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"Hurwitz is off the Track." Friedman's response to article in the
"Menorah Journal." 1954.

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C O P Y

Mr. Henry Hurwitz
The Menorah Journal
20 East 69th Street
New York 21, New York

My dear Mr. Hurwitz:

I have just finished reading your article "Israel, What Now?" and my reaction is "Mr. Hurwitz, What Now?".

I have usually agreed with you on most of the stands you have taken. I must tend to disagree almost completely with this article for the simple reason that I do not understand the purpose which it intends to serve. There is no need to flagellate Israel about Kibja. I was there when it occurred, and there were as many people in the country who decried it as there were those of us outsiders who were revolted by it. We have no particular monopoly on morality. There are also Israelis who are moral and sensitive.

It seems to me that the article fails to do what you have always done so admirably before - namely, to suggest a solution for a problem which disturbs you. When you were lashing at the tail of the Joint Defense Appeal, you made concrete suggestions as to how monies could be better spent. When you fulminated about the duplication of defense efforts, you succeeded in provoking the Mac Iver Report.

If there is something about Israel which annoys you, then you should make clear a suggestive line of improvement. Simply to issue some vague call at the end of the article to what you call "the liberals of Israel" is not up to your previous standards of ingenuity.

Let me be completely frank. I was more than passing annoyed and disturbed by your tremendous friendliness with the American Council for Judaism. You befriended them, protected them from what you thought were many unfair arrows slung at them, and welcomed them into the columns of contributors at the rear of the Journal. I do not recall having seen their names there before. I am in favor of your receiving as much financial support as possible from any source. I know that the Journal needs it to survive. And the Journal should survive. But I could not quite get used to the fact that I seem to sense the American Council thinking in many delicate parts of your article.

I am sure that you have many reasons for having written it. I take umbrage only with the fact that it is essentially destructive, negative, carping, and critical (all of which postures might in the long run be healthy ones) - without being constructive or helpful. Your previous record does not permit such useless explosions. "Mr. Hurwitz, What Now?".

Very truly yours,
Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

HAF:hk

Hurwitz Is Off the Track

WE have just finished reading the 57-page article by Henry Hurwitz in his own "Menorah Journal" on "Israel, What Now?"

The Menorah Journal seems to be fighting to stay alive, and Hurwitz believes that the Zionists are pressuring welfare funds, who contribute to The Menorah Journal, to cut off contributions.

That may be so, but we doubt it.

There are people so carried away by loyalty to certain movements that they would seek to penalize instruments that criticize them, but we have yet to learn of any indication of treatment such as Hurwitz states:

"The Menorah Association has been expelled from a number of Jewish Welfare Funds controlled by Zionist bigots. Thus they put unquestioning conformity to the Zionist propaganda line above their presumed pledge to service 'Jewish welfare' in America no less than abroad."

Hurwitz has the assurance of The Post that it would fight any such methods of controlling his views. If he asked us, we would say that the advent of Commentary is what put the skids under The Menorah Journal. The solution is to support both, since both publications are excellent.

We hope that Hurwitz will permit The Post to criticize his views without charging us with being Zionist-controlled.

Hurwitz writes:

"The Yiddish papers and the English-language Jewish weeklies and monthlies in this country, with but few exceptions, are subservient to the official Israeli or Jewish Agency line, publishing only what is considered helpful to the United Jewish Appeal and Israeli campaigns, or at least not harmful."

Hurwitz's article on "Israel What Now" comes close to being vicious. It is clear that he takes fiendish satisfaction from quoting from various sources to prove his points, which are:

1. That Kibya was a Jewish atrocity,
2. That the rabbinical courts have imposed theocracy on Israel;
3. That the haste with which Israel brought in the exiles was a sad mistake,
4. That the Israeli view of the relationship of their nation to U. S. Jewry is awry, and

5. That the Ishaelis consider the U. S. Jewish community as part of their suzerainty,

6. And finally a call to the Liberals of Israel to "lift up their voices" against the machinations of the state.

On some of these issues, The Post has taken the same stand as does Hurwitz, on others an opposing view, but never as graceless and as humorless, or with as little feeling for the Jewish people.

(1) The Post likened Kibya to Lidice; (2) we believe that the Mapai's yielding to the Orthodox in the matter of rabbinical control over marriage and divorce was the height of responsible government; (3) We don't know whether Maurice Samuel is right or wrong in his strictures against the haste with which the immigrants were rushed into Israel, but this is hindsight; (4) The Israelis do not really have an accurate concept of the U. S. Jewish community, and The Post has often said so; and (5) The Israelis have made many mistakes, they will continue to make mistakes, some trivial, others of utmost importance, and whether the appeal is to the liberals (who are these—isn't the Mapai liberal) or to any other force in Israel is o.k. with us.

We don't know whether these views make The Post subservient to anybody, whether it is to the Israelis, the American Council for Judaism or the Jewish Agency, but whoever doesn't like what our editorial views are has a right to challenge them.

We could take any of the issues which Hurwitz handles as if he must do the Israelis in or else his whole purpose in life is for naught and clothe them with some little bit of human understanding. Using the same quotations, and perhaps coming to the same conclusions, we could write an article which would at once be courageous, understanding and helpful. But Hurwitz achieves the effect of being hateful. He is skillful but malicious, and at times vile.

There is a real problem involved—that of making possible an understanding of each other, by both communities. But except to infuriate the Zionists and to titillate the anti-Zionist's, Hurwitz's extremism will further the solution very little.