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

TIKKUN

Fiction: *Mikhail Iossel*
Poetry: *Marge Piercy, Irena Klepfisz, Cid Corman*
Personal Essays: *Dorien Ross, Ted Solotaroff*

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY MAY/JUNE 1990 $5.00

Who Lost Nicaragua?
William M. LeoGrande vs. Paul Berman

The Genocidal Mentality
Robert Jay Lifton

Woody Allen's Movies
Jonathan Rosenbaum

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Jewish Poetry & the Muse
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Sephardim & Peace
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Scholem–Benjamin Letters
Elisabeth Young-Bruehl

The Intifada
Benny Morris

PLUS

Psychoanalysis & Feminism: Elizabeth Lunbeck on Nancy Chodorow and Eli Sagan on Jessica Benjamin; Alfred Kazin on Oz & Herzl; Robert Cohen on Thomas Pynchon; Joel Greenberg on Thomas Friedman; Daniel Landes on Jewish Books; Michael Kazin on Saul Alinsky; and Teddy Kollek on Soviet Jews & Israeli Peace.

The Book of Ruth and Naomi

When you pick up the Tanakh and read
the Book of Ruth, it is a shock
how little it resembles memory.
It's concerned with inheritance,
lands, men's names, how women
must wiggle and wobble to live.
Yet women have kept it dear

for a woman who put another woman
first, for how the beloved elder
cherished Ruth, more friend than
daughter. Daughters leave. Ruth
brought even the baby she made
with Boaz home as a gift.
Where you go, I will go too,

where you live, there I will live with you,
your people shall be my people,
I will be a Jew for you,
and this G-d of yours I will praise,
for what is yours I will love
as I love you, oh Naomi
my mother, my sister, my heart.

Show me a woman who is not starved
for such love, show me a woman
who does not dream a double,
a heart's twin, a sister of the mind
in whose ear she can whisper,
whose hair she can braid as her life
twists its pleasure and pain and shame.

Show me a woman who does not hide
in the locket of bone that deep
eye beam of fiercely gentle love
she had once from mother, daughter,
sister; once like a warm moon
that radiance aligned the tides
of her blood into potent order.

At the season of first fruits
we remember those women travelers,
scavengers, co-conspirators, making
do with leftovers and mill ends,
whose friendship was stronger than fear,
stronger than hunger, who walked together
down death's dusty road, hands joined.

—Marge Piercy

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY — VOLUME 5 NUMBER 3

Cover art: *Time for Bed* by Eric Fischl. Oil on canvas, 1980, 72½ × 96 inches. Saatchi Collection, London. Courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery, New York.

Letters

Tikkun *reserves the right to select, edit, and shorten all submissions to the Letters section.*

VIORST ON ISRAEL

To the Editor:

In the last two years the Army of Israel, equipped with the best modern American weapons, heroically fought and killed 150 Arab children, aged 3 months to 14 years.

No explanation, no evasion, no subterfuge can absolve the State of Israel from the curse of the Prophet: "I will bring on you everlasting disgrace and everlasting shame which never will be forgotten." (Jeremiah 23:40).

Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz
Hebrew University
Jerusalem, Israel

ON WOODY

To the Editor:

Why does Woody Allen imagine that it is possible to write or publish anything at all "without a limiting perspective" ("Random Reflections of a Second-Rate Mind," *Tikkun,* Jan./Feb. 1990)? What is specious about Woody Allen's argument is its simplistic either/or: *either* one writes for human beings in general, an altogether illusory and even undesirable goal, or one writes for "exclusive clubs that ... exist to form barriers, trade ... on human misery, and ... rationalize natural distrust and aggression." One who addresses everybody addresses nobody, and no one knows that better than Woody Allen himself, who cheerfully gives up addressing by far the largest part of the world's population (those who do not know English, those who have never been to Manhattan and don't care about it, those who are not educated and do not enjoy the subtle contortions of neurotics and hypochondriacs, those who are not Jewish and are not interested in things Jewish) in order to reach all the more effectively those who do know and are interested in these things!

The designation of a journal or group as Jewish (or Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, or anything else) need not at all mean that that group is exclusive. In my books I distinguish between what I call the "community of affinity," or "like-mindedness," and the "community of otherness." Only the former is exclusive, since its whole purpose is self-congratulation and self-protection.

Tikkun (ISSN 0887-9982) is published bimonthly by The Institute for Labor and Mental Health, a nonprofit corporation.
Editorial offices: 5100 Leona St., Oakland, CA 94619; (415) 482-0805. Book reviews: Michael Kazin, Dept. of History, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20016; (202) 885-2415.

Israel office: Rehov Gad 8 Aleph, Jerusalem 93622; (02) 720455.
משרד בישראל: רחוב גד 8א, ירושלים 93622; (02) 720455
Subscriptions can be placed by calling (800) 825-0061. $30 for 6 issues, $60 for 12 issues, $90 for 18 issues. Add $7 per year for all foreign subscriptions (including Canada and Latin America). Please pay for all orders in U.S. funds (including postal money orders) and with checks drawn from a U.S. bank only. Institutional subscriptions: $40 for 6 issues. Limited availability of back issues—inquire at editorial office.
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Articles appearing in *Tikkun* have been indexed in *Political Science Abstract, The Alternative Press Index, Book Review Index, Index to Jewish Periodicals,* and *Religion Index One: Periodicals (RIO);* in *Magazine Index, Magazine Index Plus,* and *Academic Index,* all available from Information Access Co., (800) 227-8431; and in *The Left Index.* Book reviews appearing in *Tikkun* have been indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion (IBBR).* 16 mm and 35 mm microfilm, 105 microfiche and article copies are available from UMI, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Selected articles are also available via *Tikkun Online* in the Jewish conference on the WELL. Audiotaped back issues of *Tikkun* are available free of charge for blind or visually impaired people. Contact the library at the Jewish Braille Institute of America, Inc., (212) 889-2525. U.S. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Rd., Sandusky, OH 44870; (800) 221-3148.

The "community of otherness," in contrast, not only is ready to confirm the otherness and uniqueness of each of its members but also stands ready to enter into dialogue with every other "community of otherness." *Tikkun* has helped strengthen the tendency to make Judaism a community that is genuinely sensitive to the needs of others—and to reach out to others without repudiating its own historical roots and legacy. Far from creating artificial divisions, this self-affirmation is the best basis for connections with others.

In his article, Woody Allen characterizes *Tikkun* as "a generally wonderful journal—politically astute, insightful, and courageously correct on the Israeli-Palestinian issue." What does Woody Allen think is the deepest root of this stance that he admires if it is not its very Jewishness? Does Woody Allen imagine that there are general human values that are afforded us simply through the fact that we are human? Many primal peoples did not even regard other peoples as human beings. Ancient Athens, vaunted as the prototype of democracy, not only rested on a slave culture but held that all non-Greek peoples were "barbarians" and therefore slaves by nature. Only the Hebrew Bible in the ancient world postulated the equality of every person before God and held one law for the Israelite and the "stranger" alike. Even "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Leviticus 24:20), which most Christians and many Jews in our culture imagine to be a description of the vengeful God of the "Old Testament," was actually one of the earliest statements of social democracy where each person, no matter how great or how insignificant, was equal before the law. As such it was the natural complement of the command to deal lovingly with thy neighbor as one equal to yourself, that command which Jesus quoted from the same book of the Hebrew Bible (Leviticus 19:18) yet which most Christians imagine to be a statement of Christian love and forgiveness in contrast to "Old Testament" vengeance!

Although I would not express myself as he did, I share Woody Allen's concern about Jewish-Arab relations in Israel and the repressive measures connected with the intifada. While a Senior Fulbright Lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1987-

1988, I wrote a six-page letter to the *Jerusalem Post* on that subject and on my return to America signed Michael Lerner's open letter to Shamir in the *New York Times* that caused the self-appointed representatives of "true" Jewish opinion in the United States to brand the signers as "traitors to the Jewish people"! Yet none of our criticisms will ever be of any value, Woody Allen, as long as first-rate minds such as yours fall into the either/or of polarization and politicization that destroys all chance of genuine dialogue!

Maurice Friedman
San Diego, California

To the Editor:

The only thing defensible about Woody Allen's article, "Random Reflections of a Second-Rate Mind," is the title.

Rabbi Jack D. Spiro
Richmond, Virginia

To the Editor:

Woody Allen is mystified as to why *Tikkun,* a magazine devoted to Jewish perspectives, should exist. For many of us, Judaism and the Jewish community are sources of inspiration and wisdom that enrich our lives. We marry fellow Jews not because we're not allowed to marry non-Jews, but because we want to lead Jewish lives and have Jewish families.

I care what Woody Allen thinks about Jews and Judaism. Because he is such a good filmmaker, and because he makes films about Jews, Allen's images and characters define for many Americans—both Jews and non-Jews—what it is like to be Jewish in America.

Allen has a right and maybe even an artistic responsibility to portray people the way he sees them. I just wish he saw things differently. Or, more realistically—now that I've read his article—I wish that some creative, funny, talented filmmaker who had Jewish experiences more like my own would make, say, one movie about Jewish people. In this fantasy movie there might even be a likeable, smart, beautiful Jewish female character (something I've never seen in any of Allen's films). The plot might involve her rejecting an ugly, dumb non-Jew for a handsome, Jewish guy who doesn't wear glasses. None of the Jewish characters would whine. They would be comfortable with, not self-conscious about, their Jewishness. They might have fun, say, celebrating Jewish holidays. And they would have parents who imparted to them meaningful traditions, ethical values, and a proud sense of their history, and didn't fill them with guilt about everything. It would be diametrically opposed to—and just as unbalanced as—Woody Allen's movies.

Judi Greenwald
Silver Spring, Maryland

To the Editor:

You tell us that being Jewish has nothing to do with why you don't like yourself very much. Fine. But why, in every single movie you've produced in which you appear, do you portray yourself to some degree as a self-mocking, self-degrading Jew? You're lying to either yourself or your audience if you say that your "persuasion" has nothing to do with it. Forget the chance that you may one day have to fight or even die because you're a Jew. You can proclaim yourself a humanist all you want, but when you die you'll be memorialized as a Jewish director, Jewish producer, Jewish writer, Jewish comedian.

Janet Kaufman
Iowa City, Iowa

To the Editor:

Woody Allen likes women in fairy tales (i.e., the Bible—written by men) to be Jewish, but women in his life and movies should be Anglo-Saxon, preferably blonde if one goes by his most recent choice.

Before I became aware of my Jewish identity, I would wonder at African-American women lamenting African-American men aping Madison Avenue culture and choosing white women. I too thought there should be no distinctions among peoples. However, the pain of watching Mr. Allen and so many of his ilk disregard and demean Jewish women has given me a new understanding of my African-American sisters' dilemma.

Elizabeth Greene
San Francisco, California

Zionist History

To the Editor:

That you have opened your columns to Benny Morris's name-calling harangue is, of course, your business. However, his description of me as the "right-wing Israeli who at the mere mention of the word 'peace' frantically reaches for his pistol" is in excess of any journalistic license. Not everybody who happens to disagree with Morris's historical findings and conclusions is ipso facto a trigger-happy right-wing Israeli.

For those readers of *Tikkun* who are interested in my views on peace, let me quote here from my article "Meeting with Arafat," published in the *Jerusalem Post* on May 29, 1985, years before the intifada:

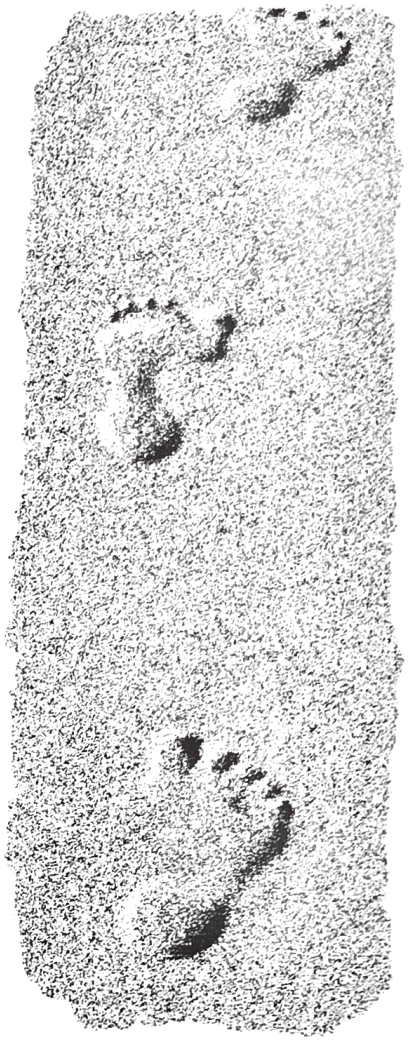
> The time has come for [Prime Minister] Peres ... or for his representatives, to meet not only with unofficial or semi-recognized PLO representatives, but with Yasir Arafat himself.... Failing to do this means that Zionism will not return to its historic path, that of a just movement.... Allowing Beginism to go on, in the guise of a national unity government, will certainly aggravate Israel's position in terms of already worsening public opinion and will drive Israel even closer to the catastrophe envisaged by Ben-Gurion.

Shabtai Teveth
Tel Aviv

To the Editor:

The peril of subjecting history to the yardsticks of the marketplace is illustrated by Morris's interpretation of what he calls the "major peace proposals" made by Syria to Israel in 1949. According to Morris (*Tikkun,* Nov./Dec. 1988), Syria was prepared to make peace with Israel if Ben-Gurion would just have "concede(d) a sliver of territory along the Jordan River." Yet internal State Department documents from 1949 contradict Morris's version. Take, for example, the telegram sent on May 9 of that year from Mark Ethridge, the American representative at the Arab–Israeli talks in Geneva, to Dean Acheson, the U.S. Secretary of State. After consulting with senior Syrian officials, Ethridge reported to Acheson that "Syria's price" for an armistice with Israel was Israeli surrender of the "panhandle of Palestine, part of eastern Galilee, and western Galilee to Acre." Far from being a "sliver of territory," the land Syria was demanding comprised a rather substantial portion of northern Israel.

Treat the earth well
It was not given to you by your parents
It was loaned to you by your children



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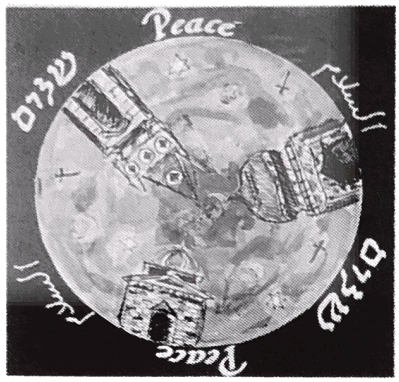

How many people who read Morris's claim subsequently traveled to the National Archives in Washington, D.C., to look through the State Department documents regarding the Syrian offer?

Rafael Medoff
Jerusalem

Benny Morris responds:

I am indeed happy to read that Teveth proposes that Israel negotiate with the PLO and that he does not consider himself a "right-wing Israeli." Perhaps he has undergone a conversion since equating—in "Charging Israel with Original Sin" (*Commentary,* September 1989)—the "purposes of peace" with "a sympathy somewhat inclined to the side of the Palestinians." The Beginist Right, as well as the Greater Israel faction in Israel's Labor Party, have in recent years continuously berated the Israeli Left and Peace Now with an overeager quest for peace that, in their view, is tantamount to support for the PLO or knifing Israel in the back. I leave it to *Tikkun* (and *Commentary*) readers to judge whether the tone and content of Teveth's critique of the New Historiography, and particularly of my work, does not betray right-wing ideological proclivities.

Medoff's letter is misleading. Almost every word in it is incorrect. He has muddled the "armistice" negotiations and President Za'im's peace proposals—two different (if inter-related) things. The fact that Ethridge at one point, in May 1949, wrote to Acheson that Syria wanted such and such in the armistice talks is hardly persuasive, firm evidence of Syria's real and actual proposals/demands in its peace overture. Ethridge was simply misinformed. (It is true that in April the Syrian delegation to the armistice negations halfheartedly called for "Jewish withdrawal from Western Galilee"—though not from the Galilee Panhandle and only from a sliver of territory west of the Jordan.) The Syrian peace proposals—which posited a peace treaty between the two countries and Syrian absorption of 250–300,000 Palestinian refugees in exchange for half the Sea of Galilee and, possibly, allowing Syria a foothold west of the Jordan at Mishmar Hayarden ("the truce lines")—were presented to Israel directly and indirectly via UN personnel in the Middle East rather than in Switzerland. A recent, up-to-date summary of the Za'im proposals and the subsequent abortive negotiation is to be found in Arye Shalev, *Shituf-Pe'ulah Betzel Imut* (Cooperation Under the Shadow of Conflict), IDF Press, 1989. Nowhere does Shalev refer to the Galilee Panhandle or Eastern or Western Galilee as being among Za'im's territorial demands in exchange for peace. And Shalev takes Ben-Gurion to task for failing to fully explore the Syrian offer. (Incidentally, Ethridge served as the U.S. representative on the Palestine Conciliation Commission which met and brought together Arab and Israeli delegations in Lausanne, not Geneva. Moreover, what occurred at Lausanne were not "Arab–Israeli talks" but indirect trilateral negotiations (which, as any student of the Israeli–Arab conflict knows, are not quite the same thing). The Israeli and Arab delegations never formally met, though there were some clandestine meetings between certain Israeli and Arab officials.

One may doubt (as I do) whether Za'im was completely sincere in his peace overtures. But this is no reason to misrepresent what they consisted of or to avoid the question of why Ben-Gurion decided not to fully explore them.

Said and Walzer

To the Editor:

As a participant in one of the printed exchanges with Edward Said to which Mark Krupnick refers (*Critical Inquiry,* Spring 1989), permit me to criticize a few problematic points I find in Professor Krupnick's essay ("Edward Said: Discourse and Palestinian Rage," *Tikkun,* Nov./Dec. 1989).

1) Krupnick suggests that the background for Israeli and Jewish fear and rage is the fact that "ever since 1948, Israel has waited for the Arab states to acknowledge its existence." As PLO spokespeople ceaselessly and correctly point out, it is difficult to recognize a country which, like Israel, refuses to declare its own borders and shows every intention of continually expanding them. On the contrary, the repeated call over the past several years by the Arab states and the PLO for a UN-sponsored peace conference including "all parties to the conflict" constitutes an implicit recognition of Israel. The last time that resolution was voted on in the UN, the only countries to vote against it were the United States, Israel, and Dominica. The Arab states are correct in insisting on mutual recognition of the Israeli state and of the Palestinian people's national rights within comprehensive peace negotiations. Krupnick misrepresents what he calls the "majority Arab view," and too easily includes Said within this presumed consensus.

2) I agree with Krupnick that Said seems driven to dismantle the link, and not merely insist on disjunctures, between the Jewish account of bondage and liberation and those of, for instance, American Blacks and contemporary Latin Americans. However, Said is correct in pointing out that the Bible portrays Jacob's clan entering Egypt as privileged strangers, not slaves in chains. Moreover, Said's insistence on the ideological relevance of the Israelite's divine "warrant" to wipe out the native inhabitants of the land—by which he means to identify one source of the rationale for European imperialism—is not to be rebutted but to be seriously addressed and worked through by people whose identity is construed largely through and with the Bible.

In this context, and with the greatest respect for Said's critical and moral sense, I find that his relative unresponsiveness to the dilemmas of Jewish collective identity is linked to his avowed general secularism—a central feature of Said's discourse which Krup-

(Continued on p. 89)

Editorials

Michael Lerner

Hysteria in the Post–Cold-War World

There's a hysteria shaping current events in Europe. Rather than using the collapse of the Communist stranglehold on Eastern Europe as a moment to consider what kind of world we want and need, the leaders of the great powers are scrambling to reconstitute the world in accord with ideas and programs that have already proved destructive. The mad rush to reunify Germany is the great symbol of this hysteria. Would the world really be served by a united Germany? It's a moot point, we are told—already a given, beyond our control. In fact, we are encouraged to watch the entire development of the new Europe as though we were passive participants at a global boxing match: "Who's going to get which country?" or "Which national group will attack which today?" The situation is out of control and no one is willing to come to grips with it.

Yet the world desperately needs rational planning for its future. We welcome the dissolution of Communist tyranny in Eastern Europe. But we are also aware that the competitive market system has helped generate a worldwide ecological crisis that threatens the future of the entire planet. The capitalist market may be excellent at responding to the desires of individual consumers (and the more money you have, the more responsive that market is to your particular needs), but it has no mechanism to weigh our collective human need for a safe and healthy natural environment, or to preserve the resources of the planet for future generations.

We never gave ourselves a chance to plan the world after World War II. Instead, we switched into high gear for a cold war, placing the anti-Communist crusade at the top of our agenda. In the process, the U.S. deformed its economy, squandered its resources, and now faces a world in which its World War II adversaries, Germany and Japan, may have greater economic and political power than the ostensible victors. U.S. policymakers after World War II made alliances with former Nazi sympathizers who had become the underground leaders of Eastern European nationalist movements (anyone who could weaken the Soviet Union could be our friend). We committed ourselves to a united Germany not because we thought that Germans had purged themselves of the reactionary nationalism that had led to the deaths of millions, but because we thought this was a clever way to enlist Germans in our struggle against the Communists.

If we need to tell ourselves that we've won the cold war—fine. But then let's stop and ask ourselves what we want the new world to look like. And to do that, we need to stop the frenzied "inevitability" arguments and begin a rational dialogue with the rest of the world.

Instead of continuing with our blind and frenetic policy-making, we need to develop our collective wisdom. The UN failed not because it lacked power, but because it lacked wisdom. The Pope has had more impact on world affairs than the UN because he was able to project a moral vision (however flawed his thinking was by sexism and his accommodations to Eastern European anti-Semitism).

Would it be so bad if the countries of the world were to tell their peoples that one day a week for the next three years everyone would be encouraged to participate in community and national discussions aimed at developing our ideas about the kind of world we wish to forge and how we might get there? What if we even slowed down our industrial growth for that time and gave people time off from work to participate in those discussions? How much worse off would the world be if we slowed down and thought about where we were going? We don't need another think tank or policy journal to do this—we need a way to involve hundreds of millions of people and thereby generate the expectation of a new direction that could itself become a political force. Such a force could convince politicians to transcend their "realism" and begin to share the dreams of the rest of us for a world that is ecologically healthy, at peace, and organized according to principles of justice, love, and mutual caring.

Imagining that we could be involved in shaping history rather than merely being spectators runs right up against our surplus powerlessness—the set of inner beliefs and feelings that convinces us that our powerlessness is inevitable, deserved, fitting, realistic. "That's the way things are and will always be," we tell ourselves. "Who are we to shape the world—we can't even get our own lives together!" is the refrain that runs through the heads of millions of people when they are chal-

lenged with the possibility that they might take a more active stance toward events. We are so committed to our surplus powerlessness that any plan that assumes we might act powerfully is automatically dismissed as (worst of all things) "unrealistic," "utopian," and hence not to be taken seriously.

We in the West don't need any state apparatus to keep us in line; we have internalized the constraints of the established order and enforce it upon each other, insisting that anyone who wishes to go beyond the boundaries of the current discourse must be a fool at best, crazy and institutionalizable at worst. Having lost a sense of our collective potential efficacy, and fearing to dream that the world could be radically different, we retreat to the television to watch "what is happening," unaware that what is happening is made to happen by ordinary human beings such as ourselves. We marvel at the mass movements of Eastern Europe, but never really let into our consciousness that these very people who are today shaping world events were yesterday sitting in their homes wondering if anyone else would possibly join them. They, too, feared that their plans to change the world were terribly utopian and unrealistic. They, too, doubted if anything could ever be different.

The capitalist market has no mechanism to weigh our collective human need for a safe and healthy natural environment, or to preserve the resources of the planet for future generations.

This is a remarkable moment—full of possibilities for creating a rational world order. There is no one military or economic alliance that can dictate conditions to the whole world. There is no longer a recognizable "bad guy" the struggle against whom can make us subordinate all our other dreams. And there is a worldwide ecological crisis that demands international cooperation in the development of resources and productive capacities.

What a moment for visionary leadership! No one ever expected President Bush to be up to such a challenge. But neither are the liberals, the Democratic party, the Left doing particularly well at transcending the narrowly constrained framework within which American politics is debated. No one has yet put forward a picture of a world that we might actually want to live in. As a result, future generations may look back on 1990 as a year of tragically missed opportunities, a year in which small-mindedness and "realism" condemned the world to several more decades of irrational and destructive competition between the nations.

Stop Manipulating the Soviet Jewry Issue

It's wonderful that both Israel and American Jewry have mobilized their resources and generosity to receive Jews who are fleeing the Soviet Union, where anti-Semitism is growing daily. The Jewish community can rightfully be proud of its rescue and resettlement efforts. The attempts to limit direct flights from the Soviet Union or to threaten airlines with terrorist strikes should be resisted and deplored by all civilized people. Rescuing Soviet Jewry deserves our fullest commitment.

It is, though, distressing to watch Shamir and his right-wing cronies attempt to manipulate the Soviet Jewry issue in order to advance their own sectarian politics. Shamir's statement that a "Greater Israel" (the West Bank) is necessary to accommodate Soviet Jews actually means the reverse: Soviet Jews are vital to the dream of a Greater Israel. Not only would Soviet Jewry address the "demographic problem" (which states that if Israel retains control of the West Bank, and stays democratic, Palestinians will soon comprise the majority of its citizens), but it would also provide cannon fodder for the inevitable West Bank military battles that putting down the intifada will require.

Shamir claims that he doesn't intend to force Soviet Jews to settle on the West Bank. He doesn't have to: as long as there is a massive housing crunch within the Green Line (the pre-1967 borders of Israel) and as long as the Israeli government—backed by contributions from U.S. Jewry—provides cheaper mortgages and resettlement aid to those who settle on the West Bank, the "free" marketplace will handle everything else. Once in Israel, and faced with the anger and stones of a hostile Palestinian population, Soviet Jews will likely shift to the right—a massive new constituency for national chauvinism.

Faisal Husseini, the leading PLO spokesperson on the West Bank, made clear in the March/April 1990 issue of *Tikkun* that he supports the right of Jews to return to pre-1967 Israel, but opposes resettling Soviet Jews in the West Bank until Palestinians are first allowed to return to their lands. Jewish newspapers in the U.S. and Israel have created the impression that the Palestinians oppose all resettlement in Israel. If Husseini had been stating that kind of opposition in *Tikkun,* this interview would have been widely quoted. But precisely because he distinguishes between immi-

gration to Israel and immigration beyond the Green Line to the West Bank, his *Tikkun* interview is given little attention by the Jewish press, which prefers instead to quote Palestinians with more extreme positions. But this "Green Line" will quickly disappear from the vocabulary of most Palestinians if Israel continues to allow settlement in the West Bank.

Understandably, those who have lived in refugee camps in and around Palestine for the past forty years and want to reach a peaceful settlement with Israel are enraged at the prospect that the one place where a Palestinian state could have been set up may now be taken over by Russian immigrants. They agree with Israeli peace activists who point to the large amount of space within the Green Line (pre-1967 borders of Israel) where Russian Jewry could easily be settled if the Israeli government, the Jewish Agency, and UJA/Jewish Federation types were willing to direct their funds accordingly.

Resettling Soviet Jewry is going to take lots of money —much of it from American Jews and from the U.S. government. Yet American Jews' initial enthusiasm and generosity may sour in future years once it becomes evident that the Israeli Right is using the Soviet Jewry issue as an instrument to "create new facts" and consolidate an immovable Israeli presence on the West Bank. If Israel is to obtain aid from the U.S. Treasury to support the resettlement of Soviet Jews, Americans may need to place strong restrictions on how this aid can be used.

Similarly, if the UJA and the Federations cannot obtain ironclad guarantees from the Jewish Agency that none of the money it collects will be used, directly or indirectly, to help settle people on the West Bank, those who care about Soviet Jews may have to set up other charitable agencies that can give these assurances. Otherwise, in years to come, Soviet Jews may find that the help they need is not forthcoming. Shame on the Israeli Right and their American backers for playing politics with the fate of Soviet Jewry.

Lithuania and the New Nationalism

It's not particularly reassuring to watch the spate of European nationalisms that have emerged in Eastern Europe. Sure, we support the right of Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia to national self-determination. The right to national self-determination is an extension of our basic commitment to democratic rights, so we are going to support it equally for Palestinians and Lithuanians, for Nicaraguans and Vietnamese. Indeed, it's quite a study in hypocrisy to see the Soviet Union

Tikkun Is Not Folding

Ever since we announced that we would need reader support to stay afloat, the vultures have been circling and the rumors flying. With *Present Tense* magazine closing and *Moment* reportedly in deep trouble, forces on the Right began to gloat that the entire liberal end of the spectrum might collapse.

Not a chance. *Tikkun* is as likely to fold in the next two years as, say, Sharon and Shamir are likely in that same period of time to become passionate advocates of a West Bank Palestinian state headed by the PLO.

The reason? Our readers have responded to our appeals; they have donated generously. We have every reason to believe that people will continue to donate this year as they did last, and that more of you will realize that it's essential to put your money behind your ideals.

Even some of our own readers, however, have come to believe the rumors—partly because it's so hard to imagine that a venture as fresh and unconventional as *Tikkun* could really succeed. Some of us have become so convinced that there's nobody out there who shares our idealism that we have given up on the possibility that the world might be radically different from how it is in these deadening days of George Bush and Dan Quayle. So it may be hard to believe that *Tikkun* has, in less than four years, become one of the largest circulation intellectual magazines in the U.S.

Thanks for your help. Through *Tikkun* your voice will continue to be heard.

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denying that right in its own country while championing it for the Palestinians; or for Jewish right-wingers to champion it in the case of Lithuania but deny it in the case of the Palestinians.

But when democracy is used to deny the rights of others, it becomes appropriate to restrict it. In the U.S., that was the point of constitutional guarantees which stated that certain fundamental rights could not be taken away no matter what the majority temporarily wanted. Similarly, on the international scale, countries or peoples sometimes engage in forms of aggression or racism that may make it appropriate for other countries to interfere with their right to national self-determination.

I think it would have been perfectly appropriate for other countries to interfere in Nazi Germany once it instituted repression against Jews, even though that repression was the democratic choice of the German majority. Likewise, I think it appropriate for us to interfere in South African affairs in order to prohibit a "legally elected" (albeit minority) regime from continuing to deny rights to Blacks. (This would be true even if the Blacks were *not* the disenfranchised majority, but only an oppressed minority.) We may want to limit the interference of any specific country in another country's affairs, and instead ask that the interference be carried out only through the mechanisms of an international community. But in principle it seems perfectly legitimate to say that we put real restrictions on the right to national self-determination.

For example, I think it was legitimate for the U.S. and the Soviet Union to deny to Germany the right to run its own affairs democratically. German society had been responsible for murder and genocide—which lost it, at least temporarily, a right to national self-determination. Part of my opposition to German reunification is based on my feeling that until Germans have deeply rethought their cultural history and understood what led to their past involvement with reactionary nationalism—until they have rooted out those elements of German identity—Germany does not yet deserve to be accepted back into the community of nations. Just as we place murderers in prison for a lifetime, we may restrict the rights of a country for fifty or a hundred years or however long it takes to eliminate all traces of the racist or nationalist elements that led it to extremes such as those Germany pursued.

Democratic rights can be restricted in other ways as well. We have argued that the Jewish right to national self-determination cannot be exercised in such a way as to prevent that same right from being exercised by Palestinians. Therefore, we support the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian state. Yet it was Palestinian nationalism that kept Jews from coming to Palestine when it was *we* who were the homeless refugees. This same nationalism motivated the attempt to push Israel into the sea in 1948, and subsequently led Palestinians to oppose our right to national self-determination for forty years. In that process the Palestinians created such fear and distrust amongst Israelis that it is now impossible to conceive of a Palestinian state that does not at least renounce the right to maintain an army. So demilitarization is not only a practical political necessity—it's also a reasonable limitation to impose.

Given the way national self-determination has been misused, it makes sense to look very suspiciously at the nationalisms that are now reemerging in Eastern Europe. Many of these nations were deeply anti-Semitic when they last were independent in the interwar years of 1920–1939. When Nazi troops marched into Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the Ukraine they were often greeted by nationalists who enthusiastically joined in searching out the Jews, usually killing them on the spot rather than shipping them to concentration camps. Though recently there have been encouraging signs that some of these nationalist movements are taking precautions to distance themselves from anti-Semitism, few of them have systematically exposed their pasts or explained how their national ideologies became associated with racism and xenophobia.

I can fully sympathize with those Eastern European Jews who joined the Communist Party after World War II and refused to support the idea of national self-determination. They watched in horror as Jews who were liberated from the concentration camps by Red Army troops returned to Polish towns and villages where they were set upon by Polish nationalists, sometimes beaten, sometimes killed. The history books of Poland and Eastern Europe rarely tell these stories—we know them only from our own history books, and I know them personally from the stories of family members who experienced this reality. To Jews who witnessed these developments, repression of national self-determination seemed perfectly legitimate.

Yet ultimately the strategy of the Communists was self-destructive. Jewish Communists never attempted to educate the people of Eastern Europe about how anti-Semitism had emerged, what specifically was wrong with it, who had used it for what purposes, and how it had been taken up by those who might have had legitimate grievances against feudal, capitalist, or Communist ruling elites. Indeed, because these Jews felt the need to demonstrate to their non-Jewish comrades that they were not themselves Jewish nationalists, they let the whole issue of anti-Semitism drop from their political agendas after World War II. They assumed that the Communist solution of trying to expunge all nationalist sentiments would work well.

But national culture and history cannot be expunged through repression. And as people came to feel that the kind of communism being imposed on them was really just a new form of oppression and exploitation, they rallied to their older religious and national identities—which were flourishing underground, often in close association with the anti-Semitism of the past.

No wonder, then, that Russian nationalism, suddenly crawling out from the rocks under which it has hidden for many decades, should also be closely identified with a resurgence of anti-Semitism.

So while we support the right to national self-determination, we don't support that right to the extent that it becomes bound with manifestations of racism and xenophobia. Nor does support for Lithuanian self-determination in principle imply support for the specific way that struggle is being fought at the moment. Gorbachev had made it clear that he *is* willing to create a process that allows for self-determination, but he wants to do it in a way that will not encourage every reactionary nationalist movement in the Soviet Union. He has already seen how Azerbaijanis massacred Armenians, and he can see that a rush toward a nationalism that rejects the positive elements in a socialist internationalism could be a disaster for the world. It could also provoke Communist hardliners to overthrow Gorbachev and dismantle the democratic advances that he has made so far. The Lithuanians who are trying to rush the process may be more interested in "sticking it" to the Russians than in finding a way to move that might get them freedom without provoking a crisis in the Soviet Union. Those who are constantly urging the Palestinians to take the long path of negotiations and limited autonomy to achieve their national self-determination might urge the Lithuanians to take a similar, less confrontational path.

The point, of course, is that many of these Lithuanians (and right-wingers in the U.S.) are delighted to use this as an opportunity to embarrass the Communists. Many right-wingers would prefer to undermine the improved relations with the Soviets; they yearn for the certainties of the cold war, and still dream of counterrevolution throughout Russia.

The danger in the current dissolution of the Communist empire and the reemergence of a wide variety of Eastern European nationalisms is that the region might return to a configuration resembling the pre-World War I years when nationalist groupings worked out their hostilities on each other and no one was safe. Yet the alternative of prolonging Communist repression is certainly not workable either. Nor are Gorbachev's concessions to Russian nationalism deserving of support. This spring, Gorbachev elevated to his cabinet Valentin G. Rasputin, a popular Russian writer and nationalist. Rasputin mixes ecological consciousness and a yearning to return to a "pure and untainted" Russia with claims that Soviet communism itself was foisted on the innocent Russians by Jews who dominated the Communist movement and who are "really" responsible for the Russian revolution and the triumph of Stalinism. Communism, says Rasputin, isn't a Russian idea at all.

Two studies in hypocrisy: Soviets championing self-determination for Palestinians but denying it to Lithuanians; right-wing Jews championing it for Lithuanians but denying it to Palestinians.

Neither repression nor co-optation of nationalism seems a plausible direction. What is needed, instead, is an alternative model of nationalism—one that builds upon the historical experience of oppression that most of these nations have lived through, and one that helps people understand how other national groups have been victims of similar oppression.

This is a model of a different kind of internationalism. Left-wingers often promoted a nationalism that required denying legitimate and rich dimensions in each national tradition. Instead of trying to homogenize all peoples into one universal "human" culture (an attempt that has repeatedly failed because it denies the particular history and psychological legacy of each group), we need to affirm particularity and uniqueness while simultaneously teaching how to see the common elements in each other's national experience and each other's experience of oppression. Instead of the worldwide melting pot the liberals tried to bring about benignly in the U.S.—and the Communists brought about viciously in Europe—we need an approach to nationalism that validates its healthy aspects and makes it possible for us to reject the rest.

For too long the Left has been identified with a position that seemed to identify safety with sameness (that saw difference as the source of conflict). This has led to a homogenizing liberalism that is as unappealing as it is dull. The key is not sameness, but learning to appreciate the world from others' standpoints and to see the common elements without denying the validity of one's own uniqueness. This is the kind of nationalism that we must fight for, both within our own community and in the emerging national groupings that are asking us for support.

Editor's Personal Column

Why I Shaved My Beard

I shaved my beard a few weeks ago. I was in Jerusalem at the time, and the latest shenanigans of the Orthodox religious establishment were too much for me. I still wear my yarmulke as a sign of my identification with Judaism and the Jewish people, and of my reverence for God. Even though I remain committed to religious Judaism, delight in Shabbat and Torah, and believe that the religious tradition has depths of insight that can provide meaningful guidance to the Jewish people, I no longer want to *look* so much like those religious extremists in Israel who are doing such damage to the Jewish people and to Judaism.

In saying this, I don't mean to blame all of Israel's problems on the religious parties. The current paralysis of the Israeli government is not caused by the 15 percent of the population that votes for the Orthodox, but by the failure of the Labor party and the peace movement to win a majority constituency amongst the rest of the electorate.

Instead of building popular support for an alternative to the Shamir plan or attempting to prepare the Israeli public for the possibility that a real settlement will require a demilitarized Palestinian state to be achieved through face to face negotations with the PLO, the Labor Party sought to manipulate its way to power. In April it appeared to have put together a narrow majority—partly through bribing the Aguda religious party with support for its yeshivas, partly by bribing opportunist politicians of the Right with promises of power, money and political protection. A government constructed in this way will have little room to maneuver in peace negotiations—at best, it will be able to implement Shamir's plan, the very plan that Shamir has continually reassured us would *not* lead to any exchange of land for peace.

Labor chose this course because it feared that it would fare poorly in elections. No wonder. When I was in Jerusalem recently I listened to Peres deliver another blistering attack—not on Shamir or the Israeli Right, but on the idea that Israel should talk with the PLO. Peres apologists explained that this was necessary to ensure his popularity with Israelis, should Labor face elections. No one has yet figured out that it was this failure to educate the public about an alternative perspective that has strengthened the hand of the Right. Such opportunism always backfires. A narrow Labor government will find itself severely constrained by the restrictive ideological consensus that Labor helped popularize. So if the peace forces are in a pickle, it's not fair to blame it primarily on the religious parties.

Nevertheless, the religious parties have done a great disservice to the Jewish people. Using their political power, the Orthodox have forced upon the Israeli public a set of religious restrictions that interfere with individual choice and personal life in ways that justifiably anger most Israelis.

I can accept the right of a community to impose restrictions on public transportation on Shabbat, or even on the use of private vehicles within a community. After all, the private choice to ride in an auto conflicts with my private choice to walk the streets one day a week without having cars on them. Just as a community could, for ecological reasons, decide to plan a city without any cars at all, so a community could ban cars one day a week to create a certain kind of spiritual environment. As long as some areas are *not* constrained in this way, so that those who do not wish to live in areas of Israel governed by these kinds of religious restrictions can find space to create non-observant communities as well, the creation of religious space is not fundamentally unreasonable. The democratic process that allows the religious to bargain in the political market seems quite workable. All of Israel's political parties operate in this way.

But not everything fits this logic: there are areas of life in a secular state that are strictly personal, areas in which the state must not trespass. When the religious set restrictions on marriage or divorce or abortion, when they prevent other Jewish denominations from organizing, when they try to use the Israeli state to disqualify the Jewishness of those who have been converted by the non-Orthodox, they go too far. By interfering in the personal lives of many Israelis, the religious world has abused its political power and turned many Israelis away from God and the richness of the Jewish tradition. And when Rabbi Schach, spiritual leader of many of the ultra-Orthodox, questions whether kibbutz dwellers are really Jews at all, he inflames a hatred that may someday lead to communal violence.

The task of religiously committed Jews is to be witness to the possibility of God's presence in the world. They do the opposite when they seem willing to ignore the possibilities for peace and appear to make political decisions based on which party will give more monies to their yeshivas and more military exemptions to their children.

The ultra-Orthodox may object that *they* are not the obstacle to peace: many of them hold no *religious* obligation to hold on to the territories, and some have joined a Peres government. True enough. But their willingness to subordinate the general interest in peace to their own narrow sectarian goals is a *chilul hashem*

(Continued on p. 92)

Was the Left Wrong About Nicaragua?

William M. LeoGrande

The defeat of Daniel Ortega and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua's February elections came as a terrible shock to the progressive movement in the United States. It was little consolation that most journalists, international observers, and even senior U.S. government officials also thought the Sandinistas would win.

Ideological warriors on the Right offered a quasi-conspiratorial explanation for the widely shared misperception: the Sandinistas were hated totalitarians all along who never could have won a free election. Expectations of their victory were widespread only because the liberal-left elite in the media, academia, and churches were useful fools who swallowed the myth of a Sandinista "popular revolution" and propagated it across America.

To the conservatives, attacking the U.S. Left seemed more important than analyzing the election. The day after results were released, both Penn Kemble writing in the *New York Times* and Charles Krauthammer in the *Washington Post* (February 27) focused not on the dramatic events in Nicaragua but on vilifying the U.S. Left as Sandinista "fellow travelers." George Will, writing in the *Post* a few days later (March 1), opened with this: "The pilgrimage is over. The long march of the West's 'progressive' intellectuals has come to a bedraggled end in Nicaragua...."

Perhaps if the conservatives who have been gleefully skewering the Left reread some of their own past predictions about Nicaragua, humility would mute their self-righteousness. After all, they swore such an election could never happen. During the protracted debates over contra aid, the Right insisted that the Sandinistas would never hold a free election or surrender power peacefully; they could only be driven out at gunpoint. If liberal Democrats refused to give the contras military aid in their crusade for freedom, they were condemning the Nicaraguan people to the endless nightmare of totalitarianism.

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When liberals replied that diplomacy was more likely to produce political concessions from the Sandinistas, conservatives derided their view as the foolish prattle of weaklings. Krauthammer (*Washington Post,* February 10, 1989) accused the Democrats of "making Central America safe for Communism." Their policy was in "full collapse," he insisted. "It was always fatuous to believe Leninists call off their repression when they run out of excuses."

Krauthammer and his friends were proven wrong on every count: wrong about the reliability of Sandinista promises, wrong about the effect of ending military aid to the contras, and wrong about the efficacy of diplomacy. Had their preferred policy prevailed, Nicaragua today would not be a country on the eve of a democratic transition and national reconciliation. It would still be a garrison state at war.

The Right's myth of Nicaragua as a "totalitarian dungeon" was just as mistaken as the Left's myth of a nation united—except for a few *vendepatrias* (country-sellers)—and willing to fight to the death against U.S. imperialism. The mythologizing of Nicaragua was largely a product of the ideological war fought in Washington during the 1980s over U.S. policy toward Central America.

The battle was so emotionally intense and the sides so closely matched that both had an incentive to smooth the rough edges of the truth in order to make a more perfect argument. This tendency was exacerbated by the fact that many people involved in the debate knew next to nothing about Nicaragua. Ideological preconceptions filled in where knowledge was lacking.

Exaggeration and oversimplification are the natural offspring of an adversarial policy process. But it is worth asking whose myth held the larger kernel of truth. Does Violeta Chamorro's upset prove that the Right's conception of the Nicaraguan revolution was closer to the mark than the Left's?

The conservative pundits had no doubts. "When history is written," said Elliott Abrams, "the contras will be the folk heroes." Even a few journalists picked up refrain, arguing that because UNO did well in the northern and central provinces where the contras had been most active, the contras must have been popular all along. The logic of this was backwards, however.

The people in the north did not decide to oppose the government because they liked the contras; the contras located in these regions because the people there already opposed the government. These were areas where Sandinista agricultural policy had alienated a significant portion of the small farming population, thereby providing the contras with a sympathetic popular base. People there would have voted overwhelmingly for UNO even if the contras had never existed.

For Nicaraguans, there was nothing "low intensity" about the American-sponsored war. Some thirty thousand died and over a hundred thousand were turned into refugees.

The contras did have significant support in those regions and among the Miskito Indians. But that is a far cry from claiming that they were widely popular in the country as a whole. Opinion polls taken by both UNO and the FSLN found that the contras were the most despised political group in Nicaragua, and both sides campaigned as if they believed it. The Sandinistas tried to link UNO with the contras, and UNO complained bitterly. Alfredo Cesar, Chamorro's top political adviser, kept a low profile for fear that his former role as a contra civilian leader would damage UNO's chances.

Making facile comparisons with Eastern Europe, conservatives argued that Chamorro's election proved the Sandinistas were totalitarian dictators with no popular support. The analogy, however tempting, was superficial. Installed by the Soviet Red Army at the end of World War II, the European Communist parties never had any real legitimacy. In free elections, they barely attracted the votes of their own members.

Not so in Nicaragua. In the first place, the Sandinistas never installed a totalitarian regime. To be sure, the limitations on political liberties imposed during the contra war were severe. But Amnesty International, Americas Watch, and the OAS (Organization of American States) Inter-American Human Rights Commission prepared dozens of reports on Nicaragua during the 1980s, reports which established beyond doubt that "totalitarian" Nicaragua's human rights record was far better than that of "democratic" El Salvador or Guatemala.

Moreover, the magnitude of the Sandinista loss at the polls was in no way comparable to the European communists' downfall. Although there was no mistaking the Nicaraguan electorate's desire for change, the Sandinistas still won 41 percent of the popular vote and 39 seats in the 93-seat National Assembly. They remain the largest single political party and by far the best organized. They are stronger today than El Salvador's Christian Democrats in the wake of a comparable electoral drubbing.

The popularity of the Sandinista revolution was no myth concocted by liberals, though many on the Left misjudged the extent to which support for the Sandinistas had eroded over years of war and economic hardship. Even the Sandinistas' worst enemies concede that Ortega and his followers had nearly universal backing in 1979 when they led the insurrection against Somoza. The upper class and much of the middle class were alienated from the revolution early, as the Sandinistas imposed radically redistributive economic policies and concentrated political control in the hands of the party. People on the Atlantic Coast, especially the Miskito Indians, balked at the Sandinistas' heavy-handed efforts to integrate their region into the rest of the country. Agrarian policies alienated small producers in the north. And deeply religious Nicaraguans were upset over the Sandinista government's feud with the Catholic church hierarchy.

Nevertheless, U.S. ambassadors in Managua during the late 1970s and early 1980s thought that the Sandinistas probably retained majority support. In 1984, they won 65 percent of the vote in an election marred by the fact that the major opposition parties refused to participate.

From there, however, the political crisis accelerated. People outside the FSLN's mass organization were angered by the petty tyrannies of some local officials and by the corruption that gradually permeated lower levels of the state bureaucracy as the economy deteriorated. In addition, the Sandinistas' refusal to match Chamorro's promise to halt the intensely unpopular military draft hurt them badly at the polls.

But all these issues pall to insignificance when compared with the economy. From interviews in the streets to the assessments of UNO and Sandinista officials alike, the conclusion is unequivocal: the Nicaraguan electorate turned the Sandinistas out of office because they could not solve the economic crisis.

Everyone knew the economy was the Sandinistas' Achilles' heel. The question was whether they could overcome the political albatross of hyper-inflation (33,000 percent in 1988 and 1,700 percent in 1989), unemployment (33 percent), and a collapsing standard of living. The wisdom of Oscar Arias is compelling in retrospect: he declared that no incumbent government could be reelected under such conditions. In fact, the defeated Sandinistas had a lot of company. Economic conditions have been so bad in Latin America over the past decade

that almost no incumbent party (except for Acción Democrática in Venezuela and, perhaps, the Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico) has won reelection—including Arias's own National Liberation Party. In Peru and Argentina, incumbent parties that presided over runaway inflation and economic collapse were defeated by margins similar to the Sandinistas'.

Why weren't the Nicaraguan people willing to endure economic hardship to defend their revolution, and, if necessary, die on the barricades shouting "No Pasarán"? Because they were tired and worn down by a U.S.-sponsored war that destroyed all the material gains of the revolution's first few years, leaving nothing in its wake but death and privation.

Conservatives were quick to credit Ronald Reagan and the contras with the Sandinistas' downfall; liberals retorted that the diplomacy of the Central American presidents had done the trick. Both were half right. Ronald Reagan's policy was a success, though not in the way he envisioned it. The contras never came close to military victory, and as long as the war was raging, diplomacy remained stalled. But once military aid to the contras ended and the Central American peace process got underway, the Sandinistas were forced by the cumulative effect of Washington's economic and military pressure to hold an election that they lost.

Liberals and conservatives will long debate whether a decade of "low intensity conflict" was a necessary condition for free elections in Nicaragua or whether it simply delayed the diplomatic process that eventually gave birth to them. For Nicaraguans, there was nothing "low intensity" about the war. Some thirty thousand died and over a hundred thousand were turned into refugees. Millions suffered as real wages fell 90 percent, inflation spun out of control, and unemployment ballooned to a third of the labor force.

Even with lavish economic assistance from Washington and its allies, it will take at least a generation for the Nicaraguan economy to recover. Ronald Reagan destroyed Nicaragua in order to save it; he can take credit for the election only if he takes responsibility for the dead.

Some of the most ardent supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution were the foreign volunteers who went there to offer their skills and solidarity in the struggle to build a new Nicaragua. They were despised by members of the opposition, who referred to them derisively as "sandalistas" because of their attire.

Attracted by the promise of a government that vowed to put the interests of the poor majority ahead of the agro-export elite, these volunteers traded the comforts of middle-class life in the United States and Europe for the hardship of living in an underdeveloped country at war. Some of them stayed in conflicted zones at the risk of their lives. Some, like Ben Linder, lost their lives.

Were these volunteers naive political pilgrims, blind to the faults of the Sandinistas? Perhaps they sometimes allowed their idealism to get the better of their judgment, as did others on the Left. But they were not wrong about the essentials. They were not wrong to fight for Nicaragua's right to determine its own future. They were not wrong to oppose a Republican policy that rained death and destruction on poor people in the name of geopolitics.

Idealizing foreign revolutions has long been a weakness of both the American and European Left. Too often, the Left has been willing to rationalize the loss of political liberty as necessary for the pursuit of social equality. The debate over the wisdom of this trade-off produced the Left's historic schism between social democrats and communists. Events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have resolved the issue decisively; the communists, admitting they were wrong, are converting en masse to social democracy.

In the United States, both the Right and the Left have been inclined to force the debate over Nicaragua into the Procrustean bed of these same ideological categories. The Right painted the Sandinistas as unabashed communists whose dictatorship was milder than others in the Soviet bloc only because the regime was not yet consolidated. The Left tended to take the Sandinistas' verbal commitment to pluralism as social-democratic gospel and to explain away their manifestations of authoritarianism as exigencies of war.

The truth was more complex. The Sandinistas were neither the supervillains nor the superheroes of the U.S. political imagination. They were young, inexperienced guerrilla fighters who came to power in 1979 with a deep commitment to social justice but equivocal attitudes about whether or not that vision was compatible with pluralist democracy. Confirmed Leninists among them thought it was not; others were less sure. Over the next decade, this tension within the FSLN produced seemingly contradictory politics. The Sandinistas had little tolerance for dissent and too often tried to impose their vision of the future on reluctant fellow citizens. But they did not eliminate the opposition or nationalize the economy as the Cubans had done before them.

Perhaps events in Europe tipped the balance in favor of those Sandinistas who were always dubious that a Cuban-style model was viable for Nicaragua. Regardless, the U.S. Left's instincts about where the Sandinistas were heading proved to be more accurate than the Right's. Nicaragua is on the road to a more authentically democratic politics today not because Violeta Chamorro and the UNO won a free election, but because Daniel Ortega and the Sandinistas held one. □

WHO LOST NICARAGUA?

A Response to William M. LeoGrande

Paul Berman

The triumphal crowing of the American Right over the elections in Nicaragua is undoubtedly a little revolting. Those who armed the contras or stoutly cheered them into battle from the columns of distant newspapers were anything but vindicated by Mrs. Chamorro's election. It was Costa Rican president Oscar Arias who was vindicated, along with Jimmy Carter and his team of observers. Most of all, the Nicaraguan civic opposition was vindicated. American right-wingers, though they now choose to forget the hoary past, strained every muscle during the Reagan era to undermine precisely those civic forces that ultimately prevailed. Does anyone remember that the U.S. Embassy in Managua, out of zeal for the contras, at one point labored day and night to weaken Mrs. Chamorro's own bastion at *La Prensa* by luring *Prensa* staffers into exile as contra operatives?

Does anyone on the American Right intend to speak of what the actual right-wing policy has achieved? Will anyone acknowledge that after thirty thousand dead and untold damage the contra war did not turn out to be the path to democracy in Nicaragua—just as President Arias was saying all along? Will anyone speak of the ways in which the American Right tried to undermine President Arias himself and the democratic system in Costa Rica? When William LeoGrande speaks of these things, he is, in my view, entirely correct.

He is right, too, to acknowledge that the contras did spring from a social base in the remoter rural districts that had been hurt by Sandinista agricultural policy. The contras were not really a mercenary army. They were an indigenous *campesino* rebellion, a Nicaraguan Vendée or Cristero movement (to cite antecedents from the French and Mexican revolutions) that was encouraged and manipulated, in a cold spirit of mistaken calculation, by White House ideologues and imperialists. Local boys (in some cases, former Sandinista guerrillas) took up arms against the Sandinistas with the blessings of their dirt-farmer neighbors. The hometown quality of the contra insurgency was a main reason why the contras were so hard to root out (or why rooting them out sometimes involved the forced displacement of entire populations). One source of Mrs. Chamorro's electoral appeal was her ability to include former contra leaders among her circle of advisers along with leaders who always stood against the contra insurgency. Nicaraguans want national reconciliation; they don't want a politics of endless invective and hatred.

Or else why *did* the Nicaraguans vote overwhelmingly against the Sandinistas? LeoGrande explains their decision as a quiet surrender to the superior force of the external foe. He asks:

> Why weren't the Nicaraguan people willing to endure economic hardship to defend their revolution, and, if necessary, die on the barricades shouting "No pasarán"? Because they were tired and worn down by a U.S.-sponsored war that destroyed all the material gains of the revolution's first few years, leaving nothing in its wake but death and privation.

The Sandinistas and their foreign supporters would agree with that analysis. But since the Sandinistas no longer command a majority and in my estimation have not commanded one for several years, it might behoove us to examine what interpretation is given by the Nicaraguan leaders who do command a majority—namely, the group around *La Prensa*.

These people argue that the main purpose of Nicaragua's revolution was to create a democratic republic characterized by rule of law, social justice, democratic procedure, rights of labor, and other normal features of democracy—as represented, for instance, by the country on Nicaragua's southern border, Costa Rica. The Sandinistas came to power promising a romantic version of something like that. But once in power, the Sandinistas turned out to be the kind of government that advertises its values and goals by wearing military uniforms. Even during the recent election campaign, which should have been their kindest and gentlest hour, a less-than-democratic sensibility kept intruding onto the public scene, like a gun that keeps poking out from beneath a plainclothesman's jacket.

The Sandinista campaign argued that the Sandinista Front, as the "vanguard of the people," embodies Nica-

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ragua's national existence, and that anti-Sandinistas are virtually traitors with scarcely any legitimacy—even though, for the moment, the Sandinistas were allowing these virtual traitors to speak in public. Late in the campaign, Ortega threatened to expropriate Mrs. Chamorro's private home as well as the property of her supporters. He threatened to expropriate her newspaper, which he has shut down for long periods of time in the past. The policy of denouncing legitimate political opponents as virtual traitors or Somocistas and then expropriating their property has been a main source of fear and hatred in Nicaragua. (Nicaragua is a country where large parts of the population, not just the oligarchic rich, own a little piece of land or a tiny business.) Another campaign threat came from General Humberto Ortega, Daniel's brother, who said that, in the event of a United States invasion, *vendepatrias* would be executed. That would certainly mean Mrs. Chamorro, who has been, in Sandinista propaganda, Nicaragua's chief *vendepatria* for many years.

Sandinista mobs intimidated northern towns, and terrorized the southern town of Masatepe, where a Chamorro supporter was hacked to death by the government mob. In an old and much-hated Sandinista custom, large numbers of voters were pressured to attend Sandinista rallies regardless of their actual views. (Given the voting tallies, a substantial percentage of the Sandinista demonstrators at the final campaign rally in Managua must have been people who returned from the rally and voted for Mrs. Chamorro.) The campaign hats and shirts and children's toys that were distributed everywhere (the Sandinistas hugely outspent the visibly impoverished Chamorro campaign) were doubtless paid for by the government, in a (benign) display of how the Sandinistas have never drawn much of a distinction between their party and the state. And the combination of frightening threats, street mobs, the intermixing of party and state, the invective and air of hatred that emanated from the ruling party—this was not, finally, what the Nicaraguans hoped to achieve when they made their revolution.

Nicaraguans who voted against the party that behaved in those several unpleasant ways were not, contrary to what some may believe, failing to "defend their revolution." In their own minds and I think in reality, they *were* defending the revolution—against the Sandinistas. That, not Sandinismo, was the "logic of the majority," to quote a Sandinista phrase. Nor were the Nicaraguans necessarily voting against their own national independence, which is how their vote is sometimes interpreted in the United States.

The Sandinistas have always presented themselves as Nicaragua's only authentic nationalists and have, to an outside world that knows zero about Nicaraguan history, successfully vilified their opponents as unprincipled anti-patriots.

But the opposition has roots in Nicaraguan patriotism that go back to the nineteenth-century days of William Walker. *La Prensa* may not be one of the world's greatest newspapers (an understatement), yet some of the bylines that appear there have been associated with the cause of Nicaraguan independence and republicanism for longer than the Sandinista Front has been in existence. Though the Sandinistas accused the opposition of swimming in Yankee dollars, it was the Sandinistas, not the opposition, who flooded Nicaragua during the last ten years with foreign workers—idealistic internationalist volunteers who have been dedicated, selfless, and hardworking, but who were not, finally, Nicaraguan. Ortega, not Chamorro, was surrounded by foreigners in the aftermath of the election.

Any tabulation of who was right and wrong about Nicaragua ought to draw a distinction between two Lefts in America—authoritarians and their sympathizers on one side, democrats on the other.

But is it true that Nicaraguans, as LeoGrande says, were "worn down" by a "U.S.-sponsored war that destroyed all the material gains of the revolution's first few years"? Majority sentiment in Nicaragua, I believe, credits some of the economic disaster and political haggling to factors apart from the war, and in any case doesn't blame the terrible war entirely on the United States. The Sandinistas, too, in popular view, have a lot to answer for.

LeoGrande cites some of the more serious political mistakes. He notes that, due to a variety of regrettable policies, the Sandinistas alienated the following groups: "people on the Atlantic Coast, especially the Miskito Indians," "small producers in the north," "deeply religious Nicaraguans," "much of the middle class," and "the upper class." That makes quite a few people, especially when you consider that "deeply religious Nicaraguans" is a category that turns nearly universal in certain barrios of the poor. That was by 1982, or thereabouts. And having lost the east, much of the north, much of the middle class, much of the lower class, and all of the upper class, exactly how vast was the support that remained?

Not vast enough to rescue the economy. Conceivably the Sandinistas could have, at some point in the mid-eighties, reassembled portions of the original revolutionary coalition by forming a popular front with the more progressive members of the opposition, as the Socialists and others kept urging them to do. Instead they relied on their destiny as the "vanguard," and on the destiny of their rivals to be historically obsolete. They ended up jailing and persecuting precisely those elements of the non-Sandinista forces with whom they should have allied. In this way the Sandinistas undercut everything that they themselves tried to do to better the lot of the average Nicaraguan.

The 41 percent of the vote that the Sandinistas obtained may somewhat overstate their popularity. A good slice of their vote must have come from state workers and their families who feared reprisals if anyone suspected they voted for Mrs. Chamorro. After all, the Sandinistas have been by far the largest employer in Nicaragua, and what is called a "clientist" political system has been the country's main tradition. Another 6 percent of the ballots were annulled on technical grounds—though members of the anti-Sandinista majority coalition charge that these 6 percent were mostly anti-Sandinista and were fraudulently annulled by Sandinista authorities.

A good 15 to 20 percent of the entire population (an extraordinary figure) has gone into exile during the years of Sandinista rule, and all but a handful of these exiles are ferociously anti-Sandinista. In the recent Polish election, exiles were able to vote from abroad—a right that, had it existed in the Nicaraguan case, would have tipped the results dramatically further against the Sandinistas. Taking these several factors into account, the percentage of sincere Sandinista support among all Nicaraguans may be as small as—to make an educated guess—a quarter of the population.

Of course that is still a significant body of support. Some of the peasants who have won land continue to support the Sandinistas. There are people who continue to admire Sandinista ideology, people who support the Sandinista version of nationalism, people who feel that Sandinista martyrdoms of the past will forever forbid them from changing allegiance to a non-Sandinista party. There are people who see in the centralized, hierarchical, and disciplined structure of Sandinista militarism an attractive road to modernization. The Sandinistas do, I think, have something in common with their comrades in Eastern Europe. (Communism in countries like Czechoslovakia and East Germany did at one time have a significant popularity, and in East Germany the Communists retain some popularity still.) But it's also true that Sandinismo has so far suffered only a

portion of the decline that has overtaken communism in Eastern Europe.

Do the elections mean that the Sandinistas honestly intend to reorient themselves as an authentically democratic party of the Left, or that they have been authentically democratic all along (in spite of being mistaken for something else by most Nicaraguans)? In speculating about the place of democracy in the Sandinista Front, LeoGrande makes a valuable distinction between the two Lefts around the world: Leninists (or the authoritarian Left) and social democrats (or the democratic Left). But it's not easy to apply this distinction to tendencies within the Sandinista Front. The Front does have some democratic impulses and has certainly acted on one in allowing themselves to lose an election. Democratic sentiments sometimes appear in the party press, side by side with paeans to North Korea. Doubtless the same democratic wind that blows around the world is blowing through the Front today. The future of Nicaragua and of the Left everywhere in Central America would be transformed if the Front's democratic impulses became something that Nicaraguans thought they could count on as a matter of course, not just as an ambiguous tactical maneuver.

But since the Front, in proper Bolshevik style, does not permit organized factions and does not hold public conventions, it's impossible to say much about the place that democracy may occupy in its aspirations. Which of the nine uniformed figures who guide the Front would prefer, if he had his druthers, to dismantle the authoritarian vertical structure and abandon the rhetorical commitment to the military-style "vanguard" concept? Everyone has a favorite guess, but no one really knows.

Whatever the status of democracy within the Front, a strain of social democracy can also be found among some of the people in Mrs. Chamorro's coalition. (Mrs. Chamorro's late husband had an interest in social democracy.) It's very difficult to predict how these people, the political Left in her movement, will fare now that they find themselves in power. Will they succumb to their right-wing allies or to other pressures, as has happened before? No one ever went wrong in predicting Nicaraguan events by choosing to worry. In any case, it is Mrs. Chamorro's group, not the Sandinistas, that has maintained good relations over the years with the social democrats of Costa Rica. From a regional perspective, the greatest social democrat of all is, surely, Oscar Arias, the real hero of these elections. He is the person whom liberals and democratic leftists around the world should stand up to applaud. It is in Arias's Costa Rica that the working class enjoys the most rights, which is the sort of fact that ought to be highly relevant but somehow gets forgotten in discussions of Central America.

I wish that, in discussing the American Left, we would remember the same distinction between democrats and authoritarians. An authoritarian instinct is not hard to find on the American Left and even among liberals; the arguments of a commentator like Penn Kemble, whatever his other views, are not incorrect about such things. A large element on the American Left does subscribe to what might be described as Fidelista myths about Latin America, which is why so many people have never thought to question Sandinista propaganda.

Nonetheless in America there has always been a democratic and libertarian Left, too. There have always been people who have opposed the U.S. embargo, the contra policy, the manipulation of ignorant *campesinos* for U.S. foreign policy goals, and generally the manifestations of big-stick imperialism—without turning a blind eye to the ways that anti-imperialism, too, can generate new forms of oppression. The "progressive" press in America has published more than a few insightful analyses of Nicaragua over the years—articles by the likes of Steven Diamond in *In These Times,* Kevin Griffin in a recent *Against the Grain,* Julius Jacobson and some of his comrades in *New Politics,* and many others. Even the *Nation* has published, here and there among the boilerplate, an occasional insightful or informed commentary—notably, articles by Michael Massing and Richard Elman.

Yes, Ortega's defeat may have come "as a terrible shock to the progressive movement in the United States," or at least to many people within it. But if that is true, isn't it because the shrewder reporters and commentators within the publications of the American Left have been drowned out by other voices? I think that any tabulation of who was right and wrong about Nicaragua ought to draw a distinction between the two Lefts in America—authoritarians and their sympathizers on one side, democrats on the other. □

Fan As In Fantasy

Ted Solotaroff

Dr. Johnson once said that were it not for imagination, a man would be as happy in the arms of a chambermaid as of a duchess. So, too, of other passions. How else to explain the average avid baseball fan who lives and dies, as he puts it himself, by the fortunes of a group of young men whom he knows only from afar, who come and go from year to year, whose successes and failures neither tangibly benefit nor cost him—unless he is a gambler—and with one or two of whom he is at least half in love?

Imagination and the fan start going together at an early age—around eight or nine. At ten or so it becomes serious. For boys, the ball field and court often displace home and school as the new center of their lives: where the abilities that most matter to them are expressed and tested. Around the same time, the world of sports becomes the most meaningful manifestation of the world itself. Or, to put it in psychological language, sports are a transitional area where the boundaries between the inner and outer, fantasy and reality, self and society become fluid and particularly fertile. As such, a lot of permanent learning as well as imagining takes place there. Through sports a boy develops a morality for his aggression in which such potentially lifelong values as competition, fairness, courage, and persistence come to be taken for granted. Likewise he develops an intense romance with a player and a tribal identification with a team that may also last him for life. I know of a philosophy professor whose abiding hero is Joe DiMaggio, a woman novelist who has season tickets to the Mets, an editor who spends his vacation visiting Yankee farm teams.

My first hero was Lou Gehrig. By the time I was eleven I was so involved with him that I imagined he was my real father—my own becoming a kind of distracting pretender who had no use for sports and couldn't even throw right. That summer Gehrig was no longer hitting massive home runs, fielding his position smoothly, and extending his phenomenal record of consecutive games played. Instead he was fighting a paralyzing disease, one so rare and devastating that it seemed to have been reserved for the man called the Iron Horse.

So I played first base with my knees slightly bent, the mitt held open and low, just like Gehrig in one of his photographs. At the plate, I cocked the bat high and back, my front foot turned slightly toward the pitcher. For a few days I even tried to turn myself around and bat lefty as Gehrig had, but I couldn't develop any power or timing and cut it out when he told me in one of our many conversations that I should wait until I was stronger.

A boy of ten or eleven feels like he has two bodies: the child's one he still inhabits that can throw and hit only so far, run only so fast, etc., and an idealized body he is beginning to grow into, hints of which appear in those charmed times when he is "on" or "unconscious," as we used to say, and he outperforms himself. The images of these two bodies stay in touch by means of certain stylish movements and mannerisms which we called "form."

That summer I tried to make my form more like Gehrig's—less flashy, more sturdy and consistent. Also I tried to imitate his renowned positive spirit that was being tested by his illness. When I lost out at first base on the summer playground team and was stuck in the outfield, he told me to stop bellyaching and play the position. Our team made it to the district finals and I ended up playing third base, Gehrig's gentle face often hovering near, his firm voice ministering to both my anxiety and grandiosity.

Why did Gehrig become my hero, rather than, say, Hank Greenberg, who was also a first baseman, a power hitter, and one of the aristocrats of the game—and Jewish to boot? Proximity had something to do with it: Gehrig was in nearby New York, Greenberg in remote Detroit. Also, Gehrig was a college graduate—rare at that time for a baseball player—and of Columbia no less, the bailiwick of my autumn hero, Sid Luckman. Also, that Gehrig was the son of immigrants and yet Christian made him particularly conjurable: like President Roosevelt, he didn't belong entirely to "their" world and served as a mediating figure in the uncertain part of my identity that lay between being American and being Jewish.

The Yankees were my team because of Gehrig and because they, too, seemed a paragon of power and distinction. Like most boys of ten or eleven I was eager for the world but conscious of being powerless

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and ignorant in its eyes. Baseball fandom gave me a conquering tribe to belong to and much new information and lore to command—baseball being preeminent in both, its history teeming with statistics and legends.

That fall I entered junior high school. Over the next year the America beyond my neighborhood became more visible and defined, a place of paths and boundaries in which I was beginning to make and plan my way, though still attached to the leading strings of my imagination. So, at least, it seems from the evolution of my baseball mind. The different teams took on sharp social images to correspond to my sense of the way American society worked. By the time I was thirteen, the Yankees seemed like the big corporations around Elizabeth—Standard Oil or Singer Sewing Machines or Phelps Dodge—a lordly gentile empire whose success no longer had much relation to my life. Out of the corner of my eye I had been watching the rise of the Brooklyn Dodgers, and during the 1941 World Series with the Yankees, I turned, game by game, into a Dodger fan.

The Dodgers were upstarts. Through most of the 1930s they were known for their ineptness and eccentricity: their star outfielder, Babe Herman, had been hit on the head by a fly ball; their best pitcher, Burleigh Grimes, was a notorious spitballer. But under their enterprising new general manager, Larry MacPhail, they suddenly became contenders: third place in 1939, second in 1940, the pennant in 1941. Known still as "Dem Bums," their players had ragtag names like Cookie Lavagetto, Pee Wee Reese, Kirby Higbee, Mickey Owen. Their center fielder, Pistol Pete Reiser, tried so hard that he kept crashing into the outfield wall; their manager, Leo Durocher, was a high-strung conniving loudmouth. They were also smart, the first team to broadcast their games, the first to play night baseball. In sum, the Dodgers were the Jews of baseball; they even played in small, homely Ebbets Field, whose cheap seats extended around the entire outfield, where the fans were all crowded together, just like in the Jewish neighborhoods of my relatives in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Seeing America more and more as a place where Jews struggled, scrapped, tried hard, looked for an edge, and got ahead, I took to the Dodgers as my team.

In their own league they had two principal adversaries—the Giants and the Cardinals. Like the Yankees, the Giants had a long tradition of winning teams. Their present-day one was made up of players with names like Burgess Whitehead, Dick Bartel, Melvin Ott, Prince Hal Schumacher; and they were managed by the handsome Bill Terry who arrogantly asked if the Dodgers were still in the league. To top off my image of them, they played in a spacious ball park in Manhattan called the Polo Grounds. It figured, then, that many of the Christian kids would root for them, for they were the WASPs of baseball who stood in the way of the once-scorned, aspiring, improving Dodgers.

Even more formidable and threatening were the Cardinals, who came from faraway St. Louis where many Germans lived. (Lou Gehrig was also from German stock but I hadn't known earlier about the German American Bund that was now stalking my imagination.) The Cardinals were called "The Gashouse Gang" because of their bullying, spikes-high style. Their players were rednecks like the Dean brothers, Pepper Martin, and Enos Slaughter, or else had tough-guy names like the *shtarkers* from the industrial areas of Elizabeth—Whitey Kurowski, Stan Musial, Joe Medwick. Thus the Cardinals became the more immediate enemy—the anti-Semites, even the Fascists.

Sports are a transitional area where the boundaries between the inner and outer, fantasy and reality, self and society become fluid and particularly fertile.

All of this personal mythology took a lot of ingenuity to sustain. When Medwick was traded to the Dodgers, I had to deal with that by envisioning him now as the homely "Ducky" who came from nearby Carteret. But lost in the spell of fandom, just as I could become lost in throwing a ball against a wall as canny Whitlow Wyatt facing the Yankees in the seventh game of the World Series, my imagination of baseball became sturdy and supple like the beanstalk that Jack climbed into the land of the giants.

I continued to follow the Dodgers through adolescence, though my memories of them during those years of the depleted ad hoc teams of World War II are vague and passionless. Most of my rooting energies were focused on places like Guadalcanal and the Anzio beachhead where G.I. Joe was staging his heroic comeback against the demonic Japanese and the steely evil Germans. Indeed, so conditioned was I by then to view a world war as a kind of ultimate sports event that even so terrible and ominous a development as Hiroshima became part of the scenario: the devastating knockout punch in the fifteenth round, the massive home run with the bases loaded in the top of the ninth that puts the game out of reach once and for all.

In 1946 the Dodgers were back to full strength and my passion returned and loyalty waxed again. When Branch

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Left Meets East

Peter Gabel

I have just gotten back from a series of meetings with Polish and Czech intellectuals and activists who are now in the process of rewriting their countries' constitutions. Their aim is to create, more or less from scratch, political and legal systems that will enable them to realize the democratic aspirations of their revolutions. I was invited to be an "interlocutor" in this process, along with nine other law professors and lawyers associated with the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement in the United States.

CLS is an influential left-wing movement of legal thought in this country, but it is completely opposed to the conventional Marxist notion that "bourgeois law" is simply a tool used by ruling elites in capitalist countries to maintain their own power. CLS rejects the whole idea that law is a "tool" at all. Instead, it conceives of law as a culture—a fabric of ideas, images, and rituals that helps to sustain a genuine cultural commitment to democracy *and,* at the same time, serves to subvert these very ideals by justifying the alienated reality of contemporary American life in their name. In the American context, CLS has been critical of legal strategies for achieving social change based exclusively on the pursuit of rights. It has analyzed the ways in which supporters of the status quo have been able to associate the psychic power of authoritarian symbols such as robed judges or "the will of the Founding Fathers" with the manipulable logic of legal reasoning —so as to grant social movements new rights and yet simultaneously drain these rights of their potentially transformative meaning. Not only does this process limit the degree of real change produced by legal victories; it also tends to warp the movement's perception of its own aims, gradually undermining its initial profound ethical and evocative appeal and replacing it with sterile rights-debates among warring interest groups, debates that often have little to do with what moved people to take political action in the first place.

I think it's partly for this reason, for example, that labor unions today retain so little political meaning for even their own members—after fifty years of labor laws for which so many workers in the twenties and thirties gave their lives, unions have come to be seen almost exclusively as impersonal entities fighting over wage levels and benefit packages rather than as visionary associations of human beings striving for workplace democracy and self-realization through cooperative activity. The long struggle to improve the economic condition of working people has of course been extremely important, but the inherent justice of these economic demands was originally linked to a political vision of true social equality. That vision, at least in part, shaped the original effort of the workers to gain the right to form unions and engage in various forms of collective action. Writers associated with CLS have argued that the dissolution of the labor movement's political appeal has in part resulted from decades of labor-law interpretation which has deradicalized the goals of the movement and dissociated its economic demands from their original transformative political foundations.

The message of CLS is therefore not that social movements shouldn't struggle for rights, but that they should do so in a way that carries into the legal arena the authentic ethical and social meaning that they want these rights to impart. This requires the creation of a new kind of progressive lawyer who is less a technician using law as a "tool" to help the poor, than an ethical advocate capable of challenging the symbolic and discursive terrain that limits the vision of existing liberal legal culture.

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Traveling to Eastern Europe with this perspective placed us in an odd position. We were leftists armed with a critique of rights going to talk with people who had heroically overthrown leftist regimes in order to win rights that we have always had. Although our critique applied with equal force to the kind of socialist law that had utterly corrupted the meaning of socialist ideals and subjected the Poles and Czechs to forty years of brutal repression, we knew that we would be looked upon with some skepticism and that we would have to work hard to convince our hosts that we were all on the same side. Our expectations were borne out by our Polish sponsor's initial remarks on the night we arrived in Warsaw: "We like to argue with people on the Left," he said, "but unfortunately there are no leftists remaining in Poland. Therefore, we have invited you."

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By the second day of our conference, however, I felt that perhaps we were getting somewhere when another participant, a Solidarity activist, said that he was relieved by our exchange about rights because "the last thing we need to listen to is a bunch of radical Marxists." Actually, most of us had probably considered ourselves radical Marxists of some kind at various times in our lives, and perhaps some of us still do. But after a few days in Poland it was easy enough to understand how the ideals of Marxism had become even more repugnant to them than George Bush's rhapsodic descriptions of "the free market" have become to us.

In fact, I constantly had the experience of being shocked at how miraculously opposite or mirror-image to ours were the assumptions of the people we visited. In both Poland and Czechoslovakia prior to the revolutions there were state-based women's organizations to support the struggle for women's rights and workers' councils to support the struggle for workers' rights. Basically every goal that we on the Left in America struggled for had been incorporated, though in a distorted form, into the state mechanisms of the Stalinist bureaucracy. And so these goals, for workers' rights or women's rights, had been completely discredited by virtue of having been part of the existing system of domination. When we raised the issue of women's rights, for example, our Czech colleagues informed us that the women's organization in Czechoslovakia occupied the largest palace in Prague. For them the women's movement consisted of this "palace organization" composed entirely of well-paid bureaucrats who did nothing for the people.

Every image that we could put forward that had a progressive connotation came reflected back to us in terms of a phony community legitimizing the bureaucratic state. When we raised the issue of workers' participation, or workers' control, this issue had a similarly negative spin for those who had struggled for freedom: the deputy attorney general and attorney general of Czechoslovakia responded by talking about how the workers' councils had been responsible for firing human rights activists around the time of the 1968 revolution and the human rights proclamation of 1977. The workers' Council had supported these firings because they were putting out the line of the Communist Party and carrying out discipline within the labor force.

We were equally stunned when women's issues were discussed. Many of us were shocked to find in the office of the head of the conference two huge pictures of nude women, obviously centerfolds from an American magazine. But when one of the women in our group raised the issue, Margaret, a Polish woman who had been profoundly affected by the women's-consciousness issues raised earlier by some of the women in our delegation, told us that we simply didn't understand the meaning of those posters in the Polish context. The collapse of communism had created an opportunity for people to do outrageous, sexually expressive things, in most cases for the first time. During the Stalinist regime this kind of expression would not have been allowed. This was the explanation for the abundance of *Playboy*-style calendars in all the bookstores in Warsaw and Prague. It represented a symbol of liberation for both women and men in this cultural frame, we were told. Those of us who had seen a similar form of sexual liberation used as a vehicle against the oppressive mores of American society wanted to warn about the potential exploitative and sexist dangers involved; yet we had to acknowledge also that the meaning of the symbols needed to be understood in terms of the historical experience of the people we were meeting.

In both Poland and Czechoslovakia people take for granted a much higher level of social responsibility and social connection than do people in America.

Having always been totally opposed to the version of socialism that had been put into practice in Eastern Europe—a bureaucratic and Stalinist reality far from the ideals that animated those of us in the New Left—and hence holding no illusions and considerable antagonism toward the Communist regimes, it was nonetheless a transformative experience for me to come face to face with those who understood the language and symbols of change that meant so much to us in the West as indicators precisely of the Communist bureaucracy we too rejected.

I'd gone to Eastern Europe hostile to the language of the "free marketplace" that was springing up in Eastern Europe—a language I feared was rooted simply in the naiveté of Eastern European progressives about the dangers of capitalism. But I quickly came to understand that for them the language of the free market was not reducible to economic content alone. Rather, it included a metaphorical meaning that was anti-state and anarchist ("we can do what we want without supervision"). For them, the language of the free market represented the opposite of the statism that they had experienced in the past.

There were three economic sociologists in our group, all of whom argued that the importation of markets did not imply, and should not necessarily imply, a particular

form of worker organization or labor–management relationship. One argued very strongly that there was nothing inconsistent about trying to develop efficient forms of production in the economy and having some forms of workplace democracy (and worker participation) within the new companies they hoped to start. Solidarity could, he argued, constrain the way foreign capital was brought into the country by developing a theory of its own about the way that it wanted workers' rights and workplace organization to be related to capitalist countries. Further, Solidarity could develop a theory for its own industry that would allow success in the world market without modeling itself after classic industrial plans of capitalist societies, in which workers perform in largely uncreative, atomized, or divided ways (the classic assembly-line model for work in steel or mining plants). Instead, it could better participate in a post-industrial world by retraining the work force so that workers could participate in problem-solving modes of worker organization that tend to foster workplace democracy and to reinforce the political aims of Solidarity. This argument was meant to address what we felt was a central problem with the way the Poles were putting forward their own line. Their tremendous desire to open up the country to markets and to foreign capital lacked adequate attention to what the new market systems might do to their own working-class constituency.

Although the Solidarity activists wanted to establish both political rights and social democratic objectives, many felt that Poland was too poor at the moment to afford social democratic entitlements. Therefore the Poles would have to divide their constitution to include on the one hand political rights based on the Western model and on the other a declaration of intent with respect to future social democratic rights (providing adequate social security, unemployment insurance, worker benefits, health benefits, education, and childcare). These, presumably, would be delivered once the society's economic base expanded adequately.

We questioned this division. If you allow market mechanisms to create enormous short-term dislocation and forms of labor–management relations that essentially squeeze the workers for all they're worth in order to generate profits in a factory, you will create a problem we are familiar with in the United States. By the time an economy can afford social rights, it will have produced a political elite so entrenched in the current economic system that it will no longer want to deliver the long-awaited social democratic entitlements. In other words, substituting a capitalist elite for a Communist elite may not be the answer.

Moreover, the introduction of uncontrolled market mechanisms, with the likely consequence of dramatic unemployment and escalation of prices, would drive a wedge between intellectuals. Workers would eventually find themselves opposing the very system that they are currently being asked to support as supposedly in their own interests. This could lead either to the Solidarity people being voted out of power or to the creation of a nationalist-based authoritarian regime with some dictatorial dimension.

A third reason we argued for insisting on workers' power at the point of production and various social democratic entitlements is that these things are simply good in themselves. Workplace democracy, for example, is a basic part of the aspirations of our professional group and a basic component of the vision of society we are trying to bring into being.

I was surprised to find that in the discussions about alternative ways to introduce markets, alternatives that might allow for the benefits of efficiency without totally eliminating workers' power at the point of production, there was an undertone to statements by these Polish activists that seemed to be dismissive of the Polish workers. One Solidarity activist summed it up this way: The large masses of our people, through hundreds of years of dependency on feudal governments and now more recently on state Communist governments, have learned to rely on the state. They have not developed a sense of individual responsibility or a notion that the individual could be responsible for the outcome of his or her life. You Americans just take that for granted, because you have faced "the fear of death" (as he put it) that is implicit in the workings of the capitalist marketplace, and that has led you to develop a sense of personal responsibility that the large masses of our people don't have. Our people are chronically dependent on the state and therefore have no motivation to work for a living. Leninism has this bullshit ideology about "social man" which is nothing more than a mechanism for maintaining the dependency of the masses on a state bureaucracy, and this blocks the individual's desire for self-determination.

This was quite striking and forced me to recognize the fact that all of us from America, though thinking of ourselves as either democratic socialists or communitarians, took for granted our responsibility for the outcomes of our lives, in part because we felt and had always felt rather isolated and unable to depend on others. It is precisely this aspect of individualism, built into our own personal histories, that has animated us and strengthened our desire to become social activists. We want to build a community that could help us overcome the isolation that we often experience in our lives as this individualism works itself out in destructive

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Anti-Judaism in Christian Feminist Theology

Susannah Heschel

I first started reading feminist theology while I was saying Kaddish for my father. Those eleven months of Kaddish hit me hard. I was devastated by my father's sudden death and took on the twice-daily trip to the synagogue as much to comfort and distract myself as to fulfill what I felt was an opportunity to express my love of both my father and my Judaism. But the experience turned out to be very different from what I expected.

I remember thinking during the week of *shiva,* while I fluctuated between periods of catatonic grief and overwhelming tears, that at least I would have the Jewish community to turn to. Some of the synagogues where I went to say Kaddish were filled with mourners —men and women—and the services went smoothly. But not one of these Conservative and Orthodox congregations counted women in the minyan, or gave women aliyot, or allowed women to lead the services. All too often there were nine men present with me—and the minyan was canceled.

During that time I spent a month in Israel, where it was simply impossible to find a weekday minyan that would let me say Kaddish. The few Conservative and Reform synagogues did not have weekday minyanim, and the Orthodox synagogues wouldn't tolerate my saying Kaddish. Every now and then came a real blow. One afternoon, while driving from Boston to New York, I stopped in New Haven for *minkha,* and found the local Young Israel synagogue. The weekday services were held in a classroom. I arrived early, sat down, and waited. When the men arrived, I was told I would have to leave because there was no *mekhitza* in the room. I offered to stand in the back of the room, near the door, and explained that I had to say Kaddish. To no avail. I remember the words distinctly: "We cannot pray as long as you remain in the room." So I left.

That same year, 1973, feminist philosopher Mary Daly's book, *Beyond God the Father,* was published. Reading it both terrified and comforted me. I felt comforted because Daly explained to me the root of all the rage I had felt—the condescension, the meannesses, the exclusions—whenever I complained about my experiences in Jewish life. At the same time, I felt something rip. Daly destroyed my optimism that solutions could be found. She argued that the treatment of women was not the result of laws that could be changed, or teachings that could be modified, but of root symbols, of God as Father, of morality as male-created and fundamentally patriarchal. There were no more easy answers, it became clear, no way to modify a sexist husk and retain a just core. And no more reason to struggle for simple changes. If women were excluded from aliyot "for the sake of the honor of the congregation," the problem was no longer the word "honor" (that men's honor not be offended by women's presence) but the word "congregation," which now appeared to be identified solely with men. Not only was I excluded from an occasional minyan, but I now saw myself excluded from the Jewish people.

Reading Daly and saying Kaddish for my father took away my sense of home. I'd grown up in the midst of a small, intensely Jewish community whose focus was the Jewish Theological Seminary. My friends, my parents' friends, our neighbors, our topics of conversation, were all Jewish. Suddenly I felt that I had lost not only a father, but a community.

More and more I turned to feminists for support. I started to read more books on feminist theology, most written by Christian women, and felt a tremendous sense of excitement: here was something new and fresh and original, ideas that had never been stated before. Or had they? At first I didn't want to pay attention to the articles or book chapters that would set my heart racing with their explanations of patriarchy, passages that blamed the Old Testament, "Yahweh," or Judaism and its law codes. Jesus, I read, fully intended to liberate women, but Paul the Pharisee was full of Jewish misogyny and squelched the feminist impulse. Once upon a time, I read elsewhere, we all worshiped a Goddess and lived in a world without violence. But then along came the ancient Israelites and their jealous, exclusive, monotheistic Father God. He killed the Goddess and introduced violence and war, patriarchy and exploitation.

Blaming the Jews for all sorts of societal problems is certainly nothing new in the history of anti-Semitism,

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including that of leftists. Jewish blame for patriarchy seems to have been introduced hand in hand with the feminist theology that emerged during the 1970s. It was accepted readily by many Christian women who were angered by their religious communities. After all, blaming Judaism provided a convenient explanation for patriarchy, together with a prescription for its cure: just get rid of the Jewish influences and Christianity will be rescued, in all the pristine feminist glory of Jesus.

Speaking out against feminist anti-Semitism is rarely received well.

At Harvard Divinity School, where I studied, Jewish responsibility for patriarchy became a new dogma among the feminists. In their rejection of traditional male-authored Christian theology, they still kept certain aspects, including the anti-Judaism. The radical, post-Christian feminism they espoused was not all that radical, nor all that post-Christian, since it retained classical anti-Semitic motifs found in Christian theology. But when the obvious was pointed out, particularly after Judith Plaskow published a short article, "Blaming the Jews for Patriarchy," the reactions were disappointing. Some feminists refused to see the anti-Semitism, others claimed we were simply mired in our Judaism (lacking full feminist consciousness), and some charged that we were actually undermining feminism.

Losing my sense of Jewish home was devastating; realizing that the women's movement was infested with anti-Semitism made me furious. With all the sharpness of the feminist critique of Christian theology's maleness and its treatment of women, anti-Semitism was rarely discussed by feminists. Instead, Judaism was emerging as a kind of "fall guy" for the problems feminist theologians found with Christianity.

I can find three general motifs of anti-Judaism in Christian feminist theology: first, a scapegoating in which Judaism is blamed for the origins of patriarchy because the ancient Israelites, together with the Father God of the Hebrew Bible, murdered the ancient Goddess and destroyed the peace-loving society that worship of her had promoted; second, a motif in which Christianity is said to be the ultimate solution to the problems of feminists, regardless of their religious background; and third, a motif that affirms early Christianity's positive treatment of women by negating first-century Judaism's negative treatment. The motifs should be familiar—long before feminism, anti-Jewish motifs played an important role in traditional male Christian theology.

The first motif, blaming the Jews for killing the Goddess and introducing patriarchy to the world, echoes the old Christian charge that the Jews killed Jesus. The argument entered feminist writings beginning in the early 1970s and is repeated by Elizabeth Gould Davis in *The First Sex,* Sheila Collins in *A Different Heaven and Earth,* Merlin Stone in *When God Was a Woman,* and Gerda Lerner in *The Creation of Patriarchy.*

In what became one of the most popular feminist books in West Germany several years ago, *Ich Verwerfe im Lande die Kriege* (I Denounce the Violence of the Land), Gerda Weiler repeated the argument: "Patriarchal monotheism developed through the elimination of the cosmic Goddess; there is no father in heaven without the murder of the mother." The dominance of patriarchy has left us, these feminists continue, with a society that is dualistic and disunified, in which body stands apart from soul, mind from nature, men from women. Worship of a male deity sets forth a pattern of social control of men over women. Moreover, the male religion described in the Hebrew Bible is said to legitimate violence and destruction.

On one level, the argument that an ancient Goddess-worshiping society once existed is important to feminism because it asserts the historically accidental nature of a patriarchy, in opposition to those who claim that patriarchy is biologically rooted. In addition, the argument tries to legitimate feminist goals by showing that they were once realized in an ancient woman-centered society. If patriarchy is a historical phenomenon, it can also be overcome by historical progress.

These assertions, however, are problematic. That a male Father God sanctified patriarchy is clear, but the corollary is not necessarily true: that the simple presence of female deities will guarantee a feminist social order. Patriarchy has existed, and continues to exist, even among peoples who worship female deities. That the Hebrew Bible makes a strong case against worship of the Goddess is uncontested, but the relation between Her suppression and the actual role of women in biblical society has not been clarified. Women's real power in the agricultural society of ancient Israel was, according to Carol Meyers's recent study, *Rediscovering Eve,* much greater than we can realize from biblical narratives. Finally, just as feminists have tried to reconstruct ancient female spirituality based on relics of Goddess figurines, the biblical texts have also been interpreted by feminists to show that Israelite women may have had their own spiritual traditions. Reading between the lines of the Hebrew Bible, feminists suggest that prophetic condemnations of Goddess worship are evidence for the persistence of Goddess worship by Israelite women. Future research might indicate the persistence of women's unique religious traditions throughout the

course of Jewish history.

What troubles me more, however, is when the argument extends beyond an affirmation of feminism to a historically unverifiable assertion that the Jews introduced patriarchy and violence into the world. In describing the contrast between ancient Goddess religion and what characterizes the religion of the Hebrew Bible, Gerda Lerner writes, "No matter how degraded and commodified the reproductive and sexual power of women was in real life, their essential equality could not be banished from thought and feeling as long as the goddesses lived and were believed to rule human life." With the advent of Israelite religion, she continues, a dramatic change takes place: "This new order under the all-powerful God proclaimed to Hebrews and to all those who took the Bible as their moral and religious guide that women cannot speak to God."

How do we respond to such arguments? Even a casual survey of the mythology of other cultures yields evidence for the early introduction of patriarchy in other parts of the world. Curiously, this comparison has been ignored. Beyond that, however, it is obvious that women do "speak to God" in the Hebrew Bible, and we can point to women leaders, such as Deborah, and prophets, such as Hulda. On the other hand, such apologetics are not a real answer. Biblical religion is clearly in the hands of men, beginning with the patriarchal accounts and continuing through the classical prophets, the priests, and the scribes. Yet the real issue at stake here is not the actual lives of Israelite women, but whether the Hebrew Bible (the Jews) can be held responsible for inventing patriarchy.

According to Elizabeth Gould Davis, when God accepted Abel's offering of meat, "the new male God was announcing his law: that thenceforth harmony among men and beasts was out, and killing and violence were in." Emphasizing the violence described in the Hebrew Bible has often been used throughout history to denigrate Judaism. At times, that violence is contrasted with the supposedly peaceful actions of Jesus reported in the Christian Scriptures. But the biblical reading is often distorted. The rape, murder, and other violence described in the Hebrew Bible is not intended prescriptively, but descriptively, as a picture of a social reality that Scripture as a whole discovers, seeks to understand, and condemns. And the Jesus of the gospels is hardly a peaceful fellow; what he doesn't like he overthrows (literally, when he enters the Temple) or curses (the fig tree).

An old anti-Jewish motif has characterized the God of the Hebrew Bible as a God of wrath, in contrast to the God of love of the Christian Scriptures. While early Christians rejected the distinction as heretical, it remained a strong motif throughout the history of Christian theology, and it emerges in feminist theology as well. From a Jewish perspective, though, the God of the Hebrew Bible is a God of passion who expresses love and anger out of a sense of caring for human beings. The Jewish God is not remote and impassible, but passionate and affected by human action. The view that the Hebrew Bible introduced violence into the world is as absurd as the accompanying claims by Christian theologians that Jesus introduced love. Ancient Near Eastern documents predating pentateuchal materials make it clear that war, violence, and patriarchy predated the Bible and coexisted with a pantheon of goddesses as well as gods.

For all their claims to be post-Christian, these feminists are setting forth a schema that seems to follow the traditional Christian model of the Fall: first there was an idyllic state in the Garden of Eden (worship of the Goddess), then a fall through human sin (rejection of the Goddess), and now a state of evil in which we await a future redemption (return to the Goddess). In the feminist schema it is not women who brought about the Fall, as in traditional Christian theology; it is the Jews. How ironic that the old anti-Semitic association of Judaism and deicide should resurface here in feminist writing. What is operating in these arguments is not historical evidence—because the Garden of Eden is a myth, not a historic reality—but a new theodicy that blames the Jews for the suffering of women and the existence of violence.

The distinction between a misogynist Old Testament and a feminist New Testament is expressed in non-theological feminist writings as well. Carolyn Heilbrun

and Catherine Stimpson describe two types of feminist literary theory, an "Old Testament" approach that "looks for the sins and errors of the past," and a "New Testament" approach that looks "for the grace of imagination ... the grace to see what, until this moment, the masculinization of society has prevented us from seeing." The Old Testament approach, in other words, is concerned with the misogyny expressed by the male literary tradition, while the New Testament approach explores where a feminist aesthetic might lead. Old Testament is male, New Testament is female.

Similarly, Carol Gilligan's research concerning gender difference concludes that in responding to moral dilemmas males are concerned with establishing universal rules and principles, while females are concerned with fostering close relationships. Her oppositional categories of analysis repeat a classic distinction of Christian theology: law versus gospel. Christianity traditionally viewed Judaism as a religion of law, and itself as a religion of love. That opposition is now continued by feminists, who imply an identification of maleness (and patriarchy) with Judaism and femaleness (and feminism) with Christianity.

A second motif of feminist anti-Judaism appears in the work of Christian feminists who proclaim that Christianity is the solution to feminism, and not just to the problems of Christian feminists. Patricia Wilson-Kaster, in her book, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ,* writes:

> The cosmic vision of feminism is not an illusory dream of naive individuals, but in its most thoroughgoing and radical form is the vision of the gospel, the promise made by God to the world through Jesus Christ. The struggles of feminism find their fullest context and their strongest promise of fulfillment in the risen Christ.

This is a curious argument: if Christ is the answer, why are Christian feminists so critical of him? Mary Daly has called the centrality of a male savior "christolatry," and argues that Christ's elevation reinforces the denigration and scapegoating of women.

Similarly, Barbara Brown Zikmund, in an essay from *The Christian Century,* identifies Easter with feminism because, she argues,

> the doctrine of the Trinity sets forth a radical ethic of justice and care very similar to the ethic that psychologists see within women's lives.... Women's experience invites us all to take the doctrine of the Trinity more seriously.

But if only Christianity can solve the problems of feminism, what happens to feminists who are Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and so forth?

Ultimately, such arguments are a cover for Christian supremacy, an old canard asserting that Christianity represents the sole and ultimate religious truth, thereby denying the legitimacy of religious pluralism and making its goal the conversion of all humankind. Among the world religions, Christianity has probably had the greatest difficulty with religious pluralism because of its claim that salvation comes exclusively through Jesus Christ. Recently, some Christian theologians have tried to develop a view that allows other claims to religious truths the right of theological legitimacy alongside Christianity. These feminists, unfortunately, have not joined that effort, but limit their concern to reconciling feminism with Christianity.

In trying to overcome the challenge of feminism, both Zikmund and Wilson-Kaster try to distinguish between a problematic male Jesus, who is a human figure, and a redemptive Christ, who by transcending earthly gender can be saved as a divine figure for feminists. Yet the distinction would seem implausible, and even heretical, since central to Christian teaching is the claim that Jesus Christ is both human *and* divine, and any denial of his human or divine nature is considered a heresy. Of course, that combination points back to the problem of Jesus' maleness, which is the central dilemma of Christian feminists. Far from having solved the problem of feminism and Christianity's male divinity, Zikmund and Wilson-Kaster have avoided it.

The third motif of anti-Judaism is unquestionably the most prevalent, not only among feminists but also among Christians eager to defend Christianity against the very need for feminism. This motif affirms Christianity through a negation of Judaism. It is a technique common to Christianity ever since Paul, and it is particularly dangerous because it assures Judaism a central role in Christian theology, but only when that role is negative.

The "negation" motif first became influential among feminists with the publication in 1971 of "Jesus Was a Feminist," an article by Leonard Swidler. While Jesus is not reported in the gospels to have claimed to be a feminist, his rather ordinary interactions with women can be made to seem remarkable if they are brought into comparison with a picture of a highly patriarchal, misogynist Jewish society in which he lived and preached. By painting a negative picture of first-century Palestinian Judaism, Swidler, as well as the others who followed his lead, could make a claim for Jesus' message of feminist liberation.

Swidler's argument has been employed both to denigrate and support the contemporary feminist movement. Sometimes it is used to prove that Christianity has

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The Genocidal Mentality

Robert Jay Lifton

Editor's Note: Robert Lifton's important work in exploring the psychological mechanisms that have allowed us to accommodate ourselves to the possibility of nuclear war led him to a similar investigation of the role that experts played in the Nazi machine. His Book The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing & the Psychology of Genocide *(Basic Books, 1986) explores some of these issues. The following piece, based on the talk Lifton gave in accepting an honorary doctorate conferred upon him by the Amerika-Institut der Universität München, raises an important perspective on how to think about the transformations in consciousness necessary to build a post-cold-war world.*

What I feel deeply in receiving this degree is the confirmation of an alliance with a special network of contemporary Germans. It is an alliance of shared ethical commitment—and yes, even of love. The commitment is toward confrontation of Nazi genocide on behalf of its victims—and for the sake of both the German future and the human future. That confrontation is not easy for anyone, least of all for Germans and for Jews, and we do well to make it together.

There are certain vignettes from my research on Nazi doctors that I will not easily forget. One of them is from an interview with a Jewish dentist who had miraculously survived three years in Auschwitz. We spoke in the sitting room of his attractive house overlooking the beautiful Haifa harbor. He told me a great deal about the behavior of Nazi doctors and about his own experiences, all of which was as painful to him as it was important for my work. At the end of our talk he looked about, sighed deeply, and said, "This world is not this world!"

What I believe he meant was that, however comfortable one's immediate surroundings, having known Auschwitz one knows that menace lurks underneath. I had encountered similar tones in Hiroshima years earlier when interviewing people subjected to the first use of an atomic bomb on a human population. They too could be sitting with me in an apparently comfortable setting and yet convey that sense of never-absent menace. For they carried within them special memories that went beyond even the extensive killing and maiming that occurs in conventional bombing—memories of one plane, one bomb, one city.

In this kind of work one must struggle to combine mind and heart. Somewhere in the intellectual history of the West there developed the wrongheaded idea that mind and heart are antagonists, that scholarship must be divested of emotion, that spiritual journeys must avoid intellectual concerns. In my view, quite the opposite is true. Who has ever heard of an outstanding piece of scholarship that was not infused with moral passion? Or of a powerful spiritual quest that did not include intellectual clarity? In my developing scholarly work, therefore, I have put forward a model or paradigm in which I speak of advocacy and detachment: sufficient detachment to bring to bear one's intellectual discipline on the subject, and sufficient moral passion to motivate and humanize the work. From that standpoint all psychological work is both a scientific and a moral enterprise, one whose vocabulary may have to include a concept of evil.

I want to pause a bit here on the subject of evil, and to suggest three different views of it that have to be taken into account. The first is the classical religious view, the notion of evil as a strictly moral state that is only to be judged and never probed in terms of causation. A second view carries that notion further and approaches evil as a visitation from without, from a dark, more-than-natural source—Satan or the Devil—whose extreme manifestations cannot be understood in human terms. But there is a third view, closer to my own, which sees evil as a specifically human trait—we do not consider horses or cats to be evil—which can be influenced by psychological and historical forces. Evil, that is, can be illuminated by probing and grasping those forces. One is then investigating psychological and historical conditions conducive to evil, while retaining the term and thereby holding to ethical judgments. I choose this secular approach, but recognize that the theological views remain important because they convey a sense of the demonic dimensions that are possible in the perpetration of evil.

Robert Jay Lifton's most recent book, The Genocidal Mentality: Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat *(with Eric Markusen), has just been published by Basic Books.*

Rolf Hochhuth, the admirable Austrian writer, raised these issues in his brilliant 1963 play, *The Deputy.* The play was a powerful indictment of Pope Pius XII for his failure to speak out against Nazi mass murder of Jews. The play's characters were actual historical figures depicted more or less realistically—except for one, a Mengele-like figure. Known only as "The Doctor," this character (according to Hochhuth) "has the stature of Absolute Evil" and so contrasts with "anything that has been learned about human beings" as to resemble "an uncanny visitant from another world." One must view him "as a figure of Satan in a Medieval morality play." During a talk I had with Hochhuth, he explained to me that he depicted his character in that way in order to suggest an extreme dimension of evil. I of course understood what he meant, but must also insist that Satan is a human creation, and that any perpetration of evil, no matter how spectacular, has something to do with the rest of us.

That principle was at issue in my embarking on a study of Nazi doctors. At the time a number of friends spoke to me of their uneasiness about my undertaking such painful work. They frequently used the phrase "strong stomach" for what they thought was needed—and hoped I had one. While they were expressing concern about a friend, some of them were also suggesting that extreme evil of that kind should not be touched, should be somehow walled off and kept absolutely separate from the rest of us. But the fact is that no such walling off is possible; that evil, however extreme, is part of human capability. And therein lies the justification—indeed the urgency—for this kind of work.

One friend, an Auschwitz survivor deeply concerned about the work, asked, in reference to the Nazi doctors doing what they did, "Were they beasts or human beings?" And when I answered that they were human beings and that was the problem, his reply was an interesting one: "But it is *demonic* that they were *not* demonic." What he meant was that it would be easier for us, psychologically and morally, if Nazi doctors had the mark of Cain on their foreheads, or if they were clearly insane, or belonged to some category that separated them absolutely from the rest of us. But actually they were very ordinary men; there was nothing unusual about them. Prior to arriving at Auschwitz they would not have been identified as either particularly good or particularly bad, and none had murdered anyone. One is reminded of Hannah Arendt's famous thesis about the banality of evil, but that thesis requires some modification. The men were indeed banal, but the evil they perpetrated was not; nor did the men themselves, over time, remain banal.

For instance, I was able to interview at some length the daughter of a man who had been a prominent Nazi doctor at Auschwitz and killed himself upon being taken into custody soon after the war's end. A middle-aged housewife when I met her, she was by no means an unsympathetic figure to me—groping to understand how her father, a kindly and conscientious physician whom she had loved and thought a decent man, could have been associated with the terrible things she came to learn that he and others did in Auschwitz. Toward the end of our interview she asked a question that was as simple as it was difficult to answer: "Can a good man do bad things?" The only reply I could think of was, "Yes, but he is then no longer a good man." When involved in evil, one changes.

What can we learn from Nazi doctors? Let me mention three principles that have enormous importance for our present world.

The first has to do with the power of a genocidal ideology. In the Nazi case, that genocidal ideology included killing in the name of healing and a pseudo-biological or "biomedical" worldview. Doctors were centrally involved in five terrible steps: coercive sterilization (of those considered to possess harmful genes); "euthanasia" (actually mass murder) of children designated as "life unworthy of life"; "euthanasia" or mass killing of adults (mostly mental patients); the extension to concentration camps of "euthanasia" or direct medical killing; and finally, the construction of death camps in Poland by transferring the killing centers of the "euthanasia" program from Germany, including both equipment and personnel.

There were key individual doctors, Nazi true believers, who took the lead in each of these steps. The Nazis combined terror with visionary idealism, and one must recognize that visionary idealism if one is to understand the power of the Nazi project for so many Germans. Indeed, it is impossible to kill great masses of people without the claim of virtue, of higher purpose. But most of the doctors I saw were by no means true believers; they embraced ideological fragments rather than the full ideology. They were especially drawn to the Nazi promise of individual and national revitalization, as were Germans in general. That response could combine with added bits and pieces of Nazi ideology, fervent nationalism, elements of anti-Semitism and authoritarianism, and corruptibility. An overall combination of that kind could be enough.

One must be constantly aware of the danger of potentially genocidal ideologies, particularly when they project a principle of sickness and cure that requires harming or destroying another group for the sake of the therapy of one's own. Here there is a parallel to the ideology I call nuclearism—the embrace of, and exaggerated dependency upon, weapons to the point of

near worship, a tendency that has long been rampant in the United States, the Soviet Union, and other countries that possess nuclear weapons. Nuclearism too is an ideology, embraced totally by some and in fragments by many more, an ideology that could propel groups and nations toward genocide, or what is now called omnicide—the destruction of everything.

A second major lesson from Nazi doctors has to do with the direct involvement of professionals, most of them ordinary professionals. I chose to study Nazi doctors because I came to recognize, from trial documents, their special importance for Nazi genocide; and also because I am a physician myself. But in another sense, Nazi doctors simply reflected the behavior of German professionals at that time. One must not speak of deprofessionalization in Nazi Germany, but rather of the professions becoming reconstituted so that medicine could become killing in the name of healing, law could become legitimation of that killing, and theology its spiritual justification.

A perceptive reviewer of my book on Nazi doctors asked when I might mount a study of what he called "nuclear doctors." I had in fact already embarked on precisely such a study. Whatever the enormous differences in the two historical situations, one cannot help being impressed by parallels in the role of professionals in nuclear-weapons projects, whether as physicists who design the weapons or strategists (mostly drawn from social science or physical science) who project their use.

A Nazi doctor went far in conveying the amoral capacity of professionals when he said to me, "Ethical . . . the word does not exist (in Auschwitz)." He went on to explain that the killing process became "purely a technical matter," with a focus always on what worked best. By means of that naked pragmatism and technicism, Nazi doctors sought to retain a sense of themselves as scientists and physicians. They could also try to hold onto that medical identity by means of professional discussions with prisoner physicians (who, unlike Nazi doctors, did engage in actual therapeutic work) and by means of their notorious "research" experiments on their literally captive population.

I did not make medical ethics the central concern of my study, but have been pleased to find the issues it raised taken up widely at medical centers in the United States. There has been considerable recognition that the very extremity of Nazi medical behavior can help illuminate some of our own more nuanced moral questions. My main focus has been on the mass killing, where professionals' involvement was made possible by an amoral focus on technical issues. And most professions have been even more negligent than medicine in articulating and maintaining individual ethical principles.

A third lesson to be learned from Nazi doctors has to do with psychological states that make possible genocidal projects. Here I would emphasize what can be called a dissociative field, which can include patterns I have described as psychic numbing and as doubling. Dissociation is a mechanism by which a portion of the self separates from the rest of the self, as described in detail early in the twentieth century by the great French psychiatrist Pierre Janet, and as taken up by Freud under the concept of splitting. Psychic numbing is a form of dissociation and consists of diminished capacity or inclination to feel. I first observed psychic numbing in Hiroshima survivors (where it had a useful purpose as a psychological defense), but came to recognize it as taking on even more importance in perpetrators or potential perpetrators. With psychic numbing and other forms of dissociation, there can be a radical separation of knowledge from feeling—perhaps the most malignant overall psychological tendency of our era—whether occurring in Nazi doctors, nuclear-weapons professionals, or other educated participants in lethal projects.

The mentally ill do relatively little harm to a society. It is the normal people who are dangerous.

Doubling consists of the formation of a part self that becomes functionally a whole self. A Nazi doctor could develop an "Auschwitz self," attuned to that environment, which enabled him not only to perform experiments but to supervise the entire killing process: from the selections at the ramp to the insertion of the gas to the determination that Jewish victims in the gas chamber were dead. Yet that same doctor could return to his home in Germany for a few days' leave and, by calling forth his prior, relatively more humane self, function as an ordinary husband and father.

The dissociative field, then, is likely to involve doubling within those closest to the center of killing projects, and psychic numbing in those at their periphery, so that in the case of the Nazis the numbing came to include much of the German population. There is a parallel dissociative field surrounding nuclear weapons: a form of doubling, in weapons scientists and strategists, less intense than that of Nazi doctors but highly significant nonetheless; and, in the general population, patterns of psychic numbing affecting groups that participate more indirectly in weapons projects. It is important to understand that the people involved in this dissociative field are in no way abnormal in a clinical

psychiatric sense. Indeed, the mentally ill do relatively little harm to a society. It is the normal people who are dangerous, as they take on patterns of numbing and doubling that enable them to sever connections between knowledge and feeling in pursuing potentially genocidal projects. But whatever the psychological mechanisms, the people involved are responsible for what they do.

We may summarize what we have learned from Nazi doctors, then, as a malignant constellation that includes: a genocidal ideology, which provides the rationale and motor for mass killing; the participation of professionals, who are needed for the intellectual, technical, and organizational requirements of the genocidal project; and the dissociative field, characterized mainly by doubling and psychic numbing, that enables people at all levels to join in murderous behavior uncharacteristic of their previous individual lives.

In discussing actual genocide, I have been talking mostly about Germans. We cannot forget that the Nazis were a German phenomenon, and that it was Germans who killed six million Jews and about as many in other groups. These groups included Gypsies, Poles, Russians, and other Slavs, as well as fellow Germans. The German victims were, for the most part, mental patients and others considered to be "life unworthy of life"—homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and those designated as political and religious opponents. That is why contemporary Germans have a special responsibility for confronting these actions, a responsibility that extends to universities like this one for confronting their own institutional behavior during the Nazi era.

Yet it must be understood that genocide is hardly a specific German trait. Just as any individual human being is capable of evil, so is any culture or state capable of genocide. We need only point to the all-too-frequent examples of genocide that have both preceded and followed the Nazi case. In that sense, Nazi genocide is part of human history, and there are partial parallels to it in other destructive events.

But saying that in no way justifies the recent revisionist trend among certain German historians, according to which Nazi genocide is nothing special, just another historical example of human cruelty—one mainly in response to Stalinism at that. Such a formulation embraces half-truths, distortions, and falsehoods in erasing the full dimensions of Nazi genocide and denying its unique features. We must clearly recognize the historical uniqueness of the attempt to round up every Jew from anywhere in the world for mass murder, and of the further impulse toward the mass murder of other peoples and the creation of what has been called a "genocidal universe." I would insist that we stress the special features of Nazi genocide while at the same time viewing it as part of history and seeking from it a grasp of those principles and patterns of behavior that can apply to other situations. From that perspective, what we learn from the Nazis can contribute greatly to combating potential genocide from any direction.

A genocidal mentality is not our only recourse. As human beings, as meaning-hungry creatures and inveterate symbolizers, we ourselves have created the meanings and symbolizations that take us along a genocidal path. We ourselves are equally capable of altering these meanings and symbolizations—of replacing a genocidal mentality with what I call a species mentality. All I have learned about Nazi doctors, about Hiroshima survivors, and about our present nuclear threat suggests the urgency of that alternative. And here there is a source of hope, however unlikely it may seem. These very genocidal possibilities—including our assaults on the earth's ecology—can prod the contemporary self toward a sense of shared fate. Each of us increasingly perceives that what is at issue is not Americans and Soviets, or West or East Germans, or Thais, Iranians, or Nigerians. What is at issue is the survival or demise of humankind. Each of us comes to feel, in significant degree, that his or her sense of self is bound up with every individual sense of self on the planet.

This more inclusive identity does not mean that one surrenders more immediate identifications; one cannot live on the species self alone. Speaking personally, I continue being an American, a Jew, a professor, a psychiatrist, a teacher, a writer, a husband, a father, an avid tennis player. But all of these aspects of myself—to the extent that I form a species self—are importantly subsumed by my sense of being a member of the human species. As that happens to any of us, we feel the pain, let us say, of a Jewish victim of anti-Semitism anywhere, but also of a Palestinian victim of Israeli harassment on the West Bank, of a South African Black treated cruelly simply because of being a Black, or of a Chinese student encountering official violence in his or her pursuit of democracy.

Many people throughout the world can already claim elements of such species consciousness, but it needs to be nurtured individually and collectively. Once more the professions are of great importance—this time in their potential for developing attitudes and behavior that enhance, rather than threaten, the human project. Here a simple image comes to mind: a scene from a film made during a visit by a group of American doctors to their counterparts in the Soviet Union, as part of the international physicians' antinuclear movement. The movement itself is species oriented, but that is not

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Notes Toward the Depreciation of Woody Allen

Jonathan Rosenbaum

"Why are the French so crazy about Jerry Lewis?" is a recurring question posed by film buffs in the U.S., but, sad to say, it is almost invariably asked rhetorically. When Dick Cavett tried it out several years ago on Jean-Luc Godard, one of Lewis's biggest defenders, it quickly became apparent that Cavett had no interest in hearing an answer, and he immediately changed the subject as soon as Godard began to provide one. Nevertheless it's a question worth posing seriously, along with a few related ones—even at the risk of courting disbelief and giving offense.

Why are American intellectuals so contemptuous of Jerry Lewis and so crazy about Woody Allen? Apart from such obvious differences as the fact that Allen cites Kierkegaard and Lewis doesn't, what is it that gives Allen such an exalted cultural status in this country, and Lewis virtually no cultural status at all? (Charlie Chaplin cited Schopenhauer in *Monsieur Verdoux,* but surely that isn't the reason why we continue to honor him.) If we agree that there's more to intellectual legitimacy than name-dropping, what is it in Allen's work as a comic Jewish writer-director-performer that earns him that legitimacy—a legitimacy that is denied to, among others, Elaine May and both Mel and Albert Brooks?

The issue isn't simply one of respect, but one of identification and outright infatuation. The implication is that a good many of Allen's fans view his comic persona in very much the same way that they like to view themselves. If movies in general owe much of their appeal to their capacity to function as Narcissus pools, offering glamorous and streamlined identification figures to authenticate our most treasured self-images, film comedy tends to heighten this tendency in physical terms, so that it would hardly be an exaggeration to state that how we respond to such figures as Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Harry Langdon, Harold Lloyd, Jacques Tati, Lewis, and Allen has something to do with how we feel about our own bodies.

As a comic writer, Allen is easily the equal of Robert Benchley, George S. Kaufman, and S. J. Perelman, and conceivably within hailing distance of James Thurber. As a performer, it is largely his lack of actorly presence—his badge of authenticity—that endears him to the world at large. His self-hatred and lack of physicality may make him an unlikely love object, yet nothing is more reassuring about his persona than the acute sense of failure that he brings to every activity, making every small victory, every flicker of warmth or hope into an inspirational triumph.

As a writer-performer-persona, he is probably as personal as it is possible for someone in his position to be. But as a director and filmmaker, even after nineteen features, he remains strangely unformed and unrealized—not a creator of forms or even a distinctive stylist who can exist independently of his models. This can be seen not only in his use of Sven Nykvist, Ingmar Bergman's cinematographer, on several of his pictures (usually to create a clinically antiseptic look that evokes Scandinavian seriousness), but also in the visible derivations of Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* in *Interiors, Smiles of a Summer Night* in *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy,* and *Wild Strawberries* in *Another Woman*; of Fellini's *8 1/2* in *Stardust Memories* and *Amarcord* in *Radio Days*; and of Fellini's episode in *Boccaccio '70* in Allen's episode (*Oedipus Wrecks*) in *New York Stories,* among other examples. Even in *Zelig,* one of his more original conceptions, the periodic statements by Jewish intellectuals playing themselves—Saul Bellow, Bruno Bettelheim, Irving Howe, Susan Sontag—are used in a way that makes them clearly indebted to the statements of the "witnesses" in Warren Beatty's *Reds,* which was released two years earlier. (The validation of *Zelig*'s fictional world offered by "real" intellectual celebrities, paralleled by the appearance of Marshall McLuhan in *Annie Hall,* is of course quite different from the dialectical function of the witnesses in *Reds,* who remain unidentified, but the appropriation of Beatty's technique is again characteristic.)

Most often these borrowings, when they're noticed, are rationalized in the press as "homages"; yet arguably they reveal the same sort of aesthetic immaturity that a beginning writer shows by imitating, say, Hemingway or Faulkner. Imitation can be a sincere form of flattery, and there's no doubting the sincerity of Allen's Bergman and Fellini worship. But beyond a certain point there's a question of whether this kind of emulation is

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being used as a tool for fresh discoveries or as an expedient substitute for such discoveries—a shield labeled "Art" that's intended to intimidate nonbelievers.

There's a world of difference between the *application* of film models by a Jean-Luc Godard or a Jacques Rivette, which offers critical insights into a particular film or director (such as the compressed references to *Monsieur Verdoux* and *Psycho* in Godard's *Weekend,* which point up the links made between murder and capitalism in both earlier films), and the simple transposition of a look or manner employed by Allen. Perhaps if Allen's cinematic frames of reference were wider—taking in, say, Carl Dreyer as well as Bergman, and Roberto Rossellini as well as Fellini—his appropriations might not seem so willful and automatic. One reason why Rivette's creative uses of Fritz Lang and Jean Renoir seem much more fruitful is that neither of these filmmakers is tied exclusively to a single country or culture. The styles of Bergman and Fellini, by contrast, are linked indigenously to the respective cultures of Sweden and Italy, so what point is there in transposing these styles to an exclusively New York milieu?

Yet Allen is often treated in the press as if he were even more important than the directors he copies. In 1982, when Michelangelo Antonioni's last feature, *Identification of a Woman,* had acquired an American distributor and was scheduled to be shown at the New York Film Festival, with most of the tickets already sold, Vincent Canby published a review of the film in the *New York Times* in which he suggested that Mr. Antonioni should study the films of Woody Allen so that he might make films that weren't so pretentious. A large portion of the tickets were returned to the box office, and the distributor dropped the film like a hot potato; to this day, it has never been released in the U.S. Ironically, four years later Allen hired the film's cinematographer, Carlo Di Palma—who had also shot Antonioni's *Red Desert* and *Blow-Up*—for *Hannah and Her Sisters* and wound up using him again on *Radio Days* and *September.*

In an illuminating book about film editing called *When the Shooting Stops ... the Cutting Begins,* Ralph Rosenblum describes in detail how he substantially reworked Allen's unformed and scattershot rough cuts on half a dozen early features—even successfully demanding that Allen shoot new endings to *Take the Money and Run, Bananas, Sleeper,* and *Love and Death,* and transforming a self-centered smorgasbord called *Anhedonia* ("the inability to experience pleasure") into a graceful romantic comedy called *Annie Hall.* While Rosenblum no longer edits Allen's pictures, perhaps as a consequence of writing this book, Thierry de Navacelle's more recent *Woody Allen on Location,* a diary of the shooting of *Radio Days* which includes in parallel columns the original script and the first "cutting continuity," amply shows that as recently as 1987 there was still a yawning abyss between Allen's conceptions and what wound up on the screen. Part of this appears to be a judicious pruning of compulsive morbidity: *Take the Money and Run* originally ended with the bloody annihilation of its hero, while *Radio Days* originally began with awkward radio coverage of the drowning of a Houdini type in an underwater stunt. But an equally important part of the problem seems to be that Allen usually starts with a literary conception rather than a filmic one. As he pointed out to Godard in a videotaped interview conducted in 1986, he regards the intertitles in *Hannah and Her Sisters* as a literary device (as words), while Godard uses them in his own films as a cinematic device (as shots).

Obviously there's nothing wrong with this in itself; the American literary cinema has few sustained talents to call its own, and there's no doubt Allen's talents as a writer enhance that cinema in certain respects. Nor can Allen really be blamed for the inordinate claims made for his movies by Canby and others; his own remarks about his pictures tend to be much more modest. One also respects his passion and seriousness in speaking out against colorization, and his refusal to let his only film in Cinemascope, *Manhattan,* be scaled down to the ratio of the TV screen by losing its left and right borders—something that neither Bernardo Bertolucci nor Steven Spielberg has been able to accomplish with the video and TV versions of *The Last Emperor* and *Empire of the Sun,* for example.

But one still needs to ask why Allen has been nominated and all but elected our foremost "artistic" filmmaker and the poet laureate of our collective uncertainties in so many circles, most of them upscale and middlebrow. What does he do for this audience that is deemed so essential and irreplaceable? To what extent is his stature a progressive factor in our film culture, and to what extent is it reactionary? How much does his status as an intellectual filmmaker represent genuine intellectual inquiry, and how much does it suggest something closer to the reverse—a representation of intellectuals for nonintellectuals and even anti-intellectuals that serves to satisfy curiosity about intellectual concerns without any sort of intellectual challenge?

Why are the French so crazy about Jerry Lewis? Well, for one thing, some of them see him as being very much like America: infantile, hysterical, uncontrolled, giddy, uninhibited, tacky, energetic, inarticulate, obnoxious, sentimental, overbearing, socially and sexually maladjusted, and all over the place. (By contrast, at least on the surface, Allen is adolescent, neurotic, controlled, whiny, inhibited, preppy, lethargic, articulate,

cynical, wormy, socially and sexually maladjusted, and confined.) It's not so much a matter of necessarily loving all these qualities as it is envying or admiring or identifying with some of them, and being horrified by others—a sort of compressed model of the love-hate that many French people feel toward America as a fantasy object. I suspect that what many French people experience as the overcultivated constraints of their culture finds a welcome release in Lewis's explosiveness and ungainliness, and their taste for freewheeling fantasy is partially met by Lewis's remoteness from realism—the sheer wildness of his ideas as a writer-director, and the deconstructive habits such as the vulgar modernism that he shares with Mel Brooks, which periodically reminds us in various self-referential ways that we're watching a film. (At one point in the mid-sixties, Godard described Lewis as "the only free man working in Hollywood.")

None of this, however, should be regarded as monolithic or exclusive regarding French tastes: the French also happen to be crazy about Woody Allen. But it's worth remarking that the French are less prone than we are to regard Allen as any sort of improvement on or substitute for European art-film directors. The essence of any taste is largely a matter of what it excludes as well as what it includes, and the ascendancy of Woody Allen as an art-film director in the U.S. coincides with a steady drop in interest in foreign-language art films. We can count on every Allen film being readily available in one form or another all over the U.S., but not every film by Bergman or Fellini (whose last feature, *Intervista,* has never been released here); in the cases of Antonioni, Godard, and Alain Resnais, *most* of their last several films remain unavailable in the U.S.

Allen is far from being the only comic director who thinks verbally more than visually; the same is true of Mel Brooks, and an overall orientation toward the word rather than the image may have something to do with the nature of Judaism as an oral culture. When someone in Brooks's *History of the World, Part I* remarks, "The streets are crawling with soldiers," one knows in advance that Brooks will have to follow this with a nonsequitur visual equivalent—giving the word and voice primacy, literally making it flesh by spelling it out in rebus form. "Death was greeted with a certain amount of awe," intones narrator Orson Welles near the start of the same film, and everyone standing around in the perfunctory, instantly forgettable shot who isn't supposed to be a corpse goes "Awwwww—." Saying as well as spraying it, chewing and spewing words until they overspill and start to fill in some of the cracks left by the illustrative images, Brooks's characters and their shticks go much farther into literalism than Allen's do, to the degree that they often make consecutive, coherent narratives impossible, adhering to the more free-form structures of stand-up routines. (For the record, Allen's uncharacteristic first feature in 1966, *What's Up, Tiger Lily?,* was as wild and deconstructive as anything by Brooks or Lewis.)

Why are American intellectuals so contemptuous of Jerry Lewis and so crazy about Woody Allen?

Allen, on the other hand, depends mainly on stories with naturalistic underpinnings; whatever the stylistic varnish given to any particular film, the form more often than not is relatively conventional (which helps to account for what makes his movies relatively accessible). But Allen's heroes remain fundamentally stand-up personalities, and what is most often funny about them is their wisecracks. This tendency is tied, in any case, to the increasing formal problem in Allen's work of integrating his comic, actorly persona with his more serious aspirations as a narrative filmmaker. His last several comic films have proposed different solutions for injecting Woody into a plot: incorporating him into mock newsreels (and uncharacteristically depriving him of a voice) in *Zelig,* bringing him back as a sympathetic romantic hero in *Broadway Danny Rose* and as a Kafkaesque hero in *Oedipus Wrecks* (in *New York Stories*), using Mia Farrow as a partial Woody substitute in both *The Purple Rose of Cairo* and *Radio Days,* using Dianne Wiest as a female Woody in *Hannah and Her Sisters* and *Radio Days,* and isolating him like a bacteria in the parallel plots of both *Hannah and Her Sisters* and *Crimes and Misdemeanors.*

A better sense of how Allen handles these problems of language and persona can be deduced by comparing his strategies with those of Chaplin, Tati, and Lewis. For Chaplin, speech brings about a transformation of the Tramp at the end of *The Great Dictator,* and then his elimination from all the subsequent films. Tati's Monsieur Hulot, initially designed to appear only in *Mr. Hulot's Holiday,* is furnished with a wealthy sister and nephew in *Mon Oncle,* multiplied and universalized by various look-alikes (to prove that we are all potential Hulots) in *Playtime,* brought back in desperation as the central hero of *Traffic* after the commercial disaster of the former film, and finally abandoned with relief in *Parade.* In all these films, speech is overheard more than heard, and sound is generally used to complement and punctuate (rather than illustrate) the images. Lewis in his own films—while doing little to alter his character (apart from adjusting to the effects of

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Israel Must Choose

Teddy Kollek

Recently Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir stated that the expected great immigration from Russia necessitated a greater Israel. As it happens, I agree with his statement—except that my greater Israel is not measured in additional square kilometers but rather in content and in spirit. We shall indeed need greatness, for this prospective immigration will demand sacrifice, understanding, and determination. The exodus of the Jews from Russia is truly a modern-day miracle, but miracles do not happen to people not prepared to accept and to use them.

While we did not entirely write off Russian Jewry, we never expected that more than a trickle would be able and anxious to leave. If this Russian immigration does indeed occur in the magnitude now anticipated, its absorption will be a tremendous task. Many will help us to succeed, but only we shall bear the responsibility for success or failure. A successful absorption of the Russian immigration could change the future of Israel; and yet no housing is ready, no employment, no schools, no adequate medical care. If we do not make this our exclusive effort, we shall fail. And this opportunity will never return.

The investment in human and material resources needed for the absorption of these immigrants is so vast that I maintain it is impossible at the same time to continue the effort to occupy the West Bank and Gaza. The goal of Zionism, and in fact one of the objectives for which the State of Israel was founded, was to guarantee a home and a refuge for any Jew who needs and wants to be here. This is our essential obligation. It takes precedence over any goal or aim, real or imagined, concerning the territories.

While I feel deep apprehension at the idea of a Palestinian state, I am convinced that ruling over a million and a half Palestinians is even more dangerous, and therefore I am definitely against holding on to occupied territory. In order to ensure our security we must look for alternatives.

Beside my moral objections to governing a million and a half Arabs, my objection is pragmatic: it just does not work. Israel cannot succeed in absorbing the new immigrants without both calming the situation and receiving aid from outside sources. We will not succeed if we insist on holding on to every inch of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza; if we concentrate forces and resources there; and if by doing so we cut ourselves off from those who would help us in absorbing the immigrants. There is no question that the order of the day is to relinquish the "territories," set the necessary security arrangements, and negotiate on this basis.

No analogy is perfect, but for several centuries there was a Christian-Maronite enclave in Lebanon, small but strong and self-contained. The French conceived the notion of a Greater Lebanon which would include Sunni and Shiite Moslems and Druze and which would give the Maronites a privileged position. The Maronites were unable to permanently rule a growing majority, and after fifty years the country was torn apart. Why can't we learn? The example is so close by.

Now more than ever I can appreciate David Ben-Gurion's clear statement, in June 1967, that while the bond of our heritage to Jerusalem would make a redivision of the city unthinkable, almost everything else should be returned quickly. Ben-Gurion was surely a patriot, but not of today's kind. He was a realist and a humanist as well; his greatness as a statesman was that he could judge what was possible and what wasn't.

Today we find ourselves in an entirely different situation, created in part by the euphoria of the Six Day War victory. With all the complexities of our political situation, the question of Jerusalem has the greatest resonance. It is a city in which 25 to 30 percent of the population are Moslem or Christian, and they will remain here forever. No impractical or immoral ideas of pushing them out should even be considered. Both we and the Arabs will have to get used to living together in a united Jerusalem, capital of Israel.

Israel tried to achieve the impossible and neglected the possible. To ensure a "greater" Israel, what is important is not settling the West Bank, but developing Jerusalem, the Negev, and the Galilee. Settling the Russian Jews in the occupied territories is neither relevant nor practical if the territories are to be relinquished. On the other hand, to strengthen Jerusalem as the

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capital of Israel, we must enable a considerable number of Russian immigrants to make their home here by creating housing and employment.

In Jerusalem we have also made mistakes, partially because of the lack of governmental support in improving relations with the Arabs. I do not think that if everything possible had been done for the Arab community their nationalism would have disappeared. It has not disappeared anywhere in the world. The Arab community in Jerusalem cannot be bought by more and better roads. But we could have avoided some of the feelings of economic discrimination which have only added to the feelings of national discrimination. We are talking about a slow, long-term evolution, and the most important question is whether we are on the right road, going in the right direction.

If it would bring about relative peace and tranquility to our city, it would be to our advantage to declare our readiness to allow Jerusalem's Arabs to vote in the West Bank elections. Let us put them to the test: if their moderation—and ours—is true, we would be able to achieve an understanding; if not, we shall be better placed to seek other interlocutors. Any other decision will damage our position in the peace process.

A successful absorption of the Russian immigration could change the future of Israel.

I can only add my fear that other considerations will remain paramount, that no one will have the courage to take on this challenge, that we shall lose out on one of our historic opportunities and at the same time move not one step closer to peace. I shall of course be overjoyed to be proven wrong. □

How Right-Wing Are the Sephardim?

Yossi Yonah

The continuous political stalemate in Israel concerning the peace process is widely attributed to a deep cultural division between Ashkenazic and Oriental Jews (Sephardim). Ashkenazic Jews are generally perceived as moderate and eager to reach a reconciliation with the Palestinians, while Oriental Jews are portrayed as bellicose and hostile toward Arabs, and thus one of the main obstacles to the cause of peace. Unfortunately, this portrayal of Oriental Jews, which is reflected within academic discourse, in the Israeli and world press, and in segments of Israeli society at large, indicates a misunderstanding about the relations between Oriental Jews and the Arab world.

Advocates of this portrayal cite the Oriental Jews' historical experience and cultural background as the reason for this militancy, and they maintain that repeated persecutions throughout the Arab world over the centuries instilled in the Oriental Jews a deep resentment and distrust of Arabs. These attitudes notwithstanding, they also argue that the Oriental Jews' long sojourn in the Arab world has left its cultural impression on them: Oriental Jews acquired values and customs that carry the hallmark of Arab "fanaticism" and "intolerance." Hence the steady growth of the Oriental Jews' electoral power in Israel is seen as a threat to peace in the Middle East.

How can we counter the overwhelming support for these perceptions? How else can we explain Oriental Jews' seeming predisposition toward the Right and away from the Left?

An adequate answer to these questions requires an understanding of Oriental Jews' quest for identity and assimilation in Israeli society.

Oriental Jews seeking acceptance in Israeli society encounter a rigid hierarchy of official ideologies, values, and, of course, prejudices. Arab culture and values are held in disdain, and the lingering conflict has contributed to a hardening of this attitude. The Jewish state was perceived by the founding generation (mostly Ashkenazic Jews) to be a modern oasis in the midst of a cultural desert—and this view has permeated Israeli society. Naturally, Ashkenazic attitudes toward Oriental Jews mirror Ashkenazic attitudes toward Arab culture in general; Ashkenazis believe that those Jews who have been living for centuries among Arabs must have adopted some or even most of the antiquated, backward, and primitive values and customs of their native culture. These attitudes shaped the patronizing ideology that has prevailed since the time of the mass immigration of Oriental Jews in the early 1950s: that an effort should be directed at transforming Oriental Jews—the "human dust," as they were once referred to by Ben-Gurion—into citizens of a modern state.

Aware of the contempt with which their culture and values were generally viewed by the Israeli establishment, Oriental Jews came to perceive their affinity with Arabs and Arab culture as a liability that prevented them from assimilating into Israeli society. The adoption of anti-Arab views by Oriental Jews is largely intended to minimize their affinity to Arabs. This strategy is of course not conscious, but it requires a certain consistency in the perceptions of Arabs. Oriental Jews gained this consistency through a reinterpretation of past experience in the Arab world: Arab hostility is highlighted and Arab tolerance toward Oriental Jews is belittled.

A good example of this phenomenon is a recent three-part TV program telling the story of the Jews of Iraq from the turn of the century up to the mass immigration to Israel in 1951 and 1952. The central theme of the program was the suffering of Iraqi Jews which culminated in their salvation by Israel. Their cultural achievement and the relationship they had with the Arab population received but a cursory treatment. It was as though the director—who was of Iraqi origin—had labored mightily to squeeze the story of the Iraqi Jews into the patterns of an Ashkenazic history of pogroms and persecution. The pogrom of the year 1941 in Baghdad was presented as if it was just another chapter chronicling the atrocities of Nazi Germany. This was effected by interspersing scenes from Baghdad with scenes from Nazi concentration camps. Was this yet another desperate attempt to assimilate into Israeli society, to share in the common destiny, to take part even in the Holocaust?

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Since Oriental Jews' reinterpretation of past experience in the Arab world is partially fictitious, it's not firmly held. Evidence for the more complex experience of Oriental Jews in the Arab world infiltrates the conscious reinterpretation. On some occasions, when our parents' reminiscing is not filtered by ideological and political constraints, I, like other Israeli-born Oriental Jews, hear different stories—stories about friendship, affection, and amicable neighbor-relations. My mother often told me about her sister who was raised by an Arab couple who did not have children of their own. My mother is also fond of telling the story about her grandfather who was held in high esteem by Arabs of his community. She emphasizes, proudly, that people used to call him "Sheik Suliman." He was, she adds, a man who served as an arbiter in many disputes that took place among Arabs and Jews alike.

I am not citing these examples in order to idealize the past; nor do I wish to restore it. I do not want to live in Iraq, and I am not even sure that I would want to live in the Golden Age in Spain. Let us remember, the Jews in that historical epoch, in spite of their material prosperity and rich spiritual life, were not equal citizens. (Jews held *dhimmi* status, reserved for non-Moslem indigenous populations under Islamic rule. This status became the formal expression of legalized discrimination in economic, social, and political life.) I do, however, want to draw attention to the fact that the situation of Jews in Arab lands was not thoroughly bleak, and that the prospect for coexistence is not utopian.

Oriental Jews have not been remarkably successful in their quest for assimilation and self-identity. The socioeconomic gap favoring Ashkenazic Jews still exists. Comprising over half the Jewish population of Israel, Oriental Jews make up only 17 percent of the students in higher-education institutions. The top 20 percent of wage earners gross close to 50 percent of the Israeli national income: Oriental Jews comprise only one-tenth of this upper-income bracket. By contrast, the lowest 20 percent of wage earners gross 1 percent of the national income: Ashkenazic Jews comprise one-tenth of *this* income bracket. Worse yet, there are signs that the gap favoring Ashkenazic Jews will become even wider in the near future.

The tilt to the right that has characterized the Oriental voters since the mid-seventies must be understood in light of this socioeconomic reality. The so-called radicalization amongst Oriental Jews reflects a protest against Ashkenazic culture and economic hegemony. This explanation gains some credence when we consider the following facts: despite the reinterpretation of their past experience in the Arab world, the hostility of Oriental Jews toward Arabs has never been translated into support of extreme hard-line policies. We should realize that since the late sixties the Likud party has not espoused the most militant policies toward the Arabs. The most extreme party, Kach (headed by Meir Kahane)—which advocates the expulsion of Arabs from Israel and the West Bank, and which calls for anti-Arab legislation—received only one seat in the parliament in the elections of 1984. But more interesting is the analysis of the vote that went to the bellicose, anti-Arab Tehiya party (the largest party to the right of the Likud). This party drew only 36 percent of its support from Oriental Jews, the rest of their support coming from Ashkenazim.

Oriental Jews are alienated by the messenger rather than by the message of peace.

Early analysis of the 1988 election data indicates that the Likud lost some of its Oriental support while it gained some Ashkenazic voters. As Abraham Diskin, a renowned Hebrew University professor of communication, writes in a recent issue of *Electoral Studies*: "[T]he Likud became less Sephardi than it was previously." The Oriental votes that the Likud lost, however, did not go back to Labor, but to Shas—an ultra-Orthodox Oriental party—which is by no means committed to the political agenda of the Right. The leaders of this party have repeatedly expressed their position, which favors territorial compromise with the Palestinians in return for peace.

A few months ago Rabbi Ovadia Yoseph, Shas's spiritual leader and a man of national standing among Oriental Jews, told President Mubarak of Egypt that territorial compromise is consistent with Jewish law. He reiterated this view when justifying the abstention of Shas in the recent no-confidence vote, thus causing the fall of the Shamir government. (This was the first time in the history of the state that a government had lost a no-confidence motion.) In Yoseph's words, "Shamir's refusal to consider territorial compromise makes the prospect of war inevitable." Rabbi Yoseph vowed that Shas would lend its support only to a government committed to advancing the Baker initiative.

To be sure, the spirit of moderation is hardly sweeping through the Oriental leadership. The most prominent Oriental leader in the coalition government—David Levy, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Construction, who is of Moroccan origin—represents the extremist faction in the Likud today. He is a patron of the settlers in the occupied territories and

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PERSONAL ESSAY

Seeking Home

Dorien Ross

You are beginning to succumb to the New York pressure to look a certain way in order to feel a certain way. You are no closer to understanding the mystery of style than you were in high school. You remember a recent conversation with your longtime admired older friend Judith. You cannot deny that one of the reasons you admire Judith is the way she looks. At fifty years old she looks younger than you: slender, groomed, and elegant. She tells you the following story:

It seems that Calvin Klein sent spies to Ralph Lauren in an attempt to discover the secret of his ongoing and remarkable success. He discovers the secret: these clothes simulate the British idea of *home*. Calvin Klein now seeks some idea of what American home-style would look like. Not an easy task. But he decides on pioneer-mission style.

This, it seems, is what people are seeking. Seeking home.

You are writing this in an attempt to master your obsession, but understanding has not halted the sense of danger. You know you are in trouble because this is the second morning you have awakened with a list of clothes in your mind that feel crucial to your survival and sense of well-being on the street.

The List:

1. sweater: $450
2. pants: $90
3. long coat: $500
4. one good dress: . . . $200

You are actually considering spending over $1,000 on clothes. But what's money when we are talking well-being, security, belonging, and home? Spend $5,000 if that's what it will bring you!

Last night's meeting with Susan Hammerstein, a hot literary agent, was warm but disheartening. She basically told you that your writing is beautiful, literary, forceful, but totally unmarketable. Very personal writing she says.

You realize walking home that you are a stylistic outsider. There is too much of you showing through. The clothing list comes to mind. It is relentless. One good dress. One sweater. One long coat. Just like that one across from you on the bus. That's the one. Where did you get it? Pardon me, Miss, where did you get your coat? Bloomingdale's two years ago. And on sale. How fortunate. How smart of you. And your hair, if I may ask? Where was it cut? That's just the way I've always wanted mine to look. The side part just so. The way it falls over the shoulder.

You refrain from asking. Because you would not know where to stop. The next woman getting on the bus has just the right shoes. And the next, the scarf. What about that necklace?

You are relieved to finally get off the bus and walk rapidly, looking at no store windows, to your basement apartment. You close the door behind you and you try to stop the imagery. You light candles. You make tea. You put on Mozart. The list begins to fade.

You know this person.
This subterranean self.
Desperate and helpless.
She's been with you a long time.

Later that night a nasty habit returns. In your sleep you walk to the kitchen, take a loaf of bread and bring it back into bed. You begin to stuff handfuls—ripped off—into your mouth. This finally wakes you up. You know this person. This subterranean self. Desperate and helpless. She's been with you a long time. Since your teenage years. She knows nothing of style.

Your brother had style. Your mother also. But alas, you were born without style. You are convinced of this. Last night, before the bread escapade, you actually stood in front of the mirror and held your nose turned up, to see what you would have looked like with the nose job you were destined to have but staunchly refused.

This was a motion that occurred often in your adolescence. Your mother standing behind you in the mirror holding your nose up. First the front view. Then the profile. "Slightly turned up and the bump out. . . ."

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You didn't buy it. You were insulted. Outraged. It hadn't occurred to you until then that there was anything essentially wrong with your face.

Your uncle was one of the "big two" plastic surgeons on Long Island and you know you heard over and over that we could get a wholesale job. Your grandparents offered to foot the bill and send you to Europe as a reward. Now you understand that they were desperate for you not to look Jewish. They had a hatred for the Semitic face. They brought that hatred over from the old country. From the pine forests of Lithuania.

Uncle Saul Golden will do it wholesale. Everyone in your family except your father and your brother; every cousin, uncle, and aunt had the same nose. Saul Golden's vision of the all-American nose. All over Long Island, in the five towns, this nose appears in markets, synagogues, streets, PTA meetings. Exactly the same. All of them.

You were frightened of Uncle Saul. Not only did he once stick his tongue in your twelve-year-old mouth. In addition, each time you went to that house, that mansion built with old-world nose-money, he would show you a picture book of nose-choices. You remember the album. Large and glossy pictures of miserable-looking Semitic faces on one side, with the redone versions on the other. He would turn the pages and look at you lustfully.

The other day on the phone, your father made an astonishing joke. He was describing a very ugly person whom a close friend of his married. What was so ugly? you asked, always fascinated by this distinction. Just that really ugly kind of Jewish face, he said. The kind you can't look at. The kind they had posters of in Germany. The kind with the word *Juden* written underneath. Both of you laughed. □

Assembly-Line Publishing

Ben H. Bagdikian

Writers' complaints against their publishers are notorious and endless, possibly beginning five hundred years ago with Pope Nicholas and Gutenberg. Traditionally the arguments pit bitter authors suspicious of venality and incomprehensible royalty statements against publishers who see authors as egomaniacs living in an economic dreamworld. No gathering of writers is immune to a competition over which author present has the most horrific accusation against his publisher. But in the last twenty-five years of American book publishing, something more profound has entered the discussion about writers and publishers of books.

Books have always provided a refuge for unofficial or unconventional ideas, analyses, and literature. But today they are increasingly joined in the ideological and economic constrictions that have made other major American media—newspapers, magazines, and television—the most sterile and establishmentarian in the Western world. Ironically, our media are now more establishmentarian than those of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

This conservative trend in book publishing arises from encapsulating that industry in the same economic and corporate culture that has put the whole American economy at risk. Like national economic policies, the establishmentarian bias has been pursued because it favors those with power to the disadvantage of the rest of society, including smaller enterprises. Promoted by conservative ideologues, this bias leads to corporate giantism and illiberality. The traditional big houses of the publishing world are now dominated by some of the same multinational corporations that also control other media. The new corporate owners typically cut back the size and diversity of book lists in their major imprints, not only out of greed but through some acts of monumental arrogance and stupidity about publishing.

Large-scale publishing merger-and-acquisition deals often include smaller, distinguished imprints that have been traditional sources of critical and original ideas and literature. These smaller imprints suddenly find themselves in the multinational mix because they happened to be in the big package of a merger, or because they had a quality reputation in the field—useful either to the corporate ego or as momentary literary decoration to a ruthless deal. Sometimes these imprints make moderate profits. The new owners invariably intone a public relations ritual consisting of utterances so uniform that one suspects there is a Book of Common Preyer in the vaults of every bank and investment house that finances publishing mergers and takeovers: "The new corporation reveres the great tradition of its new purchase and wishes only to bring greater resources and more efficient management to this proud establishment." After the initial publicity, many of the imprints can be quietly converted to more conventional commercial publication or starved into the grave.

The giant firms have done the same thing with newspapers and major magazines, most of whose contents are created today with advertisers rather than readers in mind. Both commercial and public television avoid public affairs discussions that stray from a spectrum ranging from the establishmentarian center to the right wing. In fact, since World War II, and with accelerating speed in the Reagan years, anything that departs from official or corporate values has been marginalized in the mass media so that American political and public intellectual discourse has become progressively detached from domestic and international realities.

Historically, book publishing has always had its purely technical output and a large portion of books that are talentless and derivative or crassly commercial. But the same industry has always held a special status in the life of democratic countries, because this medium had a special obligation to maintain a place for ideas, literatures, and social analyses that were unacceptable in the other mass media. Its dispensation had a social utility because these more serious and original books have helped society to recognize injustices and failures, to deepen insights and perceptions with which to respond to a changing world.

All this is changing rapidly. Because the same large corporations also own other major media—magazines, television stations and networks, record companies, movie studios, and videocassette distributors—the selection of books is influenced by external factors. Can a given book manuscript also be converted into a screenplay that will make a movie with a sound track that will

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feature a vocalist who will be highlighted in the corporation's magazines? Will it work as a television series, a recording, or a videocassette? Books that are written merely as books—especially books of analysis, protest, ideas, and original literature—are not the kind that usually end up as movies, TV sitcoms, or crime series, or that lead to hit recordings by singers publicized on the covers of national magazines owned by the same parent firm.

Nonliterary commercial exploitation of books is not new. The corporate owners have merely intensified what has always existed in the business, imitating whatever genre is making money at the time—cookbooks and other how-to books, or, preferably, blockbusters. But they have turned the mass-market ethos into basic corporate policy and practice while driving everything else out of business.

With some exceptions, blockbusters are seldom of lasting value, though they sell in the millions, have endless subsidiary rights here and abroad, and often make a great deal of money with that highly desirable quality of the mass merchandiser—a single, repeatable item issued in a different package such as a movie, TV series, recording, toy, T-shirt, and so on. To support these megaprojects, firms have shifted their money and their editors away from the so-called midrange books—books that sell moderately well, make a moderate profit, and deal with social ideas and new literature. (Original and creative books are not necessarily destined to be charity cases. Many of the quality houses—such as the independent Farrar, Straus & Giroux, or imprints like Alfred A. Knopf of Random House and Summit Books of Simon & Schuster—make a profit.) This midrange often sponsors the publication of new authors, some of whom, in time, become famous and write best-sellers.

The drive for big, fast profits also means bidding for authors who have a track record for producing blockbusters. Knowing this, those authors and their agents force the big firms to bid against each other. Out of these high-powered, executive-level bidding wars has come that curious phenomenon: the greedy publisher who pays millions of dollars for a manuscript not yet written. This produces a touching accusation by publishers that authors who accept these offers are unconscionably greedy.

In addition to shrinking the proportion of midrange books in their main operation, the big corporations have acquired some smaller subsidiaries that have published unusual books by well-known serious authors, and which, with careful nurturing, regularly developed other authors who became best-sellers for the big house. Some of these small houses had been part of former parent firms that carried them at small profits or small losses, but did so because they brought in new authors and ideas that over the years developed into best-sellers for the major machinery of the parent firm. Or they had such worldwide respect and standing that they tended to make the parent firm seem less like a godless corporation and would therefore attract profitable, respectable authors.

A word about these small "quality" houses that may or may not have made a profit under their older management. They often made quite satisfactory profits for their former owners who liked books and were less interested in some ultimate Wall Street coup. Sometimes the small imprimatur lost money; but for a conglomerate with many other operations making high profit margins, a loss leader can be useful to reduce taxes. The small house could be maintained at virtually no cost as a unit for developing future profitable authors. These smaller imprints are to the big house what a baseball farm team is to a major-league club, or a research and development lab to a high-tech manufacturer. It is not unknown that in order to offset taxes, the parent firm often employs creative bookkeeping to charge the smaller imprint extreme "administrative" and other arbitrary costs. This is one reason why publishing houses rarely disclose their real numbers on a subsidiary or imprint that they shrink or kill.

In early 1990 the ritual of the small quality house was played out with Pantheon, a subunit of Random House, owned by S. I. Newhouse. André Schiffrin, the respected editor, was dismissed, it appears, because he refused to cut Pantheon's trade list from about 110 books a year to 40, with proportionate reductions in

staff. These cuts clearly signaled the end of Pantheon as it was known in the past. Founded in 1942 by refugees from Nazi Germany, Pantheon had been a quintessential example of a small imprint that published original and serious books—often by significant authors such as Studs Terkel, George Kennan, Barbara Ehrenreich, Noam Chomsky, and Ariel Dorfman.

Books that are written merely as books—especially books of analysis, protest, ideas, and original literature—are not the kind that usually end up as movies, TV sitcoms, or crime series, or that lead to hit recordings.

In the public controversy that followed, between bitter editors and authors on one side and corporate leaders on the other, there was an exchange that I found poignant. Studs Terkel was reported as saying from the picket line: "I'm here to protest the 'bottom line' which has become the most obscene expression in the American vocabulary." To which Albert Vitale, chairman of Random House, was reported as replying, "Just look at what happened to the countries that considered 'bottom line' the most obscene expression in their vocabulary."

It was clear that Mr. Vitale referred to the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries that are tossing out Communist Party–centralized control of their economy (and of speech and publishing) in favor of something else—an economic "something else" that conservatives have been prematurely celebrating as laissez-faire capitalism.

But in the lingo of Wall Street and economic arguments, the term "bottom line" obscures more than it informs. What Terkel may have been referring to is the economic culture of the United States for the last thirty years, which measures every enterprise on the basis of fast, maximum cash profit for those in control. United States corporations take out the highest profit margins among major industrial democracies but are last in reinvestment into long-range development. Along with a huge, sloppy, and noncompetitive defense industry, this explains why American industrial firms are at such a disadvantage in world trade. The same "bottom line" mentality is killing the long-term strength of most American big business.

Mr. Vitale's defense of the "bottom line" is poignant. The corporate buyers of book publishing houses—the self-appointed experts on the "bottom line"—have performed some notoriously dumb moves that have weakened book publishing.

Three examples:

In the 1960s the major electronic firms entered the textbook publishing business wholesale. This included IBM, ITT, Litton, RCA, CBS, Raytheon, Xerox, General Electric, Westinghouse, and GTE. Their idea was that the country's schools would quickly convert wholesale to computers in teaching. By being both manufacturers of the hardware and, through their new textbook houses, controllers of software, they would be sitting pretty. (This also meant, of course, that some of the biggest corporations in the United States would control much or most of what American schoolchildren learned.) They flopped. They did not bother to learn the nature of educational systems or the human learning process—or much about book publishing. Now, twenty-five years later, computers are slowly becoming adjuncts to printed textbooks. Most of the electronic companies abandoned the business, leaving behind many once-healthy houses now weakened by hopeless corporate bureaucracy.

A second period of unintelligent operation by new corporate owners occurred several years later. Their idea was to imitate the makers of foods, cosmetics, automobiles, and other mass consumption products controlled by oligopolies—to look at a product's track record and then concentrate advertising, sales, and promotion to boost the few books that sell and build brand loyalty. Some houses actually instructed their editors to publish only best-sellers, ignoring the response that unfortunately these are not predictable. Many began putting editors on an annually audited basis—a new editor had to meet a profit quota on the books he or she edited for the year, with no excuses for bringing along new authors who might write best-sellers a few years hence. That began the revolving door of editors and their book houses.

There was even a bizarre proposal that since brand loyalty, via TV ads, worked with supermarket cereals and detergents, it needed to be developed in the book business by downplaying the names of authors on book jackets and ads, and emphasizing the name of the publishing house. The new "bottom line" experts discovered that the only brand loyalty is to authors, and no one buys books on the basis of the name of the publishing house.

And then came the present phase of "bottom-line expertise"—the epidemic of leveraged buyouts of corporations using the firm's own assets to take on overwhelming debt. Major financial institutions and manipulators made billions, but they left target corporations crippled with debt. Parent firms of many of the still-

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"The Sieve" and Remarks Toward a Jewish Poetry

Allen Grossman

Allen Grossman's poem and remarks—originally presented at a Boston University conference on Jewish poetry—make a powerful case for a Jewish poetry based not on the ethnic identity of the poet, but on a biblical conception of divinity that is itself beyond representation. Deeply rooted in Jewish experience, this approach to poetry has, according to Grossman, yet to find its place in the Western literary tradition.

The Sieve

Once more I hear the voices of the women
Like desert waterfalls long after rain
Still going on among the flowers and the seeds
Of flowers and hear the voices of the men
Shouting in astonishment far down the valleys
Where the same waters enter into stones and hang
Between the skin and the strangled heart of stone
Until night freezes the dew and the heart
Breaks free, and hear also (or overhear) the voices
Of the dead and the unborn, that mingle where the same
Waters of the rain on inland mountains far away
Flow to the salt sea, pronounce to one another
In my name of time and the world to come.

Companionable voices! I hear you now:

Every tribe has its music. But there is music
That wanders seeking its tribe:—that hangs
Like dust for blazing centuries over a strait place,
Preoccupied with rainless winds, awaiting
Impatiently lost caravans of somnambulant traders
In salt and gold;—that utters Irenic Law
To the angels of the Nations in their killing clothes
(Each Nation has an angel with dead eyes)
Deafened by their prophets and singers of songs;
—That writes far out on the disturbed *altum* of Ocean
Faint poems of the male spirit floating in air
Through whose penis spindrift music flows
Like semen on the way to human form. Thus
We are sent on errands, known and unknown,
Possible or impossible, as the music finds us.
It is as the soul is, or the mind, in pain
That labors to be acquainted (if it can)
With the barbarous discourse of a mortal brain ...

O come and see an uninstructed spirit,
New to the instrument, practicing to be
A woman or a man who builds like a lofty song
The one great thing imagined by us impossible:
An intricate, silk pavilion (let us say)
Open to the sky beside the sea, a Dome
Of the recollected soul, rigged with mysterious knots
Beneath the heavy wheel and rain-
Mill of the sexual hurricane, to be its capitol;
Or else it is an elaborate, sheltering house
Exalted stone on stone above an uninhabitable
Promontory of the main skeptic thought,
Wherein there wanders, like a walking music through the rooms,
The suave singers of the lost story of love—

as in my dream
A solitary worker, a methodical dim slave—toiling upon
A fraying reef, or narrow purgatorial dike of sand
Extended from horizon to horizon, wearing away
North and South between two seas, one black and horrible,
The other light—carries without ceasing day or night
Dark water of the Eastern ocean and pours it from
A greased sieve into the bright bay.

Mothers of Death!
To see what the mind sees dazzles the material eye.
And the whole
Body is an Orphic explanation by a most eloquent spirit
Failing to be clear, who thus talks on and on until
Out of breath—
As one might say, "These are the faeces of an ancient soul"
(Pointing to the ground). But as for *me,* what shall I think?
—One thought comes to mind,

a great question,

and is lost;
And then another—also a great question—and is lost,
Appearing and disappearing out of the sad loops and errors
Of their wandering like human-headed birds. Vainly they
Call
Whom no man answers, and pass in disappointment away. But in
The shadow of their absence brightens like a monstrous gauge
The profane music
Of the Millennium. —The poet affronts the scarcity of fame

And names the age.

I do not wish to ask or answer the question, "What is Jewish poetry?" The poetry of a nation or a world is whatever comes to pass in its domain in the name of poetry; it can neither succeed nor fail. But let us suppose for a moment instead, as a "mind experiment," that there never has been any Jewish poetry. In the same way one might suppose (and in my view should) that there never has been any poetry at all—of any kind.

Then—in the quiet that ensues—let us ask (remembering that for this moment it is a Jewish poet who is also asking, searching his nature), "What should Jewish poetry be?" After all, "Every tribe has its music." And poetry (the music of the tribe) appears as a vocation, a calling from the "above" and the "outside" to a singular destiny in language. Consider, then, that the Jews are a God-bearing people. Surely their God is the great, inalienable, and determining collective construction which they have contributed to the history of civilization. What, then, is the God-bearing, the theophoric poetry, which is their destiny? What is its nature, and what is the *prospective* importance of such a poetry to the world? Even if such a poetry does not actually exist, the *idea* of poetry in any case pertains profoundly to its nature.

Please understand that it is in no sense my intention to divert admiration and love from the "Jewish poetry" of the past or the present. Rather, I want to say that in the nuclear age all poetry must change its characteristics (in this sense there is good reason to suppose, for a moment, that there has never yet been *any* poetry) and that the Jewish world-construction—specifically, the Jews' knowledge of their God and that God's culture of sanctity—possesses a regulative power, in proportion to God's radical abstraction and priority, not inscribed elsewhere in the world's inventories of cultural terms. Insofar as the Jew has kept the Torah, he has kept it also for this.

I shall begin, therefore, by indicating something about the relationship of two categories of our discourse, the *fictive* (to which poetry as representation belongs) and the *sacred.*

Everyone remembers how at the beginning of the Greek (and therefore the Western) *literary* system Hesiod—a shepherd on Mt. Helicon—met the poetic voice in the form of a gang of girls descending toward him as he climbed up from the hard place, Ascra, where he was born. All cultural systems begin with a first calling from above, and the Hesiodic instance is the originary scene of gentile poetry, inscribed by and inscribing the first named poet of the West. The calling by the muses produces in Hesiod a singer who restates the structure of power in the human world by *re-producing* things as they are in a form of words, and by marking that reproduction (or representation) with the signature and authority of Mnemosyne, mother of the muses. Things and persons reproduced in this manner become part of cultural memory. They die and are reborn as signs.

We also remember (we are reminded by Torah at Genesis 12) that Abraham, too, was called and that the calling of Abraham was the inaugural moment of the biblical narrative. This call marked the beginning not of the fictive, but of the sacred system of texts—the culture of holiness in which things as they are die to be reborn not as signs, but as facts, members indeed of that class of facts of which God is also a member.

The calling of Abraham by the divinity of the Old Testament who is not memory but Presence—such is the originary moment of the Western *theological* system—restates the structure of the world by reversing the processes of reproduction (in the narrative, often, literally usurping them); it intends thereby to withdraw the world into its source in divinity—not into appearance (the fictive, mimetic, imaginative, or poetic) but into the sacred (which has no representational correlative and no existence but Presence as such, which is its own term and explanation). In *fiction* the reference of words is called into question, raised up but only halfway up, making room for a plurality of texts, demanding the speculative difference of poetry and also philosophy. In *holiness*—in the domain of sanctity—all reference is rotated and abolished (the disappearance, as we shall see, of Isaac) so that the holy thing becomes a member of that class of things of which, as I have said, divinity in itself is a member.

Poetry in the usage of Western languages may sometimes be called divine or sacred; but for the Jew *there is always a sense* (a profound understanding beneath all other understandings) *that the category of the sacred and the category of the poetic repel one another*—because the poetic defers the sacred (as representation defers the unrepresentability of God) which is nonetheless the destination of all things. It is this *sense* and its prospective civilizational productivity that I wish very briefly to indicate. My remarks are *speculative* in that I assume a constrained, a morally obligatory, relationship between the *theological* understanding of the world that the Jewish people keep (the keeping of which founded their existence as a people) and their *cultural* practice. The remarks are speculative also in that I wish to project a commission for Jewish poetry of a kind which may never have existed.

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A recurrent name in the Bible and Jewish tradition for the locus of history (more precisely, the site of opposition to history) is Moriah—where Moses encountered the burning bush, where the Temple was built and destroyed, where, typologically, transpired the respective agons of Adam and Christ. This was history's threshing floor bought by David from Arauna, the Jebusite, as an altar for sacrifice, which became our Jerusalem. The rabbis unpacked its name (Moriah) variously as "the teaching place," "the place of fear," "the place of myrrh," "the place where God sees." It is also the place whither God commanded Abraham to go (the second calling of Abraham, exegetical of the first) in order to sacrifice his son. I will refer to the meaning of Moriah as the place of the Akedah (the binding of Isaac), the site of history, and the sign of the culture of holiness which it has been the commission of the Jews to keep.

But first I wish to say that to the question "Why a *Jewish* poem?" the Jew must reply, "Because the Jewish people, like all other peoples, requires *a place to be* (a teaching place, a place of myrrh, a place where God sees), and the Jew's place is the word. But the Jew's word (as I wish you for a moment to consider it) is hard, not like the split word of the gentile nations who know the little word of the muse (the word half-raised up, split into signifier and signified), or who know the little word of the muse as fiction *and* the big word of the god or God. The Jew's word, strictly speaking, is One (holy, sacred, *kadosh*) and is unlike all other words in that it does not signify by difference but rather serves the Master who is difference—which is to say, existence itself. Hence, the Jew's one word, the Jew's poem of which I write, does not "create," for that would be redundant, but repeats the one word that is. In the (biblical) culture according to which the father of "all who handle the harp and organ" is in the genealogy of Cain, the universe by reason of its existence can have only one monologic rationality. For example, the midrashim which refer to the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.E. attest that *Adonai designed* the intention of Nebuchadnezzar to destroy what Solomon built; and even the letters of the alphabet (capable of an infinity of alternative combinations), when summoned to testify to the reason of that event, are mute.

History repeats a single figure, first inscribed in the Creation itself (the first devastation—the utterance by a perfect being of an imperfect world) and thereafter in successive expulsions, forcible removals, ravagings. Thus, Jewish poetry *cannot* be native, autochthonous. The project of "Jewish poetry" repels the founding of its discourse, its place for the people, in the incommutable earth of the national language, for "the earth is the Lord's." The Jew's word is the name of the nation; but the nation is not, as among the gentiles who speak of "American Poetry" or "Greek poetry," the name of the word. Thus, neither the term "Jewish poetry" nor the practice of whatever the term indicates can be symmetrical with the imaginative and local poetries of the "nations."

The gentile poet is called by language in all the openness—the questioning such as it is—of its relation to the world. The Jewish poet (the Jew's *great* poet whom I wish speculatively to summon to mind) is called monologically by Presence itself. The correlative figure in traditional Jewish narrative to the gentile muse (daughter of Memory) is the Shekhina whose name is *dwelling*—the dwelling of the name in the world: the Jew's place to be.

In 1950 Schlomo Spiegel, professor of medieval literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary, published a twelfth-century Hebrew poem, a *piyyut* or liturgical poem, by R. Ephraim of Bonn on the slaughter of Isaac and his "resurrection." A midrash on the text of Genesis 22, or "the binding of Isaac" on Moriah, the poem contains twenty-eight quatrains, the fourth line of each of which is a quotation from the Bible. It comes to a climax in the five stanzas that follow:

Then did the father and the son embrace.
Mercy and truth met and kissed one another.
O my father, fill your mouth with praise
For He doth bless the sacrifice.

I long to open my mouth to recite the grace
Forever blessed be the Lord Amen.
Gather my ashes, bring them to the city
Unto the tent, to Sarah.

He made haste, he pinned him down with his knees.
He made his two arms strong.
With steady hands he slaughtered him according to the rite.
Full right was the slaughter.

Down upon him fell the resurrecting dew, and he revived.
The father seized him to slaughter him once again.
Scripture bear witness! Well grounded is the fact:
And the Lord called to Abraham, even a second time from heaven.

The ministering angels cried out terrified
Even animal victims were they ever slaughtered twice?
Instantly they made their outcry heard on high.
Lo, Ariels cried out above the earth.

(Translated by Judah Goldin.)

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Imagining Hasidism

Peter Eli Gordon

Hasidism fascinates American Jews. In any bookshop display of New Age exotica, at least a full shelf is devoted to books on topics such as Hasidism and the supernatural, Hasidism and Zen, meditation and Jewish mysticism, Kabbala and astrology, and of course the works of Martin Buber, Elie Wiesel, and other popularizers of the Hasidic tradition. Not surprisingly, the Hasidism described in these works only remotely resembles the historical reality of European Hasidism. Likewise it has little to do with the Orthodox Hasidic communities that flourish in Crown Heights and in Israel, or with the Chabad movement which has become so popular on university campuses and elsewhere. In fact, since its inception as a movement a little more than two hundred years ago, Hasidism has undergone a peculiar series of revisions and reinterpretations. Jews standing outside Hasidic life have often "imagined" Hasidism. They have derided it or romanticized it, but they have rarely understood it.

In the twentieth century some of the most assimilated and educated European Jews turned to Hasidism as an alternative to their impoverished Jewish identity; but what they embraced was a romanticized version of Hasidism, remarkably different from the original eighteenth-century movement. This *neo*-Hasidism emerged not as a rupture within the Hasidic community, but as a development within the Enlightenment tradition of secular Jewish intellectuals.

The trouble with imagining Hasidism, then, lies here: revisionist thinkers such as Buber and Wiesel saw Hasidism as an antidote to the dry assimilationism of the nineteenth-century Enlightenment; but neo-Hasidism extends (however critically) the tradition of that Enlightenment. In their attempt to address the cultural homogenization of the Enlightenment and recover a more vital Judaism, today's adherents of neo-Hasidism may unwittingly be letting themselves drift still farther from the original sparks of Hasidism that made it a powerful form of Jewish religious community.

* * *

Hasidism, and Jewish mysticism generally, form the seductive underbelly of Judaism, what Gershom Scholem called its demonic aspect. Like the mysterious visitor in I. B. Singer's *The Gentleman from Cracow,* Hasidism promises a kind of release.

One of the most well-known legends of the Baal Shem Tov tells of his frequent escapes to the woods. There, alone and surrounded by the quiet of the trees, the young man would pray. As Buber put it: "Israel [ben Eliezer, the Baal Shem Tov] studied diligently enough, but always only for a few days running. Then he played truant and they found him somewhere in the woods and alone."

This is a unique moment in Jewish legend: the Jew embraces nature and neglects the text. For a people so deracinated, so urban, and so ferociously concerned with the printed word, the Hasid immersed in the forest is an image disarmingly pastoral. It fills one with longing, with a desire for reunification with nature. Communion with nature is a theme generally lacking from diaspora history, and it occupies a minor place in Jewish texts. Buber's Hasidism is one place where Jews can find that connection. Still, what Hasidism promises from the natural world is unclear. In fact, its relationship to everything carnal and concrete is ambiguous.

Hasidic philosophy inherited from Lurianic Kabbala the idea that the natural world contains scattered hidden sparks of divine minutiae. The Jew's role is to gain access to the sparks within the material world. Buber interpreted this process as a celebration of the everyday, a "sacralization of the concrete." Gershom Scholem, however, pointed out that this confrontation with the natural world does not celebrate it. The point of engaging nature is to rescue from it the sparks that are imprisoned there. Hasidism, therefore, does not "sacralize the material world" as Buber said. Rather, Hasidism negates the concrete and annihilates the everyday to get at the particles of God trapped within it.

Scholem's point was that Buber had imagined in Hasidism a romantic attachment to nature where Hasidism actually compelled an idealist relation to nature. The Hasid in the forest is a highly misleading image: he is there to get at something which is not there. Or perhaps it would be more fair to say he is in the woods only to retrieve something that might tarnish if it is left too long. Either way, it is a tricky pastoral that abhors nature.

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Buber's invented pastoral does, though, betray an authentic need. His version of Hasidism is compelling because it describes a reality that contrasts dramatically with our own. The dryadic picture of the Baal Shem Tov praying among the trees is an image that can provide solace, or guidance.

But the central reason that neo-Hasidism attracts American Jews is that it satisfies a profound assimilatory impulse by mimicking Christianity. Gershom Scholem dubbed Hasidism the "Christianization" of Judaism. By this he meant that Hasidism displaces and devalues Halakha. But revisionist Hasidism does more than that. It reiterates Christian claims against official Judaism. Like Christianity, Hasidism derides Orthodox Judaism for its ostensibly overwrought legalism, which is pursued at the expense of spiritual and communal values. What was a limited attack on a historically specific condition of rabbinic elitism easily overflows its boundaries to become a caricature of Judaism as such. Generalized in this manner, Hasidism becomes a vehicle for Jewish self-hatred; it offers the occasion for a specifically Jewish affirmation of the old Christian line that Judaism is legalistic and heartless.

If neo-Hasidism is a Christianization of Judaism, in more general terms it is also a Judaism that has struck a bad bargain with modernity. The half-assimilated Jew for whom ritual and law seem meaningless requires a form of Jewish spirituality that sits well with the Enlightenment. The notion of tribal religion, however, offends the Enlightenment ideal of universality. Europe didn't conceive of emancipation as a corporate matter; each Jew would be granted citizenship as an individual and was expected to obey the fictitious division of church and state by severing all ties with collective Jewry. Beards would be shaven, and the shuls and courts would close. Judaism would become an entirely private matter; eventually, it was hoped, it would vanish altogether.

Neo-Hasidism in some sense fulfills this goal. It rejects outward, communal religiosity, but retains for each individual a sense of inward spirituality, emulating a Christian culture that proudly declares itself "universal," a culture in which visible signs of difference are an offense. Gershom Scholem calls this an "interiorized" Judaism. Halakhic observance, the hallmark of Jewish difference, is cast off.

What is ironic in this contemporary revision is that historical Hasidism rarely, if ever, sanctioned the violation of Halakha. It may have questioned the primacy of law in Jewish life—certainly the Hasidim argued that the Law was only a means to God, not an end in itself. But the Hasidim did not—and do not—ever suggest that the laws of the Torah should be ignored. It was only in Martin Buber's reworking of Hasidism that Halakha was sloughed off. Non-halakhic Hasidism is a peculiarly Enlightenment fabrication, a spirituality synthesized in accordance with modern requirements.

The notion of an individualized Hasidism is also a fairly recent invention. Historically, Hasidism was a thoroughly communal movement. This was perhaps less a product of the Hasids' philosophical system than a result of community organization among impoverished Jews in Eastern Europe, where the Hasidim provided charity and havens from starvation, anti-Semitism, and homelessness.

Martin Buber's revision of Hasidism, on the other hand, emphasizes existential loneliness. In his most celebrated work of religious philosophy, *I and Thou,* Buber distinguishes between two modes of human interaction, the I-Thou and the I-It. In the I-Thou mode, two people confront each other as ends and not as means. Each participant acknowledges the God in the other. In the I-It mode, by contrast, each person conceives of the other as only a means to some individualistic end. It is an indication of Buber's profound pessimism and isolation that he believed the I-Thou moments few and far between. The I-Thou moment was described as exhausting and ephemeral; I-It selfishness was the common state of affairs.

Buber's reworking of Hasidism followed this model of human interaction. His reinterpretation of Hasidic philosophy was based on the existential notion that we are all fundamentally alone, that we experience the world as a thing apart from us and can come into spiritual union with it for only a short time. Buber constructed his Hasidism with the materials of the Enlightenment—and the concepts available were those of bourgeois humanism. Following the economic model, Buber assumed that human beings were atomized social actors, discrete Kantian wills with internal guidance systems that ensured propriety and reasonable conduct. Neo-Hasidism incorporates these individualistic concepts. Though it seems an exotic and suprarational antidote, it is in fact consistent with—and a complement to—an alienated society.

While neo-Hasidism inspires, the power of its inspiration signals the shrinkage of Jewish identity. It offers what seems an alternative to enervated spirituality, and teaches, in Buber's words, "a life of fervor, of exalted joy"—and it is undeniably an inspiring model of that life in a society where such vision is rare. But neo-Hasidism can also mislead. What Hasidism meant for the dispossessed Jews of Eastern Europe is not what neo-Hasidism means for us. Rather than revitalizing our Jewishness, romanticized neo-Hasidism pushes toward an increasingly impoverished Judaism, toward a faith of fragments and misperceptions.

In this way neo-Hasidism runs a parallel course with New Age movements. Jewish mysticism in the Middle Ages had its share in numerology, astrology, and tarot; any common divination deck sports a Hebrew letter (referring to the ten emanations of God, or *sefirot,* that comprise the kabbalistic symbology). But the specific New Age sensibility is recent. Elie Wiesel's books *Souls on Fire* and *Somewhere a Master* betray that strange mixture of allegory and hagiography typical of neo-Hasidism. Wiesel's retelling of Hasidic stories elevate the Hasidic rabbis, accentuate drama above ethics. Where traditional Judaism and its modern developments distribute Agadot (legends) in the service of a halakhic system (ethics), Wiesel's books are typical of the neo-Hasidic cult of personality. The brooding Nachman of Bratslav is no longer a teacher; instead, he becomes an idol, a golden calf.

A chief indication of the New Age recasting of Hasidic material is an eclecticism, a blending of materials from various traditions that divorces symbols from content. New Age movements tend to emphasize myths and rites that are believed marginal; traditions central to the Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—are shunned. This preoccupation with marginality for the sake of the exotic explains the New Age fascination with Celtic myths and Native American shamanism. It also sheds light on the New Age emphasis on Sufism, which is perceived as an esoteric yet still somehow accessible aspect of Islam. In all of these cases, a complex, living faith is reduced to its most anticollective and commodified form. This is Orientalism as lifestyle.

The New Age preoccupation with neo-Hasidism works in much the same way: traditional Judaism is still perceived as either too different or too restrictive, but neo-Hasidism operates as a culturally denatured Judaism, a Judaism which can be gracefully amalgamated with anything else. Traditional Jewish mysticism was upheld as a secret of the few, and its practices were guarded as the most dangerous and complex practices of the faith. The huge popularity of books that divulge Jewish mystical "secrets" indicates an odd but ingenious twist: what ensures the fascination potential of New Age Hasidism is the way it postures as occult, hidden knowledge even while it holds a mass following.

As the ostensibly esoteric becomes a mass commodity, its political meaning shifts. Neo-Hasidism, like most aspects of New Age religiosity, demands little of its adherents. It is largely a belief system of inspirational allegories and sermons, though its message is almost entirely privatistic. It is a politically and ethically eviscerated Judaism, the sort of popular psycho-spiritualism which stresses the "interior" over the social, and individual comfort over community action.

Masquerading as an expression of spiritual sincerity, neo-Hasidism is really a desperate attempt to find a shortcut to a higher realm.

In short, masquerading as an expression of spiritual sincerity, neo-Hasidism is really—as Theodor Adorno characterized astrology—a desperate attempt to find a shortcut to a higher realm. Indeed, many come to neo-Hasidism today with the sense that there they will find the truly communal sensibility that Moses Hess applauded, an emotionally inflamed and spiritually alive Judaism.

Despite its turning away from the social understanding that characterized its eighteenth-century precursor, neo-Hasidism does offer guidance of a kind. At a time when Jewish identity appears to be foundering, perhaps the simple fact that many American Jews find neo-Hasidism so inspiring should be enough to compel us to guard it jealously from collapse. Neo-Hasidism promises reawakened spiritualism and pastoral richness where many Jews, already well-assimilated, find nothing in Judaism but a desiccated medievalism. But neo-Hasidic spiritualism is a dangerous game. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, enlightened Jews shunned Hasidism as they retreated from Jewish identity; to embrace neo-Hasidism today may signal a similar retreat. □

FICTION

Every Hunter Wants to Know

Mikhail Iossel

In 1968, when I was thirteen and unhappy, I wrote a story that could have won the prestigious inter-high school literary contest, "Leningrad Teenage Creative Spring." It was called "Kavgolovo" and was about a six-year-old's first journey into the woods on a mushroom hunt. Our literature teacher had always insisted that writing should be based on personal experience rather than on the power of imagination, and she judged and graded us in accordance with what she perceived as the honesty of our recollections; "Kavgolovo" was an autobiographical story. The reason it didn't win was that shortly before the deadline I changed my mind and submitted another story, called "A Fiery Engine," instead. It dealt with a six-year-old's growing up in Leningrad, his dreamlike childhood memories, his quiet, precocious fascination with the world of words (books!), and an episode of his getting lost—and nearly killed—in an exultant crowd celebrating Yuri Gagarin's space flight, marching down Leningrad's main street chanting "We're Number One!" and "We've Made It!" Yuri Gagarin was the first man ever to orbit the Earth.

I remember the two stories sitting on the table in front of me. I felt good. By going almost as far back as I could, I seemed to have begun to grapple with the infinite number of my vastly unaccounted-for early childhood memories. I also remember being in doubt. "A Fiery Engine" was less autobiographical than "Kavgolovo," but I hoped that our literature teacher would find it more authentic. She knew my family: it was Jewish. Jewish people usually stay away from the woods.

There are exceptions, of course. One of my grandmothers had always been different. Both she and her older brother, a prominent theoretician in the cellulose industry who drowned swimming in a small northern river in 1968, had always felt ill at ease, out of place in the city. Strong, broad-shouldered, rugged, they were inveterate mushroom gatherers. Neither of them spent much time reading like the rest of our family. Just about the only book I remember my grandmother reading in Kavgolovo (a village near Leningrad) was *The Mushroom-Gatherer's Guide.* Published in 1940, it was full of multicolored pictures. I remember looking at them, wondering if a real mushroom looked even half as good. That was a long time ago, in 1961.

The words "mushroom gatherer" (*gribnik*) and "guide, fellow traveler" (*sputnik*) were pitted against one another in deep red on the blackish cover of my grandmother's book: *Gribnik's Sputnik.* They sounded alike, toylike. I couldn't help but associate them with our Soviet Sputnik Number One, that bright, speedy red-hot dot in the sky of 1957, when I was two years old. It could be seen with the naked eye every night that October. I remember staring at the sky. I was standing on the kitchen windowsill, my plump feet clasped tightly by two old women from our ten-family communal apartment. I strained my vision in a futile attempt to glimpse the pulsing Sputnik in the sky. Everyone else could see it. "Can't you see it? It's right there!" the old women were saying, their heads shaking with old age and wonderment. They were almost blind. Everyone else was either in the kitchen or in the courtyard five stories below. Our family was in the kitchen, but not my *gribnik*-grandmother: it was early October and the woods around Leningrad were still teeming with late mushrooms. Everyone was cheering and laughing. One of the hands squeezing my foot was ugly, covered with furry moles: six moles in all. There were slow, ghoulish balloons soaring and floating in the sky. Two jars with blackberry preserves sat on the windowsill to the left of my feet. Strings of dried mushrooms dangled an inch above my head. "Can't you see it?" the old women kept saying. "It's right up there, on archangel Gabriel's wing!" They laughed, delighted. "Don't confuse the boy!" my mother said from the darkness behind. The women giggled. The cheering crowd down below was invisible. People were screaming; they were stomping their feet, pushing, shoving, squeezing, hugging each other. The air was thick with brotherly love. That couldn't have been long before a curly-tailed husky, the dog named Laika (or was it Belka, or Strelka? I don't remember; one of them was Number One) was shot into space. She never returned. I was probably three years old and learning how to read. I remember her pug-nosed profile on a soft white and blue pocket-size pack of cheap cigarettes; her name was printed on it in black

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angular letters, but I couldn't read it. I remember wishing that it was I who was dead instead of that dog. I envied her fame. She was dead, but famous. The importance that people then attached to one's having done something first—coming in first, dying first, being called "first" first—seemed to have deeply impressed me. It was like a deep thirst, this national quest for greatness.

In the summer of the year when smiling Yuri Gagarin was the first man to orbit the Earth I was six and lived in Kavgolovo, twenty miles from Leningrad. The grandmother-*gribnik* never traveled far away from Leningrad and couldn't stand suburban resorts like Kratovo, a quiet town near Moscow that I don't remember—but I know that we rented a summer house there too, twice, and that's where I was. In Kratovo, my other grandmother would babysit me. I remember her well. As a matter of fact, I didn't forget my two summers spent in Kratovo, near Moscow, either.

There's a difference between the woods around Moscow and those around Leningrad. The former are less rugged and more sadly joyous, like Chekhov. Waking up near Moscow, first thing in the morning I would see the green wave of leaves casting uneven shadows on the bedsheets—tiny, neatly carved birch leaves trembling outside the open window, dripping with fresh green daybreak. Kavgolovo mornings, on the other hand, began with a long branchful of fir needles sharp against the blue sky and standing solemn like the guards at Lenin's tomb in the Red Square. The moment I woke up I would forget the dream that I'd just had, but it might repeat the following night, and then I would recall it—and forget it again. I had a habit of screaming in my sleep—even if the dream had been good—or, rather, rousing myself with a thin scream early in the morning. Everyone in the house would wake up too, shake their heads, and go back to sleep. The doctor had been consulted. He told my mother that there was nothing wrong with me: unconscious screaming seemed to be my way of coping with growing up. "Sounds fancy," the *gribnik*-grandmother's brother said disapprovingly. No other six-year-old that I knew was that high-strung.

People lived in every room of the Kavgolovo house: an old woman who owned it, my mother, my grandmother, her older brother, my toddler brother, and Grandmother's brother's two adult sons, my cousins. My father came down from Leningrad every Sunday (Saturday was still a working day). My other grandmother and my grandfather, her husband, had visited with us on several brief occasions. They lived in Moscow. The owner of the house had a grandson. He was old enough to be my father and lived in the house, too. The house was full of people. And yet, it was surprisingly silent. Of all the people who were there that summer, I most clearly remember myself.

It was the end of August, days before what is called in Russian "Womenfolk's Summer," or "the Aging Woman's Summer"—Indian summer; autumn. Grandmother and her brother had been waiting for the rain. They kept looking at the sky, but it was as blue as ever. Then, one morning, the rain began, a sudden shower, full of sun; it continued through the afternoon. It was a "mushroom rain": golden threads ran smoothly along the sunbeams, sweet lymph flowing through transparent vessels. A good omen. Russian tradition would expect you to begin dancing barefoot in such a rain. I was sitting in the room I shared with Grandmother, looking out the window at the owner of the house's barking dog, Zhuk, who was four years younger than me. I was six. I knew, of course, that everyone was expecting me to rush out into the yard, so I decided to stay inside.

Of all the people who were there that summer, I most clearly remember myself.

"Don't sit in there, come outside!" Grandmother beckoned to me from the yard. She was looking up, smiling. I shook my head, but she wasn't looking at me. The dog kept barking. My mother put aside the magazine she was reading, left the porch, and cautiously stepped into the rain. She laughed.

Grandmother's brother, chuckling, walked outside, stretching and yawning, pretending that he had business to attend to in the yard. My cousins were playing with the dog. The owner of the house brought out two empty buckets to be filled with rainwater. Soon everyone was outside in the rain, looking uncertain and self-conscious, and acting as though they didn't care. The rain became stronger. It was still benevolently sun-streaked. "Where is he?" my mother asked. Then she saw me in the window and smiled. Grandmother said to her brother and to his sons: "Tomorrow? What do you think?" They thought and said: "Sure."

"Take him with you," my mother said.

Everyone looked at me. "If he promises not to get lost," Grandmother said.

"Don't scare the boy!" said my mother.

"If he doesn't step on an old German mine and get blown up!" my cousins added, laughing.

"If he doesn't get scared and start screaming and ruin everything," Grandmother's brother said.

"I'm never scared!" I shouted back.

"Well, then, get a good night's sleep," Grandmother told me. Everyone nodded. I thought ... but I don't remember what I thought. Then I thought: "How can

one *not* get a good night's sleep?" It was pleasant to feel smug. I imagined the secret growing of quiet, giant, slippery mushrooms deep in the woods, under wet layers of old pine needles.

It was still early—too early to start thinking about night. There were many long days in each day. The day between dinner and supper was a day. Evening was a day, too. Grandmother would usually send me to bed after supper.

That Kavgolovo afternoon, 1961, there was a sharp smell of damp hay in the air. Thick light, the color of warm tree sap, poured into the room. The rain dragged on; the yard was now empty. No one could see my face in the window. The air in the room was brown, yellow. I was reading and writing. My room was cozy and austere, like a chronicler's cell: a chair and a table, an open window. Nestor (d.o.b. unknown—died c. 1115), a Russian monk who reputedly wrote the *Chronicles of Nestor,* must have seen the same serene pre-sunset landscape from his monastery window: docile hills and green grass, smooth under the rain. I had read about him—and seen his picture: long sad nose, a black cassock, a skullcap—in the *Abridged Soviet Encyclopedia* published in 1954. Its three black volumes now sat on the table in front of me, along with the notebook with my name written in angular block letters on the cover and a king-size, lemonade-stained book, *Masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance,* an incomplete collection of black-and-white reproductions. I had the first volume of the encyclopedia opened to the letter "A". With my father's fountain pen, I entered into the notebook the dates of birth and death of the most prominent people. The fame of each was reflected by the size of the corresponding picture—or its absence. All of them had been involved in the sphere of the creative spirit and had exhibited progressive tendencies in their art. They were revolutionary writers, philosophers, innovative and unorthodox thinkers—the immortals, like Abai Kunanbayev (1845–1904), prominent Kazakh storyteller (*akyn*) and educator, ardent proponent of closer ties between Kazakhstan and Russia; or Khachatur Abovyan (1805–1848), Armenian revolutionary pedagogue and writer; or Martin Andersen-Nekso (b. 1869; still alive as of 1954), a writer of the Danish proletariat. I had been working on "A" for weeks. I was not a fast reader and writer.

I remember feeling good about myself—not just proud because I was the only six-year-old I knew who had been studying the encyclopedia. I remember thinking that my work had a purpose: to learn the names of all the great people who had ever lived, and to try and find a key to their greatness—or whatever it was that had enabled them to get their names and pictures printed in the encyclopedia. There was a pleasure in conducting the countdown of the greats, drawing closer to the end of the first letter of the alphabet and—ultimately—to the end of the final volume. I wanted all those people sorted out and locked under the cover of my notebook. The dates of their births and deaths, their lives replaced by a short dash seemed to tell me reassuringly: "There's no rush! Relax! You've got all the time in the world!" But, of course, I didn't feel reassured. I didn't have all the time in the world. Time had no meaning, it was water. Ever since I had learned how to read, the first among all the three-year-olds that I knew, I had become more and more frustrated by the sheer abundance of books sitting on the shelves in our Leningrad room. I was a slow reader, impatiently plodding through the thick syrup of children's books, keenly aware of the fact that by the time I would be finished with one, there would be thousands of new books added to the number of those already existing in the world. It drove me crazy. How about the fifty-odd volumes of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*? How about the complete collection of Leo Tolstoy's works? How about Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's two shelves' worth? I was beginning to suspect that one could easily and forever drown in books and that life was too short for both reading and becoming as great and famous as the people from the encyclopedia—Nestor, who had chosen to write about his life instead of living it, or that poor old Kunanbayev with his goatee. Reading alone couldn't make one great. What, then, was it good for? If someone had asked me: "Would you rather stay alive and be aware that you're never going to get into the encyclopedia, or would you rather die now and be immediately made immortally famous?"—I wouldn't hesitate to make my choice, even though I was beginning to suspect that the time would come when I would realize that the dead are always at a disadvantage.

Soon I got tired and put down the pen. The rain had stopped—and changed the view from my window. I started daydreaming. The empty yard, encircled by a black picket fence with an angry Kavgolovo raven perched grimly upon it, gave way to a ravine. The wind was warm. Curly clouds, reflected in the silver river, rolled across the sky with considerable speed. Scoops of raisin-like trees were scattered over the green hills. I was not imagining them; I didn't think so. Imagining things was a waste of time. One of the reproductions from the *Masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance*—an extremely heavy book with all the pictures of naked men and women missing (Grandmother must have ripped them out)—was that of "The Old Man and His Grandson," by Domenico Ghirlandajo (Domenico Di Tommaso Bigordi, 1449–1494), and in the background it had the ravine, the silver snake of a river, and the toylike trees. It was a beautiful picture.

Whenever I opened that book, touching with my fingers the remaining fragile pages that were carefully separated by rustling rice paper, it occurred to me that I was the only six-year-old in Kavgolovo who was enjoying the masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance. Time would stand still and it would seem to me that I had existed forever. 1449–1494: It was amusing that Ghirlandajo's life was a matter of inverted digits, that it was ended by the last two digits of the year of his birth simply having changed places with each other. This could never happen to me, since I was born in 1955. I was lucky.

That picture was a pleasure, a joy. The Old Man resembled my grandfather: his nose was equally bulbous and his eyes seemed just as ready to well up with teary emotion. My grandfather was still alive. Five hundred years ago there was no Leningrad, no Lenin. The Old Man's grandson was my age; he wore a skullcap and had been dead for the last five hundred years. Looking at that picture always made me sleepy. I lay down on my bed and fell asleep, and my dream was pleasant. Then someone tapped me on the shoulder. I stretched and smiled, a child rising to the surface of his dream, and opened my eyes.

It was dark. Grandmother was standing over my bed. An enormous wicker basket with the mushroom knife rolling loudly across its bottom dangled from her elbow. "What time is it?" I asked. She said, "Three." I got up. She made me pull on two pairs of pants, knee-high rubber boots that an adder couldn't bite through, and a *budyonovka,* a flannel, pointed helmet with flapping ears named after the founder of the Red Cavalry, Semyon Mikhailovich Budenny (b. 1883; still alive as of 1961), a silly-looking headpiece to protect my hair against ticks, the carriers of encephalitis. We walked outside. Grandmother's brother and his sons were waiting in the yard, their faces dark and serious. Zhuk, the dog, squealed thinly. The mist smelled of cold earth, worms, and fish. Grandmother took me by the hand and we set out for the woods. We went in silence. Then she looked at me and said: "Come on! Aren't you excited? Today's your big day!"

"Yes, yes, I'm excited!" I said, stifling a smile. Everyone seemed pleased with my answer. We walked along the railroad tracks, which were empty and stained with smelly grease. The woods were on both sides of the tracks, two gray walls of trees. I had never been up that early—or that late. No other six-year-old was awake in Kavgolovo. "Here," Grandmother's brother said, and we turned right and entered the woods.

Surprisingly, the woods were not as dark as the open space, but the infinity of the trees was overwhelming. They couldn't be counted, and even if I had spent the rest of my life here, I still wouldn't be able to touch the bark of each. There were just too many of them. Soon, after grandmother had released my hand to look for mushrooms and everyone had wandered off and coalesced with the shadows of the trees—their unblinking eyes searching the needle-carpeted surface of the moss, long walking sticks in their hands flicking through piles of needles—I got lost and found myself standing in front of a tall fir tree, staring at two mushrooms, "orange caps," *podosinoviki.* They looked just like their pictures in *The Mushroom-Gatherer's Guide.* "Not bad!" I thought. I knew, of course, how I should feel—as a natural part of nature, less of a human being than a mushroom, a plant, a grass blade, a sapling, and a fungus. I was on my own. I knew how to survive in the woods. I smiled and hollered, but my voice sounded unconvincing, uncertain. "I feel good!" I thought, but the good feeling was not there any more, because I knew that I had stood in this spot before. I looked around. It was getting light. The moss under my feet was streaked by the sun. The sounds of the wood became audible. Something rustled behind my back: a hare or a fox, or a snake. Birds were testing their voices overhead. There was a thick aspen to my left, covered with black spots like a hyena—a treacherous Judas of Russian trees, its minute leaves shivering incessantly, as though in high fever. I knew that if I took three steps toward it, I would see a *chaga* outgrowth on its mossy lee side, a dark gray porous fungus—touchwood. According to *The Mushroom-Gatherer's Guide,* drinking its extract could help one suffering from cancer survive. I stepped over to the tree and saw the *chaga.* It seemed wet. I touched it. It was wet. Then I remembered that it was also called the "birch tree sponge"—*beryozovaya gubka*—and that it didn't grow on aspens. I took another look at the tree and saw that it was a birch, the dear soul of Russia. I touched it. Its bark felt like onion peels. I had touched it before. Frightened by recognition, I stood there for a minute or more; my every minute was ten times longer than that of my grandmother's. I knew that I was lost, because I was alone. I didn't have a knife to cut away the mushrooms, and I yanked them from the moss. I didn't have a basket either, because no one had really expected me to find a mushroom, and I squeezed the mushrooms to my chest. They were heavy. "I'm here!" I said loudly. No one answered. The sun kept rising and its light was familiar. I had seen it here before. I thought: "I have been here before." It occurred to me that maybe I was living someone else's life, which had already ended—and maybe (this made more sense) I was just remembering things from my own future: that would explain why, finding myself lost in the woods, I kept doing the same thing every time, over and over again—running around in circles with my heart beating louder than the crackling of dry twigs under my feet

or the warbling of wild birds overhead. I knew that this thought was too sophisticated for a six-year-old. I screamed tentatively. My voice boomed in silence; it boomeranged. Filled with my panting, the silence was no longer complete. I screamed again and bolted. The forest darkened; I was breathing too deep, too fast. "Don't panic!" I shouted, panting. The birds overhead were full of confidence and indifference. I ran forever. Once or twice my foot slipped through windows of dangerous, deep mud thinly veiled by the bright patches of decaying leaves. When I jerked my foot out, screaming, the dirt gave it up with a greedy sigh and the greasy smacking of fat, disappointed lips. This couldn't be happening to me. Then I realized that my right foot was stronger than the left one, because soon, having completed a full circle, I returned to the place where I had found the mushrooms. Too tired to scream, I remembered that real *gribniks* communicated with each other by way of cautious hallooing, so as not to scare away the mushrooms. It was too late for me, though. I was lost for good. "Halloo!" I hollered, and heard a dog's barking, and then a sweet and close "halloo" in response. A dog—it was Zhuk—cheerfully jumped at me from behind the nearest tree. Grandmother, looking beneath her feet, stepped out of the shadows and passed beside me. She stopped in front of two fresh black wounds in the moss. "Someone's beat us to two mushrooms here!" she said angrily.

She didn't notice that I had been lost, which meant that I hadn't been lost. "Scared?" she asked, and I realized that she had been keeping an eye on me all along. She glanced at me and smiled. "You did all the right things," she said approvingly. "Your decision to start screaming was a good one. You didn't need to run, though. It always makes things worse. Just stay right where you are and keep screaming."

"I knew I didn't get lost," I said sheepishly. "I was just teasing you."

She smiled. I remembered about the mushrooms that I had found. Running around, I had dropped one of them. I showed her the one that I was still clutching to my chest. Her face brightened and she said: "Congratulations! Now you are a *gribnik*!" I wished she had said something that I had not expected her to say. Then her face took on a stern expression: "Didn't I tell you to use the knife? You had to cut them away! Now you've destroyed their roots and there won't be any new mushrooms here next year!"

"I don't have a knife!" I said.

She shook her head: "You should've called for me, I would've come over with the knife!" She grabbed my hand and spanked it. I started to cry. She hugged me. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" she said.

I saw that her basket was full. I felt that it was a shame to leave so many mushrooms behind just because there was no more room in her basket. But we had to go, of course. All I could do was look around and try to remember. On the way out of the woods, I saw a colony of *lisichki,* or "little foxes," with their brilliant yellow cups, and an assorted bunch of gilled, pink-and-red-and-yellow *syroyezhki,* which can be eaten raw, as their name in Russian implies (though no one eats them raw, of course); I saw a pale Death Cap, the Destroying Angel, more poisonous than cyanide and much more lethal than the fancy scarlet, white-dotted Fly Killer—*mukhomor.* Redheaded *podosinoviki* growing under the aspens; prim *podberyozoviki* growing under the birch trees; diminutive Slippery Jacks covered with slimy film—*maslyata,* or "the buttery ones"; "white mushrooms," or *boroviki,* the kings of mushrooms—of course, it was sad to leave them behind, unaccounted for, because if all I had to do with them was to remember seeing them in the woods, I didn't have to go there and actually see them growing: I could just as well have imagined them, and then convinced myself, as I have often done since, that imagination is the best and most reliable source of recollections. Indeed, I had almost remembered waiting for Grandmother, for her brother with his sons, and for the dog to appear in our yard, at last, with their baskets full of mushrooms. "At last!" I had remembered myself exclaiming. "How was it? What took you so long? Why didn't you take me with you? Why didn't you wake me up?" Indeed, maybe I wasn't in the woods with my grandmother that morning, although I remember being there with her.

We all gathered together at the edge of the forest, the five of us—but the dog, Zhuk, was nowhere to be seen. "Zhuk! Zhuk!" I called out twice. Grandmother, radiant after a good mushroom hunt, hugged me and said: "Don't you cry, he'll be back." I was not about to cry, but when she said that, tears appeared in my eyes. She didn't notice. "He's found a huge mushroom!" she said. Her brother and his sons nodded, wasting no words. They were proud of me. "Big deal!" one of my cousins said.

"I found *two* mushrooms!" I corrected Grandmother.

"Of course," she said.

Their baskets were full of mushrooms covered with fresh leaves, green needles, and ferns in order to protect them from the sun—and also from the immodest stares and questions of other mushroom gatherers along the way. It was considered bad luck and bad taste to reveal one's mushroom-gathering spots. Grandmother had suggested that we take the picturesque lakeside road on our way back because we were less likely to meet people there. I wanted to stay and keep waiting for the dog, but they told me that he must have run into some of his

animal friends back there in the woods and that he would find the way home on his own. I hated it when they talked to me condescendingly. "What friends? Are you out of your mind?" I asked.

"Dog hunters," my cousins said, laughing, expecting me to start crying.

"Stop teasing him!" Grandmother said. I began softly weeping. "Don't cry, don't cry!" they said.

"He's tired," Grandmother said.

They patted my head; I kept crying. "Shut up!" they said sternly, giving me an excuse to become confused and inconsolable. Tears were sweet. They had a life of their own. Overtaken by the secret process of being sweetly transformed into tears, I forgot the cause and purpose of my despair. I gagged and choked. Grandmother's brother picked me up and set me down on his shoulders. "Look, he's smiling through the tears, like Chekhov!" he said.

"He's such a pain!" one of my cousins said. I smiled.

We walked down the green hills that Kavgolovo is so famous for, past the serene and blue Kavgolovo Lake. Brown pines and firs, climbing up the hills, gently swaying, scratched the bottom of the sky. High in the sky, two slender white scars in the wake of two invisible planes grew rapidly, stretching across the deep-blue altitude. They were the color of early-morning snow outside the ice-bitten window of the tourist center, a log cabin with two rooms and two windows, not far from Leningrad.

That was a long time ago, when I did not yet scream waking up. It was January, or maybe December. I awoke and looked around, feeling cold, and saw my mother sleeping in the bed across the room, her pink toes peeking out from under the maize-colored woolen blanket with the purple ink stamp of the tourist center. I considered falling back asleep and decided against it. Nothing was happening, nothing was going to happen. Once started, the day could neither be stopped nor ended. Minutes were passing by. There was a brick oven—*pechka*—in the far corner of the room. Loud snoring came from another room. I was three, or two. Now the forest, the Kavgolovo Lake, and the sky, healed from the planes' invasion, were crisp and clear. I shuddered with the anticipation of memories to come; there was a firm and conclusive promise in my having been able, at age six, to recall what had happened to me three, or maybe four years ago. I already had, at age six, a solid stock of memories to draw upon. I smiled at the thought that when I would be ten or twenty I would probably have enough memories to do nothing but reminisce, pondering and comparing the events of my life against one another. Then we came close to our house and Grandmother's brother unsaddled me from his shoulders.

My mother was waiting for us in the yard. "At last!" she exclaimed. "How was it? What took you so long?" I told her that we had lost the dog. "He'll be back," she said. We put our baskets up on the table and began to sort the mushrooms, arranging them in separate piles on the newspaper which was spread out across the tabletop. "Let me do this!" I said. "Let me count them!" They stepped aside from the table and began to watch me proudly. I was good with numbers. It turned out that we had gathered thirty-four *syroyezhki*; one hundred and seventy-eight *lisichki,* already wilting and crumbling in their fragile yellow beauty; one hundred and two *maslyata,* or Slippery Jacks; fifty-two *podberyozoviki*; forty *podosinoviki,* good for pickling, their red caps clasping rough and rugged gray-streaked stems so tight that they looked like giant matches waiting to be struck; and forty-seven *boroviki.* It had been one great mushroom hunt.

It occurred to me that maybe I was living someone else's life, which had already ended—and maybe I was just remembering things from my own future.

When the baskets finally were empty, I felt disappointed, as though I had hoped to find something exceptionally surprising on the bottom of each—a huge ugly mushroom or a tiny pretty one, a lizard, or a mouse, or a frog.

"This boy is destined to become a mathematician," Grandmother said.

My mother nodded and said: "Remember when he used to spend hours by the highway?"

Grandmother nodded. "Maybe you should send him to a special school for gifted children," she said.

"Don't confuse the boy," said my mother.

They were recalling the summer before in Komarovo, near Leningrad, when I used to spend hours by the highway, counting the cars that sped by. There were not many of them; they were headed toward Leningrad or—very infrequently—from Leningrad toward northern Karelia. They were slick and mesmerizing, each unexpected. I counted them, but I wasn't interested in the total number as such. All I needed to know was that the total was finite. In one hour, twenty-five Pobedas would go by, ten new Volgas, eight posh ZIMs, raven-black and solemn like hearses, and twenty old Moskvichs. I paid no attention to *gruzoviki* and *samosvaly*—trucks and vans. To sort them out and keep their respective quantities in

mind was interesting, but less important than the hope of being able, provided that I stayed right there by the highway long enough—maybe a day or a month—to count all the cars there were in Leningrad, or in Karelia, or the entire Soviet Union. I knew that it probably couldn't be done, but I had a feeling that maybe it could. And I was looking for something surprising and unusual, too: that was what kept me there, by the highway. I expected to witness something unexpected, like a foreign car on the road (Finland was not far away), or maybe a horse cart, or a car accident. That same anxious feeling of standing on the verge of a surprise propelled me through the pages of the encyclopedia, of course. I knew that I might see an ugly face on the next page, or discover that some writer had lived for almost two hundred years. It was highly unlikely, but it could happen. And there was a sense of doing a job, too. The more I read and counted, and kept the faces and numbers in my mind, the closer I was to the end, and being closer to the end was a good feeling. That feeling was decidedly unmathematical and defied any attempt at common-sense calculation. I just wanted to see the end of the book, the emptiness of the road. There were only so many cars in the country; only so many mushrooms in the woods; only so many people in the world; only so many famous names in the encyclopedia. I could talk with every man alive. In the end, I could get to know them all. I flipped through the pages, and if none was worth more attention than the next, I sighed with relief. I was drawing closer to the end. In the end, I would do all right. I would survive.

After dinner, when the rain began again and everyone in the house was sleeping, I stepped out into the yard. The rain grew stronger and colder. Remembering that it was my birthday, I started celebrating. I ran around the yard, sloshing in the puddles, repeating my age: "Six-six-six—*shest' let, shest' let, shest' let*"—until the words lost their meaning and fell into the black depths of the language: sixsixsix, *shestletshestletshestlet*. I used to play with words that I knew, repeating them until they began to sound funny, then scary. "Mother-mother-mother," I would repeat rapidly. "Blue. Blue-blue-blue. House-house-house"—and in no time at all the word would be destroyed and menacingly transformed into something new: what was "motherma"? What color was "blueb"? "Househou"? Each time the sudden disappearance of meaning scared me: where did it go?

When I stopped running around, I remembered that it was, of course, not my birthday. My birthday was in July, and there are almost no mushrooms in the woods until late August. I was already six. I stopped and paused. A cheering crowd approached our house. People were dancing, laughing, and screaming, as Yuri Levitan in his most sonorous voice, the voice that was used only for radio news of planetary importance, was announcing the triumph of Soviet spirit and science: "His name is Yuri Alexeyevich Gagarin, he is twenty-seven years old." The crowd went berserk. Never before had I witnessed such undiluted joy, such selfless exhilaration, such shameless happiness. People beckoned to me. I made a timid step forward, toward another story, "A Fiery Engine."

It occurred to me then that Yuri Gagarin was launched into orbit on April 12, 1961, not in August. The crowd, dancing and cheering, chanting "We've Made It!" and "We're Number One!" might instead be celebrating Space Flight Number Two: early August of 1961—but, of course, I wouldn't remember it, because Number Two didn't really count. It's the first time, no matter what, that is always remembered. That was just a happy crowd, celebrating itself. I was back in Leningrad. Yuri Gagarin was launched into space.

The crowds were cheering. Everywhere—in Moscow, in Leningrad—people rejoiced and took to the streets. As happy as if someone had promised to keep them alive forever, they were carrying huge pictures of Yuri Gagarin's ultimately Russian face—so fit for printing in the encyclopedia—with its multi-dimpled, frozen smile: it floated slowly through the pink air of April.

There were so many euphoric people in the streets that day, April 12, 1961, that some of them naturally got stomped and trod upon, crushed and squashed under hundreds of feet. There were casualties, just like in 1953, when Stalin died and everyone took to the streets in their immeasurable grief, wishing that they had died instead. I remember thinking that those who got killed in the mourning crowd passed away on the very bottom of unhappiness, with their eyes full of tears and their hearts filled with boundless sorrow. They stumbled and staggered along, and then they went down, still crying, unable to see anything, falling smoothly through one darkness into another, more permanent. But those who were squeezed to death in the happy crowd were happier than they were ever likely to be afterwards, if they had had a chance to stay alive and keep on living. They shouted and chanted "We're Number One!" at the top of their lungs, too excited to notice their own deaths. The song that they sang played on the radio day and night. They sang:

> We all were born to make the legend real!
> To claim the space! To work and study hard!
> Our mind has given us strong wings of steel!
> A fiery engine to replace the heart!

Gagarin himself had no more than seven years to live in 1961. The plane that he was piloting lost altitude and crashed into a Russian forest. That was in 1968. He was

thirty-four. I was thirteen and in high school.

The news of his death was announced on the radio the next day, after I had left for school. Our literature teacher entered the class sobbing, her eyes red. By sheer coincidence, it was the same day that my story, "A Fiery Engine," was to be proclaimed a winner in the inter-high school competition. I already knew that it had won. It was supposed to be a big day for me. It was also the day of Maxim Gorky's one hundredth birthday, March 28. Gorky (real name Alexei Peshkov, 1868–1936) was the most famous Soviet writer of all time, and I remember thinking that it was extremely symbolic to have my literary career launched on the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Instead of congratulating me and inviting the class to give me a round of applause, however, the teacher sobbed again and said: "I want you all to stand up. I have devastating news. Yuri Alexeyevich Gagarin is dead!"

There was a pause. We didn't know what to say, how to mourn. Class was promptly dismissed and we poured out, laughing, full of plans. I was disappointed and sad that Gagarin's death had so crudely intervened in my own life, of course, but by that time he was no longer Number One, and I was no longer six years old, and I didn't wish that I was dead instead.

But back in 1961, all that was still a lifetime away. I was in Kavgolovo. The rain had stopped and, sure enough, there was a rainbow in the sky. Its colors were: red, then orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Their sequence was easy to remember once you memorized the words *Kazhdyi Okhotnik Zhelayet Znat' Gdye Skryvayetsya Fazan*: Every Hunter Wants to Know Where the Pheasant's Hiding. The first letter of each word in that sentence was the first letter of one of the rainbow's colors.

It was the hour of the day when the sun strikes the eye at a crimson angle and everything begins to look eerily intense, but serene: a late-August afternoon the color of an April evening. I was in my room, watching. The trees and the hills were green, there were swallows in the sky, and Russia was joyous and looked eternal beyond my window.

Late at night, unable to fall asleep, I stepped out of my room and walked to the kitchen. There was a thick thread of drying mushrooms stretched over the stove. The stove was hot, the coals were still burning inside. To get perfectly dry mushrooms, indispensable as a source of vitamins during the winter, Grandmother would keep the thread hanging over the stove for several weeks.

I reached out and touched one mushroom with my fingers. It was already shriveled, yet still wet. I squeezed it hard, imagining everyone's surprise the next morning when they discovered that one mushroom on the thread was prematurely perfectly dry and ready to cook. Bitter-smelling drops of mushroom juice fell on the oven. There was a loud hissing; a cloud of dark bitterness hit my nostrils. When I dropped the mushroom, my index finger brushed against the metallic oven top. I was more scared than hurt. I knew that everyone would wake up if I screamed, but I couldn't help it. I had no other recourse. I remember screaming. That was a long time ago. □

Two Poems

Cid Corman

We Believe We Are

We believe we are
part of something—though
even God wouldn't

know and couldn't say
what that something is—
much less what being

a part of it might—
if meaning matters—
mean. But we believe.

The Requiem

We are speaking of meaning—
life speaking as life to life.
In the presence of Eichmann

Libera nos! And music
continues. Conducted by
a fist. Beyond Adorno.

'67 Remembered

Irena Klepfisz

for Khane

In '67 you visited with your sister.
I was in Chicago. Richard Speck had just murdered
seven nurses. We were scared. The war was only
a few days over and everyone said
how well you and Gitl looked. Who would
have thought you'd just come
from a war-torn country
dressed chic in late '60s fashion
smiling easy relaxed
confident the worst was over?
I still have the photographs.

How different that war
from that other in your life:
Siberia the Germans at your heels
your father chopping trees in the forest.
You learned Russian in the street
spoke Yiddish at home wrote Polish
in the segregated schools. You were
a linguist at eight ready to master
even more tongues for the sake of survival.

But in '67 you'd already mastered
it all. You were so relaxed so easy.
It was a joke this war despite
the casualties. It was a joke
how relaxed you were.

And wasn't I too? Weren't we all?
Didn't we all glow from it
our sense of power finally achieved?
The quickness of the action
the Biblical routes
and how we laughed over
Egyptian shoes in the sand
how we laughed at another people's fear
as if fear was alien
as if we had known safety all our lives.

And the Bank?
I don't remember it mentioned
by any of us.
We were in Chicago—it was hard to imagine.
But twenty years later
I hear how they picked up what they could
placed it on their backs
how they marched through the hills
sparse coarse grass pink and yellow flowers
rough rocks defying cultivation
how they carried clumsy packs
clothing utensils images of a home
they might never see again.
A sabra told me who watched
their leaving as she sat safe
in an army jeep: it looked no different
than the newsreels at school
of French Belgian roads. It was simple
she said: people were fleeing and
we egged them on.

Time passes. Everything changes.
We see things differently.
In '67 you had not married yet and we all
wondered why never worrying about
marriage laws or rabbinic power.
And now more than 20 years later
you live in Jerusalem ruling
from your lacquered kitchen and sit
in that dream house trapped:
enough food in your mouth
in your children's and enough warm things
for winter (coats shoes woolen stockings
good for Siberia)
and there's no way out no one to call
about a bad marriage. It's simple:
a woman without bruises
your lawyer says there's not much hope
and you accept it:
I can't say I'm happy but
I've got a truce.

Things fester. We compromise.
We wake up take new positions
to suit new visions failed dreams.
We change. Power does not so much corrupt
as blur the edges
so we no longer feel the raw fear
that pounds in the hearts
of those trapped and helpless.
In '67 in Chicago we thought we'd be safe
locking the windows till Speck was caught.
We did not know there was a danger
in us as well that we must remain vigilant
and open not to power
but peace.

BOOK REVIEW

Nobody Here But Us Citizens

Michael Kazin

Let Them Call Me Rebel: Saul Alinsky—His Life and Legacy by Sanford D. Horwitt. Knopf, 1989, 595 pp.

Community organizing: even at a time when most Americans seem to have little interest or faith in social movements, the term still embodies the warmest of democratic hopes—the conviction that people should have, could have, must have a measure of control over their most immediate environment. In Washington, D.C., community organizers go out on "citizens' patrols" to drive crack dealers from black neighborhoods; in Twin Falls, Idaho, they mobilize protests against a new plant that would "purify" plutonium for nuclear weapons; in hundreds of cities and towns they oppose escalating property taxes, pressure companies to clean up their hazardous wastes, set up neighborhood recycling and childcare programs.

While the specific causes fought for and the people who lead the fights are often controversial, nobody questions the value of "community organizing" itself, at least not publicly. To do so would challenge an ethic of active citizenship and resistance to centralized power that runs deep in the American past and has been stroked continually since the 1960s by everyone from Jesse Helms to Jesse Jackson—albeit for quite different ends. It would also defy the exalted status that "community" itself enjoys in our vocabulary. As the late critic Raymond Williams recognized in his invaluable book *Keywords*, "unlike all other terms of social organization (state, nation, society, etc.) [community] seems never to be used unfavorably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term." By appealing to the interests and needs of "communities," activists of a left-wing persuasion can often work closely and effectively with people who would be immediately suspicious of anyone introducing themselves as a "feminist," "socialist," or even "labor" organizer. But they also risk neglecting larger issues whose impact bedevils and often defeats the best intentions of grass-roots movements.

To a great extent our conception of what community organizers think and do can be traced to the work and words of Saul Alinsky. The neighborhood projects he initiated, along with his manner of promoting them, still frame both the potential and the limits of what he called "citizen action." Beginning in the late 1930s in Chicago's notorious Back of the Yards neighborhood (earlier portrayed in Upton Sinclair's horrific novel *The Jungle*), Alinsky worked to knit together churches, unions, fraternal groups, and small businesses into large, if not always stable, neighborhood coalitions. These coalitions were then able to direct internal aggressions bred of poverty and ethnic rivalry against the power of City Hall and wealthy downtown firms. In two popular books—*Reveille for Radicals* (1946) and *Rules for Radicals* (1971)—and in scores of provocative speeches and interviews, Alinsky chiseled out what amounted to an ideological code of conduct for aspiring organizers to follow: appeal to self-interest; confront your enemies with tough and imaginative tactics; encourage community people to become leaders and to decide which issues matter most to them; never challenge a person's religious or cultural beliefs; and, when articulating your vision, talk about Jefferson and Lincoln and the American Way and eschew any nonsense about the virtues of "the working class" or "smashing the system."

Alinsky styled himself a radical, a principled, bare-knuckled agitator like Tom Paine—whose jab at carping conservatives he fondly quoted: "Let them call me rebel and welcome, I feel no concern from it; but I should suffer the misery of devils, were I to make a whore of my soul." Yet Alinsky cultivated the friendship of liberal philanthropists and powerful figures in the Catholic church who financed and helped run his Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). He had come of age in an era when Americanism was synonymous with opposition to the Left and, through the 1940s and 1950s, he was forced to parry persistent (and erroneous) charges that he was pro-Communist. Ever conscious of his public image, Alinsky carefully avoided taking any stance that would remove him or his disciples from the mainstream of debate, either in the communities where they organized or in the nation as a whole.

This dual persona of the authentic rebel and the cautious strategist required some rewriting of his own early history. Sanford Horwitt's shrewd and engagingly written biography suggests that Alinsky was determined to escape some of the burdens of his background. Alinsky was the only living child (a younger brother died in infancy) of an unhappy marriage of two Orthodox Jewish immigrants from Russia who settled in Chicago at the turn of the century. Soon after his bar mitzvah, Saul's parents divorced, and his father Benjamin fled to California. Saul always took after and sided with his energetic, relentlessly opinionated mother, Sarah. "I don't think I ever hated the old man," he once told an interviewer. "I never really knew him and what little I did know just didn't interest me."

Later, part of what he *had* known got blurred in the telling. In fact, Benjamin Alinsky was a prosperous tailor who saved enough money to buy a nine-unit apartment building in a comfortable Jewish neighborhood when Saul was six years old. Yet the son liked to

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tell credulous journalists of a shabby childhood lived behind his father's shop and marked by the indignity of having to share the one lone bathroom with customers.

The famous organizer was no more candid about his intellectual patrimony. As an undergraduate and graduate student at the University of Chicago in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Alinsky worked with a handful of sociologists who were transforming the study of urban America. Scholars like W. I. Thomas, Robert Park, and Ernest Burgess obliterated older notions of the immigrant poor as an amoral mass, pathologically given to crime, strong drink, and other filthy habits. Sending their students out, in Park's words, to "go get the seat of your pants dirty" by observing the flophouses and the penthouses of Chicago, they portrayed the city as a complex, suffering web of demographic and cultural environments which demanded respect, if not empathy, for the quite different peoples who inhabited them.

Alinsky specialized in criminology, and his early writings about prisoners and juvenile delinquents voiced the same concerns about "social disorganization" that he had heard in the lecture halls of Hyde Park. But he soon began to deny his academic influences, scorning his university training as "all that crap" and belittling intellectuals of any political stripe who wrote about urban problems. No doubt this contempt was sincere, coupled as it was with an abiding mistrust of social workers and government bureaucrats who lectured the poor about how they should change their lives. At the same time, Alinsky could not allow himself to be viewed as a middle-class Jew who owed his initial interest in community organizing to a bunch of elite sociologists. He had to convince himself and others that he was the real thing, an authentic, nattily attired man from the grass roots whose ideas about social action sprang from hard-fought experience—plus some sage reflection on patriotic verities.

Alinsky's personal need for authenticity dovetailed nicely with the cultural realities of the neighborhoods where he was organizing. Back of the Yards and the other locations where Alinsky applied his method during the 1940s and 1950s in Chicago, Kansas City, St. Paul, and New York City were home to a turbulent variety of Catholic, blue-collar families. After years of bitter squabbles between Irish, Italians, and Slavs, many of these communities had begun to forge a semblance of unity behind the union drives of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). But they were still slums, plagued by littered streets, ramshackle housing, and high crime rates.

Independent neighborhood groups invariably devolve into either well-meaning but narrow exercises in self-help or bristling fronts to ward off "outsiders."

Finding a way out of this mess required the partnership of local unionists and priests, the only two groups in many blue-collar neighborhoods whose loyalties bridged ethnic barriers. In the CIO and the church, Alinsky found most of the men who became his closest allies and his best friends. On the national level, there was John L. Lewis, whose dramatic presence and unapologetic use of power on behalf of industrial workers inspired Alinsky to write his biography. The 1949 book was a tribute, with few qualifications, to Lewis, "an extraordinary individual and certainly one of the outstanding figures of our time." In Back of the Yards, there was Herb March, a leader of the Packinghouse Workers and a member of the Communist Party. (Alinsky, however, firmly barred the CP from asserting its own agenda.) In the Chicago archdiocese, there were Bishop Bernard Sheil, an eloquent defender of New Deal programs and a reliable source of funds, and Father Jack Egan, who got his training as an organizer in Alinsky's own IAF.

Reading Horwitt's book, one is struck by the succession of Irish priests and union officials whose tough talk and manly tastes for hard liquor and thick steaks seem lifted from the pages of *Studs Lonigan* and *Gas House McGinty.* Alinsky needed such men to help him build and finance local organizations. Together they provided the self-dubbed "kosher Cardinal" with a political fraternity where he affirmed the beliefs and prejudices—for example, against women organizers—that circumscribed his approach to social change.

While Alinsky was always the flexible organizer, willing to change his tactics and his venue when difficulty or defeat demanded, his basic outlook changed little from the late 1930s, when he began working in Back of the Yards, to his sudden death in 1972. America, he reiterated over the years, promises wonderful things: equal opportunity, democratic participation, economic abundance. But certain greedy and callous men had subverted that promise for large numbers of citizens. Fortunately, the solution was as simple as the problem. Average Americans had to learn to identify their collective interests and, dismissing what divided them, form community institutions to demand what was rightfully theirs—be it better housing, training for skilled jobs, or integrated public schools.

Alinsky thus extended to a multiclass and geographically bounded constituency an approach that industrial union organizers used successfully through the Roosevelt years. He first took it to white ethnic neighborhoods of factory workers and, through the medium of super-organizer Fred Ross and his super-recruit Cesar Chavez, to Chicanos on the West Coast through the Community Service Organization (CSO). Then, in the 1960s, Alinsky brought the model to black ghettos in Rochester and on Chicago's South Side. Of course, the shift from white to black and from the 1940s to the 1960s required some rhetorical changes—the vocabulary of "freedom" and "rights" replaced talk of "citizen participation" and "cultural pluralism." But the focus on a steady accretion of neighborhood power remained.

Alinsky traveled around the country almost continually, declaiming his ideas (and mocking elitists and academics) with witty directness while overseeing the community coalitions he had spawned. "If there is any truth to the saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions," he told a Senate subcommittee on juvenile delinquency in 1955, "then there sure must be a thirty-six-lane boulevard to hell paved with surveys."

By the 1960s, Alinsky had become a political personality with broad appeal. Catholic and Protestant churches, a

series of middle-sized foundations, major national magazines, and the *New York Times* all lionized him. He dressed like Humphrey Bogart, spoke with the flair (but not the prophetic tone) of John L. Lewis and the proletarian gruffness of Nelson Algren, and played the media like Andy Warhol. "The middle-aged *deus ex machina* of American slum agitation," a *Times* feature writer called him in 1966, noting his "explosive mixture of rigid discipline, brilliant showmanship, and a street fighter's instinct for ruthlessly exploiting his enemy's weakness."

Unfortunately, while the rebel's reputation grew, most of the projects he started were faltering. In Chicago, the Back of the Yards Council exerted its formidable muscle to keep black families from moving in. In California, Cesar Chavez took the insurgent spirit and best leaders out of the CSO when he established the United Farm Workers. In New York City, the well-funded Chelsea Community Council collapsed amid an internal feud between traditional social workers and Alinsky's outside organizers. Elsewhere, citizen groups either failed to survive their first big confrontation or, once established, combined valuable if limited participatory programs with the protection of an ever-shrinking turf.

Horwitt is a superb narrative biographer whose judgments about the personal choices and emotions of his subject are almost always convincing. But to understand why these projects fell so short of their founder's vision one has to go beyond Horwitt's criticisms of Alinsky for withdrawing from local groups too hastily and spending too much of his time writing and giving speeches. The fault lies deeper, in the original concept of "community organizing" itself.

Independent neighborhood groups, despite the idealism and élan with which they often begin, invariably devolve into either well-meaning but narrow exercises in self-help or bristling fronts to ward off "outsiders." Unless they link up to a larger ideological tradition and movement, the strong, steady current of particular needs and prejudices erodes the fine founding notions of "the people" rising to claim their birthright and transform society. In fact, the two main waves of Alinskyite organizing both crested on the energy of national crusades—first the CIO and then the African-American freedom movement. As Horwitt recounts, the Temporary Woodlawn Organization, Alinsky's first and most successful project in a black community, really took off only when it sponsored a mass rally in 1961 to support the Freedom Riders, just returned from their heroic and bloody trip through the Deep South.

Alinsky refused to make such broader connections permanent, arguing that while ideological movements rise and fall, pragmatic organizations are forever. In the mid-1960s, he denounced the antipoverty program (calling it "political pornography") and the New Left with equal passion as twin species of romantic do-gooders who would do the poor no good. But his unswerving focus on local people solving local problems in their own way ignored developments that had made this brand of populism increasingly anachronistic. The working-class mobilizers and joiners on whom Alinsky's projects had always depended were leaving their old urban neighborhoods and parishes for better jobs, better schools, and single-family homes. The new social movements begun in the 1960s, reacting to social tensions that had been building since World War II, wired "community" and "organizing" with an ideological charge that made grassroots unities based on class or neighborhood more difficult than ever to forge. And, in partial response to these changes, a growing number of citizens vented their discontent by voting against liberal Democratic politicians who, despite Alinsky's blunt rebukes, had created the space that once allowed community projects to sprout.

Near the end of his life, Saul Alinsky seemed to acknowledge that his old truths were no longer sufficient. In *Rules for Radicals,* he argued that, by themselves, America's poor could never change their lives or transform the nation; he urged young, left-wing organizers to reach out to the white middle class from which most of them had sprung. In such an effort, mere geographical proximity and economic deprivation would have little significance; a "community of interests," a shared need to do *something* about "pollution, inflation, Vietnam, violence, race, taxes" would take their place. Abstractly, the idea was appealing, but Alinsky continued to believe that powerlessness alone would motivate

this large, awesomely diverse constituency. The man Heather Booth (former head of the national Citizen Action network) has called the Freud of community organizing died having barely begun to treat his most difficult case—the analysis and cure of symptoms which afflicted a majority of Americans.

Fortunately, the activists who have continued Alinsky's work have broken with some of his more outmoded assumptions. In his recently published *Commonwealth: A Return to Citizen Politics,* Harry Boyte describes how working-class and middle-class women play central roles in most contemporary projects, linking personal with community needs and downplaying the charismatic cleverness that was Alinsky's stock-in-trade. Many local groups, alarmed a decade ago by the rise of the New Right, now routinely participate in political campaigns and national protests. Aware of the potential for opportunism and ideological posturing, they rely on democratic procedures to keep ambitious spokespeople in check. The Industrial Areas Foundation itself has advised its affiliates to "arm themselves for a value war" against the acquisitive, selfish mores that hamper all forms of collective participation.

So, despite Alinsky's personal and ideological flaws, the kosher Cardinal's populist methodology has proved itself to be a remarkably supple (one might even say catholic) creed. It continues to encourage adherents to pursue a variety of nondogmatic, leftward paths that combine resentment against specific elites with an eagerness to ally with anyone who has immediate goals in common. Making the leap from class to citizen politics was painful for those reared in the socialist tradition, and a focus on "community" does tend to slight the salience of work in shaping both public and private life. But I much prefer organizers who trust people to identify and attack the issues that most concern them to those liberals or radicals who insist, however subtly, on defining the "real" problems that ought to be addressed. For American rebels searching for political direction in the new world of post-industrialism, post-liberalism, and post-communism, a faith in democratic choices still seems a good place to start. □

BOOK REVIEW

Notes from Underground

Robert Cohen

Vineland by Thomas Pynchon. Little, Brown & Co., 1990, 385 pp.

A great many entertaining rumors to the contrary, Thomas Pynchon is—only—human. Not a computer, not a committee of minds-at-large (including—let's see—Freud, Jung, Rilke, Groucho Marx, Wittgenstein, Norbert Wiener, Thelonious Monk, Henry Adams, and R. Crumb), not even J. D. Salinger. Those who have spent the long years since *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) playing a game of Pynchonian connect-the-dots, trying to graph and fix the absent object of their obsession, now find, with the publication of *Vineland,* a whole Jackson Pollock-flurry of new data, new "signs and symptoms" to process, and a vivid reminder, from our Prophet of Paranoia, that the presence of signs can be as disturbing as their absence.

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Or as the anarchist Squalidozzi puts it in *Gravity's Rainbow*: "We are obsessed with building labyrinths ... to draw ever more complex patterns on the blank sheet. We cannot abide that *openness*: it is terror to us. Look at Borges."

For that matter, look at Pynchon. He has long been, like his contemporary Ken Kesey once was, his own best invention—a fabulously influential presence that remains forever unseen (talk about "silence, exile, and cunning"!), functioning for two generations of ambitious readers something like the way *Vineland*'s "ninjette" DL Chastain functions for her partner: "to make of his life a koan, or unsolvable Zen puzzle, that would send him purring into transcendence." In the process, he has inspired the kind of obsessive hermeneutical curiosity one associates with professors of English and, yes, Pynchon characters, as well as a community of boisterous, die-hard loyalists, a cabal of cognoscenti of the kind American novelists dream about but only rock 'n' rollers—even, or especially, aging ones—seem to attain. (Think of the Grateful Dead—or Bob Dylan, a near-contemporary himself, and similarly mercurial, private, and inflected by a frequently obscure mysticism. What if he'd remained unheard from since *Blood on the Tracks*?) Meanwhile, for all intents and purposes, Pynchon has chosen to live underground, stepping outside of history, like Ellison's Invisible Man, in order to get a better view of how it works.

And so, in his place, we've had the labyrinthine rumors, the endless speculation about works-in-progress, the feverish picking over of published scraps. There is a collective need to peek behind the Wizard's curtain, attach a human face to the all-but-silent mandarin voice. Pynchon's detractors have long complained of his lack of "humanness," by which they mean not only his sometimes exhibitionistic braininess but his flatness of characterization; Pynchon himself, in the almost ridiculously self-critical introduction to *Slow Learner* (1984), a

collection of his early stories, regrets this tendency of his to "get too conceptual, too cute and remote, and your characters die on the page." This document seemed to an awful lot of people to signal a profound sea change—Pynchon, so the word went (part outrage, part befuddlement, and part relief), was growing up: the man was going *straight.*

And then, to top it off, one cracks open *Vineland* to find a perfectly earnest dedication to his *parents.* Parents? Updike has parents. Roth has parents. But Pynchon? What's next, the Letterman show?

The good news about *Vineland* is that it is not the radical departure, the "mellowing," that some critics have made it out to be. The voice is, as ever, oscillating between farce and an often heartbreaking lyricism, blending high culture and low (possibly a bit more low here than usual)—a funhouse ride through the often spooky late twentieth century. Along the way, we are treated to the usual punning, comic set pieces, funny names, impromptu songs, movie references (which begin with *Return of the Jedi* and get progressively weirder, ending with such high-concept fancies as "Pee Wee Herman in *The Robert Musil Story*"), and zippy-zany casualness—in short, the usual arsenal of smoke bombs, fake vomit, and whoopee cushions our most searching and serious novelist brings to the formal, decorous party of critical interpretation. Pynchon, fifty-two or not, remains as gleefully sophomoric as ever.

Then too, this underground business has political connotations, which *Vineland* addresses somewhat more directly, though considerably less powerfully, than his previous work. Whereas in *The Crying of Lot 49* (with which this book shares a California setting, a couple of characters, and a [relative] linearity of story line) we find a shaggy, Borgesian metaphysics—in which Oedipa Maas learns of an alternative America, an underground which she knows may be (only?) a projection or dream, an idea that becomes a world—in *Vineland* Pynchon seems markedly less doubtful, less questioning of what is real and what is imagined. Perhaps he has already taught us too well, and/or perhaps the times have caught up with him. After all, in post-1984, post-Watergate, post-COINTELPRO, Reagan-Meese-and-Bush America, is paranoia still a possibility? Is there any question at this point that there *is* a They, and that They have pretty much won? And is anybody still in doubt as to the old *Pogo* question: are They really Us?

Even Pynchon doesn't seem to think so, and it's this lack of doubt that makes *Vineland* less richly ambiguous than his previous work. Essentially it's a Western—*Shane* meets *Enter the Dragon.* The good guys are a preterite assortment of old Hollywood leftists, retired or co-opted sixties activists, aging hippies, a punk rock group, even a dog; the baddies are the tool of a sinister and ambitious federal prosecutor named Brock Vond. At stake, among other things, is Vineland—a tangled, foggy, uncharted frontier in Northern California, under assault by the developers and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). But the name points us to America itself, of course, its original dream of possibility and transcendence—a land where, as Pynchon put it in *Lot 49,* the chances "were once so good for diversity."

There's a plot of sorts, actually about a dozen plots (plotting being the paranoid's game as well as the writer's), most of them pretty whimsical. They loosely center around the efforts of Zoyd Wheeler's teenaged daughter Prairie to find her missing mother, Frenesi, or at least to locate her, conceptually, through an aggregate of oral histories. (As usual in describing a Pynchon plot, one finds oneself adopting the tentative locutions of a contemporary physicist.)

All right, here goes: Frenesi, since abandoning Prairie and Zoyd, has been living the compromised and transient life of a government informant with her new husband Flash, whom she met at Brock Vond's reeducation camp for radicals and with whom she now has a son, Justin. Having herself been raised "under dreamlike turns of blacklist" in Hollywood's fifties, she is well attuned to misinformation, unseen powers, and the intrusions of celluloid reality upon whatever other kinds there are (Justin's "How do you know when you're dreaming and when you're not?" is her favorite question).

Prairie's search is aided by the ninjette DL Chastain, with whom Frenesi once shared, among other things, membership in the Death to the Pig Nihilist Film Kollective, in the service

of which, back in the late sixties, she filmed and slept with a certain Weed Atman, a mathematics-professor-turned-Movement-celebrity at the College of the Surf whom Brock Vond, no stranger to sexual manipulation himself, was out to control. As he tells Frenesi: "You're the *medium* Weed and I use to communicate, that's all, *this set of holes, pleasantly framed,* this little femme scampering back and forth with scented messages tucked in her little secret places [emphasis added]." More than one way, in other words, to capture someone on film.

Pynchon has chosen to live underground, stepping outside of history, like Ellison's Invisible Man, in order to get a better view of how it works.

Frenesi's guilt over Weed's death (he is subsequently reincarnated as one of Vineland's Thanatoids—true Deadheads, these) would seem to lie at the heart of her present condition of guilt, longing, and disconnection. "What if there is some branch point in your life," Vond asked her in the old days, "where you'll have to choose between worlds?" Apparently there was, and she had (though *why* she did, the book's crucial pivot, is left a bit hazy), and it's been only a short step, in the years that followed, from "walking around next to herself ... attending a movie of it all" to the way she now, in a lovely, entropic lament, appears to herself:

> ...once again out long after curfew, calls home forgotten, supply of coins dwindling ... among the back aisles of a forbidden arcade, rows of other players silent, unnoticed, closing time never announced, playing for nothing but the score itself, the row of numbers, a chance of entering her initials among those of other strangers for a brief time, no longer the time the world observed but game time, underground time, time that could take her nowhere outside its own tight and falsely deathless perimeter.

Indeed, were it not for passages like this, it would be a real enough temptation to read *Vineland* as a mere social satire, an extended *Doonesbury* strip of eighties life seen through a sixties lens, and vice versa. It too is informed by an often poignant nostalgia for that oxymoronic sixties ideal, the anarchic community—those small, colorful pockets of diversity and lawlessness which that era stitched in the great gray American fabric. LSD, one of the primary threads, offered the possibility of the sort of connection that informs mysticism and paranoia both—an ambiguity explored, for example, in Zoyd's recollection of tripping at his daughter's birth:

> ...the baby with both eyes open now looking right at him with a vast, an unmistakable, recognition. Later people told him it wasn't personal, and newborns don't see much, but at the moment, oh God, God, she knew him, *from someplace else.* And these acid adventures, they came in those days and they went, some we gave away and forgot, others sad to say turned out to be fugitive or false—but with luck one or two would get saved to go back to at certain later moments in life.

The other thread, of course, was political activism:

> Frenesi dreamed of a mysterious people's oneness, drawing together toward the best chances of light, achieved once or twice that she'd seen in the street ... the people in a single presence, the police likewise simply as a moving blade—and individuals who in meetings might only bore or be pains in the ass here suddenly being seen to transcend, almost beyond will to move smoothly between baton and victim to take the blow instead ... there was no telling, in those days, who might unexpectedly change this way, or when. Some were in it, in fact, secretly for the possibilities of finding just such moments.

And yet, a hundred pages later, this nostalgia is also called into question:

> "Shit," says Frenesi, "How could we lose track like that, about what was real? All that time we made ourselves stay on the natch? Might as well have been dropping Purple Owsley for all the good it did."

The tone of these passages is representative, I think, not only of Pynchon's generosity, but of one of his most slippery and subversive themes: that whenever we are tempted to supply an either/or explanation of what is "real," it must be opposed with a both/and. His repeated references to the rows of Ones and Zeros that govern computer thought are indicative of an abiding horror that goes back to the Luddites (of whom he has written) and, more familiarly, science fiction: that humanity is as much a product of technology as vice versa. In other words, thinking in binary oppositions about history, or about anything, is symptomatic of an increasingly mechanical Western culture's love of Weberian order, but it is an order that rests like a wobbly manhole cover above "another order of things," an underground of primordial Jungian connections—the sewers in *V.,* the Heroes in *Gravity's Rainbow,* the Tristero in *Lot 49,* the Thanatoids in *Vineland.* Between these two worlds—or layers of consciousness—roam the schlemiels (Benny Profane, Slothrop, Zoyd Wheeler), who are prone to an inertia born of randomness, and the questers (Stencil, Oedipa, Prairie) who see conspiracies everywhere and may be utterly paranoid—or, to put it another way, those for whom nothing is connected and those for whom everything is connected. But this schema of Pynchon's is a binary opposition, too, an either/or choice between absolutes, which means that not even authorial omniscience is truly omniscient, or really, in human terms, *of use,* all of which leaves us ...

Well, a long way from *Doonesbury,* anyway, and deep into metaphysical and epistemological quagmires—the self, enclosed within its projections, trying to make sense of a history that is, like a novel or film, a "network of all plots" (*Gravity's Rainbow*), many of them downright malevolent. Some have their origins in a documentable truth (Thurn and Taxis, Peenemunde, I. G. Farben, Nixonian repression) certainly no more true, nor less bizarre, than fictional constructions like Brock Vond's Political Reeducation Program (PREP). Vond's schemes recall the Pavlovian Dr. Pointsman in

Gravity's Rainbow and remind us that for Pynchon, growing up in the fifties, behaviorism loomed as the ultimate science of control, of either/or, cause-and-effect thinking, and, in the end, a kind of legitimatized pre-fascism:

> Brock Vond's genius was to have seen in the activities of the sixties left not threats to order but unacknowledged desires for it. While the Tube was proclaiming youth revolution against parents of all kinds and most viewers were accepting this story, Brock saw the deep—if he'd allowed himself to feel it, the sometimes touching—need only to stay children forever, safe inside some extended national Family. The hunch he was betting on was that these kid rebels, being halfway there already, would be easy to turn and cheap to develop. They'd only been listening to the wrong music, breathing the wrong smoke, admiring the wrong personalities. They needed some reconditioning.

It's clear that Pynchon, throughout his career, has undertaken to provide us with some alternative music of his own. Often, by the end of his books, we see that what seemed to be just riffing and playful improvisation is really something else—indirect suggestions of chords that may not even exist, or may in fact be what we've been dancing to all along. His books strip the gears of our certainties. They lay down false trails, and also track real ones in a way that connects them, connects *everything,* to a point almost beyond what reason can bear. And then, at this edge of near-madness, they simply end, without the consolation of resolution.

Finally, Prairie does find Frenesi, and in typical Pynchon fashion their reunion is almost completely lacking in affect, swallowed up by the noises of the larger party around them—the annual family frolic in old Vineland, a pastoral celebration of survival and re-connection. This effectively undermines what seems to be a rather sentimental affirmation at work in the closing pages, though perhaps not quite effectively enough. We're still left with that final image of Prairie waking, as though from a bad dream, to the tongue of the missing dog Desmond and to the suggestion that recent American history has been a kind of Oz-like melodrama, wicked witches on the loose, from which we may yet awake.

It's precisely this fairy-tale quality that gives *Vineland* both its charm and its somewhat disappointing slightness. Much of the satire is funny but familiar, its topicality resulting in some mushy lampoons of TV and mall culture, and equally mushy nods to feminism and family. And the structure feels slack. Zoyd Wheeler, after a terrific entrance, disappears for a few hundred pages, and though Pynchon has worked this sort of magic before (whatever happened to Pirate Prentice in *Gravity's Rainbow*?), in this case Zoyd is really missed. Frenesi's story, too, lacks the cumulative power the book needs, in part because so much of it occurs offstage, "framed" in oral testimony, and in part because of the digressions which have always made Pynchon an Evelyn Wood graduate's nightmare. Ultimately, after the scope and urgency of *Gravity's Rainbow,* perhaps *Vineland* can't fail to seem small, even tame, in comparison. What wouldn't?

It's unnerving, though, to consider the implications. Taking dead aim at Reagan's Teflon America, even Thomas Pynchon—our literature's most prescient, daring heavyweight—can't quite land his punch. □

BOOK REVIEW

Motherhood in Conflict

Elizabeth Lunbeck

Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory by Nancy J. Chodorow. Yale University Press, 1989, 286 pp.

"I do not accept Freud's opinions as far as women are concerned. About men I do not know. Their minds are an unknown land to me." So wrote Julia Dutton, an obscure early (circa 1915) feminist critic of Freudian orthodoxy, her tone of feminine reticence masking her ironic inversion of the familiar trope of woman as enigmatic other. For much of this century, such dissenting voices were submerged beneath a tide of popular and professional enthusiasm for Freudian doctrines. In psychoanalytic thought, woman was man's inferior; among the many psychic sequelae of the "fact" that she was castrated were her passivity, her narcissism, and her debilitatingly deficient superego, which excluded her from much of what man defined as culture.

Meanwhile, the popular imagination was treated to a steady diet of misogynist screeds, such as *Generation of Vipers* and *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex,* that rendered the arcana of psychoanalysis in plain language and reinforced what seemed only natural. Thus, the "normal" woman was relegated to the home; the career woman was castigated for her "masculinity complex"; and the woman who would argue the case for women's rights—well, everyone knew she was just a frustrated, grown-up version of the miserable "little creature without a penis." Freud's epigrammatic dictum, "anatomy is destiny," needed little explication in a society as hostile to women's aspirations beyond the home as the America of the thirties, forties, and fifties.

With good reason, then, women's

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movement activists and feminist theorists set out to expose the fraudulence of both psychoanalytic theory and its popular variants. In 1963 Betty Friedan charged Freud with sexualizing woman's every complaint. In her landmark 1969 essay, "Psychology Constructs the Female," Naomi Weisstein indicted her own profession for wholly ignoring women while celebrating the womanly virtues of nurturance and altruism that conveniently found their highest expression in motherhood and marriage. And in 1982 (how little had changed!) Carol Gilligan argued that psychology and moral philosophy silenced women's voices and relegated them to a private, pre-moral sphere. From Friedan through Gilligan, the charges were similar and devastating: Freudianism propounded theories without evidence, privileged anatomy over culture, and took man as the norm, woman as the exception. A century's worth of male theorists had produced little more than a catalogue of absurdities (from penis envy to the vaginal orgasm) while managing to transform popular prejudice into "science."

The marriage between psychoanalysis and feminism that Chodorow did so much to arrange has transformed the second partner far more than the first.

Nancy Chodorow's first book, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), entered a theoretical field from which feminists had largely fled. Chodorow's psychoanalytic account of women's mothering and its psychic and social consequences took issue with Freud on many counts. It dismissed some of what passed for theory—and much of what had sparked feminist ire—as uninformed, misogynist speculation. But more important, it entered into a dialogue with psychoanalysis. Chodorow was the first modern feminist theorist to seriously engage what was, after all, a theory largely concerned with sexuality and the development of gender identity.

Why was it, Chodorow asked, that the inequalities and asymmetries of gender were so tenacious, so apparently impervious to change, so apparently outside history? Much *had* changed for women—the increasing importance of wage work, for example—but women still had almost all the responsibility for mothering. Against those who offered accounts for women's subjugation derived from biology or couched in the sociological language of "roles," Chodorow boldly proposed that women's mothering was neither natural nor simply learned. Rather, she argued, it was constituted and reproduced—sociologically and, more important, psychically—within the domestic sphere. Specifically, Chodorow situated gender difference (and inequality) in the child's early, pre-oedipal relationship. In doing so, she drew upon the then rather obscure object-relations tradition within psychoanalysis, a tradition initiated by Melanie Klein that explored the child's relationship to the mother.

Chodorow argued that young boys and girls experience the mother differently. Reciprocally, mothers, aware of their sons' sexual otherness, help propel boys toward the oedipal moment when maternal attachments are repressed. At the same time they hold daughters—whom they experience as not-so-separate—in an extended, symbiotic pre-oedipal relationship. The most intimate of family dynamics prepare boys from an early age to leave, to enter the impersonal, public, extra-familial realm. The girl, while turning as oedipally prescribed to her father, never completely renounces her attachment to her mother. As a result, her sense of self is more connected to others than is the boy's. Empathic and flexible, the feminine personality, Chodorow argued, included "a fundamental definition of self in relationship," a self prepared to mother and thus to reproduce the conditions of its own oppression.

The emergence of psychoanalytic feminism as a minor academic industry is due, in large part, to Chodorow's brilliant appropriation of the object-relations tradition. Turning from the classic analytic focus on the emergence of the superego and sexual orientation at the oedipal moment, and focusing instead on the gendered constellation of internal objects that the moment highlighted and shaped, Chodorow provided a powerful theoretical account of the development of female personality. She filled in what had puzzled and eluded Freud and set right what simple misogyny had led him to misconstrue. Woman was no longer, as in the Freudian account, outside culture but at its very core.

Chodorow's *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* brings together a range of her essays. It opens with her early explorations of gender and personality, moves through a series of discussions of the "relational self," and culminates in several examinations of gender in feminist and psychoanalytic theory.

In the first essays, which date from the early seventies, Chodorow creatively draws on a disparate feminist tradition that includes the anthropologist Margaret Mead, the philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, and the psychoanalysts Karen Horney and Helene Deutsch. These theorists insisted, in defiance of the commonplace that women "are" while men "do," that female identity was problematic. From the start, Chodorow delineated a "relational" female personality, rooted in the girl's pre-oedipal attachment to her mother. She juxtaposed this relational personality to the "individuated" male personality that psychoanalysis celebrated. Even as Chodorow stressed that the former was not (as analysts assumed) a sign of women's inadequate ego strength, she was careful to note how damaging to women's self-esteem their assumption of overwhelming responsibility for others could be. On the one hand chiding male theorists who idealized woman's purportedly maternal nature, and on the other criticizing feminists who fashioned "almost primal fantasies" of the all-powerful mother, Chodorow showed that comforting assumptions about women were written into theories that denied the mother's subjectivity, her own selfhood. Much of the territory these essays traverse is by now familiar, a measure of Chodorow's importance in shaping the feminist project.

Unfortunately, however, the marriage between psychoanalysis and feminism that Chodorow did so much to arrange has transformed the second partner far more than the first. Feminist literary theorists, philosophers, and social scientists have mined Freud and the psychoanalytic tradition creatively,

spinning theories that have transformed their academic disciplines. Meanwhile, most psychoanalysts are still wary of and deaf to feminist claims; some practitioners continue to argue that the moment of a girl's "discovered castration" fatefully organizes her subsequent sense of gender identity and sexuality. Chodorow, who recently trained as a psychoanalyst, finds this disciplinary insularity particularly vexing. She places herself in the middle, between the grand claims of recent feminist theorists and the empirically derived conclusions of traditional analysts. The authoritative voice of her early work has now given way to a tentativeness—even defensiveness—bred of negotiating between the two parties.

Chodorow describes herself as passionately attached to, "intellectually in love" with, and engaged in a transference relationship with Freud and psychoanalysis. Such declarations of faith are pro forma among self-described priestly initiates. Here they betray a lapse of critical acumen. In a jarringly enthusiastic reading of Freud as protofeminist ("Feminism, Femininity, and Freud"), Chodorow asserts that psychoanalysis and feminism are "intrinsically linked," as if the two were timeless essences, not warring parties for whose troubled union she herself once had to argue. Further, she credits Freud with understanding the "special nature" of the mother–daughter pre-oedipal relationship, but she fails to note that he believed it prefigured both the penisless girl's inevitable rejection of the mother in favor of the father and even such feminine pathologies as hysteria. Since it was Chodorow herself who first attended to and normalized the girl's pre-oedipal attachments, this is at least puzzling.

Chodorow does seem aware that her benign, even celebratory, reading of Freud isn't entirely satisfactory. In "Seventies Questions for Thirties Women," she attacks the issue of gender and psychoanalysis from another angle. The profession of psychoanalysis has been particularly open to women, who have comprised between one-quarter and one-half of practitioners and have been especially visible at the profession's highest levels. Psychoanalytic theory, in contrast, has consistently cast women as men's inferiors. How, asks Chodorow, did women analysts reconcile theory and practice?

Seeking answers, Chodorow interviewed some seventy women analysts. Again and again these analysts insisted that, in their professional lives, gender simply hadn't mattered to them, that they didn't even notice whether their colleagues were women or men. As for orthodox theories of femininity, some admitted to secretly revising the most egregious aspects—viewing penis envy, for example, as socially and not biologically derived. But they believed in gender difference and held that women were inherently nurturant and fulfilled only through motherhood. Although they thought that women should be equal to men in the public sphere, these analysts didn't question the domestic division of labor. Their resistance to questioning the category of "woman" is a striking reminder of how recent the project to do so is. Gender in the psychoanalytic tradition was—and remains—a largely unexplored domain.

Chodorow has been at the very center of the feminist project to chart the salience of gender in traditions such as psychoanalysis, philosophy, and political theory that claim to speak an ungendered, universalistic language. Feminist critics have argued that the autonomous self that psychoanalysis celebrates is a male conceit; the individual who emerges from the oedipal struggle separate and independent, his maternal attachments brutally repressed by the law of the father, is simply a fantastic variant of the much-vaunted, equally improbable, autonomous self of liberal political theory. Chodorow usefully reminds us that psychoanalysis undercuts as well as celebrates this self; Freud, in proposing that the ego is subject to unconscious forces and drives beyond its control, posed a disturbing challenge to prevailing notions of individual autonomy and will. Yet Chodorow rightly emphasizes that the goal of the analytic project traditionally has been to constitute the autonomous self—"Where id was, there shall ego be," as Freud so memorably put it.

In the book's introduction, Chodorow offers an alternative reading of both the male and female self as intrinsically social, constructed in relation to another. The individualistic self of classic psychoanalytic theory—and of liberal imagination—is a fiction, she argues. The very "capacity to be alone" is predicated on successful psychic integration of the mother. Connection and separation, she writes persuasively, should be extricated from the teleological tale that fixes them in a necessary developmental sequence; in fact, striving toward both union and separateness animates the adult's, as well as the child's, mental life.

In the rest of the book, however, union and separateness appear not as positions women and men can adopt and discard but as fixed, gendered determinants of identity: men are separate, women connected. Many feminist theorists and activists have drawn on this formulation to support the essentialist notion that women are, by nature or upbringing, more empathic, more nurturant, more connected—in short, more relational—than men. Chodorow disavows positions that would morally elevate women over men. She proposes instead adoption of a "decentered," "multiplex," and contingent view of gender identity, without ever specifying precisely what she has in mind.

The object-relations perspective Chodorow advocates is essentialist in ways she doesn't see. Even as she claims to reject notions of innate gender difference, she reinscribes those differences in a developmental progression from which gendered personalities necessarily emerge. She argues, for example, that because women mother, boys "come to emphasize difference" and girls grow up with "a relational connection to the world." She asserts, on the one hand, that we should not see men and women "as qualitatively different kinds of people," yet, on the other hand, she reflexively opposes "women's self in relation" to "men's denial of relatedness." Chodorow questions those who simply champion women's relationality, but she accepts as truth that girls become one thing, boys another.

Chodorow is aware of the familiar critique that just as there are in "autonomy" traces of theories that cast the (male) self as public, there are in "relationality" vestiges of the female self as embedded in a nexus of familial responsibilities. But she doesn't question whether relationality is any less a fiction—a narrative construction—than autonomy. It doesn't settle the issue to argue, as she does, that the self that emerges from the clinical encounter between analyst and analysand—the source of

psychoanalytic truth—can *only* be relational because it is created in relation. This self can just as easily narrate a tale of striving toward autonomy—as indeed male selves purportedly do.

A properly decentered approach might propose that the series of oppositions that construct and sustain gender difference—public/private, universal/embedded, autonomous/connected—be seen, when brought to bear on individual lives, not as gendered determinants of identity but as indicating styles of worldly engagement among which individual men and women can move. It is one thing to propose that this series of gendered polarities has invisibly but powerfully structured our intellectual inheritance and legitimized social practices that subordinate and exclude women. It is quite another to argue—as object-relations feminists do—that they are necessarily attached to individual persons.

Julia Dutton, our early, ironic critic of Freud, couldn't see herself in his theory and rejected it. "My judgment is based on experience," she wrote. Responding to a theoretical tradition alternately blind to and contemptuous of women, some feminists have privileged experience in an attempt to find out what women really are. As heir to this tradition, Chodorow maintains that object-relations psychoanalysis, because it is constructed in the clinical encounter, has a special purchase on truth. But claims to ground truth in experience can be dicey. What happens, as feminist philosopher Judith Butler has asked, when individual women do not recognize themselves in the theories that purport to explain their true essences to them—as, in this case, the female self of object-relations feminism? What of the woman who can't see herself as relational, connected, or especially empathic?

Feminist theorists have argued persuasively that, in the Western tradition, men have dressed up their own claims in a universalistic guise. Some, including Chodorow, have traced the male celebration of autonomy and objectivity to the oedipal moment of maternal renunciation, seamlessly linking the psyche to the social. To argue the other side, that the female self is relational, is to posit, in similarly seamless fashion, a single trajectory from pre-oedipal experience to adult personality structure to intellectual inclination and style. Instead, we should examine this trajectory and abandon, finally, the quixotic search for a "true" female self. Otherwise, as feminists, we will find ourselves, much like Freud, in the untenable position of ascribing to women personalities they will reject as not their own. □

BOOK REVIEW

The Bonds That Tie

Eli Sagan

The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism & the Problem of Domination by Jessica Benjamin. Pantheon, 1988, 320 pp.

Contemplating the nature of human society, Nancy Chodorow has concluded that "a sex-gender system could be sexually egalitarian. Hitherto, however, all sex-gender systems have been male-dominated." Faced with the extraordinarily pervasive fact of a male-dominated society, feminist psychoanalytic theory has accomplished a fundamental theoretical task by asking three separate but intimately related questions, namely: Why have men allowed themselves to assume a position of domination over women in both personal and social life? Why have women allowed themselves to assume an attitude of subordination to men? And why, after a million years or so of human history, have questions of female-male equality only now assumed a position of such urgency on both the theoretical and the sociopolitical level?

To understand any society, nothing is more important than the question of domination, which relates directly to the existence of political and personal tyranny on various levels. One may, in fact, view all of world history as the struggle between the opposing forces of domination-tyranny and equality-freedom. Marxist theory was powerful, in good part, because it contained a complex theory of domination. The class struggle, if and when it existed, was postulated as a struggle for emancipation from tyranny. Therein lay Marxism's appeal. Its waning power in the political world does not diminish the need to produce an adequate theory of social and political domination.

Human existence has known tyranny of several orders: the tyranny of men over other men; the tyranny of men over women; and the tyranny of men and women over children. Though we suspect that there must be some intimate relationship between all these forms of domination, it is difficult to elaborate such a relationship from an historical or critical perspective. The Anglo-American nineteenth century, for instance, witnessed an extraordinary increase of male sexual repression of both women and children, on the one hand, while, on the political level, the extension of democratic equality between men and men proceeded at a

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remarkable pace. One intuitively feels there must be some connection between these two phenomena, but, again, it is difficult to say exactly what that correspondence is. Feminist psychoanalytic theory confronts that difficulty directly by refusing to accept domination and tyranny as givens in the order of things. Rather, it views them as phenomena to be analyzed and explained.

In her book *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism & the Problem of Domination,* Jessica Benjamin has given us a brilliant, courageous, and enormously ambitious explication of the psychic—and, therefore, the social—origins of domination and tyranny. It will take its place alongside Chodorow's *Reproduction of Mothering* and Dorothy Dinnerstein's *Mermaid and the Minotaur* as a basic work in the study of female–male relations. Benjamin continues the feminist psychoanalytic project of emphasizing the pre-oedipal stage of psychic development rather than assuming the traditional psychoanalytic concentration on the œdipal stage. This theoretical tradition announces that if we are to understand history and the development of society we must first comprehend the relationship between the primary nurturing parent (usually the mother) and the very young child. The theory also implies that changes in child-rearing will produce profound changes in the very nature of society—a most radical and ambitious theoretical project.

Benjamin makes no attempt to answer the third of our questions, which concerns historical reasons for the questioning of gender roles at this particular moment. Her book is devoted almost exclusively to an explanation of the trans-historical reasons for male domination and female subordination. Benjamin is attempting to fashion a theoretical tool that can be used to illuminate social development. Central to her argument, for example, is the concept that domination results from the failure to construct a situation of mutual recognition between the primary nurturer and the child. All such failures necessarily result in a struggle for omnipotence (not equality) between the contending parties; dominance and submission are the unavoidable results of such a circumstance.

Historically, child-rearing in the West has developed from an authoritarian to a mutual mode of childcare, a phenomenon illuminated by Laurence Stone and Lloyd De Mause, among others. Whereas once the adult's primary task was to beat the spirit out of the child, now the child is considered something to be treasured. To use Benjamin's terminology, child-nurturing has developed from a mode in which mutual recognition was impossible to one in which it is eminently possible, though it may still remain problematic. Can it be merely a coincidence that these same few centuries saw the institution of the first democracies since ancient Athens, and the *very first* democracies to include women in the polity? Benjamin shares with psychoanalytic feminism the belief that an understanding of the conflict between domination-tyranny and equality-freedom on the political level must follow an awareness of the gender tension between women and men. In order to proceed to this point, we must first understand the struggle that occurs between nurturer and child.

I consider *The Bonds of Love* "courageous" because Benjamin is willing to take certain theoretical stances in the interest of truth—stances that those committed to a simplistic, superpolitical conception of feminism will find distressing. She is in agreement with Dinnerstein, for instance, that women have conspired in their own subordination, that this is not merely the result of something that men have done to women. Her book is, in large part, a project to illuminate why this has been so. "Even the more sophisticated feminist thinkers," Benjamin writes,

> frequently shy away from the analysis of submission, for fear that in admitting women's participation in the relationship of domination, the onus of responsibility will appear to shift from men to women, and the moral victory from women to men ... as if people did not participate in their own submission. To reduce the domination to a simple relation of doer and done-to is to substitute moral outrage for analysis.

Benjamin takes a second potentially unpopular stance in her discussion of the importance of the father (or some other "uncontaminated" person) in the portentous conflict between mother and child over separation, individuation, and re-engulfment by an all-

consuming symbiotic mother. In essence, Benjamin accepts Margaret Mahler's notion that this struggle cannot be resolved within the confines of the mother-child dyad alone, and that a "third party" must intervene. In the traditional family, the father has been that person. Benjamin, however, carries this analysis much further than Mahler and sees that the father's capacity to play the role for the child of "liberator and way into the world" can and most times does form the basis for the father's tyranny over his children. Most particularly, for Benjamin, this establishes the father's dominance over his daughters. In the course of escaping the total loss of self by a re-engulfing mother, the child ends up subservient to its savior: the authoritarian father.

In this circumstance, all fathers do not act identically; even the concept "authoritarian" admits to degree. Benjamin asserts that the manner in which the father responds to this crisis—this potential for tyranny—is crucial to the resultant degree of subordination or equality between men and women. Combining this with Benjamin's insight that the degree of mutual recognition between mother and child is directly dependent on the mode of child-rearing (how the primary nurturer treats the infant), we can conclude that domination and tyranny are *not* inevitable concomitants of the human condition, that mutuality in child-rearing may be *the* cause of the fact that we have recently begun to awaken from the nightmare that is history.

Benjamin delineates five fundamental theoretical approaches to the question of domination/subordination. First, there is the all-important symbolic construction of mutual recognition, a term taken from Hegel that has a close relationship to ideas of equality and mutuality. Mutual recognition exists first between mother and child and later between father and child; it is the goal of a healthy, moral child-rearing. The failure to achieve this mutual recognition results in domination and subordination and leaves the mother and child locked in an unwinnable struggle for omnipotence. "This absoluteness," Benjamin explains, "the sense of being one ('My identity is entirely independent and consistent') and alone ('There is nothing outside of me that I do not control'), is the basis of domination."

In the quest for domination and omnipotence, other people become objects and not persons. This explanation resembles Kant's notion that the treating of other people as objects is the beginning of immorality. The road to mutual recognition, however, is a treacherous one. Benjamin quotes the British psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott to the effect that the child, at a point in its development, must *imaginatively* conceive of "destroying the object" (which is psychoanalytic jargon for killing the mother), and yet realize that the mother survives this destruction. Benjamin insists that it is the capacity to live with this inevitable tension between destruction and survival that makes mutual recognition possible. Any attempt to resolve that tension—and not sustain it—leads in the direction of domination.

Mutuality in child-rearing may be the cause of the fact that we have recently begun to awaken from the nightmare that is history.

Benjamin's second claim is one that has been elaborated by Karen Horney, Mahler, and Dinnerstein. Benjamin states that the masculine drive for dominance over women is a *defense* against the intense male anxiety about re-engulfment by the symbiotic mother, since re-engulfment would shatter both the individuated self and a fragile masculine identity. Boys and girls, it should be noted, have a different relationship to the threatening, absorbing mother. Caught in that vortex, girls may lose some of their sense of self, but their gender identity as female is not threatened since, of course, the mother of re-engulfment is herself female. The threat to boys challenges both the self and maleness, so the need to defend becomes even greater. Dominance over and degradation of what is female is the pathetic—though powerful—male response to the threatened catastrophe.

Next the author attempts to explain why it is that women are willing to accept this pathetic-powerful male drive for dominance, and often willingly take a submissive stance. Here Benjamin makes a dramatic theoretical leap, bringing us into the world not only of subordination but of submission—into the world of erotic sadomasochism. She finds in this experience an archetypical acting-out of the failure of mutuality and equality between men and women. "In sadomasochistic fantasies and relationships we discern the 'pure culture' of domination," she says, using the fictional account of the *Story of O* to demonstrate that the failure to be recognized may result in a fractured self so needy that it prefers to be physically hurt rather than not exist at all. For the masochist, the sadist confirms her existence; the pain makes her real.

Certain aspects in this sadomasochistic analysis are troubling. Since Benjamin is intent on elaborating male dominance over females, her description of erotic sadomasochistic experience is discussed only in terms of male sadists and female masochists. We know, however, that erotic sadomasochism exists in some all-male relationships and that some men assume the position of masochist toward female sadists. This would indicate that the problem of domination and submission goes deeper than the problem of gender itself and raises the question of how and why domination becomes structured along male-female lines. A further question concerns the actuality of sadomasochistic practices in the real world. We are learning more every day of how prevalent has been the sexual abuse of children by fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts. It seems clear that what we are witnessing today is not an increase in such abuse, but a willingness to talk about a subject which has remained until now largely taboo. One wonders how many people who act out erotic sadistic and masochistic experiences in adult life are replicating the ordeal of childhood abuse.

The last two of Benjamin's theoretical approaches—identificatory love of the father, and the "oedipal riddle"—are centered primarily on the daughter-father relationship. In one of the most powerful theoretical insights in the book she argues that identificatory love for the father is essential for any child to break out of the unwinnable struggle with the mother for individuation and omnipotence. The kind of father the child finds "out there" makes an enormous difference in the final

degree of freedom or subordination. In essence, an authoritarian, distant, possibly sadistic or controlling father who is himself incapable of mutual recognition (especially with a *female* offspring)—a father who takes upon himself the omnipotence formerly exercised by the mother—will make it impossible for the child to grow into a situation of equality and freedom:

> Indeed, it is precisely because women have been deprived of early identificatory love, the erotic force behind separation, that they are so often unable to forge the crucial link between desire and freedom.... It is not the absence of a paternal authority—"fatherlessness"—but absence of paternal nurturance that engenders submission.

It is of interest to observe the men of the generation now in their sixties: the fathers of the "baby boomers," the generation that began, to borrow Karla Hackstaff's phrase, the "divorce culture." Many of these fathers knew how to raise their daughters to be autonomous human beings, women who were capable of seeking a place in the "real world," and who were feminists by definition. And yet these same men appeared incapable of regarding the women of their own generation in positions of equality. They could recognize their daughters, but not their wives, as persons in their own right.

In the traditional family the Oedipus complex, and the superego which is its heir, set the final seal on gender as dominance. The father ultimately takes all omnipotence onto himself. The boy learns contempt for women and repression of all his "feminine" dualities which might throw him back to the pre-oedipal mother-child dyad. Thus men as tyrants and women as subordinates becomes the "human" mode.

The overriding theoretical consideration that connects these various theoretical approaches is the conception of omnipotence. The failure to renounce omnipotence must inevitably result in a failure of mutual recognition and, thereby, the establishment of a pattern of domination and subordination. All *three* actors alike must forswear omnipotence—mother, father, and child—and all three must learn not to ascribe omnipotence to any of the other actors. Every case that Benjamin describes which results in the failure of proper nurturance ends in at least one of the participants assuming the omnipotent mantle. The struggle to retain omnipotence for oneself, to take it away from the others, or to ascribe it to another out of desperation is the great ground of tyranny and domination.

There remains one reservation to express about this most important work. Benjamin exhibits in *The Bonds of Love* a definite ambivalence about admitting the full importance of aggression in human life; this seems a strange omission in a book whose very subject is domination and submission. There is, though, almost no discussion of the child's rage at the mother that Melanie Klein has so importantly underlined for us. Likewise we hear almost nothing about the mother's corresponding anger and rage at the child—especially the female child who represents the mother's mother born again. We get very little sense that the failure of mutual recognition may result precisely from too much destructive energy and not enough eros in the nurturing process. In the lengthy chapter on the Oedipus complex, for instance, there is no discussion of the anger that the oedipal situation creates between mothers and daughters. Anyone who has lived in the house with a fifteen-year-old female adolescent knows to what degree of intensity that particular aspect of aggression can reach.

In the early 1900s when Freud began to delineate the importance of sexuality—and infantile sexuality—in psychic life, he was greeted with disbelief, rejection, and contempt. That all passed, however, with remarkable speed, and by the 1920s sexuality was viewed in a radically new light. We are, though, still back where Freud was with sexuality in 1905 when it comes to that other great drive of Freud's discovery: aggression, thanatos, the urge to dominate, degrade, and destroy other people. The problem is that we will not face the existence of these feelings within ourselves. We are quite willing to think about them-cannibals, maybe, but us-cannibals is asking too much. Benjamin has accomplished so much in the direction of lifting repression and amnesia and making us remember what it was like to be an infant that I, for one,

wish that she had gone even further.

No book as profound and as controversial as this can fail to raise some objections. That is part of its purpose and its significance, and by addressing as she so boldly has the difficult subject of domination and submission Jessica Benjamin has contributed an important addition to our understanding of human interaction in general. The reader of this work is destined to enjoy a rare intellectual, and moral, experience. □

BOOK REVIEW

The Right Sort of Zionism

Alfred Kazin

The Labyrinth of Exile: A Life of Theodor Herzl by Ernst Pawel. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989, 554 pp.

The Slopes of Lebanon by Amos Oz, translated from the Hebrew by Maurie Goldberg-Bartura. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989, 225 pp.

"If you will it, it is no dream," Theodor Herzl assured his followers about a Jewish state that seemed as inconceivable at his death in 1904 as everything else that was to happen to the Jews in the twentieth century. Without Herzl's sudden conversion to a Zionism that first existed in small, isolated patches of Czarist Russia, it is very likely that there would have been no Zionist movement and state as we now know them. By some amazing freak of character, Herzl—the Paris correspondent for the *Neue Freie Presse,* the boulevardier not disinclined to socialize with French anti-Semites, the unsuccessful and always shallow dramatist—found the Jews taking over his fantasy life and proceeded to do something about their "homecoming" to a wasteland in the Ottoman Empire that he visualized in the most romantic and triumphalist scenes imaginable.

Ernst Pawel, the ex-Berliner who wrote a superlative biography of Kafka and has now produced another on the sometimes unbelievable character and world-storming adventures of Herzl, is impressed with, grateful for, his subject's achievement, but by no means is he overpowered by Herzl himself. There is an acid quality to the book that owes something to Pawel's weary knowledge of the Jewish bourgeoisie in nineteenth-century Central Europe, and something more to his melancholy suspicion that Herzl's wholly political conception of the Zionist movement—dependent upon one or another of the Great Powers—may have been the recipe for unending trouble.

In fact, Pawel is fairly relentless in painting a picture of Herzl as a mama's boy who kept his parents under the same roof as his wife and children; he was a peacock, says Pawel, a snob who even as top Zionist looked down on "the Yid." And of course Pawel has read through all of Herzl's hopelessly conventional plays and his vast diaries, which give a sometimes narcissistic view of his encounters with the great men of his time.

Still, Pawel realizes that Herzl may have been that exception to the usual Don Quixote type—a successful visionary. He makes a strong case for the "royal" Herzl of the extraordinary "front" and the full-length black beard. This is the Herzl whose famous charm and majestic presence led the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe to fall at his feet. In the fullest, most abundantly ironic detail, Pawel conveys Herzl's ability to maneuver his way into the company of the Turkish Sultan (five times), the Kaiser's uncle the Grand Duke of Baden, the all-powerful financier Baron de Hirsch, Edmond de Rothschild, Pope Pius X, various Jewish and non-Jewish British grandees, and finally—just outside the walls of Jerusalem—the potentate Herzl most wanted to acquire for "the cause," Kaiser Wilhelm II himself.

The everlasting question about Herzl is: Just what turned this by no means enthusiastic Jew into the tireless organizer and spokesman for a movement based on the wretchedness of a social class fundamentally alien to him? Pawel shows how uneasy middle-class and even wealthy Jews began to feel in the presence of rising anti-Semitism. Vienna had the first openly anti-Semitic mayor, Karl Lueger. Herzl never quite faced the pan-Germanic perils of the dueling fraternity to which he proudly belonged at the University of Vienna. Yet, as Pawel shows, there was something vacant, restless, and unused about him, successful as he was as a foreign correspondent in Paris and a leading writer of feuilletons. His marriage was hysterically unhappy and frustrated him to the point of frenzy.

So what was it that led to the recognition that some great personal destiny, never separable from his ambition to reach the crest of European society, could actually be fulfilled through the "dream" of restoring the Jews to their ancient homeland? Restoration was the key, past and present fusing into the theme of "a land without people for a people without land." (There was an optical illusion here.) He did not really *see* the Arabs inhabiting Jaffa when he landed there. What he saw, and continued to see to the very end, was some legendary picture of himself as a prince of Israel meeting with other princes. He even envisaged dueling as a necessary prospect—between the right sort of Jews, of course—in the future state.

What made Herzl successful as a

Alfred Kazin's most recent books are A Writer's America: Landscape in Literature *(Knopf, 1988) and* Our New York, *with David Finn (Harper & Row, 1989).*

man of action for his time was the fact that he was a paternalist and imperialist of the old school—as were the princelings he had to negotiate with. The mama's boy felt like a "conqueror" (Freud's term for himself and others most deeply beloved at home), able to move with suppleness, grace, and insinuating charm.

Pawel is critical of Herzl's political strategy of always directing his energies at "the highest level." Jewish settlement, for instance, was made dependent on the Sultan or the Kaiser. (Later, with Weizmann, it was dependent on Britain.) Through his many maneuvers, Herzl in effect wrote history before it happened. In his visionary world, it was all a question of getting at the top man. And wasn't he paying all the necessary expenses out of his rich wife's dowry?

In keeping with the disenchanted spirit of the book, Pawel's biography is dedicated to "the spiritual heirs of Ahad Ha-Am." "One of the people," Ahad Ha-Am was the Russian-born moral philosopher whose idea of Zionism was not so much a political Utopia as it was a homeland based on Jewish culture. Ha-Am was a "cultural" Zionist —the very greatest—who wanted to work directly with the Jewish masses themselves. Without restoring their spiritual vitality, the downtrodden Jews of Eastern Europe would sink even deeper into the pit dug for them by the violently hostile governments and peoples of Eastern Europe. Only by their own labor and with their cultural traditions reinvigorated in peaceful circumstances could the Jewish people justify the long struggle to reestablish themselves in their ancient homeland. Needless to say, Ha-Am's spiritual heirs don't exactly hold positions of power in Israel today.

One remembers Ha-Am's early hopes and ideals when reading Amos Oz's angry book on the moral chaos in Israel following the war in—and over—Lebanon. Put together from Oz's reflections in the Israeli Labor press, *The Slopes of Lebanon* targets then Prime Minister Menachem Begin as the frivolously arrogant promoter of the Lebanon War. Oz is brilliantly caustic and fiery, illuminated from within by his wrath over the first war the Israel Defense Forces fought that had no defensive rationale.

Here he is on the opening of the war in Lebanon:

> Only the children who have not seen the previous performances are excited.
>
> But this time there is something missing. This time the familiar show seems to have shrunk. After a while you can feel a difference between this time and previous times; this time your stomach doesn't contract in spasms of anxiety.... And suddenly it dawns on you. This game is fixed. The results of this war are clear from the outset, and, in any event, not one sliver of it will reach us here. The whole war will be taking place in another country, and may Allah have mercy on them.... This time it's not the whole nation that is at war; it's just the army, the government, and the newspapers. These lines bear witness to the abomination of this war, which was not forced upon us and was not fought to anticipate a threat to our survival, but, rather, to "achieve a result" or to "strike while the iron is hot." It's something like a timely investment in the stock market.

In order to justify the Lebanon attack, Oz predicted, Begin's followers would have retroactively to "defile" Israel's earlier wars, claiming (along with Israel's enemies) that Israel in all these wars actually did have a choice. But the usual sense of peril, now pumped up artificially, dictated a revival of the buzzwords from the days of 1967. "A preemptive strike." "To take them off the playing field for the next ten years." Labor, which was supposed to have "lost touch with the people," and which—according to the Likud—had lost in the elections just the year past for its opposition to the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, was strongly advised by "realists" now "to go along with the people and not against them."

That very first afternoon of the war, the Israeli Air Force launched a massive bombing attack on the suburbs of Beirut. (Oz does not note that the complete television films of the bombing were not shown in Israel.) The bombers destroyed the municipal stadium, which was supposed to have served as a huge arsenal for the "terrorists." Israeli newscasters gleefully reported that the flames "could be seen for dozens of kilometers." The Army radio station broadcast old-time Hebrew melodies. The Israeli government hoped, says Oz, for flurries of Katyusha rockets into the villages of Galilee. This would provide justification for an invasion. The PLO, this time, did not oblige. Israel went in nevertheless. In the ensuing cockiness there was talk of occupying half the country to *prevent* Katyusha attacks and thus turn Lebanon into "West Bank Number Two."

Herzl, in his dreams for "my people the Jews," could not have foreseen a Jewish fortress state steeped in perpetual insecurity and even panic.

This cockiness was magnified by a new messianism projected by rabbis—though not by them alone. The truest of true believers in the Orthodox Mea She'arim quarter continued to pronounce Israel "heretical" and "illegitimate" because the restoration of the Jewish commonwealth must be signaled by the Messiah. But there were super-patriotic rabbis enough to give their blessing to the Lebanon War. Rabbi Dov Lior would soon proclaim in the *B'nai Akiva Journal* that the war was a punishment from heaven for "the sin of having handed over the Sinai Peninsula to the Egyptians." Yet the war was the beginning of the Redemption, since "we had liberated the Land of Cedars, which, according to the Bible, was part of the inheritance of the Children of Israel who had gone forth from Egypt." "We" had been commanded, as far back as the days of Joshua, son of Nun, to conquer it, but had been remiss about this until now.

Returning from a conference, Oz in his car counted almost 150 tanks headed north on tank carriers. The car radio "showered us with nostalgic Hebrew melodies, not the marching songs other nations play on the eve of war, but soul-melodies full of charm and longing." This really got to him:

> To what tribal codes did these melodies address themselves? What did the tribe want to whisper to itself in the few precious hours that were left before it set out to overrun

Lebanon under a pretext that was mendacious, self-righteous? What emotions were those cloying tunes meant to arouse—or to silence? Perhaps this: That we are beautiful, gentle people, righteous, pure, and sensitive, completely out of touch with our actions; that we will be forgiven because our pure and poetic hearts know nothing about the filth that is on our hands; that the evening scent of roses will come to perfume the stench of dead bodies that will pile up by the hundreds and thousands in the days to come.

Begin's war did much to keep Lebanon's incessant civil wars roiling by trying to foist "the corrupt Gemayel family as rulers all over Lebanon" and "turn Lebanon into a client state of Israel." The "rotten Christian Phalangists" had been created out of their enthusiasm for Fascism. And then the unforgettable, the unforgotten horror. "Within earshot of Israeli army positions, the illustrious Phalangist heroes of Houbeike and his cohorts, their way lighted by the flares of the Israeli army, slaughtered men, women, and children in the Shatilla and Sabra camps."

After Lebanon, Oz is not afraid to take on the religious Right, the Gush Emunim, and most of all his own Labor party, which is paralyzed by fear of Israeli chauvinism. Labor, Oz thinks, will be replaced by a different opposition, which will have the guts to say, "There is an opposition between us and the hawkish right wing. We seek an honorable compromise, while they fantasize about a decision made in blood and fire. In the meantime, until we have an opposition here, where will we hide our shame?" Not afraid to speak of the Jews as a "tribe" when they behave as one, or to be scathing about "the twisted Jewish mind" when it in fact gets twisted, Oz brings us face to face with the dangers posed by so much power, so much hubris. And this in the very context of Israel's obvious isolation among the nations and the revival (if that is the word) of anti-Semitism.

One of the most moving sections of his book details Oz's reaction to Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shoah*. Film critic Pauline Kael revealed something about herself as an American Jew when she complained in the December 30, 1985, issue of the *New Yorker* that *Shoah* is aesthetically deficient, not interesting, so that "sitting in a theater seat for a film as full of dead spaces as this one seems to me a form of self-punishment." For Oz, *Shoah* was the most intense personal experience. He lived every moment of it over and over, lived it with the living and the dead: the barber who had to cut his own wife's hair before she entered the gas chamber, the slightly demented "sweet singer" who charmed the guards and the Jew-hating Polish peasants with his old songs. The million children Hitler slaughtered were not there to be seen on the screen. But we did see the "fox-like" Polish engine driver who drove his human freight right up to the camp. He draws his finger across his throat, to show what he knew then and now.

Oz covers everything from the turmoil of Lebanon to his own frustrating struggles for peace with the Palestinians. He is under no illusions about their hatred of Israel, but he thinks that neither party can ever have any peace for itself without peace for the other. And he can be very ironic about life in Israel itself, which is a Jewish family play that Herzl, the boulevard dramatist, could never have written. Herzl, in his dreams for "my people the Jews," could not have foreseen a Jewish fortress state steeped in perpetual insecurity and even panic. Nor could he have foreseen a Sabra writer like Amos Oz, whose literary gifts and total honesty are also a tribute to the underlying strength of Israel. □

BOOK REVIEW

History: A Correspondence Course

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl

The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, 1932–1940, edited by Gershom Scholem, translated by Gary Smith and Andre Lefevere. Schocken Books, 1989, 276 pp.

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl is the author of Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World *(Yale University Press, 1982) and* Anna Freud: A Biography *(Summit Books, 1988).*

Gershom Scholem bestowed on his twenty-five-year friendship with Walter Benjamin its forms for posterity and its commentary. He, the survivor, was the historian. So when he discovered that his letters to Benjamin between 1933 and 1940 had miraculously survived in a German archive, Scholem put them together with Benjamin's—most of which had already been published—and presented both sides of their conversation. The collection was first published in German in 1980, and Schocken Books has now brought it out in English (well translated by Gary Smith and Andre Lefevere, and usefully introduced by Anson Rabinbach), seven years after Scholem died in Jerusalem at the age of eighty-five.

The *Correspondence* was only one of Scholem's many memorials to his friend. With great devotion and loyalty, Scholem helped with an edition of many of the *Schriften* Benjamin

produced before 1940, when—without material resources, and thwarted at the Spanish border as he tried to flee the German Army's advance through France—he committed suicide. Scholem also co-edited two volumes of Benjamin's letters (1966) and wrote a memoir, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship.* Then he portrayed Benjamin once again in his autobiography, *From Berlin to Jerusalem.*

Scholem's various reflections on his friendship with Benjamin give off none of that warmth of Mediterranean *humanitas* that beams from the exemplary essay Montaigne dedicated to his friend who died too young, Étienne de La Boétie:

> What we ordinarily call friends and friendships are nothing but acquaintanceships and familiarities formed by some chance or convenience, by means of which our souls are bound to each other. In the friendship I speak of, our souls mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them, and cannot find it again. If you press me to tell why I loved him, I feel that this cannot be expressed, except by answering: Because it was he, because it was I.

By contrast, in the friendship between Scholem and Benjamin the seams were stitched and restitched through many deep arguments and rough reconciliations. Good seams make good patchwork quilts. "A correspondence such as we maintain is, as you know, something very precious," Benjamin reflected in 1934, "but also something calling for circumspection." There were explosive political and intellectual topics not to be broached, and intimacy—the domain of sexuality and love of women, but also the delicate domain of what Benjamin called "inner equilibrium"—was not to be addressed, though it could be evoked, alluded to.

Scholem felt that offering the friendship and the correspondence to the public also called for more layers of circumspection. He wrapped his presentations in his cut of a peculiarly pre-War German-Jewish cloth, a weave of refined courtesy and raw harshness spun *de haut en bas,* quite uncanny for anyone not acculturated to it from birth. Thus, Scholem found it appropriate to set as a postscript at the heartrending cessation of their correspondence an excerpt from his memoir in which we read of Walter Benjamin: "Despite all the astonishing patience he displayed in the years after 1933, combined with a high degree of tenacity, he was not tough enough for the events of 1940."

This awful postscript judgment is, after its fashion, written in a language of friendship. It is very literally—some might feel over-literally—obedient to the standards Benjamin had set for how a survivor-friend should play the role of biographer. Characteristically, the instructions were veiled and in the negative: do not be a Max Brod writing sentimental biography and schmaltz about a "saintly" Franz Kafka. Brod's biography of Kafka, Benjamin noted in a 1938 letter, was written from an attitude of "ostentatious intimacy." This, Benjamin said, was "the most irreverent attitude imaginable."

Behind all their carefully kept distances, most palpable whenever Scholem came near Benjamin's heresy, Marxism, lay what Scholem named simply (in the penultimate, desperate letter he launched into wartime France) "what we hold in common." In his subtle, complicated style Benjamin replied that "the arrangements made by the *Zeitgeist*" were helping them to safeguard what they held in common by setting up "markers in the desert landscape of the present that cannot be overlooked by old Bedouins like us." They each had (as Benjamin once said of Proust) a *thème de l'éternité* and a *thème du temps*; the darkening world-time lit up the former. Benjamin's last text, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in which he cites a poem of Scholem's, made clear the common direction in which their thoughts were cocked:

> The themes which monastic discipline assigned to friars for meditation were designed to turn them away from the world and its affairs. The thoughts which we are developing here originate from similar considerations.

As historians and commentators they also each held fiercely to shared plans for discovering in the past a key period—connected by a secret passageway to the present—and then illuminating the linkage, the constellation. Benjamin thought that such work would blast away at the usual

historian's image of time as one moment following upon another, one event causing another, a progression. Politicians who appeal to Progress are served by river-of-time images, which they exploit to entangle people in false hopes, technocratic and fascistic fantasies of inevitable triumph over nature. The history of constellations Benjamin invoked would, on the other hand, redeem a piece of the past and be, for and in the present, "Messianic time."

Behind all their carefully kept distances lay what Scholem named simply "what we hold in common."

Both Scholem's historical criticism and his messianism were more specific. He gave his entire scholarly attention over decades to the Kabbala and the possibility that Judaism might be enlightened and renewed by its sacred texts. To him, the work of politicians —for good or for ill—would mean nothing to Jews who had not first culturally and spiritually redeemed themselves. The moment of the past he looked to was around 1280, in Spain, where a man of vision, perhaps Moses de Léon, composed the *Zohar* (*The Book of Splendor*), which Scholem saw as "supplementing the Bible and the Talmud on a new level of religious consciousness."

Benjamin took heart from Scholem's "living Judaism," but he ranged more profanely and looked especially to "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," by which he meant Paris of the Second Empire, before the aftershocks of the 1848 revolutions had finished corrupting (with visions of will to power) all varieties of politicians, right to left. This was the Paris where there were still echoes abroad from Fourier's lucid dream of "efficient cooperative labor" in which nature would not be exploited and laborers would never be slaves. Benjamin wanted to write a book, he told Scholem, that would "unravel the nineteenth century from France's perspective." (What this meant for German Jews of Benjamin's generation was noted by his émigré friend Hannah Arendt in the first third of her *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* which she wrote following in Benjamin's footsteps: "The twenty years of Napoleon III's rule over a French Empire were an age of prosperity and security for French Jewry much like the two decades before the outbreak of the First World War in Germany and Austria.")

World events since the year of Walter Benjamin's suicide have certainly spoken loudly that those who worship at the shrines of History on the March, those who remain oblivious to the obvious unpredictability of human affairs—the possibility of the unprecedented, the inevitability of the unexpected—will pay dearly for their deafness. But events need their commentators, too, and Benjamin and Scholem and their generation of uprooted Jewish intellectuals were good teachers.

For friends such as Scholem and Benjamin, producers of texts, correspondence could in many ways be more useful than conversations; they were not, as the cognoscenti now say, "logocentric." Despite their great desires to meet, they kept each other at a distance when work demanded complete attention. Benjamin's Paris project drew him away from—as it turned out—their last chance to meet. He was with Bertolt Brecht in Denmark for the summer of 1938, more peaceful and secure than he had been for many months, working against a publishing deadline. "My stay here is tantamount to monastic confinement.... But I need this seclusion...." The essay on Baudelaire that he was writing felt, at last, like a working model for the Paris project; its prose put "into motion the entire mass of thoughts and studies I have launched myself into over the last years...."

Scholem was silent for three months after he received this excited explanation. Then he provided a lengthy explanation of his own, which said nothing of what his disappointment meant to him, but instead charted a general lethargy into which he had fallen, briefly mentioned a medical problem with his eyes, and evoked with vague horror the "most magnificent global catastrophe." At this point in the correspondence, Benjamin was the one who kept their bearings and provided the standards for endurance: "Every line we succeed in publishing today—no matter how uncertain the future to which we entrust it—is a victory wrenched from the powers of darkness."

To the end, Benjamin continued to use his letters to Scholem for rendering an ongoing account to himself of the conditions and means of his productions and of his life as a producer. He registered how his "small-scale victories" against the forces that threatened his thought with destruction were forged, as he said, in literary forms determined by the needs of combat. Letters, too, were a form fit for an infantryman. His own situation as an intellectual with only the most tenuous access to the "intellectual industry" was Benjamin's microcosm for examining the permeability of world history to any spark of the messianic coming from beyond its borders.

Scholem—with his salaried professorship, students, forums, and publishers—was the archivist for the future, and Benjamin safely deposited with him a copy of each production he managed to slip into the ever-diminishing world of European journals open to Jewish contributors. The Library of Jerusalem was crucial. Nonetheless, in the chaotic days just before the war when journals provided single author's copies, Benjamin kept the copies for himself, lining his own burrows. He knew who was writing the words he essentially needed to have at hand.

That loneliness of Benjamin's was not like the one he had found characteristic of Proust, "a loneliness which pulls the world down into its vortex with the force of a maelstrom," churning up "invectives against friendship." Benjamin's loneliness, rather, went out into the world and challenged his friends, as later his admirers, to read its code. In response, the "intellectual industry" of Benjamin scholarship has assumed contours like those of the Kafka scholarship Benjamin himself surveyed succinctly in 1934: "There are two ways to miss the point of Kafka's works. One is to interpret them naturally, the other is the supernatural interpretation." Benjamin's letters to Scholem provide one of the best guides available for reading Kafka, for their preoccupation with Kafka is really about how an isolated intellectual can make a habitat of friendship through an act of interpretation.

While he was alive, Gershom Scholem called all other Benjamin interpreters false and insisted on his own claim as he memorialized his friendship.

Hannah Arendt, when she heard from a third party that Scholem had castigated her long philosophical preface to an English edition of Benjamin's essays, *Illuminations,* decoded the loneliness from which Scholem spoke. "In my life," she said, "I have loved more than once. But Scholem has loved only Benjamin. So, Scholem should have Benjamin." Those from the younger generations who encounter Scholem and Benjamin only as readers of their written words are more likely to want to interpret a Benjamin for themselves, and a Scholem as well. But they will, by looking, be educated to recognize in Arendt's remark—so tough and abrupt, so generous—a product of the same cultural provenance as this precious *Correspondence.* □

BOOK REVIEW

Occupational Hazards

Joel Greenberg

From Beirut to Jerusalem by Thomas L. Friedman. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989, 525 pp.

Perhaps the single most important contribution Thomas L. Friedman makes in *From Beirut to Jerusalem* is his uncompromising de-heroization of the parties involved in the ongoing Palestinian–Israeli conflict. There are no "just" causes here, no courageous peoples fighting for high ideals. The characters on Friedman's Middle East stage are antiheroes, paralyzed by the fears and traumas of their past, caught in tribal conflicts from which they are unable to break free. They wrap themselves in "the loincloth of the victim" and in self-delusion, and flee from moral responsibility, honest self-criticism, and realistic politics which might lead them to reconciliation. "Such is the real world," writes Friedman, "ambiguous, unheroic, full of transient emotional highs and many more lows."

Yasir Arafat, who, according to Friedman, became a symbol to the Palestinians because of what he represented, not because of anything he delivered,

> taught his people how to look at the world through a crystal ball ... where the difference between reality and fantasy would be blurred, distorted and thrown out of proportion ... where defeats could be declared victories and total darkness transformed into glimmering lights at the end of the tunnel.

The Palestinian predicament, therefore, "could not bear up to close scrutiny ... it could never be subjected to real empirical analysis—otherwise it would deliver heartbreak and resignation."

Similarly, in Israel, leaders of the Labor and Likud parties did all they could to avoid making hard choices about the future of the territories and Israel's relationship to the Palestinians. For years, they refused to frame clear alternatives for the Israeli public. Their escape from reality climaxed in a coalition government, a "massive, inert ... functional pragmatic alliance in the middle" formed precisely to avoid having to deal with Israel's central existential dilemma, which appeared too frightening to face. This, says Friedman, led to the postponement of real politics, and to the "symbiotic paralysis" of Israeli leaders and the "emotional hibernation" of the public.

Along with the absence of courageous leadership have come grass-roots failures. Despite the drama of their intifada, Palestinians have been unable to turn their backs on Israel and disengage through civil disobedience. They dutifully line up to obtain new ID cards issued by the military government to tighten its control over the Gaza Strip; they continue working in Israel and doing business with Israelis, while some opt out and line up at the U.S. consulate for American visas.

Israelis, too, drop out. At Tel Aviv bars, in a dogged pursuit of "normality" and good times, they try to forget the uprising and its troubles. Many only give the intifada a passing thought, and few seem to be anguishing over the moral questions it has raised. Like the Palestinians, Israelis are drawn to America like a magnet.

Leaders of the Labor and Likud parties did all they could to avoid making hard choices about the future.

There is an important lesson here for Israelis, diaspora Jews, and Palestinians who have fallen victim to either an idealization of the Palestinian struggle for independence or of Israel's "struggle for survival." Both struggles are nurtured by myths, which Friedman never stops puncturing. He has no time for the whining of the perennial Palestinian victim, just as he finds tiresome the Israeli pretensions of "legality" and "morality" purportedly guiding policy toward the Palestinians in the occupied territories. He relentlessly exposes the "moral double bookkeeping" practiced by both sides, in which they project one set of ethical standards to the outside world but reserve another, more ruthless code for each other.

The picture Friedman paints is, unfortunately, still true two years after

Joel Greenberg covers the West Bank for the Jerusalem Post.

the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in the territories. While the intifada has shaken the ground under Israel and brought significant changes in Palestinian politics, self-awareness, and communal organization, it does not appear to have changed the fundamental disease of delusion and reality-avoidance so skillfully diagnosed by Friedman.

The Israeli and Palestinian leaderships are too mired in the status quo, still too committed to old positions, afraid of the internal rifts that could be opened by a plunge into an unknown future far more frightening than the painful but familiar present.

The Israeli government collapsed recently over its inability to promote its own proposal for elections in the territories. Any new coalition would likely have serious difficulty in discussing a wider settlement entailing tough decisions on the relinquishment of territory. The consensus remains opposed to talks with the PLO, and the right wing of the Israeli political spectrum wants to avoid talking even to West Bank Palestinians nominated by the organization.

The PLO sticks to its dream of a Palestinian state to be achieved through an international conference, and expects to discuss this final goal in a proposed preliminary dialogue on elections. By insisting on high-profile involvement in such talks, the PLO seeks to avoid a process which could legitimize a leadership from the occupied territories at its expense. But it risks an Israeli walkout and a lost opportunity to move one step closer to independence.

The consequences of continued stalemate are already apparent. The violent clashes in the territories, while no longer a mass phenomenon, are more brutal and deadly. Israeli troops are now permitted to shoot at any masked Palestinian when trying to catch him, and these masked youths have organized in gangs that savagely execute alleged "collaborators" and occasionally fire shots and throw explosives at soldiers. Meanwhile Israelis have learned to disengage emotionally.

Palestinians, too, are showing signs of wear and tear. The discipline that characterized the early months of the intifada has been broken. Internecine killings are a daily phenomenon, supporters of rival factions get into occasional gang fights in the streets, and leaflets from the uprising's leadership are sometimes issued in two versions, bearing the stamp of either mainstream or radical factions. Attempts to wage broad-based civil disobedience have failed, and the uprising is being waged by a hard-core minority of youths who have made a career of confronting soldiers, killing and assaulting "collaborators," scrawling graffiti, and distributing leaflets.

A prediction made by Friedman has already come true:

> The term intifada will continue, but only as a new name for the status quo—maybe a more violent, more painful status quo, but a status quo with which both sides, nevertheless, learn to live. The Israelis will remain on top, the Palestinians will make sure they never enjoy it, and everything else will just be commentary.

There is no guarantee, however, that this new status quo will endure, or not degenerate into an ever-worsening cycle of violence. That, in fact, has been the course of the intifada: gradual but steady escalation by both sides. The first half of Friedman's book, in which he describes the chaos of Lebanon in brilliant narrative and telling anecdotes, is a glimpse into the solutionless future. Absence of a settlement can only breed aggravated intercommunal violence, leading to the Lebanonization of the occupied territories.

This has already begun. Soldiers in disguise lie in ambush for wanted Palestinian youths, hunting them down in ways similar to the stakeouts for terrorists on Israel's northern border. As in Lebanon, authority is fragmented. Journalists have to run the gauntlet of different checkpoints, those manned by the army and those set up in villages by youthful intifada activists suspicious of outsiders. During the war in Lebanon, reporters carried press credentials issued by different militias for presentation at the appropriate checkpoints. On the West Bank, they find it expedient to hold two press cards: one issued by the Israeli Government Press Office, the other by the Arab Journalists Association, for presentation to the *shabab* (youth) controlling Arab villages and towns.

As in Beirut, Friedman's "city of versions" (where there is no truth but only conflicting accounts by combatants), the facts are hard to come by in the occupied territories. Truth lies buried there under the army version, the Palestinian version, the settlers' version, each reflecting a different perception.

The way out of this slide toward anarchy, according to Friedman, could be found through American efforts to gently but firmly coax Palestinians and Israelis toward negotiations, using a mixture of friendship, hard bargaining, and ruthlessness when necessary against American adversaries. But the real work has to be done here in Israel and the territories. The Palestinians, as Friedman rightfully argues, can hope to succeed only if they wage a widely based civil disobedience campaign that will make them truly indigestible to Israel, while delivering an explicit message of recognition of the Jewish state.

The Israelis, for their part, could create an incentive for recognition by offering the Palestinians territorial compromise and by recognizing their right to political freedom. This can only happen, however, when the majority of Israelis become convinced that their existence is not jeopardized by compromise, and that the status quo is intolerable and must be ended. Half the battle must be waged inside Israel. Israeli peace activists, rather than spending time in emotionally gratifying but politically marginal meetings with Palestinians, have a tougher and more important job to do: they must convince their brethren that the risks of dialogue are preferable to the abyss opened by the status quo. □

BOOK REVIEW

Jewish Books for the Nineties

Daniel Landes

Since the rise of the State of Israel, Jews have justly celebrated their emergence from powerlessness. Only now have Jews discovered that power—like exile—is a mixed blessing, for it saddles its possessor with troubling limitations. Jews continue, for example, to proclaim the mystical unity of peoplehood despite the real cracks that became evident during the "Who is a Jew?" controversy. At bottom lies a more fundamental question about the nature of Jewish identity and destiny: What is a Jew? Not surprisingly, then, the best Jewish books of the eighties have had the character of political-theological treatises: in one fashion or another they try to locate where the Jews are, and to suggest—if only implicitly—how they can best transform their fortune.

In the modern era Jews have assumed that the study of history is the key to transformative understanding. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (University of Washington Press, 1982) provides a slim and elegant argument to disabuse us of that myth. The historian has not been the custodian of Jewish memory in past eras, Yerushalmi argues, and the study of history in the present age cannot be the basis of Jewish survival and identity. The Bible is essentially the record of God's covenant with Israel; the early rabbis return to that record in order to understand their own era. In medieval times, liturgy and ritual, not the study of history, were the ways in which group memory was preserved and enhanced: "...halakhah (jurisprudence), philosophy, and Kabbalah—each of which offered an all-embracing orientation, and none of which required a knowledge of history in order to be cultivated or confirmed. These alone led to ultimate truths and to spiritual felicity."

In the modern era Jews have assumed that the study of history is the key to transformative understanding.

Only in the modern age did historiography replace the study of sacred text. The result was a perceived discontinuity in Jewish living and "an ever growing decay of Jewish group memory." The valorization of history became the "faith of fallen Jews" and the means of validation for all modern Jewish movements. Jewish historiography, with its movement toward ever greater specialization and objectivity, has concomitantly slid toward atomization and relativity. As a result, Jewish history and thereby Judaism and the Jewish people have become impervious to any "organizing principle." Jewish collective memory, which preserves and informs group consciousness, is therefore often threatened by historiography.

Those elements of the past that jumble into the present must nonetheless be confronted, so that intelligent political decisions can be made. In *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (Schocken Books, 1986) David Biale attacks the Zionist "memory" of Jewish history, which assumes that Jews had great power during biblical antiquity, were powerless during the exile, and returned to power in 1948. Biale argues that it was only in the Davidic-Solomonic dynasty that the Hebrews had true control over their nation; at all other points, uneasy and limited self-governance was secured only through realistic subservience to a nearby "superpower"—variously Assyria, Babylonia, or Rome. During the supposed "powerless" medieval period, Jews did achieve a degree of self-rule under rabbinic leadership through accommodation to Christian and Moslem rulers. That accommodation also earned the Jews a measure of protection during a generally insecure period in history. In Biale's view the Holocaust was exceptional—it constituted the only case of "government organized massacre."

The real lesson to be learned from both the biblical and medieval periods is that accommodation to an available superpower is the best strategy for survival. Biale worries that Jews who accept the old, false memories of the unbridled power of ancient Israel and the complete powerlessness of the Diaspora will lead today's Israel toward adventurism and a misbegotten sense of itself as a major power. Rather, Israel should preserve "absolute principles" of justice, which go hand in hand with a humble sense of vulnerability, a strategy better suited to achieving security, especially in an age in which even superpowers are subject to the mutual powerlessness generated by the possibility of nuclear war.

Likewise a foe of distorting memory is Israel's former chief of military intelligence, Yehoshafat Harkabi, in his book *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome: Risk and Realism in International Politics* (Rossel Books, 1983). Bar Kokhba is remembered as the great Jewish hero whose failed revolt against Roman rule (132–135 C.E.) was seen by his contemporary, the great Rabbi Akiba, as messianic. Harkabi argues that the Jews should have realized that the revolt was doomed from the beginning, since the Romans were unbeatable. This unrealistic war was therefore immoral because it placed "national existence in ultimate jeopardy." For Harkabi, the real culprit is an unbending ideology that pursues victory even when it is unattainable. Harkabi uses this argument to explain why he strongly op-

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poses the Greater Israel movement, which he argues cannot be successful in the face of Arab intransigence and decidedly negative world opinion. It is unrealistic to expect victory; risks, therefore, should not be taken. Only accommodation can save the day. He urges a "partial Zionism" which attempts a higher quality of social life within limited borders.

The third attack upon memory is Benny Morris's *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949* (Oxford University Press, 1988). Morris, the *Jerusalem Post*'s diplomatic correspondent, rejects both the Jewish memory that Arabs fled the Land of Israel at the call of their leaders and the Arab memory that the Jews had always planned to expel them.

None of the above three books on Israel are moralistic. Biale and Harkabi argue for accommodation, while Morris's book is a rejection of claims to moral superiority by both Arabs and Jews. The question then becomes: What can be expected from the Arabs? A disturbing assessment is given in Bernard Lewis's book, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (W. W. Norton, 1986). Lewis shows that classical anti-Semitism, first brought into the Arab world by Greek Orthodox and Catholic Arabs under the spell of French anti-Semitic literature, and later augmented under Nazi influence, is presently an integral part of contemporary Arab intellectual life. Though expressed as anti-Zionism, Arab anti-Semitism contains racial and religious hatred. Lewis hopes that this pervasive form of anti-Semitism might be alleviated by a resolution of the Arab–Israeli conflict: "Arab or Muslim anti-Semitism is still something that comes from above, from the leadership, rather than from below, from the society—a political and polemical weapon to be discarded if and when it is no longer required."

Philosopher Emil Fackenheim is pessimistic about easy solutions of the Arab–Israeli conflict and is suspicious of those who seek a "comprehensive solution" to hostility. He reminds us that "anti-Semitism, old style, seeks Jewish genocide; new style, it seeks Jewish politicide; and in both cases the poison infects not only those who, though opposing it, debate and thereby legitimate it." (*The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim,* ed. Michael L. Morgan, Wayne State University Press, 1987). Fackenheim renounces discussion of Jewish powerlessness as retrograde thinking from *galut* Judaism, which came to an end at Auschwitz: "The Holocaust was the climactic event, surpassable only in quantity but not in quality of a bimillenial, unholy togetherness of groundless Jew-hatred and Jewish powerlessness. Following this event, Jews find themselves morally obliged, on their own behalf as well as that of the world, to break this togetherness. And since not they but only others can do away with the hatred, they must, so far as possible, do away with the powerlessness."

The question of how to remember the Holocaust is a nexus of debate between Fackenheim on one side and Biale and Harkabi on the other. Biale fears that the Holocaust, "an extreme aberration in history," is now being remembered as the normal state of Jewish powerlessness, and that this "legacy of powerlessness becomes the justification for the exercise of power ... power without restraint." Harkabi focuses upon the doomed heroism of the ghetto revolts and warns that this memory should not lead to "an attitude that the Holocaust is prone to implant in our national thinking, namely a tendency to deny the importance of results.... In all situations other than the Holocaust (i.e., Israel's), ignoring consequences is a death cult."

Paul Hilberg's massive reworking of *The Destruction of the European Jews: Revised and Definitive Edition* (three volumes, Holmes and Meier, 1985) focuses upon what it means to be powerless under a totalitarian regime bent upon murder. Even if the Holocaust was an aberration, an instance of state-supported mass destruction never seen before (try telling that to the Armenians!), it soon became repeatable —witness Cambodia's killing fields. Simply put: the worst can happen, and while power brings risks, those risks are better alternatives than the condition of powerlessness. *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941–1945* (Pantheon, 1984) by David S. Wyman documents the absurdity of relying upon others to secure Jewish survival: "It was not a lack of workable plans that stood in the way of saving thousands more European Jews ... the real obstacle was the absence of a strong desire to rescue Jews." Deborah Lipstadt's book, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust* (Free Press, 1986) explains how American newspapers first were unable and later refused to accept and report on what was happening to the Jews of Europe. When the newspapers did transmit facts of the disaster, they tended to place blame for the Jews' fate on the Jews themselves. The careful historical work of Lewis, Hilberg, Wyman, and Lipstadt helps to reinforce the collective memory of Jewish vulnerability in the twentieth century; after their work, only one step need be taken to apply Fackenheim's teaching about the necessity and reality of power.

In recent years, the Jewish community has experienced an identity crisis. Much of the controversy has centered upon a proposed amendment to Israel's Law of Return, which would allow Jewish converts to claim citizenship upon arrival only if their conversions were accomplished according to Halakha. The real conflict, however, has emerged in America. The most important work on this topic is the well-researched and well-written book *Love and Tradition: Marriage Between Jews and Christians* (Schocken Books, 1985) by sociologist Egon Mayer. Mayer is positive about "conversionist" marriages in which the Christian partner converts to Judaism; he is also upbeat about the possibilities for "integrationist" marriages in which the partners blend their family heritages into a new form. According to Mayer, these "integrationist" marriages can lead to an increased commitment to Judaism—if the Jewish community makes the effort to include the couple. This, along with a noticeable lack of sympathy for Orthodox positions, has made *Love and Tradition* the bible of liberal Jews, who tend to support both outreach to Jews who have intermarried and acceptance of patrilineal descent as a valid determinant of Jewish identity.

Here traditional Jews part company. This is the subject of *The Coming Cataclysm: The Orthodox–Reform Rift and the Future of the Jewish People* (Mosaic Press, 1984), by the Orthodox scholar Reuven P. Bulka. He argues that in the past the Orthodox movement has differentiated between institutions and people, thereby denouncing

Reform Judaism but accepting Reform Jews as full Jews. Because liberal rabbis have chosen to reinterpret halakhic regulation of marriage, divorce, and conversion, however, the Orthodox movement has difficulty maintaining the distinction between the Reform movement and its members. Rejection of the *get* (religious divorce) procedure, for example, creates a legal quandary for the Orthodox. According to Halakha, if a Jew does not secure a *get,* any children he or she has after remarrying are considered bastards, or *mamzerim,* and cannot participate fully in the Jewish community. Bulka's recommendation is that the Orthodox and Reform movements should overcome their isolation and agree upon a central "theological clearing house" to administer all conversions and divorces. This would require acceptance of halakhic standards by the liberals, leniency by the Orthodox, and mutually-agreed-upon rabbinical authorities who would conduct the procedures. Historical consciousness can help to spur this process, just as the disagreements over the requirement for personal status were a decisive element in the separation of Christianity and later Karaism from Judaism.

Three major new theologies have emerged in the eighties that rework basic notions of Jewish faith. They evidence a rare sophistication in contemporary thought and make knowledgeable use of sources. The authors are students of one of this century's preeminent thinkers, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. It should be noted that the *Rav* (master) eschewed the usual modalities of theology—dogmatics and philosophic arguments. Each of the students has chosen a particular form of the *Rav's* thinking for the basis of their own imaginative theological explication: David Hartman employs Halakha, Michael Wyshogrod concentrates on the Bible, and Rabbi Irving Greenberg explicates the holidays. The three emerge, in the end, with quite different descriptions of the nature of the Jewish people. In Hartman's view, the Jews are limited to existence in the world only, while Wyshogrod understands the Jewish people to possess an essence that goes beyond this world. Greenberg's vision is of a people that exists between these two poles of immanence and transcendence.

Hartman's *A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism* (Free Press, 1985) explicates a philosophy of Halakha that emphasizes human adequacy, the autonomous moral spirit, a commitment to ethics, and a universalistic worldview. Halakha, then, insists on the pursuit of justice in this world, not the hereafter, and suggests the value of pluralism. Hartman draws upon Exodus as a covenantal model that expresses divine power as grace. In the Exodus view, God works freely, spontaneously, and miraculously. People attempt to secure supernatural intervention either in this world, through petitionary prayer, or during the messianic era, when a total transformation of human nature will mean the vanquishing of sin.

Hartman prefers the Sinai covenantal model, which emphasizes both divine self-limitation and human responsibility. The Torah is the vehicle of God's will; God is within Israel through the Torah. It is human decision making in interpreting and thereby creating Torah that directs people's actions. The messianic hope therefore becomes sociopolitical reality; God works with Israel rather than abruptly transforming history and nature. The messianic period represents an ethical ideal of human responsibility and action and not the end of this difficult world. The State of Israel therefore has religious significance not in supernatural but rather in natural terms. Israel challenges the Jewish people to live a more responsible life under the scope of covenantal halakhic action.

Michael Wyshogrod's *The Body of Faith: Judaism as Corporeal Election* (Seabury Press, 1983) affirms that God dwells in the midst of the people of Israel. This is the central truth of the Bible and, by extension, all other faiths. For this is how God enters the universe —as a result of God's love for Israel. Since God loves Israel He wishes to be with her (and here both the language of love between man and woman [eros] and also between parent and child [agape] is appropriate), although unity is impossible in this world. This very real love of God for Israel presupposes a relationship in which both parties are vulnerable. Wyshogrod therefore affirms the Bible's description of God's jealousy: "By being jealous, Hashem (God) reveals his passion for Israel and his dependence on this people."

The essence of Israel, says Wyshogrod, is its physicality:

> The being of Israel is embodied being. Jewish theology can therefore never become full self-consciousness. Here and there, as in its saints and mystics, Jewish being breaks through to the light, to an understanding of its constitution and destiny. But these occasional illuminations never become the totality or even the essence of the Jewish people, and that includes not only its understanding segments but also the mute and heavy masses who have suffered for the covenant with a minimum of understanding and who have sinned because they responded to the craving of their flesh and the tiredness of the exile, whose significance they understood very little.

Three basic assumptions underlie Wyshogrod's vision of Jews as the chosen people: The Jews, even when they err, are the historically chosen people; their unity is indivisible; and their redemption must be understood as a religious-political concept. These assumptions also require that "the Jewish people must be and is prepared to be sacrificed for the sanctification of God's name." The fact of the Jews being chosen also extends to the land which is part of Jewish being, even if the Zionist movement started with the holy error of depending upon women and men rather than God. The fact that Jews have been chosen means that Jewish ethics must turn its attention inward first, that it must maintain an ideal which then allows and mandates a secondary but real concern for others.

In his book, *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays* (Summit Books, 1988), Rabbi Irving Greenberg argues that liturgy and ritual can best unify the Jews. He urges a broad notion of Halakha, which would be as inclusive as possible, and encourages the creation of new holidays to acknowledge historic turning points—*Yom Ha'Shoah* (Holocaust Memorial Day) and *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* (Israel's Independence Day) are two recent successful examples.

Greenberg begins his discussion with Passover as the celebration of Exodus—his paradigmatic covenantal model—and finishes the analysis with *Yom Ha'Shoah,* the negation of Passover, and *Yom Ha'Atzmaut,* the contemporary continuation of the Exodus story. Exodus is central to the essential nature of humans, as they were created in the image of God. This implies a status of inherent dignity which is besmirched and wounded by slavery and its attendant degradations.

Liberation is a restoration of the divine image which in turn commands the beneficiary (the people Israel who replay this event) to remember its significance and to act in its spirit: "'Because you were outsiders in the land of Egypt,' Jews were instructed to treat the widow, the orphan, the stranger, the landless—those who are vulnerable and marginal in every society—with compassion, generosity, and love." At this point, then, women and men become partners with God in the process of universal liberation. What is the nature of this liberation? For Greenberg the Exodus model requires the goal of ultimate redemption: "... when the Messiah comes, all those who have died will come to life again. Resurrection of the dead will nullify death retroactively." Greenberg (himself a *cohen,* a priest who ritually must shrink from contact with the impurity of death) urges us to fight against death and degradation within life.

How far must one go, practically, to achieve the ultimate goals of Exodus? We must accomplish as much as we possibly can. If we become perfectionists, we will only feel defeated—the tradition calls for gradual change. Slavery was not forbidden by the Bible (such a ban would have been impossible to enforce during antiquity), but its practice was made more humane and further regulated by the rabbis until, finally, slavery was abolished: "Jewish religion pursues 'radical' ends by 'conservative' means. The ultimate goal is equality and total physical welfare of all people. To achieve that end, Judaism is prepared to legitimate profits, private property, and unequal wealth, and to compromise temporarily with a host of social evils."

Greenberg ends his analysis of liturgy with a chapter apiece on the holidays commemorating the Holocaust and Israel's independence. For Greenberg, the radical suffering and evil of the Holocaust threatens and even breaks the paradigm of hope found in the Exodus covenant. Breaking, however, is not the same as obliterating. Breaking means that the covenant—once imbued with the wholeness and confidence of transcendent reality—now must enter the imperfect and risky realm of the immanent. In some terrible sense, this change follows God's plan to give humans more responsibility; if they take on this responsibility, they then manifest God's presence:

> The primary religious act is to recreate the image of God. In an age of divine hiddenness, the most credible statement about God is the creation of an image of God, which, silently but powerfully, points to the God whose image it is. There is a quantitative dimension to this call: to increase the number of Jews, to increase the presence of life in the world. There is also a qualitative dimension to this commitment: to treat a person as a being of infinite value. To feed a starving child, to heal a sick person, to nurture the uniqueness of a wife or husband are in themselves all sacred acts.

The creation of the State of Israel then must be understood as a new experience of Exodus. Men and women took their destiny into their own hands, knowing that if they did not act, their people might not survive. While their strategy was pragmatic, the result was a profoundly religious act, in that "the deeper truth was that Israel's faith in the God of history demands that an unprecedented event of destruction be matched by an unprecedented act of redemption."

All three scholars are concerned about the relationship between ethics and Halakha. According to Hartman, Halakha demands that one's ethical judgment come into play in the halakhic decision-making process. At the same time, however, he argues that Halakha is imposed by God not because of a perceived insufficiency of human reason "but rather [because of] the way covenantal ethical thinking reflects the building of a common life between the community and God." Ethics is and must be continuously embodied within Halakha, "within categories that mirror relationships, rather than autonomous self-sufficient moral reason."

Wyshogrod takes up the issue of

Halakha and the concept of "relationship." He fears that when we obey Halakha without questioning it, we become complacent or "secure." Rabbinic authority in interpretation of text should not encourage us to avoid our own responsibility before the sovereign and absolute God: "The security derived from this maneuver is a sham security. There is no person or persons who are beyond the judgement of God.... Each individual must ask himself what God's will is for his particular situation.... No human advice, however learned, can take the place of individual decision based on the individual's understanding of the will of God."

Wyshogrod identifies the will of God as relating directly and only to the people of Israel, although they do in turn have responsibilities to the rest of the world. Hartman sees Halakha as part of the continuum of universal ethical categories, though it is mediated in terms of Israel's experience and character. Greenberg understands the Jewish ethics expressed by Halakha as the vanguard of a universal process of liberation. Another way of differentiating between the three scholars is through their reaction to "chosenness." Hartman seems to downplay the notion; he puts emphasis on the Jewish need to rebuild and restructure the state and life of the people, free of the unworldly distraction that the concept of chosenness brings. For Wyshogrod, Israel is the chosen people—non-Jews come to God only through the Jews, a fact not to be denied or forgotten. Greenberg puts Israel at the center of humanity by the virtue of its message and experience. In exercising its chosenness, Israel can help other nations to discover their vocations.

While Hartman, Wyshogrod, and Greenberg differ in their visions of messianism and change, they are alike in one significant respect: All believe in real—if imperfect—solutions that are achievable in this world. They encourage us to consider the concept of Jewish unity as both a metaphysical reality and an urgent sociopolitical goal. Such an understanding is essential as we enter this next decade. Caught between the memory of past longings and a sense of history in the making, we shall need political sensibility, moral resolve, and trust. □

Book Review

Intifada

Benny Morris

Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising—Israel's Third Front by Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari. Simon & Schuster, 1990, 352 pp.

Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising by Don Peretz. Westview Press, 1990, 246 pp.

For some fifty years following the crushing of the Arab Rebellion in Palestine by the British Mandate authorities in 1936–39, the Palestinians looked to the surrounding Arab world for their salvation and succor. In 1948, their half-hearted military performance (Haifa's 70,000-strong Arab population caved in after a twenty-four-hour battle) was in large measure dictated by their reliance on the surrounding Arab states and their belief that the regular Arab armies would eventually invade Palestine and pull their chestnuts out of the fire. During the 1950s the battered Palestinians, most of them in exile and savoring UNRWA handouts, did little to influence their own destiny. Cowed and meek, they subsisted under less than benign Egyptian and Jordanian rule. In 1967, barely a Palestinian sniper was out to "greet" the IDF columns when they broke into Gaza and occupied Jenin, Tulkarm, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Hebron. Where else in modern history have enemy towns and cities been conquered so swiftly and inexpensively?

Nor did things change much thereafter. The rise of the PLO in the late 1960s and its advocacy of guerrilla warfare as an alternative to the tried and failed model of state-to-state confrontation proved as abortive as past Arab efforts to dismantle Israel. The PLO's attempts to set up resistance networks in the occupied territories in late 1967 and 1968 foundered on the twin rocks of Palestinian indifference and cowardice, and Israeli (meaning General Security Service, or Shin Bet) efficiency. The Israeli operatives were at first dumbfounded by the Palestinians' readiness to inform on their neighbors and by the captured would-be rebels' routing betrayal of their co-conspirators. Palestinian docility and collaboration became a byword—and a source of Israeli contempt. And, partly in consequence, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 1967 and 1987 was one of the cheapest and least savage in modern history.

The PLO's efforts over the years to raid Israel from the surrounding Arab states fared no better. To a certain extent, these raids—and PLO attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets abroad—delegitimized Palestinian aspirations by equating them, in Israeli and Western eyes, with terrorism. To be sure, the raids had some nuisance value, but they did little to promote the advent of Palestinian self-determination—except insofar as they managed to keep the cause alive and on the international agenda.

For more than twenty years, from June 1967 until December 1987, and with only several hundred troops and security men, Israel was able to occupy and keep quiescent a population that

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during the period grew from one to almost two million souls. Most of the population and much of the traditional leadership simply resigned themselves to the new facts of life and kowtowed to the new rulers. Brief bouts of demonstration and civil disobedience were rapidly overtaken by protracted stretches of calm. Thousands of Palestinian workers daily labored in the construction of Israel's new settlement network in the occupied territories; tens of thousands daily commuted to Israel and manned its services, construction sites, and factories. Neither in the war of 1973 nor in 1982—when it was their own representative organization, the PLO, that was under attack in Lebanon—did the Palestinians make Israel's life more difficult by any sort of resistance or disruption of roads and traffic to and from the front lines through the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Israeli detention centers remain the most important "schools" for the intifada cadres and the breeding ground for future leaders of the State of Palestine.

And then, on December 8, 1987, everything changed. The territories, first the Gaza Strip and then the West Bank and East Jerusalem, erupted more or less spontaneously in demonstration, riot, and civil disobedience. The intifada (Arabic for awakening or shaking off—as a dog does a flea) had broken out. A population humiliated beyond endurance and despairing of succor from without was moved to shake off the oppressor's boot and to assert its will and destiny. Passive, servile natives almost overnight turned into enraged, courageous street fighters. Formerly cowed Palestinian youths bared their breasts in defiance of Israeli bullets; previously apathetic or collaborationist villages declared their "independence" and raised the Palestinian flag; hundreds of Arab youths were shot and killed, thousands were brutally clubbed, and tens of thousands were hauled off to detention camps for months on end. But the Palestinians refused to recant or break.

To be sure, thousands of Palestinian commuters continued to supply Israel with cheap labor and, ironically, Palestinians continued to build the new settlements. By blanketing the territories with troops, carefully reconstructing Shin Bet informer-networks, and liberally employing curfews, mass arrests, economic privations, and a wide range of other personal and collective punishments, the Israeli authorities were able to reduce the levels and frequency of Palestinian violence and disobedience.

But the intifada, now in its third year, continues. Something basic has changed. The intifada has transformed West Bank and Gazan society beyond repair; no matter how many rebel activists, agitators, and leaders are killed or incarcerated, Israel will never again be able to hold and govern the territories on the cheap—economically, politically, and militarily. This bout of rebellion may ultimately be suppressed; but until a political solution is found to the problem of the territories, the rebellion will break out anew, again and again, after each respite, and with particular virulence in the Gaza Strip (which will have a population of over one million by the year 2000—in a strip of land 28 miles long by some 5 miles wide).

The past few months have seen the publication of a spate of books on the intifada, with the Ze'ev Schiff–Ehud Ya'ari and Don Peretz efforts being the most prominent. Both suffer from the limitations of "instant history," of writing about the very proximate past without the benefit of hindsight and substantial documentation. And, in the present case, this is compounded by the fact that what is being described and analyzed is an ongoing process or event which has not yet run its course. At best, as Schiff and Ya'ari suggest, we are getting an "interim assessment."

Given these considerations, both efforts are creditable, with Schiff and Ya'ari, to my taste, enjoying a major edge. Indeed, the Schiff–Ya'ari *Intifada* is an excellent piece of reportage mixed with political analysis of a high order. It is likely to remain the best history of this part of the intifada for years to come. Schiff and Ya'ari made excellent use of their various contacts in the Israeli military establishment and in the territories. And, it appears, they had access to some classified Israeli documentation, in addition to open sources and the press. (They do not, however, provide footnotes, which forces the reader to take a great deal on trust.) Peretz's book is more journalistic and relies almost exclusively, to judge from its footnotes, on press cuttings (especially from the *Jerusalem Post International Edition*—which was by no means as good in its coverage of the intifada as the daily *Jerusalem Post*). It is, though, a solid piece of work.

One of the most interesting things, historically, about the intifada is that it caught everyone—Israelis, Western governments, King Hussein, the PLO, and even most Palestinians in the territories—by surprise. While violence and disobedience simmered and sputtered in the territories during the years before 1987, no one quite expected what happened one December day after a traffic accident ignited the powder keg. (In that accident, four Arab laborers were killed when an Israeli truck rammed into a Gaza pickup truck.) If the inhabitants had taken in their stride the slings and arrows of Israeli abuse and oppression for twenty years, why not for another twenty?

Such was the outlook of the Israeli defense establishment. For weeks it was to be business as usual. Indeed, the establishment's chief, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, boarded a plane to New York on the third day of the uprising and only returned to the country twelve days later, on December 21. Two weeks passed before the Israeli cabinet met to discuss the "disturbances."

From an intelligence point of view, says Schiff and Ya'ari, the surprise was worse than that of the Egyptian-Syrian onslaught of October 6, 1973, for "the intelligence community had failed to discern a process already well advanced among a population under its own tight control." The fact is that the territories fell between stools: strategic intelligence assessment regarding the West Bank and Gaza was the responsibility of neither the IDF Intelligence Branch nor the Shin Bet (nor, needless to say, the Mossad or the Foreign Ministry Research Division). The Shin Bet, in charge of internal security, for years had focused on tactics rather than strategy, the trees rather than the forest; the IDF Intelligence Branch kept its

eye on Arab armies and states. The government's Coordinator of Activities in the occupied territories, Shlomo Goren, spent his days producing glossy booklets on the Israeli-sponsored improvements in the local inhabitants' quality of life. So no one saw that "even the asses are rejecting the occupation by now," as Nablus politician Hikmet al-Masri phrased it.

"The solution will come through the barrel of a gun," believed Arafat. Thus, when the stones started flying and the tires burning, the PLO leadership took weeks to fathom that a major historical event was unfolding. Schiff and Ya'ari's treatment of the PLO's confusion during those first weeks of the insurrection is excellent.

The actual triggers of the intifada, which preceded the fatal traffic accident, are now clear: the Palestinian hang-glider attack on November 25, 1987, on the Lebanese border, in which a brave PLO guerrilla killed six IDF soldiers and wounded seven others before himself being shot dead; the May 18 breakout of Islamic Jihad activists from prison and their subsequent campaign of ambush and terror in the alleys of Gaza; the November 10 killing of a Dir al Balah schoolgirl by an Israeli settler and the deportation of Gaza preacher Sheikh Abd al Aziz Odeh; and the Arab summit in Amman of November, in which Palestinian grievances (and Arafat) were shunted aside completely and the Iraq–Iran war got top billing.

Yet the rebellion was not initially and primarily a nationalist revolt, argue Schiff and Ya'ari:

> Though it developed into a statement of major political import, the intifada began not as a national uprising to throw off the yoke of foreign domination but as a rebellion of the poor, an awesome outburst by the forsaken and forgotten at the bottom of the social heap.

Initially, the intifada was "powered by the hardship of getting through each day" and was directed against a hypocritical, callous society that "pointedly ignored the disgraceful conditions in which so many of [the Palestinians] lived." Israeli exploitation of the Palestinians, and especially of the refugee-camp dwellers, along with the routine, daily humiliation by Israeli employers and soldiers over the years of these commuting laborers created an "enraged proletariat, a class that saw no way out of its abominable state except by a political revolt. In short, Israel's economic system was the real driving force behind the radicalization of the Palestinian public. It was the piston of the *intifada*."

Unfortunately, Schiff and Ya'ari arrive at their assessment of the social origins of the intifada by way of transcripts of Israeli interrogations of apprehended Palestinian rioters. These detainees, most "simple laborers," according to the interrogation forms, were ignorant of basic PLO nationalist slogans and policies. They cared little about politics, argue Schiff and Ya'ari. But I am not sure that responses to interrogators' questions are the best avenue to an understanding of a detainee's motives.

It is early yet to venture a definitive assessment on the motives underlying the refugee camps' insurrection of December 1987, which within days and weeks sucked in the whole of the Palestinian population in the territories and, in some measure, the Israeli Arab minority as well. But the judgment of history is likely to be that the uprising was powered essentially by nationalist motives, reinforced by dire socioeconomic grievances. Hence the refugee camps, rather than the middle-class urban neighborhoods, were the flashpoints of the rebellion. Hence, the traditional radicals of the territories, the politicized, nationalist middle class (the Nusseibehs, Senioras, and Husseinis), were relegated to a secondary, symbolic conduit role by the intifada's real leaders.

Perhaps the strongest sections of the Schiff and Ya'ari book—and here lies their pioneering contribution to the historiography of the intifada—are those dealing with the crystalization of the rebellion's leadership (the Unified National Command—or, as Peretz calls it, the United National Leadership of the Uprising—and the local "popular committees") and with the UNC's relationship with the Tunis-based PLO leadership.

The intifada was initially an unorganized, spontaneous outburst of rioting crowds—men, women, and children. Pure rage. But within days, a shadowy, home-based leadership emerged, a

leadership that both inaugurated and represented a completely new politics in the territories. The age-old Arab norms of generational and sociopolitical hierarchy had been swept away in the pall of smoking tires. The new leaders, almost to a man, came not from the traditional, upper-middle-class West Bank and Gaza elite families but from the serried ranks of political and security prisoners, from the thousands who had spent long months and years in Israeli detention during the 1970s and 1980s. Many of the new leaders had been released in one or other of the mass prisoner exchanges of the early 1980s (in the last of which, in 1985, more than one thousand Palestinians were freed in exchange for a handful of captured IDF soldiers). These were the men who led the riots, put together and chaired the popular committees, and sat on the UNC. The cohorts of "ex-cons" were leavened by a handful of academics, mainly from Bir Zeit University.

Schiff and Ya'ari have rescued these men from their self-imposed clandestinity, if not from oblivion. This leadership, which one day will no doubt be co-opted into the Palestinians' political pantheon, was based on closely knit networks of relatives and friends, mostly ex-cons who had done time together. (The Israeli detention centers, incidentally, remain the most important "schools" for the intifada cadres and, indeed, the breeding ground for future leaders of the State of Palestine, if it ever arises.)

In the beginning there were Mohammed and Majid Labadi and their Gazan brother-in-law, Jamal Zakut. Almost single-handedly, these Democratic Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine operatives put together, published, and distributed "Communique No. 1" of the UNC. Then, making contact with representatives of other resistance factions, they put together the UNC. On it sat one representative from each major organization: Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the DFLP, and the West Bank (formerly Jordanian) Communist Party. Eventually a representative of the Islamic front was drawn into the UNC's meetings. The UNC, taking hold of existing passions and conditions, thereafter steered the rebellion with the help of a stream of communiques, which instructed each locality when to strike, what sort of demonstrations to mount, what sort of slogans to unfurl, and so on. It took the Shin Bet months to pinpoint the UNC membership, by which time the rebellion was firmly on track. As each leadership foursome was lopped off by Israeli security (some were deported, others merely incarcerated), another foursome stepped into its place. The UNC continued to function and the communiques continued to surface and be distributed. Eventually, using fax and telephone, the wording of the communiques was negotiated between the UNC and PLO-Tunis, and broadcast to the territories on PLO radio stations.

The informality and ad hoc nature of the leadership structure contributed to the UNC's longevity. But gradually the mix of Israeli repression, round-ups, and PLO pressure—exercised in great measure through the distribution and withholding of funds—severely curbed the UNC's functioning and control over the intifada. But the network of local popular committees—which oversaw strikes, demonstrations, fund allocation, education, health services, transport, and so on—continued to run the rebellion on the local level, despite the fierce Israeli measures. At the moment, the two sides appear locked in a stalemate, with the Palestinians somewhat the worse for wear. The level and frequency of intifada violence has dropped off considerably as compared with Year One, but there is sufficient disruption of normal life throughout the territories to necessitate an IDF presence a number of times greater than anything seen before 1987.

The UNC emerged independently of, and functioned only in loose cooperation with, PLO-Tunis—as its occasional shunning of PLO instructions and of traditional PLO leaders in the territories (Faisal Husseini, Hanna Siniora) demonstrated. The UNC managed to shrug off the initial PLO efforts to take over and direct the intifada. Indeed, the intifada and, more specifically, its leaders managed to turn the tables to the extent of gradually forcing a major change—or speedup—of the PLO's policies. The major outcome of the intifada-UNC-PLO symbiosis was the Palestine National Council's Algiers resolution of November 1988 and Arafat's subsequent declarations—accepting the "two-state" solution, recognizing Israel, and renouncing terrorism. In turn, these ushered in the opening of the U.S.-PLO dialogue and, indirectly, the Shamir "peace plan" of May 1989, which, in turn, eventually led to the breakdown of Israel's Likud-Labor National Unity Government.

The tangled relationship between the intifada leadership and PLO-Tunis is tellingly described by Schiff and Ya'ari. Peretz devotes little attention to the UNC-PLO rift, and is apparently oblivious to the deep tensions that have governed their relationship throughout the intifada.

Peretz is stronger—in parts, stronger than Schiff and Ya'ari—in his description of the impact of the Palestinian rebellion on Israeli society. Schiff and Ya'ari devote no space at all, for example, to the IDF "refuseniks" of service in the territory. Both books fail to examine the whole problem of conscientious objection and its almost complete absence in Israel during the intifada, despite the fact that half or more of the Israeli population opposes to some degree Israel's often brutal measures of repression, and despite the fact that close to half support Israeli withdrawal from at least the Arab-populated centers in the territories. (Fewer than one hundred IDF soldiers refused service in the territories and were jailed since December 1987.) Why, with so many Israelis uncomfortable with or opposed to their government's policy in the territories, has opposition to that policy failed to seriously dent Israeli praxis and thinking?

One underlying reason, without doubt, is the average Israeli's "historical" approach to politics and current affairs. This historical awareness may often be unstated or blurred, but it is always present somewhere behind the scenes. It is an awareness imposed upon the Israeli psyche by circumstances and by the awesome travail of Jewish history. And it compels the Israeli—both the one who supports the government's policy and the one who opposes it—to view the intifada not only as a revolt of the politically and socially oppressed against a foreign occupier and economic exploiter, but also as the latest bout, albeit an unusual one, in the cycle of Arab-Israeli conflict. In this second, historical perspective, the seeming victim and underdog, the Palestinian refugee,

slum-dweller, and peasant, is in reality only the latest, subtle instrument of Arab assault on the Jewish polity. It is this sobering ambivalence that gives the intifada, for Israelis at least, its unique moral complexity.

This complexity, in part, is embodied in the phrase *yorim ve'bochim,* meaning, in Hebrew, "they are shooting and crying," which describes the young IDF soldiers' performance in the alleyways of the intifada. The term was popularized by Israeli singer Si Heyman in a song of that name that bitterly criticizes Israel's suppression of the Palestinians. In the song, the phrase is used bitterly, cynically, to assail Israeli hypocrisy, as if to say: "You're busy crying as you shoot stone-throwing children, but you don't really feel bad. You are merely using the tears as cover, to declare that you're human and to expiate your guilt at carrying out such brutal measures. The measures themselves are in this way legitimized by your sorrow." But my feeling is that the phrase has a hard core of truth, beyond cynicism. In the case of many Israelis, who are busy shooting, the tears are genuine: they feel real sorrow, but they regard their actions as necessitated by the situation and by the historical setting of the events. □

LETTERS

(Continued from p. 6)

nick might helpfully have pointed out. Thus Said condemns figures that we all agree are indeed agents and symptoms of destruction, such as "Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Begin, Ayatollah Gemayel ... the Falwells, the Swaggarts, the Farrakhans ..." (*Blaming the Victims*). However, he does not (to the extent I can keep up with his prolific writings) discuss how such fanaticisms are fertilized by prior oppressions racial, ethnic, and imperial. Nor is Said especially involved in critical discussions of the use of ancient and traditional texts for liberatory ends. (Thus I find altogether implausible Krupnick's claim that one of the lacks Said has worked to amend is "a sacred text of [the Palestinians'] own, to memorialize an original covenant between a people and its God.")

3) Krupnick writes, "When one exposes the distortion involved in Said's portrayal of Zionism, however, one realizes that his attack is simply another ploy to discredit Israel." But Krupnick hasn't exposed anything; he has merely summarized the debate between Said and Walzer. The "realization" he refers to, based on a nonexistent "exposure," seems rather to be a leap of faith on Krupnick's part.

While Said obviously is out to discredit Zionism's claim to belonging in the family of national liberation movements (an issue I hardly see as a question of either/or, nor as one whose final arbiter, as Said repeatedly suggests, is necessarily Third World opinion), I do not believe his goal is "to discredit Israel." He has publicly acknowledged the Israeli Jews' right to self-determination and he has written of their "traditional tie to the land, their unimaginable history of suffering, and [the fact that] they were by no means an overseas offshoot of a metropolitan Western power" (*Blaming the Victims*). His claims to an authoritative discourse on Zionism notwithstanding, his primary concern is to obtain a modicum of justice and recognition for the Palestinians, not to discredit Israel.

4) As far as narratives go, the leaders of the intifada are carefully following the morals of the stories they created in their failed efforts of the late 1930s and again in the late 1940s. The first time they were badly disunited and factionalized; the second time these handicaps were compounded by the failure to realize that the Yishuv was already soundly established and prepared for military victory. There, primarily, are the historical "problems" that can be traced to the Palestinians.

The intifada, by contrast, is remarkably though not perfectly unified; the people who participate in it have no illusions about a military defeat of the Israelis, and their leaders have recognized Israel. The intifada is reaching for a "kind of solution"—independence without rejection of the Palestinians' Other—beyond the exilic melancholy Krupnick finds in Said's *Beyond the Last Sky.* It strikes me as gratuitous when Krupnick writes: "The ebullience of the past year, in the wake of the uprising and the declaration of national independence in Algiers ... is hardly likely to last in the face of the intractable difficulties peacemaking will entail." Any loss of "ebullience" has more to do with Israeli attacks on Palestinian lives than with difficulties in a peacemaking process that the Israeli government has so far "intractably" and successfully avoided.

5) In his final paragraph, Krupnick writes that "it would be unfair to say that, faced by Palestinian rage, our sympathy wholly blots out our fear and distrust. The project of understanding encouraged identification with the Other, but it also entails owning up to our feelings about being the object of Palestinian rage." By using the inclusive pronoun "our," he assimilates his reaction to that of all Jews, just as he assimilates Said's polemical critique to a generalized quantum called "Palestinian rage."

Said, too, sometimes assimilates Professor Said to "the Palestinians," as when (in *Critical Inquiry*) he wrote back to me and my brother Daniel, "Can you imagine the brothers Boyarin standing next to the residents of Beita as their houses were being blown up by the Israeli army, and saying to them, 'It would help you to know and remember that the Jews who are now killing you were once cruelly and unfairly killed too.'" Of course we wouldn't, and Said should know this. When my brother (who lives in Jerusalem) goes to towns like Beita, he goes to express his solidarity with the intifada and to ask how he can help. While I can understand why Said identifies with people in Beita, he should not confuse himself with them, nor should his Jewish interlocutors. People in towns like Beita and Beit Sahur are much more likely to address peace-oriented Israelis directly with a message of exhortation and solidarity than to publish scholarly critiques of Zionism.

In conclusion, I agree with Said and Krupnick that discourse is crucial to politics. But Palestinians suffer more directly from dispersal and occupation than from any putative narrative deficiencies. The issue is hardly what Israelis may or may not be "excused"; morally and strategically, the Israelis have already lost control of the terri-

tories. People are dying, the majority of them young, unarmed Palestinians. The best way to cease the endless reproduction of Palestinian rage and to start healing the wounds of the past is to end, *immediately,* the unjust and murderous Israeli Occupation of Palestinian territory beyond the Green Line.

Jonathan Boyarin
New York, New York

To the Editor:

I was pleased that Mark Krupnick chose to address Edward Said's critique of Michael Walzer's *Exodus and Revolution*. But I was surprised Krupnick chose not to address Said's fundamental point. Walzer finds the source of the progressive idea of history and the notion of liberation here on earth in the Exodus story. But Said finds in the same story the sources of Sharon and Kahane, the beatings on the West Bank and the massacres in Lebanon. The Canaanite perspective on Exodus asks, "By what right do the Israelites destroy the city of Jericho, slaughter its people, and take from them the land flowing with milk and honey?"

The implication of this question for contemporary debates about Zionism and Judaism should be clear. Those of us who are critical of the State of Israel from a Jewish perspective generally have identified some moment when we and the Jewish state part company. Those who remain Zionists point to the invasion of Lebanon, or Likud's rise to power, or the Six Day War and its aftermath. Those who are critical of the foundations of Zionism yet do so from a Jewish point of view talk of mistakes made in 1948, or at the time of the Balfour Declaration, or even of the personal failings of Theodor Herzl or Max Nordau. But what if, as Said claims, the root of what has gone wrong in Israel lies at the very heart of Jewish tradition, at the heart of the Torah, in Exodus itself? What if our most fundamental images of liberation, of just collective action, are intertwined with the subjugation and dispossession of those outside our community who happen to be in our way?

As Krupnick points out, Said is seeking to undermine the cultural confidence of Zionism and to elevate the Palestinian (Canaanite) story. But he also speaks directly to those Jews who seek an identity both from a specifically Jewish tradition and from the more universal and recent tradition of democratic and egalitarian politics. His critique of the heart of the Jewish tradition from the standpoint of democratic universalism demands an answer. If we have no answer, Said demands we choose between these two traditions.

There were many at the time of the founding of the State of Israel who believed these two traditions were inseparable. But the faith of people like Albert Einstein in universalism, socialism, and Zionism arose out of a Jewish political moment that is utterly gone. Now we must admit that Meir Kahane draws his inspiration out of our tradition as much as Einstein did. We may have Isaiah, but just as certainly he has Joshua.

Ultimately, I think what Said says to us is, "You must not accept your tradition, your historical self-definition, uncritically." We must choose selectively what to honor and what to apologize for. As Americans, we accepted this difficult project some time ago, and it is time we did so as Jews. I am grateful to Edward Said for confronting us with this task, and I regret that Krupnick shied away from it.

Damon A. Silvers
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Tikkun is to be congratulated for publishing Mark Krupnick's "Edward Said: Discourse and Palestinian Rage." It is an excellent sign that a certain calm reasonableness, an openness to alternative views, can prevail in these pages at least, given the hysterical frenzy that seems to prevail elsewhere in American letters when the work of Edward Said is under discussion. One recent case in point is the publication by *Commentary* of an article about Said entitled "Professor of Terror" (August 1989). As the title indicates, its author is not anxious to foster thought or exchange, but only to push that tried-and-true, mind-paralyzing panic button marked "terrorism." With regard to the opinions of so subtle and self-conscious a figure as Said (a figure, moreover, who has firmly and persistently denounced terrorism, while also denouncing the abusiveness of the term), this is clearly a move of desperate unlikelihood. The level of this article is so far below that of ordinary political disagreement that its author hardly seems worth disagreeing with. The real question is what climate of discourse could allow a minimally competent editor to let it pass, even the editor of so impeccably Reaganite a periodical as *Commentary.* It is this climate of opinion that *Tikkun* seems to have set itself to defy—to begin with, by trying to set a different tone.

"Tone," which synthesizes the two nouns in Mark Krupnick's title, "discourse" and "rage," is in fact what Krupnick is most interested in. He does not attempt to refute—though he clearly disagrees with—"Said's portrayal of Zionism." He is engaged less by such overtly political matters than by the linguistic expression of emotion. Commenting on the debate with Michael Walzer that began with Said's review of Walzer's *Exodus and Revolution,* the heart of Krupnick's essay is distress over Said's "tone" and an effort to understand and frame a response to it.

Since Said has won preeminence as a cultural theorist by excavating the varieties of political domination buried in the apparent innocuousness of ordinary discourse, his writing offers some justification for Krupnick's discursive detour from the political high road. And there is something gained: a hesitant step toward conciliation is taken when Krupnick himself establishes a tone in which more substantive political dialogue may then follow. Nevertheless, the careful quietness with which he reproaches Said's "rage" is a bit disquieting. It seems to imply, first of all, that rage is to be reprimanded. It is as if the etiquette of the classroom were applied to the West Bank. One need not have had one's house bulldozed or one's children shot at in order to feel that an implicit norm of polite dispassionateness, desirable as it may be, is not in fact equally appropriate to all parties. Reducing a political issue to a matter of how emotion is expressed in public is, among other things, a way of implying the existence of a balance or equality between the situations of the speakers which is manifestly not the case.

Further, there are one or two strange slippages in Krupnick's argument, places where he wanders away from anything Said has actually said and instead attacks an object of his own invention, which suggest that the "rage" he is writing about, or for, is Jewish as much as Palestinian. More precisely, this seems to be a rage at feeling oneself *blamed.* Krupnick objects that Said

presents "the Palestinians as innocent victims of Israeli oppression." The word "innocent" here clearly belongs to Krupnick himself, not to Said—whose career as a political critic has involved, to the consternation of many, finding things to praise in a colonialist text like Kipling's *Kim* and finding human rights abuses to condemn in the nations of the Arab world. I quote from a recent and entirely characteristic statement: "The vast majority of our people are now thoroughly sick of the misfortunes that have befallen us, partly through our own fault...." (*New Left Review,* 160, Nov./Dec. 1986). But if Said tends to favor more supple and less binary political vocabularies, demonstrating just that "self-critical awareness of ambiguity and intractable contradiction" that Krupnick says is "missing in Said," Krupnick himself, on the contrary, seems obsessed with "innocence" and with what he terms Palestinian "claims to virtue."

I have only one explanation for this anomaly. In his account of the Said–Walzer debate, Krupnick justly and valuably chastises Walzer for identifying Israel with "virtue triumphant." Yet it seems hard for him to do without just this identification himself—without the Jewish identity of the innocent victim. As we all know, victims can have victims, and acts of historical injustice can be committed against people who are not "innocent"—whatever that might mean—without those acts being any less unjust, and without the question of "innocence" inflecting in any way the steps necessary to redress or atone for the injustice. But at this point, perhaps, our emotions lag behind our knowledge. Here is an emotional lesson, a lesson of "tone," that we can practice.

Like "rage," the terms "discourse," "narrative," and "identity" in Krupnick's essay produce a devious displacement. But Krupnick is wrong—morally and politically wrong—to take Said's descriptions of Palestinian poverty in national narratives as anything other than further evidence, unacknowledged by him, of Said's refusal to spend all his time blaming the Israelis. (I should say that he omits any mention of, say, Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* or Habiby's *The Secret Life of Saeed the Ill-fated Pessoptimist,* powerful and paradigmatic Palestinian narratives discussed by Said at length.) For when Krupnick himself picks up this point, it becomes something else. Speaking of the absence of Palestinian *narrative,* as if any old fiction could be fabricated so as to do the trick, becomes in this case another way of denying the historical reality of the Palestinian people, as Golda Meir did in a passage Krupnick quotes: "There is no such thing as a Palestinian people; they do not exist." The same can be said of Krupnick's vicarious embrace, through Said, of the confusions, complexities, and internal divisions of Palestinian identity. Said's acknowledgment of this troubled reality is not an invitation to treat the Palestinians as unreal. "Identity" is of course a real issue, but not for us. For us, the issue is our (long-delayed) acknowledgment of a people that already exists. To turn fashionable theory to the task of persevering in the nonrecognition of the Palestinians is to offer a more sophisticated version of Joan Peters.

At other points Krupnick sees this. "Palestinian rights," he says toward the end, "do not depend on the ability of Palestinians to create narratives." What is demanded of Israel and its supporters is "to accept that the Palestinians do exist." However, the conclusion of his essay nearly ruins the work of conciliation he has accomplished. It slides backward from rights into emotion. "So long as envy and vengefulness remain central elements in the situation," Krupnick declares, "Israelis may be excused for wanting to proceed step by step." Why is continued nonrecognition of the Palestinians acceptable after all? Krupnick's answer is pure fantasy. The only "envy" mentioned thus far has been Palestinian envy of Israeli *narratives,* which, true or not, is clearly not what Krupnick has in mind. Of "vengefulness" we have seen absolutely nothing. The emotions expressed here, I therefore speculate, are Krupnick's own: "envy" of the moral superiority he himself ascribes to the Palestinians, and "vengefulness" at being deprived of a victim's moral superiority that has been taken for granted for so long that it feels like a necessity of life. It isn't.

Bruce Robbins
New York, New York

Mark Krupnick responds:

Damon Silvers wonders if Zionism's fall occurred in 1982 or 1967 or 1948, maybe even earlier with Herzl, or before that with the ancient Israelites. Perhaps the flaw is in Exodus, at the very heart of the Torah. I wonder if for Silvers the question isn't modern-day Israel but Judaism itself, Jewish history as a whole.

Bruce Robbins excused Said's manifest incivility in debate by saying that "the etiquette of the classroom" doesn't apply to the West Bank. But none of us—not Said nor Robbins nor I—live on the West Bank, and Said is simply out of line in the polemics I cited from *Grand Street* (Summer 1986) and *Critical Inquiry* (Spring 1989).

Neither Robbins nor any other of my interlocutors engages the central topic of my essay, which is not Edward Said's manners but the larger question of narrative and nationality. Is it too much to expect that professors of literature like Robbins might bring to the Israeli–Palestinian debate the skills and knowledge they have developed in their work on literary texts? Professors are likely to know Whitman and Yeats on the relations between literature and emergent national identity. Why, then, do they approach this complicated struggle in the spirit of party-liners, more eager, it would seem, to demonstrate their political virtue than to illuminate the problem?

Jonathan Boyarin seems to me genuinely interested in understanding and healing, so I am sorry to find myself in disagreement with much of what he has to say. It's true, as he writes, that Exodus has provided some Israelis with a warrant for insensitivity toward the Palestinians. But what does that prove? That the origin of the manifold flaws and problems of Israel lie in the Torah, as Damon Silvers suggests? No, I think it shows only that Jewish messianism has proved to be morally disastrous when joined to ultranationalist politics. Israel is hardly alone among modern states in not always resisting the impulse to mix up religion and politics. But to say that certain uses of religion are illegitimate is not to discredit religion in general or Judaism in particular.

There is one theme that links Boyarin, who is basically sympathetic to Israel, to Damon Silvers, who is not. That is the impulse to find a fatal flaw in ancient Jewish history and tradition that accounts for present-day Israel's putative sins against the Palestinians. If for Michael Walzer the story of Exodus is the Jews' great contribution to modern politics, for Boyarin and

Silvers it is the seed of the injustices that Jews are said to have acted out in the years since 1948. I think it should be possible to acknowledge Israeli misdeeds without trying to demonstrate a primal, fundamental flaw, a kind of Jewish Original Sin, in the Hebrew Bible.

I can only explain this search for an origin, a metaphysical wrongness, in the light of the political inexperience of our people, who seem prone to absolutism of one kind or another now that, at least in one country of the world, we are not marginal but ourselves figures of authority. The fundamentalist messianism of the Israeli Right is one kind of wrongheaded absolutism. But the disposition of some Jewish intellectuals to trace Israel's misdeeds to Exodus shows that the Left can be wrongheaded in an equal and opposite way.

In many ways it is heartening to see Boyarin and Silvers citing Scripture. Fifty years ago American Jewish intellectuals conducted their debates in terms of the quarrels between Stalinism and anti-Stalinism. Their sacred texts were written by Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky. The recovery of traditional Jewish learning is healthy. Still, I wish that Boyarin and Silvers might have searched for the sources of Israeli mistakes in other, more proximate causes than the Torah. To find primal guilt at the very origin of your people's history is to suggest the impossibility of practical political change. To argue that the failures of Israeli politicians are implied in the Torah is, in effect, to write Israel off as a necessarily failed experiment, the way we now talk about Soviet communism. There is no good reason for so absolute a judgment. It's a sign of the times that disappointment with Israel should express itself in such extreme terms. We shall need to oppose the times even as we oppose Israeli wrongdoing.

EDITORIALS

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(desecration of God's name)—the opposite of the moral vision that Judaism should be offering to Israeli society.

And then there are the "modern Orthodox," who are the worst of both worlds: many of them not only support the use of the secular Israeli government to enforce religious restrictions on an unwilling population, they also advocate right-wing nationalist expansionism. The Gush Emunim and the National Religious Party have recovered the worst militarist and chauvinist parts of the Bible, and have built a religious tradition around them. These are the religious who *do* serve in the army—and who have insisted that it is a religious obligation to hold on to the West Bank.

Of course, there is a segment of the religious community in Israel that does not advocate religious coercion and does support a dovish position. *Tikkun* has always identified with religious peace organizations such as Oz VeShalom and Netivot Shalom. Yet many of these religious doves have been unwilling to seriously challenge the leadership of the Orthodox world. Steeped in the assumptions and culture of Orthodoxy, products of the yeshivas and the B'nai Akiva youth movement, praying in the same shuls as the reactionaries, always worried that someone will say that they aren't Orthodox enough (the favorite pastime of some Orthodox Jews—discrediting everyone else for not being "enough"), the religious dissenters have failed to mount an aggressive strategy to reclaim the religious tradition from those who have desecrated it.

Just as the decent ideals of the democratic socialist tradition have been discredited for generations to come by the perverse actions of Stalinist elites who appropriated the language of socialism to justify Communist oppression (aided and abetted by progressives everywhere who were inadequately critical of this perverse misappropriation of their tradition), so Judaism has become discredited in the eyes of many because its most public representatives serve themselves rather than serving God. For those of us who believe that Judaism has deep truths that can provide guidance for the Jewish people, the current state of affairs is tragic. Whenever I begin to talk about the exciting insights of the Jewish tradition, I have to overcome the massive resistance of those whose experience of Judaism has been defined by the "actually existing" upholders of Jewish tradition. I can't blame any of these people who feel alienated from a religion that has this kind of public embodiment.

The most important issue facing the Jewish people today is whether we can build a life that embodies in reality the ideals we have for thousands of years spoken of in our prayers. The test of that possibility is our relationship to the stranger—to converts, non-Jews, and, most particularly, the Palestinian people. A religious community that is not only obtuse but actually destructive in these regards cannot command my respect.

So I shaved my beard. I didn't do it to make a grand gesture—after all, why should anyone much care what I look like? Rather, it was a statement of inner integrity, a way of saying that I don't want to identify in this way with a religious world that has so sullied the spirit of the Jewish tradition that it brings dishonor to the God whose name it piously proclaims.

OK. Then why not walk away from the whole enterprise, become a secular Jew, and be at one with many of the readers of *Tikkun* who like our politics but find our commitment to Judaism somewhat puzzling? The first reason is this: the Jewish tradition harbors deep truths about the nature of being and the way to build a decent world. Its spiritual and ethical depths may not be reflected by many of its practitioners, but nonetheless they are a precious inheritance in which I rejoice.

Second: even while being outraged at many of their political positions and misuses of Judaism, I love many of my fellow religious Jews as human beings, love to be

with them, to talk or argue with them, to shmooze with them, to sing and pray with them. There is in some sectors of the religious community an ethos of caring for others—a willingness to invite strangers home for Friday evening dinner or Shabbat lunch, a caring about who is sick and who is getting married and who is in need of help—that I don't find in the secular, peace-movement crowd. The abstract ideals are far better on the Left, and the Left does a much better job of respecting the rights of the Palestinians or non-Jews. But on the Left one often feels alienated and lonely; it's hard to break in, hard to feel that others really care about you. Liberals and progressives may talk a good line about community, but in actual practice they are often the most individualistic of people. They are rarely willing to open their homes to others, are not used to giving money to the causes they support intellectually, and don't know how to ask for help from others when they need it. In short, they have something to learn from the Jewish religious community.

So I shaved my beard not in anger but in despair. It is precisely because I love Judaism and the Jewish religious tradition so much, precisely because I feel so much respect for many of the Orthodox, precisely because I wish to bring others closer to that tradition, that I feel so hurt when the religious community appears insensitive or distorted. I have no intention of turning my back on that community—and precisely for that reason I think I needed some way to give myself some symbolic distance. □

FAN AS IN FANTASY

(Continued from p. 21)

Rickey, the general manager of genius (never mind that he came from St. Louis) signed Jackie Robinson to a contract—the Emancipation Proclamation of baseball—my cup ranneth over and for the next decade Robinson was my man and the Dodgers remained my team.

During this period my aggression flowed into new roles and interests that my loyalty to the Dodgers adapted to and expressed. Around the time that Robinson was playing first base for the Dodgers (and being harassed and even spiked by Slaughter and other Cardinals), I was becoming radicalized by Henry Wallace's campaign for president. Then came the struggles of the civil rights campaign of 1948, the Hiss case, the Korean War, McCarthyism, and the Rosenbergs, while right next door in my mind the Dodgers—led by Robinson, Campanella, Newcombe, Joe Black, and others of the insulted and injured—went on battling for the pennant and for their first World Series victory.

As time went on, the continuing success of "Dem Bums" made the connection somewhat tenuous. But there was still Robinson, who proved to be as adaptable to my imagination as he was to the Dodgers, for whom he starred at three of the four infield positions. After my radical period came the modern artist one. Trying out for this new mode of rebellion and iconoclasm, I latched onto Robinson as the alienated artist in baseball pants—a truculent individualist, as deft and quick as he was combative, the player who shook up the other team as soon as he got on base and who frequently accomplished the most difficult feat in baseball—stealing home. Stealing home! What a metaphor for the virtuosity, daring, impact I yearned for as a writer.

Once Robinson left the Dodgers my loyalty quickly waned, and then, a year or two later, the team moved to Los Angeles and it was gone. The *Los Angeles* Dodgers? It was like rooting for MGM. A vestigial interest flared up whenever Sandy Koufax, an artist (and a Jewish one no less) pitched in a World Series game, but the tribal identification was gone for good.

A few years after the Dodgers departed, the Mets arrived. During the first season, they played their home games at the Polo Grounds and I went to see them one August evening, hoping that my old fervor would revive, or at least that a poignancy would stir me. Neither happened. It was like visiting the neighborhood of one's youth: the familiar things, even the fabled depth of center field, were smaller and less vivid than I'd expected, and the players were strangers. Except for one: Gil Hodges, who was now playing first base for the Mets. I focused on him as my talisman, my madeleine. What I found myself seeing, though, was a man, a year or two older than myself, who had lost more than a step, and even looked a touch silly in baseball pants. The game itself dragged on, and, stripped of glamour and partisanship, the scene appeared as it really was: a team of mostly castoffs and has-beens whom not even Casey Stengel, baseball's sprightly Nestor, could juice up; an old-fashioned ball park that would be vacated and demolished after this season; an ambience of commerce posing as myth; and finally, a spectator sitting in my seat who was no longer a fan. □

LEFT MEETS EAST

(Continued from p. 24)

dynamics. Yet at the same time, the sweeping nature of the Eastern Europeans' dismissal of the project of building humane communities, the overidentification with their need to foster individualism, blocked our ability to respond. It made little sense for us to explain why it would be important to build emancipatory communities based on genuine reciprocity and genuine social

solidarity. This would have sounded so much like Lenin's theory of "social man" that they would have assimilated what we were saying to this deeply hated set of social structures. So, although we felt affiliated, on the same side, every time we neared a discussion of the crucial elements in our vision of humanity there was this dissonance that prevented us from getting any further.

Nevertheless, in both Poland and Czechoslovakia people take for granted a much higher level of social responsibility and social connection than do people in America. For example, everyone simply assumes that workers have the right to decent health care and education, to fundamental economic security. These are societies that presuppose in their cultural nature a lot of what ours presupposes in its emphasis on the individual. Thus, even though the people we saw were hostile to the things in which I most deeply believe, they were speaking from the context of a culture that for the most part already takes care of these things. To some extent these countries may already have a built-in cultural resistance to the worst forces of capitalism, and hence they take for granted that they will never allow to happen what *has* happened in the United States, where millions of people are homeless and millions more deprived of basic minimum health care and adequate food.

Yet one feels that if they don't establish a self-conscious cultural plan to resist what is likely to occur when large-scale capitalist companies come into these countries, their residual cultural traditions may not be able to withstand the new pressures. Over the course of the next several decades, they will face an erosion of the most humane aspects of their society. It seemed to us over and over again in these discussions that many of these Eastern European activists don't have a particularly clear awareness of the interrelationship between the market freedoms they seek and the potential erosion of political rights that they have been fighting for.

I found little indication that people in the social movements understood that the current revolutionary consciousness that animated political life might prove transitory when faced with the passivizing aspects of consumer society. There was at the concrete, cultural level no discussion about how to maintain the solidarity that had enabled the revolution to occur. I understood and totally sympathized with their desire to rebuild their economic life in ways that would alleviate the material hardships people had been forced to endure. Nonetheless, I felt that we had an obligation to alert people to the problems they would face if they mechanically adopted Western economic models without simultaneously trying to learn from the experience of those of us who had lived under them.

I had one really interesting conversation with an architect in Prague, a woman in her mid-thirties, about how McDonald's would conduct a use-permit campaign in Prague to put a McDonald's in the central square under the ancient Czech clock. The Czech version of the McDonald's campaign would send assurances that the appearance of the new structure would conform to the most hallowed traditions of Czech culture. It would play on the appeal of fast food itself as a democratic choice that people might wish to make, and of course it would talk about how the Czech McDonald's would certainly help the economy. It would also warn that failure to allow this enterprise would send a negative signal to others who might be willing to invest in Czechoslovakia (denial of the use permit might convey that there was a bad climate being created for business). That would discourage further investment and create needless unemployment. I told this whole story in a way that she had not heard before. In other words, I tried to make clear to her that the entry of a capitalist enterprise into their local cultural setting was something with which they don't have experience, something which perhaps they hadn't fully thought through, and hence something they might be ill-equipped to fight.

We were, of course, well aware of the potential dangers involved in coming into this situation from abroad. We didn't fully understand the situation, and we were bringing concepts that had been developed in another situation and trying to apply them to Eastern Europe. So, naturally, we approached these discussions with a sense of modesty and a deep respect for the actual experiences of our hosts. On the other hand, they made it clear that they had invited us and wanted to hear from the American Left precisely because we have lived in a society that embodies many of the formal democratic and human rights mechanisms that they valiantly fought for. They wanted to learn from us about some of its pitfalls so that they might benefit from our experience.

What we tried to get across to them was the importance of developing a social reality based on *real* participation, a democratic political culture that could sustain the achievements of the Eastern European revolutions. Although we have democratic forms in the United States, the experience of most people in our society is one of isolation and disconnection from the political process—in part a product of the consequences of the marketplace.

Clearly it's problematic for people who didn't suffer under Stalinism to be criticizing what's happening at the moment in societies that did experience Stalinist terror and oppression. But real solidarity with our friends in Eastern Europe requires that we share our perspective. They don't have to take our advice, but it would be wrong for us to keep silent about what we have learned from our own experience.

The notion that we should restrain our criticism because we are imposing Western experience or Western categories on somebody else's reality, or that it's not for us to criticize the revolutionary choices of the Eastern European people, simply resurrects in modern dress the very argument that apologists for the Soviet Union made in defense of Stalinism in the 1930s. While we need to keep in mind that we can't fully understand the situation of our colleagues in Eastern Europe, we also need to watch out for the mechanisms that the American Left has fallen into with regard to so many revolutions around the world—namely, to feel that, since these other revolutionaries made it and we did not, we should just identify with them as the embodiment of "true" consciousness and admire their achievement, in the process denying what we actually do know about the world.

It's the role of the democratic Left in the West to engage with people in the East who are in fact inspired by the same positively utopian visions of a democratic society that have animated us in the West—and to try to discuss the potential problems that they will face if they do not engage in efforts to build a democratic culture that goes beyond the institutionalization of periodic elections to a distant parliament that makes laws. A democratic political system is an essential first step. But unless there is equal attention given to nurturing a democratic culture, allowing people to participate in helping to create and shape their own lives, Eastern European activists will eventually witness the erosion of social relatedness, mutuality, and community that gave rise to their movements and allowed people to experience the mutual recognition and confirmation that made this political activity meaningful and fulfilling.

This was a difficult message to convey, because in no way did we want to downplay the historic significance of what these revolutions have achieved. Solidarity and Civic Forum have an incredible opportunity at the moment because they have engaged in action that has brought together a community in powerful and mutually confirming ways. It is this kind of social connectedness that is the precondition for real democracy. The peril that these movements face is that in their legitimate desire to institutionalize democratic forms and hurriedly establish a market economy, they may undermine the social solidarity that has led to one of the great transformations of our century. □

FEMINIST THEOLOGY

(Continued from p. 28)

no need for feminism because Jesus already liberated women. In other contexts, the argument is used to legitimate the contemporary feminist movement, since Jesus himself was a feminist. In both cases, it is Judaism that ends up taking the blame.

In *The Maternal Face of God* the South American liberation theologian Leonardo Boff writes:

> It is against this antifeminist backdrop that we must view Jesus' message of liberation. Women in Jesus' time suffered discrimination at the hands of both society and religion.... In an ideological context like this, Jesus must be considered a feminist.

In feminist accounts, the argument proceeds differently: Jesus (or Paul) was a feminist, compared to the misogynist Jews of their era; or Jesus (or Paul) would have been a feminist, had it not been for their Jewish upbringing. A classic example comes in the writings of Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, a German Protestant feminist whose books have also become popular in the United States because they represent a "moderate" feminism. Moltmann-Wendel is able to rescue Jesus and Christianity from the more serious feminist criticisms by contrasting Jesus with early Judaism. She writes, in *Freedom, Equality and Sisterhood*:

> Jesus and his message are to be seen against the background of this world. Palestine, where Jesus appeared, was in no way already the great world with progressive views, emancipated women and insightful men who tolerated independent women. Palestine ... was a small, conservative enclave. Jewish tradition and interpretation of the law still determined the people's consciousness and the customs of the country, despite some attempts at reform. The pious Jew still thanked God every morning that he was not an unbeliever, a slave, or a woman.... Women sat on the balcony of the synagogue and so never entered the inner sanctum of the house of God. The integrity of a worship service according to orthodox Jewish practice did not depend on whether or not women were present. Women were not permitted to say confession or thanksgiving prayers; only saying grace after meals was allowed them. The Jewish patriarchy was severe, although some of its traits were favorable to women. Naturally, there was no question of any emancipation of women.

She then concludes, "This background makes Jesus' appearance and message even more impressive."

Moltmann-Wendel's account of Jewish women's position in the first century is not supported by historical evidence. Recent studies have established, for example, that archaeological remains do not show the existence of a women's gallery in first-century Palestinian synagogues. That Jewish women of the first century—or any

century—were only permitted to say the prayers of grace after meals is simply false.

At issue, however, is not only the reality of Jewish women's lives in the first century but also the structure of Moltmann-Wendel's argument. She paints a deliberately negative picture of the situation of Jewish women not to sympathize with Jewish feminists but to highlight the alleged superiority of Christianity. Jesus is made to seem "even more impressive" by contrasting him with the allegedly wretched, discriminatory treatment of women by other first-century Jewish males. It is difficult to respond to this charge from a Jewish feminist perspective because we are placed in a position of defending what we have grown used to criticizing: the position of women in Judaism during the Second Temple and rabbinic periods. Moreover, we are accustomed to Jewish apologetics which try to defend the classical treatment of women by comparing it to an allegedly worse situation for women in the ancient, non-Jewish world—an argument that is structurally the same as Moltmann-Wendel's.

Both Jewish and Christian feminists are trying to look between the lines of the available evidence to recapture a positive picture of women's lives. For example, Christian feminists have read Pauline injunctions against women speaking out in church as evidence that women were taking active leadership roles in early Christian communities. Similarly, Mishnaic statements that women danced in the forests of Jerusalem on the 15th day of Av and on Yom Kippur can be read as indicating that at least some independent religious activities were undertaken by Jewish women in the period of early Judaism. Each constituency is trying to reconstruct a positive, redemptive picture of women's reality underlying whatever repressive, patriarchal measures emerged in rabbinic Judaism and in the Church.

It is also striking that Moltmann-Wendel uses the word "Jew" to refer only to Jewish men. Often in feminist writings there are subtle indications of an attitude that all Jews are male, and all feminists are Christian.

The negative depiction of Second Temple and Mishnaic Judaism is also used in arguments by some West German feminists regarding the nature of nazism. They argue that nazism is a patriarchal phenomenon and therefore not a movement for which women bear responsibility. Perhaps the most outrageous statement is found in the work of Christa Mulack. In *The Female Ethics of Jesus* she asserts: "We can say that the relations of Jesus with the law corresponded to typically female ideas, while those of the Pharisees and Scribes were at home in a typically male mental world." Mulack further argues that under patriarchal ethics men absolve themselves of responsibility for their actions. In the following paragraph she draws a parallel between the Pharisees and the Nazis:

> Under patriarchy no one has responsibility for his deeds, because he behaves at the command of someone higher. They themselves wash their hands in innocence. These men would have done exactly as Pilate, if Jesus had let them, but also exactly like Rudolf Hess or Adolf Eichmann, who pleaded "not guilty," because in the last analysis they had only followed the command of a führer. And if this führer commanded murder, then his followers would have to murder. With all the differences, that are certainly present here, the inner methods of argumentation are still the same. It always shows the same obedience to authority that is so typical for the male gender.

By contrast, Jesus, according to Mulack, never used a law or another authority in order to secure his own deeds. Quite the contrary, his perspective was divine, regardless of what the law said about it. Jesus began neither with the law nor with God, but with the people themselves. What is the result? Mulack tells us: Women are liberated!

Mulack's argument is that ethical appeal to God or to a law, which, she says, characterizes Judaism, represents patriarchal thinking. Rejection of external authority is the female mode of ethics, a mode which Jesus also possessed, although he happened to be male. Judaism is male, patriarchal, and misogynist; Christianity is female, feminist, and liberating. The internal contradiction in Mulack's argument is clear: Why does she require an external authority, in the figure of Jesus, to legitimate feminism?

But all of these considerations pale next to the consequence Mulack is drawing: that Hess and Eichmann are typical examples of this patriarchal (Jewish) morality that disclaims responsibility by appealing to a "higher authority." In an assertion almost too extraordinary to believe, Mulack blithely maintains that Jewish adherence to divine commandments is equivalent to Nazi obedience to the criminal orders of their superiors. What is nazism, in Mulack's logic? The domination of Jewish morality over Christian morality. German Christians are thus in no way responsible for the Holocaust; Jews are made by Mulack into victims of their own religion. And who is washing her hands here in innocence?

The late feminist theologian Nelle Morton wrote that for women, the feminist journey is home. When I read the arguments of Mulack and others I don't know where to find my home, in the feminist community or in the Jewish community. I have a sense of exclusion from both, and yet each represents, at least partially,

the values for which I struggle. It's not easy to be a Jew, any more than it is to be a woman, not only in the face of anti-Semitism and sexism but also in the face of the uncertainty of modern identity. In large measure, that is the purpose of the feminist movement: to allow us to define ourselves as women, and not simply accept the worn-out, often misogynist definitions of the past.

The same goal is at stake in Jewish feminism: a refusal to allow the male-authored definitions of the past to define who we are, or what Judaism is. It is inevitable that, as Jewish women, we experience profound rage and resentment. What I find remarkable is the extent to which I, and so many other Jewish women, are also deeply moved and exhilarated by Jewish ideas, stories, and history. It amazes me sometimes when I find myself in tears of sorrow or joy when I read certain Hasidic texts, or when I teach aspects of Jewish history, or when I'm asked to lead a minyan. I'm amazed that the rage has not overtaken me, that I am still able to feel so strongly as a Jew.

But the ambivalence we feel as Jewish feminists is a problem we must resolve ourselves. We can't walk away from Judaism because of its sexism any more than we can walk away from life itself. What we do demand, though, is the right to examine the problem without the distorted anti-Judaism of Christian feminists whose problems, ultimately, are so similar to our own. Their problems will not be resolved through a manipulative ideology that projects Christian problems (or human problems) onto Jews.

Speaking out against feminist anti-Semitism is rarely received well: some feminists charge that I am undermining feminism, others that the issues are not really very important; still others are sympathetic but concerned with different problems. Similarly, some Jews seem to thrive on reports of anti-Semitism but often trivialize or simply ignore feminist analyses of sexism. In West Germany, where I have lectured frequently on feminism and anti-Semitism, reactions have often been hostile. Insistence on the patriarchal roots of nazism becomes an excuse to discourage German women from taking responsibility for anti-Semitism and fascism.

Discussions of anti-Semitism should not proceed in the same old way, with Jews throwing out a list of accusations against Christians. Jewish awareness of Christian motifs of anti-Judaism should force us to address Judaism's sexism and also eliminate our denigrations of other groups. After all, one of the perennial popular defenses of Judaism remains negation of paganism. Judaism's treatment of women, we are often told, is really not so bad—compared to that of the pagans. Christian feminists have to understand the history and structure of anti-Judaism and how to cease perpetuating it, while Jews who are sensitive to anti-Semitism have to realize that sexism within Judaism is equally destructive. If there is any single most important point promoted by feminism, it is to cease the projection of evil onto others. □

GENOCIDAL MENTALITY

(Continued from p. 32)

the point I wish to make. The scene took place in a Moscow hospital room in which an extremely sick man lay on his bed and two physicians examined him in turn. The first was the head of the American physicians' group, the second of the Soviet group, since both leaders happened to be cardiologists. As each doctor applied his stethoscope, it became quite clear that the two men had forgotten about being Americans or Russians, even about the nuclear weapons problem which brought them together. They were simply focused on applying their knowledge and experience, their commitment as healers, to maintaining the life of an extremely fragile fellow human being.

There is a species principle at the heart of every profession, even if covered over by struggles for power, money, and recognition within that profession. At the heart of medicine is the principle of healing; in law it is that of justice; in theology, that of spiritual search; and in science and academic life, the quest for knowledge and truth. During our better moments as professionals we live out these principles and are capable of extending our relationship to them. But nothing is automatic, either in the professions or in our culture in general. We can hardly expect a "greening of the species"—unless we work hard at cultivating our shared gardens.

I put forward the species self as not only a goal but an existing psychological construct. In that sense, without minimizing the forces in the world antagonistic to it, we can say that there are many levels of actual and potential support for the species self. There is its pragmatic importance in the face of our genocidal inclinations. It has significant *historical* roots. On recognizing its necessity, we rediscover figures who were ahead of their time in expressing species principles—Gandhi in India, Martin Luther King, Jr., in the United States, or, for that matter, Jesus, the Buddha, or Abraham. In secular tradition, one may point to the universalism of Freud and Marx, whatever the sectarian directions of their disciples.

The species self also represents an important *evolutionary* step: the self, in a collective sense, evolves in a manner necessary to adaptation and to survival. It is also a *biological* truth. We are, all of us, members of the same species. When one group embarks upon violence

toward another, it tends to engage in what Erik Erikson called pseudo-speciation, which means treating others as if they were members of a different species.

Finally, the species self is *psychologically and morally feasible*. Its existence is observable and expandable. We speak of ideas whose time has come: the species principle is one that has been thrust upon us. We confront Nazi atrocity and the genocidal mentality as a way of moving toward a species mentality. We look into the abyss in order to see beyond it.

For genocidal and victimizing mentalities remain active in various places in the world: in Russian anti-Semitism, Eastern European ethnic antagonisms, Chinese and South African repression, and the continuing American and Soviet nuclear stockpiling. And surely all Germans must understand that any plan for their country's reunification has to evoke fearful images of Nazi mass murder—in Jews especially, but not only in Jews. Approaching these matters with a species mentality would require that German arrangements include confronting the past and providing safeguards against destructive expressions of nationalism; and that governments and peoples everywhere reconsider their relationship to a still besieged, but increasingly self-aware, human species.

Yet this is a time for hope. As we observe events taking place right now in Europe and elsewhere, we have the sense that we are in what could be called a species moment. It is what the Greeks refer to as a *kairos* moment, one so crucial that it has a decisive effect on all that follows. It is a time when, as the American poet Louis Simpson puts it, "Strange dreams occur / For dreams are licensed as they never were."

I want to give the last word to a man who endured Nazi cruelty and emerged from it with considerable wisdom. He is a Jewish doctor who survived Auschwitz. He described to me how, at a certain point, he and a few other prisoner-doctors were overwhelmed with moribund patients, with suffering people clamoring for relief. They did what they could, dispensed the few aspirin they had, but made a point of offering a few words of reassurance and hope. He found, almost to his surprise, that the words had an effect, that what they had done "in that situation ... really helped." He concluded that even under the most extreme conditions he was impressed with how much he could do by maintaining his determination to try to heal. □

DEPRECIATION OF WOODY ALLEN

(Continued from p. 35)

aging)—accompanies his bodily deformations with deformations of language, creating a kind of spastic Jabberwocky at moments of hysteria to reflect his gangling physical instability.

Like Allen, these figures can be regarded as autobiographical artists in the deepest sense, their gags springing directly from their own lives and experiences. (This might seem less obvious with Lewis, but it's worth noting that his last feature, *Cracking Up,* has slapstick sequences alluding to both his open-heart surgery and his near-suicide.) All three can also be said to be animated by a conflict between narcissism and self-hatred in relation to their comic personae. Where they differ crucially from Allen is in the degree to which they express this conflict dialectically. Rather than work both sides of the street, as Allen does, they usually maintain enough distance from their own characters to allow audiences to have a critical perspective on them. Allen, by contrast, is too close to Woody to allow us this detachment; his task is to seduce us into sharing his character's confusions and ambivalences without being able to sort them out. (After all, Woody can't sort them out, so why should we?) And rather than propose an artistic solution to a personal conflict as Chaplin, Tati, or Lewis do, he offers a kind of aesthetic smoke screen designed to keep us from realizing that the conflict isn't being squarely faced.

Intellectuals and anti-intellectuals, liberals and conservatives, can all walk away from Allen's movies feeling that their own worldviews have been corroborated and illustrated because no issue is ever forced to a point of crisis—a few potshots in every possible direction usually suffice. The gag in *Annie Hall* about *Dissent* and *Commentary* merging into *Dysentery* has something for everybody: readers of both journals feel grateful for this uncharacteristic form of recognition in a commercial movie; people who feel distaste for the intellectualism associated with both publications are rewarded; and even those who might bristle at the political incompatibility of the two magazines are likely to be amused by the pun.

Crimes and Misdemeanors offers another case in point. A film that professes to address the rampant amorality and self-interest of the eighties gives us an ophthalmologist (Martin Landau) who arranges to murder his mistress and gets away with it and a socially concerned documentary filmmaker (Allen) who isn't rewarded for his good intentions. But both characters seem equally motivated by self-interest, and we are asked to care much more about Allen's character as a fall guy than about the murdered mistress (Anjelica Huston). Landau's masochism about his initial feelings of guilt are matched by Allen's masochism about being a loser. There is a lack of ironic distance on this aspect of both characters, and if the film is genuinely attacking self-interest, it is

seriously handicapped by being unable to see beyond it.

A major distinction here is social context. Chaplin and Tati offer characters whose main problem is coping with the world; Lewis and Allen's characters, on the other hand, are concerned with both coping and scoring, and the importance of scoring—greater in Allen's case than in Lewis's—implies a different relationship to the society in question. Scoring is the aim of the extrovert hungering for society's approval and applause; and for all their apparent maladjustments, Allen's heroes already belong fully and integrally to the society they wish to succeed in. They never suggest total outcasts, as Lewis's heroes often do.

One thing that makes both Chaplin and Tati profound social critics is the fact that their characters' difficulties in coping with society lead to a consideration of society's difficulties in coping with them. Lewis carries over some of this process (see, for instance, *The Nutty Professor*), but Allen virtually abandons it. Apart from the loving self-deprecations, and the daring jibes against his audiences in *Stardust Memories,* his social critique seldom gets beyond the range of one-liners, while the obsession with success and scoring usually implies that it is the oddball individual and not the society that needs to make adjustments.

One of the most disturbing facts about contemporary American life is its rejection of the concept of victims; the current synonym for "victim" is "loser." When Allen's character in *Crimes and Misdemeanors* is listening to his sister describe her humiliation at the hands of a sadist after answering a classified ad, Allen's horrified responses are telegraphed to the audience as invitations to cruel and derisive laughter, not pity. This is a curious ploy in a film that professes to be protesting the erosion of moral and ethical values, but one that is consistent with Allen's usual methods, because it's much easier to laugh at a loser than at a victim.

Evenly matching the dichotomy between Winners and Losers in Allen's films is the dichotomy between Insiders and Outsiders. Allen generally places one foot in each camp—looking with contempt at Insiders (Alan Alda's TV producer in *Crimes and Misdemeanors*) from an Outsider's position, but also looking with contempt at Outsiders (the movie fans in *Stardust Memories*) from a privileged Insider's position. In *Radio Days,* the warm superiority assumed by the narrator (Woody again) toward his family and the abject inferiority felt by Sally (Mia Farrow) toward radio stars (before she becomes one herself) are cut from the same cloth. Suffusing both realms with nostalgia while taking swipes at each side from the other, Allen refuses to commit himself wholly to either group or even to own up to that refusal—a decision that would shape and delimit the scope of his gags and allow them to work together. By shifting allegiances, he can make all the characters lovable or fair game whenever he wants. A higher laugh quotient is attained by this process, but a much fuzzier moral perspective, because complacent vanity and a lack of commitment to either faction become the prerequisites for such a position. A generous reading of this trait would be to call it a form of objectivity; a more skeptical response would be to regard it as opportunistic.

It's been noted more than once that part of what makes the Manhattan in *Manhattan* so "attractive"—apart from strains of Gershwin and black-and-white Cinemascope views of favorite spots and haunts—is the nearly total absence of blacks and Hispanics. Insofar as this is the Manhattan that a certain class of whites already "see," or want to see, *Manhattan* both validates and romanticizes this highly selective view of the city.

Poverty in Allen's films, apart from the occasional one-liner, is almost invariably Jewish poverty and is rooted somewhere in the past; the contemporary plight of the homeless, for instance, may be apparent to anyone who walks for a couple of blocks in Manhattan, but it is not apparent in the urban exteriors of *Another Woman, Oedipus Wrecks,* or *Crimes and Misdemeanors,* and neither is the presence of racism. All of Allen's major characters are protected from such problems by the interiority of their concerns, and by implication the audiences of these films are similarly protected. Serious soul-searching about major world problems and the decline in moral values is the exclusive property of a few upwardly mobile urban whites, whose exclusive vantage points we are invited to share, and any set of assumptions that is located beyond the purview of the *New Yorker* or the *New York Times* is bound to be deemed both esoteric and provincial.

Robert Warshow's critique of the *New Yorker* as a cultural institution (in "E. B. White and the *New Yorker*") seems particularly relevant to the nature of Allen's special appeal:

> The *New Yorker* has always dealt with experience not by trying to understand it but by prescribing the attitude to be adopted toward it. This makes it possible to feel intelligent without thinking, and it is a way of making everything tolerable, for the assumption of a suitable attitude toward experience can give one the illusion of having dealt with it adequately. The gracelessness of capitalism becomes an entirely external phenomenon, a spectacle that one can observe without being touched—above all, without really feeling threatened. Even one's own incompetence becomes pleasant: to be baffled by a

machine or by a domestic worker or an idea is the badge of membership in the civilized and humane minority.

I'm willing to accept on faith Allen's claim in "Random Reflections of a Second-Rate Mind" (*Tikkun,* Jan./Feb. 1990) that his reputation as a "self-hating Jew" may be somewhat displaced. ("[W]hile it's true I am Jewish and I don't like myself very much, it's not because of my persuasion.") But because of the autobiographical elements in his work, it is still difficult to account for the strong relationship between scoring and winning the love of a beautiful WASP woman (usually Diane Keaton or Mia Farrow) in most of his film comedies—although, to be fair about this, his persona *does* wind up with a Jewish woman just like his (dreaded) mom at the end of *Oedipus Wrecks*. What seems more problematic is the failure of most of Allen's films to face this issue squarely—to the degree that Elaine May's *The Heartbreak Kid* does, for instance, when the Jewish hero (Charles Grodin) ditches his Jewish wife (Jeannie Berlin) during their honeymoon in Miami in order to chase after Cybill Shepherd. The fact that in this case May is directing a Neil Simon script (based on a Bruce Jay Friedman story) which never alludes to the ethnic nature of the conflict in the dialogue makes her success all the more striking: to put it bluntly, May's direction of the actors repeatedly and even uncomfortably exposes the degree to which Grodin's libido is affected by his own anti-Semitism. Allen's hero in *Oedipus Wrecks* may have changed his name from Millstein to Mills, and it's clear that he's dating a shiksa, but these are merely givens in the plot—the conflict is never explored in psychological terms, either in the dialogue or the direction, and eventually it gets resolved sentimentally when the plot offers him a Jewish girlfriend to replace the shiksa.

The usual reluctance of Allen to alienate his constituency—with notable and courageous exceptions, such as *Stardust Memories* and his op-ed piece in the *New York Times* criticizing Israeli soldiers—generally mean an avoidance of controversial issues and positions in his movies, in spite of their topical gloss. This is of course typical of the commercial American cinema, and it might be added that Allen's popularity with American intellectuals does not automatically mean success at the box office. (Interestingly enough, *Crimes and Misdemeanors* has been a commercial disappointment in spite of its rave reviews, and there have been many other such instances in Allen's career.) His unusual freedom to go on making personal films of his own choosing clearly has a price tag attached to it—the necessity of turning enough of a profit on some pictures to keep this arrangement going—and it would be naive to assume otherwise. Allen's representation of himself as an artist and an intellectual (as opposed to a "mere" entertainer) obliges us to take him at his own word; and once we do, the issue of what intellectuals and artists both are and should be in our culture immediately comes up. To exempt Allen from that issue is to accept the sort of imposture that the film industry itself is famous for—the notion that art is a form of entertainment that makes money, and that "intellectual" is just a synonym for "pseudo-intellectual."

Noam Chomsky has written, "It is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and to expose lies. This, at least, may seem enough of a truism to pass without comment. Not so, however. For the modern intellectual, it is not at all obvious." Whether or not we regard Allen as an intellectual depends, in the final analysis, on whether or not we accept Chomsky's view of what should be obvious.

So if we want to see a comedy that tells us something about, say, American idiocy in blundering through the Third World and the Reaganite equation of entertainment and politics, a disreputable piece of goods like Elaine May's *Ishtar* will actually come closer to the mark than any movie we can expect to get from Woody Allen. (The notion of a show-biz agent negotiating a peace settlement in the Middle East as part of an entertainment deal might get by as a one-liner in an Allen effort, but only May would have the nerve to use it integrally, as a resolution of her plot.) If we want to learn *some* of the truth about unemployment in the U.S. in the early eighties—a revelation that might make us shudder as well as laugh—Jerry Lewis's *Hardly Working* is a better place to go than any film by Allen, just as even a wobbly Mel Brooks effort like *Spaceballs* has more to say about the mercantilism of the film industry than anything we could expect from Woody. Similarly, for a genuinely satirical treatment of blinkered Yuppie sensibilities, one must repair to Albert Brooks's *Lost in America,* not to *Hannah and Her Sisters* or *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. By contrast, what we find in Allen's movies, apart from a lively stream of patter, is flattery to our egos as right-thinking individuals and a kind of soul-searching that excludes any possibility of social change—a provincial narcissism that corresponds precisely to our present situation in relation to the rest of the world. □

SEPHARDIM

(Continued from p. 39)

a leader in the hard-line coalition pressuring Prime Minister Shamir to renege on his election initiative in the occupied territories. Yet his allegiance to hard-line policies should be cautiously interpreted: first, it should

be remembered that the same David Levy exerted a moderating influence in the Likud party during the invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Yet a more interesting biographical fact is that Levy had initially tried to launch his political career in the Labor movement and was denied. His recent allegiance to hard-line policies, it's widely assumed, is designed to cultivate the demeanor of a national leader. Levy believes that adopting a militant stand will best serve his personal ambitions. Sadly, his strategy is a grotesque manifestation of Oriental Jews' quest for assimilation.

Another fact which cannot be easily accounted for by the thesis of Oriental Jews' cultural allegiance to hard-line policies is the demographic profile of the West Bank and Gaza Strip's settlers. Very few of the Jewish settlers on the West Bank and in Gaza (to be distinguished from other Jewish inhabitants who have chosen to live there for economic rather than ideological reasons) are Oriental Jews; moreover, there is no equivalent among Oriental Jews, supporters of hard-line policies, to the biblical and ideological fervor that characterizes many settlers and their supporters. Hence, to the extent to which Oriental Jews do oppose territorial compromise, the reason for this opposition should be sought not in a militant Zionism, but, as I have been suggesting, in the context of their quest for identity and assimilation.

There are also more prosaic, though not unrelated, concerns. The massive infiltration of unskilled Arab workers from the occupied territories into Israel's labor force encourages a transformation in the Oriental Jews' labor force—a transition from unskilled jobs to clerical and managerial positions. Among Oriental Jews there is some fear that in case of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories they will have to assume or reassume the lowest socioeconomic stratum occupied today by Arabs. One may dispute the grounds for this fear, but its existence should make us rethink the reasons for Oriental voting patterns. The liberal and left forces in Israel have done little to mitigate the fear of Oriental Jews that peace would threaten their tenuous economic position.

One might well ask how it is that people on the Left who are so committed to the cause of peace pay so little attention to the social problems of their own people. The standard answer to this question is that a nation which has become accustomed to the atrocities perpetrated daily by its armed forces in the occupied territories cares even less about the more than half-million people (most of them children) living below the poverty line in Israel. Their indifference, then, can be explained as just another result of the corrupting effect of the prolonged Occupation. Well, this answer will not do. After all, we are talking about people who courageously fight for the cause of peace.

In part the answer can be gleaned from the type of peace many Ashkenazic liberals talk about, which in turn is connected with their perceptions of Israel as an outpost of Western culture. When people such as Amos Oz talk about peace, it appears as though they simply want the Arabs out of their lives. Peace is viewed as a document that is concerned with defining secure borders and stipulating international guarantees. It is not concerned with cultural links.

While walls are crumbling all over the world, it seems that Ashkenazic liberals want to create a new wall between Westernized Israel and the rest of the Middle East. How high should this wall be? It should take less time to reach Paris, London, and New York than to climb over it. How ironic that, when wanting to express his yearning for Zion, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi said: "My heart is in the East but I am in the uttermost West." Today many of us say: "We are in the East but our hearts are in the West."

Where does this wall leave Oriental Jews, who, after all, have some close (if conflicted) ties with Arab culture? One should not worry. The Jewish mind is full of innovations: the immigration from the Soviet Union is the newest solution. As one of the outspoken journalists of the Israeli Left bluntly put it, the aliya from the Soviet Union will enable Israel to fight the demographic danger posed not by Arabs but by the Oriental Jews and their inferior culture. This same idea was also recently expressed, though less bluntly, by Professor Shlomo Avineri, a former Labor director-general of the Foreign Ministry, writing in the *Jerusalem Post.* He says: "If Israel has a home transcending its Jewish history and the Middle East, it is Eastern Europe." Professor Avineri forgets that approximately 60 percent of the Jewish population of Israel has no cultural ties whatsoever with Eastern Europe. But why worry about trifles? It is the wall we want to build that matters.

If peace means a wall then there is indeed no conceptual link between peace and social justice. This is the only way one can understand how it comes about that the traditional Left in Israel is so apathetic to social problems at home. And the problems are glaring.

As the number of unemployed Israelis steadily increases, we witness vicious cuts in welfare services. Actually, the welfare state as we know it—one of the marvelous achievements of a modern, democratic, and developed nation—is collapsing to the jeers and ridicule usually shown in more economically backward countries. Unfortunately, the jeers and ridicule are heard not only from the Likud, which is traditionally opposed to the welfare state, but also from leaders of the Labor party, which has always advocated social justice and

equality. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that in this political climate Israel takes first place in terms of the highest percentage of poor people in the Western world, and it is moving rapidly toward the Third World in terms of inequality in the distribution of the national income. Free public education becomes a luxury, purchasing a house is an impossible mission, and even one's pension is no longer assured.

Who are the victims of these reactionary, neoconservative economic policies? Mostly Oriental Jews who voted for them and who have not been responsive to the message of peace. How could they have been, when this message was carried by the mistitled "Israeli Left," a group that Orientals perceived to be more concerned with the right of the Palestinians to self-determination than with the right of the Israeli underclass to decent living and equal opportunities?

The people of that underclass—mainly Oriental Jews—are alienated by the messenger rather than by the message of peace. Their voting patterns, the pronounced tilt toward the right, do not stem from staunch ideological commitments; they should be explained in the context of the struggle for self-identity and material prosperity.

Consider this: when Sadat brought his message of peace to Israel, many of the Oriental Jews celebrated in the streets. What if the inconceivable were to happen and the government of Israel were to announce its willingness to speak to Arafat—the demon who allegedly exceeds even Satan in his evil? How many Oriental Jews do you think would pour into the streets to demonstrate against this step? All indications are that most would applaud it.

Time is pressing. We cannot wait idly for the day of eternal harmony in Israel in order to address the issue of peace. Oriental Jews have a hitherto untapped potential role: they can be instrumental in facilitating the prospect of peace, rather than be an obstacle to this goal as they have been cynically molded to be. However, mobilization can be accomplished only as part of a broader political agenda aimed at promoting social justice and economic opportunity. Should leaders who are at the same time committed both to this social agenda and the cause of peace arise within Israel, they are likely to find many eager followers among Oriental Jews. □

PUBLISHING

(Continued from p. 44)

healthy publishing houses are traded on the stock market, where the major players are interested only in quarterly earnings and punish long-term investment. Like the money-men who entered the auto and steel industries (among others) and weakened them by indifference to the product and zeal for money markets, short-sighted investors have infested the book world. (Bennett Cerf, once head of Random House and now looked back on as a relative saint in his devotion to books, says that once he had listed Random House stock on Wall Street in 1959, "we were publishing with one eye and watching our stock with the other.")

If a big firm like Random House wishes to prevent a hostile takeover or to expand into global giantism, it, too, needs huge credit at the banks and has to keep profits quick and maximum. All the giants depend on the big banks and other major investors for takeovers and expansion. Heavy indebtedness and interest payments on junk bonds or other borrowings require quick cash all the time. The smallest reduction in profits for a quarter or a year means squeezing every part of the operation for quick cash. A small annual decline in the economy can produce a crisis in servicing debt. At that point, not even creative bookkeeping can sustain a quality imprint.

There are some bright spots in book publishing. The major houses still produce some original and germinal books, though their proportion of annual output is shrinking. The number of smaller independent publishing houses is on the rise, and a few are becoming large enough to provide national distribution; they actually do substance editing of their manuscripts, unlike the big firms where this is a lost art. University presses have taken up some of the slack but for the most part are still cautious and academic. All of these presses lack the capacity for advances large enough to support men and women who write for a living.

Furthermore, the mass-market relations between the giant book publishers and bookselling chains, while serving the useful purpose of enlarging the size of the book-reading public, is beginning to suffer the inevitable entropy of public boredom with books merchandized like boxes of cereal. There is an interesting growth of independent bookstores, some of them quite large.

But the depredations of the multinational conglomerate mentality into the book publishing world remain. The big players in the book business are not only short-sighted and greedy; their record for intelligence in running the book business is unimpressive. Even if some fall flat on their faces, thanks to high indebtedness and excessive greed, there will be little consolation for the quality of American intellectual and literary life. Once such institutions are crippled or killed, they are not quickly or easily re-created. In any event, the multinational corporations that now control most of the country's marketplace of ideas are doing their best to convert that marketplace to the narrow uniformity of a social and political assembly line. □

TOWARD A JEWISH POETRY

(Continued from p. 48)

Isaac has vanished from the altar on Moriah (in the Bible no account is given of Isaac's descent) and Abraham is filled with fear that an imperfection of his own in the sacrificial procedure has marred his response to the commandment of God. But the ram is supplied, and the event thus described is recommended by Ephraim of Bonn to posterity with the prayer: "Recall to our credit the many Akedahs / The saints, men and women, slain for thy sake. / Remember the righteous martyrs of Judah / Those that were bound of Jacob." This latter expression ("bound of Jacob") is understood to refer to those slain "for the sanctification of the name" (the traditional language by which martyrdom is expressed in theological Judaism). The *name* of God, in which the rationality of history resides, is represented by the Shekhina who summoned the Jews at the inaugural moment of the people, and who signifies and constitutes the culture of holiness which refers all events not to appearance (as in the case of the culture of poetry) but to being as Presence without qualification.

The historical *reference* of Rabbi Ephraim's poem is remote—the atrocities done to whole communities of Jews in Germany and France by the Crusaders during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The historical *occasion* of Spiegel's book was, of course, immediate—the *shoah*. In Rabbi Ephraim's poem (as in the "Books of Disasters" of the period, Spiegel informs us) the horror of the slaughter of the Jew is (as his tormentors understood) *for the Jew* neither the pain nor the loss of life, but precisely the defilement arising from ritually impure techniques of killing intentionally practiced by the barbarian Christians. The priority of the consciousness and duties of sanctity—even (or especially) to life—is the Jew's faithful response to the singularity of the Jewish word, the word which cannot be split and to which all things are referred as to their origin.

I want to say two kinds of things in the context of R. Ephraim's poem and Schlomo Spiegel's commentary. First, with respect to the relationship of written paradigms (including the Bible and poetry) to history; and second, with respect to the God-bearing culture of holiness which I am proposing as the scene of Jewish mind—the mind, including poetic mind, that it makes a difference to call Jewish.

First: Rabbi Ephraim's Jew, in the monocausal (monological) culture of Jews in the eleventh century, is responding to a *representational crisis* defined by the fact that Abraham in the story did *not* kill his child, while the people of the Book were actually suffering the slaughter of their children—indeed, felt obligated to kill their children in order to avoid ritual impurity and to secure the sanctification of the Name. In the sense that what is authoritatively written (scripture *or* poem) has value because it supplies the rationality of *what happens,* the Bible, as the narrative (pre-)text of R. Ephraim's poem, has been put in question on its own ground—that is, the ground of history of which God is the author.

Second: R. Ephraim's poem *responds* to the representational crisis precipitated by the inadequacy to history of the authoritative narrative—biblical story as the paradigmatic, pre-textual rationality of history—in that it resituates history in the domain of holiness which is its home. Having acknowledged the innocence of his child and received acknowledgment of his own innocence, Abraham in the poem decrees that the place (Moriah) be called *Adonai-Yireh* (God Will See): "The Place where Light and Law are manifest. / He swore to bless it as the Temple site / For there the Lord commanded the blessing."

The gentile poet is called once, by Mnemosyne (transpersonal memory), mother of the muses. The patriarch Abraham, by contrast, is called twice (Genesis 22 following upon Genesis 12): The first time, like the poet, he is called to representation or story: "Get thee out of thy country." The second calling of Abraham, however—"Take thou thy son . . ."—is to the *culture of holiness,* the empowering ground of the Jew's meaning, the God-bearing or theophoric project which the Akedah founds. This culture of holiness (perhaps the only one in the inventory of civilizations) is capable of bringing to mind and therefore regulating a violence as great as the violence of the creation itself, because it is capable of bringing to mind what the words *Bereshit bara Elohim* (In the beginning God created) can bring to mind: existence and also nothing. To this invocation of existence itself, the Jewish poet I am thinking of is singularly called. It is her part or his part, the poet's part, in the theophoric, the God-bearing project of the people.

The Jewish poet has an obligation to construct the place where "Light and Law are manifest," to which the nations may come because it is where they are. The obligation is the same as the obligation to the intelligibility of experience, the covenant. And the place of holiness is the ground—neither heaven nor earth—upon which the paradigms of experience can be restored, where loss is given back as meaning, and where the People and the peoples are equally at home.

The poetics that constructs the poetry of which I speak founds itself in the (biblical) power of thought that *can* situate itself in the punctual moment before all

beginnings—"suppose for a moment there has never been *any* poetry at all"—the moment before the poetries of memory and the daughters of memory have "built for themselves solitudes." The logic of this order of discourse is other than the representational logic of gentile poetry in the West (for example, the logic of representation narrated in the story about Orpheus or the story about Philomela). We can call this Jewish poetry considered as a theophoric project by the name of Being (being in itself) whose presence is *dwelling*.

The word which indicates her—Shekhina—first became current as the name of God in the Aramaic translations of the Bible in the first and second Christian centuries. As a displacement or translator's term, the dwelling or home her name indicates is precisely *the homelessness or placelessness of the word,* existence itself and only that. She mediates between the above and beneath by being exactly both—the Light and the Law—as she is presence itself as well as its sign. As such her nature is the contradiction of representation. Raised in the beginning from the text, she is seen everywhere in Jewish history, but most often in Jerusalem itself—Moriah. As existence itself and absolute presence (adorned with all its losses) she is the thing to be feared and, also, the ground of an obedience which frees from fear because it constructs (perpetually reconstructs) the person. As the indicator of the difference between nothing and something—memorial of the creation—her presence regulates an order of force unanticipated by the culture of representation which does not remember the difference between something and nothing, an order constituted only in the culture of holiness which inscribes the most abstract God. It is she who carried the Law to the people when Israel chose the Law, and it is for knowledge of her that the people should look to the Jewish poet, and the Jewish poet to his or her nature. She is a creature of the *other* poetics which can be brought to mind only if (for a moment) we turn away from the poetries that have been, and begin again. For she is also the presence of Proverbs 9: the Wisdom who has "builded her house." She has hewn out her seven pillars. The construction thus indicated is the place of teaching where the adequacy of the paradigm is renewed in the culture of holiness: the Temple on Moriah built and destroyed, the body of Isaac sacrificed and restored—as must be the house, name, and body of the person one and many, material and immaterial, living and dead.

Finally, in the speculative silence of these remarks, consider whether there cannot come to mind a poetry of (and in the place of) evil. Consider whether the theophoric, the God-bearing poetry of the Jewish poet cannot by reason of its nature as God-bearing reach to the evil of history, because the God it bears is the place of that evil; the structure entailed by the otherwise unstatable difference which is His nature states the magnitude of the violence which civilization must regulate. Of this poetry I will say only the following: Whether the "poet" I struggle to bring to mind is a Jew or not a Jew makes no difference. Whether the poetry is mystical or nonmystical makes no difference. It is not an overcoming. But it is a beginning of the work toward which the Jew, if the Jew takes thought, is particularly empowered. □

Israel Human-Rights Update

Fatalities

During the first 100 days of the intifada's third year (December 9, 1989–March 17, 1990), 45 people were killed. Fatal clashes have generally come several days apart and have been followed by lulls of 11–12 days in which nobody was killed.

Since the beginning of the intifada, 631 Palestinian residents of the occupied territories have been killed by Israeli Security Forces:

- Shootings (including deaths by "rubber" or plastic bullets): 598;
- Non-shootings (beatings, burns, etc.): 33;
- Children: 142 (41 of them under age 14).

An additional 29 Palestinians have been killed, apparently by Israeli civilians, and another 5 by "collaborators."

During this period 10 IDF soldiers and 9 Israeli civilians were killed by Palestinians in the territories; 3 of them were infants.

In addition, 198 Palestinians suspected of collaborating with the Israeli authorities have been killed. Within the Green Line, 23 Israeli civilians and 4 soldiers were killed by Palestinian residents of the occupied territories while at least 5 Palestinians from the territories were killed by Israeli civilians.

Detention

Detainees who are residents of the territories are currently held in eight military prisons of which six are in the occupied territories and two (Meggido and Ketziot) are in Israeli territory. The total detainee population numbers some 10,000, over half of whom are held in the Ketziot camp in the Negev desert. This prison's capacity was recently increased to hold an additional 1,000 prisoners and construction is underway now on a new detention camp, designed to hold 4,000 prisoners, in the Teqoa region of the West Bank. Meanwhile, the Anatoth facility near Ramallah, known for its especially harsh conditions, was closed in the beginning of February.

At the same time, the number of administrative detainees has declined. While in July 1989 some 2,000 residents of the territories were under administrative detention, in the beginning of March 1990 there were 900 administrative detainees.

House Demolition and Sealings

One of the more draconian administrative punishments is the demolition or sealing of the houses of families whose members are suspected of security violations. Between the beginning of the intifada and February 1990 the IDF has carried out the following:

- On the West Bank: 191 houses demolished; 126 houses sealed;
- In Gaza: 109 demolished; 36 sealed.

Since July 1989 the frequency of demolitions on the West Bank has declined while the number of sealings has remained similar to that of earlier periods. In the Gaza Strip, however, there has been a sharp increase in demolition, while the number of sealings has also remained steady.

These changes may be explained by the fact that in August 1989 the Regional Commanders were replaced, and Yitzhak Mordechai, who had previously served as OC Southern Command (Gaza Strip), became OC Central Command (West Bank). According to B'Tselem's report on house demolitions: "The decision to seal or demolish a house ... depends to a great extent on the people in the field, the OC, the area commander, the regional legal adviser, and so on."

Curfews

Many curfew days have been imposed on residents of the territories following fatal clashes in order to "restore calm" or help security forces seek out suspects following attacks on Israelis with stones, Molotov cocktails, or knives. Curfews have also been used on certain anniversaries with potential for violent incidents. Thus the village of Qabatiya on the West Bank and the Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip have been under curfew for two weeks, following incidents which ended in the death of residents from troops' gunfire. Curfew was imposed in Hebron and the villages of Sawahra al-Sharqiya, Qataneh, and Deir Balut after attacks on an Israeli and a tourist. Curfew was also instituted over broad areas in preparation for the February 22 anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

A nighttime curfew has been in force daily for some two years in the Gaza Strip and for a half year in Jenin and the Dahaishe refugee camp on the West Bank. Residents of these areas are prohibited from leaving their houses from dusk to dawn.

—information supplied by B'Tselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Territories

Tikkun (tē•kün) . . .
to heal, repair and transform the world.
All the rest is commentary.

תיקון