

***ENLIGHTENING
DISILLUSIONMENTS***

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Author's introduction to the English translation (2011)

This book was written in Hebrew in 2005 for an Israeli readership. I was born in Berlin, Germany in 1931 to Jewish atheist, humanist parents. They met in Berlin in 1924 but emigrated to Buenos Aires in 1928 and married there. In 1931 they returned briefly to Berlin to settle inheritance matters. I was born there and their stay was prolonged. In 1933 the Nazis won power in Germany. That summer, when I was two years old, my mother strolled in a Berlin park with me in the pram when a uniformed Nazi SS officer came towards her and greeted her with the stretched arm "Heil Hitler" salute. As my mother's hands were pushing the pram she wondered whom was he saluting. She looked around but saw no other people. Then she looked at me in the pram. I sat there with my arm raised. She realized the SS Officer thought I was saluting him and returned the salute. When she came home she told my father: *"We must leave this country. Our son imitates Nazi gestures and will grow up to be a Nazi"*. My father nodded in agreement but did nothing. Eventually the Nazis passed a law that children of Jewish parents must sit in classrooms on a special "Jews' Bench". That motivated my father to emigrate. My parents had all the necessary documents to emigrate to the USA but my mother had a brother who had emigrated to Palestine in 1924 so she decided to visit him before leaving for the USA. They arrived in Jaffa in 1934. My mother fell in love with the magnificent Tel-Aviv beach, its snow-white sands (in 1934) and emerald clear sea (nowadays polluted) so she prolonged her visit. They were still in Palestine in 1939 when WW2 broke out. So they had to stay. When Israel fought its war of independence in 1948 my father said to me: *"In 1934 I knew nothing about the Palestinians. I didn't know they had lived here in many towns and villages for over a thousand years. Had I known it I would have left. There will be a century of nationalistic conflict here. It will suck up, like a whirlpool, all the thinking, creativity, - and lives, of people. It will be a waste of one's life. I am not a nationalist, I made a mistake in staying here but at my age it is too late for me to start life from scratch elsewhere"*. I was 17 and did not understand him. I went to school in Tel-Aviv and was fed all the standard nationalistic Zionist propaganda. Like all kids I imbibed it without questioning. As the years passed I gradually became disillusioned with many ideas I had absorbed at school. This book describes some - but not all - of my disillusionments. Many Israelis of my generation share these disillusionments.

Weaning from an illusion is often as traumatic as weaning from a physical addiction. However, if one overcomes the post-weaning depression, the final outcome in both cases is always beneficial.

Aki Orr, Tel-Aviv, 2011

Thanks are due to Mark Marshall of Toronto for this excellent English translation.

Ziona ORR reminded me to add "Suicide?" which I forgot in the Hebrew edition.

1. Enlightening disillusionment (stage 1)

In the summer of 1950 I was demobilized from the Israeli Navy and sought work in the Israeli merchant marine. As a cadet in Israel's very first Naval Officers' course I had worked six months on the A-16 (a former US ice-breaker) and a year on the frigate K-28, so I was not a novice on ships. But the Zim shipping company who hired me to work on their cargo ship ignored that. They insisted that work in the navy was unlike work in the merchant marine and that I must start from the lowest rank. They said I qualified only as a "deck boy" which is the lowest rank for deck-hands. Above it are the ranks of "Ordinary Seaman" (OS1 and OS2), "Able Bodied seaman" (AB), and "Boatswain," and the officer ranks: "Third Mate" "Second Mate", "First Mate", and "Captain". To rise in rank one must serve the required sea-time in the a lower rank as set out in the Ministry of Transport regulations and then pass special exams set by the Ministry.

At 19 I was accepted for work as a "deck boy" on the Zim company cargo ship "*Tel Aviv*" that sailed on the Israel-United States line. It was a "Liberty"-type cargo steamship with a capacity of ten thousand tons. In WW2 the United States and Canada built these ships for transporting supplies to Europe. German submarines sank many, but at the end of WW2 many remained in surplus. The US government sold them cheaply, and somebody bought four and donated them to the newly-founded State of Israel. They were named "*Tel-Aviv*," "*Haifa*," "*Yafo*" and "*Ako*." and given to the Zim company in Haifa, of which 51% was owned by the Zionist Labour Union (a.k.a Histadrut) and 49% by the Jewish Agency.

I began work on the *Tel-Aviv* in the port of Haifa a week before departure. At that time Israel exported only citrus fruit - in autumn. I began to work in summer when all Israeli ships sailed empty from Haifa. The *Tel-Aviv* stood empty in Haifa port and its height was like that of a three-storey building. To me she looked huge. Like all ships at that time she had a steam boiler and a steam engine. The steering was hydraulic but operated by a mechanical steering wheel. She did not have radar, and lookout duty was done with regular binoculars. The cargo holds were covered with wooden planks and canvas tarps. She had her own cranes, and could load and unload cargo without the help of port cranes.

The crew of every ship consisted of three sectors: deck, engine and catering. The deck crew was responsible for maintenance of the cargo handling gear, the navigation gear, and watch-keeping doing steering and lookout. In port the deck crew worked to remove rust and to paint the ship. At sea, we steered the ship, kept lookout, and prepared the cargo gear for the next port. Officially our working day lasted eight hours (at sea we worked two shifts of four hours separated by rest periods of eight hours) but at sea deck crews were asked to work four hours overtime nearly every day. In port we could refuse to do that, but at sea refusal was considered "mutiny," and those refusing risked dismissal. Thus for all practical purposes a workday lasted twelve hours.

Shipping companies paint the company's emblem on both sides of the funnels of their ships. The emblem of Zim was the Zionist flag – two thick blue stripes with seven golden stars between them. The stars represented the seven-hour working day that Theodore Herzl, the founder of Political Zionism, had proposed as the working day in the Zionist State. We used to joke that both funnel sides taken together had 14 stars symbolizing Zim's 14-hour working day.

The passage to the US lasted three weeks - one week to cross the Mediterranean and two weeks to cross the Atlantic Ocean. The return was the same. The ship stayed in every port of call for a week. Loading at six ports lasted about six weeks. Along with the six weeks at sea, the round trip Haifa-US-Haifa lasted some three months. When I returned my friends asked me: "didn't you get bored at sea, with nothing around you except the sea and the sky?"

I explained that after 12 hours of work I was so tired that I had no time to get bored and the rest of the time I slept. On my first trip I did not even see the captain.

Despite that, in those days Israeli seamen loved their work and would not change it for any work on land even for higher pay. The situation of the men with families was different. The prolonged absence from the family was a burden but they too loved the work at sea. There was an atmosphere of professional pride. At that time most Israeli seamen endeavoured to excel in their work not in order to please their employers or to rise in rank but to win the esteem of their shipmates.

Esteem was based on professional competence and willingness to help others. Those who excelled on the technical side of the work and also in readiness to help those who encountered difficulties at work were considered excellent seamen. Their reputation circulated throughout the Israeli merchant marine.

When we returned to Haifa a representative of Zim came and handed out our pay slips.

It was the first pay slip I had ever received in my life. I will never forget it. We received one third of our wages abroad in foreign currency to enable us to go ashore. In the US this sufficed to pay for public transport. In Haifa we received the rest of our pay. I examined my pay slip. After deductions for income tax, Histadrut membership dues, foreign currency allowance and paying for what I had bought at the ship's store, I reached the bottom line showing how much Zim owed me and saw to my surprise that I owed Zim money. I was stunned: After three months' work (of 12 hours daily) I had to pay the employer? When I checked the details the reason became clear: the basic pay and the overtime pay were so low that the price of the supplies I had bought at the ship's store (cigarettes, chocolate and working clothes) plus the third of the wages that I received in foreign currency added up to a sum that was more than my wages. The Zim company demanded that I pay them the difference.

True, my pay as a deck boy was at the bottom of the pay scale, but even so I was surprised, as foreign currency was only a third of the pay, and the ship store was duty-free and cheaper than shops ashore.

Those with higher pay than mine also complained about their low pay.

Not only was the pay bad, but so were the conditions of work. The accommodation was cramped – 4 in a tiny cabin, in double bunks, the food was bad and the company did not provide work clothes. We were forced to buy storm clothes, boots, work gloves and protective goggles with our own money. The ships that sailed to hot countries did not have air conditioning or coolers for drinking-water, and the ships that sailed to cold countries did not have devices for heating or for drying clothes. No ship had a washing-machine. There was no TV, no radio, no record player. In 1960 these were already standard equipment but in 1950 they didn't exist. They did not arrive of their own or due to Zim's generosity. We won every amenity only by struggle.

I went to the Seamen's Union to see the secretary in order to get advice on what to do about my debt to the company. I expected that the Seamen's Union Secretary, whose task was to defend seamen's interests against the shipping companies, would advise and assist me in my struggle against Zim. I expected the secretary of the Union to be an experienced seaman who had participated in many struggles against shipping companies and was knowledgeable about the steps I should take.

When I met him I was surprised to discover that he had never been a seaman nor had he been elected to his post. He had been appointed to his position by the Histadrut political leadership. Instead of defending seamen against Zim he defended Zim against the seamen. The reason was simple: he was an experienced bureaucrat of the Histadrut. To me - and to most seamen - that seemed unfair. Moreover, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon he worked as Secretary of the Seamen's Union but from 1p.m to 5 p.m. he worked as a member of Zim's board of directors. The Histadrut wanted to save the salary of one clerk and appointed him to do the two - related - jobs.

All seamen resented the fact that a man who received a salary to defend their interests was not a seaman and was not elected by them, but appointed by the Histadrut leaders to take care of the Histadrut's interests. We demanded that the Seamen's Union secretary be himself a seaman and be elected by the working seamen.

At first the Histadrut rejected our demand, but in the end they gave in and set a date for elections. Once the date was set the election campaign began.

Veteran seamen, who stayed ashore to prepare for their officers' exams, drew up a list of "Provisional Representatives" and ran against the Histadrut candidates. The Histadrut launched a campaign of threats against anyone who supported the "Provisional

Representatives” and offered bribes to those who promised to vote for the Histadrut’s candidates. The election campaign lasted a few weeks. The “Provisional Representatives” candidates won the elections with an overwhelming majority. After the elections, they drafted a new work contract for the seamen with a provision enabling the seamen to dismiss a Union representative who was not carrying out his functions properly. They asked seamen on all ships to draft proposals for work contracts on their lines to be included in a general contract that would be submitted to Zim. The Histadrut leaders were experienced in labour conflicts and knew that the representatives who had been elected would submit a proposal for a new work contract to Zim, which would reject it, so the seamen would launch a strike. In order to pre-empt a strike on clear economic issues the Histadrut leaders announced that they refused to approve the election results. The seamen thought that those who were elected in legal elections as representatives of the seamen were authorized to represent those who elected them. But the Histadrut leaders pointed out that according to the Histadrut’s rules, even a representative who received a majority in legal elections must receive *additional* ratification from the Histadrut leadership. The seamen learned to their surprise that those were indeed the Histadrut’s rules.

The refusal of the Histadrut leaders to ratify the results of the elections forced the seamen to declare a strike, not against Zim but against the Histadrut leadership, and to demand that they ratify the results of the elections. That confused many among the public and the seamen as well.

A strike against an employer, over pay and work conditions, is a clear issue. But a strike against a workers’ union, with the demand to ratify representatives who had been elected in accordance with the law, confused many. The representatives of the seamen acted logically and took into consideration that Zim had not refused their demands (which had not yet been submitted to it). They did not strike against Zim so they instructed the seamen not to stop ships but rather to leave them. **That was a fateful error.**

Zim immediately hired strike-breakers from Greece and Italy to operate the ships. The strikers thus lost any leverage against the Histadrut. When the seamen’s new representatives understood their mistake, they instructed the seamen who were still on the ships not to leave them and to prevent them from being operated by strike-breakers. Histadrut officials in Haifa confiscated the Seamen’s Union strike fund and there was no money to pay needy strikers. “Union dues” were deducted from the pay of every union member but rather than paying them to the Union’s account they were paid directly into a central account of the Histadrut. That account was controlled by the leaders of the Histadrut who decided how much each union would receive. A trade union that got into conflict with the leaders of the Histadrut did not receive any money. Without a “strike fund” it is hard to strike because during a long strike no wages are paid and many strikers, especially those with families, suffer badly.

The Histadrut's bank account reveals its unique structure - and purpose. It was not a federation (of Unions) but a Corporation of Zionist Labour groups. In many countries trade unions formed federations to strengthen them vis-à-vis the employers. For example: the TUC (Trade Union Congress) in Britain and the AFL (American Federation of Labour) in the United States. Those were alliances between existing unions to strengthen them vis-à-vis the employers. If a Seamen's Union has an alliance with the Port Workers Union, they can stop any cargo from passing through a port even if the employers find scabs to run the ships. But the Histadrut was no federation of Unions. It was not created as an alliance between existing unions. It existed before the Unions and it created them. One joined it directly, as an individual, before - and even without - joining any trade union. Histadrut members' fees were deducted from their salaries by the employer before they got them and were paid directly into the Histadrut's bank account. Many owners of small businesses, or professionals like lawyers, accountants, dentists, and craftsmen like cobblers, tailors and watchmakers joined the Histadrut. The reason was simple – it had the only health-insurance system in Palestine. It had doctors, hospitals and pharmacies in every big town. Before the 1940s there was no other health insurance system in Palestine. The Histadrut accepted only Jews as members. Moreover, it was created as an economic **corporation**. It owned its own Bank, a public pension-fund, an Insurance company, the largest construction firm in Palestine, a theatre company, a national football club and clubs for all sports, a publishing firm, the largest vegetable and dairy-product marketing firm, the largest chain of department stores and the largest quarries and stone-products producer. Its founders set up the Jewish trade unions (and not the other way round) so that they could manipulate and control them. When Israel became independent the Histadrut founded, and co-owned, the only airline (El-Al) and the largest shipping company (Zim). The Histadrut's purpose was to dominate the entire Jewish economy in Palestine and to subordinate all class interests of Jewish workers to the interests of Zionism, i.e. the Jewish political colonization of Palestine. The Histadrut refused to accept Arabs as members and picketed Jewish employers who employed Arab workers. It organized strong-arm groups to beat-up Arab workers employed by Jews. This was the notorious "Conquest of Labour" campaign in the 1920s. Ben-Gurion masterminded it. A Jew born in Jaffa in 1890 told me: *"It was the 'Conquest of Labour' campaign that started the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Earlier Jewish immigrants, organized and financed by Baron Rothschild (who was not Zionist), were welcomed by the Palestinians as they provided jobs for them in their plantations. The Histadrut "Conquest of Labour" stopped this and started the conflict."* The Histadrut founders in 1920 (Ben-Gurion and his followers) set up a tax-collecting office and central financial fund. The Histadrut did not depend on the Unions; they depended on it. The Histadrut was controlled by Labour-Zionist political leaders appointed by their political parties not by the trade union members. Leaders were elected in general Histadrut elections; not by trade union elections. In trade union elections all those elected by the workers needed

additional ratification from the Histadrut leaders. Trade unions received their budgets from the "Histadrut central tax fund." That enabled politicians who were not elected by trade unions to control all the unions regardless of who had been elected by the unions themselves.

The seamen rejected that system. They wanted a trade union controlled only by its own members, not by outsiders. The Histadrut leaders opposed that and so the strike broke out. Ben-Gurion and his men feared that a seamen's strike victory would create a precedent that would shatter the hold of Labour Zionist politicians on all Jewish workers in Palestine.

The *Tel-Aviv* was docked in New York harbour when we heard about the strike. The New York port workers loading our ship told us that they had heard on the news that a seamen's strike had started in Haifa, adding that if we asked them to stop loading the ship they would do so. They would not load a ship whose seamen were on strike and they would see to it that no one else loaded it. That made a great impression on me.

The unconditional readiness of the New York port workers to help us in our strike was a new thing for us. Later I learned that that was called "International working-class solidarity." In 1951 in New York I experienced it for the first time. We had a meeting of the entire crew and debated the New York port workers' offer. If we agreed to their offer the *Tel-Aviv* would remain in New York until the end of the strike. The bachelors wanted that but the family men wanted to return to their families and proposed that we return to Haifa and join the strike there. We held a vote and the family men got a majority. We expressed our gratitude to the New York port workers who understood the decision and continued to load the ship. When the ship was loaded we sailed to Israel. When we approached Haifa a small boat came out to meet us, with two of the leaders of the strike, Walter Michaelis and Aharon Stark. They instructed us to stay on the ship and to tie her to the breakwater and not the main dock. The reason was that Zim had asked the police to remove the strikers from the ships by force and hired strike-breakers to run the ships. The dock is made of concrete so placing a ladder on it to climb onto a ship is easy. But a ship tied to the breakwater is surrounded by water on all sides. Aft it is tied to the breakwater by long ropes, and its bow is held in place by two anchors in the waters of the port. One can board it only from a boat that unlike a dock is unstable and shakes the ladder, which makes it hard to climb onto the ship.

When we finished tying the *Tel-Aviv* to the breakwater, the family men went ashore and the bachelors stayed behind to guard the ship against the police. The police did not come to the ship that day. When the family men returned, the bachelors went on leave. Thus we rotated, but two seamen always remained on watch, ready to warn the whole crew of the arrival of the police.

In 1981 - thirty years after the strike - I saw on Israeli TV an interview with Naftali Vydra, who was general director of Zim in 1951. He related that during the strike he asked the leader of the Histadrut in Haifa, Yosef Almogi, to allow him to negotiate with the strikers. Almogi called the prime minister, Ben-Gurion, who rang Vydra and forbade him to negotiate with the seamen. Vydra said that Ben-Gurion told him that the United Workers' Party (Mapam) – the second largest political party in Israel at the time – had organized the strike in order to seize power in Israel and convert it into a satellite of the Soviet Union. Vydra concluded that due to “high politics” it was forbidden for Zim to seek a compromise with the seamen. Ben-Gurion did not want a compromise with the seamen; he wanted to break them in order to show everyone that the Histadrut leaders - not union representatives - controlled the entire work force. Mapam, like most of the public at that time in Israel, supported the strikers, but the idea that Mapam had organized the strike in order to convert Israel into a satellite of the Soviet Union was sheer paranoia on Ben-Gurion's part. In 1951 the strikers did not know about the conversation between Ben-Gurion and Vydra but they knew that their main adversary was the leadership of the Histadrut, and more specifically, Ben-Gurion and his men, who were fighting to preserve their power over all workers in Israel. The seamen wanted to decide for themselves on their conditions of work but the leaders of the “Land of Israel Workers Party” (Mapai – Ben-Gurion's party) opposed that. They feared that if the seamen won then other workers would also try to establish independent unions and Mapai would lose its hold over wage-earners – and over Israeli society as a whole. Mapai's control over Israel (which lasted some 50 years) was based on its control of the workers by means of the Histadrut. The seamen rebelled against the Histadrut's rule. Their victory would have weakened the Histadrut's (and Ben-Gurion's party's) control over the workers of Israel and Israeli society in general. Therefore Ben-Gurion insisted that the seamen had to be defeated at any cost. He preferred an Israeli merchant fleet operated by Greek and Italian strike-breakers rather than an Israeli seamen's union independent of the Histadrut. In those years the Histadrut was the biggest corporation in Israel. It was the owner of Kupat Holim (the national health insurance fund – trans.), Bank Hapoalim, the Mivtahim pension fund, Tnuva (the cooperative that distributes most of Israel's dairy products – trans), Solel Boneh (largest construction firm in Israel – trans.), Koor Industries, Zim and El Al, and it also controlled the unions. It controlled the economy and the wage-earners and thereby it controlled the State of Israel.

In that strike I realized that for a public employer like Histadrut (or government), control of the workers matters far more than profit, and a worker's political loyalty matters to such an employer much more than the worker's professional skill. A public employer is preoccupied with control, not with profit. Such an employer can apply pressure on a worker outside the workplace. A worker whom the government has marked as “trouble-maker” at his place of work will be considered as such in **every** government department to which his personal file is transferred. For a private employer, on the other hand, profit

matters more than all else, and he will relate to his employees according to their contribution to profits, not according to their political views. Moreover, the authority of a private employer is limited to the workplace.

I learned all that after Zim put me on a blacklist at the end of the strike. But on Friday, 21 December 1951, in pouring rain, I learned something else. While standing guard on the deck, I saw on the main dock in the Haifa port some 300 policemen mustering in raincoats, with steel helmets, batons and shields, boarding two big tugboats coming to the *Tel-Aviv* to forcibly remove us from the ship. I immediately alerted the crew to prepare to confront the police. A quarter of an hour passed before the boats reached the *Tel Aviv*. During that time I wondered why 300 policemen were attacking me. In the past I had seen only one or two policemen in action. That was also how the police looked in movies. You never see hundreds of them attacking together. Nowhere had I seen 300 policemen in action. This sight politicised me.

I was told by all my teachers that the role of the police is to enforce the law, to catch offenders like thieves or reckless drivers; but seeing 300 policemen coming like an army to attack me and my comrades, even though we had committed no offense and broke no law, caused me to question the nature and role of the police. A strike is legal. If the job of the police is to enforce the law why do they attack legal strikers? Who tells the police whom to attack? Whom do the police protect by attacking legal strikers?

In the years that have passed since the seamen's strike I have seen police attacking strikers and demonstrators all over the world, but I have never seen police attacking employers. In school we are told that the role of the police is to uphold the law. A strike is legal, and the police are supposed to defend those who are acting in accordance with the law. In the seamen's strike I saw that the police act contrary to the law in order to defend the employers and the political system that they serve.

When the police boat drew near, the commander of Haifa Port Police, Bodinger, stood up and shouted to us through a megaphone: "*Leave the ship immediately. No measures will be taken against those who leave. Those who stay aboard are violating the law, and the police will board the ship and arrest them.*" The strong wind and the pouring rain reduced our hearing, but it did not occur for a moment to any of us to answer Bodinger – or to obey him. The new Deck-Boy did not hear Bodinger, because he was cleaning the dining room inside the ship. After finishing cleaning he came out to dump the garbage into the sea but because of the pouring rain he did it hurriedly without checking who was on the other side of the railing. The garbage fell on Bodinger, who interpreted that as our reply to his ultimatum. He ordered the policemen to lean a ladder against the hull of the *Tel Aviv*, and he climbed on it brandishing a pistol.

Up to that moment we had related to him with indifference. Most of the seamen had been in clandestine militias before the creation of the State of Israel and had fought in the War of Independence. As clandestine fighters and 1948 War veterans we saw ourselves as the “silver platter” on which Israel’s independence had been handed to Israel’s citizens. No policeman scared us, but an Israeli policeman threatening us with a pistol angered us a lot more than would a British policeman. We weren’t scared but insulted. Whom is he threatening with a pistol? Those who smuggled Auschwitz survivors into the country? Before Bodinger reached the deck we pulled him up, grabbed the pistol from his hand and threw it into the sea. Then a line of seamen was formed who “settled accounts” with him, and every one in his turn landed some blows on the swaggering officer. When one finished, he turned to the next in line and said, “he’s yours.” The others threw objects at the policemen in the boat, pulled the ladder up from them and smashed it. The policemen panicked, hid, and were afraid to board the *Tel-Aviv*. We locked Bodinger in a cabin next to the captain’s.

The battle on the *Tel-Aviv* ended with a clear victory for the strikers. No seaman was evicted from the ship and the policemen refused to attack it again. Most of the seamen went to the dining room to drink something hot. I remained on watch on the deck.

The captain of the *Tel Aviv* was Yitzhak Aharonovitz, nicknamed “Ike”. In 1947 he was the captain of the refugee ship *Exodus* (in Hebrew: “*Yetzi’at Europa*” – “Exodus from Europe” – trans.) which became world-famous. It carried illegal immigrants - all survivors of Nazi extermination-camps – to Palestine. The British intercepted that ship at sea and towed it to Haifa in July 1947. In the port of Haifa they transferred its passengers to other ships and returned them to Germany. The refugees, including women and children, resisted the British soldiers, who beat them with batons. Film newsreels showed the event all over the world. Those heart-rending scenes were seen on cinema screens everywhere and generated public sympathy for the refugees. That helped secure a two-thirds majority in the United Nations General Assembly vote for Palestine’s Partition Resolution four months later, on 29 November 1947. A two-thirds majority was received thanks in great measure to the refugee ship *Exodus*. Due to that UN vote the State of Israel was created.

The story of the *Exodus* became a legend in Israel and the world, and “Ike” became a legendary figure. We respected and trusted him. After the strike we learned that before the police attack the leaders of the strike discussed how to respond to the police when they came to “take care of” the *Tel Aviv*. Ike participated in that discussion, which was followed by a vote in which the majority decided to resist the police by force. Ike opposed that decision, but he was in the minority.

On a ship at sea the captain represents the employer – and the law. In such a role he has to defend the law. If he does not, he will lose his captain’s licence. Ike supported the

strike, but not the resistance to the police. Bodinger knew that. While he was locked in a cabin next to Ike's cabin, he began to knock on the walls and shout: "*Captain, your crew killed two policemen. I will press charges against you and demand that your captain's licence will be rescinded.*" Bodinger was lying. No policemen had been killed or injured. But Ike did not know that and he panicked. He freed Bodinger and the latter proposed that Ike tell the seamen to leave the ship, in return for which he promised that nobody would be detained. Ike agreed and advised us to stop resisting the police so that we could go home without being arrested. We agreed because we trusted him. We thought it was a decision of the leaders of the strike. *We were wrong.*

The leaders of the strike had not given any such instruction. It was "Ike"'s idea. Moreover, the police were afraid to attack the *Tel Aviv* again. Thus we had in effect attained victory over the police. The victory of the *Tel Aviv* strikers over the police could have turned into the victory of the entire strike, because the leaders of the Histadrut realized that after the publication in the daily press of photos of the *Tel-Aviv* battle between police and legal strikers, the Israeli public would oppose the continuation of the police violence, and the police would find it difficult to attack the seamen again. At that time many in Israel still remembered the violence of the British police before the birth of the State of Israel against those who were demonstrating under the slogans "Free Immigration" and "A Hebrew State." Police violence was seen as the behaviour of an oppressive regime that is not fitting for a people that had liberated itself from oppression.

Photos of the battle on the *Tel-Aviv* in the press would have prevented the police from attacking the strikers again and the ships would have remained strike-bound. That would have forced the leaders of the Histadrut to accept our demands.

Had we understood all this we would have remained on the ship, but we were inexperienced in labour conflicts and public relations. Trusting Ike we accepted his suggestion to leave the ship without any discussion. We got off the ship instead of remaining on it. Our departure from the *Tel-Aviv* caused other seamen to leave their ships, which immediately began to sail with strike-breaking crews. When ships sail regardless of a strike there is no point in continuing it, so the leaders of the strike gave orders to end it. All strikers returned to work without any demand having been accepted. The Histadrut won. It appointed its men to run the seamen's union. The representatives elected by the seamen were not permitted to serve as representatives and were put on blacklists at Zim and in the files of the Histadrut and all government departments.

The leaders of the Histadrut won the strike despite losing the crucial battle on the *Tel-Aviv*.

The police did not attack us when we left the *Tel Aviv* on Ike's advice. But a week later we received summonses to report to the Haifa District Court to stand trial for "*assaulting*

police officers.” We came to Haifa to stand trial on that charge. The accusation surprised us because it was not we who had gone to attack the police but they who had come to the *Tel-Aviv*, climbed up a ladder, and tried to remove us by force from the ship without any legal justification. The police did not receive authorization from the Knesset to remove us from the ships. The fact that Bodinger threatened us with a pistol was not mentioned at all in the trial.

In the years that have passed since then, I have seen police attacking strikers and demonstrators in various countries. The strikers are always accused of “*assaulting police officers.*” A striker or demonstrator whom the police attack is immediately accused of “*assaulting police officers.*” It serves as a judicial pretext to justify police intervention in strikes and demonstrations. Every time police attack strikers the media describe the police as defending themselves and the strikers as the aggressors. It is thus all over the world, including in countries whose leaders claim to be “workers’ regimes.” No court has indicted police officers who attacked strikers or demonstrators who broke no law. I learnt my first lesson about the real purpose of the police at the trial in Haifa. Moreover, the description of the facts at the trial was utterly different from what had happened in reality. In the schools they teach us that the law is justice, but at the trial I saw that the law is very different from justice. In court only the judicial formulations have validity, not the actual facts. The strikers of the *Tel Aviv* had not studied law, and were astonished to hear the judicial description of the facts. For example, it turned out in the trial that Yosef Almogi, the Secretary of the Histadrut in Haifa, had a telephone conversation with Bodinger the evening before the police attack on the *Tel Aviv*. All those present in the court knew that in that conversation Almogi instructed Bodinger to attack the *Tel Aviv* the next day.

Bodinger too knew that everybody knew that, but he ignored it with contempt. When the judge asked him, “what did you talk about?” Bodinger replied: “The weather.” As part of Ben-Gurion’s Establishment that controlled the government, the police, the Histadrut and Zim, Bodinger knew that if he bent the law for the good of B.G’s government he would be promoted, but if he upheld the law against the government he would lose his job. He tried to present the police as defending the law and to conceal its ties to the Histadrut.

When he was asked: “*What law authorized you to remove seamen from the ships?*” He replied: “*The law that permits the owner of an apartment to evict tenants.*” All in court were astonished. But he explained: “*Seamen do not merely work on the ships; they live in them. So they are like tenants, and Zim is like the owner of an apartment. If the owner of an apartment orders tenants to leave and they refuse to do so, the owner of the apartment has the right to invite the police to evict them.*”

The simple fact that a seaman cannot return to his home at the end of his workday and is forced to live on the ship (which is not an “apartment” but a workplace) has no judicial

validity because the law does not recognize the special nature of the work of the seaman. Fortunately for us, Israeli legislation was new at the time, and there was not yet any law that permitted the police to intervene in strikes. Therefore the judge, Abraham Walter Schaal, ruled that the police intervention in the strike was illegal. He rebuked the police who lied to the court and acquitted us of the charge of “assaulting police officers.” We left the court with a feeling of relief, but the police appealed the ruling to the High Court and claimed that it was a precedent that would prevent the police from intervening in future strikes. The High Court accepted the appeal overruling the Haifa District court and ruled that the strikers of the *Tel-Aviv* should not be punished, but that the police behaviour was legal and they are permitted to intervene in strikes.

On which side would the police intervene in a strike? On the side of the strikers or on the side of the employers? The court did not decide on that, but not a single instance has yet happened anywhere in the world in which police have intervened against employers even when they violated the law (and killed strikers).

That cured me of the illusion that “*the law is neutral.*”

Even when the formulation of the law is neutral, its implementation – in strikes – is always biased in favour of the employers.

The seamen’s strike in 1951 was unique in Israel for three reasons:

1. It was longer and more violent than any other strike in Israel.
2. It aimed to create an independent union that would be accountable only to its members.
3. All the decisions of the strike were taken in assemblies in which every striker could participate. A decision was passed only if it was voted for by a majority in a poll in which every striker could participate.

No other strike in Israel was conducted that way.

After being acquitted in the trial I went to the seamen’s labour office to look for a job. I learned to my surprise that I was blacklisted by Zim because the management of that company had blacklisted the entire crew of the *Tel-Aviv*.

All the leaders of the strike – and the strikers from the *Tel Aviv* – were on the blacklist. At that time most of the ships of the Israeli merchant fleet were owned by Zim. Only four were privately-owned. And only there could we find work. Thus I arrived at the Borchard company, which owned only one ship: the *Daniela Borchard*.

Because of the strike I had entered - against my will - into conflict with the police, with the law, with Zim and with the Histadrut. Every new conflict raised new questions in my mind that had not occurred to me before. I decided to explore the question of how society

and its various institutions were created. In the past I had thought that human society was created in a natural way like an apple on a tree, and is the way it is of necessity and cannot be other than the way it is. The strike exploded that illusion and set me thinking about what - and who - makes society the way it is, and also, how did society and its different institutions come into being? Is a society created by Nature? Are police and governments, laws and courts, elections and parties “natural”? Is it “natural” that the police attack strikers who had broken no law? Can there be a different police, a different union, a different law? If it is not nature that determines the structure of society, who does? And based on what considerations?

The strike weaned me of many illusions about the law, justice, political leaders, unions, and caused me to ponder issues I had not thought of before, because the schools and the education system either ignored them or misled me. Was that an accident ?

A policeman’s baton hitting striking employees “opens the head” in more ways than one. The physical wounds heal, the mental wounds motivate one to re-asses critically all one was taught in school.

The strike raised new questions in my mind and caused me to think about new issues.

I gradually realized that actual participation in confrontations on social issues is the best way to learn the actual problems of society, politics, history, and sociology.

2. More enlightening Disillusionment (stage 2)

The crew of the *Daniela Borchard* consisted mainly of strikers from the *Tel Aviv* and other strike activists. One of them was the leader of the strike, Nimrod Eshel.

Like “Ike”, Nimrod too was a legendary figure in our eyes. In 1946-47, before the birth of the State of Israel, he served in the naval section of the clandestine commando force - “Palyam”, that had smuggled Jewish survivors from Nazi death camps into Palestine. He was caught by the British and incarcerated in a detention camp in Cyprus, but dug a tunnel and escaped. His uncle, Eliyahu Golomb, was the founder of the Haganah (the clandestine militia that became the Israeli Army), and his aunt was married to Moshe Sharett, Israel’s first Foreign Minister and second Prime Minister. Nimrod’s parents were in Joseph Trumpeldor’s “Labour Battalion” (Heb: *Gdud ha-‘Avodah*) and his father was one of the founders of the “Palmach” (the *Haganah* commando unit). But Nimrod never mentioned any of that, and never used his connections with Israel’s Labour Party elite. He was honest and modest, and his views conflicted with - and even contradicted - those of the Zionist Labour elite to which his family belonged. Zionist Labour was ideologically nationalist, but Nimrod was ideologically internationalist. He was one of the founders of the “provisional representatives” of the seamen, and was seen as the leader of the strike. Before the strike, he accused Haifa Histadrut boss, Almogi, of corruption, and the latter sued him in a Histadrut tribunal, which acquitted Nimrod. Many seamen knew him well, and knew he was incorruptible, so they trusted him. They were not mistaken.

The Histadrut dealt with him differently: during the strike they pressurized the IDF (the Israeli army) to mobilize him. Many in the army opposed this, but there was pressure “from above,” (by Ben-Gurion) so all obliged. Calling up strike leaders to the IDF in order to prevent them from leading a strike was an insult to the IDF. But as it turned out, in time of need (whose need?) the “Israel Defence Force” defends the **rulers** of Israel and not the **citizens** of Israel. After the strike, Nimrod was blacklisted by Zim. So he went to the Borchard Company and was hired to work as Second Mate on the *Daniela Borchard*.

The Second Mate is responsible for navigating the ship from midnight to four in the morning and from midday to four in the afternoon. During those hours, the officer works on the command bridge of the ship, where he ensures that it is sailing on the right course, and charts its position and progress on a map. He is accompanied by two seamen. One steers the ship and the other is on lookout duty. They exchange roles every hour. Their duty is to ensure that the ship does not collide with another ship, an iceberg or a shoal. The chances of encountering such dangers are minimal, so the people on watch have plenty of time to talk. An arrogant officer does not converse with sailors, but Nimrod was never arrogant. He related to all as equals. Most nights not much happens on watch, and so there is time to talk. Nimrod used to talk to sailors who worked with him. I arranged to

be on his watch, and I never regretted it. I learned from him about history, sociology, and politics, more than I did from all my teachers at school. Once he explained the origin of religion. The explanation made sense to me, but not to my partner on the watch, Moshe Tabachnik, who said to Nimrod: “OK, so let’s begin at the beginning.” surprised, Nimrod asked: “What ‘beginning’ do you mean?” Moshe replied, “All begins when God created Adam and Eve.”

I was stunned, as Moshe was completely secular. He ate pork, worked on Sabbath, ate on Yom Kippur, never prayed or went to a Synagogue. What caused him to assume that Adam had been created by God? Meeting others like him I realized that people who have no explanation for the origin of religion accept - as a default option - a religious explanation of the origin of humanity, *even if they are atheists*. This issue is never blank; *many people who have no historical explanation for the origin of religion accept - as a default option - a religious explanation for the origin of Humanity - even when they are secular.*

Because of the strike, we also talked about labour disputes. Nimrod knew the writings of Marx, and saw our strike as part of a world-wide struggle between employees and employers. Under the influence of his words I began to understand things that I had never understood before.

First – that the history of the human species is not a collection of accidents but a *process* in which everything happening now is influenced by what happened before and influences what will happen next. This creates a logical continuity which the writer Arthur Miller called: “the grand overview”. It explains the mental evolution from animality to humanity. Marx saw humans as the “Tool-Making animal” that is, the only animal that invents, constructs, and uses tools. By "tool" he meant something that does not exist in nature but is *intentionally* created in order to achieve an intended purpose. Tools - by their creation and use - modify mentality. Use of new tools modifies awareness, attitudes, and expectations. They create new skills, new awareness, and new relations between people (this is not the common explanation, according to which history emerges from whims of leaders - or accidentally). Thus for example, when people were nomad "hunters and gatherers," picking up what raw nature provided, their attitude to nature, morality and society, was shaped by what happened in raw nature. But when they learnt to plant seeds, to make fire, to cultivate the soil and to breed animals they became sedentary, their attitudes changed and they began to worship creativity rather than raw nature. They idolized creativity so much that they attributed it to a mythical creator – "God" – whose main quality was his creativity. Those who cultivated the land without machines (that is, all humanity before the Industrial Revolution in the 19th Century) acquired a new attitude to life very different from that of the "hunter-gatherers". However, when steam-driven machines were invented (in the 1820s) their users began to see themselves as masters of nature. Those who manipulate nature trust their ability to

dominate nature. By considering the influence of, say, the motor car, or the birth-control pill, one can easily grasp this idea. People invent tools that change people. Nimrod pointed out: *“It is not our mentality that shapes our reality but the other way round: our reality shapes our mentality.”* The motor car (1900) the birth-control pill (1957) and the infertility cure (1978) changed human attitudes, morality, and expectations. They created new ones. In other words: the material environment in which people live shapes their mentality and morality. Tools change the material environment. Changes of material environment cause changes in mentality. This idea explains human mental evolution - and history - as driven by the creation of tools. Previously I saw no connection between reality and mentality, or between tools and history. I saw society, its tools and its history as separate items, like someone in the dark touching one item at a time. I used to have explanations for particular events, but not for the totality of human history as a connected process. The idea that Nimrod expressed lit up my understanding of human history like a flash of lightning revealing an entire landscape. For the first time I saw the *entire* process of human history, and could see connections between its parts and understand overall human history undistracted by details of particular events. I received a key to understanding the totality of human history. At first I thought Nimrod had hit on this idea by himself, and I was very impressed by that. But he told me that this idea had originated with Marx, and that motivated me to read the writings of Marx and his friend Engels. There I found explanations for the evolution from animality into humanity, for evolution of the family, of society, and of history, and the answer to the question, how did one kind of animals become "Human society"? The answer: The creation and use of tools modified the mentality of their makers and users. The new mentality generated new relations between people, new authority relations, new regimes, and new attitudes to nature.

Marx's writings convinced me that most problems of society originate from people preferring private interests over the interests of society as a whole. Every society is dominated by a minority that cares for itself rather than for the whole society. This breeds economic and political disasters for the majority, and often wars that kill many.

The solution to mass suffering, said Marx, is in the ownership of tools by the entire society. “Tools” here mean knowledge, writing, medicine, technology, land, factories and banks; not just hammers, nails, and pliers. This seemed reasonable to me.

I concluded that it was necessary to organize society so that all the knowledge, technology, land, industry and banks are owned - and managed - by all citizens. Not by their representatives or private owners. All citizens - not political representatives - must decide how, and to what ends, all tools of society - the banks, the lands, the factories and all technology – should be used. Only this can prevent their misuse. In order to spread this idea it was necessary to find other people who accepted it, and to work together in an organized manner to convince most citizens to accept it. I knew that supporters of this

idea were called “communists,” from the word “commune” which meant “communal society”: a society where *all* its members decide how to use *all* its tools.

At that time, in the 1950s, most Western people were prejudiced against communists, but because I had grown up in a non-political home, I did not know what a “communist” was, and I had no prejudices on the subject.

My attitude to politics was shaped in 1944 when my father took me to hear Ben-Gurion speak at the “People’s House” (Heb: “*Beit ha-‘Am*”) in Tel Aviv. I was about 13 years old. I sat near the stage and saw Ben-Gurion speak. His style repulsed me because he used emotional intonations to exert emotional pressure on his audience. If he had appealed to my reason, I would have considered his arguments and decided whether I agreed with him or not. But his effort to shape my views by manipulating me emotionally provoked revulsion in me. Ben-Gurion’s speech made me distrust all politicians and all politics. Since then I have distrusted all political parties and all newspapers.

During the seamen’s strike I decided nevertheless to check out all press reports on the strike by all newspapers and all political parties. In that period most newspapers in Israel were owned by political parties, and expressed their positions. Only a few newspapers, like *Haaretz*, *Yediot Aharonot* and *Maariv* were privately-owned. But *Davar*, *Al Hamishmar*, *Herut*, *Haboker*, *Hatzofeh* and *Kol Haam* were all owned by political parties.* During the strike I began to read all of them every day, and to compare their reports on the strike. As a striker, I saw what was actually happening in the port and on the ships, and could verify whether the report in the newspaper conformed to what I had seen. I discovered that some of the reports in the newspapers were not based on facts at all, but only on their writers' opinions.

Many journalists did not bother to verify their assertions. They did not go to the port and they did not interview strikers. They sat at their desks and wrote their private opinions. The few reports that described actual facts played down or completely ignored facts that contradicted the writer’s views, and reported the events with a slant against the strikers. Some journalists invented “facts” that never happened in reality.

In the 1950s most Israelis' political views were still shaped by the editorials of their political party’s newspaper. One day a friend of my wife told her excitedly:

“I hit on a great idea. Up until now, when I wanted to know what to think about any political event, I would read the editorial in Al Hamishmar, and from that I knew what to

* Of all the newspapers mentioned here, only *Haaretz*, *Yediot Aharonot* and *Maariv* still exist in 2011. All the others ceased publication between the 1960s and the 1990s, except for *Hatzofeh* which published until 2008 – trans.

think. Now, when I hear about an event, first of all I think about it for myself, and only later do I read the editorial in Al Hamishmar in order to see whether I was right."

At the time, that was a "progressive" and "intelligent" approach.

Of all the newspapers I surveyed, only one withstood the test of trustworthiness and reported the facts as I saw them happen, without omissions or prejudice: it was *Kol Haam*, ("People's Voice") the Israeli Communist Party daily newspaper. Its journalist who reported on the strike had "done his homework," that is, had come to the port, interviewed seamen and described what actually happened without omitting or adding anything. That won my trust, because that newspaper had passed a test that I myself could check. *Kol Haam* was the only one that passed that test. I reasoned (wrongly) that a newspaper that honestly reported facts that I could verify personally would also report honestly on facts that I could not verify myself. Later, when I read about Stalin's crimes in *Yediot Aharonot* I did not believe it, because that newspaper's reports on the strike had been mendacious and based on hostility to the strike, to communism, and to the Soviet Union. The owners of that newspaper hated regimes that nationalized their economies. But over time I saw that even a hostile newspaper can report some facts truthfully, whereas a sympathetic newspaper that reports truthfully on local matters can report untruthfully about international affairs. But I was still politically inexperienced; I thought my test was all that was needed to verify trustworthiness. I was looking for an organization that would work to create a regime of the type I wanted – that is, a regime in which all employees make all the decisions about their work. I therefore decided to join the Communist Party. It took me eight years to realize that that choice was another illusion.

I wanted to join the Israeli Communist Party, but my comrades in the strike, including Nimrod, decided to join a new party that had just been founded by Moshe Sneh, the former head of the clandestine militia the Haganah, and one of the leaders of Mapam. I wanted to be in a party with my comrades, so I joined them. The Mapam party tried to blend Zionism and Marxism, that is, to amalgamate "the good of the Jewish people" with "the good of humanity." But in Palestine there was a conflict between those two because Zionism wanted to create a "Jewish state" in a country where most residents were Arabs who wanted independence for themselves. The conflict between "immigrant (Jewish) settlers" and "indigenous (Palestinian) peasants" was inevitable. That conflict caused repetitive internal conflicts and divisions within Mapam, which gradually broke up and vanished from Israeli politics. But in 1952 Mapam split because of the "Prague Trial," in which Czech Communist leaders were accused of treason, and Zionist emissaries of Mapam in Czechoslovakia were accused of spying for the United States. Most Mapam members saw the Prague Trial as libelous (and it turned out that they were right), but a minority, led by Sneh, did not believe that a Communist state that had nationalized lands, industry and banks would commit such libel against its leaders. That minority left Mapam

and created the Socialist-Left Party. Nimrod joined that party, so I too joined it. Sneh was a brilliant speaker. The style of his speeches was rational and not emotional like those of Ben-Gurion. His arguments were logical and convincing. When Sneh spoke in the Knesset, MKs of all parties left the cafeteria and came to listen. Sneh gave the keynote speech at the founding convention of the Socialist Left Party. Other members spoke after him. One member said, with emotion: *“I am willing to follow Sneh blindfolded.”* Many agreed with that. Not I. Another member said: *“I am not following Sneh. He walks with me.”* That was my view as well. I had not decided to join a political party out of ideological conviction, but because of the strike. I knew nothing about the Soviet Union or Marx. For me political theories and parties were means for setting up an egalitarian society. Therefore I did not find it difficult later to drop political ideas and parties when I concluded that they were not helping me to advance the goal of an egalitarian society.

Unlike most people in the Israeli Left, I was committed to an issue, not to an ideology.

I was impressed by Sneh’s speeches, but over the years I learned that even an argument that sounds logical in a speech can prove to be misleading when one analyzes it carefully later. Not every logical formulation is politically valid, and not every convincing argument can withstand careful scrutiny. Concepts contain latent, unproved assumptions that often mislead. They must be scrutinized carefully and critically.

Ideologically, the Socialist-Left Party violated the taboo separating Zionism from Socialism by preferring loyalty to humanity rather than loyalty to the Jewish people. Zionism followed the slogan: “Jews of the world – unite and immigrate to Zion to create and maintain a Jewish State there.” But Socialism followed the slogan: “Workers of all nations – unite to create an egalitarian society”. Most Zionist workers did not want to unite with the Palestinian Arab workers. From 1922 to 1966 the Histadrut refused to accept Arab workers as members in its ranks. Its activists expelled Arab workers from jobs in Jewish enterprises by their notorious “Conquest of Labour” campaign in the 1920s when the Palestinian Arabs numbered some 600,000 and all the new Zionist immigrants numbered only 60,000.

“Conquest of Labour” meant terrorizing Jewish employers who hired Arab workers, beating up the Arab workers, and keeping picket lines outside such businesses with the slogans “Buy only Jewish goods” and “Employ only Jewish workers”. That despicable campaign - conducted by the Histadrut - lasted for a decade. The Histadrut took care to call itself: “The Organization (Heb: “*Histadrut*”) of the Hebrew workers in the Land of Israel” (“*Eretz-Yisra’el*”) and was the main instrument for implementing Zionism in Palestine. The Zionist project of “immigration and settlement” (“*Aliyah ve-Hityashvut*”) aiming to create the “Jewish State” in a country whose vast majority of inhabitants were – and had been continuously for over a thousand years - Arabs, was a prescription for a colonial conflict (disguised as an ethnic one) between Zionist immigrant-settlers and

Arab resident-peasants. The fact that the conflict was between Zionists and Palestinians was accidental. Had Palestine been populated by Chinese and Eskimo immigrants came to create an "Eskimo State" there, a conflict between Chinese and Eskimos would have flared up, not because of Chinese ethnic hatred of Eskimos, but because of the dispossession of Chinese peasants by Eskimo immigrant settlers.

The Zionist-Palestinian conflict did not stem from ethnic hatred or xenophobia. It stemmed from dispossession. People who had lived in Palestine continuously for over a thousand years were dispossessed by recently arrived immigrant-settlers. The fact that Jews lived in Palestine two thousand years ago does not grant them any right to dispossess people who had populated Palestine continuously for 1,300 years. Cities like Nablus, Acre, Jenin, Ramleh, Lydda, Jaffa, Safed, Tiberias and hundreds of villages, existed long before New York, London, Paris or Berlin, and were populated continuously almost entirely by Arabs. Religion - or history - does not confer the right to dispossess another people. In terms of values, whoever wants to be morally loyal both to Zionism and to humanism is constantly caught up in loyalty conflicts between those two and must choose between them. Moral loyalty to Zionism contradicts moral loyalty to humanism since Zionist expropriation of Arab peasants and refusal to employ them as hired labour on their former lands violates the human rights of the Palestinian Arabs.

Whenever members of Mapam faced a conflict of loyalties they preferred to remain loyal to Zionism rather than to humanism. But the members of the Socialist-Left Party chose loyalty to humanism rather than loyalty to Zionism. Sneh himself thought that after World War II a new war between the United States and the Soviet Union was imminent, which the USSR would win and in which it would conquer Europe and the Middle East. His loyalty to the Jewish people caused him to support those he thought were destined to rule the Middle East, so in 1952 he supported the Soviet Union. But in 1965 he saw that the Soviet Union would not rule the Middle East, so he returned to Zionism. His daughter Tamar, who a member of my student cell of the Communist Party at Hebrew University in Jerusalem saw his return to Zionism as a betrayal. So did I. When she wrote the biography of her mother, she did not mention her father, whom she had adored in the past. She even changed her surname from Sneh to Golan. She referred to her (formerly) adored father as "my mother's husband". In 1993 she committed suicide. R.I.P. dear Tamar.

The Socialist Left Party was active for about two years, and disbanded voluntarily in 1954. Its members joined the Israeli Communist Party. Sneh became a Knesset Member for the Communist Party. At that time I left the merchant marine in order to study mathematics and physics at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. There I joined the Communist Party. During my spare time I served - voluntarily - as secretary of the communist science students' cell. My comrades in the cell were students of mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology (over the years most of them became professors). They

differed from most Israelis in many ways. First, they were not selfish. They cared for society, not for themselves. Second, they were sensitive to injustice anywhere in the world and willing to act against it. Third, they did not discriminate between people of different gender, religion, skin colour or ethnic origin. They treated women and men and Arabs and Jews equally. Fourth, they took a courageous stand against the anti-Communism that was common in the 1950s. Fifth, they not only expressed unpopular opinions but acted to implement them. They devoted their free time to the struggle to create an egalitarian society. Every party member would go every week to a Party cell meeting and participate in political discussions about the political situation in the world and in Israel. Every member sold the party newspaper *Kol Haam* (Lit. “Voice of the People”) every week, collected donations from sympathizers, paid membership fees to the party and aided in current workers’ struggles. When we heard about a strike, we would go to the strikers, listen to them, formulate their demands, print them and distribute them as leaflets. Not one of us was paid for that, and it did not occur to us to demand compensation for that activism. Members of other parties helped their parties only at election time, and demanded to be paid. But Communists acted to spread the ideas of their party every day, and never asked for pay. Members of Communist parties in all countries where the CP was NOT in power acted every day to advance the idea of the egalitarian state. No one forced them to do it. They strove to create an egalitarian society, not just to vote in elections. Communists in all countries where the CP was NOT in power endured hatred, persecution and discrimination from the authorities – and from the general public. A Communist could not get a visa to the United States. Many workplaces refused to hire Communists and dismissed anyone who was discovered to be one. My wife, who was not a member of the CP, was a proof-reader for the government’s “Statistical Annual.” That book was sold in stores. But when her employer found out that she was my wife, they dismissed her from her job without explanation or compensation. They hinted to her that because of her relationship to me she constituted a “security risk.”

After graduation I taught physics at the “Alliance Israelite Universelle (AIU)” trade-school in Jerusalem. The Headmaster, Mr. Braun, was a cultured person, and hired me for the job without taking any interest in my views. When the Israeli Security Service (Shin Bet) informed him that I was a Communist, he called me to his office and said: “*Mr. Orr, your political views are your private affair, but please do not give your students questions like: ‘If 20 Arabs go to work, and the IDF kills 5, how many remain?’*”

I was astonished that such a possibility had occurred to him. I had no problem in making that promise and keeping it, because I never spread my ideas in disguise. Before my marriage my wife’s father, a decent construction worker, came and asked me to leave the Communist Party to make it easier for me to get a job. From his experience he knew that most Israelis hated Communists and harassed them. He wanted to spare his daughter the hardships of life with a Communist husband. I explained to him that I could not live a lie

and deny my beliefs - nor would his daughter like that. He did not insist, and my beliefs did not affect his friendly attitude to me. Nor did his attitude change after the 1967 war, when members of Matzpen (the political group I helped to found in 1962 after leaving the CP) demonstrated against Israel's conquests of Arab lands. In 1970 hatred of Matzpen reached such a pitch that an Israeli Marxist mother wrote to her daughter who supported Matzpen: *"I regret that I gave birth to you."*

After the surprising Israeli victory in the 1967 war wherein Israel defeated the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian armies within just six days, Israelis were in euphoria, realizing they were the most powerful military force in the Middle East. Israeli fundraisers collecting donations for Israel from rich American Jews had a problem. They told Israeli PM Levi Eshkol: "We used to describe Israel as a small, weak state, surrounded and threatened by big strong enemies. How can we go on doing this after such a victory?" Eshkol, who unlike his predecessor Ben-Gurion and his successor Golda Meir had a lively sense of humor, used the Bible story about Samson who killed a lion with bare hands, and said: *"Present Israel as a miserable Samson"*.

During the six years from the 1967 War to the 1973 War most Israelis hysterically hated the handful of Israelis in Matzpen who opposed the Israeli Occupation of Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and Gaza Strip and who insisted that the Palestinian people were a *political* entity of which Israel was robbing of its right to independence. Most Israelis insisted that the conflict between Israel and the Arabs was due to the irrational Arab hatred of Jews. In 1970 Israeli PM Golda Meir declared: *"THERE IS NO PALESTINIAN PEOPLE"*, and most Israelis agreed with her. She said: "I came here in the 1920s and I don't remember a Palestinian people here". She must have been in a coma during 1936-1939 when the "Great Arab Revolt" in Palestine forced Britain to send half the army of the British Empire to quell the Palestinian revolt demanding independence. Who rebelled in Palestine in 1936? Eskimos?

In 1970 President Sadat of Egypt offered Israeli PM Golda Meir peace in exchange for the return of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. But Golda's Defense Minister Moshe Dayan declared: "Sharm al-Sheikh without having peace is better than peace without having Sharm-al-Sheikh" (Sharm-el-Sheikh is the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula) Most Israelis agreed with Dayan. To re-posses Sinai, Sadat launched the October 1973 war and forced Israel to hand back Sinai to Egypt. In 1979 Sadat signed a peace treaty with Begin, who had replaced Golda. She could have signed a peace treaty with Sadat in 1970 and avoided the 1973 war and all the dead and the maimed. She refused to do so. Israel paid dearly for Golda's arrogance. Not only Golda, but every Israeli who rejected Sadat's Peace offer in 1970 - and that was almost all Israelis then - is responsible for every soldier killed, wounded or maimed in the 1973 war. Those Israelis who demonstrated after that war demanding the resignation of Dayan and Golda protested only about their failure to prepare Israel for the war. King Hussein of Jordan went to Tel-Aviv in 1973

after meeting President Sadat and told Golda the exact date Egypt and Syria would attack Israel. He warned Golda, but she ignored his warning. The post-war protestors did not protest about Golda and Dayan's rejection of Sadat's peace offer in 1970 which could have prevented the 1973 war. They, like Golda, rejected Sadat's peace offer in 1970. They too preferred Sharm el-Sheikh to peace.

I don't regret having been a member of the Communist Party. On the contrary, it was an excellent school for politics. In that party I learned about politics, society, and history far more than in university. It was practical study and not merely theoretical. Just as one cannot learn swimming by reading books about swimming, so one cannot learn politics by attending university lectures on politics without participating in political struggles to change society. My support for the Soviet Union was not support for the Gulags. I did not believe they existed. I was sure they were a lie invented by the Capitalist USA psychological warfare department against the USSR which had nationalized all banks, businesses, lands and factories. In the 1951 seamen's strike I saw the capitalist press spreading lies about the strikers. Why should I believe what this press tells me about a regime that nationalized all private businesses? This press advocates privatization of all businesses and opposes their socialization. Its owners crave power and adore privatization, selfishness, and greed. I saw - and still see - no reason to trust them. However, I gradually became disillusioned with the Communist Party as well.

I discovered that when Stalin acquired control of the world Communist movement in 1928, he changed the original, authentic, definition - "*A revolutionary is one who strives to set up an egalitarian economy and egalitarian political system*" into a new one stating: "*A revolutionary is one who always - and everywhere - defends the Soviet Union.*" That turned - at a stroke - all Communist Parties from forces to create egalitarian regimes into "societies to promote friendship with the USSR". Trotsky and his followers denounced that move and were labeled "anti-revolutionary" and assassinated. When I learned from people I trusted more facts about the Soviet Union I realized that Marx's valid critique of private ownership of the economy was blind to possible misuse of governmental ownership of the economy. In the seamen's strike and its aftermath I saw that for employees, a government is a worse employer than a private one because it demands political loyalty, and can pressure people not just at work, but wherever the government rules. A private employer does not demand political loyalty, and his authority is restricted to the workplace. In states where the government ran the economy there were no independent unions and it was forbidden to strike because the regime claimed to be a "workers' state" and strikes exposed a conflict between the "workers' state" and actual workers. They had no unemployment and the workers enjoyed free healthcare, housing and education, yet despite all that, in 1991 most citizens of states with government-run economies preferred the change to a regime of private ownership, with all its hardships, as it did not interfere with their political views.

I wanted an egalitarian regime in which all employees themselves - not their representatives - would decide all in the workplace, and all citizens - not their representatives - would decide all in their state at all times. This is not private ownership, nor is it governmental ownership. It outlines today's only genuinely revolutionary goal: *Neither privatization nor nationalization but direct democracy.*

In 1956 a general strike broke out in Communist Hungary, where the workers dismissed the government-appointed officials who ran the factories and began to manage them by themselves. Workers' committees began to manage the entire economy. The rulers of the USSR feared that the success of that system would encourage workers in Poland, Czechoslovakia and even the USSR itself to set up similar systems. In order to prevent that, they invaded Hungary in 1956 and suppressed the workers with tanks.

That accelerated my disillusionment with states whose governments run the economy. I also opposed states where the economy was privately-owned. Both types exploit and oppress most of their citizens. In one regime the owners of capital rule, and in the other, government officials rule. One lot of rulers crave wealth, the other lot crave power. In both, employees have no control over their work, and citizens have no control over their lives. In both, a tiny group decides how all others shall live.

In 1962 I left the CP though I agreed with its critique of Capitalism and of Zionism. I realized that a valid critique is no guarantee that the cure which the critic offers will not produce new ills, often worse than the old ones. In politics as in medicine, diagnosis is one thing but cure is another matter altogether. A valid diagnosis can still suggest a cure with side-effects worse than the disease.

The 1951 seamen's strike liberated me from the standard illusions about the law, about the "neutrality" of the regime, unions, the press, parties and of society. I realized they were all man-made, biased, and served the greedy and the power-addicts.

The 1956 strike in Hungary liberated me from the particular illusion that governmental ownership of the economy is the remedy for the ills caused by private ownership of the economy. This "cure" is often worse than the disease it is supposed to cure.

In May 1968 the biggest strike in history broke out - utterly unexpectedly - in France: Nine million employees struck for 21 days *and did not demand higher pay or better conditions of work. Instead, they demanded "self-management"* - to manage their workplaces by themselves. The strikers failed to create national coordination among themselves and so the strike failed. It also had no technical means - like Internet and mobile phones (invented 20 years later) - to implement its aim. But the sheer fact of its outbreak during an economic boom and despite strong initial opposition of all political parties *and all labor unions*, and the fact that many strikers remained at their workplaces and began to manage them themselves, convinced me that most people want to decide by

themselves what happens in their workplace and in their country, and a regime based on that principle is the alternative to private ownership as well as to governmental ownership of the economy and society. A year after that strike, France's authoritarian president, General de Gaulle, was dismissed by a national referendum.

When all employees - not their representatives - decide **all** about their work, and **all** the citizens - not their representatives - decide **all** about their state, we have genuine *demos-kratia* (Greek for "Community Power") where the *demos* (i.e. the entire community) - not its representatives - decides *everything* that the *demos* does. To most people today such a regime looks like science fiction, but because all regimes based on private - or governmental - ownership of the economy breed repetitive economic and political crises, I have no shadow of doubt that this alternative will be realized in the not-too-distant future.

Appendix: Preparing for strike: Israeli teachers teach about “the right to strike”**Israel’s Education Ministry bans use of workbooks teachers distributed illegally.****By Or Kashti**

A new and hot subject for civics classes in schools all over the country: the right to strike and the importance of worker organization. The reason: as part of the struggle between the Education Ministry and the teachers’ organizations over the implementation of the Dovrat Report, the teachers’ organizations chose to transmit to the students lesson-plans on subjects such as “situations in which workers’ strikes are justified” and “the right of workers to organize themselves in order to defend their rights.” Under the heading “plans for lessons on the subject of freedom of organization” hundreds of workbooks that have been distributed in schools include suggested discussion-topics such as “professional organization as an expression of solidarity among the workers and as an expression of power” and role-playing about workers’ strikes. The workbooks raised a storm at the Education Ministry because according to the law, no one is permitted to distribute teaching materials that have not been approved by the Ministry. Following complaints by civics educators and teachers, the Education Ministry investigated the matter judicially. Last week the Ministry’s legal counsel, Attorney Dorit Morag, sent a letter to the Attorney-General, Manny Mazuz, in which she wrote: “In conformity with the instructions of the law, instructions on pedagogical subjects and teaching programmes are determined by the Education Minister, the Director-General and Ministry’s Pedagogical Secretariat; teachers’ organizations are not authorized to give pedagogical guidance to school principals and such guidance is not legal.” Morag also stated that “The Director-General has the authority to instruct the principals to disregard the circular, and to make it clear that guidelines to teachers on study plans are not legitimate.” Nevertheless, she added: “There is concern that, in view of the conflict between the Ministry and the organizations on the matter of the Dovrat Commission, such an order could be interpreted as an attempt to harass the teachers’ organizations and an attack on freedom of expression and organization. Accordingly, due to the sensitivity of things, we would be grateful if you would give us an opinion and suitable courses of action.” And indeed, after consultations with the Attorney General, it was decided at the Education Ministry to issue a memorandum to the principals that will instruct the principals not to use those workbooks. The teachers’ organizations do not understand the commotion over the lesson-plans that they had distributed. “It is just a recommendation, we do not impose teaching plans on the system but implement the policy of the Education Ministry,” said Bracha Metziel, the chairwoman of the professional department of the post-primary teachers’ organization. (*Maariv*, 19 April 2005, p. 12)

3. Medals for war resisters

The strikers of the *Tel Aviv* who were put on trial in early 1952, after the Israeli seamen's strike in 1951, charged with "assaulting police officers" but acquitted by the court, were blacklisted by the Zim company, which was jointly owned by the Israeli government and the Histadrut labor union. Those seamen could no longer get work at Zim. Since Zim refused to employ me I applied, along with others from the *Tel Aviv*, to the (Israeli) Borchard company, which hired us in Haifa to work on its ship the *Daniela Borchard*.

Thus I learned that for a public employer like the government or a labor union, the political loyalty of the employees matters far more than their contribution to economic profit. To such an employer, a worker's political loyalty is the foremost consideration. To a private employer, on the other hand, the worker's contribution to the profit is far more important than his political loyalty. Zim did not care about my professional skill but about my political loyalty. My resisting the Histadrut's efforts to remove me from the *Tel-Aviv* determined Zim's attitude towards me. Zim management preferred obedient workers with little or no seamanship skills to skilled seamen who stood up for their rights. Over time it became clear to me that that is also the way it was in the Soviet Union, in Poland (as we saw in the "Solidarnosc" strike there) and wherever the government is the employer.

The Borchard Company, on the other hand, was not bothered by the fact that I had resisted the police when they tried to remove me forcibly from my workplace. They were only interested in my professional skill as a seaman. The *Daniela Borchard* was a coal-burning steamship that had transported German tanks to Russia during the Second World War. It had a crane that could lift a tank. That was an advantage as it saved the costs of hiring port equipment to lift heavy loads. No other Israeli ship at that time had gear to lift a really heavy load. The company was owned by a German-Jewish family that before World War II had owned tugboats in Hamburg, Germany's biggest port. The Nazis confiscated their property, but after the war the family received compensation, and the *Daniela* was part of it. She was docked in Rotterdam for repairs and they flew us there from Israel.

When I first boarded the *Daniela* I savored her unique odor of bacon and eggs simmering over a coal fire. No Zim ship had that odor as none used coal - or bacon. At first glance she looked run-down like the *Yorikke* in Traven's famous book, *Ship of the Dead*.

A tugboat maneuvered her in the port and the crew tied her to the dock.

During the tying of a ship to the dock its captain stands on the ship's command bridge amidships observing the entire ship and the overall situation (wind, harbor traffic, dock preparedness, etc.) he instructs his officers through a loudspeaker. The First Mate works in the bow with a small team, and the Second Mate handles the stern with a few sailors. It

takes skill to dock a ship of thousands of tons. A mistake in that operation can cause great damage to the ship and to the dock costing thousands of dollars to repair. A mistake can happen by accident, or through misunderstanding, or by a sudden gust of wind. In 1952 Zim crews had little experience in the operation of docking a ship. This caused tension that was noticeable in the nervous intonations of the captain. On a Zim ship the process of docking involved much shouting. The captain barked orders from the bridge and the officers yelled at their crews who were pulling the thick ropes and heavy steel cables used for tying the ship to the dock.

But the *Daniela* was tied to the dock silently. The captain did not bark orders, and no officer yelled at the sailors. All worked quietly, smoothly, efficiently. The work was done unhurriedly and without tension. With time I learned that the captain's mood shapes the ship's mood. If he is nervous, everyone is nervous. If he is calm, everyone is calm. The captain of the *Daniela* was Thomas Doughty, a sixty-five-year-old Yorkshire man with fifty years' sea-time. During most of the docking he was silent, occasionally he made a calm comment. The calm docking at Rotterdam was my first impression of him. He was short, thin and bald and wore a six-button British Navy sea-captain's jacket (with a stripe marking service in the Second World War) directly over a dirty woolen undershirt – without a shirt, tie, or socks. He knew every inch of his ship, and he did much manual work on the ship himself. I remember him rolling up his sleeve and thrusting his arm all the way to his shoulder into an excrement-filled toilet bowl to clear a blockage. He could have told someone else to do it, but he was not ashamed to do it himself. No Zim captain would have done anything like that. Doughty treated every seaman as his equal, even if that seaman was born when Doughty was already a Captain. He was modest and did not “impose authority,” “radiate superiority” or “issue orders” as did most Zim captains. They were new in their role and insecure and tried to assert authority by manner of speech, dress, behavior, posture and gait. They often imposed obedience by declaring their rank (“I'm the one who gives the orders here”). Not Doughty. He persuaded without invoking authority. He let others exercise their authority without intervening.

When he saw a seaman perplexed by a problem at work, he would pop up at his side as if by chance and mutter: “If I were in your place, I would do it like this ...” whoever listened to him and accepted his advice realized immediately that it was the best solution to the problem. He was born in 1886 in the Yorkshire fishing town of Whitby and started work at sea as a teenager. He did not go to an officers' school, but worked many years as a sailor, and afterwards took an officers' course and became a captain before the First World War. His opinions were shaped at that time. He had antiquated habits but always an open mind to learn something new and to listen to views that differed from his.

One time the First Mate sold old ropes to a used-equipment merchant. Traditionally the money is distributed to all members of the crew proportionally to their ranks. Doughty summoned the crew members to his cabin one by one and gave each his share. When I

entered his cabin he looked at a paper and said, "Mr. Orr, your share is one pound and twenty pence." He took out a rusty cigarette box, picked out a pound note, added twenty pence in coins, gave them to me and said "sign here please." I was amazed. The amount was so insignificant that I wanted to tell him, "Thanks, but you can keep the money." I did not do it so as not to offend him. But the new deck boy, who entered after me, did just that. I asked him: "how did Doughty respond?" He said: "he took the money and said 'thank you.'"

Doughty acted in accordance with the English saying, "*take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves.*" He really believed in that.

When he began to work at sea, in 1898, seamen's wages were miserable. He got used to receiving tiny sums, and considered it no dishonor. Such habits caused tension between him and the crew, but he separated personal attitudes from professional ones and never bore any grudges. In that too he differed from Zim captains I had known. Disagreement with an Israeli captain would lead to revenge on his part. Doughty was never vengeful. He drew a line separating personal relations from work relations.

Being the union representative of the *Daniela* deck crew it was my duty to bring deck crew's demands to Doughty's attention. During one dispute, as I was about to enter Doughty's cabin to present the crew's demands to him, the Polish First Mate popped up from nowhere, and said - in a voice loud enough for Doughty to hear, "How can you treat a good man like Captain Doughty that way?" When I entered Doughty's cabin, I heard him muttering: "I don't like people who crawl up my ass." He hated flattery. He was inclined to be tolerant and considerate.

One calm day in the Mediterranean, I was doing my noon watch at the wheel. The sea was flat as a mirror and the ship's wake in the water was visible for miles. The ship's wake was as straight as a ruler. I was alone in the wheelhouse - and bored. I had a dog and he came with me to the wheelhouse. I left the wheel for a moment to tie a string to one of the dog's hind legs and attached a spoon to the string's end. The dog chased the spoon and couldn't catch it. His discomfiture relieved my boredom a little. I did not notice that the ship had deviated off course. Suddenly I noticed Doughty standing quietly at the wheelhouse door watching me. He was silent but then looked astern at the wake of the ship. Then he left without saying a word. He must have been standing there a few minutes before I noticed him. He probably saw the sunlight in his cabin's portholes change direction and came to the wheelhouse to find the reason. When he left I went out to see what he saw. I was embarrassed to see that while I had been playing with the dog the ship was drawing figures-of-eight on the water. A huge zig-zag was visible for miles. Doughty never mentioned it. I appreciated that and made sure it never happened again.

After serving two years as an AB (“Able-Bodied” seaman) on the *Daniela* I acquired the 3-year sea-time required for taking the Third Mate exams. I paid the ship off and studied at home for the exam. When I passed the exams I returned to the *Daniela* as Third Mate.

Now my watchkeeping duty was to chart the ship’s progress on the map. The chart-room is adjacent to the wheelhouse. It contains drawers with sea charts, the ship’s logbook (where each officer records what happened in his watch) and a big chart-table with the map of the current route on it. All the weather-measuring instruments are there as well. Above the chart-table Doughty had stuck a hand-written notice saying:

WHEN IN *DOUBT* - CALL ME.

I noted that he did not write: ‘*when in trouble*’ but ‘*when in doubt*’. I found this most reassuring since being new in my role as an officer I would have hesitated very much to wake up the captain at night. I would prefer to do so only when in real trouble. This could make the difference between disaster and rescue. If one waits till one is in trouble it might be too late for rescue. At sea, hesitation when in doubt often leads to disaster.

One night we were approaching the strait of Gibraltar from the Mediterranean side (going westwards). There were ships all around, most were travelling due east or due west but some ferries were travelling across the strait between Spain and Africa. It was an ominous mess. During my watch a dangerous situation developed. Ahead of me I saw a ship coming towards me (going eastwards). She was almost straight ahead. Almost – but not quite. The “rules of the road” at sea stipulate that if two ships are approaching each other head-on, each must turn to her right to avoid collision. But it was not 100% clear that we were “head-on”. Moreover, a big and fast passenger ship was approaching the slow *Daniela* from behind on my right side and was about to overtake me. If I were to turn the *Daniela* to the right I might collide with the passenger ship. If I kept straight ahead I might collide with the ship coming towards me. I took the ALDISS signaling torch and signaled to both ships to draw their attention, but I got no response. All three ships were moving at full speed ahead and the situation was fast becoming dangerous. I hesitated to wake up Doughty. Then I remembered his notice saying: *when in doubt – call me*. I was not yet in trouble but I was definitely in *doubt*. His notice encouraged me to wake him up. He turned up on the bridge in less than a minute. I explained my problem to him: According to the nautical “rules of the road” I should turn right, but if I did so I might collide with the passenger ship coming up from behind on my right. What should I do?

Doughty first went out of the wheelhouse to look at the other two ships. Then he contemplated the situation for a few minutes, and came up with a brilliant solution. When a ship changes direction she must blow her whistle to warn those around her. One short blast means: “I intend to turn Left” two short blasts: “I intend to turn Right”. Three short

blasts: "I intend to move backwards". I knew this but I would have blown the whistle only just before actually turning. Doughty had a wiser idea. First he told me to change course and point the *Daniela* directly at the ship ahead coming towards us. I would never have done this as it put us unmistakably on a collision course with the ship in front. But that cleared up any doubts about what each of these two ships must do. Each must turn to her right. Then he told me to blow the whistle twice informing all around me that I intend to turn Right – but NOT TO TURN the *Daniela*. The shrill whistle blasts from the *Daniela* pierced the silence of the night. That caused the officers on the other two ships to rush out to see who blew the whistle – and why. As the situation was now 100% clear they immediately realized what they must do. Clearing up the doubts cleared up the situation. Within minutes the ship in front of me turned to her right and the passenger ship slowed down. Only *after* they did so did Doughty say to me: "**Now** you can turn *Daniela* to the right". And so I did. The crisis was over. Doughty did it all calmly and quietly and then went back to sleep leaving the *Daniela* in my responsibility even though he knew it was my first month as an officer and I had hardly any experience in that role.

Doughty's wise way of clarifying an unclear situation and of *utilizing* the "rules of the road" rather than merely obeying them are not mentioned in textbooks or in naval officer courses. Official authorities teach you to *obey* rules, not how to *use* them wisely.

Doughty was reticent and did not fraternize with the crew, but sometimes he made exceptions. One night, in the North Sea, he came to the wheelhouse when I was on duty. After an exchange of pleasantries about the weather, he commented, "In this area I was torpedoed in the Second World War.". "How did it happen?" I asked. He replied, "I was coming from Canada with a ship loaded with timber. A day away from England a German submarine fired a torpedo at us. We were hit and the holds filled with water but we didn't sink because the timber floated. The submarine surfaced and began to shell us with a cannon. They did not want to waste another expensive torpedo on us and decided to sink us with artillery shells. We were unarmed. I gave the order to abandon ship. We boarded the lifeboats. The submarine approached and her captain asked me, 'Why isn't the ship sinking?' I told him that she was loaded with wood. He thanked me.

"On the submarine's conning tower an argument broke out between the captain and his deputy. The deputy, who was young and evidently a Nazi, wanted to shoot us with a machine gun and kill us. But the captain, who was a veteran seaman, refused to kill survivors. He respected the international solidarity of seamen. They argued heatedly. I knew that the outcome of the argument would decide our fate. In the end the captain won. He gave me our map position and the submarine submerged. About two hours later a British seaplane appeared and landed next to us on the sea. It flew us to Britain. After a two week leave I went for a debriefing at the Admiralty. They showed me a book with photos of German submarines and asked me to point to one that looked like the submarine that sank us. I pointed to one. They took me to a nearby room and there I met

the captain of the German submarine that had sunk us. She was sunk shortly after she sank us.

“I thanked him for not killing us and reported that to my superiors. I hope they treated him well.”

Doughty treated people according to their behavior and not according to their origin. He had no hatred for Germans. He drew a line between the captain who acted humanely and his deputy who wanted to shoot survivors.

One night in the North Sea, shortly after leaving the port of Hamburg, Doughty appeared in the wheelhouse during my watch and a strong smell of whiskey wafted from him. He was not drunk. I greeted him and he began to talk: “Here, so they told me, my son’s plane crashed when he was an RAF pilot in the Second World War. His plane was hit over Hamburg and fell into the sea here. I was a captain in both World Wars. On the eve of the World War II I was still carrying steel to Germany to build tanks. In the wars I saw that the rich get richer while the simple people get killed. I stopped believing in patriotism. In the next war only war-resisters will deserve medals. They are the real heroes.”

I was surprised to hear a British sea-captain born in 1886 express such views.

4. “Peace, peace”, when there is no peace”

In the autumn of 1955 I left my job in the Israeli merchant fleet and began to study physics at the Hebrew university in Jerusalem. In October 1956, a week before the first Sinai war, known in Israel as “Operation Kadesh” (and in the world as the “Suez War”) I was called up for reserve duty in the Navy in Haifa. In that war Israel invaded Sinai and immediately afterwards France and Britain invaded the Suez Canal, which Nasser had nationalized a few months earlier. The Suez Canal was built in 1868 by a French company that was granted a lease to charge user tolls for 100 years. Nasser nationalized it in April 1956 so that its revenues would help finance the construction of the Aswan High Dam, which would double Egypt’s agricultural yields and provide cheap electricity. At first he asked for a loan from the United States, but the latter demanded that he join the anti-Soviet Baghdad Pact. He refused and nationalized the Canal. The governments of Britain and France saw that as a threat to their position in the world. As victors in the Second World War they - with the United States and the Soviet Union - ruled the world and were known as “The Big Four.”

They had won WW2 and dominated world politics. But the peoples of Africa and Asia that Britain and France had colonized in the 19th century and exploited economically were beginning to demand independence, and to fight for it. Wars for independence against French rule started in Algeria and Vietnam, and against British rule in Yemen, Kenya, Uganda and Cyprus. Nasser supported the independence fighters in Algeria and Yemen and he supported the independence of all the peoples of Asia and Africa. Therefore the governments of France and Britain decided to topple him in order to re-establish their colonial domination as it had existed before the WW2. They knew that the United States, in its struggle against the Soviet Union, craved the support of the peoples of Asia and Africa and would oppose war against Nasser. So they hid from the United States their plans to invade Egypt. Moreover, most citizens of France and Britain also opposed war against Egypt. They did not want their sons to risk their lives for the Suez Canal Company. The governments of Britain and France could not start a war to regain the Canal and their colonial domination. They needed a pretext. Ben-Gurion provided it.

Without consulting his Party or Cabinet he decided to attack Egypt by invading the Sinai Peninsula. That would enable Britain and France to invade the Suez Canal Zone on the pretext of “stopping the war between Israel and Egypt to ensure safe passage through the Suez Canal to all nations”. Ben-Gurion enabled Britain and France to pose as “peacemakers”. He decided to launch an unprovoked invasion of Egypt (after declaring that the Sinai Peninsula was not part of Egypt) before he had the consent of his Cabinet. He deceived Israel’s citizens - and his own Cabinet. He presented them with an accomplished fact. First he secretly sent his personal errand-boy, Shimon Peres (who was neither a member of the Knesset nor of the Government and therefore was not obliged to report to them), to Paris to negotiate the secret collusion of Israel with Britain

and France. Ben-Gurion used Peres to bypass his Foreign Minister Golda Meir - and also his own Cabinet. He knew their approval of his pro-colonial ploy was doubtful. Peres negotiated the details with the French PM.

According to the tripartite Israeli-French-British conspiracy, Israel would invade Sinai on October 29, and reach the Suez Canal. Britain and France would then issue an ultimatum to Israel and Egypt to stop hostilities and retreat 10 miles from either bank of the Suez Canal. Israel would agree but Nasser, obviously, could not. He had to respond, and to send his army to the Suez Canal to stop Israel. He would also block the canal itself. Passage through the Canal would stop and the world economy would be harmed. Then the governments of France and Britain would announce the need *“to separate Israel and Egypt and to ensure safe and free passage in the Suez Canal to all nations,”* and send their armies to occupy the Suez Canal - and keep it. That way Britain and France would appear before the world as “Guardians of World Peace - and of free trade” rather than as colonizers. In order to finalize the details of the military collaboration and to sign the agreement, Ben-Gurion secretly flew to Paris and concluded the military pact with France and Britain. However, he consistently denied it for 17 years, until his death in 1973, insisting that he never visited Paris, that there was no pact, and that Israel’s war was a justifiable war aimed at preventing Egypt from attacking Israel and had no relation whatsoever with the colonial war of Britain and France to re-possess the Suez Canal.

But the conspiracy was transparent and many condemned it. Uri Avnery wrote in his popular Israeli weekly magazine *Ha’olam Ha’zeh*^{*}, that *“[i]t is not Israel’s duty to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for France and Britain.”* Nasser too expected such a conspiracy and offered Israel peace in return for its commitment not to invade Egypt. But Ben-Gurion - who did not doubt for a moment that Nasser would be defeated militarily by Britain and France, wanted to topple Nasser and annex the Sinai Peninsula to Israel - rejected Nasser’s offer. Most Israelis insisted that there was no connection between the French and British invasion of the Suez Canal and the Israeli invasion of Sinai. They claimed that Israel was defending itself against Egypt which aspired to destroy it, and that Israel was fighting “a preventive war imposed on us” whereas Britain and France were fighting a colonial war. Even 26 years later, while expressing opposition to Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Peres blamed Israeli PM Menahem Begin, of being the first Israeli PM to initiate an unprovoked “war of choice.” Begin replied that “Operation Kadesh” too was a “war of choice.” Peres angrily replied that that is a lie, but in 1986 he admitted it was true in a conference called by Ben-Gurion University in Beersheba to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Israeli-British-French conspiracy that he had cemented - and then denied for 30 years.

* Literally, “This World” – trans.

Many Israelis insist even today (in 2011) that “Operation Kadesh” was a war of “no choice” forced upon Israel by Nasser’s efforts to destroy it. In November 1956 the speedy Israeli-English-French military victory turned into a humiliating political defeat within days as Dwight Eisenhower, president of the United States, was furious at having been deceived by the three conspirators and threatened to stop all American aid to them. Within a week Britain and France withdrew their forces from Egyptian soil and some months later Israel did as well.

Nasser was heralded by the world as the victor of “The Suez War” and the media dropped the term “the Big Four” and began to use the term “the Two Superpowers” – the USA and the USSR. The fiasco of the “Suez War” terminated the roles of Britain and France as “Great Powers”. It sounded the death-knell of their colonial era.

A week before that war I was called up to serve as reservist in the Israeli navy in Haifa. I took the train from Jerusalem to Haifa. When the train passed Lod airport (re-named “Ben-Gurion airport” in 1973, which was not surrounded by earthen barriers in 1956, so it was possible to see the main runway) I was surprised to see on the runway a squadron of jet fighter planes with the insignia of the French air force. In 1998 I read Ben-Gurion’s diaries in the Ben-Gurion Archive in Sdeh-Boker and saw that in the conspiracy pact he arranged for French air support to defend Tel Aviv against possible Egyptian bombing but insisted the Israeli air force alone attack the Egyptian army in Sinai.

In Haifa I reported for duty on the *K-28* frigate I had served on in 1949. The service was routine but after midnight I saw non-routine things. French ships anchoring in Haifa Bay outside the port during daylight hours entered the port at night and were tied to the main dock where they unloaded French tanks and artillery pieces bearing French military insignia. All ships have their name and the name of their home ports written in big letters on their stern, but the names of the French ships were covered by large sheets of fabric. The French tanks and artillery pieces were unloaded onto the dock at night and travelled on their own power from the port to nearby Israeli military bases. They made a lot of noise and everyone who took trouble to see the source of the noise could see the French insignia. All that happened *before* the war as Israel was to use those arms in the war.

On October 29 the Israeli army invaded Sinai and the Israeli delegate to the UN, Abba Eban, announced that “an Israeli patrol [had] entered the Sinai peninsula chasing ‘*Fida’iyun*’ terrorists who had infiltrated into Israel.”

Ben-Gurion declared that Israel had no intention of annexing any Egyptian territory but was waging a “preventive war” to prevent an attack planned by Egypt. But the Soviet Union sent a strong letter of protest to the government of Israel in which it asked how Israel would react if it were attacked – like Egypt – by superpowers, and warned that Israeli collaboration with colonial powers like Britain and France would turn the peoples

of Asia and Africa against it, for they would see Israel as a collaborator with colonialism and refuse to make peace with it. The public and the press in Israel responded angrily to the letter, claiming that Israel was merely defending itself from being destroyed by Egypt and the accusation that it was collaborating with Britain and France was a malicious libel. Most Israelis angrily denied any connection between Israel's invasion of Sinai and the British-French invasion of the Suez Canal. That was strange, because many Israelis saw French pilots in Tel Aviv and French tanks in Haifa for the first - and only - time, one week before the war, yet they denied any alliance between Israel and France. Those denials of the conspiracy by the Israeli public (not just by politicians) despite seeing French pilots who had never been seen before in Israel revealed to me the schizoid state of mind of all Zionists in Israel - and elsewhere. They were denying what they had seen. In order to understand this point it should be remembered that in 1956 any Israeli military alliance with colonial Britain and France was still seen as a crime by most Israelis.

Why did all Israeli Zionists deny what they saw? For Zionists (in 1956), if Israel really conspired with colonial powers, it meant that "Our State" was guilty of a crime. Zionists cannot admit that "Our State" has committed a crime because for them "Our State" is not just a country, it defines their Jewishness. They see a crime committed by "Our State" as a crime committed by themselves personally. They refused to believe that Ben-Gurion had travelled to Paris to conspire with France and Britain as this incriminated not just Ben-Gurion but themselves personally. For Zionists everywhere (but not for religious - or cosmopolitan - Jews) Jewishness is defined by their identifying with "Our State". They need it more than it needs them.

Whom were they trying to deceive in 1956? Themselves! And they succeeded.

Who was Ben-Gurion trying to deceive? Not Nasser, and not the people of France and Britain. He was trying to deceive his own Cabinet, his electorate, Israel's citizens, and the president of the United States.

I do not like being deceived, and so I decided to document in writing all the evidence that Israel was conspiring with Britain and France. I thought that people who read evidence the reliability of which could not be doubted would be convinced of Israel's plot.

I decided to compile material for a book on the Zionist collaboration with colonialism. I discussed it with my friend Moshe Machover and we decided to write a book together that would be based only on material published in the Israeli press, so that nobody could claim it was secret information unavailable to the Israeli public.

In the winter of 1957 I began to go every evening to the National Library (which was then housed in the Terra Sancta College building in Jerusalem) and read every Hebrew newspaper that had appeared in Israel from 1948 onward. I copied (by hand, as there were no computers then) every news item about the Israel-Arab conflict and about

Israel's relations with the Big Four. During the day I was working as a physics teacher at the Alliance Israélite Universelle trade-school in Jerusalem, and after work I went home, ate my supper and went to the National Library to collect material for three hours. That took about three years. No one paid me for it. Occasionally I wondered if it was worth the effort. I knew that books on political issues become dated when the issue does. I wondered if it was worthwhile to expend so much time and effort working without payment on a book that few would be interested in after a few years. After deliberation I found an affirmative argument. I reasoned that even after the subject of the book got dated it would still serve as a collection of source-material for those interested in the history of the Israel-Arab conflict. Even a reader who did not agree with the views expressed in the book would find the sources interesting reading. Historians do not read the newspapers of the past in a systematic way. *Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace* [Heb: *Shalom, shalom ve-eyn shalom* – trans.]^{*} is a collection of source material from the Israeli press from 1948 to 1960, the reading of which will save those interested in the subject many hours of work. In 1960 I did not think that the subject of the book would still be relevant fifty years later. No Israeli thought then that Israel would fight four more wars (1967, 1970, 1973 and 1982) against the Arab states and two against the Palestinians (The “Intifada of the Stones” of 1987-1992 and the “al-Aqsa Intifada” of 2000-2005). Originally we wanted the book to prove that the Israel-Arab conflict had originated from the pro-imperialist foreign policy of Zionism. We remembered that the founder of Political Zionism, Theodor Herzl in 1897 saw the “Jewish State” as part of a European “Defensive Wall” against “Asiatic barbarism.” In his book, *The Jewish State*, he wrote: “*If His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return undertake to regulate the whole finances of Turkey. We should there form a portion of a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism. We should as a neutral State remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence.*”[†]

That policy principle convinced Britain to support Zionism and the project of a “National Home” for Jews in Palestine and to issue the “Balfour Declaration” in 1917.

While Turkey[‡] ruled Palestine the Zionist movement endeavored to prove its usefulness to Turkey. When Britain conquered Palestine from Turkey in 1917 the Zionist movement made a great effort to prove that the Jewish State (when it was to be founded) would be beneficial to Britain. After WW2, when the United States became the dominant power in the region, the State of Israel acted in concert with American interests.

^{*} Available in English translation on the Internet: <http://www.akiorrbooks.com/files/PEACE.pdf>

[†] Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, 1896. Translated from the German by Silvie D’Avigdor. Published by the American Zionist Emergency Council, 1946.

[‡] I.e. the Ottoman Empire, or the Ottoman State – trans.

The principle was – and is – collaboration with the world power dominating the Middle East region against the people of the region. Immigrant-settlers needed foreign allies.

Originally Machover and I thought that Zionism's foreign policy stemmed from its support for the capitalist system. As Communists, we saw the confrontation between capitalism and socialism as the world's main political confrontation, especially after the Russian Revolution of October 1917. That revolution set up a regime that abolished private ownership of the economy and made the government the owner of all the lands, machines, commerce and banks. All owners of capital in the world acted to prevent the creation of such regimes in other places. That situation forced every politician everywhere in the world to decide which regime they supported because that would determine the World Powers' relations with them. Many countries in Asia and Africa were still under the rule of France, Britain, Portugal, Belgium and Holland, and their people opposed both foreign rulers and the capitalist system. But the majority in the Zionist movement that Herzl created supported capitalism. Herzl himself suggested to the Interior Minister in the Czarist regime that if he supported Zionism, many Russian Jews (who supported socialism) would leave Russia and emigrate to Palestine.

As Communists, we thought that it was Zionism's opposition to socialism and its support for capitalism and colonialism that placed it on the path of conflict with the peoples of the countries colonized by the colonial powers. That explained Israel's participation in "Operation Kadesh," and Israel's support for the United States in the Korean War (1950-1953), and Israeli support for French rule in Algeria and Vietnam, and many other Israeli policies. If we compare the press items I collected from the Israeli press to pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, it seemed that the overview that the Israel-Arab conflict stemmed from Zionism's opposition to socialism placed all pieces into a single - almost coherent - picture. But two items prevented complete coherence

1) In 1948 the Soviet Union supported the UN Partition Resolution, recognized the Zionist State, and supplied it with arms that made its creation possible. Most Israelis today do not know that in 1948 the United States, Britain and France imposed an arms embargo on Israel and only Czechoslovakia defied that ban. From 1948 to 1955 the standard rifle of the IDF, its standard light machine-gun (MG 34) and its medium machine-gun ("Beza") and their ammunition (all 7.92 mm) were all produced in Czechoslovakia, the only state in the world that provided arms to Israel. Czechoslovakia would not have done it without the approval of the Soviet Union. Even the first pilots' course of the Israeli air force was held in Czechoslovakia, and its Messerschmitt 109 fighter planes were bought in Czechoslovakia. Ben-Gurion admitted - in 1949 - that it was Czech arms shipments in 1948 that made the birth of the State of Israel possible.

Therefore until 1951 Israel had a foreign policy of "non-alignment" in the Cold War between the capitalist United States and the socialist Soviet Union. That contradicted our

idea that the Israel-Arab conflict was rooted in the State of Israel's pro-imperialist foreign policy. In 1948 Israel was not acting against the Soviet Union; on the contrary.

2) The second detail that did not fit with our guiding idea was a surprise to us. In 1960 every Israeli believed that Israel's War of Independence in 1948 had been fought between Israel and the Arab states, but in the press archives I found the following declarations:

"We assert that Britain is responsible for every drop of blood that has been shed in this country." (Golda Meir in *Davar*, 28 March 1948)

"Britain cannot evade responsibility for the Arab attack on us." (Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, *Davar*, 16 May 1948)

"We are facing military Britain, which is trying to do what civilian Britain could not do. And it matters little that the soldiers are mostly 'Arabs'. Montgomery too, in 1942/3, commanded Indians and Poles in Italy, but all understood very well that they were a British army. And as of today a British army is again in action in the Middle-East." (Herzl Rosenblum, editor of *Yediot Aharonot*, editorial, 13 May 1948)

In order to understand those declarations it is necessary to remember that in 1948 Britain was still the biggest imperialist power in the world. It ruled over a fifth of the planet. In Egypt, for example, no Egyptian officer could move a battalion of Egyptian soldiers from Cairo to Alexandria without first getting British permission to do so. The UN Partition Resolution forced Britain to leave Palestine but Britain decided to "*leave by the door to return through the window*" (as Israelis said in 1948). That is: to leave officially via the port of Haifa but to create a local conflict by organizing the invasion of Israel by Arab armies in order to return to Palestine via Jordan "to save the Jews and make peace." In 1962 we understood that the War of 1948 was a continuation of the war waged by the three clandestine Jewish armed militias ("Hagana", "Irgun Tsevai Leumi" and "Fighters for the Freedom of Israel" - Lehi) against the British during the 1945-1947 period, which brought the future of Palestine to the UN. Their objective was liberation of Palestine from British rule. People forgot that Britain - not Arabs - ruled Palestine.

From whom did the Israelis liberate themselves? From Arab rule or from British rule? Against which "foreign ruler" did the three Jewish clandestine armed militias fight? against an Egyptian/Palestinian/Iraqi ruler? Politically the War of Independence was against Britain which had used Arab armies, and demographically it was against the Palestinians who were the majority in Palestine. The British did not intend to give up Palestine just because of the UN's decision. They used Arab armies to violate the UN decision hoping that the UN would ask Britain to continue its rule in Palestine till the "natives" were "ready for independence."

The fact that Zionism fought against capitalist Britain while socialist Czechoslovakia armed Israel forced us to abandon our original conception according to which we had tried to organize the Israeli press items into one coherent picture. Our original unifying conception can be summarized as follows: **Zionist foreign policy determined Zionist military policy.** That is, the decision of Zionism to support the colonial powers put it on the path of conflict with peoples who were subjugated to colonial powers and fought against them. But that conception contradicted the two details I have just mentioned, so we began to search for an alternate conception that would unify all our press items into one coherent picture.

A new fact, of which most Israelis knew nothing, came to our knowledge: **The secret 1948 pact between Ben-Gurion and Emir Abdullah, ruler of Transjordan.**

In the Israeli press we discovered that Abdullah, the ruler of Transjordan, and Ben-Gurion negotiated and signed in 1948 a secret pact to divide between themselves the area that the UN Partition (of Palestine into TWO states – one for the Jews, the other for the Palestinians) Resolution had assigned to the Palestinians. In return Abdullah minimized the participation of his army – the “Arab Legion”, the most effective of the Arab armies manned by British officers – in the Arab states’ invasion of Palestine on 15 May 1948. The “Arab Legion” pulled out of Ramleh, Lydda and Sarafand without fighting. Israel did not complain to the UN when Abdullah annexed to Trans-Jordan half the Palestinian territory that the UN had assigned to the Palestinian state and re-named his state “Jordan” as it’s territory now extended over both sides of the Jordan river, not only on the eastern bank as before. Ben-Gurion and Abdullah violated the UN resolution and divided fifty-fifty what the UN had allocated to the Palestinians. Israel annexed half and Jordan annexed the other half.

That left the Palestinians without any part of land in which they expected independence - which they have been fighting for from 1948 to this day.

Israel conspired with Jordan. These two robbed the Palestinians of the territory that the UN had assigned to them and split it up fifty-fifty between them. That is why Israel had an interest in defending the Jordanian regime from the Palestinians and from the Syrians. In 1968 Israel attacked Karameh, a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan and fought against the PLO (“Palestinian Liberation Organization”) there. In 1970 the Israeli air force defended Jordan against the Syrian air force. In 1973 King Hussein, Abdullah’s grandson, came to Israel a week before the 1973 War to warn Golda Meir against the impending Egyptian and Syrian attack ..

Before 1960 we did not know that Israel and Jordan had conspired to rob the Palestinians of their territory. But in the press archives I found it. That provided the conception that organized our many press items into a single, unified, coherent picture, as follows:

The aim of Zionism was to establish a State for Jews in Palestine, but Palestine was populated by Arabs who wanted to establish their own state there (from 1936 to 1939 they rebelled against British rule). The Zionist aim conflicted with the Palestinian one. That conflict dictated Israel's foreign policy. **It was not the Zionist foreign policy that dictated the Zionist settlement and military policy** (as the Communist Party claimed); **it was the other way round: Zionist settlement and military policy dictated Zionist foreign policy.** The expropriating the Palestinians (from 1900) and building of Jewish settlements on their land caused Zionism to oppose Palestinian supporters (mostly anti-colonialists) and to support their colonialist rulers. In 2005 that seems self-evident, but in 1962 all Israelis responded with wonderment **"Palestinians"? Who are they?"**

Until the "Intifada of the Stones" (1987-1993) no Israeli politician, academic, orientalist,* political analyst or journalist saw the Palestinians as a **political** factor. At the most they were seen as a social factor – miserable refugees who needed to be housed and fed. Even the Israeli Communist Party, the only party that always claimed that a Palestinian people existed and deserved independence, viewed the Palestinians after 1948 as having ceased to be a political entity, as they were divided into three fragments: refugees in camps, a minority in the State of Israel (entitled to full democratic equality in Israel) and citizens of the Kingdom of Jordan. No expert on the "Palestine Problem" considered the Palestinians to be a *political* factor. Therefore no politician, orientalist, journalist or analyst responded to our book *Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace*, which posited that idea in 1962. It looked like the "absurd" idea of two mathematics students who had no expertise on the Middle East. Even though we sent dozens of free copies of the book to newspapers and academics we received no reply. Only the CP daily *Kol Haam* wrote a brief review of the book - not a very enthusiastic one, since the book challenged the CP's line that the Israel-Arab conflict stemmed from Israel's pro-imperialist (and anti-Soviet) foreign policy. Only in 1999, after I issued the book again, did I receive from Meir Vilner, who was a leader of the Communist Party for many years, a letter where he wrote:

To Akiva Orr,

First of all I would like to thank you for having sent me the new edition of the book, Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace. It is a unique book that fulfilled a special role when it first came out. The concentration of historical facts, original quotations that are impossible to deny or to ignore, helped many to learn the historical truth, which had been distorted over the years. The issuance of the book in a new edition, including the important appendices, is not only timely, but also a historical-political necessity in the present era. Those who read it today will find their eyes opened not only to what occurred, but also to many important aspects of the present.

* I.e. a Western academic specialist on the Middle East (the "Orient"), especially the Arab world. The term has been in disrepute in the English-speaking world since Edward Said published his book *Orientalism*, in which he criticized the premises underlying the discipline, in 1978 – trans.

Many youths, people of the middle generation and immigrants are not aware of the history of this country, and certainly not of the facts set down in the book. That is why it is of such importance that the book be published and distributed as widely as possible. I personally would like to order 5 more copies (I'll pay for them, of course). Where, by the way, is it possible to buy the book? I hope that a subsequent volume of Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace will also be issued in the future, about the period following the years the book deals with. Such a publication will constitute a most important political and historical contribution. I thank you again for having sent me the new edition of the book, and congratulate you on its publication.

In friendship, Meir Vilner (22 August 1999)

That was the only appreciative letter that the book received, and of course I was happy to get it, and I sent Vilner the copies he requested. I thought more highly of him than of the other leaders of the Israeli Communist Party and so I did not remind him that in 1962 shortly after the publication of the book, the Jerusalem branch of the Communist Party expelled me and Moshe Machover from the CP. We were not hurt by that because we had previously informed the branch leadership that we had decided to leave the party.

Our departure was hastened by a technical aspect of printing the book: not by its content but by its physical printing. Since the famous 1956 speech by Nikita Khrushchev (First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) in which he admitted that Stalin had committed serious crimes against socialism, Moshe Machover and I became very critical of the Soviet Union and of the Israeli Communist Party. We began to ask: Who were the founders of the Israeli CP? What happened to them? Why are their names never mentioned? Why did the party never write its own history?

The leaders of the Israeli CP accepted Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin but not criticism of themselves for having supported Stalin uncritically for decades. Nor did they want to talk about their past. They had attained leadership positions during Stalin's time and did not want to start a discussion about their support for him. Gradually we came to realize that the party had given up revolution to create an egalitarian regime that would nationalize the economy and had become instead an organization dedicated to promoting good relations with the Soviet Union. We agreed with the party's criticism of Israel's political regime. We appreciated the fact that only the ICP related to the Arabs as equals and struggled for equal rights to the Arab minority in Israel. But the lack of democracy within the party prevented our criticism of the leadership's policies from being heard, prevented us from meeting members of other branches and barred the creation of factions in the party. It concealed from the rank-and-file any disagreement within the leadership and forbade us from bringing our opinions to the attention of all the members of the party. Gradually we despaired of the possibility of changing the CP from within. There were comrades who said, "maybe you are right, but show us a non-Communist party anywhere

in the world that has set up a regime with a nationalized economy.” For a long time we had no answer. Wherever a nationalized economy existed (like in China or Yugoslavia) it had been created by a Communist party. If we wanted a nationalized economy we saw no other party willing or able to create it. But in 1959 Fidel Castro, who was not a Communist, came to power in Cuba and immediately began to set up a nationalized economy. The Cuban Communist Party saw him as nothing more than a political adventurer. But he established a nationalized economy in Cuba, he established a society in which a mostly illiterate population learnt to read and write and got excellent health care and a good education system, all at the expense of the government. We realized that a small group of activists could set up an egalitarian regime even without a Communist party. It was clear to us that the conditions in Israel were quite different from those in Cuba and that it was impossible to reproduce Castro’s revolution here. In Cuba in 1959 most of the public supported Castro, but in Israel many opposed a nationalized economy. It would be impossible to set up a nationalized economy if most of the public opposed it. We knew that we would first have to convince the public to support the idea of a nationalized economy. There was no television in Israel then, nor any private radio. The only way to spread ideas was in print. We thought that would require a great deal of money and professional skill, which were not at our disposal. We were ready to leave the Communist Party and start a new organization that would work to create an egalitarian regime. We had unique political ideas, different from those of the Communist Party. In 1962 we were the only ones in Israel who called for the dismantling the Histadrut (the CP opposed it) and for setting up independent trade unions, for the establishing state-paid health insurance and for a foreign policy that would endorse an independent Palestinian state. In short, in 1962 we had a unique political program that no one else in Israel proposed. But we did not know **how** to spread it and we lacked the means.

After finishing writing *Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace*, we began to look for a publisher. It soon became clear that no Israeli publisher would print the book. Therefore we decided to print it ourselves. I found a small printing house on Jaffa Road in Jerusalem, with one Linotype machine and one worker. He asked for a modest sum to print 1000 copies. I began to take the written pages to him and stood next to him while he printed. Linotype (“line casting”) is a machine that produces a piece of lead that creates one line of print. The thickness of the piece is the height of the letters and its depth is about an inch. Length is fixed equal to the length of the printed line on the paper.

The letters protrude and when printing ink is smeared on them and they are pressed to paper they transfer the letters from the lead to the paper. The Linotype looked like an upright piano and a single worker “plays” it like a pianist by hitting keys like a typist. After every keystroke a piece of brass (a “matrix”) with one letter engraved on it slides from a magazine in the upper part of the machine to a frame the length of one line beside the worker. When the worker strikes the “space” key a wedge is inserted after the word.

When the operator decides that enough letters have been created to fill one line he pulls a handle that presses all the wedges forward. This creates equal spaces between the words and presses the letters together. That is now line of uniform length is created. Operating another lever injects molten lead into the brass matrices, and after a minute this row in lead falls into a special tray. It takes about five minutes to produce one line. The lines are arranged in a wooden tray where they are pressed together. Then the tray is put into the printing machine that spreads ink on the lead and presses it to paper. Until 1975 that is how the printing industry worked worldwide. The computerization of printing caused a revolution that eliminated Linotype and rendered an entire generation of printing workers superfluous. When I saw the first page of the book in print I was amazed.

Lines aligned to **both** Left **and** Right have a hypnotic effect. They convert a text from “opinion” to “fact”. The printed page suddenly looked to me so serious that I could not believe it was the same page that I had scribbled by hand in my notebook.

The difference is surprising. Suddenly I realized that it was quite easy - and not expensive - to print a magazine, and that a dozen people, each of whom contributes a small sum, can produce a magazine without the need for a publisher. That encouraged Moshik,* myself and a dozen other ex-CP members to found the "Israeli Socialist Organization" and to spread our ideas by means of a new political magazine which Haim Hanegbi called *Matzpen* (“Compass” - as it pointed to a new direction in Israeli politics). But that, as they say, is another story.

After printing *Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace*, we gave- the book to stores and submitted a copy to the censor in Jerusalem. We feared the censor would give us trouble and sent the book to bookstores to preempt problems if the censor forbade its distribution.

A publication ban by the censor could boost publicity as many would rush to buy a book that the censor had forbidden. As the book was based only on press items that had already been published and read by thousands of people we did not expect that it would be banned. To our surprise the censor did in fact ban the publication of the book. It turned out that under Israel’s censorship law the censor could ban material that had already been printed and publicized in the past. We took no steps to retrieve the book from the stores and waited to be prosecuted for violating the censorship law. We were ready for trial and imprisonment but instead we received a letter from the censor stating the following: “*I forbid the publication of Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace, but as the book is already in bookshops I do not intend to take any measures against you.*”

It turned out that not all the regime’s functionaries were stupid.

* Moshe Machover – trans.

5. A moth in a black hole

In 1955 I resigned from my job as Second Mate on the *Daniela Borchard* and went to study physics at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. At the end of Professor Rakah's lecture on electromagnetism (in which he showed that light is an electromagnetic wave) I approached the tutor and asked him: "If the sun implodes, how much time would pass before we felt it here, on the Earth?" He replied: "I don't understand your question."

I explained: "The sun, like every star, radiates a vast amount of energy that it derives from the matter found inside it. The day will come when that matter expires, and then the force of gravity will crush the sun and convert it into a lump of completely compressed matter or it will implode and turn into a super-nova. Either way, when the shape of the sun changes, the gravitational field produced by the sun will change, and all the bodies affected by that field, including the Earth and the planets, will undergo a tremendous disturbance and change of positions because of the change of the sun's gravitational field. How much time will pass from the moment the sun changes its shape until we feel the changed force of gravity here, on Earth?" He thought for a moment and answered: "I don't know!"

So I decided to find out for myself.

I knew that Einstein's General Theory of Relativity dealt with gravitation, but the General Theory of Relativity was not taught at the Hebrew University at that time, and in 1955 it was the only university in Israel. Therefore I decided to look into the possibilities of continuing my studies abroad. I did not know that at the Technion in Haifa there was a physicist named Nathan Rosen who had explored problems of the General Theory of Relativity with Einstein. If I had known that, I would have gone to Haifa, not London. But I got married, bought an apartment and became a mortgage-slave. In 1960 my daughter was born, and I began to push her pram in the street, where I met Orah Freund, a young mother also pushing a pram. We pushed our prams and exchanged impressions. One day in 1961 I felt pain in my ankle, as if I had been kicked in a football game. The pain was dull but persistent. Orah too felt a persistent pain in her leg, but her pain was in the thigh. We went to our doctors. My doctor told me the pain was rheumatic and there was nothing to be done: "You are built of poor quality material" were his words. Orah's doctor told her that she had cancer and would have to have her leg amputated. I continued to limp, and she had a leg amputated. She died a few months later. I was shaken. I wondered what I would have done in her situation, after being told that I had only a few more months to live. I had a clear answer: Before dying, I wanted to understand the structure of the universe in which I found myself, the nature of space and time, and Einstein's explanation for those things. Strange? Maybe. But we all have our caprices. I am not ashamed of mine.

After some time I asked myself, why should I wait until I have a terminal illness? I could be run down by a car tomorrow. Every day could be my last. Why not travel right away to study the structure of the universe? When I reached that conclusion, I began to prepare to travel to King's College in London, the only institution in Europe where cosmology was taught then. Fortunately my wife, Leah, received a bursary at the London School of Economics, and I joined her. In the summer of 1964 I travelled to London and registered for doctoral studies in cosmology at King's College. There were eight students in the class. The head of the cosmology department was a Hungarian Jew named Hermann Bondi, who, along with Fred Hoyle and Tommy Gold, had developed the theory of the "steady state" (of the universe) according to which the density of matter in the universe (the amount of matter in a unit of volume), is constant in every place and at all times. There was a serious flaw in that theory, because in 1928 the American astronomer, Edwin Hubble, showed that the universe was expanding like a balloon all the time. That is to say, its volume is increasing. But if the volume increases while the amount of matter is constant, the density of matter must diminish yet according to the "steady state" theory the density remains the same. How can that be?

In order to resolve that contradiction, Bondi, Hoyle and Gold added the premise that matter is created in the universe *ex nihilo*. In fixed periods of time new atoms are created from the void. No experiment had demonstrated such a fact, but that premise closed the theoretical gap. A year later, the cosmic background temperature was found to be some 3 degrees above the absolute zero rather than zero. That was interpreted as residual heat from the primary "big bang". Thus the "Big Bang" theory reappeared (decades after George Gamow first proposed it) and the "steady state" theory was forgotten.

That taught me something about theories in science. Not that I began to scorn them, but I realized that what we call "*laws of nature*" are in fact our *interpretations* of the phenomena of nature. Bondi lectured at Kings College, London, in a beautiful 19th century hall, the walls of which were covered with wood. On one wall was a small sign that read: "**James Clerk Maxwell lectured on electricity and magnetism in this hall**".

Every physicist knows "Maxwell's equations" in electricity. Not many are impressed by them today, but in the 19th century there were physicists who asked, "what god wrote these equations?" The reason for the excitement was that Maxwell's four wave equations fused the theory of electricity with the theory of magnetism – and from this theoretical unification he deduced that **light** - which no one thought had any connection to electricity or magnetism - is a combination of both. Today, when we flip a switch to turn on a light, the trinity of electricity, magnetism and light are experienced as a unity, but Maxwell proved it theoretically long before anyone imagined such a possibility.

I pointed out the sign to an English student next to me and said to him, "*can you believe that in this hall Maxwell announced the discovery of equations of electro-magnetism?*"

He stared at me and said: “*Discovery? What discovery are you talking about? Scientific theories are inventions, not discoveries !*”

I was astonished. I had always assumed that scientific theories existed in their own right, like stars in the sky, independently of people, and that scientists merely discovered them. But the English student clarified to me that scientific theories are not physical objects, but mental constructs, like letters, words, concepts, and language. They are human inventions; not discoveries. Later I learned that Einstein thought so too. He compared a scientific theory to a suit of clothes. A suit has to fit the body, but it is not the body that makes a suit, but a tailor. There is no suit that fits a body in advance, or that fits a body for all time, because all bodies change and it is impossible to know in advance the size of the suit. A suit is a *creation*, not a *discovery*. The tailor creates it; he does not discover it.

In science, the “body” is the results of scientific experiments, and the “suit” is the theoretical explanation of these results. It is clear that a suit must fit the body, but bodies constantly change, so no suit can fit it for ever. There are elegant suits and there are shabby suits: it all depends on the tailor. Scientists prefer elegant theories, that is, theories with a minimum of unproven premises. The times are gone when scientists thought that scientific theories were “discoveries”.

Later I met English scientist (Rupert Sheldrake) who even criticized the idea of “*laws of nature*”. “Why do you assume that nature has ‘laws’?” - he asked. “ ‘Laws’ are made by people. But nature is not made by people.” I agreed, but replied: “In nature there are phenomenae that repeat themselves with absolute precision over billions of years, such as, for example, the falling of a stone to the ground. It is certain that tomorrow every stone will fall to the ground in exactly the same way as all stones have fallen until this day, therefore it is reasonable to assume that there is something that forces every stone always to fall in exactly the same manner. Why not call this a ‘law of nature’?” He replied: “I agree that in nature there are phenomenae that repeat themselves in precisely the same way for billions of years, but why should that be caused by a ‘law’? Maybe it is a ‘habit’?”

I was astonished, and asked: “What do you mean by a ‘habit’ of inanimate nature?” He replied: “Imagine a mound of sand on which rain never fell. The first rain that falls on it creates, purely arbitrarily, depressions through which the rainwater flows. Future rain water will fall on the depressions created accidentally by the first rain, and will flow through them. A permanent phenomenon is thereby created of the flow of rainwater in the same channels, but there is no ‘law’ that requires that rain must flow in those channels and not in others. The first rain created an arbitrary path and later rains follow it. So it became a kind of ‘habit’ not due to some “Law”. I had to admit that I had not thought of such a possibility.

Bondi was a brilliant and inspiring lecturer. Though I was studying for a doctorate, I attended all his lectures for first-year students, and never regretted it. I realized that it is always a person, not a university, who imparts knowledge and inspiration. Even from Bondi's first-year lectures I gained new data and new insights. For example, theoretical physics - and mathematics - deal not only with physical phenomena, but with *changes* of phenomena. There are two kinds of changes: continuous and discontinuous. The growing of a tree is a continuous change, because during every tiny change of time the tree grows by a tiny amount. But the explosion of a bomb is a discontinuous change, because in one tiny change of time a huge change occurs in the exploding material, sometimes it disappears. My teachers at the Hebrew University advised not to deal with discontinuous changes, as mathematics has difficulties in dealing with them. But Bondi emphasized that it is precisely the **discontinuous changes** that are interesting, because that is the way something new is created. **Continuous change - and continuity - bypass creation. They imply that what will happen next will be like what happened before. But when something new emerges it is different from what was before.** Bondi's insight about the creative essence of discontinuities in processes inspired two students in the class (Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking) to explore discontinuity in the Theory of General Relativity and in the real universe and came up with the idea of "black holes" (they are neither black nor holes) - that is: points of discontinuity in a gravitational field.

Inspired by Bondi, students began to research discontinuous phenomena in cosmology. There is no big theoretical gap between "Black Hole" and "Big Bang." Both are types of discontinuities.

One day a student was brought to the class in a wheelchair. He sat in a twisted position, his head leaning to one side. Another youth pushed his wheelchair. He spoke in grunts that were impossible to understand. I wondered what he was doing in a cosmology seminar. He gave a sheet of paper to the youth who pushed his chair, and the latter began to copy what was written on it onto the blackboard. From time to time someone in the class asked a question. The young man in the wheelchair grunted an answer. No one was able to understand his grunts. But the young man who pushed the wheelchair said, "Stephen says that ...". Gradually it emerged that the young man in the wheelchair was no ignoramus. He did not make profound statements, but he didn't speak nonsense either. He had a great sense of humor. He made comments that caused us to break up in laughter. Suddenly I realized that I was - unconsciously - prejudiced against him because of his disability. His physical affliction caused me to attribute mental backwardness to him. I assumed that because he was physically disabled, he was mentally disabled as well. That was a prejudice about a physical disability. I was very ashamed when I realized that I was prejudiced, and learned a lesson, but to this day I do not understand how the youth who pushed the wheelchair was able to understand Stephen's grunts and translate them into words. Hawking became a world-famous professor of cosmology. His

achievements cannot be compared to Einstein's, as he himself would emphatically say. But his achievements were respectable, and the greatest of them, in my opinion, is how he has dealt with his grave physical disability. Not only can he not do any physical activity by himself, even his vocal cords were removed. When I see him on television sometimes, I am encouraged. His disability did not break him and he makes no big deal of it. He accepts his condition with humor. There is much humor in his writings and sayings, but those who do not know him miss it. A pity. One can learn from him more than physics.

Bondi's assistant was a thin man named Felix Pirani. It turned out that he was the expert on the question that I had asked my tutor in Jerusalem: how much time will pass from the moment the sun collapses until we perceive it on Earth. He answered immediately: "Eight minutes. Like the time required for light to travel from the sun to the Earth." He researched the nature of changes in gravitational fields, their structure and propagation. A stone that falls on a pond creates waves that spread in circles, but an exploding bomb sends out fragments in straight lines. Does a change in a gravitational field spread like waves on water or like fragments of a bomb or maybe in a way that differs from both? That was the subject of his research. Experiments had been done to measure changes in gravitational fields due to the collapse of stars in the universe. Every day, stars that have stopped deriving energy from the matter within them collapse. All such implosions and explosions cause vast changes in the gravitational field around them. In 1987 a star not far from the sun collapsed, and turned into a supernova. We should have felt some change in the gravitational field, but despite all the research no one succeeded in discovering any such change. Research teams set up very sensitive devices to discover it, but nothing has yet been discovered that could be interpreted as being a change in the field of gravity. Why? No one knows.

In the summer of 1966 Bondi and Pirani organized an "International conference on Gravitation, Cosmology and General Relativity" at Imperial College in London. Our class was invited to participate. Hundreds of scientists came from all over the world, including a large delegation from the Soviet Union. The conference was an important international event, and even people who did not work in cosmology put in an appearance. Marshall McLuhan, one of the pre-eminent researchers in communications, the author of the book *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and the inventor of the idea of the "global village" came to speak. He criticized the concept of binary digits, and it was clear that he understood nothing about the scientific side of the subject. Nobody told him that. On the second day of the conference the organizers announced that the participants were invited to register for various tours in London and the surrounding area. I wanted to register for a visit to the Culham Nuclear Research Centre near Oxford. The young woman who registered people for that tour told me: "The entire delegation from the Soviet Union is registered for the tour, and there are no places left, but I can put you on the waiting list,

and if somebody cancels, there may be a place for you.” I agreed. When I showed up the next day, she told me: “There’s a free place on that tour. Here’s a train ticket to Oxford. A car will be waiting for you there.” I took the ticket and got on the train to Oxford. At the Oxford Railway station I waited with an older woman on the empty platform. I asked her if she was participating in the tour, and she replied that she was the interpreter for the delegation from the Soviet Union. The bus from Culham turned up, but not the delegation from the Soviet Union. After waiting for half an hour, the interpreter announced that she would return to London because there was no need for her. I told the emissary from Culham that I too was willing to forego the visit as it was not worth their efforts to work for the reception of one visitor. He replied: “The preparations to receive the Soviet delegation in Culham have been made anyway, so even if you don’t come it won’t save us a penny. Since you are already here, why not come to Culham?” I agreed and got on the bus as the only passenger. After a short trip we arrived at Culham. Three senior scientists were waiting for me in the entrance hall. They were expecting researchers from the Soviet Union whom they wanted to comment on some Culham experiments. I explained that I was a doctoral student, not a scientist. They asked, “Did Ginsburg come to the conference?” Ginsburg was a Soviet scientist who was world-famous for research on cosmic gamma rays. I had heard his name at the conference, and I replied that he had indeed attended. “What does he say about the source of the gamma rays we get from space?” they asked. I could not answer because I had not attended Ginsburg’s lecture. (30 years later it turned out that gamma rays are created in collisions of black holes) They were disappointed and accompanied me to a dining hall where a splendid meal had been prepared for the Soviet VIPs. After the splendid meal, at which I was the only guest, they took me to the office of one of them. I told him a little about the lectures that I had heard at the conference. He had a large office all along the walls of which were tables laden with thousands of perforated computer output cards that included the results of experiments. Suddenly the door opened and his assistant appeared and asked, “did Ginsburg come?” My host replied in the negative and the assistant then asked, “so what shall we do with all this?” – pointing towards the thousands of perforated computer cards piled on the tables around the walls. My guest replied with indifference, “throw them away.” I was astonished. Vast sums of tax-payers’ money had been spent on constructing the nuclear research labs at Culham, their maintenance and the of the scientists’ salaries, and here sits this scientist, at the expense of the public, and throws the results of expensive experiments into the garbage without batting an eyelid. I asked him if he did not think that was regrettable. He explained to me: “I have no choice. First, I don’t have enough scientists to investigate the results of the experiments. Second, the experimental apparatuses operate 24 hours a day and constantly put out results. If I don’t clear out the cards piled up here, I’ll drown in an ocean of cards. Third, I can always repeat an experiment. I had hoped that Ginsburg, the world expert on gamma rays, would give me an explanation about the results of the experiment, but since he has not showed up, I must

clear the decks and on another occasion I will come back to the experiment.” That sounded reasonable, and forced me to change my opinions about experiments in physics. Until then I had treated every experiment with reverence. Suddenly I understood that today the particle accelerators operate 24 hours daily, and produce results, and researchers are drowning in a sea of data. It is not possible to deal with the flood of information and it is sometimes necessary to “clear the decks.” I returned to London, and I did not regret the visit. I had not learned anything new in science but I learned something about the management of science.

One day Bondi asked me: “What subject did you choose for your doctorate?”

I replied without hesitation: “To explore the nature of the direction of time, the fact that in sub-atomic domain every phenomenon can happen both ‘forward’ and ‘backward’ in time, but above atomic dimensions, phenomena can happen only in one direction: ‘forward.’” He looked at me and said: “Why look for gold when the chances of finding it are negligible? Why not look for iron, as the chances of finding it are much greater?”

I was surprised to realize that for many scientists science is a way to make an easy living by getting an academic post. For me science was a quest to understand the universe.

I told Bondi: “Thanks, but *I am not interested in iron, and I will not look for it.*”

Over the years of my studies I came to realize that theoretical physics is today in a crisis. A basic flaw has been exposed in our comprehension of nature. There is a tsunami of experimental results, but inadequate theories to account for them, or theories fraught with contradictions. The theories are unable to explain the results, and sometimes they contain logical contradictions. A fundamental change in our comprehension of nature is needed. The problem, in my opinion is not in physics, but in our thinking. Later it became clear to me that the renowned physicist David Bohm had the same view. He developed an original theory, according to which nature includes something additional to physical entities which he called the “field of information”. Consider the change in a space created by a radio broadcast that sends out very little energy but a great deal of information that can influence phenomena. Every broadcasting aerial creates an oscillating and expanding electromagnetic field. The energy density of that field is negligible in most places, but it carries information. The effect of that information is unrelated to the energy density, but despite that, the *information* (rather than the energy that carries it) can have a considerable effect. So far physics does not handle the effects of information. Nobody took this seriously, but that does not necessarily mean that it is nonsense. It is almost certain that Bohm’s idea appeared before its time. In science there are fashions and it could be that the idea of the “field of information” will become fashionable in the future.

Realizing that I would not find a job in Cosmology, I transferred to “Computer Science”.

When I began to study computers at the University of London Institute of Computer Science (ULICS) in 1966, the university had a single Ferranti Atlas computer but no department for Computer Science. In order to develop that profession the university set up an institute for the study of computers next to its giant computer. At the institute the programmers explained their work to the students. There was no syllabus because nobody knew exactly what to teach. We were four students at the institute – and in all England. The computer was fed data and instructions by means of perforated paper tape. Light shone on the tape and entered the computer through the holes in the paper, where it turned into electrical charges that were conserved in the computer’s “memory”. Today every child with a personal computer runs more programs through his computer in an hour than we ran in a week in 1966. The Atlas filled a big hall.

How does one teach a profession without teachers or syllabus, when it is not clear what has to be taught? Elementary - those who have been playing with the new toy teach others how to play with it. The University of London had a single “Atlas” computer, the biggest in the world at the time. Only four like it were built. Its large size did not help us because the use of the Atlas was cumbersome, and we could hardly run one program a day. There were always typographical errors – a comma instead of a period or a hyphen instead of an underscore. When that happened, the computer would put out an error message and cancel the program. It took a long time to find mistakes because there were no screens, and it also took a long time to punch new holes in the paper tape and attach the corrected section to the original tape. I knew that keyboards would soon be invented and feed programs directly into the computer, without perforated paper ribbon. I knew that soon it would be possible to see on a screen where the mistakes were, to correct them and to run the program again within seconds. But those were only forecasts, and I wasted hours because of the slow pace of the development of the required technology.

One day in the winter of 1967, Professor Piarni invited me to see the new radio telescope that had been built by Martin Ryle in Cambridge. I went. The telescope itself was two ten-foot wire dish aerials placed on two small rail carriages that moved to and from each other on a rail track that was about a kilometer long. The aerials moved towards each other from the ends of the track to its mid-point and back to the edges, constantly repeating that movement while pointing at the same direction in the sky and gathering data from it. The unique feature of this telescope, which had been invented by Martin Ryle, was in the **computerized processing** of the data from the two small aerials. That processing turned the information from the two small dishes into the information of one gigantic dish **the diameter of which was equivalent to the length of the entire track**. That was an amazing improvement, which won Ryle the Nobel Prize in 1974.

The ability of a telescope to see two stars that are very close to each other as two separate bodies, and not as one body, is called “Resolving Power” This is determined by the diameter of the lens or the antenna. The larger the diameter, the better the resolution. But

there is a practical limit to the size of a lens or an antenna. It is very difficult to construct a glass lens with a diameter of ten meters or a radio antenna with a diameter of five hundred meters. Ryle took two ten-foot dish aerials and turned them into a dish with a diameter of a kilometer. If it had been an optical telescope, it could have seen a postage stamp on the moon. The idea was brilliant. The prototype that Ryle built at Cambridge proved that his principle can be put into practice. If a telescope like that works well on a track a kilometer long, it is also possible to build it on a track a thousand kilometers long. In the years that have passed since then, more telescopes have been built according to that principle, with thousands of kilometers between the dishes. The information that has been received through them has opened new horizons for cosmological research. I asked myself what is the limit to the size of such a telescope. At first I thought that the limit would be two aerials at diametrically opposite points on the equator. It would provide a lens with the diameter of the Earth. But then I realized that wire dish aerials can be carried aloft by satellites so we could spread them along Earth's orbit around the sun and get a radio telescope with the diameter of earth's solar orbit. I suggested this in a letter to the scientific weekly *New Scientist* in 1996, naming it SORT (Solar Orbit Radio Telescope). Such a telescope would provide unprecedented information about the universe. I suggested it but knew that constructing SORT would require resources that would take many years to mobilize.

On that rainy morning in a field near Cambridge we sought shelter from the rain in a small wooden shack that housed the computer directing the two aerials. Ryle put a kettle on and while preparing tea told us a strange story. In the first weeks after the construction of the telescope, the dishes often went out of control. Each dish turned independently. The engineers dismantled the dishes and the computer and checked every component but found no flaw. Then they checked the program that operated the dishes. There too they found no flaw. The dishes continued to go haywire – but only at night. No one dared to suggest that ghosts were involved, though belief in them is widespread in England. One engineer decided to spend a night in the shack to try to catch the demon. After dark the dishes began to go haywire. He inspected the shack and finally caught the demon. The shack was completely dark but had one point of light. It was the tiny light-bulb over the perforated paper tape that fed the program into the computer with instructions for the operation of the dishes. The bulb was in a plastic canopy. A moth was attracted to the only light in the dark shack. It entered the canopy through the space between the canopy and the tape, and fluttered over the holes, shading some of them. That distorted the program. I had thought that in the age of computers, moths and naphthalene belonged to the past. I was wrong. A moth hovered over paper holes and affected research of Black Holes in the universe.

That too teaches something about science.

6. A nuclear war resister

In July 1964, a few days before I left Israel to study in London, my wife Leah and I met an Israeli friend who had returned from London with her English husband. He was the stepson of the British philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell, and had come to Israel with his Israeli wife because he had been asked by the United Worker's Party (Mapam) to be the editor of its English-language monthly magazine, *New Outlook*. We became friends, but because I was travelling to London a week later, we met again only a year later, when he too returned to London. His name was Roderick Barry, and his friends called him Roddy. He was confined to a wheelchair because he was paralyzed from the waist down due to a mining accident when he was 23. Before the accident he was a distinguished sportsman in cricket, and wanted to become a professional. He was the captain of the youth team at the famous cricket club in London, MCC, and as is well known, in England cricket is more than a sport. Roddy was handsome and had a charismatic personality. Everyone who met him was charmed by him. Despite his disability, many women fell in love with him. Three impressive women married him, one after the other, even though his disability obliged them to help him defecate by means of an enema every morning, to dress his pressure sores and to empty his urine receptacle. The accident had also eliminated his sex life. But none of his three wives regretted that they had married him, and they all remember him yearningly. He was friendly, honest, straightforward, and liked people. He also had some characteristics of the English nobility. His stepfather, Bertrand Russell, was from a well-known family of the traditional nobility. Today it is rare to encounter members of the genuine nobility because that class, which until the First World War ruled most European countries, was deposed after the war, lost its status and some of its property and declined in numbers. The nobility was always a tiny percentage of the population. The number of nobles diminished even more after they lost their estates. They even had difficulty maintaining their mansions. The maintenance of a mansion and its estate requires a large staff of employees - cleaners, cooks, housekeepers, drivers, gardeners, journeymen, etc. After the Second World War, employees' wages rose and most estate-owners dismissed their staffs, closed most parts of their mansions and moved into a few rooms within them. Some opened their mansions to tourists and collected entrance-fees. There were those who transferred their mansions and estates to the government authority for the conservation of the British heritage. None of that bothered Roddy, who joined the Communist Party. That was not extraordinary. The nobility, unlike the bourgeoisie, are not bothered by eccentrics; they respect them. They have only contempt for those bothered by the opinions of others. In Oxford there is a college over the gate of which is engraved: "**They say. What they say? Let them say.**"* That is how the nobility feels about the bourgeoisie worrying about "what will people think ? (or say)" The nobility has contempt also for those obsessed with wealth. That contempt is prominent in the writings of the great French writer Balzac, who despised the French bourgeoisie's pursuit of money. The nobility did not pursue wealth; they were born into it. They dedicated their

* According to some sources, it is inscribed at Marischal College in Aberdeen, Scotland, in the following form: "They haif said: Quhat say they? Lat thame say." <http://quoteocean.com/george-keith-5th-earl-marischal/> - trans.

lives to spending it, not to accumulating it. For them life was a permanent feast. Before meeting Roddy I had not encountered that attitude. But over time it became clear to me that that attitude is not a personal caprice of an individual, but a characteristic of a class. That class sees wealth as a means and not an end. It is not wealth that matters to them, but style of behavior. The nobility values **loyalty** - to friends, to class, to a principle - far more than wealth. And above all, they value honorable behavior. "Death before dishonor" is their motto. When Roddy did not know an answer in a statistics exam it never occurred to him to copy it from someone. He wrote: "God knows." The examiner wrote in the margin, "God passed. You failed." He stood for election to secretary of the student union at the college where he studied, and was running against a Jewish student named Max Neufeld. During the electoral campaign some students distributed flyers that called to vote for Roddy because Max Neufeld was a Jew. In reply Roddy declared: "**I too am a Jew.**" After Roddy was elected student union secretary, Max Neufeld became his good friend. Later he became his lawyer.

Roddy was injured in a work accident in a coal mine, and received a disability allowance from the government and the miners' union. How did he get into a coal mine?

In 1955, two years before military conscription was abolished in Britain, Roddy received his draft notice. He announced to the draft board that he refused to serve in an army that possessed nuclear weapons. The board discussed his refusal, respected it and offered him alternative national service as a construction worker, or as a male nurse in hospital or as a coal miner. He chose to be a miner, even though that was the most dangerous of the three options. He wanted to show that his refusal was not due to fear. He loved the miners and the work in the mine. The accident occurred after a year's work in a mine between Huddersfield and Wakefield. A big chunk of coal fell on him and broke his back. He was paralyzed from the waist down.

Max Neufeld came to visit him in hospital, but felt too embarrassed to approach Roddy's bed. Roddy shouted: "Come on Max, who's the paralyzed one here - you or me? So stop this nonsense and come over."

After the accident Roddy began to receive a pension from the government and from the miner's union. When he received his monthly pay, he would organize a party for his friends and spend most of the money. Often he played poker with his friends and lost large sums of money. It never bothered him. His attitude to money was typical of the nobility: "when you have it, spend it; when you don't have it, live frugally or borrow." He did not like to save or "prepare for a rainy day." He was always willing to take on a risky bet. Debts or poverty did not scare him, and he was not ashamed of them. He did not suffer selfish people, flatterers, misers or worriers. His disability did not change his views. He participated in anti-nuclear demonstrations in his wheelchair. His protracted sitting caused pressure sores. They had to be dressed anew every morning. Once every three years he would be hospitalized for a skin-graft from his legs over the pressure sores. He would stay in the hospital for about two months. During the operation he felt nothing because the nerves of his legs had been severed in the accident. But he always asked for a shot of morphine - ostensibly to kill pain - but actually to enjoy the drug. He also asked for a mirror so that he could watch the operation. In 1978, when he was in the hospital, he

was attacked by an antibiotic-resistant microbe. It caused gangrene in his legs that threatened to spread to his body. The doctors recommended that his legs be amputated, and he agreed. When I came - with his Spanish wife Pilar and his friend Joakin, to visit him after the operation, he gave me a fistful of banknotes and sent me to bring a dozen bottles of the best champagne to celebrate the amputation of his legs. "It's not every day that a man gets his legs cut off," he said, adding: "It calls for a celebration." Of the morphine he had received he observed, "it was excellent, and made me feel each bubble of champagne separately on my tongue." After the amputation-party the nurses and other patients in the ward were all drunk and merry.

He enjoyed life even when it was grim. One of the patients in the ward told me that one day, during the doctors' ward visit, Roddy went into cardiac arrest. Someone noticed it and called the doctors. They used electrical shocks to revive him. When he opened his eyes, he said, "*So this is sweet death.*" All those present burst out laughing and the tension was relieved. He did not remember it, but other patients and the nurses did. Life - and death - could tire him, but not change his attitude to life as an ongoing party. He never complained about his fate. He enjoyed life and did not let suffering spoil the permanent party that was his life. Not for a moment did he ponder: "why did this have to happen to me?" Such a thought would express self-pity, and Roddy, like a true Englishman, loathed self-pity, and had a natural "stiff upper lip". He accepted the accident and adapted his life to the new situation without ceasing to live it as a party. He just organized the party to conform with his disability.

After the accident he wrote a play called *Payday*, which described the lives of the miners. The play was broadcast on BBC television. Another play of his - *The Judges Are Hungry*,* was rejected because its content was too left-wing for the tastes of the judges. The idea for that play was taken from a 17th century English poem about judges who hastened to sentence a man to death because they were in a hurry to get to lunch.

The accident also affected his kidneys, only one of which functioned. When he got an infection in the functioning kidney, he was immediately taken to the hospital and connected to a dialysis machine.

He did not particularly enjoy his stays in the hospital. One day he explained to me: "A British hospital, like the British army, is based on the class system: Generals are from the nobility, officers from the bourgeoisie, and sergeants and privates are from the working class. No British General in history has come from the working class. In an English hospital the class structure is similar: Doctors are from the bourgeoisie and nurses are from the middle class. It is rare to find a doctor whose origins are from the working class. A patient who stays a long time in hospital has to create good relations with the nurses because they are in constant contact with the patients. The doctors visit the ward once a day and do not take care of the patients' daily needs. For the patient, the ward's Head Nurse is the person that matters. If she likes the patient, that patient's stay in hospital will be pleasant. If she does not - life will be hard for him. The nurses will not rush to him

* The titles of these plays have been retranslated into English from the original Hebrew text of this book - trans.

when he calls, and a long time will pass before they find time to take care of his urgent needs. I always try to make the head nurse laugh. If I succeed she remembers me and takes care of me.” He always succeeded. The nurses loved him.

One day he told me he was planning to visit his mother Dora (“La Viecha”) in Cornwall. Dora was Bertrand Russell’s second wife. I met her in 1975 when the first volume of her autobiography came out (“The Tamarisk Tree” pub. By Paul Elek). She was 81. The publisher organized a press conference to publicize the book. Dozens of journalists came hoping to hear juicy stories about Russell’s sex life. Dora married Russell after the First World War and travelled with him in the 1920s to visit the Soviet Union and China. She fought for equal rights for women, and in 1927 created the first school of free education.

After the Second World War she was one of the first activists against nuclear weapons. Russell himself was a pacifist during the First World War, and was even incarcerated for that. In 1955 Russell, together with Einstein, published a declaration against nuclear weapons that called on scientists to refuse to develop those weapons. Even in his old age he demonstrated against nuclear weapons. London policemen dragged him by his arms and legs and dumped him into a police car. When BBC television news showed the world-famous philosopher and mathematician, an old and thin man, with a mane of white hair, being dragged to a police van by four policemen, many viewers all over the world were shocked, and joined the campaign against nuclear weapons. That is how Russell succeeded in wresting the debate on nuclear weapons - their production and use - away from politicians and turned it into a public debate in the press and on television. On nukes Dora agreed with Russell. She too continued, at age 80 and over, to be an activist against nukes and for equal rights for women. At the reception for the publication of her autobiography Roddy introduced me to her. I asked her: "If you could live your life all over again, what would you do differently?" She replied without hesitating: "I would not have married Russell." I asked, "Why not?" She replied: "Because Russell was in love only with himself. We agreed to have an ‘open marriage’. It meant that if one of us fell in love with someone else that would not affect the relations between us. I kept my side of the bargain and accepted all his love affairs, but when I fell in love with Griffin Barry, Roddy's father, Russell refused to accept it." Dora was a philosopher in her own right. Her critique of industrialization was new to me. She developed it many decades before the “Greens” appeared and before any criticism of industrialization was heard (apart from Louis Mumford and Mary Shelley, whose book *Frankenstein* was in effect a critique of the industrial golem that turns on its creator). Dora did not suggest destroying machines; she warned against the *worship* of industrialization, against insensitivity to industrial pollution. She appreciated the vast improvements that machines had brought to human life. She warned only against ignoring the price - environmental pollution, the acceleration of the rhythm of life, insensitivity to nature - that industrialization caused. Machines screen people from nature and from each other. She warned against ignoring the side-effects of industrialization long before anyone knew about the hole in the ozone layer, about smog problems, about food and water contamination by harmful chemicals and the pollution of seas by oil. Her words once seemed to me reactionary, but today I know that she was merely ahead of her time. Many treated her as they treat all those who are ahead of their time: They are mocked, seen as irritants and sometimes even

persecuted. Roddy himself told me that for a long time he did not take his mother's writings seriously and saw only the positive side of industrialization, but in the last years of his life he began to appreciate her views.

Dora lived in Cornwall. Roddy wanted to visit her. I was surprised when he called me that evening and told me that he had cancelled his trip because he had an infection in his only kidney. I thought that he would go to hospital to have his kidney treated and travel to visit his mother afterwards. But a few hours later, at four in the morning, Pilar called me and said: "Roddy is dead." I was shocked and rushed to their apartment. Pilar told me:

"Roddy called the doctor and explained his condition. The doctor told him that he had to go to the hospital right away for dialysis. Roddy knew that the doctor was right, and if he did not go to the hospital right away he would die. He also knew that in the future he would have to spend a growing amount of his time in hospitals for skin-grafts and kidney infections. He decided that fifty years of life was enough for him and he preferred to die at home in peace, not in a hospital with tubes attached to his body and doctors hovering around him. He asked me to sit next to him. He hugged me and described to me how the cold was rising from his waist up to his head. He was calm and lucid to the end. To this day I shudder when I remember how my mother died of cancer in hospital, tubes attached to her and surrounded by medical staff without a moment of peace in the company of her family. It's a humiliating way to die. I prefer to die peacefully, surrounded by my family, without tubes, machines and doctors. I preferred that Roddy would die peacefully in my arms at home, and not in the hospital. And he wanted that too."

She cried as she said that. So did I.

I looked at his face - it expressed profound peacefulness that I had never seen before,

He had not severed his life and did not commit suicide, but he had decided that fifty years was enough for him. The daily treatment of his pressure sores, the urinating via a catheter, the daily pumping out of his excrement, and the regular long stays in hospital became a burden. He decided he had enough of it. He did not want to continue it another two decades. It seems to me that in the last seconds before his death he felt the total liberation that "sweet death" confers, and enjoyed it. This explains the profound peacefulness on his face.

Death is always sad, even when it is a relief for the deceased and those close to them. But the profound peacefulness that Roddy's face radiated inspired in me something in addition to sadness: Serenity.

7. The same children

In early 1968 in London I received by post a copy of *Matzpen* from Israel in which there was a petition calling for the release of the Israeli Palestinian student, *Matzpen* member Khalil To'ameh. He was chairman of the Palestinian Students' Organization at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (about 20% of Israel's citizens are Palestinian Arabs) and the Israeli General Security Service (GSS)* wanted him to become an informer and report on Palestinian fellow students (Palestinians who were Israeli citizens). He refused. In response the GSS accused him of sheltering a Palestinian student from the Palestinian areas that had been conquered by Israel in 1967, and arrested him. *Matzpen* launched a campaign to free him and gathered signatures of intellectuals worldwide on a petition calling for his release. When I examined the list of those who had signed the petition I saw that someone in London named Erich Fried had signed. I had no idea who he was. I found him in the telephone book and it turned out that he lived near me. I called him, and he invited me to his home. He told me that he had been born in Vienna in 1921. At age 15 he organized an anti-Nazi student group at his school, and after that he joined the Communist youth organization in Vienna. After Austria was annexed to Germany in 1938, when the Nazis entered Vienna, they arrested his father for interrogation. Erich told me that two days later he went down the stairs and saw two Gestapo men coming up, pulling along an old man with them. Only that evening, when he returned home, did he realize that that old man was his father, whose hair had turned white from the beating he had received, and his face had changed so much that Erich had passed him on the stairs without recognizing him. That evening his father died, and Erich and his mother fled to London. During the war he worked first in a factory, and later as a German-language news announcer on the German broadcasts of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). He became famous for translations from English into German and the other way round. He translated Shakespeare, Dylan Thomas, Elliott and Sylvia Plath to German and Goethe and Schiller to English. He was also a poet and published a few books of poetry, one of which was even translated into Hebrew. He wrote about various subjects, as well as political ones. A short poem of his is engraved in my memory:

Definition

A dog

That is dying

Knowing

That it is dying

* Today (in 2011) officially called the "Israel Security Agency" in English. Also known as Shin Bet, which are the Hebrew initial letters of its name in Hebrew – trans.

Like a dog

And can say

That it knows

That it is dying

Like a dog

Is a human being. *

That poem conveys his attitude to every living creature. He forbade his wife to spread poison against mice and cockroaches, and agreed only to hunt them with bait. After that he would transfer them in a box to a nearby garden or empty house and release them. He was short, rotund, with abundant black hair and thick horn-rimmed glasses. He did not look particularly attractive, but despite that, many women were attracted to him. He was married three times. He had one son from his first wife, a son and a daughter from his second and twins and a daughter from his third. They were all on friendly terms and constituted a small tribe. He supported them all emotionally and financially, and they all loved him very much. His third wife, Catherine, a gifted photographer and painter, once painted him in the form of a frog, and she called that painting “The Frog Prince”.

He had a wild sense of humor. He did not have an iota of arrogance. He treated every person as an equal. In London he was known within a small circle, but in Germany he was known to the general public. He often flew to Germany for poetry readings or to lecture on various topics. He was often interviewed on German television, and the general public knew him well. During the Vietnam War he led a student demonstration against the war in Berlin. After the 1967 war between Israel and the Arab states he wrote a poem of protest entitled, “Hear, O Israel” in which he condemned Israel for having sent Egyptian prisoners of war into the Sinai Desert without shoes or water. One line in the poem says, “When you were persecuted I was one of you, how can I remain so when you have become persecutors?” The poem angered the Israelis. The government of Israel was shocked that a protest poem against it, written by a Jewish Holocaust survivor, was published in Germany. But in Germany many young people began to see Erich as an incorruptible moral authority who would not be deterred even from criticizing Israel. For the generation that was born in Germany after the Second World War, he fulfilled the role of moral guide, like Sartre did for the generation that was born in France after the same war. That generation, which grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, was anti-Nazi and wanted to understand why their parents had supported Hitler. The parents could not give

* The English translation is taken from the web-page entitled “Poetry After the Holocaust”, from the website of Prof. Marion Hussong, Associate Professor of Literature and Holocaust & Genocide Studies, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey:

http://www.marionhussong.com/Marion_Hussong/Poetry_After_the_HC.html

an acceptable answer. In France many young people wanted to understand why France surrendered to the Nazis within three weeks and why 95% of their parents' generation failed to resist the Nazi occupation and why many collaborated with it. They too did not get an acceptable answer. So the parents' generation had lost its moral authority in the eyes of most of the 1960s' youth. Many young people sought a person whose moral stature withstood the tests of moral dilemmas and who could give them trustworthy moral guidance regarding the Vietnam War, the Israel-Arab conflict and various social problems. Sartre did that in France, and Erich Fried did it in Germany. Even Ulrike Meinhof, the German journalist who became famous in the late 1970s as a leader of the extremist left-wing armed "Baader-Meinhof Group" knew Erich in the 1960s and admired him. That was when she was working as a journalist at the monthly magazine *Konkret*, long before she joined up with Andreas Baader. After Ulrike "committed suicide" in the Stammheim Prison in 1976, Erich wrote that she was following the footsteps of Rosa Luxemburg. He opposed the armed struggle of the Baader-Meinhof Group but that did not prevent him from positively appreciating Ulrike's qualities.

Erich had the ability - rare in left-wing circles - to differentiate between a person's political opinions and his personality.

In 1986, two years before Erich's death, German television initiated a debate between neo-Nazis and the German Left. All Leftists in Germany refused to participate in the debate. They argued that Left-wingers would never convince neo-Nazis and that the TV show would only serve as a platform to spread neo-Nazi ideas in Germany. Erich opposed that approach. He said that the Left must agree to any ideological debate because to refuse to participate in it would create the impression that the Left had no arguments against racists and nationalists. Erich went to a TV interview with the neo-Nazi leader Michael Kühnen and had a rational debate with him, without moral remonstrations or anger. The neo-Nazi claimed that all the talk about the Holocaust was propaganda and that it was not based on fact. Erich told him about himself, about his father, about his grandmother who died in a concentration camp. He talked without accusation, rancor or excitement. At the end of the discussion the neo-Nazi said to Erich: "I did not imagine that a Jew would talk to me in such a humane way. In light of what you've said, I must rethink many things that I believed in." Erich died of AIDS a few years later.

I too thought at the time that there was no point in arguing with neo-Nazis on television and that it would only help to spread neo-Nazi ideas among the general public, but Erich told me: *"The children at my school in Vienna who joined the Nazi Party were no different from the children who joined Zionist parties or the Communist Party. They were the same decent and socially-concerned children. They all felt troubled by social injustice and wanted to do something about it. The children who joined the National Socialist Party (Nazism) could not foresee where it was leading. When they realized where Nazism was leading it was too late for them to stop it."*

Erich differentiated between Nazis and Nazism, between religious people and religion, between racists and racism, between nationalists and nationalism. Between an **idea** and the **people** who believed in it.

Against **ideas** like Nazism/racism/nationalism/religion, he fought uncompromisingly; but **people** who believed in those ideas were not enemies in his eyes but misguided people who should be treated as equals and approached with sensible arguments because a sincere debate can motivate any person to rethink his opinions – and to change them.

An idea does not change, but a person's **attitude** to an idea can change. How many people understand that – and how many are willing to act accordingly?

8. To forgive – or not ?

I first heard of Rudi Dutschke, the leader of the German students' "New Left" movement in Germany, early in 1968. At the end of that year I met him in London.

In 1961, two days before the leaders of East Germany erected the wall that divided Berlin into two parts, Rudi Dutschke fled from (Communist) East Berlin to (capitalist) West Berlin and was received there with cries of joy. Many saw his flight to the West as proof of the superiority of capitalism. But his hosts became disappointed when he began to criticize capitalism. On television news I saw him marching in Berlin at the head of student demonstrations against the war in Vietnam. In some of those demonstrations I saw a few demonstrators whose faces were covered by paper bags with eye-holes. It looked strange. I asked German friends what it meant. They explained to me that those were students from Iran who were studying in Germany and feared the Iranian secret police, the SAVAK (whose members were trained by the Israeli Mossad). The SAVAK agents would photograph Iranian student demonstrators, in Germany, and later murder them, or seize them and apply "moderate physical pressure" (as Israeli judge Moshe Landau - who authorized the Shin Bet/ISA to use torture - put it) on them or on members of their families in Iran. More than a few Iranian students were murdered in German back-streets. The government of Germany ignored these crimes because Iran was a major client of German industry. When the king (the "Shah") of Iran visited Germany, students demonstrated against him shouting "murderer." They were protesting against the murder of Iranian students in Germany by the SAVAK. At one such demonstration in June 1967 the German police shot at demonstrators and killed the student Benno Ohnesorg (recently an East German agent admitted he did it, to provoke the West German students against their government). The German tycoon Axel Springer, owner of the *Bild* newspapers (who donated a lot of money to create the Ben-Gurion archive at Sdeh-Boker in Israel), incited his readers against the "New Left" calling on them to take personal action against the students. In consequence a young German named Josef Bachmann shot three bullets into Dutschke's head in April 1968. Rudi fell, wallowing in his blood, and was rushed to the hospital and operated on. Two bullets were removed from his brain. The doctors preferred not to touch the third as they feared that might cause a haemorrhage in his brain.

For weeks Rudi lay in a coma, seemingly with no chance of waking up. But to everyone's surprise he woke up, recovered and left the hospital. Bachmann was arrested, tried and imprisoned. Demonstrations by the "New Left" in Germany continued. But Rudi's doctors forbade him to participate in them. They ordered him to refrain from any excitement. He decided to move to Britain. Under pressure from students, the British government agreed to accept him on condition that he not participate in student activities. He promised to respect that condition and at the end of 1968 went to London with his wife and was hosted at the home of the Vienna-born Jewish poet Erich Fried.

Erich was my friend and neighbour. I visited his home nearly every day. It was there that I met Dutschke. He radiated integrity and trustworthiness. His image did not preoccupy him at all. He behaved in a completely spontaneous manner. German friends told me that his bearing impressed many workers in Germany. The students in Germany made efforts to persuade workers to support them, but the workers distrusted them. The students spoke in left-wing slogans and that gave many workers the feeling that the students were interested in them only for ideological reasons and sought to use them to achieve political objectives. But Rudi spoke simply, without slogans, without arrogance, as an equal among equals. The workers felt that he cared about them as human beings and were won over by his honesty, his spontaneity and his love of humanity. Even though he was a VIP in Germany in those days, and his appearances on television were broadcast all over Europe and met with a great deal of sympathy, that did not influence him. He remained modest. When we met, he asked me about Israel, and took an interest in Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. He was well-grounded in politics and wrote articles and books about various political subjects, but his motive was moral, not ideological. His politics could be summed up in four words: **"Thou shalt not oppress."** We became friends, and I visited him often. One day I asked how much his memory had been damaged. He replied that he remembered no book he read, but when he scanned through such a book and looked at a page without reading it, he immediately remembered everything that was written on it. In the first months after his injury he suffered from epileptic fits, but they subsided, and his condition improved. At the end of 1970 the Labour government in Britain decided to "rein in" the students and provoked them by issuing a removal order against Rudi on the pretext that he had intervened in British student affairs. Even though he had not done that, Rudi was expelled from Britain and went to live in Denmark, where he got a job teaching at Aarhus University.

After Rudi's expulsion, Erich Fried told me the following story:

Some time after the assassination attempt on Dutschke, a story was published in the German press reporting that the mother of the assailant had visited her son in prison, and he had expressed remorse for his action. When Rudi - in London - read that, he wrote the mother a letter saying he forgave her son, because the real culprit in the assassination attempt was the press mogul Axel Springer, who had incited against the New Left in his newspapers. Bachmann and his mother were very moved by Rudi's letter and requested that he visit Bachman in the prison. Rudi accepted the invitation and went to visit the person who had tried - almost successfully - to murder him. The meeting was emotional. They cried and embraced each other and Bachmann was profoundly impressed with Rudi who genuinely forgave him and bore no grudge against him. But Bachman did not forgive himself. His remorse over his action led him to commit suicide in prison on 23 February 1970. Rudi was very distressed and saddened by the suicide and tended to blame himself. Erich and myself were also distressed. We all pondered at great length

over the question of whether Rudi had made a mistake when he told Bachmann that he forgave him. We wondered how he would have acted if he had known that Bachmann was likely to commit suicide. Should he have refrained from telling him that he forgave him or should he have done it despite the risk that he would take his own life? Based on my impressions of Rudi, I think that if he had known that Bachmann was likely to commit suicide, he would not have told him he forgave him. We knew Rudi, we knew that he was unable not to forgive, but he really wanted what was best for Bachmann. In our opinion, Rudi would have preferred not to make his forgiveness known if he had known that there was a possibility that Bachmann would commit suicide. But would Bachmann's state have been better if he had not known that Rudi forgave him?

On Christmas 1979 I was visiting friends in Madrid, and suddenly we heard on the news in Spanish: "Rudi Dutschke, the leader of the German students in 1968, died in Denmark on Christmas Eve." When I returned to London, I asked Erich what had happened. He told me that Rudi got into the bathtub on Christmas Eve even though his doctors had warned him that the heat of the bathwater could dissolve the blood-clot around the bullet that remained in his brain and cause a cerebral haemorrhage. Rudi thought that ten years after the injury, the warning had expired. He got into the bath. The clot dissolved and caused a cerebral haemorrhage. He lost consciousness and drowned in the bath.

Does this story have any moral? That depends on what one means by "moral".

Rudi was murdered, his murderer committed suicide and they both died young long before their time. But does longevity confer value on human existence?

In my opinion our decisions - not longevity - determine the value of our existence.

In the cases of Dutschke and Bachmann, the victim forgave and the assailant regretted. Those decisions endowed their lives with a positive value, even though they were short.

9. One word against one's conscience

When the leader of the German Left students in 1968, Rudi Dutschke, went to London after recovering from the wounds he sustained in the attempt on his life in 1968, the British extra-parliamentary Left threw a party for him. I was invited, and there I met a 78 year old woman named Rosa Levine-Meyer. Rudi was very excited to meet her. I did not understand why. I talked to her, and it turned out that she lived not far from me. When the party was over, I offered to drive her home. She was happy to accept. On the way she told me the story of her life. Her original name was Rosa Broida and she was born in Poland in 1890 in a small town called Grodek and was a “child of his old age” to the local rabbi. She had 11 brothers and sisters. Her father feared that she would stop observing the Jewish Religious rules (“Mitzvot”) and asked her to promise him that she would always light candles on Sabbath’s eve. Once, during the Jewish feast of Purim, a troupe of Jewish actors went to Grodek and performed – as was the custom then – a “Purim-spiel”: a play about the Biblical story about Haman, Vashti, Esther and Mordechai. Rosa was very impressed and decided to become an actress. At age 15 she left her father and went to live with her sister in Vilna, where she studied theatre. In 1910 she moved to Germany and befriended Lucy Mannheim, a Jewish actress who was famous in Germany. In 1913 Rosa participated in a production of *The Eternal Wanderer* by the Habima company in Vienna, in honour of the Zionist Congress that was taking place there. When she returned to Germany, she met a young man named Eugene Levine and fell in love with him. He was born in Russia, in Saint Petersburg, where he joined the “Social Revolutionaries” (SR) – a Russian revolutionary organization that aspired to replace the Tsar’s regime with a democratic regime based on economic equality and social justice. The SR was illegal. Levine was arrested and exiled to Siberia. His mother bribed policemen and smuggled him from Siberia to Germany, where he continued his revolutionary activities. During the First World War, Levine worked with Rosa Luxemburg to set up an organization called the Spartacus League, named after the leader of a famous slave revolt in ancient Rome. The League’s aim was to end the war and set up in Germany a regime that would eliminate the gap between rich and poor and create an economy whose profits would be shared by all citizens instead of the current economy that enriched a tiny minority. The leaders of the Spartacus League were Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches and Eugene Levine. After the war, they changed the name of the League into the “German Communist Party”. The Spartacus League was founded in the middle of the First World War, which had broken out in August 1914. That war was fought between German industrialists who wanted colonies in Africa and began to build a modern navy, and Britain, which ruled an empire on which “the sun never set,” and did not want competition. All assumed that the war would end by Christmas 1914. But it ended near Christmas 1918. In that war machine-guns were used for the first time and messed up all the generals’ plans. Many thousands of soldiers were killed in inconclusive battles. The lives of millions of civilians were disrupted in an

unprecedented way. Farmers were conscripted and agricultural produce dwindled. Hunger started in the cities. The politicians wanted to fight the war until victory, but by 1916 most soldiers were fed up with it. In 1917 Russian soldiers began to desert in their thousands and walk home – on foot. *“The soldiers voted (against war) with their feet,”* said Lenin, the leader of a small Marxist revolutionary Party in Russia. The residents of the cities in Russia began to demonstrate, demanding bread and peace. But the Czar insisted on continuing the war. There were mass demonstrations against the war in Saint Petersburg, the capital of Russia. Soldiers who had been sent to break up the demonstrations refused to do so. Many joined the demonstrators. The soldiers’ refusal to obey their officers caused the downfall of the Czar. After a short period of rule by a provisional government that insisted on continuing the war until victory, Lenin’s party arrested the members of the government and set up a new regime that immediately made peace with Germany. Russia was a vast agricultural society. Its lands were owned by estate-owners. Its 50 million peasants were illiterate. Most soldiers were peasants. They began deserting in 1916 and returned to their villages, killed the estate-owners, took over the lands, divided them into plots, and began to cultivate them. Lenin, the leader of the new regime, announced his agrarian policy principle: *“All lands belong to the government, which leases it to those who work on it”*. This turned most peasants into supporters of Lenin. He then declared that the government owned all industrial enterprises. That made a huge impression all over the world, but landowners, factory owners and bank owners everywhere became alarmed, and turned into bitter enemies of Lenin’s regime, exerting themselves to destroy it. At the end of 1918, the sailors of the German navy disobeyed their orders to fight the British navy. That caused the collapse of the Kaiser’s regime. Every regime depends on the police and the army. If most soldiers refuse to obey orders, the regime is unsustainable. Not only was the Russian Czar overthrown; so was the German Kaiser, the Turkish Sultan and the Austrian Emperor. Four centuries-old regimes disappeared in the space of a few days. In Germany the Spartacus League worked to replace the rule of the landowners by a regime of economic equality and social justice, like in Russia. But the generals and the industrialists opposed it. In Berlin in 1919 they murdered the leaders of the German Left: Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and Leo Jogiches. In May 1919 the workers in Munich revolted and set up a left-wing regime in their city. Levine came from Berlin to help them. He opposed the uprising because he knew that it lacked wider support from the rest of Germany. It was a local event, not a national one. Germany was ruled by a “Labour” government that opposed the nationalization of industry, banks and commerce, and sent its army to shoot the workers of Munich. Levine supported the uprising, even though he foresaw - correctly - that it would fail. He told Rosa: *“I prefer to err with the workers rather than be right against them. They will learn from their failure, but will not listen to those who did not fight on their side.”*

The German army occupied Munich, killed many workers and crushed the left-wing regime. Levine was arrested, sentenced to death and executed by firing squad. At his trial he gave a revolutionary speech that became famous in Germany. In his speech he coined the famous phrase: "*We Revolutionaries are dead men on leave.*" He meant that ruling regimes will do all they can to kill revolutionaries, who must accept that risk. Rosa told me that when the speech was translated into English, Levine's phrase became: "We Revolutionaries are dead on Holiday." I wondered what that meant.

Levine dedicated his life to revolutionary activity. That was not exceptional at the time. Many dedicated their lives to creating a regime of economic equality and social justice, and knew that all rulers would fight them to the death. Such people were known as "professional revolutionaries". They did not seek honours, advancement, money or power. They aspired to replace regimes that served a handful of capitalists and caused suffering and war for most people, with regimes that would benefit the entire population. They knew that no regime would voluntarily dismantle itself without a life-and-death struggle, and so they expected to be killed in that struggle as in war. Levine did not conceal from Rosa that the most important thing in his life was the struggle to replace the regime. He likened his relationship with his wife to that of a soldier who rests in the shade of a tree, but must continue to fight the war. Rosa had no illusions on the subject. She was not surprised when Levine was executed by firing squad for participating in the Munich uprising. That was the rose-garden he promised her. She mourned for him, but was very proud of him until the day she died. She did not regret that she had married a revolutionary, and would never fall in love with a man who was focussed only on his personal life. When she first met Levine she was not interested in politics, but she gradually became his active partner, and after his death she became a revolutionary in her own right. She told me that Levine asked her in Munich to attend public meetings at which he spoke and to observe the workers' reactions to his speeches. That helped him to figure out which policies they would actively support and which ones they would not. As a leader, he tried to ensure that his opinions would be one step ahead of those of the workers, but he also took care not to get too far ahead of them so as not to lose them. He knew that applause was not always an expression of agreement, and asked Rosa to watch the applauders and estimate the extent of their support for him. Some clap out of politeness, some do it so as not to stand out in a crowd, some do it to express agreement with what has been said and some do it enthusiastically. Rosa sat in the audience and looked around her. She told me: "My experience as an actress was very useful. I said to myself: if I agreed with Levine 100%, how would I, as an actress, express it with applause? If I agreed only 50%, how would I express it with applause? And if I were applauding just to be polite, without agreeing, how would I do it? I watched the audience and saw who clapped out of politeness, who to express support and who out of excitement."

It was a kind of public-opinion survey at that time. After Levine's execution, Rosa went to Berlin to work as an interpreter at the embassy of the Soviet Union (that was what Lenin's regime in Russia was called). The ambassador was a Jewish journalist called Karl Radek. Rosa befriended him. As the widow of Eugene Levine she knew many revolutionaries well. She lent some money to Bukharin, a disciple of Lenin, in Switzerland during the war. She met him again after the revolution in Russia when he was a minister in the government of Lenin, who saw him as his successor. In 1920 Rosa married Ernst Meyer who was the son of a German railroad worker and became the leader of the German Communist Party. Meyer knew the mentality of German workers. That helped him conduct a policy that attracted many workers to the party. He turned the German Communist Party into a mass party. The German CP became bigger than the Russian CP. This earned him the nickname "The German Lenin." In the 1920s many people were excited about Lenin's regime in Russia, and set up communist parties to establish similar regimes in their countries. Thus during the 1920s dozens of communist parties were founded all over the world. In 1919 Lenin set up an umbrella organization for all those parties and called it the "International organization of Communist parties" – shortened to "Com-intern". The Comintern aimed to coordinate the activities of all Communist parties in the world in order to promote revolution everywhere. In the 1920s all Communists saw the revolution as a worldwide process, not as a local one. They aspired to create a regime of economic equality and social justice in the entire world, not just in one country. The Comintern was the biggest concentration in history of forces that aspired to create an egalitarian regime. There was no revolutionary force equal to it in power and scope before or since. As the German Communist Party was bigger than all the others, it was decided that the official language of the Comintern would be German. The speeches in Comintern conferences were in German. Ernst Meyer helped Lenin set up the Comintern. They both knew that many parties would seek to join the Comintern, so they compiled 21 conditions that a party seeking to join the Comintern must fulfil. They "stitched together" conditions so as to prevent parties that were not willing to nationalize land, industry, banks and commerce, from being accepted. That prevented the participation of parties that talked about an egalitarian regime but lacked courage to implement it. Comintern meetings took place in Russia, and Rosa went to Russia with Meyer to participate in them. In 1922 Rosa was present at the Comintern conference at which Lenin and Trotsky spoke. She sat in the first row and described their appearances:

"Lenin began his speech in a simple and uncustomary way. There were many arguments about who was the better speaker, Lenin or Trotsky. Lenin tipped the scale, without any doubt. It was his honesty that made his speeches unusual. The audience felt that the speaker had no interest in making an impression on his listeners, and that he was completely concentrated on the effort to convey to them the precise content of his thought. The official language of the Comintern was German. Lenin had a nearly perfect command of that language. There were interpreters in the audience who helped the

speakers. When Lenin had difficulty finding a suitable word in German, he stopped his speech, said the word in Russian and put his hand to his ear in order to hear what the interpreters said. Suggestions rained down from all directions. He would shake his head in negation once, twice, three times and more, until he heard the word he was looking for. Then he made a motion with his hand as if he were picking up from the floor a jewel that had fallen. Lenin, who was known as measured and sober, was also very exciting. I always get excited when I remember that speech. To be accurate, I must add that not everybody felt as I did. Ruth Fischer (the leader of the left wing of the German Communist Party) sat beside me, shrugged her shoulders and commented: 'It is impossible to do anything with this speech.' Trotsky spoke after Lenin. My excitement prevented me from understanding. No two leaders were more different from each other than Lenin and Trotsky. Trotsky was at his best with a big audience, when the power of his voice impressed and electrified the masses. When he finished his speech, he repeated it in Russian and French. To me that seemed excessive and ostentatious. But many in the audience were very impressed by that."

When Rosa mentioned that, I recalled someone who had heard Trotsky speak in Petrograd during the 1917 revolution and told me that when Trotsky said, "and now let's take [the argument] one step forward," all the audience stepped one step forward.

Lenin died in 1924 and disagreement immediately broke out in his party about the direction in which to take Russia. In order to understand that disagreement, it is necessary to understand the ideas of Karl Marx, the philosopher whose ideas on society and history all Communists had accepted. Marx was secular and emphatically denounced all religions, and the view that humanity/society/history had been created by God. He had no doubt that humans were originally animals like all other animals. But what caused this particular animal to develop in a way so different from all other animals and to establish societies, governments, cultures and conflicts that do not exist amongst other animals?

Most animals survived without creating a society. What caused one animal to develop so differently from all other animals? Marx's answer to that question was based on the work of the American anthropologist, Morgan, who studied American Indian tribes and concluded that the uniqueness of humanity is the fact that it is the only animal that makes tools. No other animal in nature takes something from nature, modifies it and uses it - in a previously planned way - for its needs. There is no animal in nature that buries a seed in the ground in order to grow crops, or that strikes two stones together in order to light a fire or in order to create an arrowhead. Morgan concluded that humanity's superiority over animality is in tool-making. Marx accepted Morgan's idea and expanded on it. He lived during the Industrial Revolution and saw the first use of steam, in trains, ships, power looms and foundries, and the enormous change that brought to a society based on manual labour. In 1820 some 99% of the world's population were still earning their living in working the land by muscle power. Marx saw that the use of machines creates a

new consciousness. Industrialization changes humanity, because machines create not only new products but also new practices, new attitudes, new abilities, and new relations among those who use them and their products. Expectations rise and attitudes change. New production technology renders every existing regime – its concepts, its consensuses, and its morality - obsolete. They also create new conflicts of interests between owners of machines and the landowners who ruled most countries.

From 1820 farm workers began to leave agriculture and go in ever increasing numbers to work in factories. In 1845 Britain became the first urbanized society in history where the cities' populations exceeded that of the countryside. Workers organized themselves and faced factory owners demanding to improve their wages and their conditions of work. Their lives changed. They stopped thinking like manual farm workers. Working with machines changed their behaviour, their habits and their consciousness. A change of tools changes consciousness and living standards, and also morality and **expectations**. Gradually it renders all existing regimes **obsolete** in the eyes of most citizens, who see them as out-dated and a burden. Only a minority continues to support the old regime. The majority has an interest in replacing the old regime but the minority that benefits from it refuses to give up its role. Therefore political struggles for replacing old regimes by newer ones better suited to the new technology and consciousness are inevitable. **That is why a revolution is not “disorder” but the birth of a new order.**

Marx concluded that in every country that passed from manual production to mechanized production, there would be a change of the political system. It was mainly England he had in mind, where the first machines were invented, and later - Germany. Everyone who agreed with that conclusion expected the industrial workers in the industrialized countries to make - eventually - a political revolution. But to everyone's surprise it was in Russia, of all places, where 90% of the population were still illiterate peasants who worked the land without machines, where the first revolution broke out. According to Marx a socialist revolution was unlikely to occur in an agricultural society. But at the end of the First World War there was a revolutionary anti-war atmosphere everywhere in Europe. Rulers and regimes that started the war and insisted on continuing it were hated. Most people craved peace and were determined to get rid of rulers opposing it. Strikes, demonstrations and uprisings started everywhere. In Russia Lenin's followers succeeded in setting up a regime that made peace and nationalized the economy. But in industrialized Germany, power passed from the landowners to the owners of industry, and the workers remained at the bottom of the social and political ladder. Germany was the key to revolution in Europe because it had a big industrialized economy and the Kaiser's regime collapsed due to its defeat in the war. Germany's economic crisis was acute because of the war reparations Germany was forced to pay to Britain and France. The German “Labour” Party came to power, but refused to nationalize the economy. Only the Communist Party demanded that. Had the German CP been able to win power,

it would have entered into an alliance with the Russian CP, and together they would have become the most powerful force in the world. But the German CP failed to win power because the German workers (unlike the Russian ones) had trade unions. Unions direct their members' discontent against employers, not against the political system. In Russia the Tsar's regime banned all unions so, Russian workers had to fight the political system, not just the employers. Trade unions are safety valves for any political system. They direct the employees' discontent against employers - not against the political system. They endow the political system with an aura of a "natural" entity.

In October 1917 a revolution broke out in agricultural Russia, and the followers of Lenin came to power mainly because they - unlike all other political parties - promised to take Russia out of the war - immediately. They kept their promise. Russia stopped fighting in WW1 in 1917 - a year before all other countries. Lenin and his party expected revolutions in all warring countries, especially in Germany. Some started, but failed. In 1922 Lenin concluded that no workers' revolutions were imminent in industrialized Germany, France, England and the United States, and that Russia had to deal with its problems on its own. That presented Lenin with a problem that Marx had not foreseen - how to industrialize agricultural Russia? Where would the money necessary for industrialization come from? It costs a lot of money to set up factories. Lenin's government did not have money. Three years of war, followed by two revolutions (in February and in October 1917) and two years of civil war (1919-1921) had impoverished Russia. Foreigners refused to invest in a country the government of which called for the nationalization of industry. International banks refused to lend money to a government that nationalized banks. The governments of Britain, France, Germany and the United States imposed an economic embargo on the Soviet Union and barred commerce with it, hoping to topple a regime whose success would cause workers all over the world to try to create similar regimes in their countries. Money did not come in from abroad, and in Russia itself there were 80 million people of whom 60 million were illiterate peasants who worked the land by muscle power. Lenin's disciple Bukharin suggested letting the peasants sell part of their produce on the free market without setting prices and without forcing them to sell all of it to the government. Bukharin told the peasants: "enrich yourselves," intending to tax them when they succeed and use that money to pay for industrialization. But many Communists were against a policy encouraging part of the population to enrich itself. Bukharin explained: "when the peasants enrich themselves we shall tax them, and use the income from taxes to build factories." Lenin agreed, calling it the "New Economic Policy" (NEP), and he implemented it in 1924. The NEP greatly improved the economic situation. According to Rosa 1924 was the best year that she had experienced in the Soviet Union. In 1924 most people adored Lenin, supported his regime and respected the Communist Party. Rosa told me that in 1925, when it was said of someone that he was a member of the Communist Party, they pronounced "Comrade" with great respect. But in 1928 it was the other way round, and people said "Comrade"

with contempt, as a term of opprobrium. While Lenin was alive, most CP members supported the “New Economic Policy,” even though many in the CP opposed it because they saw it as a betrayal of the principle of economic equality. Many feared dependence on the peasants who grew the food. After Lenin’s death in 1924, the number of opponents of NEP increased. Some of them demanded that the peasants sell all their crops to the government, which would set the price, sell it to the population and use the profit to build new industrial enterprises. Trotsky suggested that the government should set up communal state-farms that would produce food by modern techniques and free the government from dependence on the peasants. Two camps emerged in the leadership, each espousing a different policy. Lenin feared that after his death there would be a schism in the leadership which would harm the regime. He wrote to the leadership demanding that Stalin (who was responsible for appointing - and paying - party officials) be dismissed, and recommended Bukharin as his successor. But the leaders ignored Lenin’s advice, and instead of dismissing Stalin they elected him to be the leader of the Party. Why? Because there were two camps in the leadership (“Politburo” – the “political bureau”): One camp supported Bukharin and wanted to continue with the NEP, and the other supported Trotsky and wanted to end the NEP and set up state farms. Stalin did not support any camp because he had no opinion of his own on the subject. Trotsky’s supporters did not want Bukharin’s policy to be adopted, and Bukharin’s supporters did not want Trotsky’s policy to be adopted. Each side preferred a leader who was not a supporter of the other camp. Bukharin’s supporters preferred Stalin to Trotsky, and Trotsky’s supporters preferred Stalin to Bukharin. Thus Stalin was elected to lead the party, despite Lenin’s request to remove him. After being elected Stalin first supported Bukharin and removed Trotsky and his supporters from all key positions in the party. He replaced them by people who were loyal to himself. After removing Trotsky’s supporters from the leadership and from the party, Stalin removed Bukharin and his supporters from the leadership and from the party. In 1928 Stalin completed removing his two rivals and became the sole leader of the party. Then he began to implement a new policy – “Pyatiletka” (“Five-Year Plan”), the essence of which was the nationalization of all land and forcing all peasants into state-farms on which production quotas were imposed. That caused 60 million peasants to turn overnight against the regime they had previously supported. Stalin responded by using violence against all opponents of his policies. Even those who told a joke about him were sent to forced-labour camps. Millions of prisoners in those camps built vast industrial projects. With their bare hands they built canals, giant dams and power-stations, steel mills and car and tractor factories. In the next ten years Stalin imprisoned in forced-labour camps thousands of Communists who were suspected of sympathy for Trotsky or Bukharin – as well as 20 million peasants, all of whom were described as “**enemies of the revolution**” because in Stalin’s eyes the revolution was the party, and he, as the leader of the party, was the leader of the revolution. Whoever opposed Stalin’s policies was considered an enemy of the revolution and immediately

arrested or executed. Like the King of France who declared, “L’État, c’est moi” (“I am The State”). Stalin declared: “La Révolution, c’est moi.” (“I am the Revolution”) and most Communists - everywhere - accepted it. Rosa Levine-Meyer saw all that close up. She personally knew Karl Radek and Bukharin who met Stalin nearly every day. They both opposed Stalin’s policies but agreed to serve him in order to preserve the regime. Even so Stalin killed both of them.

Stefan Heim (1913-2001) wrote in 1995 a biographical novel of Radek based on factual data in which he tells the following anecdote: Radek was known for his biting sense of humour. His jokes circulated throughout Moscow and he never spared the leaders. Stalin exiled him to Siberia. However, later Stalin called him back offering him a job as a journalist in *Izvestia*, the newspaper of the government run trade-unions; but he told Radek: “*You must stop telling jokes about me, for after all, I am now the leader of the World Revolution*” to which Radek promptly replied: “*That joke, comrade Stalin, is yours, not mine*”. No wonder Stalin executed him in 1937.

Rosa gave me two examples of how Stalin dominated all Communist parties:

1) In 1928 it was revealed that Ernst Thälmann, the leader of the Communist Party in Germany, concealed from his party the fact that his brother-in-law,* Wittorf, whom he had appointed Party Secretary in Hamburg, had embezzled money from the Party. The leadership of the German Communist Party condemned Thälmann, who agreed to resign from his position. Most of the German Communist Party agreed with that. Even though the amount embezzled was small, all knew that the workers of Germany would not support a leader who had concealed from his party the fact that someone in his family had embezzled the Party’s money. But Stalin supported Thälmann, who was loyal to him. Thälmann’s dismissal was a slap in the face to Stalin. Rosa told her husband Ernst Meyer that Stalin would not allow Thälmann to be dismissed. Ernst replied: “*Stalin is not omnipotent; the question will be brought for a vote before the leadership of the German Party in which no one will dare oppose the dismissal of Thälmann. The revolutionary movement in Germany cannot be led by a person who has been exposed as weak and unstable. He concealed his brother-in-law’s embezzlement and betrayed the Party’s trust. The Party leadership will not tolerate such behavior in any way, shape or form.*”

But Stalin pressed the Comintern to publish an announcement that represented the whole embezzlement affair as “*an attempt by irresponsible intellectual elements in the German Party, blinded by their greed for power, to harm the interests of the Party. They succeeded in infiltrating the leadership and misled its Central Committee into taking an incorrect decision.*” That announcement influenced the leadership of the German Communist Party, which did not want to take a decision in opposition to that of the

* Other sources indicate that Wittorf was Thälmann’s friend, but not related to him by marriage – trans.

Comintern. After a discussion of Thälmann's willingness to resign, the entire leadership of the German Communist Party voted **against** his resignation. Thälmann was cleared of guilt and returned to serve as leader of the Party. He saw nothing wrong with that. Ernst said to Rosa: *"anyone who acts once against his conscience destroys his personality. What kind of party is it that demands that its members act against their consciences? What kind of revolution is it that can succeed only with leaders who have destroyed their personalities?"*

That vote destroyed the independence of the German Communist Party, which was the only force in Germany that could have prevented Hitler from coming to power. Long before Hitler came to power, Thälmann admitted that he had no idea how to stop the Nazis. He acted on instructions from Stalin. The result is known. About the Wittorf Affair, Rosa said: *"Stalin dominated the Russian Party, as well as the Comintern. He wanted to show all the Communist parties in the world whose leaders were in the Comintern, that he could treat every Communist party like a conquered population. He did it to prevent the Comintern, and any Communist party, from becoming an opposition to himself. He wanted to avoid the possibility that somebody in the international Communist movement might criticize his policies. That's why he seized control of all Communist parties in the world, and of the international Communist movement."*

After 1928 Stalin installed only people loyal to himself in the leadership of every Communist party in the world. He also changed the definition of the concept "revolutionary." Until 1928 the accepted definition of a revolutionary was *"one who acts to create a regime where all means of production are owned by the entire society."* But Stalin defined a "revolutionary" as *"one who always - and everywhere - defends the Soviet Union."* That is, one who supports Stalin's policies. Even though the Comintern stopped being a revolutionary force in 1928, Stalin had difficulty dismantling it because that would have exposed him as an opponent of revolution. Only in 1943, in the middle of WW-2, did Stalin dismantle the Comintern in order to prove to the United States and Britain that he was not fostering additional revolutions.

2) The second example that Rosa told me about Stalin was his show trials. After the peasants had been forced into communal state farms, shortages of food began, because the peasants worked badly in those farms. Stalin decided to stage a show trial in order to scare them and to blame a scapegoat for the food shortages. The first trial was conducted in 1928, in the city of Shakhty. Rosa asked Ernst to enable her to attend the trial. She was given permission and sat as close as possible to the accused so that she could look at them. She told me: *"The accused were engineers from the Czar's time. They were mature family men. I looked at them from up close. They did not look to me like people who would jeopardize their living or their families by sabotaging machines or food stocks. When the prosecution detailed their crimes, they sat indifferently. During the trial, they helped the prosecution. My experience as an actress helped me again. I wondered how I*

would act if I had to play the roles of those on trial. Certainly not like they acted. They acted like bored spectators in a play that had nothing to do with them; not like accused people. I listened to them, I looked at their faces and I felt uncomfortable. Accused people do not act like that, they don't look like that, they don't willingly confess to the terrible crimes attributed to them. There were times when the accused faltered in reciting their confessions, and someone in the audience volunteered to complete what was missing. The accused then nodded their heads in agreement. Members of the accused's families in the audience also behaved with strange indifference. I said to Ernst: 'I feel like I'm in a nightmare. Something is not right here, but I don't know what.' At that time it never occurred to me the charges might be false. I was convinced of their veracity."

All the accused were sentenced to death. The trial and the verdicts were published in the newspapers. Years after the trial Rosa met some of the accused, who were working in responsible positions in other places in the Soviet Union. The verdicts had not been carried out because the regime needed every engineer. Over time it also emerged that all the accusations were false. During the 1930s many of Rosa's acquaintances were executed, like Bukharin, Zinoviev, Radek and Trotsky. Some preferred to collaborate with Stalin. She herself remained, from 1922 to her death in 1979, an admirer of Lenin, a supporter of the policies of Bukharin and an avowed enemy of Stalin.

In the last decade of her life, I visited her every Wednesday. I would bring her a Black Forest cake, and she would prepare tea and tell me how Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai, Sophie Liebknecht, Bukharin, Radek and many others from the revolutionary pantheon acted in various situations. A small photo of Lenin with his personal dedication to her, signed by him personally, stood on her television set. She told me that Lenin decided that his government would award her a monthly pension as a "widow of the Revolution" (not of the USSR as she was not a Soviet citizen) since her husband Eugene Levine was executed for his revolutionary activity. She received the pension until the end of WW-2. In October 1945, after the victory over Nazism, she was invited – as usual - to the Soviet embassy in London to celebrate the anniversary of the October 1917 revolution. The Soviet ambassador concluded his speech with the words: "*I call upon all our guests to drink a toast in honor of our great leader, Sun of all Nations, Comrade Stalin.*" Everyone stood up and applauded. Rosa told me: "*I did not want to stand up, but I knew that if I did not they would stop my pension. I pondered what to do. In the end I decided not to stand – not even as a false gesture – in honor of the man who had destroyed the revolution and murdered many of my friends. I remained seated. After that I was no longer invited to the Soviet embassy. They immediately stopped my pension. I don't regret it. Had I stood up, it would have been a betrayal of my conscience, and as Ernst said, "when a person acts once against his conscience, he destroys his personality."* I was left without a pension, but with a clean conscience and thus with an intact personality. It was definitely worth the price."

I can testify that her personality was intact. She had strong political opinions, but when their conclusions clashed with her conscience, her conscience turned out to be stronger.

10. A difficult choice

In the summer of 1950 I was released from the Israeli Navy and started work as a deck boy on the cargo ship *Tel-Aviv* on the Israel-America line. Israeli ships sailed from Haifa empty because at that time there were no Israeli exports to the United States. An empty ship is not efficient at sea because the wind can reduce its speed, and its propeller is partly outside the water. In order to change that, we entered the port of Algiers to load bauxite ores that would lower the ship – and the propeller – in the water. We transported the ores to the Bethlehem Steel plant in the city of Baltimore in the United States. On one voyage we were caught in a hurricane in the Atlantic Ocean. It is hard to describe the storm. In Haifa the *Tel Aviv* looked huge to me. Her capacity was ten thousand tons and at the time she was considered a large cargo ship. From the dockside she looked as tall as a three-storey house. She was about 100 meters long and 15 meters wide. She was constructed of one-inch-thick steel sheets. I did not think that any storm could endanger her. I was wrong. In the storm the hurricane waves reminded me of the mountains at Bab-El-Wad.* I saw mountains of black water all around me. The ship did not toss; she rose and fell like a cork. One instant we were on the summit of a wave and could see the horizon, next moment we plunged to the abyss and saw only mountains of water around us. Anyone who has been in an airplane and fallen into an “air pocket” knows the feeling of a sudden fall, when one’s stomach rises into one’s throat. That’s what we felt with every plunge from a wave. But we were immediately tossed upwards by the next wave and felt the doubling of our weight in our legs. Every wave was as black as soot and smooth, without foam. But from time to time a huge wave appeared as a white wall of foam. The helmsman was given the order to “turn the ship towards the wave.” If we did not do that, the wave would have struck a huge blow to the side of the ship, which could have overturned her. When the wave hit the bow, the ship shook and was covered with water. The windows of the wheelhouse on the bridge, ten meters above the surface of the sea, were covered with foam. They looked like windows of a car going through an automatic car-wash as seen from inside the car. The whole window was awash with foam. When the foam cleared up we saw a frightening sight: the bow of the ship had disappeared from sight and in its place we saw only water. The bridge of the ship looked to the helmsman like an island surrounded by water on all sides. Those in the wheelhouse held their breath and watched fearfully: **“Will the ship’s bow rise from the water?”**

In those days the cargo holds were covered with wooden panels and canvas sheets secured by wedges all around the hold. We feared that the waves might wash away the

* The spot on the road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem where the route begins the ascent into the mountains of the Jerusalem area – trans.

canvas and the water would enter the holds, sinking the ship. Slowly the bow rose from the water, with tons of water flowing down both its sides. We breathed a sigh of relief. But the nightmare returned with the next wall of foam. We feared that with time the covers of the holds would loosen and the water would enter the holds, and if that happened we would sink. Fortunately the covers stood the test, but we could not be sure that that would be the case with the next wave. No one thought about food. We had no appetite. Everyone vomited and was stricken with depression.

It was impossible to go out onto the deck because a wave could sweep us into the sea. In order to get from the crew's quarters in the stern to the wheelhouse amidships we entered the propeller shaft tunnel that extended from the engine room amidships to the propeller in the stern. From the engine room we went up to the wheelhouse. It was impossible to sleep, eat, cook, rest or bathe. People lay on the floor or leaned against the walls waiting for the storm to pass. It lasted three days. When it subsided, we checked our bearings and found that we had not moved forward at all. For three days the engines were running full steam, but the ship's position hardly changed. We worked for two days to repair the damage. In Haifa I thought that a modern ship had nothing to fear from nature. I was wrong. I saw the "forces of nature" in action, and realized they can sink a modern ship.

Two days later we arrived in the United States. We entered Chesapeake Bay, which leads to Baltimore. All along the way, near the shore, stood dozens of smelters where iron ore was smelted. They sent up fire and sparks like volcanoes, and beside them were mountains of slags. Rail cars loaded with smoldering slags from the smelters were lifted by special cranes, overturned, and emptied on the top of the slag mountains. The fresh red slags flowed down from the tops of the slag heaps like lava from a volcano. The mountains of slags resembled the mountains of water that I had seen in the hurricane in the ocean. Both were black, and about the same size. In the ocean they had been created by the wind. Here they were created by people. Suddenly an idea hit me: "An industrial society that can create slag mountains like these is also a 'force of nature.'" I felt this again a week later when the *Tel-Aviv* entered New York harbor. It was three in the morning but lit passenger trains constantly passed non-stop over bridges above the river where we docked. Lights shone everywhere illuminating the night. The difference between day and night was abolished. I realized that industrial society had overcome the order of nature, its hours of light and dark, and subjected it to the agenda of industry. At four in the morning, after the deck crew finished tying the ship to the dock, the engine crew went ashore to spend some time in Manhattan. Thousands of signs on shops, bars and nightclubs flickered non-stop all around us: "OPEN ALL NIGHT". The difference between day and night had been abolished. Industry, not the sun, determined when there would be light and when there would be darkness, when people would work and when they would rest. I felt again that industrial society was itself one of the forces of nature.

The New York port workers told us that a seamen's strike had started in Haifa, and offered to help us by stopping all loading of the ship. As there were family men among us who wanted to return to their families we declined the offer. I have described the details of the strike in the first chapter of this book, "Enlightening Disillusionments - Stage 1."

After the strike I joined the Communist party, which had supported the strikers. On one of the ships where I worked after the strike I met Adam Chizik. He too had participated in the strike. Later Chizik was elected as the Secretary of the officers' section of the seamen's union. Chizik was a sympathizer - but not a member - of the Communist Party. We often argued about the party's policy, and he always defended it.

One day I asked him, "*why do you never have any criticism of the party's policies?*" In reply he told me the following story: "*During WW2, when I was a child in Europe, the Nazis put me in the Dachau Concentration Camp, near Munich. It was the first concentration camp that the Nazis set up after they came to power in 1933. In that camp they put their main enemies - the German Communists. Most of the leaders of the German Communist Party were imprisoned in Dachau in 1933, long before Jews were put there. Over time they expanded the camp and added other prisoners there as well: Jews, Gypsies, prisoners of war. At the end of the war the prisoners of Dachau were liberated by the Americans. One day before the liberation, on 28 April 1945, at the morning inspection of the prisoners, the Nazi commandant of the camp ordered two prisoners to stand in front of him: an old Jew and a young German Communist, and told the Communist: 'Tomorrow - after 12 years in prison - the American army will come, and you will all be freed. I am giving you a choice: kill the old Jew and tomorrow you will be free. If you refuse to kill him I will kill you now. What do you choose?'*"

The Nazi forced the Communist to choose between committing a murder that would save his life and a moral refusal to do so that would cost his life. The Communist refused to kill the Jew and the commandant killed him in front of everybody. Chizik told me: "*I saw it with my own eyes, and since then I support uncritically the Party that educates its members to act like that.*"

Later I had heard the same story from two other prisoners of Dachau who did not know Chizik, and I have no doubt that it really happened.

I wondered: How would I act if I were in the position of that German Communist? I want to believe that I would act as he did, but as long as I have not withstood the test I cannot be sure of that. But I am sure that Chizik's uncritical support of the Communist Party was misguided. Nothing justifies uncritical thought about a regime, police,* law, party or leaders.

* There is a pun here: "regime" is *mishtar* in Hebrew, and "police" is *mishtara* - trans.

11. Wonders of the CIA

In 1975 I worked in the Enfield Polytechnic in north London. It was a very lively place that was home to large numbers of activists of the British extra-parliamentary Left. Most of the lecturers and students were New Left activists of various kinds. There were various Trotskyites and assorted anarchists and neo- and post-Marxists. They conducted endless debates in the dining hall. It was a long rectangular room with a self-service counter on one side, and on the other side was a stage on which a deafening PA system was set up that constantly broadcast political debates between representatives of the various groups. It was impossible to eat lunch without at least three leaflets being put on your table by the various groups. Votes were also held during meals. Sometimes I was forced, between spoonfuls of soup, to vote for one resolution or another.

Most of the students at that time wanted to understand why people behaved in the way they did, and so they came to study sociology or psychology. In those days young people were not interested in studying law or business administration, which were not taught at Enfield. I lectured to sociology students on “the social implications of the computer.” Computers were still huge, expensive and owned by governments or large companies. They filled entire halls. Computers the size of today’s personal computers existed only in science-fiction stories. About a dozen students came to my lectures. They were brilliant and I learned no less from them than they learned from me. I explained to them that there had been no fundamental change in the structure of computers since they were invented in 1944, but the electronics had undergone a process of miniaturization. I said that that miniaturization, which had been developed for the purpose of space-flights, would have far-reaching social implications. The possibility of storing an entire book on a small magnetic disc made it possible to store detailed information about every person which could be accessed in seconds. I said that a “processor” the size of a postage-stamp would render possible the cheap mass production of reliable computers that could be implanted in domestic devices like typewriters, washing machines, cars, electrical systems etc. It sounded then like a science-fiction story, but it became reality a lot sooner than I had foreseen. At the end of one lecture a young student approached me and asked if I could spare her a few minutes. I agreed. She then told me about herself. She was a left-wing activist who had returned from Portugal, where the 40-year-old dictatorship of Salazar had just been brought down. While demonstrating against Salazar she was arrested by the police in Lisbon and interrogated by people who spoke English fluently and looked to her like CIA agents. Since the arrest she had heard voices in her head even when she was alone, and she was convinced that the CIA agents had planted a tiny radio receiver in her brain, by means of which they were broadcasting instructions to her. She asked me if that was technically possible. It was clear to me that she was suffering from a psychological disturbance. I wanted to tell her that, but upon reflection I decided to take her words as she meant them. I had known people who suffered from such disturbances and I knew

that even though their words sounded illogical, that is how they experience reality. There was no point in ignoring their words and telling them that it's all in their heads. That would not do them any good because even if that is the case in reality, to them it exists and is influencing their lives. It is impossible to help them to overcome their problems by telling them that their problems exist only in their heads. It matters not where the problem exists as the problem has to be dealt with wherever it exists. In order to help that student to deal with the voices in her head, I decided to use a practical approach. I asked her: "what language do the voices speak?" She replied: "English." "And what do they say?" She replied: "they want information on people of the Left." "Are the voices familiar to you?" "No". "Are the voices coming from in front of you, or behind?" "From behind," she replied. "Is it a man's voice or a woman's?" "A man's," she said. At the end I said to her, "I suggest that you try the following experiment: take a small transistor radio with you, turn it on, and travel in the Underground train with it. Radio broadcasts are not picked up in deep tunnels, so the radio will be silent in some sections of the Underground. If the voices in your head are silent when the radio is silent, that is a sign that the voices are indeed being broadcast from outside and are not able to penetrate to the tunnel. In that case, get an x-ray examination to find the radio receiver in your head. But if the voices in your head are audible even when the radio is silent, that is a sign that they are not being broadcast from outside but are coming from within."

She showed up at the next lecture, and after it was over she told me, "I did what you said, but the voices in my head continued even when the radio in my hand was silent."

I told her: "In that case you have to deal with an enemy that is located inside your head and not outside it. The struggle against that enemy is much harder than a struggle against an external enemy. I suggest that you seek the help of a psychiatrist. If you want I can recommend a trustworthy one."

She asked me for the psychiatrist's phone number. I referred her to an Israeli friend who had suffered for years from a compulsive urge to commit suicide, but finally overcame it. There is no better psychiatrist than one who has himself suffered from emotional disturbances and overcome them. Such a person knows the problems from within, not from outside. Not only does he "understand" what is happening to the patient but he also **feels** what the patient feels. My friend had been a student of the psychiatrist R. D. Laing, author of the book *The Divided Self*, who was beloved by the Left because he criticized the mainstream approach to treatment that saw the patient only as an object of treatment. He proposed involving the patient in the treatment. When Susan heard that the psychiatrist was a student of Laing's her eyes lit up and she agreed to seek treatment with her. My psychiatrist friend told me that Susan came for treatment. After a few weeks I happened to pass near my friend's house by chance and entered for a visit. She was busy in a session with a patient. I waited in the kitchen for the session to end. When the doctor's door opened, Susan emerged. She looked at me, surprised, and left.

My friend turned to me and said, “*why did you come without notifying me first?*” I explained to her that I was in the neighborhood accidentally and the visit was not planned. What’s the problem? – I asked. “*The problem is,*” she replied, “*that Susan suffers from a persecution complex and will interpret your visit as CIA control. Now she will see you - and me - as CIA agents and the treatment itself will be seen by her as part of a CIA plot to extract from her information on the Left. She won’t come again for treatment !*”

I apologized for having come without advance notice, but the idea that Susan would see my visit as CIA control seemed to me to be exaggerated. “**Do you want to bet that she won’t come any more?**” – my friend asked. We didn’t bet, but Susan did not return for treatment. A week later Susan disappeared from the college and left a letter in which she wrote that CIA agents were on her trail and getting closer and closer, and she had to disappear in order to escape from them. She wrote a will requesting that after her death her brain be dissected to find the tiny radio receiver that had been planted there. She asked that the radio be dismantled so that information about its structure could be passed to the revolutionary Left.

The students organized themselves into search teams and went to look for her all over London. I do not know if they found her or if she committed suicide. A cut in the university’s budget eliminated my job. I was dismissed. I began to queue at the unemployment center to get my unemployment benefit cheque.

Postscript

On 14 March 1999 I saw a program on the Science TV Channel about innovations in intelligence equipment. The program showed an electronic chip that could be planted in the brain so that it could broadcast to a remote receiver what the eye saw at that moment. It would enable another person to see on a screen what the person with the chip saw. If the person with the chip is a spy, all he has to do is look at some document in order for another person far away to see that document on a screen and to photograph it.

The program also showed a device that broadcast sound waves on hypersonic frequencies that are received by the brain without being heard by the ear. Such a broadcast could influence a person’s thinking without the person being aware of it. Towards the end, the program reported on the development of a tiny capsule that can be planted under the skin of a pet. The capsule contains a tiny radio transmitter that constantly broadcasts a unique code that enables the animal’s location to be determined with ease. The capsule is offered for sale at an affordable price and is very popular in the USA.

Apparently Susan’s fears - which I scoffed at - were merely a bit ahead of their time.

12. A nice hot cup of tea

In 1974 in London I saw a French film called *The Confession* that describes a political show trial that took place in Prague in 1952 (see the second chapter of this book). The trial lasted for five days. The accused were leaders of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia who had been accused of treason. Most of them confessed to the charges. Eleven of the accused were executed, including Rudolf Slansky, the leader of the Czech Communist Party. It was a show trial similar to the show trials Stalin held in Moscow in 1936-7 in which Communist leaders close to Lenin, who had dedicated their entire lives to the establishment of Communism, were sentenced to death. The whole world was surprised when the accused confessed to improbable accusations and were executed. Many wondered why the accused confessed to such absurd accusations. The film *The Confession* was based on the memoirs of one of the accused, a Jewish Czech Communist named Arthur London, who was the deputy foreign minister in the Czech government.

Two scenes in the film particularly shocked me:

In one, a prisoner is seen in an empty cell the walls of which are painted red. There is no furniture in the cell – no chair, no table, no bed. The prisoner must run non-stop around the walls. A guard watches the cell through a peephole in the door. If the prisoner stops, the guard enters and beats him. In the other scene a prisoner is seen taken to be executed. He walks between two rows of soldiers to a platform with a gallows on it. They read out his verdict, put a rope around his neck and blindfold him. He waits for the trap-door to open. He waits, and waits, and waits, each second seems like a year. But instead of opening the trap-door in the floor under his feet so he would drop and break his neck, they take him back to his cell. That is how they pressured him into signing a confession of his guilt.

I was convinced that those two scenes were invented by the director, Costa-Gavras, or were a literary exaggeration by the author, Arthur London. I did not believe that such things had happened in a regime that espoused equality and freedom. I wanted to find out whether they had happened in reality. I knew a Czech Communist who had immigrated to London from Czechoslovakia at the beginning of the 1970s, and I decided to ask him what the truth about those scenes was. His name was Ladislav Kain. It turned out that he had a brother in Kibbutz Gan-Shmuel in Israel. That was not unusual in a Jewish family in the 1930s, because after the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, it would often occur that one son of a Jewish family became a Zionist and another became a Communist. Ladislav Kain the Communist escaped from Prague to London while his Zionist brother escaped to Kibbutz Gan-Shmuel in what was then Palestine. Kain began to study economics at the LSE (the famous London university specializing in economics), there he met a young English woman named Peggy and married her. They were both members of the Communist Party. In 1945 after the Allies' victory in WW2, Kain returned to Prague, and when the Communist regime was set up there he began to work as an economic advisor to a governmental textile firm. After a while, the government decided to use his expertise in the English language and economics and sent him to New

York to work as an economic advisor to the Czech delegation to the UN. He told me the following story:

One day in 1950, two men showed up at his apartment in New York and identified themselves as CIA agents. They told him that according to information they had received from Czechoslovakia, he would soon be summoned back to Prague, where he would be put on trial for treason. They offered him asylum in the United States. He replied that he did not believe them and did not want to stay in the United States. A few weeks later he was indeed called back to Prague. On the way he passed through London and met his friend Eduard Goldstücker, the Czechoslovakia's ambassador to Britain. Kain told him about the conversation with the CIA agents, and the two of them agreed that it was an American plot aimed at sowing distrust among Communists. When he returned to Prague he was not detained and continued to work as an economic advisor for the textile industry. A few months later, a car came to pick him up at his home in the morning, but instead of taking him to work, it took him to prison. He was arrested and accused of sabotage, treason and espionage aiming to overthrow the regime in Czechoslovakia. Of course he emphatically denied everything. Then they began to interrogate him under "moderate physical pressure."* He was kept alone in an empty cell, without a chair, bed or window. The light was on 24 hours a day. At night he sat on a mat on the floor and was ordered to lie on his back and to keep his hands over the blanket. During the day he was ordered to run the length of the walls non-stop. Twice he underwent the ritual of mock execution in order to extract a confession from him. He was constantly interrogated but did not see his interrogators because he was blindfolded. They told him that his friends had signed confessions that incriminated him as well.

He had not seen the film *The Confession* (and refused to see it), but he told me that the scenes in the film I described to him had indeed happened in reality and he himself had experienced them. About the mock execution, he told me: "They told me that the next day they would execute me by hanging. The night before the hanging they gave me a paper and pencil to write a last letter to my wife and children. All night I sat and wrote letters to them. I wrote how much I loved them and apologized for parting from them in that way. I added that since I was innocent, it would be better that I die that way rather than to confess to crimes I had not committed, thereby falsely incriminating others. I explained that I would not be able to live knowing that my lies had caused the deaths of innocents. When they blindfolded me and put the rope around my neck, they read out to me the text of a confession and said that if I signed it, I would not be executed. I refused to sign and shouted, 'Long live the socialist revolution!' They left me standing there with the rope around my neck for a long time. I was waiting for death. Every second seemed like a year. In the end they took me back to the cell. They did that twice." It was all done in order to force him to sign a false confession to crimes he had not committed.

* "Moderate physical pressure" was the term used in 1987 by the Landau Commission, a commission of inquiry established by the government of Israel, to describe measures that could legitimately be taken against Palestinians who were suspected of security offenses. Since then the term has often been used by Israelis as an ironic reference to torture – trans.

He refused to sign, and did not confess. I asked him: “How did you gather the strength to refuse to sign?” He replied, “I thought that the whole trial was an attempt by the secret service to take over the Party and the state through a coup. That belief gave me the strength to stand fast for six years in prison.”

In 1956 Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, gave a speech at the 20th congress of the Soviet Communist Party and said that the Moscow Trials in 1936-37 had been based on false accusations and staged by Stalin in order to get rid of leaders who might replace him. After that speech many people in Russia were released from prison, and others, who had died in prison, were publicly cleared of any guilt. That speech started the process that ended in 1991 with the dismantling of the State - and the Party - founded by Lenin.

Only in 1958 did the process of clearing people’s names reach Czechoslovakia too, and Kain was freed. He told me two shocking facts:

1) Stalin’s people in Czechoslovakia used prison guards from the Nazi period. The same guards who had tortured Communists during the Nazi occupation remained on their jobs during the Stalinist period. There were cases of torturers who tortured the same Communists under both regimes.

2) After his release, Kain realized that his arrest was not a coup by the secret service but had been done on the orders of the rulers in Moscow. The regime, not the police, had killed revolutionaries. When he realized he had helped to set up a regime that falsely accused its own dedicated activists, he had a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized for half a year. When he returned home he resigned from the Party and from all governmental functions.

I asked him why, in his opinion, he had not been executed like most of the accused. He replied: *“The regime insisted that every accused person sign a confession and also incriminate others. On the basis of those confessions they convicted the accused. There were accused who were told explicitly that the accusations were false, but they were asked to confess to them so as to prevent the trial from being revealed to be false, which would help the enemies of socialism. Some of the accused were convinced by that argument and signed. Others were told that if they signed they would be released. Everyone who signed a confession of guilt was executed. I refused to sign because I was sure that it was a coup by the secret police against the regime. Moreover, my wife, who is a British citizen, refused to leave Prague despite the pressure that was applied against her. She demanded to see me. They told her I had confessed. She refused to believe it and said: ‘I want to hear it from him.’”*

The authorities refused to let her see him. That strengthened her conviction that the accusations against him were false. He was saved from death because he did not sign a confession and because his wife, a British citizen, stayed in Prague, continued to believe in his innocence and demanded to see him.

He returned home after six years in prison and remained a communist in his views. His wife Peggy also remained a communist in her views.

He apologized to me for having immigrated to Britain and not remaining in Czechoslovakia to struggle to improve the regime there. He explained to me that he left Czechoslovakia because of his children's response to his liberation. When he was incarcerated his children were told in school that their father had betrayed the regime, and they believed it. In all the countries of the Eastern Bloc children were educated to see everything in black and white. In their country everything was white and in the West everything was black. When his children learned that he was innocent and that the accusations against him had been false, they reversed the message in their minds. Everything in the Eastern Bloc became black in their eyes and everything in the West became white. That worried him. He emigrated to Britain so that his children would learn there that not everything in the East is black and not everything in the West is white. He told me with satisfaction that his children had stopped seeing the world in black-and-white terms.

His wife told me an additional story. About a year after his release, two people from the Czech secret police showed up at her home and told her that they wanted to see her husband. He was not at home, and they waited for him. She had acquaintances who had been arrested twice, and that possibility caused her to panic. She was unable to think, her knees weakened, she sank into an armchair in panic and trembled unceasingly.

I imagined the state she was in and wondered what I would have done in such a situation. I found no answer. So I asked her: "What did you do?"

To my surprise she replied: "I made them a nice hot cup of tea."

Does that sound strange? Not to an English person. I asked English friends – each one separately – what they would have done in her situation, and all of them replied, without exception, "I would have made them a cup of tea." They were surprised that it was not obvious to me that that is what had to be done. Over time I understood. When an English person prepares a cup of tea it is not just a purposeful action, but a ritual. A ritual is a series of steps determined in advance that are performed automatically, without thinking. The first step in making English tea is to turn on the cold water tap and to let the water run over the palm of the hand. Why cold water? Because hot water dissolves minerals from the pipe and they effect the taste of the tea. Hot tap water must never be used. And why let the water run over the palm of the hand? Because water that has been standing in a pipe while the tap is closed must not be used. They contain materials from the walls of the pipe. When one perceives that the temperature of the running tap water has changed, one knows that fresh water has arrived from the main water pipe. Only that is used. The next step is to boil the water. At the moment of boiling, the kettle must be taken off the burner, because prolonged boiling removes the air that is dissolved in the water and lowers the quality of the water – and the tea. In the third step a suitable amount of tea leaves are put in a clean porcelain pot and boiling water is poured over them. The pot should be covered so as to conserve the heat. The teapot has to stand for at least ten

minutes. During those minutes the cups are prepared – boiling water is poured into them to warm them up so that they do not reduce the warmth of the tea. That is the fourth step.

After the cups have been heated, a small amount of fresh milk must be poured into them. It is very important to pour the milk first, and only after that the tea.

What difference does it make if the tea is poured first and the milk afterwards? Most English people claim that they can tell the difference.

There is even a well-known statistics exercise that uses this example in the study of statistical significance: “If fifty-two out of a hundred English people identify correctly tea that has been poured before milk as tea that has not been properly prepared, is their answer statistically significant, or accidental?”

Finally, the kettle, the cups, the milk and the sugar bowl are placed on a tray and presented to the guests. The process - from turning on the tap to presenting the tray - takes about a quarter of an hour. Every English person goes through those motions automatically without thinking about it. Their body executes the sequence of motions without thinking. The execution of known operations without thinking is calming and permits the brain to “reorganize itself” psychologically. Preparing the tea calmed Peggy. When Kain came home and saw the two secret policemen he phoned a Party leader and said what he said. The leader instructed the secret policemen to leave. After that nobody bothered Kain.

That is how I learned that the expression “I made them a nice hot cup of tea” signifies more than the preparation of a beverage.

13. Nello is still here

In July 1967 I spoke at the London School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) on the background of the June 1967 war and the history of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict from 1897 to 1967. In the audience sat a tall man, older than most of the students, black, wearing a broad-rimmed yellow felt hat. At the end of the lecture he approached me and congratulated me on the lecture. We began to talk, and I learned that his name was Cyril Lionel Robert James, called Nello by his friends. He was the author of the famous book *The Black Jacobins* about the slave revolt that broke out in Haiti after the French Revolution. When he told me that he lived near me, I offered to drive him home. He invited me for a cup of tea in his home, where I met his wife, Selma, a Jew from New York and a former member of the Zionist-Marxist group Hashomer Hatzair.* She was a political activist who in London in the 1970s founded an organization that campaigned for housewives to be paid a salary for their domestic work. She also tried to set up a trade union for prostitutes to protect them from the pimps and the police. James was born in 1901 in the island of Trinidad. His father was a school principal. He distinguished himself in his studies and in the sport of cricket. In the 1920s he came to Britain and wrote about sports, especially cricket. In Britain in the 1930s he became a Marxist and a sympathizer of Trotsky – Lenin’s deputy in the October 1917 Revolution. Stalin expelled Trotsky from Russia in 1928 and sent an assassin who murdered him in Mexico in 1940.

When Trotsky received asylum in Mexico, James visited him and served as his adviser on issues of Blacks in the United States. He helped Trotsky to formulate a platform for Blacks in the United States that called for a social and political revolution. James told me: *“The Blacks in the United States wanted to integrate into American society like a man who runs to catch a bus without knowing where the bus is going.”*

Nello was an impressive man in his appearance, personality and education. He knew classical English literature perfectly. He knew large parts of Shakespeare, Browning, Tennyson, Shelley and Wordsworth by heart. He admired Herman Melville, and considered him the greatest US writer, who did for the United States what Cervantes did for Spain, because in James’ eyes Melville’s *Moby Dick* was the American equivalent of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*.

In James’ opinion, the ship the *Pequod* in *Moby Dick* symbolizes the United States and its crew is a metaphor for American society in Melville’s time. *Moby Dick* himself - the white whale - is a metaphor for Capitalism. James saw the greatness of Melville not only in his penetrating description of the various types of personalities existing in American society in his time, but in Melville’s description of the personality of Captain Ahab as a man obsessed by desire to control everything, a type that did not exist in American

* A Jewish youth organization associated with left-wing Marxist Zionist – trans.

society in his time, but only appeared fifty years later. That type was called the “robber-baron”. He represented the first of the industrialists – the moguls of railways, steel and oil who compulsively pursued control of the entire economy, just as “Captain Ahab” pursued *Moby Dick* obsessively. That obsession was not in pursuit of profit but of power. In the end that obsession destroyed the ship and caused the death of most of its crew.

According to James Herman Melville predicted that capitalism would one day destroy American society just as the white whale Moby Dick destroyed the *Pequod*.

Total Control as an end in itself and not as a means to an end was not known in the United States in Melville’s time. Like the French writer Balzac, Melville came from a social elite that had been deposed by the new elite of money-minded city merchants and bankers. Like Balzac, Melville used his skills of observation and description to describe critically the motives of those who had created capitalist society. That was something new to me. Until I met James, *Moby Dick* was just an adventure story to me. I learned from James to see the classical literature of every nation as an analysis of society and the kinds of people it created as the author saw them in his time. Accordingly I understood that the book *Gulliver’s Travels* was a political satire about England in Swift’s time, and the play *The Dybbuk* by Ansky is a critique of the Jewish types created by the religious Jewish society of the *shtetls* of Poland in the 19th century.

James wrote various books. Some of them became well known, but he lived most of his life in poverty in one room. That did not bother him. In the tumultuous 1970s, when the Blacks in the United States created the Black Power movement and the Black Panthers, James was in demand as a lecturer at meetings of Black youth who were beginning to take an interest in revolutionary politics. He was one of the few who studied the history of slavery and of the Blacks in the United States, and could lecture on the subjects with expertise.

Because he did not have a car I used to drive him to meetings. Sometimes it happened that we entered a gathering and the ushers would point to me and say, “no Whites allowed.” James would say: “He’s with me.” That opened all the doors for me. In 1968 young Blacks in Britain were lacking in political knowledge (that changed very fast) and very angry about the racism and hypocrisy of White society. They did not understand the structure of society, its history and the forces at work within it. White society looked to them like an undifferentiated mass of “Whites”. James explained their history to them - something no one had done before - as well as the structure and history of White society. He presented racism as one component in a historically and socially much broader picture. The Black youth who had awakened politically first saw history as just a struggle between races, but James presented history as a struggle between social classes.

In the short run, he did not have much influence on Black youth. Their anger over White racism was so great that they were not interested in understanding White society. But his insights influenced educated people who over the long term became influential thinkers among Blacks all over the world. He was the first who called for the unification of the Caribbean islands into one political unit. Only as a unified entity, he said, could they embark on the path of economic development and full independence. But as separate political units, their independence would be purely formal, and they would remain subject to external economic and political forces. In the 1930s, when the film *Sanders of the River* (1935) represented Africans as primitives, James got angry at his friend, the great singer Paul Robeson, who played a role in that film. James was one of the first proponents of the idea of the unity of all the states of Africa and its liberation from colonialism. He emphasized to me that the pace of political development in Africa surprised even him, and if anybody had told him in 1938 that in 1968 all Africa would be free of direct colonial rule, he would not have believed it. Julius Nyerere, the president of Tanzania, and Kwame Nkrumah, president of Ghana, admired James and were greatly influenced by him. On Ghana's first Independence Day, Nkrumah invited James to stand next to him on the reviewing-stand to receive the salute at the first Independence Day parade. James accepted the offer and appeared on the presidential stand, but it did not influence him at all. He continued to criticize Nkrumah.

In 1972, when Michael Manley, one of James' admirers, was elected prime minister of Jamaica, somebody said that if James had remained in the West Indies, he would have been elected prime minister. James said to me: "Fortunately, I didn't stay."

One day in 1968, as I was driving him in my car on Tottenham Court Road in London. He suddenly asked me to stop next to a record store and buy him a Reggae record. "What's Reggae?" - I asked. "The clerk knows," James replied. "Which singer?" - I asked. "It doesn't matter, the important thing is that it's Reggae," he replied. I had no idea what Reggae was. The clerk gave me some record. I asked James, "Why did you want to listen to Reggae?" He replied, "Just as Calypso came from Trinidad and conquered the world, Reggae too will conquer the world."

That was six years before Bob Marley founded his band.

After the songs of Bob Marley became hits all over the world, I was reminded of James' prediction, which had seemed absurd to me in 1968.

Another time in 1968, when we were sitting in my car waiting for his wife, James watched a young mother walking with a toddler on the pavement beside us. He made a slow rotational motion with his right palm with outstretched fingers, as if he were closing a tap. He always did that when some thought was troubling him. I asked him: "what's the matter?" He replied: "*Look at that woman. She is relaxed. The toddler left her and is*

running on the pavement. He could step into the road and get hit, but she is not worried and is not running after him. She is watching out for him without anxiety. She knows that she will be able to save him from danger if necessary. She has self-confidence that women did not have thirty years ago. Then, no woman would have let a toddler run away from her, and if he did, she would rush to spank him. The mentality of most women underwent a big change in the last thirty years. Most of them don't know it because they were not taught how to observe social processes, but today most people are much more calm and confident in themselves than thirty years ago."

He would draw social insights from observing the ordinary behavior of ordinary people. His approach to politics did not focus on elections/parties/leaders/platforms, but on the ordinary behavior of ordinary people. That behavior, and not elections or parties, was the basis of politics in his eyes, the stage on which the political show took place. All the rest - political institutions, parties, platforms etc. - are only possible if there is a suitable social basis. The changes in the mentality of ordinary people in a given society are the most important changes in historical terms. That is why, in James' eyes, Marx, who understood that industrialization changes people's everyday mentality, was the greatest student of society. Marx saw the industrial workers as the most progressive constituency in society in his time not because of their distress or their skill, but because work in a factory creates mutual dependence between them, organizes them, unites them, forces them to cooperate, to help each other and to develop new patterns of thought and behavior - cooperative ones, different from those of the peasants (who were 95% of the population of the world in Marx' time). When industrial workers confront an employer with demands, they come as a group, not as individuals. The peasants, on the other hand, were a collection of individuals. When Marx wrote that, 95% of the population of the world were still peasants. Most of them did not know how to read or write. Every peasant worked in a field by himself, alone, without machines. What they wanted was land, not social change. Industrial workers were a tiny minority who first appeared only in Britain, where the first machines were invented. But Marx saw industrialization as a process that would spread all over the world and change all people in all societies all over the world. He reasoned that industrialization - not manual agriculture - would shape the mentality of the majority of humanity in the future. He was the first who said that capitalism converts the whole world into a single market and into a single economic unit. James appreciated Marx as the first and the greatest of the sociologists. James saw sociology itself as interwoven with economics, psychology and politics. All those fields, which today are separate academic disciplines, he saw as aspects of one entity: socialized humanity. He concerned himself with humanity, not with politics/economics/sociology/psychology. He wrote a book about the history of cricket entitled *Beyond the Boundary* which was described by experts on cricket (in the *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*) as "the best book on cricket ever written," but he did not deal only with cricket, but with sport as a component in human behavior - and mentality - from ancient times until today.

One day I drove him to the actress Vanessa Redgrave who had gotten the role of Cordelia in *King Lear*, and was looking for an explanation of the political and social background of the play. James gave her a social and political analysis of Shakespeare's era, with an emphasis on Shakespeare's critique of the institution of the monarchy. Vanessa came from a family of actors and knew Shakespeare very well, but James gave her a historical perspective that was new to her. She was impressed by his words, and that influenced the way she shaped her role.

In time I moved apartments, and we did not see each other as often as we had. He moved to Brixton in south London, and lived in a room above the offices of the weekly magazine *Race Today*. Its editors were Darcus Howe, a relative of James, and Tariq Ali, a left-wing Pakistani student who was the secretary of the students' union at Oxford in the 1960s and played a role in Britain similar to that of Rudi Dutschke in Germany. James was occasionally interviewed on British television about sports, history and politics. In his lectures and conversations he emphasized again and again that the British Labour Party would never solve Britain's social and political problems, and whoever believed it would was suffering from delusions. "Britain needs a social and political revolution," he said, "but the Labour Party is an inseparable part of the existing Establishment."

James' book *World Revolution 1917-1936: Rise and Fall of the Communist International* is essential reading for whoever wants to understand the history of the 20th century. In that book James foresaw, fifty-five years in advance, the collapse of the system set up by Stalin. Academics and political commentators ignored the book. But today their books are worthless, whereas that book of James' - like his other books - remains relevant.

In 1989, at age 88, he contracted influenza and died. One day I met Tariq Ali and asked him about James' last days. Tariq told me that James read and wrote until his last day. When he got seriously ill with influenza, he lay down with no sign of life. Darcus called a doctor. The doctor came, checked James's pulse and said to Darcus, "I'm sorry, but the man has died." He covered James with a sheet and turned to leave. Suddenly James' voice was heard from under the sheet: "I am still here, you know." Astonished, the doctor returned to James to check if it was not an unconscious nervous spasm after death. He asked James: "What is your name?" He did not expect an answer. But from under the sheet came the clear answer: "Cyril Lionel Robert James," and then James died.

That is how James was, in his life and his death.

Lucid to the last second.

14. Beware of “ Ultimate Truth” (about human existence)

(To Ken Campbell. (1941 – 2008) the innovating theatre director of the 1960s)

In the fall of 1979, at the Camden flea market, someone handed me a flyer which said: “*Next Friday at the Roundhouse, the Science Fiction Theatre of Liverpool will present the play **The Warp**. The play lasts for 24 hours. Please bring sleeping bags.*”

I had seen previous productions by Ken Campbell’s “Science Fiction Theatre of Liverpool”, and was very impressed by it. I realized it was “Acid (LSD) Theatre” not “SF Theatre”. In 1977 I saw at the Roundhouse a play of theirs called *Illuminatus* that lasted 4 hours. The original version had been shown in the most prestigious theatre in Britain, the Old Vic, and lasted 8 hours. This was unprecedented. The Old Vic had never shown a play that started at eight in the evening and ended at four in the morning. If we add three 20-minute intermissions (after every two hours of performance) the public left the theatre at five in the morning.

How many people will go to see a play that starts at eight in the evening and ends at five in the morning?

I could not believe that the respectable public of the Old Vic would agree to sit through a play that lasted eight hours. I was surprised that the management of the Old Vic agreed at all to risk such a production. Managements of national theatres are conservative and do not rush into risky undertakings. Even without regard to the content of the play, its length alone was an innovation that would likely drive audiences away. To my surprise the play met with great success. After a few weeks at the Old Vic it moved to the Roundhouse, and there I saw a shortened version that lasted only four hours. The plot was based on a trilogy that was written in the 1970s by two young men from New York. It is an alternative history of humanity. Instead of the usual interpretations of history, the authors presented a new interpretation according to which history is a struggle between forces that defend some established order and forces that oppose all established orders. From that point of view Hitler and Churchill, even though they fought each other during the Second World War, were in effect on the same side of the barricade – the side of the defenders of some established order. They differed only about the nature of the order, not about the need for order as such. It is hard to see the opponents of the established order because they do not have an army or a leader, but everyone who struggles against the established order in any milieu whatsoever is part of that camp. I was not surprised that Ken Campbell, an opponent of pre-determined order in theatre, of known texts learnt by heart, of modes of speech, gesture, and dress determined in advance, and of course of a fixed separation between audience and actors, chose to present that play. In the 1970s there were creative breakthroughs that shattered pre-determined structures in all domains.

It was expressed mainly in art: in painting, music, film and theatre. The common denominator of all those innovations was their effort to break down the psychological barrier between spectator of - and participant in – an act. They strove to make the spectator experience the act as a participant. In music, Pink Floyd succeeded in doing that. They converted music-listening from mere hearing into an experiencing of sounds (including non-musical ones). The hearer does not just **listen to** the sounds, but **experiences** them.

The painter David Hockney did that in some of his paintings – for example, “Splash” and “Shower”. “Splash” makes the viewer feel as if he is standing beside a pool and sees a splash that has just been created by someone who jumped into the water. In “Shower”, the viewer sees what he would see in a shower if he were looking up at the showerhead spraying water at him.

In the cinema, directors like Monty Hellman began to shoot film with the camera on their shoulder instead of on a tripod, and integrated actors into unstaged - real life - scenes. In a chase-scene, for example, the cameraman would hold the camera on his shoulder and film while running beside the pursuer and the pursued. The leaping image on the screen caused the spectators to feel that they were participating in the chase. I saw spectators in the cinema panting as if they had been running. They did not merely watch the chase but participated (mentally) in it. Film scenes became less verbal and presented the visual in detail, not as a story but as an experience. The famous car chase in the film *Bullit* with Steve McQueen is a good example. The emphasis is on gesture, not on conversation.

That was precisely what the new 1970s directors wanted – to make the audience feel like participants in the plot. How can one do that in the theatre? That is a particularly difficult problem because the spectators are silently sitting in chairs in an auditorium while the actors are moving and talking – on the stage. Many directors tried and failed. I saw a French company that put on a play about the French Revolution in 1789. The director tried to involve the audience in the play. He removed the chairs from the auditorium and had the actors walk around among the audience while they said their lines. The attempt was a failure. The actors were walking around dressed in 18th century clothes in the midst of an audience milling about in the hall. The actors were reciting lines they had memorized in advance, while the audience moved around them, silent and frustrated. No one in the audience felt like a participant in a revolution.

But Campbell succeeded. How?

He created effects that gave the spectators a feeling of participating in the play. For example, in *Illuminatus*, there is a scene where the detective is awaiting a telephone call. The spectators too are waiting to hear the telephone ring on the stage. Suddenly a deafening ring is heard. Not from the stage but from behind the spectators, from speakers

Campbell had placed at the entrance to the hall. The spectators had been waiting for a ring from the stage and were surprised when the ring was heard from behind them. At first people did not understand what the ring from behind was and did not relate it to the play. It interrupted their following of the play. Everybody turned around to see what the disturbing sound was about. We did not relate it to the play. We had expected that what was happening in the play would happen on the stage in front of us, not behind us. The ring from behind severed our concentration and expectation on what was happening on stage. We experienced a distraction. Suddenly we heard from the stage the detective (his voice amplified by speakers) answering the ring from behind us. We then heard the reply – from behind. To us in the hall – caught between the speakers in the hall's entrance and those on the stage – the conversation sounded as if we were eavesdropping on it. We were not listening to it as outsiders; we were inside it. That removed (momentarily) the (psychological) barrier between observing and participating. The sense of eavesdropping turned us from observers into participants.

After a few seconds the audience understood Campbell's intention, and responded with applause. In another scene the detective visits a fortune-teller. The stage lights were turned off (Campbell used no curtain) and stage workers replaced the props in five minutes. When the lights went back on, we saw on the stage a table covered with green baize and a woman in a headscarf placing cards on it. In front of her sat the detective, in a raincoat and hat. But the table was at right angle to the stage, with the green baize top facing the audience. The fortune-teller sat on a chair fastened to the upper end of the table (she was attached to the chair by unseen traps) and the detective sat opposite her on a chair the back of which was on the floor. We were confused and wondered, what's going on here? After a few seconds, we understood. Campbell had arranged the props so that the audience would feel as if they were peering at the meeting through a hole in the floor of an apartment *above* the fortune-teller's apartment. We were watching her from above without her knowledge. That converted us from listeners into secret eavesdroppers, involving us as participants in the plot. The difference between listener and eavesdropper is a psychological one, but it is significant. A listener is an outsider, an eavesdropper is an insider. While the fortune-teller was placing her cards on the table to read the detective's fortune, the detective took off his hat and put it on the (vertical) table. The whole audience held its breath expecting the hat to slip to the floor. But it stayed on the table. Seconds later, when we realized that Campbell stuck a nail into the table so the hat remained suspended from it we burst into applause. The cards were held by Velcro but the sticking of the hat defied our expectations. Our surprise broke the (psychological) barrier between our sense of "observer" and of "participant".

Campbell had anticipated the audience's responses and introduced many such effects into every scene. With the help of such effects he succeeded in making the audience feel like participants in the play. The story itself was so funny that I got pains in my cheeks and

belly from laughing. But the main point was not the story, but the feeling of participation in it. I remembered this when the flyer announcing *The Warp* was thrust into my hand at the Camden flea market, so I decided to go to see the play.

The Warp is the autobiography of a young man named Neil Oram who came to London from Rhodesia in 1968. That was just after the release of The Beatles' album "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band", which was written under the influence of LSD. About a million young people tried that drug, including Oram. The autobiography describes what happened to him then and afterwards.

Here I must say something about LSD which was one of the main sources of the eruption of creativity in Europe and the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. LSD was developed by a chemist named Albert Hofmann in 1938 in a laboratory of the Swiss pharmaceutical firm Sandoz. It is derived from a mould that grows on barley. Until 1966 the drug was legal in the United States and could be bought in pharmacies without a prescription. The American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) permitted that after extensively testing the drug for years. Psychiatrists like Stanislav Grof, Oscar Janiger, R. D. Laing and others used LSD as a psychiatric aid. The drug has no negative physiological effects and it is impossible to overdose or to become addicted to it. All the studies that tried to prove physical harm or addiction produced negative results. People who suffer from psychological disturbances should not use it without medical supervision. Most users are satisfied with one-time use. No addiction or overdose were ever recorded. The drug entered mass use after the CIA operation called MK-ULTRA. That was after the Korean War (1951-1953), when American prisoners of war who had returned from North Korea in the middle of the 1950s were received as heroes in the United States but began to criticize the foreign policies of the United States. The CIA concluded from that, that the Communists had a secret means of "brainwashing" (the CIA coined that term then). The CIA concluded that the US must acquire a similar ability. To encourage research on "Brainwashing" the CIA distributed large amounts of LSD and money to psychology departments in American universities to investigate the efficacy of LSD. CIA agents also slipped LSD into the drinks of their friends without their knowledge. Unaware users were seized with terrors and thought they were going insane. In the 1980s some of their families filed suits for compensation from the CIA, and that is how the whole affair came to light. In the universities psychology professors like Timothy Leary of Harvard and students like Ken Kesey (author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*) at the University of Chicago, tested the drug on themselves, and afterwards distributed it to their friends. The FDA, known for being stringent in its tests, did not find anything objectionable about LSD, because it is not addictive and has no harmful physiological effects. Until 1966 the FDA authorized the sale of LSD in pharmacies without medical prescriptions. It was banned in 1966 for political - not medical - reasons.

LSD influences the way the brain interprets the sensory data. The drug disables the brain's "censor", which classifies and organizes the enormous amounts of information that come from the sense organs. LSD stops the "censor" from operating for an hour, and in that condition the user experiences reality in a way that differs from the usual. Although the drug's effect differs from person to person, most users report the disappearance of the sense of selfhood (the "I") and in consequence they experience merging with their surroundings. At first the feeling is frightening, and no wonder - the disappearance of the "I" is one aspect of death. In death not only does the body stop existing but the "I" too faces annihilation. The body is not afraid, but consciousness is aware of disappearing - and fears it. Whoever overcomes that fear also learns to function without a sense of selfhood. It turns out that that is possible. There is life without "I". And it is incredibly exciting. When we learn to function in that condition, fear of dying disappears. That is why Dr. Stanislaw Grof used it to calm down terminal cancer patients.

The transition from reality perceived through the "I" to perceiving it without the "I" reveals latent assumptions in our "normal" mode of perceiving reality. The conditioning shaping our feelings and responses is exposed. This can be compared to the situation of a fish living all its life in water and thus being unaware of the existence of water. Only if it is thrown onto the land and experiences reality without water (even for a brief moment) can a fish know what water is. There are no hallucinations in an LSD "trip". People do not see things that do not exist, but they see reality itself in a different way. It is not an illusion or a "distortion" of reality, but a different perception of the same reality. It turns out that the "normal" perception of reality is one of many possibilities, and not the only possible one; and it is certainly not "objective" or "correct". That does not mean that the "normal" perception is "wrong", it only means that it is one of many ways of experiencing reality. It turns out that there is no such thing as "things as they really are". There exists a reality independent of any observer, but "truth" is a *description* of reality; it is not reality itself. Every description is dependent on the describer. Experience is "objective" if many subjects experience it in the same way; but "objective" experience too is dependent on subjects who experience it. If many subjects give an identical interpretation of their experience, that interpretation becomes a "norm" that is known to the public as "normal" and "objective" - that is, independent of a particular observer. But it is still dependent on a **collectivity** of observers. "Objective REALITY" - that is, a reality that is not dependent on any observer - exists. But any *description* of reality is an **interpretation** of sensory data, which laypeople - and some philosophers - call "objective TRUTH". This is always subjective because it always depends on those who announce it and on the way in which they experience it.

The conclusion is: **there is an "objective reality" but there is no "objective truth"**.

“Objective” means “not depending on human beings,” but “truth” always depends on man-made language and on people’s experience. “Truth” is never “reality”. It always is a *description* of reality created by describers and it depends on its describers.

One day a mathematics professor from Poland visited me and asked to join an LSD “trip”. I agreed to help him. After swallowing the pills, the two of us lay down on the carpet and listened to Pink Floyd. He rubbed his hands on the carpet. A friend who was with us in the room commented: “Aki, watch out for him, he’s getting lost.” He was calm, but his eyes had gone out of focus. It was not an emergency situation, but I decided to bring him out of that state. I gently massaged his temple with my finger. Within seconds the focus returned to his eyes, and he assured me that everything was all right, that he was enjoying it and I shouldn’t worry. After a while, we went out to walk in a nearby park. We walked around and looked at people, animals, trees and plants. A light breeze was blowing. He stretched his arms forwards as if he were carrying a load while his palms were facing each other with outstretched fingers.

He walked that way for a while. We walked in the park for about two hours and then returned home. When the effect of the LSD subsided (after some 8 hours) I asked him, “what did you experience?” He replied that all his experiences were focused on his sense of touch in his fingers. When he felt the carpet, he merged with the carpet. That was the moment when the focus disappeared from his eyes – and from his consciousness.

“And what did you feel?” I asked. He replied with a question: *“How many words are there to describe sensations of touch? Very few. There are words like ‘smooth’, ‘rough’, ‘pointed’, ‘sharp’, ‘sticky’, ‘tickly’ ‘itchy’ and ‘scratchy’, but I felt with my fingers many sensations of touch for which there are no words. Such words have not been invented because normally there is no need for them. Language is a tool that people invented in order to communicate. There is no word to describe something rougher than glass but not as rough as paper because there is no need for it. So I lack the verbal tools to describe my incredibly rich touch experiences.”*

“And why did you walk in the park with your hands and fingers outstretched?” – I asked.

He replied: *“When I felt all those different levels of roughness in my fingers I wanted to arrange them sequentially from ‘smoothest’ to ‘roughest’, like numbers that start from zero and gradually increase. I was looking for ‘zero roughness.’ I thought that the sensation of the wind through my fingers might be that ‘zero’ and from that I would be able to classify all the increasing levels of roughness.”*

“And was the sensation of the wind through your fingers really that ‘zero’ that you were looking for?” – I asked.

“No!” – he replied. *“When the wind passed between my fingers I felt a certain degree of roughness. It was not the feeling of ‘zero roughness’ that I was looking for.”*

“So you did not succeed in finding that “Zero roughness?” – I asked.

“Oh yes,” he said, *“I did find it but it wasn’t the wind ”*

“So what was the ‘zero’ that you found?” – I asked. “**The silence,**” he replied.

I was astonished. How can an **audial** sensation be perceived **tactilely**?

“Are you saying that you felt in your fingers what you heard in your ears?” – I asked.

“Yes, that’s exactly what I experienced,” he replied.

I had a friend who was a neurologist in a London hospital and the head of the neurology department there, so I asked him if that was possible. He replied positively. There is such a phenomenon and it also has a name: it is called “kinesthesia”. People see sounds or hear colours. Jan felt the silence in the fingers of his hands. To me that did not happen, but I had learned something new.

When I went to see *The Warp* in the Roundhouse at midnight on Friday, I also hoped to learn something new from the experiences of Neil Oram re-enacted in the play. I went with friends, and also with a bottle of rum and a sleeping-bag. It is not every day that one watches a play that lasts for 24 hours straight, and requires preparation. The basement of the Roundhouse, where the show was performed, was not round but rectangular. Campbell staged the play as a series of short scenes that lasted a quarter hour each. The scenes took place along the walls, a different wall each time. There was no curtain and no stage. One wall in the hall was reserved for a rock band called The American Medical Association (AMA). The members of the band slept nearby on mattresses. The author of the play, Neil Oram, slept on a mattress beside them.

The audience of about two hundred people reclined on mattresses in the middle of the hall. Every scene lasted 15 minutes, with a minimum of props. In a scene where Oram and his girl-friend drive to Oxford on a rainy night the front seat of a car served as a prop, on which two actors sat and talked. They held windshield-wipers in their hands and moved them from side to side. A third actor hissed “chit-chat, chit-chat, chit-chat,” and the audience understood it was a drive in the rain. All actors wore regular street clothes.

As the play is biographical, the lead actor, who played Neil Oram, participated in all the scenes. He acted for 24 hours non-stop. After every scene there was a short break, without lights, for changing the sets. Every two hours – at the end of eight scenes – the lights went on, the band began to play, and the audience got up to dance or went to the cafeteria to drink something hot. After half an hour we returned, and the play continued. Oram’s autobiography was not unusual. Many in the audience had had similar

experiences. When Oram came to London from Rhodesia in 1968, he felt like he had landed on a different planet. The youth in London astounded him with their dress, their behavior and their responses. I knew what he meant. A friend told me that one night, at 1 A.M. as he was going home, a stranger approached him in the Prince of Wales Crescent and asked if he wanted to go to a party. My friend agreed, and the stranger took him to an apartment where there were about a dozen young people, none of whom knew any of the others. It turned out that the party was the result of a bet between the young man who had invited my friend and the owner of the apartment. They had argued about the new social atmosphere that had been created among youth and one of them claimed that if he went out onto the street in the middle of the night and arbitrarily chose people for a party, there would be a successful party, even though none of the guests had ever met any of the others. He claimed that the 1960s youth had a lot more openness and goodwill towards strangers than ever before in the past, and he would prove it with a party. It turned out that he was right. My friend told me that he enjoyed the party very much and did not perceive any difference between it and a party in which he knew the other guests. That was the atmosphere to which Neil Oram was exposed in London in 1968. Experiencing a total stranger as a friend is exhilarating. Oram was inspired, and to the surprise of all – including himself – he became a poet. His poems sold in the thousands. Experiencing a total stranger as a friend creates a sense of euphoria. Many who had this experience set up communes and began to experiment with different forms of collective living.

Some began to “return to nature” by avoiding industrial products, by growing organic food, and by spinning wool and weaving their own clothes. Awareness of organic food and “alternative medicine” and organizations such as Greenpeace all started in those years – through the influence of LSD. Disillusionment with the excitement over scientific and industrial achievements began to set in. The first lunar landing in 1969 did not impress contemporary youth. The widespread reaction was that the money would have been better invested in eliminating poverty. Many travelled to India to seek spiritual gurus. There was new openness to foreigners, to the different, the bizarre – even to the mentally ill. People stopped treating them like lepers; and began to see them as people on their own “trip”. Normal reality was defined as “the reality trip”. New graffiti were sprayed on walls, one of them said “*Don’t adjust your mind, there is a fault with ‘Reality’*” - which paraphrased a common TV notice seen on TV when the screen became “snow”: “Do not adjust your set – there is a fault in the broadcast.” Another graffiti said: “**Use your birth certificate as a credit card.**” Somebody wrote, “**Don’t judge the Creator by one failure.**” The “failure” being human society. A sophisticated slogan said: “**Heisenberg’s Probability Principle probably OK**”. Many exhibited goodwill and aspired to help others. Many began to travel around the world not for fun but to learn from other cultures and to help others. A young American named Ed Berman bought an old bus and converted it into a mobile video school. He went to poor neighborhoods in London and taught children to make their own videos. His aspiration was to break the

awe in which television was held and to show that everyone can make a movie. Neil Oram experienced many of those things. He even went to a kibbutz in Israel. All that was shown in the play. From time to time Oram woke up from his sleep, watched the play, stopped the actors, and explained what had happened to him in the scene that was being shown. People from the audience asked him detailed questions, and he answered. There was a genuine dialogue between the audience and the author. That was not surprising, because the author was no different from most of the youths in the audience. Most of them had had experiences similar to his, and had reacted as he had done. The audience and the author compared experiences and reactions. They wanted to know how Oram had reacted to situations that they too had experienced. The show began on Friday night at midnight, and after 12 hours, on Saturday at midday, there was a 4-hour intermission. I went out of the hall onto the street. The sunlight warmed me. I felt as if I had landed on another planet. It took half an hour to get used to the “normal” scene - and to sunlight.

After a meal and a break, we returned to the play. Oram’s saga of LSD experiences continued. During one of the scenes a fight broke out between two young women in the audience. People got up to separate them, and suddenly a policeman asked everyone to disperse. After a few seconds it turned out that the fight, the young women and the policeman were all part of the play. Some spectators fell asleep, and when they woke up they asked: **“where is he now?”** The answer was: “in India,” or “in Ibiza” or “in Scotland.” Then, when eight scenes were over, the lights went on and the audience got up to dance to the sound of the AMA (“American Medical Association”) band. Twenty-four hours of a play without a single second of boredom. At the end Oram got up, and with a short speech summed up his experiences. The audience wanted to hear the lesson he had learned from all he had experienced. I don’t remember the exact words he used, but I remember the spirit of his words: *“Beware of the feeling ‘I have found the ultimate truth about human existence’ that many get caught in under the influence of LSD - or religion. Whoever thinks he has found the ultimate and absolute truth will stop developing and will not learn anything new. He is convinced that he has nothing more to learn and feels threatened when others disagree with his truth. Being alive spiritually means taking nothing for granted, constantly wondering, constantly seeking new answers, and constant mental development. “Ultimate truths” abolish searching, and terminate spiritual life.”*

This differs from Jan’s sensing silence as “zero roughness,” but it too is a useful insight.

After four shows, the lead actor, who played Neil Oram in all the shows, announced that he could not continue in the show because he was turning into Neil Oram. That convinced Campbell to close the production. I do not think I will have the opportunity to see another play like that. Am I wrong? I hope so.

15. Ruler of the flickering shadows

(To Derek Jarman (1941-1994) the innovating film director of the 1960s)

The London weekly magazine *Time Out* was a bulletin board for young people in the 1960s. Its editors had resigned from managing a commercial weekly that provided information for tourists about shows, concerts and exhibits in London and detailed information on every entertainment event in the coming week. Some of the editors also wanted to add information on demonstrations and political rallies, but the management refused. The majority disagreed and the minority left and founded *Time Out*.

Instead of commercial advertising they published drawings or photographs of current political or social events. The first page of the magazine was routinely dedicated to announcements of all the demonstrations, political gatherings and lectures by opponents of the Vietnam War, nukes, pollution, etc.

Every political group could publish an announcement free of charge.

Private individuals published announcements like: *“Will marry – for the acquisition of British citizenship – anyone facing deportation from the UK.”*

Every *Time Out* issue contained dozens of such ads. All were voluntary proposals to help left-wing activists from foreign countries who had found shelter in Britain, but whom the government wanted to deport. Many married in order to avoid deportation, and divorced shortly after acquiring UK citizenship. It was a common practice then. Three Israeli friends of mine used that help.

Interviews with actors, directors, writers, artists and leftists also appeared in *Time Out*. The weekly was a great commercial success and thousands of young people in London, who had never bought an entertainment weekly, began to buy *Time Out*. Over time ads began to appear like this: “Lover of the music of Pink Floyd and nature walks seeks male for relationship.” There were also ads by various political groups and unusual events that could not be found in any other publication. One day in 1976 I saw the following ad: *“The Amateur Film Makers’ Association presents its members’ work, in Gloucester Street.”* It attracted my attention because I had always thought that only large commercial companies were able to produce films. I decided to attend the event. On Gloucester Street I found an abandoned factory. I ascended the rusty iron stairs to an empty run-down hall that contained a few deck-chairs in front of a screen. On a small table in front of the screen was an 8-millimeter projector. On the floor was a tape-recorder for the soundtrack. The entire audience consisted of about a dozen people. The lights went out and the projector was turned on. On the screen appeared the strangest film I had ever seen. It had no plot, no characters and no movement. There was no beginning, middle or end. “Still” photos appeared on the screen, one following the other, without any rhythm or logic,

every 3 or 4 seconds. A flowerpot, a cat, a window, a flower, a chair etc. A few pictures remained on the screen for only one second. Others, for three or four seconds. No picture was seen for more than five seconds. It was impossible to guess what the next picture would be or how long it would remain on the screen. The images were not repeated, but one image appeared again and again, throughout the whole film, at irregular intervals. It consisted of a totally black screen, with a radiant spiral of light at its center. I did not understand what the plot of the film was, and gradually it dawned on me that it was a film without a plot. The director had filmed various objects in his apartment, without any logical consideration. I tried to guess what he had filmed in the black screen with the spiral of light. Only after seeing it a few times did I manage to understand: it was a close-up shot of a bare light-bulb glowing on a background of black cardboard. That image, which appeared again and again, served as the spine of the film. It lent continuity and coherence. It implied: “You are watching - all the time - the *same* film”, The technique of a succession of still photos has since become widely-used in television commercials, but when I saw that film on Gloucester Street, it was an innovation. The director of the film had invented the technique of disjointed still photos shown in quick succession. Others copied the idea from him.

I wondered: Suppose a friend met me on my way home and asked me what the film was about? What could I say? I had seen a film without a plot and without a beginning, middle or end. It could be screened from the middle to the end or from the end to the beginning, and nobody could tell the difference. If I were asked what the film was about I would have to reply that the film was about disconnected images one saw on the screen. No one would understand what I was talking about. Only someone who had actually seen the screened images could say what the film was about. The film was the sequence of unconnected images one saw on the screen: nothing more.

Every film I had seen until then was a *story* told by images. Everyone who talked about film – critics, directors, actors – talked about the **story** of the film. But the **story** is not the film; it can be conveyed without images: in words. A film is a series of c-h-a-n-g-i-n-g images. Images can describe a story, but the story is not the film. A film is only a sequence of changing images. If they change according to a certain logic – fine. If they change without any logic – it’s still a film. That surprised me, because, like everybody else, I had always assumed that a film must tell a story. Like all critics I identified the film with its story. I failed to distinguish between the film and the story.

I wondered: *“If there is no story, why don’t I leave the hall? What makes me stay when there’s no story, no “action” about to happen next? What am I expecting?”*

I concluded that what kept me in my seat was curiosity to see the next *image*, rather than the next development in the plot. If I could have guessed it, I would not have stayed. But the arbitrary rhythm of the change of images, and their unexpected content, created an

atmosphere of uncertainty. It was impossible to guess what the next image would be, and curiosity to see it kept me glued to my seat. The film lasted about ten minutes. When the lights went on, the director, who was also the cameraman, a young man wearing jeans, appeared and asked, “*are there any questions?*”

I asked, “*where did you study film?*” He replied, “*I did not study film. I studied painting.*” I continued: “*You did a lot of editing work cutting all those images and sticking them together. What considerations did you make?*” The answer: “*I did not cut the film even once. I pointed the camera in a different direction each time. All the editing was done while filming – in the camera itself.*” I was surprised.

The film’s sound-track was also unusual. It had no tune, and the sounds were unpleasant to the ear. It was by a band called “Throbbing Gristle” which had recorded sounds of stone-quarries and stone-crushers. Throughout the film we heard nothing but the grinding and cutting of stones and gravel. But much to my surprise, it was not particularly distracting, because not a word was said in the film. I wondered nevertheless what the director was conveying to the audience with this film. In my opinion he was conveying a **mood**. To me he conveyed an atmosphere of playful boredom. It seemed that he himself was in that mood when he made the film. The film had no suspense, and it wasn’t a comedy either. Nevertheless, the audience broke out in laughter several times. But the humor was not in the image but in the editing; in the appearance of unexpected images. The maker of this film was modest, serious, and innovative. His name was Derek Jarman.

From him I learned something new about the essence of film. I was sure that one day I would see his films in regular cinemas. I was not mistaken. In 1978 a film called *Jubilee* was released in cinemas. Derek Jarman was the cameraman, the director and the editor. I saw it and was impressed. In *Jubilee* too, there was no plot, but there were scenes with people and situations. There was logic to it. In order to understand that logic, it is necessary to understand English society. Until the 1960s it was a society in which “everyone knew his place” – **and accepted it**. That is to say – a worker wanted his children to be workers, not bank clerks, doctors or lawyers. A person from the middle class refused to work in a factory or a mine. A miner refused to work as a civil servant – even for a higher salary. I saw an interview on BBC television with a miner who had won a large sum in the football pools. He explained that even though he had become rich he would not leave his village because if he were uprooted from there he would be unable to acquire new friends. When it was suggested to him that he invest his winnings in shares, he reacted as if they had suggested that he fly to the moon. It was possible, but he was not interested. Winning money would not change his **class origins**, and so – in England – it did not change his place in society. That is because England is not the United States, Canada or Australia – societies that were created by immigration. In England social relations – and identities – depend on class origins and not on personal attributes. In England it was rare to find a man from the middle class married to a woman from the

working class, or vice-versa. The class division also existed in sports: the nobility enjoyed horse-racing, the middle class – tennis, and the working class – football. Preferences in entertainment too were linked to class origins: the nobility enjoyed opera and ballet; the middle class – theatre and concerts, and the working class – football and cinema. There are exceptions, but the majority shares the class division mentality.

In the 1960s the class division mentality began to loosen. Thus for example, *The Beatles* music band broke with the class division. The drummer Ringo Starr and the singer John Lennon were from the working class, while Paul McCartney and George Harrison came from the middle class. And their songs too were popular among all classes. Before them there had been no bands whose songs were popular among all classes. Most of the public liked the change; the Establishment – less so. But the Establishment could do nothing to stop the new atmosphere that was especially manifested in hairstyles, dress and music. Mini-skirts among women and long hair among men expressed independence and rebelliousness against the social consensus. The Establishment felt that it was under attack, and it was indeed under attack. Not politically, but in the domains of dress, hairstyles and music. The Establishment was not prepared for an attack from that direction and did not know how to defend itself against it. During the entire decade of the 1960s, which lasted for all practical purposes until 1976, the British Establishment was on the defensive against attack by the 1960s “Youth Culture.” When I came to London in the summer of 1964, film shows in cinemas still ended with the playing of the national anthem, with the British flag displayed on the screen and the audience rising to its feet and standing at attention before leaving the hall. But in 1966 that tradition was discarded, and the shops of souvenirs for tourists began to sell waste-baskets emblazoned with the national flag. An Israeli friend who visited me could not believe his eyes. He excitedly pulled me to a tourist gift-shop on Piccadilly Circus where waste-baskets emblazoned with the British flag were offered for sale and asked me excitedly, “*can you imagine what would happen in Israel if somebody printed the national flag on a garbage pail?*” I had not thought of that because in England nobody had complained about it. I had gotten used to that atmosphere and saw nothing strange about it. But the Establishment was worried.

In 1976, on the 25th anniversary of the crowning of Queen Elizabeth, the Establishment began its cultural counter-attack against the culture of the 1960s. A large budget was allocated for celebrating the Jubilee of the Queen’s coronation. National flags began to appear in the windows of houses. The Monarchy and tradition became weapons in the Establishment’s counter-attack against the 1960s youth culture. Derek Jarman responded by attacking the Establishment in his film *Jubilee*. He used the Establishment’s symbols (Monarchy, the national flag, and tradition) to hit back at the Establishment that brandished them. At the beginning of the film, Elizabeth *the First*, Queen of England 400 years ago, is shown on an imaginary visit to today’s realm of Queen Elizabeth the

Second. She comes to inspect the state of the kingdom. And what state is it in? The government? Corrupt. Crime? Flourishing. The Youth? Indifferent to crime, to love, to sex and to death. Television directs the lives of individuals and of society. Television is controlled by moguls of capital who aspire for control for the sake of control more than for profit. They do not point society in any direction, because they have no direction; they only have the aspiration to perpetuate their control. In the film's central scene, the television mogul presents a young woman named "Bod" (short for Boadicea – the English queen who led a revolt against the Romans) as Britain's candidate in the Eurovision Song Contest. Bod wears the English flag, with a Roman helmet on her head and a trident in her hand, as queen, Boadicea is depicted in paintings and sculptures and on the 1 Penny coin. She sings "Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves" the unofficial anthem of British Imperialism, ending in – *"Britons never, never, never will be slaves."* While singing, Bod does a strip-tease act in which she masturbates on the trident against a background of a speech by Hitler. Queen Boadicea wearing the national flag masturbating on a trident is the most anti-Establishment image possible in British cinema. The Israeli equivalent of such a scene would be Our Matriarch Sarah doing a strip-tease act while wearing a Jewish prayer-shawl and masturbating on the staff with which Moses "smote the rock".* Nowhere else have opponents of an Establishment dared - and succeeded – to produce such a vicious, yet cultured, anti-Establishment message. All the symbols of the British Establishment are culturally humiliated here. No wonder the BBC refused to broadcast the film on television and only in 1987, ten years after it was made, did the private TV station ITV agree to broadcast *Jubilee*.

After Bod's strip-tease, the television mogul (who was played with deliberate exaggeration by the blind actor known as Orlando†) gives a speech, and says:

"You want to hear my story, babe? It's easy. This is the generation who grew up and forgot to lead their lives ... they were so busy watching my endless movie.

It's power babe, power ... I don't create it, I own it. I sucked and sucked, and I sucked ... the media became their only reality and I own their world of flickering shadows: BBC, TUC, ITV, ABC, ATV, MGM, KGB, C of E...you name it, I bought them all, and rearranged the alphabet – without me, they don't exist."‡

He concludes his speech with a long and mocking laugh.

The film was made in 1977, with a tiny budget, amateur equipment and a single professional actor. All the other actors were friends of the director. *Jubilee* attracted a great deal of attention even from the Establishment because its artistic caliber could not

* Numbers 20:11: "And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly" – trans.

† Real name: Jack Birkett – trans.

‡ C of E = Church of England. Text obtained from <http://nocturnis.atspace.org/jubilee.htm> - trans.

be ignored. It was not a protest. It was an indictment of the culture of the Establishment using the Establishment's own cultural symbols. Following the success of *Jubilee*, Jarman was invited to direct a film version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. He made a film that impressed all Shakespeare admirers. After that he made about another dozen films, most of them innovative, including *The Angelic Conversation*, in which he expressed movement by means of a series of extreme slow-motion sequences. Here too he introduced innovative film effects that others copied. In 1992, at age 50, he fell ill with AIDS. He made a few short films documenting his cottage by the sea near Dungeness, and he died in 1994, aged 52. His last film was called *Blue* and shows nothing but a blue screen *without any images!* Only Jarman's voice is heard in the background, as he describes how he copes with AIDS.

It takes a lot of courage to make a film in which there is not a single image.

Is *Blue* boring? No. Nor is it whiney. It contains not a shred of self-pity.

R.I.P. Derek. Your films testify to what you were.

16. Can an airplane be a musical instrument?

The following account is intended to help the reader understand what the “1960s culture” was and the difference between it and the current hierarchical culture.

From 1964 to 1990 I lived in London and attended many concerts, some of them classical and some of them Rock. To clarify the difference between the two cultures I will compare a philharmonic orchestra with a Rock band. The differences between them are telling.

The structure of a philharmonic orchestra is static and hierarchical. The musicians sit in assigned places and produce sounds according to written rules that are set up in front of them. Coordination between musicians and the emphases they endow their sounds with are dictated by one controller – the conductor – who is in effect the dictator of the sound producing work. The structure of an orchestra is centralized and hierarchical. There is a single conductor, and sometimes there is a soloist. There is an assigned first violin, an assigned second violin, and so on. The second violin is subordinate to the first one and both are subordinate to the soloist who is subordinate to the conductor. The way the sounds are produced – and consumed – is predetermined. No unplanned improvisations are allowed to emerge in the course of the performance. Everything is planned beforehand; there are no surprises. The audience enjoys hearing a known tune. The audience itself is passive; they sit in chairs and do not move. They listen but do not dance or sing. They are passive listeners.

This set up of the philharmonic orchestra reflects – and reinforces – a particular social mentality and setup that repeats itself also at work, at home, and at school.

A rock concert reflects and reinforces a different social mentality. It is dynamic, not static: everyone moves. In a non-commercialized rock band, which does not adjust itself to the taste of the audience (and there are such), there is no conductor, there are no musical scores and there are no seats. The musicians – and the audience – stand or dance free-style (not stylized and dictated in advance) and their movements strengthen the experience of the sound. They coordinate the producing of the sounds by listening to - and watching - each other, without a musical score or conductor. Even when a tune is known it is always open to improvisation. The audience – or some of them – dance. When a person dances, it is not only the hearing centre in his brain that is influenced by the sounds, but every muscle in his body.

A muscle functions differently from a nerve. A muscle is like a spring that stretches and contracts whereas a nerve is similar to a pipe through which a liquid flows. A spring is active but a pipe is passive. The audience at a rock show is active whereas the audience at

a philharmonic concert is passive. The musical experience at an authentic rock concert (not in the commercialized versions that flood the market) is dynamic and the audience participates in it not as passive observers but as active participants. What is said here is not a value judgement but an explanation of the differences between two physical setups expressing two different mentalities that many experienced for the first time in the 1960s.

The following describes my experience at one out of many rock concerts I attended.

In the summer of 1976 I got tickets for a Pink Floyd concert. I had listened to that band for the first time in 1971 on their album *Atom Heart Mother*. A friend had recommended the album to me. I listened to it. But at first it sounded to me like a pot being rubbed with steel wool. Some time after that, “with a little help from my friends,” as the Beatles song goes, my mind was in a more suitable state. I put on headphones (it’s essential for that band) to listen to the album again – and entered a different world.

At this juncture I must warn the reader that the following description is an attempt to convey a non-verbal experience that is hard to describe in words. Those who have experienced it – and there are many who have – will understand what is being said, and the verbal description will be comprehensible to them. Those who have not experienced it are likely not to understand what is being said, and may interpret the words as pretentious prattle. That is a risk I have to take.

The sounds of the “Pink Floyd” band are like the soundtrack of a film. They create a “film” in the mind of the listener *but the listener does not merely watch the film but participates in the experience that the soundtrack creates*. It is a new kind of listening. The listener is not listening passively to the tune and the words, but *is a participant in the experience that the sounds create*.

The band creates a sea of sound in which the listener swims. Often there is no tune that can be repeated, just sounds, not all of which are musical – for example the ticking of clocks, the screeching of car brakes, an egg being fried in a pan, the dripping of tap water, breakfast cereal being swallowed, the sounds of cash registers – that cannot be represented by musical notes. A listener with *headphones* hears sounds not *in* the ears but *between* the ears – *inside* the head. It is a different kind of listening. The listener does not “hear” the sound, but “experiences” it. The difference is like the psychological difference between *hearing* water and *swimming in* water. Every Pink Floyd “song” creates a different kind of experience.

Pink Floyd developed special effects to endow their sounds with a three-dimensional space quality. Thus, for example, in the album *Ummagumma* there is a section that recreates the experience of a nap in the grass, by the side of a river, on a summer day, with insects buzzing in the air, a flock of wild ducks making a running take-off on the water and flying from the right ear to the left ear. Everything is relaxed and calm.

Suddenly heavy steps are heard coming down a wooden staircase and somebody with a fly-swatter chases a fly, swats at it, and after a few swats, crushes it.

I have seen people who were listening to that track and suddenly took off the headphones and went to see who was coming down the stairs. The experience was that convincing.

A gimmick? Not with the Floyd. Whoever listens to the albums they created – when Roger Waters was the band's soloist and planner of its shows – knows that with the Floyd every experience serves to convey a message, not in order to impress. Thus for example, the sound of the cash registers at the beginning of *The Dark Side of the Moon* is used to evoke the pursuit of money and not to impress the listener with a gimmick. The Floyd refused to appear in television commercials. During the eighteen years when they were active, before they broke up, they released an album every two years on average. They do not have a single song that brings to mind "show business." There are no tunes that were designed to please an audience. They don't pander to current tastes and fashions. Their sounds express a critical observation of humanity, society, nature and the universe. Much thought was invested in every album. They do not follow successful musical themes that they repeat; every album introduces something new in relation to its predecessor. Their shows were integrated sound and light shows, innovative and **unique**, in which the lighting did not flash to the beat of the music but created a unique visual experience that went beyond the audio experience. It included giant puppets, movies (on three different screens) unusual props like giant barrage balloons (shaped like a pig) and real airplanes.

Every show of theirs was a unique event. It was impossible to repeat a concert because of the complexity of the equipment that created the visual experience. The concert in 1976 took place in the bosom of nature, at Knebworth Castle about 80 kilometres north-west of London. The shows began on the Friday night and continued all through Saturday until Sunday evening. Seven or eight different bands appeared there. The Floyd appeared at the end of the concert.

The site of the concert was a wooded area. We parked the car and walked through a forest to an old palace on a hill next to a big circular clearing in the forest that was about one kilometre in diameter. It was covered with grass and sloping down gently towards a small stream. That was our "auditorium". On the near bank of the stream stood a giant stage for the bands and around the "auditorium" stood four giant barricades of speakers. The sounds surrounded us from all sides with enormous power (like headphones at full volume). The audience settled on the grass. The slope enabled everyone to see the stage. The press reported the next day that the audience numbered about half a million people. But we felt no congestion or crowding. The atmosphere was relaxed. Everything was done at a lazy pace. No one rushed. We sprawled on the grass and ate salad to the sounds of the Steve Miller Band that conveyed to us the experience of fog in San Francisco Bay. After that, we snoozed on the grass or watched the clouds drift across the sky. Around us,

at the edge of the forest, dozens of portable toilets were set up and people streamed to them constantly. I lay on the grass about a hundred meters from the edge of the forest, and every few minutes someone stepped over me on his way to the toilets. Every person in such need had to seek out spots to set their feet down among those who were sprawled on the ground. In conformity with the norms of English politeness, we were constantly addressed with “excuse me” and “thank you.” Those who had gone then returned from the toilets and again apologized for the discomfort they were causing, but nobody got annoyed and nobody got trampled on.

Watching the sky I fell asleep and woke up to the touch of a hand. I opened my eyes and saw the sky and a hand offering me a joint. Someone sprawled behind me, with his head near mine was offering me a “toke” by stretching his arm backwards. I did not see who it was and he/she did not see me. It was not one of my friends. To this day I do not know who it was. I took the joint, inhaled and returned it to the anonymous hand. Not a word was said. At the time it all seemed natural. But when I thought about it the next day it occurred to me that whoever hands a joint to an unknown stranger at a concert is taking a great risk. How can he know I’m not an undercover policeman who will arrest him for smoking dope? He can’t. I still ponder the trust that was revealed by that simple gesture. It reflected the general atmosphere at that concert.

The Steve Miller Band finished playing and the audience applauded. The stage-hands cleared the band’s equipment and the audience expected to see Pink Floyd’s equipment appear. But the Floyd did not appear. Half an hour passed and the stage remained empty. Rumours spread that the Floyd were appearing in Holland and would be late for the show here. The audience waited patiently. It was evening and the red sun descended to the horizon behind the stage. In the distance a buzzing sound was heard, but no one paid attention to it. People chatted, laughed or gazed at the sky. The buzzing got stronger but the audience ignored it as it was unrelated to the concert. It was a minor disturbance. When the buzzing turned into the roar of engines we looked to see where it was coming from and saw two airplanes coming in our direction from the red sun setting behind the stage. They were flying low, about a hundred meters above ground. Their engine roar was the sound of piston engines, not jets. When they got close we could see them clearly. They were two Royal Air Force fighter planes from the Second World War – Spitfires (“spit fire”). In Britain the Spitfire is not just an airplane but a symbol. That aircraft saved Britain from being invaded by the Nazi army in 1940. Britain was then fighting the Nazis alone, because France and many countries of Europe had surrendered to the Nazis and the United States and the Soviet Union had not yet joined the war. Britain fought alone, facing Hitler who was trying to win air superiority over Britain in preparation for invading her. But the Spitfires of the Royal Air Force shot down many Nazi planes and prevented them from gaining air superiority over Britain. Without ruling Britain’s air-space an army invading Britain would be destroyed by the RAF. Hitler failed to win air

superiority and had to call off the invasion. The prime minister of Britain, Winston Churchill, said then of the Spitfire pilots: **“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”**

For the Second World War generation the Spitfire symbolizes the audacity to fight for freedom even when the odds are against you as it was known that the Nazi army at that time was much stronger than the British army. But to the generation of the 1960s the Spitfire symbolized the culture of their parents, against which they rebelled. The Spitfire went out of production in 1950 and the British air force switched to jet planes. Only fanatical devotees continued to keep Spitfires in airworthy condition. We were sure that the planes would pass over us and continue on their way and were very surprised to see them circling around us and greeting us by rocking their wings. After two passes, they flew back into the red sun setting behind the stage. We saw them flying into the sunset and heard the drone of their engines fading in the distance when suddenly it was joined by a guitar sound – from the speakers. We looked at the stage and were surprised to see Pink Floyd there. The new sound came from the guitar of Roger Waters, the band’s soloist and the designer of its shows. At first the sound of Waters’ guitar was in harmony with the sounds of the airplanes as if he were flying alongside them. Suddenly it separated from them and took off, like a rocket gathering speed, and launched into the sound of “Wish You Were Here.” The parting of Waters’ guitar chord from the sound of the Spitfire engines expressed – emotionally and spiritually – the feeling of cultural parting that the 1960s generation felt towards the WW2 culture of their parents’ generation. It was a clear statement by the post-war generation to their parents’ generation: *“You go your way, and we’ll go ours.”*

A minute after the Spitfires’ departure, the audience suddenly realized that the Spitfire flight was the opening of the concert. It was not accidental but planned by the Floyd. When the audience grasped this, half a million people spontaneously rose to their feet - together - and applauded. They needed a minute to understand three things:

1. The Spitfires’ flight was a planned part of the concert.
2. It was a statement by 1960s generation to their parents’ – WW2 - generation:

“You go your way, and we’ll go ours.”

3. Even the sound of aircraft engines can have musical significance if it is integrated into the overall meaning of a musical work.

That experience broadened our sensitivity to sounds far beyond regular listening to a concert with standard musical instruments that produce sounds that have been defined in advance as “music.” A Spitfire is not a musical instrument, and it was not designed to be one; but every sound, even the drone of an engine, can acquire musical significance if it

conveys a meaning successfully integrated into the comprehensive sense of the particular musical work. The Floyd showed that every sound – not just those that were intended in advance to be interpreted as “music” – can have musical meaning, and listening to music is not just paying attention to a tune but absorbing of meanings from sounds. The Floyd overcame the compartmentalization of sounds into “musical” and “non-musical” separating the sound of an engine from the sound of a guitar. They awoke sensitivity to sounds that were not purposely created to be heard as “music.”

To “understand” that is one thing, to *experience* it in a live performance is a completely different matter, which gives a feeling of spiritual uplift.

The Floyd’s Knebworth concert created for many in the audience, who knew Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Grieg, Mahler, Satie and Stockhausen – a new sensitivity to sound.

After the concert I pondered the efforts invested in planning and executing the Spitfire scene. The idea to open the concert with Spitfires was original and brilliant. But its execution required a great deal of money and preparation. All had to be planned well in advance. They had to determine what time the sun would set at the concert site, and at what point on the horizon, on the day of the concert. They had to situate the stage so that the sun would set behind it. They had to find Spitfires that were airworthy and available for rent. They had to find pilots licensed to fly Spitfires who would practice a low-level flight that would come from - and return to - the setting sun. They had to get permission from the authorities for a low flight. It all required thought, planning, work and of course, money. The Floyd invested a lot of time, effort, and money in that concert, and the investment paid off. Not only monetarily, but especially spiritually: half a million participants in the show had an experience that broadened their sensitivity to sound, their consciousness, and the overall way they experienced life

I was very fortunate to have been present at that concert.

17. The loneliness of Eleanor Rigby.

When I came to London (from Israel) in July 1964 I noticed a strange phenomenon. All the babies I saw sitting alone in their prams were silent. They sat, sometimes for an hour or more, and gazed into space silently. In Israel babies left alone scream with all their might, and people rush to find the parents. In Britain I saw them sitting silently for hours in front gardens where their mothers left them to soak up some sunshine, or outside Laundromats while their mothers busied themselves inside with laundry. Sometimes a few prams stood side-by-side outside a Laundromat, in each sat a baby staring into space. All were silent as fish for an hour or longer. Not one of them cried or screamed. I was puzzled. I saw it again and again, in different parts of Britain, and concluded that the phenomenon was a social one, and not an isolated, exceptional, case. As I had come from Israel, where I had not seen anything like it, I was greatly puzzled by this. I knew it was not the natural behavior of babies, and wondered why it was so common in Britain.

That riddle preoccupied me for many years, and only 14 years later did I find the answer. Another strange phenomenon that I first encountered in Britain was the feeling of loneliness felt by many British people. In Israel I had not come across such a thing, and so I did not understand it. When people told me that they suffered from “loneliness” I thought that meant that it was hard for them to be without the company of other people. But in Britain I met people who suffered from loneliness even when they were surrounded by friends. One time, when I was sitting in a pub sipping my pint of bitter, a stranger sat down beside me and began to tell me the story of his life. I was not surprised. It is common in British pubs, where the sociable side of British people finds expression. In a pub people will pour their hearts out to a total stranger as if he were a brother, but the next day on the street they will pass by him as a stranger. In British pubs people do not buy drinks only for themselves, but also for their friends. When British people drink in a group, each one in turn offers to pay for the next “round”. People drink in a pub not because they are addicted to alcohol but in order to have a social meeting. British people prefer to meet in pubs rather than at home. Every group of friends have their favorite pub. There are pubs of local residents, of construction workers, of stage actors, of lawyers or journalists. Every pub has two sections. The public Bar (hence “pub”), where people enter in work-clothes, and the “saloon” bar, where people enter dressed in their Sunday best. The same counter serves both, but in the “saloon” bar the price is a little higher than in the public bar. Many pubs have a hall that can be rented for events for a low fee. The beer itself is lukewarm and is sipped slowly, like people in Israel crack sunflower seeds.

The stranger who sat down beside me and began to tell me the story of his life concluded with the words: *“You are born alone and die alone, and that’s all there is to life.”*

I did not want to argue, and nodded. But as I had never suffered from loneliness, the conclusion seemed odd to me. Over the years I saw that loneliness is a social phenomenon in Britain. The words of the man in the pub expressed the view of millions of British people. I was convinced of that when I heard the Beatles’ song “Eleanor Rigby”, in which the following line is repeated over and over: *“All those lonely people where do they all come from? All the lonely people where do they all belong?”*

These two phenomena – the silence of the babies and the feeling of loneliness – preoccupied me for a long time, but it never occurred to me that there was any link between them. I am not a psychologist who studies mental problems; what motivated me was interest in people. The phenomena that I had encountered in Britain surprised and saddened me. I wondered what caused so many people to behave, and to feel, so differently from what I felt. The solution to the riddle came from an unexpected quarter.

In 1974 Tamar, a friend from Israel came for a visit, and stayed. As a child she had suffered from a compulsive urge to commit suicide. After a number of suicide attempts, she was hospitalized, received psychological treatment and the urge weakened but did not disappear. She went to the British psychiatrist R. D. Laing for help to overcome her compulsive urge once and for all, and Laing's treatment did relieve her of it. After the treatment, she became a student of Laing, who was a famous anti-Establishment psychiatrist and one of the few who were popular among the non-parliamentary Left. When she recovered she began to work as a therapist for children who suffered from psychological disturbances and had gotten in trouble with the law. Four years later she got pregnant (not by me...). The year was 1978, and the theory of the French obstetrician Leboyer was fashionable. He criticized the medical establishment for focusing on the mother giving birth rather than on the baby being born. Leboyer stressed that leaving the womb is the most traumatic event in life because in the womb life is secure, lights and sounds are subdued, there is no sense of weight and the mother's heartbeat gives a feeling of stability and security. Outside the womb lights glare, sounds are grating, gravity is burdensome, there are unexpected stimuli from various sources, and the sensation of security and stability is lost. Leboyer recommended that the baby be calmed down after exiting the womb. Only dim light should be used, silence should be maintained and the baby should not be spanked so as to start him breathing - life should not start with a slap. The baby should be placed in a bath of lukewarm water and allowed to float for a while, to negate the sensation of gravity and to recover its calm after the trauma of the birth. Floating in warm water is like floating in the womb, the force of gravity is neutralized, and the fear of the new, hostile environment is weakened. My friend asked me to come with her to a preparatory course for birth in the Leboyer method. I agreed, and we went to several sessions. Finally the big day arrived, the day of birth. My friend asked me to be at her side, to wipe her lips with a moist kerchief, to hold her hand, to encourage her and to bring a camera to film the birth. When my daughter was born in Jerusalem in 1960 it did not occur to any father to be present at birth. It did not even occur to mothers to ask their husbands to do that. But by 1978 it was no longer unusual. Being present at a birth was one of the most powerful experiences of my life, and I recommend to every father to be at the side of his girlfriend while she gives birth.

It was the only time in my life that I regretted I had been born male. Birth without painkillers is a most powerful experience. I felt that in comparison to giving birth, everything a man does in his life is like playing. The experience of giving birth is painful and intense, but also very encouraging. When my friend was struck by contractions she yelled wildly like an animal. Two black nurses at her side kept shouting, "*Push! Push! Push!*" I was utterly terrified and shocked – by the intensity of the pain and of the screams. How much pain can a person tolerate? How will she survive the next

contraction? What will happen to her? But right after screaming she raised her head and asked in a matter-of-fact tone: *“Aki, did you take a photo?”* The sudden change from an animal scream of pain to a businesslike question stunned me. It happened again and again. First a terrible scream of pain and immediately after, the matter of fact question *“did you take a photo?”* At first I was too shocked and forgot to use the camera but after the third time I calmed down, and took pictures. That baby has a picture of himself with his head protruding from the womb. In the years that have passed since then, the presence of the father at the birth has become common, but at that time most men still had no idea about the experience of giving birth. After the birth the husband would ask: *“How did it go?”* And the standard reply was: *“OK”* or *“a little pain, but not terrible.”* And that was the end of the matter. The woman said to her husband *“OK”* because she knew that no verbal explanation could make him understand what she had undergone, so there was no point in explaining. A verbal explanation is very remote from the actual experience. Usually that **“OK”** means *“I had hellish pains and thought that I would die, but at the end we got a baby, and the pain is behind me. All’s well that ends well, there’s no point in talking about what happened because you wouldn’t understand it in any case.”*

After attending that birth I went home. The next day I came to visit Tamar in the maternity ward. It was an old hospital (Hammersmith West) where all the patients lay in large common halls and not in private rooms. There were some 30 new mothers in that maternity ward in beds lined up along two walls. When I entered that ward the noise hit me like a blow on the head from a policeman’s baton. Along the walls of the old hall stood beds, next to each stood a cradle, and in it a crying baby. All the babies were crying non-stop. I was amazed and asked Tamar: *“Why are all the babies crying non-stop, and why are their mothers not calming them?”* In reply she moved her arm in a circular motion to point all around the hall she said: *“Because all those stupid women got instructions from their mothers and their doctors to nurse the baby only “on time” fixed in advance and not “on demand” when the baby cries, so that the mother’s life will not be subordinated to the baby’s needs. That’s how they train their babies. They let them cry without attending to them on purpose - to train them. I attend to my baby whenever he cries, and put him on my breast to calm, comfort, or feed him.”*

To me Tamar’s attitude seemed obvious, even necessary. But in an industrial society where many mothers work in factories, the agenda of many women is determined by the workplace clock, and many mothers can feed their babies only at times fixed in advance and not when the baby wants it. They start to train their babies in the maternity ward right after the birth. In all my visits to the maternity ward the babies never stopped crying - not the next day, or the day after. On the fourth day I began to wonder - *“What does that do - emotionally - to the baby?”* Crying is a call for help. A baby cries because something is bothering it. It is suffering and is asking for help. If there is no reply, it calls again, and if there is still no reply, it will keep crying. But after four days of unanswered crying, the baby despairs. The absence of an answer to its cries teaches it that there is no point in crying because no one will come to help. In other words: *“It concludes - emotionally - that it is alone and that nobody will help it.”* No wonder all those babies outside the Laundromats sat in their prams without uttering a sound! They had been trained from the moment they emerged from the womb that crying is useless. Four days of continuous

unanswered crying in the maternity ward shaped the baby's emotions for the rest of its life. It concluded - emotionally - *that no help can be expected from others, that every person is alone in the world from birth to death.* Thus did I find - after being puzzled for fourteen years - the reason for the silence of the babies, as well as all those British people's sense of loneliness. It was not the mothers' fault; they were victims themselves. The practice of "feeding on time and not on demand" was the culprit ruining the lives of millions of people. If I had the means I would launch a global publicity campaign to convince all mothers to nurse their babies "on demand" rather than "on time". It would not cost a penny and would improve the lives of millions of people - especially in industrialized societies. It would bring warmth, security, and good feelings to the lives of millions of people who are suffering - needlessly - from loneliness. It would save people and society vast sums of money spent on psychological treatments.

The Beatles were *clinically* right when they sang in their song, that "all you need is love." And there is a particular need to feel loved in the very first days of life. Those who feel that they are loved in the first days of their lives will be emotionally secure *all* their lives, and not suffer from loneliness even when they are - physically - alone. They will not crave love-substitutes like fame and adulation. Those who do not feel they are loved in the first days of their lives will suffer from loneliness all their lives. That is the reason for the emotional calmness of many Bedouins I met in the Sinai. A Bedouin friend told me that Bedouin mothers nurse their babies sometimes up to age of seven. Even when a child eats normal food the mother lets it cling to her breast, to calm it or to give it emotional security. And the Bedouin technique of weaning is also very considerate. Bedouin mothers do not pry their babies off their breast. They spread a bitter juice on the nipple. That causes the baby to wean itself without feeling rejected. When such a baby becomes an adult it does not suffer from the "*I can't live without you*" syndrome which appears whenever a romantic relationship is broken off (a subject that is the bread-and-butter of the entertainment - and crime prevention - industry), which often leads to murder or suicide. Whoever separates from the mother's breast without a trauma will suffer less in future emotional separations as they will not awaken the pain of the primal separation.

In the Beatles song "Eleanor Rigby", their observation "*all those lonely people*" is repeated *ten* times and they ask *three* times "*where do they all come from?*" Many British people - including doctors and psychiatrists - have no answer, or remedy. I have: *They come from nursing babies "on time" rather than "on demand"*. The remedy? Always feed your newborn baby when it demands it.

Responding to *every* baby's distress signal will mold an emotionally-secure core that does not suffer from loneliness, enjoys life and is sensitive to the emotional needs of others. It will not cost a penny and will save - for individuals and for the entire society - much avoidable suffering - and a lot of money paid to psychiatrists and clinics.

Long ago the Beatles song "Elinor Rigby" suggested the cure: "*All you need is love*". Most people saw it merely as a line in a song. I see it as medical advice.

P.S. Why are there no lessons on proper parenthood - and couplehood - in every school?

18. Lord Caradon

In the spring of 1969 I was invited by the Leeds University Socialist Students' Society to participate in a day of study on the Israel-Arab conflict. Such study-days were common in those days. Some months earlier, in 1968, the Israeli Army (IDF) attacked the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) camped in the Palestinian refugee camp Karameh, in Jordan. Over the Suez Canal Egypt waged a "War of Attrition" against the Israeli army holding the eastern bank. Many people in Britain wanted to understand why hostilities between Israel and the Arab states were continuing despite the surprising Israeli victory in the 1967 war, and why the two sides did not start peace negotiations.

When I arrived at the Leeds railway station I found two students waiting for me. They told me that they were expecting another guest speaker – Lord Caradon. I was surprised. Lord Caradon (his original name was Hugh Foot) was Britain's representative at the United Nations and had drafted Resolution 242 of the UN Security Council, which was passed on 22 November 1967 as the guiding policy for a solution to the problems that were created in Palestine in consequence of the 1967 war. That Resolution called on Israel to withdraw from territories that it had conquered in the 1967 war in return for a peace pact with the Arab states. In 1977 an agreement in that spirit pacified Israeli-Egyptian relations and led to the signing of the Sadat-Begin peace treaty with Egypt in 1979, which, if it had been signed in 1970 when Sadat offered it to Golda Meir, would have prevented the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Had Israel accepted Resolution 242, the two Palestinian Intifadas (1987-1993 and 2000-2005) and their armed struggle would not have broken out. Resolution 242 did not call for withdrawal from *all* the territories Israel occupied in 1967 and *did not even mention the Palestinians*, therefore I was against it. I insisted on total and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all the territories Israel occupied in 1967 and recognition of the Palestinian people as a political entity with full national rights in Palestine. Most Israelis opposed this. They wanted to keep all conquered territories and insisted that "there is no Palestinian people".

I had heard of Hugh Foot and knew that during the period of British rule in Palestine (1918-1948) he had been an Assistant District Commissioner (ADC) in the Nablus area. I had been told that by his son, Paul Foot, who was a famous Left journalist in London in the 1960s and 1970s and a member of a left-wing British group "International Socialism" (IS) founded by Ygal Gluckstein (a.k.a. Tony Cliff), who was born in Zikhron-Yaakov in Palestine. Paul was a well-known figure in extra-parliamentary Left circles in Britain. I was surprised that the British representative at the UN had found time to give a talk to students. My British hosts and I were apprehensive while awaiting that senior official. After some time a solid big man with bushy eyebrows appeared and said: "I am Paul Foot's father." We all laughed. His joke broke the ice.

We shook hands and got into the students' car. It was a tiny Morris Mini in which the back seats were very narrow. I turned to Foot, who was a big man, and said: "*I will sit in the back, and you in front.*" He emphatically refused. "*By no means,*" he said. "*You come from the place we are taking about and so you are the guest of honor. I insist that you sit in front and I in back.*" I tried to argue, but in vain. He insisted that I sit in the

roomy front seat while he sat in the cramped back seat. On the way I asked him what he thought of Abba Eban, Israel's representative at the United Nations. His reply was: "*He does his case more harm than good.*" That surprised me because in Israel Eban was lauded as a UN star. It seems that the reality differed from what we had been told in Israel.

I remembered an acquaintance who went to hear Eban speak at "Beit ha-'Am" ("House of the People") in Tel Aviv in 1952. When he returned I asked him what Eban had said. He replied: "*What a brilliant diplomat: he spoke for two hours and didn't say a thing.*" He meant it as a compliment. It turned out that in the UN they thought otherwise. When we arrived at the campus, we got out of the car and stretched our arms and legs. We were standing on top of a hill, and the campus was spread out below us. The sun appeared briefly between the clouds, and a spot of blue sky was visible for a moment. Lord Caradon stretched his limbs saying: "*What a wonderful world,*" adding a moment later: "*and only human beings ruin it.*" When I heard that observation my respect for him grew. That's not something Abba Eban would have said.

A few hundred students came to the meeting. I do not remember what Hugh Foot said.

I said that the conflict between Israel and the Arab world was not a conflict between Jews and Arabs, and certainly not between Islam and Judaism. These had lived together in peace for hundreds of years, and there is no cause for conflict between them. The conflict was caused by the Zionist immigration and settlement in Palestine and the establishment of an exclusivist ethnic-state for Jews in a country that was inhabited continuously by Palestinians for 1,300 years. Moreover, most Israelis insist there is no Palestinian people, but only some Arabs who happen to live in Palestine. Most Israelis reject all Palestinian demands for political independence in any part of Palestine.

An Israeli student in the audience burst out: "*Whom do you represent? You do not represent Israeli public opinion! How many Israelis agree with what you say?*"

I replied: "*You're right. I represent myself and the Israeli group Matzpen. Most Israelis disagree with our views and insist there is no Palestinian people with whom it is necessary to reach a compromise.*"

Then I asked him: "*Tell the audience your view - is there a Palestinian people, or not?*" I held the microphone out to him, but he fled from the hall without replying.

Foot turned to me and said: "*I have not heard such clear words on the conflict in Palestine in a long time.*"

Next summer I went to Israel on vacation and met Matzpen activist and editor of its magazine, Haim Hanegbi. He told me the following story: after Israel's victory in the 1967 war, the Israeli Foreign Ministry invited Lord Caradon to visit Israel. They knew about his role during the British Mandate and wanted to show him how liberally Israel treated the Palestinians in the Israeli newly-occupied "West Bank" and "Gaza Strip".

They wanted to influence Britain to adopt a friendlier attitude to Israel at the UN, recognizing its *“enlightened occupation”* (a common Israeli expression in those days). Lord Caradon came for a week’s visit. The Israeli Foreign Ministry put a car with a driver at his disposal. For most of the visit he was taken to places the Israeli Foreign Ministry wanted him to see. On his last day he told the driver, *“today I will tell you where to drive.”* The driver had no idea his passenger knew the country well. Lord Caradon directed the driver to Nablus, and from there to a nearby Palestinian village. He then directed the driver to a particular house in the village. When they reached the house, he got out of the car, went to the door and knocked. When the door was opened, he asked the name of the owner of the house. When he heard the name, he said: *“Thirty years ago I was the British ADC in the Nablus District. The Palestinians were in revolt against Britain (from 1936 to 1939 – AO) a member of your family participated in an attack on a British police station. I sentenced him and gave the order to have this house blown up. I regret that and have come to ask your forgiveness.”*

I don’t know if they forgave him. But I do know that no Israeli military – or civilian – governor in occupied Palestine ever asked for forgiveness from a single Palestinian family for having blown up hundreds of their homes. I was not surprised to hear about Hugh Foot’s behavior because it was consistent with the impression I had of him in the Mini Minor at Leeds. However, on another occasion, he did indeed surprise me.

In Jerusalem in 1997 I met a delegation from the British organization “Medical Aid for Palestine”, which collected donations and medical supplies and sent volunteer doctors and nurses to assist the Palestinian health system. The organization was chaired by Lord Ian Gilmour who was Defense Secretary under Prime Minister Edward Heath and was briefly a member of Margaret Thatcher’s cabinet. I met Lord Gilmour in Jerusalem in 1997 and asked him about Lord Caradon. He was surprised: *“Haven’t you heard that he died?”* I apologized that I had not heard about it. Lord Gilmour added: *“Then you do not know what his last request was.”* *“To my regret, no,”* I replied.

Lord Gilmour said: *“He asked to be buried wrapped in the Palestinian national flag.”*

I still wonder why the last request of the British representative at the UN, the ADC of Nablus in the 1930s, who had held many important governmental positions in Britain, was to be buried draped in the national flag of Palestine rather than, say, the British flag.

19. A Brutal Revolution

In the autumn of 1972 Haim Hanegbi came to visit in London and together we went to visit Erich Fried. During the visit, we heard on the BBC that members of a Jewish-Arab left-wing group had been arrested and accused of spying for Syria. I suspected that it was a provocation by the Israeli security services, but Haim said that there was probably a basis for the accusations. Later it turned out that he was right. Some former members of Matzpen, who were not satisfied with its purely political activism and left the organization, had set up a new Jewish-Arab organization to conduct *armed* struggle against the Israeli Occupation, in order to promote the independence of Palestine. They wanted to operate like the clandestine armed section of the African National Congress (ANC) fighting the white racist regime in South Africa. That is, to strike at military and economic installations of the racist regime (electrical grid, rail lines, ports, bridges, etc.) in order to force it to allocate resources to defending its infra-structure from those attacks, thereby damaging its economy. Members of the Jewish-Arab network were all people of the Left, and some of them, like the ANC in South Africa, were ex-Communist Party members. They rejected attacks on civilians, which they saw as morally unacceptable and politically harmful. Members of the Jewish-Arab network travelled to Cyprus and Turkey and there they met a former Israeli citizen, a Palestinian native of Haifa who had been arrested by the Israeli security services (without being tried) but was later released from prison on condition that he leave Israel. He lived in Damascus. Members of the network expected him to put them in contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Damascus. They did not know that he was working for the Syrian intelligence service, and also, apparently, for the Israeli intelligence service. He took them to Damascus and introduced them to some people who posed as PLO men but were actually members of Syrian intelligence. It is a near certainty that he also reported them to Israeli intelligence. When they returned to Israel they tried to set up a “network” that would transmit current information about Israel to Syria. Most of the information was gleaned from the Israeli daily press. They were arrested by the Israeli security services in 1972 before they could carry out any act of sabotage, and put on trial for treason and espionage. They were convicted and sentenced to long prison terms. The network was headed by a Palestinian from Haifa named Daud Turki. I knew him as a committed Communist activist in the 1950s and as one of the first Arab members of Matzpen. He was sentenced to 17 years in prison, but was released after 12 years in an exchange Israel made in 1985 with ex-PLO man Ahmad Jibril. In that deal Israel freed 1,150 Palestinian prisoners in return for three Israeli prisoners. When I returned to Israel in the summer of 1990, I went to visit him at his home in Wadi Nisnas in Haifa. In that neighborhood, a little bit of the ambiance of Haifa of the British period (1918-1948), when most residents of Haifa were Arabs, was preserved. Daud told me that he had been born in 1928 in the village of Maghar (“Caves”) near Safed. When he was a baby his family moved to Haifa, where he grew up. He worked for a British export firm (“Steel” brothers) and learned English. He never hated Jews and had many Jewish friends. He rebelled against injustice and oppression, and opposed Zionism and the partition of Palestine. He refused to accept that the UN had the right to partition Palestine. He believed in one state, a secular and democratic one with equal rights for all its residents – Jews and Arabs – in the entire territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. After the creation of the State of Israel in

1948 he joined the Israeli Communist Party because he saw it as a force that opposed oppression and fought for equal political and economic rights and defended the rights of the Palestinian people. After 15 years as a Communist activist he despaired of the Communist Party because of the lack of democracy within it, and because of its support for the partition of Palestine on the basis of the principle of “*two states for two nations*” and its opposition to the creation of a single secular and democratic state in the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. He left the Communist Party and joined the Matzpen group that had been set up by former members of the Communist Party who believed in socialist revolution all over the Middle East. When Matzpen decided in 1965 to support the journalist Uri Avnery’s list, which did not espouse social and economic equality, for election to the Knesset, Daud left Matzpen. After the 1967 war he decided to contribute to the Palestinian struggle without joining any organization. Thus he arrived at the idea of creating an Arab-Jewish “network”, and began to set it up. The court in Haifa accused him of treason. That was absurd, as a person cannot betray something to which he has never been loyal. Daud had never been loyal to Zionism or to the State of Israel and had always considered them as enemies. He had never sworn allegiance to Israel and had not signed any document to that effect. How could he “betray” something that he had always fought against? Could Nelson Mandela betray the White racist regime in South-Africa? He certainly hated it and fought it, but never “betrayed” it. Daud's position on Israel was identical to Mandella's position on White racist South Africa. Daud stated this explicitly and publicly on many occasions.

Daud was - and remained - loyal to the struggle against discrimination and oppression anywhere in the world, and against the oppression of the Palestinian people in particular. The fact that there were Jewish members in the “network” proves that it was not directed against Jews but against oppression. The Jewish public in Israel is so in thrall to nationalistic loyalty that it cannot fathom loyalty to humanity. An Israeli citizen who is loyal to humanity first and foremost and loyal to the State of Israel only if the two loyalties are not in conflict is considered a “traitor” by most Israelis. As was any anti-racist White person in White racist South Africa who opposed racism and Apartheid.

At the end of the reading of the verdict at the trial of the “network” in the Haifa District Court, all the accused rose spontaneously, without any previous coordination, and sang the anthem of the international revolutionary Left, “*The Internationale*”. A Communist who happened to be passing by on the street outside the court was astonished to hear *The Internationale* sung in the court. Such a thing had *never* happened before - or since - in Israel. That fact reveals a basic flaw in the Israeli Communist Party, which - unlike the South African Communist Party - refused to support the creation of a single non-discriminatory state for both Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Since 1948 it insisted on the Two-State solution. One for Jews and one for the Palestinian Arabs. That placed ethnic loyalty above class loyalty and was a sure recipe for the continuation of ethnic strife.

The trial of the “Jewish-Arab network” struck Israel with amazement. Neither Arabs nor Jews had imagined that Israeli citizens of Jewish origin would participate in the Palestinian armed struggle. Many were astonished to learn that one of the members of the

network was the first grandchild of Kibbutz Gan-Shmuel and had been an officer in the IDF paratroopers in the 1967 war.

The Zionist Right made haste to attack the Zionist Left - and the Kibbutzim - on the grounds that their socialist education had caused Jewish youth to join the “network”. The hostility reached such a pitch that a public bus driver refused to stop at the Gan-Shmuel bus stop. The Zionist Right celebrated a moral victory while the Zionist left suffered a moral debacle. Journalists descended on kibbutz Gan-Shmuel like vultures on a carcass and interviewed anyone willing to be interviewed, especially the parents of the paratroop officer who had joined the network.

They asked his mother: *“Do you support what your son did?”* She replied: *“I educated my children to treat all human beings as equals despite all differences between them. If his act stemmed from that, I support it.”* That reply silenced all their nationalistic self-righteous accusations about treason. They departed silently and never mentioned her reply in their press articles.

Daud was released from prison in 1985. When I returned to Israel from London in 1990 I visited him at his home. He showed me a video about his trial that was shown on Israeli television during the trial. The video showed the accused, and the announcer said: *“The accused admitted that they had planned a brutal revolution.”*

I knew Daud as a person who hated brutality. And the other accused, most of them people of the Left, also rejected brutality. They could have been accused of having planned a “socialist revolution”, but not a “brutal revolution”. That term never existed in the vocabulary of any Leftists anywhere. I thought that maybe it was a mistake, but the announcer repeated again and again that the accused had planned a *“brutal revolution”*. I wondered what that was about because no Leftist had ever conjoined the terms “revolution” and “brutal”. Eventually I solved the riddle: As socialist revolutionaries who see industrial workers (“the industrial proletariat”) as the revolutionary force in society, members of the network supported a revolution that would be carried out by industrial workers - the industrial proletariat. This is known in the revolutionary literature as *“proletarian revolution”* (in Hebrew, *“mahpekha proletarit”*). That is a term widely used among the international revolutionary Left. The announcer had heard the words *“mahpekha proletarit”* but did not know what *“proletarit”* meant. People who speak Hebrew with an Arabic accent often pronounce “P” as “B”. So the term, as spoken by Arab defendants in the trial (“broletarit”) sounded to the TV announcer like *“brutalit*. Anyone with minimal knowledge of Left politics would have recognized the term but the prosecutor and TV announcer were ignoramuses so they interpreted “proletarian” (in Hebrew “proletarit”) as “brutal” (in Hebrew, *“brutalit”*). Thus “proletarian revolution” (*“mahpekha proletarit”*) became “brutal revolution” (*“mahpekha brutalit”*).

I do not know who was responsible for that mistake – the TV announcer or the prosecutor. But a “mistake” of that kind reveals the level of ignorance of many in the Israeli Establishment about everything related to the history of social struggles. Mistakes can acquire political significance. The first “Gulf War” in 1991 broke out because of a

mistake. The ruler of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, who was an ally of the United States, asked the US Ambassador April Glaspie how the US would react if Iraq occupied Kuwait, and she replied that the US does not intervene in local conflicts. Saddam interpreted her answer as permission and invaded Kuwait. But the Saudis feared that he would also invade Saudi Arabia and appealed to US President George Bush (Senior), who decided that the invasion endangered US interests. Glaspie was dismissed and the US launched the “First Gulf War” (1991).

In prison Daud organized hunger strikes and campaigns in defense of prisoner rights. He became a leading figure among the Palestinian prisoners in Israel. He spent his time studying classical Arab poetry. In October 1973, when “Yom Kippur” war started and Israel was in a panic as it was taken by surprise by the Egyptian attack, the Head of the prison came to Daud and said: “*When the Egyptian Army conquers this prison, will you please tell them that we treated you well.*” Daud replied “*I do not think the Egyptians intend to conquer Israel. All they want is to liberate the Suez Canal from six years of Israeli occupation. But if they do conquer this prison I shall tell them about your decent treatment of the Palestinian prisoners.*” No wonder the Israeli prison guards respected him. Just as the white prison guards in Robben Island in South Africa respected Nelson Mandela. Politically Daud was the Palestinian equivalent of Mandela.

Prison did not break Daud’s spirit or turn him into a hater of Jews. One day, as he was going to work in the prison, a woman prison guard passed him by and greeted him with “good morning.” She did the same the next day, and the day after. A male guard who saw the encounter forbade her to greet prisoners. She complied.

Daud was impressed by her gesture and wrote a poem to her, entitled “To a cousin” (in Arabic, Jews are referred to as “cousins” because in the Bible story both Ishmael and Isaac are sons of the patriarch Abraham. Isaac is son of Sarah, and Ishmael is son of Hagar. Abraham is considered father of both the Jewish people and the Arab people).

To a Cousin

My cousin walked along the path, beside the barrier she stopped

The envy of the flowers, my gentle cousin Rose

Before my eyes “good morning” glowed with a generous light

Her sweet voice and radiant face caught my ears and heart

Soothing as a moonlit night, lifting a burden from my back

Over my face a glance did wash, from the Rose outside my den

It stole a smile from a hurting heart – that long forgot to smile

Lit up a dreary world, gloomy as the midnight sky
It filled my soul with hope, and over time with peace
How sweet it was to meet, the clear voice lifting my gloom
From a nauseous embrace it swept me to a better place
How good it was to see a doe, on a bright clear day
But from my human cousin, a cat took me away!
Oh woe the black-haired one, who blocked away the light
A heartless guard betrayed us – the path was shuttered tight

Dear reader: do you know a single other case - anywhere - of a prisoner dedicating a poem to a prison guard ?

I don't.

If nothing else that poem illuminates Daud's attitude to ethnic loyalties.

Daud loved football and regularly watched Israeli football league matches on TV before, during, and after, his imprisonment. He was a supporter of the Maccabi Haifa team all his life, even before it employed Palestinian players. He played the Israeli football pools lottery and usually guessed correctly about two thirds of their outcome. On one occasion he won a large sum of money.

After his release from prison, Daud continued to write political poetry. His poems appeared in Arabic newspapers inside Israel and outside it. They were often broadcast on the Communist radio station in Lebanon - "Voice of the People". He was known throughout the Arab world as a fighter for justice, equality and the rights of the Palestinian people who had not been broken by his long prison term. His world-view, political objectives and behavior in prison were identical to those of Nelson Mandela, leader of the struggle against the racist regime that ruled South Africa. Like Mandela, Daud opposed the two-state solution, and like Mandela he supported a single secular democratic state for all the residents of the country.

On the eve of the year 2000 Haifa radio interviewed people older than seventy asking them what they considered to be the most important event of the 20th century. They all mentioned some personal or political event. Only one interviewee answered:

"The most important event in the 20th century was the landing of Man on the moon!"

The interviewer was surprised and asked, "why?" – to which the interviewee replied: *"As long as people could not leave Planet Earth they thought they would always be*

slaves to a superior force that keeps them here. Once they managed to leave Planet Earth they realized that they are not slaves to any superior force. If people can overcome a force of nature surely they can overcome any man-made force.”

The interviewee who said that was Daud Turki.

In 1992 when Arafat was still in Tunisia working to improve his image he invited Daud Turki to visit him - offering him a very large sum of money - but Daud refused. Daud opposed the Rabin-Arafat Oslo Accord (1994) from the start and saw it as the PLO's recognition of Zionism and acceptance of a Palestinian slave-state ruled by Arafat's people. The Oslo Accord abandoned to Zionism a million and a half Palestinians in Israel and broke the political tie between them and the Palestinian people under Arafat's rule. According to the Oslo Accord a Palestinian slave-state in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 would be established for the Palestinians. It would be economically, militarily and politically dominated by Israel. The White racists in South Africa set up such states for Blacks – Bantustans, including one called KwaZulu, which was ruled by a Black leader and a political twin of Arafat named Mangosuthu Buthelezi. The ANC rejected such “solutions”, struggled against them, and established a single, unified non-racist state for all the residents of South Africa. But the PLO agreed to the Bantustan “solution”, and as Shimon Peres said on Israeli television when interviewed after Arafat's death, *“the UN Partition Resolution allocated 45% of the territory of Palestine to the Palestinians. Arafat is the first Arab leader who agreed to accept only 27%.”*

In 1997 Daud's legs were amputated because of gangrene caused by diabetes. It did not break his spirit. He continues to write political poetry. Many readers see him as the authentic voice of the Palestinian conscience. He was not broken by intimidation, money, honours, flattery, a seat in the Knesset, threats or prison. They were all tried on him – and failed. He never hated Jews, he never hated the British who ruled Palestine from 1918 to 1948. He hated no one because of his origin. He hated discrimination and oppression.

Many saw Daud as a Don Quixote who aspired to something that could not be realized, but when he pointed to South Africa, where a single non-racist state was established for Blacks and Whites after 150 years of White racist rule that robbed the Blacks of their freedom, land, independence and the right to vote for the legislature, they were silenced.

This is the man most Israelis hate as a *“traitor”* who tried to launch a *“Brutal Revolution”* that would put an end to oppression.

Postscript

On 9 March 2009, four years after the above lines were published in their original Hebrew version, Daud Turki died in Haifa. He was 81.

R.I.P comrade.

20. Sinai

In July 1975 I went to Israel on vacation, and travelled to the Sinai desert for the first time. It was then under Israeli occupation, so I could go without a visa. In 1970 Israel paved the highway from Eilat to Sharm el-Sheikh because it wanted to annex the Sinai to Israel along the lines of Moshe Dayan's (Israeli Minister of Defense) formulation: **“Sharm el-Sheikh without peace is preferable to peace without Sharm el-Sheikh.”**

One could drive to Sharm in a private car. I drove with my daughter and an Israeli friend in my mother's Peugeot 504. We stocked up on food in Eilat, because there was still no electricity or refrigeration in Sinai. I bought canned and dry food that did not need refrigeration. We had a large cooler full of water, and in Eilat in those days you could buy bags full of ice-cubes to add to the water.

We left Eilat early in the morning to cross the distance to Sharm al-Sheikh before the sun was at its height. The Israeli high-rise hotel at Taba – a visual pollutant of the desert landscape – was not yet built then. Immediately after passing Rafi Nelson's village (I knew Rafi from my seafaring days) we entered the desert landscape. No plants or animals were seen. The area was devoid of man-made structures and the highway was empty. The scene was a lunar landscape, barren but impressive. On the right stood mountains in browns and purples, on the left, the turquoise sea. All glittered in the sun. The silence penetrated our brains. The scenery inspired serenity.

We drove in silence. We didn't make a sound and absorbed the silence in our ears, eyes and minds. The silence seeped into our souls. The constant dialogue that people conduct in their heads ceased. Our focused attention dissipated. We calmed down. Our rate of breathing slowed. Time and thought stood still. We entered a state of consciousness that was not focused on anything. We absorbed experiences without interpreting them. Suddenly, at a bend on the road, we saw a Bedouin standing in the middle of the road in front of us. I stopped and opened a door for him, he got in and sat down in the back without saying a word. I handed him some water. He drank silently. I handed him an apple, and he refused. But he accepted a cigarette. Not a word was uttered during those exchanges. He did not ask where we were going, and we did not ask him where he was going. It didn't matter in the least because there was only one highway. We proceeded on our way without a word. After an hour he tapped lightly on my back and pointed to a hill on the left and signaled to me to turn off the highway. I turned off the highway onto a dirt track that led to the sea. I drove along the seashore until we reached a small bay. Only the whisper of tiny waves lapping the shore was heard. Suddenly we saw two Bedouins reclining near the water's edge, facing the sea with their backs to us. Apparently they had been lying there all night. They heard the car approaching and I am sure that it was the first mechanical sound they had heard in 24 hours. But neither of them turned around. They continued to recline in silence, facing the sea. I stopped behind them. They did not turn towards me. My passenger got off and approached them from the direction of the sea. They rose, put their hands on his shoulders and kissed him first on one cheek and then on the other. With a motion of the hand he invited me to the campfire, ignoring my daughter and our (female) friend. I understood that he was inviting me to

have tea with him. I wanted to refuse in order to get to Sharm al-Sheikh before it got too hot, but I knew that he would be offended if I refused his invitation, so I sat beside the campfire. He put water in a sooty kettle. The silence was absolute. We could hear the bubbling of the water in the kettle. When it boiled, he poured the strong aromatic tea into small glasses and handed me one. To the tea he added a spice called *habak*, a kind of desert mint. We drank it without saying a word. I saw a blue inscription tattooed on the hand of one of them. With hand-gestures I asked how they did it. He took some ash from the campfire and crushed it to powder, then he added some drops of boiling water and made a paste. He took a pin from the lapel of his *Jalabiyya* (Bedouin robe with long sleeves) and sterilized it in the fire until it got red-hot. With gestures he asked me where I wanted to be tattooed. I hesitated. I do not like to have marks on me. I relish my anonymity. I decided to settle for a minimalist tattoo. On Russian sailors I had seen three dots tattooed on the back of the hand between the thumb and the forefinger, as a sign of service in the merchant marine. I described three dots on the sand and showed him where to tattoo them. He took a thin branch, dipped it into the paste and drew three dots on the back of my hand. Then he took the pin and lightly pierced through the paste. The perforations caused a wound, and the ash penetrated it and within three days turned into bluish spots on my skin. I still have them. Later he poured me more tea and took a *rebaba*: a home-made Bedouin musical instrument made of a branch with an empty tin can attached to it which serves as sound-box, and a single string made of camel hair is stretched over the branch. Another branch with a string serves as a bow. He began to play the instrument with the bow. The sound was like the moaning of the wind in the mountains. After a while he stopped playing, put his hand into the pile of *Jalabiyyes* (Bedouin robes with long sleeves) and pulled out a small box wrapped in cloth. It was a tape-recorder. He put a cassette into the device and from it a sound emanated that resembled what he had played on the rebaba. With hand-gestures I asked him if the recording was from the radio. He said no, and pointed to himself. He had recorded himself. I was surprised. I had not imagined that Bedouins were so familiar with modern technology. But yet another surprise awaited me. My daughter and my friend honked the horn for me to continue the trip. I apologized to my host and rose to leave. He agreed and in sign-language asked me if I would permit him to drive my car a little. I asked him if he knew how to drive. He replied that the following day he had a driving test, and this was his last chance to practice before the test. I was amazed. *A driving test in the middle of the desert?* Where would the test be held? He explained to me that once a month an Israeli tester came from Beersheba in Israel by helicopter to the junction at the highway's exit to Saint Catherine's monastery, and Bedouins go there for driving tests. We spoke in sign-language because I did not know Arabic and he did not know Hebrew.

I gave him the keys to the car and showed him how to use the automatic transmission. He got into the car and drove off. Though he was a total stranger I did not fear for a moment that he would steal the car, because I knew that his honor committed him. He would prefer to die than be dishonored. He returned a quarter of an hour later, and thanked me. We continued to drive to Sharm al-Sheikh. The next day I heard the details of the event from a Bedouin at Sharm, which is about a hundred kilometers to the south. At that time the Bedouin did not have cellular telephones. How did the report get to Sharm? "On the grapevine", by word of mouth. A told B, who then told C, and so on. It

turned out that for the Bedouins all Sinai is like a single village. Gossip spreads from one end to the other within hours. As we passed by Nuweiba my female passenger told me that two years previously, when she sunbathed naked on the beach at Nuweiba, every passing IDF helicopter circled around her several times to enjoy the sight of her naked body; but a Bedouin passing next to her on a camel did not turn his head in her direction. Different cultures, different customs.

After Nuweiba the highway turned westward, away from the sea and into the mountains. The landscape changed. Layers of green, black and red were seen in the mountains. Some were slanted diagonally, some were almost vertical. Clearly, the area went through geological convulsions. Like the entire Jordan Valley, the Arava and the Dead Sea are part of a rift in the Earth's crust that extends from Mount Hermon in Syria to the African Great Lakes. A geologist friend of mine did a doctoral thesis that compared core samples from both banks of the Jordan River. He found that the eastern bank of the river Jordan is gradually moving northwards in relation to its western (Israeli) bank.

After driving for an hour and a half, we reached Na'ama Bay and Palogy's "bar". That was our destination and there we found accommodation. The next morning, I decided to drive to the new Israeli supermarket in Sharm al-Sheikh. In 1960, Palogy was a kid and my neighbor in Jerusalem. In 1972 he visited me in London. He asked me if he could use my address to get mail from his mother. I agreed and offered to give him the details. He declined saying: *"No need, my mother works in the Israeli General Security Service (GSS)* as a mail-reader. She reads your mail and knows your address."* I hope she wasn't bored by what she read. Driving to the supermarket in Sharm my daughter sat beside me and put a Pink Floyd cassette into the tape-deck. The outer-space sounds of "Wish You Were Here" filled our car. I find the Pink Floyd "Space" sound the most suitable sound for desert landscapes. It has space-like resonance and is not rhythmic. I love the music of Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix, Rory Gallagher, Carlos Santana, the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin, and attended their concerts in London, but none of those are suitable for the barren desert scenery because they are too rhythmic. But the opening sounds of "Wish You Were Here" are slow, calm and inspire serenity, like the desert.

We left Na'ama Bay and got on the road to Sharm al-Sheikh. At the junction a Bedouin woman was squatting on her heels in the Bedouin style. I figured she was waiting for a lift to Sharm. I stopped the car and opened the back door for her. She got in and sat in the back seat without a word. The Pink Floyd sound alone was heard. We drove silently for a while, suddenly the Bedouin woman sighed and said, *"Ahhhh ... Pink Floyd!"* My daughter and I were stunned. How does a Bedouin woman know Pink Floyd? Where did she know the name of that band from, and how did she recognize the sound? We were completely dumbfounded. I turned around and asked her in amazement, *"Pink Floyd?"* The Bedouin woman replied in fluent North American English: *"I love that sound."* It turned out that she was a Jewish girl from Florida who became a hippie in the 1960s, was sent to Israel by her parents so that she would not get addicted to drugs or – God Forbid!

* Today officially called the Israel Security Agency (ISA) in English. Its Hebrew name has not changed, and it is sometimes called – even in English – "Shin Bet", which are the Hebrew letters that stand for the first two words of its name in Hebrew – trans.

– marry a Gentile. They preferred to pay for her trip to Israel so that she would find a “Nice Jewish Boy” and marry him. She did not like Israel and headed south to Eilat. After spending some time on the beach at Eilat, she continued further south, to Sinai. There she met a Bedouin and fell in love with him. They had a son named Jumail, and she became Umm Jumail (mother of Jumail). She lived in Nabeq, about ten kilometers north of Na’ama Bay. When we reached Sharm al-Sheikh we went to the supermarket, and she went to the doctor and the post office. After shopping I sat at a kiosk and had a milkshake. Umm Jumail returned from the doctor. She had a stomach ulcer and the doctor – himself a Jewish hippie from New York – gave her medicine. I bought her a milkshake and she showed me a post-card she had just received from her parents in Miami. It showed of a long row of hotels in Miami Beach. She asked me: “*Can you understand why I prefer to be in Sinai?*” Without hesitating I replied, “*Of course!*”

I drove her back to Na’ama Bay. When we got to Na’ama she pointed to its desolate northern part (today dozens of Egyptian luxury hotels stand there). On the sand by the sea stood four posts supporting a black camel-wool blanket. Underneath it a small campfire was burning, and a toddler was crawling in the sand playing with a kitten. A Bedouin, his back to us, was reclining and tending the fire. When we approached, Umm Jumail called out, and he turned his head to look. I recognized him right away. He was Muhammad Muzeine who worked as a cook at Palogy’s “bar”. I was happy to see him, and sat at the campfire. He told me that they had just returned from the court at Rafah (in the Gaza strip) because tourists who were arrested for smoking hashish had said that they had bought it from him. He denied it, and the judge acquitted him. He brought cucumbers and tomatoes with him from Rafah. I asked him his plans, and he replied that he was waiting for a ride to Nabeq, ten kilometers north of where we were. There is no paved road to Nabeq. There are only a few shacks there. I wondered who would drive there. I asked him how long he had been waiting. “*Three days,*” he replied, to my astonishment. But he was used to it. He could wait a month if necessary. From this I understood two things: first, that his sense of time was utterly unlike mine. I hurry “to arrive, “to catch up” and “to make it.” I have “deadlines”. My time is measured in hours, minutes and seconds. My schedule is set by the clock. But he does not rush anywhere; he never had a “deadline” and has no idea what it means. He has no watch. His schedule is set by the rising and setting of the sun. Mine – by the clock. The difference between us is not personal, but cultural. He is a product of a culture that is dominated by nature; I am a product of a culture that manipulates nature. Second, for him every place in Sinai where he erects four posts and stretches a blanket is home. But my home is only the place on which I pay property-tax. I feel “at home” only in my own bed, my own flat and own table and chairs. He feels “at home” all over Sinai. I feel “at home” only in the small area I paid for.

I offered to drive him to Nabeq. We loaded everything onto the Peugeot and took to the dirt track. We passed the Ras Nasrani airfield, and then the beached wreck of the German ship *Maria Schroeder* on the coral reef. I am sure they ran her ashore deliberately to get the insurance money. Half an hour later we got to Nabeq. We unloaded the car and went into a hut. The sun was at its high point and Muhammad asked if I was hungry. I said I was. He took a fishing-net. It was about two feet wide and a hundred feet long. I joined him in fishing. The hut was by the sea. Muhammad found a sandy patch, waded into the

sea and began to lay the net in a semi-circle that began and ended at the beach. When he finished closing the semi-circle, he called me and we both went into the water and stamped our feet. The fish panicked and swam into the net. When he pulled it out, there were about three kilos of fish in it. He cleaned them on a rock. Meanwhile Umm Jumail set up a pot on the fire and cooked rice in it. When the rice was ready, she added the fish. We sat on the sand around the pot, without plates, knives or forks. We dipped our hands in the pot and took out fistfuls of rice and fish. We rolled it into small balls and put them in our mouths. It was tasty and nutritious, but after two years of such a diet I too would have developed a stomach ulcer. Umm Jumail was raising a baby there without a budget, without running water, without electricity, car, doctor, toilet or grocery store. Quite an achievement for a girl who had grown up in Miami. Rice keeps without a refrigerator and there are always fish in the sea, but they had no fruits or vegetables, so she lacked vitamins. That's how she got the ulcer. In the evening we ate the same menu and our dessert was tea with Habak (the Sinai mint). I stayed there to sleep. I lay on my back and looked at the star-filled sky. The visibility was amazing. No electrical light pierced the sky, and the desert air was crystal clear. I saw stars that I had never seen before. I took binoculars from the car and looked at the moon. The sight was amazing. There was no straight line between the illuminated part and the dark part, but a zigzag. It is caused by the shadows of the mountains on the moon. The scientist Galileo Galilei described it in his book *Sidereal Messenger*. It was possible to see that the moon was round and not flat. I thought about people who lived their whole lives in the city without watching the starry night sky once. They have no idea what they are missing. I once read about an Indian in the United States who could not sleep under a roof. He slept all his days under the starry sky, and was used to seeing stars. I understood him. Once I asked a Coptic friend in Sinai what the Bedouin think of the stars. Do they wonder what the stars are? How far away they are? How they create light? My friend, William Husni, told me that most of the Bedouin are Muslim, and the Qur'an forbids them to ask such questions. It seems that reality is not the only factor that shapes consciousness. One can sleep under stars for one's entire life and close one's mind to asking questions. In the morning I woke up before the sunrise, and saw the dawn star ("Venus") shining with a brightness I had never seen before. The sun was peeping out from behind the mountains of Saudi Arabia, and I could follow every second of its rising. I had never seen such a sunrise. Who watches sunrise anyway these days? Muhammad lit a fire with the first match - Bedouin-style. Neither of us uttered a sound. When the water boiled he silently poured tea. We drank in silence. After the third cup of tea I parted and returned to Na'ama Bay.

A week later I was in my home in London. Since then I have returned to Sinai every year. In 1982 Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt under the terms of a peace treaty. Occasionally I would hear news about Muhammad and Umm Jumail. The Egyptians do not allow dual citizenship. If Umm Jumail took Egyptian citizenship she would lose her US citizenship. She refused to do that. With a US passport, she was considered a tourist, and had to travel to Cairo every six months to renew her tourist visa. Jumail grew up and was sent to school in Cairo. Once I heard that the three of them had travelled to the United States and stayed there for a while, but in the end they returned to Sinai. I tried to find them, but without success. I wonder what happened to them.

21. Sheikh Ali

After Israel gave the Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt in 1982, I returned to visit there. For the first two years the place suffered from neglect. Sharm el-Sheikh became too commercialized for my taste, and Nuweiba did not have coral reefs. I decided to go to the Bedouin village at Dahab. I knew some Bedouins there. At that time there was no paved road to the Bedouin village, and there were no houses, electricity or running water. There were palms, huts, a small lighthouse and fantastic coral reefs. I was looking for a quiet place, and I found Sheikh Ali's site. There were five clay wall huts with palm frond ceilings for rent, a water well, a primitive toilet and a strip of beach with coral. I rented a hut. The price was about two dollars a day. The palm frond roof provided shade and pleasant ventilation. The floor was local sand on which mattresses had been placed for sleeping. The important thing was that the hut had a door that could be locked, so you could lock your stuff in it. It was a safe place for sleeping and storage. Sheikh Ali himself was about sixty years old, short, thin, bent, and was usually to be found cleaning the place. He did not concern himself with financial matters. The man who took care of the financial side was a young Egyptian Copt named William Husni. He knew English well. In the past he had studied anthropology at the University of Uppsala in Sweden, but he abandoned his studies and went to live in Sinai. He told me that his doctoral research had been about an African tribe in Sudan. He travelled there and lived with the tribe in order to learn their language and customs.

One day members of the tribe told him that one of them had left the tribe and gone to live alone with a pack of wild dogs. William looked for the man and found him. He spent a few days in his company watching him silently. The man lived with the dogs as an equal among equals. He did not use them, and did not consider himself superior to them. He lived as a member of the pack. The dogs treated him as one of them. William was profoundly impressed by the cooperation between the man and the dogs, and decided to leave everything and go to live in the desert. That's how he got to Sinai. He did not like most of the Bedouin, whom he considered greedy. But he stressed that there were exceptions, and that Sheikh Ali was one of them. The two of them did not aspire to get rich, but only to cover their basic living expenses. William was the one who suggested to Sheikh Ali to build a few huts for rent, and he managed the site for him. Life at the site was leisurely. Nobody rushed anywhere. I would wake up and leave the hut before sunrise. Sheikh Ali was already sitting on a mat under a palm-leaf shade facing the sea and the mountains of Saudi Arabia in the east, a small fire burning in front of him, on which a small sooty kettle was bubbling. Without a sound he gestured to me to join him. I took off my sandals and sat down on the mat beside him. He handed me a small cup of tea, and we silently watched the sun rising over the Saudi mountains. In the clear Sinai air it was possible to see every detail of the sunrise. First the sky brightened in the east. Slowly the bright area turned into a glow that intensified second by second. Finally the

glow reached its peak, and a spot of glaring light appeared atop a mountain. The glaring point grew gradually into a full solar disc. Then the entire glaring disc rose slowly up and away from the mountain. As a cosmologist I was acutely aware that it was not the sun that moved, but earth that rotated. That scene made me *feel* the earth's rotation.

Watching the sunrise silently with Sheikh Ali became a regular morning ritual.

After watching the sunrise I went back to sleep.

For breakfast we would boil water for tea on a small camp-stove, and drink it with biscuits. Then we would put on bathing suits, diving masks and snorkels, go into the sea, float on the water and watch the orgy of colors and life in the water and on the coral reef. In the morning, when the sun was illuminating the sea from the east at a low angle, the coral reef was fluorescent. I have seen films of reefs on television but they were pale in comparison to the real thing under the sea. At midday we would leave Sheikh Ali's site to find a place to eat. The "restaurants" were mats spread out on the ground under palms, with no tables or chairs. We would sprawl on a carpet, rest our heads on cushions, and the proprietor, who was also a fisherman-cook-waiter, would show us what he had prepared. Usually it was fish that had been caught that morning. It was cooked on hot coals, with a little spice added and served with rice or French fries. The dessert was tea or watermelon. In the evening we would join Hamed "the lobster man" whom I knew from the time he was working as a cleaner at the Israeli diving club at nearby Di-Zahav. After Israel withdrew from Sinai, Hamed opened his own place at Dahab, and began to rent out huts. He bought a Jeep and organized night trips to sites where he hunted lobsters and organized a party on the beach. For 10 dollars you could join him for a night dive and a meal. When we got to the spot, he would spread a mat, light a fire, peel potatoes and onions and put a pan on the fire with oil and French fries. After that, he would enter the sea with a flashlight, snorkel, glove and a large bag. Whoever wanted could join him. We would swim with flippers and watch the ray of light from Hamed's flashlight as it moved over the rocks on the bottom below us. Suddenly two red dots would appear, glowing in the distance. They were the eyes of a lobster. Hamed would signal for us to halt, and then he would dive towards the lobster, pointing the light into its eyes. He held the flashlight and the bag in his left hand. His right hand wore the glove. With a quick slap he would grab the lobster and push it into the bag held in his left hand. On a good night he could catch about six big lobsters in an hour. Each one weighed between half a kilo and a kilo. When we got out of the water, the French fries were ready. Hamed would add onions and tomatoes to the lobsters and wrap them in aluminum foil and cover the package with glowing ashes. After half an hour the meal was ready. We would eat with our hands and wipe them clean in the dry sand. Then we would smoke a joint, drink strong tea, sprawl on our backs and watch the sky filled with stars glaring in brightness one never sees in a city. In the clean desert air, far from electric lights, the stars glared with an amazing

brightness. We would fall asleep on the beach and wake up at two or three in the morning, get on the Jeep and return to Dahab.

Most of the shacks of the Bedouin village at Dahab were mud huts. Only the Sheikh (not Ali) had a brick house with two stories. When we passed by it, we would see about a dozen Bedouins sitting around a gesturing storyteller. But one night, in 1986, when we passed by the Sheikh's house, about a dozen Bedouins were sitting there, facing not a storyteller but a color television set showing the n'th installment of "Dallas". It marked the end of an era. Today Dahab is commercialized and its originality is gone, but in 1986 commercialization was just starting. The week passed without our feeling it. Time stood still, past and future dissolved; only the present existed. We felt as if we had always lived that way. On the way back to Eilat I planned my next trip to Sinai.

When I returned the next year, Sheikh Ali was no longer living at the old site. William told me that the number of tourists had grown and Sheikh Ali, who loved silence, had moved away from the beach into the mountains. That evening we went to visit him. We drove to the junction where the Eilat to Sharm el-Sheikh highway branches off to Dahab, and drove about a kilometre back towards Eilat. There William told us to leave the highway and take a dirt track leading into the mountains. After about a half kilometre, at the foot of a mountain, we stopped and continued on foot. We climbed up the mountain a little bit and reached a flat rock. Sheikh Ali was sitting on a small mat next to a small campfire. He rose to greet us, asked us how we were, and when we asked him how he was, he replied "*alhamduallah*" ("Thank God" in Arabic – i.e., "I am well"). After that he began to prepare coffee. He took a handful of coffee beans from a small bag and put them on a pan. He heated the pan over the fire, tossing the beans in the air from time to time. After about ten minutes, he put the beans in a copper mortar formed like a cup and began to crush them with a heavy copper pestle. He crushed slowly. As he raised the pestle he struck the side of the mortar, playing it like a bell. The mountain returned the echo and Sheikh Ali sang in accompaniment with the mountain's echo. When he finished crushing, he transferred the coffee to a small *finjan*, added water and put it on the fire. When the water boiled, the *finjan* overflowed. Sheikh Ali removed it from the fire, let it cool a little and put it back for another boiling. When the coffee boiled over again, he began to pour it into tiny porcelain cups. He did not add sugar. We were about a dozen guests. Each cup contained only two or three teaspoons of coffee. We did not drink it but tasted it. When the first drop landed on my tongue the coffee hit me hard. I had never tasted coffee like that. It was strong as whiskey, and bitter. It was the mother of all coffees I had drunk in my life. One of the guests was an Italian woman from Rome. She said to me, "*the espresso in Rome is the best in the world, but it does not compare with this coffee.*" While we were still tasting the coffee, Sheikh Ali took up a *rebaba* and began to play. A *rebaba* is an instrument with a single string. It is played with a bow. Sheikh Ali had made it himself. The string was made of camel hair and the sound-box

was an empty tin can. The instrument's neck and the bow were branches of a local shrub. The sounds of a *rebaba* are like the moaning of the wind in the mountains. Sheikh Ali played and sang in a voice similar to the notes of the *rebaba*. He sang a mournful song. I did not understand the words and asked William what they meant. He told me that the words meant, "*don't marry a man who returns from the desert with provisions on his camel.*" Why not? – I asked. William explained: when a Bedouin sets out on a journey in the desert, he takes provisions with him, which he will share with anyone he meets on the way. He must economize because he does not know what will happen on the remainder of his journey. But when he is returning from his journey he knows when he will reach his tent, and so he can be generous and distribute the remainder of the provisions to whomever he meets. If there are still provisions on his camel when he returns to his tent, it means that he is a miser, and not a suitable man to marry. Definitely good advice for a Bedouin woman. It also illustrates the Bedouin habit of assessing people by their behavior, not by their words. After drinking the coffee we stretched out on the mat and fell asleep to the strains of the *rebaba* that wafted into the night.

In the morning, before the sunrise, I woke up. Sheikh Ali was already sitting in front of small campfire, facing the sunrise. He handed me a kettle asking me to fetch water. I asked him, "where's the water?" With his hand he indicated where the spring was. I went down a path between the rocks and arrived at a narrow canyon. Mountains loomed on both sides. Between them was a space about four or five meters wide. Big rocks lay on the ground. One of the rocks was about one meter high, two meters wide and some three meters long. It had a square hole, one meter by one meter in size, in its middle. At its bottom was some water. I lay on the rock, lowered my arm with the kettle into the hole and with difficulty filled it with water. I examined the hole and saw that it was not natural. The square opening and straight sides indicated that the hole had been carved by human hands. When I returned to Sheikh Ali I asked him: "*who carved that hole?*" "*I did,*" he replied. I was amazed. "*How long did it take you?*" – I asked. "*Thirty days – I did it during the Ramadan fast.*" "*How did you know that there was water under the rock?*" – I asked. "*I didn't,*" he said, and added: "*Two years ago I carved in another spot, and after thirty days of carving I didn't find any water. This year I carved here, and found some.*" I went down to the spring again and examined the carved hole and its environment closely. I saw spots of moisture on the mountain slope. Evidently the rain percolates through the sandy layer but when it reaches a layer of rock it flows downwards and accumulates between the two mountains. There was no guarantee that water would be found, because the soil between the mountains might have been sandy, and the water could have seeped down through it. Sheikh Ali bet on the possibility that there would be water under the rock, but he was not certain of it. Moreover, he could not determine in advance the thickness of the rock he was carving. It turned out to be about a meter thick, but what if it had been two meters? I would not have carved a rock for thirty days without knowing the thickness of the rock or whether there was water under it. Nor would any

European. When I looked at the sides of the hole I saw that one side had five small steps, about 20 centimeters wide, carved into it, leading to the bottom of the hole. I went back to Sheikh Ali and asked him, “*why did you carve the steps?*” He replied, “*the desert animals – the foxes, jackals and gazelles – smell the water, but if the walls are smooth and deep, they can’t reach the water to drink. It tortures them. If I find water I have to share it with the desert animals. I made those steps for them so they can reach the bottom and drink*”

He was not a “conservationist”, and would not have grasped the concept even had I tried to explain it to him. For him, consideration for the desert animals was a given. He did it without thinking, like he breathed. He told me that at the end of every meal, he leaves some scraps for the animals, and sometimes at night he sees foxes coming to eat them. He understood the soul of a hungry animal.

I examined the rusty chisel and the old hammer Sheikh Ali had used to carve a water hole in Sinai for thirty days. Simple and effective tools. They reminded me of the Bible story about Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt who struck a rock and water flowed from it. It turns out that it is possible.

22. The smallest child

After the war in 1967, I went to visit Israel. A friend told me about an incident that he had experienced while doing reserve duty in the army.

It was in the Golan Heights, immediately after Israel had seized it from Syria. The unit in which my friend was serving was sent to check the Arab residents of the Golan who had become refugees in the war because their villages were destroyed, and they were going to Syria looking for new places to live.

They saw a refugee family walking in line, carrying their possessions in bundles on their backs. The father was first, then his wife, then his children with the oldest first and the smallest last, and at the end, the grandparents. They were all carrying bundles. A reserve soldier who was standing next to my friend said to him: *“Can you guess which member of this family is carrying the family money and valuables?”* My friend replied: *“No, I cannot. Can you?”* The soldier said: *“Yes, are you willing to bet me that the family’s valuables – the money and the jewellery – are being carried by the smallest child?”*

My friend agreed and bet a small sum of money. In order to find out who had won the bet, the reserve soldier approached the refugee family and searched them.

And indeed, it turned out that the family’s valuables were being carried in the bundle that was carried by the smallest child. After the search they returned the items to the refugees, who proceeded on their way.

My friend had lost the bet and paid the money then he asked the reserve soldier: *“How did you know?”*

The soldier replied: *“Simple. In 1939, when the Nazis invaded Poland, my family fled to Russia. We became refugees and walked just like the Arabs we saw, and I was that child. My parents hid the family jewels and money on me, assuming that the Nazi soldiers would not search the smallest child. They were not mistaken.”*

No wonder many Palestinian refugees don’t lose hope.

23. Hava Nagila or Hava Shatila

In 1994 I went to the funeral of Saliba Khamis in Haifa. I did not know him personally, but I knew his wife and his children. Saliba was a Palestinian Communist, and the head of the Nazareth branch of the Communist Party in the 1950s.

Nazareth in the 1950s was an all-Arab town in Israel, with a Christian Arab majority. The Communists won the municipal elections there and ran the municipality for many years. Saliba's wife, Arna, the daughter of the world-renowned researcher on malaria, Professor Mer, who founded the IDF medical corps, was a member of the Palmach in 1948. Later, she joined the Israeli Communist Party and married Saliba. She named her oldest son Spartacus, after the leader of the famous slave revolt in ancient Rome. I met Arna at demonstrations, and admired her courage and tenacity. Until the day she died in 1995 she remained a fighter and a rebel. Marrying a Palestinian Communist was - and still is - considered outrageous for a Jewish girl in Israel. As it was for a white girl to marry a black man in the USA in the 1920s. Saliba was an atheist, but because he came from a Christian family ("Saliba" means "crucified") he was buried in the Christian cemetery in the village of Samir near Haifa. I like an occasional walk in a beautiful cemetery with trees, plants and ivory-covered headstones. It is a mind-broadening experience. I love to look at the headstones, to read what is written on them, to compare the ages of the deceased and to wonder about the events that occurred during the lifetime of those who are buried there. A beautiful cemetery is an atmosphere of serenity and provides distance from the events of the present. Not a gloomy mood, but a detached one. It reminds us that there is no reason to hurry because in the end we will all arrive here. Rich and poor, important and less important. It is not a matter of contempt for life, but a sober assessment of life. Actions that seem important when they are being done look less important a decade or so after the death of the doer. It is hard to evaluate the lives people live while they are alive, because the evaluation may change due to future events that have not yet occurred. However, the end of a life, like the end of a book, permits a comprehensive evaluation. All the chapters have been written, we have come to the end of the story. Now it is possible to evaluate what the person did in life, and what kind of life it was. I knew a man who was so worried by what would be written about him after his death that he documented in print every one of his acts as he was doing it. He thought that if he documented his actions himself, he could avoid a negative evaluation of them after his death. He lived his life as a planned construction of his biography. He documented every one of his actions and sent copies of the documentation to people he knew. It never occurred to him that facts are one thing, but evaluation of the facts is an altogether different matter. The same fact can be interpreted in many different ways. No documentation can save a man from a critical analysis. Other people will interpret his documentation in a way that differs completely from his own interpretation. Moreover,

people often change their own evaluations of their actions and come to new conclusions about them. Evaluations change with time, and new evaluations are constantly created. New times - new evaluations. We must come to terms with the fact that the evaluation of our lives is not in our hands, and we have no control over it. Even if we document every minute of our lives, that will change absolutely nothing. The very fact that a person has a compulsive urge to document his life raises questions: where does that compulsive urge to document his life come from? From a desire to prove innocence? Does that not reveal a repressed feeling of guilt? Only a person who is haunted by a feeling of guilt would compulsively try to document his innocence. Indeed, we all have our anxieties. One day, 'A' whom I knew, lent his car to a 'B' who damaged it, but refused to pay for the repair. 'A' asked me what to do. I knew that 'B' was a compulsive documenter, so I suggested to 'A' that he send 'B' a typed letter detailing the whole affair adding a note at the bottom: "*Copies sent to ...*", followed by a list of 'B's friends. I figured that 'B' would not want his friends to receive a printed document that presented him in a negative way, and would prefer to pay his debt. I added that there was no need to actually send copies to the friends; it would suffice simply to hint to 'B' about the possibility. And indeed, when 'B' got the letter he hastened to pay for the repairs.

Arna, on the other hand, refused to document her life. All attempts to convince her to do so failed. Once Arna told me that her father was a tyrant. She was not willing to say more than that. At Saliba's funeral I wandered in the graveyard and read what was written on the headstones. On some of them there was just a cross, without any writing. Suddenly I noticed two small headstones with names in English: "*Mrs. Maggie Mishalani, 1903-1957*" and "*Dr. Munir Khalil Mishalani, 1900-1951*". I later learned that Dr. Mishalani was a doctor at the government hospital in Haifa, and had lived with his wife on Abbas Street in Haifa, in a building where the Israeli Communist Emil Touma also lived, with his Jewish wife, Haya. Many Palestinian communists - often mixed Arab-Jewish couples - lived on Abbas street.

The name Mishalani reminded me of a talk I gave in England in 1978. I was invited to the University of Brighton to explain the Israeli-Arab conflict. I stressed it was caused not by ethnic - or religious - hatred (as many tend to believe) but by the expropriation and oppression of the Palestinian people by Zionist immigrant-settlers. It was basically a colonial conflict, not a religious or ethnic one. After my talk two students approached me. The name of one was Raziell, and the other's was Mishalani. Raziell was a Jew from Canada, and Mishalani was a Palestinian from Lebanon. He told me that his family was from Haifa, but in 1948 they became refugees and fled to Lebanon. He and Raziell were studying economics, and became friends over the course of their studies. After the talk I returned to London and forgot the matter. Ten years later, the telephone rang in my home. Mishalani was on the line. He asked me to meet him at the Kilburn Underground station in London. I went to the station and met him. He looked around him and checked to see if

he was being followed. After that, he got into my car saying: *“I need your help.”* I asked him how I could help him, and he replied, *“get me a pistol and a fake passport.”* I was astonished. I explained to him that I could not get those things, and I did not know anybody who could. I asked him what he needed them for. He replied: *“They’re after me, and I must leave Britain right away.”* I tried to get additional details, and it turned out that his parents were trying to have him committed to a psychiatric hospital against his will. He had escaped from them and wanted to flee to Greece. It was clear that he had a persecution complex, and his parents wanted him to be treated with medication. When he refused, they tried to hospitalize him against his will. In the end he was hospitalized. I visited him in hospital. He was very happy, and we had a rational and topical conversation. He talked rationally about every subject in the world. On only one subject was he irrational: his persecution. He could not tell me exactly who was persecuting him. I understood that he had run into financial difficulties because the bursary for his doctoral studies had been stopped due to cutbacks in the university’s budget, so he could not pay the rent for his apartment and was evicted. He was forced to sleep in stairwells. That difficult situation pushed him to the conclusion that he was being harassed and persecuted. He saw everyone who glanced in his direction as a persecutor. I asked him what I could bring him, and he asked for a radio. On my next visit I brought him a small radio as a gift. Two months later his condition improved, and he was discharged from the hospital. Then he told me that when he listened to the radio he was sure that the broadcast was meant for him personally. We often talked about Israel.

In 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon and shortly afterwards Lebanese Christian Phalangists (with Israeli connivance) massacred Palestinian refugees in the camps of Sabra and Shatila, Mishalani remarked: *“In their relations with the Arabs, Israelis must choose between ‘Hava Nagila’* and ‘Hava Shatila.’ I hope most of them will choose ‘Hava Nagila.’ ”*

There was no irony in his words. He was expressing a hope that many in the Arab world share. Jews and Arabs had a "Golden Age" of social, cultural and scientific co-operation during the period Arab rule in Spain in the 11th century. The Jewish-Arab poets Ibn-Gvirol and Ibn-Ezra published there their poetry - revered to this day - in both languages. The greatest Jewish theologian Moshe Ben-Maimun ('Maimonides') served as the personal doctor of Saladin (who defeated the crusaders in Palestine). That co-operation can be revived. Israel must become the state of all its inhabitants - Jews and Arabs - not of world Jewry.

I too hope that most Israelis will - eventually - choose “Hava Nagila” with the Arabs, instead of “Hava Shatila”. Even if this change requires involuntary - foreign - coercion.

* “Hava Nagila” is the title of a very popular Israeli folk song. It literally means “Let Us Rejoice” – trans.

24. Slovo

In the winter of 1978 I was invited along with my wife, Leah, to a dinner at the home of Susie Orbach, a left-wing psychiatrist who had established the “Therapeutic Centre for Women” in London. The Centre provided psychiatric care with a feminist approach to women of limited means.

Susie wrote a book called *Fat is a Feminist Issue* that had been published shortly before, and was translated into many languages and made her name known worldwide. About twenty years later, Princess Diana herself also went to her for treatment. Susie’s father, Maurice Orbach, was a Labour Member of Parliament. In 1955, he became famous for travelling to Egypt and interviewing President Nasser. He asked Nasser, “*why are you not willing to make peace with Israel?*” Nasser replied: “*I am willing to recognize Israel and make peace with it if Israel respects the UN Partition Resolution and permits the Palestinians to establish the state that the UN assigned to them in its Palestine Partition Resolution of November 29, 1947.*”

That was not propaganda, but politics. Nasser was the first Arab leader who declared before the whole world that he was willing to recognize Israel and to make peace with it. He declared that at the Bandung Conference in 1955, in which he appeared, together with Nehru, the leader of India, and Tito, the leader of Yugoslavia, at the head of a new bloc of Asian and African states that refused to join the bloc that was led by the United States (“The First World”) or the bloc that was led by the Soviet Union (“The Second World”). They adopted a policy of neutrality in the struggle between the two blocs. They called the new bloc “The Third World”.

Maurice Orbach published Nasser’s words worldwide, but Ben-Gurion rejected them angrily and called them a “sanctimonious accusation”. For that reason many Jews in London refused to vote for Orbach and he was not re-elected to Parliament. Susie was well-versed in political matters, and the therapy that she developed combined a political approach with a technique of psychiatric treatment. It was an approach that was unusual then, because most psychiatrists ignored the influence of society on the lives of their patients. They related to their patients as individuals with personal problems, without any connection to the society in which the patient lived. Susie, on the other hand, made it clear to women that current society is dominated by male psychology and that this creates psychological problems for women. Susie founded women’s support groups, in which only women met and told each other about their problems and discovered their similarity, and often even their identity. That is how many women came to the conclusion that often “*the personal is political*”. That is – a problem that seems to a woman to be her private personal problem is in fact a problem that many women suffer from and so it is also a social problem that must be solved not only as a personal one but also as a general, social (and even political) one. Conversations in 'support groups' helped many women liberate

themselves from feelings of personal inferiority they had internalized, and thereby to acquire confidence in themselves and to overcome their difficulties. Today all that sounds obvious, but in 1970 it was a revolutionary innovation in psychology and therapeutic technique. Susie was a pioneer of that approach.

Susie had also invited Joe (Yosef) Slovo (Soloveitchik), and his wife, Ruth First, to the dinner. They were both members of the South African Communist Party who had escaped from there after the white racist regime made the party illegal and imprisoned Ruth without trial. Joe was one of the leaders of the South African Communist Party and later its General Secretary – that is, the leader of the party. He was also a member of the leadership of the ANC (“The African National Congress”), the Blacks’ movement for liberation against the racist White regime. The ANC demanded “*one person - one vote*” and waged a struggle for the right for Blacks to vote (because the White racist regime denied Blacks the right to vote in elections). After the massacre of Black demonstrators in Sharpeville in 1960 the ANC decided to commence an armed struggle against the racist regime and Joe became the commander of this struggle. The racist regime called this struggle “terrorist” and labeled Joe as the arch-terrorist. Ruth wrote a book about armed struggles against racism all over Africa. Both fled to London where they continued the struggle against racism. They had three daughters who were studying at the same London school as my daughter. In 1978 Ruth had got a job at a university in Mozambique, a country next to South Africa that had liberated itself from Portuguese colonial rule, and was preparing to fly there to work as a lecturer in sociology. I got the impression from her comments that evening that she was inclined to dogmatism, whereas Joe seemed to me to be pragmatic. Two years after that evening I read in the newspaper that Ruth had been killed in Mozambique by a letter-bomb. It was an operation by the South African intelligence service that had tracked down the postal address of the African National Congress in Mozambique and put explosives into an envelope addressed to Ruth. Joe became the leader of the military struggle against the racist regime in South Africa (with no office, secretary, or salary). He acquired weapons in the Eastern Bloc, organized training camps in Africa, and planned attacks on South Africa’s economic infrastructure. His policy was to strike at economic targets in order to force the regime to allocate resources to protecting them, but to refrain from attacking civilians. The racist regime declared that the African National Congress and its leaders – Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Joe Slovo were “terrorists” and refused for many years to conduct negotiations with them (as Israel did with Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization until 1994).

The White racist regime blocked all possibilities of political struggle for the anti-racist movement. It passed laws that allowed the detention of ANC activists without trial, and it denied Blacks the right to vote for parliament. The racists deliberately pushed the ANC

into adopting armed struggle in order to stigmatize it as “terrorist” and aspiring to murder innocent white civilians. It was a planned and calculated policy against a political movement the demands of which were supported by part of the White population of South Africa. The racists aimed to present the struggle of the ANC as criminal rather than political in order to neutralize White support for it.

Every government that has conquered another people has adopted that tactic. The Nazis used it in Poland and Russia during WW2. The governments of Britain adopted it against all the liberation movements in Kenya and Malaysia.. The government of France adopted it in Algeria and Tunisia, the government of Portugal adopted it in Angola and Mozambique, the government of Belgium adopted it in Congo, the government of Holland adopted it in Indonesia, and the government of Israel adopted it in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The term “terror” has served governments that oppress occupied peoples and steal their lands as an instrument to mobilize sympathy in their war against freedom fighters who were forced to take up arms after all paths of legitimate political struggle were closed to them. War ministries donated budgets to academic collaborators to conduct studies on “terrorism”, to hold academic conferences to discuss “terrorism” and to portray armed struggle against oppression as a psychological deviance unrelated to politics, a kind of mental illness that impels those afflicted with it to commit murder for its own sake. In all those “studies” one element was lacking: a clear definition of the term “terror” (or “terrorism”).

In politics, “terror” means “*a deliberate attack on civilians in order to achieve a political aim*”, but no government will accept that definition, because according to it, dropping the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 was an act of "terrorism". Nuclear bombs are intended to destroy large cities, not to destroy armies, and so nuclear weapons are terror weapons. No government will admit that it creates weapons or plans military nuclear operations in order to harm civilians. Any government hoarding nuclear weapons is involved in terrorism.

Slovo knew that the White racists in South Africa would do everything in their power to demonize the armed struggle against them as a criminal activity. He considered killing non-combatant civilians to be both immoral and harmful. He ordered his fighters not to harm civilians so as to prevent the racist regime from stigmatizing the anti-racist fighters as criminals. His fighters hit highways, railroads, port facilities and electrical lines, but took care not to harm civilians. If they harmed civilians, it was accidental, never deliberate.

The Jewish community in South Africa supported racism. Only a handful supported the struggle against racism. They aspired to prove to the racist regime that they were loyal,

and so they condemned the anti-racist handful who fought the regime. Especially Slovo and First. Most of the South African Jewish community supported the Israeli nationalistic extremist Menachem Begin and his Herut (later "Likud") party which never condemned racism. The Zionist Labour Party – and the State of Israel – also technically assisted the racist South African regime. They provided it with arms, technical supplies and military advice in its war against the ANC who were resisting racism. All Israeli governments consciously and deliberately violated the official UN boycott on the provision of arms to the South-African racist regime.

There is strong evidence that the government of Israel also collaborated with the racist regime in South Africa helping it to develop nuclear weapons.

Kibbutz Beit-Alfa built special gravel-shooting vehicles (in Hebrew, *hatzatziot*) for the South African regime, for the purpose of dispersing demonstrations by opponents of the racist regime. But none of that saved the racist regime from collapse.

In 1991 Nelson Mandela was freed from the prison in which he had been held for 27 years. In 1994 free elections were held in South Africa, which Nelson Mandela won with a large majority. He had a decisive majority to pass racially discriminatory laws against the White minority. He could introduce racist policies democratically – by majority vote. He did not do that; instead he passed laws against *any* racial discrimination. He set up a new government in which Slovo was the Housing Minister. Slovo acted to prevent acts of revenge by Blacks against the White racists. He helped to found an institution that was unprecedented in history: the "*Truth and Reconciliation Commission*". That commission subpoenaed members of the racist regime who had tortured and murdered activists in the struggle against racism and civilians whose only crime was the colour of their skin. The murderers and those responsible for torture were forced to appear before a public commission of inquiry and answer questions by the relatives of the people they had murdered. Not one of them was sentenced to death or imprisonment. The commission was satisfied if the accused expressed remorse. The commission was intended to reveal the truth so as to prevent revenge.

Without that commission, the new regime in South Africa would have been forced to deal not only with the legacy of the racist regime (mass crimes by Blacks, a serious housing shortage, the AIDS epidemic and the lack of educational and health services for Blacks), but also with acts of revenge by Blacks against Whites and the Whites' response to them.

Racists who had tortured anti-racist activists and murdered them were forced to publicly confess their crimes, but stayed alive thanks to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

In January 1995 Joe Slovo died of cancer and was the first White to be buried in the cemetery of Soweto, a poor Black suburb of Johannesburg. Nelson Mandela stood by his bed in his last moments, and gave the eulogy at his graveside. About 40,000 mourners attended his funeral, most of them Black, a minority White, to give final honours to the “terrorist” Slovo. One of the Whites was Pik Botha, formerly the prime minister of the racist government, one of whose missions had been to kill Slovo. He sat next to Mandela at the funeral. As Slovo was a leader of the Communist Party, a huge wreath of red flowers was laid on his grave, arranged to look like the Communist flag, and everyone sang the anthem of world-wide revolution, "The Internationale", the lyrics of which had been printed in all the languages of South Africa on pages handed to the mourners with the official state emblem of South Africa on top. Pik Botha too held this page of the new government of South-Africa, on which the words of the Revolutionary anthem were printed, and he too sang "The Internationale" along with the rest of the mourners, the first stanza of which (in the excellent Billy Bragg version) says:

*Arise all victims of oppression for all tyrants fear your might
Don't cling so hard to your possessions for you have nothing, if you have no rights
Let racist ignorance be ended for equality makes empires fall
Freedom is only a private privilege unless enjoyed by one and all*

Chorus:

*Come on brothers and sisters for the struggle carries on
The Internationale revolution unites the world in song
Come comrades and rally for this is the time and place
The international equality ideal unites the human race*

I have no doubt that Slovo, who had a great sense of humour, would have enjoyed seeing the head of the security services of the racist regime singing The Internationale at his funeral. Too bad that Slovo could not see his funeral, because his life was a success story. He struggled to eliminate racism in South Africa, and succeeded. Moreover, his struggle convinced many Blacks that the enemy was racism - not whites

The same lesson that the activity of his comrade – Nelson Mandela – taught the whites. I recommend the excellent film INVICTUS (2009) that illustrates this point.

To see Pik Botha singing The Internationale at Joe’s funeral was the icing on the cake of Joe Slovo’s victory. Like all humanists, I supported every struggle against racism, nationalism and tyranny, and I had no doubt that the racist regime in South Africa would be defeated. But I did not think that it would happen before the year 2000. I was pleasantly surprised when it happened in 1994, and I was glad that Slovo lived to see it.

After Slovo's death in January 1995 I read in the *Jerusalem Post* that a condolence book had been set up at the South African consulate in Tel-Aviv in which the public was invited to write words of remembrance. I went to the consulate and asked to see the book. The Israeli receptionist knew nothing about Slovo. Like most Israelis she had never heard about Slovo's life or death. I showed her the item in the newspaper, and asked her to look into the matter. She went to check, then she returned and took me to a small room in which a picture of Joe had been set up next to a book similar to a photo album. Some Jews from South Africa, who had known Slovo and supported his struggle, lived in Israel. I was sure that I would find at least a dozen entries in the book. I expected to find some words from Arthur Goldreich, at whose villa near Johannesburg, "Rivonia", the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, ("Spear of the nation") which had conducted the armed struggle against the racist regime, was founded. It was also in that villa that Mandela and his comrades were arrested in 1963. Goldreich escaped to Israel, and became an art teacher at the Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem. But when I opened the book at the South African embassy I was surprised to see that it was completely empty.

I wrote a few words of appreciation of Joe Slovo and Ruth First, who had dedicated their lives to the struggle for equal rights to all human beings without exception, and without expecting any personal reward - not honors, wealth or career.

They saw it as an elementary human duty which only racists - or cowards - would evade.

Their only aim was to set up everywhere regimes of freedom and political equality for all human beings despite all the differences between them.

From my knowledge of Joe I know that he would not have been disappointed if he knew that no one in Israel had written a word in his memorial book.

It confirms his views on Israel. He opposed Zionist nationalism as he did racism and refused to visit Israel though asked by its Foreign Office to do so.

The lack of any Israeli comments on Joe reveals something about Israel; not about Joe Slovo or Ruth First.

25. Reply to Ra'an

In 1997 Eran Torbiner, a documentary filmmaker of left-wing views, began to make a documentary on the history of the “Israeli Socialist Organization”, which became famous in the 1960s and 1970s due to the outspoken opposition of its organ, *Matzpen* to Israel's 1967 occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights, and Sinai. He interviewed me as well, because in 1962 I was one of the founders of that organization. The film was shown on Israeli TV channel 8 in March 2005. *Matzpen* means “Compass” in Hebrew and is the name of the group's monthly magazine. We chose that name (suggested by Haim Hanegbi) as it pointed (in 1962) to a new - Left anti-Zionist - direction in Israeli politics. Eran came with two friends - one was a cameraman and the other a sound technician - who had volunteered to help him. They did not ask to be paid. The interview was conducted in a friendly atmosphere because the four of us had similar political views. After the interview we kept in touch and got in the habit of celebrating the Civic New Year^[*] together. The cameraman was Ra'an Nachmias. On 5 April 2005 Ra'an committed suicide after writing the following letter:

To my family and friends,

I feel that my existence has no meaning or purpose. There is no logic. A person lives and dies and is replaced by another. Some find relief from fear of this truth in the worship of God. Some deny their fear of this reality by hard work that makes them forget everything. Some come to terms with their knowledge of this truth by caring for “me and no one else,” by grabbing all they can from everybody while trampling over all other people. Some find relief from fear of this truth by believing in the reincarnation of souls. But everybody knows the one truth: That there is no meaning, logic or purpose in our lives here. I have come to this truth and I do not fear it. I take my life in clear knowledge and without fear. There is no point in continuing life with suffering and torment of the soul. Death awaits us all. There is nothing to be afraid of. I am only shortening this stupid race that I have gotten tired of. I have no fear. Just love and hope that maybe, maybe, maybe something exists of what people have faith in, and I will be able to extend my hand from the other side. But maybe this is just my attempt to encourage you and myself.

Ra'an 5 April 2005

Just one more request in conclusion: No Dosim^[†] at my funeral and if possible, play “Shalal Sharav” by Meir Ariel, in the Greek adaptation. To cheer up those present.

[*] I.e. The first day of January, as opposed to the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashana, which takes place in the fall – trans.

[†] “Dosim” is a derogatory term for ultra-Orthodox – a.k.a. Haredi – Jews. Ra'an did not want a Haredi rabbi to officiate at his funeral – trans.

Two days later his funeral was held at Kibbutz Gezer. I went to the funeral because I had liked him and it pained me that I would not see him again. At the end of the funeral members of his family told me that he had seen me as a spiritual guide. I was surprised because he had never told me that and I saw him as a friend and not as a disciple. The relationship between us was one of friendship between equals and not of a mentor and a disciple. I insist on the self-ability and self-responsibility of all people and abhor the idea of “disciple”. If I had known that he saw me as a spiritual guide I would have talked to him about the subject that he raised in his last letter and tried to change his mind, because that subject had also preoccupied me in my youth.

I believe the reasons in Ra'an'an's farewell letter were a rational attempt to justify his suicide, but they were not the cause of his suicide. In my opinion the cause was an emotional trauma that had nothing to do with what he wrote in that letter. Ra'an'an suffered from bouts of depression long before writing his letter of departure.

I believe he was unaware of the source of his anxiety attacks and depression.

Nevertheless, I will relate here to the content of his farewell letter, because the idea that *“that there is no meaning, logic or purpose in human existence”* troubles many young people and strengthens their inclinations to commit suicide. It is an idea that is widespread among sensitive people who often observe life - theirs and that of all humanity - with a sense of emotional detachment. Not from a personal, familial, national or human point of view, but from a cosmic one, that is, from the viewpoint of an awareness that knows it exists - and arose from - a cosmos of inert matter devoid of awareness, and hence devoid of self-awareness, and also devoid of meaning. That idea does not bother religious people because they believe God imparts meaning to existence. But Ra'an'an was secular and refused to assume the existence of a god as this assumption cannot be tested by experimentation or prediction.

The problem of the “meaninglessness” of the universe and all that is in it also preoccupied me in my youth and was one reason why I studied cosmology - the science of the structure of the universe, space and of time. The universe has no meaning, but it has a past and a structure. I wanted to understand them. Cosmology investigates both. According to that science about 13 billion years have passed since the “Big Bang” in which the universe emerged. In 99.99% of that time no suitable conditions existed for the emergence of living cells, and certainly not for the emergence of awareness. Concepts like “meaning”, “objective”, “purpose” and “logic” did not exist because they can only be created *after* the appearance of systems of living cells that developed “awareness of awareness”.^{*} That is to say, in most of the time during which the universe has existed,

^{*} The Hebrew term I translated as “awareness of awareness” here is מודעות – *muda'ut*, which is normally translated as “consciousness”. But the author prefers “awareness of awareness” in the English version of this book, as it might motivate some readers to ponder the unique nature of human consciousness – trans.

adverse physical conditions prevented atoms from combining to form a “living cell” and there was no entity capable of asking any questions.

During all that time, was there “*meaning*”, “*logic*”, or “*purpose*” to anything at all? Not just to our lives, or even to the very phenomenon of “life”, but to *anything* at all?

A religious person will reply, “yes”, but for a secular person the reply is a definite “No”.

Because “meaning”, “logic” and “purpose” are concepts invented by *awareness*. “Awareness” and especially “*awareness of awareness*” is a state of a *mind* (N.B. - not of a *brain*) that has been programmed by a society. *Without society there is no awareness of awareness*. Dogs, cats, and snails don't have it, yet they survived very well without it. “Meaning” is not an essential requirement for physical survival, nor is “awareness of awareness”. Without awareness of awareness there is no “meaning”, “logic” or “purpose” to anything. Without a living cell there is no human being, without a human being there is no society, without a society there is no awareness of awareness, and without this there is no meaning. Galaxies, stars, and radiation do not ask any questions and don't ponder on “meaning”. Does that indicate that there is no “meaning”, “logic” or “purpose” to human life today? Certainly not. Awareness of awareness invents “meaning”, “logic” and “purpose” and they have value only from a relative - human - point of view and not from a cosmic point of view. So what ?

Does the fact that living cells, and organisms consisting of combinations of living cells, have existed only for a tiny fraction of the time in which the universe has existed negate the significance of “human life” or of “awareness”? Does the fact that awareness of awareness has existed for only 0.0001% of the time in which life has existed in the cosmos render it irrelevant or insignificant? Does the fact that the universe itself exists without any meaning attributed to it (by whom?) imply that aims we set ourselves are meaningless? My answer to these questions is: no.

What is “meaning”? Who decides on it? Who - or what - determines the significance of a meaning? And what flaw is there in existence devoid of any meaning whatsoever?

I emphatically reject assumptions that cannot be tested by repeatable experiments or predictions; therefore I reject all assumptions about existence of a “supreme entity”, “god” or “fate”, because those assumptions cannot be tested by repeatable experiments or predictions. Without a “supreme entity” that determines the “aim of existence”, “objective of life” or “meaning of life” there is only the socialized human being (to be more precise – the human being who has acquired awareness of awareness) to determine it.

Any “purpose” a person proposes has validity only from a human perspective, and has “relative” meaning (relative to humanity) and not “absolute meaning” (relative to the cosmos). What’s wrong with that?

The concept of “meaning” itself is the invention of a living creature (that is, a collection of atoms that came together and developed into systems of billions of cells) and systems of nerve cells that became “brains” and produced “awareness of awareness”.

The Greek poet Aeschylus, in his poem “Prometheus”, says that Prometheus revealed to Sons of Eve that they are “sons of death”, that is, that their lives are destined to come to an end – of necessity. Awareness of death is the beginning of “awareness of awareness”, and a necessary condition for “consciousness”. Why? In order to ponder the meaning of life, a living creature must first be aware of the fact that it is alive, that is, that there is an end to the state of “life”. No living creature apart from homo sapiens (from a late stage in its development) is aware of the fact that its life will - inevitably - end, and so they are not aware of their very existence. Therefore they have no “awareness of existing” and certainly no “awareness of being aware”.

For such creatures - and that is 99.99% of all living creatures- questions about the “meaning”, “logic”, and “purpose” of “existence” do not exist. Creatures that are not aware that they will die are not aware that they “exist”.

Only when a creature creates a special ceremony to mark the end of life does it begin to indicate its awareness of its existence. It is emotionally difficult for many people to come to terms with their mortality and so even at ceremonies to mark the termination of life (i.e. “funerals”) there are always efforts to invent new arguments for life's continuation in a different form (in “Heaven”, or “the Next World”, or “reincarnation” etc.).

A brain programmed by society (not by sheer physiology) is the only combination of atoms in the cosmos as we know it today that evolved awareness of its own existence, and also of awareness itself. This is qualitatively different from mere physical existence. homo sapiens acquired it only at a late stage of his evolution.

When an organism puts an end to the “Garden of Eden” innocence in which it is unaware of its existence, and begins to develop “awareness of existence” it can attribute various aims to its existence and choose between them. Only then does it begin to wonder about the “purpose”, “meaning” and “objective” of its “existence” – and about the phenomenon of “life” in general.

Any “purpose” a person sets has validity only for the person who set it, and therefore it is “relative” to that person and has no “absolute” meaning with regards the entire cosmos. *Does that diminish its importance to the person who accepted that purpose?*

When the sun collapses (in about another five billion years) all life in the solar system will end, as well as any “purpose” people may have attributed to it. Is that a reason for a person to cut short his life at age 40, when he could live another 40 years?

We all know that we will die. The question is, what will we do *until we die*?

The fact of death does not diminish the importance of life; on the contrary. What gives meaning to life is not the answer to the question, “*what will there be at the end?*” – but the answer to the question, “*what did we do between the beginning and the end?*” If we did something that made life of humanity pleasanter, then we contributed something meaningful to humanity even if humanity will perish when the sun collapses.

The fact that in another five billion years all life in the solar system will end and with it all meanings, purposes and objectives as well, does not mean that what a person does with his life is a waste of time. The fact that it will have no value in another five billion years is not a good reason for suicide. Those who have suicidal tendencies and want to justify them must invent a better reason.

Life is a very rare phenomenon in the universe. Awareness of awareness is an even rarer phenomenon because it is not necessary for survival. If we have the good fortune to be given things as rare as life and awareness of awareness, it is worthwhile to think carefully about how to use them, and not to waste them.

Those who suffer from incurable suffering are entitled to put an end to their lives in order to shorten their suffering, but that has nothing to do with the existence/absence of “meaning”, “logic” or “purpose” in life.

The fact that life only has meaning that is relative (to humanity) which is conferred on it by a possessor of awareness of existence, and is not absolute (relative to the entire cosmos) is not a good reason to put an end to it prematurely. Relative meaning too is a good reason not to waste gifts as rare as life and awareness.

Those who are not satisfied with the present meaning of their lives can always change it. It is preferable to create a new meaning for one's life than to cut it short because of dissatisfaction with its present meaning.

26. SUICIDE?

While working as a seaman (but not as deck officer) I used to "sign off" ships I worked on for a month in summer and spend it on the beach in Tel-Aviv. I had to laze on the beach a month in summer but our Union contract provided no leave. So I used to "sign off" and take unpaid leave. During my leave in 1953 a friend told me that the *Rimon* had an emergency - a seaman was taken to hospital in Haifa hours before departure for Africa and they desperately needed a replacement. I told him the *Rimon* was owned by Zim which had put me on its "blacklist", but he said they would sign anyone so as not to delay departure. So I went to Haifa, and the Zim clerk signed me on in a hurry without checking whether I was blacklisted. However, when the ship returned to Haifa I was sacked on arrival. I hope that clerk wasn't.

The *Rimon* was a modern ship built in 1950. It was given by the German government to the Israeli government as part of the compensation for property stolen by the Nazis from the Jews they killed in WW2. The *Tel Aviv* and the *Daniela Borchard*, on which I had worked previously, were steamships built before 1945. The *Rimon* had a diesel engine and was much faster. Its deck cranes were operated by electricity. On the *Tel Aviv* and the *Daniela*, deck cranes were operated by steam. The *Rimon's* crew cabins were luxurious compared to those of my previous ships. Each cabin was for two seamen only, with a sink and mirror, hot and cold water taps, a toilet, wardrobes, lights over each bed, even a ventilator. They looked like a room in a modern motel. The dining room had a built-in radio and record player, an electric Frigidaire and a cold water dispenser. Everything was newly painted with no rust anywhere. On my previous ships rust was everywhere. We fought a constant battle against it as a daily routine. We chipped rust off with special chipping hammers, brushed the surface with a steel brush, and applied a layer of red Minium anti-rust paint. Nothing like that was required on the *Rimon*. I felt as if I had been catapulted into the future. The *Tel Aviv* and the *Daniela* were grimy and slow; The *Rimon* was shiny and fast. However, as soon as she put to sea I discovered that modernity had its drawbacks. First - she was noisy while the steamships were quiet. Her 6-cylinder giant diesel engine thumped away loudly non-stop and was heard all over the ship. It was impossible to escape the incessant diesel-drone. Second - the diesel engine caused the whole ship to vibrate. It did some 200 r.p.m., while steam engines did around 60 r.p.m. and never shook the ship. Some of the *Rimon's* crew complained that while sleeping on their belly the vibrations caused them to ejaculate. The incessant diesel noise and vibrations induced fatigue even after one got used to them. The human body isn't built for such conditions.

Our first port of call was Rotterdam. We docked to get the decks fitted out to house some thirty African workers. They were to help us load and stow the giant tree-trunks we loaded for the new plywood factory – Kelet, in Kibbutz Afikim. In port we met the *Tamar*, the *Rimon's* sister-ship, returning from Africa to Haifa with logs and dismantling the deck arrangements we were fitting. As none of us had been in Africa before we asked the *Tamar's* crew for advice. They told us to buy cork helmets, not to befriend the native workers on board, and added: "If you buy monkeys make sure they are not frogs". That sounded strange, as no one can mistake a frog for a monkey. Later we found out they had a point.

From Rotterdam we sailed to Lagos where we took some 30 workers on board. That was necessary because at our destination there were no facilities, and no workers to hire. It was a barren beach south of Port-Gentil at the mouth of the Ogooue River in Gabon. All we saw on arrival were palm trees, some shabby wooden shacks, and the river's mouth. We anchored a mile offshore and wondered where the logs would come from. The next morning we saw a motor launch coming towards us from the river. It progressed slowly. When it neared us we saw it was towing a long line of tree trunks held together by steel wires. It came alongside and tied one end of the wires to our anchor chain and the other end to our stern. The logs floated in the sea all along the ship. Each log was about five feet in diameter and some fifteen feet long. Six-inch steel wedges with rings were attached to both ends and the middle of each log. Three long wires passing through the rings held all the logs together. To load a log on board one had to stand on it and knock out the three steel wedges. That was done with a big axe. Then the ship's crane lowered a wire loop which had to be slung around each log, which enabled the crane to lift it onto the ship. Once aboard it had to be lowered into a cargo hold and stowed. Stowage required skill to reduce empty spaces between logs. The *Rimon* had four cargo holds, each equipped with two cranes. Each hold was manned by a crew of nine: two stood on the logs, one worked the winch, one at the railing directing him and five worked inside the hold to stow the logs. It took about half an hour to lift a log from the water and stow it. Each hold was manned by seven of the African workers and two Israeli seamen supervising them. At first we tried to play colonial overseers with our cork helmets, barking orders at the natives. Soon we realized that the Africans were very slow at knocking the wedges out of the logs and no orders from us could change that. So we dropped the overseer posture and went overboard to do the job ourselves. The Africans enjoyed this sight very much and kept laughing. They were a jolly lot and our relations were quite friendly. However, we realized that if we became too friendly they took advantage in various ways. They cooked their own meals and ate on deck. The friendlier we became the longer the cooking and eating lasted. After loading the first lot of logs the launch came with a second lot, and then with a third. It took some two weeks to load the ship. All work stopped at 5 p.m. It was then that a lot of small, narrow boats, each manned by a single paddling young man, came alongside to trade. Each boat was about 6 feet long and 2 feet wide and carved from a single tree trunk. The rowing trader sat at the stern with his merchandise in front of him. The merchandise was mostly tropical fruit, some hand-made bracelets and necklaces, and a variety of monkeys. We threw a bucket tied to a rope overboard and shouted our choice. We paid with packets of American cigarettes. The trader put the merchandise in the bucket and we hauled it aboard, lowering it with the cigarette packs. There was a lot of haggling but no cheating. When darkness fell the boats returned to shore. There was nothing to do ashore after dark. There was no bar, no cinema, not even a paved footpath. Just earthen tracks through the vegetation and a few shabby wooden shacks. One hardly saw people. It was rumored that the famous Swiss doctor Albert Schweitzer had his leper-hospital in Lambarene, up the Ogooue River, but no one planned to visit him. After all, what would we do in a leper hospital?

I went ashore once and while walking along a track two Africans approached me asking if I want to buy a monkey. They said they had something special. I followed them to a shabby shack. They opened the door and I entered an empty room with an earthen floor. The only item inside was a rusty bed with rusty coiled springs and no mattress. It was dark and it took my eyes a while to adapt. When they did I saw a Chimpanzee, about two feet tall, sitting on the bed and smoking a cigarette. His fur was brown but his clear face was yellow

and two clever, sad eyes peered at me. I asked them how much they wanted and they asked for 200 US Dollars. I didn't have that sum and declined, but actually I was moved by that quasi-human creature. I realized that if I bought it I would have to be responsible for its welfare just like a parent. I wasn't ready to undertake such a responsibility. Later, when I told the *Rimon's* second mate about it, he said I was lucky as there was a local law forbidding the sale of Chimpanzees. Had I bought it I certainly would have been tried and fined.

When we finally departed, everyone felt relief. We discharged the African workers at Lagos and headed for Rotterdam to dismantle the structures they used while living aboard. It was then that we realized what the *Tamar's* crew meant by "Don't buy frogs". Most of the monkeys we had bought from the boat traders were actually babies taken from their mothers. Some were not yet weaned. We did not know that and thought they were adults. To feed them we used leftovers from our meals. The babies were unable to digest that food. Within a few days they all died. Being tiny, and sitting on their haunches, they did resemble frogs. The *Tamar's* crew had meant: "Don't buy babies". They were right. Not one baby survived.

However, one crew member bought an adult Rhesus. It was about two feet tall, looked mean and was utterly unfriendly. I guessed it was a female deprived of her babies. She had a leather belt around her waist with a big ring attached to it and a rope about a quarter inch thick tied to it. Her owner did not want to take her into his cabin and tied her to some appliance on deck. She had about fifteen feet of rope so she could move around. Her owner put food and water within her reach and left her alone. We all avoided her fearing she might bite us. She was the only monkey that survived when we finally saw Mount Carmel and Haifa.

We were about half an hour away from port when someone shouted: "Watch out - she bit through the rope and escaped". We began to search for the escaped monkey. Finally we saw her under a winch and surrounded her. She jumped over us to the ship's railing and ran astern. The stern is the rear of the ship. There was a storage cabin there and she hid behind it. We split into two groups approaching the cabin from both sides. There was nowhere for her to escape. When we were about ten feet away from her the owner shouted: "Stop. Don't approach her. She might jump overboard". All stopped.

She stood on the railing looking at us and then at the sea below. She did this again, and again. We realized she was contemplating whether to jump into the sea – or not. No one made a move – or a sound. We didn't want her to jump. Finally she took one last look at us, and jumped into the sea. We were shocked. Her repeated looking at the sea below and then back at us indicated she realized that jumping into the sea meant death and was contemplating whether to live as a captive or to die. We were all deeply moved and depressed by her death. Did she really know that she would die if she jumped? Did she knowingly commit suicide? None of us had an answer but the possibility that she knowingly committed suicide tormented us.

It still torments me.

Akiva Orr's books (all can be downloaded for free from www.akiorrbooks.com)

1. *Halufa le-medina psykhotit: zehut, ruhaniut, mishtar ve neshek atomi be-yisra'el* [Alternative to a psychotic state: identity, spirituality, regime and nuclear arms in Israel – in Hebrew]. Tel Aviv 2000.
 2. "Ha-petzatza ve-ha-hamania". *Lomdat mahshev le-yeladim 'al petzatzat ha-atom ha-rishona. Me'uyar.* ["The bomb and the sunflower". Computer instructional for children about the first atomic bomb. Illustrated – in Hebrew]. CD.
 3. *Israel: Politics, Myths and Identity Crises.* Pluto Press, London 1994.
 4. *Mi-meha'a le-mahpekha: hamesh hartza 'ot li-fe'ilim politiyim be-"salon mazal"* [From protest to revolution: five lectures for political activists at "Salon Mazal" – in Hebrew]. Tel Aviv 2003.
 5. *Mi-mishtar netzigim le-demokratia yashira: ma'amarim 'al mishtar hadash* [From rule by representatives - to direct democracy: articles on a new regime – in Hebrew]. Tel Aviv 1998
 6. "Politics without politicians". Article on the internet website: www.abolish-power.org
 7. *Politika bli politika'im* [Politics without politicians – booklet in Hebrew], 2005.
 8. *Shalom, shalom, ve-ein shalom* [Peace, peace, when there is no peace – in Hebrew]. With Moshe Machover, Jerusalem 1961. Second edition, Tel Aviv 1999. English translation available from 2010. <http://www.akiorrbooks.com/files/PEACE.pdf>
 9. *The UnJewish State*, Ithaca Press, London, 1984.
 10. "Hevzekim" Hebrew version of "Enlightening disillusionments" Tel-Aviv 2005.
- See also the author's internet sites www.abolish-power.org and www.autonarchy.org
11. ABOLISH ELECTIONS Vote directly on policies – never on politicians. (English 217 pages)
- 20th Century power-politics and their 21st Century electronic alternative
-

Back Cover

Memoires of an Israeli whom the Zionist dispossession and oppression of the Palestinians turned into a humanist and therefore anti-Zionist.

Albert Einstein used to say: "*Nationalism is an infantile disease, it is the measles of mankind*". Indeed, Zionism is the measles of Judaism. It will certainly pass, but while it lasts it causes much suffering and injustice. Mostly to the Palestinians but also to many Jews.

In a letter (23.11.1929) to Weizman (first Israeli president) Einstein wrote: "*Should we be unable to find a way to honest cooperation and honest pacts with the Arabs, then we have learnt absolutely nothing during our 2000 years of suffering, and deserve all that will come to us*".

His solution to the problem was: "*I should much rather see reasonable agreement with the Arabs on the basis of living together in peace than the creation of a Jewish state*" ("New Palestine", Washington DC 28.4.1938)

The author fully endorses all these three views of Einstein.

The book covers the period from 1950 to 2005 including the period from 1964 to 1990 which the author spent - mostly - in London.

Not all the book is about politics.