

A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Henry Luce III

WORKING on a TIME cover story usually means immersion in the subject. The staffers who produced this week's article on Judaism—Religion Writer Mayo Mohs, Correspondent Richard Ostling and Reporter-Researcher Clare Mead Rosen—plunged in deeper than most. During months of preparation, they compiled six shelves of books and a foot-high stack of original research from their own reporting and that of correspondents abroad.

The experience was particularly intense for Clare Rosen, who was completing six months training for her conversion from Catholicism to Judaism. Those studies dovetailed with her journalistic chores, which included a visit to a mysterious cult of Jews outside Mexico City, lunch with six Orthodox rabbis on Manhattan's Lower East Side and interviews with Conservative Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum. After bestowing the traditional three blessings that complete the conversion ceremony, the rabbi quipped: "You even look Jewish." At a family gathering, her mother-in-law teased that Clare had learned more about Judaism and its history than anyone else present.

Ostling, a Protestant with seven years' experience covering religion, reported on both religious and political aspects of Judaism. He sought out members of the militant Jewish Defense League in Cliffside Park, N.J., Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn and leading Jewish spokesmen and scholars. "I don't think you can be an intelligent Christian without having a good grasp of Judaism," he says. "Working on this cover was, in a sense, a religious experience for me."

Mohs, a Catholic who attended and taught at parochial schools, has frequently covered Jewish subjects during his three years in our Religion section. Before writing this week's story he visited seminaries in Cincinnati and New York, donned prayer shawl and yarmulke for lengthy Orthodox Sabbath and Yom Kippur services and spoke to many Jewish laymen and scholars. After their story went to press, Mohs, Ostling and Rosen and their spouses got together for a belated but traditional Passover Seder.

MOHS, ROSEN, OSTLING & LIBRARY

The Cover: An international Jewish album. Top row, from left: Israeli from Kurdistan; Yaël Dayan, author and daughter of Israel's Defense Minister; Yemenite bride and German businessman. Second row: a Swede, a New Yorker, an Australian, a Russian. Third row: man from Cochin region of India, Mexican Diving Champion Miriam Weil, Jewish black in New York, Polish girl. Fourth row: synagogue elder, New York youth, American grandmother, Iranian in Israel.

Photographs by Arnold Drapkin, David Gahr, Norman Gorbaty, Charles Harbutt (Magnum), Curt Kaufman, David Rubinger, Rhoda Sidney (Nancy Palmer).

WALTER DARAN

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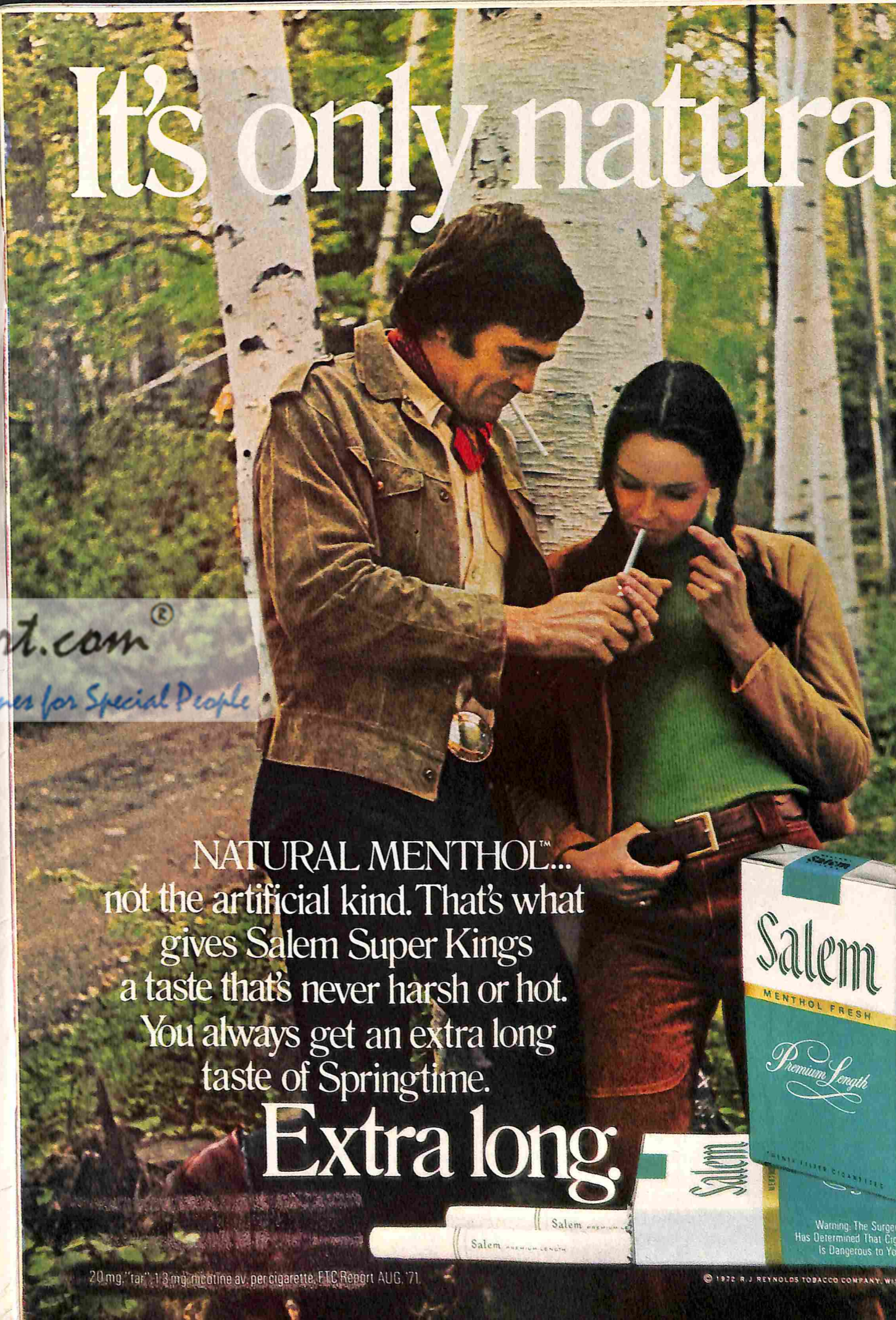
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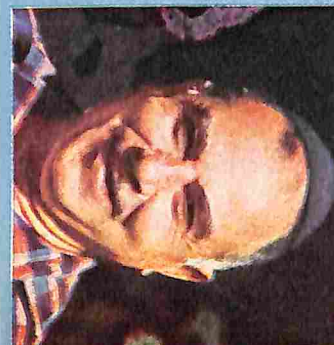
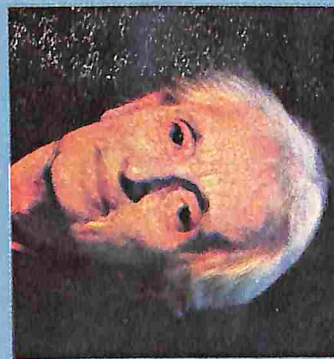
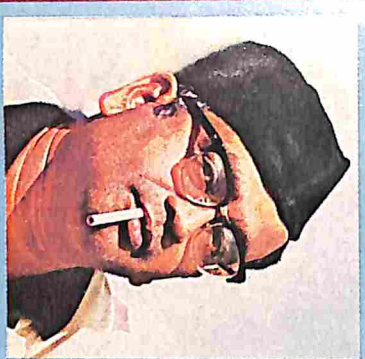
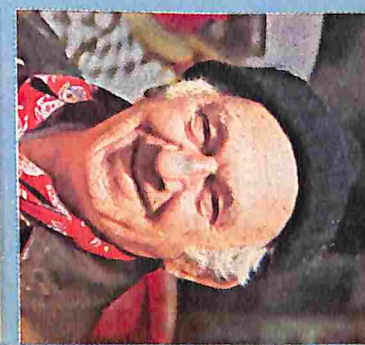
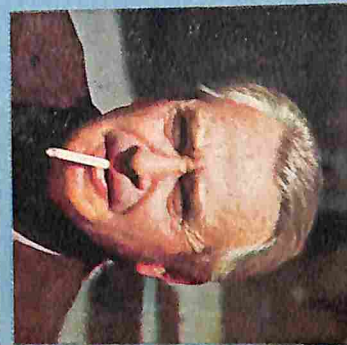
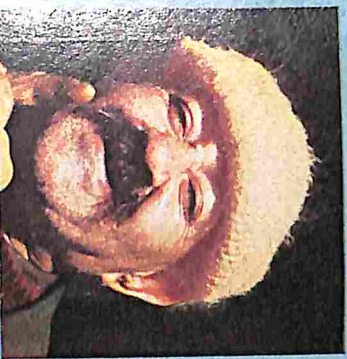
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