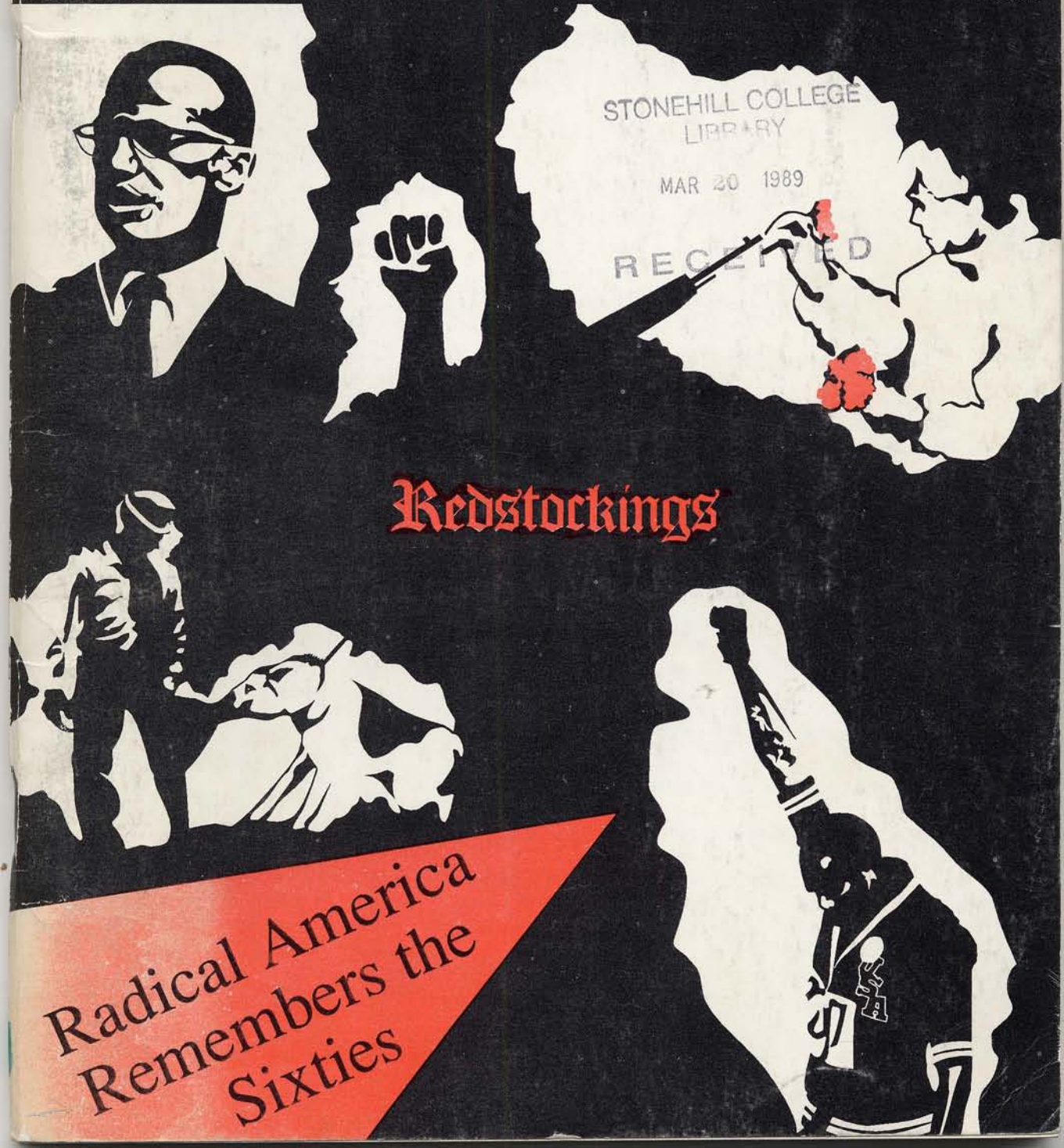


National Reproduction in Israel • AIDS Action at the FDA

RADICAL AMERICA

Vol. 21 No. 6

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Radical America
Remembers the
Sixties

Editors: Margaret Cerullo, John Demeter, Rob Elias, Marla Erlie, Elizabeth Francis, Evelyn Hammonds, Ann Holder, Bill Hoynes, Judy Housman, Donna Penn, Cynthia Peters, Leigh Peake, Ken Schlosser, Hassan Vakili, Kim Westheimer, and Deb Whippen.

Associate Editors: Peter Biskind, Carl Boggs, Frank Brodhead, Paul Buhle, Margery Davies, Ellen Du Bois, Barbara Ehrenreich, John Ehrenreich, Phyllis Ewen, Dan Georgakas, Matthew Goodman, Ted German, Martin Glaberman, Jeff Goldthorpe, Linda Gordon, Jim Green, Mike Hirsch, Allen Hunter, Joe Interrante, Mike Kazin, Ken Lawrence, Staughton Lynd, Mark Naison, Jim O'Brien, Sheila Rowbotham, James Stark, Gail Sullivan, Annmarie Troger, Martha Vicinus, Stan Weir, David Widgery, Ann Withorn, and Renner Wunderlich.

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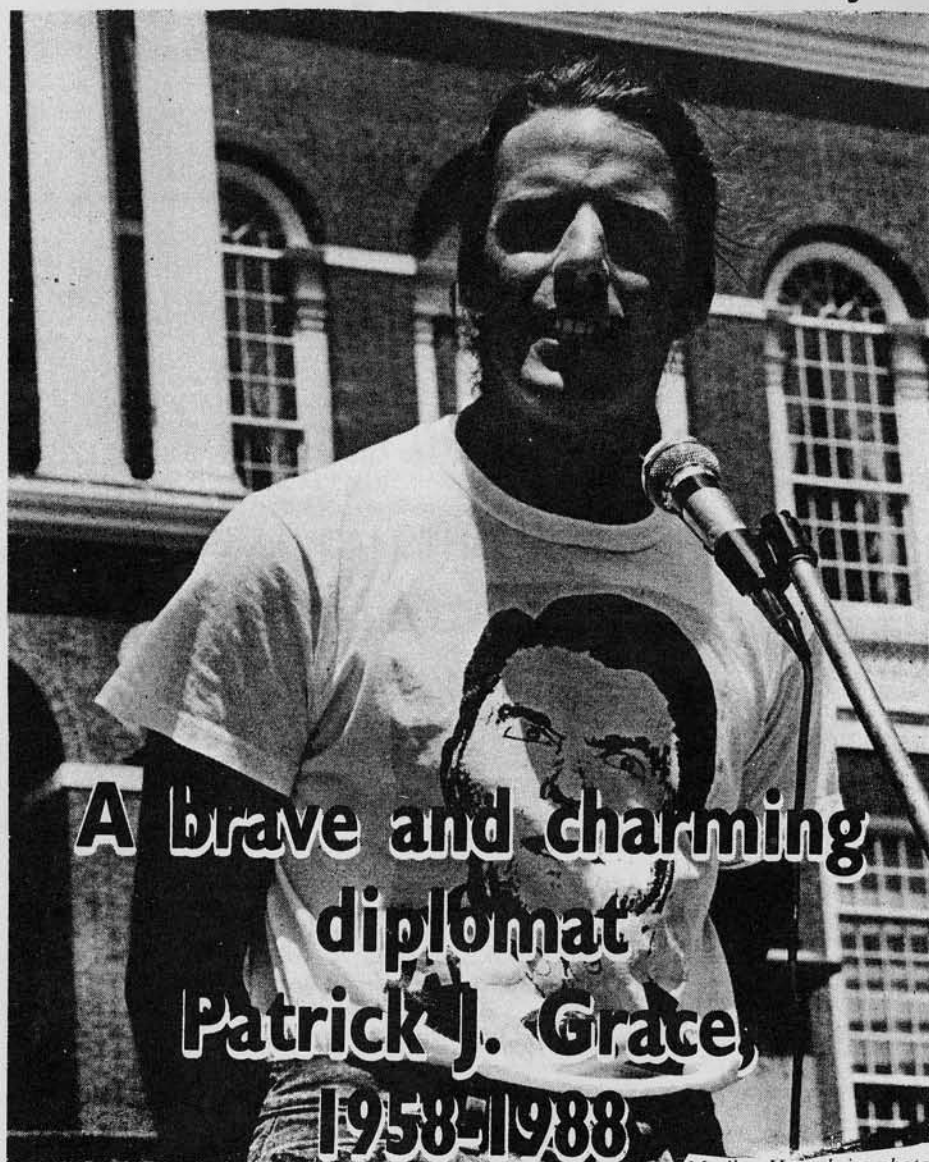
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RADICAL AMERICA

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This issue of **Radical America** is dedicated to the memory of



Marilyn Humphries photo

“My government can ignore me. My government can treat me as a mere statistic. My drug company can get rich off of me. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts can continue denying my basic civil rights, can arrest me, and can beat me up. The unseen AIDS virus in my bloodstream can kill me. Statistically it probably will. But none of these things can ever silence me....For love and for life, we’re not going back.” —from **Radical America**, Vol. 21, Nos. 2-3

INTRODUCTION

Remembering the sixties is harder for some than for others. For many of the white male leftists whose books have garnered so much popular attention, "the Sixties" are remembered with a glow of personal and political nostalgia: as a political initiation rite, a time when they reached a pitch of power never to be found again. For veterans of the Civil Rights, Black Power, and Black Liberation movements, there are often more ambivalent memories, of less theatrical, more threatening violence, of essential hopes bypassed, dreams stillborn. White women may recall both the liberation of the refusal of the feminine mystique, the opening of sexual freedom and political possibility, and the bitterness of indifference, trivialization, even betrayal of political allies. Women of color, gays and lesbians all may harbor even more complex memories of the experience of social movement. And working class men and women often recall the fear of the draft along with the thrill of the counterculture, and the ridiculing of their forced choices that too often characterized the elite culture.

With this issue, *Radical America* begins to look at the politics of remembering—what is remembered and by whom; to what end and with what effects. Lynne Hanley begins the process with a reflection on the fictions of Vietnam, in literature and film, confident that how

we remember the last war will shape how—and whether we fight the next one. It is the soldier's story, the tragedy of the American soldier confronting not the Vietnamese but himself, that has dominated our cultural imagination, our cultural industries and institutions, she argues. We have an alternative literature, written by women, but it is most often not even seen as war literature, precisely because it doesn't concentrate so exclusively and obsessively on the soldier's story. The Vietnamese literature of the war is virtually unknown in this country, and only recently through translations (mainly by vets) is it becoming available. And yet, Hanley recalls that it is to the Vietnam era that we owe the challenges to the literary "canon" that are currently being raised in colleges and universities, on behalf of the literatures of other than white men. In the controversy over the Pulitzer Prize which went to *Paco's Story* not *Beloved* we are further reminded that the politics of cultural transformation is ongoing. As we go to press, the debate over *Mississippi Burning* rages about who will tell the story of the civil rights movement, even whose story it is. In Boston this month, there is a full production of Lorraine Hansberry's posthumously published play, *Les Blancs*, set within the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya in the fifties, and dealing with complex questions of black liberation "yesterday, today, and tomorrow—but not long after that." [1959] The title was a sarcastic response to Jean Genet's *The Blacks (Les Negres)* which Hansberry saw in 1961 and found to be essentially a conversation among white men about themselves, a necessary conversation perhaps, but one which too easily purged the whites, "self condemning and self absolving," while "the Blacks" remained in "untouched remoteness."

Reebee Garofalo looks back to document the connections between the black political movements of the sixties and the position of black artists in the music industry, the content and form of their music, and the entire character of American popular music. The early sixties, he recalls, saw more black women, in fact more blacks of both genders, on the pop charts than at any point in our history. And for those who think of Flower Power, he reminds us that *Ebony* christened the summer of 1967

the summer of 'Retha, Rap [Brown], and revolt.'

Radical America has wanted for some time to publish a separate "Sixties Issue." For more than two years we have tried to solicit articles that would both evoke the memories and speculate on the meanings of the historical reflections emerging around us. *RA* editors who had lived the sixties wanted to be sure that the radicalness was recovered, against the relegation of the Sixties to youthful excess, utopia without organization, or pre-marxist naivete. Younger editors wanted a Sixties Issue that would make sense to them, that was linked to today's political dynamics.

Rather than wait until the 1990s to remember the sixties, we begin in this issue with a less ambitious project. We publish the first in a series of "Sixties sections" to be continued over several issues. Here we are including some of the short reminiscences solicited from readers, associate editors and friends of *RA* by the Board. The reminiscences of people of color, women, gays and lesbians are sorely under-represented. The response to our solicitations points to the patterns of remembering we had hoped to criticize not illustrate. What are the sources of this pattern? What are the obstacles to memory and to writing about memory? We are reminded of a remark made by Susan Sontag in 1975 when the Vietnam war finally ended, commenting on the sense of anticlimax and disorientation that existed in this country, and particularly within "the movement": "the Vietnamese won," she said, "but we didn't." Looking toward future issues on the Sixties, and in hope of exploring the process of remembering, the Board invites *RA* readers to submit their memories and memorabilia (leaflets, diary entries, clippings, etc.) to write us letters or articles to expand this process of collective remembering.

The 60s meets the 80s in the AIDS activist movement. We are publishing a speech by Vito Russo along with three shorts to convey why the Food and Drug Administration and the health industry have become a target of activists in the fight against AIDS.

Nira Yuval-Davis' article "Woman/Nation/State: The Politics of National Reproduc-

tion in Israel" is timely. The results of the last election in Israel, that threatened to expand the authority of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties, created an international furor among Jews as the question of Who is a Jew? took center stage. Yuval-Davis elaborates how the answers to that question have been contested among Jews since the French Revolution. With the development of Zionism and the establishment of the state of Israel, the boundaries of the Jewish collectivity, the Jewish national collectivity, and the Israeli collectivity have become contradictory and subject to challenge from within Israel and from world Jewry outside. Because "the criteria for 'membership' for Jews" in the Israeli national collectivity is under debate and Palestinians represent 17 percent of Israel's population, whether Israel can defend its boundaries as a Jewish collectivity remains an open question. Demographic policies and Jewish reproduction thus become central concerns in Israel's attempt to secure itself as a "Jewish state."

Ironically, the need, on Israel's part, to wage

a "demographic war" puts women on the front line. At stake is women's relationship to nationalism. Yuval-Davis here concretely unravels the interconnections between gender, race and nationalism. Israel's identification with the West, where the "modern woman" limits reproduction conflicts with the national requirement to increase the Jewish population. Birth control is free to Palestinians within Israel and not to Jews. Yuval-Davis suggests that feminist analyses of the politics of reproduction that concentrate on economic requirements (sufficient labor power for the national economy) are not sufficient. "A closer analysis," she suggests, "will often reveal that the national/political rather than economic interests lie behind the desire to have more children, or rather more children of a specific origin."

In addition to illuminating the gendered character of current Middle East politics, Yuval-Davis enters a larger discussion of what may be a worldwide crisis of reproduction that *Radical America* hopes to follow.

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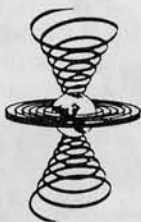
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THE OFFICIAL STORY: IMAGINING VIETNAM

Lynne Hanley

One of Anna Wulf's many literary diversions, in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, is parodying herself, her work and the culture business in general. (Remember, for example, what The Blue Bird Series of Television One-Hour Plays wants to make of Anna's first novel, *Frontiers of War*.) Anna takes a certain sour pleasure in inventing counterfeits of herself and watching them sell. In response to an editor of a literary journal who has been plaguing Anna for years for "something of yours—at last" (*TGN*, 437), Anna Wulf invents the journal of "a lady author of early-middle age, who [has] spent some years in an African colony and [is] afflicted with sensibility" (*TGN*, 437). This lady author afflicted with sensibility discovers "the essential tragedy of the colonial situation" (*TGN*, 438) in a story she records and comments upon in her journal:

A young white farmer...notice[s] a young African girl of rare beauty and intelligence. He tries to influence her to educate herself, to raise herself, for her family are nothing but crude Reserve Natives. But she misunderstands his motives and falls in love. Then, when he (oh, so gently) explains his real interest in her, she turns virago and calls him ugly names. Taunts him. He, patient, bears it. But she goes to the police and tells them he has tried to rape her. He suffers the social obloquy in silence. He goes to prison accusing her only with his eyes, while she turns away in shame. It could be real, strong

drama! It symbolizes...the superior spiritual status of the white man trapped by history, dragged down into the animal mud of Africa. So true, so penetrating, so new (TGN, 439).

Though Anna thinks this is all a bit thick, the editor accepts the journal entry enthusiastically, but, as Anna puts it, "my rare sensibility overcame me at the last moment and I decided to keep my privacy. Rupert sent me a note saying that he so understood, some experiences were too personal for print" (TGN, 439).

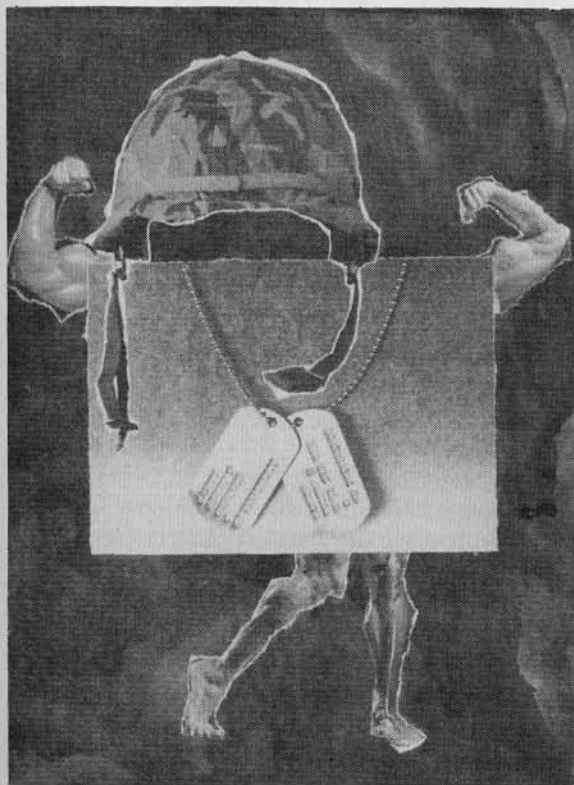
When I think about the impact of Vietnam on literature, I think first of the soldiers' stories. Like every war, Vietnam has been remembered, and some of its memoirs, both in fiction and in fact, offer powerful and precise accounts of the experience of some of the young American men who fought there (*Going After Cacciato*, for example or *Dispatches*). We have also had some fine coming home novels (*In Country*, for example, and most recently, *Paco's Story*). And we will, no doubt, if we don't already, have some fine going back novels. That I think, instinctively, of this body of literature as *the* literature of Vietnam, is perhaps a response as much to the films as to the literature of Vietnam. The story of the American soldier in Vietnam has proved to have a vise-like grip on the imagination of Hollywood and, like the Ancient Mariner, Hollywood has to tell it again and again, and never more often than in the last couple years: *Rambo*, *Gardens of Stone*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Missing in Action I, II, and III*, *Good Morning Vietnam*, the list goes on and on. What our films and literature of Vietnam have operated together to do in the twenty years since Tet, is to lay down the line of the story of Vietnam, and that line is, I think, essentially the discovery of the tragedy of the colonial, or perhaps more accurately the imperial, situation in the tragedy of the white American man. With the partial exception of *The Killing Fields*, virtually all of our well-known representations of Indochina in literature and in film ask us, first and foremost, to pity the American soldier—to share his guilt, to weigh his wounds, to forgive his degradation, to understand his loyalties, to admire his endurance, to appreciate his betrayal, to recognize the "superior spiritual status" of the American soldier "trapped by history, dragged down into the animal mud" of

Vietnam. That the American soldier suffered intolerably in Vietnam is beyond question. That the character of the American soldier, indeed the character of America itself was, as Larry Heinemann puts it in an interview last January with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "squandered in Vietnam" is equally beyond question. "There was this sense of *carte blanche*," Heinemann says in the same interview. "You could do anything, stand naked in the street and piss if you wanted; there was the broadest possible permission. If you killed the wrong person, that's too bad. That was a body count. So we got brutal and mean, and the evil of it was, we really began to like it." What is not beyond question, however, is the priority we have given to American suffering and American brutalization in a war which America inflicted, for no good reason, on the entire populations of three unoffending countries on the other side of the world.

The impact of the widespread pressure to "reheroicize" the Vietnam soldier was brought home to me by an article in the February 22, 1988 *Los Angeles Times* by Bob Baker called "Staying Behind Now Catches Up." Baker tracked down a number of men who refused, evaded, or fled the Vietnam draft. Referred to throughout the article as draft dodgers or draft evaders, never as draft resisters, few of the men interviewed express pride or conviction about their decision not to fight in Vietnam, and *none* offers as a reason for his decision an unwillingness to kill Vietnamese. Most feel guilt, many ascribe their action to cowardice, one doubts his manhood: "The feelings people like me have are that maybe at a certain level I wasn't really a man because I never did what the guy who went to Vietnam did." Asked about his feeling towards the men who refused to serve, a Vietnam veteran explicitly identifies the Vietnam memorial and *Platoon* as the initiators of a change of attitude among draft resisters: "They have—a feeling like they had missed something...[E]ver since the memorial and *Platoon*, a lot of people's minds seem to have changed. When people like that get to know you and they know you served, they say: 'Gee, maybe I should have done my part.' " Another veteran, Arthur Egendorf, author of *Healing from the War*, reads the slogan, "Hell

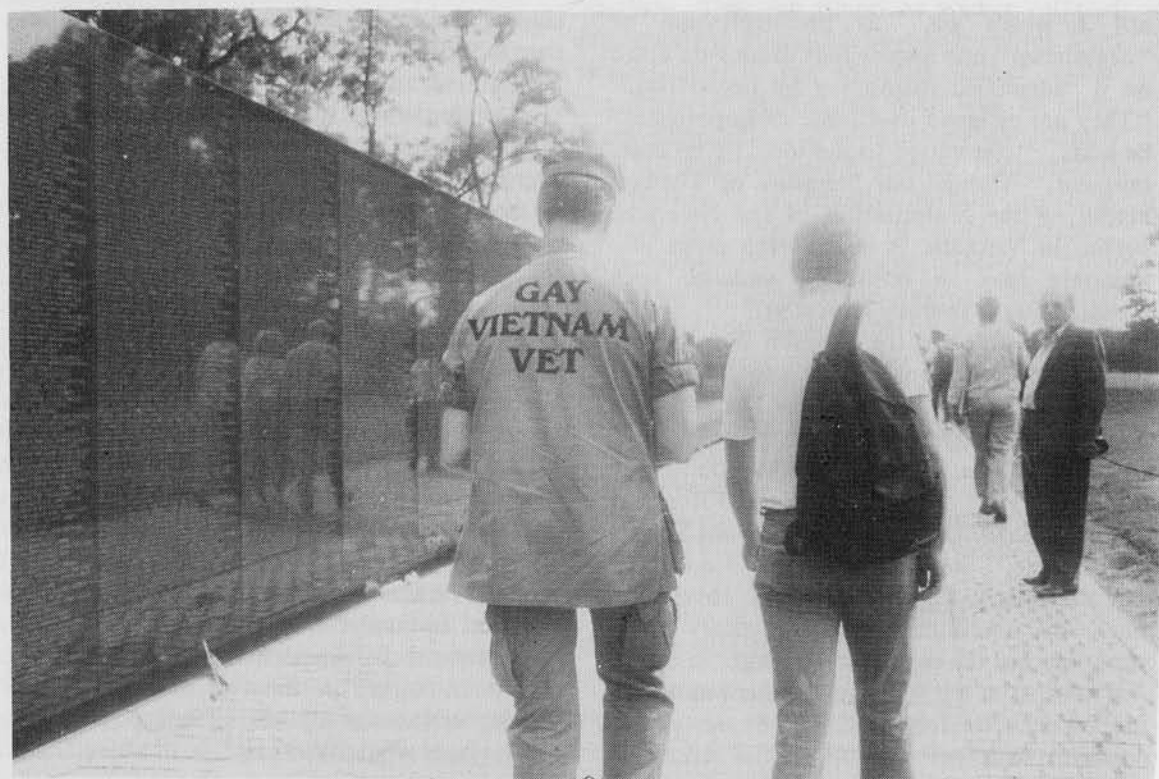
no! I won't go," as an expression of "negativism" and argues that those who acted on it "identified themselves by negativism." "They are resigned to a sense of impotence," he adds, "committed to the ideal of no commitment." Though our literature of Vietnam insists on the brutalization of the American soldier in Vietnam, it insists even more persuasively that to refuse to undergo such brutalization is morally bankrupt.

There was, during the Vietnam War, a competing literary response, the trip to Hanoi, (for which, by the way, Jane Fonda has yet to be forgiven by many of the Vietnam veterans of Holyoke, Massachusetts, who are mounting, a campaign effort against her efforts to film part of *Union Street* in their town. "I'm not Fonda Hanoi Jane," the bumper stickers read in my neighborhood). Like most of the novels and films, this literature was documentary in inspiration, but the experience it sought to record was not that of the American soldier but that of the enemy. No doubt because of our preoccupation with the tragedy of the American



soldier, our celebrated films and novels of Vietnam still offer a shockingly thin version of the Vietnamese, and a number of writers suspected, even while the war was still going on, that our failure to understand the first thing about the Vietnamese, about their history or their culture or their language or even their land, was very close to the heart of our problems in that country. Many of these writers were women, perhaps not surprisingly, since women had less access to and, perhaps, less commitment to the soldier's story. Denise Levertov's "Glimpses of Vietnamese Life," Susan Sontag's "Trip to Hanoi," Robin Morgan's "Four Visions on Vietnam," Frances Fitzgerald's "Fire in the Lake" were all efforts, in various forms, to create Vietnam as a culture in the American imagination, and to confer upon the enemy a spiritual status at least equivalent, if not superior, to that of the American soldier. That the enterprise of representing the Vietnamese and their culture as the real victims of the tragedy of the war has all but dropped out of our sense of what "Vietnam" is all about is an indication, I think, of the sentimentalization of our imagination of the war in the twenty years since Tet.

The soldier's story, rooted as it is in a particular man's experience of a particular war, tends not only to sentimentalize, but also to dehistoricize our apprehension of war. Vietnam is not seen as one in a series of wars whose repetitions reveal a pattern in our relations with the peoples and cultures of the Third World. As in *Heart of Darkness*, which has been the paradigm for so many of our representations of Vietnam, the clash of cultures and political interests is mythologized and psychologized into a kind of "ur" encounter of the white American man with his own unsuspected capacities for evil—Adam "surprised by sin"—a compelling story to be sure, but one which fails to represent that evil as *policy*, rendering it instead as an isolated and personal encounter which occurs only under extreme duress deep in the heart of the jungle. A more recent version of this same story is currently coming out of Israel, and represents the Israeli soldier as surprised by sin in Gaza and the West Bank, thus transforming an occupying army into the victims of its own occupation.



Ellen Shub photo

Less myopic versions of our experience of Vietnam seem to me to occur primarily in literature we overlook in this context because we assume, consciously or unconsciously, that the soldier's story is the story of Vietnam. The fall of Saigon, for example, is the event around which Joan Didion's *Democracy* circles, but its narrative is not about the American soldier "trapped by history, dragged down" etc., etc., but about the American politicians, white American men too, just about every one of them, who devised and executed the policies which put the American soldier in the mud. Didion's is not a tale of an innocent young man surprised (and why, *still*, so surprised?) by his capacity for violence and brutality and blinding fear, but of ripened war mongers, grown familiar and easy with their ways and means. War is the profession of the American men Didion depicts in *Democracy* and, by the end of the novel, our hearts do not bleed for them.

An even more capacious exploration of war, not just of the Vietnam War but of the wars which have recurred with obsessive regularity

throughout this century, occurs, I think, in the fiction of Doris Lessing. Lessing is one of the few novelists of the generation that spans World War I to the present to fix her eyes on the history of human violence in our time. Born in 1919 of a World War I amputee and his nurse, and coming of age with the outbreak of World War II, Lessing recognized early that hers was a generation and a culture steeped in war. In her first series of novels, *Children of Violence*, written mainly in the fifties, Lessing defines the people she is writing about as "people like myself,"

people my age who are born out of wars and who have lived through them, the framework of lives in conflict. I think the title explains what I essentially want to say. I want to explain what it is like to be a human being in a century when you open your eyes on war and on human beings disliking each other (ASPV, 57).

One of Lessing's crucial contributions here to the literature of war is her intuitive expansion of its terrain. War is not something a handful

of doomed young men trip over in the jungles of an alien and inhospitable land, war is what the sons and daughters of Europe and the United States wake up to every day, it's the marrow of our culture.

In *Children of Violence*, Lessing treats war as a family legacy, it's something Dad hands down to son, Mom hands down to daughter. Focusing, as the series does, on World War I and World War II, conveniently precisely a generation apart, Lessing treats the battlefield and home as different arenas of the same conflict. Marxist historical determinism and Freudian psychological determinism join hands to force her generation to repeat the war of its parents. Her generation is, in fact, a direct product of war, and metaphors of violence and conflict shape its understanding not just of the relations between nations and races, but also of the relations between men and women, between parents and children. Cold War, the War Between the sexes, the War Between the Generations are merely the domestic names for the mentality which erupts militarily under the names of World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Nicaragua.

Vietnam, of course, fits very neatly into this generational pattern of violence. Heating up almost exactly twenty years after the end of World War II—Iwo Jima plus twenty, we might even say—Vietnam was fought on both sides of the world largely by the sons and daughters of the soldiers and nurses of World War II, and what's at the back of our minds, if not on the tip of our tongues, when we say "Tet plus twenty," what makes this date reverberate with a peculiar significance, is not just our sense that it's time for a retrospective, it's also our sense that it's time for another war. Many American writers on Vietnam share this sense of the war as an inheritance, the legacy of the World War II generation to its children. I heard Chuck Norris, father of *Missing in Action I, II* and *III*, say on t.v. recently that John Wayne was like a father to him. And in *Going After Cacciato*, Paul Berlin goes to Vietnam largely because his father can imagine no other possible response to "the call of duty." Like the protagonists of *The Deer Hunter*, Paul Berlin is groomed for war in his boyhood by participating with his father in the war game called

hunting. This confusion of war with sport is, in fact, a kind of trope of the imagination of the American soldier in Vietnam, and in a country in which we conduct football games, presidential elections, video games, foreign policy, disarmament talks, children's cartoons and sexual relations in the same rhetoric of the prize fight, we might consider whether the bellicosity of our metaphors doesn't have something to do with our ever-readiness for war.

In part because she is a daughter of the British, not a son of the American, empire, Lessing does not present Vietnam as the war which confirms a pattern of generational violence. From the point of view of Europe, Vietnam is not so special, Vietnam is merely one more in a series of violent clashes along the perimeters of the spheres of influence of the Superpowers. Moreover, Lessing has come to regard her view of war as a family affair as excessively deterministic, permitting no response



Ho Chi Minh

but an enlightened cynicism. The quotation from Lewis Carroll which Lessing puts at the beginning of the second volume of *Children of Violence* hints at her early recognition of the dangers of even a wry and witty fatalism: " 'You shouldn't make jokes,' Alice said, 'if it makes you so unhappy' " (APK, 1). In her recent fiction, Lessing has taken a much more global and impersonal view of Vietnam in particular, and of war in this century in general. In *Shikasta*, the first volume of her *Canopus in Argos* series, Lessing presents the history of the earth from prehistory to the not so distant future through the eyes of a vastly superior species from another galaxy. This view robs Vietnam of the special case status we Americans tend to give it, and places it instead inside a pattern of violence perpetuated, not by Communists against the "free world," but by the white races against the non-white races of the world. *Shikasta* ends with the trial of the white race for its life, for its crimes against humanity. Vietnam is cited as an instance of these crimes, but its inspiration is the same as that which led white men to exterminate the Indians, enslave the blacks, establish apartheid in Africa, practice genocide against the Jews, and colonize and exploit non-white peoples around the world—the unexamined assumption of the white race of its own superiority. The trial ends, however, not with an agreement to exterminate the brutes—to apply Kurtz's solution to the real culprits—but with the citing of the case of the treatment of untouchables in India. In this case, the assumption of superiority is detached from race, and revealed to be, in itself, the motivating force behind aggression and exploitation, race being a central, but not the only, category within which it expresses itself.

Coming in, as the anti-war movement did, on the back of the civil rights movement, and coming in, as the feminist movement did, on the backs of both, one thing all three movements recognized they had in common was a critique of the cultural hegemony of white, male America, American spelled KKK, and it may finally be this critique which has had the most lasting impact, if not on the literature about Vietnam, at least on literary studies in America. Covering the meeting in San Francisco last December of The Modern Language

Association, Joseph Berger of *The Times* comes to the conclusion that the crucial issue under debate in American academic literary circles is, can we know what literature is superior? Since twenty years ago, the superiority of literature by white men was assumed at the M.L.A., and since, twenty years ago, an alternate body of literature worth reading was not even imagined at the M.L.A., this debate does point to a certain erosion, in the twenty years since Tet, of the white American male academic's assurance of his cultural preeminence, a certain unhooking of his easy confidence in the "superior spiritual status" of his kind. But note with what bellicosity the idea of an alternate, an alien body of literature is entertained at the M.L.A. "U.S. Literature: Canon Under Siege," Berger titles his article, and who can fail to hear the echoes of Khe Sanh, who can fail to see, particularly if they've been reading a lot of Vietnam novels, the beleaguered white man's books—the best he's seen and thought and done—dragged down into the animal mud of books by women and African Americans and Indians and what have you. Though drenched in a sentiment we owe in part, I think, to our literary representations of Vietnam, the sentiment that allows white American men to perceive themselves as victims of the tragedies their assumption of superiority creates, the article does document an increasing tolerance in academic circles for literature by authors who are not white men. Remnants surface of the conviction that the best that has been seen, thought, and done by white men is all we need to know, particularly remarks of several prominent literary critics. Yet, the article points out that those who mourn the loss of "once-honored standards like grace of style, vigor of prose and originality of expression" are under fire and losing ground. We are no longer quite so convinced that the white man's literature is the only one we need to know, or that it does indeed embody the best that has been seen and thought and done. In fact, as Berger points out, a good deal of work is currently being done on how literary reputations are constructed, on how networks of white men in criticism, academics, and publishing engineer the canonization of writers of their circle.

Though the M.L.A. seems prepared to make

a little room for a number of literatures it once dismissed as "popular," though the M.L.A. seems prepared, even, to allow that "the New England spinster[s] struggl[e] to 'grow old with dignity' " is as much a paradigm of courage as the matador's performance in the bull ring, the M.L.A. showed no inclination to launch a serious critique of the canon as enshrining the cultural values of a race and a sex with a formidable history of violence. Its intention is to assimilate other literatures and other cultures, not to transform its own. The premise of the trip to Hanoi literature was not just that we need to be familiar with other cultures, it was also that we need to discover in other cultures less pugnacious ways of structuring our feelings, of structuring our whole apprehension of life. Choosing between Virginia Woolf and

Pearl Buck, a professor of literature at the University of Pennsylvania said at the M.L.A., is "no different from choosing between a hoagie and a pizza," suggesting the choice is merely a matter of taste and one taste is as good as another. While this position does not open up the canon, it also discourages reflection on the relation between literary choices and military history, on the relation between, for example, what we know as our literature of Vietnam and our behavior as a nation and a culture in the Third World since World War II.

Lynne Hanley teaches literature and short story writing at Hampshire College. Two earlier articles on twentieth century women writers on war appeared in the Massachusetts Review.





Time called him the Messenger of Love. Marvin Gaye during the early Motown days. (Michael Ochs Archives photo). Bus burning near Anniston, Alabama, during the first Freedom Rides.

THE IMPACT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT ON POPULAR MUSIC

Reebee Garofalo

When political activists think about the music of the Civil Rights Movement, they are likely to focus on union songs and spirituals like "Which Side Are You On," "This Little Light of Mine," "Keep You Eyes on the Prize," "This Land is Your Land," "Down by the Riverside," and, of course, "We Shall Overcome." These were the songs that raised consciousness, energized activism, and provided moments of celebration within the struggle. In the words of Bernice Reagon, these were the "songs that moved the movement."¹ With their roots in the culture of the Black church, the locus for most civil rights organizing, these songs were critical to participants in the movement. To the nation-at-large, however, the music often served as little more than the background for terrifying newscasts of racial violence. Interestingly, as the Civil Rights Movement exploded on the national scene, its impact on the national consciousness was more clearly reflected in popular music. As always, this was the music that moved the mass audience.

As any social movement attains national recognition, popular music can be used as an important socio-political indicator of that struggle. In the case of civil rights, the trajectory of the entire movement can be traced through an analysis of trends in popular music from 1954-1973. Such analyses are often limited to a consideration of changes in lyric content.

While there is no question that these changes are, at times, powerful, it is also important to note that changes in musical form, tone, instrumentation, production style, and personnel can be more telling. One pattern related to the Civil Rights Movement is that innovation in these latter areas generally preceded changes in lyric content.

Civil rights activity heated up in the 1950s when a new activist Black clergy, with Martin Luther King at its forefront, began to form political alliances with secular organizations like the NAACP, CORE, and, later, SNCC. "While this spiritual-secular coalition was forming in the political sector," states music journalist Nelson George, "the music world was witnessing the breaking of a longstanding taboo, as gospel began to fuse with rhythm & blues."²² Prior to this time, gospel singers simply did not perform "the devil's music," and vice versa. But as the faithful began to take their struggle to the streets, the musical influences of gospel—the prominent use of keyboards, soaring vocals, background choruses, and the call-and-response style—were quickly appropriated by the secular world of rhythm & blues and brought to the attention of a mass public.

Prefigured in the 1953 releases of "Shake a Hand" by Faye Adams and "Crying in the Chapel" by Sonny Til and the Orioles (covered by June Valli for RCA), the fruits of this trend could be seen in the vocal stylings of Clyde McPhatter and Jackie Wilson, both of whom began their careers as lead vocalists for the gospel-tinged Dominoes, and in the spectacular pop career of Sam Cooke, who was already at the top of the gospel heap as the lead singer for the Soul Stirrers. But nowhere was the marriage of gospel and r&b more apparent than in the early recordings of Ray Charles ("Hallelujah, I Love Her So," "What'd I Say"). By 1954, all the elements of the fusion were already present in one of the most influential, if not most successful, releases. The impact of "I Got a Woman" is remembered by music historians as nothing short of apocalyptic. "The very stratagem of adapting a traditional gospel song, putting secular lyrics to it, and then delivering it with all the attendant fanfare of a Pentecostal service was, simply, staggering," writes music

historian Peter Guaralnick; "it was like a blinding flash of light in which the millenium, all of a sudden and unannounced, had arrived."²³ In popular music as in civil rights, the Black church was now becoming a force to be reckoned with in the material world.

The explosion of civil rights as a national issue was anticipated by a number of regional struggles that also had parallels in popular music. When Rosa Parks moved up to the front of the bus in 1955, Black artists like Fats Domino ("Ain't That a Shame," "I'm in Love Again," "Blueberry Hill"), Little Richard ("Tutti Frutti," "Long Tall Sally," "Good Golly, Miss Molly"), and Chuck Berry ("Rock & Roll Music," "Sweet Little Sixteen," "Johnny B. Goode") were just beginning to cross over into the pop market as heroes of rock 'n' roll. Increasingly, regional civil rights struggles based mainly in the deep South came to national attention, just as much of early rock 'n' roll was based on regional r&b styles from the deep South that found a national audience. The rebellious tone of this music mirrored the growing demand for political change in the Black community. As early as 1956, the cor-



Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers, mid-1950s, from Rock Archives.



Students sit-in at a lunch counter, Greensboro, N.C. 1960. UPI photo

responding cultural changes were already apparent in popular music. “It was not only the slicker, more pop-oriented singers like Clyde McPhatter and Otis Williams who hit in the pop market,” reported *Billboard*, “but also those working in the traditional style like Shirley and Lee, Little Richard, and Fats Domino. Their impact, in fact, has virtually changed the conception of what a pop record is.”⁴

With the advent of rock ‘n’ roll, the form and style of popular music changed dramatically and irrevocably. But these changes were not yet accompanied by analogous changes in lyric content. Brown may have rocked the Board of Education in 1954, but Chuck Berry’s depiction of “School Days” in 1957 did not describe the educational experience in Little Rock, Arkansas that same year. Berry was a true storyteller in the folkloric sense of the term, but he was also a man for his time. As he recently told his audience, “I said: ‘Why can’t I do as Pat Boone does and play good music for the white people and sell as well there as I could in the neighborhood?’ And that’s what I shot for

writing ‘School Days’.”⁵ The strategy of the early Civil Rights Movement was integrationist and it was in this historical context that Berry pursued his career. While he never disowned his Blackness, his goal was full acceptance in the white mainstream. In keeping his eyes on that prize, Berry’s intent was not significantly different than that of the other Black rock ‘n’ rollers who crossed over. He just did it better. Interestingly, the down side of the Black educational experience was more nearly captured—albeit somewhat tongue-in-cheek—in the Coasters’ “Charlie Brown” (1959), written by the white songwriting team of Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller. Neither popular music nor the Civil Rights Movement were without their contradictions. In its integrationist phase, the movement tended to play down real differences in favor of the slogan “Black and white together.” Issues like white skin privilege on the one hand and self-determination on the other were not yet prominent on the political agenda. If the movement itself avoided confronting pressing issues at the time, it should come as no surprise that civil rights themes were nowhere

to be found in the lyric content of popular music. In this period, the movement exerted its influence on music in other ways.

Following a period of repression of both civil rights activity and rock 'n' roll in the late '50s, bland, white vocalists like Fabian, Frankie Avalon and Bobby Rydell gradually took over the pop charts. However, as civil rights activity gathered momentum once again in the early '60s with sit-ins, freedom rides, the 1963 March on Washington, and the Mississippi Summer Project in 1964, a new phenomenon appeared in popular music—the “girl groups.” Black female vocal groups such as the Shirelles (“Will You Love Me Tomorrow”), the Crystals (“He’s a Rebel”), the Chiffons (“He’s So Fine”), and the Ronnettes (“Be My Baby”) provided a polar opposite to the white males on the charts. Corresponding to the increase in civil rights activism, there were more Black women—indeed, with the continued success of artists like Sam Cooke and Ray Charles, more Black artists of both genders—on the pop charts in the early '60s than at any point in our history. In 1962, 42 percent of the best selling singles of the year were by Black artists. Their

music was a refreshing change of pace (and race) in the pop market.

It was also during this period that we saw the formation of the most significant Black-owned record label ever—Motown, until recently the centerpiece of the largest Black-owned corporation in the United States. There can be no doubt that the growing civil rights movement provided a climate that encouraged the development of such an enterprise. Barry Gordy, the founder of Motown, was a brilliant producer able to incorporate white audience tastes without abandoning a Black sound. In the process he created a formula that was the perfect metaphor for the early Civil Rights Movement—upbeat Black pop, acceptable to a white audience, that was irresistibly danceable, but not threatening to anyone in tone or content. Dozens of early Motown releases such as the Marvellettes’ “Please, Mr. Postman” (1961), “Dancing in the Streets” by Martha and the Vandellas (1963), the Supremes’ “Where Did Our Love Go?” (1964), or “My Girl” by the Temptations (1965), could serve as examples.

While the influence of the early Civil Rights Movement clearly extended to the music



business, the major pop styles still showed virtually no change in lyric content. During this period, civil rights texts were performed mainly in the folk idiom and, to a lesser extent, in jazz. At the time, these musics experienced some brief successes in the pop market. In folk music, whether one looked at old timers like Pete Seeger or newcomers like Joan Baez, the best-known performers who addressed civil rights themes in their music were white. This phenomenon probably had more to do with the process of becoming famous in this country than who was performing civil rights-related material, but in the context of the early Civil Rights Movement, this was not identified as a major contradiction. The newcomer who became the most famous of all the folkies was, of course, the enigmatic Bob Dylan. With selections like "Oxford Town" (1962) and "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" (1963), Dylan was early on proclaimed a "leader" of the Civil Rights Movement. He performed his "Only a Pawn in Their Game," a song about the murder of civil rights leader Medgar Evers, at the 1963 March on Washington. That same year, the more commercial Peter, Paul, and Mary scored a top ten pop hit with Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind."

Soon a number of Black folk artists like the classically-trained Odetta, the unorthodox Richie Havens, and the gospel-influenced Staple Singers also gained prominence as voices of the Civil Rights Movement. As more Black performers achieved recognition, the style of civil-rights related music moved closer to pop production. The Staple Singers, for example, performed "We Shall Overcome" with electric guitar and drums. Of critical importance in linking "folk consciousness" with pop appeal was the often underappreciated Curtis Mayfield. Like fellow Chicagoan Sam Cooke before him, Mayfield left the gospel choir for the secular world of popular music, there to become, in the words of Nelson George, "Black music's most unflagging civil rights champion."⁶ With his pop/gospel trio, the Impressions, Mayfield utilized full studio production to achieve major pop successes with a series of "sermon" songs like "Keep on Pushing" and "Amen" in 1964, and "People Get Ready" in 1965. In 1964, Sam Cooke, in-

spired by Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind," tentatively attempted a similar fusion with "A Change is Gonna Come." By the time the record was released as a single, though, Cooke had already been shot to death. When his friend Malcolm X was assassinated two months later on February 21, 1965, "A Change is Gonna Come" was a pop hit. It stands as Cooke's monument to civil rights.

For the Civil Rights Movement, 1965 was a pivotal year. Activists marched in Alabama from Selma to Montgomery. The Voting Rights Act was passed. Rioting broke out in Watts, ushering in an era of urban unrest. And, Stokely Carmichael coined the term "Black Power." In the jazz arena, Nina Simone captured the tenor of the times, in context and in tone, as her 1965 recording of "Mississippi Goddam" anticipated the militance that was about to erupt (just as her "Backlash Blues" would anticipate the reaction). This transformation was also reflected in Black popular music, but, again, changes in form, tone, and production style preceded changes in lyric content.

As the liberal Civil Rights Movement gave way to the more radical demand for Black power, Motown's hegemony over Black pop was successfully challenged by a resurgence of closer-to-the-roots, hard driving rhythm & blues from the Memphis-Muscle Shoals region of the deep South. Chiefly responsible for this popularization of Southern soul, as this music was called, was a short-lived but highly successful collaboration between Atlantic Records and a number of Southern studios, most notably Stax in Memphis and Fame in Muscle Shoals. From 1965 on, artists like Otis Redding ("I've Been Loving You Too Long"), Wilson Pickett ("Land of 1000 Dances"), Sam and Dave ("Soul Man"), Arthur Conley ("Sweet Soul Music"), and Percy Sledge ("When a Man Loves a Woman") were prominent among the new chart toppers. Echoing the spirit of the emerging new militance, their recordings were raw, basic, and almost angry in tone, as compared to the cleaner, brighter Motown sound.

Striking differences between Motown and Southern soul can be seen in a comparison of Motown and its chief competitor, Stax. Both founded in 1960, Motown was as secretive and tightly controlled as Stax was open and



Aretha Franklin, 1968. David Gahr photo.

disorganized. Stax was originally a white-owned company; its creative functions were as likely to be handled by whites as by Blacks, and the “Memphis sound” which they spawned was almost invariably the product of cross-racial teamwork. Initially the credits on all Stax recordings read simply: “produced by the Stax staff.” Motown was not only Black-owned, but virtually all of its creative personnel—artists, writers, producers, and session musicians—were all Black as well. It was clearly a haven for Black talent. Paradoxically, Motown is remembered as being “totally committed to reaching white audiences,” while Stax recordings, by contrast, were “consistently aimed at r&b fans first, the pop market second.”⁷ In context of Black pride, Motown’s lavish use of multi-track studio production to achieve a more “pop” sound seemed somehow out of synch with the search for African roots. “Motown does a lot of overdubbing,” commented Stax artist Otis Redding just before his death in 1967. “At Stax...[w]e cut together, horns, rhythms, and vocal....Until last year, we didn’t even have a four-track tape recorder. You can’t overdub on a one-track machine.”⁸ In many

ways, it was the very simplicity and straightforwardness of Southern soul production which gave the music its claim on authenticity. When this music crossed over into the pop market, it wasn’t because the music had changed, it was because Black pride had briefly created a climate wherein unrefined rhythm & blues could find mainstream acceptance on its own terms.

With Southern soul in its ascendancy, unencumbered production was soon joined by social consciousness in Black popular music. In January, 1967, Aretha Franklin was signed to Atlantic Records, and after one legendary session in Muscle Shoals, she found her sound. Later that spring, she cut a version of what had been Otis Redding’s signature tune. “Respect” was instantly “transformed from a demand for conjugal rights into a soaring cry of freedom.”⁹ Shortly thereafter Aretha was crowned “Lady Soul.” The vocal and emotional range of her early Atlantic releases (“Baby, I Love You,” “Natural Woman,” “Chain of Fools,” and “Think,” to name a few) uniquely expressed all the passion and forcefulness of the era. Fittingly, the summer of 1967 was dubbed by *Ebony*

as "the summer of 'Retha, Rap [Brown], and revolt."¹⁰

When James Brown had his first Top Ten hit with "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" in 1965, he billed himself, with some justification, as "the hardest working man in show business." By 1968, he was "Soul Brother #1." His string of uncompromising Top Ten hits ("I Got You," "Cold Sweat," "I Got the Feelin'") made fewer concessions to mainstream sensibilities than any other music in the pop market. During this period, according to critic Robert Palmer, "Brown and his musicians and arrangers began to treat every instrument and voice in the group as if each were a drum."¹¹ The connection to African roots and Black pride was made explicit as his 1968 hit single, "Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud," became an anthem in the struggle for Black liberation.

By 1968, socially conscious texts were common in popular music, as artists of all styles got on board the civil rights train. However, the assassination of Martin Luther King on April 4, 1968 left a clear void in the leadership of the movement. "The civil rights struggle was not dead, but its energy was increasingly scattered," writes Nelson George. "The Black Panthers embraced communism. Ron Karenga's U.S. organization advocated an Afrocentric cultural nationalism....Black Power came to mean whatever its user needed it to....The assimilationists pressed on...."¹² This fragmentation was evident in the range of themes which found their way into popular songs. Releases such as Dion's "Abraham, Martin and John" (1968), the Rascals' "People Got to be Free" (1968), and "Everyday People" by Sly and the Family Stone (1969) were reminiscent of the more moderate themes of the early Civil Rights Movement. Curtis Mayfield continued his run of socially conscious hits with "We're a Winner" in 1968, and "Choice of Colors" in 1969. Even Elvis Presley's "In the Ghetto" (1969), a rather unlikely entry, went to #3 on the pop charts. Recalling the heyday of the Black Panthers, John Lennon's exhortation "Power to the People" (1971) provided another upbeat anthem. Bob Dylan's tribute to the memory of slain Black leader "George Jackson" (1971) remind-

ed us that the more radical elements in the struggle for Black liberation had already been neutralized. The confusion and disillusionment of the period were evident in Marvin Gaye's "What's Goin' On?" and "Inner City Blues," both of 1971. On a more positive note, Aretha Franklin's recording of Nina Simone's "Young, Gifted, and Black" that same year captured the spirit of a community that weathered a storm of urban violence. Her stirring celebration of Black pride provided the musical capstone for a decade of civil rights struggle.

As radicalism in the Black community was systematically repressed, there was a corresponding decline in the popularity of the more militant sounding rhythm and blues from the deep South. By the early 1970s, Stax had begun its descent into bankruptcy, the other pioneers of the Memphis-Muscle Shoals axis were no longer producing rhythm & blues, and even Atlantic had changed direction to focus on its British rock acts. Atlantic's Jerry Wexler commented that radio stations didn't want to "burden" their listeners "with the sound of breaking glass in Watts or the sirens coming from Detroit, which is what r&b music meant at the time...so they took most of it off the radio."¹³ Reflecting the "quieter" mood of the early 1970s, the Black popular music which came to the fore was the "soft soul" sound pioneered by the



Otis Redding, 1968. Jim Marshall photo.

Philadelphia-based writer-producer team of Kenny Gamble and Len Huff, and producer-arranger Thom Bell. Joining forces with Sigma Sound Studios in Philadelphia, they developed the style in the late 1960s, working with artists like Jerry Butler and the Intruders. The Delfonics' classic 1968 hit, "La La Means I Love You," was a harbinger of sounds to come. But the Philadelphia enterprise didn't hit its stride until 1971, with the formation of Philadelphia International Records (PIR) and a distribution deal with CBS. Employing lush orchestral arrangements over a polite rhythmic pulse with groups like Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes ("If You Don't Know Me By Now"), the O'Jays ("Back Stabbers," "Love Train"), the Stylistics ("You Make Me Feel Brand New"), and the Spinners ("Could It Be I'm Falling in Love"), the Philadelphia producers set the standard in Black pop for the next few years. Other artists like the Chicago-based Chi-Lites ("Oh Girl") and the ever-changing Isley Brothers ("That Lady") soon followed suit. Even Southern soul yielded the velvety smooth Al Green ("Let's Stay Together," "I'm Still in Love With You").

Even with the movement in disarray, civil rights themes had not yet disappeared completely from popular music, but they were on the decline. In 1971, the Chi-Lites had a pop hit with "Give More Power to the People" and War scored with "The World is a Ghetto" in 1972. But after 1972, only Stevie Wonder's "Living for the City" (1973) was noticeable in the pop market. More to the point, the softer production style of the ascending Philadelphia sound clearly signalled the end of an era of turmoil, ferment and rebellion. Interestingly, in 1972, an all time high of 44 percent of the best selling singles of the year were by artists of color.

Curtis Mayfield offered the following summation of the previous decade:

You know, to talk about the '60s almost brings tears to my eyes. What we did. What we all did. We changed the world—me, us, Smokey Robinson, Jerry Butler, the Temptations, Aretha, Otis, Gladys Knight, James Brown. We really did. Barriers broke down for us. And for all black musicians afterwards. I mean, to have lived through

that, and to have been a part of that, is more than anyone can ask.¹⁴

The battles of the '60s were hard fought, but in popular music as elsewhere, they were not without their victories.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Bernice Reagon, "Songs That Moved the Movement," *Civil Rights Quarterly*, Summer, 1983.
- ² Nelson George, *The Death of Rhythm & Blues*. Pantheon Books, New York, 1988. p. 69.
- ³ Peter Guaralnick, *Sweet Soul Music*. Harper & Row, New York, 1986. p. 50.
- ⁴ *Billboard*, December 22, 1956. p. 10
- ⁵ Chuck Berry, interviewed in the Taylor Hackford documentary, *Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll*, 1987.
- ⁶ George, *op cit.*, p. 85
- ⁷ George, *op cit.*, p. 86.
- ⁸ *Rolling Stone*, January 20, 1968, p. 15.
- ⁹ Guaralnick, *op cit.*, p. 332.
- ¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 345.
- ¹¹ Robert Palmer, "James Brown," in Jim Miller, ed., *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. Rolling Stone Press, New York, 1976. p. 136.
- ¹² George, *op cit.*, p. 98
- ¹³ *Billboard*, November 20, 1971, p. 103.
- ¹⁴ Guaralnick, *op cit.*, p. 20.



Reebee Garafalo teaches at the College of Public and Community Service, UMass/Boston, Boston, MA 02125.

LOOKING BACK AT THE SIXTIES

Newsweek remembered the sixties by wondering, "will we ever get over them?" Television gave us a chance to remember the sixties through the eyes of yuppie "thirtysomethings" and their problems with divorce, romance, and child custody. Meanwhile, Hollywood blessed us with, in some cases anti-war, but for the most part more shoot-'em-up versions of the white American soldier's ordeal in Vietnam. And corporate publishers asked the movement's "leaders" to reflect on the time, some of whom, like Tom Hayden, for example, felt the sixties represented the moment when they came tragically close to losing faith in the American political system.

As the mainstream media rallied its resources to write the history of the sixties, we at *Radical America* began to think about the politics of remembering. How do we reflect on that pivotal moment in US history? What are the epiphanies, snapshots, and glimpses we would offer as our memory of the time? How does our experience of that time shape our current political work?

With these questions in mind, we asked a wide range of activists, intellectuals, and other assorted *RA* readers to think back on their participation in that decade. We came up with the compilation of reflections that follows.



photo, Skip Heine

They by no means make up a coherent retrospective. In fact, the gaps are striking, and caused us some dismay. Despite our best efforts, mostly white men responded to our solicitation; this collection includes only four women, one of them Black. We considered not running such an unbalanced selection of remembrances. But we finally decided to go with it, partly because the pieces we got were provocative and valuable to our readership, and partly because there is a lesson even in this skewed presentation of that period. Who is it who feels connected enough to the period to be able to reflect on it? Who looks back on the time and sees themselves in the center of it, empowered by it? The process of remembering has left us with these questions. We encourage feedback on this series and any new recollections you have to offer as we continue this series over the next few issues.

Then...

Thurs. Aug. 7

Mike!

I addressed the letter to you, in case Earl, Tom + Tom have already taken off. I'm writing from Albany. I ditched up from the city Tuesday and easily had my physical switched there.

The atmosphere around the East just hit me as uptight and heavy as soon as I stepped off the fucking plane - probably a lot came from

my parents. But I just walked out and said fuckit.

This trip upstate has really been amazing. I crossed the N. W. Bridge and began hitchhiking on 9w in N.J. A fuck gave me a ride to Tonawanda, N.Y. and then after 10 minutes a spaceman in a VW microbus stopped, waved me in and handed me a joint all in one motion - we rolled another and smoked some more. Wow! My trip was made - lost all concept of time and the waits for rides in way-out little



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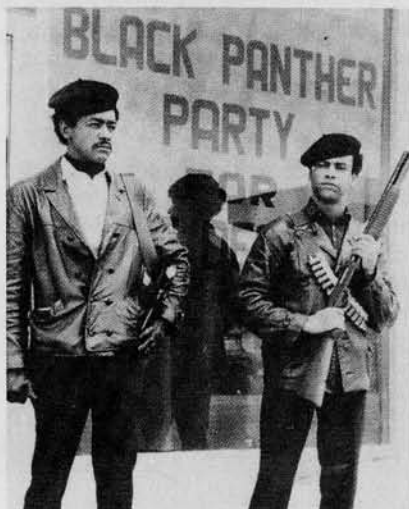


Letter to Mike Hanrahan from John Demeter, August 7, 1969

The Sixties and Popular Memory Jon Wiener



photo, Elliott Erwitt



Associated Press photo

"Will We Ever Get Over The '60s?" *Newsweek* asked in a recent cover story. The implication, of course, is that getting over the sixties is something we ought to do; the sixties are a hang-up, a drag, an era that would be better forgotten. The editors were thinking about Dan Quayle, who had just been nominated as Republican vice-presidential candidate, "the first member of the Big Chill generation nominated for national office." Quayle a sixties person? He spent the sixties going to fraternity parties and playing golf. At least he didn't burn his draft card, George Bush said. Instead he called on his influential family to help him avoid fighting in a war he supported.

What were "the sixties"? The opposing sides from that decade continue to struggle today to define what happened, to shape popular memory. The right has been especially obsessed with attacking the meaning of the sixties. The *Newsweek* cover story indicates how corporate publishing is working on popular memory. The sixties were an era of assassinations (photos of a grieving Jackie Kennedy—but not a grieving Coretta Scott King); an era of rioting (photos of cops bashing kids in Chicago outside the '68 Democratic National Convention); an era of war (photos of injured American troops in Vietnam); an era when young people turned to drugs and sex (photo of grubby hippies naked in lake), when blacks turned to violence (photos of Black Panthers with guns).

The magazine laid out the effects of the sixties: "all presidents since Lyndon Johnson have been hampered in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy by the legacy of Vietnam." Let's put it differently: American imperialism was crippled by the anti-war movement, which made "No More Vietnams!" a rule that policymakers dare not violate.

Crabtree town was easy. Then I made Albany and drifted around in the rain park when the Freaks hang out but had no luck in finding a place to crash.

So I just walked around, heading up the other side of town towards Siena - and out of the blue two guys spotted me, dragged me in a van with them and bought me a couple of drinks. One was a Nam vet, the other a Siena fuckoff in the National Guard - a real friendly

guy who had been doing acid the past two months. They drove to another van, bought me more beer and something to eat.

Then they found me a place to crash in town with three other Siena freaks in a huge place with fireplace and porch and room for 2 crashes. We got there and did some really tough hash - knocked me out and I woke up the next afternoon - then we smoked some more and hit the Selective Service board - clerk said my physical probably wouldn't come until Sept. or Oct.

Another lesson of the sixties, according to *Newsweek*, "infinitely damaging to our political system," is that "political leaders cannot be trusted." Let's put that differently: the movements of the sixties gave criticism of injustice and oppression a new legitimacy and gave democracy a popular force it had not had for the previous two decades.

What were the sixties? We need to challenge the rewriting of our history which has been going on since the decade ended. We need to reassert that the sixties constituted an explosion of democracy, a popular challenge to established authority in the state, the university, and the family, a renewal that, in its sweep and intensity, ranks beside the era of Andrew Jackson and the New Deal.

We need to examine again the political problems the New Left faced: how to maintain a position that is independent and critical of undemocratic governments like Hanoi's, while fighting to end America's imperialist interventions; how to balance militant tactics with an appeal to the undecided, how to turn outrage into organizing; how to understand what student radicals can accomplish in the absence of an organized adult left.

We need to know more about the spread of participatory democracy beyond SDS, through the rest of the New Left, into the counterculture, to draft resistance groups, health clinics, law communes, free schools, feminist groups, underground newspapers, drug crisis centers, food co-ops: all tried their hand at participatory democracy. As Todd Gitlin writes in his book, *The Sixties*, "anthropologists declared their independence of the CIA, city planners consulted for community organizations, priests and nuns married, soldiers confronted officers, reporters confronted editors, patients confronted doctors, wives confronted husbands, children confronted parents." This broad process of democratization, this assertion of rights, this challenge to injustice and oppression, constitutes the real history of that decade. No wonder *Newsweek* hopes we will get over it.

Jon Wiener teaches history at the University of California, Irvine, and is a contributing editor to *The Nation*.



From *Steal This Book*, Abbie Hoffman, 1971



Civil disobedience sponsored by National Mobilization, October 21, 1967; photo Maury Englander

which will give me some time to
float around and get some ahead w.p.
If the deferment comes, then no
pressure. Otherwise, Toronto.

The guys have said that the Draft
Board is a lot easier than a lot of
ideas - one guy said quite a few have
gotten off with letters from a shrink
named Friedman who's a pioneer
in shock therapy, a nut, but if you
mention drugs he puts you into a
fucking coma and relapses
you with some pair of electrical
pitches. \$25/1/2 hr but these guys
have said quite a few have beaten

the bill
Well, at least I've got a
little more time.

In case Saul is still
here, tell her I'm heading to
Poughkeepsie to see Bud, and to
NYC for a day and then to Mike's
place in Endicott. I'll be able
to be reached thru either Buck
or Reagan. If they've left, could
you drop a postcard and just
tell me when they did, so I'll know
when to expect them - and when

Looking Forward to Looking Backward

Paul Buhle

Tracy Chapman comes onto my cassette player these days, as I'm taking a 6:30 am run, and she sounds pretty damned good. What I like best is that she has the politics without toting anyone else's agenda. She is spreading the word, and to a new generation: it's time to get on the move again.

Ten years ago, I found it almost impossible to get people to write about the 1960s. Admittedly, I was only handing out space in a marginal left cultural magazine. Still, the feeling I came away with was that people who could write well on just about any other subject found a coming-to-grips with their own experience psychologically very painful, and conceptually almost impossible. Suddenly, at the end of Reagan's reign, you can hardly look over a Fall booklist without running into another sixties study.

There's one great problem I see in nearly all these books, a problem magnified by the discussion of them in the mainstream and liberal press. The founders of the Movement are portrayed as Nice Boys and Nice Girls who started out with great ideals, somewhere (but not too far) from Kennedyesque rhetoric. They raised up hopes for the nation. Then their movements were seized, taken over, by drug-taking Maoist-terrorist totalitarian-sympies who alienated the American masses and brought on Nixon and finally Reagan.

I'm caricaturing, of course. But I have the definite feeling that the 1960s is being remembered as the betrayal of the Brightest and the

Best by the common herd, and by herd instincts (that seems to be Jane Fonda's snivelling excuse) gone mad. I don't remember it that way.

Here's my snapshot of the Movement's pre-origins. In the middle (it's only *my* picture, remember) is me and my friends. The Civil Rights movement barely touched down in my hometown; it was great, but quickly gone, leaving behind essentially intact the same racist structures and attitudes. The Ban the Bomb movement was almost underground. Fair Play for Cuba was a newspaper advertisement. The Young Democrats were said to be active (secret socialists, burrowing from within the system) but you didn't see much of them.

I had the feeling I was born too late—for the Beat Generation, that had come and gone a few years earlier, leaving behind a trail of poetry books and a mini-bohemia. My initiator was a 21 year old lesbian who had lived, for a summer, in Greenwich Village. Around her ranged concentric circles of folk song fans (including a few musicians), blue-collar background kids who went to college by day and drank hard at night, gays, and the only drug-takers I'd ever met personally. We were, to put it mildly, cynical. And self-destructive (I woke up one morning with a blurry head and a near-bursting appendix; there were also attempted suicides, but more cases of suicide-on-the-installment-plan).

Just exactly a quarter century ago, as I write this, some of us had moved our scene to San

to contact Mary in Salamanca—where
I guess they'll be stopping.

Oh man into Abbie Hoffman
on 4th St. when I was in the city
Monday—told him about the hospital
and shit and said he'd come as my
wife—pussy.

No

Admirer
Rat (I am blind and unemployed please
buy a poem and help me pay
medical expenses... I am dead and a poet
please buy a pencil and
help me...)
Fred
John Nomad
Cathy
Stew + Nola
et al.

→ from the
of my
artist

↓ How's the
Volume coming?

Admirer:

Howard +
Butal, pencil bello's,
Butal + Senic are heading
to Woodstock, they've got
a plane to stay—so if I
can get some bread up I
think I'll go.

Peace + Freedom
John

Good luck!

Laba Laba Lution!



Francisco where we got, at least, a sense of
cultural solace. I heard about the socialist
movement for the first time. I also chewed
Heavenly Blue morning glory seeds—which
then had a legal, mild, assimilable hallucino-
gen—listened to Leadbelly records and experi-
enced revolutionary fantasies. When two
years later back in the midwest the forces of
resistance had started to gather, I found what
I'd been waiting for however unconsciously.
That's what snapped me out of cynicism at last.

When things began to move fast politically
and culturally, I brought along into my activi-
ties and judgments everything I'd been through
in the post-Beat, bohemian, experimenting un-
derground. Maybe I understood the despera-
tion of the times better than the clean-cut kids
of the Port Huron convention. Maybe I didn't.

But at least I had a sense of how much hurt,
how much wasted time and wasted life go into
the passion of a mass movement arising.

As we look at the scene today—ecological
collapse amid a torrent of urban-suburban ug-
liness, to say nothing of the monstrous
schemes of imperialism, the homeless, etc.—
we can't avoid a sense of how desperate, ironic
and utopian by turns, any new movement has
got to be.

I trust that movement will establish its own
dialogue with the experiences of the 1960s,
based upon a re-evaluation of *everything* from
acid (and Cock) Rock to draft resistance and
campus occupations. That re-evaluation has
only begun.

Tracy, I'm listening.

Paul Buhle was a founding editor of *Radical America*.
His latest book is *CLR James: The Artist as Revolutionary*.



photo, Klaus Lebnartz

Kilroy's Still Here

Pat O'Connor

For those of us who are old enough this has been a year of remembering the sixties. My days didn't feel like history then. But today, twenty years later, sitting on a sunny bench in a Lowell riverpark, a bench on which an anonymous veteran has recently scrawled, "I got fucked in Vietnam screw your ass," they do. This angry trooper and I share not only a park bench on which to scribble our thoughts but also a violated youth, a coming of age we may never completely sort out. For him as well as for myself, it's a remembering that needs to be done.

Twenty years ago I was living in Okinawa, an island seventeen miles long and three miles wide which housed 26 separate military facilities and was the back porch to Vietnam. I was employed as a civilian schoolteacher. My students were Air Force kids. Yet, when I think back to those days, it's not the normalcy of kids but the parallel realities of B-52 bombers and the Camp Kue Army Hospital I see.

My volunteered "donut dolly" weekends at the hospital put me into the war in a way I had never expected. My job involved meeting newly arrived wounded from 'Nam and it still comes back in a kind of emotional surrealism. For example, my first weekend, I'm standing alone in a corridor near a set of double doors which burst open. Two bathrobed troopers screaming obscenities roll at my feet. One man is trying to kill the other. I know there were others there but I recall myself in this event as shocked, scared and alone.

Perhaps this is what Henry was feeling. Day after day he lay in his clean white bed without a word and stared at a spot on the wall. He had no legs. He came from small town rural poverty. He was nineteen. One day I offered to share half of a Mounds Bar with him and he accepted. This became our only communication. After several weeks Henry was stabilized and sent back to San Francisco for rehabilitation. Before he left, during our final candy bar, he said, "I don't want to go home. I want to die. What kind of life can I have like this?" I had no answer, but I had begun to question everything.

Who could respond sanely to the burned and broken infantry officer who asked me to get him two Valentines, one for his wife and one for his daughter, then turned his head to the wall and died? I stood there devastated. I had been too naive to recognize the man was dying! I had done my rounds alone. Nobody had talked to me about him. There must have been somebody attending, but what I recall is that this man died among strangers—young, used, and unaware. I lived to question and revalue my life. He never got the chance.

Finally, there were the B-52 crews. Their world was not dangerous and bloody but pale as first light. Night after night they took off from Kadena Air Base for Vietnam. They were crews of technically elite nice guys. Death flowed from their fingers and rolled beneath their heels but they remained nine miles up and disconnected. Morning after morning they came "home" to Okinawa, touching down over the chainlinks into the island's several realities as my first-graders ran out to recess. Many were very severely depressed. A guy ejected himself on takeoff one night; nobody really believed it was an accident. These bomber crews were young too, mostly white, and new to the American middle class. Children of the baby boom, like me, they'd readily accepted America as they found it—upwardly mobile. They saw the Air Force as an honorable career and like their parents viewed those of our generation who were beginning to question this as spoiled aggressive children. Some changed their minds, most stayed with their careers.

For those of us who are old enough this is a year of remembering, but the images I carry with me come in detached fragments and parts which can never be successfully re-remembered. It's as if the mutilated young lives and bodies I saw there are permanently outside a unified sane construct of reality and the significant truth is—they are.

Pat O'Connor has been teaching in Massachusetts public schools since leaving DOD's overseas schools in 1970. She is presently working on a novel set in Okinawa during the Vietnam War. Her poems have appeared in *Echoes*, *Pegasus*, and forthcoming *Oak Square*.

"...and if you're a chick, they need typists"

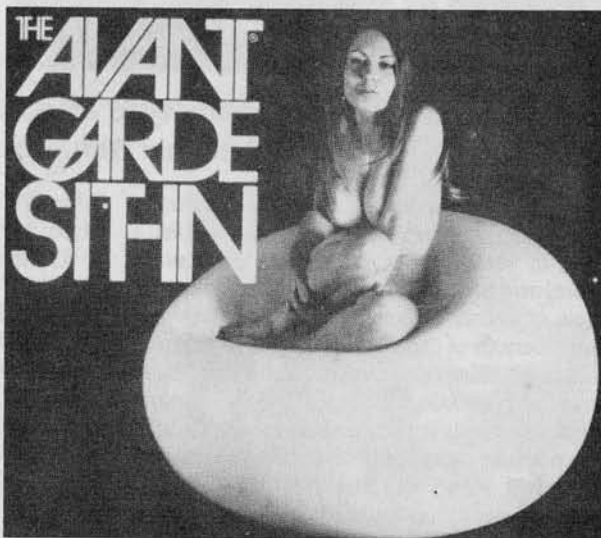
Ann Popkin

The point of direct—"zap"—actions was not to organize women into the movement, but rather to set ideas in their minds, ideas for later rumination. One zap action which involved a large, cross-cutting group of women took place at WBCN, a Boston counter-cultural radio station. The offending incident was an advertisement for a local drug program which ended with "and if you're a chick, they need typists." Thirty angry Bread and Roses women "stormed" the station "protesting its male chauvinism." The statement they presented explained,

The male supremacist (sic) assumption was that "chicks" by their very nature type; we do fifteen words a minute at birth and work our way up. Many phone calls later, they modified it to, "If you're a chick and can type, they need typists." No men need apply. It's beneath male dignity... Could a radio station get away with an ad that ran, "And if you're Black, we need janitors?"

The women were especially insulted by the advertisement (written by WBCN) because they had hoped for greater support from the alternative media. They were continually disappointed. The statement continued,

And it's not just that ad, which only represents one of the many oppressive stereotypes and assumptions that comprise the currency of rock culture—the so-called "cultural revolution" we hear so



"Protest against uncomfortable, heavy, square-looking furniture! Take a position in the revolutionary new Avant-Garde Inflatable Sculpture Seat." Ramparts, April, 1970.

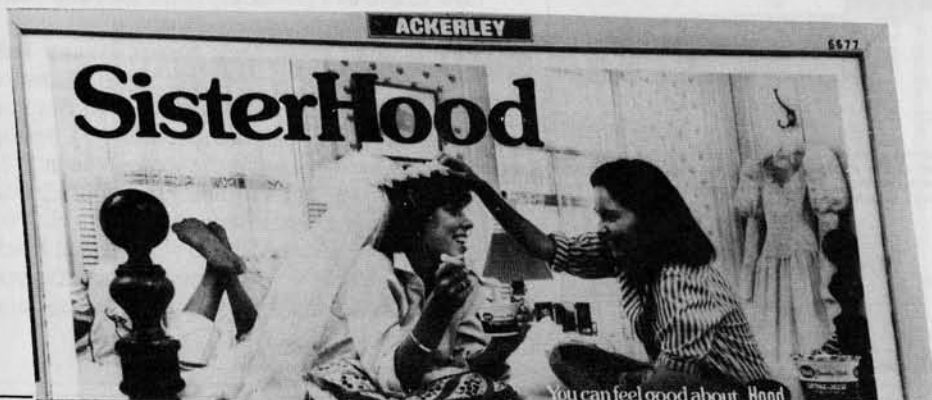
much about on WBCN. Hip culture and values are supposed to be more real and honest than centerfolds or Doris Day, but it's not so. The old dream images dressed up slicker or funkier are no more liberating than their American midcult originals...

The women presented the station manager with eight baby chicks, "pointing out that women are *not* chicks." They demanded, "in partial reparation, an hour of prime evening time on...International Women's Day, to present a women's liberation program:

This will require use of recording facilities, adequate to our needs and free advertising the week preceding, with publicity spots written and recorded by us.

The station manager agreed to their demands.

Ann Popkin was a founding member of Bread and Roses.



Billboard, Boston, MA; photo, Cynthia Peters

An Afro Isn't a Hairstyle and Neither are Dreads Evelynn Hammonds

Since the media began to focus on the new books that have come out about the sixties, I began to realize how skilled the process of cultural and historical annihilation has become in this country. I like many others view the reminiscences of the small group of white men who are prominent among the authors of these books, with disdain and anger. I too with many others have a view of the sixties that has little to do with the demise of either my political and ideological views nor the downfall of SDS. One of the most important legacies I carry from the sixties is not to trust white men's definition of anything when it contradicts my own reality.

In 1968 I was fifteen years old, living in Atlanta, Georgia. Every weekday at 7:15 in the morning I boarded a bus that took me and about thirty other Black teenagers across town to Therell High School. A white high school in the Southwest section of Atlanta. Some might say I wasn't a part of the social movements of the sixties because I was too young to march in demonstrations (nor did my parents take me to them). I didn't do drugs or rebel against my parents and teachers or join any radical organi-

zations until the 1970s and I cared as much about Motown as I did about Bob Dylan.

But the events of the sixties—the Civil Rights and anti-war movements—the protests and marches I watched on TV; the books I read; all shaped my identity. Yet it was much more than that. Growing up in Atlanta during segregation meant I had little daily contact with whites, little direct personal confrontation with racism. In ninth grade I took a class in world geography. On one exam I received the highest grade in the class. I was the only Black student in the class. As the teacher passed back the exams he called me to the front of the room and turned to the rest of the class and said, "If she can make an A on this test, what is wrong with you people?"




It was moments like that that made racism real for me—as real as the pictures of the four young Black girls murdered on Sunday morning in a Birmingham church; as real as the hoses and billy clubs used on the protesters at the Democratic National Convention. To help myself understand, to make some sense of the madness, to create for myself a vision, an identity, I turned to those people around me who did march. I read everything I could get my hands on by those who challenged the establishment and advocated participatory democracy and social change. I sought support and models. I moved into the seventies with the biggest afro I could grow.

The sixties didn't end for me in 1968 because I have defined my political and social identity from that time. It's still where I come from. I am still following those people who were in that moment in a more active way than I was. Many of my teachers and mentors were radicalized in the sixties and through them I learned how to live as a politically conscious and committed Black woman.

You don't know their names. James Baldwin, Ella Baker, Angela Davis, yes. Howard Zinn, Bob Moses, Tom Hayden, yes. But you don't know my physics professor, a young Black man radicalized in the sixties who in 1974 at an ill-equipped and underfunded Black college, taught me that science was political. You don't know my friend, who was the first Black woman I knew who tramped around Europe with a back pack, read Marx, Marcuse, and


MISSING CALL FBI

THE FBI IS SEEKING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE DISAPPEARANCE AT PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI, OF THESE THREE INDIVIDUALS ON JUNE 21, 1964. EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATION IS BEING CONDUCTED TO LOCATE GOODMAN, CHANEY, AND SCHWERNER WHO ARE DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">ANDREW GOODMAN</p> 	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">JAMES EARL RAY</p> 	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">MICHAEL ERIC SCHWERNER</p> 
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<p>RACE: White</p> <p>SEX: Male</p> <p>DOB: November 21, 1942</p> <p>POB: New York City</p> <p>AGE: 21 years</p> <p>HEIGHT: 5'10"</p> <p>WEIGHT: 150 pounds</p> <p>HAIR: Dark brown, wavy</p> <p>EYES: Brown</p> <p>TEETH: SCARS AND MARKS</p>	<p>RACE: Negro</p> <p>SEX: Male</p> <p>DOB: May 22, 1942</p> <p>POB: Jackson, Mississippi</p> <p>AGE: 21 years</p> <p>HEIGHT: 5'11"</p> <p>WEIGHT: 170 to 180 pounds</p> <p>HAIR: Black</p> <p>EYES: Brown</p> <p>TEETH: Good, none missing</p> <p>SCARS AND MARKS: 2 inch cut scar 2 inches above left ear</p>	<p>RACE: White</p> <p>SEX: Male</p> <p>DOB: November 8, 1935</p> <p>POB: New York City</p> <p>AGE: 28 years</p> <p>HEIGHT: 5'9" to 5'10"</p> <p>WEIGHT: 170 to 180 pounds</p> <p>HAIR: Brown</p> <p>EYES: Light blue</p> <p>TEETH: Good</p> <p>SCARS AND MARKS: Faint scar center of forehead, slight scar on bridge of nose, approximately 1/2" above left eye</p>
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SHOULD YOU HAVE OR IN THE FUTURE RECEIVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WHEREABOUTS OF THESE INDIVIDUALS. YOU ARE REQUESTED TO NOTIFY ME OR THE NEAREST OFFICE OF THE FBI. TELEPHONE NUMBER IS LISTED BELOW.


 DIRECTOR
 FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535
 TELEPHONE: NATIONAL 8-7117

June 29, 1964

FBI poster

Fanon, listened to Hendrix, Dylan, and Nina Simone, wore black turtlenecks and an afro. Who was always in a fight with her landlord or professor or some sexist male colleague. Who always said to me, "What did you do about it?"

What we're talking about is who owns the sixties. Those white men who mourn its so-called death in 1968 are lamenting their own failed vision and courage and trying to deny the rest of us access to an ownership of that moment. They also fail to acknowledge the legacy of the sixties for those of us who followed—and those who carried forward and transformed what they knew was just begun at that time.

In 1989, I sit in a darkened theatre with my white Jewish friend who teaches a course on the sixties at an elite New England college. I am intensely twisting one of my dreadlocks as we watch the final scene of "Mississippi Burning." "Mississippi Burning" purports to tell the story of the investigation of the murders of three Civil Rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi in 1964. In the film the three men—two white, one Black—have no names. No Black character has a voice. The movie shows us a battle of wills between two white FBI agents and the stereotypical southern male rednecks they battle against. This is not a movie about the sixties. This is a degrading and dishonest Hollywood fantasy created to facilitate the process institutionalized in the Reagan years, of erasing the real people and events of that historical moment from our collective memory.

But those of us who carry the goals embodied in the social movements of the sixties will expose the lies of "Mississippi Burning" and show our students "Eyes on the Prize." We will tell them the names of Schwerner, Goodman and Chaney and we'll tell them about the heroism of others, young people whose names were not recorded because they didn't gain fame through death.

Evelynn Hammonds is on the editorial board of *Radical America*.



photo, Library of Congress



Cineaste, Vol. V, No. 4

"BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR"

THE NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW



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An Activist/Scholar Remembers

Alan Wald

The single most important—and treasured—fact of my political, intellectual life to date is that I had the good fortune to be a college student during the mid-1960s. Today, the bulk of my scholarly work, and the axis of my socialist activism, are critical extensions of the theory and practice absorbed and lived in that decade.

For me, that period probably began in 1962 at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis. I was a junior at Walter Johnson High School in Bethesda, Maryland, and was startled by the news that several seniors had refused to cooperate in an air raid drill. We had been ordered by our teachers to practice a retreat to the basement of the school building for “protection” in case a nuclear bomb were dropped by the USSR on the nation’s capital—which was all of seven miles away!

Some time afterwards, I saw a newspaper photograph of students from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio being hosed down by police as they demonstrated against a local barber who refused to cut Black people’s hair. I knew then where I wanted to go to study.

After a year devoted to creative writing, sexual initiation and drug experimentation, I became active in the local chapter of SDS in the fall of 1965. I then moved to Cleveland in January 1966 where I was affiliated with SDS’s Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) led by Paul Potter, Cathy Boudin, and others on the West Side. Later, while in England, I became convinced that I should belong to a socialist organization. Shortly after returning to Ohio in 1967, I became a “candidate” member of the Young Socialist Alliance, whose Antioch members had until then worked effectively and in a non-sectarian manner inside the local SDS.

In the 1960s, I recognized the hypocrisies of liberalism, the doctrine in which I had been schooled by my family and which seemed a pragmatic extension of my middle-class Jewish background.

I also saw how mass movements were built, how they were sometimes derailed, and how the competition of political orientations worked their way out within them. I learned about the interconnectedness of world affairs—something captured vividly in a pamphlet called “Detroit is Vietnam,” written by Antioch professor James D. Crockcroft in the wake of the 1968 Detroit rebellion. From the

political and personal struggles of those years I forged an alternative set of values that I have retained to this day.

I recall the 1960s as far more intellectual than seems to be communicated by recent depictions of the era. One popular image of the 1960s is that of mindless hedonists in a youth rebellion, rejecting the “Old Left” *in toto* in a fit of arrogance. Here my experience was just the opposite. It was only in the context of 1960s activism that I learned about the “Old Left” and the whole legacy of the struggle of working people, women, people of color, and radical intellectuals, in the United States and around the world. I vividly remember an early Antioch SDS meeting where a student member read aloud passages from Joseph Freeman’s 1938 *An American Testament*, pointing out ways in which Freeman’s experiences paralleled our own. I eagerly took courses where we studied writings by Randolph Bourne, John Reed, Richard Wright, and Lincoln Steffens. We launched a successful literary-political journal and fought to get Carl Oglesby, recently president of SDS, to be hired by Antioch College as “Activist Scholar in Residence.” Under Oglesby’s tutelage, our reading shuttled from Fanon and Marcuse to Melville and the Marquis de Sade.

Emanating from SDS, and, later, in a more organized fashion from the Young Socialist Alliance, was a steady series of study groups and other educational activities. Even at Antioch, where all education was touted as “relevant,” the kind of study that took place in this format—organized by ourselves and aimed at helping us act more effectively to change the world—was by far the most vital and memorable. The fusion of intellectual work with political practice made me far more curious about the world than all of high school and the regular class instruction that I undertook. Moreover, it was in these groups and not academic courses that I first began to read feminist writings as well as literature by and about people of color.

A number of the leading activists in YSA were drama majors while others possessed a contagious enthusiasm for history and philosophy. The Cleveland ERAP developed a radical theater that performed adaptations of Brecht plays (the names of characters and settings were changed, but not the politics) free of

charge in a storefront for the white Appalachian community. The Antioch SDS newsletter contained poems on war and other political-personal themes by myself and others. In short, the intellectual-cultural dimension of the 60s was crucial to my own experience, and has helped significantly to shape my vision of the kind of

socialist politics required for the 1980s—something that I try to carry out today in my work for the political organization Solidarity and for the journal *Against the Current*.

Alan Wald is a Professor of English Literature and American Culture at the University of Michigan, and is author of a number of books on the U.S. cultural Left, the most recent of which is *The New York Intellectuals*.

The Forgetting of Napalm Nora Mitchell

She runs on a dark-wet clay road,
a child running in a photograph.
She wears no clothes, has no pubic hair,
and hangs her hands away from her body
as if she does not know what to do with them.
In the background her village burns.
I have always hoped
that after he snapped his picture, the cameraman
threw down his camera, folded her in his arms,
and listened to her cry.

The things we forget: how the leaves look
when the trees first bud.
Not by day (I remember that well enough),
but at night under a streetlight
I always forget how they turn
pale as foam, trees in flower.

Napalm is no longer in our daily talk
and some of those who did not watch each night
its dark orange blossom in Vietnamese fields and hamlets
have never heard the word at all. The fire
that clings and burns, the fire I thought
would never let us go.

Perhaps napalm does not exist
until we remember just what it was:
the gel in gasoline, its only use
to make sure things burned.
As personal as the shirt of a dead friend,
war has its intimate moments,
when the fire hugs, holds, and won't let go.

Nora Mitchell lived in South Korea with her family from 1966 to 1968. Her poems have appeared in a number of magazines, including *Calyx*, *Dark Horse*, *Hawaii Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *Sojourner*.

Reprinted with permission from *Your Skin is a Country* by Nora Mitchell (Alice James Books, Cambridge, MA 1988).

From New Left to New Social Movements

Carl Boggs

The sixties was a unique period of critical engagement, mass upheaval, and social change; the energy unleashed was simultaneously intellectual and moral, political and erotic. Activism was infused with a sense of moral urgency and existential will so great that political involvement took on, in Jim Miller's words, a "mythic stature." The year 1968 alone was more explosive than any since World War II: from France and Mexico to the United States, from Berkeley to Chicago to Columbia, insurgency against the postwar order stimulated a rebirth of long-dormant radical traditions. Only the imagination seemed to impose limits on what could be achieved.

Yet most observers, including sympathetic ones, agree that the new left entered into cataclysmic decline sometime between 1968 and 1970. Amidst the chaos of total defeat, the "movement" is said to have disintegrated virtually overnight, giving way to cooptation, privatized retreat, religious cults, bizarre therapies, and the return to traditional lifestyles. This poses a rather intriguing question: could "mythic" struggles of the sixties have vanished from the public sphere so quickly and so completely? That there could be any sort of ideological continuity from the turbulent sixties through the reagan era is often dismissed as fantasy. Yet, the possible linkages between past and present deserve closer scrutiny.

Several authors challenge the myth that new leftists were simply affluent students whose "alienation" soon gave way to high-powered careers, large incomes, and right-wing conversion. For example, Richard Flacks and Jack Whalen found that most ex-activists remain dedicated to social change and that many of those who are disengaged could be described as "passive radicals."

Yet such persistence of new-left ideology does not exist in a social void; it must be understood within the evolution of more durable post-sixties forms of protest—the new social movements. The logic

of the feminist, gay, peace, ecology, and urban movements, which from time to time have built massive constituencies in the United States and Western Europe would be indecipherable without reference to the sixties.

The new movements uphold, in different ways, the ideal of transforming daily life that was only implicit in the sixties; they carry forward the legacies of direct democracy, cultural renewal, and personal politics. Some movements—feminism, ecology—intersect with progressive currents of the holistic revolution in therapy, healing, and health care that grew out of the counterculture. They have also helped to revitalize community institutions, build local electoral coalitions, and keep alive a subversive cultural and intellectual life. The growth of a radical intelligentsia since the late 1960s intersects with the proliferation of social movements. Today feminism, Western Marxism, social ecology, critical political economy, and cultural radicalism converge in many ways with a grassroots activism that is galvanized by many of the same concerns: ideology and consciousness, social relations, the problem of domination.

Such elements of continuity call into question the "total break" thesis according to which the "radical" sixties was followed by the "quiescent" seventies. The inclination to devalue post-sixties movements corresponds to an equally exaggerated romanticizing of the new left itself. Of course the sixties became a huge political spectacle, and this, along with inflated revolutionary claims and the centrality of the Vietnam war, brought enormous media atten-



SDS and SNCC sit-in at New York's Chase Manhattan Bank to protest their loan of \$50 million to the government of South Africa, March 1965; photo Diana Davies

tion. Although most new movements have been more "moderate" and less disruptive, in fact they carry forward a mature elaboration—not a reversal—of important sixties themes. Thus feminism alone has, since the late 1960s, probably exerted a deeper impact on popular consciousness, daily life, and policy reforms than all new-left struggles combined.

From the vantage point of 1989, then, the new left can perhaps best be understood as the anticipation, in embryonic form, of the future shape of political opposition in the industrialized countries. Surely the continued presence of grassroots movements for social change, on a large scale, within the bosom of Reagan country shows that those social forces



Dartmouth students protesting their school's failure to divest South Africa holdings. Photo, Steve Young.

which originally inspired the new left have scarcely disappeared.

Carl Boggs teaches at the University of Southern California and is the author of *The Two Revolutions: Gramsci and the Dilemma of Western Marxism*.

Notes on Not Being Able to Step into the Same River Twice

Jim O'Brien

I want to muse a little bit about the ways that I've thought about the sixties while I've been doing Central America solidarity work and participating in local political campaigns. For five years I've been involved in a big, Boston-based all-purpose Central America solidarity group. It's been the hub of a hotbed of Central America activism in area since the early eighties. My Central America work has sort of relieved me from having to feel responsible for attacking *everything* that's wrong with the society. The New Left had an awfully limited attention span, and now it feels good to pick out a specific part of the mosaic of evil and work to change it. I sometimes feel that I never got as angry as I should have about the Vietnam war, because as an SDS member I was quick to see it in an overall context. We used to say that Vietnam was "not an aberration," and of course it wasn't, but personally I think that argument shielded me from the raw outrage that the war properly invoked. We used to distrust the liberals who seemed narrowly concerned with stopping the war, but now I think it's a great thing they were on the job.

But I also miss the sense of discovery that we had in the sixties, when new ideas about how society works were a dime a dozen. The Vietnam war *wasn't* an aberration, it *was* a

product of a manipulative, top-down, deeply racist and sexist society with an astonishingly arrogant ruling class. That was all new to me back then. In years of working against US Central America policy I don't think I've learned a single thing that was strikingly new (though the *extent* of the administration's ability to manipulate the media has surpassed my expectations several times).

Part of the difference, maybe, is geographic and cultural. Vietnam was so far away (from civilians, at least), and seemingly so different, that we developed a mental shorthand for thinking about it. We could be satisfied with vague, often highly romantic abstractions about Vietnam, and we could concentrate chiefly on what the war had to tell us about our own society. With Central America, it's different. It's close at hand, the language is related, refugees abound in the major North American cities (during the war, not afterwards), and probably well over a hundred thousand North Americans have been there to see for themselves in the eighties. If the watchword of the Vietnam anti-war movement, at least its left edge, was "resistance," the corresponding watchword now is "solidarity." The difference bespeaks a basic orientation to helping the Central Americans rather than opposing the

status quo in the United States. I don't quarrel with the new orientation, but I miss the old one.

I especially miss the kind of energy that comes from a fusion of different sources of inspiration and anger. In the sixties a demonstration might be about one particular issue but really be about a much broader range of things. I fondly remember a Willie Murphy cartoon in the underground press that screamed, "ALL OUT FOR THE APRIL 15 MARCH AGAINST ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING!" Today, what you see is what you get—demonstrations are more a matter of duty than a funnel for our emotions.

The one exception I can think of in all our years of Central America demonstrations around Boston is one that was organized in two days in March of 1988 when US troops were sent to Honduras in response to a dreamed-up Nicaraguan "invasion." It got a much bigger turnout than any of the demonstrations which, over the years, had been laboriously planned months in advance with long lists of "sponsors," "endorsers," etc. And it was an emotional march: anger at the administration, ecstasy at the numbers, pleasure in the really creative banners and cardboard cut-outs that disparate people had thrown together for the occasion. For once I had the feeling that this was a social movement making its feelings emphatically known.

That was just one demonstration, of course. And the planners themselves subsequently helped to diffuse the mood by calling for the exact same demonstration a week later, when of course it drew a much smaller crowd.

I keep missing the power that comes when different issues and concerns are fused together and focused in a common enterprise. The last time I felt this effect in a sustained way was in the campaign of the Black radical Mel King for mayor of Boston in 1983. Because he had been a key actor in all manner of social causes for years, and because of the symbolism of a serious Black candidate for mayor in a racist, three-quarters white city, the King campaign became a magnet. Activists in a wide range of social movements—black, Latino, women's, gay and lesbian, anti-war, plus lots of radical hangers-on such as I was at that point—felt that the campaign expressed a kind of synthesis of our hopes. For me, the emotional boost of the campaign was what got me energized to work in the Central America movement afterwards.

I wish I could find an easy formula for translating today's issues into the world-spirit of the sixties New Left, while still retaining today's ability to focus. But it still seems to me that some things we acted on (or acted out) in the sixties are part of my way of making sense of the world today: the sense that issues are ultimately connected; the sense that the United States has a social hierarchy from which a host of seemingly disparate problems emanate; the sense that when people are in motion they can change their lives and can affect the social context of those lives. There was a lot of fumbling around in the dark in the sixties, but we hit a few light switches too.

Jim O'Brien is a longtime political activist.



photo, Eric Rasmussen

WOMAN/NATION/STATE:

The Demographic Race and National Reproduction in Israel

Nira Yuval-Davis

Nations, as Ben Anderson points out,¹ are imagined communities. In the case of Israel, the imagined community has been a direct product of the dreams, as well as the actions, of the Zionist movement which established the state. This does not make it any less historically real than other nations, but it might make it more historically precarious.

This article explores the ways in which the boundaries of the Israeli Jewish collectivity have been defined and reproduced, in relation to the Jewish people on the one hand and to the Israeli society on the other. Specifically, it looks at the ways in which Jewish women and childbearing have been ideologically constructed to play certain roles in the above process, and the consequent effects of this on the social and legal position of women in Israel.

The issue of national reproduction in Israel, both in terms of its ideological boundaries and in terms of the reproduction of its membership, has always been at the centre of Zionist discourse. In recent years, it has gradually come to overshadow even the issue of security as a precondition for Israel's survival. As Shimon Peres, the Israeli Labour ex-Prime Minister stated in October 1987, "The demographic problem has become the strategic problem of the state of Israel."² An extreme expression of this position can be read in the introduction to Rabbi Kahane's book *Thorns in Your Eyes* (Kahane is the leader of the fastest growing polit-

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ical power in Israel, the Kakh party—a neo-fascist party, although many, especially his supporters, see it as the most consistent of the Zionist parties). According to Kahane:

Each Jew should ask himself the following question: I am the son of a people that...unlike other peoples, was not allowed to develop in its body and spirit in its own country. Today, following the death of six million and with God's help, we do have a state which embodies our sovereignty, defends itself with our army, and follows our culture. Am I prepared—in peaceful conditions and with *the Arab rate of population growth* (my emphasis) which is transforming a minority into a majority—to cancel the Law of Return which entitles each Jew an automatic right of entry and citizenship ...and peacefully and democratically to end the Jewish state?³

Kahane is not alone asking the question. Golda Meir, then prime minister of Israel, had confided in the early 1970s that she was afraid of a situation in which she “would have to wake up every morning wondering how many Arab babies have been born during the night!”

“Whose Survival, Whose Future”

A “demographic race” between the Jews and the Arabs in Israel is seen as crucial, then, for the survival of Israel—Israel, not as a state apparatus for the population living in it, but as the state of the Jews all around the world. Revealingly, the official aim of the Israeli demographic center which was established as a unit attached to the Israeli prime minister's office in April 1967, was “to act systematically to realize a demographic policy directed at creating an atmosphere and the conditions for encouraging a birth rate, which is so vital to the future of the *Jewish People*.” (my emphasis)⁵

More than 75 percent of world Jewry, according to the statistics produced by that same demographic center, live outside Israel. On the other hand, 17 percent of Israeli citizens, and about a third of the people under the direct control of the Israeli government (including those living in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967), are not Jews. How is it, then, that the Israeli government, portrayed for so many years as “the only democracy in the Middle East,” is worried explicitly, not about the demographic future of its own civil society, but about the Jewish people?

As Kahane says, Israel was established for a specific purpose, and as an achievement of a specific political movement—Zionism. While the definition of boundaries of national collectivities and their relationship to the state is very often problematic, in Israel it is especially so, because of the specific historical construction of the Jewish people, as well as the settler colonial character of Israeli Jewish society. Exploring these issues will be the purpose of the first part of this article.



New Arrivals

Symbolic reproduction of the Israeli Jewish national collectivity depends on the availability of people “of the right kind” to “man” it. One of the basic concerns of the Zionist movement, especially the Labour Zionist movement, since the beginning of the Zionist settlement in Palestine, has been the creation of a Jewish majority in the country as a precondition for the establishment of the Jewish state there. In the early period of Zionist settlement and up until the early 1960s, the major form of the supply of “human power” to the *yishuv*, the Zionist settler society, has been by *aliyah*, the immigration of Jews to the country. Gradually, however, the objective and subjective conditions for *aliyah* have dwindled, and Israeli Jewish national reproduction has come to rely more and more on Israeli-born babies. Another implicit, and in certain historical periods not so implicit, alternative has been to create and safeguard a Jewish majority by lowering, by various means, the number of Palestinians in the country.

Demographic policies often seem to be determined by worries about the existence of sufficient labour power for the national economy,

and indeed feminist literature often assumes reproduction to be the complementary facet of economic production or rather a precondition of it.⁶ A closer examination of national demographic policies (as well as state welfare policies), however, will often reveal that national political rather than economic interests lie behind the desire to have more children, or rather more children of a specific origin.⁷ In Israel, where economic calculations have never seriously determined major political decisions (even in the heart of an extreme economic crisis⁸), this has been especially true. The second part of the article will therefore examine the nationalist angle in the ideological debates and policies which have surrounded the question of the birthrate of Israeli children.

The last part of the article will focus on the ways in which the political and ideological pressures on defining and reproducing the national collectivity in Israel have constructed and affected Israeli Jewish women as its national reproducers.

The Israeli "Nation" and Its Boundaries

There is no space here to recount in detail the history of the Zionist movement and its internal divisions.⁹ Suffice it to say that the basis of its widest consensus is reflected in the 1948 Israeli Declaration of Independence, in which Israel is seen as the state of all Jews. Israel was never meant to be a political expression of its civil society, of the people who reside in its territory or even of its citizens. It was meant to be the State of the Jews, wherever they are. And in that respect it was immaterial (albeit highly inconvenient) that only 55 percent of the population in the Jewish state proposed by the 1947 UN resolution were Jews, and they owned only about five percent of the land there, or that even today the Jews in Israel constitute less than a quarter of world Jewry.

In October 1985 the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), by passing what is ironically known as the "anti-racist" law,¹⁰ gave a more specific interpretation to the consensus expressed in the Declaration of Independence. It defined Israel as "the state of the Jewish people," and not just as "the Jewish state"—which Zionist liberals would have liked to believe represented the

same relationship between state and nation in Israel as in any other Western country. It does not—as the rest of this section will attempt to show.

The legal expression of the relationship between Israel and the Jewish people has been the Israeli Law of Return (mentioned by Rabbi Kahane) according to which all Jews, wherever they come from, are entitled automatically to Israeli citizenship, while according to the Israeli Nationality Law, non-Jews, even if born in Israel, unless born to Israeli citizens (residency and settlement are not sufficient for that purpose), are not. This special relationship between the Israeli state and the Jewish people expresses itself in many other ways as well—symbolic, legal and administrative. (Not least among them is the functioning of the Jewish Agency, the executive arm of the Zionist movement, as a parallel state distributive apparatus, operating exclusively for Jews).¹¹

This relationship makes the criterion according to which people are included or excluded from the category of Jew to be of central and vital importance. Subjective and cultural identification are by no means sufficient.

Who is a Jew?

The modern ideological and legal debate on the definition of "the Jew" had already started by the time of the French Revolution, when the question of the legal emancipation of the Jews came to the fore. It focused on the question of whether or not the Jews constituted a nation, or merely shared a religion. In a way, this debate has not been fully "decided" until today—at least two Israeli governments fell as a result of disagreements on the question of "who is a Jew" and last year the debate even shook the present Israeli government.¹²

Historically, in the Estate society of feudal Europe where "classical Judaism" crystallized,¹³ the Jewish communities, the *kehilot*, were often organized around the more or less specific economic role the Jews had as a middle caste between the landed nobility and the peasantry or the urban poor. As such, they usually had a certain degree of autonomy and self government and their religion expressed itself more as a total way of life, than as a belief

in certain religious dogmas. Part of their religious culture was the tradition of a common origin and history, which included political independence before the destruction of the second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. Like many other ethnic collectivities therefore, in Europe and even more so in the Third World, the dichotomy of nation/religion has not suited the historical construction of the Jewish people. Zionism, it is important to remember, has only been one response, and for a very long time a minority one, of the Jews in the "modern" world to this history, and to their displacement and persecution with the rise of capitalism and nationalism in Europe, in which their traditional mode of existence could no longer survive.

The two large Jewish political movements in the 20th century which attempted to resolve the "who" or, rather, "what is a Jew" dilemma by constructing Jewishness into a nationality, have been the Jewish Bund and the Zionist movement. The Bund, which was the dominant Jewish national movement in Eastern Europe before World War II, saw the Jews there as constituting an autonomous national collectivity, with its own language and cultural tradition. They aspired for a multinational state structure in Eastern Europe in which the Jews, like all the other national minorities, would have a national and cultural autonomy.¹⁴

The Zionist movement aspired to the "normalization" of the Jewish people, by establishing a Jewish state in an independent territory in which, ideally, all Jews would eventually settle. After long debates and the proposal of various alternative locations, it was decided that Palestine, which in the Jewish tradition had been the "Land of the Fathers" and the "Promised Land," would be the territorial basis for this state. Colonialism and exclusionary practices against the native population of Palestine have been, therefore, an integral part of the Zionist endeavor. It became historically successful due to the specific historical configuration in Europe and the Middle East post-World War I, and especially in the aftermath of World War II and the Nazi Holocaust. The physical extermination of such large numbers of European Jewry, combined with the survival of the Zionist settlers in Palestine (which the Nazis never reached), created a myth that Zion-



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ism presented a successful strategy against anti-Semitism and Israel a secure refuge for persecuted Jews. The superpowers supported this presumption of the Zionist movement, and the establishment of the Israeli state, because it was more convenient for the USA to send the post-war Jewish refugees to Palestine than to have to absorb them en masse in its own postwar society. It was also a way for the Americans and the Soviets to penetrate the Middle East, an area which up until then had been controlled by the British and French.

As a result, the Zionist movement came to be the hegemonic movement in World Jewry. To the majority of Jews, Israel has become, at least to an extent, their *post facto* homeland. Sending money to Israel has become an easy way of being Jewish, especially for the non-religious Jews who still felt the need, especially after the Holocaust experience, to express their Jewishness. Israel has also become an emotional "insurance" policy, as a potential refuge from persecution. (In reality, of course, Israel's very existence is dependent to a very large extent on the political and financial support of the Jewish Diaspora.) Concurrently, the Establishment of the various institutions of the organized Jewish communities has become very dependent on its



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relations with Israel, in terms of channels of power and prestige. One of the results of this process, especially in the last ten to fifteen years, has been the dissociation of Jews, especially young Jews, who do not want to be identified as supporters of Zionism and Israel, from any association whatever with the structured Jewish community. This phenomenon, plus the high rate of mixed marriages (up to a third) among young Jews has raised a debate among demographers not only about how many Jews exist in the world, but also about who should be defined as such. In Israel itself, religious legislation has been chosen as the criterion for membership in the Jewish collectivity.

This requires explanation, as the Zionist movement has generally presented itself as a "modern alternative" way of being Jewish, as opposed to the traditional religious one. However, in spite of the fact that the majority of Zionists were, at least originally, vehement secularists, the Zionist movement never completely broke away from Jewish Orthodoxy. The Zionist movement needed the religious tradi-

tion in order to justify its claim that Palestine was its homeland, rather than the land of its indigenous population; it also needed the recognition of at least major sections of the Orthodox Jewish communities, as the Zionist movement claimed to represent all Jews all over the world.

This is why, (in addition to more *ad hoc* government coalition calculations), there has always been a partial incorporation of Jewish religious legislation into Israel's state legislation. A central aspect of this incorporation relates to the kind of criteria whereby one can be considered a member of the Jewish national collectivity. A Jew—as defined by the law, following the traditional religious construction—is "anybody who is born to a Jewish mother or has been converted to Judaism" (the question of which forms of religious conversion will be recognized by the state is still being debated).¹⁵ The Israeli Law of Return, the Nationality Law and various administrative regulations use Jewishness as a criterion for entitlement to various privileges in Israel (in spite of its supposed parliamentary democratic welfare state structure), such as automatic rights to citizenship, loans housing, etc.

The incorporation of the criterion of religious conversion in state legislation has created a situation in which religious conversion is used in instances which in other states would have been dealt with by simple acts of naturalization. An extreme example of this is that of the Black American Olsi Perry, a professional basketball player. He had to undergo circumcision as part of his supposed religious conversion in order to be able to play in the Israeli national team.

On the other hand, Jewish national ideology is explicit in placing a greater emphasis on the right "genetic" origin than other national collectivities. A couple of years ago, there was an outcry in Israel when it was discovered that childless couples who despaired of getting babies for adoption were using the services of private American agencies to import Brazilian and Columbian babies. The outcry was that, as it was done illegally and secretly, these babies will grow up as Jews, without "really" being so (since they were not born to a Jewish mother and had not been converted to Judaism); this will create havoc in the reproduction of the

Jewish collectivity when they marry and produce children as if they are Jewish, when they are "really" not.¹⁶

To be born Jewish, however, is more than purely a genetic matter. To be a Jew, one has to be born to a Jewish mother in the "proper" way—otherwise one is considered a *mamzer* (bastard), cannot be considered a Jew, is not able even to become a Jew by conversion, and one's descendants cannot marry other Jews "for ten generations to come." Bastardy in Judaism is not a question of being born outside wedlock, since according to Jewish religious law sexual intercourse is one of the ways in which marriage can be contracted (as long as it is with another Jew—rapes during pogrom did not receive such a "sanctification," but on the other hand, they are the historical reason why Jewishness has come to be defined via the mother rather than the father in classical Judaism). Bastardy is rather a question of being born to a woman who is having a forbidden relationship of adultery or incest—and that includes even women who have been divorced by civil (rather than religious) courts, which, unlike civil marriages, are not recognized by the religious court. Their children by their second husbands would be defined as bastards.

The major ideological justification which has been given for the incorporation of Orthodox religious personal law into Israeli legislation, and for accepting its definition as to "who is a Jew," has been that doing otherwise will "split the people." It was claimed that accepting the authority of other Jewish religious denominations, such as Conservative or Reform Judaism, let alone secular legislation, would make it impossible for Orthodox Jews to marry anyone but other Orthodox Jews, for fear of incorporating unintentionally the forbidden *mamzers* into their family. The paradox is, of course, that in reality no Orthodox Jew would marry a non-Orthodox Jew (or even newly "born again" Orthodox Jews who come from secular families)—exactly because of this fear. Moreover, outside Israel the majority of Jews do marry and divorce in a non-Orthodox fashion, even if they are married by a rabbi, and in Israel itself private contracts in lawyers' offices have become more and more popular as an established alternative to official marriages.¹⁷ The

attempt to control the boundaries of the Israeli collectivity and its patterns of reproduction in a homogeneous way by incorporating severe Orthodox religious law into Israel's state legislation has, therefore, not really succeeded.

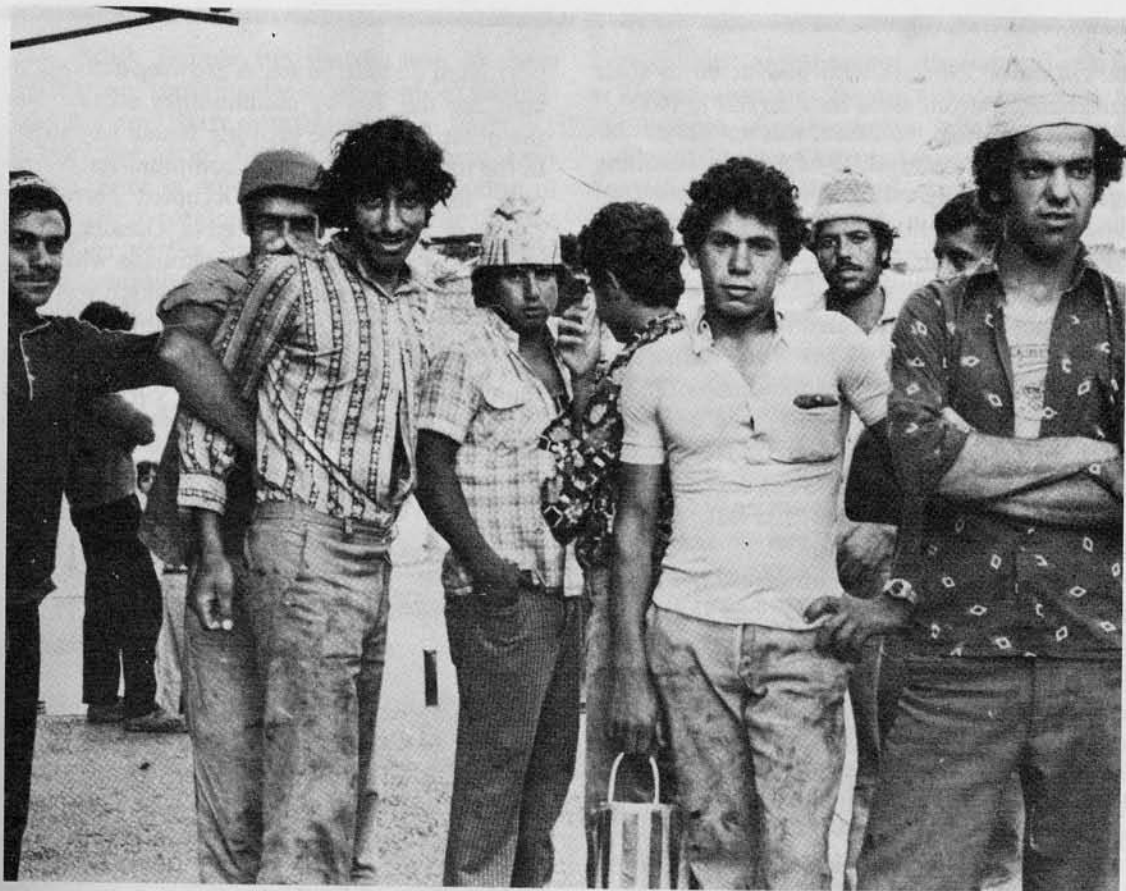
All this means that the boundaries of the Jewish national collectivity which Israel claims to represent are not clear at all. On the one hand, they are definitely wider than the boundaries of the Israeli Jewish national collectivity, but on the other, there clearly exist many organized (mainly Orthodox and some Socialist) and especially unorganized segments of the world Jewish population who less and less recognize Israel's claim to represent them. Moreover, the historical past of the Jews as a religious civilization with separate histories in different parts of the world has presented contradictory pressures on the Zionist movement when it attempts to construct the national boundaries of its collectivity without at the same time breaking radically with its ideology of religious/ethnic construction.

But contradictions in and challenges to the determination of the boundaries and nature of the Israeli national collectivity have emerged not only in relation to world Jewry outside Israel, but also in relation to divisions and struggles within it.

Internal Israeli Divisions

The problems concerning the nature and boundaries of the Israeli national collectivity get yet another twist when we look at the internal ethnic divisions within its Jewish collectivity, especially the major division into Occidental and Oriental Jews. The ideology, the leadership and the overwhelming majority of the Zionist settlers and supporters of the Zionist movement until the post-World War II period came from Europe, especially Eastern Europe, and originated from among the Ashkenazim.

The Jews from Arab countries mostly arrived in Israel after the establishment of the state in 1948. Unlike the Zionist settlers from Europe, they usually came not as single individuals but as whole families and communities. Also different from most of the European Jewish communities, they were not exterminated during World War II, but their situation began to



Contract day laborers from Gaza in Nazareth. Lena Rifkin

worsen dramatically with the growing conflict between the Zionist movement and the Arab world as a whole. When they arrived, the Oriental Jewish communities, as they became known collectively in Israel, came into an already well crystallized political structure, with its pre-established supporting economic underpinnings. The task of absorbing the new immigrants was given to the various Zionist parties according to their relative size in the Jewish Agency.¹⁸ These new immigrants and their families came to make up the majority of the Israeli Jewish population. Autonomous Oriental Jewish parties, unlike Palestinian ones, were not forbidden by law, but (at least until the 1970s), they were not allowed sufficient access to independent economic and political levers. Within the old party system, the national political leadership, with very few exceptions, continued to be composed of Ashkenazi Jews (especially East Europeans) and their children. As in the case of the Palestinians in Israel,

the process of change had started gradually, but would probably not have transformed itself as it did without the major shift in the Israeli society as a result of the 1967 war. The entrance en masse of Palestinian labour power into the Israeli labour market not only involved a relative upward shift for the Israeli working class, which after the 1950s was overwhelmingly Oriental; it also supplied markets and cheap labour for those among the Oriental Jews who started their own enterprises and/or engaged Palestinians as workers in their fields in the moshavim.

In spite of occasional complaints that the settlements in the Occupied Territories were diverting money from the rehabilitation of urban slums and underprivileged development towns where the majority of Oriental Jews lived, the mass of Oriental Jews came to support the Likkud party and parties even further to the Right. They saw these parties as serving their class interests, as well as satisfying their growing expressed hostility to the former domi-

nant Labour Zionists who had acted as their controlling patrons since their arrival in Israel.¹⁹

Their challenge, however, was not only political but also cultural. They were revolting against the underrating and suppression of Oriental Jewish culture which had been part of their "absorption" process—whereby modernization was equated with westernization, and Jewish nostalgia was focused on the East European shtetl of *Fiddler on the Roof* rather than on "Our village in the Atlas mountains."²⁰ The quotable Golda Meir not only lived in fear of Arab babies being born, but, it is said, also cried in relief when Russian Jews began arriving in Israel in the early 1970s: "At last real Jews are coming to Israel again...."

In the last few years, however, the power struggle which has been taking place in Israel to challenge western exclusivity and supremacy concerning culture, education and political structures, has to a certain extent become enmeshed with the power struggle of the religious sector to reinstate religious tradition as the legitimate basis for social and political action in Israel.

The *sabras*,²¹ the "New Jews," grew up feeling themselves to be a positive alternative, and completely different, to the Diaspora Jews. After the establishment of the state, the term "Zionism" itself became in Israeli slang a euphemism for meaningless waffle. There was a feeling (contradictory political and financial reality notwithstanding) that the Zionist movement had finished its task with the establishment of the state of Israel and the mass immigration in the first few years of its existence. There even developed ideological movements which attempted to classify the Israeli Jews as part of the ancient Semitic region in which Israel's long term future lay.²² Diaspora Jews were looked at a bit contemptuously, and as an ongoing source for contributions of money given in order to salve their conscience for not having come to settle in Israel; religious Jews were looked on, to a great extent, by the dominant majority, as an anachronism left over from the "Diaspora period."

The 1967 war changed all that. It suddenly became clear (and even more so in the 1973 war) that Israel is actually dependent for its existence on Jewish financial and political sup-

port from outside Israel. A growing active concern for the Jewish communities abroad was the other face of the growing Israeli hegemony in the international Jewish communities. Moreover, the debate on the Occupied Territories (between those who wanted a Greater Israel which had subordinated Palestinians within it, and those who wanted an Israel which was perhaps smaller, but as far as possible "purely" Jewish) raised again the whole discussion about the nature of the Zionist endeavour, as live an issue as is the relationship between the Jewish people and Israel.



However, the changes went deeper than that. The 1967 war, in which the Wailing Wall and the other Jewish holy places were captured, was also endowed with a religious interpretation—it was a "miracle," the "hand of God." (The defeat in Lebanon was also to be seen as the hand of God—this time as a punishment for not keeping to the religious code....) The ideological trend which has seen the establishment of the Jewish state as a religious mission was strengthened. And this was by no means confined to religious circles. It is not incidental that after 1967 new Israeli soldiers began to swear allegiance to the army no longer on Masada,²³ a symbol of national liberation warfare, but in front of the Wailing Wall, the last remnant of

the Jewish Temple; nor that by now so many kibbutzim, traditionally strongholds of secularism in Israel, have synagogues.

But the more far-reaching changes have taken place in the politics and the position of the Zionist religious sector itself. The Zionist religious parties have always been the traditional coalition partners in Israeli governments. Until 1967, they willingly accepted the Labour parties' military and international policies in exchange for economic benefits for their institutions and keeping the *status quo* on religious legislation more or less intact. After 1967, however, and especially among the younger generation, the product of religious state education, they started to develop their own political line. This focused on the issue of annexation and settlement of the West Bank and the other territories of the "Promised Land" as a religious duty. From occupying a secondary and inferior role—both in the eyes of the dominant Labour Zionists and in the eyes of non-Zionist Orthodox Jews—they saw themselves (and were seen by others) as occupying a pioneering front-line role in Zionism and religious affairs as a whole. The rise, in 1977, of the rightwing Likkud party government was partly prompted by this pro-

cess; it also accelerated it. The religious parties, Zionist and non-Zionist alike, switched their allegiance as government coalition partners from the Labour Party to those who were closer to them politically and who also gave them much larger economic resources for their specific institutions. As a result, it is claimed, Israel now has more "Yeshiva Bokhers" (religious scholars who are kept by the community) than existed in nineteenth-century Poland. The process of settlement in the Occupied Territories, as well as the militancy of religious circles in all spheres of Israeli life, are growing all the time. The reconstitution of the Labour Party for two years as the head of a national coalition government has not seriously affected this process.²⁴

It is important to note, however, that not all the growth of the religious sector has taken place in the nationalist camp. The ideological crisis, combined with the economic crisis in Israel since the 1970s, has led many to turn to religious fundamentalism, not as a messianic, nationalistic, if not fascistic movement, (parallel to fundamentalist movements in the Muslim world) but as an escape from all the moral and political dilemmas that Zionism (which most of



Menachem Begin at the Wailing Wall.

them see as having failed) has presented to contemporary Israeli and non-Israeli Jews (a phenomenon common to disappointed youth all over the West). Studying the Torah and keeping the Halakha seem to many, mostly Ashkenazi but also Sephardi *sabras*, as the only valid way for Judaism to continue to exist, and for them to live as Jews and to find emotional security and certainty.

The intermeshing of the power struggles of Oriental Jews and the religious Jews has meant that in Israel there is a growing body which sees western culture and values as a threat (if not as a contemptible anachronism—I did hear a student on a bus one day being teased for being so dumb as to still believe in Darwinism). Correlated to these developments is the considerable growth of an Israeli neo-fascist movement, in which the class grievances of poor Oriental Jews are combined with nationalistic religious myths, and in which democracy is seen as a trap invented by the ruling Labour Establishment, from which only they and the Palestinians, the national enemy, could benefit.

What was challenged here, in different ways, is not so much the boundaries of the Israeli national collectivity, but the nature of the collectivity itself. Whereas at the beginning of the Zionist endeavour the dominant trend had been to create in Israel a nation state in the western mode, as “normal” as possible within the constraints of the Zionist mode, there are now more and more voices calling for Western-dominated values to be driven out of Israel, and for the country to be turned into an ethnic collectivity united by religious traditions and practices, with modern state powers to enforce and exclude others. The inherent contradiction between Zionism and democracy, instead of being seen as a major weakness of the structure of the state, is seen as its redeeming value. In turn, these challenges to the nature of the Israeli Jewish collectivity affect approaches to the question of reproduction of the national collectivity itself, its relationship with world Jewry, and its attitudes towards those in Israel who are not Jews.

The Israeli National Collectivity and the Palestinians

Up to now I have discussed the relationship be-

tween Israel and the Jews, both in and out of Israel. However, as I said previously, about 17 percent of Israel's citizens are not Jewish, and the figure reaches about a third of the population when we include the people who have lived for the past twenty years under the control of the Israeli state in the Occupied Territories. The latest statistical scare has been that more non-Jewish than Jewish babies were born in areas under the control of the Israeli government.²⁵ The overwhelming majority of those non-Jews are Palestinian Arabs.

The Palestinian Arabs have been “threatening” the Zionist endeavour in more ways than one, even before the *Intifadah* (Uprisings) when the Palestinians have shown their total resistance to the Israeli occupation and that time is not on Israel's side. Their presence is a continual reminder that Palestine has not been an empty country “waiting for two thousand years for its sons to return,” as the Zionist myth puts it; it is also a continual obstacle as regards reconciling the ideological constructs of a western-type welfare state (the model which Israel has attempted to follow, but in which by definition all citizens are supposed to be treated on a universal basis) with Zionism, which demands exclusive rights, or at least a privileged position, for Jews.

This contradiction remained in “manageable” proportions until 1967, with the Palestinians constituting no more than 13 percent of the Israeli population. Furthermore, for many years the Palestinians in Israel were made to live in relative geographical isolation. They were concentrated in two major areas—Galilee and the “Triangle,” and they almost always lived in separate settlements. Military government operated in Israel until 1965 (two years before Israel came to occupy the West Bank and Gaza strip) and this meant that Palestinians had to obtain special permission in order to travel outside their home zones. Up until the 1967 war, the Israeli Palestinians were sufficiently segregated from the Jewish collectivity, to enable the feasible operation of the Israeli state in most of its facets in a supposed universal fashion. However, even within these containments, the long term contradictions started to emerge.

The continuous pressure for expropriating

Palestinian lands, both for positive reasons—to expand Jewish settlement—and negative—to prevent the emergence of excessive concentrations of Palestinian enclaves within Israel—have had the paradoxical result of integrating the dispossessed Palestinians into the Israeli labour market. The Palestinians have undergone a process of proletarianization and were incorporated as a class fraction at the bottom of the Israeli class structure, especially in unskilled and manual work in the private sector.²⁶

Consequently, not only were they brought into closer social and economic interaction with Jewish society, but this change also brought more education and more money to the Palestinian villages. One result of this process, and of the numerical growth of the Israeli Palestinian population, has been a relative strengthening of their political power as Israeli citizens, especially as a voting bloc, no longer fully controllable by traditional mediators sponsored by the authorities. This has somewhat improved their collective bargaining power. Unsurprisingly, however, there is only a very small improvement in the representation of Palestinians in real political power positions, and all attempts at independent Palestinian political organization continue to be blocked.²⁷ Moreover, the basic apartheid-type discriminations and exclusions in the supply of amenities, state resources and supplementary benefits continue to operate, in an atmosphere in which interpersonal racism towards the Palestinians has been growing all the time. Until shortly before the *Intifadah* started there were several cases of actual pogroms against Palestinian students and workers living in Jewish neighborhoods.²⁸

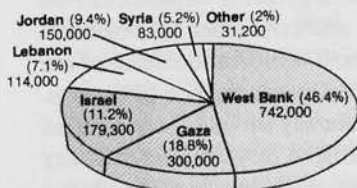
One consideration in the growing racism is the fact that the differentiation between Palestinians who are Israeli citizens and those who are in the Occupied Territories is very problematic and has been the subject of debate within Israel among both Jews and Arabs. The Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have never received even formal civil rights, having been under straight occupation for the past nineteen years. Unlike the Palestinians who remained in Israel after 1948, they have several urban centers and a much more heterogeneous class structure. The occupation has affected social and economic relations within the West Bank,

especially in terms of a growing dependency on Israel, as a supplier and consumer as well as an employer. But the most important effects of the occupation have been the emergence of a segregated Jewish settler society on lands confiscated from the Palestinians; a continuous military presence; deprivation of civil and legal rights; a continuously active resistance movement and a growing cycle of terrorization. The overwhelming majority of the Palestinians on the West Bank see their future in terms of an autonomous Palestinian state headed by the PLO—a political movement which has also gradually become more and more popular among Palestinians who are Israeli citizens, and who find themselves excluded from a future Palestinian state which would be in any way acceptable even to the most “dovish” Zionists. There has been a lot of sympathy and solidarity towards the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories by the Israeli Palestinians, but apart from a few cases, the delineation between the structural placements of the two groupings has remained very clear.

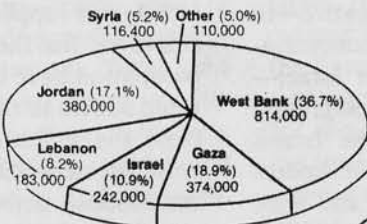
The Zionist “doves,” the Left of the Labour party, want Israel’s withdrawal from most of the Occupied Territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel in these areas, thus keeping the Jewish character of the Israeli state without having to deviate too extremely from normal practices of western type democratic states. They would like to see the Israeli Palestinians as a small minority within Israel, with civil but no collective rights, and the bravest among them even talk about the eventual full assimilation of Israeli Palestinians into Israeli society.²⁹

Such an assimilation, of course, negates not only the subjective feelings of most of the Palestinians in Israel, but also the fundamental existence of Israel as a Zionist state. It absolutely depends, as most of those who hold this position from within the Zionist camp admit, on the continued existence of the Palestinians in Israel as a small minority. Hence a growing preoccupation with “the demographic race” (as we shall see below).

However, the differentiation between Palestinians who are and those who are not Israeli citizens pales in significance next to the growing majority of Israelis who are claiming the Occu-



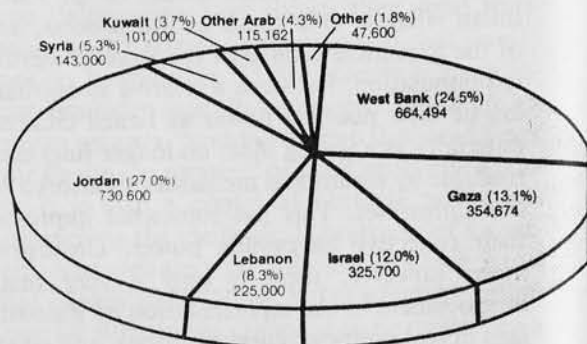
1952: 1.6 Million Palestinians
78% in Historic Palestine



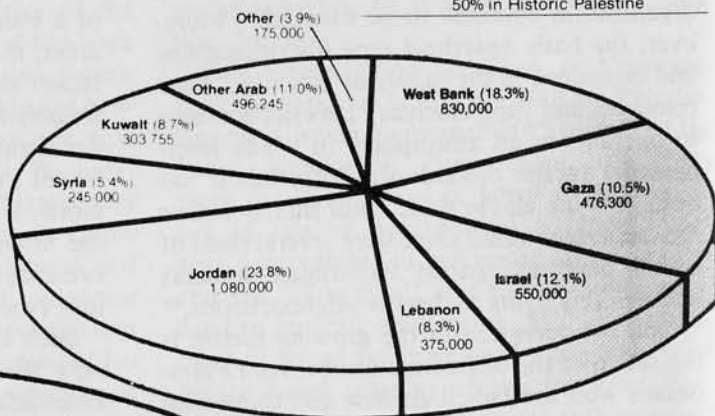
1961: 2.2 Million Palestinians
65% in Historic Palestine



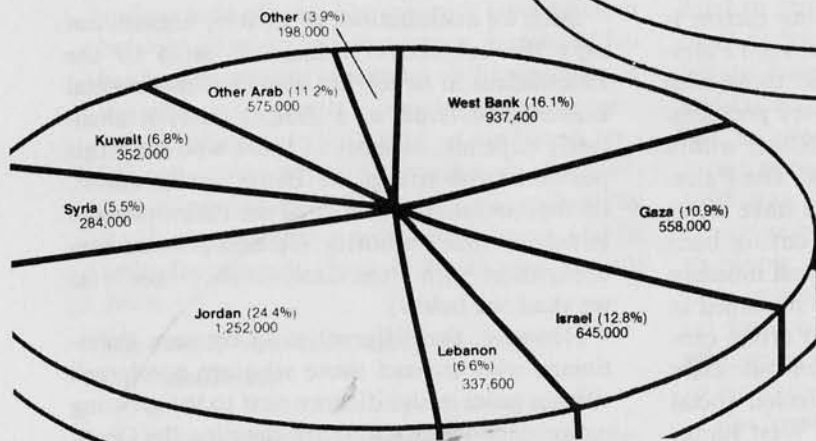
Pre-June 1967: 2.63 Million Palestinians
63% in Historic Palestine



Post-June 1967: 2.7 Million Palestinians
50% in Historic Palestine



1982: 4.5 Million Palestinians
41% in Historic Palestine



1987: 5.1 Million Palestinians
42% in Historic Palestine

STRUCTURE OF PALESTINIAN LABOR FORCE (%)

	1961		1967		1984	
	West Bank	Gaza	West Bank	Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
Agriculture	36.8	21.8	28.9	21.6	22.4	18.1
Industry	23.7	17.0	14.1	13.8	16.5	17.6
Construction	8.9	9.6	12.7	6.2	24.2	25.5
Services	17.3	35.3	29.5	38.2	32.2	33.1
Other	13.3	16.3	14.8	20.2	4.7	5.7

Sources: For 1961, 1967: UN Economic Commission for Western Asia; For 1984: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 1985 Statistical Abstract.

STRUCTURE OF LABOR UNDER OCCUPATION, 1984

	West Bank (154,000)		Gaza (87,000)	
	In Israel (33%)	In West Bank (67%)	In Israel (46%)	In Gaza (54%)
Agriculture	9.8	28.5	19.6	16.5
Industry	17.9	15.9	18.1	17.1
Construction	51.0	11.3	45.1	8.5
Other (incl. Services)	21.3	44.3	17.2	57.9

Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 1985 Statistical Abstract

ped Territories, especially the West Bank which includes the Jewish religious sites, as an exclusionary Jewish territory. From this position, the boundaries of Israeli civil society include not only Israel's citizens but also the inhabitants of the Occupied Territories, who constitute a third of the overall number of the Israeli population, and all of them are thus perceived as a threat. Containment, exploitation, oppression and ultimately expulsion are the various means suggested and used against the Palestinians, especially in the Occupied Territories. The aim is to include the territory but exclude its people from inclusion in the Israeli national boundaries.

The relationship between the Israeli national collectivity and the Jewish people has made its overall boundaries blurred and indefinite, and the criteria for "membership" for "Jews" in the collectivity open to both ideological and legal debate. The relationship with the Palestinians, both those who are Israeli citizens and those under its occupation, has opened a debate on the basic premises according to which the Israeli national collectivity will, in the long term, reproduce and defend its boundaries as a Jewish collectivity. Demographic policies stand at the heart of these debates and struggles.

Demographic Policies and the "Need" for Jewish Majority

Now I want to look at the implications that the factors we have been discussing have had for demographic policies in Israel.

Basically these policies, although reflecting all the ambiguities, contradictions and tensions described above, have had two hegemonic goals: —the first goal has been to maintain and if possible increase Jewish domination in Israel, both via the establishment of a numerical majority and via the pursuit of military and technological superiority over the Arabs; —the second goal, which is increasingly occupying the minds of Israeli policy makers, has been to reproduce and enlarge the "Jewish people" all over the world and to ensure that Israeli Jewish mothers produce enough children to "compensate" for the children lost in the Nazi Holocaust and in what is called in Israel the

"Demographic Holocaust."

Traditionally, as a settler society, immigration (*aliyah*) was considered to be the quickest, as well as the cheapest and most efficient, method of increasing the Jewish Zionist presence in Palestine. Not that the specific composition of the Jewish immigrants was without its own internal contradictions. As the character of immigration changed from being predominantly young, single, ideologically motivated East Europeans, into bringing whole migrant communities, especially from Arab countries in the 50s, with age compositions, ideologies and skills which were very different, so too the overall character of Israeli society changed. This demographic change took place many years before it began to challenge the Israeli power structure, as the later immigrants, mostly Oriental Jews, were tightly controlled by the Zionist institutions which were responsible for their absorption.

When we look at the demographic policies in Israel aimed at encouraging higher birth rates, we have to examine not only *when* they were mostly introduced (which corresponded with the periods, overall, when outside sources of Jewish immigration were blocked), but also at the debates which developed in Israel concerning *who* should be encouraged to reproduce and *how*. To an extent there has also been the debate as to whether this question is at all in the domain of public debate, or whether it is an individual decision of the families involved, or even only of the women involved, as the small Israeli feminist movement has been claiming. The lack of clear policies concerning abortion, for example, up until the 1970s, has been just one symptom of the conflict between a liberal democratic ideology which saw decisions concerning child bearing as basically part of the private domain and an ideology which saw it as a patriotic duty. The change in the relative hegemony of each of these ideologies is but one symptom of the more general shift in dominant value systems in Israel. It is not a coincidence that when Efrat, The Committee for the Encouragement of a Jewish Birth Rate in Israel was first established in the 1960s, it was a bit of a public joke. Uri Avneri, for example, the editor of the weekly *Ha'olam Haze* which consistently supports civil rights in Israel, accused

those who advocated this line of thought of having "the psychology of rabbits." These days Uri Avneri himself writes editorials which explain the unavoidable need for a Jewish majority in Israel.³⁰

The "need" for a Jewish majority has always been a cornerstone of Zionist thinking, of which Avneri represents the most liberal wing. Ben-Gurion, debating in the Knesset in 1949—during the war which expanded Israel's territory way beyond the territory allocated to it by the UN—explained: "A Jewish state...even if only in the West of Palestine is impossible, if it is to be a democratic state, because the number of Arabs in the western part of Palestine is higher than that of the Jews...we want a Jewish state, even if not all over the country."³¹

The Zionist strategic priority of a Jewish majority in Israel has been one of the issues debated all along between the Left and Right of the Zionist movement, especially before the state was actually established, and after 1967. In the time of the *yishuv*, the crucial thing for the Zionist Right, led by Jabotinsky, was Jewish sovereignty over the whole of Palestine. Once this could be established, it was assumed that the Jewish masses from all over the world would come and fill the country. The Labour Zionism that dominated the *yishuv*, on the other hand, saw Jewish settlement and a consolidation of a Jewish majority in a gradually expanding territory as a precondition for the establishment of the Zionist state. However, even they were prepared to accept a majority of only 55 percent in the first instance, as was the situation in the planned Jewish state in the 1947 UN partition plan (which never actually materialized, due to the 1948 war), and planned various ways of expanding that majority.³²

Plans for a transfer of the Palestinians outside the Zionist state have existed in more or less muted form throughout the history of Zionism, as one way of resolving the political contradiction of a Jewish state with too many non-Jews in it. During the 1948 war, Israel enlarged by more than 50 percent its allocated territory, having divided the planned Palestinian state with Jordan. This could have meant a Jewish state with an overwhelming Palestinian majority. However, most of the Palestinians

under Israeli rule either escaped during the battles and were never allowed to return, or were expelled by force. This, plus the major Jewish immigration to Israel in the first few years of its existence from postwar Europe and from the Arab countries, had reduced the Palestinian minority in Israel in the early 1950s to no more than 11 percent. Still, in the hope of reinforcing this ratio, Ben-Gurion initiated in the early 1950s rewards (of IL.100—even then with more symbolic than substantial value) for "heroine mothers"—i.e. those who have had ten children or more; he was continually calling on Israeli Jewish mothers to have more children.

The birthrates of the Jewish and the Palestinian populations within Israel were not, however, evenly balanced. In the early 1960s, there was, on the one hand, a halt in the mass Jewish immigration to Israel, and on the other hand the birthrate of the more traditionally oriented Israeli Jews began to fall. At the same time, the Palestinian birthrate in Israel did not decrease significantly, while their life expectancy increased (by 1967, the Arab minority in Israel constituted 15 percent). A government committee was set up to review the demographic situation, as a result of which the Center for Demography was established in 1967, and was attached to the prime minister's office (until 1978, when it became part of the government Work and Welfare Ministry) in order to develop suitable long term policies to deal with the issue.

The "ultimate threat" of the gradual growth of the Palestinian community in Israel and the erosion of the Jewish majority kept on growing as a political issue, especially after the 1967 war and the public debate about annexation of the Occupied Territories with their massive Palestinian population. But concern has also been growing in relation to the Palestinians who live within the 1949 borders, who are Israeli citizens, and who, for the first time in the last elections began to count, in sheer terms of numbers, as an important electoral lobby.³³

By 1976, this issue had already become a focus for widespread public paranoia in Israel, when a secret document written by König, the civil officer responsible for the Israeli Northern District, was leaked to the press. Galilee, with its concentration of Arab population, has

always been a cause for concern to Israeli policy makers. In the mid-1960s, (before the 1967 war and around the time of the establishment of the demographic center) major confiscations of Arab lands were carried out in Galilee, in order to establish in the heart of that dense Arab population, a new Jewish city, Karmiel. The official aim of this policy, initiated by Levy Eshkol, then prime minister, was to "Judaize Galilee." Konig expressed in the 1976 document his alarm that these policies had failed and that in the foreseeable future, the Arabs would constitute a majority in Galilee. Konig suggested various ways of combating this tendency, including settling Jews in areas densely populated by Arabs; encouraging Arabs to emigrate from the country by limiting their prospects of employment and studies, and cutting their child national insurance benefits and more. Since then, the "demographic race" and the annual Jewish and Arab birthrate continue to be discussed prominently in the Israeli national press, accompanied with gloomy demographic predictions and/or attempts to refute them.

Palestinians and the Demographic Race

Israeli Palestinians have not necessarily been reluctant participants in the "demographic race." The fact of having large numbers of children, especially boys, has always been important in Arab rural society, which is organized around the extended family. It made possible a dignified existence for the old parents; it brought social honour to the mothers of sons; it also made possible a pooling of resources in times of economic hardship. The gradual proletarianization of the Israeli Palestinians was somewhat eased by the fact that while the men commuted to town to work, the women and other men of the family, stayed together in the village; in times of unemployment they constituted a buffer against its hardest effects. Nevertheless, gradually, especially with the rise of a new intelligentsia and the politicization of the younger generation, the authority of the *hamulas* (family clans), which the Israeli authorities have also cultivated as efficient means of control, has begun to diminish. In terms of population growth, however, modernization has had an immediate and contradictory effect—life expectancy has gone up; the mortal-



Moroccan Family, MERIP, Nov/Dec 1980

ity rate has come down; and together they have reversed the beginnings of a trend towards a falling birthrate.³⁴

In addition, since the 1970s, family size has become a conscious political weapon among Palestinian nationalists. This has been true for the whole of the Palestinian movement. The training of children in refugee camps to be the next generation of fighters has been very central to it. War orphans, for example, have not been allowed to be adopted by outsiders (unlike Vietnamese orphans in similar circumstances), but are reared collectively for their national role. In Israel, the "war on the baby front" became especially bitter in the "post-Konig" period. Slogans like "The Israelis beat us on the borders but we beat them in the bedrooms..." started to be heard, and poems, a traditional mobilizing means in Arab societies, were written in this spirit.³⁵ The Israeli authorities more or less admitted that none of the active population control policies which are used in other Third World countries have any chance of meeting cooperation among either the "tradi-

tional" or the "modern" elements in the Arab sector. Nevertheless, social welfare clinics were set up, and Palestinian women are the only women in Israel who can obtain free contraceptives. I was told by a social worker that as long as these clinics were headed by Palestinian women, they tended to cooperate with the Israeli authorities on family planning policies (although from a very different motive to theirs—care for individual women rather than control of overall numbers). In the last few years Palestinian men have become heads of some of these clinics and it is rumoured that attitudes towards family planning have changed considerably.

Since the Israeli government is unable effectively to control the number of Palestinian children being born, quite a lot of its policies have concentrated on bringing in more Jews from abroad, and, when fewer and fewer actually came, promoting and encouraging a growth of the Jewish birthrate in Israel itself.

Encouraging "Quality" Births

After its establishment in 1967, the Demographic Center commissioned coordinated studies on demographic trends in Israel and in the Jewish Diaspora, and promoted various pronatal policies. This was done both by propaganda work and by material incentives, such as "The Fund for Encouraging Birth" which was set up in 1968 by the Housing Ministry to subsidize housing loans for families with more than 3 children. These benefits, such as increased child allowances, were given basically only to Jews, under the euphemism of "families who have relatives who have served in the Israeli army."

Clearly the value of all these policies has been more symbolic than practical, when we take into consideration what is actually involved in bringing up a child. But even at this symbolic and auxiliary-practical level, these policies were not universally approved of in Israel. One line of objection was raised by militant liberals and leftists. They joined the Israeli Palestinians in pointing out the racist character of using the state apparatus to discriminate against Palestinians and to block their access to a whole line of state benefits. Rightwing nationalists, however, also objected to using the state apparatus for that purpose—they would have preferred the Jewish Agency to take on this function. As

things stand, Palestinians who are Israeli citizens have been receiving some child benefit allowances, and the Druze and Bedouins who do military service have been even receiving the enlarged allowances that Jews receive. On the other hand, some Jewish families, especially among the extreme Orthodoxes, have no members of their family who have done national service; thus, under the euphemistic regulation, they have been entitled only to the reduced allowance. The Jewish Agency has in fact supplemented the allowances in such cases, first secretly and then openly; then, in the early 1980s, the Ministry of Religion began to take over this role.

Another line of argument against these policies was that, while promoting national goals, these policies do not take into account the class (and therefore also intra-Jewish ethnic) divisions in the Israeli society—inasmuch as it is the number of children rather than size of family income which is used as the qualifying criterion for child and housing benefits.

This line of opposition in the 1970s reflected a growing concern with issues of poverty and ethnic antagonism within the Jewish collectivity. Studies were published which showed that class differentiations between Ashkenazi and Oriental Jews in Israel had grown rather than shrunk in the course of the 1960s.³⁶ (This situation changed somewhat in the 1970s, due in large part to changes in the Israeli labour market after the influx of a large number of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories, and the consequent economic upward mobility of sections of the Oriental Jews. Nevertheless, the Jewish poor in Israel today are still overwhelmingly of Oriental origin.)³⁷ Growing popular protest movements within what is often called "The Second Israel" (the best known but by no means the only one being the Israeli Black Panthers) have brought this reality into the political arena as well, especially since the Oriental Jews have become a majority of the Israeli electorate.

The Government committee which was set up to examine these issues discovered an important and relevant fact. They found that, in Israel 75 percent of children who grew up in Israel in economic deprivation come from large families of four or more children, mostly from Oriental Jewish families, and that they constitute about 40 percent of all Israeli children.³⁸ It pointed

out the continuous and possibly growing class and ethnic divisions within the next generation of Israeli Jews, and also the shift in ratio between those belonging to the various different classes, as a result of the much larger number of children among people at the bottom end of the income bracket.

It is important to note in this context that although maintaining a Jewish majority in Israel has been a prime concern of the Zionist movement, Zionists are also always aware that in the Arab East it will always be a very small minority. The petty-bourgeois socio-economic background of most of the Zionist settlers before the establishment of the state; technological and organizational superiority over the underdeveloped Arab world; imperialist support of Israel as the most consistent local ally; and a nationalist myth of "there is no alternative"—these are what has enabled the continuous success of Israel in its wars against the Arabs (at least until the Lebanon war). Quality, then, rather than quantity has been the crucial factor. (Over the last few years the situation has been changing, and Israeli newspapers report with anxiety that there is a much higher number of university graduates in the Arab world than in Israel; and, on the other hand, that there is a growing deterioration in the quality of the human material available to the Israeli army.³⁹)

It was therefore, again, primarily national concern, as well as an attempt to appease the growing protests of the "Second Israel," which brought about a significant development in the direction of welfare policies in Israel in the 1970s—measures such as the introduction of social security, "slum rehabilitation" programs etc. For a while the (Jewish) family's economic situation, rather than the number of its children, became the official criterion for housing support. This political trend, resulting from the fear of too many children growing up in poverty-stricken households in Israel, can also be said to be one of the major factors which, combined with ideological pressures, have brought about abortion legislation in Israel. For years there have been no official policies on the matter, because of politicians' fears of running into political trouble whatever decisions were taken.⁴⁰

The Abortion Debate

In fact, this legislation has become one of the major mobilization factors of the growing rightwing nationalist and religious camp. They see not only abortions, but also family planning in general and anything which results in families smaller than four children, as objectionable. Indeed, the secretary of the Efrat committee explained to me when I interviewed him that, since so many Israeli Jewish women get married and start bearing children only after completing their military service (at the age of twenty), any family planning aimed at limiting child-bearing to once every few years would necessarily severely limit the number of children such women could have before menopause.

For large sections of the pro-natal lobby in Israel, having many children is not just an inevitable outcome of keeping religious codes concerning procreation, or an expression of Jewish traditional values, or even a means of making Israel stronger by enlarging the number of potential soldiers. It is not even a question of keeping a Jewish majority in Israel. Having large families is seen as also a way of reproducing and enlarging the Jewish people which has dwindled, first as a result of the Nazi Holocaust (caused by anti-Semitism) and then by the "Demographic Holocaust" (caused by assimilation and intermarriage).⁴¹

The lobby which organized the pro-natal politics of the early 1980s revived the "Efrat Committee for the Encouragement of Higher Jewish Birthrate" which had been dormant for most of the 1970s. In the 1980s, it became powerful enough to establish centers and branches all over the country and to incorporate in its ranks major elite figures from all professional fields, both religious and secular, and to gain official status as a governmental consultative body on natal and demographic policy committees (together with the official women's organizations).

Efrat gained a lot of its public power by linking the debate on encouragement of the Jewish birthrate to the public campaign around the abortion issue. As part of its coalition agreement with the religious parties, the Begin government, when it came to power in the late



1970s, abolished the one category in the abortion law which enabled legal abortions to be carried out on the grounds of "social hardship" (the other categories are: the woman's age; the pregnancy being a result of "forbidden relations"; the health of the fetus and the health of the woman). This angered the feminist lobby but was not enough to appease the anti-abortion lobby, especially as liberal social workers on the abortion committees have tended to apply the woman's health category instead.⁴² In addition to the usual reasoning of the anti-abortion lobby, who treat abortions as murder, came an emotive call to Jewish mothers to do their national duty and replace the Jewish children killed by the Nazis. An extreme (and narrowly defeated) example of this ideology was a suggestion by the then Advisor to the Minister of Health, Haim Sadan, to force every woman considering abortion to watch a slide show which would include, in addition to other horrors such as dead fetuses in rubbish bins, pictures of dead children in Nazi concentration camps. After a large public campaign this specific proposal was defeated and Sadan eventually resigned. Nevertheless, "the war on the demographic war" continues.

It is worth remarking, however, that the ef-

fects of the overall economic, political and ideological crisis in Israel in the last few years have been making their mark on the various policies which have been used in the "demographic race." The effectively reduced state incentives have to a great extent lost any practical effect that they might have had a few years ago. This, plus a growing negative net migration to and from the country, have gradually and increasingly turned attention to the option of transferring Palestinians out of Israel, as the only possibly valid long-term solution if Israel is to keep its Zionist character. Thus it is no more an issue promoted by extreme marginal rightwing leaders like Meir Kahane. Prominent national leaders, like ex-general Rehavam Ze'evi and the deputy minister of Defense, Michael Dekel, have declared publicly and organized conferences for the promotion of the idea of "Transfer"—the mass expulsion of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories, as the only effective solution to the demographic predictions that within 30 years, Jews will be no more than 52 percent of the population. According to Ze'evi, "If last year only 30 percent of the Israelis supported the idea of Transfer, this year it is already 70 percent."⁴³

The Palestinian political strategy in response has been "Zumut"—holding on, resisting pressures to emigrate. And encouraging Palestinian women to bear more children. A recent saying on the West Bank is that "Every woman should have at least five sons: Two to go to prison, one to die, one to go to Kuwait to make money and one to do what he wishes to do...."

Jewish Women and 'The Nation'

We have seen how Israeli Jewish women, like Palestinian women, have been "recruited" in the "demographic war" to bear more children, this being seen as their national duty to the Jewish people in general and to Israeli Jewish people in particular. It is debatable to what extent the ideological pressures, or the formal and material collective measures such as child benefits are the deciding influences in whether to have a child or, when an unplanned pregnancy occurs, to keep it. The emotional needs of people in a permanent war society, when husbands and sons might get killed at any moment, and

cultural familial traditions probably play a more central role than anything else. Whatever the deciding factor, however, the fact is that Israeli Jewish women, especially professional middle class women, do tend to bear more children, than their counterparts in other advanced capitalist societies.⁴⁴ And their role as suppliers of children to "the nation" has a direct effect on the availability of contraceptives and abortion. As I say, there are no free contraceptives in Israel except for Palestinians, and abortion legislation is a focus of major public political debates—not unique to Israel, but with a very explicit nationalistic emphasis, in comparison with campaigns in other countries where the "Moral Right" has been fighting against abortion legislation.

Historically—until the 1960s, and since the beginning of the Zionist movement—it was mainly Jewish mothers in the Diaspora who "supplied" the human power for the Zionist settlement to go forward. The Zionist endeavour can be described as an organization with clear international division of labour—in the Diaspora, the members and supporters of the movement supplied financial and political support and human power, and in Palestine, at the "front," these resources were used to promote the Zionist project of imposing an exclusively Jewish society on Palestine.⁴⁵ This division of labour continues to date, and without the financial and political support of the Jewish Diaspora, Israel could not have continued to exist. In the supply of human material, however, the balance has gradually shifted and the discussions today focus, as we have seen, on the role of Israeli Jewish mothers in replacing the membership of the overall shrinking Jewish national collectivity all over the world rather than, or in addition to, the other way around.

Within the Zionist *yishuv* itself, the pressures on Israeli Jewish women to bear more children date from the beginning of the limitation on Jewish immigration to Palestine under the British mandate (I myself am a "historical product" of Ben-Gurion's call for "internal *aliyah*" (immigration) in the early 1940s when the news of the Nazi Holocaust started to arrive...).

However, initially, as I suggested earlier, the main emphasis of Jewish motherhood in Israel

was more to do with its qualitative aspect (of producing the "New Jew"—the *sabra*—the antithesis of the "Diaspora Jew" whose negative image the Zionist movement shared with European anti-Semitism), rather than necessarily with quantity of children. The role of Israeli woman was to participate in the national struggle, mainly in supportive roles,⁴⁶ and, in addition, to produce proud, rooted and "normal" children (whose characteristics would be "earthiness," military strength, and, of course, the "Jewish genius"...).

The development of the specific ideological construction of women as national reproducers in Israel has had a lot to do with the specificity of the historical development of the Israeli society as a permanent war society. The ideological placement of women in this respect was best summed up by MP Geula Cohen, a member of the neo-fascist Tehiyah party and an ex-member of the Stern gang in the pre-state period:

The Israeli woman is an organic part of the family of the Jewish people and the female constitutes a practical symbol of that. But she is a wife and a mother in Israel, and therefore it is of her nature to be a soldier, a wife of a soldier, a sister of a soldier, a grandmother of a soldier. This is her reserve service. She is continually in military service.⁴⁷

There have been many myths concerning the role of Israeli women as soldiers (and I have expanded on it in another place⁴⁸). Basically, however, and to a great extent as in the civil labour market, women in the army serve in subordinate and supportive roles to that of men, unless they are in welfare and educational roles which directly correspond to the ideological tradition of women as mothers (rather than as wives and mistresses). The few women who are engaged in combative occupations are doing so in order to release men for front duties, from which women soldiers are officially banned. Also, as Geula Cohen says, women, unlike men, are released mostly from reserve service, which is the mass popular base of the Israeli army. Men serve at least one month a year in the reserves until they are fifty years old, and this is their most important national role. The women's national role then becomes to produce babies who would become soldiers in future wars. War widows (and parents) are perceived

not only as people who have suffered the loss of their nearest and dearest, but as people who have made an active national contribution in their own right. It is on this basis that the value of war widows' compensations is set: they receive an income from the state, along with other privileges, all of which bears no relation to the income of the late husband before his death, and is comparable to a senior government office⁴⁹ (although, since the Lebanon war and the economic crisis, the real level of widows' income has been seriously eroded, as have most other Israeli state benefits).

Women's Weapons

This ideological construction can explain why groups like "Women against the War" and "Parents against Silence" have been so effective in their protest against the Lebanon war (together with *Yesh Gvul*, the first serious draft resistance movement in the history of Israel). They touched the heart of the ideological assumption that Israeli Jewish society is fighting only because "there is no other alternative" if continuous collective survival is to be assured, and therefore the individual's sacrifices (constructed specifically according to gender and age and to a certain extent class and ethnic origin) are willingly made. Similar activism has been shown by "Women against the Occupation" and "Women in Black" since the beginning of the *Intifadah*, but their influence has been less specific. This is both because there is less unity about the desired action by the Israeli government to the *Intifadah* than there has been concerning Lebanon, as well as because of the nature of women's participation in the *Intifadah* which has desensitized to a certain extent the Israeli differential response to women. ("The Arabs' women and children have been transformed into a weapon pointing at us, and must therefore be treated not as women and children, but as someone coming to kill us."⁵⁰) When we look at the effects of the national reproductive role of Israeli Jewish women, however, it is important to remember that we are dealing here not only, and even not mainly, with effects which relate to the actual number of children they produce and for what. We are also concerned with the ideological and

legal constraints within which this role of theirs is being constructed.

Jewish women in Israel, and for that matter in the Diaspora as well, are being incorporated actively in the Zionist endeavour, not only in supplying humanpower to the national collectivity, but also legally and symbolically, as markers of its boundaries. As I said in the beginning of this article, a Jew, according to the Law of Return, is somebody who was born to a Jewish mother (or is a religious convert). It is motherhood, therefore, rather than fatherhood that determines membership in the collectivity.

However, this matrilineal tradition does not mean, by any means, that Jewish society is a matriarchal one. It is not even fully matrilineal—since children take the family name of their father, not their mother. The adoption of collective matrilinearity as a means of determining who is a Jew was suitable in the context of the Jewish community as a persecuted minority, in which pogroms and rapes were historically a recurring phenomenon. In such a context, motherhood was a safer way of determining inclusive boundaries, and tight measures were taken in the religious code to secure the legitimate reproduction of the boundaries of the Jewish collectivity marked by its women.

Jewish women in the Diaspora can, in principle, choose whether or not to remain subjugated to the religious code. Not so Israeli women. The Israeli state apparatus has added its coercive power to the traditional voluntary Jewish communal power in several crucial instances, such as marriage and divorce, and gave it monopolistic rights.

Several attempts have been made since the establishment of the state of Israel to guarantee equal rights for women in terms of employment and payment, as well as protecting their rights as workers when they become mothers. This legislation suffers from limitations similar to other legislations found in this area in Western states, in which women are constituted in law primarily as wives and mothers. Another similarity with other countries is that this legislation fails to alter the basic segregation and inequality between women and men in the labour market.⁵¹ What is more specific to Israel, however, is the fact that all attempts to guarantee

women's overall equal constitutional rights in principle have failed. This has happened not so much as a result of direct intervention by the religious parties, but more by the preventive actions of the other Zionist parties, who feared that the religious parties would withdraw support from their coalition governments, and who also feared that any "split of the people" would damage the Zionist claim to be "the representatives of the Jewish people." So, we have Rabin, the Labour prime minister in 1975 declaring that a Fundamental (= quasi-constitutional) Law of Women's Equality would never be passed in Israel; moreover, already in the 1930s, at the height of the ideological zeal of the self-styled secular Labour Zionist movement, people were ready to give up women's right to vote, in order to prevent withdrawal of the extreme religious communities from the *yishuv* institutions (the Zionist settler community). What "saved" the women then was the fact that the extremist religious parties withdrew anyway....⁵²

Women do have the right to vote in Israel, although in recent years they have been prevented from doing so in local elections in some extreme religious settlements, especially among the settlers in the Occupied Territories (such as Immanuel). But in the 1950s, Golda Meir was prevented from becoming a candidate for the Mayorship of Tel-Aviv, because it was claimed that, according to the Halakha, "women are not allowed to govern men." (This position never changed; Golda was subsequently "allowed" to become prime minister because, it was argued, her role there is formally that of "first among equals"....)

The most serious effects of the incorporation of religious law into state legislation on women's status relate to women's position in family law, where control of their constitution as bearers of the national collectivity is most carefully guarded. They are not allowed to become judges in the Orthodox Rabbinical state courts which have the decision-making monopoly in issues of marriage and divorce; furthermore, women's evidence, as a rule, is not accepted, especially if there are male witnesses. Questions of guardianship of children and maintenance are dealt with by two parallel court authorities—secular and religious; in the

latter, most particularly, constructions of what should be the proper duties of a wife are exclusively decided by a small reactionary patriarchal group of Rabbinical judges. (If she is proved not to have fulfilled them she is likely to be declared a "rebel" and thus lose maintenance rights.) The inequality between the two sexes also affects the women whose husbands disappear—in peacetime and even more so in Israel's continuous wars. Unlike men, women are not allowed to remarry until some proof can be brought that their husbands are in fact dead, and if they decide to live with another man and have children by him, the latter are declared as *mamzerim*, outcasts from the Jewish national collectivity for ever.

The Fate of the Zionist Dream

Women's position and women's roles then, are thoroughly affected by Zionism's central concern for the reproduction of the Israeli national collectivity as Jewish. This article has examined some of the factors determining this relationship, and the series of debates which have accompanied various demographic policies that have attempted to reinforce it.

I began by quoting Rabbi Kahane when he stated that the issue of the Jewish character of Israel is the most central issue in Israeli politics—more important even than security. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the first proposal for a private member's bill that Kahane has raised in the Knesset related directly to the control of women's national reproductive role. He proposed to pass a law forbidding sexual relations between Jewish women and Arab men. (There have been reports in the press on the abuse that women who used to be married to Arabs suffer in the "home" his organization has opened for them to move to.⁵³) What is even more revealing, however, are remarks that come from so called "dovish left" Zionists, like ex-general Prof. Harkabi who teaches International Relations at the Hebrew University. He objects to Transfer and calls for peace and even for dialogue with the PLO: "If we don't reach some agreement, there is going to be hell here and not a Jewish state. We shall not be able to keep two million Arabs under curfew. The rebellion will continue and I cannot see

how we could castrate every Arab male in the West Bank and Gaza strip in order to prevent them from multiplying naturally.”⁵⁴

Is it the case that the dream of the Zionist-Imagined Community has, in fact, become a nightmare?

FOOTNOTES

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, 1983.
2. *Ha'aretz*, October 27, 1987.
3. Rabbi Meir Kahane, *Thorns in Your Eyes* (Hebrew), The Institute of Jewish Ideas, 1983, p 9.
4. Quoted by Kahane, *Ibid.* p 52.
5. Demographic Centre, *Goals and Means of Demographic Policy*, (Hebrew), Labour and Welfare Ministry, 1979.
6. See, for example, F. Edholm, O. Harris and K. Young, "Conceptualizing Women," *Critique of Anthropology*, 3:9; O. Harris and M. Stevens, "Women & Social Reproduction," unpublished paper; and M. McIntosh, "Gender & Economics," in Young, Wolkowitz & McCullugh (eds.), *Of Marriage and the Market*, CSE Books, 1981.
7. See, for example, Sir William Beveridge, *Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services*, HMSO, 1942, p 154: "With its present rate of reproduction, the British race cannot continue; means of reversing the recent course of birth rate must be found." And in the Soviet Union, like in Israel they rewarded "Heroine Mothers" for those with ten children and more. (*Guardian*, March 1979).
8. For further details on the initial reasons of the crisis see my paper, "The current crisis in Israel" *Capital & Class*, no. 22, Spring 1984.
9. For a summary of the main differences between the two tendencies, see Theodor Shanin, "The price of suspension" in U. Davis, A. Mack & N. Yuval-Davis, *Israel and the Palestinians*, Ithaca Press, 1975.
10. A correction of the Knesset Fundamental (= quasi constitutional) Law no. 12, 1985.
11. See U. Davis, *Israel: Apartheid State*, Zed Books Ltd., 1987.
12. At this stage, the debate is not about using the religious definition itself, but whether or not conversions carried out by non-orthodox rabbis abroad should also be recognized.
13. See A. Leon, *The Jewish Question, a Marxist Interpretation*, Pathfinder Press, 1970; and I. Shahak, "The Jewish religion and its attitude to non-Jews," *Khamsin* nos 8 & 9.
14. See my paper on "Marxism and the Jewish Question," *History Workshop Journal*, October 1987.
15. On the debate around this law see A. Orr, *The Unjewish State*, Ithaca Press 1983.
16. Reported in *Ma'ariv* (Israeli daily) 29 March 1984.
17. See *Davar* (Israeli daily) 6 May 1985.
18. S. Svirsky & D. Bernstein, "Who worked in what, for whom and for what," (Hebrew) *Booklets for Research and Critique*, no. 4, 1980.
19. See the articles of Emmanuel Farjoun and Avishai Ehrlich in *Khamsin* no. 10.
20. *Fiddler on the Roof* is a famous musical based on the life of the East European shtetl; "Our village in the Atlas mountains" is a famous song by the Moroccan singer of the Natural Selection group.
21. "Sabra" is the nickname given to the Jews who were born in the *Yishuv* and in Israel. It is the name of a cactus which was widespread in Palestine. The Sabras are supposed to be like the fruit of the cactus—thorny on the outside and sweet inside.
22. There is still no good summary of this political trend in Israel although Maxim Ghilan tried to do it in his book *How Israel Lost its Soul*, Penguin, 1974.
23. Masada is the name of the fortress mountain in the Judea desert in which the last rebels against the Romans resisted foreign rule to the end and committed collective suicide rather than give themselves up the enemy. It became a strong nationalist symbol of the Zionist revival; it is not incidental that Masada is also the nickname given to Israel's atom bomb.
24. An extreme example of the development of this political trend, focused around Gush Emunim and the settlers in the West Bank, is the way that the religious underground has been conspiring to bomb the Al Aqsa Mosque in order to be able to rebuild the Jewish Temple and bring about the advent of the Messiah.
25. *Israel Statistical Abstracts*, 1985.
26. See H. Rosenfeld, *They were Peasants* (Hebrew), Hotza'at Hakibutz Hame'uhad, 1964 and his later article in *Booklets for Research and Critique*, no. 3, 1978; see also S. Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, Institute of Palestine Studies, 1968.
27. In the last elections there was an attempt to block The Progressive List for Peace, although it was an alliance between Palestinian nationalists and Israeli Jewish liberals and leftists; its Palestinian MP, M. Mi'ari had his parliamentary immunity taken away and there are all the signs that they will not be permitted to enter the next elections even in this format.
28. The press is every day full of new facets of anti-Arab racism. To give just a couple of examples from the same week: the Chief Rabbi forbade Jews to sell their apartments to non-Jews (*Ha'aretz* 17 January 1986) and survey results revealed that 42 percent of Israeli Jews want the mass emigration of Palestinians from Israel (*Ha'aretz* 14 January 1986).
29. See, for example, the articles by Gershom Schochen, "Ezra's Curse," *Ha'aretz*, 29 August 1985 and Yehoshua Porat, "The state of the Jewish people or the Jewish state," *Ha'aretz*, 6 October 1985 (Hebrew).
30. Editorial in *Ha'olam Hazev* (Hebrew), 24 April 1985.
31. *Protocols of the Knesset*, 4 April 1949.
32. See Y. Bailin, *The Price of Unification: the Israeli Labour Party until the Yom Kippur War*, (Hebrew), Revivim, 1985.
33. During the last election campaign, for the first time the election campaign by the major Zionist parties in the Arab sector in Israel did not take place mainly via traditional Hamula heads. This was especially true for the party headed by General Ezer Weizman.
34. Haim Ronen, "Israeli Arabs multiply faster than the Chinese," *Bamakhane*, army weekly (Hebrew), 17 November 1982.
35. In May 1976, the poet Owani Sawit was arrested after reading some of his poems on the "Day of the Land" memorial, including a poem in which he promised - "Hey, murderers/ Do you really believe that you can murder my

people?/ This is an impossible mission/ If you murder six, we shall bring to the world sixty on that same day" (Arabic).

36. S. Smooha, *Israel—Pluralism and Conflict*, RKP, 1978; see also the articles by S. Svirsky and D. Bernstein (Hebrew) in *Booklets for Research and Critique*, nos. 1 & 4.

37. See the articles by E. Farjoun and A. Ehrlich in *Khamsin* 10.

38. Report of the Prime Minister's Committee on *Children and Youth in Distress*, 1974 (Hebrew).

39. See, for example, Ari Sharit's article "Is Israel withdrawing from the army?" (Hebrew) *Koteret Rashit*, 15 May 1985. Other similar articles appeared around that time also in *Ha'aretz* and *Ha'olam Hazeh*.

40. Y. Yishai, "Abortion in Israel—social demand & political responses," *Policy Studies Journal*, vol. 7, no. 2 Winter 1978.

41. Professors Baki and Dela Pergulas of the Hebrew University are continually quoted in the press, predicting the shrinking of world Jewry from the present 11.5 million to 8 million by the year 2000 and to 5 million by the year 2200, and pointing out that by now 43 percent of world Jewry births are taking place in Israel (although less than 25 percent of world Jewry actually live there).

42. The table in the *Efrat* bulletin (no. 15–16) shows that in 1979 there were 15,925 legal abortions in Israel, of which 1,665 were granted under the category of the age of the woman; 4,465—forbidden relations; 2,165—danger to the embryo; 1,299—danger to the woman and 6,331—the social situation of the woman; the last category was abolished in 1980 and in 1980 the number of abortions came down to 14,703. However, in 1982, the number of legal abortions was 16,829, 1,775 for age; 6,632 for forbidden relations; 2,626—danger to the embryo; and 5,796—danger to the woman. Clearly the last category has been used by the abortion committees as a substitute for the category which was abolished.

43. *Hadashot*, March 1988.

44. The average number of children to Jewish women in Israel in 1984 was 2.7, while it was less than 2, if not 1, in most western countries. For systematic comparison of the situation of women and the family in Israel and in other countries see Y. Peres and R. Katz, "Family and Familiality in Israel," (Hebrew) *Megamot*, 26.1, pp 30–43.

45. See D. Hecht & N. Yuval-Davis "Ideology without revolution: Jewish women in Israel" *Khamsin* 6 and A. Ehrlich, "Zionism, demography and women's work," *Khamsin* 7.

46. See my booklet, *Israeli Women and Men: Divisions Behind the Unity*, Change publications 1982 and my article "Front and Rear: The sexual division of labour in the Israeli army," *Feminist Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3, Fall 1985.

47. Geula Cohen, quoted in L. Hazelton, *Israeli Women—The Reality Behind the Myth* (Hebrew) Idanim, 1978.

48. See my article "Front and Rear," op. cit.

49. L. Shamgar, *War Widows in Israeli Society*, (Hebrew), Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University, 1979.

50. Naomi Frenkel, a settler writer, *Ha'aretz*, March 10, 1988.

51. See, for example, Hilary Land, "Sex role stereotyping in the social security and income tax system" in J. Chetwynd & O. Hartnett (eds.), *Sex Role Systems*, RKP, 1978 & Elizabeth Wilson, *Women and the Welfare State*, Tavistock

publications, 1977.

52. Sarah Azaryahu, *The Organization of Hebrew Women for Equal Rights in the Land of Israel* (Hebrew), Karen leezrat ha'isha, 1977.

53. Reported in *Al-Hamishmar* daily, 27 February 1986.

54. *Ma'ariv*, 13 March 1988.

Nira Yuval-Davis has been involved in anti-racist and anti-sexist struggles in both Israel and Britain. She is a member of the editorial collective of *khamsin*. She teaches sociology at Thames Polytechnic in London.

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PREFACE:

The AIDS Movement and Its Challenge

1988 marked the beginning of a new national grass roots movement, an AIDS movement. Spearheaded by the direct-action, treatment-focussed group in New York City, ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), formed largely from the gay community in 1987, similar groups have sprung up in more than 30 cities creating the national ACT NOW network (AIDS Coalition to Network Organize and Win).

ACT NOW's convergence on Washington, DC from October 8-11, 1988 challenged "business as usual" at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The rally at the HHS, from which we publish Vito Russo's speech, and the disruption at the FDA that closed operations down, gave national focus to the needs and alternative policies with which AIDS activists confront the current administration.

Demands on the welfare state are new to many segments of the gay male community and certainly to gay male politics. If anything, given a history of repressive legislation and police entrapment, the view of the state that has dominated the movement is "Get the State Off Our Backs." Gay men like most Americans with a modicum of privilege have looked to the market to meet their needs. But when health care couldn't be bought and discrimination

meant lack or refusal of services, gay men experienced the limits of the marketplace and were forced to turn to city, state and federal governments for support. Thus the recent experience of gay men joins the histories of the poor, people of color and women in demanding that the state recognize and meet the needs of its citizens.

The insights that have grown out of these histories must engage each other if a collective strategy that represents all those affected by the AIDS epidemic is to develop. This is the challenge and promise of the AIDS movement. All this must take place in a context of daily crises of literal survival. As Vito Russo asks, "Will this mean I get the drugs I need on Tuesday?"

The tension between responding to "a state of emergency" and developing a more detached analysis of US institutions plays itself out within the AIDS activist organizations. Russo's reference to an opportunist Left makes the case in point. At ACT-UP meetings, leftists, often from Marxist-Leninist parties, repeatedly raise the demand for socialized medicine. The demand itself is not the issue. The frustration comes in the seemingly abstract character of the goal, since no concrete strategy is outlined and meanwhile the death toll is climbing toward 50,000.

We think Russo's anger and dismissal of leftists in the AIDS movement raises a challenge to those on the Left. Is raw outrage perhaps always a necessary political emotion, too readily sidelined by the traditions of the Left. Jim O'Brien poses a similar question in his reflections on the New Left's response to the war in Vietnam, printed in this issue. He wonders whether the very strength of the New Left, its ability to see the war in context, rather than as a tragic aberration, didn't at the same time block the outrage at the war itself. An openness to the place of passion in politics and a concern for meeting day-to-day needs as well as seeing the "larger picture" have been more associated with feminism than the traditional Left and the questions raised here echo feminist challenges.

With no cure in sight, with hope resting on expanded, effective education and more promising treatments, AIDS activists move against the walls of discrimination and government in-

transigence that fuel the epidemic and pronounce a death sentence on those already infected with the virus. The women's health movement, the AIDS movement's most immediate predecessor, also moved against drug companies, the medical establishment and government agencies with like passion, producing alternative knowledges (like *Our Bodies, Our Selves*) that gained a grass roots legitimacy, became a watchdog on drug trials and transformed, most especially, the delivery of reproductive health care. In their analysis in 1971, the Women's Health Book Collective exposed the FDA as a regulatory agency "well regulated by the pharmaceutical industry." While the women's health movement fought for and supports stringent regulations on drug trials and the AIDS movement is calling for a relaxation of such regulations, their views of the FDA and drug companies are not as contradictory as they may seem. Robert Massa in his article, "Why the FDA," takes up the history of the FDA and clarifies how the demands of the AIDS movement are about making drug trials good health care.

The AIDS Movement Debates

Many debates exist among AIDS activists, in answering questions on how to conduct scientific/medical research, how to represent all those at risk for AIDS and how to transform popular consciousness.

ACT UP/NYC has led the fight against drug trials that use placebo controls or those that require a participant to use only the one drug being tested. ACT UP's slogan on research is "A Drug Trial Is Health Care Too." Others within the movement, especially some who do medical research, argue that participants in drug trials must make sacrifices, that effective research demands such controls. But within these disagreements, fundamental agreement exists—such decisions belong to the communities in need and their allies among physicians and scientists.

As the demographics for the epidemic shift—iv drug users and their sexual partners account for most of the new seroconversions and women now make up 10 percent of the caseload—different needs join those articulated

by gay men. Issues around clean needle exchange and drug treatment programs become critical. As women move from caretakers to themselves becoming ill, lack of childcare and other alternatives to women's family responsibilities deepen the crisis of illness. Questions of reproductive rights and reproductive health become central to the politics of the epidemic. Even at the level of diagnosis and treatment, it appears that women manifest this syndrome differently from the patterns now recognized in gay men and iv drug using men. An enormous effort to educate primary health providers to recognize that the frameworks for medical care and service delivery developed by the gay community and embedded in the established AIDS organizations will have to be transformed to address the very different needs and resources of these populations.

Whether the goals and demands of the AIDS movement are affecting popular consciousness is a key and open question for the movement. A "common sense" fear of contagion pervades popular consciousness. Homophobia, racism and class bias are infused in this fear and available to be used to gain support for repressive politics, legislation and referenda. A recent survey of the general population showed that even though most people understood that

they could not become HIV infected through casual contact with People with AIDS (PWAs) or those HIV positive at their workplace, about one-half favored the firing of those with the virus. Or another example. Most people agreed that their child would not be at risk if a child with AIDS was in their class and that children with AIDS should be allowed to attend school—yet about half of those who had this basic information would remove their child from such a setting.

The fear of contagion is legitimated by popular media every time they use the language of "AIDS carrier" or every time a conservative initiative formulates the problem as one of containing the populations at risk rather than the virus.

A Challenge To Us All

Thus the AIDS movement confronts an enormous task. Not only must it continually broaden its base, beyond the gay community, for example, and make AIDS a genuine national priority, it also must face the emergency of a mounting caseload. Crises of access to treatment and social services are pressing daily realities.

Clearly the movement cannot achieve these goals without other community support. Broadening the base of the movement requires solidarity and initiative from many groups involved in community organizing. It requires that groups organized around central America, for example, know that their constituencies are informed and supportive of the demands of the AIDS activists just as those activists support Central America work. In order to break through the bigotry and apprehension that surrounds AIDS, progressives need to hold forums, disseminate literature or include articles in their newsletter. And importantly, organizers in general need to confront the homophobia and often the racism that lives in their community base. The right wing is perched, preparing repressive initiatives and legislation. Any gain made by the AIDS movement cannot be sustained without popular support. Supportive initiatives have rarely come from the Left. The challenge of the actions in Washington, DC is a challenge to us all.

-Ed.

Arrests at the FDA. Debra Samdperil photo.



STATE OF EMERGENCY

A Speech from the AIDS Movement

Vito Russo

A friend of mine has a half fare transit card which he uses on buses and subways. A few months ago when he showed his card, the token attendant asked what his disability was—he said, “I have AIDS” and the attendant said “No, you don’t. If you had AIDS you’d be home—dying.” I’m here to speak out today as a person with AIDS who is not dying from—but for the last three and a half years quite successfully living with—AIDS. Members of my family who get all their information from reading the newspapers and watching television know two things about me—that I’m going to die and that the government and the FDA is doing everything in its power to save me. I think they’ve been lied to.

If I’m dying from anything it’s from homophobia. If I’m dying from anything it’s from racism. If I’m dying from anything I’m dying from Jesse Helms. If I’m dying from anything I’m dying from that moron who calls himself the President of the United States. If I’m dying from anything I’m dying from the sensationalism of newspapers and magazines and television shows which are interested in me as a human interest story only as long as I’m willing to be a helpless victim but not if I’m fighting for my life. If I’m dying from anything it’s not from opportunistic infections as much as from opportunistic politicians and crazies on the right *and* the left who are using AIDS to push their bullshit ideology by

exploiting ACT UP's numbers for their own non-AIDS related agendas.¹ If I'm dying from anything I'm dying from the fact that not enough rich, white, heterosexual men have gotten AIDS for anybody to give a shit.

Living with AIDS in this country is like living in the Twilight Zone. Living with AIDS is living through a war which is happening only for those people who are in the trenches. Every time a shell explodes you look around to discover that you've lost more of your friends. But nobody else notices—it isn't happening to them—they're walking the streets as though we weren't living through a nightmare. Only *you* can hear the screams of the people dying and their cries for help. No one else seems to be noticing. It's worse than wartime because during a war the people are united in a shared experience. This war has not united us—it's divided us. It's separated those of us with AIDS and those of us who fight for people with AIDS from the rest of the population. Two and a half years ago I read a *Life Magazine* editorial on AIDS which said it's time to pay attention to AIDS because "this disease is now beginning to strike the rest of us"—it was as if I wasn't the one holding the magazine in my hand. Since then nothing has changed to alter the perception that AIDS is not happening to the real people in this country—it's not happening to *us* in the United States—it's happening to *them*, to the disposable populations of fags and junkies who deserve what they get. The media tell people they don't have to care because the citizens who really matter are in no danger. Twice, three times, maybe four, the *New York Times* has published editorials saying, "Don't panic yet over AIDS," it still hasn't entered the general population and until it does we don't have to give a shit.

And the days and the months and the years pass by—and *they* don't spend those days and nights and months and years trying to figure out how to get ahold of the latest experimental drug, and which dose to take it at, and in what combination with what other drugs, and from what source and for how much money—because it isn't happening to them so they don't give a shit. And they don't sit in television studios surrounded by technicians who wear rubber gloves and refuse to put a body mike on

them—because it isn't happening to them so they don't give a shit. And they don't have their houses burned down by bigots and morons; they only watch it on the news and then they eat their dinner and they go to bed—because it isn't happening to them so they don't give a shit. They don't spend their waking hours going from one hospital to another, watching the people they love die slowly of neglect and bigotry—because it isn't happening to them so they don't give a shit. They haven't been to two funerals a week for the last three, four or five years so they don't give a shit. It's not happening to them.

We read on the front page of *The New York Times* that Dr. Anthony Fauci says that all sorts of promising drugs for treatment haven't even been tested in the last two and a half years because he can't afford to hire the people to test them. We're supposed to be grateful that this story has appeared. Nobody wonders why some reporter didn't dig up that story and print it two years ago, before Fauci went public with his complaints before a congressional committee. How many people are dead in the last two years who might be alive today if those drugs had been speedily tested? Reporters all over the country are busy printing government press releases. They aren't covering the FDA in an investigative way. They treat Frank Young² as though he was god. Anything he says they print. They don't give a shit—it isn't happening to them—meaning that it isn't happening to the real people, the world famous "general public" we all keep hearing about. Legionnaire's disease was happening to them because it hit people who looked like them, sounded like them, were the same color as them—and that fucking story about a couple of dozen people hit the front pages of every newspaper and magazine in the country and stayed there until the mystery was over.

All I read in the newspapers tells me that the mainstream heterosexual population is not at risk for this disease. All the newspapers I read tell me that i.v. drug users and homosexuals still account for the overwhelming majority of cases and those at risk. Then can somebody please tell me why every single penny allocated for education and prevention gets spent on ad campaigns directed almost exclusively to white,



Vito Russo speaks in front of the Department of Health and Human Services, October 10, 1988. Debra Samdperil photo.

Why the FDA

Why the FDA? A more likely target might be the National Institutes of Health, which coordinates federal AIDS research, or the Office of Management and Budget, or Congress—especially in an election year. The FDA, after all, is a product of liberal reform, painstakingly constructed through decades of legislation to protect the public from having dangerous or useless drugs foisted upon it by profit-hungry pharmaceutical companies. The present system dates from 1962, when Congress acted in the wake of the thalidomide scandal to tighten regulation of experimental drugs. Manufacturers were required to prove not only that their drugs were safe but that they worked.

In its role as consumer advocate, the FDA acts as the liaison between public and private research. This places it in the best position to speed AIDS-drug development. But the agency's critics charge that its mission has been

compromised by an intransigence that serves the drug industry's long-term profit goals rather than the needs of desperate AIDS patients. "Other agencies sin by omission; they aren't doing enough," explains ACT UP's *FDA Action Handbook*. "Only the FDA sins by commission; it is doing the wrong things, and they are deadly wrongs."

The activists draw on criticisms leveled against the agency by physicians, independent researchers, consumer watch-dogs, and even the president's AIDS commission to argue that the FDA's response to the epidemic—years of sluggishness and reams of paperwork—is inexcusable. To block the release of promising, safe drugs against AIDS with the same zeal the agency applies to headache remedies or treatments for baldness is immoral, since, in the activists' words, "no drug could have a graver endpoint than the untreated disease itself."

heterosexual teenagers who they keep telling us are *not at risk for this disease*? Can somebody tell me why the only television movie ever produced by a major network in this country is not about a young man with AIDS but about the impact of the disease on his straight, white nuclear family? Why for eight years has every newspaper and magazine in this country done cover stories on AIDS only when the threat of heterosexual transmission is raised? Why for eight years has every single educational film designed for use in high schools eliminated any gay positive material before being approved by the board of education? Why in the past eight years has every single public information pamphlet and videotape distributed by establishment sources ignored specific homosexual content? Why is every bus and subway ad I read, and every advertisement and billboard I see, specifically not directed at gay men? Don't believe the lie that the gay community has done its job and done it well, and successfully educated its people. The gay community and i.v. drug users are not organized, politicized people living in New York and San Francisco. Members of minority populations, including

so-called sophisticated gay men are abysmally ignorant about AIDS. If it is true that gay men and i.v. drug users are the populations at risk for this disease we have a right to demand that education and prevention be targeted specifically to these people and *it is not happening*. We are being allowed to die while low risk populations are being panicked—not educated—panicked into believing that we deserve to die.

AIDS is not what it appears to be at this moment in history. It is more than just a disease that ignorant people have turned into an excuse to exercise the bigotry they already feel. It is more than a horror story to be exploited by the tabloids. AIDS is a test of who we are as a people. When future generations ask what we did in the war, we have to be able to tell them that we were out here fighting. And we have to leave a legacy to the generations of people who will come after us—remember that someday the AIDS crisis will be over. And when that day has come and gone there will be people alive on this earth—gay people and straight people, black people and white people, men and women—who will hear the story that once there was a terrible disease, and that a brave group of

Strange Bedfellows

The politics of AIDS makes strange bedfellows. ACT UP's militant demands on the FDA seem to place the activists in line with the deregulation frenzy of the Reagan years. Citing AIDS, big business advocates from *The Wall Street Journal* to George Bush have called for changes to streamline the drug approval process. The Heritage Foundation, a right-wing think tank, goes even further: it urges repeal of the 1962 reforms, and would reduce the FDA to issuing seals of approval like *Good Housekeeping*.

But ACT UP doesn't want the agency to open the floodgates and abandon its rigorous licensing standards. Instead, the activists demand "conditional release" of drugs for patients with life-threatening conditions while trials continue. Under such a program, an AIDS patient could obtain any promising drug that has passed preliminary safety testing before it has been proven effective. About 160

AIDS drugs are now in experimental trials; the activists mention 10 by name. But just how is safety to be determined? Drugs which have long been used for other illnesses may cause complications for a patient with a compromised immune system. And some AIDS drugs are brand new—they may pass preliminary safety checks but cause problems after long-term use. Dr. Mathilde Krim, who has long advocated quicker release of AIDS drugs, thinks the decision should be made on a drug-by-drug basis, but some activists believe the patient alone should decide what risks to take.

The balance clearly has tipped in the direction of caution. There's a widespread consensus among AIDS researchers that most drugs the activists name (such as aerosol pentamidine, dextran sulfate, and AL 721) are safe enough to be more widely distributed.

In response to agitation and several congressional hearings, the FDA has made some procedural changes. For example, until recently, the only way a patient could obtain unlicensed

people stood up and fought and in some cases died so that others might live and be free. I'm proud to be out here today with the people I love and to see the faces of those heroes who are fighting this war and to be a part of that fight. To steal a phrase from Mike Callan's song, "All we have is love right now—what we don't have is time."

Like the unsung, anonymous doctors who are fighting this disease and are so busy putting out fires that they don't have time to strategize, AIDS activists are stretched to the limit of their time and energy, putting out the fires of bigotry and hatred and misinformation when they need to be fighting for drugs and research money. We need luxury time to strategize the next year of this battle and we need our friends to join us so we can buy that time. And after we kick the shit out of this disease I intend to be alive to kick the shit out of this system so that this will never happen again.

Vito Russo is author of *The Celluloid Closet* which is published by Harper & Row and writes about film for many national and local publications. He lives in New York City.

drugs without being a part of a formal experiment was to have an attending physician plead for special consideration. Last year, the FDA implemented a new system for dispensing unapproved drugs, called Treatment IND—Investigational New Drug. Run out of major hospitals, the program hasn't worked the way AIDS advocates hoped it would. So far, only one AIDS drug (trimetrexate, used to treat and prevent pneumocystis pneumonia) has been made available through Treatment IND—and only to about 100 patients. Activists have dubbed Treatment IND "a fast track with no trains."

Why the System Fails

Why has the system failed? Largely because it's up to the company holding rights over a drug to make it available to Treatment IND. Manufacturers may hesitate for several reasons. They resent regulations which prohibit profiting from drugs dispensed through the program. Larger companies oppose any

FOOTNOTES

¹ RA asked Vito Russo to elaborate on this comment for our readers. Russo responded, "...on the Right I was referring to the opportunism of George Bush and the current Administration which is using the AIDS epidemic as an excuse and a smokescreen to push for deregulation of the FDA which is their real agenda. On the Left, I have had the sorry experience of The Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party coming to gay demonstrations in the past, trying to latch onto the gay movement in order that it might seem that gay people as a group support their political ideology. They don't want to fight for gay rights as much as they want to claim us as numbers in their battle to appear successful as an ideological movement. The same has been true of the New Alliance Party, especially in regard to ACT-UP. The New Alliance Party is not a political party but a cult....They simply wish it to appear that they are supported by greater numbers of people than they are actually supported by. To do this they have been wasting their time (and ours) by pushing a phony and unnecessary "AIDS Bill of Rights" which does nothing that isn't already mandated by law."

² Frank Young is currently Director of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

mechanism that would make experimental drug testing less rigid and more attractive to smaller competitors. Most troublesome of all to manufacturers is that Treatment IND regulations provide no protection from liability. In a letter last month to Otis Bowen, secretary of Health and Human Services, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association stated its position unequivocally: [We] would oppose any sort of 'conditional approval' of a new drug application."

David Barr of Lambda Legal Defense, an adviser to ACT UP, says these obstacles are surmountable: "Treatment IND could be made more attractive through liability protection and tax incentives. The FDA could agree to expedite licensing applications for companies enrolled in INDs. Finally, recognizing that AIDS is a national emergency, it could request from Congress the authority to demand that companies enroll or risk losing exclusive rights over a drug." Given the FDA's symbiotic relationship with the pharmaceutical industry, this is the

Passion Play at the FDA

We all suffer from AIDS by now, or at least from one of the related disorders—worsening health care, bigotry, exhaustion, relentless loss. On Tuesday, October 11, 1200 of us encircled the Food and Drug Administration in Rockville, Maryland to demand some fast relief; the doctor, FDA commissioner Frank Young wasn't in, so we shut his big office down. By the end of the nine-hour blockade, 176 of us had been arrested, and by current estimates, 18 more Americans had died of AIDS...

For weeks, ACT NOW had been meeting with top FDA officials to present demands, and with Montgomery County police to negotiate terms. Wild rumors circulated among FDA employees: we were going to throw blood and urine; 15,000 of us were planning to camp out for days. The police looked ready for us as the crowds began to gather at dawn. Some 350 were poised in squad cars, busses, and watchful lines at the open entrances on three sides of the 18-story black box. SWAT teams in visored helmets and rubber gloves stood at a discreet distance. One affinity group after another

began crossing the street to shout at one or another entrance. *Seeing Red* stalked the front doors in bloody lab coats. *Livid Lesbians* yelled, "Tie me up, but not with red tape." The *Candelabras* fell limply to the street holding up tombstones, "I got the placebo—R.I.P." and "Women with AIDS die twice as fast." *Names Project* volunteers held up a 12 x 12 quilt with two stark names at the bottom, "You" and "Me." FDA workers pressed against upper-story windows to watch this expressionist theater; some waved and smiled, because theater arouses longing.

To enter such a play does require a leap of faith: the structure is all but invisible. Indeed "choreography" was the final agenda item at our packed pre-action meeting the night before in D.C.'s All Souls Church. We had agreed upon non-violence guidelines and a list of demands, but all the decisions on how to carry them out were ours: who would risk arrest, what to communicate, how to "seize control of the FDA." *Wave 3* intended to take over an office, establish a New Center of Drugs and Biologics, and issue revised policy on FDA sta-

least likely option of all.

The activists make several other demands, springing from their conviction that, in AIDS, research *is* health care. ACT UP insists that volunteers be informed of results as soon as they are available; the FDA replies that premature release of findings could bias the results or frighten patients into leaving a study. ACT UP urges that HIV-infected people be placed on safety monitoring boards; the FDA responds that the composition of these boards is determined by centers conducting the trial and is "not very much in our purview."

And ACT UP insists the trials be open to the entire range of people affected by AIDS. At present, gay white men reportedly make up over 95 percent of those in federally financed drug studies, though nonwhites and women make up more than half of New York City's AIDS cases and an increasing percentage nationwide. Activists call this situation not only unjust, but unscientific: Patients with a history of IV-use are known to have a lower tolerance

for AZT, for example; drugs safe for men may cause complications in women. "After a drug is licensed, it can be used on anyone and these problems will show up," FDA spokesman Don McClaren says. The reason for the discrepancy, he insists, is to maintain the purity of an experiment. "If you keep adding variables, that only slows the process, which doesn't serve anybody."

The heart of the matter is whose interest *is* being served? "Our intent is not to provide public health in clinical trials," McClaren concedes. "If you did that, you might have great public health, but no drug development."

Besides the afflicted, the FDA serves manufacturers, whose interests aren't always compatible with those of their customers. The FDA, for example, declines to publish a comprehensive list of drug trials because of federal laws protecting the confidentiality of a corporation's property. Likewise, the agency has taken no steps to discourage price gouging of AZT (at \$10,000 per year, the most expensive drug ever

tionery. The *Forget-Me-Nots* planned to read names of the dead in Frank Young's office, as some had read names at draft boards 20 years ago. But getting inside was starting to look impossible, and the cops were clearly inclined to take as few of us into detention as they could, dragging some from the scene only to let them go. How to mix up this polite two-step? "What's the country coming to," lamented one of the *United Fruits*, "when a screaming faggot has to wait in line to get arrested?"

By 8 a.m. all but the main entrance was closed. Then *Queer and Present Danger* staged a die-in at the doors, outlining their bodies in chalk. Police encircled them fast and began a first busload of arrests, but now these doors too were impassable, and all arriving employees were advised to go on home. The FDA was sealed shut; two people affixed a sign to the doors reading "Federal Death Administration." One man in black was hoisted onto the central portico to unroll and tape a giant Silence = Death banner; he set off little smoke bombs to reinforce the slogan. Toward 9 a.m., 19 members of PISD [People with Immune System Disorders] and five of our group found them-

selves surrounded and swept toward a second bus—great God almighty, busted at last.

Now is supposed to come the boring part—in the hands of the law, waiting like schoolchildren for the recess bell. But we were a pretty obstreperous busload. A hearing-impaired member of PISD wouldn't cooperate, nor would we, until the cops let his interpreter on board and agreed to pay him. As the driver started a slow three-point turn to pull away, we hollered "Block the road!" through one cracked-open window, and dozens swept in to lie down in front of the wheels, chanting, "You block the drugs—we block the bus." After nearly half an hour, some of the sick on board were ready for bathrooms and rest, so we called off the blockade and took the 10-mile ride to the county Police Academy. I had almost wriggled out of my plastic handcuffs when a cop spotted me—"Going somewhere?"—and made them good and tight. Officer McNally, a well-trained, affable control queen, claimed not to be prejudiced against gays like "some of these hard asses on the force." One cop said, "I'm with you," although he wasn't entirely: he was

marketed) or pentamidine (the cost has risen 300 percent since the epidemic began). But the FDA is hardly, as commissioner Frank Young has claimed, "above economics." As with all federal regulatory agencies, there exists a rather busy revolving door between the agency and the industry. The FDA reportedly has a 20 percent staff turnover every year.

Ultimately, this is a debate about economics, not science. As of June, the FDA had only 127 officers tracking the 162 AIDS drugs in trials; some involve paperwork of up to 100,000 pages. When human trials are completed, it takes an average of two to three years for the agency to review the results. If research facilities were adequately funded, experiments could be more flexible and the results could be analyzed more quickly. As things stand, the patients' interest must be sacrificed in the name of efficiency.

The irony is that the present system will be even more expensive in the long run. Expanding drug research can't be costlier than the burden

placed on hospitals by dying AIDS patients, not to mention the loss of productivity from an epidemic that attacks people in their prime. ACT UP's critique cuts right to a fatal flaw in our for-profit health care system. The HIV virus may not be within our control right now, but that system is.

And in the end, patient-centered drug development would benefit everyone. Each of us will someday be a patient.

Robert Massa

"Why AIDS Activists Target the FDA," Excerpts from Village Voice, Oct. 18, 1987

trying to get my real name, and I kept giving him Brian Keith's.

As we were getting booked some news came in over a walkie-talkie: a basement window had been broken during a scuffle, and four people had hopped into the building. Later we learned that 12 members of *Seeing Red* had entered an adjacent building and held a conference in the FDA's Ethics Office. Our group was released at 3 p.m. and made it back as the seventh and final busload of detainees rode off. A small picket line was still carrying on, but the stand-off was complete: dozens of frustrated souls hadn't managed to get arrested all day. A final chant went up—"We'll be stronger, we'll be back"—as a cleanup crew arrived for business as usual tomorrow.

Dan Bellm

Excerpts from Village Voice, "A Power & Passion Play," Oct. 25, 1987.

Diary: FDA Action

Monday: At the demonstration in front of the Department of Health and Human Services, we put the Reagan Administration on trial. The verdict is definitely "guilty." This demonstration is our chance to articulate a broader politics of the AIDS activist movement, but the media fails to pick up on this and covers the demonstration as a pre-FDA rally...

After a quick bite to eat we go off to the "pre-action" meeting at All Soul's Church, to make final plans for the Civil Disobedience (CD) at the Food and Drug Administration. Used to leaving things to the last minute, our Mass Act Out affinity group makes its preliminary decisions at this meeting, and agrees to scope out the situation when we get to the FDA and make more detailed plans then. The group doubles in size when folks from Boston Act Up, Boston PWA Coalition, and several Rhode Island AIDS activists put aside differences in order to be part of a bigger group. There are about 20 of us now, equally divided between men and women. We agree to



all wear bright yellow gloves (to mock the police). We've named our affinity group "Nobody's Nasty Little Secret," but we become known as "Yellow Gloves." Our plan is to meet in Rockville, Maryland at the ungodly hour of 6:45 a.m. No one gets much sleep.

Tuesday: Images and sounds take over my senses. Brightly costumed affinity groups begin to gather in the parking lot across from the FDA and in front of the building. San Francisco ACT UP is wearing tie-dyed t-shirts with "Purple Rage" scrawled across the front. The PISD caucus of ACT NOW has formed an affinity group. They have on white shirts and headbands. A New York ACT UP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) "Seeing Red" affinity group is wearing lab coats with red paint splattered across the front and red gloves. They can be seen throughout the day walking around chanting "The government has blood on its hands, and I'm seeing red." Everyone is chanting "Act Up. Fight Back, Fight AIDS" and "History will record, Reagan and Bush did nothing at all." I notice many lesbians from around the country who were once active in the Reproductive Rights National Network, and am not surprised by their presence here.

The whole demonstration has more the flavor of the sixties than the '80s. People are being spontaneous and creative. The building is soon draped with "Silence Equals Death" banners and many different posters. All the entrances to the building are blocked. No one else can get in to work. There is more media at this demonstration than any I've been to lately. The way to get arrested at this CD is to lie down in front of the main entrance. Those lying down in front of other entrances are left alone. Those who lie down in the street in front of a bus-full of arrested demonstrators are also allowed to stay put. Finally the arrestees themselves ask the demonstrators to move. They don't want to sit in the bus all day. They want to be processed and released, so they can return to the FDA.

"Yellow Gloves" hooks up for most of the day with "Purple Rage." We become a bi-coastal action team, roaming around the building forcing the closing of entrance after entrance. We are pushed around by the police, but most are not arrested. Our two groups stage

a kiss-in in front of a bus load of arrestees. We chant "Purple Rage in my hair, pardon me while I kiss this guy/gal." We notice that the bus driver of this particular bus is a sympathetic woman with several "Silence = Death" stickers on her jacket. Everyone applauds her and she gives the thumbs up...

Throughout the day I chat with building employees who have not been able to get into work. Some of them work at the FDA, many work in other departments the building houses. People from the Mental Health Department are very sympathetic to the protest. One man stays around all day, and points out to us a "Silence = Death" poster a co-worker of his has put in his office window, many flights up. I have a long conversation with an off-duty police officer who says she is out as a lesbian to everyone but people in her department, and has come to support us in the way she can—by just being there and watching.

At the end of the day, those of us still left get on the Metro back to DC. We are exhausted and exhilarated. We are talking loudly and uncontainably about the action. An FDA employee approaches us, wanting to discuss the protest. She is so excited by the conversation that she misses her stop and stays on for two more stations to continue the conversation. Mostly we ask her questions. What did you think of the protest? What do you think of the Reagan administration's response to the AIDS epidemic? We learn from her that burning an effigy of Reagan was a big hit inside the building. She tells us that employees have been discussing the protest for the last week, and that today very little work got done because everyone was completely captivated by the protest. As they watched affinity groups approach an entrance, do an action, and then pull back to discuss their next move, her co-workers would exclaim, "I wonder what they will do next?"

We huddle together in a hotel room to watch the news. We are with the men from "Purple Rage" again. The local news does extensive coverage. The demonstration makes the national news...

Nancy Wechsler

This article is excerpted from Resist Newsletter, November 1988.

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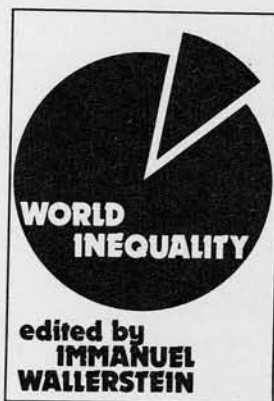
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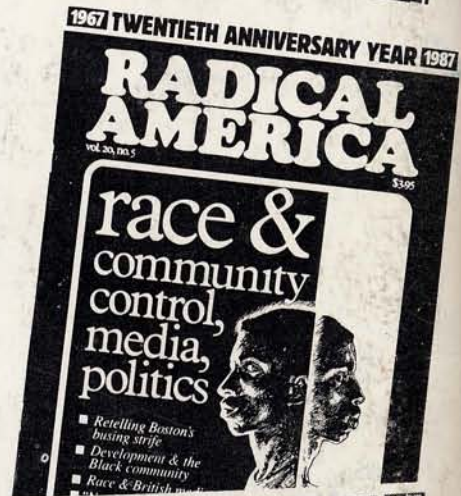
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