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

TIKKUN

Editorials:
Whitewater & Clinton's "Hypocrisy Factor"

Tikkun Conference:
Nan Fink on Jewish renewal; Rodger Kamenetz on changing names

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY MAY/JUNE 1994 $6.00

Settler Violence and the Rape of Judaism

Wendy Orange
Uri Avnery
Tzvi Marx
Benny Morris
Michael Lerner



Psychoanalytic Optimism
Michael J. Bader

Meaning in Education
Svi Shapiro

Freud
Eli Zaretsky
Joel Kovel

Song of Songs
Daphne Merkin

Lasch's Legacy
Jean Bethke Elshtain

Crime
Ellen Willis

on Diana Trilling • on panhandlers; encounter with A.J. Heschel; on marriage & commitment; fiction • poetry by & Gerda Zeiger

"Vus is Gevain, is Gevain"

My mother chews food like a rodent,
stares ahead at thin air.
Soon she will fasten a bracelet
around her thin wrist.
What is left now is habit,
sister to custom.
Tears cloud her eyes,
water drips at her feet.
The flesh forgets manners.
I wipe her as she bends
over me, her small back a bridge
from "forget" to "forgot."
Her questions rain on me,
the same ones over and again.
I'm soaked to the bone.
Where are we going? she asks.
I remember the aqua and white Chevy
she ferried me in, how she parked it
tidily at the curb, her dark hair
vivid from my seat in the back.
Now, her elbow cradled in my palm,
purse clutched to her chest,
we walk upstairs in slow motion,
she counts aloud: 1—-2—-3—- until
I open the door, and we enter what is.
Where am I? she asks.
Her skirt hangs gently to her knees,
the floor is bright at her feet.
Beyond her, the open window, the deep green trees.
She turns to look me in the eye and sings:
"*Vus is gevain, is gevain. Is nisht du*":
What is gone, is gone. It is not now."
Without conviction, she shakes her head,
kisses my hand as I help her into a seat.
Then I sit down beside her,
and she teaches me the words.

Gene Zeiger

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY — VOLUME 9 NUMBER 3

2 **Letters** Hebron; Politics of Meaning; Jewish Slave Traders; Wellstone on Single-Payer; Hayden on Meaning

8 **Editorials** Whitewater & Clinton's Hypocrisy Factor

Articles

11 **Michael J. Bader** *Helping the Patient Get Better: Psychoanalysis, Optimism, and Social Change* Psychoanalysts are discovering an unconscious instinct toward emotional health that has implications for a politics of meaning.

15 **Martha Mendelsohn** *Toward Marriages of Meaning* Few couples contemplating divorce strive first for healing and repair.

17 **Svi Shapiro** *Memo to Clinton on Education* The administration's approach to education aims at productivity rather than meaning and will achieve neither.

21 **Michael Fontana** *Life in the Parentheses* Panhandlers mirror Americans' worst fears and deepest longings.

23 **Joshua Halberstam** *Which Molecule Has The Dignity? An Encounter with A.J. Heschel* The author recalls his impromptu audience with an extraordinary man.

Notes From the TIKKUN Conference, Part II

This second sampler from the January TIKKUN conference includes:

25 **Nan Fink** *Reflections on Jewish Renewal*

86 **Rodger Kamenetz** *Changing Names*

Politics of Meaning Insert (between pages 32-33) A short summary of the basic ideas and program.

Special Focus: Settler Violence and the Rape of Judaism

For the one million Palestinians who remain locked up on the West Bank under Israeli military rule, it is not the withdrawal from Gaza but the continuing settler violence, often in the name of Judaism, that defines their reality and provokes Arab terror.

27 **Michael Lerner** sets the political stage after Hebron and Afula. **Wendy Orange** describes the daily life realities for Palestinians—and the settlers' festival of violence and resistance. **Uri Avnery** describes post-Hebron debates in the Israeli peace movement. **Tzvi Marx** tells his son in the Israeli army that despite their appropriation of Jewish sources, the settlers' justification for violence is contradicted by Orthodox Judaism. And **Benny Morris** reviews the long history of Jewish-Arab conflict around Hebron.

51 **Ellen Willis** *Beyond Good and Evil: Crime and Cultural Politics* Combatting crime, from a cultural radical perspective, means eschewing the moralism of both Left and Right.

57 **Jean Bethke Elshtain** *Christopher Lasch, American* Reflections on the life and work of a unique public intellectual.

59 **Daphne Merkin** *The Woman in the Balcony: On Reading the Song of Songs* The Bible's most sensuous text serves as a Rorschach test for our own experiences of lust and love.

65 **Eli Zaretsky** *The Attack on Freud* His contemporary conservative critics want to demonize the man and discredit the radical potential of his thought. **Joel Kovel** responds: The problem isn't the anti-Freudians—it's Freud himself.

Reviews

79 **Mark Shechner** on Diana Trilling's *The Beginning of the Journey: The Marriage of Diana Trilling and Lionel Trilling;* **Sikkum**, brief reviews of Jewish books.

Fiction

73 **Angela Himsel** *On Hold*

Poetry inside front cover: **Yehuda Amichai**; inside back cover: **Gene Zeiger**

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Letters

To the Editor:

I can't tell you how proud I am to be receiving and financially supporting a magazine that simultaneously stands strong for Jewish interests, as you do in your fierce critique of Farrakhan both in TIKKUN and when you wrote an essay about Black anti-Semitism in Time magazine in early March, and at the same time stands strong for Jewish ethics as you do in your unrelenting critique of the Occupation and Israeli settler violence. TIKKUN proves to the world that one can both be morally sensitive and proudly Jewish—congratulations.

Sharon Katznelson
Los Angeles, California

To the Editor:

I was glad to see you critique the attack on Lubavitcher Hasidim just as you critiqued the attack on Moslems by Baruch Goldstein. You prove that you don't just care about others, you also care about Jews.

Rachel Blum
Brooklyn, New York

To the Editor:

I was one of many who opposed TIKKUN's critique of the Occupation. I cancelled my subscription when you wrote your infamous article "The Occupation: Immoral and Stupid" (March/April 1988). Now, after the massacre in Hebron, I've decided that you were right and I was wrong. The *New York Times* described you as "This Year's Prophet" (June 29, 1993), and I'm afraid that events have proved that they were right. I and many others of us who were active in the Federation world thought that you were being alarmist and unnecessarily critiquing Israel, but in retrospect it turns out that the Jewish people would have been well served had they listened to

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you instead of the voices that said that everything was fine, that the Israelis really knew what they were doing, and that Jewish values could be preserved even as we continued the Occupation. I thought you were a traitor; now I see that you were courageously defending the best interests of the Jewish people.

Marianne Moskowitz
New York, New York

To the Editor:

When, if ever, has either an Arab leader or the U.N. Security Council condemned any of the many Arab (Palestinian) terrorist attacks? Did they condemn the attack in Southern Lebanon which killed more than 200 U.S. servicemen? Have you at TIKKUN ever been critical of any action by Palestinians?

Lillian Levine
New York, New York

Editor responds:

TIKKUN has consistently and publicly denounced Palestinian acts of terror directed against Israeli civilians.

To the Editor:

The sadness and shame which Jews all over the world felt upon learning of this terrible deed perpetrated by a deranged, religious Jew were deepened for many of us by your diatribe against Orthodox Jews in Israel and in America. Your article appeared on the same day as the report of the massacre. Such a rush into print almost suggests that the article, or at least its sentiments, were on the tip of your pen, almost waiting for the right moment.

Your liberal credentials are sullied by the intolerance manifested by such words as "we frequently hear violent language from some in the Orthodox community..." Where is the understanding that is part of the liberal tradition, in an article which bashes Orthodox and right-wing Jews—are they really the same?—no less than six times in a twelve-paragraph essay? Is it fair to identify Baruch Goldstein as "a religiously observant Yeshiva University graduate"? Do you really think that he developed his fanaticism in the classrooms of YU?

In the act of Baruch Goldstein, one could see the confluence of madness and fanaticism and the resultant damage when the two are combined. The fanaticism is a product of the Kach movement which nurtured his ideology. The source of his madness we will never know, but anybody who leaves behind what essentially was a suicide note for his pregnant wife and four children has to be identified as clinically insane. He suffered from an illness which warrants our sympathy. Unfortunately, the illness, combined with the fanaticism, created a tragedy of immense proportions for many innocent Arabs; and only God knows how many other innocent people will die as a result of this fatal episode.

Virtually all Jews felt overwhelming revulsion when they learned about this act. The sadness and the shame which we all felt, including and especially those in the religious community, led to expressions of profound grief in synagogues of all kinds, grief over the terrible loss of life and shame that it was perpetrated by an observant Jew. One member in my congregation went so far as to question whether we in the Yeshiva movement are developing sufficient tolerance in our students to guard against such tragedies. I feel that his concern is unwarranted, for Dr. Goldstein was a product of a very extreme ideology which is basically repudiated by the organized religious community. But the comment itself demonstrates the pain and the introspection which we all experienced when we heard the terrible news.

To take that news and damn the religious community on the Op-Ed page of The *New York Times* was an act of irresponsibility at best, and slander at worst.

Rabbi Haskel Lookstein
President
Synagogue Council of America

Editor responds:

Rabbi Lookstein is certainly right to suggest that the sentiments in my editorial—critiquing the way the Orthodox religious community had given a respectful home to the demeaning of the Other that led to Baruch Goldstein's massacre of Palestinians at prayer in Hebron—were at the tip of my pen. For many months I have been appalled by the racism and discourse of violence that I have heard articu-

Editor's note:

The translator of "The End," by Ida Fink, (TIKKUN, November/December 1993) is Madeline G. Levine.

Biweekly TIKKUN NYC Shabbat Salon

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We are interested in considering for publication your black and white line art, editorial cartoons, illustrations, full color paintings, and black and white photographs. Please send copies that can be kept permanently on file. We pay for work that is used. Send to Production Manager, TIKKUN, 251 West 100th St., New York, NY 10025.

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Summer 1994, and Fall 1994 through Spring 1995

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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.

lated in Upper West Side Orthodox synagogues in which I myself *davven* (pray) on Shabbat. It is not infrequent to hear people talk as though "everyone knows" that Palestinians can't be trusted, are hateful, and are committed to the destruction of the Jewish people. This last part is particularly important, because if the entire Palestinian people are seeking the demise of the Jews, then there is halakhic justification to protect ourselves by wiping them out first—and this argument has been made to me over and over again.

Nor is my perception idiosyncratic. In this issue, we print a lengthy response from Tzvi Marx, an Orthodox rabbi and a leading educator at the Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, to his son who recently entered the Israeli army. His son reports being troubled to find that his Orthodox-trained comrades in the Israeli army have taken to justifying the Hebron massacre. Marx finds that he must make a halakhic argument for the unacceptability of this position precisely because it is so prevalent in Israeli as well as American Orthodox circles. The real question to ask is why Haskel Lookstein and other Orthodox leaders do not allow themselves to know that there is a real problem inside Orthodoxy.

Perhaps their attention is not directed to this question because there are so many of them who have directed their energies to engaging their synagogues in public political acts of support for the settlers, and implicitly (and often explicitly) in attacking the Israeli government's peace process. The very people who a few years ago were screaming at TIKKUN because it supposedly had no right to critique Israel from the Diaspora without sharing the risks of living there now find themselves being the critics of Israeli policy aimed at exchanging land for peace.

On the other hand, it would be unfair to suggest that the Orthodox are the only ones who have this problem. While I know of no group of Reform or Conservative synagogues that has publicly aligned itself with the settlers in the way that a group of Upper West Side Orthodox synagogues did at a public demonstration in January, there are many people in Reform temples and Conservative synagogues, as well as many strictly secular Jews, who participate in the process of "demeaning of the other." If I give special attention to the Orthodox, it is not only because a disproportionate number of violence-prone settlers identify with Orthodoxy, but because Orthodox rabbis have used their religious authority (in ways that Reform and Conservative have not) to sanction acts of resistance to the peace process (as in the recent ruling of the former Chief Rabbi of Israel that soldiers must disobey orders should they be told to assist in the process of removing settlers from Hebron or other parts of the West Bank).

To the Editor:

I am distressed that even in the wake of the Hebron pogrom you still defend the "right" of the less ideological colonists (you call them "settlers") to remain in the small remnant of the Palestinian lands that remains to them. Surely you must be aware of the fact that every U.S. administration (until Clinton's, which is riddled with AIPAC graduates) called these "settlements" illegal, and, like the U.N., called for their removal.

To come along after 2,000 years and claim another people's country because one's ancestors may have lived there 2,000 years ago strikes me as absurd. At the very least, you should insist on the speedy removal of all Israeli soldiers and colonists from the small remnant of Palestine—the West Bank and Gaza—with no conditions attached.

As a Jew who has lost relatives in the Holocaust, I resent the constant harping on an exploitation of the Holocaust for propaganda purposes half a century later.

And I wish they would stop calling Israel a "Jewish" state. Most Jews who have a choice prefer to live elsewhere. And many of those born in Israel have emigrated. It's high time decent Jews freed themselves of the notion that being a Jew and being a Zionist are somehow synonymous.

Miriam Abileah
Toronto, Ontario

To the Editor:

While Baruch Goldstein's hatred may have been nurtured by "right-wing" Jews and the previous Likud governments, that hatred, as well as the "anti-Arab racism" lamented by TIKKUN have a long pedigree within mainstream Zionism. From its beginning, Zionism within Eretz Israel was realized not just through the founding fathers' socialist ethos, but just as importantly through its political and economic conflict with the indigenous Arab population. As Israeli historian Gershon Shafrir explains in his seminal work, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, the Zionist leadership "developed a confrontational. . .militarist-nationalist approach to the Palestinians [in] a struggle to displace them and conquer their jobs." This struggle, symbolized by the concepts "Conquest of Labor" and "Conquest of Land" were seen by socialist Zionists as the key means to realize their goals of immigration, settlement, and the creation of a Jewish economy.

Within this context, the "discourse of violence and demeaning of the Other" (to quote Lerner's editorial) that paved the way for the massacre was also a technique familiar to and accepted by no less than David Ben Gurion, who understood that "Arab national hatred is the reason that will force. . .Jewish farmers to take on Jewish workers." A discourse dominated by oppositions such as West/Orient, civilized/backward, and patriot/enemy thus became vital to the realization of the Zionist enterprise and continues to dominate the view of most Israelis towards Arabs. Given this history, we should not be shocked to learn, as *Yedioth Ahronot* reported, that many Israeli schoolchildren thought the massacre was a "mitzvah."

The old Jew who knew "how to make peace," so vividly described in Wendy Orange's article (March/April 1994) reflects a historical, paternalistic attitude toward the Arabs that is also part of this discourse. His no doubt heartfelt belief that he could make peace with the Arabs by starting a school and "teaching them," particularly about Jewish history, is similar to the pre-state rhetoric which claimed Zionism would lift up the "backward Arabs from their abject state of misery," as the Jewish Agency described it in 1930. This attitude is of course not unique to Zionism; it lies at the heart of American "Manifest Destiny," the British "white man's burden," and the French *mission civilatrice*.

What's more, the entire discourse of "security" that has for so long dominated Israeli politics covers the offensive nature of Zionism by embedding it within a "defensive" paradigm in which the Jew, as victim, has a

monopoly on "security" against the Arab Other who by definition became an "aggressor."

While the national security paradigm in the United States has undergone critical reappraisal since Vietnam, a similar process has only recently begun in Israel, as epitomized by writers like Benny Morris, who (in these very pages) illustrated how hundreds of thousands of Arabs were purposefully expelled form their homeland during the 1948 war. A similar review has yet to occur with the Six Day War (Israel's most celebrated "defensive war"), despite the fact that Israeli leaders like Menachem Begin have admitted that "we had a choice: we must be honest with ourselves, we decided to attack," or, as the current president, Ezer Weitzman, put it, "there was no great threat of destruction; the [war] was fought so that Israel could exist according to the scale, spirit, and quality she now embodies."

Until Israel and all of us concerned with her welfare heed Begin's ironic advice to be "honest" about the conflict's history, Israel's "spirit" will continue to be threatened while we remain incapable of understanding either the conflict's intractability or our own role in its perpetuation. TIKKUN can lead the way by continuing to provide the opportunity for such a reappraisal to take place in the public rather than purely academic realm.

Mark LeVine
Hoboken, New Jersey

To the Editor:

It is wrong for us to write letters telling the people and government of Israel how they should conduct themselves in resolving one of the most difficult and dangerous situations which a nation has to deal with. Any peace between the Jews and the Palestinians will not be the result of resolutions agreed to after a debate. Rather it will be a very slow process, moving in tiny steps, whose outcome will be determined by the minute details of the daily behavior of many people. I think that the Israeli nation will find a way to defang the fanatics without our advice. As for the Palestinians, they have plenty of killers of their own. Too bad we Americans always feel sympathy for the underdog of the day.

Joseph Dresner
Princeton, New Jersey

To the Editor:

Not all of us are smart enough to put into words the feelings of anguish we have at what is happening in Israel and Palestine, or the hopes of what we believe to be the only just solution. You do this for us, better than I ever thought anyone could.

Rachelle Marshall
Stanford, California

To the Editor:

Well, you were right about one thing—your Passover Haggadah supplement 1994 surely caused an uproar at the Seder I went to. I had expected it to be rather dull—after all, you seemed to go out of your way to congratulate Israel for its courage in pursuing the peace talks. But my relatives were still up in arms about the suggestion that we drop wine from our cup of joy and think of the suffering of Palestinians when mentioning the ten plagues. The old "they wouldn't do this for us" theme reemerged. I used your argument about Torah—that it doesn't say we should love the stranger only if they love us back—but that got me nowhere. Things turned around a little, however, when we read your "Pour Out Thy Wrath" section, and no one could deny that you were expressing genuine anger at the anti-Semitism that has oppressed us through the centuries.

By the end, not everyone was convinced that you were really a self-hating Jew, since you had shown so much caring for the suffering of our people. Still, I was surprised how people in my family who had normally been supporters of Israeli policy were now prepared to disagree with the government of Israel because it was becoming too pro-peace and hence too pro-Palestinian.

It almost seemed to me as if the bottom line was racism toward Arabs, not support for Israel. And if that is the bottom line, TIKKUN can forget about ever winning friends by showing how passionately you care about Jewish interests and how much your criticism of Israel stems from a sensitivity to the survival needs of the Jewish people. I sometimes feel as if Jews who were born before the Holocaust would rather see Israel destroyed as long as it would be destroyed in a glorious Samson-like gesture in which the Temple is brought down on the

JEWISH RENEWAL

✡ THE BOOK ✡

A major event in Jewish intellectual and spiritual life: *Jewish Renewal: A Path To Healing And Transformation,* by Michael Lerner.

This is not only a TIKKUN manifesto that provides an intellectual and spiritual foundation for a progressive Judaism for the twenty-first century, it is also a significant rethinking of Jewish theology and Jewish destiny.

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✡ THE CONFERENCE ✡

NOVEMBER 4-6, NEW YORK CITY

This is the major TIKKUN conference that you ought not to miss. Built around exploring the themes raised in Michael Lerner's book, *Jewish Renewal,* it will provide a way to connect with people who share your interests in healing and transforming the world, and in deepening their relationship to Judaism. Plus an exciting array of TIKKUN writers.

Whenever we hold a TIKKUN conference, we have to turn away hundreds of people because we don't have sufficient space. Our readers shouldn't be among them—and you won't be if you register now. The conference costs $150, plus $25 if you wish to register for dinner Friday night, $25 for lunch Saturday, $15 for lunch Sunday. It does not include accommodations, but we will have an arrangement with a New York hotel for medium-range prices. If you register before September, we guarantee you entrance to the conference if you are a current subscriber to TIKKUN.

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heads of our enemies, than for Israel to survive if its survival meant treating our former enemies as though they were real human beings with real needs. Thank you for the TIKKUN Haggadah supplement—it reminded me that there is another way to be Jewish. If this is what you mean by "Jewish renewal," I'm all for it.

Roberta Axelrod
Washington, D.C.

POLITICS OF MEANING

To the Editor:

The control of public meaning through the media in contemporary America is heavily subsidized by corporate interests. There must be an all-out, unified effort to establish a cable TV network supported by liberal and progressive subscribers and advertisers across the nation. Given the suppression of progressive political perspectives, we must find a way to make serious political thinking available on a daily basis, so that people have some place to turn to for reflection and hope. Some such media outlet is a prerequisite for an alliance politics capable of representing the populist interests that today remain fragmented and powerless.

David Robbins
Oakland, California

JEWISH SLAVE TRADERS

To the Editor:

Michael Lerner does a fine job of debunking the Nation of Islam's grotesque distortion of the role Jews played in the slave trade, while Ralph Austen ("The Uncomfortable Relationship," March/April 1994) puts that role in the proper historical perspective. I doubt, however, that the audience for Farrakhan's revisionism will be swayed by correctives such as "Jews constituted .3 percent of slaveholders" (Lerner), or "the vast majority of New world slaves were captured, bought, traded, and forced into labor by non-Jews" (Austen).

The NOI's obsession is not with the actions of "Jews" but with "the Jews." Farrakhan's fantasies are part of an anti-Semitic tradition that dispenses collective guilt for the acts or purported acts of individuals, as if the millions of Jews who have lived and died since the beginning of the age of exploration—including this American-born grandson of Polish and Rumanian immigrants—are responsible for the acts of a few thousand Jewish merchants of the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries. To say that Blacks are disproportionately represented among those arrested for drug-related offenses is not to say that "the Blacks" are responsible for the drug problem. Why Farrakhan and his ilk see profit in ignoring this distinction is beyond me.

Andrew Silow Carroll
Associate Editor, Moment
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Ralph Austen claims ("The Uncomfortable Relationship," March/April) that the anti-Semitism of the Nation of Islam's book *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews* is "limited at least to accusations of avarice rather than blood libels or plots to rule the world." To the contrary, *The Secret Relationship* is permeated with imagery of Jews as disease carriers and debauchers that Edward J. Bristow (in a different context) has called the "sexualization" of the ritual murder accusation. In my own book, Farrakhan's Reign of Historical Error (Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1992) I document numerous parallels—sometimes, close paraphrases—of Ford's *The International Jew*.

Austen, in my view, unwisely in this context—suggests that the NOI book may actually "underestimate the structural importance" of the Jewish New World diaspora in establishing trans-Atlantic commercial networks in the era of the slave trade. On the other hand, the great scholar of comparative slavery David B. Davis has concluded that Jewish merchants played "no major continuing role" in the slave trade which would have developed in much the same way had they never existed. Also still unchallenged is the finding of the dean of American Jewish historians, Jacob R. Marcus, that Jewish merchants were accountable for "considerably less than 2 per cent" of the North American and West Indian slave trade. This is a limiting statistical conclusion with important structural implications.

Austen seems to think a choice must be made between mutually exclusive historical views of American Jews a members of a mistreated ethno-religious minority vs. as beneficiaries of a white caste society. Every scholar of American Jewish history knows that both views, paradoxically, have been true, though no two historians agree exactly about how much emphasis to put on each. What can be said with certainty is that the current, politically correct tendency to strip American Jews of historical minority status, and deny their experience with vulnerability and victimization, is a falsification of the past. I also do not see how it can make amends to African Americans for their incontestably greater injustices in the New World theodicy.

Harold Brackman, Ph.D.
San Diego, California

WELLSTONE ON SINGLE-PAYER

To the Editor:

I was very impressed with Paul Wellstone's argument for single-payer in TIKKUN (March/April 1994). I think it a real tragedy that Hillary Rodham Clinton didn't endorse this approach, instead of the complicated and ultimately irrelevant plans concocted behind closed doors by Ira Magaziner, Paul Starr, and a cast of elitists more interested in serving the insurance industry than serving the public. If she thought that single-payer was too politically risky, but agreed with it, she should have taken a two-track approach, suggesting both her own plan and the Wellstone plan, and saying that if her plan gets defeated now that she'd then switch to support single-payer. That would have sent a shiver down the spines of the special interests and made it more likely they'd moderate their opposition to her plan.

Meanwhile, I think we should be promoting Wellstone for national office.

I heard that you also had Carl Levin speak at the TIKKUN conference. With senators like these associated with TIKKUN, one almost gets the feeling that a few people in the Senate are getting their heads together—and that's wonderful and incredible. I have new respect for both these senators for having the brains and the guts to associate with TIKKUN.

Larry Krantzlinger
New York, New York

HAYDEN ON MEANING

To the Editor:

Tom Hayden's criticism of Bill

Clinton ("Running in Place: Pushing Past the Market in the Clinton Era," January/February 1994) ignores the solid gains that the President has made and the difficulty of achieving progressive goals in the current, conservative political culture.

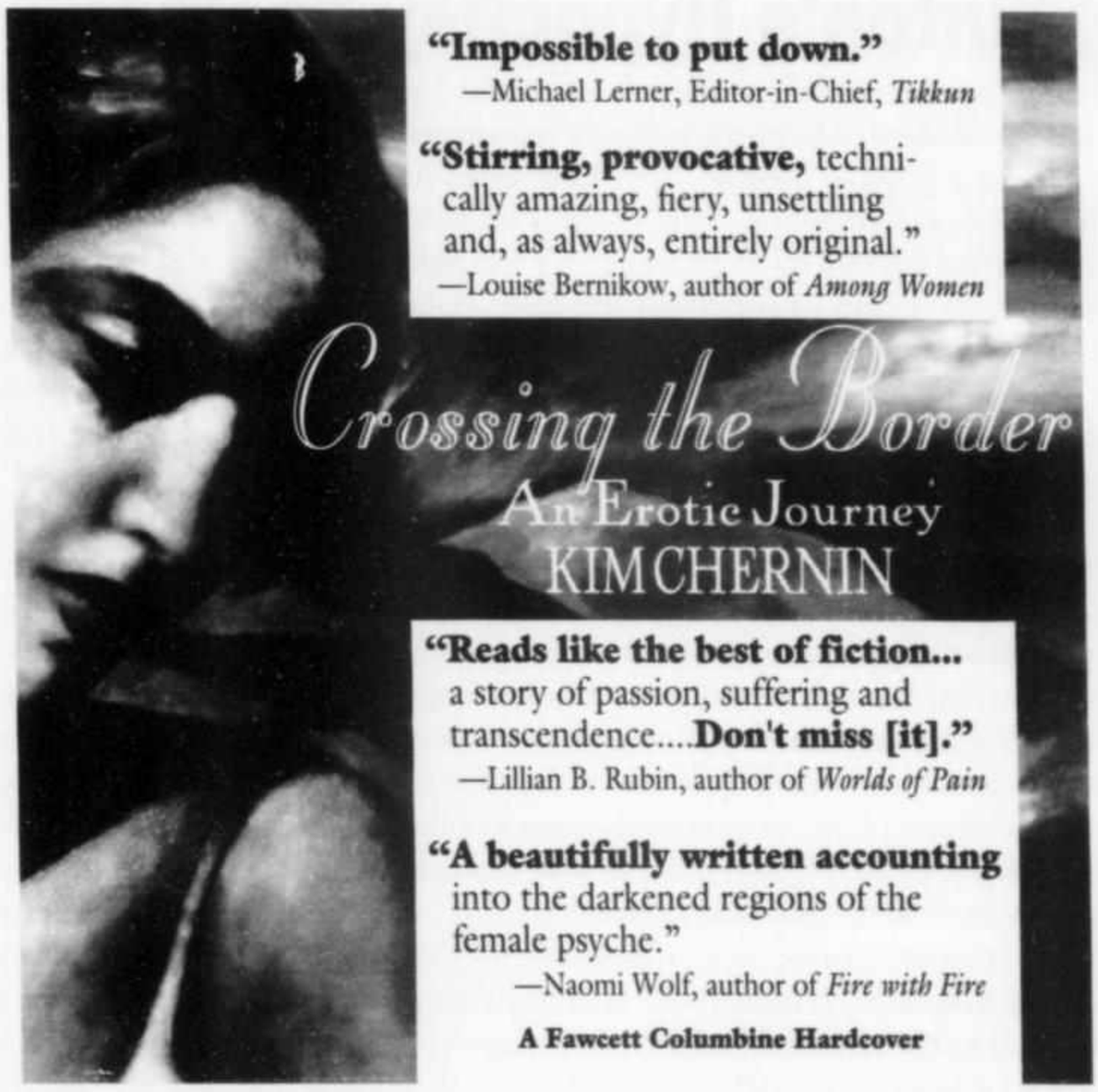
Hayden's desire for a more equitable and environmentally conscious society is laudable, but he ignores the prospect of using regulated market forces to achieve these ends. President Clinton's use of emission credits to reduce pollution is an example. This measure will ameliorate the environmental devastation being wrought by industry, but will achieve this with as little economic disruption as possible. In contrast, the "solution" that Hayden proposes—a "ban or phase-out" of carcinogens—would serve only to throw millions of Americans out of work and to move factories to the unregulated Third World.

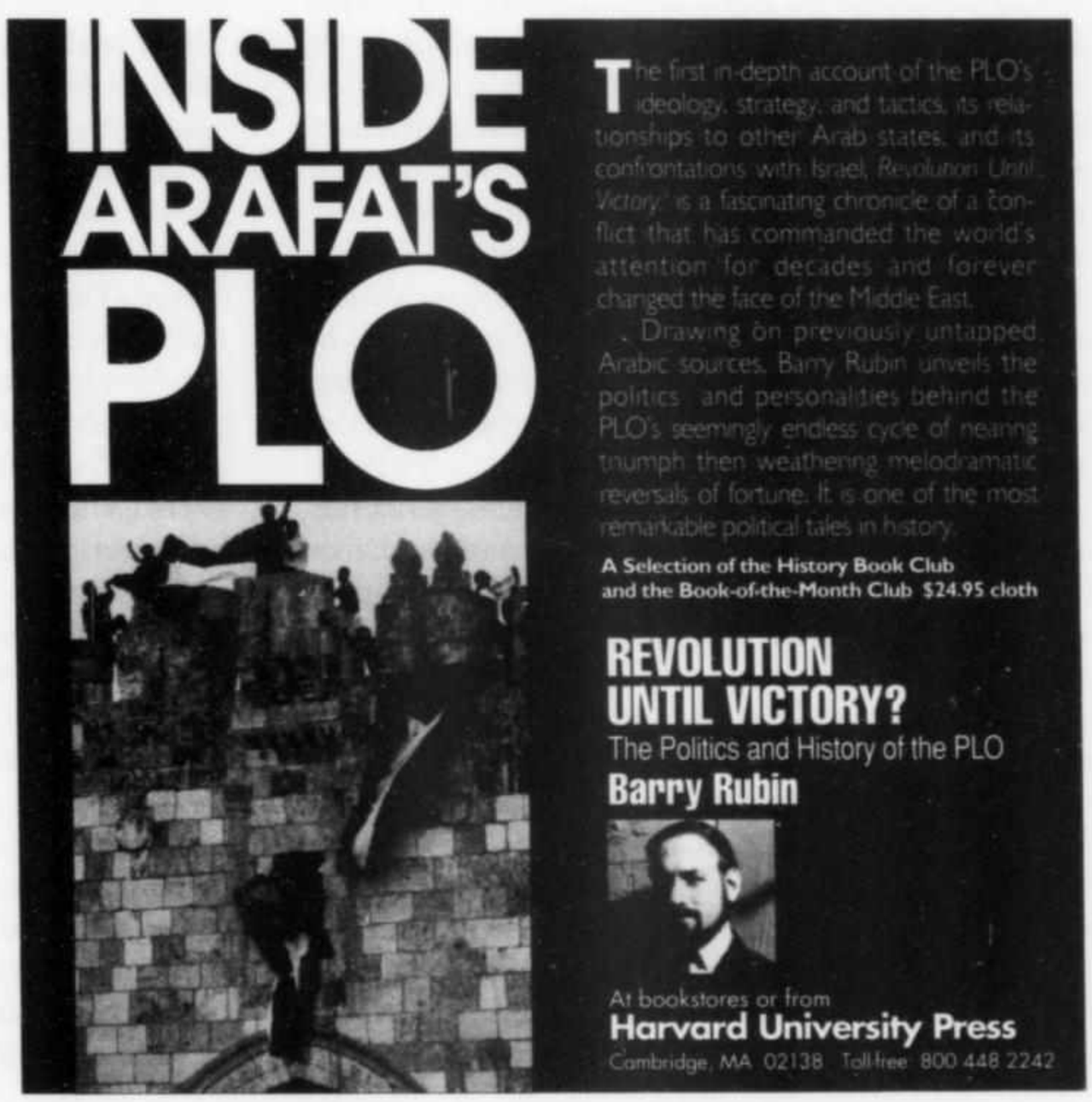
Hayden's ideas on health reform are similarly shortsighted: He does not perceive the "forest" of cigarette and fat-induced deaths for the currently fashionable "trees" of pesticides and chemicals. Banning these substances would drive up world food prices and save far fewer lives than even a moderate tax on red meat or tobacco. Government health-care dollars are an indirect subsidy of McDonald's and Philip Morris—by keeping unhealthy products cheap we encourage unhealthy behavior and end up paying for it in emergency rooms—often the only medical recourse of the uninsured.

In only a year the administration has achieved much while remaining fiscally responsible: leave for workers who need to spend time with children; a record of hiring for ability, not Aryan genes; and the lifting of the clinic "gag rule." Criticism aimed at the President can only weaken his chances for reelection—and think of the alternative. Our nation cannot afford another "lost decade of Republican rule." Avoiding that is worth compromise on the politically impossible. Clinton's ability to think pragmatically is the best hope of the Left, for the "buy now, pay never" message of the Republicans is a seductive siren call to America. To compete, the President must remain committed to the market, temper it with regulation, and maintain himself in the political center.

Charles Eaton
Washington, D.C.

(Continued on p. 84)





Clinton's Hypocrisy Factor

Michael Lerner, editor

Maybe the Clintons didn't do anything illegal, several reporters on the Whitewater beat have asserted to me recently, but still they are guilty of massive hypocrisy. Since I am credited by the media with having inspired Mrs. Clinton's politics of meaning speech a year ago, surely I should see that the Clintons were hypocrites when they ran for office by denouncing the selfishness of the Reagan/Bush eighties, only to be revealed now as deeply immersed in that same frenzy for profits that they publicly condemned.

To understand why this critique of the Clintons is deeply misguided, one has to think deeply about politics in a way normally prohibited by sound bites.

The essence of the politics of meaning is its critique of the way contemporary economic, political and social institutions foster an ethos of selfishness and cynicism that make it extremely difficult for anyone to build a life around principles of caring and idealism. Although we imagine that we can overcome the corrosive effects of public selfishness through private religious devotion or ethical commitment, the me-firstism of the competitive market gradually corrodes every area of private life. Even our family lives and friendships are weakened because everyone has learned that this is a society in which "looking out for no. 1" is the bottom line, and anyone acting on a different principle will be disadvantaged.

The epidemic of selfishness shapes every area of our lives. Corporations deplete the resources of the Earth with abandon, in the process putting the life-support systems of our planet at risk. Their justification? They can make a profit doing so! This rip-off mentality pervades the middle class, and tens of millions of Americans will spend the weekend before April 15 trying to conjure up reasons to pay less money on their income taxes, imagining that anything they can get away with will be justified since "everyone else is doing it also," so why should they give more money than they have to? Then both the wealthy and the middle class turn to the poor and expect *them* to embody a higher ethic, and are shocked when the same rip off mentality leads the less advantaged to condone the same kind of looting on the street level that corporations engage in on the planetary level.

The politics of meaning suggests that we need to challenge this ethos of selfishness. But it completely rejects the assumption that those who are doing the challenging will necessarily be on a higher level than everyone else. Quite the contrary—precisely the point of this kind of societal critique is that the corrosive dynamic affects everyone, including the reformers.

And this is how it has always been, and must necessarily be. Those who advocate a higher moral ideal will always be less than the ideal they advocate.

Our social reformers will always be "wounded healers," people who do not yet fully embody the ideals to which they aspire. Judaism and Christianity both recognized this in their holy texts. The Israelites, just recently beneficiaries of liberation from Egypt and recipients of God's revelation, revert to building a golden calf. Instead of destroying them, God reveals to Moses the necessity for compassion. The people who will be conveyers of God's vision will also be deeply flawed. The New Testament tells a similar story, about the very "rock" on which the Church will be built, Peter—who three times before the cock crows—will deny his association with Jesus.

Would we say that these religions should have never started, and that their founders and adherents can only be hypocrites because they articulated ideals they could not fully live?

Yet somehow Americans have got it in their heads that their leaders must be on a higher moral plane than everyone else. This insistence guarantees that our leaders will be liars. They learn to hide who they really are, because we demand that they appear flawless as a condition for our respect. And when the inevitable flaws come to light, we feel shocked, feel that they have been unmasked and disappointed us, and so we retreated to cynicism as the only rational position.

Of course, this process serves best the protectors of the status quo. They will always look *less* hypocritical,

because they openly advocate the very cynicism and selfishness that they also live.

But are we really well served by this? Would America have been better off if Martin Luther King's romances had been exposed, his credibility decreased, and hence his ability to lead a moral crusade for civil rights had been compromised? Would it have been better had JFK been exposed before he could inspire a generation to ask what they could do for their country? And if the Clintons are politically crippled by a focus on the minor league role they may have played in the selfishness of the eighties, will the country really benefit?

This is not an argument for a blank check for our political leaders. If they commit crimes, they should be prosecuted. And there *is* hypocrisy worth publicly attacking—namely, the disparity between their public pronouncements and the policies they support. If someone wants to critique the Clintons for failing to embody a politics of meaning in the way they've dealt with Bosnia, homelessness, or even their failure to support a single-payer approach to health care, we could have a reasonable discussion. But what is unreasonable, and distortive of the whole political process, is to fault them for being self-interested. Everybody is, in this society.

But isn't that what they wanted to change? Yes, but there was nothing hypocritical in articulating that goal. If they had said, "We want Americans to become like us, because we have magically managed to transcend the selfish dynamic of this society; and so our solution is for people to learn how to live by looking at us," then at least the criticisms would make sense. This kind of elitist attitude, embedded in Jimmy Carter's "malaise" speech, produced widespread antipathy among the American people, since he seemed to be claiming that he was on a higher moral plane than everyone else, and that the task for Americans was to change themselves

But that is the *opposite* of a politics of meaning approach. Each of us has a part of ourselves that wants to transcend the selfishness and live according to our highest values, and a part of ourselves that thinks that that is impossible and unrealistic. To the extent that we believe that everyone else will be motivated by selfishness, it becomes much harder for anyone individually to move toward idealism. So it would make most sense if the Clintons were to say now, unequivocally, that "Yes, we were part of the same dynamics that we were criticizing—and that was our point: In a society that rewards selfishness, everyone is going to act like that. By advocating a politics of meaning we were advocating a change in the collective dynamic, a change that we could only make together as a nation. Without that change, no matter how idealistic people are, they will get caught, as we did, in the pursuit of self-interest. It was precisely because we recognized that, not because we thought we were better or more moral than anyone else, that we decided to challenge the dominant selfishness."

This level of honesty is precluded by our collective fantasy that our politicians must be morally better than we ourselves. And it is precluded by cynical media that will interpret this as merely another "move" in the Clintons' self-interest.

The heart of Whitewater remains the relentless and ferocious assault on the Clintons from the moment they took office by all those forces that resist change in America. The Clintons were naive not to protect themselves better—by explicitly warning the country that they would be subject to endless attacks, by critiquing media cynicism before it had gotten out of hand, and by talking more honestly to their own constituency about how they perceive the attacks on them and their own situation.

Yet nothing they could have done would have fully protected them from ruling elites terrified of substantial change. The military-industrial complex, wary of a progressive Democrat presiding over what it feared would become substantial pressure for a "peace dividend," other sectors of American industrial and agricultural conglomerates worried about environmental sanity that might cut into their profits, insurance and drug industries fearful of health reform—all would inevitably gang up on Clinton, use their clout in the media to assault him, and encourage a public climate of distrust. Though we warned Clinton as early as November 1992 that he would have to prepare to go on the offensive or else find himself the subject of a fierce destabilization campaign, the Clintons thought that they could get their programs through by relying on charm, personality, and compromise.

Nor could anyone fully withstand the wrath of a media angered that a president's wife could challenge their fundamental belief: the deep conviction that no one can be motivated by anything other than material self-interest. Since there are parts of each of us that will always have that inclination, the media will always be able to cast the change agents as self-promoters. And in so doing, they will serve the status-quo interests of those who own the means of mass communication and who wish to discredit any "change" that might question their right to put selfish interests above the common good. In the final analysis, the media are truly consistent: They both advocate cynicism and embody that cynicism as their daily reality.

It is still not too late for Clinton to save his presidency. If he could consistently embrace a politics of

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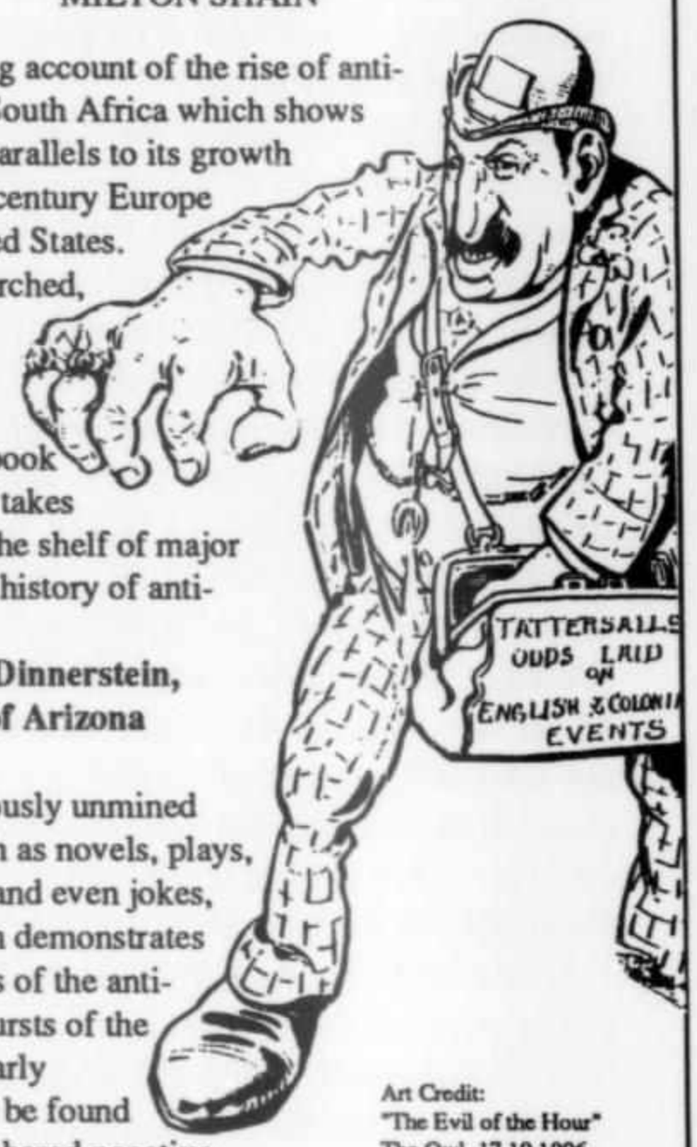
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meaning, or any *other* unifying principle, and reframe most of his agenda around that principle, and then convince people both about the legitimacy of the principle and of the way that his specific programs flow from that principle, he would have a much better chance.

That's precisely what he has *not* done with health care. One has no idea how the specific planks of his program flow from a central principle. No wonder, then, that it becomes difficult for his supporters to know how to enter into the political debate taking place—they are not adequately schooled in the details to be involved in defending his plan, nor can they claim that these plans flow from a unifying principle that he has explained and defended. So we are left with nothing more to say than that we want universal coverage—a fine point, but one that provides little basis to respond to the other plans that *also* claim that they will seek universal coverage.

Indeed, as many people have argued, when one actually considers the details of Clinton's plan, they do *not* flow from a politics of meaning, but rather from the Clintons' alleged "realism" that led them to adopt a pro-insurance company plan rather than single-payer. This realism has now been shown to be deeply misguided. If they thought that their plan could avoid savage assault from the Republicans and the special interests, the Clintons must have had a rude awakening. What they have endured was no gentler than had they adopted a principled stand and fought for the kind of single-payer plan that Senator Paul Wellstone outlined in the March/Arpil issue of TIKKUN.

This is the hypocrisy worth criticizing—not what happened in the Clintons' personal finances ten years ago, but what they are doing in their public policy now that they are in office. It is here, ultimately, that they have been most disappointing and least embodying a politics of meaning.

In a recent town meeting in April 1994, President Clinton was challenged by audience members who asked, "Why should we trust you?" Some of the media interpreted that question as a reference to Whitewater. But others noted that what upset the audience was not what upset the media. What many town meeting participants were trying to say was, "You act in such a compromising way that we don't believe we can trust you, because you don't really level with us about your principles and you don't seem to fight for them." It's this inability to follow through on principles, reflected as much in the health-care plan as in the continuing ill-conceived way we relate to the slaughter in Bosnia or the dictatorship in Haiti, that makes Clinton so vulnerable when the media and America's elites of privilege gang up on him as they have been doing on Whitewater. □

Helping the Patient Get Better
Psychoanalysis, Optimism, and Social Change

Michael J. Bader



Psychoanalysis can be a real bummer. It always seems to be at its best when it explains why people don't change, why they're fixated on their unconscious complexes. And, as such, it has been appropriated by social theorists seeking to explain why we resist social change. At its best, this analysis is sympathetic to the victims. We don't challenge authority because we're scared, because we're identified with the aggressor, because we're self-blaming, because we're parented asymmetrically, etc. At its worst, we're subtly told by psychoanalysis that we're narcissistic, gripped by various infantile fixations, vulnerable to the passivizing manipulations of the media and the power elites behind them.

All this is probably true—no, it is definitely true. I have been part of this discourse and continue to believe that psychoanalysis has a great deal to teach us about what makes people conservative, whether it be in the consulting room or in the public arena. In particular, several variants of object-relations theory offer a powerful model for exploring how we get attached to our oppressors and resist change because of deep and terrifying fears of loss and guilt.

But what about how and why people *do* transform themselves? After all, people strive to transcend social alienation all the time, in both large and small ways. And, contrary to popular belief, people do actually

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change in psychoanalysis. They get better—feel happier, freer to love, to work, to recognize others, to be productive. What, then, can psychoanalysis tell us about transformation that can help us understand that process as it occurs socially? Or can psychoanalysis only help us understand resistance?

We need to disconfirm the reasonable—but ultimately pathologically cynical—collective expectations of the inevitability of corrupt political leadership and the hopelessness of change.

Psychoanalyst Joseph Weiss and his colleagues in San Francisco have been in the forefront of the study of the change process in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. Their work is summarized in two volumes (*The Psychoanalytic Process*, 1986, Guilford, and *How Psychotherapy Works*, 1993, Guilford). For the social theorist, Weiss's research and theory provide fertile insights into the process of transformation that can potentially be used in an analysis of social and political change processes.

Weiss believes that people suffer from grim unconscious beliefs about themselves and the world, beliefs formed through the interaction of two important factors. First, these beliefs reflect actual experiences with parents upon whom the child is completely dependent, who have the awesome authority to define reality *and* morality for the child. Second, these pathogenic beliefs are shaped through immature modes of cognition and mental functioning characteristic of earlier stages in psychological development. A child may infer, for instance, from observation and real experience that normal efforts to assert herself or elicit admiration are systematically rejected by a self-involved or depressed parent. She may then generalize this experience to adult beliefs and expectations that people are not likely to be interested in her, will resent her assertiveness, and are inclined to punish her for her wishes to show off.

Children do more than simply observe reality, however; they construct it. Most commonly, they do this by assuming responsibility for what happens to them: I not only *won't* get praise, I'm not *supposed* to get or even want it. I don't get it because it's forbidden or because I don't deserve it. Children don't make adult judgments about cause and effect. Their thinking is often egocentric and omnipotent in nature. If my father was depressed during my adolescence, I probably came to feel unconsciously guilty about it, as if my adolescent rebellion were ultimately *responsible* for his sorry state. If my mother seems to feel bitter and depressed, then my exuberance or autonomy or sexuality probably is responsible.

Many of the unconscious beliefs that Weiss believe plague his patients involve permutations of this kind of guilt. Children are exquisitely vulnerable to feeling responsible for their parents' real and imagined injuries, depression, worries, failures, illnesses, temper—and even overt parental abusive behavior. Thus, happiness is thwarted by intense, guilt-based conflicts over having more than, leaving, surpassing, or otherwise hurting one's family. The ubiquity with which we all tend to take responsibility for our own experience and that of important others makes some version of these guilt-related pathogenic beliefs appear in all of us. The difference between a so-called "healthy" and a "pathological" outcome is one of degree. Clinically speaking, to the extent that someone's capacities and desires to love, feel competent and productive, and have pleasure are significantly impaired by pathogenic beliefs, then we tend to see the kind of symptoms and suffering that bring someone into therapy.

While people come into therapy crippled by guilt and other pathogenic beliefs, Weiss argues that they also come with a powerful unconscious desire and plan to master and overcome these problems. People seek to "disconfirm" their pathogenic beliefs in therapy because these ideas and feelings are painful, and because on some level they recognize their irrationality. In other words, children and, later, adults, never fully buy into their symptoms and pathological view of the world. They enter therapy and set out to "test" the therapist to see if it's safe to face and work through their traumas and free up their underlying wishes and capacities for health and growth.

Weiss argues that patients repeat their symptoms in therapy not because they're fixated or compelled but because they are unconsciously seeking a healing emotional experience from their therapists. This search involves acting and relating in ways that are unconsciously intended to determine if the therapist will repeat the patient's earlier painful relationships and, therefore, confirm the patient's grim expectations. If the therapist does so, the patient will not change or get worse. If the therapist responds in ways that are counter to the patient's neurotic expectations and more in line with the patient's healthier vision of himself and their

work, then psychological growth will proceed.

Patients test in various ways. One who felt dominated or exploited by a narcissistic parent might test the therapist by being disagreeable and stubborn to see if the therapist can tolerate it. If the therapist demonstrates that he or she *can*, the patient feels safer and can gradually experiment with healthier ways to relate to others. If the therapist repeats the original traumatic situation by acting in a way that the patient interprets as controlling or defensive, then the patient will have his fears confirmed and will remain stuck. Or a patient might treat the therapist as the patient felt he or she was treated by authorities in childhood to see if the therapist can handle things better and provide a healthier model. For instance, a patient of mine would verbally attack and attempt to demean my competence in the same way that his competitive father did routinely with him. By standing up to him, while still maintaining a positive ambience, I was able to make the patient feel safer and more able to remember and work through the traumas of his childhood and feel trusting enough to begin to develop a more affectionate relationship with me and with others. He was better able to stand up to abuse and had less need to abuse others.

The power of Weiss's theory rests in his insight that behavior that is usually understood in negative terms—the patient is resisting or undermining the treatment process and therapist—can be understood affirmatively. If a patient is provocative, he may be testing the therapist by inviting the latter to reject him like a parent once did. The patient unconsciously wants the therapist *not* to reject him; if the therapist passes the test, he is relieved and more able to face his pain and be close. A patient might act abusively or self-destructively with others as a way to see if the therapist will protect him. In this case, the patient seeks limits as an expression of care and protection and, if given them, is better able to face his fears and be more responsible. Or a patient who has been traumatized by a suicidal and manipulative parent might assault the therapist with suicide threats as an unconscious test of the therapist's ability to more adaptively handle the same feelings of helplessness and omnipotent responsibility that the patient was traumatized by as a child. In all of these instances, the therapist's understanding, empathy, and therapeutic options are enlarged by understanding the patient as actively problem-solving and seeking mastery, albeit in disguised and often self-defeating ways. The therapist is better able to get on the patient's "side." The traditional psychoanalytic view that the patient is intrinsically ambivalent about change and that the therapist must be careful about *neutrally* positioning him- or herself equidistant from all sides of the conflict gives way to a conception of the therapist understanding the patient's unconscious plan for growth and doing everything to facilitate it.

Weiss's central presupposition is that the patient is actively striving to establish more gratifying, intimate, confident, and joyful relationships with others, as well as live and work with more self-esteem and sense of personal efficacy and autonomy all the time, but is hobbled by pathogenic beliefs about herself and the social world. The patient is not "fixated" or simply irrationally repeating infantile gratifications and fears. She or he is actively striving at all times to create and discover conditions that are safe enough to heal him or herself, to develop richer and more satisfying relationships and pleasurable experiences of the world. But this striving is often hidden within the complex and confusing tests that the patient is always arranging with others. Thus, it is the therapist's job to decipher the patient's plan, pass his or her tests, and facilitate the unfolding of the patient's hidden but powerful strivings toward healthy satisfactions.

On the most general level, the compatibility of this attitude with a certain kind of political sensibility is obvious. As contributors to this magazine have so often opined, a movement for social change has to adopt a similar position of respect, empathy, and support for the essentially healthy strivings and rational fears of people that they want to reach. They have to decipher and compassionately articulate the hidden strivings for recognition, empowerment, mutuality, and connectedness that often lie behind even the most destructive and self-destructive attitudes and behavior.

For instance, political support for vindictive and punitive police measures to combat crime, might be understood as containing a healthy striving for security and protection in a social and economic world that offers increasingly little of it to the average person. Repressive pro-life sentiments may contain a misplaced longing for the lost innocence of a childhood that was taken away and damaged in one's own personal and social history, as well as a distorted protest against perceived attacks on a defensively idealized vision of family life. Support for militarism abroad carries with it a wish that "we" not allow ourselves to be "pushed around" so much in our everyday lives—i.e., we can kick Saddam Hussein's ass even though we can't do anything about our alienation or insecurity at home. Even the racist backlash against affirmative action might in part represent a growing and reasonable (although displaced) resentment among whites that the American Dream has left them behind and that it is *not* for lack of ability on their part.

Weiss describes patients as propelled in therapy by powerful motives and wishes to get better. Similarly, the "American people" are animated by legitimate and healthy wishes to feel more powerful, connected, and understood in their economic and political lives. Progressive political leadership thus needs to respond to political passivity, cynicism, and right-wing sentiment and reflexes—the worst of who we are politically—by understanding these phenomena, first, as both a communication of authentic pain and a healthy, but disguised attempt to transcend it. Second, we need to *disconfirm* the reasonable—but ultimately pathologically cynical—collective expectations of the inevitability of corrupt political leadership and the hopelessness of change.

An example might bring this point into bolder relief. People in our culture have come to fear that by caring too deeply about the poor, the needy, the victimized—by loving too much—they lay themselves open to be taken advantage of and, thus, to experience themselves as weak, helpless, and humiliated. This is the lesson of the competitive marketplace which, as Hillary Rodham Clinton has said, "knows the value of nothing" and invites us to devalue helplessness in ourselves and others. Add to this the observation of the apparent failure of the welfare state and a growing bitterness about the souring of American Dream for the traditionally secure middle class, and you have fertile ground within which identifications with the aggressor and other pathogenic beliefs will grow. Specifically, there is a tendency for people to become angry with the poor and to want to punish and deprive them in the same way that we, ourselves, have felt treated when we have felt or been—and continue to feel and be—dependent, vulnerable, and needy. We have learned not to expect or feel deserving of compassion and caring for our own victimization, and so can't allow or afford such feelings for others. Our authentic need for empathy and help and our instinctive capacity for empathy and concern become strangled, turned into a harsh, punitive, and paranoid reaction against the poor.

Political leaders who understand these psychological dynamics need to counteract this attitude—and not only by supporting the growth of the social welfare net, or by advocating for greater economic democracy. Taking Weiss's example, they need to get on the "side" of the patient. The rest of us need to provide grass-roots support for this shift in attitude by advocating for the importance of love and compassion as defining *strengths* in human beings and the "American character." We have to develop ways of critiquing the association of care with weakness in the popular imagination and articulate the legitimate unmet needs of *all* of us to be treated in a caring way.

When a therapist responds with understanding and compassion to her patient's aggressive attempts to hurt others in the same way that he/she has been hurt, the patient feels cared-for, doesn't need to identify so much with an aggressive and/or depriving caretaker, and can become more caring him/herself. Simply put, if I feel entitled to compassion and care, I can more easily give it to others. Media and education strategies that involve directly talking about how our needs to be understood, to be treated with respect, to be protected, and to be cared for are as vital as our need for economic security—and *why*—are essential in changing the political discourse in such a way that our cynicism is *disconfirmed* and our natural motivation to be more open and human is freed up.

The "patient" is us, the citizens. The test we impose on our political leadership is our cynicism and punitive, conservative attitudes. We all have a fear of being humiliated if we express our need for recognition and compassion, as well as our pain at not getting it, and this results in our tendency to want to blame, hurt, and deprive other people in the same way that we have been victimized. Political leaders and activists have to speak to the need that underlies this fear, the need and wish for connection and growth, by carefully developing specific ways to talk about these needs so that people feel safe enough to express them. That means reframing political images and language in such a way that cynicism is equated with weakness, and values such as empathy, compassion, and love are indicative of strength.

Such discourse can create conditions of safety, much as Weiss describes in the clinical situation, in which pathogenic expectations of being embarrassed, exposed, or manipulated if one is vulnerable are disconfirmed. People can thus become freer to face some of their longings and fears and redefine what they think might be possible in the public world.

TIKKUN has taken the lead in this regard, urging people to expand the discourse of the public world to include what it calls their "meaning needs," and legitimating talk about such embarrassing topics as faith, love, compassion, and even God. By elevating spirituality and recognition to the level of political goals, a politics of meaning will elicit all the resistances—the cynicism, passivity, identification with the aggressor, the tendencies to scapegoat—that have so often daunted people interested in working for progressive political change in our society. Yet the rapidity with which the language of a politics of meaning has entered into American political discourse suggests that underlying passions, longings, and sensibilities are being freed up for expression because it is now safer to do so. And this suggests the possibility that the patient is slowly getting better. □

Toward Marriages of Meaning

Martha Mendelsohn

It's almost June, open season for frothy wedding cakes and crates of *grand cru*. Florists anchor orchids and roses into nosegays, dressmakers secure the hems of satin gowns, and hopeful couples everywhere affix their names to the dotted lines of marriage licenses.

Last bridal season, my husband and I were invited to the wedding of the daughter of old friends. Watching the mother of the bride proceed down the aisle on her older son's arm, I admired how her journey toward the altar some twenty-five years before had resulted in several children and a loving, lasting union.

My first marriage, only a few weeks after hers, had led to one child and divorce. At a time when many of my friends received college diplomas one week and marriage licenses the next, it had been easier to get married than not to, even though I suspected that my husband-to-be and I weren't right for each other.

The option of divorce had first occurred to me as I quaked under the *chupah*! What a relief to realize there was that life raft, to know that my vows hadn't committed me to a life sentence, that, if need be, the nuptial knot could be untied nearly as easily as the bows on my wedding dress. Though I'd signed



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a *ketuba*, I'd made no true commitment.

When the predictable problems arose in my first marriage, there was little thought of healing and repair. Everyone knew it was wrong to stay together "for the sake of the children." We, the parents, were entitled to a better deal. My husband and I barely explored marital therapy. We didn't want to work things out, we wanted out!

And at first our son seemed to weather the separation well. Psychologically sophisticated, I had prepared Jimmy weeks in advance, for the trauma of seeing Daddy load his easy-chair onto a U-Haul. Hadn't Jimmy digested my carefully worded explanations, based on the best of Spock and Ginott? And hadn't he witnessed more than his share of ugly exchanges between his father and me? Later, didn't he gain a precocious independence, helping to pack his little weekend suitcase festooned with Wacky-Pack decals, tattered security blanket and all, to go off to visit, every other weekend, via a car service, his father in his new home two hours away?

Despite his initial, superficial adjustment, Jimmy probably suffered more from our divorce than from our marriage. The heated arguments of our cohabitation had nothing on subsequent skirmishes over money—those sine qua nons of many an "amicable" divorce. Or battles over him as top prize in the divorce sweepstakes, where Solomonic *sechel* is forsaken as his true parents repeatedly split the child in two.

Who gets him for Thanksgiving? The first Passover seder? The second? (Two-day Jewish holidays are a godsend, it's true.)

And Jimmy suffered from his father's next two divorces. He'd work on forging a bond with a stepmother (and a step-sibling or two) only to learn that life partner number two or three was only the spouse of the hour. What do here-today-gone-tomorrow marriages teach a child of trust and stability, or the permanence of promises? Insecure children worry too much about themselves to grow into loving, giving adults who will become caring partners in their own marriages, which only perpetuates a domestic policy of marriages that don't last.

All too often divorce reflects a fundamental selfishness and self-interest—a "crisis of meaning" within the spiritual "community of meaning" that each marriage-with-children represents. In a recent *New York* magazine article chronicling the first year of parenthood of several "yupples," one husband and wife seemed more intent on keeping track of how many times each had diapered the baby during the course of a weekend—a chore they were hell-bent on "sharing" equitably—than on the baby's welfare.

In an "Introduction to the Politics of Meaning," his blueprint for building a society based on love and caring, TIKKUN magazine editor Michael Lerner writes: "Friendships are not what they used to be—people just seem to be out for themselves." This could apply to today's marriages, too. Cynicism and despair are accepted attitudes toward matrimony. Last June a *New York Times* marriage-theme crossword puzzle titled "Love - American Style?" had the "dating game" and "love connection" leading straight to "divorce court." Perhaps dating should be less of a game and connections more binding, so that divorce would not be the logical conclusion to filling in the blanks.

At my friend's daughter's wedding, an Episcopal ceremony, the marriage vows were exchanged at two points during the service, serving to underscore their seriousness, their sacramental solemnity. "The hard thing is not to find the right person, but to be the right person," the minister said, before turning to the assembled guests with an urgent request: Would we, the community, "promise to support this couple in a lasting life together?" he asked. We responded with a rousing "We do." I couldn't help wondering what might have happened if my family and friends had been as supportive of my marriage when it hit the rocks as they'd been of my divorce.

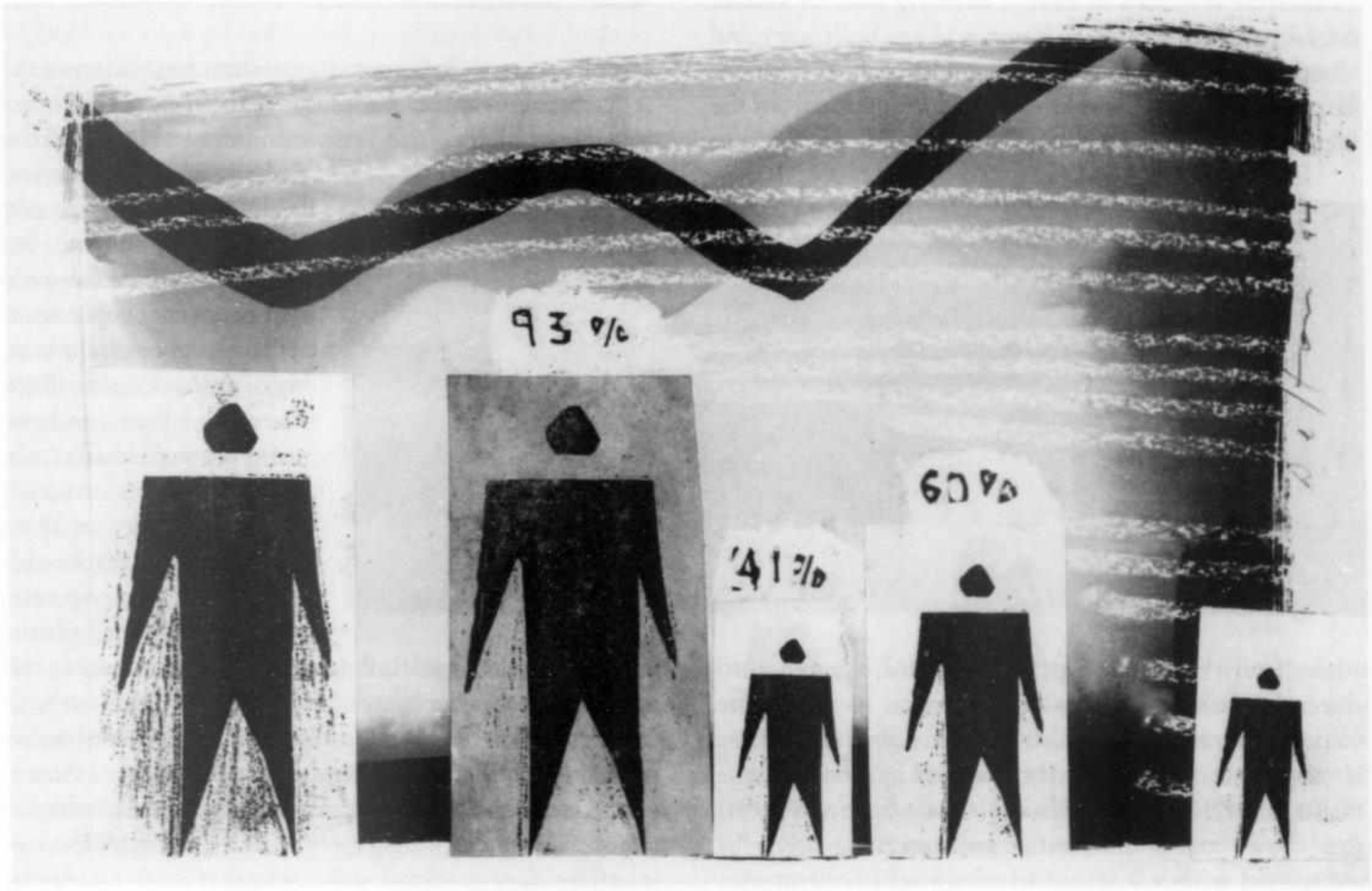
Married couples (in all their contemporary permutations), supported by the community, owe it to their children to avoid jumping ship at the first sign of trouble, to direct their efforts toward mending rather than ending marriages—and not to dodge the responsibility as they might a tossed bridal bouquet. What else are all weddings if not "commitment ceremonies?"

I'm not advocating masochism or martyrdom, or lobbying for greater constraints on divorce. There are circumstances calling for dissolution, terminal instances of cruelty and lack of respect for each other, when it is downright dangerous for two people to stay together. And certainly, I was grateful to have the opportunity to start over, to bring to my second husband, stepdaughter, and second son the spirit of commitment my first marriage lacked.

But anyone disputing the importance of "the sake of our children," or the lasting effects on children of marriages that don't last, should have been there last fall as I watched my son pack up his bags—for law school, this time. On top of a shoebox filled with souvenirs was a photograph torn from my wedding album: his father and I, feasting on cake and champagne, before rushing off to our unexamined life together. Though I've provided Jimmy with a kind and sensitive stepfather, like so many children of divorce—like his stepsister, who harbors similar images—in his heart of hearts he's never abandoned that picture, that dream: his parents together, despite their differences, till death do they part. For his sake, I'm sorry we couldn't make the dream happen. □

Memo to Clinton
Clinton and Education
Policies Without Meaning

Svi Shapiro



Even by the conventional criteria of education professionals, the Clinton administration's first-year efforts at education reform have been modest. This is not to say that some of your priorities are unimportant. Certainly, for example, the shift in emphasis toward early childhood needs is welcome and overdue. We have come to recognize the United States' shameful record in immunization against childhood diseases, and the crying need for more resources and a more systematic approach to addressing the public health crisis of young children. In addition, we welcome the attempt to direct more resources to the funding of Headstart programs, given the increasing impoverishment of America's children. Your initiative to make college loans more available is also welcome. We are supportive of Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich's attempts to establish effective job-training programs. And we appreciate the administration's proposals to encourage more flexibility and innovation at the local level in teaching and educational programs, since the dead hand of educational bureaucracy is widely recognized for its enervating effect on reform and experimentation.

Your proposals represent a significant shift in outlook, if not in outlays. The actual increases in funding in education proposed by your administration are, in fact, disappointingly small. The 1994 budget included only a small increase in discretionary spending over the Bush administration's last allocations. This year's budget will

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provide a modest increase in these funds (although it is true that education would be one of only a handful of agencies to receive *any* increase). Yet it is clear that this administration is concerned about redressing the social neglect of the Reagan/Bush era, and we support this greater sensitivity to the needs of the young, the recognition of the gross inequities that exist in the funding of school programs and resources, and your attention to families' growing difficulty meeting the costs of higher education.

Despite this turn in mood, rhetoric and, to a more limited degree, resources, however, I am both wary and disappointed with your emerging approach to both the language and policies of education. However serious the crisis of jobs in this country is—and you rightly have



identified the erosion of meaningful, secure, and decently rewarded work—your attempt to define the value of education primarily in *vocationally related* terms is misguided. As Tom Hayden stressed in a recent issue of TIKKUN ("Running in Place," January/February 1994) the core of your administration's reform pragmatism "is subsumed within a larger ideology which promotes corporate expansion. 'Making us competitive again' is only the current slogan of this worldview." According to this view, clearly articulated in the writings of Labor Secretary Reich, the core of America's problems is the failure of "our" corporations to be effective players in the world market. Reich's solution is vigorous state action to lay the human groundwork for a rejuvenated American economy. This means greatly expanded government initiatives and investment in research and development, and in education, oriented to what the economists call the enhancement of "human capital," including development of apprenticeship programs and greater investments in vocational training.

The most alarming feature of your approach to education is the greatly increased emphasis on the notion that public education exists to service the needs of corporate America, *that education is preeminently about preparing kids for the job market*. Of course, this view of the purpose of schooling was not invented by Reich or other members of your administration. From its inception, public education has always been seen, and served, as a training ground for employers concerned about prospective employees having the right technical skills and, even more important, the right attitudes to authority and alienating work. But it is disappointing and dismaying that your administration is attempting to relegitimate this educational philosophy by framing the public discourse of education in economic terms.

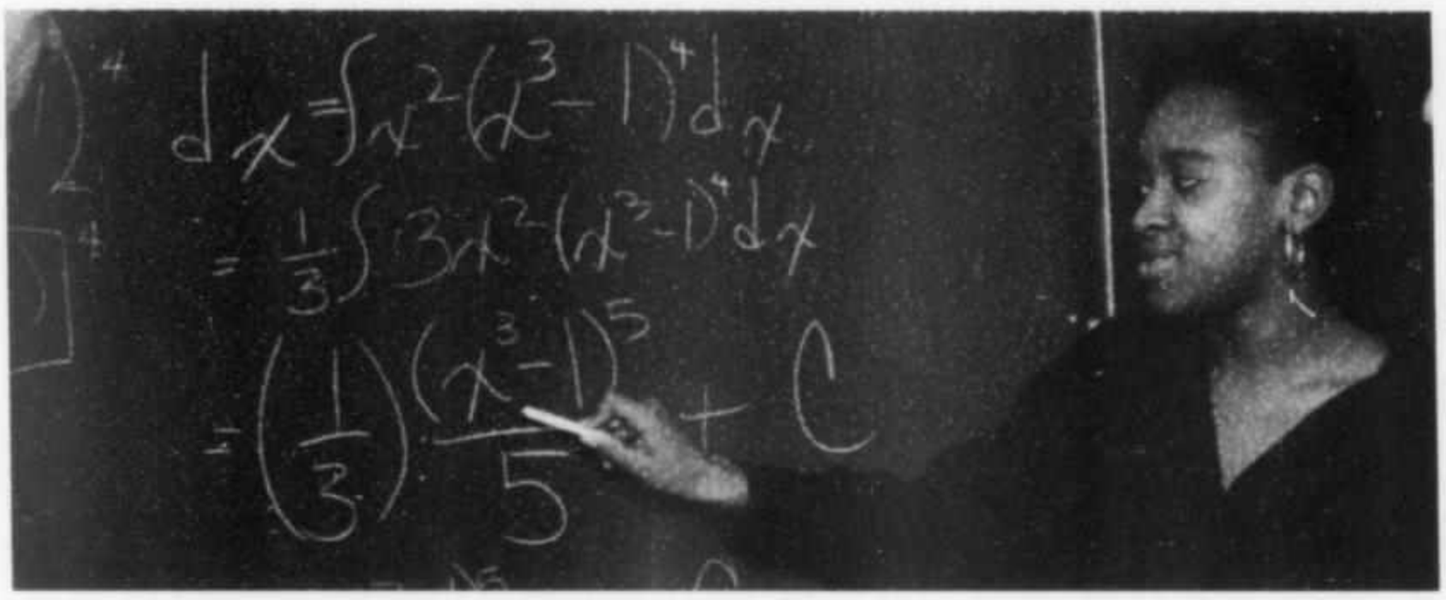
It is easy to forget, in the constant reiteration of this discourse and its association with images of electronic super-highways and new computer technologies, that there is another American tradition and language concerning the purpose and meaning of education—one that connects people, especially the young, to the making of a democratic culture. It is about creating and nurturing the individual's capabilities to live critically aware, humanly sensitive, and socially responsible lives. In the press of powerful class interests, racism, and the widespread influence of positivist values, this paradigm has never been dominant in the public struggle to define the goals of education. It does persist nonetheless in the ideals, and sometimes the practices, of American educators. Sadly, there is little room in the ideological framework of expanding markets and corporate development for an educational philosophy that might emphasize this democratic tradition.

It is disappointing and dismaying that your administration is framing the public discourse of education in economic terms.

Let me remind you, however, that there does not have to be an unbridgeable divide between work preparation and democratic education. Indeed, some of the most interesting recent ideas about the rejuvenation of the American workplace have emphasized the importance of allowing employees to assume much more decision-

making power. Experiments in decentralized management, quality circles, job rotation, and cooperative decision-making have questioned the traditional, hierarchical form of corporate control as the means to higher productivity. Where workers share in the power over the work process there are clear gains in product quality, and other beneficial results such as reductions in absenteeism.

The value of more democratically structured workplaces suggests that public education must do more than teach workers how to use machines or to master technology. Our schools need to educate individuals in cooperative work, collective responsibility, negotiation of priorities, and conflict resolution. In such settings, workers will need to consider critical economic and human issues that include the environmental impact of particular production decisions, the effects on workers' security and labor of the adoption of specific technologies, or the consequences of investment decisions on employees and their communities.



If you are to take the possibility of more democratically managed workplaces seriously, you must urge the adoption of a different approach to decision-making in schools. Schools will need to become what John Dewey many years ago called "laboratories of democracy"—places where students of all ages begin to experience empowerment in their everyday lives. In this sense, work-related education becomes not simply job training, but a genuine form of critical, cultural education where the broad human, social, economic, and environmental consequences of one's work can be, and often are, in question.

And to take seriously the notion of school as a place where democracy is learned—not merely through books but as a matter of experience—means to confront how thoroughly disempowering today's typical American schools are. Contrary to our myths, our public schools are not places where young people learn what it means to live and work in a democratic environment.

The linchpin of "Goals 2000"—the major education bill of your administration in 1994—is the push for national standards and methods of assessment throughout public education. Yet nothing is more likely to reinforce the uncritical and uncreative character of public education than this added emphasis on so-called "performance standards." Such an approach to education will, in all likelihood, exacerbate the trend toward conformist teaching in the nation's schools. It is destined to increase the concern with tests and testing among teachers and educational administrators, while further increasing the levels of boredom and alienation already so pervasive among students. This is the latest consequence of the educational reform movement that began in the early 1980s with the publication of the report, "A Nation At Risk," which blamed America's economic decline on failing schools. It has, as a result, managed to turn public education into what education critic David Purpel has dubbed "public evaluation."

Increasingly, schools and schooling are dominated by a concern with testing. During the 1980s and '90s, the number of standardized tests administered to students during their pre-college years has increased by almost 400 percent. The laudable notion of public accountability in education has been reduced to the obsessive and destructive charting of test numbers. Teachers are compelled to "teach to the test" in order to ensure their jobs. Not surprisingly, the result for teachers is work without creative, imaginative, or intellectual content. Like many other forms of contemporary labor, teaching has been progressively deskilled, as education administrators and policymakers insist on the use of what radical scholar Michael Apple has called "teacher-proof" curricula that will mechanistically produce the desired results.

As we have striven to keep up with the Japanese, we have placed ever-greater emphasis on the competitive nature of education; one result is an obsessive concern with how students, schools, and their administrative units are doing vis-à-vis one another. As the language of performance and accountability in education pervades our schools, educators, parents, and kids focus on test scores, ranking, and the need to get ahead.

And, of course, there will be no surprises in such a system about which segments of the population will

come out on top. Educational achievement in this sense has always mirrored—and legitimated—our grossly inequitable social structure. Vast differences in the material and cultural resources available to different groups will ensure that success in schools reflects the deep inequalities between races and classes in American society.

The daily grind of school subjects is, to a large extent, existentially without meaning or purpose. Much of what goes on in the classroom is disconnected from the lives, interests, dreams, fears, anxieties, and concerns of young people.

Viewed through the prism of hopes, expectations, and opportunities, America's children attend schools that can only be described as worlds apart. Family socioeconomic background is the primary predictor of educational achievement. Increasingly, minority children attend schools that are physically dilapidated, overcrowded, with the greatest problems of teacher turnover, gangs, and violence. Your administration's emphasis on national standards will heighten the degree to which education is understood as a contest for a limited supply of rewards; school will become a place that emphasizes winning and losing—getting ahead of one's neighbor, whether that neighbor is across the street, the town, or across the world.

But beyond the moral implication of this increasing emphasis on testing and performance in the discourse of schooling, you should be concerned about its equally deleterious effects on pedagogy. Tom Popkewitz, a radical critic of schools, is probably correct when he observes that more and more power is being given to teachers to decide less and less. The attempt to authorize national performance standards across the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools represents a continuation of a 1990 Bush administration initiative calling for the establishment of "world-class" standards for what students should know and be able to do in five core subject areas. Four years later you have proposed setting up a national panel that would review and certify the standards in these and additional areas (the arts, civics, English, foreign language, geography, history, and science).

This effort comes at a time when many states are introducing similar policies. At the last count, at least forty-five states are planning, developing, or implementing new curriculum standards. In their present form, the content and evaluation standards often run to hundreds of pages, and elementary teachers teaching several subjects would be confronted with thousands of pages of regulations and standards. The job of translating these standards into the everyday work of teaching would likely fall to curriculum supervisors at the state or district level—a paradoxical development, given the parallel attempt in public education to shift more administrative power to classroom teachers. Talk of empowering teachers rings hollow when the very heart of the teaching process—the design and conceptualization of the curriculum—is removed from teachers' purview. Decisions about what to teach, when to teach, and how to evaluate students' work fall under the control of one's supervisors. For those of us who argue that schools need to be places that model democratic values and nurture a democratic culture, this trend signals an antithetical authoritarian and dehumanizing view of education. It is not only teachers who suffer as a result of these policies. Study after study in recent years has noted the pervasive boredom and alienation of students toward the ostensible primary purpose of schools—academic instruction. This alienation is reflected in the popular culture—just about every recent popular movie and television show depicting adolescent life conveys the disdain, irrelevance, and meaninglessness that kids feel toward school. For those of us who watch these portrayals, humor and fascination is tempered by great sadness about what they reveal of kids' cynicism toward learning and the school experience.

Yet their cynicism is easily understandable. In a world in which a 1991 federal survey of U.S. high school students reported that 27 percent had "thought seriously" about committing suicide (including 8 percent who had made an attempt), the daily grind of school subjects is, to a large extent, existentially without meaning or purpose. Much of what goes on in the classroom is disconnected from the lives, interests, dreams, fears, anxieties, and concerns of young people. School is felt to be the real venue of trivial pursuit.

Without the intensifying drumbeat of warnings about the current job market and the fate of those who do not possess the necessary credentials to enter the competition, how many students would actually spend time in school? If we actually measured the levels of school drop-outs to include not only the third or so who physically drop out, but also those who mentally and emotionally do so, we might have to recognize the utter futility of policies and talk about higher levels of

(Continued on p. 90)

Life in the Parentheses

Michael Fontana

In the text of society, the panhandler is parenthetical. The economy moves around him and over him, like armies through mountains or deserts. He is an obstruction to the order of business. Executives must look him in the eye as they pass, sense his fingertips nearing their coatsleeves, contend with his presence in the periphery of their motion.

The day of a business person is one continuous run-on sentence, one breathless monologue. The parenthetical statement is what such a person would wish against. A parenthesis conveys a pause, a whisper, a breath. There is something fearful about taking a breath in front of someone who panhandles. That human hand extended, that human voice which whispers, those strained human eyes, become a barrier. We are not they. They are not us. There are too many unspoken sentences between. Words pile up like corpses at our feet, so that is where we stare as we pass.

Much as a diligent editor will reach for a red pen or eraser to eradicate parenthetical statements that burden a document, community leaders attempt to hush the whispered messages of dread concealed in the rags and tatters of a person who panhandles. The popular media even uses the term "panhandler" the way racists use "nigger" for African-Americans. It dehumanizes the person in question so that it is easier to look at him as a "problem" to be dealt with either by the "objective" realm of science (innumerable "scientific" counts of homeless people as a way of postponing action) or when that fails, by the not-so-objective realm of random violence.

Homeless people and those who panhandle have been beaten by paramedics in New Jersey, ambushed with baseball bats by merchants in Philadelphia, and stabbed to death by teenagers in California. These acts of violence have been met with a collective sigh of near-boredom from the general public, as whites in an earlier era responded to lynchings and beatings of Blacks in the deep South.

Other official responses have included sweeps of people who panhandle from sites where "revitalization" is taking place (a new civic center in Nashville, new shopping malls in Seattle and Columbus, downtown development in Cincinnati, Atlanta, and other cities), or sweeps of "vagrants" from public parks (Tompkins Square Park in New York City), or bulldozing encampments (in Los Angeles, Miami, and outside of Tucson). Certainly, there are more discreet measures, like Berkeley's vouchers for those who panhandle, and more vicious measures, like Fort Lauderdale's proposal to spray dumpsters with rat poison, suggested by a public official who found it offensive to observe "vagrants" digging through garbage for food. In between, a variety of laws and ordinances have been enacted and proposed to meet the perceived, whispered threat: anti-loitering laws, anti-sleeping laws, anti-begging laws, anti-aggressive speech laws, anti-vagrancy laws. Laws designed to keep you and your tattered parenthetical intrusion out of the way.

In other words, keep it moving. Even though you have no place to go because the shelters are full and

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there's a recession on; even though you have no job because you don't have a lot of skills and even if you did you'd have to compete with all the white-collar workers who've lost theirs. You must continue your motion because, after all, your life is like a sentence, and when it doesn't proceed in a straight and linear fashion then something might appear wrong with the construction of all the sentences, until the entire American document appears badly written and in dire need of revision.

We would rather edit the landscape around us instead. The *Columbus Dispatch*, for example, prints a huge article about the "vagrant" problem because "proper citizens" "perceive" that "these people" are spending too much of their time and money on drink and sex. Indeed, the sexual activity of poor people, one of the only pleasurable escapes within their means, seems a particular obsession of "proper citizens," almost a parenthesis within the parenthesis of poverty. Hence proposals to force women on welfare to undergo mandatory Norplant implants and men on welfare to undergo mandatory vasectomies. Our "leaders" assume that "these people" might be having entirely too much fun living on $600 a year welfare for single adults or about $4,000 a year welfare for a mother with two children.



We are always ready to arm ourselves against a "perceived" threat. We will not, however, arm ourselves against real threats. Thus we have police officers at the doors of churches and in plain-clothes circulating on the downtown summer streets to guard against the "perceived" threat of panhandlers, while at night in Over-The-Rhine, on the very corner where my office sits, there are open drug transactions each and every day; or in Mount Auburn, there were drive-by shootings two summers ago; or in Corryville three summers ago, we had gangs of youths prowling the streets and beating people up. Perhaps these incidents, these neighborhoods, require a standing guard as well.

Perhaps hundreds of thousands of people discovered all at once during the 1980s the pure excitement of life on the streets.

Maybe we should even hire guards to guard against the guards, because not only have we seen the same sorry videotape of Los Angeles police officers beating Rodney King, or officers in New York City wilding against gay men, but even here in Cincinnati, police officers have displayed a habit over the years of shooting unarmed mental patients to death.

I might be foolish not to perceive a threat from those who ask me for change. Perhaps I rely too much on the homeless gentleman who sits silently on the steps in front of my apartment at night, dreadlocks down his back. Or Sonny, who panhandles around Fountain Square now that his General Assistance benefits have been cut. Or Tiny, who stands at 15th and Elm during the day and sometimes hits me up for change, and even though I know he will drink with it I still give it over. Tiny in particular moves me because I know that anywhere else

(Continued on p. 93)

Which Molecule Has the Dignity?
An Encounter with A.J. Heschel

Joshua Halberstam

If a poet and a pious man should confer and exchange views, the poet would say, "All he lives, I say," and the pious man would know, "All he says, I live."
A.J. Heschel

When I was twenty, Zvi and I cut the afternoon session at Colel Chaim Berlin and took the train to meet Abraham Joshua Heschel.

To 99 percent of the world, the difference between the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and the post-graduate yeshiva we attended was but a hair's breadth, but to the rabbis and students at our talmudic academy the division was oceanic. Disputes over ideological borders are no less intense than battles over geographical turf; each side views the other as irredentists, illegitimately laying claim to authenticity. JTS was enemy territory, headquarters of the craven distorters of true Judaism.

Of these traitors, Heschel was especially iniquitous—he grew up better and knew better. Only Saul Lieberman evoked greater anger in the yeshiva world. Heschel could be dismissed as a soft romantic, and not a serious scholar in the one subject that really mattered, i.e., the Talmud. Lieberman was another story. He had studied in one of the premier Lithuanian *yeshivot*, married into a prestigious family of talmudic scholars, and his magisterial work on the Jerusalem Talmud could not be denied. Lieberman was the genuine article, an authentic *talmid chachum*. Speaking of Lieberman, my teachers would lament, "So personally religious, so learned, and yet where does he work? At Shechter's Seminary. And why? Money and prestige. For that he sold his soul."

Ours was an adventure of intellectual mischief, a peculiar mischief that, alas, disappears with the passing of youth.

Small differences blur as you gain distance from them, and I had already traveled far afield from my yeshiva, Heschel, and religious metaphysics. I had discovered a new bible, A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*. To be sure, logical positivism was no longer in 1967 the pristine, swashbuckling metaphysics killer that it was decades earlier; even its supporters acknowledged the flaws in Ayer's manifesto. But the slender volume articulated what I, with the condescending conviction of a twenty-year-old, took as basic truth. My conversion, of course, was purely doxastic—violations of orthodox practice was something else entirely. I was, nonetheless, intoxicated with my new lithe, lean, and mean philosophy and prepared to do battle.

"What will we say to him at the outset?" we asked each other all the way from Brooklyn to the Upper West Side. We had no appointment, and although Heschel wasn't a household name, he was an intellectual celebrity and you didn't just barge in on someone of that stature. Our anxiety was compounded by the fact that neither of us had ever been to JTS before. Our first reaction upon arriving there was surprise—the men wore yarmulkes—but the initial familiarity soon dissipated at the sight of women studying talmudic tractates. And although we wore our black hats at a rakish tilt, we fooled no one, least of all ourselves—this was not our province.

I was brave with the gab, but not with the fist, and counted on Zvi to knock on Heschel's door; we agreed that I would speak first. Zvi knocked and after a few moments Heschel appeared, looking even more impressive in person than in the photographs I'd seen on the jackets of his books.

"Yes?" he asked, clearly not expecting anyone.

"We'd like to talk with you."

"Yes, what about?" he replied.

"About Judaism," I answered, trying to sound provocative.

"About Judaism," he repeated, capturing my tone precisely. "Well, come in then. I'm in the middle of

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reading a letter from Thomas Merton. Do you know who he is?" We did. Zvi was a fan of Merton and had recently lent me his copy of *The Seven Story Mountain*. "If you don't mind, I'll read the letter aloud," Heschel said. "It's about the snow at his monastery."

For the next few minutes Heschel sat at his desk and read to us Merton's serene description of the snowflakes blanketing his Trappist retreat. So this is what one master theologian writes about to another—snowflakes! The letter was extraordinarily gentle, and Heschel read it that way.

"Well then," Heschel asked when he had finished, "who are you?" Zvi offered his name, and when I revealed my mine, he raised his eyebrows, as I expected he would. "From which Halberstam?" he wanted to know and nodded his head when I told him who my grandfathers were.

Abraham Joshua Heschel was my cousin. Not a close cousin, but not as distant as a "we're related somehow" either. In our family, the specifics of consanguinity didn't matter anyway—we were *rebbishe einaklich*—grandchildren of Chassidic Rebbes. For generations, scions of dynastic Chassidic families intermarried so that by now we were all related to one another in a labyrinth of matings (a genetic zoo, my biologist friend calls it). My parents, for example, were second cousins four different ways and third cousins some nine ways. Abraham Joshua Heschel was a *rebbishe einakle*, a descendant of the revered Chassidic Rebbe Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel of Apt. So am I.

Heschel was clearly intrigued with us—why had we come to see him? I had come to argue. Indeed, I spent a good part of my waking hours arguing. During the day, I sat across the table from my Talmud partner, my *chavrusa*, and exchanged analyses of text. We litigated for plaintiffs and defendants, for Maimonides' exegesis versus Nachmanides' exegesis, for our own speculation rather than the fellow's at the next table. Others may regard *pilpul*, the distinctive hermeneutics of traditional Talmud study, as a paradigm of spurious casuistry, but to us, nothing compared to the pleasures of an afternoon's debate over two lines of a commentary on a commentary.

In the evening, I brought this love of argument to my philosophy classes at Brooklyn College. Drawing fine distinctions within a paragraph of Rashi or the Vilna Gaon wasn't that different, and certainly no easier, than dissecting a piece of Kant or Wittgenstein. I had come to make my positivist case with Heschel. The Merton letter had sapped my litigious drive and made the going tough at first, but the argumentative spirit soon returned and I warmed to my presentation.

The positivist's weapon of choice is Occam's razor. Unlike the weak-willed continental philosophers who clutter their universe with metaphysical debris, we were ontological minimalists, never postulating more than needed to explain the facts. Wielding the verification principle, we eagerly sliced the weeds of inflated, nonconfirmable claims. Heschel's writings about the ineffable were precisely the sort of propositions that positivists found so utterly meaningless.

With a brazenness that embarrasses me now when I recall it, I lashed out at Heschel's Cartesian dualism. "Why preserve a notion of a mind or soul?" I asked. Then I proffered my well-rehearsed plea for metaphysical materialism: The concept of a mind is nonverifiable and explains nothing that can't, in principle, be explained within a purely materialist account. "The fact is," I insisted with artless solemnity, "human beings are just complex machines, complex molecular arrangements."

Heschel looked me in the eyes, rose from his desk, and walked over to me. When he reached the chair I was sitting on, he raised his foot. "All right," he said, "then I will kick you. I don't mind kicking molecules." He put his foot back down on the floor. "But I won't" he continued. "I won't kick you, and do you know why? Because you are a person and a person has dignity. But tell me, please—which molecule has the dignity? Why don't I throw you out of the room? I don't mind throwing out a bag of molecules. Ah, because of dignity. But show me, show me. Where is the dignity?"

Whenever I think about the mind-body problem, I still see Heschel's foot poised in mid-air, inches from my side. I still hear his Polish accent, glazed with the articulation of German schooling, asking me, "Vich molecule hes de dignity?" Years of professional philosophy have armed me with a more sophisticated response than the chastened shrug I could barely manage back then in his office. Adept materialists can deal with Heschel's obvious objections; a defense of dualism was not the chief lesson I learned that day. Heschel taught me something far more philosophically substantial.

In every philosophical discussion one side carries the onus of proof. Heschel insisted that human experience, not theory, shifts the burden from one philosophical shoulder to the other. The coarse materialism that I espoused in argument was divorced from how I actually viewed my life. And while that estrangement was not, in itself, a fatal flaw, (we deceive ourselves so often about so many of our beliefs), it did mean that if I was

(Continued on p. 85)

The Tikkun Conference of Liberal and Progressive Jews

Constituting the Tikkun Community

Jewish Renewal
Our Current Situation

Nan Fink

Recently, I met a friend for dinner in a Manhattan restaurant. I quickly spotted something I wanted on the menu, but my friend was in a quandary: Should I have this? Or that? But maybe the pasta isn't so good here, and so forth.

Noticing that I had closed my menu, she said, "If you were Jewish, you would still be looking."

I was shocked by her comment. Although it's been a decade since I converted, I am still taken aback when people reveal that they don't *really* think of me as Jewish.

"But I am a Jew," I said angrily to my friend. "Remember?"

"Well, you know," she shrugged. And I did know what she meant: that there is something different about me—I was raised in another milieu. The air was different, the density, the colors, the sounds, and this is what shaped me. Yet I went on, way beyond my family, through years of questioning and considering, and studying and worrying, and finally became a Jew. Let me tell you, I've made a lot of changes in my life. But none has nearly the weight, nearly the dislocation, that this has had for me. It has brought everything in my life, all my relationships, into question, for the better in the long run. I wouldn't have it otherwise, but it still has been very difficult. All the stereotypes are heaped on me as a convert, and the worst has been existing on the fine line of Jewish identity, where I am seen as Jewish by the outside world, but inside, among people who are born Jewish, it isn't so clear.

There was a time after my conversion when I did everything I could to "pass." If people began to talk about their childhood experiences, or their summers at Camp Ramah, or their memories of their grandmother's Jewish cooking, I immediately stopped talking. I didn't exactly hide my past, but I never told my stories. I was a cipher, and this was painful, a loss of self. Yet it is frightening to risk rejection, even if it is only a subtle moving away.

I speak about this for a reason: I want to sensitize you to my experience. The number of converts is growing—there are now more than 200,000 of us, and each of us has made an important commitment to be a Jew. We've done this not because we're stupid, or because we don't know about anti-Semitism, or because we want to hook somebody into marriage, or because we've suspended our critical judgment. We've converted because, despite its faults and its failures, Judaism has something of very great value that we want in our lives.

There is another reason why I speak about my experience. Sometimes I feel marginal in this world of Jews, but then I realize that so many other Jews experience the same thing, even though they have been born into the culture.

I'm thinking now about a friend of mine who's a secular Jew. It's not that he wants to become religious, but he feels that something is missing. He wants to "have more Jewishness in his life." So, should he take a course or become involved? He probably won't, because he feels ashamed. Shame on him for not already knowing Jewish history, or how to do a seder, or whatever. He was born Jewish, after all, and he's very smart, and he should have learned these things in his childhood.

And then there's my other friend who wants her spiritual life to be congruent with her feminist beliefs. But where does she go for that in the Jewish world? She has no idea, it all seems like an impenetrable mystery, and so she's done what so many Jewish friends of mine have done: She's become a Buddhist. And these are just two other people—we could go on and on with our stories, each of us, because there are so

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many of us who feel like we're on the fringe.

Five years ago here in New York I spoke at the first TIKKUN conference. A lot has happened in all our lives since then. We've had innumerable discussions and many of us have been doing what we can about the terrible problems that plague us—the homelessness, the poverty, the sexism, the racism, the violence. We've often felt discouraged and yet... maybe, maybe. There's the Clintons, and the exciting breakthrough in the Middle East. We're living in a time of hope, we say cautiously.

More and more people are taking on the Jewish tradition as their own and insisting that it expand, change, move into line with progressive values.

And so we are together once again, some of us, most of us not at all sure where we fit in the Jewish scheme of things. Whether it is because we don't know as much as we think we should, or because we're angry at the tradition, or because only one of our parents is Jewish, or none, or because there seems to be no place for us... the list goes on. We're ambivalent, unsure, each of us finding our way, wishing for something more. It's never settled, the choice is never over.

We have inherited a Judaism that has been dead in many ways for us. Americanized beyond interest, it carries the vestiges of a patriarchal tradition that is no longer acceptable. We turn our backs on it, yet we cannot leave it alone; we cannot let it be. We come together to criticize, to discover, to fantasize, to analyze, to breathe new life into this something that holds us together.

We are held by a bond, and we can feel the vitality in our community. It was here at that first TIKKUN conference five years ago, and it is here again today. It is present whenever people like ourselves get together.

In centuries past, Judaism has gone through waves of revitalization. Just when the culture and the religion appear to be settling into a state of stasis, something happens, an influx of strangers, a prophet, a surge of great interest, a movement. Although in retrospect this something is not surprising, at the time it is experienced as a marvel. It shakes things up, so that they are never again the same.

There is a lot of talk these days about Jewish renewal. It's an amorphous term, one that has been coined to describe the spirit of change that exists on the fringes of American Judaism. Jewish renewal is a movement, and it is gaining strength.

If you want to know where Jewish renewal is taking place, I can tell you that it is here. We are part of a wave of revitalization like the ones of the past. Jewish renewal is us as women and men who insist that the tradition no longer be sexist; us as individuals who insist on bringing our progressive values to Judaism; us as political beings who act on the injustices we see in this world; us as gays and lesbians who no longer allow ourselves to be discriminated against; us as converts who insist on being seen in our complexity; us as people who care deeply about our tradition.

Jewish renewal has everything to do with politics in the United States, and everything to do with the political struggle in the Middle East. We know it, and we insist on it. We cut across traditional lines, mixing politics and culture and religion and spirituality. We take what we learn in the larger world—such as the insights of feminism and the political savvy of the gay and lesbian movement—and we bring this understanding to the Jewish community. We insist that it pay attention and change so that it becomes a breathing, living organism that provides meaning and sustenance for us all.

It's wonderful that we are here together, and we need this for ourselves. But there is a lot that must be done for this movement of Jewish renewal to flourish. For those of us who are secular and have stayed away from Judaism and the Jewish world, it might mean opening ourselves up to greater contact. Learning. Speaking out. Or getting involved in some of the organizations that embody progressive Jewish values, such as American Friends of Peace Now, or Jews For Racial and Economic Justice, or Shomrei Adamah, or The Shefa Fund, or The Jewish Fund for Justice. Or starting something of your own, such as a progressive Jewish effort to stop the violence in Bosnia. Or becoming part of the effort to promote a politics of meaning.

And for those of us who want to be involved in a non-sexist, progressive spiritual community, they exist in growing numbers. But they need support, and new groups must be started if we are to create a Judaism that is in line with what we say we believe. And the non-sexist ritual and midrash that is being written needs to reach more people. And the wonderful work of feminists like Judith Plaskow and Alicia Ostriker and Esther Broner, who help us think about the tradition in new ways. And the Jewish renewal publications: TIKKUN, certainly, and *Bridges*, and *Lillith*. And the projects in the arts, such as the

(Continued on p. 86)

ISRAEL AFTER HEBRON

Settler Violence and the Rape of Judaism

Michael Lerner



After the massacre in the Ibrahim Mosque, Hebron, wounded worshipers are evacuated.

Are you surprised that the massacre of dozens of Palestinians as they prayed at the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron was followed by acts of revenge including the terrorist attacks in Afula, Hadera, and perhaps more by the time you read this?

Baruch Goldstein would not have been surprised. That was precisely the point of his attack. If right-wing settlers know that they can manipulate public opinion in Israel by acts of violence against Palestinians that lead to Palestinian acts of reprisal, we can be sure that there will be much more of this ahead.

Who can blame any Jew for outrage at the acts of Palestinian violence—our anguished response to pictures of Israelis bloodied by terrorist bombs or axes or guns? Our people have suffered too much—we have a right to demand that these disgusting attacks be stopped immediately. And yet, the most effective way to stop them is to end the Occupation. It is precisely because we really *care* about Jewish lives that we want to stop the settlers from continuing to provoke violence.

Most settlers are not to blame. They moved to the West Bank because the Likud offered low-cost, high-quality, suburban-style housing, and they would move back if they could obtain comparable housing without financial loss within the Green Line. For that reason we recently sponsored a *New York Times* ad urging the U.S. government to earmark loan-guaranteed

We Condemn Palestinian Violence

We unequivocally condemn the vicious murder of Israelis in terrorist attacks in Afula and Hadera. We are heartened by the fact that so many Palestinian leaders in Israel condemn these atrocious acts (though we were disgusted at Yasser Arafat's equivocation and failure to condemn these acts forthrightly). We demand that Palestinian authorities take steps to uncover and punish those forces within the Hamas who assisted in these and other terrorist acts.

funds for the purpose of resettling these settlers, but there are an estimated twenty-five thousand, possibly more, of the settlers who moved to the West Bank because they believed that the conquest of this land by the Israeli army was an act that showed the will of God, and that it would be a sin and a catastrophe comparable to the destruction of the First or Second Temple for Israel to withdraw from this land.

Most of the religiously motivated settlers would not participate in acts of cold-blooded murder, but many have made clear that they would support the use of force to displace the more than one million Palestinians who remain on the West Bank.

Since 1988, settlers have killed sixty-two Palestinians. Chances are that if you've been relying on American Jewish newspapers or the mainstream press for your information, you don't know much about these deaths, because they are considered business as usual on the West Bank. According to the Israeli Human Rights Organization, B'Tselem, in four of the cases Israelis who opened fire were in mortal danger, in three other cases they knowingly put themselves in danger, and in six cases there is insufficient information to establish the level of danger being faced. In the other forty-nine cases Israeli civilians killed Palestinians in situations *not* involving mortal danger.

The B'Tselem report goes on to describe what Palestinians often face:

> Using weapons supplied by the IDF individuals and organized groups initiate operations against Palestinians and their property in order to intimidate, deter, and punish. In many cases these are planned operations, initiated and carefully planned by groups of settlers who are backed by the established leadership of the settlements.
>
> The operations initiated by settlers against Palestinians include entering villages, shooting at houses and solar water heaters, sabotage and torching of vehicles, violent disturbances, blocking roads, smashing windows, destroying crops and uprooting trees, harassment of merchants and stands in the markets, including destruction of their wares and so forth.
>
> The many rampages and other acts of violence by settlers against the Palestinians and especially the organized character of many of these raids attest to the fact that these are no merely criminal acts; they constitute ideologically and politically motivated violence.

Commenting on Goldstein, the B'Tselem report said that his act was "the consequence of the on-going anti-Palestinian incitement, and another link in the chain of violent acts perpetrated by settlers against Palestinians including frequent illegal use of firearms which for the most part went unpunished."

Despite the fact that most American Jews know nothing about all this, because the Jewish media systematically censor this kind of information, and gave no serious attention to these attacks when they happened or to the B'Tselem report when it was issued in March, many other people all around the world *do* know. For hundreds of millions of people this settler violence has become the public face of Judaism to the world and the meaning of "the Jewish state."

The settlers exist within a larger community of Jews who have created what I call "Settler Judaism." Here are some of its prominent tenets: Since the world is against us, abandoned us during the Holocaust, and hypocritically condemns us for violence more sharply than it criticizes others, we don't have to live according to a universal morality. God gave us the West Bank as our eternal inheritance and we have the right to do whatever is necessary to hold onto it. Anyone who trusts Palestinians or assumes that they have the same kinds of human needs and motivations as Jews is naive and likely to endanger the Jewish people. Indeed our fellow Jews are betraying us by calling for an exchange of land for peace. They are traitors and may be as dangerous to our future as the Arabs. The obligations to pursue justice and love your neighbor apply only to our fellow Jews not to non-Jews, certainly not to Palestinians and maybe not even to the Jews who advocate the peace process.

Settler Judaism is a rape of the morally and spiritually sensitive versions of Judaism that have predominated through most of Jewish history and which our generation is seeking to strengthen through the process that we call Jewish renewal.

Judaism came into existence in a world already dominated by empires and oppressive class structures. Its message was that God was on the side of the oppressed, that YHVH was the god of slaves and that slavery could be overthrown. The cruelty and pain that existed in the world need not be dominant—there was another force in the universe, God, who loved mercy and compassion, who freed the captives, redeemed the humble, sided with the powerless, helped the poor, and cared more about one's righteousness than one's physical strength. Jews knew that the world operated according to the rules of the powerful but our job was to testify to the possibility of a different logic for the world.

It is a tragedy that even those in the organized Jewish community who do not actively support Settler

(Continued inside back cover)

ISRAEL AFTER HEBRON

In the Wake of the Hebron Massacre

Wendy Orange

I. Hebron, March 30

From a bucolic *moshav* outside Jerusalem, I'm phoning for an Arab taxi to begin my journey into the Wild West Bank. Always honest about who I write for, I suspect that after a month of terrible hostilities between Israeli soldiers and the Palestinian population it will be unwise to mention the Hebrew word "*tikkun*" as I go among those in Hebron I've never met. My friend Daphna, a seasoned journalist, agrees, sitting at her breakfast table as I call to make arrangements.



Rina Castelnuovo

"But TIKKUN is written on my press card," I remember in alarm. "Fine," she says calmly. "Pronounce it 'tycoon'; say it's a human rights magazine." "Tycoon," I muse aloud, "a human rights magazine for the very wealthy," as we both laugh. For these days, no one enters the West Bank without acute anxiety.

Riding in the back of Yassir's cab, I survey the lonely hillsides above Hebron. We're traveling the back roads to circumvent Israeli checkpoints, since Hebron is a "closed military area," forbidden to journalists. Yassir adroitly navigates the steep dirt mountain roads that circle above the city. We're surrounded by farm country. Olive, grape, and plum orchards alternate with flocks of goats and sheep, which clamber among the flowering trees and vines.

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

We're giving a ride to Bashir, a boy of twenty-three. Caught in East Jerusalem the last three days, he couldn't get home through the checkpoints to Hebron, couldn't even get through to his family on the phone. His family (father, mother, six siblings ranging from twelve to twenty-five) and assorted neighbors greet him with hugs and relief.

"What did you think?" I ask, as we sit in their clean home, a house situated high above the Ibrahim Mosque. Just over a month ago, all rhythms of daily life here (work, school, marketing, socializing) were ruptured by the massacre, the street violence that followed, and the Israeli-imposed curfew and closures.

"We thought the worst," they answer, hugging Bashir, a feeling of quiet relief washing over all of them, some of them crying silently as they hold him. Bassam, his twenty-one-year-old brother whose English is perfect, does most of the speaking and interprets for the group. "We thought he was taken by soldiers, shot, imprisoned, or kidnapped. We have no security here so of course we thought the worst. We knew no one from Israel would ever inform us what happened."

The house fills with neighbors. We discuss the day of the massacre, how over the loudspeaker the whole town woke to the sounds of screams and cries for help. One neighbor who is sitting with us tells us about her husband, who ran to the hospital to give blood as did many others in the city. She points to the unfinished cement building outlined against the next hillside. "Seven who went to donate blood were

murdered by soldiers right after the mosque murders," Bassam interprets. Her husband was one of them, killed by a gunshot to his head for his efforts, she claims.

I hadn't read about this incident, but the gathered neighbors are certain her account is accurate; in unison, they say: "Giving blood and killed while they lined up. Shot, one by one, in the head." (Later I hear a slightly different version: soldiers converged on the hospital, kids stoned them, and they opened fire at close range.)

The Israeli government's harsh punishments since the Hebron massacre have left the town smoldering in a murderous rage, a collective depression. The most creative activity anyone can imagine is to kill a Jew.

"Everyone ran toward the hospital because it was lacking even the basic supplies of water and cotton, and our first need was to get those supplies and donate blood, but the soldiers interrupted us," Bassam recounts. "They wouldn't even let Daoud, a local taxi driver, carry the wounded through. They repeatedly stopped his car, finally forbade him to drive, although he had the dead and dying lying in his back seat. He went anyway. By the third trip from the mosque to the hospital he said to the soldiers: 'Kill me if you want to but I will not stop because these men are injured'." Israeli television showed a live interview with Daoud. Bassam explains, "They do that: Show some real news just to keep the impression that they are fair, which is totally false."

He talks energetically, his wiry frame alive with the story, his hands earnestly gesticulating. "The curfew began immediately but no one kept to it, everyone threw stones and rocks. No one would stay in their homes even though the soldiers were shouting in Arabic on the loud speakers to stay inside, no one did. And after the killings at the hospital, the rest of the day of the massacre they stopped shooting at us. They saw we would not stay inside, we had to help our neighbors and bury our dead."

We are sitting in a circle in their comfortable living room. If you had to guess Bassam's age, you'd subtract five years, and if you had to guess his nationality, you wouldn't think Arab, but maybe Irish or English. Everyone in this family is thin and, except for the father, light-skinned with auburn hair, blue eyes and slight features. Bassam is radiating an electric intelligence that makes him not only attractive, but believable.

This is not a family given to histrionics. Our conversation warms slowly. Though they are willing to talk, we don't get to the heart of the matter for several hours; by then, no one wants to stop talking. My presence is a catalyst for a lively conversation among them, which lifts what I gradually discover is their massive collective depression.

They explain that during the whole first week after the massacre, curfew was impossible for the army to enforce. Everyone except those living right next to the mosque slipped out back doors, built holes in their houses where they could exit secretly, visit neighbors, offer help, throw stones. They tell me that those killed had died "between God's hands" and those who survived or weren't, by happenstance, in the mosque that morning are envious, "because everyone here wishes to die. Everyone believes that as a martyr you go right to heaven, and how much more powerful in the midst of early morning Ramadan prayers."

This religiously induced death instinct is hard for me to fathom, and I say so. It is only toward the end of the afternoon that it's clear to me that the collective wish to die—"all of us want to leave this life"—is born of hopelessness and then, for most in the room, poured into a religious frame. After I listen to the vivid details of their listless and frightening lives in Hebron, their collective death wish becomes sadly understandable.

For this family, which under any other circumstance one would regard as lucky—middle-class, intellectually gifted, emotionally bonded—are living in a netherworld. It seems to them that the soldiers and the settlers are often in cahoots, harassing them in tandem in their shops or on the main street. At Bassam's father's electronics shop (after thirty years as a math and science teacher in the local elementary school, he makes only 1,200 shekels a month—his shop is his second income) kids often duck in to avoid the settlers. Along with the army, they chase after the kids with guns, often shooting in the air, taunting them.

The image of the Ku Klux Klan rises about me as they describe the escapades of Rabbi Moshe Levinger, one of the founders of the settler community in Hebron, and his followers. "Mafia" is the term Bassam uses when I ask him to describe these guys.

"They're ugly and they hate us and they have not only their own guns but the soldiers tagging alongside, jeering at us, arresting us."

When I ask them, "How do you understand their mentality?" they respond in unison, heads nodding. "Zionist mentality. They want to take our land. They want us to leave or give up. And it's not only land; it's religion as well. Jews against Islamics."

As for peace, even those in the room who felt some hope on September 13 have lost it. This does not seem to be rhetoric, although I'm sure if something really tangible on the ground did shift, so too would their feelings of hopelessness. But how they will ever imagine Jews who are not vicious and racist I cannot fathom. For their hatred seems airtight.

When I ask them about Israelis who are fighting for their human rights, sending food and money for hospitals, they scoff and shake their heads. "All Jews are on their own side. We don't want their money or their food. We want our freedom."

For what they've seen since the handshake, and especially during the massacre and since, the unrelentingly punitive Israeli attitude toward them convinces them all that there is no Israeli wish for peace.

Bassam says: "Understand. We have no hope for the future. We fear the future. Three years ago we needed permission to go to Jaffa or Tel Aviv. Two years ago we needed papers to go to East Jerusalem. One year ago we needed permits to get to Nablus. Now we need permits to leave our house, go to our own market in Hebron. Next year we'll need papers to leave our bedroom. It only gets worse and worse.

"You ask about human rights, tell them there are no human rights here," Bassam continues. "The victim is us and us and us. Every family has trouble: no work, no studying, no money, no food, but most of all, the most important thing: no freedom. The soldiers come to us in the middle of the night, checking for guns or wanted men, wake everyone and make us stand outside in the rain, find nothing, don't even apologize, show no sign that we are human."

What began as an interview hours ago ends as a condolence call. The mother begs me to stay for dinner, spend the night. Sulei, the sister, pulls me aside, saying that she is studying psychology at Hebron University, and invites me to come and talk to the women.

"You see, the women and girls have it hardest," she explains. "They are the most defeated. The boys can go and throw stones. The girls are not allowed to express themselves. They are the ones who have no outlet." This fits exactly what Eyad Sarraj, a Gazan psychiatrist, told me a year ago—that those who are active even in the most violent ways, risking their lives, feel more self-esteem and are more esteemed by their peers, stay mentally more robust.

"I write in my journal every day," she says. I tell Sulei about free writing groups popular in the United States, in which women just write their hearts out, then read aloud together. "Exactly what we do in Hebron," she says. "We write together when we don't have housework to do." She holds my hand. "Keep writing," I say, "It's very important."

The taxi driver takes me up and down the streets of Hebron before heading home. There is virtually no sign of life, no cars on the roads, no one looking out through the windows of the many apartment buildings, no kids playing outside. Even though curfew has finally been lifted today, the city is ghostly still, as if everyone is already dead. It's a strike day, and the intense spirit of comraderie following the massacre has subsided.

This month of harsh punishments has succeeded in leaving a whole town smoldering in a murderous rage that's been turned inward, a collective depression with no creative outlets, so strong that even when curfew is lifted no one leaves home: They don't trust that it is safe and their spirit for life has been effectively suppressed. Even in the loving family I've just visited the most creative activity anyone can imagine is to kill a Jew.

This day, which began in such beauty, perfect weather, soft breeze, and the sense of blossoming all throughout the land, has turned grim and cold by late afternoon. The dark sky matches my mood as we wend our way past checkpoints. We're driving down the main road when the driver points out to me that up on the bucolic hill we used to circumvent the Hebron checkpoint early this morning there is now, bright red against the dark sky, a blazing tire, the one we had seen early this morning lying inert on the innocuous-seeming dirt road. Vividly silhouetted in profile, five or six soldiers are running toward whoever set the fire, machine guns pointed straight ahead, directed at their invisible targets.

So immersed am I in the contagious Hebron sadness that I'm startled to be back inside the green line with the wild vitality and full range of obvious life options—like walking down the street to visit friends—everyone here in Israel enjoys. I'm stunned as I pull into a gas station en route home, surrounded by guys animatedly asking me about the Arabic sign in my window. What kind of journalist? Where from? Their questions so casual and cavalier.

I look about the lively street. Virtually no one I see walking freely about really knows what goes on in their name, every day, only a short ride from where they live. Yet these "good" Israelis mirror the "good" Germans—the facts they deny are accessible.

As I drive the final mile home, I'm stopped by a kid in a *kippa*. He's passing out bumper stickers emblazoned with the Hebrew slogan "All Israel is Hebron" for the settler rally in Kiryat Arba tomorrow in support of the settlements. "No way," I reply. "*Hag sameach*," he says breezily, moving on to the next car.

II. Kiryat Arba, March 31

I'm inside an Israel Radio van early the next morning, driving with five Radio Israel correspondents and one TV cameraman to cover the settler rally in Kiryat Arba, the "other" Hebron.

The ostensible reason for the rally and solidarity march is the twenty-sixth anniversary of Jews moving into Hebron. The real agenda is to show the strength of settler opposition to the peace process and solidarity with rabbinical injunctions to resist Israeli soldiers if they try to move the settlers out of Hebron proper.

"Nobody will admit this, but we love Goldstein," many tell me. "Rabin will fall and Judea and Samaria will be ours."

Five thousand Jewish settlers now living in this huge apartment complex called Kiryat Arba, in addition to the five small enclaves of Jews in downtown Hebron, consisting of 400 Jews, require 1,500 soldiers to "protect" them from the huge number of Palestinians (over 300,000 in Hebron city if you include those from the suburbs).

Kiryat Arba could be anywhere in America, a large co-op city replete with shopping malls and banks—could be in Forest Hills, or suburban Cleveland, except for the biblical mountain landscape that forms the immediate environment, along with the valley below, full of Arab homes. It's a fortress guarded by many green tents where the soldiers live. Security guards and high wire gates and fences surround us as our van pulls in, the first to arrive today.

There's anger from our first moment here as the police on "campus" have requested that Noam Arnon, the spokesperson for the Hebron Jews, relinquish his personal weapon. He refused and is being detained. The fifty or so residents who are sitting on the lawn waiting for the festivities to begin storm the small police headquarters, screaming "*medina mishtara*" (state police).

Kids no older than twelve, some as young as four, each sporting a paper yellow Star of David with "Hebron" written in the middle, climb onto the windows and bang on the wire grates, chanting "*medina mishtara*" at the top of their lungs. Geula Cohen, head of the Gush Emunim movement, is standing on the small square lawn, arguing in a tense and angry voice with a military commander. Alon, from Radio Israel, mutters to me: "We pay 20,000 dollars a year to the military to 'protect' each settler and they argue with them. Go figure." He shakes his head.

I hear the chants: "Doctor Goldstein, there is no one like you in the whole world." And I also hear: "We are all Baruch Goldstein." Huge banners frame the baseball field where the parade will culminate with a series of speeches. "Hebron From the Past Until Forever," proclaims the legend on the largest banner. "Hebron, City of our Fathers Forever" runs a close second.

I move among the crowd, talking to anyone available. On the edge of the hilltop is a guy who won't give his name. After talking for half an hour he'll only reveal that he lives in the settlement outside Jericho. He's patiently been explaining to me that the Arabs are a cancer. "You don't coexist with cancer," he says. "You cut it off."

"How? What's a realistic scenario?" I ask. "Nothing in Jewish history is realistic," he responds, laconic. "Zionism wasn't realistic and we're here. The Bible predicts what I predict, the Arabs will leave."

I sit next with Evon Hadump, spokesperson for settlers from Judea and Samaria, in his car. His telephone doesn't stop ringing. There's an unkempt air about him, distracted and hyped up. Preoccupied with organizing the day, he gives me short shrift. We're parked on the hilltop overlooking the procession that has begun twisting up the hill, settlers from all over Israel and the territories departing from their buses, walking toward this field. Carrying banners, wearing buttons, most wearing *kippot*, some in black hats, a few in secular garb, many carrying Israeli flags, they file in a huge procession below us, guns in pocket holsters or slung from the men's shoulders.

"But what of the peace process?" I ask.

"This *is* the peace process," Hadump says, waving toward the crowds below as he answers his phone again.

DETACH AND CIRCULATE

detach here

TIKKUN'S POLITICS OF MEANING

A BRIEF SUMMARY

The politics of meaning is an attempt to shift the dominant discourse of our society from an ethos of selfishness and cynicism to an ethos of caring and idealism.

The bottom-line consciousness of our society is based on the notion that human beings are only motivated by material self-interest. Hence, individuals will only take initiative if they are given material incentives, and the real way to judge the productivity of any operation is the degree to which it generates profits.

The politics of meaning, on the other hand, seeks a different bottom line, based on the notion that human beings have both material needs and meaning needs. While we do not discount the reality of self-interest in human affairs, we also have ample evidence that most human beings seek to transcend the individualism and selfishness of the competitive market and to root themselves in communities of meaning and purpose that connect them to a higher spiritual and ethical framework for their lives. Because liberals and progressives have denied or ignored the meaning needs (for example, the way the labor movement systematically ignored the alienation workers experienced at work and focused almost entirely on providing economic benefits, or the way that liberals have avoided addressing the crisis of family life or ethics in the society), the right wing has been able to capitalize on them, presenting itself simultaneously as the champions of the very economic and political institutions that embody the ethos of selfishness, on the one hand, while on the other hand articulating and seeming to care about the pain that people experience as a result of this triumph of selfishness in daily life.

So the politics of meaning suggests a different bottom line: Let every social policy, economic and political institution, movement, or way of life be judged as productive to the degree to which it tends to produce human beings who are idealistic and not cynical, caring and not selfish, demonstrably capable of sustaining loving and committed relationships, and who are ethically, spiritually, and ecologically sensitive and alive.

This is a paradigm shift as dramatic as the paradigm shift sought by the women's movement. Just as women were faced with the challenge twenty-five years ago, "Show us a single society in the history of the human race that is not patriarchal" (and they couldn't, but didn't let that stop them from struggling for one), so we similarly cannot show a single society in which this politics of meaning has been the bottom line, and will not let that stop us from struggling for one. In fact, we believe that the dynamics of unimpeded selfishness have led to a monumental ecological crisis and a monumental social crisis (manifested in rising alcoholism, drug abuse, family breakdown, and societal violence) so intense that most people will eventually come to see that their long-term self-interest is being destroyed by a society that validates every individual and corporation seeking their own narrow material short-term self-interest.

Nor is it the case that Eastern European societies tried this ethos and failed with it. Rather than being societies that were genuinely constructed with the aim of serving the common good and then failed because people were unable to transcend their narrow self-interest, Eastern European societies were imposed by totalitarians who used the language of socialist ideals to cover their anti-democratic and narrowly self-interested policies. Precisely because the majority of people understood that the society was not constructed to respect the common good, they were unwilling to work hard for non-material incentives in a system that essentially aimed to strengthen the power of the totalitarians who were in fact oppressing them.

The highlights from the platform are meant to give a very sketchy idea of the kinds of directions that a politics of meaning might take in the policy arena. Yet we stress three important things: 1. The platform, summarized here, is in process—we invite you to join us in refining its ideas or in taking it in new directions; 2. The politics of meaning is *not* primarily about what government should or could do. We offer a platform only because some people insist that the ideas are too vague unless they see how it might play out in the public arena, not because we believe that the major work of changing the dominant discourse or the bottom line in the society can be done by government; 3. We are highlighting only those points which might be different from a standard liberal platform, though we also support the traditional liberal demands.

For the past several decades liberal and progressive politics has been about inclusion—getting groups that have been left out of the system to get a place within it. *We support that effort.* But a politics of meaning is about critiquing and changing that into which people are seeking inclusion. In the first half of this century, for example, Jews fought hard to be included in American society. But that did not lead to Jewish values changing American society; rather, American individualism and selfishness seeped into and changed the Jewish world. Hence, our goal is not equality and fairness within the system, but healing, repair, and transformation from a system based on selfishness to a system based on love and caring.

Education

Values clarification is not enough—schools should give priority to educating students to practice the following specific values: love, empathy, caring, cooperation, commitment to the well-being of others, respect for difference, respect for learning, and honesty. For example, at every grade level a course should be dedicated to teaching empathy and caring for others.

Schools should also create a "safe space" for students to reflect on what is happening in their families and how to work with the problems they face. The goal is not to identify one "correct" family form or to impose external values on families, but to provide students with skills for coping with the complexities of family dynamics.

Health

The whole approach to training, rewarding, and promoting health professionals must be reworked to reward the ethos of community service. Professional training for those desiring to be doctors and health care professionals should be fully funded by the community, and these trainees should also receive a "family living" stipend to support their families during their training. Doctors' salaries subsequently should not exceed four times the average wage in the communities that they serve.

Since physical healing is closely connected to psychological and spiritual well-being, our approach to health care must serve the full human being. Health care delivery must not only emphasize significant empowering of the individual, and involvement of the client's social support system in a collaborative effort with health care professionals to devise a process of treatment, but it must also mobilize the spiritual and ethical resources of the individual and community to developing programs that sustain wellness.

To encourage community caring for the sick, workers should be allowed at least two hours leave per month to visit the sick, as long as these hours are validated by health-care personnel.

Racism

The deep shame that many people feel at not having "made it" in the marketplace, the shame others feel for having "made it" only at the expense of spending most of their days at meaningless work or at work in which they must constantly manipulate and control other people, combined with the deep unhappiness that so many people feel in personal lives when they have to face in their partners, families, and friends the consequences of living in a society that has validated selfishness and me-firstism as the only way one can live one's life, drives many people into a desperate search for a community of meaning and purpose that can compensate them for this pain.

Unfortunately, all too often what they are offered is not a real alternative to the logic of selfishness, but only selfishness writ large. Instead of struggling just for themselves they can struggle for a particular community: whites, Christians, Americans, Blacks, Jews, etc. In its most pathological—but unfortunately not atypical—form, these communities of meaning project themselves as the embodiments of all good and find everyone else to be the embodiments of evil or lesser being.

For a time, these communities of meaning do provide some relief from the relentless selfishness of the competitive market. The spectacles of communal celebration stand in sharp contrast to the individualism and loneliness of daily life.

But eventually, the celebrations are over and people return to the same world of work and family life. And since most of the existing communities of meaning are not constituted around challenging the alienation at work or the selfishness embedded in the competitive market, life remains as lonely and oppressive as ever.

At this point, many of these pseudo-communities offer an explanation: There is some "Other" who is screwing things up. For much of Western history, the Other of choice has been the Jews. But in the United States it has been African Americans, though recently Jews, gays and lesbians, feminists, and even liberals have been added to the list.

Racism will never be defeated until these dynamics have been uncovered and understood by most Americans. And the only serious alternative is for liberals and progressives to build communities of meaning that provide an alternative explanation for why things don't feel good: one that focuses on the need to challenge the ethos of selfishness in the marketplace. There's a big difference, however, between talking about these issues in church or synagogue, and actually developing a concrete challenge to selfishness in the economy. Only communities of meaning that do the latter will have a chance of providing an alternative to the racism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism that remain dangerous elements of contemporary life.

Liberals feel more comfortable making endless lists of programs designed to rectify inequality or to make discrimination or oppression illegal. We support them all. But we also notice that they haven't been winning and won't win unless they are supported within the context of a politics of meaning capable of speaking to the deeper hunger that leads people to desperately seek some context of meaning and purpose. A progressive politics that does not seek to provide such a context is whistling in the wind.

Community Service

All schools and government institutions (such as military installations, law enforcement agencies, media outlets, and state universities) should allocate four hours per week for community service in some project fundamentally different from and unconnected to the kind of work that the people in the institution normally do.

Sabbatical Year

Every employee should be given a paid sabbatical every seventh year, which may be used in two ways: either job retraining, education for its own sake (unrelated to one's career), or community service. A partnership between public- and private-sector institutions should develop a wide range of possible community service projects, provided that they do not aim to provide infrastructure support for profit-making institutions.

Work

Workers should be allowed to elect safety-and-health committees charged with restructuring workplaces to make them health-maximizing. Since psychological health requires empowerment and genuine decision-making, these elected committees should have the power to restructure the workplace to give workers genuine ability to use their intelligence, creativity, and ability to be cooperative and self-regulating. Worker control of this kind is to be distinguished from "total quality management" or other management schemes designed to promote greater worker "involvement" while leaving ultimate decisions where it has always been. The politics of meaning seeks to shift the bottom line, so that the ultimate criterion for a healthy workplace is the degree to which it promotes human beings capable of sustaining loving relationships, etc. While there is ample evidence that such workplaces also have the capacity to increase the involvement and energy that workers give to work, that increase may in part depend on the degree to which workers feel that they are working for themselves rather than for someone else who owns but does not work. The most productive workplaces may be those that workers own and control (formal ownership can be meaningless if substantive control is not the central experience facing workers in their daily lives). One correlate: workers should elect their own supervisors, and top management should be replaceable by "recall" votes of the workers in the institution.

All able-bodied persons receiving public support should also be required to work. But the work provided must meet the standards described above, and adequate training and childcare must be available so that people can take advantage of these possibilities. In general, we should seek to create an ethos of respect for work, and an understanding that we are all in this together, and hence working for the common good is a moral requirement rather than an externally imposed burden.

Investment

America's economic life requires planning, coordination, and vision, and hence cannot be determined primarily by the needs of individual corporations for profits. But the need for national planning should not be the excuse to create new governing bodies through which the rich can pursue their interests. Instead, we should elect a national economic congress that does not make decisions, but rather shapes major alternatives to be presented to the rest of us in national economic referenda.

The new investment policies will aim to achieve the following:

- Creation of productive jobs of two sorts: jobs that create needed goods, and those that free others to put more energy into their work (e.g., child care or education or caring for the elderly or the sick)
- Reindustrialization of the cities—but in ways that are ecologically sound.
- Creation of urban banks to extend loans to minority entrepreneurs and to community groups to create productive small businesses.
- Double the rate of housing production. Tax capital gains in real-estate speculation and tax unused land at a rate higher than land that is put to productive use.
- Create jobs with massive governmental expenditures focused on rebuilding America's productive infrastructure in ecologically sound ways. For example, invest in an extensive system of rapid inter-city trains and other forms of mass transit.

A Progressive Perspective on Being Pro-Families

We mean to support the rich variety of ways that people have made long-term commitments to each other to sustain loving relationships through time and to share the common responsibility of raising the next generation. By "family" we include single-parent families, gay and lesbian families, and other arrangements aimed at providing a stable and lasting framework for loving relationships and within which child-rearing may take place.

The external structure

- Comprehensive community controlled, publicly funded child care, provided by professionals paid respectable wages and given extensive training and ongoing supervision.
- Subsidize families to take care of aging parents at home, plus training for seniors who have retired from their jobs to become support personnel for others who are aging.
- Maternity and paternity leaves of up to six months, plus the right to come to work late when necessary to provide care for children or aging parents.

The internal support

- Reduce stress at work by increasing worker powerfulness at work.
- Reward caring behavior in the economy.
- Eliminate the vestiges of inequality in family life, sex roles, and the economy.
- Fight for public validation of caring as the most noble activity for men as well as women. Oppose conceptions of liberation that emphasize individual economic achievement: validate loving behavior as the most valuable behavior in the society—and insist that that be rewarded economically, politically, and socially.

A Pro-Families Strategy

- Create networks of family support networks so that people can share information about ways to deal with the inevitable tensions that emerge in family life.
- Train family support professionals who can act as consultants to family support networks.
- Create public events to honor those who have maintained loving commitments.
- Help make families based on real choice.
- Eliminate economic inequalities or social pressures that force people into families based on something other than loving connections.
- Provide adequate support institutions for those who seek to leave oppressive families.
- But validate the ethos of "working things through."
- Provide choice on abortion. But create an ethos that opposes abortion as a method of birth-control except in extreme circumstances. In other words, in matters of divorce and abortion, fight for rights, but create a community ethos

which tilts toward responsibility and commitment so that those rights are not used lightly. These are not matters that can be legislated.

Children must be treated with respect. Children who grow up being treated respectfully and lovingly are most likely to know how to treat others respectfully and lovingly. Being respectful, however, does not mean giving in to all of children's wants (which are themselves often formed by the larger society and television) nor does it mean avoiding all forms of discipline. Self-discipline and learning to take responsibility are important gifts that parents must give their children. But too often parents use these words as a cover to pass on to children the same arbitrariness, emotional cruelty, and sometimes even violence that they experienced when they were children. We urge parents to join parenting groups in which the difficult issues can be discussed with others and problem-solving can be encouraged. The highest honors in a community should be given to parents who have been most successful in raising loving children.

Family support doesn't mean supporting coercion or dishonesty in family life. To be pro-family from a politics of meaning perspective does not entail rationalizing the various deceits and coercions by which people try to cover up all the problems and tensions in families or the ways that people actually suppress their real selves in order to become "good couples." In calling for a progressive pro-family perspective we are not cheerleading for existing family relationships. To be really pro-family means to recognize the pain and frustration so many people experience in family life, to get those secrets out of the closet and into the public domain. People can then learn from each other's experience, stop blaming themselves inappropriately for those problems, and begin to help each other work them through.

Individual Responsibility

Our goal is to increase a sense of responsibility to the community and to counter the self-indulgence and me-firstism that has been associated both with the economic arrangements of a capitalist society and with the pursuit of unlimited individual rights and entitlements associated with the "me-generation" mentality that flourished in some sectors of the 1960s counterculture and in subsequent Yuppie cultural realities. There has been an excess of this kind of privileging of selfishness, both on the Right and on the Left. We wish to foster a sense of communal responsibility to the common good.

But we wish to avoid the mistakes of previous attempts at community that counterposed the common good to individual freedoms. We are strong supporters of the liberal rights agenda, and will never accept totalitarian communities that seek to impose a collectivist agenda that does not respect individual freedom or individual privacy. We do no want a society in which every decision of personal life is subject to collective scrutiny or control. A politics of meaning, then, is not a communitarianism that seeks to abolish rights. Rather, it is a philosophy that seeks to counter the way that this society today has shifted too much in the direction of individualism and the pursuit of rights with a new emphasis on community responsibility.

Ultimately, our highest responsibility is not to the specific community in which we live, but to the ethical and spiritual principles we hold, which may provide a basis of critique for any existing community. It is in the name of these values that we critique American society for its excessive materialism and selfishness; and it might well be that in the name of similar values we would critique any overly communitarian society that acted in ways that did not adequately acknowledge the infinite preciousness of every human being created in the image of God.

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In the above, we have selected a few elements of a platform that includes other areas such as policies for seniors and foreign policy, a platform that is still in process. We do so not to say, "Buy every detail, otherwise you are *not* with us," but to show the direction of our current thinking. If you find it compelling, get involved with us in refining it and building the Campaign for a Politics of Meaning.

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What You Can Do

- Get together with experts in a given area and develop platform planks that further develop our thinking, or that come up with better ways to achieve the same end of changing this society from the discourse of selfishness to the discourse of caring.
- Get together a group of people in your profession and ask them to imagine how every detail of their work would be different if they were to allow our changed paradigm (productivity defined in terms of creating loving human beings who are ethically, spiritually, and ecologically sensitive) to govern their work. Write up the results and send them to us. And then widen the circle of people discussing these issues in your profession.
- Join the Campaign for a Politics of Meaning. Become a Member for $60/yr., a Sustaining Member for $100/yr., an Associate of the Campaign for $250/yr., a Major Donor for $1,000/yr., or a Meaning Enhancer for $5,000/yr.
- Subscribe to TIKKUN magazine. In TIKKUN you'll find articles every issue that address the latest thinking about the politics of meaning. One year: $31; two years: $51. Make checks to TIKKUN and mail to Post Office Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046-9914, or call 1-800-846-8575.
- Bring together a group of people in your community to read and discuss this document. You can become a regular TIKKUN discussion group, using the material in the magazine as a jumping-off point for a biweekly or monthly discussion.
- Push for your local and national media coverage of the politics of meaning perspective on contemporary issues.
- Help us create a national Ethics Summit and regional Ethics Summits to promote public discussion of these issues.
- Contact us with your ideas and suggestions. Reproduce this summary and circulate it among friends and at community, cultural, and political events.

Write to: Michael Lerner, Campaign for a Politics of Meaning, c/o TIKKUN *Magazine, P.O. Box 1778, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025.*

Now the 10,000-plus are swarming over the baseball field as Binyamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon and assorted rabbis lecture them over the loud speakers. In between talks the music blares: Waiting for the Moshiach to a rock-and-roll beat. One group is holding a sign: "The People Goldstein killed were sick; he gave them the right medicine."

All about, families picnic while others loll on the fields or spread out over the hilltops, guns everywhere. Pamphlets denouncing Peres and Rabin as Nazis are distributed. In a Hebrew that sounds harsh to me, the speakers spit the name "Peres" as the crowd jeers loudly. Rabin, the same. Now other names are barked out to loud hoots from the crowd: Amos Oz, Shulamith Aloni, Yossi Beilin, Yossi Sarid. The rally is as much against the government and the peace movement as against the Arabs, who are completely disdained by this group. The Arabs are no problem—these settlers, who revere Goldstein, know how to handle Arabs; their problem is the "Nazi government." Of the twenty interviews I conduct, whether with families of Chabad Moroccans carrying Rabbi Menachem Shneerson's photograph, black-hatted, *peyus*-wearing Jews, middle-aged settlers in jeans, or teenagers, the rhetoric is identical.

"Nobody will admit this, but we love Goldstein," many tell me. "Rabin will fall and all Judea and Samaria will be ours." "This Nazi government will never be free of us," others say. "The Arabs will leave, not us" all repeat.

Finally, a welcome sight: an attractive man, no gun, with a mobile, intelligent face, who invites me to join his family for lunch. After ascertaining that I'm Jewish, his rabbi feeds me potato latkes. We sit on the sidelines, eating, as I try to understand the evolution of Doron Mori's views.

Mori, a thin Moroccan Israeli who lives in a settlement near Tel Aviv, inside the green line, tells me his tale of conversion. "I was once confused, and thought about Israel from the Left's point of view. But then I found the true Judaism and my whole life began to make sense. For what is life if we don't make sense of ourselves and our situation?

"I was always running after women and it never worked out. Finally, my rabbi said if I lived a Jewish life, I'd find the right woman. And after keeping just one Shabbat, my wife and I met: the very next week. So then I made a deal with God: I will follow Jewish law to the letter if God makes my life better. And it worked, miracles keep happening.

"I feel sorry for the secular left-wing Jews. They will never have our strength because we have God, we have 100 percent commitment to Torah and they have discos and coffee shops and unhappy personal lives. That's why they don't care about Israel, and are willing to give up our land. Whereas we are strong and will fight for the real Israel, the Greater Israel.

"About Goldstein I was at first confused. Because I know the Arabs will leave of their own volition soon enough, and I didn't like the killings. But then I learned more of what Goldstein lived through in that mosque and now I am certain he was following Jewish law, as everyone here is certain, though few will admit it [yet everyone I talked to used that same phrase]. What he did was necessary. Because now I understand, those Arabs in the mosque were not coming to pray but to kill, and Goldstein had to do what the army refused to do. There is a Jewish law higher than the Israeli law. And that is that if you know someone is going to kill a Jew, you must kill them first."

At Baruch Goldstein's grave, woman after woman prostrates herself on the cement. Families line up to have their pictures taken with the tomb. On line, the crowds of mourners are crying, praising Goldstein: "Our martyr, our saint, our holy man."

"Those Muslims praying were killers?" I ask.

"Oh yes, we know all about them now," Mori insists. "They used their muezzin prayer calls to taunt Jews. They would say in Arabic: 'Kill Jews', not 'Come to prayer'. Goldstein heard this and so he followed Jewish law and killed them first. Self-defense. They were planning to kill so he had to kill first. The army can't shoot them, so he did their job for them. Look at the facts: Since September thirteenth, thirty-three Jews were killed by Arabs. This government is far too easy on the Arabs."

I move down to Goldstein's grave, the only grave situated at the end of Meir Kahane Park, a quarter-mile from the baseball field. The tomb is covered with poured grey cement, so that no one can remove or desecrate it. The barricades surrounding the grave don't stop the crowds of worshipers from lining up to hug the cement stone, kiss it, cry over it, knitted *kippot* frequently falling to the side of their heads as they bend to place small stones on the grave, a Jewish custom. Off to the side, Chassidim are dancing and

singing, "Goldstein, our *moshiach*, our *moshiach*." On line, the crowds of mourners are crying, praising Goldstein: "Our martyr, our saint, our holy man."

During the next two hours, hundreds take their turns at the grave. Woman after woman prostrates herself on the cement.

Families line up to have their pictures taken with the tomb. One overweight settler with an Uzi slung over his shoulder squints through the lens of a red Instamatic camera. He is having difficulty getting his whole family in the frame along with the tomb. "Lower," he shouts to his wife. "Get lower, I can't get Goldstein and you and the kids." For a few awkward minutes they keep rearranging themselves so that everyone can fit in. Frustrated, the family photographer finally shouts: "Just get on your knees; all of you, on your knees or else we won't get Goldstein in the shot."

One woman who has been lying across the cement slab suddenly sits up and starts eating sunflower seeds, crudely spitting the shells them out, just missing the tombstone. An American journalist is taking notes. The woman sees him and starts cursing at him for desecrating the memory of their holy man, screaming: "Why are you writing? *You're* writing and *he's* dead, get out of here." She spits these words at him, while still spitting sunflower shells, some of which now fall on the remains of Baruch Goldstein.

An Israeli photographer who has been shooting this procession keeps on photographing as a strange-looking man emerges from the crowd and attacks her. He's wearing a sweater over his head in place of a *kippa* and eating chocolate ice cream, which in the heat is dripping near Goldstein's grave. He turns on the photographer, screaming obscenities. Trying to pry her camera from her, he grabs at her hair, pulls her camera straps, her shirt sleeves, desperate to wrest the camera from her tight grip. She shouts back at him as the crowd joins him in trying to yank her camera away.

A Palestinian photographer, Rula Halawami, who's come today ready to say she's a Turk if anyone asks, watches this scene in utter horror, realizing if her identity was revealed she might be torn limb from limb. "If that's how they treat an Israeli, God knows what they'd do to me," she says later. "Hamas would never treat a Jewish journalist the way these settlers do. I couldn't believe it."

A man arrives hawking rental rights to "Goldstein's *tallis*": six shekels to wear his prayer shawl.

"How do we know it's his?" a woman shouts.

"Don't ask questions," the old, pot-bellied merchant answers curtly.

A young settler with an Uzi inspects the *tallis*. "Not Goldstein's," he says authoritatively. "Goldstein's had stripes."

Nearby, several families are eating matzas as they watch the commotion, passing kosher apple juice from kid to kid.

I wander back to the radio van to find that Duki, our cameraman, was also attacked, in his case for filming the lines outside the makeshift toilets. "They hate journalists because they know we don't believe the way they do," he explains cheerfully. "But I got good footage once they attacked me" he says, unruffled.

The settler version of Judaism is taking a three-thousand-year-old religion and throwing out two thousand years of ethical development.

Realizing I don't have the tough Israeli spine this scene requires, I collapse in the back of the van figuring we'll be out of here in no time.

No such luck. Just as we were the first to arrive this morning, we are the last to leave: It's after 7:00 p.m. and completely dark as we head down the curving roads that connect Kiryat Arba with Hebron, following, and indistinguishable from, the last caravan of settler cars.

Suddenly these Israeli radio commentators and T.V. cameraman, friendly, easy-going chaps who love to banter, turn silent. The van is now completely quiet except for the gravelly, moribund voice of Yitzhak Rabin, who is giving a speech carried live on the radio. His voice sounds tired as we are tired, tense as we are tense. Periodically, he's interrupted by loud bursts of staccato as the radio loses connection, staccato that sounds like guns shots. This is a particularly ominous sound as we drive through Hebron in the dark. A stoic feeling arises in the silence. So this is also part of war, I think, this stoic anticipation, this danger through which we are silently driving.

After what feels like forever, I turn to Alon and ask: "Are we out of the war zone yet?" as he shakes his head, making a sucking sound through his teeth. It's then I see the road sign: Twenty-two kilometers to Jerusalem. We all remain tense and silent until we are inside the city. "Like another planet," Alon says, as we exit, "The West Bank is like another planet."

It's only the next morning that I discover what I



Rina Castelnuovo

took to be a lonely personal experience was shared by other foreign Jewish journalists. I asked several what they felt on the fields of Kiryat Arba. One with a Yeshiva education says: "I felt my Judaism was being raped." Another says: "For me this rally was another image of how the settler version of Judaism is taking a three-thousand-year-old religion and throwing out two thousand years of ethical development, taking post-Enlightenment Judaism and turning it back into barbarism. What such a scene does is to push me further and further away from any identification with Israel."

Then he adds, "They're on the road to their own destruction."

Another Jewish journalist says: "Standing near Goldstein's grave I realized that a monster has been created here. It's shocking. Their ideology is strong and ugly, yet it's a serious force."

III. Gaza Street Scene

Today, April 1, there's good news from Cairo: The peace process is back on track; the first Palestinian police units are due within a week. Rabin no longer says: "No date is sacred." He has reversed that stance completely. Now anything the two sides decide will be "implemented immediately." Yet talking to two intrepid female photojournalists (one Palestinian and one Israeli) who often work together, who know this land as few foreign journalists ever will, they tell me that for people living in Gaza, the hope seems a hype.

The day after the Israeli killings of six PLO Fatah Hawks, the mini-massacre that was hotly debated all week, they went, accompanied by two male photographers, one from Gaza and one from Jerusalem, to see the Palestinian reaction. They arrived in Gaza city not knowing whether the Army would be cooperative or punitive. For between the IDF commanders and journalists who frequent Gaza it can go either way, depending on how tense the situation is, how fierce the stone-throwing, and whether or not any Israelis have been hurt.

Today is a strike day, quiet. The IDF commander waves a friendly hello to the four photographers, pulls up to their car, spotting the Palestinian. "*Efo Madji*?" he asks ("Where's Madji?"), all smiles, referring to a Palestinian cameraman with whom this IDF official seems to have a love/hate relation. Last week Madji was shot for the third time by Israelis as he ran with his camera after the action. But Madji always comes back to the story; shows an ability to survive that the Israelis respect. "You can follow us today, but keep at a distance," the commander says expansively. "It's quiet."

The photographers exit their car and walk behind him. The alleyways are indeed quiet. At a far distance



Rina Castelnuovo

they make out young kids throwing small stones. Quick as a flash, like Clint Eastwood in a Western, the commander unhinges four tear gas canisters and with only one arm adroitly throws them down the alleyway, which instantly mushrooms with the sickly strong gas. The four photographers separate. The two men run in one direction, the two women in the other. The men, realizing that they don't know what they're running toward, stop. As they stand still, one tear gas canister falls almost directly at their feet. Out of nowhere a Palestinian kid comes along and fiercely kicks the now-empty canister like a football.

A young Palestinian mother runs with her four-month-old baby, shrieking; she knows that tear gas can be lethal to young children.

Meanwhile, the women have run toward a small adjoining alleyway into which the IDF is shooting tear gas from both ends. This makes the air so thick that the few unlucky enough to be stranded on the street are choking. A young Palestinian mother runs with her four-month-old baby, shrieking; she knows that tear gas can be lethal to young children. (Many babies have died after inhaling it.)

Now the two women photographers are banging on a random door trying to get the mother and baby protection. The door opens. Everyone in the crowded room is holding cut onions—the best remedy for tear gas—up to their faces. They hand more onions to the young mother. Finally, the two photographers cover their faces with this home remedy.

"Well, they're soon to leave," someone says, referring to the Israelis.

"They've already thinned out around Gaza city," a man responds.

The room is quiet for a while as everyone watches the thick gas begin to dissolve in the street. The baby is breathing regularly and everyone relaxes.

"It'll be like Lebanon," says a Palestinian man who speaks in a way that commands respect. "They'll leave us on the ground. But mark my words, next we'll see the Israelis, it will be worse. They'll be coming at us from planes and helicopters. From overhead they'll rain bombs on us for some terrorist attack near Tel Aviv."

Everyone nods. "I'd rather them on the ground then from the air," a woman says, as the photographers depart. □

ISRAEL AFTER HEBRON

Who Is the Opponent?

Uri Avnery

A silent debate is agitating the peace camp in Israel: Who is the real opponent at this moment? Against whom do we have to demonstrate? What is the real address of our criticism, complaints, even accusations?

For Peace Now and its allied organizations, the answer is clear: the settlers, the extreme right-wing, the Likud. They see the battle raging between the Rabin government, honestly striving for peace, and the right-wing fanatics of Eretz Israel Haschlema. The duty of all right-thinking persons is to rally around Rabin and the Meretz ministers and join forces against the foe.

On the other side of the debate stands Gush Shalom and smaller groups. They believe that the real obstacles to a rapid progress toward peace is not the right wing, but Rabin himself, because the settlers would long ago have lost much of their clout if Rabin had wanted it.

One example: On the morrow of the Washington handshake, Gush Shalom published an ad calling upon the government to set up a new Israeli agency for the voluntary resettlement of settlers who want to return to Israel, thus isolating the hard core of fanatics. The idea was later taken up by several dovish members of the Knesset. Rabin adamantly refused even to consider the idea and called on all settlers to remain where they are.

This week, all the settlers of Dugit left their settlement in the Gaza Strip, set up tents within the Green Line and demanded resettlement in Israel. The government refused. It also insists that the tiny, isolated Netzarim settlement, in the middle of the most populated Gaza Strip area, must remain where it is.

Why? That is part of the Rabin enigma, which is now a central part of the Israeli reality. Governing practically alone, having no friends or advisers, keeping even Shimon Peres at arm's length, holding his cards close to his chest, Yitzhak Rabin defies any attempt to guess his real intentions.

Perhaps it is merely tactics. Rather than provoking the inevitable fight with the settlers now, he may want to postpone the confrontation, to weaken them in the meantime. But if so, why prevent the voluntary resettlement of those who want it?

The Rabin government is constructing the most expensive road ever built in Israel, practically for the exclusive use by settlers, from Jerusalem to the Gush Etzion settlements, and from there to Kiryat Arba. This road will cost half a billion dollars and includes the only tunnel ever built in this country, as well as the two biggest bridges.

A new housing complex was opened recently in Katzrin, on the annexed Golan Heights, in a big festival, by Housing Minister Benjamin ben-Eliezer.

Some believe that Rabin wants to use the settlers as bargaining chips when the negotiations for the permanent solution start. But that means inviting trouble. Any concessions still to be gained from the PLO are secondary compared to the immense danger of hundreds of Baruch Goldsteins—both Jewish and Arab—committing unimaginable atrocities on the way, destroying all chances of reconciliation.

Others are convinced that Rabin really does not want to remove the settlements at all, but use them eventually to cut up the Palestinian territory into self-governing—but not independent—Palestinian "cantons" or Bantustans. This is not so far-fetched as it may seem. One must remember that the "interim" solution will stand until agreement for a permanent solution is reached—which may never happen at all.

There can be no doubt that Rabin needs an agreement with the Palestinians and will surely lose the next elections without it. But it is equally clear that he is looking for an interim agreement only, postponing all substantial issues for another term of office. He obviously hopes to postpone thereby all serious confrontations with the settlers, religious fanatics, and the right-wing generally. This, however, is an illusion. The situation created in the interim period cannot last, not only because the settlers will not tolerate it, but also because the Palestinians cannot possibly tolerate an "occupation with other means" for any length of time.

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In the aftermath of the Hebron massacre, this hidden debate rose to the surface. In the big Jewish-Arab demonstration in Tel Aviv, called jointly by Peace Now and the Committee of Arab Local Authorities in Israel, Peace Now called solely for the removal of the settlers from Hebron proper (to the neighboring Kiryat Arba). At the time, it was widely believed that Rabin intended to do just that. Peace Now leaders were extremely angry when the Gush brought hundreds of signs saying, "Dismantle all settlements immediately," and were rather dismayed when many of their own followers preferred these signs. Eventually, Rabin gave up not only the idea of kicking the 415 zealots out of Hebron, where they are guarded by 1,200 soldiers, but even of concentrating them in one neighborhood in the town. Not one single settler was moved.

The question is not whether the Oslo agreement itself is good or bad—all peace groups in Israel as well as in the occupied territories accepted it at the time with various degrees of joy—but rather whether the implementation is progressing well and in good faith, and where it leads.

The Gush believes that the government should clearly state the "interim" period is but a stage leading to the creation of a state of Palestine beyond the Green Line, with Jerusalem the joint capital of both states. With this in mind, it raised several demands: releasing immediately all Palestinian prisoners, allowing Palestinian symbols of pre-statehood to be raised in Gaza and Jericho, changing immediately and completely the character of the occupation in the other parts of the occupied territories, ceasing the manhunt of "wanted" underground fighters, and—most important—starting the negotiations for the final status now, rather than in two years. (The Oslo agreement makes this possible, saying that these negotiations will "commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year..." Article V of the declaration of principles.)

The government rejects this whole attitude. It has repeatedly declared that it will never agree to an independent Palestinian state, and even less to a change of the status quo in Jerusalem, "the eternal undivided capital of Israel, under sole Israeli rule."

The release of the prisoners was crucial. The day after the handshake, all 12,000 of them could have been set free in a dramatic gesture, without anyone in Israel howling—at that moment it would have seemed quite natural. Their return to their families—hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in every town and village—would have completely changed the atmosphere. Instead, Rabin is releasing them in niggardly installments, in return for concessions, completely losing the effect of reconciliation but giving ammunition to the right wing, who accuse him every time of "capitulation to the terrorists." Worse, the hunt for the "wanted" underground fighters by undercover units, often amounting to virtual executions, goes on as if nothing has happened. The victims are frequently the very people who were destined to be our partners tomorrow, such as the six Fatah leaders killed at the end of March in Gaza. This could not have happened if the minister of defense and/or chief of staff had reprimanded the responsible officers after the first time.

Along the way, these acts and omissions are destroying the political basis of Yasser Arafat, which is absolutely essential to any progress toward peace. In the occupied territories the symbiosis between the army and the settlers, which has been thrown into stark relief by the Hebron massacre inquiry, is continuing unabated. Not only did it become apparent that there exists an army order prohibiting shooting at "Jews," whatever the circumstances, even while killing Palestinians, but it appeared that the settlers, including the most virulent Kahane types, enjoy free access to the generals, cooperate with the army on a daily operational basis, and frequently wear two hats—being both settlers and soldiers on active duty. All settlers are officers and soldiers in the heavily armed "regional defense" units, which are an integral part of the army.

This does not mean that the army has become unreliable. In a crisis, the traditional Israeli attitude of absolute support for the army will most certainly assert itself. There will be no civil war, because the settlers know that they will lose everything the moment they raise a hand against a soldier. But the army needs strong political and military leadership and a clear picture of what is demanded—a picture sadly lacking today.

One way to explain Rabin is to take seriously a statement openly made by environment minister Yossi Sarid, who is quickly becoming his foremost spokesman: "We must twist the arms of Arafat, but without breaking them." This means beating Arafat into submission and squeezing the last drop out of him, as was done in the Cairo agreement, which nearly all Palestinians in the occupied territories consider a capitulation. This is a most dangerous course, endangering the chances for real peace in return for short-term benefits of dubious value. Thus Menachem Begin squeezed a wonderful peace treaty out of Amin Jumail, then Israel-appointed president of Lebanon, but the treaty was rejected by all elements in Lebanon and became a dead letter the next day. Without a strong PLO, led by a strong Arafat, with unbroken and untwisted arms, all agreements will be quite worthless.

All this puts Peace Now on the horns of a dilemma.



It is not an organization with registered members, but rather a loose group of activists, which can call great or small numbers of peaceniks into the streets—depending on the current mood of the public. Politically, it is closely linked with the Meretz Party and the Labor Party "doves," who exercise an unofficial but real veto power over its actions. It is thus unthinkable for Peace Now to act contrary to the wishes of a government. Many of the rank and file of the movement (to use an inadequate term) support this stand, reflecting the moderate liberal consensus, while others are close to the more radical outlook, and some consider themselves activists of several groups simultaneously. The Gush Shalom, a much smaller grouping with a much clearer message, is not bound by political interests, and therefore can permit itself to set forth advanced and therefore still unpopular ideas.

As the process goes on, new problems may bring the different attitudes closer to each other, but events may well work to the contrary. The Oslo Agreement has created a situation which may prove to be impossible, the close proximity of three armed and hostile forces: the Palestinian army (camouflaged as "police"), the Israeli army, and the armed settlers, dominated by Kahane ideologies and in turn dominating many segments of the army and border police. To this may be added another armed force: the radical Islamic underground, which is ready to fight against peace with terroristic acts, such as the Afula bus bombing in early April.

Optimists may believe that the dynamic of peace will take over once the Palestinian self-government takes root in Gaza and Jericho, and soon thereafter in the rest of the West Bank. Peace Now has established a dialogue with PLO elements on the ground. The Gush has gone much further, establishing a day-to-day framework of joint action, demonstrations, and political statements with the PLO leadership in the West Bank and Gaza.

Pessimists see before them continued turmoil, with an Israeli government unable—and perhaps unwilling—to confront the settlers and a Palestinian leadership losing its grip.

Either way, the Israeli peace movement—with all its different shadings—has an essential role to play, perhaps now more than ever. Recently, Peace Now adopted a detailed plan calling for the staggered evacuation of settlements, starting from the most acute danger spots (Hebron, Nablus, Jericho, Netzarim) and moving on to the big settlement towns. It also proposes to pay compensation to those settlers who want to return to Israel voluntarily. At the moment, however, Israel is full of posters supporting the settlers in the Golan and Hebron, the media are filled with settlers whining and protesting, demonstrations by the settlers are held daily and duly reported—with no posters supporting peace, no adequate counter-propaganda in the media and practically no demonstrations by Peace Now. □

ISRAEL AFTER HEBRON

A Post-Hebron Letter to My Son Michael

Who Just Went from Yeshiva to Basic Training

Tzvi Marx

My dearest Michael, son and soldier-in-training,

Sadly, your basic training commenced at the turn of a new era in Israeli history: P.H., post-Hebron. Till Hebron, I, like every Israeli parent, counted on the self-evident Judaic morality embedded in the idea that man was created in the "image of God" and in Zahal's (The Israeli army's) commitment to "*tohar ha-neshek*" (purity of arms) to protect you from the terrible temptation of weapons abuse. We knew that as a nation which portrayed itself as "compassionate people, descendants of compassionate people" (BT *Yebamot* 79a) we did not have to harp on the distinction between the taking up of arms only in defense against enemies who attacked us, but never against innocent civilians. We knew that cruelty was a contradiction to our very being (Rambam, *Laws of Tzedaka* 10:2) and therefore could be confident that whatever legitimate use you were going to make of your Uzi, Galil, or M-16, it would always be according to the strictest standards of Jewish and Israeli morality. Until Hebron.

Hebron has made us ashamed. "As a Jew and an Israeli, as a man and a human being. I am humiliated by the shame brought upon us by the lowly killer." Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin expressed this for almost all of us. Hebron has undermined the foundations of our selfhood and self-confidence. We have been brought low from the high moral ground that we had previously held. President Ezer Weizman described the massacre as "the worst thing that has happened to us in the history of Zionism." Noting that since 1948, 18,000 Israelis have fallen, he reflected that "war is ugly and inhuman but we have tried always to maintain our humanity and have never reacted as one man did, on Ramadan, in a mosque, on a Friday."

The confession in the Knesset by our prime minister and the reflections of our president are embedded in our Judaic sensibility as enshrined in the Talmud's refined code of ethics: "If one was pursuing his neighbor to slay him and the latter could have saved himself by maiming a limb of the pursuer and did not thus save himself but killed him instead, he is executed for his death" (BT *Sanhedrin* 57a).

You see, Michael, even when one is justifiably defending oneself, the Halakha still requires our finely tuned attention to the appropriateness of the measure of force, imposing upon us the grave, almost inhuman imperative of weighing carefully—even in the heat of fear, adrenalin, and high emotion, the talmudic situation being one of pursuit—the absolute need to use deadly force. And against this refinement of the human spirit we now have to contend with the brutish event in Hebron.

Three thousand years of moral training in ethics and holiness could not prevent the deviance we witnessed in Hebron. This deviance, I must emphasize to you regretfully, Michael, cannot be dismissed as a lone event of one extreme individual.

B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Territories, in its March 1994 report, "Law Enforcement Vis-à-Vis Israeli Civilians in the Occupied Territories," has documented the systematic course of violations of human rights—constituting as well transgressions on fundamental Jewish values—during the military occupation of the Judea, Samaria, and Gaza concluding that "the Israeli government has failed in its task of protecting the lives, persons, and property of Palestinians from repeated attacks by Israeli civilians in the occupied territories" implicating "every branch of the government and legal system, individually and together" as tending "to view the many acts of violence by Israeli civilians against the Palestinian residents... with an insufficient degree of seriousness." The unwillingness of much of our society and in particular, the Orthodox sector, to challenge these transgressions on our own stated civil and religious morality and codes deepens the sense that the Goldstein slaughter is only the tip of the iceberg.

God, we are told in our holy Bible, gave up on the world in the time of Noah primarily because of its cruelty. He was ready to destroy it, and subsequently the

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Rina Castelnuovo

Jews pay homage to Baruch Goldstein at his grave.

cities of Sodom and Gemorrah, for the same reason. Our prophets have repeatedly emphasized that our status of election gives us no special protection from His wrath if we succumb to the allure of evil: "Behold the Lord God has His eye upon the sinful kingdom; I will wipe it off the face of the Earth." He is addressing us, the Israelites and telling us what some of us don't like to hear: "To Me, O Israelites, you are just like the Ethiopians—declares the Lord" (Amos 9:7-8). We have no special claim to his love if we betray the essential values that He entrusted to our care.

We spent long hours on the Shabbat after that bloody Friday discussing your question concerning the Jewishness of the murderer's actions. You pointed out that while of course you too condemn his action, your yeshiva friends, the "*hevra,*" raise the issue that his act can be seen as grounded in Judaic sources. The rabbinic mind thrives on controversy. Even when disagreeing vehemently with other views, it does not delegitimatize them, recognizing that the tradition is robust enough to contain views which are contradictory. So while one side may view Goldstein's act as desecration of God's name, the other may view it as His sanctification.

This debate can be seen in the aftermath of reactions that followed that infamous Purim Friday. The Union of Rabbis for Eretz Yisrael, headed by former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Avraham Shapira, Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, head of the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva, and Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neriya, head of the B'nei Akiva Yeshiva called it "an act of madness" that "is in opposition to Halakha and Jewish ethics."

Forty-four Orthodox rabbis from the National Religious party condemned in the harshest of terms "the brutal murder carried out by a Jew on innocent people created in God's image." Rabbis including Yoel Ben Nun of Ofra, Nachum Rabinovitch head of Yeshivat Birkat Moshe in Ma'aleh Adumim, two heads of Yeshiva Har Etzion in Alon Shvut, Aharon Lichtenstein, and Yehuda Amital and Yehezkiel Kofeld from Dolev, in a statement initiated by Yehuda Gilad, head of Yeshivat Kibbutz Hadati in Kibbutz Ma'aleh Gilboa, exhorted in synagogues and yeshivot that "there is no understanding and no forgiveness for the murder of people while they are praying to the creator of the Universe." In universal and particular terms, "as people and Jews, we grieve the blood spilled." They raised up a "protest against this horrible desecration of God's name," calling on everyone

who is able "to denounce and eradicate this phenomenon of any understanding and agreement to these types of acts."

Even though the Kiryat Arba local council laid the guilt against the government of Israel and its leaders who have, according to them, abandoned the settlers and led to unending murders in Gaza, Judea, and Samaria, they expressed sorrow about "the bloody attack" and sent condolences to the Arab families. These condemnations were joined by that of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza who "see this morning's incident as very grave" and has "condemned these types of incidents in the past and condemn it again." Uri Ariel, head of the council adds, "This is something that is not Jewish, not humane, and we need to condemn it."

On the side of the advocates, Kach spokesman Noam Federman: "We lower our heads before the holy hero, Rabbi Dr. Goldstein." The Kahane Chai movement mourns the death of the "martyred Baruch Goldstein who died this morning sanctifying the name of God in Hebron. Blessed is the lot of Baruch Goldstein (may his memory be blessed) who sanctified God's name his entire life, and even more so in his death." They invoke the analogy of Samson bringing down the Temple on the Philistines, and the Jews of Shushan, "Praiseworthy is he who carried out the same act as the Jews in Shushan of which the Torah says: 'Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with a stroke of the sword, and with slaughter and destruction, and did as they pleased to those who hated them.' Let all those who condemn the acts of true Jewish heroes be silenced. They only defame and disgrace the true tradition of the holiday of Purim. We are at cultural war with them. Happy Purim!"

Please note, my son, that in a poll involving a representative sample of 500 adults conducted by Telesker for the International Center for Peace in the Middle East 88.8 percent condemned Baruch Goldstein while only 3.6 percent praised him and 6.8 percent had no opinion. For me even that 10.4 percent is unsettling. The issue is now not whether we can take pride in our Judaism after this massacre, on the grounds of the condemnations, but how did it come about that any Jew could have thought that it was a viable option for action.

I now take up your question, my dear, searching Michael: Is this disagreement between components of the Jewish community to be Judaically assessed as just a case of "these and those are the words of the living God?" Is this an example of a "controversy for the sake of heaven," so lauded in the Ethics of the Fathers? Are we who are outraged by this act to the depths of our Jewish *neshama* (soul) nevertheless to pay respect to those who hold sympathetic views, as we would in so many other situations of Judaic disagreement, or is there a limit to the containment within Judaism of divergent views?

In this task, I would not be satisfied merely to show that their view fits into Nachmanides's category of "*naval birshut ha-Torah*"—"scoundrel within the law"—because that would concede that their view can be construed to be within the formal fold of observance. Nachmanides's "*naval*" is indeed within the fold of possibilities. His skewedness lies in his not realizing that one must at times go beyond the letter of the law and try for its spirit.

Instead, I want to offer you a moral critique that is sanctioned by the Torah, which requires every Jew to realize with the firmest of convictions that some actions and behaviors are simply perversions of Judaism. In the typical disagreement between scholars, the view rejected is not adjudged as perverse, but merely as not plausible; hence it may be respected as a possible Judaic option not chosen. What is at issue in this instance, however, are the limits beyond which the discourse is no longer Jewish, notwithstanding the disclaimers of its proponents. I am not saying that those who hold that view are not Jewish, but only that their *views* are not Jewish.

The Talmud (BT *Sanhedrin* 43b) offers two views on the extent of this responsibility. Rabbi Yehuda held that, for an individual's publicly known sins, the community was held accountable even prior to entering the land of Israel, while still in the desert, whereas for an individual's private sins they were held accountable only after entering the land. Rabbi Nehemiah understood that the Israelite community was to be held accountable, even for publicly known sins of the individual, only after they entered the land and not while in the desert. The issue is over the legitimate extent that solidarity makes in linking the moral decisions by the individual to community responsibility. Rabbi Yehudah can be said to be of the opinion that the framework of peoplehood (irrespective of dwelling together in a well-defined territory) is sufficient to obligate the community for the acts of an individual member. Even a nomadic community can and should bear responsibility for the misdeeds of its members, certainly when the misdeeds are known. In contrast, Rabbi Nehemiah is of the opinion that, in order to hold a community accountable for the acts of an individual member, it needs a larger measure of control in shaping the outlook of its members, the kind that one can expect only when a community lives in its own land. Clearly, in our case, both Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nehemiah would agree that the community must take responsibility.

That's why Gad Navon, chief rabbi of the Israeli army, was asked in February by a group of Shalom Hartman Institute scholars to instruct the military administration of the territories not to allow Goldstein to be buried

within the regular cemetery, but to be buried separate and apart from the *normal community* as befits those deemed "*rasha*"-"wicked." This is based upon the talmudic dictum (BT *Sanhedrin* 47a) that "one does not bury the wicked with the righteous" and is supported by the subsequent codes (Tur YD 462, *Shulkhan Aruh* YD 462 par. 5). It is with this burden of responsibility that I offer you these reflections.

Our first inkling of the self-evidency that murder is outrageous comes in Genesis, where we learn that God punished Cain for killing his brother Abel. "What have you done? Hark, your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground!" (Gen. 4:10). This text is problematic from a halakhic perspective. "One does not punish without prior warning." (BT *Sanhedrin* 56b). How was Cain supposed to know that the taking of life was wrong? All that God had previously admonished by way of prohibition was the injunction to Adam and Eve not to partake of the tree of knowledge. The biblical injunction, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed," (Gen. 9:6) came long after Cain's action. Yet God does not hesitate to punish Cain, "cursing him more than the ground" (Gen. 4:11). Clearly, even before the advent of formal legislation, the biblical tradition, much like all moral systems, deems it self-evident to any human being that murder is repugnant. "There are things... which even were they not written should have been written, like ...shedding of blood" *(Sifra, Aharei Mot, Parsha* 10 on Lev. 18:4).

Indeed, the Talmud (BT *Sanhedrin* 56b) construes the so-called Noahide laws to emanate from the prior Adamic reality. In fact, it grounds those Noahide laws—which include the prohibitions against murder and theft, as well as the injunction to establish judiciary systems—in a proof text (Gen. 2:16) that is addressed to the *adam* (man). Interestingly, the word in that text which is seen as alluding to the prohibition against murder is *adam*. While the Talmud by way of analogous reasoning (*gezerah shava*) connects this to the later, more explicit injunction to Noah (in Gen. 9:6), it is more than just a coincidence that by itself the word *adam* (whatever else it implies) is construed as conveying the sacred attitude of hands off to violence. There is something in the very status of *adam* that, to any morally normal human being, self-evidently makes his abuse illegitimate. God shines in the human visage so that to abuse it is to diminish not only man but God (*Mekhilta Bahodesh* 8). No formal prohibition is required for any person to be held culpable of murder.

The inclusion of all the introductory pre-history in the Bible, from Genesis until the Sinaitic covenantal event, has normative and not merely narrative significance. The morality that is revealed or implied in this pre-history reflects the jumping-off point for further halakhic improvement following Sinai. It is Halakha at its minimum standard and not at its fully developed potential, not to speak of its not falling below that point.

In the words of the sage Issi ben Akabyah: "Before the giving of the Torah we had been warned against shedding blood. After the giving of the Torah, whereby laws were made stricter, shall they be considered lighter?"(*Mekhilta de Rashbi Nezikin* 4). Or as the Talmud avers: "There is nothing permitted to an Israelite yet forbidden to a heathen" (BT *Sanhedrin* 59a).

There are values that are so fundamental to basic humanity that one does not need prior proof texts to substantiate them. If someone comes out of the traditional milieu, as you do Michael, one need only know that reliance upon fundamental moral intuitions is a valid source of Judaic guidance. What this means is that these fundamental values help to place later elaborated halakhic teachings into context. That which is already enshrined in the universal demand upon all human beings in the pre-Sinaitic expectation, is surely binding upon the Sinaitic Jew. To undermine that commitment in the name of the post-Sinaitic Halakha must accordingly be seen as a distortion of Torah.

There are texts in the tradition that can be cited in support of discrimination and devaluation of others not Jewish. These texts when cited plainly, without commentary, contribute to an attitude that Jewish personhood is humanly more precious to God than that of the non-Jew. This in turn creates a readiness to accept apparent discriminations that are expressed in practical halakhic codes when taken at their face value. Some of these teachings are dismal in their rendering an image of the other that is diametrically contrary to the prime teaching that all human beings are created in the image of God.

For example, every yeshiva boy, including you, was taught the famous comment on Gen. 22:5 where Abraham instructs his lads accompanying him and Isaac, "Abide you here with the ass, for you are like the ass"—"*Am ha'domeh le'hamor*" (*Bereishit Rabba* 56:2; Rashi, Deut.23:18).

This text follows upon the "blessing" accorded to Hagar that her future son, Ishmael, "will be like a wild ass among men; his hand will be against all, and the hand of all against him" (Gen. 16:12). The sense in which this is to be taken is debated by Talmudic sages. Rab Yohanan suggesting that "while all people are bred in civilized surroundings, he would be reared in the wilderness," while Resh Lakish explained that he will be "a savage among men in its literal sense. Whereas all others plunder wealth, he plunders lives." In a further

midrashic comment on the phrase, "And the hand of all against him—'*kol bo,*'" the two words, "*kol bo,*" are rendered as one word, "*kalbo,*"—"his dog," meaning, his hand and his dog's are alike. Just as his dog eats carrion, so does he eat carrion" (*Genesis Rabba* 45:9).

In an even more dehumanizing depiction, there is the infamous teaching of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai "that the graves of idolaters do not impart levitical impurity" since "you are called 'man'—'*adam*'—but the idolaters are not called 'man'" (BT *Yebamot* 61a, also BT *Baba Metzia* 114b). Rabbi Simeon deduces this from the proof text "And you [only you] My sheep, the sheep of My pasture are men" (Ezek. 34:31).

Bar Yohai's point comes in the context of defining the application of the laws of ritual defilement of a corpse based on the text, "When a man dies in a tent" (Num. 19:14). The primary halakhic impact of Bar Yohai's interpretation of the text is to restrict this defilement to that of a Jewish corpse, a kind of halakhic leniency. The attitudinal impact is far reaching, however, and ethically devastating when taken literally. An example of such a literalism is apparent in the Soncino English translation on tractate *Yebamot* (p. 405, footnote 2) where we are instructed quite straightforwardly that it was "held by R. Simeon b. Yohai to denote, as distinct from the other terms for 'man' (*enosh*, *gever*, *ish*), only an Israelite who, as a worshipper of the true God, can be said to have been like Adam created in the image of God. Idol worshipers having marred the Divine image forfeit all claim to this appellation."

But, by contrast, Soncino, in another comment on the same text (English translation of *Baba Metzia*, pl. 651, footnote 7) delimits the option of such a dehumanizing reading, explaining that this exclusion was "only, of course, from the point of view of ritual defilement... In any case the phrase loses all harshness when it is remembered that it is simply a Talmudic idiom denoting 'inhuman' and that its author was R. Simeon, who had been so bitterly persecuted by the Romans." This comment is intent upon damage control against literal renderings which have the effect of undermining prior foundational commitments of the Judaic heritage.

Similarly, Rabbi Baruch Ha-Levi Epstein (in his *Torah Temima*, a nineteenth-century popular anthology of classic rabbinic aggadic comments upon the Bible) is quite perplexed over this teaching. (Num. 19:14, note 67, commenting on his citation of *Yebamot* 61a). "How could anyone exclude even the idolater from the appellation '*adam*-man'?" He concludes that "in truth it would appear that the Talmud is not to be taken literally to suggest that the idolater is not included in the appellation 'man'. On the contrary there are many verses where the appellation 'man' refers only to the idolaters... Rather the intent is that where the Almighty speaks to Israel regarding Torah and *mitzvot* and denotes them by the appellation '*adam*' He intends only [in that sense to be addressing] Israel and not the nations that are not involved in *mitzvot*." Do you see his strategy of limiting the significance of this issue to a particular target audience and restricting its impact there? By applying this mode of understanding he is controlling the damage to Judaic and ethical sensibilities that would be wrought were Bar Yohai's dictum to be taken literally.

The texts cited against Ishmael, likening him to an ass or a dog, if left to themselves, literally, are in direct contradiction of the foundational teaching to that man is created in the image of God. Now either we have to say that with the advent of Jews, God's image became limited to them—patently absurd when we consider that any non-Jew may choose to convert and embrace Judaism (an option not available to members of the animal kingdom). As rational bearers of God's covenant, we must use interpretative approaches that will neutralize those morally explosive remarks. This can be done by distinguishing between essential and non-essential meanings.

For example, it is quite common for groups in conflict with each other to characterize each other in defamatory terms, and the more outrageous, the better. This is known as polemics, from the Greek word "*polemos*"—war. It is critical to emphasize that essential meanings are not intended in such statements, however, intensely they are expressed. When the wars are over and the polemical defamations are no longer relevant, because the two sides have come to their senses and become reconciled, then it is disastrous to the moral sensibility for those pieces of commentary to remain fixed in their literal frameworks as if providing permanent insight on the nature of the other. This is where the unceasing work of later commentary is critical to correct these impressions.

You may ask: Why not altogether remove these texts or change them instead of engaging in these elaborate interpretative, and possibly dangerously unconvincing, gymnastics? Censorship of these works is not an acceptable hermeneutical strategy—because one would have to rewrite too much of earlier traditions since so much of earlier religious literature is constructed from a polemical fabric. Remember that at their inception, most religions are militant, rebelling against the old ways of thinking and behavior. Much of their posture is polemical, in order to impress their new adherents with the potency of their essential messages. Censorship of long-held canonical, sacred texts is therefore an impractical approach. For a traditional culture, interpretation serves as the most effective form of criticism. One brackets the unacceptable religious

judgment by reconstructing it through commentary and interpretation. The main task of such criticism is to separate the essential from the non-essential elements. Critical respect is then paid to the past without stifling the developing moral imagination.

In this regard, we spent a long time discussing the perplexing rulings of Maimonides regarding murder. He first ruled in his *Laws of Murder and Preservation of Life* (1:1) that "whoever kills a human being (ben-adam) transgresses on a negative precept, as it says, 'Thou shalt not murder' (Ex. 20:13). And if he murdered intentionally before witnesses, he is to be executed by the sword." This seems to validate the universal prohibition of murder—against any human being—and its indiscriminate punitive consequences. This universal implication gets confounded when we realize that this only reflects the censured and amended printed text whereas the original manuscripts have it only as "whoever kills an Israelite..."

Yet he further rules according to the printed text (2:11) that "At first whoever killed a resident stranger (*ger toshav*) is not to be executed by the court, as it says, when a man schemes against his neighbor (*re'ehu*)" (Ex. 21:14); and it goes without saying that he is not executed for killing a gentile. As you yourself suggested, this seems clearly to imply that the gentile's life is not as significant as that of a Jew. The term "at first" does not appear in the manuscripts, suggesting that even now there is a distinction in bringing the murderer to ultimate justice depending on whether he murdered a Jew or a gentile.

Maimonides derives this from the second-century halakhic midrash (*Mekhilta de Rashbi*, *Nezikin* 4) which, commenting on the verse "And if he comes presumptuously upon his neighbor to slay him with guile: Thou shalt take him from My altar, that he may die" (Ex. 21:14), deduces that the term "his neighbor" comes to exclude its application to others not Israelites. Maimonides included in these others even the "resident strangers" (*Kesef Mishna*).

So according to the text, murder of a gentile seems not to be a punishable offense. Even with the printed text, the idea that such offense was not punishable seems to violate our ordinary sensibility and would seem to support the notion that the gentile's life is of lesser significance. What happened to the earlier teaching that made all human life equal before God and for which He demands a human accounting according to Gen. 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed?" The sage Issi b. Akabyah was puzzled by this dissonance: "Before the giving of the Torah we had been warned against shedding blood. After the giving of the Torah, whereby laws were made stricter, shall they be considered lighter?" (ibid). He is content to explain that "In truth the sages said: he is free from judgment by the human court but his judgment is left to heaven." And this is also how the Maimonidean gloss, *Kesef Mishna*, asks us to understand Maimonides' ruling in Chapter 2:11. It is only from human punishment that he is exempt, but not from the judgment of heaven. So presumably the universal norm against murder applies as well to the murder of a gentile. Otherwise why would the murderer be accountable to Heaven?

But we are still not satisfied. Even if that murder will be avenged by Heaven, it does yet seem to reflect a devaluation of human life to try one murder before the human court and another only before Heaven. How is a student of Judaism to assess the disparity in justice that is codified in the twelfth-century code of Maimonides which became the textbook for all subsequent Jewish instruction against the earlier foundational Torah? Which becomes the figure and which the ground, which the essential and which the secondary text that has to be explained in light of the essential?

Censorship of long-held canonical, sacred texts is an impractical approach. For a traditional culture, interpretation serves as the most effective form of criticism.

Maimonides' primary position can be guessed at in the conclusion of his code (Judges 12:4) where he insists that "the Sages and Prophets did not long for the days of the Messiah that Israel might exercise dominion over the world, or rule over the heathens or be exalted by the nations...but that Israel be free to devote itself to the Law and its wisdom, with no one to oppress or disturb it, and thus be worthy of life in the world to come" predicting that "in that era there will be neither famine nor war, neither jealousy nor strife. ...The one preoccupation of the whole world will be to know the Lord." It is clear what constitutes Rambam's essential values. We see in these more sweeping and imaginative aspirations where Maimonides' deeper longings tend.

Remember that the Rambam was codifying earlier laws even if they could not in fact be applied by the Jewish community under the social and political conditions of his day. This may well account for the lacunae in this area of capital punishment. In our contemporary ethical, social, and political context we should realize that were we to apply Rambam's teaching on this point we would be doing a disservice even to

Maimonides. We are meant after all to carry the tradition along, to improve upon it according to our best lights, remembering that "the holy One, blessed by He, insists on truth" and does not want us to "ascribe false things to Him" (BT *Yoma* 69b). This is an example of what taking responsibility for a tradition means.

Don't let anyone persuade you that one should not raise this issue in print, that it's like washing the dirty linen of the Jewish people in public, an act of disloyalty. Haim Ganz of Yeshivat Shavei Hevron, for example, criticized the National Religious Party for condemning Goldstein, insisting that "a father does not say he condemns his son ... you are not judges" but "are charged with paying attention to the pain behind the incident." Ganz apparently forgot the condemnation of Jacob for his sons' brutal murders.

He also forgot the teaching of the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael (Pesach-Petichta) in which Jonah is charged with excessive loyalty to his clan while neglecting his duty to God's values: "He insisted upon the honor due the children (Israel) and did not insist upon the honor due the Father (in Heaven)." It is a false test of loyalty to one's family and nation to tone down the condemnation of mass murder just because it is committed by one's co-religionist. On the contrary, it is a true test of one's commitment to God and to justice to judge such crimes "blindly."

If you're looking for a genuinely Torah-true view, you do better to follow the teachings of Rabbi Yehuda Henkin (formerly rabbi of Beth She'an Valley). After the incident last year in which a Jew shot and killed a captured terrorist who had been bound hand and foot, he submitted an article on the prohibition regarding the killing of non-Jews and the murder of captured terrorists to a halakhic journal. It was rejected on the grounds of a misplaced anxiety that publishing the ideas might subject the Torah to ridicule. To this, Rabbi Henkin responded: "Is not your fear a mere apprehension while the murders discussed—not only of bound captives—are already being committed, and every murder causes more damage than taking ten articles such as mine out of context?" I say aye to this argument.

This exaggerated caution can be likened, says Rabbi Henkin, to the mistake of Rabbi Zecharia ben Avkulis who did not issue a lenient halakhic ruling which might have prevented the war with Rome out of concern that it be misconstrued. For this he was held responsible by the Talmud for the destruction of the Temple (BT *Gittin* 56a).

Let's be honest with ourselves about the educational approaches of the *yeshivot* where Goldstein was trained; they are among the finest possible in the Diaspora. Did our rebbes ever engage us in this kind of moral discussion, mediating those problematic texts for us with the guidelines of a refined moral sensibility? Did we not instead have our moral questioning suppressed or muddled on the claim that we are not in a sufficiently lofty moral level of "spiritual" fitness to question the "seemingly" discriminatory statements found in many traditional texts that we hold so dear.

I recall being lectured to here in Israel by a prestigious scholar and Rosh Yeshiva that the reason for Ishmael being characterized as "*pereh adam*," literally, manlike wildness, rather than "*adam pereh*," literally, "wild man" (Gen. 16:12), is to emphasize that in his essence he is a wild thing, (wildness, the noun), and only peripherally in form, human (man, the adjective). There was no mediation here of a moral sensibility commensurate with the prior teaching that all humans reflect the divine.

These dicta are left unexplained at best, quickly glossed over, but at worst are taken as holy writ, explicitly or by implication. This is not atypical of the educational treatment such texts received in the kinds of schools that we attended, here and in the Diaspora.

And I might add that Rabin's casting the burden of Goldstein's moral failure upon the conditions of the Diaspora simply misses the point: "He grew up in a swamp whose roots are overseas; even here, they are foreign to Judaism, they do not belong to us." While it is true that Goldstein comes from New York, the outlook in which he was trained is as much a part of the yeshiva world of Israel as it is of the Diaspora. The unwillingness of that world to allow for moral criticism, on the simplistic religious assumption of the tradition's inherent perfection, has spawned an exaggerated, unholy triumphalism as well as a racism which bore fruits in the violence of the Jewish Defense League, the Kach movement, the Machteret, and finally in Hebron.

It also provides a kind of generalizing effect of prejudice upon the attitudes of the religious public and even the secular public that is influenced by this tradition when transmitted in an unmediated format. The ordinary student who takes a matriculation exam and therefore has had to master significant portions of *Tanakh* (Hebrew Bible) is also left to his own devices on countering the apparent discriminations of the Bible.

Rabin would do well not to squirm out of this quagmire so blithely by ascribing its poison to "overseas" roots. Allowing his negation of the Diaspora to sway his attention to such a serious breach of Israeli morality is a disservice to you, my son, an Israeli serving in the army over which Rabin is currently commander-in-chief. As such, he might look to himself, about his own culpability in the failure of the military command of Hebron to protect innocent worshipers. It would seem that there is enough moral failure to go around for all of us.

(Continued on p. 95)

ISRAEL AFTER HEBRON

Hebron's History



Hebron, circa 1920

Hebron (also referred to in the Bible as Mamre, Alonei-Mamre, and Kiryat Arba) has turned into the focal point and litmus test of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process: It is here that it recently faced its most severe challenge, the massacre at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, and it is here that the Rabin government will have to face down and symbolically (and perhaps physically) crush the militant right-wing opposition—or go down in defeat (meaning at least a temporary halt to the peace process and a return of the Likud to power). And it is here—the only place in the occupied territories where Jews are living in the very heart of a large Arab population center—that the religious nerve ends of what remains in essence a nationalist conflict are most exposed and frayed. This juxtaposition of religious sentiment and nationalist politics has its roots in history, ancient and modern.

The town, originally set in a small valley and some slopes among rolling, semi-barren hills, dates from the early Second Millennium B.C.E. When Abraham—who spawned both Isaac and, through him, the Jewish people, and Ishmael, and through him, the Arabs—passed through in the eighteenth century B.C.E., the Canaanite town was located at the southern edge of present-day Hebron, at a site known as Jabl (or Tel) Remeida (a name worth remembering, since it may be the site of the Rabin government's first ejection of Jewish settlers from the territories).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all lived in Hebron at different times. Abraham bought the Cave of the Machpela—the word, meaning "double," apparently refers to the two caves that existed at the original site—from Ephron the Hittite for 400 silver shekels and there buried his wife Sarah. It was also at "Alonei-Mamre" that Abraham was promised the Land of Canaan—"from the River of Egypt unto the great river, the Euphrates"—by God. Later, Abraham himself was buried in the cave, as were Isaac and Jacob and their wives, Rebecca and Leah. According to one rabbinic tradition, Adam and Eve are also buried at the site—and Arab sources occasionally refer to it as the "Tombs of the Fathers of the World."

Soon after the town was captured by one of Joshua's captains, Caleb ben Yefuneh, the town began to don the accoutrements of centrality and sanctity. It was appointed one of the Levite "cities of refuge" and, around 1,000 B.C.E., young David was there anointed

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Benny Morris is a historian. He is the author of The Birth of the Palestinian Problem, 1947 - 1949, *and* 1948 and After.

king and ruled from it, over Judah and, later, Israel for seven and a half years, before capturing Jerusalem and turning it into his capital. It was in Hebron that Absalom raised the banner of revolt against David his father.

Following the destruction of the First Jewish Commonwealth (587-586 B.C.E.), Hebron's population was exiled to Babylon, and Edomites (Idumaeans) moved in. It became a "Jewish" city once more only after its capture by the Hasmonean King Yohanan Hyrkanus at the end of the second century B.C.E., when the population was forcibly converted to Judaism (along with most other Edomites, including Herod's father). It was Herod, the Romans' friend and master builder, who constructed the magnificent thirty-nine-foot wall that today still surrounds the 1,000-square-yard tomb complex.

At the start of Ottoman times, the Jews of Hebron apparently got their first taste of massive Muslim violence. In 1517, the community was subjected to a pogrom.

A pall of vagueness surrounds much of the next 1,800 years. It is known that the town was captured by the Jews and then razed by the Romans during the Great Revolt (66-70), but Jews apparently continued to live in it. In Byzantine days, a church was built over the cave, although Jews apparently were allowed to enter at least part of the church area to pray.

The following "Arab period," which began when the Arabs swept out of Arabia and conquered (among other regions) Palestine, stretched almost continuously from the early seventh century until 1967. Jewish and Arab histories began to splice, and it is to these early splicings that the later conflicting nationalism eventually looked. The Arabs renamed the town Khalil al Rahman (meaning the beloved of the Merciful One [God]), a reference to Abraham, father of Ishmael (brother of Isaac), although there are Arab sources that continued to use Habra or Habran. (Today it is referred to simply as Al-Khalil.)

The Arabs converted the cave basilica into a mosque. But the Jewish community apparently prospered during the following centuries: The Jews were given supervisory rights over the cave complex and the Khalif Omar gave the community permission to build a synagogue adjacent to the Herodian walls.

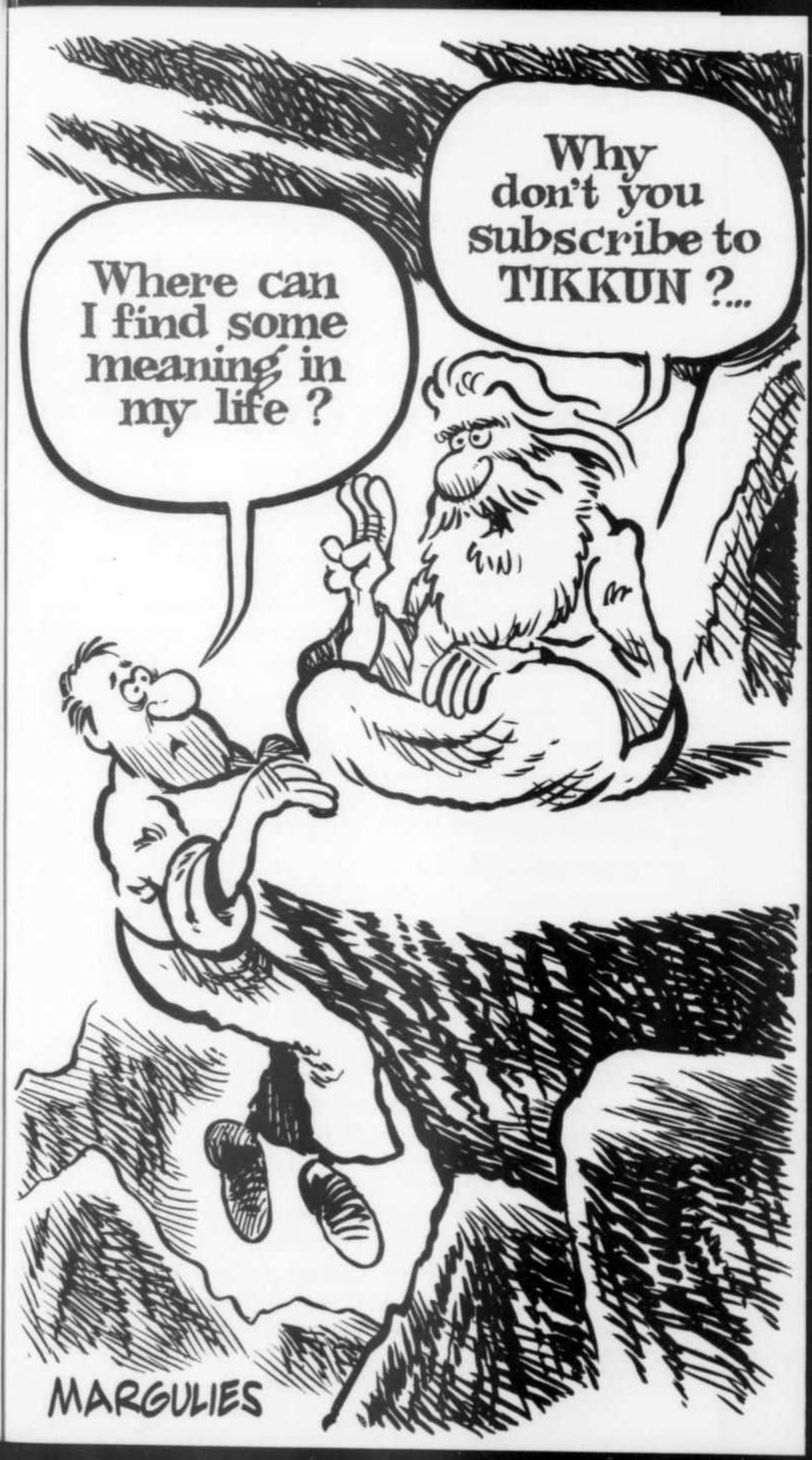
The Crusaders, who conquered Hebron in 1100, expelled the Jews and converted the mosque and the adjoining synagogue into a church and monastery. Maimonides and Benjamin of Tudela, who visited the town later in the century, make no mention of a Jewish community. While individual Jews may have settled there toward the end of Crusader rule, the community was only reestablished after the town was reconquered for Islam by Saladin in 1187. Nachmanides (Moshe Ben Nachman or the Ramban), a leading Spanish Jewish philosopher and kabbalist, who immigrated to Palestine in 1267, once suggested that he might "go to Hebron to dig a grave for himself there" (though eventually he was interred in the Haifa-Acre area).

The renewed Muslim rule, however, was not as tolerant as in pre-Crusader times: In 1266, the Mameluke Sultan Baybars forbade Jews (and Christians) from praying in the cave; a Christian traveler reported from Hebron in the first half of the fourteenth century that "Christian and Jewish people are regarded by them [Muslims] as dogs and they do not allow them to enter such a holy place." Apparently, the Jews were allowed to pray in a specially built antechamber which had a window that looked onto the cave. During the following centuries, the Jewish community remained minuscule—at the end of the fifteenth century there were only twenty families, who lived in a "Jewish Quarter." Jewish refugees from Venice made glass; others spun cotton. The town was regarded as one of the four holy towns of Judaism—alongside Jerusalem, Safed, and Tiberias. Many regarded Hebron as preferable to Jerusalem as a burial site.

At the start of Ottoman times, the Jews of Hebron apparently got their first taste of massive Muslim violence. In 1517, the community was subjected to a pogrom. Murad Bey, one of the Sultan's officials, led or at least connived at an attack in which many died, much property was plundered, and the survivors fled.

But, allowed to filter back, the community during the following years grew and prospered. Refugees from the Spanish persecution made their way to the town and several well-known Kabbalists, including Elijah de Vidas, arrived from Safed. Hebron became a Jewish religious center: There was learning and a fashion of asceticism, castigation, and flagellation. Sabbatai Sevi, the false messiah, visited the town in 1663 on his way to Egypt and converted some of the community, plunging it into crisis. This, and economic stagnation, led to the town's decline as a kabbalistic center.

With the arrival at the start of the nineteenth century of a small Ashkenazi Chassidic community (Habad), the community again began to grow. In 1820, they set up a yeshiva and library. By the end of the nineteenth


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century, the town had 1,500 Jews, with five synagogues. They lived on charity from the Diaspora. Like other Jewish sites in Palestine, the Hebron Jewish Quarter emptied almost completely during World War I due to a lack of food and funds. The quarter began to recover following the British conquest (1917) and numbered 700 (amidst an Arab population of 18,000) by 1918.

While the first major bout of anti-Zionist violence by Palestine's Arabs—in 1920-21—somehow passed over Hebron's Jews (who were "Old Yishuv" and non-Zionist), Hebronites were prominent in the mass anti-Jewish rioting in Jerusalem in April 1920. On April 4, a column of 500-600 pilgrims from Hebron, walking in procession through the Old City to celebrate the Nabi Musa festival, ran amok at the Jaffa Gate. Bursting out of the Old City walls, they attacked Jewish shops, shopkeepers, and passers-by along Jaffa Road. One Arab witness, an educator named Khalil al Sakakini, recorded in his diary: "I saw a Hebronite approach a Jewish shoeshine boy, who hid behind a sack ... and take his box and beat him over the head. He screamed and began to run, his head bleeding.... [The rioters] shouted: 'Muhammad's religion was born with the sword.'"

Palestine calmed down in 1921. But the underlying causes of the eruption remained: Hatred for the newly arrived alien infidels. Russian- and Polish-speaking Jews, whose influx involved gradual, piecemeal purchase of lands and displacement of Arab tenant-farmers in the countryside and economic competition in the towns, and, over the longterm, threatened *national* displacement and dispossession of the Arab majority by an eventual Jewish majority. The threat was underlined by the advent of the British. The Ottoman rulers, fellow Muslims, had by and large opposed Zionism and the Jewish influx and land purchases: But the British, even before their conquest of Palestine, had announced in November 1917 (the Balfour Declaration) that they supported and would promote the establishment in Palestine (the Arabs interpreted this to mean in *all* of Palestine) of a "Jewish National Home" (which the Arabs and the Zionists interpreted as meaning, eventually, a full-blown, sovereign Jewish state).

The Arab fears were well grounded: In 1881, Palestine had contained about 25,000 Jews and half a million Arabs; by 1929, there were 830,000 and 165,000. (The ratio was to grow still more dramatically in the Arabs' disfavor during the following two decades, with Palestine containing some 650,000 Jews and 1.25 million Arabs in mid-1948.) Side by side with numerical growth there was political and economic development—in which the Zionists even more markedly outstripped the Palestinian natives. Hence, while the Muslim preachers and politicians who incited their congregants to pillage and murder in Jerusalem in 1920 railed against the Jews' encroachment on and threat to Muslim sites and dominance in the Holy Land (it was easy to whip up popular passions using religious arguments and images), in fact they were protesting against the *political-demographic* threat that Zionist immigration and the Zionist enterprises *in toto* posed to Arab Palestine. These very Arab fears and resentments were to be given even bloodier expression in the summer of 1929, when Arab mobs ran riot and attacked Jewish neighborhoods and settlements around the country (killing altogether 133 Jews). The ostensible trigger to the outbreak had been fears that the Jews were taking over the Wailing (Western) Wall, which was also holy to Muslims (here according to tradition Mohammed had tethered his horse before ascending to Heaven), and were bent on taking over the whole Temple Mount compound, with its two sacred Muslim sites, the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aksa Mosque. But again, the Arabs, now led by Jerusalem's Grand Mufti, Hajj Mohammed Amin al Husayni, were motivated more by the overall political-demographic challenges and fears than by concrete religious considerations. This time, one of the foci was to be Hebron, where, paradoxically, the Jewish community was "non-Zionist."

On August 23 and 24, in the worst concentrated atrocity before 1948, Arab rioters—from among the townspeople and from neighboring villages—murdered sixty-four (some records say sixty-seven) Jews and wounded another sixty in a two-day pogrom in Hebron. The rioters were incited and, apparently, led by a few of the town's notables, including Sheikh Talab Marka, who purveyed the rumor that Jews had just killed thousands of Arabs in Jerusalem.

There was only one British policeman in the town, R. Cafferata, who survived the ordeal and testified that his fellow (and subordinate) Arab policemen did nothing to stop the rioters. Indeed, one or two played a part in the carnage. Cafferata vividly described what happened:

> On hearing screams in a room I [rushed in and]... saw an Arab in the act of cutting off a child's head with a sword. He had already hit him and was having another cut, but on seeing me he tried to aim the stroke at me, but missed.... I shot him low in the groin. Behind him was a Jewish woman smothered in blood with a man I recognized as a police constable... in mufti. He was standing over the woman with a dagger in his hand. He saw me and bolted into a room close

by... shouting (in Arabic) 'Your Honour, I am a policeman'. I got into the room and shot him.

Most of the Jewish dead were women, children, and elderly men. Synagogues, *yeshivot* and homes were put to the torch; Torah scrolls and prayer books were vandalized. But dozens (and perhaps hundreds) of Jews were sheltered and saved by Arab neighbors before the British authorities brought in reinforcements and regained control. After burying the dead (and silencing the Arab burial party, which had begun to sing), the British evacuated the remainder of the community to Jerusalem in a convoy of trucks and buses. The Arab population lined the roads and looked on in silence.

In 1931, thirty-five families returned and resettled in the town but on the night of April 23, 1936, after the eruption of the rioting that signaled the start of the Arab rebellion, the British authorities evacuated the Jewish community for fear that there would be a repeat of 1929.

During the following decades, many Israeli Jews lamented the abandonment of the Jewish Quarter and the IDF's failure to conquer the town in 1948. Jewish Hebron was one of the few Jewish sites abandoned during the Zionist march toward statehood: It was seen as something shameful and inexcusable, and it was partly to wipe out this sense of failure and shame that Israeli ministers such as Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, both senior officers in 1948, allowed or covertly supported the Jewish resettlement of Hebron in the late 1960s and 1970s. The settlers themselves openly spoke of the resettlement as revenge for what had happened in 1929.

Hebron was at last conquered by the IDF on June 8, 1967, the fourth day of the Six Day War. It fell without a shot—and its conquest was seen by Orthodox nationalist Jews (of the sort who would soon fill the ranks of Gush Emunim) as a major scene of the first act of national (and perhaps universal) redemption. The Arab inhabitants greeted the Israeli armored columns with shuttered windows and empty streets; thousands more fled, apparently fearing retribution for 1929. No massacre materialized—but those who fled were never allowed back, and remained refugees in East Jordan. After centuries, Jews were once again allowed into the Cave of the Machpela to pray at the tombs of their forefathers. The new rulers promptly introduced a delicate balance between Jewish and Arab rights of access, IDF troops overseeing and guarding the entrances.

Using subterfuge, in April 1968 a band of extremist supporters of "Greater Israel," led by Rabbi Moshe Levinger (who emerged as the leading activist of Gush Emunim), rented the Park Hotel in Hebron for one night, ostensibly to hold the Passover Seder feast. Levinger promised the Israeli military authorities that they would leave the next morning—but stayed for a month, and only left in May after receiving promises from a hesitant, deadlocked government that they would be allowed to settle permanently in Hebron. Initially they were moved to the military government compound, and later, in early 1971, to the new Jewish neighborhood of Kiryat Arba, whose construction had in principle been approved by the cabinet as early as the end of the 1968, when the Mapai ministers bowed to the pressure of their coalition partners from Rafi (Moshe Dayan), Ahdut Ha'avoda (Yigal Allon), the National Religious Party (Yosef Burg), and Herut (Menachem Begin).

As it had drawn Levinger, so the history of Arab-Jewish blood-letting and the mirage of a Jewish Hebron has since drawn dozens and perhaps hundreds of Jewish extremists, bent on the expulsion of the Arab inhabitants, to its bosom. Today they inhabit Beit Hadassah and its satellite houses, Tel Rumeida—the site of a half dozen caravans filled with Kach supporters—and Kiryat Arba, and a dozen small hilltop settlements to the south, east, and west. Levinger and his supporters had targeted Hebron because of 1929: because it was, beside Jerusalem, the historic cradle of Judaism; because it contained the religion's second holiest site; and because, heavily populated with Arabs and with a long tradition of Islamic militancy, Hebron represented the supreme challenge. If Jews could be inserted into this lion's den and prevail, they could safely move into any site in the West Bank; if the Arab locals could here be overcome, the whole of the West Bank could be Judaized. Hebron would serve as the arena for the crucial battle between Judaism and Islam for the whole land of Israel. For the settlers, it might be said, whoever rules Hebron rules the land of Israel, much as whoever rules the Temple Mount in Jerusalem holds the keys to redemption. In present circumstances, for all concerned, Hebron is the thin edge of the wedge.

It is for these reasons that the current struggle over Hebron has such political significance and eschatological resonance. Both sides—Jews and Arabs—and both sides within the Jewish camp—moderates and Great Israel supporters— know that, in principle, the battle for the West Bank will be won or lost in Hebron.

But Jewish and Arab accounting in Hebron also feeds, and feeds directly, on post-1967 events, principally the pivotal attacks in the cycle of Arab

(Continued on p. 94)

Beyond Good and Evil
Crime and Cultural Politics

Ellen Willis

I used to dream about burglary. I'd come home and discover, with anguish bordering on despair, that someone had broken down my door and ransacked the place. The symbolism was embarrassingly obvious, but only when I was awake. Over the years I had that dream, I also had a few real break-ins, but none of them were nearly so traumatic—except for the last and, by any rational standard, the least serious. Actually, it was the second of two burglaries in two successive summers in the early 1980s. The first time, my New York apartment was hit while I was away on vacation; I didn't lose much, and reacted with grumpy urban fatalism.

But I must have been more upset than I thought, because the following summer, when I went to spend a month at an artist's colony in a small New England town, I took along all my earrings—none of them worth much except to me—so as not to leave them unattended in the city. At the colony, instead of keeping them in my unlocked bedroom, I secreted them in a drawer in my studio, where I spent most of my time.

A few days later, while I was at breakfast, someone broke into the studio through a window and stole...not my typewriter, which was in plain sight, but my bagful of earrings. I was devastated out of all proportion to my loss and so enraged at the thief that I truly wished I could kill him in some particularly painful way. *Him*: I envisioned my enemy as vaguely young and raceless, but definitely male, till one day an image of "him" as a teenage girl popped into my head. I was totally disconcerted; there followed a weird moment of what I can only call brain-clearing, as my murderous fantasies subsided.

But I didn't really get over the incident for a long time: I'd been so determined to be in control, my efforts had backfired so badly, and though I got the message I couldn't accept it, not with any kind of grace. Still, I don't think I ever had the burglary dream again.

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"Crime"—the social issue, the social crisis, the source of recurrent and escalating waves of panic, revulsion, fury, and angst—is not the same thing as crime. When we worry about "crime," we don't mean all illegal activity, or all anti-social behavior. As the Left has been fond of observing (characteristically scoring a debating point while missing the real one), our tacit definition includes "crime in the streets" but not "crime in the suites." Nor does it encompass all forms of violent crime. "Violence" as an issue overlaps with "crime" but is not identical: wife-beating, for example, is "violence" but not "crime." Assassinations don't qualify; neither does organized crime, except for car-theft rings and the gang warfare attendant on the drug trade (or more precisely on its prohibition).

The acts that count as crime in the public imagination (I'm dropping the quotation marks, but I mean them to be understood) are those in which the collision of particular criminals with particular victims is unpredictable, uncontrollable, seemingly arbitrary and meaningless. Crime victims go about their normal daily routines and run into the mugger on the corner, the customer who turns out to be a robber, the bullet meant for someone else, the gunman on the Long Island Railroad. They are robbed, raped, killed by intruders in their homes and workplaces, plundered in absentia by burglars and car thieves. The criminals are generally strangers; when they are known—the disgruntled employee, the neighbor's teenage son, the classmate who thought the victim looked at him funny—the relationship must be tenuous and the act appear to come out of the blue.

Like everything else, the danger of crime is unequally distributed, a continuum varying from neighborhoods where crime itself is so "normal" that to call it unpredictable or arbitrary is something of a paradox, to those where it remains less a practical reality than an intimation of menace, fed by the media and the knowledge that all borders are permeable—including those that separate housing projects ruled by gangsters from the rest of the world. But what increasingly unites

the more and less vulnerable is a sense of embattlement against a capricious, malevolent oppressor, along with a conviction that government has abdicated what is after all its most elementary excuse for being—insuring the personal safety of its citizens.

Committed to reason and optimism, leftists tend to be out of touch with their own messy feelings and therefore with the stew of desire, fear, aggression, and guilt that bubbles in the cultural unconscious.

Crime became a national political issue around 1968, and (unlike "violence") it has always been the Right's issue, woven into the fabric of the anti-Sixties backlash. It would be far too simple to say that fear of crime propelled the Right to power. But that fear has been crucial, not only as a potent force in itself but as a focus for more generalized anxieties about social breakdown. While political and social conservatives have explicitly linked crime to the decline of moral absolutism and traditional social authority, the connection is embedded in a cultural psychology far deeper than conscious belief. For the criminal also represents the marauder in ourselves, held barely in check by the institutions and values of "civilization": the family, religion, sexual morality, parental authority, traditional education, the work ethic, unambiguous sexual roles, a clear hierarchy of race and class, a firm social consensus about what constitutes virtue and vice. These are, of course, precisely the institutions and values that have been radically disrupted by the upheavals of the past thirty years. When politicians from Dan Quayle to Daniel Patrick Moynihan blame crime on single motherhood and call for restoring the stigma of illegitimacy, they invite us to associate criminality with sexual license, safety with self-restraint. Similarly, the Right's demand for retribution, especially the death penalty, and its contempt for the rights of the accused speak not only to people's fear and anger, but to their guilt.

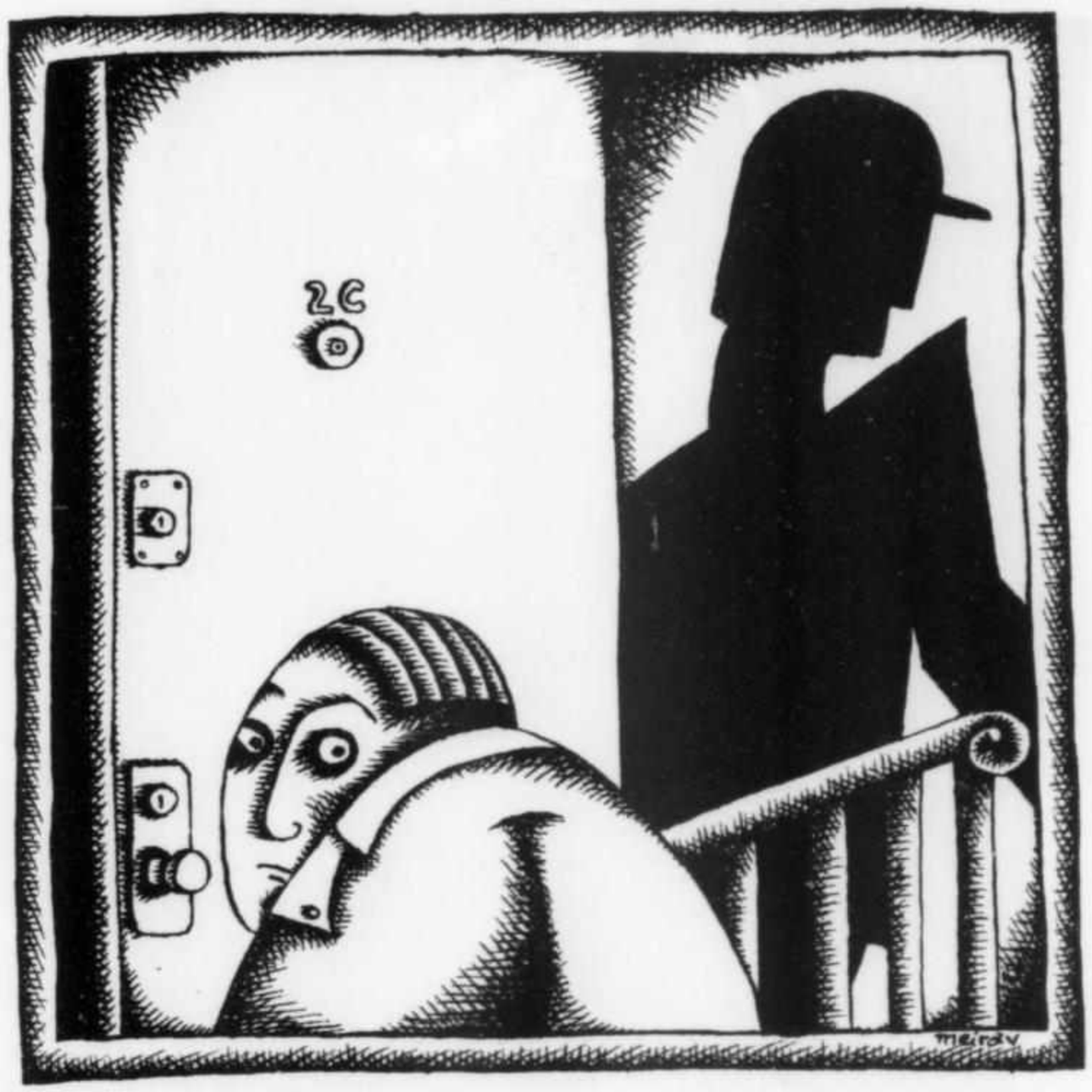
The Left (broadly defined to include liberals and "progressives" of whatever stripe) has had the same trouble with crime as with social issues generally: Committed to reason and optimism, convinced of their moral rectitude, leftists tend to be out of touch with their own messier feelings and therefore with the stew of desire, fear, aggression, and guilt that bubbles in the cultural unconscious. While anti-abortionists thundered against baby-killing, evoking the specter of moral and sexual anarchy, feminists and other leftists talked antiseptically of "choice" and "reproductive rights" (or, in the case of Left pro-lifers, insisted that opposition to abortion is simply about the sanctity of human life and has nothing to do with fear of sex or women). While Ronald Reagan appealed to the longing for freedom and power stirred up by the events of the '60s—effectively linking those desires to capitalist expansion, nationalism, and the assertion of white male muscle—Walter Mondale gamely promised to raise our taxes.

Left thinking about crime has followed a similar pattern. In the '60s, most leftists denied that crime was a real problem, dismissing it as racist code invented by right-wing demagogues. Much effort was devoted to explaining away the disproportionate presence of the poor, minorities, and especially Blacks in crime statistics: The statistics were faked; or the police and the courts discriminated against Black men, arresting and convicting them more often; and anyway, why harp on crimes committed by the poor and ignore white-collar crime and corruption, not to mention the government's depredations in Vietnam or the legal theft and fraud corporations committed every day? At the same time, paradoxically, many radical leftists proclaimed their identification with criminals as fellow outlaws and rebels: Crime, they argued, was a revolutionary act, and all convicts political prisoners. The flip side of this attitude was cop-hating; the police represented state repression, brutal by definition. Those who did concede that street criminals victimized people, not least the law-abiding population of their own impoverished neighborhoods, tended to reduce the issue to economics: Crime was merely the product of poverty and unemployment, an alternative way of making a living.

I saw things differently. This was partly because my father was a policeman, whose version of the struggle between cops and robbers (not to mention the struggle between cops and liberals) I'd grown up with, and generally found convincing not only because it was first-hand, but because it was informed by far more irony, humor, and respect for complexities than most Lefties I knew displayed. Anyway, it was truer by far to the everyday reality of my life in the East Village, where I'd been victimized more than once, where I followed a set of defensive routines (keep the money in my shoe, the keys in my hand during the long walk home from the subway at night; bring the stereo out to my parents in Queens if I'm going away for more than a few days), where I always felt relieved when I saw a cop on the street.

As a radical who took for granted that crime was

embedded in an oppressive social system, I was not incognizant of my own privilege in relation to the punks I feared. Yet I knew that the core of my fear was not about begrudging a bit of property redistribution. Nor was it only about the threat to my physical person, though that was important; at bottom it had to do with a radical loss of control over the space I occupied in the world. Even before feminism made the implications clear, I knew there was something deeply arrogant about the guys' outlaw fantasies, something I couldn't be part of.



These days, Left romanticism about crime has gone the way of Left romanticism about a lot of things, and the more blatant forms of denial are rarely heard. Of course, conservatives now dominate the terms of the crime debate so thoroughly that none but the most mildly reformist attitudes get any kind of mainstream forum. But leftists have also been chastened by events. I don't feel competent to jump into the ongoing argument about whether the crime rate has *really* gone up. (As I write this, The *Nation*'s front page informs me that violent crime rose only 3.5 per cent from 1983 to 1992; on the other hand, Lynn Chancer, a radical sociologist who teaches criminology at Barnard, says that a number of different types of studies show significant increases during the same period. In neither case do the statistics distinguish between "crime" in my sense of the word and other kinds of violence.) Yet simply from looking at datelines in newspapers it seems clear that crime has spread out, that suburbs and small towns are no longer havens. And no one, The *Nation* included, disagrees that inner-city crime—the proliferation of guns, the phenomenal homicide rate, the obliteration of usable public space—is catastrophic; Black people themselves have long since made crime by young Black men a major topic of concern.

Still, greater realism about crime doesn't necessarily translate into deeper understanding. Bereft of illusions about the innocence of the oppressed, leftists have fallen back on the familiar thesis and antithesis of their ideological tradition, economic determinism (poverty, joblessness, racial inequality, laissez-faire social policies, the fiscal strangulation of cities are the "root causes" of crime) and moral idealism (street criminals are infected with the "me first" greed and ruthlessness of the capitalist ethos, or, as a recent TIKKUN editorial put it, are suffering from "an epidemic of social alienation induced by the breakdown of community and the triumph of selfishness.") Communitarians and other Left cultural conservatives have melded Left and Right moral arguments, linking crime to rampant individualism and moral relativism in both economic and personal life. While each of these arguments gets at certain truths, in the end they reinforce the most fundamental assumptions of the society they propose to change.

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It should hardly need saying that high levels of crime are related to intolerable social conditions, which the Left must in any case oppose for their intrinsic harm. Yet criminal acts are not mechanistically, neutrally



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"caused" by one "force" or another, but committed by people with feelings, motives, and values that shape the social world as well as being shaped by it. Leftists with a moral perspective are well aware of this; they insist on individual as well as social responsibility. But the moral language they invoke poses the opposite problem—it ignores the ways in which our very conception of morality is shaped by culture. By this I mean not how a society supports or discourages particular virtues, but how it arrives at basic categories like good and bad, right and wrong in the first place.

In this culture, "morality" carries the explicit or unspoken modifier "Judeo-Christian," with its profoundly patriarchal connotations. Our vocabulary for discussing values is grounded in the religious equation of morality with God's (the father's) law. We speak of "good" and "evil" as cosmic abstractions, with an existence prior to any concrete act: While evil inheres in our "animal nature" and arises from insatiable material, sexual, and egotistical desires, goodness is Godlike, an aspect of the non-material soul rather than the body, and is defined by altruism, sacrifice, and the conquest of desire. This moral system assumes the need to combat the human inclination toward evil by imposing coercive social controls as well as the internal controls of conscience and guilt. The key institution for its perpetuation is the family: It is parents' job to suppress their children's evil impulses and insure that they develop the requisite inner controls. Within the patriarchal family, the father is the representation of a transcendent God; through fear of and identification with his authority, children (especially boys) embrace the moral order.

Suppose, though, that this mystical dualism between soul and body is a human invention, designed to ward off terror of unpredictable nature and of our own mortal, vulnerable flesh? That our suspicion of sex in particular and desire in general is part of the same fear? That genuine goodness—empathy, respect for others' rights, a sense of responsibility—does not come from stifling desire but is rather the spontaneous analogue to satisfaction and pleasure in life, to confidence that one's needs will be respected? That evil—pleasure in cruelty, indifference to suffering, solipsistic selfishness—stems not from the indulgence of insatiable desire but from rage at humiliation; not from a swollen ego but from fear that one doesn't exist? This radical, secular view of morality suggests that crime is not so much a failure of the socialization process as one of its logical results; that in demonizing children's desire, the family provokes the very destructive impulses it must then imperfectly repress.

When cultural conservatives, Right and Left, defend the "intact" family, organized religion, and, in Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's phrase, "Some notion, however secularized, of original sin" as bulwarks against crime, they appeal quite overtly to the traditional moral framework. It is perhaps less obvious how that framework applies to the "softer" forms of Left moralism often expounded in TIKKUN—those that recognize the crucial role of frustration and humiliation in bringing out the worst in people, and indeed make an ethical imperative of addressing psychic pain. Typically, this kind of progressive morality relates individual moral failure to the collective abdication of humane values by the powerful: Unjust economic and social policies create both material hardship and intolerable psychic stress that poison personal, familial, and communal relations. Nonetheless, this standpoint implicitly shares the traditional view of morality as the disciplining of desire. Whether posed in individual or collective terms, moral failure is defined as the triumph of selfishness and individualism over an ethic of caring and communal responsibility.

From a cultural radical perspective, a fundamentally erotic rather than altruistic motive is the basis of a democratic community.

From a cultural radical perspective, in contrast, individual freedom and self-fulfillment are the basis of real morality, and the desire for the pleasures of connection, rather than the subordination of self—that is, a fundamentally erotic rather than an altruistic motive—is the basis of a democratic community. The underlying social conflict, in other words, is not selfishness versus caring, or individual versus community, but freedom versus domination.

It's intuitively obvious that happy people don't blow each other's heads off, yet there's enormous resistance to considering that destructiveness may have its source in misery, not some primal sadism. Underlying the resistance is a lurking fear that to understand all is to forgive all, to identify with the criminal and lose heart for revenge. (It's this fear, I suspect, that animates many Jews' insistence that the crimes of the Holocaust are a dark mystery beyond human comprehension, that to try to understand Nazism in psychological or social terms is to trivialize it.) Tracing crime to unhappiness seems to mock the efforts of ordinary people who have bought the idea that their own deepest desires are bad and have spent a lifetime taking pride in repressing them. After all, unhappiness does not *cause* crime, any more than poverty or unemployment

does. Feelings of powerlessness and joylessness, rage and despair are common in this society—and not only among the poor—yet most people don't become criminals. If such feelings give rise to destructive impulses, willingness to act on them is curbed—or not—by guilt and fear of punishment or social ostracism.

Crime is the alternative tyranny, a form of domination inflicted by people who are excluded from the "legitimate" power structure or prefer, for whatever reason, to "freelance."

In this sense, social conservatives are justified in worrying about the relaxation of controls. Thirty years of cultural revolt against social hierarchy, sexual repression, the patriarchal family, and other authoritarian institutions have liberated malign as well as positive energies. Given father's historic role in the transmission of morals, associating crime with the decline of marriage and the two-parent family is not as illogical as it sounds. Yet there remains the basic contradiction in the conservative view: A moral system based on repression and coercion, on the stifling of desire, generates enormous stores of anger and frustration that can never be totally controlled. When those emotions find expression in destructive behavior, it is seized on as proof of intractable human evil and the need to maintain or increase repression. The result is a closed circle, a self-perpetuating, self-reinforcing system of tragic dimensions. Democratic social movements by their very nature weaken existing authority while intensifying people's consciousness of their discontents and raising their expectations; yet building a democratic culture, laying the social groundwork for a genuine, spontaneous morality, is a long-term proposition. In the meantime, the gap between the decline of old structures and the creation of new ones is filled with all sorts of social disruption. This is our present dilemma, the common theme of our most volatile social issues, from the crisis of the family (women's double shift, the feminization of poverty, children's insecurity, open hostility between the sexes) to the crisis of urban crime. While disruption of any kind makes people anxious and tends to provoke backlash, crime makes the backlash seem necessary, a matter of simple common sense.

Crime is political, although not in the way the Left romantics once claimed. Crime is the alternative tyranny, a form of domination inflicted by people who are excluded from the "legitimate" power structure or prefer, for whatever reason, to "freelance." While the established authorities (in this country, at least) act in more or less predictable fashion—allowing people to avoid punishment by obeying the rules, or calculate the risks of breaking them—criminals exercise power arbitrarily, in accordance with their own immediate needs or whims. Since they are not part of any institutional establishment, not answerable to bureaucracy, law, or any tradition of noblesse oblige, they can't be petitioned or bargained with. It's this absence of rules and negotiating room that most terrorizes their victims and makes leftists' comparisons with the "crimes" of the ruling class irrelevant for most people. (With minorities and marginal groups, on the other hand, the authorities often feel free to disregard the rules, acting as capricious as criminals and exciting comparable hatred.)

Crime, like racism, fascism, or authoritarian politics in general, is a means of revenging and redressing humiliation. Since the social contract, as criminals see it, offers them no respect, they command respect with guns. They turn to their own uses the "badness" stamped on their identities by parents and teachers, racism and class bias, contempt for youth, rejection of difference. The most blatant of these uses is masculine protest. The alternative tyranny is almost exclusively a man's world: Aggression and physical force are male prerogatives, the streets a male domain. For the iconic Black teenage boy in the 'hood and his fellows at the bottom of the social heap, crime eases the galling contrast between their sense of entitlement to male power and society's merciless erasure. For white men of the working and lower middle classes, who see their status eroding on all fronts, crime can be a last-ditch assertion not only of self but of a social world. Masculinism serves as a bond between the outlaw and his enemies and rivals, the men who wield real social power. Which might explain why, though he may savage the real or imagined agents of his impotence (rich people, white people, Black people, women, Jews), he more often chooses the targets closest to hand, his neighbors and peers. Revenge becomes another word for self-hatred.

What I'm suggesting is that the psychopolitics of crime are as complex as the dynamics of domination itself. This holds true, I think, not only for criminals but for their victims and for the mass of Americans who are clamoring that something must be done, or are determined to get hold of guns and do it themselves. Humiliation, powerlessness, violation and negation of self, hunger for revenge are common coin—as is the outrage that one's

(Continued on p. 96)

Christopher Lasch, American

Jean Bethke Elshtain

The voice of Christopher Lasch seemed to me particularly, even peculiarly, American. The work of some writers—especially academic writers whose prose appears to have emerged out of a generic Brand X can or container of some sort—could be more or less that of anybody, anywhere in late modernity. Not Lasch. His roots were American. His fundamental sources—Freud and certain Freud commentators, until his late forays into the roots of Christian thought being the big exception—were American. His concerns were primarily, if not exclusively, American. He once told me that he thought the jeremiad as a great writerly form deserved resurrection: He was thinking of Jonathan Edwards. No wonder he perplexed. And vexed. And angered. I recall occasions when certain highly agitated persons literally hissed at the sound of his name. At first this took me by surprise. Now very little surprises me about the sorry state of American political discourse. But that is another story. This is a tale of Kit, as those who knew him and those who loved him called him.

Kit first entered public consciousness for his extraordinary essays in the *New York Review of Books*. That was when I started to clip and save every Lasch piece that appeared. His ken astonished. He wrote with equal facility and discernment about American foreign policy, the twists and turns of the New Left, the vagaries of American history generally, the family, psychoanalysis, education, the emerging therapeutic mentality, popular culture. The essays, in turn, lead many—myself among them—to his book *The New Radicalism in America*, not Kit's first book but one that helped to crystallize his voice and presence as one of America's premier public intellectuals. Within that defining volume, Kit took up many of his favorite figures and themes: American optimism and sense of unboundedness, American arrogance (inescapably tied to the optimism), America's dominant story about herself—progress, expansion, power. To this, Kit counterpoised an alternative story or motif, told by such Americans as Orestes Brownson and Randolph Bourne, two of Kit's enduring thinkers.

Well before "women's studies" was an ongoing enterprise, or the feminist movement in its incarnation of the past several decades had hit the scene, Kit took up and took seriously powerful and great American women—Mabel Dodge Luhan and Jane Addams figured prominently in *The New Radicalism*—and the theme of women's organizations and friendships. He edited the first—and last—volume on *The Social Thought of Jane Addams*, a text, now out of print, that gathered together a selection from that formidable figure's massive oeuvre. He also pioneered work on the relationship between American social reform and the project of "social hygiene," namely, the tendency of many social reformers to think it is their task to clean up not only the messes generated by industrialism and its many effects, not all of them beneficial, but to straighten out people's psyches as well. Kit thought ill of this latter enterprise because of its tendency toward prying and know-it-allism and because it—therapeutic intervention under the auspices of reformers or, even worse, the state—rapidly became a substitute for serious social reform and political thought. This got him into no end of trouble in many quarters, including, I daresay, some who write for this particular publication. But that was Kit's way. He never cut and trimmed and trembled at the prospect of giving offense. He didn't relish controversy—I found him among the most gentle of figures—but he never backed away from it either.

As I try to put Kit's life and work into focus—not such an easy task this soon after losing him—it strikes me that one could gather it all together under the general rubric of an attempt to find and to secure secular sources that would offer occasion for the stories of human sin and redemption, the coming to

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grips with evil in oneself and the world generally, the possibilities of grace and awe found in religion or, to be more precise, in the Christian narrative. It would have been so interesting, if "fate," as Kit put it, had not intervened, to have seen him work this out further. With his late pieces on Gnosticism and his return to thinkers like Brownson and Edwards, Kit was struggling with what can only be called "religious questions," inescapably associated with questions of identity, to be sure, but also with larger philosophic and political matters of human strength and fortitude, and human frailty and venality. That he began to publish extensively in *The New Oxford Review*, a Catholic journal that admits into its pages its fair share of "seekers" who are neither denominationally nor doctrinally secure, offers important clues in this regard. Kit would not want to be thought of as a religious thinker but he was, in the words of his friend, Robert Coles, "religiously musical." This was a Kit somewhat unfamiliar to readers who knew him primarily through his works on the family and politics and through his feisty polemical pieces on that disgraceful charade he considered the present state of American politics.

Kit shocked many people, for example, a few years ago when, in a *Harper's* magazine forum he delivered himself up of the view that divorce should be made very difficult, if not more or less forbidden. This prompted cries of outrage from a number of the other participants in the discussion and from readers. I recall one conversation Kit and I had with a rather well-known feminist commentator who took him on about divorce and said that her own post-divorce situation was a happy one for herself, her ex-husband, and her child and that that was much better than persisting when one knows one has made a "mistake." I think Kit thought we should have greater patience learning to live with our mistakes and that we might, in fact, discover—with such persistence—that it wasn't such a mistake after all. That is, he feared that Americans had lost a sense of persistence and perspective. That we had become quick on the trigger. Short on the ability to realize that the current moment will not last forever; that, perhaps, the habit of living with one another over time, over the long haul, builds layer upon layer of history and attentiveness and respect that current unhappiness and inconvenience and—that all pervasive term "insensitivity"—cannot even imagine. We Americans had, in other words, lost patience. And it is only patience that sustains marriages, communities, and even polities. In our avid enthrallment with the beckoning green light at the end of Daisy's dock we denude ourselves of the textured richness of what it means to perdure. This is not a perspective that works well for a bumper sticker or the Oprah Winfrey show.

How does all this comport with his interest in Freud? Freud, after all, is associated with therapy, if not "the therapeutic mentality"; Freud is a great thinker in the European tradition who thought America a bungled experiment; and Freud was associated in his time, and ours, with greater sexual freedom and many of the other imperatives Kit found so troubling. I think it comes down to this: Freud, in his own way, reminded us of *limits* and limits is what Kit was all about. Freud spoke of limits to enlightenment, limits to projects of transcendence, limits to what finite and mortal human beings can do confronted with the great and inexorable force of necessity. It is well to remember that certain cultural Freudians (Marcuse comes to mind) committed a serious sleight of hand with Freud's work when they tried to turn Freud into one of the totems of liberationism. They did this by translating—by just simply altering—Freud's texts, substituting "scarcity" for Freud's "necessity," as if "necessity," for Freud, was primarily an economic category. But it was not. It was the great and inexorable goddess of Fate in the very ancient, very Greek sense. This was not something that could be overcome with a superabundance of goods of every kind and a growing superfluity and optimism. For Freud, this sort of thinking represented an illusion and a dangerous one at that. So Kit's Freud was the Freud who reminded us, over and over again, that we were limited and mortal and that while there might be defensible grounds for hope there were no good grounds at all for optimism.

I fear I may, by now, have offended many readers in this summary of at least a few of the themes in Kit Lasch's life and work. But, then, that in itself would be in keeping with his life-long commitment to telling the truth even, or especially, when it hurts. In his final book, *The True and Only Heaven*, a work that offers a counter-narrative to America's story of progress, he commented that "limits and hope" were the themes he had woven together. Limits and hope defined Kit Lasch. Those of us who hoped with him find it very difficult to face the final limit that took him from us and will one day greet us all face-to-face: death. We Americans would like to repeal death. But necessity will have its due. There is no other voice quite like his in American public intellectual life today. To say we will miss him is an understatement but one of the sort Kit himself favored, because it makes the point with some economy of style. □

The Woman in the Balcony
On Reading the Song of Songs

Daphne Merkin

I.

Everyone lies about sex, more or less, to themselves if not to others, to others if not to themselves, exaggerating its importance or minimizing its pull.

Perfect sex is like some Platonic essence, taking place only in our heads, safe from the incursions of an always-blemished reality. Sexual reality demands that we bury our erotic disappointments and leads us to credit a moment's tremorous fulfillment with the whole earth-shaking shebang. We cannot experience sex *in situ*, except as it is acted upon us, and we can only imagine the erotic life of others. As befits the workings of fantasy and guesswork, the mythology of sex tends toward florid stereotypes: Men in general are supposed to prefer their sex served straight up—like strong drink, without the diluting agent of affection. Lower-class men are supposed to be either quick and unsubtle or, like Lady Chatterly's lover and the shepherd in the Song of Songs, unexpectedly gifted in the sensual arts. Then there are rich men, gone soft with too many pleasures, men on the order of King Solomon, who chase skirt frenetically, showering gold coins, but who ultimately lose out to poorer and more potent rivals.

Women, the whole lot of us, are a mystery, insistently confounding. ("*What do women want?*" Even Freud threw up his hands.) Supposedly incapable of sex without intimacy—of physical ardor without at least the whisper of love—we insist from time to time on following our baser instincts and thereby put the whole tentative patriarchal order in jeopardy. Just look at Eve. Ignoring the compliant Adam's lead, she bit covetously into the infamous apple and thereby sundered carnal and spiritual desires forever.

When speaking of erotic matters it seems we are always at pains to guard against gender anxiety, to differentiate between subject and object, between the *he* and the *she*: who's on top and who's on bottom. From biblical times through the present secular moment, the power play of lust—frivolous but telling—remains a constant if encoded theme. A strict division of behavior along male (designated as active) and female (designated as passive) lines runs like a hidden thread in the Judeo-Christian narratives that have been passed along, pulling them tight against homosexual and/or androgynous encroachment. (This is in distinct opposition to the construction of morality put forward by the ancient Greeks and Romans, wherein boys and women were treated as interchangeable objects of male desire, with the former culture glorifying homosexuality and the latter accepting it as a matter of course.) Thus, down the slope of religious history it is unmanly to seek fulfillment where none is forthcoming, but it is just like a woman to long for what she cannot have.

Accordingly we have had in the Judaic formulation of the world—which was the only one of the archaic civilizations to prohibit homosexuality per se—clearly demarcated territories: The godhead is kept rigorously unanthropomorphized, while the sexes are kept in their places at opposite ends of the seduction equation as the sorely tempted male and the dangerously blandishing female. There have naturally been some lapses or detours along the way—most notably the kabbalistic strategy of investing the Jewish concept of divinity with erotic power, leading to a "restitution of primordial androgyny," as Elliot K. Ginsburg suggests in his essay "Jewish Mysticism." But the kabbalistic mode, which embraced mysticism and its attendant sacral devices, calls attention to itself by the very audacity with which it went against the mandated principles of the religion it sought to invigorate.

Enter the Shulamite, whoever she be, love object or

[Throughout my piece, I have referred to three translated versions of the Song of Songs: the Anchor Bible, the Soncino, and the Jewish Publication Society. In each case, I chose the specific translation that struck me, purely subjectively, as most in the spirit of the original Hebrew.]

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subject, bestride (or ridden by?) this frisky colt of a text—canonical glitch or deliberate oversight, Jewish original or Persian derivative, holiest of holies or pure, unadulterated smut—called, with arrant hyperbole, The Song of Songs. Enter the dusky-skinned Shulamite ("I am black but comely" [Song of Songs 1:5]) filled with boundless longing, just like a woman….

Or is she in fact just like a man? The pinprick of gender anxiety haunts the reader almost from the moment one begins reading this most sacrosanct piece of erotica.

Marcia Falk, a feminist biblical scholar, in the introduction to her audacious, albeit meticulously researched translation of the Song, points out that "there is hardly a trace of coherent plot" and that "the voices do not conform to masculine and feminine stereotypes." All the ordinary mooring points of identity are so tentatively established in this famous love poem—a dramatic dialogue with remarkably diffuse boundaries—that the reader is left feeling deeply uncertain as to exactly *who* is doing the talking, much less what sex the person is.

This first sliver of doubt brings others in its wake, revolving around the basic dyad of Self and Other upon which the enigma of amorous choice is based: Are you me, am I you, are you there, are you gone, are you worthy, are you ridiculous, who is the male (i.e., dominant-aggressive) and who is the female (i.e, subordinate-receptive)? *Who is the lover and who is the loved?* Indeed the emotional lability of the writing—all in a dither over the Other, but the Other as representative of aspects of the Self—is so omnipresent that one could easily imagine it being presented, in another context, as psychiatric evidence of dangerous symbiotic yearnings on the part of two mental patients, the "David and Lisa" of biblical times.

It is one of the givens of literary interpretation that there will be, inevitably, almost as many perceived contexts as readers, and what looks like signs of pathology to one reader may seem indicative of the greatest psychological health to another: Turn unhealthy symbiosis on its head, in other words, and you end up with blissful mutuality.

Feminist biblical critics, ever on the lookout for hidden textual persuaders, have been quick to adduce progressive—that is, antipatriarchal—signs from the Song's suppleness, or sexual amorphousness; there is, among this crowd, glowing talk of the narrative's "egalitarianism," as if its author, unbeknownst to him/her, was a hoary prototype of the contemporary jargon-infused orthodox-feminist redactor… er, reader.

So you have an academic reader like Ilana Pardes, in an essay full of opaque, Bakhtinian-inspired theoretical stratagems ("'I am a Wall, and My Breasts like Towers': The Song of Songs and the Question of Canonization"), referring to the Song's "metaphoric fluidity, whereby the lovers use the same vehicles to interpret one another in their cocourting [sic]." With similar pyrotechnic ease at overlooking time warps and bending a given text to her will as a reader, the French psychoanalytic critic Julia Kristeva, in an essay entitled, "A Holy Madness: She and He," comments passingly on "the listless quality of the woman lover," only to go on, rather confusingly, to hold said listless lover up as a domestic woman warrior: "The amorous Shulamite is the first woman to be sovereign before her loved one. Through such a hymn to the love of the married couple, Judaism asserts itself as a first liberation of women [!]"

Of course, the hunger of female Bible scholars to find some trace of their own predicament in the onion-peel layering of the Old Testament is entirely understandable. Marcia Falk, in her author's note, explains that her "growing need… as a woman and Jew, for sources more directly connected to my own origins led me in search of Hebrew literature that included the authentic voices of women." This need helps explain why Falk seems compelled to locate in this perplexing artifact echoes of her own concerns—although she's just gotten through admitting that the poems don't offer much in the way of gender specificity, much less validation. To this wishful end she distorts, however eruditely, parts of the original material beyond recognition on more than one occasion. There is, for instance, the implausible opening line of stanza 13 as Falk renders it—"At night in bed, I want him"—which suggests the zipless fuck was invented way before Erica Jong came along to coin the phrase. It also explains how like-minded readers have managed to hear a sanguine "collective female voice" in the "daughters of Jerusalem" to whom the Shulamite addresses her warnings about love, in spite of the fact that these unwilling soul sisters are as likely to jeer at the Shulamite's advice as to applaud it: "What is your beloved above another, / O fairest of women, / What is your beloved above another, that you thus adjure us?"

Perchance one can discern in the Shulamite's predicament an early instance of sexual harassment, replete with unconscious racist overtones…. So long as we are merrily throwing caution and credibility to the winds, we might as well go a step farther. Who knows but that biblical times had their wily subversives just as we do—their Princes and Madonnas who had a say along with the clean-living, God-fearing Pat Boone types. What if this most famous of love poems,

preserved in the alembic of a deeply paternalistic tradition that is yet canny enough to give the opposition its due, constitutes a stab to the heart of the very androcentric religion in which it nestles? "His hands are rods of gold/ Studded with beryl;/ His belly a tablet of ivory,/ Adorned with sapphires." Any putatively male love object described with such a decided lack of virility and such a decidedly female sense of adornment presents ripe territory for study. Could it be that what we have before us is nothing less than a daringly prescient ode to bisexuality? *The Male Lover as Odalisque: Gender Inversion in the Song of Songs*. Chills run through one at the exegetical possibilities such a hypothesis would open up, whole graduate departments trained to spot the semiotics of kinky doings in the late biblical period.

II.

There is, patently, nothing straightforward about the Song of Songs. Even before you get to the text itself—one of the five *megilot* included in the *Ketuvim*, or writings, section of the *Tanakh*—you encounter controversy. While the late historian Gerson D. Cohen has argued that "the Song of Songs has suffered basic neglect in modern scholarship," Marvin Pope begins his introduction to his thickly appended translation for the Anchor Bible series with the following observation: "No composition of comparable size in world literature has provoked and inspired such a volume and variety of comment and interpretation as the biblical Song of Songs."

Then there is the vexed issue of authorship. The time-honored conservative view, which attributes the poems to King Solomon, has an undeniable (if unprovable) logic to it. Who better to pen poems with a prurient undertone than the Bible's own homegrown voluptuary? Less tradition-bound scholars have tended toward a looser theory of authorship, though there is little consensus as to which reconstruction is the most persuasive. In the past generation or two, as the field of biblical criticism has come into its own and its methodology has been refined, a wide variety of historical influences have been discerned in the poems, each in turn cast aside as soon as a tantalizing new lead presents itself. Parallels have been found with Syrian nuptial customs (specifically the mode of celebratory description known as the *wasf*,) Mesopotamian fertility cults, Tamil love poems (which feature another swarthy beauty at their center), the Gita-Govinda, Hindu hymns celebrating the dark-skinned goddess Kali, and a brief Akkadian text. Then there is the smorgasbord approach, alluded to by Pope, which views the Song as "a syncretistic torrent from a variety of springs from different cult areas, Canaanite, Byblian and Babylonian."

Along with Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and Psalms, this slim collection of verses—also known as the Canticle—occupies a much-disputed position in the biblical canon; the book has inspired a flurry of interpretive strategies bent on controlling if not outright dousing the fiery passion contained within. These strategies have themselves been looked upon with a suspicious eye: Gershom Scholem, for instance, in his *Origins of the Kabbalah*, cites one Meir of Narbonne, who, in the 1240s, thought that "the commentary on the Song of Songs deserved to be destroyed in order to prevent simple souls from being ensnared by it."



The response of simple souls has occasionally surfaced in stray remarks—such as the one by Samuel Ibn Tibbon, who is said to have heard from his father, Moses (himself the author of an elaborate commentary on the Song, written sometime in the Middle Ages, which explained the text as representing a union of active and passive intellects), that the Song of Songs was merely a love poem. Still, fears of the common reader's misjudging the book are rife: Rabbi Akiba is quoted as saying, "He who trills his voice in chanting the Song of Songs in the banquet house and treats it as a sort of song has no part in the world to come." Staunchly defended as the "holiest of holies" by none less than Rabbi Akiba (also known for indulging himself in the farther shores of mystical speculation and emerging with his belief unscathed), the book remains a strange contender for inclusion and has generally been conceded to be a bit rich for less-than-sophisticated

palates. "It is like a lock," observed Sa'adya Gaon in the early tenth century, "whose key is lost or a diamond too expensive to purchase."

Reader, in other words, beware. But who can resist a challenge? The intelligentsia least of all. Precisely because of the difficulties it poses, the Song of Songs is beloved of theorists, traditional and nouveau alike. The postmodernists, especially, warm to its "charming confusion," as Pope calls it. And with good reason: If ever there was a narrative cut to fit the current fashion in dense literary speculation, this one qualifies. Various special-interest groups—be they religious, deconstructionist, or feminist—have tried to get in on a piece of the heterodoxical action, all laying claim to a unique relationship with this avowedly independent-minded text, all attempting to fudge the question: How did so conspicuously ungodly a composition—a piece of undeniable erotica, filled with enough sexual punning ("Your lips drip honey, bride," or, "Let my love enter his garden. / Let him eat its delectable fruits" [Song of Songs 4:11,16]) to make Shakespeare blush—slip by the defenders of the faith, the old men with beards?

And then, like dominoes toppling, a whole slew of questions comes in the wake of that first one: How could the rabbis of the first and second centuries have failed to sound the alarms and allow the Song to secure for itself a sanctified niche, right up there with the creation of the world and the destruction of the Second Temple? Were they duped into stretching the category of sanctity wide enough to let in a bastard text? Or did they discreetly look away, recognizing that a religion based on 613 commandments could do with a little leavening, a welcome touch of sensuality?

What is clear in any event is that it is well-nigh impossible for the contemporary reader to approach the Song of Songs in a virginal spirit; the book's fame—or, more rightly, infamy—as the *I Am Curious, Yellow* of Jewish literature precedes it.

III.

The notion of the taboo in Jewish thought has always struck me as hazy, underdeveloped in its implications.

Unlike Catholicism, a religion that comes with a firmly entrenched sense of sin—and a concomitant sense of atonement—Judaism makes, perhaps, insufficient fuss about the mysteries of the flesh. In the Old Testament everything is handled in a matter-of-fact, so-called "naturalistic" fashion, from Noah's drunken near-incest with his daughters, to David's wandering eye, to Kohelet's sexual malaise. This inclination to regard the promptings of the id with a certain bemused tolerance is true of rabbinic literature as well: If a man can't handle his urges, advises the Talmud, he should go to a neighboring town and seek relief. It is important to note, in any discussion of the Judaic treatment of eros, that it is the only religion that historically had no specific sexual rites. As Gerson D. Cohen has been credited with observing, the love of the couple *sanctified by the law* has always been at the core of the Jewish stance toward lust and its consequences. This emphasis on demystifying the erotic by placing it in an ongoing conjugal context is a canny and subtle one; without fully disavowing its power, the focus on situating sexuality within marriage works toward weakening the hold of the unattached woman, as well as the hold of the carnal in general. Yael S. Feldman, in an essay that maps out a psychoanalytic reading of the Bible, argues along these lines: "It is therefore no accident that the domestication of the sexual drive is a major theme throughout Genesis, rivaled only by the analogous gradual sublimation of the aggressive drive." If Judaism can be said to be about the contextualization of problematic drives, then anything that is inherently outside the law of religion—the wild landscape of eros for instance, a region without recognizable markings—must be brought inside and given boundaries.

Yet with all its emphasis on the connubial satisfaction of libidinal claims, there is in Jewish tradition a shrewd recognition that marital life and the business of ritual observance will not fully tame the stirrings of desire. So it seems entirely in keeping with this sense of *realpolitik* to allow the unrulier passions some representation. Which goes a long way to explaining the acceptance not only of the crazy-for-your-body lyrics of the Song but the groanings of the eponymous Kohelet, who, with his nihilism and decadence, might have found greater outlet for his frustrations had he lived in the latter half of this century.

But leave it to the rabbis to gyp us hapless readers. See them wink knowingly at one another behind their *s'forim*, their big black books of learning, getting ready to renege on their offer. Watch as they pat themselves on the back for their sense of embracing irony about the human animal, stuck forever between the worldly and the transcendent. The rabbis—of whom it can be said, as the critic George Steiner said of Freud, that they had "a mastering bias toward solutions"—were, after all, stuck themselves between appeasing the more absolutist among their constituency and keeping the less inflexible of their followers within the fold by attending to their wishes. And so we are handed a bill of exchange in which a Shulamite virgin is meant to

stand in for Israel and a tumescent Solomon is meant to stand in for God, their passion to be acknowledged but never gratified. (Renunciation as a form of holiness is something those sniffy non-Jews Henry James and Edith Wharton would surely have cottoned to.) What at first might have appeared to be a blistering piece of amatory literature turns out to be, via the magic of hermeneutics, a dutiful homiletic; instead of gaping at a skin flick we find ourselves watching a video made for the annual synagogue dinner.

How like a people who have God in the head to insist that God is in their loins too!

IV.

I have never been a true believer, not even as a child brought up in an Orthodox Jewish family. For one thing, I never understood my role in the religiously ordained hierarchy, other than to mutely observe and admire. I think of myself on Saturday mornings, standing in the women's balcony with my mother and two sisters, at a careful remove from the men's club going great guns downstairs. All those patriarchs and their sons busily thumping around with the Torah, carrying it aloft and singing its praises, opening and closing the curtain of the *Aron Hakodesh*, the Holy Ark, where the Torah scrolls were stored, or officiously dispensing *aliyot*, calling up young and old to the *bima*, the raised platform in the center, for a bit of momentary glory. That club included my father and three brothers, included anyone who wasn't female and excluded anyone who was: me, for instance, blusher carefully applied (rub it *in*, my mother would insist on the way to *shul*), the essence of self-conscious, unblossomed girlhood.

At what point did I stop listening to the text of the service, my years of Jewish day school and immersion in Hebrew endured for naught, the better to concentrate on the subtext—the palpable sexual tensions I sensed around me in the synagogue? All those dolled-up women, dressed and made up to kill, *their eyes like doves', their hair as black as goats, their teeth like a flock of ewes all shaped alike, their lips like woven threads of crimson silk, their breasts like twin fawns*. Why did they gleam and glisten so, I wondered, only to be cordoned off from the objects of their ministrations: the men downstairs, who cast appreciative glances upward and then went back to their noisy activities?

The burden of sexuality—both its allure and its danger—is placed on women, this much I see. Can it be that if the men venture upstairs, come too close to the expensive scents wafting through the women's balcony, they'll be bewitched, throw their marital vows out the window? Perhaps they'll cheat or, worse yet, leave their wives and families altogether; perhaps they'll go crazy with fleshly greed. Down the corridors of my mind, doors open upon a flurry of long-ago, briefly glimpsed images, scenes from a synagogue on the Upper East Side of Manhattan: sudden divorces and shamefully short marriages; older, prosperous husbands paired with younger, blond wives; trade-ins and -ups. The doors close, and order is restored. All is once again as it should be: We are here, the matriarchs and their daughters, stuck behind the *mechitza*, that inviolable dividing wall, whether balcony or curtain, consigned to an attitude of expectant readiness.

There are other questions that go unanswered because to ask them would be to imply that the bourgeois verities of life are up for grabs and thus their very asking is taboo. How interesting, really, is *fulfilled* desire? What happens, that is, after you get the girl, find yourself actually bedding the Shulamite? How sustainable is erotic passion once you place a ring upon its finger? How sustainable is erotic passion, period?

The Song of Songs is read aloud in synagogue at the end of the long eight-day Passover holiday. It is doubtful I was present to hear it at an age when I could most have appreciated its uniquely untheological nature; once I had put in an appearance in my spring finery on the first two mornings of the holiday, I generally forswore further *shul* duty. But even if I was to be found in my seat in the women's balcony, I doubt I was listening anymore by the time I could have grasped its message, the secret it clutched to itself, behind its reputation for smuttiness.

It would be years before I stumbled upon a true consideration of what that secret was, before I teased out that sexual desire is a lie we tell ourselves, more or less. Romantic enamorment is a fabrication that serves to conceal the immense relativity of all passion and the virtual invention of the love object. "How sustainable is erotic passion?" *It was a question nobody asked because nobody wanted to know the answer.* Tell the truth about it and you did so at your own peril, as I discovered when I heard the tale of my great-uncle, Raphael Breuer. Simple artistic soul that he was, he undertook in 1912 to write an interpretation of the Song based on literal rather than allegorical reading: It was, as Samuel Ibn Tibbon had hinted centuries before, merely a love poem. So strong was the reaction of the German-Jewish community of which he and his family were an influential part that Breuer not only had to rescind the introduction to his commentary but the gaffe is said to have cost him one of the most prestigious chief rabbinates in Germany.

And so, burdened by my particular history as a woman, I come to reacquaint myself with this infamously titillating text. How well will it live up to its reputation as the dirty, red-hot book of Jewish literature? I must admit that, after several readings to make sure I haven't somehow missed the climactic moment as I used to do when I read the late novels of Henry James, I don't find the poem particularly sexy. Resoundingly lyrical, yes; intimate and charming, undeniably; in the nature of an aphrodisiac, hardly. Perhaps it is the overwhelming rusticity of the amorous imagery—love that is like the crocus of the plain, the lotus of the valley, the apple in the wood; love that leaps over mountains and bounds over hills—that leaves me, a constitutionally urban creature without much direct experience of flora and fauna, at a loss. Perhaps it is all those trailing flocks of goats and ewes come up from the washing that give the narrative a faint whiff of barns and cow manure. I muse upon the possibility that allusions to the bestiary once carried a greater erotic charge than they do now. At any rate a zookeeper's vision of loveliness is not mine. Nor, for that matter, is a banker's; otherwise the persistently mercantile notion of comeliness that the Song advances—the lover's beauty is compared to gold, gems, ivory, sapphires, and marble—would undoubtedly move me more.

I find myself without sufficient frame of reference in the jumble of other metaphors as well. Lebanon. The tents of Qedar. Carmel. Clusters of grapes. More Lebanon. True, there is praise for a vulva that smells, improbably, of apples, but what is one to do with *that* piece of information?

Which leads me to the tale itself, rather than the telling. Goethe was supposed to have viewed the Song as "the most tender and inimitable expression of passionate yet graceful love that has yet come down to us." Nice words, although they still don't help me get a grip on the story.

Like, what exactly *happens* in it? I look ahead a couple of centuries and come upon this, from Kristeva: "The Song of Songs gives Judaism the unique trait of being the most erotic of abstractions, the most ideal of sensualities." Nice words again, although they leave me with a blurry feeling around the edges. All this obscure, high-flying description, and I'm beginning to feel like the proverbial Hollywood philistine who prefers his literary plots pitched in one sentence or less.

Here, for better or worse, is what I've made of this "enigmatic parable," as it's been called. Once you've put the credos aside, you're left slipping around in the liquid atmosphere of the text without a foothold. Interestingly enough, what almost all of the readings of the Song have in common is a notion of union, marital or merely consensual, presumed to be implicit within the poem itself. This interpretive bias can be discerned as much in the various secularist stances as in the religious-allegorical approach, which raises the bawdy goings-on of the poem to a spiritually correct level by treating Israel as the symbolic bride and God as the symbolic husband—a familiar sacral conceit, used by the prophets Hosea and Jeremiah.

But to this reader the whole predicating idea of a union is never quite persuasive, perhaps because the Shulamite never comes across as an actual breathing specimen of womankind, just as Solomon and his lowly shepherd rival never emerge as fully embodied malehood. The verses, I propose, speak not to the idea of union, either literal or metaphorical or, God help us, "depatriarchalized," but rather to its virtual opposite: the solitary, wholly interior churn of ambivalence, expectant desire entwined with melancholy longing. Inherent in the very nature of erotic presence is absence—the looming loss of the lover even as he/she is glimpsed.

How to "own" the love object, how to pin down another beyond the fleeting moment: The possibility of sexual gratification is at least as threatening as it is pleasing, with its inevitable shadowy denouement of withdrawal and further longing.

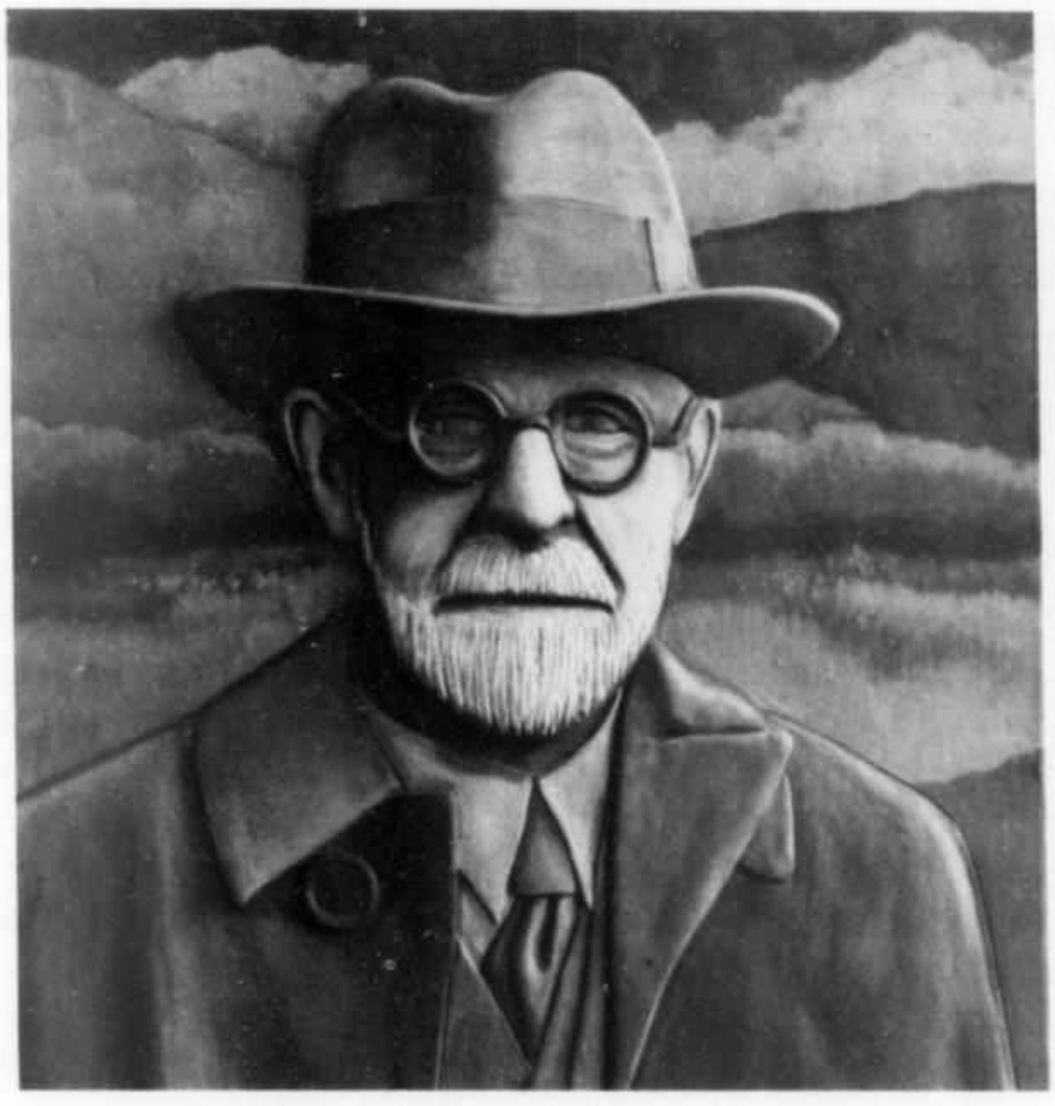
I choose, then, to think of the Song of Songs as a story about the risks of passion—about being a fool for love and all of that. A particularly overlooked aspect of the text, to my way of thinking, is its recognition of the lover's vulnerability. To fall in love is to open oneself up to potential ridicule. The Shulamite's thrice-repeated bleak admonition about the dangers of falling in love seems most significant in this regard: "I adjure you, O / daughters of / Jerusalem, / by the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field, / That ye awaken not, nor stir up love, / Until it please" (Song of Songs 8:4). Under its Zen-like absolutism this refrain points to the fear of rejection implicit in all extensions of self. There is, too, the implied fear that once you've gone ahead and fastened your hopes on some designated other, the world will rush in with scabrous comparisons and invidious remarks of the *Who, him?!!* variety.

Radical as its inclusion in the canon of Holy Scriptures may appear to be, I suggest it is less surprising if one sees this amorous dialogue in the form of a warning—a prophylaxis, as Gerson Cohen calls it: Caution, ye seekers of passion, lest you end up lost and wandering, in a city with no name, reduced to calling on the help of anonymous and

(Continued on p. 89)

The Attack on Freud

Eli Zaretsky



With the publication of Sigmund Freud's correspondence with Ernest Jones, and the impending publication of Freud's correspondence with Sandor Ferenczi, it is possible to reconstruct the worldview of the early group of Freudian analysts with considerable accuracy. They saw themselves as a beleaguered band in possession of a great truth, railing against the unexamined orthodoxy of the establishment. Your talk will no doubt enrage your "supercilious" medical audience, Freud advised Karl Abraham, his "consanguineous" follower in Berlin, but that's not bad. "Too bad," Freud wrote to Abraham as everyone else was celebrating the armistice. "No sooner had we begun to interest the world," alluding to the attention gained by psychoanalytic "cures" for wartime traumatic neuroses, "than the war comes to an end." "Yes," Abraham responded stoically. "Our position as outsiders will continue for the time being."

But merely feeling beleaguered is itself no guarantee that one has anything of value to contribute. To paraphrase Freud, sometimes a dissenting theory is just a dissenting theory, remaining a minority opinion for good reason. This was brought home to me by a series of recent publishing events attacking the supposed Freudolatry of our culture. These authors share with the early analysts a sense of being part of a courageous in-group, with a salvationist message and ignorant, dishonest opponents—with, however, far less justification.

The full extent of the anti-Freud project became clear to me with the appearance of Frederick Crews's electrifying article, "The Unknown Freud," which appeared in the November 18, 1993 issue of The *New York Review of Books*. "The Unknown Freud" is a summary and endorsement of the work of a network of researchers and writers, now "vigorously" challenging a "tradition of hero-worship," according to Crews. Their work, he says, describes a very different, "darker," Freud than the one that Freud's "own suave texts" and "loyalist biographers," such as Peter Gay, "have managed to keep before our eyes for many decades now."

Crews summarizes many stories about Freud, old and new: his bungling of the treatment of Emma Eckstein in the mid-1890s, which illuminates Freud's

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somewhat pathetic attempts to cover up the malpractice of his then-mentor, Wilhelm Fliess; Freud's casual and perhaps ill-advised remark to his student/analysand, Horace Frink, "you are not yet aware of your phantasy of making me a rich man," which Crews interprets as revealing "Freud's transparent aim" to get his hands on the money of Frink's lover; and the rehashing of often told details from Freud's analyses of "Dora" and "the wolfman."

The current attacks on Freud continue the repudiation of the revolutionary and utopian possibilities glimpsed in the 1960s. The impetus seems to be, now that we're done with Marx, why put up with Freud?

No human being could be fairly described by such a method as Crews's, which isolates the moments of weakness, greed, or insecurity known to all of us and ignores every other aspect of character and achievement. What makes Crews's account so compelling, however, is his brilliant writing combined with his quite accurate condemnation of the way psychoanalysis came eventually to be practiced, especially in the United States: "its deliberate coldness, its cultivation of emotional regression, its depreciation of the patient's self-perceptions as inauthentic...its reckless dispensation of guilt."

The most important book that Crews discusses is John Kerr's just-published *A Most Dangerous Method: The Story of Jung, Freud and Sabina Spielrein*. Kerr's lengthy, detailed book announces itself as joining a "small number of similar studies" willing to challenge the Freud myth. It does so by attempting to put a nasty spin on the well-known fact that Freud, in the early years of the century, had turned to Jung in Zurich in a desperate search for legitimation. Freud was a lower-middle-class doctor with little academic clout; his title *Professor Extraordinary* meant adjunct professor. The followers he had drawn around him—the "Wednesday Night Club"—were, like him, Jewish, relatively impoverished, culturally (and usually politically) radical. By contrast, the Burghölzi mental hospital in Zurich was a citadel of establishment legitimacy. Its chief of psychiatry was the renowned Eugen Bleuler. Of particular importance was its strongly Christian and pastoral element represented by Oskar Pfister, Ludwig Binswanger and, of course, Jung himself.

Kerr exaggerates Sabina Spielrein's role in the origins of analysis. Spielrein, once Jung's patient and lover, went on to become an analyst who attempted to bridge the gap between Jung and Freud. After World War I, she was a founder of Soviet psychology. Kerr's main subject, however, is the story of the emergence of psychoanalysis with Zurich, rather than Vienna, as its center. His claim is that the split with Jung (in spite of Jung's later mysticism) was a split with scientific psychology, rigorous experimental methods, hypothesis refinement, statistics and testing, a split that led psychoanalysis to become a "worldview" rather than a science.

Kerr writes as if "science" is a neutral arena in which men and women of good will objectively weigh claims according to universally agreed-upon methods. In fact, as Thomas Kuhn demonstrated thirty years ago in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, science involves a constant struggle for power, authority, and resources. A newly emerging scientific paradigm needs some breathing space to develop, without having continually to answer to criticisms that presuppose the truth of a well-entrenched rival. That is exactly what Freud wanted for psychoanalysis. As for Freud's view that analysis needed desperately to avoid the stigma of being a "Jewish science," a view that Kerr and Crews regard as an example of his power-hungry paranoia, the subsequent history of Europe demonstrated how prescient he was.

I first became aware that there was an anti-Freud industry afoot in October 1990, when I attended a small conference on "Freud and the History of Psychoanalysis" at York University in Toronto. Since, from my point of view, Freud had always been under attack, and never more so than in the past few decades, I didn't notice that the "big names" used to advertise the conference, such as Adolf Grünbaum, the philosopher of science, and Phyllis Grosskurth, the biographer of Havelock Ellis and Melanie Klein, were all critics of Freud. The tendentious character of the conference emerged fairly quickly, as papers by Malcolm McMillan, Frank Sulloway, Peter Swales, and Rosemary Sand—all figures cited enthusiastically by Crews and Kerr—reasoned similarly: Everything that Freud said was already known in the nineteenth century and, besides, it was all wrong. Whichever line of thought one follows, Freud is discredited.

The conference was well underway before I realized that this gathering was unlike typical academic colloquies, which feature a variety of perspectives. Notable in their absence were Peter Gay, whose

biography of Freud had just appeared; Carl Schorske, the historian of fin-de-siècle Vienna; and Elizabeth Young-Bruehl, the biographer of Anna Freud. Not only were they missing: so were their points of view. Why wasn't there a single representative of the Lacanian, Derridean, and other post-structuralist readings of psychoanalysis? Where, with the sole exception of Madelon Sprengnether, were the feminist writers on Freud? The analysts? The purpose of the conference was not intellectual inquiry; it was the meeting of an in-group with a strong sense of mission. The work of Kerr and Crews are two of their products; there will be more.

Any reader who wishes to understand the range of contemporary positions attacking Freud and analysis is well advised to read Paul Robinson's *Freud and his Critics*. Robinson discusses three figures—Frank Sulloway, Adolf Grünbaum, and Jeffrey Masson. (Masson's charge that Freud, motivated by career opportunism, deliberately abandoned his 1896 theory that all hysteria was the result of childhood molestation enjoyed considerable currency a few years ago, until it was realized how much of the current hysteria over childhood sexual abuse was based on fantasy. Unbelievably, Crews blames Freud for the *current* hysteria.) Robinson takes up the arguments of Freud's critics in painstaking detail, summarizes their evidence, and refutes their claims. I salute him, not only for his clarity but for his patience. What Robinson does not do, however, except incidentally, is explain the historical sources for the current attacks on Freud, unprecedented in their depth, intensity, and personal character, nor discuss what they tell us about our society and culture today.

The current attacks on Freud are continuous with the attack on the Left that began with the election of Richard Nixon in 1968 and has dominated American political discourse ever since. They continue the repudiation of the revolutionary and utopian possibilities glimpsed in the 1960s and are of a piece with the recent attacks on women's and African-American studies and on "political correctness." The impetus seems to be, now that we are done with Marx, why should we put up with Freud?

Parts of the Left, especially the women's movement, began the attack on psychoanalysis that conservatives have since refined, academicized and, in the case of feminism, manipulated opportunistically. Nevertheless, as the twentieth century draws to a close, and as issues of identity, gender, and nationalism supplant those of class, it becomes clearer and clearer that Freud, as much as, if not more than Marx, was the central figure in providing the self-clarification for the twentieth century Left's critical dimension.

Freud's thinking belongs within a critical or reflective tradition descending from the Enlightenment. To understand this tradition, it is necessary to grasp the novelty of the idea that personal identity is something to be created by individuals, rather than given by society. Kant caught a crucial aspect of this idea when he defined the goal of enlightenment as the creation of individuals who have the ability "to use [their] understanding without another's guidance." But Kant's famous definition of enlightenment overvalued reason, as opposed to other dimensions of identity and stressed external obstacles (such as the church or political despots) to the neglect of those that are internal. Three-quarters of a century later, Marx introduced a historical dimension to the Enlightenment's project of individual freedom, but with the loss of any perspective on the individual.

Freud's greatest contribution to this critical tradition lay in realizing that because modern men and women had to construct their own identities, this project could fail. As he sought to explain this failure, he developed a method for unearthing the internalized attachments to authority that lie so close to the surface of everyday rationality. Writing at a time when the possibility for a genuinely personal life was beginning to be extended to the masses of people, yet in a city where imperial and religious domination retained its hold, he defined the subject matter of analysis as something historically new: "what is most intimate in mental life, everything that a socially independent person must conceal." Its primary terrain was the family.

While a condemnation of lies and an unmasking of a systematic, socially organized process of distancing and deflection can be found on every page he wrote, Freud can only be superficially understood as a critic of society. His subject matter is not so much the forms of domination that characterize the modern world—sexism, racism, sexual and social intimidation, the psychology of exploitation—but rather their internal, psychic preconditions. From a broad range of phenomena, he inferred the persistence of a form of infantile and sexualized thought not available to perception: the unconscious. Because he reasoned from observed phenomena to that which must be the case in order for these phenomena to exist, Freud should be considered a transcendental thinker in the philosophical sense. He even considered using the term "transcendental" in place of the term "metapsychology" when he reformulated his theory in the 1920s.

Thus, Freud's thought forces us to step back from our current preoccupations and think about them. It cannot be directly translated into practical politics. But is this not also true of all our important modern

teachers, of Nietzsche and Weber, of Foucault and Derrida? The weakest point of Marx was his claim that his conclusions *could* translate into politics in a direct manner. The Left's case against Freud comes down to the idea that his theories are apolitical, that they encourage reflection rather than action. But isn't reflection—standing at a distance from ourselves—exactly what a Left needs? There is no clearer lesson to be drawn from the history of the last thirty years.

The central concept for the analytic understanding of identity is transference—the repetition of an infantile attitude in a new context. Transference, in which, as Freud wrote, the patient replaces "some earlier person by the person of the physician" is most fundamentally a relation to authority. The exploration of the concept led Freud and his followers into the depths of the modern family. Because patriarchal authority had become by Freud's time so weak and shadowy, especially in the family, it had become possible to analyze it. As the last generation of historians of women and the family have shown, in place of patriarchal authority, nineteenth-century Victorians sought to create a new basis of social order resting on self-control and character rather than on deference and birth. To a great extent, the difference between the sexes replaced the difference between lord and master as the fundamental principle of society. Freudian thought evolved an analysis of this form of social order primarily through its conception of bisexuality, which did not have its contemporary meaning of having sexual relations with both sexes, but referred to the idea that no individual could be adequately characterized psychologically as simply belonging to one sex or the other.

In seeking to keep analysis free of medicine or psychiatry, in seeking to retain its ties to history, philosophy, and the study of culture and religion, Freud clearly intuited the drift of analysis toward authoritarianism.

By the 1920s, the idea that psychoanalysis was fundamentally a psychology of authority came under criticism. What had earlier appeared as a "longing for authority" that needed to be overcome, began to appear to analysts as unsurpassable needs for recognition, mirroring, and support. This realization gave rise to the second great idea in the history of psychoanalysis—narcissism or self-love.

But in formulating this idea Freud never abandoned his initial goal of mapping out a psychology of authority. The theory of narcissism, for Freud, involved—but could not be reduced to—a theory of subjection; it incorporates an explanation of how the way we make ourselves into subjects involves subjection or subordination to a hidden master. By the 1920s, Freud and his associates were beginning to see the connection between internalized attachments to authority and the illusory sense of "self-mastery" that characterized modern consciousness. Just as the concept of transference implied a critique of hierarchical authority, that of narcissism implied a critique of social control in formally democratic contexts. This is the authority that prevails in groups based on identification with others who are like us—people who follow the same leader that we do or who belong to the same nation or religion. Psychoanalysis, historically, was an attempt to "de-identify." Freud can help us understand today's politics, in which group loyalties and identifications are so important.

The same developments that gave rise to psychoanalysis—especially the capacity to study and change personal life without changing the society—also limited its scope and drained it of critical potential. This evisceration can already be seen at work in the 1890s. From its inception, we see the marginality of psychoanalysis, its "Jewishness," its trivialization in the mass culture, and the rather sad and lonely search for acceptance by Freud and his associates.

The "success" of this search was the creation of analytic psychiatry and its integration into the disciplinary structure of modern society. Freud bitterly opposed this move in the debates over lay analysis. In seeking to keep analysis free of medicine or psychiatry, in seeking to retain its ties to history, philosophy, and the study of culture and religion, Freud clearly intuited the drift of analysis toward authoritarianism. But by the 1920s, Freud was an old and very sick man, largely isolated from the burgeoning analytic "movement."

Rather than seeking to overcome Freud's many limitations, his successors—especially those who emigrated to the United States after World War II—cloaked themselves in Freud's mantle while abandoning most of what was valuable in his thought. The process by which American analysis became authoritarian, male dominated, and repressive cannot be understood without recalling the post-traumatic mood of the late 1940s and early 1950s, out of which the Cold War emerged.

Even Freud's critics on the Left before World War II, such as Wilhelm Reich, never viewed him as a defender of authority. On the contrary, they argued that he did not press his radical ideas far enough. During and after World War II, however, in what was really an intellectual revolution, figures such as Philip Rieff reinterpreted Freud as a conservative and praised him for it. Talcott Parsons offered one among the many developing conservative applications of Freud. In 1942, Parsons, with the experience of World War I behind him, urged that government propaganda agencies not "respond too vigorously to hostile interpretations of government policy—thus defeating them in the manner of a therapist whose non-responsive behavior is supposed to undermine a patient's neurotic perceptions by witholding confirmation from them."

More important still was the diffusion of analytic ideas in the post-war United States. Reflecting the characteristically modern and, by the late 1940s, quintessentially psychoanalytic idea that the basis of life was to be found in the private sphere and that the social was secondary, derived, and often false, analytic psychiatry came to occupy its influential cultural position because it both reflected and validated the illusory or imaginary way in which modern personal life is lived, namely as something separate, individual, without connection to society. Because of this illusory basis, personal life is lived, to a great extent, in what Jacques Lacan called the imaginary register—the register of narcissism—which analysis had taken as its province. By the mid-fifties, analysts and those they had influenced in social work and education had taken a partial truth and enormous resource opened up by capitalism—the individual's responsibility for his or her life—and mystified it.

It was this phase in the history of analysis that the New Left and its successor movements repudiated in the 1960s and '70s. The New Left began to challenge the idea of a division between the public and the private that analysis had taken for granted. But under the influence of figures such as Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse, New Leftists also began to rethink the meaning of analysis. Freud, more than Marx, was the key figure in inspiring the "affluent," identity-based radicalism of the New Left. Today's politics, with its focus on race, gender, and sexual orientation, has its roots in the attempts, during the 1960s, to fashion a new post-Marxist, post-liberal politics.

The response of second-wave feminism to psychoanalysis in the late sixties and early seventies was mixed. Some feminist works unambivalently rejected Freud. Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* called the theory of penis envy "a superbly timed accusation" against women's liberation. Similarly, who can forget, or fail to sympathize with, Erica Jong's heroine's marvelous, utopian confrontation with her analyst in the *Fear of Flying*:

> Don't you see that men have *always* defined femininity as a means of keeping women in line? Why should I listen to *you* about what it means to be a woman. Are you a woman?

And:

> As in a dream (I never would have believed myself capable of it) I got up from the couch (how many years had I been lying there?) picked up my pocketbook, and walked...out... . No more arguing with Kolner like a movement leader! I was free!

But more often, the same works that questioned Freud appropriated and sought to transform his theory, for example, as a gender-based "power psychology" (Shulamith Firestone), as a theory of socialization into a patriarchal culture (Juliet Mitchell), or as a mother-centered rather than patricentric theory of gender (Nancy Chodorow). Chodorow's *Reproduction of Mothering* begins with a chapter-long attack on Freud's "unexamined patriarchal cultural assumptions... blindness, contempt for women, misogyny... claims about biology" and then turns to elaborating and reworking his ideas.

Even more than revising analysis, however, the deepest spirit of second-wave women's liberation was to displace it. "Feminist theory *manqué*" was Gayle Rubin's description of analysis. In place of an intrapsychic theory of individual psychology, feminism initiated a new politics in which identity was the central concept. But this meant *group*, not individual, identity and took place in a "real world" rather than within the mind.

Although pointing to the centrality of gender in the formation of identity was a master stroke, the feminist readings of psychoanalysis did not do it full justice. The key to appropriating psychoanalysis in the age of feminism is to understand how Freud used the concept of bisexuality. The notion that every individual combines "masculine" and "feminine" traits lies behind everything Freud wrote that touches on conflict, duality, or ambivalence. Nonetheless, Freud never wrote an essay on bisexuality or defined masculinity or femininity. When he commented on the terms, as he did with increasing frequency in the later part of his life, he was almost apologetic. He said, for example, that in using these categories he relied on "what is obviously an inadequate

empirical and conventional equation: We call everything that is strong and active male, and everything that is weak and passive female."

In contrast to his opponents and contemporaries, Freud resisted defining gender. Jung, for example, posited the principles *animus* and *anima* that are literally masculine and feminine in the sense that they correspond to psychological traits such as nurturance or competitiveness. Nowhere does Freud describe masculinity and femininity as psychological traits. Instead, he talks of "masculinity" and "femininity" as being *identified or associated with* nongendered psychological terms such as activity or passivity, sadism or masochism, etc.

The way to read Freud on gender is to take literally his use of the term "conventional." This term suggests that our contemporary idea that the equation of masculinity with activity and femininity with passivity is *cultural* was implicit in psychoanalysis, but only implicit. What was needed were social movements to make this clear, and this is what the feminist intellectuals of the 1970s saw. Their work and the movement of which they were a part make it possible to read Freud in a new way. Thus we can read the terms "masculinity" and "femininity" in Freud's writings to refer to the cultural constructions of gender as they take shape within and through individuals.

This was not Freud's view; rather, it is a gloss on his writings that fills a conceptual gap. Nor is such a reading social constructionist in its extreme contemporary sense. It leaves space for biology and distinguishes the social from the psychological. But it is nonetheless based on our contemporary desire to be free from gender stereotypes.

Such a reading also addresses problems lingering from the feminism of the 1970s, which rested on the assumption that analytic theories reflected a real social world organized through the domination of men over women. Although later Lacanian and post-feminist readings of psychoanalysis sought to break with the idea that psychology reflects real societal relations, they did not break with the gender assumptions central to 1970s feminism. Nor did they break with a description of the relations of men and women in essentially instrumental, conflictual or "power" terms. In holding to these categories, they missed the entire history of heterosexual love and cooperation, the exploration of which was the primary subject of early psychoanalysis, and the understanding of which was inseparable from Freud's concept of bisexuality.

Over time, a growing literature on gay sexuality has begun to question, although rarely explicitly, the very concept of gender. Through this literature it becomes apparent that psychoanalysis is in opposition to many forms of feminism, as feminists have claimed, but not because it stands for female subordination. Rather, analytic theory destabilizes the dichotomous opposition between men and women on which most forms of feminism rest. It is not destabilizing of the concept "woman" in the way that some contemporary feminists, who are attempting to make room for lesbians or women of color, seek. It destabilizes the concept "woman" when it is opposed to the concept "man."

Like the feminist criticisms of analysis, the contemporary conservative criticisms are ambivalent, but in a different way. Through the work of Sulloway, Crews, or Kerr, a sneaking admiration and envy emerges. Sulloway's first book, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind*, sought to discredit the "myth" of Freud's originality. Yet it reinterprets Freud admiringly as the forerunner of sociobiology. Crews established his reputation as a psychoanalytic literary critic before becoming Freud's leading debunker. As for Kerr, almost every page of his book is an attempt to prove that Freud was as instrumentalist, as opportunist, as self-seeking as Kerr apparently regards everyone. (An example of Kerr's attitude is his description of Otto Gross, an important and original predecessor of Wilhelm Reich, as "the first of the great unwashed.") The cover of Kerr's book is a distorted, enlarged portrait made up of parts of a man's mouth, beard, hands, and cigar. I carried it around for days before realizing it was Freud. The unmistakable message was: Don't get too close. Don't be too soft on Freud. Don't succumb, don't be tempted.

There is ambivalence and there is ambivalence. The feminist struggle with Freud was a life and death struggle for the soul of the late twentieth century Left. It has enormously and irrevocably enriched our understanding of what a critical tradition descending from the Enlightenment means: Only in a feminist environment can Freud be intelligently read.

As for the contemporary critics of Freud, what they offer is acceptance of the status quo. They are attempting to eliminate the dimension of critique and distance that critical inquiry should always involve and that Freud exemplified. This impulse informs their discussion of Freud's politics and methodology; it is at the root of their demonization of him. At this historical moment, we need that element of self-reflection more than we need political programs. If we are going to go forth into the twenty-first century with the sense of being part of a critical tradition, we need Freud more than ever and—but this is a different subject—we also need Marx. □

Freudianism and Its Discontents
A Reply to Eli Zaretsky

Joel Kovel

A personal note may be in order. I began training in the mid-1960s to become a Freudian analyst and turned away from the work in the mid-'80s. When I first encountered the movement, there was plenty of hostility to psychoanalysis, for example, the vitriol of Vladimir Nabokov (to whom Freud would always be the "Viennese quack"), but it seemed no more than sniping by the disgruntled as the train of progress went triumphantly by. In my days as an acolyte, Freud's status as a genuine hero of our culture seemed like a fixed star. I assumed also, led to this belief by such as Ernest Jones, that Freud the man was basically a fine fellow, albeit a trifle "neurotic," as was only natural for the truly creative. Who would have dreamed it could come to this? The snipers now seem to be an organized band, even a kind of movement. They refer to one another's work, argue systematically, and command the pages of major intellectual venues while going after Freud as if he were a stag pursued by wolves, or to choose an image more in keeping with their view of the discoverer of psychoanalysis, a rat caught in a trap. No doubt some portion of the assault can be discounted as rancor, for example, Frederick Crews's 180-degree turn from true believer to true-unbeliever, or Jeffrey Masson's personal vendetta against the psychoanalytic establishment. But this says nothing about the substance of the charges against Freud or their general significance.

According to Eli Zaretsky, there is not much substance to the charges at all. As for the general significance of the anti-Freudian movement, this should be regarded as part of an attack on the Left which began as far back as 1968, because Freud "was the central figure in providing the self-clarification for the twentieth century Left's critical dimension." I am no admirer of the anti-Freudian movement, yet find both of these claims unpersuasive.

Zaretsky's account of some of the more sordid stories about Freud has the look of a whitewash to me. For example, he claims that the anti-Freudian attack "isolates the moments of weakness, greed, or insecurity known to all of us" while ignoring all the good about Freud. Agreed, Crews et al. tend to downplay the good in Freud to the point that one would not even know that he was kind to his dog. But this tells us nothing about what was not so good. And the flaws now coming to light in Freud's character are not, I should hope, of the sort "known to all of us."

There aren't too many people around—thankfully—who would have done to others what Freud did to Emma Eckstein or Horace Frink. In the former instance, Freud did not simply try to cover-up his friend Fliess's near-fatal botching of a crackpot operation on poor Emma's nose (the good doctor having left a hefty chunk of gauze behind in the wound); he actually blamed Emma for not getting well, claiming that her post-operative bleeding was the hysterical equivalent of menstruation. As for Frink, Freud's finagling to get advantage for the cause of psychoanalysis contributed to the breakup of two marriages and may fairly be said to have ruined several lives. These acts are not, as Zaretsky asserts, "pathetic," but reveal a chilling capacity to treat another simply as means to one's own end, behavior all the more reprehensible when evinced by a physician toward his patients. It seems to me that Freud, in all his grandeur and squalor, represents a moral enigma of the first order. Zaretsky obscures this dilemma by his effort to protect the founder of psychoanalysis from his critics and, in effect, to normalize him.

Needless to say, the morals of Freud the man should not be used to mystify the larger significance of psychoanalysis or the attacks upon it. In this respect, Zaretsky's point that Freud opened space for the Left which the anti-Freudians are bent upon closing merits some reflection. As Zaretsky sees it, Freud forged an advance in human self-understanding with great emancipatory potential. This was largely nullified by the psychoanalytic establishment, then reopened in the '60s and '70s by the New Left, who thereby rescued Freud from the establishment, and in so doing, restored an essential moment of self-reflection which the anti-Freudians are busy dismantling.

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The latter claim seems a bit opaque to me, since no evidence is offered to back it up. As far as I know, the anti-Freudians are after defects in Freud's character and scientific methodology, and their attacks are irrelevant to the political and moral value of psychoanalysis except insofar as they distract us from this dimension. I suppose it could be said that if Freud is destroyed entirely then the emancipatory potential goes as well, but this is scarcely a credible threat; and in any case, the emancipatory potential remains to be demonstrated.

The New Left's appropriation of Freud was a dialectical process—psychoanalysis itself had to be transformed.

The rest of Zaretsky's argument is of greater interest. There was a New Left appropriation of Freud, in which Zaretsky's 1976 book, *Capitalism, The Family and Personal Life*, played an honorable role. Zaretsky and others built upon observations originally made by Wilhelm Reich and Erich Fromm in the early 1930s to the effect that the social order was sedimented into character structure and family life, whence it appeared in the "complexes" discernable by psychoanalysis. One cannot therefore only address the economy and state in confronting capitalism; a much more deeply personal engagement is required. In this light, the Freudian moment took on a greatly enhanced political value. The insights of psychoanalysis could now be used to link together hitherto diverse strands of political action. In particular, as Zaretsky indicates, psychoanalysis helped connect feminism, the paramount politics of the personal, with more traditional politics. In the larger sense, a bridge had been created between the public and private realms.

So far, so good. The problem is that Zaretsky goes no further. Apparently given to nostalgia for the '60s, he forgets that the appropriation of Freud was a dialectical process in which psychoanalysis could not remain some kind of unmoved mover, but had itself to be transformed. It might be recalled that Reich and Fromm also broke with Freud; while Herbert Marcuse, the most influential of the New Left appropriators of Freud, embraced a version of psychoanalysis that was quite unrecognizable to the profession and undoubtedly would have been so to Freud himself.

I myself became deeply affected by Marcuse during psychoanalytic training. Seeking in some way to integrate what I was learning in psychoanalytic training with Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, I approached the eminent Heinz Hartmann, in those years the doyen of Freudian analysis, to ask him what he thought. Hartmann was a perfect Viennese gentleman, but he minced no words. Whatever Marcuse's work was, in Hartmann's opinion, it was not psychoanalysis. There was an absolute barrier; and one would have to choose which side to be on.

That barrier was not a function of Freud's emphasis upon self-reflection, which Hartmann would have extolled every bit as much as Zaretsky. It lay in something else that Zaretsky seems to imagine is in Freud but is in fact not: a real commitment to social transformation. This in turn implies a willingness to look deeply enough into the workings of society to imagine that transformation. It implies, in a word that stands for a name and a whole worldview: Marx. Reich, Fromm and Marcuse were all in their way Marxists. This fact gives their critiques an enduring vitality. Norman O. Brown, with Marcuse a leading New Left interpreter of Freud, was not, a fact which vitiated his critique and made it, like a major segment of the New Left, romantically self-indulgent.

Where does Zaretsky stand on this matter? He asserts that "we also need Marx," then claims that "this is a different subject," as if what Freud revealed is one thing and what Marx revealed is another. In other words, an appropriation of psychoanalysis by the Left can take place without reference to Marxism.

Zaretsky's discussion of the New Left is consistent with this view: It was for the "affluent," those into today's identity-based, "post-Marxist" politics. This by implication downplays the less trendy "Marxist" domain of widening class differences, global immiseration, and environmental destruction while attending to the gender and sexual orientation of the well-to-do.

The problem with the self-reflectivity introduced by Freud was its divorce from action and engagement. In other words, self-reflectivity became a web of subjectivism. This was the root of both the spiritual emptiness and the political inertia of psychoanalysis. Yet it is precisely what Zaretsky regards as the Freudian breakthrough. Thus he opts for "self-reflection" over "political programs" and extols the "critique and distance" exemplified by Freud. It may be asked, distance from what? Does not Freud really mean distance from struggle? Is this illusion of the affluent what Zaretsky wishes to promote as the "left" alternative to the anti-Freudians?

I left the profession of psychoanalysis because it seemed to me that taken all in all, the game wasn't worth the candle. Psychoanalysis wasn't able to address the essential questions about justice and emancipation and the workings of society, or about the spiritual side of existence. I found that the web of subjectivism which lay at the heart of psychoanalysis occluded engagement with these

(Continued on p. 87)

FICTION

On Hold

Angela Himsel

When the other line rings, Victoria hesitates. She is on the telephone with her dad who is telling her about Sex and Satanism. Her father has finished the weather report—storm headed her way, hitting New York City tonight, all clear in Indiana—and he's updated her on a recent airplane crash and now a recap of Donahue.

Victoria puts down the photographs of the Shrine of the Book which she has been flipping through, trying to figure out how best to crop and arrange them so that the symbolic meaning she'd seen in the Shrine can be understood by others. So difficult, taking her vision (which often she later forgets or remembers but doubts its validity) and trying to convey it in some meaningful fashion to others. In this case, when she looked at the Shrine, she had thought it was closer in resemblance to a big, white nipple more than to the lid of the jar in which the Dead Sea Scrolls had been found.

The phone clicks once more, and her father says, "Do you have to get that?" Her father's calm, level tone, his almost resigned acceptance, indicates he is prepared to say goodbye. Victoria knows that call-waiting fills many people with the unreasonable paranoia that another person, even American Express calling about her past due payment, will be chosen over you.

At times like these, when you must make choices between your father who is a known, predictable quantity, and the unknown person—maybe her lover, Ariel, or perhaps a stranger taking a survey on her shopping habits—Victoria thinks how difficult, and sad and potentially dangerous, life can be: Choose the wrong door, and you don't end up with the trip to paradise. You get the jackass.

"Daddy," she says now, "hold on. I'll be right back."

She clicks the line and says, "Hello?"

"Hello," says a woman. "Is this Victoria Nutzel?"

"Yes, it is."

"This is Leslie Blumenstein. Ariel's wife."

In the split second of silence, Victoria's glance happens upon her photographs. It's a tit, she thinks. Ariel is a breast man. Her breasts are small and sometimes, she thinks, inadequate. But Ariel likes them.

"Leslie," Victoria now says pleasantly. "Can you hold on for a second?"

"I'll hold," she says.

"Daddy," Victoria clicks back to her father, "I have to take this. I've been—expecting this call for a long time."

Depressing her forefinger, she says goodbye Sex and Satanism, hello Wronged Wife.

"Hello?" Victoria says to the woman Ariel left last month, after four years of marriage, the woman she had bumped into at Ariel's therapist's office last week, the woman who for the past week has been plaguing Ariel with questions about her: What does Victoria look like, how old is she, what does she do, which college did she go to. The woman who just yesterday had ransacked Ariel's new apartment while he was out, dumping over boxes in a frantic search for something, anything. And she had found enough. A few pictures of them together, which she ripped into shreds, as well as a piece of paper with Victoria's last name.

"Victoria," Leslie takes a breath. "I know you and Ariel have been seeing each other this past year. I don't want this man. I don't love him. He's already taken eight years of my life. I don't want him to take any more. I wasn't going to call you because my marriage is over and it wouldn't help to hurt myself more than I am already, but I'm going to be 38 and I want children. I need the truth so that I can make closure on this whole thing. I felt if I met you...Woman to woman, I hope that you will help me through this...very painful...very horrible situation. Will you meet me?"

"Where are you?" Victoria responds quickly, not because she wants to really help Leslie but because finally, she is being given the opportunity to participate in a discussion and decision. Ariel has said, "My phone calls to Leslie, our discussions, have nothing to do with my relationship with you."

To which Victoria responded, "Just like your marriage

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had nothing to do with me, right? Well, everything in life is connected and when Leslie gets her period, it affects me. She's in a shitty mood, cries to you that she's afraid she'll die alone and unloved, then you feel guilty and distance yourself from me..."

"You're minimizing real issues, Tory."

"And you are denying my issues," she had shouted into the phone.

"Fine," he had said, "then everything I do will affect you but I can't take having a confrontation everywhere I go."

"So Leslie, as always, is the lucky one who gets the answers and the explanations?" Having delivered her parting shot, she slammed down the phone and didn't answer for the rest of the night.

Well, if Ariel wouldn't give her answers, she would get them from Leslie, who now replies, "I'm down the street. At the pizza parlor."

"I'll be there in fifteen minutes."

Any self-respecting mistress would allow herself fifteen minutes to put her face on and choose the right wardrobe. Meeting your lover's wife is, after all, a fairly important event, one for which Victoria has had four years to write the dialogue, design the set and direct the action. But in her fantasy, she calls Leslie and asks to meet with her. This lady has guts, Victoria will give her that. Not for Leslie, waiting around to be chosen, something Victoria has been doing since she was a child. Waiting for Jesus to return, waiting for the world to end. And, most recently, waiting for Ariel's marriage to end.

As a religious studies major in college, Victoria knows that by biblical standards, the four years she's spent with Ariel is a blink of an eyelid; it is a shadow passing at night, a warm breath clouding a glass. You are begotten in one verse, married in the next, then you do your own begetting and a mere one chapter, or hundred three score and fifteen years later, you give up the ghost. Begin, begat, begone summed up the biblical recording of history.

The Bible could do that—condense people and time, fold entire lives into a terse conclusion, "And he was born, and he died, and it was so."

Victoria stands up from her futon, puts the photographs of the Shrine back in the envelope. The man who made this huge white breast to enshrine ancient religious material is saying something mystical: The nipple with dead scrolls will nurture life, perhaps. She would have to wait until later to work it out. There are times when you must choose your real life over your art.

Victoria almost feels sorry for Leslie because Leslie has lost. Now that Victoria has won Ariel, she can afford to feel sympathy for the woman who has, unwittingly, been her rival, in fact, the blame for her unhappiness, and for Ariel's unhappiness, all these years. Victoria wonders if Leslie has large breasts.

Outside, Victoria feels the storm coming. She walks slowly, thinking about what to say. Ariel told you one year, she practices in her mind. How about putting four years in your pipe and smoking on it?

Time was relative, like that joke about Abe Rosengarten who was explaining Einstein's theory of relativity to his friend Hyman. "If a beautiful shiksa is sitting on your lap, every hour is like a minute. If you are sitting on a hot stove, every minute is like an hour."

"That's Einstein's theory?" asked Hyman.

"That's it."

"And from this," Hyman was incredulous, "he makes a living?"

For four years, Ariel held a shiksa on his lap. For four years, Victoria sat on a hot stove.

Now, her waiting is over and it is Judgment Day, when her faith in their love will win out over Leslie and Ariel's long, complicated, tortured history together; a history as powerful as Victoria's, growing up in a fundamentalist Christian sect that every week preached that soon, not long now, the world would end, followed by the Great Tribulation, and those who had not let their love wax cold, had held out and waited, would be rewarded by marrying Christ. How strange that she, who is so impatient, hates staying in the same place, will travel at a moment's notice, has spent her life, really, waiting, never letting go of the fear that, on Judgment Day, when Jesus separates the sheep from the goats and the wheat from the chaff, she might get tossed into the chaff pile. Might not be saved.

Two years ago, Ariel had asked Victoria, "If I were to—settle everything with Leslie, would you be willing to consider converting? If we were to have children..."

"Well, maybe." She had replied, non-committal as ever, not explaining that if Judaism would save her, then maybe she would convert. If a mezuzah on the doorpost would make the death angel pass over her house then, sure. But what if the angel of life passes over her house because she does have a mezuzah on the door? Then everyone else would meet Jesus in heaven and sit at His feet, except her. She was sure it had never occurred to Ariel that he should be her Savior.

On the other hand, Ariel was understandably confused because, after all, hadn't he and Victoria met when she was coming out of her Jewish mysticism class? He had asked her the time and they joked about studying the Kabbalah and trying to unify themselves with God. Ariel had said, "God is very choosy about whom He unifies Himself with. I, on the other hand..."

She laughed and three nights later, the *keter,* her crown, joined with the *hokmah*, his wisdom, and the vessel of God was being mended over chicken marsala and

broccoli rigatoni.

Victoria learned that Ariel was the son of an Orthodox cantor but he himself was not Orthodox. Victoria told him about her religious upbringing and they both believed, immediately, that in the most unlikely place and in the most unlikely way, they had found their spiritual as well as physical counterpart.

Oh, Victoria would admit that, when Ariel confessed, looking down at his bare hands, "Actually, I should tell you, you have a right to know, I recently—got married," it put a bit of a damper on things. However, as he went on to explain that he'd known Leslie for four years, that he wasn't certain how long the marriage would last, because "We haven't even been able to commit to living together in the same apartment!" Victoria became more certain that this marriage, which he had passively agreed to out of guilt and a kind of responsibility, would in a matter of time, as Ariel would later put it, fail. Actually, she didn't consider him to be married. Sort of, but not really.

But that first night, when they left the empty restaurant, Victoria was not thinking of Ariel or Leslie. She was thinking of her Eternal Life. It was with great reservations that she allowed Ariel to put his arm around her, and when he tilted her face to him, kissing her softly, hungrily, tenderly, harshly, she worried about not being chosen. She saw a quick image of all the sheep following Jesus the herdsman and her, left alone on a mountaintop, destined never to marry into the Christ family.

But Ariel's mouth was soft and giving, his hands gently held her close against him, and then Victoria saw herself and Ariel as a Chagall painting—two souls flying in the lilac heavens while far below them the physical world tilted in its fixed but jumbled way. They soared, hands clasped, high above little Italy, feeding each other cannolis and cappucino. The cannolis grinned at them, silly and delicious grins of discovery. They licked the white smiling cream from the mouth of the other. Their bodies, when they held each other, cannoli light, cappucino strong, revealed as much as their words concealed.

Victoria was aware, and she knew that God knew, too, of the spark that set her pubic hairs on edge when she heard Ariel's voice. The spark that he lit in her ran up between her legs, up the line of fine blonde hairs that led to her belly button, up, up went the spark in the crevice between her breasts, separating the left nipple form the right nipple, then up the middle of her neck to the cleft in the center of her chin, and on past the pucker in her lips, past the nostrils and up to the spot between her eyebrows where a man kisses the woman he loves. The spark drew a line that halved her body; Ariel was bringing to life a desire to unify her two halves.

She would not tell Leslie any of that. No matter what, she would hold on to that. She still believed in the beginning of their love affair as something wonderful, a happy and delicious time, despite the fact that not only did Ariel and Leslie not get a quickie divorce, but they did move in together which made it difficult to maintain that they weren't really married.

If it hadn't been for the beginning, for that same initial excitement and sense of discovery and revelation as she felt when she found a new subject like the Shrine to photograph, she would not have held on so long, trying to unify the vessel which had contained the sparks of God and which shattered at creation, setting up ten spheres within the universe, thus exiling the world from God. Most important, it exiled the Infinite God from the revealed God. However, by kabbalistic theories, man's actions and beliefs will affect the larger universe, and redeem not only the world, but also God. Mental note: The Shrine has finally brought together those little fragments of paper, God's holy words written by human hands. She would have to give that more thought. Chickens coming home to roost...

No, if it hadn't been for those sparks, she would not be in this position today, going to meet the wife of the man she had waited for, despaired of, held on to, pushed away, been tortured by for four years. The man she loved, for reasons she could never explain.

"Hi," Leslie extends her hand and smiles graciously. "I'm Leslie. Thanks for agreeing to meet with me."

"Hi." Their hands meet in a firm handshake. From what she can see, Victoria does not think Leslie has large breasts. Rather small, actually. "There's a coffee shop around the corner. Is that okay?"

"Sure. It's so cold, I could use something hot right now."

"Yeah. The weather's supposed to get worse tonight, too."

"Really?" Leslie's well-defined, dramatic eyebrows fly up her forehead. "That's all we need!"

Victoria had not written comments on the weather into the script. This wife character was not acting out the part she had been given, either. At Dr. Weiss's office, Leslie, while waiting for her own therapist, had been understandably shocked at seeing Ariel with another woman and, eyes flaming like a punishing prophet of old, charged toward them shrieking, "So *this* is how you're trying to work out *our* relationship!" However, as she explained over coffee, "Even though Ariel moved out, he acted as if we could still work things out. He certainly never told me he was seeing someone else whom he wanted to marry!"

This was not the story Victoria had heard from Ariel. He'd told her, "Leslie knows it's over. We've both known it for a long time. But for my own sake, because I want to

feel good about myself, for once in this whole thing, I have to call her and see her. Make sure she understands. We couldn't make our marriage work, but—I do still care about her. Victoria, I do, I'll be honest. I don't love her like I love you, but I love her."

She had held in her rage, her sadness at his words because what right did she have to tell him not to love someone else? But one day, she vowed, I will personally make sure he feels this pain himself.

Ariel did not know this spiteful side of her personality. Deep in her sixth sphere a private battle raged between the need to reveal and the need to conceal.

Leslie does not appear to be in need of help, either Ariel's or Victoria's "woman to woman" help. She seems pleasant, pretty, straightforward, and direct. Very together. However, Victoria doesn't trust superficial judgments. As a photographer she knows that surface appearances are deceptive and often hide something one would never suspect, re that big white breast.

"How long have you known each other?" Leslie asks, holding the coffee in both hands, not drinking it, just holding it.

"Four years." Let the veil of secrecy be lifted, Victoria thinks, the veil that shrouds the mythical from real.

"That bastard!" Leslie shakes her head. "Let me tell you what he told me, okay, then you can tell me the truth."

"Fine. But I want answers from you, too," Victoria says. Your lover's wife may not be the most reliable witness but neither is your lover. It's a choice you must make.

"It's a deal. He told me that he's known you for a year. That he recently told you he loved you."

"He said that?" Victoria's breath catches and holds for a second.

"Yes. He told me he hasn't met your friends. He said that you haven't spent any quality time together."

"Bullshit!" Victoria says, as if in refuting these accusations, she will cancel out his denial of them and they can be rebuilt once more. "He moved out!" Victoria feels she has been split in two.

"He told me he would be willing to give you up if I would take him back."

The vessel that contained their love has shattered and broken into tiny little pieces.

Though there is a ring of truth in Leslie's statement, how could Ariel have asked her, just last night, if their children could be brought up Jewish?

"He wants children badly, you know," Leslie watches Victoria's reaction to this, "and he's been torturing himself about whether he's made the right decision or if maybe he should have made another choice."

Yes, this sounds like Ariel, but no, no, no, he would never, in a million years, at the 13th hour, go back to her!

"But you're seeing someone else so you don't want Ariel back, right?" Victoria asks, feeling like a little girl saying, "If you've finished with your doll, could I have a turn, please?"

"No, of course not," Leslie shrugs. "But we talk it over and then I talk to my shrink and he talks to his. Then we go together to Weiss …"

"I don't understand this need to get approval from a person you are paying to talk to," Victoria says, although she has done just that. If Dr. Weiss approved of her, Ariel would, too. Funny, to meet a man's shrink before meeting his mother.

"What did Dr. Weiss say about me? I'm curious."

"He said that he thought you and Ariel had a strong bond of shared history and a strange friendship which kept you together all these years and if you decided to get a divorce, you would be fine." Victoria repeats the shrink's words, happy to be able to give an objective person's viewpoint which reenforces her own, just like when she looks through the camera lens and sees what she had believed she would see. Leslie's eyes tear up for just a second. "Yes," she says quietly. "I did think, whatever else we were, we were friends. You know, I confronted him about a year ago about seeing someone else. He swore he wasn't. I wanted to trust him because he'd always been—my best friend. But one morning he said he was going to the gym and I don't know why, really, because I never check his gym clothes, but when he came home that night, I opened his gym bag and smelled his T-shirt. It was clean. I asked him if he went to the gym. He said yes. I knew he was lying and I suspected he was having an affair but I couldn't say anything because I was having one, too. Finally, three months ago, I told Ariel about this other man. I couldn't stand myself anymore. I'm a spiritual person. I couldn't bear to hurt Ariel like that. I wasn't behaving in an honest or kind manner and so I decided I had to stop."

"I understand," Victoria says. Victoria's friends could never understand how she could justify a lunch hour tryst with Ariel followed by an evening lecture on biblical law. "How can you be so concerned about justice and morality in America today but not see that you're doing anything immoral or unjust?" friends had asked exasperatedly.

As objectively as Victoria saw the subjects she shot through her 35 millimeter, that little black extension of herself, she saw it all, feeling little guilt and remorse, two things which she had learned were necessary to repenting and changing. Of course, since she had no intention of changing, she didn't see the need to repent. It was

pointless to tell God you were sorry unless you were going to stop doing what you were doing. God was no dummy. But now, talking with Leslie, although she would not say she felt consumed with guilt, she also saw that Leslie was a person, she could see, hear, observe, sympathize with; she was not the abstract wife who was impeding her illicit affair. Victoria had damaged her, and for that, she was sorry."

"...and last August, when we were in France, we both agreed that we would separate when we came back. But then, Ariel said no, let's try again."

"He asked me if I wanted to go to Paris last August." Victoria's voice is dry, dry as the dust that has settled in her heart. What's Ariel doing, asking both of them to go to Paris, asking both of them to have his babies, as if both women are of equal value and whichever choice is ultimately made will be indistinguishable from the one not chosen.

"That slimy bastard! I have no respect for him anymore, none!" Leslie says. "Last week, before I saw both of you at Dr. Weiss's office, he gave me a list of things we should do together, ways we could work out our relationship and I said I would think about it. I hope he drops dead of a heart attack!"

Though she is as hot as the Gehenna in which sinners will be tossed, Victoria tries to focus her mental lens from different angles—hers, Ariel's, Leslie's—and see if she can get an aerial shot of everything, because something is not quite right with this picture. Something is missing, some viewpoint, like maybe the truth.

On the other hand, she thinks now, I am so tired of everyone else's perspective. So tired, all these years, of understanding his procrastination, of insisting that his choice to remain in his marriage had nothing to do with her, nothing to do with his love for her, was separate and attributable to his strong sense of loyalty, guilt, and shared history with Leslie.

Leslie says now, "Do you want to confront him with this?"

"Let's go," Victoria says. If she patiently continues to wait for the bridegroom to prepare himself for her, she will be waiting until Kingdom Come. It's time to stand up and be counted, time to call a spade a spade, as her father would say, or a breast a breast. Because the truth can be shrouded, too.

Like good pals and buddies, they walk together to Leslie's Porsche. They pass a women's boutique and in the window are mannequins with nipples outlined against the slinky dresses. This is disturbing to Victoria. Though plastic dummies, their hard nipples popping out pretend to offer warm flesh, the inverse of the Shroud of Turin which indicates a face where there is no body. Illusions, both of them.

"Ariel says you're a photographer," Leslie says. "I admire people who work in the arts. I wanted to do something in it—I was always good in the theater and I have an eye for color but..." she shrugs. "I can't take the rejection and I like to make money. Still, there's a part of me that wishes I'd tried. That wishes, I don't know, that I had done more for my soul. I really believe in a soul, you know, and I think if you deny your soul, no matter what your accomplishments, you will always have some unhappiness inside you. That's why I felt I really needed to get out of this marriage. It was crushing my soul."

Victoria listens and nods, surprised at how much she agrees with Leslie, how much alike, God forbid, they seem. That there would be the slightest similarity between the mistress and the wife had never occurred to her.

"Why did you stay with him for so long?" Leslie asks.

"I loved him," Victoria says.

"Why?"

Victoria has been asked this question countless times, has asked herself the question as well. Why, given the frustration, the anger and the hurt, the betrayals and broken promises, could she not end her concubineship and return to the values and principles from which she had strayed? Maybe because "As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool returns to his folly."

Fool, because when love approached her like a thief in the night and kidnapped her heart, somewhere between a kiss and a caress, she had never reclaimed it. There was something in the quiet of her lover's deep, even-toned, security-sodden voice, something in his listening eyes, something in her which made her always forgive him, believe him once more. When Ariel called her at midnight to say, "'Night, my love." then went off the next day, without telling her, to the Bahamas with Leslie, she had continued to have faith, that deep Christian faith, that his heart, soon, one day, would be surrendered completely to her. When Ariel returned and said, "Hurting you is like inflicting pain upon myself," when his mouth searched hers like a Crusader looking for the Holy Grail, dog to vomit, she was rendered incapable of doing to him what she ached, from the hollow cavity of her own lost heart, to do. For how could she justify hardening her heart against him when he so obviously needed her to be his savior?

Only those who have fallen into the bowels of love, who have felt themselves devoured, who have walked in the valley of fire, who have experienced the great tribulation of hope, whose heart has been tried and tested and shattered and mended, can truly understand why one person remains with another.

"Who am I to judge?" Leslie gives a little laugh. "I

stayed with him for eight years even though I knew, we both knew, that it would never work. I'm sure you know we almost didn't get married. We were both on the phone with the shrink the night before trying to decide what to do. He has his good qualities, you know..."

The tears stream down Victoria's face. She cannot stop her nose from running, and she reaches into her pocket for a crumpled tissue and blows her nose, embarrassed to be crying over Ariel in front of his wife.

"Sorry," she apologizes to Leslie. "I just—I can't believe this is Ariel! I can never trust him again. This is—it." But on the interior of that exterior, Victoria is screaming, "Tell me, God, it's a mistake! Leslie didn't hear him right! He never made a list! He never denied our relationship! He never said it had no quality!"

"Well," Leslie says, "you had a different relationship with him, obviously, than I did. I'm sure he loves you and you probably love him. I hate him now. You will have to take this information and think about it and make your own decision. If you're worried that he'll cheat on you, well, any man might."

Leslie garages the car and says hello to the doorman who responds with a cheerful, "Storm'll be here soon!" Leslie and Victoria look at each other and, in perfect unison, a blonde and a brown eyebrow lift and they smile wryly at each other.

The elevator deposits them into a small alcove. "I'll go in first," she says to Victoria.

She rings Ariel's bell, Victoria hears Ariel's footsteps, the door opens, and Ariel says, surprised, "Hi, Les."

Victoria could kill him for shortening her name to the familiar and affectionate, "Les."

A light kiss resounds. Judases, both of them!

"I have someone to introduce you to," Leslie says. She comes to the doorway and with a dramatic wave of her hand, gestures to Victoria. "Let me introduce Victoria."

Ariel's face is, no other way to describe it, white. Confusion, terror, and sorrow battle for dominance. Trapped behind his unpacked boxes, he looks like an animal that wants to escape but has been caught by the practiced and more powerful hunter.

"Please," Leslie says. "Come on in. Take a seat, Victoria. You can move some of those things. Ariel, we'd like to talk to you about a few misunderstandings."

Victoria realizes that Leslie is enjoying this in some perverse way. Her dramatic soul is finally being nourished.

In a triangle they sit, the guilty and culpable parties, Ariel in a chair, Victoria on the couch, Leslie in a chair facing Ariel.

Victoria bursts out, "You bastard! How could you tell her you just now decided you loved me?"

Ariel and Leslie look at Victoria in surprise as she continues screaming, "Love! Yeah, right, as if you know anything about it, anyway! Well, screw you, Ariel, just screw you!"

Leslie, very calm and controlled, says, "You've known her for four years, Ariel, not just one."

"Great. Great. Now you both know everything, and I'm a real shit, is that it?" Ariel, recovering his natural color, flings back.

"You were in bed with her a month after we took our vows!"

"Did you have to tell her that, Tory?"

"Yes."

"Leslie, what about Michael? What about that other guy you were seeing, what was his name? Jeff?"

"You were in fucking Paris with her last summer when you told me you were in London on a business trip!" Victoria throws at him. She doesn't want to hear their post mortems, she's had it with those endless "discussions."

"Did she also tell you that we spent the entire time shopping?" Ariel turns away from Leslie and faces Victoria directly. "For years, before I met you, I never knew if Leslie would be there the next morning or if she'd decide to go back to her old boyfriend or maybe she'd take off for California and not tell me. Then I met you and I trusted you. You would always be there. Do you know how important that was to me? Don't let her," he flung a finger toward Leslie, "poison you against me. I told you the truth, so help me, as much as I could without hurting you."

"So I conveniently waited for you while you and Leslie flew off without telling me?" "You didn't have to wait," Ariel stands up, glaring at both of them. The pieces of the vessel were being put back together but in a completely different pattern. "Neither of you waited! You *both* did exactly what you wanted while having a relationship with me. Victoria, did I tell you not to go to Israel for the summer? You dated other people and how could I say no, you can't? I couldn't, and I knew it and you knew it."

"So, why did you tell me, 'Tory, wait, it won't be long now, it's just a matter of time.'?" she chokes out.

"I *wanted* you to. But I never..." his voice is quiet, pleading almost, "believed that you would."

Then you never really knew me, Victoria thinks, but is beyond saying. If you had known me, you would have understood that I come from a long history of faith and belief and waiting. The woman who has an affair with a cantor's son is the same little girl who believed in a God who parted the Red Sea. So what if I later learned that it was all a mistranslation and it wasn't the Red Sea at all but the Reed Sea, some little dribble in the middle of the

(Continued on p. 88)

BOOK REVIEW

A Much-Examined Life

Mark Shechner

The Beginning of the Journey: The Marriage of Diana Trilling and Lionel Trilling by Diana Trilling. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993. 442 pp.

If living well is the best revenge, then writing a memoir surely comes in a close second. There is, in the genre, a calculable relation between indignation and vividness. We shouldn't wonder that Diana Trilling's memoir of her childhood and the early years of her marriage to Lionel Trilling—up to 1950—is brewed in gall. We should be grateful a substantial history, along with a wife's-eye view of Lionel Trilling himself, have been given passage on this train of resentment.

Diana Trilling, now eighty-eight and still writing (or rather dictating; she is virtually blind) has not been an easy person to be around. Nor does she pretend otherwise. " . . . There was an important sense," she concedes, "in which I was never socialized: I was never taught to please. I was in middle age before it broke upon me that people made life more pleasant and profitable for themselves by undertaking to please others, often at some cost in honesty." Honesty is the unaccommodating virtue she claims for herself and her memoir: "The need not to deviate from truth drags like an anchor on this book; it would have been impossible for me to be a writer of fiction and invent my own versions of truth."

In token of this anchor, Mrs. Trilling relentlessly keeps score on those who did her dirt over the years. Fifty years later she is still fuming. Winifred Rorty, wife of writer James Rorty, was "the first of a long line of women who would have me understand that in choosing me for a wife, Lionel had gravely underestimated his own worth." She would overhear Alfred Kazin proclaim to her husband, "When are you going to dissociate yourself from that wife of yours," a remark that brought Lionel close to violence. Randall Jarrell frosted her with a put-down of the coconut cream pie she had bought specially for him: "What's that? Pus?" Her own husband "indulged in annihilating verbal assaults," accusing her of "being the worst person he had ever met and of having ruined his life." These attacks were not frequent, she reassures us—perhaps five or six a year.

Diana Trilling's inventory of fears runs well over a page and includes Greek ice-cream parlors, fruit pits and "other people's towels or tubs or toilet seats."

Certainly, Diana Trilling is conscious of having provoked some of this. She was anything but temperamentally placid and remains a woman of blunt judgments and obstinate rectitude. She gave no quarter and asked none. In her circle, intellectual life was expected to be contentious, and it was taken for granted that disagreements could escalate into feuds.

It can't have helped her social relations, moreover, that she suffered from crippling phobias and attacks of irrational panic, which assailed her early on in her marriage. She suffered from hyperthyroidism and eventually had her thyroid removed, but there were also psychic wounds that needed healing. As a result, she would seek out psychoanalysis years before it became chic in New York intellectual circles and would plug away at it, fretfully, for years. Indeed, psychoanalysis and its discontents are pivotal to this memoir as Trilling ponders why psychotherapy, so highly touted as an intellectual discipline, should have utterly failed her husband and herself, thinkers and pliant disciples.

If the agenda is resentment, the form of *The Beginning of the Journey* is pure case history. Diana Trilling presents herself time and again as chronic patient and determined convalescent, still brooding over the details of her and her husband's analyses and trying one more time to strike to the root of their pathologies and exorcise them. "I was an excessively fearful child," she writes, "fear is the emotion I remember best from childhood. My second most important emotion was longing..." Her inventory of fears runs well over a page and includes Greek ice-cream parlors, fruit pits, and "other people's towels or tubs or toilet seats." It gives pause to wonder if there was anything at all that did not arouse her dread. In adolescence, these fears would recede for a spell, leaving her free to live more adventurously, indeed, to frequent the speakeasies where she and Lionel Trilling had their first dates.

Possibly, she suggests, the terrors point back to her stoical and detached father, who believed in keeping emotions under curfew and extolled the power of mind over body, in the manner of the Christian Science with which he had a brief romance. In Diana's home, the public display of feelings was prohibited. Or perhaps her fears implicate her dyspeptic mother, who gave

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permission to brother and sister to act out their envy of her, the last born of the family.

The panic symptom returned with a vengeance in 1931. Diana was afraid to stay home or go any distance alone, preferring that someone, usually Lionel, go with her. She would see a neurologist who scarcely knew what to make of her and prescribed a sedative for emergencies. Subsequently, she would hurl herself with missionary zeal into long-term therapy with a parade of analysts, only to lament later that, "at the end of this long road, I still feel that I was never properly analyzed."

The neurologist sent her to a hypnotist, who chatted her up for a year and then proposed a date at a speakeasy. She got drunk and had to be sent home in a taxi. Her next doctor was a classmate of Lionel's, who put her on the couch five days a week. His office being in his home, this nameless therapist took the liberty of introducing his patient to his family. Still incensed at the absurdities into which her crusade for remedy sometimes led her, Mrs. Trilling occasionally works her indignation into a comic fusillade: "To be introduced into this particular household and to become acquainted not only with this particular wife but also with my doctor's child and his sister and his ill-trained cats and dog was a cruel experience."

> The household could not have been more disordered. At all hours of the day, remnants of half-eaten meals were strewn about on tables and chair, on floors and carpets. The household pets relieved themselves as the need seized them and the doctor's infant daughter was let crawl in their mess. Slovenly and willful, the doctor's wife reigned over this chaos, supreme in her domestic power and impervious to the most elementary demands of social propriety. She was overweight and layers of soft white fat rolled out of her clothes.

In time this doctor would commit the added faux pas of taking on Lionel as a patient, thereby casting the Trillings in the role of sibling rivals, "vying for the attention of the same parental figure."

When this doctor gave up his practice to seek retraining, he handed Diana Trilling over to Dr. Paul Schilder.

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Trained in hypnosis and neuropsychology, Schilder had been an associate of Freud's in Vienna and had a long list of publications in German and English. Unfortunately, Schilder was, in the manner of Diana's father, "an artist of the counterphobic" whose treatment "was designed not to ferret out the emotional conflicts which generated my symptoms but to prove to me that with determination I could master them."

It was not until she found herself under the care of Dr. Ruth Brunswick that Trilling experienced out and out betrayal, though she didn't learn of it for a long while. Brunswick, also an immigrant to America and a former colleague of Freud's in Vienna, was a morphine addict at the time Trilling was in therapy with her. This fact was widely recognized in the analytic community, which protected Dr. Brunswick by keeping her patients ignorant of her illness.

The analysis was marked from the start by erratic habits: cancelled appointments, sometimes at the last minute, wayward and unfocused attention, wild interpretation, silly chatter, shopping calls to high-concept stores, didactic excursions into analytic theory that might last whole sessions, even by the analyst's falling asleep on her. "The five years in which I was in treatment with Dr. Brunswick," she now writes, "were the hardest of my life. Not only when I was at her office but through long sleepless nights I tried to make sense of her bewildering behavior."

Only after Dr. Brunswick's death did Mrs. Trilling learn the truth. While she does not regard that analysis as entirely wasted—she learned enough theory from Dr. Brunswick to perform an analysis upon herself—she does harbor bitter feelings, as well she might, toward the community of therapists that preferred rallying around a colleague to protecting the rights, not to say the finances, of her hapless patients. Finally, Trilling wound up in the care of Dr. Marianne Kris, whom she lauds as "a most remarkable woman, warmhearted, large-minded, sensitive, sensible, imaginative, a great unraveler of emotional knots. She looked wise and she was wise." Kris was, moreover, no protector of her guild; she felt the Psychoanalytic Society owed the Trillings restitution for the Brunswick fiasco and volunteered the observation that Lionel Trilling was being mishandled by his own therapist, Dr. Rudolph Loewenstein.

We learn little more about Lionel Trilling's encounter with psychotherapy, as is only just. We do, however, know for certain now that Lionel Trilling was in analysis for a considerable time with several analysts. It seems too that his submission to psychotherapy was the basis for Trilling's intellectual engagement with Freud's ideas during the 1930s and 1940s. Two of his essays of the 1940s were "Art and Neurosis" and "Freud and Literature," (both included in *The Liberal Imagination*), which claimed Freudian theory as the gateway into the artistic imagination. While Trilling never did become a ritualized practitioner of "applied psychoanalysis"—he balked at elevating the infantile to the status of *primum mobile*—he certainly held out the hope that we might find, in Freud's principles of mind, clues to the creative imagination.

If Lionel Trilling's intellectual life was keyed to his therapy, was therapy not the most precious gift of all to his criticism?

Certainly we need no longer wonder about Trilling's insistence upon "the divided self" as a key to complex literary texts. The writers on whom he brought his intelligence most powerfully to bear—Henry James, Jane Austen, John Keats, E.M. Forster, Matthew Arnold, John Stuart Mill, George Orwell, and Freud himself—were all souls in division who drew their power from their struggles with themselves. Who but Trilling himself was the model for the divided self?

Nor need we wonder how Freud's "death instinct" came to be celebrated as an antidote to modern "weightlessness" or how "the tragic sense of life" might constitute a proper, moral relationship to the modern world. Diana Trilling tells us that her husband was a depressive who suffered from a lifelong emotional fatigue interrupted by spikes of rage and despair. (This sounds like a drinker's profile, and it is one of the book's revelations that this patron saint of high consciousness and tired blood was, at times, a problem drinker.) Lionel Trilling seldom yielded to frivolity and spent the better part of his professional life convinced he had come up short.

There was some basis for his self-doubt. Trilling had aspired to be a novelist, though one novel and a clutch of stories were all he ever mustered in the way of fiction. In addition, he was, according to his wife, blocked even in his criticism during much of his career, enduring long episodes when words simply failed him.

Still, one has to take issue with Diana Trilling's verdict that her husband's analysis, like her own, was a failure. "I doubt," she says, "that he would have described his treatment as successful, with or without quotation marks. He frequently had difficulty in writing and he was prone to depression. Analysis did not rid him of his problems." But self-knowledge, self-control, and the ability to manage one's fears and perform one's tasks have always been the goals of psychoanalysis, and, by such measures, the Trillings are as persuasive an argument for its practice as any we have. If Lionel Trilling's intellectual life was keyed to his therapy, and there was a hot line from the couch to the seminar and the writing, was therapy not the most precious gift of all to his criticism?

And what of Diana Trilling herself? Is she fair to dismiss so much of her own labors, when the evidence seems to be that she flowered in the 1950s into a reviewer, a critic, an intellectual, and a formidable polemicist in her own right? Certainly, if one insists on "cheerfulness" as the standard of value, classical psychoanalysis runs far behind any of its more energy-efficient rivals, from Yoga to Prozac, which can produce a smile a good deal more ergonomically than hours of grousing about "the mother" to an analyst who just might be dozing through one's most impassioned aria. If, however, endurance, responsibility, and the capacity to function are our standards, what better models does public life have to offer than Lionel and Diana Trilling?

At certain moments in reading this memoir, one grows perversely fond of the relentless scolding and joylessness of it all. In temperament, as

well as intelligence, Mrs. Trilling was ideally suited to join the ranks of the New York intellectuals, whom she both scorns and adores. She qualified brilliantly in low spirits. Compared to her gloom, that of other New York intellectuals—that company of scolders, brooders, and frustrated commissars who set the intellectual agenda for so much post-war debate—was nothing worse than a morning's headache or a dip in blood-sugar level. She seems virtually a summary of their darkest mannerisms.

Compared to Diana Trilling's gloom, that of other New York intellectuals was nothing worse than a morning's headache or a dip in blood-sugar level.

Prophets of the worst, they were well suited to taking positions of intellectual influence during the time of their greatest disappointments. After World War II, when America's victory counted less for them than the failure of revolutionary ideals, anti-Stalinism became their chariot, and Diana Trilling signed up eagerly to be one of the charioteers. If she carries an indelible label with her, it is that of anti-communist, though her two volumes of essays, *Claremont Essays* (1964) and *We Must March My Darlings* (1977), reveal a mind more flexible and probing than that.

Diana Trilling's political initiation had come through a fleeting association with an organization known as the NCDPP—the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners—a Communist Party front that made its mark in 1933 by helping to defend the Scottsboro Boys, a group of Black youngsters on trial in Alabama for the alleged rape of two white girls. The leading figures in the NCDPP were writers for *The Menorah Journal*, a liberal Jewish publication that was edited in the 1920s by Elliot Cohen. It was a forerunner of *Commentary*, founded in 1946 with Elliot Cohen its editor as well. Devoted to Jewish "culture" in a broad-focused way and committed to the full participation of Jews in the secular world, *The Menorah Journal* attracted an extraordinary array of literary and intellectual talent. One might find in its pages the likes of Trilling, Horace Kallen, Louis Ginsberg (father of Allen), Maurice Samuel, Clifton Fadiman, Charles Reznikoff, and Isaac Babel—the Russian Jewish writer whom Stalin would murder during the purges of the 1930s.

The point of Diana Trilling's review of this history, which has been presented before with greater particularity by Alan Wald and Mark Krupnick, is not to open new doors or even to put a spin on what is already known. It is to remind us that she had a profile of her own, which took shape early in the marriage and, in certain respects, placed her in advance of her husband. She was invariably the more exposed of the two, during the revolutionary years and after, the more combative, the more volatile. Diana Trilling moved more swiftly, turned more abruptly, and maintained a greater zest for intellectual combat than did her more retiring husband, whose preference for "ideas in modulation" not only kept him out of trouble but was the rule of style that made his writing iconic for a generation of university-based critics who preferred their frisson of rebellion cut with the ironies of "sensibility." Confirmation of Diana Trilling's credentials as a revolutionist in the early Depression years would come in menacing form. In 1933, Whittaker Chambers, whom everyone knew to be a Soviet agent, asked if she would be his mail drop. Looking back, she recalls being "enormously flattered that he thought me capable of such an assignment and I was ashamed to refuse him." Her refusal, though, was a bewildered non-affirmation; an urgent phone call was the *deus-ex-machina* and absolved her of having to answer at just that moment. Chambers never repeated the request.

An occasional visitor in the Trilling home, he would be fictionalized as Gifford Maxim, the pontificating revolutionist turned pontificating theologian, in Lionel Trilling's novel *The Middle of the Journey* (1947). In 1948, he would thrust himself into the national limelight as the post-revolutionary Nemesis in one of the sensational political trials of the Cold War: that of former State Department official Alger Hiss, whom Chambers accused of being his associate in Soviet espionage. It is chilling to imagine that the Trillings themselves, with a history of revolutionary flirtation, however brief and tepid, could have wound up on the wrong end of Chambers's finger, had Diana yielded to his "flattery."

Then again, saying "No" has always been at the core of Diana Trilling's politics, no matter what the orientation in question. She appeared, for a spell, to say no to capitalism; later on, it was no to communism. In 1965, when another apostate revolutionist, Irving Kristol, asked both Lionel and Diana Trilling to serve on the editorial board of The *Public Interest*, the Trillings demurred. "Even then we were reluctant to associate ourselves with his generally conservative stance and we did not accept the offer."

"Just say no" was Diana Trilling's theme song long before it became an anti-drug slogan. She was not alone in this, of course, which is why she so effortlessly joined ranks with a New York intellectual culture that defined itself by its oppositions. And she is still saying no, well into her eighties: with guts, with honor, and with her own obstinate brand of self-assertion. Consider this envoi to *The Beginning of the Journey*, the *ave atque vale* to the other intellectuals with whom she and her husband made their lives. "The strange difficult ungenerous unreliable unkind and not always honest people who created the world in which Lionel and I shared, and to which we tried to contribute, are now most of them dead. I inscribe their names here, on this poor monument: Elliot Cohen, Herbert Solow, Henry Rosenthal, Philip Rahv, Dwight Macdonald, Mary McCarthy, Hannah Arendt, Sidney Hook, Edmund Wilson, Malcolm Cowley, Fred Dupee, Margaret Marshall, Delmore Schwartz, William Barrett, James Agee, Bernard Haggin, Irving Howe." Was ever affection acknowledged more grudgingly? Was ever honesty more conspicuously triumphant over accommodation? And what of the psychoanalysts who don't even make this short list? Is *The Beginning of the Journey* farewell to them too, or a good riddance? □

BOOK REVIEW

Sikkum

Edited by Michael Paley

Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective: Religion, Ideology, and the Crisis of Modernity. Laurence J. Silberstein, ed., New York University Press, 1993

Laurence J. Silberstein has assembled an outstanding collection of essays on the explosive topic of Jewish fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism in general. James Davison Hunter argues that fundamentalism is a product of oppositional minority behavior to all Enlightenment values, both secular and modern. Elie Rekhess and James Piscatori place Hamas in the deadly ground between the more homicidal Muslim Brotherhood and the suicidal Islamic Jihad. And there are many other insightful contributions that will help us understand the thinking of those who will be playing a central role as the Middle East peace process unfolds in the years ahead.

A Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Postcritical Scriptural Interpretation, by Peter Ochs, Paulist Press, 1993.

Peter Ochs paints a new method for coping with our classical heritage, one that uses the hard won skills of source criticism and archaeology but re-engages with the pre-modern quest for religious meaning. For most of us, a course on Judaism or Christianity at a university leaves us dry, filling us too much with the conditions surrounding the birth of the text and not nearly enough about why we should find this text important. In this century the interpretation of religious texts has moved from the inspirational to the historical, from the meaningful to the skeptical. In every corner of this book, the writings of Maimonides, Jonathan Edwards, the great Muslim philosophers, and the Gospel editor are brought to life in a way that neither ignores the fruits of modern scholarship nor the essence of a spiritual quest. This is a fine and readable book by the small core of revolutionary scholars on how to read a religious text.

Let the Earth Teach You Torah, by Ellen Bernstein and Dan Fink, Shomrei Adamah Publications, 1993.

Shomrei Adamah, the Keepers of the Earth, has given us an environmental workbook that links Jewish text, political action, and educational opportunity in an interactive and enjoyable way. The book is divided into conversations that pair Bob Dylan and Annie Dillard with Genesis, the Book of Job, and selections from the Talmud. There are exercises and worksheets perfect for a family setting and for the building of a Jewish ethic. Sit with your teenagers and their friends and use this book to transform Sukkot or Tu Bishvat into a provocative celebration of the environment.

The New Jewish Baby Book: Names, Ceremonies & Customs-A Guide for Today's Families, by Anita Diamant, Jewish Lights Publishing, 1993.

Why is this book different from all other Jewish naming books? Whereas all Jewish naming books, including this one, will help you pick a name and tell you what it means, this book guides you through ritual and innovation to creating a Jewish life for you and your child. When you decide to have a child, how should you celebrate the decision? When your child is born, is there help in how to spend the first moments of life? If conception is difficult, how does one turn a medical procedure into a sacred act? If one of the parents is not Jewish, how will this affect the ritual? *The New Jewish Baby Book* is presented with care and sensitivity to feminism, authenticity, and the new shape of the Jewish family.

Entering Jewish Prayer: A Guide to Personal Devotion and the Worship Service, Reuven Hammer, Schocken Books, 1994.

"The opportunity of addressing God is both an obligation and a privilege. The experiences of daily life present us with just such opportunities." With *Entering Jewish Prayer*, Rabbi Reuven Hammer gives us a historical guide to making the best of that opportunity. For those just beginning their spiritual journeys, *Entering Jewish Prayer* is an excellent companion to spiritual meditative guides; for those already on their way, the book begins to address many of the questions which are so often left unanswered by other guides: where did the prayers come from? why do we pray just so? what's the best way to get ready to pray?

Islams and Modernities, by Aziz Al-Azmeh, Verson, 1993.

There is no single Islamic culture except in the mind of the West. This book draws the consequences, showing how wildly distorted our

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conceptions of Islam have become.

Representing the Holocaust, by Dominick Lacapra, Cornell University Press, 1994.

Those who deconstructed social reality found themselves quite embarrassed when some of the deconstructors turned out to be Nazis with a special interest in undermining notions of objectivity in representation. The Holocaust is a troublesome case for postmodernists, and Lacapra's critique of Zygmunt Bauman's masterful *Modernity and the Holocaust* and of recent attempts to understand Heidegger's Nazism reveal a slippery slope toward the kind of moral relativism that always disarms critics of oppression.

Apocalypse: On the Psychology of Fundamentalism in America, by Charles B. Strozier, Beacon, 1994.

Unable to make sense of the pain that they face in daily life, tens of millions of Americans have clutched at a variety of religious visions that see the contemporary period as bordering the end of time and the rectification of wrong by God's return into history. Not only Christian fundamentalists, but important strands of New Age thinking reflect the apocalyptic themes that have given some people hope in facing dark times.

Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza, by Ian S. Lustick, Cornell University Press, 1993.

Ian Lustick was a State Department analyst for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research when he began his search fifteen years ago for a comprehensive theory of the incorporation of additional territories into existing states and the equally problematic process of how states relinquish control over territories. Now a professor in the social sciences at the University of Pennsylvania, Lustick has come up with a book which effectively contextualizes three of the last century's bloodiest territorial disputes in a broad theoretical overview applicable far beyond the case studies which provide its foundations. □

LETTERS

(Continued from p. 7)

To the Editor:

After reading Tom Hayden's wonderful article in TIKKUN, I was delighted to hear that he had decided to run for governor of California. But then, after hearing how he is presenting himself on television and the newspapers, I almost couldn't believe it was the same man who I'd read in the magazine. In his actual campaign he doesn't talk about a politics of meaning, nor does he raise any of the central issues that TIKKUN has talked about over the years, issues like the crisis in families or in ethics. For Tom Hayden, the ethical crisis is simply that the wrong people fund elections, and his solution is electoral reform. But from my perspective, no one much cares about this issue, because they've already become so alienated from government that they don't care who runs it. Government doesn't address the crisis of meaning in our lives, it doesn't touch the family crisis, it ignores or accelerates the ethical crisis and the ecological crisis—so why doesn't he speak about these? It's useless for him to say that all these issues depend on electoral reform, because even though he's right, he won't win electoral reform unless he first gets my generation (I'm in graduate school) to care enough to want to do anything, and this focus on who is giving money won't generate that.

In addition, Hayden's theme seems particularly susceptible to ridicule, because he himself is rich and if he doesn't take any large outside donations he is likely to end up donating to his own campaign. I've already heard people say, "It's easy for him to talk about limiting external donations when you are rich enough to fund your own campaign." Even if this isn't really true, why should he have picked a campaign theme that gives the appearance of looking vulnerable? I don't get it, because if he had taken the spirit of a politics of meaning and applied it to our situation in California, he would almost certainly have had a tremendous impact. I think California will remain very good territory to try a politics of meaning candidate—I hope you at TIKKUN eventually field one.

Roberta Klein
Los Angeles, California

Which Molecule Has The Dignity?

(Continued from p. 24)

serious about my philosophy, I would have to answer his question; the burden was mine. Heschel pressed me on that score, refusing to permit me umbrage behind pure logic. Could I live, do I live, with the conclusions of my point of view?

Heschel's raised foot also lurks in the periphery when I think about the Holocaust and the problem of evil, another subject we discussed during our encounter. Over the subsequent years, I've developed a different perspective from Heschel's on this fundamental problem, but he taught me that day to watch out for the dishonesty of hiding the issue behind a shield of formalism.

True to my devotion to logical form, I had dismissed seeing the Holocaust as a unique *theological* problem. All it takes to get the problem of theodicy off the ground is a single headache somewhere in the universe: The existence of an All Good, All Powerful Being is, according to the standard argument, incompatible with any suffering, and the *amount* of suffering is irrelevant. But Heschel pressed me: Could I live with my fine analytical conclusion? Structurally, the problem of evil of a single headache and the death of six million might be the same, and perhaps, the same philosophical solution will do for both, but unlike a single headache, the Holocaust rocks the theological boat and *demands* a response. A headache somewhere in the universe isn't enough—enough, existentially, one might say—to dislodge the onus of argument from the atheist to the theist; one can leave the problem unanswered without an overbearing strain to one's theistic commitment. The Holocaust, however, shifts the burden. Here again, Heschel forced me to ask myself with all the intellectually honesty I could muster: Was philosophy more than an exercise for me?

Our epistemological concerns were, however, only part of our agenda. Zvi and I weren't going to miss this opportunity to pry into Heschel's genuine feelings about Jewish observance.

Young people show no gray, neither in their hair nor in their convictions. The sum of our philosophical explorations hadn't made a dent on our unquestioned conviction that only one brand of Judaism—ours—had any serious claim on authenticity. It was this Judaism that one accepted or rejected. We carried into Heschel's office the notion that since he came from the same traditional background as we, he must share, if only tacitly, the same view about what is "really" Jewish.

But, then, how to understand Heschel? We knew his public résumé and liberal associations, which included teaching Talmud at Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Jüdentums, a professorship at the Hebrew College in London and then, *mirabile dictu,* a stint with the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Yet we heard that he was meticulously observant. (This is a puzzle that few contemporary yeshiva boys with roaming curiosities now confront. The number of deviants from that environment—people who grew up and spent their young adulthood in that culture and then went on to become significant non-Orthodox religious leaders—is dwindling rapidly. Most who now leave, leave Jewish scholarship entirely). Heschel was an enigma to us, a paradox and a problem. What was his excuse? We'd find out.

Instead, we found out a great deal about ourselves. Heschel understood our minds as well as what was on them. And so he talked to us about *neigel vasser.* "I can't imagine getting up in the morning and not doing *neigel vasser*," he said and proceeded to discuss at length the ritual of washing one's hands upon awakening. *Neigel vasser*, for goodness sake! In the vast expanse of halakhic minutiae, this morning ritual is just a remote footnote, but for Heschel, the practice was laden with meaning. It allowed him to begin his day with an act of purification, he said. It fixed his mind on the spiritual, he explained. Of course, it wasn't *neigel vasser* that he cared about—it was holiness.

Never before (or after) had someone talked to me so directly, so non-condescendingly, so free of embarrassment and with such passion about sacredness. We talked at length about Halakha and modern life, and he answered all our personal questions with thorough candor. But he also wanted to know what *we* were doing to make our lives holier. We could only offer the most feeble of excuses.

I ran into Zvi recently. I was spending Shabbos with my mother in Brooklyn and saw Zvi at the Chassidic synagogue, the *shtieble*, where my grandfather used to be the Rebbe. Zvi still lives in Boro Park, as one look at his dress quickly confirms. I look like I'm visiting.

"Do you remember our visit to Heschel?" I wondered. Of course, he does. It was important to him, he says. He remembers, too, how quiet we were on our way home, each lost in his own confused thoughts but sure that our visit to Heschel would make a difference in our lives. I reminded Zvi that on the way back we weren't sure where to go.

"You decided to go back to the Yeshiva for the evening session of Talmud, and I went to my class in metaphysics." "Yes," Zvi says, understanding too well. "Same train, different stops." □

JEWISH RENEWAL

(Continued from p. 26)

Traveling Jewish Theater, which produces plays about people who are struggling, like us, with questions about their Jewish identity.

This is a time when more and more people are taking on the Jewish tradition as their own and insisting that it expand, change, move into line with the progressive values we embrace. As for us, we need to support this effort. And we need to make connections—connections between our lives and what we know, and the tradition. And we need to keep on making these connections, so that we're not just reading TIKKUN, although that's a very good place to start, but we're acting on what we are learning.

I want to conclude by saying that I am very moved to be here today. In 1985 I created this magazine with Michael Lerner. It is my issue, my child, and I claim it as such. Back then we had a dream that it would become an important forum for the discussion of ideas, but it has become much, much more than I ever imagined. I am very proud. But it would not be possible if there were not a context for it, a growing movement of Jewish renewal, people like you and the people you know, and the circle goes outward, all of us demanding, insisting that this tradition be all that it can be. □

CHANGING NAMES

Rodger Kamenetz

I hereby change my name
from Rodger Kamenetz
to fill in the blank.
What's in a name?
Nothing more than
you put into it.
The roses in my name
have all wilted
but the touch of Celia's breath
would revive
them at once.

Who is Celia?
Who is Laura?
Who is Beatrice?
Who is Sylvia
that all the swains do commend her?
We make up names
to save innocent loves
from our drunken praise
so they may marry
rich men, not poets
and have many servants
one of whom, the maid
will find, locked
in a secret diary
the secret poems
addressed to the secret lady
with the secret name
and the secret number
of kisses, thirty thousand
all in a row
from Catullus to Petrarch to now.

I'll change my name
to something, anything
but Rodger Kamenetz.
My name's odd conjunction
splays me across time—Rodger
the Celtic warrior,
he who carries a mighty spear
in the midst of battle—
okay, at least it's not Dick
or Peter but the resonance
is close: I see a drunken
hairy brute with a spear
as long as laundry pole
and thick as a baseball bat
haft set in mud
his heels have dug
a jug of mead half-tipped
at his side and arrows
mudballs, rocks and stones
thick in the air.
One meaty hand fingers
forelock and beer-soaked
beard: Rodger!
Then there's Kamenetz
Ellis Island wisecrack.
Kamenetz: a name that roars
like thunder across the bay...
No, Kamenetz, a name so hard
to pronounce and easy to misspell
tangled in miles of cable
twisted through coves of ears
punched into guts of demented
computers and spat out:
Kavanet
Kabinets
Kamenetty
Kamentz
Ka-menn-etz
Kameneta
Kamentez
Kramentz
Kramenetz
Kanenetz
Kastanets
Kostalenetz
Katzenstein
Kamenhammer
Katzenjammer

Really, it's not even Kamenetz
but Kam-yen-yetz, the Russian e
greased by adding a sliding y
or so three big bears of Russian
bibliographers told me

Rodger Kamenetz is author of The Missing Jew *and the forthcoming* The Jew in the Lotus, *his account of Jewish dialogue with the Dalai Lama. (Harper/San Francisco, May 1994)*

at the Columbia Library
Slavic section linking
arms on their way
to the union meeting
singing the Internationale,
they hailed me, "Come
tovarisch Kam-yen-yetz!"

Cities of grim slaughter,
I mean Kamenetzes, little towns
in Poland, Latvia, the Ukraine
cramped shtetls.
Kamenetz from Russian kamen
meaning stone and etz
makes it little, little stones
(and Rodger, a mighty spear)
mismatch of sexual equipment
but more likely a quarry town.
Kamenetz means gravel.

Cities of grim slaughter.
Jews without last names
just David son of Samuel.
It's the old story
change a name
to mark a memory
to mark a moment:
when her son was born
Sarah laughed,
Yitzhak, she laughed, Isaac.
Abram became Abraham
Jacob, Israel
"he who struggles with God"
struggling still.

I hereby change my name
from Rodger Kamenetz
to idle-speculator-daydreaming-
the-new-syntax-that-will-release-
names-from-dread-history-
and-send-them-spinning-
an-echolalia-of-nonsense.

I want a name as common as dirt
a name like a mantra
as Walt Whitman hypnotized
himself
chanting Walt Whitman Walt
Whitman
Walt Whitman, who heard the sea
whispering death death death
and right, I hear no sea
whispering Rodger...
hear no trains clacking by
Kamenetz Kamenetz Kamenetz...
Every little breeze seems to
whisper
the sound of one hand clapping
and the nightjar that keeps me
awake all summer with her lust
doesn't crack her throat on
Kamenetz
but whips poor will to death.

I don't want to change my name.
I want my name changed.
I want it inhabited by force.
I want it to mean something.
I want a name to match
how dissatisfied I feel.
Oh Sammy Rosenstock
I want a name as tragic
and magical as yours
when you changed it
to Tristan Tzara
Rumanian for lost lands...
I want a change as surgical
and sure as yours
Manuel Rabinowitz
when you erased the middle west
and the middle class
with a single stroke
and became Man Ray.
And you Pablo Neruda
what was your name
before you borrowed
that dead Czech poet's?
So thoroughly you succeeded
we have lost it...
As for you, Ezra Pound
some people are just born lucky...

I hereby throw my name
into the air.
I want it digested
into something subtle
as alcohol dissolves dye
retrieving blue.
I want to cultivate
the seeds in my name.
I want to groom
that drunken lout, Rodger
and that scared immigrant,
Kamenetz
and blend them into a single name
courageous and empty as a shout!

from *The Missing Jew: New and Selected Poems*, (Time Being Books, 1992).

Freudianism and Its Discontents

(Continued from p. 72)

questions. I would not charge the anti-Freudians, therefore, with trying to erase a kind of Freudian emancipatory essence. The problem is with Freud himself.

In my view, Marx cannot be postponed in addressing this problem. Marx may have failed to appreciate the tenacity of capitalism or to develop a blueprint for going beyond it; he may also have failed to appreciate the contours of the inner world. But what he did contribute remains indispensable. It was Marx who announced the necessity of a unity of theory and practice, and who tells us that self-reflection without a commitment to social transformation is regressive navel-watching. Marx may not have appreciated subjectivity, but he knew the dialectic which gives subjectivity life.

If we want to restore to psychoanalysis its lost promise, we have to make it genuinely dialectical. I would suggest beginning with *Marx's 1844 Manuscripts*, calling for a "single human science," along with a recent work that really advances the breakthroughs of the '60s and brings us closer to this goal, Victor Wolfenstein's *Psychoanalytic-Marxism* (Guilford, 1993).

Wolfenstein is a practicing analyst, but he knows what comes first. He goes straight to the heart of the matter—the need to ground psychoanalysis in a philosophy of social transformation. □

On Hold

(Continued from p. 78)

desert? From my childhood, it was the Red Sea and still, I believe, have faith, against all odds, in things that are hidden, which I have no reason to believe exist or will come to be.

Victoria realizes that Ariel is no Isaac Luria. He was a mystic who saw the ten spheres of the universe. He sought the hidden within the hidden and would have understood that plastic dummies have life and museums contain death. Had she lived four centuries ago, she would have married him.

Victoria, watching Ariel and Leslie stare at each other, sees their failure covering them like a blanket, and the thickness of wrongs shrouding them is now being cast off.

"I thought you were my best friend," Leslie finally says, quietly.

"I was."

"I'll never forgive you for destroying our friendship and," she leans back, "I can't wait for the day I hear that you've died of a heart attack."

They exchange a long look which spans eight years. Victoria sees it as a photograph, set amongst all these boxes, titled, "Debris." Sadness and affection, past hurts, past happiness, ending and like any ending, it deserves to be cried over. Ariel is holding back tears.

Victoria wants to hold him. She wants to slap him, and she wants to hold him when she sees the hurt in his face. Such a good mistress, she thinks. Wanting to comfort my lover as I watch his marriage fall apart.

"You gave her a necklace for her birthday," Leslie accuses out of nowhere. "You told me you never gave her anything. You've been talking to her about having children."

Victoria breaks in, "While you've been talking to her about having children!"

"People who are married often do!" he returns defensively.

"Well, listen Ariel," Victoria brushes away more tears, "you are not Abraham and we are not Sarah and Hagar and I don't appreciate being in a battle of wombs!"

Leslie goes on, "You took my youth..."

"What about what you took from me, Leslie? You certainly never turned down my help. That's all you ever wanted from me, wasn't it? My support and my help with your business. And I asked for nothing from you in return." Turning to Victoria, he says, more quietly, "I never meant for any of us to be like this. It's not in keeping with who I think I am and, I know, with who you are. But now," he spreads out his hands, "we all have the facts, or a certain version of them. We can all make our decisions."

Leslie gets up, comes over to where Victoria is seated. She holds out her arms and Victoria, not a crier or a hugger by nature, stands up and hugs her. The hug doesn't ring true but later she thinks that Leslie wasn't hugging her, but rather Ariel through her.

Ariel stands up. "Goodbye, Ariel," Leslie says, going to the door. Victoria expects him to go after her, as he always has done, but he doesn't move. "Goodbye," he says, and Victoria realizes he is crying.

Leslie walks onto the street which, seen through the living room window, is gearing up for a big winter storm. Victoria wants to follow her, does not want to stay here with a man mourning his broken marriage.

One way or another, the shiksa has been shoved off the hot stove and, though she doesn't want to sit in Ariel's lap, now that the waiting is over and the choices have been made, it would be impolite to walk out on him in his hour of need.

"She's not a bad person, you know," Ariel says to her, trying to control his tears, "But I really hurt her. And you, too."

"Yes."

"But we can—this isn't going to be the end for us. We won't end up like Leslie and me. I know that's what you're thinking. But Leslie and I, we never knew how to give to each other, and you and I, we aren't trying to—win. Trust me a little, okay?"

When she doesn't respond, when there is no sound but an eery wind outside the windows, he removes one of her hands from her face and seeing the tears underneath, says, "You're a photographer. You see things that other people don't see. Whatever you saw in me is still there. Okay, so don't trust me—but trust yourself. Have faith in what you see," he lifts her other hand.

She sees a big white tit and the words "Text and Texture." Mother's milk nurtures our body, and words, God's words and man's words, hidden inside, nurture the soul. She's getting closer to whatever it was she had originally been so inspired by. She wonders if she'll ever get it back again, the way it was in the beginning, or if, like her faith, it has been altered with the passing of time but it is still unreasonably there, like a phantom bridegroom who leaves a dent in the cloth but in the morning, his body is nowhere to be found. Not on my pillow, the head that rested there the night before. Just a crease and a spot on the sheets, but it has been enough to keep my faith alive.

Ariel is quiet. Sitting amongst his boxes, Victoria thinks, "I have no idea which door I've chosen: the jackass or the trip to paradise. And I don't know if I want to spend my life opening his gym bag and sniffing his shirts in order to find out." □

The Woman in the Balcony

(Continued from p. 64)

hostile "watchmen." Caution, in other words, lest you end up lovesick, shades of Truffaut's *Adele H.*, the woman consigned to an unfulfillable longing for the absent, ever-fleeing male.

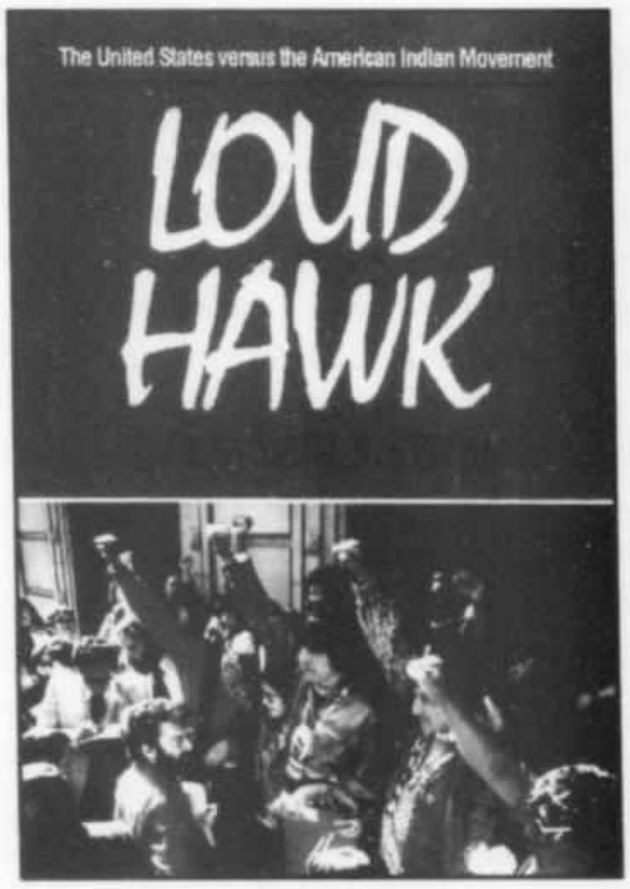
V.

The final section of the Song begins by alluding to the yearning for a pre-eroticized period in life in which a young boy is free to suckle on his mother's breast and a prepubescent girl ("Our sister is young / And breasts she has none") is free to kiss her brother without risk: "none would scorn me" (Song of Songs, 8:8). It is a curious scenario for a purportedly heavy-breathing amorous dialogue to end on, but an entirely reasonable conclusion for the conflicted, push-me/pull-you recitation—a monologue in several voices—that I take this text to be. Perhaps, with just the smallest of shifts in emphasis, we might read the Song of Songs as an internalized argument *preceding* the taking of romantic action, a sort of amplified version of Hamlet's famously indecisive soliloquy: To love or not to love, that is the question.

At the core of the Song of Songs, under all its waffling, is an erotics of restraint, even of stasis. Someone, a woman perchance, longs; someone else, a man perchance, responds, but is ultimately unattainable. It is a game, a lie, an elaborate ruse: A case for adult heterosexual passion is presented in the guise of two amorphously defined lovers who never come close to consummating their relationship. Once the dust the poem is designed to kick up has settled, its stark secret is revealed: Stay upstairs in the balcony, Shulamite woman, for withheld consummation is the best kind.

But even as I write this, it becomes clear to me that I am writing out of my own idiosyncratic tastes. As such, it must be pointed out that my imagination is drawn more to the prospect of erotic doom than to sensual rapture, to Jean Rhys and her abandoned boardinghouse creatures than to daredevil dames astride one stallion-lover-husband after another. It is, in the end, a matter of personal accounting whether any passion is worth the price of that passion. So, too, in the end, the Song throws one—in the most parodied of postmodernist theories of reading—upon oneself as Author.

It would seem, finally, that one brings to a text about love all that one was taught to read into it, an amorous imprint stretching back for generations: unto mothers and grandmothers, and behind them ancestors galore. Some of us are destined to exalt love and others to demonize it; some rise to its occasion and others shy away for reasons unknown even to themselves. Lineage counts—Noah was the son of *x*, the son of *xx*, the son of *xxx*—even in matters of the flesh and heart. What you recognize as the siren call of love I may fear as the siren call of imminent abandonment. Someone must have scared off the author of the Song of Songs in the porousness of childhood, whispering sweet messages of caution: "Bolt, my love / Be like a buck, / Or a young stag, / On the spice mountain" (v. 14). □



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Clinton and Education

(Continued from p. 20)

performance, more content, and academic excellence.

Such hollow education-speak is rooted in what the great Brazilian educator Paulo Freire called the "banking method" of education. Freire noted how much of the educational process treats students not as active producers of knowledge, but as empty vessels who we attempt to "fill up" with curriculum material. Kids, however, experience this content as remote and abstracted from their real lives. It is, in a real sense, meaningless knowledge; reified information that might be memorized by students and regurgitated in a subsequent test or examination, but has little use as a means to help students gain some critical understanding of the world that confronts them.

Freire and other educators have noted that this concern with transmitting subject matter and covering content has little to do with educating people in ways that might begin to empower them or imbue their lives with meaning. Indeed, it does the opposite, by teaching students that successful schooling requires an altogether passive and uncritical attitude toward the words of teachers and texts. Classrooms are rarely places where students learn to question the taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs of the culture. They are seldom spaces where they learn the meaning of democratic values by challenging social myths or realities. Nor are they places where knowledge is actively constructed by students as they bring their own lives and experiences into a dialogue with the understandings of others. They rarely create situations where individual and communal meanings can be forged out of the voices, memories, and wisdom of other human beings.

The language of increased content, higher levels of performance, and improved test scores—sadly, the language of your administration's educational policies—will only continue and exacerbate this confusion of schooling with some genuine, humanly liberating, and meaningful education. It will ensure that many students (especially older ones) will continue to find school deadening and oppressive; a place where their own lives in all of their particularity and difference will find little resonance in the curriculum that confronts them.

This lack of connection is especially acute among those for whom schools have historically offered little—the poor, minorities, and working-class students. For them, the oppressiveness of schooling is compounded by an even more stark separation of the classroom from the culture of the streets and the neighborhood. It is a gap that has been documented in the ludicrous and/or minimal images of such groups in textbooks, in the inattention of the curriculum to their experiences, history, and lives, and in the ways that schools track and exclude students from less favored backgrounds. The documentation makes clear how schools create cultures that silence and invalidate students—a process that, not surprisingly, frequently produces in students hostility and resistance to the official culture of schools. In this sense, the poor educational performance of minority students is a deliberate response to a school experience that continues to demean and exclude them.

The greatest disappointment of your administration's approach to education is not in what you've proposed, but in what is missing. Your approach is overwhelmingly technocratic in its stress on making systems more effective and efficient and its view of education as an investment in human capital, ensuring that talent is not wasted. Educationally, it is an approach without heart or soul, a discourse about education that accepts liberalism's excision from it of moral and spiritual concerns. It is a language that reduces the education of the young to skills, knowledge, and competencies, one that accepts a disastrously limited view of what it means to nurture a new generation for a world in crisis and pain. It is a view of education that bears none of the marks of your own formative "educational" experiences; of what it means to grow up in a time when the real curriculum meant grappling passionately with the life and death issues of one's world. Nor is there any sense of why for your own child you and Hillary would choose a Quaker school, part of an educational tradition based in progressive moral concerns and commitments. It is one of the profoundly instructive political lessons of our time that the Right has been so willing and able to invoke moral claims and purposes in its social and cultural agenda—a process that has been analyzed with great insight in the pages of this magazine. The Left, in contrast, continues to defend church-state separation and academic freedom and offers a view of education that is largely bereft of spiritual affirmation or moral conviction. While we understand the demagoguery surrounding the Right's appeals to family values and its intolerance of those whose lives do not fit some preordained condition of virtue, or the hypocrisy of those who call for religious prayer in school while they sanction a more callous social order, we cannot dismiss the popular hunger for such talk. We, and even more our children, face a world that is spiritually desiccated and ethically a wasteland, where communal purpose and individual meaning are absent for so many. In this context, the Right has been correct in arguing that education must be connected to some moral purpose or vision.

It is indeed time to say that education is about more

than higher test scores, advancing industrial productivity, and improving human capital. Real educational change should be linked to the struggle for a politics of meaning, asserting clearly that at the heart of the educational enterprise are questions of human purpose and social vision—what does it mean to be human, and how should we live together? Education, at its core, is *not* about the transmission of information or skills, but is the quest for lives lived together more fully and meaningfully. While the issue of our children's economic futures is legitimate and must be addressed, education encompasses far more. And you, like most parents, know it.

Whatever else it may be expected to accomplish, education's role in shaping human consciousness and communal purpose must be affirmed and reaffirmed. Education must be understood as a cultural act—an important means through which we, and especially the young, develop a sense of what our lives are about and what it means to live with others in community. Through it we may learn how to envision our future and decide what values and beliefs we might live by.

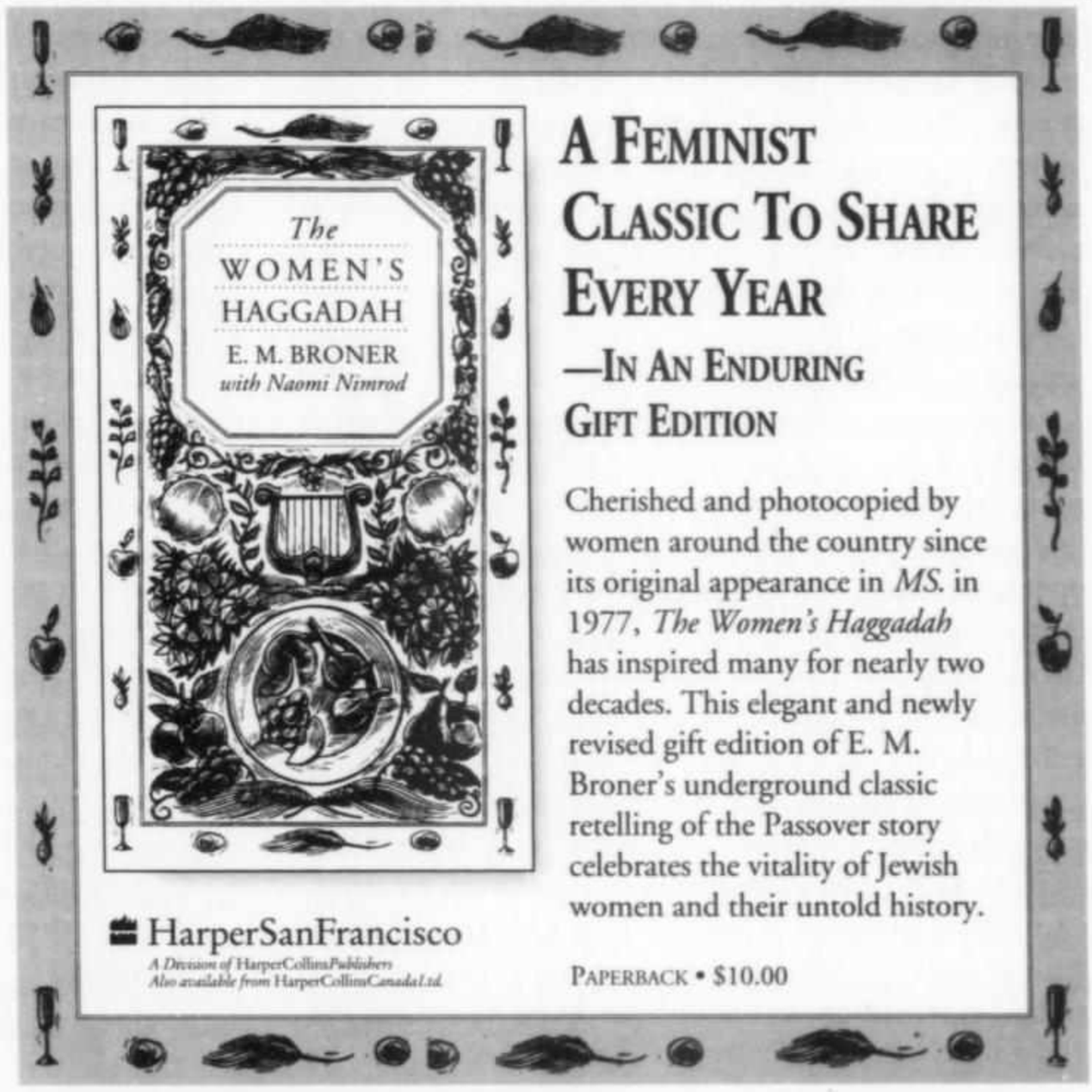
The struggle for a politics of educational meaning is thus not fundamentally a battle for the passage of one sort of policy or another so much as the struggle for a new language of educational purpose. It is the struggle to change the public discourse of education to reshape the moral and social commitments that underpin our educational work. And in this we call upon you, a progressive president, to act as a force in the re-articulation and affirmation of our nation's educational goals. Politics here is to be understood not in its instrumental, legislative sense, but as pedagogy—attempting to influence and reshape the concerns, hopes, and aspirations of citizens.

You can use your presidency as a bully pulpit, to make clear to the nation that education is about more than grades, test-scores, or even jobs. The character of our community, the vitality of our democracy, and the sense of individual purpose and meaning depend on it. And there is nothing especially radical about such ideas. They are deeply rooted in American traditions of public education—traditions that have always linked education to the quality of communal and civic life.

If you champion this vision, it will be vying with a number of competing possibilities. We have, for example, seen the repressive and intolerant versions recently articulated by Pat Robertson, Bill Bennett, and their followers. Yet they have tapped into themes such as the erosion of community and the decline of personal responsibility that have a wide and resonant appeal and must be understood as speaking to critical moral dimensions of our lives and the lives of our children. These same themes can and ought to be central to the struggle for a new progressive language of educational purpose. Indeed, you have shown a remarkable ability to harness them to other areas of social policy, though, sadly, not yet in education.

It is clear, for example, that across a wide spectrum of American life there is a deep sense of the socially irresponsible nature of our culture—we see the irresponsibility mirrored in the callous and ubiquitous use of guns, the fathers who refuse responsibility for their offspring, the rapacious corporate behavior that produces toxic environments, and the Wall Street speculators making millions of dollars as they destroy the livelihoods of American workers. There is a strong and growing sense of the decay of communal values and concerns, and the need to address this by infusing a sense of care and mutuality into our shared life.

This crisis of responsibility is deeply rooted in the structures and practices of our society, yet I believe there is potentially wide support for a model of schooling concerned to develop an attitude of care for others (as well as for our natural environment). It is an attitude that might start with the value of helping the sick, the elderly, or those who are alone, and extend to the value of addressing the



effects of social injustice whether among the poor, those with AIDS, the homeless, immigrants, the handicapped, or the victims of discrimination on the basis of race or other forms of identity. At the core of this educational goal is the regeneration of the sense of meaningful and concerned citizenship among the young—offering a different vision of social life from the now-pervasive sense of apathy, disinterest, and cynicism.

Your recently enacted national service plan is a small but important step toward expanding civic engagement and awareness among young people. If you stress the ethical impulse behind this program, not just the fact that it may help pay college tuition, it can become a valuable part of an educational vision centered on the renewal of our civic life.

In this context of civic concern and social responsibility there is a place for discipline. The debate over discipline, although often expressed in unduly restrictive and punitive ways, resonates through a wide cross-section of the adult population. A progressive, ethically infused, educational process needs to help redefine what discipline might mean. It does not translate into simply exerting control, managing behavior, or exacting a mindless compliance with the rules of the institution. None of this is good for the nurturing of a democratic culture where thoughtful and questioning behavior are prized, and dissent encouraged.

Yet the deep salience of the discourse of discipline stems from Americans' sense of the world as increasingly chaotic, insecure, and threatening, concerns that cut across the political spectrum. The leading advocacy group for young people, The Children's Defense Fund, in its most recent annual report argued that epidemic poverty, joblessness, racial intolerance, and family disintegration have been eclipsed by the "greater crisis of children killing children." The report notes that between 1979 and 1991 almost 50,000 children were killed by guns, a figure equivalent to the number of Americans killed in the Vietnam War.

In this context, discipline means acting in ways that are mindful of the needs and rights of others. It arises from social standards and moral behavior that resist the disregard for human life shown on our streets, just as it opposes wasteful and unrestrained consumerism and the irresponsible destruction of the Earth and its resources. Inculcating this sort of discipline requires teaching methods that contest the indifference, callousness, and self-indulgence of our individual and collective behaviors, conveying the importance of acting with regard to limits and with respect for human life (indeed, of all life).

The call for education stressing community, meaning, and moral purpose is rooted in a rich tradition of educational thinking and practice. It must be built around curricula created out of the desire to address the concerns and hopes of students' lives through the process of critical reflection, teachers who encourage young people to pursue questions of personal meaning and moral commitment, and classrooms in which the fundamental concern is the cultivation of human care and sensitivity to our neighbors and to the Earth.

Critical to the notion of a politics of meaning is the belief that so-called ordinary people are deeply concerned with issues that go beyond questions of income, material interests, and economic rights. Among these are questions of community, the meaningfulness of our lives, the care and dignity in our treatment at work or at home. They are issues that speak to the nature of our moral and spiritual lives, or more accurately, to the present crisis in these dimensions of our lives. It is deeply disappointing that in your tenure as president, you have not yet sought to connect education—that part of our society whose concern is explicitly and uniquely with the development and well-being of the young—to these concerns. Instead, you have relied on a vision of our future focused on jobs, markets, and technology, with little to offer on more fundamental matters—identity, connection to others, or the meaning of democratic life.

We have not seen the last of Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition or of William Bennett's call for a "curriculum of virtue." And there are others waiting in the wings ready to respond to the crisis of meaning through education with prescriptions that are equally or more coercive and reactionary. This is the time for you and those in your administration to widen the focus of your educational lens, to transcend its limited technocratic and corporate view of what is really at stake and to begin to reclaim the moral vision and human concerns that must be the heart and soul in educating a new generation. In making this point to educators, I often recall the words of one principal who, at the beginning of each school year, sends this note to the teachers in her school:

> Dear Teacher:
>
> I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:
>
> Gas chambers built by *learned* engineers. Children poisoned by *educated* physicians. Infants killed by *trained* nurses. Women and babies shot and burned by *high school* and *college* graduates.
>
> So I am suspicious of education.
>
> My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.
>
> Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.

□

Life in the Parentheses

(Continued from p. 22)

he would be shunned as fitting a stereotype.

Facilities to deal with indigent alcoholics are few in our community and the lines are long for those that do exist. Between the "War On Drugs," which stripped away resources for treatment, and cuts in welfare, which strip away insurance for low-income people to pay for treatment if they're fortunate enough to find an empty bed, the chances of recovery for street alcoholics and addicts are slim. So many give up trying.

Perhaps Tiny tires of his drinking (he no doubt is tired), tires of watching the police arrive only to ticket illegally parked cars (he warns me sometimes when they're about to ticket mine), tires of living in the largest mass shelter in the state of Ohio, tires of hanging around the corner carry-out and washing the owner's car and talking about basketball and baseball and boxing and women with him all day, tires of talking to the women too, tires of talking to me, tires of giving me the size 10 shoes he receives at the Drop Inn Center which never fit him anyway.

Perhaps I am too generous. Perhaps "these people" *are* simply lazy. Perhaps hundreds of thousands of people discovered all at once during the 1980s the pure excitement of life on the streets. After all, it is compelling to feel a knife blade at your throat, to feel the rain soaking you to the bone, to feel how close to death you can be when ice and snow pack your body as the temperature plummets, to have the police roust you from your shallow sleep on a park bench, in an abandoned building, in the back of a Pinto, in a barn, in an open field thick with frost, in a dumpster. It is compelling to eat one or two meals a day, to nab food out of garbage cans, to beg complete strangers for dimes and nickels while they tell you to go to hell or hand you a referral card, to plop down on a mat elbow-to-elbow with 235 other men in the long night of restlessness on a concrete shelter floor.

And indeed, if laziness is the cause, then the solution becomes one of offering "these people" a job, any job, from wiping our asses to shining our shoes, for whatever pay we deem appropriate. We must then insist that even a hardcore street alcoholic of ten years or more should be able to put down his bottle and walk to the nearest employment agency in his rags and tatters (no time for a shower or change of clothes if he's sincere) and be immediately hired (even though he may not have worked one day in all of those ten years), shed street defenses that require him to mistrust people if he's to remain alive, and immediately adapt, not only to a new environment of work and schedules and supervision and specific tasks after a decade of doing whatever his disease of alcoholism compelled him to do, but also to every white middle-class moral standard.

Furthering this logic, we should never be deluded by the idea that it is not some personal defect of character or individual choice that places "these people" in front of us. There are slews of soft-hearted people (the author included) who would have us look at all manner of parentheses for explanations as to why "these people" have suddenly materialized in front of us. Some of those parentheses being: a 75-percent cut in the federal housing budget over the course of the 1980s, which has left boarded buildings to haunt our inner cities and poor families to dwell in apartments with nests of cockroaches bulging from the walls; or the mass proliferation of homeless shelters throughout the nation, so that Ohio, for example, went from shelters in only the major cities in the early 1980s to shelters now in over fifty counties; or cuts in welfare that have resulted in grown men eating dogs to survive in Cass Corridor, and women dropping dead of heart attacks after being forced to limit their intake of blood pressure medication in Pontiac. There are many more causes, many more symptoms, many more parentheses that crop up like viruses in our official language.

In time, however, the parentheses will no longer trouble us. It will become habit, like skipping footnotes in a treatise, to skip over their presence. The people of India have adapted to the broken and mangled bodies of beggars in the streets. In the United States, colleges have begun to offer courses of studies for "professionals" specializing in homelessness, people with a stake in maintaining shelters and abject poverty so that their degrees might not go to waste. Prisons and shelters will become our social welfare system, one that we can manage. Like stores with company scrip. Like Indian reservations. Like concentration camps.

Which is why people who panhandle are important. As long as homeless and low-income people are quiet and meek and remain hidden, they will be ignored and further marginalized. The few opportunities remaining to them will be squandered to pay for arts centers and shopping malls and streetscapes. The few programs that treat them with dignity and respect will be weeded out for spaces that pack in more people with less service.

The panhandler becomes the parenthesis that surrounds us, distracts us, accosts us, and forces our attention to his misery, our misery reflected in his eyes. He takes nothing from us at all. The quarter we give is hush money for our own conscience. The insults we hurl are aimed at our own fears. He is like the glass in a storefront. He reflects us and displays our desires, our wishes for America. □

HEBRON'S HISTORY

(Continued from p. 50)

resistance to the Israeli occupation—variously called guerrilla warfare or terrorism—and Israeli counter-strokes.

Arab guerrilla warfare/terrorism in Hebron has been intimately bound up with the Israeli settlement ventures. While this resistance began to manifest itself already in September-October 1967, some three months after the conquest, it grew increasingly bold and deadly with each new settler intrusion. The first spectacular attack took place on October 9, 1968, a few months after Levinger's Park Hotel escapade: A grenade was thrown by a seventeen-year-old high school pupil at a group of Jewish worshipers and visitors at the entrance to the cave of the Machpela; forty-seven persons were injured. The start of the Jewish settlement in the downtown area in December 1979—the occupation by several Gush Emunim families, led by Rabbi Levinger's wife, Miriam, of Beit Hadassah, the main remaining building of the pre-1929 Jewish Quarter—triggered the most lethal PLO attack inside the territories: The ambush on May 2, 1980 of a group of settlers making their way from Friday night services in the Cave of the Machpela to Beit Hadassah. Six of the settlers died and sixteen were injured by bullets and shrapnel.

The Begin government had acquiesced (a willing victim of rape) in the illegal takeover and soon permitted more settlers to move into Beit Hadassah and a series of nearby houses which had before 1929 been inhabited by Jews. A yeshiva—Avraham Avinu—was also established.

During the following years, Arab terrorists brandishing knives, grenades, and occasionally automatic weapons periodically attacked settlers and/or their IDF guards in downtown Hebron. The settlers often retaliated by shooting their assailants or Arab passers-by, or by torching Arab houses and market-stalls and shooting at Arab cars and rooftop solar heaters.

But Jewish revenge was to take more sinister and organized forms as well. The 1980 attack resulted in the birth of the settlers' own terrorist underground: If the government was shy of imposing capital or corporal punishment against Arab terrorists, the settlers would mete out their own justice. In June, five weeks after the Beit Hadassah ambush, the underground went into action; booby traps in cars and garages belonging to the (radical) mayors of three Arab towns cost two of them their legs and one Israeli sapper—sent to dismantle a bomb—was blinded for life (the charges had been finely judged to maim rather than kill.)

The murder in July 1983 of settler Aharon Gross in the Hebron marketplace was similarly and quickly avenged: A team of Jewish terrorists drove up to the gates of the Islamic University of Hebron and sprayed the milling students with automatic fire. Three died and thirty-three were injured. Among the leaders of the underground—so it emerged when the group was at last rounded up by the Israeli security service, the Shin Bet in April 1984—were a handful of leading figures from Kiryat Arba and the Jewish settlement in downtown Hebron.

The demise of the Jewish "underground" did not end the cycle of Arab and Jewish violence. Jewish and Arab fanaticism and violence fed each other. Kahane's supporters—always strong in the Hebron area settlements—and other extremists continued to let their neighbors know who was boss: (Armed) Jewish settler patrols daily and nightly roamed the (unarmed) Arab neighborhoods, intimidating, shooting in the air, and occasionally beating passers-by. More covertly, over the past few years, they have been responsible for the death of a handful of Arabs—a driver during a stone-throwing incident in downtown Hebron, three Arab laborers on their way to work near Tarqumiya. (Perhaps the wonder is that there has not been more Arab anti-settler terrorism.)

Much of the recent Jewish violence appeared to outside observers to lack any specific provocation—though to the settlers of Kiryat Arba, Beit Hadassah, and Tel Rumeida, the Arabs' very presence in Abraham's town represents a singular and continuing provocation. To these settlers it is crucial that Hebron is mentioned seventy-eight times in the Bible and (apparently) not once in the Koran. Baruch Goldstein's murderous assault on Muslim worshippers in the Cave of the Machpela was a fitting if dramatically magnified culmination to these Kahanist depredations, bringing together, as it did, the various strands of murderous violence, religious antagonism, and messianic expectations. But it was also more than this: It was a well-timed political gamble based on the hope that triggering massive Arab counter-terrorism against the settlers and the army would definitively derail the peace process and, perhaps, through a chain reaction bring down the Rabin government, a necessary prelude to the End of Days. Goldstein's choice of location—the Tombs of the Patriarchs, of both peoples and perhaps of mankind itself—could hardly have been better. □

A Letter to Michael

(Continued from p. 46)

The prophet Jonah's attempt to avoid responsibility for the universal community is instructive. He was admonished by God for caring about the plant, for which he did not work and which he did not grow, which appeared overnight and perished overnight, "and should not I care," declaims God, "about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not yet know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well" (Jonah 4:10). This biblical text is chanted in the synagogue on Yom Kippur toward the end of the long day of affliction and reflection. As the holiest day of penitence draws to its final hour of *Neilah*, when the community feels maximally bonded through its strenuous efforts, the Jew is directed through this reading to the universal caring by God for all human beings and their welfare. Jonah the Jewish prophet is castigated for allowing his loving tribal concern to blind him to his moral obligation. This lesson was lost on Goldstein and his perversely religious followers.

"What," after all, "does the Lord require of you" so that "your name will achieve wisdom?" The prophet Micah (6:8) answers: "only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk modestly with your God." God asks us to read his loving Torah through the eyes of enlightened partners in His enterprise to bring about the realization that "the ordinances of the Torah were meant to bring upon the world not vengeance but mercy, lovingkindness, and peace!" (Rambam, *Laws of Shabbat* 2:3). The Halakha is part of this grand and compassionate enterprise. All its potential deviances are meant to be constrained by this overriding pathos, and not the other way around. To be a mensch! This is all you know and all you need know. And then the proof texts are superfluous.

And with all this, I know that these words do not finally put your questions to rest. I made this attempt so as to keep you in the discussion with me, so that you do not abandon the moral quest in the name of your halakhic zeal. I know that these words may not allay your uncertainty, raising even more questions than they answer. But my son-soldier, for whom I know it is important to bear arms with the confidence that this necessary though unpleasant activity be judaically justified according to the highest moral standards, please realize that the moral quest is never completed. You are not expected as a Jew to have an airtight moral alibi. You are expected, though, never to let go of this problem, gnawing at its unending new forms that pose unexpected questions in all their novel refinements, taking seriously your role as a moral agent, as a covenantal Jew, in this far from perfect world. God bless. □

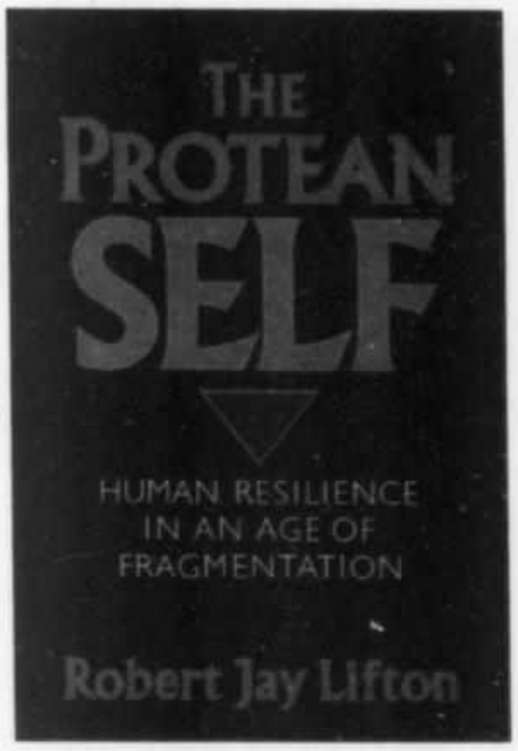
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BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

(Continued from p. 56)

assumption of the right to dominance (I am a man! I am a white middle-class American!) has been contravened. My point is not that there's a moral equivalence between criminal and victim, but that the issues of power, control, and hierarchy are the air we all breathe. The discussion of crime is always about these issues, whether we admit it or not. Crime and punishment, victimization and retribution, repression, explosion, and crackdown are an endless sadomasochistic dance.

Conservatives get credit for being pragmatists about crime, for cutting through blather about "root causes" and demanding that criminals be executed, put away, gotten off our backs NOW! In fact, if this blow-off-steam rhetoric were to be translated into an actual program, it would be more radical than anything the Left has proposed. In a society as unruly as ours, hiring more cops, building more prisons, mandating longer sentences are squirt-gun measures. A serious attempt to impose order by force would mean transforming our political culture: requiring a national identity card, which would have to be produced on demand; enforcing curfews; allowing police to stop, search, arrest, beat up, and/or kill any "suspicious" person and to systematically harass Blacks or any group with a high crime rate; permitting forced confessions and imprisonment without trial; restricting defendants' access to legal counsel; restricting the rights of the press to cover criminal cases and police conduct; forbidding groups to congregate without a permit; developing an extensive network of police spies and informers—in short, more or less doing away with the First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Fourteenth, and probably the Eighth Amendments.

There are elements of the hard Right that would welcome such a police state, and there's always a danger that people will get desperate enough to support them, but this hardly qualifies as a quick fix. In any case, for most conservatives the real point of get-tough policies is less practical than symbolic. The giveaway is their rejection of the one reform of the criminal justice system that could actually have a significant impact on crime. Legalizing drugs would destroy the social basis of an outlaw industry whose entrepreneurs defend their turf and enforce their deals with Uzis; it would end the glut of drug cases strangling the court and prison systems; but it would also contradict the conservative moral agenda. That agenda—restoring the legitimate tyranny of family and church, corporation and state to its historic hegemony—is itself a radical project that would, assuming it were possible at all, take generations to achieve. In this battle to reclaim the culture, fear of crime is a potent weapon. Conservatives *need* crime. Criminals are their rogue cops. Crime gives freedom a bad name.

Since we can't fight crime in a social vacuum, since the comfort offered by tough talk is illusory, we have no choice but to be visionary in one direction or another. We may as well be visionary in the direction of equality and freedom. The hard part is confronting fear, including our own: fear not only of crime but of freedom itself, and the uncertainty that goes with it; fear of our desire, and our violent rage; fear of being the victim and the criminal too; fear, ultimately, of living with our doors unlocked in every sense. Grappling with that fear is the most daunting of tasks, admitting it a first small step. □

Settler Violence and Judaism

(Continued from p. 28)

Judaism have nevertheless become so intimidated by its logic that they remain relatively mute in the face of its current power. The Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist movements have been unwilling to challenge the logic of Settler Judaism or to denounce publicly the alarming number of synagogues that are "adopting" West Bank settlements as a statement of opposition to the peace process. Meanwhile, prominent Orthodox rabbis in Israel have issued halakhic decisions prohibiting religious Jews in the Israeli army from assisting in the process of removing Jewish settlers. No comparable religious injunction from any branch of Judaism has publicly instructed its adherents to be morally sensitive to the humanity of nonviolent Palestinian civilians. No wonder so many secular Israelis equate Jewish religiosity with the right-wing moral insensitivity that characterizes Settler Judaism.

It is time for all denominations of Judaism and all the major Jewish institutions publicly and unequivocally to endorse the Israeli peace process and the exchange of land for peace, to call for American aid to relocate settlers inside the Green Line, and to state publicly that those settlers who try to interfere with the peace process will receive no support from American Jews. We don't believe that any place should be *judenrein*, but we do believe that only those settlements have a right to remain that are consciously and actively seeking to reconcile and live in peace with their Palestinian neighbors.

If we are to win morally and spiritually sensitive contemporary Jews back to Judaism, we must unequivocally condemn those who have attempted to rape Judaism, to dirty its holy mission, and to replace its commitment to love and justice with hatred and oppression.

While we salute the state of Israel and applaud its implementation of the Gaza/Jericho (very limited) autonomy plan, we will not be surprised if the Palestinians who continue to live under a harsh military occupation in the West Bank do not greet this with the same enthusiasm. The time bomb of the settlements must be quickly diffused. The best way to save Jewish lives is to support the call of the Israeli peace movement for immediate dismantling of the most provocative settlements including Kiryat Arba and settlements in the Gaza Strip, and for an immediate start of the second stage of negotiations.

Yet no political breakthroughs can undo the damage done by Settler Judaism. It is our responsibility as Jews to support a Jewish renewal that returns Judaism to the God of love, gentleness, and compassion. □

At Right Angle

In the sands of prayer
My father saw
Footprints of angels.
He ordered me to go one way
And I went the other,
That is why his face was bright
And mine was charcoal,
Like a diary in an old office
Covered with dates.

The land blows through the ruined houses
On the hill;
Where under our feet?
When does the night lock?
Young wounds without forefathers
Wander throughout the world.
But she is always busy,
Like a farmer, who eats.

My parents have sewn me
A destiny, according to measure,
But I have grown
And my naked arm
Protrudes from it.
My destiny has not grown with me.
My being is full of history
Like Genesis, like the shores.

In a distance of two hopes from the battle
I envisioned peace.
My tired head yearns to go
My feet dream a dream.
The burnt man said: I am the burning bush
And will be consumed. Come hither.
You are allowed
To keep your shoes on your feet.
This is the place.

Yehuda Amichai
translated by Dr. Ada Aharoni

Tikkun (tē-kün) ...to heal, repair and transform the world. All the rest is commentary

תיקון

The Socialism of Fools

ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE LEFT

by Michael Lerner



This is a powerful and provocative book.

Michael Lerner is a major progressive Jewish intellectual who has been an outspoken critic of the conservativism in the American-Jewish community and of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. His critique should not be dismissed as an attempt to set Israel above criticism or to conceal conservative interests in the Jewish world.

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—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.

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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.

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