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MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1960-1991

Box 13, Folder 6, Boyd, Malcolm, 1974.

Sherman Oaks, Calif.
March 22, 1974

Dear Marc:

Having spoken to the Interfaith Coalition here in L. A., and engaged in many, many TV and radio talks concerning Jews and Christians (where I often engaged in dialog with people on the other end of a phone), I see now the necessity of a book like ours.

There has been a walking-on-eggshells in Jewish-Christian relations, but little expression at a gut level, I am told again and again. A Jewish woman was telling me that she has never had a close Christian friend. Several times she came close, but the possible friendship evaporated. In her opinion, most Christians cannot (she does not know why) deal with Jews and Jewishness. A Christian woman, in a large gathering of Jews and Christians that I addressed, raised her hand to ask me a question. "I am afraid for Jews," she said. "My minister says that Jews will go to hell because Jesus Christ said that salvation can come only through belief in him. I am so worried about Jews. Would you give me your views on this subject?" Another Jewish woman told me, after I had offered my candid opinions about various matters: "I have waited all my life to hear a Christian say those things. I had given up hope a long time ago."

Taking a gut approach to this subject could be helpful to so many people, both Christians and Jews. It could open up possibilities for all kinds of local discussion at a new level.

What I gave you is an expanded outline, but with a very real taste of what I would like to do. I could write, say, three times that much material--some 75 pp. Conceivably my part of the book would come first; then, if you took 75 pp. to "respond" to what I said, we'd have a book of actual dialog--not the usual rhetoric or something above the heads of the real concerns ~~and~~ that people feel. I would rather like to get the book finished this late-spring or early-summer, so that it could be published next spring. If a publisher liked the idea and signed a contract with us now, we could probably do that.

Tonight I am giving the sermon at Temple Judea in the San Fernando Valley. On Sunday I fly to Houston, then Dallas and Atlanta. Will be back in Ann Arbor on March 29th for three days before pushing on to Minneapolis, Chicago, Cleveland, Indianapolis, etc. I shall finish this tour in New York City (should I speak to any group there?) and Boston in early May.

Please tell both Jim and Inge hello from me and tell them that the tour is both a creative and a productive experience.

All my best wishes,

Malcolm.

Malcolm Boyd

* A letter from you will reach me there

SHALOM: ~~NOTES OF~~ A JEW AND A CHRISTIAN.

by Marc Tanenbaum and Malcolm Boyd



~~One day~~ I caught a Connecticut limousine for Kennedy Airport and the El Al orange terminal. The car was filled except for an empty seat next to the driver. I occupied it. The driver asked us which flights we were taking that day. The names were called out. "United." "American." "TWA".

"El Al," I said.

We motored along in silence for a while.

"There were two Jewish girls I drove last week who just got back from Israel," the driver said. "They had fresh fruit they had brought home with them. They were telling me that the fruit got confiscated. They couldn't bring it by the customs."

Nobody in the limousine was talkative, but I allowed as how customs could be difficult. The driver continued in silence.

"I was reading a book," the driver said after another half-hour had passed. "It was about Germany. Most of the Germans, according to the book, didn't know. They didn't know what was happening. It was just a few Nazis who were guilty and they didn't tell the rest of the people."

Neither I nor anyone else felt like making a response to the driver's remark, so the trip continued quietly and uneventfully. El Al was the car's first stop at the airport. But moments before the limousine reached the entrance to the terminal, the driver turned his head toward me and asked: "Why do you Jews want to go to Israel?"

In 1964 I had visited Israel briefly for the first time. However, I was a member of "a tour," whose group dynamics sadly took precedence over getting involved with the land and the people I wished to see. When the opportunity arose to visit Israel under far more auspicious circumstances in the spring of 1972--this exactly five years after the Six-Day War--I accepted the invitation with alacrity.

The El Al dinner aboard the plane was kosher, as I should have known it must be, but I forgot. When fruit was offered us after the meal, I asked: "Is there some cheese?" The stewardess opened her mouth to say no. I knew the answer--and why, and was suddenly embarrassed. Why had I been so stupid and insensitive, I asked myself, to commit that gaffe? I must watch myself and not be an intolerable tourist.

My seat companion on the flight was a taciturn young man who never spoke a word to anyone, even to a stewardess in acknowledgement of being given dinner or in response to questions. He appeared to be an athlete or a soldier, for his body was muscular and he conveyed an impression of physical strength. I assumed that he spoke another language and dismissed the matter from my mind.

I had homework aboard the plane. Once inside Israel, I intended to explore the matter of Jewish-Arab relations there. One publication that I had with me was a transcript of conversations between Arab and Jewish students at the Hebrew University.

Now the time was 2 a.m.. Most of the other passengers, including my seat companion, had apparently gone to sleep as I began to read the document.

"Why are you reading that?" the young man abruptly asked. He spoke English with only the slightest accent. He explained that he was a Sabra, a native-born Israeli, who had been visiting relatives in the U.S. as their guest during a holiday. I put aside my reading in favor of a long conversation.

It was his arrogance--there is no other word to describe his facade--that initially struck me. As we talked, this outer roughness or seeming harsh unfriendliness gave way to personal warmth marked by a no-nonsense pragmatic quality and an abrupt directness in getting to the heart of the matter, issues or ideas. We became friends. I liked the qualities that I found in him.

I thought of him immediately several days later when I visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, and found written upon a wall the words of a letter written by

Inside the Israel Museum I saw Jewish religious objects, instruments of worship used in rituals that were designed to be outward and visible signs or forms of an inward and spiritual grace. I related to these (although they were surely not so familiar to me as to a Jew) with the same respect, and sometimes devotion, as I feel in the presence of Christian crucifixes, chalices, patens and icons.

These ^{Jewish} objects stirred a recollection in my mind of the Bar Mitzvah scene in the movie Sunday Bloody Sunday that had touched a nerve in me. Movies can move in on people's faces and hands in dramatic closeups that human eyes can seldom achieve.



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I was made intensely aware by the film of the older man's remembrance of his own Bar Mitzvah when he attended his nephew's ceremony. There seemed to be involved a cultural tradition, rooted and imbedded in human bones or even the lines of Jewish faces, that was sorely missing from the Episcopalian Confirmation service, whose flaw might be the very loss of finely honed ethnicity in a vast Anglo-Saxon complex of sameness. Or was there also lacking a sharply remembered, and absolutely shared, legacy of corporate suffering as a people?

Looking at Jewish religious objects in the Israel Museum, and later in a small museum above a Jerusalem synagogue, I remembered how, during the summer of 1951 before I entered an Episcopalian theological seminary, I visited a different Conservative or Reform synagogue every Friday night. My idea was to participate, to place myself before God in worship with Jews. I had a vision of universal love outside of ~~my own prescribed tradition.~~ ~~then have used this place as a synagogue.~~ # At the end of that summer I moved swiftly into the ~~overwhelmingly~~ busy and demanding world of the seminary, commencing my studies for the priesthood. My earlier impulses were crowded out by these new mechanisms in my life. At first there was no time for Friday night visits to a synagogue. Then there was no inclination. ~~Why must universal love give way in the priorities of organized religion to the exigencies of achieving organizational and secular power, and erecting high walls in order to separate people in whom God's spirit rests?~~ Why must

Both in civil rights and the peace movement, I have on occasion been jailed, following arrests for "disturbing the ~~peace~~ peace," ~~with~~ with Jews, various denominational kinds of Christians, and agnostics. We had attempted to act according to the dictates of conscience that had been informed by a common Judeo-Christian heritage nurtured by the Bible. The fact that we were motivated by a yearning to actively express love in the social sphere, as well as an insistent desire to commit our bodies as an expression of adoration to God and in responsibility for people who were being maimed in body and spirit, surely meant that we were by intention involved together in an act of worship. Such a moment has seemed to be purer, despite its acknowledged ambiguities and spiritual shortcomings, than many choreographed moments in the more socially respectable life of organized establishment religion.

I remember with some horror a moment inside a church when my heart constricted and I did not know where to go, spiritually, or what to do. It occurred prior to my entering a theological seminary, when I had concluded a long period of atheism and was struggling with the meaning of faith for an adult human being. A church that I had started to attend occasionally in Los Angeles had scheduled a fund-raising drive. Because I worked in Hollywood, and therefore possessed numerous connections in the entertainment industry, I was asked to obtain celebrities as volunteers to appear at a benefit program in the church. My efforts were aided by those of a close friend, a songwriter who was Jewish. On the evening of the benefit, as I walked into the church I saw its young rector standing surrounded by a half-dozen high school students. He was gesturing angrily with his hands. His voice boomed out. I heard him say: "I knew that damned Jew would be late." Apparently the songwriter who had volunteered to help me was a few moments late-- as I must have been, too. My idealism was stained and shattered. The joy of the evening benefit, what there had been of it, was drained. I turned and fled. I wondered, what could I do? Religion seemed a terrible thing to me in that moment, something infinitely more complex than I could cope with as an individual who sought communion with God and brotherhood with man.

Years later, the hard lines between Jews and Christians emerged once again in a religious context that was on a collision course with my own experience. A priest deeply involved in the civil rights

movement, I organized a "kneel-in" of black and Christians to take place on a Good Friday in a dozen segregated, all-white Episcopal churches in Detroit. A close friend of mine, ~~Arnold~~ G., who was a Jewish student at Wayne State University, told me that he wanted to participate. I said no, explaining that the action was religious and, in fact, involved kneeling inside a church. I felt it would be compromising, or wrong, for him to do this. He argued with me. "It's a political action, at least that's the way I see it, and I want to take part." He did. However, he made a request of me. It would be necessary for me to telephone him in order to leave a message concerning the time and place of meeting for the various religious and/or political protestors. "Please leave a message at my father's office," Arnie told me. "Don't call me at home, o.k.? My grandmother doesn't understand our relationship."

Indeed. For wouldn't I proselytize the best Jewish youth? I have known many of them intimately during the past decade. Only once did a youth ask me if he could "begin instruction" to become a Christian. I told him not to complicate our friendship with the request, that if he did desire such instruction surely he could find dozens of people listed in the telephone directory who would be pleased to assist him. I have long thought it was more important to help a Jew to become a better Jew than to turn a "good Jew" into a "good Christian," a "moderate Jew" into a "moderate Christian," a "good Jew" into a "moderate Christian" or "moderate Jew" into a "good Christian." What matters is that a Jew or a Christian have a sense of the closeness and the goodness

of God--who is actively loving, and whose loving makes a demand upon people to love--and that a Jew or a Christian learn how to express this gift of love actively in responsibility and service to other people. Salvation is a gift of God, a holy matter that I have ^{let rest} ~~in the providence of God, and I ceased to place my primary reliance upon the religious system~~

Several years ago I was asked to open an ecumenical worship service in Washington, D.C., that was sponsored by Clergy and Laymen Concerned. I read from two meditations that I wrote. "Isn't the siren blowing longer this time, doesn't it seem to have lost control? Are the bombers only ten minutes away? Are the submarines surfacing on both coasts; has our radar been knocked out? Do you suppose we're really going to die?"..... "A smokestack means burned bodies. A freight train moving along the tracks means people being transported like cattle to a concentration camp. A whip means being lashed to a post, hands tied together in an upward position, while the hot leather (one, two, three times--twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three times) draws circles of blood on one's back--and screams from deep within one's self--and a satisfied response from hard-working torturers. At least, that is what these things mean to some people."

A Jewish student responded by writing these words that I find unforgettable: "I was battered by dreadful feelings during this worship, and yet a strange harmony emerged, a fellowship of anguish and commitment. The words bit into me, and I wept to

hear of beauty and sweetness, bombs, fire, and God, are you with us? We who are silent and comfortable, do we call loud enough that you answer? God, I cannot remain alone; we stand by and watch the trains going to Auschwitz; the Vietnamese are dying and we rest in the evening. Will the bombs come closer? I felt the love of God ~~surging~~ through the preservation of human love."

The many American Jewish students whom I have known: what were their feelings about God, Judaism, Zionism, Israel, Jewishness...? I have wondered. Bits of feelings have come through fragments of conversations, whether animated ones past midnight or subdued, even sleepy ones over breakfast coffee.

A student at Yale, whom I knew especially well, talked with me about my then forthcoming visit to Israel. He told me that he had met a few Israeli students during a visit to Europe. He found that he could not easily relate to them. "They seemed to be super-jocks and non-intellectuals. But I met one Israeli guy whom I could talk to. He was sensitive and interested in art, books and ideas." Since I had been reading Yigael Yadin's Masada, I mentioned the book to the Yale student. He said that he did not know what Masada was. I explained its history to him as well as its present significance in the Israeli consciousness. I met the student again a few days later. He asked me to tell him more about Masada. "I ought to find out about my heritage," he said. "Malcolm, how do you spell Masada?"

Another student, D., told me that he was brought up an

Orthodox Jew. "A cantor came to tutor me three times a week. My parents kept a kosher home. It wasn't Orthodox in terms of life but only religiously. But that doesn't have anything to do with God,--The desire to be Christlike informs the positive parts of my spirit. But the historical Christ is difficult for me. I don't believe he is the son of God,--In a time when all the institutional religious expressions have atrophied, when man is thrown back on himself, if you're able to house your religion in an institution you're not very responsible for it. But when all the religious institutions are destroyed, every individual has to start from scratch."

J., another student, went through Hebrew School as a child. "I took religion seriously. I believed to a large extent. Now I don't have a God in any way close to me. The question of Judaism as a culture or a religion hasn't been closely associated for me with the question of God. I have certain socialized values as a matter of family that go with a belief in God because of Judeo-Christian values. I don't have a God in terms of any self-conscious reflection or active consideration,--When I think of Israel, I have great fears that it is a pawn of the United States, a capitalistic nation."

D. remembered deciding that she was an atheist in the seventh grade. "So I didn't have to go to Hebrew School anymore. I suppose I identify somewhat culturally with being Jewish, but for me it doesn't matter about the religion,--If somebody said

'The world is falling apart,' I'd tend to say it was due to something like the family structure. I'd take this approach rather than say 'People are depraved and we must put our faith in God.' I think it takes intelligence and different kinds of change instead of 'good thoughts!---What would the term 'the love ethic' mean? I don't really know. I think love involves as much taking as giving. People don't face up to the fact that, in loving, you're limited just as much as you're enriched.---My parents still keep a kosher home although they don't go to a temple anymore. There doesn't seem to be a religious force behind it. It's a habit. Prayers and rituals offend me. I went to a Christian wedding last week. I just didn't like the service. I could never imagine myself getting married in any kind of religious service.---I studied Mathematics. These are the kinds of laws that stand outside of you and me and the universe. It's almost like pure intellectual exercise. It's purer than anything I'll ever find in History, and much less ambiguous, but it didn't seem to tie in on the levels of my own existence, so I changed.---A lot of religion I observe seems to be based on a subservience of man to something, a personalized God. Everything that I know tells me that's garbage. Hell is a meaningless concept for me."

W. said that his grandfather goes to a synagogue three times a week. "In my parents and grandparents, I see religion as a crutch. But now I see that I have crutches, too. Books. Yet

I still discredit religion and God. My friends and I go to Seder if we're invited and it's convenient. I avoid holidays;-- I exulted in the Six-Day War and I have a sense that Israel is a better state than Egypt. However, I'm anti-Zionist for two reasons: (1) Most Zionists I know are Orthodox Jews. I don't think that being kosher is justifiable on any grounds; (2) My father has always been nationalistic."

E. believed that her life has been utterly--completely-- different from the lives of the Jews in Auschwitz. "I don't think my God is the God that those Jews worshipped. I feel that I'm Jewish culturally--traditions, holidays, rituals, Bar Mitzvahs, weddings. But when I feel God, it doesn't have any relationship to being inside a synagogue or reading a Hebrew prayer. These things don't have a deep feeling in representing what they're supposed to represent. They're just an extension of myself, things that I enjoy."

C. said that he is not an atheist but probably an agnostic. "In my particular case, my Jewishness is a heritage and not a doctrine that I adhere to at all. To me, there has never been any real proof of miracles and things like that. I've been with friends, though, when they experienced a very deep spiritual moment.---My decisions aren't in debt to any single set of values. I did my damndest to get out of the draft. I wouldn't shoot somebody, ever. And I don't want to get shot."

G. defined a Jew as one who practices Judaism. "I'm Jewish

and go to temple. Not regularly, but I like to listen to the sermons. My grandparents were very Orthodox, my parents less so. I had a curiosity about learning Hebrew but even more the heritage.---Maybe we wouldn't have an Israeli state without the Holocaust. So something has come out of it. If you're looking for a justification for God, maybe you can find it that way."

D. discovered that the central religious facts in his life are Auschwitz and the simple truth that the Jewish people still exist. "I can't adjust to myself a truth that encompasses both of them. Hope seems to betray a black truth that is truer than hope. Yet I simply can't live without hope.---Elie Wiesel has said, in Hasidic imagery, that if the ghosts of the six million had raised their voices, they would have destroyed earth. I almost viscerally get the feeling that those dead have the right to end the human race and decided not to.---Is God just? That's more important than whether or not He exists. Intellectually I cannot believe that He is just.---My life has often to do with very specific Jewish sorts of things. Some title suggests a reference to the Holocaust. And an ink blot spreads, and it's all there. A very different framework that makes you feel a different connection with what you scheme about, or are disappointed about, from day to day.---God and death are rooted experiences in ^emy that, when I think about them, shake me and are religious. It's impossible to contemplate one without the other.---Yom Kippur. There is a long blast on the shofar. It represents the slamming shut of the gates of heaven in the pure,

straight legend terms in which it is given. Even on Yom Kippur, I always let myself an escape clause. I thought it was inevitable that I'd get it together on that last moment when your lack of faith would be taken back and forgiven. The Passóver. The allegory of the four sons: the smart, the bad, the simple, and the one who didn't know how to ask questions. I always knew, even at the age of eight, that I was in one of the first two."

My conversations with these students had, with one exception, taken place prior to my trip to Israel.

Now, one afternoon in Jerusalem, I chatted with a distinguished and patriarchal Jewish theologian at his home. Having been introduced to him as the author of the book of prayers, Are You Running With Me, Jesus?, I observed him looking me over carefully. I saw myself in his eyes: a "brash," "young," "American" "priest." He received me graciously. Following an initial skirmish of wills and images, we routed the necessity for amenities, minutiae and religious jargon, embarking upon an excellent discussion that ranged from the close affinities between Judaism and Christianity to the banal phoniness of America's currently pressagented "religious revival." Suddenly I looked at a clock on the wall, and realized that I would be late for another appointment if I did not depart immediately. Yet the two of us were engaged in this delightful and profound conversation.

"I must run," I said, half-rising from my chair.

"God has placed a curse on you for writing that book," he

said levelly, with only the slightest suggestion of a smile at the corners of his eyes. "God will make you run forever."

On the eve of my departure for Israel, I talked one evening at Yale with one of the foremost Jewish novelists in America whose celebrated writing themes have not included either the Holocaust or the Israeli experience.

"I'm going to Israel on Monday," I told him. "Tell me about it--what to do, whom to see."

"I have never been to Israel," he said.

"Don't you want to go?"

"No. There's a Boy Scout aspect to it. I'd keep looking into faces that said over and over again 'What have you done for Israel?' I think that I wouldn't like that."

Our conversation came to my mind two weeks later when I sat in the Tel Aviv suburban home of Moshe Shamir, the Israeli novelist and journalist. His wife had poured Scotch-on-the-rocks for us.

"I think many American Jews are afraid of Israel," Shamir said. "Israel is too strong a dilemma. As a Jew, you cannot be an onlooker. You have to participate fully and say goodbye to America and everything you have participated in. A serious Jew has to answer the question: Why am I not staying in Israel? There is something of desertion, of being a traitor, in not being here."

The definition of "a Jew" repeatedly came under discussion during my stay in Israel. I reflected upon words written by Arthur Koestler in his novel Thieves in the Night: "For Jews were not an accident of the race, but simply man's condition carried to its extreme--a branch of the species touched on the raw."

I chatted in Jerusalem with Rabbi Jack Cohen, of the Hillel Center at the Hebrew University, who spoke of "the myth of Jewish peoplehood" inside Israel.

"There is the self-identity problem," he said. "Jews are battling among themselves as to who they are. Traditionalist and democratic pluralistic views are worlds apart. Then, too, Jews do not come to Israel just as Jews, but as men and women characteristic of various cultures. It isn't easy to get a Russian Jew to understand what an American Jew is talking about--for example, when he discusses feelings of loyalty to America. To create a people out of this cannot happen overnight."

Reuven Surkis, Director of the Israel Historical Society, had come from America to live in Israel. We sipped cokes in the livingroom of his modest Jerusalem apartment following dinner with his family.

"We have a problem because we don't know how to run a Jewish state," he said. "We don't know what the Jewishness of running a Jewish state really means. There are some Jews who claim that a Jewish state must be a theocracy, according to the laws of the Talmud. Others say it is a secular state and a Jewish nation. We don't have businesses open on the sabbath, or public transportation. We require our students to study the Bible and Talmud in schools. Is this coercion or a part of being a Jewish state?"

We have problems of autopsy. For it is against Jewish law, yet it is a part of running a state."

Moshe Shamir spoke of a "crisis in Judaism" during our conversation in Tel Aviv.

"If Judaism is a religion first and foremost, then it is in a very dead condition," he said. "What saved it from total collapse is Zionism, the opportunity to try again on a different dimension as a nation on its own land. As pure religion, small societies spread all over the world, there is a total bankruptcy. Intermarriage. No believers. Religion becomes a monopoly of small exotic sections. The beautiful thing about Israel is that it started really as a rebellion against Orthodox Judaism. Zionism is a branch of assimilation--let's not use such a strong word. Of secularism. Let's stop praying for the messiah to come and save us. Let's do it with our own hands.

"In a miserably small way, Zionism is a success. The most fascinating aspect of it is the revival of the Hebrew language and the experience of Jewish history. Out of legend or myth, and a branch of German expression, has come a unified power, and, with it, something like a religious renaissance. This is not taking place so much in Israel as in Jewish communities outside of Israel. One becomes a religious Jew and Zionist at the same time. There is a great change of heart in Western Jewry. Personal edification instead of personal philanthropy."

Rabbi Jack Cohen said that we are on the threshold of what he called "the second Biblical revival."

"If you examine the Bible, to me it is a book that sets forth the problems with which a people has to deal when it comes to settle on its own soil. First, it has to deal with polity concerning other people. Second, it has to develop the ethical values that are necessary to govern the group. Third, it will develop an ideology of man, the universe, God, and so on, which will enable each member of the group to find its place. A certain type of ritual is bound to develop. A secular culture will provide the framework.

"In the State of Israel today, and what preceded it, this process has been going on. The present stage noticeably raises a degree of difference between the various people of Israel. The Twelve Tribes were presumably of the same family, while now there are vastly different people with varied problems. It's much easier to be self-critical about the past. The real question is what you are doing now that may make future generations feel self-critical."

The question of self-criticism arose⁵ in a conversation that I had in Tel Aviv with David Ben-Gurion when I asked if he had read Amos Elon's book The Israelis: Founders and Sons.

"I wish that you would not speak of that book," he said.
"I wish that it had not been written."

Earlier, I had asked Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem to tell me what he thought about the ideas expressed in Elon's book.

"Elon is a journalist," said Kollek. "I appreciate writers who have deeper things to say."

What did Elon say in his book that disturbed some people inside Israel and aroused controversy? For one thing, he alluded to the existence of a "spiritual vacuum created by the receding future of the classic Zionist dream, a vacuum that cannot satisfactorily be filled by feats of arms."

When I spoke with Elon, I asked him to comment on the question of self-criticism that had apparently been raised by what he said as well as the controversy surrounding his book.

"Zionism from its very start was a movement of Jewish self-criticism," he said. "It has never evaded itself. The most prominent thinkers who have lived here have written the worst things, albeit in Hebrew. The myopia vis-a-vis the Arabs was revealed in 1931 by a writer. In the twenty years between 1948 and 1967, this type of writing wasn't very common. But now it can be found in many places, especially in the magazines put out by the kibbutzim. My book is a mild reformist twiddle by comparison. The breaking out of the ghetto since 1967 has reopened the discussion of serious questions of Zionism. This is true not merely in political literature but in Hebrew letters generally, including plays and novels."

What spiritual, or deeply moral, questions confronted Israel?

"There is a deterioration in the Israeli police force in the past few years," said Elon. "This seems to me to be a product

of the occupation force. This is a functioning society. A youthful society. What am I afraid to lose? The idea of creating another state was, at the start of Zionism, subservient to creating a better society." However, these words must be understood in the context of something else that Elon said: "Israel is the closest thing to a Greek city-state that exists today. Only in raucous, nearly anarchic freedom can you get this kind of strength...It is understood that freedom is more effective than tyranny. There is the element of not wanting to force anybody to do anything. It also comes from an essential gentleness that remains in this society."

Meron Benvenisti, a member of the city council of Jerusalem who ^{had previously} resigned amid controversy as administrator of East Jerusalem, ~~expressed~~ expressed self-criticism, as well as considerable optimism, during a conversation.

"We know from history that a national movement, once it has begun, cannot be forgotten. A moral danger in Israel is that the occupation of the West Bank will become permanent. However, I don't think this will happen. People would like Israel to be democratic and Jewish."

In the past two years, a spokesman for the Ministry of Absorption said, there were more North American immigrants to Israel than in the preceding nineteen years. "Israel likes immigration but hates immigrants," Leonard Edelstein of the Jewish Agency half-jokingly remarked. Joshua Palmon, Advisor on Arab Affairs to the Mayor of Jerusalem, told me: "New immigrants complain to the Jewish Agency about their conditions. Next they complain to the government about their conditions. Next they complain to the government about their high taxes. Then they complain about the new immigrants who receive too much help. Who is not an immigrant? Everybody is an immigrant. It only depends on when."

I was told a lovely and certainly an apocryphal story concerning Prime Minister Golda Meir. She is supposed to have said: "We construct all of the new buildings with Arab labor and American money for Russian immigrants."

~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~

I can remember Hitler's voice. Its staccato quality sticks in a recess of my mind along with that other part of his public

speeches, the rhythmic, measured crowd responses out of thousands of throats that grew in intensity until a blood sacrifice insinuated itself to one's own blood, the imagery of flailing whips and broken bones caused one to cower in fear as if before an incensed and terribly--absolutely--powerful serpent-demon that demanded simply one's very being, essence, identity, blood, body, mind and soul.

I was not yet twenty, a high school student who spent afternoons and Saturdays reading library books which told about the world outside of my limited experience. The world included Hitler with his crowds, goose-stepping Nazi soldiers marching in their shiny black boots, Goebbels who resembled an ascetic monk and Goering a worldly prior.

Often Jewishness irritated me. Why did it seem to be aloof or mysterious? Why did Jews have a habit of laughing loudly among ~~them~~ themselves--even separating themselves from everybody else as if they had the nerve to assume that they were somehow superior? What did Jews do inside their temples? What was kosher food? Those candles they always burned: the ritual seemed eastern, un-American, studiously alien. Why couldn't they conform, come off it, be like everybody else? At a point their attitude could become downright insulting, I felt, mostly because of its deliberately withdrawn quality.

My separation from Jews, already a fact of life, increased in college when I joined a fraternity. It was Christian. There were Jewish fraternities for Jews. The twain never met. Years

later I remember visiting a fraternity one night on a campus where I was a chaplain. The college men invited me to sit in as they voted on whether or not to pledge a group of men as new members.

A particular name was called.

"He has a car," one member said. Applause.

"The guy's an athlete."

"He's sexy, man." Whistles. Laughter.

"He's got grades."

"You guys, listen. I'm serious about this. He looks Jewish. You know? He's got that kike hair on his face that doesn't shave clean. I say no."

The prospective fraternity brother was blackballed. My image of Jews as victims of persecution was once more reinforced.

During my stay in Jerusalem, I spent an evening with an Israeli professor. He had never visited Yad Vashem to see its eternal flame burning alongside the ashes of concentration camp victims and its chimney memorializing the horror of the Holocaust. He explained that he did not wish to look back upon persecution and death but ahead to strength and new life embodied in the State of Israel. His words drove my thoughts backward to that time when Jewishness and persecution were synonymous in my mind.

In my own days as a college student, I was once invited home over the Christmas holidays by a girl whom I dated. On Christmas Day the entire family was seated around a table laden with foods. A fire crackled in a grate. The atmosphere was ^{gemütlich} ~~one of~~ ^{cheer} ~~and~~ and friendliness. The girl picked up a morsel of leftover food on her plate and started to place it inside the mouth of the family dog that was begging.

"Don't give that damned Jew any more to eat," her mother said, smiling ^{warmly} ~~and~~. "He's had too much already."