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Ehud Barak's

Inaugural Address

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A Sweet and Sour Victory A Sweet and Sour Government

By Susan Hattis Rolef

For the Israel Labor Party, or rather "One Israel" — the list comprising of Labor, David Levy's Geshet and the moderate religious party Meimad — the results of the May 17 elections, were an extremely pleasant surprise in so far as the election of the Prime minister was concerned. Less so when it came to the Knesset elections.

Though as the date of the elections approached, opinion polls clearly showed Labor leader Ehud Barak coming in ahead of outgoing Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in a second round, not even the most starry-eyed optimists believed that the victory would occur in the first round, that it would be so massive and that Barak would actually manage to muster a small Jewish majority in addition to his impressive general majority. While back in the 1996 elections Netanyahu beat Shimon Peres by less than 30,000 votes, Barak's majority over Netanyahu was close to 390,000 — 1,791,020 votes versus 1,402,474 to be exact — or 11.7% of the valid votes.

One reason why Barak's impressive victory came to most people as such a surprise, was that after several bad experiences, in which the opinion polls predicted a clear Labor victory, but the Likud emerged the victor (especially in the 1981 and 1996 elections), even those who saw the optimistic polls remained wary. Another reason was that few people believed, until the very last moment, that the three additional candidates for Prime minister — Itzik Mordechai, Benny Begin and Azmi Bishara — would all step down one or two days before the elections, and thus enable a decision in the first round. Conventional wisdom had it that many former Likudniks, who were angry

with Netanyahu, would "return home" in the second round, and that while the ultra-religious voters would dutifully come out in large numbers to vote for Netanyahu, few Arabs would come out just to vote for Barak.

How can one explain Barak's victory? It is, perhaps, too early to give a definitive answer to this question, but there is no doubt that victory should be read, first and foremost, as a defeat for Netanyahu. Though we shall probably never know the numbers, it is known that there were quite a few right-wing voters who voted for the Likud, for National Religious Party, for Yisrael Beitenu (Avigdor Lieberman's party) and even for National Union (the list made up by Herut, Moledet and Tekuma, headed by Benny Begin) and voted for Ehud Barak as Prime Minister, or put a blank ballot paper in the envelope for Prime Minister. From the little that has been said on the subject one may gather that these right-wingers decided not to vote for Netanyahu because they stopped believing him, started viewing him as a destructive element both in the State and within the Likud, or because they hold Ehud Barak in high esteem — especially due to his brilliant military career.

Barak owed the massiveness of his victory to the voters from the former Soviet Union. In contrast to the 1996 elections, this time a majority of new immigrants did not vote for Netanyahu. What appears to have influenced the new immigrants, in addition to the distribution of Barak's biography, which emphasized his military career (the biography was translated into Russian, and left a deep impression

despite the fact that there was also a forged version of the book in Russian on the market), was the fact that Barak, unlike Netanyahu, was able to respond to the demand of Yisrael Be'aliya (Nathan Sharansky's party) that the Ministry of Interior be taken out of the hands of Shas and given to the Russians (The by now famous, oft quoted election propaganda in Russian: "*Pod Shas kontrol — Nash kontrol...*"). Netanyahu found himself with his hands tied, because unlike Yisrael Be'aliya, Shas had come out openly in his support.

The less pleasant surprise was in the makeup of the 15th Knesset. Though it was clearly foreseen that both Labor (or rather One Israel) and the Likud would emerge greatly weakened because of the split voting enabled by the system of the direct election of the Prime Minister, nobody predicted just how weak they would become. Whereas in the 1992 elections Labor received 44 Knesset seats and the Likud 32, and in 1996 Labor received 34 seats and Likud together with Geshet and Tsomet 32, in the 1999 elections Labor, together with Geshet and Meimad, received only 26 seats, and the Likud 19.

In the current elections 15 lists managed to pass the 1.5% qualifying threshold, compared to 11 in 1996 and 10 in 1992. The greatest surprise here were that Shas managed to increase its representation from 10 seats to 17, that the new Center Party, headed by Itzik Mordechai and with numerous "stars", got only 6 (originally it was predicted that it might get as many as 15), and that the old/new Shinui party, originally founded by Prof. Amnon Rubinstein in 1976 and now headed by the big-mouthed, anti-clerical journalist Tommy Lapid, would also receive 6.

Shas's success was largely at the expense of the Likud, and can apparently be attributed to the fact that its political leader, Arie Der'i, was found guilty of taking bribes and interfering with the course of justice not long before the elections, and sentenced to four years imprisonment (he is now preparing to appeal to the Supreme Court, both against the sentence and against the punishment). Though some predicted that these developments would weaken Shas (in any "normal" country they would have done so), in fact they strengthened the ultra-religious Sephardi party. Shas's campaign was run largely around the motif of "he

is innocent" (Shas's spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, said so openly), and a video prepared by Der'i, in which the police and legal establishment were accused of hypocrisy and prejudice against an ethnic background.

The failure of the Center Party may be attributed to the fact that its only clear message was the need to bring down Netanyahu, while its call for basic change in the way Israeli politics are conducted, lost much of its effectiveness as the party had difficulty putting its list together and drafting a platform. The fact that its four leaders (Mordechai, Amnon Lipkin Shahak, Dan Meridor and Ronnie Milo) didn't appear to be working together in harmony, didn't help much either. In the final analysis placing Mordechai at the head of the list might have been a mistake, though no one knows whether another candidate (Lipkin Shahak) might have done better. As it were, the Center Party is another "promise without fulfillment" story — a rather pathetic repetition of the story of the Democratic Movement for Change (DASH) back in 1977, only in fast motion.

The relative success of Shinui, which competed with Meretz and the Center party for votes, can be fully attributed to the fact that Lapid's main message — leave out the *haredim* (ultra religious) — appeals to many. Large parts of the secular population got rather disgusted with the way the *haredim* increased their influence and appetite for public funding, and had become more daring in their virulent criticism of the Supreme Court in the three years of Netanyahu's government. The sudden emergence of Lapid as a political figure, and his habit of not mincing words, certainly helped Shinui draw potential voters away from the Center Party.

On the surface, Barak's victory should have been translated easily into a simple and comfortable government. If one looks at the 15th Knesset one can find in it a clear majority for each of the issues on which Barak fought his election: a majority for continuing the peace process; a majority for mobilizing Yeshiva students for military service; a majority for instituting a constitution; a majority to divert funds from the settlements in the territories and religious institutions, to the health and education services, and development towns. But this picture is misleading. Barak

really does have a majority for each of these issues, but it is not the same majority, and in order to get the Knesset to approve some of the policy moves he is planning, he will need the support of opposition parliamentary groups, because not all the members of his Coalition will support them.

The Coalition that Barak presented to the Knesset on July 6 is supported by 75 Members of Knesset — a more than comfortable majority, but not necessarily a stable one. It is made up of One Israel (26 seats), the Sephardi ultra-religious party Shas (17), the left-wing Meretz (10), the Center Party (6), the new immigrant Yisrael Be'aliya (6) the right-wing National Religious Party (5) and the Ashkenazi ultra-religious Torah Judaism (5). Shinui (6) remains outside the coalition because it refuses to sit together in one government with Shas, and Amir Peretz's trade unions party, Am Ehad (2), remains outside (at least for the time being) because Barak would not accept its conditions — especially concerning the minimum wage. The Likud (19) seemed for a while to be a serious candidate to enter the coalition, but either its positions regarding the peace process were too rigid, or Barak merely used it to reduce Shas's price for joining.

Though Torah Judaism entered the coalition without actually demanding representation in the government, or even chairmanships in Knesset committees (the payoffs will be made in only moderate changes in the formal "*religious status quo*"), Barak's task in forming his government was not simple. According to the current Basic Law: the Government, the government cannot include more than 18 ministers. Before the Knesset goes out to its summer recess in the beginning of August, Barak hopes to change the law and increase the number of ministers to 24, but for the time being he could only appoint 18. Of these he made sure that 9 would be from One Israel, with the option of adding another 2 or 3 when the number of ministers increases to 24. Some of these appointments are a little peculiar, such as that of Yossi Beilin to the Ministry of Justice, that of Shlomo Ben Ami to the Ministry of Internal Security and that of Binyamin (Fuad) Ben Eliezer to the Ministry of Communications. These peculiarities can be explained as resulting from coalition constraints, but can also be seen as a means to try to neutralize future contestants to the party leadership.

How Barak will do as Prime Minister, whether he will manage to fulfill all the major expectations of him both in Israel and abroad, is yet to be seen. Certainly, the way he ran the rather extended coalition negotiations with the help of lawyers (headed by former Minister of Justice, Professor David Libai) rather than of politicians, was quite unusual. The way he managed to keep members of the Labor party silent throughout the election campaign and coalition negotiations, without informing any of them until the very last moment what job he had assigned to them, was even bizarre, and led many commentators to claim that the Labor leadership was put through a rather tortuous course in basic training (some used less gentle terms). However, Barak also learned a lesson regarding the limits of his own power, one day before presenting his government to the Knesset, when the Labor Party Central Committee decided to nominate MK Avraham Burg, and not Barak's candidate Shalom Simhon, for Knesset Speaker. Burg will be Speaker during the term of the 15th Knesset. The relationships that will develop between Barak and Burg, as between Barak and Ramon will be extremely interesting to follow.

One final comment on the new political map: Three political leaders resigned as leaders of their respective parties and from the Knesset as a result of the election: Binyamin Netanyahu announced his resignation even before the final results of the elections became known on the morning of May 18, though he was to remain Prime Minister and a Member of Knesset until Ehud Barak presented his government to the Knesset. Ze'ev Binyamin Begin resigned, both from the leadership of the National Union and the Knesset, after it became known that the representation of "the Greater Israel Front" in the Knesset had shrunk from eight to four Members. Arie Der'i resigned from heading the Shas Knesset list even before the election results were registered, and from the political leadership of Shas after Ehud Barak refused to open formal negotiations with Shas on its joining the coalition, as long as Der'i remained leader.

In more than one sense, a new era in Israeli politics has opened. □

Ehud Barak's *Inaugural Address*

With Ehud Barak elected as the overwhelming choice of the citizens of Israel to head the country as its Prime Minister, a new era has dawned for the Jewish State, and hopefully for the entire Middle East. Prime Minister Barak, in his opening address to the new 15th Knesset on July 6th was clear in defining his mandate — to pursue the goal of peace while assuring its vital security requirements, and promoting a social welfare program that would benefit all segments of the population, especially the new immigrants, and others left behind in the upward social-economic surge of the nation entering its sec-

ond half century of independence.

Barak lost no time in mending relations with Israel's Arab neighbors. His trip to Egypt seems to have started things rolling again, with a friendly Barak/Mubarak meeting; a cordial reception in Jordan by King Abdullah II, and even a relaxed encounter with Chairman Yasir Arafat at the Erez checkpoint at the Gaza Strip. As we go to press, Israel's Prime Minister has reached the United States, and met with President Bill Clinton. While welcomed with a note of caution, all these outings of Barak bode well for his term as Israel's leader.

We present here the gist of Prime Minister Barak's Knesset address.

Toward Peace and Social Progress

By Prime Minister Ehud Barak

Your Excellency President and Mrs. Weizman, Mr. Speaker, our friend Avraham Burg, please accept my heartfelt congratulations on your deserved election as Speaker of the Knesset.

Today, the legislature acquires a new, young and energetic leadership, the product of a Torah and Avodah philosophy, which will undoubtedly put its stamp on this House. All of us send you our very best wishes for success — and with you, to your parents Dr. Yosef and Rivka Burg.

I would also like to thank the outgoing temporary Speaker, MK Shimon Peres, who has led the Knesset in the last few weeks with a practiced, experienced and steady hand, and with him, to all the Knesset members who

have left the House, and particularly to Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon, who guided the Knesset in a manner which added honor to the House and to Israeli democracy.

Let me begin with a personal comment. I have been a soldier for practically all my adult life. I have known the pride of victory, but also the pain of failure, and as one whose only clothes, for decades, were olive-drab uniforms, I tell you today that, in the words of the poet Hillel, "We — the gray soldiers, whose hands are blackened with war, whose nostrils reek with death, whose throats are hoarse — we cry love into your souls."

I am not alone here today on this podium. Together with me are generations of IDF sol-

diers who withstood the most severe trials of fire in order to secure our liberty. Together with me are those who returned at dawn from the nighttime inferno, carrying on their shoulders the silent stretchers bearing their lifeless comrades.

I am not alone here today on this podium. Together with me are the white-coated hi-tech-people in Herzilya and the struggling unemployed, without a livelihood from Dimona, Ofakim and Hazor, rabbis and secular Jews, fieldworkers, gardeners and construction workers. I am not alone.

I am not alone today. Together with me are the mothers who do not sleep at night and the fathers tormented by anguish. Together with me are all the dreamers and the fighters.

And speaking for myself and the entire Israeli government which is setting forth today, I assure you that we have not closed our eyes in the last month, and we will not close our eyes as long as is needed in the future so that mothers in Israel sleep peacefully in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset:

In the annals of the Knesset there are turning points, ends of eras and beginnings of new ones. Today a new government in Israel starts out, resting on the broad-based confidence of the House and most of the people.

I believe that this day will be chronicled as a milestone and turning point – a time of reconciliation, unity and peace.

Eight weeks have passed since the people had their say at the polls.

As I begin my address, I would like to again express my profound appreciation to the masses of Israelis who placed their confidence in me, and my appreciation of all citizens, regardless of outlook, who participated in the democratic process and expressed their choice and free will.

I am duty-bound to express my full appreciation for the outgoing government for the efforts it invested and also for the achievements during its tenure. I express my appreciation to all the ministers, and in particular to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who since receiving the decision of the electorate, has behaved in an exemplary and statesmanlike fashion.

And I wish to add a personal comment. Even if, on a political level, we disagreed, very

often on matters of style, on the personal level our relationships were hardly ever affected. And as one who has accompanied the Netanyahu family, including Benjamin Netanyahu, for decades, I hope and believe that we will be able to be friends in the future as well.

I already said on the evening of the election that, from the moment I was elected, I view myself as an emissary of all Israeli citizens. I shall act with all my strength on their behalf, and for their sake, together with my colleagues, out of a profound recognition of responsibility and mission, in order to guide and lead the country forward to its great objectives and a promising future. There is an ancient prayer in my heart, the prayer of Solomon: "Give your servant a discerning heart...to distinguish between good and evil, for who is able to judge your great people?"

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset,

I am proud to submit to the people and the House a new, broad-based, good, representative government, supported by the large majority of Knesset members and the citizens of the state. It was not in vain that I took advantage of the full time allotted by law to form the government. I did not take the easy way. The lessons of Jewish history and the depth of the social and political chasm in Israel today required me to choose the long and patient way in order to achieve the goal which I had set for myself: to form a government which will act during a time of difficult national decisions, through consent and balance between most sections of the people. I did not accept any disqualification of any side.

During the negotiations I seriously examined the possibility of expanding the basis of the coalition even further. This was not possible and in retrospect, this may have been best. In a democratic system, there is great importance to the role of a parliamentary opposition, and it is my intention to express my recognition of this by maintaining ongoing contacts with, providing information to and holding consultations with the heads of those factions which are not members of the coalition. I expect substantive and constructive criticism from the opposition which will also enable consideration of its opinion in managing affairs of state.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset,

The basic guidelines of the Government and coalition agreements are before you. Everything is open and fully disclosed. Nothing is concealed, there are no secret agreements, no "under-the-table" understandings, and as you have seen, there are neither financial commitments nor favors to specific sectors or groups.

I will not go into the details of all the Government guidelines. The guidelines constitute the identity card of the government, the principles of its policy and its declaration of intent. All previous governments had good intentions. Not all were equally successful in putting them into practice. I know that the Government will be judged by its actions, not its intentions. I will try with all my might to ensure that the gap between its good intentions and its actions is as narrow as possible.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset,

The Zionist idea which was proclaimed in Basel over 100 years ago has brought about a revolution in the life of the Jewish people and restored it to the stage of history as a sovereign, independent, strong and prosperous people.

The Ingathering of the Exiles, the settlement of the land, the revival of the language, culture, and scientific and intellectual life, the creation of a splendid educational system and Torah institutions, the establishment of a strong national economy, an exemplary defense force and security services, sophisticated infrastructure systems and advanced health and welfare services, the creation of a democratic, free and diverse society based on the supremacy of the rule of law— all of these are achievements which are utterly unparalleled in the history of nations. They were achieved despite the Holocaust, which wiped out a third of our people, and during an unrelenting struggle and a bloody war in which the best of our children and comrades gave their lives. It is because of them that we are here — determined and confident and aspiring to historic acceptance and an end to wars and enmity.

We embrace the bereaved families and the families of the MIAs and POWs, the disabled and wounded of the security establishment. May peace ease their suffering. We know that

the victory of Zionism will not be complete until the achievement of genuine peace, full security, and relations of friendship, trust and cooperation with all our neighbors. And therefore, the Government's supreme goal will be to bring peace and security to Israel, while safeguarding the vital interests of the State of Israel. The great historic breakthrough to peace took place 20 years ago, through the vision and courage of two outstanding leaders: the late Menahem Begin and the late Anwar Sadat, may they rest in peace.

A further milestone was the Madrid Conference during the tenure of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Renewed and far-reaching impetus was imparted by Yitzhak Rabin, the courageous and unswerving leader, from whom I learned so much, and who was assassinated during the struggle for his path, the path of peace, and with him, by our friend Shimon Peres.

The government of Benjamin Netanyahu indeed opened with the Hebron Agreement, but it was unable to implement the Wye accords which it had signed.

Now it is our duty to complete the mission, and establish a comprehensive peace in the Middle East which has known so much war. It is our duty to ourselves and our children to take decisive measures to strengthen Israel by ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. This government is determined to make every effort, pursue every path and do everything necessary for Israel's security, the achievement of peace and the prevention of war.

We have an historic obligation to take advantage of the "window of opportunity" which has opened before us in order to bring long-term security and peace to Israel. We know that comprehensive and stable peace can be established only if it rests, simultaneously on four pillars: Egypt, Jordan, and Syria and Lebanon, in some sense as a single bloc, and of course the Palestinians. As long as peace is not grounded on all these four pillars, it will remain incomplete and unstable. The Arab countries must know that only a strong and self-confident Israel can bring peace.

Here, today, I call upon all the leaders of the region to extend their hands to meet our outstretched hand, and toward a "peace of the brave," in a region which has known so much war, blood and suffering. To our neighbors the

Palestinians, I wish to say: the bitter conflict between us has brought great suffering to both our peoples. Now, there is no reason to settle accounts over historical mistakes. Perhaps things could have been otherwise, but we cannot change the past; we can only make the future better. I am not only cognizant of the sufferings of my people, but I also recognize the sufferings of the Palestinian people. My ambition and desire is to bring an end to violence and suffering, and to work with the elected Palestinian leadership, under Chairman Yasser Arafat, in partnership and respect, in order to jointly arrive at a fair and agreed settlement for co-existence in freedom, prosperity and good neighborliness in this beloved land where the two peoples will always live.

To Syrian President Hafez Assad, I say that the new Israeli government is determined, as soon as possible, to advance the negotiations for the achievement of a full, bilateral treaty of peace and security, on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

We have been tough and bitter adversaries on the battlefield. The time has come to establish a secure and courageous peace which will ensure the futures of our peoples, our children and our grandchildren.

It is my intention to bring an end to IDF presence in Lebanon within one year, to deploy the IDF, through agreement, along the border, and to bring our boys home while also taking the necessary measures to guarantee the welfare and security of residents along the northern border, as well as the future of the Lebanese security and civilian assistance personnel who have worked alongside us, over all these years, for the sake of the residents of the region.

I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to praise the residents of Kiryat Shmona and communities along the confrontation line for their firm stand in the face of the Katyushas. From here, on behalf of us all, I offer my support to them. Their determination and the strength of the IDF are what will enable us to create the new situation.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset,

These two missions — arriving at a permanent settlement with the Palestinians, and achieving peace with Syria and Lebanon — are, in my eyes, equally vital and urgent. One neither outranks the other, nor has priority over it.

Our objective will be to act, at the same time, to bring peace closer on all fronts, but without compromising on Israel's security needs and most vital interests — first and foremost among them, a united Jerusalem, the eternal capital of Israel, under our sovereignty. We will not be deterred by the difficulties.

I know very well that difficult negotiations, replete with crises and ups-and-downs, await us before we reach our desired goal.

I can only promise that, if the other side displays the same degree of determination and good will to reach an agreement as on our side, no force in the world will prevent us from achieving peace here.

In this context, I attach the greatest importance to the support of our partners to peace treaties: Egypt and Jordan. I believe that President Hosni Mubarak and King Abdullah can play a vital role in creating the dynamics and an atmosphere of trust so needed for progress toward peace. They can also advance education for peace among the children of Egypt and Jordan, the Palestinians and, in the future, also of Syria and Lebanon — education for peace, which is a condition for any long-term, stable peace. I am convinced that King Hassan* of Morocco can also contribute to this, as can other countries who already, in the past, opened channels of communication with Israel, cooperating with the peace process in various spheres. My aspiration will be to firmly resume these contacts in order to create a favorable regional atmosphere that can assist the negotiations.

It goes without saying that the assistance of the United States is a fundamental condition for any progress toward resolving the conflict in the region. The friendship of America, under the leadership of President Clinton, its generosity and the intensity of its support for the peace process in the Middle East constitute a vital component in the chance to achieve our goal. I will soon leave for the United States, at the invitation of President Clinton, a loyal friend of Israel, in order to discuss the gamut of issues facing us, first and foremost, the renewal of the peace process on all tracks, and the fortification of the strength and security of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset,

The guarantee of the peace agreements and their implementation lies in the strength of

* King Hassan has since died.

the Israel Defense Forces. As such, we will attend to bolstering the IDF, the quality of its commanders and soldiers, its equipment — with the best educational and technological systems — training and fitness, its ability to always be prepared to deter and provide a response to distant and near dangers, and to all kinds of threats, whether conventional or otherwise. But security is not only provided with tanks, planes or missile boats. Security is, first and foremost provided by individuals. It is they who shape the integrity of the society and of the national strength of Israel. Therefore, together with the promotion of security and peace, and foreign policy, and with no less urgency and importance, the Government is obliged to contend with the challenges of society, the economy and the needs of the citizen.

Israeli society is a unique society: a fascinating mosaic of hues and opinions, cultures and creeds — veteran residents and new immigrants, people from different Diasporas, religious and ultra-Orthodox, traditional and secular, Jews and Arabs, Druze and Circassians. Together, equally, they are Israel. A society where none are better or less good, but where, as in every human society, there are fringes of poverty and backwardness. There are weak sectors of hundreds of thousands of agonizing citizens who are unable to maintain the rapid pace of progress. We must not rush forward and leave them behind by the roadside.

The Government, under my leadership, is committed to waging war on the unemployment and poverty threatening to undermine and unravel our social fabric, and to strengthening the health system and the improvement of the welfare services in the State of Israel. We will introduce a new national order of priorities.

The most important mission which the Government will take upon itself in the social sphere is the positioning of education as its top priority. I always viewed education as the most correct and worthwhile long-term investment. Therefore, we will aspire to provide the best possible education to every single child and adolescent in Israel, from kindergarten through university. The government will allocate resources and efforts in order to bring about a change and breathe a new spirit into the entire education system — by expanding the knowledge base, fostering curiosity and directing the potential of the talents of the

young generation toward creative channels. And to the same extent, the Government will work to educate toward values, personal morality, work ethics, social responsibility, volunteerism, assistance to fellow human beings, justice, respect for the law and a loathing for injustice and violence.

The Government will place a special emphasis on an uncompromising struggle against the growing violence among youth. We will not accept a situation in which parents are afraid to send their children to schools and playgrounds.

I wish to say something to those citizens who are members of minority communities in the State of Israel: I wholeheartedly believe in the equal value of all humankind, in equality between people and between citizens, without distinction. The State of Israel has not always been sufficiently wise to grant all its citizens a sense of equality and partnership. The disparities are great, and the sentiment of bitterness is not unjustified. I know that you have heard innumerable slogans and promises, and I pledge today that the Government, under my leadership, will make every effort to gradually bridge the gaps, dissipate the alienation and provide equality for all sectors of the population in Israel. The Rabin and Peres governments began a focussed effort to bring about this change. We will continue along this path with renewed vigor.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset,

Emphasizing the social aspect of Government policy is not in contradiction with a policy of free and productive economics, free from unnecessary government interference. An economy which will act as a magnet for foreign investment, and be increasingly based on hi-tech industries and domestic research and development which will put Israel at the forefront of scientific and technological progress — because there can be no healthy society without a healthy economy, and vice versa. The creation of 300,000 new jobs in the next four years — as I pledged in my election campaign — is a concrete and possible objective for reducing the shame of unemployment and strengthening the entire economy. At the same time, this goal is contingent upon imparting a new impetus to the economy, as a result of restored confidence in a future of peace for the region and the country.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset,

We are living in an era of the global economy and immediate world-wide communications, being exposed to the cultures of all nations through television screens, the internet and computers. In this open world, there is no possibility of enclosing oneself in an impenetrable armored shell or being sequestered from the outside world, even if its influences are not always positive.

The world is changing so rapidly that those who cannot cope or adjust to the new reality will find themselves dragged back, like Alice in Wonderland.

It is our mission to prepare the new generation in Israel for the new, open and global era of the 21st Century, while also reinforcing and strengthening the components of its national and Jewish identity, its sense of attachment and its bonds to Israel. The way to this is through deepening historical awareness, acknowledging our heritage and faith, building a society based on solidarity, internal cohesion and what is called – with no cause for embarrassment – “national pride.” Not arrogant pride, condescending to others, but pride which recognizes values, and identification with the historical collective memory of all Jewish ethnic groups, with the heritage of the generations and with the awesome contribution that our nation has made to human civilization.

Identification with the struggle for rebirth and with those who have fallen in Israel’s wars, identification with the goals of the State anchored in the vision of the Prophets and the Declaration of Independence. With the very name “Israel,” which expresses courage, determination and victory. As the angel’s blessing to Jacob in Genesis: “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with man – and have prevailed.”

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset,

This government for which I seek your confidence is a government directed toward peace and security, education, health and welfare, directed toward full civil equality and social justice, directed toward a free and prosperous economy, growth and the eradication of unemployment and poverty, directed toward immigration and strengthening the ties between

Israel and the Diaspora, directed toward the fortification of democracy and the supremacy of law. This is a government in which people will go hand-in-hand, combining their strengths.

The primary consideration which guided me in composing this government was the need to find the broadest possible common denominator in order to responsibly bring together representatives of parties and sectors from various, even opposing, sides of Israeli society. This is not simple, and it comes at a cost. We will first have to make the painful compromises among ourselves, via a policy which is the fruit of a broad-based, sober and realistic consensus – an honest policy, confident in our strength, which is not conceived of wishful thinking and vacuous arrogance, of haste, hesitation and missed opportunity, of vacillation and the intoxication of power, but which is marked by great love for all parts of our homeland and the painful acknowledgment of the ties of others as well.

This government will not turn its back on any group, portion, sector or ideological stream in Israeli society. This will be a government of constant dialogue, openness and attentiveness, a government that will aspire to a “new national consensus,” but not shirk from decisions or resign itself to paralysis and be stalemated. I know and understand exactly where the government must head and the destination it must reach, and I intend to lead this march to the finish line.

Ultimately, as I have pledged, if and when cardinal historic decisions are required, the entire public will be called to take a decision, in accordance with its sovereign will, in a referendum.

I believe that bearing responsibility together will bring the extremes closer, blunt the contrasts in society and will require consideration, attentiveness and mutual balances – since it has already been said in the Torah, and about our Torah: “Its paths are paths of pleasantness, and all its ways are ways of peace.” In this way, we will be able, together, to face the tests and decisions which await us. In this way, we will be stronger and more united, despite the disputes and the diversity of opinion among us. Perhaps we will become wiser, because we will be guided by shared wisdom.

The sun is about to set on this millennium. In the entire world, there is great anticipation of the coming millennium. The Hebrew calendar does not recognize this, and for most of us the change of date between 31 December and 1 January is not a day of celebration. But we are part of the world, and this new government will cross the line into the next millennium. It is my hope that the sense of a new beginning will not be neglected over the Middle East, and that the start of the third millennium will also bring an atmosphere of reconciliation and momentum for peace to our area.

The Government of Israel will be there, prepared for the challenge, attentive to expectations and aspiring to bequeath a better future to our children.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to present the composition of the new government to the Knesset:

Ehud Barak – Prime Minister and Defense Minister, (One Israel)

Dalia Itzik – Environment Minister, (One Israel)

Yossi Beilin – Justice Minister, (One Israel)

Binyamin Ben-Eliezer – Communications Minister, (One Israel)

Shlomo Benizri – Health Minister, (Shas)

Shlomo Ben-Ami – Public Security Minister, (One Israel)

Eli Yishai – Labor and Social Affairs Minister, (Shas)

Avraham Shohat – Finance Minister, (One Israel)

Yitzhak Cohen – Religious Affairs Minister, (Shas)

Ran Cohen – Industry and Trade Minister, (Meretz)

David Levy – Foreign Minister, (One Israel)

Yitzhak Mordechai – Transportation Minister, (Center)

Eli Suissa – Infrastructure Minister, (Shas)

Shimon Peres – Regional Cooperation Minister, (One Israel)

Haim Ramon – Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, responsible for Jerusalem, (One Israel)

Yossi Sarid – Education Minister, (Meretz)

Natan Sharansky – Interior Minister, (Yisrael Ba'aliyah)

Yitzhak Levy – Housing and Construction Minister. (NRP)

The following ministries, for now, will be

under the purview of the Prime Minister: the Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry, the Absorption Ministry, the Tourism Ministry and the Science Ministry.

This, for now, is the current composition of the Government. In the coming days, I will bring before the Knesset a proposal to change the Basic Law: The Government, for an increase in the number of ministers, as required by the size of the coalition and the composition of the Knesset. In any form, this is the best government for the State of Israel at this time. We are the bearers of the torch which our predecessors have transferred to us, and we assume full responsibility for moving forward.

Today, the Government requests the confidence of the 15th Knesset in the knowledge that the eyes of all Israelis are focused thereon, in prayer and with great hope.

Today, millions of eyes in Israel, millions of eyes of Jews around the world, and millions of eyes around the whole world are focused on us, praying that we will know to lead the country, with determination and a sure hand toward a new path, momentum and a new page in the chronicles of the State of Israel. A new page of peace in an arena which, in recent generations, has known mostly pain, bereavement and suffering.

Accompanied by the blessings and concern of everyone, we embark today on the long and arduous path. I would be most appreciative if you would express your confidence in the Government today and wish it well and God speed. □

Hon. Ehud Barak
Prime Minister of Israel
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Mr. Prime Minister

The Labor Zionist Alliance congratulates you on your success in forming a broad-based government led by Labor/One Israel and upon your confirmation as Prime Minister of Israel.

We reaffirm our expressions of hope and solidarity, as stated in our earlier congratulatory letter of May 18 following your election, and again pledge our partnership and our support in the challenging but promising period that lies ahead.

With every wish for your unprecedented success,

Sincerely,
Daniel Mann,
President



Jewish Dualism

By Chaim Nachman Bialik

Many students of our national *Gestalt* have dealt with the phenomenon of dualism in our psyche as a fundamental characteristic of the Jewish people. By dualism we mean the rule of two traits in the nation's soul, one contradicting the other. In this dualism we can discern the source of our misfortunes and greatest afflictions but it is the source of our strength and happiness as well.

This dualism turns the soul of the nation into a battlefield where an incessant war rages. It is an impoverishing war. The two forces maul each other, thereby weakening the nation; but, on the other hand, they enrich our national content by not permitting us to drop off to sleep. Paradoxically enough, these opposing forces couple and are fruitful, so that the nation becomes many-sided and diversified.

In what is this Hebrew dualism revealed? One does not have to look for it long or in far-away places. It is to be found in all the primary and secondary views of Jewish history. It will be enough to recall the two aims serving the nation side by side as well as alternately, one declining for a time and the other in the ascendancy again for a time. I mean the tendency to expand and its opposite, to contract. These two tendencies have left their stamp on our whole history from beginning to end, on all the nation's modes of life and thought, and, wittingly or unwittingly, on its chief actions. And this was true not only during exile. If we inves-

tigate ancient Jewish times and perhaps even its earliest history we shall discover these two tendencies — on the one hand the desire to expand from the center and, on the other, to contract towards it and cleave to it. No nation strives to be swallowed up in other groups as much as the Jews and, at the same time, to remain an entity — an entity whose least particle is still recognizably Jewish: a nation which builds a ghetto for itself in its place of dispersion and adjusts its life to an alien environment and, in a time of national emergency, permits itself to be killed over a minuscule change in its religion; a group which adapts itself to the ways of life of a whole world but nevertheless remains “a people dwelling apart, not reckoned among nations.” These things are well known. . . .

This dualism reveals itself also in the most important of possessions: in religion. There is no nation which immerses itself more in the abstract, general, universal aspect of religion; contrariwise, no nation so treasures and shows such solicitude for its practical side — the *mizwot*. The Messiah idea is one of the spiritual centers of Judaism. On one hand, the Messiah is depicted as the redeemer of all mankind who will enthrone God in the entire world and, on the other, he is represented as the national redeemer who will restore the people to its land and bring back the kingdom of the House of David. This is, of course, the tendency to contraction and isolation. The mission idea was born in those Jewish circles which tended, at the first flowering of the Reform movement, to expansion: that is, to lose themselves among the nations of the world. Deriding the *atta*

From a lecture delivered in Berlin in March 1922. Translated from the Hebrew by Maurice M. Shudofsky, then on the faculty of Long Island University. Originally published in *Jewish Frontier* in July 1961.

behartanu,¹ they proclaimed our equality with others. In order to gain equal rights, the first “enlightened” Jews tried to negate essentially the idea of a Jewish nation, maintaining that we are entrusted with the mission of spreading monotheism throughout the world. Naturally, in the end they arrived at an awesome *atta behartanu*, a conclusion grounded ostensibly on the opposite assumption: namely, that the Jewish people is no different from others. Here is the marvel: the national idea striving for contraction emerges from that of expansion. So we see that this dualism is present in “the mission idea” as well. And, in other ways, we find progressiveness on the one hand and on the other — with respect to its ancient possessions — an unparalleled conservatism. Vladimir Soloviev² defines Judaism as a realistic-idealistic religion — on the one hand, ardor for achieving great things characterized by unceremonious pushing ahead and, on the other, a self-abnegating humility which produced a circumscribed culture plus a belief in an afterlife. These antitheses are characteristic of our time, but their roots are in ancient times, revealing themselves in all period. This dualism is indeed the natural rhythm of Judaism; it constitutes the two stones of the scale which provide balance.

There is a vision *sui generis* among the Jews unmatched in the history of other peoples, a vision of a double — some even say triple — revival. You know the story with an admixture of legend about the return of the Hebrews to Eretz Israel from Egypt, and afterwards the “historical” return from Babylon. The coming back of a people to its country after having been exiled has no parallel. One may wonder at such a phenomenon but not deny it. As stated above, some say that the return was threefold. Many scholars see the first return in the coming of Abraham to Eretz Israel; that is, ancient tribes of Eber had already conquered the land once, and they came back in the days of Abraham. At that time, of course, there was

¹ Literally, “Thou didst choose us...”, opening words of the Sabbath and festival prayer setting forth Israel’s divine election. Translator’s note.

² Russian philosopher (1853-1900). The definition referred to is from Soloviev’s *Judaism and Christianity*. Translator’s note.

as yet no Hebrew nation. There is textual support for this, because in relating the story of Joseph, the ancient sources quote him as follows: “For I was stolen from the land of the Hebrews.” There are also other hints from a very early period. In commenting on the verse, “And the Canaanites were then in the land,” the Aggada says that it points definitely to a time when the Canaanites had not yet been there. The Aggada tells us further that the Canaanites kept on wresting the land from the children of Shem. Investigators demonstrate from archaeology that numerous ancient tribes, scattered in Assyria and in Babylonia, came back to Canaan in the days of Abraham bringing with them of the culture of the children of Eber.

This was the first return. The second occurred in the time of Moses, and this time they brought an even heavier cultural baggage, acquired to an appreciable extent in the land of their exile. After hundreds of years they once more made their exit from the land of their forefathers; they influenced the cultures of Babylon and Persia and were in turn influenced by them. Then they again made their way back to Canaan. Hundreds of years later they went out once again with greater cultural wealth and with a religion which had grown on their soil and it conquered the ancient world. Was all this mere chance? Hardly. If the Hebrews had not possessed two equal antithetical foundations, there would have been no repetition of the vision of ingathering and scattering several times one after the other. It is impossible to get at such phenomena by objective explanations alone. “When a people does not wish to be exiled, it does not suffer exile.” There are peoples which choose not to be expelled, and *they come to an end in their land*; and there are nations which are exiled and lost in the land of their dispersion. But when a people leaves and re-enters, leaves and re-enters — this reveals its inner strength. Leaving means that the hour of expansion has come, while return shows the trait of contraction.

But why do these tendencies exist side by side, each doing its work in its appointed time? I think that their roots are to be found in the earliest period of our history; they are a product of the Hebrew racial composition and of the special structure of the nation’s body.

From its earliest time the nation regarded itself as composed of two elements — shepherds and farmers. Historically, there are nations who skip a number of steps in their development, and there are some whose national consciousness dates from one period: either that of the shepherd or the tiller of the soil. The national consciousness of Israel had its beginning at the time when the shepherds and farmers lived side by side and exerted an equal influence on the life of the whole group. Hence the increasing prominence of the two tendencies whose fundamental characteristics are generally known to us. In the main, the farmer is slow of movement, conservative, enslaved to possessions; in contrast to him, the shepherd is quick of movement and not enslaved to immovable property. The ancient legends tell us of the imprinting of these two tendencies on the people's imagination. Are not Cain and Abel the farmer and the shepherd? The murderer must of necessity be a wanderer. Here we have an echo of the protracted warfare between the tribes of shepherds and farmers; and we learn something about the vengeance of blood by a kinsman and the powerful curse: "A wanderer on earth shalt thou be." Then we have the stories about Cain's children, tent-dwelling shepherds, the exploits of Jonadab ben Rakhab, the Kenites (depicted as a tribe which preserved the desert tradition), and the Nazarites who abstained from wine and whom the prophet Jeremiah singled out as models of pious living. Do not Abraham and Isaac represent two periods, the former that of the shepherd in search of pastures for his sheep and the latter that of the tiller of the soil ("And Isaac sowed...")? And in later periods after the tribes had united and were living side by side there began the war between Yahweh, god of the desert shepherds, and Baal, deity of the Canaanite farmers.

The clash of these antithetical tendencies is discernible in laws, ordinances, and customs. Hence the dualism in the festivals which had originated with the farmers (spring and harvest festivals, etc.); but later, on becoming the property of the whole nation, they retained also the memories of wandering and the journey to the Promised Land ("A remembrance of the exodus from Egypt.") Even the Sabbath which is basically a product of the farmers' culture ("so that thy servant may rest, thine ox and thine ass") becomes "a remembrance of the

Exodus...", of the covenant between a people exiled from land to land and its god.

This applies equally to "minor" commandments like fringes and phylacteries. In the latter's frontlets and straps there is definitely a hint of an ancient pastoral culture with its ideas of Ornamental beauty. We even find that women used to bedeck themselves with frontlets made from skins and sewn together with tendons. One should not neglect folk customs; it is precisely those customs whose origins are lost which afford us insights into very important things, as, for example, in language from words no longer used in life or in literature.

Such secrets, for instance, are preserved in "the law of mixed materials." It has already been shown that in this law there is a memory of the great hatred between shepherds who wore woollen garments and farmers who dressed in clothes of flax. The mixing of the two materials was bound to put the wearer of such a garment into danger, because his fellow tribesmen could mistakenly take him for a member of a hostile tribe and pounce upon him — something that happens daily even in our time among warring Bedouin tribes. The fringes with their blue edge originated later, and it is specifically stated that it be made of mixed materials to symbolize the peace between the tribes who had in the meantime united to form one people. In due course both the fringes and the phylacteries became religious garments and "religious laws" whose *raison d'être* is not clear.

In a later period we find an image of the ancient antitheses in the customs of libation. Samuel, Elijah, and the other prophets engage in pouring out water; that is, they uphold the desert tradition of nomadic shepherds as against the wine libations which the Israelites took over from Baal-worshiping agricultural tribes. Since there was neither wine nor vineyard in the desert, wine libations were foreign to the shepherd tribes. In the desert wine is considered the devil's brew.

This dualism, revealed in laws, customs, and practical religion and resting on two different foundations, showed its strength also in morality, in art, in economics, and in everything created by the spirit of Israel. Because the people did not tie its fate to one of these and because they remained equal in power, the

rule of this dualism in our group character has survived to this day. A people whose fate is determined by only one tendency and which puts all its weight on one foundation must depart from the world stage when this power is no longer strong and its rule has evaporated. A people, however, which is in equal measure under the rule of two forces lives forever.

The origin of these two tendencies is truly very old. The sense of possession was first developed among tillers of the soil; that is, among most of the Israelites when they were still in their land. This feeling has a variety of psychological foundations. There is in it also something of the sense of power as well as something of present pleasure and future security. Actually, one can raise objections to these explanations. The sense of possession has in it more of the feeling of jealousy, comparable to a husband's jealousy of his wife. In the Hebrew language the roots "to possess" and "to be jealous" are related. If you reduce the feeling of possession to a realization of the power inherent in wealth, then you are confronted with the fact that possession may come about through inheritance, a gift, or a chance finding. And if you reduce it to enjoyment, does not a passion for possession occur even among people whose wealth is so great that they will be able to enjoy only a portion of it? These people know that they have not seen nor will they ever see all their possessions; yet they shudder at the thought of being robbed of some of their wealth. You might say there is a mystic, erotic relationship between the possessor and the thing possessed, between the object and its owner, a relationship that does not differ from that obtaining between the savage and his woman. A man used to purchase a wife in the same way he purchased an object. In the purchase of either or both there was a feeling of making a covenant. "One buys merely by looking" — when a man sees something and desires it in his heart, his desiring "buys" it. The soul of the object cleaves to the purchaser; they make a covenant. It seems to him that the object has a soul inasmuch as they made a covenant out of mutual agreement and desire. It is as if their souls had coalesced. And if the ancient Scriptures say: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife...thy neighbor's house or ox...and anything which belongs to him," it is not because the Bible compares a woman to objects but rather because it likens objects to a

woman, raising them to her level. This is the relationship of primitive man and of children to the object they love. When a child breaks an object, it is as if the soul of one had departed from that of the other. Hence the Hebrew expressions: "my soul abhors thee," "my soul has become estranged from thee," "lest my soul become estranged" — like the alienated limb which has departed from the body.

This is the animistic attitude of primitive man; it is also the attitude of the farmer to his soil, his sowed land, his plants — he is "enslaved" to them all. In Hebrew *baal* means owner of an object and husband of a woman. But the concept of possession in our sense of the term was not born among farmers, because the soul of objects is not marketable. It originated among shepherds, cattlemen.³ Possession is the first abstraction but tillers of the soil were not given to barter; how could they barter away that which had taken root among them and from which their livelihood was derived? The cattlemen who dealt only with movables were the first merchants. Those wandering possessions, the first coins, were sheep ornaments. During the nomadic period bartering and the first "possessions" brought them to the realization that importance lay not in things themselves but in their value and worth. Land can neither be stolen nor sold. But the shepherds, fashioners of an expanding barter, went from the first abstraction — possession based on barter and worth — to the second: namely, symbols — skin ornaments followed by metal in the form of coins and on to a higher abstraction, the note. The quantity of the concrete possession grows smaller and smaller, while its quality, embodied in a small piece of marked metal, can even be reduced to a piece of paper. In this manner we finally arrive at the highest abstraction — the word. By means of idle chatter on the exchange you can conceal millions and you can abstract material possessions to the point of denying their quantitative form, thus reducing them to their qualitative value.

This is how humanity has proceeded from the concrete to the abstract. You may call it progress which means proceeding from the large concrete containing little to the small abstract containing much. The Jewish people have walked and are still walking on both roads. When we lived on our soil we founded

our life on the concrete, on the quantitative, on the material possessions in which we invested our very being and which in turn penetrated into our soul. During the Dispersion the second trait, that of expansion — which basis everything on the abstract, on the qualitative, on value and worth — gained ascendancy within us. We then proceeded from abstraction to abstraction. Torn from the soil, we reduced all our wealth to religion, and then we further reduced this religious wealth to one book, the Bible. We rolled all our wealth into one document, into a piece of parchment which became the embodiment of everything we possessed — a hidden store of thousands upon thousands of worlds. From this lofty abstraction we climbed to the highest of all — to one Biblical verse, “Hear, O Israel,” on whose final word we agreed to take on the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven and the sanctification of the Divine Name in the world. Even this abstraction, the highest, was expressed with the greatest economy, and after it there is nothing except the idea of the denial of idolatry (“He who denies idolatry is equal to him who affirms the whole Torah.”). This negative form is the extreme condensation of that highest abstraction whose positive form, the *Shema*, is qualitatively the most powerful of all utterances.

At the end of the Second Commonwealth the Hebrews took much spiritual wealth along with them to Babylonia — the teaching of the

Prophets and basic Judaism. When the Babylonian exile was drawing to its close, the nation appeared to have become depleted. In reality, Israel had been considerably influenced by the Babylonians and Persians, so that by the time the exiles began their homeward journey, their spirit was enriched; they had adapted the foreign material, absorbed it, and then created a revised basic Hebrew culture.

After wandering for thousands of years and after endless changes and re-evaluations... after influencing the whole world and being influenced by it, we are now, for the third or fourth time, once again returning to our land. And here we are destined to fashion a culture sevenfold greater and richer than any we have heretofore created or absorbed. And who knows? Perhaps after hundreds of years we will be emboldened to make another exodus which will lead to the spreading of our spirit over the world and an assiduous striving toward glory. □

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The *Kehilah* in Warsaw

By David Rosenthal

“**W**arsaw” stands for many Jewish worlds, each one with its own particular atmosphere, its own rhythm of life and its own melody. From Warsaw the creative stream flowed through all the other cities and towns, touching young and old alike and filling their lives with inspiring content.

The address in Jewish Warsaw which expressed the vitality of these different worlds — as well as reflecting all their hopes and struggles and their social-political convictions — was Grzybowska 26, the Jewish Community building (*kehilah*).

Concerning the history of the legally recognized Jewish self-government in Poland, I wish to mention (in a very limited way), the essential facts of that period, which lasted about 20 years, from 1919 — when the government issued the *Kehilah* decree — to 1939, when Warsaw was engulfed by the Nazi darkness.

The *Kehilahs* and the Situation of the Jewish Population

The *Kehilahs* were organized on the basis of a government decree dated February 7, 1919 and signed by Marshal Pilsudski and Prime Minister Jan Paderewski. The decree stipulated: “All Jews who reside in Poland, except those who live in the state of Silesia, constitute a religious federation of an openly legal character. The federation consists of the various communities headed by a religious council.”

The competency of the *Kehilahs* included the following functions: the organization and upkeep of the rabbinate; the construction and upkeep of synagogues, study centers, bath-houses and cemeteries; religious educa-

tion of the youth; preparation of kosher meat; administering the *Kehilah* properties and the foundations which were assigned to the community; management of the various *Kehilah* institutions, educational and philanthropic.

As can be seen, the competency of the *Kehilah* was a purely religious one, not a national-cultural one. Dr. Raphael Lemkin, who became known in the United States as the author of the genocide laws, believed that even in the *Kehilah* form in Poland at the end of the 1920s, which was designed by the Polish government, much constructive national-cultural work could be done, but only on condition that the *Kehilah* would be led by responsible, capable people and not by individuals who were concerned only with their own personal and political agendas. Dr. Lemkin also called for a broadening of the *Kehilah* legislation.

This postulate was advanced by the Zionist and labor movements. Thus, for example, the Bund, in its 1920 election platform, demanded the democratization of the *Kehilah*, voting rights for women; lowering voting age to 20; creating a uniform secular democratic school system based on compulsory attendance.

Some of the demands of the political movements were met, despite all the limitations. The vital needs of the Jewish masses were stronger than all the governmental regulations. They created their own dynamic and moved the center of gravity of the *Kehilah* activity onto the plane of urgent cultural and educational activities.

Moshe Feldstein, who played a leading role in the Warsaw *Kehilah* on behalf of the Zionist bloc, tells about this development in

his memoirs. "The expenses of the rabbinate make up five percent of the entire Kehilah budget. On the other hand, the expenses for the school and culture department amounted to one million gulden or approximately 25% of the entire budget." The increase in the funds for these purposes was a result of the difficult economic situation of the Jewish population. In Feldstein's words: "Thousands of Jewish children are completely without schooling. Tens of thousands of children who attend the public schools graduate as assimilated ignoramuses; thousands of children of impoverished Jewish families, who look for work in the streets, or become 'peddlers,' remain at the mercy of fate, without any prospects and without education. As a result, certain new educational institutions were founded, such as the Teachers' Seminary for graduates of high schools (the only one of its kind in Poland); evening courses for adults; continuation courses for apprentices to artisans, etc. Thus, today (1928) the Warsaw Kehilah has 28 cultural institutions with 88 classes, 135 teachers and 3587 students."

The Kehilah Elections and the Discriminatory Paragraph #20

At the end of the 1920s the number of elections to public institutions in the Jewish community was growing like mushrooms after a rain. Elections to the Sejm, elections to city councils, elections to Zionist congresses, to the Kehilahs. The latter were "general, equal, secret, direct and proportional" in accordance with the official election regulations — except that only males over the age of 25 were allowed to vote. In 1930 the government regulations stated: "In preparing the election lists, the election commission may delete the names of individuals who publicly agitate against the Jewish religion." (Parag. 20) In practice this paragraph served as an excuse to eliminate from the Kehilah leadership representatives of the labor parties.

Up until 1924 there existed in Warsaw a Kehilah administration which had been chosen on the basis of an anti-democratic, elitist election code. But when Poland won its national independence, a sharp struggle flared up for control of Grzybowska 26. The first elections took place in 1924, then there were elections in 1931 and 1936. The Bund, however, participated only in 1924 and 1936.

A characteristic feature of these elections campaigns is the steady growth of the election lists among a smaller number of participating voters. In 1924 there were 15 lists. In 1936, 40 lists. These lists were put forth by all the political movements; by philanthropic and economic associations and institutions, by the various Hasidic movements, etc. In 1924, 49% of those eligible to vote participated. In 1931, only 28%. In 1936, 45%.

The weak turnout in 1931 was a result of the boycott by the Bund, which had left the Kehilahs in July 1929. The declaration of withdrawal was announced at the Kehilah council by the Bund leader Henrik Ehrlich. The reasons for this drastic step, he explained, had to do with the heartless treatment of the poverty-stricken Jewish population by the Kehilah bureaucracy. The offices of the Kehilah employees, he said, are a veritable hell where one hears cries for help by those seeking assistance. During a period of severe cold weather the Kehilah paid out barely seven percent of its budget for heating impoverished homes.

In addition to these complaints there were deep differences of opinion between the Bund and all the other Jewish movements on the question of the events in Eretz Israel in August 1929, (The Bund had expressed solidarity with the Arabs there. D.R.) All these factors led to the Bund's withdrawal from the Kehilah. In July 1931 the Bund revised its position.

Concerning the protests against the Kehilah engendered by deep dissatisfaction with its social-relief activities, there is a moving passage in Sholom Asch's "Warsaw," volume II, Chapter 23, "A Storm against the Community." "No one knows who spread the rumor in the unheated homes that there would be a march to the Kehilah office to demand coal. People came to this conclusion simply because this was the only address the poor people had to turn to in time of need... There is no one to appeal to, all the doors are closed and locked ... The entire mass of people cried out in one desperate voice: 'Coal! Give us coal! We are freezing to death!'" (pp 238-248, in "Warsaw," Kultur League edition)

(Continued on P. 22)

Copyrights: Ancient (Dead Sea Scrolls) and Modern: (Rosenberg Trial Transcript)

By Harold Ticktin

In *Bleak House*, Charles Dickens, once a court reporter, details the drawn-out case of Jarndyce v. Jarndyce, a probate matter in which the case persists long after the witnesses have died and both the litigants and judges now have snowy white coiffures. That was child's play compared to the appeal presently pending in Israel, entitled Qimron v. Shanks in which the document in dispute is something over two thousand years old. It is one of the most famous Dead Sea Scrolls, *Mik-tzat Ma'aseh ha Torah* (MMT). Curiously another instance of a dispute over a "public" record also has Jewish implications - The Rosenberg case, specifically its transcript.

Qimron v. Shanks began around 150 BCE when the presumed head of the Dead Sea sect, the Teacher of Righteousness, wrote an angry letter, most likely to the Hasmonean rulers in Jerusalem who had usurped the High Priest role to their royal dynasty, something hitherto unthinkable. There were six copies of the letter found among the original Dead Sea Scrolls, highly fragmented and almost impossible to understand because of the many gaps. Professor Elisha Qimron of Ben Gurion University undertook the job of arranging the known fragments, by trying to fill in the gaps logically. This meant that some forty percent of his work was "rendering" into the original on a probable but still hypothetical basis.

The task, which took some eleven years of hard work, saw daylight in the early 90's. One copy, presumably photographed without Qimron's knowledge, found its way to Hershel Shanks, the eminent editor of *Biblical Archaeological Review*, and a major force in forcing the scholarly world to bring to light the Dead Sea

Scrolls which had been kept under wraps for many years. He published MMT and apparently did not attribute the work to Qimron.

Qimron sued in Jerusalem District Court before Judge Dalia Dorner, who ruled in Qimron's favor. The amount in question was less than \$15,000, but the principle is of the highest importance. The case is now before the Israeli Supreme Court and it was there that Judge Aharon Barak, presented with a Solomonic kind of decision, urged the parties to settle the case, which is most unlikely.

To my knowledge there is only one instance in the twentieth century of a similar dispute over a "public" record and I was the lawyer in that matter. It was the Rosenberg case, specifically its transcript, a kind of modern equivalent to MMT's scroll from Qumran.

A critical link between the two cases is the difference between translating and rendering or interpreting. A translation is simply that, substituting words from one language to another. Rendering on the other hand is a more creative act which contextually captures the rhythm and cadences of one tongue "rendered" into another. Italian movie titles in English are superb examples. My favorite is one of Lena Wertmuller's best known efforts. Its Italian title is *Tutto a Posto, Niente in Ordine*. A literal translation would say *Everything in Place, Nothing in Order*. As marketed in English the creative interpreter called it *All Screwed Up*. The differences in style are clear.

In Qimron's case the rendering of MMT was from Hebrew to Hebrew because he had to fill in the gaps on the likeliest basis; some creativity was obviously required. Much the same

happened with the Rosenberg transcript, as we shall see. Since the law and theater are such close-knit kin it should not be a surprise that the latter "rendering" involved a play.

In 1969 Donald Freed, later the author of a satire on Nixon made up entirely of Nixon's own words, brought to the Cleveland Playhouse what he called the *Theater of Fact*, a play based directly on the manuscript of the Rosenberg trial, obviously a matter of public record. Every word in the play replicated the words in the trial. The 60's ferment had tossed up many new kinds of theater - of the poor, the street, cruelty, absurdity, ridiculous, etc. Freed's was yet a new variation.

In Cleveland the title was *The U.S. v. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg*. Like the Sacco-Vanzetti case of the 20's the case spawned a literature which entitles it to be called *A Case That Will Never Die*, the title of one of the Sacco-Vanzetti anthologies. Freed's work implicitly (never explicitly) owed an organizing debt to the critique of the trial by Walter and Miriam Schneir in their book *Invitation to an Inquest*. The Schneir book had many predecessors and many successors. Particularly there was "The Atom Spy Hoax" by William A. Ruben and "The Judgement of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg" by John Wexley, both written before the Schneir work.

The play was my introduction to the Rosenberg case and to Donald Freed personally. It was a smash hit in Cleveland. The run was extended and at one point the Schneirs came to town. I appeared with them in a public forum about the Rosenbergs. The next step in the spring of 1971 was Broadway where the title was changed simply to *Inquest* with a sterling cast including James Whitmore, Shirley Jackson, Fritz Weaver and Abe Vigoda.

No sooner did the play go into rehearsal than I got a frantic call from Freed who informed me that he and the Schneirs had casually signed an agreement on a restaurant napkin for the Schneirs to receive a percentage of the proceeds from what looked like a long Broadway run. After all if the play did so well in Cleveland with its 80,000 Jews, what was to be expected in New York with 2,000,000 in the metropolitan area? But if Freed and the Schneirs had a deal why was Freed frantically calling me? Very simple. Both Ruben and Wexley were now claiming that the Schneirs had

built on *their* work and if the Schneirs were entitled to a piece of the cake, so were they!

It was the first and only copyright case I ever had. The research was something like a nurse practitioner trying to do brain surgery. I knew a bit about intellectual rights, but not much more than a reader of *Variety* might. The issue was tantalizingly simple. How could there be a copyright in a public record?

As it happened the Rosenberg parallel was a lot easier than what is facing the Israeli Supreme Court. I spent some time in New York with the author, my excitement considerably enhanced by the appearance at rehearsals of Morton Sobell recently released from his 30 year sentence (quite unjustified by any present legal standard) for his "part" in the espionage charge. The proof against him consisted mainly of his flight to Mexico shortly after Julius Rosenberg's arrest.

I was working pro bono for the moment, enjoying my 15 minutes of cultural fame, mostly by reflection back from the others. When the play opened I expected a lawsuit based on perhaps a year's run, but as someone has surely said, Broadway is a fickle mistress. New York, in spite of a first rate cast and the temper of the time, simply wasn't interested. *Inquest* closed after very few performances. I slouched back to Cleveland and Donald Freed kept marketing his *Theater of Fact*, presumably free of lawsuits. Hopefully he followed my advice not to sign contracts on restaurant napkins.

This is precisely the issue which Israeli Judge Aharon Barak has dubbed so "fascinating" that he would much prefer to see the case settled than to decide it. *The Jerusalem Post* put the issue quite succinctly: "whether Qimron can claim that the reconstruction of a text originally written by someone else is an act of creativity that entitles him to a copyright," exactly the issue handed me by Freed.

For Barak, the issue is doubly convoluted because Jewish law weighs the amount of labor going into the product for its inviolability. Qimron worked eleven years patching in the gaps in MMT. Anglo-American law relies on creativity as the standard for author protection. Shanks published in America and Barak has the esoteric job of determining which law applies, which is at best only a

threshold issue. No wonder he'd like to see it settled.

The resolution of Qimron vs. Shanks is certain to be more complex than the Rosenberg transcript. Shanks' lawyer claims that Qimron created nothing. "There is no authorship here. He discovered facts. You can't copyright facts." Qimron's lawyer responds by invoking precisely the translation vs. rendering paradigm discussed above. He argues if MMT were in Latin, with missing parts and Qimron filled in the gaps and translated back to Hebrew, Qimron would be entitled to copyright under the rubric of translator.

I would amend Qimron's lawyer "translating" with "rendering," because translation is too pedestrian for what transpired here. In any event, Barak, with his colleagues, will have to choose between the two; neither party is inclined to settle and the Dead Sea Scrolls are destined to be on the boards for a long time. □

CONTRIBUTORS

Susan Hattis Rolef is our regular chief Israeli correspondent.

Ehud Barak is the newly elected Prime Minister of Israel.

Chaim Nachman Bialik was the most influential Hebrew poet of modern times. His *City of Slaughter*, after the Kishinev pogroms of 1903 inspired young Jews to develop self-defense organizations.

David Rosenthal, a frequent contributor to the *Frontier*, now resides in Los Angeles.

Harold Ticktin, an Attorney in Cleveland, is active in the Labor Zionist movement.

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(Continued from P. 19)

Kehilah in Warsaw

The Kehilah, however, despite its good intentions, could not satisfy the demands of the ever-increasing number of poverty stricken Jews. We should remember that those responsible for the intolerable conditions were the Polish governments who conducted a systematic destructive war-policy against Polish Jewry. In order to ease the oppressive conditions somewhat, Jews in Warsaw (as in hundreds of other cities) created a broad network of relief institutions.

Most of the Warsaw charitable institutions, wrote Meir Balaban, do not belong to the Kehilah, but were created by individuals or organizations and are governed by them. Thus, in Warsaw, they supported four orphans' homes, three childbirth clinics for needy women, three old-age homes, several summer camps and sanatoriums, a school for deaf mutes with a dormitory, institutions for the mentally ill, and various charitable organizations which distributed food for Sabbath and holidays to the needy, as well as kosher meals to Jewish soldiers and prisoners.

This was the answer of a beleaguered Jewry to hostile acts which they could not possibly overcome. The response to the policy of reactionary Polish governments was a dual one: struggle against them on the political front (in Parliament, in the city councils), and self-help organizations on the social and economic fronts. In this struggle the Jews of Warsaw wrote notable chapters which were fashioned in both the traditional and the modern spirit. □

*With bowed heads, we mourn the passing
of our dear friend and Chaver*

HYMAN R. FAINE

*May Ruth and entire family
find solace in great memories
of a life fully lived as a gifted person
and loyal son of the Jewish People.*

ELAINE & DANNY MANN

Bethesda, Maryland

The End Of Shoah Business?

The Holocaust in American Life, by Peter Novick. Houghton Mifflin, 1999. 373 pp.

Reviewed by Henry L. Feingold

People who came of age in the sixties and seventies are so accustomed to having the Holocaust at the center of their attention that they rarely give it a second thought. Holocaust "geschrei" has always been part of their lives, and they sense nothing peculiar about reading a daily holocaust story in the print media, or seeing movies like "Schindler's List" or "Life is Beautiful." But those who reached consciousness during World War II and recall that little was said about the Holocaust until the mid-sixties, this belated focus on the Shoah in high and popular culture may come as something of a surprise. Some serious students of Jewish history find the continuous hooplah distasteful and have taken to referring to the media spin as "shoah business." It expresses their reservations about things like tours to the death camps, the "march of the living," large and small museums that purport to teach tolerance and now the development of a special psychotherapy for the children of Holocaust survivors. There is a suspicion that some communal leaders use the event to earn the income a supposedly now-caring world reserves for those it has allowed to be victimized. Targeted for special animus are Swiss bankers, German industrialists, together with a few aging concentration camp guards and beaureaucrats involved with the "final solution". Over the years, the last has grown to include F.D. Roosevelt, with whom American Jewish voters once had a "love affair", Pope Pius XII, George Marshall, even David Ben-Gurion. So disparate is the list, that there is good reason to suspect that something more than a search for justice is involved.

But now it appears that some relief from Holocaust spin is in the offing and the nation's interest, especially that of its Jewish constituency, may slowly revert to the almost silent period of the fifties. The survivors who were most committed to assuring that their time in history was remembered are departing the historical stage, and the latent distaste at the misuse of the Holocaust is coming to the fore. It is signaled by the publication by Peter Novick, a Professor of History at the University of Chicago, that deals with America's preoccupation with the Holocaust. He approaches the interest with considerable skepticism, maintaining that much of the preoccupation stems from the influence of American Jewry that has abandoned an integrative universalistic political culture in favor of a tribal inward-looking one. Sometime in the mid- and early sixties, Novick argues, Jewish communal leadership in America and the leadership of Israel made a conscious decision to instrumentalize the memory of the Holocaust, to hand the world a "bill for suffering rendered." The strategy was adopted to address a two-fold problem, a declining enthusiasm for Israel and the international community, and a strong current of assimilation among American Jews. In both cases the Holocaust, which emphasized the victimization of European Jewry, seemed able to arouse the empathy required to reenergize Judaism at home and reinforce support of Israel abroad. According to Novick, that was what led to the extraordinary preoccupation, some call it obsession, with the Holocaust after two decades of almost complete silence.

Is Novick onto something? There is probably not an engaged Jew alive who hasn't sometimes felt like saying "genug shoin," especially during April, which has become the month when most communities and congregations commemorate the Holocaust. Jews are after all commanded to bury their dead quickly and are forbidden overly intense signs of grief lest they seem to be blaming God for not caring enough about his people. But that is a far cry from believing that Jewish communal leadership conspired to instrumentalize the Holocaust, to use it to gain some kind of income the world rewards for those it has victimized. Could American Jewry with its high level of formal education and political engagement really allow itself to be so manipulated by its community leaders? More important is there a governance among American Jews coherent and cohesive enough that could conceive and implement such a strategy? Of course, most of us have become aware that the moment a disaster befalls some Jewish community, there is in the mail a letter from the Simon Wiesenthal Center or the ADL and even the respectable American Jewish Committee requesting money to fight the new scourge. But do such letters actually convince Jews that the world conspires against them?

There is much more to the Jewish preoccupation with the Holocaust than hype, though hype there is. One out of three Jews alive during World War II did not survive the war. Such radical losses were suffered by no other people. In absolute terms, Russia and Germany absorbed greater loss of life, but proportionately it was far smaller than one out of three. Nor did they suffer the loss of the motor force of their culture, as did the Jews with the devastation of Jewish communities of eastern Europe. There was a Holocaust trauma which was so severe that Jews rarely spoke about it until after the Eichmann trial in 1962. It took time to digest. It was not the scale of slaughter nor the use of a recognizable mundane industrial process to achieve it. It was not intentionality, though the liquidation of the Jews was part of Hitler Germany's public policy. Its historical weight rests on how it affected subsequent events. It is

true that Europe seems to do quite well without its Jews and certainly does not miss them. Except for some periodic fear like Kosovo or the persecution of Turks in Germany when the Holocaust metaphor comes into play, there is little evidence that Europe is haunted by the Holocaust in its closet as George Steiner once maintained. The patterns of European civil behavior has improved, perhaps as a result of what it allowed to happen to European Jewry. Europeans are concerned about "ethnic cleansing" in Africa or the Balkans and some states now have laws prohibiting the denial of the Holocaust or incitement of antisemitism. But there has been no opportunity to observe what its behavior would be like in extremis.

The real change has occurred on the Jewish historical canvas. There has been a change in Jewry's cultural configuration and almost overnight a new Jewish center has developed in Israel as if to replace the lost Jewish Jews of eastern Europe. With a Jewish State, Jews have reentered history, this time armed again with sovereignty and military power. It is not that the destruction of European Jewry was a requisite for the establishment of the state. There might have eventually been a Jewish state without a Holocaust. Some like the noted historian Yehuda Bauer, have argued that by destroying its would-be citizens, the Holocaust almost prevented the state from coming into being. But few will take issue with the fact that, measured by the change in the Jewish condition linked to the creation of the Jewish state, the Holocaust was a momentous event, at least in Jewish history.

If that is so, then one needs to temper our distaste for the sometimes vulgar misuses of our collective Jewish memories. If one listens closely, coupled with the "geschrei" is also a need to warn the world how thin is the veneer of civilization. Jews have reason to know that through their millennial historic experience. It is also an act of affirmation. What Jews are doing, after all, is warning the same world that bore mute witness to their crucible, that not far beneath the surface of civilization there are lethal

passions that can destroy everything that has been built. Jews have not allowed themselves to be silent as the nations of the world were silent during those bitter years. By speaking out, they affirm their willingness, despite everything that has happened, to be again part of the universe of obligation that serves as the underpinning of all civilization.

So there is also a positive side to Jewish preoccupation with the Holocaust that goes beyond hype. Yet one thing is fairly certain. Public interest in the Holocaust will not remain at the present level of intensity if for no other reason than there is already a fresh number of victims of new terrible man-made catastrophes waiting in the wings for a hearing. The principle advocates of Holocaust memorialization are the survivors and their kin. They are now mostly in their seventies and eighties and their voices will soon be still. At the same time, the circumstances in the Jewish community that set the stage of the Holocaust "geschrei" have changed. Few still believe that the Holocaust itself can be an underpinning for a stronger attachment to Judaism. More acceptable to American Jews is the Zionist aphorism "better to be the master of history than its victim." Today Israel knows that in the end it can only rely on itself, and not the sympathy of the world given for past injustices suffered. Israel, in fact, had great difficulty in imbibing the Holocaust image of the martyrdom of European Jewry. The "sheep to slaughter" image was particularly repulsive to Israelis whose usable past required the image of the fighting Jew. All the motives for the Holocaust "hype," if they ever existed at all, have been dissipated.

Finally, we have Professor Novick's disturbing book which is, incidentally, not the first to openly question the priority given to the Holocaust, as well as the authenticity of the memorialization process. But Novick takes it beyond merely an impression. He has done considerable research especially in the Anglo Jewish press. Whatever else his book may be, it is probably the opening signal that the high priority

given to that bloody event in Jewish history is about to decline. Most committed Jews will not resist the normalization of the Holocaust trauma. There is no paucity of other urgent problems on the Jewish communal agenda that need attention and resources. It should become an important page in the millennial history of the Jews which, rather than overshadowing all else, lives side by side with other such events. There is, unfortunately, no paucity of catastrophes in Jewish history. Let us hope that Jews do not go to the other extreme and totally avoid confronting this trauma.

Our Holocaust obsession leaves in its wake the problem about what to do with the historical debris, especially the expensive memorial museums that now dot the Jewish organizational landscape. Fortunately, the two major museums in Washington and New York have had the foresight to provide life belts for just such a contingency. The Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York embeds the Holocaust firmly in Jewish history and culture. The Holocaust focus will remain, but the historical context can always use more emphasis. Its place in Jewish life as a museum of contemporary Jewish history should be secure. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in the nation's capital presents a more difficult problem precisely because it has so exclusively focused on the gritty details of the liquidation process. But it seems already to have hit upon a strategy which came to the fore during the crisis in Bosnia and again in Kosovo. It acts as a watchdog monitoring such human trespasses as ethnic cleansing and reminding the administration in power of what a moral response entails. We need such an agency, and if the past is any example, it will have plenty of business to occupy it. Whatever the case, the memorialization of the Holocaust and the sundry, sometimes distasteful uses to which Jewish collective memory has been put, has reached its apogee and will probably now slowly decline. Some of us will welcome that, if only because it will allow a more authentic and meaningful memorialization to emerge, one with no other purpose but remembrance. □

An Afternoon With Meyer Levin

By Si Wakesberg

Sometime in the mid-1960's I had the good fortune to interview Meyer Levin, author of "The Old Bunch" and "Compulsion" for a small newsletter I was then editing. It was my first and only contact with the man who was reputed to have "discovered" the Anne Frank diary for American audiences, who subsequently wrote a play about it, then spent many bitter years fruitlessly trying to have it produced.

All this comes back to me because television has recently been spotlighting the life of Lillian Hellman. Several TV specials have presented a rather unglamorized version of Ms. Hellman, particularly in her relations with the writer of popular mysteries, Dashiell Hammett. But at that time, Lillian Hellman was a notably famous playwright with a coterie of followers whose presence was reported to be intimidating.

When I arrived at the West Side apartment in Manhattan where Levin was temporarily staying — he was then residing in Israel — I was planning to discuss the body of his work, specifically his novels which I had eagerly absorbed as a youngster growing up in New York. It had seemed to me that Levin had a real grasp of what it meant to be second-generation Jewish Americans trying to come to terms with the Anglo-Saxon culture of the country.

Meyer Levin was then about sixty years old, a man with a large face and piercing eyes that looked right through you. He could hardly sit still but spent most of the afternoon walking about the room with exciting gestures of his hands and face and at some point a deep flush spread over his features.

Levin was then deep into the so-called Anne Frank affair. His play, which he had been assured would be produced was eventually rejected on the advice of Lillian Hellman (so he said) and the producer instead called in Albert and Frances Hackett to do their version which found its way to Broadway and commercial success. It was this subject, which had become an all-consuming obsession with Levin, that he turned into a monologue that afternoon.

In 1963, Levin had written a novel called "The Fanatic". According to biographer and critic Steven J. Rubin ("Meyer Levin"), "...the novel is a retelling, only thinly disguised with fictional names of Levin's own experiences with 'Diary of A Young Girl'". It wasn't until 1973 that Levin wrote "The Obsession", an autobiographical account of the Anne Frank affair.

The air became filled with recriminations, particularly against Lillian Hellman who, Levin implied was a ringleader in a communist cabal against him,

mainly because he was a committed Zionist. When one reads Rubin's thoughtful study, or Levin's own "Obsession", one may be inclined to agree that he got the short end of the stick. A jury verdict found in his favor and awarded him part of the proceeds of the Hackett play. But he was unhappy that his own version was not being produced, was in fact hindered from being produced and that frustrated and angered him.

"They don't want a 'Jewish' play," he told me. "They've watered it down and taken all the Jewishness out of it."

I tried to derail him by talking about "The Old Bunch" and "Compulsion", two novels I thought had integrated themselves into the American literature of the thirties and forties but he was impatient to get the conversation back to the Anne Frank affair. Only when I touched on Israel did his mood change. He foresaw a somewhat utopian future for Israel (what he would have made of present day Israel is certainly interesting speculation). Levin had profound empathy for Israel's kibbutz movement and spoke about it movingly.

He told me a little of his own history but not much. He also was somewhat irritated with the 'Jewish' writers of his time. After all, Levin was one of the pioneers of the Jewish theme in American literature. What he did for Jewish boys and girls growing up in Chicago in "The Old Bunch" paralleled what James T. Farrell had done for the Irish in Chicago in "Studs Lonigan". Still to come were Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, Bruce Friedman, even Isaac Bashevis Singer. For a while, following some early immigrant writing, Meyer Levin, as a writer of second generation Jewish

Americans, occupied a rather lonely and bleak outpost.

It was weird to hear Levin discuss Lillian Hellman and her "gang" because to some extent he himself had been characterized as a leftist and radical, noticeably when he wrote "New Bridge" in 1933 and "Citizens" in 1940. These were, as Rubin says, "proletarian" novels. "The Old Bunch", though broader in scope, also has an irreverent tone whenever it alludes to the capitalist system.

Yet by the time Levin was enmeshed in the Anne Frank case he saw himself as the object of a radical conspiracy in which Hellman and her friends played a leading part.

I think of him now, many years later, as he talked to me, walking up and down in that West Side apartment, his hands moving, his body twitching, his face contorted with anger and I am dismayed that I never taped that important meeting.

Looking back on it all, I feel that the literary critics short-changed Meyer Levin. They talked about the crudeness of his language — but was Dreiser a smooth writer? — without crediting him with the substance of his endeavor. He became the chronicler of a generation of Jewish-Americans growing up in the giddy twenties, living in depression-laden thirties, fighting for social justice and peoples' rights. Like Dos Passos and Farrell he was a social historian as well as a reporter.

But because he was indeed a Jewish writer (Yiddish had not taken on the exotic flavor it later did) the critics found him too limited. His novels linger on the bookshelves and only one or two critical and biographical books about him exist.

That afternoon resulted in one

action that has transcended time. My battered copy of "The Old Bunch", purchased when I was a teenager just discovering the

world of literature, bears evidence of Meyer Levin's presence by his signature and kind inscription. □

MAZAL TOV

Misha Louvish

Celebrates 90th

Misha Louvish, longtime contributor to the Jewish Frontier was feted on his 90th birthday at Moadon Haoleh in Jerusalem on June 28th. His son, David, has sent us a brief bio of his distinguished father:

Misha Louvish was born in Kimpolung, then Romania, in 1909, his parents brought him to Glasgow, Scotland, in 1912. He was active in the Jewish Socialist Labour Party *Poalei Zion* and in the University Zionist Federation. In 1929 he had his first experience in journalism when he edited a local weekly, *The Jewish Leader*.

Louvish married Eva, née Berzinski, in 1935. As the young couple were both ardent Zionists, they were determined to immigrate to what was then Palestine, despite the difficulties of life there, coming to Haifa with their infant son in 1937. Louvish spent a year in Haifa and later Tel Aviv, teaching English. As the British authorities would not renew his temporary labor permit, he returned to Glasgow just before the outbreak of World War II and, after a few years as principal of a boarding-school and hostel for Jewish children evacuated to the countryside, served with the British Army in Europe. After the war he returned to teaching in Glasgow.

In 1949 Louvish made his second *aliyah*, this time with three sons. He has been living in Jerusalem ever since. Among the posts he has held are:

Editor, Israel Youth Horizon, published by the Youth and Hehalutz Department of the Jewish Agency;

Labor Correspondent, The Jerusalem Post;

Managing Editor, Here and Now (a political weekly);

Editor of English Publications in the Government Press Office (interalia, in charge of press services at the trial of Adolf Eichmann);

Deputy Divisional Editor of Modern Israel, Encyclopedia Judaica.

In addition, Louvish regularly translated David Ben-Gurion's speeches and essays for several years, and translated works by S.Y. Agnon (including the novel, *A Guest for the Night*), S. Yizhar, Aharon Megged and others. He edited festival handbooks for youth movements and, for many years, the annual *Facts about Israel*. He has contributed many articles on Israeli life and politics, as well as Zionist problems, to *Jerusalem Post*, the *Jewish Vanguard* (the organ of Labor Zionism in London), the *Jewish Frontier* (New York) and other journals. He will soon publish an autobiography. □

A Mentor Who Made A Difference

In Memory of Hyman R. Faine

The pessimist who wrote the words “Sing a new song” was clearly speaking to the entire nation of Israel, calling on it to reaffirm its relationship with God. But sometimes parts of a people, such as an extended family, a community, or an organization, also find the need to sing a new song about old values. Such was the case in the early 1960s with the Labor Zionist Organization of America — Poale Zion (now part of the Labor Zionist Alliance). A cadre of fully acculturated American Jews had become active in the movement that had earlier been built by their Yiddish-speaking elders, and it was now their turn to assume full responsibility for the organization that had already functioned on this continent for over a half-century. The times were not ripe for renewal: Neither the United States nor Israel was yet caught up in the dramatic transformations that were to come later in the 1960s and extend into the 1970s, but as a result of a particular combination of personalities, priorities, and politics, the time had come within Poale Zion for a new generation to sing a new song.

After the dust had settled from the process of constituting the new leadership, it turned out to be more renewed than totally new. The faces were familiar: alumni and now parents of Habonim; rabbis, educators, and communal workers long identified with Labor Zionism; liberals in the business and professional worlds already active in support of Labor Israel. Yes, there had been a long overdue shift but there was also much needed continuity. Yet there was one seemingly new person seated among the other better-known *chaverim* around the table of the Central Committee — a labor lawyer named Hyman R. Faine, who

was embarking on almost four decades of remarkable leadership in the Labor Zionist movement that would end only in his passing in Los Angeles in April of this year.

It did not take long for Poale Zion to find out that Hy Faine (as he was known to one and all) was not so new after all. He had spent his early childhood in the Ukraine, then grown up in a Labor Zionist home in Connecticut, and gone to a yeshiva high school in New York (as did several other future leaders of the movement). On the other hand, he was already well along in an innovative academic and professional career: He had made the then unheard of transition from City College to Harvard Law, and by the time he came to the Poale Zion Central Committee he had already served almost 15 years as executive secretary of the American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO, representing opera singers and ballet dancers in New York and elsewhere — one of the so-called white-collar unions that constituted a basis for the renewal of the American labor movement in general and a likely target for our own membership recruitment in particular. Most significantly, in the 1950s Hy had taken leave from his post at AGMA to spend a year in Israel, then still a struggling young country, to work with Golda Meir as an advisor on labor relations at the Ministry of Labor — in sum, an individual who was a mix of the old and the new and thus a long-overdue addition to the ranks of the movement and its leadership

But what made Hy Faine truly stand out was his personality: sophisticated yet direct, cultured yet down-to-earth, able not

only to work with a range of *chaverim* of many generations and backgrounds but also to move everyone forward and thus to build an organization usually longer on promise and potential than on practicality and productivity, no matter how much it did manage to achieve because of the commitment of its members to its great ideals. He had the unique ability to step back, look at what an organization was doing (while probably mired in a rut or two), and ask, "What's going on here?" — and then to get everybody working together to improve the situation. It was therefore not surprising that with those qualities and that background Hy very quickly moved up in the leadership to become president of Poale Zion from 1964-8. Others too, learned to appreciate his unique combination of pragmatic intelligence and progressive idealism, so again it was not surprising that from the basis of our movement he emerged as one of the key founders of both the American Zionist Youth Foundation and what is now the American Zionist Movement.

After Hy's presidency he continued to be active in the movement as well as in Zionism in general, and worked closely as colleague and friend with other key personalities here and in Israel, including Judah Shapiro, soon to become the founding president of the merged Labor Zionist Alliance, and Louis Pincus, perhaps the most effective chairman of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency in many decades,

As I write these words, I can think of two dozen or more *chaverim* — sadly, most of them gone, many "before their time" — attracted to Hy's leadership style and associated with him in renewing the movement and reasserting its influence in the broader community. Fortunately, a number of those colleagues are still active, and all of them will recall his calm but forceful approach. (The key Israeli personality in that group, Saadia Gelb of Kfar Blum, is writing separately about Hy in this issue.)

In the early 1970s, approaching retirement age, Hy Faine embarked on a new career in academia, once again as innovator. At the invitation of the University of California at Los Angeles, he integrated two rather disparate disciplines into a pioneering graduate program for training managers in the arts, and remained active there for many years. As if that were not enough, he then combined his

advocacy of well-prepared nonprofit managers and his equally strong commitment to the Jewish community through the establishment of a graduate program in administration at the University of Judaism. In the almost three decades he lived in Los Angeles, Hy continued to be active in the local movement, attended national conventions, and through our world movement served on the Supreme Court of the World Zionist Organization.

It was my privilege to be associated with Hy Faine from the beginning of his engagement with Labor Zionism. As a byproduct of the process of renewal in the 1960s I became the executive of Poale Zion and worked closely with Hy during his dynamic presidency and in his other roles in Zionism. We were further connected in the 1970s and 80s because of our overlapping roles in the development of Jewish communal professionals.

These shared perspectives came together in both our organizational and our personal relationships. Despite the disproportionately high number of Habonim alumni and LZA members who have gravitated over the years to professional Jewish communal service, the movement itself always had a somewhat inchoate approach to the respective roles of the layman and the professional, drawing as much from the tradition of "the secretary" — be it of the youth movement, the kibbutz, or the party — as from the normative patterns of American Jewish communal organizations.

My job at Poale Zion came relatively early in my professional career, and having myself experienced Habonim only a few years before, I faced the possibility of slipping into the old habits and thus unwittingly impeding the new hopes. At this crucial juncture Hy became my mentor. He himself was a modern-style professional executive in his union (not the usual pattern in the labor movement), so he had a feel for what the respective roles could and should be. We undoubtedly made many mistakes along the way. Indeed, four decades later I can say that Hy Faine was one of the finest volunteer chairs I ever worked with as a professional — and today he remains my role model as I serve as one of his successors in the volunteer position of LZA president.

The pleasure of working with Hy was enhanced by getting to know his family and seeing his devotion to them: his wife, Ruth, to whom he was married for almost 60 years at

his passing; their two daughters, Robin and Judy, both very active in Young Judaea; and five grandchildren, several of whom grew up at Kibbutz Hatzertim where Judy lives. Elaine and I always enjoyed our several reunions with Hy and Ruth after all of us had left New York. Even during the recent years of declining health, Hy showed his old spark when we would get together during my annual visits to Los Angeles. In a sense we never stopped singing a new song.

Together with his family, his colleagues, and his friends, the Labor Zionist Alliance is blessed with Hy Faine's memory and enriched by his legacy of informed, effective, and innovative leadership. □

— Daniel Mann

Hy Faine

More Than a Ray of Light

When Hy Faine appeared on the Poale Zion scene, it was more than a ray of light. It was an entire spectrum. He was young, bright, vital, energetic and he personified a bright future.

It was at a time when we struggled to insure a continuation of our movement when the issue was how to attract the English speaking generation to our founding fathers whose Yiddish was the milieu. Was it only a language problem or will the basic premises of Labor Zionism be jeopardized? There was the fear of change.

Hy projected confidence and assurance. His background in the labor movement and his Jewish roots put the old guard at ease. Most of all his smile and his quiet manner eliminated any possible hint of condescension. In no time differences of age, cultural origin and manners disappeared. We worked together harmoniously for many years. Ruth's charm added no less to the ambiance.

When Hy was in Israel, I had many occasions of joint efforts. Here we were somewhat of a minority in our differences from the prevailing majority.

Hy's passing marks the close of a movement chapter. The speed of changes must not obliterate the significant contribution of Hy and his group to the developments in all phases of our Labor Zionism in both U.S.A. and in Israel. □

—Saadia Gelb



LAST CALL!

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A Labor Zionist Peace Mission

By Stephane Acel

Fresh after Ehud Barak's election victory, the Labor Zionist Alliance took its place this June with the rest of our Labor Zionist movement chaverim from around the world by bringing the message of peace to the Middle-East. As Prime Minister-elect, Ehud Barak, was busy negotiating through the late hours of the night with other political parties to form a broad-based coalition government, the World Labor Zionist Movement was one of the first groups to meet with high ranking members of the Palestinian Authority since the election. Participating in this peace mission, which was partly aimed at cultivating young leadership in the movement worldwide, were members of Habonim Dror from around the world, including Argentina, Australia, Canada, Germany, Russia, and the United States. Also participating were members of Labor Zionist movements from the previously mentioned countries and Belgium, Brazil, England, France, Israel, the Netherlands, and Ukraine. Representing the United States were Jeremy Salinger, president of Labor Zionist Alliance of Detroit, and myself.

Although associated with Barak's Labor party, we were not there to speak on behalf of the yet to be formed government. Rather, we came to demonstrate that Jews around the world hope and dream for a peaceful and equitable solution to the century long Arab-Israeli conflict. What we found was that the previous government under Prime Minister Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu had squandered three precious years in terms of peace-making, and that, if the yet to begin final status talks do not yield a real agreement within the next two years, we will have lost what Barak has recently been calling a "window of opportunity." On the positive side, we found that if anyone can seize this opportunity to make peace, it's Barak, and the goodwill we experi-

enced from the Palestinians definitely led us to conclude that the determination is present to find solutions to the tough problems that have perpetuated the conflict for so long.

Arriving in Israel soon after the May 17 election victory, we definitely felt a fresh, new, and positive atmosphere in Israel. The feeling is best explained by the following joke. A woman calls the Knesset and asks for Prime Minister Netanyahu. The secretary at the prime minister's office tells her that Mr. Netanyahu lost the election, is not taking calls, and will soon be replaced by Ehud Barak. The next day, the woman calls again asking for Netanyahu, and is told the same thing. On the third day, she calls again, and the frustrated secretary asks angrily, "Why are you still calling here for Netanyahu? You call everyday, and we tell you the same thing - he lost the election and will soon be replaced!" The woman on the other end responds, "I know, but I just love to hear you keep saying it!" Although there was an air of jubilation still clinging to the country, like the Ehud Barak posters and stickers still hanging all over the place, we quickly learned that the issues on Barak and Arafat's plates are so daunting and difficult to deal with, that we must all think past the recent election and instead focus on the difficult issues that remain to be resolved. Here's why.

The peace process, as left by Netanyahu, is on very shaky ground and the post-election feelings of hope that we and many Israelis felt, were not shared by the Palestinians. Rather, there was a very, very cautious optimism. One might be able to understand why after listening to various Palestinian politicians relate how they were dealt with by Netanyahu's Likud government. Bethlehem mayor Hanna Nasser explained that under the Rabin-Peres government, euphoria among Palestinians

was once so great that when the Israelis first redeployed out of his city, young Palestinians put olive branches in the guns of departing soldiers. Now, after three years of Netanyahu, hope has turned to disillusionment. Bibi's negotiating style, according to Nasser and virtually every Palestinian negotiator and leader we met, was actually dictatorial and dishonest. After concluding the negotiations at Wye that were always on the verge of breakdown, the signed agreement was not fully implemented by Israel. The above impression of Bibi and the Likud has been confirmed by Israeli politicians. Back in October of 1998, Yossi Sarid, now Minister of Education, responded to analysis of the then upcoming summit that eventually produced the Wye accords with skepticism. Sarid was so sure that Bibi would not fulfill his end of the bargain that he stated that if Bibi actually gave the Palestinians any land, he Sarid would chew one of Bibi's famous cigars. Other generals on the original Oslo negotiating team have also confided that the Likud government destroyed the trust between the Palestinians and Israelis that existed under the Rabin and Peres governments.

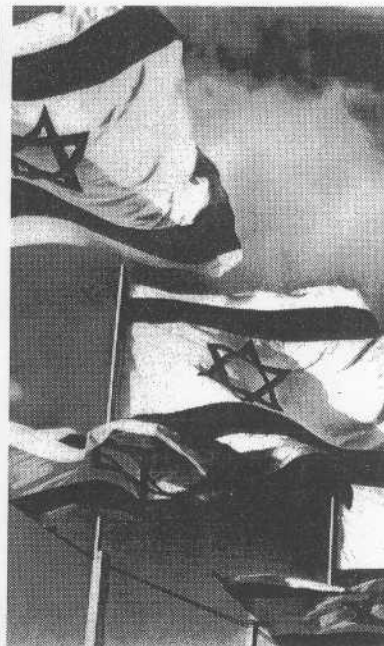
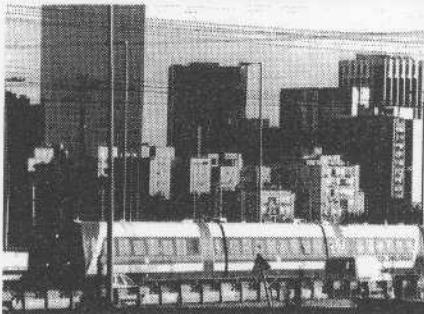
Now that Barak is taking control of the peace process, he will have to do something about the mistrust fostered under the Likud government by providing some concrete advances and gestures. The attitude of mistrust on the Palestinian side is still strong. The mayor of Hebron, for instance, told us that his people cannot comprehend the hero worship of Baruch Goldstein and the other constant provocations his people face from Israeli settlers. In Bethlehem, the mayor complained that so much land from his municipality was confiscated by the Israelis to expand Jerusalem that the city's very physical existence was in danger. We also got a taste of how difficult the final status issues are, even though they are not unsolvable, from reactions in our peace mission to the Palestinian point of view. For instance, Faisal Hussein, Palestinian Minister of Jerusalem Affairs, explained that in his opinion, Jerusalem is not solely a Jewish city and should therefore be the binational capital of both Israel and Palestine. When one of the people in our mission declared that the Palestinians must give up their claim to Jerusalem in order for the peace process to continue, Mr. Hussein defied expectations by remaining calm and providing a precise

response. He explained that he envisioned a circle encompassing the holy sites that would be a free space for all. This circle would be equidistant from both the new city of Jerusalem on the Israeli side, and Abu Dis, the area that Yossi Beilin and Abu Mazin discussed in 1995 as a potential capital for the future Palestinian state. Some other issues to be discussed at the yet to begin final status talks are the right of return of Palestinian refugees, water agreements, additional land transfers, borders, and more. Clearly, much will have to be done soon to make up for lost time!

There is some reason to have hope, however. The good news according to Sayib Arikat, the chief Palestinian peace negotiator, is that Barak's election represents a clear message of peace from the Israeli people and a clear mandate to make concessions. According to Arikat, there is a very big difference between Barak, whom he considers a tough negotiator and Netanyahu, whom he considers a non-negotiator. Our meetings with Labor party members of Knesset (parliament) confirmed this by saying that the number one priority for the next two years will be the peace process. Since Mr. Barak formed his new government, he has met with and continually updated Arafat on what is going on, he has met with all the important leaders in the region, and he has set a deadline of fifteen months to solve the conflict with the Palestinians and the Syrians, showing the world that he means business.

We must do all we can to ensure that Barak has all our support in this difficult time of concessions and decision making. This window of opportunity will not be open forever. The Middle-East is changing quickly. Arab leaders such as the late King Hassan II of Morocco are dying of old age and are being replaced by leaders who may or may not share the vision of peace with Israel. Iran is now wracked by instability, Iraq is still attempting to rearm itself, and terrorist groups, such as Hamas, are taking advantage of the squalor and hopelessness in Gaza to recruit new members for their destructive missions. With all this uncertainty, only the successful conclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which is at the core of Arab-Israeli conflict, and real peace with the majority of Israel's neighbors, will help stabilize the region and ensure Israel's defense and security. □

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