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

TIKKUN

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A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY MARCH/APRIL 1990 $5.00

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Faisal Husseini
An Interview

Feminism & Religious Authority
Judith Plaskow

Germans & Jews
Robert S. Wistrich

Story of Women
Bérénice Reynaud

The Capacity to Love
Stephen Goldbart & David Wallin

Gay Jews
Martin Bauml Duberman

HAPPY EARTH DAY?

Ecology & Social Meaning

Carolyn Merchant, Laurie Stone, Anthony Weston, Eric Mann, Robert Gottlieb, Jeremy Cohen, Arthur Waskow

From *The Gematria:* "The Curses"

Jerome Rothenberg

1

THE MAN

His red
unclean
blood.
Earth
& water.
The adam, the man.
Fat
& bloody.

2

THE ANGEL (1)

A star
shall uncover.

THE ANGEL (2)

His king.

3

GEMATRIA 105

Man
the blasphemer.

Man,
the bald locust.

4

YOUR STUFF

My stuff
is unclean.

5

THE PLAGUE

Hands
that begot thee.

6

A WIZARD (1)

Between me
& Leah.

A WIZARD (2)

Let us sacrifice
your son.

7

TO CURSE YOU / A CHARM

for H.B.

(1)
Bloom
the unclean.

(2)
I will blot him out
with stones.

(3)
Sodom
in Sodom.

Gematria, a form of traditional Jewish numerology, played off the fact that every letter of the Hebrew alphabet was also a number, and that words or phrases the sum of whose letters was equal were at some level meaningfully connected. Unlike the traditionalists of gematria, I have seen these coincidences or synchronicities (from which these poems are built) not as substantiations for religious and ethical doctrines, but as an entry to the kinds of correspondences and constellations that have been central to modernist and "post" modernist poetry experiments over the last century and a half. It is my feeling that the process used is, in this case at least, not irrelevant to a reading of the resultant poems. [J.R.]

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY — VOLUME 5 NUMBER 2

Cover art: *Self-Portrait with Head in Tree at 2,9__,_84* by Jonathan Borofsky. Acrylic on canvas, 1986, 96½ × 61 inches. Courtesy of Wellington S. Henderson, Jr.

Inside Front Cover: Jerome Rothenberg is the author of over fifty books of poetry, most recently *Khurbn and Other Poems.*

The linograph on page 13 and the prints on pages 67 and 82 are by Galina Bleikh (courtesy of Gallery Route 1, Pt. Reyes Station). The woodcut on page 98 is by Asaph Ben-Menahem. The drawings on pages 65 and 77 are by Rebecca Lemov. The cartoons on pages 33 and 69 and on the inside back cover are by Jack K. Lefcourt.

Letters

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

Commentary Responds

To the Editor:

It is a lie that, as you claim in *Tikkun* ("The Eel and History: A Reply to Shabtai Teveth," Jan./Feb. 1990), "*Commentary* refused to print a rebuttal" by Benny Morris of Shabtai Teveth's article criticizing him and Avi Shlaim. In fact, we offered both Morris and Shlaim generous amounts of space (up to two thousand words) in our correspondence columns for such rebuttals. Shlaim accepted, and his letter appears in our February issue. Morris, insisting that his response be printed as an article rather than as a letter, refused, contenting himself with a short vituperative note advertising his then forthcoming article in *Tikkun*. That note also appears in our February issue.

Brenda Brown
Associate Editor, *Commentary*

Benny Morris responds:

Nonsense. I remember the telephone conversation with Brenda Brown of *Commentary* distinctly. I asked her if *Commentary* would agree to run a full-scale rebuttal—in article form—of the nine- to ten-thousand-word attack by Teveth. She countered that they would allow me to respond in a "letter to the editor." When pressed she added: "We'll give you, perhaps, as much as one thousand words." I said that this hardly seems fair or evenhanded—a nine- to ten-thousand-word article versus a ("perhaps") one-thousand-word letter to the editor. There was no way I could properly answer Teveth's diatribe-dressed-as-history in such a short space. She said: "That's our policy." I said: "Well, you leave me no option but to publish elsewhere."

(I assume Ms. Brown, in speaking of a "generous . . . two thousand words," is referring to what she intended to allow Avi Shlaim and myself *together*—which is somewhat obscured by her English.)

Ms. Brown and *Commentary* had weeks in which to reconsider and knew where I could be contacted. Had they wanted to allow me to argue on an equal footing with Teveth they could and would have. They didn't. They

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preferred to run a malicious attack on myself and my work (and on Avi Shlaim's work) by a third-rate Israeli propagandist/historian without allowing us an equitable right of response. They have only themselves to blame if they emerge as bigoted champions of the official Israeli historiography and as censors and enemies of Israel's "New Historiography." I am afraid that observers of *Commentary*'s ongoing decline into a mouthpiece of Reaganism and Shamirism will not be surprised.

Viorst on Israel

To the Editor:

As an American living in Israel for the past thirty years, I cannot accept Milton Viorst's rabid self-hating article ("Biting the Rubber Bullet," *Tikkun*, Nov./Dec. 1989). I have two grandsons at present serving in the Israeli army and many acquaintances still serving; never have I heard of anyone using baseball bats or beating up Palestinian youngsters except in life-threatening situations. I have specifically questioned everyone I know in the army about their official instructions. Let me assure you that the IDF still maintains its high standards of morality even under intense provocation. The cases quoted in the press are *deviants from the norm*. What else does a newspaper print? But what your editor fails to mention is that such cases are punished and deplored. Can this be said for the cases of uncalled-for violence perpetrated by Arabs? Note that there have been 145 cases of brutal murder of Palestinians by Palestinians, and still the masked youths who are guilty go merrily on their way.

Had the editorial board of *Tikkun* been objectively interested in the sensitivity of the Israeli public to the intifada, it would have quoted article after article of discontent and criticism voiced in the Hebrew press and the *Jerusalem Post*. To claim that Kahane and Levinger are representative of our modern spiritual leaders is as ludicrous as it would be to claim that Jesse Helms and Huey Long represent the American mainstream . . . Yes, the "cry of pain" was first voiced by Jews, those who were hospitalized or scarred for life by the flingers of firebombs, iron bars, and rocks—which you avoid mentioning in your pursuit of morality and the search for the Jewish soul. True, you are justifiably concerned

about the freedom of expression and civil rights of 1.5 million people; but what are you willing to do for 3 million Jews in Israel who just want assurance of a peaceful existence among a bloc of twenty-two unfriendly and undemocratic Arab countries?

Joe Dubin
Migdal HaEmek, Israel

To the Editor:

Judging by the tone and language of Milton Viorst's article "Biting the Rubber Bullet" he seems unable to differentiate between the moral innocence of powerlessness and empowerment's moral ambiguities.

Viorst seems not to want to engage the complexities which empowerment's moral incertitudes creates; he just prefers simpler times. As a permanent minority in both Christian and Islamic societies, Jews had no power to inflict bodily injury upon others. As such we could perceive ourselves as being "a little better" than the empowered Christian and Moslem majorities. Under conditions of oppression and powerlessness perhaps such self-flattery was justifiable as a psychological survival tool. Today this is not only intellectually adolescent, but given the reality of Israel's neighbors, most of whom are still unreconciled to Jewish sovereignty in the Middle East, it is positively dangerous.

Why dangerous? Because while we rightfully should hold high expectations of our own behavior, we have to be very careful about how we publicly phrase any rebukes of our embattled brothers and sisters so as not to give aid and comfort to those whose designs for Israel are, shall we say, less loving than our own. As long as Israel's basic legitimacy is still questioned, careless Jewish dissent could unwittingly help pave the road to a mortal weakening of pro-Israel support in this country, Israel's lifeline.

Nevertheless, the 1980s have been difficult for Israel and world Jewry. Our sense of being a people with a special understanding for oppression and a love for peace, resulting from our covenantal mission, has been severely tested. If this is the premise of Viorst's piece, then I accept it. I believe Viorst's voice is necessary in the context of our covenantal tradition which makes us

(Continued on p. 118)

Editorials

Michael Lerner

Something Is Happening Here

In November 1989 over nine hundred people attended the *Tikkun* conference in San Francisco. In late January 1990 fourteen hundred people attended the *Tikkun* conference in Los Angeles. When combined with the twenty-one hundred who attended our New York conference in December 1988, this represents a rather sizable constituency of people who are responding to a call for a community of liberal and progressive Jewish intellectuals. Not only has *Tikkun* in its three-and-a-half years of existence become one of the larger circulation intellectual magazines in the United States, it has also helped to create a growing community of people who share and respond to our vision.

These conferences demonstrate visibly what all the poll data shows—that there is a silenced majority of American Jews whose positions on Israel and on a wide variety of other issues are not being articulated by those whom the media identify as "Jewish leaders." What many people discover, both at our conferences and in the magazine, is that there is a way to be Jewish that is very different from the sterile and spiritually deadening incarnations of Jewishness to which they were exposed as children growing up in the organized Jewish community.

We are pleased to announce that we are now planning a major *Tikkun* conference in Israel during the summer of 1991. Hope you'll join us. Details will follow.

Are They Just Plain Crazy?

That's the question that comes to mind when looking at the Bush budget and the timidity of the Democrats in their attempt to challenge it. With Europe and Japan buying up the real estate and assets of America, you'd think that ruling elites in the U.S. would use the present opportunity to massively cut defense spending. They could use budget savings to reindustrialize, repair the intellectual and physical infrastructure, and make the American economy fit to compete in the post-cold-war world. Instead, they seem determined to allow the U.S. to experience significant decline in the not too distant future.

Are they crazy?

Here are some possible interpretations of their behavior:

- The multinationals have given up on the U.S. They have invested in ventures around the world, and are no longer tied to the fate of any individual country. As long as they are doing well, they see no need to worry about the economic future of any particular national entity. So if their lucrative investments in military production have long-term devastating consequences for the U.S., that's no problem for them.
- The political system has been so corrupted by responsiveness to the vested interests of the military/industrial sector that it simply isn't capable of detaching itself and projecting a vision that could serve the general interest. Constituencies for defense spending are so widespread, and so fearful of the unemployment that would result from any retooling to domestic spending, that only a principled and visionary politician could even begin to suggest such changes—and our politics systematically roots out politicians of this sort and rewards the conformists and deadheads.
- Decades of cold-war propaganda have so deadened the collective imagination of America's leaders that they are simply incapable of recognizing the objective conditions facing them. They actually believe that America *needs* the hundreds of billions of dollars to be spent on the defense budget, cannot recognize a world that is less threatening, and cannot understand the relationship between how they are wasting America's resources and the undermining of America's economic security.

However you interpret it, the squandering of hundreds of billions of dollars even as the cold war waned will almost certainly go down in history as one of the major follies the world has seen. It is a form of economic suicide. Could it be that the feelings of guilt and shame at having lost the Vietnam War—publicly repressed but privately a factor in the social unconscious—are defended against by a rigid insistence on the inevitability of threat from outside? Does that neurotic fantasy, immune to historical reality, make America its own worst enemy?

"NO" to German Reunification

Had the German people, East and West, really engaged in a serious process of denazification, had each German child been required to study the history of anti-Semitism and come to understand how this perverse racism influenced people to vote for Hitler in 1933, and had there been a systematic attempt to uproot the rigid character structures that were encouraged by German cultural and educational norms, I might feel very different as I watch the two Germanies celebrate potential reunification. But when I hear talk of a resurgent German nationalism, when I read about Germans singing World War II songs as they dance on the ruins of the Berlin Wall, I have to question why the American occupiers of Germany seemed to think that fascism (and anti-Semitism) was suddenly not a problem, that the struggle was solely against communism. The sad truth is that in the name of enlisting Germans on our side of the cold war, we in the U.S. never insisted on a serious denazification in West Germany. Conversely, Jews in the Communist Party in Eastern Europe were so anxious to prove their internationalist credentials, and so afraid of appearing self-interested and sectarian, that they never insisted that the East Germans wage a serious campaign against anti-Semitism. No wonder, then, that neo-Nazis are once again popping out of the woodwork in Germany.

It's not that I'm so worried about a new wave of anti-Semitism in Germany—the dangers for that are much greater in Eastern Europe, and anyway the Germans killed so many of us that there just aren't enough remaining alive in that part of Europe for them to get worked up about. Rather, I resist the idea that Germans deserve reunification, that they've served their time and now can forget the past (something that most of them managed to do almost instantaneously in 1945). Judging from the ceremonies at Bitburg honoring the SS dead, and judging from the attempts by German historians to reconceptualize their role in World War II as part of a legitimate struggle to stop Soviet communism, they have a long way to go before the society can or should be treated as though it has the same rights as any other group. It's not a question of how much time has been served, but of how deeply Germans have grappled with their past and how much real change has occurred.

It is Germany's historical amnesia that worries me. The ability to massively repress awareness of a traumatic event, particularly when one is the perpetrator of the trauma, may provide momentary comfort, both for the perpetrator and for observers. "That was just a momentary aberration. We were taken over by some demonic spirit. We weren't really ourselves, it was someone else who was doing all that." But if the source of this behavior is ignored, it will continue to live in the collective unconscious of a people, and once they are no longer under close scrutiny (in this case, once the Soviet Union and the U.S. remove their hundreds of thousands of troops that still occupy Germany), the same problems may pop up again. Already we see neo-Nazi groups from West Germany organizing supporters in a newly liberalized East Germany. And we will see worse unless the Germans are forced to confront and work through their past.

The occasion of reunification could have arrived in a very different spirit. Had they not repressed their past (a repression, we must add, that was encouraged both by the U.S. and the Soviet Union in order to mobilize their respective sides of Germany into being more efficient allies in the cold war), both states might have developed a deep awareness of the dangers of nationalism and solidly repudiated anti-Semitism. The respective populations would have approached the issue of reunification with humility and a vision of a new nation that accepted the burden of rectifying wrongs that had been committed in the name of German nationalism. This never took place at all in East Germany; it happened symbolically in West Germany through payment of war reparations to Israel, but not substantively in the consciousness or education of the West German people. Had it happened, we would not see the German Right nostalgically yearning for the good old days of the last Reich. And we would not hear German leftists equating Israeli policy toward the Palestinians (a policy *Tikkun* has consistently opposed) with the Nazis' systematic gassing and cremation of a civilian population. That intelligent and morally sensitive young leftists could make this equation demonstrates how little they have been taught about the Nazis.

But doesn't every group have the right to national self-determination? If the German people want to reunite, what right does anyone have to stop them? Our answer: national self-determination is not an absolute right, but conditional on how it is used. There are some moments when a national group must limit its right, and other moments when it may temporarily lose its rights altogether. For example, we believe that Israel is a legitimate expression of the national self-determination of the Jewish people. But we put limits on that right, insisting that it does not include the right to expropriate the land of Palestinians or to prevent Palestinians from exercising their own right to national self-determination in the occupied territories.

In the case of Germany, restrictions on national self-determination must go much further. The virulent form of nationalism that thrived in that society some forty-five years ago brought the world one of its greatest catastrophes, World War II. Tens of millions of people

(Continued on p. 121)

A Conversation With Faisal Husseini

Michael Lerner talked with Faisal Husseini at his home in East Jerusalem.

Michael Lerner: *Tikkun* has called for the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian state. One of the arguments used against us is the claim that Palestinians would not accept demilitarization as a condition for obtaining a state.

Faisal Husseini: Well, if we want to create peace, then let's talk peace and not a scenario for war. It doesn't make sense to try to create a plan for a new state based on some scenario for creating a balance of forces—let's instead talk peace. Nor do I see that an army for a Palestinian state would guarantee its security. Our security would have to be obtained through guarantees—I don't think it would come through us having a big or strong army, because we would be surrounded by other states, like Israel, Syria, and Jordan that all have big armies, and our army would not be big enough or strong enough to protect us. So our security could not be achieved through military force. To have real security, the following would have to happen: Either we and Israel should have no arms—but I know Israelis would refuse this idea—or we would be without an army but Israel would have one. Imagine the scenario. We don't have any mines or raw materials. All we would have is agriculture. So we would develop a technology for agriculture, and because we would not be spending our money on armaments or supporting an army as Israel is doing, we would instead spend our money on research laboratories to develop our technology and our industrial capacity. Within thirty years we would be able to sell our computer on the international market. The Israelis would not be able to match this, since they are spending their money on armies. So who could guarantee us that Israel would not come with its big army standing on our borders and forcibly raise the cost of our computers? So we will need international guarantees that no one will attack our borders!

I am sure that if the Palestinians do create a demilitarized state, the Israelis, within two or three years, will come to us and ask us to build an army and buy some tanks and some airplanes from Israel. So all this talk has to be placed within the context of a more fundamental question: Are we trying to build peace or are we still talking war? If we are talking peace, then the issues can be resolved.

Lerner: From my analysis of the situation in Israel, one of the critical things that needs to happen is that we need to build confidence among Israelis that peace is really a possibility. After decades in which the Palestinians refused to recognize Israel, and a long history outside this area in which people have continually tried to destroy us, it is understandable that there is a certain distrust. Those of us who wish to build peace must seek ways to eliminate that distrust.

Husseini: Yes, it's true that for years we refused to recognize the State of Israel. But from the other side, Israel is preventing us from having a state. Maybe theoretically we may have been against an Israeli state; practically speaking, Israel is now against a Palestinian state. Saying "no" to a Palestinian state has generated much suspicion among Palestinians about Israeli intentions—some people think Israel's goal is to destroy the Palestinian people. So we need to build confidence not only among Israelis but also among Palestinians.

To help the process, we produced a Palestinian peace initiative which accepted the Israeli state, accepted a two-state solution, accepted UN resolutions 242 and 338, and said we are ready for negotiations. Now we would like to have the same thing from the Israelis. We'd like to hear from them that they are not against a Palestinian state. We'd like them to say, "We are not against you. We are afraid that your state would endanger us, so let us talk to see how we can build this state without endangering Israel." *This* I would accept as confidence building from the Israelis. But to tell me, "It is forbidden to you to have a state because we are afraid that it will endanger us"—this is not acceptable.

Lerner: I don't think it is a fair account of the history to say that there was theoretical opposition by Palestinians to an Israeli state while now there is practical opposition to a Palestinian state by Israel. The Palestinians engaged in armed struggle in order to prevent the creation of an Israeli state.

Husseini: But since 1948 the Israeli state has been there.

Lerner: But people have not forgotten '48.

Faisal Husseini is the chairman of the Arab Studies Research Center in Jerusalem and is considered the leading spokesperson for the PLO on the West Bank.

Husseini: If we start talking about memories, I'll tell you I can't forget about De'ir Yassin, I can't forget that Jaffa was an Arab city, and we will not get out of this circle. But I'm talking about the more recent period, the last several years. During that period we were saying, "We are not going to recognize Israel, because that's our last card."

Lerner: So you think now that you've played that last card, that you've granted recognition?

Husseini: Yes.

Lerner: Many of us who oppose Shamir's policies and have been subjected to considerable abuse for our willingness to do so in public, in other words those of us who strongly support the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian state, are still not really convinced that what happened in Algiers constituted a clear statement of recognition. Even when Arafat met with Jews in Stockholm, it appeared to me that he was pushed into uttering the right words; I never had a clear sense that he was genuinely committing himself. Nor did I have a sense from Algiers that people were saying in a clear and forthright way, "We are recognizing Israel and want peace with Israel." Instead, there was legal mumbo jumbo, which made it possible for some of the people there to deny they had made a commitment to abandoning the notion that someday Israel would be replaced by a Palestinian state that would "liberate all of Palestine." If Arafat were to go on American television and unequivocally say, "Look, we recognize Israel, we want to live in peace with Israel, I want to go to Jerusalem to negotiate peace. . . ."

Husseini: [*Interrupts.*] Arafat already said that he is ready to go to Jerusalem to sit down with Shamir. And Shamir responded, "If Arafat arrives at Ben-Gurion Airport, I will arrest him immediately." We've already taken the steps you ask for. What more do you need?

Lerner: I could write you a paragraph which, if passed by the Palestine National Council (PNC), would change the whole dynamic and give irresistible momentum to the Israeli peace forces.

Husseini: Yes, what would it say?

Lerner: It would have several clauses:

1. We amend the Palestinian National Covenant to remove any references, direct or indirect, to the idea that Israel should be eliminated.
2. We would accept a *demilitarized* Palestinian state.
3. If you give us a demilitarized state with international guarantees to protect that Palestinian state, then—once the state is set up—we will commit ourselves to publicly renouncing, in the name of the entire Palestinian people, all claim to the part of Palestine that remains within the pre-1967 borders of the State of Israel.

Husseini: But what you are saying now would be the *result* of negotiations, not *conditions* for negotiations. Because if we started out saying that now, then we'd be asked to make *further* concessions during the actual negotiations.

Lerner: This is the exact same argument that right-wingers in Israel give when I say, "Let Israel offer a *demilitarized* Palestinian state." They say, "If we offer that as a starting point, we'll have to give more in the actual negotiations."

So I say to both sides: State your whole position now. You have to realize that most Israelis simply cannot believe that the Palestinians would ever really accept demilitarization.

Husseini: But I said that when I said that a Palestinian state would live beside an Israeli state.

Lerner: That word "beside" is still consistent with the fear of many Israelis that eventually such a state will be used as the launching pad for a second stage of struggle in which you attempt to eliminate Israel altogether. Why not say explicitly: "We used to have the idea of a two-stage solution, in which gaining a state would be a first stage, leading to a second stage in which we would attempt to liberate the rest of Palestine. We now repudiate that two-stage notion."

Husseini: But what did 242 say?

Lerner: It didn't say it in a way that anyone could believe. You can hide behind legalese and the language of international diplomacy. But I'm talking about how to change the political situation. We need to create a majority of Israelis who could really believe that it would be possible to live in peace. To do that, you must speak to the heart, not just to the head.

Husseini: The Palestine National Council is a body which adopts resolutions that speak to the legal community and therefore it speaks that language. To speak to the heart, I can't make it through the PNC—but we can do it through other resolutions, statements of high officials of the PLO, and statements from Palestinian institutions.

And we'd like to hear such a thing from the Israelis—that they want to hear this kind of language and that then they'd be prepared to give us something back.

Lerner: You'll never get it from Shamir. But in Israel there is a democratic process, and if you make these kinds of statements we can change the democratic alignment of forces—we can change who has power.

It would be useful if you would pay more attention to influencing the outcome of that democratic process. It's too bad that the PNC didn't issue its statement before the 1988 Israeli elections, instead of waiting until they were over. Instead, a day before the election Israelis heard about a terrorist attack on a bus in which a mother and her children were burned alive. Obviously all this pushed the whole dynamic to the right.

If you are going to accept 242 and 338, why not do it before the elections?

Husseini: It was my assessment that had the PLO issued any statement before the elections, both sides would have discounted it. In the pre-election days Labor and Likud had built a dynamic in which the real question was, "Who is most against the PLO?" The most successful propaganda that Likud used was to picture Peres with Arafat; and the Labor party spent much of its energy trying to defend itself against this image. So the atmosphere was *not* conducive. Moreover, I felt that if we took a new position during the elections, once a new government came into power it would view that as a position from the past and would seek some *new* concessions. We are always trying to shape our policies to help the Israeli peace movement, but in the end we are discovering that they can't deliver the vote. After all, they told us that if we accepted 242 and renounced terrorism this would create a huge advance. America tells us this, you in the peace movement tell us this, but when we do change, neither America nor you can actually deliver the appropriate changes in Israel.

Lerner: This is one of the limits on a democratic system: you have to win people's minds and hearts, and people have been terrified by a long history.

Husseini: But really, where is the end of this? First they said to us, "Recognize the right of Israel to exist in peace with recognized borders and security." Then someone came to us and said, "No, we need more. We want you to accept *the historical right* for Israel to exist." Then someone came and said, "No, that would not be enough—we want the Palestinians to accept the moral right for Israel to exist." I don't know where it will stop. Will it stop only when I finally have to say, "OK, I admit that *I* have no right to exist"?

Lerner: I understand that you are saying that you want something in return. I understand the legitimacy of your position. But I think about this *politically* in terms of how to change the situation, rather than in terms of who is right or wrong. Politically it is necessary for the PNC to change the charter and for the PLO to say that it would prosecute people who engage in terrorism against Israeli civilians. This is a principle recognized by the Israeli army. We might both criticize the sentences against Israeli soldiers who have committed brutal acts—they are too light. But *in principle* the Israeli army recognizes that these acts should be punished—it doesn't, as the PLO did in the past, issue statements claiming credit for attacks against uninvolved civilians. So people who beat up Palestinians can and do get prosecuted, even if the sentences aren't stiff enough. Finally, suspend military actions of PLO forces trying to infiltrate Israel through the northern border. And say that you would accept a demilitarized state.

But you are right to say that we can't guarantee

immediate results—there's a political process in Israel. We don't have a dictatorship there—people's minds have to be changed. The alternative is to keep the present situation in which every little concession made by the Palestinians isn't even noticed. Make one big concession of the sort I'm describing, let the PNC take this kind of action in a clear way, and you could change the political dynamics in Israel. It's not fair to ask you to do this; but it's smart. And it's time to begin to distinguish between "fair" and "smart."

Husseini: Take your point about military attacks from the north. We are not yet a state, so even when we say that we agree to suspend attacks, some Palestinians will not listen to us. But it would be different if we had a deal—an explicit cease-fire such as the one that we had with Israel on the Lebanese border from 1981 to 1982. As you know, in that period, while there *was* an explicit agreement, we were able to enforce a cease-fire throughout our movement. But to ask us to stop all these things while the other side has the full freedom to hit our targets and do whatever they want—that we will not accept. If we reach an agreement, then that's a different matter—but even when we agree to a demilitarized Palestinian state, we want an equal level of respect, and that means a situation in which not only one side is giving.

Lerner: There are many times in history after a war has been fought when the victor wins and that's it—they take over the land that they've conquered and the matter is closed. So, if Israel withdraws from land it conquered in a war, land it could militarily hold on to, it is giving something up, something very real. It's not just the Palestinians who would be giving up something—the Israelis would be giving up land. When the U.S. beat Mexico in a war, it took over California. And it didn't later hand back that land and withdraw. So if Israel does withdraw, it's giving up something very real—and so it's a mistake to present this as though you would be the only side that is giving.

Husseini: But we are already saying that we are ready to give up the borders of the 1947 UN resolution and that we are now accepting the 1967 borders, which in effect means giving up very large parts of what we understand to be part of our homeland. It will be equal when both sides recognize that we have here two peoples fighting each other, and that the conflict will be resolved when we both reach the decision that we should not destroy each other, but must live together in peace. From our side, we've reached this point—we've declared we are willing to live with a two-state solution. The other side does not acknowledge that they would be willing to live on equal terms with the Palestinian people as a people—they insist instead on dealing with us not as a people, but as a minority group that is inhabiting foreign land. Mr. Shamir is more willing to negotiate with a Palestinian living inside the occupied territories (even if he is extreme, that is, someone who has been put in prison for activities that Shamir has decided are "hostile" activities) than he is with someone who is a Palestinian who doesn't currently reside inside the occupied territories; but he won't sit with members of our people who reside outside that territory. He won't sit with Edward Said or Abu Lughod just because they are from outside—because if he would sit with them he could no longer say he was dealing with a minority, he would have to thereby acknowledge that he was dealing with a people.

So the real question remains, "Is Israel willing to deal with us as a people, or does it insist on dealing with us as a minority that has no right to self-determination?" What we want from Israel is that they recognize that we are *one people,* and those people who are living outside are not coming from the moon. I am in Jerusalem, so Israel says they can talk to me. But what about my other three brothers, who are outside—why can't they also participate in determining the future of this land? Why do they have no right to be here—who made that determination? So, the only way to get out of this is to have mutual recognition of the principle of self-determination for each people. But it makes no sense to ask the Palestinians to make further concessions unless we can start with *both* sides acknowledging the right of the other to self-determination. And from our side, I believe we have done our steps, by passing the resolutions at Algiers, by Arafat saying he is willing to come to Jerusalem—we have done our job. The peace camp in Israel is asking us not only to do our job, but also asking us to do for them their job. The peace camp in Israel needs to change Israel. Because if people like the right-wing Israeli leader Gandi—who calls for expulsion of all Palestinians—continue to operate, eventually Israel will lose its own democracy, it will lose its freedom, it will go on to create a very perilous situation.

For me, I am sacrificing my life, I am fighting, I am trying through this fight to rebuild my society. But we insist on our right to self-determination. We are saying that we are willing to negotiate, that we will talk with anyone, from the Left, from the Right, from the extreme Right, from the center—we are ready to do that anywhere, anytime. But what about the other side?

The peace camp must work harder. The danger exists for Israel. The occupation is moving from the West Bank—and it will eventually occupy the Israeli side.

Lerner: You've talked about protecting a Palestinian

(Continued on p. 123)

The revolutions in Eastern Europe are a welcome development for those of us who have fought for increased democracy and human rights in all corners of the globe. We believe in democracy as the system most consistent with human creativity and freedom, and most appropriate to human dignity.

Liberals and progressives have a more sectarian reason to celebrate the collapse of Eastern European communism. Anyone who has listened carefully to the American Left knows that since the 1960s at least the majority of those affiliated with the "New Left" have been unequivocally hostile to the Soviet Union and other dictatorships that appropriated the label "socialism."

Yet the Right has always been able to manipulate Americans' correct revulsion at Stalinism into a general dismissal of socialism's fundamental ideas. The very reason that the command economy didn't work in Eastern Europe is that the system was not democratic. Hence it depended on the implausible assumption that people could be motivated to work for nonmaterial incentives such as social solidarity even as they felt alienated from the society and saw it as being dictatorially controlled by a ruling Communist elite. Every sensible democratic socialist would (and did) explain that this could never work—that if people had no sense of power and control, they would work only for material rewards such as those provided by the capitalist marketplace. But it was almost impossible to explain that East European socialism wasn't really socialism because workers didn't have real power or control—that it was just another ruling elite exploiting the word socialism for its own purposes. Nevertheless both the American Right and the East European Communists agreed that what was being tried was socialism.

Better then for the people of Eastern Europe, and for those of us seeking democratization in the West, that the whole system of oppression has collapsed. At least now the liberals don't have to try to explain why the mixed economy they support, with elements of democratic planning and elements of the marketplace, has nothing in common with the dictatorships of Eastern Europe. Perhaps now it will become possible to talk about extending democratic control to investments and production, and about using resources in ways that would save our endangered planet.

But the collapse is not total, and what comes next in Eastern Europe must necessarily concern all of us. Absent a strong democratic tradition, given the long history of anti-Semitism and xenophobic nationalism, the next steps in Eastern Europe are likely to be ambiguous, complex, and problematic. We can cheer at the collapse of the totalitarian regimes while simultaneously being wary about some of the current developments. We at Tikkun *shall closely monitor those developments, with special attention to their meaning for worldwide democratic forces and for the Jews.*

The Unmastered Future: What Prospects for Eastern Europe?

Tony Judt

Several months ago I spent some time in Prague and Budapest. By now most people have a fairly good sense of what's been happening there. But as to what's *going* to happen ... who knows? We can hazard something of a prediction by posing two seemingly straightforward questions which are of enormous interest in Central Europe at the moment. First, and of obvious urgency to Jewish communities everywhere, "was Gorbachev good for the Jews?"—by which I mean to address the whole question of ethnic, religious, and national sentiment and particularly the background of anti-Semitism in Central Europe. And second, more generally, what's happening to socialism? Or, rather, since socialism is dead, what will replace it? Will Central Europe now witness a rampant enthusiasm for the worst features of capitalism?

In some ways I can illustrate the themes I want to pursue with two brief anecdotes. When I left Prague I

Tony Judt is a professor of history at New York University, the author of Marxism and the French Left, 1830–1981 *(Oxford, 1986), and the editor of* Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe, 1939–1948 *(Routledge, 1989).* *A version of this talk was presented at the Los Angeles* Tikkun *conference in January of 1990.*

took the train to Vienna. Normally at that frontier, one is searched in a very long, boring, and rather unpleasant series of encounters. This time I was sitting in a compartment with three East Germans and an Austrian when the young Czech frontier guard came in. He was, it turned out, figuratively as well as literally unbuttoned. He looked quickly at the passports of the other four people and then stood at the door and said, in Czech, "I seem to have missed someone. I've only got four." And I, in the timid way one does, or did, in Central Europe, said "Yes, please, excuse me sir, you've forgotten me." He looked at me holding out my passport and said, "Oh, what the hell, perestroika." And he walked away.

Since socialism is dead, what will replace it?

Another minor anecdote: There was a cartoon that appeared on the back of one of the student newspapers that started to flourish in Prague in late December of 1989. Some of the cartoons are extremely good, very biting. This one was of a middle-aged man, a sort of Stanley Kowalski figure standing in front of a mirror, looking with some bemusement at a middle-aged woman. The woman—overweight and naked except for her curlers—stares at him from the door. The caption underneath has her speaking: "Don't you recognize me? I'm your dream of 1968."

The dream of 1968 doesn't speak very well in 1989, and that's part of the point I want to make on the death of socialism. But several observations about the region are in order by way of background, because what is happening now reminds us that the East-bloc countries do not comprise a natural region. They simply occupy the land between two more or less natural regions, and two more or less hegemonic powers. In fact, the only thing the East-bloc countries share is forty years of Soviet domination. In other words, they have four things in common: domination by the local Communist Party, consistently supported, for the most part, by the Soviet Union; centralized economic systems that communism imposed; an absence of civil liberties; and an obligation to reorient themselves eastward. In every other way, these countries are very, very different from one another. (Just how different they are is only now emerging.) After all, they are the consequence of the breakup and fall of quite different empires: the Turkish Empire, the Austrian Empire, the Russian Empire, and the German Empire. Linguistically, culturally, economically, and so forth, they come into history in very different ways.

The Czechs, to take one extreme example, came out of the Austrian Empire in 1918 with 70 percent of the productive capacity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. By 1938, Czechoslovakia had a greater per capita production and was more advanced by most of the usual criteria than Italy, Belgium, or Austria—and not very far behind France. Conversely, there are other parts of East Central Europe—such as bits of Eastern Poland, most of Rumania, and large chunks of Eastern Hungary—which were never industrialized or urbanized, and which remained, well into the Second World War, much more backward than any part of Western Europe, except perhaps for areas of southern Portugal.

Those cultural gaps were very often reflected in differences in degree of religious affiliation (by and large the more backward regions being both more Catholic and more heavily practicing) and also in the extent to which they were beneficiaries of the Communist experiences. Because if communism did anything in this part of the world, it ushered in a certain kind of crude, Russian-style industrialization. In parts of Rumania, Slovakia, and Poland this was a net short-term gain. That is to say, people did get better off at least in the crude material sense. In other countries, and in parts of the same countries, like Bohemia in Czechoslovakia, or the industrial parts of Poland, or East Germany, the Soviet domination simply had the effect of sending them into a backward tailspin, deindustrializing them in some cases, or forcing them into a primitive industrial base when in fact they were much more advanced, much more consumer-oriented and technically sophisticated.

So the countries involved in the current upheavals come from diverse stock. They're also extremely distrustful of one another. Many Hungarians regard Slovakia as "Northern Hungary." It used to be. The Slovaks hate the Hungarians for precisely that reason. And the Slovaks today are very suspicious of the Hungarian reforms because there's been a resurgence of Hungarian nationalism among a number of parties. Those parties have started to talk about parts of Rumania and Czechoslovakia which they claim should be returned to Hungary.

Likewise the Czechs and the Slovaks are mutually suspicious, the Czechs regarding the Slovaks, to some degree rightly, as the beneficiaries of communism. After 1968, when tens of thousands of schoolteachers, professors, intellectuals, and professionals of all kinds were removed from their jobs, Slovaks were imported into places like Brno and Prague to take their places. I know people who will talk (privately until last year) with almost racial fervor of their dislike of Slovaks and of the Slovak schoolteachers who'd been imported, semiliterate, from Bratislava or points east to come and teach in Prague and spread the primitive word to their children—this because there were no decent, "reliable" (politically reliable) Czechs to do it.

And there are many other hatreds. Poles and Czechs, Czechs and Germans, Poles and Germans. Everyone hates the Gypsies; and as we'll see in a minute, most people don't care for the Jews. Central Europe is, therefore, a part of the world that has been held together by historical accident—the historical accident of the local vacuum of power into which the Russians stepped in 1944–45. A comparable vacuum of power in 1918 allowed these countries to come into being in the first place; but there was nothing historically necessary or inevitable about that.

By 1989 a vacuum of power existed in the region once again. There was no massive Western power with both an interest and the capacity to exercise that interest in Central Europe. The Soviet Union, for reasons of its own, doesn't feel that the price of control is worth paying any longer. This vacuum has made possible the dramatic events of 1989; but at the same time it underscores the precariousness of the new situation. And it is against this backdrop of volatility that the question of anti-Semitism must be addressed.

In all of Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia, there now live only 120,000 Jews; 80,000 of them live in Hungary, another 20,000 or so live in Rumania, about 7,000 in Czechoslovakia, and some 4,000 in Poland. The reason why Jews matter, however, and why anti-Semitism matters, is this: Hitler did not destroy European Jewry. There were perhaps a million Jews living in Eastern Europe in 1945. Nearly half of them, just under 500,000, lived in Rumania, and most of those lived in Bucharest. Bucharest had the second-largest (next to Paris) Jewish population of any city in Europe, if you don't include the Soviet Union. Budapest, with 110,000 or so Jews in 1945, was next. And these people were very, very prominent. Don't forget, also, there were over 100,000 Jews in Poland at the war's end.

A wildly disproportionate number of these Jews were active members in the highest ranks of the Communist parties. Many of them had survived by living in the Soviet Union (some of them, of course, had survived by living in Soviet labor camps), but others had passed the previous decade as the party representatives of the Rumanian, the Polish, the Hungarian, the Bulgarian Communist parties, living in exile in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. These parties were put together by Stalin after the purge of the original, much more nationally oriented parties of those countries. They were brought back in the baggage trains of the Russian armies to construct Communist governments in these countries. For example, almost the entire Politburo of the Rumanian Communist Party, which founded the Communist state and remained in authority until the purge in 1951, consisted of Jews. Eleven of the fourteen people who were tried in the famous Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia in

1952, which was basically the great purge of the old Czech party leadership, were Jews, all but one of whom were hanged. The Hungarian Communist state had a Jew as the president, a Jew as the head of the Party, and Jews among the chief victims of those two Jews. The head of the secret police in Poland was Jewish.

This is an important point, because when it became necessary for the Communist parties of most of these countries in the 1960s to try to reestablish credibility in the post-Stalin, post-Khrushchev era, some of them did so by reminding the local population of the fact that all the miseries, all the frustrated expectations, and the appalling social and moral condition of the country could be attributed to the first generation of Communists, who'd set the systems up. And guess who they were.

At the same time, the Jewish population in these countries was in fact rapidly declining. After the series of attacks on Jews, culminating in the Kielce pogrom in Poland in 1946–47, the Polish Jewish population fell off sharply as large numbers of Jews left Poland, fleeing either to Israel, the U.S., or France.

With the Soviet switch from pro-Zionism to anti-Zionism in 1950, the Jewish population in Rumania and Czechoslovakia went into a tailspin as Jews got out if they could. And it was, in fact, always easy for Jews to get out of Rumania—initially because they were allowed out; later on, as we now know, because Ceausescu basically allowed Israel to pay for them to come out. In any event, Jews left very rapidly. They left again in 1968, particularly from Poland (but also from Czechoslovakia and Rumania) when the Party turned on its own Jewish high ranks to try to gain some credibility with what was already then a popular opposition.

A second reason for the importance of the Jewish question is paradoxical: it relates indirectly to the Jewish presence in the Communist Party. Remember, these parties were very small. The Rumanian Party, run by

Anka Pauker, for example, basically consisted of about fifteen hundred people, and it took over the whole country. Its credibility, and the credibility of other parties, consisted of the claim that they were now, finally, once and for all, going to establish security, stability, and the right of these small nations to exist. The small Slav nations—Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria—would be able to look to the great Slav nation—Russia—to protect them against future attacks by Germany. In 1946–47, the historical threat was from Germany, not Russia. For the other nations—Hungary and Rumania in particular—the promise was that in return for complete alignment with the Soviet Union, they would no longer need to fear loss of territory, and they would no longer have to fear internal division caused by their ethnic minorities. These countries became relatively ethnically homogeneous in comparison with what they'd been before 1939. There were no Jews (the claim becomes eventually true, though it wasn't initially), and there were no Germans. And here it is essential to keep in mind that the two great minorities in Eastern Europe were Jews and Germans. The Germans killed off most of the Jews. The rest of the Jews progressively emigrated, and the remaining Germans (there were many of them in Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland) were violently removed. They became refugees in West Germany and eventually came to constitute the basis of the conservative vote in areas of the German Federal Republic during much of the 1950s and the 1960s.

The Communists claimed that they were in some sense the source for the final historical establishment of these countries. They were now going to put them on an economically sound footing by industrializing them. This is what made Communist leadership relatively popular, initially, in parts of Hungary and Rumania. This popularity was further boosted by the fact that the people who were put in charge of the factories, the increasingly mechanized collective farms, the ministries, economic agencies, and so on, were rapidly-upwardly-promoted peasants and workers (who were also very carefully selected to be true representatives of the nation). There was much emphasis in Communist propaganda of the forties and fifties on the Hungarianness of Hungary, the Czechness of Czechoslovakia, the Polishness of Poland.

In other words, the very same Jews who established the Communist regime, people like Rakosi in Hungary or Berman in Poland, very rapidly realized that the credibility and legitimacy of their regimes rested on claiming to be more nationalist than the nationalists—claiming, in other words, to have *made* these countries both safe against outside threats, autonomous (if not wealthy), and independent of economic dependency upon the West. There was a lot of political mileage to be got for communism by claiming to have once and for all done away with the foreign ownership which had so characterized their economies before 1939. And "foreign" could be read as, literally, French, German, British, but also "non-ethnic" Hungarians, "non-ethnic" Poles, "non-ethnic" Slavs.

The present situation resurrects these concerns, but through a mirror. The removal of the Communist regimes allows the question of the legitimacy of these countries once again to arise. The question of what exactly constitutes the "true" Polishness of Poland, the Czechness of Czechoslovakia, the Hungarianness of Hungary is one that people can now get back to after this Russian-imposed forty years of domination. (I leave aside the question of how much of it is Russian-imposed, and how much self-imposed; that is a debate already, among Czech intellectuals in particular.)

What makes prognostication difficult is that so often there is no indigenous political tradition to get back to. Or rather, there is a series of traditions, but none of them is properly political. Only Czechoslovakia had something resembling parliamentary party politics before 1938. And the decade from 1938 to 1948 pretty much destroyed that in Czechoslovakia as well. Elsewhere, there wasn't even anything to be destroyed.

Therefore, we find that Gorbachev offered only the conditions under which it was possible for oppositional forces to come into the open and thrive. But he didn't give birth to them. Within all the dissident movements there were quiet but deep divisions as to exactly what one would do if the Communists could be gotten rid of. Only the Czechs, as I say, had something to go on. What, after all, could the others look back to?

All they could look back to—and herein lies the problem—is exactly what they're now getting: nationalist rhetoric, a strong emphasis on the identity of nation and religion, and a deep resentment at the damage caused to the country, not only by Communists, but also by other countries. Remember that for forty years the Russians forbade any discussion of territorial matters, because the Russians have also been the chief territorial beneficiaries of the Second World War. But everyone has a gripe—the Hungarians want some of Rumania, the Rumanians want some of the Soviet Union, and so forth.

These matters were being argued within the opposition but couldn't be voiced publicly, and they are now the first form in which politics has reemerged in these countries. With them has reemerged not only the issues but the language of the 1930s. And I mean that literally. Everyone presumably recalls the famous speech by the appalling Cardinal Glemp on the subject of the Carmelite nuns at Auschwitz. The bit in Glemp's speech where he goes on about the Jews running the media and so forth

is the part that made the Western press. But the whole speech was cast in a way that would immediately ring bells for a generation of Poles over the age of forty. It is the language of the *endetzia,* the National Democratic Party of the 1920s and 1930s: the language of, to put it crudely, Poland for the Poles, the identity of religion and nation, the assumption that ethnic minorities within the country are necessarily anti-Polish. (Jews are the most obvious minority, but in a recent unofficial opinion poll taken in Cracow, it turned out that Poles have a positive view about all categories of persons *except* Germans, Gypsies, and Jews, in that order, and there are hardly any members of these categories in Poland today.) But of course that is the form in which nationalist rhetoric casts itself. So Poland is rediscovering its voice in the nationalist rhetoric of 1939.

The language of radical politics in Eastern Europe is now, for want of a better word, liberalism.

The situation is comparable in Hungary, where there are at least half a dozen political parties, only one of which is the former Communist Party, now called the Hungarian Socialist Party. There is, however, one party called the Democratic Forum, which is by no means reactionary and by no means in the Glemp category. Most of the support for the Hungarian Democratic Forum, which will likely comprise approximately 20 percent of the electorate in the spring elections, comes from outside of Budapest, from the countryside in eastern and southern Hungary. The Democratic Forum has begun to speak once again of Budapest as sort of a den of sin, iniquity, "otherness," populated by Westerners and foreigners. Or, as I was told in Budapest on my last visit, it is now sometimes being referred to as "Zydapest." Why Zydapest? Well, to some extent, it makes sense. I also attended a party of the SDS, which is the union of liberal and social democrats, run by the most important of the younger dissident generation. The gathering consisted of the English ambassador and about thirty Hungarians, mostly Jews. Jews made up most of the leadership of the social democratic party. They could perhaps get about 12 to 15 percent of the vote in opinion polls, nearly all of it in Budapest and a couple of other cities. So a division which was absolutely characteristic of Hungarian history before 1939 has come naturally, easily back into being. There is a "Jewish Budapest," a cosmopolitan Budapest—more social democratic, Western, and intellectual—versus the peasant and businessmen's parties of the East. And with this division the language of the 1930s has also returned.

Part of the resurgence of anti-Semitism involves another problem. Hitherto it was not permitted to talk about the fact that these countries had highly stratified social systems in which there were very real beneficiaries and victims. You could be a beneficiary by being in the *nomenklatura,* in what the Czechs called the Mafia—that is to say, the "second economy" or black market—or you could advance yourself by working, as some Hungarians do, at four or five jobs. Anyone who's traveled on the Budapest trams at midnight will know that there are large numbers of people just leaving their third job, or just going off to their third job, in order to be able to make a living. The spending power they accumulated under goulash Communism misleadingly conveyed to Western visitors a sense of economic well-being.

The resentment now emerging against those people who did well under these conditions is analogous to the resentment against corruption in East Berlin. In other countries, it is taking anti-Semitic form. "They must be Jews, they're doing so well" is one phrase. According to an interesting double bind, people who don't do well are assumed not to be working hard enough. And they're called Gypsies. So we now have social and economic categories ascribed to ethnic or racial origin. People who've done well must be Jews, and people who've failed must be Gypsies. And this has nothing to do with the presence or absence of Jews in Budapest, even though Budapest now has the largest number of Jews (about 80,000) of any city in Eastern Europe.

The Jewish question is not the most important question in Eastern Europe today. But it is part of the most important question, namely: How do you establish political systems that are not simply throwbacks to something that the Communists quite rightly complain was, if not worse than what they wrought, in many respects not better? How do you invent politics? It's a curious fact that the Western observers have been much more concerned with a different question—How do you invent economics?—which is not the primary question, except perhaps in Poland or maybe in the Soviet Union.

It is not that the economies of any of these countries are in a good state; they're not. They are all basket cases. They are just different kinds of basket cases. None of these economies ever thrived. (The one that came nearest to thriving was Czechoslovakia's, and it has thrived less over time. In other words, it was simply benefiting from the massive advantage it had in 1948: high level of skills, high level of productivity, good raw-material base, established markets, and a highly urbanized population.)

But many people of Eastern Europe are not talking chiefly about economics. There are two reasons for that. One is because politics is more problematic: What do you do with questions of religion and nationalism? What are you going to do about the people who have

power? The second involves the fact that the only way you could become a dissident in Communist Eastern Europe between 1956 and the mid-seventies was by being a so-called reform economist. That is what nearly all the dissidents, even those who didn't know the first thing about economics, were. From within the party, you could criticize the system on Marxist grounds, and you could argue that in the name of its own egalitarian and productivist theses it was failing, and therefore it needed to be reformed. Everyone proceeded under the assumption that by talking about economics, one could stay within the system, stay socialist, stay safe (you couldn't be imprisoned for talking about economic performance), and at the same time be a critic of the existing situation.

Since the mid-seventies, that has been regarded as a massive act of bad faith. None of the people whose names are known in the West as significant thinkers or political activists, from Havel to Michnik, Kuron to Kis, knows anything or could have cared less about economics. Now that they are suddenly discovering it, they have nothing to offer by way of a theory. One answer is that there *is* no theory about what you do once communism dies. There's no example to build on; no one's ever written about it. Instead, they've talked about politics. And the reason they've talked about politics, as I've said, is that the immediate danger to these countries is a resurgence of the only available kind of politics that's ever been there. There is no liberal tradition, and there is no longer a socialist tradition. This is something that it is very important to convey. Socialism is dead. It is dead largely because the language is so abused that it is no longer possible to talk about socialism. It is simply polluted beyond repair, like two-thirds of Slovakia's rivers. Remember, these are not Communist states, these are socialist states (the Union of Soviet *Socialist* Republics). Socialism, and any political language that purports to want to move toward it, or rest upon it, or derive its moral premises from it, immediately meets blank, skeptical, or cynical stares.

On the other hand, there is no universal assumption that therefore liberal capitalism should replace it. That only follows from the sort of argument that claims that those are the only available historical options—precisely the kind of argument which is now being rejected because it was the argument of the official regime.

Also, there is a refusal to discuss politics and economics as though they were necessarily a package. A central claim of Marxism is that there is a necessary historical relationship between economic systems and political forms, between economic interests and political power, between the economic class that dominates and the political system through which it dominates. And so it is universally the case in Eastern Europe that people therefore reject the idea that politics and economics come as a package. Thus, they have no trouble imagining, at least in theory, the virtues of a totally free market and the moral appeal of a social democratic political system, with all sorts of collectively recognized protections and interests.

At the level of political thought, that is probably recognized as the desired goal. This is a part of the world, more than most other parts of Europe, where the state has always played an enormous role in public life, in economic life, in relations between people at all levels of society. It was not an achievement of communism to bring this about—communism simply seized the state and used it for different ends. But those ends varied only by virtue of being different ends. The means were rather similar, rather recognizable.

It follows, then, that there is no assumption that you have to kick the state completely out, that liberal market economics involves the absence of the state in the areas of welfare and education or in any of the traditional social democratic concerns. None of these countries has any history of liberalism in either of the Anglo-American senses—laissez-faire or political freedom. (Czechoslovakia has a little in the latter case.) Therefore, none of them can look back to some model of which they've been deprived. Whereas, for example, if you could imagine communism imposed for forty years on Belgium, or Norway, there would immediately be a very clear sense of what you would look back to, of what you would want to dismantle.

But the Communists didn't actually create much of what they took over, though they did use it differently. What has to be dismantled is the political ends, not the social means, for many of these Eastern European thinkers. To this extent, the latter are social democrats, but they recognize a problem: that social democracy carries with it one necessary condition and one promise. The necessary condition is enormous wealth. The only social democratic countries that are even relatively successful have, per capita, massive wealth available for distribution. That wealth has produced countries such as Sweden or the Great Britain of the 1960s, countries like Australia, the Netherlands, West Germany. Since none of these countries in Eastern Europe has the remotest chance of having any such forms of production or capacity for a long time to come, and many of their leaders aren't even sure they want it, distribution is going to be much more problematic than it's ever been in social democratic countries.

The second point is that social democracy has a promise. The history of social democracy, like the history of socialism—and the split between the two is accidental and historical, not conceptual or philosophical—is a history of promising the eventual creation of a better

society. But, in contradistinction to Communists and to revolutionary socialists, social democrats did not claim that you could achieve the better society necessarily by revolution, or by violence, or by bringing to power a new ruling class. It was, nevertheless, a promise. And in that sense it was a goal-oriented political system. It still is, in language if not in practice.

That promise, however, is unacceptable in contemporary Eastern Europe. Anyone who walked into any Eastern European country today and said, "I promise you that we will together construct the perfect, or even relatively perfect, or even a good society," would sound and would be read as extremely threatening. Because a society based on promises, based upon the assumption that the present is a price that we pay for the future, is precisely what has been experienced for the past forty years and is now, and likely to remain for some time, illegitimate. The only kind of teleologically oriented promise people will listen to is the one that says there's an afterlife. There is no other promise which people will buy for a long time to come. They are much more willing to accept that there are going to be bad times for some time to come. The condition for accepting those bad times is that there will eventually be slightly better times and that both during the bad times and the better times there will not be a Communist government, or anything resembling it.

That is the nearest thing to a vision of utopia in Eastern Europe today. This will change. But for the moment that's what there is. It is not accidental that the president of Czechoslovakia today is a man whose social vision consists precisely, if you read Havel's essays, of the refusal to construct. Havel is not, of course, a political theorist. He never was. But he has written a number of what are essentially political essays, most of them from prison. In them, he—and in this he's rather like some of the other people in Poland and Hungary—makes very clear that Eastern Europe today is a peculiarly distorted and historically unfortunate outgrowth of modernity: productivism for its own sake, the introduction of utopian visions and utopian languages into public life rather than into private belief, the removal of responsibility from the individual, a sort of hubristic obsession with creating a better world in the here and now. There is here an element of religious moralism, and Havel is a moralist in a long tradition of puritanical moralists (even though many of them are Catholics) in this part of the world.

He is symbolically the right person to lead politics in Czechoslovakia, and would probably be in other countries as well—for the moment. In December, students produced ersatz banknotes, huge false banknotes, in which the face of Klement Gottwald, the first Communist president, had been removed and the face of Havel had been inserted. Underneath it says, "The Bank of Czechoslovakia promises to pay the bearer on demand one hundred koruna," and on bottom it says, "Backed by character." And indeed moral character is Havel's selling point, just as it was the selling point of Lech Walesa—though I'm no longer so sure it still is with Walesa, even within Solidarity, much less outside.

So there is no longer any vision of socialism, and social democracy is simply the residual belief that it would be a good thing and it is a good thing for people to care for one another. And what's more, the appalling condition in which our countries now find themselves means that we *must* work together: on the ecological question, on the health question, on the decrepit state of education, on the whole problem of creating a society that will endure and will not again fall prey to the illusions of the 1940s. And that must be a collective achievement, just as these revolutions are collective achievements. In that sense, these are *not* individualistic, entrepreneurial, political visions, however much they may believe that the only way to create wealth in these countries is to give a free hand to peasants, workers, and managers.

Already, though, there is an interesting debate coming up and taking some rather unpleasant forms on that score. The opponents of privatization consist almost totally of people who are using the issue to say that we are selling out to foreigners. The Hungarian Democratic Forum says that it is all for privatization, but it wants a law saying that the only people who can buy into Hungary are Hungarians. "Hungary for the Hungarians," essentially. The former, so-called official labor unions in Poland, together with the Communist Party, are now very cleverly starting to play the same line: "We're all in favor of privatization. But what we don't want is Poland to be sold to cosmopolitan foreigners."

The whole issue of privatization, of course, leads into the matter of Eastern Europe's perception of the West and vice versa. The vision of America in Eastern Europe is in part quite revealing. People who would be considered leftist in American terms, for example, hold Ronald Reagan in extremely high regard. (We should keep in mind, though, that this is a fantasy Reagan. He is alive and well and living in Poland, among other places.) But this is due to the fact that all thoughts have to be filtered through the question of Russia. Eastern Europeans were bound to like an American president who realized (as Eastern Europeans had always argued) that the Soviet Union is troubled economically and that upping the ante in international diplomacy would bring them to their knees. An American president who appeared to realize that must, it was assumed, be extraordinarily insightful, because no previous American president, at least since Truman, seemed to have got the point. In

other words, the Eastern Europeans made the classic intellectual's error: if someone agrees with you, they must be clever. From this they inferred that Reagan had a strategy, that there was some relationship between what Reagan said and what this strategy was, and that eventually something might happen. Even the most cynical of them took the view, "Look, he may be a dumb second-rate actor, but he's accidentally doing the right thing, and so we must back him to the hilt."

On the other hand, we, the collective Western Left, have projected our own fantasies onto Eastern Europe since 1945. I don't mean always, and I don't mean everyone, but there was in general a desire to believe that whatever the obvious failings, the obvious unpleasantness of these places, something was there that might be retrieved, that might be improved.

The young, radical Eastern European opposition, some of them ex-Marxists, some of them ex-Catholics, found that they couldn't talk to such people in the West as long as there was a Western fantasy that there was something over there that could still be saved. Not the fantasy of the 1950s—the Sartrian idea that there really was socialism there, and that the future of the West lay in the East—but a residual belief that we couldn't totally give up on the hopes of 1917.

This is an amazing illusion, because there's no reason on earth why the West should have projected the nineteenth-century dreams of a perfect civil society onto, of all places, Eastern Europe. For all the reasons I've outlined and for many others, Eastern Europe was the last possible candidate for social democracy, much less socialism. And if there is to be any communication between us and them, "us" has got to learn this fast. We can talk about socialism, we can talk about social democracy, as much as we like. But if we wish to talk to people in Eastern Europe about what they're doing, we must realize that the language has changed. The language of radical politics in Eastern Europe is now, for want of a better word, liberalism—except it's not what we mean by "liberalism," at least not what we've come to mean by it.

To be liberal in Eastern Europe, to be a "muscular liberal" (as in the English term "muscular Christian"), to take liberalism seriously in its intellectual forms, is to be extremely radical and also quite brave. To have the courage to think through what it would mean to believe in a market economy, but not necessarily in the package deal that a market economy is likely to carry with it in the West, is to be in a very tricky position indeed. It would seem to me a pity if the Western Left—in particular the French Left—should be so absorbed with its own sense of loss that it should fail both to keep in touch with and also to listen carefully to what's going on over there. I think this would be a massive opportunity lost. In fact, it seemed to me as I was leaving Prague that this was the most important thought to retain on coming back to the West. □

AFTER THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS

Revolution and Us

Joanne Landy

Each day's papers bring news of unprecedented victories for democratic movements in the USSR and across the Soviet bloc. These victories disprove outright the claims of cold warriors who argued for more than four decades that Communist societies were frozen monoliths impervious to challenges from below. As Polish, Hungarian, Czechoslovak, East German, Bulgarian, Rumanian, and Soviet citizens courageously seize the opportunities created by Gorbachev's liberalization policies, the Communist system itself appears to be unraveling. It remains to be seen whether the string of revolutions will result not only in the triumph of democracy in the Eastern bloc, but in an end to the cold-war order.

The upheaval in the Eastern bloc poses three central questions—not just for people who live in the Communist world, but for all of us: First, how will the disintegration of the old order in the Warsaw Pact countries contribute to the redefinition of East-West relations in Europe? Second, what economic and political relations ought to exist among nations and peoples around the world? And third, as we move into the twenty-first

Joanne Landy is the director of the New York-based Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West. She has often visited Eastern Europe to promote contacts with independent human rights and peace activists. Ms. Landy is an editor of New Politics *magazine.*

century, what kind of society will best fulfill essential human needs for freedom, economic well-being, and ecological survival? As the one-party system loses credibility, we have to ask whether the Western model of political economy is the only or the best alternative.

Challenges to the Warsaw Pact and NATO

Careful though many East-bloc activists have been not to explicitly repudiate the Warsaw Pact, the USSR faces mounting de facto challenges to its domination of Eastern Europe. As the vision of an independent Eastern Europe takes on flesh, the role of NATO necessarily comes into question. The end of the cold-war division of Europe into competing military blocs is suddenly a possibility that must be seriously considered.

Although Mikhail Gorbachev has repudiated the Brezhnev doctrine justifying Soviet intervention in neighboring countries—a most welcome step—he revealed his apprehension about concrete moves to end the postwar division of Europe when he said in October 1989: "We don't idealize the order that has settled on Europe. But the fact is that until now the recognition of the postwar reality has insured peace on the continent."

Gorbachev has sent mixed messages. The USSR now admits that the invasion of Afghanistan was a violation of international norms, and it promises no new interventions against its neighbors. It has proposed the mutual dissolution of military-political blocs in Europe, but relegates that to the future. In late October 1989, Nikolai Shishlin, spokesman for the Central Committee, said Hungary was free to leave the Warsaw Pact if it wanted to—but, he added, of course it doesn't want to. Just a few days prior to Shishlin's statement Soviet spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov had said, "We may witness a change of government in Warsaw or Budapest, but international obligations do not necessarily go away with a change of government."

Likewise, the Soviet Union has announced a willingness to "curtail all [Soviet] military bases abroad as well as [Soviet] military presence there" by the year 2000—but right now still maintains more than 500,000 troops in Warsaw Pact countries. To confuse matters further, the Soviet Union has clouded the meaning of its suggestion to close down all bases in Europe; this it did by failing to differentiate clearly between spheres of security that are "legitimate" and spheres of influence that are apparently no longer appropriate. As a result, it is unclear whether Gorbachev really intends to relinquish the Soviet claim over Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, Soviet diplomats have shown a new interest in keeping the U.S. *and* its nuclear weapons in Western Europe. In doing so the Soviets hope to limit the upheavals in Eastern Europe by providing a justification for keeping their own forces there.

These contradictory signals would offer a golden opportunity for any U.S. administration seriously interested in seeing the Soviets out of Eastern Europe. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, the U.S. and other NATO countries would simply have to respond positively to the Soviets' proposals for the disarmament and disengagement of superpower forces from Europe and then proceed to the business of implementing these proposals, both bilaterally and unilaterally. This would put political pressure on the USSR to live up to its theoretical pronouncements and withdraw all its forces from Eastern Europe.

It must be noted, however, that most of the Western establishment has also been far from enthusiastic about ending the East-West division of Europe and has therefore proven incapable of rising to the occasion. Western politicians have developed what can best be described as a case of the jitters about disrupting the "stability" of the status quo established at Yalta, despite their years of decrying the evils of Communism. One can only surmise that they too fear the political thaw that would take place with a real termination of the cold war.

The American government, of course, has special cause for concern: What will be NATO's publicly defensible function if the Warsaw Pact continues to fall apart? Without the East-West confrontation, how can the U.S. sustain the rationale for dominating its European allies? Undergirded by the prospect of Western European economic integration in 1992, the process of West European rejection of Washington's "leadership" has already gained considerable ground. West Germany's refusal to accept the deployment of medium-range American nuclear missiles is a mark of the independence already achieved; it now seems virtually certain that the missiles will never be deployed.

Relations Among Nations

As Hungary and Poland begin to democratize, activists in those countries are calling for international support. The West's response reflects the nature of today's global political economy. First of all, the amount of money promised to these countries is disgracefully inadequate, even after increases offered in response to public pressure from Lech Walesa and other East-bloc leaders. Second, the U.S. and Western Europe are demanding that in order to receive further financial support, Eastern European countries must adopt the same kind of austerity and privatization programs that have been imposed with such devastating effects on Third World countries.

Is this unequal global distribution of wealth and

power an inescapable fact of life? The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and Western governments and financial institutions require that the great majority of a given population suffer drastic reduction of their already miserable living standards in order to qualify for help in overcoming their economic crises. Are these "solutions" the inevitable price of admission into an international economy?

The Polish Case

An analysis of the current Polish situation might shed some light on these issues. In Poland the choice among different political and economic options is directly and immediately on the agenda. International financial support will play a crucial role in determining the country's direction.

The degree of democratization gained in Poland is a tribute to the steady and heroic work of the Solidarity opposition, which challenged the system not only during the sixteen months of its legal existence from 1980 to 1981, but also during the period of martial law and the ensuing years of one-party rule. Only after the stubborn resistance of Polish society was shown to be an insurmountable obstacle to resolving Poland's economic crisis did the Communist Party begin the process of political reform that eventuated in liberalized elections and a government with a Solidarity prime minister.

Yet the nature of this new government is quite ambiguous. Is it truly a Solidarity government? How *can* it be, with President Jaruzelski enjoying strong constitutional powers, with the secret police and army still very much in place, and, perhaps most important, with the great majority of the *nomenklatura* bureaucracy holding onto their positions? In an understandable but possibly fatal attempt to avoid a clash with the old administrative and political apparatus, Solidarity has sidestepped the issue of dismantling the *nomenklatura* structure. As a result, the Polish political situation is highly unstable and potentially very dangerous.

Meanwhile, Poland's Mazowiecki government has committed itself to quickly transforming the country from a command economy to one based on the "free market" (a theoretical model which is misleading since the market in practice has always been distorted by intertwining concentrations of power and wealth, and a model which certainly doesn't conform to the realities of contemporary Western or Third World private market economies). It is clear that the government's program means great social hardship for precisely those people who have traditionally formed the base of Solidarity's constituency—workers, pensioners, teachers, medical care workers, and other vulnerable sectors of society. At the same time, the creation of a "capital-friendly" private market economy, which Solidarity leaders have assured Western governments and financial institutions they intend to introduce, will necessarily foster the growth of a new wealthy private elite.

The Polish people, then, are being asked to make enormous sacrifices of their already sharply reduced living standards while they see two sets of elites (the traditional *nomenklatura* and the new business class) enjoying privileges, power, and wealth—and while millions of *zlotys* are spent on the swollen budgets of the military and secret police. To add insult to injury, at this writing (January 18, 1990) the military and police remain under the control of Communist ministers.

Will the population accept the pleas of the government for great economic sacrifice under these circumstances? This is difficult to predict. In light of Solidarity's legacy of egalitarianism and defense of the weak, it is reasonable to assume that widespread disaffection and resistance could easily arise from the union's ranks in the future, as it already has among thousands of Polish miners who went on strike in January 1990. Such resistance could be a positive development: it could lead to a revived mass-based egalitarian movement of social reconstruction in Poland. This movement might be able to replace the current Solidarity leadership, or to convince many of the present leaders to change course—a distinct possibility, given the social values and historic ties of Solidarity leaders with Poland's working class and poor. These values and links mean that several of those who are carrying out the current government's program feel profoundly ambivalent about their task and therefore are potentially responsive to pressure from below.

A change of course in an egalitarian and more deeply democratic direction is obviously the outcome to be hoped for. But a demoralized and impoverished population could also look to authoritarian solutions to its deteriorating situation. The Communist-linked trade union alliance, the OPZZ, has recently launched protests against Solidarity's plans to limit wage increases. While in the past the OPZZ was the agency the Communists used to get workers to accept low wages and shameful working conditions, its new militant posture suggests that it hopes to exploit popular disillusionment with Solidarity's economic policies for neo-Stalinist purposes. For similar reasons, the Communist Party itself has challenged the legitimacy of Mazowiecki's program, accusing the Solidarity leadership of making basic political and economic decisions without a genuine popular mandate.

The Communists are hardly in a moral position to make such an accusation, since for decades they ran the country in a dictatorial fashion. Far from being accountable to the population, the Party used prisons, censors,

and police to deal with people who advanced ideas deviating from the official orthodoxy. Nonetheless, the Communists' charges against the current government's economic program have a certain resonance. Solidarity candidates in the summer elections of 1989 never told their constituencies they intended to embark on a radical austerity program that would involve higher prices for medicines, immediate plant closures, the withdrawal of subsidies for food and other staples, and the like. Of course no one predicted that opposition candidates would do so well in the elections that they would be in a position to make policy decisions, but Solidarity will nonetheless have to face the consequences of undertaking its "reform" program. If the OPZZ and Communist Party are successful in their demagogic appeal against Solidarity-imposed austerity, it could lead to a resurgence of strength for those elements that oppose democratization.

The only way to reconstitute the Soviet Union on a democratic basis is for it to become a real confederation which different nations voluntarily agree or refuse to join.

Another possible response to the stress of privatization/marketization could be the growth of non-Communist antidemocratic sentiments among the Polish people and the establishment of a more traditional authoritarian regime. Mounting unemployment, skyrocketing prices, and a decline in real wages have historically often engendered a popular desire for a strong leader to assert control—not just in Poland, but throughout the world. This response is frequently associated with ugly forms of nationalism, and with anti-Semitism.

A third authoritarian way of resolving social tensions in Poland could come from within the government itself, with the participation of the Solidarity leadership. There are a number of potential scenarios. One possibility is that the state could become a kind of hybrid, formally maintaining democratic institutions while using coercive state measures to simultaneously protect both private and *nomenklatura* elites. Obviously this would constitute a tragic betrayal of the liberatory principles of Solidarity that transformed the Polish nation and inspired the entire world.

I raise these grim alternatives not because they are in any sense inevitable—they are not—but because they constitute real dangers that must be acknowledged and understood in order to be averted. Recognition of these dangers lends an even greater urgency to finding ways to support democratization in Eastern Europe.

To a large extent, the survival of democracy in Poland will depend on what happens in other East-bloc countries and in the Soviet Union. But the role of the West is also of critical importance. Unfortunately, progressives in the United States and Western Europe have not yet entered with their own voice into the policy debate about Eastern Europe. True, the Bush administration has been criticized by congressional Democrats (and some Republicans) for not offering enough money to Poland and Hungary; but the bill introduced by, among others, liberal Democratic senator Paul Simon limits increased aid to an investment fund called the United States–Poland Endowment for Free Enterprise. No major progressive figures have challenged this ideological earmarking of aid, nor have any prominent progressive leaders taken on the Bush administration, the IMF, or the European Community for insisting on "reforms" that will hit Polish and Hungarian workers and the poor hardest.

There is no question that the Polish economy needs to be radically restructured, given the proliferation of outmoded, inefficient, and environmentally disastrous industries. Doubtless, as both Communist and Solidarity leaders have contended, many of the old factories will simply have to be closed down and replaced. But who will control this restructuring, and how will the social interests of the weak be defended in the process? This has been an issue in our own country, which has witnessed a monumental transformation of the economy involving the closure of hundreds of plants producing cars, steel, and other industrial products. The way this change was carried out, from the top down and according to corporate rather than social needs, has been disastrous. It has created unemployment without adequate retraining programs or provision for those unable to find new jobs; thousands have been forced into non-union jobs at which they earn a fraction of their former wages. Moreover, the last two decades of economic change in the U.S. have meant insecurity for the great majority of Americans.

For a country like Poland, so much poorer than the United States, the question of economic restructuring is even more central. The social and ecological consequences of making decisions according to the interests of private capital will be far more severe. As this becomes evident, Solidarity's leadership may be challenged from below to adopt alternative, more socially equitable programs to resolve the country's crisis. Alternatives could include the elimination of *nomenklatura* positions; restrictions on privatization; progressive taxation and workers' self-management; various forms of democratic planning and social ownership of large enterprises;

and the slashing of military and secret-police budgets. All of these alternatives would free funds for critical social needs.

In the absence of a fundamental transformation of the global economic order, the reforming East-bloc countries will not be able to completely resist Western pressures to make great concessions to private capital. Eastern European proponents of more egalitarian solutions to their countries' economic crises will have more to bargain with, however, if progressives in the West mount a major campaign to provide financial aid without tying it to IMF-type economic restructuring policies.

The Democratic Movement in the GDR Transforms the Eastern European Political Landscape

It is impossible to overestimate the significance of the rise of a mass democratic movement in East Germany. The future of both Poland and Hungary appears brighter now that the strongest and most economically powerful of the Eastern European countries is on the move. The effects of the GDR's new grassroots movement were immediate in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.

Until the fall of 1989, almost no one predicted that a mass popular movement would emerge in East Germany, among the most repressive and at the same time most economically successful of the Warsaw Pact countries. Once started, though, the pace of change in the GDR has been astonishing. On October 6, 1989, Erich Honecker declared self-confidently, "We have the answers to all questions. Ours is the better world." By the end of the month, Honecker was no longer in office and hundreds of thousands of East Germans were in the streets pressing for reforms such as free elections, freedom of association, independent trade unions, the right to travel, and an end to police brutality. Demonstrators demanded "ecology instead of economy," a slogan that obviously cannot be taken literally, but which reveals the popular outrage at the way the country's bureaucrats, unaccountable to society, have wantonly destroyed the environment. From the day it took over, the new government of Egon Krenz was clearly on the defensive; within weeks it was replaced.

The crisis in the GDR was precipitated by the exodus of thousands of citizens over the course of just a few weeks. In response, activists formed a variety of groups (the best known being the New Forum) which were dedicated to making the GDR a place where people would want to stay. These groups have demanded radical democratization. Some activists call for democratic socialism, others don't want to give an explicit definition or label to their beliefs. A very large number, however, reject Western European or American political and economic models as being too competitive and insensitive to human and ecological needs.

Several of the new movements in the GDR have not called for the reunification of Germany because they don't want to be prematurely engulfed in what they see as the conservatism of West German political and economic life; they want to concentrate on the immediate issue of transforming East Germany itself into a democratic and humane society.

Yet it is universally recognized that the emergence of a democratic movement in the GDR at least raises the question of a reunited Germany, if not now then sometime in the future. It is therefore important to examine the grounds for opposing or accepting this eventuality.

The reason most often given for denying Germans the right to reunify is nazism and Germany's past international aggression. If the two Germanies get together, the argument goes, what guarantee is there that they won't do the same thing all over again? Americans ought to have a special insight into what's wrong with this logic, reasonable though it may seem on the surface. After all, consider the international crimes of our government—from Vietnam to South Africa, from Turkey to the Philippines, and of course, throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. One doesn't have to claim that U.S. policy has been comparable to that of the Nazis to understand that this country's global role has been brutal and immoral. Should the U.S. therefore be cut up into two, three, or even sixteen pieces? No one would advocate such a punitive and antidemocratic measure, including those of us who have strenuously opposed American interventionism and objected to the disgraceful practice of U.S. support for murderous dictators and human rights violators abroad. We argue instead for the need to transform this country into one that can conduct a humane and democratic foreign policy.

Aside from the question of fairness toward Germans, a defense of the superpowers' right to permanently divide Germany prolongs the cold-war division of Europe into competing military blocs. This was recognized by Charter 77, the Czech human rights movement, in their pioneering "Prague Appeal" of 1985:

> We can no longer avoid those issues which have so far been taboo, one of which is the division of Germany. If our aim is European unification, then no one can be denied the right of self-determination; and this applies equally to the Germans. As with all other rights, though, this must not be enforced at the expense of other peoples, nor by way of ignoring their fears. Let us therefore declare unequivocally, that no solution shall be sought through a further revision of European frontiers. In the process of

> European rapprochement, frontiers should gradually lose much of their significance, but even this should not be regarded as an opportunity for nationalistic backsliding. While appreciating this fact, let us acknowledge openly the right of the Germans freely to decide if or how they wish to unite their two states within their present frontiers....

In a similar vein, Polish Solidarity leader Adam Michnik wrote in a recent editorial in Solidarity's newspaper that the shape of Germany has to depend on "the Germans themselves, and on the situation in Europe.... The Germans must know that Poles are not interested in the continuance of a Stalinist system in East Germany, and that the de-Stalinization of East Germany is in Poland's national interest." In a 1989 interview with a West German newspaper, Solidarity's parliamentary leader Bronislaw Geremek likewise supported the right to German reunification.

Of course not all Poles, Czechs, or other Eastern Europeans agree with Michnik, Geremek, and the signers of the Charter 77 appeal. For instance, there is a lively dispute taking place right now within Solidarity over whether to limit Solidarity's response to support for the democratic movement in the GDR, or to go further and defend the right of Germans to ultimate reunification if they so choose. Many thoughtful East-bloc activists favor defending this right, despite the history of the German state against their countries, because they believe they cannot in good conscience deny to others national rights they demand for themselves. Likewise they think it would be suicidal to cut themselves off from the emerging East German movement by declaring in advance that reunification is off limits no matter what the East and West German people may democratically decide in the future.

Quite apart from fears of German military expansionism, there are other considerations that fuel concerns of Western governments about the prospects of serious confederation or unification of the two Germanies. On the economic front, for example, West Germany is developing a competitive edge as a result of its closer ties with the GDR and the rest of the Eastern bloc. A second, overlapping worry is that NATO will disintegrate —that West Germany will leave the Alliance if it becomes deeply involved in a wider network of East-bloc economic affairs.

President Bush said as much, in his own convoluted way, when he remarked: "I don't share the concern that some European countries have about a reunified Germany because I think Germany's commitment to and recognition of the Alliance is unshakable. And I don't see Germany, in order to get reunification, going off onto what some are concerned about, and that is a neutral path that puts them at odds, or potentially at odds, with their NATO partners...." In other statements Bush and Secretary of State James Baker have been much more blunt in indicating that while the United States upholds its decades-old official support for German reunification, it would not tolerate such a Germany unless it were aligned with the West. Of course it is precisely this tendency toward neutrality that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union could be sure to contain if the two halves of Germany came together on a democratic and voluntary basis.

The interests of environmental, peace, and human-rights activists on these issues are fundamentally different from those of the Western establishment. From the standpoint of the activists' concerns, the sooner NATO is dismantled the better—and the same for the Warsaw Pact. These military alliances not only give the superpowers an opportunity to exercise illegitimate influence and control over weaker nations within their respective blocs; they also perpetuate the danger of an East–West military conflict in Europe that would be devastating even if, somehow, it could be limited to conventional weapons.

At the same time, the "economic threat" of Germany is not a matter progressives can deal with by denying national rights to the German people. An honest look at the way *any* of the world's economically strong nations use their power—whether toward the Third World, Eastern Europe, or internally—shows that none of them devote that power to socially responsible or equitable ends. We need to restructure economic relations democratically both within and among countries, not to join in the game of favoring one powerful economic rival over another.

The Soviet Union

Gorbachev's effort to rescue the Soviet Union's economy and maintain the USSR as a world power has been seized from below and taken further than anyone anticipated. Independent associations and movements have sprung up across the country, raising issues that range from ecology, legal reform, military conscription, religious freedom, the rights of the handicapped, and psychiatric abuse to national self-determination, free elections, and the introduction of a multiparty system.

Yelena Bonner recently told a Berkeley, California audience, "For us, and for the country as a whole, it turned out surprisingly that the people in the Soviet Union are alive!" She said she was deeply encouraged by the surge in popular activity in the Soviet Union, particularly by the wave of miners' strikes that erupted in the summer of 1989. Soviet miners are concerned

with their terrible economic conditions and with the practice of what they call "serfdom," which deprives them of their pensions if they choose to work for a different mine. Significantly, though, they are not limiting their demands to such issues. In Vorkuta, for example, miners have called for the repeal of the notorious Article Six of the Soviet constitution, which codifies the "leading role" of the Communist Party. This mass demand for party pluralism gives social muscle to those members of the Soviet legislature who are moving toward demanding a truly democratic political system with a choice among competing political parties.

Radical members of the Supreme Soviet have already drawn strength from the popular pressure for democratic electoral changes. They have succeeded in eliminating the "golden list" which, in national and local elections, reserved special seats for the Communist Party and other official organizations such as the Committee of Soviet Women, the Komsomol youth organization, and the Soviet Peace Committee. Fully one-third of the seats of the 2,250-member national Congress of People's Deputies were "set aside" for this select group in the March 1989 elections. Mr. Gorbachev had presented a list of exactly one hundred names to fill the one hundred seats allotted to the Communist Party itself, and—with some important exceptions—the elections in other official organizations were also extremely undemocratic. Now that this practice has been repudiated, it will become more and more difficult to prevent genuinely democratic elections with voters free to choose among candidates from different parties.

Many Westerners, impressed by the new freedoms gained in the USSR over the past few years, question the wisdom of those in the Soviet Union who have raised the demand for multiparty elections. Look at the United States, these critics say. Where have free elections gotten us? Aren't they just a sham? The problem with this argument is that it misdiagnoses the cause of the American political malaise. The problem isn't that we have democratic elections; it's that our elections aren't democratic enough. First of all, the winner-take-all system and electoral laws discriminate systematically against third parties—thereby giving this country a two-party system, not the multiparty system our government proclaims for Communist countries. Even more important, the electoral process in the U.S. and other Western nations is distorted by the grossly unequal distribution of power and wealth, which gives built-in, systemic advantages to corporations, real estate interests, banks, and other "big business" concerns. The cure, however, is not to throw out the concept of free elections but to bring elections onto a level playing field by extending democracy from the political to the economic spheres.

To return to the Soviet Union, how can citizens consistently hold politicians accountable in a single-party system, even if that party is more relaxed and permissive than in the past? In the USSR, less than 10 percent of the population is allowed to join the Communist Party. What happens, then, if the views of a particular citizens' group on, say, ecology, economic restructuring, foreign policy, gay rights, or equal pay for women are not represented within the Party? Or, even if they are represented, what happens if they don't manage to win a majority there? How can members of these citizens' associations find a way to vote for and elect politicians to carry out their policies unless they have the right to form alternative political parties when they find themselves thwarted within the one available party? Recognition of this very practical problem has prompted democratic reformers in the East bloc to call for a multiparty system.

Democratic movements in the Soviet Union have made incredible gains over the past few years. Their progress in the future will depend to a large extent on how the USSR deals with the question of national self-determination. As it is presently constituted, the Soviet Union is an internal empire which has forced the various republics to remain in a Russian-dominated state. With the relaxation of coercion under glasnost, people from the Baltic states and across the USSR are demanding their national rights against the bureaucratic power of Moscow. As Andrei Sakharov said, the only way to reconstitute the Soviet Union on a democratic basis is for it to become a real confederation which different nations voluntarily agree or refuse to join. The alternative to Sakharov's proposal is an endless nightmare of repression against citizens in the republics.

Many people both within Russia and abroad will argue that such a confederation is not appropriate for the Soviet Union. After all, they say, would (or should) the United States today permit California to secede? Without getting into the question of California's theoretical rights, the starting point for any serious discussion of this issue must be the recognition that California and, for example, Lithuania do not involve comparable situations. To begin with, Californians don't have their own language or national history. A more proper comparison would be between Latvians, Lithuanians, or Estonians and Nicaraguans, Salvadorans, or Guatemalans if, let us imagine, the United States had taken over their countries in an imperial military sweep fifty years ago and forcibly integrated and subordinated them into the U.S. The obligation to defend the right of these Central Americans to secede would be obvious.

It's true that other Soviet republics don't have such a very recent history of forced membership in a Russian-

dominated empire. Many of them were part of the old Czarist empire, which Lenin once quite aptly called "a prison house of peoples." For these republics as well, however, the only democratic solution is to permit them to vote on whether or not they wish to remain in the USSR. Of course, to have even a ghost of a chance of winning such a vote the Soviet Union would have to undergo a radical transformation and become an attractive place in which to live.

There are obviously many difficult issues that would arise once a democratized Soviet Union tried to construct such a true confederation and actually live up to the rights of secession presently guaranteed to the republics in the Soviet constitution. These problems would concern the rights of Russian minorities who now live in many of the republics, and ugly conflicts between nationalities of the sort we see today in Armenia and Azerbaijan would abound. But then decades of Russian control haven't cured these problems. In fact, Moscow's domination has created a breeding ground in which these problems have festered and grown.

The Contradictions of Gorbachev

Gorbachev's liberalization policies have opened up space for independent initiatives throughout the Soviet Union. With each passing month, the world learns of the existence of new grass-roots groups and unprecedented opportunities for such groups to organize. On the other hand, the new liberties have not been institutionalized or guaranteed for the future.

Moreover, there are still important day-to-day limitations on these freedoms. According to Helsinki Watch, one hundred political prisoners remain in jail—great progress over five years ago, but nonetheless a basic violation of human rights. In addition, Soviet citizens are still regularly punished simply for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Over the past several months sentences ranging from fifteen days in prison to fines amounting to one year's salary have been meted out to hundreds of Soviet citizens because they distributed Samizdat literature or participated in peaceful demonstrations.

As far as freedom of the officially recognized press is concerned, the record is uneven. Despite the liveliness of today's Soviet newspapers and journals, Gorbachev felt entitled to tell Vladislav Starkov, editor of the prestigious newspaper *Argumenti i Fakti,* to get a new job simply because he didn't like the informal poll which indicated that among the journal's readers many radical members of the legislature were more popular than Gorbachev himself. It is testimony to the new strength of independent critical opinion that Starkov still has his position as of this writing.

While Gorbachev's initial draft of a law prohibiting all strikes did not pass in the legislature, the law that did make it through in the fall of 1989 could not pass muster with supporters of trade union rights anywhere in the world. It forbids strikes by workers involved with power plants, communication centers, government agencies, and all major forms of transportation.

The sense of global possibility, the sense of renewal, was best expressed by the young Czechoslovak who said "[This] is the beginning of our real lives."

These contradictory realities of Gorbachev's government—major liberalization coexisting with significant limitations of civil liberties and democratic rights—reflect his goal, which is to modernize and loosen up the system while retaining its essential social character. Hence his decision to allow a great deal of freedom for independent civic associations, but to fine or imprison people who go beyond certain limits in exercising these freedoms. Hence his decision to allow a measure of choice in recent elections, but to reject the idea of a multiparty system for the Soviet Union. For a long time, Gorbachev simply dismissed party pluralism as "rubbish." In December 1989, however, in response to growing pressure, he retreated somewhat and allowed that such pluralism might be possible in the future, but not now, since the process of perestroika needed to be "guided" by a Communist Party facing no other competitors. In the case of Soviet workers, Gorbachev's goal of maintaining the system explains why he has fulfilled some of their economic demands while trying to deny the workers essential rights such as the ability to strike or to form independent unions.

Given the character of Gorbachev's objectives, the tendency of many Western supporters of democratic Soviet reform to *rely* upon him is fundamentally mistaken. Gorbachev's recognition that radical changes were necessary in order to save the system from a stagnating paralysis impelled him to inaugurate the reform process, and his actions have had an enormous impact. At the same time, however, the social power both to defend the reforms already undertaken and to go further and institutionalize democracy lies with the country's independent associations of human rights activists, ecologists, trade unionists, defenders of oppressed nationalities, and so forth. These are the only groups with sufficient popular strength to effectively resist the threat of bureaucratic backlash that always waits in the wings.

It is in the very nature of these independent groups to use the territory opened up by glasnost to expand the boundaries of freedom in the USSR. Like mass social movements everywhere, these groups do not and cannot act according to a finely choreographed script, nor can they cautiously ascertain ahead of time the certainty that their next moves will prove successful. Of course over the past few years there has been a great deal of strategizing and tactical self-restraint on the part of virtually all Soviet social movements, but to one extent or another they have all engaged in acts of great daring and imagination, surging forward to seize democratic freedoms that had previously been considered beyond reach. This dynamic momentum has been the key to the enormous victories Soviet movements have achieved so far.

The dramatic disintegration of Communism has, for the first time in decades, made it practical for millions of people in the economically developed world to seriously consider what kind of society they want. This is one of those rare moments in history when the existing order is no longer taken as a given, and when people have the power to consciously choose among political and economic alternatives.

Unfortunately, people's bitter experience with Communism has seemed to confirm the idea that a "normal" social order must be organized around the imperatives of private property. Moreover, the unraveling of the Communist world is occurring at a time when the international democratic Left is numerically weak and intellectually confused. In addition, much of the Western Left, trapped by cold-war dichotomies into thinking that "the enemy of my enemy must be to some degree my friend," has been reluctant to support wholeheartedly the struggle for democracy in the Eastern bloc. This reluctance hasn't enhanced the attractiveness of left-wing ideas to people in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

There are, of course, major exceptions to this kind of thinking in the Eastern bloc, particularly in the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union. In most cases, however, East-bloc activists right now can't see the possibility or viability of a third option, of a society based on cooperation and democratic control of basic economic decisions.

Perhaps experience and dialogue will offer the only cures for Eastern Europe: experience with existing capitalism, as it imposes the same kind of draconian measures on Eastern Europe that it has for decades inflicted on the Third World; experience with the perniciousness of private wealth and power; and at the same time, dialogue with people in the West and in the Third World who have firsthand knowledge of the logic of an economy based on the prerogatives of private property and capital. This dialogue is needed by both sides. For too long radicals in the capitalist world have thought that democracy was just a catchword serving the purposes of the West in the cold war. It might behoove them to listen to people in the East who know what it means to be imprisoned merely for expressing an unorthodox opinion, or for peacefully demonstrating for their convictions.

This dialogue will have to address difficult questions. It is not enough to agree that democracy is essential to any decent society and that the "survival of the fittest" brand of capitalism espoused by the Milton Friedman/Margaret Thatcher/Ronald Reagan school is unacceptable. The question of the social limits and possibilities of an economy based on the private market has to be taken on.

Many liberals and "market socialists" propose a market economy based on private capital but with strong social regulation. Others, like Pat Devine, author of the recently published book *Democracy and Economic Planning,* contend that as long as the market remains the driving force behind the economy it will inevitably produce concentrations of private wealth and power with antisocial and ecologically disastrous consequences. Devine maintains that basic economic decisions should be made politically, by democratic means. Whether or not Devine's participatory-planning alternative is viable (I think it is), these are issues which must be placed on the international public agenda through discussions among Greens, socialists, progressive liberals, and democrats of all sorts, including activists from the whole range of progressive social movements around the world.

The rapidity of change in countries like Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, and East Germany shows that these discussions are not just irrelevant abstractions: today's activists may well become tomorrow's political leaders, responsible for proposing operative political and economic programs to their constituencies. As problems of global debt, poverty, inequality, and ecological suicide proceed apace, this dialogue may well become of practical importance in the West and South as well. The cold war helped the custodians of the existing order in East and West to discredit alternative thinking on the grounds that it would in every instance prove to be a Trojan horse for the other side. Today's delegitimization of the cold war opens up the social and intellectual climate for fresh thinking about social options in both blocs.

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Certainly there is a crying need for fresh thinking about U.S. foreign policy. This was one of the most remarkable years in recent history. Popular struggles for democracy began to redraw the political map of the world. Pinochet was repudiated in Chile after years of

dictatorial rule; in Brazil, a popular movement for social justice nearly won the presidency; in China, a mass democratic movement almost triumphed before it was drowned in blood. Dictatorships in Eastern Europe that had seemed unchallengeable were toppled in a matter of weeks.

Anyone who might have predicted all this a year ago would have been called a dreamer—which only proves that dreamers are often the most realistic people around. The sense of global possibility, the sense of renewal, was best expressed by the young Czechoslovak who spoke to a *New York Times* reporter just after two weeks of peaceful demonstrations had swept the old order away: This, he said, is "the beginning of our real lives."

Jeane Kirkpatrick and other cold-war pundits always sneered at those of us who believed that Communist societies could be challenged politically, through civic popular action. The monumental changes of the past months, though, compel fresh thinking about the whole of U.S. foreign policy. Responding to massive pressure from below in Eastern Europe and to pressing domestic problems, the Soviet Union has renounced the Brezhnev Doctrine and replaced it, as Soviet spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov put it, with the Sinatra Doctrine, letting every Eastern European country say, "I Did It My Way." Soviet adherence to Sinatraism is not assured, of course, particularly as long as the USSR itself is not thoroughly democratized. Nonetheless, the new Soviet policy is a major step forward, which ought to be matched by a renunciation of the Monroe Doctrine justifying U.S. military intervention in its "backyard." Going beyond Latin America, the U.S. ought to withdraw from all its foreign military bases and dismantle its high-tech interventionary forces, and call on the Soviets to do likewise.

An East-West arms agreement may be in the offing. However, all proposals discussed so far would leave the U.S. and Soviet global military arsenals very strong, even if at reduced levels. Any respite from the arms race would be most welcome, but all proposed reductions fall far short of dismantling the superpowers' military structures and hegemony over other nations. In Europe, for example, proposals currently on the table leave substantial numbers of U.S. and Soviet forces in place.

Voices from the East are beginning to question the U.S. response to the new fluid situation in Europe. For example, the new Czechoslovak foreign minister, Jiri Dienstbier, a long-time human rights activist and leader of Charter 77, told *Le Monde* in December of 1989, "The Americans ought to make a [disarmament] gesture" to complement Eastern European demands for Soviet troop withdrawals. Similarly, Peet Kask, a leader of Estonia's independence movement, told a New York audience that the U.S. ought to offer to join in working for the demilitarization of Northern Europe by both superpowers. Its failure to do so, he argued, would just give the Soviets an excuse for keeping their conventional and nuclear forces in his country.

A new U.S. foreign policy has to go beyond disarmament measures, important though disarmament would be in melting down the cold war. The U.S. and the other wealthy Western and Asian countries need to totally redefine their relationship to the world's economically weaker countries. So far the American response to the tumultuous changes in the Eastern bloc has been to maintain the military status quo—with at best modest reductions by the U.S.—while working to integrate East-bloc countries into the international global economy as it is currently structured. A look at the world's more fragile economies reveals the pitfalls of this course. The democratization begun in Eastern Europe will be jeopardized by standard IMF and World Bank policies requiring large-scale unemployment, higher prices, and loss of subsidies of necessities—just as democracy is undermined in the Third World by internationally imposed austerity measures borne by the great majority of the population.

Until now it has been hard to build popular domestic support for a peaceful U.S. foreign policy congenial to radical democratic change throughout the world. One reason for this is that no major political figure, with the partial exception of Jesse Jackson, has called for such an approach. The blinding effects of the cold war, combined with the apparent security and material well-being of the American people, helped to create an acceptance of traditional policy. But this is beginning to change now, with the relaxation of East-West tensions and increasing public unease about the health of the U.S. economy. The opportunities for building an active constituency for a new foreign policy are revealed by opinion polls, which consistently show that Americans today question massive military spending and are open to new ways of thinking about international affairs. The political leadership vacuum remains, however, and therein lies our next challenge. □

AFTER THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS

A Jump-Start to History?

Todd Gitlin

Two specters, arm in arm, are haunting all humanity—the convulsion of communism and the end of the cold war. But why haunting? Why should anyone feel spooked in this year of the democratic revolution? What a year this is, what a moment! The decade that began with Soviet troops streaming into Afghanistan, with Polish tanks crushing liberty, with Ronald Reagan beginning a $2.4 trillion military splurge, ends with dominoes falling and people rising throughout Eastern Europe—and, let us not forget, Chile. Despite the terrible rollback in China at the bloody end of Beijing spring, this has to be the greatest year for democracy in the history of the world—certainly in two centuries. The year 1989 was a successful 1848, 1968 with its feet on the ground. (Some Czechs discovered that '89 is '68 upside down.) Who imagined this? Even now, just as I think I've grown accustomed to the news from the East, I find myself thinking that these reports must be fantastical, as if there had been a sort of Disney takeover of American news, converting it to infotainment spectaculars like "Snow White and the Seven Police States." Vaclav Havel as president of Czechoslovakia ... Communist parties disbanding ... secret police under popular assault ... elections forthcoming ... and pogroms and civil war in a part of the USSR that a year ago I'd never heard of.... So much for the powers of prognosticators—and a reminder to be properly humble when we try to imagine what is possible now.

We have moved from a period when the news is wearingly predictable to a period when the world can be, is being, reinvented—all the more so if we throw open what the recent ex-president would call the picture window of opportunity. All this happens not an instant too soon. When the news unhinges our sense of reality, when solid ground liquefies, we hold our breath and enter a moment of truth—where we are permitted, or indeed required, to reconsider just what we took for granted. This is a moment when we can think.

Of course revolutions against communism are no more tidy than any other kind. Perhaps these are even more untidy, disconcerting, destabilizing than usual. Certainly this seems to be so in Washington, where the atmosphere at times resounds with moans more than jubilation, and where the end of the permanent crisis implies a crisis of another sort—a crisis of meaning. Some rescue themselves from this crisis with a claim of absolute victory—Pepsi five, socialism zero. Capitalism sweeps the Series. (I'll come back to these conclusions.) But for ourselves, the democratic revolution portends its own crisis of meaning. Breakdowns of order are scary, because order averts the unknown. So let us see what we can learn from this unknown that is staring us in the face, this glorious destabilization.

I have lived my entire life rattling around inside an all-embracing master script—the cold war. So have most of us, like it or not. The organizing principle of this time has been a melodrama we didn't write, presumed (until recently) to be permanent from World War II to eternity. East-West confrontation apparently reduced all choices to one either/or choice: Light versus Dark, Freedom versus Slavery, Godliness versus Atheism, Capitalism versus Socialism, Democracy versus Dictatorship. (I take the first three from a speech by President Eisenhower.) To adapt Trotsky, we may not have been interested in the cold war but the cold war has been interested in us. Like it or not, we have been placed into the condition of hostages, blips in superpower maneuvers. If the superpowers behave, we live; if they don't, we don't.

But the cold war was more than the overarching fact of foreign policy; it was a cultural principle, an orderly binary way of organizing the world. Virtue and paranoia fused to make us the Good Guys. Our cars, kitchens, families, schools, synagogues, and churches were all defended in the name of our goodness, as *proofs* of our goodness. For more than forty years, in the dark heart of American politics, it was virtually impossible to talk about America without talking about its Enemy, the Threat, the Thing that was all that America was not, the challenge we had to rise to and fight to the death: the Evil Empire. We were free—or needed to become free—*in order to fight.*

In Vietnam, America encountered the bloody limits of the cold war. As it turned out, the war of Freedom

Todd Gitlin, professor of sociology at UC-Berkeley, is the author of The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage *(Bantam, 1987),* Inside Prime Time *(Pantheon, 1983),* The Whole World Is Watching *(University of California Press, 1980), and other books. This is the revised text of a keynote address given at the* Tikkun *conference in Los Angeles on January 20, 1990.*

versus Slavery could not provide the unity of definition and purpose which a popular war is good for. Maybe we were not so virtuous after all. When cold-war proxies went to war, the hot war cost too much. So Vietnam spelled the beginning of the end of the cold war as a master script. But America could only agree to lose a war by pretending it was doing something else; the ideological lessons stayed murky—we could only have lost if we fought with one arm tied behind our back, in the Rambo/Reagan version. The cold war was resurrected. In the latter half of the seventies, rising panic about Soviet power rescued the script just as it was bogging down in the third act. Enter Reagan I to stoke up the military-industrial furnaces—to prove we weren't losers for lack of trying. To move us past the middle of the end of the cold war took above all the man of the decade, Mr. Gorbachev. Maybe we did not need to be so paranoid after all. Even Ronald Reagan II got a whiff of the virtues of a new scenario—deduced that if he were going to recoup from Iran-contra and other embarrassments, he had better accommodate that plain American reluctance to embrace the cold war as the culmination of human history.

So today the master script of the cold war is in tatters. We are past the middle of the end of communism. History, which the Hegel desk of the State Department tells us is shortly to end, is in play. In certain ways, it would be more accurate to say that history is just beginning. And yet: over on this side of the world (if a round world has sides) there is much wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth at this amazing opportunity to redraw the map of the world.

A few words about the convulsion of communism. Since 1914, for three-quarters of a century, the Leninist party has been an imposing machine for revolution and rule. That's what it was good for. It laid claim to be the only working time-tested machine that could overthrow corrupt regimes (as well as democratic ones), avert imperialist war, suppress opposition, batter fascism, and rule justly and rationally in the name of economic progress and—this redundancy was a tip-off that somebody was protesting too much—People's Democracy. (What other democracy could there be?) The prior tradition in Marxism, that of the Second International, which believed in the slow parliamentary road to socialism, stood condemned as helpless—helpless against the nationalist war spasm of 1914, helpless against Soviet-sponsored coups (as in Poland in 1946 and Czechoslovakia in 1948) or American-sponsored coups (as in Guatemala in 1954 and Chile in 1973), and recently, if this were not bad enough, helpless against capital flight that would drive any full-blooded democratic socialism to its knees.

So Leninist theory had its plausibility and the Leninist machine dug in. Enter Stalin, perfecting what he called the Marxist-Leninist theory. The decrepit, debased social system of police power and a command economy was hitched to the Red Army and the all-responsible Party. The Party and the state apparatus claimed to be the prerequisite for justice, equality, peace, and socialism, and in the process befouled every one of these values. They did this so effectively that in large parts of Eastern Europe today the words are polluted as thoroughly as the forests and rivers. The system worked for nothing but power. It ruled. Existence was its argument for existence. And absolute power seemed to have absolute consequence. The glacial Soviet order seemed to have ground away social initiative, freedom, everything that was not itself.

We can declare an end to the nineteenth-century idea that human reason was entitled to colonize nature, pave it, shape it, police it, and rule in its name over the Other—be it nature, subject peoples, women, whatever other materials remain to be worked over.

But this, it turns out, was a grand illusion. While politicians and theorists and pundits were denying the possibility of upheaval, while Jeane Kirkpatrick was building a political career on the strength of the assertion that communism was forever, after decades when the one-party state commanded the police and information and organization, it turned out that that messy, ever-insistent, ever-replenishing society had not been crushed. Or to switch to a California metaphor, those tectonic plates, long stuck, started moving. The whole intricate living tissue of social relations and energies called "civil society" revived—along with virulent nationalism, ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism, and everything else that had been pressed beneath stones. All of them revived just where they were supposed to have been pulverized, just where the theory of totalitarianism was supposed to have proved them impossible. Marxist-Leninist theory, it turned out, was futile.

The theory was bad and the consequences were bad. But I think it is dishonest to say that the Left has been exempt from their siren song. And this is part of the reason why some of the Left has barely begun to grasp what the new opportunities mean. Some of the Left, some zone in almost all of us, has been stuck inside the

cold war, indulgent toward the bipolar idea—left leg good, right leg bad. If capitalism is bad, then whatever calls itself socialism must be better. One even detects, here and there, a nostalgia for the cold war, the thundering hoofbeats of the Final Conflict; with the twentieth century almost over, there are those who can't wait to resurrect the nineteenth.

True, most of the New Left, as opposed to most of the Old, was suspicious from the beginning about the claims of this so-called state socialism (a horrendous concept). True enough, most of us had no illusions that the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968 were contributions to the history of human freedom. And yet, in Third World incarnations, loaded onto anti-colonial nationalism, the totalitarian idea has exercised its pull in the enlightened West; and I want to suggest that part of the reason—not all, but part—is in the deep structure of the idea that became Leninism. It turns out that this idea is not as alien as we liked to think.

The convulsion of communism is deeply threatening, as well as exhilarating, because what has foundered, finally, is the grand nineteenth-century idea that reason could be embedded in a single institution that would steer society: the State, or the Party; in any case, Order. The Marxist-Leninist nightmare is where the rationalist dream of the single-centered grand plan lets out. It's the last stop on the rationalist express. The Party, recall, was intended by Lenin to be the superintendent of reason. In both versions, the State turns out to be the heavy hand—and a catastrophe at that, for instead of liberating human energies it imprisons them. And converts them into prison walls. As Randolph Bourne said, war is the health of the State. The cold war was the health of the mobilization state *East and West.*

At long last, now, we can declare an end to the nineteenth-century nightmare of the rationalist design, the idea that human reason was entitled to colonize nature, pave it, shape it, police it, and rule in its name over the Other—be it nature, subject peoples, women, whatever other materials remain to be worked over. There's an irony here. As I've already said, the grand design was not only grandiose, it was futile. The Leninist-rationalist vision turned out to be unable to eradicate tribalism. On the contrary, it inflamed it. In Georgia and Poland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania, nationalism was not only ancient; it was also *the most available form of opposition at a time when socialist alternatives to bolshevism had been fundamentally discredited.* Amazingly, after three generations of rule and indoctrination, controlling all private as well as public organizations, bolshevism was still unable to convince Azerbaijanis or Lithuanians that they are "Soviets." So part of what we fear today is that with one pillar of the nineteenth century knocked away, the weight of the world is going to fall onto the other: tribalism, the idea that each tribe, sector, or nation is a law unto itself.

That is because where communism unravels, politics begins. As false unities collapse, what feels real to people is the tribe. After fraudulent universalism comes the contest of particularisms. So the present convulsion *of course* will not produce serenity, but the opening up of conflict. And that is exactly the point: Self-limiting conflict is the essence of democracy; and without democracy, "socialism" is an abomination. Even Communists now accept that the heavy hand of the state cannot run a reasonable economy. But the state is necessary for many purposes—social services, investment, regulation, insurance, some production, some equality. The question remains, Who controls the state? Who pays the dues?

The terrain of post-Communist politics will be defined by these questions. Already the dues are being paid by Poles so desperate for a new start that the government has committed itself (for now) to a crash program to cut inflation and state subsidies by forcing "the free market"—and you can hear the sound of the crash all over Poland.

But one of the chief canards of our time—this cold-war falsity brandished with equal vigor and blindness by commissars on both sides—is that socialism and the marketplace are automatic enemies, just as unbridled markets and democracy are held to be automatic friends. We hear from Zbigniew Brzezinski, and the mysterious Z. on the *New York Times* op-ed page, among others, an explicit and smug either/or: The solution to communism is the absolute rule of "free enterprise"; economic stagnation is overcome with labor discipline, unemployment, and inequality on an American scale. The entrepreneur's freedom is held to be indissolubly bound to freedom of speech and democracy. Polish entrepreneurs speak of smashing unions; Western capital sails eastward, drawn by the prospect of docile, low-paid workers unprotected by independent unions. So dismal has been the record compiled by "socialism" in Eastern Europe that no less a figure than Margaret Thatcher is revered—even by workers!—for having rejuvenated a flagging economy. If twentieth-century command economies have proven disastrous, the proposed solution is to return to nineteenth-century capitalism—another kind of disaster, one that gave Leninism such a good name as it wangled in the course of its history of bloodletting. In China we have seen the worst of both worlds—one-party politics alongside a corrupt private economy bloating the favored rich.

As politics opens up in the East, as dissident groups become something like parties, conflict develops. While many romance free markets, even recognizing that inequality "in the short run" is going to increase, real

democrats will recover from the romance of the market and mobilize to protect popular interests—in health, working conditions, the environment, and so on. Defying the simple-minded either/or, they will experiment with varieties of the mixed economy. Don't despair yet that unbridled capitalism has such a good name in the East—pragmatism has a tradition there, so does social democracy, and Thatcherism won't look so good in a couple of years. (It doesn't look so good in Britain now either.) While defenders of the old faiths hold onto their pieties of "public ownership" and "consumer freedom," the twenty-first century will belong to those who can draw upon the strengths of both traditions—those who can say, for example, that economic initiatives entitle entrepreneurs to certain privileges but not absolute wealth or absolute control of the workplace. Of course there will be many difficult choices along the way—that's politics. For now, the excitement lies simply in our capacity to imagine a world that would not be crippled by that terrible cold-war either/or, socialism or democracy, but rather a world of *both/and.*

The challenge for the Left now, with the nineteenth-century rubble swept away, is to move to the center of its thinking that which comes from neither the state nor the market, that which society needs to help us become more human: bonds of recognition and mutual need *across* tribal lines. On a world scale, the hope is for collective security and recognition of the new varieties of interdependence. The hope is for the realization of global citizenship which would mean something other than the federation of the privileged squeezing low-cost labor out of Poland or blood debt out of Mexico and Brazil.

I can't here try to imagine a global interdependence which would not reduce us to a two-tier world, a common Northern Hemispheric home sitting nervously astride the Third World homeless. But to compound the need for political revival on our side of the world, let me say a few words about the other challenge that follows from the convulsion of communism. Nuclear weapons are scarcely going to melt away of their own accord. The residue of the cold war (among other things, the division of Europe) is not going to evaporate overnight. Obsolete images and rhetorics (and hair-trigger war plans and hardware) from tattered scenarios rumble along past their prime. One reason is that military-industrial and military-intellectual complexes (including Generals Electric, Dynamics, and the rest of the generals, along with California's own Livermore and Los Alamos weapons labs) fuel them. But another reason for cold-war momentum is that the Super Bowl imagery of implacable juggernauts deploying their throw-weights prevails, in part, by default. Which poses the question: What is to be the substitute script for America's role in the world? After a bad script which did, however, get the adrenalin flowing, and rigged our nightmares in a predictable direction, what better one?

Having taken its postwar shape by thundering against barbarians, American politics now thrashes around trying to manage without them. As we so depressingly saw in last year's election, no other compelling viewpoint was ready. What crystallizes instead is a contest of interpretations, with the all-or-nothing, zero-sum type first out of the gate. How shall the convulsion of communism and the end of the cold war be understood? The conventional wisdom proclaims that the cold war is ending with a victory for the West. There are economic and political versions. The economic version is that communism has dismally failed as an economic system because what are called "free-market economies," Western-style, are superior. Now, true: to people who live in most of the Leninist-ruled countries, it is not news that their standards of living have been deplorable. The conditions of everyday life have been more or less deplorable for a long time—cramped and decrepit housing, food shortages, scarce and shoddy goods, low pay for the many, corruption and privilege for the few self-appointed supervisors of the proletariat. The argument that things are today worse under capitalism in the West or were worse under capitalism at home loses its force after decades of Leninist rule and command economy. But what makes unbridled capitalism's apologists think they have earned the right to brag if all they can say is that the American economy is superior to the Soviet economy?

What happens when you have committed your national identity to a war and the enemy resigns?

The military version of "How the West Won" is: with firepower. This is treacherous territory for the Right, some of which still doubts that Gorbachev is anything but a trickster, or a feeble blusterer whistling in the dark. In general, the conservative triumphalist view is that the Soviet bloc is unraveling and democratic tendencies are spreading *under*—but *only* under—the pressure of the Western military. Reform in the East is said to come from the barrel of the American gun. It was our big top guns that brought the bear to heel. To conservatives who accept that Gorbachev "means it," he looks to be the by-product of Reagan's military boom. If he looks strong domestically, and perestroika has a chance, this is worrisome—reason to stand tall at the arms bargaining table and hold onto NATO for dear life. If he looks weak domestically and perestroika looks doomed, this is also worrisome—he won't be willing to concede much at the arms bargaining table (therefore we shouldn't

either). The latter is apparently the dominant opinion in the Bush White House—successor to the old cold-war consensus. Containment, in this view, worked. There are even passages in George Kennan's famous long telegram of 1946 arguing that if the Soviet Union could be kept from expanding, internal pressures would build up there, forcing political reforms and declining hostilities. The argument goes that Reagan's guns forced Gorbachev to choose between guns and butter, and Gorbachev, being a rational fellow, chose, well, a bit of margarine, which was the best the Soviet system could manage. Of course, had Gorbachev chosen more guns, the military triumphalists would have crowed, Told you so.

On the surface, military triumphalism has a persuasive ring, or tinkle. But think how much greater were America's strategic military advantages over the Soviet Union of Stalin and Khrushchev. The missile gap favored the U.S. by a mile. And what happened? The American advantage catered to militarism, panic, and imperial overreach on both sides. It accomplished nothing for Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968. It led to the overthrow of the reformer Khrushchev and the rise of the repressive Brezhnev.

So what follows now if we are not satisfied to crow about how the West won, with all subsequent problems to be solved by convertible currency? We start with jubilation about the revival of democracy in the East, the decay of the cold war, the brilliant record compiled by nonviolence. Then we demand that the thaw warm up. We insist that $300 billion a year is a steep price for fighting a nonexistent enemy. We know that the crackpot rationalism of military-industrial and military-intellectual complexes is its own sort of nineteenth-century nightmare. As the cold war script of implacable East-West hostility loses all plausibility, the question that American politics evades becomes all the more urgent: What happens when you have committed your national identity to a war and the enemy resigns?

Watch the thrashing about for symbolic answers! One is: Go from cold war and Star Wars to Drug Wars. Another candidate scenario: Man the economic barricades against the Japanese. General Noriega has his hour as an understudy bogeyman. And there is Professor Bloom's version: If you can't save NATO, maybe you can save Plato. The forces of Father, Canon, and Bomb are mobilized against the feminized soft-heads of Peace, Love, and Understanding. Flags will be waved, tariffs will be raised. The White House, attended by a chorus of experts, frets over the horrendous possibility that there is no imaginable military rationale for NATO. And the Democrats—those poor souls—still wander in the wilderness, afraid of being bashed with the W-word by the man in the White House who now wears on his lapel the button I AM NOT A WIMP.

What an opportunity is being squandered! Where is the Committee on the Present Opportunity to press Bush, and the Democrats as well, into making major cuts in strategic military spending, major cuts in American bases and troops abroad, to press them into reallocating spending so that more goes toward the public good: toward serious investment in housing, health, schools, child care, mass transit, and the restoration of that infrastructure we had so long heard about and whose weakening became appallingly clear to us in Northern California on October 17. *This is where all the movements can converge—peaceniks, feminists, trade unions, the homeless, people of color, gays and lesbians, others.* The available space on the political horizon is breathtaking. The stagnation of the Democrats is numbing. After the preemptive "cuts" (reductions in previously announced increases!) proposed by Defense Secretary Cheney, the U.S. will still be spending some $150 billion a year to defend Europe—from whom? The armies of Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa? Roughly half that amount *for one year* is what the entire Marshall Plan cost (in current dollars) in 1947-52. That half, spread out over several years, could handily pay for a Marshall Plan to help Eastern Europe—help the people, not just the entrepreneurs—while leaving plenty of money for domestic as well as Third World aid purposes. And yet the public discussion is rattling around in the cramped space of military Keynesianism. Just causes are reduced to competing for leftover nickels and dimes. The serious national commitment to leave behind the cold war, once and for all, remains to be made. Instead, we hear crowing—hooray, the American system wins invidious comparisons with Soviet communism. Rejuvenation in the East, decrepit politics in the West. Are we going to be happy to be voyeurs?

The new world to be imagined and furthered is one world, in one greenhouse, under one ozone layer. It is also going to be polyphonic, polymorphous, various, messy, not top-down—or it is going to be no world. Markets are global, culture is global, dangers are global; so must movements and strategies be. And increasingly—though our rhetoric doesn't register the fact—they are. To live in a world which is one extended backyard requires that we take seriously the grand ideal of internationalism, which suffered every possible corruption in this atrocious century. The old socialist dream of internationalism was shattered in 1914, when the working-class parties of Europe voted to war against one another. The post-1917 version of internationalism was hijacked by Stalin and his ghosts. But haltingly—two steps forward, one-and-a-half back—we may be coming into a time when a global sensibility lives and breathes. Greenpeace is a world organization; so is Amnesty

Tikkun
Passover Haggadah Supplement

תש"נ/1990

Have you ever been to a boring Passover Seder where people mechanically read through the text? This happens only because many of us have abandoned the tradition of heated argument and discussion about the meaning of the stories connected with Passover. In fact, from the time that Rabbi Akiba used the Seder to plan a revolutionary struggle against the Romans to the moment that inhabitants of the Warsaw ghetto celebrated the Seder before beginning their historic revolt, the Jews have used the Seder as a time to grapple with their current reality—applying the message of the historical struggle against the Pharaoh. It is in this spirit that we encourage you to make any Seder you attend a lively and spirited occasion to address the problems of the present moment in light of the lessons of our past. This year particularly the Jewish people must address its relationship with the Palestinian people.

Detach these additions to the haggadah along the perforation and bring them with you to your Seder. They are meant to be read as additions to the normal text at the places indicated. But, of course, you can add them elsewhere if you wish.

Kiddush

Before the Kiddush (the first blessing over the wine)

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

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

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

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

It is no wonder, then, that many of us celebrate this Passover with a heavy heart. In recent years the Jewish people itself has become the symbol of oppression to another people: the Palestinians. In our Seder tonight we will joyfully celebrate our own liberation—but, at the same time, we will remember the status of the Palestinian people and pray that their liberation be achieved without harm to the safety, security, and freedom of the Jewish people living in the State of Israel. It is not to undermine the legitimacy of our own people's struggles for freedom, or to diminish our joy in celebrating our victories, that we tonight also affirm the Jewish vision that all other peoples must be allowed to live in freedom and in dignity.

This year we rejoice at the collapse of Communist tyrannies in Eastern Europe. Few of us would have predicted a year ago how powerfully and successfully the deep desire for freedom could reassert itself in human affairs. Societies in which people seemed to be dominated and passive, societies in which the social structures encouraged and enforced conformity to a group norm were nevertheless unable to extinguish the fundamental human desire for self-determination and freedom.

After a decade of selfishness and wild squandering of our societal resources on weapons of war it may be hard for us to remember that a similar unpredictable spirit of freedom and self-determination can reassert itself in our own society. With justifications for military spending now greatly undermined, it may be possible to convince our neighbors to join with us in an effort to redirect a massive military budget to peaceful uses, so that we can feed the hungry, house the homeless, and provide care for basic needs to hundreds of millions of people around the globe. In this sense, any celebration of our own freedom is incomplete unless we use this occasion to rededicate ourselves to rectifying the vast inequalities of the world's resources—inequalities that allow many of us in the United States to live in luxury and self-satisfaction while turning our backs and shutting our ears to the thirty million children worldwide who will die of hunger this year. We are mindful that the very international economic arrangements that have brought comfort and wealth to the United States have simultaneously brought increasing poverty and suffering to peoples of the Third World, and that in a spirit of selfishness our society has increasingly ignored the hungry and homeless within our own country as well. Passover, then, is not just a celebration of our own freedom—it is a moment in which we recommit ourselves to the struggle for peace, justice, and equality for all peoples.

Blessing the Vegetation of the Earth in Times of Ecological Crisis

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

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

This Pesach we pause to reflect on the ways that we have failed to take adequate care of the earth. In a relentless fury to amass profits without regard for ecological consequences, the free marketplace has generated tens of thousands of corporate ventures and products that have combined to do uncalculated damage to the life-support systems of the planet. The problems have grown worse in the twenty years since Earth Day 1970. Willing to let corporate concerns for profit weigh more heavily than a concern for the general interest, we have restricted our responses to the ecological crisis to piecemeal efforts that do not adequately address the problems we face. Our biblical injunction to work and exercise stewardship over the earth has been transformed into a notion that the earth is simply a resource for exploitation. If we construct a society in which people are encouraged to look out for themselves and advance their own interests without regard for the consequences for others, an ecological crisis becomes an almost inevitable result.

As Jews, however, we recognize that our own fate is closely connected to the fate of others. The peasant in Brazil who has no other way to make a living but to cut down the rain forest, the Japanese fisherman who has no way to live but to harvest the sea, or the auto manufacturer who uses political clout to block funds for mass transit or for stricter environmental policies—all are acting rationally, given the logic of the competitive marketplace. Nevertheless, their actions have dire consequences for the rest of us. Our task is not to put these people down, but to construct an economic

and social system in which people no longer have to choose between their own best interests and the best interests of the physical environment. This is not a question solely of learning as individuals to be more ecologically aware—though this is also important—but also of transforming the social system that makes it possible for some people to profit on activities that destroy or endanger our planet Earth.

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

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

Drops from Our Cup of Joy

Before Reciting the Ten Plagues

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

Our cup of joy also cannot be full this year. The tragedy of the destruction of European Jewry seemed to bring in its wake a new redemption: the creation of the State of Israel. But that new homeland, a renewal of ancient dreams, has been restored to us at the expense of another people. The hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who fled in the midst of an armed struggle in 1948 have turned into millions of people, many living in refugee camps, most desiring to return to their homeland. A million and a half Palestinians now live under the direct military rule of the Israeli army.

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

Today the Palestinian people have openly rebelled against Israeli rule. While some of them fantasize about eliminating the State of Israel, many more are willing to settle for a state of their own in the West Bank and Gaza.

How can we rejoice without pausing to consider this historical tragedy? Our people are now locked into combat with a people pleading for independence and freedom. Israeli troops are killing hundreds and wounding thousands—often young children. Let us also dip from the cup of wine for the sufferings that both peoples endure as long as the occupation continues—the victims of Israeli bullets and beatings; the people subjected to humiliation and harassment; those whose homes have been unjustly blown up; those who have been victims of rampages by Jewish settlers on the West Bank; those who have faced the collective punishments of curfews and school closings and food shortages meted out by the Israeli military authorities; those who have been imprisoned without charges and without trials; also those Israelis who have been murdered or wounded by Palestinian terrorists; those Israeli soldiers who have been wounded or attacked by Palestinians; those Israelis who have gone to jail rather than serve on the West Bank; and those Israelis who have been harassed, beaten, or jailed for their nonviolent civil disobedience in opposing the occupation. For all of this suffering, we dip wine from our cup of joy.

A careful reading of the historical record leads us to have compassion for both sides. We approach the issue not from the standpoint of blaming, but from the desire to reestablish peace. Peace is impossible as long as we hold on to the idea that one side has all the good and the other has all the bad.

In Every Generation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yet even here we are not free of the dynamics of world oppression. In class societies, virtually everyone is enmeshed in a web of oppression, in some respects by forces outside our control, in some respects by participating and benefiting from the oppression of others. Whether as tax collectors and small tavern owners in Eastern Europe, or as shopkeepers, government bureaucrats, social workers, and teachers interacting with people in American ghettos, Jews are sometimes perceived as representatives of the established order in their dealings with other oppressed groups. In the process, and quite unfairly, anti-Semitism is regenerated. It is understandable why we Jews would become angry at the groups who participate in these dynamics—the peasants in Eastern Europe, or some African-Americans in the U.S. We wish that they would understand that we too are victims, yet it's understandable why they may see us otherwise.

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

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

Pour Out Thy Wrath

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

Tonight we remember our six million sisters and brothers who perished at the hands of the Nazis and at the hands of hundreds of thousands of anti-Semites who assisted those Nazis throughout Europe. We remember also the Jewish martyrs throughout the generations—oppressed, beaten, raped, and murdered by European Christians.

It's not fashionable to speak about these atrocities—particularly since some reactionary Jews use these memories to legitimate the current oppressive tactics of the Israeli government. But tonight we recall in pain and in anger what was done to our people. We do not think it appropriate to use this past as a blank check to justify what right-wing Jews wish to do to others. Yet we understand the pain that has led many of our fellow Jews to be deeply suspicious of a non-Jewish world that turned its back on us at the moment we were being systematically annihilated.

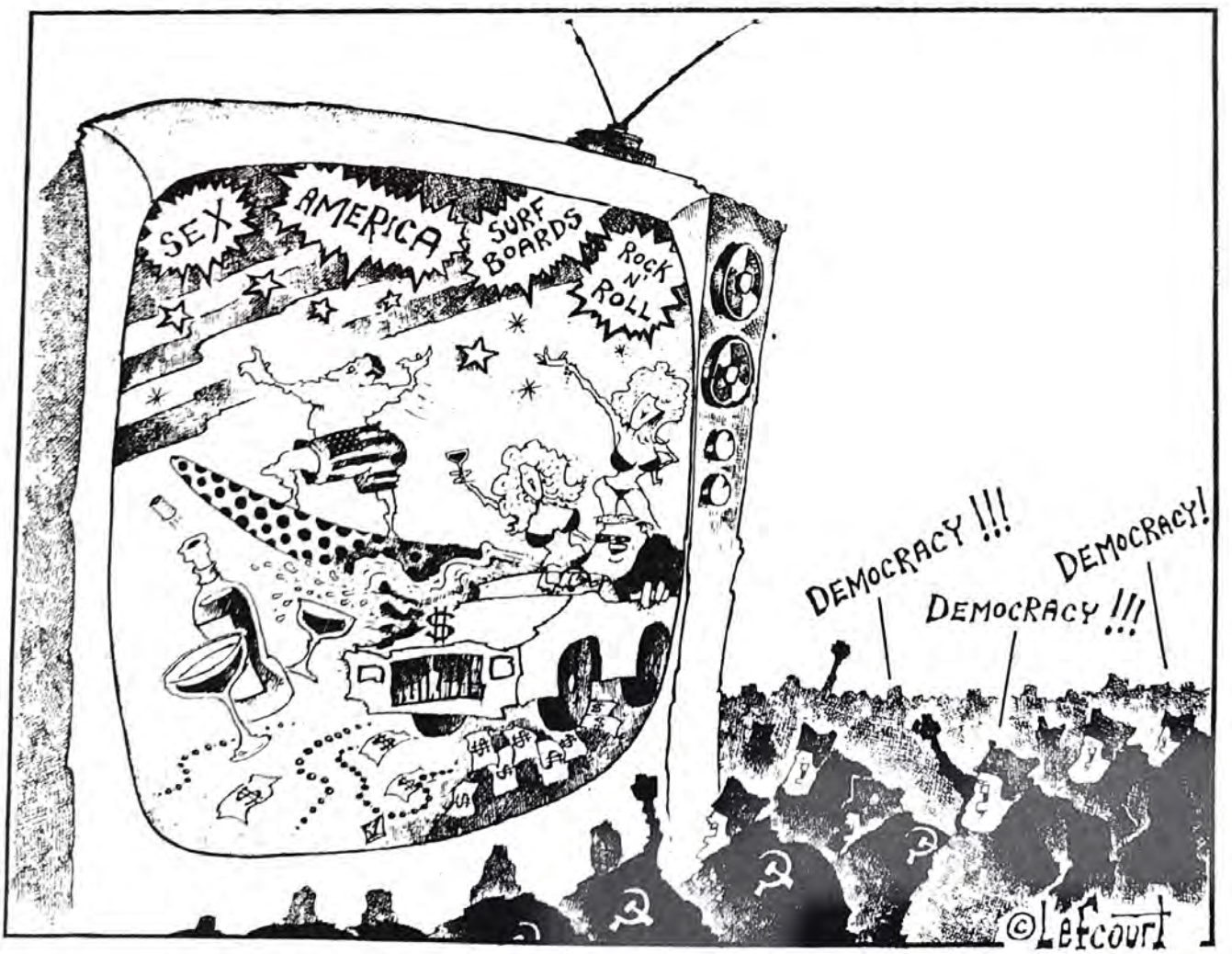
To get beyond the pain, we must first be allowed to express our anger. Permitting ourselves to articulate our anger, rather than trying to bury it or forget it or minimize it, is the only way that we can get beyond it. So tonight it is appropriate to speak about our history, about the Holocaust, and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

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

International; so is Cultural Survival. In Great Britain, END (European Nuclear Disarmament), and in the United States, the Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West, work for "detente from below"—the practical solidarity of independent movements, on the premise that peace is an active intertwining of citizens and not the balance of terror and the postponement of war. International feminist congresses grapple with questions of how national groups in deeply different circumstances can help one another. Groups like the Rainforest Action Network solicit letters on behalf of native peoples who are fighting to save the rainforest not only because we need to breathe its oxygen but because they live there. Even the generals of NATO and the Warsaw Pact are holding seminars of reassurance.

The consciousness shift toward an interdependence of common security will not be a year or a decade in the making. There is nothing automatic about it. No harmonic convergence guarantees spiritual communion across the fortified boundaries of nation, class, race, age, gender. To underestimate the political opposition is foolhardy. Capital moves at the speed of light, labor doesn't. Top dogs will keep trying to make bottom dogs pay the price for rational management of a shaky world ecology/economy. In the name of the ignoble principle "Not In My Back Yard," they aspire to turn the Third World into a pump fueled by cheap labor and a dump for poisoned garbage.

An interdependence of common security will be uncommonly hard to come by. But why should it be otherwise? The convergence of nation and empire, industry, science, rationalism, and male supremacy that reaches its fruition in the voracious nation-state, the atomic bomb, and the search-and-destroy economy is centuries in the making. The fantasy of invulnerability that has its military side in Star Wars scenarios hails from the Monroe Doctrine. Such habits are not cured quickly. But the world has suffered enough from fantasies of overnight, absolute transformation; fantasies including death to the Great Satan who refuses to get on the side of History. After the end of History with a capital H, let us recover history in the lowercase, down here where people live and the energies are—messy, imperfect, interdependent. After decades of cold war, the warm peace needs time and work and imagination to sink in. In the name of everything we hold dear, let us help it sink in. □



Fateful Trap: The German–Jewish Symbiosis

Robert S. Wistrich

Few Israelis or diaspora Jews could have been wholly devoid of mixed feelings as they observed the recent dismantling of the Berlin Wall on their television screens and contemplated the prospect of a reunited Germany. Though the German national hymn *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* has been stripped in the postwar era of any overtly aggressive or threatening tones, it still sends a shiver down many a Jewish spine. However irrational they may seem to some, fears of a Fourth Reich—of a militaristic Germany once more prey to its nationalistic and imperial demons—remain a living reality in Israel, as in not a few European countries that suffered Nazi domination in the past. This historically rooted anguish has undoubtedly colored some of the natural sympathy and even joy experienced by many at the sight of the seemingly final collapse of Stalinist totalitarianism in Central and Eastern Europe.

Some understandable skepticism has also been voiced with regard to the political maturity of the Germans—who have known only forty years of democracy in the West and a few heady months, at most, of elementary human freedoms in the East. With the growing pressure for unification from below, will a dynamic of German nationalism be unleashed which neither the Common Market nor the western Alliance can expect to contain in the longer run?

There is undoubtedly a specifically Jewish dimension to many of these fears about the prospect of an eighty-million-strong single German nation in the heart of Europe. Elie Wiesel eloquently expressed it when he evoked the Jewish memory of November 9, 1938, against the new German memory of November 9, 1989, when the symbolic division of Germany—itself a reminder of the Shoah—was overcome. With the Night of the Broken Glass all of Germany's synagogues went up in flames and a millennium of German–Jewish history came to an end. Will this memory now be effaced in the euphoria of "*Ein Volk, ein Reich*" and, some day in the future perhaps, under a new Führer?

For some, these are no doubt idle fantasies—for a reunified Berlin holds out the promise of a better and more democratic united Europe. For the Jewish historian, however, Berlin presents a symbol in another sense. It stands for both a creative peak in the Jewish contribution to modern European and Western culture, and, at the same time, the headquarters from which Hitler's diabolical project to exterminate the Jewish people was conceived and implemented. The dramatic collapse of Berlin's postwar divisions provides us with a timely backdrop to reassess this paradox of creativity and destruction, to look again at the German–Jewish symbiosis and also at some possible lessons for American Jews today.

Albert Einstein is supposed to have remarked once that when the German Jews first began to flock into German universities over a hundred years ago, it was as though they had spent an entire millennium preparing for the entrance examinations. During the sixty years between the founding of Bismarck's German Empire and Hitler's rise to power, these German-speaking Jews not only left an indelible mark on German culture in Central Europe; they also decisively shaped the color, tone, and spirit of modernity. Can we even imagine what twentieth-century culture would be like without Einstein, Freud, or Marx; Mahler, Schoenberg, Wittgenstein, or Kafka; or a whole galaxy of other outstanding Jewish scientists, poets, playwrights, composers, critics, historians, sociologists, psychoanalysts, jurists, and philosophers? Yet the most vibrant period in German cultural history—a period that peaked first in fin-de-siècle Vienna and then in Weimar Germany, and that owed so much to the contribution of Jewish intellectuals—ultimately collapsed into the horror and mass murder of the Nazi Holocaust. Was there perhaps a connection between the brilliance of the achievement and the ferocity of the backlash? Did the Jews not take upon themselves a tremendous risk in entering the mainstream of German and European life in the way that they did? Was the German–Jewish symbiosis in Berlin, Vienna, Prague, and elsewhere not a tragic, one-sided love affair, based on delusion and doomed to failure, as the late Gershom Scholem used to argue? And what, if any, are the lessons that we might draw today, both from the achievement in symbiosis and from its tragic collapse?

Robert S. Wistrich is a professor of modern Jewish history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and is the author of The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph *(Oxford University Press, 1989).*

Jews appeared on the German cultural scene at the height of the late-eighteenth-century German *Aufklärung*, or Enlightenment, a movement identified with the names of Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Hegel, and Fichte. This decisive encounter took place under the cultural aegis of *Bildung* (self-cultivation), which in George Mosse's words "transcended all differences of nationality and religion through the unfolding of the individual personality." German Jews from Moses Mendelssohn to Leo Baeck (that is, right up until Hitler) profoundly believed in the ideal of *Bildung*, understood as an integral faith in education, self-discipline, aesthetic harmony, and the moral perfectibility of man. For many secular German Jews these ideals increasingly came to constitute the substance of their Jewishness.

German Jews assumed that these ideals were shared by most of the German middle class—the social group into which Jews generally aspired to integrate. Kantian Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen even developed an idealistic theory about the deep-rooted affinity between the German Protestant and the Jewish "spirit," which insisted on the cosmopolitan humanism of "the nation of Kant." Cohen saw Germany as "the teacher of the world," and during the First World War he proclaimed that it was the true fatherland of all Jews because in no other country had such a far-reaching spiritual symbiosis taken place. Not all German-Jewish intellectuals were that naive. Writing in September 1917, philosopher Franz Rozenzweig observed: "To be a German means to undertake full responsibility for one's people, not just to harmonize with Goethe, Schiller and Kant, but also with the others and above all with the inferior and average, with the assessor, the fraternity student, the petty bureaucrat, the thick-skulled peasant, the pedantic school master ... Cohen confuses that which he as a European finds in German culture with what a German finds in it."

This confusion was characteristic of a whole generation of Central European Jewish intellectuals who mistook their wishes for reality. Driven by a noble impulse to spiritualize the Germans, to popularize *Bildung*, and to act as cultural mediators between the European nations, they failed to discern how alienated the German middle classes (let alone the masses) had become from this cosmopolitan vision in the 1920s. As the emphasis in German culture moved from *Geist* (spirit) to *Volk* (nation/race), and as the notion of *Bildung* itself became nationalized, German Jews often seemed to be the last upholders of the eighteenth-century faith in Reason and High Culture. Moreover, as the Jews moved into the very center of German social, economic, and cultural life during the Weimar Republic and began to redefine German society, the anti-Semitic backlash acquired renewed intensity.

Already in the nineteenth century German anti-Semitism had placed strong emphasis on the allegedly destructive and alien character of the Jewish presence in German society and culture, its rootlessness and abstract quality—lacking any organic link to the *Volk*. Richard Wagner's tract, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (1850), was one of the earliest examples of this reaction against the so-called *Verjudung* (Judaization) of German culture. Conservative historians such as Heinrich von Treitschke railed against the influence of radical Jews such as Heinrich Heine, Ludwig Boerne, and Karl Marx—the "Oriental choir leaders of the Revolution"; the anti-Semitic Protestant court preacher Adolf Stoecker in 1879 pointed out the subversive effects of Jewish capital and the liberal press (owned mainly by Jews) on the Christian ethos and on the social cohesion of the German Reich. Other anti-Semitic forerunners of Hitler blamed the degeneration of German morality and the negative effects of urbanism and industrialization almost exclusively on the Jews. Thus, within only a decade or two of Jewish emancipation in Germany, the whole arsenal of modern anti-Semitism was already in place—Christian and anti-Christian, conservative and radical, patrician and plebeian.

During the Weimar period this anti-Semitism was implicit in the political onslaught by the forces of the nationalist and radical Right against the Republic. That most German Jews were intensely loyal or patriotic mattered little to the Right. Jews were invariably portrayed as a radical, subversive internationalist element conspiring to undermine conventional taboos, time-honored traditions, Christian values, and national solidarity. The fact that a number of individual Jews had been prominent leaders in radical Marxist politics and avant-garde movements, especially during the traumatic events of 1918, ensured the broad dissemination of these stereotypes by the conservatives and the Nazis. The stigmatization and demonization of the Jews tended, if anything, to encourage and reinforce their participation in radical, modernist, and progressive movements in art and politics. This was especially true of Jews who had themselves become de-Judaized, cut off from their own tradition and heritage without being fully able or willing to root themselves in the tradition of their adopted society.

The consequences of this loss of psychic balance became apparent, at least a generation before the Holocaust, in the acute identity problems and negative attitudes to Judaism (bordering on self-hatred) of a number of prominent German-Jewish intellectuals. Franz Kafka, the Prague-born Jewish writer, was an expert on this syndrome. He wrote of a whole generation of Jewish writers in Central Europe who drew their inspiration from the despair of having "their hind legs bogged down

in their father's Judaism" while their front legs could find no new ground on which to stand. Kafka's anguish even extended to the German language in which he wrote, the deeply loved symbolic fatherland of so many German-speaking Jews. He could not rid himself of the feeling that German-Jewish writing, including his own work, somehow involved an illegitimate usurpation or "secondhand acquisition of someone else's property"—a claim constantly made by the anti-Semites! Scathingly, he referred to the "gypsy literature that had stolen the German child from the cradle and trained it, in a great hurry, to perform anyway because someone had to dance on the tightrope." In more prosaic terms, other critics, such as the Zionist writer Moritz Goldstein in a controversial article written in 1912, warned German Jewry that its domination of the press, the theatres, musical life, and so on was placing it in a dangerous and untenable position, that of administering "the spiritual property of a nation which denies us our right and ability to do so."

American Jews have not troubled themselves with the disturbing thought that their own Golden Age of prosperity, achievement, and acceptance might turn out to be a snare and a delusion.

Indeed, Zionists ever since Moses Hess had seen something self-destructive in the alacrity with which German Jews abandoned their own heritage in favor of German *Kultur.* Zionism tended to see this process as an act of self-surrender, made more dangerous by the blindness of many German Jews to the reality of the antagonism that their prominence seemed to arouse. According to Scholem, the abandonment of Judaism in fact aggravated the contempt that many Germans already felt for Jews. If the elite of Jewry was so ready to disavow its own traditions in order to offer up its talents to the Germans, then perhaps this tradition really was inferior!

To a certain extent, such criticism seems unfair, especially since German-speaking Jews were from the outset placed in a difficult, if not impossible, position by the terms of their emancipation. If they sought to retain their Jewish group identity, they were attacked as a "state within the state," as an alien, unassimilable element clinging to its stubborn particularism and therefore not deserving of civil equality. On the other hand, they proved even more unacceptable the more they penetrated into the heart of German society and culture and began to reshape it in their own image. They then became identified as symbols of those forces of modernity, liberalism, atheism, social democracy, and avant-garde culture that Hitler and the Nazis sought to uproot from Germany and from Western civilization as a whole. Precisely because Jews had become so integrated, through acculturation, *embourgeoisement,* and intermarriage into the surrounding society, German anti-Semitism came to assume such an extreme racialist character, striving for a clean and total break between Jews and Germans. This war against the Jews assumed such apocalyptic dimensions because the Nazis, in their fanatical worldview, saw the Jew as embodying the essence of those doctrines of moral conscience, human equality, peace, material progress, parliamentary democracy, and international brotherhood that they had sworn to destroy. Such beliefs could only obstruct the German nation in its will to power, racial purity, and world domination.

The German Jews were in no way responsible for this hideous perversion of German nationalism which would seal their doom. In 1914 nobody could really have foreseen the rise of Hitler or have predicted that the German-Jewish symbiosis would end in disaster. Nevertheless, we may draw some important lessons from this tragedy. Jews, throughout their long experience of Diaspora, have always been subject to the pressures of the surrounding majority cultures—whether they be hostile, indifferent, or relatively open and tolerant. From the Hellenistic period through the post-Enlightenment era in Europe and America, there have been brilliant examples of creative symbiosis between Jewry and foreign cultures; at the same time, periods of flowering have often been succeeded by pogroms, massacre, and expulsion. The Holocaust was only the most recent and most terrible example in this depressingly familiar pattern. Can contemporary Jewry, especially in its two most powerful and vibrant centers, Israel and the United States, break out of this cycle? What then might we learn today from the case of German Jewry?

Clearly, the creation of a Jewish state has made a difference. It has provided both a geopolitical focus for a renewal of Jewish identity and a shield against the kind of powerlessness that rendered Jewry the helpless object of sadistic persecution in the Nazi era. Many other minorities in our century have discovered the price of statelessness. One need only consider the fate of the Gypsies, the Armenians, the Kurds, the Oriental Christians, and the Palestinians, to name but a few examples on a long roll call. For the Jews, the creation of an independent state has provided a degree of both physical and psychic security that did not, for the most part, exist during nearly two millennia of dependence in exile. This vulnerability should not be underestimated or taken for granted, whatever the problems and dilemmas that have accompanied the

physical survival of Israel. Zionism, no matter what one thinks of it, has once again returned the Jews to history as actors and makers of their own destiny, responsible for their own political fate. At the same time it can provide no absolute safeguard for a distinctive Jewish identity. Israel is bedeviled by unresolved problems in defining the relation between Judaism and the state, between its religious and secular inhabitants and between the Jewish majority and non-Jewish minorities. Isolationist, particularist, and narrow nationalist trends threaten to divorce it from the humanistic, universalist vision of its founding fathers. Its physical security is constantly threatened by Arab states from without and by the Palestinian Arab population from within. Zionism has also not succeeded in eradicating the curse of anti-Semitism, as many of its founders naively hoped it would. On the contrary, the dynamics of the Arab–Israeli conflict and of the Palestinian question have provided a new framework in which postwar forms of anti-Semitism can thrive under the mask of anti-Zionism.

Under present conditions the problem of symbiosis with surrounding cultures scarcely seems pressing. An increasingly right-wing, religious, Sephardic, and nationalist Israel may become impervious not only to its immediate neighbors but also to the secular Western culture of which it is, at least in part, an offshoot. Given Israel's demography and the geopolitical realities of the Middle East, such a development would not be altogether surprising. But this new nationalism could lead to a dramatic rupture with the European traditions out of which Zionism and Israel itself originally grew. The lessons of the European Jewish experience would thereby be reduced to a simplistic belief in the God-given uniqueness of the Jewish people (a people that dwells alone), a profound distrust of the gentile world, and a reliance solely on one's own strength.

The lessons of German Jewry (and they can easily be generalized for post-emancipation Jewry as a whole) then become transparent: its trust in European humanism was tragically deluded from the outset; *Kultur* is a decidedly weak reed when barbarism stands at the gates; assimilation weakened Jewish vigilance and defense; and reason, tolerance, and justice are irrelevant in international relations. As Herzl once said, it is might, not right, that is decisive in human affairs, a Bismarckian lesson if ever there was one! Fortress Israel, therefore, becomes the only answer to the endemic anti-Semitism of the gentiles. This is not perhaps a climate favorable to the flourishing of a Freud, an Einstein, or a Mahler—but then, as we have seen, the conducive climate of pre-Nazi Germany hardly helped Jews either.

Many American Jews might well sympathize with this kind of Israeli gut reaction even if it does not necessarily make sense in their immediate situation. After all, it is in the United States that the philosophy of "Never Again," of transforming the Holocaust into a civil religion, of creating a powerful Jewish lobby for protecting Israel's interests, and of encouraging a militant Jewish political activism put down roots in the postwar era. In pursuing this road, American Jewry was motivated at least in part by a feeling of guilt that it had not done enough to rescue European Jews from the Nazi Holocaust, as well as by a growing sense of self-confidence and of its special responsibilities in the postwar world. On the other hand, American Jewry has never drawn a "Zionist" lesson from the experience of German or European Jews during World War II. American Jews have certainly never conceded that only in an independent Jewish state can Jews be immune to the kind of cataclysm that overwhelmed their European Jewish brethren. Nor, for the most part, have American Jews troubled themselves with the disturbing thought that their own Golden Age of prosperity, achievement, and acceptance might turn out to be a snare and a delusion. American Jews appear to believe in the reality of an American–Jewish symbiosis, while quietly dropping the "assimilationist" credo that was far more prevalent before the Holocaust.

American Jews have, of course, some good grounds for believing that they will escape the fateful trap of the German–Jewish symbiosis. They have never confronted—except for a brief moment in the 1930s—the kind of strident, racist anti-Semitism that cast a shadow across German Jewry for over a century before Hitler. They live in a pluralistic democracy where church is separated from state and where the dominant ethos has been set by capitalism, the Protestant ethic, and liberal tolerance. In North America, moreover, there has long been a multiplicity of ethnic groups, a situation that makes a distinctive Jewish group identity more acceptable while providing a wider range of targets for bigots to choose from. (Had a color line such as the one in America existed in prewar Germany, it is unlikely that the Jews would have become Hitler's prime targets.) Furthermore, American Jews had the good fortune of not having had to struggle for their emancipation or to demonstrate that they were worthy of it. Admittedly, America was and still is in many ways a Christian country, but it does not have the dead weight of a long feudal, aristocratic tradition, or the recent memory of persecutions and expulsions of Jews to contend with. America's liberal democratic heritage is solidly anchored in the founding document of the Constitution. German liberalism, on the other hand, has only begun to flourish in the western part of the country since the Allies partitioned Germany after World War II, and its growth has been fragile. When one adds to all these factors the sheer size, affluence, and power of the United States, its ideological commitment to individual freedom, and its pride in being an open society built on immigration, it becomes clear that American Jews have sound objective reasons to feel more optimistic than most other diaspora communities. Surely what happened to German Jewry could never happen in America, in a society founded on the universalist credo of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment with its commitment to human equality.

On the other hand, there is no reason to suppose that in America, any more than in France (a society rooted in similar ideals) the triumph of liberty, equality, and fraternity is assured; or that reason and tolerance will always overcome superstition and prejudice. America has always had its Protestant fundamentalists, its anti-Semitic and anti-Black bigots, its rabid anti-Communists, and a diffused potential for mass violence that could one day be exploited by a Stars and Stripes Führer-figure appropriately adapted to the age of electronic mass communications. Moreover, in some ways the prominent Jewish presence in the mass media, in academia, in arts and letters, and even in political life, suggests some parallels with Central Europe before Hitler. American Jewish creativity, while proportionately less impressive (the percentage of Jews in Germany before 1933 was considerably smaller than the percentage of Jews in America today), is nonetheless a major factor in American society and culture. In literature, theater, and cinema, American Jewish art often reflects the themes of angst, alienation, and rootlessness that were so pertinent to Central European Jewish intellectuals and artists. Neither this large-scale American Jewish cultural presence nor the liberal proclivities of most American Jews, more radical than the gentile mainstream, have as yet produced anything like the kind of backlash that occurred in Germany and in many other European societies. This backlash, however, might easily be triggered should the United States ever find itself subject to a mass economic depression, or to a sharp decline in its international position and its social cohesion, and should Jewish power and influence come to be perceived as an obstacle or threat by significant forces in American society. In such a scenario, America's special relationship with Israel might also backfire against American Jewry by casting doubts on its patriotism and loyalty.

Such a reaction does not seem at all likely at the present time. But a breakdown of the American–Jewish symbiosis cannot be excluded in the future. The most important lesson that Judaism has to teach under such circumstances is not to trust in empty political slogans or in the innate goodness of mankind, but to realize, in the words of Leo Baeck, the last great teacher of German Jewry before its demise, that "the path to our humanity leads through our Jewishness not away from it." □

"It Is Not in Heaven": Feminism and Religious Authority

Judith Plaskow

The problem of authority plagues modern theology and ethics. Two centuries of biblical criticism combined with increasing awareness of the religious beliefs and practices of other peoples have undermined the secure foundations of written and oral revelation on which earlier thinkers grounded their philosophical reflections and legal decisions. Biblical criticism reminds us that the religious sources we look to for fundamental values are human creations, the culture-bound expressions of past societies. Recognition of global diversity weakens the claims of any specific tradition to divine authority or eternal truth so that it becomes impossible for the sophisticated modern to respond, as a student of one of my colleagues did when asked to describe the difference between parallel miracle stories in the Talmud and the New Testament, "the one in the New Testament is true."

The difficulty of grounding our actions and convictions in some absolute authority by no means reduces the hankering for certainty—witness the worldwide rise of fundamentalism. This hankering is very powerful in our individualistic North American culture. According to this worldview, if we do not have the divine word, we are left with only our own fragile and individual words and desires. When New York's 92nd Street YM-YWHA held a major symposium on "Cultural and Religious Relativism" in 1986, it framed the issue of authority as a choice between individual subjectivity and communal imperatives rooted in divine sanction. Posed this way, the problem of authority is bound to send us scurrying to communal imperatives—wherever they come from and whatever they say.

Feminism can be very helpful in getting past the easy opposition of divine revelation and individual subjectivity—not because it has solved the problem of authority, but because it has had to confront it head on. The issue of authority is one area among many where feminism has embodied and focused larger dilemmas posed by modernity. Religious feminism has benefited from and contributed to the breakdown of traditional authority structures. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *The Woman's Bible,* a feminist commentary published at the end of the nineteenth century, used the advent of biblical criticism to radically question the religious authority of the Bible, and in so doing set the tone for future generations of feminist critics. Yet while feminists have helped undermine biblical authority by pointing to the patriarchal origins and development of so-called normative texts, they have also tried to develop alternatives to patriarchal religion which are themselves in need of some authoritative grounding. Whether a particular feminist seeks to "prove" the fundamentally liberatory nature of her own tradition or elaborate a new feminist spirituality, she still faces the issue of secure foundations which no constructive thinker can avoid.

Feminists have responded to this problem of authority in several ways. A number of Christian feminists, for example, have sought to find a "real" (that is, nonsexist) Paul or a "feminist" Jesus who can function as models for Christians today. This nonsexist strand of Christianity is identified with "true" Christianity, while sexist Christianity is seen as a distortion of its own founders' vision and therefore in need of change. Other feminist thinkers have acknowledged the basic androcentrism of biblical thinking but have found in Scripture minority voices that submit the Bible to self-criticism. Themes like the prophets' passion for justice, the equality of man and woman in Genesis I, and the presence of female God-language throughout the Bible, while not the statistical norm, may function as normative by providing a scriptural basis for feminist faith.

Such attempts to ground feminism in Scripture, however, point to the flaw in all attempts to base contemporary convictions on sure biblical foundations: *they disguise or deny the authority of the reader.* Since both feminists and antifeminists, democrats and authoritarians, warmongers and peacemakers can ground themselves in the Bible, surely it is not the Bible itself that tells us which interpretation is final and true. The difficulty of articulating even formal criteria that would be acceptable to all parties in a dispute over the conflicting voices in Scripture suggests that whether or not the fact is acknowledged, authority must lie outside the text and not within it.

Judith Plaskow teaches religious studies at Manhattan College. She is the author of Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective.

The feminist example makes clear, however, that in failing to find certainty within traditional texts, we are not thrown back on personal subjectivity and desire. No feminist sits alone in her study and decides to seek a feminist Jesus or give priority to Genesis I because these approaches suit her own temperament or private view of the world. The quest for feminist role models and authorities *is a communal quest.* It emerges *out of a movement* of women and men struggling for social and religious transformation. Feminism *as a movement* teaches individual women to value their experiences as women, to criticize and reject texts that have subordinated and demeaned them, and to lift up sources that, even within a patriarchal tradition, seem to point to a different way of structuring social relations. A student recently asked me, very puzzled, why I had written no feminist papers in graduate school, and I answered, "Because I had no idea what a feminist paper was." I did not get my feminist perspective from God, but neither did I or any other individual woman invent it in a vacuum. We developed it together.

Religious authority rests in a community of interpreters that seeks to understand texts and/or experience in ways that give meaning and structure to human life.

The feminist case suggests, then, that religious authority rests in a community of interpreters that—whether to enhance its own power or give voice to the experience of a larger community—seeks to understand texts and/or experience in ways that give meaning and structure to human life. I would claim that this is always where religious authority has rested. When the rabbis said that rabbinic enactments and modes of interpretation were given at Sinai, they were claiming authority for their own community. When Kabbalists proposed that *peshat* and *drash* are two important levels of a text, but that the mystical meaning is the most fundamental and profound, they were claiming authority for their community of interpreters. And so on for every group that has sought to shape the development of Judaism.

The knowledge that community has always functioned as an authority may provide cold comfort in our own situation. At least earlier interpreters, so we tell ourselves, *believed* that their interpretations gave the true meaning of Scripture and thus rooted the interpreters themselves in divine authority. Our self-consciousness about the authority of community, on the other hand, leaves us all too aware of the precariousness of our moorings.

I do not see a way beyond this self-consciousness, but I also think it need not be destructive. Awareness of communal authority can foster appreciation of diverse perspectives, help to challenge claims to absolute authority, and make us aware of our power to bring about religious and social change. Particular modes of interpretation emerge out of particular communities, but communities of interpreters, I have suggested, seek to understand texts and experiences in ways that give meaning and structure to Jewish/human existence. Those who would speak on behalf of a community are accountable to others for their capacity to make sense and provide meaning, to offer the possibility of a whole life. Indeed, modes of interpretation become authoritative partly because of their power to articulate the experience of ever-widening communities. Authority is, or ought to be, responsive—to the meanings in Jewish sources, to the changing demands of Jewish and human community, to the Eternal You that sustains and enlivens all our efforts to give our lives purpose. There may be no way past communal authority into the mind of this Eternal You that would allow us to anchor ourselves in the absolute. But then even reaching for such foundation may entail an evasion of responsibility. "It is not in heaven," the rabbis remind us.

We are to be our own authorities—not against God, not without God, but also not in such a way that we dodge our responsibility to create the structures of meaning we need to live our lives. □

The Rhetoric of Occupation

David Biale

When I spoke this past November at the *Tikkun* conference in San Francisco, I began my remarks with an official disclaimer: I was speaking, I said, only for myself—my institutional affiliation was for identification purposes only. One might well ask why I began by stating the obvious. I did so because it is no longer possible to speak out freely on Israel without the risk of incurring venomous wrath and threats, both veiled and unveiled, to one's very livelihood. There is a witch-hunt abroad in the land and many of us in the Jewish community are the witches.

Let me cite a few cases, taken more or less at random.

- Arthur Waskow is forced to resign from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College for advocating the creation of a Palestinian state;
- the Zionist Organization of America maintains files (which it publishes for its members) on American Jews who have taken pro-peace positions such as endorsing the Jewish Peace Lobby and signing ads sponsored by *Tikkun;*
- a branch of the American Jewish Congress loses its funding from a major Jewish foundation because it allows another organization to use a room in order to hear a Palestinian speaker;
- newspapers in the Bay Area report that the Israeli consul-general has spied on and harassed Jewish educational and communal organizations that have dared to engage in dialogue with the insidious P-people;
- activists in Friends of Peace Now in Toronto report that they regularly receive death threats whenever they mount any kind of program or demonstration.

The list goes on and on. Who among us in public life has not been the target of similar vilification, threats, and pressure? I myself recently had the honor of being called a Kapo by a worthy member of the Jewish community for advocating dialogue with the Palestinians. Read the letters column of any Jewish community newspaper, if you can bring yourself to do so, and you will have the dismal experience of seeing Jews accuse other Jews of being "worse than Hitler" for suggesting that Israeli policy might be misguided. Or read the venomous character assassination of Michael Lerner written by Edward Alexander and now being reprinted in Jewish papers around the country. Alexander's screed is McCarthyism with a Jewish face, an ad hominem use of selective quotations from the distant past in place of any substantive and serious debate over the issues. Having demonized the Palestinians, the next step for these self-proclaimed defenders of the faith is to demonize those Jews who step out of line as Arab-lovers and traitors to the Jewish people.

Our situation in this country is not, of course, as desperate as it is for our allies and friends in the Israeli peace movement. For them, reaching out to the Palestinians means not only censure and threats, but even the possibility of jail sentences. Abie Natan, one of the true zaddikim of our time, served four months in jail for meeting with Arafat. Even the judge found it hard to fault his intentions. The deputy mayor of Jerusalem was arrested and charged for wearing a small lapel pin with Israeli and Palestinian flags at a ceremony honoring Yitzhak Shamir. And twenty-seven Israelis, including a number of contributors to *Tikkun,* were arrested and charged with sedition for traveling to the West Bank and meeting with Palestinians. The charges were dropped on a technicality, but the harassment continues. And now we read in the papers of a group called the Sicarii that has planted bombs and threatens to execute seven members of the Knesset for the crime of advocating dialogue with the Palestinians.

Need one add that these severe measures come at a time when a settler who kills a fourteen-year-old Arab girl gets a seven-month sentence and soldiers who beat an Arab to death have their sentences reduced to a few months? We all know that while Israel may be a democracy within the Green Line, it deprives the Arabs of the territories of most democratic and civil rights. For more than half of its existence, Israel has maintained this double standard. As inevitably had to happen, this impossible state of affairs has begun to erode democratic rights within Israel itself.

Jewish life today is mortally threatened by a disease that afflicts not only the State of Israel, but the Jewish community worldwide. The disease is the occupation and it is attacking the cohesiveness of the Jewish people, sowing gratuitous hatred between Jews, and poisoning our public life. I submit that the price of continuing

David Biale is director of the Center for Jewish Studies and a professor of Jewish history at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. His latest book is Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History *(Schocken, 1986).*

the occupation will not only be the deterioration of democracy in Israel, but also the progressive disintegration of the American Jewish community. We can no longer speak about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as though we were innocent but concerned bystanders. The real moral and political question today, then, is not the price of peace, but the price of the occupation.

Now, more than ever, the occupation can be maintained only by a process of deliberate obfuscation, by hiding behind linguistic masks. The official rhetoric, for example, speaks of peace when it means occupation, of negotiations when it means capitulation. We are sucked into a seemingly endless process of initiatives, counterproposals, ten points, five points—all concerned with negotiation about who will negotiate about who will elect who will negotiate, and so on. The real point of this dreary charade is to stall endlessly for time and to distract attention from the relentless entrenchment of the occupation.

Whenever we dare to raise questions, we are told not to weaken Israel by criticizing it and not to do the work of the PLO. When we point out the immorality of the occupation, we are told that practices far worse exist elsewhere in the world, and that any other country would have ended the intifada a long time ago by much bloodier means. There is, of course, much truth in this. But those who make this argument never show the slightest interest in injustices elsewhere in the world unless they can be used to make Israel look good. Their sudden embrace of universalism smells very fishy. We have been constantly urged to regard Israel as a special country, as our country, but when we pay special attention to what is happening there, we are suddenly urged to pay more attention to the rest of the world. And worst of all is when the Holocaust and the suffering of our own people are invoked as a way of trumping the obviously lesser sufferings of the Palestinians.

A variant on the rhetoric of comparison is the argument from context. The occupation must be put in historical context, we are told: the refusal of the Arab states to accept Israel and their systematic exploitation and mistreatment of the Palestinians. Again, there is considerable truth here. But there are some things that are not permissible in any context. The argument from national security cannot be made to justify every instance of collective punishment, demolition of houses, and breaking of bones, especially when these policies have only fueled greater resistance. Will our great-grandchildren also be told that the historical context justifies the occupation?

Those who criticize are admonished to remain silent if they are not willing to move to Israel and put their own lives on the line. A compelling argument on the face of it, but one that quickly leads to absurdity. Who would argue that just because I have chosen not to live in the Soviet Union or Nicaragua I have forfeited my right to criticize their regimes? But more to the point, the consequences of this argument are profoundly anti-democratic; these right-wingers envision what used to be called democratic centralism, in which the citizens of Israel elect a government and all Jews around the world are expected to adhere to the party line. But we all remember the devastating consequences this policy had for the moral and political integrity of Communist parties around the world in the 1930s and '40s. For all the differences, do we want to see the same process happen to Zionism? Aren't Zionism and the Jewish people strengthened by free and open debate?

It is no longer possible to speak out freely on Israel without the risk of incurring venomous wrath and threats, both veiled and unveiled, to one's very livelihood.

Those who wish to suppress debate are no more eager themselves to move to Israel: they devote themselves to urging the critics to make aliya. I am reminded here of the slogan from the Vietnam War: America—love it or leave it. The slogan of right-wing Jews is: Israel—love it or move to it. They are certainly eager to fight to the last Israeli. Moreover, they are not really leaving Israeli policy up to the Israelis. Their silence is a powerful form of consent to a policy with potentially disastrous consequences, and since they are willing to criticize the critics publicly—often in the most vicious and violent terms—they are not really silent. Israeli peace activist Hannan Hever puts it even more strongly: "If American Jews want to genuinely help this country that we all love, then they must regard all silence about the occupation and all support of the current Israeli regime as an attack on those of us who are fighting for a moral Israel."

For the defenders of the occupation in this country, the buzzword for all discussions of the Middle East is "balance." But by balance they do not mean the reasoned examination of the legitimate claims of *both* sides—that, after all, is *our* position. Thus, the recent statement of American Catholic Bishops calling for a Palestinian homeland balanced by equal concern for Israel's security was automatically denounced as "one-sided." "Balance" is a code word for hearing only the Israeli government line. The voices of peace from both Israel and the Palestinian camp must be silenced.

This brings me to the most important component in the rhetoric of the occupation: the claim that there isn't

anyone to speak with. According to the official rhetoric, any dialogue that attempts to find common ground with the Palestinians must be condemned as serving their nefarious purposes, as giving a forum to the enemy. They must be kept silent because whatever they say is really a clever trick aimed at destroying Israel. Even listening to their side of the story is regarded as tantamount to saying that Israel has no right to exist. In this zero-sum game, every gain for them must be a loss for us. But the claim that there is no one to talk to becomes ever more contorted as the evidence mounts that dialogue is exactly what the PLO is ready for. As Abba Eban has put it, Israel is only prepared to talk to Palestinians who won't talk to Israel. And we are supposed to follow suit and to refuse any such contacts here. Instead of engaging the Palestinians in public dialogue, instead of listening to their story so that they might listen to ours, they must be denied any voice and kept silent. Again, out of sight, out of mind.

The day of reckoning with reality is fast approaching. Our role is to help create a space within the politics of this country for the possibility of a political settlement. We must defy the threats and intimidations and continue to speak the truth as we see it. We will defend Zionism as the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. We must stand ready to criticize the rejectionists, whether Israeli or Palestinian, and to encourage anyone who is committed to a genuine and realistic peace process. We must continue to meet with Palestinians in order to find common ground, but we must also stand our ground where we cannot agree. By our actions, we must give courage to the peace movement in Israel as it fights for survival. Above all, we must repeatedly expose the bankruptcy of the language of occupation and call to account those who are destroying democratic discourse both in the American Jewish community and in Israel. □

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Mapping the Terrain of the Heart: Passion, Tenderness, and the Capacity to Love

Stephen Goldbart and David Wallin

Consider the experience of a couple—call them Adam and Rachel—whose early "made for each other" attraction had so declined into disillusionment and contention that their marriage of five years was threatened. Adam, a thirty-five-year-old social worker and health program director, and Rachel, an attorney of the same age, finally sought therapy when the tension and emotional distance between them spilled into the bedroom, turning sex into a battleground. Specifically, Rachel's growing sexual frustration was causing her to doubt previously unquestioned feelings of love for Adam. She understood her difficulty in achieving orgasm as the frustrating product of what she euphemistically characterized as his "lack of sexual stamina." Although Adam believed that his wife's frustration was a result of an inability of *hers* to give up control, he found himself feeling increasingly inadequate and unmanly. He blamed Rachel for his feelings of self-doubt, and accused her of "undermining his masculinity." Caught in a downward spiral which burdened sex with increasing anxiety, Adam and Rachel each felt helplessly angry, guilty, and disparaged by the other.

The difficulties this couple faced are by no means unique. For most of us, passionate romantic love that lasts is both infinitely desirable and infinitely problematic. As often as not, we are unable to effectively alter frustrating patterns that prevent relationships from remaining *both* sexually and emotionally fulfilling. To understand these kinds of problems and be in a position to help resolve them, we as psychotherapists were led to formulate a psychoanalytic developmental model centering on the capacity to love. Our approach synthesizes the capacity to love into a set of six developmentally acquired psychological capabilities which measure our ability to fall and remain in love. [See box.] As a love relationship evolves through successive stages, different capacities are called upon to make continued progress within the relationship possible. These capacities originate in childhood, emerge in sequence, and evolve in

Drs. Wallin and Goldbart are psychologists who practice and teach psychoanalytic psychotherapy at the Marin Psychotherapy Institute in Mill Valley, California, and the Solano Center in Albany, California.

SIX CAPACITIES CONTRIBUTING TO MATURE LOVE RELATIONS

Capacity	Problems in Loving
To experience the body erotically.	Inhibition of bodily eroticism.
To merge pleasurably with the beloved without overwhelming anxiety.	Tendency to set rigid boundaries or withdraw from others to protect oneself from threats to identity or autonomy.
To see self as worthy of idealization by the beloved; to maintain stable idealization of beloved.	Unstable grandiosity as defense against feelings of emptiness and rage; the idealization marred by devaluation and detachment as protection from feelings of envy and rage.
To experience integrated images of self and others so that mixed feelings can be tolerated and abilities for mutual empathy and reciprocity for the love object can be achieved.	Love relations rendered unstable by oscillating all-good and all-bad images of the beloved; abandonment concerns contaminate experiences of falling and remaining in love.
To "refind" in current love relations the passion of one's earliest loves.	Guilty inhibition of sexuality and assertiveness; separation of intimacy and sexuality; perfectionism and excessive criticism; self-defeating triangular involvements.
To transcend boundaries of the self during intimate "play" while maintaining a secure sense of identity.	Pleasure without a sense of fulfillment. Committed intimacy without shared values or without adequate sexual "chemistry."

an ongoing fashion throughout the life cycle. While problems such as Rachel and Adam's are unwelcome in their own right, they provide an opportunity to resolve old conflicts and heal old wounds—thereby removing barriers to the continuing development of the capacity to love.

From Freud to contemporary object relations and sociocultural perspectives, psychological theories on love emphasize love's difficulties to such an extent that satisfying love seems an altogether unlikely prospect. We are told that the sexual dramas of our early development, our damaged self-esteem, our lack of self-empowerment, our conflicted response to rapidly changing sex roles have all so negatively affected our ability to love that romantic happiness seems improbable, if not impossible.

These ideas about the difficulties of love are certainly credible, but they tend to underplay the key factors in healthy development that motivate our loving desires. Human beings have primal intrinsic needs to love, to enjoy sexual pleasure, and to transcend our individuality by being part of a greater loving community. Intimate relationships are the setting in which we gratify these innate needs, and, over time, develop our capacity to love. The more completely this capacity develops, the more capable we are of building satisfying love relations. Psychological theory has been correct in stressing how early deficits and conflicts affect the capacity to love: the error lies in any implication that these experiences pronounce a "death sentence" upon love's promise. We benefit from a shift of perspective when we think about love in terms of making latent capacities manifest, rather than of overcoming the problems of the past.

Our experiences of falling and remaining in love are influenced most significantly by three of the six capacities we've outlined: the capacity to idealize self and other, to integrate good and bad images of self and other, and to rediscover in current love relations the passions of our earliest loves without excessive guilt or anxiety. As a love relationship develops, each of these capacities in turn occupies center stage.

Falling and Remaining in Love

When we first fall in love, our *idealization* of the beloved excites the expectation that he or she will likely meet our crucial emotional and sexual needs. The unqualified mutual admiration that characterizes the fantasy life of two people in a new relationship is an essential ingredient in the process of falling in love. Idealization is complicated, however, by the fantasy of the "perfect mate" who not only embodies all we want in a lover, but who, most importantly, possesses qualities that we lack and desire in ourselves. This mate must be perfect roughly to the degree that we ourselves feel imperfect. A culture like ours that supports "getting as much as you can" encourages increasingly ambitious expectations of the ideal mate and reinforces the use of love as a commodity to compensate for what we feel we lack. To the extent that we live up to the cultural ideals of youth, independence, and success, we tend to feel freer to wait for this perfect mate. But because such a lover is often required to accommodate a collection of contradictory virtues (aggressiveness and gentleness, spontaneity and self-discipline), he or she may be difficult, if not impossible, to find.

Enlisting the partner to play a role in the old family drama guarantees that there will be more than two people in bed when a couple makes love.

Returning to Adam and Rachel: No more than a few hours after they first met, both began to feel they had found the perfect match. Weary of men who were unable to form deep or enduring emotional connections, Rachel was swept away by Adam's warmth and his easy comfort with physical and emotional closeness. He seemed soulful, strong, and caring. The compassionate commitment to helping others she saw reflected in his career choice easily overshadowed her momentary concern that as a successful attorney she earned more than Adam. In bed, Adam's passion made her feel desirable and secure: it seemed to free her to experience her sexuality more fully than she ever had before.

Adam was thrilled to have found in Rachel someone who was smart, sexy, strong, and Jewish. He had been involved and disappointed with a number of women whose sexual allure for him was eventually compromised by their emotional neediness. With these women, he had felt called upon to play an unwanted parental or therapeutic role. He described the Jewish women with whom he had previously become intimate as dependent, demanding, and intrusive. Inevitably, they reminded him of his mother—a university professor of psychology who treated him, he said, like a loved but uncontrollable research project.

Rachel was different. She was abundantly self-confident, independent, and successful. Here was a woman who wouldn't confront him with the criticism and struggles for control he felt he had endured in previous relationships. Rachel's strength was a turn-on for him, and she seemed to respond to his sexuality with unrestrained pleasure. Nearly convinced he had

met his future wife, Adam moved with due speed to capture her heart.

In order to admire and idealize the other, each lover must feel "lovable"—each must feel love for the self. When one has problems in the development of sufficient self-esteem, the resulting feelings of inadequacy can provoke a defensive depreciation or mistrust of the beloved. Either way, the mutual idealization that enables the couple to get in the door, so to speak, is undermined.

Adam and Rachel nearly missed getting in the door. After falling in love with Rachel's unrestrained strength and independence, Adam began to worry that she might be too cool and distant—not nurturing enough. While irresistibly drawn to Adam's warmth and openness to emotional attachment, Rachel was also mistrustful of the speed with which he wanted the relationship to move: she was suspicious that it might signal weakness or a lack of self-confidence. Fortunately, past relationships had enabled Adam to understand enough about his defensive fault-finding not to be dominated by it. For Rachel, the same was true of her wariness. Overcoming these early obstacles made it possible for each to idealize the other. Not all couples are so fortunate.

As we become more aware of the complex reality of another person and his or her imperfections, our idealized view of the other can no longer be sustained. What invariably ensues is a painful confrontation with the rapidly dissolving fantasy elements of romance. The capacity for *integration* now becomes crucial if the relationship is to survive the waning of idealization. When integration has not been achieved, the disappointment we feel at the fading of the initial blissfully merged quality of falling in love can provoke black-and-white judgments that dismiss the entire relationship as entirely bad, inadequate, or impossible. Without a developed capacity to integrate an understanding of the other's shortcomings, the lover is tempted to reject the beloved and "cut his or her losses" before there is further hurt.

Rachel struggled with this temptation when she began to experience Adam's desire for emotional attachment as oppressively dependent and controlling: "You're clinging to me! You want me to be your mother and it's a turn-off." Adam was disillusioned by her angry withdrawal, but he was able to understand it as her way of protecting herself. And after all, he admired her strength, even while it threatened to expose an apparent weakness in himself.

The capacity for integration enabled both Rachel and Adam to tolerate the unavoidable disappointments that come with a long-term relationship and to feel empathy and tolerance for one another. Integration also enabled them to tolerate the shortcomings in themselves, which were inevitably revealed and acted out in the course of developing their intimate bond. Each had sufficient patience and compassion for his or her own insecurities, jealousies, and unrealistic expectations to transform the fantasy of first love into the reality of an intimate, ongoing relationship. Having integrated a conception of the other's weakness, they were able to provide real support and nurturance.

The fact that Adam and Rachel had each *individually* developed a secure and integrated sense of identity enabled them to avoid some of the difficulties encountered by partners who lack this asset. When integration of the self is incompletely achieved, we look to the partner to "complete" ourselves—and are predictably disappointed. We are also prone to feel attacked and threatened too easily when our beloved is critical. Acting out and excess projection can then provoke intense conflicts that severely undermine the capacity to remain in love. In relationships of this kind, the remedy must involve attention to the pressing individual issues, as well as the dynamics of the couple.

The Paradox of Refinding

The ability to rediscover in our partner qualities that were important in our initial love relationships adds a dimension of depth to our capacity to love. This refinding enables us to feel passionate intensity, familiarity, and effortless rapport with the beloved. It also represents the ultimate turn-off, the pain and heartache of love's disappointments, the re-creation of past love conflicts ("oh god, not again") in the present. While refinding enables us to experience depth in relationships, it is often the dynamic that people most consciously seek to avoid: the rediscovery of aspects of mother and father in our lovers is not generally felt to be desirable or to generate sexual chemistry.

Refinding is at work when our new relationship begins to feel like a rendezvous with the past. As an undercurrent that imbues the present relationship with what was desirable in the intimacy of the past, healthy refinding draws us to our beloved; we want to feel again the way we did when Mom and Dad provided love and support. Refinding that is laden with conflict, on the other hand, casts a shadow over the relationship. Overwhelming the defenses that shield us from the impact of painful, unresolved experiences with those whom we have loved in the past, it can provoke a potential revival of these experiences in the present.

This superimposition of past on present is obviously problematic—particularly when it occurs outside our conscious awareness. But the refinding of old difficulties also gives us a new opportunity to master them. Conflicts with mother and father that may previously have been too painful to resolve now reemerge in relationships

with those with whom we have found a second chance to work through troublingly familiar scenarios. When these ghosts of past loves reappear, each partner's capacity to love is challenged—but the potential now exists for mastery, grieving, and the eventual healing of old emotional wounds.

In its existence as an undercurrent that both draws us to the beloved and pushes us away, refinding is key to understanding what occurred between Adam and Rachel. In Rachel, Adam refound his strong and successful professor mother. What he didn't bargain for was refinding his mother's critical, undercutting style and her difficulties in providing warmth and comfort. He had always wished for a more emotionally soothing and supportive mother. He felt she saw him as too much like his father—a funny, likable, and emotionally available man who was unsuccessful in the workplace and never really stood up to his wife. Mother had been critical to the point of being abusive with both father and son. Adam gained a sense of personal strength only by moving as far away from her as he could. In becoming a social worker, he felt he had finally found the psychological tools to master the emotional conflicts engendered in his family. In fact these conflicts had only gone underground until Rachel came along.

At first, Rachel seemed to be a "dream come true" solution to his plight with Mother. She had Mother's strengths and yet really believed in him and admired the person he had become. Yet as Rachel became more disillusioned, distant, and openly critical of him, many of his hidden conflicts and insecurities emerged. It was as if he were reliving with Rachel his mother's coolness, her emotional withdrawal when he needed her, and, at worst, her depreciation of his masculinity.

For Rachel, Adam's warmth and generosity seemed the perfect antidote to her early experience with parents who were emotionally unavailable and self-involved. Her mother, an unhappy woman with her own ambitions unrealized, made no secret of her neediness and her disappointment with husband and family. She turned to Rachel as the oldest child not only for help with household duties, but also more importantly to soothe her damaged self-esteem. Father, a successful "workaholic" businessman, was a seductively impressive but domineering figure. He had high expectations for all his children and particularly for Rachel, who found that only through her achievements could she reliably capture the attention of this formidable but remote man. In a frustrating bid for his love, she became an honors student and top law-school graduate. Openly critical of his cool dominance, Rachel secretly admired her father and identified with his strength and competitiveness. She learned from him that maintaining a strong sense of control could lead to power and success—and to protection from unwanted intrusions from others with greater needs.

When she began to see Adam as overly needy, the earlier wish for a healing relationship with an idealized mate faded. Instead, it was as though she found herself burdened again with her depressed and emotionally hungry mother. She began to view herself as superior to Adam, her higher salary and social status providing the evidence. Adopting the attitude of her admired father, she became progressively more distant and critical. She expected more "manliness" of Adam, more assertion, and less of his unbecoming wishes to "merge." Adam's apparent freedom to go after what he wanted emotionally—which had once seemed alluring—had become in her eyes a liability. So, she asked, why should it come as a surprise to him that I'm less turned on, less orgasmic? Without her awareness, the intensifying

(Continued on p. 126)

ECOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEANING

Critical Support for Earth Day: An Editorial

Michael Lerner

Why only critical support? When everyone from Barry Commoner to George Bush is on board, why shouldn't we be equally enthusiastic? After all, how can it hurt to raise environmental consciousness?

It *can't* hurt, which is why we support it. Yet the attempt to legitimize this event by creating the largest possible coalition around it also diminishes its potential impact. In the twenty years since Earth Day 1970, environmental consciousness has often been misdirected into programs and attitudes that did more to co-opt our indignation at the destruction of the earth than to fundamentally change things. Band-aids on a cancer are counterproductive—they divert energies that need to be mobilized more effectively.

Experts in ecology are increasingly convinced that the survival of the human race, perhaps of all life on the planet, hangs in the balance. If we do not immediately and decisively alter our entire relationship to nature, there is good reason to believe that within twenty years we will have done irrevocable damage to the life-support systems of the planet.

Hard as it might be to accept, some forms of ecological consciousness actually work in the wrong direction. For example, the notion that we are *all* polluters, and that what we really need to do is to be aware of our own responsibility for polluting the earth, is fundamentally misleading. Yes, it is true that many of us could make environmentally more conscious decisions in our personal lives—recycle, not litter, and so on. But the real and pressing danger to the planet comes from corporations and governments that decide to use resources and develop products in environmentally destructive or irresponsible ways. By focusing attention on the smaller issues in our personal lives, we get to feel good about ourselves and close our eyes to the larger structural issues which we sometimes feel powerless to change.

"But surely if people did not choose to purchase environmentally destructive products the corporations wouldn't produce them," runs one typical argument. "Similarly, if the people did not choose to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on wasteful weapons systems and other environmentally hazardous governmental projects, they could elect different representatives who would choose different priorities. So it's really people's attitudes that have to be changed." True enough, as far as it goes, but it doesn't go very far. The argument misses the economic and political realities that help shape our choices, and hence unfairly blames the people for choices that are at least understandable given the options they face.

Take, for example, one of the heaviest polluters—the automobile. The immense power of the auto and oil industries around the world has been mobilized to block the development of a rational system of mass transportation. In Los Angeles, for example, a rail transit system was bought up and dismantled by an automobile manufacturer—so that people would become more dependent on cars. Other powerful corporations, using their resources to encourage the election of sympathetic legislators, managed to prevent the introduction of serious auto-emission restraints, thus polluting major industrial areas and threatening the population with the cancer that emissions cause. In circumstances such as these, it makes sense for people to choose to live far away from the areas in which they work, and to rely on automobiles to get there. It misses the point to blame the individual consumers for making this choice or to ask them to raise their environmental consciousness.

Or take the defense industry worker. Faced with the end of the cold war and the possibility of massive unemployment, and knowing full well that this society does not provide adequate unemployment benefits, reasonable retraining, or any serious attempt to provide alternative employment, this worker is not being environmentally insensitive to insist on continuing massive defense spending. He or she may care just as much about the environment as any environmental demonstrator from the upper-middle-class universities, but that worker also suspects that the actual alternative to defense spending is likely to result in a personal tragedy. Again, it makes little sense to blame such a person, given the available choices framed by the current political system.

Similarly, we will hear increasing talk about the damage being done to our environment by Third World polluters, those who are cutting down the rain forests, for example.

Michael Lerner is the editor of Tikkun.

Here, again, we miss the larger economic realities that have caused the problem. For hundreds of years Western colonialists, and for decades American corporate interests, have helped shape a world economy that has prevented Third World countries from developing economic independence. The massive poverty of the Third World has often been an outcome of economic arrangements imposed on them by the developed world—and in the process Western corporations and publics have benefited from cheap raw materials, cheap labor, and markets for goods. It is in this context that Third World countries hear the moralizing words of environmentalists. The environmentalists talk about the future of the planet; many people in the Third World worry about their own physical survival today. So the pleas of environmentalists fall on deaf ears.

Nor will corporations change their behavior as long as it is profitable for them to produce goods that may have long-term destructive consequences. After all, as a corporate manager your "responsibility to shareholders" is to maximize profits in the short run. You get no career benefits from maximizing the future of the planet. You may take a few minimal steps to project an image of corporate sensitivity to environmental issues, because that may help enhance corporate profits, but you certainly are not going to engage in a fundamental restructuring of what and how you produce. It's as wrong to stigmatize individual corporate managers as it is to attack individual workers in environmentally destructive ventures. All are caught in a web of entanglements in which it will be self-destructive to their own short-term interests to act in ways that would be environmentally rational.

We need an international system for rational planning of industrial production, farming, fishing, mining, energy resources, and the like. The human race *could* pull together, decide to prohibit all forms of interference with the natural environment that are destructive to the long-term survival of the human race, and enforce its decisions. But for this plan to work, we would need a moral revolution: a rejection of the self-interest ethics of capitalism. We would also need a powerfully decentralized democratic process so that we could all participate in the discussions and the decision making, plus a democratically elected and accountable body that could coordinate the various local decisions.

But rationally planned economies are precisely what have just failed in Eastern Europe, no? *Tikkun* had little sympathy for the Eastern European systems of government that appropriated the language of socialist visionaries to mask the reality of ruling elites who governed in their own selfish interests and ignored the will of the people. The idea behind those societies was that people were supposed to forgo selfish interests and work for nonmaterial incentives—namely, the common good. But because these societies were *not* democratic, the common good was defined by ruling elites who used the language of community to advance their own private interests. No wonder, then, that many Eastern Europeans lost interest in working hard and sacrificing material well-being once they realized that the language of the common good was a mere cover for the private good of a particular elite.

The same logic will hold whenever we ask any specific group within our society to sacrifice its own short-term interests for the common good. People will make major readjustments in the way they produce and consume only if they see that *everyone* is making fundamental changes, and that these changes do not leave them more economically vulnerable than others. In short, saving the planet puts the question of redistribution of the world's wealth and rational planning of the world's economy at the center of the human agenda. And the changes will require substantively democratic procedures so that people can participate as part of the community that debates and decides how to use the world's resources.

Short of this kind of thinking, we get the nearsighted strategies of major environmental groups and "environmentally sensitive" politicians. We've had this for twenty years, and we can predict that there will be a flood of candidates attempting to appropriate the environmental label for their personal ambitions in the years ahead. Afraid to challenge existing methods of production and consumption, government regulators and politicians delay for years the target dates for addressing the problems, set unconscionably high "acceptable" levels of environmental damage (such as poisons in the air and on our food), and make exceptions which guarantee that even when a specific problem is addressed it will *not* be solved. But even with the best of intentions, the piecemeal solutions are wildly inadequate—they serve more to soothe our frayed nerves than to seriously confront the magnitude of the problem. So the media select one of the innumerable ways that we destroy our natural environment (the destruction of the ozone layer, for example) and eventually government leaders acknowledge that there is a problem and make lame attempts to limit the damage. Meanwhile, dozens of other areas remain unattended and get worse, while we delude ourselves into feeling good that we've been paying attention to a few areas.

Once we understand the scope of the problem, many of us despair. Transforming the world economy? Creating a worldwide system of rational planning of the world's resources? "It's too big for me to handle" is a typical response. "I have enough trouble keeping my own life together. Let me do what I *can* do—recycle my garbage

or vote for a candidate who says he or she will deal with a few of the worst environmental hazards."

Yet if this larger transformation is necessary to save the planet, then the feeling of powerlessness expressed in the above response becomes a major environmental issue. Environmentalists cannot afford to simply address environmental issues—they need to look at the issues that have led to this sense of powerlessness.

For this reason, anyone who wishes to save the environment must empower people so that they can overcome their "surplus powerlessness." In the past, we've argued that transcending the dynamics of self-blaming and building communities of compassion are essential to this process—and hence we've called for a new kind of liberal or progressive movement that would pay attention to the psychodynamics of daily life and that would speak to people's fundamental spiritual and ethical concerns. Dealing with the pain in people's lives and the collapse of their spiritual and ethical environment may be a necessary prerequisite for engaging them in the struggle to save the physical environment on any level except that of limited and inadequate reforms. Environmentalists may have to join with others in creating a liberal or progressive movement that would pay attention to the pain in people's lives.

You may not think we have time to create such a movement. In fact, nothing else will succeed without it. Until people feel empowered to address the big picture, they may commiserate about the terrible destruction of the environment, turn out at Earth Day events, and participate in narrow environmental struggles, but they will still vote for candidates who advocate the most minimal and piecemeal changes, and they will still watch the demise of the planet with the same detachment, passivity, and cynical despair that characterizes the rest of their lives. Therefore, building a new kind of political community—far different from anything being discussed at Earth Day 1990 and far different from the politics that dominates in the American political arena—is a major priority for anyone who wishes to save the planet.

If these issues can be discussed at Earth Day 1990, we may take an important first step; if not, it will only confirm people in a political approach that fundamentally misses the boat. We can't afford that outcome. Our task in the years ahead is to shift the level of the discussion, to understand how very much is at stake, and then to adopt strategies aimed at changing the political climate so that what is necessary becomes what is possible. □

ECOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEANING

Listening to the Earth

Anthony Weston

According to James Lovelock of Gaia Hypothesis fame, Gaia—Earth as living organism—can't be doing so badly when, looking down from an airplane or from a height, we see mostly green even in populated areas. There's something to this. From the knob where I am standing I can see the Hudson River Valley from Storm King to the lower Catskills, east to Connecticut and west across the river to the Shawangunks. In the barrenness of winter when nothing is hidden, I scan the dwelling place of maybe 200,000 people and still see mainly trees. Hills and trees. And here too, having come out to celebrate the rhythm of the seasons, I begin to sense what it might mean to regard the Earth itself as a living thing. The birds shuttle about as I climb to greet the sun on its first day north of the equator this year, the day of equal night and light, "equi-nocte"; pagan "Eostar," the return of light; Easter, the resurrection of life; Passover, deliverance. Already the buds are swelling and the red flowers of the maple wave in the still-wintry wind. An old, old rhythm. The sun will return, the flowers will yield to leaves, small birds now darting all around in the predawn light will consume and be consumed. Life goes on.

There are three power plants down the river opposite New Hamburg. I can see their white plumes rise straight into the air four or five thousand feet, then at some thermal boundary bend at a right angle and meander off along the horizon. Curiously, one drifts vaguely to the west, the other stretches out eastward along the whole southern quarter of my panorama. As I climbed, I thought they were the trace clouds of sunrise, pink-purple with the residue of night. The feeling is more sinister now that I know the source. It reminds me of how the Angel of Death arrives in deMille's *The Ten*

Anthony Weston teaches philosophy at SUNY Stony Brook.

Commandments: as a long, thin, green cloud, hovering below the moon. Not like a hurricane, or a banshee roar, but crystalline and silent.

Curling above my sleeping world floats the morning's contribution to global warming. Yesterday's *New York Times* spoke of unprecedented drought and dust storms in Kansas. This morning's local paper, which I collect on my way back, reports that Poughkeepsie is now for the first time in violation of federal air-quality standards. Last summer's record heat has caused excessive ground-level ozone and a steady wind from the south brings Gotham's carbon monoxide up the river.

Even this site may soon be gone. Its days as an orchard are apparently numbered: our neighbor, fighting one of those endless rearguard battles with sundry developers, tells us that it has already been sold and is slated for housing of some sort. In a few years the suburbs will have risen even to these heights. Little brush birds may return, since the usual suburban vegetation tends to be more brushy than working orchards, and whatever of these fruit trees remain will no doubt be left untended. Wilder birds, not so easily bought off by the largesse of bird feeder and berry bush, and adamantly opposed to the permanent presence of humans, will not return. Another and more disquieting suggestion for judging the health of an ecosystem: look for the presence, or absence, of the wildest animals.

Back down the hill. It turns out that the neighbors were already up: perhaps I did not climb so far away after all. By evening it is snowing—oddly, just about the first snow we've had this year. At midnight, this first midnight of spring, there is enough snow, barely, to cross-country ski through the woods and along the abandoned railroad bed across the road. Now the woods are silent, wet, almost sighing. For a moment it seems to be November, early December, the first and not the last snow of the winter. But in fact this is winter's last gasp, it is already spring. I have seen the buds. This year they come forth to the prospect of regional drought by midsummer; this year also the old railroad bed may become a new county road. So the reawakening is as if from an unsettled sleep. Bad dreams. A reflection of our own nervousness—or vice versa?

My Ph.D. seminar in the philosophy of nature is sitting on the ground in a wigwam in Hauppauge, New York, half a mile and four centuries or so from the Northern State Parkway. Perhaps the latter distance explains why we do not hear the cars. This is Long Island, or "Paumanok," which the Indians knew took the shape of a great whale, though they never saw the island from the air. It is drizzling, foggy, and cold. Wisps of fog and smoke, indistinguishable, cling to the outside of the wigwam, and inside the mists from our voices rise to join the smoke seeking the small smoke-hole.

We are here because I believe that we cannot even begin to understand a Native American experience of the Earth in any other way. Of course we have also done what all appropriate seminars do: read books and talked about them around tables in small rooms. In *The Re-enchantment of the World* Morris Berman argues that from the medieval to the modern age, consciousness was turned from what he calls a "participating" mode, a sense of identification or "psychic wholeness" with one's surroundings, to the opposite, "disenchanted" mode all too familiar to us now. For Descartes, sitting on his stone in the midst of the Thirty Years War, the very justification of knowledge requires that we abstract ourselves from the world of the senses and of the body. Consciousness sets itself up *against* our surroundings, against the world. Thus, a certain world-alienation is virtually the essence of thought itself. "Painful incompleteness is the true mature experience," as Paul Shepard puts it in *Nature and Madness,* "and the meaninglessness of the natural world is its meaning."

Western culture tells us that to be able to think we must disconnect the senses, and to be able to do that we have had to disconnect and deaden the entire natural world in turn.

Berman wants to recover "participation," a world that is once again "enchanted." So we read about Jung's use of alchemical texts to interpret dream images, about Reich's conception of the unconsciousness as the body, about reinterpreting the Indian rain dance not as a technology for producing rain but as, at bottom, an invitation to *relationship*: the Indians, Berman argues, were "asking in effect to make love to [the clouds], and like any normal lover they may or may not be in the mood."

We are struggling. Of course the ideas are strange and unsettling, but the struggle is more than that. Partly it is that too much in Berman's writing makes it sound as though "participating consciousness" is primarily a state of mind—and on some level, I think, that is what we implicitly believe. Berman speaks of participation as a form of *consciousness,* a word we inevitably hear with Cartesian overtones. His text itself invokes participation in a triply intellectualized form: citing a Jungian reading of the symbols in alchemical texts. Perhaps, scandalously, we ought to drop this talk of consciousness entirely, and stick with the adjective: participating. We need to recover a directly experienced closeness and also vulnerability. It is, Berman says, something that we can

now glimpse or recover only under special circumstances. Sex and panic are his examples. The general suggestion is that we can recover participation only at the extremes, not as a normal mode of being but only when we are thoroughly and perhaps unexpectedly overpowered.

But there are other ways too. And so here we are, sitting on the earth in a wigwam on a cold morning, watching the rising smoke and the mists from our breaths, passing a cup, hearing the calls of the geese and wild turkeys—penned, to be sure, but still calling excitedly in the fog. We are talking about Abenaki creation stories. We are speaking slowly, for once, not covering all other sounds with our voices. And maybe that small matter of tempo in the end points to the very essence of participation: the sense of being simply *part of* a larger, living world. There is something to hear besides ourselves: the calls of the birds and the slow rustle of the winds; our fire echoing the hiss of the rain; and our voices, when we speak, interweaving among the animals'. This is what it means to truly feel that "the Earth is alive." For Lovelock it is supposed to be a scientific discovery, at the very forefront of modern speculation. For the Indians it was an everyday experience that hardly needed to be thematized at all, until they encountered another people who, incredibly, had somehow missed it.

As we prepare to leave, I speak of a kind of "culture shock" in going back to campus. Many of the students return to an afternoon seminar on Hegel. I return to a balky Xerox collator. Late in the day many of us find ourselves on the fourth floor of the university library, listening to a famous American philosopher hold forth on the question of whether a certain famous French philosopher did or did not draw normative conclusions from his exhaustive and penetrating cultural critiques, or whether his systematic avoidance of normative explicitness could really save him from the apparently dreaded problem of normative foundations. The suggestion seemed to be that the problem of "justifying" values is so central yet so insoluble that a philosopher might well structure his or her entire corpus so as to avoid ever having to face it. Yet no such "problem" would have occurred to us six hours earlier in the wigwam. And once again it is not merely a question of thinking ourselves into the necessary position.

Perhaps what the morning showed us is that the divide between value and "fact" may be rooted in something as simple and pervasive as our architecture. It is not merely the preoccupation with texts or argument that subtly or not so subtly reinscribes the very nonparticipation we are trying to escape. We would do better to notice that the very settings in which texts or arguments present themselves already exclude the possibility of real participation. What happened on the fourth floor of the library would have been utterly impossible in the wigwam; and the reverse is also true. Nonparticipation is enforced by the concrete blocks and steel of the library walls, and by the windows that don't open, looking over asphalt plazas and a few disconsolately wheeling gulls. All of this is of course no more than the familiar landscape of human inhabitation, here not even particularly urban. Here the Earth does not emerge as "alive": it barely even seems to have a presence.

We return to private cogitation, or more mundane tasks, in our own building. Here the windows open—it is an older structure—but otherwise everything is the same. We "do" philosophy, we try to comprehend the world, we are wholly surrounded by our artifacts; there are no animals, not even any children, not even, so to speak, ourselves. No new discovery, this, but the enormity of it is still astonishing. Our tradition tells us that to be able to think we must disconnect the senses, and to be able to do *that* we have had to disconnect and deaden the entire natural world in turn. Thus and only thus have we managed to persuade ourselves that it is dead.

How can we speak for the Earth? Can it be done at all on the fourth floor of the university library, in our disconnected mood generally? Should we try? We don't "speak for" our lovers, after all; we love them, as the Indians loved this earth. The spruce muskegs off James Bay, so-called barren land periodically proposed for flooding by Hydro Quebec partly in order to generate electricity for export to Long Island, are known to the Cree as "Kistikani," gardens. Of the primeval evergreen forests of the Pacific Northwest, rain-washed, fogbound, and now being clear-cut for timber, a Duwamish chief said:

> Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

Perhaps *he* is speaking for the land—though even that would not give anyone else the right. Even so, he speaks out of desperation, and to an audience that hears mostly sentimentality. Can we actually understand those words—we whites, I mean, who in the Indians' view brought the idea of wilderness with us? *They* never saw this land as wild, threatening, needing to be tamed and controlled. "By seeking to dominate [nature]," writes Peter Matthiessen, "the white men set themselves in opposition to a vital healing force of which they were a part, and thereby mislaid a whole dimension of existence." Turn that phrase over in your mind: mislaid a whole dimension of existence. It is not a matter of having missed one or two connections. But then why should we expect to be able to recover that lost dimension at all, let alone in the old familiar rooms and with the old familiar words?

There is a deep and perverse logic at work here, actually a logic that works itself out not only with respect to nature but across the domain of ethics. This is the perversity: violation can turn the violated into something that in the end "by nature" invites or allows violation. Thus one effect of "factory farming" cattle or chickens is to terrorize, cripple, and debase the animals to the point that the pitiful creature that results seems to be an utterly implausible candidate for anything *but* human "use" and consumption. People who work with those animals may find it impossible to feel any serious concern for them. People who speak up for them will inevitably seem to speak out of mere sentimentality. To this, I believe, we are now only able to say: so be it. What we are speaking up against is the very debasement itself, the deliberately undertaken process of turning the animals *into* creatures who can have no serious claim on us, creatures such as commercially produced chickens—debeaked, drugged, virtually blind, unable to fly or even walk. By now that kind of horror story can be repeated for many species of animals including ourselves. We are left to speak for what might have been, and maybe not so much against the suffering and violation of this particular animal as for a vision of what a more natural life for this *kind* of animal would be like. Of course this is a matter of some speculation. Of course it requires a leap of faith. The horror is that faith is all that is left to us.

To pursue the analogy one more step: recovery too must start from a posture other than *argument,* strictly or even loosely speaking. Argument takes seriously the demand to *show* that other animals can be companions, when precisely that demand already represents a way of closing ourselves off from the creatures in question (that's it: in question). Thus the last thing we need are the usual laboratory studies of other animals from a posture of studied neutrality about whether or not, as one dolphin researcher put it, "there's somebody in there." Human beings trip over their own feet when treated with such distance and skepticism, and there is no reason to expect other animals to do any better, especially when they are exquisitely more sensitive to the affective environment than we are. Not to mention that being "in there" is exactly what fully sensed creatures are *not*: we are "out here," alive in a rich and responsive world. Participation, again, is not in the head.

I am suggesting that the very insistence on speaking personally and nostalgically in fact can be profoundly insightful and reconstitutive. Relatedness or the failure of relatedness depends as much upon our openness as upon any justification of values that philosophers might devise. So the task is to open up the possibility of relatedness, and for this we must speak in a different way, reflecting a different way of being. About other animals, then, what we really need to ask is not whether they are fit companions for us, but whether *we* are fit companions for *them,* and the answer, again, lies more in *our* willingness to invite and recognize reciprocity than in the usual issues about *their* ability to use language or to solve problems or the like.

"Relatedness" can also emerge in the experience of natural places, rock formations or rivers or pine-covered dunes. But there are very few natural places whose integrity remains intact, not reconstructed to human advantage or in accord with our notions or momentary needs, or simply destroyed. On suburban Long Island the mere fact that a piece of land is not built upon qualifies it as "barren" in the minds of planners and developers. Indeed the very notion of a "piece" of land does violence to an ecosystem point of view; this is why, as has often been noted, the Indians could not understand the idea of dividing and selling it.

In general, we have turned natural places into mere things even more thoroughly than we have turned other animals into things, sometimes even while seeming to acknowledge them. So "Old Faithful" scintillates under colored lights and the Parks Service adds oil to the water to make sure the eruptions come off on schedule. So mountaineering becomes the new sport of choice, the new form of *exercise.* How would we know, having so thoroughly remade and re-rubricized the natural world itself, whether these places, ancient geysers or the jagged backbones of the world, might not have their own integrity and spontaneity? And these are cases, supposedly, of "preservation." How, with the land now reduced to acre-and-a-half parcels with no regard for natural boundaries, could we expect to grasp the wholeness of the land itself?

Here too, then, the first moment of an ethical relation is not the raising of questions about just what sort of thing nature or a natural place is, or just what, a priori, its possibilities are, as if we had enough "evidence" to answer such questions. The task is not to derive the value of nature from some more general criterion. Instead the first moment must be a reaching out, a willingness to be touched, an openness to the unexpected—and, correspondingly, an approach that at least struggles against the technologically remade environments that ordinarily close us off from the natural world. So "Old Faithful"—presumably renamed to acknowledge that she/he/it too has moods, like the skies that may or may not open themselves to us—might have to be approached in the manner of the Plains Indians: after elaborate fasts and ceremonies, perhaps first daring to come near the geyser only in dreams, then in person, purified and alone, after days of hiking across the bubbling earth and nights sleepless for the scent of grizzly bear. So someday such a pilgrimage might be necessary for anyone

who claims to know something about what my graduate students are supposed to be learning: philosophy and ecology. So someday, like the Celts, we may set aside places that we all may climb to greet the equinoctial sun, each of these places a holy place, a center of the world, not a mere margin temporarily unsubdivided for more ranch houses.

Sometimes in my dreams I walk the hallways of some galactic version of the United Nations, that old science-fiction fantasy replayed in a thousand cheap novels and films, and in this dream too I am surrounded by talking birds, cats on two legs, beings modeled after horses, and the occasional ambassadorial-looking locust and conspiratorial-looking snake. Like everyone else, of course, I know that precisely this imitation of the familiar animal forms makes this sort of imagery "cheap": *good* science fiction is supposed to understand that truly alien life forms are likely to be so unrecognizable to us that we might not even distinguish them from the expected background, even if, as in Nietzsche's mocking image of God, they were gesticulating wildly in an attempt to break through to us. The bind is made worse by the fact that this macabre fate actually befalls some animals: chimps who were taught American Sign Language, for instance, and then, after the funds for the experiments ran out, were abandoned to keepers who couldn't sign. Chimps not only share our world but share our lineage, yet we decline the proffered connection so readily, so readily refuse even to recognize it. What chance would any true alien have?

But from this last point we might also turn the bind inside out. Suppose that the submerged, latent meaning of the dream—mine, and all those cheap science fiction stories too—is that this imagined council of beings invokes a different possible human relation to the rest of the living world. Perhaps we first have to leave even our own planet before we can truly recognize it. Now, anyway, we are back again, on a reimagined Earth where all beings come together with some sort of mutual recognition and some sense of mutual responsibility. Except that we can no longer imagine an interspecies translation service dutifully rendering the oratory from the podium into the multiform earphones of the assembled delegates. The task is at once harder and easier. We are looking at the expressions of organic beings, beings made of the same stuff as we are, moving to the same rhythms; but there is no translation service either. Already, in the dream, the podium is dissolving, maybe into some sort of tree, and this snake who was moments ago holding forth in the most languidly, liquidly flowing oratory now flows serpentine upon a carpet that begins to look suspiciously like grass. The high-flown sentiments of the bird-people begin to take wing. Then I notice the wind, and now I realize that the hermetically sealed chamber, the old Star Trek set one always imagines as the backdrop for intergalactic fantasies, is falling away, and the sky is opening up, our sky, with its clouds that, according to Lovelock, are controlled by life itself, acting as a whole over eons, keeping temperature and atmospheric gases constant despite massive volcanic eruptions and steadily rising heat from the sun. Gaia herself reemerges, with her own characteristic expressions—though actually these clouds look much more carefree, as clouds are wont to do, like how extraterrestrial beings might look if we could begin to imagine them.

In the "real world" we know, sober men train their telescopes on the stars and look for "life" somewhere else. Florida's dusky seaside sparrow was pushed over the brink into extinction by the construction of Cape Canaveral. Now our children learn even about Gaia from television. But outside of our very own doors there still lives a far wilder and yet more familiar world than we have yet imagined. At night the televisions flicker and the telescopes do their ghostly work, but the living world still calls to us as the owls question the dark, the breezes toss the trees, and our children dream. □

ECOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEANING

Earth Day Revisited

Robert Gottlieb

There is a new movement spreading throughout the land—a movement reemerging from earlier expressions in a new and potentially more dynamic and embracing form. Still without strong organizational roots or political definition, this set of neighborhood-based, often family- or community-centered groupings can best be characterized as a kind of fledgling new environmentalism, a "Movement for Environmental Justice," as some of its participants call it.

These "locals," distinct from the big national mainstream environmental organizations, have increasingly set the agenda around such issues as toxics, garbage, pesticides, and urban growth. They tend to be single-issue-oriented while searching to place their concerns and related questions of urban and industrial development in a larger perspective. Though they have not identified their struggle within an explicit historical framework, they see themselves as embodying both a democratic and populist spirit. And although they have yet to develop a full-bodied vision based on their emerging politics, they nevertheless resonate with the language of participatory democracy—and social and industrial restructuring—which could lay the groundwork for such a vision. As we enter the 1990s, this new environmentalism challenges us with one of the most exciting and inspiring forms of political engagement. It captures in its organizing, networking, and broad political vision an approach most reminiscent of the early civil rights and New Left movements nearly thirty years ago.

While many of these movement participants are identified as "environmentalists," they have little to do with the largest "Group of Ten"* environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club, the National Wildlife Federation, or the Environmental Defense Fund. These national, staff-based organizations, which gather together periodically to issue national documents signed by their "chief executive officers," are the ones who get the big media play as representative of the environmental position. And while the leading Group of Ten organizations continue to concentrate on fund raising, lobbying, litigation, and document production as their dominant mode of activity, they have nevertheless also moved to adopt some of the language and concerns of this new grass-roots movement, in recognition of the groundswell of concern and issue-oriented politics that has occurred outside the Group of Ten's traditional agenda-setting process.

While both sets of groups can be seen as part of an "environmental movement," their differences and tensions are a reflection of a different political style and constituent base and a different starting point in the evolution of their politics. These tensions are also rooted in differing interpretations of both the past and future of environmentalism. They relate back to the pivotal events of Earth Day 1970 and the subsequent interpretation of that celebration, and forward to the equally crucial events unfolding around Earth Day 1990 and how it will come to be interpreted and understood in the context of an environmentalism still to be defined. These matters not only involve a question of how these two events should be interpreted as historical anchors, but whether and in what forms a new kind of environmental politics—and beyond that, a larger politics of social change—will ultimately emerge.

EARTH DAY 1970: END OF AN ERA, BEGINNING OF A MYTH

As an event, Earth Day 1970 was the culmination of a rich and complex political era that would soon exhaust itself with the collapse of the New Left and the conservative counterattack of the 1970s and 1980s. The *interpretation* of Earth Day 1970, however, served as a kind of creation myth for the new Environmental Decade which immediately followed. Beyond that, Earth Day legitimized a form of politics that has come to underlie American environmental organizations and the policies they have developed.

The inaugural Earth Day was framed by the movements and concerns of the 1960s, many of which, in turn, constituted a response to the enormous changes in the structure of urban and industrial society since World War II. A set of new concerns about the quality of daily life were brought to the fore by the advent and rapid development of the aerospace, automotive, nuclear,

*The term "Group of Ten" refers to the ten largest national environmental organizations. It was first used by those groups in their 1985 "Environmental Agenda for the Future," subsequently published by Island Press.

Robert Gottlieb's latest book (co-authored with Louis Blumberg) is War on Waste: Can America Win Its Battle with Garbage? *(Island Press, 1989).*

and petrochemical industries, to name several, and by related changes in the patterns of urban, suburban, and rural life. These concerns were distinctly "environmental," in the way the term is used today, though in the late 1950s and 1960s they were identified as social or cultural issues which articulated the discontent of the children of the middle class who became the constituent base of the New Left. Initial concerns around such issues as radiation release, thalidomide, DDT, auto-centered life styles, the anomie of suburbia, and so forth tend today to be forgotten in the wake of the political explosions around civil rights and the war in Vietnam. But these concerns ultimately prefigured a kind of opposition to both consumerism and the decline of community that continued to be articulated even in the midst of the more visible and sharp-edged protests about Vietnam and racism.

By the mid- to late 1960s, a kind of premature environmentalism was tentatively set forth in and around the New Left. Phenomena such as the high-tech horrors of Vietnam, the burning of Cleveland's Cuyahoga River, or the Santa Barbara oil spill highlighted the idea that the "environment" itself—an extension of the concerns of daily life—was at stake. In that context, many New Left groups seemed more capable of responding to the industrial and urban character of the environmental crisis than were the traditional conservationist groups such as the Sierra Club or the Audubon Society, which still focused on natural resources and scenic protection. For the New Left, environmental degradation was one more reason to be angry at the System. Indeed, there seemed to be a direct trajectory from the blowout at Platform A in the Santa Barbara Channel to the burning of the Bank of America building just a year later.

Earth Day 1970 was first conceived in those somber days of 1969, when protest—any kind of protest—elicited fears of continuing social upheaval. At the time, there was no easily identifiable environmental politics as such. The idea of Earth Day—a series of teach-ins culminating in one large event—was to adapt some of the New Left's protest techniques in order to focus attention on an issue that had yet to find its full political expression. The traditional conservationist groups were not central to this process. The Sierra Club, for example, was at that moment embroiled in its own protracted internal battle over nuclear power and organizational tactics, with the majority of its board taking a pronuclear, anti-direct-action stance. Some of the newer, staff-based groups of lawyers and technical experts such as the Environmental Defense Fund, though initially supportive of the politics of protest, nevertheless grounded their own efforts in the politics of litigation and lobbying. Even the ad hoc coalitions set up to promote the Earth Day event had no organizational or political roots as such. Organizationally, Earth Day resembled more "moderate" protest actions, such as the Vietnam Moratorium of the previous November. It was a shell for an event rather than an event that reflected an organizational and political dynamic. The event itself in fact had no center; rather, it was a series of teach-ins, rallies, guerrilla theater activities, protests, and happenings spread throughout the country.

Contrary to later impressions, the mood at these events was militant. At one gathering, for example, then Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel was booed off the stage after announcing the administration's support for the Alaska pipeline. Presidential candidate Senator Edmund Muskie employed the hothouse rhetoric of the period when he declared in a speech at the University of Pennsylvania that "those who believe that we are talking about the Grand Canyon and the Catskills, but not Harlem and Watts, are wrong. And those who believe that we must do something about the SST and the automobile but not ABMs and the Vietnam War are (also) wrong." Even Rennie Davis of the Chicago Seven was given a platform at the rally in Washington, D.C. (though his speech was largely gibberish). The prevailing mood at the hundreds of events throughout the country reflected the need for dramatic change and the powerful impulse of direct action; but there was neither a central platform nor an organizational headquarters to channel the available energy. Like so many missed opportunities of the 1960s, Earth Day 1970 was an event unto itself.

Among corporate and political elites the response was ambiguous. Much was made of the fact that Earth Day would divert attention from the controversies around Vietnam and abuses of civil rights; it would, therefore, be a consensus-building issue. A few right-wing groups fulminated that this was one more New Left-cum-Marxist plot since the date chosen for Earth Day was in fact Lenin's centennial birthday! A number of companies developed a public relations approach to the event. They sent out speakers, donated funds to offset costs, and created gimmicks, such as New York utility Consolidated Edison's donation of an electric bus for Mayor John Lindsay to ride around in during the day. But corporate speakers were also subject to hostile attacks, frequent interruptions, and creative protests. At the University of Illinois, students came on stage to disrupt a Commonwealth Edison speaker; they threw soot at each other, and coughed away vigorously. A dead octopus was presented at the headquarters of Florida Power and Light, a utility responsible for the thermal pollution of Biscayne Bay.

Perhaps most striking about Earth Day was the media presence, which in some ways upstaged the event itself. Buffeted both by criticism over their failure to cover the movements of the 1960s and by an impatient and

angry alternative press which was addressing several million people, the media saw in Earth Day an opportunity to extend its coverage to a new, albeit ostensibly less threatening and more consensus-building movement. Media coverage not only highlighted the event as a kind of "spectacle," but sought to grant it most-favored-issue status. Suddenly, debates around legislation such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Resource Recovery Act, each of which were extensions of previous legislation passed during the 1950s and 1960s, were described in crisis terms. Meanwhile, media coverage generated much expectation that these legislative efforts would somehow create a new "pollution regulation system," as then EDF executive director Roderick Cameron put it. This interpretation of environmentalism as an after-the-fact cleanup strategy to be molded by experts was reinforced by the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency—designed to administer this system—and by the transformation of the earlier and barely debated National Environmental Policy Act into a major policy instrument to sustain pollution regulation.

The Group of Ten, NIMBYs, and the Greens

In this setting, Earth Day came to be defined as the prelude to a new politics of environmental *containment.* Groups such as the EDF and the Natural Resources Defense Council, along with now-rejuvenated traditional groups such as the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation, immediately staked out territory on the new environmental map that was being established through legislation, litigation, and administrative action. During the early and mid-1970s, these forces were still perceived by their corporate and political opponents as engaging in a form of adversarial if not confrontational politics. By the Carter presidency, however, the Group of Ten–type environmental organizations, several of whose leaders (including Earth Day organizer Denis Hayes) had received midlevel appointments in the new administration, began a cautious retreat. This caution applied even in the context of their modest pollution regulation and control strategies.

The Group's defensive mood was created by a major corporate counteroffensive. Administration reversals on such issues as water and energy policy, along with the President's reliance on the concept of individual responsibility as the basis for environmental change, reinforced the corporate reaction. Subsequently, the Reagan administration's frontal attack on the pollution regulation and control system caused many of the Group of Ten outfits to redirect their focus to include "market" mechanisms and polluter incentives, such as the air pollution credit system, as part of their containment strategy. As the post–Earth Day era entered its second decade, the Group of Ten brand of environmentalism came to be increasingly and successfully identified as a form of "special-interest" politics led by organizations that now relied entirely on professional experts, lobbyists, and lawyers.

As a set of events with organizing potential, Earth Day 1990 will essentially strengthen the notion of environmental politics as a politics of mobilization at the local level.

While this semiofficially sanctioned version of environmentalism came to be recognized and legitimated through the policy process, a dispersed though still potent form of locally based, direct-action environmentalism emerged around a range of issues such as utility rate reform, nuclear power, and housing. Many of these movements came to be identified in other terms—consumer protest, counterculture protests, and community-related organizing. Such groups were linked by their local, democratic character, their reliance on the politics of mobilization, and their focus on daily life concerns. Even the 1960s-style anti–nuclear power protests were complemented by the parallel participation of downwind neighborhood-based activists who ultimately came to be characterized as NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard). This derisive term was later used against anti-toxic protesters.

Isolated or ignored by the press and policymakers, this parallel version of environmentalism was limited both by its organizational instability and its lack of a larger political framework that would take it beyond the local protest. Its lack of historical rootedness was magnified by the organizational and political dissipation of the New Left. These problems were further compounded by the lack of a social democratic political tradition in this country. Consequently, environmental politics continued to be perceived here as an extension of the pollution regulation and control system. This contrasted strikingly with the political evolution of environmentalism in Europe, where the remnants of the New Left were able to recast a politics based on an environmental analysis that challenged the existing political discourse and industrial arrangements. The emergence of the Greens, who were strengthened by their ability to link such issues as the arms race, social policy, and environmental degradation, appeared to signal the advent of that new political paradigm that many one-time

New Left activists here so eagerly awaited.

But establishing the basis for a "Green" politics in this country proved to be more difficult than anticipated. Under the aegis of the Citizen's Party, and counting on the energy of the antinuclear, anti-arms race constituencies which appeared to be at their height in 1979-80, Barry Commoner's 1980 presidential race ended up like nearly all electoral third-party efforts—with a minuscule and discouraging showing. A hodgepodge of organizations and movements that appropriated the term "Green" for their organizing splintered into various "groupscules," as the French New Left used to say. These groups ranged from the militant and moral-witness stance of Earth First (with a dose of racism and macho-style ecoadventurism to boot) to the abstracted counterculture notions tied to bioregionalism. None of these groups were adept at organizing. Green gatherings, moreover, tended to alternate between discussion groups and marginal (often third-party) electoral activities. Collectively, they were but a shadow of their European counterparts.

While self-defined "Green" politics stood at the margin of environmentalism, a feistier, more expansive and rooted form of environmental organizing began to take hold during the 1980s. Mostly based on neighborhood concerns over toxic hazards, these NIMBY-identified movements took policymakers, industrial interests, and the Group of Ten environmental organizations completely by surprise. Although the pollution regulation and control system had been extended to the toxics arena in the late 1970s and early 1980s through Group of Ten-backed legislation, actions at the local level proved more effective. With great spirit, intense community-based organizing, and a probing democratic impulse, a new movement rapidly and unexpectedly came onto the scene.

Unlike the Group of Ten organizations and the fledgling Greens, these community-based groups, most of them created around opposition to a particular landfill or incinerator, were led by people who were new to environmental protest and other forms of political action. More often than not their leaders were women—many of them housewives. Several of the groups were rural-based; many others involved Blacks, Latinos, and other minorities as well as whites. While the groups ranged from relatively poor to middle class in composition, they were largely removed from the professional-based, upper-middle-class constituencies from which the Group of Ten drew its staff and leadership. Leaders like Lois Gibbs from Love Canal, Penny Newman from the Stringfellow Acid Pits in Riverside, California, or Wendell Paris from Emelle, Alabama (the site of the largest hazardous-waste dump site in the country) comprised a new breed of activist. These activists were strongly attached to the notion of community; deeply mistrustful of corporate, governmental, and environmental elites; and willing to entertain the notion that the way to deal with a particular dump site ultimately led to the notion of industrial restructuring and dramatic political change.

Pollution prevention and toxics-use reduction became their primary goal. Organizationally, they espoused a deeply rooted notion of participatory democracy—the Movement for Environmental Justice. The movement spirit, akin in its own way to the civil rights "beloved community" framework of the early 1960s, resonated in their organizing and activity. "When I travel to meet with a new group that's sprung up, no matter where the location, a small town in Nevada, a mid-sized community in the California Central Coast, or inner-city Los Angeles," Penny Newman declared of their antitoxics organizing, "I'm taken in, the language is the same, the anger is visible, and I feel at home."

This Movement for Environmental Justice, unlike earlier single-issue protest groups, was quickly becoming more expansive not only in its analysis of such issues as toxics and garbage, but in its willingness and ability to link its movements to other political concerns, such as the homeless issue, child care, or questions of public health. Furthermore, its focus around the toxics and garbage issues, though conceived from a community point of view, ultimately led to *production* questions, including the problem of workplace hazards and industrial decision making. Out of this context could be seen the beginnings of a new discourse, albeit one still limited by the local, single-issue nature of the movement.

The rapid-fire growth of the toxics movement was paralleled by rising concerns about a range of other urban and industrial environmental hazards of daily life, from gridlock to pesticides to the absence of affordable housing. These concerns, in turn, complemented the fears and anger around the higher-profile "global" issues such as the depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, the destruction of rain forests, and acid rain.

This expanding base of issues tied into the growing public support of environmentalism. Despite eight years of Reagan and the Group of Ten's misplaced fears that the pollution regulation and control system would be dismantled, huge and increasing majorities (according to polling data) continued to demonstrate support for a wide variety of environmental positions. Environmentalism in both its semisanctioned and rough-edged, democratic form was ascendent once again. As many observers noted, the situation was beginning to recall the heady days of Earth Day 1970, when everything seemed possible.

Earth Day 1990

Against this background of optimism the events planned for Earth Day 1990 have begun to unfold. On a political and organizational level, the event seems likely to be cast in terms that will conjure up the media version of Earth Day 1970: the emphasis will most likely be placed on recapturing consensus and identifying environmental cleanup as a global priority. Media rhetoric will be on the theme of individual responsibility and will call for a strengthening of the pollution regulation and control environmental agenda. Framed as a twentieth-anniversary spectacular, Earth Day 1990 will be an Event designed for the media. Organizational letterheads will become representative of the effort, as they reflect the concurrence of celebrities, Group of Ten chief executive officers, and corporate and political elites. Consensus means that everybody can agree—including George Bush and William Reilly.

Though Richard Nixon didn't participate during Earth Day 1970 (he only wandered out among demonstrators and talked football), his cabinet members did. If Bush doesn't show up on Earth Day 1990, you can bet that Reilly will. The administration has (mostly) been successful in convincing the media and some Group of Ten organizations that, thanks to the former president of the Conservation Foundation, there has been, as the *New York Times* put it, a "greening of the White House." Reilly's "environmentalism" is indeed a well-developed, albeit exaggerated, version of pollution regulation and control politics: attack the greenhouse effect by bringing back nuclear power; focus on hazardous waste disposal by building incinerators; and, when necessary, use the power of the federal government to force communities (and states) to accept such technologies. Reilly, in fact, has become the most aggressive exponent of trade-offs, environmental sacrifices, and hostility toward grass-roots environmentalism that the Environmental Protection Agency has ever known. His presence could ultimately become a polarizing force not only between the differing strands of environmentalism but even within the Group of Ten itself.

This polarization in fact has already begun to occur, and Earth Day 1990, as a political moment in the evolution of environmentalism, might well reflect it. But as a set of events with organizing potential it will essentially strengthen the notion of environmental politics as a politics of mobilization at the local level. This activist definition might well become most pronounced on campuses throughout the country, where events are being planned in the context of a developing, nationwide environmental student coalition. Establishing a full-blown environmentalism on campuses is a necessary ingredient for any effective national movement, though student environmental groups until recently had been relatively insignificant (even within the Movement for Environmental Justice and other expressions of grass-roots environmentalism).

Moreover, unlike 1970, grass-roots environmentalists have today been able to develop the rudiments of an organizing strategy, an analytic framework, and a long-term perspective. Using the Earth Day forum this coming April could strengthen the ability of the New Environmentalism to initiate more permanent (especially campus-based) groups and link the immediate enthusiasm for environmental action to that necessary and compelling Long March through the institutions critical to the success of the Movement.

The next several months and years will be an exciting and volatile time for environmental politics. The politics of pollution prevention will increasingly challenge the problematic system of pollution regulation and control. The politics of democratic mobilization, both locally and in its national forms, will contrast with the politics of expertise and insular policymaking. Issues will be joined, new coalitions created, and the budding Movement for Environmental Justice will have the opportunity to evolve toward a Movement for *Social and Environmental Justice.* Even the Group of Ten, with its own concerned and at times uneasy constituent base, could well polarize along the lines of the new environmentalism. It too may find itself an invigorated force on the political scene.

With extraordinary change in Eastern Europe our country's biggest polluter (the military and its industrial complex) is beginning to signal a retreat, and analysts everywhere are proclaiming the arrival of a new political era. The idea of environmentalism as a potent, radical social force is no longer the fancy of despairing activists. Though planned to reinforce the existing environmental strategies, Earth Day 1990 might well be an historic opportunity for the transformation of the current political discourse. □

ECOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEANING

Environmentalism in the Corporate Climate

Eric Mann

During the summer of 1989 President Bush announced a new plan to regulate airborne toxins and dramatically improve air quality by the year 2000. One aspect of that plan was designed to encourage the development of alternative fuels such as methanol and ethanol. This would require U.S. automakers to produce at least one million cars per year that did not run on gasoline. By October 1989 the automobile and petroleum companies had effectively lobbied Congress to amend the Bush plan to require only that by 1997 American automakers be capable of producing one million such cars; the new legislation involved no actual commitment to produce any cars by that date.

In a similar sequence of events, the Southcoast Air Quality Management District announced its own plan to reduce airborne toxins in Los Angeles by 2009. No sooner had the plan been announced than Governor Deukmejian placed a sixty-day hold on it, claiming that it created "great mistrust" between the AQMD and "the business community." During that sixty-day "cooling-off period" the AQMD gave Southern California Edison an extension on compliance from 1993 to 1999. Mike Hertel, Edison's "environmental affairs manager," stated, "This proves the AQMD can be fair to business." Similarly, the AQMD has announced a plan for major oil refineries to police themselves on toxic emissions.

At both the national and state level organized corporate power has carried out what those involved call a "three bites of the apple strategy"—first lobbying against any legislation that would restrict corporate behavior, then working to weaken any legislation that can't be killed, and, finally, attempting to sabotage the implementation of those already-gutted regulations. Their short-term success in weakening long-term clean air plans at the state and federal levels makes one wonder what will happen after their lobbying activities pick up steam.

At one point early in the environmental debate, there was a belief that corporate executives and their children, having to breathe the air, eat the food, and drink (or swim in) the water, might possibly feel a certain self-interested urgency about saving the planet on which they were the wealthiest inhabitants. Several decades later, the cultural and ethical degeneracy of unmitigated free-enterprise capitalism—ideologically justified in concepts of "deregulation," "corporate competitiveness," "cost-effectiveness," and "personal freedom"—has produced a corporate elite that has shown itself thoroughly unable to grasp, let alone solve, the disastrous and at times irreversible effects of their production policies.

Equally frightening is the manner in which corporate values have contaminated the politics of the environmental establishment. As Earth Day 1990 approaches, many mainstream groups are swaggering with a self-congratulatory and self-deceptive confidence that they are "shaping the debate." Their confidence is based on the increasing frequency with which government officials and corporate executives declare themselves "environmentalists." Preferring to curry corporate favor and corporate funds, these groups reject any strategies based on a class analysis of our society and put forth an easily co-optable view that environmental destruction is *all* of our faults.

But while the environmental establishment may be very pleased with itself, the toxins are not impressed. As Dr. Barry Commoner has pointed out, "For the first time in the 3.5-billion-year history of life on this planet, living things are burdened with a host of man-made poisonous substances, the vast majority of which are now even more prevalent in animal tissue and the elements than they were twenty years ago when Earth Day first imposed itself on the popular consciousness."

Commoner, Peter Montague of the Environmental Research Foundation, John O'Connor of the National Toxics Campaign, and Lois Gibbs of the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste have been urgently arguing that the strategy of attempting to regulate and control each separate chemical, with the premise that each toxin is innocent until proven guilty, is both chemically and politically bankrupt. They call for new strategies that demand the reduction and at times the immediate cessation of toxic chemical *production*.

Eric Mann is the director of the Labor/Community Strategy Center in Los Angeles, and the author of Taking on General Motors: A Case Study of the UAW Campaign to Keep GM Van Nuys Open.

While some naive environmentalists have fantasies of a new breed of yuppie capitalists grooving on the socially responsible job of cleaning up toxic wastes, the reality is that capital will go anywhere it smells high profit margins. Thus, we now have a new growth industry of toxic cleanup firms which rake in enormous profits from government superfund contracts. These do slipshod work and use the EPA to impose cleanup mechanisms on communities. The mechanisms include, for example, trash- and hazardous-waste-burning incinerators that exist because of the *production* of waste and toxics. Needless to say, the industry opposes all solutions that demand the elimination of such efforts.

A recent *Nation* article by Jim Sibbison ("The EPA's Revolving Door") explains how the two cleanup giants, Waste Management and Browning Ferris, are guilty of price fixing, while their superfund cleanups tend to be "sloppy, makeshift, stretched out for maximum profit and prone to contaminate the environment again." During this historical period in which everything is up for sale, the future corporate cleanup artists will not be members of a hippie food co-op but, rather, corporate extensions of General Motors, Monsanto, DuPont, and Union Carbide, with ad agencies concocting slogans like, "It takes a polluter to know how to clean up pollution."

Both Sibbison's important article and Jim McNeil's *In These Times* account ("Sellout at the EPA") outline a chilling vision of an interlocking directorate of right-wing environmentalists, corporate polluters, cleanup executives, and conservative corporate think tanks. Sibbison and McNeil envision this directorate moving through a complicated process (similar to the military-industrial complex and the Pentagon) in which a common self-interested ideological perspective has created a new colossus that is in turn directed against community-based, grass-roots environmental activists.

McNeil points out that EPA Administrator William Reilly, secretly lobbied by officials from Waste Management Inc., is working to gut strict environmental standards in North Carolina that would prevent the firm from building a huge solid-waste incinerator. While in theory the federal government is supposed to guarantee a minimum floor so that states do not undercut each other, Reilly is worried that in practice individual states might in fact set standards *too high,* thereby jeopardizing the new "waste management" industry.

Similarly, the EPA is now deferring disputes between community activists and toxic polluters (so-called toxic waste managers) to Clean Sites, a supposedly independent arbitrator. Clean Sites receives contributions of $100,000 or more from Dow Chemical, DuPont, Monsanto, Shell Oil, General Electric, and Union Carbide. Its founder, one should note, was Reilly, who got his job as head of the EPA through a recommendation of William Ruckelshaus, a former head of the EPA who is now the CEO of Browning Ferris. The chairperson of Clean Sites is Russell Train, EPA administrator in the Nixon and Ford administrations.

The new "environmental" corporate establishment has managed to reduce both the production and cleanup of toxins to opportunities for profit and career, thus creating another layer of institutional control in which the problem will prove even harder to solve. As more radical demands for the elimination of the *production* of toxins become widespread, both corporations that profit from producing them and corporations that profit from cleaning them up will have a strong material interest in their continued existence.

In the wake of incidents such as Bhopal, Three Mile Island, the *Exxon Valdez* spill, and the Phillips Petroleum explosion, there is a growing movement within the corporate world for each board of directors to appoint a token environmentalist. It was made clear that militant activists need not apply. The preferred environmentalists, according to a July *Los Angeles Times* article, would be people sensitive to corporate profitability objectives. Not surprisingly, the omnipresent William Ruckelshaus was recruited onto the board of the chemical giant Monsanto; Reilly, then president of the Conservation Foundation, joined the board of Northeast Utilities; and Alice Rivlin, chairperson of the governing council of the Wilderness Society, was welcomed onto the board of Union Carbide.

The trouble with the "greening of the boardroom" is that since boards of directors are specifically charged with maximizing the profits of their corporations, the corporate environmentalists will comprise nothing more than a new layer of corporate apologists to attack grass-roots environmental movements. In a parallel development, former UAW President Douglas Fraser was brought onto the Chrysler board not to restrict corporate behavior but to rubber-stamp the 57,000 permanent layoffs and eleven plant closings Lee Iacocca was about to implement.

So the institutional matrix is frightening: corporate polluters derail environmental regulations in Congress; corporate pollution managers make lucrative deals that neither restrict polluters nor effectively clean up the toxins; government agencies set up ostensibly to protect the environment become captive to the polluters and pollution managers; and corporate boards of directors co-opt the most malleable and greedy environmentalists to clean up their image—but not their products. In this context, talk about grass-roots organizing must extend beyond a romantic populism to an analytical and strategic long-term perspective that challenges institutional power and asserts democratic policy.

Workers and the Environmental Movement

We are living at a time when many valuable elements of left strategy have been trivialized, leading too many movement activists to dead-end rhetoric about "the people" and "the citizens." According to this logic, the worker and Donald Trump are just two citizens, who can work together in an environmental coalition if they both understand that the planet is in jeopardy.

During the 1960s the dominant tendencies of the antiwar, civil rights, and women's movements all developed in the absence of a strategic appreciation of the working class. Student-based anti-working-class prejudices contributed to this alienation, as did a narrow empiricism that drew no distinction between the labor union establishment and the rank-and-file worker, or the media's clever equation of prowar hard hats with the working class itself. The same is true today. As Penny Newman, a leader of the community battle against the Stringfellow Acid Pits outside Los Angeles observed, "Too often the only time community-based environmentalists meet the workers is when we are protesting against corporate practices and the workers are bussed into public hearings to advance the company's agenda—so that the company can orchestrate the conflict between workers and the community."

Today environmental activists who want to reach out to working people and their unions will find some encouraging places to start. There is an embattled but nonetheless substantial segment of today's labor movement that is attempting to save organized labor from literal extinction through aggressive strategies of internal democracy, mass mobilization of the membership to reassert adversarial unionism, and a progressive political agenda that focuses on labor-community coalitions. These strategies find expression in a variety of movements ranging from Richard Trumka's revitalized United Mine Workers to the union reform movements of Teamsters for a Democratic Union and the UAW's New Directions movement; from the Service Employees' creative Justice for Janitors campaign to its 9 to 5 local for organizing office workers; from Tony Mazzochi's pioneering environmental work in the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union to the growth of union initiative against contra aid and U.S. (and AFL-CIO) intervention in the Third World.

The difficulties of involving working people in the leadership of a new environmental movement will center on the issue of job blackmail. Environmentalists, like activists from the three great social movements of the 1960s, will have to confront the dilemma of how to organize workers to oppose socially destructive corporate policies (such as employment discrimination and military production) that are not of their own making but which provide them with a material livelihood—that is, their jobs. The workers' traditional fear of layoffs is exacerbated by the economic and social insecurities of the past decade. In the face of a lean and mean corporate policy to cut both employment and the safety net and the attendant decay of working-class social and community institutions, the worker's job becomes the last remaining element of economic and social viability. In this context it seems almost inevitable that demands by an environmental movement to shut down some of the most lethal corporate production processes will be perceived by most of the workers at that plant as a direct attack on them.

Too often the labor establishment not only refuses to provide an alternative institutional and ideological approach for the frightened workers; worse, it exploits these fears to further reinforce the worker's perception that his or her only hope is to stick with management. In recent years the international officers of the UAW and many other major unions have abandoned any pretense of generating an independent political program for labor. Instead they parrot platitudes about labor-management cooperation based on Japanese management systems. This approach is openly hostile toward any movements that challenge management rights, and it pits the muscle of the union establishment against reformers who argue that labor should have some voice in the products and processes management chooses.

For example, the *L.A. Weekly* recently published a list of Los Angeles County's largest toxic polluters. The list includes oil companies such as Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, Shell, and Arco; military producers such as Northrop, Douglas Aircraft, and Lockheed; and industrial manufacturers such as General Motors, Reynolds Metals, Miller Brewing Company, and the Niklor Chemical Company. When we expand that list to include the highly toxic furniture industry which employs seventy thousand workers, then the strategic dilemma becomes apparent. Industry begins the battle with a captive army of workers whose livelihoods are in some way dependent upon the production of toxics and who are predisposed to believe company claims that environmentalists are well-to-do, anti-working-class crybabies. At present an atmosphere of social Darwinism pervades, in which many environmentalists benefit quite a bit from the class hierarchies and class-based income inequalities of our society. Workers may argue in turn that if life is reduced to a battle between one self-interested force (the environmentalists) attempting to take their jobs versus another self-interested force (corporate management) attempting to "save" their jobs, then they have no other self-interested option but to side with corporate power.

A pro-working-class environmentalism, however, begins with the strategic understanding that many of the workers in these plants that are poisoning the community are also themselves being poisoned in the workplace. At the Lockheed plant in Burbank, California, Mark Gillespie led a protest against poisonous epoxies used in the production process. The workers at the GM Lordstown plant in Ohio have formed Workers Against Toxic Chemical Hazards (WATCH), and their claims were recently verified by a "morbidity study" that indicated an abnormally higher percentage of deaths per year from cancer, heart disease, and other industrially caused illnesses than that of the general population. In the past the occupational safety and health movement often found itself trapped within the workplace. And too often it fell prey to "labor-management cooperation," in which too much protest is bad for "competitiveness." But a movement that could synthesize the health and safety of the workers with community health has exciting organizing potential.

One proposal being discussed to address part of the problem of job blackmail is a superfund for workers. This would demand long-term training, education, and income maintenance for workers who have been laid off when a facility is shut down because of environmental concerns. The goal would be to lessen the workers' ties to toxic production by offering an economic out.

In order for this demand to have any substantial political impact it must not be offered as a buy-off, but rather as part of a political worldview that assumes workers can understand the broader interests of their class and can respond to ethical as well as simply material appeals. A community-initiated environmental demand to stop production by a Chevron or Exxon or Monsanto or DuPont, combined with the presence of a superfund for workers, would reach out to the workers not just as employees but as members of both the broader community and yes, the *class* of workers.

The Strategic Importance of Communities of Color

During the 1960s the national movements of Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans generated among large numbers of whites an antiracist consciousness which contributed to the institution of civil rights and affirmative action initiatives. But less than a decade later corporate economic setbacks in the international arena and insufficient antiracist sentiments among many white American voters generated a virulent backlash. Cries of "reverse racism," "minorities getting everything," and "welfare queens stealing our tax money" led to the reversal of those programs almost before the ink was dry.

Unfortunately communities of color have once again become the victims of problems our society cannot solve. As Aurora Castillo of Mothers of East L.A. explained, "Some people ask us why we oppose the state's plan to put another prison in our [overwhelmingly Latino] community one day and a trash-burning incinerator the next. It has become clear to us that from drugs to prisons to garbage the system wants to dump all its problems in our community."

Her words are, in fact, not simply figurative. In 1987 the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ conducted a survey of toxic waste site locations throughout the United States. By an overwhelming margin the sites turned out to be in the areas in which the population was predominantly Black, Latino, and Native American.

Furthermore, there are clear indications that international companies, when prevented from dumping waste products in American communities of color, do not destroy the garbage but rather ship it to the Third World. An alarming *In These Times* article reported in November that large corporations in the United States and other Western countries pay middlemen to accept their toxic waste. These agents in turn pay Third World governments, desperate for foreign currency, to accept the poisons. The article likened the chemical despoliation of the West Coast of Africa by Western industrial countries to the slave trade that ravaged the social structures of those same peoples only a few centuries ago.

Recently in Los Angeles, the Labor/Community Strategy Center organized a meeting called "Workers, Communities and Toxics: A Two-Day Conversation" in which fifty-five activists from the Latino, Black, labor, and environmental movements came together to explore both the possibilities for multiracial coalitions and potential difficulties in developing such alliances. East Los Angeles residents illustrated their dilemma with the example of the furniture industry, which has proven itself toxic to both workers and the community and yet provides relatively well-paying jobs for tens of thousands of workers. One participant asked how furniture companies could be subject to environmental restraints which would also restrict them from fleeing to nearby Mexico to continue their polluting while even further exploiting their workforce.

We discussed a possible long-term campaign for the furniture industry that would combine changes in the production processes to dramatically reduce poisonous varnishes and coatings. Such a proposal would require low-interest government loans to allow relatively small firms to retool their facilities. Other aspects of this plan included protection for the rights of undocumented workers (the vast majority of the work force); noninterference by the company in union elections; and a long-

term commitment by the retrofitted firms to stay in the communities. While this outline is just one of several possibilities and remains in the earliest conceptual stages, it reflects a strategic perspective in which environmentalism is not just a battle against chemicals, but a kind of politics that demands popular control of corporate decision making on behalf of workers and communities.

Fundamentally, the environmental crisis is a crisis of institutional and corporate production. Acid rain, global warming, pollutants in the air, pesticides, internal combustion engines are products of the chemical, atomic, automobile, electrical, and petroleum *industries*. As Barry Commoner explains, toxic cleanup is a non sequitur; we learn from physics that "everything has to go somewhere." Thus the incineration of toxins drives them into the atmosphere, toxins dumped in landfills seep into the water supply, and toxins "filtered" and then dumped into the water supply evaporate into the air and come back to earth as acid rain. Commoner argues that the only successful environmental solutions have been those that have directly banned harmful products—such as DDT or mercury or lead in gasoline.

While the environmental establishment may be very pleased with itself, the toxins are not impressed.

But any efforts to limit or shape production in these kinds of environmentally sound ways will involve direct confrontations between the "management right" to determine what a corporation will produce and the rights of workers and communities to work and live in safety. Strategies to build effective and democratic trade unions that could break with the current union pattern of slavish obedience to corporate priorities in return for short-term economic benefits for workers, as well as strategies to build citywide and regional coalitions across the boundaries of color, gender, and race, become central to the creation of an effective environmental strategy that might hold corporate executives and elected officials accountable for the ecological impact of their policies. We will need new models for political and economic life—models that combine representative government "at the top" with significant power for direct input into decisions at the grass-roots level, both from workplaces and from communities impacted by any given decision.

Yet this kind of democratic impact will be resisted by corporations, and will only be achieved if we have a transformation of labor unions as well as the development of powerful community coalitions. Oppositional movements in the labor movement, like Teamsters for a Democratic Union or the UAW's New Directions, need to integrate the legitimate demands for union democracy and better contracts with a more fundamental challenge to the toxic processes and products that characterize contemporary production in many firms. Ultimately, workers must demand a comprehensive program for a nontoxic economy, and support worker retraining and income maintenance in the process of moving our economy in an ecologically sound direction. Community coalitions must be formed which attempt to develop regional economic plans from the bottom up, and which can work together with the unions in a larger struggle for ecological sanity. This focus on transforming the corporations may seem rather utopian, but it is far more realistic than the present electoral and lobbying strategy that imagines that toxins can be effectively regulated within our present institutional matrix.

Some steps toward developing a consciousness that might challenge "management rights" have already been taken in various labor struggles in the last decades. In Los Angeles, dozens of groups have worked to organize a campaign, now seven years old, to keep the GM Van Nuys plants open. The campaign was able to mobilize workers, Latino and Black community members, and white progressives, and threatened GM with a boycott of its products if the plant is ever closed. By demanding a ten-year commitment to keep the plant open (rather than participating in discussions about the usual severance pay), this countywide Labor/Community Coalition has placed some small limits on GM's presumed management rights—and has succeeded in keeping the plant open since 1982 when GM first threatened to close it.

The logic of these struggles, of course, leads beyond individual attacks on specific corporate offenders to a need for larger regional strategies that necessarily raise more fundamental redistributive questions. Though many workers have substituted the shopping mall for the union hall as the center of their recreational and cultural life, my own conversations with workers lead me to believe that there is a growing awareness that rampant materialism can offer little real satisfaction or sense of meaning and purpose. A movement that sought to reduce the quantity of goods produced in order to conserve the environment, while simultaneously advocating more egalitarian distribution of what was being produced, could gain the allegiance of many working people in the years ahead. The Right's vision of unchecked corporate behavior and a state sector designed primarily to serve corporate interests may be increasingly vulnerable to ecological challenges, particularly if an ecologically based campaign for a smaller but safer GNP were linked to plans for a strong safety net for the unemployed and the poor, guaranteed medical and health

care, low-cost and high-quality public education and transportation systems, and the use of tax revenues for recreation and the support of new cultural endeavors.

The deepening ecological crisis requires that we move beyond narrow and allegedly more realistic approaches to strategies that can actually address the full depth of the crisis. This necessarily will involve a more rational planning of production and uses of resources. Yet only a powerful grass-roots movement could plausibly develop the strength to counter those corporate interests which will continue to oppose rational planning. After almost two decades of bipartisan eulogizing of the civilizing role of "market forces," our political, material, and ethical environment is deteriorating rapidly. So despite the fact that many on the Left have abandoned a transformative vision and have placed much of their energy into more narrow self-interest struggles, the reality of the ecological crisis requires the reemergence of a more visionary and radical movement. Environmentalism—in the sense of a comprehensive politics that addresses the nature and quality of work, the products we produce and the processes of production, and the political institutions that determine social policy—is in urgent need of a Left perspective. Conversely, a democratic, militant, and grass-roots environmentalism that brings working people and people of color into the mainstream of the political debate can contribute to the reemergence of a vital American Left.

The environmental crisis is not solvable locally. Thus, while grass-roots movements are essential building blocks and catalysts, they cannot be substituted for a broader political strategy to transform policy and power at the national level.

During the 1980s, the retreat of many "movement" organizers into single-issue specialization was partially a product of the loss of confidence in Democratic party reform, social democracy, Marxism-Leninism, or any broader worldview that could give coherence and optimism for social transformation. Today, however, in the wake of the invigorating movements in Eastern Europe

and the futile efforts to "regulate" increasingly concentrated corporate capital, many of the upstream swimmers who have survived the 1980s seem once again willing to explore the complexities of macrostrategies for economic and political democracy.

As progressives once again debate the merits of a radically reformed capitalism versus new models of democratic socialism, it is important that the *content* of "economic democracy" center on the replacement of our present model (in which private corporate power dominates public life) with new models of public power and decision making rooted in workplaces and communities.

Long before Earth Day, visionary environmentalists were ridiculed as alarmists when they warned that the future of the planet itself was in danger. Today, as Earth Day approaches for the twentieth time, there is widespread understanding that the ecological viability of the earth is truly hanging in the balance. Environmentalists need another infusion of courage and vision to break with tepid reformism and corporatist co-optation, and to confront the logic of the problem they have posed. Radical social problems demand radical political solutions. □

Gaia's Last Gasp

Carolyn Merchant

Is the earth dead or alive? The ancient cultures of East and West and the native peoples of America saw the earth as a mother, alive and responsive to human action. Ancient Greeks and Renaissance Europeans conceptualized the earth as a living organism with respiratory, circulatory, reproductive, and elimination systems. For the past three hundred years, however, Western mechanistic science and capitalism have seen the earth as inert, manipulable from outside, and exploitable for profits. Colonial extractions of resources along with industrial pollution and depletion have pushed the planet as a whole to the brink of ecological destruction.

In 1979, atmospheric chemist James Lovelock revived the idea of the earth as a living organism with his Gaia Hypothesis, named after the Greek earth goddess. According to Lovelock, life on the earth's surface evolved and maintains a comfortable habitat for its own continuance. The chemical constituents of Gaia's abiotic air, waters, and soils interact with her biota as if they were a single organic, living entity. For millions of years, the planet managed quite well along these lines. But can planetary life sustain itself in the face of industrial assaults? Gaia is still alive, but she is deeply wounded and suffering. Her lungs are clogged with smoke, her pores are filled with acid rain, her hair is shorn, her flowered gown is tattered and torn. As we approach the twenty-first century, perceptions of planetary destruction and calls for the earth's renewal abound. A new partnership between humans and Gaia is needed.

The environmental crisis of the 1990s overwhelms that of the 1970s. From Chernobyl radiation to the Alaskan oil spill, from tropical rain forest destruction to polar ozone holes, from Alar in apples to toxins in water, the earth and all its life are in trouble. Industrial production accentuated by the global reproduction of population has severely strained Gaia's capacity for regeneration. Pollution and depletion are systematically linked on a global scale not previously experienced on the planet.

Carolyn Merchant is a professor in the Department of Conservation and Resource Studies at UC-Berkeley. She is the author of The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution *(Harper & Row, 1980) and* Ecological Revolution: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England *(University of North Carolina Press, 1989).*

Air

In the ancient world, the earth mother respired daily, inhaling the pneuma, or spirit, from the atmosphere. The earth's "copious breathing" renewed the life on its surface. Today the hotter air of the so-called greenhouse gases threatens Gaia's respiratory balance. As the amount of carbon dioxide and other gases in the atmosphere increases from the burning of fossil fuels and industrial processes, global temperatures are expected to rise three to ten degrees Fahrenheit. "The greenhouse effect is already here and it will worsen," warned scientists and policy analysts at congressional hearings held in the summer of 1988. "The greenhouse effect is the most significant economic, political, environmental, and human problem facing the twenty-first century," according to Senator Timothy Wirth. Half of the world's dioxide emissions are produced by three countries alone: the United States (21 percent), the USSR (19 percent), and China (10 percent).

With acceleration of the greenhouse effect, winters worldwide are predicted to become stormier, summers hotter and drier. Seas will rise one to three feet over the next half century, and hurricanes will become more powerful as the oceans warm. Waterfront homes and villages will be flooded, droughts will increase in severity, grain-growing regions will move north, and whole forests and wild species will be lost. Although there is much debate over the timing of the effect, a series of measures to slow it have been recommended: stopping global deforestation, planting trees, conserving heating fuel, and shifting to alternative energy sources.

Ozone depletion is another disruption of the Gaian respiratory system by industrial production. In 1985 scientists reported a hole in the ozone layer over the Antarctic. The production effects of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the northern industrialized countries were suddenly manifest at the South Pole. CFCs are used as refrigerator and air conditioner coolants, as primary components of Styrofoam, and as propellant gases in spray cans (banned in the U.S. in the 1970s, but still used in other countries). Whenever we buy a hamburger or a cup of coffee in a Styrofoam container, whenever our automobile leaks or we turn in an old refrigerator for a

new one, we are inadvertently contributing to upper-atmosphere ozone depletion. As a result of worldwide concern, twenty-four countries meeting in Montreal in 1987 agreed to a goal of CFC reduction of 35 percent by 1999. Alternatives to CFCs are now being researched, but much work needs to be done by science, industry, and Congress in eliminating CFCs from the global atmosphere. Industry, for example, will hardly prove eager to spend millions of dollars reducing pollution and overhauling its operations. We will need more than mere voluntarism or the spirit of cooperation. For disruption by industrial production of the Gaian respiratory system—the atmospheric balance of gases—is intimately connected to disruption of the ancient Gaian circulatory system.

Water

As the waters on the earth's surface ebbed and flowed, evaporated into clouds, and descended in the form of dews, rains, and snows, the earth mother's blood was cleansed and renewed. From high mountain lakes to wild rushing rivers, Gaian waters are now threatened by acid rain. Solid wastes wash up on beaches; globules of oil float on the surface of even the remotest oceans. Plastic wastes are causing the deaths of upwards of two million birds and 100,000 marine mammals a year. Seabirds, fish, turtles, and whales lunch on small plastic pellets produced as wastes in the plastics industries. Birds become entangled in plastic six-pack rings that will be present for another 450 years and outlive the generations they are extinguishing. Marine mammals are entrapped in plastic drift nets six to thirty miles in length that eventually sink under their weight. Global water pollution needs to be halted and water quality restored.

Soils

The thin layer of soil on the earth's surface is Gaia's skin. European peasants and Native Americans nurtured the land, performed ritual dances, and returned the land's gifts to assure continued fertility. Today erosion and soil pollution from insecticides with long-lasting half-lives are threatening croplands everywhere. Over the next fifty years, grain production in the United States could sink to half of its 1980 level, affecting millions of people. Around the world Green Revolution farming techniques that depend on Western insecticides, fertilizers, and machinery have replaced traditional methods, often with disastrous consequences for indigenous peoples. In India, according to conservationist Vandana Shiva, land has been used to feed people for over forty centuries, with only 5 to 10 percent of the surpluses leaving the local villages. Today, the Green

Revolution is teaching Indian farmers, as Shiva puts it, "to forget about the hunger of the soil and the stomach and to go after their own hunger for profits." Soil conservation and sustainable agriculture based on the wisdom of traditional peoples needs to be combined with many of the positive advances in twentieth-century agriculture.

Biota

In the ancient theories, the earth mother's capacity for reproduction brought forth the rich variety of life found on its surface. Today Gaia's generative processes are being aborted. In the words of *Time* magazine, "the death of birth" poses another immense global threat to all species. A National Science Foundation study predicts that a quarter of the earth's species of plants, animals, microbes, and fungi will become extinct over the next several years unless extraordinary measures are taken to protect the ecosystems in which they live. Only 1.4 million of the five to ten million species of life in the world have even been named. Increased efforts must be taken to identify the rest, understand their ecology, and educate the public accordingly. International agreements have been reached on halting some of the most visible threats; yet changes in policies and practices may not come in time to preserve the lives of known

endangered species, much less those not even identified.

Trees are the earth mother's tresses. According to Thoreau, Mother Nature's head was adorned with "a profusion of fringes and curls," but sadly the lumberer was capable of "shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time." Today forests that absorb CO_2 and produce oxygen—linking air, water, and biota—are disappearing at a rapid rate. Tropical forests cover 2.3 million square miles of the earth's surface and are being cut at the rate of 100 acres a minute or more. And the rate of destruction is increasing. According to some predictions, little of the forests will be left by the year 2040. The United States imports enough timber from tropical rain forests each year to cover the state of West Virginia. In Central and Latin America, tropical rain forests are being cut down to pasture cattle for the fast-food industry. In Indonesia 500,000 acres of tropical rain forest have been converted to eucalyptus plantations to produce toilet paper for North America. Much of the rain forest being slashed in Malaysia is used by Japan to make throwaway construction forms, boxes for shipping, and disposable chopsticks. At a June conference on "The Fate and Hope of the Earth" held in Managua, Nicaragua, Martin Khor of Indonesia, quoting Gandhi, admonished: "There are enough world resources for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed."

In the United States, Pacific old-growth redwood and Douglas fir forests are being logged for export to the Far East. Some 70 percent of the total harvest of uncut logs is exported to sawmills in Japan and Mexico—enough for 37,000 jobs in the wood-products industry. Modernization over the past decade has replaced labor-intensive lumber mills with automation, reducing by one-third the number of jobs available. This process, instead of saving the threatened spotted owl, is putting people out of work. Trying to resolve these complex problems will require enormous sensitivity, as well as changes in lifestyle on the part of Northern Hemisphere citizens.

Some scientists believe that even if we do not destroy Gaia's life with a nuclear bang, we will poison it in a toxic whimper. Toxic chemicals range from factory emissions, smog, and radon in the air to pesticides in the soil and trichloroethylene in drinking water. According to environmentalist Barry Commoner, the earth is being invaded by chemicals unknown to biological evolution. "An organic compound that does not occur in nature," he argues, "[is] one that has been rejected in the course of evolution as incompatible with living systems." Because of their toxicity, "they have a very high probability of interfering with living processes." Over the past thirty years the production of organic chemicals from petroleum will have increased from about seventy-five billion pounds per year to over 350 billion. Concerns such as these led California citizens to pass Proposition 65, an antitoxics initiative, in 1986 with a 63 percent vote. At present, 242 chemicals on the state's list are being examined to determine their likelihood of causing cancer or birth defects. Scientific research, along with citizen actions such as those being undertaken by the National Toxins Campaign, are a vital part of the current effort to reduce toxins in the environment.

There is a renewed interest in an environmental rights amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would dignify and enforce the efforts of the states to clean the environment.

What can be done to turn the tide of the global environmental crisis in production and pollution? In 1970, the first Earth Day galvanized an incipient environmental movement into national action. An outpouring of citizen concern resulted in the passage of environmental laws and tighter regulations: the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was passed in 1969, and with it the President's Council on Environmental Quality was created; the Clean Air Amendments of 1970 strengthened the Clean Air Act first passed in 1955; in 1972 water regulation was also brought under stricter federal control through the Clean Water Act, amended by the Water Quality Act in 1987; in 1976 the first comprehensive legislation on toxins was passed as the Toxic Substances Control Act (TOSCA). The list goes on. Two decades of experience in environmental regulation have shown us what can and cannot be accomplished. Still, despite obvious gains and citizen activism, industrial pollution continues to threaten the quality of life for all citizens of the planet.

What more can be done? Ultimately capitalist production must give way to some form of steady-state economics that brings production and reproduction into balance with planetary ecology. Yet a global ecological revolution of this magnitude is unlikely to occur fast enough to resolve the immediate problems of health and environmental quality for ourselves and our children. A more immediate approach would reconsider a tactic introduced by the environmental movement of the 1970s: we might begin by amending the highest law of the land.

A Clean Earth Amendment

In 1970, the year of the first Earth Day, a constitutional amendment was introduced in Congress that would have guaranteed every person a right to a clean environ-

ment. During the 1970s, many states (including Hawaii, Montana, Illinois, and Massachusetts) added environmental rights amendments to their constitutions. These amendments hold that the state shall provide for the implementation and enforcement of the right to a clean environment, and that each person may enforce this right against any party through legal proceedings. Many countries have environmental rights provisions in their constitutions, and others are in the process of adding them. The National Wildlife Federation has proposed an Environmental Bill of Rights, and the United States Conference of Mayors is considering endorsing a similar measure. More radical amendments that would give rights to other species have also been proposed. There is thus precedent for and a renewed interest in an environmental rights amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would dignify and enforce the efforts of the states to clean the environment, broaden the basis for legal suit, and raise levels of compliance with the legislation of the past two decades.

In 1990 we must rally the people of the United States to support a new constitutional amendment which states: "Every person has the right to a clean, healthful environment. The Congress and the individual states shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation." The final wording of the amendment would of course be determined by environmental and constitutional lawyers and by Congress, through hearings and consultation with American citizens. But clearly action has to be taken from above as well as at the grass roots: strong resistance is to be expected from business concerns that stand to be threatened by regulation. They are not likely to act on their own.

The new decade could be a turning point in human efforts to save the earth. Imagine hundreds of thousands of people demanding that they be guaranteed clean air, clean water, and a healthful, nontoxic environment. A variety of grass-roots environmental groups, labor groups, women's groups, and others could endorse an environmental amendment. Thousands of bumper stickers, ecology flags, and buttons could flood the country. A reinvigorated environmental movement could demand action from Washington. It could insist that the Congress of the United States pass a Clean Earth Amendment to the Constitution. The 1990s could become the new environmental decade as state after state ratifies the amendment. United we could enter the twenty-first century with guaranteed environmental rights. Through passage of an environmental amendment, we of the twentieth century could bequeath to our children and our grandchildren in the twenty-first century a clean, healthy, beautiful earth on which to live. Gaia needs us; we need Gaia. □

[Endnote: To support the Clean Earth Amendment please contact the Clean Earth Amendment Coordinating Committee, 2208 Rose St., Berkeley, CA 94709.]

Factor X and the Big Spill

Laurie Stone

In 1970 I first felt that jolt of understanding—that fear wafted on cold clear air—that the planet was mortally imperiled. I was reading Doris Lessing's novel, *The Four-Gated City,* which had been published a year earlier. It's a sprawling, mesmerizing chronicle of earnest, lost Londoners, a tale that opens during the fifties in a gritty verité style and spins into a dark, futuristic vision. The holocaust that eventually dooms Earth is triggered not by nuclear war but by a series of human and mechanical errors: oil spills, steam pipes exploding within rotting infrastructures, toxic waste that seeps through containers, and mysterious, deadly viruses unleashed from chemical warfare plants.

Most of these events go unreported, and those disclosed are connected to one another by only a few individuals. Many are driven mad, their circuits overloaded with premonitions of catastrophe. Dorothy, a schizophrenic, collects clippings of disasters. Mark, a still-sane writer, papers a wall of his study with her findings. The wall, writes Lessing, "represented factor X, that absolutely obvious, out-in-the-open, there-for-anybody-to-see fact which nobody was seeing yet, the same whether it was a question of a rocket failing to get itself off a launching pad, or the breakdown of an electric iron the first time it is used, or a block of flats or cooling towers collapsing."

Mark composes a memorandum to himself—really an alarm, a prophesy:

> We are all hypnotised by the idea of Armageddon, the flash brighter than a million suns, the apocalyptic convulsion, the two-minute war, instant death. Populace more than government; but governments as well. Everyone is stunned by an approaching annihilation like an animal dazzled by an approaching car. This prevents preparation, psychological and physical, for what is likely. Which will be local catastrophic occurrences—the poisoning of a country, or of an area; the death of part of the world; the contamination of an area for a certain period of time. These events will be the development of what is already happening.... Naive people think that conspiracies are seven men around a table in a Machiavellian plot: a conspiracy is an atmosphere, or a frame of mind in which people are impelled to do things, perhaps those things they could never do as individuals.... It can be taken absolutely as an axiom that the populace will not be told the truth, nine-tenths because the governments concerned won't know what is the truth, will be as much in the dark as anybody else, and one-tenth out of panic, greed, hysteria, *fear of their own citizenry.*

I read these predictions—inhaled them is more like it—feeling they were true, but hoping they were exaggerated. However fierce and convincing Lessing's writing was, she had pitched herself into science fiction. In 1970 I was in my early twenties and up to my eyeballs in the emergent, roiling women's movement. That was why I read Lessing, on the hunt for models and literary history. During the years of New Left ferment, environmental causes—especially as depicted by mouthy, machoid class analysts—were deemed flimsy, even lighter in weight than the sissy causes of feminism and gay rights. Where was the fight? No one *claimed* to be in favor of nuclear war or water pollution. To me as well, the environmental cause was less pressing than the women's movement. It didn't burn in me like feminism, which seemed inseparable from my well-being.

But Lessing's blueprint stayed with me as the years went by—as a gut reminder. I flashed to it as, one by one, the catastrophes she predicted came to pass. Medical waste scarring beaches, fires burning out of control in national parks, hundreds of dolphins and seals washing up dead of mysterious causes, rain forests turning to cinders, the ozone layer rupturing. Three Mile Island. Chernobyl.

By the mid-eighties my attention was mainly focused elsewhere: on society's generally callous response to AIDS, and on homelessness. Many people I knew were sick and dying. Living in Manhattan, I walked a gauntlet of street encampments, witnessing abjectness and hunger that presented itself with moral force each time I went out the door. I followed the trial of Joel Steinberg, fascinated by the horror that had proliferated amid ordinary life. I marched in Washington to protest the Supreme Court's unraveling of abortion rights. The overpopulated planet was choking on human waste,

Laurie Stone's first novel, Starting with Serge, *has just been published by Doubleday. She is a columnist for the* Village Voice *and critic at large on National Public Radio's "Fresh Air."*

but the U.S. government was ready to decree that more unwanted children be born. This was a by-product of the true campaign: to control women's lives.

Increasingly, however, these developments struck me as part of the same brutal wave that included environmental collapse. The alarms were so thick and inescapable. Society appeared to be spiraling into a vortex of neglect and violence. It seemed that the rootlessness, squalor, and pain—the collective sense of not being cared about—were gathering into a fever of hopelessness. It wasn't that we'd lost the ability to protect and shelter life; we hadn't yet learned to value it adequately, and time was running out.

Something in us, as Lessing wrote, wanted to give up the fight and drift into a millennial haze. It was difficult to admit the pleasures of passivity, because, like most gratifications, it shamed us. Still, we could not keep our eyes off Hedda Nussbaum, this witness to the addictive powers of surrender and punishment. It was even more difficult to own up to the pleasures of sadism—the wish to destroy creation in a rage against mortality. Why should nature survive, if we must die? Not even Joel Steinberg could confess he relished dominating and smashing; he said he, too, was a victim. And perhaps his own pain was all he could feel. Denial can be that encompassing.

Last winter, when three gray whales were trapped in Barrow, Alaska, I became fixed on their plight. So did millions of other people, and that was the astonishing thing. Understandably, many conservationists resented the media attention and money spent on a mere three animals while, at the same time, endangered species were being ignored. In a coarser vein, some scientists said the whales ought to perish: they weren't clever enough to migrate at the right time; their species, in fact, would be better off without them. But I was cheered by global sympathy for the grays. In a stroke of collective awareness, we saw ourselves in the stranded beasts: radically off course, bobbing for air, unnecessary for our species but struggling to stay alive.

Last February an Argentine tanker spilled oil in Antarctica, tarring penguins and seals, indelibly smudging pristine coasts. On March 24, the *Exxon Valdez* discharged eleven million gallons—some reports now claim that it was twenty-seven million gallons—into Prince William Sound, one of the richest wildlife habitats in the world. Suffering otter faces filled TV screens; they were innocent, helpless. The images went through me, a draft of galvanizing rage. I identified with the otters, but this feeling wasn't new. Every day I identified with my terrier-spirited dog. An unprecedented sense of personal involvement—threat—had finally seized me, working as feminism originally had. Why then? I don't know, but my reaction rode a flood of similar response. The spill—the latest and perhaps most visible catastrophe in a series of vast, preventable blunders steered by greed, arrogance, and criminal negligence—was marshaling widespread resistance.

Many Exxon employees denied the disaster's severity and repudiated responsibility for it: the American people, with their voracious appetite for energy, were the culprits.

I called several environmental groups and offered to volunteer but was discouraged; the areas hit weren't equipped with accommodations. Eventually, I landed a reporting assignment from *New York Woman* magazine, and in early June I took off for Anchorage. I worked with animals for a time, but volunteers were plentiful and it soon became apparent that the best use of my energies lay in gathering information: discovering what happened, how it happened, and how it could have been prevented.

I spent a month in Alaska, traveling to Seward, Homer, Valdez, and Cordova, meeting scores of people who'd spent months hip-deep in the spill. I witnessed amazing displays of valor and commitment in the animal rescue centers. The residents of Homer and Cordova, longtime opponents of oil policies, were especially ferocious. Hours after the *Exxon Valdez* ruptured, and as Exxon officials stood paralyzed, Cordovans saved crucial fish hatcheries from contamination. A few days later, Homerians organized their volunteer effort. Containment booms were built from logs. A computerized list of available crews and equipment was created. Charter boats were dispatched to capture injured wildlife; bird and otter centers opened.

I drove along hundreds of miles of coast and flew to the crude-drenched islands of Prince William Sound. These regions—ringed with deep blue glaciers, blanketed with lush forests, populated by seabirds and nearly every species of wild mammal—were breathtakingly majestic. They dwarfed human existence, yet human beings had blighted them—conspired to foul them, it appears, once the oil industry's spill contingency plan is reviewed. The details of any devastation are dizzying in their scope, but since the details of a preventable disaster argue with unequaled eloquence the case for opposition, and since the most scrupulous reporting was published in the little-read *Anchorage Daily News*, it's useful again to map the spilling fields.

Alyeska, the consortium of seven oil companies that built and now operates the Trans-Alaska pipeline, promised to have enough containment booms and skimmers to handle any size oil spill and to have equipment and personnel on line within five hours of a disaster. None of this happened. There has not been a full-time oil spill coordinator in Valdez since the mid-eighties, though one is mandated. The barge designated to take on oil from spill sites was down for repairs; it was also much smaller and older than the promised craft. For two days the waters of Prince William Sound were preternaturally calm, and the spill sat—first in a four-mile area, then, as the hours ticked away, in a widening pool—while Exxon did nothing to contain and skim it. On the third day, sixty-six hours after the tanker ruptured, a storm came up and oil raced down the coast for a thousand miles. Recovering the bulk of it became virtually impossible.

According to estimates from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the initial kill comes to half a million seabirds and five thousand otters—about half the population in Prince William Sound. The number of dead wolves, moose, deer, and bear which feed on oiled kelp and prey is difficult to gauge because these animals die in the woods, out of sight. Dead sea lions and seals tend to sink, but it has been assumed thousands have perished. (It was reported that Exxon employees burned dead animals; these corpses, naturally, couldn't be added to mortality tallies.)

Half the bald eagle population, equaling two thousand birds, has perished. Eagles possess a highly complex central nervous system which enables them to target prey and swoop, but it also renders them extremely sensitive to petroleum toxicity: one microliter can kill the embryo in a developing egg. The prospects for this year's offspring are dismal: only 10 percent of the trees containing eagle nests show viable young.

All experts agree that the fates of surviving animals are uncertain. Fatal hemorrhages and ulcers as well as lung and liver diseases can develop months after original contamination. It's also not likely that animals so traumatized will be able to reproduce. Before the spill, for reasons not entirely known, the seal population had already declined 40 percent since 1984.

The long-term effects on the food chain are likely to be dire as well. A sizable amount of oil has sunk and will slowly release dangerous hydrocarbons that contaminate microorganisms—the basic components of the food chain. After about a year, unrecovered oil turns to asphalt. THANKS EXXON FOR PAVING THE MARINE HIGHWAY, reads a spill T-shirt.

Native Alaskan villagers have for centuries subsisted off the seafood and wildlife they gather and hunt; their villages, most of which can be reached only by boat or plane, aren't equipped with supermarkets. There is no telling how long this population will remain severed from its food supply.

As I moved through the animal centers filled with screaming birds and wearied, oil-sickened otters, as I walked tarred beaches, saw mounds of dead animals piled in plastic bags, and gazed at a dead baby seal with blood pouring out of its mouth—a twin in appearance of a rescued pup I'd helped care for—the statistics acquired bold corporeality.

In Alaska, I found three basic responses to the spill. The first group—the vast majority of which live in coastal towns—felt utterly betrayed; they hoped the catastrophe would end Alaska's compliant relationship to Big Oil and the rest of the country's tolerance for Reagan/Bush pro-industry environmental policies. A second, smaller group was skeptical about environmental protection. They believed technology could fix whatever it broke. Their goal wasn't to prevent disaster but to manage it with MASH-style animal hospitals and high-powered hoses and drills; they saw themselves on the cutting edge of a growth industry. The third group, made up mostly of Exxon employees, denied the disaster's severity and repudiated responsibility for it: the American people, with their voracious appetite for energy, were the culprits.

This mentality steered the public-relations-oriented, largely ineffectual cleanup. Again, much of this has been reported, but Exxon's ability to weasel out of its responsibility is prodigious and mind-boggling, and the details bear reviewing until the company's practices are stopped. When the federal government elected not to step in, Exxon was left in control of all operations. The U.S. government relied on the same goodwill as could have been expected had the Nazi high command been asked, after World War II, to relocate surviving Jews. Their thinking went something like this: you made the mess, now you clean it up. If laws exacted huge fines for every barrel of oil *left* in the environment, the cleanup would have proceeded differently—the spill might never have occurred. But as the laws stand, it is cheaper for Exxon to leave spilled oil than to retrieve it and dispose of it in costly toxic waste dumps. The crux of the problem with the current situation is as simple as that. When Exxon arrived in Homer it commandeered and ultimately sabotaged the volunteer effort. Government officials told me that Exxon instructed work crews *to cut down* on the amount of oily debris they were collecting; too few barges had been ordered to cart it off.

Veco, Exxon's main contractor, was recently penalized both for coercing employees to pay into a campaign fund and for illegally contributing the money to Republican candidates who backed oil interests. Veco recently

bought the *Anchorage Times,* the second-largest paper in Alaska, and plans to use it to lobby for Big Oil. The oil industry, whose revenues constitute 85 percent of Alaska's budget, has historically poured money into the campaigns of conservative Republicans and filled the state legislature with its supporters. Alyeska thus won the right to place the pipeline terminal in Valdez and to use single-hulled rather than double-hulled tankers. The state legislature also denied funds for inspecting oil terminals to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

Exxon, with annual revenues of $90 billion, claims to have spent $1.28 billion on the spill and estimates costs could go as high as $2 billion. Most of the money was thrown at Alaskans, creating a miniboom. Owners of fishing boats were paid on the average of $3,500 per day for the use of their equipment (some were paid up to $8,000 per day). Salaries of workers in animal centers ranged from $250 to $600 per day; the Seward otter center alone cost $1.2 million a month to run. The animal rescue effort saved only about two hundred sea otters (at a cost of $40,000 each), twelve hundred birds, and twenty seals—and bought the corporation a conservationist image. So far, however, no sum has been allotted to purchase coastland (placed on the market by native Alaskan corporations) for the purpose of establishing and funding wildlife preserves that could save imperiled species.

Exxon scientists have gathered information that could be useful to sick animals, but the company is withholding it for fear it will be incriminating in upcoming damage suits. On September 15, when Exxon ended its treatment effort and refused to guarantee it would return, hundreds of miles of beach remained fouled. The giant oil company recently tried to duck its culpability by claiming that the state of Alaska caused the massive destruction to wildlife by impeding Exxon's efforts to use dispersants; the claim was made although Exxon didn't have dispersants at Valdez. Moreover, such chemicals are considered by many environmentalists to be more toxic than oil.

The spill—a scenario in which oiled otters clawed out their own eyes in attempts to clean them, a devastation in which beach cleaners routinely became sick from the fumes they inhaled—makes glaringly clear that animals and humans exist in a continuum and that animal suffering at the hands of humans is as vile as the torture of people. This isn't a sentimental conceit; it's at the core of our willingness to care for rather than plunder the natural world. But this view isn't shared by government leaders.

Under Reagan/Bush, government agencies function not as protectionists but as referees, apportioning animals and resources among competing human claimants—sports hunters, commercial trappers, biologists. In this all too prevalent view, animals are described alternately as property or competitors in the race for survival; human avarice is treated as a biological factor, an immutable element in the fight to the death that man must win against nature.

In *The Four-Gated City,* Lessing, with typical legerdemain, predicts the end of the cold war; an allied Soviet Union and U.S. anxiously grapple with a recalcitrant China. Hmm. History has caught up to her vision with frightening accuracy. Now, however, factor X—the truth that no one will see—*is* recognized by a majority of people, with the glaring exceptions of the U.S. government and most multinational corporations. In a recent *New York Times* article on global warming, the cost of retooling U.S. industries in order to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to safe levels was estimated to equal the cost of the current defense budget. So what does Bush do now that the cold war has fizzled out? Invade Panama. That's one way to nip the ecology-for-defense trade-off in the bud.

The Bush administration appears to have learned nothing from the spill. This past fall, thirteen of the country's major environmental groups, among them the Wilderness Society and the Natural Resource Defense Council, said the administration's plan for recovering damages from Exxon made no specific damage assessments, focused on losses to industries like fishing while ignoring the larger defilement of Alaska's ecosystem, and would let the oil company get away with paying a fraction of what could conscientiously be claimed. As for Exxon, it sharpened its skills at misrepresenting damages and dodging responsibility about preparedness; to wit, it displayed the same callousness at the December Arthur Kill spill.

Lessing didn't predict European Green parties that determine elections, nor a Russian head of state who sanctions libertarian revolts. One possible, admittedly rosy, outcome of a unified Europe with more clout in international policy is that Congress and the next administration *might* be pressured to tend the planet, even if the pleasures of destruction impel them precisely the other way. □

On Classical Judaism and Environmental Crisis

Jeremy Cohen

Twenty years ago this spring, I worked as a high-school intern in the national offices of a Jewish youth organization. My job involved the preparation of study material on the subject of Judaism and ecology. As politicians, theologians, students, writers, and others were hastening to identify with environmental concern in general and with the ecology movement in particular, we felt that we too had to take a stand. Judaism, we presumed, had to address the fundamental questions of ecology, and, more importantly, it had to prove compatible with the correct, desired answers (just as it had to guide us properly with regard to the war in Vietnam and the civil rights movement).

We were especially concerned with the harsh and popular indictment of Judaism's biblical foundations, which were blamed for our typically Western exploitative attitude to nature. The biblical God's initial instruction to the first human beings (Genesis 1:28) to "be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it, and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth" struck many as the guiltiest culprit.

In his frequently reprinted speech to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science on "The Historic Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," Lynn White, Jr., understood this verse to mean that "God planned and fashioned all of the natural world 'explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes.'" Arnold Toynbee agreed that the biblical creation story underlay the Western proclivity for technology. Writing in *The International Journal of Environmental Studies,* he noted that while "in 1661, this [verse] read like a blessing on the wealth of Abraham in children and livestock, in 1971 it reads like a license and an incentive for mechanization and pollution." Cultural geographer Clarence J. Glacken viewed "the idea of man against nature in Western thought" as deriving directly from the Genesis cosmogony. And landscape architect Ian L. McHarg denounced the divine injunction with greater severity still, inasmuch as it provided "the sanction and injunction to conquer nature —the enemy, the threat to Jehovah." Surely, we believed, along with numerous theologians who took up the cause of the Bible, surely Judaism could not have abandoned the environment and its advocates in our hour of collective need. It was inconceivable that biblical and rabbinic literature could have left us disarmed and alienated as the decade of the sixties gave way, at times painfully, to that of the seventies.

Long after the heyday of the ecology movement, my interest in the issues the movement raised has remained. Prolonged research into the "career" of the biblical injunction to "fill the earth and master it" has convinced me that popular condemnation of this text on ecological grounds was grievously in error. Above all else, it proceeded from a flawed methodology. Scholars simply assumed that their own understanding of the verse matched that of its author, that this understanding characterized Jewish and Christian readers of the Bible throughout the intervening centuries, and that one may therefore link the verse directly to specific social and scientific tendencies of our own day and age. Yet these scholars had not investigated the history of the verse's interpretation to determine whether it justified these assumptions. Nor had they grappled with the theoretical question of how one attributes meaning to a text, and to a sacred text in particular.

Must a text that inspires us itself be primarily responsible for such inspiration, or does the inspiration derive from a referential system within which we interpret the text? More simply put, does the meaning that we find in a text originate, ultimately, in the text itself or in the "baggage" that we as readers bring to the text? Perhaps the answer lies somewhere in between. Perhaps the meaning of a text derives from what the German philosopher of hermeneutics Hans-Georg Gadamer termed the "fusion of the horizons" of text and reader—in which case one must measure the cultural impact of a text in terms of its societal function and its interpretation over time.

Approaching the message of Genesis 1:28 from such a perspective, one finds that premodern readers of the verse, Jews and Christians, found in it relatively little bearing on the natural environment and its exploitation. Rather, God's initial words to human beings, especially those words mandating sexual reproduction, repeatedly

Jeremy Cohen teaches Jewish history at Tel Aviv University and Ohio State University. His most recent publication is "Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It": The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text *(Cornell University Press, 1989).*

raised the theological issue of divine covenant. Theologians, jurists, preachers, mystics, and poets—in their respective idioms—focused on this verse as an expression of (1) God's relationship with all of humanity and (2) the tension between that universal commitment and God's election of a single people.

In the first instance, the sexual and ruling functions mandated by our verse struck many readers as paradoxical if not contradictory: humans procreate like animals, but they exercise dominion like God. To reproduce and fill the earth on the one hand, and yet to master it on the other, suggested that humans are situated on a cosmic frontier, between terrestrial and supernal realms of existence. Our verse led exegetes to harp on this puzzling aspect of human nature, which the Bible openly cast as divine blessing: How, they wondered, were humans to confront their sexuality properly, so as to attain divine reward and realize the godliness implicit in their dominion? *Mutatis mutandis,* biblical, talmudic, and medieval Jews all struggled with this problem, to which the midrashic anthology *Genesis Rabbah* (8.11) offered a characteristic solution:

> R. Tifdai said in the name of R. Aha: The creatures of the upper world were created in the divine image and likeness and do not engage in procreation, while the creatures of the lower world engage in procreation and were not created in the divine image and likeness. The holy one, blessed be He, said, "I shall hereby create him [man] in the divine image and likeness like the creatures of the upper world, and as one who engages in procreation like the creatures of the lower world."
>
> R. Tifdai said in the name of R. Aha: The holy one, blessed be He, said, "If I create him like the creatures of the upper world, he will live and never die; and if [I create him] like the creatures of the lower world, he will die and not live. Rather, I shall hereby create him like creatures of the upper world and like creatures of the lower world. If he sins, he will die; and if he does not sin, he will live."

The homilies attributed to the otherwise unknown R. Tifdai follow immediately upon a list of those characteristics—four in each case—that humans share with angels (erect stature, speech, understanding, and sight) and with beasts (the consumption of food and drink, procreation, defecation, and death). For R. Tifdai, however, the dialectic between the angelic and beastly traits of human beings boils down to the tension between human sexuality and the divine image in which God created man and woman. R. Tifdai's midrash suggests that the anomalous, sexual, God-like human being defies the apparent logic of this polar opposition.

Tifdai's second homily indicates that unlike the angel and the beast, humans can determine their own destiny; their merits will yield for them the deserts of the upper world or those of the lower, epitomized in life and death, respectively. Within such a framework, sexual reproduction denotes not only an attribute of the lower world, but also—along with the divine image—the essence of that singular perfection which allows humans, and humans only, to choose between life and death. The ensuing discussion in *Genesis Rabbah* (8.12), which plays upon alternative vocalizations of God's proclaimed intention that human beings "shall rule" (*yirdu,* Genesis 1:26) other creatures, reflects similarly upon the second half of the primordial blessing:

> *And rule the fish of the sea....* R. Hanina said: If he has been meritorious, "they will descend (yer-du)." R. Jacob of Khar Hanan said: "And rule (u-r-du)" [applies] to him who is in our image and likeness; "they will descend (yer-du)" [applies] to him who is not in our image and likeness.

Vocalizing the consonants of the verb *yrdw* in Genesis 1:26 to mean "they will descend (yer-du)"—or perhaps "they will be ruled (*yeradu*)"—rather than "they shall rule (*yirdu*)" as in Scripture, R. Hanina and R. Jacob both instruct that humans can merit either reward or punishment, embodied in the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of God's primordial blessing. Sexuality and the divine image are the defining characteristics of the human being, and their proper expression leads directly to the reward of dominion.

The rabbis set limits on human interference with the natural order.

In the second instance, the universal applicability of our verse continually troubled Jewish and Christian exegetes. The ostensive election of all human beings challenged their notion of a chosen people, prodding them to address the problem exegetically. Rabbinic lawyers, for example, expanded much casuistic effort to exclude gentiles and women from the commandment to "be fertile and increase," the blatant literal meaning of the Bible notwithstanding. (According to Genesis, God had addressed his instructions to both of the first parents, who lived twenty generations before the first of the Hebrew patriarchs.) Medieval Jewish kabbalists deemed the commandment of paramount importance, labeling the Jew who fails to have children "a despoiler of the covenant." Noted church fathers beheld the blessing of "fill the earth and master it" fulfilled in the rapid expansion of Christendom in late antiquity. And a famous

monastic preacher of the high Middle Ages claimed that Catholics alone enjoy the blessing of "fill the earth and master it," while Jews, infidels, and heretics inherit the curse of Eve (Genesis 3:16), "in pain you shall bear children."

Overall, the recurring covenantal interpretation of "be fertile and increase" provides a helpful framework for considering what little the rabbis did have to say about God's ensuing instructions to fill, to master, and to rule. In a sole instance, the Talmud attributes quasi-*halakhic* significance to this call for human dominion over the earth, questioning whether it actually entitled the first humans to consume other animals for food. Elsewhere, classical rabbinic interpreters generally construed dominion to signify human primacy in the natural order, in physical, intellectual, and spiritual terms. According to some, Adam's dominion was reflected in his enormous size. According to others, dominion over the earth involved its development with the tools and fruits of human creativity. A third view linked dominion with the unique intellectual capability to acknowledge God. Yet another interpretation stressed that the blessing of dominion depended on human compliance with God's will, and that God punished and rewarded throughout history with the removal and conferral of this blessing.

Among some medieval commentators, dominion did entail the license to control the environment for one's own advantage, although one never senses a dispensation for noxious exploitation or destruction. In the first half of the tenth century, Saadya Gaon described most graphically how the blessing of "rule" in the Genesis cosmogony

> includes the entire range of devices with which man rules over the animals: over some with fetters and bridles, over some with ropes and reins, over some with enclosures and chains, over some with weapons of the hunt, over some with cages and towers, and so on....
>
> And the word "the fish" includes the stratagems for catching fish from the bottom of the sea and the rivers, the preparation of the permitted species in cooking utensils and their consumption, the extraction of pearls from the shells, and the use of the appropriate portions of skin and bones and everything associated with this. And [God] added the word "of the sea" to include man's subjugation of the water as well; for he finds it within the ground and raises it out with pulleys or with containers or with a machine utilizing force and pressure. And thus he dams rivers to transfer water from one side to the other, and he uses it to power the mills....
>
> And his word "and the birds" corresponds to the various snares for hunting birds which fly in the sky, the process of taming some in order to hunt others, the preparation from them of foods for his sustenance and potions for medicines and the like. And he added "of the sky" to include the ability of man to understand the heavenly sphere and its composition ... and to prepare the various instruments for measuring the hours and their components.
>
> And with the word "the cattle" he gave him the authority to lead and the power to make use of them all, to eat the flesh of those fit for consumption through various means of cooking and in the different forms of food, to heal from that which is medicinal, to ride on those suited for riding like mules, and to know all their diets, that is, how to feed them....

Both in their length and in their elaboration of dominion Saadya's comments are exceptional, but they too speak to the same essential concern that dominated the classical Jewish understanding of Genesis 1:28. I have quoted them so extensively precisely because they comprise a glorious ode to *the cultural achievements of men and women*. Human nature rather than the physical environment (which is hardly the same as human nature at the expense of the physical environment) dominated rabbinic consideration of the primordial blessing. Even those Jewish theologians who, like Abraham Ibn Ezra and Moses Maimonides, denied that God created the world expressly for the purposes of human beings shared a fundamental Western anthropocentrism which they inherited as much from Hellenistic traditions as from the Bible. Reconciling this outlook with a life of Torah remained central to this discussion. Issues ecological were usually absent.

Perhaps this traditional focus on human beings grates in our postpositivist, pluralistic, global society. Yet I believe that a responsible Jewish approach to environmental problems cannot afford to deny or neglect its own lineage. Rather, it must commence from a focus through which one can best appreciate the *halakhic* principle most pertinent to environmental preservation: *bal taschit*. The rabbis set limits on human interference with the natural order not in their midrash on the Genesis cosmogony but in their reflection on Deuteronomy 20:19–20:

> When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy (*lo taschit*) its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you under siege? Only trees which you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has

been reduced.

From the words "you must not destroy" the rabbis derived a general rule—*bal taschit*—against the needless destruction of anything. But at the heart of this principle lies the question of needlessness. The Torah itself does not prohibit the destruction of all trees, only those which bear fruit. And while the Bible appeared to justify its injunction with a rhetorical query as to the powerlessness of the tree—"Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you under siege?"—the rabbinic *Sifre* on Deuteronomy (203) understood the question differently: "Is a human being like a tree of the field?" In other words, the verse "teaches that human life is dependent upon the tree." The fundamental human need for food and its priority over the needs of battle underlay the commandment of *lo taschit,* not any sacred inviolability of the physical environment.

When it abstracted the principle of *bal taschit* to other situations as well, rabbinic tradition remained consistent in its evaluation of environmental concerns. On the one hand, *bal taschit* applies, in theory, to everything. One may not destroy buildings or wildlife, waste food or money, or even squander energy for no good reason. On the other hand, the applicability of *bal taschit* gives way before the legitimate desires of men and women, of society at large, and of God. One is therefore permitted to chop down even a fruit-bearing tree for the food, fuel, and enrichment of the individual; to clear a space for a public building; and to use its wood in the performance of a divine commandment.

Implicit in this principle of *bal taschit* is the demand for acute environmental sensitivity. The *halakha* requires that one carefully weigh the ramifications of all action and behavior, for every interaction with the natural world involves the setting of priorities, the weighing of conflicting interests, and the permanent modification of the environment. Humans may have a singular capacity to control other creatures, even as they too constitute part of the environment they dominate. The Torah relates (Genesis 2:15) that "the Lord God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to till it and to tend it." To till and to tend, or to develop and to preserve—a pair of human responsibilities to God's creation characterized by complexity and dialectic, if not outright contradiction. Judaism charges its adherents to recognize

and balance these responsibilities and, most importantly, to remember their heavenly source and rationale.

Essential to this lesson of *bal taschit* is the talmudic comparison (*Shabbat* 105b) of reckless destruction to idolatry:

> One who tears his clothes in anger, or one who breaks his tools in anger, or one who wastes his money in anger you should consider as an idolater. For such is the craft of the evil inclination. Today it tells a person, "Do this," tomorrow it tells him, "Do that," until it tells him, "Go, practice idolatry," and so he does.

If the Talmud thus characterizes the wanton exploitation of dominion, it is most instructive that the abuse of the first gift of the primordial blessing—the sexual power of reproduction—merits the only other application (*Niddah* 13b) of this talmudic account of "the craft of the evil inclination." Ultimately, the mandate of Genesis 1:28 and the restrictive principle of *bal taschit* conveyed an identical message. Responsible interaction with the environment offers men and women the deepest personal and spiritual fulfillment, while environmental irresponsibility will lead to their physical and spiritual demise.

Judaism's environmental consciousness originated long before the ecological *cause célèbre* of our generation and, I should hope, will long outlive it. Like so much else in the rabbinic ethos, it calls upon human beings to be mindful of whence they have come, where they are going, and before whom they will have to account for their actions. □

From Compassion to Jubilee

Arthur Waskow

Three related illnesses are eating at the heart of America:

• an increasingly damaging and unjust distribution of wealth;

• a deepening threat to the environment;

• a collapse of social solidarity—what has been called both *fraternité* and sisterhood—at the levels of family, neighborhood, workplace, and society.

For several years now, *Tikkun* has insisted that society cannot expect to deal with the first two of these symptoms without addressing the third. Economistic proposals for redistributing wealth or healing the poisoned environment are not powerful enough to counter the old destructive ways that have proved profitable and job-producing in American society. It will take empathy for Mother Earth herself as well as for the victims of environmental cancer and immune-system collapse to give new energy to movements for economic and environmental change.

Creating such a politically informed empathy requires the development of a shared rhetoric, a language of vision and change. Such a language would take us beyond the conventional "shared" American myth of individualism, which is *not* about sharing, and which makes serious concern for other human beings and for the earth impossible.

The very absence of a myth that affirms our common interest proves the severity of our problem. I do think, however, that we have the beginnings of a shared language. It is contained within an extraordinary passage from the Bible—but more on that passage in a moment.

What dybbuk would possess me even to think of the Bible as a source of social solidarity in this world of secularized intellectuals and weakened religious institutions? Am I setting us up for a successful return of the religious Right, just as it is losing its steam? It seems to me that the Bible remains the only element of "high culture" with which large numbers of Americans feel any connection, and the only one that both white and Black workers have in common. It attracts figures such as Robert Alter and Geoffrey Hartman on the one hand, and great masses of less intellectual Americans on the other. In part this explains why Jesse Jackson, a preacher, appeals to people across lines of race and, to some extent, class.

Even if Jews and Catholics and Protestants mean different things when they say "the Bible"—even if Muslims, Buddhists, Native Americans, secularists, and some feminist spiritualists are skeptical of the Bible altogether—the cultural wisdom contained in the Bible still speaks to more Americans than does any other expression of compassion, community, and sharing.

I think we are wrong to assume that all American social critics and activists are staunch secularists. Is it an accident that the head of SANE/Freeze is a clergyman? Is it an accident that the most respected leader of the movements of the sixties, Martin Luther King, Jr., the first American since George Washington to be honored with a national holiday, was a preacher? But—some will say—the proof of the pudding is in the program. The Bible may teach compassion toward the poor, but surely—some will say—this advocates a kind of welfare handout, the sort we know doesn't work. And what of the Bible's sense of empathy for the earth? "Fill up the earth and subdue it," it instructs us.

Not so.

One of our culture's most remarkable expressions of empathy for the land and its people also encodes a program for compassion. I mean the biblical passage about the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, contained in Leviticus 25.

That passage outlines a specific program, with three related elements:

• redistribution of the land, so that all families can periodically start over at a common economic level;

• a year-long rest period for the land, meant to ensure protection of the earth;

• celebrations designed to strengthen local clans and tribes.

All these elements of the program for compassion are understood as expressions of love.

The Bible's Jubilee program is rooted in the conception of sacred time that inspires the Sabbath tradition of rest, contemplation, and sharing on the seventh day of every week. The program institutes a moratorium on

Arthur Waskow is the director of The Shalom Center, author of Godwrestling *and* These Holy Sparks, *and a member of the editorial board of* Tikkun. *From 1982 to 1989 he was a member of the faculty of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.*

everyday customs every seventh and fiftieth year (the year after the seventh seventh year). The Jubilee year is a pause for contemplation and reorganization.

Every seventh year all debts are canceled. The land rests from organized cultivation and harvest, and whatever freely grows from it may be gathered by any family for food. Meanwhile, food that has been lying in storage is shared. In the fiftieth year the land rests again, and every family returns to the equal share of productive land that it was allotted when Israelite society began. The poor become equal to the rich, who give up the extra wealth they have accumulated.

All this was to be done not by a central government's taxation or police power, but by the direct action of each family, each clan, each tribe in its own region. When it was not done, an Isaiah (chapters 58 and 61) or a Jeremiah (chapter 34) or a Jesus (Luke 4) would arise to demand that the program be implemented.

What in our society would it mean to draw on this biblical teaching in order to create a program that could address our economic, environmental, and emotional woes—three symptoms of our modern illness? And what would it mean to make this not only a program but a strategy—to build a movement or constituency around a Jubilee program that would harness more energy and political power than ordinary secular progressive coalitions?

Most of us might not have the biblical chutzpah to propose shutting down the whole society one year out of every seven. But let us *imagine* three major structural reforms as elements of a possible Jubilee program:

- venture capital recycling;
- sabbaticals on research and development;
- celebrations of neighborhood empowerment.

Such a contemporary Jubilee program would involve a continuous recycling process in the society rather than a blanket moratorium at a given time.

Venture Capital Recycling

The policy goal is to shift massive amounts of investment capital from the control of giant, long-established corporations to grass-roots businesses—especially those that are owned and operated by workers, consumers, families, or neighborhoods.

How to do this? By very high taxes on the wealth (not merely the income) of very large, old businesses such as DuPont Chemical Company, the great global oil companies, and Chase Manhattan Bank. The proceeds of this capital recycling tax would go not to the general treasury but directly to a number of publicly controlled banks that would make loans available to help workers buy their factories, farms, and insurance companies, and to help neighborhood associations, churches and synagogues, and other grass-roots groups start cooperative food stores, restaurants, pharmacies, bicycle factories, fish hatcheries, and solar power stations.

To prevent liquidity problems, corporations could pay this capital recycling tax not in money but by turning over to a Community Ownership Trust a portion of their ownership rights (for example, stock certificates). The Trust would then transfer ownership rights to workers or communities.

The primary requirement for receipt of these venture capital loans and ownership rights would be the recipient's proof that they represent a particular community—whether of co-workers in a single workplace, students and faculty at a specific school, or members of a neighborhood association, a religious congregation, or a family.

Favorable interest rates would be offered to firms that both use recycled materials in production and recycle their own waste products, as well as those that use renewable energy sources and otherwise demonstrate respect for the environment.

Low interest rates would also be made available to groups whose average income and wealth fall below a specific cutoff point. In this way, the white poor would not be excluded in favor of other disadvantaged groups such as women, Blacks, and Hispanics. "Disadvantage" would be understood as an economic condition, rather than one determined by ethnicity or gender. Because recipients would need to prove that they represent an existing community, the program would empower rather than shatter ethnic and racial communities.

Such a wealth-recycling program would address one of the major problems posed by conventional tax-reform proposals and welfare programs. That problem involves the need for investment capital. Many people fear that a program which taxes large corporations too heavily will

keep these corporations from investing in the economy, and thus precipitate depression. At the same time people fear that national investment, through projects such as the Tennessee Valley Authority or outright welfare grants will inevitably create a large, unresponsive bureaucracy and a disempowered, irresponsible underclass.

If investment capital were taxed from corporations and recycled not through giant bureaucracies but rather through grass-roots community-controlled enterprises, we could avoid such dilemmas. The capital recycling tax would encourage investment—indeed, it would stimulate creative forms of investment by shifting capital to new hands—and empower, rather than subjugate, the recipients. It would strengthen community rather than the culture of individualism.

Sabbaticals on Research and Development

Most government programs that focus on the environment have concentrated on the end products of industrial activity—how to recycle and clean up waste. Very little attention has been paid to the decisions society makes about *what* to produce. The biblical Jubilee program, however, teaches us to confront issues around production. In an agricultural, pastoral society this entailed pausing from production altogether. But what would the Jubilee program mean for a technological, scientific society such as our own?

I offer two proposals, both of which draw on the Jubilee notion of pausing from production for a period of sacred, reflective time. Both proposals are intended to prevent us from treating production and technology as ends in themselves, and to train ourselves to reconsider them in the light of their environmental and social effects.

First, all corporate investments of more than a specific amount—one billion dollars?—slated for a single program, such as the production of a new car, or the invention of a new pesticide, would be subject to a one-year "sabbatical" delay while a public review studied the effect of the proposed program on society and the environment.

Second, all scientific and technological research and development would halt one year out of every seven, and society would provide a *real* sabbatical for scientists and engineers.

What do I mean by a real sabbatical? It would be a time for scientists, engineers, and those who allocate capital to reevaluate our use of technology. The intent of this real sabbatical is not to stop technological development, but to interrupt it periodically, so that it can be reconsidered in terms of purpose and effect.

Both proposed sabbaticals would help us catch our breath and would soon bring about both physical changes in the environment and profound effects on our culture. In the physical sphere, the sabbaticals would slow down our invasion of the web of planetary life and perhaps encourage a change of direction. Culturally, these pauses (and the campaigns to get them adopted) would teach society that there are values other than producing, making, doing; and indeed that even the values of producers need to be governed by larger issues of long-term effects on human beings, the earth, and community.

Celebration of Neighborhood Empowerment

The provisions of Leviticus 25 are designed to strengthen grass-roots communities: in ancient times, such communities took the form of clans within a tribal region. For us, community is probably best represented by the concept of neighborhood.

Public policy has not been shaped with an eye to strengthening community or compassion. Just one example: all the efforts to cut down demand for drugs have focused on creating more fear—despite (or because of?) the likelihood that more fear and despair are quite likely to encourage more drug use. What would it mean for public policy to focus on creating stronger communities, rather than greater fear?

A Jubilee-style proposal: empower neighborhoods to choose one day a month, one week a year, for a neighborly celebration. Give seed-grants to neighborhood institutions to plan such events. Make this folk festival a decentralized but universal event.

Create a national "Sabbath," on at least two occasions a year—July 4 and New Year's Day? Or on the newer, more globally and environmentally conscious occasions of Hiroshima Day and Martin Luther King Day? Or a revitalized Earth Day? Shut down all but life-preserving emergency services; close highways, hotels, television stations, newspapers, factories, offices; suspend train, bus, airline services. Let us rediscover walking and talking, singing and cooking. Let us rediscover our neighbors. Better than a day or two would be an entire week, so that we can experience the meaning of rest and celebration.

These three proposals make up a Jubilee program. What about a strategy to bring them about? All the proposals challenge powerful institutions in our society. Without the empowerment of people at the grass roots, none of it will be possible. How to begin?

It seems to me that the initiators of a Jubilee program should be the churches and synagogues, partly because the approach comes from the biblical tradition, but not only because of this. Also because we know that

religious communities can be great sources of empowerment and change—as some churches were the seeds and some synagogues the support of the civil rights movement, as some churches and synagogues nurtured the antiwar movement of the sixties and the disarmament movement of the eighties, as some religious communities helped antislavery efforts and were the defenders of the labor movement.

To organize well means, at very best, to infuse the means with the end. In this case, synagogues and churches might begin by creating in miniature the Jubilee program that we envision, as a sort of demonstration project that would help us organize the broader Jubilee program.

What is a miniature Jubilee?

In a particular city, for perhaps the nine days from one Friday night to the following week's Sunday, a cluster of synagogues and churches could hold a Jubilee festival. The festival would encourage economic renewal in the city and its neighborhoods by inviting co-ops, worker-managed firms, and innovative small businesses to explain their work; by demonstrating equipment for energy conservation and the local generation of solar energy; by turning empty lots or a part of church or synagogue grounds into communal vegetable gardens; by holding workshops on how tenants can buy apartment houses and turn them into co-ops; and by setting up a temporary food co-op and helping people organize a more permanent one.

The festival would address the psychological and cultural renewal of the neighborhood through song, dance, storytelling, and the sharing of food. It would encourage all the people in the neighborhood to pool and exchange their talents, skills, and memories.

The Jubilee as a whole would help empower people politically by instituting town meetings, at which people could discuss some of the major issues of our society—energy, jobs, environment, family, and the cost of living.

Obviously this miniature Jubilee would not be a reenactment of the biblical Jubilee so much as an experiment in reinterpreting the Jubilee program for modern times. Approaches that began or were stimulated by the Jubilee festival would continue and grow through the year. Their work would intertwine the day-to-day problems of people in the neighborhood with study of both the biblically rooted religious traditions and the modern analytical knowledge of social relations. In this way, the Jubilee festival would create the context for a North American equivalent of the *communidades de base* that have revivified and renewed the church in Brazil and other parts of Latin America.

The very absence of a myth that affirms our common interest proves the severity of our problem.

People who experience the miniature Jubilee could use that moment to begin imagining how to translate the Jubilee program into postmodern practice, which sees productivity as only part of a larger process that includes rest, and institutionalization as part of a process that includes decentralization. And they could start developing the political power that could bring about the kinds of change that they imagine.

How to get the Jubilee festival process going? In a given city, some of the rabbis, ministers, priests—and also the lay members of synagogues, *havurot,* churches, mosques—probably know who in the various religious communities shares this vision. They can create local Jubilee committees, asking congregations to agree to host or sponsor a Jubilee festival. Soon the project would grow through outreach to co-ops, labor unions, innovative businesses, and to singers, dancers, cooks, and storytellers of the local traditions.

In all these practical proposals, there is an underlying thread of belief: that "ritual" and "politics" should be intertwined, not separated one from the other. This may seem fuzzy-minded to the practical politician, and irreverent to the ritually observant, but such responses are both symptoms of the modern age which has split politics off from any notion of the spiritual. Through the passages on the Jubilee, Leviticus teaches us that the most effective politics has a potent ritual element in it, engaging not only material interests but deep emotional, intellectual, and spiritual energies. Only when ritual focuses on reality does it become fully communal. Only then can it emerge as politics. □

FICTION

Two Stories

Diane Williams

PERFECT

"You want an insight? I'll give you an insight," said a perfect stranger at the children's ball game. Then he gave me his insight which proved to be exactly correct.

"People will cheer him when he gets himself up," the man said.

I had thought that the child's ankle was probably shattered—that was *my* insight—that the child would not be able to walk, that he would need to be lifted and carried, that he'd never walk again. I thought, Now he is a cripple for the rest of his life.

"He's fine," the man said. "I know he's fine, because, you see, he's hiding his head. He's hiding his face. He's making such a big deal. I know. Sure, it's very painful."

The man had told me that the hardball had hit the child in the ankle. I didn't know where.

I said, "How do you know? It might be shattered. He's not moving."

"Because he missed the ball—" the man said, "because he wants everyone to forget he missed the ball, that's why he's making such a big deal."

If I could have an insight about this man's insight, I could probably save myself. That's my insight. I could save my children, my marriage, the world, if I could let enough people know—that there's a powerful solution in here somewhere—a breakthrough trying to break through.

The stranger was so angry talking to me. I don't think he believed I was believing him, and I didn't.

Will you please rise and Shame us not, O Father.

THE LIMITS OF THE WORLD

My adventures have led me to believe that I possess two powerful powders—genuine powders. The "I command my man" powder is one of my powders. When I put this powder on my body, then I will command my man. He will always be my lover whether he wants to be my lover or not. He will be obedient and satisfied, whether that's what I want him to be or not. Nothing will ever take him away, whether that's what I want or not.

I'm not sure what the purpose is of my other genuine powder.

Now what?

What would you do? Would you go ahead and use either of these powders, if you, as I have done, had gone ahead and paid money for them?

Keep in mind, we are past the age of enlightenment. This is past reason. We are pretty deep into modern history and the decline of religion. This is when Nature itself has been stripped bare of its cozy personality and we all feel homeless in our own natures as well.

To say it another way, I gave away a pure love powder with no conditions on its use, or specifications warranted. (A lusty friend of mine grabbed it out of my hand.)

So now what?

Whosoever reads this, write to me if I am still alive, or please write to my children, or to my children's children, who may yet be even still deeper into the farther reaches of our common history. Give us *your* opinion. Provide please credentials for you yourself, who you are doing the talking.

Are you a superior person? Or, how soon do you think you will be? I can ask because I asked. □

Diane Williams's first collection of stories, This Is About the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate, *has just been published by Grove Weidenfeld.*

FICTION

Blue Spruce

Myra Goldberg

Once upon a time, a poor orphan lived alone in a forest near Riga. The boy's mother had been eaten by wolves and the boy's father had run away with a Russian ballerina. Friendless, parentless, and penniless, the boy in the forest cut wood, which he carried on his back into Riga to sell. One day a drunken policeman taunted him, calling him "Juden" and worse. The boy knocked the policeman out, then ran and hid beneath a bridge, burning logs to keep himself warm and catching carp to eat, while he built a raft under cover of darkness. Then he sailed downstream, abandoning the raft to climb mountains and cross borders and in one way or another make his way to where the ocean was, which he sailed across. On the other side, he reached a city on a hill, which was Troy, New York. There he worked his way up into a king of sorts.

Everyone has objected, at one time or another, to this version of my grandfather's origins.

My mother: "An orphan? He told you that, Natalie? He was no more orphan than I was. Certainly, I grant you this, he had no parents. Lots of people lost them in those days. Death was more prevalent then, even in this country. Take a look at the graveyards—young people, babies, it always makes me weep. But Papa had sisters in Trenton, an aunt in Philadelphia. He didn't *have* to be so solitary."

My father: "I come from the same part of the world as he did. Poland, Russia, these are made-up distinctions, after the fact. This is small-town life we're talking about. Nobody knocked out a policeman in Riga and lived to boast about it. No Jew in those days even *thought* about doing such a thing. Somebody might overhear the thought and report it. And another thing: no orphan learned Hebrew, which he pretended not to know. I caught him reading the Gemara once. Rabbis, religion, these I understand him being angry at. Even that monkey business—leaving open his store on Yom Kippur, just to make his neighbors, well, unhappy. But why would anyone hate a language? What was that about?"

"But where did Grandpa get the nails to build that raft?" asked my brother Jonathan on the phone from California. Then carefully casual, belying the intensity of the yearnings Grandpa planted in his soul, my blond blue-eyed brother mentioned that Grandpa was blond and blue-eyed too. So maybe there was a Russian ballerina somewhere. Someone tall, slim, graceful, Russian instead of Jewish, rooted in land and lifted into air, embodied, transcendent, different from us. "It's impossible, for sure. A Russian lady from the Bolshoi marrying some impoverished Jewish woodcutter? Still, look how crazy I am about skiing and what a maniac you were about dance, Natalie. You know, we're physical. So where did that come from?" Then shame filled the silence between us. Atonement for his yearnings, his explanations, his grandfather's character and his own, which are so similar. "I mean, get this: a wolf who was really a ballerina waltzing into some forest where Grandpa's father was crouched in a cave before a fire and. . . ."

"But there *were* caves in Russia. Don't you remember, Jon?" I interrupted. "Those weddings we went to with relatives with numbers on their arms, who'd hidden from the Germans in one. Or was that Poland? But never mind the caves. This is my point. Somebody, maybe Grandpa, used to talk about his life before he came here and get tears in his eyes: 'We were so poor we had no shoes,' he'd wail. Well, they must have had shoes, I've decided. Old shoes, shoes with holes in them, rags around their feet, I saw pictures at the Jewish Museum. But some sort of shoes, especially in the wintertime. So maybe he was saying how poor he'd been, how poor he felt, compared to us in America, his grandchildren."

"I'll buy that," said Jonathan, hanging up.

So there'd been loneliness in that forest, but my grandfather had had relatives. There'd been yearnings, ambitions, but nobody had married a ballerina. There'd been hunger and fear, wolves and policemen, but nobody had gotten eaten or knocked out. For my grandfather, who came from the same part of the world as my father, had the same attitude toward the facts—that they are interchangeable, changeable garments that exist so naked unchangeable truths can walk among us and be dressed.

What's left of my grandfather's Russia, you may have noticed, after everyone has put their two cents in, is a pine forest. For no one has ever questioned the existence of that forest near Riga, although no one but my grand-

Myra Goldberg teaches fiction writing at Sarah Lawrence College. Selections from her novel Rosalind: A Family Romance *will appear in* Representations of Motherhood, *forthcoming from Yale University Press.*

father has ever been anywhere near the spot. And beside the pine forest, I found this thought: that my grandfather's version of his Russian boyhood must have grown out of his feeling that the real story wasn't good enough.

My mother: "But my father did well in Troy. He had Mama, and us, that store, and that partner, Segesta, the best sausage maker in the city. Ask anyone. Jake loved his livelihood. Driving pell-mell at three in the morning to Schoharie County where the farmers were. I have to say it, I was his favorite. I looked like him, they said. He'd take me with him in the truck. It was still dark. The farmers were still sleeping. We'd go into the orchards by ourselves. He'd pick an apple, twist the stem, bite down, then spit it out. Pronounce the name: Macintosh, Northern Spy. The names still have this glamour for me. Pronounce his judgment, rotten, ripe. Not good enough for Stern and Segesta. I worried, can you believe the way a child's mind works, that he'd throw me away if I displeased him. Had worms or got mushy.

"And when he bought the land at Lake Mohican, I was the first to see it. Pines all over the property, which I must point out he cut down on an impulse, like everything else he did. He was going to build the bungalow himself. Only everything he wanted was impossible. He wouldn't measure and he wouldn't wait for the paint to dry. Everything had to go fast, according to his wishes, roofs and porches, as well as people. Mama begged him to hire a helper. The helper pleaded with me, a little girl, to get him out of there. It was the best land, said Papa. Why not the best bungalow?

"You know that other people's camps had friendly names. Welcome Inn, Gremlin's Lodge, things like that. Papa's camp was named IF. 'If you like it, you can stay. If you don't, get the hell out,' was how he explained it. Now what kind of attitude is that? And other people's bungalows were better built. They had more land, a larger lot."

My grandfather would have approved of and been enraged by my mother's judgment of his lot. More is better, but mine is best, he said, asserting his supremacy by banging one fist into another while he peeked over his shoulder to see what his neighbors had gotten for themselves.

The redwoods dwarf the pines in California. And my brother's dictum on the envy and ambition question arrived on a postcard early in this week I've spent alone at the bungalow whose higgledy-piggledy interior is dark, shadowed by two tall spruces in the yard.

> Land is expanse, offering solitude, perspective, etc. What Grandpa had in Lake Mohican was a medium-sized, working-class, immigrant's lot.
>
> Love,
> Jonathan

On the other side of his postcard were the Sierras looking lofty. Jonathan has hiked up mountains that make my grandfather's Adirondacks look like molehills. "Okay, land is expanse and etc.," I wrote back on a Kodachrome of Lake Mohican. "But aren't expanse and etc. still lots?"

He'll get my point. We've practiced. We've shared the pleasures of the word, like apples in the mouth, since my grandfather, in a gravelly Russian voice, introduced them to us:

> He's the biggest crook in six counties.
> The Republicans got the tombstone vote.
> A nothing, a nobody, he watered the cream for a living in Buffalo.
> Shears Robust. It's where they sell the lawn mowers from a book.
> The World's Serious.
> Your father, the man who can't hammer a nail through butter.

My grandfather, I add to the list, the man who sandwiched his mistakes in English between two jokes.

The store flourished. My grandmother worked beside him, while his daughters studied music and gave recitals: O Wild Red Rose, my mother dressed in petals sang. My grandfather emerged from the bungalow on weekends with an axe in his hand, muscle and shoulder blade beneath the strings of his undershirt, gray work pants strapped with a belt around his stringy body. He looked a little like a wolf himself, though not a ballerina. Wood chips flew as his activity spoke out for him: Don't just sit there. Do something, make something, be something, someone.

"So I climbed mountains," said my mother, "took elocution lessons, went to Montreal to study French. And when I dared to spend a summer with your father in New Jersey, I got these postcards: 'Go ahead, stay wherever you want to, but there's nothing better than Lake Mohican, not even Paris, France, or Leningrad. And don't come back to this place too soon, because we're full up with guests.'"

Filial, loyal, dying to leave him, she returned the next summer with a husband who came from the same part of the world as her father did.

"Jake was already old, blind in one eye. It must have been the diabetes." It's my father speaking now. "And every time, well, I didn't really mind him nudging my croquet ball into the ragweed, but your mother, that's another story. This kind of monkey business drove her wild. Then on Sunday, we had a game and again, that nudge through the wicket and so he won, just before we were on our way home. And so your mother started in on him. But this time into the Buick—right, Helene?—he jumped. Driving a hundred miles an hour down that

Stony Creek Road to Troy where he handed his store over to Segesta. I mean it. Gave it to this younger fellow, very honest. Shouted, 'Go ahead and take it all away from me. You've been stealing me blind right along.' Segesta pleaded with Jake to let him pay for it. Later, the fellow brought money to your grandmother on the sly.

"Now what kind of sense does that make? When it's his daughter he's mad at. Or me maybe, for marrying her. And that store, how he loved it. Another thing I never understood: if Jake wanted to retire, why not take his half of the store and sell it, like normal people do? What was all the rage about? I don't believe in Freud. But I think the reason that your mother hated him was syphilis. He got it from the Polish girl, who cleaned for them. In those days, they thought it was hereditary."

"I was pregnant," from my mother. "We lived way out in Bensonhurst, in Brooklyn. Papa was in the hospital uptown. Mama had just died. He was in Flower and Fifth Avenue or some such place. It took an hour and a half on the BMT to get there, but I went to see him every day. Troy was a one-horse town as far as medicine went, said Papa. But really, I think he was ashamed. His hands shook. I felt sorry for him, so I stood, big as a house, on the subway to go and visit. Nobody offered me a seat.

"At the hospital, he kept two lists. The people who'd come to see him or sent cards on one list. The ones who had forgotten on the other.

"Maybe I had to go to the obstetrician. I've forgotten why I didn't come one day. The next afternoon he picked up his betrayers list and pointed to my name on top. Then he covered his face with his hands and cried and cried. I was a rotten daughter. I'd never loved him.

"After that, I made your father come with me. So Papa would have someone to talk to.

"A few weeks later, I was in the hospital myself and he was back in Lake Mohican. I'm not ready for this, I thought. My legs open. Interns, everyone, could come and take a peek. How resentful I felt. Then it came to me with the pushing that it didn't matter if I was ready or resentful, the child was ready to be born. That was the difference between Papa and me. Between men and women, maybe."

"Come quick," shouted Jake's neighbor. "You've got a grandchild."

But Jake refused to come to the phone to speak to his son-in-law, the man who couldn't hammer a nail through butter and the husband of the daughter who didn't love him. Instead, he went back into the bungalow and came out with a spade in his hand, which he carried down the dusty road into the forest.

A seedling came back beneath his arm.

After the planting, he washed his hands. "Bring up the baby," he called the hospital in Brooklyn. "There's something I want to show him in the yard."

"It was typical," according to my mother. "Why plant the tree on his property? Why not on mine? And why not say he was sorry, at least, for all those awful scenes he'd put me through?"

Nobody pointed out that she had no property. That she spent her winters in a rented flat in Brooklyn and her summers, after that pine got planted, at her father's bungalow here. And nobody pointed to the brilliance of my grandfather's ploy, the problems he had solved with that pine, the apologies and pleas he had avoided.

And how unhappy my grandfather was when he found the first pine was a girl and not a grandson will be skipped over. He'd had enough daughters. For me, his unhappiness had been a puzzlement. My fascinating grandpa's lack of interest in my fascinating being and accomplishments. Jealousy reached retrospectively towards my roots when the second pine he planted turned out to be my brother Jonathan, golden-haired and bright blue-eyed, like Grandpa and the Russian ballerina.

And like a toothless, stubble-chinned Rumpelstiltskin in an undershirt, Jake stood beside my brother's crib. "He's too good-natured. Why doesn't he cry a little? Is he retarded?"

For only idiots, according to Jake, were ever satisfied. Only fools were ever happy. To be smart was to be critical. Then no one could pull the wool over your eyes.

The two pines before me now are more or less the same height, despite the difference in their planting times and the thin and rocky soil on this lot. "These things even out," my pacific father murmured once, "in adult pine trees."

"Jake was mad for your brother." My father. "What a smart kid. How quick. The usual. Your grandma had died by then. His love, I'd say, was aggravated by his loneliness. He dragged Jon around in that Rival Dog Food Wagon. Jonny hollering, Faster, go faster, and poor Jake, he must have been seventy-something, would work himself into a lather. Then he'd come inside and boast, 'That's some smart kid. Already he's got me working for him.'"

But one day Jonathan climbed out of the wagon and ran across the road to the ball field to watch some bigger boys play catch. Faster, faster towards the playing field, away from Grandpa running after him in his old man's shapeless carpet slippers. Then the old man stepped on a nail or something sharp on the road. The nail pierced the slipper and the skin inside, but Jake, who barely noticed, kept on running. Then catching Jonathan by his skinny polo-shirted shoulders, he smacked his grandson's face. Two sets of blue eyes stared at each other appraising, astonished.

"I was surprised he cared that much about me,"

reported Jonathan. "Weird how at that age, I knew it. Then we both went back to the bungalow and kept our mouths shut about what happened. It seemed too intimate in a way to talk about, and the old man maybe was ashamed, chasing what he loved instead of running from it."

"He didn't say a word about the foot, of course," from my mother. "The toes cut out of his carpet slippers. I schlepped him back to the city when I noticed how much he was shuffling and they dangled his leg from the ceiling, dripping bottled stuff into his veins, but it was hopeless, he was diabetic. They had to cut the leg off by October."

"I still dream," added Jonathan, "of Grandpa chasing me. He's legless, with an axe. I wake up and thank God I live in California. But really. It was time to get out of there, out of that family. I made up the mountains here before I'd ever seen them."

Everyone has agreed that Grandpa in the hospital refused to see Jonathan, waiting in the hall, but no one knew why. Was the boy like Hebrew or that pine forest in Riga, something to flee from, and then encircle? Or something he loved, like his daughter or his store, that he threw away for fear of losing? His daughters entered the darkness of the hospital room and found the only light was a wrestling match on television. Gorgeous George versus somebody not so gorgeous named Hans. "Turn it off," Grandpa shouted as he stared mesmerized by two hulking bodies with their arms around each other. Hair pulling. Thuds on the mat. Someone in the corner being sponged. Then somebody's hand held for a second before somebody flipped them upside down. "It's so brutal, I don't see how anyone can watch," Jake muttered as he leaned forward.

"And how he learned at eighty," said my mother, "to walk with a prosthesis I'll never know. I saw him do it. Down the hall towards the light above the nurses' station. The nurses, they were wonderful women, cheered him. They held his hand up like a champion. 'Get me out of here,' he muttered. 'There's only old people and cripples in this place.'

"But I'll never figure it out. Did I admire his self-delusion or despise it?"

His last instructions, written in a shaky syphilitic hand: "Burn me, if I don't commit suicide first. No funeral." He handed them to my mother, who obeyed him when he died a few years later, as she'd obeyed in life. He went up in smoke. My brother and I forgot him for a long youthful while, then began in middle age to make calls across a continent to talk about a man who was now ashes.

Nobody remembered whether he died the year my mother cut her foot or whether Jonathan was in high school then. Jonathan remembered my mother's cut foot. "I had to cry to get her to a doctor. I was a *boy* in high school, crying. And she was diabetic. She could have lost the thing, like he did. How many times, I thought, do we have to go through this same story? Only there was penicillin now. Or some wonder other drug. 'You didn't have to get upset,' she told me in that little girl's voice she uses sometimes. 'Still, it's nice to know you love me.'"

I worry about those pines my grandfather planted. I worry about my mother selling the bungalow to strangers who look for the source of the darkness at the center of their house and find it, find them, lined up outside. A man arrives in a truck with a buzz saw and cuts the trees down, stacking logs neatly in a pile by the chimney outside. All of us will feel relieved for a moment, Jonathan in California, me in New York, and my mother flying between us, visiting grandchildren. Then freed from something, blander, less contentious, more content, we'll feel what? Be what? Say what to each other and our children?

The strangers will sit, warming their hands at the fireplace, poking at pine logs to make the fire burn brighter until the woodpile is gone.

But now I get up off the stoop and start down the road to where the forest is. The road is dusty, but there's mud on the path through the woods, soft and then harder. Then ruts appear and finally an impasse. Branches too heavy to lift lie piled, trapped between trees they've broken from in some storm, and the trees on the other side. I stand before the woodpile, listening to bird calls, then something thrashing through the forest—a deer, raccoon, porcupine, or wolf.

Often after my father has said something that infuriates me, he'll add, "It's only words. I don't see what you're getting so excited about."

I've calmed myself by blaming the soldiers who criss-crossed his town and his tongue, dropping languages like pine needles for him to pick up, Russian, Polish, German, besides his Yiddish, Hebrew, Aramaic. My father, like my grandfather, uses words for what he knows already: doing business, praying, telling well-worn jokes. While for saying what he's never heard before, he takes to gestures.

But that animal is coming closer. And I spot a place to put my foot up on the branches. Twigs scratch my palms as I climb up the pile, then stumble and pitch forward, sliding down the other side. My knees get banged against the stony ground. The dirt on my hands is damp and full of pine needles. In the darker, wetter part of the forest later on, I find logged patches, scorched places, scars deep as Riga in the ground. □

United Jewish Appeal

Michael Blumenthal

My grandmother was 89 and blind
and I was a young boy hungry for quarters
so, in the waning light
of Sunday afternoons, my parents gone,
I would ring the doorbell
(my friend Raymond smirking
from behind the stairwell) and listen
for the slow shuffle of slippers
on the linoleum, the soft thump
of her body against the closet.

She would come to the door,
my parakeet Jerry trapped in her hairnet,
stammering a *Who's there?*
in minimal English, between the chain
and the doorjamb and, without hesitancy
or shame, in a cracked, mock-Hasidic voice,
I'd answer: *United Jewish Appeal*
swaying my hand, like a small plane
moving over an airstrip, toward her.

She would open the door—tentative,
timid, charity having won out over terror—
and reach her palms into the hallway
the way she reached out under the candles
to bless me on Sabbath. *My daughter . . .*
she would stammer, *she is not home now,*
poking her eyes like Borges into the vastness.
A better heart than mine was
might have stopped there, but I was a boy
ravenous for malteds and baseball cards,
so I repeated the words of my small litany,
United Jewish Appeal, and reached my hand out again
until it almost touched the blue print of her smock.

All the while the parakeet sat there,
dropping its small coils of birdshit onto her hair
until she retreated again
down the long yellow hallway,
reading the braille of the walls with her hands
as she made her way, and I would wink
at my good friend Raymond behind the stairs
when the rattle of change clanged out
from my parents' bedroom, and we heard again
the slow sweep of her feet, and, at last,
the shiny fruit of my cleverness and hunger
fell into my palm, and my grandmother Johanna,
the parakeet still flapping like a crazed duck,
closed the door behind her,
leaving me and my friend Raymond
to frolic off into the sun-licked
agnostic streets of Washington Heights,
full of the love of grandmothers
and of change, forever singing the praises
of the United Jewish Appeal. □

Michael Blumenthal is the director of the Creative Writing Program at Harvard. He has just finished work on a novel entitled Weinstock Among the Dying.

Current Debate: Abortion Politics

The Left's Wrong Turn on Abortion

Michael J. Quirk

The recent discussion on abortion in *Tikkun,* while refreshingly free of the shrill polemic that usually graces the rhetoric of pro-choice and pro-life advocates alike, strikes me as being yet another example of "prepackaged politics." There is an unstated assumption in all these articles that any respectable leftist position on abortion must include, however ambivalently, support for legal abortion on demand. Those on the Left who have their doubts about abortion, such as Christopher Hitchens, are castigated as sexists for not voicing "politically correct" opinions.

I worry about this sort of divide-and-conquer rhetoric, for it plays directly into the hands of the Right, which also believes in "prepackaged politics" and does not hesitate to grab the moral high ground so often ceded by the Left. As a communitarian, I am troubled by the Left's insouciance toward abortion, and by its reluctance to question whether the agenda set by *Roe v. Wade* squares with its own principles and hopes. But I am even more troubled by the Right's refusal to consider the ethical and legal complexities of abortion, and by its predilection to moralize in a social and political vacuum. Those who think the Left has taken a wrong turn on abortion need to engage in sympathetic criticism and encourage constructive discussion; otherwise support for the Left's agenda may suffer serious erosion.

Ruth Rosen and Carole Joffe both define the political dimension of abortion in terms of women's reproductive rights. In this they are the mirror image of orthodox pro-lifers, who define it in terms of the fetus's right to life. What nobody dares to question is the shared idiom of this political battle, the very idea of self-evident and inalienable rights. For both the pro-choice and pro-life orthodoxies, rights are above politics and beyond dispute. No one should be too surprised, then, that abortion is less a matter for discussion than for verbal war: rights, whether those of women or the unborn, are brandished as conversation-stoppers, as manifest truths that only the morally or intellectually deformed would fail to recognize.

The rights-based pro-choice stance must be judged defective. It is radically individualistic.

I think it is high time to ask: What is the nature of such rights? Does it make sense to keep on introducing such rights as "givens" when the very idea of self-evident and incorrigible truths has been discredited by almost all of twentieth-century philosophy? If the moral theory of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment is no longer viable, then is there any reason to think that we can use its moral concepts, such as rights, without fear of distortion, anachronism, or inconsistency? Might not the discourse of rights carry with it a very real danger—that of serving as an ideological smoke screen behind which all sorts of harmful and self-serving behavior might be justified?

For any appeal to rights to be intelligible, such rights must be placed in an entirely different conceptual context than that of the Enlightenment-inspired idea of self-evidence. To respect a person's rights is to perform one's duties toward that person, which in turn are dependent upon and given content by virtues which secure the good of both the individual and the community. In this interpretation, "having a right" is a highly refined, derivative notion: one cannot introduce rights without defining and describing an entire complex of moral and political goods. Indeed, each right presupposes the truth of an entire systematic vision of "the good life" embodied in and determined by the life of a concrete community. In short, one cannot begin to address any issue concerning rights unless one has some idea of the sort of person one ought to be, and the sort of community one wants to create. One must also determine the kind of character that constitutes a full and exemplary human life, and the shared ideals to which the community can aspire. One could not begin to tabulate the rights of fetuses or pregnant women without a prior awareness of how one ought to act toward them, and this in turn cannot be specified without some shared story about how good persons and good communities treat women and the unborn.

If this vision of community is the sole context in which one can make sense of rights, then the rights-based pro-choice stance must be judged defective. It assumes that the right to an abortion is more basic than any benefits the community might secure by limiting or regulating abortion. It is radically individualistic. Rosen, for example, assumes that the right to a "personal decision" on abortion is more basic than reforms designed to "encourage fewer abortions"; Joffe makes a similar argument when she brushes off Ruth Anna Putnam's negative moral appraisal of most post-*Roe* abortions, describing it as mere subjective preference. "Reproductive rights" thus become trumps in any discussion of the community's efforts to achieve the collective goal of lessening reliance on abortion, which no one, pro-choice

Michael J. Quirk is an adjunct associate professor of philosophy at Pace University, New York, and the author of a number of articles on contemporary moral and political theory.

or pro-life, deems a positive good. But such trump-playing perpetuates the idea that the individual takes precedence over the community, that political society has no claim upon the individual *qua* citizen, that politics must be limited by procedural norms that leave to the individual the task of defining and pursuing his or her good, and that we can understand what rights are and what they enjoin without considering what is good for us as moral agents and how such decisions affect public life.

The problem with this social and cultural individualism is that it shares essential premises with the economic liberalism it claims to abhor. One might as well argue that the shabby policies of a Frank Lorenzo, while destructive to the well-being of thousands of working citizens, are nonetheless protected by his managerial right to dispose of the property of Eastern Airlines's shareholders as he sees fit. Of course this economic individualism is just ideological fog. In treating Eastern's labor force as nothing more than nonliquid overhead, Lorenzo has failed in his duties as a manager and a human being precisely in giving corporate interests pride of place over the common good. But one cannot condemn Lorenzo on these grounds and continue to finesse the abortion issue as a procedural issue of rights—not without contradicting oneself. If economic individualism is wrong for privatizing "capitalist acts between consenting adults" on the grounds that such acts cannot but invade the public sphere, then social and cultural individualism is wrong for the same reason. Why should we suppose that abortion has no damaging effect on the common good, on our shared moral self-image?

It should be reasonably clear by now that I, for one, don't think abortion on demand has been particularly good for Americans. Since *Roe v. Wade,* the fetus has counted for naught in legal terms. But how can the legal personhood of the fetus be consistently denied if one delegates the metaphysical issue of fetal personhood to the backwaters of private choice and preference? Can the law afford to be philosophically neutral here? Doesn't consideration of the legal status of the fetus require a verdict on its moral and metaphysical status—whether it really is a person, or whether we ought to treat it as such—if the issue is to be rationally resolved?

Larry Letich at least takes these metaphysical issues seriously when he claims "a fetus is no more a baby ... than an egg is a chick." In dismissing the humanity of first trimester fetuses, Letich acts as if we possess unambiguous criteria for determining whether something is or isn't a human being. Yet we lack such criteria for identifying chickens, let alone human beings. Is the protoplasm within the eggshell a chicken or isn't it? It possesses the complete genetic code of a chicken but otherwise is unlike anything found in the coop. Is the third trimester fetus more like a three-week-old infant or a three-week-old blastocyst? The second trimester fetus? The nine-week-old embryo? What criteria of similarity or dissimilarity are morally relevant here? If the blastocyst is unlike the infant in a vast number of aspects, but like the infant in that its biological future is probably similar, what precise standards can settle the issue of whether the blastocyst and the infant belong to the same class of beings or not? To ask the question is to answer it: we do not possess such standards, because for each example we advance there is a convincing counterexample. Therefore it is legitimate to ask: If all rational, philosophical attempts thus far to determine the humanity of fetal life have not succeeded, might not it be at least plausible to presume the fetus's humanity at conception, thereby giving the fetus the benefit of the doubt? And might it be at least equally plausible to suppose that this moral indeterminacy at least be a factor in deliberating about legal access to abortion?

Metaphysics aside, there are other reasons to wonder about *Roe*'s repercussions on the common good. Isn't it also fair to ask whether, in taking a laissez-faire attitude toward abortion, the court might have compromised the common good by eroding important facets in our collective character that provide the basis for sympathy, self-discipline, healthy and meaningful sexuality, and compassion toward others? If *Roe v. Wade* has, in effect, served to legitimate abortion as just one more contraceptive device (recall Joffe's tale about abortion "repeaters"), then we must consider the dangers of a rights-based jurisprudence that races past

questions about law and its relation to the sort of character we should desire to have.

Pro-choice advocates are on more solid ground when they point to the potential harms the repeal of *Roe v. Wade* would foist upon women. Putnam, Joffe, and Letich all note that the burdens of restrictive abortion laws will be largely avoided by those able to pay for abortions and thus will be borne primarily by poor women. Letich seems to be trying to edge the pro-choice movement away from its reliance upon the rhetoric of procedural rights toward a discussion which highlights the suffering of women denied safe legal abortions: the abandoned welfare mother, the pregnant teenager, the woman with a genetically deformed fetus, and so on. He stresses the need for abortions rather than the right to abortions.

Abortion on demand is an emblem of our lack of civic virtue, moral imagination, and solidarity; this very lack creates the "need" for many abortions.

It is hard to dispute the contention that legal abortion on demand will at least ameliorate much of this pain. But it could be argued that legalized abortion helps perpetuate the causes of these profound evils by masking them from public inspection. Thus the good achieved by giving poor women unrestricted access to abortion helps forestall any serious discussion in our society about poverty and distributive justice, especially among women and children. The avoidance of "public shame" prevents us from acknowledging even deeper shame—the condemnation of the unwed mother taking precedence over our willingness as a community to welcome all human beings into the world.

In short, I wonder whether the justification of abortion on the grounds that it alleviates suffering is a symbol of our reluctance to make certain difficult social and political choices, a reluctance that is in large part due to the inability of modern societies to instill a sense of justice and loyalty in their members strong enough to spark a measure of sacrifice for the sake of the common good. Abortion on demand is an emblem of our lack of civic virtue, moral imagination, and solidarity; this very lack creates the "need" for many abortions. The suffering of poor women can be alleviated by granting them abortions, but such suffering can also be palliated by easing the crush and grind of these women's poverty. The pain of an unwed teen can be eased through abortion, but it also can be eased if society gives her the sort of encouragement, love, and trust she could use in her time of need. Abortion is a solution to the problem of suffering and pain, but it is not the only solution. To think that the political and social realities of America in the 1990s necessitate ease of access to abortion is to confuse realism with cynical resignation—an awkward sentiment for the Left to endorse.

I agree with Putnam that there is a strong, prima facie moral presumption against abortion, except in cases when the fetus threatens the life of the mother, or in cases of rape, when pregnancy is the outcome of an act of violence. But the general immorality of abortion in no way dictates the politics of abortion. Under conditions of radical conceptual uncertainty and public discord, I think that the common good might be best served by limiting abortion on demand to the first few weeks of pregnancy, when the uncertainty of fetal humanity is undeniably greater. Later abortions could be limited to cases of rape or incest, as well as those cases in which the mother's life or health is gravely endangered.

Then again, the common good might not be well served by this political recipe. The point I want to make is: we cannot know how to settle this political issue until we drop both the pro-choice idea that abortion is simply a reproductive rights issue, and the pro-life idea that the legality of any particular abortion must precisely reflect the moral legitimacy of a given situation.

This latter idea—that no immoral abortion must be legally permitted, or that virtually all abortions are on the same moral and legal plane—is a grotesque oversimplification. Insofar as pro-lifers indulge in such oversimplification, they do not acknowledge that justice is neither exhausted by nor necessarily reflected in the standing laws of a government. Getting the court to reverse a key decision or Congress to enact a constitutional amendment may make abortion illegal, but it would not solve the larger problem—why people feel such a need for on-demand abortions.

The great pathos of the pro-life movement is that it fails to recognize that abortion is legitimized by the very political and social arrangements that conservatives take for granted. It is presumptuously empty and abstract to exhort people to "practice restraint" and to "sacrifice" their interests to the needs of others without indicating how such restraint is integral to achieving their true good, or without asking whether such entreaties would be terribly meaningful to most people. It is not merely that many people are not trained in these virtues, nor merely that these virtues are not reinforced by a supportive community. These virtues are unintelligible against an economic background where limitless consumption is raised to the order of an imperative, and in a social context in which the key maxim is "I've got mine; the hell with you." We can hardly expect individuals to recognize their moral stake in society if society refuses to recognize its stake in individuals, and so we tolerate a world in which individuals and societies alike are empty of care and concern.

A social and political order in which genuine concern is the order of the day would be informed by what Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, the archbishop of Chicago, has called "a consistent ethic of life." But such an ethic does not come cheap. Consistency would require those opposed to abortion to apply their pro-life principles to war, domestic violence, the legal system, medicine, and economic justice. It would demand an unflagging effort, in Putnam's words, to "change the moral climate" of the nation, an effort more concerned with transforming hearts, minds, and communities than with scoring legislative or judicial points, or with winning an abstract battle that has become as wearisome as it is venomous. □

A Response to Michael J. Quirk

Beyond Patriarchy

Barbara Katz Rothman

I'm sorry that Michael J. Quirk has grown tired of the "abstract" battle, the wearisome and venomous discussion, and the scoring of legislative and judicial points that the issue of abortion in America seems to him to have become. But it is astonishing how *concrete* the issue can be, how unlike a game, when you contemplate the problem with your period five days late. Six days late. Seven and are those tingles in the breast anything? Eight days.... Right around then, the problem *does* seem radically "individualistic," and the need for a matching solution imperative.

Right then, for a woman who does not want to enter motherhood, the solution is simply not to be pregnant—please, please God let this achiness of the belly be a coming period. Oh please let that sensation be a trickle of blood. And if the universe or the body or whatever gods there are won't supply the solution, by making the pregnancy a false call or making it go away, then let there be another way to fix it.

That's what abortion is about. Late periods. Tingling breasts. Repeated trips to the bathroom to search for a sign, just a tiny sign of blood.

Sure this dilemma is translated into wearisome discussions of "rights," of individual freedoms, and of privacy. But when people feel trapped, they *do* take the problem personally. Quirk raises a valuable point when he asks for sensitivity to the sources of such feelings: the source may not be the pregnancy, but poverty; not the pregnancy, but shame over sexuality; not the pregnancy, but societal attitudes toward people with disabilities. If society were to ensure a decent standard of living for the children of all mothers; accept the sexuality, and its consequences, of all women, including young women; and welcome all children, whether able-bodied and able-minded or not—then some women might feel less anxious about a particular pregnancy. And then again, they may not. With all of the support, acceptance, and love in the world, a woman may still want desperately not to be pregnant, may still find herself locked in a toilet cubicle, silently crying and pleading with her body to produce a rescuing few drops of blood.

Like Quirk and Ruth Anna Putnam, I too do not always feel comfortable with some of the reasons a particular woman may give for choosing an abortion. Then again, I do not always feel comfortable with the reasons why a particular woman decides to have children. People don't always choose to marry or not to marry; to move or not to move; to have surgery or not to have surgery the way that I would choose. Aside from certain requirements for the safety and well-being of individuals, the government allows people to make such important personal decisions on their own. So why do so many think that the state has the right to intervene in a woman's decision about abortion?

The roots of such assumptions, I believe, lie in our patriarchal tradition, which defines the relationship between women and the children we bear. I refer not to "sexism," or "male dominance," but to the literal or technical meaning of patriarchy—the rule of fathers. Rachel Biale's article on abortion in Jewish law (*Tikkun,* Jul./Aug. 1989) makes the point that though the fetus is defined as part of the mother's body, if the fetus is damaged, the husband is compensated. The fetus is *his* progeny. In a patriarchal system, children are the children of men, even though carried by the bodies of women. In recent years, having moved beyond traditional patriarchy, society has begun to focus less on the seed of the father and more on the fetus. But now the fetus is seen *not* as part of its mother, but as a separate being planted within the woman, who is merely a vessel. It is this separate being within that calls forth the energy, compassion, anger, venom, love, and hate which characterize the abortion debate.

The social construction of the fetus, and most especially the early, pre-quickening fetus or embryo, is a relatively recent phenomenon. The ability to penetrate the hidden world of the fetus, to make women's bodies invisible so that the fetus can be seen, has been used—with great passion and power—by those on both sides of the abortion

Barbara Katz Rothman is professor of sociology at Baruch College and the Graduate Center of the CUNY. Her books include The Tentative Pregnancy: Prenatal Diagnosis and the Future of Motherhood *(Viking-Penguin, 1986) and* Recreating Motherhood: Ideology and Technology in a Patriarchal Society *(Norton, 1989).*

debate. Right-to-life advocates have used these techniques to make it seem that the fetus walks among us, a being who can capture our compassion. Yet these same techniques are being marshaled in support of the right to abort. Women are being encouraged to undergo prenatal screening tests to ascertain the condition of the fetus and to abort "defective" fetuses. The public is perhaps most accepting of abortion in such cases; fear of disability, repugnance toward the mentally retarded, and firmly embedded cultural ideas about health combine to shape the attitude that sanctions abortion in cases of "fetal defects." This argument for legalized abortion, no less than the arguments against legalized abortion, focuses not on the woman, but on the fetus within.

It is important to remember that just as not all arguments against abortion come from the Right, not all arguments *for* legalized abortion are either feminist arguments or arguments from the Left. The feminist pro-choice voice has been only one of the forces for legalized abortion. Margaret Sanger made her alliances both with the population control movement and the eugenics movement of the twenties. The contemporary feminist reproductive rights movement does the same, making its own uneasy alliances with the new eugenics movement, which looks at embryos and fetuses as products suitable for quality-control testing, and with the population control movement, whose agenda is often implicitly classist and racist.

That the politics of abortion in America has made for some strange bedfellows does not constitute an argument against legalized abortion. I believe, however, that it demands great clarity from those of us who support the right of access to abortion for every woman in any pregnancy. Such a position must support all women who decide that an abortion is their solution to a particular pregnancy. That includes women who have abortions for reasons some of us may not like. We must stop apologizing for our support, stop feeling abashed by "repeaters," and stop paying obeisance to the potential life in a fertilized egg. We need to turn away from the patriarchal focus on the "seed," or product of conception, and toward a *woman-centered* understanding of pregnancy and abortion.

Sure this dilemma is translated into wearisome discussions of "rights," of individual freedoms, and of privacy. But when people feel trapped, they do take the problem personally.

There is no contradiction, no need for embarrassment, in saying that women take motherhood very seriously and yet may choose to have abortions relatively "casually." Abortion is one way a woman prevents herself from entering into an unwanted relationship, one way she can avoid the serious, lifetime commitment of motherhood. Women must have ways of avoiding such a commitment precisely because we do take it so seriously. It is because of this commitment, not in spite of it, that some abortions are relatively easy. The meaning of a pregnancy for a woman is what shapes the meaning an abortion holds for her.

It is time to reject absolutely the patriarchal principles—principles deeply embedded and perhaps inherent in Judaism—that have shaped our thinking about abortion. The trajectory of life in a patriarchy is from father to son: we trace back the person to the moment of fertilization, as if before that there were nothing. This is *not* the experience of women. We hold potential life within us month after month. Ovulate in January and there is a potential life to be born in September, a life already shaped by its genetics. Have we a right not to give that "life" what Quirk called the "benefit of the doubt," to allow that brown-eyed, brown-haired September baby with dimples not to come to birth when all it needs is a chance to be fertilized? But we don't conduct a great moral debate about the cutting off of the children of women in their potential; we don't ask every fourteen-year-old, every nun, every grandmother, to run out and seek fertilization.

From a woman-centered perspective, we don't have to make such an enormous distinction between contraception and abortion. As part of contraception, as a backup to safe barrier methods, as the response to contraceptive oversights and errors, failures, and foolishnesses, abortion expresses an unwillingness to make a baby, a decision to stop the division of self, to keep a bit of oneself from going on to become someone else. From a woman-centered perspective, such an abortion is an easier choice than the ending of a pregnancy because the fetus has been tested and found wanting.

From a woman-centered perspective, we could accept the fact that for one woman, experiencing one pregnancy, an abortion is a minor inconvenience and a small price she expects to pay now and again for an active sex life and the use of a barrier contraceptive; and that for another woman, or for the same woman who is pregnant at another time, an abortion feels like the death of a loved baby.

Having accepted this seeming contradiction, we could get on with the business of providing women with access to abortion, along with access to child care, health care, and other human needs. Such a goal could be understood to be not in opposition to, but very much a part of, a consistent ethic of life, very much a part of the moral climate we seek. □

A Response to Michael J. Quirk

Who's Directing Traffic?

Isabel Marcus

A self-confessed communitarian, Michael Quirk is concerned about what he views as the Left's unquestioning acceptance of the feminist agenda, which he describes as "abortion on demand." Already we must be wary of Quirk, for the phrase "abortion on demand" hardly does justice to the feminist position on abortion, which is just one element of a broad agenda on reproductive rights. Although Quirk claims he wants to engage in "sympathetic criticism" of the Left for its "wrong turn" on the abortion issue, his piece is harshly dismissive of the bases for the Left's choice to support the feminist agenda for reproductive rights.

"What does the label 'communitarian' mean in both theory and practice?" Quirk tells us that a communitarian acknowledges that community is prior to the individual, from which several principles follow: First, society's claim on the citizen overrides the claim of the individual on society; second, whatever rights the individual has must be derived from an understanding of what is "good" for society; and third, that the practice of politics should not be limited by procedural norms (by which I assume that Quirk means to criticize the liberal emphasis on form of the law over substance). Clearly this abbreviated set of beliefs raises numerous important questions. How is the community defined? Is "citizen" a formal category or a substantive one? By what procedures does a society arrive at a notion of the good? And what place, if any, is made for those who dissent from a community's determination of the "good"? Quirk does not consider these questions. He does, however, state that commitment to a communitarian perspective necessitates scrapping the tired old "rights" discourse, which is premised on Enlightenment notions of self-evident and incorrigible truths.

At the core of the feminist vision, however, is the charge to articulate an inclusive identity for women, who throughout history have been excluded or marginalized. Such a charge requires questioning the entire existing social order. No wonder critics demand that feminists set aside this vision in the name of the good of the community, for feminism has appealing and terrifying transformative potential. Quirk's blast is yet another instance of men telling women that an emphasis on rights is misplaced because it forswears community in the name of creating and protecting a separate identity.

Of course the feminist vision ascribes to rights-based theory. A group which is seeking access to the resources of American society would be foolish to eschew a philosophical system that has great cultural and legal power.

True, Quirk considers rights-based theory philosophically salvageable. When rights are dependent on and derivative from a vision articulated presumably both about and by persons who are good or at least seek to be good in a community that is oriented toward the good, Quirk finds such rights perfectly acceptable. Presumably only after this vision has been articulated can one identify rights for anyone, though in this context Quirk is quick to jump in with his concern for the rights of "fetuses and pregnant women."

Note here that Quirk shifts parameters seemingly ever so slightly, yet with profound consequences. The first parameter he creates is "women and the unborn." Many women would argue that the term "the unborn" tilts the proposed discussion. The unborn blastocyte, zygote, fetus, embryo, or child? Clearly in all but the latter case, the term is not applicable. This is far more than a semantic quarrel. The second parameter Quirk creates consists of fetuses and pregnant women. This is a device designed to define a subclass which is determined by biological function, and to further divide the subclass of women from fetuses—thereby elevating the fetuses.

A woman who considers whether she is able to care for a fetus which she carries to term in her own body is not just thinking of herself.

Quirk condemns the rights-based pro-choice stance because he believes it assumes a hierarchy of rights, of which a right to abortion is the most basic; in other words, it is an attempt to bypass the prerequisite discussion, which he has already cast in highly charged terms. Here Quirk dismisses the widely discussed feminist issue of reproductive rights, of which abortion is only one aspect. By separating abortion from other reproductive issues, Quirk does violence both to history and to contemporary discourse. Feminists emphasize abortion rights because these rights are under attack. Yet feminists are committed to overarching issues of bodily integrity, autonomy, and self-assertion, all of which play an integral part in their understanding of sexuality and reproduction. The feminist agenda is broad. It demands that women have access to safe and effective contraception; that the range of available contraceptive choices must be expanded; that there should be careful consideration of the role and impact of alternative reproductive technologies which experiment on women's bodies; that there must be no abuse of steril-

Isabel Marcus is a professor of law and adjunct professor of political science at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She is currently on sabbatical at the Bunting Institute, Radcliffe College, and is writing a book on abortion.

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ization; that adequate prenatal care and day care must be available; that society should provide more employment opportunities that do not automatically impoverish women; and that all employees should have safe working conditions, including adequate leave and vacation policies for their employees.

Quirk describes two of the pro-choice contributors to *Tikkun* as proponents of "radical individualism," a stance that relies on subjective preference as the basis and justification for action and choice, thereby placing the individual above the community. Rosen anticipates this aspect of Quirk's critique by reminding us that such allegations are not new. Historically, the supposed rewards connected to "radical individualism" did not extend to women—particularly those who happened to be pregnant. Rather, the term "selfish"—an allegation connoting an unacceptable disregard for others and characterized at best as unwomanly and self-serving and at worst as evil—has been applied to women's attempts to deal with sexuality and reproduction. This strategy is designed to make women respond with guilt and pain, sacrificing what they know from their personal experience for the sake of a mythological community.

I have read Rosen's and Joffe's pieces several times and I still find myself confused by Quirk's *ad feminam* allegations. Both women are openly concerned with community and, in fact, discuss a broad range of issues that deal with the tension between the needs of the community and the individual. Moreover, both of them underscore the fact that the decision to terminate a pregnancy is a moral one. A woman who considers whether she is able to care for a fetus which she carries to term in her own body is not just thinking of herself. She must take into account the material and social conditions of the community. What resources are available to her, and, more important, are those resources accessible? To label such a response as "subjective preference" strikes me as a misrepresentation. Instead this response is a painful, telling comment on the state of resources available to women in need. Surely this should serve to remind us that the control of reproduction is contested turf, and women have not been accorded their due for articulating the needs of those who are in the sentient world. The social, cultural, economic, and political costs of unwanted pregnancies for women are not seen as costs to men. Surely this is an extraordinarily powerful indictment of what Quirk would characterize as our "collective character" toward those whose metaphysical status is not open to the degree of indeterminacy which he admits is attached to blastocysts, zygotes, embryos, and fetuses. When he does speak of such indeterminacy, Quirk offers no persuasive reason why these developmental stages of a fertilized egg should be given "the benefit of the doubt," or equal status with a woman.

Quirk moves from an incomplete analysis of rights-based jurisprudence to a consideration of the potential harm and suffering caused by restrictive abortion laws. Women might suffer if they can't procure abortion, Quirk says, but their suffering can be alleviated in ways other than abortion. But even here Quirk is unable to keep the issue in context. Instead he relies on what, even for a non-philosopher like myself, is an obvious non sequitur—by giving poor women unrestricted access to abortion, Quirk says, society helps forestall serious discussions regarding distributive justice. This is a tenuous connection at best. Our indifference to poverty has deep economic and cultural roots which are not connected to abortion. Where, one must inquire, is there any evidence that redistribution of resources for poor women and children was a significant political issue when abortion was illegal? And where, one must inquire, is there any evidence that redistribution of resources for poor women and children is a significant issue now that Medicaid-funded abortions have been seriously curtailed? Recent initiatives for welfare reform have served only to further stigmatize and degrade women. By providing training only for low-paid jobs, by requiring women with young children to work outside the home whether they choose to or not, and by demanding that women justify even the most basic necessities for their children, these "reforms" have done more to degrade women than to help them.

Perhaps the most depressing aspect of Quirk's conclusion is his final sentence, which characterizes the issue of access to abortion as an "abstract battle." For those of us who escort patients to clinics, who work in clinics, or who are patients seeking medical services, this is a cruel misreading of reality. Ask anyone who has been there (if you plan to include them in your communitarian deliberations), Professor Quirk! □

Women's Business

Bérénice Reynaud

In 1978 director Claude Chabrol cast a talented young actress, Isabelle Huppert, in the title role of his *Violette*. The film was based on the case of an eighteen-year-old Parisian woman, Violette Nozière, who poisoned her parents in 1933 to get their money and spend it with her gigolo-cum-pimp lover. Two years ago, Chabrol (one of the original members of the French New Wave) and Huppert (now a major star) collaborated again on one of the most morally challenging French movies in recent years: *Story of Women*. Also based on a true story, Chabrol's new film tells of Marie Latour, the last woman guillotined in France.

Whereas Nozière was made a heroine by the surrealists—who saw in her crime a revolt against bourgeois morality—nobody spoke for Marie Latour in 1943 when she was sentenced to death by a special court that had been created to consider crimes against the state. Marie's crime? In a period of two years, she had helped some twenty women terminate their pregnancies—for her, strictly "women's business" (which is how the French title reads in a more literal translation).

Marie's crimes were committed with boiled water and rationed soap in a provincial kitchen. She performed her first abortion to help a neighbor, but Marie soon began to run her "clinic" as an increasingly lucrative business which enabled her to buy fruit preserves for her kids, nice clothes to make her pretty again after years in a loveless marriage, and champagne to drink in bed with her newfound lover. The Latour trial had none of the dark glamour of the Nozière case; instead, it reflected the grayness, cowardice, and uneasy selfishness of its time. Like Violette, Marie was an implicit rebel, and her lust for pleasure and money similarly led her beyond social norms. The world she revolted against was, however, no longer the self-satisfied Third Republic; it was a ruined country that had been occupied and humiliated—its men taken away to distant POW camps and its government given over to collaborators.

According to Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, women entertain an ambiguous and problematic relationship with the social structure: not being defined by the "phallic function," they are both within and without what he calls "the symbolic order," which is to say the Law. Hence, in a period of crisis, the behavior of some women will tend uncannily to reflect the specific malaise of the time in a distorted or "deviant" way—which turns them into easy targets for a witch-hunt. Violette's mercantile selfishness mirrored the "get rich" ethics of the Third Republic's bourgeoisie—though the acceptable (male) way to realize that dream was to invest in stocks or to exploit workers, not to kill one's parents. In occupied France, however, an ethos of survival prevailed, and a petty, frightened, and obdurate egoism permeated most social relationships. Marie, for example, agrees to help her neighbor without any reward in mind. But she makes sure not to use more of the rationed soap than necessary and asks to keep what is left.

The murkiness of Marie's political discourse is outlined in several instances. One day, going to her usual cafe, she discovers that her best friend Rachel has been arrested by the Germans. Why? She is a Jew. "This is absurd," says Marie. "Rachel couldn't have been a Jew. *She would have told me.*" Her sincere pain at her friend's disappearance finds expression neither in revolt against, nor a questioning of, the fate inflicted on the Jews in general. The only thing she minds is that *her* friend is gone.

In other instances, her political naiveté is contrasted with the more politically realistic views of the men around her. She smiles happily when Lucien, her lover, explains to her why he wasn't sent to work in Germany: "I do them little favors.... I keep my ears open and help them clean the town." Later, through Lucien's connections, she finds a surveillance job for her unemployed husband. The latter accepts because "it might reduce sabotage, and thus the number of hostages shot," and bitterly scolds her ignorance of the Germans' policy in the matter. "There is *a war* going on!" "I know," says Marie, sulking. "Anyhow, I am for the partisans." "Poor girl! You're for nothing! You're for yourself!" Her husband is correct, but Marie's weak, ridiculous stance "for the partisans" mirrors that of an entire nation of closeted patriots who decided to "join the Resistance" at the Liberation.

In a third instance, Marie literally collides head on with history. A partisan escapes from a Gestapo interrogation by jumping through a window and running through a street fair where Marie, her children, her hooker friend, and her lover are having fun. The partisan is eventually shot and collapses, with his eyes wide open, in Marie's arms. "He was looking at me," she remembers later, "as if he *knew* me." Did he indeed *know* that Marie was performing abortions, renting rooms to prostitutes, sleeping with a collaborator? Of course not, but Marie's reaction can be read as a cross section of the film as a whole: men tend to think that they *know* what Marie is about, while her entire being resists their analysis. Her half-defiant, half-no-nonsense attitude (in which "You don't know me" equals "You don't own me") wages an implicit struggle against male discourse. At the begin-

Bérénice Reynaud is the New York correspondent for Cahiers du Cinéma. *An independent curator and correspondent for international film festivals in the U.S. and Europe, she is a scholar-in-residence at the Whitney Museum on a Rockefeller Foundation grant.*

ning of the film, feeling that she has been a servant for all her married years, she manages some free time for herself (going to the cafe with Rachel). Later, warding off the sexual advances of a returning husband she no longer loves, she also fights for her freedom against the established code of marital rights and duties, although in this instance the freedom is negative.

The turning point in Marie's evolution takes place when she meets Lulu, the hooker, at the hairdresser's. Not only does Lulu become a sort of substitute for Rachel, but prostitution—with its apparent glamour, freedom, and transgression—fascinates Marie. To gain Lulu's attention and maybe her love, she cannot be "just a housewife." So she brags, hints at "illegal activities," demurely suggests she could help in case of unwanted pregnancy. For Lulu's gaze, Marie-the-housewife becomes Marie-the-abortionist. She has been seduced into Lulu's world—a world that, for most women of her condition, remains mysteriously, dangerously, and luridly "other."

Through the encounter between Lulu and Marie, *Story of Women* becomes a morality tale, and the film's power lies here, in Chabrol's complex treatment of the ethical issues underlying the narrative.

This is familiar territory for Chabrol, who was the first critic to have pointed out that Hitchcock's films involved an endless battle against evil:

> Hitchcock maintains that basic ambiguity of all his characters. Yet, he ... has too much faith in mankind ... not to find some excuse for those who have fallen.... But [these excuses] are the breach through which Satan rushes in.
>
> (*Cahiers du Cinéma,* Oct. 1954)

No matter how innocently the hooker and the abortionist perceive their respective activities, there has been a "contagion of evil" between Lulu and Marie. It is thanks to Lulu that Marie effortlessly slides into her new life: she discovers that she can make quite a lot of money through her "illegal activities," starts renting a room to hookers, and meets Lucien.

The problem of evil, however, is no longer perceived in the late eighties as it was in the forties and fifties. To begin with, it has been made more complex by new theories of sexual difference, implying that morality does not necessarily have the same meaning for women who are dominated by men as for men who dominate women. (One of the roots of evil might very well be this domination—once conceived as the expression of a theological order.) So, through the acerbic dialogues of his screenwriter, Ms. Colo Tavernier, Chabrol depicts women painstakingly struggling to express themselves and do what *they* want, rather than what *men* want from them.

Her half-defiant, half-no-nonsense attitude (in which "You don't know me" equals "You don't own me") wages an implicit struggle against male discourse.

This implicit combat between the sexes is powerfully expressed in the film's imagery. Most viewers remember Marie's face radiant with the glow of postcoital happiness in the hotel room where she had sex with Lucien. Lucien, however, is outside the frame, and the camera sensuously pauses on that single image. The framing, the golden light, Huppert's round shoulders, her white skin, her tousled strawberry hair, make her look like a perverse Madonna or a demure Venus in a Renaissance painting. Offscreen, we hear Lucien, as he half-playfully, half-callously tosses her dress at her face, signifying that "it is over." The whole sequence indicates that Marie has to fight hard for moments of pleasure.

The scene in the room is preceded by the visit of a woman announcing that her sister-in-law has died following Marie's ministrations. But what upsets Marie most is that this unfortunate conversation has made her late while she was on her way to meet Lucien. Her nervousness is motivated by fear as much as by the expectation of pleasure. When she finally arrives at the cafe where he is playing billiards, Lucien rudely ignores her, then declares, "I don't like my women to be late!" Similarly, when she comes home after this amorous interlude, her husband rebuffs her. So Marie's sexual activity is entirely bracketed by the demands placed on her by society as she encounters it in the Moral Order (represented by the sister-in-law, a woman who uses self-sacrifice as a way to deny her own pleasure), in men's attempts to control women's sexuality, and in the patriarchal order of marriage.

At the moment of her arrest, Marie's face is similarly bracketed by the gray figures of two plainclothes officers. Wearing her pretty printed dress and angora sweater, she plays with her children when the men enter. She turns back to face them, her face still bearing the expression of the previous moment's joy mixed now with a stubborn misunderstanding of the situation: "What do you want from me?"

Marie will never understand the answer to that question—no more than the men appointed as her judges will understand Marie. Not that she never had any doubts, but they were always expressed in relation to other women. For instance, after the visit of the sister-in-law, she confides in Lulu: "Do babies have a soul in their mother's bellies?" Lulu's answer, in its no-nonsense cynicism, is plain and admirable: "We should first be sure that their mothers have one!" Clearly, for both Lulu and Marie, two survivors toughened by Occupation hardships, theology is men's business, and the question of the existence of the soul is an idle one for someone threatened daily at the most tangible level of existence: the level of food, shelter, sex and its consequences.... The question resurfaces, albeit indirectly, in the conversation between Marie's lawyer and his friend, when they deplore the hypocrisy of a regime that wants to execute an abortionist for "killing babies" while it deports hundreds of Jewish children. Not all babies have souls—and they don't have the same rights either. As an imprisoned Marie points out bitterly, "Who's going to take care of *my* kids now?"

Despite her "lack of political consciousness," Marie takes on a spontaneous class position. The men who want to punish her have maids to look after their kids, while she has to manage by herself. Before she started making money, her kids had to eat a soup as clear and unappetizing as the one provided in the women's prison. What never comes to trial, also, is

how these aborted "babies" were conceived in the first place. Except in the case of the exhausted mother of too many children, most of the women seeking Marie's help have had their sex lives radically affected by the war. The boyfriend of one is drafted to work in Germany. Others are women married to POWs. In order to stave off their sexual loneliness, they'd had a fleeting affair with a stranger, or even a German. In other words, most of these unwanted pregnancies are the direct consequences of the French army's failure to fulfill their traditional role: protect the country, its institutions, and its families. The blow struck to French manhood in 1940 is metaphorically shown through the relationship between Marie and her husband. She no longer respects or obeys him; he is frustrated and angry. She finds him totally useless, and he takes vengeance by calling, pitifully, on a superior authority: the police.

The prosecutor's position—deploring the murders of these "babies" while France needs to replenish her population—is hypocrisy itself. Had they been born, these babies would have been stigmatized as illegitimate children, half-Krauts, or permanent reminders of their mothers' "sin." For this is really what the official state attitude is all about: punishing women. Thanks to movies like *The Sorrow and the Pity* and *Hiroshima Mon Amour,* we are now aware of the way in which those "last-minute partisans" treated women who had slept with Germans: their heads were shaved and they were often stripped in front of a jeering crowd, then chased through the streets. Marie Latour is "bad" because she made it possible for such women to rid themselves of the most visible sign of their "sin." The fact that she rented rooms to prostitutes, providing a discreet hideaway for their "shameful" trade, makes matters only worse.

Since the French army and Vichy government were unable to keep husbands at home, provide decent jobs for returning veterans, and help women to support their children, she honestly does not understand why they are so upset, when all she did was make the best of a bad situation. Her duty was to care for and protect *her own* children (and in spite of the pain she inflicts on her little boy by favoring his kid sister, she is portrayed as a good mother). Marie found it easier and more efficient to offer that care by providing abortions for women than by digging potatoes in a peasant's field rented for a few pennies. As Chabrol has said, crudely but accurately in an interview in *Cahiers du Cinéma,* May 1988, "To be an abortionist, in [Marie's] mind, is no more serious than unplugging sinks."

Chabrol's comments bring us back to the French and English titles of the film respectively. Marie's actions are, indeed, "women's business," but the film presents two conflicting ways of telling a story: in the first two-thirds of the narrative, we have a "story of women," told and enacted by women either without or against the patriarchal order. In the last third, we're presented with another, official story of the same women, this time retold by men, and brought to its logical climax at the guillotine. Men fare well in neither: we witness a parade of bitter, incompetent husbands, despised johns, selfish lovers, hypocritical judges, and "sympathetic" but ultimately cowardly lawyers (Marie's defense counsel does not even attend the execution and instead sends a young assistant who is more frightened than Marie is). At that fatal moment her concern, once again, is not metaphysical (she does not wonder if she'll go to heaven or not), but practical: "Does it hurt?" Significantly, the young man does not have an answer: "It's very quick." "But I want to know," she says, "Does it hurt?"

A simplistically religious film would have shown Marie touched by grace at the moment of her death. On the contrary (and this part of the film created havoc in Catholic France), she expresses her disgust at institutionalized religion in a scandalous version of Hail Mary. A moralistic film would have implied that Marie (like the classic *femme fatale*) took the wrong path because of her indifference to metaphysical or ethical issues. *Story of Women* takes up a more radical and frustrating stance. Chabrol and Tavernier seem to be saying that the definition of good and evil is largely constructed through the subject's gender and sociohistorical circumstance. Marie is no heroine. Yet she is neither a monster nor a victim—just a woman who fights hard for what she gradually assumes is her "right": better living conditions, more money, more pleasure. (Once again, are we so far from the most banal ethics of capitalism?)

It would be pointless to deduce an argument for or against abortion from Marie's story: the conditions under which she operated have little or nothing to do with the social dilemmas currently faced by pro-choice advocates or pro-lifers in contemporary industrialized countries. Yet when I programmed the film at last year's International FilmFest in Washington, D.C., I was approached after the screening by a number of pro-choice women, who found the film extremely challenging. Some of them, though, voiced doubts about showing it, fearing it may support the position of pro-lifers. Others (in particular those affiliated with NOW) thought that the film had the advantage of making people *think* about these issues. Chabrol's depiction of the harrowing conditions women had to undergo when abortion was illegal was, they reasoned, a strong argument in favor of keeping it legal.

The ethical bottom line of the film, then, is that no moral order can—or should—be imposed on others. For better or for worse, we live in a world of plural and conflicting values. *Story of Women* implies that the moral choices of a working-class woman may not be submitted to the same standards that apply to an upper-middle-class man—that the imposition of one group's values onto another group constitutes an act of symbolic (and sometimes real) violence. For generations, and for a variety of reasons, women have sought to terminate unwanted pregnancies, and they will continue to do so. For generations, they have found people (often other women) to help them, and they probably will find them in the future. Since babies develop in their mothers' and not their fathers' bodies, it is understandable that some men have a hard time figuring out how women really feel about pregnancy. But this hardly gives them ground upon which to erect their ignorance as a moral order. *Story of Women* registers the painful collision of that institutionalized male order and a more survival-oriented female ethos. Alone and afraid, Marie shows remorse neither in prison nor before the guillotine. Wherever abortion is prohibited, other Maries will go about their business, whether the Moral Majority wants them to or not. □

Talk on the Weill Side

Norman Weinstein

A Walk on the Weill Side by Helen Schneider. CBS Compact Disc MK 45703.

Where is Kurt Weill now that we most need his musical genius? If we could resurrect him from his forty-year-old burial plot, what tunes might he craft for a reborn Germany, a South Africa on the brink of revolution, a bewildering America? With what bemused puzzlement would he witness the plethora of Weill revivals on and off Broadway, on audio and video tape? Would he believe a millionaire rock star declaiming "Mack the Knife"? Russian avant-garde jazz bands swinging his numbers? Make no mistake: Weill's stock has never been higher on the show business circuit.

This reintensification of interest in Weill's songwriting—his music has never utterly disappeared from the American scene—is brought about by his ever-fresh ear for catchy pastiche. Jazzy without actually swinging, bluesy without any black stamp of Mississippi authenticity, classical without being rigidly structured, Weill's music was Broadway's (or Berlin's) "philosopher's stone": a fine case could be made for how Weill's gift for musical pastiche was a consequence of his brand of liberal Jewish humanism, a Judaism that enthusiastically embraced the rhythms and tones of other oppressed peoples. This point was certainly not missed by the Nazis, who pressured him from his homeland:

> The key element of Weill's music is the rhythm of jazz. If Weill is deliberately going to bring Negro rhythms into German art music, then in effect he is telling us that we need a transfusion of Negro blood. As if the people who brought forth Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Wagner needed to be refreshed with Negro blood!

So crowed the music reviewer for the 1932 issue of *The National Socialist Monthly.* Weill knew this critic could back up his opinion with bullets, but he also knew that he would be greeted with open arms in the U.S., the nation "refreshed" by a million musical bloodstreams.

While none of his U.S. collaborations with lyricists ever brought him the popular success (posthumous, largely) of his masterpiece co-created with Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera,* he did achieve a measure of artistic and financial success. And recordings of his show music have sold quite steadily over the years.

All of which brings us to this new recording of Weill songs interpreted by Helen Schneider. There are plenty of recordings on the market by women vocalists doing Weill, including a budget-priced collection by Weill's widow, Lotte Lenya. Here's the scoop: I think Schneider's recording is the only one available that would make Weill wish to cross the watery lengths of Lethe in order to cheer. It is nothing short of an astonishment, and repeated listenings only confirm the miracle.

Maybe Schneider's own convoluted career path made her especially sensitive to the artful collage in Weill's tunes. Professionally, she has moved from blues to rock, Vegas to Broadway. She is currently doing the Weill songs in a New York cabaret, The Ballroom. Her diction is crystalline—in three languages (though she largely sticks to English on her Weill recording). Her vocal range (unlike Lotte Lenya's) is daunting, her timing breathtaking.

But the real story of her singular success with Weill's songs has to do with the expressive vitality and emotional gale force she brings to both familiar and obscure material. She comes on sassy in "I'm a Stranger Here

Norman Weinstein is a poet and critic. He recently won an ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award for excellence in writing about contemporary music.

Myself," wistful in "September Song." No surprises there. But what mordant wit she brings to a minor Weill collaboration with Alan Jay Lerner, "Progress." Her glissandos hilariously mirror the fluctuations of the stock market. Yet Weill's idealism, however jaded by wars and depressions, shines through her stirring reading of "Johnny's Song." When she sings "We'll never lose our faith in Mankind," it sounds neither corny nor ironic—you hold your breath, wanting to summon such belief.

Not only does Schneider communicate an understanding of the political and moral perspectives undergirding Weill's work, she tunes into the eroticism and the humor of the music. Listen to her sly "Take me, sexy" introduction to "I Wait for a Ship." Hotter than a hundred Mae Wests, Schneider can also laugh at her own sultriness.

Accompanying her is a single keyboardist on piano and synthesizers, Bruce Coyle. His settings are restrained, tasteful, witty. He gives Schneider plenty of space with which to project. Everything about this recording emits class. One only wishes that the song lyrics had been reprinted in the accompanying CD booklet. But Schneider's clear delivery makes catching the words easy.

Weill never forgot the power that song has as a catalyst in trying to bring about a more human and humane world.

Tone is an elusive term to define, particularly when it comes to Weill's songs. They seem to live in a twilight zone between dignified art song and pop hit, confusing the boundaries between lowbrow and highbrow entertainment. Treat a Weill song as popular radio music and the ironic undertones instantly vanish. Treat a Weill number too "artfully" and the tang of populist anthem can no longer be savored. Up until Schneider's, every recording of Weill tilted to one extreme or the other. With this album, Schneider has bridged the gap between art song and pop tune. No punk rocker alive can match her ravingly hysterical scream on "Surabaya Johnny." And just try to find an imposing diva to match her passionate "Mon Ami, My Friend." This is seamless pastiche, and something more.

That something more in Schneider's recording has to do with moral conviction. It is no light matter to communicate the depths of Kurt Weill's songs. A cantor's son to the end, Weill never forgot the power that song has as a catalyst in trying to bring about a more human and humane world. Long after Weill's death, Helen Schneider keeps that quest alive. □

BOOK REVIEW

Socialism and Its Discontents

Jeffrey C. Isaac

Socialism: Past and Future, by Michael Harrington. Arcade Publishing, 1989, 320 pp.

Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation, by Alan Wolfe. University of California Press, 1989, 371 pp.

If 1789 marked the beginning of the modern political era, then 1989 might well have inaugurated its end. Recent events in Eastern Europe at least pose the possibility of a more civil, democratic world order. After years of silence, citizens have taken to the streets singing the songs of democracy, and workers long suppressed have created autonomous organizations. It is a moment that rightly inspires the enthusiasm of democratic socialists. And yet it is one of those ironies of history that socialism, for many the repository of the ideals of freedom, is an ideology in tatters, unable to project a compelling vision and a viable program.

In the United States socialism is virtually nonexistent as a political force. In Western Europe socialist parties, still reeling from defeats at the hands of the New Right, are constrained by the politics of fiscal austerity and increasingly challenged by Green movements whose relationship to the traditional Left is problematic.

Meanwhile, Third World socialism seems even farther from realizing a free association of producers. Leftist dreams once invested in Havana and Hanoi have turned into nightmares. In Jamaica and Nicaragua, geopolitical forces beyond the socialist movement's control seem to have doomed more democratic experiments to failure. And while developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe offer the hope of socialist reform, most of the rhetoric now popular there—religious and nationalist, when not neocapitalist—is outside and often hostile to the socialist tradition.

An impasse is thus upon us. The situation demands nothing less than a serious rethinking of the intellectual foundations of the modern Left.

Michael Harrington's *Socialism: Past and Future* is, sadly, the last in a series of thoughtful books in which its author sought to reconstruct and revitalize democratic socialism in America. Self-described in his recent autobiography as *The Long-Distance Runner* (See Maurice Isserman, "The Last Socialist Hero," *Tikkun,* Nov./Dec. 1988), Harrington kept running until the very end, displaying courage and intellectual

Jeffrey C. Isaac is an associate professor of political science at Indiana University, Bloomington. He is the author of Power and Marxist Theory *(Cornell University Press, 1987) and is currently at work on a book about Hannah Arendt and Albert Camus.*

lucidity in the face of enormous physical and emotional pain. He died of cancer at the age of sixty-one shortly after this latest book appeared. *Socialism: Past and Future* is a fitting legacy, an honest and insightful account of the difficulties facing contemporary socialists.

Harrington was one of the last genuine public intellectuals. He combined almost four decades of dedicated and effective political activism with a career of teaching and writing. His serious, scholarly, and readable prose is perhaps at its best in *The Other America* (1961), his influential book on poverty. In *Socialism: Past and Future* Harrington draws from his political experience in the labor movement, the Socialist International, and the Democratic party to analyze the prospects for socialism in the twenty-first century. Like his other books, this one joins intellectual history with public policy analysis, addressing enduring questions and immediate political issues.

Alan Wolfe's *Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation* builds upon its author's previous criticisms of the welfare state in such books as *The Limits of Legitimacy* (1977) and *America's Impasse* (1981). As in earlier books, Wolfe incisively challenges the limits of the postwar liberal project of political compromise based upon economic growth. But here Wolfe's interests take a surprising turn from neo-Marxist political economy toward the communitarianism of Robert Bellah and his associates. Wolfe now emphasizes the moral impoverishment of contemporary politics and insists that the solution lies in neither the capitalist market nor the social-democratic state but rather in what he calls, according to current fashion, "civil society."

Both books seek to explain where the socialist project has gone wrong, and to delineate a realistic conception of a more humane society that is neither capitalist nor communist. In doing so, they challenge a *statism* deeply embedded in traditional socialist discourse and seek to offer more pluralistic visions of political life. But both also suffer from defects characteristic of their idioms—in Harrington's case a persistent if sometimes chastened progressivism, in Wolfe's an excessive moralism. Such attitudes are symptomatic of our times, in which it is difficult to let go of the nineteenth-century imagery of Historical Progress that has fueled so many of our most noble efforts at human betterment, and even more difficult to create a political outlook more appropriate to the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Harrington's book develops three themes. The first is that socialism, despite its failures, possesses "a rich conceptual heritage" that socialists need to critically reappropriate. Here Harrington, in familiar ways, underscores Marx's essentially democratic inclinations, and insists that the "authoritarian collectivism" developed in the Soviet Union is contrary to the socialist ideal. Second, Harrington praises the postwar "realpolitik of utopia," whereby social democratic parties disavowed revolutionary aspirations, embraced Keynesian economic strategies, and became efficient managers of capitalist societies, encouraged by the utopian expectation of unending economic growth. Harrington views this development as a genuine political success, something to be proud of and to build upon. But he also argues that such a setup was inherently contradictory. It generated "private affluence and public squalor," economic growth and enormous social misery in the Third World, and, ironically, many of those "new social movements" which now contest its legitimacy. Further, the economic order that it sustained has experienced continuous crisis since the mid-seventies, resulting in the kinds of economic difficulties that have only been exacerbated by Reagan, Thatcher, and the New Right. We are now living, Harrington insists, in the midst of an epochal transformation of global economics and technology. This transformation "is creating a social and political environment that, if it is not subjected to democratic control from below, will subvert the possibilities of freedom and justice. . . ."

Harrington's third theme is a "What is to be done?" for contemporary socialists. He calls for a strategy of "visionary gradualism," associated with the policies of the Socialist International under the leadership of Willy Brandt and Michael Manley. He argues that socialists must continue to sustain a long-range vision of their ideal society, but that they must put forth practical programs and forge constructive alliances in order to build power in the short and medium term. This strategy is inspired by the successes of Swedish Social Democracy, which has pioneered such efforts as an active labor market policy, solidaristic (egalitarian) wage bargaining, economic democracy, a strong welfare state, and, central to Harrington's vision, economic and moral solidarity with democratic socialists in the Third World. It promises to unify the "fist" of the traditional socialist labor movements with the "rose" of New Left social movements.

Clearly Harrington had been chastened by eight years of Reaganism. Indeed, he even expresses some doubt as to whether any Marxism without "the old faith in the working class as a collective Messiah" is possible. But his tone is generally buoyant. In large part, his optimism seems to rest upon his sense that drastic and wrenching economic transformations are upon us which cannot fail to provoke resistance. In recent years, Harrington valiantly sought to outline an economic program that various "left wings of the possible" (in the U.S., the liberal wing of the Democratic party) might adopt. He remained confident that interest in such a program would eventually be forthcoming. Unfortunately, there is no reason to assume that the undemocratic changes taking place will be seriously challenged, and there is even less reason to imagine that such challenges would take a socialist form. While Harrington recognized that this impasse posed a problem of culture and ideology, and of socialism's ethical appeal, he devoted little attention to such questions in his political writing. And this is where Alan Wolfe's book comes in.

Alan Wolfe's *Whose Keeper?* focuses upon the two dominant agencies of modern "moral impoverishment"—the capitalist market and the bureaucratic nation-state. In terms reminiscent of Hegel and Tocqueville, Wolfe insists that while the onset of modernity required a flourishing "civil society" of autonomous families, neighborhoods, religious communities, and voluntary associations, the development of modern political and economic systems has all but suffocated such institutions. Weak moral ties are substituted for stronger ones, and modern life becomes dominated by routinized activities that are not motivated by any deep sense of moral conviction. For Wolfe, the consequence of this is the evisceration of the cardinal virtue of modernity itself—human autonomy. Unfortunately, ac-

cording to Wolfe, neither liberalism nor socialism, the two dominant idioms of modern political discourse, is capable of understanding this problem.

Wolfe begins his book with a brilliant critique of "the dubious triumph of economic man" in social theory and social life. Countering the rosy portraits of liberal individualists, he argues that the market destroys most social practices and values, including those necessary to sustain itself. In Part Two, Wolfe levels a symmetrical charge against what he variously calls "the left" or "liberalism," which, in its program of economic justice, exalts statist institutions whose authoritative power similarly corrodes any sense of moral obligation.

He aims his most concerted criticism at the Scandinavian social democracies. While acknowledging that Norway, Sweden, and Denmark have almost banished economic insecurity, Wolfe is quite critical of the bureaucratism of the welfare states. For example, he claims that the public monopoly of child-care centers and foster homes and the general ideology of "a public family" actually weaken families, increase crime and alcoholism, and lead to a decreasing sense of personal responsibility.

Wolfe deliberately disavows any conservative or antimodernist conclusions. "Overall," he writes, "the Scandinavian welfare states are far more successful at organizing modern moral obligations than are market-oriented societies like the United States." Yet there are times when the rhetoric of the book belies his intentions, and his arguments come perilously close to those of neoconservatives. This is especially true in his discussion of the family, where he questions "turning our moral responsibilities over to institutions" like day care centers. Because his analysis of civil society neglects the rule of patriarchal structures, one cannot help feeling that, whatever his intention, lurking behind his critique is a model of family responsibility that would place the main burden of child-rearing on mothers.

However, Wolfe does make us aware of problems that have not received sufficient attention in modern socialist discourse—matters concerning what Gramsci called the "hard shell of civil society." He appreciates the importance of the existing traditions and local conventions of "traditional" milieus—families, neighborhoods, charitable institutions, synagogues, and churches. Wolfe is correct to assert that many of our most vital values and commitments are attached to these institutions, and that the socialist Left "no longer speaks a resonant moral language" because it neglects to nurture the roots of civil society.

This failure helps to explain the difficulties confronting Harrington's progressive and universalist vision. Democratic socialists have long argued that any decent social system must allow maximum freedom of expression and association. But they have not recognized the kinds of moral resources that might be tapped within the existing institutions of civil society. Marx's vision of human emancipation—hunting in the morning, fishing in the afternoon, criticism in the evening—is mirrored in Harrington's own discussion of liberation from labor and the importance of free time. Such a view, while ironically inspired by certain premodern activities, seems to envision a human being choosing his or her pursuits virtually *ex nihilo* and unencumbered by any abiding moral commitments. For Harrington, this liberation would mean "the expansion of free time in which people act on their own projects and desires," permitting people to be "spontaneous" in the enrichment of their lives.

That vision articulates the most important accomplishment of modernity—the value of human autonomy and self-determination. But what will—indeed what *should*—people choose to do? It is notable that Harrington discusses the economic and educational prerequisites of such liberation but says nothing about religions and community obligations. Nor does he say anything about obligations toward one's children. Such obligations are, as any parent knows, quite demanding and, indeed, enriching. But they are hardly spontaneous and freely chosen. They are typical of the kinds of commitments which, in a freer society, would continue to remain central.

Yet there are also significant limits to Wolfe's critique, and to communitarianism more generally, for which Harrington's socialism provides a remedy. Even if one agrees with Wolfe's account of how both state and market threaten "civil society," we still need to ask how to organize a political and economic system which would avoid that outcome. How *should* production and distribution be structured? Who should control and operate the economy? It is telling that the concept of "democracy," central to Wolfe's earlier work, receives no discussion in this book. Absent are Harrington's compelling concerns—the democratization of all aspects of social life, beginning with the political economy.

Any political program that envisions the complete transcendence of a distinction between the public and the private is hopelessly and dangerously romantic.

Second, Wolfe's discussion of civil society often lacks specificity. Central to his discussion are such ideas as "intimacy" and "moral passages," terms referring to the types of choices people make in their daily lives. But noticeably absent is any account of power, either in the civil society or in the institutions of economy and state. Moreover, Wolfe says nothing about the Third World or world politics in general and its impact on advanced capitalist nations. By avoiding such matters, Wolfe's book seems at times strikingly apolitical, oblivious to the world of parties and movements, and to strategies of empowerment directed both at the state and within civil society.

The problem is not that Wolfe fails to provide an alternative to the World Historical Proletariat. The myth of that Proletariat and the imagery of complete and global transformation it entailed are best left dead and buried. But this does not mean that *politics* is dead. Some political agencies, however pluralistic and democratically organized, are still necessary as a means of combating the ills of our world. Wolfe leaves us feeling caught between market and state, dogmatic Right and Left, without any sense of there being any alternative political traditions.

The modern conception of civil society makes possible the flourishing in diverse forms of interaction, emotional commitment, and moral agency. But

these are by their very nature in tension with the logic of modern political life. Where civil society finds value in the particular, politics esteems the universal. Where civil society draws its strength from often implicit modes of conduct, expectations, and obligations, politics requires the drawing of explicit and general rules. Whereas civil society thrives on ambiguity and open-endedness, politics demands closure, however subject to democratic revision such closure might be. And, finally, as thinkers such as Max Weber, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Albert Camus long ago recognized, while the institutions of civil society rely upon a wide range of motives and sanctions for their moral force, the distinctive function of modern politics is the employment of some form of coercive power in the name of general principles of justice.

This does not mean some categorical, a priori boundary exists between civil society and the state. Indeed, Marx himself challenged the separation of state and civil society, with its insulation of private property from political life, and struggled to rethink the relationship between public and private. Capitalist markets and bureaucratic states are not permanent irrevocable things. But any political program that envisions the complete *transcendence* of a distinction between the public and the private, between politics and civil society, is hopelessly and dangerously romantic. As John Dewey saw, the character of the public is always a problem, one without final resolution.

To their credit, contemporary "communitarian" theorists have recognized that political life involves endless and irresolvable political dialogue. But they too frequently view such insight as a conclusion rather than as a premise for further theoretical inquiry and political practice. Recognizing the impasse in our public life does not justify placing an exaggerated and sentimental value on intimacy, and acknowledging the limits of capitalist markets and socialist statism does not allow us to ignore the question of how our civil society and our politics can be *politically* reorganized and revitalized. Given the enormous powers concentrated in contemporary corporate and state institutions, we cannot afford to retreat onto islands of civility. We must understand and engage the world in political terms if we are to meaningfully exercise our moral capacities.

At its best, modern socialism has tried to make real the Enlightenment ideals of human autonomy and democratic self-government. I do not believe we can dispense with these ideals. Thus, democratic socialism is the precondition of any humane future. Socialists need to temper their aspirations, to recognize how they can foster the values of pluralism and localism rather than ride roughshod over them. But advocates of civil society should not repudiate universalist and democratic aspirations, for the modern world offers little solace, and those who abandon history are simply doomed to suffer it. □

BOOK REVIEW

Twice Blessed or Doubly Other?

Martin Bauml Duberman

Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian, Gay and Jewish, edited by Christie Balka and Andy Rose. Beacon Press, 1989, 305 pp.

Two years ago at the New York City 92nd Street YMHA, I organized a four-part series on gay and lesbian life. The last evening was devoted to "The Jewish Response to Homosexuality," and Rabbi Hershel Matt, representing the liberal wing of Judaism, was one of the panelists. Matt spoke compassionately of the need to welcome Jewish homosexuals into the fold of Judaism. He based his view on the fact that all the gay people he knew were just like everybody else—they were either searching for or involved in loving, supportive, monogamous relationships.

That brought me up short. Since the AIDS crisis began some eight years ago, many gay men *have* drawn back from the kind of erotic adventuring that previously characterized their lives—but the more radical among them insist that they have done so from necessity, not because they now view sexual variety as "immature" or as inimical to a satisfying life. In other words, they have put the sexual revolution on hold, not rejected it (and their own past histories) as having been morally misguided. I wondered if Rabbi Matt was aware of this attitude, indeed whether he knew that promiscuity had been a central reality for many gay men in the pre-AIDS years.

During the panel discussion I asked him whether he would be as welcoming toward promiscuous gay men as he was toward those who shared his own (and mainstream America's) commitment to monogamous sexual values. Matt blanched at the question, confessed that he did not personally know any homosexual men who fit the promiscuous pattern I described, and said he would "have to think further" about "all of that."

Our polite confrontation at the Y came to mind as I read through the fine anthology, *Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian, Gay and Jewish.* On the whole, its authors share Rabbi Matt's sexual values, and, on the basis of their common religious and cultural traditions, they want to be welcomed into the Jewish community in which they were

Martin Bauml Duberman is Distinguished Professor of History, Lehman College, CUNY. His two most recent books are Paul Robeson *and* Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past.

raised. They want to win acceptance, find a home, end the status of lesbians and gays as marginal outsiders. But they also stress a wish to retain and deepen their affiliation with Judaism because they see it as having long been the preserve and refuge of outsiders. Indeed, the essayists in *Twice Blessed* see their gayness and their Jewishness as two parts of a single tradition: the struggle to broaden established notions of acceptability.

In this regard, Adina Abramowitz emphasizes in her essay that Maimonides' levels of *tzedaka* taught her about "empowerment," and the Prophets taught her about "social justice." *Tikkun olam* —repairing the world—is cited by several of the essayists as simultaneously at the core of their Jewish identity *and* at the heart of their gay protest against "things as they are." One can, in fact, argue that Jews and gays have shared similar fates throughout European history. In societies that have not tolerated religious diversity, sexual variation has also been repressed, and Jews and gays have been lumped together as threats to the social fabric. The history of both groups has been marked by resistance and survival against great odds.

Rachel Wahba, a psychotherapist, puts it this way:

> The parallels between being a Jew and a lesbian are obvious. We struggle against prejudice and for civil rights, and we struggle for the right to be visible without fear. We strive to preserve self-respect and maintain self-esteem in the face of bigotry and ignorance. As lesbians, gays and Jews, we face issues of assimilating, "passing," or coming out.

Profound though the similarities are between gayness and Jewishness, the compatibility founders on questions of sexual ethics. The Jewish tradition assumes and demands that sexual desire be channeled into heterosexual marriage and procreation; historically, that tradition has shown no tolerance for same-gender eroticism and love. Faith Rogow invokes "gay midrash" to interpret the biblical friendship of Jonathan and David as a prototypical homosexual love story, and the marriage of Rachel and Akiba as a convenient "cover" for two homosexuals who wanted to win credibility in a homophobic society.

But these interpretations are not persuasive. Rogow acknowledges that there is no evidence of genital contact between Jonathan and David, but nonetheless feels able to claim their relationship as homosexual by conveniently insisting that passionate friendship, not sexuality, is central to homosexual bonding. Others before Rogow have argued for such a definition, but it has always seemed to me that if we broaden the designation "homosexual" to include all intense, loving, supportive relationships between people of the same gender, we will be left without any specifying concept or language for describing a relationship that includes genital arousal. Indeed, the effort to broaden the definition of homosexuality in this way may be a strategy for rendering it more palatable (that is, nonsexual) to the mainstream.

Jody Hirsh, a graduate student in modern Hebrew literature, is more successful in her attempt to reclaim gay experience from the world of medieval Jewry. Although I am not familiar with the literature she cites, I found her excerpts from several of the best-known poets of the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry—Judah Halevi, Moses Ibn Ezra, Solomon Ibn Gabirol —to be demonstrably homoerotic in content. Less convincing is her effort to interpret Betula of Ludomir, Hannah Rochel, as "a significant lesbian figure." The fact that Betula "acted like a man" is not sufficient to warrant calling her a lesbian—especially in the absence of any suggestion of active sexuality. There is now a considerable body of evidence from several cultures about women who "passed," and the evidence makes clear that some did so to gain entry to the world of male privilege and not to woo females into their beds.

But finally, those gays and lesbians who wish to argue for their acceptance within Judaism have to confront directly the biblical injunctions against homosexuality. One of the chief accomplishments of the many-faceted *Twice Blessed* anthology is its forthright engagement with the key biblical passages that have long been used—by fundamentalist Protestants no less than by the Orthodox rabbinate—to reject homosexuality as an aberration and a sin. The preeminent passage, of course, is Leviticus 18:22: "Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is an abomination."

In perhaps the best essay in the anthology, Rebecca Alpert engages the Leviticus passage with profound interpretive skill. An ordained rabbi at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, she begins her essay with a plaintive evocation of what it has been like for gay and lesbian Jews to hear read aloud in synagogue three times a year (on Yom Kippur and twice during the annual cycle of Torah readings) a passage calling "that which is central to your life an abomination. What could be more terrifying," she asks, "than to know that what for you is a sacred loving act was considered by your ancestors to be punishable by death?"

Radical gay men continue to affirm the rightness of a sexual revolution which insisted that human nature is not monogamous and that a variety of sexual experiences are essential to self-discovery.

Alpert suggests various ways for coming to terms with Leviticus. One is to treat the text, in the spirit of biblical criticism, as a document created by human beings who were the product of a particular historical period. From that perspective, Leviticus is accepted as meaning what it says (homosexual acts are forbidden), but its authority is confined to the ancient Near East, and its relevance for contemporaries is denied. The Bible, after all, also countenanced slavery and the strict separation of the sexes, and prohibited both the mixing of certain kinds of fabric and plowing with two types of animals. Just as most of us no longer accept these strictures, so too we regard biblical pronouncements on homosexuality as anachronisms.

Alpert also points out that the key word in Leviticus, *to'evah*—abomination—is etymologically obscure. With an impressive display of erudition, she traces the varying interpretations of the word through time. According to the second-century commentator Bar Kapparah, *to'evah* meant *to'eh ata ba*—"you go astray because of it." From Bar

Kapparah's commentary, Albert infers that engaging in homosexual acts is "not intrinsically an evil" but rather something to be avoided because of the negative consequences likely to follow. Later commentators spelled out their shifting sense of such consequences—from disrupting family life, to being led astray from procreation, to abandoning one's wife. The medieval commentator Saadiah Gaon summed up these dangers in his general pronouncement that the Bible's moral legislation was directed at preserving the structure of the family.

In a discussion of parallel linguistic uses of the word, Alpert further discovers that *to'evah* "is actually a technical term used to refer to a forbidden idolatrous act." From this she concludes that the prohibition in Leviticus is against *cultic* practices of homosexuality (an interpretation supported by the fact that the other legal condemnation of homosexuality in the Bible, in Deuteronomy, *directly* prohibits homosexual practices that relate to cultic worship); the prohibition is therefore not applicable to the way contemporary societies organize homosexual behavior.

In offering this argument, Alpert takes her inspiration from contemporary commentators like Arthur Waskow, who has suggested that the Leviticus prohibition is simply against making love to a male *as if* he were a female, and Rabbi Matt, who has pointed to the contradiction between Leviticus and the view in Genesis that we were all created in God's image. Those who were *created* lesbian and gay, the argument goes, cannot logically be denounced for "abominable" sexual acts which are in fact central to their being.

But Alpert is well aware that such interpretations are rejected by traditional Jews. The influential Jewish theologian Norman Lamm, for example, has insisted on interpreting Leviticus as a thoroughgoing ban on any and all homosexual practices (though not even Lamm follows literal scripture to the point where he argues that homosexuality should be punished by death). And indeed movement within Judaism toward the acceptance of gays has thus far been limited. The Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform) did in 1977 adopt a resolution supporting civil rights for homosexuals, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations has accepted four gay/lesbian synagogues as members, and Reconstructionist Jews do argue that our understanding of *halakha* does and should respond to shifting cultural needs.

Still, no *openly* gay or lesbian Jews have been allowed to assume leadership positions, and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College remains the only seminary whose faculty has voted to admit openly gay men and lesbians as rabbinical students. And of course Conservative Judaism, standing firmly on traditional *halakhic* grounds, has refused outreach of any kind to gay and lesbian Jews; neither the Rabbinical Assembly nor the United Synagogue of America has even come out in support of gay civil rights.

Not surprisingly, then, the anthology's most moving essay deals directly and at length with the lack of Jewish response to gay/lesbian appeals for understanding and acceptance. Janet Marder, a heterosexual who served as rabbi from 1983–88 at the gay Los Angeles congregation Beth Chayim Chadashim, reports that she could find "no published rabbinic statements declaring homosexuality an acceptable Jewish way of life." In order to square that omission with both her own experience and the "deepest promptings" of her conscience, she has concluded that "the Jewish condemnation of homosexuality is the work of human beings—limited, imperfect, fearful of what is different, and, above all, concerned with ensuring tribal survival." "Our ancestors," she writes, "were wrong about a number of things, and homosexuality is one of them."

Like all the essayists in *Twice Blessed,* Marder is insistent that Jewish *values* do *not* condemn homosexuality. The Judaism that Marder and the other essayists affirm is the Judaism that teaches "love of humanity, respect for the spark of divinity in every person, and the human right to live with dignity." Marder cannot understand "why liberal Jews, who say they are not bound by ethically repellent statements in the *halakha,* and who say they are devoted to justice and equality, still balk at granting justice and equality to gay and lesbian Jews." She urges them to conclude, as she has, that liberal Judaism must unequivocally break with *halakha*: "reverence for tradition is no virtue when it promotes injustice and human suffering."

The only alternative is to break with Judaism itself. Neither Marder nor any of the other essayists in *Twice Blessed* consider that option, though Rebecca Alpert does acknowledge in her discussion of Leviticus that "this whole process of textual interpretation may seem irrational and unnecessary, and even amusing. Why go to the trouble to validate this text? Why play by these rules?" The answer for religious gays and lesbians is that the authority of the Torah is absolute, and unless that authority and gay life can be reconciled, Jewish homosexuals will not feel whole.

In their sometimes wistful efforts to effect such a reconciliation, the essayists try two distinct tactics. First, they argue that the gay life *they* (unlike promiscuous, nonreligious gays) lead is marked by the sort of loving commitment to a partner that can be sanctioned by a Rabbi Hershel Matt and therefore does fall within the Jewish tradition of devotion to family values. And second, they claim that because gay Jews are "doubly other" (marginal in both Jewish and American life) they could function as "a new prophetic minority" within Judaism, helping it to fulfill its historic mission of speaking out for righteousness and justice. Essayist after essayist insists, sometimes in a plaintive tone that attests to the argument's fragility, that their relationships, too, are marked by emotional intimacy and stability, mutual faithfulness, and economic interdependence; that, like good Jews everywhere, they resist sexual expression outside the confines of the committed couple, dutifully suppressing any impulse toward erotic adventuring, vigilantly exercising sexual restraint. And because their lives conform so closely to the ideal Jewish model, they believe they are not only worthy of acceptance into Judaism but have a special contribution to make to the current Jewish dialogue about the possibility of new egalitarian roles for men and women within the family structure.

By emphasizing the centrality of the caring, monogamous couple, the essayists, like good mainstream Jews and Americans, echo the emotional and sexual values that have long dominated national discourse, religious and otherwise. No notion is more deeply seated in American life than the view that a committed relationship is the only hope for a satisfying life, and that

in order to maintain such a relationship the two individuals involved must curtail any impulse to pursue emotional comfort and erotic pleasure elsewhere. It is a view that, in the name of security and safety, places union somewhat at odds with pleasure, and perhaps even with individual growth.

But there is another tradition within the gay world that is strongly at odds with all this, a tradition not at all susceptible to reconciliation with mainstream mores, Jewish or otherwise. Radical gay men (and, in recent years, some lesbians) continue to affirm, even in the face of AIDS, the rightness of a sexual revolution which insisted that human nature is not monogamous, that a variety of sexual experiences are essential to self-discovery, and that these experiences do not compromise and may even reinforce the emotional fidelity of a primary relationship. Some would even question the necessity of a primary relationship.

The essayists in *Twice Blessed* do not subscribe to these radical views. They do not wish, as do gay radicals, to rebel against the established sexual mores of mainstream culture but rather to prove that in their devotion to those mores they warrant entrance into the fellowship of good Americans and good Jews. This is a far cry from the stormy, revolutionary call one heard in the early days of gay liberation to reject mainstream America and all its institutional values.

Twice Blessed is not alone in marking this shift within the gay world from a need to rebel to a need to belong. Witness, for example, the recent best-selling *After the Ball,* in which authors Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen do yuppie-esque cartwheels in order to win their conformist stripes in middle-class white male culture, and dutifully echo most of its deforming pieties. Rejecting that kind of impulse to join up, the essayists in *Twice Blessed* argue instead for identifying with and winning acceptance in a religion that has a noble history of nonconformity. In the best tradition of that religion, the essayists stress the role they hope to play in bringing notions of gender equality to Jewish councils.

In their essays and in their lives, these men and women have amply proved themselves worthy of playing such a role. The question now is whether Judaism will prove itself worthy of them. □

Book Review

We Are Not One: A Post-Zionist Perspective

James S. Diamond

Hakheshbon HaLe'umi, by Boaz Evron. Dvir, 1988, 464 pp.

Zionism has conventionally been regarded as the definitive response to what its founders called "the Jewish question." Yet almost from the movement's inception, this response has had its critics, some of whom doubt the substance of the question itself. Anti-Zionism abounds in many varieties in the non-Jewish world, often as a poorly disguised hatred of Jews; but demurrals from the Zionist idea have developed also among Jews themselves. There is of course the ultra-Orthodox position—epitomized by the Neturei Karta movement—which regards Zionism as a contravention of the Sinai Covenant because the early Zionists embraced the Emancipation and its anthropocentric values; or, as the ultra-Orthodox explain it, because Zionism represents a usurpation of God's role in the messianic redemption. Then there is the position of Jewish ultra-secularists and universalists, whose assimilationist aspirations are offended by the particularism in which Zionism is grounded.

The principal expression of this ultrasecularist tendency within Israel has been Canaanism. The Canaanite movement of the forties sought to construe the social reality that took shape in the prestate Yishuv in exclusively secular terms—as the development of a new polity having nothing to do with a Jewish problem or Jewish religious needs and ideals. Canaanism's critique of Zionism relates to the manner in which Zionism appropriated the Jewish past in order to legitimize itself historically: in conceiving itself as a continuous, historical entity, dating from Abraham and Joshua, Zionism compromised its radical secularity and condemned itself to be conflicted and ultimately overwhelmed by the requirements of *halakha,* the messianic aspiration of the Jewish religion, and the unfulfilled longings of diaspora Jewry.

As an organized movement Canaanism went nowhere. It never concretized itself as a political entity. The presence of Canaanism, however, abides in the coffeehouse conversations of North Tel Aviv. It hovers like a question mark over a society that has still not reached a consensus with regard to fundamental political considerations such as what its regnant values are and how it should be governed. Amidst such confusion, Canaanism seems to offer clarity—a clarity born of the unambiguous sensibility of those rooted in the land. In place of a Jewish state tied to—and controlled by—the Jews and Judaism, Canaanism envisions a state that would create in the twentieth century what its protagonists fancied had been in Canaan before the Jews came onto the scene: the coexistence and integration of all the inhabitants of the region based on shared regional interests and cultures. What god these inhabitants worshiped, how they worshiped, and whether they worshiped at all, would count for less than the reality that then, as now, they shared the same land and climate in the same part of the world.

Events since 1948, however, have rendered the original Canaanite vision obsolete. Masses of Jews poured into the new state because they had no other place to go, and the Sabras (Jews born in Israel)—whose families had, by and large, not been there long themselves—were demographically overwhelmed. The non-Jewish residents of the region, for their part, evinced little interest in abandoning their own religious and nationalistic ideals in favor of helping create a putative new polity. And so Canaanism was passed by, as either a utopian pipe dream or a noble vision whose time had not yet come.

In the present crisis (of which the intifada is a symptom and not a cause), questions that were raised long ago about Zionism and the ideational foundation of the Zionist state are reasserting themselves. It is, then, not surprising that the Canaanite perspective should reappear, modified and updated in the light of four unsettling decades of Zionist statehood. The most comprehensive and provocative expression of this perspective is Boaz Evron's *Hakheshbon HaLe'umi* (A National Reckoning). Published in 1988, Evron's book has been widely reviewed and discussed in Israel—at one point reaching the best-seller list there. An English translation will, it is hoped, be forthcoming. In its absence, an enumeration of some of Evron's main contentions is in order, especially since his book has been described by one reviewer as a veritable "slaughterhouse of sacred cows."

Boaz Evron is virtually unknown in North America. Born in 1927, he is a Sabra whose roots in Palestine extend back to the early nineteenth century. His great-grandfather was Yo'el Moshe Salomon, one of the major figures of the old Yishuv. In his youth, Evron's nativist perspective led him to the right-wing Lehi (Freedom Fighters of Israel), and then, for a brief time in the early fifties, to the Canaanite movement of poet and ideologue Yonatan Ratosh. Always an independent thinker, Evron saw fit to break with the ideological rigidity of Canaanism as propagated by Ratosh in favor of the more pragmatic and political appropriation of this ideology by Uri Avnery. An erstwhile member of the Knesset, Avnery is editor of *Ha'Olam Hazeh,* Israel's equivalent of the *National Enquirer.* In the late forties he created an

James S. Diamond teaches in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures at Washington University in St. Louis. He is the author of Homeland or Holy Land? The "Canaanite" Critique of Israel *(Indiana, 1986) and* Barukh Kurzweil and Modern Hebrew Literature *(Scholars Press, 1983).*

alternative Canaanite group, *BaMa'avak* (In the Struggle) out of his impatience with Ratosh and his circle, which Avnery considered effete and ineffectual. In the late fifties, Avnery joined together with Evron and other left-leaning ex-members of Lehi such as Natan Yellin-Mor and Amos Kenan to form *Hape'ulah Hashemit* (Semitic Action), which envisioned a regional confederation of Israel and neighboring states based on a common Semitic ancestry. A latter-day incarnation of this idea can be found in Yasir Arafat's notion of a Palestinian state involved in a Benelux type of agreement with Israel and Jordan. Through his book reviews in *Ha'aretz* and his theater criticism and opinion columns in *Yedi'ot Akharonot,* Israel's most widely-read dailies, Evron has established a reputation in Israel as an articulate voice of the Tel Aviv secular intelligentsia.

Evron's thinking proceeds from a single assumption: a nation, according to Evron, is constituted by a group of people who share a common language and who have roots in a particular, definable territory. On this basis, he calls into question the most fundamental of modern Zionist axioms: that the Jews are a nation. The historical record, he contends, shows otherwise. Over the last several decades, biblical scholarship and archaeological findings have made it clear that what brought the Jews into existence was the religious idea of monotheism. This religious focus did, to be sure, endow the Jews with a group consciousness, but it was the consciousness of an ethnic community of faith, characterized by what Evron calls a caste-like mentality. This community was theocratically exclusivist and of a separatist bent. Its consciousness was not that of a nation. A nation, says Evron, seeks to create a political entity, and the Jews had little interest in an entity of this sort. This was as true of the Pharisaic rabbis in their suppression of the nationalist leanings of the Hasmoneans as it had been true of the returnees from Babylonia, whose priestly goal was to rebuild the Temple, not to found a state. Thus, in line with Ahad Ha'am's remark that "it was not Israel that kept the Torah but the Torah that kept Israel," Evron invites us to accept his interpretation of the historical evidence: the Torah unquestionably kept the Jews—it kept them from thinking that they might ever need anything other than the Torah in order to survive as a people.

Evron's analysis is certainly provocative. It is, moreover, attractive in its potential for political breakthrough. But his analysis also raises several questions: Can historical situations that obtained in antiquity be evaluated by the terminology and the criteria of modern political arrangements? Can religion and state really be dissociated in so facile a manner? Is the creation of a political entity the only indicator of nationhood, or are there other ways to define a nation? Considering the complexity of the Jewish experience, these questions are central to any critique of Israel.

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Evron, however, overlooks these issues. In his view the Jews did at certain points take root as a nation in the land of Israel and begin to act as a political entity. The examples of the monarchy and of the Hasmoneans in the Biblical and Second Temple periods, respectively, show this, as do the experiences of the Jews in Yemen and in the Khazar Kingdom of the Middle Ages. In all these cases language and territory combined to initiate the beginnings of Jewish polities. But in general, it was the apolitical or the antipolitical thrust of the Jewish religion and its rabbinic representatives that kept the Jews from creating a nation. In the rabbinic scheme, the raison d'être of the Jews is the fulfillment of God's commandments, not the creation of independent structures of government and their attendant political institutions.

In the modern period, however, the nationalist impulse reasserted itself among the Jews of Eastern Europe. Here was a community that had its own distinctive linguistic basis and had roots in one place for centuries. It had come to possess a consciousness of itself as a collective entity distinct from the society around it. This was the *incipient* Jewish nation that began to express itself in the movements for Jewish autonomy—in Bundism, and in Zionism.

From here it is but a short jump to a revisionist reading of Zionism. Zionism, in this reading, is not the expression of any historical Jewish rootedness in the Land of Israel. The state it succeeded in creating there has nothing to do with a millennial Jewish return; rather, it is the flowering of the new secular polity that had taken root among the Jews of Eastern Europe toward the end of the nineteenth century. Both Zionism and Bundism signified a radical break from the premodern and prenational worldview of Judaism, and in this respect the Yiddishist Bundists were much closer to the truth about themselves as Jews than were the Zionists, who had, after all, committed themselves to a sacral language. As Evron puts it:

> The inner contradiction of Zionism was its assumption that the Jews of the world comprised one nation, a territorial nation that had been exiled from its soil.... But any attempt to find a normative content for Jewish life beyond religion ... failed.... [Zionism's] essential formulation was self-defeating. By contrast, Yiddish nationalism ... was able to break free completely from Jewish religion, since it was based on a defined community that was indeed clearly in the transitional stage from a religious entity to a nation—a definition that was true for only a *part* of the Jewish people. Zionism tried to generalize from this local manifestation and to read all of Jewish history in its light—and therein lay the seeds of its failure.

In other words, the secular "Jewish People" that Zionism abstracted from the collective entity organized around the Sinai Covenant is an invention, as is the entire historiography upon which this notion of peoplehood is based. But by the same token, the alternative construction of Jewish history that Evron gives us and the conclusions that

construction leads to must be seen as no less willful. Indeed, the development of any grand unified theory of Jewish history is inherently problematic and must always be seen as the selective application of underlying assumptions that often go unstated. The question is not which construction is right or wrong but which one accounts for historical phenomena more convincingly.

Evron seeks to disencumber certain phenomena from the Zionist hermeneutic and its resultant distortions. First and foremost he addresses the phenomenon of modern European anti-Semitism and the entire manner in which its relationship to Zionism has been understood. Here, too, Evron finds a generalization from circumstances that were specific to Europe. Applying the insights of some major students of modern Europe, Evron reminds us that in certain crucial respects, Western Europe was very different from the East. It is not only that the former was the crucible of modern anti-Semitism (while Zionism as a mass movement arose in Eastern Europe), but that there was a fundamental difference between the two Europes in the very concept of the nation-state. Western democracies such as England, France, and Holland focused on the individual citizen and understood the state to be the agent of the individual's needs and interests, whereas in Central and Eastern Europe (Germany and Russia) the individual was subservient to the state, and one's life was authentic and meaningful only to the extent that it related to the whole.

It was in the context of this latter approach, sometimes referred to as "integralist nationalism," that Zionism was shaped; for it was precisely in that milieu that the Jew was perceived as an outsider, as a "foreign body" in the national organism—regardless of whether one was Orthodox, religiously liberal, secular, or assimilated. Anti-Semitism, then, as Evron sees it, has less to do with specifically Jewish traits and behavior than with the host nations—their social structure, the weaknesses therein—and with how good or bad they feel about themselves, as both Nietzsche and, later, Sartre pointed out. In the face of such ethnocentrism, Zionism, says Evron, adopted the same "integralist nationalistic" approach: it posited the essence of being Jewish not as the religion of Judaism, but as a larger, national essence that was actually as vague as it was mystical and all-embracing. This led to an interesting congruence between European anti-Semites and Zionists: "both . . . sought the same goal: the removal of the Jews from the non-Jewish society." And this, according to the new Canaanites, is why Zionism actually needs and depends upon anti-Semitism to validate its existence, even as many Israeli Zionists fail to understand that the liberal societies of Western democracies will not be fertile soil for the germination of that anti-Semitism. In short, the State of Israel is predicated on a worldview that, in the late twentieth century, is an anachronism. It holds to a determinism that regards anti-Semitism as endemic to human reality, and posits a "Jewish problem" that it regards as inevitable, when the reality is otherwise.

His thesis made clear, Evron invites us to see the *national* (as opposed to the religious) element in the Yishuv and its successor, the Israeli state. It is incorrect, he believes, to say that the State of Israel came about as a direct result of the Holocaust, that it was the guilt of the nations of the Christian West that precipitated an independent Israeli state. These were, at best, ancillary factors. Rather, it was the people of the Yishuv who laid the foundations for statehood. For what was the Yishuv other than the continuation of the incipient Jewish nation of Eastern Europe transplanted to soil it saw, fatefully, as ancestral?

The Holocaust itself, for Evron, was not a result of millennial non-Jewish hatred of the Jews. Rather, its origins need to be located in the political and strategic *global* designs of the Nazis and should be understood mainly in the context of German and European history. Similarly, another legacy of the Holocaust experience—the understanding of the nature of Arab antagonism—needs, in this view, to be rescued from its appropriation by Zionist historiography. The conventional view is that Arab rejection of the Jewish state is a Middle Eastern expression of a millennial anti-Semitism, that the Arabs and the Palestinians are the latter-day legatees of nazism, and that Arab terrorism is a technologized version of the Russian or Polish pogrom. Such a perspective serves Israel well, Evron believes, for it perpetuates a dependence on diaspora Jewry which is actually a form of control. No less important, it obscures the fact that the essential nature of the conflict is *national,* rooted in specific geopolitical issues that have nothing to do with the Jewish problem. Arab and Palestinian hostility is directed not against all Jews, according to Evron, but against *Israelis.*

Zionism has succeeded in creating a state, but it has not, indeed cannot, create a nation.

But these matters are not so clear-cut. How, for example, are we to explain the PLO hijackers' methods of selecting hostages? And does this interpretation satisfactorily account for the anti-Israel attitude and policies of Khomeini's Iran? In *From Beirut to Jerusalem,* Tom Friedman points out that Jews, and especially Israelis, are imbued with a victim mentality. No matter how we assess this phenomenon, no matter how subjective and emotional its nature, this mentality is, after all, an existential reality, based in lived Jewish experience.

In any case, Evron goes on to say the following:

> The concentration of Jews in one place does not create a nation. It creates a community. In order to create a nation, the Jews must undergo both an inner and a social transformation and they must establish a society that controverts in every way Jewish communal thinking and its values.

Zionism underwent this transformation only in part. It did abandon religion, but the Zionist worldview remained traditionally Jewish—which is to say particularist, exclusivist, and caste-like. While Zionism originally aspired to the universalist democratic values of a modern secular nation, it has been fundamentally qualified by values derived from a religious tradition. This has all been said before, but not with the implication that Evron wishes to have us see: that Zionism has succeeded in creating a state, but it has not, indeed cannot, create a nation.

Take, for example, the case of Is-

rael's constitution. The reason Israel has no constitution has less to do with the familiar argument that it would precipitate a rift with the forces of religious Zionism (an oxymoron for Evron) than with what the real crisis would be:

> A constitution would enable a non-Jewish citizen of the state to claim—and for the [Israeli] Supreme Court perforce to uphold—that the state should not accord preferential treatment of any kind to one ethnic group, members of which are not citizens of the state, over another [who are].... It could declare successfully that the legal status of the Jewish Agency in the state is unconstitutional, since it is authorized by the state to serve the interests of one ethnic group. It could challenge a whole range of laws and statutes the purpose of which is to favor Jews over non-Jews, even though their wording does not specify this (e.g., housing allowances given through the Jewish Agency to "ex-army personnel" or to new immigrants)....

Whatever reservations we may have about Evron's analysis, *Hakheshbon HaLe'umi* forces us to reconsider the central issue of the Israeli enterprise—its definition and mode of existence as a Jewish state. Here we find the most trenchant nuance of Evron's contention that Israel is not really a nation in the modern and Western sense of the term but a recrudescence of Jewish sectarianism. In the ongoing Who-Is-a-Jew crisis, for example, the state has refused to exercise its authority to determine who is a Jew. The Israeli experience has shown that at every turn the state has resisted and eschewed a national, secular definition of Jewishness in favor of the *halakhic* one. In effect this means that the state has ceded its authority to the norms of Orthodox Jewish religion or, more precisely, to those who would claim to speak in the name of Orthodox Judaism. This preeminence of Jewish religion over the secular state buttresses Evron's contention that real secular and national sovereignty in Israel has yet to be achieved. There is a certain congruence between this argument and Michael Walzer's ("What Kind of a Jewish State?" *Tikkun,* Jul./Aug. 1989). Both are clear that, whatever else it may be, Israeli statehood is part of the legacy of the Emancipation; and Emancipation, as Walzer reminds us, "is an irreversible experience." But whereas for Walzer the meaning of Israel as a Jewish state has not yet been conclusively determined, and the possibility of such a liberal definition still exists, for Evron the die is cast: there can be no Jewish definition beyond the religious one and this is ipso facto incompatible with the requirements of modern statehood.

What Evron has in mind now comes into view. He aspires to

> an Israeli nation whose connection with the land is not spiritual or ideational or "historical" and does not come from any "historical right" or from "Judaism," but [from] the natural connection of a nation like all nations.

What will inspire the Israeli citizen to live there? Not idealism or any sense of mission, be that Jewish or Zionist, but the simple and natural desire to feel at home.

Just as the emphasis on "the centrality of Israel for the Jewish experience" distorts ... the spiritual and cultural identity of the diaspora Jew, provides him with a means to avoid coming to terms with and resolving the problems of his identity, and allows him to maintain an illusory, vicarious, and infantile form of existence, so, too, does the "Zionist motivation" create a barrier between the average Jewish Israeli and his land, call his natural patriotism into question, and serve [instead] to [co-opt him into] ... becoming a member of a worldwide Jewish sectarian community. In other words, for both the Israeli and the [diaspora] Jew, Zionist ideology subverts the formation of the "natural" identity required by the respective social, spiritual, political, and national situation [of each].

It would be easy to label such thinking "Canaanite," and thereby dismiss it as an irresponsible simplification of Jewish history. After all, apprehending the Jewish and Israeli experiences solely in territorial terms will strike most informed observers as fundamentally misleading. Evron's reading of

modern anti-Semitism is so clean and clear as to risk losing relevance. Here (and not only here) Evron betrays his Sabra origins. Had he been born and raised in the Diaspora, I daresay he would feel otherwise. He should read Philip Roth's autobiography and its account of how good American Jewish boys at Weequahic High School were beaten up by non-Jewish compatriots who soon after would be his fellow students at Bucknell. Furthermore, the antagonistic attitude to the religion and Judaism of Ratosh and his various adherents is, a hundred years after Berditchevsky, "old hat"; it has not escaped the opprobrium of being Jewish self-hate.

This last charge, however, really should not be pinned on Evron. He is as aware as anyone that "it is impossible to skip over and ignore twenty-five hundred years" and that a "Hebrew national consciousness will always be linked to Judaism." A cultural lobotomy of the kind Ratosh called for isn't, as Evron sees it, in the cards. What Canaanism did signal, however crudely, and what Evron's reformulation highlights, is the need for the Jewish national effort to transcend the implicitly theocratic and ethnocentric mentality of Zionism and to found its nation on a more pluralistic basis. (It is important to remember that the Yishuv, in its social structure, perpetuated the millet system of the Ottoman Empire whereby society was organized around separate religious communities whose relationship to each other was largely perfunctory.) If this pluralistic basis ultimately leads to notions of regional interests, necessitating confederated national arrangements or condominium agreements, then I agree with Evron that, in spite of its ideological excesses, Canaanism had it right. "[Canaanism's] most fundamental idea was understanding that true independence and peace in our region depend upon creating political frameworks much wider than the existing political entities."

As the twenty-first century approaches, it is becoming clear that, while nationalism is by no means dead, the individual nation-state is less important and powerful than the regional and continental constellation. One need only look to Benelux, the Common Market, and perhaps even the recent trade pact between the U.S. and Canada. We should not be surprised if in the long run the forces that are even now pushing Israel and its neighbors toward dialogue come to outweigh those that connect Israel to world Jewry, no matter how many solidarity conferences Jerusalem calls.

Conventional rhetoric aside, we are not one, then, but two: there is a worldwide Jewish religious entity that understands itself, in diverse ways, to be bound by the Sinai Covenant, if not by the commandments; and there is the national entity known as the State of Israel, an entity that is still evolving as a polity and that has nothing to do with either the Covenant or the commandments. Diaspora Jews, to be sure, may continue to relate to the *Land* of Israel, and their moral responsibilities to co-religionists there will abide. But it will be as manipulative for them to foist on the State of Israel any compulsion they feel for it to be "a light unto the nations" as it will be for them to regard Israel emotionally as the "revenge of the Jews on the *goyim*." In both cases they would be superimposing on Israel moral or emotional baggage that would be deleterious to its ability to function as a secular state.

Most of what Evron has to say is, of course, *apikorsus*. It is as heretical for the ethnic and political orthodoxies of today's Jewry as denying the divine authorship of the Torah would have been for our premodern forebears (and, indeed, as it would be for most of today's Orthodox community). Heresy, though, can always be controverted, both by questioning its content and by impugning its motivation. Evron's assumption about what a nation is, an assumption on which, we can now see, his entire argument rests, is assailable on the grounds that it is much too narrow a definition: it represents an acceptance no less uncritical of the assumptions of Western secular modernity than Zionism's, and we know that these assumptions, too, are historically conditioned; they are being challenged daily by large sectors of the human family. Our world is increasingly showing us that a nation-state need not be constituted along the lines of a pluralistic, egalitarian, secular democracy. It is not at all clear that the Western (Ashkenazic) worldview will, or even should, prevail in Israel.

And there are other questions every bit as heretical as the ones that Evron asks. If Israel evolves into a state that is different from that which its founders conceived, different from that which Evron and perhaps even many readers of *Tikkun* desire, will its growth be enhanced? How will it be viewed by its neighbors and other nations? What connection would such a nation have to the needs and interests of secular, liberal, or even religiously non-Orthodox Jews in North America? What connection could it have?

Current and prospective Israeli and Jewish realities invite us to contemplate the possibility that both the Zionist thesis and the Canaanite counterthesis are essentially passé. Both can be seen as misreadings of the Jewish experience. North American Jews, obviously at home in states where the values of the Emancipation are established, though by no means guaranteed, need to begin thinking about Israel in new ways. Not only are we not one, but, as Ratosh never tired of pointing out, "Next year in Jerusalem!" never obligated any Jew to do anything.

The post-Zionist perspective that Evron however imperfectly lays out in *Hakheshbon HaLe'umi* is, therefore, well worth our closest consideration. "Kheshbon" in Hebrew does indeed mean "reckoning." It also means "check" or "account." By forcing us to come to terms with the flawed nature of the ideational foundation on which the Jewish state rests, Boaz Evron helps us realize that our illusions may be expensive and dangerous. Dispelling such illusions could lead to a new metapolitics of the Middle East conflict, one to which this discussion is but a prolegomenon. □

Book Review

Beauty and the Nazi Beast

Adina Hoffman

See Under: Love by David Grossman, translated by Betsy Rosenberg. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989, 452 pp.

AHAVA: LOVE

See under: SEX

OMETZ: NERVE

The quality of audacity, courage, or pluck [*see under:* GROSSMAN, DAVID].

1. In the case of *See Under: Love* this term [NERVE] refers specifically to the scale of Grossman's task which, it would seem at times, borders on the temerarious [*see under:* CHUTZPAH]. Miraculously, Grossman has managed to lure and tag the following decidedly undomestic creatures: salmon, trauma, prooftext, suicide, masturbation, the Messiah, and that most wily of jungle beasts, *love.* From the palm of his hand, Grossman feeds them all.

See Under: Love is a complex rendering of the coming to terms, both artistic and more crudely quotidian, of a child of Holocaust survivors, fed from his infancy with only the leanest scraps of knowledge concerning the fate of the Jews from Over There (Europe). Momik Neuman's own parents, now the chastened proprietors of a Jerusalem lottery ticket stand, have banished their past lives into ellipses, and in so doing denied Momik even the most perfunctory explanation of the trauma so central to their lives. One day his grandfather, Anshel Wasserman—formerly the renowned Hebrew author of the "Children of the Heart" adventure stories—arrives in a reduced and drooling state on the Neumans' front step. Momik is desperate to understand more about his parents and the odd assortment of Holocaust survivors who live on his Jerusalem street. These neighbors seem capable of communicating with each other in a strange shorthand of screams, laughter, and an occasional hushed reference to places Momik cannot find on any map. His grandfather is the latest addition to this disturbed clique (whose members will later team with the Children of the Heart in a different kind of action story) and Momik's new hope for an entree into the shadowy world of Over There. Momik begins to piece together fragments of Wasserman's aphasic mumblings and discovers in them a STORY [*q.v.*] of a highly mysterious nature and origin. He decides that "his poor grandfather was locked up in the story," and launches an earnest campaign to set Wasserman free.

The task, it turns out, is not as simple as this rather constipated little boy at first imagined. He pushes his glasses up the bridge of his nose and reasons, "... it's just a question of logic, there's always an explanation...." What the young Momik does not understand, and what the elder Momik must learn the hard way, is that the imagination might indeed release one from a barrack, but it could just as easily confine.

Momik's forays into the cut-and-paste world of the Holocaust as he imagines it eventually render him nearly psychotic. When pushed by Momik, Bella, a chain-smoking friend of his parents and herself a survivor, "let it slip out that the Nazi Beast could come out of any animal if it got the right care and nourishment." So Momik sets to trapping unsuspecting hedgehogs, toads, and ravens in his basement where he taunts them and concocts a series of elaborate charms and rituals designed to wake the Nazi Beast from its slumber. Momik longs to steal just a glimpse of this monster. One could say that in his own fierce determination to call forth the phalanx of dybbuks that inhabit the post-Auschwitz world, David Grossman has offered with *See Under: Love* a similarly nervy incantation, howled into the imagination's abyss.

2. OMETZ also refers to Grossman's chosen form, namely, four distinct sections with seemingly disparate ends and certainly various means [*see under:* MOMIK; BRUNO; WASSERMAN; *and* THE COMPLETE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF KAZIK'S LIFE]. Momik's wrestlings with his literary and imaginative forebears give shape to *See Under: Love*'s four complicated sections. As previously mentioned, the book's first quarter concerns Momik's childhood. In the second of the book's four sections, Momik (now grown and considerably subdued) journeys to Poland where he attempts to fashion another possible scenario that might solve the mystery of the Polish writer Bruno Schulz's final days. Schulz was the man whom many thought destined to be the century's next Kafka until he met his untimely death at the hands of the SS. In Momik's version, he was not killed by the Nazis: he metamorphosed miraculously into a salmon and swam off with a school of fish. Momik invokes a whole chorus of narrators to relate the tale of Schulz's fishy fate, including Schulz himself and the sea (here personified as a curvy, talkative tease). The section climaxes with a recounting of Schulz's *The Messiah,* his manuscript lost in the war, and by now more legendary for its absence than its presumed literary merit.

The third portion of the book is devoted to Momik's recounting of the unusual relationship between his grandfather Wasserman and the Nazi camp commander Herr Neigel. Before the war, when Wasserman wrote adventure stories, his pen name was Wasserman-Scheherazade, but it is only this last name (Scheherazade) that Commander Obersturmbannführer Neigel uses when he calls upon Wasserman to tell him a story in the camp every night. Their curious arrangement is this: if Wasserman's nightly installment is satisfactory, then Neigel will agree to shoot him once in the head. (Wasserman, it seems, while adept at many things, has an

Adina Hoffman is a writer living in San Francisco.

inexplicable problem with dying: he can't. While other Jews fall left and right, Wasserman picks himself up and dusts off after bullets shoot through him and Zyklon B is dumped on his head. Naturally it follows that the longer it is denied him, the more he longs for death.) As the original Scheherazade extended her life each night by unraveling another skein of story for the king, so will an attempt on Wasserman's life be the small daily reward for a story well told.

The fourth and final segment constitutes an encyclopedic encapsulation of the entire life of Baby Kazik. Kazik is one of Anshel Wasserman's fictional characters from the "Children of the Heart" adventure series who lives an entire childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age in the course of twenty-four hours. Momik's version of Kazik's life takes the rigid narrative form of an encyclopedia, chosen, one assumes, to demonstrate the very futility of such attempts at classification. "The Complete Encyclopedia of Kazik's Life" is anything but complete, and it exists mainly as an artistic extension of Momik's childish attempts to trap the Nazi Beast in his basement. The encyclopedia entries range freely in tone and scale (through the Hebrew alphabet) from ECZEMA to HITLER to BETRAYAL to MARRIAGE PERMIT to SLAUGHTER, LIKE SHEEP TO THE, and simply underscore Grossman's knowledge of the difficulty, nay *impossibility,* of caging any of these beings.

OMANUT: ART

The green felt corner upon which Momik has chosen to stack all his chips. Art, in Momik's slippery terms, appears here first as the great redeemer, the rock.

According to Grossman's scheme, art has little commerce with the usual stuff of concert halls and museums. Rather, "real art" is *life,* and paintings, poems, string quartets nothing but its reflection in a cracked glass. Schulz explains to Momik that "compared to real art, natural art, literature and music are nothing but ephemeral copy work..." He points to the people of the Drohobycz ghetto and explains "they're human beings, all, and therefore creators ... we are all artists, Shlomo..." The zombified population of this town is under the sway of the Messiah and lives in a strange vacuum in which words no longer matter. Every few minutes all memory is erased and the "people ... must re-create language and love and each coming moment anew..." While there is some truth to Schulz's scheme, its dangerous implications are manifold. All previous connections to religion, family, and society are erased in the process of forgetting, and Momik (with the reader close at his side) must ask what kind of freedom it could be that allowed a complete severance from the dirt-under-nails stuff of life. This *stuff* needs memory, Grossman appears to be saying, but cannot depend on the past for its sole support. Without the grit of daily life, the imagination is a useless machine, just as a life without imagination is desperately in need of repair.

In his fierce determination to call forth the phalanx of dybbuks that inhabit the post-Auschwitz world, David Grossman has offered a nervy incantation, howled into the imagination's abyss.

While it would be a mistake to label *See Under: Love* A Holocaust Book or A Book About Israel Now, and limit its more universal relevance in so doing, the book is obviously spun of David Grossman's own experience. Grossman is known in Israel not only as a novelist but as a radio commentator and author of *The Yellow Wind,* a collection of journalistic writings about the West Bank. An outspoken critic of the occupation, he should be heeded when leveling a charge about the possible abuses of memory both personal and historical. Momik Neuman's parents exemplify a whole generation of Eastern Europeans who arrived in Israel just after the war, eager to establish a secure footing in the sandy soil. These survivors often blanketed their memories of that other world in order to live quietly in their new Mediterranean haven. Grossman makes it clear that this willed forgetting exacted its own price (simply observe Momik and his myriad neuroses). Equally fierce, though, is Grossman's admonition against an understandable but woefully misguided reliance on the past as eternal justification for the present. No doubt he would contend that the bankrupt moral state of Israel's present policies is due in part to the too-frequent sounding of Holocaust alarms, designed to drown out the din of Israel's own aggressive actions against others.

BEDIYA: FICTION

A placebo known to cure.

As Wasserman unwinds his story for Neigel he manages slowly to draw the Nazi into the process of imagining and so "infects ... [him] with humanity." The two stare at each other across the no-man's-land of their roles as Nazi and Jew, but cannot help occasionally exchanging an emotionally charged token. Every so often their eyes meet and some fleeting understanding is reached which pierces the heart well below the uniform of each man.

As a boy, Neigel read the stories of Wasserman-Scheherazade, and now against the camp's macabre backdrop he demands from the writer a new installment to these somewhat overblown tales of youthful glory and daring. As Wasserman embarks on the first of these new stories, Neigel asks "Is the heart willing?" and slips the Jew the password uttered by the Children of the Heart before they set forth on each adventure. Wasserman responds, "The heart is willing!" "Come what may?" asks the Nazi. "Come what may," agrees the Jew, and a pact of sorts has been made, although:

> They both look hollow. As if everything inside them has been sucked out and spilled into the veins of a new, transparent embryo made entirely of the supplications and fervor and anxiety of two who briefly glimpsed each other over the trenches.

For all his fierce determination to achieve narrative obscurity, Grossman's appeal is really quite simple: his is a challenge to shed the skin of the victim once and for all and engage the world "come what may." He Who Risks Nothing Has Nothing, he declares, and slams the door definitively on a crowd of tired excuses.

[Note that OBSCURITY is not given a place in this encyclopedia, because it does not really apply to the book at hand. What may seem obscure at first glance is usually just Grossman adding one voice too many to the clamor. Tortuous as the book may be at times, it lacks the subtle concealment of the truly obscure. Woe unto him who does not understand Grossman's POINT when the book is finally laid to rest.]

CHASHAD: SUSPICION

Intimation's underbelly.

See Under: Love [*see under:* LONG, COMPLICATED, TRYING AT TIMES] is intricately crafted and complex in its schema. At the same time it is a book of basic simplicity in its convictions and moral imperatives [*see under:* STORY, A BIG SHAGGY-DOG]. Observe:

Momik Neuman entered the world by way of the quick-sale shelf. That is to say, even before he could walk or talk he was damaged goods, the product of parents who taught him from the outset:

> Always stand in the middle row. Never reveal more than you have to. Remember things are seldom what they seem. Never be too happy. Don't say 'I' so freely. And in general, try to get out of the whole thing safely, with no unnecessary scars. Don't hope for more than this.

Slowly, as Momik ventures into the world of Schulz and his own grandfather, he begins to see something more. THE STORY [*q.v.*], it seems, is largely to blame. Wasserman chides the Nazi, "Your main problem (!), Herr Neigel ... is that you never leave the confines of your own skin!" Soon, after long weeks of sleepless, story-filled nights, even the Nazi is touched with a bit of compassion for Wasserman's ragtag band of adventurers, which includes the old cast of characters as well as Momik Neuman's Jerusalem neighbors Yedidya Munin the chronic onanist, hysterical Hannah Zeitrin of the pendulous breasts and crooked wig, and others. The Children of the Heart, no products of Never-Never Land, have aged considerably since their last escapade, and now inhabit an abandoned mine and scramble to find food in the woods. Theirs is a wartime adventure with which even a Nazi is capable of sympathizing.

It is essential to note that Neigel's understanding springs from his participation in the tale's creation. Wasserman manages to implicate the Nazi by sending him for factual details to further the story. His explanation of the artistic process sounds suspiciously familiar [*see under*: SCHULZ, BRUNO; AGE OF GENIUS, THE]: "You build something and challenge it and again build it and challenge it a thousand and one times!" Momik, too, through this plunge into the chill waters of his grandfather's story and Schulz's, is learning about the power of creation to make one feel. He has become a father. (What better way to leave your own skin?) "The story," his grandfather tells him, "is a living, breathing creature, a mysterious, lovely, and delicate creature we must not twist or break to suit our own impetuous whims...." Suddenly the old restraints are gone and Momik cannot help himself: *he loves.*

In the last section of the book, "The Complete Encyclopedia of Kazik's Life," another child is born, this one quite real and dripping the amniotic fluid that has collected over this four-hundred-page gestation period. In the book's final pages there is a meditation on THE MEANING OF LIFE, PRAYER, and DECISION. Fried, the featured player of Wasserman's "Children of the Heart" series, looks long and hard at his child Kazik and decides to choose "between observing and acting ... between forces of habit and creativity." After this decision comes Grossman's own final indictment (spoken like a real Prospero, in the person of Wasserman, all other masks aside for the time being). He speaks clearly, right into Neigel's face: "We asked so little: for a man to live in this world from birth to death and know nothing of war." The wise reader will proceed with caution down the neat trails of this last page or two. There are blazes and markers here which warn that something may be not quite right. Grossman seems prepared to drastically simplify his own project after pages and pages of honest labor and delicately calculated obfuscation. While the point is not to make obscurity itself a goal, one may still find fault

with Grossman's urge to resolve the book's deeper questions with a few platitudinal low blows.

Grossman's moral challenge is a basic one: to love, to try our hardest to resist war, to make our gardens grow. Indeed, he seems to say, complication in matters like war, death, and love are easy ways out, the stuff of convoluted and flawed justifications for deaths of nations and lives lived in stultifying check. He knows well enough to see that if *See Under: Love* were simply a tour de force in formal terms, just a complicated synesthetic, synchronic pudding, mere complication for complication's sake, then it would be, for all its difficulty, hollow at the heart. So he resorts in the book's last paragraphs to a stab at that very region of the chest cavity, and proclaims LOVE [*q.v.*] the necessary victor. At what cost, though, this emotional overcompensation that floods the final few pages with almost no warning at all?

Surely concentrated emotional clarity is warranted in a book whose acrobatics are so elaborate and which demands so much of both the reader's and the writer's energy. Still, clarity and simplification are not one and the same. Grossman has proven himself capable of a complex *telling*; no one could deny that this book winds gracefully as a snake path up (and over and through and round and round) the mountain. So, too, we grant him the need for the simplicity of emotion mustered at the book's close. SUSPICION, though, hovers at the place where the path runs out. Why, we ask, has Grossman invested himself so in the unleashing of a determinedly tangled tale when, in fact, his message is so simple? Are we just to allow him his pirouettes and tours jetés when we know that walking is his final goal? It is difficult not to feel manipulated in some way by this jarring disparity between tale and tale's tail: the incongruity of method and message, means and ends, artifice and heart.

It is important to reiterate that the book succeeds miraculously at the level of craft. It is a legitimate stylistic achievement whose loops and dips should not be underestimated. Interesting, though, to note that the book's richest and undoubtedly most powerful section is the opening, "Momik"—the least complicated quarter formally, emotionally the most complex. One senses that Grossman was able here to swing high his scythe and hack at the more oppressive brush that clogs some of the other passages, and in "Momik" allow the basic potency of the subject matter and characters to dictate the section's emotional crop. The author's presence, while clearly felt, resists crowding, and allows us to breathe deeply the air of Momik's childish observations and piercingly honest probing into his parents' and grandfather's past.

The possible solution to Grossman's problems lies neither in further obscurity at the book's close, nor in a continued overcautious reliance on the simple structure of the "Momik" section. When *See Under: Love* succeeds, it does so because of the substance and quality of the questions it asks about imagination, memory, denial, and faith. These are the times his chosen method of approach and attack serves most faithfully the deeper subject matter. The encyclopedic section, for example, is a testimony to the adult Momik's essential numbness and rigidity, his inability to let the world exist undefined and unordered all around him. Form and content meet in the looking glass and fix their steady gaze, whereas in parts two and three there is a tendency to complicate for no apparent reason except, perhaps, to prove that it can be done. Only in the last few pages does Grossman (road-weary after this long journey?) throw his hands up and essentially cast his art under a shrub to die. Instead of trudging on a little further toward a more honest resolution befitting this book and its jagged edges, he shirks the very task he had assigned himself, and leans so heavily on that single word LOVE that its letters threaten to shatter under his weight and scatter their shards to the winds. Love may be in fact exactly what he means, but Grossman has abandoned the quartz precision of his earlier sections when he allows the word to exist undefined and unballasted at the close. Then the capacious quality of the terms he has set seems less tantalizingly open-ended than plain wishy-washy.

Grossman has looked up into the face of the unnameable and seen that he will never be able to get it all down, or even grasp hold of its coattails. Instead of admitting the impossibility of his task and allowing irresolution its place in the book, he demands closure of a sort which—according not just to this cranky reader, but to the standards established by the book itself—sounds a distinctly false note.

SIPPUR: STORY

"The story," Grossman says, "was really his life, and he always had to write it again from the beginning."

Obersturmbannführer Neigel scowls at the newly degenerate state of the Children of the Heart and demands, "Give me a simple story, Wasserman! Give me something straight out of life! ... And don't kill anyone!" Wasserman shakes his head wearily and explains to Neigel how "he invents nothing but merely reveals the pre-existent story and follows it like a boy chasing a pretty butterfly. 'I am only the scribe of the story, Herr Neigel, its obedient servant....'" As Wasserman devises new adventures for his characters, the transports arrive punctually and the crematoria chimneys continue to spew smoke. In this setting, a simple story seems distinctly out of the question.

There are intimations of a larger STORY from the beginning. Everywhere there are droppings left by this giant bird. As a child, Momik scrambles down the rickety cellar stairs and pillages the battered relics carted faithfully from Over There: a *Teitsh Chumash,* the *Tzena u-Rena,* a pile of moldy goose feathers, and the real object of the search, his grandfather Anshel's notebooks left from his days as Scheherazade. Between those covers Momik finds a yellowing page of one of the "Children of the Heart" stories, clipped from an old magazine:

> [H]e knew it was the most exciting story ever written, and the paper smelled about a thousand years old and seemed to come out of a Bible ... you could tell this story was the origin of every book and work of literature ever written, and the books that came later were merely imitations of this page....

Later he reads Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles* and describes it as "The Book for me in the sense that Bruno had yearned for *that great tome, sighing, a stormy Bible, its pages fluttering in the wind like an overblown rose....* "

Both of these stories—Wasserman's and Schulz's—are actual written texts, and both hold the status for Momik of

the Word, of a STORY received. The essential story, LIFE [*q.v.*], is also given, but less like a text than a transfusion—slowly, continuously, and, most important, sustainingly. Says Wasserman to his grandson: "Write, then ... sit and write. There is no other way. Because you are like me, your life is the story and for you there is only the story!"

We may safely assume, then, that David Grossman has written himself into the text, though his whereabouts remain largely ambiguous throughout. When it appears he has spoken his mind in the voice of Schulz, he vanishes, only to reemerge several pages later with the cynical snort of the sea. Attempting to ascribe Momik's or Wasserman's traits to Grossman is quite pointless, for each must represent some aspect of the author. Still, occasionally a telling phrase leaps from the page, and voice becomes a mere technicality. Wasserman's final antiwar indictment simply cannot be consigned to a character quirk: David Grossman has appeared from behind his curtain and spoken his mind firmly.

The final question left unanswered is really one of daring. Momik's literary roller coaster ride has revealed to him an astounding view; the matter pending concerns his ability and desire to apply all he has learned. Oddly, the book concludes with a testimony not to Momik's health, but instead to his compulsive need to provide documentation, alphabetization, and an orderly arrangement for the multifarious aspects of his imagination—all in the form of an ENCYCLOPEDIA. One may well ask what differentiates this obsessive urge from his struggle as a child to systematically crack the code of Over There. Momik's mistress Ayala is appalled at the notion of an encyclopedia. "You know what it reminds me of?" she yells, "A mass grave.... It's also a documentation of your crimes against humanity."

Instead, she proposes, "Write me a new story.... But promise me that at least you'll write with ... LOVE! ... Not *See Under: Love,* Shlomik! Go love! Love!" Some SUSPICION [*q.v.*] may indeed be warranted here, but perhaps there remains something to be said for the straightforward nature of this challenge. As Grossman pleads with us to discard our doubts, so does he cast off his complicated masquerade and approach us as—himself. Then it becomes clear that the real object of this quest has been to find the place where love, life, and the story meet, and his challenge entails following his lead with lives of our own. One thing is clear: although *See Under: Love* ends here, the STORY most certainly does not. □

BOOK REVIEW

Liberal Liturgy

Riv-Ellen Prell

Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy by Lawrence A. Hoffman. Indiana University Press, 1987, 213 pp.

Liberal Jews are troubled by prayer. They join synagogues—most frequently when they have young children—but they cannot seem to pray there. Recent studies show that only a fraction of Jews attend synagogue even monthly, far less frequently than Protestants and Catholics attend church. One would expect American Jews to behave more like their Protestant neighbors, since Protestantism provided the Jews with an influential model for Americanization. By the early twentieth century American Jews understood that their economic and social mobility depended upon an American Protestant model of daily life rather than a Jewish European one. In Protestant culture ritual was spare, worship restrained, and religious activity confined to one day a week. First-generation Jews chose to pursue economic success, and their children grew up to resemble Protestants in behavior, if not in religious belief. They built impressive Conservative and Reform synagogues that often housed organs and choirs and created a proper setting for decorous worship. They created "religious schools" for their children. In short, they succeeded in making Judaism into a religion that came to be called one of America's "three faiths." The process created synagogue members, not "attenders," and prayer became alien.

The children who grew up in the new suburbs have not fared much better than their parents in creating a prayer life. The Jewish religious revival that began in the early 1970s has attempted, in part, to address the problem of prayer. Some Jews have turned to Orthodox Judaism, some have joined the progressive *havura* movement, others have turned to Jewish feminism. All are searching for identity and a language with which to address God. The organized Jewish movements have devoted considerable energy to making prayer books more "meaningful" by revising them. In each of these rather different expressions of Judaism, liturgy remains a central issue for American Jews because the Jewish identity they seek is linked to participation in an American "faith" whose significance is marked by its links to an historical tradition.

When one turns to the scholarship on prayer, however, the literature fails to provide a complex understanding of the practice. Despite the importance of prayer in human lives and throughout world cultures, prayer is one of the

Riv-Ellen Prell is an anthropologist in the Program in American Studies at the University of Minnesota. She is the author of Prayer and Community: The Havurah in American Judaism *(Wayne State University Press, 1989).*

least studied phenomena of religious life. At least in the West, the study of prayer has traditionally been confined to the study of texts—scholars attempt to date them accurately and analyze their literary structures and historical antecedents. This approach has done little to help us understand what prayer is, what happens to people when they pray, what prayers mean as the cultural expressions of a religion or a people, or why people persist in praying, even if infrequently.

Lawrence Hoffman's book, *Beyond the Text,* sets the study of liturgy and prayer on a new course. His central argument, that prayer is a ritual and not solely a text, allows him to bring fresh insight to a continent that had appeared to be fully explored and not terribly interesting. With Hoffman as our guide, prayer becomes a way of understanding the history, social relations, aesthetics, and ideas of a people. In short, his work is among the first to both understand prayer as a cultural expression of the Jewish people and provide the methodology for exploring those cultural dimensions in the liturgies of other peoples as well.

This work is particularly significant because it is among the first to develop a dialogue between the classical interests of Jewish studies—texts and history—and the stuff of cultural analysis—ritual, myth, and meaning. Hoffman's work exists as part of a burgeoning literature by anthropologists, sociologists, and religious studies scholars committed to understanding Jewish life as it is embodied in its texts and lived in contemporary society.* In both cases, questions of meaning—cultural categories and culturally formulated activity—emerge as significant. This interest signals an important and slow-to-develop change in Jewish studies which, with important exceptions, has until now been unwilling to engage theories that compare Judaism to non-Western religions. Accustomed to the lofty Western isolation that set Judaism and Christianity apart from the world, scholars were wedded to narrow frames of reference for understanding Jewish life. Hoffman's work, like others in this trend, brings Judaism into the forum of much wider and more appropriate discussion. For many of these studies, Hoffman's pioneering work has been suggestive. At the same time, many of his questions help us to uncover the dilemmas posed by prayer for American Jews.

Hoffman's discussion of prayer-as-ritual focuses on two closely linked elements of the experience: prayer is both "social," enabling individuals to join together in community, and "reflexive," creating a mirror for personal experience. At the same time, Hoffman argues, prayer cannot be understood apart from its sacred power, which transcends both its social and reflexive dimensions. Prayer expresses the collective identity of a group, differentiating that group from all others, but particularly those close at hand, by ritualizing "perceptions of time" and articulating shared experience. Hoffman's examples—the post-Sabbath *havdala* ritual and the American nineteenth-century Reform Jewish revisions of the prayer book, as well as the development of key liturgical portions of the Seder—all reveal that prayer rituals are best studied in terms of "universal patterns," or questions that all human cultures ask. The framers of the Seder liturgy and the creators of denominational prayer books, though separated by centuries, inherited Jewish myths and reformulated them in light of pressing social circumstances. For scholars of liturgy, then, the question to ask is not what the earliest version of a particular prayer is, what date it entered common usage, or how it reflected certain institutions of society, but how that prayer encoded human experience as it was defined within that era of Jewish culture.

Unlike most social scientists, Hoffman is committed to the study of those elements of prayer that address God, because it is the relationship between the worshipers and God that makes both prayer and the myths it draws upon powerful. Hoffman claims that whatever one may say of prayer, to ignore its holy and sacred dimension is to misunderstand how and why people pray. His task is to demonstrate the variability, rather than universality, of experiences of holiness by offering examples of ancient worship by rabbis in Palestine in the third and fourth centuries, and contemporary Reform worship as well.

Hoffman's approach to prayer sensitizes us to the fact that prayer has often provided the occasion for groups and movements to articulate their feelings about God and society, about their longings and their place within a larger culture. Because of his interest in the elements of prayer that are powerful and that link the worshiper to God, he examines nontextual aspects of worship as well as liturgy. His discussions of the organization of the prayer book, gestures associated with praying, and the physical setting of the worship space, in addition to liturgy, all demonstrate that prayer is a window onto Jewish identity, Jewish culture, and relationship to God.

Beyond the Text does not intend to provide a sociological study of prayer, but a mode for interpreting it, and in this way Hoffman can help us consider the puzzle of why liberal Jews do not pray. He shows that even Jews who pray only infrequently continue to articulate a Jewish identity, even if its expression takes the form of evocative fund-raising appeals, drawing on such sacred myths as the fabled indivisibility of the Jewish people. How do these communal activities, which help establish both group and individual identity, differ from the practice of prayer? Why have these activities succeeded in attracting American Jews as prayer has not? I suggest that the answer lies farther "beyond the text" than Hoffman proposes.

The very capacity of Jewish prayer to articulate unique cultural categories sets it in opposition to the organization of American society. The dramatic changes of the nineteenth century—urbanization, industrialization, bureaucratization, and the isolation of the domestic sphere—helped create a society in which religion became a leisure-time activity well suited to the development of personal identity. Immigrants found that their "ethnic churches" were particularly important

*This recent scholarship includes: Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage and Judaism* (Indiana University Press, 1990); Frida Kerner Furman, *Beyond Yiddishkeit* (SUNY Press, 1987); Harvey Goldberg, *Judaism Viewed from Within and from Without* (SUNY Press, 1987); Jack Kugelmass, *The Miracle of Intervale Avenue* (Schocken, 1986); Jack Kugelmass, ed., *Between Two Worlds* (Cornell University Press, 1988); Riv-Ellen Prell, *Prayer and Community: The Havurah in American Judaism* (Wayne State University Press, 1989); Walter Zenner, ed., *Persistence and Flexibility* (SUNY Press, 1988). Earlier work is included in Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days* (Dutton, 1979), and Samuel Heilman, *The People of the Book* (University of Chicago Press, 1983).

settings for the construction of their new American lives. For more than a century, American Judaism offered orienting markers for Americanizing—including ideas about decorum, the place of religion, and aspirations for success—and then consolidated those definitions within certain social class settings. American culture approves of the development of a private identity, but only if it does not interfere with work, education, or patterns of consumption which are the hallmarks of middle-class life. Such compartmentalization makes it virtually impossible to maintain a unique language, religion, or worldview that is not confined to the private world. Other ethnic or minority groups which, for various historical reasons, were less successful in confining their cultural life to private time could not or were not allowed to move smoothly into the mainstream and did not enter the middle class.

Most liberal American Jews are culturally impoverished. Neither synagogues nor secular organizations were created to provide Jews with the opportunity to learn about their culture or live in an all-encompassing Jewish world. Current research demonstrates that American Jews maintain their Jewishness by adapting and reinterpreting key rituals and symbols to make them compatible with American life. But what is lost in the process? Jews keep their Judaism alive, but that Judaism—and prayer as well—becomes more difficult to define.

The efforts by Jewish movements and Jewish feminists to revise liturgy are as yet too self-conscious to constitute a culture or sacred myth. These attempts are primarily elite formulations that come from individual, as opposed to communal, experiences. Such self-conscious statements are far more successful at creating one-time events than enduring practices. These events include prayer, but they are not designed to be repeated or to help negotiate *daily* life. These contemporary revisions of prayer, as well as the occasional practice of prayer, often move worshipers so far beyond the text that the text itself recedes from importance. Such prayer might mark one as a Jew, yet it does not achieve the status Hoffman discusses of a rehearsal of cultural categories tuned to a particular social context. Praying in a group with which one shares neither work, mutual responsibility, nor political activity is a narrow experience which makes the reinforcement of even limited meanings almost impossible. If the essence of culture is shared activity, then sharing must occur for more than just a few hours a week. Contemporary prayer can flood the worshiper with a language that may be familiar and understandable, but nevertheless lacks emotional resonance and power.

In his analysis, Hoffman does not address the issue of whether the highly general meanings of "community" or the ideological formulations of the Jews of another time parallel the experience of contemporary Jews. What do these acts have in common? Even if the rabbis of an earlier century use many of the same words as we do today, their prayers and ours are almost entirely different cultural events because the cultures from which they arise cannot invest these prayers with the same type of meanings. We cannot assume that in every case culture is experienced or community self-identity expressed.

Indeed, communities are never homogeneous and their cultural self-portraits—prayer, ritual, literature—inevitably represent the interests and power of one group within the community over another, including the power to define experience itself. If we treat prayer as the expression of a homogeneous social group, then we depend too heavily on elite visions. Petitionary prayer, which expresses personal need and desire (as opposed to praise of God or formulations of Jewish myth), speaks to rather different aspects of community and self. We need to understand the relationship between a prayer for health and the narration of the Jews' liberation from Egypt. How does each prayer use symbols, express Jewish meaning, and provide a self-portrait of the Jewish people?

Despite Western culture's scientific and rational explanations for pain, loss, and confusion, people have continued to turn toward religion and prayer when confronted with those experiences. What we learn from those troubled by prayer is that, lacking a community in which prayer overlaps with the rest of life, attempts to generate new cultural categories or transmit continuous ones have been less than successful. Prayer innovation has not produced communities that have strengthened and continued to build variations on those prayers. And the "tradition" has not successfully transmitted the values and outlook that made prayer necessary and desirable. As American society has undermined cultural difference and made the ascent to the middle class through education possible, it has made prayer virtually impossible.

Most liberal American Jews are culturally impoverished.

As I read the behavior—as opposed to the texts—of people, it seems to me that most Jews pray in Jewish settings because they want to insure the continuation of the Jewish people. (We don't know how or whether they pray in private at points of fear and despair.) They do not pray for the continuity of the Jewish people; they pray so that the Jewish people will continue. This strategy, however, is not working. It is not producing a Jewish American culture. Instead, it produces a ritual "place marker" which is supposed to prevent the erasure of Jewish experience. Jews cannot pray, not just because of secularization and a crisis of faith, but because American culture makes it almost impossible to generate a Jewish American experience. American Jewry's greatest hope for renewing an authentic culture and creating meaningful prayer rests in resisting America's insatiable desire for homogeneity. The more willing Jews are to look to their communities for Jewish voices, history, and politics, the more successful will be their attempts at prayer. Self-conscious and personal liturgy, if practiced by committed communities that share other activities, may someday provide the foundation for a flourishing American Judaism.

As scholars turn to the study of prayer-as-ritual, they must attempt to understand how prayer works to formulate the meaning and significance of cultural experience. Hoffman puts liturgy at the center of that agenda, and by expanding its subject matter and interpretation, he has helped us learn how to discuss the bargain that led to the creation of American Judaism. □

LETTERS

(Continued from p. 4)

the only people on earth who believes that its claim to sovereignty is conditional on our moral behavior. His questions are healthy to ask when trying to define for ourselves the terms that make Jewish statehood tolerable. Where Viorst is mistaken, or overly zealous, is his implication that unless we are morally perfect, we should give up our claims to statehood.

Viorst's intolerance of moral imperfection is not covenantal since the covenant between God and Israel is premised upon the ability to soak up imperfections. God is capable of accepting into covenant imperfect, potentially evil human beings. From this we can infer that moral perfection isn't a prerequisite for empowerment since an integral part of the covenant is for Israel to inherit the Land of Canaan. What is required is an incremental progression toward national moral redemption culminating in messianic times.

Empowerment will place the nation in morally ambiguous situations. If empowerment has the ability to destroy the Jewish mission in history by obscuring Judaic morality, how then do we keep empowerment *and* the Jewish mission? On one hand, in order to be morally unambiguous we should probably avoid taking a role in history. Yet, on the other hand, if by the terms of the covenant we are supposed to take a role in history, can we realistically expect to avoid morally ambiguous circumstances? While our mission is to be a "light unto the nations," our tradition conversely teaches us that, unlike Tibetan monks who have sequestered themselves from the world on top of mountains, Moses came down from the mountain, in covenant with God, to lead his people out of the wilderness and into history. How can you be "a light" if that light is hidden away backstage somewhere? Our job, therefore, is to be a player on the stage of history, and to struggle with the moral questions as they arise.

Where I differ from Viorst is that when he sees a "spiraling loss of our Jewish soul" I see difficult tests in our learning to handle our hard-earned empowerment. Where Viorst sees only a series of Israeli moral failings and nothing else, I see the moral failings of individuals in power, but also the moral rebalancing of Israeli society by virtue of the Israeli people's much intact "Jewish soul."

In the shadow of the Holocaust—the epitome of powerlessness—survival itself becomes a moral imperative and those actions which would undermine survival become immoral. Our task as a newly reempowered people is to find the ethical balance between survivalism—the justification in the name of survival of every action regardless of its repugnancy—and the innocence of powerless moral purity. This is what our covenantal tradition demands of us. That is why I view the Kahan and Landau Commissions, the series of Basic Laws, Israel's free press, free elections, free speech, separation of powers, and a myriad of other checks and balances as the building blocks in the structure of covenantal ethical empowerment. Just because there are cracks in that structure doesn't mean we condemn it for demolition. Rather, we pour new ethical mortar into those cracks of moral failing, reinforce the structure, and continue the job of building.

Jeffrey Yitzhak Santis
Palo Alto, California

Milton Viorst responds:

I think I can manage the complexities, thank you; it is rather that I see fewer challenges to Israel's legitimacy than Mr. Santis does. I'm tired of hearing how criticism endangers Israel. That's a right-winger's argument. It's the argument the Khomeinists used with regard to Islam to go after Rushdie. I believe that Israel is endangered by the unwillingness of diaspora Jews to engage in criticism—distinguishing between self-indulgent denunciation, to which I attach no value, and constructively directed criticism. Nor do I believe the issue is Israel's "moral imperfection." The term is much too delicate. Israel's preference of territory over peace, its denial of the same national goal to its neighbors that it claims for itself, its inhuman treatment of these neighbors—this conduct is morally reprehensible. More important, it is also self-destructive. Mr. Santis may believe that Israel's military superiority over the Arabs is a permanent condition. I am not so convinced. That is why I believe that only a policy of reconciliation—the precise opposite of Israel's current course—holds real promise for the long-term survival of a Jewish state.

I respect Mr. Dubin's right to disagree with me—but not his right to demean my Jewishness with the tired epithet "self-hating." He lost me with that one.

Deena on Dina

To the Editor:

I was surprised to see, in the same issue in which my "Crossing the Street in Chile" essay appeared (Nov./Dec. 1989), a review of Deena Metzger's wonderful novel, *What Dina Thought*. As I cannot believe that your reviewer read the same novel that I publicly endorsed, I would simply ask that you reproduce here what I wrote for the back of the book: "The story of love so deep and stubborn that it makes the dead speak, as if they were the mothers of history. I was amazed and moved beyond belief."

If your readers want to decide who is right, your reviewer or this reader of Deena Metzger's novel, the only way to do so is to read the book itself.

Ariel Dorfman
Durham, North Carolina

On *Tikkun*

To the Editor:

As an early subscriber to *Tikkun*, I have read a lot of articles in which the editor criticized the elitism of liberals (or progressives, or whatever) who were not addressing the needs and fears of Americans who do not share our liberal views.

I didn't always agree with those articles, but I couldn't help feeling dismayed a while back when *Tikkun* announced a conference in New York that it described as a gathering of intellectuals.

Talk about elitism.

The West Coast conferences announced in the insert facing page 64 in the Nov./Dec. 1989 issue are described the same way. But the announcement on the back cover, at least, deletes the word "intellectuals."

Can it be that *Tikkun* is, however haltingly, beginning to heed its own advice?

Merrill Martin
New York, New York

The Editor responds:

There is a long tradition of working-class intellectuals in the U.S. that builds upon the even longer tradition of Jewish intellectual activity throughout the ages. There is nothing elitist about it. When we use the word intellectual we mean to refer to those who like ideas, like to discuss and debate them, like to play with them, and who think that the life of the mind is intrinsically valuable. American culture often demeans intellectual activity; we do not.

The term "intellectual" in these announcements is meant to discourage those who think that only feelings are legitimate while ideas are somehow tainted or necessarily distanced from emotional reality; those who think we've already done enough thinking and that people need only take political action around already defined political objectives. We want to make it clear to all potential participants that we do *not* think that theorizing is somehow either a distraction or a means of avoidance of the political work we should really be doing. On the contrary, we hold the view that we deeply need to rethink the liberal and progressive agenda and the theoretical foundations on which it rests. Anyone who wishes to engage in that kind of thinking will find an exciting network of people with shared concerns at the *Tikkun* conferences, at *Tikkun* study groups and salons, and in the pages of *Tikkun* itself.

To the Editor:

"You don't have to be Jewish to read and love *Tikkun*." I just want to testify that, so far, this is true. I've been reading *Tikkun* for several months now and I love it (that's why I subscribed) and I'm not Jewish. My testimony is intended not merely to flatter you but to encourage you to keep on doing whatever you're doing that makes this true. You never make me feel as if I'm on the outside looking in. You relieve my ignorance without calling attention to it. There is something mysteriously open and welcoming about *Tikkun*. You manage to be exuberantly Jewish without being exclusive. Maybe this embracing quality is exactly what being exuberantly Jewish means. I'm learning, I'm learning.

Jane Elder Wulff
Battle Ground, Washington

Eastern Europe

To the Editor:

It is rare for me to find myself in disagreement with *Tikkun*, but I must dispute your editor's note on nationalist movements in the Baltics (*Tikkun*, Nov./Dec. 1989). Your argument, essentially, is that the Baltic nationalists threaten to destabilize Gorbachev, and they are probably anti-Semites to boot, so their cause does not deserve our support.

I won't contest your point about the long history of anti-Semitism in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The record is irrefutable. I believe it is inaccurate and unfair, however, to tar the leadership of the Baltic popular fronts and independence parties with the brush of anti-Semitism.

I have met leaders of all three Baltic nationalist movements, and I am convinced of their determination to ensure that anti-Semitism has no role in their countries' futures. Vytautas Landsbergis, the leader of the Lithuanian people's front *Sajudis*, has spoken openly and candidly about the history of anti-Semitism in his country and the importance of including all groups, Jews too, in the struggle for self-determination.

All three popular fronts have numerous Jewish members. In Latvia, which has perhaps the most virulent history of anti-Semitism, the Jewish community has been intimately involved in the struggle for self-determination. Mavrik Vulfsons, a member of the Congress of People's Deputies in Moscow and of the Latvian Popular Front leadership, is also a long-time Jewish activist and CPSU member who fought for years to restore Jewish religious and cultural freedoms in the USSR. During his recent visit to the U.S. with a popular front delegation, he spoke at length to both Jewish and non-Jewish groups about the improving situation for Jews in the Baltics and the importance to Jews of Baltic self-determination.

The facts speak for themselves. Jews today are freer and more integrated into public life in the Baltic republics than in the rest of the USSR. The improved conditions in the Baltics coincided directly with the lessening of control by Moscow and the increased autonomy won by Baltic nationalist groups. The Baltics have seen none of the anti-Semitic violence and fear that has arisen in the Slavic areas of the USSR under glasnost. A Jewish cultural center has opened in Riga, and Israeli friendship societies have started operating in all three Baltic states.

It is therefore inaccurate and unfair to stereotype Baltic nationalists as anti-Semites. It is also incorrect to label them all as right-wing anti-Communists; in fact, a considerable proportion of the membership of the popular fronts also belongs to the CPSU (or the now-independent Lithuanian Communist Party). The preference for national independence in all three Baltic countries is overwhelming and encompasses the entire political spectrum.

Finally, as Jews and as Americans it would be wrong for us to ignore the historic injustice of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Paet, of the forceful annexation of the independent Baltic states by Stalin, and of the thousands of Balts who were murdered or deported to their deaths for defending their nations' freedom. And while Baltic self-determination poses a difficult challenge to Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership, it is by no means certain that the gradual evolution of the Baltic states toward independence is incompatible with the survival of reform in the USSR.

Hitler and Stalin succeeded in destroying the independence of the Baltic states in 1940. It is not unreasonable for the United States to maintain what has been our stated policy for fifty years: the future of the Baltic states is for the peoples of the Baltics to decide, peacefully and democratically.

Eric S. Rubin
Washington, D.C.

ERRATA

In "Black-White Relations: From Bensonhurst to Ballot Box" by Bob Blauner (Vol. 5, No. 1) on page 43, first column, the confrontation mentioned between Black college students and the police took place in Virginia Beach, not Virginia City. Also, Douglas Wilder was elected the first African-American *governor* since Reconstruction.

In "On Schizophrenia, Reductionism, and Family Responsibility" by Reginald E. Zelnik (Vol. 5, No. 1) on page 46, third column, the word "schizophrenic" was twice inadvertently substituted for the word "schizophrenegenic" on lines 14 and 23.

Holocaust

To the Editor:

I make my living renting garbage compactors and I am conscious that it is presumptuous of me to mix in controversy with the intelligentsia. Nonetheless, I think there is a natural explanation for the excitement Phillip Lopate ("Resistance to the Holocaust," *Tikkun,* May/June 1989) heard in his mother's voice when she spoke about the concentration camp survivors they visited together. I draw this explanation from understanding my cousin Gertie in Cleveland. She is a contemporary of his mother. She left school at age twelve to stand in a candy store, the same business as Lopate's mother's, and she is similarly emotional. Gertie's obsession with the horror and her agitation come from her understanding that she and her sons would have been murdered but for the fortuity of her emigration; that those who died were her flesh and blood, relatives and *klal Israel*; that their deaths were the teleological development of two thousand years of more limited horrors; that history has not yet shown that North America is not another fool's paradise in the Diaspora. She understands that the survivors who came into the candy store after the war "were more sinned against than sinning" (to quote a passage from a work of culture to which Lopate may more easily relate), and she reached this understanding without having had the opportunity of studying Shakespeare as a window on life. She understands that European Jewry died for her, without her having had the benefit of studying comparative religion. Lopate writes as he does because he does not feel the same bond and does not have the same understanding. I suggest—if I can engage in the same smart-assed argument and fractionally partial truths—that it is because Lopate's professional experience and ambitions as a public school teacher and writer in New York have been so modest, limited, and ever so provincial as to make him think that he is living in a Jewish world. Nor can he sympathize from guilt, for he is too young to ask himself what he did in the 1930s.

Had Gertie had the opportunity of going to school a few more years (as I was fortunate enough to do), she would have been able to comprehend and respond to the uniqueness of the Holocaust not only from the heart. If I may put words in her mouth, she would have said that Lopate's four reasons, listed by him for dismissal, as to why the Holocaust is unique are not exhaustive just because he has made an enumeration. She would have said that one other reason for a special poignancy is that one of history's great civilizations almost succeeded in annihilating another. ("When beggars die there are no comets seen; the heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.") Expunging the victims' humanity was integral to the process of murder; to have succeeded would have made the annihilation total *ab initio* because it is humanity which characterized the victims' civilization and made it unique. This is more than neatness; it is an elegance with which intellectuals of an aesthetic bent should be fascinated. If the Germans could have annihilated the Jews, the murder of a few hundred thousand or million gentiles by each other for relatively rational motives of greed, economics, or religious orthodoxy would have been easy. The slaughters will be repeated if the Holocaust is seen as only another hiccup in the development of a world in which hiccups are normal. As many American Jews rationalized in the 1930s, it was just another pogrom; as Hitler reputedly retorted to henchmen concerned about world opinion, "Who remembers the Armenians?"

Lopate, in the last part of his essay, complains about the aesthetics of the commemoration of the Holocaust and the clumsiness of the didacticism of the memorials. But you really cannot expect great art to emerge from the Holocaust.

The big *machers* tend not to be great aesthetes. They tend, like Gertie, to have worked like horses all their lives and subordinated their own development so that they could make it in America for themselves and their families, so that they could have children like Lopate who could become intellectual and refined. Some have the same limited education as Gertie, who made a life for herself peddling apples and potatoes; many were more successful in their work. But a lifetime of dealing in scrap metal or ladies' dresses or filling teeth does not in itself ennoble or heighten one's artistic sensibilities. Gertie's emotions are uncomplicated, sincere, and open. So is the expression of her compassion, and her taste in memorial art.

Then there is the problem of supply and demand. This is the basis of the garbage business and much else. There is so much to memorialize. Many of those who could have created great art because they lived the life regrettably died. Those who survived had their development distorted; art was not an official activity in camp (although music sometimes was). Many of those who survived can't even talk about their horror, let alone make art of it. Remember what happens every time major league baseball expands? You get shortstops who can field but can't hit; shortstops who are decent hitters but bad fielders; shortstops who can't do either well but at least are mediocre in both aspects of the game. Then there are those who had the potential to be great but are ruined by being pushed into the furnace too early. So it is with Holocaust art.

Also, there seems to be a problem with a lot of modern art. It is heavy on the symbolism, light on the aesthetic, and really quite ugly. I think that the artists and their patrons think that modern art and its materials lend themselves to the memorialization of horrors. These are the times that we live in and I think that it would be wrong to wait for the Messiah to memorialize the Holocaust.

Gertie and those who make torches in basements acted as they understood and as their lives permitted. They have made memorials and engaged in observances that are meaningful to them and hopefully to the next generation. Their monuments, inadequate as they must be, are nevertheless meaningful to the survivors so that they should not think that their families were martyred for nothing, and that they are alone in caring and understanding.

Lopate rebels when he is invited to have normal emotions; instead he envies an Auschwitz survivor. All I can see that Lopate has done has been to respond to honest emotion and positive action with sophomoric humor and cynicism, and to equate Jews with Hutus. European Jews did not need American Jews to consider their plight through Lopate's "deracinated cosmopolitanism" in the 1930s, and Israelis don't need it now. May Lopate never make a hard choice in which Jews are

(Continued on p. 122)

(Continued from p. 6)

lost their lives in a senseless struggle, and millions of our own people were systematically brutalized, dehumanized, and then annihilated. It is now in the name of this very same German nationalism that we are asked to recognize the right of East and West Germany to reunite. (And possibly next we will be told about Germany's desire to absorb other areas where ethnic Germans live, precisely the pretext that led to German expansionism in the 1930s.) This is preposterous. German nationalism has no legitimate claim on us and will not until either the entire generation that grew up in Nazi Germany no longer plays any role in German life or until the German people, both in East and West Germany, engage in some set of public service activities aimed at uprooting and recompensing the evils that they let loose on this world. (I'm thinking here of a German peace corps dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Semitism all over the world, a German effort to provide direct economic aid to societies—including the Soviet Union and Israel—in which displaced Jews were resettled, a German educational system that trains its citizens in the skills of combating all forms of totalitarianism and prejudice, a German Church that teaches its members exactly how the Church had collaborated with evil; the list could go on.) A German reunification that comes to us in the name of repairing the damage Germany did would be worthy of consideration. But a German reunification suffused with historical amnesia and fueled by a desire for economic growth and power is a mortal danger to the world.

In short, while recognizing the prima facie claims of any nationalism, we need to distinguish between progressive and destructive nationalism. When national identity is used to satisfy the fundamental needs of a people for community, shared culture, shared ideas, and a shared history, we applaud it. But some nationalisms then become an instrument for the oppression of others. At this point we need to question the validity of that nationalism more closely.

There is a progressive nationalism that emerges from the shared struggle of a people against oppression. The kind of nationalism developed by African-Americans to counter the oppression of a white society embodies elements of humanity that can provide a meaningful and ethical framework for many who remain oppressed. Similarly, there are progressive elements of Jewish nationalism—exemplified in the insistence of Jews to root their history *not* in some glorious superhero founders but in a history of a people that is liberated from slavery (see the Haggadah supplement that is inserted in this issue of *Tikkun*)—that provide a liberatory framework. To the extent that nationalisms are progressive they enable people to identify with others who are oppressed (as the Torah puts it so clearly, "Do not oppress the stranger; remember that you were strangers in the land of Egypt"). But many nationalisms are not progressive, and as the Israeli experience is beginning to show, even progressive nationalisms can be transformed into mechanisms of oppression.

In the modern world, nationalism is too often an ideology used to allow people to repress awareness of their own pain and alienation in daily life. The need for connectedness and recognition by others is systematically frustrated in the contemporary world. From the moments in early life when alienated parents misrecognize their own children, deny their subjectivity and spontaneity, and project onto them fantasies of who they are (to which the child must conform in order to receive some degree of pseudo-recognition), to an adult life in which human relations are increasingly shaped by the competitive and dominating modes of the marketplace, our human community is increasingly fragmented and emptied of deep connections and ethical wholeness. "The nation" becomes a substitute gratification for the wholeness lacking in one's own immediate life; and instead of struggling to change daily life to make it less fragmented and alienated, people are encouraged to identify with this fantasized national community. Through identification with this larger reality one imagines oneself made whole, fully recognized (as citizen), and accepted into a community whose destiny will provide meaning to one's own fragmented life. But the community exists only in songs, movies, television images, and speeches of politicians—not in how people treat each other or lead their daily lives. So the pain of alienated lives is only momentarily assuaged by the moments of nationalist fantasy, and eventually people suspect that something is still wrong. The solution: to find some "other" (the Jew, the Communist, the Black, the homosexual, the Arab, the Japanese, the Chinese, the capitalist) who is the reason why the nation is not delivering the emotional goodies it was supposed to have in store. The rage that one feels at one's own alienated life can now get externalized in aggression against the other who is allegedly undermining the fantasized community that would otherwise be working well to make life fulfilling and meaningful.

This is the most prevalent way that nationalism functions in the modern world, and I see little reason to encourage it.

Nor is this a moment when we should look favorably on the reemergence of nationalisms throughout Europe. The U.S. helped foster these nationalisms as a way to counter Soviet influence. Yet all too often European nationalisms flourished—even while officially suppressed by the Communists—precisely because they embodied

all the vitality of older reactionary fantasies, including anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and religious fundamentalism. These diseases may once again spring to life in a Central and Eastern Europe no longer governed by the Soviet Union. Giving the nod to a reunited Germany, the country that most embodied these tendencies in the recent past, can only encourage the plethora of national groupings that may recreate a Europe so similar to the pre-World War I picture that it dissolves into endless battling between ethnic and religious rivals.

Our point here is not to be unforgiving toward the enemies of the Jews. I would hold any country responsible to the same standard for a similar level of historical outrage in the recent past. For this same reason, I don't recognize any fundamental right for national self-determination of Cambodians under the Khmer Rouge. And I still hope that someday Kissinger and Nixon and others will stand trial for their war crimes against the people of Vietnam, and that they will be sentenced to spend years of their life working to repair the country they did so much to destroy.

I shared the great joy of seeing the Berlin Wall come down—because it symbolized an end to decades of Communist oppression in Eastern Europe—and I rejoice at the surge of democracy that has swept through Europe. There's a new spirit of openness that is shaking even the Soviet Union. South Africa, too, has recognized the African National Congress, leaving Israel as the one Western-style state unwilling to talk to her enemies (a position that was recently bolstered by the work of Arab terrorists, whose murder of Israeli civilians on a tour bus in Cairo gave aid and comfort to Israeli right-wingers). But much as I welcome the democratization of the world, I also remember that many of the peoples involved were in fact once racists and anti-Semites. The regimes that they are likely to democratically establish may well reflect those sentiments. Sounding the alarm now about German reunification is one way to introduce into the current discussion the notion that all of these resurgent nationalisms have our support only to the extent that they explicitly condemn and struggle against the legacies of anti-Semitism and racism with which they have been identified.

If Germany is allowed to reunite without simultaneously dealing with its past, we will be passing on to history a very unfortunate lesson that will soon come back to haunt us: a people can participate in the worst and most unspeakable crimes, and in a reasonable period of time our collective historical amnesia can be such that this people can return to the collective family of humanity acting as though nothing serious has really happened. If that is the lesson the world learns from Germany, we may see more terrible crimes in the name of nationalism in the years ahead. If it is too late to stop reunification, let it be remembered that liberal Jews sounded the warning. □

(Continued from p. 120)

affected. May Lopate's daughter marry a Hutu and make aliya to Burundi.

Charles M. Arymowicz
Toronto, Canada

To the Editor:

I have two general comments to make regarding Phillip Lopate's essay "Resistance to the Holocaust" and the responses it set off. While my ideas on this topic continue to be rather confused, I strongly sympathize with Lopate's point of view.

Nearly the only thing I can remember from my twice-weekly, decade-long trek to Hebrew school is that every year the curriculum included a long, excruciatingly boring unit on the Holocaust. We read the same textbook for several years. We talked about the same questions regarding what happens when we, the chosen people, are killed en masse. We never contextualized the discussion with more than the most mundane, rote-learned theology, certainly not with any serious historical approach. We concentrated on the Holocaust nearly to the exclusion of any other period of Jewish history. The approach to the subject I received was a major factor in much of my subsequent rejection of Judaism, and persists with my current confusion about organized Judaism as I find my interest in the heritage reawakened. As a child I asked: Who wants to be part of a community that can only weep about its own past? To this day I ask what my relationship can be to a community that so severely fails to integrate the memory of its oppression with its present way of living.

Second, I believe that Lopate's emphasis on rhetoric (he calls it aesthetics) is important and should not be dismissed. What is at issue is not whether the Holocaust will be remembered, but how it will be remembered, by whom, and for what reasons. The way the Holocaust is discussed outside the community cannot be determined solely by our empathy to our dead. The vast majority of the world has its own set of oppressions and of course will not remember ours to the exclusion of their own contexts.

Nothing has made me more ambivalent about Judaism than the way that the Holocaust is generally addressed in the Jewish community. Remembering the Holocaust can't ever be just about Jews, even if we were the most oppressed group in the world at a specific time, or for that matter ever. It also has to be a means of fighting for the oppressed now and always, an opportunity for tikkun.

Kenneth Moss
Washington, D.C.

Volunteer Help Needed

1. Anywhere in the U.S. Would you be a local *Tikkun* contact or organizer for the magazine's educational arm, the Committee for Judaism and Social Justice (CJSJ)? As a *Tikkun* contact person, your tasks would be to coordinate raising money in your area for the magazine (helping to arrange benefits, house parties, or speaking engagements for *Tikkun* editors at local colleges, synagogues, or community organizations, etc.), to get local bookstores and newsstands to order the magazine from Eastern News (our distributor), and to promote the magazine in local media. As a CJSJ organizer, you would help form a local *Tikkun* study group, organize salons, promote *Tikkun* ideas, and build interest and involvement in our Israel conference for the summer of 1991.

2. In the Bay Area. Do you have 10–15 hours per week that you could give to helping out in the office at *Tikkun,* answering telephones, doing office work, helping us solicit donations, helping with mailings, etc.? If so, we could use your help. If you are willing to help with phone solicitations (of subscriptions and/or donations) you could help us in the evenings or on Sundays.

FAISAL HUSSEINI

(Continued from p. 10)

state from attacks by Israel. Israel will want similar protection. Moreover, a Palestinian state might be subject to attack from Syria or other Arab states—for example, Syria still thinks of Palestine as part of "Greater Syria." Can you imagine the need to defend Palestine against other Arab states?

Husseini: If we are talking about regimes, maybe a certain regime might want to make problems for us—maybe we would be threatening some regime's way of functioning.

Lerner: For example, if you had democratic institutions?

Husseini: Maybe if we had democratic institutions, some regimes might not like this idea. And it must and will be a democracy.

Lerner: *Tikkun* has talked about an international force, possibly made up of troops from the United States and the Soviet Union.

Husseini: Everything—we can talk about everything and work out a solution. What we need is freedom for our state so that we can build our lives and rebuild our society, and bring in our refugees so that we can build a life of dignity for them. This is our aim.

Lerner: Let's consider the issue of Israeli settlers in the West Bank. *Tikkun* has taken the position that there is no country in the world that has a right to say, "This country must be *judenrein*—which is to say, Jews can't live here in this country." On the other hand, we recognize that there is some dispute about the legality of the way some of the land taken by the settlers was acquired, and that some of the settlers are interested in provocations and would be a provocative force inside the new Palestinian state. So we've suggested some kind of international force that would supervise the borders and set up an international tribunal to decide which land was taken fairly and which land was taken unfairly. This force would also have the responsibility, for some transitional period, of enforcing law on the settlers, so that the Palestinian state would not risk creating "provocations" that would be used as justifications by the Israeli Right for military incursions against the Palestinian state. But all this thinking is based on our assumption that in principle not all settlers would have to give up land, because some of the land was legitimately acquired. Jews have a right to live on such land, just as Palestinian Arabs have a right to remain on the land that they currently inhabit inside the State of Israel.

Husseini: Just as we would not accept any other state excluding us on principle, our state will not exclude Jews or Christians. We will let anyone live here—but as part of the Palestinian state, as Palestinian citizens, not as refugees and not as part of a group that considers itself citizens of another state. Now, in the settlements that have already been set up by Jewish settlers, we will have to insist that they become open to Palestinian Arabs for settlement as well—just as we will not accept that there should be any area that prohibits Jewish settlement, so we will not accept that any area of our state would prevent Arabs from moving in. Jews would live here as citizens, as equal individuals, but not as a corporate body or as a ghetto.

Lerner: I wonder if the Palestinian movement has developed tensions and differences of perspective between those Palestinians who live on the West Bank and Gaza and those who live outside the boundaries of historical Palestine. These kinds of tensions are apparent in the Zionist movement—there are often clear differences of perspective between Jewish American Zionists and Zionists living in Israel—so I wonder how analogous differences are manifested in the Palestinian movement.

Husseini: Our movement today does not really have those fundamental differences, because our movement is like the Zionist movement before 1948 when there was a fundamental unity about the need to establish a state. Once a Palestinian state *is* created, then people in our diaspora will face the same issue that faced Zionists: Do they make use of their right of return? From that point on, the decisions about the fate of the Palestinian state will be in the hands of those who make that decision. But until they have the *right* to return, the direction of our national movement will be determined not only by those who have been allowed to remain here, but by our entire people.

Lerner: Perhaps many Palestinians who have built a more comfortable life for themselves in the U.S. or England or France or some other countries will, like many Jews in our diaspora, choose *not* to return.

Husseini: As long as they have the choice. At that point, fine, not everyone has to return. It may be good for us to have some people living in other places—they can still help us, not only financially, but morally and politically. Maybe if someday we develop a policy in some matter in our Palestinian state that is offensive to the rest of the world, those Palestinians will come and say to us, "Look, I'm a Palestinian just like you, but now I want you to listen to my advice."

Lerner: But isn't there a difference between those who live here in conditions that they consider oppressive and at least some of those who live in other countries under conditions that aren't so terrible? Many analysts report that those Palestinians living here are more interested in working out a solution, while many who live outside feel that they can hold onto more maximalist solutions because they don't face the daily pressure of life under occupation.

Husseini: No, we have a majority here on the West Bank and Gaza who favor a two-state solution and a minority who still do not accept that we must live in peace with Israel. And we have a similar majority that favors a two-state solution amongst Palestinians elsewhere—and a similar minority. Now, if you consider the people in this Palestinian majority who seek peace with Israel, I cannot say that I am more moderate or have more understanding of the path toward a solution than, for example, Nabil Shaath or Abu Iyad or other Palestinian leaders. Sometimes I hear statements coming from them that are more conciliatory than I might have thought to make, and I have to think about their positions and sometimes explain them by telling myself, "Maybe they've come to their ideas before I came to them because they are thinking about the interests and needs of the whole Palestinian people while I'm reacting just on the basis of what I feel living here." But while this may occur in reacting to a particular situation, there is no fundamental political difference as far as I can see.

Lerner: Isn't there a danger that a growing number of Palestinians are becoming attracted to Islamic fundamentalist positions like those of Hamas, and that if the PLO doesn't win some concessions soon and doesn't have something to show for its current policies, more Palestinians will move in that direction?

Husseini: Some will, yes, but a majority of Palestinians will continue to be committed to a two-state solution.

Lerner: So you don't see that Hamas is a serious danger?

Husseini: No, I don't see that they are a serious danger. I know the people in Hamas and I know that the majority of people in Hamas are also ready to accept the idea of two states.

Lerner: But that is so different from the basic notion of Islamic fundamentalism.

Husseini: But in our context many of these people are not as you perceive them—they want to win the people, and in our context they have to win them through democratic means. And the Palestinian majority favors a two-state solution.

Lerner: In January 1990 you were arrested by the Israeli government. What were the charges?

Husseini: They claimed I belonged to an illegal organization.

Lerner: What organization?

Husseini: They didn't say exactly. But through the organization I came to think that what they were accusing me of was belonging to Fatah. But they had no evidence. So they tried to ask me to confess.

Lerner: Fatah is the main organization of the PLO.

Husseini: It's illegal to belong. But they have no evidence.

Lerner: So why did they arrest you?

Husseini: For political reasons. In the first year of the intifada I saw the goal as trying to change world public

opinion about the Palestinian people. The second year I thought the goal was to change public opinion in the world about the PLO. But this year I said that our goal should be to change public opinion inside Israel. So they were trying to stop me from doing that and at the same time trying to give me a bad reputation.

Lerner: How do you imagine going about trying to change public opinion in Israel?

Husseini: Through meetings with individuals and groups, activities with the Israeli people, trying to explain the activities of the Palestinian people and the intifada. We know that there is a real interest on the part of many Israelis. We need to address the Israeli people's needs and fears, their concerns for security—and to try to explain to them also that we have the same needs. To talk with them, people to people.

I think that we can get them to understand that there are two kinds of enemies: the enemies that you must get rid of and the enemies that you must try to find a way to live with. We believe that they are the second kind of enemy and we are trying to convince them that we are the second kind of enemy for them.

Lerner: You were recently quoted in the *New York Times* saying that you opposed the settlement of Soviet Jews on the West Bank. How do you understand the issue of Soviet Jews?

Husseini: We support the right of Soviet Jews to leave the Soviet Union if they want, and also their right to choose where to go. Americans fought hard for the right of Soviet Jews to leave the Soviet Union, but once America succeeded in getting this right for Soviet Jews, then America closed its border to the Soviet Jews. This is not fair. So first, the United States should open its border. But then it's the right of Soviet Jews to decide where they want to go, and they can choose to come to Israel. We are not against them coming to Israel. But they should not be settled in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip or East Jerusalem, because this is an area where we Palestinians wish to settle our own refugees. We do not oppose Israel solving the problem of the Jewish people of Europe—but not at the expense of the Palestinian people. There is a way to do it that recognizes the needs of both peoples.

Lerner: So you recognize the right of Israel to bring in Jewish refugees?

Husseini: Yes, I do, and I do not want to be told in the future that we in a Palestinian state don't have a similar right to bring back our own people from their exile. Similarly, I want the Palestinian people to have the right to choose either to come to their homeland or not, and to have other options available to them as well.

Lerner: Looking at it today, the end of January 1990, what do you think are the chances of the Shamir election plan going forward?

Husseini: The main problem with the Shamir plan is that it is trying to address us not as a people but as a minority or as a refugee problem. We are a people. We are a people with the rights to national self-determination. A people who can negotiate our own future for ourselves. If he continues to insist that he will not talk to Palestinians who live in East Jerusalem or Palestinians who live outside the West Bank or Gaza, if he insists on choosing our negotiators for us, his plan will not succeed. What if I said I will talk to the people of Israel, but not those living in Eilat—would anyone accept that?

Lerner: In a column on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* a few days ago A. M. Rosenthal suggests that if you are really serious about peace you should accept the proposal being offered by the Shamir government, because it involves real elections. Let me extend his argument and try to make a more persuasive argument for the Shamir-Rabin plan in the following way: Sure, the argument goes, Shamir isn't offering you everything that you want. But if it's true that the PLO really represents the Palestinian people, then if there is an election, even if the election doesn't include East Jerusalem, and even if Palestinians from outside are excluded, still the people in the West Bank will elect people who are sympathetic to and close to the PLO; and if that happens, Israel will be locked into negotiating directly with people who represent your positions and who have emerged as legitimate by a process that Israel itself has set up. So if the PLO wants negotiations to happen, why not let these elections take place?

Husseini: We are their enemies, we are not their slaves. It never happens in the whole world that one side of the conflict picks the people to represent the other side.

Lerner: Yes, but the other side argues that Israel has a military force that is occupying the West Bank, so they have the power to do what they want, and they are now offering elections.

Husseini: They can do what they want, but they cannot achieve what they want to achieve. They can kill our people, they can jail our people, but they cannot achieve what they want to achieve. With less power we can achieve more than the Israelis. They have more power,

but they can't achieve what they want, but we can with less power. You know, the walls have come tumbling down in Europe. The Soviet Union and the governments of Eastern Europe had the biggest armies and the greatest power but those who ran them could not achieve what they wanted.

Lerner: But still it's hard to understand why Palestinians don't grab at these elections, when the result would be that Israel would then end up being forced to negotiate with PLO supporters.

Husseini: So if we accepted this start of negotiations, then Israel will come and say, we want to do these elections without American observers. And if we say yes to this, then next they will say that the elections cannot include people living outside Palestine who were expelled by Israel. And if we say yes to this, then next they will say that Palestinians living in East Jerusalem can't vote. And if we say yes to this, then they will say that anyone who has ever been arrested by the Israeli military forces cannot vote. And the demands will go on endlessly, and there is no stop to it, and at each point you will make the same argument—that since they have the power we should accept whatever conditions they set. We just had a taste of this in the past few years. For years you and others were telling us that if we just publicly stated that we accepted Israel's right to exist by accepting UN resolutions 242 and 338 then everything would change and Israel would begin to negotiate seriously with us. So we did it and nothing has changed on the Israeli side.

Lerner: So you think it will be an endless path of giving in and getting nothing back?

Husseini: You need only listen to what Shamir himself says on this topic. He was asked a few weeks ago about why he wants to drag out the process of negotiations, and he said that if enough time went by there would be enough Russian Jews coming to Israel that the Arabs would have to accept that Israel was going to hold onto a bigger state. This is not something that we have to read into his thoughts—he says it publicly.

Lerner: So do you see any hope?

Husseini: Yes. Shamir and the people who support his policies represent the past. But many Israelis are now ready to move into the future. They know that they are living in a different world today, that things have changed all over the world, and they are ready to make changes here as well. I believe that by the end of this year this new spirit will assert itself decisively in Israeli politics. □

TERRAIN OF THE HEART

(Continued from p. 47)

intimacy with Adam had stimulated the refinding of Rachel's conflict about being openly dependent, and with it her warded-off depression.

Adam and Rachel's conflicts illustrate the parallels between refinding and the experience of transference in therapy. Both are phenomena that re-create the past in the present. Both impose a lens that distorts accurate perception, transforming one's image of the new love into a version of the old. Without the protective constraints and relative control of the psychotherapeutic setting, refinding can result in "wild" transferences which perpetuate a downward spiral of mutual distortion that undermines intimacy and threatens a relationship. Certainly, the way we manage these conflict-laden transferences is crucial in determining whether refinding becomes a force for deepening the relationship or a force that provokes despair. When partners can understand and take responsibility for their own *individual* issues with refinding, mutual empathy and dialogue are likelier to carry the day against defensive fight or flight.

The dynamics of refinding are complicated further by the disparate developmental quandaries facing men and women in our culture. As writers such as Nancy Chodorow and Jessica Benjamin have helped us appreciate, the fact is that for most of us, the mother is the first caretaker and the first human being with whom we identify: this has important consequences for the development of the capacity to love. For the little boy to feel male, he must *dis-identify* with mother. There is no such requirement for the little girl. Consequently, the experience of refinding mother in today's lover has a different meaning for each gender. For men, it threatens to stimulate fears not only of returning to childlike dependency but of losing one's sense of maleness. For women, the rendezvous with mother in the contemporary lover may carry the same threat to adult autonomy—but there is no comparable threat to her solid sense of gender identity. These differences between the male and female experience may explain in part why men's fears of intimacy are often more pronounced than women's.

The divergence of male and female experience does not end in early childhood. To the extent that present relationships repeat the psychological and cultural past, men and women tend to reembrace patterns of dominance and control that have helped resolve earlier developmental dilemmas. A man may deal with his fear of losing his masculinity as he becomes intimate with his "maternal" mate by exerting control or domination. A woman may cope with her fear of being more powerful than her mother—which threatens her identification with her mother—by trying to please the man and

enjoy his power rather than cultivating power of her own.

Sexuality, finally, has a paradoxical relation to refinding. While we usually assume that the recognition of aspects of one's parents in one's partner will inhibit sexual chemistry, it turns out that to a considerable degree it is precisely such recognition that actually fuels attraction. If guilt is not dominant, the lover becomes even more exciting as he or she is identified with one's first loved ones. Because intimacy and refinding develop over time, sexual excitement fueled by refinding may intensify as aspects of the lover become more recognizable in these terms. For Rachel the inverse was true—in Adam she did *not* refind the experience of her powerful narcissistic father. Feeling disappointed, she lowered her appraisal of Adam's sexiness. While consciously she protested her father's self-absorption and emotional distance, unconsciously she sought his image—which she identified with an ideal of masculine strength.

Self-Protection, Revenge, and Mastery

As Adam and Rachel learned, the sad story of love's promise is this: what you see isn't likely to be all of what you're going to get. While lovers begin by conspiring to minimize their own failings and those of the partner, their attention soon threatens to be consumed by them.

To contend with emerging feelings of vulnerability in our intimacy with others, we make use of a range of defenses. Like Adam and Rachel, we may attribute our own shortcomings to the beloved or grow distant from our feelings. These defenses not only guard us from immediate psychological danger but also from feelings associated with refinding. Adam, for example, tried to protect himself from the critical mother he found in Rachel by constantly seeking reassurance and by deciding that she was chiefly responsible for his current feelings of inadequacy. Rachel tried to protect herself from her own neediness and disappointment in her mother's nurturing by deciding that all the neediness was Adam's: by taking on the role of the critical, depriving parent, she reversed the experience of frustrated longing she had known as a child.

Like many couples, Adam and Rachel learned that the collusion of defenses that protect early romance can succumb to a *collision* of defenses when partners confront the differences in their respective styles of self-protection. As we have seen, Adam sought to protect himself by promoting a reassuring closeness which paradoxically pushed Rachel further away. She found safety in withdrawal, which only provoked more of his importunate and unwelcome overtures. The very dissimilarity of their defenses made conflict and disappointment inevitable.

Adam and Rachel's difficulties make it clear that the key questions must be resolved if a couple's intimacy is to survive. Can we live with our mate's defensive style? Can we empathize with and find tolerance for the conflicts it defends against? Eventually, the couple must learn to mold what were once individual caretaking and protective capacities into a new interdependence—a kind of "mutual defense pact" that enables each partner ultimately to feel safe with the other.

But safety alone isn't love's goal. The promise of new relationships, like that of psychotherapy, is that they carry the potential for liberation from the tyranny of the past. The problem is that each of us tends not only to misconstrue the present relationship in terms of the past, but to unconsciously *enlist* our partner in a re-creation of the past. In so doing, a variety of needs are met including those for self-protection, revenge, and mastery.

First, we may re-create a version of the past in the present to protect ourselves from the risks of experiencing something unfamiliar and potentially threatening. Adam not only viewed Rachel as similar to his critical mother, he provoked her tendency to be as critical as his mother. His experience of women thus remained consistent with the past, saving him from any risk of personal initiative that might challenge his preconceptions. He could understand his unhappiness as a result of Rachel's character rather than his own. He could also keep intact the childlike hope that if he were loved differently and better, his discontent with himself would be banished.

Second, we re-create the past as a kind of revenge. We satisfy grudges against our parents by playing them out with our current lovers. Rachel's anger at her mother's needy unavailability was unconsciously enacted in a

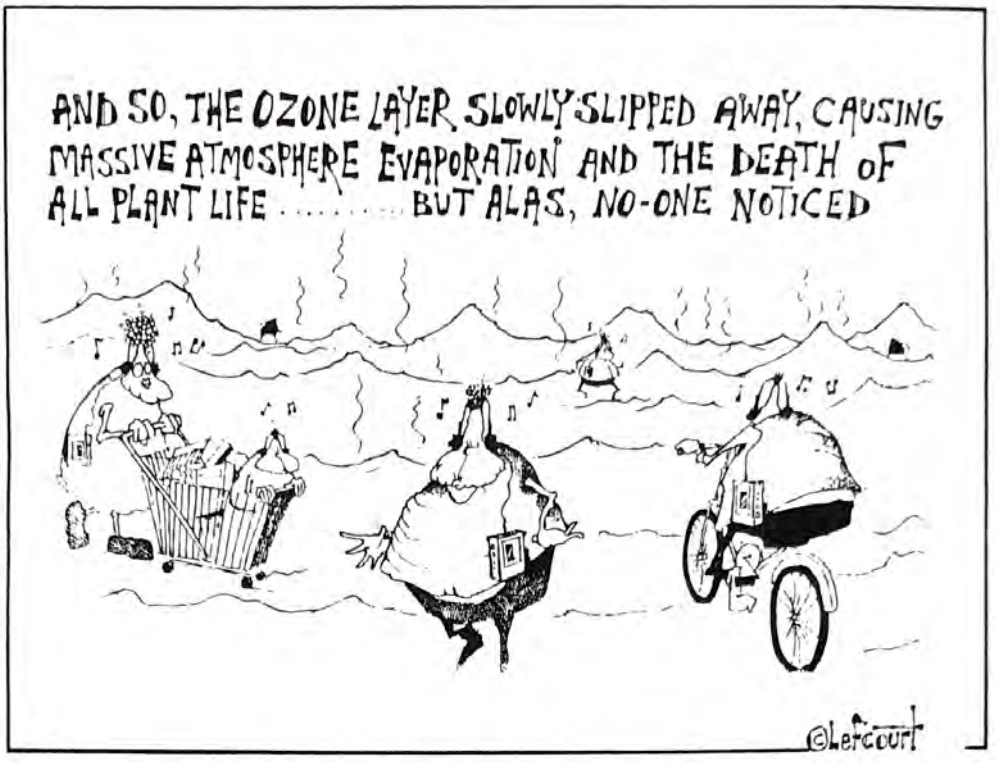
rage at Adam, in whom she activated the potential for behavior she could construe as self-absorbed and childishly dependent.

Third, and perhaps most important, we re-create the past in order to master it. Refinding can be used as an opportunity to confront old problems and generate new solutions that enable us more fully to mobilize the capacity to love. In this light, Adam and Rachel began to understand the extent to which exaggerated needs for self-protection and revenge were affecting their behavior with each other. Adam understood his vigilance toward Rachel and his hunger for sexual reassurance as the products of an internal drama with roots in his relationship to his parents. Rachel realized that Adam's dependence upon her was not simply an unwanted burden and an intrusion upon their sexuality; without intending to do so she had actually intensified his neediness. She discovered two important motives for her provocation. First, as a form of self-protection, she encouraged Adam to feel that "he can't live without me" and thereby reduced her fear of losing him. Second, as a means of expressing anger, she would let Adam hurt now—as she had been hurt as a child—by letting him feel the hunger for love that had so frustrated her. Having felt her desire to be close to her father first stimulated and then thwarted, she was both relieved and, in a vengeful way, satisfied to cast Adam now in the same dispiriting role.

Enlisting the partner to play a role in the old family drama guarantees that there will be more than two people in bed when a couple makes love. When we discover the identities of these bedside intruders, we can find ways to understand and eventually exorcise their destructive influence. As Adam and Rachel painfully learned, the depth of their intimacy and the refinding it engendered had damaged their sexual relationship nearly irreversibly. Only when they grasped the real meaning of the motives that were driving them could Adam and Rachel finally begin to see a way out of the self-defeating dynamic in which they felt trapped.

The story of this couple demonstrates how our wishes for love always vie for the upper hand with our fears. What makes this dialectic of wish and fear so problematic is that we are deeply influenced by it, often without understanding how or why. When fear dominates, defenses constrict our experience and inhibit our capacity to love. The idealization that enables us to fall in love may be undone; the integration that helps us to remain in love may not be sustained. Or the passionate refinding that deepens love may succumb to pressures from the past, rather than resolving these pressures in the present.

What makes possible the fulfillment of love's promise is the creation, through empathy, self-understanding, and perseverance, of a relationship in which each partner can know and express more and more of who he or she is. In the overlapping contexts of sexuality, emotional intimacy, and shared goals the capacity to love will flourish, opening us to the challenging pleasure of experiences that transcend the boundaries of the self. □



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