statecraft. One wishes (no doubt in practical wisdom and the lore of and epigrammatic statements, rich book, filled with telling quotations Rostow’s vision, but it is the kind ONE may quarrel with aspects of out in Russia and elsewhere. anti-democratic forces, as it plays contest between democratic and fected by the continuing global peace will also be decisively af- tion in Rostow’s global framework, however, and that concerns the relationship between peace and liberal democracy. Grounded as he is in the logic of 19th-century great-power diplomacy, Rostow fails to emphasize the fundamen- tal global division, apparent since the beginning of the 20th century, between democratic and tyranni- cal regimes.

Today the core of the Western security system continues to be defined by the common interests and values of the liberal democracies, and the gravitational pull that these states together exert on certain basically friendly, authoritar- ian regimes. In the short run, peace always depends on the balance of power; but in the long run, peace will also be decisively af- fected by the continuing global contest between democratic and anti-democratic forces, as it plays out in Russia and elsewhere.

One may quarrel with aspects of Rostow’s vision, but it is the kind of quarrel one always learns from. This is a marvelously stimulating book, filled with telling quotations and epigrammatic statements, rich in practical wisdom and the lore of statecraft. One wishes (no doubt futilely) that Rostow’s wisdom were the collective wisdom, the starting point for discussion of our post- cold-war role, for Americans would have a clearer vision of their future if they had a fuller understanding of their past. Anyone interested in acquiring such an understanding will find Toward Managed Peace an excellent place to begin.

Tremblers


Reviewed by Allan Nadler

W HEN Israel’s first Prime Minis- ter, David Ben-Gurion, de- cided to exempt his young coun- try’s few ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students from military service, the gesture was considered a minor concession to a tiny, fragile group on the brink of extinction, the last relics of the fossilized Judaism of Eastern Europe. But Ben-Gurion turned out to be a poor prophet. Far from disappearing, the ultra-Orthodox Jews, known in Hebrew as “haredim” (literally, “tremblers,” from Isaiah 66:5, “Listen to the Word of God, all ye who tremble at His word”), have thrived and are currently enjoying the fruits of a post-Holocaust baby boom. Today, thanks to the naive generosity of Israel’s founders, tens of thousands of young men and women in Israel take full advantage of the draft exemptions still accorded to religious seminary students, to the consternation and resentment of most Israelis whose sons and daughters do serve in defense of their country.

The remarkable and unexpect- ed resurgence of Jewish ultra-Orthodoxy, both in Israel and North America, is a matter of both fasci- nation and concern to many Jews today and has occasioned a growing literature, including these three books. Before looking at them, it would be useful to note a number of important distinctions.

First of all, despite the impres- sive increase in their ranks and influence, the haredim remain a small minority-within-a-minority of the Israeli and American Jewish communities. The ultra-Orthodox account for only one-third of all Orthodox Jews, who in turn represent less than 10 percent of world Jewry. Although precise figures are hard to come by, not least because Orthodox Judaism forbids censustaking, it is estimated that, despite their rising profile and high birth rate, Israel’s haredi population just barely exceeds 100,000 souls.

Secondly, the world of ultra-Or- thodox Judaism is itself neither monolithic nor uncomplicated. There are, for instance, ultra-Or- thodox Israelis, including some members of the highly influential Lubavitch hasidic sect, whose sons are drafted. (Virtually no Ortho- dox girls are allowed to enter the army.) And among mainstream, non-haredi Orthodox Israelis, a great many are passionate Zionists who join fully and enthusiastically in their country’s defense. The modern Orthodox Zionist move- ment, known as Mizrachi, has even established a network of unique yeshivas (known in Hebrew as “heder,” or “special-arrangement,” yeshivas) which offer a joint pro- gram of army service and advanced talmudic studies.

Stüll, the haredim in Israel do constitute a highly visible group, physically on account of their dis- tinctive dress, socially and politi- cally because of their passionately held religious convictions. If, for most visitors to the “holy land,” they may be something of an ex- otic tourist attraction, for Western Jews they are also something more: a nostalgic source of comfort and an assurance that, despite their own abandonment of the ways of their East European progenitors, the pristine Jewish spiritual past has managed to survive in the lives of these pious few.
In Piety and Power: The World of Jewish Fundamentalism, David Landau, who spent twenty years covering Israel’s religious scene for the Jerusalem Post, paints a vivid and perceptive—and unsettling—picture of the life of this community in Israel. The Orthodox Jewish world described by Landau has taken a sharp theological right turn, and this trend, along with a dramatic rise in numbers (thanks mostly to the haredi rejection of birth control), has produced a community now experiencing a growing awareness of its own political power. But despite its growth and political advancement, this rising religious minority remains not only fundamentally alienated from but actively hostile to majority values and culture.

The haredim perceive Zionism and the secular Jewish state which it produced as threats to traditional Judaism. As might be expected of a group claiming possession of transcendent and infallible truth, haredi thinking seems little affected by political and social reality. Although ultra-Orthodox Judaism thrives today in Israel like nowhere else, the haredim refuse to give any credit, let alone acknowledge any debt, to the mostly secular Jews who built the state in which they found refuge after the Holocaust, and who continue to defend it.

Even as they reject Zionist political ideology, however, the haredim have apparently learned much of a practical nature from the Jewish reentry into the world of politics which Zionism pioneered. Particularly in the last two decades, Israel’s small but influential Orthodox political parties have mastered the art of parliamentary politics, often holding the country’s fragile coalition governments hostage to their demands for increased subsidies of yeshivas and greater public enforcement of the Sabbath and Jewish dietary observances.

In a chapter aptly named “Zionist Nightmare,” Landau describes the stranglehold of the haredim on the Knesset, perhaps best symbolized by the political clout wielded by ninety-four-year-old Rabbi Elyezer Menahem Shach, the spiritual leader of the tiny Torah Flag party. The spectacle of an anti-Zionist rabbi controlling the destiny of a country to which he holds no allegiance is yet another source of the deepening resentment of the haredim on the part of secular Israelis and, it needs to be added, on the part of many religiously observant Israelis as well.

The enduring hostility of these haredim to the state which has been their refuge and breeding ground is a deeply troubling phenomenon. On another level, though, it is hard not to admire the tenacious survival of this community, a segment of Jewry which was almost completely annihilated during the Holocaust. Moreover, this is probably the only faction of world Jewry which has not been thrown into a veritable panic by the high rates of assimilation and intermarriage which are today decimating the non-Orthodox Jewish world.

As the sociologist Samuel Heilman notes in Defenders of the Faith—an anthropological foray into Jerusalem’s most extreme and hermetic Orthodox sects—isolation from prewar European culture often earmarked the haredim for even greater destruction than that which befell other Jews:

Had they been willing to integrate linguistically into the societies in which they found themselves instead of continuing to speak only their Yiddish, had they been more robust instead of the pale yeshiva boys who sat over books, had they been willing to change their appearance and style in line with general European culture, they might have been able to hide more easily among the Gentile population and perhaps survive in greater numbers.

But while their physical and linguistic distinctiveness may have rendered the haredim more vulnerable to their Nazi oppressors, their refusal to accommodate the wider culture has also been the cause of their remarkable postwar recovery. A particularly moving example is the community of Belzer Hasidim, a sect which thrived for just over a century in the Galician region of Poland. Even more vociferously...
than other ultra-Orthodox groups in Poland, the Belzers resisted emancipation and were particularly opposed to Zionism on the ground that a reestablished Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel must await the coming of the Messiah. In fact, the previous Belzer rebbe (or grand rabbi), Aharon Rokeach, absolutely forbade his followers to emigrate—either to America, which he saw as a land of religious anarchy and assimilation, or to Palestine, whose sanctity had become tainted by the Zionist enterprise.

The rebbe's consistent advice to his Hasidim in the 1930's (similar advice was dispensed by dozens of other rebbes) turned out to be a lethal miscalculation. Although he himself did manage at the last minute to escape the Nazis—ironically enough, on a Zionist-sponsored transport of Jews to Palestine—the vast majority of his followers were annihilated, mostly at Auschwitz.

But today, the community has experienced a phenomenal renaissance, captured by Heilman in his account of the bar-mitzvah celebrations of the only son of the current Belzer rebbe. Thousands of Hasidim crowded the sect's Jerusalem headquarters to witness the coming-of-age of the heir-apparent. As Heilman notes, the festivities marked more than a religious rite of passage: "This was not simply a celebration of survival; it was a triumph over the Holocaust.... Above all else, even as they seemed to be honoring the rebbe and his son, the Belzers were celebrating themselves."

But have the haredim learned anything from their historical experience? David Landau would say no: their survivalism appears often to be purely instinctive, and they certainly do not acknowledge the catastrophic political judgments of their rabbis in prewar Europe. This is perhaps not so surprising: there are, after all, good theological reasons for the refusal to attend to the implications of history. At the very core of the haredi credo is an insistence on the transcendence and immutability of their faith and the impeccable wisdom of their sages. This is particularly true of the Hasidim, whose grand rabbis are believed to be directly guided by an infallible "holy spirit." Not only can the haredim admit no mistake on the part of their rabbis, they take special pride in their own alleged impermeability to historical change.

I say "alleged" because, naturally enough, their encounter with modernity has transformed many aspects of their lives. In the course of his "expeditions," Heilman found that in a community where photographs were once considered graven images, and hence a violation of the second of the Ten Commandments, cameras and video recorders are now de rigueur at all public occasions (except, of course, on the Sabbath). Regarding the surprising inroads of modernity into a sect which prides itself on its immunity to the modern world, he observes:

... wherever ideology was silent, Belz had found a way to fill the ideological vacuum with the up-to-date: the newest cars, the most modern video recorders on which to photograph the proceedings, the highest-quality recording tape, the newest high-tech microphones, up-to-date halogen lamps, and (as I would later discover in Belz homes) personal computers, modern furniture and decor, and all else that was current to support their tribal activity in the most up-to-date way.

If modernity has left its mark on the haredi camp in Israel, it has made even deeper inroads into the ultra-Orthodox community in America. In Jerome Mintz's Hasidic People: A Place in the New World, we encounter Hasidim who have had to adapt to the frenetic and profane life of the world's most cosmopolitan—and hence most spiritually subversive—city. While the Hasidim of Israel may have relaxed the laws prohibiting "graven images" by purchasing cameras and video recorders, the Hasidim of New York have built fortunes by selling them: the most famous example being 47th Street Photo, the hasidic-owned electronics giant.

Politically, too, the ultra-Orthodox have made their accommoda-

Most of the data in Hasidic People take the form of extended quotations from an impressive array of "informants" whom Mintz interviewed in the course of his research. This is undoubtedly the book's greatest strength, and it is one shared by Heilman's book as well. One cannot but be impressed by the success of these scholars in gaining the confidence of people generally so wary of outsiders.

But there is also a problem here. Mintz's informants, no matter how candid, instinctively protect the image of their community; and so, despite his own attempt at objectivity, Mintz's account of hasidic life is inevitably a censored one. Further confounding matters is the fact that Mintz's other sources are mainly journalistic and for the most part limited to the English-language press. It is hard to credit a study of a group whose lingua franca is Yiddish which refers hardly at all to the many books, pamphlets, and weekly newspapers produced in that language by New York's hasidic community.

Heilman's Defenders of the Faith suffers from similar limitations. He cites Claude Lévi-Strauss's Tristes Troiques as an inspiration and
model, but there is a crucial difference between the haredim and the Brazilian savages studied by Lévi-Strauss: namely, literacy. A vast sacred literature stands at the very cornerstone of hasidic life (as of all traditional Jewish life), and any understanding of "hasidic people" and other ultra-Orthodox groups will remain seriously limited.

Art (?) in America


Reviewed by Walter Berns

John Frohnmayer had two purposes in mind when he set out to write this book: he wanted to get even with all the enemies (or perceived enemies) he had made during the two-and-a-half years he served in the Bush administration as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and he wanted to persuade us that he is not the hopeless booby he appeared to be in office. He succeeds in his first aim, but not in his second.

As "an artist in my own right"—he had sung in a church choir—Frohnmayer says he came to Washington to promote the arts in order to "enhance the quality of life in this country," only to be frustrated at every turn by the politicians. This, mind you, is the same man who begins his book by describing how he pulled every political string within his grasp to bring his name to the attention of George Bush (while concealing the fact that he had not voted for him), yet was surprised to learn that the office he won was not completely isolated from politics.

In Leaving Town Alive, at any rate, which is itself a particularly nasty political memoir in a very crowded field, Frohnmayer goes out of his way to express his contempt for politicians, and especially the Republicans among them: Bush's first chief of staff, John Sununu; Sununu's replacement, Sam Skinner; Vice President Quayle's chief of staff, William Kristol; and chief of Presidential Personnel, Constance Horner.

Few escape his venom. He suspects ("but was never able to verify") that Frank Hodsoll, his predecessor at the Arts Endowment and then a senior official in the Office of Management and Budget, conspired to defeat his budget requests; he asserts that Lynne Cheney owed her success as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the sister agency to the Arts Endowment, only to the fact that she was the "darling of the conservatives in Congress and the White House [as well as] the right-wing commentators"; he charges that some of his own staff plotted against him and even lied to him, and that one, Anne Radice, a "rabid conservative," was assigned by the White House "to keep an eye" on him; and so forth.

Worst of all in the Republican nest of vipers were the Republicans in Congress. He calls one of them a "lizard," another a "meathread"; he likens them to Neanderthals, to totalitarian, twice even to Hitler. They made his life miserable with their incessant complaints about obscenity, and they were constantly going out of their way to find it—for example, by seizing on a couple of lines from a poem and then denouncing him for funding the obscure journal, Queer Nation, in which the poem appeared.

Of course, Frohnmayer has to admit that, taken out of context, the lines in question "delivered quite a jolt." And so they did, speaking in the coarsest language of how Jesus performed oral sex on the narrator "behind the pulpit/ I was 6 years old/ he made me promise/ not to tell no one."

Still, Frohnmayer suggests that, had his critics read the poem in its entirety, they could have seen that it was "a serious work of art conveying a serious message about a serious problem."

Much to Frohnmayer's dismay, they were not appeased. Especially did they object to funding the likes of Karen Finley. Frohnmayer thinks that Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) should have been "laughed out of Congress" for making her an issue. Why, he asks, should the idea of a performer rubbing chocolate on her naked body in front of an audience so inflame the American public? He wonders idly whether the reaction would have been the same if Finley had spread herself with "peanut butter or Crisco or oatmeal."

But he knows very well that the issue was not Finley's choice of spread, or even the scatological verses she recited as she applied it, but whether performances like hers deserved to be subsidized with tax dollars. Helms and company said no, arguing that the NEA's job was to fund art, not obscenity, and that a sensible agency ought to be able to distinguish between them. Frohnmayer said yes—actually, in Finley's particular case he made a public fool of himself by saying no, then yes, and finally no.

At a certain point, Congress found it necessary to appoint an independent commission to review the agency's grant-making procedures, and the commission, in turn, found it necessary to remind Frohnmayer that the "National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency" established to serve public purposes (and that the public's elected representatives were to have a role in defining those purposes).

But what public purpose, Frohnmayer's critics wanted to know, was served by an exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs that included a picture of one man urinating into the mouth of another, or by Queer Nation's blasphemous poems, or by Karen Finley's spreading herself with chocolate to make the point that, as a woman in 20th-century America, she was, as she said, "nothing but shit"? To say the least, his critics saw none; to which Frohnmayer responded with the tired cliché that the purpose of art

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