

**THE**  
*anti* **NEW JEWISH**  
**AGENDA**

**by Rael Jean Isaac**

The New Jewish Agenda was created in 1979 to fill the gap left by the passage of Breira. An amalgam of left wing activists and conservative and reform rabbis, Breira, after a slow start in 1973, burst on the national Jewish scene in 1976 and died shortly thereafter. It foundered when the anti-Israel credentials of many of its leaders were exposed. Even Alan Mintz, the man widely credited with creating Breira, dropped out, asserting that "Breira has done little to assure us that the central point of departure for its work is an empathetic bond with the fortunes of the Jewish people."

From the standpoint of those seeking to revive the organization in a new form, Breira's mistake had been its overemphasis on the Middle East. (Breira's activities had focused almost exclusively on promoting a PLO state as a "solution" to the Arab-Israel conflict.) So in December 1978 when Gerald Serotta and Albert Axelrad, both Hillel rabbis active in Breira, decided to form New Jewish Agenda, they determined to avoid what Serotta described as Breira's focus on "day to day developments in the Middle East."<sup>1</sup> When New Jewish Agenda held its founding conference in December 1980, the introduction to the program noted that "important conceptual decisions" had been worked out over the past year. Agenda was to be a multi-issue organization and Middle East issues "although primary to most if not all of our people will only be a part of our concerns and ought not be allowed to dominate."

In a sense New Jewish Agenda has been successful. It set out to be an organization where Jews, as Jews, could participate in "progressive" politics; its slogan is "a Jewish voice among progressives, a progressive voice among Jews." What is "progressive" is defined as the causes fashionable among the radical left at any particular time, presently gay and lesbian rights, disarmament, and Marxist liberation movements, especially in Central America. True, it has not grown as it hoped. After an initial phase of rapid growth, Agenda peaked in 1984 when it claimed 4,500 members in 40 cities, and has remained static since then. On the other hand, it is increasingly being accepted in the Jewish community. It is a member of Jewish community relations councils in a number of cities; it co-sponsors meetings and activities with mainstream Jewish organizations; and it has now joined with several left wing Zionist organizations to form a "Progressive Zionist Delegation" to work within the World Zionist Organization. Above all, for six years it has avoided the glare of exposure that irreparably damaged Breira.

Agenda's success in avoiding scrutiny is surprising in that while Israel is not the only focus of Agenda's activities, it has certainly come to dominate them. It has been even less inhibited than Breira in attacking Israel and cooperates closely with some of the most viciously anti-Israel

organizations in the United States. Indeed, in its devotion to "progressive" regimes and politicians, Agenda serves to deny and legitimize their anti-Semitism, making the overt expression of anti-Semitism more acceptable in American society. It would thus seem time that the development and activities of New Jewish Agenda were accorded some attention.

### AGENDA'S FOUNDING CONFERENCE

The continuity between Breira and New Jewish Agenda was apparent at Agenda's first conference, which was even held at the same 4-H Conference Center outside Washington D.C. where Breira's founding conference had been held three years earlier. Not surprisingly Agenda's constituency was drawn primarily from former Breira members and the overlapping membership of the Peace Now network in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

The direct line from Breira was also apparent in the resolutions considered. To be sure, no formal resolution was passed on Israel. No formal resolutions were passed on anything, since in an orgy of participatory democracy members debated throughout the night, losing a quorum in the process. Nonetheless the "straw votes" cast by those who survived the all-night resolutions assembly were revealing. On Israel, the voters rejected a resolution calling for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and mutual recognition of Israeli and Palestinian rights in favor of one specifically calling for recognition of the rights of Palestinians to a state. Moreover the resolution called on Israel to be "an ethical, democratic and peaceful country"-note the assumption that at present it was none of these. No wonder the militant left paper *The Guardian*, which noted with satisfaction a substantial contingent of "anti-Zionists" playing "an active role" at the conference,<sup>3</sup> described the vote on the Middle East as the most "progressive position" ever taken by a major Jewish organization. (It was interesting that while *The Guardian* seemed to have had no trouble covering the conference, *The Jewish Week* was excluded on the grounds there was "no room." Presumably that paper's earlier critical coverage of Breira led the organizers to exclude it.<sup>4</sup>)

The conference also suggested some of the ways in which Agenda would be different from Breira. Former Breira activist David Szonyi was struck by the role women were playing in the new organization. Not only did women form the majority in the governing structure, but they also were focusing on women's grievances. For example, *Lilith* editor Aviva Cantor spoke of the "Jewish patriarchal establishment" and argued that American Jewry was "dominated by a small group of wealthy assimilated men and their hired male hacks." In addition to

Israel, the conference concerned itself with a wide range of issues, with "progressive positions," as the *Guardian* noted, being passed in straw votes on such issues as racism, nuclear power, the arms race, women and gay rights. Typically the "straw vote" on U.S. foreign policy supported, without qualification, "liberation struggles" throughout the world.

Initially Agenda did manage to avoid placing primary focus on Israel, concentrating instead on disarmament, then the premier issue on the left. In shaping Agenda's role here, Arthur Waskow seems to have played a decisive part. Waskow, a central figure in Breira, was a 1960s radical and long time Fellow of the far-left Institute for Policy Studies (which he left in 1977 in a financial dispute), who had turned his considerable energies to radicalizing the Jewish community. He displayed his customary flair for "adapting" Jewish religious symbols for political purposes (of which more later) by developing a series of activities to observe the "Rainbow Covenant." The notion was that the Biblical story of the Flood should serve as symbol and warning of a "Flood of Fire, thermonuclear fire, that could destroy the human race and all life on earth."<sup>6</sup> New Jewish Agenda chapters led "Rainbow Sign" coalitions in such activities as marches and vigils at defense contractors; created Tisha B'Av and Nagasaki Day observances; and threw itself into the preparations for the huge June 12th, 1981 disarmament demonstration in New York City.

Feminism, combined with lesbian and gay rights, also seems to have initially absorbed considerable energies of Agenda members. When Agenda held its second national conference in August 1985, Lawrence Bush, who conducted a session at the conference, observed in an article published in *Jewish Currents* that there was a strong gay and lesbian presence. Indeed Bush claimed that judging by a show of hands it was over 35%.<sup>7</sup>

### THE SHIFT TO A MIDDLE EAST FOCUS

Nonetheless it was inevitable that the primary focus of New Jewish Agenda's activities should become the Middle East. This was obvious from the outset to the Shalom Network, an organization that had grown out of the October 1979 conference held by the left-wing Israeli journal *New Outlook* in Washington D.C. The Network, whose statement of purpose proclaimed that Israel's survival "may well be dependent upon self-determination for the Palestinian people"<sup>8</sup> decided to conduct its training workshop for Middle East "peace activists" in Washington immediately prior to the opening of Agenda's conference. (By 1982 the Shalom Network would formally merge into New Jewish

Agenda.) The focus on Israel was inevitable in part because, as Serotta had himself noted, Middle East issues were "primary to most if not all of our people." While caution (the fate of Breira) might indicate that such a focus created problems in the broader Jewish community, it could not long deflect members from acting upon the issue that they found most compelling.

A second factor impelling Agenda to focus on the Middle East had to do with the first half of Agenda's self-defined role, to serve as "a Jewish voice among progressives." From the standpoint of those "progressives," the most valuable function of the New Jewish Agenda was to serve as a Jewish voice attacking Israel. Apart from specifically church-linked organizations, radical groups suffered from no lack of individual Jewish members. In order to become a recognized, valued and important member of the "progressive community" then, Agenda came under pressure constantly to take stands in conformity with the anti-Israel positions of the radical left.

The development of Agenda into an ally and apologist for the most anti-Israel (and often anti-Semitic) politicians, organizations and regimes was the easier because of the feeling of intense hostility to Israel that animates many in Agenda (as it did in Breira). For this important component, much more is involved than advocacy of a "solution" to the Arab-Israeli conflict that departs from the Jewish consensus. One senses they truly hate Israel. The source of this feeling no doubt differs. For some it may stem from a feeling that Israel bars Jews as a group from joining ranks with political revolutionaries; for others that it interferes with their espousing a universalism that they feel is the hallmark of "prophetic Judaism." For yet others it presumably stems from the all-too-familiar pathological Jewish self-hatred. Whatever the complex of motivations, New Jewish Agenda chapters, often in cooperation with the most anti-Israel organizations in the United States, embarked on a series of activities, ranging from resolutions to newspaper ads, from organizing anti-Israel speaking tours to showing anti-Israel films, from demonstrations to developing and promoting anti-Israel political referenda.

By 1982 Agenda had conquered its passion for participatory democracy and "unanimously" passed a platform with 18 planks. The plank on Israel, after a perfunctory reference to Agenda's commitment "to the survival and well-being of the State of Israel" (there was no reference to its "security"), continued with eight paragraphs critical of Israel's policies and of course insisted on Israel's recognition of Palestinian rights to "self-determination."

While Agenda staged demonstrations before Israel's invasion of

Lebanon (for example, against Israel's incorporation of the Golan Heights), the Lebanese war precipitated an intense wave of anti-Israel activity. Indeed, in the very first days of the Israeli action, before the media had assumed a hostile role, Agenda moved into high gear. On June 8, 1982, only two days after Israeli forces entered Lebanon, the Washington D.C. chapter of Agenda issued a public statement calling on Israel to recognize the PLO. "Khevre," an Agenda chapter in Massachusetts, held a protest vigil and issued a statement saying Israel had betrayed "the principles of freedom and self-determination" upon which it was established.<sup>9</sup> By June 30 national Agenda had an ad in the New York Times opposing Israel's actions and repeating the highly exaggerated estimates of casualties being spread at the time.

Pro-PLO politicians were not slow in taking advantage of Agenda's propaganda value. In August 1982 Ohio Congresswoman Mary Rose Oakar, fresh from a visit to Arafat in West Beirut, declared in Congress that she had the names of 100 Washington area Jews who had signed a statement saying "the dream of a peaceful homeland will never be realized so long as Israel denies the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people." New Jewish Agenda was among the signatories.

#### WORKING WITH PRO-ARAB GROUPS

Cooperation with the most radical anti-Israel groups, ranging from the American Friends Service Committee to the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee, which has replaced the Association of Arab-American University Graduates as the most active pro-PLO group in the U.S., has become a trademark of New Jewish Agenda. This cooperation is evident in everything from cosponsorship of demonstrations and conferences to organizing national speaking tours of anti-Israel activists.

Organizations from the most extreme end of the political spectrum enlist Agenda's support. When an "April 20" (1985) demonstration in Washington D.C. called "Festival of Resistance" (against Reagan's policies) was organized by a series of pro-Soviet and pro-PLO groups, Agenda's Rabbi Brian Walt was there to denounce U.S. support of the "apartheid regime." So was long-time anti-Israel activist Abdeen Jabara, who spoke to attack U.S. aid to Israel. Ironically, in seeking to persuade mainstream Jewish organizations to participate in an August 1983 "civil rights" march on Washington featuring many of the same groups, Agenda argued that if Jews abandon such coalitions, the Middle East might arise as an issue and none of Israel's defenders would be around to speak out." Certainly Agenda was more likely to join the anti-Israel chorus.



The impact of speaking tours, particularly on the church, university and civic groups they chiefly target, should not be underestimated. The pretense of "balance" is kept by having both an Israeli and an Arab on the program. The Israeli then reinforces the Arab message that Israel is an evil and oppressive society. For example, with the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, the American Friends Service Committee and several other "peace" groups, Agenda sponsored a tour by Tamara Berger, a founding member of the Committee Against the War in Lebanon and a member of the Israeli Committee in Solidarity with Bir Zeit University and Rita Giacaman, a Palestinian Arab who teaches at Bir Zeit. Bir Zeit, a hot bed of anti-Israel activism, was described in a PLO memorandum captured in Beirut in 1982 as "a genuine fortress, encountering the Zionist enemy," and the best "of any West Bank university" because "it boasts the largest number of violent clashes."<sup>12</sup> Appearances by Uri Avnery (author of *Israel Without Zionists*) and Palestinian Arab journalist Hanna Siniara were sponsored by Agenda, the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee and others. With the American Friends Service Committee, Agenda cosponsored a tour by Mordecai Bar-On of Peace Now and the PLO's Mohammed Milhem. On another Agenda sponsored tour, retired Israel colonel Dov Yermiya, head of the (now defunct) "Israeli Committee Against Racism" was paired with Palestinian Arab Munir Fasheh. When Yermiya spoke in Seattle, the University of Washington's paper reported that he described how "extreme nationalism and racism" fueled the Israeli war machine. (The paper reported that Yermiya had tartly defended his likening of Israel to Nazi Germany: "It appears that I erred in explicitly mentioning the name which Jews consider a private asset, some kind of primate Satan which must not be mentioned in the same breath as their own actions, as parallel as those actions may be.") So-called "cultural" tours have the same political message. Thus when Agenda and the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee sponsored Israeli singer Sara Alexander and Palestinian Arab Ismael Saleh, Saleh made it clear that his songs were on subjects like "why children have no parents" or "why lovers must separate"—because of Israel, of course.<sup>14</sup>

New Jewish Agenda has also served as Jewish sponsor for the anti-Israel conferences and meetings held by the familiar far-left consortium. For example in 1985 Agenda joined with the American Friends Service Committee, Mobilization for Survival, and the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee in organizing a 4 day conference on the Middle East that drew activists from 25 states. Addressing "human rights" issues in the Middle East, it was called "Breaking the Silence." Needless to say the silence to be broken was not concerning violation of human rights by the brutal Lebanese militia or the PLO or the Syrians, with their massacre of thousands of civilians at Hama. The conference concluded by calling on the U.S. to support a PLO state. Similarly in

1984 Agenda's Atlanta chapter joined with the Georgia chapters of the National Association of Arab Americans, the American Arab Community Center and the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee to sponsor a lecture on "the human rights of the Palestinian people."

Agenda is ever ready to send its representatives to provide far left organizers with a cover of "balance" for what amount to anti-Israel revival meetings. In September 1982, a meeting entitled "Terror in Lebanon: the Israeli Invasion" was held at MIT. There were four panelists: the Lebanon Program director of Oxfam, a "Palestinian sociologist," Noam Chomsky, and a representative of New Jewish Agenda. Roger Levenson, a senior at Boston University who attended, observed that Roger Hurwitz, Agenda's speaker, after initially seeming to defend Israel from the charges being hurled against it—he said Israel did not intend to commit genocide and was not an imperialistic country—went on to support the other speakers. Indeed, according to Levenson, Hurwitz "assailed Israel before a hostile audience without qualification." Asked about the PLO's placement of arms in populated areas of West Beirut, Hurwitz countered "Have you ever seen the Israeli Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv?" Levinson noted that by turning aside the question in this way, he in effect defended the PLO's tactics. Levinson was puzzled. "What could cause Hurwitz to cast his ballot with those who would see Israel destroyed?"<sup>15</sup>

In cooperation with the far left and pro-Arab lobby, Agenda has spoken and demonstrated against the visits of Israeli leaders to the U.S. When Ariel Sharon spoke at a Hebrew Academy banquet in San Francisco in November 1983, over 2,000 demonstrators gathered before the hotel to protest his appearance. The organizers included the November 29 Coalition (which takes its name from the date declared by the UN as International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People), the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee, the National Lawyers Guild (the association of far left lawyers whose mission to the Middle East, which issued a report charging systematic torture of Arabs by Israel, was funded in part by the PLO<sup>16</sup>), the Committee for Academic Freedom in the Israeli Occupied Territories, and New Jewish Agenda." When Israeli General Amos Yaron presented his diplomatic credentials as military attache in this country, the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee put an ad in *The Nation*<sup>18</sup> demanding that they be revoked. The ad was worded so as to suggest that Israel had deliberately colluded in the massacre at Sabra and Shatila camps: Yaron's troops, it said "fired illuminated rounds so the Phalangists could continue their bloody work." Among the signatories, which included the brothers Berrigan, Noam Chomsky, and Jesse Jackson, was New Jewish Agenda. New Jewish Agenda demonstrated against then Prime Minister Menachem Begin when he spoke in Los Angeles in November 1982.



Agenda members have taken an active role in some of the most imaginative anti-Israel gambits. Members of Berkeley's Agenda chapter took an active role in launching the so-called "Initiative E," which called on the U.S. to cut funds to Israel by the amount that Israel spent on settlements outside the "Green Line" established by the 1949 armistice. According to the Communist Party's *Daily World*<sup>19</sup> Initiative E was the brainchild of Arabs and Jews from the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Committee for Academic Freedom in the Occupied Territories, the International Jewish Peace Union and New Jewish Agenda. (The International Jewish Peace Union, with which Agenda has joined in a large number of actions, is led by Paris-based Maxim Ghilan, who for fifteen years has published a pro-PLO paper called *Israel and Palestine*; when it temporarily ran short of money in 1983, its anti-Israel record earned it the support of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign which solicited subscriptions and contributions on its behalf on the ground that "I&P has both documented and publicized hundreds of cases of arrest, torture, land confiscation, illegal imprisonment and other abuses of Palestinian rights ... Most important, it has defended the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, recognizing the PLO as their sole representative ..."<sup>20</sup>

The above-mentioned groups organized as Taxpayers for Peace in the Middle East; of the 7 member steering committee, four were Jewish, one of them David Makofsky, an Agenda member.<sup>21</sup> It was no wonder then that *MERIP Reports* (the journal of the virulently anti-Israel Middle East and Research Project) called the coalition an "exemplary landmark of Arab-American Jewish cooperation" marking the first time Jewish and Arab American organizations had formed an alliance to work on a political campaign.<sup>22</sup>

Agenda's Seattle chapter, Kadima, is similarly adept at finding opportunities to defy the Jewish consensus. Following the U.S. air raid on Libya early in 1986 representatives of the Rabbinic Board handed a proclamation to the French consulate in Seattle condemning France for refusing to allow American jets to overfly their territory. But Kadima, along with the International Jewish Peace Union (to which Kadima is affiliated) joined an Ad Hoc Committee to Stop the War on Libya.<sup>23</sup> When the Israeli government temporarily closed Bir Zeit University (the PLO's "fortress") the night before a "festival" celebrating the 16th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine on the grounds that materials on how to make bombs were being distributed, Kadima described this as a "gross violation of academic freedom," accused Israel of "torture of students" and urged members to send telegrams of protest to Secretary of State George Schultz and then Prime Minister Shimon Peres.<sup>24</sup> A number of members of Kadima, along with representatives of the Miami and Washington

D.C. chapters and Gordon Fellman, a sociology professor at Brandeis who is one of Agenda's leaders, signed an "open letter" to Schultz and Peres that was then published as an ad in *Haaretz* (on April 26, 1985) by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign. The letter, also signed by the ubiquitous (in matters anti-Israel) Noam Chomsky, Arab academics, anti-Israel stalwarts of the mainline church bureaucracies,<sup>25</sup> and heads of "peace" organizations, expressed "deep disturbance" at the "ongoing erosion of the academic freedom of the Palestinians" by the Israeli government.

### NATIONAL AGENDA IS "EMBARRASSED"

On more than one occasion the national steering committee has been embarrassed by the actions of chapters. It is not that the national board disagrees with the perspectives that guide them, but that it fears the organization's efforts to reach into the Jewish community will be jeopardized. When the Manhattan chapter accepted an invitation by a coalition of PLO support groups to cosponsor and provide a speaker for a protest rally in front of the Israeli embassy on June 18, 1982, some national steering committee members insisted that the chapter steering committee "reconsider" its decision on threat of expulsion.<sup>26</sup> Their grounds were that the rally's location made it too visible to national media and national Jewish leadership. While the chapter succumbed to the pressure and bowed out of the June 18 rally, little over a month later, on July 29, 30 members of the chapter demonstrated in front of the Israeli Mission to the UN and Jacob Bender, a spokesman for the group, was quoted by Religious News Service as saying "what the Palestinians are now suffering at the hands of the Israeli army" was similar to the Roman persecution of the Jews.

When Taxpayers for Peace in the Middle East succeeded in putting its measure on the ballot in Berkeley (thanks to an energetic response by mainstream Jewish organizations it was ultimately defeated by a substantial margin), Agenda's national steering committee, embarrassed by the extensive press coverage of the initiative, ordered Berkeley's Agenda chapter to remain "neutral." The chapter's solution was to take a position "internally" in favor of the initiative and to "lobby" National Agenda in hopes of persuading it to take a position in favor of such initiatives (a similar one had been attempted in Ann Arbor).<sup>27</sup> But of course by the time Berkeley Agenda was ordered to take a position of public "neutrality," its activists had done their damage.

Similarly, when the Palestine Human Rights Campaign organized a conference in Atlanta in May 1983 on the theme "War and Peace in the

Holy Land: What Does Biblical Justice Require of Us?" (the elimination of Israel, of course) and listed New Jewish Agenda as a sponsor, Agenda's national steering committee was sufficiently disturbed to protest to the Atlanta chapter. It, in turn, wrote to the Palestine Human Rights Campaign urging that the "error" be clarified. The letter declared it was unclear how the confusion occurred because no Atlanta Agenda member had "formally consented" to endorsing the conference. (The writer's language suggested that "informal consent" had in fact been given.) A few years later such reservations had apparently melted. When the Palestine Human Rights Campaign held its national conference in Chicago in September 1986 "Palestine and Justice: The Next Phase" the program advertised a New Jewish Agenda representative as leader in a workshop on "Building Alliances in the Movement for Justice in the Middle East."

#### AGENDA ACCEPTED BY "NETWORK"

Agenda's censoriousness toward Israel is matched by its uncritical enthusiasm for a number of Arab individuals and groups working directly for the PLO or in its interests. PLO representative Issam Sartawi, attending the 1983 Congress of the Socialist International in Portugal, was assassinated by a faction which objected to Arafat's policy of fostering contacts with Jewish "peace activists." Sartawi had earlier been rebuked for contacting Jews who were not anti-Zionist "in theory as well as in practice." (Sartawi's sense for public relations was of course far better than that of his critics; the very fact that Agenda was not anti-Zionist "in theory" made its "practice" all the more effective.) Agenda reacted with professions of deep loss. It declared "The Jewish people have lost a great friend in the assassination of Issam Sartawi." Agenda was even more devastated when, in October 1985, Alex Odeh, Western regional director of the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee, was killed by a bomb while opening his office in Santa Ana. Los Angeles Agenda responded by placing an ad in the newspaper mourning his death, soliciting funds for his family, and inviting his brother to participate in a "tribute" in the form of a "Hannukah" party where each of the eight candles was lit in honor of a "progressive cause" and the last was lit in honor of Alex Odeh and justice to the Palestinian people.<sup>28</sup> Expressing grief and outrage on Odeh's death, Agenda's Al Fishman declared it was impossible to fight against anti-Semitism against Jews without fighting against anti-Semitism against Arab Americans. "We seek," said Fishman, "to build unity in the struggle for freedom here and the recognition of the Palestinian people and their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."<sup>29</sup>

The warm sentiments Agenda harbored toward the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee and the many ways it had lent support to its activities (including a successful joint protest to Coleco which then took off the market a six inch plastic doll with an Arab headdress designed to fight Rambo) caused problems when, early in 1984, the ADC sought full membership in the far-left Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, to which Agenda belonged. (The Coalition had long had PLO support groups on its "Human Rights Working Group.") There was the problem that backing the ADC in this setting would have uncomfortably high visibility, especially since the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Americans for Democratic Action, also Coalition members, threatened to resign if the application was accepted. When Agenda's steering committee reluctantly voted to oppose the ADC's membership, the Middle East task force was indignant, and voted to ask the steering committee to reverse itself." By early 1985 the ADC was a member of the Coalition and no group carried out its threat to resign.

Agenda further demonstrates its empathy for Arab perspectives by promoting pro-PLO "educational materials." For example, the Washington D.C. chapter in 1982 reported that it had sponsored "a slide show by the Palestine Solidarity Committee on the West Bank and Gaza occupations." Another chapter sponsored a showing of the Swedish-produced virulently anti-Israel "Gaza Ghetto." In December 1986 Seattle's Kadima, in cooperation with the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee and the International Jewish Peace Union sponsored a showing of "Native Sons: Palestinians in Exile," portraying according to the flyer "real Palestinian families, exiled from their land and homes since 1948."

The pro-PLO left sees Agenda as a member of "the network." An article in *The Guardian* noted that while the struggle for Palestine did not have as broad a base as the disarmament movement and was not as well organized as the networks in solidarity with the struggle in Central America, it had developed strong and diverse support. After outlining the chief elements in the Palestinian support effort (the November 29th Coalition, the National Emergency Committee on Lebanon, the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Palestine Congress of North America etc.), the article noted that there were also "progressive" groups in the Jewish community, New Jewish Agenda chief among them.<sup>31</sup> The only Jewish sources included in a list of Resources on the Crisis in Lebanon distributed by the anti-Zionist Washington Emergency Committee on Lebanon (the list consisted of the standard pro-PLO network) were New Jewish Agenda and the tiny, but similar, Jewish Peace Fellowship.

## AMERICA THE EVIL

Agenda's moral wrath is not exclusively directed against Israel. The United States comes in for its full share of obloquy as a racist, imperialist, oppressive society, so much so that sometimes Agenda does not seem to be quite sure whether Israel or the U.S. is the primary villain. One member wrote to complain that "your basic thrust is against Israel" when it should be against the United States, which uses scapegoats like Israel to deflect public outrage to its vicious aggression against oppressed people everywhere."<sup>32</sup>

Agenda members experience America's free society as one of unparalleled repression. Priorities in the struggle against the myriad of oppressions vary among members, leading to letters of protest to Agenda's newsletter. One reader wrote to complain that the struggle for Lesbian and Gay Jews had been placed too high in relation to other oppressions. The editor replied that Agenda "actively made no attempt to rank oppressions" but wanted to affirm "the strength of our commitment to Lesbian and Gay liberation."

Its emphasis on the ubiquity of oppression in American society allows Agenda to maintain a rhetorical commitment to fighting anti-Semitism, while in practice ignoring or, more accurately, condoning it. For by condoning and denying its most blatant manifestations among "progressives," in effect it gives legitimacy to anti-Semitism. In so far as Agenda is willing to make any acknowledgement of the progressive left's anti-Semitism, it places the blame on Israel.

## AGENDA'S "HUMAN RIGHTS" DELEGATION

Nowhere is this set of attitudes more apparent than in Agenda's efforts to deny the presence of anti-Semitism in the Sandinista government of Nicaragua, with which Agenda identifies strongly as a "progressive" regime. The small Jewish community has left Nicaragua, forced out through a combination of threats, imprisonment, and confiscation of property. The most dramatic single incident was the firebombing of the synagogue during the prayer service by Sandinista toughs. According to Fred Luft, one of those present, they tried at gunpoint to keep the worshippers in the building. The elderly head of the community, Abraham Gorn, was arrested and forced to sweep streets. His brother-in-law Isaac Stavisky was told at gunpoint "Next time we'll get you, you Jew."<sup>33</sup>

In cooperation with the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, New Jewish Agenda sent a delegation to Nicaragua ostensibly to

"investigate" the charges, but in fact to whitewash the Sandinistas. Agenda's perspective on the Sandinista regime was obvious well before it assumed the mantle of a visiting "human rights delegation." Months before its departure, Los Angeles Agenda, in December 1983, had presented a "People of the Book" award to Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaragua's Minister of Culture. In the award ceremony, the Agenda spokesman compared the Sandinistas to the Maccabees on the grounds that both sought "to establish a more just society." Declaring Agenda was "unalterably opposed" to anti-Semitism "anywhere," he commended the Nicaraguan government for its effort "to refute such charges." (It is noteworthy that, for Agenda, the very fact of the Sandinista denial, regardless of the merit of the charges, was seen to merit praise.)

It was little wonder then that Agenda's delegation paid no attention to what it was told by the Jewish refugees from Nicaragua with which it met in Miami. (Its decision to meet with them was presumably designed to defuse a potential source of criticism of the delegation's findings.) But the delegation's members believed implicitly, and parroted on return to the U.S., everything members of the Sandinista junta told them, and their "finding" that there was no anti-Semitism in Nicaragua (although they claimed to have "searched for any evidence" to support the charges<sup>34</sup>) received extensive press coverage both in the U.S. and Israel."

How did New Jewish Agenda delegation members dispose of what was after all the first-hand experience of Nicaragua's Jews? Confiscation of property? Other people's property had also been confiscated. Besides the Jews deserved it—they had supported Somoza. Fire-bombing of the synagogue? The Sandinistas told them it had been done by "Somoza provocateurs" and that might be true. (In any event, some delegation members seem to have felt the synagogue was now being put to better use. One member described the conversion of the synagogue, which the Sandinistas had confiscated, for use by the Sandinista's Children's Association as representing "a kind of consecration."<sup>36</sup>) Hostility to Israel merging into anti-Semitism? The delegation conceded articles in the Sandinista controlled *Nuevo Diario* alleging Jews control world finance and headlines like "Jews Bomb Beirut" were unfortunate, but dismissed them on the grounds they were not part of "a systematic campaign." The delegation shifted the blame to Israel, noting that Israel's role as arms supplier to Somoza "and its current involvement in arms sales to the region" made the Sandinista government's attitudes inevitable. The delegation's report left the impression the tie between the Sandinistas and the PLO had been much exaggerated: members did not "observe" evidence of "significant PLO assistance to the Sandinistas." (In fact, relationships remain close: as recently as January 1987 Nicaraguan President Ortega

sent a message to Arafat, which was broadcast on Nicaraguan radio, expressing pleasure at this "new opportunity to express our solidarity and firm support for the noble struggle of the Palestinian people."<sup>38</sup>)

The villain for the Agenda delegation was not the Sandinistas but, in addition to Israel, the Reagan administration, whose "policy of economic, political and military confrontation with Nicaragua raises profound moral questions" and which was exploiting the allegations of anti-Semitism "for political purposes."<sup>39</sup>

There was one dissenter in the delegation. Rabbi Francis Silberg of Congregation Bnei Jeshurun in Milwaukee had apparently established his "progressive" credentials for Agenda by his participation in the sanctuary movement, another "cause" which Agenda has been promoting in the Jewish community. (The premise of the movement is that the U.S. policy of aiding the Duarte government is evil, and that the people, i.e. the Communist insurgents, should take control of El Salvador.) But if Silberg had been taken in by the humanitarian veneer of the sanctuary movement, he proved less credulous in Nicaragua. Courageously, he issued a separate statement in which he said he was "unable to endorse the New Jewish Agenda's hopeful account of life and political longing in a country yanked from an oppression of the Right into a repression of the Left." He told the Wisconsin *Jewish Chronicle* that his fellow delegates were "absolutely and unequivocally snookered. They went down as idealists and were swayed by realists. And cagey ones at that."<sup>41</sup> (Pithy as Silberg's statement was, it would be more accurate to say that members went with their minds made up and returned in the same condition.)

Some involved in Agenda have gone even further. While the delegation's report at least included a few caveats (it expressed some concern about the blurring of distinction between the Sandinista party and the institutions of government "even in the face of overwhelming popular support") Rabbi Balfour Brickner, once a stalwart of Breira, who now gives active support to Agenda's programs, actually sees Sandinista Nicaragua as the "true Israel." He describes how he experienced *deja vu* in Nicaragua, so reminded was he of Israel when it was in its youthful struggle to emerge as a nation. On the other hand, to Brickner, Israel itself seems to have developed into a sort of spiritual "anti-Israel," for it is "deeply involved in thwarting popular forces for democracy and social change in Latin America, forces similar in ideology to those which brought Israel into existence against social and military imperialism."<sup>42</sup>

Paul Tick, the head of Agenda's Central American Task Force, is equally unabashed in his role as apologist. He explains Nicaragua's



action in walking out of the UN when the Israeli Prime Minister spoke there; Nicaragua's Minister of Tourism explained that Nicaragua's hard line at the UN had "never been against the Israeli people"—only the Israeli government. As for anti-Semitism, Tick was impatient. "Only Reagan and the ADL [Anti-Defamation League] have charged the Sandinistas with anti-Semitism" and the ADL finds "anti-Semitism all over anyway."<sup>43</sup>

#### AGENDA ON SOVIET UNION, SOUTH AFRICA

Pleased with the results of its venture into "human rights diplomacy," Agenda is now planning to send a delegation "modeled after our Nicaraguan investigation" to look into the charges of Soviet anti-Semitism and human rights violations. The motivation, as Agenda frankly admits, comes from concern that opponents of U.S. disarmament have "seized" on the Soviet Jewry issue "to block or delay" arms control agreements. Agenda announces that it will explore such questions as "Are limits on pluralism part of an overall assimilationist government policy that is applied to all national minorities?"<sup>44</sup> (Sidney Hook writes in his 1987 autobiography *Out of Step* that when he confronted Jewish fellow travelers in the 1930s with the evidence that Stalin had killed more Jews than Hitler—which was true at that time—the answer given was that Stalin killed them not as Jews but as dissenters.) One cannot help suspect that Agenda intends to mute charges of anti-Semitism by treating the Jews as merely another instance of repression of minorities.

In this case it seems likely Agenda will employ a more subtle strategy than the outright denials it used in Nicaragua. The plan is to "position Agenda as a force in the Soviet Jewry movement, serving as a counterweight to the right-wing, which has used Soviet Jews for their own purposes."<sup>45</sup>

Even in its anti-South Africa campaign, Agenda promotes a group whose leadership has made its hostility to Israel clear and uses Israel's trade relations with South Africa as an excuse for more intemperate attacks upon Israel. Thus early in 1987 Agenda sponsored a 23 city speaking tour by a South African Rabbi and Rev. Zachariah Mokgoebo, a national organizer for a group of black ministers within the Dutch Reformed Church led by Dr. Allan Boesak. Boesak (along with Ramsay Clark) was the featured banquet speaker at the Palestine Human Rights Campaign 1986 conference: his subject, "Bantustans in the Promised Land: Israeli Apartheid and Palestinian Resistance." Another speaker, former South African attorney Joel Carlson, told an Agenda meeting: "Thanks to Israel, the greatest threat to world peace and survival is not that nuclear war could be set off by accident, but that

South Africa has the ability to use nuclear weaponry." When someone in the audience countered Carlson's charge that Israel was "racist" by bringing up Operation Moses, in which Israel had absorbed thousands of black Ethiopian Jews, Carlson replied: "I'm not interested in Operation Moses. Israel is racist because of the support it gives to South Africa."<sup>46</sup>

#### AGENDA SUPPORTS "PROGRESSIVE" DOMESTIC POLITICIANS

Agenda also gives legitimacy to anti-Semitic voices in this country. For example, during the last Presidential elections, Jesse Jackson was the favored candidate of Agenda members despite his deliberate appeal for Arab-American financial support, his close relations with the virulently anti-Semitic Louis Farrakhan, and the "Hymietown" episode. Jackson's Middle East position paper, as *Israel Today* noted, had an uncanny resemblance to the position of the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee, with parts of it a nearly word for word reproduction of "A Plan for Arab-American Political Involvement" distributed at the Committee's convention: "Nonetheless when the Jackson forces took their campaign for a "new," i.e. pro-PLO, American policy in the Middle East to the platform committee of the Democratic National Committee in June 1984, the Detroit and Ann Arbor chapters of New Jewish Agenda lobbied for a plank demanding that Israel "implement an immediate freeze on the construction and expansion of Jewish settlements on the West Bank."<sup>48</sup> When, in March 1984, the *St. Louis Jewish Light* published an editorial attacking Jackson for his "Hymietown" remark, Agenda's St. Louis chapter responded that the group was forced "as Jews" to recognize the "unique contribution" Jackson had made, not only in his candidacy, but "also in the prophetic values he represents." Jackson, said the letter, "is good for blacks, good for Jews and good for this country."<sup>49</sup>

Jesse Jackson is only the best known of the politicians whose hostility to Israel or Jews (generally both) Agenda has sought to play down or deny in its eagerness to promote the fortunes of what it defines as "progressive" candidates. In Cincinnati, for example, the Agenda chapter clearly favored the candidacy of Thomas Porter for Congress against Republican incumbent Willis Gradison. After Gradison decided not to appear at a forum sponsored by New Jewish Agenda, the Agenda representative wrote to the local paper comparing the record of the two candidates in such a way as to make it seem Porter was by far the superior choice.<sup>50</sup> Yet Gradison, as even the Agenda letter made clear, was a supporter of military aid to Israel. Porter, as the Agenda letter *failed* to say, is a black militant who accompanied Jesse Jackson on his trip to Syria. While *Newsday* described him as a "campaign strategist" for Jesse Jackson, according to *USA Today* he was serving as campaign

aide to none other than Lewis Farrakhan<sup>151</sup> In whichever capacity he served (and of course Farrakhan was devoting himself to Jackson's candidacy), Porter was an odd choice, to say the least, to be favored by an organization that claimed to feel "a deep commitment" to the welfare of Jews and Israel.

Nor is the Porter case singular. When city councilman Grantland Johnson ran for County Supervisor in Sacramento in 1986, he lost the support of some Jewish contributors and voters when it became known that he had spoken before the virulently anti-Israel November 29th Coalition (as noted earlier the very name of the group commemorates the date set by the UN as International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People), even although the nature of the group had been made clear to him at the time by leaders of the Jewish community. Agenda stepped in—not to criticize Johnson—but "the reckless and politically motivated charges" against him. Johnson, Agenda declared, was "unwavering" in his support for the "existence" of Israel and his "humanitarian" concern for "Palestinians" was no different from that of many Israelis and American Jews, including the members of New Jewish Agenda.<sup>52</sup>

Agenda even came to the defense of the notorious Alexander Cockburn when he was dismissed from the *Village Voice* for taking money from an Arab propaganda outfit. Betsy Cohen, cochair of Agenda's Manhattan chapter wrote to the *Voice* that while it was "free to set its own journalistic standards," the danger was that the Cockburn affair would be used "to further delegitimize Arab opinion in this country."<sup>53</sup> Agenda also protested the "blacklisting" of Vanessa Redgrave by the Boston Symphony.

In practice, Agenda becomes far more impassioned about "racism" than anti-Semitism, particularly the "racism" allegedly suffered by Arabs. In its national platform Agenda declares its concern for the racism it says is widespread throughout the U.S. against Arabs and Arab-Americans, and calls for a coalition to fight racism. Agenda makes no mention and indicates no concern over the way the concept of racism has been perverted by the Arabs so as to define Zionism as racism.

Indeed, for many in Agenda Israel is viewed as the cause of anti-Semitism. Responding to one of the annual Anti-Defamation League surveys of anti-Semitic incidents, an Agenda spokesman is quoted by *The Guardian*: "We have reason to be concerned. The ADL's statistics should not be overlooked. The rise of anti-Semitism, along with the rise of racism, should be taken up by the left in a serious way. And in some ways the ADL's conclusions are correct: Israel's outrageous actions

have made it even more difficult to distinguish between Jewish people and Israel in the minds of many, creating conditions for anti-Semitism to flourish." Needless to say this was Agenda's "conclusion," not that of ADL. Fighting Israel thus becomes part of fighting anti-Semitism: "Because of this," the Agenda member summed up "it is even more important for progressive Jews who oppose the policies of the state of Israel to stand up and speak out against both Israel and anti-Semitism."<sup>54</sup>

The significance of all this is obvious. Agenda, by the very fact of constantly emphasizing that one of its chief concerns is the battle against anti-Semitism, can and does successfully provide a seal of legitimacy and approval to the anti-Semitism of the left, making it easier for "progressives," whether the rulers of Third World countries or third-rate U.S. politicians, to indulge in hatred of Jews and Israel with impunity.

### THE HARD LEFT FINDS A HOME IN AGENDA

While most Agenda members belong to what used to be called "the New Left," the attacks on U.S. institutions and passion for Third World communist countries and insurgencies attract the "Old" or "hard" left to the organization. The Communist *Daily World* has taken great interest in Agenda from its inception. Noting with satisfaction that Agenda's founding conference would be "open to all seeking a change of direction for American Jewry," the paper reported that Lewis Moroze, the managing editor of *Jewish Affairs* (the "Jewish" journal put out by the U.S. Communist Party) would be there. When Agenda held its second national convention in 1985, Lewis Moroze was there again and in the *Daily World* praised Agenda's contribution to the struggle for economic and social justice and world peace.<sup>55</sup>

Agenda has indeed fulfilled that promise to be "open." Among the sixteen candidates for "at large" delegates to Agenda's Council in 1982, for example, were Paul Bermanzohn of the Communist Workers Party and Esther Herst, national director of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation, an outgrowth of the National Committee to Abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee, a Communist front organization.<sup>56</sup>

Jon Weisberger, a member of Agenda's national council and chairman of its "disarmament task force," was elected to the U.S. Peace Council's executive board in the spring of 1986.<sup>57</sup> (The U.S. Peace Council is the U.S. affiliate of the World Peace Council, the Soviet Union's premier international front.) Speaking at the 14th annual *Jewish Affairs* dinner in September 1986 (at which the PLO's chief UN representative Zehdi

Terzi spoke and where a place on the dais was kept vacant for General David Dragunsky, the head of the Soviet Union's Anti-Zionist Committee, whom the State Department had not permitted to enter), Weisburger decried the "so-called campaign for Soviet Jewry" as the major barrier to the Jewish people's full participation in the peace movement. Given Weisberger's prominence in Agenda, his words deserve to be quoted at some length.

The less American Jews know about the Soviet Union, the more they are willing to buy some variety of the 'Soviet anti-Semitism' canard, and the more they are led to doubt the possibility of genuine movement on the peace issue. And, I think therefore, that our perspective on disarmament must, in some ways, revolve around a challenge to the Big Lie .... In an important way, work in the Jewish community is a laboratory for our larger educational work on the Soviet Union, and on the nature of socialism and its promise for the working people of the world. We must find new and creative ways of bringing the realities of Soviet Jewish life, and Soviet life in general, to our readers and fellow activists .... I believe that experience is the best teacher in this regard: one meeting with a so-called dissident may do more to overcome illusions about the 'progressive' nature of the 'dissident' movement than a thousand articles on the bankruptcy of the anti-Soviets.<sup>58</sup>

When the coordinator of Agenda's "disarmament program" talks of the "acknowledged leading role of the Soviet Union in the struggle for peace" and deplores "the cunning of the 'Soviet Jewry' movement in providing a 'Soviet anti-Semitism' line tailored to the perspective of different sectors of the American people,"<sup>59</sup> a certain suspicion attaches to Agenda's "disarmament" activities, not to mention its announced plan to "position Agenda as a force in the Soviet Jewry movement." Nor, given the intense Soviet opposition to SDI, is it surprising that Weisberger reported that Agenda was planning "to tour an American computer scientist and an Israeli physicist throughout the U.S. in the spring of 1987 to expose the dangers of Israeli Star Wars participation." Noting that "Star Wars" was being sold to American Jews on the basis of Israeli participation and to Israeli Jews on the basis of American Jewish support, Weisberger expressed the hope that the tour could "help break into that closed circle."<sup>60</sup>

While the extent to which Agenda has been penetrated by the U.S. Communist Party is unclear, the *Daily World* occasionally offers revealing items. For example in November 1986 it reported on the memorial meeting that had been held in tribute to Ted Silverstein, chairman of the Wisconsin District of the U.S. Communist Party from 1976 until his death. Among the speakers, representing New Jewish Agenda, was Rose Daitsman who described Silverstein's work in Agenda "as an example of the Jewish progressive tradition."<sup>61</sup> Agenda's

"Old Left" constituency is presumably concentrated in the significant proportion of members 61 or older. (Agenda itself was surprised to discover in its own survey, conducted in 1986, that 22% of its membership were 61 or older while only 3% were under 26.<sup>62</sup>)

## A NEW JEWISH THEOLOGY

The U.S. Communist Party is not ordinarily interested in fostering Jewish religious life. It is thus significant that Jon Weisberger, in his address at the *Jewish Affairs* dinner, should talk of the need for "recognition of and support for new currents in Jewish theological thought and their expression in organizational activity."

The new currents in theological thought to which Weisberger referred are largely the creation of Arthur Waskow, who as we noted earlier, has become a central figure in Agenda as he was in Breira. Waskow came to Judaism in 1968 from previously wholly universalist concerns and found within it the divine mandate for his radical politics. Since then, in a variety of imaginative projects he has sought to subvert the central prayers and rituals of Judaism so as to transform it from a religion centering on one people and land into a metaphor for universal revolution.

Waskow has found a home in the Reconstructionist Movement, teaching at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia and establishing a Shalom Center, attached to the Seminary. It is dedicated to advancing "peace" (as understood by "progressives"). Reconstructionism was of course the creation of Mordecai Kaplan, and with his death a vacuum was left that a man like Waskow, despite his lack of grounding in Jewish religious life, has served at least in part to fill. Reconstructionism lends itself to the "reinvention" of Judaism because of its central notion that Judaism is an evolving religious civilization. As Jacob Staub, the editor of the *Reconstructionist*, notes, it is "open to the inevitable and desirable changes that occur when Jews are empowered with serious responsibilities for constructing their Jewish lives." Staub observes that this view "is a powerful tool that loosens our timidity about tinkering with our Jewish inheritance."<sup>63</sup> Waskow certainly suffers from no timidity on that score.

How then does Agenda, under Waskow's guidance, use "theology" in service of its political work? On one level it simply uses religious holidays and symbols to give its political activities the resonance of an ancient tradition. For example Tisha b'Av, the day of mourning for the destruction of the First and Second Temples, which falls in mid-summer, becomes Hiroshima or Nagasaki Day. Advocacy for dis-

armament is centered on the imagery of the Flood and "Rainbow Sign" observances signify commitment to peace movement activities. A "Sukkat Shalom" campaign focuses on the sukkah, in which Jews take their meals during the Feast of Tabernacles, as the antithesis to the bomb shelter and weapons generally. (Agenda set up "Sukkot" opposite the White House in protest against the administration's failure to disarm.)

More fundamentally, and more seriously, Agenda follows Waskow's path in literally subverting the meaning of Jewish rituals and holidays. In Waskow's perspective it is the Jewish task to bring the Messianic Age through revolutionary action, but since it is a *universal* revolution, Waskow, in so far as he uses Jewish religious tradition, must do so to destroy it. In his first Freedom Seder, written in 1969, Waskow had subverted the central point of the Seder, which is God's election of his people Israel and his bringing them to the land destined for them. The blessing sanctifying the election of the Jews is turned by Waskow into a blessing of a God who sanctifies everything, who makes no distinction between "the holiness of the Jewish people and the equal holiness of other people." The egalitarian holiness of all things leads him to incorporate part of an Allen Ginsberg poem into the Seder: "... The World is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy! The nose is holy! The tongue and cock and hand and asshole holy!" Israel has no physical territory, but becomes a symbol of the ideal world, which will be everywhere: "... next year we hope all mankind will celebrate in the Land of Israel—that is in a world made one, in a world made free."<sup>64</sup> (Typically, Waskow also issued an "Action Supplement" calling for support for Palestinian liberation.)

Similarly, as part of his revolutionary messianism, Waskow developed "creative" rituals in which traditional rites are transformed, the forbidden allowed, indeed commanded. At Kibbutz Micah, a farm in Pennsylvania, Waskow related "... We begin the shabbos service with a purifying mikve in the creek. A dozen of us, men, women, children, naked, exhilarated, join hands in a circle, chant the mikve prayers, go deep under, let ourselves float in the water, the World ... sexual energy high, but-and spiritually directed ... "<sup>65</sup>

Typifying Agenda's effort to rescue Judaism from its parochial focus on Jews has been its publication of the so-called "Shalom Seders," three "alternative" Haggadahs for Passover, with an introduction by Waskow. The first is an "update" of Waskow's earlier Freedom Seder, this one created, appropriately, for use at Riverside Church. The second is a "Seder of the Children of Abraham," the work of the Middle East Task Force of Philadelphia's chapter of Agenda. As the title suggests this "haggadah" is devoted equally to the "liberation" of Jews and Palestinians, with its entire tenor the balancing of "rights" and "fault"



between the two. As the *Jewish Post and Opinion* noted in a sympathetic report on the Shalom Seders, the Palestinian at the Seder table would be very comfortable with readings and poetry by Fawziel Asmar, (PLO chieftain) Abu Iyad, Fawz Turki and Rashed Hussein. Along with the Exodus story there is the section on Ishmael from the Koran. The ten plagues are transformed into ten "infamous" places, with Maalot (where PLO terrorists seized a school and machine gunned 20 children) paired with Beit Nuba, described by the "haggadah" as "one of a number of towns leveled by [Israeli] bulldozers after the six day war." The third haggadah, the work of Seattle's chapter, Kadima, tells the story of women's liberation. Political action is supposed to flow naturally from the consciousness-raising experience of the Seder: "Consider doing some kind of political act during the week of Passover, as an act of resistance to the Pharaohs of our day; saving some time together to write letters to members of Congress, doing a vigil, marching and 'exodus,' deciding to boycott a product, refusing taxes ..."<sup>66</sup>

Agenda is not likely to have much impact on Judaism. (On the other hand, Waskow's religious "inventions" may doom Reconstructionism, which must not only survive him but the creative tinkering of feminist radicals, some of whom are more attracted to the mother goddess than the "patriarchal" religion of the Hebrews that supplanted her worship.) Most members of Agenda, while respectful of Waskow's innovative and imaginative manipulation of Jewish ritual, are alienated, assimilated Jews, not in search of Judaism but of some sort of fellowship through which they can express their radical politics. When Waskow regales them with the need for worldwide religious reconstruction,<sup>67</sup> one suspects he leaves most Agenda members uneasy.

#### AGENDA TARGETS THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Where Agenda is more likely, to have an impact is on Jewish communal, political and cultural life, including the way in which funds raised by the Jewish community are spent in the United States and in Israel.

Agenda initially directed most of its efforts toward achieving the first part of its slogan: to become "a Jewish voice among progressives." Initially some participants seemed to harbor the notion that they could change anti-Semitic attitudes within the left. Thus *Village Voice* writer Ellen Willis, speaking at the founding conference, declared that one of Agenda's tasks was "taking the lead in getting the left to clean up its act." And Agenda's working platform draft on anti-Semitism declared that in working in coalitions with "other oppressed peoples" Agenda could take the opportunity to point out anti-Semitism among them, especially in the form of anti-Zionism.<sup>68</sup> As we have seen, far from

getting the left "to clean up its act," Agenda has been a Jewish voice denying there was anything to clean up. In return it has won a measure of acceptance on the radical left as a useful tool forwarding the aims of the anti-Israel "network."

In the last few years Agenda has increasingly turned its attention to achieving the second part of its goal: to become "a progressive voice among Jews." It initially targeted Jewish community relations councils, seeking both to become part of local federations and to influence the policies taken at the annual general assemblies of these councils. This has been the easier to accomplish because many of the substantial number of young rabbis active in Breira deliberately avoided the congregational rabbinate, turning instead to Jewish education and community work. They are today ensconced in positions in these areas, and while not necessarily members of New Jewish Agenda, sympathetic to its "progressive" views.

Agenda has been able to win acceptance as a member of Jewish community relations councils in Hartford, Ann Arbor, Detroit, Kansas City, Gary and Santa Fe.<sup>69</sup> (In Los Angeles, where the structure is somewhat different, members of Agenda have been elected to the Metropolitan Region Board of the council and Los Angeles Agenda is an "affiliate member.") Agenda's bid to join the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington D.C. was narrowly defeated in 1983. The executive board approved Agenda's membership application. However experiences in 1971 with Fabringen, a pioneering Waskow project combining Judaism with radical politics, had sensitized a number of members who forced a second vote, which went against Agenda, in the Delegate Assembly.

New Jewish Agenda is proud of its success in shaping the policies of the federations meeting in general assembly. Agenda's newsletter reported that, with the help of the Levinson Foundation, Agenda was able to send its entire steering committee to the Jewish Federation's General Assembly in Los Angeles in November 1982 where it lobbied successfully for passage of a nuclear freeze resolution. When the Council of Jewish Federations held its General Assembly in Atlanta in November of the following year, Agenda took credit for persuading the Assembly to add a clause to its resolution on peace in the Middle East urging all parties to "be flexible" and not preclude any options. Although the resolution was tabled in the end, for Agenda this was a first step toward its larger goal of pushing Jewish community relations councils into resolutions attacking Israeli government policy.

Another sign of Agenda's increasing acceptance by the Jewish mainstream is the now frequent phenomenon of joint sponsorship of events by Agenda and a wide range of Jewish organizations. Generally

these are speaking engagements that further Agenda's radical left program. For example on April 5, 1987, a talk on Jews and the Sanctuary Movement by the movement's chief rabbinic advocate, Joseph Weizenbaum, was held in Denver, co-sponsored by New Jewish Agenda, the Hillel Council of Colorado, the Synagogue Council of Denver and the Central Agency for Jewish Education. (The sanctuary movement, on behalf of which Agenda has a special "task force," seeks to halt U.S. aid to the government of El Salvador so as to bring "the people," i.e. the Communist guerillas, to power.) The editor of *Heritage*, Herb Brin, complained that in San Francisco the Jewish Community Relations Council hosted the Agenda-sponsored tour of Mordecai Bar On and Mohammed Milhem (alternating with Bir Zeit professor Nafez Nazzal), and that in Los Angeles the same tour was promoted in leaflets sent out by the Community Relations Committee under the imprint of the Jewish Federation.<sup>70</sup> A 1986 conference on "Judaism, War and the Nuclear Arms Race" at Boston University was cosponsored by several radical groups including Agenda, (Waskow's) Shalom Center, Jewish Educators for Social Responsibility and the Jewish Peace Fellowship, along with the American Jewish Congress, the Hillel Council, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the United Synagogue of America. The National Council of Jewish Women, the Federation of Reconstructionist Synagogues and the Federation of Reform Synagogues are among the other groups which have cosponsored activities with Agenda.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, as early as 1983, Agenda expressed "surprise" at the "ease" with which established Jewish organizations and synagogues had offered their facilities to Agenda and conducted programs in conjunction with them.<sup>72</sup> Agenda's July 1987 national conference is being held at UCLA in association with the University's Department of Jewish Studies.

Agenda also seeks to put its imprint on Zionist and Israeli politics. It has joined with Americans for a Progressive Israel, and the Israeli parties Mapam and the Citizens Rights and Peace Movement (led by Shulamit Aloni) to form a "Progressive Zionist Delegation" within the World Zionist Organization. Agenda has sent out registration forms to its members so that they can enroll as members of Americans for Progressive Israel, thus making them eligible to vote for the Progressive Zionist List to the 1987 World Zionist Congress. While many think of the World Zionist Congress as merely a debating society, there is method in Agenda's action. The Zionist Left has embarked on a major campaign (in which they are prepared to use Agenda, despite its dubious, to put it mildly, claim to the name "Zionist") to obtain enough delegates to the 1987 World Zionist Congress to prevent the funds of the Jewish Agency from reaching Jews who live in Judea, Samaria, Gaza, the Golan Heights and even part of Jerusalem.

The new journal *Tikkun*, which describes itself as an "alternative" to *Commentary*, while not formally tied to Agenda, will certainly disseminate its perspective. The very title "Tikkun" echoes Agenda's Hebrew motto "tikkun olam," the repair of the world. *Tikkun's* editor, Michael Lerner, was a speaker at Agenda's first national conference. (Lerner began his career, while an assistant professor at the University of Washington, with leadership in the Seattle Liberation Front, in 1970 the largest and most active above ground white radical group in the country.<sup>73</sup>) When *Tikkun* published its first issue, Agenda sent out a letter to its members informing them that they would receive *Tikkun* free for a year. The letter explained that *Tikkun's* editorial board included several national Agenda leaders and that the journal would be presenting views "similar to ours" and creating a format "within which our position can be heard."

Similarly the Jewish Fund for Justice, while still small, provides the kind of "alternative funding mechanism" which Jewish radicals have sought since the days of Breira. Agenda founder Gerold Serotta served on its initial steering committee.<sup>74</sup> The Fund was started in 1984 with initial funding from the Veatch program of the North Shore Unitarian Church.<sup>75</sup> Although a surprising source of seed money for an ostensibly "Jewish" fund, it was an appropriate one, for the Veatch program is perhaps the most important single source of funding for far-left groups (a number of them openly anti-Israel) in this country. The Fund is the first Jewish group to serve on the Ecumenical Review Board, which is affiliated with the National Council of Churches, and dispenses funds to groups agitating for changes in "conditions and structures that cause poverty." For the radical church bureaucracies that make up this board, the "conditions and structures that cause poverty" can be traced to the U.S. government, and the way to change those "conditions and structures" is to fund political activists.<sup>76</sup>

#### DANGERS POSED BY AGENDA'S INFILTRATION

It is on the principle of "democratic representation" that Jewish community councils vote to admit Agenda, even when they deplore the organization's activities. For example, in 1982 Murray Wood, executive director of the community relations committee of the Jewish Federation in Los Angeles, wrote. "Last week I observed two protest demonstrations outside the Israeli consulate here, in Los Angeles. I found both outrageous. One was staged by a group of Arabs claiming to represent the PLO and calling for the destruction of Israel; the other was staged by a Jewish group whose members call themselves the New Jewish Agenda. A pretentious name representing an aspiration that should more properly be labeled the 'wrong Jewish agenda' or maybe even somebody's 'hidden' Jewish agenda." For here, said Wood, "was a group

of Jews lending their voices in support of those very angry voices of the PLO." But only a year later, when Agenda was seeking admission to the Los Angeles Community Council, Wood was quoted as saying Agenda's voice "needed to be heard" within the Federation.<sup>78</sup> The same assumption that all views should be represented explains the initial decision by the executive board of Washington D.C.'s Jewish Community Council to admit Agenda. Yet as the Zionist Organization of America's Paul Flacks has pointed out, democracy also involves the right to say "no."

There are a number of reasons why saying no to Agenda is important. Belonging to Jewish community relations councils gives Agenda legitimacy as a representative Jewish organization in the eyes of the broader community. In addition to influencing the deliberations of these councils, including how their funds are spent, Agenda sees this as the prime benefit of participation. Legitimacy as a member in good standing of Jewish community relations councils stands Agenda in good stead when its delegations go to Congress to call for recognition of the PLO, when it seeks to advance the candidacy of anti-Semitic or anti-Israel "progressive" politicians, when it seeks media attention for the host of ways in which it seeks to undercut the Jewish consensus.

Since media attention is inevitably attracted by a Jewish organization that sharply attacks that consensus, it becomes important for Jewish organizations concerned with maintaining it to avoid giving Agenda a stature in the Jewish community it does not deserve. One of the reasons Breira attracted such enormous media attention in the brief period when it rode high was that so many distinguished figures in the Jewish community had lent their names to it. Agenda has not attracted individuals with equal visibility in the Jewish community, or at least has not persuaded them to speak in Agenda's name in the public eye.

The publicity Agenda has received from the mainstream press has been relatively modest. To be sure, there have been exceptions. After Israel invaded Lebanon, Agenda received substantial coverage for its protests against the war. For example, although only 50 people showed up for an Agenda rally in front of City Hall in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Inquirer spread the headline "Jews Express Anguish Over Israel's War in Lebanon" across the entire six column page, with a four column picture and 26 inches of anti-Israel rhetoric.<sup>79</sup> Agenda's delegation to Nicaragua also attracted a great deal of media attention, obtaining major coverage in both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.<sup>80</sup> Indeed in combination with Balfour Brickner's "independent" testimony (actually Brickner is closely involved with Agenda), Agenda's report "absolving" the Sandinistas of ADL and Reagan administration charges of anti-Semitism accomplished its purpose in defusing the issue. The more "respectable" Agenda becomes by virtue of its

acceptance as part of the Jewish mainstream, the more media attention it can hope to obtain for its efforts to portray a divided Jewish community.

### NEW JEWISH AGENDA'S WORLDVIEW

New Jewish Agenda, with its determination to "repair the world," can be seen as an example of secularized Jewish messianism. As distinguished historian Jacob Katz has pointed out, in secularization "outmoded religious patterns may be abandoned but often only after the underlying emotional impulses have been transferred to more timely objectives."<sup>81</sup> No one has been more forthright in defining a Jewish messianic politics than Arthur Waskow with his declarations that Jewish traditions "impel us to believe that *at this moment* we must become committed *as Jews* to the radical transformation of America and the world."<sup>82</sup> In this perspective it is up to Jews to bring Messiah-revolution by their political (religious) activities.

What is bizarre about Agenda's messianism is the political channel it has taken. Jewish religious messianism, as Katz observes, was set apart from all other parallels, by the fact that its "point of reference in the past, as well as the scene of future reconstruction, is a concrete spot on earth—the land of Israel." In Agenda's secular variant the "repair of the world" requires the subversion of the religious tradition that gives Israel a central role. Israel rather becomes metaphor for humanity, and in the process becomes dispensable, its existence in fact potentially a barrier to the achievement of transcendent universal goals.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that it is hostility to Israel, not devotion to "progressive" politics that lies at the root of Agenda. Agenda's members can and do work to advance their political goals by joining the host of radical organizations that proliferated in the wake of the ferment of the 1960s. Six years ago Agenda surveyed its members and found they belonged to such predictable organizations as the Mobilization for Survival, the Anti-Nuclear Alliance, the Abortion Rights Action League, Friends of the Earth etc." (The largest number belonged to the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and the ACLU, whose left-wing agenda has been fully exposed in William Donohue's *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union*.) It was noted earlier that Agenda was under pressure from fellow progressive organizations to take anti-Israel stands. But prodding was not really necessary. For why did these "progressive" Jews feel the need for an organization like Agenda if not to lend the force of the label "Jewish" to an anti-Israel politics? Anti-Israel pronouncements from the Mobilization for Survival attracted little attention; from something called "New

Jewish Agenda," which professed concern for Israel's welfare and proclaimed war on anti-Semitism, the same statements carried weight.

In its sycophantic fawning over the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee and the variety of pro-PLO organizations, Agenda is reminiscent of the National deutschen Juden, a small fringe group within the Jewish community of Weimar Germany. Led by Max Naumann, these Jews actually identified with the emerging National Socialist Party. They considered the Nazi leaders to be "noble idealists." Naumann called on German Jews to bear with their "error" (anti-Semitism) and to understand the true value of their thoughts and methods in the national struggle "even if they behave *as if* they are our enemies."<sup>83</sup> Once the Nazis came to power, the National deutschen Juden were convinced that the noble ideals would be realized and the anti-Semitism would "fall away." In retrospect, this failure in the elementary ability to distinguish friend from foe seems grotesque. Yet it is no more grotesque than Agenda's denial of the "sincerity" of the PLO's determination to destroy the Jewish state or the reality of the enmity toward Jews felt by radical black politicians or Third World Marxist dictators with whose "noble ideals" Agenda identifies. Indeed Agenda is far more harmful to Jewish interests than the National deutschen Juden was in its day. This is because the latter group, contemptuously ignored by the Nazis, was seen by the Jewish community as an obvious aberration. But while Agenda may well be viewed with equal contempt by the pro-PLO lobby, that lobby uses Agenda for its purposes. This both spurs Agenda to ever more energetic activity to win that lobby's approval and acceptance, and gives it credibility with some elements of the Jewish community which sees this "joint activity" as somehow advancing the cause of "peace."

The Jewish community cannot prevent the development of groups like New Jewish Agenda. Indeed the prompt reappearance of Breira in the shape of New Jewish Agenda suggests that a group of this sort, under whatever name, is likely to persist. What the Jewish community can do is to isolate a group that is outside the consensus. It did this in the case of the anti-Zionist American Council on Judaism which is now generally recognized as marginal. To a considerable extent it isolated Breira, which died as a result of the internal dissension that isolation precipitated. But Breira was not without a legacy. Its very existence dissipated the sense of shock within the Jewish community that previously attended the appearance of an organization of Jews engaged in public attacks upon Israel. In addition, its "graduates," as we noted earlier, by moving into positions in Jewish communal and educational life, to a large extent became the organizational establishment. As a result, when Agenda appeared, although its activities went far beyond anything Breira had done, there was no outrage in the Jewish corn-



munity. Rather Agenda has been able to win increasing acceptance as a member of the Jewish communal "club."

Yet Agenda violates what historian David Vital has defined as the American Jewish community's consensus that "the safety of Israel must be the overriding *national* concern of modern Jewry." Rhetorically Agenda lays claim to belong within that consensus. Thus Rabbi Gerold Serotta declared at Agenda's founding conference that the organization's goal was to serve as "a 'loyal opposition' in the Jewish community." But it is difficult to find anything in Agenda's record to warrant that adjective. On the contrary, by virtue of its actions, Agenda has become part of the campaign to delegitimize the State of Israel.

1. Genesis II, September/October 1980
2. The *Jewish Week* of December 28, 1980 reported that a number of its readers who had been on the Breira mailing list informed the paper they had received Agenda's materials. And the *Jewish Post and Opinion* (Jan. 9, 1981) considered the "giveaway" that the New Jewish Agenda was the old Peace Now was that Agenda's coordinator had announced it had 2,500 contacts in 45 states, the precise figures given by Peace Now several months earlier.
3. *The Guardian*, January 14, 1981
4. *The Jewish Week*, Dec. 28, 1980
5. *Jewish World* Jan. 16-22, 1981. While women were more prominent in leadership roles in Agenda, in Breira too many of the women came from the Jewish women's movement, some of them moving on to Agenda. See Rael Jean and Erich Isaac "The Rabbis of Breira," *Midstream*, April 1977, p. 16.
6. "Renewing the Rainbow" *Menorah*, March 1983
7. *Jewish Currents*, September 1985
8. By "self-determination" the Shalom Network clearly meant a PLO state, since in its newsletter it repeatedly emphasized that the Palestinians were totally united behind the PLO as their representative.
9. *Hampshire Gazette*, June 23, 1982
10. *Jewish Week*, August 19, 1982
11. *Ibid.*, July 29, 1983
12. See "PLO State U: Where Arafat's a Big Man on Campus" *New Republic*, May 21, 1984.
13. *University of Washington Daily*, May 2, 1981
14. *Jewish Exponent*, June 28, 1985
15. Roger Levenson in *Focus*, published by the North American Student Zionism Forum, 1982.
16. State of Israel letter to Amnesty International, December 31, 1979.

17. *Palestine Focus*, January 1984
18. October 18, 1986
19. May 31, 1984
20. *Palestine Human Rights Newsletter*, April-May 1983
21. *Jewish Week*, March 30, 1984
22. *MERIP Reports*, Jan. 1985. MERIP distinguished itself at the time of the Arab terrorist massacre of Israeli athletes at the Olympics in Munich by issuing a flyer declaring "Munich and similar actions cannot create or substitute for a mass revolutionary movement, but we should comprehend the achievement of the Munich action ... It has provided an important boost in morale among Palestinians in the camps..."
23. *Seattle Times*, April 19, 1986
24. Newsletter, Kadima, April 1985
25. It is interesting that one of the signatories was Rev. Michael McConnell, of the United Church of Christ, the founder (with Renny Golden) of the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America, the coordinating body of the sanctuary movement, in which Agenda takes an active role.
26. *Agenda* Summer 1982. The national steering committee eventually apologized to the Manhattan Chapter for what it admitted was wrongful interference by some of its members.
27. Bay Area Chapter Newsletter of New Jewish Agenda, Adar 1, 1984
28. *Jewish Currents*, February 1986
29. *Daily World* Dec. 6, 1985
30. *National Catholic Reporter*, Feb. 3, 1984
31. John Trinkl, "Activist Groups Work for Peace, Palestine" *The Guardian*, Winter 1982.
32. *Agenda*, Spring 1983
33. The complete story of the treatment of the Jewish community in Sandinista Nicaragua is chronicled in Joshua Muravchik, Susan Alberts and Antony Korenstein, "Sandinista Anti-Semitism and Its Apologists" *Commentary*, September 1986, p. 28.
34. Report of the Jewish Human Rights [Jewish Agenda] Delegation to Nicaragua, August 12-17, 1984.
35. The delegation's claims were given the more credence because members included Rabbi Marshall Meyer, a former leader of the Jewish community in Argentina, Hector Timerman, son of Jacobo Timerman, who had become a "human rights hero" in the press and former Common Cause head David Cohen.
36. Article by Walter Ruby (who was present on the Agenda trip to Nicaragua) in the *Jewish World* (Long Island), September 6, 1984.
37. "Report of the Jewish Human Rights Delegation to Nicaragua, August 12-17, 1984, Organized by New Jewish Agenda," Sep. 6, 1984, pp. 6-8.
38. Anti Defamation League of B'nai Brith memorandum, January 30, 1987.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11.
40. For a discussion of the ideology of the sanctuary movement see Rael Jean Isaac "Sanctuary Scoundrels," *American Spectator*, April 1986 and Rael Jean and Erich Isaac, "The Sanctuary Movement and the Jews" *Midstream*, May 1986.
41. September 7, 1984
42. *Sh'ma*, November 2, 1984. Incredibly, Brickner describes himself in the article "as a Zionist who has given nearly half a century to the establishment and securing of Israel." It would be more accurate to say that he has given much of that time—in

Washington and now New York City-to criticizing Israel from the heights of his own moral superiority. Brickner has nothing but contempt for the Jews who fled Nicaragua. The firebombing of the synagogue? Said Brickner: "I don't want to argue that. It's a dumb, stupid argument because nobody really knows what happened. I suggest to you that what happened is different from what they [the Jews who were in the synagogue at the time] report." Harassment of Jews until they fled? Said Brickner: "It [the Sandinista government] does challenge, and sometimes expels, those who, in religious garb, conduct counter-revolutionary activities." The close ties to the PLO? Brickner told the *Washington Post* that "Nicaragua and Israel broke formal relations after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon." Note how, by sleight of words, Brickner makes it appear that this was a "mutual" decision! (For Brickner's views on the Jews of Nicaragua see *Washington Jewish Week*, April 24, 1986 and *Sh'ma*, November 2, 1984.)

43. *Bergen Jewish News*, June 26, 1986  
Mike Hirsch "Soviet Jewry, Detente and Disarmament," *Agenda*, Fall 1986.  
*Ibid.*, p. 6
46. *Bergen Jewish News*, March 19, 1987.
47. *Israel Today*, May 26, 1984
48. *Voices for Peace*, Summer 1984
49. *St. Louis Jewish Light*, March 14, 1984  
*Cincinnati Post*, October 29, 1984
51. *USA Today*, January 4, 1984
52. *Village Voice*, Feb. 7, 1984
53. *Agenda*, Fall 1986
54. *The Guardian*, January 27, 1982.
55. *Daily World*, June 1985
56. For a detailed study of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation see *Information Digest*, September 27, 1985
57. *Peace and Solidarity*, September 1986.
58. Jon Weisberger "Jewish Americans and World Peace" *Jewish Affairs*, Sept./Oct. 1986, P. 5
59. *Ibid.*, p. 4
60. *Ibid.*, p. 4
61. *Daily World*, November 11, 1986
62. *Agenda*, Winter 1987
63. Jacob J. Staub, "Reconstructionism: Judaism for Today" *Judaism*, Spring 1987, p. 197.
64. See Rael Jean and Erich Isaac, "The Rabbis of Breira" *Midstream*, April 1977.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Review of Shalom Seders by Dorothee Soelle, *Christianity and Crisis*, June 11, 1984.
67. Both *Jewish Currents*, September 1982, and *Agenda*, Spring 1982 described the conference on "Developing a Progressive Jewish World View" attended by around 70 *Agenda* members at Fellowship House near Pottstown, Pa. at which Waskow described the need for a secular-religious synthesis.
68. In the final draft, while it was reaffirmed that *Agenda* would "make affiances with other oppressed groups" there was no mention of reforming their anti-Semitism (anti-Zionism).
69. *Agenda*, Fall 1983; *JTA Bulletin*, July 24, 1984

70. *Jewish Post and Opinion*, May 30, 1984
71. *Agenda*, Fall 1986
72. *Agenda*, Spring 1983
73. Lerner's exploits at the time were described, for example, in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer of March 4, 1970, and the New York Times of April 26, 1970.
74. *Jewish Post and Opinion*, May 2, 1984
75. *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 1985
76. The New Israel Fund, while not created by Agenda, is providing, in Israel, the kind of "alternative funding structure" it approves, siphoning money to "progressive" causes, a number of them ostensibly devoted to furthering Arab-Israeli peace, while in practice focusing on the theme of Israeli "guilt" for the conflict.
77. Los Angeles Jewish Community Bulletin, April 12, 1982.
78. Mary Curtius, "Dovish Jews Walk Tightrope," Los Angeles Times, July 17, 1983.
79. The disproportionate attention accorded the demonstration is described in *Jewish Post and Opinion*, August 13, 1982.
80. With typical sloppiness, *The Washington Post*, in an article by Marjorie Hyer, described Agenda as "a human rights organization that emerged two years ago out of the anguish many American Jews felt over Israel's occupation of Beirut."
81. Jacob Katz, "Is Messianism Good for the Jews?" *Commentary*, April 1987, p. 34.
82. See "The Rabbis of Breira," op. cit., p. 11
83. *Agenda*, Autumn 1981
84. Quoted in Sidney Bolkosky, *The Distorted Image*, Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., New York, 1975, p. 162.

