SHMATE

A JOURNAL OF PROGRESSIVE JEWISH THOUGHT

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FOCUS ON POETRY
THE BUND AND TERRORISM
HOLOCAUST RESISTANCE BIBLIOGRAPHY
THE IDEOLOGY OF DESPAIR
STORIES, LETTERS, MORE
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STEVE FANKUCHEN Publisher/Editor

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Welcome to the fourth issue of SHMATE. Response to our last issue has made it clear that it is necessary to reiterate and clarify the purpose of this magazine. I stated in the first issue that "Our purpose in producing this magazine is to serve as a reflection of and catalyst for the development of alternative currents within the Jewish community. Our hope is that SHMATE will not merely be a product consumed by you, our readers, but rather, a tool for our mutual education and stimulation." This statement still stands. Unfortunately, a number of our readers—potential readers—seem to support the concept of coverage of alternative currents only when it coincides with their particular alternative current. Those who would seek in SHMATE a sectarian alternative to the essentially sectarian, monolithic monopoly of the established Jewish press should seek elsewhere. SHMATE will certainly have opinions and advocate actions. This will be done both editorially and in articles. However, the magazine's views will not be limited to those of the Editor/Publisher or any other individual or group.

SHMATE will try to avoid stating things which we believe are well known by the vast majority of our readers. Unless we have something which will, in our opinion, provide a new approach, new information, or new analysis, we will try to refrain from commenting on a subject.

This gets us to a specific subject: the Middle East. SHMATE will not be defined by the Middle East. SHMATE'S Middle East position will not be defined by its views of the P.L.O. This approach—as distinct from substantive position—is editorially defined. I am tired of those traditionally affiliated Jews whose precondition for any discussion concerning Jewish issues is a denunciation of the P.L.O. I am equally tired of the many leftists who insist on support of the P.L.O. as being a precondition for discussion concerning Jewish issues. Being Jewish neither began—nor will it end—with the issue of Israel and the Palestinians. Period. This is not to underestimate the importance of Israel nor the rights of Palestinians. This is merely to state that SHMATE will not have, as its primary purpose, discussion of the Middle East. The Middle East will continue to be dealt with in the same manner as other subjects: only when we have something to add to the discussion. And this will only be done in the context of who our readers are. Almost all of you have strong reservations about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and about the more generalized problem of Israel's inability to develop a realistic political approach to its relations with the Palestinian Arabs. I have no doubt that SHMATE readers have spent many days reading about and discussing the Middle East. When we can add something we will. Otherwise SHMATE'S pages will be used for other things.

In previous issues of SHMATE I have always made a pitch for subscriptions and other financial support. Best I can tell my words have had no effect, at least no positive effect. However, in the noble tradition of the great Rabbi Hillel ben-Sisyphus, I shall try again. C'mon fans; remember, you're part of a quality readership, not quantity! Now I know the idea of a small clique of devoted supporters appeals to all our prurient snob instincts, but without a little more quantity it will be impossible to improve the quality. If you order now, you can be the first to give SHMATE as a Chanukah gift in 1983. (To tell the truth, if you order now, you would still be the first person to give it as a Chanukah gift for 1982.) Have you nudged your library and local bookstore to carry SHMATE? Did you get this copy from a friend or a bookstore? Well, remember: you deserve a break today! Treat yourself to a SHMATE sub. Reach out, reach out and touch someone; reach out and just say, "Hi! Here's a SHMATE sub!"

After all, what other magazine comes with a 50,000-mile/5-year limited warranty on the power train and graphics colors? Where else can you get a tamper resistant extra-strength pain reliever that doesn't expire even if you do?

Special thanks go to Janine Baer for all her help in design and proofreading and to Teya Schaffer for editorial assistance.

Carrying on as a minor SHMATE tradition, the next issue will be very different from this one. Issue #6 will be a political issue. Submissions on all subjects will be cheerfully accepted if they are typed double space or printed triple space. If you want something returned, include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Material concerning the Middle East, the education of Jewish youth, and local progressive political organizing would be especially appreciated.

Letters are extremely important to SHMATE. If you do write and there are parts not intended for print, please indicate such.

STEVE FANKUCHEN
I liked “Letters To The Editor” very much, especially the ones from Marilyn Baumkel and Fran Salen. Also “The Reply To Alter”. One quick criticism: the use of the word “goys” is offensive to me. “Non-Jews” is better — even “goys” sounds better than “goys”.

Elaine Starkman
Walnut Creek, Ca.

I hope you continue to have lots of lesbian and women's input and output.

Alix Dobkin
Saugerties, N.Y.

Listen, despite my obvious self-interest, I think Issue #3 is terrific! Especially the material on The Generation After, the Jewish Feminist Conference, Judy Stone's Jewish Film Festival review, Gutrajman's memoir, and Wilet's “View From Paris”.

Sandy Berman
Edina, Minnesota

We wish you all the best at keeping Shmate alive — it is needed during these times of struggle and discussion. Varied views need to be out there and available. Hard lines will stop us from moving ahead.

Debby/
Lesbian History Archives
New York, N.Y.

Type too small. No sense of editing. Quality of content good to poor. Tasteless cartoon on minorities. Redeeming quality union label.

Stan Rosen
Chicago, Ill.

I especially liked your second issue with its attention to gay/lesbian issues and Jewish feminists. As a result of that issue and other things I have read by Jewish feminists and about anti-Semitism within the women's movement, I am re-evaluating and re-embracing my own Jewish identity.

Kathy Anolick
Oakland, Ca.

You're great. You join off our backs and the Guardian on my list of subscriptions. I like you better than Lilith!

Sue Davies

I realized I just wrote you a letter, but I just sat down and started reading Shmate and I couldn't stop. I read one issue lightly before, but I hadn't actually sat down and read each article. Now an entire day of work is blown reading the first two and the onus is squarely on your head! Your mag is great! In addition I like the name and hope you keep it.

Jim Wilets
Paris, France

Why do I as a progressive American Jew feel that it is necessary to be embarrassed and at least partially responsible for Israel’s recent actions in invading Lebanon, while American blacks never felt responsible for Idi Amin and Polish Americans do not identify with the repressive Polish government that is cracking down on dissidents? To not do so would be every bit as revolting as Begin and Sharon’s attempts to wash their hands of any responsibility for the massacre that occurred at Palestinian refugee camps by Israeli supplied and directed Phalangists. Morally I am obligated to speak out.

For years Israeli governments have stated that their actions were necessary not only for Israel’s security but to prevent another Holocaust from occurring. To be against Israel or Israeli government policies is simply advocating the continuation of “Hitler’s Final Solution to the Jewish Question.” As a child of Holocaust survivors and as a volunteer who spent a year in Israel during which time the 1973 Yom Kippur war broke out, I feel mandated to speak out when over-zealous, aggressive, immoral actions are being committed in my name.

Throughout the invasion of Lebanon, many so-called leaders in the American Jewish establishment spoke in the name of “all Jews” voicing almost 100% support for the Israeli actions within the Jewish community. They pledged millions of dollars of support while the killing went on. Fortunately, when the facts came in and all the initial claims of a limited action were proved to be blatant lies, many Jews in the United States, began to question the wisdom and extent of the Begin-Sharon policies. I, too, felt compelled to speak out against those leaders who claimed to speak for me. Unlike those apologists who support Israel right or wrong, I support Israel only when it is right. No one has the right or authority to speak for all Jews, and if they connect me to policies I find unacceptable, I might feel embarrassed. Unless I do something, I am to a certain extent, responsible for the consequences.

Unfortunately, the Lebanon campaign has caused an outbreak of anti-Semitism. This must not be condemned or tolerated. “Jews” is not a synonym for “Israelis” or “Begin-Sharon regime.” But Jews must be among the first to point this fact out. Voicing opinions that are not in complete agreement with Israeli government policies does not readily “identify the anti-Semites amongst us.” But to say that we Jews have no responsibility in this situation is an over-simplification. Anti-Semitism will always exist, but Israeli government actions have magnified a very real problem. The world as a whole (even those individuals and countries previously considered very pro-Israel correctly interpret the invasion of Lebanon and the occupation of the West Bank as totally indefensible. Palestinians are people, not just terrorists and their right to a national homeland is every bit as legitimate as Israel’s. If it is perceived in the non-Jewish world that there is near unanimity of Jewish opinion in support of this invasion, a climate conducive to anti-Semitism can arise, even where it did not exist before.

In the Middle East, Israel is no longer “David,” it’s “Goliath.” Instead of being the defenseless country that had to strike out at all times to continued next page
LETTERS: continued

protect its sovereignty, Israel is now the superpower in the region that can wield its military might with impunity. This is why progressive Jews internalize the Israel/anti-Semitism question so deeply. We did not tolerate the Soviet Union's military incursions into Poland and Afghanistan. But, then again, we are so tightly bound to Israel. As Walt Kelly said, "we have met the enemy and they are us." Too often people who are serious about fighting anti-Semitism are labeled as self-hating Jews or anti-Semites because of their political differences with Israeli actions. This is unfair, and in the long run counter-productive.

As in the Viet Nam war era, many Americans risked being called unpatriotic and traitorous for their vocal opposition to the war. With hardhats roaming the streets, it was quite unhealthy to speak out against the slaughter—but their actions showed the world that the U.S. Government did not speak for all Americans and that some of us were embarrassed and did feel responsible for the killing and suffering we were causing. I American Jews should feel the same way. Israelis never were intimidated by their leaders into remaining silent and neither should we. And just as protesting against our government's Viet Nam policy helped bring about the conclusion of the war and did not increase in anti-Americanism, speaking out against Begin and Sharon will not cause anti-Semitism. In fact, it might even lead to its decline. But we must care, and we must get involved.

Henry Finkelstein,
Brooklyn, N.Y.

While I certainly agree with your statement in Shmate #3 that Jews don't cause anti-Semitism, I also disagree with some of your other comparisons and viewpoints on the topic.

The difference between Idi Amin and Menachem Begin which you don't address is that Begin claims his policies are enacted to save Jews, since Israel is a state created for the safety of all Jews. That means the invasion of Lebanon was supposedly carried out "for me," in my name as a Jew. Amin, in contrast, didn't claim that his killings were for the purpose of making Uganda safe for Afro-Americans. It's not merely a matter of race or religion or culture, but one of political goals that differed. If any government has a policy to which I feel strongly opposed, I will protest and feel responsible as a concerned human being; if a government claims openly to be doing things I dislike, for my sake, I become particularly and personally outraged, and feel compelled to set the record straight: this is not the way I would go about making the world "safe for democracy," Jewish survival, or whatever the stated goal in United States or Israeli policy.

Another part of the editorial that bothered me read, "When will our people recognize that anti-Semitism is a reflection on goys, not on us?" Those statements make it sound like all non-Jews are anti-Semites; fortunately, that's not true.

I'm glad Shmate exists to provide a place for these on-going dialogues.

Janine Baer,
Berkeley, CA.

Dear Shmate,

As Dear Abby is not my guru (even though she's Jewish), I am writing to you with an ongoing problem of mine, and would like to know whether you or your readers have any insight into this situation.

My problem is that convention separates me from part of my Jewish family. I was adopted at birth, and if you know the situation of "adooptees" (we have a movement called the Adoptee Liberty Movement Association), we are blocked, by law and convention, from meeting our "birth" families. This creates problems, from life-long curiosity to possibly dangerous omissions of our medical histories. Why should a convention such as unwed parenthood and; other "sins" from which we allegedly need to be protected prevent us from knowing another part of our families?

I believe it is my right to meet my relatives, including two half-brothers, who I know are out there because my birth mother told me about them when I met her several years ago. Yet there is a conflict of needs: my birth mother's need to hide her past (namely, me) for fear of being looked down upon by her conventional community and by her sons (her husband knows about me), versus my desire to meet my half-brothers.

I'm often tempted to put an ad in a newspaper or try to contact them by other more direct means, but feel conflicted about whether this would be the right thing to do. My half-brothers are in their mid-to-late twenties, I'm a woman in my early thirties.

If any readers have opinions on this predicament, I would appreciate hearing them via SHMATE.

Signed,

Very Anonymous

LIBRARY FOLLOWUP

The last issue of Shmate contained an article by Sandy Berman concerning library cataloging. The following section includes letters to Shmate concerning that article as well as replies by Berman.

I was surprised to read such a technical, not to mention long, article on cataloging in Shmate, even if it was about anti-Jewish bias. Mr. Berman was writing for librarians and I wonder what others will make of it.

First, while it is common coin among librarians, others wouldn't appreciate the pivotal role of the Library of Congress (LC). Mr. Berman is right in believing that LC's cataloging is worth our attention. What LC does will be reflected many times over in libraries everywhere.

Second, while Mr. Berman's analysis of LC's anti-Jewish bias is very perceptive and thorough, it is difficult to cut through the library jargon. His point is important to understand and remember; the existence of headings like Jews in America and The Jewish Question are injurious and inexcusable. These must be changed.

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**THE GREAT BETRAYAL**

"GOOD-BYE, LITTLE FRIENDS, GOOD-BYE"

by FLORENCE LEWIS

In those days we purchased a radio, and we had to hide it under the bed when the relief investigator came to call. My brother, who now owns half of northern New Jersey, would throw his body on the radio because if the relief investigator took the radio away, she would have to carry him away too. The relief lady was a nice woman, tall and handsome like Mrs. Roosevelt. (In our family Eleanor was never anything but handsome; you had to be uncouth, one slice below a salami, to consider her ugly. Eleanor had class.) The relief lady was Mrs. McCarthy — the Eugene side, not the Joseph R. She never looked under our bed. But we lived in fear that if Mrs. McCarthy ever found the radio, she would make us give it up and then report us to the government. Then we would be off relief, and then what! Starvation! My father would agonize how willingly he would enter the ring with Joe Louis, "Joe should knock him out in the first round," and Madison Square Garden should pay for the hospital and give us all $5,000. On $5,000 my father could have surgery, and we could live in comfort for the rest of our miserable lives. A nickel bought three cupcakes so imagine the opulence of those days.

To earn a buck he lifted packing cases, cleaned manure from the streets, planted trees in the snow (he did, they never grew but they got planted). He ruptured himself three different times, and Coney Island Hospital always sewed him up wrong. Man, did he suffer for his poverty. Wasn't it enough that he was poor, that we were poor? Did he have to be ashamed? Did he have to grovel? For what I hate is the basic injustice which my generation endured and my father too.

So why didn't we give up the radio? Where? Where would we give it? If the neighbors saw us carrying it out, they would fry us in chicken fat. We were all supposed to be starving to death, so what were we doing with a radio, unless my brother from northern New Jersey had stolen it. He used to find nick-

els in the sand. The radio cost us twenty-five bucks. I tremble to tell you this. It came out of my brother from southern New Jersey's savings. He used to work in a lab at Brooklyn College and get the princely sum of $13 a month for being an assistant to a professor of Chemistry. The relief people and the United States Government and La Guardia didn't know about this either because on $13 you could raise twelve kids, if six of them died. So here we were crooked in every one of our rachitic bones and out of the $13 a month for two years, my brother had saved up for a radio, and my northern New Jersey brother delivered clothes for a tailor and worked twenty-four hours a week and received the princely sum of two dollars on Saturday (from Mr. Schiff who broke the Sabbath) and out of his two dollars a week for two years, he contributed five dollars to the radio fund. And the two of them bought the radio on a Sunday afternoon on Canal Street and smuggled it home on the subway and hung around the subway station until it got good and dark, and then they came home with it. The first night we put it on the kitchen table and heard Jack Benny and Eddie Cantor, and we couldn't eat for excitement. Anyway, what was there to eat? A concoction of lung and spleen and potatoes? It was enough to make you vomit, and this potage is now one of the specialties de la maison of a restaurant to which I repair de temps a autre in San Francisco. But even if there were chocolate pudding without lumps what food could you eat when you had a radio? I ask you.

So where am I? Why didn't we give up the radio? Because life without it, once we had it, would be a prison and a torment. From five to nine each p.m. of our lives, the world became bearable, and food didn't matter and cast-off shoes and bronchitis which was actually tuberculosis didn't matter because as long as you don't know it, it can't kill you, can it — maybe stunt your growth, but what, the hell, you can't have everything. You have a radio. We never quarreled about what programs we would listen to as do the kids raised on television sets. If I turned on the hit parade, it was o.k., especially with my father who agonized on the possibility that he too might write a hit one day like "The Music Goes Round and Round" and become a millionaire and a humanitarian, because that was a song, that was a song, that was one song in a million, in a million. And the man who wrote that song "he should live forever to be a million years" was a genius. We even recommended programs to one another. My southern brother told my parents about the Forward Hour, and we all listened to the Forward Hour on Sunday morning because there was no other place to go on Sunday morning, especially if the weather was lousy and besides my parents so obviously grooved on this program, rain or shine. My brothers would run out of the house to play handball if the sun was out, but I was run-down and so I would have to stay indoors and keep

continued next page
warm and drink Ovaltine which Mrs. McCarthy would bring to me to drink out of her own pocketbook. Oh, I hated the stuff. I liked plain seltzer, and at first I hated the Forward Hour too. It made me crawl. They would sing songs from Cavalliera Rusticanna in Jewish. Imagine. Religious songs, addressed to the Holy Father, yet. And you know who the Holy Father was. It wasn’t until much later that I understood how significant, how full of class was the stuff on the Forward Hour, but as a child the high brow stuff they were singing to the Kosher clientele was simply not Jewish. I never complained, and the commercials were screamingly funny. The radio was a miracle.

And that’s how come Uncle Don. One of my teachers said that children should absolutely listen to Uncle Don. I was a child, so I believed. So I listened, and the first few times nobody said anything and when the protests came along, they were gentle.

“What’s that?”

“Uncle Don.”

“What does he do for a living?”

“He tells stories.”

“Who to?”

“To kids. Don’t interrupt. The teacher told me to listen.”

Next to the U.S. Government we feared what the teacher said. If the teacher said, you did it.

But Uncle Don occupied prime listening time. When my father and brothers wanted to hear Gabriel Heater. One evening my father agonized, underneath his breath of course, that he couldn’t stand the dirty louse, Uncle Don, whoever he was, and he fervently hoped that cholera would seize him, but my father never told me I was not to listen to the radio or Uncle Don. My northern brother told me that the program was dumb, stupid, insane! But the teacher said I should listen to the stories, because they were wholesome. Like whole wheat bread. All of us hated whole wheat bread, but we knew it was good for us. Then my southern brother took to calling Uncle Don, “Uncle Donald,” and even my mother mocked him and further classified Uncle Don by calling him, “der meschugene Uncle Donald” or “Donald der berimptse.” My mother had a wicked tongue. After awhile it got to me. If my family hated this guy so much, either he was stupid or I was stupid, and it sure as hell wasn’t going to be me. But why was Uncle Don stupid? I pondered this question. I couldn’t imagine that perhaps Don was our collective punching bag because he was obviously without talent but permanently employed. By us there was plenty of talent and only home relief. Why was he stupid? Well, he laughed like a horse, but I had an uncle who smelled like one and you didn’t give up a guy because he resembled an animal. My Uncle Izzy was a pig. What else distinguished Uncle Don to make people laugh at him, knowledgeable critics like my brothers, for example and what was it that distressed my father who liked Joe Louis and “The Music Goes Round and Round”? I put it first to my father who would attack me for other things but not for a simple direct question.

“Pop, why don’t you like Uncle Don?”

“Because he stinks.”

“Yeh, but why —?”

“Because he’s a dirty son of a bitch.”

“But he’s a success, Popa.”

“How much does he make”?

“I don’t know.”

“Then don’t bother me with foolish questions!”

And my father muttered off into the bedroom agonizing on why God would not taste of the compote it was my father’s lot to eat during his travails on this earth because if God tasted the dessert he would know what the rest of the goddamned meal was like.

My brothers would and did attack me for simple, direct questions like how much is 17 plus 28 and what was wrong with Uncle Don. I put the question most tenderly to my brothers one bitter cold night while my mother was frying doughnuts in the kitchen because the relief people had somehow been issuing bags of confectionary sugar instead of flour, “Why don’t you like Uncle Don?”

My northern brother, closer in age than my southern brother and less Olympian, issued the statement that Uncle Don was a prick. I went at once to report to my mother that my brother was using bad words at me, but my mother didn’t know what prick meant, and the philosophical discussion ended with my being walloped with my brother’s sneakers for the next few days. The blows I no longer feel, only the stench.

So I turned back into my own being and pondered the question all alone during a siege of bronchitis and malaise, and it was obvious to me that I didn’t really like Uncle Don. He was boring. His stories were stupid. I didn’t know anybody in his right mind who could believe such dull-witted crap, let alone tell it, even if the stuff was supposed to be fairy tales. And, besides, his humor was phony. He forced himself, as if he were constipated, to laugh. I certainly never laughed at his stupid stories or his attempts at friendship. And there was another reason, something I could not put into words. It was a feeling. In my bones. He didn’t like Jews. I could tell. Even if he was a Jew himself. And he wasn’t. It was infantile paranoia.

But my opinion had not the weight of authority and to the cries of “Are you still listening to that golem or that schmaglege?” or “When are they auctioning him off,” I would remain steadfast and reply “The teacher said . . .” I could not even convince myself—until . . .

My brothers broke it to me gently.

“Guess who isn’t on the air anymore”?

“Who”?

“Your beloved ‘berimpter,’ Uncle Donald.”

“Berimpter” means renown, and we used it only in relation to village idiots or yentas. 

continued next page
"Why?"
"They threw him out on his ass."
"Who threw?"
"The radio station got rid of him. They threw him out, got rid of him like garbage."
"But why?"
"He called all his little radio friends 'bastards', that's why, and he was still on the air."

I took the news somberly. Bastards was a grave word, more so, much more so, than prick. My mother had chased me around the block three times once, before she landed on me, for using that word. The radio station was probably outraged to discover that a beloved employee should sink so low.

"Will he have to go on relief?" I asked.

"I hope so."

My father took the news calmly, all things considered.

"I always knew he had a big mouth, that goddamned, unthankful creature." When my brother suggested my father should now audition for Uncle Don's role — my father was in no mood for hijinks.

"Keep your lousy shirt on," he told them, and to me he said, "There are some great men on relief, but he's a louse like the rest of us."

Yes, Uncle Don was a louse like the rest of us. But it has haunted me over the years why he called me a bastard. Really, what did I ever do to him. Did I write him letters? Did I "nudge" him for stories? Did I ask him to congratulate me on my birthday? Did my mother call him on the telephone? Who had a telephone? For Chrissakes? What did he want from me?

What was it then? Was it the ethical culture gang in Manhattan? Was it the middle class, the kids who could afford Ovaltine, and liked it, who were bothering him for stories and birthday announcements? And so what if they bothered him? Or maybe they came to the studio to watch him. And he was ugly. And he didn't look like anybody's Uncle. And he pinched behinds and he drank.

Uncle, Don, hello little friends, hello — he was a louse like the rest of us. Today he could yell bastard over the air and nobody would know the difference. Unless it was West Virginia. Carson would interview him with a panel of six year olds who, no doubt, would trade him bastards. Fifty years ago the poor dope made a mistake. And he got it right in the head. For him, at last, I have charity. He belongs to my generation; he didn't get away with anything. Even if it never happened.

**NO NUKES IS GOOD NUKES**

Can we even survive, much less “win” a nuclear war, limited or otherwise? The answer is an unequivocal no. Some recent statistical projections provided by the Physicians for Social Responsibility, a group of medical professionals dedicated to researching and analyzing the medical consequences of nuclear war, provide deadly documentation of this judgment. If you have any doubts, then examine their assessment of the death and destruction that a single one-megaton device would inflict, if exploded over San Francisco in mid-afternoon on a clear day:
- 800,000 people would be killed outright, and 400,000 more fatally injured.
- everything within a 3 mile radius would be devastated; 500 m.p.h. winds would blast everything out of high-rise buildings.
- within 4 miles, clothing and wood frame houses would spontaneously ignite.
- within 8 miles, exposed persons would suffer second-degree burns; windows would shatter and pieces of glass would become missiles of death traveling in excess of 100 m.p.h.
- within 16 miles, firestorms would sweep through neighboring cities, generating heat up to 2000 degrees Farenheit.
- only 2,000 of 12,400 doctors in the area would initially survive, and only 2,000 of 12,500 hospital beds would be intact. There would be thousands of severe burn cases, with no burn beds in which to treat them (there are only 1,000 burn treatment beds in the entire U.S.). It would take the surviving doctors 8 days to see every injured person for only ten minutes, without the equipment or medicine necessary for treatment.

If the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. detonated only 10% of their existing nuclear arsenals within a 15-day period, 70% of the ozone layer of the Northern Hemisphere would be destroyed. Because the protection afforded by this atmospheric layer against the sun's ultra-violet radiation would no longer be effective, blindness in all species would result. The planet's ecology would suffer catastrophic damage without parallel in recorded history. It is doubtful that life as we know it would continue.
In the late Sixties and early Seventies it was fashionable among conservatives to blame the "radicalization" of the postwar baby boom on Benjamin Spock. The left largely responded to this "accusation" with a shpiel about material conditions, while the hippies invoked the Age of Aquarius. Those parents who thought there might be something to one of those explanations, usually submerged themselves in guilt, alcohol, kaddish, or calls for help to the National Guard. Through diligent research, including interviews with 97% of those who, willingly or unwillingly, participated in the Sixties, I have established that all previous explanations were faulty. The conservatives came closest by understanding that one person was, in fact, responsible. However, that person was not Benjamin Spock but Walter O'Malley.

The early fifties was a time of schizophrenia. The nation wallowed in the American dream, moving to the suburbs, buying one's own home, and saving up to send the kids, all 2.4 of them, to college — or at least figuring you had a shot at it. At the same time, people lived with an all-consuming fear of the Soviet Union. But, with the exception of red-diaper babies who learned of reality through the Rosenberg case, white kids by and large lived lives believing in the simple virtues of loyalty, community, and the sanitized American way of grammar school civics texts.

And then, in 1958, Walter O'Mally moved the Dodgers, out of Brooklyn, across the East River, out to Disneyland. The shock, the sense of betrayal, the feelings of emptiness and helplessness irrevocably burned themselves into the souls of millions. In one season a generation came of age; a generation learned that loyalty and community didn't mean squat in the real world, the world of adults. The name of the game was opportunism and greed. That was the beginning. Of course there were a few years of catatonic denial punctuated by the shell-shocked trooping to Shea Stadium, sterile-of-steriles, to cheer on the ghost of Brooklyn past. But, by the time the Viet Nam war came around we understood. We would never again be taken by surprise, never again set up as suckers. The cast that brought you Chavez Ravine was the same cast that brought you Viet Nam. It was clear to all of us, adults were capable of anything!

STEVE FANKUCHEN
MOVIE REVIEW

THE CHOSEN

by JANINE BAER

Let me start by saying I am a Jewish woman in my early 30s. When I first read Chaim Potok’s novel The Chosen over ten years ago, I felt envy and admiration for the main characters, two young, intelligent Jewish male students. I envied their serious and involvement in the religious and political arenas of Jewish life; their acceptance in those realms differed sharply from the exclusion most women experienced. Though at the time I didn’t have a full understanding of my feeling of exclusion from those aspects of Jewish life, I can see now, as a feminist, that I envied the naturalness with which the boys took their places in the larger Jewish community.

With that explained, I must say that I enjoyed the recent film of The Chosen; it’s just that I had to identify with the male characters to do so. In The Chosen, all major characters are male, two teenage boys and their fathers.

Danny Saunders (played by Robby Benson) is the son of a Chasidic rabbi (Rud Steiger) and Reuven Malter (Barry Miller) is the son of a Zionist activist (Maximilian Schell). These characters are Jews living in New York City during the 1940s, but their lives are so different that they seem to live in different worlds. The two boys meet as rivals in an unusual looking high school basketball game. Danny and the other Chasidic boys play in black suits, hats, and sidecurls; Reuven and his team wear typical American clothes and think the Chasids are pretty strange.

As a result of a baseball injury Reuven and Danny slowly become friends. They learn about each other’s lives, families, philosophies, and struggles.

The characters are appealing in many ways. It is interesting to learn about Chasids, about Zionists both before and after World War II, and about the bitter antagonism between the two groups. Appealing is the closeness, in spite of difficulties, between each boy and his father. Similarly engaging is the rocky friendship between Danny and Reuven. And perhaps most exciting is the awakening of consciousness and intellectual growth of each boy. Chasidic Danny, intellectually brilliant, secretly pours over such forbidden topics as Freud and psychology in the public library; afraid of being found out by his father, he sees his first movies, including post-war documentaries of Holocaust victims, registering wide-eyed wonder and shock on his young face. How can he follow in his father’s footsteps as expected and become a Chasidic rabbi, when his interests are boundless and worldly? Similarly, Reuven is seen growing, taking adult risks as he chooses a career and works for the building of a Jewish state.

In The Chosen, the strong silent type of man, the Anglo-American stereotype, is nowhere to be found. True, Reuven’s father works too hard, but it’s for a cause he believes in, not to prove his masculinity. The father and son are shown taking care of each other when they are ill, filling the nurturant role a woman might if there had been a woman in their family (Reuven’s mother had died some time in the past). Also atypi-
POETRY REVIEW

KEEPER OF ACCOUNTS

by MIRIAM SAGAN


Keeper of Accounts by Irene Klepfisz is really two collections of poetry, one moving and engaging, the other far less compelling. The last third of the volume, subtitled “Inhos­pitable Soil” is a strong group of poems, by far the best of Klepfisz’s work. The epigraph, from Melanie Kaye, sums up the themes of the poems:

i can’t go back
where I came from was
burned off the map

i’m a jew
anywhere is someone else’s land

The place “burned off the map” is described by Klepfisz in the most detail in “Poland, 1944: My mother is walking down a road.” Klepfisz remembers being a child: “I am over three years old, corn silk blond and blue eyed like any Polish child. There is terrible suffering among the peasants. Starvation . . . ” In Hiding, Klepfisz says: “I have no consciousness of our danger, our separateness from the others. I have no awareness that we are playing apart. I only know that I have a special name, that I have been named for the Goddess of Peace.”

In further poems, Klepfisz incorporates her early experience, and the experience of the Holocaust, with the present. As a “keeper of accounts” she keeps history alive. “Poland, 1944” begins with the lines: “My mother is walking down a road. Somewhere in Poland.” By poetic design, the next poem, “Chicago, 1964” begins “I am walking home alone at midnight. I am a student of literature, and each night I stay in the library until it closes.” Klepfisz experiences the city as alien: a “rubble of unbombed landscape.” The theme of relocation, of a destructive history, continues into the present.

The only weakness in these accounts is that the stories seem to ask for a longer, more complete form. Also, the language is often flat and dully prosaic. Perhaps poetry or short prose poetry does not give the writer a large enough scope; reading these, I wished that Klepfisz would write a novel about the same material.

“Solitary Acts” is more successful as a long poem. The imagery of gardening and of growing things in this poem is reflected throughout the book. In fact, the entire third section is dedicated to descriptions of “Urban Flowers.” Again, in “Solitary Acts” the past and the present, history and personal memory, intertwine. Klepfisz says: “There have been many plots of ground that formed me” and remembers wild flowers after the war and an unmowed field, a bit of countryside in the Bronx.

The subject matter of “Inhos­pitable Soil” is compelling enough that the reader will skip over the occasional dull line. However, in many of the earlier poems in the book Klepfisz’s voice is not as convincing. The volume opens with the weakest poem found within: “From the Monkey House and Other Cages.” This is a long poem in the voices of “female monkeys born and raised in a zoo.” Obviously, Klepfisz wants to draw parallels between the monkeys’ fate and that of women imprisoned and separated from each other, and perhaps to all people confined and tormented. However, the premise is a bathetic one, and the voices of the monkeys are unconvincing as either animals or as humans. The theme of mother separated from daughter permeates Klepfisz’s writing, but here it is unsuccessful and at times confusing.

In “From the Monkey House and Other Cages” Klepfisz fails to successfully set the tone for the rest of the book, but she introduce her main themes. The second section, “Different Enclosures” is composed of poems about work. Klepfisz is again at her best with her most direct and anecdotal material. She describes a conflict between her and her mother:

... Fifteen, bored with inventory
and weekend jobs, I stayed in bed and,
already expert, called in sick. Her rage
was almost savage, wild. She paced
through the apartment, returned to me again
and again saying “Get up! Get up now!”
as if I were in mortal danger.

from “Contexts”

However, Klepfisz can also bore the reader with detailed journal-like entries that do not really move anywhere. An example from “Work Sonnets,” which are unconvincing as sonnets: today was my day for feeling bitter. the xerox/broke down completely and the receptionist/put her foot down.”

Ultimately, the most disappointing thing about Keeper of Accounts is the almost unrelieved depressed tone. Isolation is the prevailing mood, there is little connection between friends or lovers. Workers are seen in isolation, oppressed and not particularly capable of doing anything about it. The only ray of relief comes from nature, although even here a flower is described as poisonous, with no known antidotes. Klepfisz’s vision is a grey one of suffering and alienation. The energy of her acts of survival does not always come through in her poetry. In “Babsert” Klepfisz writes a lament for those who died because they had no love and felt alone in the world.” In the following poem, “These words are dedicated to those who survived”:

because life is a wilderness and they were savage
because life is an awakening and they were alert
because life is a flowering and they blossomed
because life is a struggle and they struggled
because life is a gift and they were free to accept it

This is the energy and vision that could infuse all of Klepfisz’s writing.
Solitary Acts

for my aunt
Gina Klepfisz (1908?-1942)

“To garden is a solitary act.”
—Michelle Cliff

by IRENA KLEPFISZ

1.

And to die
as you did with the father
confessor standing waiting
patiently for your death
for your final words
and you watching the dissolution
around you watching his eyes
his face listening to his Latin words
said: “What have I to confess?
I am a Jew.”

It was 1942 and you wanted someone
to know though you’d be buried
in a Christian grave with an Aryan name.

Such will to be known can alter history.

2.

Today I stand alone planning my first garden
and think of you buried on that other continent
rescued from the Christian plot
the only flesh of your family to lie
in a marked grave in the Jewish cemetery
in a Warsaw almost empty of any Jews.

That ground I know is but a fragment
of the past a place apart the surroundings
long rebuilt into a modern city
and I know that even now
while I stand
and try to map this season’s growth
that country cleansed of our people’s blood
intones the litany of old complaints.

Gina they hate us still.

3.

You are to me everything
that remains outside my grasp
everything in this world
that is destroyed with no one
there to rescue the fragments
to hear the words.
So much of history seems
a gaping absence at best a shadow
longing for some greater
definition which will never come
for what is burned becomes air
and ashes nothing more.

So I cling to the knowledge of your
distant grave for it alone
reminds me prods me to shape that shadow.
4.

I have spent a life disentangling from influences trying to claim what was original mine: from my mother's mastery of daily survival so subtly interwoven with common gestures few recognize it for what it is from my father's more visibly heroic deed of dying recorded in memoirs tributes from the deaths of grandparents aunts uncles anonymous in a heap indistinguishable from all the others who died unmourned.

And now I remember you and face another: Gina in those few months when you watched over me before my consciousness learned the danger into which I had just been born and the label of who I was and while my mother sick and weak teetered on the edge of life in those few months as the meaning of the ghetto walls grew more defined as you inched people out of the umschlagplatz your chest contracting gasping with fear yet certain that this needed to be done I believe that in that short time something passed between us Gina and you imparted to me the vision the firm sense of self that gave you strength to state your name.

5.

And who would say that I have mourned enough that I have looked at the old photographs enough yellowed and faded and the green ink now a grey dullness where Marek placed the flowers on the rubble where my father's body was buried and disappeared and Marek's head looking down his profile etched against an empty horizon for there was nothing left who would say that I have mourned enough?

And when I asked my mother if I could have this album that holds it all holds more than most have who are without a witness to mark their spot in green or whose graves have been overgrown by weeds or forests or bulldozed for the sake of modern cities or whose bodies were never buried but were left for speechless animals to devour there is no piece of earth that does not have its nameless who lived and died unnoticed beyond the grasp of history who die today
And when I asked my mother if I could have this album and she replied this stays here in this apartment until I die I glimpsed again the urgency to be known.

6.

There have been many plots of ground that formed me. This town's church, its cemetery the bare expectant earth of my garden all remind me of that other soil on which I grew.

The first was the green bush and grass behind Marek's house in Lodz. It was after the war and Elza orphaned and just recently claimed from the Polish stranger stood proud before me and brushed her long blond hair her haughtiness her only power. I watched ashamed and awkward my small hand trying to hide my bald head shaved for reasons I was never told. It was our first meeting.

More than two years later in the neutral countryside that never saw the war in Neglinge Moti and I crawled flat on our stomachs to see the miniature wild flowers hidden beneath the blooming lilac bush. They grew for elves I said and bound him to me with the secret not wanting anyone else to know. He was alert then but only months before had refused to eat was force fed in a Stockholm hospital. When his appetite returned he clung to me four years older in a way no one could ever understand and I responded as I never would again unconsciously selflessly with complete certainty. I knew that he must live and inched him along.

And again a few years later in a park the Bronx there was an unmowed field near a metal fence. My mother would bring me here on warm summer Sundays and spread a blanket that would billow over the high resistant grass then finally settle and flatten with the weight of our bodies. We brought things to read books that warmed with the sun newspapers that yellowed as the day wore on.

These were the gardens of my childhood.
7.

Gina I must tell you: today I felt hopeful as I knelt close to the earth and turned it inch by inch sifting the soil clearing the way for roots of vegetables. I felt so hopeful Gina that with repeated years and efforts the monotony of daily motion of bending and someday the earth would be uncluttered the debris cleared.

There is I know no reason for such hope for nothing destroyed is ever made up or restored to us. In the earth are buried histories irretrievable. Yet what philosophy can justify any of our emotions? Like the watercolors from Buchenwald—if you can imagine! The stench from the chimneys just the sounds of the place. And yet someone felt a need to paint. And did.

So do not ask me to explain why I draw meaning and strength from these common gestures why today my hope is unwavering solid as if I’d never lost it or never would again as if those dying angry or stunned at the stupidity of it could be revived as if their mortal wounds could heal as if their hunger could be outlived as if they were not dying strangers to others strangers to themselves.

I need to hope. And do.

8.

I have been a dreamer dreaming of a perfect garden of a family tree whose branches spread through centuries of an orderly cemetery with no gravestones missing. Tonight as the sun sets and I turn towards evening I have no such dreams. Like the woman who refused to trace the ancient constellations upon a clear and crowded sky because finding the stars recording each in its place the faint and the brilliant was enough I too Gina have discarded all patterns and blueprints. This night I want only to sleep a dark rich dreamless sleep to shelter in me what is left to strengthen myself for what is needed.

Cherry Plain, New York August 1982

Notes

"To garden is a solitary act." from "The Garden" in Claiming an Identity They Taught Me to Despise by Michelle Cliff (Watertown, Massachusetts: Persephone Press Inc., 1980).

umschlagplatz (German)—the place of deportation for concentration camps

"Like the watercolors from Buchenwald—" For the extraordinary artwork produced in ghettos, concentration camps and in hiding, see the reproductions in The Art of the Holocaust, eds. Janet Blatter and Sybil Milton (New York: Rutledge Press, 1981).
I want to yell at you
and ask you why you didn't teach me
how not to hate Jeff
when they pushed him around
and called him a Jewboy
Two years of watching, nauseous
ignored by "them" because I was a girl
Two years
of wishing that I was a boy
and could kick the shit out of "them"
or more likely,
have the shit kicked out of me
day after day after
day after day that I never told you about
It's not your fault
and Jeff, let's be friends
Why didn't we ever talk to each other and
Why did we wear our Jewishness
like an invisible cloak which only goyim
could comment upon
or tear apart.
You taught me the silence well
but the questions keep coming
I never told you about Jeff and the bus stop
when I was 12
about being called a "Jewish dog"
when I was 8
You never told me about changing your name
growing up on the lower east side
I once asked you to teach me Yiddish
You laughed and asked me why
I never answered and you never taught me.
We/you fought to have a Menorah in the school
along with the Christmas tree but why
have we still not talked about the 5 years
of harrassment.

TO MY PARENTS

by SUSAN DAVIES

I never told anyone until 7 or 8 years later.
The Vice President of the Honor Society finally
cought in the act
I still feel the pain, the anger, the fear, the
isolation
that we/I never talked about,
and I still feel nauseous and betrayed
by you. But it is not at you
that my anger should be directed
at least not now
I blamed you for
not having enough money to send me
to Hebrew School for
not warning me about the pain for
not protecting me forever for
allowing this world to treat me/us
the way it does.

Five years
And we did nothing
Five years
And we waited for the police
to catch "them" in the act
Five years
And we never talked about it
Five years
And I learned what it meant to be a Jew
and how a Jew should handle such things
Five years of being above "them"
better than "them"
Five years eighteen years fifty years
And "them" is in me
"them" is in us.
And now three years more
Three years of a "prestigious
liberal arts education"
Three years of learning
how not to be a Jew
Three years of learning
What my parents didn’t want me to/were afraid
I would learn
or were afraid I already knew
Three years after Five years
during which they could have taught me
But no, they could not have taught me
what it would be like among the liberals,
the WASPS
the other Jews
attempting to survive or succeed
where they/I really don’t belong
really aren’t allowed
Verbally you never acknowledged our pain
But you knew and
When I left for school
you told me not to come here because
there were no Jews
Did you really know what it would be like
or were you only guessing from your own
experience?
To end the silence I must first tell you that
you were right.
You were wise but you could not protect me and
Now I must fight my own battles
No more silence except between us
For now anyway
We have never needed more than the silence
We could never risk breaking the silence
Someday I will talk to you
and tell you about
the Nazi demonstration
and the swastikas where I lived
and have you hold me
and tell me “It’s okay” and not say you “warned me.”

Yes you warned me
But “them” is everywhere
even in us.
I wish you had given me a filling for the silences
that
was not quite so painful.
You did teach me to be strong,
proud,
A Jew
and I used to think that that was not enough.
But now I know that it’s
the secret of survival
of loving myself
of removing “them” from “us”
You have no verbal answers to my questions
But someday you will shout an
acknowledgment
instead of trying to make it better with
silence or hugs or tears
We need to speak
We need to speak to ourselves first
and then “them”
Someday maybe we will all gather around
and communicate in words and emotions
in a new language in which all can hear and speak

But for now it only hurts
When I give a bit of my energy to another
My father changed his name and
I never knew till I was 16 and
We never talked.
In the silence
One of the major theoretical differences between Marxism and other radical currents popular in the late 19th century was their respective positions on the use of terror as a political means. Whereas some anarchist and populist theoreticians believed that individual acts of terror could spark a revolution, Marxists have always insisted that a socialist revolution could only occur when the proletariat is sufficiently class-conscious and organized. The execution of key government officials, Marxists have maintained, may rid the workers of some of their class enemies — but it will not lift the burden of capitalism from their shoulders. A revolutionary struggle waged along Marxian lines is always a revolution against a system, against an economic structure and all that has been built upon it. It is not an attack on specific individuals, however nefarious they may be.

As a movement originally based on Marxian principles, the Bund from its inception adopted an anti-terrorist ideology. There was no point at which the Bund officially retreated from this stance. In the spring of 1902, however, the Central Committee of the Bund did see fit to praise the attempt by a member of the Bund to assassinate the Governor of the province of Vilna. In fact the would-be assassin, Hirsh Lekert, has remained to this day a hero in the Bundist "Hall of Fame". The Bund has, on the one hand, consistently condemned the use of terror as a political means. It has, on the other hand, considered a member whose one claim to fame was an attempted political assassination of one of its greatest heroes and martyrs. On the 75th anniversary of the "Lekert Affair" this seeming anomaly is worthy of re-investigation.

The use of whipping as a punishment had a number of connotations. It evoked in many minds images of the days before the liberation of the serfs, images of bondage. Chattel are whipped in order to entice them to work harder. Von Wahl's threat implied that he thought of militant workers in such terms: as somewhat less than human, as beings unworthy of respect.

The Bund, the strongest revolutionary movement in Vilna, was faced with an obvious challenge. It could proceed to plan a May Day demonstration, thus underlining its solidarity with workers everywhere and its determination to continue the struggle — but thereby risk exposing its members to a cruel and humiliating punishment — or it could forego a demonstration, admit its weakness, allow the Czarist government to win another round. Some members of the Bund apparently considered this latter alternative. The Bund, however, had stressed over and over again that dignity and respect must be accorded to the worker. In fact one of the major accomplishments of the Bund had been to raise the self-image of Jewish workers to the point where they considered themselves worthy of respect from others. How could the Bund call upon others to stand up for their rights if it did not itself stand up for...
what it believed in? The Bund went ahead with its plans for a demonstration.

On the first of May, 1902, a number of workers and artisans, mostly Jewish, gathered in Vilna around 7 or 8 o’clock. The police, however, soon moved in, broke up the meeting, and arrested a large number of participants. In the morning 26 men, 20 of whom were Jewish, were whipped in von Wahl’s presence. In order to emphasize his disdain, von Wahl had each prisoner given a flyer reading “May Day Greetings!” immediately after the lashes had been doled out.

Again, the Bund was faced with an important choice. All Bundists were outraged. All Bundists knew that von Wahl’s action could not go unanswered. The question, however, was: just how and in what form should the Bund answer von Wahl?

In the Vilna Committee of the Bund there were voices raised in favor of a violent answer. Blood must be answered with blood, these comrades argued. Von Wahl and others like him must be dealt with in the only way they appear to understand: in like kind. But even in the heat of the moment, the Social Democratic traditions of the Bund prevailed in the Vilna Committee. A majority of the Vilna Committee rejected a formal resolution endorsing an organized assassination attempt. The strength of the emotions brought to the fore by von Wahl’s barbaric punishment of the workers, however, may be measured by the fact that the Vilna Committee did not formally prohibit Bundists from participating in an act of revenge. Committee member M. Gurevich, expressing what appears to have been the feelings of a majority of the Vilna Committee declared: “As a body the Committee cannot assist ... (in the preparations for a revenge act) ... but individual members who feel the necessity of such an act, can lend such assistance — on their own.”

The Central Committee of the Bund itself went so far as to issue a proclamation justifying an act of revenge. In its proclamation the Central Committee expressed its confidence that a “revenge-taker” would arise from amongst the ranks of the Jewish proletariat, and that this revenge-taker would “avenge the humiliation of his brothers.”

Acting without the official endorsement of their own local organization — but with its tacit consent — a group of Bundists living in Vilna, seething with rage over the treatment of the arrested workers, proceeded with a plan to assassinate von Wahl. On May 18th, 1902, Hirsh Lekert, a member of the Bund, shot von Wahl twice as the latter was leaving the circus, and wounded him in the hand and foot.

Who was Lekert? An uneducated man, Lekert made his living as a shoe-maker. He was no theoretician, was not one to be concerned with the finer points of social-ist ideology, but as a Bundist he had come to recognize that Jewish workers must no longer allow themselves to be trod underfoot. The attempt on von Wahl’s life touched a nerve in the Jewish community. Lekert — who was captured, tried, and executed in rapid succession — became a martyr in the Jewish community. A number of songs, plays and poems were written about him. In fact Hirsh Lekert, a hitherto unknown figure soon became a household name among the Jewish working class.

It was in this atmosphere that the Bund convened its Fifth Conference, held in Berdichev in 1902. Underlining the fact that it remained opposed to the use of terror as a political means, the Fifth Conference resolved that the Bund could not allow acts which tended to strike at the dignity and human rights of Jewish workers to go unanswered. Mere protests, moreover, “do not provide a sufficient means against such Asiatic murderism. The honor of a revolutionary party demands that revenge be taken for the humiliation of its members.” The Fifth Conference of the Bund therefore endorsed acts of revenge where such acts are necessary in order “to wash away the stain on the party, to take vengeance for a shameful insult.”

To those not caught up in the stormy atmosphere which then prevailed within the Pale of Settlement this distinction between acts of revenge and organized terror seemed unrealistic. The members of the Bund’s Foreign Committee, at that time based in London, took the extremely unusual step of criticizing the home organization. In an article published in Posledniia izvestiia, the Foreign Committee claimed that resolutions of Conferences as opposed to Congresses were not binding on all sections of the Bund. Vladimir Kosovsky, one of the foremost of the Bundist theoreticians, published a powerful and convincing article in Der Yidisher Arbeiter, the Yiddish-language organ of the Foreign Committee. In his article Kosovsky declared that making such a distinction between revenge and terror was “altogether without sense.” “Organized revenge,” Kosovsky argued, “is a specific form of organized terror.” The former has historically led to the latter. Political parties which begin by endorsing acts of revenge on a case by case basis ultimately end up adopting political terror as one of their major means of struggle. Let us learn from the history of other revolutionary movements, Kosovsky pleaded. To avoid sliding down the slippery slope into the morass of terrorism the Bund must renounce even acts of revenge.

In the months following the publication of Kosovsky’s article, tempers in the Pale cooled off to some extent. Reassessing their position, the leadership of the Bund became increasingly convinced that Kosovsky’s arguments were in fact valid. At the Fifth Con-

continued page 21
THE IDEOLOGY OF DESPAIR

by MARK SILVERBERG

For years we have inadvertently promoted the image of the despairing Jew. The results are unsettling, the cost high. A disproportionate number of Jewish children are "opting out" and finding their way into cults and the threat of assimilation now represents the greatest challenge to Jewish identity since World War II. What is worse, we have made of today's anti-Semitism a salable commodity in the Jewish marketplace, vividly reliving the past transgressions from William of Norwich to Chmielnitski to Streicher to Arabatef. We have made of our sorrows, torments, shame and humiliation a masochistic ideology by which our consciousness as Jews is being consumed daily with past and present indignities and sufferings. We are told that we are united today by the ever present thought that "we may once again be lined up against the wall, together." Thus, we collect our insults, we horde our humiliations, accumulate our horrors, and make of them a fine-edged wedge to cut deep into the Jewish psyche. We unknowingly portray ourselves to our children and to the world, as a People, devoid of either hope or sanctuary, who embarked in antiquity, as shipmates, on an endless voyage of the damned, harbouring but briefly in the portals of the world's civilizations, only to move on to the next series of catastrophes. In consequence, we have deified Israel both for honor and for safety's sake.

We have made of our sorrows...a masochistic ideology by which our consciousness as Jews is being consumed daily with past and present indignities.

While Israel today has become the citadel of Judaism, the unifying force of world Jewry, a haven of refuge and the centre of Jewish nationalism, it is home for but a portion of world Jewry. Coincidently, but equally as vital, has been the impact of Diaspora Jewry — a majestic living force moving through the millenia. The universality of Jewish culture, however, has all too often been neglected or misrepresented. In mobilizing support for Israel through an ideology of despair and hopelessness, we not only fail to do justice to the cause, but we neglect to represent both to ourselves and to the world at large, a positive image—the dynamic impact which Jewish culture has had upon the history of Western Civilization. We have forgotten that the periods of darkness in Jewish history, horrendous though they may have been, have never been able to extinguish the light of Jewish thought or its impact upon humanity. The image and the self-image of the Jew are the prices to be paid and the deification of Israel through ideology of hopelessness, cannot resolve the dilemma.

To the average secular Jew of today, the history of the Jewish People is one, more sensed than known, a place here—a history of expulsions and cataclysmic disasters, surely not enough to provide our posterity with an opportunity to face a brave new world with any proper sense of pride or dignity. We know little of (and emphasize not) the golden threads of Judaism which have been woven so intricately through the greatest civilizations of humanity: Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, Roman and Mohammedan—contributions to faith, to democracy, and even to Christianity—each an integral part of our inheritance and a gift from our ancestors to the benefit of civilization. While one cannot minimize the impact on the Jewish soul of the horrors which our ancestors experienced or of anti-Semitism today, we must speak of the Darkness in its proper perspective by considering the whole of our history and not simply the most sordid parts.

THE ANCIENT LEAGUES

When the ancient Hebrews settled in Canaan and ceased to be a nomadic people, they created a unique political institution—the Shoftim or the Judges—and with it, the first democracy in the world, 400 years before the Greeks. Human sacrifice was something the Jews had fought against since the days of Abraham while the Druids of England and Germany still practiced it in the 1st century A.D...

The web of Jewish culture and philosophical culture and philosophical thought has swept most every land, influenced most of the major civilizations and contributed to virtually every social order and every form of government. The first constitutional monarchy in history was founded by the Hebrews a thousand years before Christ; Medina, one of the holiest cities in the Islamic world, was founded by Jews a millennia ago and 700 years before Christianity rose from a sect to a world religion. Jewish prophets (Amos, 769 B.C.) recognized that humanity, justice, and morality were superior to cult and ritual sacrifice. The Romans who pitted slaves against wild beasts for amusement, viewed the Jewish celebration of Passover and its glorification of humanity's freedom from slavery, as barbaric. Both Greeks and Romans who mercilessly worked man and beast seven days in the name of industry, viewed the Jewish practice of "a day of rest" for man

continued next page
and animal, as heresy. The Greeks laughed at the “graceless” Jews for recoiling in horror at the Greek custom of exposing an infant to death when the physical characteristics were at all displeasing, and condemned the Jew as a barbarian for placing duty to God above pleasure of Man. . . .

Four centuries before Christ, this ancient people devised a legal system based upon the dignity of people and equality before the law, while Europe floundered in the judicial morass of trial by ordeal as late as the 15th century. To our ancient sages, Law and Justice were inseparable. The procedures governing the laying of indictments and the trial of individuals find their codification in the Common Law jurisdictions of most of the Western world: the presumption of innocence, the right to counsel, the right to proper trial, the right to call witnesses, the right to appeal, to confront one’s accusers and to testify on one’s own behalf, each was a judicial concept enshrined in the Jewish psyche, almost 2,000 years before Columbus set out in search of his new world.

The legal principles underlying the concepts of search warrants, the right to privacy, sale of goods, and copyright, trace their origins back to the Takkanot of Rabbeinu Gershom of Mayence (Mainz) (900 A.D.-1040 A.D.).

Other concepts, such as requiring the woman’s consent to a divorce — as protection to the wife — have been modified by current laws to reflect the passage of time and changing values.

It was the Jewish People, dispersed over three continents and in three civilizations, representing but one People, bound by one religion, one language and one Law who in early medieval centuries, introduced new methods of trade based upon credit and negotiable securities — which today form the economic substructure of the Western World.

From the Jewish Talmud, this People gave the world an international law which regulated all forms of conduct and set forth the foundations of the modern commercial era with concepts of tort, trade regulations, damages, real estate, commerce, the sanctity of oaths, and the enforcement of contracts.

In the fields of science and mathematics, medieval Jewish scholars invented the decimal system, the foundations of modern trigonometry and the quadrants used by Magellan, Columbus and Vasco da Gama, to discover the New World. These and other gifts helped to lay the intellectual foundations for the 17th century rebirth of philosophy and the establishment of scientific methodology in Western Europe.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Jews became the social critic and the prophet for new social justice helping to usher in the Enlightenment to Europe and new philosophical era in the unfolding story of Western civilization.

THE NEW IMAGE

The value of Jewish history, literature and culture must be measured in ideas, and not in the amount of gold amassed, real estate acquired, statues constructed, or roads built. True, these are the tangible trappings of past civilizations but the impact of ideas and literature are the truest mirrors to culture and by that standard, the Greeks and the Jews were among the most cultured nations in antiquity. The works of the Greeks and Romans are studied as intellectual exercises in special university courses, but the literary works of the Jews are the living principles of humanity. They are the culminating achievements of an inspired and highly sophisticated and civilized people. Jewish culture is a culture wrought by prophets, saints, and scholars — so versatile that it has survived even in the heart of dying civilizations. Nourished by the Torah, imbued with an overwhelming will to survive, guided by people of learning throughout the millennia — Jewish culture has been an ever present living force tied to the chariot of history. Throughout the ages, the Jews have introduced such concepts as prayer, universal education, redemption, and charity, while what is now the Western World floated on a sea of superstition. Yet for two millennia, the Jews lacked a nation of their own. Despite oppressive odds, they thrived in Babylon, flourished, yet remained distinct within Hellenistic and Mohammedan culture, survived the onslaught of the Roman Empire, and emerged to reach new intellectual and spiritual heights in the 20th century. The nations of antiquity have completely vanished: the Chinese, Hindu and Egyptian peoples brought forth great cultural achievements in their time, but their impact on other civilizations was minimal. Unlike the Jews, theirs were civilizations surviving primarily within specified territorial limits. Only the Greeks and the Romans have had as profound an influence upon Western history as has Jewish thought.

This is the true Jewish legacy to humanity, a legacy of pride and dignity, a legacy not be dwarfed by false images of the Jewish People as being meek and uninspired. . . .

Mohammedan culture, survived the onslaught of the Roman Empire, and emerged to reach new intellectual and spiritual heights in the 20th century. The nations of antiquity have completely vanished: the Chinese, Hindu and Egyptian peoples brought forth great cultural achievements in their time, but their impact on other civilizations was minimal. Unlike the Jews, theirs were civilizations surviving primarily within specified territorial limits. Only the Greeks and the Romans have had as profound an influence upon Western history as has Jewish thought.

This is the true Jewish legacy to humanity, a legacy of pride and dignity, a legacy not be dwarfed by false images of the Jewish People as being meek and uninspired — a people who exist, as Toynbee once noted, merely as a footnote to the progression of history, moving from crisis to crisis. It is altogether unfeeling, heartless and ignorant to further the perception of the Jews as a people under siege. Not only is it untrue, but it will inexorably whittle away our own self-image. If the Jewish People are to endure, it will be because the proper foundations have been laid in setting out who we are and that for which we stand, now and always—from Antiquity to the Modern Age. To adopt an ideology of futility, for whatever reason, is self-defeating. The struggle against anti-Semitism, after all, is not unique, for as Gordis has rightly pointed out, “it has a long and dishonorable history dating back to pre-classical antiquity. From Haman, the first political anti-Semite, to Hitler, the line of descent has been clear and undistinguished.” Yet, in spite of it, we have survived and the legacy has endured.

Israel has helped us to forge a new destiny, one of redemption and not persecution, but we must nevertheless ensure that while the storms of history may throw our compasses off, and while some may abandon ship, yet the ship remains strong, its structure sound, and its course, certain. We are a people, a collection of feelings and thoughts, of memories, myths and motives, of traditions and commitments. We must therefore look to our history with an air of dignity, not shame, for above all, it is our sense of community that has allowed us to repair the world.
MY GRANDMOTHER’S NAME WAS BESSIE

by MAGGIE ROCHLIN

I hardly knew the woman who died this morning. She was my grandmother, the mother of a man who calls me daughter, who I understand to be my father. We are all related, I am told, a family that knows itself by the names of its parts. We speak the words whose meanings elude us; we know them almost by heart.

MY GRANDMOTHER’S NAME WAS BESSIE. SHE WAS BORN IN LITHUANIA 94 YEARS AGO.

I am the grand/daughter of the woman I hardly knew who died this morning. I do not say that were it not too late, I would yet know her. I do not say that while it is not too late, I would yet know her son. I know better in my grand/daughter/hood, and I can know neither; for there is no knowing the one without the other. And the one would not be known.

MY GRANDMOTHER’S NAME WAS BESSIE. SHE WAS BORN IN LITHUANIA 94 YEARS AGO. WHEN SHE WAS 18, SHE FLEED TO AMERICA FOR HER LIFE.

The woman who died this morning who was my grandmother lived in fear of her life. This much I do know. They called it “Paranoia”, a mental disorder characterized by systematic delusions, as of grandeur, as of persecution. Especially as of persecution.

I looked up “Paranoia” when I was nine, and my younger sister and I were to meet my grandmother for the first time.

“Your father’s mother thinks there are gangsters trying to kill her,” my mother said. “She thinks they are after her money. Otherwise she’s rational.”

“Are the gangsters after her?” I asked, looking to my father sitting silent while his wife explained his mother to his daughters. He shook his head, gesturing with his hands, letting them speak what he could not; it was all beyond his ken; he understood nothing.

I persisted: “But she is rich, isn’t she Daddy? So it could be true the gangsters are after her, couldn’t it?”

“She has money,” my mother replied. Later I looked up the word “rational.”

My grandmother had two sons. From two sons she had six grandchildren, the first five girls, the last one a boy. We were all to be introduced to her at one time, with only grandmother and grandchildren present. On a particular Sunday afternoon, two cars filled with a family drove up to a house. Grandchildren filed out, one by one, the eldest leading the way. I was second oldest.

“Remember,” my mother whispered at the last moment, “If she starts talking about gangsters, pretend you don’t hear.”

Six children entered a house in single file. A dark-skinned grandmother, with dark hair and eyes, was seated in an armchair in a dimly lit room. One by one we introduced ourselves to her. She drew us close one at a time and smiled, saying a few words to each. To me she said what lovely curls I had, and perhaps I wasn’t too dark to be pretty. She hoped I would be pretty when I grew up. When she had finished with the girls, she lighted on the youngest, the boy-child, and said: “This one will be a doctor.” Then the grandmother took one last look at her grandchildren and the meeting was over.

One by one we left the house as we had entered and, not speaking, walked slowly to our waiting parents.

“What did she say?” my mother asked. “Tell me everything she said. Did she bring up the gangsters?”

“No, Mother,” I said. “She was rational.” My father said nothing and we drove quickly away.

MY GRANDMOTHER’S NAME WAS BESSIE. SHE WAS BORN IN LITHUANIA 94 YEARS AGO. WHEN SHE WAS 18, SHE FLEED TO AMERICA FOR HER LIFE. IN AMERICA SHE WORKED. IN AMERICA SHE MARRIED THREE MEN.

The woman I hardly knew who died this morning was my grandmother. She lived on the run; this too I know. She was never at home.


“God knows,” my mother answered. “The woman is possessed. She can never stay put in one place.” Once I heard my grandmother had returned to Europe, but had left soon after when she discovered the gangsters still there. Another time I heard she had moved to Israel, certain there were no gangsters in the holy land; but she found them there too, and had come back to the U.S.

“She never rests, that woman,” my mother said. “She just can’t seem to stop.”

“I want to see my grandmother,” I said.

“What on earth for?” my mother asked.

When I was 23 I met my grandmother for a second time. My father had somehow located her to announce the birth of his first grandchild, my son, and my grandmother wished to see him. My grandmother looked the same as I had remembered her 14 years earlier. Her first words upon seeing me were how glad she was that I had turned out pretty after all, and not so dark like her.

I introduced the man who was my husband to my grandmother, and brought my infant son to her. She held her great grandson briefly, murmured something to him I could not quite hear, then returned him to me and said:

“You have a beautiful son. You have a smart and handsome husband. He will take care of you both. You will be safe.” Then she kissed me for the first time. In another moment she was gone.

MY GRANDMOTHER’S NAME WAS BESSIE. SHE WAS BORN IN LITHUANIA 94 YEARS AGO. WHEN SHE WAS 18, SHE FLED TO AMERICA FOR HER LIFE. IN AMERICA SHE WORKED. IN AMERICA SHE MARRIED THREE MEN: THE FIRST FATHERED TWO SONS BEFORE HE LEFT; THE SECOND WORKED WITH HER, THEN LEFT. THE THIRD REFUSED TO WORK AND REFUSED TO LEAVE. WHEN MY GRANDMOTHER WAS SPENT, SHE LEFT.

One year ago, I saw my grandmother for the third and final time. It had been another 14 years since we had last met. My father learned my grandmother was staying in the Jewish Home for the Aged in Los Angeles, where she had been living on and off for the past 10 years. The Rabbi at the Home told my father how grandmother would leave the Home periodically, returning only when she had become too exhausted to move. And then how she would stay just long

continued next page
enough to recover her strength before moving on again. This time he did not think she would be moving.

My mother and I visited my grandmother together. She was expecting us. "Remember," my mother warned just before we reached my grandmother's room, "don't let her get started on the gangsters."

By this time my grandmother was a very old woman, and considerably changed. She seemed very tired as she roused herself to greet us; the slightest movement an effort for her. Still, she seemed genuinely gladdened to see us.

"Maggie," she said first things, arms outstretched, "How pretty you look. And how is your darling son and handsome husband?"

"I have no husband anymore, Grandma," I said. "We were divorced years ago. But my son is well, and so is my daughter."

"Oy, so you have now a daughter, too," she said. "Maggie, how can you live without a husband. It's no good; a woman living alone. You need a man to take care of you and the children."

"But Grandma," I said, "you didn't."

"Ah, but that was different. With me it was bad luck. If you are pretty, you have good luck. You marry again, Maggie, while you're still young. You find a nice man, he'll take care of you."

"No, Grandma," I said. "I'm not going to marry again. Ever. I don't need a man to protect me."

"Oy, what to do with such a stubborn girl. I didn't know you were such a stubborn girl, Maggie," she said. "Where did you learn such stubbornness?"

My grandmother then turned to my mother. "Rose," she said, "Please would you leave Maggie and me for a few minutes to talk?"

My mother reluctantly left the room, glancing at me meaningfully on her way out. As soon as she was gone, my grandmother turned to me and whispered, "Maggie, go look out the window. Tell me, do you see anyone out there? In the Courtyard?"

"No, Grandma," I said, "I don't see anyone out there right now."

"But they're there, you know. They're there," she said. "The gangsters are out there. They're everywhere, everywhere. Even in here. I do not escape them. She looked at me. "Do you know about the gangsters, Maggie? Do you understand what I'm saying to you?"

"Yes, Grandma," I answered, moving closer to her. "I do know about the gangsters. I know that they're out there. I know they are everywhere."

"Thank God," she said, staring intently at me for several seconds. "Thank God. Now call your mother back in."

My grandmother's name was Bessie. She died this morning. I hardly knew her.

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delete male references to God in their liturgy. There is an active and growing Jewish feminist movement in the United States. The general feminist movement has raised consciousness about sexism so that progressives now understand, or should, that most women do not wish to be restricted to the occupational title "housewife" for their entire lives. Nor do women want to be depicted in films and literature in the limited balabosta / temptress role (analogous to the "madonna / whore" dichotomy of the general feminist movement).

The Jewish feminist movement helped bring feminists like myself back to the Jewish community, to struggle there against sexism as we work against anti-Semitism in the women's movement. So while acknowledging the limitations and omissions of women characters in The Chosen, I enjoyed the film for its Jewish warmth, exuberance, conflict, intensity, and history. For the future, Jews can work toward creating new films — and new lives — that reflect equal representation and power of women and men while retaining our positive Jewish values.

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CORRECTION

Apologies to Andrea Behr, Steven Levy, and our readers for errors in Issue #3. Paragraph 2, column 2, page 13 should read, "... 'No more genocide in our name.' The Marxist-Leninist Party, USA, refers to a 'blitzkrieg', to 'zionist storm troopers'. " Column 1 at the top of page 7 should read: My brother's trade is bookbinding/ Are you a joiner? No, Sir, I am a cloakmaker/ Can you operate a sewing machine?/ To be sure, I can/ This man is a common laborer/ How much do you earn a week?/ I earn six dollars a week."

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Newspapers are unable, seemingly, to discriminate between a bicycle accident and the collapse of civilization.

G. B. Shaw

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BUND: continued

gress of the bund, held in June, 1903, the resolution adopted at Berdichev was annulled without debate.

The Lekert affair, however, was not forgotten. On the contrary, Lekert was often praised by the bund as the prototype of the new Jewish worker; proud of his Jewishness, unwilling to tolerate the exploitation of his people and his class. In some ways, Lekert may be said to have provided the model for those who were to take part in the Bundist self-defense groups, organized to fight against "pogromchiks", and even for the Jewish resistance fighters of the Second World War. There is a direct spiritual thread extending from the Vilna of 1902 to the United Jewish Resistance Organization of 1942.

The reaction of the Bund to the Lekert affair may even provide guidelines for socialists asked to take a position on terrorism in our own day. Socialists must always defend human rights and the dignity of the worker. While violence against our fellow humans may in exceptional circumstances prove to be necessary as a last resort, Socialists must not use terrorism as a general political means.
COME IN

Come in!
says the bread,
the dark
loaf

In
with your
teeth.
Already,
I'm full
of your grandfather's
teeth,
teeth of his dreams
which broke
themselves
on my
crust

Make a blessing
over me
Eat me!
—thus
spoke the bread
to my hunger

KUM AREIN

Kum arein
zogt dos broit.
Kum arein,
kum mit tsain arein,
zogt dos shvartse korn broit;
Ich trog noch dein zaidn's tsain in mir—
di tsain fun zeine chaloymes,
tsain vos hohn zich tsebrocht
oif mein skore.
Kum arein,
mach a broche oif mir.
Es mich!
Azoi hot geredt dos broit
tsu mein hunger.

SENIOR CENTER: SONG AFTER YIDDISH CLASS

With her hand
on the piano
Ida sings a streetboy's song
in the bitter rain of a distant city

Papirosen!
Upsweep of white hair from collar,
chiffon scarf pinned to her dress,
thin clay of rouge over high square cheeks,
handkerchief in hand

Ida is a streetboy
peddling cigarettes, matchsticks,
calling his grief
to crowds fusing the twilight
She sings Russian snow and dust,
black bread
rich with the salt of mourning: a mother's
grate by the Volga,
a husband crumpled
by junkie's bullet
behind a Chicago counter

Ida's voice
deep as sunlight
melting frost
on the roofs of the Ukraine
Papirosen!

by DANIEL MARLIN
LIBRARY: continued

Third, what do we do? I like Mr. Berman's two-pronged approach, some. LC is the source, the authority to which everyone looks and what changes there will be felt far and wide. But as Mr. Berman has learned, LC is as stubborn and bureaucratic as the next federal agency.

This is where non-librarians may have an advantage over Mr. Berman. He seems to expect too much, too quickly, and too easily from LC. Anyone with more experience fighting city hall wouldn't expect them to fold so fast. The gains by Blacks and women in representation in the card catalogs of America did not come about from a respectful letter from the Black or Women's Caucuses of the American Library Association.

Cataloging, like dictionaries, follows practice, only cataloging is slower. We're talking about an organization that until very recently called all aircraft "aeroplanes" and still refers to "moving pictures" rather than film cinema or movies. If people want to change the laws Mr. Berman recommends—and I think they should—they are going to have to do a little concerted consciousness-raising.

Mr. Berman's second point concerns approaching the local library. It is a laudable effort to get rid of anti-Semitic subject headings but some of the extensive cataloging he recommends for Judaica is costly and unjustifiable. Cataloging costs money and libraries are hard pressed (anyone who voted for a tax cut initiative or Ronald Reagan should be barred from libraries). The last thing your library needs now is a torch-wielding mob demanding an extra subject heading for Latkes.

Challenging prejudice, yes; special treatment, no. There is a lot to be said for Mr. Berman's thesis but I think it would be a mistake to demand or expect some of the changes he suggests. On the other hand, it is a ground breaking work and deserves wide circulation. If you want to change the law on the card catalog, a good place to start is to show his article to your local cataloger. Write to Daniel J. Boorstin, the Librarian of Congress, and tell him how you feel. If you need the address, you can get it from the library.

Lee David Jaffe
Berkeley, CA

Sandy Berman replies:
1. It's neither naive nor unreasonable to "expect" that our national library and bibliographic center should promptly eliminate antisemitic and other bias from its subject heading scheme and cataloging practice. That's what I "expected" 12 years ago when my Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People (Scarecrow Press) appeared. And that's still what I "expect."

2. Improvements in the cataloging treatment of women and Afro-Americans did result in large part from organizational pressure: e.g., letters, petitions, and public testimony from the ALA Black Caucus and SRRT Committee on Sexism in Subject Heads. (For documentation, see my Joy of Cataloging [Oryx Press, 1981], p. 61-3, and Joan Marshall's On Equal Terms: a Thesaurus for Nonsexist Indexing and Cataloging [Neal-Schuman, 1977], especially p. vii-viii.)

3. It's the responsibility of local libraries to:
   a) ensure that their catalogs don't peddle misinformation or harmful stereotypes (like "Jewish Question" and "Councilmen").
   b) maintain catalogs that "work," that truly reflect what's in the library collection and help people to quickly find what they're looking for; and
   c) respond to the needs and wants of their own constituencies.

If you want a subject heading for Latkes, or JEWISH LESBIANS, or KIBBUTZ, or PALESTINIAN STATE—i.e., if you want your library to clearly identify what it has on those topics—it's the library's obligation to do so. That's what it's there for. And it's your right as a taxpayer to demand it. Don't worry about the "poor librarian." Worry about the information you've paid for and need and that you can't find because of farkocketter cataloging.

I do want to comment on the erroneous assumption (made in the otherwise wonderful "library" piece) that "Jewish-Arab Relations" should be substituted with "Israeli-Arab Relations." This substitution would wipe out the centuries of history Jews have had with the Arabs before the re-creation of the Jewish State.

And why is Jewish-Arab Relations a "seriously inaccurate" heading? Despite particular variations at different times, the attitudes toward Jews living in Arab (Muslim) lands have been consistently anti-Jew.

Rachel Wahba
San Francisco, CA.

SANDY BERMAN REPLIES:
In fact, most material currently assigned to JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS by the Library of Congress deals with post-1948 "relations" between Arabs and Israelis and thus would be more accurately represented by ISRAELI-ARAB RELATIONS or ISRAEL—FOREIGN RELATIONS—ARAB COUNTRIES.

Material on pre-1948 "relations" could be properly subject cataloged under JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS if it were regularly subdivided by place: e.g., JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS—PALESTINE or JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS—SYRIA. However, to make catalog entries for works on the Jewish experience in specific countries more findable, it's better to keep them together, which might produce a sequence like:

JEWS IN PALESTINE—HISTORY
JEWS IN PALESTINE—RELATIONS WITH ARABS
JEWS IN PALESTINE—SOCIAL CONDITIONS

And if particular works dealt solely or largely with Jewish persecution in Arab lands, the appropriate heading would be, e.g., ANTISEMITISM—IRAQ, ANTISEMITISM—MOROCCO, etc.

SHERWOOD (JERRY) BAUMKEL
Born: 7/24/26 Died: 1/29/82
Despite being blacklisted
he loved Malke, hot dogs, tongue sandwiches and LIFE!
CHANUKAH AND CLASS STRUGGLE

by MICHAEL (ROSS) ARGAMAN

At the time of the Maccabean revolt, there was hellenistic cultural, political, and economic intervention in the land of Israel. Though this was neither the first nor the last time in our history that there was significant foreign influence, this period was somewhat different from the others.

Jewish society was divided at the time into relatively distinct classes: urban aristocracy, urban proletariat, and rural peasantry. Conflicting interests among these classes naturally led to struggle, the first Jewish class struggle.

During this period, Jews were free in terms of cultural and religious affairs, but not in political and economic matters. Certain sectors of the Jewish population were more prone to hellenistic influence than others, most notably the Jerusalem aristocracy, which collaborated with the foreign imperialists. This indigenous aristocracy in Jerusalem wanted to maintain its position of power in the financial and commercial affairs of the city. They wanted to make Jerusalem into a hellenistic city and rename it "Antiochus", thereby attempting to placate their imperialist "allies" who were occupying the land. It is written in the first book of Maccabees: "In those days there went out from Israel lawless ones and they persuaded many, saying, 'Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles around us because from the time that we were separated from them, many evils have come upon us'." The passage continues by describing how the people were convinced of the justice of this claim and volunteered to go to the king in order to make a pact with him.

The Maccabees, who were the guerrilla force of the Jerusalem proletariat and the Judean peasantry, led the armed struggle against the local aristocracy and the foreign imperialists. The "lawless ones" (Hebrew: bnei-biliya'al), mentioned in the first Book of Maccabees, refers to the Jewish aristocracy, which attempted to co-opt sectors of the working class and peasantry. Though Hellenistic cultural imperialism had its effects on the masses, particularly in the spheres of language, architecture, and art, the masses understood that their class interests were opposed to those of the aristocracy and their imperialist partners. The Maccabee-led struggle expressed the conflict between the wealthy urban elite and the urban and rural poor. The success of this struggle brought about national independence under the rule of the Hasmoneans. Under Jewish working class independence, the economic situation greatly improved, and Hebrew language, literature and art were revived.

Such was the class nature of Jewish society in the land of Israel at the time of the Maccabean guerrilla struggle, and such were the class conflicts which brought about the successful revolution, which we annually celebrate to this day.

NEW POLISH SAINT KNOWN AS ANTI-SEMIT

LONDON—(JCNS)—The recent canonization of Father Maximilian Kolbe of Poland has probably created the first Catholic saint to be notorious before the Second World War for his anti-Semitic activities.

Father Kolbe died in Auschwitz death camp in 1941 after offering his own life to save that of a Polish Christian prisoner who went on to survive the war.

His canonization was accomplished at an unprecedented speed by Vatican standards. In 1971, the Catholic Church declared his beatification. Eleven years later, he was elevated from the status of "blessed" to that of a saint. However, in this elevation, the Church has failed to take his past activities into account.

The thorny question of whether anti-Semitism should be considered an obstacle to beatification was raised in Poland in 1971, when Father Kolbe became "blessed."

Jan Jozef Liski, the Polish dissident writer who was born a Catholic raised the question in the Catholic press. In a letter published in the weekly Tygodnik Powszechny, Liski asked how the Catholic Church could reconcile beatification with pre-1939 anti-Semitism. The paper's reply was that many Poles had held Father Kolbe's views at the time.

Father Kolbe was a Franciscan monk. A gifted organizer, he created a popular anti-Semitic press which strongly influenced the thinking of the Polish workers and peasants. In pre-war Poland, where even the most serious Warsaw dailies never exceeded a circulation of 50,000, Father Kolbe's "Maly Dziennik" ("Little Daily") sold 150,000.

His weekly, Rycerz Niepokalanej ("Knight of the Immaculate") sold more than a million copies a day — an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of the Polish press. The daily pursued a relentless, anti-Semitic campaign, while his weekly pursued a more pseudo-scholarly anti-Semitic line, apart from staging a witch-hunt by blaming liberal-minded Poles of aiding Jews.

One of the victims of this witch hunt was Prof. Czeslaw Milosz, the Polish poet and literary scholar who was awarded the 1980 Nobel Prize for Literature. Prof. Milosz was sacked from his post at a radio station in Vilno in the late 1930s after the station had entrusted its religious program to a Jew — a fact promptly denounced by Father Kolbe's weekly.

Although Father Kolbe spent the last weeks of his life among Jewish inmates, there does not appear to be any conclusive evidence to indicate how far, if at all, the experience altered his anti-Semitic views.

In Britain, only John Whale, the religious affairs correspondent of The Sunday Times, mentioned Father Kolbe's anti-Semitism, a taint of which the pre-war Polish church was not free.

"Kolbe is known to have called his journalists to order on the point at least once." Nevertheless, his intervention in certain extreme cases did not alter the fundamentally anti-Semitic character of his two newspapers.
ANOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

HOLOCAUST RESISTANCE

by JAMES BENNETT

The following are sections taken from the author’s 23 page excerpt of his own 75 page bibliography. Other sections including The Repression, Historiography, Imaginative Literature, Music, Film, and Art, Journals, and Assistance to The Jews will be published in a forthcoming issue of Shmate. We encourage all our readers to submit annotated editions to this bibliography indicating in which category the work fits.

GENERAL HISTORIES

Biblog. Definitive, with chapters on “Elemental Resistance,” “Jewish Partisans,” “The Fighting City-Ghettoes” “The Warsaw Ghetto Revolt” (over 100 pages), and “Revolts in the Death Camps.” See Kahanovich.
A brief but scholarly introduction to the subject by the head of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.
The book concentrates upon how the Jews responded to his plan to exterminate them all. See the Index for specific pages on resistance.
312 pp.
A history of Jewish resistance from 1939 up to the formation of Israel, with chapters 3-5 on resistance during World War II.
Eight kinds of Jewish resistance to the Nazis.
Divided into six sections with commentary; over thirty selections, several of which deal with aspects of resistance.
412 pp.
Part VI, “Resistance,” seventeen selections.
412 pp.
Part VI, “Resistance,” seventeen selections.
Surveys the literature of spiritual resistance, describing the situations wherein characters actively contend against those conditions in the ghettos and concentration camps which threaten despair.
A collection of speeches by the world’s best historians on the subject, the speeches followed by comments by participants.
Articles and memoirs of Jews in World War II.
Thirty-three accounts of resistance, many first-hand.

NATIONAL HISTORIES, INDIVIDUAL BIOGRAPHIES, SPECIAL TOPICS

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, SPECIAL TOPICS

Not only were many Jews active in the French resistance movement but they were “the first in all France to organize active opposition to the enemy.”
How Brand saved many Hungarian Jews.
How the Bulgarian Jews escaped the fate of the rest of Europe’s Jews under Nazism.

continued next page


Personal account of a Jewish underground fighter and concentration camp inmate.


An adaptation of some sections of the author’s *Der Widerstand deutscher Juden gegen das Nazi­regime 1933-1945.* Gives a history of the Jewish resistance within Germany from the beginning of the Hitler Regime.


Young Anne Frank’s account of her life in hiding with her family from the Nazis in Amsterdam.


The life and thought of Baeck, the leader of German Jewry until its extermination.


Of the estimated 30,000 French Jewish children before the war, half were saved.


Resistance in the Vilna Ghetto and the surrounding area, especially in the Rudnicki Forest. A detailed, scholarly report based upon eyewitness accounts.


Makes a case for large-scale French-Jewish resistance. See Knout and Ravine.


One of the major half-dozen subjects of the book is the Jewish resistance. “In many countries — France, the Soviet Union, Holland, Belgium, Greece — a million or more Jews fought in the nation’s army or resistance forces and their identity melted into the general national forces . . . Jews res-
BIBLIOGRAPHY: continued

Struggle of Jewish youth in Slovakia who joined the anti-Nazi revolt in the Tatarian Mountains, told by one of the active members.  
Surveys the history of Partisan campaigns against the Nazis and their collaborators in the forests of Poland, Russia, Central and Western Europe.

Story of a Jewish girl who returned to Poland on the last train before the fall of Warsaw and who served as a doctor in the Pinsk Ghetto and later in a partisan brigade in the Polish forests.

CONCENTRATION CAMPS

The performance of Verdi's Requiem in the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia.


Personal narratives.


Lewenthal, Zelman, and Adam Rutkowski, eds. "Pamietnik Czlonka Sonderkommando Auschwitz II" [Diary of a member of Sonderkommando Auschwitz II], Biuletyn Zydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego [Poland], 65/66 (1968), 211-234.  
The diary relates the preparations for a general revolt of Auschwitz prisoners and the course of the tragic, heroic armed revolt of the Sonderkommando people on 7 October 1943.


This is the first chapter of a greater work devoted to the history of this camp in which from May 1942 to September 1943 the Germans killed about 250 thousand Jews from Poland, Holland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, France, and the USSR. Presents all manifestations and forms of resistance movement in this camp. See Suhl's They Fought Back.


GHETTOS

Resistance in the city and in the forests.


"All the material in this volume is based on authentic documents written by eyewitnesses and participants in the Jewish resistance movement during the period of Nazi occupation in the lands of Eastern Europe." Only the first of three parts deals with ghetto resistance. Part II is about partisan resistance; Part III about resistance in concentration camps.


The uprising of the Polish town of Nesvizh.

History of the consolidation of the Fighting Jewish Movement in the Bialystok Ghetto, and description of the revolt before the liquidation of that ghetto.


Chapter Four specifically on underground resistance with sections on Warsaw, Bialystok, Cracow, Vilno, and Lodz.  
The main purpose of the book is to examine the role exercised by the Jewish political parties in the resistance movements in occupied Poland between the years 1939 and 1944.


The author discusses the structure of the Left-wing and its activity, such as sabotage, propaganda, and schooling.


Extract from the diary of the author about Safrin, who used all his personal fortune to enable other Jews to escape, and who was himself caught and killed in 1943.


Over half the book is about the Warsaw Ghetto, the remainder on the other major Ghetto uprisings and rebellions in concentration camps.


The countless personal and communal acts of resistance within the ghetto.


Encyclopedic study of all aspects of 405 Councils in Poland, the Baltic countries, and the occupied areas of the U.S.S.R. [Byelorussia and Ukraine]. Considerable details on resistance.

Zucherman, Itzhak and Moshe Basok. The Book of the continued next page
BIBLIOGRAPHY: continued


WARSAW Ghetto


Development of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB), Jewish National Committee and the Secret Coordinating Commission from 1942 to 18 January 1943, the eve of the first act of ZOB’s armed resistance.

Berman, Adolph, and Barbara Berman. “Zaglada Getta w Warszawie (Zskro Kronikarski)” [The Extermination of the Warsaw Ghetto (a Chronology)]. Biuletyn Zydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego [Poland], 45/46 (1963), 138-158.

The authors are former members of the resistance who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto and survived World War II. The chronicle factually treats the ghetto during 1940-42. Also describes the escape of the authors.


Memoirs of a member of the Jewish Fighting Organization in the Warsaw Ghetto.


In Hebrew. A biography of the commander of the revolt written by a member of the underground.


Important material recently discovered includes the Statutes of the Jewish Fighting Organization, the reminiscences of Hirsch Berlinski, and a profile of the commander of the Jewish defenders. Mordechai Anilewicz, written by Immanuel Ringelblum.


The 1943 rebellion and subsequent massacre of Jews in the Warsaw ghetto based upon interviews of survivors.


The author participated in the battle of the Warsaw Ghetto as a liaison officer of the Coordinating Committee of the Jewish Underground Organization.


The authors, the former chief of staff of the Polish Home Army (underground) and a member of the Polish Government-in-Exile, describe the uprising and efforts in London to get help.


Day-by-day chronicle of the slaughter of a half-million Jews.


A 35th anniversary account of the uprising.

LATE LETTER

... I believe that your editorial in the last issue was an absolute shande. Let me quote a portion:

“Day after day I have read articles by and listened to supposedly progressive Jews wish that Israel would leave Lebanon so that anti-Semitism would go away. Sometimes they wring their hands and cry out that they are suddenly embarrassed to be Jewish. They shrink into the woodwork and refuse to confront the blatant anti-Semitism all around them... When will Jews stop internalizing the anti-Semitism of non-Jews? When will our people recognize that anti-Semitism is a reflection on goys, not on us?”

Let’s start from the beginning of your statement: I have never read (let alone “day after day”) anything by a Jew about the Lebanon invasion that said Israel should leave Lebanon “so that anti-Semitism would go away.” Jews opposed to the invasion declare that Israel must leave Lebanon because the invasion was unnecessary, did not accomplish the goals that the government advanced and because it was plain criminal brutality. You’ve got it all wrong. All of us are opposed to anti-Semitism and fight against it with everything in our power whenever we see it. ...

No one in his right mind, Jew or non-Jew, would deny that these were despicable acts. But, Israel sent troops into a foreign country and killed thousands of its residents, not to mention 300 of its own boys. Let’s place our moral outrage in perspective. While the killings of these European Jews was heinous, you must admit that the invasion of Lebanon was the most important development both for Israel and world Jewry in the last ten years (since the 1973 war). Why were there no articles in your last issue that dealt with the vexing issues raised by this current war (only two articles made indirect reference to the events of Lebanon, and then only because of the anti-Semitic incidents which the invasion sparked).
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