

COMMUNICATIONS

NETUREI KARTA

TO THE EDITOR OF *TRADITION*:

It is disturbing to me that Dr. Norman Lamm spoils a well written objective article on the "Ideology of the Neturei Karta," based on Halakhah considerations, with an uncalled for very personal conclusion of "admiration" for the "courage" of the Satmarer. Since when does sheer hooliganism with complete disregard for one's fellow man go under the heading of "courage?" Surely Doctor Lamm is familiar with the well documented articles of Lieberman on the subject that were published some time ago in the Yiddish press. Has he the same admiration and respect for the courage of the El Fatah? Such attitude was one of the factors in the growth of the "Avi Avoth Hatumah" of Germany. Many well meaning persons despise his theories but admired his guts. If you want a discussion of "power politics" and legitimate means to achieve it, or "on the courage of dissenters vs. the Chuzpah of Lunatics," let's have it, but please no *obiter dicta* of misguided admiration.

The other apology for the Satmarer that he loves the Jewish people but hates the Zionists has a very familiar contemporary sound. Or as a well known writer said, "some people like a beard without a Jew, better than a Jew without a beard."

And finally, I am prepared and anxious to read an article by Lamm on "The Place of Evil in the Divine Scheme of Things" or to use his simile, "on poison as an ingredient in medicine," but please use the right labels — mark the bottles with skull and cross bones for that's what it is.

David Newman (Q. C.)
Toronto, Canada

DR. LAMM REPLIES:

I cannot say that I did not expect this kind of backlash as a result of the misreading of my article. Still, Mr. Newman's comparisons are invidious, his characterizations insidious — and I, incredulous that I am being labeled as an apologist for Satmar!

Let me assure Mr. Newman that I am on the Right Side of the Issues and, except for a membership

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card, I can document it. I do not excorciate Zionism, I recognize the State, I contribute to U.J.A., I recite Hallel on Yom Haatzma'ut, I admire Golda, and when in Israel I don't throw stones on Shabbat. Not even on weekdays.

But I also do not throw verbal stones at anyone with whom I disagree. A minority group that adheres to its principles against all odds — if sincerely *leshem shamayim*, and even if I take exception to its ends and loathe its means — is courageous, and I will admit it. Of course I abhor the excesses of the Satmarer's followers. And I invite Mr. Newman to share this same abhorrence towards *all* excesses, whether on behalf of the Berrigan's, peace in Vietnam, Attica

prisoners — or Soviet Jewry. Or does Mr. Newman propose to distinguish between "hooliganism" and "courage" on the basis of whether the protesting groups shares his views?

It is, I suppose, too much to expect that we objectively evaluate our antagonists and give them credit where it is deserved, even while resolutely opposing them. But I, for one, cannot go along with Mr. Newman's knee-jerk modernism in finding absolutely nothing of value in Satmar. He is merely outdoing them at their own game by viewing them demonologically. This is not the way of charity or of enlightenment. Our side, Mr. Newman, is not above criticism — and the opposing ones, not beneath it.