



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series D: International Relations Activities. 1961-1992

Box 63, Folder 7, Israel - violence, 1986.

AGENDA

1. Tanenbaum opens meeting, introduces Ellenoff
2. Ellenoff welcomes group, tells ~~abix~~ briefly about AJC's interest in the subject, mentions plans for intergroup work in Israel. He calls on Gordis.
3. Gordis reads joint statement.
4. Tanenbaum returns to chair, introduces various spokesmen to comment.
5. Wurzberger
6. Rosenberg
7. Syme
8. Klaperman
9. ~~g. H. Lookstein~~
10. Tanenbaum again returns, to ask for questions

- Herschel Schacter



## STATEMENT OPPOSING RESORT TO VIOLENCE

As representatives of major religious bodies of American Jewry, we join together in expressing our grave concern, outrage and sadness over the resort to violence on the part of militant elements in both the religious and secular sectors of Israeli society.

We are cognizant of the deep differences regarding Jewish law, tradition and belief that divide Jews today both in Israel and in the Diaspora. These in turn result in differences in practice and lifestyle, some of which one group or another may find unacceptable.

In such a heterogenous and pluralistic society it is difficult to demand that everyone love his neighbor as himself. But as Hillel so wisely formulated it, the minimal guideline for coexistence and survival is that "what is hateful to you, do not do unto your neighbor."

In practical terms this means giving due consideration to the feelings of others and exercising self-restraint.

We therefore deplore provocative actions that have violated Jewish religious sensibilities regarding "modesty in dress" in places of worship and in traditionally Orthodox neighborhoods. But insensitivity on the part of secularists to religious observance cannot be a justification for religious zealots, or any other persons, taking the law into their own hands and carrying out acts of intimidation and of destruction of public or private property. Jewish ethics and democratic ideals do not sanction the resort to extra-legal violence as instruments for enforcing public piety. Moreover, such measures only exacerbate tensions and arouse enmity for Jewish tradition among the non-observant. Teaching, preaching and personal examples of pious practice are the only legitimate and ultimately the only effective means of persuasion; violence and coercion are not.

By the same token, it is nothing short of bigotry and hooliganism to carry out acts of reprisals against synagogues or institutions of Torah study. Over and above our repudiation of their acts of physical violence, we are especially horrified that Jews could engage in acts historically associated with anti-Semites. Tearing up holy prayer books and sacred Bibles, desecrating tefillin and the Arks of the Law, and defacing synagogue buildings with swastikas are unbearable to Jews of conscience and memory throughout the inhabited world.

We call upon all elements of Israeli society and of world Jewry to repudiate these mindless resorts to violence and hatred, as well as the religious and secular fanaticism which have incited them. We urge all Jews to join in supporting Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir in their appeals for a cessation of physical

violence and the undertaking of major efforts to promote moderation, tolerance and mutual respect. The precious democracy that Israel has forged must not be allowed to become hostage to irrationality and uncontrolled passions.

The Jewish people have survived over 4,000 years and across some thirty civilizations because at crucial moments of Jewish history the core values of Ahavat Yisrael ("Love of one Jew for another") and sense of mutual responsibility have dominated Jewish consciousness. At this critical hour in Israel and in the Diaspora it is urgent that the entire Jewish people return to these sacred principles of mutual love and respect, the keystone of Jewish survival.

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Rabbi Herbert M. Baumgard, President, Synagogue Council of America

Dr. Gerson Cohen, Chancellor, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, President, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

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For the American Jewish Committee: Theodore Ellenoff, President; Dr. David M. Gordis, Executive Vice-President; Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director, International Relations Department; Dr. George E. Gruen, Director, Israel & Middle East Affairs Division

8865 (IRD-8)

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** June 27, 1986  
**to** Area Directors  
**from** Marc Tanenbaum, Director of International Relations  
**subject** Local Programming on Religious-Secular Conflict in Israel

On Friday, June 27, we held a very successful press conference during which we brought together major personalities in the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist groups to express their condemnation of recent outbreaks of physical violence among extremist religious and secular groups in Israel and their appeal for moderation and tolerance.

Enclosed please find copies of (a) the press release; (b) the joint statement; (c) the list of signators and participants; and (d) WINS radio commentary.

It occurred to us that it would be useful to try to replicate such a press conference in your community, involving major local religious Jewish personalities. You could use the text that we issued, or have local leaders adapt it.

We believe it is important to build up a counter-movement momentum that rejects extremism and violence and encourages a community spirit of mutual respect, moderation, and tolerance.

Where possible, it would be wise to invite local Israeli mass media representatives so that this message would be communicated to Israeli media. Local Israeli consul generals and their public information people might also be invited.

Please keep us informed of what steps you are able to take in this direction.

Dr. George E. Gruen, director of IRD's Israel and Middle East Division, coordinated this effort and I urge you to keep in touch with him -- especially since I will be attending meetings in Israel from June 30th to July 6th.

The time to move is now while the issue is on everybody's mind.

MHT:RPR

Enclosures

86-550

# NEWS COMMITTEE

FROM THE



**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE** Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

*MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations*

**FOR RELEASE AFTER 10:30 A.M.  
FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 1986**

NEW YORK, June 27 . . . Sharply denouncing the violence that has erupted between extreme religious and secular groups in Israel, leaders of the major religious bodies of American Jewry today called on Israelis and Jews everywhere to condemn all fanaticism in the Jewish state, whether secular or religious, and to seek an immediate end to "these mindless resorts to violence and hatred."

Speaking at a news conference at American Jewish Committee headquarters here, top officials of the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist arms of American Judaism expressed their horror "that Jews could engage in acts historically associated with anti-Semites," and urged support for "major efforts to promote moderation, tolerance and mutual respect."

"In such a heterogeneous and pluralistic society," the officials said in a joint statement, "it is difficult to demand that everyone love his neighbor as himself. But as Hillel so wisely formulated it, the minimal guideline for coexistence and survival is that 'what is hateful to you, do not do unto your neighbor.'"

Making plain that their denunciations were aimed equally at all parties to the violence, the statement continued: "We deplore provocative actions that have violated religious sensibilities regarding 'modesty in dress' in places of worship and in traditionally Orthodox neighborhoods. But insensitivity on the part of secularists to religious observances cannot be a justification for religious zealots, or any other persons, taking the law into their own hands and carrying out acts of intimidation and of destruction of public or private property.

"Jewish ethics and democratic ideals do not sanction the resort to extra-legal violence as instruments for enforcing public piety....

"By the same token, it is nothing short of bigotry and hooliganism to carry out acts of reprisals against synagogues or institutions of Torah study . . . . Tearing up holy prayer books and sacred Bibles, desecrating tefillin and the Arks of the Law, and defacing synagogue buildings with swastikas are unbearable to Jews of conscience and memory throughout the world."

.....more

Howard I. Friedman, President; Theodore Ellenoff, Chair, Board of Governors; Alfred H. Moses, Chair, National Executive Council; Robert S. Jacobs, Chair, Board of Trustees;

David M. Gordis, Executive Vice-President

Washington Office, 2027 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 • Europe hq.: 4 Rue de la Bienfaisance, 75008 Paris, France • Israel hq.: 9 Ethiopia St., Jerusalem 95149, Israel  
South America hq. (temporary office): 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022 • Mexico-Central America hq.: Av. Ejercito Nacional 533, Mexico 5, D.F.

CSAE 1707

"We urge all Jews," the group concluded, "to join in supporting Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Deputy Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in their appeals for a cessation of physical violence and the undertaking of major efforts to promote moderation, tolerance and mutual respect. The precious democracy that Israel has forged must not be allowed to become hostage to irrationality and uncontrolled passions...."

"At this critical hour in Israel and in the Diaspora it is urgent that the entire Jewish people return to the sacred principles of mutual love and respect, the keystone of Jewish survival."

Theodore Ellenoff, American Jewish Committee president, chaired the conference. He said that the conference "dramatized the consensus that exists among the vast majority of American Jews who oppose vigorously the violation of Jewish law and ethics by those who resort to violence, whatever their religious and ideological motivation. The American Jewish Committee is intensifying its activities in Israel during the coming months to help contain such extremist actions and to promote increased respect among all religious and ethnic groups in Israel."

Participants in the conference were: Rabbi Daniel Syme, Vice-President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, representing UAHC President Alexander Schindler; Rabbi Yaakov G. Rosenberg, Vice Chancellor, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, representing Chancellor Gerson Cohen; Rabbi Herschel Schacter, Director of Rabbinic Services, Yeshiva University, representing Dr. Norman Lamm, Y.U. President; Rabbi Benjamin Kreitman, Executive Vice-President, United Synagogue of America; Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger, Chairman, Inter-religious Affairs Commission, Synagogue Council of America; Rabbi Henry D. Michelman, Executive Vice-President, Synagogue Council of America; Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, First Vice-President, Synagogue Council of America; Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, President, New York Board of Rabbis; David M. Gordis, Executive Vice-President, American Jewish Committee, and Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director, International Relations Department, American Jewish Committee.

In a related development, Rabbi Milton H. Polin, President of the Rabbinical Council of America, said: "We are in basic agreement with this joint statement. However, we have already issued our own statement together with several other Orthodox groups (Agudath Israel of America, National Council of Young Israel, and Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America), which enabled us to say things to our brethren in Israel that could not appropriately be said in a joint statement."

The conference was convened by AJC's International Relations Department, which carries out a program of improving intergroup relations and human rights in Israel and other parts of the world.

The complete text of the statement is attached.

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We call upon all elements of Israeli society and of world Jewry to repudiate these mindless resorts to violence and hatred, as well as the religious and secular fanaticism which have incited them. We urge all Jews to join in supporting Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir in their appeals for a cessation of physical violence and the undertaking of major efforts to promote moderation, tolerance and mutual respect. The precious democracy that Israel has forged must not be allowed to become hostage to irrationality and uncontrolled passions.

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Jack Stein, <sup>CCAM</sup> Pres.

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Nation/world

# Secular-religious war disarms Israeli leaders

By Jonathan Broder  
Chicago Tribune

JERUSALEM—Israeli President Chaim Herzog called it "a nightmare that Satan himself couldn't create."

In Tel Aviv last week, arsonists torched a temple and vandals painted swastikas on cars, homes and another synagogue. At a Jewish seminary, prayer shawls, religious books and phylacteries were ripped into shreds, and the holy ark containing the sacred Torah scrolls was smashed.

In Jerusalem, a mob attacked a vehicle belonging to the Orthodox Jewish Burial Society. In the Bnei Brak suburb of Tel Aviv, a street sign was scrawled with the words, "Run over every ultra-Orthodox man—The war has just begun."

On Saturday Avraham Fried, the leader of a secular organization called the Committee Against Religious Violence, was surrounded and his car was stoned by ultra-Orthodox Jews when he drove on the Sabbath in a street where rubbish carts had been set up to block traffic. He fired a rifle into the air several times before police rescued him.

Such violence, normally associated with 19th Century European pogroms, was one of the main reasons for the creation of Israel. But last week's violence pitted Jew against Jew in their own nation as non-observant Israelis exploded in unprecedented fury over what they see as intolerable religious encroachment and the government's unwillingness to preserve their secular way of life.

Many Israelis fear the violence has signaled the start of a long-simmering Kulturkampf that has left the government out of touch with the angry public mood and unable to control its direction.

"We are headed for an eruption. We are going back to the Dark Ages," a Tel Aviv man said as he washed a swastika off his car. A columnist for the Labor Party newspaper, Davar, warned, "We are talking about the first shots in a potential civil war in the near future."

The secular attacks on religious targets were a backlash to the destruction by Orthodox militants of more than 100 bus shelters around the country because they carried ads of women in skimpy swimsuits or women cavorting with men—considered pornographic "abominations" by the religious.

On a deeper level, however, the vandalism reflects the refusal of ultra-Orthodox groups to recognize the Jewish state and its Zionist institutions, which they consider heretical enemies. In a Jerusalem court last week, one of three ultra-Orthodox vandals on trial for defacing bus shelter posters told the judge:

"This isn't a trial about posters. It is a trial of the whole state of Israel. We must do away with the whole government of Israel."

Such sentiments, when spoken by Palestinians accused of anti-Israeli violence, are seen as subversion, earning stiff punishments. When the defendants are Jews, the courts tend to be more lenient. But as communal

Herzog

tensions heat up, many anti-religious Israelis now oppose such distinctions in the courts.

Ironically, the secular-religious rift has opened up at a time when the Labor-led government of Prime Minister Shimon Peres is enjoying its highest popularity ratings since it came to power almost two years ago. But analysts say that popularity reflects public confidence only in the government's ability to deal with security and economic matters.

"With regard to religious-secular tensions, everyone knows the government can't do anything decisive," said political scientist Itzhak Gal-Nur, director of Hebrew University's Eshkol Center for Israeli Research.

Under the current coalition agreement, Peres must hand over the premiership to Likud Party leader Yitzhak Shamir in October. Any future Labor government would require the support of the small religious parties, so it is doubtful Peres will do anything to offend them, Gal-Nur said.

The public's angry mood also has been vented in the editorials of virtually all Israeli newspapers. The independent Ha'aretz urged, "All Jews who don't want the rabbis to rule the state of Israel must rise up." In the same paper, Fried, the man who resorted to rifle fire Saturday, warned that religious Jews no longer were safe in secular neighborhoods.

"What this religious-secular issue is touching is the place of the individual and his psychological sense of space in the political order," said Israeli philosopher Rabbi David Hartman, director of Jerusalem's Shalom Hartman Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies. "The government doesn't appreciate the level at which this is becoming psychologically felt as claustrophobic."

Though only few militants on each side have turned to violence, disgruntled majorities on each side think their rights are being threatened by the other.

Indeed, over the last few years, Orthodox Jews have demonstrated, often violently, against mixed bathing at public swimming pools, the scheduling of movies



Reuters photo

An ultra-Orthodox rabbi weeps during a prayer service for religious articles destroyed during an attack on a Tel Aviv seminary by secular Jews.

and soccer games on the Sabbath, autopsies, the sale of pork, archeological digs without rabbinical approval, meetings between Jewish and Arab schoolchildren, and the construction of a Mormon university in Jerusalem.

In parliament, they also have sought to change automatic citizenship laws for Jewish converts to apply only to those converted by Orthodox rabbis.

Religious Jews charge that secular Israelis are trying to undermine the "status quo" agreement that has

defined the balance of power between religious and secular rights since the birth of the state in 1948.

"It is imperative to adhere scrupulously to the status quo on religious observance in public life," said parliamentarian Rabbi Avraham Shapira, leader of the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael Party.

The status quo agreement—contained in a letter between Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, and religious leaders—essentially provided that the boundaries of religious-secular life would prevail indefinitely. A constitution, which would have formally defined the division between religion and state, never was written.

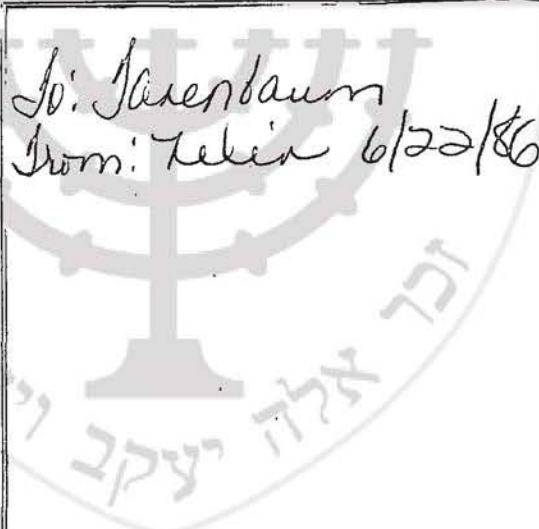
The agreement ensured that official institutions would be kosher, that Jewish businesses and public transportation would be closed on the Sabbath, and it gave religious courts responsibility for all matters of marriage and divorce.

Over the years, successive governments, needing religious support on vital issues of national security, diplomacy and economics, also have pumped millions of dollars into religious schools and institutions, exempted Jewish seminary students and religious girls from military service and given the rabbis control over the powerful Interior Ministry.

Peres has threatened to use force against the militants, but amazingly, his police commanders have refused to comply, saying the problem isn't one of law and order but a complex matter that ultimately goes back to the conflicting definitions of Judaism and the unresolved nature of Israeli society itself.

"The secular Zionists essentially view Judaism as a political tool that kept the Jewish people together during all the years that we were in the diaspora," Hartman said. "They believe we now have a much more powerful instrument to guarantee the continuity of this national identity, and it's called the State of Israel."

"The religious community doesn't... accept the fact that the Jewish state is a place where many Jews are going to gather who have different understandings of what it means to be part of the Jewish people. The real issue now is how do we live together? The truth is, after 38 years of statehood, that we don't know yet."



URGENT

memorandum

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** June 24, 1986  
**to** Attached list of Participants and/or Signators  
**from** Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director of International Relations  
**subject** Press Conference on Friday, June 27, 10:30 A.M., at AJC

Please forgive the formality of this note. Because of the shortness of time, this is the quickest way of my communicating with you.

As agreed, a press conference will be held this coming Friday, June 27, 10:30 a.m., at the American Jewish Committee headquarters, 165 East 56 Street (between Lexington and Third Aves.), Room 800 A.

The purpose of the press meeting is to release a joint statement of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist leaders condemning recent acts of extremism in Israel, and appealing for support of moderation and mutual respect.

Enclosed is a copy of a proposed statement for your approval. If you agree with the general thrust of the statement, we would appreciate your holding any suggested changes primarily to points of substance. If at all possible, please telephone your reaction to my colleague, Dr. George E. Gruen, director of AJC's Israel & Middle East Affairs Division. Dr. Gruen, who is coordinating this effort, is available by calling 212-751-4000, Ext. 259.

We look forward to your personal attendance at the press conference or your sending a personal representative who would reflect your views. There will be an opportunity for brief personal comments by the participants. If you can send your comments to Dr. Gruen in advance by messenger, noch besser.

I regret the hurry-upness of this project, but the time factor did not allow for a more leisurely process. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

N.B. - When you call in or send in your editorial comments, would you also let Dr. Gruen's office know the name and exact title of your representative.

Please let us hear from you on Wednesday if at all possible and no later than Thursday, June 26 at 12 noon.

8856 (IRD-8)/e1  
Enc.

LIST OF PROPOSED PARTICIPANTS IN PRESS CONFERENCE

Rabbi Moses Scherer, International President  
Agudath Israel  
5 Beekman Street  
New York, NY 10038

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson  
Lubavitcher Rebbe Shlita  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11213

Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, President  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
3101 Clifton Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45220

Dr. Norman Lamm, President  
Yeshiva University  
500 West 185th Street  
New York, NY 10033

Dr. Gerson Cohen, Chancellor  
The Jewish Theological Seminary  
3080 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

Dr. Arthur Green, President  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College  
Church Road & Greenwood Avenue  
Wyncote, PA 19095

Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, President  
Synagogue Council of America  
327 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger, Chairman  
Interreligious Commission  
Synagogue Council of America  
327 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, President  
New York Board of Rabbis  
10 East 73rd Street  
New York, NY 10021

Rabbi Paul Hait, Executive Vice-President  
New York Board of Rabbis  
10 East 73rd Street  
New York, NY 10021

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Mr. Albert Vorspan, Vice-President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
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5224 West 26th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55416

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New York, NY 10016

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Central Conference of American Rabbis  
21 East 40th Street  
New York, NY 10016

Rabbi Binyamin Walfish, Executive Vice-President  
Rabbinical Council of America  
275 7th Avenue  
New York, NY 10001



memorandum

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

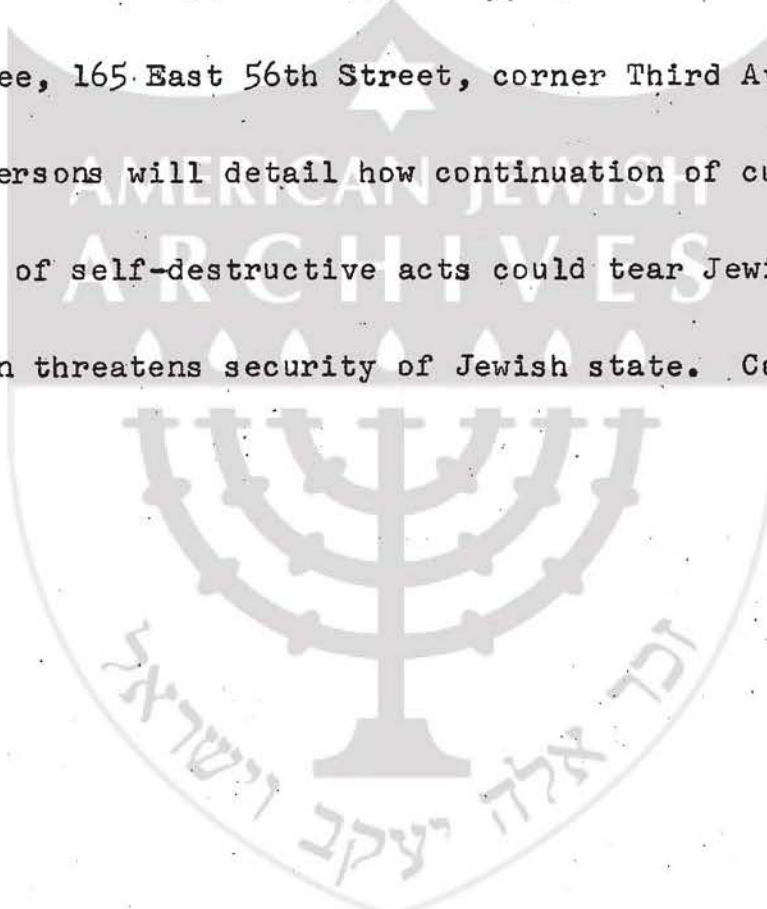
**date**  
**to**  
**from**  
**subject** W Thurs AM

Marc: Here is draft of mailgram. This will have to go out before 3 PM today. Are we in agreement to go ahead? Shouldn't we have at least some clear indication that we will actually have broad representation of the three religious groups before we do go ahead? Can you and Yehuda -- along with others in your department -- begin immediately to make phone calls so we do get some indication shortly? Pls call me when you get in.



Leaders in U.S. of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform branches of Judaism will urge "immediate cease fire" in Israel among all extremists engaging in physical and verbal attacks on synagogues, bus stops, theaters, soccer stadiums, and personalities, at news conference Tuesday, June 24, 11 A.M., offices of American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56th Street, corner Third Avenue.

Spokespersons will detail how continuation of current violent pattern of self-destructive acts could tear Jewish people apart and even threatens security of Jewish state. Coverage welcome.



Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, President of the New York Board of Rabbis

I am very pleased to be able to associate myself and the New York Board of Rabbis with a position which is endorsed by virtually the entire Jewish community on this critical issue which touches the very life of the Jewish people worldwide and the State of Israel in particular. Such vital concerns which also affect the lives and well-being of individual Jews and the way in which the Jewish people is perceived by the entire world require that all of us stand together in an effort to bring peace to our people.





JUN 24 1980

ISRAEL  
Kulturkampf

The Organization of Families Inflicted  
by the "Chazara Betshuva" missionaries  
(A registered non-profit organization)  
Tel-Aviv, P.O.B. 10431).

Dear Madam/Sir,

Tel-Aviv, June 4th, 1980

As an affiliated Zionist organization and long-term donor and contributor to the needs and welfare of the State of Israel, we believe that you should be made aware of the fact that your financial support is also channeled directly and indirectly to Anti-Zionist activities of the extreme orthodox groups in Israel.

These groups, which constitute less than 5% of the Jewish population in Israel, draw most of their financial resources from Zionist and Jewish organizations in North America, Canada and elsewhere. However, they preach against Military Service (which, under the prevailing conditions, is the one deterring mean to protect the Jewish State), do not fulfil most of their duties towards the State and society. With their uncompromising fanaticism and absolute lack of tolerance they cause a rift within the Jewish people in general, and more so, within the fragile and volatile society of the State of Israel.

They have no respect for the flag and on Independence Day, they not only prevent their youth from joining the national celebrations, but burn the the flag and fly black flags over their Yeshives, and carryout violent activities against secular institutions and individuals in order to force their way of life on everybody else.

To gain political power, they conduct intense "Missionary" activities amongst The Israeli Youth ("non-religious" and Zionist-religious"). Their methods are not different from any other Cult, causing agony and despair with good and devoted Jewish families whose children or mates are lost in a one-way road into those fanatic groups who have nothing in common with the rest of the citizens of the State of Israel. Their success to recruit new members to a Medieval life-style which, in our opinion, is far removed from what Judaism should be and is today. This is done under the guise of becoming a "new born jew" ("Baal Teshuva"). In effect the recruits are brainwashed in Yeshive or Collel for "new born Jews", where they become ultra-orthodox detached from society and their own families.

The "Missionary" work is made possible with the funds you and other Jewish organizations contribute to help Israel's social and educational institutions. We urge you to reconsider and revise your contributions and ensure that these ultra-orthodox and Anti-Zionist Yeshives will not be the recipients.

ENCL./

Very truly yours,

  
Secretary

Tel-Aviv, May 7, 1986

DO THE DONORS KNOW?

There is no justification in financing anti-Zionist  
Yeshiva education with funds of Zionist contributors.  
by Charles Z. Levine

- The writer is a public relations consultant.

The flag of Israel waves proudly, the musicians enthusiastically play "Hatikvah", and the Israeli ambassador is about to present a moving plea to the audience to reach even deeper into their pockets this year and pull out a more generous contribution in behalf of the Jewish state.

This evening all those present - businessmen and scholars, students and housewives - breathe the air of the Jerusalem hills and sip from the blue and white cup of patriotism. For now, until they return to their daily routine, they are pioneers who are shaping the future of the state of Israel and the destiny of the Jewish people. The event is a crowning success: Several million dollars are donated, and the Zionist enterprise continues galloping forward at full steam.

At a distance of several thousand kilometers away, a black candle is burning in a small Yeshiva and the Rabbis explain to their students how and why they should ignore the approaching Israel Independence Day and to defy it. That same morning these Rabbis received their monthly check from the "Zionist pipeline" - the Jewish Agency and hurried to deposit it in the bank.

A radical event? Without a doubt. A caricature of reality? True. However, something is rotten in the present state of affairs, which allows for the systematic transferral of contributions which are collected from Zionists by Zionists for anti-Zionist institutions both in Israel and in other countries.

It is necessary to differentiate essentially between the Aliyah aid given by the Jews of the world and the aid given towards Jewish education. As a Zionist and a religious Jew, I am convinced that the uniqueness of Israel arises from its being an "incomplete" state, namely, a country where most of its potential citizens are still residing beyond its borders. This country belongs to every Jew wherever he might be, according to the basic principle of Zionism and as a "mitzvah" from the Torah.

Therefore, the public assistance for the encouragement of Aliyah must continue. We are obliged, both by order of conscience and belief, to endeavor to bring all Jews to Israel, whether they be Satmer Hassidim from Brooklyn or assimilated Jews from whatever city in the U.S. Despite the difference between them, both will be better Jews within the state of Israel than outside its borders, and we ourselves will profit from their presence and their being a part of our society.

On the other hand, with this selfsame fervor, we must oppose Zionist financing of anti-Zionist Yeshiva education. There can be no justification for the flow of dollars which were contributed with the best of intentions to institutions who are constantly opposed to their pupils' obligations towards the Jewish state.

Here, an important question arises: Should we punish ideology? Should we refuse to finance the black candlelighters but transfer budgets to those whose opposition to Zionism is somewhat less, and who are simply not Zionists, in the sense of "neither milk or meat"?

A relatively simple Litmus Test could aid in determining the borderline. Does the Yeshiva encourage its students to fulfill their national duty and to serve in the Israel Defense Forces, or does the Yeshiva preach against this obligation of saving an endangered life?. In my opinion, any preaching against service in the Israeli army is at a stage of a renouncement of the Jewish state and, therefore, nullifies any right such a body may claim to Zionist financing.

There is no justification for a Yeshiva, which picks the fruits of this financial support and uses it to reject the principle, according to which its students should defend their women and children along with everyone else. There is no logic to the existence of a Yeshiva which rejects Israel Independence Day, which is a holiday that the religious Jew should celebrate with devotion.

One should also emphasize the fact that most of the anti-Zionist Yeshivas carry on independent fund-raising campaigns abroad among the same elements of the Jewish community who are not supporting Israel. Has it ever occurred that contributions from such groups would ever be transferred to the Zionist educational system in Israel? The answer is obvious.

Nevertheless, nothing new under the sun and in the Diaspora the Israeli flag waves on high in order to mobilize funds for the benefit of the burners of the Israeli flag in Meha-Shearim. I cannot imagine a clearer example of a complete contradiction of the intentions of the donors, disregarding the contradiction of the common sense.

The time has come to bring an end to this folly. There is no lack of white candles to be lit in Israel and we have no need for black ones.

The above is a translation of an article published in "Haaretz" daily newspaper of 1.4.86.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

U R G E N T

date June 23, 1986

CONFIDENTIAL

to M. Bernard Resnikoff / Ya'akov Pnini

from George E. Gruen

subject Sources of Violence in Recent Incidents

We are planning a press conference here at AJC headquarters this Friday morning, June 27, with leading Jewish religious representatives from the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform denominations to call for a cease-fire in violence on all sides, to warn of the dangers to Israel and to world Jewry from the spread of polarization, and to support the efforts being made to bring about dialogue, mutual respect and tolerance.

I have been asked to query you for whatever information you can quickly obtain as to who has been behind the violence.

1. On the militant secularist side have these been the acts of isolated individuals or are there groups, such as the League Against Religious Coercion, which have given either tacit or clandestine support to the violent countermeasures? Who has organized the non-violent demonstrations? What is the demographic profile of those behind the Jerusalem and Tel Aviv militant secularist acts?

2. On the militant Orthodox side has the spraying and burning of bus stops been limited to Haredim who are anti-Zionist, or have other Orthodox elements, such as the Agudah yeshiva students been involved? What evidence is there of support from the United States, with money and/or encouragement e.g. the Lubavicher or other groups?

3. Has Hanoh Smith or anyone else done a quick public opinion poll as to where the Israeli public stands on these issues and whether the demographic breakdown is significant (age, ethnic background, religious self-identification (dati, mesorati, hiloni)? The earlier Smith poll for us showed a fair amount of religious tolerance among about 2/3 of the public, but how good is his sample in getting at the views of those on the extremes? Could you ask Smith how difficult it would be to get answers to these questions and how expensive. It might be very useful to have in hand before the September conference, even if we can't have much data before this Friday's press conference.

P.S. We still have not heard from Avram Burg in reaction to our draft outline of the conference. He promised Shula that he would call us today, Monday, and it is now 3:00PM and we have not heard anything.  
cc: Marc Tanenbaum, Mort Yarmon, David Gordis, Shula Bahat

MEMORANDUM



The American Jewish  
Committee

June 18, 1986

Executive Director

Shalom D. Conway

Robert S. Rifkind

David H. Petrez

Mimi Alperin

Executive Director

David B. Eisenbach

Arnold B. Gardner

Site C. Hausel

Charleston G. Holster

Ann P. Kaufman

Alfred H. McCloskey

Idelle Rabin

Bruce M. Ramer

Jerome J. Shestack

Richard L. Weiss

Gordon Zacks

Executive Director

Morris B. Abram

Howard I. Friedman

Arthur J. Goldberg

Philip E. Hoffman

Richard Maass

Elmer L. Winter

Maynard I. Wishner

Executive Director

Nathan Appleman

Martin Gang

Ruth R. Goddard

Andrew Goodman

Raymond F. Kravis

James Marshall

William Rosenwald

Shirley M. Szabad

Executive Director

Max M. Fisher

Executive Director

Executive Director

Executive Director

Executive Director

Executive Director

Executive Director

Executive Director

Executive Director

Mrs. Florence Thomas  
130 Huguenot Avenue  
Englewood, N.J. 07631

Dear Mrs. Thomas:

At last week's AJC chapter meeting in the home of Inge Schwartz, you asked me a question which I was unable to answer on the spot concerning American Jewish philanthropic money and religious groups in Israel.

Having made some inquiries, I can now offer you the following information: the ultra-Orthodox groups involved in the recent violence in Israel do not recognize the sovereignty of the State of Israel and therefore boycott its principal institutions, including the Jewish Agency. Being anti-Zionist, they are, of course, not members of the World Zionist Organization, which governs the distribution of foreign contributions through the Jewish Agency. The Agudat Yisrael Party, although it participates in Israeli politics, is still non-Zionist. Its educational institutions may receive Jewish Agency funds, but its political agitation is financed by direct contributions from abroad. Zionist religious parties, like Mizrahi, do participate in the World Zionist Organization and therefore receive Jewish Agency funds.

For more information on this very complex topic, I would recommend an excellent book, Givers and Spenders: The Politics of Charity in Israel by Eliezer D. Jaffe, published in 1985 by Ariel Publishing House (P.O. Box 3328, Jerusalem).

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

David A. Harris  
Deputy Director  
International Relations Department

P.S. I enclose a recent AJC publication that may be of interest.

cc: Gayle Sorkow  
bc: Marc Tanenbaum  
DAH:sr

JUN 23 1986

# U.S. Jews warned of extremists

By Armand Gebert  
News Staff Writer

## Ethnic Detroit

The long festering and now exploding tension between Israel's militant secular and Orthodox Jews could gain a foothold in the United States, said Dr. David M. Gordis, executive vice-president of the American Jewish Committee (AJC).

Human Relations office about six months ago in Jerusalem.

"We want to safeguard pluralism by bringing all groups together," Gordis said. "We want to diffuse tension by understanding, knowledge and democracy. We seek the cooperation of schools, clergy and lawmakers. We want to build bridges of reconciliation. If we don't, there will be political repercussions that will fracture Israel."

The New York educator-rabbi returned Sunday from Israel where he met with government leaders on the crisis of mounting vandalism and violent showdowns between the two sides. He brought the warning and pleas for reconciliation efforts to a local AJC audience Tuesday in Birmingham's Temple Beth El.

The American Jewish community also faces the danger of being split. Issues of marriages, performance of marriage ceremonies by non-orthodox rabbis or the recognition of conversions to Judaism by non-Orthodox rabbis could infiltrate into the American Jewish scene, Gordis said. "It's an issue which raises the challenge of who is a Jew?"

Gordis said many American Jews are shocked and non-Jews astounded by the increasing reports of smearing of swastikas on Tel Aviv synagogues, ransacking of religious schools and burning of books and pamphlets.

\*\*\*

**GORDIS, A Conservative Jew,** said that, according to Israeli law, the orthodox is the only officially recognized form of Judaism in the Middle East nation. Orthodox Jews, who follow religious law closely, have been demanding that Israeli laws conform to their beliefs, he said. The secular Jews, who are in the majority, tend to follow a less rigid and more modern religious structure.

The annual Polish American Heritage Workshop will be held from June 26 to July 12 on the campus of Orchard Lake Schools. Sponsored by the Orchard Lake Schools Center for Polish Studies and Culture, the program offers instruction in the Polish language as well as a lecture series on Polish culture, folklore and crafts and a seminar on the Polish-American parish. Additional information may be obtained by writing to Dr. Frank Renkiewicz, Center for Polish Studies and Culture, Orchard Lake Schools, Orchard Lake, MI 48033.

Tensions smoldering since Israel's founding in 1948 erupted into violence in the past six to eight weeks, Gordis said. Secular extremists have daubed Tel Aviv's main synagogue with swastikas. Ultra-Orthodox Jews have set fires to bus stop shelters that display ads showing women in bathing suits.

**CHARGING THAT** the religious Orthodox are polarizing Israeli society instead of uniting it, Gordis said the 80-year-old AJC's campaign and projects for tolerance and religious pluralism are supported by Israel's Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek.

"When I asked Mr. Peres what we (AJC) can do to help stop the polarization, he said: 'Become more visible, more active. This will be a great help to Israel.'" Kollek asked him to tell American Jews to withhold support of extremist factions.



David Gordis: "I'm optimistic the AJC can be helpful."

The AJC, which has 50,000 members in 33 U.S. chapters as well as offices in Mexico City, Paris and Jerusalem, opened its Institute of

M. Farenbaum  
D. Harris  
F.M.

LIST OF PROPOSED PARTICIPANTS IN PRESS CONFERENCE

Rabbi Moses Scherer, International President  
Agudath Israel  
5 Beekman Street  
New York, NY 10038

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson  
Lubavitcher Rebbe Shlita  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11213

Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, President  
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3101 Clifton Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45220

✓ Dr. Norman Lamm, President  
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500 West 185th Street  
New York, NY 10033

960-5280

Dr. Gerson Cohen, Chancellor  
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Church Road & Greenwood Avenue  
Wyncote, PA 19095

Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, President  
Synagogue Council of America  
327 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Israel

Henry Michelman

✓ Rabbi Walter S. Wurzburger, Chairman  
Interreligious Commission  
Synagogue Council of America  
327 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

R. Gilbert Klapperman

✓ Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, President  
New York Board of Rabbis  
10 East 73rd Street  
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✓ Rabbi Paul Hait, Executive Vice-President  
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Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
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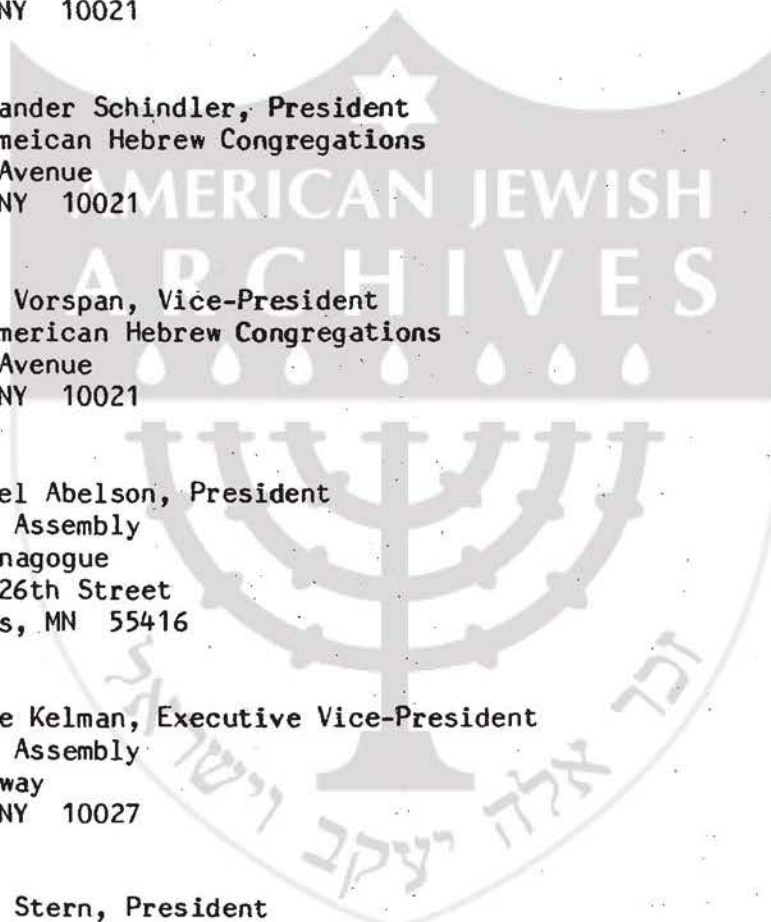
Rabbi Kassel Abelson, President  
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Minneapolis, MN 55416

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Rabbinical Council of America  
275 7th Avenue  
New York, NY 10001





Rabbi Benjamin Kreitman, Executive Vice-President  
United Synagogue of America  
155 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10010

Rabbi Pinchas Stolper, Executive Vice-President  
Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America  
45 West 36th Street  
New York, NY 10018

6 - Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, Executive Director  
Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot  
270 West 79th Street  
New York, NY 10024



8854-(IRD-8)  
6/25/86 /el

SIGNATORIES

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling  
Executive Director  
Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations  
and Havurot

Rabbi Richard Hirsh  
Executive Director  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Rabbi Ira Schiffer  
President  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Dr. Arthur Green  
President  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Dr. Alfred Gottschalk  
President  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Rabbi Herbert M. Baumgard  
President  
Synagogue Council of America

Dr. Gerson Cohen  
Chancellor  
The Jewish Theological Seminary *of America*

Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger  
Chairman  
Interreligious Affairs Commission  
Synagogue Council of America

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Executive Vice-President  
United Synagogue of America

Dr. Norman Lamm  
President  
Yeshiva University

SIGNATORIES - Page 2

✓ Rabbi Haskel Lookstein  
President  
New York Board of Rabbis

✓ Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations

✓ Rabbi Kassel Abelson  
President  
Rabbinical Assembly  
~~Beth El Synagogue~~

✓ Rabbi Wolfe Kelman  
Executive Vice-President  
Rabbinical Assembly

Rabbi Henry D. Michelman  
↑  
Executive Vice-President  
Synagogue Council of America

Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman  
First Vice-President  
Synagogue Council of America

-----  
For the American Jewish Committee:

Theodore Ellenoff, President  
Dr. David M. Gordis, Executive Vice-President  
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director, International Relations Department  
Dr. George E. Gruen, Director, Israel & Middle East Affairs Division

Theodore Ellenoff, American Jewish Committee president, who chaired the press conference said that "this press conference dramatizes the concensus that exists among the vast majority of American Jews who oppose ~~thax~~ vigorously the violation of Jewish law and ethics by those who resort to violence, ~~whaxkax~~ whatever their religious or ideological motivation. The American Jewis Committee is intensifying its activities in Israel during the coming months to help contain such extremist actions and to promote increased respect between all religious and ethnic groups in Israel."



NEW YORK, June 27....Sharply denouncing the violence that has erupted between extreme religious and secular groups in Israel, leaders of the major <sup>religious</sup> branches of American Jewry today called on Israelis and Jews everywhere to condemn all fanaticism in the Jewish state, whether secular or religious, and to seek an immediate end to "these mindless resorts to violence and hatred."

Speaking at a news conference at American Jewish Committee headquarters here, ~~top officials of the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist arms of American Judaism expressed their "horror that Jews could engage in acts historically associated only with anti-Semites" and urged support for "major efforts to promote moderation, tolerance, and mutual respect."~~  
top officials of the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist arms of American Judaism expressed their "horror that Jews could engage in acts historically associated only with anti-Semites" and urged support for "major efforts to promote moderation, tolerance, and mutual respect."

"In such a heterogeneous and pluralistic society," the officials said in a joint statement, "it is difficult to demand that everyone love his neighbor as himself. But as Hillel so wisely formulated it, the minimal guideline for coexistence and survival is that 'what is hateful to you, do not do unto your neighbor.' "

Making plain that their denunciations were aimed equally at all parties to the violence, the statement continued: "We deplore provocative actions that have violated religious sensibilities regarding 'modesty in dress' in places of worship and in traditionally Orthodox neighborhoods. But insensitivity on the part of secularists to religious observances cannot be a justification for zealously religious Jews, or any other persons, taking the law in their own hands and carrying out acts of intimidation and of destruction of property.

"Jewish ethics and democratic ideals do not sanction the resort to extra-legal violence as instruments for enforcing public piety.

"By the same token, it is nothing short of bigotry and hooliganism for anti-religious elements to carry out acts of reprisals against synagogues or institutions of Torah study ....Tearing up holy prayer books and sacred Bibles, desecrating the Arks

of the Law, and defacing synagogue buildings with swastikas are unbearable to Jews of conscience and memory throughout the world.

"The imagery of a 'Crystal Night in Israel' is a horror too frightening for comprehension," they said, recalling the night in 1938 when the Nazis went on a rampage of smashing ~~the~~ windows <sup>in</sup> of synagogues and other Jewish institutions in Germany.

"We urge all Jews," the group concluded, "to join in supporting Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Deputy Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in their appeals for a cessation of physical violence and the undertaking of major efforts to promote moderation....The precious democracy that Israel has forged must not be allowed to become hostage to irrationality and uncontrolled passions...."

"At this critical hour in Israel and in the Diaspora, it is urgent that the entire Jewish people return to sacred principles of mutual love and respect, the keystone of Jewish survival."

Theodore Ellenoff, American Jewish Committee president, chaired the conference.

Participants were

The conference was convened by AJC's International Relations Department which carries out a program of improving inter-group relations and human rights in Israel and in other parts of the world.

The complete text of the statement is attached.

AJRZ,FD

36-960-134

Peres

PARTICIPANTS IN PRESS CONFERENCE

6 Rabbi Daniel Syme  
Vice-President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
Representing Rabbi Alexander Schindler

5 Rabbi Yaakov G. Rosenberg  
Vice Chancellor  
Jewish Theological Seminary of America  
Representing Chancellor Gerson Cohen

4 Rabbi Benjamin Kreitman  
Executive Vice-President  
United Synagogue of America

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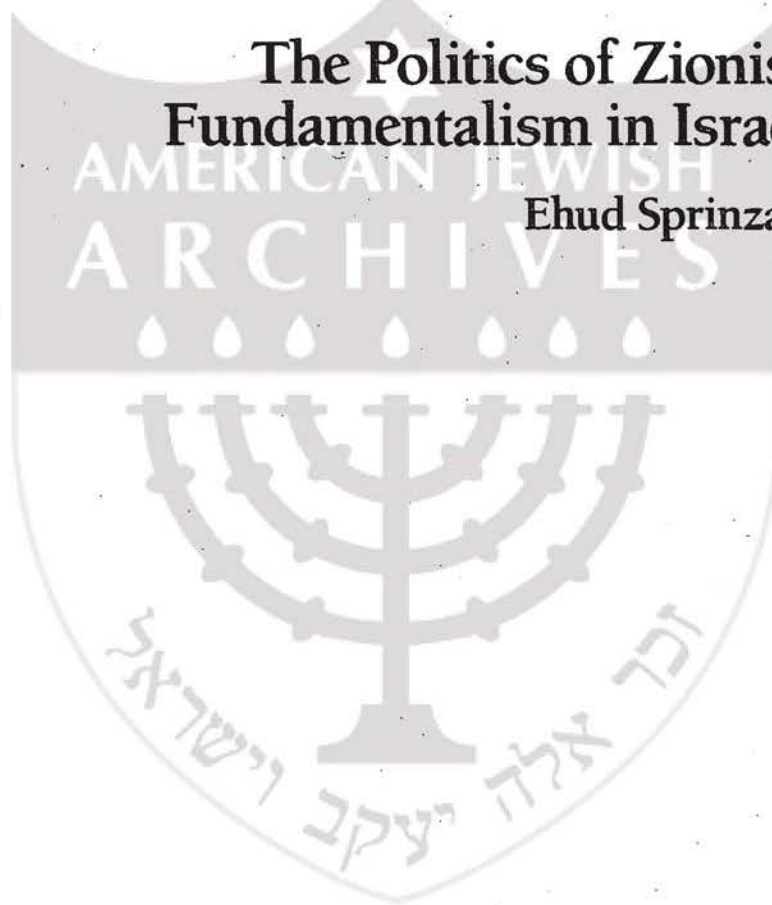
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# Gush Emunim

The Politics of Zionist  
Fundamentalism in Israel

Ehud Sprinzak







ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ehud Sprinzak teaches political science at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and has published and lectured widely on extremist movements, violence and terrorism in Israel and abroad. In 1985-86 he was a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. He received B.A. and M.A. degrees at the Hebrew University and his Ph.D. at Yale University.

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## FOREWORD

One reason why peace in the Middle East has proved so elusive is that the principal parties have to deal with both external and internal obstacles.

In the first instance, and at the very least, peace between the Arabs and Israel requires that Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinians accept a settlement that includes Arab recognition of Israel's legitimacy. Thus far the Palestine Liberation Organization has refused that recognition, and King Hussein of Jordan declares that he cannot negotiate with Israel without Palestinian partners. A credible alternative Palestinian leadership prepared to negotiate with Israel has not yet crystallized. Lebanon is torn by civil war and abrogated a draft agreement with Israel under pressure from Syria. Syrian and Soviet hostility to Israel, as well as inter-Arab and superpower rivalries, also play a part in this complicated situation.

But all the parties, including Israel, must also deal with internal obstacles to a peace settlement. In the Arab world, peacemakers risk assassination at the hands of extremists of varied stripes -- political and sectarian fanatics sometimes supported and directed by foreign governments.

In Israel, the government requires a majority of the Knesset (the democratically elected parliament) to approve the terms of any peace treaty affecting the West Bank and Gaza, territories captured by Israel during the Six-Day War of 1967. The partners in the current Government of National Unity, the Labor Party and the Likud, differ sharply in their readiness to make territorial concessions. And the situation is now complicated by the rise of an ominous new phenomenon in Israeli politics -- a religious nationalist movement determined to block any exchange of territory in the biblical Land of Israel for peace.

Spearheading this movement is Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful). Although Gush Emunim was unable to prevent the return of the Sinai to Egypt in 1979 under the peace treaty concluded by Egyptian President

Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, it has attracted powerful allies in its opposition to Israeli withdrawal from any portion of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). Indeed, while Begin did not regard the Sinai as part of the biblical Land of Israel, he and his Likud Government opposed the re-establishment of Arab sovereignty over any part of the territory west of the Jordan River.

Mr. Begin's successor as leader of the Likud, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, adheres to the same policy. Mr. Shamir is slated to become Prime Minister in October 1986 under the rotational agreement concluded with Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the leader of the Labor Alignment, which has traditionally favored a territorial compromise with Jordan on the West Bank. Any peace proposal calling for territorial concessions is thus certain to split the Government of National Unity.

In the fierce public debate now raging in Israel, Gush Emunim continues to play a crucial role. It has not limited itself to rhetoric but has, from its inception, undertaken practical actions to build new settlements and create a political infrastructure in the West Bank that will ensure continued Jewish rule in all of what they regard as the divinely promised Land of Israel.

The present timely study by Dr. Ehud Sprinzak examines the creation and emergence of Gush Emunim as a political force on the Israeli scene, its religious and ideological roots, its social and cultural base, its method of operation, its attitude to the Muslim and Christian Arabs in the occupied territories, and its actual and potential impact on the political process in Israel and the prospects for peace.

George E. Gruen, Ph.D.  
Director, Israel and Middle East Affairs

## A NEW POLITICAL FORCE

On April 27, 1984, Kol Yisrael, the Israel broadcasting service, announced the discovery of a plot to blow up six Arab buses during a crowded rush hour. In the following week, more than 20 Israelis suspected of forming an anti-Arab terrorist network were arrested. It was soon disclosed that the suspects had been responsible for an attempt to assassinate the Arab mayors of three West Bank cities in 1980, a murderous attack on the Islamic College in Hebron in 1983, and a score of lesser acts of violence against Arabs. Moreover, they had developed an elaborate plan to blow up the Dome of the Rock on Jerusalem's Temple Mount, a site sacred to Muslims and Jews alike.

What shocked many observers was not so much the existence of such a terrorist group as the identity of its members. They belonged to Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful), a group committed to establishing Jewish settlements in the West Bank (biblical Judea and Samaria). Though an aggressive (sometimes even illegal) settlement movement, Gush Emunim had never openly embraced an ideology of violence. Its orthodox leaders asserted a biblically based Jewish claim to Judea and Samaria, but they had never advocated deportation of the Arab population. Instead, they had professed the belief that peaceful and productive coexistence with the Arabs there was both possible and desirable. That any of these highly educated and responsible men, some of whom were ranking army officers and all of whom were heads of large families, would resort to terrorism was astonishing.

It now appears that earlier perceptions of Gush Emunim were seriously deficient. Gush Emunim, it is clear, has introduced into Israel's public life a radical mode of thinking, and a comprehensive and absolutist belief system capable of generating intense aspirations with the potential of extreme consequences. Because this system combines belief in the literal truth of the Bible and total commitment to the precepts of modern secular Zionism, it may be called Zionist fundamentalism.

Jewish fundamentalism, of course, is not new in Israel. It was there long before the establishment of the State. It was, however, always the exclusive province of ultra-orthodox, anti-Zionist sects.<sup>1</sup> As the Zionist enterprise advanced in Palestine, traditional fundamentalism became socially isolated, politically detached, and culturally marginal. Seeing Zionism as a religious affront, it secluded itself in a cultural, sometimes real, ghetto and played no part in public life. It stood, in principle, in direct opposition to pragmatic Zionism, including religious Zionism, which for many years was oriented toward "the art of the possible."

Gush Emunim has combined religious fundamentalism and secular Zionism to create a potent new political force. Because of the growing appeal of the fundamentalist cast of mind, there can be no doubt that Zionist fundamentalism will exert a profound influence on the future of the State, including such critical matters as national decisions on war and peace.



### THE EMERGENCE OF GUSH EMUNIM

Israeli occupation of the West Bank in the 1967 Six Day War aroused in many Israelis a passionate determination that these territories should be permanently joined to the State of Israel. Future members of Gush Emunim -- particularly its core group, Elon Moreh, whose founders first formulated the settlement ideology<sup>1</sup> -- became active in establishing Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. Not until after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, however, did they feel a need to organize politically. In the gloomy public mood occasioned by the first territorial concessions in the Sinai Peninsula (required by the disengagement agreement with Egypt), the founders of Gush Emunim determined to organize in order to oppose further territorial concessions and to promote the extension of Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories.

The founding meeting of Gush Emunim took place in March 1974 at Kfar Etzion, a West Bank kibbutz that had been seized by the Arabs in the War of Independence and recovered by Israel in the Six Day War. This meeting had been preceded by informal discussions in which leading roles had been played by former students of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, then head of Yeshivat Merkaz ha-Rav. Among these were Rabbi Moshe Levinger (the leader of the Kiryat Arba settlers), Hanan Porat (one of the revivers of Jewish settlement in Gush Etzion), Rabbi Chaim Drukman (educator and one of the leaders of the Bnei Akiva religious youth movement, now a member of the Knesset), Rabbi Eliezer Waldman, and Rabbi Yohanan Fried.

At first, Gush Emunim was a faction within the National Religious Party (NRP), then a partner in the Labor coalition government. Distrustful of the NRP's position concerning the future of Judea and Samaria, the Gush people soon left the party and declared their movement's independence. Since then, they have refused to identify with any political party and have gained a unique political status.<sup>2</sup>

The Gush Emunim people -- mostly yeshiva graduates, rabbis, and teachers -- immediately launched a vigorous information campaign to



explain their position. They carried their campaign to all parts of the country through kaffeeklatsches, meetings in schools and yeshivot, and so on. At the same time they began organizing people who would inhabit the settlements they planned to set up in the West Bank. They did not require formal membership in Gush Emunim. Its people and supporters would not be called upon to carry out any task that would set them apart from the rest of the nation. People could participate in particular activities of Gush Emunim with which they sympathized without any obligation to support other activities or a broad platform. The absence of formal membership makes it impossible to confirm or refute Gush Emunim's claims regarding the size of its following.

During the Labor-led government of Yitzhak Rabin (1974-77) Gush Emunim pursued three types of activity: it protested the interim agreements with Egypt and Syria; it staged demonstrations in Judea and Samaria to underscore the Jewish attachment to those parts of Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel, or biblical Palestine); and it carried out settlement operations in the occupied territories.

Gush Emunim's protest activity began with active support of a hunger strike that leaders of the Greater Israel Movement started on Independence Day in May 1974 outside the Prime Minister's residence in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> There were repeated protests against U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger while he shuttled to and from Israel in his role of peacemaker after the Yom Kippur War. Participation in these demonstrations, which continued sporadically until the fall of 1975, ranged from the scores of people who blocked traffic on Ruppin Road in Jerusalem, thereby obstructing official motorcades, to the thousands who filled Jerusalem's Zion Square and clashed there with the police.

This activity reached a peak in October 1974 when a mass rally was held in Tel Aviv's Malkhei Yisrael Square to urge recognition of Judea and Samaria as inseparable parts of the country. After the interim agreement with Egypt and the end of Kissinger's visits, smaller protest demonstrations, opposite the Knesset building or the Prime Minister's office, reminded policymakers that the Gush had not abandoned this avenue of activity.

Gush-organized demonstrations stressing attachment to Judea and Samaria began with Operation Go-Around in October 1974. Some of an estimated 2,000 participants managed to get past army roadblocks and spread out across Judea and Samaria to points where the Gush maintained that settlements should be established.<sup>4</sup> Since the operation was meant for publicity purposes, the participants avoided serious collision with the army and left their occupation points when requested to do so. A similar action was conducted in December 1975, when many supporters of Gush Emunim spread out across mountain tops in Judea and Samaria in a Hanukkah candle-lighting ceremony. Passover in 1976 witnessed the first Eretz Yisrael Ramble, when some 20-30,000 people took part in a mass hike across Samaria.<sup>5</sup> The participants in this march, as in succeeding years, included such prominent figures as

Menachem Begin, Yigal Hurwitz, and Geula Cohen. Gush Emunim has always invested a tremendous effort in organizing these marches, for the extent of participation in them became the principal barometer for assessing public support of the movement. On the basis of participation in these marches, Gush Emunim claimed a mass following.<sup>6</sup>

The success of its protests and demonstrations never diverted Gush Emunim from its deep commitment to settlement beyond the "Green Line," the name popularly given to the 1949 Armistice Demarcation Lines, which had served as the de facto borders between Israel and the Jordanian-annexed West Bank and between Israel and the Egyptian-administered Gaza Strip and Sinai from the 1948 War of Independence to the 1967 Six Day War. The government of Israel, being pragmatic and subject to pressures from all sides, was not enthusiastic about initiating settlement. Its hesitancy was most marked during the period of the negotiations on the interim agreements with Syria and Egypt, talks that were conducted under heavy American pressure applied by Kissinger. Gush Emunim, however, both behind the scenes and in public, continued to push for a settlement policy. In response, the government approved a settlement at Keshet on the Golan Heights, which Israel had captured from Syria in the Six Day War, a military foothold at Tekoa, and another at Kochav ha-Shahar.<sup>7</sup> Minister of Defense Shimon Peres authorized a workers' camp at Ba'al Hazor, which later became Ofra, a civilian settlement in all respects, including families and children. Nevertheless, the government's fundamental objectives remained secure borders and minimal involvement with the West Bank Arab population.<sup>8</sup>

Gush Emunim, however, was determined to settle in all parts of Eretz Israel, including the very heart of the Palestinian population. Its core group, Elon Moreh, tried on seven occasions to settle in the Nablus-Sebastia region, but each time its attempt was thwarted and its settlement forcibly dismantled by the army. On its eighth attempt, during Hanukkah 1975, some 2,000 people, members of Elon Moreh and yeshiva students on holiday, settled near Sebastia. Some American Jewish leaders who were meeting in Jerusalem at the time were mobilized by Gush Emunim to express support for the settlement attempt. After two days of tense confrontation between the settlers and the army, the members of Elon Moreh agreed to leave the site "of their own accord," move to a military camp at Kadoum, and stay there until a decision was reached about their future location.<sup>9</sup>

The "Kadoum compromise" brought the series of confrontations between Gush Emunim and the Rabin government to a head. Afterward the group receded from public view, but its activity behind the scenes continued, increasingly geared to pressuring the government to establish new settlements and support existing ones. At the same time the Gush launched a vigorous public relations campaign. Important in this regard was the Ein Vered Conference, at which prominent figures in the Labor settlement movement proclaimed their support for the Gush.<sup>10</sup> Not only did the Gush thereby achieve cooperation between the

religious and secular Zionist camps, but actually won support for its extralegal mode of action from an elite group within the Labor movement. After Kadoum and the formation of the Ein Vered Circle, it was clear to the government in general, and to Prime Minister Rabin in particular, that here was an opponent of substantial weight.

The Likud victory in the elections of May 1977 and the declaration of the prime minister designate, Menachem Begin, that "we will have many more Elon Morehs" induced Gush Emunim leaders to believe in all sincerity that their extralegal period was over.<sup>11</sup> And, indeed, the new regime accorded them full legitimacy. Gush Emunim was in fact never regarded by Menachem Begin as a deviant group. Its young members had always been his darlings and they now had easy access to the new Prime Minister. Many of them welcomed this official acceptance and were happy to shed their extremist image. They were pleased, too, that one of their leading members, Rabbi Chaim Drukman, had been placed second in the NRP list to the Ninth Knesset.<sup>12</sup>

Gush Emunim's rejoicing did not last long. Despite the Gush's expectations, the government did not come up with a large-scale settlement program. The constraints of daily policy-making, Begin's failing health, and especially the pressures of the American government began to leave their mark on the cabinet, and the impatient Gush soon felt that it was being given the runaround by the government and the Prime Minister. The government was still sympathetic -- Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon did not conceal his affection for Gush Emunim -- but it gradually became clear that even under a Likud administration it might have to use the extralegal tactics it had devised during the Rabin regime.

The Camp David accords leading to a peace treaty with Egypt, the autonomy plan, and the government's commitment to give up the Rafiah salient in the Sinai struck Gush Emunim like bolts from the blue. This was without doubt the lowest point in its short history.<sup>13</sup> Unable to organize an antigovernment front by themselves, they welcomed the help of other disaffected groups and individuals such as the Herut Loyalists Circle, Professor Yuval Ne'eman, members of the Greater Israel Movement, Knesset members Geula Cohen and Moshe Shamir, several former Rafi members, and others who together formed the Covenant of the Eretz Yisrael Faithful.<sup>14</sup> This new association committed itself to the original platform of the Greater Israel Movement. Later, it founded the Tehiya movement to oppose Begin's determination to carry out the Camp David accords.

In the months preceding April 28, 1982, the date set by the Israel-Egypt peace treaty for the final Israeli evacuation of Sinai, the settlers of the Rafiah salient organized to frustrate the government's policy.<sup>15</sup> Their movement was soon taken over by a group of Gush zealots. Hundreds of Gush settlers in Judea and Samaria moved to Yamit, the capital of the salient, and to its surrounding settlements, to block the retreat with their bodies. They came with their rabbis,

their yeshivot, and even their families, fully convinced that they were heavenly ordained for the mission.<sup>16</sup> Several of them, the most extreme, seriously considered armed resistance, and only great caution by the army prevented the eruption of large-scale violence.<sup>17</sup>

The "treacherous" evacuation of Sinai provides the background for the activities of the terror network described in the first chapter of this essay. As early as 1980 the leaders of the group had concluded that the Begin government was not to be trusted. The Prime Minister, in their opinion, was ready to surrender Israeli territory in the south, and his defense minister, Ezer Weizman, was not sufficiently forceful in pursuing PLO terrorists in Judea and Samaria. Their response was the attempt to assassinate three Arab mayors considered to be the unofficial PLO leaders in the West Bank.<sup>18</sup> Later they developed their plan to blow up the mosque on Jerusalem's Temple Mount. In this instance their object was both tactical and millenarian. They believed that destruction of the Muslim holy place would nullify the Israel-Egypt peace treaty, with the result that the Sinai would remain in Israeli hands.<sup>19</sup> But they also cherished the dream of creating the conditions for the final redemption of the Jewish people.<sup>20</sup> It is not clear why this operation was not carried out at the time.

Despite the frustration felt by some Gush extremists, Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria multiplied after 1981. The Israeli cabinet after Begin's electoral success in 1981 was not the same cabinet that had signed the peace agreements. The dominant axis, composed of Begin, Sharon, and Shamir, was a hawkish one, quite different from the Begin, Dayan, and Weizman group responsible for the Camp David accords. The new axis was limited by the Camp David accords and the autonomy plan; nevertheless, it aggressively pursued Jewish settlement of Judea and Samaria. Ariel Sharon proceeded rapidly toward the realization of his own settlement plan.<sup>21</sup> He had always objected to the Allon Plan, which in one form or another had guided all the Labor governments. (The Allon Plan envisioned a string of Israeli settlements along the Jordan River, which would become Israel's security frontier, but opposed new settlements in the heavily Arab-populated areas, which might be returned to Jordan under a peace treaty.)

Sharon's plan was based on strategic control of all the dominant roads in the West Bank. By virtue of his stubbornness and aggressiveness he achieved more than either his friends or his opponents had thought possible. In spite of the difficult personal problems he encountered in the Likud government, he outlasted both Dayan and Weizman, the only ministers able to neutralize him. With Sharon as a dominant figure in the government, Gush Emunim had no need for noisy public activities.

## THE FUNDAMENTALIST IDEOLOGY OF GUSH EMUNIM

By overlooking the cultural milieu from which Gush Emunim emerged, most observers have perceived it primarily as a political movement seeking to extend Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank. Only recently have a few scholars -- prominent among them kibbutz intellectual Zvi Ranaan<sup>1</sup> and the late Professor Uriel Tal<sup>2</sup> -- recognized the totalistic and messianic character of the Gush ideology. Several cardinal points of this belief system warrant close scrutiny:

### Redemption

All of Gush Emunim's spiritual authorities and many of its leaders were educated in Yeshivat Merkaz ha-Rav, whose founder was Avraham Yitzhak ha-Cohen Kook, the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Eretz Yisrael. Kook believed that the era of redemption for the Jewish people had already begun with the rise of modern Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, and the growing Zionist enterprise in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> Like a classical kabbalist, Kook was equivocal on many issues, vague on others, and susceptible to different interpretations. His teaching was not a guide to earthly conduct.

Israel's victory in the Six Day War transformed the status of Kook's theology. Suddenly it became clear to his students that they were indeed living in the messianic age. Ordinary reality assumed a sacred aspect; every event possessed theological meaning and was part of the metahistorical process of redemption.<sup>4</sup> Though shared by many religious authorities, this view was most effectively expounded by Kook's son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, who succeeded him as the head of Yeshivat Merkaz ha-Rav. The younger Kook defined the State of Israel as the halakhic Kingdom of Israel, and the Kingdom of Israel as the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Every Jew living in Israel was holy; all phenomena, even the secular, were imbued with holiness.

The belief that they are living in the messianic age and that

redemption is at hand has operational consequences for Gush members. No longer is their theology expressed in esoteric kabbalistic language. It has become the practical guide to daily living. Conversation with Gush members is impossible without repeated references to national regeneration, the metahistorical meanings of ordinary events, the building of the Third Temple, and messianic redemption. Almost all the biblical rules regarding the Kingdom of Israel are literally applicable, and strict halakhic instructions concerning national behavior in the messianic age are now valid.<sup>5</sup>

### The Sanctity of the Land of Israel

According to the fundamentalists of Gush Emunim, the Land of Israel -- every grain of its soil -- is holy. "This holiness," writes Professor Tal,

does not replace the physical substance but inversely, the physical substance is itself becoming sacred until total holiness is achieved. Thus no individual can escape holiness and every place upon which a Jewish foot is set is holy. The historical symbols are transformed from mere symbols to a concrete substance. Not the single individual but the place is holy and not the place as a symbol for holiness, but the physical place: trees, stones, graves, walls and other places as well. They all are sacred in themselves.<sup>6</sup>

Since 1967, therefore, the issue of the borders of Israel has assumed an unprecedented seriousness. In countless religious symposia and learned essays the question has been discussed and debated.<sup>7</sup> While the secular proponents of the Greater Israel idea have surveyed the borders with a view to security considerations and historical claims, the proponents of the messianic idea have in mind only one consideration: the biblical covenant made by God with Abraham. They soon discovered that the territory so promised was not confined to the area taken by the Israeli army in the Six Day War but extended to the Euphrates on the northeast and -- according to one school of biblical interpretation -- to the Nile on the southwest. While no unanimity on the operational meaning of the biblical map has been reached, not a single fundamentalist authority is ready to alienate a square inch for either peace or security. Some even favor further territorial annexations. Rabbi Israel Ariel, the former head of the yeshiva at Yamit (the evacuated city in the Rafiah salient), is a typical fundamentalist. In an interview, he would not disclose his opinion whether this was the time for Israel to wage a war of conquest. Asked about current political constraints and diplomatic limitations, the rabbi replied that Joshua had far worse political constraints and limitations. When pressed further about potential casualties and national losses, the fundamentalist rabbi referred to a biblical ruling that in a holy war no question about casualties is legitimate until one fifth of the nation is extinct.<sup>8</sup>

Not all fundamentalist rabbis or members of Gush Emunim go as far as Rabbi Ariel; his is clearly a minority opinion.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, his view enjoys a measure of legitimacy. In 1976 Israel's Chief Rabbinate -- which has formally nothing to do with Gush Emunim -- issued an official halakhic ruling about the holiness of the Jewish territories and the consequent holiness of the political sovereignty over them. In 1979 the Rabbinate ruled that no part of the Holy Land could be alienated even in the context of a peace treaty. "According to our holy Torah and unequivocal and decisive halakhic rulings there exists a severe prohibition to pass to foreigners the ownership of any piece of the land of Israel since it was made sacred by the brit bein ha-betarim [Abraham's Covenant]."<sup>10</sup>

The uncompromising position of the fundamentalist members and supporters of Gush Emunim helps explain several events of the last decade. It explains, for example, the stubborn opposition to Israel's retreat from Sinai and the belief held by some until the last moments of April 28, 1982, that God was about to intervene directly to prevent Begin's "crime."<sup>11</sup> It also explains the welcome accorded by Gush Emunim to the Israeli conquest of Southern Lebanon. This territory belonged in biblical times to the tribes of Asher and Naftali, and the Gush saw no reason not to free it from the hostile Arabs and reclaim it forever.<sup>12</sup>

### The Revival of Zionism and Settlement

In an early document Gush Emunim calls itself a "movement for the renewal of Zionist fulfillment."

Our aim is to bring about a large movement of reawakening among the Jewish people for the fulfillment of the Zionist vision in its full scope, with the recognition that the source of the vision is Jewish tradition and roots and that its ultimate objective is the full redemption of the Jewish people and the entire world.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, although it appeared to many that Gush Emunim was established as a single-issue movement to promote the extension of Israeli sovereignty to Judea and Samaria (and, if possible, to all the occupied territories), it never actually confined itself to that issue alone. Taking into consideration the new totalistic definition of the Gush reality as well as the concrete operations of the movement, it is obvious that Gush Emunim sees itself as a movement of revival whose task is to revitalize the historic Zionism that died out in the Israel of the 1950s and 1960s. According to the Gush's analysis, Israelis now live in a crisis born of the fatigue that followed the partial implementation of Zionism after the establishment of the State of Israel. This crisis has led to a weakening of the pioneering spirit, to an unwillingness to continue the struggle against the pressures of

the outside world, especially against the continuing hostility of the Arabs, and to the establishment of a materialistic society in which the private ego has superseded the national mission. Underscoring the gap between authentic Jewish culture and what they regard as "alienated" modern Western culture, the Gush's leaders propose to rejuvenate Zionism in keeping with authentic Jewish values.<sup>14</sup> They want to overcome the present decadence by restoring the pioneering and sacrificial spirit of the past. Gush people present themselves as the heirs of authentic Israeli Zionism, which actually built the Yishuv, guided by ideals of land settlement, manual labor, and personal sacrifice.

Gush settlements in the West Bank thus represent the purest Zionist activity in every sense of the term. Gush people are not socialists, but they are attached to the kibbutz ideal. It is not surprising that two of the most prominent leaders of Gush Emunim, Rabbi Moshe Levinger and Hanan Porat, were originally members of religious kibbutzim. Porat comes from Kfar Etzion, and Levinger was formerly the rabbi of Kibbutz Lavie.

### The Arabs

What role do the Gush Emunim fundamentalists accord the Palestinian Arabs in the age of Jewish redemption? What rights, if any, should they retain in the Holy Land of Israel? For years Gush spokesmen enumerated "three alternatives" to be presented to Israeli Arabs: acknowledge the legitimacy of the Zionist doctrine (Gush Emunim's version) and receive full civil rights, including the right to elect and be elected to the Knesset (and serve in the army); obey the laws of the state without formal recognition of Zionism and in return receive the rights of resident aliens (no political rights); emigrate to Arab countries with economic assistance provided by Israel.<sup>15</sup>

While not particularly liberal, the "three alternatives" at least make some political sense. In the context of a peace settlement and agreed-upon borders, they might even be appealing to some non-Gush Israelis. The problem is that the "three alternatives" do not exhaust the full range of fundamentalist views on the status of non-Jewish residents of Israel. As Professor Tal points out:

If time and space are two total existential categories, then no room can be left to foreigners. As we have seen, the question is not limited to a bunch of crazy prophets who lost control or to an unimportant marginal minority but pertains to a dogmatic and highly elaborated philosophy. This system leads to a policy which cannot coexist with civil and human rights and in the final analysis does not leave room for toleration.<sup>16</sup>



Following Tal, it is possible to identify in the fundamentalist school three positions on the status of non-Jews in Israel: limitation of rights, denial of rights, and -- in the most extreme and improbable case -- extermination. Each position is anchored in an authoritative interpretation of Scripture. The first stems from the conviction that the notion of universal human rights is a foreign ideal that, like other European, non-Jewish values, has no meaning in the context of the Holy Land.<sup>17</sup> In the Bible, non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine were accorded the status of resident aliens, enjoying some privileges but never obtaining rights equal to those of the Jews. The Gush's "three alternatives" reflect this position and may be seen as its political translation.

The second position on the status of non-Jewish inhabitants amounts to a denial of all rights, since the very existence of the Jews in Israel depends on Arab emigration. The ruling regarding conquest of the land according to Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, in his essay "Messianic Realism," stands above "moral-human considerations of the national rights of the Gentiles in our Land."<sup>18</sup> The people of Israel, according to this view, were ordered to be sacred but not to be moral. Alien moral considerations do not obtain in the case of the Chosen People. One consequence of this view is that in time of war no distinction should be made between enemy soldiers and civilians since both are of the category of people who do not belong in the land.

The most extreme position, extermination, was expressed in an essay by Rabbi Israel Hess published in the official magazine of Bar Ilan University students under the title "The Genocide Ruling of Torah." Hess likens the Arabs to the biblical Amalekites, who were deservedly annihilated.<sup>19</sup> The historical Amalekites, according to Hess, were both socially and militarily treacherous and cruel. Their relation to the Jews was like the relation of darkness to light, that is, one of total contradiction. The Arabs who live today in the Land of Israel and who are constantly waging a terrorist and treacherous war against the Jews are direct descendants of the Amalekites, and the correct solution to the problem is extermination.

Hess's position is an isolated one and has not been repeated by any Gush Emunim authority. Even the denial of all rights is rarely mentioned. Nevertheless, it is significant that in current fundamentalist discourse none of these three approaches to the problem of the non-Jewish inhabitants of Israel is considered illegitimate or abhorrent. More important, none has so far been ruled out as erroneous by Israel's Chief Rabbinate, the highest official religious authority in the land. It is not clear whether the silence of this institution is evidence of disapproval or of political prudence.

Some indication that Gush Emunim is aware of the political sensitivity of its views on the Arab question is the present refusal of its leaders to discuss the future of the Arabs in Judea and Samaria following the "expected" annexation of the West Bank to Israel. Their

standard comment is that their mission is not to solve the Arab question but the Jewish question.<sup>20</sup> When pressed, Gush spokesmen maintain that in due time Almighty God will provide the answer.

### Democracy and the Rule of Law

A key issue in understanding the politics of Gush Emunim is its attitude toward democracy and the rule of law. During its formative years, Gush Emunim set itself resolutely in opposition to the policies of the democratically elected government of Israel. More recently, in rejecting the peace treaty with Egypt, the Gush defied the Knesset, which had overwhelmingly approved it.

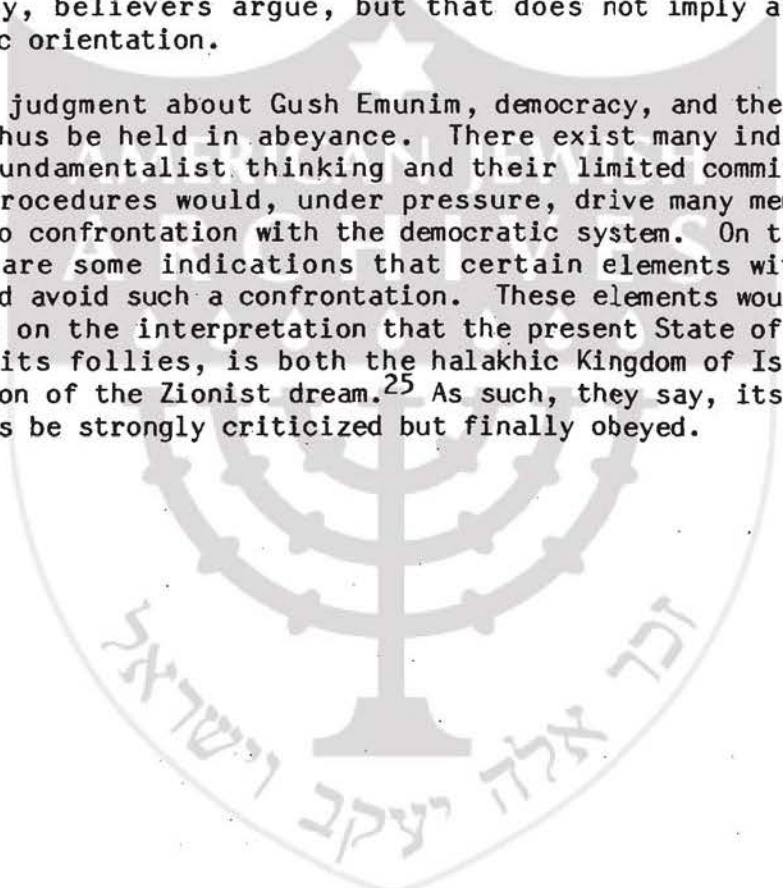
Moreover, the cultural milieu of the Gush's spiritual leaders is avowedly undemocratic. Its rabbis' fundamentalist interpretation of the Torah is totally alien to the spirit of modern democracy and legal positivism. Nowhere is their viewpoint better revealed than on the issue of the civil and human rights of the non-Jewish residents of Israel.

But is this the entire story? Do the illegalities of Gush settlers and the fundamentalism of their rabbis exhaust the subject? The leaders and theoreticians of Gush Emunim argue that they should not be judged in the context of the abstract notion of democracy but in the context of the Israeli political system, which is a democracy. They point out that they have always had great respect for the secular institutional expressions of Israel's sovereignty -- the government, the Knesset, and the army. Many of them, together with young members of the NRP, were active in launching the yeshivot hesder (academies combining religious study and military service). They played a major role in changing the NRP's orientation toward the institutions of government in Israel. Whereas they once considered the institutions of sovereignty merely instrumental, they now insist that these institutions are of great national importance and should be infused with truly Zionist content -- pioneering and self-sacrifice.<sup>21</sup>

The movement, it is true, does not have a formal antidemocratic ideology, and in the general Israeli context it has not displayed exceptionally undemocratic behavior.<sup>22</sup> On the issue that most concerns Gush Emunim -- namely, Eretz Yisrael -- the movement has adopted a rigidly doctrinaire stance. In the Gush's view, the only legitimizing principle in whose name the State of Israel, its democratic regime, and its legal system were established is Zionism, which requires Jewish settlement in all parts of Eretz Israel. Democracy is acceptable as long as it exists within a truly Zionist polity. Should the two principles collide, Zionism must take precedence. If the Knesset passes legislation contrary to the requirements of Zionism (as understood by the Gush), that act is illegitimate and must be resisted.<sup>23</sup> Every Jew in Eretz Israel has the right -- indeed, the duty -- to oppose any compromise on the issue of settlement, even if

it is supported by a majority of Israelis. When Gush Emunim people are asked how it is that they, who show so much respect for the state, are prepared to resist it, they reply that the existing government coalition does not represent the true spirit of the state. According to Gush Emunim, government prohibitions of settlement may be legal but they are illegitimate. A government that prevents settlement undercuts its own legitimacy and places itself in the same position as the British mandatory government, which undermined its legitimacy by executing the policy of the infamous White Paper of 1939.<sup>24</sup> During the period of the White Paper, when the British placed severe restrictions on Jewish immigration and settlement, illegal acts of settlement by secular Zionists were altogether legitimate. The same principle applies today, believers argue, but that does not imply a general antidemocratic orientation.

A final judgment about Gush Emunim, democracy, and the rule of law should thus be held in abeyance. There exist many indications that their fundamentalist thinking and their limited commitment to democratic procedures would, under pressure, drive many members of Gush Emunim to confrontation with the democratic system. On the other hand, there are some indications that certain elements within the movement would avoid such a confrontation. These elements would put a high premium on the interpretation that the present State of Israel, despite all its follies, is both the halakhic Kingdom of Israel and the culmination of the Zionist dream.<sup>25</sup> As such, they say, its leaders should perhaps be strongly criticized but finally obeyed.



## THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ORIGINS OF GUSH EMUNIM

Many Israelis underestimate Gush Emunim as a political force because they continue to think of it as it appeared in the mid-1970s when it launched its first illegal settlements in the West Bank. Though successful in bringing down the Rabin government over the issue of settling Samaria, its leaders and members appeared to be unworldly idealists incapable of sustained, responsible action. Israelis who recall their own early pioneering youth movement regard Gush Emunim as a latter-day version. Many are convinced that, once the government resolves to compromise over Judea and Samaria, Gush Emunim will evaporate. As they see it, an unrealistic youth movement, all its virtues notwithstanding, cannot survive in the "grownup" world of practical politics.

Nothing could be more misleading than this obsolete image. Eleven years after its creation, Gush Emunim comprises a highly variegated social and institutional system, including a state-supported settlement organization, regional and municipal councils, and independent economic corporations. In addition, it possesses a highly cohesive spiritual leadership composed of distinguished rabbis and scholars. It would not be erroneous to speak today of the invisible kingdom of Gush Emunim, which is gradually acquiring the character of a state within the state.

A full understanding of this system must start not with the official establishment of Gush Emunim in 1974 but with its cultural and social roots in the 1950s and 1960s. It has already been noted that the Gush leadership emerged almost exclusively from the Yeshivat Merkaz ha-Rav and was influenced by the teachings of Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Kook as interpreted by his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. No less important is the fact that most of the Gush leadership came to Merkaz ha-Rav from the world of the so-called "knitted skullcaps" -- the Bnei Akiva youth movement, ha-Poel ha-Mizrahi, and adherents of Torah va-Avodah (Torah and Labor), the founders of the religious kibbutz movement. It is important to note the spiritual underpinnings of these roots because the process under consideration pertains not only to Gush Emunim but also to one of the central transformations that has taken place in Israeli society and that has not yet been adequately studied. Although there was no outright Kulturkampf in the

1950s and 1960s, there was nevertheless a power play in which the victors were the religious educational system and the subculture of the ha-Poel ha-Mizrahi and the "knitted skullcaps."

In contrast to the other sectors of the Zionist educational system, which in the course of being nationalized lost their normative character and underwent an astonishing dilution, the religious Zionists developed an educational system that created norms of life and behavior of the highest order for a quarter of the school population. Thus the religious Zionist public was spared the general decline that beset the country's secular educational system and, indeed, may even have been consolidated by it.<sup>1</sup> Around that educational system complete life patterns were created for an entire public, which reinforced its religious life not only at home and in the synagogue but also (for its children) in the neighborhood kindergarten and in the ulpanah (religious academy for girls) and yeshiva (religious academy for men).

Simultaneously with the establishment of state-supported religious schools occurred the revival of Yeshivat Merkaz ha-Rav, which had fallen into decline after the death of its founder. At the end of the 1950s a new Bnei Akiva generation revitalized the old school. This new generation listened eagerly to Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook's interpretation of his father's teachings and infused it with nationalistic meaning. When the Six Day War broke out, these youngsters were ready to embrace a new religious Zionist ideology -- but not before witnessing a unique, seemingly miraculous event.

On the eve of Independence Day in 1967, graduates of the yeshiva met at Merkaz ha-Rav for an alumni reunion. As was his custom, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook delivered a festive sermon, in the midst of which his quiet voice suddenly rose and he bewailed the partition of historic Eretz Yisrael.<sup>2</sup> His faithful students were led to believe that this situation was intolerable and could not last. When three weeks later, in June 1967, they found themselves citizens of an enlarged State of Israel, the graduates of Merkaz ha-Rav were convinced that a genuine spirit of prophecy had come over their rabbi on that Independence Day.

At one stroke a flame had been lit and the conditions made ripe for imparting to the subculture of the "knitted skullcaps" the political ideology of a greater Eretz Yisrael. The disciples of Rabbi Kook became missionaries equipped with unshakable confidence in the divine authority of their cause. They soon transformed the "knitted skullcaps" from an isolated religious community into a radicalized political constituency. According to the new ideology, the entire historic Land of Israel must now pass into the hands of the Jewish people, whether by military action or by settlement and the extension of Israeli sovereignty.

Not all the religious public was affected by the new spirit. The religious kibbutz movement, for example, and its most prominent leaders have retained deep reservations about this revolution in

thought. So too has the Oz ve-Shalom (Strength and Peace) movement of religious intellectuals, which says there is halakhic support for the concept of territorial compromise for the sake of saving Jewish lives and attaining the highest Jewish religious goal -- peace. This dovish view is presumably supported by many others, including heads of yeshivot and rabbis. But it is clear today that between 1967 and 1973 most "knitted skullcaps" went through a process of "Eretz Yisraelization." This ideological transformation was not effected only by people from Yeshivat Merkaz ha-Rav. A sizable role was also played by the "young guard" of the NRP, as well as the Greater Israel Movement.

It is necessary to grasp the full magnitude of the cultural transformation of the national religious bloc to understand Gush Emunim's unprecedented impact on Israeli public life. Instead of an isolated group of religious fanatics who emerged from nowhere in the wake of the Yom Kippur War, Gush Emunim, like the tip of an iceberg, must be recognized as the visible portion of a submerged social and cultural system.<sup>3</sup> Despite their small number, Gush people could rely in time of need upon a large pool of reinforcements from the religious educational system, the Bnei Akiva yeshivot, and the yeshivot hesder, many of whose rabbis and teachers -- their spiritual authorities and role models -- had passed through Merkaz ha-Rav. Most of the youths did not participate in Gush operations as individuals. They came in organized groups, often on the explicit instructions of the directors of their yeshivot. It is no accident that the large Gush demonstrations and its settlement moves always took place during school holidays, when young people were free to attend.

The link with the educational institutions of the "knitted skullcap" culture and with organizational networks affiliated with it also explains Gush Emunim's financial resources. Opponents have questioned how a small and fanatical group could raise the considerable funds needed for its activities. It is now clear, for example, that most of the organized transport and equipment for the Gush's early operations was contributed by state-supported institutions such as yeshivot, youth centers, and settlements, which charged these expenses to their official budgets.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to relying on the human and financial resources of the "knitted skullcap" subculture, Gush Emunim activists relied heavily on its political resources. The young Bnei Akiva, for example, were an integral part of the NRP, a permanent senior partner in Israel's cabinet. Despite their extreme positions on settlement issues, Gush activists were always welcome in high political circles. Fully backed by the NRP, they could be sure that no decisive military action would be taken against them for fear of a general government crisis. They also enjoyed the support of the opposition leader at the time, Menachem Begin, and of the Greater Israel camp.<sup>5</sup> Regarded affectionately as idealistic pioneering youth, they became in fact effective politicians and lobbyists, firm in their objectives but flexible in their tactics, willing to act within the system if possible and outside it if necessary.<sup>6</sup>

## THE INVISIBLE KINGDOM OF GUSH EMUNIM

Although its activities in the period 1974-77 were often extra-legal, Gush Emunim aspired to public respectability and legal status. In 1978 it established Amana (Covenant) as its official settlement organization, recognized by the World Zionist Organization.<sup>1</sup> This occurred after Begin's rise to power and was one of several steps designed to regularize the movement. Another was establishment of the Yesha Council representing the Jewish settlements in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. The creation of these two organs transformed the Gush from a loose association of like-minded individuals into a permanent movement with a formal organizational structure.

Although Gush Emunim developed the ideology for aggressive Jewish settlement in all parts of Eretz Yisrael, the framework for the settlements was developed by the Israeli government. Meron Benvenisti, who has followed the evolution of the West Bank under Israeli occupation, argues that the de facto Israeli annexation of the area is being achieved by an incremental process of parliamentary legislation, government ruling, and administrative regulation.<sup>2</sup> Benvenisti stresses, however, that there was a great difference between the policy of the Labor Alignment administration (1967-77) and that of the Likud (Begin's) administration (1977-84). While Labor wanted to keep open options regarding the future of Judea and Samaria and abstained from a nonselective settlement policy, the Likud was not so constrained. Even within the framework of the autonomy plan it was determined to prevent a "repartition of the Land of Israel" and was consequently ready to support large-scale, nonselective settlement and a strategic takeover of the whole West Bank.<sup>3</sup> Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon aggressively pursued a policy of "creeping annexation." New strategic roads were built, new settlements initiated, and new economic investments made in the area.

Had Gush Emunim been a secular settlement movement, it would have had no reason for displeasure with Begin, Sharon, and the Likud administration. No voluntary effort could have accomplished in Judea and Samaria what the Likud government did. But Gush Emunim, because

of its fundamentalist attachment to Eretz Yisrael, was never satisfied with Begin and Sharon, the lay politicians. Begin was always suspected of being a declarative Zionist, a man who talked about great national visions but was not capable of their realization. Sharon was mistrusted because of his personal ambition. Begin's refusal to officially annex Judea and Samaria and his part in the peace treaty with Egypt confirmed Gush Emunim's worst fears.<sup>4</sup> Sharon's support of Begin further added to the Gush's distrust. Gush Emunim could not forget that, despite advances in Jewish domination of the West Bank, the number of Jewish settlers there did not exceed 3 percent of the population. It could not ignore the fact that the holy cities of Hebron and Nablus were largely Judenrein. And it observed that demands for an eventual Israeli withdrawal came from inside Israel as well as from abroad. The Gush resolved to strengthen the Jewish position in Judea and Samaria to such an extent that under no circumstances would any Israeli government be able to surrender even a small portion of the area. Now that its people were key figures within the settler community, the most capable and motivated, this task was not very difficult.

On March 20, 1979, six days before the signing of the peace treaty with Egypt, in a gesture of great political consequence, the military government in the West Bank signed Order 783 establishing three regional councils in the area. Two more councils were added later.<sup>5</sup> The regulations governing the regional councils' powers and functions, defined in Order 783 as amended, are identical with those governing Israeli regional councils. In March 1981, five municipal councils were established in the West Bank by Order 982. That order largely duplicated the Israeli Municipal Ordinance, with the result that the powers of West Bank municipalities are identical with those of Israeli municipalities except that, in addition to the right to levy taxes, supply municipal services, nominate officers and employ workers, the West Bank councils enjoy planning and building-licensing powers. The Israeli settlement areas were declared "planning areas," and the councils were designated "special planning commissions." The purpose of these acts initiated by the Begin government, apart from their administrative dimension, was to strengthen Jewish control of the area and ensure the permanence of the settlements. The key executive positions in the new councils were given to Gush members. Once illegal settlers, they suddenly became state officials with large budgets and great political powers and responsibilities.

Today, the councils, especially the regional ones controlled by Gush Emunim, are dynamic institutions. They have established business corporations, transportation services, and health and educational organizations. They employ hundreds of people and own considerable equipment and other assets. The Company for the Development of Samaria, for example, established by the Samaria regional council, owns 22 buses, trucks, bulldozers, and minibuses. It operates gasoline stations and soil works and plans, in cooperation with a well-established Histadrut company, Even Vasid, to construct a cement



factory and, with the big oil corporation, Paz, to produce gasoline by-products. The directors of the company are proud of their ability to finance new settlements without government assistance.<sup>6</sup> A recent article in Nekuda, the settlers' magazine, reports that the company is on its way to becoming an economic empire capable of acting independently in time of political trouble.<sup>7</sup>

What today distinguishes the Gush organizational structure is its semi-autonomous character. Thus its economic and social welfare system is largely independent of the Israeli system. All the Gush-dominated municipal councils are members of the Yesha Council, which operates political, financial, information, and security committees as well as a committee for external relations with other communities. Danny Rubinstein, the veteran West Bank correspondent of Davar, has observed that these committees look very much like state ministries in embryo.<sup>8</sup>

Of special significance to a full appreciation of the Gush's "invisible kingdom" is its defense organization. Almost from the beginning of the Israeli occupation, there were security problems in the West Bank. Because of anti-Jewish terrorist and guerrilla attacks, the settlements were designated "confrontation settlements," and special military orders authorized their guards to defend them with force.<sup>9</sup> Many Jewish residents of the West Bank are, in fact, soldiers "on extended leave," mainly religious students combining military service with rabbinical studies. In every settlement one settler is appointed "security officer" and receives a salary from the Ministry of Defense or from the Israeli police. The result is the direct involvement of the settler community in defense and security matters that were originally handled by the army and the military government.

In 1978 Israel's chief of staff, General Raphael Eitan, initiated a new policy under which the settler community in the West Bank was assigned complete responsibility for securing the area and defending itself. Hundreds of settlers were transferred from their regular army units to the West Bank, where, in addition to protecting their own settlements, they were to secure cultivated fields, access roads, and commercial and general community facilities. Every settlement was required to have an allotted number of fit combatants, including officers. These were to perform their active duty on a part-time basis while leading normal civilian lives. In addition, regional mobile forces equipped with armored personnel carriers were established to police the Palestinian population.<sup>10</sup>

The regional defense system was probably seen by the chief of staff as the best and most economical way to secure the settlements against Arab attacks. The concept of regional defense was familiar from prestate days in Palestine, when the border settlements and kibbutzim necessarily defended themselves. Nevertheless, the dangerous potential of a semi-independent armed force composed of Gush

Emunim officers and soldiers cannot be ignored should strong disagreement with government policy arise. Reports of recent debates within the settler community about its future in case of major territorial concessions by the government concealed the opinions of the small minority who favored armed resistance. The fact that the settler-soldiers keep their personal arms with them and that heavier weapons are stored in the settlements' armories means that the settlements could serve as bases for independent military operations.

The potential for disorder is already evident in the settlers' vigilantism. Benvenisti observes:

The quasi-independence of ideologically motivated armed settlers, serving part-time under their own commanders, has led to various vigilante activities, including the smashing of cars and harassment of the Arab population. The degree of independence of the armed settlers and the lack of control over their activities were revealed by an Israeli official committee. The committee found that incidents of vigilantism (vandalizing of Arab property, opening fire, and harassment) had not been investigated "because of intervention of politicians, including senior members of the government coalition, who have halted investigations by intervening with authorities." A former chief of internal security who was responsible for investigating vigilante activity went even further by stating "There is a sympathetic political environment.... Those settlers who took the law into their hands and established illegal settlements have now become legitimate.... This proved to them that 'destroyers of fences' and law breakers have been right, that they have become strong and respectable."<sup>11</sup>

The warning quoted by Benvenisti regarding the settlers' vigilantism was made before the disclosure of the underground network responsible for the most extreme anti-Arab terrorism since 1980. A senior officer in the regional defense unit was among those arrested.<sup>12</sup>

Gush Emunim's drive for autonomy is not limited to organizational, economic, and military areas. It extends as well to the legal. The regional council in Mateh Binyamin has established a rabbinical court to resolve financial issues according to Halakhah. A little-noticed announcement of the court's establishment explained:

The revival of the Israeli nation means also the return of the Law in Israel and the management of financial issues between a man and his peers according to the Torah and not according to the law imagined by the Gentiles. It appears proper that settlements that are instituted by the Torah should follow this path for the law is from God.<sup>13</sup>

Since the death of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook in 1982, the Gush

"invisible kingdom" has lacked a single spiritual authority. Nevertheless the system has functioned smoothly since Rabbi Kook's students have themselves become admired authorities. Among them, Rabbi Moshe Levinger from Hebron, Rabbi Eliezer Waldman from Kiryat Arba, and Rabbi Yisrael Ariel from Yamit have achieved national reputations. There are, moreover, dozens of young rabbis trained at Merkaz ha-Rav who disseminate its fundamentalist, messianic doctrine. Every Gush settlement has its own rabbi, and in many there exists a yeshiva as well. By indoctrinating hundreds of young students every year, Gush Emunim perpetuates itself and preserves its religious zeal. The number of new Gush adherents may not be large, but as reinforcement of an elite group it is more than adequate. Gush Emunim is by far the most dynamic social and cultural force in Israel today.



## GUSH EMUNIM AND ISRAELI POLITICS

A cultural and organizational analysis of Gush Emunim cannot account for the movement's great political influence. This can be understood only in the general context of Israeli politics. Most observers agree that on the territorial question the Israeli public is today evenly divided between "doves" and "hawks." While about half of the citizens are ready to trade part of Judea and Samaria for a real peace with a Jordanian-Palestinian entity, nearly the same number oppose such a settlement. The latter accept the position expressed by Menachem Begin many times: "Never again should Eretz Yisrael be repartitioned." Most of them, however, are not fundamentalists. They are territorial maximalists who believe that Judea and Samaria should remain in Israel's hands for various reasons: security, demography, historical attachment, even purely emotional considerations. They are highly suspicious of the Arabs, resentful of PLO terrorism, and in general see no reason for being altruistic in the cruel and bloody reality of the Middle East. For these territorial maximalists, most of whom are represented politically by the Likud and Tehiya parties, the youthful and energetic zealots of Gush Emunim are objects of admiration. While these ordinary Israelis of nationalist convictions have personally done nothing to make the dream of Greater Israel come true, the Gush people and their families have gone to the cold and rocky hills of Judea and Samaria and literally pioneered.

For the maximalists, Gush Emunim fills the role that was once filled for the Labor movement by the kibbutz community. Leaders of the Labor movement used to stress incessantly the importance of the tiny kibbutz community to the whole Labor movement and to the realization of socialist Zionism in Israel. Many who as young pioneers passed through a particular kibbutz on their way to political power and influence retained their formal membership in that kibbutz although they had long since become urban politicians in every respect. The kibbutz community thus became a symbol of the nation's youthful idealism. Similarly, for the territorial maximalists, Gush Emunim seems to embody the nation's former confidence and certitude. Unfortunately, admiration for Gush Emunim has entailed an uncritical indulgence of its fundamentalism.

The popularity of Gush Emunim is evidenced by the warm welcome extended to Gush leaders in high government circles and by the recognition and moral authority accorded to its rabbis. To make sure that its influence is not merely informal, Gush Emunim has placed its members or supporters in all the maximalist political parties. Thus Tehiya, despite its secular leadership, is generally viewed as the political embodiment of the Gush's ideology. Gush Emunim also musters political support in the Likud, where Ariel Sharon, an archmaximalist, is vocal and influential. The NRP is permeated with Gush supporters, especially among its rabbis and yeshiva heads. The small Morasha, another religious party, is headed by two prominent leaders of Gush Emunim, Rabbi Chaim Drukman and Hanan Porat. In addition, Gush Emunim and the settler community have created a very effective lobby in the Knesset. Every Knesset or government meeting that deals with Judea and Samaria, whether on small questions such as construction budgets or on important ones involving the future of the entire area, is attended by Gush members or their political allies. Very little escapes the attention of the young Gush activists. Wielding their immense influence, they are usually capable of mobilizing the entire maximalist body in support of their positions.

Gush political influence is not limited to the maximalist camp only. During its pioneering years, it made inroads into the very heart of the Labor movement and to what was once called Israel's Left. Some Labor members, devoted supporters of Gush Emunim, crossed political lines and joined the maximalist camp. Others did not and are still counted in the minimalist camp. Most prominent among the latter is Israel's present minister of agriculture, Arik Nachamkin, but he is not alone. While these politicians are unaffected by the Gush "mystique," they support the Gush on many important issues.

Had the political influence of Gush Emunim been confined to the maximalist camp and to some minimalist supporters, the present coalition cabinet under Shimon Peres could perhaps have limited its influence. But as a result of the 1984 elections, the government has, in this area, been largely paralyzed. The current national unity cabinet is equally divided between the Likud and the Labor Alignment. No major policy decision can be made unless agreed upon by both parties. Moreover, Peres and his colleagues have been occupied with Israel's immense economic difficulties. They have little time or energy to resist the slow, incremental process of annexation in the West Bank. Their success in decreasing the number of new settlements has been diluted by Gush Emunim's extension of existing ones. Using their legal authority as heads of local and regional councils in Judea and Samaria and with the support of Likud ministers, Yesha leaders have skillfully accomplished most of their goals. And since there is very little concrete progress thus far in the peace process with Jordan, Peres and his colleagues are understandably disinclined to jeopardize the precarious political alliance that brought them to power. There are very few instances of Labor-initiated interference

in the actions of Gush settlers, and then only in cases of flagrant lawbreaking.

The only significant public force that actively opposes the growing political influence of the fundamentalists is the Israeli Left, sometimes called the Israeli peace camp. This force, however, is very feeble. It is composed of a few small political parties that account for no more than a tenth of the Knesset; of Peace Now, a vocal extraparliamentary movement; and of several small civil rights organizations. The Left, especially Peace Now, has occasionally managed to arouse intense public reactions to certain excessive acts of the government. But during the Likud administration it was unable to stop the Gush's expansion in Judea and Samaria. Its only successes in this area have been to identify extreme settler transgressions against Arabs that could be proved in court. These successes contributed to the demonization of the Left in the eyes of the maximalists, but otherwise they had little political impact.



### ZIONIST FUNDAMENTALISM: A BALANCE SHEET

Gush members generally bear little resemblance in tactics to the Muslim fundamentalists currently so conspicuous in Iran, Lebanon, and elsewhere in the Middle East. They are not sadistic, bloodthirsty, or suicidal. They do not engage in street hooliganism or other quasi-fascist behavior. Unlike some other Jewish fundamentalists in Israel (such as the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta, which preserves a medieval life-style), Gush people are modern, well-behaved, and intelligent. Many are professionals, engineers, talented mathematicians, and successful businessmen. Most of their rabbis are extremely versatile, far removed from the popular image of ayatollahs. Almost everyone who has known Gush people has been highly impressed by their combination of intelligence, idealism, and modesty. Their work ethic and dedication to collective goals have earned them the respect of many Israelis who do not otherwise share their convictions.

The modern and attractive life-style of Gush Emunim is, however, highly misleading. The real challenge of this movement does not lie in its way of life or even in its politics. It lies instead in its fundamentalist cast of mind, which simply refuses to acknowledge the constraints of political reality. Many ordinary Israelis would love to live in a Greater Israel free of Arab hostility. They would rejoice if the Palestinians willingly evacuated Judea and Samaria or if their government commanded the magic resources to restructure the Middle East. Today, however, these Israelis are aware that the necessary conditions for such a resolution of the Arab-Israeli problem do not obtain and that they are unlikely to obtain in any foreseeable future. These Israelis, who are no less patriotic than Gush Emunim, are simply capable of reading the political map of our time. While the political perceptions and interpretations of those in the non-Gush mainstream may vary, in the final analysis they are unlikely to engage in irresponsible acts or blindly challenge current political reality.

The danger of the fundamentalist mind is its conviction that reality is bound to follow ideology and not vice versa. Facts can simply be disregarded: the Palestinians do not exist, the Arab countries do not count, world public opinion is rubbish, and the U.S.

government is merely a nuisance. The only reality that counts is Jewish redemption, which is imminent -- to be realized by massive aliyah, negation of the Diaspora, and the building of the Third Temple. Throughout Jewish history there have been "true believers" like the Gush Emunim who were equally convinced that the Messiah was at the door. Fortunately these messianic believers were in most cases few and isolated. Their messianic vision was not translated into operative political programs. This is not the case with Gush Emunim. Since the movement is so attractive and effective in present-day Israel, it is bound to have a significant impact on the country's future.





NOTES

**A New Political Force**

1. Cf. Menachem Friedman, "Radical Religious Groups in Israel: Conservatism and Innovation," paper presented at the Colloquium on Religious Radicalism and Politics in the Middle East, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 13-15 May 1985.

**The Emergence of Gush Emunim:**

1. Cf. "Gush Emunim: The First Decade" (Hebrew), Nekuda, no. 69 (2 February 1984): 5-7.
2. Cf. Ehud Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model of Political Extremism" (Hebrew) Medina, Mimshal Veyahasim Beinleumiim, no. 17 (Spring 1981).
3. Ibid., p. 24.
4. Ha'aretz, 11 October 1974.
5. Ha'aretz, 31 March 1976.
6. Danny Rubinstein, On the Lord's Side: Gush Emunim (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1982), pp. 58-59.
7. Cf. Yehuda Litani in Ha'aretz, 5 December 1975.
8. Cf. Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model," p. 25.
9. See Haim Gouri, "A Letter to Emunim's People" (Hebrew), in Yediot Achronot, 7 May 1976.
10. Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model," p. 26.
11. Ibid.

12. Rubinstein, On the Lord's Side, p. 167.
13. Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model," p. 27.
14. Rubinstein, On the Lord's Side, pp. 152-153.
15. Ibid., pp. 170-172.
16. Gideon Aran, "The Movement to Stop the Retreat from Sinai: Lessons and Meaning" (Hebrew), unpublished paper, Jerusalem, 1985.
17. N. Hofman, "Yamit and Its Evacuation: How Was Bloodshed Prevented?" (Hebrew), unpublished paper, Jerusalem, 1984.
18. Ha'aretz, 4 June 1980.
19. Ha'aretz, 4 April 1985.
20. Ha'aretz, 4 June 1984.
21. On Sharon's settlement plan, see Zvi Raanan, Gush Emunim (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim, 1980), pp. 146-147.

#### **The Fundamentalist Ideology of Gush Emunim**

1. Zvi Raanan, Gush Emunim (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim, 1980).
2. Uriel Tal, "The Foundations of Political Messianism in Israel" (Hebrew), Ha'aretz, 26 September 1984.
3. Cf. Zvi Yaron, The Teaching of Rav Kook (Hebrew), 3rd ed. (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency, 1979), pp. 270-273.
4. Raanan, Gush Emunim, pp. 64-67.
5. This judgment is based on frequent encounters with members of Gush Emunim. Halakha is the name of the system of Jewish religious law that, according to the Orthodox tradition, is based on the divine revelation to Moses at Sinai and has been handed down, developed and interpreted by the sages from generation to generation. Halakhic principles and rules apply to all aspects of human conduct.
6. Tal, "Foundations of Political Messianism."
7. See, for example, Yehuda Shaviv, ed., Eretz Nahala: Our Right to the Land of Israel (Hebrew), 2d ed. (Jerusalem: World Center of Mizrahi, 1976).

8. Interview with Rabbi Ariel, 31 January 1985. There is a dispute among scholars whether the biblical term nahal mitzrayim (the River of Egypt) refers to the Nile or to Wadi el-Arish, which is near the eastern edge of the Sinai bordering the land of Canaan (Israel). In the latter view, Sinai is not part of the Promised Land. The usual biblical term for the Nile is Ye'or.
9. I have not observed a general "imperialist" tendency at the present time. Most Gush leaders seem content with what was achieved in the Six Day War.
10. Cited in Tal, "Foundations of Political Messianism."
11. Cf. Gideon Aran, "The Movement to Stop the Retreat from Sinai: Lessons and Meaning" (Hebrew), unpublished paper, Jerusalem, 1985.
12. Cf. Hanan Porat in Nekuda, no. 50 (12 November 1982): 6-7.
13. Cited in Ehud Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model of Political Extremism" (Hebrew), Medina, Mimshal Veyahasim Beinleumiim, no.17 (Spring 1981): 31.
14. Cf. Tal, "Foundations of Political Messianism."
15. Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model," p. 32.
16. Tal, "Foundations of Political Messianism."
17. Ibid.
18. Shlomo Aviner, "Messianic Realism" (Hebrew), Morasha, no. 9 (Winter 1975): 61-77.
19. Tal, "Foundations of Political Messianism."
20. Based on an interview with Gush Emunim's secretary-general, Mrs. Daniela Weiss, 4 March 1985.
21. Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model," pp. 32-33.
22. For a general account of the Israeli tradition of illegalism into which Gush Emunim fits, see Ehud Sprinzak, "Illegalism in Israeli Political Culture," in A Study Day 1980 (Hebrew), Magnes publication no. 6 (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1981).
23. Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model," p. 33.
24. Ibid., p. 34.
25. Cf. Yoel Bin Nun in Nekuda, no. 72 (9 September 1984).

### The Cultural and Social Origins of Gush Emunim

1. Cf. Danny Rubinstein, On the Lord's Side: Gush Emunim (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1982), pp. 12-17; Zvi Raanan, Gush Emunim (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim, 1980), pp. 39-49; Ehud Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model of Political Extremism" (Hebrew), Medina, Mimshal Veyahasim Beinleumiim, no. 17 (Spring 1981): 36-39.
2. Kook's sermon is quoted in Nekuda, no. 86 (26 April 1985): 6-7.
3. Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model," p. 36.
4. Rubinstein, On the Lord's Side, pp. 79-80.
5. Cf. Giora Goldberg and Ephraim Ben Zadok, "Regionalism and Territorial Cleavage in Formation: Jewish Settlement in the Administered Territories" (Hebrew), Medina, Mimshal Veyahasim Beinleumiim, no. 21 (Spring 1983): 84-90.
6. Myron M. Aronoff, "The Institutionalization and Cooptation of a Charismatic Messianic Religious Political Revitalization Movement," in David Newman, ed., The Impact of Gush Emunim (London: Croom, Helm, 1985), pp. 54-58.

### The Invisible Kingdom of Gush Emunim

1. Ehud Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim, the Iceberg Model of Political Extremism" (Hebrew), Medina, Mimshal Veyahasim Beinleumiim, no. 17 (Spring 1981): 41.
2. Meron Benvenisti, The West Bank Data Project (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1984).
3. Ibid., pp. 37-39.
4. Cf. Danny Rubinstein, On the Lord's Side: Gush Emunim (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1982), pp. 147-152.
5. Benvenisti, West Bank Data Project, pp. 39-49.
6. Danny Rubinstein, "Settlers: A State in Creation Underground" (Hebrew), Davar, 2 February 1985.
7. Cf. interview with Dr. Joseph Dreizin in Nekuda, no. 84 (1 March 1984): 6-7.
8. Rubinstein, "Settlers."

9. Benvenisti, West Bank Data Project, p. 41.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 42.
12. The man was Capt. Yeshua Ben Shoshan, former regional defense officer of Mateh Binyamin; cf. Ha'aretz, 18 January 1985.
13. Cited by Yehuda Litani, "Double-edged Sword" (Hebrew), Ha'aretz, 21 February 1985.





## A NEW PHASE IN ISRAEL'S RELIGIOUS WARS

(Press Summary - June 12, 1986)

The long-simmering feud between Israel's Orthodox and secular Jews erupted on June 11 when a Tel Aviv synagogue was set afire in retaliation for the burning of bus shelters by ultra-Orthodox Jews who consider the shelters' advertisements to be obscene. A note affixed to the door of the synagogue, signed by the "People Against the Ultra-Religious" read in Hebrew, "We will burn a synagogue for every bus shelter set ablaze."

Over the past half year, well over 50 modern bus stop shelters displaying large illuminated advertising posters have been vandalized by ultra-Orthodox zealots (called "haredim," lit., "pious ones") in Jerusalem and in Bnei Brak, the largely haredi suburb of Tel Aviv. Over 30 were torched or otherwise totally destroyed; the rest were defaced with black spray paint. Most of them, but not all, showed scantily-clad female models in bathing suits. The haredim claimed that they were deeply offended by this display of "immoral nudity" in public.

The individual cases of such attacks have now turned into an organized campaign which has spread from the haredi neighborhood of Mea Shearim in Jerusalem to clearly secular neighborhoods in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Petah Tikva. Evidence of the new organized phase of the campaign came last week when the rabbi of the Kiryat Shalom quarter of Tel Aviv was apprehended by the police as he was spray-painting a bus shelter. Rabbi Eliezer Shach, who is the spiritual mentor of both the "Lithuanian yeshiva" wing of the haredi Agudat Israel party and of the new Sephardi haredi party, Shas (Sephardi Torah Guardians), also came out in favor of such actions. One of the two Agudat Israel Knesset members, Menachem Porush, declared that he personally would also take part in the defacing of the offending posters. It was reported that he was persuaded not to do so by the police. The competing haredi dailies and weeklies outdid each other in urging the campaign to proceed.

On the evening of June 7, haredim in Bnei Brak hung posters which read: "Our brothers in Jerusalem are fighting a holy war. Will we sit back quietly here in Bnei Brak, where one of the advertising firms responsible for the abomination is located? Every G-d-fearing Jew must come out to protest against the Abboudi advertising firm which is desecrating the Holy Name."

On the following day, thousands of Bnei Brak haredim joined in a public rally and marched on the premises of the allegedly offending company. On the way, they attacked passing motorists at

random, and called a number of secular female passers-by "prostitutes" and "shikses." According to news reports, the police did not enter Bnei Brak during the whole course of the rioting. The level of frenzy to which the campaign has reached is evidenced by the fact that the Abboudi company was attacked although, in fact, it was not responsible for the offending posters and that the posters now being destroyed and defaced include innocuous ones for El Al and mayonnaise, among others, in which no women appear.

Nadav Shragai, one of Israel's few media experts on the haredi community and its internal workings, writes in Ha'aretz on June 6 that the campaign began nearly a year ago when a splinter group of Natorei Karta ("Defenders of the City") zealots in Jerusalem, headed by a Rabbi Katznelboigen, began attacking the "arrogant posters." His example was followed by the main body of Natorei Karta headed by Rabbi Uri Blau, and then by the larger Eda Heharedit ("Pious Community"), and finally by the even larger Agudat Israel party.

Shragai writes: "Katznelboigen has several scores of adherents; Blau, several hundred; the Eda Heharedit and the Aguda tens of thousands each. These four concentric circles of similar haredi Jews followed one after another...The leaders of each group...were the ones to decide to widen the circles.

"Behind the 'holy war' lies the very mundane matter of money. A number of Jerusalem press photographers can personally attest to how the photo industry burgeoned after the events of the past few days, with members of different sects competing to buy photos of their heroic actions, for good money, for the purpose of sending them to their supporters and financial backers abroad. The entire purpose was to ensure the continued flow of dollars to their impoverished treasuries."

Ha'aretz writes in its editorial of June 6: "The campaign against the posters is but a new, not entirely unexpected, phase in the broader struggle that has been gnawing away at Israeli society. President [Chaim] Herzog was absolutely correct when he said recently that relations between the haredim and the secular [Jews] in Israel were worse than those between Arabs and Jews in the capital [Jerusalem]....Most researchers [of Israeli social tensions concur] that this is perhaps the most intense of the various confrontations that beset Israel, and that it will in all likelihood get worse as the Jewish ethnic confrontation [between Ashkenazi ("European") and Sephardi ("Oriental") Jews] continues to subside.

"Many things bother the haredim: what the average Israeli eats; how he spends his Friday nights; his desire to travel on the Sabbath with his family on inexpensive public transportation; what the Israeli woman wears. Gradually, haredi violence is penetrating to all walks of life. There is absolutely no reason for the secular public to believe haredi politicians who claim that the whole fight is just about safeguarding their way of life...Israel is home to many different communities, who are each entitled to [live according to] their different life-styles. None

of the targets of the brutal haredi attacks could justify denying those groups their rights. The fact is that the haredim are determined to impose their way of life over the secular community.

"There is always the temptation to empathize with the haredim who rise up in arms when such posters are put up in their quarters. But that, of course, is not the problem. For the Porushes and their ilk [see p. 1] will never be satisfied with such examples of secular understanding. They will always extend their torching and trashing outside the confines of their own quarters, for their goal is to dictate their own way of life to others rather than merely to defend their own.

"It will not work in other parts of the country -- in Petah Tikva, Haifa, Tel Aviv and even in Jerusalem -- where there is already a counter-struggle to ensure the principles of life without coercion. It will be a difficult and protracted struggle, but one that should not be shirked. The trouble is that the police, whose function it is to treat such predators as they treat all other common criminals, have not proved up to the task. The secular public must learn to understand that this is a crucial struggle for the future character of Israel. That perception should spur them on to take part in the struggle by all legal and appropriate means. Secular passivity in the face of brutal haredi aggressiveness can mean the beginning of defeat in that battle."

Ma'ariv writes in its editorial on June 5: "The destruction of public property is an offense, and those found guilty of it should be made to pay the price. When the perpetrators are part of a nationwide campaign -- as in the present case -- the haredi trashers and their supporters should be treated even more severely. When the campaign goes beyond the confines of the haredi areas, it is doubly reprehensible, as is the support of the rabbis and larger circles of the haredi community.

"Such a phenomenon cannot be confronted by merely routine police action. It is thus surprising that the police have so far failed to enforce the law in these cases. It is all the more surprising that senior police officers are trying to take the easy way out by pleading with the likes of Knesset Member Porush and by urging the advertising companies to remove their posters so as not to enrage the haredim.

"It is the function of the police to impose the law equally on all and not to seek to mollify those who declare themselves in opposition to the law. We believe that it is high time to put an end to the lawlessness of the haredim and to the self-restraint...[of the police]."

The Jerusalem Post writes in its June 4 editorial of proposals supported by Prime Minister Shimon Peres for the establishment of a forum between religious and secular Israelis that would facilitate a rapprochement between the two communities: "Understanding, to most of the Orthodox community, means non-Orthodox acceptance of the natural monopoly of Orthodoxy as the only legitimate and authentic expression of Judaism. The Jewish culture of the secular is disdainfully rejected as, by



definition, not Jewish and hardly a culture. The haredim are not fighting to shelter their own quarter from the blight of obscenity (for it is hermetically sealed to outsiders), but to save the souls of the uninstructed secular, and to remake Jerusalem in their own image. It is a mitzva -- a virtuous deed -- they are performing, so the haredi 'court of justice' has ruled.

"The chief rabbis of Israel, with their seat in Jerusalem, have shrugged off such hooliganism as the work of an unruly and insignificant minority, but have had scarcely a word of condemnation for the perpetrators, even after the massive burning and daubing outburst of the past few days...and neither have the three Orthodox government ministers who conceived the joint forum. One of them, Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, the Minister of Interior, in fact sprang into action over the last weekend to obtain the release of one of the daubers arrested by the police.

"Before there is any hope of rapprochement between the two communities, Orthodox leaders must themselves accept that it will never be achieved without abandonment of any effort at religious coercion, and without the appreciation of the fact that -- to the non-Orthodox -- individual freedom is a value in its own right, and not merely a synonym for licentiousness."

Nadav Shragai writes in Ha'aretz (June 6) that in the midst of all the escalation in tempers "it comes as somewhat of a surprise that other voices are being heard, too, in the haredi camp. They are still very few (those of Haifa's Sephardi Chief Rabbi Bakshi-Doron, Rabbi Shaul Israeli of the Supreme Rabbinical Council, and former Agudat Israel Knesset Member Rabbi Ya'acov Gross), and they are being directed inward to the haredi camp itself, rather than to the general public. They are not the voices of the current political or spiritual leadership -- such as [Sephardi Chief Rabbi] Ovadia Yosef and Rabbi Eliezer Shach [see p. 1] -- but they have elicited echoes in the haredi camp.

"Rabbi Bakshi-Doron has called to 'consider well the seeking of a confrontation with the seculars, for it might bring on tragic consequences, and possibly even prevent the drawing close of the secular public to the Holy Torah.' Bakshi-Doron says there are many reasons for the secular public's hatred for Judaism, 'but we cannot deny our responsibility in that matter....It is in our hands to avoid hatred. Much depends on our attitudes to the secular public. The basic principle should be that we should not invite a counter-reaction by our publications and by the atmosphere that we create. We can achieve the same goals in regard to the things we consider positive and desirable by presenting them in a pleasant manner to the secular public. Of course, there is always the alternative of presenting them in a way that will lead to a backlash. It is a heavy responsibility that we bear.'"

Shragai concludes: "The beginnings of this seeming change in the haredi camp would seem to be more tactical than substantive. But one should not forget that the solitary individuals who have dared sound such voices in the haredi camp are very much part of the people at large and are not interested in burning their bridges to them."

(Edited by Harry Milkman)

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE  
165 E. 56 St., New York, NY 10022

DATE: 6/24

FROM: DAVID A. HARRIS

TO: MARC TANENBAUM

Please circulate to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- For approval
- For your information
- Please handle
- Read and return
- Returned as requested
- Please telephone me
- Your comments, please
- As requested

REMARKS:

# Clergymen To Combat Anti-Semitism

Wash. Post (86)

6.21.86

United Press International

BOSTON—A delegation of Christian clergymen said their visit to Austria has convinced them that a Christian-Jewish alliance is needed to fight the "latent anti-Semitism" triggered by Kurt Waldheim's presidential campaign.

The eight U.S. clergymen, who flew home from a one-week stay in Vienna on Monday, said Waldheim's campaign "triggered a latent anti-Semitism that had manifested itself many times before in Austrian society."

"We found in many Austrians an indifference toward and a reluctance to do anything about contempt toward Jews," the delegation leader, the Rev. Frank Eiklor of Salem, said upon his arrival at Logan International Airport.

Eiklor, a Christian radio broadcaster, organized the delegation of clergymen representing Roman Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical congregations to "reach out in solidarity with the Jews."

He said that a professor at the University of Vienna told the clergymen of an outpouring of hate letters directed at Jews during and after Waldheim's campaign.

Jewish students told him that "during the campaign things were so volatile that Jewish youths reported being kicked and spat upon," he said.

The clergymen said they spoke to Christian and Jewish leaders, including Nazi hunter Simon Weisenthal, and laid the groundwork for an alliance to fight anti-Semitism.

Waldheim, 67, a former secretary general of the United Nations, won a clear victory in Austria's presidential elections runoff June 8, despite allegations he was involved in Nazi war crimes more than 40 years ago.

Waldheim acknowledged serving as a desk officer in an army group whose commander was later executed for war crimes. But he denied involvement in criminal activities and said his job required merely that he verify field reports.

The delegation said they would stay in touch with Christian and Jewish leaders in Austria who are "in various stages of commitment to combating anti-Semitism."



## ESCALATION OF ISRAEL'S RELIGIOUS WARS

(Press Summary - June 16, 1986)

The dispute between Israel's Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities has escalated to new and dangerous levels. Following an attempt to torch an Orthodox synagogue in Tel Aviv, Prime Minister Shimon Peres declared last week that the government would take immediate steps to stop the fighting over religious issues. President Chaim Herzog expressed his shock at the depths to which the animosity between the fringes of the two camps had descended. The two Chief Rabbis [Ashkenazi and Sephardi] declared that the burning of bus shelters was an act of sacrilege and that the willful destruction of property, even in a struggle for religious values, was a violation of Jewish law.

Bus shelters continued to be burned and defaced throughout the country, especially in Jerusalem. Militant secularists were most enraged by the fact that the police appeared not to have orders to intervene strenuously against the ultra-Orthodox vandals. The Police Inspector-General went so far as to tell a Knesset committee that the haredim might even have a legal case to justify their actions, for there is an Israeli law against the display of material in public that could be construed as giving offense to people's religious sensibilities.

By the Shavuot holiday weekend (June 13-15), there was a massive escalation of intrareligious hostilities. In north Tel Aviv, a yeshiva (Talmudic academy) and synagogue belonging to the Gur hasidim was broken into by vandals, who tore up tefillin (phylacteries) and holy books and damaged the Ark of the Torah. In Jerusalem, a crowd of secularists attacked a vehicle belonging to an Orthodox burial society on Saturday night. In the same area, haredim from the nearby Mea Shearim quarter broke windows in the Edison Cinema, which is open on the Sabbath. It seemed clear after the holiday that the entire matter had gotten out of hand, and that the lenient police hands-off policy had not worked, but had instead encouraged further haredi depredations and violent secular counterattacks. At the time of writing, the cabinet was convened to consider the situation.

Avraham Schweitzer writes in Ha'aretz on June 15: "The advice given by the Police Inspector-General -- that the haredim can go to court against the public display of the offensive posters -- misses the point, for the haredim who have been burning bus shelters...in their neighborhoods do not recognize the laws and the legal system under which they could appeal to the courts. They deny the very right of the State of Israel to legislate such laws. Not only that, but in their eyes, and in those of the rabbinic authorities they follow, violence is not merely a means but an end in itself. For only by violence can they give vent to

their rage and to their determination to bend Israel's life-style to that of their own.

"The average [ultra-Orthodox] yeshiva student, whom Israel is getting to know on its television screens these days, is far from the ideal type of devoted scholar described by the [Hebrew] poet [Chaim Nachman] Bialik as is a crocodile from a chameleon. The ultra-Orthodox world has never been [quiescent], and its recourse to violence is attested to by the vicious fights between its different sects.

"The prime minister, who has convened a conciliation committee of notable religious leaders, the chief rabbis and political dignitaries, has no chance whatsoever of 'conciliating' the average yeshiva student or the yeshiva head who has sent him to burn bus shelters, or for that matter, [the Satmar Rebbe], the spiritual father of haredi terror who sits in New York from where he agitates for and finances such terror in Israel. Just as it would be unthinkable to conduct negotiations for an Arab-Jewish accomodation with the [radical Palestinian] terrorist Abu Nidal, so would it be unthinkable to try to seek accomodation with the Satmar Rebbe and his likes.

"The only possible outcome of attempts at such conciliation would be recognition of the legitimacy of additional demands on the part of the religious that would come at the expense of the life-style of the secular population. But the goal of curbing the violence of the ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students is simply unattainable. Until the authorities recognize the fact that the haredim totally reject the State of Israel and everything it stands for, there will be no end to haredi terror.

"The moment of truth has come for those who keep spouting off concerning the rule of law. Will they have the courage and determination to apply the rules of the legal system in this case, too, as they were applied to the [anti-Arab] Jewish terrorist underground and as is being demanded in the case of the head of the General Security Services? For if they do not have that courage, they will unavoidably set off a counter-campaign of anti-religious terror. The burning of the synagogue [in Tel Aviv] should be seen as just such a warning by the upholders of the rule of law, who seem to have fallen asleep on the job. This time the secular community will not swallow the soothing words of the prime minister. If the authorities will not protect their rights, they will do so themselves."

Hatzofe, the daily newspaper of the National Religious Party, (whose constituents do not include the ultra-Orthodox who have participated in the recent incidents), comments in its June 12 editorial: "The torching of a synagogue in Tel Aviv -- by Jews -- as a protest against haredi torching of bus shelters, gives rise to feelings of rage and disgust in the broader public. It was a reprehensible act that should set off warning signals as to how low those who support the freedom to post pictures of abominations have stooped. There is absolutely no common denominator between the two actions. The burning of bus shelters should be condemned, but how is it even possible to compare such illegal acts with such

a horrendous act as the burning of a synagogue?

"The prime minister's initiative in seeking conciliation between the two camps should be welcomed, but it should be obvious that conciliation will not be won merely through slogans. Those calling for patience and tolerance between the two camps must also take steps that would make it possible for members of both communities to live together through mutual respect. Such mutual respect is being undermined by the recent attacks on the sanctity of the Sabbath, by displaying in public of pictures of abomination, and by scurrilous agitation against the religious community. All these must be stopped in order to restore the possibility of coexistence through mutual respect to the House of Israel."

The Labor Party's Davar writes in its June 12 editorial: "The [police] inspector-general's assertion that the posters hurt the feelings of the haredim, and that is what set off the violence, could easily be misinterpreted. It is very dangerous to attempt to justify acts of violence by hurt feelings. Tomorrow the religious will announce that their feelings are hurt by private car traffic on the Sabbath, and they might feel justified in burning such cars."

"The statement of the new attorney-general [Yosef Harish] on the matter is also problematic. He is reported to have said that the criminal acts of the religious stem from ideals. Since when do ends justify the means? Are we short of crimes and misdemeanors in this country which stem from the ideals of their perpetrators? Take the case of Jewish terrorism [against Arabs], or the burning of the synagogue [in Tel Aviv]. Certainly no one among us would seek to justify such a horrible acts on the basis of the ideals of those who carried it out."

"Now that we are all properly shocked...the time [has come] to start working to increase understanding and foster coexistence. But it should be clear from the outset that there can be no coexistence...without mutual understanding. Understanding must be mutual as must self-restraint. Respect for the law must obligate all sides, regardless of their feelings or motivations. The acts are what count and everyone must be held responsible for his acts."

Ha'aretz, in its June 12 and 15 editorials, remarks: "The picture being painted of a symmetry in the confrontation between the religious and the secular is simply not correct. On the one hand, the religious camp, while not monolithic, is sufficiently consolidated to prevent its more moderate elements from breaking solidarity with and castigating the extremists. On the other side are the secularists who are entirely unorganized. [They] are mainly individual citizens of different points of view who are united only by their belief that Israel must be a state of [civil] law and not of halacha [Jewish law]. This community does not want to pick a fight with the religious. But it does demand the right that every citizen be enabled to lead his own life and determine his own attitude toward Jewish tradition without having another element in society ramming its own religious point of view and way

of life down his throat...

"A call for tolerance and self-restraint is well-taken. But it should be directed first to the religious, who are the first ones to threaten coexistence. The breakdown in relations between the religious and the secular is an outgrowth of an attack by the most benighted and reactionary forces in the religious camp who are determined to impose their views on Israel's public life. After the 'pictures of abomination' issue will be the issues of cinema shows on Sabbath eve, the sale of pork products and the sale of bread during Passover. The haredim will never be satisfied. And we can expect increasing pressure on the religious factions in the Knesset to deny Israeli citizenship to new immigrants who have been converted by non-Orthodox rabbis.

"All Jews who oppose being subjugated to the rule of the rabbis should rise up against this campaign. This should pertain not only to secular Jews, but also to those among the religious who understand that in the [contemporary society] it will be impossible to maintain the values of human culture if the rabbis will be arbiters of what constitutes acceptable life-styles. All the authorities, including the police, the attorney-general's office and the courts must apply the law equally against all law-breakers, even if they wear religious black [garments]. This freedom to pursue one's own life-style throughout the country must be defended against the attempt by a minority of zealots to impose their own will on those who are opposed to their ideas."

Nadav Shragai, a journalistic observer of Israel's ultra-Orthodox communities, outlines the organization of the bus shelter vandalism campaign in the June 12 edition of Ha'aretz: "[On the evening of May 31], the signal was given in [a section of the ultra-Orthodox Mea Shearim quarter in Jerusalem] for what has subsequently developed into a sort of civil rebellion. The campaign staff in Jerusalem was headed by the elders of the community, including Rabbi Yitzhak Gottfried, Rabbi Hillel Schlessinger and Rabbis Eliezer and Zalman Brizl (the latter two both heads of the 'modesty brigade') and other rabbis. Most of the factions of the extreme wing of the haredi community were represented on the staff. These included the yeshiva of the Satmar hasidim (400 students), the Toldot Aharon yeshiva (1,000 students), the Dushinsky yeshiva (200 students) and the two Natorei Karta yeshivot, Torah V'Yira and Kahal Yere'im, with 100 students each.

"The staff met nearly every day in different homes in [Mea Shearim], and chose ten students to carry out the following day's action. A student who wanted to volunteer had to bring a signed note of permission from his wife, so as to avoid family troubles. Several of the students went out on their actions equipped with plastic bags for their talletim [prayer shawls] and tefillin [phylacteries], for use in jail.

"The initial organization was not headed by the official leadership of the community, but by activists in the 'modesty brigade' established by the Toldot Aharon yeshiva...The silent majority of the haredi community would have preferred peace and

quiet. The political and spiritual leadership of the different factions, however, has been very active in the organization and they have been [prodded] by the haredi press. The circles of support for the attacks on the bus shelters widened last week with the publication of the support of Rabbis Shach, Elyashiv and Auerbach [the first being a spiritual mentor of the Agudat Israel Party, who resides in the Bnei Brak section of Tel Aviv; the latter two, respected Jerusalem-based authorities on Jewish law].

"On the other hand, there has been a thunderous silence from the direction of the big hasidic sects, Gur and Lubavitch. Their rabbis and those of other hasidic sects pointedly refrained from publishing notices of support for the acts. They explain in private that they were following in the footsteps of the Baal Shem Tov [the founder of Hasidism] 'whose ways were the ways of pleasantness and love of Israel [the Jewish people].'"

The Jerusalem Post comments in its June 12 editorial: "Obviously, if escalation of violence and crisis is to be prevented, both the secular and Orthodox populations and their leaders must accommodate each other. But no amount of political rhetoric can eclipse the hard realities: (1) If the law cannot prevail, violence will; (2) If the Orthodox leadership cannot respect the imperatives of a democratic, pluralistic society, they cannot expect the non-Orthodox to respect the imperatives of halacha [Jewish law]; (3) If Orthodox factionalism, which engenders extremism, continues to be matched by the opportunism of the large secular parties, the conflict will deepen.

"The overwhelming [majority] of the Orthodox community, like the [majority] of the secular community, have always abhorred and continue to abhor extremism and violence. For most of the State's history, that sentiment has prevailed in the corridors of power and in the streets. The question today, however, is whether the institutions of the State, the party structure and the heterogeneous rabbinic authorities can once again, and in concert, cement that sentiment in new form. Rhetoric alone will not do it."

(Edited by Harry Milkman)





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(Press Summary - June 16, 1986)

The dispute between Israel's Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities has escalated to new and dangerous levels. Following an attempt to torch an Orthodox synagogue in Tel Aviv, Prime Minister Shimon Peres declared last week that the government would take immediate steps to stop the fighting over religious issues. President Chaim Herzog expressed his shock at the depths to which the animosity between the fringes of the two camps had descended. The two Chief Rabbis [Ashkenazi and Sephardi] declared that the burning of bus shelters was an act of sacrilege and that the willful destruction of property, even in a struggle for religious values, was a violation of Jewish law.

Bus shelters continued to be burned and defaced throughout the country, especially in Jerusalem. Militant secularists were most enraged by the fact that the police appeared not to have orders to intervene strenuously against the ultra-Orthodox vandals. The Police Inspector-General went so far as to tell a Knesset committee that the haredim might even have a legal case to justify their actions, for there is an Israeli law against the display of material in public that could be construed as giving offense to people's religious sensibilities.

By the Shavuot holiday weekend (June 13-15), there was a massive escalation of intrareligious hostilities. In north Tel Aviv, a yeshiva (Talmudic academy) and synagogue belonging to the Gur hasidim was broken into by vandals, who tore up tefillin (phylacteries) and holy books and damaged the Ark of the Torah. In Jerusalem, a crowd of secularists attacked a vehicle belonging to an Orthodox burial society on Saturday night. In the same area, haredim from the nearby Mea Shearim quarter broke windows in the Edison Cinema, which is open on the Sabbath. It seemed clear after the holiday that the entire matter had gotten out of hand, and that the lenient police hands-off policy had not worked, but had instead encouraged further haredi depredations and violent secular counterattacks. At the time of writing, the cabinet was convened to consider the situation.

Avraham Schweitzer writes in Ha'aretz on June 15: "The advice given by the Police Inspector-General -- that the haredim can go to court against the public display of the offensive posters -- misses the point, for the haredim who have been burning bus shelters...in their neighborhoods do not recognize the laws and the legal system under which they could appeal to the courts. They deny the very right of the State of Israel to legislate such laws. Not only that, but in their eyes, and in those of the rabbinic authorities they follow, violence is not merely a means but an end in itself. For only by violence can they give vent to

their rage and to their determination to bend Israel's life-style to that of their own.

"The average [ultra-Orthodox] yeshiva student, whom Israel is getting to know on its television screens these days, is far from the ideal type of devoted scholar described by the [Hebrew] poet [Chaim Nachman] Bialik as is a crocodile from a chameleon. The ultra-Orthodox world has never been [quiescent], and its recourse to violence is attested to by the vicious fights between its different sects.

"The prime minister, who has convened a conciliation committee of notable religious leaders, the chief rabbis and political dignitaries, has no chance whatsoever of 'conciliating' the average yeshiva student or the yeshiva head who has sent him to burn bus shelters, or for that matter, [the Satmar Rebbe], the spiritual father of haredi terror who sits in New York from where he agitates for and finances such terror in Israel. Just as it would be unthinkable to conduct negotiations for an Arab-Jewish accomodation with the [radical Palestinian] terrorist Abu Nidal, so would it be unthinkable to try to seek accomodation with the Satmar Rebbe and his likes.

"The only possible outcome of attempts at such conciliation would be recognition of the legitimacy of additional demands on the part of the religious that would come at the expense of the life-style of the secular population. But the goal of curbing the violence of the ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students is simply unattainable. Until the authorities recognize the fact that the haredim totally reject the State of Israel and everything it stands for, there will be no end to haredi terror.

"The moment of truth has come for those who keep spouting off concerning the rule of law. Will they have the courage and determination to apply the rules of the legal system in this case, too, as they were applied to the [anti-Arab] Jewish terrorist underground and as is being demanded in the case of the head of the General Security Services? For if they do not have that courage, they will unavoidably set off a counter-campaign of anti-religious terror. The burning of the synagogue [in Tel Aviv] should be seen as just such a warning by the upholders of the rule of law, who seem to have fallen asleep on the job. This time the secular community will not swallow the soothing words of the prime minister. If the authorities will not protect their rights, they will do so themselves."

Hatzofe, the daily newspaper of the National Religious Party, (whose constituents do not include the ultra-Orthodox who have participated in the recent incidents), comments in its June 12 editorial: "The torching of a synagogue in Tel Aviv -- by Jews -- as a protest against haredi torching of bus shelters, gives rise to feelings of rage and disgust in the broader public. It was a reprehensible act that should set off warning signals as to how low those who support the freedom to post pictures of abominations have stooped. There is absolutely no common denominator between the two actions. The burning of bus shelters should be condemned, but how is it even possible to compare such illegal acts with such

a horrendous act as the burning of a synagogue?

"The prime minister's initiative in seeking conciliation between the two camps should be welcomed, but it should be obvious that conciliation will not be won merely through slogans. Those calling for patience and tolerance between the two camps must also take steps that would make it possible for members of both communities to live together through mutual respect. Such mutual respect is being undermined by the recent attacks on the sanctity of the Sabbath, by displaying in public of pictures of abomination, and by scurrilous agitation against the religious community. All these must be stopped in order to restore the possibility of coexistence through mutual respect to the House of Israel."

The Labor Party's Davar writes in its June 12 editorial: "The [police] inspector-general's assertion that the posters hurt the feelings of the haredim, and that is what set off the violence, could easily be misinterpreted. It is very dangerous to attempt to justify acts of violence by hurt feelings. Tomorrow the religious will announce that their feelings are hurt by private car traffic on the Sabbath, and they might feel justified in burning such cars."

"The statement of the new attorney-general [Yosef Harish] on the matter is also problematic. He is reported to have said that the criminal acts of the religious stem from ideals. Since when do ends justify the means? Are we short of crimes and misdemeanors in this country which stem from the ideals of their perpetrators? Take the case of Jewish terrorism [against Arabs], or the burning of the synagogue [in Tel Aviv]. Certainly no one among us would seek to justify such a horrible acts on the basis of the ideals of those who carried it out."

"Now that we are all properly shocked...the time [has come] to start working to increase understanding and foster coexistence. But it should be clear from the outset that there can be no coexistence...without mutual understanding. Understanding must be mutual as must self-restraint. Respect for the law must obligate all sides, regardless of their feelings or motivations. The acts are what count and everyone must be held responsible for his acts."

Ha'aretz, in its June 12 and 15 editorials, remarks: "The picture being painted of a symmetry in the confrontation between the religious and the secular is simply not correct. On the one hand, the religious camp, while not monolithic, is sufficiently consolidated to prevent its more moderate elements from breaking solidarity with and castigating the extremists. On the other side are the secularists who are entirely unorganized. [They] are mainly individual citizens of different points of view who are united only by their belief that Israel must be a state of [civil] law and not of halacha [Jewish law]. This community does not want to pick a fight with the religious. But it does demand the right that every citizen be enabled to lead his own life and determine his own attitude toward Jewish tradition without having another element in society ramming its own religious point of view and way

of life down his throat...

"A call for tolerance and self-restraint is well-taken. But it should be directed first to the religious, who are the first ones to threaten coexistence. The breakdown in relations between the religious and the secular is an outgrowth of an attack by the most benighted and reactionary forces in the religious camp who are determined to impose their views on Israel's public life. After the 'pictures of abomination' issue will be the issues of cinema shows on Sabbath eve, the sale of pork products and the sale of bread during Passover. The haredim will never be satisfied. And we can expect increasing pressure on the religious factions in the Knesset to deny Israeli citizenship to new immigrants who have been converted by non-Orthodox rabbis.

"All Jews who oppose being subjugated to the rule of the rabbis should rise up against this campaign. This should pertain not only to secular Jews, but also to those among the religious who understand that in the [contemporary society] it will be impossible to maintain the values of human culture if the rabbis will be arbiters of what constitutes acceptable life-styles. All the authorities, including the police, the attorney-general's office and the courts must apply the law equally against all law-breakers, even if they wear religious black [garments]. This freedom to pursue one's own life-style throughout the country must be defended against the attempt by a minority of zealots to impose their own will on those who are opposed to their ideas."

Nadav Shragai, a journalistic observer of Israel's ultra-Orthodox communities, outlines the organization of the bus shelter vandalism campaign in the June 12 edition of Ha'aretz: "[On the evening of May 31], the signal was given in [a section of the ultra-Orthodox Mea Shearim quarter in Jerusalem] for what has subsequently developed into a sort of civil rebellion. The campaign staff in Jerusalem was headed by the elders of the community, including Rabbi Yitzhak Gottfried, Rabbi Hillel Schlessinger and Rabbis Eliezer and Zalman Brizl (the latter two both heads of the 'modesty brigade') and other rabbis. Most of the factions of the extreme wing of the haredi community were represented on the staff. These included the yeshiva of the Satmar hasidim (400 students), the Toldot Aharon yeshiva (1,000 students), the Dushinsky yeshiva (200 students) and the two Natorei Karta yeshivot, Torah V'Yira and Kahal Yere'im, with 100 students each.

"The staff met nearly every day in different homes in [Mea Shearim], and chose ten students to carry out the following day's action. A student who wanted to volunteer had to bring a signed note of permission from his wife, so as to avoid family troubles. Several of the students went out on their actions equipped with plastic bags for their talletim [prayer shawls] and tefillin [phylacteries], for use in jail.

"The initial organization was not headed by the official leadership of the community, but by activists in the 'modesty brigade' established by the Toldot Aharon yeshiva...The silent majority of the haredi community would have preferred peace and

quiet. The political and spiritual leadership of the different factions, however, has been very active in the organization and they have been [prodded] by the haredi press. The circles of support for the attacks on the bus shelters widened last week with the publication of the support of Rabbis Shach, Elyashiv and Auerbach [the first being a spiritual mentor of the Agudat Israel Party, who resides in the Bnei Brak section of Tel Aviv; the latter two, respected Jerusalem-based authorities on Jewish law].

"On the other hand, there has been a thunderous silence from the direction of the big hasidic sects, Gur and Lubavitch. Their rabbis and those of other hasidic sects pointedly refrained from publishing notices of support for the acts. They explain in private that they were following in the footsteps of the Baal Shem Tov [the founder of Hasidism] 'whose ways were the ways of pleasantness and love of Israel [the Jewish people].'"

*2/15/73  
M.W.*

The Jerusalem Post comments in its June 12 editorial: "Obviously, if escalation of violence and crisis is to be prevented, both the secular and Orthodox populations and their leaders must accomodate each other. But no amount of political rhetoric can eclipse the hard realities: (1) If the law cannot prevail, violence will; (2) If the Orthodox leadership cannot respect the imperatives of a democratic, pluralistic society, they cannot expect the non-Orthodox to respect the imperatives of halacha [Jewish law]; (3) If Orthodox factionalism, which engenders extremism, continues to be matched by the opportunism of the large secular parties, the conflict will deepen.

"The overwhelming [majority] of the Orthodox community, like the [majority] of the secular community, have always abhorred and continue to abhor extremism and violence. For most of the State's history, that sentiment has prevailed in the corridors of power and in the streets. The question today, however, is whether the institutions of the State, the party structure and the heterogeneous rabbinic authorities can once again, and in concert, cement that sentiment in new form. Rhetoric alone will not do it."

(Edited by Harry Milkman)

To: GEORGE CRUEN.



# REPORT

From the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee  
 Rehov Etziona 9, Jerusalem 95 149 Tel. 228862, 233551 Cable: Wishom, Jerusalem

June 25, 1986

## THE VIOLENCE AROUND JEWISH RELIGIOUS-SECULAR ISSUES

**Is the violence symmetrical?** Nothing could be further from the truth. The vast majority of secular, traditional and Zionist Orthodox Jews throughout Israel live in good relations with each other in primarily mixed neighbourhoods. At the personal level, relations are also more than civil between these parts of the population and large numbers of ultra-Orthodox haredi Jews. The problems arise on the margins of both the secular and haredi camps where mutual attitudes range from open disdain to active hostility.

The symmetry ends where attitudes are translated into action. On the secular side, there has been virtually no resort to anti-haredi violence in recent years and whatever few incidents there may have been have all come in retaliation for real or perceived threats from the haredim. The recent horrendous incidents of attempted arson against one Tel Aviv synagogue and the trashing and desecration of religious books (not Tora scrolls) in a north Tel Aviv yeshiva are cases in point. Nothing of the sort has ever happened before; these extreme incidents clearly came as retaliatory attacks for the wholesale haredi campaign against the bus shelter posters; and police have so far unearthed no evidence of the involvement of any secular anti-religious organization in those attacks.

To the contrary, left wing parties such as Mapam and Ratz, a middle of the road anti-religious party like Shinui, and the Young Guard of the Labour Party, have all come out publicly against violence while calling for police action against haredi violence. The League Against Religious Coercion, which used to be in the forefront of the battle against the haredim in Jerusalem in the 1950's and 60's is to all intents and purposes defunct.

On the other hand, the haredi violence against the bus shelters, which has been going on for close to half a year with impunity, is but the latest example of such violence in recent years. For years haredim would walk for close to two kilometres from their neighbourhoods in and around Mea Shearim in Jerusalem to throw stones at vehicular traffic on the shabbat on the way to the new neighbourhoods of Rehovot.

There have been cases of haredi violence against various archeological digs, primarily in and around the City of David in Jerusalem and in the desecration of a tombstone of a Reform rabbi in the Mt. of Olives cemetery and the illegal exhumation of the body of a non-Jewish woman from a cemetery in Rehovoth.

But the major direction of haredi violence has been in the torching and trashings of the homes of non-observant and of observant but non-

haredi Jews in Jerusalem neighbourhoods which the haredim, driven by population pressures, are trying to infiltrate and take over. And, of course, there has been the constant violent attacks on policemen, buses, and other municipal services in the extreme haredi neighbourhood of Mea Shearim.

One of the developments that has been driving small unorganized extreme elements on the fringes of the secular camp into contemplating counter-violence has been the near-total inaction of the police in nearly all of these incidents. This first became apparent in the years in which the police tried, futilely, to stop the stone throwing on the Ramot Road but were clearly under orders not to make arrests of apprehended haredi attackers and not to press charges. The same pattern of police policy has repeated itself in the case of the recent torchings and daubings of the well over 100 bus shelters in Jerusalem and in areas around Tel Aviv.

The attacks on the homes and cars of secular, traditional and non-haredi Orthodox families in north Jerusalem has given rise to an ad hoc league against haredi violence. So far, with the exception of one retaliatory desecration of the tombstone of a haredi rabbi, this organization has been mainly a talking society.

**The sources of haredi violence** The origins of the campaign of violence around the bus shelters and their advertising posters are clear. They stem from an internal split in the extreme anti-Zionist Neturei Karta community which then spread into the larger Eda Haredit, which in turn had a strong impact on the "Lithuanian yeshiva" wing of the mainline haredi Agudat Israel. (For a more detailed treatment please see the weekly Press Report of June 15, in the article by Nadav Shragai of Ha'aretz).

One of the interesting developments of the past few weeks was the abstaining of the hassidic courts affiliated with the Aguda from participating in or abetting the violence. This has certainly been true of the Lubavitcher Habad movement. Ironically, the Gur hassidim, who also stayed aloof from the violence are the ones who had their yeshiva in Tel Aviv's Ramat Hehayil quarter desecrated.

A growing number of Zionist Orthodox leaders have condemned the haredi violence. At the recent conference of the Bnai Akiva movement, its outgoing and incoming secretaries went out of their way to mince no words in stating that their movement dissociated itself totally from the haredim on that score. The Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Haifa, Bakshi-Doron, a former Agudat Israel MK, Rabbi Ya'acov Gross, and a member of the chief rabbinical council, Rabbi Shaul Israeli, also condemned the violence early on. The two chief rabbis joined in that condemnation only much later. In Petah Tikva, where the Ashekanzi chief Rabbi has for months been leading violent demonstrations against the operating of a movie house on Friday night, more moderate local Orthodox elements have come out in opposition.

In the last few days the mainline Zionist Orthodox National Religious Party has also sought to take advantage of the anti-haredi atmosphere to protest "the cynicism" of both Labour and the Likud in allocating much larger budgets to the educational activities of the anti-Zionist Aguda and Shas organizations than to their own educational frameworks.

**Are there any foreign influences at work?** With the Natorei Karta and the Eda Haredit it is a long established pattern to foment cause celebres in the long hot summers to serve as propaganda vehicles for the raising of money in the haredi communities in New York and elsewhere during the High Holidays season. This is seen as a necessary tactic because these groups are so extreme in their opposition to the "Zionist heresy" and to the state of Israel, that they are sincere enough to refuse to take tainted money from such sources. Agudat Israel, on the other hand, plays both sides of the fence. There are no other "foreign" influences visible in the recent spate of haredi violence with the possible exception of the occasional prominence of especially militant American students in their yeshivas.

**Background influences** The recent spate of violence is only the tip of the iceberg of a much longer process of the growth of haredi self-assurance and aggressiveness compared with their relative quiescence in Israel's early decades. This development has been due partly to the growth in their numbers and in their strength vis-a-vis the Zionist Orthodox in the broader religious camp. But primarily it is due to changes in the larger political context. Between 1950 and 1977 the Labour Party was always dependent on the National Religious Party for its coalition majorities, but the anti-Zionist Agudat Israel was always kept out of such coalitions.

Menachem Begin brought the Aguda in in May 1977 and became totally dependent on them in both his government coalitions between 1977 and 1984. In the present Labour-Likud parity "government of national unity" there is objectively no need for the support of the Aguda or of any of the other religious parties. But both Labour's Shimon Peres and all of the Likud's leaders are vying frantically for the support of these parties with an eye to the breakdown of the present coalition and the formation of either a Labour- or Likud - led narrower coalition. Ironically, this has been happening at a time when the number of religious party Knesset Members has been reduced from a historically stable 17-18 to a current 13. In the present circumstances, it is quite clear that the reluctance of the top political leaders to take any effective steps against haredi violence stems largely from such political considerations.

**The future of the status quo and a secular backlash** Considering the basic potential for confrontation between Israel's secular, traditional,



Orthodox and haredi populations , volatile situations have been handled not badly by a political establishment committed to upholding a fiction called "the status quo on religious matters". This refers to an agreement concluded between David Ben Gurion and the leaders of Agudat Israel in 1947 on the eve of the U.N. decision to partition Palestine, in which the heads of the impending Jewish state committed themselves to maintaining the rights and interests of the religious minority in four areas: public observance of the Shabbat and the Jewish holidays as the official days of rest; exclusively kosher food in all public institutions serving food, which has meant mainly the armed forces; separate State-funded religious school systems; and an Orthodox rabbinical monopoly over personal law for all Jews, meaning primarily in matters of marriage and divorce

It should be clear that no such commitment to a status quo could actually be carried out over a period of 39 years in the fastest changing society in the world. Encroachments by the religious on this status quo have been mainly by way of exploiting the dependence of the secular political parties on their votes to get additional religious legislation. Secular encroachment on the status quo has been effected primarily at the grass roots level by establishing facts on the ground and openly ignoring such religious legislation.

Recently there have been growing signs of haredi opposition to the public expressions of the fact that a growing number of Israelis are becoming less observant and of also signs of a secular backlash to these haredi pressures. It is in this potential for a growing secular backlash that the main immediate danger to social peace in Israel lies.. A good part of the problem lies in the growing perception of secular and even of traditional Israelis , that their secular political leaders are guided by very different considerations from their own in dealing with the question of striking a modus vivendi between observant and non-observant Israelis.

**A final point for American Jewish observers** All of the above are distinctly Israeli issues. The question of the Orthodox discrimination against Reform and Conservative rabbis and congregations , and even the question of the amendment to the Law of Return in regard to conversions, are totally absent from secular Israeli perceptions. They remain largely hypothetical issues for the Israeli man in the street as opposed to many of the issues treated above which affect his daily life and life-style. \* \* \*

Mare —

I assume you  
are going to  
call or contact  
us. If not, please  
put me on the  
list.

THANKS

Don Syre

memorandum

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

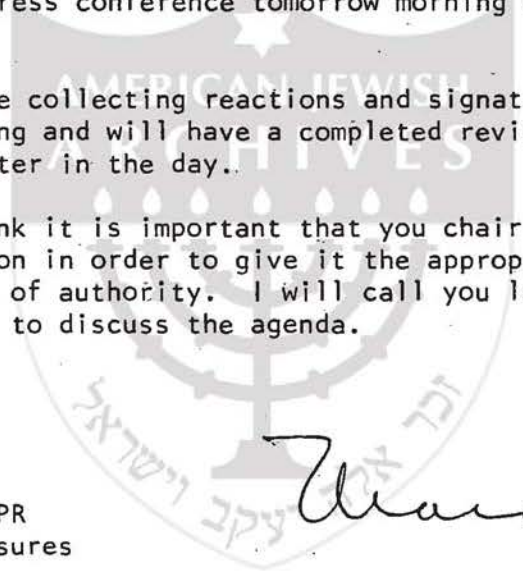
**date** June 26, 1986  
**to** Ted Ellenoff  
**from** Marc Tanenbaum  
**subject** Enclosed Materials

Enclosed is a package of material prepared for the press conference tomorrow morning at 10:30 A.M.

We are collecting reactions and signatures this morning and will have a completed revised text by later in the day.

I think it is important that you chair the session in order to give it the appropriate level of authority. I will call you later today to discuss the agenda.

MHT:RPR  
Enclosures



URGENT

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** June 24, 1986

**to** Attached list of Participants and/or Signators

**from** Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director of International Relations

**subject** Press Conference on Friday, June 27, 10:30 A.M., at AJC

Please forgive the formality of this note. Because of the shortness of time, this is the quickest way of my communicating with you.

As agreed, a press conference will be held this coming Friday, June 27, 10:30 a.m., at the American Jewish Committee headquarters, 165 East 56 Street (between Lexington and Third Aves.), Room 800 A.

The purpose of the press meeting is to release a joint statement of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist leaders condemning recent acts of extremism in Israel, and appealing for support of moderation and mutual respect.

Enclosed is a copy of a proposed statement for your approval. If you agree with the general thrust of the statement, we would appreciate your holding any suggested changes primarily to points of substance. If at all possible, please telephone your reaction to my colleague, Dr. George E. Gruen, director of AJC's Israel & Middle East Affairs Division. Dr. Gruen, who is coordinating this effort, is available by calling 212-751-4000, Ext. 259.

We look forward to your personal attendance at the press conference or your sending a personal representative who would reflect your views. There will be an opportunity for brief personal comments by the participants. If you can send your comments to Dr. Gruen in advance by messenger, noch besser.

I regret the hurry-upness of this project, but the time factor did not allow for a more leisurely process. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

N.B. - When you call in or send in your editorial comments, would you also let Dr. Gruen's office know the name and exact title of your representative.

Please let us hear from you on Wednesday if at all possible and no later than Thursday, June 26 at 12 noon.

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Enc.

LIST OF PROPOSED PARTICIPANTS IN PRESS CONFERENCE

Rabbi Moscs Scherer, International President  
Agudath Israel  
5 Beekman Street  
New York, NY 10038

Rabbi Menachem Shneerson  
Lubavitcher Rebbe Shlita  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11213

Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, President  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
3101 Clifton Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45220

Dr. Norman Lamm, President  
Yeshiva University  
500 West 185th Street  
New York, NY 10033

Dr. Gerson Cohen, Chancellor  
The Jewish Theological Seminary  
3080 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

Dr. Arthur Green, President  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College  
Church Road & Greenwood Avenue  
Wyncote, PA 19095

Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, President  
Synagogue Council of America  
327 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger, Chairman  
Interreligious Commission  
Synagogue Council of America  
327 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, President  
New York Board of Rabbis  
10 East 73rd Street  
New York, NY 10021

Rabbi Paul Hait, Executive Vice-President  
New York Board of Rabbis  
10 East 73rd Street  
New York, NY 10021

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Mr. Albert Vorspan, Vice-President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

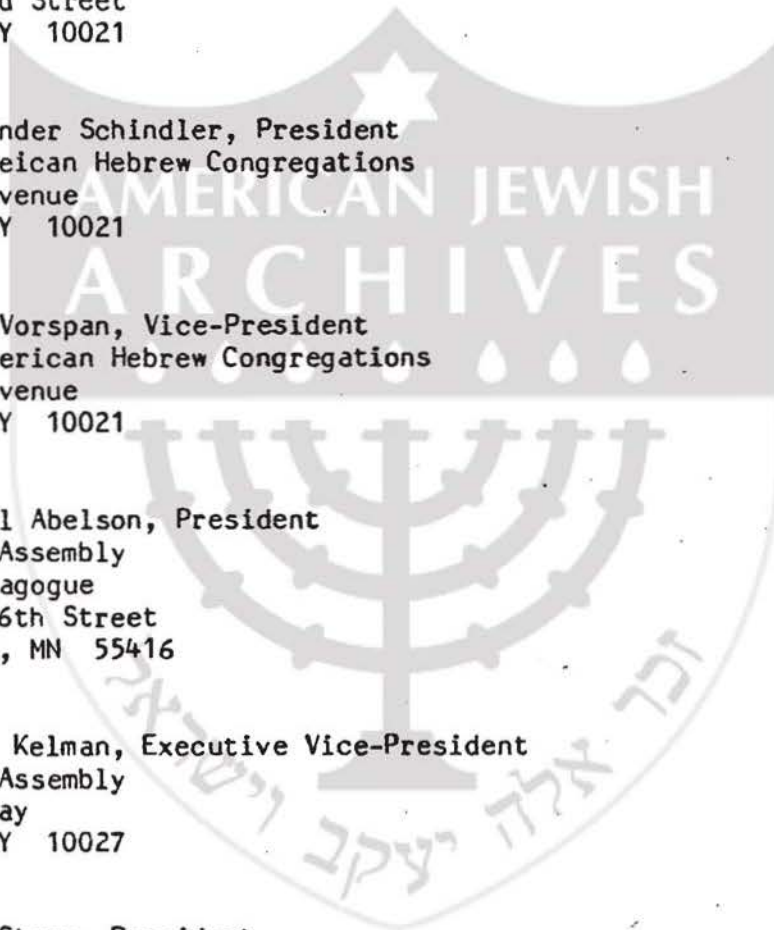
Rabbi Kassel Abelson, President  
Rabbinical Assembly  
Beth El Synagogue  
5224 West 26th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, Executive Vice-President  
Rabbinical Assembly  
3080 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

Rabbi Jack Stern, President  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
21 East 40th Street  
New York, NY 10016

Rabbi Joseph Glaser, Executive Vice-President  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
21 East 40th Street  
New York, NY 10016

Rabbi Binyamin Walfish, Executive Vice-President  
Rabbinical Council of America  
275 7th Avenue  
New York, NY 10001



Rabbi Benjamin Kreitman, Executive Vice-President  
United Synagogue of America  
155 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10010

Rabbi Pinchas Stolper, Executive Vice-President  
Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America  
45 West 36th Street  
New York, NY 10018

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, Executive Director  
Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot  
270 West 79th Street  
New York, NY 10024



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