

DICES

bin is proof words can kill



Rabin's assassination contemplate how the been punctuated by F. Kennedy, Martin how on that Friday ed students crowded meaning to the news dd offer no meaning- l only suggest to my lity of the Eisenhower ld. Having grown up s of the Nazi period ing about the human

I could tell them that y the Rabin assassina- lent, as it has both in lictense. When a senior that it would be dan- es to visit his state or ace policies call him a plicit in the language ctions.

bones, but words will ill. Not directly, to be te an atmosphere that student who proudly lictim of the most atro-

cious deeds, while claiming sanction for his violent act from God.

What lesson can we draw from this assassination that might render the tragedy meaningful? While the eulogies both at the memorial assembly on campus or at the funeral in Jerusalem cited the continuation of the peace process as the proper answer to this destructive act, I would like to suggest a more fundamental lesson, relevant to political discourse both in Israel and here. We must learn to be aware of the violence in our language, to avoid it ourselves and not tolerate its use by others.

It is not a matter of freedom of speech. The classic example of crying fire in the crowded theater is well known. You can work vigorously for an opponent's defeat at the polls or in conference; you can even move to impeach him. But you don't call for his murder. For when morality begins at the barrel of a gun, when motives for illegal acts are justified by putative instructions from a divine source, when political debate disintegrates to demonization of your opponent, we are not talking about democracy as it has evolved either in America or in Israel.

Overlooked in all the eulogies is the remarkable fact that Rabin was a general who became a politician, who, like other Israeli generals who became politicians, adopted the democratic principles of the political arena, which are not the norms of an army command. This rarely happens in politics, and the repetition of this phenomenon in Israel is remarkable.

The example of his life should move us beyond mourning and despair to a reaffirmation of the basic processes of democracy, ever vigilant to defend it from its abusers.

Arnold J. Band is director of the Center for Jewish Studies.

Parents: Don't neglect need to develop child's social responsibility

BY PATRICIA GREENFIELD

There is much discussion about how to be "the best parent possible," how to maximize a child's potential. But all of these discussions focus on intellectual potential. I, however, would like to bring up something that is conspicuous by its absence: the role of the parent in children's social development.

What has produced the alienation and lack of social responsibility, the lack of sharing and caring, that we see all around us? As one who has studied child development and socialization in other cultures where children generally grow up with a strong sense of social responsibility, I have some ideas. I see our societal emphasis on maximizing the child's intellectual capabilities as standing in the way of developing socially responsible children, adolescents and adults.

Cross-cultural studies decades ago showed that household chores and, especially, care of younger siblings were experiences that developed a sense of social responsibility; it is parents who assign these tasks. In contrast, the dominant view in this society is that play and academic activities are children's proper work. Yet neither provides an education in social responsibility.

In the United States, we are lucky to have many immigrant groups that have brought with them traditions of child-rearing that do promote social responsibility. Unfortunately, we fail to recognize that groups in which helping other family members is an important part of a child's life and upbringing provide a positive education for their children's social development. Instead, we tend to criticize parents in these groups as being insufficiently stimulating of each child's individual potential.

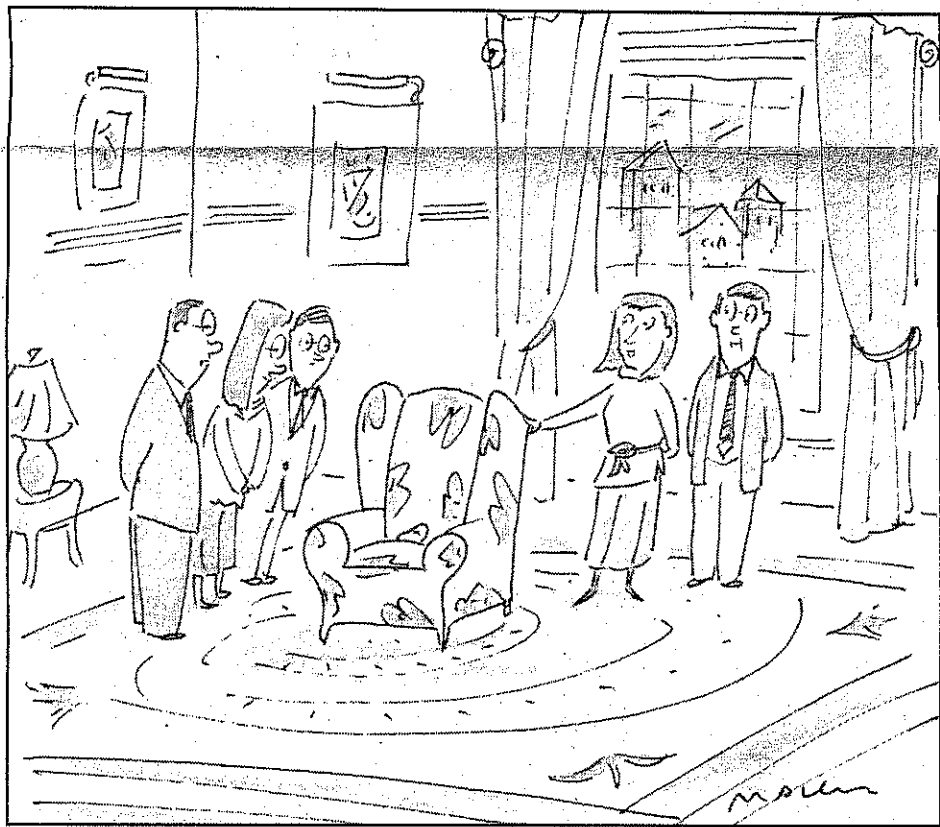
For example, if a child of Mexican immigrant parents is kept home from school to help in a family crisis, this is not considered a positive educational experience in learning to help others; instead, it is considered a negative influence on that child's educational development.

From the point of view of many immigrant groups, this emphasis on intellectual development over social development must look like a debate on how to raise the smartest, most selfish children in the world. But the epidemic of murder, crime, homelessness and poverty in the richest nation on earth shows that smart, selfish children are not good enough. Nor are the highly educated parents who know how to raise such children.

There are many groups in our multicultural society that know how to raise socially responsible children. We need to learn from them and add parental education for social responsibility to our goal of realizing every child's intellectual potential.

Patricia Greenfield is a professor of psychology.

Another View by Michael Maslin



"We couldn't raise a million dollars for an endowed chair, but we managed to find two hundred-and-fifty bucks for this nice upholstered chair."

what we believe to be true about our nation's history. What our country stands for — and what we want it to stand for — is integrally linked to what we think our country has done. Our sense of worth, of well-being depends upon our remembering. But, alas, our sense of worth, our well-being also depend upon our forgetting. Remembering and forgetting determine the history we tell. Because of this connection, historical scholarship frequently becomes embroiled in keenly felt moral disputes.

Historians, on the other hand, are defending the standards because they embody the

telling a more complicated story about the United States, moving beyond presidential elections and wars to look at what went on in the slave quarters, on the shop floor, at Ellis Island and LAX. The success stories of life's winners have been tempered by the tales of those who suffered.

Is there any reason to think this fuller account will untie the strings of citizenship? To answer that question, we'd have to think hard about what holds us together. In the meantime, we can contemplate a delicious irony: Critics blame a "cultural elite" for putting ordinary people into our history

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