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FREE

Scofflaw Diplomacy

Matthew Evangelista

The last decade has not been an easy one for the peace movement in the United States. The end of the Cold War saw many of its key goals achieved—reductions in nuclear weapons; withdrawal of Soviet and American troops from central Europe and substantial cuts in conventional weaponry; the end of the Soviet war in Afghanistan and US military intervention in Nicaragua; the demise of communist rule and the promise of democracy in Eastern Europe and Russia. Yet subsequent challenges divided the movement—if we can still speak of it in those terms—with erstwhile allies taking opposing positions on US policy. Some former opponents of US intervention in Central America, for example, endorsed sending the marines to reinstate the ousted president of Haiti, Jean Bertrand Aristide, whereas others suspected US motives and balked at the use of military power even to right such an obvious injustice. Some critics of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization who had protested against the alliance's deployments of US nuclear missiles in Europe in the 1980s came, a decade later, to support the expansion of NATO right up to Russia's borders in the interest of stability and democracy. Others continued to see NATO as part of the problem rather than the solution and wished it would go the way of the Warsaw Pact and cease to exist. Many peace activists who in the past had steadfastly opposed bloated US military budgets found themselves calling for the United States to use its air forces to bomb Serbian targets in Bosnia and Kosovo, and to send ground troops to halt the genocidal actions of Slobodan Milosevic. Others found the bombing-for-peace approach unacceptable, especially when carried out by the NATO alliance in the face of opposition from key members of the United Nations Security Council.

No issue has been more troubling for supporters of peace than Iraq. As a new generation of activists emerges to protest the Bush administration's rush to war, it would do well to reflect upon the problems that the Iraq situation has posed for the peace movement over the years. The traditional approaches pursued by peace activists have not proved very successful: nonviolent resolution of disputes, sensitivity to the "security dilemma" (the notion that even countries that procure weapons solely for defensive purposes can appear threatening to others), and reliance on economic sanctions and UN resolutions as alternatives to military action. Saddam Hussein's rule of the country has led Iraq into two disastrous wars. Barely a year after coming to power in 1979 he provoked a war with Iran over a boundary dispute, anticipating an easy victory against a country in the throes of Islamic revolution. The war dragged on for eight years, with no clear victor, but with a toll of well over a million victims. In the midst of the war, Hussein's army pursued a separate campaign against the Kurdish com-

munities of Iraq, destroying thousands of villages and displacing or killing tens of thousands of people—many of them attacked with chemical weapons, which the Iraqi forces also used against the Iranian army. A UN-brokered ceasefire ended the war with Iran, but Hussein hardly paused to catch his breath. In August 1990, he ordered an invasion of neighboring Kuwait, ostensibly in response to a dispute over oil production. Once Iraqi forces had overwhelmed Kuwait's limited defenses, Hussein declared the country's annexation while his troops carried out a brutal occupation in which Kuwaiti citizens and foreign guestworkers (Palestinians, Indians, and others) suffered alike.

The peacemakers' toolkit—negotiations, arms control treaties, conflict resolution—did not seem very effective in dealing with Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Those techniques were developed in the context of a superpower nuclear rivalry, which, as British historian and disarmament activist E.P. Thompson famously put it, was mainly about itself. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union intended to attack each other (although they invaded countries in their "spheres of influence" many times). The arms race served the domestic interests of the ruling elites on each side, but was in turn vulnerable to unilateral initiatives of restraint promoted from the grassroots. It ended when the Soviet leadership under Mikhail Gorbachev heeded the advice of transnational activists and pursued a conciliatory foreign policy under the banner of "new thinking." All that was needed was for the United States to acknowledge the change, and Ronald Reagan, to his credit, did so, even if his successor, George H.W. Bush, feared that he was being too hasty.

What finally persuaded the first President Bush that Gorbachev's changes were real was the Soviet reaction to Iraq's invasion of

Kuwait in 1990. The USSR backed UN Security Council resolutions intended to induce Iraq's withdrawal. Gorbachev, whose rhetoric and ideas often drew upon those of the peace movement, advocated a nonviolent approach, at least to start. Thus, the Soviet Union, a major supplier of weapons to Iraq, endorsed the US proposal for a UN-sponsored arms embargo. Then it supported an overall trade embargo with a naval blockade of Iraq's oil tankers. When Iraq still refused to withdraw its forces from Kuwait, the Security Council issued Resolution 678 authorizing the use of "all necessary means" to reverse the Iraqi invasion, a transparent euphemism for military force. Iraq was given until January 15, 1991 to comply. The Soviet Union joined the three other permanent members of the Council who voted in favor of the resolution—the United States, Britain, and France—while China abstained. The USSR, through its special envoy Evgenii Primakov, a Middle East specialist who had known Saddam Hussein for years, tried to persuade Iraq to face reality and withdraw. But Hussein would not even do his "friend" the courtesy of allowing Soviet civilian and military advisers to leave the country; he preferred to keep them as hostages, in a futile attempt to undermine the uneasy Soviet support for military action.

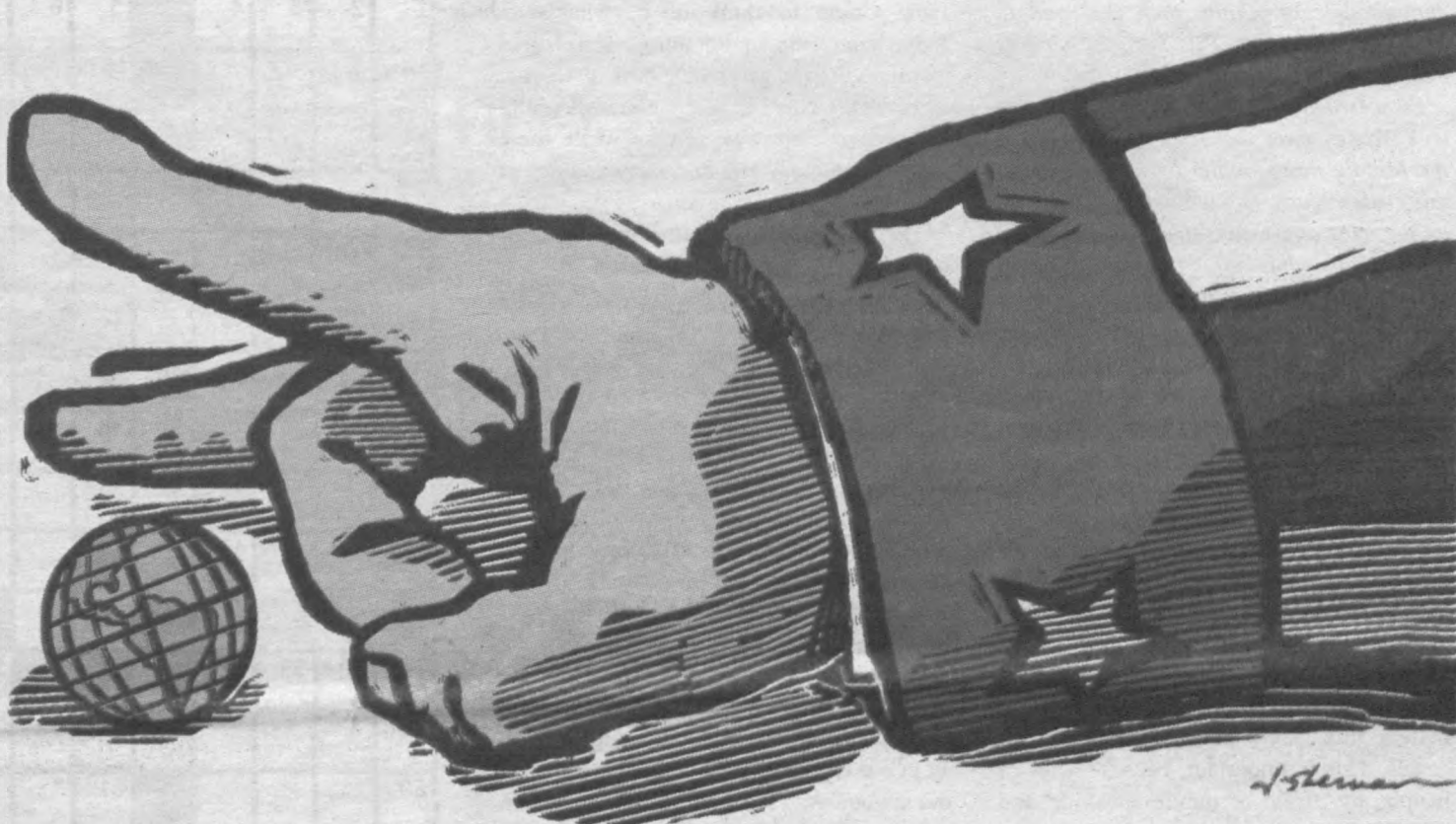
Operation Desert Storm—the war against Iraq—began on January 16, 1991, the day after the expiration of the Security Council resolution. Thirty-three countries participated in the war, but the United States clearly dominated the military campaign. The strategy was heavily dependent on massive bombing, with much damage inflicted on basic infrastructure—electricity grids, sewage and water systems, communications facilities. Destruction of such targets undoubtedly hindered the Iraqi military forces, but at enor-

mous cost—especially in the long term—to the civilian population. In combination with the punishing sanctions regime, the toll on innocent civilians over the decade since the Gulf War has been devastating.

Perhaps most disturbing to the peace movement was not only that the economic sanctions—intended as a nonviolent alternative to war—failed to secure Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. Pursued tenaciously by the United States, long after Iraq's defeat, and exploited for propaganda purposes by Hussein, the sanctions wrought terrible damage on the weakest, most innocent members of Iraqi society.

Does the peace movement then deserve blame for the dangerous mess that Iraq has become? Hardly. If Saddam Hussein is a monster, as hardly anyone would doubt, the United States is in many respects his Dr. Frankenstein. Viewing Iraq as a secular bulwark against Iran's Islamic revolution, the US government encouraged its aggressive actions against the Ayatollahs' regime. For years US and other Western companies knowingly sold Iraq the components that enabled Hussein's scientists to pursue development of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. During the war against Iran, the United States provided satellite imagery to assist the Iraqi air force in locating Iranian targets for chemical-weapons attacks. In planning his assault on Kuwait, Saddam Hussein is widely believed to have received a green light from the United States in his infamous meeting with Ambassador April Glaspie. The United States evidently failed to anticipate the voraciousness of Hussein's appetite for aggression, as he swallowed Kuwait and claimed it as Iraq's nineteenth province.

In opposing the Iraqi invasion, George Bush groped for justifications that would lead



Jack Sherman

continued on page 8

Everyone is Innocent

Jeremy Weir Alderson

Dan Cook, writing in response to my comments about the Israel/Palestine conflict (Bookpress, October 2002), crosses the line and makes numerous misstatements of fact. Most egregiously, he accuses me of calling for the destruction of the Dome of the Rock and The Al Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem. I never made any such statements, and actually agree with Cook that such actions would be disastrous.

Nonetheless, Cook's letter is a pretty good illustration of exactly what I am decrying about the left's attitude toward Israel. There seems to be a belief out there that if we can just say enough awful things about Israel, just pressure Israel enough, just blame Israel enough for everything, then the road to peace will open up. This is, quite simply, madness.

Even Israelis willing to admit their country's wrongs know that Israel did not create the Middle East conflict by itself. Instead, this crazed blame-making will only embolden the most aggressive elements among the Palestinians while stiffening the resistance of the least compromising Israelis. The left's approach to Israel is an invitation to war, not peace.

I have tried to set forth some of my views on the real road to peace in the column below.

When it comes to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, only three viewpoints are possible: one side is guilty, both sides are guilty or both sides are innocent. Each has its advantages—and its drawbacks.

The biggest advantage of the one-side-is-guilty position is that it is, by far, the most popular option and, what's more, if you believe this, you'll never be at a loss for words. This is important, because a lot of people are afraid of public speaking and even some people who like to be the center of attention are a bit abashed when it comes to expounding on matters that could lead to World War Three. Fortunately, as long as you can blame someone else, you'll never run out of accusations.

Among other things, Israelis can blame Palestinians for not recognizing the legitimacy of their claim to Palestine; preventing Jewish immigration and, thus, making more Jews die in the Holocaust; waging a war against them; rejecting peace initiatives and

slandering them. Among other things, Palestinians can blame Israelis for usurping land, conducting a brutal occupation, waging a war against them, rejecting peace initiatives and slandering them. Of course, to a house built on such a firm foundation, one can add storey after storey (or story after story), and, as if that weren't enough, both sides can vent their fury at the press for not reporting accurately why the other side is to blame for everything.

It's hard to quibble with a position that's so perpetually satisfying but, let's face it, the one-side-is-guilty argument provides too much of a good thing. Sure, that feeling that you'll never walk alone is wonderful when it's because so many people are on your side. But it's a little less congenial when it's because you wouldn't dare to visit the other side without the company of an armed phalanx. Come to think of it, what with Palestinian suicide bombings and Israeli airstrikes, it even gets a little difficult to walk in groups. And, if the one-side-is-guilty folks have their way, after a while there won't be anybody left to do any walking at all.

The both-sides-are-guilty position is, if nothing else, a little more practical. For one thing, both sides pretty much agree that God takes a peculiar interest in the Middle East. And by all accounts, God likes it when we repent and take responsibility for our wrongs. Since both sides pretty much agree that God could squash us all like bugs, pleasing God is, maybe, more important than pleasing any particular party. Also, this position does have the advantage of opening up a potential dialogue for peace.

Take, for example, the issue of readmitting Palestinian refugees to Israel. It's one thing to take back a group of people who say, "It's about time you despicable so-and-so's did the right thing. Now we're going to sit in our old homes and let our hatred leach out at you." And it's another thing to take in a group of people who say, "Look, we all did wrong, let's get along." Anyone can see that the prospects for a harmonious democracy are a lot better with the latter group than with the former. And the same logic applies to all the thorny issues, like who controls the Temple Mount, the extent of territorial compromise, and whether Arafat or Sharon ever faces a war crimes tribunal. Unfortunately, the both-sides-are-guilty position has its downside too. For one thing, people thinking this way won't exactly be the life of the party—any party. And it's hard to imagine a peace settlement that requires every single adult on both sides to be a perpetual bore. Once you've taken your share of the blame, what have you got left to say? Even in the Middle East, there must be some other purpose to life than endless self-flagellation. Certainly people on both sides believe they began with good intentions in their minds and hearts. They still want to live in the spirit of their highest hopes, and that's not likely to happen if everyone adopts the both-sides-are-guilty position which is, after all, just one big downer.

Which brings us to the both-sides-are-innocent point of view. The biggest virtue of this position is that it's true. The Jews did nothing wrong in presenting their rather musty deed to the Promised Land. Sure, it was a bit unusual, but it was certainly not a crime to have survived 2000 years of exile or to want to survive for 2000 more at home. Similarly, who can fail to understand why the Palestinians didn't want to give up one inch of the land they thought was theirs? Can anyone say that if the positions had been reversed, the Jews would have done better? Israel isn't exactly rushing to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, now is it? True, there's a downside to the both-sides-are-innocent argument, the biggest one being that it fudges the bitterest truth.

Sure, both sides had innocent motivations when this whole conflict started and sure, as Anne Frank said, "people are truly good at heart," but come on. To say that both sides are innocent is to gloss over the grotesque crimes both sides have committed. Whatever happened to, "No justice, no peace?"

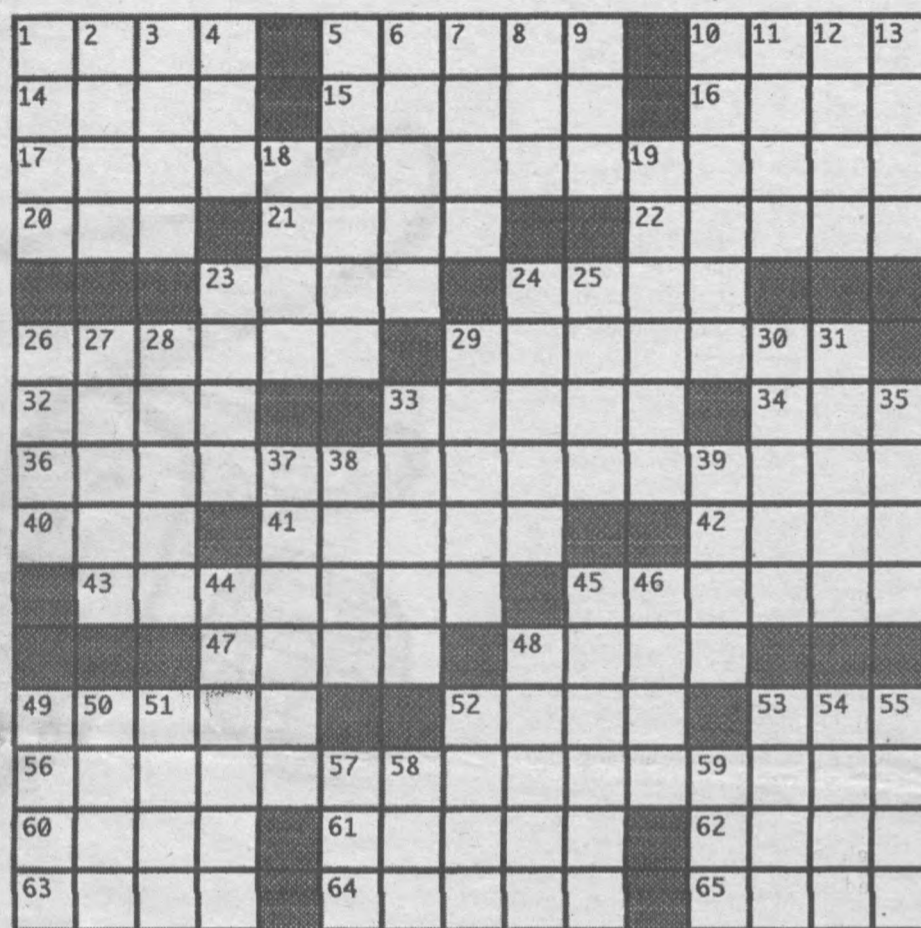
The answer is that the truest of all the truths in the Middle East is that something is going to have to be overlooked. The real question is should we be overlooking rights or overlooking wrongs? Well, actually, that's not the real question because that one's

a no brainer. The one people get stuck on is the one about just exactly whose wrongs are we supposed to overlook? Again, choosing between the options is just a practical matter. By all reports, God likes it when we remember our own wrongs, and likes it even more when we forget someone else's. It's called forgiveness. And, in the end, it's not that there can be no peace without justice. It's that there can be no justice without peace.

Jeremy Weir Alderson was the host of the *Nobody Show* on WEOS.

Crossword Puzzle

"D+" by Adam Perl



ACROSS

1. Oft signed item
5. "Not _____ in the world"
10. Spread
14. Healing plant
15. Georgia crop
16. One of Chekov's sisters
17. Marked the score?
20. Collection
21. Ground items?
22. Zany
23. Some are great
24. Email folder
29. Riders
32. They're unrefined
33. Respond
34. Kids' game
36. Get the naked truth?
40. Brian of song
41. Ceases
42. "____ - 12"
43. McNally's output
45. Space _____
47. Elects
48. New Rochelle campus
49. Five-star powder ingredient
52. Queens' stadium
53. Detroit org.
56. Hates to swim?
60. At any time
61. Chopper part
62. Superman's mother
63. Costner role
64. Die down
65. Breakfast option

DOWN

1. Heels
2. Sheltered

3. Weak, economically
4. Gunpowder, e.g.
5. Heights
6. Gives up
7. Does one's part
8. Fan noise
9. Compass point
10. Gets on
11. "Born Free" star
12. Not fer
13. It may be found in tatters
18. Fear or Hope
19. Trivial
23. As well
24. Blind spots?
25. For one
26. Mother _____
27. Venue
28. Terminal
29. Phones won't take them
30. Chopin opus
31. Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1978
33. Upsets
35. Masterpieces
37. Forms
38. Middle _____
39. Zip
44. They may be sore
45. Stick
46. Over
48. "____ the Sheriff"
49. Gulf state
50. "Scream" star Campbell
51. Followers
52. "____ girl!"
53. Jazz home
54. Dynamic start
55. Stole
57. End of an ex?
58. Kind of story
59. 2001 biopic

See answer on page 6

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What Came First is Last

David Brazil

After Nature

By W. G. Sebald

tr. from German by Michael Hamburger
Random House
116 pp., \$21.95, cloth

In some remote corner of the universe, poured out and glittering in innumerable solar systems, there once was a star on which clever animals invented knowledge. That was the haughtiest and most mendacious minute of "world history"—yet only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths the star grew cold, and the clever animals had to die.

"On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense," Friedrich Nietzsche

Winfried Georg Sebald, to my mind one of the finest contemporary authors, died unexpectedly a year ago this December. For those of us who were ardent readers of his work, it came as a severe blow. *Austerlitz*, his fourth book, had just been released in this country, and it was clear that he was writing at the top of his powers. Now his first posthumous publication, *After Nature*, has been published in this country in a translation by Michael Hamburger. It is a free verse poem in three sections, which was actually composed prior to the books which have been published thus far. Although it came first, we read it as we receive it, last. It is a striking précis of the themes and techniques that Sebald's later works would develop, and it is also a presentation of Sebald's views on both the nature of art and the struggle of the artist to find a form adequate to the chaos of human experience in the natural world.

The first section of the poem, "... As The Snow On The Alps," deals with the life and work of the painter Matthias Grünewald. Grünewald, a shadowy figure about whom we know little, and whose very name is uncertain in the historical record, was commissioned by an Antonine monastery to paint an altarpiece for their hospital chapel in Isenheim, Germany. This work, which is considered one of the masterpieces of the German Renaissance, depicts the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and several scenes from the life of the desert saint Anthony, the patron of the monastery. Anthony, who dwelt in solitude in Egypt, was plagued by demons who tempted him into madness and despair. Grünewald's depiction of these scenes of demonic torture is hellish. For Sebald, it is also exemplary of the painter's worldview:

To him, the painter, this is creation,
image of our insane presence
on the surface of the earth....

And, for Sebald, what is the logic of our presence?

To try out how far it can go
Is the sole aim of this sprouting,
Perpetuation and proliferation
Inside us also and through us and
through
The machines sprung from our heads,
All in a single jumble,
While behind us already the green
Trees are leaving their leaves and
Bare, as often they appear in Grünewald's
Pictures, loom up into the sky....

Sebald shows us Grünewald's art as the attempt to grasp the apparent arbitrariness of nature. But strangely, this wrestling, which seems so agonizing, forms the ground for the greatest triumphs of his art. In a discussion of the central panel of the Isenheim altarpiece, which is a graphic and nightmarish depiction of the Crucifixion, Sebald suggests that the painter was able to imagine the darkness that settled over the earth at the moment of Christ's death by recalling his experience of a solar eclipse:

Most probably Grünewald painted
and recalled the catastrophic incursion
of darkness, the last trace of light
flickering from beyond, after nature....

Nature itself taught Grünewald
how to imagine the final, spiritual

Aleutian Islands, Sebald's presentation of the story is mostly concerned with Steller's approach to and return from the New World. From the solar eclipse, Grünewald learned how to present the end of the world; in his explorations, Steller discovered what still persists at the end of the world. But to learn what he must, he too must pass through the chaos:

All was a greyness, without direction,
with no above or below, nature
in a process of dissolution, in a state
of pure dementia.

When the Bering expedition, which returned without Bering, who had perished during the winter, rebuilt a boat out of the wrecked shell of their original vessel, Steller had to discard all of the botanical samples and notes that he had made.

And closest to the beholder's eye
The new generation of Moabites is conceived.

When for the first time I saw
This picture the year before last,
I had the strange feeling
Of having seen all of it
Before, and a little later,
Crossing to Floridsdorf
On the Bridge of Peace,
I nearly went out of my mind.

We are all children of history, but Sebald, born in 1944 in Germany, was the inheritor of a country which had initiated previously unimaginable crimes, and for which it paid a devastating price. We are not only the children of soldiers; we must also live amidst the wreckage of their wars. Sebald's reference to his birth and the birth of the Biblical Moabites also reminds us that human generation is part of the ongoing chaos of nature, which we attempt to bind with the orderly system called history. But history is only the record of the damage we have done in trying to escape our original place in nature.

The artist has the double task of interpreting both nature and what we have wrought in nature, the after-nature which we have made. We are left to grapple with attempts at a reasonable explanation. The first section of the poem opens with a quotation from the second canto of Dante's *Inferno*, in which Dante asks Vergil to be his guide through the depths of the underworld. This is how we are to read Sebald's biographical-poetic presentations of Grünewald and Steller: he is their student, they have something to teach him. It seems to me that each one of these men tried to construct a system of order with which to capture the phenomenal world. In his poem, Sebald is looking at two who tried, in different ways: one, through art and a kind of faith; the other, through science and a kind of reason. And in the process of investigating and modelling the world, both men discovered that its sense was no sense at all. The painter and the scientist were both architects of inadequate systems of order. And the uncertainty of the author does not permit him to take either as a model. In fact, neither man can be a teacher, because nature is the true teacher, from which the patient man:

slowly learns, from the tininess
of the figures and the incomprehensible
beauty of nature that vaults over them
to see that side of life that
one could not see before.

To paraphrase Hector Berlioz, nature is the best teacher, but it kills all of its pupils. Yeats has told us that "once out of nature I shall never take my bodily form from any natural thing". There shall be none of us after nature but what remains of what we have made. Despite his fears and scruples Sebald speaks to us with this same voice, the voice of a distant but powerful hope:

The wind drives us into flight
Like starlings in the hour when
The shadows fall. What remains to the last
Is the work undertaken.

David Brazil lives in Ithaca, NY.



Don Karr

darkness. In this appearance of the work's title in the text, Sebald introduces the dual meaning of a painting executed after nature, that is, in imitation; and also of what is subsequent to nature, what persists after it is gone. Both the natural world and our earthly natures, which are perishing as we watch. When he received word of the mass execution of peasants involved in an uprising, Grünewald, like Anthony, declined to leave his dwelling-place any longer. He had seen enough.

Grünewald's travels were all restricted to Germany. But Sebald's second subject, the naturalist Georg Steller, traversed Europe, Russia, and the Bering Sea in pursuit of knowledge of the natural world. Attached to the second expedition of Vitus Bering, which was dispatched to explore the New World, Steller travelled to Alaska and was party to the great disaster that befell the expedition. Although poor planning and the weak leadership of Bering, who was a broken man by the time of this expedition, forced the surviving crew to winter under terrible conditions on the

Almost nothing survived except the notes he was able to make when he returned to Russia and wrote down what he could gather "into the dust/of an endless inventory".

The subject of the third section is Sebald himself. As so often in his work, the spur to recollection is a photograph, in this case of his family. Neither his mother nor his father have any particular recollection of the last war, the Second World War, during which Sebald was born, but the thought of Nuremberg in flames brings to Sebald's mind a painting:

by Altdorfer depicting Lot
with his daughters. On the horizon
a terrible conflagration blazes
devouring a large city.
Smoke ascends from the site,
The flames rise to the sky and
In the blood-red reflection
One sees the blackened
Façades of houses.
In the middle ground there is a strip
Of idyllic green landscape,

The Making of the New Library

Janet Steiner

For two hundred years, Americans have found their way out of poverty, ignorance and parochialism through public libraries. And despite predictions that libraries will become obsolete and replaced by digitized information on the Internet, in recent years new libraries have been built in San Francisco, Phoenix, Chicago, Denver and San Antonio. Here in Tompkins County, the tiny village of Newfield has renovated and expanded its library, the Ulysses Philomathic Library in Trumansburg moved into its new facility in 2001, and the Tompkins County Public Library opened the doors of its new building at the end of 2000.

The story of the Tompkins County Public Library starts in 1863, when Ezra Cornell chartered the Cornell Public Library. Cornell deeply believed that a free public library would be useful in "increasing the knowledge and elevating the moral and religious standards of the people." Buying the property and funding the building, Cornell saw the library open at the southeast corner of Tioga and Seneca Street on December 18, 1866. Cornell University was founded later with its first meetings of trustees and graduations held in the Cornell Public Library. The three-story building included a Lecture Hall with a stage and balcony seating 800 people, room for up to 30,000 books, and leased space for tenants. It served the Ithaca community until 1960 when it was demolished during urban renewal.

In 1968 the Cornell Public Library became the Tompkins County Public Library and moved into its new home on Cayuga Street. Thirty-two years later, on November 20, 2000 the new Tompkins County Public Library moved to the corner of Cayuga and Green Street, the site of a former Woolworth's Department Store.

The story of how we moved from the 1995 Strategic Plan to a new library has been documented and preserved in an 80-minute video "The Making of the New Library," which can be checked out at the library. Community involvement, private/public financial support and strong leadership ensured a successful project. Inspired architects, staff stakeholder participation, and hundreds of iterations of floor plans resulted in a library which continues to receive rave reviews, and which was highlighted in the 2002 Architectural Issue of *Library Journal*.

When we built the new library we built a facility that would meet the projected space needs of the community for the next twenty years. The library expects to complete its growth on this site in 2010 when it will expand into the 7500 sq. foot space now

occupied by the Finger Lakes Library System. In addition, the library and the county are active participants in the Cayuga Green development project, ensuring that the library's potential to physically expand is not compromised by the project.

Vision and Reality

The library has now doubled in square footage, tripled in seating capacity and has a shelving capacity for 20 years of collection growth. Usage of the community meeting room has tripled, reference queries have



Tompkins County Public Library

increased by 63%, and circulation is up by 20%. Public programming attracted more than 10,000 people in 2001. Our door count is approaching 650,000 people annually. And despite the increase in public Internet terminals, users can expect to wait in line before they can get on-line.

The increase in space allowed us to offer new services like a Health Information Center, public exhibit and display opportunities, and book drops open 24/7. A digital microfilm scanner extends new possibilities to those using microfilm. And users can e-mail their questions to the Ask A Librarian service, providing the best in professional library service to those who don't have the time to come in to the library.

A solar energy system resides on the roof, and provides 20%-40% of the library's energy demand. An information kiosk located on the Avenue of the Friends provides immediate information about the amount of energy being generated by the solar panels.

Data Collection

Collecting information from a number of

different sources provided the foundation for the new strategic plan. A community survey of users and non-users was conducted by the Center for Applied Research in Library and Information Science (CARLIS) at the State University of New York at Buffalo in November of 2001, one year after the new library opened. The survey results were thought-provoking and illuminating. For example, we learned that 61% of the residents of Tompkins County said they used the library, while another 7% indicated that they used other public libraries in Tompkins County. 84% of our users said they were

extremely or very satisfied with the level of service that they received. This puts Tompkins County Public Library in the top ranking of other public libraries in the county in terms of user satisfaction. "TCPL users are more satisfied with their library than 17 of 19 other libraries for which CARLIS had comparable data..." (TCPL Users Survey p. 7)

How much should Tompkins County pay for library support? Our users suggested \$98 per capita, while non-users proposed \$44 per capita of support. This contrasts dramatically with the reality—in Tompkins County the per capita support for all five chartered public libraries is less than \$23. The full report (267 pages) is available at the library.

In addition to the community survey, the committee reviewed data which compared the Tompkins County Public Library to other libraries in the county serving similar populations and with similar circulation. The data, contained in the library's 2020 Report (available at the library), showed that our library is below the median in terms of collection size, hours open, and staff size.

The committee also spent time considering trends in public libraries, especially the continuing impact of technology on library operations. These trends include partnering with other community agencies, incorporating user-friendly technology, offering customized and personalized service, enhancing the library's web page with community information, and increasing the role of professional librarians as "creators of knowledge" rather than locators of information.

Fiscal Reality

The irony of the strategic planning initiative is that it is taking place during a challenging fiscal time. Retaining a vision for the future while being confronted daily with the prospects of a significant (20%) reduction in county funding was difficult. County funding represents 70% of our revenue.

As we discussed what new library services would be important to offer in the next five years, we were simultaneously asking what library services would be reduced or eliminated in the next five months!

Libraries have always been vulnerable to

the slightest economic downturn. Regardless of how many Americans love and use public libraries, regardless of how many campaigns we mount to inform the American public about our value, and regardless of the size of the library or its geographic location, public libraries seem to be in a constant state of fiscal jeopardy.

In New York State, the Regents Commission on Public Libraries studied the issue of financial support (and non-support) of public libraries and recommended that public libraries seek stable, secure and sufficient funding by becoming public library districts.

Public Library districts are defined by two basic elements: the budget is voted upon by the taxpayers residing within the district and the library is governed by a board of trustees who are also-elected.

New York libraries which have moved to the public library district have seen their per capita support double. According to the report issued by the commission, average funding is \$55 per capita in communities where there is a public vote on the library's budget, compared with \$24 in communities where there is no vote.

These data did not escape our strategic planning committee. In fact, the library trustees had already convened a broad-based coalition of county libraries and county legislators to investigate the possibility of creating a public library district for Tompkins County. While simple in concept, the public library district model is complex in Tompkins County, due to overlapping chartered service areas. A hybrid model which protects the autonomy of each library while producing the needed increase in revenue is under consideration.

The Next Five Years

For the immediate future, the library's strategic plan will focus the resources of the library on eight directions. Just as the 1995 plan indicated that success would hinge on an improved and expanded physical facility, this report starts with the premise that future success will hinge on achieving fiscal stability. At press time, the strategic plan is nearing completion. The focus points are as follows:

- o Pursue Secure, Stable and Sufficient Funding
- o Continue to Improve the Collection
- o Expand Reference and Information Services
- o Stabilize and Expand the Staff
- o Increase the Investment in Technology
- o Emphasize Public Programming
- o Reach out to New and Diverse Users
- o Establish Evaluation Measures for All Library Services

The strategic plan provides clear evidence of outstanding stewardship of the library and its assets by the Board of Trustees. The Friends of the Library provide financial support at a level far beyond what most public libraries in this country could even hope for. The Foundation's Board of Directors continues its amazing success in private fundraising. The staff of the library are committed to delivering the best possible library services today and are eagerly planning specific initiatives to implement the strategic plan.

Our library represents the heart and soul of our community. Our belief as Americans that we can be anything we want to be has no greater symbol than the American public library. Our library, like those of many other cities, towns and villages, continues to flourish and to fulfill the mission started by Ezra Cornell one hundred and thirty-nine years ago.

—
Janet Steiner is Director of the Tompkins County Public Library in Ithaca.

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Tough Times for Libraries

Elizabeth Herrington

Times are tough for public libraries these days. Nationwide they face challenges both political and economic, as the double whammy of terrorism and recession takes its toll on the functioning of what are among this country's most enduring public institutions.

Faced with spending cuts and shrinking budgets, libraries have been forced to find ways to cope with higher demand and decreased funding. Maurice Freedman, president of the American Library Association, calls this situation a tragedy. "The tragedy is that at the time when libraries are most needed and most in demand, funding is being cut and hours of access curtailed," he said, in an interview with *The Bookpress*.

Many libraries nationwide have simply had to shut their doors for periods of time (the Tompkins County facility closed all weekend during the summer). Seattle's library, for example, has announced it will close the entire week before Christmas, due to citywide budget cuts. Cincinnati will increase fines and reduce the number of hours the main library and every branch library are open to the public by an average of four hours per week. Under consideration is the closing of some of the branches.

"Libraries are coping in whatever ways they can. Budget cuts are hitting most city and county agencies hard right now," Freedman said.

There are more than 16,000 public library outlets—one in almost every community across the country. In fact, there are more public libraries than there are McDonald's outlets, Freedman noted.

Libraries and Liberty

Meanwhile, libraries face another threat: that embodied in the USA Patriot Act (a fine example of putting the acronym before the meaning): "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act."

The latest study available (Jan/Feb 2002), conducted by the University of Illinois at Champaign, indicates that about 8% of libraries (85 out of a survey sample of 1,020 libraries) report that authorities have requested information about their patrons pursuant to the events of September 11.

Since then, according to Freedman, the due process procedures that protected the privacy of library users in 49 out of 50 states have been transcended by the provisions of the USA Patriot Act.

"If the survey correctly reflects activity in libraries, we have some reason to be concerned. The government has always recognized that what you read and think are an extension of free speech. We're concerned that the USA Patriot Act allows a much lower level of judicial scrutiny before law enforcement is allowed to search library records. Our major area of concern is the invasion of privacy for people who use the library," Freedman said.

The legislation originated late last year with Attorney General John Ashcroft, who asked Congress for additional powers that he claimed were needed to fight terrorism in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001. Few amendments were made to Ashcroft's initial proposal to Congress, and the bill became law without any hearings or markup by a congressional committee.

According to the ALA, the section of the act that specifically hits libraries (and bookstores and the media, for that matter) includes the following:

Section 215: Access to Records Under Foreign Intelligence Security Act (FISA)
Allows an FBI agent to obtain a search warrant for "any tangible thing," which

can include books, records, papers, floppy disks, data tapes, and computers with hard drives.

Permits the FBI to compel production of library circulation records, Internet use records, and registration information stored in any medium.

Does not require the agent to demonstrate "probable cause," the existence of specific facts to support the belief that a crime has been committed or that the items sought are evidence of a crime. Instead, the agent only needs to claim that he believes that the records he wants may be related to an ongoing investigation related to terrorism or intelligence activities, a very low legal standard.

Libraries or librarians served with a search warrant issued under FISA rules may not disclose, under penalty of law, the existence of the warrant or the fact that records were produced as a result of the warrant. A patron cannot be told that his or her records were given to the FBI or that he or she is the subject of an FBI investigation.

(For additional information on the ALA's position on the USA Patriot Act, see www.ala.org/washoff/terrorism.pdf and www.ala.org/washoff/FreedomofSpeech9.pdf

The Future

Yet the ALA is optimistic about the future. "The future of the book is assured," said Freedman. "The public library is a storehouse of freely available information in print, electronic, and other formats—a role that guarantees its future existence. It also is a center to which the community comes for a host of reasons—to attend programs, to read a newspaper, to meet and be with other members of their community, to get the friendly assistance of the reference librarian when a website can't be found, a nugget of information is elusive, for an entertaining book to read, or for a multitude of other reasons."

Yet every library is different, he noted. Libraries are uniquely local institutions and reflect the flavor of their communities. But there are some broad themes and principles that bind them together: Libraries are places of opportunity. They are places for education and self-help. Because they bring access to all, they bring opportunity to all. In this way, libraries are the same as they have been since the first U.S. public libraries were established in the 1800s.

"But libraries also are technology powerhouses, community meeting centers and hosts to public programs ranging from author readings to film series, Freedman said. "Libraries are changing and dynamic places that continue to strive to meet the diverse needs of their users. Almost all libraries offer free public Internet access and classes to teach people how to find what they need effectively. Eight out of 10 libraries offer cultural programs for adult audiences."

The only thing certain, Freedman concluded, is that there will continue to be a need for libraries and the expert assistance of librarians.

The sheer volume of information available in print and online demands the skills of librarians—the ultimate search engines. Libraries continue to be America's great information equalizers—the only place people of all ages and backgrounds can find and freely use such a diversity of resources, along with the expert guidance of librarians.

Elizabeth Herrington lives in Ithaca, by way of, New York City, Atlanta and São Paulo.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE BOOKERY

Ammiel Alcalay

Alcalay incisively advances some unfashionable but often convincing positions on the politics and culture of the Middle East, winning greater exposure for a wide range of Sephardic writers both through his own writings and by editing and translating anthologies that showcase their work.

Thursday, November 7, 7:30pm. The Bookery.



Zelda Lockhart



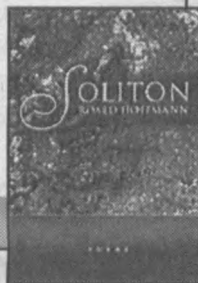
Set in Mississippi and Missouri in the 1970s, this strong debut novel tackles harrowing themes of family violence and abuse. Lockhart's narrative is straightforward and lyrical, Odessa's voice is believable and the evolution of her character in the face of overwhelming alienation is as engaging as it is heartbreaking.

Saturday, November 9, 2:30pm. The Bookery.

Roald Hoffman

Taking a well-deserved break from being a Nobel Prize winner, author, poet, professor and playwright, Roald Hoffman will be reading from *Soliton*, his new collection of poetry. Sometimes funny, and always carefully observed and reflective, his work is intriguing, mysterious, ambitious, and accomplished.

Sunday, November 17, 2:30pm. Tompkins County Public Library.



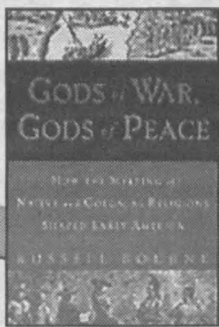
Trevor Pinch

Trevor Pinch, science professor at Cornell University and closet rock and roller will be reading from his new non-fiction book, *Analog Days: The Invention and Impact of the Moog Synthesizer*. This promises to be a fantastic multi-media presentation.

Sunday, November 24, 2:30pm. Tompkins County Public Library.



Russell Bourne



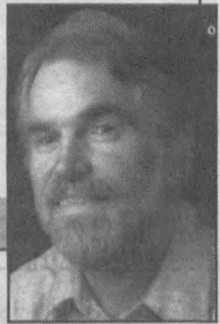
With dexterity and eloquence, Bourne weaves his considerable research into a compelling narrative of the ways in which Native American religions both meshed and clashed with those of the settlers. It was, he writes, a time when the two "religions shuddered, gave good for good and bad for bad, and changed in order to survive."

Sunday, December 1, 2:30pm. Tompkins County Public Library.

Edward Hower

Modern terrorism, like ancient beliefs in spirits and ghosts, thrives in lush, beautiful Sri Lanka, the setting of Edward Hower's new novel. Although this book will not be commercially available until January, Mr. Hower has graciously decided to preview it in Ithaca.

Sunday, December 8, 2:30pm. Tompkins County Public Library.



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Purity, World Music

Gail Holst-Warhaft

New York World Festival, *Music Around the Mediterranean*, presented by the World Music Institute and Center for Traditional Music and Dance, New York City, September 20-22, 2002.

Rebetika, the Blues of Greece, Grigoris Maninakis and friends at Cornell's Barnes Hall, November 1st.

Maria Farandouri in concert at Barnes Hall, November 7th.

What is Mediterranean music? The question inevitably provokes other ones: What do we mean by "Mediterranean culture," or the more recently coined term, "Mediterraneanness?" And where does Mediterranean music fit into the broader phenomenon of world music? Is it a sub-genre, or simply a convenient geographical limitation? At the World Music Institute's first New York World Festival on September 20-22, titled "Music around the

Mediterranean," Roberto Raheli, leader of the group Amarimè, which performs traditional music from Puglia in southern Italy, suggested that the "Mediterranean voice" was a form of opposition to the "European Union voice."

Like a number of performers at the weekend festival, Raheli has researched and revived a style of music that was all but extinct when he became interested in it. Inspired by the revival of folk music in Naples in the 1980s, Raheli went back to his native Puglia and listened to old singers who still remembered the type of music associated with a healing ritual used to counteract the poisonous bite of the tarantula, the pizzica taranta. Raheli and his group of musicians use flutes, an accordion, tambourines, and a loud, rough vocal style that gives an impression of authenticity. "Raheli is passionately committed to preserving his musical culture," the program notes explained, and "to that end, Amarimè performs with a minimum of contaminazione, or mixing of styles." This sounds remarkably like the rhetoric of the purist flamenco revival of the 1960s or the authentic rebetika revival groups of the 1970s in Greece. If it is possible to generalize about the extraordinarily diverse musical styles represented at this festival, it is that most belonged to two distinct types: purist revivalists like the Puglian ensemble and unashamed fusionists like the Spanish group, Radio Tarifa.

In terms of purity and impurity, no two groups had less in common than Radio Tarifa and Amarimè. There is a growing literature in ethnomusicology on the phenomenon of musical style-mixing. Groups like Radio Tarifa are considered performers of "hybrid," "world," "mélange," or "fusion" music, and, depending on your point of view, they either represent what is innovative and healthy in "ethnic" music or its opposite. Such a discussion may seem trivial in North America, where national identity is not generally centered on the question of musical purity, but it is taken very seriously in other cultures, and nowhere in the world have the arguments been fiercer than in Spain.

From its emergence as a commercially successful genre in the 1860s, through Federico Garcia Lorca and Manuel de Falla's Concurso



Petros Pandis and Maria Farandouri, Argentina 1970.

de Canto Jondo in the 1920s, to the debate between Antonio Mairena's "authentic" gypsy style and fusions with American jazz in the 1950s and 1960s, flamenco has been the focal point of Andalusian and, more broadly, Spanish identity for more than a century. By the 1980s, when record companies introduced the term, "new flamenco," to market the experimental "impure" flamenco music, it merely reflected what had been going on for two decades in Spain. Whether we consider this a form of "globalization" or a reaction in some way to the particular political conditions of Spain, where "pure" flamenco had become institutionalized as an affirmation of conservative nationalism, Spanish groups were among the first and most successful musical style-mixers in Europe. They picked up whatever appealed to them—jazz, rock, salsa, classical, ethnic music from Morocco and other countries—and mixed these styles with elements of flamenco to create a wide variety of new Spanish music that thumbed its nose at purity.

Decades of disdain for purity may be why Radio Tarifa stole the show at the

Mediterranean festival. Led by Fain Duenas, Vincent Molino, and the wickedly camp singer Benjamin Escoriza, the group has not turned its back on traditional music. Both Duenas—who performs on lute, guitar, and percussion—and Molinas, a French-born flute player, have done a great deal of research on Arab music, incorporating contemporary North African elements into their music in a gesture that retraces the historical trajectory of flamenco. The end product, however, is not the recreation of a traditional style, but, as Duenas explains it, a "borderline, a no-man's land, and most of all, a balcony over the Mediterranean." However much it may draw on older styles, it is also the unabashedly slick product of a group of professional musicians with a degree of showmanship that makes them an impossible act to follow at a folk festival.

Radio Tarifa's success raises the question of what world music is up to. Does the World Music Institute of New York represent the remarkably successful international business of selling world music or does it seek to celebrate and encourage the cultural richness of New York City and its boroughs? According to its directors, Robert Browning and Ethel Raim, who also represent the Center for Traditional Music and Dance, Astoria was chosen as the location for the weekend festival partly because it had been the site of the Queens Ethnic Music and Dance Festivals, held between 1976 and 1991, and partly because of its ethnic diversity. Many of the people who attended this year's event were the sort of New Yorkers who love folk music of almost any variety and have been attending such events for years. Wearing embroidered blouses, Balkan sandals, and hoop earrings, they greeted each other fondly and participated with experienced good cheer in the Greek dance

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Answer to Crossword Puzzle



and the Goddess Hera

workshops. The other main contingent consisted of members of the various ethnic communities of Queens, who had come to listen to music from their native countries and predictably barracked for their own home teams.

The festival organizers are familiar with the local musical scene and they chose their performers well, but there is an inevitable downside to juxtaposing, say, a Serbian brass band with a performance of Yemenite song. The Mediterranean might have some kind of abstract cultural voice, but its traditional musical voices are as heterogeneous as any in world music. Lumping them together for a festival is bound to give all but the hardy folk-festival regulars musical indigestion, while detracting from the "pure" folk music. Take the case of the two Sardinian launed-das performers who were unlucky enough to follow Radio Tarifa. They perform on a type of folk clarinet from Sardinia that consists of three single-reed cane pipes using the technique known as "circular breathing." The sound produced is more like a bagpipe than a clarinet, and the musicians, Roberto Corona and Stefano Pinna, played their instruments with great skill, but on a large open-air stage, following the electrifying ethno-chic of Radio Tarifa, they were doomed to the shoals of quaint revivalism.

To some extent, the Mediterranean music festival succeeded in being both an international and a local folk festival. The main events were staged in the beer garden of the Bohemian Hall, with dance workshops and panels taking place inside in an auditorium. Tasty food of various ethnic varieties was available and, since it was a warm weekend, the audience and musicians from a dozen different countries mingled cheerfully, balancing their plates of falafel and plastic beer cups in the sun. If there were some musical events that were less appealing, one could always attend a panel in the adjacent hall. One of the more interesting panels was led by the master 'ud player and violinist Simon Shaheen, and was called "Stringing Across the Mediterranean." It included demonstrations on the 'ud, kemenje, Cretan lyra, and bouzouki. Shaheen is one of a growing number of ethnic-music performers who like to have their musical cake and eat it, too. He plays and records traditional Arab music with his New York-based group, the Near Eastern Music Ensemble, and at the same time plays and composes for a fusion-music group, Qantara, which he founded in 2000. Shaheen has written and performed on the film soundtracks for *The Sheltering Sky* and *Malcolm X*. He is a performer who moves effortlessly back and forth in musical time and space, confirming the possibilities of



Maria Farandouri, Melbourne, Australia 2001.



Gregory Maninakis and his Mikrokosmos Ensemble.

maintaining traditional form while allowing for all kinds of experimentation.

The current political situation deprived the festival of what would certainly have been another highlight: Sheikh Hamza Shakkur, the Al-Kindi Ensemble, and the whirling dervishes of Damascus were to have been the event's closing act, and anyone who has seen their international performances is aware that they are spectacular. Unfortunately, both they and the male members of Zakia Kara-terki's Algerian ensemble were denied visas. Zakia Kara-terki's group reinforces the notion of the Mediterranean as cultural conduit, with centuries of interaction from north to south and east to west. Kara-terki was born in Tlemcen, Algeria, center of a rich Andalusian culture established by Muslims and Jews who fled there during the fifteenth century Reconquista of Spain. Coming from a family of master musicians, she plays and sings in what is called (after the city of Granada) the Gharnati style. Despite her colleagues' absence, Kara-terki's presence was

an important addition to the festival, reminding us that the brilliant musical heritage of medieval Andalusia moved south as well as in every other direction.

The Astoria festival reflected both changes in the world-music scene and the steady demand for ethnic music of any variety. The World Music Institute initially responded to the growing demand for that elusive commodity during the 1980s and 1990s by bringing a series of first-rate performers to New York from India, Damascus, Tehran, Africa, and Istanbul. Their concerts, held in Symphony Space and Town Hall, were the first opportunity New Yorkers had to listen to such music regularly in a central location, instead of sporadically at small venues that were hard to find. As someone who loves many kinds of what is generally called "ethnic music," I am grateful to the Institute for bringing so many outstanding performers to this country, but I am also aware that many of these performances depend, as they should, on a very particular context for their real impact to be felt.

The ensemble Mikrokosmos, led by Grigoris Maninakis, is a case in point. Grigoris Maninakis is one of my favorite Greek musicians. A professor of engineering at CUNY Brooklyn, a cantor in the Orthodox Church and singer of urban Greek music, Maninakis is regarded as the leading exponent of the style of music known as rembetika or rebetika in this country. I first heard Maninakis perform in the small "Mikrokosmos" club in Astoria twenty years ago, and I never tire of his voice. He and his band will be performing at Barnes Hall on the Cornell campus on November 1st and he should not be missed. Maninakis is a relentlessly modest performer, a quality that shines in a small space and may have caused him to forfeit a larger career. The popularity of rebetika on the world music scene has demonstrated that this music has universal appeal, but it works best where there is intimate contact between the musicians and their audience. The sepulchral hush of Barnes Hall may not be ideal, but it is small enough to be able to generate some kefi, the high spirits without which such music should never be heard.

Maninakis's performance at Barnes Hall is part of a week's activities on the Cornell campus devoted to modern Greek culture. The climax of the week's events will be a performance, also in Barnes Hall on November 7th, by the legendary Greek singer Maria Farandouri. She has been called the Joan Baez of Greece, but she is much more. As the lead singer for the composer Mikis Theodorakis, she sang with him on every continent, recording and performing with John Williams, Zubin Mehta, Miriam Makeba, Leo Brouwer, and the Turkish composer, Zulfu Livaneli. She is probably best known in Europe and Israel for her interpretation of Theodorakis's song cycle, *Mauthausen*, and in Latin America, for her performances (in Spanish) of the Neruda/Theodorakis oratorio *Canto General*. The Guardian said of her voice that it was "a gift from the Gods of Olympus." Francois Mitterand's comment was "she is the goddess Hera of my imagination." Farandouri was world music before there was a world music industry. She collaborated with Turkish musicians, singing in Turkish long before such interactions were politically correct. She sang Kurt Weill in Germany, Neruda in Cuba, Mauthausen on the site of the concentration camp. Those who come to hear her on November 7th will hear not the goddess Hera, perhaps, but a voice which could start a revolution with a single song.

Gail Holst-Warhaft is the director of the European Studies program at Cornell.

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Scofflaw Diplomacy

continued from page 1

Americans to support US military action. Saddam as Hitler seemed a bit exaggerated, higher prices at the gas pumps, crassly insulting in the assumption that US citizens cared mainly about their pocketbooks. Appealing to the United Nations Charter, to the fundamental right of national sovereignty and defense against aggression, appeared to do the trick. Never mind that the US government itself was only selectively sensitive to such appeals, ignoring or abetting over the years the Chinese annexation of Tibet, the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, Israel's "security zone" in southern Lebanon and illegal occupation of Palestinian lands. Many Americans put aside their doubts and hoped that Bush's vision of a New World Order would be one founded on respect for the rule of law and the institutions of international governance, such as the United Nations.

In retrospect, one can doubt the extent to which such high mindedness motivated the Bush team. Much of the administration's behavior smacked of the triumphalism that has since become the defining feature of US foreign policy. The Gulf War provided an opportunity, not to be missed, to make clear which country won the Cold War and would dictate the terms of the peace.

This is the father's legacy, which the son inherited along with many of the advisers who helped fashion it. The new US National Security Strategy, issued in September 2002, makes explicit that the United States intends to continue its military domination of the world and to prevent the rise of any potential challengers. The administration has rejected a range of international treaties, from the Kyoto Protocol on global warming to the International Criminal Court—reflecting a go-it-alone attitude that is out of step with American public opinion and international realities. Bush, in his speech to the United Nations on September 12, implicitly acknowledged that the unilateralism had gone too far, as he sought to put concerns about Iraq in the context of UN resolutions. Official US acknowledgment of the importance of the United Nations, however fleeting, provides an opportunity that the peace movement should not miss. The speech nevertheless left many doubts about the administration's sincerity. The perennial issue of double standards was unavoidable. Iraq is hardly the only country to have flagrantly violated UN resolutions, invaded and occupied neighboring territories, pursued secret programs to develop weapons of mass destruction, and perpetrated or condoned acts of terrorism against innocent civilians.

By itself, accusing the United States of pursuing double standards does not constitute an effective argument against going to war

with Iraq. However justified the critique of US behavior, it is unlikely to reassure Americans about Iraq enough for them to oppose the war. Moreover there does not seem much to be gained by playing down the danger that Saddam Hussein poses. The point is to put that danger into perspective and to consider what greater dangers the United States risks by rushing into a war.

After the September 11th tragedies, the danger that naturally preoccupies many Americans is terrorism, and, particularly, the threat of further attacks by the al Qaeda organization. One of the strongest arguments against war with Iraq—one that hawks and doves alike can embrace—is that it will distract the United States from a necessary focus on preventing terrorism. Hawks will emphasize spreading US armed forces too thin and the implausibility of being adequately prepared to counter a sudden terrorist threat while troops are engaged in a major battle in Iraq. A full-page advertisement in the New York Times in mid-September made this case. It was signed by more than two dozen leading professors of international security policy, most with a reputation as hard-nosed "realists." Doves can endorse these concerns and add additional ones: that war in Iraq will kill many innocent civilians and sow the seeds for further terrorist activity.

Here the issue of double standards becomes relevant. Critics of the United States, in the Middle East, for example, will make much of the selective US concern about violations of UN resolutions and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and wonder why Israel gets a free hand in both domains. The Security Council's Resolution 242, for example, requires Israel to withdraw its armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war (and for Israel and its neighbors alike to acknowledge "the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force"—a clear requirement to accept Israel's right to exist). US tolerance of Israel's continued military actions in the occupied territories, despite their justification as a response to terrorism, will strike many in the region as inconsistent with insistence on Iraq's strict adherence to UN dictates. On the question of "regime change," at least, the US seems more consistent. It favors overthrowing Saddam Hussein and looks the other way as Israel seeks to do the same with Yasser Arafat. In this case, the consistency will only serve to create more enemies for the United States and boost the popularity of both Arafat and Hussein, neither of whom would otherwise garner much sympathy in the region. Furthermore, Israel's undeclared possession of several hundred nuclear weapons has never drawn US criticism. US officials seem

confident that Israel would not use its nuclear arms unless the very survival of the state were at stake. Few would give Iraq the same benefit of the doubt, although a recent CIA report suggested that the event most likely to provoke Iraq's use of weapons of mass destruction would be a US invasion.

For many Americans, fear of Saddam Hussein's nuclear intentions is one of the more plausible rationales for war put forward by the Bush administration (as long as evidence of Iraq's connections to al Qaeda terrorists remains flimsy). Here the criticism of double standards, however telling, serves poorly as an anti-war argument. Yes, the United States possesses the most destructive force of nuclear weapons the planet has ever known; it is the only country to have used them, against Hiroshima and Nagasaki; it has developed the world's most advanced arsenal of chemical arms and is at the forefront of research on biological weaponry. Moreover, the current administration has abandoned or sought to undermine key international treaties intended to control weapons, from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to the Biological Weapons Convention. But such an argument, a pot-calling-the-kettle-black approach, does not seem to resonate with the American public. It is also in evident tension with another argument one sometimes hears from peace activists: we need not worry about a nuclear-armed Iraq, because it would always fear a devastating US nuclear retaliation if it sought to use its own weapons. Principled opponents of nuclear arms, who understand them as weapons of genocide, should resist taking this tack. A long-term objective of the peace movement should be to stigmatize the possession of nuclear weapons, so that they will no longer be a symbol of great-power status, to which challengers like Iraq aspire, but a sign of moral depravity. That end is not served by invoking US nuclear might as an anti-war argument.

Fortunately there are better arguments for opposing unilateral US military action without seeming complacent about Iraq's nuclear potential. No country wants Iraq to have weapons of mass destruction, whether or not the United States has them. The point is that threatening to invade the country in order to topple Saddam Hussein is hardly likely to diminish his fervor for obtaining the only weapons that he might hope could deter such a US attack. The system of international inspections developed at the end of the 1991 war, despite its flaws, did more to hinder Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction than any military action. A natural argument for peace activists—and one that a majority of Americans could endorse—is to insist on a role for the United Nations and an emphasis on restoring a meaningful inspections regime.

The history of the UN inspections in Iraq attests to their effectiveness as well as offering ample evidence why they were and still are necessary. The original regime was created by Security Council Resolution 687 in 1991. Iraq accepted its terms as part of the peace agreement that ended the war. The inspection system depended on two organizations, the already existing International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), established to monitor civilian nuclear power plants and prevent diversion to weapons production; and the newly created United Nations Special Committee (UNSCOM), intended to discover and destroy facilities involved in development and production of chemical and biological weapons. UNSCOM withdrew its teams from Iraq in 1998, as Hussein's regime continually hindered its work and as UNSCOM itself came under criticism for allowing its staff to engage in espionage. UNSCOM was superseded in December 1999 by the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC, created under Resolution 1284), which up to the current crisis has not had access to Iraq.

On a modest budget and in the face of the Iraqi government's consistent deception and efforts to undermine its work, the inspections regime achieved a great deal. With a team of 21 international arms control experts, and supporting staff, UNSCOM conducted 250 inspections between 1991-98. The IAEA conducted a further 500 inspections during roughly the same period. Iraq initially claimed that it was in compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and denied that it had conducted any nuclear activities beyond those already monitored by the IAEA. Inspections, however, revealed an extensive, secret effort oriented toward the production of nuclear weapons, including several undeclared projects to enrich uranium for use in weapons.

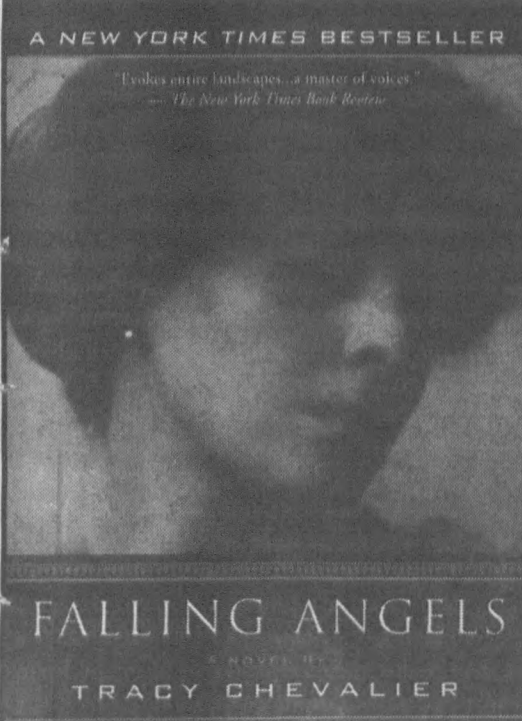
UNSCOM's work was equally effective in identifying illegal weapons programs. The commission found 80 undeclared SCUD missiles, 45 warheads adapted for biological or chemical use, and 30,000 chemical munitions. Iraq had initially denied the existence of any biological weapons program, but UNSCOM inspectors confronted Baghdad with enough evidence that the government acknowledged several production facilities, where anthrax and botulinum toxin were developed, and declared 25 SCUD warheads and more than 150 aerial bombs prepared for use in biological attacks.

When the inspectors left in 1998, they had been unable to locate many weapons components for which they had evidence (from shipping invoices, cross-references in other Iraqi documents, and so forth). The missing items include missile warheads, rocket fuel, and some 17 tons of growth media for biological agents. Iraq failed to account for thousands of suspected chemical munitions and some 4,000 tons of precursor chemicals which the government insisted it had destroyed (but not under UNSCOM supervision, as required). These chemicals, if they still exist, could be turned into thousands more weapons. If Iraq follows through with its promise to allow the return of UN inspectors, they will clearly have their work cut out for them.

Despite impressive mobilization over a relatively short time period, the peace movement was unable to influence a majority of the US Congress to refrain from endorsing President Bush's war resolution. In the days leading up to the vote, it was nearly impossible to get through by telephone to the offices of New York's senators. Charles Schumer's line was constantly busy and calling Hilary Clinton's number yielded only this encouraging message: "Senator Clinton's voice mailbox is full. Good-bye." Yet a key argument, advanced by many peace activists and supported by broad segments of American public opinion, did apparently get through. Many of the Democratic representatives and senators who issued the Bush administration a blank check for war nevertheless offered various (non-binding) qualifications as they justified their votes. In effect they argued that the United States should not initiate war against Iraq without specific endorsement from the United Nations Security Council and support from US allies. It may be that the blank check will prove more meaningful to the president than the qualifications, but here is where continued activity of opponents of the war can play a crucial role—by stressing the potentially disastrous consequences of a go-it-alone approach.

The long-term agenda of the peace movement, regardless of how the current Iraq situation is resolved, should be to emphasize the role of international institutions and law. The United Nations Security Council is not without its faults, dominated as it is by the world's major nuclear powers, four of which (France, Britain, Russia, and the US) have oil interests at stake in Iraq. Yet it is precisely the other major powers that should be concerned about US pretensions to act independently of any

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Prospects for Peace in Israel/Palestine

David Regenspan

On Thursday, October 3, a Palestinian and an Israeli academic professor came to Cornell to speak on "War in the Middle East: The Case for a Just and Realistic Peace Between Israelis and Palestinians." The professors, Islah Ajad of Bir Zeit University and Israeli Professor Yoav Peled of Tel Aviv University, are part of a group of Israeli and Palestinian academics currently touring the United States, Faculty for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. Ajad and Peled presented their views on what went wrong with the Oslo peace process and how the current critical state of affairs in Israel and Palestine came about.

Not surprisingly, the scenario that they described was bleak. The Oslo process is dead and the current Israeli regime under Ariel Sharon is on a collision course with the very idea of Palestine, making maximum use of the "war on terror" concept as a cover to promote its aims. Echoing the message of an e-mail written by Israeli academics currently circulating around the world, they warned that Sharon and his allies are pushing for an American invasion of Iraq solely to be able to expel Palestinian civilians while the "fog of war" obscures the actions of the Israeli army. In other words, things are only getting worse.

Professor Ajad spoke first, stating her intention to "deconstruct the prevailing discourse" concerning the current situation. In particular, she addressed the common assumption that the Camp David agreement (1993) between then Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat eventually led to a "gener-

ous offer" by more recent Prime Minister Ehud Barak, but this offer was turned down by Arafat, who chose a course of violence and terrorism. This claim is central to justifications for repressing Palestinian nationalism.

Meanwhile, Ajad maintained, the assumption that there is something intrinsic in Palestinian culture or beliefs that leads to violence represents a convenient way for Israelis and their American allies to avoid taking responsibility for the actions of the Israeli government and its army. Ajad reminded her audience that the Oslo/Camp David process was intended to be a gradual one, based on the principle of land for peace, and that the Palestinian leadership accepted this principle and asked for time to build up a peace constituency at home among people who had suffered years of Israeli domination. Rabin, too, she said, acted on this understanding. However, Ajad asserted, even before Rabin's assassination in 1995 Israel attempted to weaken the Palestinian leadership, an effort that gained momentum after Rabin's death. As to Barak's "generous offer," no one can be sure what the offer was or how it was originally understood, because nothing was written down. In the end, Ajad claimed, the Israelis led the United States intermediaries to belief that they had well-defined terms to be fulfilled, when in reality the terms kept changing.

According to Ajad, the attack of September 11 served as Ariel Sharon's excuse to bury Oslo for good and link his war on the Palestinians with the "war on terror," comparing Arafat to Bin Laden and the Palestinians to the Taliban, thus delegitimizing the Palestinian struggle. By placing the Palestinians under a virtual state

of siege and blockade and making full use of anti-terrorism rhetoric, Sharon could stall for more time to allow more Jewish settlers into the occupied territories.

Ajad described life as it is now under occupation: sixty per cent unemployment; civil institutions such as finance and education offices destroyed and their computers confiscated; roadblocks that keep sick people from medical care and cause pregnant women to give birth at checkpoints; a humiliating reliance on international humanitarian aid for survival. Her own workplace, Birzeit University, has been shut down for eight months due to roadblocks (to avoid international condemnation, the shutdown is de facto rather than official policy). Often shot at by Israeli soldiers, students have been told to avoid the campus because the administration cannot keep them safe.

Professor Peled took a more academic approach, offering an economic analysis of the peace process and why it failed. Israel's original economy, he explained, represented a blend of free-market capitalism with centralized control of the economy. The powerful Histadrut, the umbrella organization for all the labor unions, controlled half of the economy and made sure that unprofitable enterprises were subsidized in order to ensure full employment. After Israel's victories in the 1967 and 1973 wars, the efforts to maintain a military and settlement presence in the occupied territories also represented further public investment and control of the economy. According to Peled, the "right-wing" project of dominating the territories thus served the interests of the "leftwing" project of maintaining government intervention in economic affairs.

With the election of Menachem Begin and the empowerment of his right-wing Likud bloc, this balance of private and public interests began to come to an end, Peled said. Begin was committed to the "liberalization" of the economy. Thus, Peled explained, his surprise move to make peace with Egypt and his agreement to withdraw from the Sinai was really no surprise. Begin wanted to develop free markets within the Middle East, which required peace agreements.

Peled explained that, starting with the Begin years and continuing through the "national unity" government of Likud and Labor, the power of the Histadrut was weakened while free-market economics were strengthened. Israel had invaded Lebanon in the early eighties to drive out the PLO; now, the Israeli army was withdrawn from most of that country. The defense budget was reduced. The occupied territories began to attract investors and to develop some markets and industries.

At the same time as peace and free markets developed, Peled said, the income disparity within Israeli society grew drastically during the nineties. Israeli society became Americanized, with its very rich and its very poor. Social services were slashed just when they were needed most. Those Israelis who were forgotten by prosperity, notably the Jews of Middle Eastern origins, became increasingly angry. They formed an alliance with the

ideologically committed Jewish settler movement to increase government intervention in the economy again by speeding up the settlement process and riding roughshod over Palestinian aspirations. The result was the first and second Intifadahs. Thus, Peled concluded, economics had as much to do with the current situation as ideology.

Professor Ajad's account was vivid and moving, while that of Professor Peled offered a perspective on the Israel-Palestine conflict that is not often heard. Nevertheless, the "case for a just and realistic peace" was never made, in the sense that no realistic outline was offered for getting from here to there. When one questioner asked the speakers how they proposed to get Israelis and Palestinians out of the mess that they are in, Professor Peled replied that academics solve nothing in the "real world," and when they try they often make things worse (then what, one might ask, was he doing there?). Professor Ajad demurred from this dismal view, offering the hope that, as academics did during the Vietnam War era, they could educate people to in turn move things in a more positive direction. But that was as close as she came to offering a plan.

One has to question the value of such a public seminar if it leads to feelings of pessimism bordering on despair, as it did for this writer. The most positive development, mentioned only in passing during the question period, was the recent phenomenon of Israeli reservists refusing to serve in the occupied territories. Would that this seminar had focused upon the brave souls who are out there struggling to solve the Israel/Palestine dilemma in such practical, real world ways. That would have made an afternoon one could get through without a desire to reach for the nearest painkiller.

David Regenspan, a former congregational rabbi, is completing a novel about Jews and Muslims in medieval Spain, City of Pomegranates. He lives with his family in Ithaca.

Scofflaw Diplomacy

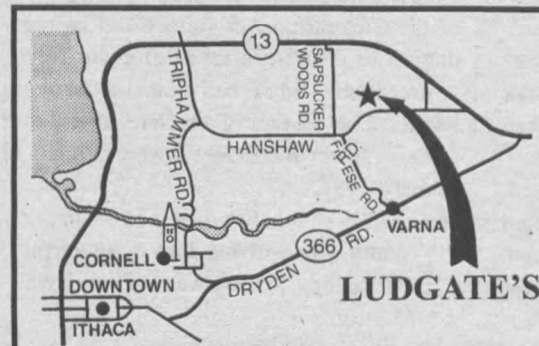
continued from page 8

international legal constraints. There is a growing recognition across the world of the value of law as a means of governing the international system. Evidence is found in the widespread support for such initiatives as the Kyoto Protocol within the environmental sphere, or the Treaty Banning Land Mines in the area of security, or the International Criminal Court in the realm of human rights. The United States constitutes a notable exception to this general trend of support for international law. In fact, the US resistance to international law hints at a change in the role of law in the international system. In the past, as E.H. Carr has pointed out and most other observers have agreed, international law was established by the dominant powers to serve and perpetuate their interests. Today much of the impetus for new initiatives in international law comes not from the United States, the most powerful country in the system, but from countries that are trying to rein in US power or at least get the United States to abide by the rules.

In the dark days of the Cold War, democratic opponents of the communist regimes in

Eastern Europe and Russia, such as Vaclav Havel, used to argue that if people would live and act as if they were free, then they could create the parallel structures for an alternative to the regimes which sought to control them. In his essay, "The Power of the Powerless," Havel wrote that the work of the so-called dissidents was "based on the principle of legality: they operate publicly and openly, insisting not only that their activity is in line with the law, but that achieving respect for the law is one of their main aims." As the peace movement seeks to limit the dangerous excesses of the Bush administration's unilateralism in places like Iraq, it should keep its eye on the bigger prize. The goal would be, in Havel's words, "achieving respect for the law," for international law in this case, on the part of the United States.

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Anchor Books, 2002

If people in the U.S. know one thing about Botswana, it is likely to be the assertion that it has the highest rate of HIV infection in the world. Perhaps they even know the current reported rate of infection: 39%. Tragic and difficult as the situation of HIV infection is, it is still only part of what should define the country and its people. Having lived in and studied Botswana, I often feel frustrated and angry to see them identified only in terms of HIV/AIDS. In many ways Botswana is exemplary—for its multiparty democracy, honest government, free education, economic development, and remarkable women's rights movement. It is a contradictory mix of deep-rooted sexism and openness to change, of great disparities in private wealth and great strides in government programs to increase everyone's "social wage," of an inward focus on things Botswana and a long history of speaking out against white minority rule while surrounded by bigger, more powerful white minority-ruled countries.

I first visited Botswana in the late 1980s, when the women's rights movement was just getting organized, and lived there for two years, 1987 and 1988. I became a member of a multi-national collective, the purposely misleadingly named Southern African Literature Society (SALS), which provided publications and videos from the mass democratic movement in South Africa to anti-apartheid bookstores and groups in Europe as well as to residents in Botswana.

In that collective I became friends with a founding member of the new women's group, *Emang Basadi!* (Stand Up, Women!), who recruited me to come to EB meetings. So my political work in Botswana became doubled: working in the SALS collective and providing various other kinds of support for the African National Congress, and also going to women's rights meetings, conferences, and workshops organized by *Emang Basadi!* My friend from SALS, who is a Senior Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Botswana and the daughter of a wealthy Batswana family, found it wryly amusing that I had come to her country and was studying her women's movement, when she was the third generation of postgraduate degree-holders in her family (her doctorate was from Germany), whereas I was the first generation of my family even to attend university, and didn't hold a doctorate at the time. I found it embarrassing, but I also felt the sweetness of being able to use the protection of my U.S. citizenship to work for the ANC. At the time, almost all Americans in Botswana were government officials and comfortable supporters of Reagan's cozy relationship with Pretoria, so our house and our activities were not likely to draw the attention of the South African agents in Botswana.

I have returned since for visits both to Botswana and, after the election of the ANC government in South Africa in 1994, to South Africa to visit friends who were refugees and militants in Botswana during the anti-apartheid struggle. Besides the ties I developed with friends from both

Botswana and South Africa, I developed a tremendous respect for the way the Batswana have resisted white minority domination and created a democratic society that significantly provides for people's needs, as well as admiration for the women who are trying to overcome the sexism that reflects both old customs and new possibilities for abuse.

For me, reading these novels is like making a virtual return visit. They bring back vividly many of the positive experiences I had living there—the sense of connection between women, the wicked Tswana sense of humor, the excitement of the women's movement, and my intense experience of the land itself, the immensity of the flat, flat Kalahari and of the night sky with its unfamiliar constellations undimmed by urban lights, the sounds and smells of the bush, the absolutely inexpressible awe of seeing a full-grown elephant walk across the road right in front of your car, and the parade of wildlife through your kitchen as well as in the bush. These books also remind me of the frustrations of dealing with Botswana bureaucracy and sexism and of the poverty and abuse and blocked aspirations of many. For those unfamiliar with Botswana, they offer a significant amount of information about the country, its history, and conditions today.

The Batswana and the other peoples they have incorporated (some willingly, some not) into their polities in this hot, dry, landlocked region survived for generations by herding cattle year-round, farming for a few months in the October to February rainy season, and gathering wild crops and hunting wild game in the "hungry time" before harvest. They resisted the continued attempts of Rhodesia and South Africa (in the person of Cecil Rhodes and his cohorts) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to annex their land by trickery and armed raids.

In the 1950s, the Bangwato, the largest of the Tswana groups, resisted pressure from the British to accept a replacement for Seretse Khama as their chosen *Kgosi* ("chief") because of his marriage to a white Englishwoman. There were serious protests in support of Khama, with strong, loud participation by Bangwato women, and although Khama never was installed as *Kgosi*, he became the first President of Botswana. (The entire saga, in a somewhat breathless but engaging narrative, can be found in Michael Duffield's *A Marriage of Inconvenience: The Persecution of Seretse and Ruth Khama* [Unwyn Hyman, 1990, out-of-print]).

Seretse and Ruth Khama became an important political symbol to the oppressed Africans of South Africa: in the 1950s there were frequent cover stories in the black South African magazine *Drum* featuring the Khama marriage and then the Khama children, emphasizing how healthy and happy they were, and, certainly intentionally, thereby tweaking the noses of the South African whites who were so opposed to having a symbol of interracial marriage and procreation on their doorstep.

Botswana, from being called a "basket case" by the West at independence, has transformed itself into a stable middle-income country today. The economy is driven by the export of gem-quality diamonds, discovered a year after independence, and developed by a partnership cleverly negotiated by the government with DeBeers Corporation of South Africa on terms of equal ownership of the company that manages the diamond industry, Debswana. On this base, significant development and diversification of the economy has taken place, with a great expansion of infrastructure, education and health services, and government welfare and drought relief programs for the needy. Botswana has food security without food self-sufficiency,

through government policy. As the Botswana foreign minister said during debates some years ago about aid for African famine, "In Botswana, we have droughts, but we do not have famine." Currently, all the countries in Southern Africa are dependent on foreign aid to avert famine except Botswana and the much larger and agriculturally rich South Africa. The continued stability and growth of the Botswana economy has produced a great expansion in the availability of wage jobs for both women and men, in an economy that is continuing to grow, although now threatened by AIDS.

All three of these books are set in the late 1990s, after the fall of the apartheid government in South Africa. They assume the historical context of colonialism, the migrant labor system, apartheid threats, and the more recent women's rights movement, but the history is usually referred to rather than recounted. As a context, it is useful to know more about that history in order to understand the world the characters in these books live in, and particularly how the women characters, both those challenging and those suffering from the current social system, came to be as they are.

The precolonial agro-herding system of the Batswana required the year-round labor of boys at cattle posts distant from the villages, but the full-time labor of girls only during the short farming season. When missionaries arrived in 1817 and set up schools, many girls went to schools and many boys did not. When diamonds were discovered in South Africa in 1867 and gold in 1886, young men were recruited as migrant mine workers, a system that continued into the 1980s. Although migrant labor has seriously diminished, and workers in Botswana diamond mines live in adjacent towns with full family services, the social burden of almost 100 years' of male labor migration is still heavy, reflected in the 50% rate of female-headed households in Botswana today as well as the HIV infection rate.

As Botswana developed its own diamond mines and began to diversify its economy and expand its service sector in the 1980s, there was a large pool of educated young women ready to fill jobs usually taken by men in other parts of Africa. Botswana had been rapidly expanding educational opportunities, and girls were well positioned to take advantage of that expansion. Education is now free through university, for those who pass the required examinations. Girls outnumber boys until the last year of secondary school, and the percentage of women students at university is approaching parity. By the 1990s female urban literacy (half of women live in cities or semi-urban areas) was almost 90%, and overall female literacy 79%, both about 5% higher than male literacy. More than two-thirds of the total work force is in paid employment, and more than 45% of those paid workers are women.

These women workers form the base of the women's rights movement, and the highly educated sector of privileged professional women, about 5% of employed women, provides most of its leadership. At independence, women and men over 21 were given the right to vote, and in the 1990s the voting age was lowered to 18. In the last national election in 1999, overall turnout was 77%, and women were a majority of voters, as they are of the population. The 1999 election was dubbed "The Year of the Woman" by one Botswana newspaper, because of the gains made by women as both elected and appointed officials. But the seeds of that victory go back to the 1980s.

The women's movement was galvanized by the passage in 1982 of a new and discriminatory Citizenship Law, which replaced citizenship by birth in the territory to citizenship by descent, but only from the father in the case of married women. Unmarried

women citizens could pass their citizenship on to their children. The new law also made special provision for non-citizen wives to become citizens easily and quickly, but not non-citizen husbands. This law was enacted into a rapidly urbanizing society, at exactly the time that greatly increasing numbers of women were taking wage jobs and becoming aware of the need for legal rights as they moved both geographically and culturally away from the obligations and protections of kinship-based village life. As urbanization and the pool of salaried and waged women increased, so did opposition to government and customary discrimination against women and support for women's equal rights.

Growing opposition to the Citizenship Law led to the formation in 1986 of the women's rights organization *Emang Basadi!*—Stand Up, Women!—a name adapted with a pointed change from the national anthem, which urges men to "stand up and defend the nation," but women to "stand up beside your men." *Emang Basadi!* set out to educate women about their existing rights and agitate for greater equal rights, starting with the new Citizenship Law. It chose not to affiliate with any political party, and in 1986 no political party had a plank on women's issues or a women's wing.

During 1987 and 1988 I attended many meetings, workshops and conferences organized by *Emang Basadi!* and listened (mostly) to the many heated discussions about women's inequalities and the abuse they suffer, and what needed to be done about it. When I left in early 1989, issues of women's rights had been pushed into public discourse by *Emang Basadi!*, through their organized activities, publications, press coverage and letters to the editor. But neither the Citizenship Law nor other laws had been changed.

In 1990 women from EB joined with women from the Women and Law Project of Southern Africa to support a suit filed by Unity Dow, a human rights lawyer and founding director of the Methaetsile Women's Information Center in Mochudi, about 50 km north of Gaborone, the capital city. Dow argued that the Citizenship Law violated the Botswana Constitution. The government appealed to customary law, arguing that the Constitution was premised on Tswana patrilineal tradition, and that customary law should take precedence in areas of family law. In 1991 a High Court judge, in a decision upheld on appeal, ruled for Dow, explicitly arguing that women "can no longer be viewed as being chattels of their husbands," but must be viewed as equal citizens in all areas of law. The law was referred back to Parliament for revision in 1992, but the government continued to stonewall.

By 1993, *Emang Basadi!* decided to launch a new strategy of targeting political candidates and parties and urging women to vote for those who supported women's rights. In explicit response to male members of Parliament asking that familiar question, "What do women want?," *Emang Basadi!* issued *The Women's Manifesto*, which told them. In the 1994 election, more candidates sympathetic to changing the law were elected, and a new non-discriminatory law, still based on descent, went into effect in January 1996. Keboitse Machangana, chairwoman of *Emang Basadi!* in 2002, said of the Citizenship Act victory and its repudiation of custom in favor of equal rights, "Since then, there has been no looking back!" The weekly Gaborone newspaper *Mmegi* (*The Reporter*) editorialized in January 1996:

Women are evolving into a powerful constituency in Botswana. They have

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Pipeline Dreams

Michael Doliner

The proposed war with Iraq is about oil, not about Saddam Hussein. *Hubbert's Peak: The Impending World Oil Shortage* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), by Kenneth S. Deffeyes, a Princeton geologist, is an argument for the thesis that conventional oil production will reach a peak at some time during the present decade, probably between 2004 and 2008. Production will remain on a plateau for a few years, and then, probably at the end of the decade, begin to decline rather precipitously. This assessment is supported by, among others, C. J. Campbell and Jean Laherrère, both retired oil exploration geologists who have worked for major oil companies. Mathew R. Simmons, an investment banker for the oil industry and a member of President Bush's energy "team" also supports this view in a number of papers, one of which he gave in a symposium jointly sponsored by Simmons's bank, Simmons and Company International, and Baker and Boggs, James K. Baker III's law firm.

With the exception of the Persian Gulf states, Russia, Norway, Venezuela, and a few others, virtually all other countries are oil importers. Although Britain has been self sufficient thanks to the North Sea oil fields, this will soon come to an end, for the North Sea fields have already peaked, and are in decline. The only place most of the world can draw its oil from is five Persian Gulf states, for the Russian fields are also in decline. Nor will the Caspian basin prove to be another Middle East. All this and more has been considered by Deffeyes and the other geologists who have carefully evaluated the situation.

Regardless of what those in the Bush administration say or even think, this coming oil shortage is the central political context of their war threat. An oil shortage, if unplanned for, will plunge the world into a depression which will grow ever more severe as the shortage increases. International tensions will grow in the fight over the limited supply. Thus the war, if it comes, will be against not only the Persian Gulf states, but also against oil importers—Europe, China, and Japan among them. The effects of oil deprivation are so drastic that other governments cannot avoid assuming that the United States intends to monopolize supplies. With the stakes so high, to assume anything else would be simply negligent, for an industrialized country without sufficient oil will fall back into a pre-industrial state.

Whatever American intentions, professed or even real, once the United States controls the Persian Gulf it has the rest of the world by the neck. Thus the tacit threat: those who want a bone had better join the pack. We must remind ourselves that in ten years or less, assuming we continue to live in our present profligate way, there will not be enough oil to go around. Deffeyes' conclusion, in *Hubbert's Peak*, is this: "To summarize, it looks as if an unprecedented crisis is just over the horizon. There will be chaos in the oil industry, in governments, and in national economies." This peak in oil production is far more important to the world than whether or not Saddam Hussein stays in power.

Some people disagree with Deffeyes and other former oil geologists who predict the coming peak. M. A. Adelman is an economist who holds to the thesis that increased oil prices will spur exploration and production. Adelman contends that mineral wealth is essentially inexhaustible. His arguments rest on market principles: If supply fails to meet demand, higher prices will spur an increase in supply. Yet histor-

ically, we saw that higher prices were not able to spur increased supplies in the United States in the '80s. Production in the lower forty-eight states has continued to decline since 1970, regardless of market incentives, energetic exploration, and technological ingenuity. Market incentives, in spite of their power, were not able to produce more oil when there wasn't any more to produce.

Scientific opposition rests almost exclusively upon evidence from the U.S. Geological Assessment 2000. Deffeyes estimates the total endowment of the earth—all the oil that has ever existed and will ever exist here—to be about 2 trillion barrels; Thomas S. Ahlbrandt, the project manager for the USGS Assessment 2000 estimates earth's endowment to be 3 trillion barrels. Both writers agree that the disputed trillion barrels, if they exist, are yet to be discovered. If the extra trillion barrels exist, they might hold off the peak for only ten to fifteen years, given historical rates of growth. Thus, even if Ahlbrandt is right, the peak will be pushed back only ten to fifteen years.

However, Ahlbrandt has no evidence for his claim. Discoveries have been declining since 1965, but Ahlbrandt predicts they will suddenly begin to rise. The "Assessment" contained predictions for discoveries starting in 1995. Here are Colin Campbell's comments upon them:

The USGS forecast, as a Mean estimate, that 674 Gb (billion barrels) are to be found between 1995 and 2025, which means an average of 25 Gb a year. So far, the average has been only 10 Gb, when above average performance should be expected because the larger fields are usually found first because they are the biggest targets.

Thus it is almost certain that the peak is imminent, but even if not imminent, soon. The war against Iraq, whatever the pretext, will be an attempt to monopolize the remaining oil. If this attempt is made, the result will be disastrous for everyone. With Iran already in the "axis of evil," and Saudi-American relations deteriorating daily, it is certain that not only Iraq, but also the entire Persian Gulf is the target. For it will do the United States no good to gain additional oil from Iraq only to lose the supply from Saudi Arabia. The monopoly, to work, must funnel oil to the United States at below-market prices. Thus the present situation will not provide the needed monopoly.

But the outcome of the war is unlikely to be what the United States might hope. It is possible that the Persian Gulf oil fields will end in flames as a result of the war. This might be done intentionally by the present

governments when they see their situation is hopeless, or simply occur as collateral damage in the war. The specter of flaming oil wells, a vivid memory from the last war in the gulf, could, and probably would, reappear.

Even if military victory is quickly achieved without this result, it will be difficult to protect the oil fields, pipelines, and other infrastructure. The economic situation in Iraq could not improve very much, for that would drain yet more oil from the market. Just the energy needed to rebuild what the war will destroy will strain the already taxed world oil production capacity. With continued misery will come desperate opposition. As we have seen in Afghanistan, it is not as easy as it once was to set up puppet governments. Even a small, disgruntled remnant of the population with only the most rudimentary of weapons could inflict serious damage on an oil pipeline. The United States would need to create a wasteland to protect against this.

Perhaps it is in such a wasteland that the United States plans to perch. Seated upon this charnel pile of wealth it will toss bones to whoever joined the coalition—or double-cross them if the pile becomes too small. But it is hard to see how a pile stable enough to sit on will result. Oil companies will move in to produce the oil. How will the United States assure that this oil will flow to it at below-market prices? The flow of oil is difficult to track and easy to divert. Shortages anywhere will force price increases and will tempt oil companies, or those who work for them, or those who can blackmail or bribe those who work for them, to divert the flow of oil to those who will pay the most for it. A huge black market fed by billions of dollars in potential profits will overwhelm the agency entrusted with protecting the United States monopoly. We all know how well the United States has succeeded in interdicting the drug trade into the United States. How well could it succeed in keeping oil from leaking out of monopoly control into other countries all of whose governments were part of the black market itself? Indeed, American transnational corporations, many of whom have interests elsewhere, might actually work against the monopoly control for the benefit of their foreign subsidiaries. As we all know American CEOs are not above seizing a few profitable opportunities. Free market pressures would soon make a joke of the monopoly.

And indeed, Americans as well as citizens of the rest of the world might hope that this happens as quickly as possible. For if somehow the monopoly did control oil flow, other countries, armed with far more weapons of mass destruction than Saddam Hussein, would find themselves in desper-

ate circumstances. There is no substitute for oil. Alternative fuels can help somewhat, but not much. With an American victory, the rest of the world would find itself utterly dependent upon the United States for its survival. How many countries would be likely to accept such slow strangulation?

Even without a war, the world will have to learn to live on less. But sudden deprivation would cause collapse into a pre-industrial condition, a fate that could inspire a resort to desperate measures. If Saddam Hussein is insane enough to use weapons of mass destruction, then we must assume others, under even more intense pressures, might resort to similar measures. After all, most of our recent wars have been fought against former allies. But even if no hostilities with well-armed former friends follow an attack on Iraq, in the present era of globalization the American economy could not survive the destruction of the other major economies. Although the outcome of any war is unpredictable, the coming oil production peak and subsequent shortage are not.

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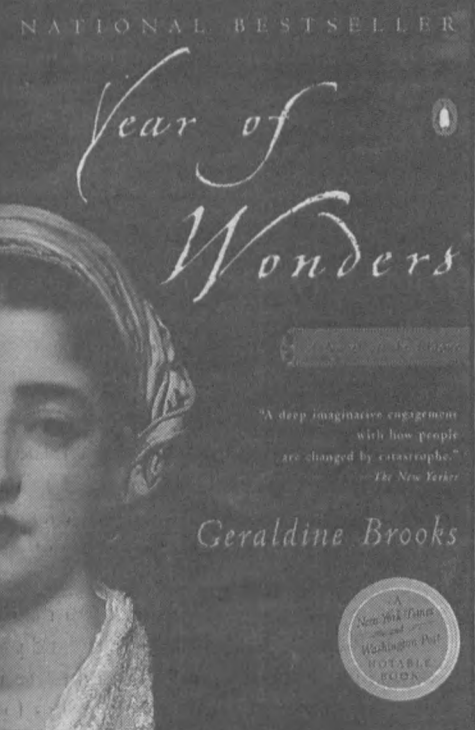
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When to Take the Pumpkin Out of the Pot

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always been a potentially strong block as they constitute the majority of voters, especially in the countryside. However, in the past women did not vote as a block rallying around common issues. With the momentum that women's civic associations like Emang Basadi have set in motion in conscientizing women about their rights, any political party which does not court women in the future will be doing that at its own peril.

The ruling Botswana Democratic Party apparently learned this lesson. Other discriminatory legislation in significant areas of employment and property law has been changed without additional court cases, and a Law Reform Committee has been charged with evaluating all legislation for gender bias. Botswana has adopted a national Policy on Women in Development, a National Gender Program and Gender Plan of Action, and houses the newly created Gender Unit of the Southern African Development Community. *Emang Basadi!* and the Women's NGO Coalition it led were particularly successful in the 1999 election. Their message was carried into public visibility on tee-shirts ("Democracy without a woman in power belongs to the past" and "Dear President, Members of Parliament, Councillors and All Candidates: In 1999 we will vote for those who advocate for women's rights. Are you one of them?") to placards ("Vote a Woman! Suckle the Nation!") to the appropriation of Miss Universe: when Miss Botswana, Mpule Kwelagobe (an aspiring pediatric neurosurgeon and prize-winning runner at Maru-a-Pula Secondary School), won the Miss Universe contest in 1999, *Emang Basadi!* ran a political advertisement:

To all young Botswana women we say: the sky is the limit, Mpule has set the pace. Mpule has proved that women can take Botswana to greater heights. Cast your vote for a woman in the coming general elections!

The BDP carried the majority again in 1999, and with it a record number of women candidates in both local and national elections. The number of women in Parliament was doubled, to 18%, and in the Cabinet increased to 20%, respectable figures by worldwide comparison, and women were appointed to six other top positions, including director of the National Bank.

The impact of the women's movement and the continuing struggle between "custom" and women's rights is most closely reflected in the gently didactic *Far and Beyond*, authored by Unity Dow, whose lawsuit in the Citizenship Case galvanized the movement. The optimistic tone of the book, despite the hardships faced by the 16-year old heroine, Mosa, her friends, and her mother, reflects the upbeat self-presentation of the Botswana women's movement and Dow's own successes: she has recently been appointed as the first woman High Court Justice. Until her appointment, Dow lived in Mochudi, the village in which *Far and Beyond* is set, and her teenage daughter was an activist in protests in 1995 over a "muti murder," the murder of a child to gain body parts for muti, "medicine," that a powerful person uses to keep his power (an issue taken up in *The No. 1 Detective Agency*).

Mosa seeks to go "far and beyond" in order to escape the inequalities of village life and pursue her own gifts and goals, but she is confronted with two of the scourges of young women's lives in Botswana today: sexual abuse by male teachers, and AIDS and its denial. She is losing her second brother to AIDS, but her mother refuses to

acknowledge what is wrong and seeks help from a traditional diviner, who leads her to blame her best friend for putting a curse on the family. Mosa fears that she, too, might be infected, but feels that she cannot tell her mother. To resolve these problems and reconnect with her mother and surviving brother, she must work through conflicts between customary beliefs and her "educated" perspective.

Mosa, along with her friends, also faces severe pressure from teachers and other influential men in the community for sex. The girls worry that they must give in or lose their chance at education, crucial for the jobs they seek—a very real problem in Botswana. The declining percentage of girls in the last years of secondary school mostly results from the requirement that they withdraw from school if they fall pregnant, and many do, as the result of sexual relations with teachers and other older men. Mosa and her friends work out a strategy that reflects the realities of Botswana today.

In contrast, *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* and *Tears of the Giraffe* are not novels about women's collective struggles for their rights, and AIDS is scarcely mentioned. But, despite having been written by a white male expatriate, they vividly bring to life a feminist heroine, Precious Ramotswe, who was cared for and taught to read before starting school by a cousin after her mother's death, a cousin who, in the early 1960s, "wanted Precious to be clever...and sensed the possibilities for change.... Women were beginning to speak amongst themselves about their lot.... One day, women would be able to sound their own voice, perhaps, and would point out what was wrong. But they would need to be able to read to do that."

Precious founds the first women's detective agency in Botswana, using money left to her by her migrant mine worker father at his death from lung disease. He has told her that she can start a business and not have to marry: "a woman could be by herself these days—there were more and more women like that."

Precious Ramotswe indeed is determined to point out what is wrong, through her detective agency, since "A woman sees more than a man sees. That is well known." Among her many cases, she finds out what has happened to missing husbands and missing sons. She pursues a suspected muti murderer, exposes insurance frauds, returns stolen cars, and uncovers sexual abusers' secrets, forcing them to change their ways. Every case tells us something new about what it is like to live in a changing Botswana and, as another reviewer put it, leaves you feeling as though you were standing in a Botswana landscape—even if you have never been there.

From the first line of *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, we know to be prepared for a cunning sense of humor and a down-to-earth sensibility appropriate both to expatriate writers and to Botswana: "Mma Ramotswe had a detective agency in Africa, at the foot of Kgale Hill." ("I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of...") For anyone who's been in Gaborone, a good laugh is the only appropriate response to this: Kgale Hill is one of the few hills in all of Botswana, is virtually the only hill near Gaborone, and is not so very big in any case. Like Mma Ramotswe's "tiny white van" and "tiny office," Kgale Hill is appropriate for a nonsense practical sort of Botswana lady detective.

But Mma Ramotswe's strengths are large: her pithy common sense, her penetrating intelligence, her talent for patient observation, her rootedness in her own country, and her comfort with herself as a "traditionally built" Botswana woman in control of her own life. She sets out "to help people with the problems in their lives," as her office

sign proclaims, efficiently and effectively, and when she has done so, she moves on. As she says to herself while cooking her pumpkin stew after finishing a case,

It was time to take the pumpkin out of the pot and eat it. In the final analysis, that was what solved these big problems of life. You could think and think and get nowhere, but you still had to eat your pumpkin. That brought you down to earth. That gave you a reason for going on. Pumpkin.

Mma Ramotswe is compared on one book cover to Miss Marple, and she herself refers to Agatha Christie in explaining to skeptical men that she is a "lady detective." She certainly shares with Miss Marple a skill for close observation, logical deduction, and a politeness that to some people conceals her absolute determination. But she is also very different, and these novels are not "detective fiction" in any expected sense. Miss Marple essentially catches murderers and turns them over to the police to get their punishment in the criminal justice system. Mma Ramotswe has individual friends who are policemen and asks for their help in gaining information, but for the police as an institution, she has little respect. As she says in one case, "The police had a limited interest in pursuing crime, and certain sorts of crime interested them not at all. The involvement of the country's most powerful figures in witchcraft would certainly be in the latter category." Mma Ramotswe seeks, instead, a very African resolution of her cases: social reconciliation and personal justice, privately arrived at. Watching how she does this and thinking about the difference between her "detecting" and that of Miss Marple or any other Western female detective is a provocative and engaging exercise in understanding Setswana culture—and our own.

In the second Mma Ramotswe book, *Tears of the Giraffe*, there are fewer cases resolved, but a much fuller development of the character of Mma Ramotswe's good friend, Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni, an exceedingly kind and generous man by any standard. I found Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni a bit much to believe: I could hear my friends in Botswana asking, "And just where is this man?" But it isn't difficult to believe that having found such a man, Mma Ramotswe might consider marrying him—he has all the qualities praised by Botswana women in the letters-to-the-editor columns in which current gender debates rage. *Tears* also tells us about negative Botswana attitudes toward the San people, and about the strong value that Setswana culture places on children and their care. I was puzzled by one thing: Mma Ramotswe's explanation that the "tears of the giraffe," a pattern on Botswana baskets, are "given to the women who make the baskets" because "the giraffe has nothing else to give." The explanation I learned from basket sellers (which appears on official basket posters) is that the "tears" were shed by a dying giraffe wounded in the hunt, as the hunters chased it to its death, and the pattern of the tears was copied stylistically into baskets. A sadder story, certainly, and not nearly as poetic as Mma Ramotswe's, but more appropriate perhaps to the contradictory mix of sadness and beauty in today's Botswana. Mma Ramotswe's investigations into life and crime continue in two more novels, *Morality for Beautiful Girls*, already available, and *The Kalahari Typing School for Men*, coming in spring 2003.

When I arrived in Botswana in January 1987, the country was still adjusting to the shock of South African Defense Force commando raids, a raid six months earlier having killed Botswana women as well as South African refugees and cultural workers. Raids went on during the two years I lived

in Gaborone, as South Africa continued its campaign to terrorize Botswana and her people into turning against the ANC and the anti-apartheid struggle. Although many Botswana became more suspicious of strangers, neither they nor their government backed down from their opposition to apartheid and their disdain for "the Boers." Instead of giving in, they expanded their army and set up roadblocks on all roads leading into and out of cities and towns, and eventually caught, tried and imprisoned a group of commandos, to the apartheid regime's embarrassment.

Despite the continual threat of commando attacks and the periodic actual murderous raids, Botswana was generally safe for its citizens and foreign guests, whether expatriates, tourists, refugees or militants. We experienced Botswana as an incredibly safe place to live and travel. I took many trips by car with my daughter Adrian, ten years old when we arrived, camping and staying in cottages by ourselves at game parks in Botswana and in southern and western Zimbabwe (where there were also roadblocks). The main direct impact on us of SADF terrorism was that the first Setswana we learned, after the polite greetings, "Dumela, Mma" or "Dumela, Rra," was to understand and answer roadblock questions: "Where are you coming from? Where are you going? What's in the boot?" Once the soldiers heard our U.S. accents, or, to be precise, heard that we did not have South African accents, we were waved through. On one trip we had my daughter's stuffed doll, Gretchen the (large) Bear in the boot, and on looking in the young soldier politely said, "Dumela, Bear," and waved us on our way with the customary, "Tsamaya sentle, mma"—literally, "Go nicely," but translated by McCall Smith more in the spirit of the wish, as "Go in peace"—to which we replied, "Sala sentle, rra"—"Stay in peace." Would that the roadblocks at our own airports these days were so politely operated, or that, as in Botswana, suspected terrorists were prosecuted through the normal criminal justice system and not detained without trial, and refugees could gain easy entry. With grace, Botswana survived that crisis, and prospered. Her enemies are history.

Now Botswana is faced with the crisis of AIDS, itself largely a result of the country's location on the road between South Africa and East Africa, of generations of men moving back and forth between South African mining camps and their home villages, and of its own development success, which has provided the roads on which the virus can travel to all corners of the country. The government is acting aggressively, mobilizing its considerable resources and outside aid to prevent, test and treat HIV/AIDS. Testing is widely available at clinics throughout the country, and most young women are tested during pre-natal visits. Government provides free ADZ for all pregnant women who test positive, and free retrovirals are being made available in more and more clinics. Debswana, the diamond company, already provides free testing, ADZ and retrovirals to all its workers and their families. Government is now planning for special care centers for AIDS patients. Despite continuing problems with denial, more and more people recognize that it is time to take the pumpkin out of the pot and eat it. There is much more to Botswana than AIDS: it is that "much more," often vividly and eloquently captured in these books, that will enable the Botswana to overcome this latest threat to their independent survival.

Judith Van Allen is affiliated with the Institute for African Development at Cornell. She is currently writing a book on the women's movement in Botswana.