Welcome to Shmate! Our purpose in producing this magazine is to serve as a reflection of and catalyst for the development of alternative currents within the Jewish community. Our hope is that Shmate will not be merely a product consumed by you, our readers, but rather a tool for our mutual education and stimulation. To that end, we strongly encourage you to write to us with comments about the magazine as well as about topics discussed in its pages.

Issue #1 of Shmate is an amalgamation of what were originally two separate concepts: a very broad based first issue and an April issue focusing on the Holocaust.

The deadline for Issue #2 is May 1. We would especially appreciate stories, clippings, graphics, and announcements that pertain to feminist, gay, and lesbian concerns. Items relating to the coverage of Jewish concerns in feminist, gay, and lesbian media are needed for an article on that subject.

Thanks to all thirty people who served as sponsors for Shmate's original fundraising letter. (We received 1/3 the cost of this issue as a result.)

Those of you who responded to our fundraising letter will receive two issues of the magazine. We would appreciate it, though, if you subscribed before Issue #2 to simplify our paperwork.

Articles, poems, graphics, and stories are welcome. If you want them returned, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope. We would also appreciate being put on the mailing list of any relevant group you are associated with.

Thanks are due to many for their help in getting Shmate this far. To the Shmatoid Class of '81 for licking, labelling, typing, doing, not doing, meeting, yelling, arguing, teaching, hanging in, spacing out: Debbie Bloom, Guy Diamond, Amy Fried, George Marks, Beth Sandweiss, Sherry Sank, Barbara Stack, Marika Wertheimer. To Michael Cholden-Brown, Barbara Perlman, Myron Perlman, Sheldon Ranz, Daniel Soyer, and Paul Zilsel for keeping me honest.

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—S.F.
AUTHORS

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LETTERS...

WHAT'S IN A NAME

A few words are in order about the name of this magazine. It was chosen with little passion, some thought, and much affection. The connotation of Shmate most relevant in the choice was that of "rag", as applied to a newspaper. Over the years the term has been used disparagingly towards those papers which were purveyors of unpopular progressive ideas. What many of us who worked on such papers did was to invert the situation and carry the epithet as a badge of pride and honor.

A second important connotation for us was that of a child's "Linus Blanket". It has turned out that while a majority of people we have been in contact with like the name, about 10% oppose it. The opposition takes two forms: those who dislike the name but who are willing to give the magazine a chance and those for whom the name is an insurmountable block. The following are excerpts from some of the letters opposing the use of Shmate for a title.

I am sending you $20 with reservations. Why Shmate? Do you plan to be the Jewish answer to Mad Magazine? Why did you choose so self-deprecating a name? Come off it. Your tentative list of articles saves me from some chilling reflections.

Charles Ansell
California

I think that the name Shmate is ill-conceived. It reflects either a description of your work, a type of self-deprecation — or both. Is it a joke?

Michael Luckens
Massachusetts

I think your ideas and prospectus are good. I think that the title is awfully cutesy and self-defeating."

Stanley Rosen
Illinois

I am so sick of disowning you and your periodical because of the name Shmate I can't begin to tell you. I've received phone calls from people I don't even know. Everyone finds the name offensive (especially to women), ludicrous, in poor taste etc. Please take my name off all future materials unless Shmate changes its name.

Larry Bush
New York

I hope you'll consider a new name: less cute but representative of the goals you state. Much of the popular press deserves to be called rags. . . Our check indicates we assume you'll be a cut above.

Shirley Van Bourg
California

Let me tell you that I am certainly no purist and have never considered myself upright in any way, but I consider the title of your new journal to be very vulgar and in the poorest of taste.

Rabbi Herbert Bronstein
Illinois

It is the title of your newspaper that made me think twice whether to contribute a penny. A "shmate" is a dirty rag that is found in the dirt and it is used to wipe out the most unsightly, ugly, unwanted things and places. It is dirty all the time and stinks and so is the name. I wonder of the sponsors, whom a few I know, that let you be so ignorant. Not every Jewish word is symbolic or makes sense. Beware, there are people who know.

Rivka Barlev
California

We applaud your publication idea, we are dismayed by your title choice. We can't decide whether the choice is smart-aleky, a matter of poor taste, or one of denigration. How can a publication with the worthwhile agenda you describe think the title you have chosen is the least bit appropriate?

Barbara & Arnold Messner
New York

It is our hope that as this magazine develops, all those who are troubled by the name will be reassured by its contents. Some tentative and tenuous observations can be made about those who dislike the name. It would appear that they either come from the old left or are presently associated with political and social groups that are direct descendants of the old left. Supporters tend to be more from the new left and alternative movements. With some clear exceptions, the difference can be described as between those whose consciousness was developed in the '30s, '40s, and 50s versus those developed in the '60s and '70s. Again with exceptions, the division may be viewed as between those with a Yiddish background and those without.

We are not wedded to the name Shmate and are considering changing it, but only if our readers concur and a suitable alternative can be found. Opinions and name suggestions are welcome.

As to the spelling of Shmate: it appears that at least 2/3 of you do not like the way we have spelled it. Ten alternative spellings have been suggested. Unfortunately, no more than 15% agree on any one of them!

A number of other issues have been raised in letters we have received. Several people wanted to know if we were printing in a union shop. The answer is yes. Abe Boxerman in California wanted to know whether Shmate would be duplicating the efforts of Jewish Currents, a magazine we both love. The answer to that is no, for reasons that should be apparent to those who read both. Allan Solomonow in New York wrote: "Is your description of Shmate too broad—or is this simply unavoidable. The list of the kinds of articles seems to be something for everyone. Can that be reconciled with 'a progressive Jewish newsmagazine', which suggests a far narrower but possibly more potent, defineable focus?" Though there are few people we would rule out off hand as potential supporters, we do intend to develop a focused perspective. We expect that our content rather than policy statements will ultimately define our viewpoint.

Thanks to these and the other folks who took the time to pass on their thoughts to us.
I grew up with a healthy respect for the spirit world. It was because of the sephardic blood in me. Those Jews who got kicked out of Spain and made their way over to Greece and Turkey definitely had a little something extra going for them on top of their determination to survive. And they passed their secrets down through many generations until they came to me—the modern reincarnation of Jewish Turkish Gypsy Witch.

Even as a small child, I felt lucky being a witch. I knew how to really guard against the "ayn ara," the evil eye—it's not like the ashenistim tell it—knocking on wood won't do you a bit of good. You have to spit three times; and in special cases, when a new baby is born, you have to hang blue ribbons and beads of turquoise and coral around the crib—just like Nonnie did for my brother—and stand guard for a few weeks spitting furiously every time one of the uninitiated would say, "My what a big healthy child." Papoo would spit three times to ward off the ayn ara whenever a nun walked by. When my mother was growing up in Brooklyn she was in constant fear that the Italian kids whose neighborhood began at the end of her block would see and start throwing rocks like they did once a year when they got out of Easter mass. Spitting would not ward off the rocks.

The Sephardic Jews probably lived by the side of the road on their way to Turkey and discovered a few new things about the shiddium, which is what we called the spirits, that they hadn't figured out living in Madrid. When my family went on long trips and I just couldn't hold it in until the next gas station, my father would pull over to the side of the road and I would find some likely bush to pee behind. But first, following my mother's careful instructions, I would politely ask the shiddium to move in case any of them happened to be about before I peed. Shiddium get very angry when peed on.

Papoo told me a story about how there was a boy in his village who began to have convulsions after driving his wagon to a nearby town. His mother went to the local witch doctor who told her to give him one piece of gold and some food for the shiddium. The next day she came back and he said, "Your son pulled his cart to the side of the road and passed water in the bushes. The shiddium were having a wedding and he went right on the bridegom's head. There is no forgiveness for this." And sure enough the boy died.

The women in our family had a closer relationship to the shiddium than the men did. Nonnie was our direct link according to my mother. She knew about things before they happened. A few times she woke the whole household at four in the morning, announced that some long lost relative was coming, and that everyone would have to start cleaning. She was always right. She had a magic table that could rise up off the floor a few inches and float around the room. It would tap out how much change you had in your pocket. Years later, long after that table was gone, my mother and I searched junk stores for another three legged table that was glued together and contained no nails. But, it seemed that no one in California was into the brand of mysticism we were.

The shiddium were always interfering in Nonnie's and Papoo's lives. As a child I wondered why these same things never happened in anyone else's families. In second grade class when it was show and tell time, I stood up in front of the class and told them about a haunted house where Nonnie and Papoo briefly lived in New York. As soon as they moved in, Nonnie began to have a recurring dream that she was walking into a dark room, then standing in front of a semi-circle of seated men. They rose together and pointed to the door "Got!" they told her. But she didn't listen until one night when she was carrying my uncle, still a baby, into his room to go to sleep. She didn't bother with the lights and went to put him into his crib but found that the crib wasn't there. She touched the walls where furniture had been a few hours before and everything was gone. That was a bit much so they moved. All the kids laughed when I told the story and the teacher said it was like when the milk disappeared off her front porch and it turned out to be the raccoons. I was mortified. But it didn't last very long. There were too many interesting stories to hear.

"Tell me about the shiddium," I would ask my mother and off we would go into another world where our family was powerful and knew the real secrets of life.

There were all sorts of ways to tell the future. Nonnie used cards. Sunday afternoons when all the piece work she'd brought home from the shop was finished, she would sit with her women friends around the kitchen table, covered with its worn but clean oil cloth, and tell fortunes. All the sephardic women and even some of the Italian women from up the block came to Nonnie because there was something special about her. Then one of her friends was killed—run over by a truck two weeks after Nonnie saw death in the cards. After that she became frightened and put the cards away.

All of us had different relationships with the shiddium. My mother accepted them as part of her life—though somewhat at a distance. But then, she was never confronted with actually having to intercede with them like my Aunt Rachel was. Rachel hated the shiddium. She was always embarrassed by Nonnie's "superstitions." They were from the old country. That was why she probably received the brunt of Nonnie's ministrations. Later she would say that out of the money she paid for therapy, she put one of her shrinks kid's through college just on the shiddium. Rachel was sold off (on paper) to another family when she was a child to confuse the ayn ara because she was continually sick. Then Nonnie decided that a crazy woman up the block had put a curse on her and tried to make Rachel pee into a cup to use in a ceremony to remove the curse. Rachel refused, but Nonnie kept after her.

One night she put a big sign on the toilet with a chamber pot placed on top. "Please Pie Here" it said in Nonnie's version of English.
Coming of Age: continued

so Rachel gave up and donated her pee to the cause. At midnight, Nonnie took Rachel in front of the woman's house and sprinkled urine mixed with sugar water around her in a circle chanting some appropriate incantation. I don't know if it worked but I do know that my Aunt Rachel had to undergo numerous fortune telling sessions where a copper cauldron full of water was held over her head and hot lead was poured into it making a deafening racket. She cried, but Nonnie insisted she sit still. Then she read the patterns of the lead to try and discover what was going on with her daughter.

When I started to menstruate at the age of 11, my mother handed me a box of chocolates with one hand, and slapped me with the other as was the custom in her family. Then she called up the relatives to announce the good news. She told me that I had now reached womanhood — boys get Bar Mitzvahed and girls menstruate. I figured it was about time I took an active part to bring the shidduch into my life. I knew that I was among the chosen, even if I was half Ashkenazi, because I had a large mole on my right breast, just like all the women on my mother's side. We thought the moles were remnants of a third nipple.

So I started out reading Turkish coffee fortunes: drinking the sweet black coffee down to the mud, inverting the cup on its saucer, then picking it up to decipher the mud patterns clinging to the side of the cup. I got to be pretty good at it. Besides doing almost daily readings, my mother and I would read fortunes at her dinner parties and, counting on the excuse of being quite young, I had no inhibitions about embarrassing her guests with predictions of sexual infidelities or less than kind character analyses. By the time I was 14, I'd branched out into tarot cards and ouija boards and by 16, with the encouragement of Marilyn who was the only one of my friends that also believed in the spirits, I had developed my own special version of a Turkish curse. We used this curse on the boys that we wanted to curse. I waited for them to take their places.

"From the east and the west and the north and the south, shidduch, gather round," I asked. I waited for them to take their places.

"Find Jeff Silver and inflict upon him cursing."

I paused.

"Diarrhea," Marilyn intoned.

"A pain in his left foot," I motioned to Marilyn to concentrate hard. "Mental anguish," I said my voice getting stronger, "And limp penis." Those were our two favorites that we cursed all the boys with. Then I took the toe nails and Jeff's writing and burned them in the candle flame, lowering an image of Jeff's face into the fire.

"Thank you, shidduch," I said.

"Ask them for a sign," Marilyn whispered.

"If you are really here show us that you have heard," I said, a little scared. The flame on the candle snuffed itself out. Marilyn and I instinctively grabbed each others hands.

"That happened, didn't it?"

Marilyn nodded her head.

The next day when Jeff called on the phone to forgive him, I cut through all the superfluous garbage and asked him how he was feeling.  

“'We’re gonna curse Jeff tonight,'” I said and explained the situation.

“Great. I'll be right over.” Marilyn was not overly fond of Jeff anyway.

We spent most of the evening waiting — curses have to be done at midnight. Around eight, Jeff called — but I told him to just fuck off. Things had gone beyond the point where talking would satisfy me. I wanted revenge.

A little before midnight, Marilyn and I took my great grandmother's brass pot out of the cupboard, got a candle, the nail clippings and some of Jeff's handwriting and went outside on the driveway. We used the brass pot in all of our curses because I remembered my mother saying once that her people wove spells into anything that was made by hand.

It was a clear night. I lit the candle, placed it in the pot, then stepped back. Marilyn and I raised our arms to the sky.

"From the east and the west and the north and the south, shidduch, gather round," I asked. I waited for them to take their places.

"Find Jeff Silver and inflict upon him nausea." I paused.

We never did ask him about his ability to maintain an erection — so I don't know if the curse was entirely successful, though I have a feeling it was. Listen, I'll tell you a secret. If you believe in shidduch — they'll believe in you.

Mazel Tov to Bob and Sara Dylan on the Bar Mitzvah of their son.

Plant Friend

Hi fern, hi fern,
How 'ya doing?
Would 'ya like a squirt?
here's a squirt:

| s | q | u | i | r |

Did 'ya like that squirt?
Would 'ya like another?
Would 'ya like some more light?
a little air, perhaps a bite?

Some egg matzo with butter,
Shmalz herring, a knish,
a latke or two,
would that do?
what's your wish?

How 'bout some Bach,
Vivaldi, Scarlatti?
Partita, sonata,
let's have a party!

Wanna take a nap?
Sit on my lap?
Snuggle a bit?

Can I give you a kiss?
Can I play with your leaves?
Can I nuzzle your fronds?
Can I give you a squeeze?

Hi fern, hi fern,
Let's always be friends.

Mitzi Rachleff-Crandall
A JEWISH ALTERNATIVE TO ALIENATION

By Larry Bush


I've been wondering ever since I received the invitation to speak at this conference what I could possibly say that would please us both, make you feel buoyant, make me feel honest? I'm 29 years old, I have no children of my own, I've never been to Israel, I speak only a few words of Yiddish, I'm the assistant editor of a magazine with only 4,000 circulation. What can I give you?

The old folks, the Emmas, the Clubs and Societies people, they see me, let's say, at a fundraising dinner, and they usually give me one of two reactions: a hostile glare, a cynical stare that says, You, you don't speak Yiddish, you never organized a union, you never worked in a sweatshop, you probably take drugs, what are you doing here? How do we know you'll be here next year, too? Eh, if we'd succeeded at making our revolution, a scamp like you wouldn't be a hotshot.... Or else I receive an adoring smile, a fawning gaze that says, Oi, light of my life, apple of my eye, at last a young person who understands, who will carry on our tradition. A youth! He doesn't speak Yiddish? So he'll learn! But the thing is, y'see, he's proof that we did good. We made organizations, we made progressive shules, we made unions, we fought for the Blacks and for all kinds of good causes, and against all kinds of discrimination....

Yes, with great respect, I salute them, whether they're cantankerous or sweet-natured. But what do they want from me?

I try to explain to my friends, my peers, why it is that I spend my days working for a shthunky little magazine in a hopeless little movement at wages that a teenager might scorn. I talk about the need for a cultural line in our progressive movement—look at how the New Right has used questions of culture and lifestyle to their advantage! I talk about the inadequacies of certain of our "counterculture" concepts from the '60s—the "Youth Nation" idea, for instance, and all the rejectionist attitudes that flowed from it. Me, I'd like to have dinner with my folks immediately following the revolution. I want my mishpokhe included in my movement. After all, I was certainly included in theirs.

And I tell these friends of mine about the generation of secular Jewish radicals who succeeded, at least in their own lifetimes, at building political-cultural-service networks that could take care of them, sustain and invigorate them, give them a kind of alternative in the face of tremendous pressures to assimilate, recant, despair—and go for the bucks instead of the ideals.

One friend argues: But they were dogmatists! What are we supposed to learn from them?

Well, I reply, the pressures on them were relentless. Perhaps a certain ideological rigidity was required to withstand it. Anyway, learn from their mistakes, if nothing else—you probably won't have time to make them all yourself.

Another friend says: It's all very nice what you're doing, Larry, but it means nothing to me to be Jewish. I'm not religious. I'm an internationalist.

Here, I say, read this article by Max Rosenfeld about Haim Zhitlovsky. It was printed in Jewish Currents over 15 years ago! It's got this line about how the key to the concept of inter-nationalism is the hyphen. I get interrupted. Nationalism, huh? says a New Left friend. So you're a Zionist!

(Is that supposed to be a curseword or something?)

Ahh, then the definitions begin. Zionism. Secularism. Peoplehood. National Nihilism. And of course, Jewish identity is such a complex of forces, spanning centuries of history and fitting no single definition of any particular era, defying definition while persisting in existence—it's enough to drive a leftist crazy! We Jews have the unhappy fortune to be the exception to every holistic solution to human paroblems and, simultaneously, a spark plug that keeps the search for solutions going.

No, I happen not to be a Zionist. I reply. I don't consider myself in exile; I don't consider Israel to be the center of my concerns as a Jew (though as my Jewish consciousness grows, so does my concern and interest in Israel). America is my homeland and my arena for identity and activism.

So finally the definitions are set—only after I myself have referred once again to Morris U. Schappes' The Jewish Question and the Left, Old and New to renew my grasp on these elusive concepts—and then the discussion peters out. More often than not, my friends are no more Jewish-conscious or understanding of my involvement with Jewish life than they were before our discussion.

Oh, there are stirrings of interest here and there: the occasional young progressive who's fed up with being self-conscious about any and all things Jewish because of the insensitivity of his or her peers; or the rare artistic nut who's involved in a revival movement—this one researching klezmer music, that one digging up shund theater from the archives, my wife creating a dance/theatre piece about the Triangle Fire, I writing a novel about my revolutionary Jewish grandmother. And together we share some words (trying not to feel competitive). We talk about building community (knowing damn well we have to look out for ourselves). We talk bravely about the Jewish cultural renaissance (secretly wondering what we'll make art about when the boom busts. Who knows, maybe we'll have made it big by then, like Howard Fast, like Woody Allen, who knows?).

So I stand here today, knees knocking from more than stage fright. Speaking at this conference is rather like becoming a bar-mitzva boy. I have dreams of precocious glory, of becoming what Itche Goldberg has called a "secular rabbi." I feel pressed, like any good bar-mitzva, to deliver an inspirational message, filled with hope, respect and praise for the secular humanist tradition and avowing my commitment to the furthering of that tradition. But I feel a streak of doubt in me that I surely hope no 13-year-old boy could feel. Inspired by our movie-actor president-elect, I have an impulse to say, "The envelope, please," collect my applause and

continued next page
never mind the inspirational message.

At least, then, you'd be spared my
description of what alienation in America
means to me. You'd be spared the deadly
titans about racism, sexism, anti-Semitism,
exploitation; the panicky comments about
and all manner of psychopathologies.

about growing old in America, being young
in America, living with the constant threat of
nuclear holocaust in America. You'd be
spared the statistics about cancer, suicide,
wife-beating, rape, child molestation, police
brutality, prison conditions, unemployment,
drug abuse, alcoholism, gambling,
homelessness, hopelessness, shiftlessness,
involvement with totalitarian religious cults
and all manner of psychopathologies.

We could skip the figures about corporate
profits, military budgets, cost overruns,
advertising expenses, planned obsolescence,
unsafe products, poisons in our
environment. I wouldn't have to tell you
how many hospitals could be built instead of one
battleship, or how many McDonalds
hamburgers it would take to stack up to the
moon (fewer than they've already sold). We
would not tire our brains with abstracted
phrases about the immaturity of capitalism,
the decay of monopoly capitalism into
fascism, the alienation of labor, or even the
time-honored, time-ravaged Jewish
question.

Why bother going into details about such
grisly things? In just 24 days Ronald Reagan
will be inaugurated as President of the
United States until 1984. That event, the
culmination of America's desperate,
panicked search for its own pulsebeat in the
face of corporate hegemony and deadening
alienation, says it all for me.

Besides, who wants to talk politics at a
secular Jewish conference? I've heard it said
that secularism and progressive politics
don't necessarily mix. It reminds me of a joke
that Annette Rubinstein told me of three
Czecho-Slovakian citizens sitting on the park
bench. The first one sighs, the second one
sighs, and the third rises and hollers, "If
you're going to discuss politics, I'm leaving!"

I'm not leaving. Instead, I must insist that
we recognize the political content and
quality of Jewish affirmation today.

For us, the younger folks, who are
removed by at least a generation from what I
would call "organic" Jewishness—the
Yiddish language, its literature and music,
the pioneering days of Zionism, raw anti-
Semitism, etc.—for us, Jewish affirmation
involves a process of voluntarism and active
seeking. The struggle to find, preserve and
use Jewish identity is a political struggle. It is

my long hair of the "80s. It is the affirmation
of an alternative identity in corporate
America, a human way of being in a dog-eat-
dog system, a folk culture in the face of mass
mindlessness, a Jewish calendar and clock
instead of the rat race. It is an identity that
recognizes as necessary and nurturing to my
integrity, my self-determination as an
individual, my survival as a humanist, my
continued commitment to struggle.

Therefore, however dwindling and even
anachronistic the secular Jewish movement
sometimes seems to be, I search it out, I cling
to it, I seek to extend and revive it. However
lacking in truly satisfying Jewish ritual my
secular life may be, I light those Hanuka
candles and scour my bookshelves in search of
meaningful passages to read over the
flames. For I am desperate to affirm an
identity that can serve as an alternative to
alienation. I am desperate not to have to
internalize and personalize my feelings of
revelation for the system into a self-
destructive sense of failure. I am desperate to
consolidate my feelings as rebel and
humanist and artist into an affirmative
identity, never again to say to myself: What's
the matter boy, you scared? You can't
compete? You can't hack it?

I don't want to hack it. I reject most of my
society's standards for success. I don't want
to go for the gelt and let society be damned. I
don't want to erode into cynicism.

But frankly, I am scared.
honest slap rather than a false kiss to the secular Jewish movement. But more than anything mine is a panic reaction. Obviously we must be more historical in our approach to progressive secular Jewishness than simply to behold the approaching countenance of Ronald Reagan and run scared.

I must remember from Jewish history the whole array of Hamans, far worse than the unproven Reagan, whom the Jewish people have rarely conquered but always outlasted. I must remember the genocide against us, only one generation ago, and the Auschwitz number that we wear like psychic dog-tags in our battle for Jewish survival and for a humane world. Austrian Jewish Auschwitz survivor Jean Amery, in an essay entitled, “On the Necessity and Impossibility of Being Jewish,” writes that the Auschwitz tattoo on his arm “reads more briefly than the Pentateuch or the Talmud and yet provides more thorough information. It is also more binding than basic formulas of Jewish existence” (New German Critique, #20). Let us therefore scorn nothing Jewish, not even the slim pickings left to our secular movement. Let us instead feel great pride about how far our people have come back in regenerating themselves and their culture, creatively and affirmatively, from the brink of utter destruction. And let us approach our future with eagerness by trusting in yet another Jewish proverb: All things grow with time except grief.

Let us take warning from the Holocaust experience to have no illusions about the “voluntary” nature of Jewish identity when it comes to the anti-Semite’s plans. But let us not allow the sheer scope of the genocide to overwhelm us with a mystical sense of the inevitability of ineradicability of anti-Semitism. The central lesson of the Holocaust, to my mind, is about totalitarianism: that in the face of devastating alienation—national, economic, cultural—an entire population is capable of embracing mythic, absurd worldviews such as Hitler’s racist ideology in order to feel a part of a meaningful community, however abhorrent its meaning; and that when people believe such absurdities, they will commit atrocities, including the ultimate atrocity of genocide.

We Jews must be the harbinger of this terrible truth. It’s a grim irony that several German-Jewish and Austrian-Jewish scientists who fled Nazi persecutions were centrally involved in the creation of the atomic bomb in the United States. At times I think that these survivors brought about the nuclear age as the revenge—or, more optimistically, as the last will and testament, a warning from beyond the mass grave, of the six million. How loud must the warning signals of history be before the collective consciousness of mankind is awakened?

Let me not, either, in my search for a relatively secure future as a Jew, scorn our troubled relative Israel. Let us remember that it is Israel’s passionate struggle and affirmation of Jewish life (although Yiddish has suffered abuse in the course of Hebrew’s ascent) that has made our own so-called Jewish renaissance in the arts and general culture possible here in the United States. It is Israel that made the global Jewish community resilient enough to rebound from the depths of the Holocaust shock. Let us remember that it is Israel’s mistreatment in the international arena that has forced many of us to choose between the mask of assimilation and concern for our Jewish future. It is the relentless persecution of Israel and Zionism in the international arena that has pitted our rather abstract notions of anti-imperialism and internationalism against our gut feelings of self-interest. Whatever political ideals do emerge whole from this crucible are well-tempered, mature ideals, unclouded by preconception or dogma and well worth fighting for.

Our Jewish consciousness serves to keep our politics honest—a contribution to progressive thinking that has yet to reach full flower and will not soon fade away. Whereas in 1966 Isaac Deutscher, in any essay entitled “Who Is a Jew?”, could write, “Only if the search for an identity can help the Jewish intellectual in his struggle for a better future for the whole of mankind is that search at all in my view justified” quoted in Jewish Socialist Critique #3), today we can and must assert almost the converse of his statement: “Only if the Jew’s struggle for a better future for the whole of mankind is rooted in his or her search for an identity as a Jew will it be genuine.”
RESISTANCE AND THE HOLOCAUST

by Steve Fankuchen

"Like sheep to the slaughter!" How many times have we been told that Jews did nothing to resist annihilation at the hands of the Nazis and their supporters? "What can you expect? Jews don't fight." "Maybe Jews are even the cause of the Holocaust, of anti-Semitism; they're such easy targets." Let's talk about the Holocaust and the myths of Jewish non-resistance and passivity.

First, we must touch on the nature of resistance—especially in the extraordinary context of the Holocaust. Is merely staying alive in the face of death resistance? Or, must one pick up a gun and try to kill the Nazis to earn the description and title of "resister"? Does maintaining one's personal dignity in the face of utter degradation count? Is it relevant that Jews maintained communal institutions in the ghettos in the face of attempts to create total fragmentation? What of praying, when such meant death? My purpose here is to outline the scope of resistance in its broadest possible sense both to dispel myths of Jewish passivity and to provide a context within which further political analysis of resistance can develop.

The struggle to perpetuate the ideals as well as the physical reality of the Jewish people can be divided into eight categories: staying alive, maintaining a sense of communal responsibility, acts of religious affirmation, acts of individual defiance, affirmation of the possibility of life in the future, escape, sabotage, and armed struggle.

For the Germans, the Jewish desire to stay alive was something of an impediment. Mass suicide was expected and encouraged both by the view that Jews were inferior creatures and by the practical consideration that large scale suicides would, through its demoralizing effects, be self-justifying and, therefore, self-perpetuating. As it turned out, the suicide rate in the ghettos and camps was exceedingly low, apparently significantly lower than that of Jewish communities composed of people who had escaped from the immediate physical threat of the Holocaust. Of 300,000 taken to Treblinka, there were only several hundred suicides. The German response to this was to complain that the Jews lacked honor for refusing to kill themselves in the face of such miserable conditions.

For the Germans, it was very important to destroy the social fabric of the Jewish community as a precursor to physical annihilation. This was done in ways much more subtle and personal than by gross destruction of existing institutions. For instance, people were pitted against each other continually for scraps to eat and places to shit. Those who broke a rule to stand quietly in line were summarily shot if they reached down to another person who had collapsed from hunger. Some were offered a few additional hours of life for digging the death trenches of those victims who preceded them. Such efforts by the Germans were designed to break down the sense of mutual responsibility and, therefore, the sense of communal legitimacy and strength. We do have, however, many examples of people refusing to be so degraded, people who refused to put themselves on the same plane as their murderers. These were people who chose their own death long after the question of life became moot.

Religious Jews were involved in forms of resistance common to all. In addition, their position required something unique: the refusal to obey German orders to refrain from religious observances. For these Jews the choice was between the words of the Nazis and the words of the Torah, knowing full well that death was the price to pay for personal integrity.

Throughout the Holocaust, wherever there were Jews, there were innumerable acts of defiance, of personal resistance. Some, such as curfew violation, stealing from the Nazis, and working slowly, risked death. Others, such as talking back to or spitting in the face of a German, meant immediate death.

The affirmation of communal continuity was an important element in the struggle against the Nazis. For virtually all Jews, of whatever religious or political persuasion, the overriding consideration was how best to preserve the community and, when that was no longer possible, to preserve its dignity and memory. As a result one finds monumental efforts that were made in the ghettos—always at the risk of torture and death—to preserve the past, record the present, and build for the future. In the midst of devastation, archives were established, photographs taken, theater groups created, and schools maintained.

In this context the Ringelblum archives merit special note. Emmanuel Ringelblum was an historian and leading communal figure of Polish Jewry. After the German takeover, he organized a secret organization in the Warsaw ghetto to do studies on and record every aspect of Jewish life, including Jewish police, communal life, the school system, cultural activities, Jewish-Polish relations, continued next page
smuggling, youth and women. In addition, Judenrat files were acquired, underground newspapers collected, and a photographic record made. In August 1942, at the height of the deportations, the archives were sealed and buried beneath the ghetto. After the war two of the three containers were found.

Escape as a form of defiance and resistance occurred individually and collectively, from the ghettos and the camps. In many instances the physical difficulties of escape were the easiest to deal with, since the German policy of collective responsibility meant that individuals who escaped would be guaranteeing the immediate execution of their family, neighbors, work brigade, or organization.

Sabotage was another type of resistance. Sometimes it took the form of destroying factories, sometimes lists of people to be deported, and sometimes the machinery of destruction itself, as in the case of the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Sobibor death camps.

**Armed struggle by Jews** occurred on a wide scale, individually as well as collectively, spontaneously as well as planned. The story here begins in Spain in 1936. The Spanish Civil War was, among other things, a testing ground for German troops, weapons and tactics. Approximately 35,000 premature anti-fascists came from all over to form the International Brigades. The fact that they chose to fight against Franco, Hitler and Mussolini well before it became popular to do so, still goes largely unrecognized today. Of those volunteers, at least 6,000 (17%) were Jews. Of the 3200 volunteers from the U.S. 30% were Jews. From the Palestinian Jewish community of one half million came at least 250, a per capita rate 15 times that of the overall American rate. When the Brigades were disbanded, many veterans of that struggle went on to fight in the allied armies, as partisans, in the ghettos, and in the death camps. Some who managed to survive the Holocaust went on to fight in Israel in 1948.

Of the eleven million Jews outside Nazi control during World War II, the large majority were children, the aged, and women who, for the most part, were not involved in regular military units. Of the several million remaining who were combat age men, two million fought in the allied armies, a rate of resistance unsurpassed by any other people. In the Soviet Union, 70% of all male Jews of age fought in the army or with the partisans.

Fighting as partisans, Jews served in both Jewish and mixed units. One group, operating out of the Ukraine and led by Misha Gildenman (a.k.a. Diadia Misha), was composed of hundreds of fighters. Another group under Tuvie Bielski maintained a community of 1500 who were involved in production, communal service, and fighting. In Yugoslavia 5000 Jews fought as partisans. In Belgium and France 15%-20% of the resistance movements were composed of Jews.

In all three of the preceding cases—Spain, armies and partisans—we see Jews fighting against the Nazis out of proportion to their numbers in the population. Clearly this is not the picture of a passive people, a fearful people lacking in self-respect.

Armed resistance occurred in many of the ghettos, most notably Vilna, Bialystok, and Warsaw. Here the struggle was complicated not only by the general refusal of the non-Jewish resistance to cooperate, but also by the unique nature of the Holocaust itself. Much of the Jewish communal leadership was imbued with a concept of modern Jewish history as cyclical with pogroms coming and going. As is the case with most entrenched leadership, they were traditional in outlook. It was no easy matter to break with the past and recognize that what was happening was manifestly not a huge pogrom, not even an attempt to destroy Jewish religion and culture but, rather, an attempt at the physical annihilation of all Jews.

A variation of the pogrom mentality operated in the population at large, within non-Jews as well as Jews. This was the inability to comprehend another unique aspect of the Holocaust: namely, that Hitler's war against the Jews was more important to him than the war against the Allies. Such was his intent and practice, and the yardstick by which he measured success.

Another factor operating to mitigate resistance in the ghettos was the aforementioned German policy of collective responsibility. This particular burden the Jews shared with others under Nazi rule.

The revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto stands out as a milestone in Jewish history. Himmler had set April 19, 1943, Hitler's birthday, as the date for the final liquidation of the ghetto. Instead of a birthday present the Germans were faced with the first urban insurrection by any people in all occupied Europe. (It was well over a year before the rest of Warsaw rebelled.) In several months of fighting, thousands of Jews fought against tanks, automatic weapons, and aerial bombardment with knives, Molotov cocktails, an occasional gun, and determination. Unable to conquer the ghetto even with heavy armor and air power, the Germans were forced to go through the rubble of the ghetto blowing up and burning, building by building. While most of the fighting was over in several months, as late as June 1944 three Germans were killed by a Jewish fighting group that remained in the rubble of the ghetto.

Knowledge of resistance in the death camps is hampered by the fact that, in many cases, there are neither records nor survivors to tell the story. It appears, however, that the struggle was carried on in all of the camps. In Auschwitz there was an active resistance with people smuggled in as well as out. Pictures were taken to inform the world of what was happening. There was a small number of totally successful escapes. In addition there was a mass escape of six hundred after a well organized destruction of one of the four crematoria.

In the camp at Sobibor, six hundred escaped under the leadership of Alexander Pechersky, a Soviet Jew. Much of the camp, whose ovens burned 15,000 people a day at their peak, was destroyed. The Germans completed the destruction of the camp themselves when they realized that a couple hundred witnesses would live to tell what had been happening there.

"Like sheep to slaughter. Who are they talking about? Certainly not the Jews! It is bad enough that non-Jews believe the myth. It is much worse when we believe and perpetuate it ourselves. Perhaps all of what I have delineated should not count as resistance. Certainly we should not hold illusions about the number of Jews saved through resistance or otherwise. But as to going like sheep to slaughter, this simply was not so."
WE REFUGEES

by Hannah Arendt

In the first place, we don't like to be called "refugees." We ourselves call each other "newcomers" or "immigrants." Our newspapers are papers for "Americans of German language"; and, as far as I know, there is not and never was any club founded by Hitler-persecuted people whose name indicated that its members were refugees.

A refugee used to be a person driven to seek refuge because of some act committed or some political opinion held. Well, it is true we have had to seek refuge; but we committed no acts and most of us never dreamt of having any radical political opinion. With us the meaning of the term "refugee" has changed. Now "refugees" are those of us who have been so unfortunate as to arrive in a new country without means and have to be helped by Refugee Committees.

Before this war broke out we were even more sensitive about being called refugees. We did our best to prove to other people that we were just ordinary immigrants. We declared that we had departed of our own free will to countries of our choice, and we denied that our situation had anything to do with "so-called Jewish problems." Yes, we were "immigrants" or "newcomers" who had left our country because, one fine day, it no longer suited us to stay, or for purely economic reasons. We wanted to rebuild our lives, that was all. In order to rebuild one's life one has to be strong and an optimist. So we are very optimistic.

Our optimism, indeed, is admirable, even if we say so ourselves. The story of our struggle has finally become known. We lost our home, which means the familiarity of daily life. We lost our occupation, which means the confidence that we are of some use in this world. We lost our language, which means the naturalness of reactions, the simplicity of gestures, the unaffected expression of feelings. We left our relatives in the Polish ghettos and our best friends have been killed in concentration camps, and that means the rupture of our private lives.

Nevertheless, as soon as we were saved — and most of us had to be saved several times — we started our new lives and tried to follow as closely as possible all the good advice our saviors passed on to us. We were told to forget; and we forgot quicker than anybody ever could imagine. In a friendly way we were reminded that the new country would become a new home; and after four weeks in France or six weeks in America, we pretended to be Frenchmen or Americans. The more optimistic among us would even add that their whole former life had been passed in a kind of unconscious exile and only their new country now taught them what a home really looks like. It is true we sometimes raise objections when we are told to forget about our former work; and our former ideals are usually hard to throw over if our social standard is at stake. With the language, however, we find no difficulties; after a single year optimists are convinced they speak English as well as their mother tongue; and after two years they swear solemnly that they speak English better than any other language — their German is a language they hardly remember.

In order to forget more efficiently we rather avoid any allusion to concentration or internment camps we experienced in nearly all European countries — it might be interpreted as pessimism or lack of confidence in the new homeland. Besides, how often have we been told that nobody likes to listen to all that; hell is no longer a religious belief or a fantasy, but something as real as houses and stones and trees. Apparently nobody wants to know that contemporary history has created a new kind of human being — the kind that are put in concentration camps by their foes and in internment camps by their friends.

Even among ourselves we don't speak about this past. Instead, we have found our own way of mastering an uncertain future. Since everybody plans and wishes and hopes, so do we. Apart from these general human attitudes, however, we try to clear up the future more scientifically.

I don't know which memories and which thoughts nightly dwell in our dreams. I dare not ask for information, since I, too, had rather be an optimist. But sometimes I imagine that at least nightly we think of our dead or we remember the poems we once loved. I could even understand how our friends of the West coast, during the curfew, should have had such curious notions as to believe that we are not only "prospective citizens" but present "enemy aliens." In daylight, of course, we become only "technically" enemy aliens — all refugees know this. But when technical reasons prevented you from leaving your home during the dark hours, it certainly was not easy to avoid some dark speculations about the relations between technicality and reality.

No, there is something wrong with our optimism. There are those odd optimists among us who, having made a lot of optimistic speeches, go home and turn on the gas or make use of a skyscraper in quite an unexpected way. They seem to prove that our proclaimed cheerfulness is based on a dangerous readiness for death. Brought up in the conviction that life is the highest good and death the greatest dismay, we became witnesses and victims of worse terrors than death — without having been able to discover a higher ideal than life. Thus, although death lost its horror for us, we became neither willing nor capable to risk our lives for a cause. Instead of fighting — or thinking about how to become able to fight back — refugees have got used to wishing death to friends of relatives; if somebody dies, we cheerfully imagine all the trouble he has been saved. Finally many of us end up wishing that we, too, could be saved some trouble, and act accordingly.

Since 1938 — since Hitler's invasion of Austria — we have seen how quickly eloquent optimism could change to speechless pessimism. As time went on, we got worse — even more optimistic and even more inclined to suicide. Austrian Jews under Schuschnigg were such a cheerful people — all impartial observers admired them. It was quite wonderful how deeply convinced they were that nothing could happen to them. But when German troops invaded the country and Gentile neighbors started riots at Jewish homes, Austrian Jews began to commit suicide.

Unlike other suicides, our friends leave no explanation of their deed, no indictment, no charge against a world that had forced a desperate man to talk and to behave cheerfully to his very last day. Suicides occur not only among the panic-stricken people in Berlin and Vienna, in Bucharest or Paris, but in New York and Los Angeles, in Buenos Aires and Motevideo.

On the other hand, there has been little reported about suicides in the ghettos and concentration camps themselves. True, we had very few reports at all from Poland, but we have been fairly well informed about German and French concentration camps.

At the camp of Gurs, for instance, where I had the opportunity of spending some time, I heard only once about suicide, and that was the suggestion of a collective action, apparently a kind of protest in order to vex the French. When some of us remarked that we had been shipped there "pour crever" in any case, the general mood turned suddenly into a violent courage of life. The general opinion held that one had to be abnormally asocial and unconcerned about general
We Refugees: continued

events if one was still able to interpret the whole accident as personal and individual bad luck and, accordingly, ended one's life personally and individually. But the same people, as soon as they returned to their own individual lives, being faced with seemingly individual problems, changed once more to this insane optimism which is next door to despair.

We are the first non-religious Jews persecuted — and we are the first ones who, not only in extremis, answer with suicide. Perhaps the philosophers are right who teach that suicide is the last and supreme guarantee of human freedom: not being free to create our lives or the world in which we live, we nevertheless are free to throw life away and to leave the world. Yet our suicides are no mad rebels who hurl defiance at life and the world, who try to kill in themselves the whole universe. Theirs is a quiet and modest way of vanishing; they seem to apologize for the violent solution they have found for their personal problems. In their opinion, generally, political events had nothing to do with their individual fate; in good or bad times they would believe solely in their personality.

If we are saved we feel humiliated, and if we are helped we feel degraded. We fight like madmen for private existences with guarantees of human freedom: not being free to create our lives or the world in which we live, we nevertheless are free to throw life away and to leave the world. Yet our suicides are no mad rebels who hurl defiance at life and the world, who try to kill in themselves the whole universe. Theirs is a quiet and modest way of vanishing; they seem to apologize for the violent solution they have found for their personal problems. In their opinion, generally, political events had nothing to do with their individual fate; in good or bad times they would believe solely in their personality.

The conclusion we drew from such unpleasant experiences was simple enough. We learnt that in order to build a new life, one has first to improve on the old one. A nice little fairy-tale has been invented to describe our behavior; a forlorn emigre daschund, in his grief, begins to speak: "Once, when I was a St. Bernard. . ."

Our new friends, rather overwhelmed by so many stars and famous men, hardly understand that at the basis of all our descriptions of past splendors lies one human truth: once we were somebodies about whom people cared, we were loved by friends, and even known by landlords as paying our rent regularly. Once we could buy our food and ride in the subway without being told we were undesirable. We have become a little hysterical since newspapermen started detecting us and telling us publicly to stop being disagreeable when shopping for milk and bread. We wonder how it can be done; we already are so damnably careful in every moment of our daily lives to avoid anyone guessing who we are, what kind of passport we have, where our birth certificates were filled out — and that Hitler didn't like us. We try the best we can to fit into a world where you have to be sort of politically minded when you buy your food.

The less we are free to decide who we are or to live as we like, the more we try to put up a front, to hide the facts, and to play roles. We were expelled from Germany because we were Jews. But having hardly crossed the French borderline, we were changed into "boches." We were even told that we had to accept this designation if we really were against Hitler's racial theories. During seven years we played the ridiculous role of trying to be Frenchmen — at least, prospective citizens; but at the beginning of the war we were interned as "boches" all the same. In the meantime, however, most of us had indeed become such loyal Frenchmen that we could not even criticize a French governmental order; thus we declared it was all right to be interned. We were the first "prisonniers volontaires" history has ever seen. After the Germans invaded the country, the French Government had only to change the name of the firm; having been jailed because we were Germans, we were not freed because we were Jews.

It is the same story all over the world, repeated again and again. In Europe the Nazis confiscated our property; but in Brazil we have to pay 30% of our wealth, like the most loyal member of the Bund der Auslandsdeutschen. In Paris we could not leave our homes after eight o'clock because we were Jews; but in Los Angeles we are restricted because we are "enemy aliens." Our identity is changed so frequently that nobody can find out who we actually are.

Unfortunately, things don't look any better when we meet with Jews. French Jewry was absolutely convinced that all Jews coming from the Rhine were what they called Polaks — what German Jewry called Ostjuden. But those Jews who really came from eastern Europe could not agree with their French brethren and called us Jaeckes. The sons of these Jaecke-haters — the second generation born in France and already duly assimilated — shared the opinion of the French Jewish upper classes. Thus, in the very same family, you could be called a Jaecke by the father and a Polak by the son. Since the outbreak of the war and the catastrophe that has befallen European Jewry, the mere fact of being a refugee has prevented our mingling with native Jewish society, some exceptions only proving the rule. These unwritten social laws, though never publicly admitted, have the great force of public opinion. And such a silent opinion and practice is more important for our daily lives than all official proclamations of hospitality and good will.

Man is a social animal and life is not easy for him when social ties are cut off. Moral standards are much easier kept in the texture of society. Very few individuals have the strength to conserve their own integrity if their social, political and legal status is completely confused.


Run Not So Fast My Love

My love
runs from demons in his past
A warden, his conscious mind,
sackles and hides them,
but softly, stealthily,
in sleep, night's wondrous balm they creep,
Demons of an age gone mad,
when men derelict in humanity
roamed and ruled his universe,
where his mother's sheltering arms
were torn from him,
and he was left to weep
alone, in the madness.
Softly my arms now enfold him,
Run not so fast my love. . .
they are far behind.

by Ruth Marmorstein

"Martyrdom and Resistance"
January/February 1978
Portrait Of My Father

By Paul Zilsel

There is a portrait of my father, Edgar, painted during World War One, when he was in his early twenties. And even though it was done about eight years before I was born, he looks just as I remember him when I was a boy in Vienna. It is a small oil painting, head and shoulders, full face. The background is ochre wall paper with red roses, the wall-paper of the same living room in which the picture was hanging during my childhood.

My father looks out of the painting with sad eyes. His thin, intelligent face with its long nose is deeply tanned. His black hair is brushed back above the high forehead. His lips, deep red — almost purple — in the picture, express an ironic smile. All very much as he looked up until the last few years before his death at 53.

The painting is in the Austrian Expressionist style. It could be the work of Kokoschka or Schiele. But it was done by a young contemporary who never had a chance to become famous. He was killed at the front shortly after the picture was painted.

My father's portrait was one of the few belongings my parents managed to take with them in 1938, when we fled from the Nazis. In 1944 when I came to stay with my mother Ella after my father's suicide, it was hanging in her bed/sitting room on New York's Lower East Side. At that time my mother was working at Post Graduate Hospital, sterilizing and powdering surgical gloves. It was one of the few periods during her stay in the United States that she was out of the State Hospital, living on her own and supporting herself.

In 1948 my mother went back to Austria and took the painting with her. It was hanging on her bedroom wall when I visited her at the Catholic old age home in a suburb of Vienna, where she spent her last years. After her death in 1974, it made another trip across the Atlantic. It is now on the cabin wall of the boat I've been living in since shortly after I moved to Seattle, eight years ago. I often look at it and think of my parents.

I've been thinking of them a lot, more than usual, lately. Perhaps it is because of the story of the Ukrainian family in Chicago that has been in the news. They had come from Russia six months ago. And now the parents, disappointed and exhausted by the difficulties of adapting to life here, want to go back to the Soviet Union. But the daughter, 17, and son, 12 — want to stay. How alluring and manageable life in the U.S. can often seem to young people arriving here from Europe; and how difficult, bewildering, and humiliating to the parents! I watch the images on TV: the Ukrainian daughter earnestly trying to explain and understand the gulf that has opened up between the generations in her family. The father, desperate, with his head down, hands covering his face. The mother, angry turning away from the camera, a rapid stream of Ukrainian coming from her mouth. And the boy, walking silently with his lawyer, dazed, with sad but determined eyes. And I am overwhelmed, again after all this time, by the memories of my own family's first years in America and of my parents' tragic fate.

Being refugees in the States was a disastrous experience for both my parents. I sometimes think they would have liked to go back home. Back even to the vicious anti-Semitism and the looming genocide of the Jewish people in wartime Nazi Germany. Anything rather than try to cope with the bewildering, seemingly hopeless task of making a life here as newcomers in their late forties, without any money or status. And of course my mother did go back after the war, as soon as she could pick up the pieces of her life and get herself together enough to make the effort.

During her nine years here, except for a few short intervals, she simply went on strike. Like a non-violent protester in the face of arrest, she went limp, refused to do anything to take care of herself, to accept the reality of her life and her surroundings. It was not, or at least no more than half, a conscious, willed refusal. It came from deep within her, her nerves, her guts — a futile attempt to escape from an incomprehensible world; to return to infancy or to the womb, to a state of blissful passivity, with all her needs taken care of by others. She had begun her frantic flight from the real world already in Vienna, as the basis of her life was disintegrating under her feet. But she reached the full extent, the ghastly climax of her refusal only in America, the land of her supposed refuge. Here she was living in an internal hell of panicky fear of overwhelming resentment and hatred that she could contain only by staying absolutely passive. I know because at times I've almost been there myself.

They call it agitated depression. This was before the days of tranquilizers and antidepressant drugs. They locked her up in the State Hospital for the Insane. They gave her electric shocks, metrazol shocks, insulin shocks. But all without much success. For every time they managed to convince her that the outside world had to be better than this, torture camp of a hospital, a short return to New York City persuaded her otherwise. In the hospital at least she didn't have to cope with the insane normality of the real world. And she survived.

But my father, poor rational, tragic fool, never had a chance. With his great powers of intellect and insight he tried to function and to cope. Cope with the unfamiliar language, with the blind, incomprehending rat maze New York City represents to the impoverished. Trying to cope with his pittance of welfare support, the starvation grants from learned societies set up to support refugee scholars. Trying to grapple with the arrogant psychiatric bureaucracy that held his wife in their clutches, visiting her in the hospital, trying to give her encouragement and hope, an appearance of calm and strength. Hoping against hope, at the same time to move mountains: to rescue his sister and her husband left behind in Nazi Germany. Coping with the sister's frantic accusing letters — he, the brother who had made it to the land where the streets are paved with gold, and yet couldn't or wouldn't help her escape from the mass murderers preparing her final solution. Watching impotently from afar as sister and brother-in-law were deported first to Terezin and then in a cattle car, to Auschwitz. Getting his last letter to her returned with a stamped notation on the envelope: return to sender — addressee moved without forwarding address.

And all this time, trying to clear his mind from the weight of the personal and universal tragedy clouding it, he was writing feverishly in a race against the end he knew was approaching. He haunted the New York Public Library, the Columbia University Library in search of the material to document his work. He wrote paper after paper in his clumsy English, with the interminable Germanic sentence construction which, along with so many more important things, I have inherited from him. In fragments he laid out the grand sweep of his conception: his analysis of the social economic roots of the rise of modern science in Renaissance Europe, the beginnings of capitalism in the 16th and 17th centuries. To the editors of scientific journals he sent letter after polemi-

continued next page
cal letter defending with brilliant wit and erudition his historical materialist analysis against the stifling class arrogance of the scientific-intellectual elite.

And I? I was a bright young student, in my late teens at the time, going to college on a refugee scholarship in Charleston, South Carolina. With the optimism, resilience and callousness of my youth, with the encouragement and indulgence given to promising young students, I naturally managed much better to cope with the strangeness and crazyness, and loneliness, with my alienation in the environment I had been transplanted into. I was a big, though strange, fish in the small college pond. The consciousness of my father, to visit my mother in the hospital. I pressed my mind and spirit only on occasion.

During summer vacations I went to New York to earn some money, to be with my father, to visit my mother in the hospital. I remember my father during those summers, living in a succession of ever smaller and dingier furnished rooms in seedy brownstones on Manhattan’s upper West Side. His much too large coat hung loosely on his emaciated body. The top of his pants was folded over, as if in wide irregular pleats, held in by the belt tightened around his thin waist. For years a nervous stomach ailment had kept him from eating more than small amounts at a time. By then his diet consisted of milk heated on an electric hot plate in his room and a few slices of toast. He looked like a corpse. Only his eyes had their old brilliance as we sat for hours in his room talking, arguing about world politics, about science, about my studies, about his work. His hands trembled as he lit cigarette after cigarette, getting up to pace the floor of the small room when the topic under discussion particularly excited him. He was barely fifty, but for all the world he looked and was dealt with as a piece of worn out scrap, ready for the junk heap. I could not bear to see him this way, could not bear the deep love and pity I felt for the man who was not only my father, but my teacher, my moral and intellectual model. More often during those years than I can stand to think of, I treated him with pitying condescension. I was the glib young hipster who was making it in the crazy new environment. He was the ineffectual has been unable to cope and adjust.

In the summer of '43 things seemed to be looking up for him. His work was at last attracting some attention. He was offered an instructorship at Mills College, a prestigious rich women's college in Oakland. He left New York for California at the same time as I went to Graduate School at the University of Wisconsin. I can only guess at the disappointment he met there, at the despairing exhaustion that held him in its grip. Six months later, in Madison, I got a telegram from the president of Mills College announcing that my father had killed himself in his office at the college with an overdose of sleeping pills.

Twenty five years after his death the scattered incomplete papers written during his American exile, retranslated into his native German, were collected into a book and now have become a classic—in Europe. His historical materialist analysis has become a definitive source and starting point for further work in the history of the origins of modern science. In America, though there has been talk for years, the papers have yet to be collected and republished in their original English.

Edgar and Ella Zisel were members of the Socialist Party. Edgar was a member of the Vienna Circle and Chairman of the Philosophy Department at the Vienna People's University, a school sponsored by the city of Vienna and the Socialist trade unions. His book, "Die Sozialen Ursprunge der Neuzeitlichen" ("The Social Origins of Modern Science") was published by Suhrkamp in Frankfurt. Ella taught English and German at the Women's Gymnasium.

For All Of Us

To some of us it is a ghost only recently visible behind our parents' shoulders. It has been there all along. To some of us it was an inexplicable torture of the adults. And it terrorized us in the night. Some of us were so close we drank the blood en utero and thought it an obligation a rite of passage. Where one day we too would risk the burning. For me, knowledge has been as casual and intimate as photographs in a family album. The book is leather-bound and thick with black construction paper pages. It begins with my parents on a swing. White penciled words announce this photo: the Engagement. It continues to the marriage, the first night, the morning after, the honeymoon, the war. The War is army men, and army men's wives, barracks and newsletters, and then the words: Mischa goes overseas.

Instead of photographs, picture postcards of a little boy pissing: he appears several times in different costumes; if I lift the cards carefully from their corners—love poems to my mother on the other side. Picture postcards of Belgium of England of France And there are the two photographs held by their eight corners on a page like any other one shows a man too skinny to be alive but he is; his hands cover the nakedness of his penis. the other is of a pile a hill of people as skeletal as he their dignity is preserved without modesty they are dead. On the opposing page there are other pictures continued next page.
Anne Frank still believed
in humanity's basic good
I began a diary
but knew
it could never be as interesting
and felt
the sin of considering her life
"interesting."
I read The Silver Sword, Mila 18 the special portion
in the Haggadah
I thought of the photographs
of the mothers hiding their children in their clothes
before the showers
of the Germans sticking the clothes with bayonets
of all the screams

of all the ways there are
to resist death
and still to die
I thought of the little blonde girls
who knelt palm pressed to palm
in prayer
bringing tears to the eyes of the tv-movie audiences
I thought that I should not
bear a grudge
against Germans.
I thought it a shame that Jews did not have nuns.
On tv I saw
a play
of Passover in a camp.
I watched a production of children's poems
called "I Never Saw Another Butterfly."
I do not remember not knowing
that it was possible
for a little child
never to see
another butterfly.
I do not remember not knowing
that the world had reeled
noxious with burning flesh
and that people
only a mile away
had denied knowledge.
I saw Judgement at Nuremberg
Night and Fog The Pawnbroker
The Shop on Main Street
I went to Sunday School
where recent horrors cast incomprehension upon the
teachers
and so, instead of Holocaust, was given holidays and
the older stories
of glory
and destruction
was told about Christians
and Moslems
so I would know what to say
when attacked.
I learned about pogroms
learned in careful pauses between the grown-ups' words
that not all believed
it couldn't happen here
learned that "the Germans killed us and
the British wouldn't let us live"
that Israel was our protection.
And there was more of course
and less
sections of the story unknown or omitted
left for my own researches in later years
sections of the story to be known again
but in a different way
sections of the story unknowable
never to be known
keynahora
but I do not remember not knowing
that "Holocaust" cannot be written in the lower case
as if this word belonged to the world at large
as if the world could say to us
"you have only so long for mourning
and now we take it back: this word is ours."
For some of us... it was a ghost
barely visible
For some of us it was an inexplicable torture
of the adults
Some of us were so close we drank the blood en utero
and feared the coming age
For me, I do not remember not knowing
that for all of us
it was there.

by TEYA SCHAFFER
On the Agenda: Death

This document is the record of a meeting of the executive committee of the Bialystok branch of the Hechalutz (Palestinian pioneers) movement in Bialystok, held February 27, 1943. The chairman was Mordecai Tannenbaum, who had been sent with some others from the Vilna ghetto to organize the resistance in Bialystok. The subject of the meeting was death.

On August 21, 1943, six months after the meeting, a detachment of German police entered the ghetto. They were greeted by a barrage of small arms fire, and fled in confusion; the battle of Bialystok began. The Nazis brought up heavy artillery and unleashed an eight-day bombardment, after which they put the ghetto to the torch. But the resistance continued until the bitter end, and it was not until the middle of September that the Nazis could proclaim that the revolt was suppressed. An estimated forty thousand Jews fell in the battle of Bialystok. One of them was Mordecai Tannenbaum.

This document is reprinted from the appendix to Churbn Vilne ("The Destruction of Vilne") by S.Z. Katsherginsky (New York, United Vilner Relief Committee, 1947). The translation from the Yiddish is by Milton Himmelfarb.

Mordecai: I'm glad that at least we're in a good mood. Unfortunately, the meeting won't be very gay; this meeting is historic or tragic, as you prefer, but certainly sad. The few people sitting here are the last chalutzim in Poland. We are entirely surrounded by the dead. You know what has happened in Warsaw: no one is left. The same is true of Bendin and Czestochowa, and probably everywhere else. We are the last. It's not a particularly pleasant feeling to be the last; on the contrary, it imposes a special responsibility on us. We have to decide what to do tomorrow. There is no point in sitting together in the warmth of our memories, and there is no point in waiting for death together, collectively. What shall we do?

We can do two things: decide that with the first Jew to be deported now from Bialystok, we start our counter-attack, that from tomorrow on nobody goes to the factories, that nobody is allowed to hide during the action. Everybody will be mobilized. We can see to it that no one German leaves the ghetto alive, that not one factory is left standing.

It is not out of the question that after we have finished our task some of us may even be still alive. But it must be a fight to the finish, till we fall.

Or we could decide to escape to the woods. We must consider the possibilities realistically. Two of our comrades were sent today to make a place ready; in any event, as soon as the meeting is over a military alert will be instituted. We must decide now, because our fathers can't do our worrying for us. This is an orphanage.

There is one condition; our approach must be based on an idea, and our thinking must be related to the movement. Whoever imagines or thinks that he has a real chance to stay alive, and wants to use his chance—fine, we'll help him in whatever way we can. Each one of us will have to decide for himself about his own life or death. But together we have to find a collective answer to the common question. I don't want to impose my opinion on anybody, so for the time being I won't express myself on the question.

Issac: What we're really debating is two different kinds of death. Attack means certain death. The other way means death two or three days later.

We ought to analyze both ways; perhaps something can be done. I don't have enough precise information, and I should like to hear the opinions of better informed comrades.

If comrades think that they could remain living, we ought to think about it.

Hershl: It's still too early to strike a balance on everything we've lived through in the past year and a half. Nevertheless, in the light of the fateful decision confronting us, we must form a clear idea of what we have lived through.

Hundreds of thousands of Jews have perished in the last year; with great subtlety the enemy has succeeded in demoralizing us and leading us like cattle to the slaughterhouses of Ponar, Chelmno, Beloszyz, and Treblinka. The extermination of the Jewish communities of Poland will be not only the most tragic but also the ugliest chapter in Jewish history, a chapter of Jewish impotence and cowardice. Even our movement has not always stood on the required high level. Instead of giving the signal for desperate resistance, we have everywhere put off making a decision. Even in Warsaw the resistance would have had a different result if it had been started not at the end but at the beginning of the liquidation.

Here in Bialystok it is our fate to live through the last act of the bloody tragedy. What can we do, what ought we do? The way I see it, this is the objective situation. The great majority of the ghetto, of our own family, have been sentenced to death. We are condemned. We have never looked on the woods as a hiding place; we have seen the woods as a base for combat and revenge. But the tens of young people now escaping to the woods are not seeking a battlefield; most of them are living a beggar's life and will doubtless find a beggar's death. In the conditions in which we now find ourselves, our fate would be to lead the same beggar's and vagrant's life.

Only one thing remains for us: to organize collective resistance in the ghetto, at any cost; to consider the ghetto our Musa Dagh, to write a proud chapter of Jewish Bialystok and our movement into history.

I can imagine how others would have reacted if their families had been subjected to what ours have been. The lowest Gentile peasant would have spat on his own life and stuck a knife into the guilty one. The only emotion dominating him would have been the thirst for revenge.

Our duty is clear: with the first Jew to be deported, we must begin our counteraction. If anyone succeeds in taking arms from the murderer and going into the woods—fine. A young person with weapons can find his place in the woods. We still have time to prepare the woods as a place for combat and revenge.

I have lost everything, all those near to me; still, there persists the desire to live. But there is no choice. If I thought that not only individuals could save themselves, but fifty or sixty per cent of the ghetto Jews, I would say that our decision should be to remain alive at any cost. But we are condemned to death.

continued next page

15
Sarah: Comrades! If we are concerned about honor, we have long since lost it. In most of the Jewish communities the extermination activities were carried out smoothly, without counter-action. It is better to remain living than to kill five Germans. In a counter-action we will all die, without any possible doubt. On the other hand, in the woods forty or fifty per cent of our people can be saved. That will be our honor and that will be our history. We are still needed; we shall yet be of use. Since in any event we no longer have honor, let it be our duty to remain alive.

Enoch: No illusions! We have nothing to expect but liquidation to the last Jew. We have a choice of two kinds of death. The woods won’t save us, and certainly rebellion in the ghetto won’t. There remains for us only to die honorably.

The prospects for our resistance are not good. I don’t know whether we have adequate means for combat. It’s the fault of all of us that our means are so small, but that’s water over the dam—we’ll have to use what we have. Bialystok will be liquidated completely, like all the other Jewish cities.

In the first operation the factories were spared, but no one can believe that the Nazis will let them go this time. It is obvious that the woods offer greater opportunities for revenge, but we must not go there to live on the mercy of peasants, to buy our food and lives for money. Going to the woods should mean going to become active partisans, but that requires arms.

The weapons we have aren’t suited to the woods. If we do have enough time left, we should acquire arms and go to the woods.

But if the Nazi action intervenes, we must answer as soon as they touch the first Jew.

Chaim: There are no Jews left, there are only remnants. There is no more movement, there are only remnants. There is no point in talking about honor; if we can, we must try to save ourselves, and not worry how we’ll all be judged. We must hide in the woods, and maintain systematic communication among the comrades.

Mordecai: If we wanted to hard enough, and made up our minds that it was our duty, we could make sure our people were safe to the very end, as long as there were any Jews left in Bialystok. I ask an extreme question: do the comrades who are for the woods propose that we should hide and not react at the next Nazi action, so that we can escape into the woods later?

(Voices from all sides: No, No!)

There are two opinions, one represented by Sarah and Chaim, and the other by Hersh! and Enoch. Make your choice. One thing is sure—we won’t go to the factories and pray to God that the Nazis catch the people who have hidden, so that we can be saved. And we won’t watch passively from our factory windows when comrades from another factory are led away.

We can have a vote: Hersh! or Chaim.

Fanya (of the Branch): I agree with Enoch. We have to choose between one big action here, or a series of much smaller actions, which in the end will have a much greater significance—I mean escaping into the woods. Because we aren’t sufficiently well equipped and don’t have the opportunity to go to the woods, and because the situation is very tense, we must emphasize counter-action right here; as soon as the first Jew is seized for deportation, we must attack with all our strength.

But if nothing happens for a few more weeks, we must make every effort to leave.

Eliezer Suchanitzky (of the Branch): Comrades! I think it would be wrong for us to try to work in two directions at the same time. Taking to the woods is a good idea; it gives us some chance to reamin alive. But at the present moment, when action is so imminent, going to the woods is an illusion. Even if we have another three or four weeks, we won’t be able to assemble all the necessary material and take it with us.

I think there is only one thing for us to do: to answer a Nazi action with our counter-action. I think we should work only along this line, so that we can give the most forceful possible answer with the limited means at our disposal.

Jochebed: Why is there all this talk about death? It isn’t natural. Even a soldier at the front, or a partisan in the woods, in the greatest danger keeps on thinking about life.

We know what the situation is, but why frighten everybody with all this talk about death? If that’s what we should do, let’s take to the woods, or remain here and fight it out. That doesn’t mean that we must necessarily be killed. Everything we’ve been saying here is opposed to our most basic instincts.

Chaim: I don’t agree with Jochebed. We must be consistent; we dare not give anyone the moral dispensation to run away. This will be for keeps, not for fun. When we fight, it will have to be to the last. And to fight means to be killed. I think we would be accomplishing more if we remained alive, by taking to the woods.

[He suggests setting up a base outside the ghetto, so that sabotage can be carried on inside the city even after the Nazis act.]

Moses: In the order of importance, the counter-action comes first; then, if possible, organization of partisan activity in the woods. Everyone here, without exception, should speak his mind, because the lives of all the comrades depend on the decisions made at this meeting. If necessary, let the meeting last until morning.

Chaim: You want everybody to speak so the meeting should decide against counter-action in the ghetto. (Protests.)

Dorke (of the Branch): I think our position must be the position of people in a movement, of people with full consciousness of what they’re doing, who know what has happened to our nearest relatives and friends.

We will die a worthy death. The chances for revenge are greater in the woods, but we cannot go there as vagrants, only as active partisans. Since the necessary preparation for the woods is impossible now, we must devote all our energy to the counter-action.

Zipporah: It’s hard to say anything, it’s hard to choose the manner of your own death. There’s a kind of argument going on inside me between life and death. It’s not important for me whether I or somebody else will remain alive. After what we have lived through and seen with our own eyes, we shouldn’t have too high a notion of the value of our lives. I am trying to think a little more deeply of the question of our movement.

We’re proud of the fact that our movement lived through the most difficult period in the history of the Jewish community in Poland. I was brought here from Vilna, and so were many others. There were certainly more important people to save. It wasn’t I who was brought here, and it wasn’t you; it was the movement. Now the question has been posed: will the movement be destroyed entirely? Does the movement have the right to be destroyed? We are a movement of the Jewish people; we must, and we do in fact, undergo all the sorrows and persecutions of the people.
AGENDA Continued

When we consider the right to stay alive, I say yes, we have every right. Perhaps our movement may have to be the only one to speak up, when that is needed. Take the example of Warsaw. That was certainly a proud and manly death, but it wasn't the kind of thing a movement should do.

The decision of a movement should be to remain alive. I don't mean we should hold onto life for its own sake, but for continued work, for extending the chain that was not broken even in the darkest days.

Our chances are as small as they can be, but if we put everything we have into our effort, then we can succeed.

Shmulik: This is the first time we have had to hold a meeting about death. We are going to undertake our counter-action not to write history, but to die an honorable death, as young Jews in our times should. And if our history is ever written, it will be different from the history of the Spanish Jews, who leaped into the flames with "Hear, O Israel!" on their lips.

Now, as to the action. All our experience teaches us that we can't trust the Germans, in spite of their assurances that the artisans will be protected, that only those who don't work will be deported, and so on. They have succeeded in driving thousands of Jews to the slaughter only by deception and demoralizing.

And yet we have a chance to come out of the impending action safely. Everyone is playing for time, and so should we. In the short time that remains, we can work to improve our small and impoverished store of weapons.

We should also do what we can about the woods, where we can fulfill two functions. I don't want to be misunderstood. We shouldn't interpret our hiding while the action is taking place as cowardice.

No! Man's instinct for life is so great, and here we must be selfish. I don't care if others are deported in our place. We have a greater claim on life than others, rightly.

We have set an aim in life for ourselves—to remain living at any cost! We were brought here from Vilna because there was a smell of liquidation there, and living witnesses had to remain. We must therefore do everything we can, if there is no liquidation immediately, to wait and gain time.

But if the liquidation starts now, then let it be all of us together in the counter-action, and "let me die with the Philistines."

Sarah: I want the comrades to know that I will do whatever is decided. But I'm amazed by the calmness with which we're talking about all this.

When I see a German, I begin to tremble all over. I don't know whether the comrades and especially the girls, will have enough strength and courage. I said what I said before because I don't have any faith in my own strength.

Ezekiel: I don't agree with Sarah. In the face of death you can become weak and powerless, or you can become very strong, since there is nothing to lose. I agree with Shmulik that we should begin our counter-action only in the event of a definition liquidation.

Ethel: Concretely—if an action is started in the next few days, then our only choice can be a counter-action; but if we are granted more time, we should work along the lines of taking to the woods.

I hope I can be equal to the duties that will be imposed on us. It may be that in the course of events I shall be strengthened. In any case, I am resolved to do everything that needs to be done. Herzl spoke rightly. We are going to perform a desperate act, whether we want to or not. Our fate is sealed, and there remains for us only the choice between one kind of death and another. I am calm.

Mordecai: The position of the comrades is clear. We will do everything we can to help as many people as possible escape into the woods for partisan combat. Every one of us who is in the ghetto when the Nazis start their action must react as soon as the first Jew is seized for deportation. We are not going to haggle about our lives; we must understand objective conditions.

The most important thing is this: to maintain until the very end the pride and dignity of the movement.

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**A K A**

My Poppa's Father, born a Zwibach in a shtetl west of Vilna, took the papers of a dead soldier, someone his own build and coloring. He left Lithuania with his new identity, escaping poverty, pogroms, and conscription by the Tsar's cruel army, then traveled to America in 1900 to live out his life as—Julius Horwitz.

My Poppa he named Meyer—Mayer Hurvitch is the way a clerk unused to Jews misheard it, then misspelled it for his birth certificate. But people called him Mutka, Mickie, even Max, and they pronounced the Horwitz—Horowitz. My mother's maiden name was Sadie Zankman, but, she's been recorded as one—Cedic Gengman. Cedic/Sadie, long ago she switched to Shirley, and, since Poppa's gone, the Horwitz became Rosen and then Snyder and then Frank.

I am another drawn to aliases, having changed a given Marion to Marianne, then dumped the Horwitz (and the ghost of Zwibach) for the Anglo-Saxon sounds of Dougan and then Ware. Without my proper name, I've been anonymous in marriage, left wondering who she is—grandchild of Jennie Bralbon (spelled that way on Meyer's records) and of Sarah (Sora?) Something or other, my long gone, nearly forgotten, maternal Buba.

by Marianne Ware
Report from the West Bank

Three stacks of newspapers lie on the counter of a kiosk in Arab Jerusalem. To an eye trained in Western makeup, the long, graceful strokes of Arabic fit loosely on the page. The picture of Arafat, standard fare, comes out blurred on the shabby stock. On an average day, the three papers sell maybe 20,000 copies in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. One can never be sure of the figures.

It is likely that these papers — more than terrorism, student demonstrations, strikes — keep alive the flame of resistance to the Israeli occupation. They are not the Arabs' only source of information. The Israelis offer Arab-language radio and television, and an Arabic-language newspaper called Al-Anba ("The News"), which purveys the official government line. TV is also available from Amman and Damascus, and radio from Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, as well as from the PLO in Beirut. The British beam in the BBC, and the Americans the Voice of America, both in Arabic. But the three small newspapers published in East Jerusalem belong to the Arabs of the territories, speak for them and stand up for them, reflect their yearnings and despair, symbolize their struggle, and naturally the Israelis do not like what they have to say.

The question often arises why the Israelis allow them to publish at all. Subject to the authority of the military censor, the three papers are not exactly free. But, on the other hand, they are freer than the press was when Jordan ruled East Jerusalem, and there is probably no freer press, except in the anarchy of Beirut, anywhere in the Arab world.

The three papers, all dailies, are called Al-Kuds ("Jerusalem"), Al-Fajr ("The Dawn"), and Al-Shaab ("The People"), and by Western standards none would be considered very professional. Each is produced by a handful of editors, who take reports from a network of stringers (many of whom also circulate the papers) and rewrite items that they read in the Israeli press or hear on the radio. In the tradition of Arab journalism, much of what they publish is tendentious, and even sports and features normally are presented with a political slant. Though the three compete vigorously for readers, they are united in supporting the PLO. All campaign to replace Israeli rule in the territories with an independent Palestinian state.

Of the three, the most successful is Al-Kuds, run by Mahmud Abu Zalaf, a tall, middle-aged man with a gruff voice and a perpetually sardonic smile, who proudly notes that he attended the Columbia School of Journalism. Abu Zalaf is a force to be reckoned with on the West Bank. Scion of a rich Palestinian family, he founded the paper in 1952 when, he said, he was still "young and hot." He openly maintains ties with the Jordanian monarchy, which he insists do not conflict with his Palestinian nationalism, admittedly of the more moderate brand. "My friend, King Hussein," he said, "also supports the PLO."

The two other papers, much smaller, are more rigidly hard-line, adhering to the PLO's "rejectionist" position. Al-Fajr and Al-Shaab each claim about 7,000 daily circulation, Al-Kuds about 22,000. When I told Abu Zalaf that his competitors put his circulation at half that figure, he snorted, "They're Communists. They can go to hell."

To most Arabs, Al-Kuds is the "establishment," representing the interests of the West Bank's landed gentry, carrying most of the commercial advertising. It is also the "social register," in which prominent families put paid notices to announce deaths, marriages, or their children's admission to universities around the world. The two smaller papers are upstarts, lashing out at the old order. (In 1974, the editor of Al-Fajr disappeared, after the paper published an exposé about one of the great sheikhs of the West Bank.) None of the three finds it easy to come out every day under a military occupation that would be very happy to see them vanish.

Beni Goor-Arie, who is Prime Minister Menachem Begin's chief of staff for Arab affairs, acknowledged in an interview that the government, whenever it wants, can find the authority to suppress the three newspapers. Goor-Arie told me that, at the time of the occupation in 1967, Moshe Dayan, who was then defense minister, decided to allow Arabs to publish, more or less freely, as part of his "open bridges" to the native population. And despite periodic outcries, Goor-Arie observed, Dayan's policy remains in force because most Israelis fear that suppressing liberties in the occupied territories must lead ultimately to the suppression of liberties in Israel itself.

Moreover, I was told by Dr. Moshe Sharon, a professor of Islamic history at the Hebrew University, a flourishing A Jerusalem reader peruses Al-Kuds, largest of three Palestinian-nationalist dailies published under Israeli censorship
Arab press enhances Israel’s image abroad while serving its interests at home. An adviser to Begin on Arab policy, Sharon said it was likely that, if legitimate papers were not allowed, an underground press would spring up, which would probably be more dangerous. He added that, in their rivalries with one another, the Arab newspapers reveal a great deal about politics in the occupied territories, information which facilitates the task of the security forces.

The editors of the East Jerusalem papers are aware that they are playing Israel’s card by publishing every day. But they are also playing the card of Palestinian nationalism. By their very existence, the papers enrich the sense of community of the Arabs of the occupied territories. However much they are handicapped, only these papers convey, from an Arab perspective, a sense of the activities through which Arabs, under the nose of the Israeli army, assert a political identity.

To interview Akram Haniya, editor of Al-Shaab, I had to drive to Ramallah, a town about six miles north of Jerusalem. There, for more than a year, he and two other editors — jokingly calling themselves the “Gang of Three” — have been held under town arrest, for reasons the army has never announced but presumably because they belonged to the quasi-political National Guidance Council, considered by some to be a PLO front. While waiting for the authorities to lift their arrest, they send in copy by phone or courier.

“Is it worthwhile publishing a newspaper under the strict controls of the military government?” Haniya asked rhetorically. Then he answered, “It’s as if we are tied to a tree by a length of rope, and can only walk around in a small circle. We don’t have much space, but it’s probably better to walk than to sit down in surrender.”

Near the wall of the Old City of Jerusalem, in the converted stone house that serves as Al-Fajr’s headquarters, Hanna Siniora, the paper’s American-educated editor, said to me, “We can’t give up publishing, although sometimes I think it would be easier if we did. But it’s our duty to appear, to try to reflect the mood and feelings of the occupied territories. We have to tell the people outside what is in our hearts, and we have to tell our own people inside that others know what we are going through.”

Every night, the editors of the three papers must take their copy crosstown for approval at the censor’s office in West Jerusalem. All the editors to whom I spoke agreed that the censor is tolerant of stories that originate outside the occupied territories, even if they concern the PLO. What they look for are items that might stir up the populace against the military occupiers. Since the censors have no fixed standards for what constitutes incitement, their decisions often seem arbitrary, even capricious. What’s more, the editors agreed, with the Begin government’s turn to the right in the past year, censorship has become increasingly rigorous.

“We function under regulations first enacted under the British mandate,” said Colonel Yehuda Katz, the chief censor in the Jerusalem office. A large, athletic-looking man, Katz was born in Hungary and learned Arabic at Tel Aviv University. “Those rules give the censor the powers of a judge. By law he can confiscate property, banish editors, close down papers, and jail reporters, but obviously his chief power is to prevent publication.”

“The censor,” he continued, “can suppress material which in his opinion violates military security, incites the public, or threatens public order. Admittedly our judgments are often subjective, and I am not surprised that the Arab editors don’t love us, or go out on Zion Square [the main square in West Jerusalem] to sing our praises.”

The closest the Arab papers have come to obtaining a fixed standard for what they can print is the so-called Weizman rule, which holds publishable whatever has previously appeared in the Hebrew press. From this rule a system of collaboration has been improvised. Arab editors tip off Israeli reporters to stories in which they are interested, which the Arabs rewrite as soon as the Hebrew papers publish them. Wise to the system, the censor has recently announced that the Weizman rule is being reviewed.

What the censors seem to go after most aggressively are accounts of bombings, demonstrations, or arrests in the occupied territories — accounts that might, in their view, spread a rebellious mood. Since editors are not allowed to go to press with white space, they must quickly fill the holes, usually with random wire copy carrying, perhaps, a Buenos Aires or an Auckland dateline. Several editors told me their readers have learned to spot such copy, and then inquire of the grapevine what they were designed to conceal.

Given the censor’s wide-ranging powers, when I examined the evidence I found myself more often surprised by what had been published than by what had been suppressed. According to Palestine Press Services, a commercial monitoring firm in East Jerusalem, on a Friday in July, for example, Al-Fajr printed a charge that Israeli military forces had broken into an Arab college in Hebron, Al-Shaab ran a letter of support from one West Bank mayor to another who had been expelled from his post, and Al-Kuds leveled an accusation that Israeli companies were acquiring West Bank land by fraud. In an editorial, Al-Fajr urged all Arabs to stand fast in the strategy of confrontation toward Israel.

But with Begin entering his second term, his hard-line mandate having been renewed in last summer’s election, the editors of the East Jerusalem papers all foresaw harder times ahead. “I don’t know what they’re planning,” said Hanna Siniora of Al-Fajr, “but I feel deep in my heart that they’re planning something very tough against us.”

Early evidence bearing on his apprehensions was equivocal. Shortly after the election, the government announced that West Bank leaders would no longer be allowed to make public statements in support of the PLO, and a few days after Siniora and I talked, the mayor of Ramallah was arrested for pro-PLO comments published in Al-Fajr. But a few weeks later, Begin’s new defense minister, ex-general Ariel Sharon, known as a superhawk, announced that he was restricting the army’s repressive practices in the occupied territories in order to promote Israeli-Arab dialogue. Like most of the Arab population, the editors were skeptical, and proceeded with their work on the assumption that the confrontation would continue.
OPEN POEM

TO AN ANTI-ZIONIST FRIEND

Ruthie
Do you speak Yiddish?
Ruthie
Are you kosher?
Since Jews are only carriers
Of a landless tongue
Or believers
Destined to disappear
When religion drops
Like a worn scab
Tell me,
What are you?

Progressive—yes!
But progressive what?
Your friends are all colors of the rainbow.

They are progressive—
Red Progressive, Black Progressive, Irish
progressive...
But we—you say—are only a faith
Or an historical phenomenon
Made to fight other peoples battles for them.
And god forbid
We should think of ourselves
As a nation
(hosted or otherwise).

You
By relegating all differences
To the class struggle
Cling only
To your “progressive,”
And hungrily feed
Off the peoplehoods
Of the other nations.

You become an empty wandering wind
Surrounded by the shell
Of progress.
A shell cold
When it contains
No living Heritage:
Without one’s Traditions,
Without one’s Community,
Without owning up
To the countless number
Of impossible definitions
That our impossible people
Are.

But no.
Only one
Single
Counter-definition
Satisfies you:
“Jews are JEWS and Zionists are FASCISTS!”
You proclaimed
In L.A.
Below the smoggy windows
of Israel’s consul,
While self-defining others
Chanted with you
This lull-a-bye
Lulling you
To Amnesia.

And across the street
Pacing angry eyes
Screaming for blood
Stood the league of defensive Jews:
The J.D.L.
Whose demented members
Threatened you with their clubs of rage
(rage born of the unpredicted Holocaust).
So you rolled your progressive shell home
Spitting out curses
Mixed with fear:
Zionists, Zionists!
As if Zion
Were a root-word
For Nazi.

As if my little sister
Rachel,
A born Jerusalemite,
Lover of blue flower petals
And noisy summer bees
Were an ugly imp:
Hoarding all the sand in the box.
Zionists, Zionists...
Fear not—
She’ll not hoard
Or smell the petals,
Nor make a child’s fuss
Anymore.
Terror’s bomb
Has painted her
All over
A schoolbus carcass....

You reach home
And in the shuddering silence
Your singer’s inspiration
Shapes a song.
If defiantly shouts:
“Free Palestine Now...”
...of the Jews, of course
Chapter and verse
Of PLO covenant.
After all,
A religion
Is only
A religion...

Ruthie
You have mastered the simplistic.
In surpassing careful questioning and thought
(your forbearer’s trademark).
You are cutting your insides out
Offering them up
On an altar of empty progress
To idols
That burnt out your people
Long ago.

You
By fighting for the humanity
Of all Humanity
But one
Are killing your connection
With us all.
And thus...
As our Sages of Old said:
“If you destroy but one life
It’s as if
You’ve destroyed
A whole world....”

Daniel Lev
May Day 1979
Book Review: *Up From Seltzer*


First things first: this book is very funny. It's not that you will roll on the ground shaken by convulsions of uncontrollable laughter. It's the kind of funny where, if you tend to read in the bathroom, there will be a long line angrily banging on the door wanting you to get it in gear. Hochstein's cartoons divide the American Jewish experience into four generations, exemplified by four generations of "nice Jewish boys", Yussel, Irving, Robert, and Sean Pincus and "nice Jewish girls", Yetta, Shirley, Barbara, and Kimberly Koplowitz. The names—and the pictures of the people—tell it all. The book proceeds to evolve as variations on a theme. For instance:

**Typical Jewish Male Occupation**
1st generation: Sells on the street from a pushcart.
2nd generation: Owns a retail store or a dress factory.
3rd generation: "My son, the doctor."
4th generation: Leads sensitivity training sessions.

**Typical Jewish Female Occupation**
1st generation: Worked in a sweatshop till marriage, then became a housewife.
2nd generation: Became a housewife the day she was born.
3rd generation: Taught school until she got married.
4th generation: "My daughter, the doctor."

The practice of developing different descriptions for men and women is common in *Up From Seltzer*. This innovation is not only a comment on Hochstein's strength but also on the weakness of most social criticism and satire.

The most creative aspect of *Up From Seltzer* is the author's recognition and portrayal of a "fourth generation", what one might call "The California Generation."

**Cure For Nervous Tension**
1st generation: Work, work!
2nd generation: A drive in the country.
3rd generation: Valium.
4th generation: Rebirthing

**The Official Cause Of Death**
1st generation: He worked himself to death so you could have a better life.
2nd generation: When he heard you flunked out of medical school, he died of a broken heart.
3rd generation: I warned him not to play tennis after a big lunch.
4th generation: He blissed out on quaaludes.

Most cartoons and jokes involve a certain amount of stereotyping to make their point. This is not an inherently individuous situation, even though it is often exploited to produce sexist, racist, and homophobic "humor". Hochstein uses his stereotypes to illuminate and poke fun without being oppressive. In the tradition of Lenny Bruce, he tries to get us to look at some of the realities of ourlives, including some of the less attractive ones, by substituting the door of humor for the stone wall of rhetoric.

Hochstein includes a very clever section in English-Yiddish grammar as an addendum. He begins by referring to the context in which Yiddish evolved.

"Yiddish conversation was as subtle and precise as you'd expect from a language that had 432 ways to express feelings of pain... Remember, Yiddish flowered in the ghettos of Eastern Europe where spies and Czarist agents—real and imagined—secretly lurked to denounce a poor Jew for heresy or subversion. To stay out of trouble, Jews learned to communicate through indirectness, innuendo, and subtle shades of meaning. The consequence is that while Yiddish is extremely precise, it doesn't always mean what it seems to be saying."

Then, he illustrates:

**The Imperative Negative Miserative**
Another form of speech that asserts misery, in this case by ordering the listener to cease an interrogation.

**EXAMPLE**: "What's wrong? Don't ask!"

**Note**: In polite conversation, the hearer of an imperative negative miserative must immediately respond with, "So, who's asking?" to which the only polite answer is, "So, all right, I'll tell you!" (assertive capitulative)

**The Objective Advancecive**
Another way to give special emphasis to a declaration is to advance the direct object of a verb to the head of a sentence.

**EXAMPLE**: "Trouble I could live without."

One could spend a lot of time analyzing the generations and stereotypes in *Up From Seltzer*. Certainly, they are not always appropriate. Many articles will be written discussing the "real meaning" of the situations pictured in the book. But, when that happens, we will be fortunate if Peter Hochstein writes a number of them.

—S.F.
THE VACUUMATIVE CONNECTIVE INTERROGATIVE-ACCUSATIVE

JEWISH LEISURE UNIFORM

1ST GENERATION: "So who has time for leisure?"

2ND GENERATION: For her, a mink jacket over checked slacks. For him, a Hawaiian shirt over blue serge suit pants.

3RD GENERATION: Anything with an alligator on it.


THE TRAGIC STORY OF MY CHILDHOOD PET

1ST GENERATION: "She was a wonderful cow, but when Grandpa Yussel lost his job, we had to eat her."

2ND GENERATION: "We were so poor, we couldn't afford a pet. I used to put a leash on my brother and teach him to pee on fire hydrants."

3RD GENERATION: "I had to give up my pet puppy dog when I was sixteen, because my mother was too sick to walk him for me."

4TH GENERATION: "We decided it was ecologically unsound to keep a boa constrictor in the city."

EXCERPTS FROM A SUICIDE NOTE

1ST GENERATION: "My wife Yetta is dead. My sons Irving and Max have taken over my business and are running it into the ground. The grandchildren never exist. I have nothing left to live for. Somebody say Kiddush for me, if it isn't too much trouble."

2ND GENERATION: The business is bankrupt, my son the doctor is too important to return telephone calls, and my wife Shirley puts on perfume at night and says she's going to the movies. I hope you all have a wonderful time at my funeral.

3RD GENERATION: A cross-eyed woman is suing me for malpractice during wrinkle surgery. My wife is having an affair with the tennis pro. My children never write from the commune in California. Enjoy your lives, because I just reinvented my will leaving everything to the United Jewish Appeal.

4TH GENERATION: I have decided to reunite my herpes with the universal unholiness of the cosmos. Please scatter my ashes so that they won't intrude on anybody's space.

JEWISH MARRIAGE DISASTERS

1ST GENERATION: Never got married.

2ND GENERATION: Married a gentile.

3RD GENERATION: Married a black.

4TH GENERATION: Married somebody of the same sex.
**Zog nit keynmol**

Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Chotsh himlen blayene farshtein bloye teg;
Vail kumen vet noch undzer oysgebenktte sho,
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: mir zenen do!

Fun grinem palmen-land biz vaytn land fun shney,
Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey;
Un vu gefaln iz a shprits
Fund undzer blut,
Shprotsn vet fort undzer g'vure, undzer mut.

S'vet di morgn-zun bagildn unz dem haynt,
Undzer nechtn vet farshvindn mitn faynt;
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun un der kayor,
Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu for!

Dos lid geshribn iz mit blut un nit mit blay,
S'iz nit kayn lidl fun a foygl oyf der fray;
Dos hot a folk ts'vishn falndike vent
Dos lid gezungen mit nagenes in di hent!

Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Chotsh himlen blayene farshtein bloye teg;
Vail kumen vet noch undzer oysgebenktte sho,
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: mir zenen do!

Never say that there is only death for you,
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue,
Because the hour we have hungered for is near;
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble,
We are here!

From land of palm-tree to the far-off land of snow,
We shall be coming with our torment and our woe,
And wherever our blood was shed in pain
Our strength and courage shall spring forth once again.

We'll have the morning sun to set our day a-glow,
And all our yesterdays shall vanish with the foe,
And if the time is long before the sun appears
Then let this song go like a signal through the years.

This song was written with our blood and not with pen;
It's not a song that summer birds sing overhead,
It was a people among toppling barricades,
That sang this song of ours with guns in their hands.

Never say that there is only death for you,
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue,
Because the hour we have hungered for is near;
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble,
we are here!

Hirsh Glik wrote this song in the Vilna Ghetto after hearing of the uprising in Warsaw. It quickly spread to the Jewish people dying and fighting in the camps, the ghettos, and the woods. By war's end it was being sung in almost a dozen languages and throughout the Yiddish speaking world. In 1944 Glik was killed by the Germans at the age of 24.
MEDEM JEWISH SOCIALIST GROUP

by Daniel Soyer

A year and a half ago, the Jewish Socialist Youth Bund was revived as an active organization. This marked the reestablishment, after a hiatus of several years, of an activist — and primarily English-speaking — Jewish socialist presence in New York City. Since then, the Youth-Bund, and its successor — the Medem Jewish Socialist Group have been very active.

The Bundist Heritage

The Medem Jewish Socialist Group is affiliated with the Jewish Labor Bund, from whom it receives material aid, and to whose traditions it looks for inspiration and defense. As well as in the revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

Vladimir Medem, for whom the group is named, was an early leader and theoretician of the Bund. He was born into an extremely assimilated Jewish family and was baptized into the Russian Orthodox church. As a young man, however, he was drawn to return to his heritage among the Jewish people. Already active in the revolutionary movement, he joined the Bund, learned Yiddish, and was soon writing and speaking the language. He became one of the most respected and beloved leaders of the Jewish labor movement. Medem died in New York in 1923.

When the bolsheviks seized power, they suppressed the Bund together with the other democratic socialist forces operating in Russia. Newly independent Poland then became the center of Bund activity. There, the Bund blossomed into a truly mass-movement, with its own press, special organizations for women, children and youth, a sports club, etc. It also played a leading role in the Jewish trade union movement, and in the secular Jewish school system. By the late '30s, the Bund was the most popular Jewish party in Poland. It scored smashing victories in the municipal elections of 1938. In Warsaw, for example, 16 of the 20 Jewish city councilors elected were Bundists.

The Bund took active part in the Jewish resistance to the Nazis, and Bundists were among the organizers of the uprisings in the camps and ghettos. However, together with its base of the Jews of Eastern Europe, the Bund was decimated in the Holocaust.

Bundist organizations now exist wherever their are Jews of Eastern European origin — the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Australia, France and elsewhere. They publish journals, and run schools, libraries and publishing houses. In New York, Unser Tsait, the official organ of the World Coordinating Committee, is published, and the Bund also produces a weekly radio program.

The importance of the Bund in modern Jewish history cannot be underestimated. As the first Jewish political party, it brought the Jewish people into all the debates of the modern world. As a champion of secular Jewish folk-culture, and of the Yiddish language, it helped to bring about the flowering of modern secular Jewish culture in that language. It constantly fought for the interests of the persecuted Jewish poor, and defended them against anti-semitic attacks.

For Jewish socialists it serves as a model of a successful movement that managed to create an integrally socialist Jewish way of life. Early on, the Bund developed its own unique approach to the "Jewish Question," as it was then called, opposing both the separatist Zionism movement and assimilationist trends among the socialists. Obviously conditions have changed drastically since those early days, and many specific aspects of the Bund's program have become obsolete, but its basic principles remain valid today. The Medem Group is now working on a new statement of principles based on Bundist ideals, and adapted to the needs of our generation. However, the following can serve as a summary of Bundist principles.

1) Bundists support the continued development of secular Jewish culture, based on national-cultural rather than religious identification, with special reference to the East European heritage and the Yiddish language.

2) Bundists believe that the Jewish people is, and will remain, a "world people." Jews have the right and the ability to create a full and rich Jewish life wherever they reside. No one Jewish community has the right to dominate the others.

3) Bundists support the right to self-determination of all peoples. They support the concept of cultural pluralism and comradeship between different national and ethnic groups.

4) Bundists support democratic socialism as the best solution to the world's problems. We are also working to integrate feminism into our socialist conceptions.

Medem Group Activities

The Medem Group Activities

Chief among the activities of the Medem Group (and before that the Youth-Bund — the name was changed to reflect the wide range in ages of members of the group) has been a very successful series of lectures and forums on a variety of subjects. Programs have been held on: "Secular Celebrations of Jewish Holidays," "American Jewry and the Rise of The New Right," "Jews in City Politics," "Mir Kumen On," a film about the Medem Sanatorium childrens institution run by the Bund in interwar Poland; "Jews, Feminism, and the Family," "Jewish Women's World in Eastern Europe," "Solidarity, Polish Society, and the Jews," and a discussion on, "Jewish Culture and the Jewish Left."

In addition, the Medem group sponsored a memorial rally for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on April 19th, attended by about 80 people, with a guest speech by Conrad Lynn, a well known civil rights lawyer. The group also took part in the May 3rd, 1981 demonstration against American involvement in El Salvador, and participated in the May Day and Erlich-Alter commemoration rallies of the Bund. (Erlich and Alter were bund leaders executed by the Soviet regime during World War II.)

One of last years most important controversies in the Jewish community was that...
surrounding the issue of anti-Semitism in Argentina, Jacobo Timmerman's role in exposing it, and the reaction by certain segments of the North American Jewish community. Sections of the American Jewish leadership, particularly the intellectuals grouped around Commentary magazine, sought to discredit Timmerman and play down the problem of anti-Semitism in Argentina. They did so because they endorse the Reagan administration's policy of support for fascistic military regimes in Latin America. They were willing to betray Jewish interests in support of that policy.

The Medem Group initiated and organized a demonstration in June, at the height of the controversy. The demonstration took place outside of the offices of Commentary, and the American Jewish Committee, which had refused to speak out forthrightly against anti-Semitism in Argentina. We demanded that the Jewish leadership take a more aggressive stand on this issue, and an end to U.S. aid to the junta.

Within a week the Medem Group mobilized about 100 people for this demonstration. Groups representing the full range of progressive Jewish and democratic socialist views in New York endorsed the rally, including: the Brooklyn Chapter of New Jewish Agenda; Habonim; Hashomer Haytsir; Arielewicz Circle of Americans for a Progressive Israel; The Generation After; Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee; the Socialist Party, USA; War Resisters League; Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador. The rally received coverage by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and radio station WBAI in New York.

Future Prospects

The Medem Jewish Socialist Group plans to continue with its series of educational and cultural events, and its participation in movements around the crucial issues facing both the Jewish people and the American people in general. The Medem Group, while maintaining its own unique presence, doesn't hold itself apart from other progressive Jewish organizations. In particular, some members of the Medem Group are also very active in the New Jewish Agenda. The American Jewish community is in sore need of new and different ideas which these movements can provide.

For more information about the Medem Jewish Socialist Group, write:
Medem Jewish Socialist Group
P.O. Box 564
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Study Shows T.V. Destroys Evangelical Brain Cells

Recently ABC screened a movie called "Pray T.V." in which an actor portraying a television evangelist said, "If you have a problem of any kind — financial, medical, spiritual — call the number you see on the bottom of your screen and let us help you to be born again by the spirit of God." In the following three hours the phone company recorded 15,000 calls to the phony number! Too bad they didn't cast Orson Welles as the preacher.

THE MENTSCHKEIT INSTITUTE

O.K. You probably just got finished looking at the accompanying ad for "The Mentschkeit Institute". What are your reactions? Does it make you laugh? Does it offend you? Do you want to apply? Does it make those of you in New York smug about not living in California? Does it make those of you in California want to run back to New York where there are egg creams and real pizza instead of hot tubs and fern-laden therapists?

This ad originally ran several months ago in a local Bay Area paper called the East Bay Express. The two Berkeley women who created the "Institute" have received well over a hundred calls in response to the ad. They created the fictitious institute and placed the ad as a joke, or more precisely, as a way to have some fun. While several callers accused them of being self-hating Jews, the overwhelming majority took the whole thing in the intended vein. However, most were initially not certain whether the ad was for real or not. And, there were those who called wanting to sign up for courses and arrange speaking engagements.

There's really no moral to this story — though, I hear the Institute may offer a weekend retreat in Hamish Advertisement Analysis. But, tell me, how did you take the ad when you first looked at it?
ALL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

by Myron Pearlman
Les Friedman
Peter Gray

In October, 1981, the Chutzpah Organization sent three members to the All Peoples Congress in Detroit. The conference was attended by a reported 3000 people, at least one-half whom were third world. There was a large contingent of gay activists and many "sectarian" left groups.

Legitimacy was lent to the Congress through a welcoming speech by the President of the Detroit city council and the presence on the stage of former N.Y. Borough councilman Paul O'Dwyer.

Most of the conference was taken up by plenary sessions. Only one time bloc was set aside for workshops. At the plenaries there was one speech after another cataloging the wrongs of the Reagan administration. It had the nature of a high school prep rally. After awhile it became boring as speeches repeated themselves again and again. No political discussion took place in the plenaries.

Control of the conference was held very tightly by the organizers. There was no voting, for example, on motions to change the nature of the plenaries.

We went to the A.P.C. very anxious about Jewish issues. We turned out to be right.

Right off, Jewish concerns were basically ignored. It was clearly the assumption of the organizers (if not the people attending) that Jews are not an oppressed people. Some of the people involved in organizing the conference showed an eagerness to coopt anti-Semitism as an issue but not even consider the possibility that Jews are oppressed. Many, many participants would consider themselves anti-Zionist.

The first night we stated to organizers of the conference that we would hold a Jewish caucus and that we wanted a room for it or we would do it in a hallway. After they conferred with higher ups we were told by a delegation of "Jews" from the program committee that they were discouraging caucuses but we could do a workshop on anti-Semitism. We agreed — a mistake we only realized later.

In all the plenaries Jews and anti-Semitism were never mentioned except incidentally, and then negatively, as when, a welfare rights activist stated that "We're supposed to live on 600 calories a day. That's worse than Hitler gave the Jews in concentration camps."

The only real discussion of Jewish issues came in the Middle East and anti-Semitism workshops. We split our forces. One of us went to the Middle East workshop which turned out to be very bad. The Palestinian spokesperson took the standard PLO line. This was to be expected. Other panelists discussed Iran, Egypt, Libya, etc. They each represented an organization involved in a struggle. Then there was a "generic Jew" on the panel, not representing a group fighting for liberation. His function was to say, "I was in Israel for 5 years and let me tell you how bad Israel is."

The anti-Semitism workshop was sparcely attended (about 14). This was due largely to the fact that as a last minute addition it was on no written material. Also, though there were many Jews at the conference, many were not Jewishly identified and probably not interested in a discussion of anti-Semitism. Of the 14 people attending one was a Palestinian and three were non-Jewish Americans. Several people attending were Jews just getting into their Jewish identity and very concerned about anti-Semitism. The Palestinians pushed for, and got, support for a resolution condemning Zionism. At one point it appeared that anti-Semitism might not be mentioned in the resolution reported to the plenary session that would be coming out of the anti-Semitism workshop. Discussion was, to say the least, very heated and emotional.

It's necessary to backtrack here and tell about one of our more positive experiences at the APC. We set up and met over breakfast with the chief Palestinian spokesperson and around 4 to 6 other Palestinians. The discussion was cordial, frank, and useful for both sides. We (especially after the encounter in the anti-Semitism workshop had the opportunity to observe the variations within the Palestinian camp. Although all followed the PLO line; they differed in what they would stress and discuss. For example, the chief spokesperson seemed to appreciate our 2 state position (perhaps for tactical reasons), yet he stressed that, for him, 2 states were a transitional program. "Let's wait and see what happens then" was the most we could get him to declare. Meanwhile, in the anti-Semitism workshop a different Palestinian (younger, more "militant", certainly more vehement) stressed confrontation with us. He declared, in a discussion of Jewish oppression, that Jews are not a people. They are a religious minority with rights only to live as a religious minority in the countries they reside. No right to a state. He also took pleasure in labelling us among the more insidious Zionists — a word that clearly had negative denotations.

On Sunday we pushed to change the resolution coming out of the anti-Semitism workshop. We argued to the conference powers behind the scenes that it was to their advantage to drop all references to Zionism in that resolution. "How can you expect to organize masses of Jews with this?" We also threatened to withdraw. They agreed to our case. So then we said, it must be cleared with the Palestinians since it was written in part by one of their people. Negotiations took place and a compromise was arrived at.

continued next page
The U.S. send troops to El Salvador? Nah! After all, Viet Nam was an exception!

1900—Occupation of Puerto Rico (ceded to U.S. 1899).
1900—500 Marines, 1,500 Army troops help relieve Peking in Boxer Rebellion.
1900-1902—Occupation of Cuba.
1900-1902—Guerrilla war in Philippines.
1903—Sailors and Marines from U.S.S. Nashville stop Columbian Army at Panama.
1904—Brief intervention in Dominican Republic.
1906-1909—Intervention in Cuba.
1909—Brief intervention in Honduras.
1910, 1912-1913—Intervention in Nicaragua.
1911—Intervention (to collect customs) in Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic.
1912-1917—Intervention in Cuba.
1914—Intervention in Dominican Republic.
1914—April 21 to Nov. 23. Marines in Vera Cruz.
1914—Navy and Marines enter Haiti, stay until 1934.
1916-1924—Marines in Dominican Republic.
1917—Apr. 6 to Nov. 11. 1918. War with Germany, Austria-Hungary.
1918-1920—Expeditions into North Russia, Siberia.
1918-1923—Occupation of Germany.
1922-1924—Marines in Nicaragua.
1926-1933—Marines in Nicaragua.
1927—10,000 Marines in China.
1941-1945—War with Japan, Germany, Italy and allies.
1950-1953—U.S. troops in Korea; U.S. Navy guards Taiwan.
1958—Navy, Marines and Army units in Lebanon.
1960—Navy patrol in Caribbean to protect Guatemala and Nicaragua regimes.
1961—Army units to Vietnam.
1962—Units of Navy on Cubn blockade duty; Marines in Thailand.
1965—Navy, Marines, Army units to Dominican Republic.
"A few of you here today don't like Jews. And I know why. He can make more money accidentally than you or I can on purpose."
—Reverend Jerry Falwell

SHMATE'S Set-A-Wolf-To-Guard-The-Sheep Award to Prez Ronnie Raygun for his nomination of B. Sam Hart to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. It seems good ol' Hartless doesn't consider gay problems a civil rights issue. Said BigHart at a convention of National Religious Broadcasters, "[homosexuals] have chosen a way of life. They have to accept the consequences." However, he does admit that gays have some rights. "He (sic) has the right to live. He has the right to eat. He has the right to work. The right to live someplace." To make sure, he Hartworm, is not confused with his nemesis BleedingHart, the commissioner noted, by way of comparison to being gay, that if he decides to become a thief, he would do so knowing there are penalties for stealing.

Our Sisterhood-Is-Powerful Award to "Stop ERA" head Phyllis Schlafly who testified before a Senate Labor Committee Hearing that sexual harassment of female workers is not a problem since "virtuous women are seldom accosted by unwelcome sexual propositions or profane language." Only un-virtuous women with a "body language that most men intuitively understand" are propositioned.

SHMATE’S Light-At-The-End-Of-The-Tunnel Award goes to Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders who recently testified before congress about the wonderful human rights progress being made by the Duarte regime in El Salvador. Responding to concern about massacres of civilians by government troops, Enders noted that the figures were overblown, that there was no absolute proof it was Duarte's boys who did the deeds, and that the leftists had done nothing to move the civilians out of the way! (Reminds me of the Post Office which, when a week's worth of mail disappeared recently, assured me that: a/ it didn't happen; b/ it wouldn't happen again.) This alone would not earn Enders an award. However, the good Secretary has been at it awhile. It seems he earned his present position while in Cambodia as the man in charge of covering up the massive bombing of civilians by the Nixon administration.

Finally SHMATE presents its prestigious Cut-Your-Own-Throat Awards. Third place went to the San Francisco Chapter of the American Jewish Congress which featured guest speaker Edwin Meese (People's Park prosecutor, Reagan counsellor, and general nogoodnik) in giving their Community Service Award to Fred "Damn-The-Fault-Lines, Full-Nukes-Ahead" Mielke, Chairman of the Board of Pacific Gas and Electric. New York, carrying on its tradition of cultural, political, and moral leadership, beat out the Bay Area for second place with the National Conference of Christians and Jews garnering the laurels for its granting of the Charles Evans Hughes Award to Ronald Reagan. Prime Minister Begin copped first place for Israel with a hard act for us exiles to follow. He brilliantly chose Moral Majoritarian Jerry Falwell as recipient of the Ze'ev Jabotinsky Award. For this he receives The Golden Shande.
JEWISH FEMINIST CONFERENCE

At a conference in San Francisco from May 29-31, Jewish lesbian feminists and Jewish feminists are creating a women-only cultural and political gathering. We will meet to educate ourselves, to struggle against our own oppression as well as that of others, and to laugh, sing, dance, and hang out. One day of the conference will be open to non-Jewish women. All events will be physically and economically accessible.

For information contact: Jewish Feminist Conference, 1442A Walnut St., Suite 349, Berkeley, Ca. 94709; phone (415) 540-0671 x349. For workshop info: Yohimbe 824-7723 or Teya 653-8588.

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BOX 4228
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DATED MATERIAL
Dear Roger,

Thanks very much for your kind letter, as well as all you support the last few years. I hope you find the enclosed issues of interest. I had intended to do a Lampoon story—Katya Komesawka. One of many undeveloped stories.

Cheers!

Steve