

Correspondence

Of Jews and the State of Israel

To the Editors: A relative of mine introduced me to *Worldview* early this year, and I immediately subscribed. It is an outstanding collection of distinguished thought.

As an active member for many years of The American Council for Judaism, I am particularly interested in *Worldview's* hospitality to non-fanatical views about the Middle East. The most recent contribution to sanity in this area is the article by Prof. Horowitz ("Israel Developing") in the September issue. I applaud the conclusions numbered two and three which he arrives at, together with the substance of his preparatory reasoning. And of course I congratulate him on his recognition of the contradiction between Jewish power and Jewish morality, a point which has, even decades ago, been clearly stated publicly by spokesmen for my organization and guest writers in its publications.

I have but one reservation about Prof. Horowitz's discourse. To my way of thinking he has fallen into the Israeli trap, in which the national interests of a political nation are equated or identified with a religion. I am by far the most religious member of my family, and at the same time, and largely for that reason, I am the most free of the peculiar "irredentist" policies of Israel. To me, the fall of Israel (which is not going to occur in the foreseeable future) would be the same kind of tragedy that Prof. Horowitz describes as that which would be experienced by nonreligious Jews. It would indeed be a terrible thing if Israel were to fall, but no more terrible than, for instance, the two falls of Czechoslovakia have been. I am not a shareholder in Israel; if Israel should fall, I would grieve, as I do for Czechoslovakia, but as a Jew I should not be damaged any more

than my Christian neighbor would be. And there are many Jews—and I know many of them—who share this conviction, profoundly. There is even a strictly Orthodox group here, the Friends of Jerusalem, with similar views.

This is why I do not go along with Prof. Horowitz's first conclusion. Israel and black Africa or red China or white Finland can have whatever relationship they please. To the degree that such relationships might affect the United States, they affect the Jewish citizens thereof—no more and no less. To conceive of any relationship between two foreign countries as bearing on the relationship of different categories of citizens of our country to one another is stretching the long arm of coincidence past the breaking point. Any catalyst from any foreign country in solving our domestic problems will avail us Jews nothing, nor, I believe, do we even want it to be attempted. If fellow-citizens of America, of different colors and/or religions, cannot arrive at a satisfactory symbiosis directly on their own ground, by their own efforts and on their own predicaments, then all of us are on the wrong planet.

Richard Korn
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Irving Louis Horowitz Responds:
Needless to say, it is always a delight to receive kind and good words on an article—particularly when the commentary is as articulate as Mr. Korn's.

I agree with Mr. Korn that there is a sense in which the downfall of any nation-state—particularly one of real substantive worth—is as catastrophic as the downfall of any other; and at the level of the nation-state, the comparison he makes between the possible fall of Israel and, let's say, the fall of Czechoslovakia to Hitlerism in 1938 is indeed comparable. However, I do believe that there are both religious and ethnic dimensions that make it difficult to speak of the fall of Israel as simply the fall of a nation-state. Indeed, the very dimensions I was alluding to in my article indicate that the entire

Middle East cannot be spoken of simply in nation-state terms. There are matters of people as well as nations involved; and I think in this the irony is that both the Israelis and the Arabs have a shared sense of peoplehood and destiny, which indeed makes the solution to the national question all that much more difficult and complex.

More on India

To the Editors: *Worldview's* three articles on India in the August issue contribute to the stocktaking following the 1971 crisis and its results. Doubtless, as Gunnar Myrdal says, Gandhi might be disappointed in evidence of corruption and violence and the postponement of economic and social reforms. Yet the reforms (some of which the Mahatma might not have understood or endorsed) are under way in a new wave of postwar confidence and some euphoria. Perhaps the new India will make progress on its long-standing ambition to become more self-reliant.

James V. Schall comments that India's use of military force means that it "deliberately renounced" an ethical quality to its public policies but doubts that the change is a substantial loss because the quality was often blended with realism, as in the first Kashmir episode and the taking of Goa. India applied this mix in the East Bengal affair, helping victims of repression while the world did nothing and also reducing Pakistan by half. Ernest W. Ranly's discussion of the Fourteen-Day War as a justified war can be placed into the context of Indian traditions without distorting them. To interpret Indian behavior in 1971 as contrary to its own values would be to miss their subtleties.

More might have been said by the writers about the Nixon Administration's callous and inept response to the crisis. Washington's recognition of Bangladesh has helped American-Indian relations. But they could im-

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The Pacific Rivals

by the Staff of *Asahi Shimbun*
(Foreword by Edwin O. Reischauer;
Weatherhill/Asahi; 431 pp.; \$10.00)

The title is misleading, for the focus is not on rivalry in the Pacific. The book is, rather, as the subtitle suggests, "A Japanese View of Japanese-American Relations." Imagine, if you will, a Tokyo resident reading 400 pages of articles from the *New York Times* on Japan and you get some idea of what this volume, put together by the staff of one of Japan's leading newspapers, is about. Imagining the American counterpart to the book is difficult, however, because neither the *Times* nor any U.S. newspaper has devoted that much attention to Japan. The reasons are obvious—not the least being that we conquered and occupied their country—but the result is nonetheless a "curtain of ignorance" for which Americans are primarily responsible. *Pacific Rivals* is composed of several hundred brief articles focusing on history, economics and politics. Although religion and culture tend to be shortchanged, the collection remains an eminently useful reader that explains the daisy-plucking ambivalences of Japanese love, resentment, admiration, disgust, hatred, and apparently endless fascination for America.

Witness to the Faith

by Gary Lease
(Duquesne; 158 pp.; \$6.95)

A scholarly little book about John Henry Newman and the teaching authority of the Church. It is no secret that Cardinal Newman is in need of rehabilitation among moderns, what with his insistence upon a One True Church and other items similarly unpalatable in our dialogical era. Mr. Lease of Loyola University, Los Angeles, brings Cardinal Newman into line with Vatican II with skills of historical reconstruction that will no doubt be admired highly by readers devoutly determined to keep the saints in step with the times.

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prove further if both sides discarded outdated or untrue images of one another.

Paul F. Power

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American Community

To the Editors: In "The Death and Rebirth of American Community" (*Worldview*, July) James Sellers writes about the greatest affliction a society can suffer: the lack of life-informing myths. I regret that his article was so tentative and question-begging. But I do not blame him for this. Having myself on several occasions written on the same theme and not got much beyond the starting line, I realize the difficulties involved and so am always grateful for a fellow-groper's efforts.

In that spirit, then, I offer the following observations. I take it that Mr. Sellers would agree with me that the great intellectual and political task of our century is to restore the category of life to a position of primacy in our thinking, our talking and our doing. To this end it is helpful to invoke, as he does, mythic archetypes. Mythology is the strongest and most persuasive affirmation of life that human culture has furnished. I am not altogether happy with the appeal to initiation rites, however. For one thing, the practical rite of initiation in our own society is enacted in the schools. But the latter are so much part of the problem under discussion that I wonder if we can continue to look hopefully to them for any solution. Second, initiation rites suppose that there is some more or less stable and accepted scheme of values into which the young can be initiated. Again, it is this scheme that is under protest. Thirdly, since Sellers is much concerned with the hero theme, I think it might be better to stress the classic hero's mythic path

through separation from present values, to contact with a deeper vision, to a return with some salvific message. Separation-renewal-return. Our present predicament could then be located somewhere between the first and second step. It is true that America has departed from its innocence and "died" to its "recent past." But it has not yet made effective contact with those sources of replenishment that make a "moral revolution" promising. It does little good to appeal to such "structural bonds" as federal power and property holding. Equally well one could argue that these are prime causes of our alienation. And I fear that Mr. Sellers is quite wrong when he says that the gladiator hero of the American past is no longer reflected in the movies. The Godfather and Detective Doyle (to cite but two examples from recent film fare) are very much "aggressive, masculine and egoistic."

I agree that there are "stirrings." The voices of creative protest he mentions—blacks, women, students, the poor—are real enough and significant. But one stirring is conspicuously absent from most of our deliberations on this question, and I refer to an affirmation of the continuity and solidarity of all forms of life. We cannot both hope for rebirth and, for example, continue our exploitative ways with nature. As the poet Wendell Berry has written beautifully: "There is no earthly promise of life or peace but where the roots branch and weave their patient silent passages in the dark." We reach step two of the mythic pattern when we learn again the fertilizing power of the earth and the humbling lesson that man too is subject to the eternal rhythms of all living things, that there is a necessary homology between things cosmic and things human. Because we have forgotten this we have (as Berry says) made ourselves lonely among the creatures and have alienated ourselves from the ways of creation.

Sellers touches gold when he says that the Declaration of Independence needs to be worked over by a new generation of artists and story tellers. And not just this document