

JEWISH  
**Frontier**

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MARCH ■ APRIL ■ 1996

*The Israel Scene:*

- PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH
- NINE DAYS OF TERROR
- ELECTIONS UNDER FIRE

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**Salutes to Rabin**

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- Gulf War in Retrospect
- Abba Hillel Silver and Labor Zionism
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SINCE 1934—A LABOR ZIONIST JOURNAL

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## On the Horizon

**T**his is war. This is psychological warfare on the deepest level. The four suicide bombings — in Jerusalem, Ashkelon and Tel Aviv — were not aimed only at destroying innocent Israeli lives, but to demolish the peace process that was, step by step, realigning Israel and the Palestinians in the direction of mutual acceptance and non-violent co-existence.

The bombings took a horrible toll — 58 innocent men, women and children, mostly Israelis, including sabras and recent olim from Russia; two American students; several Arabs and a half dozen Rumanian workers imported to help the country's economy. Yes, there were also four other Arabs, dupes of Hamas, who carried the deadly explosives and thus took a short cut to the Islamic heaven for martyrs.

World Jewry, and millions of non-Jews will long remember these unspeakable events. But the scars will heal, and the people will gradually resume their normal pace, as they have for decades in the past, after comparable trials.

**A**s Israeli former President Chaim Herzog remembers:

"These tragic events recall many others. At the onset of the War of Independence, as we literally struggled for our existence, we faced many harrowing trials and tribulations. We had endured a siege in Jerusalem without water and food, as 100,000 shells landed in the city. But we survived it with determination and in most cases succeeded in brushing off the feeling of danger, both national and personal.

"Today, our capabilities are more extensive and our situation bears no relation to that which we experienced then. But much can be done to lift the nation's spirit, to strengthen its

faith in the righteousness of its path and to bolster its ability to meet challenges."

Herzog adds: "For some 50 years, I have observed Shimon Peres in periods of crisis and seeming hopelessness. He was always capable of standing up to the most trying challenges calmly, sensibly and with courage under the most difficult and frustrating circumstances."

And finally: "In 1929 we did not give in when the Jews of Hebron were massacred; nor in 1947 when Arab mobs attacked Jews in Aleppo, in Aden and Jerusalem, Haifa and Jaffa. We buried our dead, rolled up our sleeves and created the Jewish State. We did not yield in 1948, when Arab forces besieged Jerusalem and prevented the arrival of food, water and equipment to the city. Following every attack we emerged stronger. . . I am convinced we shall prevail."

**P**Prime Minister Shimon Peres has mobilized Israel's security and political forces to counter the evil designs of Hamas. While there is no foolproof protection against future suicide bombings, much can be done to destroy the source of these attacks. First in line is the very clear and unequivocal pressure on Yasir Arafat to eradicate the Hamas network in his domain. Not only must the terrorist network itself be torn to shreds, but the entire infrastructure that feeds it must be dismantled. Hamas boasts of its humanitarian services to the Palestinian public — schools, hospitals, etc. Given his mandate by the recent elections, which handed him a popularly elected "parliament" of 88 members, Arafat could move swiftly to nationalize those institutions, and pull the rug from under the Hamas financial structure.

Also, high on the agenda of the Palestinian Authority is the repeal of PLO's covenant, whose declared goal is to destroy the State of Israel. Such a move, which is dictated by the Oslo agreements, would effectively improve the atmosphere and abate the political hostility that nourishes terrorism.

**B**ut that is not enough. Terrorism is a world problem. The specific terrorist master scheme is fed by Iran. See: Lebanon. To help Israel cope with its current crisis and to focus attention on the universal evil of terrorism, President Bill Clinton initiated a gathering at Sharm-El-Sheik, on the coast of Sinai, in Egyptian territory, hosted by President Mubarak.

The very presence of leaders of 27 nations was a powerful indication that the curse of terrorism was not only an Israeli affliction. The one-day meeting, attended by the president of Russia, the king of Jordan, and high-ranking representatives of Saudi Arabia, Japan, and many European nations was a rare phenomenon. The fact that 14 Arab nations from North Africa to the Persian Gulf sat in the same room with an Israeli Prime Minister was a harbinger of favorable developments in the region. The absence of Syria and Lebanon was noted but not unexpected. The fact that the Saudi delegate shook hands with Shimon Peres was by far a more significant gesture.

Critics aver that the entire conclave was a mere photo opportunity, to enhance the prestige of President Clinton and to strengthen the political standing of Prime Minister Peres and Chairman Arafat. Be that as it may, those narrow considerations are outweighed by the very fact that the gathering took place. Sharm El-Sheik, which was the staging area for Egypt's blockade of the Straits of Tiran in 1967 that triggered the Six-Day War, may well be the staging area of a massive offensive against terrorism, the bane of all nations, not only in the Middle East.

These are indeed days of trauma, but in the long view of history, Israel will survive. It will proceed to deliver its promise of becoming the Jewish homeland that is not only a dream but a permanent feature of the globe. Israel knows that peace and security are within reach, that costly as it may be, the struggle will ultimately pay off. Ultimately, a brighter day will dawn. Just keep your eye on the horizon. □

**Prime Minister Shimon Peres greets  
LZA President Daniel Mann**

February 27, 1996

Dear Daniel;

I would like to commend you for your dynamic leadership of the Labor Zionist Alliance in the United States.

Your determination to strengthen the membership ranks of the L.Z.A. while becoming public advocates of the 'peace process' is a wise and helpful course.

No doubt the dramatic developments in our region give new meaning to Labor's historic message of peace, social justice and economic well-being.

L.Z.A.'s work in support of the Jewish Zionist education of youth, and its efforts to help strengthen the Israel-Diaspora relationship, are also greatly appreciated. I share these values with you.

May you and your colleagues grow from strength to strength.

Sincerely,



Shimon Peres

Jerusalem Israel

**The Labor Zionist Movement**

extends heartfelt condolences  
to its long-time active chaver

**SAMUEL DUKER**

On the tragic death of his beloved  
granddaughter

**SARA DUKER**

A victim of the Hamas terrorist  
bombing of Bus 18 in Jerusalem.



May the Duker family continue their  
tradition of Zionist devotion and the  
upholding of a meaningful Judaism  
for ages to come.

## PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH

*By Ehud Barak*

From an address delivered at the NJCRAC Plenum in St. Louis,  
February 11, 1996

**I** stand here before you today, a privileged man. Privileged to be here, privileged to be the Foreign Minister of Israel and privileged to represent a strong, vibrant and self-confident Israel.

I was appointed Foreign Minister under the most tragic circumstances. Yitzhak Rabin, assassinated just 99 days ago, was for a generation my commander, my leader, my mentor and my friend. 99 agonizing days, and not one has passed without the thought of "what if?" crossing my mind. Yitzhak's legacy of Zionism, nation building, security and peace is, and must be the shining path along which we march forward.

In two years' time the state of Israel will mark the 50th anniversary of its independence.

As we approach the threshold of the next millennium, many challenges lie ahead, and clearly some obstacles too. But we may look back at almost a half century of remarkable accomplishments, and draw from it confidence for an even brighter future. Standing at this juncture in our history we are engaged in a process that is designed to shift us into an entirely different, and somewhat unfamiliar sphere of national, social, economic and cultural existence: peace.

**O**ur ultimate objective, to put it in political-maritime terms, is to create "the pacific Mediterranean". To pacify the region, to render war a horror of the distant past, to bid farewell to the use of arms. We are doing so from a position of strength, self-confidence and superiority vis-à-vis our immediate surroundings.

Our power is predicated on the military might of the Israel defense forces, a robust economy, a vibrant society, our unique relationship with the United States — the only global superpower — the absorption of seven hundred thousand Jews, the elite of a collapsing empire and the common perception in the Arab world that we have a nuclear capability.

These are the tenets of our edge.

Others may tell you that peace cannot be achieved until the Arab world radically changes its attitudes and begs us for peace. That is a fallacy. It will never happen by itself and it is in fact a code word and a recipe for sanctifying the status quo and forever living on our swords. Our approach is to pursue peace from a position of strength and self-confidence.

This peace, by virtue of the reality it would create, will gradually lead the Arab peoples to come to terms with Israel as a peaceful neighbor. We will continue to be strong and enhance this strength to ensure that agreements are kept and that we are never outmaneuvered. This posture will serve us deep into the future.

We have no illusions. The dreams and aspirations of many in the Arab world have not changed. We still live in a modern and prosperous villa in the middle of the jungle, a place where different laws prevail. No hope for those who cannot defend themselves and no mercy for the weak. But we are now at an unprecedented advantageous position from which we can attain lasting and durable peace and take the necessary, yet calculated risks attached to it. Moreover, in many quarters of the Arab world, attitudes are in fact changing.

**T**he Arab political leadership, excluding countries like Iraq, Libya, and Iran, has in fact recognized Israel.

Our military might and Israel's overall strength compelled the Arabs to negotiate peace agreements with us. This is the truth. Take a close look at the fruits this peace process brought us. We now have relations with one hundred and seventy countries, including a promising beginning of ties with Tunisia, Oman and Qatar.

Our economic growth is astounding, as a direct result of the impact of the contribution of the new aliyah and the peace process as a whole. We now have McDonald's in Israel, not just McDonnell-Douglas. Yet we do not delude ourselves and pretend that the risks are over. There are serious threats ominously looming over the horizon.

The possibility of radical Islamic fundamentalism guiding global terror and acquiring the bomb is not merely a menacing prospect, but it may prove to be a real threat not only to Israel, but to the stability of the region and to the world order as a whole. The international community has a responsibility to do everything in the realm of the possible to foil that threat.

Back to the present situation. Our basic approach to the negotiations with Syria, as with the Palestinians, is to determinedly pursue peace while insisting on our vital security and water interests.

With Syria, our goals are to devise an array of security arrangements that are designed to achieve three aims:

1. To render a surprise attack practically impossible.
2. To significantly reduce the temptation to launch a full-scale war.
3. To prevent daily border clashes from deteriorating into full-scale collision.

These arrangements will be combined with full normalization, open borders and regional economic cooperation that would create a powerful disincentive to resort to armed conflict.

The agreement, if and when reached, will be accomplished by solutions to the problems of water, terror, and the "hizbollah" in southern Lebanon. It will also leave the door wide open and invite North African countries, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States to join this process. The kind of peace we seek means more, rather than less overall security.

And I say this not only as the Foreign Min-

ister of Israel responsible for the peace talks, but as a former chief of the general staff who spent almost thirty-five years in uniform, defending Israel against terror and external aggression.

**I**n regards to our Palestinian neighbors, Yasser Arafat was elected a leader. Consequently, he gained more legitimacy, but in our judgment also a heavier burden of responsibility.

He now has to live up to his commitment, to forcefully combat terror and nullify the Palestinian covenant in a straightforward manner. If the Palestinian authority fails to deliver on these promises, then I see no way to proceed with the permanent status negotiations as planned.

In these talks our position will be that greater Jerusalem should remain undivided under our sovereignty, the eternal capital of Israel.

There are no compromises here. No "ifs", "ands" or "buts".

We will not go back to the 1967 borders; most Israeli settlements will remain under Israeli control and no army other than the I.D.F. will be deployed between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River.

**T**his peace process has enormous benefits for all peoples, a quantum leap from the ruins and despair of wars to the promise of hope and prosperity. Not without risks, not without concessions, but with clear-sighted determination.

In the words of a great American, President John F. Kennedy, in his inaugural address: "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate".

On the verge of the year 2000, we are a transformed nation. Five and a half million Israelis produce eighty-five billion dollars a year, more than the output of 75 million people, in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian authority combined. I wish the Arabs, too, reach such a figure once their resources are diverted from offensive weapons systems into the markets. We, supported by you, are successfully absorbing the new waves of immigration.

We have more doctors, pianists and engineers per capita than any other country in the world, and we print more books per capita

than anyone else, although I must admit that many are cookbooks. We are Jewish, after all.

Yet, with all that, one thing is conspicuously absent in our national experience: a new agenda concerning our relations with the Diaspora.

**A**s Israel addresses fundamental questions regarding its identity, its borders, its relations with its neighbors, its social fabric and economic development — fundamental also is the question of its relations with the Diaspora. There is a clear and pressing need to define for ourselves, for all of us, the direction we wish Israel-Diaspora relations to take.

Strong leadership is needed to ensure that we can create a vibrant relationship capable of rising to the challenges and opportunities the new era presents.

Our identity is critical; how we each see and define ourselves. For Israel, the question is do we, or should we, define ourselves as a nation completely separate unto ourselves, or do we, or should we, define and see ourselves as a part of a larger Jewish whole.

For the Diaspora the question revolves around the place of Israel and Jewish expression within the family and the communal frameworks you build and nurture.

Clearly, the traditional relationship between us must be adapted to the new realities of Israel's maturing identity and the growing communal focus of many communities in the Diaspora.

To put it in a nutshell we must move beyond charity to partnership. Although many may not yet see it this way, we are strategic partners. And we must learn to act as true partners.

As befits such a partnership, on the political level Israel must involve the Diaspora Jewish leadership as never before, through improved dialogue, regular consultations, and genuine openness.

**T**he support and involvement of your leadership is important as a value in itself, but also for the crucial contribution it makes to Israel's political, security and economic standing in the international arena. It is also welcome for the less tangible benefits it brings.

You live in a society — free and democratic, embedded in a two-hundred-year tradition of pluralism and tolerance.

We, as a young state still defining our national identity, must and wish to gain from the input created by the American democratic experience.

Yet, friends, do not be misled. The fateful decisions regarding the state of Israel will and should continue to be made solely by the democratically elected government of Israel.

The strategic alliance I see between us reaches also to the depth of our shared culture and heritage.

Let me make an example: for generations your grandparents and mine shared a common culture and a common language.

Today, in Israel, our youth continue to learn Hebrew. They can read and understand the very sources of our tradition, yet their brothers and sisters in the Diaspora remain largely cut off from the rich, national fountain of this civilization, the civilization that gave birth to the morals and values of western societies.

**W**e must recommit ourselves, and our resources, to Jewish education in the Diaspora, to the teaching of Hebrew to our youth elsewhere, and to the continued renaissance of our heritage. If we do not take steps in this direction, we face the prospect of losing our common reference points and in the long run the Diaspora sense of identity.

We need to increase the exposure of our youth to each other, best achieved through organized programs in Israel. In this way, American Jewish youth can renew their emotional bond to the land and the modern state of Israel, while at the same time conveying the full cultural richness of their own Jewish identity to their Israeli friends.

Such exchanges are vital to our continued mutual understanding.

A complete convergence of interests and concerns between Israel and the Diaspora is neither possible nor desirable.

We each have our own priorities and concerns dictated by our different challenges and responsibilities. We must use this diversity positively, to draw on the sustenance it provides, to build our future together.

**T**he present Israeli government embarked on an ambitious road to peace. The long journey stemmed from strength and is fueled by poise and conviction.

*(continued on page 13)*



# NINE DAYS OF TERROR

*By Susan Hattis Rolef*

**F**our months after the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook the Israeli public and resulted in a swing in public opinion in favor of the Labor Party and its candidate for Prime Minister, a succession of terrorist attacks, resulting in the deaths of 62 persons (several of them foreign workers from Roumania and Ethiopia, and a couple of Palestinian passers-by), has led to a swing in the opposite direction.

In the midst of this cocktail of traumatic and politically loaded events, it is sometimes difficult to think straight. One feels as if one is in the middle of an emotional hurricane, and that after the hurricane subsides one will find oneself at the mad hatter's tea party in *Alice in Wonderland*, trying to make sense out of a totally insane reality.

Especially after the second human bomb went off in a number 18 bus in Jerusalem on March 3 — exactly one week after the first one went off — there was a feeling of general despair and signs of panic. The dreadful sights of the previous week repeated themselves: the charred bodies, the scant remains of an Egged bus, the wounded, the weeping relatives, eyewitnesses suffering from shock and those saintly religious men collecting the dismembered parts of human bodies into plastic bags in order to bring them to burial. Then came the attack near Dizengoff Center.

That there was to be a political reaction was obvious. Soon after the Declaration of Principles was signed in September 1993, Hamas embarked on an open war against the agreement between the PLO and Israel. The political Right in Israel started to argue that "this is not peace — this is terror". Then came Rabin's

assassination, followed by the preparations for elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and there was a respite in the terrorist activities of the Hamas. Most observers in Israel regarded this respite as a temporary, tactical move which would last until after the general elections in Israel. But then came the liquidation of Yihya Ayash — "the engineer" — by the Israeli General Security Services (the Shabak). Famous for his expertise in the field of explosives, Ayash was a central figure in the military arm of the Hamas, and following his death there were growing demands among Hamas supporters for revenge. Though both the Israeli security forces and those of the Palestinian authority managed to stop several planned terrorist attacks, it was clear that it was only a matter of time before something would happen.

**O**nce again the political right could argue that "this is not peace — this is terror". Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu adopted a moderate and responsible public stance, but other members of his party started accusing Peres and his government of being directly responsible for the total collapse of personal security in Israel. "The whole concept behind Labor's policy has proven false," they argued, adding that cooperation with the Palestinian authority in fighting the terrorists was a sham, and that all the Oslo Agreements had achieved was to tie the hands of the IDF and prevent it from doing what it ought to do in order to fight the terror effectively.

**T**he new situation immediately affected the public opinion polls. After the first bomb

attack the 12 percent gap between Peres and Netanyahu, in favor of Peres, went down to nil, and the following week Netanyahu was already ahead of Peres. The change was not just the result of the terrorist attacks. The decision of David Levy, several days after registering his new party "Gesher", to join the Likud-Tsomet alignment towards the elections to the 14th Knesset, apparently also had an effect. Even without the terrorist attacks the gap between Peres and Netanyahu would have started to close.

Soon after the first attack various personalities started calling for a national unity government for a limited period "in order to join forces in the war against the terror." Such a call came from President Ezer Weizman, and even from certain personalities within the Likud, including Ariel Sharon, who already saw himself in the role of Minister of Defense in such a government. But neither Peres nor Netanyahu were enthusiastic about the idea.

The last thing Peres wants is to seem to be admitting that he cannot deal with the situation himself. He wouldn't even consider giving up the Defense portfolio, which he decided to assume together with the premiership after Rabin's assassination, in favor of one of Labor's recent recruits — former Chief of Staff Ehud Barak. Peres also understood that forming a coalition with the Likud would serve as a death warrant for the peace process with the Palestinians. Though he has decided to freeze this process for the time being, he is still willing to give Arafat another chance to act decisively against the Hamas and other rejectionist organizations. As to Netanyahu, from his perspective entering into a coalition with Labor at this juncture would be political folly. Why should he help Peres save his skin, at a time when public opinion seems to be moving rapidly in his own direction?

**T**hough the new situation has had a profoundly negative effect on Peres' mood and spirits, he is determined to proceed without panic. He immediately announced the establishment of a new apparatus to fight the terror, and instructed the IDP to take decisive steps in those areas in the West Bank in which it is still free to act. Minister of Internal Security, Moshe Shahal, has also started to implement a policy of complete separation between Israel proper and the territories, fences and all. Mea-

asures taken by the Palestinian authority, at Israel's express request, to detain the leaders of the military arm of the Hamas, to outlaw the Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and to take effective measures against the organizational infrastructures of these organizations, have also started to bear fruit, though Israeli commentators argue that Arafat could do much more, and that he appears to prefer letting the leaders of the Hamas leave the country than have them arrested.

Will all this help restore the public's confidence in the government's ability to deal with the security problem inside the country, and reduce its feelings of insecurity and even panic? To a large extent this will depend on whether the battle against the terrorists will bear fruit. The wave of sympathy which Israel has been receiving from abroad, and promises of support, especially from the United States, are undoubtedly reassuring but are unlikely to affect public opinion at home. One of the major benefits Israel has derived in the last few years from the government's peace policy has been a major improvement in Israel's international status, both politically and economically. Unfortunately this does not impress the average Israeli who seems more comfortable in the role of little David standing up to the whole wicked anti-Semitic world, than in that of teacher's pet being constantly patted on the head for doing exactly what teacher expects him to do.

And there is another complication. Though the majority of Israeli Arabs have condemned the terrorist attacks and organized several demonstrations to that effect, the fact that it was an Israeli Arab truckdriver who gave the young terrorist from Gaza a lift from the Karni checkpoint on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip to Dizengoff Center on March 3 (he was apparently paid \$1,100 for this deadly service), and that certain activities in the Islamic Movement in Israel were involved in handing over money to the families of Hamas terrorists killed in action, has had a negative effect on Jewish public opinion. Peres, Weizman and others have been stating publicly that one should not condemn a whole community because of the actions of a few, but not all the Israeli public is receptive to their message. The fact that the Arab Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Walid Sadek of Mapam, was

*(continued on page 17)*

# Elections Under Fire

*By Misha Louvish*

**T**he entire picture of the Israeli elections, as it appeared only two weeks ago, has been transformed by the two terrorist outrages in the center of Jerusalem: one in front of the central bus station and the other opposite the central post office. Both were perpetrated by the Islamic fundamentalists of the Hamas organization for the obvious purpose of derailing the peace process, but they have also had the immediate effect of dealing a heavy blow to the prospects of Prime Minister Shimon Peres and the Labor Party in the forthcoming elections.

There was a time when terrorism was regarded as a phenomenon of no more than tactical importance, though painful, but the repeated suicidal bomb attacks, with their heavy casualties bid fair to make it a strategic threat, and Prime Minister Peres has declared that, despite the peace process, Israel is at war with Hamas.

At the moment of writing, the overwhelming consideration in the minds of the people is the question of personal security, and the undeniable fact that at this time Labor policy has not ensured that security has suddenly closed the wide gap between public support for Peres and Likud leader Binyamin ("Bibi") Netanyahu who has also achieved an important coup by sealing an electoral alliance with "Rafal" Eitan, of the Tsomet list, on condition the latter withdraw from the race to the premiership, and offering similar terms to David Levi and his newly formed "Gesher" party.

The decision to hold early elections in Israel was part of the aftermath of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, which had a profound effect on public life and the mood of the people.

In Israel, unlike the United States, the parliamentary term is not fixed, but only the Knesset itself can decide on early elections. According to the law as it stands the elections were due to be held in October, but Prime Minister Shimon Peres felt that he now needs a renewed mandate.

Besides, the Government has largely imple-

mented the mandate it received in 1992: the great majority of the Palestinians now have self-government under their elected authority, and since three years, beginning in May, are scheduled for the permanent settlement negotiations, the long-term decisions will be taken after this year's elections.

Peres might have held on until October if there was any prospect that he could have presented to the electorate a peace agreement with Syria, but there seems to be no likelihood of a speedy breakthrough on the Syrian track.

The opposition parties charge that he is merely taking advantage of the emotional reaction to the assassination of Rabin and the fact that the public opinion polls gave him a comfortable lead over Netanyahu, the candidate of the Likud and parties further to the right. Having repeatedly called for immediate elections, however, the opposition could only haggle about the date which has been set for May 29th.

These elections are likely to be of outstanding significance in the history of Israeli democracy. The nation is being called upon to choose between two opposing visions of the country's future.

**T**he Labor Party and its left-wing allies believe that it is possible, at the cost of significant territorial and other concessions, to reach agreements with the Palestinians and the Syrians which will, in effect, put an end to the century-old Arab-Israel conflict.

The Likud and its right-wing allies also want peace, but they insist on having it on their own terms, and they believe the concessions made and contemplated by Labor would endanger the country's security: for this reason they oppose, for example, the return of the Golan Heights to Syria.

With the withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from the Gaza Strip and a considerable part of the West Bank, including the Arab-inhabited cities, and the election of a Palestinian Authority, with Yasser Arafat as its head, a

new era has opened in the annals of the Palestinians. For the first time in history the great majority now enjoy self-government under their own freely elected leaders.

The very existence of a "Palestinian people" is a comparatively modern phenomenon. No such nationality was recognized by the Ottoman Turks, and under the Mandate it was mainly the Jews who called themselves "Palestinians"; the Arabs in Palestine were represented by the Arab Higher Committee, headed by the notorious Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini.

With the establishment of independent Israel the Jews threw the term "Palestinian" into the dustbin of history, and the Arabs picked it up. Ironically, the first Israeli leader to recognize "the Palestinian people" and their "legitimate rights" was the late Menahem Begin, in the Camp David Accords.

Begin evaded the logical consequences of this admission by translating the term in the Hebrew version as "the Arabs of the Land of Israel," and his movement denied the very existence of a Palestinian national entity.

The hymn of Herut, the predecessor of the Likud and its dominant component, went further than "the whole Land of Israel"; it proclaimed:

"Two banks to the Jordan;

This is ours and so is that!" —

but history has overtaken the Israeli right. When Rabin's government signed a peace treaty with Jordan (the former Transjordan!), they applauded.

**W**ith the implementation of the agreements with the Palestinians, the dream of *Eretz Yisrael Hashlemah* dissipated, as it were, in smoke. The Likud leaders admit that the new situation is irreversible: they would not send in the army to reconquer Hebron, Nablus and the other Arab cities — to say nothing of the Gaza Strip, of which the great majority of Israelis would say "Good riddance!"

They propose, however, to try to contain the newly-born Palestinian entity by restricting it to a few Arab islands in an area swamped by more Israeli settlements and firmly held by Israeli power. That is a sure prescription for further outbreaks of violence.

Netanyahu can promise peace with all his Robert Redford charm, but the Palestinians would not sit down quietly in the face of such a

violation of the spirit and the letter of the Oslo agreement, which was signed by the Government of Israel and ratified by the Knesset.

There is another distinctive feature about these elections. For the first time they will be held in a new form: not only will the people be electing the 120 members of the Knesset, but they will also be choosing directly between candidates for the post of Prime Minister.

This compromise between the presidential and parliamentary systems of democracy is, I believe, unprecedented. It has been introduced in Israel because of general disgust at the sometimes squalid bargaining that used to take place, in which small parties — and even individuals — might hold the balance between rival candidates for the post.

There have been some misgivings about this fundamental constitutional reform, although it was worked out in the previous Knesset by a group of jurists from the major parties. Some are afraid that the dubious bargaining will take place before the elections, instead of after, giving much power to the religious parties, who, it is feared, may extort major concessions as the price of their support, and the candidates will go to great lengths to get their votes.

Another objection is that electors will feel free to support small parties. What will happen, it is asked, if the prime minister belongs to one party and the majority in the Knesset to parties of another color?

**I**t is known that Prime Minister Peres was previously opposed to the reform, but was unwilling to appear to take advantage of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin to impose his point of view. The general view is that the popularly elected prime minister will have such prestige that the parties that hold the balance will be only too anxious to get their places round the cabinet table.

In any case, there are precedents for what the French called, in the last phase of the Mitterand presidency, "co-habitation" between a chief executive and a parliament of different political coloration. In the United States, this has been the case, I believe, during most of the last generation.

A notable feature of the post-Rabin era has been the enhanced prestige of Shimon Peres. Part of the popular reaction to the assassination was a renewed dedication to the quest for peace and a renewed respect for the man who

embodied it together with the late leader. It is unprecedented to find a test poll of younger voters giving a sixty-percent support to Peres.

The Likud has correctly identified one of its major problems by starting its campaign with a direct attack on Peres's credibility in the context of the highly sensitive issue of Jerusalem. "Peres will partition Jerusalem!" is a difficult slogan to refute: how can you disprove the future? The Hamas outrages have significantly strengthened Netanyahu's position.

**I**n the run-up to the elections, Netanyahu has taken a hazardous step by allying himself with former army chief of staff "Rafal" Eitan's Tsomet ("Crossroads") list. This group disintegrated during the life of this Knesset and the polls did not give it much hope of getting the eight seats it won in 1992. By threatening to run against Netanyahu for prime minister, Eitan got the Likud to promise his nominees eight good positions in a joint list, although past experience shows that in Israeli elections unity generally means weakness: the Likud and Tsomet would probably have won more seats separately than they will get together.

Another candidate for the political center is the "Third Way" list, which favors compromise with the Palestinians but opposes withdrawal from the Golan Heights and is headed by a former Labor member of the Knesset, Avigdor Kahalani, brigadier in the reserves and holder of a medal for valor.

At the time of writing, it is not yet clear whether Natan Sharansky will enter the lists at the head of a party mainly representing new *olim*, especially from the former Soviet Union. Another group which is hesitating on the brink is Meimad, representing moderate religious opinion, which, unlike the pronouncedly right-wing National Religious Party, supports the peace process and backs Peres for prime minister. There have also been hints of a new religious list, headed by a former member of the orthodox Sephardi party Shas.

Since the minimum required for representation in the Knesset is 1½% of the total vote, it is far from certain that all the new lists will make it to the Knesset. At least we will know very soon after the election who will be the prime minister. □

## A DAY IN SPRING

*By Menahem Stern*

With no talith on my shoulders  
Nor sidur in hand,  
Delighted I walk in Spring's land  
and with trees, flowers and grassblades  
Like with brethren I pray . . .  
As I walk farther from my abode  
To the woods and fields I shout:  
"Halleluyah! Praised be the Lord!"  
and instantly  
The Elms, Acacias, Chestnuts, Firs  
and their children — bushes  
Stir like birds from sleep  
and as their branches swing  
They shout and sing:  
"Halleluyah! Halleluyah!"

Like a spiritually handsome rebbe  
Surrounded by pious, devoted Hasidim —  
a tall, multibranching Elm  
In the midst of trees and bushes  
Bows graciously in the wind and says:  
"You are all dear to me:  
Whether you are a man, a tree,  
a bird, a lamb, butterfly or rose,  
like the Baal Shem and Reb Nahman  
to God you are close."

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### PEACE PROCESS

*continued from page 8*

We are on the eve of our critical, early elections, and since we are in St. Louis, I want to paraphrase a famous Missourian, President Harry Truman, and tell all Israelis: "I don't want you to vote for us, I want you to get out on Election Day and vote for yourselves — for your own interests".

And to you, our extended family in America, I want to say that whichever way Israelis choose to define their interests, your support and partnership is vital.

You have stood firmly behind us in time of war and conflict.

I ask you now to lend us your unmitigated support in this historic moment of peace-making. □

Dedicated to  
**YITZHAK RABIN**  
*A man who loved the Jewish people and eschewed hatred*

## יהדות באהבה ולא בשנאה

### A MEDITATION

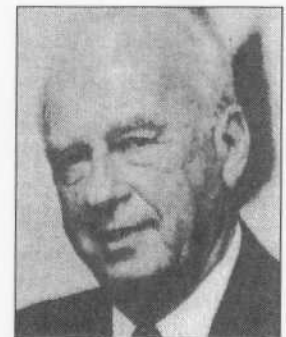
Birth is a beginning  
and death a destination.  
And life is a journey:  
From childhood to maturity  
And youth to age;  
From innocence to awareness  
And ignorance to knowing;  
From foolishness to discretion  
And then perhaps, to wisdom;  
From weakness to strength  
Or strength to weakness —  
And, often, back again;  
From health to sickness  
And back, we pray, to health again;  
From offense to forgiveness,  
From loneliness to love,  
From joy to gratitude,  
From pain to compassion,  
And grief to understanding —  
From fear to faith;  
From defeat to defeat —  
Until, looking backward or ahead,  
We see that victory lies  
Not at some high place along the way,  
But in having made the journey, stage by  
stage,  
A sacred pilgrimage.  
Birth is a beginning  
And death a destination  
And life is a journey,  
A sacred pilgrimage —  
To life everlasting.

### AFTER MY DEATH *Chaim N. Bialik*

אחרי מותי ספדו ככה לי:  
"היה איש - וראו: איננו עוד:  
קודם זמנו מת האיש הזה,  
ושירת חייו באמצע נפסקה;  
וצר! עוד מזמור אחד היה לו -  
והנה אבד המזמור לעד,  
אבד לעד.

...

וגדול מאוד מאוד הכאב!  
היה איש - וראו: איננו עוד,  
ושירת חייו באמצע נפסקה;  
עוד שיר מזמור אחד היה לו,  
והנה אבד המזמור לעד,  
אבד לעד."



יצחק רבין ז"ל  
ראש הממשלה ושר הבטחון  
1922 - 1995

עושה שלום במרומיו הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל

Reprinted from AACI SENIORS SPECTATOR (Jerusalem)

# YITZHAK RABIN

## IN THE SERVICE OF HIS PEOPLE.

By David Rosenthal

**T**here is an old saying: Only a good person can be a good doctor. This applies also to communal and national leaders, with the understanding, of course, that this is not the sole qualification for the position.

In his essay, "Protect and Belief," Aaron Zeitlin has something to say about the "addendum" which elevates this sort of person. The poet-thinker talks about those "who beat their heads against the doors of the unknown future." Attempting to characterize those who are chosen for this mission, he cites two lines of Mieczkewicz's *Ode to the Youth*: "They fulfill the 'royal decree': Reach for that which the eye cannot see. Break that which the understanding cannot break!"

Yitzhak Rabin lived with the present, with the actual reality, but at the same time he dared to think about and to prepare for "the threshold of the future." In his memoirs he wrote:

"In the near future we shall have to decide what will make our Jewish state a unique place in which to live and nurture future generations; what forces other than the threat from beyond our borders will keep our people united in their vision and purpose; and what kind of relationship we wish to foster with the Jewish communities abroad." (The Rabin Memoirs, 1979, p. 336)

**Y**itzhak Rabin's memoirs reveal the depth and daring of his way of thinking, the essence of his pursuit. The State of Israel now has the long-awaited possibility of breaking down the walls of isolation and of thinking about the future.

"Peace will demand that we change certain of our basic attitudes and philosophies; that we

devise new methods of reaching and educating our public, and that we set new goals which will capture the imagination of Jews around the world, that will motivate them to join with us in our venture and help them exploit their talents to the maximum. . . . As one who had led the country's struggle both on the battlefield and in political negotiations, who has been privileged to amass a unique combination of experience as a soldier, a diplomat and head of government, there is no doubt whatever in my mind that the risks of peace are preferable by far to the grim certainties that await every nation in war."

Yitzhak Rabin's entire life was a preparation for a time of peace, a time of dreams and accomplishments. The consciousness of long-lasting endeavor, the foundations of his basic idea of life, are to be found in the home of his parents.

"I was raised in the spirit of national mission," he says. When he gave up active service in the army, someone asked his father Nehemiah what sort of habits he had inherited from his parents. Nehemiah replied: From his mother Yitzhak inherited diligence and endurance; not to be a flatterer, not to bow his head, but also not to overestimate himself.

**N**ehemiah himself came to Eretz Israel with the soldiers of the Jewish Legion during World War I. Prior to that he was active in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in Chicago. They settled in Jerusalem, where Yitzhak was born in 1922. People there knew Rabin's mother, Rosa, who, during the riots in 1920, went from house to house bringing help (as well as weapons) to the needy. The Rabin family believed in *Ha-Avoda Hi Khayenu* — labor is our life — as the most

essential doctrine of Zionism, labor as the factor which purifies and fulfills human existence.

Coupled with this attitude was the habit of modesty. When Yitzhak Rabin was honored by the Hebrew University after the Six-Day War, the Israeli press related how his father sat modestly in the audience at the end of the front row. And Yitzhak Rabin was dressed in his plain khaki uniform. He accepted the honorary title of Doctor of Philosophy as an expression of "the profound recognition of the uniqueness of Israel's armed forces, which express the uniqueness of the entire Jewish people."

The *halutz* movement, upon whose teachings the personality of Yitzhak Rabin was fashioned, rebelled against living in a world of words which replace deeds. Joseph Trumpeldor, the teacher and guide of the movement, characterized it this way: "We shall work quietly, without fuss, so that our healthy, vital idea will not be killed by clangorous phrases." The heart of this teaching, which had already been implanted within Yitzhak Rabin in the home of his parents, was later nurtured in the agricultural school Kadoori in the Valley of Jezreel. From here the road led to his further career of halutzic duty and self-realization. In 1944 he headed a bold action in which Palmachniks broke into the camp at Atlit and freed the illegal immigrants imprisoned there.

In the War of Independence, Yitzhak Rabin took part in battles to open a road to Jerusalem, as well as in various battles in all sections of the city itself. He had already become known as a man who makes quick decisions, analytical and to the point. Thanks to these qualities he continued to rise up the ladder of military recognition. In 1964 he was named head of the General Staff.

His briefings were clear, concise and persuasive. The Israeli press reported that when the Six-Day War began, he met with the pilots before they went forth to do battle and said to them: "I have so many things to say to you, but my dictionary is too poor. Permit me, therefore, to paraphrase Churchill's remark: Never was the fate of so many dependent on the skill and courage of so few! The fate of the people and the state will be decided by how you do battle. . ."

Excerpts of Rabin's speeches — primarily those made in connection with the Six-Day War — contain the most important of his national and universal beliefs. The Jewish People does not want any wars and does not chase after military victories, he declared. The tradition of our people is based on the striving for peace and on a heritage of honor and of recognition of other peoples and religions.

And by what is the spiritual personality of the Israeli soldier represented? Rabin's reply to that was: "(he is) a soldier who fights not out of hatred of the enemy but out of love for his own people and its values; a soldier who defends his home and his country against those who would destroy it; a soldier who is distinguished by spiritual exaltation and high morale. Our army was victorious in the last war primarily because the soldiers were moved not by a feeling of hatred, but by a sense that they were carrying out a great historic mission. They knew they were fighting for the very existence of our Third Temple." (excerpts from "A State Which Is Seeking Its People," by General Yitzhak Rabin, *Goldene Keyt* 62/63, p. 28)

As far back as March 1967, Yitzhak Rabin discussed with Levi Eshkol the question of his own personal future after he completed his duty as Chief of Staff. "When I told Eshkol that I wanted to be Israel's ambassador to the United States, it took him several minutes to get over the shock. . . That's the last thing I would have expected you to want, he said. Are you going to stand around at tedious cocktail parties, sit through boring banquets, and play all those other diplomatic games? Are you really up to it? Well, I told him, I am up to what I consider to be the task of Israel's ambassador to Washington. Cocktail parties don't worry me. What did concern me was our future place in the scheme of global politics. . . I appreciated the role that the United States played in our region and the need to coordinate our policies with the Americans. It seemed to me that strengthening our links with the United States was our greatest political challenge, not to mention a vital condition for maintaining the power of the I.D.F." (Memoirs, p. 122)

Yitzhak Rabin was Israel's ambassador in Washington for five years. He occupied the post during the terms of Presidents Johnson and Nixon. He played a critical role as Prime



Minister during the shuttle diplomacy of Henry Kissinger, which ended with the 1975 Israel-Egypt pact, the treaty that laid the foundation for President Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem.

**H**enry Kissinger described Yitzhak Rabin in his memoirs, published in 1975: "He was an unlikely ambassador. Taciturn, shy, reflective, almost resentful of small talk. Rabin possessed few of the attributes commonly associated with diplomacy. Repetitious people bored him. . . He hated ambiguity, which is the stuff of diplomacy. I grew extremely fond of him, though he did little to encourage affection. His integrity and his analytical brilliance in cutting to the core of a problem were awesome. I valued his judgment, often even on matters unconnected with the Middle East, and trusted his motives even when his country's positions were not always identical with our own. We became good friends and remained so through all the vicissitudes and squabbles that our duties occasionally imposed on us." (p. 355, "White House Years," by Henry Kissinger)

Thus passed the self-sacrificing life of Yitzhak Rabin for over half a century, until — like a lightning-bolt in a dark sky — the shattering news came of his assassination on November 4th, which threw us into a state of deep grief and confusion. During those first few minutes the mind refused to accept the terrible news, but the reality was not to be denied: Fratricide!

Several days later more details became available. The number of those involved in the murderous deed includes several individuals, the most extreme group, and even "rabbis" and "mystics" who took upon themselves the monopoly of speaking in the name of Torah, but who are actually "disciples of the devil." (Shimon Peres' phrase)

**G**uilty of this political crime is the criminal himself, but in this situation the responsibility belongs not only to the individual who perpetrated the murder, but also to those who gave him ideological sanction. The murder could have been committed only by one whose mentality was fundamentally influenced by the preachers of hate, by those who tear down the authority of the democratically elected government. Precisely now, when the political situa-

tion in the State of Israel demands the maximum unity and the maximum discipline, we must have the strength to "recognize the serpent in its embryo" (Berl Katznelson's words during conditions which threatened civil war) and to limit the bombast, to stop the poisonous relations, and to keep the disputes between the various camps to a level of national unity and civilized personal behavior. □

## NINE DAYS OF TERROR

*continued from page 10*

accused by his hosts of sexual harassment during a recent visit to Denmark, won't make the situation any simpler.

**I**t is difficult to be optimistic in the current situation, and at the same time it is difficult to blame the Israeli public for feeling as it does. It would be totally unnatural for people to react with a "business as usual" attitude after viewing the sights of the last two weeks brought straight into their living rooms in full color by the TV networks. How can one remain indifferent?

But then one sees the Kahanists and other extreme-Right-wing fanatics demonstrating and calling for the death of all the Arabs and of Shimon Peres, and attacking the policemen trying to maintain order. It is difficult not to be reminded of the bloody atmosphere that existed in the weeks before Rabin's assassination, and wonder where we are all heading. What will happen if, God forbid, the peace process breaks down and we lose all hope for a brighter future? Was it all just a dream and the reality a nightmare, or will we wake up from the nightmare and continue our march towards a "new Middle East" in which swords are beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks, and in which "nation shall not lift up sword against nation / and shall not learn war" any more? □

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# GULF WAR IN RETROSPECT

*Right War — Wrong Reason!*

*By Ralph Seliger*

**H**aving experienced 1995's outpouring of 50-year commemorations for the liberation of the death camps and the end of World War II, we've recently been reminded by the news media of but another historic anniversary — the five-year mark since the 1991 Gulf War. Memories rush back of acrimonious debates among Jews and people of liberal or left persuasion during that less distant time.

In the summer and fall of 1990, I uncomfortably found myself more in agreement with George Bush and James Baker on the build-up and use of military force in the Persian Gulf, than with the liberal and left elements of the Democratic party to which I was otherwise closer. For example, I remember feeling quite alone in my perspective while attending the "Renewing Shalom" conference under the sponsorship of Arthur Waskow's Shalom Center, held in New York on the eve of that war. Only one anonymous soul amidst the plenary assemblage of hundreds had the courage and good sense to emerge from the audience to gently suggest that there was no alternative to military action. All the luminaries whom I recall at this event inveighed against the pending use of force (e.g., Rita Hauser, Michael Lerner, the late Marshall Meyer); both Arthur Hertzberg and Arthur Waskow backed the defensive deployment of troops in Saudi Arabia, but not their offensive use to disgorge Kuwait from Iraqi control.

Some of the reflexively "left" arguments against countering Saddam's aggression which I heard that day and during those weeks and months before, during, and after the war, were both artful and tortured in their logic. For example, Alisa Solomon, the talented but very

p.c.-*Village Voice* writer, recounted attending one of the "anti-war" rallies in Washington; she reported on the anti-Semitic tenor by describing how the word, "Jewish," as in New Jewish Agenda, was booed when a representative of this well-meaning but often foolish organization (now defunct) rose to voice opposition to the war. Ms. Solomon acknowledged the bitter irony in the telling, but concluded with the declaration that she would not allow such bigotry to chase her from the "peace movement" (God bless her)! I recall also the tautological observation of an accomplished Harvard-educated member of my *chavurah* as Israel was being attacked by SCUD missiles: if the U.S.-led coalition had not attacked Iraq, the SCUDs would not be falling on Israel!

**I**t was unassailable that Saddam Hussein's conquest of Kuwait and his threat against Saudi Arabia and the other Arab states of the Gulf — notwithstanding their dubious pedigree as progressive or democratic in any true sense — had to be nullified. It also seemed clear to me that Saddam's regime had to be overthrown, that it was not good enough to force or negotiate a withdrawal from Kuwait.

Why? Although not truly a "Hitler" — as propagandistically characterized by the Bush-Baker team then — in the extent of his power (thankfully!) or his absolute threat to the world, he was Hitlerian in his ambitions, his repeated acts of aggression (having attacked Iran to begin the first bloody Persian Gulf War, ten years prior to ingesting Kuwait), and his genocidal deeds toward the Kurds, **even before the 1991 war**, and against both the Shiites and Kurds after. He was more like a

Mussolini — a Hitler wannabe — in his bloody but less than invincible use of military force, and like a Stalin in his unbridled use of terror and starvation against his own citizenry.

The latter is substantiated by Saddam's cruel manipulation of the international sanctions which cause widespread suffering and disease among his impoverished people. He has long resisted the United Nations' offer for Iraq to sell a substantial quota of oil to permit the purchase of food and medicines — with the callous contention that this arrangement violates national sovereignty. The material scarcity he thereby created reinforces his ability to buy the continued loyalty of his party and security apparatus with special economic advantages, and supplies an external target to deflect his people's discontent.

His ultimate lack of strength vis-a-vis a powerful international coalition did not render him less a force necessitating an effective response. It did, however, make it inexcusable that the coalition juggernaut prematurely withheld its hand, while his regime was still able to muster the firepower (mostly in the form of tanks) to massacre Kurds, Shiites, and other Iraqis who rose against Saddam, *at the explicit behest of George Bush. We even heard Bush making this exhortation!*

**I**t may also be true that the Western bombing campaign caused excessive damage to civil infrastructure which has resulted in unnecessary civilian suffering. But if so, such an observation is a criticism of the war's conduct, not its purpose. It's analogous to criticizing the Allied destruction of Dresden or other aspects of the air wars against Germany and Japan in World War II, as being of little or no military value, which in no way would have invalidated the Allied cause as such.

With the initial dramatic success of the Gulf War, I was seduced into believing the humane possibilities of the "New World Order." James Baker's crude reductionist justification for the U.S. armed involvement, that it was "about jobs," should have given me fair warning. In retrospect, it is precisely the economic interest as summed up in the one word — oil — which explains the prompt and resolute U.S. and Western response in the Gulf in contrast to the tragically limp and exasperating slow reaction of the same powers to the quasi-genocidal slaughter in Bosnia.

Again, all this does not invalidate the important purposes served by the war of having reversed the conquest of Kuwait and badly damaged Iraq's military machine. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that an even more important goal for us as Zionists was served by this war: the initiation of the current peace process — which we fervently hope will conclude in a lasting and secure peace for Israel and all its neighbors.

**B**ut the negative aspects of this war as recounted above, and the disarray, unreality, and often isolationist (even anti-Semitic) reactions of so much of what passes for the "left" in the U.S., points me toward a realization. As Zionists, we cannot be true adherents of a broader left. (The same may also be true of right-wing Zionists with regard to a broader right — e.g., there's no home for them with Pat Buchanan!) We may be more or less "liberal" (in American terms), but our home is with the moderate left, progressive center, or "near-left" (to coin a term).

This is further illustrated by what we saw in Israel. At the time of the Gulf War and its lead-in period, there was some debate within the Israeli left as to what was a proper response. But with very little exception at the time (the late curmudgeon, Yeshayahu Liebovitz comes to mind), the "left" — meaning primarily Peace Now and *Meretz* activists in this connection — found it inescapable to support the Western cause against Saddam Hussein. (Recall the public statements of such prominent Israeli doves as Amos Oz, Yael Dayan, and A.B. Yehoshua, for example.) Contrast this position as a consequence of the compellingly clear life-and-death issues facing Israel in the form of Saddam's SCUDs and his threat to "burn" Israel with chemical weapons, with the disgracefully facile response of the international "peace" movement!

But as *progressive* Zionists, we also must continue to seek, in cooperation with others, a truly humanistic "New World Order" which responds effectively to threats of aggression, mass starvation, and genocidal crimes. There is no easy formula which fits all such possible situations. In this post-Cold War era, the inadequate and inhumane response (in the end) to Saddam Hussein's aggression, squandered a golden opportunity to establish such vitally-needed international resolve. □

## JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

### *WJC Deals with Global Jewish Problems*

**T**he 10th Global Assembly of the World Jewish Congress, held in Jerusalem January 22-24, had a dual purpose: to show solidarity with the people of Israel, who are celebrating the 3,000th anniversary of the national capital, and to strengthen the bonds of Jews around the globe. The 1,200 delegates from 70 countries were indeed an impressive sample of Jewish leaders from countries large and small, from the main centers of America and Europe to the tiny community of 400 Jews in Mongolia (represented by one delegate).

The agenda combined topics of historic portent, and current topics of utmost urgency. Beginning with a tribute to the slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by President Ezer Weizman, to sessions on present-day Israeli problems, analyzed by Prime Minister Shimon Peres and others, the delegates received a full picture of the complexities of life in Israel, the difficulties with the Arab world, and especially the task of shoring up Jewish existence as a viable people in the Diaspora.

One presentation that stimulated heated discussion was by the noted writer, A. B. Yehoshua, who declared that the money sent to Israel by Diaspora Jewry might better be used for Jewish education in their respective countries. This opinion was challenged by many delegates, who emphasized that Diaspora Jewry still had a vital responsibility for sustaining Israel's social and educational institutions, and in the absorption of new olim. It was obvious that the answer was: bake a bigger pie, so that there will be enough for Israel's needs and Diaspora's as well.

**A** little side play occurred during the session at the Knesset. Labor and Likud MKs addressed the delegates, while the spokesman scheduled to represent the Religious bloc failed to appear. Knesset Speaker Shevach Weiss, tearing himself away from the Knesset

then in session, made his speech, and hastened back to his parliamentary post. Other speakers on the rostrum did likewise. The chairperson, Evelyn Sommer, head of the American Section of the World Jewish Congress, took umbrage at this seeming lack of respect for the guests who had come from the four corners of the earth. However, British parliamentarian Greville Janner soothed feelings by stating that his experience in the British Parliament paralleled that of the Knesset members who were torn by diverse, conflicting demands on their presence.

Incidentally, Meretz leader Shulamith Aloni crossed swords with Likud's Eliahu Bem Elissar, former ambassador to Egypt. Aloni, who has since announced she would not run for the Knesset in the forthcoming elections, was in her best abrasive form.

**T**he Assembly held a number of workshops devoted to various subjects. The range of interests is best summarized by the 18 groups of resolutions adopted at the closing session. In summary, they are:

- Support of the State of Israel and the aspirations of the people of Israel to live in peace with their neighbors. The WJC is concerned about the polarization of Jewish society in Israel and the Diaspora, which it regards as a threat to Jewish unity and continuity . . . it calls upon upon Jewish communities to purge extremism and demagoguery from their public life . . .
- WJC reaffirms centrality of Jerusalem in Jewish life.
- WJC commends the State of Israeli for its heroic efforts in ingathering of the exiles and pledges to assist it in the integration of newcomers into Israeli life. WJC calls upon all communities to assist Jews who wish to settle in Israel. It calls upon the Knesset and government to resist efforts to change

*(continued on page 24)*

# A CRUCIAL PARTNERSHIP

## *Abba Hillel Silver And Labor Palestine*

*By Mark A. Raider*

**O**n the eve of Jewish statehood, Abba Hillel Silver (1893-1963) stood at the helm of the American Zionist movement. Silver rose to national prominence at a time when the Jewish people faced questions about its very survival. Though not necessarily more important than other American Zionist figures, Silver's leadership was, arguably, more crucial than that of Louis D. Brandeis, Stephen S. Wise, Louis Lipsky and Henrietta Szold. At a pivotal moment, as this essay will explain, he used his authority to galvanize public opinion and shape American Jewish policy vis-à-vis the Jewish National Home and post-war reconstruction. Silver's unique style of leadership did not derive from profound philosophical expositions. Nor did it issue from his position as rabbi of one of America's largest Reform congregations. Even his oratorical prowess does not fully explain his grasp on American Jewry. Where Silver's Zionist leadership differed was his talent for independent political action.

A few words about Silver's background. Born in Lithuania on January 28, 1893, Abraham Silver (as he was originally known) immigrated to the United States at the age of nine. Growing up on New York's Lower East Side, young Abraham was immersed in the fluid setting of the Jewish immigrant milieu. He saw no contradiction between attending public school, yeshiva and Zvi Hirsch Masliansky's sermons at the Educational Alliance. He was also active in Zionist youth activity.

After graduating high school, Silver enrolled in Hebrew Union College and the University of Cincinnati. On several occasions, he arranged for prominent Zionists to speak at the then predominantly anti-Zionist Hebrew Union College. In this period he also changed his name to Abba Hillel. He graduated from both institutions in 1915 and was ordained a rabbi.

Following a brief appointment in Wheeling, West Virginia, Silver assumed the prestigious pulpit of The Temple in Cleveland, Ohio. The Temple's lay leaders were apparently unconcerned about Silver's strong Zionist views. They were more interested in his oratorical abilities and growing reputation. Silver did not disappoint his congregants, and during his tenure The Temple's membership skyrocketed. Meanwhile, Silver became something of a local icon. He was the first president of the local Bureau of Jewish Education, chairman of Cleveland's Jewish Welfare Fund Appeal, a leader in the campaign for unemployment insurance and, until he resigned in protest over the treatment of local labor unions, a member of the Chamber of Commerce.

**D**uring the 1920s, at the insistence of Stephen S. Wise and other prominent members of the so-called "Brandeis group," Silver intensified his involvement in the activity of the Zionist Organization of America. In 1921, as a result of the Brandeis-Weizmann conflict, he officially resigned along with the leadership of the ZOA. Nevertheless, he continued to participate in national and international Zionist affairs.

With the rise of Hitler, Silver was one of American Jewry's early voices to speak out against the threat of Nazi aggression and anti-semitism. As early as 1933 he advocated a boycott of German-made goods and helped found the League for Human Rights Against Nazism, an enterprise that foreshadowed his involvement in the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights. It was also at this time that Silver went head to head with the ZOA's local leadership. He subsequently withdrew from the Cleveland Zionist District and formed Cleveland Zionist District No. 2. The new group, renamed the Cleveland Zionist

Society, rapidly outgrew its counterpart. Subsequently, the ZOA leadership negotiated a settlement that brought Silver's group *and their dues* into the national organization. These events, viewed in retrospect, are a microcosm of Silver's later Zionist activity on a national level.

In 1937 Silver reentered the arena of national Zionist politics. At the Fortieth Annual ZOA Convention, he and Stephen S. Wise strenuously opposed the partition plan for Palestine proposed by Britain's Royal Peel Commission. Like many Zionist leaders, however, though Silver publicly opposed the partition plan, privately and *sub rosa*, he worked for its realization. Especially after 1938, as president of the United Palestine Appeal and co-chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, Silver was well aware of American Jewry's growing support for the Labor enterprise in Palestine. The 1935 and 1937 elections to the Zionist Congress, in which the Labor bloc garnered a disproportionate share of American votes, alerted him to American Jewry's growing affinity for practical, constructive Zionist policies. An analysis of Silver's UPA and UJA directives reveals that his priorities were largely in keeping with those of the Labor-led Yishuv.

Yet Silver did not reach a public rapprochement with the Yishuv leadership until Hitler's forces overran Poland in September 1939. His lukewarm relations with the Labor leaders until then were due, in part, to his reluctance to withdraw his support of Chaim Weizmann. Nor did David Ben-Gurion's low estimation of Silver help matters. As late as August 1939, in sharp contrast to the emerging American Jewish consensus, Silver opposed the Zionist program of so-called "illegal immigration" known as Aliyah Bet. At the Twenty-first Zionist Congress, Silver accused the Labor-led Jewish Agency and its supporters of pursuing policies that resulted in the cancellation of legal immigration. He urged the Zionist leaders to "refrain from desperate acts of opposition, from civil rebellion, from non-cooperation." Silver correctly pointed out that Labor was behaving as though a Jewish state already existed and that the Jewish Agency's policies would lead to a clash with the Mandatory. In fact, Labor dominated Zionist policy-making and imposed its will on much of the world movement; it controlled the building blocks of the Jewish state-in-the-making.

Silver's attack on the policies of the Zionist Organization provoked tremendous consternation. He was publicly chastised by the Labor leader Berl Katznelson. In an unusual move, the American delegates, at the conclusion of a private meeting, unanimously rejected Silver's remarks and declared that he spoke in his "personal capacity."

**T**he Twenty-first Zionist Congress marked a turning point for Silver. He had consistently sided with Chaim Weizmann's cautious policy of Zionist gradualism within the framework of restrictions imposed by the Mandatory. Ben-Gurion, on the other hand, insisted on a combative approach, including the full use of Aliyah Bet as a political instrument. In short, between 1937 and 1939 Silver changed his position in the evolving Zionist debate over Jewish dependence on the Mandatory.

After World War II erupted, Silver abandoned all illusions about Great Britain's support for the Jewish National Home. The political playing field, he explained, was no longer dominated by either the Palestine Administration or the British government. The locus of action and struggle had shifted from London to Washington, D.C. The United States had become the new battleground for Zionism, and he viewed himself a key player in the new constellation of political forces.

Silver now urged American Zionists to embrace the combative approach of Labor. He encouraged American Jews to unite behind a common platform for Jewish statehood. At the Biltmore Conference of 1942, an American Zionist gathering held in New York City in lieu of a wartime Zionist Congress, Silver allied himself with Ben-Gurion. The three chief issues addressed by the Biltmore Conference were the political future of Palestine, the Arab problem and the feasibility of creating an American Zionist alliance. The first two questions had also been central to the Twenty-first Zionist Congress of 1939. At Biltmore Silver planted himself firmly in the militant camp.

**T**he coalition grouped around Labor and the General Zionists, with Ben-Gurion and Silver at the helm, argued against whittling down Jewish claims to Palestine in order to appease the Arabs or Britain. Silver declared that Jewish immigration to Palestine required no consent — be it Arab or British. Despite

intense opposition and the highly charged nature of wartime Jewish politics, the combative Zionist camp prevailed. The conference adopted an eight-point resolution that came to be known as the Biltmore Program. The program's operative political concepts were:

1. That the Jews of Palestine be allowed to create a military force under the Zionist flag.
2. That Palestine be established as a Jewish commonwealth integrated into the structure of the postwar democratic world.

Organizational and philosophical differences notwithstanding, the Biltmore program epitomized the progress which American Zionism as a whole had made since 1917. Establishing a "Jewish Commonwealth" in Palestine became the new rallying call of the movement. This was a great advancement over the Balfour Declaration's ambiguous promise to support a "national home for the Jewish people."

Until the summer of 1942 Silver, like other American Jewish leaders, believed that the Allies would not completely abandon European Jewry. However, the revelation of Nazi atrocities prompted him to completely alter his strategy as a national figure. He marshaled all his political energies to revive the weary American Zionist movement, and he assumed the co-chairmanship of the American Zionist Emergency Council. This period also witnessed an intensification of contact between Silver and the right-wing Revisionist Zionist party in the United States. In the end, Silver's activist strategy and authoritarian style provoked Stephen S. Wise and Nahum Goldmann, both of whom also played chief leadership roles in the American context.

**H**ere we come to the intriguing subject of the American Zionist Emergency Council and Silver's pivotal leadership role in it, both of which require greater attention than is possible in this brief analysis. Suffice it to say, that the AZEC's political direction under Silver was ultimately vindicated by the American Jewish Conference of August 1943. The conference, which was called by the president of B'nai B'rith Henry Monsky, proposed to unite American Jewry behind a platform for the rescue of European Jewry, the removal of restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine and the reconstruction of Jewish life in postwar Europe. After a lengthy process of propagandizing and balloting, the Conference emerged

from relative obscurity to assume a position of primary importance. In all, 501 delegates representing roughly 2,250,000 men and women from 64 national organizations and 375 communities comprised the democratic assembly. An estimated eight percent of the Conference participants were avowed Zionists.

There was virtually unanimous agreement among the delegates concerning the rescue of European Jewry, the importance of postwar reconstruction and the restitution of minority political and civil rights in war torn Europe. The Palestine proposal, however, proved to be quite controversial. Although the conference was predominantly Zionist, there was no assurance that the delegates would endorse the notion of an independent Jewish Commonwealth. In fact, Zionist leaders worried lest an ambivalent resolution be adopted in the name of communal unity. The scales were tipped by Silver, whose position cut across ideological and philosophical lines. "I am for unity in Israel," Silver declared, "for the realization of the total program of Jewish life, relief, rescue, reconstruction and the national restoration in Palestine."

Silver carried the day because he articulated the attitude of mainstream American Jews to Zionism. Acknowledging the essential role of the Zionist enterprise in modern Jewish life, he argued the case for an immediate political solution based on wartime realities. "We cannot truly rescue the Jews of Europe," he proclaimed,

"unless we have free immigration to Palestine. We cannot have free immigration into Palestine unless our political rights are recognized there. Our political rights cannot be recognized unless our historic connection with the country is acknowledged and our right to rebuild our national home is affirmed. The whole chain breaks if one of our links is missing."

**S**ilver's dramatic speech represented the passing of authority from one generation of Zionist leaders to the next. He now decisively supplanted Stephen S. Wise as American Zionism's foremost spokesman. The comprehensive program placed before the Conference opened the flood gates of American Jewish consensus. The Palestine issue was carried with only four dissenting votes. The delegates resoundingly called for "the fulfillment of the Balfour Decla-

ration" and the reconstitution of Palestine as the Jewish Commonwealth. This event signaled a watershed for American Zionism which presently came into full view as the driving political force of American Jewish life.

Between 1945 and 1947 Silver embarked on a controversial series of political initiatives. He lobbied the United States to pass a Palestine resolution favoring Jewish statehood, and used his leverage to insure that pro-Zionist planks were adopted by both the Democratic and Republican parties during the 1944 presidential campaign. His insistence in this regard caused a rift between himself and Stephen S. Wise, and Silver subsequently resigned from the AZEC. However, after being recalled by his supporters, Silver moved swiftly to consolidate his power base. In 1945 he was elected president of the ZOA and president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. In 1947 he was appointed chairman of the American section of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. In these years, Silver reached the apex of his influence. One of his great personal triumphs came on May 8, 1947 when he delivered an impassioned speech to the United Nations General Assembly in support of an independent Jewish state.

**F**ollowing the creation of the State of Israel, Silver became embroiled in the American-Israeli struggle for control of the Zionist Organization. He subsequently resigned from his positions on the AZEC and the Jewish Agency executive. This time, however, he was not recalled by a mass of followers. Indeed, at the Twenty-third Zionist Congress in 1951 he and other diaspora Zionists were soundly defeated by the political machine of Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. Silver's remaining years were devoted largely to Jewish scholarship, and participation in social and cultural work on behalf of the Zionist movement.

Had Silver immigrated to the new State of Israel, he might have continued to play a central role in Zionist affairs. However, he chose to remain in the United States. Events quickly outpaced his authority as American Zionism's wartime tribune. Silver's Zionism had once differed distinctively. He had been *the* maverick rabbinic leader in the United States: he offered a compelling alternative to American Jewish ambivalence; and he embraced a combative strategy that emphasized social and political

realities over philosophical biases. As I have argued here, his leadership was upheld and his strategy was implemented so long as his goals and those of the Yishuv leaders were congruent. After the State of Israel was established, a new American Jewish consensus took root and flourished. When this happened, Silver was swallowed up by the very revolution that originally propelled him to the fore of American Jewish life. □

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## JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

*(continued from page 20)*

the Law of Return. That law represents not only the vision of the ingathering of the exiles but stands as the most profound symbol of the Jewish character of Israel.

- WJC encourages all efforts by the United Nations to eliminate anti-semitism that for so long permeated that body. The repeal of the repugnant "Zionism = Racism" resolution righted an historic wrong.

Other resolutions dealt with Jewish Communities in Distress (e.g. Syria); assistance to very small communities; restitution of Jewish properties in Central and Eastern Europe as well as Western Europe (e.g. Norway); Commemoration of the Holocaust; Anti-semitism; International terrorism; the right to perform Shechita; Relations with Christian Churches; Interfaith relations; Youth and Students, including support for the World Union of Jewish Students; and call for a special commission to study the restructuring and reforming of World Jewry institutions. □

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# Michelangelo's Paul

By Haim Chertok

Generally successfully, our three oldest youngsters had gone the boarding school route when they arrived at the kilometerstone of high school, but after a mopey year of living away from home at a girls school in Arad, our exuberant sixteen year old daughter is again embedded and embarked in our midst. Were this not the situation, like most of you my wife Marcia and I would scarcely have noticed that "Free As A Bird," resurrected from the trashbin of one-time Beatles' rejects, recently balleyhooded to Number One on the pop music charts.

Prior to Miri's departure, the trove of LPs we ourselves had purchased in the Sixties had been retrieved by our "baby" out of their mausoleum, lovingly dusted, and reprieved from early, technological retirement. For many months Miri had squealed brakes into our breakfasts and bit a din into our dinners. In her absence, once again they would get furloughed to our S.R.O. community of old by distinguished 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ s. Now they and she are back, and we learned again that old sergeants never, never die but simply bide away...plotting insurrections.

A collateral effect of Miri's year away, however, had stunned us with its liberating implications. After twenty-eight years of raising four children, for days, sometimes weeks on end the two of us were again alone, i.e., just the two of us, alone, together. Free, indeed, as birds. Vistas old and new flew open. "It's a new world, Golda."

Upon realizing, however, that our newfound freedom would bubble forth only during that narrow belt of time until Shai, then Miri entered their years of army service, when Israeli parents perforce stick close to home, we carefully laid plans to visit the home of Michelangelo's David. Fixing upon a Shabbat in mid-October when we wouldn't be missed,

i.e., when neither of our outboarding motors was scheduled to skedaddle home, replaying a silver pipe dream, alacritously seizing the days — seven of them — we, I mean just we two, booked ourselves tickets and made arrangements for a week together in Florence.

*Scuza! Firenze.* Bus, bus, bus, and then plane, bus, and train. Zappo: hardly half-a-day from raw Yeroham — Firenze: a transformative, magnificent, absorbing text well worth the effort to translate and master. Two, even three days in this place would have been gauche, even insolent. But in seven, skimming its aesthetic ether like rounded, oval pebbles in the Arno, we thought we could at least get a feel for the place. Perhaps even an intimation of intimacy.

Day and evening we trailed the narrow streets into the broad piazzas of central Firenze to pay homage to the masterpieces in the Uffizi, the Piazza della Signoria, Bargello, and the Loggia dei Lanzi. On Shabbat, services a la Italianate rite resembling nothing so much as Hebraized Gregorian chant under the dome of Europe's most stunning *sinagoga*. Inevitably, such was the gorgeous stuff of our daily fare, but what of its subtext? What recollections, which obtuse tangents slanted new, surprising motifs, what our droll preoccupations while crossing the Ponte Vecchio to trapise through Palazzo Pitti and the Giardino di Boboli, up the hills and down the bank to the Ponte San Niccolo? What of our daily window-gawking, cafe-quaffing along Via Gioberti, the main commercial artery of Piazza Beccaria close by our *pensione* on tiny Via Fossonbroni?

In the way of such things, playing insistently and with surprising power on the black keys of memory are three Florentine varia-

tions on the theme of sensory frustration. These individualized cadenzas are as salient to *our* Firenze remembered in tranquility as the marvelous doors of Ghiberti and the awesome proportions of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in the Piazza del Duomo. First, though we inquired and we delved, though we pursued each lead and transversed each district of the city, it was fruitlessly, legumeless, lugubrious: no where in this city of 450,000 souls and perfectly rounded pears might one uncover a single bona fide, gen-u-wine vegetarian or health food restaurant. No, we did not starve, but for Kosherized kishkes, Firenze is a week of muddle.

**O**ur final Florentine quest was active, intensive, and rounding out the missing senses, visual and tactile. On our second day in town Marcia spotted it rounding the corner of Via Botta. It could be no one else: a poster displaying Miri's very idol. The very Saturday night after our departure for home who would be coming to town, with his band and *his* wife but, looking strangely Italian, pert-faced Paul McCartney!

At once we divined the verdict of destiny. No leathery accessory, no beaded ornament, one and only one Italian remembrance would render our daughter beatific. We simply had to swipe one of those McCartney posters for Miri. The problem was, although nearly all other performer's posters had been affixed to the walls of buildings, or more rarely kiosks, and then left naked to brave the elements, most of Paul's were hermetically sealed behind plastic shields, rendering them impervious either to raindrops, to infection, and prying paws. Most, I say...but not all.

The following morning on Viale Della Giovine Italia we spotted six unsealed, dimpled Pauls, cute as infant sextuplets, all in a row. We loitered, we dawdled, we bided our chance, but there was so much damned traffic, it seemed hopeless. Finally, as I glanced first to the left, then furtively to the right, just as though I was barely acquainted with the Mad-woman, Marcia, outfacing the smirks of passersby, began to strip first one Paul, then a second. Ever so slowly and carefully, first from one corner and then another, she carried on, but glued fast, Paul after crucified Paul tore into strips. It was truly pathetic. Holding fast, brittle Pauls would not unpeel.

The next day, it drizzled. "Great news," my astute wife commented. "The rain should loosen the glue. We'll get him now."

This time we headed for another cache of unprotected Pauls we'd stalked on the wall of a school on Via Tripoli. Never mind that it was half-a-block from a police station. Failure had steeled our resolve. As I shielded her with an umbrella, Marcia brilliantly executed her art, liberating not only considerable lettering but chin, mouth, and nostrils when...oh, it pains me yet...Paul's dewy face shredded in her hands. Another failure.

Yet nothing would do except that we fetch one back to Yeroham. First thing next morning, through a much heavier downpour, I shlepped myself to the address on Via Del Frati Bigi which had been listed in the corner poster. I found no office. When I called the ad agency I learned why: it was located in Viareggio, miles away from Florence on the coast. No matter. Could I buy one poster...or a dozen? I'd pay almost anything. "Impossible sir. Our policy is to sell them only on the day of the concert."

**W**e were deflated, defeated. It would be a purse or necklace for Miri until, on our final day in Firenze, what did I see staring out of the window of a barber shop on Via Pietrapiana but a pristine Paul. In a flash, Marcia trailing, I entered the shop. "*Prego, signor, uh...cuanta lira for...uh...[wildly gesticulating] him...Paulo McCartnini?*," I incoherently gasped.

"No money, sir. Paulo is yours," the gracious barber responded as he untaped the corners and neatly rolled the poster, handed over our trophy beyond price. Tears in my eyes, "*grazi, grazzi,*" I moaned. Only Marcia's hand restrained me from kissing his cheeks.

I love Italians. Calculating my desperation, any Frenchman would have clipped me for two haircuts. So that's how Israelis comport themselves when "overseas" does not mean New York or Los Angeles. True, we did not see the original of Michelangelo's David, but the lines from Cole Porter came unbidden on the flight home to Israel, and Miri was delighted beyond measure with her pasteboard Paul. And — who knows? — perhaps *that's* the way peace will come to the Middle East. □

## DISPERSAL OF THE JEWISH FAMILY

*By Si Wakesberg*

**R**ecently, while in California visiting my daughter's family, my 16-year-old grandson Eli introduced me to the Internet, demonstrating how speedily a message could be sent to upstate New York, at the other end of the continent. It was a fascinating lesson in up-to-date communications but, at the same time, it also brought home to me how fragmented and dispersed the modern Jewish family had become.

In the 1940s, my parents lived two subway stations away; my in-laws lived around the corner and most of my other relatives resided a nickel's ride from our own home. It was not at all strange to find an old uncle or an ailing grandmother in residence with one's family, for Jewish life then was homogenous and integrated. Mainstream Jewish families remained, for the most part, interconnected in the cities in which they had lived all their lives. Today parents are in Florida or Arizona; children reside in California or Oregon; one's life has become more solitary, less familial.

I don't know how historians will fix the date for the beginning of the dispersal of the Jewish family in the United States but to me it seems that it all started after World War II, when Jewish youngsters in swarms sought entrance to out-of-town colleges. Growing up in New York, it was one of life's unalterable and inevitable expectations that college meant C.C.N.Y. (College of the City of New York) or Hunter College — the two most prestigious "free" public institutions in the city. I believe that C.C.N.Y., in those days, demanded an 85% high school average for entrance and once you managed to cross that barrier the competition became even more intellectually challenging.

World War II, with its GI Bill offering free education in a variety of the nation's colleges, changed all that. Suddenly, new York Jewish young men and women who had been confined to educational institutions in their backyard could reach out and attend Princeton,

Harvard, MIT — some of them winning scholarships to these colleges, others applying to smaller high-rated universities. It became "faddish," almost obligatory, to attend an out-of-town school. I recall with some amusement exchanging information with a friend of mine who lived in Syracuse, telling her my daughter had enrolled at Syracuse University, and being told in return that her daughter was attending Columbia University in New York City!

**N**ew York Jewish college students dispersed to Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Indiana, UCLA, and even unknown institutions in the South and Southwest. What happened to them, far away from home, cut off from their families, on unfamiliar ground is another story, but it certainly led to a breakdown of the family unit as we know it.

Then came the flight to the suburbs, a movement too-well documented to need explanation. It would be erroneous, however, to think that Jewish migration from the cities to the suburbs differed in any way from its non-Jewish counterpart. The move in the late 1950s and early 1960s was an "American" migration, as Americans of different nationalities and religions pulled up their stakes and left cities beset with crime, violence, pollution and poverty. Some recent studies have unfortunately given an elitist touch to the Jewish migration movement which was a segment of the American middle-class exodus, an abandonment of the cities for life in the hoped-for greener pastures of suburbia.

However, since the focus often is on New York and New York's large Jewish population, the issue has been spotlighted as "Jews fleeing to the suburbs," which becomes an exaggerated reportage. But there is no doubt that entire areas of traditional Jewish life were disrupted as masses of Jews left the city blocks of their youth for the more sanitized atmosphere

of the suburbs. Entire Jewish neighborhoods vanished overnight. While these middle-class wanderers did not travel with packs on their backs, as their forefathers did in Europe, their move eventually would unsettle Jewish family life, bringing on new tensions, anxieties, and intergenerational clashes.

Later in the 1960s and 1970s, these family clashes would take on a special fury as the younger generation ironically reached out for goals their parents had abandoned in the cities. A movement back to the cities became more pronounced and suburban parents were faced with the strange sight of their children moving back into the old tenements or into reconverted brownstones on those very mean streets they had left only a short while ago.

**W**hat did all this do to the Jewish family? It seriously changed the structure of family life, creating a long-distance relationship between parents and children. Yet in losing an immediate tie to their families, the younger Jews began to feel a need for sustaining values. It became commonplace to say that these displaced young Jews were seeking their "heritage". Many of them, away from home, in distant and unfriendly places, turned to the synagogue (to which their parents had paid scant attention) as a way of solidifying their Jewishness. The flourishing of a synagogue culture in cities across the United States may be attributed, in some measure, to a genuine homesickness deep in the Jewish soul.

In some ways, younger Jews became more Jewish — though not in their parents' way of secular Judaism. The older liberal, even socialist secular Judaism transported to the United States by European immigrants — including the speaking of Yiddish, reading Yiddish newspapers, attending the Yiddish theatre, devoting oneself to Jewish causes, attending Jewish schools, belonging to Jewish organizations — all this was transformed into a Jewishness that had a religious base, whether it was synagogue-oriented or not.

**T**he boomer generation therefore adopted a different kind of Jewishness than that of their parents. Theirs was a more fragile relationship to the Jewish community, a more American-style and therefore a more assimilated way of life. One wonders how deep their commitment is to the United Jewish Appeal, to

the Jewish National Fund, to the cause of Jewish education in the United States? Jewish organizations, Jewish camps, Jewish schools have all declined and there has certainly been a drift away from Yiddish, even though there are valiant attempts being made to recapture that vital language.

**T**he question can therefore be asked whether the Jewish family, as a unit, can survive in the post-dispersal period? Family organization in the United States had changed radically. It has become increasingly vulnerable to modern technology, to requirements of job travel, to attendance at colleges far from home, and to increasing intermarriage. The old days when families normally took in an unmarried aunt or a sick grandmother are gone forever. Economics, living space, the intensities of the modern workplace, all militate against that kind of family expansiveness. And not only that — older generations today are more independent and many stubbornly refuse to live with their children.

Yet we have seen the impact of "family values" as an American theme of the 1990s. This theme, though politically motivated, has resonated powerfully in the social discussions of the decade. If the family structure is changing, there appears to be a need to reach out for lost moral values, no matter how thin their rationale in a modern complex world.

If a real search for "family values" is on, we have our own Jewish traditional values, handed down for thousands of years and sustained in the ethos of the Jewish people. As we move toward the year 2000, the structure of the family will be different, the organization may be looser, the distance in geographical terms between family members may widen, but those Jewish values which nurtured Jews in their 2,000-year history can continue to guide the Jewish family no matter how dispersed or how disconnected the family unit is. □

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## Did F.D.R. Fail Us?

### BEARING WITNESS:

**How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust,** by Henry L. Feingold. 322 pages. Cloth \$39.95, Paper \$16.95  
1995. Syracuse University Press.

More than half a century has elapsed since the war against Hitler ended, and the enormity of his crimes against humanity has already sunken deeply into the consciousness of mankind. His super-atrocity — the Holocaust — has become a permanent topic of research, debate and controversy. One of the most tenacious questions, even now, is the tormenting question: did America, the giant world power, do enough to stop the fiendish Nazi plot, or at least rescue whatever was rescueable?

Professor Feingold, who himself was saved by providence when his family left Mannheim early enough to escape the Nazi hellfire, has spent decades trying to piece together the many facets of America's relationship to the Holocaust, aside from its massive involvement in the military destruction of the Nazi regime.

In discussing the uniqueness of the Holocaust, the author suggests that "rather than the scale of the slaughter or its intentionality, it was the fact that European Jewry was producing a universalizing elite in the sciences, political theory, communications, literature, theater, philosophy, and commerce that was reshaping European life and pushing it to beyond the confines of the nation-state that gives the Holocaust its historical weight. It is the destruction of the population base that produced that small universalizing elite that makes the Holocaust a turning point in European history. . ."

Feingold deals with the charge

## B O O K S

# The Jewish Volkists

*The Stern Gang: Ideology, Politics and Terror: 1940-1949*  
London: Frank Cass, [1995]. 358 pp.

by Joseph Heller

**L**ehi ("Lohamei herut Yisrael") was the name given, in September, 1940, to a Jewish pre-State resistance movement devoted to daring guerrilla tactics by Abraham Stern (1907-1942). Stern was a poet and a political militarist personally devoted to civil behavior but evidently an incorrigible outsider. A mystic as well as a militarist, he adopted the name "ben Yair", identifying with Elazar ben Yair, the last commander of Masada. Fiercely anti-British, Stern and his cohorts helped expedite *Aliyah bet* (the immigration of refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe by coming to Palestine governed by the British) while defying Zionist policy and authority — particularly that of *havlaga* or self-restraint. Even the fairly radical approach of Zev Jabotinsky (1880-1940) and his New Zionist Organization was too quiescent for Stern. Stern inevitably was a hunted man, killed in early 1942 by a British police officer who found him hiding in a closet.

*The Stern Gang...* is a translation of the author's *Lehi: ideology and politics, 1940-1949*

that the Jews allowed themselves to be led "like sheep to the slaughter" and the role of the much-maligned *Judenrat*. It was not a simple life for those in "authority" in the Ghettos.

The complexity of the situation

(Jerusalem: Mercaz Zalman Shazar and Keter, 1989). It is not a narrative history of the Stern group which was reorganized in 1943 and finally dissolved in 1949. Rather, it is an analysis of the ideological underpinnings and convolutions of a fascinating but increasingly unpopular twilight organization which found itself at loggerheads with the Jewish Agency, the British and even the Revisionists.

A carefully researched study, Heller's book provides the reader with an introduction to the vast literature concerning Yair and the Canaanite movement, which sought to see Jewish history in purely nationalist and *volkish* terms. At a time when current Israeli history is changing and past political relations are being dramatically revamped, a work which holds up Israeli political and ideological antecedents to examination is most welcome. An historian of diplomacy, Dr. Heller teaches international relations and Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. □

Reviewed by  
MORTON J. MEROWITZ

in those days is presented in detail, with special reference to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who has been idolized and demonized by American citizens, and by American Jews of various tem-

(continued on page 31)

## Foreign Workers' Rights in Israel Secured

**A** new pattern of employment of foreign workers has been created with the endorsement of a new collective agreement between the Histadrut and a private employment agency. This new agreement is seen as an effort to improve the conditions of workers brought to Israel from other countries.

The special agreement enumerates the conditions of employment of foreign workers employed by the *Shadmot Lev Hasharon* employment agency. Among other things, it specifies criteria for subjects which have not been regulated before, and addresses serious problems regarding employment of foreign workers.

According to the agreement, each foreign worker will receive a copy of the employment contract, in a language which he understands. He will be in possession of his passport, and his salary will be calculated according to the Wage Protection Law. Every case of dismissal will be examined by a joint committee. The worker will have the right to receive an advance on his salary in Israeli shekels and be able to receive a loan at reduced rates of interest.

The working week is fixed at 44 hours, with extra pay for overtime. *Shadmot Lev Hasharon* is committed to assisting the workers in providing reasonable housing, including electrical equipment and domestic appliances. Each month the employer and the employees will contribute 0.1% of the workers' salary to a welfare fund to be used in emergencies.

The workers will receive payment for feast days or days of mourning and will have the right to two trips on the Holy Days of Easter and Christmas. They will also receive a festive gift once a year and also holiday pay according to the norm in Israel. Every worker has the right to twenty days' sick leave (according to Israel's labor law only 18 sick days are obligatory) which can be accumulated to a maximum of 100 days in five years and will be insured by the National Insurance Institute.

In addition, workers will be insured in a health fund (50% participation by the workers) including hospitalization, surgery, and emergency treatment. Life and accident insurance, including flight expenses for emergencies and a provision for injuries or death, are also included.

## HISTADRUT RESOLVES STRONGER PEACE EFFORT

In a letter to Jay Mazur, president of the National Committee for Labor Israel, Histadrut chairman Amir Peretz, M.K., stated:

"On behalf of the Histadrut and all the workers of Israel, I would like to express my appreciation for your message of sympathy, received after the recent wave of terrorist attacks on innocent men, women and small children, in the streets of Israel.

"Your sympathy and encouragement are a source of support at this anxious time and you can be assured that we will pass on your condolences and good wishes to the families of the victims and to the injured.

"While mourning the casualties, we are resolute about two subjects. First, the security of our fellow citizens is paramount and the terrorist organizations must be severely dealt with and, second, the best method to achieve lasting security is to continue with the peace process until all the Middle East countries are part of it, thus showing that such foul acts only make our resolve stronger."

### The National Committee for Labor Israel

- Advocates the Middle East Peace Process.
- Promotes projects in Israel to strengthen Jewish-Arab relations.
- Works with local Jewish Community Relations Councils.
- Sponsors educational seminars and conferences
- Conducts the Israel Histadrut Campaign.
- Helps fund a network of social, educational, youth and religious services in Israel.
- Supports Israel's labor sector.
- Sponsors national and local labor union missions to Israel.

**You can be part of this dynamic program  
through your membership contributions.  
Write or call:**



National Committee for Labor Israel  
275 Seventh Avenue  
New York, New York 10001  
(212) 647-0300

Jay Mazur, President  
Jerry Goodman, Executive Director

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Over 90,000 Olim and Returnees Arrive

About 77,000 new immigrants arrived in Israel last year, bringing the total number in the current wave, since 1989, to about 710,500. Approximately 610,000 came from the former Soviet Union, when the giant wave of emigration began. Projections for 1996 stood at 62,500 because of the reduced reservoir of Jews there.

The 1995 figure represents a drop of 3.5% compared with 1994, though it is slightly larger than the 1993 figure. Fully 85% of this year's immigrants, about 65,000 people, arrived from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In real terms, there has not been a fall-off from the CIS, since there has been a 10% annual drop in the number of potential immigrants from that area.

Over the past year, there was an increase in the percentage of those coming from the Ukraine, while the proportion from Russia fell.

The number of Israeli residents returning after more than two years abroad was about 14,000, roughly the same number who returned in each of the previous two years.

### Momentum Grows for Quitting Golan

According to survey data published by the Steinmetz Institute at Tel Aviv University, when faced with the option of full withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for a full peace agreement, or continued retention of the Golan without a peace agreement, 46.6% of respondents chose the first option while 43.4% selected the second.

This was the first time that the number of respondents preferring full withdrawal from the Golan was larger than those favoring retention. By comparison, in June of 1995 only 34.4% supported a full withdrawal while a majority were opposed.

A majority of 52.9% of respondents said they favored Prime Minister Shimon Peres' policy regarding negotiations with Syria as compared to 39.2% who opposed it.

The survey found that a decisive majority of 75.4% of those polled believe peace with Syria should be approved by a public referendum.

## Bearing Witness

(continued from page 29)

peraments. As Professor Feingold reminds us, "The Jewish voting bloc had moved closer to him after 1936 while other hyphenates had cooled their ardor. The Jewish 'love affair' with Roosevelt remained unrequited."

Furthermore, "Politically, Roosevelt — like Stalin — wanted to avoid making World War II a war to save the Jews. That was true despite the fact that the Nazi cosmology pictured it in precisely those terms." Feingold gives us much more insight into the FDR phenomenon, his political considerations and his failure to adequately respond to the "human crisis." He contends that "with only a few distinct exceptions, American Jewry seems never to have understood that it was being manipulated."

So the riddle remains unsolved: did FDR fail the Jewish people? Or did he, within obvious limitations, do his utmost to lessen the tragedy of the centuries? □

Reviewed by NAHUM GUTTMAN

## CONTRIBUTORS

GEN. EHUD BARAK is Israel's new Foreign Minister.

SUSAN HATTIS ROLEF is our regular Israel correspondent. She is working on a book dealing with Israel-PLO relations before Oslo.

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RALPH SELIGER is former editor of *Israel Horizons*, quarterly journal of Americans for Progressive Israel/Hashomer Hatzair, and currently contributing editor to *PS: The Intelligent Guide to Jewish Affairs*.

MARK A. RAIDER is professor of modern Jewish history in the Department of Judaic Studies, University at Albany; he recently completed his PhD. dissertation at Brandeis University, entitled "From the Margins to the Mainstream: Labor Zionism and American Jews, 1919-45".

HAIM CHERTOK is an American transplanted to Yeroham, the Negev. Among his books is *Stealing Home*.

SI WAKESBERG is a longtime Labor Zionist *chaver* in New York.

MENAHEM STERN recently published a collection of his work in *100 POEMS PLUS*.

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