

IN SHORT

Mother and child reunion...

The Supreme Court ruled on April 26 that Linda Palmore, a white woman, couldn't be stripped of the custody of her daughter because she remarried a black man (see *In These Times*, Jan. 18). But it may be a while before Palmore and Melanie are reunited. The Supreme Court's ruling overturned the order of a Florida court that took the girl from her mother's custody in 1982 so that she would be protected from "the social stigmatization that was sure to come." The ruling of the highest court in the country didn't dissuade a Texas judge from issuing a temporary restraining order forbidding Palmore from retrieving her daughter from her ex-husband's custody. The father, Anthony Sidoti, now has a few more weeks to come up with another tactic to try to win Melanie permanently. Sidoti reportedly has lots of support for his stand: he netted \$6,000 for court fees by raffling off a rifle in the small Texas town where he now lives with his new wife and Melanie.

Right there in black and white

What makes a city the most "livable" in the U.S.? According to the criteria of the American Geographers Association (AGA), Greensboro, N.C. fits the bill: plenty of parks and greenery, just enough people to make life interesting, a bearable climate. A UPI reporter followed up on the AGA's choice and his story on "livable Greensboro" was picked up by the CBS Morning News and newspapers and radio stations across the country—just days after the Greensboro anti-Klan slayings were a front-page item.

Enraged by this myopic praise for the racially tense southern city, Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) lawyer Randy Scott McGloughlin called WLIR radio in New York to offer a countercharge to the AGA's livability index. WLIR—a black station that had aired the earlier report with no additional comment—gave the civil rights lawyer air time to recount Greensboro's infamous history of racial violence, from the 1960 sit-in at a Woolworth lunch counter by black students that engendered garbage-throwing and front-page news photos across the nation to a 1968 occupation of the local black campus by the National Guard. More recently, the mayor of Greensboro refused to rent the city coliseum to civil rights groups planning to commemorate the slain Communist Party members—until a lawsuit by the CCR and others forced him to do so.

A woman's choice

A recent *New York Times*/CBS News poll shows that running a woman for vice president would gain about as many votes from women as it would lose from men. Trying to understand the reasons for these gains and losses, the polltakers asked questions to uncover whether men or women were thought of as better compromisers, better "protectors" of the poor and better able to stand up to enemies. Women were seen as better protectors of the poor by both sexes. Both men and women also thought that men were better compromisers. And an overwhelming majority of both sexes saw men as better able to "stand up to enemies." It was this trait that seemed to drive the men away from a woman candidate. Women, though agreeing with the perception, didn't let it weigh as heavily on their voting choice. Perhaps they were waiting for a further question: "Who chooses enemies more wisely?"

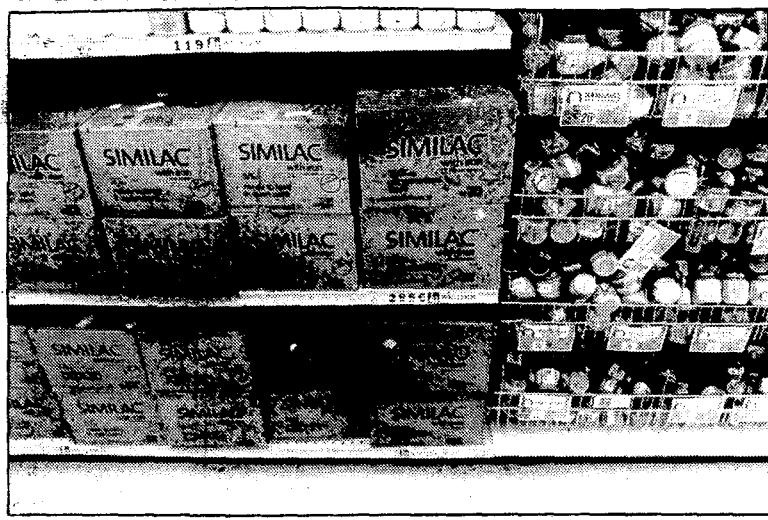
Peaceful restoration

The 19th century reformer Julia Ward Howe knew how to choose her enemies: she was anti-slavery and against Prussian imperialism in the Franco-Prussian War. She was also the founder of Mother's Peace Day, as it was known in 1872, reports Robert Goff. The name change signals a change in the holiday's emphasis—Howe intended Mother's Day to be a day when women commemorated their year-long work for peace. To put peace back in Mother's Day, the Utah Peace Network and Utahans United Against the Nuclear Arms Race recently called on women's and church groups statewide to focus on the original meaning by encouraging people to join local peace groups and demonstrations.

Socialist Scholar's Conference

On Easter weekend, April 19-21, some 2,000 people gathered in New York at the Boro of Manhattan Community College for the Second Annual Socialist Scholars Conference. They were greeted by Joseph Murphy, chancellor of the City University of New York, and by Rep. Major Owens. Organized and sponsored by the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the conference's 79 panels reflected an impressive diversity of interests among American socialist intellectuals. Billed "The Encounter With America," the conference seemed a promising step in that direction—although still a brief and somewhat tenuous encounter. Bogdan Denitch, DSA leader and conference organizer, pleased with the 50 percent growth over last year's meeting and with the ecumenical spirit that pervaded the conference, plans to hold the Third Annual conference next Easter weekend.

—Beth Maschinot



Chicago: Stale infant formula

CHICAGO—The infant formula problem may hit closer to home than most Americans realize.

In the last few months, Martha Stubbs, a determined Chicago social worker, has been tracking down a disturbing pattern in inner-city supermarkets and drugstores: stale infant formula sold regularly to customers. In fact, in one investigation of 10 stores in black and Hispanic neighborhoods, every one had out-of-date formula on the shelves. In contrast, all 10 stores surveyed in white suburbs carried fresh formula.

The cost of stale infant formula to an unsuspecting consumer can be high: what Stubbs in her occupation calls "baby's failure to thrive" can be a direct result of feeding the child formula that's lost its full nutritional value (see pg. 11). She cites hundreds of cases of neglect brought against mothers each year in Chicago that may not be neglect at all—at least not on the part of the mother.

Whose responsibility is it? The manufacturers claim no responsibility beyond the point of shipping the formula. Each store manager must decide whether to accept the formula when it reaches the store—sometimes in unheated trucks in sub-zero weather—and when to send the formula back to the manufacturer for a refund. Stubbs says that her investigation has revealed that the larger chains (especially Jewel grocery stores and Walgreen discount stores) have been especially negligent by accepting formula transported under poor conditions, storing formula in variable temperatures in the stores, and keeping formula long past the dates marked on the cans. In fact, both Jewel and Walgreen had 2½-year-old formula on their shelves when Stubbs checked this past January.

When first confronted with the evidence of their negligence,

most store managers said the stale formula "wouldn't hurt the baby—it was just an oversight." Stubbs questions the rationale of a simple "oversight," however—in many stores the price was stamped directly over the date in an effort to hide the information from the customer. The preponderance of the out-of-date formula in the minority stores leads Stubbs to a different conclusion: "The store managers are just looking for a place where they can dump the stuff and hope nobody will notice. So they don't have to do all the paperwork to send it back and they can get all their profits. They put such a cheap price on human life."

On April 14, Alderman Marian Humes of Chicago introduced an ordinance that outlaws the sale of stale infant formula within the city of Chicago. Though a first step, the ordinance is limited to within city limits and limited to outdated formula. (Stubbs' investigations have turned up other outdated items in minority stores, including medicine and contraceptives.) Also, enforcement will mainly be left up to a group of vigilant consumers; a coalition of mostly blacks and Hispanics is forming now to oversee each store's compliance with the law.

Stubbs is certain Chicago is not the only city with the stale formula problem. Any further cases can be reported to John Rossen, 53 W. Jackson, Room 343, Chicago, IL 60604; (312) 663-1664. —Beth Maschinot

Group opposes forced overtime

WASHINGTON, D.C.—"I'm 43 years old and there's nowhere to go and nothing to do. I've got no skills for today's new workforce," said Nelson Gee, an unemployed foundry worker from Elmira, N.Y., at the People's Hearing on Jobs and Dignity.

The April 4 hearing witnessed the arrival of more than 500 unemployed Americans from 10 states in the Northeast and Midwest here to voice their disen-

chantment with U.S. employment policy. Sponsored by the National Unemployed Network (NUN), the hearing was designed to refocus the nation's attention on the unemployment issue.

Testifiers voiced their strong disapproval of policies in the public and private sector that encourage mandatory overtime while thousands are left without work. Postal worker Albert Lacy fought forced overtime at the Philadelphia Post Office for months, and eventually won a small victory. Contacted by local leadership of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), Lacy and fellow members of the Philadelphia Unemployment Project (PUP) began both dialogs and demonstrations with the Postmaster to air postal workers grievances for having to work 10 hours a day, five and six days a week.

Lacy explained that the problem is not unique to Philadelphia: "In 1983 the Postal Service spent \$1.4 billion for overtime, an increase of 25 percent over the previous year. The APWU estimates that 30,000 full-time jobs could be created nationally by cutting mandatory overtime."

The union's and PUP's efforts led to the reduction of overtime for Philadelphia postal workers and the hiring of 150 new employees.

Attempting to cut back on overtime on a national scale, Congressman Austin Murphy (D-PA) stated that he would draft a bill stating that "no federal agency shall cause its employees to work more than 42 hours each week except for national or local declared emergencies."

Other bills (recently stalled in the Senate after House approval) supported by the unemployed include:

- HR 1036, the Community Renewal Employment Act would target the long-term unemployed for jobs repairing the infrastructure, disaster relief and hazardous waste removal.

- HR 5017, the Youth Incentive Employment Act, would create community jobs for unemployed youth.

- HR 2847, the National Employment Priority Act, would notify workers of anticipated plant closings, offer significant aid to employees affected by closings, and penalize employers who disregard the law.

- HR 3021, the Health Care for the Unemployed Act, would generate \$4 billion in block grant monies for health insurance for the long-term unemployed.

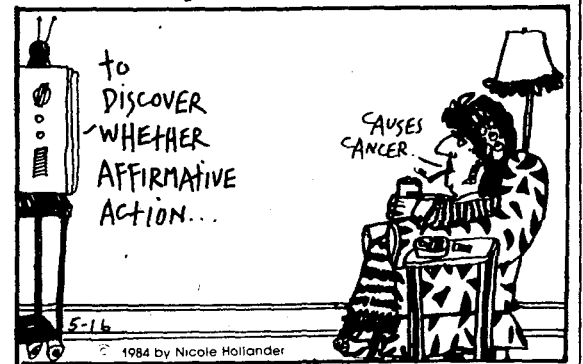
- HR 1983, Mortgage Foreclosure Relief Act, would protect thousands of financially distressed Americans from losing their homes because of unemployment.

—Allen Hornblum

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander





Israeli warns of West Bank disaster

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

THE MOST SERIOUS, INTELLIGENT and radical critics of Israeli policy have always included Israelis. Now Meron Benvenisti, the deputy mayor of Jerusalem from 1974 to 1978 and a widely respected author, has published a study of Israeli policies in the West Bank. Benvenisti's study, released last week by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in Washington and entitled *The West Bank Data Project*, is both damning and deeply pessimistic. The army of facts and tables that Benvenisti assembles and his noncommittal style barely manage to conceal a profound moral outrage at what has happened to his own country.

In his study, Benvenisti shows that the Israeli government has established a system of "dual" economic and political control over the Jewish and Palestinian residents of the West Bank that viciously discriminates against the Palestinians. He warns that with the incorporation of the West Bank, the Israeli regime could become "ominously similar to that of South Africa." But Benvenisti also believes that the process of incorporation is irreversible and cannot be halted by American, Palestinian, or Israeli opposition.

West Bank suburbia.

Israeli policy toward the West Bank has changed dramatically since the 1967 Six-Day War. From 1967 to 1973, the Israeli Labor government envisioned the West Bank as a bargaining chip in an overall Mideast settlement that would guarantee peace to Israel. The Labor Party encouraged settlements only along the eastern border of the West Bank. According to the Allon Plan, these settlements would provide a geographical barrier to armies that wanted to advance from Jordan on Israel's densely populated coastline. But after the 1973 war, Labor's resolve to prevent other settlements weakened.

In 1974, the *Gush Emunim* was founded, a right-wing party that adhered to a "new Zionist" goal of reclaiming the whole of biblical Israel, including the West Bank. After the 1977 victory of Menachem Begin's Likud Coalition, which included the *Gush Emunim*, the *Gush* goals for the West

Bank became the official government objective. Between 1977 and 1981, 40 Gush settlements were established. Most were nonagricultural cooperatives located in the central West Bank, but six were white-collar suburbs for Israel's cities.

In the early '80s, the Likud government began to encourage the suburbanization of the West Bank. Most of the 15,000 new settlers since 1980 have been suburbanites, with jobs in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. By 1990, the Likud plan sees the Jewish population of the West Bank expanded from its present 27,000 to 100,000.

The Likud's suburban strategy amounts to an abandonment of the original military rationale of the West Bank occupation. It represents an alliance between fanatical theology (the right-wing Zionist vision is no less total nor primitive than that of the Ayatollah Khomeini's Islam or the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Christianity) and the crass commercialism of real estate speculators and developers. "The World Zionist Organization and the Israeli government did not initiate suburbanization and the quest for a higher standard of living. They just exploit the trend," Benvenisti writes. "By identifying it with Zionist values, however, they transformed the entire Israeli value system."

The Likud government also changed the political status of the West Bank. Under Labor governments, the Israeli settlements and the expropriation of West Bank land was justified on military grounds. The Likud government viewed the West Bank, in Benvenisti's words, as part of Israel's "national patrimony." Any land that Palestinians could not prove was under cultivation they declared "state land"—to be auctioned off to Jewish settlers and developers. (To demonstrate that the land was being cultivated and owned, a Palestinian had to produce often unobtainable papers and witnesses.) The Israeli occupying authorities also passed laws that prevented Palestinians from expanding any areas under cultivation. As a result, most of the West Bank is now "state land."

Permanent control.

Before the ascension of the Likud coalition in 1977, the principal debate in Israeli politics was between those who feared that the incorporation of Arab

populations would threaten Israel's status as a Jewish state and those who believed that Arabs could be integrated at the lower levels of Israeli society without threatening Jewish hegemony. The Likud strategy in the West Bank is different from either of these alternatives.

Some of the West Bank Palestinians have been able to raise their standard of living considerably by finding jobs with Jewish industries, but most Palestinians remain small farmers in isolated villages. The Israeli strategy is to keep them there. According to one document, the Likud planning strategy aimed at "restricting Arab commuting and encouraging homogeneous growth of Arab settlements." The major East-West roads built after 1977 deliberately bypassed Arab towns.

While the Israeli government provided minimal assistance to Palestinian farmers, the government discouraged Palestinian industrial development. And next to Jewish settlements it financed industrial parks that relied on capital-intensive factories "in order to limit Arab employment." As a result, the Arabs were to be kept in communities relying on small-scale farming, but dependent on the Israelis for any outside markets. If this plan works, the Palestinians will be marginalized rather than integrated at the bottom of society.

The Israeli system of political control is also rigidly divided between Jew and Palestinian. Since 1979—the time of the Camp David Accords—Jewish settlers have governed themselves through Jewish Councils, while the Palestinians have been under the thumb of an Israeli military and civilian government. The Councils have developed their own defense forces, which have staged vigilante attacks on Palestinian settlements. (Benvenisti warns, with prescience, that they may also be the basis for a Jewish terrorist network.)

During the 1967-77 Labor years, the Israelis allowed a measure of local self-rule in the hope that the Palestinian mayors in the West Bank would provide some alternative to the Palestinian Liberation Organization, but in 1976 mayoral elections, pro-PLO mayors were swept into office. The Likud government later ousted the mayors and has tried to

The new study holds out very little hope for the doves in Israel.

By 1990, the Likud plan sees 100,000 Jews living in the West Bank.

create a network of pro-Israeli Palestinians. Likud General Raphael Eitan termed the new policy "the iron fist."

Israel has not annexed the West Bank, according to Benvenisti, because then it would have to extend the benefits of the Israeli welfare state to Palestinians. And it would also have to face the question of the Palestinians' political rights. But it has assumed what Benvenisti calls "permanent control."

Internal facts.

According to Benvenisti, the Likud is not concerned with foreign but domestic opposition to their West Bank strategy. It plans to win over its opposition at home by creating "a strong domestic lobby composed of those who settled in the new suburbs in the West Bank or who have an economic interest in it." It aims to create "internal political facts rather than geostrategic facts." (Moshe Dayan had once described the Israeli strategy of nationhood as one of "creating facts.")

Benvenisti believes that it has already succeeded in making a fact of Israel's West Bank control. Even a Labor government could not reverse the Likud policies. "In the event that a Labor-led coalition is formed or a Labor-Center coalition wins the national elections, we may expect a change in style—an avoidance of extreme religious and historical claims—but not in substance," he writes.

He also holds out little hope for the Israeli doves. "Dovish groups have pinned their hopes on the outside world, principally the U.S., to exert pressure and halt the annexation," Benvenisti writes. "Their sense of dependence on the U.S. has shown that they do not believe that they can consolidate enough power domestically to reverse the process."

He dismisses the PLO as politically "self-destructive." But at the same time he believes that the conflict between Jews and Palestinians will, if anything, increase as Israel incorporates the large Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza.

Benvenisti rests his hopes for change on the renewed moral capacities of the Israelis and their erstwhile allies. He writes, "Near the turn of the twenty-first century, we cannot expect the enlightened world, cynical as it may be, to reconcile itself to the disappearance of the Palestinian nation. Moreover, after they acquire more perspective on recent history, many Israelis will come to understand that, notwithstanding the intransigence of the PLO, the Palestinians were scattered to the winds not because they were wicked murderers but for the simple reason that they stood in the way." ■