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The Battle to Belong

Roger Cohen is a columnist and the author of "The Girl From Human Street," a memoir, from which this essay is adapted.

NEVER before have so many people been on the move. New opportunity, like a bright star, draws immigrants across the world. In every one of the past four generations my family has moved, hopping from Lithuania to what is now South Africa and on to Britain, Israel and the United States. Sometimes they have found success and happiness. But the other side of displacement, its black sun, is loss.

The strain of burying the past, losing

one identity and embracing another, can be overwhelming. Home is an indelible place. It is the landscape of unfiltered experience, of things felt rather than thought through, of the world in its beauty absorbed before it is understood, of patterns and sounds that lodge themselves in the psyche and call out across the years. When home is left behind, or shattered, an immense struggle often ensues to fill the void.

I was born in London to South African Jewish parents. We left almost im-

mediately for South Africa, lived there for two years and returned to Britain. Although the word was never uttered, we were immigrants. Our priority was assimilation into Englishness. Pogroms and penury had been left far behind. The past was as silent as a village at the bottom of a dam.

Why then was I tugged to Israel as a college student? Our Jewish identity had been dribbling away ever since my great-grandparents and grandparents left Lithuania for South Africa around

the turn of the 20th century. It was a slow process but appeared inexorable.

Having been persecuted as Jews in the Eastern European shtetl, my forebears put their faith in education and science to usher them from backwardness. My father did have a bar mitzvah in Johannesburg in 1934 but hated the experience, seeing it as an exercise in obscurantism and hypocrisy. He reached England in the mid-1950s with no inclination to inflict such instruction

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My mother suffered as an immigrant, as a Jew set adrift.

NICHOLAS KRISTOF

Race, the Police and the Propaganda

WELCOME visitors to New York City! This has been the best time ever to urinate on a street, sneak onto the subway or run a red light, for the police force has been on a virtual strike.

Police officers may be making a point for contract negotiations. But many also are genuinely frustrated and, along with millions of other Americans, seem sympathetic to an argument that goes like this:

The real threat to young black men isn't white

Ending the impunity that fuels unequal law enforcement.

cops. It's other black men. Police officers are numerous in black neighborhoods not because they want to hang out there, but because they're willing to risk their lives to create order on streets where too many residents have kids outside of marriage, or collect government benefits but disdain jobs. Instead of receiving thanks for their efforts, cops have been cursed

and attacked. Hate-mongering led by President Obama built a climate of animosity that led to the murder of two of New York's finest. And where are the street protests denouncing those racist murders? Don't blue lives count?

Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York and de facto spokesman for that viewpoint, put it this way in November when he was asked about Ferguson, Mo., on "Meet the Press": "I find it very disap-

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