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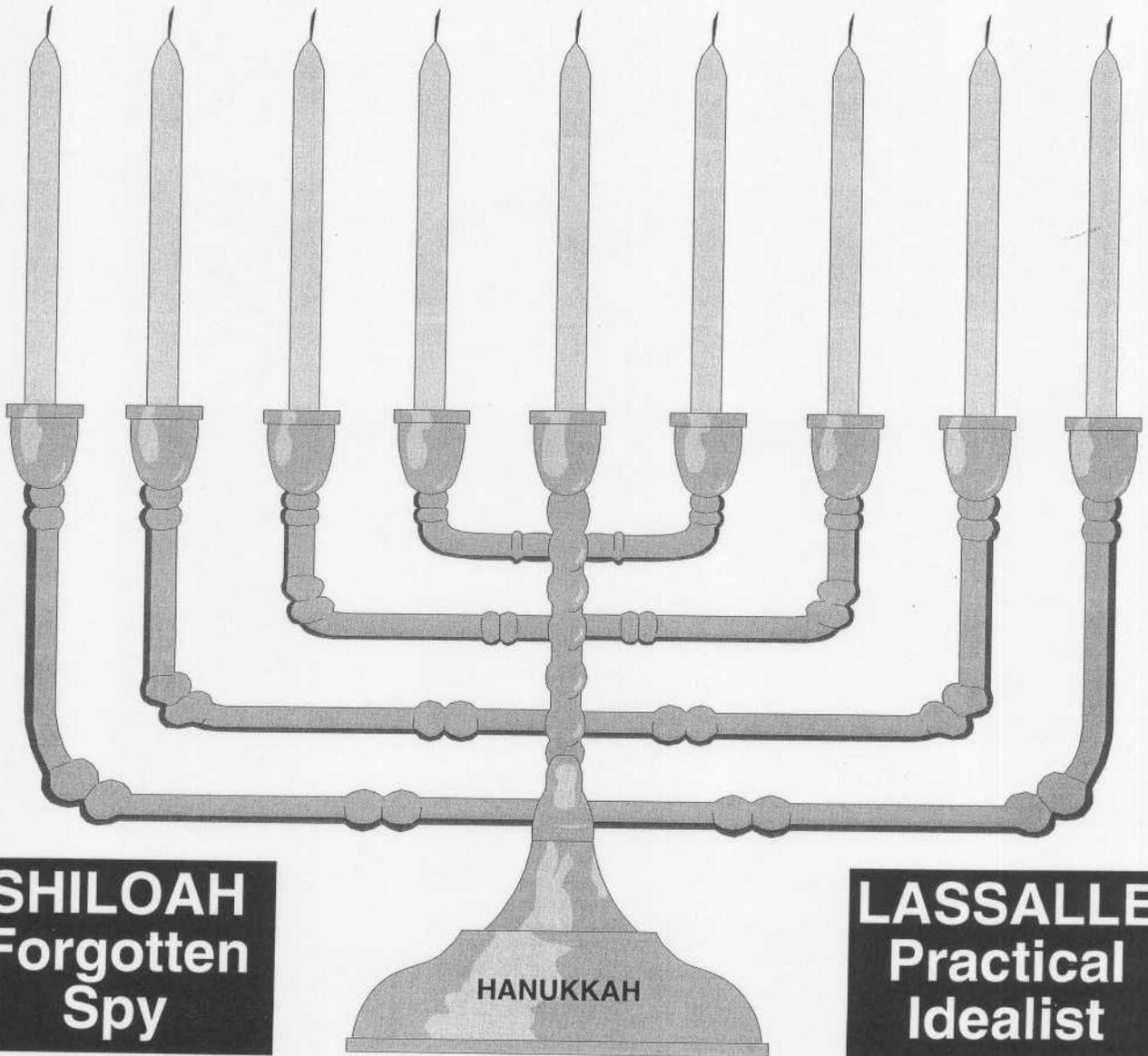
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NOVEMBER ■ DECEMBER ■ 1997

**BIBI'S  
TROUBLES**

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CENTURY**

**WHAT AILS  
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# BIBI'S TROUBLES

*By Misha Louvish*

**A**s the first Prime Minister of Israel directly elected by the entire adult population, "Bibi" Binyamin Netanyahu has unprecedented powers, but he also faces unprecedented problems. The old method had obvious faults, but many people feel that the disadvantages of the new method outweigh its merits.

In Israeli elections the voters have to choose between lists of candidates submitted by the various parties, and the 120 members of the single-chamber Knesset are slotted in proportion to the votes obtained by each list.

Until last year, after the results were announced, the President (who is himself elected by the Knesset, but has very limited executive powers) consulted the representatives of the parties and called upon the Knesset member regarded as most likely to succeed to form a coalition which would obtain a vote of confidence.

At this point a most unedifying series of intrigues usually ensued, with parties demanding the most prestigious and potentially profitable posts as the price of their support.

Until 1977 the Labor Party dominated the scene and was always able to form a coalition government, but since the late Menahem Begin's victory in that year there has been a constant struggle between Labor and the anti-socialist Likud, with the two parties sometimes in alliance in "national unity" governments, and always in competition.

The intrigues involved in forming and maintaining coalition governments brought the system into disrepute, and the climax came in 1990, when Shimon Peres tried to bribe Avraham Sharir, a prominent member of the Likud, to join his coalition by offering him ministerial office not only in the present Knesset but also in the next one if Labor would again be able to form a coalition.

This "smelly maneuver," as it was widely dubbed, was unsuccessful, but it convinced many of the need for a fundamental change, and an association headed by Professor Uriel Reichman persuaded a narrow majority in the Knesset to pass a law providing for the holding of two votes: one for prime minister, on an individual basis, and the other for the Knesset according to the old system.

This change in Israel's constitution has had a marked effect on the party political map. It has enabled the electors to split their votes, supporting one of the candidates for prime minister without necessarily backing his party.

As a result, there are no less than eight parties represented in the government coalition today, and any one of these parties could deprive it of its majority by defecting.

The largest party, the Likud, won only 22 seats at last year's general election, and it is actually outnumbered by the alliance of religious parties, which has a total of 23. The Likud, however, had formed a single list with two smaller parties: Geshet ("Bridge"), headed by Foreign Minister David Levy, which stresses social problems, and Tsomet ("Crossroads"), led by Raphael Eitan, the hawkish Minister of Agriculture, a former army chief of staff.

This gives the alliance a total of 32 seats, almost equal to Labor's 34, and the coalition has a total of 66. There have been ominous rumblings from Levy in connection with the peace process and from his supporters in regard to budgetary problems.

I leave it to *Frontier* readers to compare the new Israeli system with that of the United States. The directly elected Israeli prime minister is not in the same position as an American president, but it is very difficult — almost impossible — to get rid of him. According to the new law, he can be deposed by a vote

of eighty members of the Knesset.

He could also have to face the electorate again if the Knesset decided on new elections, but then the MKs too would have to risk their seats — a prospect that must give them pause. (One Geshet member, however, has called for new elections in which his faction would be independent.)

A third possibility which would unseat the prime minister would be his failure to pass the annual budget in time, but this, too, would compel the Knesset members to stand for reelection. Although such an eventuality is not very likely, it must be taken into account in view of the complaints from Geshet, the National Religious Party and Yisrael Ba-aliyah, the new-immigrant party headed by Natan Sharansky, that the draft budget does not provide the promised benefits for their constituents.

**T**he peace process presents Netanyahu with problems which, on the face of it, appear to be insoluble. He never tires of proclaiming that, unlike the weak-kneed Labor leaders, he will achieve not only peace with the Palestinians and the Syrians but peace with security.

Security, however, is easier to talk about than to ensure, as the nation has learned. Hamas, the intransigent Palestinian movement, has succeeded in perpetrating three terrorist outrages, with many casualties. That is not Netanyahu's fault; security depends not on government declarations of principle but on constant vigilance by the secret services, which continue no matter which politician is in charge.

Bibi's claims sound particularly hollow in the light of the disastrous results of an operation for which he cannot avoid personal responsibility as the minister in charge of the secret service. This was the failed attempt to assassinate a Hamas leader living in Amman, which not only had a ruinous effect on relations with Jordan but compelled Netanyahu to release Arab prisoners, notably the Hamas leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, to obtain the release of the two Israeli agents arrested during the operation.

The release of the Sheikh, who returned in triumph to Gaza, gave a fillip to Hamas and thus had a negative influence on security prospects. Foreign Minister David Levy, the Geshet leader, took the trouble to tell the

media that if he had known in advance about the operation in Amman, he would have opposed it.

Security, too, is relevant to the latest Netanyahu scandal: about a statement whispered to the noted Kabbalist Rabbi Kedouri and caught by the microphone. "The Left," the Prime Minister said, "have forgotten what it is to be Jews. They give the Arabs a piece of land, and rely on them to protect us!"

In spite of the official spokesman's effort to explain away this statement, there has been wide-spread indignation at the slur against half the nation contained in the first sentence. Equally if not more objectionable, however, is the demagogic smear against the Oslo agreements contained in the second.

What we are talking about is the Rabin-Peres government's historic efforts to open the way to a resolution of a century of conflict between the Jewish national movement and the Palestinian Arabs. These are the Oslo accords, which the Likud and the rest of the right wing fiercely denounced when they were concluded, but which Prime Minister Netanyahu has undertaken to honor because they were signed by a legitimate Israeli government. Without these accords, Netanyahu could not even begin to think about peace with Arafat, and his statement casts a lurid light on the sincerity of his promises of peace.

Levy has been digging in his heels in order to get government authority for the concessions that he believes necessary in order to promote agreement with the Palestinians. It is very doubtful, however, if this prime minister and this coalition can agree to terms that any Palestinian leadership will accept. If Netanyahu were inclined to offer real self-government — let alone statehood — he would be in deep trouble with his right wing, as well as with the National Religious Party, which opposes any compromise, especially on the question of the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

The Likud also has internal problems. Two of its most prominent members, former Finance Minister Dan Meridor and Binyamin Begin (son of the former Likud leader) resigned from their posts during the last year, and Begin is not the only Likud member who would try to torpedo any effort that Netanyahu might make to carry out the Oslo obligations. □

# THE KNESSET WINTER SESSION

By Susan Hattis Rolef

**T**he Knesset's winter session opened — as every year — right after Sukkoth, with some pretty heavy business: a political announcement by the Prime Minister, a vote on a motion of no-confidence in the Prime Minister and the first reading of the state budget for 1998. All this took place against a background of growing mistrust in Binyamin Netanyahu from all possible political quarters, on a growing number of counts.

Though the Meshal affair — the bungled attempt by the Mossad to liquidate a top Hamas man in Amman — was the Prime Minister's worst *faux pas* in the course of October (the affair won him the title of "Israel's serial bungler" from the London *Economist*), the attacks on the Prime Minister as the Knesset winter session opened, concentrated on what he had whispered in the ear of the old mystic Rabbi Kadourie — writer of charms and bestower of blessings — several days before the session opened, as both celebrated their birthdays: the old mystic his hundredth, Netanyahu his 48th.

"The people of the Left have forgotten what it is to be a Jew," an ITV microphone caught Netanyahu whispering, which in conjunction with the issue of the Conversion Law seemed to add another totally unwelcome and superfluous element of divisiveness into the Jewish existence. Efforts by Netanyahu to convince the public that his words had been taken out of context (they always are, according to him, though it is not so easy to discover what the context is!) and should have been understood in conjunction with the next sentence about the Left having handed Israel's security over to the Arabs(!?), didn't make much of an impression on anyone. One was left wondering why our Prime Minister couldn't have simply done what President Weizman did several days later, when he got into trouble with the *haredim* for criticizing Moses (biblical Moses) and simply said: "I am sorry if anyone was hurt by what I said." But that would have been too simple.

The Netanyahu, who whispered words of incitement into the ear of Kadourie, is the same Netanyahu, who upon being elected Prime Minister some 17 months ago made the following statement in his victory speech: "The Israeli society is blessed by many shades and various streams. The unity among us must manifest itself in the nurturing of tolerance, and mutual respect for that which is different, to the other . . . I am talking about fair cooperation among all parts of the public in Israel, while preserving the balance among the different *weltanschauungs* . . . That is our way, that is our approach and we shall act accordingly. These principles are rooted in the Jewish tradition, and it is the basis for unity of the people." Fine words indeed, but like many fine words uttered by Netanyahu, totally meaningless when confronted with the test of reality.

**A**s it were, as soon as the Prime Minister mounted the rostrum in the Knesset to begin his speech on October 27, Knesset Members from the Labor Opposition got up waving banners with the words: "I am a proud Jew", and after the Knesset ushers tore the banners away upon the Speaker's instructions, Netanyahu had the following message for the people: "There is no other democratic country in which the Opposition attacks the elected government so viciously as the opposition does in Israel . . . You incite, deny, join every attack by any person in the world against the elected government in Israel, because your lust for power is without any barriers and with no inhibitions . . ."

**L**abor leader Ehud Barak, who since his election as party chairman last June has tried to maintain a reserved and guarded demeanor (much to the chagrin of most party members), finally took off his gloves, attacked the Prime Minister head on for his words to Kadourie, and, against the background of the approaching second anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, said the following about Netanyahu: "Let us remember who stood on

the balcony at Kikar Zion when pictures of the Prime Minister of Israel in SS uniform were being burnt. Let us remember who 'danced on the blood' (took cynical advantage of the blood - SHR) near bus number 5 (the Palestinian terrorist attack on bus number 5 in Tel Aviv in 1995 - SHR). Let us remember who marched (in a demonstration before Rabin's assassination - SHR) with a coffin behind him bearing the name of an Israeli Prime Minister. I advise you to shut up." "500 days after the elections of 1996," Barak concluded his first real opposition speech, "we are standing before a broken basin. Failures in all sphere, from the (Hasmonean) tunnel and the Bar-On affair, through Ras al-Amud and to the last fiasco in Amman. Mounting unemployment, a retreat in education, and new immigrants that are being neglected. Netanyahu has failed . . ."

Two days later the Knesset was embroiled in another drama, passing the state budget in first reading. It is usually the Opposition that attacks the budget, and when Labor was in power the Likud Opposition used to put on a pretty good show, bringing hundreds if not thousands of reservations, and doing the term "filibuster" proud. But this year the Opposition seemed to be superfluous. "Bibi, stand behind me," Minister of Finance Ya'acov Ne'eman was heard pleading with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in a telephone conversation from a phone booth outside the MKs' restaurant in the Knesset on the day of the debate and vote on the budget. "If you will stand behind me, they will come to vote," he continued. "They are mad. How much have you given them?" — "they" and "them" being the Coalition members.

No one in the Coalition seemed to be pleased with Ne'eman's rather tight, 207.4 billion shekel budget, of which 32.3% is earmarked for debt service (compared to 44.1% in 1988), 17.6% for security (compared to 19.7), 28.5% for transfer and support payments (compared to 19.4%) and 15.2% for civilian expenditure (compared to 10.2%). However, only Geshet (David Levy's party) ended up not voting for the budget in first reading. Of the five members of Geshet, two voted against the budget and three (including Levy himself) were absent. Geshet's complaint was that the proposed budget is anti-social. Though on Ne'eman's insistence no fast promises were made to any of the coalition members before

the vote finally took place, many implied promises were made, and there is sure to be a lot of blackmailing within the Coalition before the budget finally gets through on December 31, 1997, or soon thereafter.

What is one to make of the events of the last several weeks? There are really three basic conclusions. The first is that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who is without doubt an intelligent and capable man (how otherwise would he have finished a degree in architecture and a degree in business administration at M.I.T., and been offered the opportunity to do a doctorate in political science at the same university?), ought to count to ten before he opens his mouth. This would save both him and his loyal assistants the need to explain things that cannot be explained. "A clever man manages to get out of situations that a wise man would never get into," is a popular saying, which seems well suited to Netanyahu.

The second conclusion is that there is something very faulty with the decision-making process in the government, and all of Netanyahu's promises since the beginning of the year that he would mend his ways have remained little more than words. The third is that Netanyahu's government is probably one of the most incoherent and undisciplined governments that Israel has ever had (and Israel has certainly had some incoherent and undisciplined governments in its day), but that it will probably survive until the next elections are held in the year 2000, unless Netanyahu decides that he would like early elections.

The reason why despite everything early elections seem improbable, is that it is quite unlikely that enough Knesset members will be willing to bring Netanyahu down by a vote of no-confidence and thus also bring about early elections for the 15th Knesset. In the meantime, Netanyahu's people are busy trying to get the institution of primaries for the Likud Knesset list abolished, in order to ensure that the Likud list towards the next elections will be more congenial to Netanyahu. The fact that he is antagonizing some central figures in the Likud — including his former colleague Minister of Communications Limor Livnat, Minister of Defense Yitzhak Mordechai (who has just married a young woman half his age), Minister of Infrastructures Ariel Sharon, and the may-

*(continued on page 17)*

# TOWARD THE SECOND CENTURY

*By Daniel Mann*

**A**fter the celebration, what comes next? That question has been at the center of the deliberations and activities of the Labor Zionist Alliance throughout 1997, and now merits the attention of our entire membership and other readers of the *Jewish Frontier*.

"Celebration" refers to the centennial of organized Zionism, marking 100 years since the first World Zionist Congress convened by Theodor Herzl in Basle, Switzerland in August 1897. By extension it also refers to the jubilee anniversary of the 1947 United Nations decision on the partition of Mandatory Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Indeed, Herzl anticipated that connection in his private prediction that no more than 50 years following that first Zionist Congress the Jews will have established their state. One cannot imagine any more powerful reasons for celebration than those anniversaries.

But their significance is enhanced to the extent that they motivate us to build on them as we plan the future. And in fact much of the Zionist world as we have known it for at least a quarter century is already undergoing major transformation this year, under the impact of two developments: the restructuring of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), which was approved by the pertinent governing bodies in June and will take effect this coming January 1; and the recently concluded election of the American delegates to the 33rd World Zionist Congress, which will convene in Jerusalem at the end of December.

**T**o understand the latest reorganization of JAFI, one has to go back some three decades, to the Six-Day War of 1967 and its aftermath, during which Israel and the Diaspora demonstrated an awareness of each other

and a recognition of Israel's crucial place in Jewish consciousness that had been latent until then. In 1968 the 27th World Zionist Congress adopted a revised "Jerusalem Program" that stated as the first aim of Zionism "the unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life." In my opinion, it is still a valid formulation.

Two years later, the late Louis Pincus, Labor Zionist head of the WZO in Israel, and Max Fisher of Detroit, universally respected to this day as a central figure in Israel-Diaspora relations, took the initiative to conclude an agreement calling for the "reconstitution" of the Jewish Agency for Israel. That body, until then essentially identical with the WZO, emerged as a 50:50 partnership between the WZO, representing Zionist membership organizations worldwide and the Israeli political system, on one side, and the central community funding instrumentalities for Israel in the Diaspora, on the other — in the United States, the United Israel Appeal (de facto, the federations); elsewhere, including our neighboring Canada, Keren Hayesod.

A division of labor between the two components, reflecting complex legal, fiscal, ideological, and socio-psychological considerations, continued to evolve in the ensuing years. Most notably, earlier in the present decade a range of educational and youth programs were brought together in a semi-autonomous institution called the Joint Authority for Jewish-Zionist Education. (The very name reveals its hybrid nature.) Meanwhile, in the past two decades the WZO and its counterparts in key Diaspora countries, particularly the American Zionist Movement, have welcomed the entry of significant sectors of organized Jewish life previously not part of the Zionist structure — new Zionist membership frameworks like ARZA and MERCAZ of the Reform and Conservative

movements, respectively, and, through affiliation on an institutional level, major organizations such as B'nai B'rith. At the same time, "nonpartisan" personalities from the totality of Israeli socio-economic life joined the representatives of the all-important political parties in the government of the Jewish Agency.

Two years ago, when Avraham Burg of the Israel Labor Party emerged as the new chairman of the WZO and JAFI, he pushed for a full integration of the diffuse pieces of the structure into one Israel-Diaspora 50:50 partnership and even gave it a name, "Bayit," which is both the Hebrew word for "home" and an acronym for a Hebrew phrase meaning "the house of Israel and the Diaspora." (For a detailed discussion of the early stages of the reorganization process led by Burg, see my article, "New Voices and Old Verities," *Jewish Frontier*, September-October 1995.) Two years of complex negotiations ensued, involving all three partners in JAFI — the WZO, the United Israel Appeal, and Keren Hayesod, each replete with its own complex of moving pieces. This past June, all three bodies and then the Jewish Agency itself approved the final text of the reorganization plan.

What will begin to function as of January 1, 1998, is a structure whose governance will continue as heretofore — 50% WZO (including Israel) and 50% Diaspora community campaigns (30% for the USA through the United Israel Appeal and the other 20% for the rest of the world through Keren Hayesod). But most of the action will be conducted under the auspices of the Jewish Agency, primarily through four integrated departments: Immigration and Absorption, still the priority concern of the Agency; Activities in Israel, including Partnership 2000; Activities in the Former Soviet Union, building on a remarkable record worthy of a separate article; and Jewish-Zionist Education, a JAFI department replacing the aforementioned Joint Authority. All of these departments will be run by professional staff with more accountability than heretofore to executive administration and thus relatively less to the nominal co-chairs of the departments chosen through the various political processes of WZO, UIA, and Keren Hayesod.

The leadership of the Labor Zionist Alliance has supported this plan. Many (though

admittedly not all) of us see it as another Zionist achievement in that all of World Jewry is now ready to implement what heretofore had been limited to the Zionist movement. A major example of that progress is the readiness of the entire Jewish Agency, including the community federations, to accept responsibility not only for the aliyah of Jews from so-called "countries of distress" (FSU, Ethiopia, etc.) but also for "free aliyah" from the West, although for the time being the immigration and absorption operations will continue to be handled by the WZO.

Nevertheless, we reserved some cautions that apparently resonated through not only the entire Labor Zionist Movement but also other Zionist groupings, and in Israel and the Diaspora alike. Two in particular merit further discussion: the future of the WZO itself and the fate of the Zionist youth movements. The issues are interconnected. In the case of the WZO, what will be left for it to do as of January, when most of its current activity, including its connections with the youth movements, will be taken over by the Jewish Agency and handled by the latter's professional staff?

The simple part of the response is that the WZO will have to serve its own organizational and informational needs as it continues to comprise one-half of the Jewish Agency's governance, including the complex process of electing its own leadership, appointing its representatives to other bodies, and communicating with the Zionist federations and ideological groupings worldwide. But under the restructuring plan the very existence of the WZO is guaranteed for only two years, so before the new century arrives, basic decisions will have to be made about the fiscal, organizational, and programmatic operations of the WZO. And that invites the even more basic question of *mission*, which ultimately can provide the only viable argument for maintaining the WZO in some form beyond simply serving as a channel for representation in JAFI.

At the LZA National Executive Committee in September, Yehiel Leket presented his concept of the mission. Leket, a prominent Israeli leader of the World Labor Zionist Movement, has held major positions in the Jewish Agency and played a key role in shaping the final version of the restructuring agreement. While emphasizing the pragmatic aspects of that plan, Leket also stressed that it would require,

more than ever before, the input and impact of the autonomously organized and ideologically attuned Zionist movement active in both Israel and the Diaspora.

At the heart of both Burg's and Leket's visions — and of most other Israeli leaders as well — is their hope for a new department to be established within the WZO beginning next year and dedicated to *Hagshamah* — the classic concept of the realization of Zionist ideology through the personal example of aliyah and service to Israel. Many of us in the Diaspora believe in that concept too. Indeed, some of us feel that even though we may not (yet) have moved to Israel, our Zionist and communal endeavors in the United States owe much to the inspiration of the concept of *Hagshamah* particularly as it informed our earlier experiences in Zionist youth and student movements. Nevertheless, we don't fully grasp what a functional WZO Department for *Hagshamah* will do more effectively than such elements of the new JAFI structure as Education and Aliyah.

It was against that background that so much concern was expressed across the board about the second question above, the fate of the Zionist youth movements, at the time that the WZO endorsed the overall restructuring plan in June. Will the youth movements gain or lose from access to the big-league setting of the JAFI Education Department? On the other hand, if they rely for protection on the WZO, will the movements find themselves in jeopardy two years hence, when the very existence of the WZO will be under review? As passed in June the plan calls for the JAFI Education Department to serve the needs of those movements, but a resolution introduced by representatives of the United Kibbutz Movement was also adopted (over establishment objections) calling on the WZO to monitor the situation actively. That decision has become all the more necessary in view of well-founded reports that the historic system of *shlichim* (Israeli educational emissaries) to youth movements such as Habonim Dror is already threatened with severe cutbacks over the next two years.

One week prior to (secular) New Year's Day, when restructuring goes into effect, the World Zionist Congress will convene in Jerusalem — the 33rd in number but marking the centennial of that institution. For the fourth

time in the last three decades there were elections for delegates from the United States, who together comprise 25% of the Congress. (Israel holds 38% of the seats, based on Knesset elections, while the remaining 33% is reserved for the rest of the world, again including our neighboring Canada.)

In contrast to the three previous elections, this time one did not automatically receive a ballot by virtue of belonging to an American Zionist membership organization. Instead, one had to actively sign up individually and even pay a modest \$2 registration fee. Another change from previous years was that Hadasah — by far the largest organization — did not participate in the election process altogether, opting for a "special status" in the WZO and concomitant representation in the Congress. (Space does not permit discussion of the pros and cons of that arrangement.) And even among the groups that did participate in the elections there was much ambivalence about the entire project. Yet some 150,000 American Jews did register last spring and three-quarters of that number returned their ballots this summer.

As readers of this magazine know, the American Labor Zionist Movement — the Labor Zionist Alliance, NA'AMAT USA, and our shared youth movement Habonim Dror North America — advocated a multi-issue platform of peace, progress, and pluralism, not only in Israel but in America as well, and stressed that only Labor had the standing and strength to lead the WZO and JAFI toward those goals. Our slate comprised many prominent communal, academic, rabbinical, labor, and intellectual figures in American Jewish life together with the official elected leadership of the movement, most of us also well-known in the community at large; and one-quarter of the slate was drawn from younger age cohorts.

Everyone knew that the central issue of the 1997 elections would be religious pluralism in Israel, advocated most single-mindedly by ARZA and MERCAZ, at a time that the Knesset was threatening to enact legislation recognizing only Orthodox conversions within Israel and otherwise discriminating against non-Orthodox elements — an issue that has not gone away as of this writing. Thus in a sense Labor's main challenge came not from parties to the right, such as Likud or Mizrachi, but

from our natural allies in the Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist movements. In 1987 we faced a similar situation, when ARZA and MERCAZ were invoking public opposition to the "Who is a Jew" threat, yet that year the American Labor Zionist Movement more than held its own. This time, by contrast, while ARZA and MERCAZ together garnered three-fourths of the total vote, Labor fell from almost nine percent to less than three-and-a-half.

There are many plausible explanations for this setback, beyond its cyclical nature: Labor did well in 1971 and 1987, not so well in 1978 and 1997. The aforementioned ambivalence, extending to leadership at the highest levels worldwide, was one factor. Another may have been our inability to focus the attention of the electorate on the fact that we were not voting on the government of Israel but rather the leadership of the WZO — not Ehud Barak (though of course we hope that he will be Israel's next prime minister, and soon), but Avraham Burg, who has been both outspoken and effective in support of peace, progress, and pluralism.

This retrospective analysis applies in particular to many younger voters who apparently supported MERETZ, the group to the left of Labor that surprised most observers by receiving well over four percent of the vote, on the theory that Labor could not be trusted on such issues as religious pluralism. The irony here is that the Israel Labor Party lost the 1995 elections in Israel partly (among many reasons) because the electorate perceived it as being too closely identified with the alleged secularism and pacifism of MERETZ, so now, as the main opposition party, Labor cannot enjoy the luxury MERETZ has of ideological purity. In any event, we congratulate all the parties that participated in the election (and the American Zionist Movement for conducting it), and particularly ARZA, MERCAZ, and MERETZ, and we look forward to joining with them and perhaps some centrist factions as well in a broad progressive coalition at the Congress, to be led by Labor and its dynamic candidate for reelection as chairman, Avraham Burg.

**T**he overwhelming success of the Reform and Conservative movements in the election, while welcome from several standpoints, may also be a source of concern because of

events that transpired last June at the Jewish Agency Assembly — the same body that gave final approval to the restructuring plan discussed in detail above. There is an important line in the budget of the Jewish Agency, established some ten years ago to "provide support for special projects in two areas: projects which promote religious pluralism in Israel among the various religious streams; and innovative, creative projects for children and youth up to age 18." Because of the widespread unease in American Jewry over the projected conversion bill that threatened the level of contributions to the annual federation campaigns — already systematically decreasing their allocations to the Jewish Agency while overall American Jewish support for projects in Israel under various other sponsorships continues to grow — the United Israel Appeal proposed an increase in that line in the JAFI budget. However, the precise wording of the resolution called for doubling (from \$2.5 to \$5 million) funding "for programs in Israel that support religious freedom and freedom of conscience through programs specifically proposed by the religious streams . . ." (In order to achieve unanimity JAFI has learned of late to avoid the phrase "religious pluralism," apparently a red flag to even the modern Orthodox.) Every attempt by representatives of LZA, B'nai B'rith, Hadassah and other groups that are themselves pluralistic by definition to amend the proposed language, e.g., with wording like "all streams of Judaism," proved unavailing.

There is something bizarre about the resultant situation. Do worthwhile Israel experience programs sponsored by Habonim Dror or Young Judea at kibbutzim such as Grofit or Keturah in the Negev, or the Kibbutz High School program originally at Kfar Blum and now at Beit Heshita, have to go to nearby kibbutzim affiliated with the same United Kibbutz Movement but identified with the Reform or Conservative movements to secure additional funding for their truly pluralistic and innovative projects? How does the kibbutz-sponsored college at Oranim, which made a presentation at that same JAFI Assembly on its programs for inculcating Judaic values in non-Orthodox education, secure additional funds for that endeavor? And where do the communal day schools, the Hillel foundations, the Jewish community centers and camps, the

*(continued on page 17)*

## WHAT AILS ZIONISM?

By Henry L. Feingold

Originally this essay was titled "Who Killed Zionism?" But when I realized that such a title left no room for hope, I changed it. When something is ailing at least there is a chance that a cure will be found. I want to believe that about Zionism, especially the American movement.

If one listens to the statements of Zionist spokesmen, one would hardly surmise that there is a malaise. Again and again we are informed that while all the other "isms" that plagued the twentieth century are dead, only Zionism has endured. That is usually followed by some triumphant statement that sometime during the next twenty years the Zionist dream of making Israel the demographic center of the Jewish world will come to pass. Israel will contain the largest Jewish population aggregation. Other triumphs like the ongoing Russian *aliya* are mentioned. But while I am the first to acknowledge that, considering the difficult road traversed since World War II the triumph of Zionism is indeed impressive, I am still tempted to question the present condition of the movement. If everything is so good, then why is everything so bad?

I will not catalogue the symptoms of weakness except to note that virtually every Zionist organization not linked to congregational membership knows about it. It is reflected in the low number who voted in the recent WZO election. It can be noted in the absence of young people in our gatherings and in the tried programmatics of our organizations. It is true that in America the Zionist movement never attracted a majority of Jews. But the number of Jews who considered themselves Zionists without belonging to a Zionist organization or buying the shekel, certainly formed the overwhelming preponderance of American Jewry.

If one means by Zionism simply support of Israel, then that preponderance continues to this day.

But American Zionism, like the Zionism of other western democratic states, never accepted the imperatives of the ideology. Scholars tell us that American Zionism was philanthropic and lacked the passion of the Zionist movement in eastern Europe. Chaim Weizmann later regretted that American Zionism was cast in the role of a "cash cow" for the world movement. It never lived down its "schnorrer" persona. Indeed in the early twenties his conflict with Brandeis had a great deal to do with the control of the Keren Hayesod funds which were streaming from America into WZO coffers without proper accounting procedures or even normal budget accounting.

Ben-Gurion felt that once Zionism had given birth to the Jewish state its historic role was over and it ought to go out of business. But instead the movement reshaped itself to become an effective international network to support Israel economically and diplomatically. It was partly the need to support Israel that forced American Jewry to master the instruments of direct projection of influence. That marked a total change in the political culture of American Jewry which heretofore preferred a low political profile. It also became more philanthropic than ever before. Indeed, as early as 1957 Abba Eban, then the foreign minister of Israel, wanted American Jewry to channel more of its resources into Jewish education lest it lose an entire generation. No heed was given to this sage advice because Israel's needs were considered more urgent than our own. We are paying the price for

those priorities today. American Zionism remains what it always was, totally devoted to the security and development of Israel. But at the same time it remains what eastern European Zionists used to complain about, vicarious. American Jews did not and do not seriously consider leaving their American Zion. Neither did the Jews of prewar Germany or the Jews of Britain and France today.

In the end if I were asked to state as briefly as possible what ails Zionism, I would have to give a paradoxical response. It is and has always been Zion that ails American Zionism. I do not mean to be facetious or contrary. No one is more aware than I that the very meaning of Zionism is to bring the dispersed Jewish people back to their ancient homeland where they could develop their specialness to their heart's content without anyone resenting them for their otherness. But it develops that not all the Jewish people want to be ingathered in Zion. Millions have found their Zion in America. Despite expenditures of huge sums of capital and generations of exhortation and "Zionist education" the Jews of the democratic west did not return to Zion and do not plan to. It is not even predictable that the Jews now settled in Israel will forever remain there. Today *yerida* is rarely mentioned but it could become a torrent should the situation in the Middle East remain so unsettled that a normal middle-class life, which is what Jews everywhere seem most to aspire to, is not in the offing. What we need to keep in mind is that post-Holocaust Jewry, no less than its predecessors, is extraordinarily dynamic and fast-changing. I am often astounded at how itinerant the Jewish people have remained. It is partially reflected in the proportion of the tourist stream that is Jewish and incidentally, the proportion of the Jewish that is Israeli. It may be that a people that has wandered for millennia finds it difficult to suddenly stay in one place. A modern people does not lightly accept an ideological fiat to go settle in a certain place and live a certain kind of life. The acceptance of such a fiat was never part of American Zionism.

For American Jewish thinkers, cultural Zionists like Mordecai Kaplan, Horace Kallen and even Solomon Schechter, never viewed the reestablishment of Zion as a goal in its own right. Zionism was not a substitute for Judaism. It was to be its enabler. A Jewish national

home, the idea of a sovereign state came later, and was envisaged as a buttress for the waning sense of belonging to a certain people. In the west it was considered a suitable haven for those eastern Jews who could only be restored by removing them from the source of their humiliation. So American Zionism was always a Zionism for "yemem." At the turn of the century the Jewish immigrants who had voted with their feet for a Zion in America defined Zionism in their familiar biting humor. A Zionist, they said, was someone who collected money from another Jew to send yet a third Jew to Palestine.

Cultural Zionists sought in Zionism an ideology that could strengthen American Jewry in place. It was difficult for the world Zionist movement to fill such a role since it was Israelocentric by its very nature. By virtue of being a sovereign state, Israel is compelled to do with Zionism what it has to do with every asset at hand: to enhance its security and well-being. Any government would follow the same path. First it sees to the welfare of its own citizens. The well-being of American Jewry, when it is considered at all, is secondary. If American Jews want to live Jewishly, they reason, let them resettle in Israel. The Zionism, whose progenitor was Achad Ha'Am, that once sought to generate a world Jewish renaissance, became instead an instrument limited to the needs and concerns of Jews in the Diaspora. If, for example, Israel's needs required a close working relationship with an oppressive regime in South Africa, so be it. If it required the recruitment of a walk-in Jewish agent in America, so be it. What the impact on South African or American Jewry might be did not matter. The needs of the sovereign state came first. It could not be otherwise.

The problems with a Zionism controlled and managed from Jerusalem is not only that it tends to become an outlet for small-time provincial politics spawned by every democracy in unseemly quantities. That is what the politics surrounding the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization is all about. It is that it generates a Zionism that is provincial and constricted and unable to inspire those who will never settle in Zion with a broader, nobler vision of the Jewish enterprise. It is such a vision that is requisite for a restoration of confidence.

To claim that Zionism has been more successful and survived other 20th century "isms" is only partly true and based on a misreading of history. A highly variegated ideology that came in many different packages, Zionism never sought to explain society, much less dictate how it should be managed. It was limited to the welfare of the dispersed Jewish people which it sought to renew and to secure. During the Holocaust the establishment of a Jewish state became a part of that plan. That is what the Biltmore program of May 1942 was about. But the state was not an end in itself but the heart of a strategy to restore world Jewry after the radical losses it had suffered. Israel was the instrument to help achieve that broadly conceived goal. It allows anything that strengthens Judaism and Jewishness, including the strengthening of American Jewry, to be legitimately Zionist. Such a focus does not neglect Israel. It strengthens it by strengthening the Jewish people no matter where they live. It is true that there can be no Zionism without Zion, but there is a corollary. A Jewish enterprise that limits its concept of Zion to a single place and thereby separates itself from the Jewish people who reside outside Israel is bound to become ailing.

Zionism was not a self-contained ideology that sought the furtherance of a single class or nation like Communism or Fascism. Rather it sought to strengthen the Jewish people and its civilization which was dispersed all over the known world. It resembled a kind of

Mazzinian nationalism which shaped the Italian people during its Risorgimento period. But it was different, too, because the Jewish people did not yet live in their land. I know of no other nationalism in history that sought its nationhood from outside the land.

The most direct answer to the query "What ails Zionism?" is to note that it is the same malaise that ails Judaism itself, a lack of cohesiveness and a weakening sense of peoplehood. That should not surprise us. Zionism, after all, has been a crucial part of and a prime shaper of modern Judaism. In the last half century Jewish resources and energy were necessarily expended to strengthen Israel which became the anchor of Jewish survival, and a kind of substitute for the European Jewry that was lost. But the dream that Israel would act as a new center can only be partially realized under conditions of sovereignty. The state solved the problem of haven, of having a place to go in case of need. It also returned Jews to history. For those who desired it, one could even see normality in the Israeli sabra. But like all states, the Jewish state has interests of its own that stem directly from its sovereignty. Those needs cannot always be shared by American Jewry just as Israel cannot fully recognize that American Jewry has needs of its own. We each view the world through our own rose-colored glasses. The hope is that the commitment to Judaism, the faith as well as the civilization, will permit us to transcend the limitation of circumstances and address those needs in their own terms. □



As Jews everywhere  
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of freedom,  
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a democratic and  
progressive Israel.

## Happy Hanukkah!

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Correction: Our September/October issue was erroneously numbered #6; it should have been #5. This November/December issue is #6. Librarians who maintain files, please note.

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## Collision Course 101

*By Jerry Goodman*

According to Leah Ahdut, head of the Histadrut's Institute for Social and Economic Research, the present difference between the Histadrut and the government centers around the basic issue of how you view society. Speaking on behalf of Israel's General Federation of Labor, or the New Histadrut as it wants to be called ("HaHistadrut HaHadasha"), Ahdut defined the problem as whether any government in Israel must see to it that people who have worked and saved during their careers can live out retirement with dignity. According to the Histadrut official, the Histadrut and previous Labor governments shared that social vision. The present government, however, is striving to place the burden on the workers by placing pension funds at the whims of the free market.

At present anyone joining the new pension fund created in 1995 in a reform agreement between the Histadrut and the Labor-led government can set aside a monthly pension payment, based on salary and on an employer's contribution. That payment is based on income limited to twice the average wage. In a complex formula which had been agreed upon, 70% of the accrued savings would be invested in government bonds at a preferred 5% interest rate. The balance is protected by the government, if it is invested at market rates, a much riskier undertaking.

It was this dispute over pensions, and other matters, which led to an eight-hour general strike or work stoppage, called by the Histadrut in September. It was the third such action in the last year and a half. In addition, the Histadrut was attempting to block privatization moves which would, in its view, weaken collective labor and pension agreements. The

Histadrut not only accused the government of "demagoguery", but it also criticized the mass media for not informing the public about the issues in contention.

The issues of contention with the government focused on the pension arrangements, including workers in future privatization programs, including government companies in the general agreements which were soon to be negotiated, and proposed changes in the terms of the sabbatical fund. The critical issue, however, was the battle over pension agreements.

Histadrut Chairman Amir Peretz argued that the dispute with the government reflected a conflict over social values and priorities. In negotiations prior to the general strike he blamed the Treasury for trying to "rob the poor man's sheep", meaning the pension funds. The Histadrut had wanted Minister of Finance Yaakov Neeman to promise that the government would honor existing wage and pension agreements, and not tax study funds, child allowances, or grants to the elderly and the handicapped.

The Finance Minister, reflecting the views of the government on social issues, announced an intent to change the terms of the new pension funds by limiting the income for which money can be set aside for pensions to the average salary, rather than twice the average salary as had been agreed upon with the previous government. Furthermore, the Finance Ministry sought to eliminate the safety net altogether and promote an increase in direct investment in the capital market, which would increase the risks for the pension funds.

Peretz confronted Neeman when he urged the Ministry to cancel large pay hikes set for senior officials, cabinet ministers and Members of the Knesset. His argument was that these officials would receive increases in their cost of living allowances which would outstrip those given to other workers. The labor federation chief accused the government of "arrogance" as it sought to deny demands for a ten percent pension increase for wage earners up to NIS 2,500 per month, and have worked 30 years or longer, while senior officials who made more than 10 times those salaries would be slated to get raises.

**A** Treasury official explained that priorities can change, and that this government wanted "to improve the capital market" and direct more cash for investments. The Histadrut's contention was that the agreement signed in 1996 had never been implemented.

According to the Treasury official, the influx of new capital would lead to an increase in investments in enterprises where such capital had not been available. Among other things, he argued, this would lead to lower mortgages and cheaper electricity, thus benefiting the poorer sections of the population.

Union members disregarded the government's views and members of the Histadrut's 13 major unions heeded the strike call, which reflected a decision taken by the Histadrut leadership that there were disagreements with the government which had not been bridged.

Some observers saw the Histadrut action as part of its continuing efforts to redefine itself in light of the profound changes which have taken place in the labor federation. This process was set in motion by Haim Ramon, Peretz's predecessor, when he launched a series of radical measures to change the Histadrut. The result is, indeed, a "New Histadrut", one which has moved away from its role as a nation-builder to that of a more traditional trade union movement fighting for its members' rights. As a confederation of unions, more akin to the AFL-CIO in this country, with some overtones of the social activism advocated by German trade unions, the Histadrut may have also lost much of the political power it enjoyed for the last seventy years.

Some analysts in Israel suggest that the initiatives taken by the present leadership

seem to have given Histadrut members, especially the younger generation more concerned with economic security, the sense that labor has a clear strategy and is using its tactics judiciously.

While it may increase the collision potential with the government in the future, this has strengthened the view that Amir Peretz is demonstrating effective leadership. As the campaign begins to mount early next year, this assessment bodes well for his re-election as Histadrut chairman. □

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# Thanksgiving Story

By William Finn

**T**wo years ago, my wife and I spent Thanksgiving in Bet Shlomo, a house of prayer founded by friends of the late Rebbe Shlomo Carlebach. Nestled in a warren of narrow alleys, it is typical of the cramped dwellings in the old quarter in Jerusalem. Packed in tightly, wearing our winter coats to fight off the cold radiating from the Jerusalem stones, we ate stuffing and cranberry sauce, while two guys played Bob Dylan songs. Ten thousand miles from the land of our birth, Bob Dylan music at Thanksgiving seemed appropriate.

I was sitting next to strangers. The guy across from me was a New Yorker in the ladies' garment industry. He looked very East Coast in his dark raincoat and blue-suit business uniform. On my right was some tough old bird. No, not the turkey, but some grizzled person with a thick accent. He didn't take nonsense from any one, and he made sure all knew it.

"Leah Rabin," he said disgustingly. "She is not strong. The strong are silent!"

Being new in Israel, I am not very familiar with Leah Rabin. However, describing her as "not strong" is not something that would have occurred to me. Nor do I understand why being "not strong" merited such derision.

The New Yorker wore a knitted *kipah*. If he was typical of religious Americans in Israel, his politics would be extremely right-wing. In these post-assassination days, a few have learned to choose their words carefully.

In a highly deliberate manner, the New Yorker asked, "What do you mean the 'strong are silent'? I don't understand."

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## KNESSET WINTER SESSION

(continued from page 7)

ors of Tel Aviv (Ronnie Milo) and Jerusalem (Ehud Olmert) — doesn't seem to be bothering our Prime Minister. What he said about the Opposition in his speech on October 27 — "your lust for power is without any barriers and with no inhibitions" — apparently applies, first and foremost, to himself. □

"She acts like Rabin's the only one who's died! Lots of people have died. People have died in bus bombings, and terrorists' attacks!"

I did not like hearing this. As part of the national soul searching that followed the assassination, one of the ways of doing *teshuva* (repentance) was not to be silent when someone defames Rabin. In this case it was his widow who was being pointlessly criticized.

I didn't want to say anything. I didn't want to fight. I wanted to sit back in the House of Shlomo, feel his love, and enjoy my turkey. But, I was obliged to say something.

"Cut her some slack," I said. "She just lost her husband."

He muttered something I didn't understand, but it was obvious he wasn't listening to me, and why should he? Compared to him I was just some punk American.

"People have died!" he continued. "There was a soldier last year that was kidnapped! Remember that girl who was knifed?"

"Do you remember the father of the soldier that was kidnapped?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"He met with the father of the terrorist who murdered his son. Together, they formed a peace group."

This news clearly stunned my dinner companion. He paused, his eyes wide opened.

"Now," he said, "that's a strong man." □

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## TOWARD THE SECOND CENTURY

(continued from page 11)

Hebrew high schools, and the federations themselves apply for increased support for their innovative educational activities in Israel? In sum, can the Jewish world anticipate more funds for a truly inclusive range of programs and projects in Israel, or will the Conservative and Reform movements, now further emboldened by the Congress elections, succeed in simply replacing Orthodox hegemony with a new three-denominational parochialism? □

# The Photo Album

By Edmund Pennant

Because I am their guest from America I do not complain about the chamsin heat and busy myself taking note of the kibbutz landscaping.

The old couple and I sit together not in the shade of a terebinth but of the kibbutz plastics plant which in late afternoon casts a long shadow, less hot rather than cool, to the door of their apartment.

An old contention having nothing to do with politics builds between them like electricity in a warm wire, when she interrupts him and he gets up, piqued, and goes for a seltzer in the kitchen. She takes possession then of the photo album and commentary.

Whether the kibbutz would be a beam of clear light in the eye of history or a brooding like the light inside an opal, rich with ambivalence, she could not tell. Picture: the kibbutz dining hall ("We don't eat there any more."); the eucalyptus grove, planted to suck up swamp ("All gone. . ."); the peach orchard ("Cut in half, to make room for the factory and packing plant."); kids on new basketball court ("Empty now, kids gone to the city."); bomb shelter ("Those we still use.")

At the penultimate page, a group photo of the founding kibbutz membership; I study hard, trying to locate the two. She doesn't smile at my ineptitude. About half of the pioneers are gone now, she comments, while I go up and down, scrutinizing faces of the young people. Embarrassed, I give up, afraid to choose the wrong couple. She points at the extreme left of the topmost rank, stiffly standing on benches. "Of course," I murmur, dissembling, careful

to dry my fingers before turning the last page, a photo of both sons, one lost in '67, one in '73.

The husband returns from the kitchen and the talk turns to Ben-Gurion, their late good friend. I try to show off, quoting the old man:

*He who does not believe in miracles is not a realist.*

(Obviously known to every Israeli and his pet goat.)

The husband, an amateur mathematician specializing in topologies, shakes his head and grins. "Tell me," he sighs, "about reality. Can you lift it? Twist it? Weigh it? Rely on it?" The hollyhocks beside their apartment door are drooping from the day's heat, but the sun has gone down by now, and it's almost cool enough for a glass of tea. They take it hot. □

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# FERDINAND LASSALLE

## Life and Times of a Practical Idealist

*By Joseph Adler*

**D**uring the revolutionary wave of 1848 in Germany, liberals and nationalists believing that the auspicious moment had arrived to realize their hopes for political unification called an Assembly at Frankfort to prepare a constitution for a federated commonwealth. The Austrian government, hostile to any federation it could not aspire to dominate, withdrew from the Assembly. Still hopeful of forming a smaller German Empire under Prussian leadership the Assembly offered the imperial crown to Frederick William IV of Prussia. His curt refusal, with the intimation that he might accept it from his fellow princes, but could not take a crown from the hands of a revolutionary assembly, extinguished the last hopes of the Frankfort delegates. Most of them dispersed in disillusionment, and the handful of extremists who attempted to resort to radical measures were driven out by force.

The failure of the revolutionary movement of 1849-50, however, was not a complete disaster for it had given impetus to democratic elements throughout the German lands. As a result of the general agitation, millions of workers and peasants felt for the first time that they deserved a rightful place in the constitutional system of the state. Throughout the German states worker organizations arose to assert their claims. In the reaction which followed a concerted effort was made by the ruling establishments to suppress these worker associations; to restrict the press; and to expel political agitators.

Nevertheless by 1860 a number of political parties had come into being representing the various classes in Germany society. The most important of these parties were the Conservatives and the National-Liberals. The Conserv-

atives representing the aristocracy favored the status quo. The National Liberals, the party of the upper middle class — the businessmen, bankers, lawyers, doctors, professors etc. — advocated free trade and parliamentary responsibility. It refused to admit workers as members and wanted Austria excluded from any federation of German states. In 1861 a third party, the Progressives, was formed to provide a more liberal program than that put forth by the National-Liberals. The Progressive Party would eventually gain control of most of the large cities of Germany.

At about this time (1862) the Workingmen's Association of Leipzig appointed a committee to examine the possibility of establishing labor organizations in all parts of Germany. The first meeting which was held in Berlin revealed a great confusion of aim amongst the committee delegates. Some favored to make their association an appendage of the Progressive Party, while others preferred a non-political platform. In the midst of these deliberations came Ferdinand Lassalle, one of the most brilliant and picturesque figures of the nascent socialist movement.

**L**assalle was born in Breslau (1825) the only son of Heyman Lassa, who had been trained for a rabbinical career, but became a prosperous silk merchant, a member of the town council, and subsequently a militant adherent of the Jewish Reform Movement. Precocious beyond his years, young Ferdinand took an early interest in Jewish affairs. He was acutely conscious of the status of the Jews in Eastern Europe, and at age fifteen had confided to his diary his dream to lead Jews in avenging the infamous Damascus Affair. He

also showed some interest in the Reform Judaism movement. However, by his late teens literature and Hegelian philosophy awakened in him new ambitions, and led him to gradually adopt a negative attitude to the Jewish religion and people. Thus, he recognized Judaism as a necessary phase in the human development of the past, but negated it as a useful force or element in the present state of mankind. While his attitude did not in itself contain any hostility toward Jews, Lassalle with the passage of years would become more inimical to Jews. In 1860, four years before his death, he would write "I can well affirm that I am no longer a Jew" and added "... I even detest them in general. I see in them nothing but the very much degenerated sons of a great but vanished past. During past centuries of slavery these men have acquired characteristics of slaves, and that is why I am most unfavorably disposed toward them. Besides I have no contact with them. Among my friends, and in society which surrounds me here there is scarcely a single Jew." Characteristically, Lassalle never discussed the Jews from a socialistic point of view, but always spoke of them as a separate entity. In this respect he resembled Karl Marx (1818-1883), though unlike the latter he did not indulge in public anti-Semitic utterances. Indeed, Lassalle was often the object of anti-Semitic attacks, particularly from his socialist rivals.

Lassalle's father desired that he pursue a similar career as his own, and was strongly opposed to his son's idealism. After some preliminary schooling in his native city, Lassalle was enrolled in a commercial school in Leipzig. The studies there were not to his taste as he had already acquired a fondness for literature, philosophy, and the classics. The year and a half that he spent at the commercial school was irksome, but it offered him an opportunity to pursue at leisure the intellectual interests that attracted him.

Lassalle finally persuaded his father that the school was not suitable for him, and he left the institution before matriculating to prepare himself for admission to the University of Breslau. During this period Lassalle's interests switched from literature to history, and finally to a study of the philosophy of George Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831). Admitted to the University of Breslau, he engaged in radical

propaganda. In order to avoid expulsion, and to widen his horizons, he went to Berlin where he attended the city's university. Here he joined a group of Young Hegelians, and soon attracted about him a circle of followers.

At both the Universities of Breslau and Berlin, Lassalle specialized in philology and philosophy. His scholastic career was exceptionally brilliant. The savant Alexander Humboldt (1769-1859), one of the great men of the age, dubbed him *Das Wunderkind* ("The Miraculous Child") and other prominent individuals also recognized the young man's remarkable talents.

At the end of his university career, Lassalle decided to go to Paris to collect material for a work which he was planning on the Greek philosopher Heraclitus. In the French capital he became acquainted with the poet Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), who was suffering from sickness, want, and the worries of litigation. They became good friends and Lassalle interested himself in the question of an inheritance that was troubling the poet, but Heine desiring to avoid a public scandal eventually withdrew his legal action. For Heine, the youthful Lassalle was a ray of sunshine. In a letter of introduction written by the poet he expressed his admiration for Lassalle. "My friend", he noted, "is a young man of the most distinguished intellectual powers. To the most thorough scholarship, the widest knowledge and the greatest penetration that I have ever known, he adds the fullest endowment of imaginative powers, an energy of will and a dexterity of action which simply astonish me."

From Paris, Lassalle returned to Berlin where he consorted familiarly with such eminent scholars as Humboldt, and Friedrich Karl von Savigny, professor of Roman law and a founder of the historical school of jurisprudence. Here too, Lassalle was introduced to the Countess Sophie von Hatzfeld whose marital problems would dominate his life for almost a decade.

The Countess had married at the age of fifteen, her cousin Count Edmund von Hatzfeld, the richest member of a powerful aristocratic family, who possessed all the privileges of the high Prussian nobility. He ill-treated his wife from the outset, confined her in his castles on the Rhine, secretly abducted her children, and deprived her of the means of existence,

while he squandered his patrimony in debauchery. The Countess had no parents to defend her, and her relatives who held high official posts were anxious to avoid a scandal. Only one course appeared to be open to the Countess, namely an appeal to the law. The handsome bearing of Lassalle, and his unusually dark eyes made a favorable impression on the Countess. Angered at the story of her ill treatment, Lassalle was soon enrolled among those who were seeking to secure for the Countess a measure of justice. At first he challenged Count Edmund von Hatzfeld to a duel, but the high born Junker laughed in the face of "the silly Jewish boy". Furious at the rejection of his challenge, Lassalle seriously resolved to undertake the cause of the Countess in the courts. He knew nothing of law, but nothing could restrain him. Accordingly, he applied himself to the study of jurisprudence, and being admitted to practice took up the Countess Hatzfeld's affairs in earnest. For eight years (1845 to 1854) he confined himself almost exclusively to her interests, not only giving of his time, but also providing for her support out of his small allowance from his parents. All other pursuits were practically suspended by Lassalle, including his work on Heraclitus, as the Hatzfeld Affair absorbed all his intellectual powers. Some indication of the effort involved in the prosecution of the case may be gleaned from the fact that from first to last, Lassalle was obliged to pursue justice in thirty-six separate and distinct courts. Before the Revolution of 1848, decisions in his favor were, on the whole, favorable. When, however, the counter-revolution was triumphant hardly a week passed in which some of the large number of cases he set forth were lost. Nevertheless, Lassalle persisted and in 1854, his opponent, the Count was exhausted, his strength was broken, and Lassalle was able to dictate terms of peace under conditions most humiliating to the Prussian aristocrat. He secured for Sophie von Hatzfeld a divorce and a princely settlement. She, in turn, kept her agreement with Lassalle made at the beginning of the litigation that he would receive 400 thalers a year if successful in winning the case. This award relieved Lassalle from anxiety concerning his daily wants and ensured him economic independence.

**D**uring the Revolution of 1848 while in Düsseldorf in connection with the Hatzfeld

case, Lassalle became involved in the uprising. When the Prussian Government dispersed the National Assembly, Lassalle used his considerable oratorical powers in an effort to arouse the populace to armed resistance. He was arrested, thrown into prison, and on the following day tried. In an eloquent speech which he delivered in his defense the young revolutionist, then but twenty-four years old, emphatically proclaimed himself an adherent of the social-democratic movement. The speech circulated in pamphlet form under the title "Heine Assisen Rede" (1849) proved to be one of the most remarkable documents of the abortive revolution. Acquitted of the main offense, but found guilty on a minor charge Lassalle was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

After his release from jail, Lassalle found time to once again pursue his literary interests. In 1852 he completed his book *Die Philosophie Herakleitos des Dünklen* ("The Philosophy of Heraclitus the Obscure"). During this period, Lassalle also conducted a lengthy correspondence with Karl Marx. He contributed to a newspaper edited by Marx, and kept him informed on German affairs. In addition, Lassalle aided Marx financially, and helped him later publish some of his writings. Marx proposed that Lassalle be invited to join the "Communist League", but the central committee rejected the proposal because of Lassalle's reputation as a roue and dandy. Later, however, relations between Marx and Lassalle cooled.

**A** visit to the Balkan countries after the Crimean War, and the national stirrings in Italy convinced Lassalle of the potentialities of national uprisings. His readiness to tolerate Napoleon III, his encouragement of nationalism, and his refusal to regard pan-Slavism as the arch-enemy of revolution estranged him from Marx. The split widened with the publication of Lassalle's *Franz von Sickingen* (1858), a plan for German unification in drama form; and in 1859 *Der italienische Krieg und die Aufgabe Preussens* ("The Italian War and Prussia's Passion"), a battle cry against the Hapsburgs demanding the dissolution of their Empire. Both books were subjects of heated literary controversies with Marx, and at the same time enhanced Lassalle's reputation among the intellectual elite.

It has been usual to belittle Lassalle's role in German history and his contributions to

Socialism and Social-Democracy. Indeed, considerable efforts have been made to depreciate his mind and character. It is also evident that Karl Marx who could not bear his rivalry started the fashion. He was abetted in this campaign of villainy by his collaborator Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) who hated Lassalle. Both men often attacked Lassalle in anti-Semitic terms. Indeed, Marx always after his break with Lassalle referred to him opprobriously as "the Jewish nigger".

Seven years younger than Marx, Lassalle had been brought up in the same Hegelian school of thought, and had independently of all Marxian influences, taken a somewhat similar path. However, Lassalle was everything that Marx was not — a judicious scholar, a spell binding orator, and a man in whom despite appearances, logic and enthusiasm combined with a rare degree of balance. He was above all a born leader of men and a natural master of politics. Within the courtroom, or on the platform, Lassalle's studies in law, history, government and philosophy made him formidable, but they appeared in their fullest in his written works. He published during his short lifetime twenty volumes on political and social questions, and carried on an enormous correspondence. In strong contrast to Marx's crabbed polemics and torturous erudition, everything in Lassalle's writing is lucid, generous, and orderly. There is little oversimplification, yet simplicity is the result.

Both men drew from the same fund of socialist ideas that were current in the first half of the nineteenth century. They owed much to the writings of the French Utopian Socialists — Charles Fourier (1772-1837), Count Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), Louis Blanc (1811-1882) — as well as to such thinkers as Moses Hess (1812-1875), Jean Charles de Sismondi (1773-1842), and the anarchist Bakunin.

Lassalle, in particular, accepted the classical labor theory of David Ricardo (1772-1823) as reinterpreted by Karl Johann Rodbertus (1805-1875). When he did borrow from Marx the doctrine of surplus value to explain the formation of capital, he was careful to make full acknowledgment.

In 1860 appeared the fruits of Lassalle's researches on jurisprudence, the *System der Erworbenen Rechte* ("The System of Acquired

Rights"). It was considered by the jurist Savigny the ablest legal treatise written since the sixteenth century. About the same time as the appearance of the latter work Lassalle grappled with the literary critic Heinrich Julian Schmidt who sought to pose as the interpreter of German intellectual life. In a work of fascinating brilliancy he exposed Schmidt's errors of fact and of judgment.

Now came the period which witnessed the activity that rendered Lassalle's career most remarkable. The seed sown in 1848 blossomed forth in the last three years of his life (1861-1864). For a time he continued to occupy himself with such diverse activities as trying to exploit a constitutional crisis in Prussia by intensive agitation among the workers; strengthening ties with the left wing of the German National Verein; and supporting the efforts to unify Italy by the Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882).

In 1862, Lassalle was asked to address the Berlin Liberal Club, an organization with ties to the Progressive Party. He accepted the invitation and chose as his topic "The nature of the Constitution". In his talk he stressed that all constitutions were based on power, and that if the Progressive Party wished to defeat the reactionary Prussian Government with its medieval constitution they must not rely merely on arguments setting forth the injustice of the present situation. They must instead act. The printed versions of the speech were confiscated by the police, but no action was taken against the author. The address, however, led to an invitation to speak before an artisan association in the Prussian capital on April 12, 1862, a date sometimes referred to as the birthday of German Social-Democracy. The talk before the association, later published as the "Workers Program" had in it a number of elements found in the "Communist Manifesto". However, Lassalle differed from Marxian doctrine in his insistence that the true function of the state was to help the development of the human race towards freedom. Such a state could be attained, he asserted only through rule by the majority based on universal and equal suffrage. The growth of the factory system Lassalle pointed out had made the workers' potential the most powerful force in the state. The next logical step, therefore, was to make them legally the most powerful by insti-

tuting complete democracy. The next revolution, Lassalle believed, would place the workers in power. This would mean a victory for all mankind. The publication of the "Workers Program" led to Lassalle's arrest. Once again he was charged with inciting the masses to revolt.

Released from jail, Lassalle continued to agitate for workers' rights. In the summer of 1863 he was contacted by the central committee of the Leipzig Workmen's Association to address a pan-German labor congress which they had convoked, and that had become bogged down as to what goals to pursue. Some of the committee members were particularly anxious to counteract, among the delegates to the labor congress, the influence of the liberal Schulze von Delitzsch. In his talk, Lassalle bluntly declared that the credit unions and cooperatives advocated by Schulze von Delitzsch were mere palliatives and did not get to the heart of the matter. At the base of the social problem, he recognized was the pitiable plight of the laborer in Germany where the French Revolution probably exerted less influence than in any other country in Western Europe. The real villain, Lassalle believed, was the "iron law of wages" as enunciated by David Ricardo, according to which the tendency of a laborer's wages is to keep on level with the cost of bare existence for himself and his family. Lassalle contended that the real value of things is the amount of labor expended in their production; that labor is therefore the sole creator of value. Therefore, it followed that labor should consequently receive all the value of its production, instead of the greater portion being given to capital as profit on the investment. The problem to be solved, Lassalle stressed was how to dispense with the interposition of capital, so that labor might secure the profit of its industry instead of a bare subsistence wage.

Thus, the proposals of Schulze von Delitzsch would hardly be of much benefit to workers who were barely able to eke out an existence. Credit and raw material were of value to small merchants who possessed some capital, but were a mockery to others. Similarly, cooperative societies were of little use to workers who were suffering as producers and not consumers. Only one solution to the problem was possible: The state by its credit should aid the promotion of productive associations for carrying on various industries. In this brief

statement was embedded the germ of "state socialism". To state it negatively, it does not contemplate any confiscation of property, as by communism, nor ultimate abrogation of all legal obligations, restraints, and liabilities, as advocated in the program of the anarchists.

The economic phase of Lassalle's program was not, however, its sole feature. Equal in importance with it was his political plan, which had for its objective the introduction of universal suffrage as the method by which social reform could be more expeditiously and efficaciously realized. To invest the laboring class with political power, Lassalle called for the working class to constitute themselves into a political party. A popular elected legislature which would result from an independent workers' party would then vote state credit for producers' associations thereby freeing the working class from the grip of the "iron law of wages".

The address of Lassalle was warmly greeted, but the delegates to the workers' congress remained sharply divided between two rival camps — one supporting Lassalle, and the other Schulze von Delitzsch. In May of 1853 both men were invited to state their respective views before a workers' congress in Frankfort-on-Main. Lassalle immediately accepted the invitation, but parliamentary duties prevented Schulze von Delitzsch from attending. Lassalle with his usual eloquence held his audience spellbound. He concluded his speech by noting that if his views were rejected in favor of those advanced by Schultze-Delitzsch, he would stretch himself out in the Gulf of Naples, and spare himself a life full of torment, exertion, vexation and worry. However, the delegates would lose one of the best friends of their class. In the vote that followed 400 to 1 favored Lassalle's views, and the fiery orator now found himself the head of the workers' democratic movement in Germany.

On May 23, 1853, Lassalle founded the *Allgemeiner deutscher Arbeiterverein* ("General German Workers Association") the nucleus of the future German Social Democratic Party. All workingmen were eligible to join the association on the payment of a nominal fee, and agents were appointed throughout Germany to recruit members. In justifying the association's aim to achieve universal suffrage, Lassalle declared over and over again that it was the

only practical way of realizing labor's claims, for without it "... we may be a philosophical school, or a religious sect but never a political party. Thus it appears that universal suffrage belongs to our social demands as the handle to the axe."

He did not, however, regard his idea of productive associations as final. Lassalle felt that mere abstract principles of economics would fail to touch the masses and that some simple, yet fundamental proposition must be placed before them if their imagination was to be captured. A final solution he suggested in a letter to Karl Johann Rodbertus (an exponent of professional socialism, also known as socialism of the chair) might require five hundred years for accomplishment, but his proposals, he felt, were a step in the right direction.

**F**rom the formation of the General German Workers Association (acronym ADAV) until his death Lassalle worked ceaselessly and with great effectiveness to build a powerful political party. At first the press ignored his efforts, but eventually a number of newspapers came to Lassalle's support, as did many distinguished publicists, and intellectuals. Within a year of the association's founding Lassalle suddenly found himself one of the most talked about public figures in Germany.

The ADAV was strictly disciplined, the members accepting a centralized leadership. Its shock tactics forced the other parties to reform their organizations in order to better counteract its activities. Equally effective in challenging the views of other factions, notably the Progressive Party was Lassalle's pamphlet *Herr Bastiat Schulze von Delitzsch*, a primer on labor economics. Its concept of state aid as opposed to individual self-help also influenced many socialist party programs outside of the membership of the ADAV. In all of this work of agitation Lassalle displayed marvelous assiduity, and though he was hated and denounced by his opponents as "the terrible Jew" astonishment was expressed at his remarkable oratorical and organizational power, his dialectical skills in controversy with some of the ablest publicists of his time.

In the spring of 1864, Lassalle traveled to various parts of Germany to review and assess the accomplishments of the workers' party he had created. Mass gatherings of workers greet-

ed him enthusiastically at every stop. In Ronsdorf, the celebration reached a climax when Lassalle was hailed as a great prophet of the workingman. He was deluged with flowers thrown in his pathway by working girls, and escorted by a joyful group of laborers under a triumphal arch to the speaker's platform. A thunderous ovation followed the delivery of his speech. Lassalle, later recalling the event would write that he had a feeling "... that such scenes must have been witnessed at the founding of a new religion."

**I**t was shortly after his triumphant tour that Lassalle, while in Riga, met again Helene von Doenniges, the daughter of a Bavarian diplomat. They had first become acquainted in one of the fashionable salons of Berlin. The two fell in love, and it was not long before they decided to marry. Although Lassalle had drifted away from Judaism in his youth he had not been baptized as claimed by some writers. Indeed, Helene von Doenniges in her memoirs stated that during their courtship, Lassalle asked her whether he being a Jew would be an obstacle to their union, and whether she would require him to become a Christian, and that he expressed his gratification that such a sacrifice on his part would not be necessary.

Helene's father, however, was not so tolerant and was violently opposed to the marriage of his daughter to an individual of Jewish origin and dubious past. He forced his daughter to write a formal renunciation of the proposed union. She then under her father's prompting accepted as a suitor a Wallachian, the Prince von Racowitza who had long paid her assiduous attention. Lassalle was enraged by these developments and challenged both Helene's father and suitor to a duel. The prince accepted the challenge and the duel was fought at Carouge, near Geneva, Switzerland on the morning of Sunday, August 28, 1864. At the first shot, Lassalle fell mortally wounded, and three days afterward died.

The body of the socialist leader was brought home through Germany amid much pomp and ceremony, and was greeted in the various cities it passed through with many manifestations of popular grief. The Countess of Hatzfeld and some of Lassalle's followers wanted to turn the burial into a demonstration, but the family objected and he was buried hurriedly in the Jewish cemetery of Breslau.

After the demise of Ferdinand Lassalle the organization which he had founded developed factional differences growing out of various conceptions of the scope and methods of the workers' party. During the classical period of Socialism that preceded World War I, Lassalle was honored as one of its principal figures. While Marx and Engels worked mainly abroad, Lassalle had laid the foundations of the Social-Democratic movement in Germany. His meteoric career showed him to be a man of extraordinary ability, magnetism, ingenuity, and oratorical power. He managed to create what had never existed before — a party of the workingman growing almost simultaneously with the industrialization of Germany. It was a party which a decade after Lassalle's death joined the Marx-controlled International to form the German Social-Democratic Party (1875).

The two who might have been Lassalle's allies — Marx and Engels — kept an aloof silence while he spent his strength and resources upon the task of organizing a workers' political party. Lassalle dead, they collected the fruits of his labors and expressed their relief at his removal by insulting his memory. The Social-Democratic Party, then, which forced Prince Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck (1815-1898), Chancellor of the German Empire, and his successors to steal so much of its program worked presumably in the name of Marx, but actually on Lassalle's principles. The party's goals were national, for as Lassalle had perceived, a German national state was the first demand of all Germans after the failure to unify in 1848, nor could economic problems be handled otherwise than nationally in the European system of sovereign states. It was political and not revolutionary for the German working class wanted tangible benefits together with security of life and limb — another lesson from 1848. Lastly the workers tended to prefer Lassalle's practical idealism to Marx's theoretical materialism.

In retrospect, as one writer put it “. . . until Lassalle entered public life the working classes had been without organization, and had wandered about like sheep without a shepherd. He it was who drew the masses together and formed for the first time a true workingman's party.” □

## LETTERS

### COMMENTARY ON THE BUND AND BOLSHEVIKS — A Response

Harold Ticktin's article on the Jewish Bund and the Communists is fascinating. Its attempt to bring back the past and even to assign blame to the terrible results is intriguing.

Unfortunately it does not hold water. There is no question that opposition groups at times played into the hands of the Communists. Even the Bund's leaving the London 1903 Conference of the All-Russian Social Democratic Party played into Lenin's hands and gave him the use of the Bolshevik label (majority) in spite of the fact this brief flash of time his group was always a minority.

But to have played a role in the Communist victory you have had to do more than have misjudged or blundered a point in history. You have to have consciously supported the Communist terror.

A mother who insists that her child go down the street to Macy's rather than his choice a block sooner to Toys Are Us is not responsible for the tragedy when a DUI type plunges his car into the youngster, seriously injuring him.

No, the Bund and the other Democratic forces were the hope for a better society. It was the Erlichs and Alters and their predecessors along with Martov and Dan of the Mensheviks and the Chernovs of the Social Revolutionaries who were the forces for a free society.

It is true Lenin had the tight organization and understood the overwhelming need to end the war that made his case. The result was thirty years of Stalinist terror. It was Lenin's crowd — Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, etc. — who did not appreciate the horror they unleashed.

The Bund did not see the desperate need of Eastern European Jewry for a Jewish homeland but they are not responsible for Stalin.

Milton Zatinsky  
Miami, Florida

# JEWISH RESISTANCE IN WWII

*By David Rosenthal*

**H**arold Werner was a member of the Jewish underground force that operated in Poland during the Nazi occupation. As a participant and witness to that struggle for Jewish survival, Werner was well qualified to compose an account of that singular effort. He did so in a book entitled *Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War Two*, published by Columbia University Press in 1992. The introduction is by Sir Martin Gilbert, the distinguished British historian who is himself an authority on the Holocaust.

Harold Werner writes in detail about the sabotage exploits of the Jewish resistance group against the German army. Members of his unit blew up trains, attacked local military posts, and even shot down a German plane. They also managed to lead a group of Jews out of the ghetto into the forest near Parnow. In addition to fighting the Nazis directly, the Jews had to fend off the hostility of the Poles who were supposed to join forces with them against the common foe.

This book reopens the wounds of those years, but it also reminds us that there is a great deal of important data about Jewish resistance, written in Yiddish and in Hebrew, that has not been made available to the general public. The reason for this state of affairs lies in the fact that these two languages (in which so many of the original materials were written) are foreign to most American Holocaust scholars. Added to this ignorance is the dubious role of "publicity" in American-Jewish life. Instead of truthful accounts describing the memorable deeds of that period, we often get nothing more than ballyhoo about the "exceptionally heroic accomplishments" of current

"celebrities."

Thus, large segments of the population are kept ignorant of a chapter of history which would deepen national Jewish consciousness. What they get is a surrogate, a cluster of stories suited to the popular — and uncritical — taste.

**T**he broad Jewish partisan front extended from the woods near Warsaw, through the forest around Lublin, where remnants of ghetto Jews who had escaped from Parnow, Pulaw, Krashnik and other places found refuge in the woods and swamps between Vilna and Minsk. These geographical details do not span the complete scope of that front. The Jews there suffered from a double-barreled hatred: from the Germans, on the one hand, and the Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian-White Russian, on the other. During the war years the forests became the domain of Jewish bravery, Jewish struggle and Jewish martyrdom.

The changed situation in the forest during the war years becomes painfully clear against the background of Joseph Opatoshu's novel, *In Polish Woods*. What follows is his characterization of the forest Jews of former times:

Mordecai, his father, his grandfather and his great-grandfathers back to the sixth generation, had all been born in the Lipovetz Forest. They intermarried, lived as a clan . . . Whenever one of them celebrated a wedding (as happened often), more than 300 guests came — and that was only the immediate family . . . Every branch of the family brought along its own rabbi and its own klezmer-band, who played out in the open air. And the guests danced in every room of the house, in the barns, in the woods . . .

Wherever a new Jewish community took root, Mordecai's family sent them hewn lumber, providing another portion of Poland with synagogues and study-houses where Jews could gather to pray. Wherever a Talmud Torah or a *bes-medresh* needed wood for the winter, Mordecai's family sent it — furnishing kindling for half a province.

The Jewish lumber-workers placed at the service of the World War II partisans their familiarity with the local roads and the little-known paths and rivers. The loggers, the sawyers, the men who tied up the lumber and shipped it — they were the ones who guided many of the partisans through the mud and swamps and helped them link up with other fighting units.

How large was the partisan movement? Moshe Kaganovitch, author of "The War of the Jewish Partisans in Eastern Europe," (Buenos Aires, 1956) estimates that the number of partisans in Volhynia and Western Byelorussia was 12 to 14 thousand. Some Israeli scholars arrive at the same figure. If the partisans of the Lublin district and of all other parts of Poland are added to this, the total number of partisans on the territory of the former Polish state totals 20 to 25 thousand.

The general partisan movement was not free of anti-Semitism. According to chroniclers and accounts by Jews at the front, there was a fanatical Jew-hating element in almost every unit and every detachment — "just like in the good old days." Often these anti-Semites were criminals and former Nazi collaborators. There were instances when Jews were shot for "spying." Their accusers charged: "How could anyone have escaped from the ghetto without spying?" Jewish partisans were accepted into detachments on the condition of cutting all ties to other family members. Another condition: that they obtain their own weapons.

In Sh. Kacjerginski's *Between Hammer and Sickle* (Paris, 1949), in which the destruction of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union is described, the author, a partisan, asks: "Shall I recount here the experience of those Jews who managed to get to the partisans in the forest? Shall I now tell about the anti-Semitism of those Soviet commanders who were sent in from the other side of the forest? About the large number of Jews who became victims of their 'own' partisans? No. We have already had

enough of those kinds of reports . . ."

Dr. Shlomo Wolkowitski, a partisan from Slonim and a doctor who served a number of partisan detachments, summed up the situation in this way: "If the Jews had not been so harassed and victimized by the partisans; if they had not been so deceived and if so many of them had not been shot for so-called crimes; if the Soviet partisans, who grew up during the Stalin years, had not fanned the flames of Jew-hatred in the forest — then thousands more Jews would have come out of the forest alive . . ." (*From One Forest to the Next*, Sionim Chronicle, p. 124)

The family camps in the woods were the last bastion of Jewish family connectedness against which the destructive lust of anti-Semitic partisans was directed. Their rescue is associated with the brothers Tovye and Eshol Bielski, who were descended from an old family of Jewish villagers in the area of Novogrudek, and with Shimon Zarom from Minsk.

Yehoshua Yaffe, in *Sefer Milkhamot HaGetaot* (edited by Yitzhak Zuckerman and Moshe Basak, Tel Aviv, 1954) tells us about a family camp of the Bielski brothers:

. . . The number of people in the camp reached 1,230, including women, children and elderly people. The commandant, Eshol (Bielski), used to go out with his people in the area and conduct successful raids against the Germans . . . The work in the camp was well organized. Almost everyone had a function. Even the children were busy with their lessons in the camp school. Tovya Bielski, who was head of the camp guard, had sole responsibility for the security of the camp . . .

Elsewhere in the book, Yaffe asserts: "The commandant (Tovya Bielski) came to us with a few of his closest people . . . We felt safer and stronger . . . We trusted him. We believed he would protect, that he would save us . . . He used to say very firmly: 'The main thing is to save as many Jews as possible.' He always found time to talk with each one of us and to ask about our personal situation. . ."

Some partisan groups were organized by Jewish veterans of the Polish army. For example, liberated Jewish prisoners of war in the army stationed in Lublin created a partisan unit in the name of Emilia Plater (a well-known Polish freedom-fighter), with Moshe Yeager and Shmuel Gruber in command. This group later distinguished itself in a number of battles and

joined up with other partisan groups. After a number of engagements, it concentrated its efforts around Ostrow, near Lubartow, the partisan "capital." Its units were credited with safely transporting to the Russian side the leaders of post-war Poland — Osubka-Moravski, Marian Spicholski and Wladislaw Gomulka.

Compared to their gentile "comrades-in-arms," the situation of the Jewish partisans was extremely difficult. In all occupied countries the non-Jewish partisans had the full support of their governments. This was especially true in the Russian areas. The government gave the partisans the wherewithal to carry out sabotage operations against important enemy positions. It entrusted them with such tasks as cutting enemy communications lines and wrecking food and weapons

transports. In a word, the government helped create a second front in the rear of the enemy. The development of radio transmission, of air power and of new troop movement techniques raised the importance of that front and led to its integration into general battle strategy.

Utterly different was the fate of the Jewish partisans. They were not strengthened by any government, nor by a centrally organized body; nor did they have any previously worked out strategy. Without instructions, without money, without weapons, they still dared to follow the path of active resistance.

*Fighting Back* illuminates the role of Jewish partisans. It is an important contribution to the documentary literature, showing that not all Jews went to their slaughter like sheep — that the theory of Jewish "passivity" during World War II was totally false. □

## In Memoriam

**MIRIAM MANN**, a veteran of the Labor Zionist movement in Cincinnati, passed away on October 12th, leaving a great void in the ranks of the movement there. In eulogies by her close *haverim*, Miriam was likened to "A meteor's fleeting appearance and abrupt disappearance — her influence and charismatic leadership spanned over six decades." Miriam possessed charm, determination, vision and action. She was instrumental in initiating many projects, notably the *Lunch and Learn* monthly lecture series which continued for a decade. Following the death of her husband, Albert Mann, together with the local branch of LZA, she brought prominent local and national personalities to lecture at the Albert Mann Memorial Lectures. Miriam was also highly regarded as a reviewer of books, no matter how lengthy or complex. Her practical wisdom and dedicated idealism inspired generations of colleagues not only in Cincinnati but also nationally.

**MARSHA RAPPAPORT WIDETZKY**, formerly of Minneapolis and long-time member of Moshav Beth Herut, passed away in October after a brief illness. Coming from a highly motivated Labor Zionist family, it was natural for Marsha and her husband, Hy Widetzky, to go on Aliya with their young family. Her father, Eliyahu Nisan Rappaport, was a leader in

Labor Zionist circles in Minneapolis, and was in the nucleus that planned the establishment of what became Beth Herut, a moshav on the Sharon plain near Kfar Vitkin. Her mother Yona (Yentl) was active in Pioneer Women (now Na'amat USA). Marsha and family sailed for Israel on July 14, 1951, aboard the ZIM freighter, *S.S. Tel Aviv*, a voyage lasting three weeks. Established in 1933, the moshav flourished over the decades, expanding from just growing oranges to producing turkeys that were exported worldwide; later, the community started a silkscreen printing plant, and eventually a supermarket on the side of the main highway linking Tel Aviv and Haifa. The Widetzky's were an integral part of the life and development of Beth Herut.

Besides her husband, Marsha leaves behind two daughters — Judi Widetzky, co-chair of the World Labor Zionist Federation, who will become director of the Aliya Department of the World Zionist Organization and its representative in Washington, D.C. in January; and Elie Aloni, who is chairperson of the Department of Economy, Employment & Vocational Training of Na'amat in Israel.

The American Labor Zionist Alliance mourns the loss of two *chaverot*, here and in Israel, whose lives exemplified the finest characteristics of our movement. □

## THE FORGOTTEN SPY

**"REUVEN SHILOAH: The Man Behind the Mossad"**

by Haggai Eshed (trans. by David and Leah Zinder). Frank Cass; 384 pages. \$57.50/£39.50 (cloth) \$27.50/£19.50 (paper).

*Reviewed by Eric Silver*

**A**fter Reuven Shiloah's premature death in 1959, Tel Aviv University established an institute in his name for research into contemporary Middle Eastern affairs. It was soon renamed the Moshe Dayan Center. Donors found it more sexy.

Shiloah, one of the most prickly and frustrated of men, would have squirmed at the irony. That was the story of his public life. As David Ben-Gurion's "Mr. Intelligence" in the decades before and after the establishment of the state, his contributions to Israel's security and diplomatic strategy were monumental. Yet he died, in his 50th year, craving recognition. His contemporaries became ministers or ambassadors. Shiloah remained a shadowy "adviser," whose name now strikes a muffled echo.

He was not only the first chief of the Mossad, Israel's external security service. He set the pattern for intelligence gathering and evaluation — the division of labor between the Mossad, the internal Shin Bet and Military Intelligence — that has proved its worth for almost half a century.

In the '30s and '40s, Shiloah pioneered Zionist espionage in the Arab world. He himself posed as a Jewish teacher in Iraq. He ran a network of informers in Palestinian towns and villages. He built a

clandestine partnership, fluctuating but fruitful, with British counterintelligence during World War II and after. The epic parachute mission of Hannah Szenes and other Jewish agents from Palestine into Nazi-occupied Europe to foster Jewish resistance and escape was his brainchild.

Working under Ben-Gurion and foreign minister Moshe Sharett, Shiloah supervised negotiations, overt and covert, with King Abdullah of Jordan. He played a key role, supple but always mindful of security, in the 1949 Rhodes armistice talks and other early peace efforts.

As Abba Eban's No. 2 in the Washington embassy during the '50s, he refined another staple of Israeli diplomacy: quiet cultivation of influential American "friends," with access to the administration. At a time when the American connection was far from axiomatic, he forged secret links with the Central Intelligence Agency. One of his earliest conquests was James Jesus Angleton, the agency's fanatical cold warrior, whose memory was honored in Jerusalem long after he had been discredited in Washington.

Shiloah, a rare Sabra among the midwives of the state, was always troubled by Israel's international and regional isolation. Many of the ideas attributed to

Ben-Gurion began in his fertile mind. Most notably, Shiloah lobbied for Israeli membership in NATO when others still hankered after non-alignment. He developed the strategy of the "periphery," a liaison of convenience with the non-Arab neighbors Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia,

Why, then, is he the forgotten man of Israeli statecraft? Haggai Eshed provides more clues than explanations in this persuasive biography, published in Hebrew shortly before his death in 1988 and offered now for the first time in English. Readers are left to crack the code.

**S**hiloah was born into a rabbinical family in Me'ah She'arim, but his father took the family out of the ghetto and became a campaigning religious Zionist. Reuven joined the Haganah when he was 15, and abandoned his religious roots. His background and temperament made him a loner, an ideas man rather than an organization man. He was an obsessive worker who hated to delegate and never took holidays. Like a classic yeshivah student, he had to fill every waking second with his equivalent of Talmud.

After Shiloah's death from undiagnosed heart trouble, his friend and ally, Chaim Herzog, calculated that he had gone abroad 32 times as a diplomatic trouble-shooter in the last year of his life. Although Herzog warned him that he was killing himself, Shiloah had to be involved in everything. He was secretive to the point of parody. Colleagues joked that when a taxi driver asked where he wanted to go, he refused to tell. It was classified.

Industry, discretion, innovative thinking, private charm — these were the qualities Shiloah brought to the service of the young state. They proved both his

## ISAIAH BERLIN DIES AT 88

strength and his weakness. When rivals plotted to unseat him, he didn't know how to defend himself. When skeptics challenged his qualifications to be Washington ambassador, a post for which he thirsted after Eban returned to Israel, even his admirers had to admit that he lacked the platform charisma.

This book was designed to give Shiloah his due place in history. It turned into a memorial to its author. Like his subject, Eshed was a Sabra maverick: a leftist who fought in the Stern Gang; a non-conformist journalist with the Labor daily Davar, who backed Ben-Gurion over the Lavon Affair. His book on that notoriously divisive episode was so explosive that the paper "exiled" him to London to keep him out of mischief. □

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### ADDENDUM

Before Reuven Shiloah Hebraized his name he was Reuven Zaslany. He married Betty Borden, member of a prominent Labor Zionist family in New York. Betty continues to reside in Jerusalem. Reuven died in 1959 at age 49.

*Jewish Frontier* presents this review of Shiloah's biography at a time when *Mossad* which he founded and led through many successful operations, has fumbled recently, most notably in the failed assassination attempt against a major HAMAS leader in Amman, Jordan.

One of this century's leading Jewish philosophers and exponent of Zionism, Sir Isaiah Berlin passed away on November 5th in Oxford, England, after a long illness. A man of great scholarship, intellect and wit, Sir Isaiah advocated pluralism in a century when totalitarians and utopians alike claimed title to the "one, single truth".

The *New York Times* devoted more than a full page in its account of Sir Isaiah's life and achievements. We present herewith a section of that eulogy, dealing with his outlook on Zionism:

Sir Isaiah's fervent Zionism derived from his experience as much as from his philosophy. "I can tell you why I'm a Zionist," he said in a conversation in the year before his death. "Not because the Lord offered us the Holy Land as some people, religious Jews, believe. My reason for being a Zionist has nothing to do with preserving Jewish culture, Jewish values, wonderful things done by Jews. But the price is too high, the martyrdom too long. And if I were asked, 'Do you want to preserve this culture at all costs?' I'm not sure that I would say yes, because you can't condemn people to permanent persecution. Of course assimilation might be a quite good thing, but it doesn't work. Never has worked, never will. There isn't a Jew in the world known to me who somewhere inside him does not have a tiny drop of uneasiness vis-à-vis them, the majority among whom they live. They may be very friendly, they may be entirely happy, but one has to behave particularly well, because if they don't behave well they won't like us."

When it was suggested to him during that conversation in 1996 that he was surely the exception, that he had been knighted, awarded the Order of Merit, Britain's highest honor for intellectual achievement; that he was a renowned and beloved Oxford scholar, a president of the British Academy; that he had been saluted, cherished and accepted with pride in England, the recipient of innumerable honorary degrees, he had an immediate response: "Nevertheless, I'm not an Englishman, and if I behave badly. . . ."

In his scholarly work, Sir Isaiah had traced the origins of Zionism in a profile of the 19th-century German-Jewish revolutionary Moses Hess, one of his many portraits of political philosophers. Often, though, he was drawn to his opposites, like Karl Marx, the subject of his first book in 1939, and Joseph de Maistre, a French philosopher of the Napoleonic age whom he regarded as a proto-fascist. Michael Ignatieff, Sir Isaiah's biographer, said, "He is liberalism's greatest elucidator of the antiliberal. He is always drawn to his opponents. Here is a liberal, balanced, amusing, witty man drawn to lonely, eccentric, crazed characters. It is said he is a rationalist who visits the irrational by day and comes back to the rational stockade at night." □

We mourn the passing of  
**FANNY KOENIGSBERG**  
New York City  
Mother of Ruby Vogelfanger  
and

**MARSHA WIDETZKY**  
Moshav Beit Herut, Israel  
Mother of Judi Widetzky

Two Labor Zionist Pioneers who  
transmitted their legacy to suc-  
ceeding generations.

•  
Daniel & Elaine Mann  
Bethesda Maryland

The Labor Zionists of  
Cincinnati

record with deep sorrow the  
passing of our beloved and  
respected Chavera

**MIRIAM MANN**

who brightened our ranks for so  
many decades

## A LOVE STORY

**"TO MY MEMORY SING"** by Rosalind Byron Chaikin. 299 pages. With photos, maps and index. Library Research Associates, 474 Dunderberg Road, Monroe, NY 10959. \$25 Hard Cover.

*Reviewed by Nahum Guttman*

**T**his memoir, based on letters and poems from Sol Chick Chaikin to his wife Rosalind, mainly during World War II when he was stationed in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theatre brings to life the many-sided career of an American trade union leader and social activist.

The story begins with the trials and tribulations of a young Jewish couple who are madly in love and strive to rise from a genteel low-income background to the highest rungs of the American labor movement. After the war, Chick becomes a regional director of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, gaining valuable experience that prepared him for eventual leadership in that union, topped by his election as president, following in the footsteps of David Dubinsky and Louis Stulberg. In that role, he also earned a seat as vice-president of the AFL-CIO.

A tall, attractive man with an abundance of charm and a gift of oratory, Chick gained wide acclaim outside the Labor fold. A champion of liberal causes and progressive issues, Chick was given an honor rarely bestowed on a trade unionist — he was tapped to second the nomination of Jimmy Carter at the 1980 Democratic Party convention. In a

later tribute, President Carter said: "Whenever I needed help as President, Chick was there. He embodied the best in American values. He was tough but compassionate. He set a shining example of a commitment to the brotherhood of all men and women, commitment to human rights, a fervent dedication to just cause which will long leave an imprint on our nation."

Another leading Democrat, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, likewise ascribed to Chick a major part in his becoming a senator: "The first thing Chick Chaikin ever asked of me was that I run for the United States Senate, and I would not have done it if he hadn't . . . there were many other requests, but all singular in that he never asked anything for himself. It was always for others, and not those you would necessarily expect."

But the major part of these memoirs deals with the strong bonds between Chick and Rosalind, especially during his military absence from his wife, and his first child. Rosalind faithfully kept his letters (and especially the poems) from CBI.

Soon after his arrival in Sylhet, India with the 4th Combat Cargo Group, he wrote:

Half a world away in a foreign land,

He . . .  
wave on . . .  
I said good-  
many ways.  
Has a song delight  
your heart  
With Love? Has a cool bre-  
you?  
It is I, kissing you. We are not ap-

These memoirs are an "excursion into the past", and will be most appreciated by veterans of World War II (and other battles, for that matter) who were separated from loved ones for long periods of time.

The author, Mrs. Chaikin, adds her own literary touch with poems dedicated to Chick whose "hair was black". Their four children and several friends contribute short statements which reflect the extent of Chick's influence on family and friends — for to him the individual mattered as much as the masses he led as a unionist.

Chick Chaikin (1918–1991) was a devoted Jew. He dedicated himself and his union cohorts to support the labor movement in Israel, which he visited many times, to survey the projects sponsored by the ILGWU and meet with the country's leaders. He was particularly close to Golda Meir and other Histadrut personalities. Chick chaired the American Trade Union Council for Histadrut.

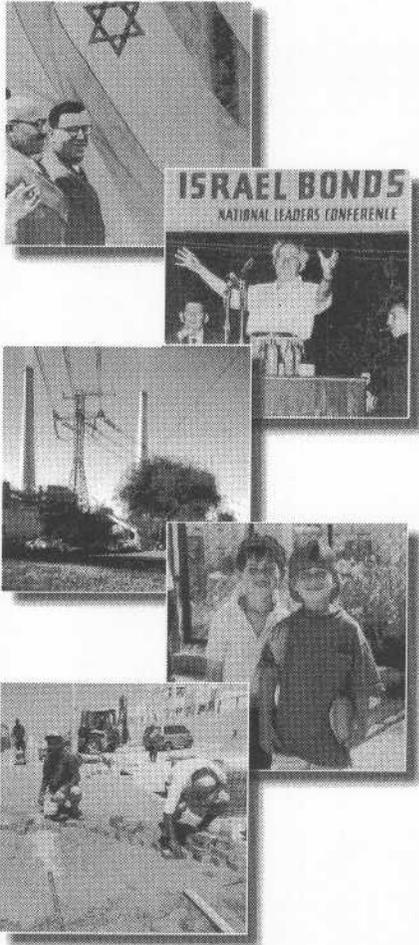
As a valiant American trade union leader, as a staunch supporter of Histadrut, but above all as a caring human being, Chick left a legacy that "sings". □

*All royalties will be donated to the Family and Children's Policy Center, Heller School, Brandeis University.*

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