FOCUS: PORNOGRAPHY

NINA HARTLEY INTERVIEW

JEWISH MALE PORNO STARS

JEWISH AMERICAN PRINCESS

THE POLLAND CASE

ISRAEL/PALESTINE FOLLOWUP

HEVRI QURIEL

SHORT STORIES, POEMS, LETTERS
Much thanks to all of you who responded to last summer's fundraising appeal. Unfortunately, I was unable to send a personal thank-you to each contributor. Rather than simply mail out mutually interchangeable "form" thank-you's, I skipped the process entirely. I feel bad, however, because in addition to wanting to acknowledge your support, I view those letters I've traditionally written as an opportunity to establish personal contact with you and to solicit ideas and articles, as well as your thoughts about the magazine.

SHMATE needs more subscribers, lots more. It's not simply the fact that many people like the magazine only until their own personal ox is gored, that issues such as the last one on Israel and the Palestinians and this one on pornography produce substantial cancellations. It's more that most people simply don't know SHMATE exists. I don't have the personal million dollars that helped establish Tikkun as America's officially approved kosher Jewish alternative. Nor did SHMATE evolve from a collective effort as the voice of a historical movement, as has Jewish Currents, guaranteeing (biz 120, Morris) that magazine's audience. You are this magazine's publicity, public relations, and subscription department. Putting it simply, I have to depend on you to publicize the rag, to get and give subscriptions. If you believe SHMATE should exist, you have to do this. There is simply no way I can do it alone. If each of you would pledge the effort to find one or two subscribers in the coming month, or to give a gift subscription, it would go a long, long way to demonstrating one doesn't need a million bucks, that a magazine can be independent without being wealthy, that it can be genuinely independent, beholden to none other than its readers.

Mea Culpa! I don't have the room to get into it here, so I'll have to do it next issue. Suffice it to say that I'm going to have a hard time maintaining the Presidency of the North American Neo-Luddite Movement.
What the United States needs is to become a monarchy. Really! If this country were a monarchy, we would avoid absurdities such as the last two presidential elections. Our problem is that, having only a President, we have to invest in a single person two conflicting sets of expectations. On one hand we want our leader to be a symbol of national unity, our surrogate tough guy, the embodiment of the morality we preach but do not practice, the incarnation of our alleged ideals, our deeply-held political, social, and economic illusions. On the other hand, we want our President to actually deal with the real problems of the nation. The two are simply incompatible.

A monarch would solve the problem quite nicely. Look at the British. They do it right. There’s Lizzie, the oh-so-very-proper embodiment of virtue, historical memory, colonial fantasies and Great, Greater, Greatest Britain. Then there’s Maggie, chosen because most of the people believe she will take care of their real needs. No need for her to answer campaign charges about having sex with horses in the Bahamas, whether she smoked a joint twenty years ago, whether having a househusband at 10 Downing Street emasculates the British male. No, the Prime Minister gets to be political, free from the irrelevant trappings of royalty.

So, what we should do is have a monarch, elected every six years, with no reelection limits. This would not necessarily produce a better President or a more honest campaign. But at least we would be spared the sad spectacle of having most Americans sorry they couldn’t vote Reagan into a third term as President. They could elect Reagan or, for that matter, Jerry Falwell, Fawn Hall, the Pope, Tommy Lasorda, or Clint Eastwood as King or Queen. Then we could get down more seriously to the more serious job of electing a President. We would no longer have to worry about confusing Edgar Bergen with Charlie McCarthy.

A few words about the contents of this issue. Pornography is a hot topic these days. Everybody writes about it. Everybody tells everybody else what they should or shouldn’t do, how, when, where, and with whom or what. Apart from the absurdities of much of what is said, there seems to be one overwhelming patronizing reality: nobody allows, let alone encourages, those involved with pornography to say what they think. Thus it seemed there was a role for SHMATE in this discussion. What could be more appropriate than Sheldon Ranz’s interview with Nina Hartley, the country’s leading female porno star?

Burton Levine’s article on the Pollard case speaks for itself. However, there is one thing I’d like to note: it seems there was another instance of a nice Jewish couple accused of spying for an American ally. Unlike the Pollards, that couple steadfastly maintained their innocence. Though we were wartime allies of the other country at the time of the alleged deeds, that couple was also convicted. I can’t help but wonder at the different responses of the American Jewish leadership in the two cases. Pleas for clemency, leniency, understanding, exoneration, and pardon have abounded for the Pollards. As for the other couple — well, just where the hell were the leaders of the Jewish community when the Rosenbergs were electrocuted?

Richard Grossman’s story, “Home”, is simply my favorite of all the stories I’ve published. That is not to say I think it’s the best. I have no idea what “the best story” even means. It’s just that this is a story that could have been my story, and in some ways was, is.

O.K. all you pop shrinks, feel free to analyze that one-line literary Rorschach.

In the last issue of SHMATE I intended to continue the 20-year retrospective I began in Issue #19. I planned a somewhat lengthy discussion of two situations in which I participated, the cultural-political rebellion the French euphemistically refer to as “The Events of May” and the Soviet-lead invasion of Czechoslovakia. As it turned out, there was no room, even with eight extra pages. Well, I figured I would do it this issue. What’s an extra few months, after twenty years? However, again there seems to be no room. So, next issue I will cover those little corners of history (unless I can come up with another semi-plausible excuse).

I have always said that I do not want SHMATE to be merely an item for consumption; I want it to be a participatory endeavor. To that end I’ve encouraged readers to write letters, articles, and even to act as editor for an entire issue. With this issue I’ve gone a step further. The typesetter inserted a bunch of comments into a few of the articles. I decided to leave them in, identified as such. It’s not that I’m advocating the excesses of the Chinese Cultural Revolution’s collective approach to creativity. It’s just that I believe all participants in this magazine should be able to get their two cents in, at least once in a while. (Good grief, as I write this I’ve just discovered a new meaning to inflation: this keyboard I’m using has no sign for cents, only $$$$$ for dollars!)
Dear Morton Downey Jr.:

Help! You are America’s only hope. There is a conspiracy-fraud plot to destroy the body cells and vital body fluids of all real Americans. They are planting subliminal messages in magazine headlines to make us think dirty thoughts. Please make them stop. We can't stop all these dirty thoughts by ourselves. Save us.

Sincerely,
Dan Quayle, Andrea Dworkin, George Steinbrenner

I lived in Berlin when Hitler took charge and in Moscow during the Stalin terror. In the West I have heard lots of talk about people in Germany and the Soviet Union resisting all too little then. Now it’s half a century later. And now people in the United States and Israel resist all too little their own states’ crimes against humanity. With much more leeway for public communication and action, the current response feels to me like Free World forms of the same denial and avoidance.

So thank you, thank you for resisting in general, and in particular in SHMATE #20 on Israel and the Palestinians. Thank God for voices like yours and Burton Levine's. Thank God for voices like Noam Chomsky's and Deena Hurwitz's and Arthur Hertzberg's.

Here is a two-year renewal of my subscription. All the best!

George Url Fischer
Woodstock, New York

In Issue #20 you repeat your observation made in Issue #9 that the Left criticizes Israel while ignoring similar or worse actions elsewhere. In #9 you also wrote, "...most Jews and most leftists have a double standard when it comes to Israel." I then hoped that you would publish a magazine balanced in its treatment of Israel. Issue #20 has made me fear that you have yielded to the extreme Left in your treatment of Israel.

In Issue #20 you write, "...I wanted to focus on realistic steps that can be taken on the road to a solution." After reading the issue carefully, I find a lot of theorizing and biased statements against Israel coupled with an absence of "realistic steps". Surely you knew the attitude of each contributor to the topic. Why didn't you include at least one article with a different approach? You have 30 pages of articles and cartoons in the issue and 12 pages, fully 40%, is devoted to the views of Noam Chomsky. Do we really need that much of his well-known views?

Your fund-raising letter (7/4/88) adds salt to the wound. You say you are sending 2 copies of #20 (I received only one) to each paid-up subscriber, so we can distribute a copy. If this is an example of what you call a "genuinely independent...progressive Jewish magazine..." then you and I do not use words the same way. I think this issue is a collection of articles and cartoons that individually and collectively are anti-Israel. I had expected and I want a balanced approach. I will not circulate my copy.

Let us admit that no one has the perfect solution to this or any other political problem. Then we should listen, even to those with whom we disagree. That would be progressive.

At the present time, I can take no further action on your request for a renewal and a contribution. I wish to see the next issue or two before deciding.

Simon Fellner
Queens, New York

Thanks very much for the last issue of SHMATE. I think some of the material was very much to the point, (for example the points made by Herzberg), but I was troubled by your promotion of Chomsky. I don't know how much you or Burton Levine know about the more arcane aspects of Chomsky's life. He was in Victoria about two and a half years ago and I questioned him about his defense of French revisionist historian Faurisson. He denied ever having made a certain outrageous statement attributed to him (Chomsky) to the effect that denying the Holocaust does not automatically make one an anti-Semite. Both he and I were very explicit about the statement so there was no misunderstanding. I subsequently wrote to an Australian academic who sent me photocopies of his voluminous correspondence with Chomsky (which I still have) and there is no doubt that Chomsky made precisely that statement. Before he denied making it, by the way, he asked me if I had any proof, which at that time I hadn't. He's very clever that way, testing how far he can go before denying something in public.

I suggest that you send $2.95 to Americans for a Safe Israel, 114 East 28th Street, New York, NY 10016 for The Hidden Alliances of Noam Chomsky" by Professor Werner Cohn. You may disagree with the general position of this organization but Cohn, who lives in British Columbia and whom I know, is a good scholar and the pamphlet is well-documented and annotated. I think you will be surprised, perhaps shocked by the contents, which demonstrate how closely allied Chomsky is to the French neo-Nazis.

Eugene Kaellis
Vancouver, Canada

I am renewing before I receive Issue #20, because I suspect I will be so annoyed after I read Chomsky that I would not renew. The only difference between Chomsky and Alex Cockburn on the issue of Israel is that Cockburn is more mean-spirited. When Chomsky says silich li for the Faurisson preface, he will demonstrate that he is not a professional
anti-Semite. I believe in freedom of the press and I was on the board of the New York Civil Liberties Union for ten years, even during the Skokie period. But to link his name (distinguished in Jewish scholarship) with the denial of the Holocaust and calling it a hoax is poison that does not deserve to have Chomsky's encouragement or defense. And Chomsky does not deserve to appear in *SHMATE*.

Bernard Fischman
New York, New York

I am saddened to tell you that if I had read the Chomsky interview in Issue #20 before renewing my subscription, I would not have renewed it. Unless *SHMATE* gets rid of the garbage, I do not intend to renew.

I must decline your invitation to write a substantive reply. Chomsky is no longer a subject deserving of serious discussion. For me, he is a classic anti-Semite who distorts facts. If Chomsky says he did not tell Alan Dershowitz that he was “an agnostic about the Holocaust”, he is simply trying to escape a self-portrait of himself. Chomsky is true to his reputation when he distorts Elie Wiesel’s statement that he expresses his own words. Indeed when Professor Robert Nozick, Chairman of the Harvard Philosophy Department, who had been one of those who heard Chomsky say these words, confronted Chomsky with his own sick statement, Chomsky’s response was—literally—to *shove* Professor Nozick in a very unprofessional manner. Unlike Billy Budd, however, Chomsky’s physical denial was not at all persuasive, especially to those who heard his words with their own ears.

Finally, a word about the Anti-Defamation League. The great enemy of hypocrisy and falsehood is memory and the ADL serves as a wonderful memory bank. When I debated Chomsky, I went to my own files, to newspaper reports of his prior speeches, and to the ADL. The ADL provided me with accounts of Chomsky’s prior speeches and articles. These proved valuable in demonstrating the ever-shifting contradictions of Chomsky’s criticisms of Israel. The only constant was a rabid hatred of virtually everything Israel had ever tried in its 40 year effort to achieve a modicum of peace and security in that beleaguered area of the world. I am proud to have used the ADL research department. Only people who are ashamed of what they have publicly said in the past should fear the research department of the ADL. Chomsky has a lot to fear from the facts.

Alan M. Dershowitz
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

I have a question for Burton Levine. In his review of Chomsky in *SHMATE* #20, he describes Chomsky as a Zionist. I was aware Chomsky ran in Zionist circles as a youth, but did not know if he still considers himself to be one. Does Chomsky consider himself to be a Zionist or do some of his views coincide with certain Zionist tenets? Is there anything Chomsky has written which describes himself as a Zionist? If so, can you point me in that direction?

Tony Michels
Santa Cruz, California

In your interview with Noam Chomsky, Mr. Chomsky expresses opinions and perceptions of Peace Now and Amos Oz which, I believe, are inaccurate and mean-spirited. Perhaps the position of Peace Now changed from the time the interview took place and July, 1988, when I attended a talk at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, billed as the Peace Now “Viewpoint on the Territories”. Janet Aviad, the scheduled Peace Now speaker, began by explaining she felt she needed to rush off to get Faisal Husseiny out of prison. (Husseiny, a moderate P.L.O. leader,
had recently spoken at a Peace Now rally and had been arrested without charge the following day.) A professor, whose name I don't recall, spoke off-the-cuff about the history of Peace Now, and its changing position in different situations. Since this man had preferred the Jordanian option as the safest way for Israel to return the West Bank and Gaza, he was struggling with the new reality of King Hussein's pulling out of responsibility for the West Bank. His main thrust was that he, like many Israelis who support Peace Now, believes finding a way out of the occupation that will be most secure for Israel is crucial for Israel's survival.

I was more troubled by Chomsky's remarks about writer Amos Oz and the careless paraphrasing of talks Oz gives in the U.S., i.e. "if only there were an Arab as beautiful as me, everything would be all right". I was not at such a talk where Oz spoke, but having read his *In the Land of Israel* and much of his fiction I cannot believe he would speak in such a way, which Chomsky describes as "extremely deceitful". I may be wrong, but is Mr. Chomsky really saying, "if only the Jews and Israelis who say they want peace thought just like me, everything would be all right"?

Let Mr. Chomsky choose his favorite Israeli Peace groups to support; personally, I like the work of Interns for Peace, Neve Shalom, and Oz Ve'Shalom. I'd like Mr. Chomsky to be more careful when he tells us what other people stand for. Direct quotes from Peace Now leaflets would have been useful, as well as direct quotes from Amos Oz.

There are large numbers of Jews in Israel and the U.S. who deplore the policies of the Israeli government. We feel moved to work for more humane policies and a just peace with the Palestinians in a variety of ways. Burton Levine points out that "Chomsky is a favorite target for American Jewish organizations like the ADL." I conclude that Chomsky's style of talking and writing about Israel is not effective in reaching main-stream Jews.

I encourage all of us to find genuine means of expression with the intention of being effective in healing the wounds and dealing with the fears that separate Palestinians and Jews, and Jews from one another.

Will Fudeman
Point Reyes, California

**Noam Chomsky replies:**

As is apparent from his letter, the humane response to Alan Dershowitz is pity, not censure. Nevertheless, a few words to clarify the record.

Dershowitz scrupulously avoids the verifiable record; the reasons are plain enough, as the present case illustrates. I have often written about Nazism and the Holocaust, but since the contents do not serve his purposes, Dershowitz ignores them entirely, offering conflicting versions of what he Pretends to have heard. In the article in the *ADL Bulletin* (Feb. 1987) to which I referred in the interview, he quoted me as telling him: "Personally, I am agnostic when it comes to whether the Holocaust occurred." In his letter, he says that my actual words were that I am "agnostic about the Holocaust." Why try to maintain consistency in recounting fairy tales? Dershowitz would have us believe that I selected a person for whom I have total contempt as my confidant, revealing to him that what I secretly believe is diametrically opposed to what I have always written -- which he avoids, because it can be checked. The remaining stories, too ludicrous to merit comment, are an increasingly desperate effort to evade exposure for a transparent lie.

We did, in fact, once briefly discuss the Holocaust. After a debate, he asked me why I never write about the matter. I told him I often do, quoting my earliest political writings in which I described the Holocaust as "the most fantastic outburst of collective insanity in human history", adding that "one has already lost one's humanity" by even entering into debate with those who try to deny the evident facts. Before I could cite many later examples, he interrupted, saying that's only one statement, at which point I simply walked away in disgust. That is the basis for his allegations. It is instructive that the ADL is happy to publish what it knows to be pure lies -- and, doubtless, to add them to the files that Dershowitz so admires, with their comical reports of what I am alleged to have said at public meetings, newspaper stories, fevered interoffice memos, and other materials of the sort familiar from any FBI file, occasionally ascending to the level of half-truth, distributed secretly for the purpose of defamation. Dershowitz correctly states that the ADL provided him with "accounts" of my speeches and articles -- as concocted by their informants. Those who leaked the secret files to me as they were to be sent to Dershowitz were appalled, not sharing his conception of proper behavior for a tax-exempt "civil rights" organization or a person pretending to be an independent commentator on the Israel-Palestine conflict, the topic of the debate a few days later. Note that even if there were a shred of truth to the ADL constructions, it would have been entirely irrelevant to the issues under debate; but as any dishonest lawyer knows, if you are incapable of arguing your case, the best course is to shift the jury's attention to irrelevancies, such as the alleged iniquities of opposing counsel, etc., Dershowitz's standard technique.

The allegation that I called for a binational state "modelled on Lebanon" is Dershowitz's garbled rendition of my reference to earlier Zionist binationalist thought and, separately, to the perilously maintained confessional system in Lebanon. My actual views on these matters are accessible, in print.
It is easy to explain Dershowitz's antics. They date to 1973, when Dr. Israel Shahak was interviewed in the Boston Globe, where he was identified, accurately, as the Chairman of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights. Pursuing his vocation, Dershowitz wrote an angry letter claiming that "in November of 1970, he was overwhelmingly defeated for re-election to that post," adding much nonsense (e.g., that Rakah and Matzpen were "Maoist organizations") and a stream of abuse against an honorable and courageous civil libertarian who was, at the time, under harsh attack for his stand in support of human rights. I responded stating the actual facts. In November 1972 (not 1970), the governing Labor Party secretly organized several hundred people to take over this tiny civil rights group by demanding to be registered at its annual meeting (with the Labor Party paying their membership dues), then voting out the leadership; similar tactics would eliminate the ACLU. The courts, quite properly, declared the staged election null and void, and Shahak remained chairman. Dershowitz responded, claiming that my accurate account was "totally false" and that "Judge Levenberg [sic]" had ruled that "the election was legal", challenging me "to cite any documentary evidence to the contrary!"—again, adding a stream of abuse to try to cover his tracks. I responded by quoting the opinion by Judge Lovenberg in which he rejected the "election" as invalid, restoring the former status quo (Globe, April 29, May 17, May 25, June 5, 1973). Dershowitz had assumed that he could brazen it out by signing his letters "Professor of Law, Harvard"; it had not crossed his mind that, unlike him, I would not have written had I not had the relevant documents. Note that he accepts as legitimate the government efforts to destroy the League and is content to defame an outstanding civil libertarian with lies and slander. As I wrote, "unable to refute the facts [that Shahak documents about violation of civil rights], Dershowitz has chosen to defame the man, in a manner which is as familiar as it is deporable."

The point is more general: the level of invective and fabrication is a fair measure of the desperation of propagandists who recognize their inability to respond to fact and argument.

I then received a phone call from Dershowitz, asking me what my sources were. I told him that I had the court records and other documents, and asked what he was using. He conceded that he had nothing; he was repeating what he had been told. I offered to send him the transcripts and did so. A few days later, the Globe Ombudsman called me to say that they had received a third letter from Dershowitz, again charging me with lying. He asked if I had some suggestion as to how they might proceed. I said I would send them the Hebrew documents, with my translation, which they could verify as they pleased. I did so. Dershowitz's final letter was not published and I was informed that the Globe had advised him to drop the matter. Since that time, he has been seeking revenge for this public exposure of his utter dishonesty. The real world being uncooperative, he is compelled to resort to Walter Mitty fantasies and other delusions—carefully avoiding the public record.

Dershowitz objects to my description of him as a "strict party liner", as the preceding example adequately illustrates. He represents himself as a "strident critic" of Israeli policies, referring to "numerous critiques" since 1970. Having seen none of these, I cannot comment. I have, however, seen his apologetics for violations of civil rights, for example, his 1971 article in Commentary in which he denounced a political prisoner (the Israeli Arab writer Fouzi el-Asmar, imprisoned for 15 months without charge) as a terrorist "commander," relying on secret Shin Bet files that he found "convincing". It would take a diligent search in the archives of party hackery to locate anything similar. The same article contains some other shameful apologetics, e.g. the claim that "Israel has blown up some houses in which terrorists have hidden" (my emphasis). Incidentally, no one now takes the charges against Fouzi el-Asmar seriously, but that is hardly the point.

To take a last case, Dershowitz writes that "the Israeli Supreme Court has responded magnificently to the occasional over-reactions of the Israeli army and security forces; "its judiciary remains responsive to legitimate Arab complaints," and Arabs often "have decided not to seek relief from the Israeli Supreme Court precisely because they know they will win," and thus "lose in the court of public opinion" (Los Angeles Times, Feb. 14, 1988). These absurd comments would have been merely embarrassing, as anyone familiar with Israeli legal practices will confirm, even if they had not appeared after Israel's Landau Commission reported that for 16 years the courts had been accepting confessions extracted by the Shin Bet under torture. (Aske by Amnesty International about the remarkably high rate of confession by Arabs, a typical indication of torture, High Court Justice Moshe Etzioni responded that Arabs confess because "it's part of their nature" AI Newsletter, Sept.1977.) The Landau Commission report, recognizing these facts, was itself denounced by Israeli civil libertarians. Its recommendation of "moderate physical pressure" is "a euphemistic expression meaning that torture is allowed for a serious purpose, as distinct from torture for pleasure," Israeli philosopher Avishai Margalit comments. Over the years, when the magic word "security" is invoked, the Court regularly abdicates responsibility, as commonly reported by the Israeli
press and legal commentators, even refusing to permit an Israeli Arab lecturer at the Hebrew University to open a newspaper on unspecified "security" grounds, to mention only one notorious case.

Eugene Kaellis refers to a public meeting in Victoria where he claims I denied having made an "outrageous statement" to the effect that denial of the Holocaust is not in itself a proof of anti-Semitism. It now turns out that he was referring to a personal letter I had written several years earlier. Like everyone in the audience, I assumed he was referring to something I had published. I write some 50 letters a week, many long and detailed, and could not possibly recall the contents of a private letter years earlier. With regard to deceit, the shoe is on the other foot.

As for the "outrageous statement", it was entirely accurate. In this letter, I noted that as a simple point of logic, denial of even the most extreme atrocities is not in itself a proof of racism. A person can be ignorant, deluded, insane, unwilling to believe that humans are capable of such monstrosities, etc., without being a racist. The point is obvious, and commonly accepted. Thus Ian Hancock, who provides evidence that the treatment of the Gypsies by the Nazis was comparable to that of the Jews, cites eminent historians and others who deny the facts, alleging that a comparison to the treatment of the Jews is "more apparent than real" (Yehuda Bauer, his sole reference to Gypsies in his *Holocaust in Historical Perspective*), "that only Jews can claim to have been victims of Nazi genocide," etc. He does not accuse these commentators of racism or "deliberately diluting the facts"; rather, of (unwarranted) ignorance. That is the reaction of a person concerned with knowledge and understanding of the Nazi horrors, as distinct from those who exploit them for other purposes, a disgraceful form of sacrilege ("Hillul ha Shem"), as Nahum Goldmann bitterly observes.

There are numerous other examples. Many scholars publicly deny the Armenian massacre. Until quite recently, leading scholars vastly underestimated the destruction of the Native American population, by perhaps 10 million, dismissing ample evidence, as Francis Jennings has shown. U.S. atrocities in Indochina are commonly denied by respected historians. Even the very existence of a Palestinian people is widely denied by American intellectuals, who claim they are recent immigrants on the basis of fraudulent "histories". In all such cases, the reasons might be racism, but one cannot draw the conclusion from denial of historical facts alone, and no serious person cheapens the concept of racism by employing it in such a manner.

Bernard Fischman cites the same "outrageous statement" as "pure, disgusting Chomsky", citing a letter by Alan Schwartz, Director of the A.D.L. research department. Again, I make no apologies for writing true and pertinent comments in personal letters, and will continue to do so. Schwartz also denounced Brian Morton's statement that "it's conceivable, perhaps, that one can deny the existence of the gas chambers without being an anti-Semite." By A.D.L. standards, if a person believes that the Nazi monsters slaughtered 6 million Jews by other and perhaps still more brutal means, he is an anti-Semite. Again, Nahum Goldmann's charge is much to the point.

The fact is that since 1967, the A.D.L. barely pretends to be a civil libertarian organization. It re-interprets anti-Semitism as unwillingness to conform to its level of service to Israeli authorities. Its concepts were expounded by A.D.L. National Director Nathan Perlmutter, who wrote that while old-fashioned anti-Semitism has declined, there is a new and more dangerous variety on the part of "peacemakers of Vietnam vintage, transmuters of swords into plowshares championing the terrorist P.L.O....", and those who condemn U.S. policies in Vietnam and Central America while "sniping at American defense budgets". He fears that "nowadays war is getting a bad name and peace too favorable a press" with the rise of this "real anti-Semitism". Anti-Semitism, for him, is opposition to the interests of Israel (as he sees them); and these interests are threatened by "the liberals," the churches, and others who do not adhere to the A.D.L. political line (The *Real Anti-Semitism in America*, 1982). Small wonder that the Hebrew press casually describes the A.D.L. as "one of the main pillars" of Israeli propaganda in the U.S., while Israeli doves bitterly condemn the techniques of defamation to which they, too, are subjected.

There is a great deal more to say about all of these matters, which are much too little discussed, and about the Faurisson affair that lies in the background, which also raises very serious issues, both the events and the scandalous reaction to them. But space is lacking here.

Fischman tells us that Elie Wiesel is his "moral hero", responding to my reference to the denunciations of him in the Israeli press and his advocacy of silence in the face of state violence on the grounds that "you must be in a position of power to possess all the information", so that he cannot comment on atrocities against Arabs (Jewish Post, Nov. 19, 1982). Similarly, he reveals in the Hebrew press that he was unwilling even to write a private letter asking the government to refrain from participating in near-genocide in Guatemala, after having been provided with documentation on this matter from Israeli sources by a Nobel laureate, who suggested that he break his vow of silence.
Sometimes he takes refuge in the argument that not living in Israel and sharing its problems, he cannot criticize it; he can, however, sing its praises, and the same principle does not prevent him from condemning P.L.O. atrocities, though he does not live in a refugee camp, or brutal Soviet practices. One can understand why Israeli commentators condemned him so bitterly when he received the Peace Prize.

Mr. Fudeman believes that my remarks about Peace Now and Amos Oz are inaccurate, mean-spirited, and based on careless paraphrasing. I’m afraid, however, that the facts are as I presented them.

On Amos Oz, see my Fateful Triangle, the index entries under “Oz” and also pages 76, 86, and 317, for ample evidence to substantiate the few comments in the interview which, if anything, were understated.

With regard to Peace Now, I mentioned in the interview that I had met with leading Peace Now intellectuals, some of whom have been friends of mine for many years, in April 1988. We discussed at some length the fact — and fact it is — that Peace Now has never produced a public peace proposal that is as forthcoming and clear as those of the P.L.O. over many years; that is, a nonrejectionist statement that Jews and Palestinians have equivalent rights, including the right of national self-determination in the former Palestine, with a suggestion as to how these rights might be realized. Unlike what I regard as more authentic peace groups in Israel, Peace Now had never called for a two-state settlement based on mutual recognition; that is why people like Abba Eban, who had always advocated Labor Party rejectionism, was able to associate himself with Peace Now.

Fudeman raises the possibility that the Peace Now position might have changed by July 1988 (after the interview), when Faisal Husseini spoke at a Peace Now meeting, repeating the P.L.O. call for a two-state settlement with mutual recognition and security guarantees on the internationally recognized (pre-June 1967) borders. The fact that he presented this position (which, as he correctly stated, was a familiar P.L.O. position) at a Peace Now meeting might, as I have written elsewhere, be regarded as a step by Peace Now towards adoption of a nonrejectionist stand, at least obliquely. Fudeman observes that the speaker who gave the history of Peace Now had advocated the Jordanian option. We should bear in mind, however, that the “Jordanian option” has never meant that the occupied territories would be handed back to Hussein, an option far more hazardous for Israel than a Palestinian state, for obvious reasons, and overwhelmingly opposed by the population of the territories. Rather, the “Jordanian option” is understood to be something like the Allon plan, with Israel retaining control of the resources and territory it desires, while allowing Jordan to administer the areas of heavy Arab population concentration to avoid “the demographic problem”. This program, expressed again in the current Labor Party platform, is regarded as more cynical than Likud’s by many Israeli doves, Matti Peled for example. Peace Now has taken no stand on these matters, but it is likely that the “Jordanian option” was dominant among its members, as Fudeman intimates, though individual participants varied in their own personal views. Some privately advocate the nonrejectionist two-state settlement proposed by Syria, Jordan and Egypt in 1976 at the U.N. Security Council with the support of the P.L.O. (vetoed by the United States), but the organization has not.

In my interview, I commented on the peace movement in Israel, correctly, to my knowledge, though there is much more to say. In reaction to the Palestinian uprising, there have been interesting shifts. The Citizens Rights Movement (Ratz) has now indicated a willingness to accept a two-state settlement, and Peace Now may be moving beyond tacit advocacy of some form of Labor party rejectionism; I hope so. The leading edge of the peace movement lies elsewhere, in my view, for reasons discussed in the interview. That is true of public stands, and also activism. Thus, the efforts to help the villagers of Beita reconstruct after the scandalous behavior of the state authorities are not coming from Peace Now, but from groups that have, for some years, pressed far more seriously for a political settlement based on mutual recognition and true reconciliation. There are many other examples.

I agree that quotes from Peace Now and Amos Oz would have been most useful. There was no opportunity to present them in the interview, though I have done so in print. Such quotes would substantiate and extend the few understated remarks in the interview. I would, of course, endorse Fudeman’s call for reconciliation and settlement, urging, however, that we proceed on the basis of realities, not illusions of the kind that have been fostered for many years. Misleading ourselves and others is no contribution to peace and security.

Tony Michels asks whether I consider myself a Zionist. I have always taken for granted the Jewish right of national self-determination in the former Palestine. In the pre-state period, I held the familiar Zionist position in favor of socialist binationalism. Since 1948, I have held that Israel should be accorded the rights of any state in the international system. After the 1967 war, I urged that Israel use its (transitory) position of overwhelming regional dominance to move towards some kind of federal arrangement in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, an option that would, I think, have been beneficial to all concerned, avoiding much further tragedy. These
Whether these views should be called "Zionist" depends on how one chooses to conceive of Zionism.

Noam Chomsky
Cambridge, Massachusetts

I think that the section on the Israeli protest movements could be more informative and the name of one of the more important of them was, unfortunately, garbled in transmission; it is "The Year 21", "Hashana Esrim v'echad" and not "Shomrei Esrim v'echad" as appears on page 21 of your issue.

In addition I consider that one important and much discussed subject of the present situation inside the Israeli-Jewish society is almost unknown in the U.S.A., no doubt because of the great faults of the U.S.A. press to which Noam Chomsky has so well referred: I mean the great increase of the real extremism in Israel, meaning by this phrase those who are more extreme than all Likud, including Sharon, and specially those who advocate the expulsion - total or significant - of the Palestinians from Palestine. This is referred in Hebrew as the "transfer".

Israel Shahak
Jerusalem, Israel

Burton Levine replies:

I apologize to Hashana Esrim v'Echad for garbling their name. It is one of the larger of the protest groups that have begun in Israel. Some of the others are: Enough of the Occupation, The Oriental Front, There is a Limit, Red Line, Down With the Occupation, The East Toward Peace, Women in Black, Friendship, Campus, The Arab Student Union, and the Committee for an Israel-Palestine Dialogue.

While the groups all generally oppose the Israeli government and its policies, they have fundamental disagreements among themselves. Some advocate refusing all national military service, while others are only opposed to service in the occupied territories. Some want a binational state and others another two-state partition.

The 21st Year, named after the 21st year of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, was started before the current Arab revolt. It has a few thousand members who visit the occupied territories to collect testimony about unlawful Israeli military acts, attend trials, visit hospitals to report on activity, monitor materials distributed in schools, and try to combat racism and propaganda for an undivided Land of Israel. While it does not oppose service in the Israeli army, it encourages soldiers to refuse to obey unlawful orders. It also cooperates with other groups in demonstrations against the government occupation policies.

Anyone who wants further information can contact:
Hashana Esrim v'Echad
P.O. Box 24099,
91240 Jerusalem, Israel.

Okay, you win, here's your 25 dollars. Guilt has finally triumphed!

Now can I say something about Paul Zilsel and Maxim Ghilan? There are a lot of very good reasons for opposing the behavior of the Israeli government in the Occupied Territories. Probably the best one is to be found in Parshah Kedoshim (Leviticus ch. XIX, verse 16) which forbids us to stand idly by the blood of our neighbor.

But Ghilan's statement that "those Jews...who do not fight [against Israeli government policies] now for the sake of human decency may have no credit left to fight later on [against a huge wave of anti-Semitic backlash] for the sake of Jewish survival" is total hogwash. Let's face it, the mess in the Occupied Territories didn't cause anti-Semitism, or even its latest re-surgesnces, and opposing the mess, or even stopping it won't end anti-Semitism.

The anti-Semites are no more interested in the real vices of some Israeli government bad guys than in the real virtues of some other American Jewish good guys. We will win no "credit" with the anti-Semites by opposing the policies of the Israeli government. Nor, for that matter, should we be trying to curry credit with such scum, even if it were possible. We should be opposing the Israeli government's behavior in the Occupied Territories because it is wrong and counter to both Jewish values and long-range Jewish interests. And we should recognize that we will probably win no brownie points with even the most "moderate" of the current wave of anti-Semites by doing it — but so what?

Similarly, while American progressive Jews certainly ought to be reaching out to any Black or Third World community groups willing to work with us, we should be doing it not to try to ward off the increasing respectability of even the vilest and craziest anti-Semitic propaganda in those communities, but because we recognize, even if they sometimes don't, that our interests are ultimately the same, or at least convergent.

The struggle against anti-Semitism is separate from both the struggle for a just solution of the Israeli-Palestinian problem and the struggle for an equitable relationship between Jewish and Third World communities in the United States. It is to be won, not by trying to fit somebody else's definition of "good guy", but by refusing to be intimidated and by calling
lies and slander by their proper names whenever we hear them.

Speaking of which, in regard to Item #2 in the sublime idiocy department, did you know that Chicago Aldermen Streeter and Shaw, who "arrested" the Art Institute painting of Mayor Harold Washington in ladies' undies, initially claimed it had been done by a Jewish art student? Separate investigations by at least two respected non-Jewish journalists revealed the artist to be of Irish and Scandinavian extraction, but our city stepfathers never retracted the "accusation" or apologized to anybody for it.

Marian Neudel
Chicago, Illinois

I read your harangue on the papal visit in Issue #18 with great interest. The political fear of insulting the apparent leader of a large number of the U.S. voting population reminds me (much as I have tried to forget) that the U.S. involvement in Vietnam originally supported a minority government of mostly Catholic persuasion. While I am willing to admit that this may have been a coincidence, it certainly does explain our involvement in an area with demonstrably little economic benefit (our usual reason for intervening).

Instead of registering priests as foreign agents, why don't we offer them diplomatic immunity; we could then demand the same for any member of the rabbinate (read educated Jew).

Charles J. Feltman
Oakland, California

Please take our name off your mailing list. We thought the last issue was very one-sided and anti-Israel. Originally you did a good job and deserved our support, but the last issue was disgusting.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Stein
Oakland, California

Enjoyed Issue #20 very much, including both the editorial and Chomsky's piece. The article "The Death of Zionism" in Issue #17 was disappointing — good title, pretentious contents. The interview with Victor Erlich in Issue #14 was extremely interesting. More on the history of the Bund would be welcome.

Norman Epstein
Vancouver, Canada

Please keep sending me your journal of progressive Jewish thought, though eleven dollars is all that I can afford. I enjoy reading SHMATE.

Ross Rosen
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

First off, I want to tell you I love your last issue. I was really thrilled with it, though there was one place I do not agree with you, that is regarding the attitude of the Left against Israeli leaders. Believe me, before this uprising they killed many Palestinians with the help of the so-called Christians. Besides, we Jews have the impression that we are a "better" people, and that oppression through the years would exempt us Jews from such terrorist acts. This is, of course, wrong!

I like the set-up of the last SHMATE better, because I always prefer political news to stories, although the stories you printed were always interesting.

Mona Bazaar
Berkeley, California

Here's a contribution. We both were very impressed with the Israeli-Palestine issue. Andrea Barron's article was good. The whole thing was a few steps beyond anything anyone else would do - but that's what SHMATE's for!?

Galia Goodman
Durham, North Carolina

Enclosed sub-renewal $. The last two issues have been spectacularly great, not taking anything away from earlier ones. You ask, entirely correctly, the question of why we seem to scrutinize Israel closer than other societies for human rights violations, etc. The only answer can be that in this most cruel of centuries, Jews had once seemed to be not only victims, not only not executioners, but in the socialist and Yiddishist element an extraordinary beacon of justice, tolerance and idealism. At no time more than the environmentally-endangered present has the message become more vital: cooperation or catastrophe. Yet the Jewish message has been blurred. Now it reads something closer, in Wiesel's monologues, to: we're still humane no matter what happens, but if we aren't, it's not our fault. In short, just the same excuses made by every other nation, ethnicity, etc., for barbarities. Should Jews be judged on a different scale? As a Gentile, I've done so since childhood. Now I am very frightened (or depressed) by the thought that in the neighborhoods where one used to hear the venomous phrase "dirty Jew", the no less venomous "dirty Arab" has gained a toe-hold — and among the educated, the literate, the prestigious, a modified form of same, similar to the genteel anti-Semitism once so common. It is to weep.

Paul Buhle
Providence, Rhode Island

P.S. - Won't someone design a new button, with Israeli and Palestinian flags intertwined, and the motto, "Two States, One Solution: PEACE".

I have considered myself to be a radical feminist since I was 14, and for an even longer time I have wanted
to be Jewish. These two things seemed to clash with each other more vigorously than do the other semi-contradictory things that bounce around in my brain. Shortly before Rosh Hashanah this year I decided to begin to study for conversion. Now, of course, I feel like something of an imposter no matter where I am, because “I’m Jewish, but...”. And non-Jews, especially Leftists, can’t understand how I could be drawn to something which many of them view as a monolithic, oppressive institution. What all of this is leading to is a very humble Thank You. The articles in this magazine have played an active role in a lot of decision-making. Keep it coming!

Wendy Strandtmann
San Diego, California

Three hundred subscribers! EEK! I assumed it was at least a few thousand. Have you been written up in Utne? Zeta? Whom can we push to get the word out, besides our friends?

Read Weaver
Boston, Massachusetts

SHMATE is worth having around. Enjoy your independence.

Paul Jarmon
Forest Hills, New York

Since you claim to want mail that isn’t just financial support, I thought it appropriate to write to you. For some reason I received two copies of the last issue and, like a good fella, I gave one to some friends who I thought should subscribe. Whether they do or not, I can’t tell. My other issue I read from cover to cover, and this time I even convinced my wife to read it. Bravo on getting Arthur Hertzberg before the New York Review did! I gave that issue to yet some other friends to get them to subscribe.

I’m really not currently in a position to give you the financial support you need, and which I would like to send. But I do want you to know that I am a great admirer — not because I always like what I read, but because you are willing to deal with issues outside the official channels and away from the doxologies with which we are surrounded.

Is there some way I can help you with subscriptions or P.R. other than by sending you money? I move in a variety of official and unofficial Jewish circles and constantly ask people about SHMATE and yet I find that, few people know about you. I’d be interested in helping. Do you get to Washington? Do you get to the Bay Area a few times a year, although I don’t have anything planned right now.

Anyway, I just wanted to send you some end-of-summer fan mail — this last issue was especially powerful! Bravo! Kol ha-Kavod!

Tom L. Freudenheim
Washington, D.C.

I thought the last issue of SHMATE on Israel and the Palestinians, was truly excellent: incisive, stimulating and informative.

I read your fundraising letter with interest. I’ve known you run SHMATE on a shoestring; I had not quite realized quite how frayed and fragile that shoestring was. Fifty dollars in donations in six months?

The purpose of my writing is two-fold. First I want to double that, so you will find enclosed a check for fifty dollars. Second, I want to urge other readers of SHMATE to ante up as well. We all know how much work, how much time, how much commitment, it takes for you to edit and publish SHMATE. I think it’s time some of SHMATE’s readers and subscribers took on a little of that burden. So I urge my fellow subscribers to dig deep — well, just a little deep — and send ten or twenty or thirty dollars. Where else can a little money go so far? What other project will allow us to be “major contributors” for ten bucks? And what could be more important in this age of conglomerates buying up more and more of the media we depend upon for our knowledge of the world, in a time when U.S.A. Today sets the standard (it is now even spinning off a daily TV show) for journalism, than to support the serious and engaged interchange of views and ideas about the world we live in?

Keep up the good work.

Huck Gutman
Burlington, Vermont

Thank you for your Issue #20, which I read with great interest and appreciation.

Although I do not engage in public discussions, politically and religiously, I have and vent my opinion often directly to the respective authorities, which in this case very much coincides with your expressed thoughts of Justice, Fairness and Kindness.

The same sun is shining upon all of us, whether one stays in the light, or in the shade.

And for dealing wisely with the differences between our human fellowmen, there is no better approach than the words of Edwin Markham:

“He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win;
We drew a circle that took him in.”

I am 92 years old, and do not pledge as a member for a definite time, but I am enclosing a contribution for your good work.

Further on, best of luck.

Hartwig Heymann
Albany, California

SPRING 1989
HOME
by RICHARD GROSSMAN

Front St, which ran parallel to the LIRR Station, was still there. Church steeples and bank roofs and store windows were still there. Years of absence which had shown him much of the world from an epigean view had not disturbed this village of his youth. And from the station platform he greeted the town appropriately on this quiet weekday morning after rush hour: he waved to hidden crowds; he smiled at camouflaged mothers and fathers; he hallooed to concealed youngsters.

The air was still. It was a clear fall day, the kind he had hated, a day for football heroes for cheerleaders for the confident and able. What were changing seasons to him in those days but tremulous revolving terrors, each equinox ushering touch football curbs on Shepherd St.

yards, dissolved hopes under backyard backboards, between touch football curbs on Shepherd St.

He checked out the big clock on the bank and decided he had time to walk. And he thought: had it truly been so awful? Now that he was back, were memories less painful? What was frustrated for so long over so much as was it? With no hesitation he had answered Roble Yes yes we are all sick and bitter guilty and afraid that the fault was our own.

The fault. The fault. These days they talked of no fault auto insurance. Great. Perhaps some day they will get around to no fault boyhood ... no fault youth ... no fault humanity.

He turned right into Maple Ave. It was wider now, easier for huge trainstation buses to make their turns. Front lawns were truncated, curbs newly beveled, front doors nearer to gutters than perhaps people liked. He wondered if they had fought the village: had any of them protested? Had any of them gone to zoning meetings and argued with the bastards?

He passed the new firehouse for the volunteer hose manipulators he used to watch from the stickball court at Allen Field. He wondered if any of his classmates were firefighters. Not probably, for they came from the ranks of the guys who took no fault automotive shop, the cats he had never known, the hood who rode with the only girls who were putting out.

But shit, they were all probably putting out. It's the old John O'Hara Perpetual Pubertal Perplex—you go home after ten twenty forty years and talk to some of the girls you were 'good friends' with on the newspaper or the Jr Prom Committee and they reveal that all the while beneath the staircase, behind the dictionaries, in the heating tunnels during air raid drills they had received the awl from each and every ...

He came abreast the Water Dept building ... used to be the old temp rec center, site of league basketball games on black cement floors. He had landed places on Dynamic Windows, on Rockville Ramblers, losing teams from the opening jumps with no jackets lucky if they got numbers for their undershirts.

He walked on. We were close occasionally, though, he thought. But we never broke through. There we were, a group of us at a Village Board meeting, and all we did was giggle. It would have been great to have caught them with their dirty laundry, with their hands in the till, or down each other's pants. We only giggled.

Yes, there was a lot we could have done if we hadn't been obsessed with sex and athletic grandeur manhood grades college competition rivalries, if we hadn't been convinced to take for granted righteousness of rules and history and established relationships. Yes, we bowed all right before structure and authority, quaked in our loafers before threat of confrontation, strove for seats on the Honor Society, settled for make-believe splutters of revolt which had been carefully sprinkled into the scheme of events like saltpeter into summercamp soup.

Frankie Robinson used to live around here, he thought, or if not exactly here further over towards the renewed areas, away from the more stately polished neighborhoods. Is his home still standing? Does Frankie still stand? Another bust, another nightmare, another harsh awakening in some hovel in a far away country filled with fear and sweat regret waking up knowing we all fucked Frankie Robinson we let them fuck him over we helped the X Country Coach and the Principal string up his black ass. There, in a senior assembly, in front of his so-called brothers and sisters of our model community — model because we had been told we were model because there were only a few Negroes and Frankie was a good one perhaps a good runner a wise guy but within limits of course he kept away from the white girls except for some arm's length rapid dancing which was the rage (or does O'Hara's Perplex pertain here too)?

The Principal McKibbon came out and lay down a ban on the Traditional Senior Cheer ... the Give Me An S ... Give Me An E ... a harmless release of energy and unsupported egoism but anticipated by each wave of seniors as Divine Right. For was it not totally in line with the glories and Americas, the rights of those who by means of hard work and perseverance and destiny reach the top of the ladder? It was just one more of the long-awaited rewards for the good deserving. One more device to split divide the ages into hate fear competition.

No more no more, said the Principal, it's unfair unnecessarily, uncouth, to be reserved for the gymnasium and the athletic field. The Principal McKibbon turned to walk from the stage and Frankie Robinson jumped to his feet shouting GIMME AN S! his own personal Fuck You Everyone, incomprehensible so incomprehensible to us good white boys and girls. And a great hush slapped over the auditorium like a noose the girls went ooh ooh how horrible how disrespectful so that's why we shouldn't dance close with them and the boys weren't far behind so that's what they mean by nigger so up dashed Mr. Morse X Country Coach grabbed him by the ear and dragged him outside delivered him unto tongue-lashing teachers. They banished him for a week to give him time to repent to cleanse his skin regenerate new parts to replace the ones they had stuffed in his mouth.

O how we stood for that how we permitted that lynching, abetted that evisceration in our names. The opportunity we had! The power that was ours to take! We, the good students
from the good families from the good parts of town, the school officers class officers top students in the school the presidents of clubs and societies and the newspaper and yearbook people the scholar athletes if only we could have forged alliances across town, beyond money beond honor grades and family beyond advanced classes and of our adult-imitated rivalries frustrations if only we one of us had stood up I'm sure of it, we could have snatched him from the hands of the hooded X Country Coach, from the noose of the Principal from the knives and whips of the teachers. We would have given them the biggest S they ever heard and the EN

presidents of clubs and societies and the newspaper and should have seen, we could have acted we would have succeeded. Where were we then? Where were you then, Roble? Where was I... how many oceans must I cross before I can forget?

H

He saw Guttermans Funeral Home in the distance. New Memorial Chapel it was subtitled. He laughed. It wasn't so new anymore, he thought; it wasn't much of a memorial to anyone, and as for being a 'chapel'—he spit. But the teams they sponsored had worn beautiful uniforms, had jackets and probably sweatpants and crepe-edged supporters.

Slowly he entered the eddy of tearful mourners disembarking from black limousines. He moved with them toward the big glass doors. He was grateful for his beard for his long hair for his outside face and quiet clothes. There was little chance anyone would know who he was.

Inside he began to recognize people among the obvious grief. There were some parents he had known, some of Roble's cousins he had met one time or another ... there was Roble's sister, the brother, the families they had accumulated ... and the mother and father. And there were teachers, some classmates—touch football and advanced English buddies, guilty giggling high college board scorers, participants all in the Frankie Robinson lynching. There were the girls grown into women, mothers now bringing up their sons and daughters in the same town the same houses perhaps, with the same unrevealed obsessions the same chained passions the same merciless silences.

He picked up snatches of base funereal relief. "So young" "So much to live for" "Such a good boy" "A model student" "A wonderful son" "So good looking" "So smart." He saw the furtive glows of relief on faces of mothers who knew their own sons were safe at home who knew they had won this round and were one up for once on Mrs. Roble.

The coffin was up front. He had no desire to see it touch it some money gathered for an eponymous scholarship for a de-

GIVE HIM AN S, ROBLE

He was optimistic, positive, cheerful, supportive of right and truth.

GIVE HIM AN S, ROBLE

He was a fine son, a thoughtful brother, a devoted friend to many.

GIVE HIM AN S, ROBLE

He was a faithful, albeit not a devout Jew, a model American.

GIVE HIM YOUR S, ROBLE

The Rabbi talked about Death Yet Life; he read some psalms, and making the point that although Roble was a man of medicine and a scientist he nonetheless loved poetry, he recited: 

Weep no more, woeful Shepherds, weep no more
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead.

No not dead but mounted high. High like a fucking star, somewhere up there in the glorious heavens with God, anywhere really but not shut up in that airtight mahogany coffin soon to be consumed by the world of worms ... anywhere but there ...

FOR GOD'S SAKEs, MAN, GIVE HIM AN S!

He heard the Rabbi going on and on. He looked around and watched the mourners: grateful they were for the Rabbi who said in his practiced pious way words they knew they must speak to the bereft but could not. He watched them all. A quick trip to the cemetary for those who could spare the time some money gathered for an eponymous scholarship for a de-
serving up and coming Roble, and they could wash their hands of the whole affair. He could see fingers fidgeting itching for soap and water for the fluffy white towels.

He watched them he watched all he watched the Rabbi he watched Roble's parents the brother the sister he watched the ushers and the mourners gathering outside for the next funeral. He watched he listened S GODDAMMIT S he cried jumping on his bench S he shouted as loud as he could HERES YOUR FUCKING S FRANKIE!!

The Rabbi stopped shocked like McKibben the Principal. Hundreds of X Country Coaches dashed across the field to bring him down to drag him out by the ear to string up his white ass ... and he saw as he looked around what Frankie must have seen: there was to be no aid forthcoming from the community leaders his friends who sat beside him no sympathy no compassion no understanding no comprehension even. There was only hostility, disgust, agonized cries of "shame" "who is that hippie" "get that dirty kid out of here." The X Country Coaches were closing in.

He drew out his fat switchblade and snapped it open. The mourners yelled and cried out alarms. He shouted over the noise: I just want to speak. I just want to tell you about Roble, about his life and his death. I want only to say a few words. He was a friend of mine.

The coaches and ushers looked at one another and the knife and froze. The Principal rabbi stood silent and motionless. Someone said "Heys that's D------." Another: "I thought he looked familiar." The name was recognized by many present. "Yes, he was a friend of Roble's." "Look at him now." "He had such a future also." "Isn't that ironic."

Yes, he said, I am D------. Many of you may remember me. I grew up in this town. I went to school in this town, with many of your sons and your daughters, with many of you. I was Bar Mitzvahed by this Rabbi. And if instead of Roble I now lay dead among you perhaps even my funeral would be celebrated here ... and perhaps Roble would be interrupting even as I do now.

But I know you all are saying Never, Never, Roble wasn't the kind of person to do such a boorish thing. He was a good boy, a nice boy, yes, a credit to all the institutions he represented. Yes, he was a leader in school, an outstanding student, a good athlete president of this and treasurer of that. He was in the forefront of the service societies a Christmas Santa a car washer for the scholarship fund, a joy to his teachers and his parents. And he went away to college, and studied in medical schools, was marching in the South at risk to life and limb ... and he went to medical school and spent all his spare time with the underprivileged in the ghettos. And he returned home a doctor, a healer of men. We have all known these things about Roble, and you have contented yourselves with your grieving and breastbeating why why take away one so young so good so noble ... yes you busy yourselves with tossing halos on him as you did rings on coke bottles at school carnivals. You ache to be at ease with yet another lie perpetrated on yourselves and on one another.

But I will not let you lie about Roble's death as you lied about his life. I will not let you nurture any longer your lives of lies.

I will speak of Roble.

I have been a constant wanderer about this Earth for five years now, or six or seven. And while I was travelling Roble was finishing college, was studying in medical schools, was working in hospitals applying his knowledge and gathering more. But we kept in touch, in the way two people can who have experienced together more than just some high school and college days. For we had come to realize that we shared much beyond the surface the obvious — so much that even now at Roble's death we are still uncovering the extent of our correspondence.

You see, we finally became able to reveal to each other what had transpired beyond the veneers of model youthdoms. It was difficult to do — our facades were so carefully constructed, so attached to societal girders, so elaborate, that for the longest time we thought any penetration would bring destruction down upon us. But we were mistaken — for the dissolution of the false fronts showed to us instead the destructiveness of life and events about us, showed us to have been zombies in perpetual states of capitulation and sycophancy, participants in constant sickness.

You here have forgotten the depths behind your own graceful citizenships because you did not have someone like Roble to prod you to question to doubt you, someone who wouldn't leave you be, who constantly poked around in dim unfrequented places. Or maybe you could never be aware because of the expert job done on you. Well, today I will prod for Roble, so that he will have an honest funeral an honest burial so that we the living may have an honest funeral an honest burial so that your kids now generating so much fear in the hearts of their mothers fathers clergy educators senators presidents may have a less gueling struggle.

Be it known that Roble's model youthdom was a sham, a desperate front for a scared and hungry lonely. It was, in fact, much like your own fronts right here and now. But the difference is that Roble became so expert that he was acclaimed far and wide:

Roble the Good
Roble the Bold
Roble the Compassionate
Roble the Whiz
Roble Every Mother's Dream.

But the seed of bitterness, the seed of anger and of disgust, this seed had been planted and grew like a weed. It flourished on the shit which cascaded down upon him. The more model he became the larger and stronger grew his bitterness and disgust. It was only recently that he could talk to me of the pain and frustration the rot the guilt the impotence he felt through the years spent in this village, in the stifling stifling schools, in the homes of classmates and friends, at the hands of leaders and educators and model citizens. It was only recently, do you understand, that he and I could speak of our anger within, the rage, the craving to strike out and kill which almost led him to murder and which ultimately did lead him in his own triumph to suicide.
The assemblage gasped as one. Cries of outrage, denial, insult filled the room. He went on rapidly, raising his voice, brandishing his knife.

Yes. I said suicide! It was no accident. He told me he was going to do it. He told me how. We discussed the whole thing. Don’t you understand: he felt he was performing the most logical absurdity. The incentive to cooperate had been too strong, the rewards through the years too alluring. The adults the parents the pillars the platforms the platitudes were all too much there. He only knew one life, one existence, although his mind was slowly telling him what was truly taking place, was telling him to get out and seek other realms.

I am trying to help you see Roble: the young Roble who pleaded for eradication of guilt, for surcease from rivalry and competition, from pressure for perfection; the young Roble who begged assurance from blossoming girls and their mothers and fathers that he was a sexual being; the young Roble who sought to understand wars and government killing, as well as the evil in his own mind and hands, that same evil denied by others’ minds and hands but not by their words and deeds.

He asked he shouted he implored: why am I so confined, so caged, so delineated, so dissected before I’ve even begun? Why is everything so secreted? Why is everyone so busy camouflaging themselves. Who really is in control? Why do they allow this why do they destroy themselves and all of us?

You cry out to me Nonsense. You say he had everything possible a boy could want — health, good looks, intelligence, money, family. Yes. He did. So much so that it was precisely such possession which propelled him to his ultimate conclusion.

With precision and dedication, with persistence and drudging monotony, he uncovered the lies the deceits the dissimulations the ineptitudes the hypocrisies. Here is your irony: he used your values and your own system to uncover you. And he reached the point when he understood and held truth in his hands. He said to me he couldn’t go on living among the lying bastards, working among the enervating hypocrites. He was sick of the medical world and the legal world and the political world. He said there was no hope of freeing the people from themselves. He said he had no choice but to kill himself. He smiled when he said this. I remember. He smiled as he told me he would kill himself in defeat and despair.

So what happened in the lab that day was no accident. And he performed the greatest of ironies — he concealed the true nature of his final act: he camouflaged his suicide. He utilized the very process of hypocrisy and dissimulation he learned at the hands of this society to offer society his final farewell. He would never let on he knew. He would not leave behind stuff for martyrdom or blasphemy or dreams. He would just vanish beneath the standard funeral into the ordinary earth.

And I am so safe in revealing the truth here today, because none of you can believe me. Your friends your enemies your very selves won’t let you believe me. You cannot possibly believe me.

That’s all right. Roble knew. Roble understood. Roble overcame the lies, the guiles the camouflage, Roble understood so much that he ceased to believe in anything, including his death as some kind of affirmation. He spilt on your rewards your honors your love your goodness your honesty your truth. And I tell you he shot dope he drank he beat women he aborted babies he lied he cheated he gambled he accosted little boys. Each act brought him closer to self-knowledge, to human understanding. And at the end he killed himself without telling his mother.

Understand? He showed you the ultimate deception, the very perfection of hypocrisy elaborated with flawless grace and execution.

Don’t forget: it was you who taught him, it was you who enabled him to operate at high efficiency in all levels of society.

That is the reality behind his death.

It was not a senseless wasteful accident, but a logical and well-planned act. It is reality behind the slaughter of each generation of kids. It is reality behind all pompous funerals and unwanted births. It is reality behind prestigious positions and pious leaderships, behind lusts and desires we can never expunge.

So we gather here for a proper ceremony in honor of that sack of bones and rotting flesh we once called Roble. You called him Roble, and he answered you. He answered you all right. That’s his monument... his triumph... his tragedy.

Today he doesn’t need your grave your gravestones your flowers your ceremony your candles your tears your rabbits. So when you’ve finished here you can go forth from this place and dump him out of that fancy box and chuck his carcass into the gutter somewhere and kiss his ass goodbye. And you can forget him. For he has forgotten about you forever and ever.

D----- stopped talking. He slowly closed his knife and slipped it into his pocket. Then he jumped down from the bench and walked toward the big glass doors. The mourners silently made a path for him and he went outside. There the second funeral people stomped about impatiently, shouting insults at the funeral director.

D----- kept walking, up Maple Ave past the Water Dept, the short lawns the firehouse to Front St. He heard a train roaring in and caught it.

Richard Lee Grossman used to write stories about people and angst. He currently is an eco-catastrophist living in Washington, D.C. He wrote this story in 1970.
INTERVIEW

NINA HARTLEY

BY SHELDON RANZ

Since the latter half of 1987, Nina Hartley has been the most popular female star of pornographic movies — the porn queen. Since her debut in 1984, she has starred or been featured in over 170 such movies, the most X-rated films any female performer has made during the past five years and the second highest number of films for any woman who has ever appeared in this genre. Hartley is also a founder of the Pink Ladies Social Club. The Club started out as a rap group for female performers in X-rated films, but has recently expanded to include any woman who works in the industry — writers, make-up artists, assistant directors, etc. The Club’s existence helps to refute the stereotype of female sex workers (or “red collar” workers) as airheads, bimbos, or helpless pawns, coerced by men into humiliating themselves. Hartley has a regular column called Health and Hygiene Report, which appears in the Club’s bimonthly newsletter. The column stresses AIDS prevention and the precautions women should take before the cameras roll. Hartley is indeed qualified to write the column; she is a Registered Nurse, with a degree in Nursing from San Francisco State University.

SHELDON RANZ: I guess the best way to begin is by reading most of a letter to the editor you sent to the Guardian, the radical newswEEKLY, which was published in the April 16, 1986 edition:

...I’m a third generation socialist and feminist. I’ve just graduated this past June magna cum laude with a B.S. in nursing. During my senior year, I started my career as an erotic actress. I have appeared in several dozen hardcore videos and have been featured in public discussions on the subject. ...I firmly believe in the possibility of non-exploitative hardcore erotica and I work to affect the product called porn. On principle, I refuse to portray rape or coercion and fight to portray sexuality as something natural, wholesome, playful, and tender.

I’m not sure what the anti-porners mean when they say ‘sexual subordination.’ It’s a highly subjective idea, and to me it implies coerced sexuality. However, if I’m in control of myself and voluntarily accommodating male lust, then I’m not being subordinated. I see my job as legitimizing human sexual urges while educating against domination.

It’s bad enough that I have to fight the Moral Majority for the right to work, but it’s tragic how much some feminists misunderstand the many complex issues involved here. As a feminist, I’d much rather spend my time fighting misogyny through my job as an erotic actress. I’d rather work to organize fellow actors and actresses and raise their consciousness. I want to fight for better working conditions and for a more sensual, less alienated medium. Instead, I find I have to spend all my time and creativity defending the First Amendment against the anti-porn feminist.

Let’s go back to the beginning of that letter. What can you tell us about those first two generations of socialists?

NINA HARTLEY: The socialist side of my family is my mother’s side. My maternal grandfather was born and raised in Alabama. He rejected his parents’ Orthodoxy and became a non-practising Jew at a very early age. I think he refused to be bar-mitzvahed; that was around 1912. In the late Twenties, he was a physics teacher at the college level. Then, one night, he read Stalin’s book, The Foundations of Leninism, which turned him around.

It made him an instant, life-long convert to the Socialist/Communist cause.

He worked to protect the rights of political prisoners in the South who, at the time were, of course, mostly Blacks, and worked against the Klan for many years. He helped to organize the defense of the Scottsboro Boys. For his efforts, at one point, he was beaten up and left for dead by the Klan and carried life-long health problems due to that. One of the head thugs who beat him up was Bull Connor, who later became the sheriff of Montgomery, Alabama.

My family had several encounters with the Klan during the Thirties. My mother wasn’t allowed to play with the neighborhood children because her daddy was a “nigger lover.” The Klan burned a cross on their lawn more than once, and my grandmother, ever the Southern lady, didn’t think to turn on the garden hose, but ran in and out of the house with the silver ice water pitcher, trying to put it out that way. The struggle went on for many years. My grandfather eventually lost his job for being a “premature antifascist.” He went to New York, did some odd jobs (politically), and then came back to Alabama, where he and my grandmother taught at the University of Alabama. My grandmother was an English teacher and my grandfather remained a physics instructor. They moved out to California toward the end of the war. My grandfather was active politically until the
end. He died prematurely, unfortunately, in 1950, from heart disease.

My aunt became a Communist very early, at age 16, and my mother was a later convert to it. Both she and my father (a Gentile) were socialists of the heart. They saw evil, and they wanted to do good for the world. They were among those who were very disillusioned with the Russian invasion of Hungary and left the Party at the time. My father was blacklisted in 1957. He had a successful radio show here in the San Francisco Bay area. He lost his job and went before the House Un-American Activities Committee and was hailed as a hero for standing up to them. He didn’t feel much like one because he lost his job! No one would hire him after that, and he never did get another job in the radio profession.

I am a red diaper baby, but I never went to socialist summer camp. I never was set down on my daddy’s knee and taught about socialism. I’m much more a socialist of the heart. I want equality for people, and everyone to have a job, everyone to have food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and education. I am not a “convert” to socialism; that is just what I am. Utopia might be communist, but in the meantime, we have to have socialism.

RANZ: When you were growing up at home, what was your parents’ attitude toward sex? What did you learn about sex?

HARTLEY: I learned that they were uncomfortable talking about it. I was never taught that it was good or bad. It was Berkeley in the 1960’s, so I was basically taught that it was O.K. if you really liked the person and, more importantly, took birth control precautions. I learned most of my sexual knowledge from books that I got out of the library, so very early on, I got factual, biological, physiological knowledge and very little of the so-called “street knowledge” that you get from your friends. So, sex as a physical act was demystified for me very early on.

Later, when I was 14, 15, 16, I read The Joy Of Sex, Our Bodies, Ourselves, which I received from my cousin when I reached puberty - a very important book. Also, The Happy Hooker was a very important book for me in terms of how it dealt with sex and sex as a profession. My parents weren’t really comfortable with it. They went through Reichian therapy for awhile, but it didn’t really help much. I was young and didn’t know what was going on at the time.

Sex was sort of ambivalent in our house. My brothers had their girlfriends over to spend the night. My oldest brother lived with his fiancee in our house in the same bedroom for a couple of years before they were able to get a place of their own. By the time my sister and I were old enough to have boys over, the family had moved apart and we were no longer living together, so I don’t know if my mother would have allowed her daughters to have boyfriends over the way she allowed her sons to have girlfriends over.

RANZ: Do you think your parents’ attitude toward sex was wholly their own, or was it influenced by the attitude of the Communist Party?

HARTLEY: The Communist Party is quite puritanical in a number of ways, but it was their own attitude. You have to understand about those times - it was the curse of their generation. But certainly that attitude didn’t clash with that of the Party.

RANZ: When did you first realize that you were different sexually than most women - an exhibitionist?

HARTLEY: Probably by 13. I knew I had these desires, and I also knew that socially, they were not permitted to be expressed, so I never acted them out then. They were strictly mental on my part. I went to this nudist swimming hall at one point when I was 13, and all I wanted to do was stare at people. But I knew that staring was not considered polite or proper. It was just curiosity, being the first time I had ever been around a lot of naked adults. I just wanted to stare, to look, not necessarily to touch.

I didn’t start feeling more exhibitionistic until my later teens - 18, 19 - realizing that I liked to go naked, but also realizing as a nice, middle-class girl who had been raised to be a little bit fearful of men, that you just don’t do that. I had friends who were more bold that way and they’d wear more sexy clothes as teenagers, and if a guy caught a glimpse of “something”, they didn’t mind. I was much more reserved than that for fear of harmful reprisals from men, because in Berkeley you are taught that if you are very sexual, men will then harm you somehow.

RANZ: The image of Berkeley on the East Coast, and perhaps throughout the whole country, is one of a radical, experimental place - “Free Love,” “Free Speech,” etc.

HARTLEY: That’s about 15 years out of date, unfortunately. After the Sixties died out in the early Seventies, a new wave of feminism came. It was the anti-porn feminism, the anti-sexuality feminism, the one that said that any objectification is evil, that any visual enjoyment of women’s bodies by men is harmful and oppressive to women. That is very, very much the attitude prevalent in Berkeley now. While we’re not all Dworkinites, Dworkin has a strong following here. These feminists did a lot to make men feel guilty about liking to look at women, and made women feel very guilty about wanting men to look at
them. Somehow, it was politically incorrect to want to be attracted to the opposite sex. So, the anti-male lesbian feminism in Berkeley is very strong.

RANZ: How did you get your start in the sex industry?

HARTLEY: When I was 21, I started stripping at the Mitchell Brothers Theatre. The Mitchell Brothers are most famous for their movie, "Behind The Green Door." I found stripping there the perfect way to explore my exhibitionism in a physically safe environment. The theatre has bouncers, and the men are not allowed to make advances or touch you in any way that you don't want, so there was never any question of my being harmed physically. Once that was taken care of, I just really blossomed. For ten minutes, three times a night, as a performing artist I had complete control of my medium -- what I wore, what I danced to, how I moved, what I did.

I had a very good time doing that job for two years. It was about learning how not to be scared of men, learning how to be more confident with men, helping men feel more confident around women. I gave a lot of sexual advice, a lot of relationship advice to men, most of whom are lonely and just want to talk. I had very few "weirdos." Most of the men wanted to talk to a friendly woman while having her sit on his lap. It's much easier than going to a pick-up bar, much cheaper and certainly sexually safer than going to a prostitute, since there is no sexual contact between the two of us. I was amazed at how many men wanted that personal contact -- they did not want an impersonal object sitting on their lap. They wanted to know that I was a real person. They loved the fact that I was a nursing student, that I was intelligent and doing something with my life. That just made them feel very good.

I learned that there is a big lie going on out there that all men who watch porn want women only to be objects. I found that not to be true.

RANZ: How did you come up with the stage name "Nina Hartley"?

HARTLEY: "Nina" I chose because it was easy to say, and even the Japanese tourists could say it. The Mitchell Brothers Theatre would get Japanese tourists by the busload, and I wanted a name that they could pronounce without any difficulty. Plus, I have some Alsatian blood in my background, and Nina is a French name. "Hartley" is similar to my real last name, and it also fit. I like the double syllable first and last names. "Hartley" is not too uncommon a name. It sounded like a real name, rather than other cutesy porn names that don't sound like they could be anybody real. So, I wanted a name that sounded like that of a real person.

RANZ: From being a stripper, you went into the sex film industry. How?

HARTLEY: I was dancing my customary Saturday night dance, and my husband, Dave, came in and said, "You'll never guess who I saw at the corner market." I said, "Who?", and he said, "Juliet Anderson," who's also known as Aunt Peg, a porn star. She was in the produce section, squeezing cantelopes. I said, "Did you get her address?" and he said no. That got me real upset, because we had been talking about me getting into those movies for a couple of years, and the only thing holding me back was concern for my physical safety.

As luck would have it, the very next week she was back again. Dave saw her again. This time, he approached her and said that his girlfriend would like to get into the movies. She gave him an address to write to, and said, "Please send some Polaroids." So we typed up a letter of introduction, sent some Polaroids, and she put me right away into her first - and as it turned out, the last - movie that she herself wrote, directed, and produced, called "Educating Nina." More importantly than that, she introduced me to people she knew to be on the up-and-up. The physical safety issue turned out to be a false concern. Never, at any point in this business, have I seen anyone ever attempt to harm a female performer.

RANZ: Are you sure she was squeezing cantelopes and not...bananas?

HARTLEY: Cantelopes, maybe avocados, but bananas, no.

RANZ: Prior to entering the sex film industry, were you ever aroused by pornographic material?

HARTLEY: Oh, certainly! - ever since I got my hands on it at age 14. I used to read "pulp" novels in this one used-book store, and I was terribly afraid that someone was going to come up to me and go, "Excuse me, lady, how old are you?", or "Aren't you a bit young to read those books?" No one ever did. I knew I wasn't supposed to like reading them, but I also knew that I did indeed enjoy reading them - a real contradiction there. I found that I naturally gravitated toward novels that depicted consensual exploration, and I naturally moved away from all the ones that depicted bondage, punishment, and spanking.

So, in the beginning, I had a natural sensory mechanism that pornography depicting non-consensual acts turned me off instantly. I would not allow myself to get turned on to those images because of what they implied. But the ones that did depict mutuality were fine. Now, these books may have been written by men, for men, with a man's idea of
what a woman's sexuality is, but at a certain level, having that attitude about sex is not a bad thing. Sometimes, women get horny and they want sex. It's not a bad thing to show women as being able to do that.

RANZ: When you first watched one of your movies, what was going through your mind as you saw yourself having sex?

HARTLEY: I tried not to crack up laughing! The first time you see yourself, you're so embarrassed. You wish the make-up had been different, and you say, "Oh, my God, why didn't I do this? Why didn't I do that?" Because I have a very strong memory of the situation, it's very hard for me to get turned on to myself. I can get turned on to other people in the same scene, or to other people in the same movie. Certain scenes I've had with men, but mainly with women, I can get turned on to because I'm really turned on to the other person. But when I watch myself, I'm so critical I can't just relax and watch it. I can not look at myself with an objective eye because I'm looking at myself. So I can rely on other people, who tell me that I do O.K. I think many people who watch themselves in these movies have the same reaction.

RANZ: When did your folks find out that Nina Hartley, a name that is seen on some X-rated marquee, is their daughter?

HARTLEY: They found out in June, 1987. My parents are now ordained Zen Buddhist priests, and porn is not in their periphery of vision. They don't see it, and their circle of friends is not familiar with it. When they saw me speaking on the Phil Donahue show, they were quite shocked and upset. They are now more accepting of it. They know I'm happy, healthy - I'm still the person they knew. They also know that I'm going to severely limit my contact with them, if they can't act polite around me about this issue. So they do, and we get along much better now. When we do talk about it, my mother sees that I'm a pretty happy professional person, and that pleases her. She doesn't like the medium, but she sees that I'm a mature adult, and that's good.

RANZ: I don't understand how a family where the parents have a Communist background can raise a kid who grows up to be an Orthodox Jew. How did that happen?

HARTLEY: They're still asking themselves that very question. My brother turned to it the way anyone turns to religion as an adult. Insecurity, fear, a desire for community, a desire for roots, and identity. He started out being interested in the history of Jewishness and Jewish culture. He slowly got into the more religious aspects of it, buying the t'fillin and the whole bit. He's now 35 years old, so it's been a seven year process.

RANZ: What sort of Jewish identity did you have growing up?

HARTLEY: Very little, in terms of Jewishness as a religion. It was more Jewishness as a culture. The reason we observed Chanukah at all was a) because it was a Jewish ceremony, but more importantly, b) it's an opportunity to get together and have a great meal. It's another excuse to have a family gathering, another excuse to cook and eat.

RANZ: It's a Jewish tradition - food!

HARTLEY: That's right. Well, my grandmother is classic in the "Love me, love my food" tradition. She cooks sumptuous meals, and even wrote a couple of cookbooks. The most Jewish part of my culture, besides everyone talking at the dinner table all at once, is food. Of course, this is something that to do it partly for health reasons, but mostly because the medium upsets her. While she is not a full supporter of Women Against Pornography, she does lean in that direction. Even softcore material doesn't do much for her. Even written material, written by women about women's experiences that contain no violence, upsets her a little bit. She's not that visual - sexuality, that way, is uncomfortable for her, unfortunately.

My eldest brother found out about it just yesterday. He thinks it's a hoot, and it doesn't bother him at all. That was a surprise. I was expecting a stronger, more censorious response from him. However, the final sibling of mine, an older brother, can barely bring himself to say hello to me. He's very upset with what I do. He's a practicing, "born again" Orthodox Jew, so we don't speak. Even before he found out what I did, we didn't have a whole lot in common, because of his religious behavior. He's the hardest case to crack. Even my grandmother wants to check out one of the movies, just to say she watched one.

RANZ: Tell us about your brothers and sister. What is the range of their reactions to what you do for a living?

HARTLEY: My sister is a doctor. She doesn't want me
Mediterranean peoples, like the Italians, have in common.

We also opened presents at Christmas, not because we were celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, but because my father came from a Christian background. He had beautiful antique, German hand-blown glass ornaments. It was part of the tradition, we'd make the tree using the ornaments, and we'd have a great meal for that, too. So, we'd celebrate Chanukah and Christmas, because it was another excuse to have food! I'm surprised none of us got overweight.

So, to be Jewish was to be a questioner, to be a seeker, to learn more about yourself and those around you. To ask questions, to talk - and to eat! Also, to be socially conscious - that was very, very important. We had black friends before it was “fashionable” to have black friends, although when they did turn militant in the Sixties, that did confuse my family a lot. Several of those black friends did move away because they were more with the Black Panthers and didn’t want to deal with “whitey” anymore, which I can certainly understand. My parents and my family can be very well-meaning, but they can also be dippy liberals as well. But their hearts are good, and that is where their socialism and their communism came from, from their desire to do good, to make the world a better place.

RANZ: Are they still socialists and Zen Buddhist priests? Is there a contradiction involved?

HARTLEY: I think there is. Because socialism is so down on religious practice. They don’t believe in a deity or anything like that. Buddhism is more of a philosophy than a religion with a God at the top. My father says that the more he studies Zen, the more he believes in communism. I’m not sure what he means by that. He considers himself a socialist in that he supports a social welfare state, but they’re also pacifists. They’re not comfortable with armed revolution, although they don’t say that nobody has the right to it. For example, I’m sure they hope that the South Africans could settle their differences peacefully. They probably don’t expect it to happen that way.

RANZ: How do you feel today about being Jewish?

HARTLEY: I feel very lucky. I believe very strongly in the heritage of Jews as educators. I feel very proud of the fact that if it weren’t for the Jews, half the world would still be illiterate. Along with the Diaspora - the spreading of Jews all over the world - came the spreading of reading and writing all over the world. I’m extremely proud of my people’s contribution to world knowledge. Certainly, the basis of Judaism, in questioning and in analyzing, has stood well. I would like to know about Jewish religion as history, but as an atheist, I see no reason to practice any religion - Judaism, Christianity, any religion - because it is organized superstition and it certainly is the opiate of the masses. There’s no doubt about that in my mind. As history, in the history of the world, Jewish history is very important.

We have achieved amazing things throughout world history, and I certainly have great pride in that. I’m proud to be Jewish. I’m very glad that I’m Jewish.

RANZ: Do you ever think about Israel? Does it figure into your identity?

HARTLEY: It doesn’t figure into my identity, but I do think about Israel. As it does now, I don’t think it has a right to exist as a theocracy masquerading as a democracy. The religious Right has far too much power and influence on its politics. This will backfire against the Israelis. When I say the state doesn’t have a “right to exist,” don’t misunderstand me. If Israel and the P.L.O. want to negotiate a peace settlement that will give the Palestinians a meaningful state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip - hey, that’s cool. Someday, in my world, Israel will become a binational, secular state, if there’s to be any hope for a long term peace. It’s just that Jews are not a race, Jews are not a cohesive people. There are Israeli Jews, and Polish Jews, and English Jews, and American Jews. Jews are all over the world, so there is not one race or nationality that is still “Jew.” Therefore, there is no valid Jewish “nation-state” because there is no Jewish “people” as a race.

Just the fact that Israel denies basic civil rights to the Palestinians in the occupied territories - I can’t support that at all. It makes me very angry at Israel. I can’t imagine how it could be so shortsighted: after being discriminated against all these years, how could Jews turn around and blatantly discriminate against people who are their genetic first cousins? They’re all Semites, you can’t tell them apart by looking at them. It makes me extremely upset when I read about how Palestinians get carted in and out of the Gaza Strip the same way South African Blacks get carted in and out of Johannesburg. I firmly believe that if Israel does not clean up its act, it will become another graveyard for the Jews.

On the other hand, I do not support the P.L.O. wholeheartedly. There are certain factions that commit terrorist acts against civilians. I can not support that at all. Fortunately, there are other factions in the P.L.O. that are less radical and are willing to sit down and talk. Israel needs to stop being so knee-jerk and sit down and talk, because if it doesn’t learn to share, it will be taken away and many
A MENAGE IS NOT A MENAGERIE

RANZ: You have indicated that throughout your career in the sex industry you have not been alone off camera. You live with your male lover and husband, David, who works as a landscape gardener, and also with your female lover, Bobbi, who is active in a group called San Franciscans ACT Against Censorship Together, in a feminist menage-a-trois. Most people encounter a menage-a-trois as a popular pornographic fantasy. But for you, this is no fantasy but a day-to-day reality. How did it start?

HARTLEY: When I first met David, I was 19 years old. I got a job at a cafe in Berkeley. I met David my first day on the job. He struck me as a friendly person. The second thing he said to me after his name was that he was non-monogamous. At that point in my life, I knew I was bisexual. I had had a few bisexual experiences and was seeking to find more, but not really being able to make it work very well for myself. I was struck by how comfortable I was with him. His long-time girlfriend, Bobbi, had, after a three year separation, just moved to California from Detroit, where Dave was from. He was also seeing two other women in the Berkeley area.

I was looking for sexually free people, because I knew that my philosophy and attitude were very sexually free and very advanced. My experiences at the tender age of 19 were not so positive, but I knew that it could be possible. I saw Dave off-and-on for a couple of months, and he always talked about Bobbi who, back in Detroit, had her multiple boyfriends. They had a very open and sexually free relationship that was not, however, devoid of commitment, support, and deep and abiding love for one another. That really gave me heart.

At the time, I couldn’t really believe that anyone was really as unjealous as Bobbi, because it was too good to be true. When I finally did meet Bobbi, and realized that it was true, I kicked myself for not having the courage to meet her sooner and get to know her sooner, because she’s a truly wonderful human being.

So Dave and I gradually fell madly, passionately, in love. It never bothered me that he had other girlfriends, because when he was with me, he was really with me, giving to me what I needed, not what he thought I needed or what he thought he had to give. He really did tune in and is a very loving, giving person. He helped me out emotionally, mentally, sexually, philosophically - we just clicked on a lot of different levels. The other two relationships he had besides Bobbi fell by the wayside, and his and mine got deeper. Bobbi and Dave needed to move, and I needed some roommates, and I asked them to move into my house. And they did; it was six years ago.

It just happened that the three of us fit together, but it took awhile. In the beginning, Dave and I had a relationship, and Bobbi and Dave had a relationship, and Bobbi and I had to develop our own relationship, so we wouldn’t have to go through Dave. We built our own bridge with each other. That took almost a year to a year-and-a-half, because Bobbi was basically a heterosexual woman, and I am bisexual. But, she’s also very sensual, and can receive pleasure from a man or a woman - it doesn’t bother her. But, her main focus was towards men. My main focus was women, more as aggressor than receiver, and it actually ended up working just fine sexually.

The relationship works because of our philosophy of fidelity of the mind and heart, but not of the crotch. What also helps is the constant, open communication about all subjects - sexual, political, personal, philosophical. Bobbi and Dave believe in the loving encounter session, and they’re quite good at it, actually. This kind of relationship can not work without extreme, brutal honesty and very open communication. There are no taboo subjects. The relationship has developed over time.

Bobbi and I now have a very strong relationship with each other independent of Dave, even though he was the original rallying point for us. To this day, we do swing on occasion, but Bobbi has boyfriends on the side. Dave has a couple of girlfriends on the side, and I’m trying to get a couple of boyfriends on the side, though my work makes it difficult.

RANZ: Well, you can say you swing for a living.

HARTLEY: Yes! One of the reasons that made me very happy to get into the [sex film] business was to meet and have sex with other bisexual women, other openly, happily bisexual women. There are a lot of women I see in the street that I’m very attracted to, but you don’t just go up to them and go, “Hi! Are you bi?” I wish I could do that, but I can’t do that. I’ve met several women [in the business] that I do maintain at least “friendships” with off the screen. Since most of them live in Southern California, and I live in Northern California, we don’t often see each other when we’re not working.

RANZ: Can you tell us more about David’s and Bobbi’s political backgrounds?

HARTLEY: David is a very dedicated Marxist-
Leninist, with a tendency toward Trotsky. He and Bobbi got involved together in NAM, the New American Movement which later merged with the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee to form the Democratic Socialists of America. Bobbi was very active in NAM for a number of years. It was one of the reasons she didn’t move out with David at the same time — that, and her union work. Bobbi’s a long-time feminist, ever since her early days when she realized that there were certain things she wasn’t supposed to want to do because she was female. She’s been a feminist probably for 35 years, before even there was a word “feminist.” She is a socialist, but she does not subscribe to the ideology of those who call themselves “socialist-feminists.” She is a feminist and a socialist, two different things. We have a lot of disagreements with “socialist-feminists,” particularly around the area of sex and sexuality.

David went through his own “born-again” conversion to Marxism; from being a right-wing Goldwater Republican to, for a brief moment, a pacifist and then all the way to being a communist. He’s “kept the faith” ever since; it’s been over 20 years now. If he’s not a political genius, he’s certainly politically gifted, in my personal opinion, and I’ve learned a lot from him. He’s a very good teacher of politics.

RANZ: It’s surprising to hear you speak of disagreements with “socialist-feminists” over the issue of sex, since they tend to oppose the Dworkinites and support your right to express yourself in the way you do.

HARTLEY: They believe that in a perfect society, prostitution and other sex work would no longer exist because it would not need to, nor would they want it to exist. That is not my belief. At some level, there will always be a need for professional sexual individuals in any society, no matter how utopian. In utopia, with food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and education for everyone, I would still probably choose, at least part of the time, to be a sex professional — either a sexual entertainer, a sexual therapist, a sexual surrogate, a sexual teacher — as well as pursuing my medical career as a nurse/midwife. That would be my dual role.

Just for them to allow me the right to work in porn isn’t enough. I believe my work is valid and good and has a lot of things to help people with. Not just “Oh, let it happen”. No! Support it wholeheartedly and promote the use of explicit sexual materials for the education and benefit of all adults. I’m very Reichian in that particular way, on the need for sexual outlets for all people in and out of relationships.

RANZ: You are Jewish. Bobbi and Dave are not. Does this cause any problem or tension in the relationship?

HARTLEY: No major problems, no. There are certain social interactions that get a little muddled sometimes because they are WASP and I’m not. But I’m not religiously Jewish and they’re not religiously WASP. They both love my energy, my quick wit, my ability to be a bit of a ham...

RANZ: ...and your modesty!

HARTLEY: (laughs) Oh, they like that! They like my energy, my ability to be intellectual, which doesn’t come easy to many WASP women because they’re not taught that it is a valuable thing to have. Bobbi’s unusual that way. At a certain level, my individual will, my refusal to bow down and be subjugated by others, which is a Jewish female trait - this they like.

In the WASP culture, up until very recently, women were expected to bow down to the will of their husbands, and that’s been socialized into a lot of WASP women. I don’t have that, so they appreciate this in me.

The biggest things that come up are social things — what is considered rude in one culture versus the other culture, and we have had some minor clashes over that, but nothing really serious. When I grew up, we had six people around the dinner table. We’d have two to three conversations going on at one time. There’d be diagonal conversations, straight-across conversations, next-to-yourself conversations, you know, all different ways of doing it. When Dave and Bobbi grew up, one person spoke at a time at the table and was finished, and then the next person spoke. And I thought, “How can you do that?!?” It just completely flabbergasted me when I found this out. So when Dave goes into a purely Jewish situation like a family gathering, he just goes crazy because everyone talks all at once to everybody else. The tendency toward interruption is so infuriating to him.

I cook differently than WASPs do. I use things like onion, garlic, spices. Well, Dave is pretty daring, but he doesn’t like a certain number of things I cook with, and he could do very well without them.

RANZ: You’ve been in one-to-one relationships before. When you compare your current household arrangements with those relationships, what aspects of a menage-a-trois, particularly the non-sexual aspects, surprise you? What didn’t you expect?

HARTLEY: I’m getting everything I expected. A triad is a very stable situation, just as tripods are very stable, tricycles are very stable. Three points make a very stable base on a plane. So whenever any of the
two of us have a disagreement, there’s always a third person who’s watching and can step in and say, “Well, here’s what I see going on. Here’s what I’m hearing. Here’s the dynamic I see happening.” Because we have no secrets, we will carry on very heated arguments sometimes, very emotional arguments in front of the other person, because we’re all one...triple. I get to do that with Dave and Bobbi because I’m female. I have certain insights into what she’s feeling and can sometimes articulate them better because I’m not the one who’s so upset.

If Dave and I are having an argument Bobbi, who has lived with him for 15 years, can sometimes step in and make her point of view known. Bobbi and I don’t fight a whole lot, but Dave has certainly come in and explained things because he’s had to explain my way of looking at things to her. So, it’s very useful to have that third party. One of the reasons why people go to therapists is to get that “objective observer“ to look at what’s going on and give their considered opinion. What we have is someone who is an “objective observer“ to the dynamic of the interaction, but who is an intimate as well, so they can come in and say certain things and make certain points that a therapist could never make.

RANZ: So you really don’t need therapists.

HARTLEY: No, no we don’t. Dave and Bobbi and I are each other’s therapists. That’s what we believe the role of good friends is. I had been to a therapist before I met Dave and Bobbi, but I never really got much from her. As soon as I started seeing Dave on a regular basis, I no longer needed a therapist because he and Bobbi pushed when I needed to be pushed. When they see you’re putting bullshit out there, they’ll tell you to cut the crap and get to the real heart of things. We have the permission to do that with each other.

SEX

RANZ: When did you realize that you were bisexual?

HARTLEY: I knew for sure by the time I was 14. I always enjoyed playing sex games with my little girlfriends, most particularly at age 6. When I was 12 and 13, I played some sex games with some girls down the street. But they were very uptight about it because of their parents, so I was uptight. I wanted to do it, but I knew if anyone caught us, we’d all be completely embarrassed, and they would think badly of me. I desperately wanted a girlfriend who would not think it wierd or strange to play sex games with me. I would have been a practicing bisexual much earlier than age 18 had I found an appropriate girlfriend. There’s one woman in the business now who, turns out, didn’t live too far from me - Shanna McCullough. She could have been that girlfriend had I indeed met her then. She’s my age, she was very sexually adventurous at an early age and very confident. She was never mystified by sex or confused by it. She enjoyed sex almost from the very beginning of her partaking in it. She herself told me she would have liked to have a girlfriend to fool around with.

RANZ: Describe the first time you made love to a woman.

HARTLEY: I was 18. She was 18. She was already 3/4 of the way out of the closet as a lesbian. She still was hanging on to her boyfriend, but she knew that that wasn’t going to last long, and that she basically was gay. We had talked about doing something together for a long time, and we ended up in my bedroom. Mostly it was hugging and kissing and playing with breasts. I remember being utterly delighted and fascinated by the fact that there was no such thing as “five o’clock shadow“ with a woman, that her skin was so soft and smooth, and it’s like, “Ah! I know why guys like us!”

I was certainly a little shy and embarrassed; at 18 I had a lot of sexual ideas but I had a ways to go before I fully relaxed sexually. So, it didn’t culminate in oral sex. It got very close, but I chickened out at the last minute - “Will I do it right? How do I know if she’s going to cum?“ The same problems guys have, actually. But it was still good enough to make me know I wanted it more. We never made love again after that, and I haven’t seen her in years, but I know that soon after that, she came out of the closet and began seeing women exclusively.

RANZ: You do appear to be having a great time on camera with men as well as with women. Are the orgasms real?

HARTLEY: About half of them are real. The other half are close, but the final throes of passion are enacted. Those, because the situation is not quite right. It’s really late, the director has been on-again, off-again, stop, start, cut, move the camera here, the positioning is a bit awkward. There are many reasons why a woman can’t quite go over the edge. Her orgasm is not the focus of the scene; the man’s orgasm is. If you, the woman, have one, that’s great, they say to her, it’s utterly wonderful, but if you don’t, they’re not going to stop the cameras and wait for you, either. However, I physically enjoy all my scenes or else I wouldn’t do them. I take power and make the situation enjoyable for me as much as I possibly can, including not working with people I don’t want to
work with.

RANZ: There are two women in particular that you have worked with regularly where the sex is really intense, where your deep sexual love for women really shows - Lilli Marlene and Alexis Greco. What is it about these two women that makes your lesbian scenes with them so vivid, so passionate?

HARTLEY: Because both of them are very bisexual and very in touch with their sexuality. Both of them are easily orgasmic, both of them are heavily bisexual, both of them are heavily sensual. So they go ahead and enjoy the scene for the pleasure and can give pleasure without any regrets, guilt, or hangups about it. When I get a part like that with them, I can get just that much deeper into it, rather than trying to make it look good because she's not really into it. With Lilli and Alexis, you don't have to fake anything - it is real. That is why it's so much better.

RANZ: I thought your attraction to them might have been because their politics are close to yours.

HARTLEY: Well, Lilli Marlene has very little politics. She's not a political creature. Alexis Greco is no socialist, but she's certainly very liberal. I can have a relationship with Alexis Greco off the screen. Now, if a woman is a real right-winger, but can really get into the scene sexually, I can have a good scene with her. I just won't have much of an off-camera relationship with her. However, there's no other woman in the business who is halfway as politically oriented as I am. Most of the women in the business think politics is pretty damn boring.

RANZ: Are there genuine lesbians in your business?

HARTLEY: There used to be two -- Erica Boyer and Barbara Dare. While for many years they had lesbian relationships off camera for emotional support and identified themselves as lesbians, each recently got married to a man. Obviously, they were basically bisexual and just hadn't found the right man yet. They still enjoy sex with women very much, and there will always be that love and affection for women. But at this point in time, they have bonded with a man.

RANZ: Is it painful emotionally for a woman who is a lesbian off camera to have sex with a man on camera?

HARTLEY: It doesn't have to be. It can be if she has trouble with the concept of fucking a guy. If I was an all-the-way lesbian off camera, it wouldn't be emotionally painful for me to have sex with men because the kind of lesbian I would have been is not one that hates men, but one that just doesn't want to deal with them emotionally.

RANZ: This is a deeply sexist and heterosexist society. Yet, nearly every pornographic film that's not all-male, gay, has at least one lesbian scene, and there are some videotapes available in which the sex is entirely lesbian. You've been in some of those tapes.

HARTLEY: (smiles) Oh, yes.

RANZ: But it's not the fact that they exist, but the way they exist that fascinates me. The women are almost always beautiful; it's the girl next door making love to the girl next door to her. I stress "making love" because the sex between the women is of such an unusual tender and gentle quality. It's unusual because you almost never see that between men and women in these films. Phrases like "How do you like it?", "Does that feel good?", and "I love you," when spoken in a sex scene, are spoken much more often than not by one woman to another. I should also like to point out that in these films, unlike in Hollywood films, the women don't die, they don't commit suicide...

HARTLEY: (laughs) Thank you!

RANZ: It almost seems like they're rewarded with orgasms. Someone seems to have gone through an awful lot of trouble to imbue the act of sex between two women with a humane sex appeal. Why?

HARTLEY: The women in the sex scene themselves imbue it with a humane sex appeal. One thing you have to understand during a lesbian scene is that there is no erection to worry about, so they can get right down into the sensations of the sex act itself for the pleasure it can give. They go for the pure sensuality of it. Plus, many of the women themselves are bisexual. In a hetersexual scene, the erection is the main point of focus, the man's orgasm is the most important thing. Also, the men are performing in front of a small audience, so they are not alone. Most men are embarrassed to say tender things in front of other people.

RANZ: Why are these scenes put there in the first place? I am not aware that most of these film's producers are great feminists.

HARTLEY: Oh no. They put the scenes in there because many men like to watch lesbian scenes.

RANZ: What kind of man would prefer to watch two women have sex in the way that I've described? Since not all men who regularly watch porn get off on that,
what type of man would enjoy that very much?

HARTLEY: I would think that it's a man who likes women and likes to see women receiving sexual pleasure and not just being the servants of the male, men who are not uncomfortable with seeing true emotion passed back and forth between the two people in the sex scene. I would tend to think these men would be a little more sensitive, more interested in finding out what women do together so they can learn from that in order to please women more. Also, there are men who appreciate the beauty of women and the beauty that two women can have when they are interacting sexually. Women are there pleasuring each other and there's no man in sight, so if a man can still enjoy two women doing that and not feel left out or not feel that there's something missing, a man, then that would show me that he has a pretty good attitude toward women and their right to sexual pleasure.

RANZ: I've spoken to other people in the sex film industry about this, and I keep hearing the phrase "turning out." Can you define that?

HARTLEY: For raving bisexuals such as myself, Sharon Mitchell, and a few other women when we are with women, we are more butch than female, i.e., the aggressor who says, "Lay back, honey, I'll take care of you." Many, many, many lesbians and bisexual women have a fantasy of taking a woman who was previously inexperienced in the bisexual realm and giving her an experience so good that the woman wants to keep doing it.

RANZ: So, it's like conversion from one sexual orientation to another.

HARTLEY: I guess, in a way, it is conversion from heterosexuality to bisexuality. I think that many, many, many women are bisexual to one degree or another. There are many women out there who speak to me who are dying to have a lesbian experience — with their husbands watching — because they rightly perceive that no one can do it to a woman quite like another woman. The fantasy is there for a lot of women, but they're too scared to act it out. I love to make a sensual experience so pleasant for a woman that she is not turned off to it but wants to explore it further.

RANZ: Have any of the women that you've "turned out" gotten a crush on you or even fallen in love with you because it turned out that the sex she had with you on camera was the best sex she had in her whole life? Did any of them consequently become bisexual or even totally lesbian?

HARTLEY: A couple of those women have mild crushes on me, because when I meet a new woman in the business, as a feminist I take it upon myself to teach her a few of the ropes and to tell her to remember to take care of herself and not to do anything she doesn't want to do and to have a good time. The first time I have sex with those particular women, I make extra sure that they do have a good time, sensually. I don't go through the motions of "a lick-lick here" or "a suck-suck there." I really make love to them.

RANZ: And you make sure to bring them to orgasm?

HARTLEY: As close as they can get, on camera. Some women can go all the way over, and some women can only get very close. One woman I first worked with a couple of years ago, Nicki Knights, was a terrified bisexual. She could hardly relax during a scene. As it turned out, that was the scene - she was uptight and I was trying to relax her - in "Rear Action Girls II". So, it worked out well, and now, two years later, you can't stop her! She has orgasms on screen, she loves women, she loves to give as well as receive. She's very cute, a very nice person. We recently had a hot scene together in "Lingerie Girls". So, yes, there are some women who have become more bisexual because of me. But, no one in the business has become totally lesbian because of me. You already have to have a tendency toward that, anyway.

RANZ: Are there any well-known women outside of porn, like celebrities, that you fantasize about?

HARTLEY: Oh, all the time. Bernadette Peters I think is just fine, fine, fine. Debbie Allen I would go to bed with in a minute, Goldie Hawn in a second. Felicia Rashad I would definitely walk miles for. Lisa Bonet is very beautiful. She's a fine example of what good can come from the mixing of the races. She offers a direct refutation of the Klan line of "racial purity." I tend to like dark-haired women, although there are many blondes that I like. I really think Mariette Hartley is very attractive, intelligent. She stands up to James Garner. Meredith Baxter-Birney is entering middle age very gracefully and sexily, and I like her energy. Ann-Margret is getting better looking as she gets older - it's amazing. I have a weakness for redheads, too. I'm very partial to them.

I've been watching "Golden Girls" on a regular basis now and I've got this mad crush on Rue McLaanahan. Rue, I would love to make you feel good - give me a call! And also, Delta Burke, a really beautiful, beautiful brunette woman on "Designing Women". Her character is like a younger version of Rue's. What I like about their characters is that they
both love the attention of men and have no problem with it. They keep themselves attractive, they seek it out, they don’t mind it. But they also “put out” — they don’t just flirt with men, they enjoy sex with men, and they make a lot of men happy.

RANZ: You don’t seem to go for the superficial, glitzy Joan Collins types. Personality plays a very large role in determining what turns you on about these women.

HARTLEY: Oh, certainly. Just a still photograph of any of these women is a turn-on, but if I find a person has a mental attitude that I can’t stand, the attraction instantly decreases to almost nothing. Personality is very important as to whether or not to pursue an active relationship, sexual or otherwise, with an individual. If Delta Burke turned out to be a right-wing Republican woman, I would be extremely disappointed. I’d still think she’s attractive, but I won’t ever want to go to bed with her because I won’t have anything to talk to her about.

RANZ: Or worse, you will have things to talk about, but you’ll be shouting them at each other.

HARTLEY: [laughs] Yeah, right.

RANZ: If Jerry Falwell is reading this, he must really hate your guts. This is exactly what his type claims to fear about feminists in general, that they’re going to “steal” his daughters. In that sense, you are his nightmare woman.

HARTLEY: Many patriarchal men’s ultimate fear is that women will not need them anymore. That’s why many men are uncomfortable with a lesbian scene, because it means that they are superfluous. They want women to need them sexually, which is not a bad desire to have. Everyone wants to be desired sexually. So to see women being very happy up there without men is threatening to a lot of men. Of course, for people like Falwell, homosexuality is one of the worst offenses a person can commit. The fact that I advocate exploration in that area is very, very threatening to him. But then again, I’m already Jewish, atheist, socialist, porno actress, so I am his Jezebel, his Devil Incarnate, many times over, so what’s one more?

RANZ: You’ve been working in adult films since 1984. You are now one of their top stars. To what do you attribute your success?

HARTLEY: Sincerity. I really like what I’m doing and I make a sincere effort to show that on the screen, so that anyone watching my films can go away feeling good. My physical attributes, many people find attractive, some people don’t so much. I’m not everyone’s type, and I can understand that, certainly. I put out a consistent product. You know when you see a movie with me in it, that my scenes are going to be energetic, positive, certainly mutual, where the woman is really taking control and getting off sexually as well as helping the other person get off. One of the reasons I’m popular is that I make it seem not dirty to watch porno movies, since I make it not dirty, because of my sunny, bubbly attitude, because I want to be there. Other people say it’s my big blue eyes or my rear end, but that’s secondary.

RANZ: The jury may still be out on how “secondary” the latter of the two really is. I’m struck at how talk of your prominent posterior pervades gatherings of adult film and video industry people. It’s been called the “tightest tunes in Tinseltown”. Do you exercise, or were you just born that way?

HARTLEY: Well, I was definitely born with that “tendency.” There’s a picture of me at seven or eight months of age standing in my crib, and I have a big round butt and big thighs, shaped very much like my mother’s. I have a Jewish butt. Jewish women are the only Caucasian women who have any kind of rear end to speak of at all. We’re talking about nice, round butts. So, I have a tendency toward that my weight goes there, between my navel and my knees, when I gain it. I also have the potential to have extremely powerful legs. I have a lot of muscle mass in my legs. I have to exercise because if I don’t, I have a tendency to gain weight, and in front of the camera, you already look ten pounds heavier.

When I’m not in the movies, I work out 4-6 days a week. I do a lot of jogging uphill. I do a lot of work with weights with extra emphasis on the lower body. I like body building, but I don’t like the levels some women - or men - carry it to.

RANZ: Rachel McLish?

HARTLEY: She’s not too much. She’s the perfect example of the slender but firm and shapely type. She’s not my body type. I don’t really go for her sexually, plus the fact that she’s a born-again, prissy, stick-in-the-mud. The most beautiful woman for me in body building is Gladys Portuguese. Those who follow body building know who I’m talking about.

**Pornography and the Jewish Question**

RANZ: Are people in the X-rated film industry aware that you are a socialist?
HARTLEY: Very few. I don’t talk that level of politics very often, because most of the people who run the industry are entrepreneurial capitalists. They all want to make money. Some may be liberal on some issues, like supporting a woman’s right to an abortion. Most of the people in the business are apolitical or tend toward conservatism, if they even think about it at all.

RANZ: Have you ever been rejected from a role because you are a socialist?

HARTLEY: Oh no, no!

RANZ: The actress Debra Winger tells the story (Esquire, Dec. 1986) of how she almost lost the female lead in Paramount Pictures’ “Urban Cowboy”. At one point, she recalls, “Michael Eisner, who was president of Paramount, said, ‘She’s too Jewish for that role. I want to dance school with girls like that.’ What he was doing in dance school we won’t even ask.” Eisner exhibits an old syndrome among the Jewish movie moguls of Hollywood, a desire to assimilate so strong that it turns into self-hatred. The self-hatred is not directed straight at themselves but sublimated into a terrible, degrading attitude toward Jewish women. Have you or any other Jewish performer encountered this attitude in the X-rated film industry? Or anti-Semitism, of any kind?

HARTLEY: I can’t speak for other Jewish performers. I have not encountered any anti-Semitism. So many of the producers, directors, and actors are Jewish. At least among the performers, the Jewish ones like working with me, because I know them and can understand them and can get along very well with them. A lot of the producers like me because they think it’s great that I am Jewish.

RANZ: The majority of leading male performers in American pornographic films over the years have been Jews. Not a “disproportionately high” percentage as in “a disproportionately high percentage of American Nobel Prize winners have been Jews”, but over 50%. How do you account for this?

HARTLEY: I have not yet met a Jewish guy who isn’t a horny rabbit. This is said in all affection and honesty. But the major point is, culturally it’s O.K. for Jews to act and for WASPs, it’s very difficult. Many WASP men feel that acting is making a fool of yourself. To go up there and have sex is seen as opening yourself up to too much potential for failure. It’s O.K. for Jews to be actors, and a lot of them are big hams, let’s face it. They also have a lack of regard for potentially looking silly. There is also a lack of guilt about sex that Jewish men have generally. Plus, they get to have sex with all these beautiful, blond women, so wouldn’t you want to go into that business? Where else are you going to get a succession of shiksees to bed you down?

RANZ: It’s interesting that you say “a succession of shiksees,” because there don’t seem to be as many as there used to be. In the early days of porn, the 1970’s, you could count the number of Jewish female stars on one hand: Annie Sprinkle, Susan Nero, and Gloria Leonard. Then, around 1984, there was this upsurge in Jewish women starring in X-rated films - you, Amber Lynn, Karen Summer, Nina Preta, Chelsea Blake, Ali Moore, and more. Why?

HARTLEY: For women, there is less stigma nowadays attached to doing it than there used to be. Also, by the Eighties, a large part of the adult filmmaking community had moved to Southern California, which has a very large Jewish population. So, it’s chance, the chance that a Jewish person is going to wander into the offices of one of the agents is high.

RANZ: The film that you’re most identified with is “Debbie Duz Dishes”. It’s not only a very funny video, but you play a suburban Jewish housewife who’s not a “Jewish Princess” at all, although you are referred to that way by the mother character. You enjoy sex with anyone who rings the doorbell, male or female, without any neurotic hangups. Given the history of Hollywood’s portrayal of Jewish women, showing a Jewish woman like that is radical. You see Woody Allen films. You see “The Heartbreak Kid”. Jewish women are portrayed either as ugly, or if they have a stunning figure like Leah Lapidus in “Sophie’s Choice”, then they can’t have sex, because they don’t want to, they’re not good at it, or they’re terrified of it. They’d rather be materialistic instead of sexual – file their fingernails, shop at Bloomingdale’s, take vacations in Florida, etc. Given this context, and since porn films do operate in the shadow of Hollywood, who decided to make “Debbie” Jewish? Why wasn’t she left ethnically nondescript?

HARTLEY: Well, the creator of the character is Damon Christian, a Protestant man...

RANZ: Now that’s ironic!

HARTLEY: He’s quite a phenomenal individual who’s been involved in the fight against censorship for a long time. He made Debbie Jewish partly to poke fun at the Jewish American Princess joke, and partly to have someone Jewish who is not a “JAP” for the sheer cinematic amusement to be gained. Plus, he knew that I was Jewish and could play someone of Jewish descent with very little effort...

RANZ: Just breathe!
These are people who have little face-to-face contact with Jews, so all they know of Jewish women is what they see in the movies I've already mentioned. And yet, a lot of these people enjoy watching X-rated films featuring women like yourself, Amber Lynn, Karen Summer, but they don't know that these women who get them off are Jewish. If they did know, would it make a difference in their attitudes towards Jews? Would it make them question the Princess image which they may or may not be aware they even have. They don't understand that not all Jews have dark, frizzy hair, with hairy legs and big noses. They do not realize how varied Jews can look.

HARTLEY: If they look at us on the screen and see that we're hot and find out we're Jewish, I certainly think it would serve to break down some stereotypes which they may or may not be aware they even have. But, a lot of people don't think of Jewish "women." They think about Jews as having power, Jews as having money, or Jews as big bankers. Jewish women, as a subcategory, do not merit much thought in the Midwest, in the heartland of the country. Jews are seen as an amorphous "thing", which floats around and runs the international banking system.

If the people in the Midwest and the South who watch the films knew that we were Jewish, they would say, "Gee, not all Jewish women are ugly." They don't understand that not all Jews have dark, frizzy hair, with hairy legs and big noses. They do not realize how varied Jews can look.

HARTLEY: Right.

RANZ: Let me bounce this idea off you: the JAP stereotype is so widespread and unchallenged that it plays a vital role, an important role, in perpetuating hostility toward Jews. Many people who do believe this of Jewish women live in the Midwest, the South. These are people who have little face-to-face contact with Jews, so all they know of Jewish women is what they see in the movies I've already mentioned. And yet, a lot of these people enjoy watching X-rated films featuring women like yourself, Amber Lynn, Karen Summer, but they don't know that these women who get them off are Jewish. If they did know, would it make a difference in their attitudes towards Jews? Would it make them question the Princess image which they may or may not be aware they even have. They don't understand that not all Jews have dark, frizzy hair, with hairy legs and big noses. They do not realize how varied Jews can look.

HARTLEY: If they look at us on the screen and see that we're hot and find out we're Jewish, I certainly think it would serve to break down some stereotypes which they may or may not be aware they even have. But, a lot of people don't think of Jewish "women." They think about Jews as having power, Jews as having money, or Jews as big bankers. Jewish women, as a subcategory, do not merit much thought in the Midwest, in the heartland of the country. Jews are seen as an amorphous "thing", which floats around and runs the international banking system.

If the people in the Midwest and the South who watch the films knew that we were Jewish, they would say, "Gee, not all Jewish women are ugly." They don't understand that not all Jews have dark, frizzy hair, with hairy legs and big noses. They do not realize how varied Jews can look.

HARTLEY: Right.

RANZ: Do X-rated films with Black people in them perpetuate racist stereotypes?

HARTLEY: I'd say they perpetuate racist stereotypes: the "well hung" stud mentality or the "hot woman" mentality, or how good Blacks can "do it", or how much better Blacks can "do it" than whites. People expect Black sex to sizzle more than white sex.

RANZ: Are you sure? From the films I've seen, porn perpetuates the image that all women are hot, not just Black women. The most well-endowed men in the films — John Holmes, Peter North, Ron Jeremy — are white.

HARTLEY: True, but there are white men in the business who are not really well-hung; Eric Edwards, Richard Pacheco, Jerry Butler. I have a feeling that if a Black man is not pretty decently well-hung, he's not going to get a job.

RANZ: If this is true, since the industry is not unionized, I'd be inclined to think it should be, at least to remedy that situation. Would you like to see the adult film industry unionized? Do you think that could work?

HARTLEY: Of course I'd like to see it unionized; I'm a socialist. But before we can do that, you have to get it legalized or decriminalized. But, it would be very difficult to unionize because it would be too easy to find scab workers. The working conditions over time have generally improved greatly, due to the efforts of those who have gone before — Gloria Leonard, Annette Haven, John Leslie, Richard Pacheco. They have argued for basic comforts on the set. Instead of baloney and white bread, we now have warm, catered lunches. A 12-hour day is considered normal, and
anything more is considered overtime. There are now make-up artists on the set to make sure everyone stays looking their prettiest.

RANZ: You say it would be difficult to unionize this business. But that's true of a lot of industries. Only 18% of the workforce in this country is unionized.

HARTLEY: Well, you have to get the people to think they need a union. That's difficult, because they don't want to make waves, they don't want to get anyone mad at them, they don't want to lose any work. For a lot of people, just the relief of having it decriminalized or legalized would put off the ability to unionize for quite awhile, since they wouldn't have to worry about being harassed, so working conditions would go up even more.

RANZ: As a sex worker, do you feel kinship with prostitutes? Do you have contact with them?

HARTLEY: Certainly I feel kinship with other sex workers and certainly with prostitutes. I've had a slight connection with COYOTE, the prostitutes' rights group. I wholeheartedly feel decriminalization is the only way to go to protect their rights. Only about 20% of all prostitutes are street prostitutes, yet they account for 95% of all prostitutes arrested and harassed. I really feel very strongly for the women who have to put up with being on the streets. It's illegal for them to work in pairs, it's illegal for them to work out of a secure apartment, it's illegal for them to create safe working conditions for themselves. Only with decriminalization can they redress their grievances and only then can they be rid of one of the major hassles in their lives, which is the police.

RANZ: The anti-porn feminists charge that most porn film performers, like prostitutes, were abused as children, so their current line of work is, therefore, not natural. One of your co-workers, a performer named Kimberly Carson, seems to back this up. She states in an interview (Hustler Erotic Video, May 1987), after explaining her Southern Baptist background, that "you also find that a lot of us have been abused by our parents. Most of us were molested." Is that true?

HARTLEY: I have not found that any greater percentage of women in the business have had unwanted sexual experiences than in the general population. I don't know where Kimberly got her information. She also makes a statement that she was raised strictly Baptist, and I find that some of the worst child abusers are those who are very highly religious. They have very rigid ideas as to what men and women are supposed to be about, which opens up the whole thing about sparing the rod and spoiling the child. Many people beat up their children, because the Bible tells them to beat up their children. So, while 25% of all women are abused before they reach age 18, I would guess that 60-75% of all fundamentalist Christian children are abused before they reach age 18.

To those feminists who say that pornography and prostitution are so degrading to women, I say put your money where your mouth is and start counseling programs and job training programs so that women who want to leave the sex industry can do so with a hope of earning a decent living.

WHERE NO PORN STAR HAS GONE BEFORE

RANZ: You've been a guest on the Phil Donahue and Oprah Winfrey shows, a guest speaker at a Mensa convention, and you spoke at a workshop at the 1986 N.O.W. convention in Denver. There was a workshop planned on pornography at the New Jewish Agenda convention in Los Angeles, with you as a key participant. It was cancelled, vetoed by Agenda's Feminist Task Force. New Jewish Agenda is an organization considerably to the left of Phil Donahue, Mensa, and N.O.W., and the members of that Task Force knew that you are a Jew, a feminist, a socialist, all the right credentials, some would say, to speak at that conference. How do you figure it?

HARTLEY: I can only attribute it to puritanism, submission to the anti-porn hysteria going throughout the country, and just fear of the topic, a fear of sexuality, a fear of really reaching new heights of sexual theory and practice. You know, a lot of people tell me to my face that I can't be a feminist because I make adult movies. Feminism in this country has become synonymous with puritanism, a most unfortunate turn of events. So, I was quite upset at not being able to talk at the conference and get my ideas out. It was censorship by default.

RANZ: Some porn stars have recently told the mainstream press, such as VARIETY, that they are quitting porn or going behind the camera due to fear of AIDS. But you're staying in the business, working in some cases with men who have also appeared in gay male porn films. Don't you worry?

HARTLEY: In the beginning, I did. But then, my medical reasoning got the better of me. I knew that the major problem was the mixing of blood and semen. But, one of the saving graces of adult movies is that all semen is deposited externally. I used to dislike that, but I'm glad that that happens. I knew several
people who even stopped French kissing, but I never did stop that. I felt strongly that there was not enough concentration of virus in the saliva to effect harm, plus there are acids and enzymes in the mouth and stomach which could kill a delicate virus.

I just talked to a woman who works here in the East Bay for an AIDS awareness project and she supported my view. She gets all the latest information from the CDC [Center for Disease Control, in Atlanta] and she says you can not get it by giving or receiving oral sex. You also can't get it by giving or receiving oral sex. She says what is now unsafe is unprotected sex during a woman’s menstrual cycle, which stands to reason, and the deposition of semen in the body cavities, the vagina and the anus. Once I heard about the spermicide nonoxynol-9, I started using it to take care of any pre-ejaculate fluid that may get inside me during my scenes.

RANZ: Do you have any desire to direct porn films?

HARTLEY: I would love to direct one day. I've been constantly directing scenes in my mind ever since I first started thinking about being in porno. That takes a business organization behind me, and I still have to investigate and explore how one goes about doing all that. Maybe someone like Candida Royalle [head of Femme Productions] will invite me to direct an episode of her “Star Director Series” that she recently produced and I recently starred in.

RANZ: If you had your druthers, what would the adult film industry look like in terms of the product?

HARTLEY: There would be less of it and better quality. In 1986, there were 100 new adult video titles introduced a month, 98% of which were drek. The scripts are given little or no thought. You have little or no time to rehearse and only two days to shoot. I’ve been in my share of “one-day wonders.” There are too many films being made by people who don’t care about the quality and want to make a quick buck.

RANZ: What do you see as your future in this business, five to ten years down the line? You are a Registered Nurse; will that skill ever be put to use?

HARTLEY: Oh, I certainly expect it to be put to use, if not here then someplace where it can be appreciated, like Nicaragua. I know that my nursing skills and training put me at a certain level of high demand in many parts of the world, so I know that no matter what happens here, I can go somewhere else and be appreciated and be useful.

In, say, ten to fifteen years, I’d like to see my work in the adult film industry fan out, become a little broader. I’d make the occasional film as good roles come my way, have an advice column on a regular basis in a magazine or any other kind of column where I’d get to speak my mind. I would love to get on the college lecture circuit, talking about sex, sexuality, the “business,” feminism, etc. I’d like to write a book one day. I would like to be a general counselor for young women just getting into the business, to help them understand if they really want to do this or would they rather be doing something else.

RANZ: Have you ever thought about having children?

HARTLEY: Oh, sure. Ever since I was little, I always thought I definitely wanted to have at least one child. That’s not in the cards anytime soon, because I’m not ready for it and I don’t want to take the time out for it right now. A child is a very large responsibility, so that will have to wait for a more opportune time.

RANZ: As a socialist porn star, have you ever thought of making progressive X-rated films, ones that would imbue certain left-wing ideas with sex appeal?

HARTLEY: I’d love to. The most romantic story of all is Che and Tanya. I often think, “Golly! I’d like to do a movie about them.”

RANZ: Tanya was Jewish, by the way.

HARTLEY: I didn’t know that. Well, that makes sense!

RANZ: The Left in this country has yet to put forth a coherent position on the pornography issue. What is your message to those on the Left who feel, at the very least, uneasy about pornography?

HARTLEY: Keep an open mind. If you want different kinds of erotica, you are going to have to make your voice heard, or go out and make it yourself. Erotica is a useful and beautiful thing. There needs to be more of it and more kinds of it. Go out and explore tapes on your own, don’t be afraid to use your VCR’s fast forward button. There’s something out there for everybody. When the Revolution comes, we’ll all cum!!

Sheldon Ranz is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America and the National Organization for Changing Men and currently sits on the National Council of New Jewish Agenda. From 1980 to 1986 he hosted Voices of the Israeli Peace Movement on WBAI Pacifica Radio in New York and has produced programs about the pornography controversy in the feminist movement.
THE JEWISH AMERICAN PRINCESS

by SHELDON RANZ

How can you tell if a JAP is a nymphomaniac?
—She has to have a man at least once a month.

The Truly Tasteless Joke-a-Date Book (1988)

Once the stuff of casual joke-telling and private conversation, the stereotype of the “Jewish American Princess” (JAP) has emerged from the closet to make front page news in a serious, ominous manner.

Over the past two years, there has been a wave of anti-Semitic graffiti and JAP-baiting at campuses around the country. One of the more notorious instances of this bigotry occurred at Syracuse University in New York. During basketball games, the University’s pep band would start a chant during a time-out. When a well-dressed female student walked in front of the student section of the stands, band members would stand up, point at her, and shout “JAP! JAP!” Soon thousands of students in the audience would join in. The recently published book by Shirley Frondorf, Death of a ‘Jewish American Princess’: The True Story of a Victim on Trial (Villard Books) deals with the trial of Arizona restaurant owner Steven Steinberg on charges of murdering his wife, Elana. Steinberg’s defense was novel: Elana walked in front of the student section of the stands,beck sees that the merging of anti-Semitism and misogyny creates the Jewish American Princess” and cites as an example of this misogyny the portrayal of the JAP “as both sexually frigid (withholding) and as a nymphomaniac”. (Sojourners, 9/88).

There is a flaw in Beck’s formulation. Most JAP jokes have been available to the general public for a few years, typically in the form of “truly tasteless” joke books, such as the one cited above. Not only do more jokes focus on the Jewish woman’s sexuality than on her alleged materialism, but not a single joke asserts that Jewish women enjoy or desire sex, let alone are oversexed enough to qualify for the label “nymphomaniac”. The undertone of the JA. stereotype is that Jewish women so loathe sex that they divert their libidinous energies away from the bedroom and toward Bloomingdale’s. The JAP is to sex as matter is to anti-matter.

The withholding of sex is considered by many to be the mark of the Puritan. If, according to the Puritan theology, sex for pleasure is sinful because it leads to “temptation” (i.e., consorting with Lucifer), then an analogous situation is true for the JAP: sex
leads her to stray from shopping. Indeed, the element missing in Beck’s equation, \( JAP = \text{anti-Semitism} + \text{Misogyny} \), is Puritanism. After all, jokes deriding the allegedly overprotective Jewish mother also combine anti-Semitism and misogyny, but the mother’s sexuality is left virtually intact. Puritanism, then, is the essential ingredient of the JAP stereotype, its \textit{American} ingredient. Why else do such “princess” jokes arise in the United States and not elsewhere, where Puritanism is not as strong?

The most powerful disseminator of these sex-negative images of American Jewish women is the Hollywood movie industry. Films ranging from \textit{Goodbye, Columbus} to \textit{Dirty Dancing} have unrelentingly perpetuated the JAP stereotype. While there are major Jewish actresses who have radiated a smoldering sexuality on the screen — Debra Winger, Barbara Hershey, Dyan Cannon, Meryl Streep, Jane Seymour — they are not permitted to do so playing American Jewish women. Most Americans, and probably most Jews, do not even know that all those actresses are Jewish. Since most Gentiles meet few Jews, their primary source of information about Jewish women in many cases comes from the movies. As a result, many Americans have come to believe that Jewish women are sexually flawed in ways other women are not. Since these movies are made by studios largely run by Jewish men, the JAP image emerging from the cinemas serves to legitimize or reinforce hostile feelings towards Jews in general.

It is not difficult to understand how, under this intense bombardment of anti-Jewish propaganda, Jewish women with little self-esteem would succumb and internalize the JAP stereotype, or how Jewish men with little ethnic pride would employ the stereotype to rationalize their desire to assimilate into the American status quo.

Thus far, the measures proposed by the aforementioned conferences are laughable: pressure store owners to stop selling JAP “greeting cards”, and \textit{educate Jews to think better of themselves}. These measures are laughable because: (a) they ignore Hollywood and focus on a minor symptom—joke cards, and (b) Jewish institutions are always attempting to improve Jewish self-image. Not only would little be accomplished, but the measures reflect a certain laziness which could only feed into the very stereotype that they are attempting to address. How then should progressive Jews combat this stereotype?

If the sex-negative images of Jewish women are the problem, then it is logical that fostering sex-positive images of Jewish women might be the answer. But from where shall these images arise? And what form shall they take? The time is ripe for Jews to be bold and innovative by considering the possibility that a viable alternative to the current JAP malaise could be the purveyor of the most radically anti-Puritan, sexually explicit images available today, the X-rated film industry.

One of the best-kept secrets of American culture is that Jewish women have been among the top stars of pornographic movies, and some are even considered “legends” by their peers. Gloria Leonard, better known as the publisher of the X-rated \textit{High Society} magazine, was one of the first women to start her film career when she was near 40. Her sexual versatility on camera helped pave the way for over-35 women to star in such films, teaching the audience \textit{that a woman does not have to be a blonde teenybopper to be arousing}. Leonard, who describes herself as “a nice Jewish girl from Moshulu Parkway [Bronx]”, has retired from porn, but continues to speak out on its behalf on the talk show circuit.

Annie Sprinkle was the “Queen of Kink” in the 1970’s and early 1980’s. A veteran of nearly one hundred X-rated films, she has indulged in sexual practices well out of the mainstream. She has done this not only to satisfy her own desire to experiment, but to demonstrate respect for sexual diversity. She recently stepped behind the camera to direct a segment of the \textit{Femme} series, \textit{The Search for the Ultimate Sexual Experience}, which is based on one of her own sexual fantasies. (\textit{Femme} is a series of X-rated videos produced by feminist ex-porn star...
Candida Royalle.) She has occasionally done off-Broadway theatre and she drew a positive review from *The New York Times* for her work in Richard Schechner’s *The Prometheus Project*. The bisexual Ms. Sprinkle participated in the recent Gay Pride March in New York City, carrying a sign that said “Save Sex”.

Quantitatively, however, there were few Jewish women performers until the mid-1980’s. 1986 was a banner year for Jewish women in X-rated films: the top stars were Nina Hartley, Amber Lynn, and Barbara Dare — all Jews. Out of about 50 women performers who are currently active, six are Jewish: Bunny Bleu, Barbara Dare, Nina Hartley, Susan Nero, Annie Sprinkle and Ona Zee. (Those who were Jewish stars but have since retired include Chelsea Blake, Tiffany Blake, Tawny Pearl, Blair Castle, C.J. Laing, Gloria Leonard, Amber Lynn, Ali Moore, Nina Preta, Janey Robbins and Karen Summer.)

A take-off on *Prizzi’s Honor*, *Mitzi’s Honor*, deals with a Jewish mobster who cheats on his wife, Mitzi. This “kosher capo” is not seen as all that bad, however: he only wants to sleep with other Jewish women. Mitzi will not have any of this and exacts from her husband a bit of revenge before getting him to appreciate her. Femme Productions issued *The Three Daughters*, a more serious video about the career aspirations of three sisters - the Claytons - living in upstate New York. The outside doorpost of the Clayton house sports a giant mezuzah, and the daughter that is the main focus of the film is studying to be a doctor.

Then there was *Debbie Duz Dishes*, a comedy about Debbie Anderson, a beautiful but bored Jewish housewife who has to contend with a plumbing system possessed by a supernatural spirit. Debbie at one point has a phone conversation with her mother (unseen), who is reasonably protective of Debbie as compared to the stereotype of the Jewish mother as unreasonably overprotective and jealous. Between attempted “exorcisms”, Debbie has guilt-free, energetic sex with virtually anyone, male or female, who knocks on the door. *Dishes* became a huge commercial hit and it made its lead, Nina Hartley, into a bona fide porn star. Hartley’s repertoire of sexual talent, combined with nonsexual acting ability, was no longer a secret.

Perhaps this is, indeed, one way to combat JAP-baiting, a way predicated on confronting the Jewish American Princess image itself.

Sheldon Ranz is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America and the National Organization for Changing Men. He currently sits on the National Council of New Jewish Agenda. From 1980 to 1986 he hosted *Voices of the Israeli Peace Movement* on WBAI Pacifica Radio in New York and has produced programs about the pornography controversy in the feminist movement.
DID YOU KNOW MOST MALE PORN STARS ARE JEWISH
by DANIEL SHOCKET

Legend has it that the Jewish American male is a faithful husband, good provider and sexless. (NOT THE LEGEND I HEARD!) In the history of word association, no one has ever responded to "stud" with "Jewish". It will therefore come as a great surprise (NOT TO ME!) that a vast majority of the dependable, famous and envied male adult film stars are of the Hebrew faith. As veteran porn stud R. Bolla would say, "That's one of God's little jokes." (AREN'T WE ALL!)

To discover the truth behind the joke, we talked with five top Jewish male porn performers: R. Bolla, Bobby Astyr, Marc Stevens, Herschel Savage (NOW THAT'S A NAME!) and Richard Pacheco. Other top porn studs who are also Jewish include Jamie Gillis, Ashley Moore, Jerry Butler, Ron Jeremy (YUK!) and Harry Reems, among others. While all the men interviewed were different in many important ways, (WAYS NOTED BY THE TYPIST ON HER 25" SCREEN SONY) all shared certain beliefs and ethical values. What did these values have to do with being a nice Jewish porn performer?

"In the Jewish religion, sex is not the worst of sins," R. Bolla points out. "I hope that porn is the most unrighteous thing I do. If we go out of our way to be scumbags, that's the sin. When I do this (perform in X-rated films), I'm offending Shakespeare more than God."

"I don't know why being Jewish seems to be an asset for an actor in "X", (I DO!) Herschel Savage says, "but it must have something to do with it."

Marc Stevens counters vehemently, "My religion, the size of my dick and my color have nothing to do with me being Marc Stevens. I'm not ashamed of being a Jew, but it never comes up and I don't bring it up. But years ago, Jamie Gillis and I used to laugh about this. We'd say all the guys are Jewish and all the women are Christians. We noticed it, but we never really discussed it. I don't know why, we just didn't."

In the best Jewish tradition, what follows next are arguments, theories, principles and righteous indignation. The chosen people chosen for this article include Bobby Astyr, a ten year porn veteran best known for comedy and character roles; R. Bolla, award-winning star of Outlaw Ladies and Amanda By Night; Marc Stevens, a veteran porn performer and cable TV celebrity who was featured in the documentary on porn Not a Love Story; Herschel Savage, seen in The Filthy Rich and Marilyn Chambers' new film Up'n Coming; and Richard Pacheco, award-winning star of Talk Dirty To Me and Nothing To Hide.

How does one succeed in a world most people would call immoral or amoral? All the men interviewed insisted this is done by maintaining ethical standards, treating others in a dignified, compassionate manner and demanding the same treatment for themselves. "If I'm in the cesspool," Bolla believes, "I may as well be nice in the cesspool."

Bobby Astyr concurs. "When I first got into the business, I felt the least I could do while I was here was to get the dopers off dope and try to help where I could. I thought that I'm doing something wrong, so while I'm doing it I'll also do something nice."

Bolla calls it "selective morality", being as decent as possible in an intrinsically exploitative situation. Throughout their history, Jews have insisted on retaining the laws of civilization despite the most adverse circumstances. While porn is far preferable to a pogrom, (I'LL SAY!) the principle remains the same.

While most Jews are probably as puritanical as members of any other ethnic group, there is nothing in the religion that says a lascivious woman is the devil's work. When you're not taught that sex is synonymous with sin, it makes it easier to work sexually with women, and to treat them with dignity. Perhaps this is one reason so many female porn stars find themselves requesting the Jewish actors for their partners, though the girls (GIRLS!) don't realize they're Jewish. These men seem to be kind, decent, more humane.

"When I first came to Los Angeles," Herschel Savage remembers, "I had an interview with this director. I went with a girl that I invited, figuring the guy might use her as well as me. This guy looked at the girl and said, 'Take your top off.' She did. He then puts up his hands and says, 'Your tits are too small. I can't use you.'"

"I just got so angry. I said, 'That's not the way you talk to a person. If you don't like the way she looks, just say you can't use her right now.' We're in his finished basement and he's standing behind the bar. All of a sudden he puts his hand behind the bar as if he's going to get a gun. I still keep talking, telling him how to behave with people. Now I know I lost the job for myself, but I couldn't let him get away with..."
that. The girl was crushed. Afterwards, other people at the interview kept asking me, 'Why did you do that?'. They thought I was a pushy New Yorker.'

When asked what would have happened if the producer had told Herschel his cock was too small, he replied, 'I could have joked about that. I know my worth. The guy couldn't hurt me. But that girl couldn't defend herself.'

"Working in adult films is the most righteous thing I do," says Richard Pacheco. (He refuses to use the word 'pornography' in discussing his profession.) I take enormous pains to treat people fairly, a revolutionary concept in this business, which is hard core in terms of exploitation. I don't tell you that it's being Jewish that makes me feel that way, it's just because of who I am. The fact that we've entrusted the sexual film to amateurs, criminals and drug addicts is absurd to me. My commitment to the industry is to stop doing crap and start doing stuff that elevates the human spirit."

At the same time, Pacheco reflects the most obvious manifestation of Portnoy's Complaint: "I went into this business thinking it would be a safe extra cookie. Neither my wife nor I can tolerate affairs; so I figured this would be the perfect answer. I then discovered the sex was frightening to me. It still is. I had hives before the first scene I ever did and I never had hives in my life. I can't have sex three days before a scene because I won't have enough juice to get through it. My desire is not that high. This isn't something that gets me hot. This is very much work for me. That's God laughing...."

It's also telling that all interviewees (with the single exception of Marc Stevens) insist they are actors first, who happen to perform in X-rated movies. Stevens delights in being a porn celebrity first and an actor by coincidence. Astyr considers himself a clown in the best sense of the word, Savage makes sure you know he does legitimate stage work, (SWEEPS AND POLISHES) and Pacheco is proud of his burgeoning cinema career outside adult films. An anecdote Bolla tells underscores this. "A producer was flying me from New York to Los Angeles," he recounts, "and I told him I felt like a prize bull. You either have to be a prize bull or a racehorse to be flown across country to get laid and paid for it. And the producer said, 'if you couldn't act, I wouldn't be flying you anywhere'. The producers don't want studs who try to act, they want actors who are willing to fuck. I'm a working actor. I've been in over a hundred films and I'd feel worse if I couldn't make a living and I was an actor driving a taxicab."

"I wasn't sure about giving this interview. I have a bad feeling about this article. There's a lot of anti-Semitic sentiment in the country. I'm afraid some redneck will read this and say, '"Those Jews. They've got all the money...(which I wish were true)...now they're getting paid to get laid'."

"I'm feeling more guilty about doing this interview than I am about being a porn star. I'm terribly afraid this will besmirch Jews. I'd like it to be noted." Bolla felt it important that he in no way compromised other Jews and that no one should risk suffering for Bolla's actions but himself.

"They used to want biologically reliable people who would try to act," Bobby Astyr states, "but now being an actor is the most important consideration. They'll wait three hours for the guy to get it up if he can recite lines. They'll even junk the sex scene. I've seen that."

"The men in this business are not as down and out as the women I've seen," Bolla believes. "For women, this is sometimes a last resort. I feel it. For the men in this business it's sort of like revenge at their parents."

Throughout history, every established order has at one time or another excluded and/or exterminated the Jews. This has given Jews a rather jaded view of the established order. All X-rated actors interviewed bragged about their joy in being anarchic, sexual gadflies to the puritanical beast.

"I like the idea of testing the waters," Bolla says with the wicked grin of a man just told he has nothing to lose in a game of chicken. "In the pond of complacency, I'll throw something in. I like dichotomies. I go to synagogue; I go to Israel when I can; I make porn films; I make straight films; I'll stand for specific causes, and I'll give my life to a cause worth dying for. Those contradictions throw people off. I'm saying 'Don't judge me.'"

"I can definitely relate to that," says Bobby Astyr. "That's part of my motivation. If someone turns around and says, 'Of course you do porn...you can't do anything else', I reply that I can do this and this and that; there are plenty of other ways I can make a living. I do porn of my own volition. Now what?"

"I had to run for it and/or fight for it in grammar school because I was a Jew," Astyr continues. "It could very well be that part of my porn career is an 'up yours' to those people. It's also an 'up yours' to the uncles with the pinky rings who got down on me as a kid who wanted to be a musician. That's part of what being a porn star does for me."

"Five years before I got my first part in an adult film," says Richard Pacheco, "I went to an audition for an X-rated film with my hair down to my ass, a copy of philosopher Wilhelm Reich's Sexual Revolution under my arm and yelling about work, love and sex, which were Reich's three principles. These things have got to be in balance or your life is going to be fucked," the last sentence being a paraphrase of the philosopher's theory. No one should be surprised that Pacheco failed to get the job.
"Five years later I auditioned for another X-rated film," Pacheco notes. "That very day, I also interviewed at Hebrew Union Seminary to do rabbinate study. I made the choice that the kind of rabbi I would be, if I became one, was one that could have been performing in a sex film as part of his experience."

Savage discovered that his natural obstinacy had practical value. "I've had guys look at me, waiting for me to fuck up, which in this business means not being able to sexually perform. When I get that kind of treatment, I get a hard-on immediately."

"I didn't tell my parents about it for three years," Pacheco explains, "until a cousin stumbled into a theater and saw one of my movies. He got all excited (OBVIOUSLY A MAN OF UNSOPHISTICATED TASTE, EROTICALLY) and rang up the family grapevine. It ended up five or six members of my family in my hometown knew about it, all pledged not to tell my parents. I immediately got on the phone and called my parents. I wasn't interested in them being embarrassed by something they didn't know."

"My mother's only comment was [sound of tongue reverberating between lips] and she never said anything more about it. My father's comment was silence. It wasn't overt anger, but it was there. I've told my father about half of my experiences. He's interested, amazed, but he hopes that's not how I go on the Johnny Carson show."

Marc Stevens summed it up by saying, "It never occurred to me I'd be cut off from my family. It won't happen and it never will."

R. Bolla asked that this article end with the understanding that he did the interview in the hope of teaching something, "rather than just jerking off. Jewish men aren't studs; hell, we've lost half our peckers at birth! What makes the women ask for us is that these men don't hate them for being sluts, but consider them co-workers deserving of respect. That shouldn't be a Jewish trait, and it really isn't. It's a sense of humanity and compassion that anyone can bring to any situation."

The preceding article was previously published in Samantha Fox's X-Rated Cinema in 1984.

**INTERVIEW**

**DANIEL SHOCKET**

By SHELDON RANZ

(Comments in parentheses put in by the typesetter)

The following are excerpts from an interview of film reviewer Daniel Shocket, conducted in 1985, three months before his death from cancer at age 36.

SHELDON RANZ: How would you define the pornographic film, or if you prefer to call it, the adult film?

DANIEL SHOCKET: Anything which shows graphic sex, penetration — hardcore sex films.

RANZ: So you would define it the way Hollywood does, in terms of the rating. If it's XXX for sexual explicitness, then it's a pornographic film.

SHOCKET: Sure, that's what we're talking about. That's where two people, for the sheer lust of it, get together, perform sex on screen and part with absolutely no consequence whatsoever.

RANZ: How did you get into this business in the first place?

SHOCKET: A friend of mine was the editor of Screw. He said, "Would you like to do some freelance work?" I said, "Sure." I wrote an article, he paid me for it. I said, "Well done. This is a wonderful way to go about my business." I wrote more articles, he paid me more. He said, "Do you want to review movies?" I said, "You get paid for it?" He said, "You bet." And that's how I became a movie reviewer.

RANZ: But not anyone who's offered a job as a movie reviewer will review these kinds of movies. You obviously had to have some predisposition to
review XXX-rated movies as opposed to regular movies.

SHOCKET No, I had a predisposition to write funny reviews. I can be as funny and as silly as I wish to be. I can say whatever it is I wish to say. It is a weekly forum that I have, just as long as I talk about the film for about a quarter of the way, I can say anything else I want. Also, they give you free drinks at the screenings. That's the free-lance life as far as I'm concerned.

RANZ You sound like a genuine idealist, I must say.

SHOCKET I try to be.

RANZ It's been said that the pornographic books and magazines – *Playboy, Penthouse, Hustler* – are going to be phased out, because everybody's getting into the videocassette market. First of all, you get a lot more private space. Those people who get turned on by a book are going to get even more turned on by seeing it on screen, because it seems more real.

SHOCKET No, I don't think they're mutually exclusive things. What the magazines are going to have to do is define themselves in a much more intelligent way than they've been doing, and try to hit a more intelligent audience.

RANZ How would you go about doing that?

SHOCKET I'd have more fun with it. I wouldn't pretend that all sex is good and wholesome and wonderful. I'd try to put a little more humanity into what's going on, make it more complex.

RANZ Give me an example of what you mean by "complex". What are they not doing now that you would do?

SHOCKET I'd show more emotion, more consequence with the sex act. It's hotter to me if people go to bed even if they realize, especially when they realize, that there is going to be some consequence to what they do, that it is going to be a lasting commitment and they are willing to take that step. It makes the sex seem more intimate and more arousing. That is erotic to me. But, I don't define erotica by what is erotic to me.

RANZ You would have explicit photos of monogamous couples, so at least there would be a commitment between the two people?

SHOCKET Or a commitment among three people, or, you know, a commitment among the Kiwanis Club members. It would make it more arousing for me if there were some complexity and some result of the sex, where the people made love...

RANZ And it affected their lives, somehow?

SHOCKET Yeah, some consequence to what they were doing. But that's me. I don't pretend to tell other people what turns them on.

RANZ And you wouldn't legislate your tastes?

SHOCKET No! You know, throughout history, it's always been that the upper class has been telling the lower classes what they can and cannot do. *Fanny Hill* was written by a guy who was trying to get out of jail. If you're trying to get out of jail, to raise money, you don't try to write a book that's setting a new market — you go to a market that's pretty well established and you know you're going to sell your book very quickly. So obviously, there were a lot of pornographic books being written, and no one was busting anybody. The first time *Fanny Hill* was banned was when they put out an illustrated version, which meant that the lower classes, who had not yet learned to read, could get turned on. You know, it was OK when it was only the upper classes... and the same thing is happening now. If it turns Gloria Steinem on, it's erotic. If it doesn't, it's pornographic and therefore evil.

RANZ Do you think that most of these films are offensive to women?

SHOCKET Not really. I mean they're ridiculous, but they're not offensive. To be offensive, you have to take something seriously, and they're not good enough to be taken seriously.

RANZ One hears a great deal about sadomasochistic pornography and violent pornographic films. How much truth is there to the contention that this is basically what XXX-rated films are all about? How do you respond to that?

SHOCKET There is very little sadomasochism in mainstream pornography. The producers are scrupulous about keeping violence out, because they don't want people to say, "Look at that!" Also, sadomasochistic films have a very, very small audience. In New York there was one theater that showed sadomasochist films, and the theater closed. There just wasn't enough of an audience for it. (BESIDES IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO GET ANYONE TO CLEAN THE BATHROOMS)

You're going to find films to fit any fetish, (ABSOLUTELY NOT TRUE!) but to discuss pornography, and then to discuss it as if
sadomasochism is an intrinsic part of mainstream pornography — it isn't there. The trouble with most discussions of pornography is that people are so busy discussing what doesn't exist, and what, through various hallucinations, people fear exist, that they never really examine pornography. Most mainstream pornography does not contain sadomasochism. Most mainstream pornography does not have violence. They don't want it. The men who make it are not out to expand the erotic entertainment or erotic sensibilities of America. They are out to make a buck... They're out to make a buck as unobtrusively as possible.

I once asked why they pulled back after The Devil in Miss Jones received all the great adulation it did, and reviews were saying, “We now have to take porn seriously as an art form”. And I said, “You had it there. You were in the mainstream. You could have really done good stuff. Why did you pull back?” And the producer said, “Well, we kept getting busted” They don't want the notoriety. They want it to be in the segregated section of town where you went and they were left alone.

RANZ Given the institutionalized homophobia or heterosexism in this country, it’s very surprising to see that lesbian sex explicitly portrayed on the screen would have such a significant following. It’s not a majority taste, but it certainly has its devotees.

SHOCKET Most men [XXX-rated film watchers] enjoy watching lesbians.

RANZ Why?

SHOCKET I don’t know — they’re fun!

RANZ They’re fun?!! What is this — Romper Room?

SHOCKET Lesbians are fun people. Women I know have said that men like to watch lesbian scenes because there’s no threat at all. They don’t have to look at a guy whose penis is larger, or who performs better.

RANZ But isn’t there a threat? The implication in these scenes is that these women can get off and they don’t need guys. How could a male chauvinist enjoy this? Unless you’re saying that most men who watch these things aren’t chauvinists.

SHOCKET It has nothing to do with chauvinism. I don’t think people take what they see in a porn film as seriously as you seem to think they take it. You don’t extrapolate, “My Lord! These are lesbians. Therefore they don’t need men. I am threatened sexually!” You say, "Hey, good! Oh goodie! A lesbian scene!" and that’s it. Once the scene is over you don’t think about it anymore. I don’t think they give it the emotional weight you seem to. I don’t think you give anything in a porn film any emotional weight, which is why they’re so dull.

RANZ There seems to be some preference among women filmwatchers for gay, all-male films. One guy who works for a place called Video Flix said, “It’s no different than guys watching all-female films.” What’s Shocket’s Theory about women watching X-rated films?

SHOCKET They’re going to be just as bored as men are.

RANZ You think that they watch gay male films so they won’t feel threatened by another woman who looks better than they do? (WHY ARE MEN THREATENED BY PENIS SIZE AND PERFORMANCE AND WOMEN BY LOOKS, HUH— TYPIST Actually, research shows that 97.6% of all women who have penises are, in fact, threatened by penis size rather than looks. — EDITOR)

SHOCKET The gay male films are hotter for them. I was talking to the women who did the Franklin Furnace Art Show, the erotica art show. They were looking through all this porn. They found themselves being turned on mostly by the gay men magazines. Not by Playgirl, but by the way the men were posing for the gay magazine.

RANZ Well, there was interaction between the men there, whereas in Playgirl, it’s just pinups.

SHOCKET It’s not just the interaction. The men in the gay magazines are trying to be more sensual.

RANZ What kind of man would want to participate in an X-rated film?

SHOCKET Someone who finds it basically a lark, an easy way to make a buck, have fun, get laid. (I’LL BET THIS IS THE FIRST TIME AN ARTICLE IN A PROGRESSIVE JEWISH MAGAZINE ENDED WITH THE WORDS “GET LAID”).

Sheldon Ranz is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America and the National Organization for Changing Men. He currently sits on the National Council of New Jewish Agenda. From 1980 to 1986 he hosted Voices of the Israeli Peace Movement on WBAI Pacifica Radio in New York and has produced programs about the pornography controversy in the feminist movement.
On November 22, 1985, federal agents arrested Jonathon Pollard, an analyst in Naval Intelligence, outside the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C. and charged him with passing classified defense information to Israel. The next day they arrested his wife, Anne Henderson Pollard, for trying to destroy the evidence of his crime. Under a plea bargain they cooperated with the prosecutors who, in exchange, agreed not to ask for the maximum sentences. The judge ignored the agreement and in March 1987 sentenced Jonathon Pollard to life in prison and Anne Pollard to five years.

Jonathon Pollard’s supporters call the case “the American Dreyfus Affair”. That sounds snappy, but is terribly deceptive. Dreyfus was not guilty, not even in the most technical sense. His only crime was being a Jew.

In his early days in prison Pollard sent many of his supporters letters. The Pollard support organization, Justice for the Pollards, has copied and distributed some of them. His father-in-law, Bernard Henderson, collected other writings by Pollard in a book on the case. The letters are extraordinarily vituperative. The nicest thing Pollard says about people who criticize him is to compare them to Gedaliah, the Jewish governor of Judah after Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. He tosses about comparisons of collaborators with the Nazis with the ease most people reserve for frisbees. Caspar Weinberger is not a good person. He shares in responsibility for large scale death and destruction in Central America, Libya, and Southern Africa. None of this bothers Pollard. But, because he is not as enthusiastic about Israel as Pollard would like, Pollard compares Weinberger to Chmelnitzki, the 17th century predecessor of Hitler and leader of a wave of pogroms in the Ukraine. He even says Weinberger has an “Amalek complex”, as if his goal were to annihilate all Jews. Pollard also indiscriminately calls American Jewish leaders “salon Jews”, “court Jews”, and “hyperassimilationists”.

American Jewish leaders know that religion no longer binds Jews together. They look to secular sources - Israel and the Holocaust - to maintain a sense of a mythical American Jewish community. Not spiritual ties, but raising money for Israel, cheering on its army, touring its sites, and preserving the Jewish monopoly on the Holocaust define Jewish identity for them.

Pollard himself is an example of both the alienation from traditional Judaism that Jewish leaders hope to combat and the failure of their strategy. Although he says his family is steeped in Jewish religion, neither he nor they give much supporting evidence. Without the stacks of papers about the Pollard case, his sister Carol Pollard’s apartment could be the home of any American gentile. Instead of a mezuzah on the door, she has a plaque on her light switch saying “God Bless Our Home”.

In his letters, Pollard misidentifies the most famous saying from Pirke Avos, The Ethics of the Fathers, (“If I am not for myself, who will be for me...”) as a World War II Jewish partisan song. For Jonathon Pollard, the fanatic follower of American Jewish ideology, Jewish tradition starts with World War II. The previous 3,000 years of Jewish tradition are irrelevant. In his implicit repudiation of the past and his emphasis on the new era that began with the Holocaust and Israel, Pollard is implying, like the Christians before him, that Judaism has a new testament with new rules and obligations.

Pollard’s new religion is the American Jewish establishment’s ideology pushed to its extreme limits. This new religion explains oddities like Pollard’s saying that the death of 75 members of his family in death camps during W.W.II was the most significant event in his life. Pollard was born in 1954, more than eight years after those deaths. But in his mind W.W.II and the establishment of Israel were religious millenial events, the equivalent of God’s granting the Torah at Mount Sinai. Jewish tradition says that all Jews throughout history were at Mount Sinai. Pollard has structurally transposed the founding event of the new religion with the revelation at Mount Sinai. Thus in his mind the Holocaust really did occur in his lifetime.

Pollard takes his identification with the Holocaust to obscene lengths. He often calls his and his wife’s jail terms his family’s “personal Holocaust”. He encourages his supporters to use W.W.II analogies. They often rehearse the myths and falsehoods spread by the right-wing of the American Jewish establishment about how American Jews stood by and did nothing during W.W.II. One of Pollard’s pen-pals, Steve Mazer, the editor of Ha’etgar, says of the refusal of American Jewish organizations to help Pollard,
“the fact is that the Jewish community in this country is not going to do a thing about it. During W.W.II, this same Jewish community was also relatively silent. While six million Jews and many others were being slaughtered by the Nazis, the answer was generally the same: no response. The precedent has been set and is now being followed to the letter”.

Pollard takes Israel-worship to the same extreme lengths. He describes his fanatical version of Zionism as the authentic Jewish religion, saying that “Jewish nationalism and faith are identical” and that a “fundamental tenet” of that faith is “a Jew’s unconditional responsibility to help ensure the survival of Israel”. He even calls in God on his side by saying that the Israeli politicians who refused to help him “will one day have to explain their actions to any Knnesset investigating committee”.

That higher power is not the traditional Jewish god of Moses or of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Pollard uses the uncommon phrase “the god of Joshua”. Jews rarely speak of Joshua or of his god. But somebody whose religion starts with Israeli independence would be fascinated with Joshua, the first Jewish conqueror of Canaan.

But, so what? Perhaps Jonathan Pollard is the intellectual golem of the Jewish establishment taking their limp, poorly thought-out ideology to its logical self-destructive extreme. Perhaps, unlike Dreyfus, he was a spy. But maybe his supporters still have a point. Maybe he really is the victim of anti-Semitism. Even if he is not a victim, he deserves justice and fair treatment.

On the surface, his supporters make a good case, but each of their points falls apart when tested. They say that Pollard spied out of love of Israel and his Zionist commitment. He did not do it for profit. The $50,000 he took from Israel was just to cover expenses. In speeches and letters his supporters even claim that he lost money. In his prison letters Pollard portrays his wife and him suffering on their trips to Europe, sleeping in the cold and in their car to help the cause. But in his affidavits to the court reprinted in Henderson’s book, Pollard and his wife admit to having profited from their spying. They received jewelry and trips to Israel and Europe where “the hotels we stayed at, the restaurants we enjoyed, and our modes of transportation were well beyond what a couple on our salaries could normally have afforded”. They also accepted money from Israel, so that their lives “were significantly improved to the degree that we could do certain things and purchase a few items that were previously beyond our reach”. Also, he admits that he expected the Israelis would reward him with an important position in the Israeli defense industry.

In his attempts to combine greed and ideology Pollard was the perfect spy for the age of Reagan. Pollard, who voted for Reagan, really believed in doing well while doing good. In his affidavits he dodges back and forth between money-making schemes and his fanatical Zionism with complete faith that the two could never conflict. Working in the defense bureaucracy where military contractors make fortunes while supposedly making America strong, Pollard could easily convince himself that his access to secrets gave him the opportunity to help himself, Israel, and even America.

Significantly, Pollard claims he helped Israel but did not hurt America. This defense is another example of his taking American Jewish ideology to an extreme. American Jewish leaders have endlessly claimed that Israel and America have the same interests and the same enemies. They are so fearful of appearing to favor Israel over America, that they have concocted the idea of “the special relationship” between two countries that are as one in their visions of the world. Deep down, American Jewish leaders and thoughtful people know that no two countries can ever agree on everything all the time. But Pollard, working in Naval Intelligence and seeing America with a policy not totally in Israel’s interest, could only believe that both America and Israel were being betrayed. The policy makers were sinning against his religious beliefs.

The spector of dual loyalty hovers over the Pollard case. Pollard justly criticizes American Jewish leaders for abandoning him out of fear that any defense of his actions would bring into question their own patriotism. Both Jonathan and Anne Pollard have had a bad time in prison. They have been harrassed by their guards, held in solitary confinement, denied access to their lawyers and to regular visits from friends. He has been threatened by other prisoners and she has been denied crucial medical treatment and medicines. These are terrible denials of civil and human rights. But American Jewish leaders are afraid to taint themselves by protesting these abuses.

This concern about dual loyalty is misplaced. Only a sprinkle of extreme rightist anti-Semites and the fringes of anti-Zionist Jews care about it. Most Jews, like most other Americans, after years of Columbus Day and St. Patrick’s Day parades and other manifestations of ethnic pride, are completely comfortable with the idea that groups of Americans keep links with some other country, as a source of personal identity.

In rejecting charges of dual loyalty, Pollard’s conservative and right-wing supporters are more in tune with the American Jewish condition than the liberal American Jewish leadership. They err however when, ignoring his greed, they describe Pollard as a “prisoner of conscience”. Rabbi Avi
Weiss, a politically conservative rabbi from the Bronx, says that "although Pollard broke the law, he was giving information to Israel that the United States, as an ally, should have given on its own. [Pollard's] information was instrumental in securing some of the vital interests of Israel". So, instead of espionage, Pollard was committing a kind of high-tech civil disobedience that challenged an immoral American defense policy. Weiss even implies a comparison with Martin Luther King Jr.

But Weiss and other Pollard supporters have a rather limited view of civil disobedience. Mordecai Vanunu, a worker in an Israeli defense plant, gave the Times of London pictures and documents showing that the Israeli capability to produce nuclear weapons was much more highly developed than anyone had publicly proved. Unlike Pollard, Vanunu's was a true act of conscience. He gained little from it except a long sentence in an Israeli prison. He acted only to stop a policy with which he disagreed. Nevertheless, Weiss emphasized that Vanunu is not a prisoner of conscience. He is "a traitor to the Jewish People" whose acts were "catastrophic not only to Israel, but to Western interests in general".

Other Justice For The Pollards activists, who eloquently denounced the prosecutor for spreading unsubstantiated and false rumors about Pollard's mental stability and drug abuse, repeated the same kind of unsubstantiated rumors that the Israeli government spread about Vanunu.

Pollard and his conservative followers bolster their weak arguments with conspiracy theories. The conspirators, depending on the theory, are a large segment of the American government. In the looniest version of the conspiracy, Caspar Weinberger wanted to discredit Israel and tilt U.S. policy toward Saudi Arabia. He had Naval Intelligence set up Pollard as a spy by showing him documents crucial to Israel and then telling him Israel would never see them. They relied upon his "racial instincts" (Jonathan and Anne Pollard are perhaps the only Jews in America who still believe that Jews are a race) to turn the documents over to Israel. They then arrested him.

This theory has two problems. First, in his affidavit Pollard says that nobody in Naval Intelligence knew he was a Jew. Second, the same people who portray Pollard as a dupe also insist that he is a hero because he was a dupe. They say that the information Pollard gave Israel was so crucial it saved the entire country from being massacred. They have no explanation for why the anti-Israel people who set up Pollard did not just withhold the information from him and watch Israel be destroyed. It certainly would have been neater and quicker than a convoluted plot that depended on Pollard's racial instincts.

Occasionally Pollard's defenders float an alternative theory without explaining how it can co-exist with the "Naval Intelligence set-up theory". In this theory, which Pollard himself seems to favor, Weinberger, laboring under his Amalek complex, was planning to withhold information from Israel so that Arab nations could attack Israel and destroy its people. Pollard gave Israel the information to save itself and is being punished for thwarting Weinberger's plot. Pollard and his defenders do not explain what information could be so crucial. For Zionists they have little faith either in Israel's intelligence services or its armies. They also do not explain why the rest of the pro-Israel U.S. government would allow Weinberger to destroy Israel.

The fall-back conspiracy theory is that Pollard acted on his own initiative, but then Weinberger took advantage of the situation to perpetrate anti-Semitic and anti-Israel acts. The problem with this theory and the others that claim a cabal used the Pollard case to discredit Israel is that U.S.-Israeli relations did not appreciably change after Pollard's arrest and conviction.

The only possible act of anti-Semitism the conspiracy theorists cite is the judge's decision to sentence Pollard to life in prison despite the plea-bargain. The judge, they say, acted at the request of Weinberger who, in turn, was prodded by Prince Bandar, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the U.S. Carol Pollard and other Justice For The Pollards members claim that Prince Bandar, acting purely out of anti-Israel animosity, demanded of Weinberger that Pollard be executed. Pollard's life sentence was, she says, really an example of barbaric Saudi Arabian justice. But in affidavits in Henderson's book, Pollard admits that he "recruited" or "corrupted" a Saudi Arabian bureaucrat for Israel. In addition some of the information Pollard gave to Israel was about Saudi Arabia. So Prince Bandar, even if he represents a feudal monstrosity, was not acting solely out of anti-Israel animosity. He was playing a legitimate ambassadorial role by protesting to Weinberger that one of Weinberger's employees should be punished for corrupting a Saudi Arabian employee and for stealing U.S. intelligence about Saudi Arabia and giving it to Israel.

Discussions of Saudi Arabian diplomats are cumbersome facts for the conspiracy theorists. They believe that Weinberger, the judge, the prosecutor, and even (according to the Pollard family) the defense attorney, are part of the conspiracy. A conspiracy is their only explanation for why the Pollards' sentences were so long. They often compare the Pollards' sentences unfavorably to those of the Soviet spy ring around John Walker and his family. They ignore simpler explanations. Although Pollard brags endlessly in his letters about his sophistication in
espionage, he was not shrewd enough to stop talking when he was arrested (as Walker did). The government had to negotiate with John Walker to get the information it wanted. In contrast Pollard never shut up. He gave away all his negotiating power for free in the naive belief that the government would reward him for being a nice guy. John Walker and his lawyer could bargain for light sentences of a specific number of years and a recommendation for parole for Walker’s son. But Pollard’s lawyer had little to offer when he was arrested (as Walker did). The government had to negotiate with John Walker to get from Pollard. The most Pollard’s lawyer could get free in the naive belief that the government would lawyer could bargain for light sentences of a specific number of years and a recommendation for parole for Walker’s son. But Pollard’s lawyer had little to offer when he was arrested (as Walker did). The government had to negotiate with John Walker to get from Pollard. The most Pollard’s lawyer could get free in the naive belief that the government would

Once imprisoned the Pollards have probably been mistreated. But their prison treatment conforms to the dismal abuse regularly passed out in American prisons; it is not the result of anti-Semitism. The one Justice For The Pollards activist who knows about prisons — she devoted her life to prison reform — found nothing unusual about the Pollards’ treatment. It was so normal that she never mentioned it to her prison colleagues.

Jonathon Pollard and his followers often forget about Israel’s role in the affair. They are such fanatic right-wing Zionists that they rarely criticize Israel. Pollard, the Israeli maximalist who speaks of the “Jewish territorial inheritance” in Palestine and who says that “we are one people with one God and one indivisible land”, prefers to blame America or American Jews. The first thing Carol Pollard asked when I interviewed her was whether I was from New Jewish Agenda or some other pro-P.L.O. organization” and whether I was going to use the case to justify giving away parts of Israel to the Palestinians.

Pollard was spying for Israel. But the government of Israel explicitly repudiated him. “Jonathon Pollard’s fate is no concern of Israel’s,” said Yitzhak Shamir. “The State of Israel has no connection to Jonathon Pollard or his family. The State of Israel did not hire him and did not assign him espionage missions. Therefore the situation of his family may be a human problem, but not a problem with which the state as such has to concern itself.”

Although Israel agreed to cooperate with American prosecutors, the investigators were convinced that Israel withheld information and lied. Even Abraham Sofaer, who headed the U.S. investigation team and who won his job as State Department Counselor by presiding over the Ariel Sharon libel trial against Time magazine, was disappointed by Israel. Just before Pollard’s sentencing date, Israel promoted to General and commander of an important air base, Aviem Sella, the man who recruited and handled Pollard. It also promoted to chairman of Israel Chemicals, the largest government-owned company, Rafie Eitan, the head of the intelligence agency to which Pollard reported. Then, in a move of either incredible stupidity or brazen provocation, it invited officials of the U.S. embassy to attend a celebration in honor of Sella’s promotion.

When Weinberger wrote to the judge, he was reacting at least as much to Israel’s behavior as to Prince Bandar’s request. He specifically requested that the promotion of Sella and Eitan fall on the Pollards’ heads. The judge concurred. Pollard was punished for Israel’s behavior. This action may not be fair, but it is not anti-Semitism. It is a common practice in the perverse world of American justice for judges to punish the members of a criminal conspiracy in custody harshly as a lesson to those at large.

Nevertheless, most of Pollard’s supporters agree with the Philadelphia Justice For The Pollards leader who told me that the only thing Israel did wrong was in the timing of the promotions of Sella and Eitan. Otherwise, they deserve their honors and Pollard, who was a hero, deserves a medal instead of a prison sentence.

Jonathon Pollard is a tragic figure in Jewish history. He made the mistake of believing the facile public relations cant of American Jewish spokespeople. Then when he tried to live out his devotion to those ideas, the American Jewish leaders repudiated him. Cowering in fear of charges of dual loyalty, they left him alone to face the full force of the American judicial system. But the Pollard case has another tragic aspect. Money and ideology were not the only reasons Pollard became a spy. He liked the image of a spy. In his letters he frequently brags about his knowledge of and involvement in espionage. He identifies very strongly with Jews who helped to smuggle refugees to Israel after W.W.II and who fought in the Israeli War of Independence. He wanted to be a hero like them. The Israelis spotted this yearning and manipulated him with it. They continually told him how important he was to them. They and American Jewish leaders should be ashamed of how they led Jonathon Pollard and his wife into prison. The rest of us in America and Israel should be ashamed for allowing them to do it.

Burton Levine is a writer who lives in Connecticut.
He was a bookkeeper in civilian life. This wasn’t him, these thick, starched green fatigues, the heavy metal helmet and the automatic rifle with a barrel so hot he couldn’t touch it. But the army wanted him — called him up — and there wasn’t any choice. So Avron cautiously moved into the small, smelly ancient hut built of mud, and stood inside the entrance for a minute, adjusting his eyes to the darkness.

A bright bleaching light passed through a glassless window where a pale blue curtain flapped in a blistering breeze. The stiff, colored fabric seemed to inhale and exhale through that void in the wall, tapping on the sill — one sound, and the buzzing of flies. Garbage was piled in the middle of the room about five feet high. The legs of chairs stuck out from filthy aged rags, rotting dried orange rinds, a wood bench, and God knows what-all. Avron could barely see over its top to the other wall. When his vision became accustomed to the dark, he saw a funny little picture of a mosque, a bead curtain, a cooking stove tipped on its side, and an upended table with its broken parts pointed toward the pile of trash. He heard the flies buzz around him and looked at the rot in the stinking, infested room. Filthy, fucking Arabs, he thought. Isn’t it just like them to live in filth, in fucking filth. Tap-tap. He looked towards the window. Was that something? He took a step into the room. His boot scraped along the mud floor and he heard the gravel crunch. The leather squeaked and his feet ached.

The beaded curtain was to the right of the window. Avron couldn’t tell if it hid another room. He had to check. Sergeant Weitzman would be pissed if he didn’t. He moved toward the pile of refuse, his finger on the trigger and the safety released. He pointed the barrel at the curtain. There was just enough light to see behind the heap when he rounded its corner — nothing. He took a deep breath and felt his right hand shaking; as he moved the automatic weapon against his side, it bumped against a plastic water canister suspended from his belt. The window was now on his left. The curtain flapped and he saw three nails holding it in place. But the beads...what was behind them?

He heard a paper cup squash under his boot and looked down at the litter on the floor. This side was mostly old Arabic language magazines and newspapers, discarded clothes and a piece of faded canvas. He bent forward to read the banner on one of the periodicals. It wasn’t a good job and...stunned him as much as the metal that tore through his uniform, his muscle and bone, severed his lumbar spine and ripped his left flank open. His legs collapsed under his weight and he fell forward against the rags and canvas. His chin hit the barrel of the Uzi machine gun and he was lucky not to blow his face off. His hand rested under the trigger guard and the clip of rounds.

It was strange, he thought. Where was the pain? He felt no pain, just some burning. Goddamn, it must have been from that window. From the window behind him. Oh no! But no pain. Why? He reached down and felt his side, something wet and warm. Sticky. Thick. It felt like warm grease. Avron pulled his hand up and looked at it. It was red.

He could barely see over the top of the trash. He lay prone against the garbage and watched the doorway. There! What was that? Something moved in the entrance. Yes! There it is again. Something outside. He brought the Uzi up with his right hand and laid the weapon against the top of the pile, making an arch with his right arm to hold the gun and aim its barrel toward the door. There! He stuck his head in. But it’s not big enough to shoot at. I must wait. He’s looking around, but he can’t see me. That must be him, the one that shot me. Ass of a donkey! Arab scum! Come in, yes, look for me! Just as I looked for you, come in!!

Salem was seventeen. He stood outside the hut, his body pressed against the wall, plastered against it like a poster, he thought. He waited, listening. Fucking Jew — he had no right to be in Al Na-qam. He held an old M-16 in his right hand and his knuckle scraped against the rough material composing the uneven wall. He darted his head in and out of the entrance like a lizard, quickly, trying to find the soldier. He wanted the gun.

Once it had been his grandfather’s home, this dirty one-room hovel that was falling down. He remembered helping fix the roof about ten years ago, and the man who always wore a dirty black skull cap, tattered from age and use. It wasn’t a good job and now the roof sagged. The old man died and no one came to work on the hut. Why should they? What good was it? The land was worthless, not even for
feeding goats or sheep. A few dried plants stretched their roots deeply in the sandy soil for droplets of water. It was impossible to farm without irrigation, and no one in Lebanon had any plans for that. Not with Beirut in ruins. And who cared about us anyway — a few homeless Palestinians?

They hid in the hills when the Israelis came. His leader, Im Jaled Chasam, told him to watch the little valley while he took the older men further south to ambush a troop carrier. Saleem wanted to go with the others, but he knew not to argue with Chasam who was smart, that fox, smarter than he looked, short, with a high pitched voice. “You must stay,” he said. So Saleem gloated as he hid and watched the lone Israeli soldier walk toward his grandfather’s old hut. Let them go, he thought. I will show them the captured gun when they return, and maybe the dead man’s head.

He could stand it no more. He looked into the hut, his eyes squinting, trying to find the dead man. Please, if you please, Mohammed, make the room light for me. If it be your wish, let me find the dead man quickly. God willing, I will strip him of his belongings and have a good weapon to fight your battles. If it please you, make him dead and my mission safe.

Saleem could see nothing but the window and through it the dusty hills, and the blue curtain flapping in the dry air. The rest of the room looked like different shades of gray and black. He saw the heap of refuse in the middle of the room contrasted against the wall behind it, and the window. He edged toward the entrance, moving one foot slowly behind the other until he was ready to go in. He listened for sounds but heard nothing. He thought the soldier was dead.

He wore shoes but no socks, a faded pair of brown trousers and an old camouflage shirt that was too small for any of the other men. It was a remnant of the Six Day War, he was told, gloriously won in battle from the larger but inferior Jew-barbarians. He was hatless, his thick black hair matted and dirty, unwashed. An old belt too large for his slim torso and doubled back on itself held his pants on his thin waist. Saleem decided it was time.

He stuck his head in, then his chest, creeping into the room, hugging the wall of the doorless entrance, stepping gently across the threshold. He knew he was a silhouette, but he had no choice. He moved the gun to his side, brought it across his chest, and took it in both hands.

The Uzi cracked twenty rounds in just two seconds, scattering its high velocity bullets in a line starting on one wall, through the door, and continuing on the other side. Two bullets entered the boy’s abdomen and exited on either side of his back. Saleem fell into the room, gripped his stomach, and dropped his gun.

The Uzi kicked back against Avron’s hand and arm and he couldn’t hold it. He watched it slither down the trash pile to the floor. He grabbed for it, but it slid away, the barrel smoking a little stream of vapor and smelling of burnt gunpowder. The room was quiet for a moment after the shots, the staccato tat-tat-tat-tat-tat, loud, smacking sounds like a newspaper beaten quickly against a table. The acrid smell of burning sulfur drifted towards him from the automatic rifle that lay out of reach. He stretched for it, trying to make his feet move, but they wouldn’t. He didn’t have his weapon....what if that dirty rab wasn’t dead?

He lifted his chest with his hands, pushing up against the trash trying to get to the Uzi. Instead he fell down the side of the pile, rolling like a log and came to a rest against the old magazines, looking up at the ceiling. He saw where he had first fallen. It was covered with blood, many hundreds of cc’s he thought. He lay on his back, helpless, like an exposed turtle, his legs askew, unable to reach the gun, waiting.

The Arab lay on the other side of the trash, gripping his stomach. He made little grunting sounds, gasping for air; ugh, ugh, ugh... The little puffs were hardly enough to keep him alive; in-out, in-out. He seemed to push his life’s breath out more than take it in. The pain was very bad. He didn’t want to move, didn’t want to breathe, it hurt so much. What went wrong? How had he been shot? He thought the soldier was dead.

Avron lay on his back, waiting for the Arab to come and kill him. He wondered how he would do it. Damn! He should have aimed higher. Now he was at his mercy — Hah! What mercy? Did he know any Arabs that gave mercy? He was as good as dead — no worse...... He was dead...... No.... His hand grenades.... Yes..... He reached for his belt and pulled one of the ovals off and found its pin. Yes. If the Arab came Avron would pull the pin. At least they would both die. He listened. What was that grunting noise? He listened. It sounded like a machine, almost like a little motor. It was him! I must have hit him. Ahhhhh — the dirty Arab is lying on the other side of this chazari — he’s hit...

Saleem was conscious, breathing so shallow that he hardly exchanged any air at all, trying to stop the pain. He heard the sliding sound from the other side of the rubbish heap, knew the Israeli was still alive. Why doesn’t he finish me off, he thought. All right, already. I will die. But it will be a glorious death. And they will know that I died for the cause, for Palestine. Just do not move me.... let them find me here, defending my grandfather’s home. It will not be for a loss. They will know and honor me. Like we did the others.... But the pain was getting better.
He could breathe a little more, so he tried not to grunt.... Let him come and find me, dirty Jew. God willing, he must find me, but I will not dishonor my cause.

They both lay quietly for a while in that little valley where the sounds of life and death were silenced by rocks and thin-leafed olive trees, dried up rills and sandy paths. The sun beat down on the roof of the hut, and flies dived, and small-toed reptiles basked, and the earth cracked, and nothing grew. Avron waited for the Arab, his hand gripping the ball of death. When the Arab didn't come, he wondered and decided that he, too, must be hurt. That must be the motor, he thought, his breathing. He relaxed his grip, but kept it held closely in his hand. He turned his head from side to side, trying to find clues, hope.

Avron waited for the Arab, his hand gripping the ball of death. When the Arab didn't come, he wondered and decided that he, too, must be hurt. That must be the motor, he thought, his breathing. He relaxed his grip, but kept it held closely in his hand. He turned his head from side to side, trying to find clues, hope, He remembered his Arabic, wondering if he should use it. He wondered if the other would understand him, that rudimentary financial language he used with the merchants in Tel Aviv. What the hell.

There was no answer, just the motor. He said "Soldier!" he called out in the foreign tongue. There was no answer, just the motor. He said it again, thinking he must know the word.

"What?"
"You are alive?"
"Yes."

He waited. What a horrible predicament. Trapped here in this God-forsaken, dirty little hut with some stupid, filthy Arab. "You are a soldier?"
"Yes. Of Allah."

Shit! Wonderful! Maybe he should just pull the pin. "How old are you?"
"Seventeen" He was surprised at the Israeli, he spoke Arabic, a decent accent. But the pain.... My God. Seventeen. Just a boy. Shot by a boy. To die, shot by a boy. "You are just seventeen?"
"Yes. How old are you?"
"Twenty-four."
"Will you kill me?"

Avron thought about it. He could pull the pin, toss the grenade over the trash and hope for the best. Probably he, too, would die from the blast and the fragments, but what were his chances? "I don't know."

"What are you waiting for?"

That was a good question, thought Avron. What would Sergeant Weitzman do? They didn't tell him about this in training.

"Do it. Kill me. What are you waiting for?"
said the boy.

"Because I will die too."

"What do you mean?"

"If I try to kill you, you will shoot me. If I use my grenade, we will both die."

"I cannot shoot you, I have too much pain. I am dying, too. I know it. Allah be praised, I die for his cause."

What shit, Avron thought. These Arabs, always with Allah-be-this, Allah-be-that. At least he had no pain. "Then we will both bleed to death, together?"

"If that is Allah's wish."

Yes, it seems it is Allah's wish. They would die together, in a little, dirty mud hut in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, over some worthless piece of scrubby, lifeless land. Avron wondered if the Arab really believed it. But they knew nothing else.

"You are Palestinian?"
"Yes. You are Israeli?"
"Yes."

"Why did you come? Why did you invade my land?"

"This is not your land. It is Lebanese, and before that it was ours."

"No, it is my father's and his father's."

"Oh yes, yes. I know. And his father's before that. What about my father's?"

"He did not own it. It is Palestinian. It is my father's."

"Hah! That's what they tell you."

"Yes. It is so."

"But none the same, it is Israel's land. So it says in the Bible."

"My father, he does not believe in the Bible. Only the Koran."

"The Koran. And what does it say in the Koran, Arab? What does it say about killing and stealing other people's land?"

"It says all men should honor Mohammed, the true God. And all that stand in Allah's way are heathen and infidels and will die a thousand deaths."

"And so you will only die one death, because you are a believer."

"Yes. And you, a thousand."

Impossible, he thought, they are just impossible to understand. It is ours and so it says in the Bible. It always has been and it always will be. We just gave it to them, the dirty Arabs, and they are so ungrateful "What is your name, Arab?"

"I am not Arab. I am Palestinian."

"All right Palestinian. What is your name?"

"Saleem Achmad Waatah. Son of Kaaliel. He is dead."

"He died only one death?"

"You make fun of me, Jew?"

"Yes. It is crazy, these thoughts of death and dying. We will both die. Here."

"I will gladly join my father, and his brother. If you die it gives me benefit. Allah be praised."

"Shut up! Allah be praised — you are crazy!! We are dying in this God forsaken pest-hole and you are praising God. Sick!"

"It is a glory to die for Allah."
"Is it a glory to die? To die for a rotten dry patch of land that you cannot even raise sheep on? Is that glory?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know? You know why you don't know? Because you have never been taught, and you have never seen anything. You are just a boy. What can you know?"

"Yes. I am just a boy. But I die a man."

"You die just the same. With me, a Jew. We die together. What does the Koran say about that?"

"I don't know."

"Let me tell you something, Arab. We die for nothing."

He paused, listening to the other’s breathing, grunting, and he thought for a moment he wasn't there. Maybe the boy crawled out, to call his friends, and he was imagining things, that the window was the breather, and the sound came from the movement of the air. He wondered who would discover them first, his platoon, or the Arab insurgents. In either case he was doomed. The platoon would see the Arab and drop a grenade. If it were the Palestinians they would kill him. It was hopeless.

The whole war was hopeless, fighting over dried up slivers of land, water holes, sand, rocks, hills. For what? To say you own it?

"Senseless. It's senseless."

"What did you say?"

"I said it is stupid. This war — it's senseless."

"It is not so. We fight for our freedom, you fight to enslave us."

"That's a pack of lies. Who'd want you?"

The boy thought. Who did? No one in the world wanted them. All his life he had fought, first the elements, then his family and finally, when he was old enough, these Jews. It was a way of life for him, taught at his mother's knee, and from his father. He had never been wanted. The fourth boy. He remembered his mother, her tired, lined face, dragging herself from chore to chore, always working, never laughing. Did she ever show him love? Who did want him?

"The Koran says, we are God's children, that he loves us."

"Yes. He loves you enough to let you die in some dirty hut. With a Jew. Is that love?"

"Why do you speak my language?"

"I learned it."

"You speak it well."

"It is like Hebrew? Do you know Hebrew?"

"Only some words."

"It is strange, you know. In other wars men fight foreigners, invaders. But here we kill our ancestors."

"You are not my brother."

"You were, once, long ago. Why didn't you leave with the others?"

"It is my home. This was my grandfather's house."

Avron felt like an intruder. Here he was killing the boy in his family's home. He wondered what his mother would say. "This place?"

"But he is dead now. I will soon join him with God."

He heard the boy moving, or was it metal, or was it stiff rags? Something scraping along the floor. Where are you going?"

"Nowhere."

"No! You must stop," Avron said, gripping the grenade closer and feeling for the security of the pin that would set the fuse. The movement stopped. He wondered if the boy was crawling towards him, or outside, to bring more Arabs.

"I can't, anyway. It hurts too much."

"How do I know?"

"You don't. I will tell you. I know I am dying. I can feel it, I can see it."

"How can you tell? Maybe it's just a flesh wound."

"I see my blood. It is everywhere, and I still bleed. I know."

"You will call your friends."

"I would, if I could. Even then, I will die. We have no doctors."

It was true. Only the Israeli Army had surgeons. He would die. Perhaps, if he waited... "Why did you shoot me?"

"You were in my grandfather's house."

"Through the window?"

"Yes."

"And you wanted to kill me?"

"Yes. I did. Perhaps it was wrong. I don't know."

Avron swore in Hebrew, cursing his fate. The boy asked him what he said.

"I curse God."

"It is the wrong God."

"There is only one. That is as true in the Koran as in the Bible."

"There is only one belief. It is Mohammed. It is the true belief."

"There is only one life and you have lived it. We fight over stupid beliefs that have no meaning. Why can't you just live and leave us alone? Always to attack — some senseless killing, some crime with no purpose. So we retaliate and hunt you down, find your guns and hideouts. Now we both die. Your family will come to bury you and that is that."

"My family is all gone. I am the last."

Avron remembered his mother and worried about how she would take the news. Her soup, her smell, her clothes, her long hair. Gray now, she wore
it long as she tottered along, ageing gracefully with her simple tastes. “Someone will bury you. At least they will find you.”

“And you?”

“I am paralyzed. I cannot move. I will die in this trash and no one will find me.”

“It is not too late. You can repent.”

“You are crazy. You have no brains and you talk like a lunatic. What do you know?”

“That you are a long way from home, that you are not a martyr, and that I was too greedy. If you had gone on I would not be dying.”

“I had to come.”

“You have to hunt us, to kill us, to deprive us of our homes and our family. Why? For a map? To put up a fence and say, these are ours - don’t touch them?”

“I have orders.”

“You should have just gone on. I wanted your rifle.”

Always, to kill, to fight some more. Oh, what a life. So desperate, these people. He heard the boy gagging and he called his name. There was a muffled reply. He couldn’t tell from where. He held the grenade.

The scraping started again. Where? Where was the boy going? He’s getting away.

Avron brushed the sweat from his brow. He thought about the options, his chances - accountant-like, he figured the odds. No help, in a foreign land, hidden. The boy was on his way out, to get help. Why should he believe him? Dirty Arab! Rag head! No, he wouldn’t get away, not to bring the others. Looters! Killers!

He pulled the pin and tossed the round ball over the trash. He heard it hit the wall and bounce again on the floor. There was a quiet, a painful peacefulness while he thought of fruits and water, cold mornings and the ocean lapping on wet sand, pillows and red wine. All he heard was a tremendous explosion.

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**CHANGING PLACES**

A ray bounces off a windshield
glares into my study.
I hear a knock on my front window.
I see my father’s frightened eyes.

A motorcycle roars past.
I beckon my father to the door.
He stumbles on the stoop.
I catch him in my arms.

A child shouts to another.
I close the door, my father whispers,
“Today I’m sixty Herschel,
and there’s sugar in my blood.”

A shadow steals into my house.
On that day we change places,
I the parent, he the child.
My turn to kiss him where it hurts.

A ray bounces off the windshield,
glares into my study.
A motorcycle roars past.
A child shouts to another.
A shadow steals into my house.

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**WIFE, WHORE**

No more than a servant in my sister’s house
my youth is a bent knee and hands red,
rough from the pail’s water.

When will I loosen my hair,
be rid of these girlish braids?
And when will I take my place
by his bed
and scrub the floors
of my own home?

Is he the one
with his city ways
and his fancy cloths?
Is his heart too
a diamond pin?
Does it shine through
my sister’s door?
Can he unfasten my braids
and make my hands soften
with his touch?
Will his eyes sparkle
when he sees
my body naked
in its youth?

With his city ways
will he make me his whore
as my sister made me her servant?
Is his heart more
than a diamond pin?
In 1976 the name of Henri Curiel was spectacularly brought to the attention of the French public: a cover article in the popular right-wing newsweekly, *Le Point*, characterized him as “the boss of the terrorist support networks”, the man behind groups as diverse as the German Red Army Faction and Rakach. Two years later, in the heated atmosphere of the second half of Giscard’s final term, he was again front page news: a right-wing commando had assassinated him, a result, it is assumed, of hatred festering since the earlier article. In 1984 he returned to celebrity status, this time as the subject of a best-selling biography, Gilles Perrault’s *Un Homme A Part*, recently translated into English as *A Man Apart* and published by Zed Press in England, distributed in the U.S. by Humanities Press International of Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey.

Henri Curiel was born in Cairo in September 1914, the scion of a wealthy Sephardic family which, under the system of concessions then in place in Egypt, had taken Italian citizenship. Curiel had no formal attachments to the Jewish community, but in the network of comrades he worked with throughout his life, in the way he was viewed by others, and in the constant concern he felt for the Middle East, there can be no doubt as to the importance that being Jewish played in his development. Being a Jew, and raised as a European, he was set apart from his surroundings and liberated from the constraints placed upon Arabic-speaking Egyptian Moslems and Jews. Ideas which did not reach the Egyptian masses until much later (often with Curiel’s aid) were made available to him in the European schools he attended in Cairo. What is more, his circle, from which the Egyptian Left was to develop, was almost entirely Jewish and “European”, and men with names like Marcel Israel and Hillel Schwartz were to lay the groundwork for Egyptian communism.

After a privileged youth, Curiel joined various Popular Front-type groups of the 1930’s and later opened a left-wing bookstore, which was to play a crucial role in the dissemination of Marxist thought in Egypt and the Middle East. Aided by the non-existence of an Egyptian Communist Party, Curiel developed his own line of action during World War II; he insisted that the Left avoid any connection with the British who, as occupiers of Egyptian soil, were hated by the Egyptian masses. Curiel understood that this hatred, and the concomitant sympathy for the Nazis, had less to do with belief in Germanic superiority and support for corporatist ideology, than with the sharing of a common enemy with the Reich.

Understanding the people’s feelings does not mean he shared them; when Rommel was at Cairo’s gates, Curiel began to plan an organized resistance movement. The Afrika Korps was defeated, but Curiel was arrested anyway. Egyptian security forces, acting independently of the British, wanted to have a Jewish Communist ready to hand over to the Desert Fox.

In jail Curiel shared his cell with pro-Nazi Moslems. For Curiel they were not lost to the good cause; as Perrault defines it, Curiel’s political credo was: “In order for people to change their opinions, you must not impose your own ideas but take off from theirs”. In keeping with this, Curiel participated in a hunger strike in support of his fellow-prisoners’ right to elect a pro-Nazi delegate to deal with the prison administration. Then, in an effort to be with the people in everything, he joined them in their Ramadan fast and, for a brief while, for political reasons, even considered conversion to Islam.

After his release from prison, Curiel and his friends established the Egyptian National Liberation Movement. The time had come to reach beyond their narrow Jewish intellectual circles and involve the Egyptian working class. Curiel’s group contacted workers and soldiers and brought the most promising to a clandestine school for cadres on the Curiel family estate outside Cairo.

In 1946 his efforts bore their first fruits. Popular rage against continued British occupation was mounting. Demonstrations and strikes broke out, with the Egyptian National Liberation Movement and its fellow pro-Communist groups (with names like *Iskra*, Liberation of the People, and *New Dawn*) leading the people. After a month of bitter struggle, the British announced their evacuation of the Nile Valley and their retreat to the Suez.

The major left-wing groups attempted to unify, but their organization collapsed at just about the time the first war with Israel broke out. On the question of Israel, Curiel had no doubt as to the correct position: the Soviets had come out in support of Israel’s (and Palestine’s) existence, and that alone would have been sufficient reason to oppose the war. The Egyptian Left was anti-Zionist (Marcel Israel had founded the Anti-Zionist League in response to...
Curiel’s Zionist organizations), but for Curiel the issue went beyond this. He considered the war a fraud, fomented by the ruling class to distract the workers from their real struggles, those against the King and the British. Curiel’s acceptance of the Soviet position was neither dishonest nor cynical. Until his death, and especially so in the last years of his life, Curiel was to work actively for Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

Curiel once again paid for his beliefs with imprisonment, this time in the concentration camp in Huckstep. At war’s end, as a condition of the armistice, Egypt agreed to release all those imprisoned because of the war. Curiel refused release from prison under such terms, feeling it would render further political action in Egypt impossible. In 1950 he was released and deported to Italy.

Curiel and his handful of Jewish comrades had not succeeded in all they had set out to do, but they had accomplished the essential. Men who had learned from Curiel were to be found in the Free Officers Movement, which overthrew King Farouk in 1952 and, remaining behind after Curiel’s comrades left Egypt, were Arabs who were to form the Egyptian Communist Party and its spin-offs.

After a brief sojourn in Italy, Curiel passed illegally into France, but Egypt remained his sole concern. Although Curiel saw himself as the most faithful and orthodox of pro-Soviet Communists, he swam against the Communist stream and supported Nasser’s coup, refusing the Communist characterization of the coup as an “imperialist plot”. When the new Egyptian regime began jailing Communists (partly as a result of Communist hostility), Curiel temporarily adopted an anti-Nasser attitude, but only temporarily: in 1956 he delivered the Anglo-French invasion plans to the Egyptians. The plans, according to Perrault, were circulating openly in Parisian diplomatic circles. Curiel managed to obtain a copy and pass them to a former collaborator of Nasser who then sent them on to Egypt. Nasser subsequently admitted having the plans of the invasion nearly three weeks before it had begun, but hadn’t believed in their veracity. Curiel himself, wanting desperately to return to his homeland and unable to do so legally, considered joining the Anglo-French expeditionary force as a means of entering the country, but was dissuaded from doing so.

Perrault says that this “stateless Jew [was] one of the great citizens of the Third World”, and that the period 1957-1978 provides ample support for this statement. It was only in 1957 that Curiel entered non-Egyptian politics, and in the most courageous of fashions: he participated, and eventually led, the French network which aided the Algerian F.L.N. in its war against France, the innocently named porteurs de valises, valise carriers.

Again going against the Party line, which was not militantly anti-war until relatively late, (only the marginal Parti Socialiste Unifie was consistently opposed to the war) Curiel and other porteurs rendered invaluable service to the F.L.N., carrying in their valises propaganda and money, operating clandestine printing preses, aiding French deserters, and hiding and transporting leaders of the F.L.N.

The porteurs were a mix of anarchists, Trotskyists, existentialists, and communists. As a result of this mixture, this lack of a common political language between “Stalinists” like Curiel, and those such as Sartrean Temps Modernes editor Francis Jeanson, a certain personal ugliness mars the history of the network. But in spite of this, the history of the network is an exalting one, of men and women willing to put their careers and their lives on the line in order to contribute to the ending of French colonial rule in Algeria. For this Curiel once again spent time in jail, from October 1960 through May 1962.

Curiel saw resistance to the war not only as a fight against the French, but as a golden opportunity for Israel to achieve friendship with its neighbors. Curiel suggested to Uri Avneri that Israeli aid be given to the F.L.N. in the hopes of showing the Arab nations that Israel, far from being an ally of imperialism, was at their side in the fight against it. An Israeli Committee for Free Algeria was formed, its members including Avneri, Nathan Yalin-Mor, Amos Kenan, and Maxim Ghilan. Avneri wrote in Haolam Hazeh: “Curiel asked the Algerian leaders in what way we could aid them. When they learned that members of our Committee were members of the Stern Gang they leapt at the occasion. They sent us a message requesting that we send a group of instructors in chemical and electrical sabotage to F.L.N. training camps in Tunisia and Yugoslavia... The Israeli Government opposed it, and we didn’t have any volunteers.”

Once victory was achieved in Algeria and he was released from prison, Curiel decided to expand his field of activity. Continuing the work of the porteurs de valises the clandestine group Solidarite was founded, one purpose of which was to provide aid to liberation movements all over the world. The aid was not in the form of guns, however, but rather in the formation of cadres in key areas such as the fabrication of false papers, mapmaking, coding, sabotage, and the handling of arms.

Solidarite did not attempt to impose ideas on any of the groups it assisted; indeed, the refusal of any form of dogmatism was a key element in its success: three different groups from the Dominican Republic received aid and instruction from Solidarite, and Curiel insisted on the group’s obligation to provide aid to a group of Spanish Maoists. Curiel’s lack of
dogmatism at times reached nearly absurd levels: Curiel wanted to provide aid to Holden Roberto's C.I.A.-backed UNITA in Angola. As far as Curiel was concerned, liberation was good in and of itself, even if it came as a result of American aid. Living in France he remained an Egyptian, a Third World citizen for whom liberation from colonial and neo-colonial rule were the dominant thoughts.

If aid was not tied to dogma, it was not indiscriminate. The Basque E.T.A. received aid until the time it moved on to armed struggle, as did the Quebecois P.L.O. Both groups were supported while their aims were mass and political; Curiel judged armed struggle in these instances inopportune and cut off aid when it was begun.

Curiel, although forever rejected by the Communists (the Cubans and Soviets, even after his death, considered him an agent of the French secret service) loudly insisted on his loyalty to Moscow and wanted desperately to be accepted by the Soviets. As Perrault says: "Had Curiel been born ten years earlier he would have been one of the Comintern's travelling salesmen of revolution". But Curiel was born too late and, for the Soviets, he was a kind of bad conscience, the last avatar of an era long dead.

After a series of splits caused by personal, political (many Solidarite supporters found Curiel's pro-Soviet line untenable), and generational conflicts, (the veterans of May 1968 found the old-timers old hat), Solidarite was re baptized Aide et Amitie, and the war against fascism and colonialism continued.

Africa was crucial to Curiel, and he provided much aid to South Africa's African National Congress. In the early and mid-1970's he participated in the audacious plan of setting up a white anti-apartheid organization under the leadership of the Afrikaaner writer Breyten Breytenbach.

Breytenbach received Curiel's unstinting attention, but Curiel made a serious error: Breytenbach was a writer, not a political activist, and he failed disastrously in the latter role. Arrested in July 1975 during a foolhardy trip to South Africa, he proved to be a cooperative defendant and an even more amenable prisoner. Breytenbach, to the dismay of his supporters, was to prove no Dimitrov at the Reichstag Fire trial.

The last years of Curiel's life were dedicated to the cause of Israeli-Palestinian peace, as he brought together doves from both sides, including Matityahu Peled, Uri Avneri, and Issam Sartawi. The dismal failure of a 1973 meeting between Israelis and Arabs in Bologna, a meeting Curiel had spent two years arranging, did not deter him. Further meetings between representatives of both sides were set up, including eight meetings between Israeli doves and P.L.O. representatives between September 1976 and March 1977. Conferences were held, articles were published. Failure followed failure, but Curiel carried on.

In 1956, he had ghost-written for Youssef Helmy, secretary of the Egyptian Peace Movement, a call for common action by Israelis and Arabs against the war-mongers in both camps. Proof of the consistency and sincerity of his beliefs on the Middle East can be found in the posthumous collection entitled For A Just Peace in the Middle East. Here he spelled his beliefs out clearly: "Our point of departure is the sacred and inalienable right of national collectivities to national existence. We thus recognize the right of the Jews of Israel to a national existence, but this right must, a fortiori, be recognized for the Arabs of Palestine...[I]n defending the rights of the Palestinian Arabs, we are struggling, in the first instance, for a just cause. But we also thus create the most favorable conditions for the recognition by the Arabs of the legitimate rights of Israeli Jews...In order to arrive at such a solution it is necessary that an alliance be established between the forces of progress [on both sides], who must coordinate their efforts against the reactionary forces of the two camps and their common ally, American imperialism."

And then, on May 4, 1978, a comando group calling itself Delta shot him down as he stepped out of his elevator. It is possible that Delta acted for South Africa's BOSS, for the Mossad, or for Abu Nidal. Or they could have been French fascists operating on their own; a year and a half later the left-wing Jewish writer Pierre Goldman was gunned down on the streets of Paris by a similarly mysterious group. Curiel had, in a lifetime of revolutionary activity, won the hatred of many.

In all, Curiel's failures were perhaps as numerous as his successes; the liberation movements of Latin America failed to overthrow their dictatorships, apartheid is still in place, and Israeli-Palestinian friendship is still a chimera. But his successes were real: Mozambique, Angola, Algeria and Greece are now free, and Curiel's role in their struggles was far from negligible. And in a politics which aims as high and far as Curiel's did, even one success would suffice to make his career worthwhile. Perrault says that Curiel's objective was "to break out of the sectarian shell in order to open onto mass action". The European masses never joined him in his work, but for those of the Third World who did, Curiel was, over the course of a generation, the custodian of the European conscience.

Mitchell Abidor is a single father from Brooklyn.
The Henri Curiel I knew was a completely different kind of Jew from the paradigms known in the American Jewish community. His roots were, by order of priority: revolutionary, Egyptian, Jewish, Communist, banking, business, scholarly. With such a mixture and with a keen intelligence and ruthless determination, there is little wonder that Curiel was wildly loved and admired by his comrades and allies, as well as hated by his class, national and racist enemies. Curiel became a target for all haters of action, for all the enemies of the "outsiders" of our world, as well as for the more conventional anti-Semites, racists, anti-Arab bigots and anti-Communist fanatics of the Right.

Born in Cairo on September 13, 1914, the son of a wealthy Jewish banker of Italian origin, Curiel founded one of the first Communist-Egyptian groups, the Egyptian National Liberation Movement, or M.E.L.N. Through this small group, he organized aid during World War II to German and Italian anti-fascists in semi-colonial Egypt. At the same time he helped revolutionaries serving with the Allied forces in Cairo and, most particularly, anti-British Empire left-wingers. At this stage of his life, that is to say in his late twenties and early thirties, Curiel broke with the wealthy and sheltered tradition of his father's home to become a young revolutionary, an outsider even among the outsiders of the mid-1940's, who composed the non-native society of Cairo and the summer capital of Egypt, Alexandria.

A particularly interesting chapter of his activities was his dedication to the insurrectionist left-wing Greek underground in Egypt working against the Nazis. He helped organize a strike among Greek volunteers when the British, keen to restore a Greek monarchy after the war and destroy the communist influence there, wanted to send the Greek volunteers to fight in Italy rather than to return to their own country as part of the liberating units.

A fighter for a just solution to the problems of Sudan, Curiel opposed the "unity of the Nile countries", which would have meant control of Sudan by the Egyptian (and British) ruling elite.

In 1950, King Farouk illegally expelled 37-year-old Egyptian subject Henri Curiel, who had matured to become an efficient revolutionary and a believing Communist. These were the times of the aftermath of the Comintern, the Communist International, which though directed from Moscow, was also a confederation of national revolutionary movements. In the secret life of this activity, Curiel remained a Communist, aligned with Moscow's Stalinist party. However, he also managed to remain something else, something much less usual among those of his brotherhood: a true maverick and a true humanist, able and willing to give his all for those who have nothing, whether an individual or an entire people.

In 1950 Curiel reached Italy and then France, where he lived, at first, as an illegal immigrant and activist. Some of the Jewish members of his group left Egypt or were also expelled and settled, like him, in France. With them he would set up what later became known as the "Curiel network" (Le Reseau Curiel), part of the "Suitcase Carriers" (Les Porteurs de Valises). These were a group of French and France-based Europeans who helped the Algerian national revolution and most particularly the N.L.F., which collected arms and money from Algerian migrants working in France. The Curiel network took the money to Switzerland and carried arms from one hideout to another. It also started networking with a number of individuals and organizations active in national liberation movements throughout the Third World, including Arabs.

Caught by the French secret police, Curiel went to jail for a long period where, for a while, he was able to put aside pure action in favor of introspective thinking, studying, and writing. It was during this time in jail, I believe, that Curiel made his peace with his father, and changed from a person always drawn to the most clandestine and revolutionary action into a leader able to decide the best and wisest way to fight for justice, peace and national liberation in the Third World.

Curiel was finally set free, thanks to his good contacts among the French elite; some of his relatives and friends in (then) French-speaking Cairo had moved to France while others had lived all their lives in Paris. He obtained a work permit and worked with the Jewish French publisher Nathan, mostly editing schoolbooks.

Soon he set up a new half-clandestine organization, Solidarite, whose task was to help a number of liberation movements in South Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. Among others, Solidarite helped South African white anti-apartheid activist
Breyten Breytenbach return to his country from European exile; but a mistake occurred and he was jailed by the Pretoria regime.

During this period Curiel’s communist internationalism and anti-father-born individualism underwent a change. From a “pure” Marxist, he became a Third World revolutionary. From a man of Jewish origins he became an atheist, revolutionary, and self-assured Jew.

This change, together with his basic Egyptian-Jewish origins, turned Curiel’s attention more and more toward the Middle East conflict. Far from rejoicing about this, the French Communist Party, at that time one of the most doctrinaire and Stalinist in the Western world, was hostile to Curiel’s and Solidarité’s work, as was the ruling faction of the Soviet establishment in Moscow. Only a few internationalists inside the U.S.S.R. were friendly to his ideas. The Italian Communist Party (soon to become the mother of Euro-Communism) helped him: Palmiro Togliatti, the legendary Italian communist leader, was, after all, one of those who helped create both the Israeli and the Egyptian Communist outfits. Nonetheless, the Western and principally American and French secret services, and the French extreme right, branded Curiel an “agent of the K.G.B.” This would also be the pretext of his murderers, who killed him for probably quite different reasons, and who, in any case, knew better.

Among the Third World elements contacted by Solidarité were, of course, the Palestinians. Curiel opposed the theories and actions of the purported Marxist-Leninists of the P.F.L.P.’s George Habash and Wadyah Haddad and even of the D.F.L.P.’s Nayeif Hawatmeh. He kept close links with the Arab — and particularly Egyptian, Jordanian, Palestinian and Lebanese — Communists. More surprisingly, he began weaving links not only with leaders of Shell and later on of the Progressive List for Peace, but also with Zionist left-wingers of Mapam, which during this period still sported a Marxist brand of Zionism, and even with the mainstream Israeli establishment.

On April 11, 1964, Curiel wrote a letter to Le Monde, the prestigious Parisian daily: “Allow a Jew, born in the Middle East, where he has lived for 40 years (NB: 37, actually), to try and give this drama its real meaning. Actually the problem is not to know whether the Arab Palestinians, who left the war area in 1948, did or did not have reason to fear for their lives, whether they left of their own free will or were incited by the leaders of other Arab countries. That certain Arab governments exploit (or not) this problem, that the refugees may or may not become economically integrated into the other Arab countries — these are after all secondary questions.

“The right of the refugees to return or to obtain indemnity has been expressed, without ambiguity, by the United Nations since December 11, 1948, reaffirmed solemnly only a few months ago by the General Assembly. One cannot compare the fate of Palestinian refugees to that of, for example, the Bulgarians in Greece or Greeks transplanted in Bulgaria. It is not possible to proceed to the ‘repatriation’ of a Palestinian to Egypt, to Lebanon or to Iraq — no more than it would be possible to repatriate a Belgian to France. Born in Palestine, his right is not just sacred, it is also something that cannot be abolished, neither for him nor for his children.

“The real problem is that of the very existence of the Palestinian Arab nation. To recognize the existence of this problem, to try and resolve it, is the best way to preserve peace in the Middle East.”

In 1971 Curiel wrote in an internal document: “We shall keep a precise evaluation of the peaceful forces inside Israel for our next research, but it would be really dangerous to deal with them contemptuously or to underestimate these forces. They constitute the nucleus of Israel’s transformation into a peaceful country. They are also more and more acknowledged internationally.” Curiel then mentioned as these peace forces: Rekakh, the Israeli Communist Party; the New Force (Koakh Khaadash), party of Uri Avneri and Shalom Cohen; the Israeli New left, which broke with Mapam; and Movement for Peace and Security, an intellectuals’ group close to Mapam and to Labor doves.

In that same document Curiel wrote: “Speaking of peace and a ‘political solution of the crisis’ — a different vision of this exists in Egypt and Israel...In Egypt is is thought that everything will be settled by returning to the status quo ante (the situation before) the 5th of June 1967. On the Israeli side, this cannot be even considered. It is necessary to understand that, for over twenty years, the Israeli masses lived in the fear of annihilation, a fear which a delirious Arab propaganda has continued to feed and which certain statements by Arab leaders often confirmed... The Israeli masses would only renounce the occupied territories against real peace and a real security...The Israeli masses will give up ‘security borders’ only if they are no longer necessary due to real peace conditions between them and their Arab neighbors. The Israeli masses will only then start moving and impose ‘another way’ on their government.

Curiel added: "...Obviously, we do not make acceptance of our proposals a condition for our collaboration. It will be based on the principle: the inalienable right of Egypt and the other Arab countries to the integrity of their territories as of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian Arabs".

This writer met with Henri Curiel and his friends repeatedly, from 1971 until 1975, when
Curiel was assassinated in the elevator of a building in the bohemian Fifth Arrondissement (district) of Paris, where he lived with his wife.

Being neither a Communist nor a Marxist, nor particularly sympathetic to compulsively clandestine activity, I was outside the circles of the "Curiel network". But we, the people later to found the International Jewish Peace Union (I.J.P.U.), and particularly the editors, backers and publishers of *Israel and Palestine*, were doing work not dissimilar to some of Curiel's Middle East activities: motivating Jews and Arabs, Palestinians and Europeans, Americans and Israelis, in order to establish contacts between the warring sides and to build confidence, on both sides, assuring both of the friendliness of those who stuck their necks out and started talking to their enemies.

I am fond of saying that our political report, *Israel and Palestine*, started its work by sending "messages to planet Mars — and that one day Mars responded". Sayeed Hammami, then P.L.O. representative in London, had written us a letter which we published — staggering even in the early 1970's, when "talking to the Israelis" was banned and extremely dangerous.

Curiel then arranged for a meeting at Hammami's home. On the same day, Shalom Cohen, secretary general of the (Oriental Jewish) Israeli Peace Union (I.J.P.U.), and I visited Hammami - but separately. For Shalom Cohen, it was the first meeting with Israelis who were not anti-Zionist revolutionaries. Of course he had met with then-Marxist revolutionaries, such as Ilan Halevy (later to adhere to Fatah and become the P.L.O.'s observer to the Socialist International), Moshe Mahover, Akiva Orr, the late Elie Lobel (who became assistant treasury minister of Mali before committing suicide in Paris out of political and personal heartbreak), and Haim Hanegbi, who went on to become Parliamentary Secretary to Knesset members Matty Peled and Muhammed Miari of the Progressives.

The meeting I had with Hammami opened another chapter of *Israel and Palestine's* and my own work. Thanks to that meeting I was able to really bridge some gaps between Israelis and Palestinians. Even more important, I was able to become a friend to both sides, advising them how to refrain from falling into the obvious pitfalls of mutual fear and misunderstanding.

Later on I was to meet, (through French politician and anti-Nazi fighter Claude Bourdet and his wife Ida), Issam Sartawi and Ghazi Khoury, who became the main P.L.O. conduit for talking to Israelis and Jews. For their pains, both Sayeed Hammami and Issam Sartawi were assassinated by Arab extremists close to Abu Nidal. Ghazi Khoury died later on of a natural illness aggravated by stress and the need to constantly escape murder attempts.

The day I saw Curiel for the last time was five days before he was killed. We met in a typical cafe of the Fifth Arrondissement. Henri told me he was starting a new initiative linking Israeli peace camp personalities and P.L.O. leaders. He asked whether I was willing to help. I agreed.

As it happens, I was already keeping my own links open to the other side through Issam Sartawi and Ghazi Khoury. I met them at another cafe on the Boulevard Saint Germain on the Saturday morning Henri would be killed. They did not tell me, but after his death we compared notes and discovered that Curiel had wanted to introduce me, among others, to themselves.

Earlier that Saturday afternoon, while going down in his elevator, Curiel was shot and killed by a heavy French Army handgun. The two assassins escaped. An inquest by his friends, and another by French security, evinced unconfirmed reports that Curiel had actually been shot by a Spanish Franco-oriented fascist, hosted by French pro-Nazi rightwingers. A contract on his life was said to have been jointly issued by the Israeli Mossad and BOSS, the South African Secret Service.

When Henri Curiel's coffin was carried to his grave in the historical Pere Lachaise cemetery of Paris (where nowadays only famous men and women or owners of family tombs are buried), the several hundred mourners sang the left-wing anthem, *The Internationale*. But among them you could see right-wing French government members, High Court magistrates, intellectuals, writers, army officers, publishers and actors, Jews and Israelis, Arabs and Palestinians, and, of course, Egyptians. A wreath was brought and speeches made by the Ambassador of Algeria (a country which had meanwhile obtained its independence), by members of the erstwhile "Curiel network", and by members of the French Communist Party, which, after having spurned Curiel for so long, insisted on his ideological closeness to their party.

Sartawi, then still alive, also sent a wreath. He could not come, as he was threatened even then by many groups, including those who later killed him.

After Curiel's death his network, led mostly by aging revolutionaries, shrank and became far more innocuous. It turned into a normal, somewhat staid but quite active non-profit association called "Palestine et Israel Vivront" (Palestine and Israel Will Live), playing a role in contacts between the P.L.O. moderates and the Israeli peace camp.

Maxim Ghilan is Editor of *Israel and Palestine* and a founding member of the International Jewish Peace Union. He lives in Paris.
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