

Publisher's Page

Nan Fink

It is time now for me to talk straight with you about a very difficult subject: the finances of the magazine. Most people hate talking about money, and I do too. This kind of discussion makes me feel vulnerable, because it means making private things public. I'd much rather keep on being protective of our internal financial arrangements.

Since the start of the magazine we—myself and Michael Lerner—have talked as little as possible publicly about our finances. Those people who know about the high cost of running a magazine have easily figured out that the magazine is not run on subscriptions alone and that there is a large yearly deficit. They often ask us how we pay for this deficit. We answer in a vague way that we use “personal money,” and then we change the subject. Once in a while someone doesn't believe our answer. Don't we have a rich sponsor or sponsors? Who is *really* behind us? A few politically conservative people have insisted that Arabs must be supporting us, because of our stand about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The truth about the finances of the magazine is simple. From the beginning we ourselves have picked up the tab for the deficit. The tab is staggering: about \$350,000 each year, plus the money used to start the venture. The total amount has been close to \$1.5 million.

Tikkun has been an incredible labor of love, into which we have poured all our resources. It has taken our time, our energy, our creativity, our money. We had a dream, and we have used what was given to us to make that dream become a reality.

During these three-plus years we've had the pleasure of passing along to you, our readers, a wonderful gift. We are extremely grateful that we've been able to do this. Some of you probably have not known that the magazine in your hand comes partly from money out of our own pockets. We've kept quiet about that. It has always seemed that too much talk about what we were doing would make us self-conscious and somehow diminish the giving.

Our original plan in 1986 was to use our own money to establish the magazine rather than to look for outside funders. Realistically, it probably would have been just about impossible to find people willing to sink large amounts of money into our project, because it was only a dream in our heads. Also, we knew how we wanted the magazine to be, and we didn't want to compromise

our ideas because of pressure from other funders.

We knew this venture would cost a great deal, even with careful fiscal management. We wanted the magazine to look high quality so that it would be taken seriously; that meant paying for decent paper and a full-color cover. Also, we knew that it needed strong promotion in order to be noticed. We were willing to absorb these costs.

I'm extremely pleased with how well *Tikkun* has done in becoming a central forum for the discussion of issues and a vehicle for creative expression. I'm also pleased with how it has become a strong alternative voice within the American Jewish world. The magazine has become very important to a large number of people. We hear about this daily.

I wish I could say that we can go on funding *Tikkun* as we have in the last several years. But we cannot. We have spent what we could, and now our money is running low.

This is happening according to schedule. We knew when we began the magazine that our limited funds would take us only through the third year of existence and that we would need to find other funding sources to help us out thereafter.

Every magazine has its life stages. We've gone through the birth/childhood stage, with us as the nurturing parents. Now we are entering the adulthood stage. The magazine is a fully developed and respected entity among national magazines. The time has come for it to get sustenance from additional people.

Here is our plan: First, we will continue to put our resources into the magazine, including our time and our smarts. Second, we will build up a cadre of *Tikkun* Associates, people who are committed to seeing the magazine continue. Our goal is to have one hundred Associates who contribute \$1,000 per year, one hundred who contribute \$500, and two thousand who contribute \$100. Third, we will find people who are willing to contribute larger amounts of money.

As I have said, we are operating at a \$350,000 yearly loss. We can cut a few expenses in the future if we must. For example, we can print on cheaper paper (which we would hate to do) and save about \$10,000 a year. But almost all our expenses are fixed expenses and must be paid in order for the magazine to continue. Our staff is very small, and our production costs are as low as we can make them without compromising our standards.

To get an idea of the breakdown of our current

expenses and our current income, please look at these figures:

CURRENT EXPENSES

- 43% Production (Typeset, print, and mail magazine)
- 22% Labor (Office staff, authors)
- 19% Promotion (Advertising, direct mail, conferences)
- 9% Circulation (Subscription service)
- 7% Office (Equipment, supplies, mailings)

CURRENT INCOME:

- 51% Subscriptions
- 41% Our Personal Money
- 5% Newsstand/Bookstore Sales
- 2% Advertisements in Magazine
- 1% Donations from Subscribers

Tikkun will continue, but we need your help. If enough people take on the commitment to give a yearly donation to the magazine, it will survive.

I think that most of you understand the value and importance of *Tikkun*. You realize that there is no other voice that exists like it within the American Jewish world. You also realize the contribution the magazine makes to the crucial discussions about American politics and social issues. Also, you know that it provides one of the few places where a sense of community exists on the national level.

Healing and transforming the world is not something that just happens by itself. It takes all of us working together. Many of you see *Tikkun* as being instrumental in this process, a place where ideas are generated, articulated, and exchanged, a place where people can talk with each other.

The American right has been built up and sustained by people who are willing to put their money where their mouths are. The money doesn't come only from wealthy conservatives. It comes from ordinary, committed people.

Similarly, the conservative institutions in the American Jewish world are monied by people who realize that their institutions will collapse without their support. These people understand that they have a moral and political obligation to support the institutions in which they believe.

Many people in the liberal and progressive community don't take the step of contributing to institutions. Perhaps this is because they feel hopeless about significant change actually occurring. Or perhaps it is because they more easily take the role of critics, thinking no group is doing enough and therefore nothing is worthy of their support.

I am asking you now, and we will ask you in the future, to please support the magazine. Your help will

insure that the work of *tikkun olam* being done by the magazine will continue.

You can help by becoming a *Tikkun* Associate for a minimum contribution of \$100. In appreciation of your support we will give you a small gift in return.

We know that not everyone can make a gift of \$100. We will be happy to accept whatever you can afford. Those of you who have fewer resources can also help by buying gift subscriptions for your friends and encouraging other people to become subscribers.

Please consider organizing a fundraising event in your community for the magazine. Perhaps you know people who would understand the valuable job *Tikkun* is doing and who would be willing to contribute money. It would help us a great deal if you contact these people for us, or let us know who they are.

As we make this shift from a personally-funded magazine to one that is more of a shared venture, we need your financial support. I hope that you can help us continue the good work that *Tikkun* is doing.

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These early years of the magazine's life have been pleasurable in many ways. One of the greatest pleasures has been working with a wonderful staff.

I wish I could draw a circle around these people and not let any of them go, but that can't be done. Josh Henkin, who came for one year and blessed us with a two-year stay, will soon be leaving. His intelligence, his energy, and his leadership will be sorely missed. Also Andrea Siegel, who has been the most cheerful customer service manager any magazine could ever have, won't be at *Tikkun* much longer, and we will miss her. □

In Memoriam

We mourn the loss of three close friends of *Tikkun*:

Michael Harrington
I. F. Stone
Trude Weiss-Rosmarin

All three were tireless crusaders for justice and peace. Harrington, a democratic socialist with deep Catholic roots, spoke at the *Tikkun* Conference to show his solidarity with the revival of the Jewish left. Stone was an enthusiastic member of the board of *Tikkun's* CJSJ. Weiss-Rosmarin, a member of our editorial board, forged her magazine *The Jewish Spectator* into a beacon of hope and progressive politics. They will be deeply missed by all of us in the *Tikkun* community.