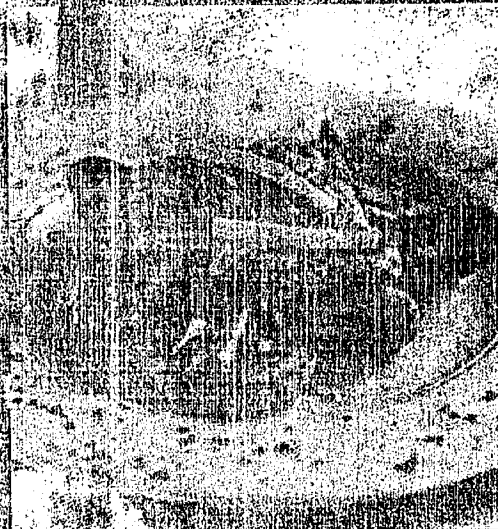
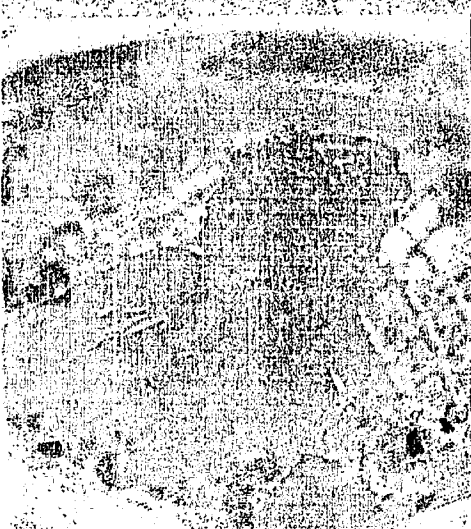


INSIDE THE SATMAR SCHISM • COURT STREET • CONGRESSIONAL MAP GETS WHACKED

# BROOKLYN BRIDGE

## FOOD FIT FOR KINGS *(County)*



## FEATURES

### 28 WHY MOSES HATES FEIGE

The Teitelbaums are in dispute once again, as a schism splits the Satmar community.



### 36 COURT STREET SERENADE



Artisans have always used Court Street as a base of operations, but a new generation of skilled and dedicated craftspeople is taking artistic license with the old traditions.



### 45 A TASTE FOR ADVENTURE

The food of Brooklyn reflects more than just our good taste, but our neighborhoods, too.

## DEPARTMENTS

### 10 Family

There are more than miles separating some family members.

### 12 Not Forgotten

Baruch Goldstein was an above-average student who went on to earn infamy in Israel.

### 15 Brooklyn Local

Tall tales of dancing the Giglio in Williamsburg. Plus: Fowler's roads come home to park; Cyberspace



lobbyist; An Eagle Morgue with no dead eagles?; Haven's Gateway Estates; Drumming in sync; Different strokes for little folks.

### 20 Kings County Almanac

Congressional reapportionment hits Brooklyn for the eighth time since the Second World War. What gives?

### 23 Culture

Why Gary Dourdan is a four-movie man. Plus: Brian Dewan's brain;

A tragic blast from the past: Andrea Zittel's futuristic containers for living: What goes on atop Clinton Hill Simply Art?

### 74 Jobs

When judgement day comes, the New York City Marshalls will be there to serve it.

### 76 Adventure

Uncovering relics of Brooklyn's frontier past in the oldest and grandest restored house-museums.

### 78 Sports

The ball bounces better, but concrete surfaces can make softball a hard-contact sport.

### 80 Business

Red Hook neighbors who finally have a bank coming to them.

### 84 Homestyle

A diminutive stable's architectural expansion. Plus: Fitting stained-glass for windows.

### 88 Gardens

If there be thorns, then there might not be trespassers—and other tips for defensive gardening.

### 90 Marketplace

The small independent bookstores that make Brooklyn readable.

## ETCETERA

### 6 Editor's Note

### 7 Letters to the Editor

### 93 For Kids

### 96 Guide to Events

### 101 Restaurant Listings

### 105 Puzzle

### 106 Last Exit

### 107 Calendar





*Inside  
the  
Satmar  
Hasidic  
"War"*

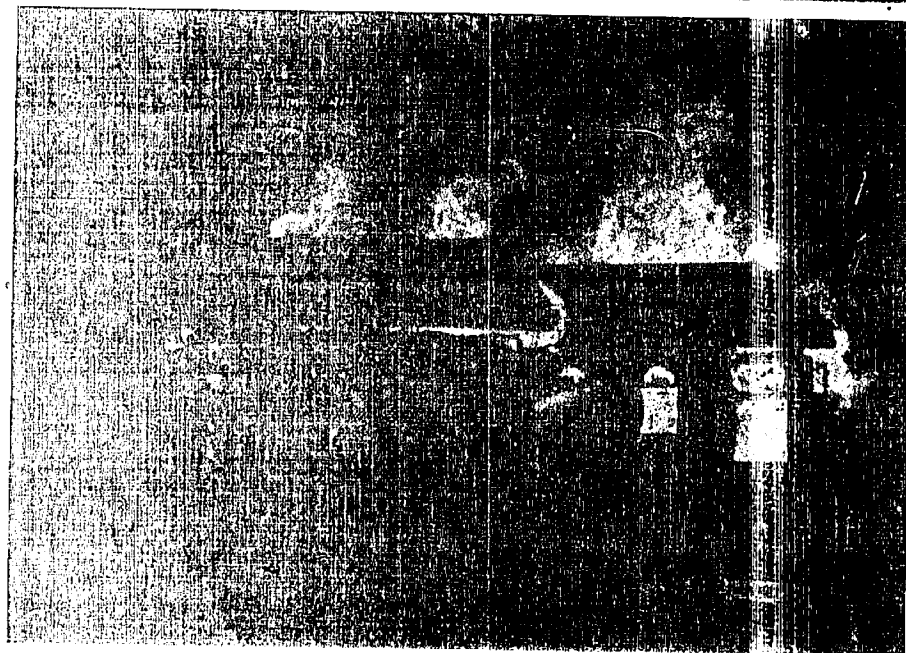
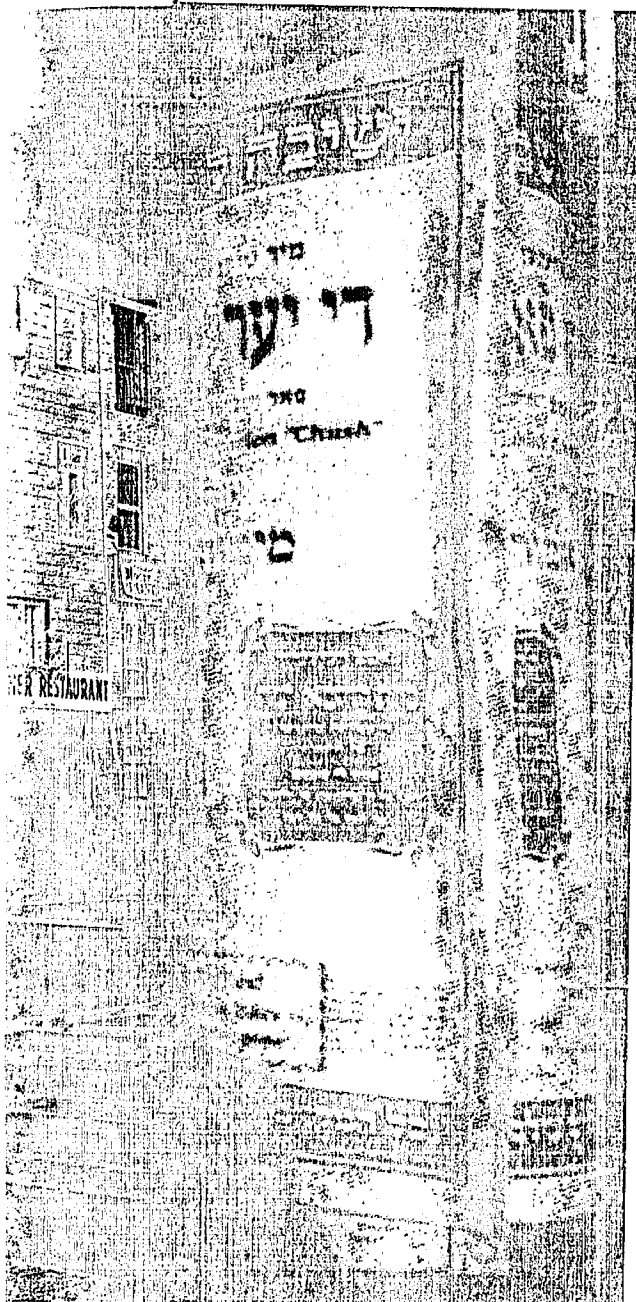
# WHY MOSES

BY KEITH ELLIOT GREENBERG • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN

# HATES FEIGE

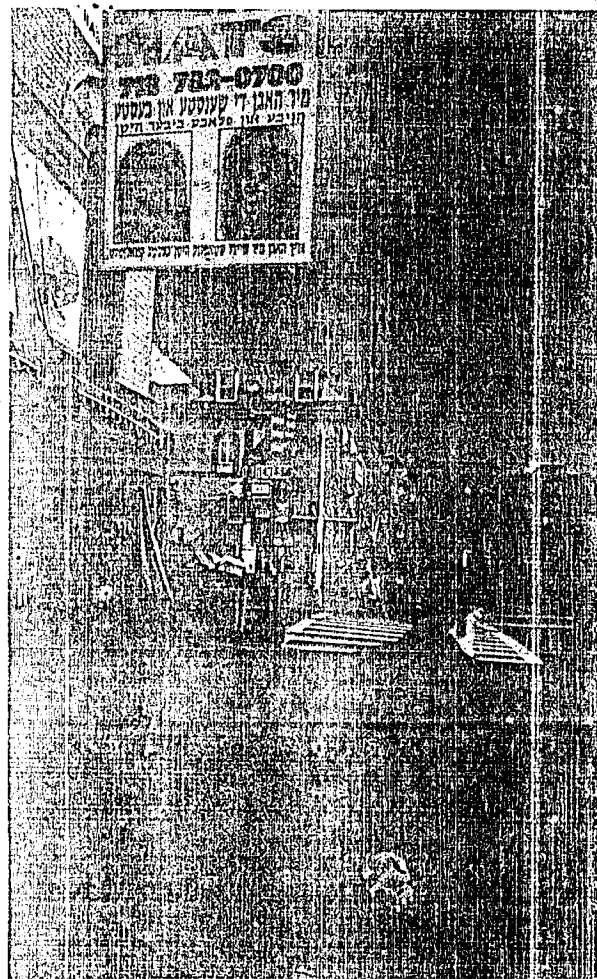
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The Satmar stare on Lee Avenue (left), Moses Teitelbaum, (above) the Grand Rebbe.

It's a short walk down the elevated stairs of the Marcy Avenue subway station in Williamsburg, past some housing projects, to Lee Avenue, a street that seems to be ruled not by the edicts of Bill Clinton's America, or Rudy Giuliani's New York, but by rabbinical decrees issued over a century ago in faraway Transylvania. Greenpoint may belong to the Poles, and Bensonhurst to the Italians, but Lee Avenue is the domain of the Satmar Hasidim, the most militant branch of Orthodox Judaism. While radical movements like the Republic of Texas and the Freeman of Montana have sought to establish themselves by literally challenging the U.S. government, the Satmars are happier fighting with their neighbors, other Hasidic sects and, most ludicrously, each other. In early March, dissension boiled over among the two main factions of the Lee Avenue community, and *loshon hora*, the type of destructive gossip Hasidim view as sinful, ran down the gutters like rainwater.



It got so bad that one faction, led by Feige (pronounced Fay-gee) Teitelbaum, the 80-year-old widow of the late Joel Teitelbaum, the man who salvaged the Satmar movement from the ashes of the German death camps, actually brought suit against the other larger faction, led by 81-year-old Moses Teitelbaum, the current Rebbe (Grand Rabbi) and nephew of Joel, for alleged business improprieties and gener-

group that deliberately quarantines itself from the rest of humanity.

"When you say 'fighting with each other,' this isn't fighting," claimed one fellow, standing by a stack of *Der Yid* ("The Jew"), the house organ of the Satmar movement. "Most people around here get along. You want fighting, you should go see Lubavitch." He was referring to the Satmars' archrivals within the Hasidic world,

## "MOST PEOPLE AROUND HERE GET ALONG. YOU WANT FIGHTING, YOU SHOULD GO SEE LUBAVITCH."

ally lousy behavior. And it did so in Federal District Court in Manhattan, not in some musty rabbinical enclave in Flatbush or Borough Park.

There were various accusations of Satmar-on-Satmar crime, involving arson, vandalism, minor violence (pelting with bottles, rabid heckling, an occasional *schmeck*), and even the most pious members were said to be culpable. Worst of all, both sides were violating the unspoken "11th Commandment"—"Thou Shalt Not Air Thy Dirty Laundry Before the Goyim."

the Lubavitchers of Crown Heights, currently embroiled in a debate about whether their late Rebbe, Menachem Schneerson, was the Messiah. "One side thinks this guy's it, the other says no. *That's* fighting."

To "regular" Americans—the kinds of people who golf, decorate their living rooms with wooden ducks, and cut into Easter hams without worrying too much about eating the flesh of the "unclean" pig, the words *Satmar* and *Lubavitch* are as baffling as names in Flemish or Sanskrit. To

fellow New Yorkers, who regularly breeze by Williamsburg on the BQE, their round fur hats, black coats and white stockings, worn on even the hottest days, bespeak anachronistic codes, "European" backwardness.

The Satmars are a tribe who still communicate in Yiddish, the lingua franca of the Eastern European ghettos wiped out by Adolf Hitler. Relics of a lost world, they intrigue sociologists, mystify Gentiles, and guilt-trip Jews with anglicized surnames. Since hip-hop clothing, TV, and Christian-inspired holidays like Halloween and Valentine's Day are off-limits to them, members concern themselves with less-assimilated stuff: numerology, for example, or tales of miracles performed by righteous men, or acts of charity and self-sacrifice. And then, of course, there are the all-consuming feuds, born of a belligerence that seems to define Satmarism itself, and that may be "organic" by now—the Satmars, like the all-but-lost Sanzer sect, seem able to affirm themselves best by "fighting back." What had once been necessity has now become reflex.

Sometimes this fighting is waged against the Satmars' most convenient "enemies," their Hispanic neighbors in Williamsburg, who compete with them for housing, government subsidies and political clout. But, as proven by the Serbs and Bosnians, our most passionate feelings are very often aroused by those who seem most like us. So the Satmars have immersed themselves in battles with the Lubavitcher Hasidim, from Ukraine; the Belz sect, from Poland; the Zionist Jews of Brooklyn and Israel; and for much of the last decade, each other.

Incongruously, the rival Moses and Feige

factions of the Satmars are headquartered directly across the street from one another. Rebbe Moses Teitelbaum lives in the "royal court," a large brown brick structure at 550 Bedford Avenue, while his "enemy's" upstart synagogue and shul operate out of Bais Feige, or "House of Feige," a columned building at 535 Bedford. At one point the Grand Rabbi's flock successfully overran and took possession of Feige's place, but her followers were able to get the home she'd shared with her late husband back through the State Court of Appeals.

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When Rebbe Joel Teitelbaum first came to Brooklyn, in 1947, he barely had enough Satmars to make a *minyan*, a quorum for prayer (10 male members). Although grateful for the housing space and relative lack of persecution in Williamsburg, he feared the corrupting Americanization of the big city, and the ways of the surrounding *schvartzes* and Hispanics, with their crazy clothes and sensual music and dancing. So he saved up and, by 1974, was able to buy some acreage upstate and build housing units for 12,000 Williamsburg Jews, especially equipped to accommodate their traditions—separate sinks for meat and dairy.

But it didn't happen until after Joel's death in 1979. At that point, since Feige had not produced a son, Satmar tradition provided that Joel Teitelbaum's oldest male relative, Moses, a nephew, should assume command. Feige didn't like it. Reportedly—she refused to talk, except through spokesmen—Feige was *extremely* unhappy. Although she herself had no hope of leading the Satmars (females can't lead), she'd never forgiven Moses for having sided with Roza, Joel's daughter from a previous marriage, who'd bullied the young Feige when she first married the much older Joel, in 1937. Moses had always been against her, and was, she felt deeply, a schmuck. Feige gathered some 500 Satmars around her who felt as she did.

Rabbi Joseph Waldman, an ambitious man whom the "Mosies" think of as a provocateur. He ran for the Kiryas Joel school board in 1990, defying Rebbe Moses, who'd selected candidates loyal to him. As a direct result of Waldman's unwanted candidacy, he maintains, six of his children were booted out of school and a "grand pattern of harassment" began. "Feigies" were "systematically" prevented from entering a number of their own synagogues for various "trumped up" i

zoning and safety reasons by the town government, and when they tried to visit relatives' graves in the local cemetery, they were purportedly barred, spat on and laughed at. As a result, Waldman transformed himself into a thorn in the Mosies' side, "worse than a PLO guy!" Most astonishingly for a Hasid, he contacted the media and began recounting the Satmars' intimate problems to the *The New York Times*, the *Village Voice*, and other hideously secular outfits.

Then, Waldman charges, his car was torched three different times, windows in his home in Kiryas Joel were broken, and his good friend Rabbi Judah Weingarten's car was firebombed in Williamsburg. Finally, Waldman claims, Weingarten was set upon by a "renegade" group of Satmars known on Lee Avenue as "the *Schwarzes*."

able home, his yarmulke pecking out from under his black fur hat, his payess tucked behind his ears, he seems almost genial. "But when you talk to them individually, where nobody can see, they're going to say they want Fidel dead."

Waldman was holding court for a small group of sympathizers, including 12-year-old Jacob Rosenberg, who, wearing a yarmulke, green pants, suspenders and a plaid shirt, was claiming he'd been punched and called a *shagerz*, or non-Jew, because of his family's allegiance to Feige. We were sitting in the chapel of the widow's house, a room with marbled walls, a water-damaged ceiling, and shelves groaning under the *Divrei Joel*, the 25 books written by the late Rebbe. Waldman kept checking his beeper and chat-

influences" and various ultra-Orthodox competitors in Transylvania, where they originated about 160 years ago (though the present sect formally dates from 1934). They've been blatantly proud of their immoderacy.

"It is true. We are extreme," Rabbi Chaim Stauber, an affable editor of *Der Yid*, told me. "Should we be ashamed?"

**T**he Hasidic movement took shape during a period of great turmoil, beginning in the 16th century. Between then and the 1700s, no less than three false messiahs appeared to liberate the Jews, the most famous of whom, Shabbetai Zevi of Turkey, shocked his followers by converting to Islam in 1666, rather than facing death by impalement, the Turks'

## "MOSES TEITELBAUM IS A DICTATOR!" RABBI JOSEPH WALDMAN TOLD BROOKLYN BRIDGE

These are allegedly a group of young men fanatically loyal to Moses, who function as "de-facto blackshirts," according to one knowledgeable source. (Officially, their existence is denied by the Mosies.) Weingarten, beaten "beyond recognition," according to Waldman, was bedridden for a year.

Waldman, however, in the best Sarmar tradition, seemed to thrive on the adversity, shouting his taunts and defiance:

"Moses Teitelbaum is a dictator!" he told *Brooklyn Bridge*. "And you know how he looks? He look like Khoment!"

As the force behind the Feiges' March court case, he asked for \$6 million, citing a "consistent and continuing pattern to disallow the free exercise of religion in the Village of Kiryas Joel."

On Lee Avenue, the very mention of his name and the various lawsuits he's filed provokes fury: "Joseph Waldman is a troublemaker!" barked a bespectacled male customer, paying for takeout at Landau's. "He's just a rabble-rouser like AJ Sharpton! Go and ask. I'd say 99.9 percent of the people are with Rebbe Moses."

Waldman scoffs at this, countering that the Rebbe has a "Stalinist" grip on his flock that prevents a true assessment of the feelings of the Satmars: "If you would go into Cuba and ask how many people want democracy, most would say they love their Grand Rabbi Castro," Waldman laughs. Enconced in Feige Teitelbaum's comfort-

ting on his cell phone, and while he was doing this, produced a business card that read: "Committee for the Well-Being of Kiryas Joel. Freedom and Peace for All." Illustrating the card was a reproduction of the Marines hoisting the flag at Iwo Jima: "We are fighting for democracy here," Waldman said, without blinking an eye.

Bravura aside, Waldman appears to have his work cut out for him. While we stood outside Feige's place, a three-man neighborhood patrol materialized, wanting to know what "suspicious people" like us were doing so close to the Grand Rabbi's home. Dropping Yiddish for standard Brooklynese, one of them unleashed a torrent of obscenities at Waldman, and predicted that "the *Schwarzes*" would soon "kick the shit out of him." Our photographer was ordered to hand over his film. When he refused, he was warned that he'd be "hammered" if he ever showed up in the neighborhood again.

"You see?" Waldman grinned. "Moses Teitelbaum and his gangsters! We are comparing them to Koresch! [the late leader of the Branch Davidian sect]. When someone wants to leave [the Satmars], they are running after them! They gave out a decree that everyone has to spit and yell after us! They call our children worms! Can such a house stand?"

Traditionally, the Satmars have held the most extreme position in the Jewish universe. Since their days battling "outside

favorable form of capital punishment at the time. In those years, Jewish scholarship was an elite vocation, out of reach of the vast majority of poor, uneducated Jews. In the 1700s, Rabbi Israel Ben Eliezer—better known as the Baal Shem Tov, or "Master of the Good Name"—began preaching in the Ukraine, marketing to the previously excluded masses a new, emotional form of prayer that was not unlike the later charismatic Christian sects of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Baal Shem Tov's style of Judaism soon caught on throughout Eastern Europe, and his disciples splintered into dynastic groups headed by Grand Rabbis and named for particular locales. Thus the Lubavitchers, formed by Rabbi Shneur Zalman in the 1700s, originally hail from the town of Lubavitch, in Belarus; the Bobovers of Borough Park came from Bobov, in Poland's Galicia region; and the Satmars are from the village of Satu Marie (Saint Mary), then in Hungary (now Romania).

Rebbe Joel Teitelbaum was in his 40s when he took control of the group in 1934, exhorting his followers never to compromise with the dominant society or more "progressive" Judaism. While the rest of the Eastern European Jews were either fleeing Heinrich Himmler's SS by emigrating to America, or pretending to be Aryan in order to avoid being swallowed up, Teitelbaum commanded the Satmars to stay put in Hungary. The result was tragic. In 1944,



the Nazis overran those parts of Greater Hungary overlooked by the Slavic Iron Guard, and 70 percent of the Jews still living there were deported or killed outright.

But by then, Nazi discipline was breaking down, and Rudolf Kastner, a shadowy Hungarian Zionist, managed to bribe German officials at a cost of \$1,000 per person, to release about 1,300 Jews. Teitelbaum was among them. In December 1944 he was liberated from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany and placed on a train for Switzerland. To his followers, the event was nothing short of a miracle.

By the time the Grand Rabbi arrived in Brooklyn in 1947, he was a legendary figure, a holy man who'd refused to give in to earthly temptations and was subsequently plucked from the crematorium by the hand of God. He immediately created an extensive social-services network and began undoing Hitler's work by officiating at countless Satmar weddings. The first ceremonies—held outdoors in keeping with Hasidic custom—matched younger women with men who'd lost their families to the Holocaust.

And there were soon battalions of Brooklyn-born Satmars having children of their own. The average Satmar family has seven children; the group's population doubles every decade. Today, the sect is Hasidism's largest, with what Rabbi Stauber characterizes as between 60,000 and 75,000 "ideological adherents" in Brooklyn. A new synagogue going up next to Moses' home will be the biggest in the world, seating approximately 8,000 worshippers.

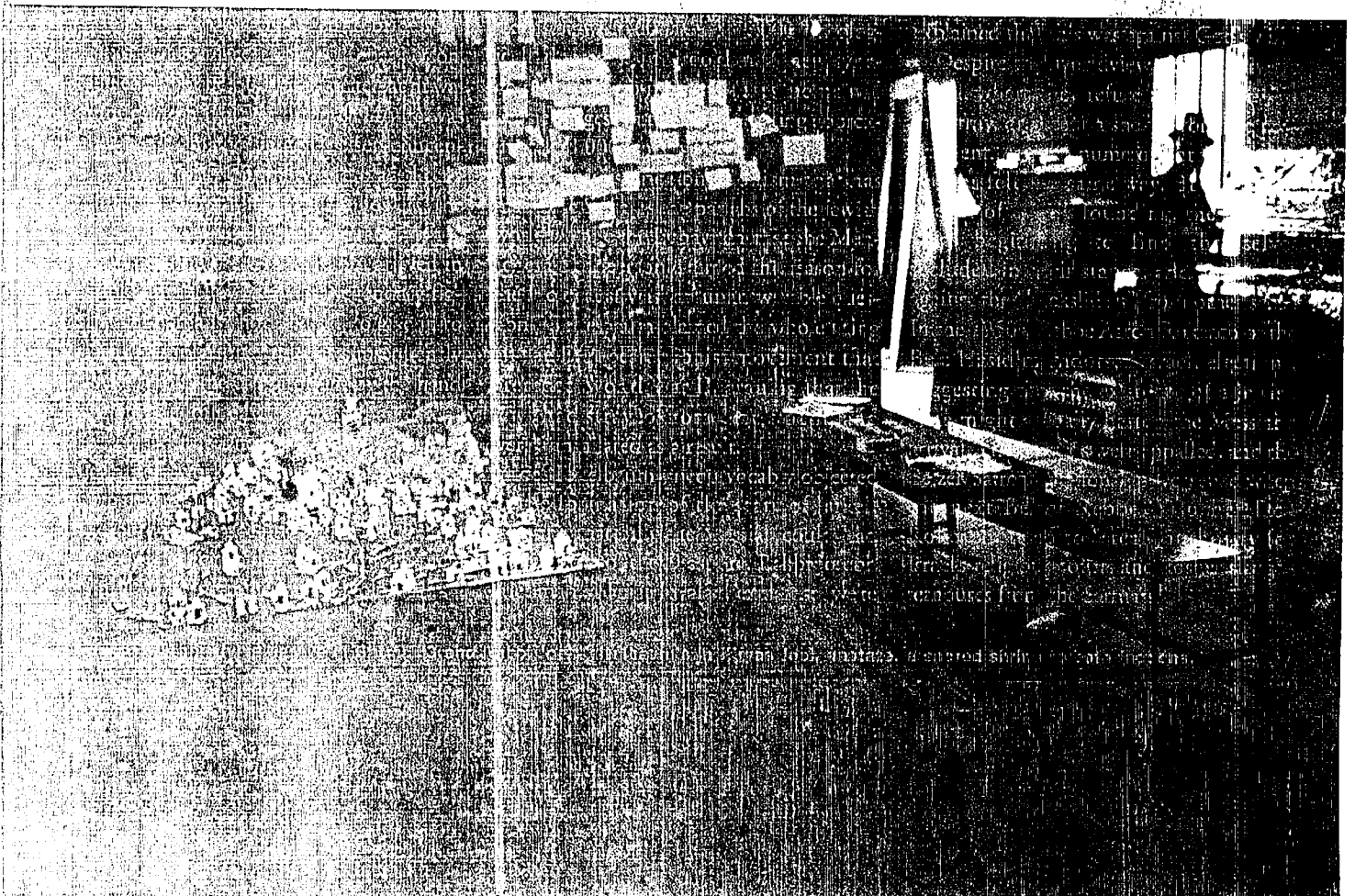
It is their stance on Zionism that has made the Satmars the pariahs of the Jewish world. While the Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Schneerson claimed the reason for the Holocaust was "an unanswerable question," Teitelbaum blamed the whole thing on the European Zionist movement that preceded World War II, arguing that the Jews had strayed from God's path, and were annihilated as a result.

Joel Teitelbaum unequivocally objected to the formation of the state of Israel, asserting that only the Messiah could lead the Jews out of the Diaspora. Rabbi Joseph Friedman, a Peige loyalist, explains: "we're

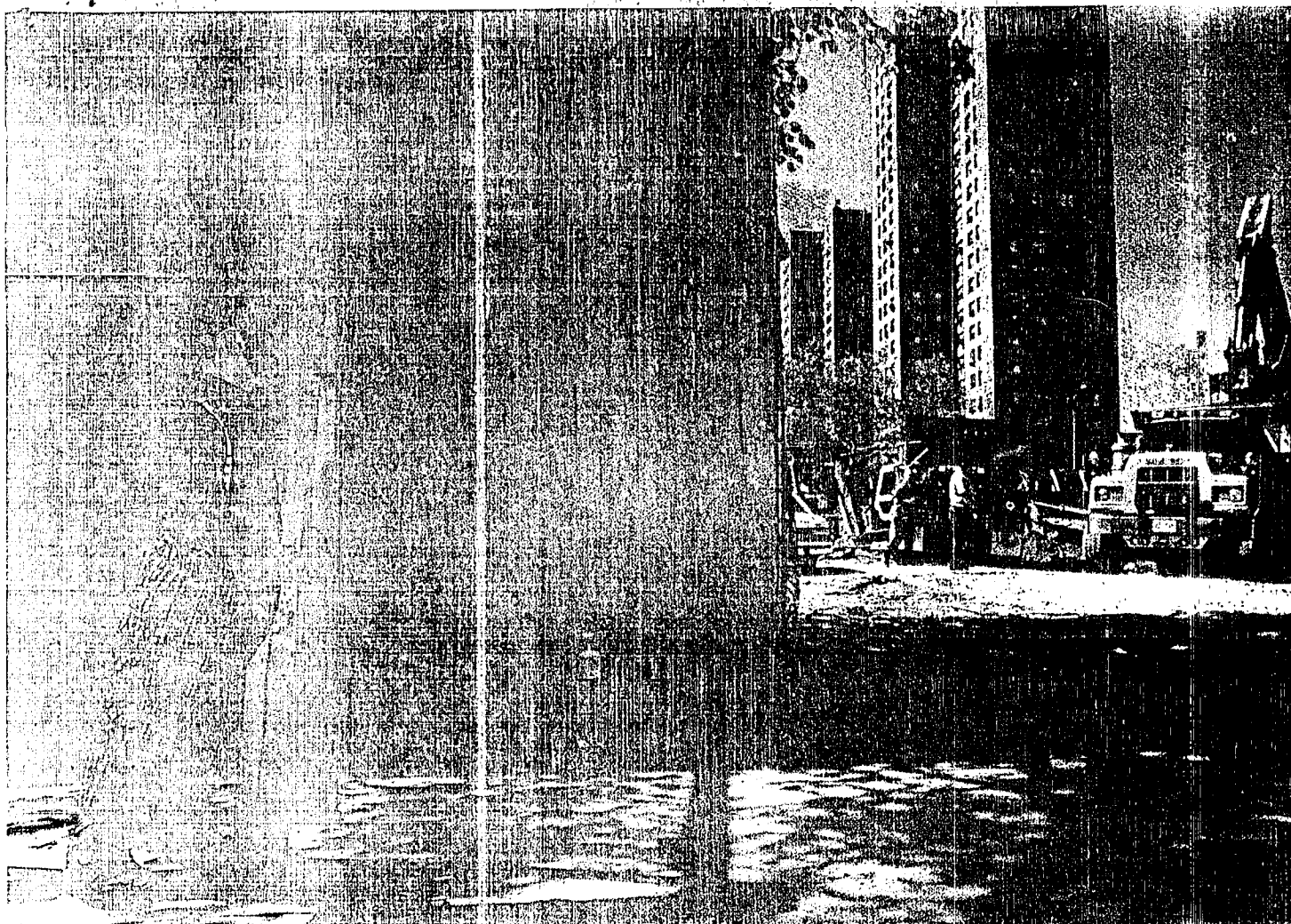
vehemently opposed to Israel [as it now exists]. It is a secular state for sure. And the founders of the Labor Party were certainly atheists. We can live with Arabs together in a neutral state. The Zionists came and took land from other nations, and our Rebbe explained that this was against God's will."

Despite this worldview, Satmars live in Israel, where they refuse to vote, serve in the army, or accept a shekel from the government. At first, numerous other Hasidic groups felt the same way. But within a decade of Israel's founding, the Satmars were beginning to find themselves secluded in their stance, and lashed out against the "backsliders" from other sects. In the 1950s, Rebbe Aaron Rokeach of the Belz Hasidim endorsed Israeli elections, suggesting that the existence of a Jewish state might actually hasten the Messiah's arrival. The Satmars were appalled, and the Belzer/Satmar relationship worsened when the next Belzer Rebbe, Yisucher Dov Rokeach, tried to "steal" authority for Israel's religious courts and kosher slaughterhouses from the Satmars.

The "living" grave of Satmar Grand Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum's in Kiryas Joel, upstate, a sacred shrine to both factions.







The largest Temple in the world (above), holding 8,000 worshippers, goes up on Bedford Avenue, next to Moses Teitelbaum's house (right).

The struggle spread to Brooklyn, where about 100 Satmar students attacked a Belz prayer house on Ross Street in 1979, bashing their foes with sticks, smashing windows and busting up the lectern. Two years later, when Rokeach was about to show his face in Brooklyn, some 500 Satmars pelted a Belz synagogue with bottles and eggs. More than 300 police in riot gear were on hand when Rokeach spoke at P.S. 180 in Borough Park amid threats that the Satmars would make more trouble (two were arrested for allegedly "plotting" to hurl stink bombs). A sizable caricature of the Belz Rebbe was scrawled at the intersection of Lee Avenue and Ross Street, along with the slogan "May His Name be Erased." A similar portrait appeared on balloons in Manhattan's diamond district, with the words "Bust me!"

But the Satmars should have been watching their backs. As the group was mixing it up with the Belzers, the Lubavitchers, always great "missionaries," were making an incursion into their territory. A Lubavitcher Rabbi, one Pinchus Korf, decided to

proselytize the Satmars and succeeded in converting a number of them. In May 1983, he was set upon by six men who shaved off his beard, summoning memories of the Nazis who'd mockingly done the same. The next month, Rabbi Mendel Wechter, a converted Satmar, began preaching to his old pals, and was kidnapped by five masked men, beaten, shaved and left on the street in his underwear.

Lubavitcher Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky couldn't contain his rage while discussing these matters with the Associated Press: Krinsky claimed that the Satmars' record of "terrorism goes back fifty years." He described the rival sect as a very "inward community, a ghettoized community. They're taught from youth to shun anyone not from their own turf, so kids grow up thinking they have license to do whatever they please."

Officially, of course, the Satmar leadership condemned the violence. "This was sickening to us," remembered Rabbi

Stauber, the *Der Yid* editor, tongue firmly in cheek. "But the reason we attract such news when something goes astray is because it's so rare."

But within their own borders, and excepting the Moses/Feige feud, the Satmars are in many ways a model of altruism and self-sufficiency. When a Danish visitor was arrested in Manhattan recently for leaving her baby in a stroller outside a restaurant, it was noted that mothers in Williamsburg regularly park their carriages on the sidewalk and wander away, confident that the entire tribe is keeping an eye on the kids. Vans—discreetly designed like regular delivery trucks as a gesture of respect for recipients—drop off free groceries to needy families. Rabbi Stauber himself is the founder of Door of Hope, a nonsectarian mental health center catering to both the Hasidic and Hispanic communities.

But everyday Satmar reality is different, and the vendetta between the followers of

Rebbe Moses and the disciples of his Aunt Feige has been brewing for decades.

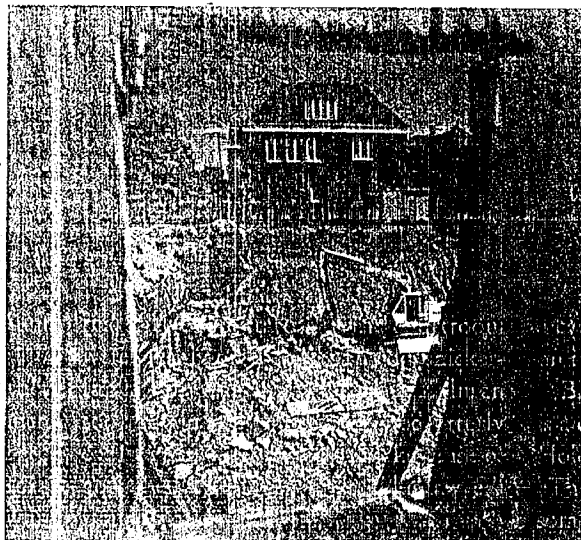
The two never really liked each other from the time she married Joel. As his much younger second wife, Feige immediately got into battles with his bossy daughter Roza (who was older than she was), about who should run the household. For some reason Moses decided to side with Roza, and rumor has it that he once lobbied for his uncle to divorce Feige because she couldn't bear him a male heir. Out of such enmity came Feige's hate for Moses, energetically reciprocated. After Joel's death in 1979, Feige's followers condemned Moses' son and heir-apparent, Aron, for marrying the daughter of the Rebbe of the Vishnitzer sect, said to be supportive of the State of Israel. They also spread rumors that Moses was so consumed by greed that he kept a ticker tape to monitor his investments, and that he was "enriching" himself and his friends in both Kiryas Joel and Williamsburg by controlling construction and maintenance contracts, and preventing any of Feige's supporters from "making a living."

Moses' people counter that Joseph Waldman is partners with Feige in a for-profit home for Satmar women recovering from giving birth, and that he's the money-hungry one.

Naturally Waldman dismisses the allegations. "Unfortunately," he said, "the improprieties" would persist as long as Rebbe Teitelbaum lived: "As a Jew, you're

majority of spectators in the courtroom were clearly on the Rebbe's side, snickering when Waldman's brother Zalman took the stand. Zalman seemed utterly confused, and struggled to make sense of both the English language and his lawyer's simplest questions.

Suddenly Aaron Biller, an "issues management specialist" hired by the Mosies, dramatically emerged from a sea of black coats, resplendant in a Madison Avenue-style blue suit and red tie, his salt and pep-



per beard well trimmed, his face devoid of payess. "I guess you've been called here by the other side," he began, before repairing to the hallway to talk things over.

Standing by a window, peering down on a hearse being loaded with flowers in front of the Ng Fook Funeral Home, Biller said

a can of worms! We're going to put them on the table and get a circumcision!"

Biller didn't dignify the remarks. "This is a community that got wiped out in the Holocaust," he said, ignoring Waldman. "There's a renewal process, and there are some growing pains. Really, the question here is 'Which Teitelbaum do you follow?' For all the trouble, there's not a huge amount of difference between the two sides."

But that wasn't how the Satmars saw it.

And when the rebel faction threatened to call Moses Teitelbaum's son and potential successor, Aron, to testify about his father's allegedly "shady dealings," something drastic had to be done. As Abraham Weider, Kiryas Joel's deputy mayor told *The New York Times*, "That would have been an embarrassment to the whole Jewish world." "It would have been like calling Cardinal O'Connor in open court to discuss priestly pedophilia," said another observer, who asked not to be quoted.

Unsurprisingly then, at 11 a.m. on March 10, five days into the trial, a break was called and

the village's lawyers announced that an out-of-court settlement appeared imminent. For the next several hours, the federal courthouse operated by Satmar standards. Hasidim ran up and down the hallway stage-whispering in Yiddish. People shouted into phones. Students from

## "REBBE MOSES IS RUMORED TO HAVE LOBBIED HIS UNCLE JOEL TO DIVORCE HIS AUNT FEIGE"

not supposed to wish death to any human being," Waldman said. "The only thing you can say is you're hoping he'll repent. But this will never happen. The only sigh of relief will be when he goes."

Perhaps hoping to hasten that day, Waldman led the charge against the Rebbe: he came skittering down the white marble corridors of the U.S. District courthouse on Pearl Street, flanked by his Feigies, but there were no fireworks. Followers of both factions clustered in groups, murmuring softly in Yiddish and gesturing at outsiders. The

that his clients "generally don't want publicity. They're modest people. They don't even watch television. But what this comes down to is a faction has broken away and is trying to stir up the pot. These are a few people [the Feigies] who used to be in the inner circle of the late Rabbi and they're not in the inner circle of the new Rabbi. And they're doing things that are not helpful."

At that point, Waldman leapt from the plaintiff's table and rushed to the rear of the courtroom to put his own spin on whatever Biller might be saying. "Look at them, they had to hire a PR person, they're such criminals! We're opening their up like

various yeshivas packed into the courtroom like lox. Finally, the cops made them form lines and get tickets for the afternoon "performance."

Then, into the no-man's-land stepped the Weiner Hasidim, a small group residing in Williamsburg—and one of the few Orthodox sects that haven't clashed with the Satmars. Suddenly seeming to realize that carrying on in public was unbecoming to the Jewish (continued on page 100)

Keith Elliot Greenberg wrote about the world headquarters of the Jehovah's Witnesses in the March issue.

## BROOKLYN ARTISANS

Wedding Exhibition featuring hand-crafted wedding items by various artists from around the country. The exhibits will include stained-glass wedding keepsake boxes and frames, hand-made glass beads and jewelry especially for the wedding, original headpieces and bridesmaids dresses, hand-blown stemware, hand-thrown stoneware, silk wedding lingerie and wooden serving pieces. There will also be antique lace photo album covers and garters and handmade wedding cards. **July 1-30** at the Brooklyn Artisans Gallery, 221A Court Street, 330-0343.

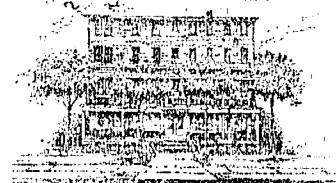


into the museum's archives for a look at recent historical acquisitions with archivist Kathleen Collins, Ph.D. **July 17, 6:30-8 p.m.**, event for members only, reservations required, \$3, guests \$5. For more information, call 243-3060.

**LEFFERTS HOMESTEAD CHILDREN'S MUSEUM**  
This 200-year-old historic house opens to the public Saturday and Sunday, 1-5 p.m., Thursday and Friday, 1-4 p.m. The Garden Club meets every Thursday to tend the Homestead's outdoor garden and grounds. Learn about plants, various animals, and insects. All ages and experience levels welcome.

**THE NEW YORK ARMS WRESTLING ASSOCIATION** presents Golden Arms Championship, **July 5**, Orchard Beach, Bronx, and **July 6**, Big "A" Fair, Aqueduct Racetrack, Queens. Rain or shine. Beginners and amateurs only, men and women. Registration and weigh-in begins 11 a.m., start time 2:20 p.m. Awards for first, second and third place. Winners are eligible to compete in the 1997 Empire State Tournament of Champions.  
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## SATMARS (continued from page 35)

people, both the Mosies and the Feigies allowed the Weiners to mediate.

At 3:30 p.m. the dissidents' lawyer, Michael Sussman, was able to tell the judge: "My client [Waldman] is here, and he says they have a deal."

There was a little more bickering—at one stage, nine men stood around the courtroom's microphone offering amendments to the armistice—before the terms of the accord were announced. The rebels would receive \$300,000, be allowed to reopen their synagogues, and bring future grievances to a four-man arbitration panel instead of to the press.

Waldman celebrated by visiting Joel Teitelbaum's grave in the cemetery the dissidents had heretofore been prohibited from entering. And, as a gesture of good faith, he removed a burnt car from in front of his house, which he'd been ostentatiously using as a symbol of his "martyrdom."

"We have a fresh start," he enthused to me. In the spirit of reconciliation, he proclaimed that he was praying for Moses Teitelbaum's health, but that didn't mean he was about to embrace the man he'd branded a "tyrant," he said. "Just because we have an agreement doesn't mean we've lost the right to disagree."

And sure enough, both sides quickly utilized that prerogative. Three weeks after the "cease-fire," Feige Teitelbaum's supporters accused the rivals of barring them from their synagogue again and reneging on the \$300,000 settlement. In May, the rebels filed a contempt order against the village, and Joseph Waldman was again a marked man on Bedford Avenue.

"People say, 'Why not start your own group?'" he complained to me. "But I was born a Satmar. If you cut open my arteries, Satmar blood comes out. And believe me they've wanted to do that a couple of times."

Then he smiled, basking in the strife that has become the Satmar way of life:

"Thanks God, they never did it. God was saving me."

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