

All the World Wants the Jews Dead

by Cynthia Ozick

An overwrought view from the peak of the bottom

After the Yom Kippur War, I went to Jerusalem—not in the hours when the mourning over the fallen was fresh, but soon enough. I rode in a car that stopped for soldiers on leave, exhausted boys and pale girls with knapsacks and wool caps. They would get in, silence all the way, and then they would get out.

Around that time Syria, ignoring international law and repeated Red Cross requests for the names of prisoners of war, continued silent, week after week.

Earlier still, on the day Egypt and Syria attacked Israel, the United Nations was silent. The day after and the day after and the day after, the United Nations was silent. Meanwhile, the Jews fought to live; the battle turned in their favor, it seemed they *would* live—not only live but pursue; and at that moment the United Nations spoke—not to stop the bloodshed, which up to then had left it unmoved, but to nip a Jewish victory.

In Jerusalem, the car advances toward Yad Vashem. A white sleet beats the roof. A white blindness whips the windshield. We crawl past the trees at the road's margins; new trees. In Israel, it is every moment necessary to remind yourself that each tree began from a seed put down. The trees are just visible behind the sleet. But we cannot see their names, the green stelaes that announce Europeans who saved Jews from German death.

I leave the car, and the ice strikes at my eyes. Inside, the great cave is empty, black, silent. No one else has come. No tourists, no visitors. The car idles alone in the bus plaza. The young driver sits alone.

His name is Motti.

Motti is dark-eyed and beautiful, a charmer, and he knows it. He has twelve older brothers and sisters; he is the baby of that family. His parents fled Yemen, the father died. All these brothers and sisters have Bible names, not made-up modern Israeli ones. One sister is

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"Jewish and Israeli...are one and the same thing, and no one, in or out of Israel, ought to pretend differently anymore."

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married to an Ashkenazi and lives in a pretty village outside Tel Aviv. One brother is married and has a brand-new baby; this brother is a brand-new paraplegic. A bullet pierced his spine at Suez the third day of the war. Motti too has been in a tank at Suez; but he can still dance, and takes his English girl friend to discotheques in Tel Aviv.

Motti does not come into Yad Vashem. Maybe he has never bothered about it at all. Maybe he is bored with it. Maybe Motti just wants to keep warm in the car.

The memorial flame sucks at the wind. The plaques, with the names of the death camps, gleam in the black floor.

The rest of Yad Vashem is mainly a museum of photographs, pictures of Jews debased and roasted. There are also reproductions of documents in German and Polish: edicts of expulsion, expropriation, roundups, secret letters, public declarations leading to the Final Solution. There is even a children's book, in German: the little Aryan girl in the picture is rosy-cheeked but frightened, and there is the fiendish Jewish doctor with the hideous nose.

Though Yad Vashem is in Israel and documents the destruction of the European Jews, it is not properly a Jewish museum. Yad Vashem means "Hand and Name"; it is a German museum: all the photographs were taken by German hands holding German cameras for German archives.

Whose hand, in whose name? What was the *German* purpose of these records? Emotion recollected in tranquillity?

It is, by now, a worn-looking place. Visiting journalists do not even trouble to write about it anymore; some suspect it as a means of irrelevant, sentimentalizing propaganda. Israeli schoolchildren are brought here routinely by their teachers. But they do not want to come, though this is the story of their parents. Why? Is it just an old textbook? Or are they shamed by what they see?

Not until I was grown up was I told about my great-uncle Mottel and his son Raphael. In a pogrom in a Russian village, the Cossacks captured them and tied them to the tails of horses, upside down. The Cossacks galloped back and forth over cobblestones until the heads were dashed to pieces. When at last my mother confessed this story, she whispered it.

The displays are dusty. Are they beginning to yellow? Inside a glass case there is a tiny wrinkled shoe. It sags into silence and loss. The baby is a phantom—the shoe is real. There are no visitors today because of the storm, because after the war visitors stopped coming—yet you feel that all these terrible things, the baby's shoe, the obscene photographs, the murderers'

edicts, have been used up by thousands of eyes.

Yad Vashem is leaking. There is the steady clangorous fall, through a hole in the roof, of water into a bucket.

Two stories about Kissinger. One: Kissinger, on his arrival in Israel, asks at once to be taken to Yad Vashem. He looks about him and weeps. Two: Kissinger, on his arrival in Israel, is immediately escorted to Yad Vashem. He looks about him and sneers. "You people are paranoid," he says.

The Knesset, I discovered the next morning, is leaking too.

When I came home to New York, I wanted to begin an article. This is not the article. *That* one was going to be about China. Why did God decide to choose the Jews? I asked myself. Why didn't He choose the Chinese? "Then half the earth," I wrote, "would be populated by Jews, and the geopolitical world structure would, I suppose, be different from what it is now."

Here is the rest of what I wrote about China:

"Once a tiny group of Jews turned into Chinese. You will find this in the encyclopedia, curiously illustrated. The last to visit their synagogue were some nineteenth-century Christian missionaries, and what they came upon was about a dozen very Chinese-looking people who prayed in a Hebrew they did not comprehend. Great China, multitudinous as the stars of heaven or as the grains of the shore, swallowed them; they have not survived. No doubt the seed of Abraham walks around in Honan Province carrying Chairman Mao's little red book of revolutionary thought.

"Consider this: except for that ancient cluster of long-ago traders who built their synagogue where they settled, the Jews have had no contact with that gargantuan Eastern civilization and all its magnificent freight. Since the planet's crust first cooled, Jews and Chinese have not locked eyes. Then comes the burst of technology, the world contracts, one region looks on another, and the Chinese instantly wake to their enemy: the Jews. There is no historical context for this enmity, no embedded tradition spawned in antiquity, as in the West. Suddenly, the Chinese hear of the Jews; the very next moment they have learned to pronounce 'Zionist imperialist.'"

I went only a little further with my article about the Chinese and the Jews, and then I gave up on it. I gave up on it because I knew what I was going to lead up to. "The world wants to wipe out the Jews"—I was getting ready to write—"the world has always wanted to wipe out the Jews."

But that sort of thing is hard to get published. Editors call it overwrought. "Go without preconceptions," one editor said, about the question of traveling to Israel some weeks after the war. And that's fair, of course: "journalism" wants no preconceptions. But what could those preconceptions be? That what happened on Yom Kippur was not someone's will to wipe out the Jews yet again? That is not a preconception; it is a precondition for understanding reality.

An editor of another magazine considered the pressure of topicality. "As far as Israel is concerned," he said, "right now it's the peak of the bottom."

The peak of the bottom! Though he was intending to describe sound magazine practice—not to take up a subject when it is too stale for news and not stale enough for history—he was nevertheless putting a finger on something more terrible than he knew: the refusal to take seriously the precariousness of Jewish survival.

If I say *Jewish* and not *Israeli*, it is because they are one and the same thing, and no one, in or out of Israel, ought to pretend differently anymore.

In Israel, it used to be felt by idealists (who did not see the irony in choosing ordinariness for an ideal) that "Jewishness" was over and done with, that the reconstitution of sovereignty had at last ended exile and normalized the exiles, and that the Jews could finally be "like unto the nations." Inside Israel there was to be a citizenry called Israelis, just as in Italy there are Italians; and that, thanks to Zionism, was going to be that. Anti-Semitism can apply only to a beleaguered helpless few, not to a sturdy citizenry indistinguishable from the ordinary inhabitants of any other ordinary nation-state.

Meanwhile, outside of Israel, the Zionism that was meant to end anti-Semitism became an equivalent for "Jew" in all its ancient resonances. It is no good for anti-Semites to pretend anymore that they are "anti-Zionist" but not "anti-Jewish," or that the two notions can be kept separate.

The Jews are one people. There is nothing new or astounding about this, and when Norman Podhoretz implied in *The New York Times Magazine* not long ago that the Jews of America bleed when Israel bleeds—an utterly unsurprising, even usual, view of things—what was astounding was the ferocity of his respondents.

It is plain, of course, why so many clamor to retain the distinction between "anti-Zionist" and "anti-Jewish"; most people, especially well-educated and generally sensitive people, like to imagine themselves as keeping clear of the gutter. My father, who was the corner druggist, used often to be told by affectionate cronies, "Hey, doc, you're one white Jew." And their children pelted me with rocks because someone taught them the Jews killed Christ. The genteel distinction remains, but with this difference: nowadays, all Jews, whether in Sadat's or Berrigan's mouth, are eligible to be "white" Jews; only Zionists are the criminals, and if Jews themselves are unable to see the distinction, it is because they have been misled and corrupted by Zionists.

Moralists of the world! Here is the way it is. This is the *only* way it is. You cannot separate parent from child, the Jews from Zion. And if you do, you are known for what you are.

"Overwrought," says the editor, creaking back into his reading chair. He will invite me to lunch. He will tell me he is very sorry, but there have already been so many pro-Zionist articles. . . .

The Palestinians, we are told, are the Jews' Jews.

They are also the newest Zionists. They too long for restoration to Jerusalem. They too have their Diaspora. They too educate their children to the hope of Return.

Between Israel and the Arab states, we are told, the issue of the "Palestinian refugees" is paramount, essential.

The United Nations officially recognizes as a "Palestinian refugee" any person—or his descendants—who left the area that is now Israel. Some of these "refugees" are rich businessmen in Beirut, teachers and workers in booming Kuwait. Some are residents of the West Bank who earn high Israeli wages with fringe benefits. All these people are entitled to a stipend from the United Nations; they and their children and their children's children.

No other group, no matter how destitute—not even the suffering of Bangladesh—is accorded this distinctive international status.

The masses of Jewish refugees who escaped to Israel from Arab countries have never been given official United Nations recognition, and do not receive any U.N.-funded support. No one doubts the reliability of photographs we are shown of Arab waifs; there are, unfortunately, thousands of such neglected children in most Arab lands, not only refugees but typical members of populations living out the kind of life allotted to them by indifferent governments. It is easy to give credit to pictures of forlorn Arab children lost in wretchedness, though lately, with so much flaunting of Arab oil riches, it becomes less and less easy to give credit to the necessity for such deprivation. Even in 1948, when Arabs (in those days "Palestinians" meant Jews) ran from the Arab attack on a newborn Israel, the oil kingdoms were exporting enough millions of gallons every day to refurbish the life of every refugee. What is now called "the Arab oil weapon" was an oil weapon even then—a weapon against poverty. It was never used. Only when "refugees" became "commandos," organized terrorists operating out of bristling military villages where even children are given guns (and which are still movingly called "refugee camps" for the sake of U.N.I.C.E.F. pennies on Haloween), did the financing begin.

Meanwhile, oil-dry Israel absorbed multitudes of its own refugees from Arab countries in the first months of their flight.

Motti is one of them. Where—if there were no Israel—would Motti go?

But if the photographs are to be evenhanded in depicting Arab refugees, then we ought also to be shown all those "refugees" prospering decently, living normally and well in Arab towns and cities, at home in their own language and religion and culture, entitled to U.N. handouts forever.

Arab Diaspora" indeed! The phrase rides on the mournful coattails of the Jewish experience of exile, persecution, discrimination, marginality. It is a slogan meant to collect sympathy and to render spite: it both moves and mocks. Look, it says, you Jews are doing to us exactly what was done to you: from oppression you have learned only how to be oppressors; go and shudder at what you have become.

A famous American novelist, who has written a compassionate novel about slavery, told me last year about his trip to Russia. There, he said, he met a Palestinian poet, homeless, sitting at a table in Moscow writing poetry in Arabic, far from his people and his language. Oh, the homelessness of the man.

Is this what is meant by an Arab Diaspora? That poet can take the next plane out of Moscow and land in a major city of any of twenty Arab countries and instantly sit down at a table and write poetry in his own language among his own people. The Russians do not keep this poet captive, nor must he beg for an exit visa, nor will he be punished for wanting to leave.

At their summit conferences, Arab theoreticians speak with emotion of the "Arab Nation." It is a stirring term, even to non-Arabs: it refers to the unity of religion, custom, and language of a vast people with a single splendid heritage inhabiting limitless territories. So immense a space—it is intelligent to call it the Arab "world"—and all of it one spirit, one culture! It seems right to think of all the Arab states, taken together, as one Arab Nation. The poets and thinkers convince us of their emotion: an Arab can feel at home anywhere in the Arab world.

Although the Arab Nation is home to every Arab, it is not home to the Palestinian Arab. Although home is intimacy with the faith, habits, and tongue of your own people, the Palestinian is nevertheless *not* at home. He is, we are told, in exile.

The only place the Palestinian Arab can feel at home in is "South Syria"—which is Tel Aviv. Even though all the people in Tel Aviv have a different religion and a different culture and are of a different stock and speak and read and write a different language, Tel Aviv is the only spot on earth an Arab poet in Moscow can call home.

Now that I have explained a little about the nature of "Diaspora" as defined by Arabs, it is fitting to describe certain parts of the Jewish Diaspora, so that the appropriateness of the term can be measured.

It is no use talking here about the condition of Jews in the Soviet Diaspora: Arabs are not responsible for what Russians decide in Moscow, even if Russians are responsible for what Arabs decide in Damascus. Syria is more to the point.

Syria is an authentic Jewish Diaspora, old style. There are 4500 Jews left in Syria. They cannot leave the country. They are jailed, and there they are tortured. They are murdered in their homes and in the streets. They cannot leave their neighborhoods. If they want to go two miles from their front doors, they must get permission. They are required to carry identity cards with the word JEW printed in big red letters. They are not allowed out of their houses after ten p.m. They cannot have a telephone. They cannot have a driver's license. They cannot work in government offices. They cannot work in public companies. They cannot work in banks. They cannot work in other businesses. Their shops are closed. They are not permitted social or commercial contact with non-Jews. Non-Jews are not permitted to walk on Jewish streets.

It is poetic to talk about homelessness and exile—as long as you are not a Jew trapped in the Arab Nation.

Dear fellow moralists: Where, without Israel, would Motti go?

Now we will have a history lesson.

How many Arab-Israeli wars have there been?

Answer: Four—1948, 1956, 1967, 1973. Independence, Suez, Six-Day, Yom Kippur. Alternate Answer: Five, counting 1967-1970, Attrition.

Fundamental Question: What has been the point of all these wars?

Definitive Answer: To get the Jews out of the Middle East.

Voice: No euphemisms, please!

Don't interrupt the lesson. Now, pretend you are an Arab. Name two causes of the Yom Kippur War.

Answer: One, Palestinian Arabs, legitimate rights of. Two, occupied territories, intent to regain.

Pretend you are Israeli. What caused the Yom Kippur War?

Reply by chorus of thousands. Sample answers: Jews, attempted annihilation of. Vigilance, absence of. Prime Minister, mentality of. Defense Minister, cockiness of. Party in power, incompetence of. Territories, growing inflexibility toward. Population, selfishness of.

Some examples of the latter, please?

Idealism, weakening of. Consumerism, rampant. People thinking only of cars, children, groceries, home furnishings, similar criminal preoccupations. (Several hundred thousand further accusations lost in litany of self-criticism, every man his own Isaiah.)

All right. Pretend you are a Martian. Now we will sort out the real issue behind all these wars.

Voice: You just gave a Definitive Answer to that Fundamental Question.

Yes, but I am being Socratic. Martian, are Arab refugees the issue?

Martian: Arab refugees cannot be the issue.

Why not?

Martian: Because in 1948, when the State of Israel was established by the United Nations, there was not one single Arab refugee. And still there was war. That war was not caused by refugees who did not yet exist.

Then what *was* the cause of the 1948 war?

Martian: The Arabs wanted to destroy the Jewish State before it was born. Israel was invaded by the combined armies of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia.

Not so much detail, please. What about the right of Palestinians to their own national identity? What about their right to have a state of their own?

Martian: There is only one nation in the Middle East that has ever acknowledged that right.

Which nation is that?

Martian: Israel.

How's that again?

Martian: In 1947 the United Nations voted to split in two the territory known as Palestine under the British Mandate. There were supposed to be two countries in the one territory, one for the Jews, one for the Arabs. It seemed only fair to divide it like that. The Jewish part was 6200 square miles, most of it desert. Israel immediately recognized the Arab part as the Palestinian Arab State. Nobody else ever has.

And the Arab State? Did it recognize anything?

Martian: Not even itself.

Well, all that's blood under the bridge, you know. Please move on, we're running out of time. What about the issue of "occupied territories" as one of the underlying causes of all these wars?

Martian: Occupied territories cannot be an underlying cause.

Why not?

Martian: Because until 1967 the issue didn't exist. There *were* no "occupied territories," except for Old Jerusalem and the West Bank.

That sounds like a riddle. What do you mean?

Martian: Jordan occupied Old Jerusalem in the 1948 war, even though the United Nations said it had to be an internationalized city. From then on, for nineteen years, Jews were locked out of their religious places, and nobody seemed to mind. Jordan also occupied the

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West Bank, which was supposed to be part of the new Palestinian State.

You know perfectly well I'm talking about *Israeli-occupied territories*.

Martian: Until 1967 there were none; so they can't count as an "underlying cause." Before 1967, Sinai, Sharm el Sheikh, and the Gaza Strip were all still under Egyptian control. The Syrians still held the Golan Heights and kept shooting down from them. The West Bank was governed by Hussein. Israel didn't have a single crumb of any of these places and *still* Nasser saw reason enough to want war.

What was his reason?

Martian: To crush the Jewish State.

What was Sadat's reason in 1973?

Martian: To crush the Jewish State.

Then nothing has ever changed?

Martian: This is getting boring. And, besides, it makes me nervous. If I think like a Martian, people will say I'm a Jewish sympathizer.

Very well, class dismissed. —Oh, one more point. Please come back—come back, all of you. Right after the Six-Day War, in 1967, when the Israelis took those Arab territories, what did they immediately offer to do with them? In the very heart of their victory?

Voice: Give them back.

In return for what?

Voice: A treaty recognizing the State of Israel, settling the refugee and border questions, and making peace.

How did the Arabs respond?

Voice: They said: No peace, no negotiations, no recognition.

Well, class, it certainly looks like the Arabs don't want the Jews around, doesn't it?

Voice: Again euphemisms!

Addendum to history lesson.
What about Henry Kissinger? What about his diplomatic achievements since the Yom Kippur War?

Everything Israel and Egypt agreed to in the disengagement talks was proposed by Golda Meir exactly six months before the war, in April of 1973. You can read it in *Foreign Affairs*, which is nobody's secret state document.

You don't mean that Sadat could have had everything he says he wanted? In 1973? Without a war?

Everything.

Including pullback of Israeli forces? Opening the Suez Canal?

All of that. Everything.

Egyptians and Jews didn't have to die?

Not one life.

Then why *did* they die?

It is clear you understand nothing about national humiliation and national honor. These things are more important than just being alive. First kill two thousand six hundred Jews and maim two thousand more; then you can be certain you have upheld your honor.

But Jews weren't the only ones killed. Far from it.

Sadat has great confidence in the birthrate of the Arab Nation.

But Egyptian parents, Egyptian wives! Sadat's own brother died in the war! Aren't Egyptians mourning?

They must be, though we don't hear of them. A fault of Western news-gathering, perhaps. A fault of the Egyptian censorship, perhaps.

And the Jews?

Oh, the Jews. The Jews are mourning too. But they have had so much practice at it. . . .

Erika Freeman, a psychoanalyst who specializes in gifted people, has an inspired meditation sprung from the phrase "the glory that was Greece." She imagines that there are no more Jews in the world. It is a very intelligent imagining, since not one other nation of ancient times has survived; psychiatrists, after all, want to turn us away from anomaly back to the healthy normal. So of course it will not be a dark holocaust imagining, especially because the destruction took place, let us say, twenty centuries ago (for the meditation to work, you have to make believe that the Jews lost the Maccabean Wars); there can be no live sentiment for such a long-ago devastation any more than there are hot tears for the vanished Hittites.

So now the world has no Jews, as it has no ancient Greeks. Instead, it is in possession of two resplendently evocative phrases, each of which calls up sublime intellectual ghosts: the second phrase is "the genius that was Israel."

How—if there were no Jews—the world would be enraptured! The people that stood at Sinai to receive a desert vision of purity, the people of scholarly shepherds, humane prophetic geniuses, dreamers of justice and mercy, the mother-people of Jesus, the sister-people of Mohammed! A lost civilization: barbarism closed over it and we have only these fragments, these bits of scriptural rags faintly traced with the strong black letters of their forgotten alphabet. Christian ladies, study "The Priceless (Continued on page 207)

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(Continued from page 107) Culture of the Jews" at Chautauqua in the summertime, where there is also a workshop on tallith making.

How melancholy-sweet: the dear dead slain heroic Jews of long ago, that lost humanitarian people whose liberator Moses made it obligatory to free slaves, defend the widow and the orphan, carry on ordinary affairs in decency and equity, hate idolatry of stone or spirit; and who put all that down into a treasured Law in order to insure a life of Commandment and Deed.

Oh, the genius that was Israel!

Sometimes we try with all our might to imagine for ourselves what the world would be like if there were still a living Jewish people.

In New York, on Yom Kippur, I knew well enough they meant me—not only the citizens of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The Nazis too had rejoiced in Yom Kippur as a "special" day for "special" treatment. The massacre at Babi Yar—the shooting of thousands of Jews on the lip of a ravine outside Kiev in the Ukraine, with the zealous complicity of the Ukrainians—Babi Yar had begun on the eve of Yom Kippur and continued all through the next day. The inner nature of the Yom Kippur War was immediately recognizable.

The word for it is pogrom.

But they would take from Jews even the death of Jews. In the Soviet Union, Babi Yar is not permitted acknowledgment as a Jewish martyrdom: the official view is that "Soviet citizens" perished there, justifying the prohibition against Jewish memorial ceremonies on that spot. In the Soviet Union, Jews are singled out in all the usual unpleasant ways, and become ordinary citizens only when they fall into mass graves.

The same with the holocaust. The Final Solution, some insist, was "a crime against all mankind," not "just" against Jews: as if to say that if this were declared a crime only against Jews, then it could not be considered a crime against mankind.

When the world wants Jews to start dying again, it begins to speak of "mankind."

But the Yom Kippur War was an exception. No one could say that Syria and Egypt did not mean Jews.

On Yom Kippur I was in the synagogue.

A word about "universalists." History yields categories, which some persons resist, insisting on their commonality with all flesh, as if flesh were the only human mark. Jews who refuse to be categorized form a very large category. From Leipzig, from Danzig, from Frankfurt, from Berlin and from Vienna, the charred bones of the uncategorized cried out from the gut of the ovens, "You cannot do this to me! I am a member of all humanity!"

Only Jews carry on this way. Universalism is the ultimate Jewish parochialism.

Universalism puts one in confederacy with those who will not admit that it

was Jews who were murdered at Babi Yar.

Abstractions cannot be murdered. If only it were possible to elude every violation, past, present, and future, by becoming a universalist abstraction!

Solzhenitsyn, by contrast, abhors the Soviet system not because he is a "human being" but precisely because he is a Russian.

In the synagogue on Yom Kippur, I was pierced by the memory of a story. It was in my father's childhood, in a Russian townlet. There were two priests of that place, the "good" galach and the "bad" galach. It was, of course, Easter time, when these things often used to happen. The bad priest organized a mob with truncheons. The Jews ran to the synagogue and locked themselves in. The truncheons were turned into torches, and the mob marched around and around outside, about to set fire to the synagogue. My father, then a boy of four or five, always remembered the panic inside, families pressed together. But then the good priest came along and persuaded the murderers to go home.

My father lived, and here am I, free and safe in an American synagogue on October 6, 1973. Then why do I feel as if I am my father, about to be cut down by the mob outside?

There is no mob outside. Cairo and Damascus, which hold the torches, are on the far end of the globe. Yet they mean me. I know they mean me. Having chosen Yom Kippur, they mean me to know they mean me.

In the synagogue, amid those meditations of self-criticism and rededication that constitute the Yom Kippur worship, it seemed it was the end of Zionism, history thumbing its nose, the ideal of a Jewish homeland a mockery. Here were Jews, all crushed together in one little place, the mob beating the walls that held them. Was this what was meant by a sovereign state? A homeland? A refuge, a restoration, a return from exile? A nation like other nations? Or was it only another of those townlets, another trap in another place?

In the days that followed, a friend telephoned long-distance from Maryland; a poet. He wanted to read his new poem. The call came just before the ten o'clock news. It was the third or fourth day of the war; news in those hours was a feverishly awaited crust, an urgency, something to be downed. Nevertheless, I shut off the set and listened to the poem. It was lyrical; infused, as we say, with sensibility. Then and there I vomited up literature; I was turned against every posture grounded in aesthetics. Art is indifferent to slaughter.

On the fifth day of the war a magazine editor telephoned; business as usual. A good man, sensitive to certain elemental aches, he had grown up a member of a small fundamentalist sect in a Mormon community, and as a child felt dispossessed. "What

ing staff meetings regularly and having everybody in—Prisons, Immigration, Legal Division, maybe a dozen offices—but he never participated in those. He came four or five times, but he'd talk about the things he wanted to talk about. It would tend not to be spontaneous and it wouldn't move. The meetings were quite unproductive. That's when I finally went to just the two of us.

"You see, he had all those associates down at the F.B.I. and he really had a strong feeling that he shouldn't fraternize. One of the things I wanted to do—there were some things I wanted to do that I never did—was to have all the assistant directors to a lunch in my office. I did this at least once a week, selecting a different outfit each week, and I wanted to include the F.B.I. but it was obvious I wouldn't want to do it over his strenuous objections because you'd defeat the very purpose. I wanted to get to know them better and to open it up a little so I could get to hear what they were thinking, what they were saying and doing and give them some encouragement, but he just didn't think you should fraternize."

Would Tolson accompany him when he came to your office?

Ramsey Clark: "Only in the beginning. I always appreciated Clyde Tolson very much. But there were long periods there when Clyde couldn't come. I don't know the truth of the allegations and nobody would ever say, but Clyde had a stroke, I think, and it was pretty severe. He had a stroke in the night, and Mr. Hoover and his chauffeur—Clyde apparently called him—had to get him over to the hospital. They didn't want anybody to know it. I would ask him, 'How is Clyde?' but people in the Bureau wouldn't ask. I think Clyde had a series of strokes and I think he couldn't talk for a while. He was sick for months and months, I'd say in both 1967 and 1968, and of course I don't know anything about his condition after that time.

"I can remember the Director telling me at some length as if to justify—you see, he really needed Clyde because he didn't have any close relationship with anyone else—they were flying and the plane took a sudden drop and Mr. Hoover always wanted to think Clyde's condition had something to do with the change in pressure in the cabin. Mr. Hoover was a very lonely man. It was sad in a way. He had no close friends. His social contacts were just incredibly limited."

J. Edgar Hoover grew increasingly cantankerous in his last years. The "jellyfish" story was only one in a long series of classic boners that were indiscriminately tossed to the media like raw meat to hungry wolves. Clyde Tolson, who always stayed a respectful half step behind the Boss in their famous walks together, survived him in death, but perhaps, if the truth were known, the Boss never survived that first stroke that disabled his lifelong alter ego. ##

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Where are the counterparts?

Is there, at some café table in Cairo or kitchen in Damascus or university study in Beirut, a group of Arabs this moment making—in whatever muted or grudging fashion—the Jewish case?

Palestinians, refugees, political tacticians, national liberationists, Olympic terrorists, and terrorists of the air! Destroyers of forty-nine peaceful lives in a single postwar spring! Shooters of thirteen mothers and babies at Qiryat Shemona! Murderers of twenty school-children at Maalot! Popular-front butchers of the women of Kibbutz Shamir! All you killers of the "moderate" wing, you who fired into the kitchens at Nahariya! Religious scholars of Al-Azhar, you who issued to the "democratic secular" Fatah God's license to blow up, maim, and dismember Jews! Good and pious Moslems whose festival charities go to the same dread end! Children of Abraham, cousins! Jews of the new *Judenrat*, you who recognize the national rights of all peoples except Jews! All you who speak the word "humanity" in order to divest the Jews of their humanity! Is there not one among you who desires Israel to live?

Here the editor himself becomes overwrought. All those exclamation points!

He does not invite me to lunch. Instead, he begins a letter: "Unfortunately, we have already published so many pieces presenting this point of view, and it is, you understand, as far as general interest in these matters is concerned, the peak of the bottom. . . ." #

THE KNIFE

(Continued from page 141) man invent it or did the knife precede him here, hidden under ages of vegetation and hoofprints, lying in wait to be discovered, picked up, used?

The scalpel is in two parts, the handle and the blade. Joined, it is six inches from tip to tip. At one end of the handle is a narrow notched prong upon which the blade is slid, then snapped into place. Without the blade, the handle has a blind, decapitated look. It is helpless as a trussed maniac. But slide on the blade, click it home, and the knife springs instantly to life. It is headed now, edgy, leaping to mount the fingers for the gallop to its feast.

Now is the moment from which you have turned aside, from which you have averted your gaze, yet toward which you have been hastened. Now the scalpel sings along the flesh again, its brute run unimpeded by germs or other frictions. It is a slick slide home, a barracuda spurt, a rip of embedded talon. One listens, and almost hears the whine—nasal, high, delivered through that gleaming metallic snout. The flesh splits with its own kind of moan. It is like the penetration of rape.

The breasts of women are cut off, arms and legs sliced to the bone to make ready for the saw, eyes freed from eyelids, intestines, and liver

boils through his pores, like sweat. The flesh of the patient retaliates with hemorrhage, and the blood chases the knife wherever it is withdrawn.

Within the belly a tumor squats, toadish, fungoid. A grey mother and her brood. The only thing it does not do is croak. It too is hacked from its bed as the carnivore knife lips the blood, turning in it in a kind of ecstasy of plenty, a gluttony after the long fast. It is just for this that the knife was created, tempered, heated, its violence beaten into paper-thin force.

At last a little thread is passed into the wound and tied. The monstrous booming fury is stilled by a tiny thread. The tempest is silenced. The operation is over. On the table, the knife lies spent, on its side, the bloody meal smear-dried upon its flanks. The knife rests.

And waits. #

WHY AMERICA IS BOTTLING UP

(Continued from page 162) color exactly like a swimming pool.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA, and SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, have the hardest water in the United States. Hard water has more than a hundred parts per million of dissolved solids. In these cities the water has 500 to 700 p.p.m.

CLEVELAND, OHIO. The water supply comes from Lake Erie and is drawn through four pipes extending at least two and a half miles into the lake to avoid the worst of the pollution near shore. The water, after purification, tastes wretched.

CINCINNATI, OHIO. The people who live here say the water tastes "okay," but studies indicate that it could taste better if certain purification steps were taken.

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA. Toxic substances, some of which are known to cause cancer, have been found in the water. But they are present in such small quantities that the populace isn't worried. It is disturbed by the taste of the water, which comes from the polluted Mississippi.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA. "Tolerable is the most you can say about the taste of the water here—it depends more on the pipes it flows through than on the supply itself though," says one Philadelphian. So far, though, it has been acceptable to most of the city's inhabitants.

A recent Gallup Poll on community water supplies indicates that thirty percent of Americans are displeased with their water: fourteen percent of this group said their water tastes bad, and others said it looks "discolored" or "dirty." Three quarters of the population believe that pollution poses a threat.

The burgeoning sales of bottled water suggests that these people are now willing to put their money where their mouths are, and the Bottling of America, if not an immediate certainty, is a