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ISRAELI
ELECTIONS
HEAT UP

RELIGIOUS
DILEMMA
EXAMINED

CLINTON
AS
"BOYCHICK"

THE GHETTO
PRESS

FRESH
IMPRESSIONS
FROM ISRAEL

**THE EMERGENCE OF
American Zionism**



MARK A. RAIDER

(See Review on Page 29)

SINCE 1934 • A LABOR ZIONIST JOURNAL



The Labor Zionist Alliance of America
mourns the passing of its illustrious
past President



HYMAN R. FAINE

at age 88 in California. We extend heartfelt
condolences to his beloved wife Ruth, to their
two daughters and five grandchildren here and in Israel.

Hy's total commitment to Labor Zionism and to
the labor movement in America will serve as an
inspiration to us all.



IN MEMORIAM
"Hy" FAINE



HE WILL BE LOVINGLY REMEMBERED AS A
LABOR ZIONIST LEADER AND THINKER
DEVOTED TO A PROGRESSIVE ISRAEL,
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE RIGHTS AND
DIGNITY OF LABOR

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CONTENTS

Vol. LXVI, No. 2 (634)
MARCH/APRIL 1999

Tributes to Hyman Faine	2
Israel	4
LESS THAN TWO MONTHS TO GO	<i>Susan Hattis Rolef</i>
	7
ELECTION CAMPAIGN HEATS UP	<i>Misha Lowish</i>
Poetry	9
DAVID CONTEMPLATING A PHOTOGRAPH OF BATHSHEBA	<i>George I. Bernstein</i>
Americana	10
THE PRESIDENT AS "BOYCHICK"	<i>Henry L. Feingold</i>
Contributors	14
IMPRESSIONS FROM ISRAEL	15
	<i>Mark Seal</i>
ISRAEL: A THEOCRATIC STATE?	19
	<i>Zvi Ganin</i>
History	22
THE GHETTO PRESS	<i>David Rosenthal</i>
Books	26
MEMOIRS OF NAHUM GLATZER	<i>Curt Leviant</i>
EMERGENCE OF AMERICAN ZIONISM	29
By Mark A. Raider	<i>Bennett Lovett-Graff</i>
Letters	27
In the Movement	28
LZA YOUNG LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE	<i>Stephane Acel</i>

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Less Than Two Months To Go

By Susan Hattis Rolef

James Carville, Ehud Barak's American advisor in the current election campaign, recently commented that he had never experienced a campaign in which the issues changed so rapidly as that in Israel. He might have added that it is not just the issues that have been changing rapidly, but even some of the actors.

Since the beginning of January, when early elections were first declared, and we last wrote, quite a bit has changed. In the first place, the new Center Party has more or less gelled, though at the time of writing - March 21 - neither its full list of candidates nor its platform have been finalized. Instead of former Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak standing at the new party's head, we have former Minister of Defense and retired Major General Yitzhak Mordechai, with Lipkin-Shahak in second place. Mordechai, who was born in the Kurdish part of Iraq, is Israel's first serious non-Ashkenazi candidate for Prime Minister, and until January 23 was a Likudnik and a member of Netanyahu's government. Mordechai is also the first Israeli minister to have been fired in a live TV broadcast by the Prime Minister, who has turned TV appearances into the be-all and end-all of his political career.

Lipkin-Shahak is number two in the new party. Numbers three and four are two former Likud "princes" - former Minister of Justice and Minister of Finance, Dan Meridor, and former Minister of Police and Mayor of Tel Aviv Ronnie Milo. The only senior Laborites to have deserted to the new Center Party were former Labor Secretary General, MK Nissim Zvili (who will not be on the new party's list) and MK Hagai Merom (formerly a representative of the United Kibbutz Movement). In fifth

place there is Dalia Rabin-Philosoph - Yitzhak Rabin's daughter, and in the eleventh place there is a young, sharp-tongued Russian woman - Svetlana Alexandrova - who failed in the contest for the new-immigrant slot on the labor list in the recent Labor primaries. Haim Ramon finally decided to stay in the Labor Party. The polls predict that the new Center Party will get no more than 15 Knesset seats - what Yigael Yadin's Democratic Movement for Change (which the Center Party resembles in so many ways) received back in the 1977 elections. For those who have forgotten, though the DMC joined the coalition formed by Menachem Begin after those elections, within a year the new party totally disintegrated.

As to Mordechai, he is the greatest paradox in Israeli politics today. All the opinion polls show him beating Netanyahu in the second round of elections for the Prime Minister (and there will almost certainly be a second round, because none of the candidates will receive more than 50% of the votes in the first round), but none of the polls show him reaching the second round (Netanyahu and Barak will meet on June 1). The reason for this is that while almost all of Barak's votes would go to Mordechai in a second round, only about half of Mordechai's votes would go to Barak. Amongst Mordechai's supporters there are many former Likudniks, "Oriental" and "traditional" voters, who are likely to vote for Netanyahu if Barak stands opposite him in the second round.

In his campaign so far, Mordechai (who unlike Netanyahu and Barak doesn't have an American campaign advisor, and doesn't seem to be in need of one) has been attacking Netanyahu for being both a failure as Prime

Minister and danger to Israel, and Barak for being unable to unite all sections of the Israeli society and allegedly unable to beat Netanyahu in the second round. Mordechai also claims to be the only Israeli leader who really understands the Arab mentality and thus able to reach peace with the Arabs. The warmth with which he was received by King Abdallah of Jordan during his father's funeral, certainly seems to indicate that Mordechai has an edge over the other Israeli candidates in this sphere.

Ehud Barak's popularity - if we are to believe the polls, and these, as we know from past experience, are fickle - has been going up. The report of the new State Comptroller, Eliezer Goldberg, regarding the tragic accident during a military practice at the Ze'elim training grounds back in 1994 (an elite IDF unit was allegedly practicing an attempt on Saddam Hussein's life when it occurred), which Barak attended as Chief of Staff, totally exonerated Barak from any suspicion of misconduct or desertion of wounded soldiers. After declaring that he did not expect Minister of Justice Tsahi Hanegbi to apologize for accusing him, from the Knesset podium, of having escaped the scene and responsibility ("*Ehud barah*"), Barak declared - much to James Carville's chagrin - that he wanted the issue of the Ze'elim accident off the agenda, since so tragic an event, in which five soldiers had been killed and another five wounded, was not a suitable issue for an election campaign.

Barak has, however, taken Carville's advice to do more well reported roaming about the country, and less TV appearances. Barak has also started to call the cues in the campaign, rather than just react to cues set by others. Thus, Barak was the first candidate to declare, following painful Israeli losses at the hands of the Hizballah in Lebanon, that if he is elected Prime Minister he will have the Israeli soldiers out of Lebanon by June 2000, by which time he also promised to have talks with Syria well under way. Barak has also made the utmost of his success in getting David Levy's "Gesher" and the moderate national religious party "Meimad" to join the Labor Party in a single list - Yisrael Ahat (one Israel) - in the coming elections. Among Labor's star performers in the current elections campaign are MK Prof. Shlomo Ben Ami, who is of Moroccan ori-

gin, and retired Major general Mattan Vilnai, who had expected to be appointed Chief of Staff after Lipkin-Shahak's retirement, but was disappointed. Both Ben Ami and Vilnai are among the first five on the Labor list. Vilnai, who blames both Mordechai, as Minister of Defense, and Lipkin-Shahak for his non-appointment as Chief of Staff, is proving to be a serious and solid spokesman for the Labor Party.

Despite the fact that the Likud is currently running without five of its previous top leaders, and that its previous chairman, Yitzhak Shamir, is supporting Ze'ev Binyamin Begin's bid for the premiership, despite bitter personal attacks on Netanyahu by all the leaders of the Center Party and Labor, and despite the continuation of the economic slump and Israel's deteriorating status in the international arena, Netanyahu's popularity among broad sections of the population, seems to be as solid as ever. Surprisingly, the Likud list for the coming elections, recently elected by the party's Central Committee (the Likud cancelled the primaries system) is a young and not unattractive list, with three "Orientals" (Silvan Shalom, Moshe Katzav and new Minister of Finance Meir Shetrit) among its top five. However, for the first time in many months Netanyahu and the Likud as a whole, seem to be on the defensive, and Netanyahu's American campaign advisor - Arthur Finkelstein - doesn't seem to be supplying the goods.

At the time of writing it looks like there are going to be six candidates for Prime Minister: Netanyahu, Barak, Mordechai, Begin (who now heads a new Right wing list, which includes Begin's own Herut Party, Ze'evi's Moledet and a settlers party called Tkuma), the clown Rabbi Yossef Ba-Gad, and Arab MK Azmi Bishara of the Balad Party. Bishara, who would like Israel to turn into a binational state, wants to use the campaign for Prime Minister to increase awareness in the country to the plight of its Arab citizens.

Currently 56 parties have registered with the Parties Registrar, but many of these will not be running in the elections, or will not be running independently (for example, "One Israel" is made of three registered parties, as is Begin's Right wing list, which hasn't yet adopted its final name).

Carville's comment about the rapid change

in the campaign issues, mentioned at the beginning of this article, was made in connection with the verdict in the Der'i trial given on Wednesday, March 17. Der'i, the charismatic political leader of the ultra-religious "Oriental" party Shas, was found guilty, by the District Court of Jerusalem, of a whole list of criminal offenses, including the taking of personal bribes and trying to obstruct justice. The spiritual leader of the party, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, as well as its hard core members, have refused to accept this verdict, and believe it is a secular Ashkenazi conspiracy against the Sephardim in general and Shas in particular (this is especially curious, since two of the three justices who sat in the trial are Sephardim, and the one who sat at the head, is religious). This follows very harsh words uttered several weeks ago by Rabbi Ovadia about the justices of the Supreme Court, whom he accused of knowing less Torah than "one of our 7-8 year old children", and called wicked people, "who are the source of all the suffering and troubles in the world... They have neither religion nor justice. They all have intercourse with menstruants (a dispicable act according to the Jewish law - SHR). They all desecrate the Sabbath. These are our judges. We are ruled by slaves."

How the verdict will affect the future political map of Israel or even the fate of Shas itself, is not clear at this point, and since Der'i's appeal to the Supreme Court will not be heard before the elections, it is not even clear how the trial will finally end (whether Der'i will receive a prison sentence, or will finally be declared not guilty on the most serious counts). It should be noted that it is not only Der'i's religious political supporters who believe him to be not guilty. Even among his non-religious personal friends there are many, and chief among them Labor's Haim Ramon, who believe that the District Court was wrong in its verdict, and that the Supreme Court will reverse it.

The three main candidates for Prime Minister have all made a point of standing firmly behind the Israeli legal system, but all have expressed sympathy with Der'i's personal predicament. Netanyahu is hoping that unlike what happened in the 1996 elections Rabbi Ovadia Yosef will instruct Shas voters to vote for him for Prime Minister, while Barak and Mordechai are hoping that he will again

remain formally neutral. Even though as a traditional "Oriental" Mordechai had hoped to gain Rabbi Ovadia's support, the Rabbi was reportedly angry with him for not having taken his advice that he remain in the Likud. However, what is clear is that Shas is close to realizing its full electoral potential. Despite what the Shas leaders say, the majority of "Orientals" in Israel do not identify with the Shas message of ethnic discrimination and desire to turn Israel into a Halacha state. Rather they seek to integrate into modern, progressive Israel. In the coming elections Shas might not even repeat its phenomenal success of 1996 - 10 Knesset seats.

What we can state with certainty about the approaching elections is that the Arab vote is going to be more split than in the previous elections (at least four Arab lists are planning to run); the Jewish extreme Right will be more united; the National Religious Party, that has become a little more moderate, will lose some of its power (it received 9 seats in the previous Knesset); there are going to be two new-immigrant parties in the next Knesset (Sheransky's Yisrael Be'aliya and Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beteinu); and there will be more women in the 15th Knesset than there were in the 14th (that is not difficult, since there were only 9 women in the 14th...)

It is also certain that several notable parliamentarians from previous Knessets are not going to be members of the new one, including current Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon from the Likud, who decided to leave politics and go into business; former Knesset Speaker Professor Shevah Weiss from the Labor party, who did not get elected to a realistic place on the Labor list; MK Dedi Zucker from Meretz, who was thrown out of the Meretz list, and might be running in a separate list; Avraham Poraz from Meretz, who has decided to run as number two in an independent Shinui with media personality Tommy Lapid as number one (the party is unlikely get through the 1.5% qualifying threshold); and Eliezer Sandberg from Tsomet, who went to the new Center Party but at the last minute announced that he was not a candidate for a place on its list.

Who will be elected Prime Minister and what the make-up of the 15th Knesset will be, is still anyone's guess. We shall be wiser on May 18 and June 2. □

Election Campaign Heats Up

By Misha Louvish

As the days wind on towards May 17, when the people of Israel will elect their prime minister and the 120-member Knesset, this writer cannot help envying the great democracy in the West.

Fifty states, spread out over a continent, with citizens belonging to scores of races and a wide variety of religions — and yet they concentrate their electoral support on two great parties, while we Israelis, with a population of some six million, five-sixths of whom claim to belong to one people and, basically, to one religion, are dispersed among a score of parties and more, and we have little hope that one of them will emerge strong enough to give the country the unchallenged leadership it needs.

If we look around in our geographical neighborhood, it is true. We may claim credit for our success in maintaining democracy despite all the difficulties — but the strength of our political system seems to have deteriorated rather than improved.

When the people of Israel went to the polls for the first time, less than a year after the Declaration of Independence, there was no time to imitate the American and British systems and divide the country into constituencies each of which would elect one representative. Besides, mass aliyah, the rapid establishment of kibbutzim and moshavim, and the growth of urban populations made it impossible to predict a stable distribution of the electorate.

There was no alternative, therefore, to the list system of proportional representation, in which the elector chooses between party lists, and each is allotted seats in proportion to the number of votes it receives. And although Ben-Gurion never ceased to call for reform, the inertia and the vested interests created by the system were too strong.

When reform did come, it turned out to be in the wrong place. The direct election of the

prime minister, coupled with the election of Knesset members by the old list system, made it possible for the electors to split their votes, so that the major parties lost strength and it was easier for small groups to win representation.

One result of this situation is that prime minister Netanyahu had to include seven parties in his coalition government in 1996 in order to get a bare majority; another is indicated by a recent public opinion poll, which suggests that if the election were held now the three major parties put together would command no more than a bare majority.

The Likud, on the face of it, seems to confront the most serious problems. It fought the 1996 election in combination with David Levy's Geshet group and Reserves Major-general Raphael Eitan's Tsomet. Levy left the Likud in protest against the weakness of its peace effort and its social policies and has joined the Labor Party to form the One Israel list. Eitan would be prepared to stay with the Likud, but his electoral backing has sadly deteriorated.

Netanyahu, too, lost the support of his Finance Minister, the veteran Dan Meridor, who later joined in the establishment of the new Center Party. Benny Begin, who revived the name of his father's Herut party and formed an alliance to fight the Likud from the right, and his popular Defense Minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, who now leads the Center Party. The Likud enters the election with no more than nineteen Knesset members, compared with Labor's thirty-four.

It must be noted, however, to the chagrin of an old Socialist like myself, that the Likud and its leader have a great deal of grass-roots support. Despite fifty years of progress, life is still hard for the majority of Israelis, and many, especially among the Sephardi families from Morocco, Iraq and other Middle East

countries, still distrust the largely Ashkenazi parties of the Left. Right-wing is no longer a term of abuse, and the word is brandished as a banner by Benny Begin's alliance.

Ehud Barak, Shimon Peres's successor as Labor leader, does not reject the leftist brand, but he does not brandish it either. In a new form of "Alignment" he has concluded an alliance, not with the parties of the left as in the seventies, but with David Levy's populist Geshet and the moderate religious movement Meimad, under the heading "Yisrael Ahat" — "One Israel" or "Israel is One."

Whether the leaders of these groups will bring their followers with them to the polls remains to be seen, but Barak has placed himself and his supporters firmly in the center of the political scene, and there are signs that his support is growing.

Both Labor and the Likud chose their Knesset candidates by democratic methods, which is particularly important since a "safe seat" in a party list — i.e. one which is well within the party's realistic electoral expectations — is tantamount to a personal victory before the polls are opened.

The Likud had previously held primaries of its entire membership to choose its parliamentary slate, but did so this time only in the framework of its central council. However, this body has some two thousand members and there was a lively contest in which the rank and file showed considerable independence of the official leadership.

The Labor Party held an organized ballot of all its registered members, but the need to reserve seats for women, new immigrants and the various regions, as well as the Geshet allies, made this a complex operation and there has been controversy over some of the results.

Labor's claim to centrality is vehemently contested by a new movement whose entire appeal is summed up in its name: the Center Party. Ronny Milo, the retiring Mayor of Tel Aviv, had placed the idea of such a movement on the public agenda, arguing that the almost equal division of the political forces between right and left made it almost impossible to get anything like a consensus on problems of public policy, and only a center party could break the continuing deadlock.

When Dan Meridor resigned he joined up

with Milo and they were reinforced by the popular Major-General Lipkin-Shahak when he retired from his post as IDF Chief of Staff. He, however, specifically proclaimed himself a candidate for the premiership, which was also claimed by Meridor. The deadlock was broken only when Mordechai resigned from the government and the Likud, so that both claimants could combine, without lack of face, under his leadership.

The new party was joined by two Labor members, Uri Savir, an expert in foreign affairs and one of the architects of the Oslo agreement, and Dalia, daughter of the late Labor leader Yitzhak Rabin. It claimed to be gathering support, but for some time it had no defined program and its Knesset candidates could not be chosen by any form of popular election, like those of Labor and the Likud; they had to be hand-picked by the founding four.

The new party, however, presents an enticing argument over the election of the prime minister. It is fairly obvious that Netanyahu, although he will probably get a larger vote than either Barak or Mordechai, will not win fifty percent of the total, so that a second ballot will have to be held after a two-week interval between the two leading candidates.

In such a second round, it is argued, Barak will be backed only by convinced Labor supporters, while Mordechai can expect to get all the Labor votes in addition to those of the center and thus defeat Netanyahu. Therefore, his advocates argue, Barak ought to withdraw and let Mordechai achieve the common goal of defeating Netanyahu.

Even if this argument was more convincing, it could not hope to persuade a long-established, deeply rooted movement like Labor to commit suicide, and in recent polls Barak is predicted to defeat Netanyahu, if only by a narrow margin, in a second round.

There was a time when a moderate National Religious Party ("Mafdal") could always be relied on to support Labor in a coalition government, but in the last couple of decades it has gone far to the right. Today it is definitely opposed to the Oslo and Wye agreements and any further concessions to the Palestinians.

It continues to support Netanyahu as prime minister because a Labor or Center Party leader would no doubt give up more territory for peace.

It seems, however, to include an ill-defined

moderate wing, which was able, in the choice of Knesset candidates, to relegate the right-wing Hanan Porat and a supporter of his to "unrealistic" positions on the list. The two refused to accept the situation and left the NRP to join Benny Begin and another right-wing group.

A unique movement, which came into even greater prominence when its leader was found guilty of bribery and other offenses, is Shas (initials of "Sephardim Shomrei-Torah" — Observant Sephardim). Shas has succeeded in coupling the resentments of the masses of oriental origin with popular beliefs and superstitions. Its spiritual leader, the former Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef (also known as "Rishon le tzion," the First in Zion), an unchallenged authority on Talmudic law, is served by the young Rabbi Arye Der'i, one of the most skillful politicians on the Israeli scene.

Unfortunately, at an early stage in his career, when he was first Director-General and then political head of the Interior Ministry, Der'i seems to have been involved in underhand dealings and, after a trial lasting several years, has been found guilty of bribery and other offenses. Shas supporters have vociferously proclaimed his innocence, and political storms are expected when sentence is pronounced. Since Shas, which at present holds ten Knesset seats and two ministries, is expected to be an essential component of any coalition cabinet, leaders of the three major parties have been extremely cautious. Their comments on his conviction, express more sympathy than censure.

Space does not permit detailed comment on a plethora of other parties, each of which hopes to win the statutory minimum of one and a half per cent of the votes. There are two parties, mainly representing newcomers from the former Soviet Union — one of them headed by Natan Sharansky, the hero of Soviet Jewry's struggle; a women's party, headed by a beauty who runs a prosperous fashion business; one led by "Tommy" Lapid, the popular star of a political talk show; another whose program calls for the establishment of gambling casinos in Israel, and a dozen or so more.

Ehud Barak, the Labor leader and Mordechai, of the Center Party, indicate their intention to try to establish a "national unity government" after the elections in the hope that a consensus over a policy for peace with

the Arabs can be obtained. Everything will depend, however, on the defeat of "Bibi" Netanyahu and the success of the victor in winning enough support to make him relatively independent of the smaller groups. □

David

CONTEMPLATING A PHOTOGRAPH
OF BATHSHEBA

(at an air-force base somewhere in the Negev)



By George I. Bernstein

*O for your kiss! For your love
more enticing than wine,
my eyes disrobe my dove
the eyes of sun and morning shine.*

Are you really for real
or formed of sunrise air,
could the mind's meanderings
compose a face so fair.

The twinkling night-sky pales
in your lucent shining eyes,
the moon in envy hides
beneath the perfume of your sighs.

Merry laughter, rippling clear
as a tumbling little mountain stream,
your sadness at another's tear,
your soul, as pure as a child's sweet dream.

Your hand's soft touch upon my brow
caressing cool as twilight's sigh,
the wondrous music of your voice
like an angels' chorus from the sky.

To win your love, jewelled crowns would fall
and gold and kingdoms lose their worth,
heaven's entrance would be left unsought
while you my sweet remained on earth.

The President as “Boychick”

By Henry L. Feingold

So much has been written about the impeachment of Bill Clinton that it may be a “high crime and misdemeanor” to add yet another word. But these observations are being set down when, despite the zeal of Henry Hyde and his young Republican inquisitors, the ordeal has drawn to a close. Lacking the gravitas required for reversing the election of a popular president, the trial may go down in history as an example of political overreach. A small group of men determined to punish an immoral president bamboozle the dominant Republican party to go along with a self-destructive strategy which, if successful, threatened to undermine the checks and balance system. It is difficult to believe that a political system as stable as the American allowed itself to come so close to being destabilized.

The five year long quest to topple Clinton was not merely a “right wing conspiracy” as suggested by the First Lady. Yet there was something perceptibly abnormal, in the avid pursuit of Clinton. The overweening attention of the media is proof of that. It promised the inquisitors instant celebrityhood. The sheer length of the impeachment process assured more exposure. For politicians whom we would otherwise never have seen that must have been especially seductive. Their names became household words. But there was a down side. The TV camera exposed more than a physical image. It showed them as zealots embarked on the impossible mission of removing the president without having a clear cut case and without having bi-partisan support requisite to overturn an election.

But the physical image of the House managers was interesting from a regional and gen-

erational point of view. They were usually young and had a certain neatness of appearance as if dressed and coiffured as models in a clothing store catalogue. Their speech, often, had the Gomer Pyle accent of rural America. It stemmed from somewhere in the American heartland, the upland South perhaps. Professionally they were usually lawyers who thought they were putting their training in the service of a deeper moral purpose. Clearly they believed that, but detectable beneath was a hatred of Clinton that bordered on a mania. Repeatedly they conjured up stories expressing concern about the moral education of their children. What could they tell them if the president is allowed to get away with perjury and suborning witnesses? It would mean the collapse of the legal system. Sometimes they sounded a warning regarding the importance of absolute equality before the law. The president was no exception. Others cited the unwritten laws of the business world. We were told that if a CEO had done what Clinton did he would be fired without hesitation. The arguments were banal but effective. It was only later in the proceedings after the hypocrisy of the prosecutors like Henry Hyde, and Tom DeLay who acted as point man for the drive to remove Clinton from office, that the public got a glimpse of the fact that much more than a search for justice was going on.

That was the rationale presented to the public but it tells us almost nothing regarding the special animus against Clinton. But why Clinton? He is after all a son of the upland South who shares their culture down to the very rhythms of his speech. The Clinton type should have seemed familiar to them. Moreover, his ascendancy could serve as a sterling

example of the "rags to riches" story, southern style. But we shall see that rather than muting the antagonism it actually strengthened it.

The inquisitorial types in the House managers group are not unknown in American politics. Recall that McCarthy and Nixon built their careers on accusations generated by the fear of a communist conspiracy. Extreme hatred for a particular president is also not unknown. FDR was considered a traitor to his class and some may remember the *New Yorker* cartoon which showed that someone had written the name of Roosevelt in the snow — in urine. Readers would be shocked at the slanderous attacks against Jefferson in the Federalist press or the attempt to silence the opposition embodied in the Alien and Sedition laws of 1796. Similarly there was a great hatred against Andrew Jackson and Andrew Johnson who also was impeached in 1868. But not all cases of dislike for the person occupying the oval office are the same. Anchored in his "do nothing" policy to counteract the Depression, the distaste for Herbert Hoover grew geometrically by the election of 1932. But the voters' dislike was not personal. Jewish voters remembered that Hoover had done yeoman relief work in war-devastated Europe. But the left's hatred of Nixon was as intense as that of today's right against Clinton. There is something personal involved in shaping such attitudes. Nor are they permanent. Those who are concerned that the current episode will leave a permanent scar are reminded that Nixon had successfully rehabilitated himself so that before his death he played the role of respected elder statesman. Clinton would begin the rehabilitation process at a younger age and with a better argument. He was, after all, the first president who fell victim to the intensified culture war that has always been part of the American political scene.

The best historical parallel to match the current passion to topple Clinton can be found in the hatred of Roosevelt. Then, too, the animus extended to the First Lady. Like Eleanor Roosevelt, Hillary was forced to pay a price for her activism. Even the rumors of lesbianism are similar, although in Eleanor's case they were raised by her biographer, not the opposition.

But there are differences, too. Roosevelt was

a patrician who "betrayed" his class while the hatred of Clinton may relate to the marginal social class station with which he entered life. The president was raised in a dysfunctional family who, by dint of sheer intelligence, will and charm, was able to become the most powerful political leader on earth. The official biography has it that he aspired to be president from his early adolescence and simply acted out his career strategy step by step. Given his background such high aspirations seem unreal, as unreal as Monica Lewinsky's aspiration to possess a married President as her lover. It is the stuff of a cheap dime novel. But it demonstrates that American politics is open to talent, perhaps too much so. In fact, the political leader that most closely resembles Clinton is not American at all. He is David Lloyd George, the Liberal Prime Minister who led Britain out of the doldrums after 1916 and who did much to reshape Britain's polity and social structure. Clinton's political program tries to do much the same thing and faces the same kind of intense hatred from conservative power holders who do not look kindly at the prospect of their "trailer trash" rising to the very top and then preaching a message of inclusion.

The role of the religious right which is anchored in the South is only one element in the excessive hatred of Clinton. The desire to topple Clinton is a phenomenon rooted in the sociocultural soil of post-World War II America. Clinton stands indicted not only because he broke an imagined moral code that governs behavior in the Oval Office. Those rules were after all previously broken most recently by two of our most popular presidents, Roosevelt and Kennedy, and probably do not reach the level of outrageousness of Warren Harding. The hatred is better related to his administration's strong outreach to constituencies, women, gays, blacks, ethnics, the handicapped, that heretofore were not part of the American mainstream. Clinton openly flaunts his connection with these groups. His buddy who shares his innermost secrets is Vernon Jordan, an attractive black man. His defense team featured a well spoken black attorney who skillfully presents her case. His secretary is a gentle black woman. His former Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich, was a dwarfed man, secure enough to make sport of himself and relax everybody in the process. And that inclu-

siveness goes well beyond the White House. It is found on all levels of the federal civil service. It is all part of a new "inclusive" society with which many Americans have yet to come to terms.

Clinton himself belongs to that SRO generation of "Boomers" born all at once in the decade after the veterans of World War II returned. The "Boomers" have presented problems for every social institution with which they have come in contact. When they were processed through the schools the problem was "why Johnny can't read." When it came to war it was "hell no, we won't go." When it came to marriage it was serial monogamy. Once in the work force they proceeded to break down the traditional linkage of work and worth. "Boomers" aspire to retire before the age of fifty five. If the joyful togetherness of Woodstock is any indication, the Boomers seem to be less individuated and happy to live in groups. That may account for the frequently heard observation that Clinton is so anxious to please and belong that finding his character core is impossible. He seems to have none.

Yet when his tenure is judged by the normal standards which primarily concern national security and economic prosperity, the American people rightly conclude that they have rarely had it better. Like politicians everywhere Clinton claims credit for all good things that happen on his watch when, in fact, the seeds for the period of sustained economic growth and American dominance in the international arena were planted years before. But clearly America has not been mismanaged since Clinton took the helm in 1992.

There is concern that the Lewinsky affair will diminish American power which is based as much on aura as it is on military hardware. We are told that abroad few understand why we have shot ourselves in the foot. Some worry about the political stability of this one remaining super power. But that is less true of Europe's underclass which instinctively recognizes that the real revolution that sets the world's standards of freedom and social justice was born and continues to be nurtured in America. Mitterand's funeral which showed his mistress, daughter and wife standing virtually side by side is counterposed against the sleazy Monica affair as a model of European

sophistication. In Europe we are told that sex remains a private affair between men and women, or what have you, which is as it should be. But I wonder whether a poll of European women would show such easy acceptance of the male prerogative. There are Europeans who rather than condemning America for its puritanism feel a certain satisfaction that there still exist innocents that at least aspire to a more honest form of gender relations, though they do not necessarily achieve it.

Yet, inexplicably, the viewing public did not regard the upholders of moral standards represented by the House managers as an attractive group. That has something to do with a recognition by the public that there is a vast difference between being moral and being a moralizer, telling others what their moral standards should be. The chief prosecutor Rep. Henry Hyde, clearly is a moral athlete and if Rep. Tom DeLay applied to his own actions in Texas the standards he applies to Clinton he might be serving time for perjury in a Texas jail. We should not be surprised at the linkage of sex and politics which is the context in which these happenings can best be understood. Power, which is what politics is all about, is after all the most powerful of all aphrodisiacs.

There is another disjuncture encountered when applying a moral standard to matters of sex among political leaders. Such standards tend to deviate from the practiced norm. The accepted figure for male adultery hovers anywhere from forty to sixty percent. (It is lower among women but is rising.) There is considerable variation between groups and professions. But other things being equal we are probably more likely to find sexual trespasses among political leaders precisely because they hold power. Thankfully, it is not constitutionally possible to request that all Representatives and Senators resign if they have committed adultery. But I suspect that if we add other unacceptable moral and economic acts that tempt power holders the number resigning would be surprisingly high. The popular jest might even be: "Will the last Congressman to leave please turn off the lights." There are of course moral and righteous people who hold political office. But the comparative context would give our moralists great sorrow. Especially at the highest level it may well be that

Clinton and Kennedy and Johnson and Rockefeller and Roosevelt are not the exception but the rule. People in a position of power are more subject to temptations that can take the form of thong-snapping Monica groupies to Mata Hari type espionage agents. If Monica in her naivete was not aware that sex is a currency of power when she first displayed her thong then she was soon made aware of it by her "friend" Linda Tripp who informed her what such an affair with the president was worth on the job market.

All of which brings us to the most startling incongruity of all. The standards of morality projected by the prosecutors were totally at odds with those of the world of the "Boomers" that have come into their political own with the ascendancy of Clinton to the presidency. The "Boomer" generation tolls the highest divorce rate in American history. Divorces, incidentally, that are frequently preceded by "affairs" by either partner. A proportion of the "Boomer" generation seems to have abandoned the idea of marriage altogether, preferring informal arrangements of coupling. That accounts for the growing percentage of single parent families. They also produce among the highest rates of illegitimacy in the western world. (Iceland may be higher.) In short what we have experienced in the last half century is nothing less than a radical alteration of the sexual morals that guided family life previously. That is really what may be behind the persistent refusal, reflected in the polls, of the American people to withdraw their favor from the president. Clinton's extramarital affairs do not really set him apart from his age cohort or at least not that far apart that it can be frowned upon. They live in glass houses and, unlike Rep. Henry Hyde, they are honest enough not to throw stones.

Then, what sense can be made out of this extraordinary event. Clearly there was something more going on here than concern about the president breaking the law. We have caught a glimpse of the conflicts that rage just beneath the surface of an affluent American society. They are fueled by the deep economic and social changes in post-war America that have accelerated since the end of the war in Viet Nam. One of the facets of that change concerns demography: the composition of the nation's population has become more racially

and ethnically diverse. The white Protestant core group is not being displaced but it is gradually being forced to share power with formerly peripheral groups who for various reasons remained outside of the polity. Chief among these outsiders were blacks but earlier there were various ethnic immigrant groups including Jews. Increasingly, too, women are becoming a separate and crucial part of the political equation. Power is in the process of being extended to women, gays, and the handicapped and smaller groups. All are highly visible in the Clinton administration. A genuinely democratic system keeps the pot boiling and on its side is the very logic of democracy. That is what nettles. The Clinton administration has assured that the democratic dynamic continues to operate.

It has caused a new political alignment. The "Solid South" is now Republican. Most of the manager/inquisitors represent election districts that were solidly democratic two decades ago. Some still are. The change is more apparent than real. The South of the White Citizens Councils that came to the fore during the civil rights struggle, continues to resist change whatever the party label. These new alignments will be seen again in the forthcoming debate over social security, medicare, abortion rights, the death penalty, gun control laws and public education policy. The impeachment debacle itself was not the beginning of the confrontation but rather the last stand of the old polity. It revealed the true face of both sides of the *kulturkampf* in which we are involved.

It is difficult to foresee the precise contours of the conflict in the years ahead. But those who predict that for the next two years Clinton will be lamer than most lame ducks may be in for a surprise. He may recoup much of his influence partly because the Republican party has followed a cadre of zealots over a political cliff and partly because the electorate sympathizes with a man who has been needlessly tortured. The new political forces that Clinton has mobilized are relatively weak but they can be relied upon to support him, come what may. The overwhelming support of the President by Black voters throughout his ordeal has been remarkable. Seen as part of the culture war, liberal America, despite its reservations, will rally to Clinton as it did during the impeachment process.

Still the liberal constituency faces a dilemma. One can hardly come away from this sleazy affair without the impression that Clinton is not quite an adult. There is in him a unique coupling of two talents not usually found together, a brilliant policy wonk and at the same time a practitioner of casual sex. That makes him what my father used to call a "boychick," a young male not quite in control and still subject to uncontrollable hormonal storms. His indicters do not inspire much greater confidence. Viewing this political theater on TV and seeing our congressmen up close one wonders about the future of the republic. Are there no silent contemplative leaders in Washington who can resist the talk shows and the cameras? Where are our Lincolns and Jeffersons?

Where should we situate ourselves in this conflict which will shape American political culture for at least the first half of the 21st century? People like myself who are apprehensive about having a representative of the "Woodstock nation" actually exercising power are in a quandary. Recognizing the familiar face of our old opponents from the McCarthy period and the civil rights struggle, we understand that these forces must be balanced just as our own extreme must be held in check. But to be called on to defend Clinton against them does not set our hearts aflame. True, he has remarkable political skills, he is probably the best informed president about the nitty gritty of public policy since Woodrow Wilson and Herbert Hoover. (Roosevelt did not care for the details and Kennedy had little enthusiasm for the underlying principles.) But he is also a certain type, a southern rogue male, that is particularly unsuitable to occupy the Oval Office. The presidency calls for someone who can do more than play a role. Unlike Kennedy who was also "reckless" in his amalgam of sex and politics, Clinton had ample reason to be careful. He had been pursued by his enemies since the beginning of his meteoric rise. The independent counsel had extraordinary powers to hunt him down and had shown that he was passionate about doing so. Few today still doubt that Kenneth Starr was in the throes of a hatred that went far beyond merely establishing the facts of the case. Yet Clinton succumbed to Monica's thongs and mindless chatter. It shows incredibly bad judgement, the kind that nearly blew up the world in the Bay

of Pigs. In the end we cannot have a "boychick" president. The world is simply too dangerous a place for that. Better a mature adult. But then we will probably discover that the "Boomer" generation which is by the logic of democracy bound to govern probably has an even less restrictive idea of how life should be lived. Who knows? Clinton's successor may actually have inhaled! □

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February 1999

Impressions from Israel

By Mark Seal

I've been in Israel for 8 days, all of them spent in Jerusalem. I'm part of the annual mission of the Conference of Presidents which has provided me with individual presentations from most of the major contemporary political players as well as panel discussions by journalists, both American and Israeli, academics, pollsters and Rabbis.

The religious issues are at the very center of the public discussion. It is essential to understand that the debate is framed in very different contexts for Israelis. It has become a debate about the democratic nature of the State, about the separation of Synagogue and State, about the freedom of public spaces and, because SHAS is such a significant player, it forms one side of and leads into a cultural clash of profound proportions for this society. (SHAS is an ultra-Orthodox Sephardic group, with a large and effective local network of social service agencies in development towns and poor urban centers.) It is not about religious pluralism.

As a reaction to the massive, 250,000-strong HAREDI demonstration against the Israeli Supreme Court last Sunday, Amos Oz, A.B. Yehoshua, David Grossman and 20 other prominent public personalities announced their intention to affiliate with the Reform or Conservative movements. Yehoshua was quick to add that his affiliation was symbolic since he doesn't believe in God and can't really be a member. Oz joined both movements. In their public act of solidarity, they undermined the authenticity and validity of Liberal Judaism and provide ultimate proof of the HAREDI position that the Reform are just members of a social club.

Rabbis for Human Rights celebrated their 10th anniversary and was featured in Ha'aretz

(Hebrew and English. That's how it now works) Levi Weiman-Kelman, their current chairperson, talked about the tensions that he, his group and by extension, all Liberal Jews living in Israel, live with: demonstrating with secular Israel and identifying with the political left but also being committed to a spiritual, religious life. "The average secular Israeli is uncomfortable with people who speak in the name of the Jewish tradition and lead traditional lives."

Regarding an article in a HAREDI publication where Sinai was identified as coming from the same word root as *sin-ah* (hatred in Hebrew). Somehow, *matan torah* (the giving of the Torah) at Sinai was also about and connected to hatred. Therefore, the ultimate value in Judaism is not to repair the world or to introduce a new ethical and moral set of values, but is to hate those that do not accept Torah. And in this world:

- there is only one way to accept Torah, and
- all other approaches are wrong, and
- one is obligated to confront all those others in public and to deny public space to them as well. The language used to attack Liberal Jews and the Israeli Supreme Court starts at traitor and ends in the Holocaust.

On top of this, the tension between Israeli Orthodoxy and its ally the political right and the American Liberal movements intensifies.

It is impossible to separate religion and state. Unless and until, there is some pluralistic model or approach to Judaism, this rift will grow and intensify as will the struggle over democracy in public space. Conversion is too difficult an issue, but marriage, bar and bat

mitzvah, funerals and other life cycle rituals will have to stop being the exclusive domain of the Orthodox. Religious will also have to leave the legislative arena.

There may be no single issue as important to the future of Israel and to relations between Jews in Israel and the Diaspora. This will have to become a central mission for Liberal and progressive Jews everywhere.

Before going into the political arena, three more snapshots on the religious debate: Avi Ravitsky (Chair, Institute of Jewish Studies at Hebrew U. and founder of Oz V'Shalom), in a superb panel sponsored by the Institute for Democracy In Israel, told of the profound changes in the Israeli educational system during his lifetime. His Orthodox education included study of democratic institutions and secular Zionism and turning to Yaron Ezrachi (Hebrew U. Poli Sci and Shalom Achshav) said "and your education included the siddur, Agadah and midrash.." But that was 30 years ago. These elements are presently absent from the both the secular and religious school systems. In fact, no orthodox child in Israel is taught basic civics. The polarization in the society begins in the 1st grade.

In a conversation with my former colleague and friend, David Landau (for you newcomers, DL is editor of the English Ha'aretz, JTA bureau chief, left wing on the peace Issue and Orthodox in belief and conviction on the internal debate) noted that the ultimate revolution in the HAREDI community was women studying Talmud throughout Jerusalem.

Now politics. The single most problematic element in contemporary Israeli political life is the direct election of the Prime Minister. On the one hand, it has created a completely fragmented Knesset and on the other, it has transformed the national Israeli political process into a personality contest conducted mostly on TV.

For the first time in its history, the two large parties comprise together less than half of the total Knesset and the 1999 electoral projections are for fewer than 30 seats each for Labor and Likud. Shas will definitely have the 3rd largest representation and could become the second largest by the next election. There may be as many as 20 parties represented in the new Knesset with 10 medium-sized parties of between 5 - 10 seats each. The law that was

enacted to eliminate the instability of a fragmented Knesset has created a totally unstable legislature of narrowly focused interest groups and a coalition that will never last even three years and a new culture of politics as personality.

The race for Prime Minister is dominated by sound bites and US media advisors and the Arthur Finkelstein formula of relentless, direct personal attacks dominates the Likud campaign. According to this strategy, Barak is too weak to negotiate with the Arabs, so "Vote for Netanyahu, a strong leader for a strong nation" (*manhig chazak le am chazak*). Barak is not capable of managing a modern economy, so vote Netanyahu, *manhig chazak le am chazak* and on and on. No substantive discussion of issues, which abound and include growing unemployment, economic downturn, rising crime, a frozen peace process and religious wars.

Bibi dominates this type of contest. He rules on TV. He constantly uses his position of incumbency to promise every group pie in the sky. The tragedy, is that he is not held accountable for the failures of his administration which was toppled from power well before the end of its term. He is somehow not held responsible for any particular failure. He blames the media or the Ashkenazic elite or the Palestinians or the US and for now at least, is getting away with this approach. Yoel Markus in Ha'aretz talked about the defeatism of both Barak and Mordechai and their supporters. Barak's appeal is intellectual and Bibi's is emotional and the emotional appeal is currently winning.

The Center party, at present, is a huge disappointment. It is being compared to DASH in the 1970's, which was a cult of personalities created in the mid 1970's to change the Labor party from the outside and ultimately led to the election of Menachem Begin. Dan Meridor has disappeared as has Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. Ronnie Milo is angry over Mordechai's courting of Shas. Mordechai does not seem to have any substantive message and is very tentative in public. They have no apparatus to get out the vote, no structure, no internal democratic process. Mordechai appears to be trolling for a theme or message. Mordechai polls better than Bibi in the second round, but cannot get to the second round, according to the current polls.

Barak and Bibi are even in the polls in both rounds. The Labor primaries produced a rather impressive list. They held a truly democratic primary with 160,000 voters. Both accomplishments were immediately lost by their mismanagement of Ethiopian MK Adissu Messala. Messala did not garner sufficient votes to reach a safe place on the list this time and emotionally accused the party of racism on national TV at what should have been their moment of triumph. Barak apparently knew about this result early in the day and could have made him some offer, say to be assistant minister of absorption in his government. He did not address the issue with political skill and thereby allowed Messala to undermine their public show of national democratic process. Laborites snipe at Barak constantly suggesting that he step aside in favor of Shlomo Ben-Ami. This would be an excellent idea but this conversation is too public and just undermines Barak's image and that of the Labor party.

Shlomo Ben-Ami is Sephardi, an academic and a former Ambassador. He is articulate, with real charisma, appealing strongly to the Moroccan community (according to polling data). He received the most votes in the primaries and will be number 3 on the list after Barak and Peres.

Yossi Beilin gave the most impressive presentation that I heard. He and Ben-Ami are the hope of the Labor party and should help it become the largest faction in the Knesset. A national unity government may be the best possible option at present. Beilin has a new book called "The Death of my American Uncle: American Jewry in the 21st century". It will be released in English soon but I'm not sure under what title. He is interested in the US Jewish community, making informed comments on the UJA-CJF merger, Ron Lauder at the Conf of Presidents, intermarriage and National Jewish Population Study. He has created meaningful alliances and working partnerships with the Right and with the Palestinians and has immense political and diplomatic skills. He will be #4 on the list. He and Ben-Ami traveled around the country on primary day and presented a genuine display of unity. The image of them together is very powerful in this most difficult environment.

I was also impressed by Naomi Chazan.

Her presentation of the Meretz platform focused on the peace process, the religious debate and social justice and equality within Israel. She believes that Bibi will lose. She supports religious pluralism. She belongs to *Mevakshei Derech* and mentioned Reconstructionism as a stream in the debate. But she's #9 on their list and they are polling 5-6 seats.

The electorate is divided into six large groups from a pollster's perspective:

Ashkenazim

Sepharadim

National Orthodox

Haredim

Russians

Arabs.

I heard a presentation from Dr. Minah Tzemach, the most respected pollster in the country, on a panel with Israeli political media consultants and correspondents. The Russian community is profoundly hawkish. They live in their own country for the first time in their lives and are loathe to give any of it away. They will vote at least 2-1 for Bibi. The Ashkenazi vote is overwhelmingly progressive. The National Orthodox vote is Bibi's. The Arabs will generally vote for Barak, but Bibi is convening meetings with conservative community leaders and making lots of promises, especially to the Bedouin community. The Sephardi community cannot ever vote Labor. The Haredi community is committed Shas and Aguda and 2-1 Bibi. She said that Barak is gaining 1996 Bibi voters but that 7% of the electorate are first time Jewish voters and that translates to mostly Haredim, given their birth rates. Absent some major event, demographic facts point to a Bibi victory of 30-50,000 votes in the second round over Barak.

Israel has never had an electoral second round, where only the PM is voted for. What will happen to voter turn out, especially in the Haredi and Arab communities? That is the central question and one of the keys to the election.

SHAS is another key to this election and one of the most important societal phenomena. They own the social justice agenda. Poverty and unemployment are ethnic, Sephardic issues and Shas is their champion. Also, in a profound clash of cultures, the Ashkenazic

elite is seen as the labor constituency and the enemy of the Sephardic underclass. And in Israel, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Therefore, the underclass votes for Bibi. (it's also why Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua join the reform and conservative movement) BUT: The spiritual leader of Shas, Rav Ovadiah Yosef, is a dove and may, according to David Landau who knows Ovadiah well, urge his followers to support the peace process in their ballot for PM. Shas voted for Oslo, so this is not as unlikely as it may appear. But he's old, erratic and directed incendiary language at the Supreme Court.

Perhaps the most compelling analysis is that all Israeli politics are fundamentally tribal. They may masquerade as democratic, but they are not. Labor, Likud, Shas, are all tribal affiliations. A politics of identity and not of ideologies and issues. Personality and not platform and performance. The media becomes part of the Ashkenazic elite and therefore discounted by the other tribes. As an example, a Labor party member could never vote Likud. It's about soccer and basketball teams, youth movements, social circles, professional affiliations, neighborhoods, birthplace, extended families, all tribal.

The National Religious Party held primaries this week, A couple of moderates made the #2 and #4 spots, Hanan Porat, the founder of Gush Etzion and one of the great visionaries of the Land of Israel movement and Gush Emunim was pushed down to #11. The press celebrated the triumph of moderation and the end of the dominance of the Greater Israel faction within the NRP. Today, Porat was offered #5 on the list after spending the week leading ceremonies through downtown Hebron and blasting the NRP on TV and in the press.

Many politicians on the left and in the center state the inevitability of a Palestinian State and the assumption that peace has already been achieved. This is a most seductive analysis for the left, but ultimately helps the right. This issue recedes in primacy and Bibi can sidestep his total mismanagement of the peace process, his bungling attempts at diplomacy and foreign policy, his alienation of the most pro-Jewish US administration ever, etc. and still claim to be, in his heart, a man of peace, except of course, when addressing hard right audiences.

A rational enlightened Israel does exist, an Israel of cafes, and parks, civil behavior, rational public discussion, etc. A source of hope. People who are prepared to fight over their vision of the Zionist dream and will not concede and let it all slip away. I heard Saeb Erikat (Palestinian negotiator in the peace process) deliver one of the most moving presentations. Rational and moderate, he is fundamentally committed to peace. He describes his working for peace as essentially working to support his Jewish friends. Peace is the goal for both nations. If not this year, then in 2010, or in 2050, but peace is inevitable. Another hopeful sign.

There was another panel of presentations from Israel Arabs that was much less positive. They are at the very end of the fiscal allocation process. The Israeli Arab population was increased by a factor of 10 over the 50 years of the state, but not one new Arab village or community has been built. There is a strong fundamentalist movement in Um El Fahem and throughout Wadi Ara a second Arab political force has emerged. They are often neglected in the broader focus on the peace process. There are over one million Arab citizens of Israel and their situation must be addressed and their prospects improved. They did not participate in the boom of the 1990's and this is a time bomb within the Israeli body politic.

Among the people that we know, there is a terrible tension around the vote for Prime Minister. It is still early in the campaign and Bibi is bound to stumble or get caught in his web of lies. Labor has been negotiating with Meimad, Geshet (David Levy's party), Amir Peretz' workers party and others and appears to be succeeding in creating a "One Israel" movement that is broad and inclusive. Barak should begin to appear as a person that can bring groups together, hopefully while Israel remembers that Bibi could not keep either his coalition or his cabinet intact. But in the end, head-to-head, can and will Sepharadim (eastern Jews) vote for Barak for PM. In all of the 1-on-1 polls, Barak and Bibi are virtually tied, while Mordechai trounces Bibi by 12-15%. And the center has not yet issued a platform or set of positions. It is also rumored that Dan Meridor is unhappy and may bolt, which will deepen the belief that the Center is just not a serious party. □

Can American Jewry Help Avert the Danger of Israel Becoming a Theocratic State?

By Zvi Ganin

“Israel: A house divided,” announced the caption under a front-page photo in USA Today on the eve of Israel’s 50th anniversary. The photo showed two ultra-Orthodox Israelis watching a woman in modern dress walking by on a Tel-Aviv street. Above the photo, the paper highlighted two provocative quotes: “More Israelis prefer to have an Arab neighbor than an Orthodox neighbor”...Ze’ev Chafets, newspaper columnist; and, by contrast “Before being a democratic state, we have to ensure it is a Jewish state”...Avner Shaki, National Religious Party. USA Today seems to have accurately captured the growing religious rift within Israeli society.

This rift also has a significant American Jewish dimension. A few weeks after the appearance of the USA Today issue, the *New Yorker* carried a perceptive piece by Pulitzer Prize winner David Remnick titled, “The Outsider.” Remnick, who had visited Israel, managed to decipher the riddle of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu’s cryptic personality and outlook. Of interest here is Netanyahu’s role in abetting the religious rift, and his desire to dismantle the creative secular culture molded by Israel’s founding fathers. An infusion of American Jewish Orthodox support, and heavy contributions by several right-wing American Jewish millionaires, had brought about Netanyahu’s slim victory in 1996. What, one wonders, does the ultra-secular prime minister have in common with the Orthodox? Two years later, it has become increasingly clear that these strange bedfellows are united by a shared perception of the menace presented by

the non-Jewish world, and by a deep hostility to Labor Zionism — and in particular to the kibbutz movement — which had largely shaped modern Israel. This alliance of radical right and fundamentalist Orthodox views has greatly emboldened the aspirations of those Orthodox who aim to make Israel a theocracy. In the long run, the alliance might prove to be fatal.

To understand how Israel has arrived at such a menacing point, let us briefly sketch the role of the Jewish religion in the Jewish state. The idea of the Jewish state evolved and was implemented by the Zionist movement, led mainly by such non-Orthodox leaders as Theodor Herzl, Chaim Weizmann and Louis D. Brandeis, as well as by Reform and Conservative Rabbis: Stephen S. Wise, Abba Hillel Silver and Israel Goldstein in the U.S. Striving to create as wide a consensus as possible, the movement consistently followed a policy of compromise with those Orthodox Jews who were attracted to the Zionist idea of restoring Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Yisrael.

This policy was maintained throughout the period of British rule in Eretz Yisrael (1918-48), and despite several conflicts within the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael), namely over public Sabbath observance, women’s suffrage, and the authority of the rabbinat, the non-Orthodox-Orthodox modus vivendi was sustained.

Essentially, the Yishuv developed into a democratic and pluralistic society. Guided by non-Orthodox leaders such as Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion, Berl Katznelson,

and Moshe Sharett, it created a rich modern Hebrew culture based on the revival of the Hebrew language. It also placed an emphasis on the creation of unique agricultural communities – the kibbutz and moshav, thereby restoring the Jewish people's roots in their ancient homeland. They succeeded admirably in integrating Hebrew culture with the best of Western civilization, as manifested in universal education, the emergence of vibrant literature, art, theater, music, dance, museums and archaeology. Creativity and freedom of thought were encouraged. Indeed, viewed from the vantage point of 50 years, the variety, scope and quality of the achievements of the generation of the founding fathers are truly astonishing.

The emergence of the State of Israel in 1948 after 2000 years of exile presented the Orthodox community with an unprecedented challenge. As scholar Aviezer Ravitzky has rightly observed, a strange creature had been born – “Jewish sovereignty in the Holy Land, before the advent of the Messiah — led by sinners” (non-Orthodox Jews). The Orthodox reaction was split. Most of the ultra-Orthodox, while refusing to recognize the legitimacy of Israel, made the necessary political accommodations to insure continued government funding for their yeshivot. For the Zionist Orthodox, however, the newly born state represented the traditional beginning of Redemption. Adopting the motto “the land of Israel for the People of Israel in accordance with the Torah of Israel,” they insisted that the Halakhah (Jewish law) be integrated into the state's legal and administrative structure as the only guarantee for its existence as an authentic Jewish state.

David Ben-Gurion, cognizant of the Orthodox electoral asset, and determined to prevent a *kulturkampf* decided to continue the policy of compromise. With hindsight, it was a grave mistake. At the time of the creation of Israel, the Orthodox were a small minority and curtailing the legal monopoly granted to the Orthodox could have been brought about, thereby precluding numerous domestic crises and avoiding the present danger of a theocracy. Ben-Gurion and his successors, however, gave in to many Orthodox demands, including:

- The exemption of Yeshiva students from army service.
- Enforced stoppage of public transportation on the

Sabbath (with the exception of Haifa and vicinity), including the banning of EL AL flights on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, ever since Menahem Begin's tenure, with the subsequent loss of \$50 million annually.

- Enforcing dietary laws in public institutions.
- Granting Rabbinical courts a monopoly on marriage, divorce, burial and conversion procedures.
- State financing of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox schools.

The price that Israeli society has been paying for the traditional policy of compromise is heavy. Spiraling monetary support of the ultra-Orthodox through the budgets of the Ministries of Religious Affairs and Education, along with Social Security subventions, have resulted in a dramatic increase in the ultra-Orthodox population. An unprecedented situation has been created in which a growing segment of the population (who do not recognize the legitimacy of the state) does not serve in the army, is not engaged in gainful work, and thus lives off the government dole permanently.

For the Orthodox Zionists, it was the Six-Day War that marked a turning point. Israel's sudden and overwhelming victory, resulting in the conquest of the entire territory of western Eretz Yisrael and the liberation of the Western Wall and the old city of Jerusalem, imbued the war with a far-reaching religious-messianic meaning for the Orthodox. The conquered territory in their view was a sacred land, never to be given up.

This sense of “the beginning of the redemption,” and the messianic frenzy that it engendered, led to the creation of Gush Emunim, a settlement movement of Orthodox Zionists. Augmented by a steady influx of Orthodox American Olim, it has devoted itself single-mindedly to establishing settlements in Judea, Samaria, and in the Gaza Strip. Comprised of dedicated, idealistic true believers, it has systematically flouted restraining government rules and injunctions, successfully settling tens of thousands Jews in these areas and thereby creating obstacles for negotiations involving an Arab-Israeli give and take.

Two shocking events, both perpetrated by Orthodox militants, demonstrated how short the distance is between idealism and fanaticism. On Purim of 1994, Dr. Baruch

Goldstein (an American Jewish settler) indiscriminately killed 29 Arabs and injured 125 while they were praying at their mosque in the Machpelah Cave in Hebron. On November 4, 1995, a Bar-Ilan University student shot and killed Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Tel Aviv.

Apart from these heinous acts, various Orthodox groups (in particular Shas, the Sephardi party) have displayed a growing militancy, intolerance and sometimes violence. They have mounted campaigns to settle their adherents in wholly non-Orthodox neighborhoods with the aim of driving the latter out. Reform and Conservative groups are unable to pray at the Western Wall without massive police protection. The controversy over the Conversion Law has demonstrated once again that the Orthodox rabbinate will never recognize the legitimacy of the Reform and Conservative movements and their rabbis. Moreover, Orthodox propaganda deligitimizing the authority of the Supreme Court has increased dramatically, and at least one act of violence has occurred in this context.

The only ray of hope in these unprecedented developments has been the emergence of Israeli-born young, Reform and Conservative rabbis such as Uri Regev, Ehud Bandel, and Yehoram Mazor who are courageously and tenaciously working for religious freedom and pluralism. They themselves, of course, are denied legal recognition as rabbis. By now, however, there are 44 Conservative and 25 Reform synagogues, and a growing number of schools, all this in the face of active and abusive opposition by the Orthodox establishment.

Ironically, at the height of the UN struggle over the partition of Palestine in September 1947, the director of the State Department Office of Near Eastern Affairs, Loy W. Henderson, who was the most strident opponent of the creation of a Jewish state, warned that such an entity might become a "theocratic racial state and even go so far in several instances as to discriminate on grounds of religion and race against persons outside of Palestine." At that time, of course, this was just another spurious anti-Zionist argument. Regrettably, recent developments might actually validate it.

It is important to point out that the overwhelming success of the Zionist movement

emanated from the fact that it was never a messianic movement. Inspired by Jewish humanistic ideals, balanced by a consistently pragmatic respect for reality, it aimed at taking Jews out of their confining religious and mental ghettos and turning them into masters of their own destiny once again. The transformation of Israel into a theocratic-chauvinistic state would reverse this process. It would also sever Israel's ties with American Jewry and the rest of the diaspora, and in fact turn Israel into a pariah state in the perception of the West. Israel would be doomed, thereby also adversely affecting the position of Jews the world over.

What can be done in the fight for the soul of Israel? The enlightened majority of American Jewry — Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, secular, affiliated and non-affiliated, are our natural allies. Through mutual in-depth visits, Internet correspondence, and identification with selective institutions and causes in Israel, you can lend your moral, political and financial weight to a pluralistic, enlightened Israel. The time has come to vigorously propagate America's heritage of religious tolerance and constitutional protection of religious freedom in Israel. It is a heritage as valid today as it was 200 years ago. This, in my mind, is our challenge for the third millennium. □



Gesher Branch 975 — LZA
Nassau County, New York

Sends warm greetings to
ISRAEL
on the occasion of its
51st Anniversary

Happy Yom Ha'atzmaut!

Raisle Goldstein Al Procton
co-chairs



The Ghetto Press

By David Rosenthal

Prior to the War

Twenty-seven daily newspapers – 23 in Yiddish and four in Polish – served Polish Jewry in the course of various periods between 1918 and 1939. Nine of them were published in Warsaw, 18 in other major cities – Lodz, Cracow, Lwow, Vilna, Bialystok and Lublin. In addition to the daily press, more than a hundred Jewish weekly, bi-weekly and monthly periodicals appeared, devoted to regional matters, problems of Jewish politics, literature and art, of scholarly and professional interest.

This press, the chief source of information for Jews, not only reflected daily developments and events, but also helped to shape the Jewish life of the time. There was a warm, close relationship between reader and writer through the pages of the publication. The reader looked upon “his” writer as teacher, guide, authority in his field of knowledge, and as a person of high moral standards. He awaited “his” newspaper eagerly and followed it with love and loyalty.

When the Nazis came, they wrecked the printing shops that published the newspapers. They destroyed most of the linotype machines, and those that they didn't, they shipped out of the country. Writers and teachers were the first ones on their list of “enemies” to be arrested, deported, tortured. It was therefore clear from the very first day of the occupation that the history of the Jewish press, as we had known it, as a medium of expression for political and social ideas and for literature, had come to a temporary halt.

The Gazeta Zydowska

All unexpectedly, a newspaper – in Polish –

appeared on July 23, 1940 with a masthead reading Gazeta Zydowska (Jewish Gazette). On the front page was a Star of David and two words printed in Yiddish characters – Yidishe Tseitung (Jewish newspaper). It appeared Tuesdays and Fridays in Cracow and cost 30 groshn. Apparently its circulation was satisfactory to the publishers, because they made an attempt to publish it three times a week. After several issues, however, they gave up that plan and went back to twice a week.

The front page of this newspaper tried to satisfy the reader's need for general, up-to-the-minute news, such as the official war reports. Then came a short editorial. Some issues carried surveys of Jewish life in the larger cities – Warsaw, Cracow, Radom, Lublin. There was a serialized story by the Hebrew writer Yehuda Burla, describing the life of the Oriental Jews. There was a column of Hebrew lessons and a column devoted to the Jewish child. Sometimes there were personal greetings, even a notice by someone seeking an eligible spouse. Very obvious was the absence of death announcements – the Germans prohibited them...

There could be no doubt that this newspaper was the work of the German propaganda office and under the tight control of the Gestapo. Yet there were occasional allusions in the paper to ideas and opinions that could conceivably strengthen the reader's spirit and sustain his dream of a freer world. Scattered throughout the “news” were folksayings and verses from “Ethics of the Fathers” advocating good habits and teaching people to “love their fellow human beings,” or about the “meaning

of life," about "man not having been created to accumulate wealth, because he leaves it to others while he himself shall dwell in the earth." There were passages from the Talmud showing that "in order for a person to save himself from the agonies of hell he must devote himself to the study of Torah and to helping others." There were facts about Ibn Ezra whose life of privation and suffering and wandering had special poignancy in the ghetto conditions. There were aphorisms from Ecclesiastes and other ancient sources, teaching that "as long as there is life there is hope" and that "wickedness does not spare its perpetrators."

In an article in one of the early issues the author described a conversation of the Baal Shem Tov with an 80-year-old Jew named Chaykl. When the Baal Shem Tov first met him the man grumbled about having to work hard for a living even in his old age. The second time they met, he was in a different state of mind. When the holy man asked him how he felt, he replied: "As long as I have the strength to work and to earn a modest living from my labor I consider myself one of the fortunate ones..." The subtle form of the story was particularly suited to the feelings and desires of the ghetto children.

This same *Gazeta Zydowska* (no one knows who their writers were) frequently published poems written by its younger readers. Some of them paraphrased German folksayings and gave them a Jewish form. Thus, one child took the German saying, "Tomorrow, tomorrow, not today, all the lazy people say," and reinterpreted it: "Why worry about today? From tomorrow on I will be sad, but not today..." A young girl speaks of "saving, not money, but my strength, my nerves, the fire in my soul, my tears, because they've got to last for many years..."

Occasionally one could also find provocative items against the Judenrat. Thus, there was a critical comment about Adam Czerniakow, head of the Judenrat in Warsaw, for levying special taxes on the bread that was allocated by Judenrat ration cards.

With all these zigzagging steps, with the tactic of hurling the human being into the deepest pits of poverty and suffering and then, at the same time, of holding out a ray of hope for freedom, the Germans sought to cover up their real intentions, to mislead the public with illusions and ambiguous signals. In a

word, to disorient the Jews in the ghetto as much as possible.

One of the tasks of the illegal Jewish press was to expose these lying maneuvers and to tell the public the truth about what was happening on the war fronts, inside Poland and throughout the world, especially the truth about the genocidal plans the Germans had in store for the Jews.

First Signs of the Illegal Press

One of the first decrees the Germans issued after they occupied Poland (and other countries) ordered the population to surrender all its radios. The penalty for listening to foreign broadcasts was death. With this draconic law the Germans hoped to isolate the population from the world and prevent the flow of truthful news. The function of the illegal press was to break this enforced ignorance. The Polish illegal newspapers appeared almost a year earlier than the illegal Jewish publications. For this reason, during the first year of the war, Jews were dependent on personal contacts with Poles for the printed word. The Polish-Jewish experience was not confined to anti-Semites who split Jewish heads open or who picketed Jewish stores and staged Jew-hating demonstrations. There were also Polish democrats – and Jews went to them first. Some of them were ready to help.

For example: Wladyslaw Maslanka, a high official in the Lowicz city administration; Henryk Kocemba, Maslanka's brother-in-law, in the village of Bochen; Henryk Jarzynski, a student at the Warsaw School of Business; Stefan Pongowski, a student at the Warsaw Polytechnicum. These people passed on information to their Jewish friends about events in the free world and brought to Jews the first issues of *Polska Zyje* (Poland Lives) and *Biuletyn Informacyjny* – harbingers of the Polish underground press. Jewish contacts with this group lasted until July 1940.

Polska Zyje, printed in the form of a small pamphlet, contained radio reports from the war fronts and brief news items about the situation in the country. It was not difficult to recognize that the people who were editing the copy in this newspaper came from the political right-wing. The *Biuletyn*, on the other hand, was a democratic periodical which often carried reports about the persecution of Jews. Its spirit was militantly patriotic. The news items

were brief, slogan-like. The items that reported the murder of the labor leader Mieczyslaw Niedzialkowski in 1940 in Palmiri, a village 25 kilometers from Warsaw, ended with a sentence that was clearly the slogan of the entire underground movement: "We pledge to throw the head of the hangman on the grave of our brother." (*Slubujemy, ze na grob brata rzucimy glowe kata*)

The "distributor" of the illegal publications and one of the chief organizers of an underground cell in the region of Lowicz-Warsaw was Henryk Kocemba. During the German occupation a strong underground functioned in Bochen which even put out its own newspaper. On the night of March 8, 1942 this town was selected for a British parachute drop; the Polish government-in-exile used this method to deliver newsprint, ink, photographs and small typewriters to the underground. On December 12, 1943, Henryk Kocemba was arrested in Bochen, taken out to the Pawiak prison and tortured to death. The Germans had hoped to extract information from him about hidden weapons and the illegal press, but they failed to break him.

The Bochen story was revived in 1964 (without any mention of the Jews, of course) when mass celebrations were held in Poland to mark the 600th anniversary of the founding of Cracow University. Special events also took place in the neighborhood of Lowicz, where Adam of Bochen, a great Polish scholar and physician, was born circa 1470. Rector of the University of Cracow, Adam of Bochen was a student of the philosophic systems of Aristotle, Plato and Cicero. In connection with the celebration, mention was also made of the tragically heroic story of the World War II underground struggle in Poland, in which Henryk Kocemba was a key figure. (See the historical account by Jadwiga Zgierska in *Widomosci*, London, Oct. 2, 1966, No. 1070)

The Jewish Underground Press

The Jewish underground press arose at practically the same time as the *Gazeta Zydowska*. It "flourished" from around October 2, 1940, when the ghetto was established, until July 1942. During that period "the underground publications of the various movements appeared almost without hindrance... People read them openly in the cafes, collections were taken up for them publicly, they polemicized

with opposition papers. In a word people behaved just as they had before the war..." (Emanuel Ringelblum, *Oneg Shabbat*, p. 73)

It appears from the research that 56 Jewish periodicals were published at that time – 26 in Yiddish, 20 in Polish, 10 in Hebrew. Printed by hectograph, they were generally of small format, single sheet, 2-4 pages. There were exceptions when they contained as many as 20 pages. They appeared monthly, semi-monthly or weekly. Naturally, they often did not appear on schedule.

The underground press served as an educational instrument of the political movements and the youth organizations. It was an important factor in creating the psychological counterforce to the Nazi war communiques. It stimulated cultural interests and it was a defense against all the German actions to dehumanize the ghetto population. Following are the names of some of these illegal publications:

Ha-medina (Betar) – this was the only printed (not hectographed) publication; Der Veker; Di Yugnt Shtimme; Dos Freie Vort; Der Shturem (Bund); Neged Ha-zerem; Flomienie (Hashomer Ha-tzair); Slowo Mlodych (Gordonia); Morgn Freiheit (Left-wing, pro-Soviet); Shaviv (Ha-noar Ha-tzioni), Yediot, Bafreiung (Hechalutz).

The main source of information, however, was the illegal radio and the workers who were employed on the "Aryan side," for example, those who worked at the East Warsaw railroad station. In the underground press one might read a report like this: "People who happen to be at the Warsaw railroad stations are often witness to incredible scenes. Trains arrive from the eastern front one after the other, packed with German soldiers. But these are not the self-confident men that we see on our streets; they are tattered and broken, their greatcoats torn and their faces dejected..."

Early in 1942, the underground newspapers began bringing reports to the ghetto about massacres of Jews. The February 1942 Veker sent an alarming dispatch from Chelmno about trucks with gas chambers... "Those who escape, by some miracle, wander from town to town, from ghetto to ghetto, and the Judenratn are afraid to issue them residence permits."

On February 5, 1942 the Morgn Freiheit printed a letter from a reader describing how the Germans had driven the 25,000 Jews of Kutno to Chelmno, locked them in barracks

and gassed them to death. In March 1942, items appeared in the press about armed resistance by young Jews in Nowogrodek. Young Jews who were being led to their execution turned on the Nazi convoys and killed 20 gendarmes. (Cited by Ruta Sakowska in *Ludzie z Dzielnicy-Zamkniety* (People of the Ghetto), pp 253-254 Warsaw 1975)

From copies of the underground press that have survived it is evident that the news about German defeats on the war fronts was immediately picked up in the ghetto and passed from mouth to mouth with all sorts of optimistic and hopeful interpretations, but the same people instinctively refused to believe the reports about gas chambers. It remains a cruel fact that during the first German death-roundups some 20,000 Jews voluntarily gathered at the *umschlagplatz* because they had swallowed the Nazi lies about being "sent to the east to work."

Bloody Attack on the Illegal Press on April 18, 1942

Fifty-seven years have passed since that Friday in April 1942, but the events of that terror-filled night are still fresh in my mind. It was one of the last nights that our family was together, when all four of us – mother, father, sister and brother – still formed an inseparable unit in Warsaw. Our home was on Ogrowa Street #29. Dozens of families lived in that building. Among them were: Dr. Adolf Berman and his wife Basia, pillars of the underground movement in Poland; Prof. Ginzberg, a teacher of education in a secondary school, with his wife and daughter; Noz, chief of the pharmaceutical section of the Judenrat, his wife and his son Felek; Glaychenhaus, a pharmacist, his wife and daughter. All the way back, in a corner of the courtyard, was the shelter for refugees that had been opened with so much pomp by Adam Czerniakow. People said that in this shelter lived former Sejm Deputy Rosenberg (Communist Party) and several World War I Jewish officers from Vienna and Berlin. Next to the shelter was an "illegal bakery" where bread was baked during the night.

Several days before that bloody Friday, a rumor spread that the ghetto population had only forty days more to live, that the "S.S. death-column" which was responsible for the destruction of the famous old Jewish community in Lublin, was on its way to Warsaw.

Members of the Jewish Police advised us to lock the gate of the building a little earlier than the official curfew time. And that if there was a loud knocking on the gate that night, we should not open it.

Usually, when that massive wooden gate was locked in the evening, we breathed a little easier. We would come down into the courtyard and talk. But not that Friday. That evening everyone huddled within the four walls of their rooms. The tension mounted as we heard whistles blowing and shots being fired and heavy military boots kicking against the gate. In the morning the situation calmed down somewhat. Bits of news filtered in from the street: scores of people had been killed or wounded on neighboring streets – Leszno, Nowolipki, Gesia. Among those taken from their homes and shot to death were Menachem Linder, gifted young economist and one of the chief organizers of cultural activity in the underground; Jerzy Najding, leader in the Polish Socialist Party; Pesach Zuckerman, a printer; Joseph Leruch, manager of the Yiddish magazine *Zukunft*; David Blajman, proprietor of the ghetto bakery. *And also among the victims were many typesetters and other printing-workers of Warsaw.*

This murderous "action" was personally led by Untersturmfuehrer Karl Brandt, Gestapo lecturer for Jewish Affairs in Warsaw and chief of the Gestapo command post on Zelaznez Street.

In his diary entry for April 21, 1942, Adam Czerniakow wrote: "In the morning with Brandt. He informed me that it was the underground papers appearing in the ghetto that brought about the repressive measures that night, and that more severe means will be employed if the papers continue to appear. He authorized me to inform the public that this was a special action and that the population can return to work without fear. He informed me that Council member Winter had also been included in the list, but that he made inquiries and learned that the accusations were groundless..." (The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow, edited by Raoul Hilberg, Stanislaw Sharon, Josef Kermisz, Notebook 9, p. 345)

The Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto maintained their cultural interests and creativity until the last moment. This was their "inner weapon" which gave them the strength to hang on to life and not to give up hope for a better tomorrow... □

Memoirs of a Master Teacher

The Memoirs of Nahum N. Glatzer, edited and presented by Michael Fishbane and Judith Wechsler, Hebrew Union College Press, New York, 151 pp., plus photographs, \$29.95.

Reviewed by Curt Leviant

At the outset of this review I'd like to note that Professor Glatzer was among the five greatest teachers I have had, and that superlative includes not only his depth of Jewish and general knowledge and his ability to convey this material cogently to his students, but also his edelkeyt, humaneness and generosity of spirit. Where less capable holders of Jewish chairs in universities can be arrogant and demolish students with sarcasm and gibes (I know of one such scholar at a major metropolitan New York school), Glatzer was modest, understanding and kind — the very model of a gentleman scholar qua mentch.

I remember a small graduate seminar in Jewish history at Brandeis University's Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department where Glatzer taught for many years, whose members, with only a couple of exceptions (myself included) was composed of rabbis from the greater Boston area seeking to adorn their rabbinic titles with the perhaps (in their eyes) more prestigious title: Doctor. One rabbi once asked Glatzer a personal question: How can he reconcile certain historical

Curt Leviant is the author of, among many other books, *Masterpieces of Hebrew Literature*.

facts with a religious belief that contradicts those facts? Glatzer's answer was simple, succinct and memorable. He replied that one separates the historical facts from the religious belief and deals with both at the same time.

Nahum Glatzer was a multifaceted scholar and teacher who wrote the standard biography of his mentor, Franz Rosenzweig, books on midrash, and editions of Martin Buber and Franz Kafka's works. It is with fond memories of this superb teacher, who brought to America the best of the European Jewish intellectual tradition, that I began avidly reading his memoirs, which are beautifully edited, presented and introduced by Glatzer's former student and now himself a professor of Jewish studies at the University of Chicago, Michael Fishbane, and Glatzer's devoted daughter, Judith Glatzer Wechsler, now a professor of art at Tufts University.

I read the memoirs hoping to get a deeper glimpse of the man and, indeed, got more than that — learning about him as a youth, a young scholar and doctoral candidate and "seeing" via words and photos, his family, friends, teachers and colleagues, some of them international luminaries.

Glatzer was born in Galicia in

1903 and died in Boston in 1990 after a long and distinguished career at Brandeis (after his retirement, he also taught for several years at Boston University), and concomitantly as editor at Schocken Books at its heyday, when it was issuing ancient and modern Jewish and literary classics from the rabbinic period through works by Buber, Kafka, Agnon and Yiddish masters like Mendele and Sholom Aleichem.

The memoirs offer highlights from Glatzer's meticulously kept notebooks. Most of the passages range from short paragraphs to entries of several pages; they are divided into three basic categories: Memories, Encounters, and Faith.

The "Memories" section covers reminiscences of grandparents, parents and family members, his yeshiva education, and later his studies at Frankfurt where his direction in scholarly life was formed and where he wrote his dissertation under the tutelage of Martin Buber. Included here too are his remarks about his emigration from Nazi Germany (he foresaw the turmoil in Germany long before the ascent of the Nazi party), life in England, Palestine and finally the United States.

One of Glatzer's brief entries is paradigmatic of his unique insights. He compares the public's attitude to the stolen "Mona Lisa" in 1911 from the Louvre to post-World War Two Prague's Jewish sites. He notes that when the famous da Vinci portrait was missing for two years from the Paris museum "more people went to stare at the blank space than had gone to look at the masterpiece in the previous twelve years."

Glatzer then shows how before "the Evil One did his frightful work in Europe" Prague had a thriving Jewish community

which didn't interest anyone except perhaps the anti-Semites. But now gentiles throng the Jewish Museum, the centuries-old Altneu Synagogue, the old Jewish ghetto and the old Jewish cemeteries, guided by non-Jewish youngsters with skimpy knowledge. Now that the Jews are gone, Glatzer observes, killed in the German concentration camps, crowds come to stare at the "empty space."

In his "Encounters" section, Glatzer describes meetings with famous Jewish personalities like Chaim Nachman Bialik, in Germany and in Tel Aviv; Israel's Nobel Laureate, S.Y. Agnon; Harry Wolfson, Harvard's great Jewish scholar, whom he depicts with humor and incisiveness; the sculptor Jacques Lipschitz; the philosopher Martin Buber, and Salman Schocken, the founder of the publishing house in Tel Aviv and New York, and also editor/publisher of the Tel Aviv daily, *Ha'aretz*. Glatzer also devotes several pages to Kafka, whom he never met but had a lifelong encounter with via several decades of editing his works for American readers.

In the "Faith" section, we read anecdotal portraits of Rosenzweig's worldview and other short pieces that focus on Glatzer's religious attitude, a mixture of the old East European traditional approach fused with a more critical and objective modernism. What emerges from his memoir is the portrait of a man who is unique in his intellection, deep faith, scholarly integrity, positive world outlook, and his mentchlikh interaction with fellow human beings. Glatzer successfully combined his East European background with central European and western sensibility and therein lies his approach and his magnificent achievement. □

LETTERS

RE: THE "ANTI-CHRIST"

The following letter was sent to us by Irwin Ferber of Rego Park, New York.

Dear Mr. Ferber,

Thank you for your letter of February 10. Due to the holiday I'm only now reading it.

You will not be surprised to learn that the Catholic Church approaches the topic of the "antichrist" from a different perspective than that of the Reverend Falwell. I think it might also be helpful to advise you that Reverend Falwell is not a Protestant. He is a Southern Baptist. I say this because there is no such thing as a generic "Protestant" idea of the antichrist. The Reverend Falwell speaks from his own Southern Baptist interpretation.

The Catholic Church, in its long history, has seen "antichrists" come and go in the form of secular messianism and millenarianism. We read the Book of Revelation as a prophecy or past events, current events and future events, not just as a revelation for the future. Our community has had evil at enmity with it in every generation and will continue to in the future until the Second Coming. Nonetheless, we take comfort in the Book of Revelation for it points to the victory of good over evil and has helped good Christians persevere. We do not look at the Book of Revelation as a detailed plan book on the end of time.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "The supreme religious deception is that of the antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh." The antichrist is not necessarily a person as much as it is a concept championed by persons. *They have been and usually are Christians, by name anyway.* Hitler was a gross example, for instance.

Thanks again for keeping me informed.

Faithfully,
REV. JAMES LOUGHRAN, S.A.
Director

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dear Chaver Guttman,

Recently we had a very exciting reunion of "Chevra" that had attended the first 5 Habonim Institutes in NY and others from the early workshops held in Israel. People attended from the U.S. and Canada, as well as from all around Israel. Some of us had not seen one another for over 50 years.

First of all, the week-end included an opening "Gala" with the keynote speaker Ephraim Sneh (M.K.), remarks by Dave Breslau, a youth Quartet which is sponsored by Mishkenot Hasha'ananim, and the evening under the chairmanship of Chaim Stopak. The following evening we had an Oneg Shabat program which included remarks by Billy Goldfarb, and an "original" Shalom Aleichem program (in Yiddish and in English), followed by songs by two of our "Chaverot", Dolores Cohen and Belva Thomas. During the mornings we had sessions to get reacquainted with one another, a political discussion chaired by Yossi Goell, and a lecture by a young cardiac surgeon describing his work in Wolfson Hospital. The entire week-end elicited a great deal of enthusiasm. During the week following, trips were made to various Habonim kibbutzim, Jerusalem, and to personal friends. Some 45 attended from abroad and 90 locals....

For this occasion we printed up an "iton" which included a reprint about the very first Institute. The rest are articles written especially for this event about reminiscences of our days in NY, crossing the ocean, living here, the difference Israel has made in our lives, etc. If you find any of the material which you deem fit for "The Jewish Frontier," we would be honored to have you use it. All rights are NOT reserved!

Dave Breslau asked me to mail you these issues. The "chavera" who edited this is Batya Faerman Fromm of Lachish, and I am Phyllis Braiterman Cohen of Hadera. My father was William Br. of the LZOA, from Baltimore, and your name was a "household name word" in our home. In Israel these 46½ years, my husband and I are raising the 2nd generation of Sabras.

With special greetings,
PHYLLIS B. COHEN

LZA Washington Young Leadership Conference

By *Stephane Acel,*
LZA Administrator

As various Jewish newspapers around the country have already announced, the Labor Zionist Alliance had a very stimulating and successful Washington Action Conference for Young Leadership on March 6-8. The conference, co-chaired by Judy Silberg Loebel of Detroit, and Steven Weinberg of New Brunswick, N.J, came at a time when the need is great for a progressive movement in the United States that can express its membership's point of view in a pervasive and effective manner to effect change. To achieve this, the conference had at least three primary goals:

- 1) To find new leadership
- 2) Educate about Jewish community activism
- 3) To make the New Labor Zionism voice heard.

The first goal was to begin preparing the younger generation in LZA to take over all leadership positions in the movement in the next year and a half. Participants came from our new young LZA branches around the country, including Chicago, Detroit, Washington and Philadelphia. The enthusiastic participation of seventeen Habonim Dror *Ma'apilim* in blue *chultzot* (movement shirts) helped make the conference a resounding success.

The second goal of the confer-

ence was to educate about Jewish community activism. Although the list of speakers is too long to elaborate upon, one of the highlights was M.J. Rosenberg, from the Israel Policy Forum, who gave a frank and eye-opening personal perspective of Washington politics and provided background on some of the senators and representatives LZA members could correspond with to get our message out. Another interesting and informative talk was given by Dr. Robert O. Freedman, President of Baltimore Hebrew University. Dr. Freedman gave a detailed account of the U.S. foreign policy and strategic interests in the Middle East and the former Soviet Union. Both Mr. Rosenberg and Dr. Freedman have personal connections to Habonim Dror and the Labor Zionist movement.

Lastly, and most significantly, this conference was an opportunity to make the new, young Labor Zionist voice in America heard. We heard Yona Yahav, a Labor M.K. discuss the difficult challenges his party faces in the upcoming elections on May 17. With an honesty many of us were unaccustomed to hearing from politicians, he caused controversy by stating that he, and many of his Israeli peers, did not understand the pain the conversions issue has caused North American Jews. Although he said that the objective of achieving peace supercedes that of achieving a fair pluralistic society in Israel, he told us that as partners with the Labor party, we have a right to share our opinions. This is exactly what we did in small group discussion with Yahav but also as a larger group when Jared Matas, Mazkir of Habonim Dror,

asked the M.K. to explain why Ehud Barak was not at the secular rally in Jerusalem to counter the massive show of Orthodox protesting the involvement of the Supreme Court in pluralism issues. Yahav admitted that Barak made a mistake by not attending.

In addition to Yahav, the conference met with Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) at his office to offer support for his work to get low interest loans to the Palestinian Authority to develop its economy. Because much of the American Jewish lobby is often narrowly focused on getting as much as possible for Israel, sometimes at the expense of its neighbors and partners in peace, we felt it was important to demonstrate that there are many in the Jewish community who think a more equitable treatment of the peace partners is warranted.

As a last plan of action, we decided to set up a web site offering information with pro-Labor information on the peace process, pluralism, and other issues. We are speeding toward this goal and this web site will be up and running soon.

All in all, the conference was an important precedent to build on. By having our young leadership and Habonim-Dror youth learn together, and discuss plans to work together, I feel that we are well on our way to filling the void needed to be filled in the American Jewish community by a progressive Jewish movement. Although the elections will come and go, the Labor Zionist Alliance needs to continue attracting and activating members at the grass roots level so that in this critical time in American Jewish history, we, with our unique and evolving Labor Zionist ideology, do not let the opportunity pass us by. □

From American Zionist to Labor Zionist

The Emergence of American Zionism, by Mark A. Raider,
New York University Press, 1998.

Reviewed by Bennett Lovett-Graff

Mark A. Raider is an assistant professor of history at the State University of New York at Albany. Originally from California, he is not only a former member of Habonim Dror but was once its General Secretary during a critical juncture in that youth movement's fortunes. His subsequent immigration to Israel to found a new kibbutz was itself the actualization of a Labor Zionist objective, and his continued participation in the United States as, among other things, a member of the editorial board of *Jewish Frontier* serves as further evidence of his own commitment to the subject upon which he has written with such historical acumen.

The Emergence of American Zionism has no subtitle, but it should have since its thesis is narrower than the origins of Zionist sentiment in America. In his preface, Raider offers point blank what his true argument is:

This book argues that Zionism and Labor Zionism had a much greater impact on the American Jewish scene than has been recognized. It traces Labor Zionism's dramatic transformation in the United States from a marginal immigrant party into a significant political force. It shows how and why Labor Zionism in the United States — the voice of Labor Palestine on American soil — played a role disproportionate to its size in formulating the program and outlook of American Zionism. It also examines more generally the impact of Zionism

on American Jews, making the case that Zionism's cultural vitality, intellectual diversity, and unparalleled ability to rally public opinion in times of crisis were central to the American Jewish experience (p. ix).

Such an argument is bound to pique the interest of modern Labor Zionists, since Raider's argument does amount — to put it rather boldly and a tad undiplomatically — to the assertion that of all the different streams of Zionist, non-Zionist, and anti-Zionist thought that had prevailed in pre-World War II America, it was the Labor Zionists who had it right.

The key word in the preface is "disproportionate." Labor Zionism may have well carried the day in Palestine, and for some time afterwards in the newborn Israel, but in America the size of its membership was never that great. This in large part stemmed from the problem faced by the turn-of-the-century German-American Jewish establishment following the massive influx of Jews from eastern Europe and Russia. Having assimilated into the American mainstream roughly two generations or more earlier, these "establishment" Jews found among their immigrant brethren a mixture of poverty, political radicalism, and class-consciousness that ran against the grain of middle and upper-class gentile gentility they had long cultivated. But this was not to last in the volatile mixture

of events that ensued in America and overseas. Carrying with them the nationalist-socialist ideologies that had marked nineteenth-century Europe, immigrant Jews, in essence, refused to let their more benighted fellow Jews overlook the welter of pogroms that swept the Russian countryside; the poverty from which they had come and to which, in America, they were returned; or, following World War I, the "new" reality of the Mideast, with the creation of Mandate administration and the Arab riots that followed under Palestine's new British masters.

Labor Zionism's growth in this hotbed of political turmoil was, in certain respects, inevitable. It joined together the egalitarian idealism of socialist theory with the pragmatic assumption of the need for a Jewish nation-state with land, an army, a police force, laborers, and other means of self-sustenance and preservation. It was an ideology most befitting a landless and poor people, sick of being pushed around by non-Jews, tired of being forced to fight one another to gain their favor, and recognizing once and for all that their salvation was not going to come to them on a white donkey. Labor Zionism was particularly suited to immigrant Jews, who were savvy enough to know that despite the absence in America of a virulent anti-Semitism that might well have barred them from land or business ownership, living in the *goldine medine* was not the same as receiving a golden ticket. Power and money often try to preserve themselves — or at least this was what Marx and other socialist and Communist ideologies had taught — and America was no different. Certainly any Jew reading the newspaper, whether it was a Yiddish daily or an American paper, was

bound to read of repeated strikes by workers being broken with clubs, guns, and goons, from the vineyards of California to the steel towns of Pennsylvania.

What America did do for Labor Zionism that Europe could not and did not do was teach ideologies with a healthy respect for the democratic process. This was where the Labor Zionism of Europe, especially Eastern Europe and Russia, and the later evolved Labor Zionism of America began to part ways, Raider pays careful attention to the ways in which these forms of Labor Zionism intersect with the larger American Jewish community around it. When Labor Zionism first began to make headway within the American Jewish community in the form of Poalei Zion, leading American Zionists of more centrist organizations paid heed to the ideas of its intellectuals but steered clear of the organization itself for fear of tarnishing its image with that of a bunch of left-wing socialists. At the same time, the top-down, Soviet-style bureaucratic system of executive committees and central committees and party cells began to break down within Labor Zionist organizations as more pluralistic youth groups (like Habonim) and prodemocratic, vehemently anti-Stalinist stalwarts within the adult organization (such as Hayim Greenberg and Marie Syrkin) made their voices heard. It was only a matter of time before the forces of history began to move these two groups closer together as the Labor Zionists sought to convince fellow (but mainly moderate) Zionists to recognize the pragmatism and rightness of their views.

When these forces did come together, it was not always as pretty a sight as one might imagine. Despite their Americaniza-

tion by becoming more pluralistic and democratic, Labor Zionist organizations, as a relatively small block, could still afford to be the voice of commitment to such things as the establishment of a Jewish homeland, acceptance of the Balfour Declaration, and, later, promotion of illegal immigration. Not so the larger, more centrist organizations such as Hadassah or the Zionist Organization of America. Seeking to maintain their larger membership rolls, these groups had no choice but to constantly straddle fences. But, as Raider points out, although as circumspectly as one can, there is a price to be paid even for inaction. As a result, easily the most riveting chapters are the last two, which chronicle the fate of American and Labor Zionism from 1935 to 1945. A microcosmic illustration of this macrocosmic problem of commitment versus fence-straddling shook the foundations of the American Zionist movement in 1942 when *Jewish Frontier* became the first Anglo-Jewish publication to report the mass killing of Jews by the Nazis in war-torn Europe. Although Raider is diplomatic in explaining the reasons why it took as long as it did for the leadership of the American Jewish community to learn and then disclose this information, one can't help but sense the depth of betrayal, whether intentional or unintentional, American Jews felt towards their leaders. As Raider notes:

The revelation of Nazi atrocities prompted widespread American Jewish anguish and mourning. It also led many to reexamine the road leading from the unfulfilled promises of the Balfour Declaration in 1917...to the catastrophic loss of European Jewish life. Those who had counseled against Zionist assertiveness and militancy were now thoroughly discredited...

Because of American Zionism's long-standing claim to represent the national will of American Jewry, the movement's leaders aroused expectations by which they later would be harshly judged. In short, American Zionists were expected to assume responsibility for the fate of the Jewish people, a duty that other Jewish leaders and groups were unwilling to perform. Even after half a century, investigation of this complex subject is still obscured by accusation of "perfidy," and "moral bankruptcy."

Of course, the charges of "perfidy" or "moral bankruptcy" were just as likely to come from Revisionist Zionists as they were from hardcore Labor Zionists, weary of the "carefulness" of the cross-ideological organizations with which they had to work. In the end, it does not really much matter since there is little gained in childishly claiming final vindication, for one's views over the ashes of six million dead.

With that said, however, that Labor Zionism was ultimately the correct path is, I believe, borne out by Raider's analysis of American Zionism, thus making his study worthwhile because it illustrates how minority movements (which Labor Zionism in America was) may well teach the rest of us what needs to be done. It may even teach us that being in the minority is sometimes a source of strength rather than weakness.

In the end, *The Emergence of American Zionism* bears reading not because it chronicles a stream of Zionism, but because it tells of our stream of Zionism. In short, it restores to American Zionism not only its story but our place in it — the importance of which is greater than our numbers because our vision is not a popularity contest but the result of a firm understanding of the needs of the Jewish people. □

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