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COMMITTEE OF CONTRIBUTORS AND WORKERS

6 East 34th Street, New York City

Abraham Feinberg
Chairman

Joseph Shulman
Secretary

October 29, 1948

Dear Friend:

The basis for the creation of the Committee of Contributors and Workers is: the Jews of America who raise the funds and give the funds have a right to a voice in the administration of the funds.

The Committee was formally established at the Hotel Henry, Pittsburgh, Pa., on Friday, October 22, 1948, when some eighty men from thirty-five communities in the United States came together to discuss the issues and adopt a program of action.

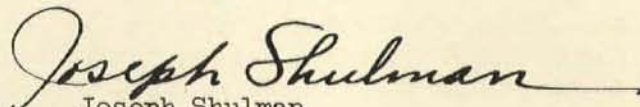
We invite you formally to associate yourself with this Committee, and by your participation in its work to help achieve its objectives.

At this time, we are urging that the United Palestine Appeal be reconstituted (a) so that the Jewish communities of America, through which the funds are raised, shall share adequately in the governing bodies of the UPA; and (b) that these governing bodies have complete power over disbursement of UPA funds in the United States. We are convinced that acceptance of this proposal will immeasurably strengthen fund-raising for Israel in the United States. The communities and the contributors and workers have a right to such participation. To fail to grant it is to weaken the bonds between America and Israel.

After reading the summary within, you will appreciate that we are engaged in a great effort to reassure the contributors and workers of the United Jewish Appeal that more than ever their devotion and their resources are warranted for the era of large immigration and rebuilding upon which Israel has launched.

I shall look forward to word from you that we may count upon your joining our Committee.

Sincerely yours,


Joseph Shulman

JS:N

A COMMITTEE IS ESTABLISHED

On October 22, 1948 a group of some eighty men from thirty-five communities met at the Hotel Henry in Pittsburgh to consider the rights of contributors to share in the administration of the United Palestine Appeal which is, today, the principal beneficiary of the United Jewish Appeal.

Leading workers for the United Jewish Appeal, nationally and locally, were present. These men, in their own communities, by their services as campaign chairmen or officers, as leading workers and contributors, had supplied the spark which resulted in the greatest campaigns in the history of philanthropy. Men like Julian Venezky, Peoria, National Chairman for Regions of the United Jewish Appeal; Rudolf Sonneborn, New York, National Chairman for Trades and Industries of the United Jewish Appeal; Harold J. Goldenberg, Minneapolis, Associate National Chairman, with Hon. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., of the Committee of UJA Campaign Techniques; Samuel Rothberg, Peoria, National Vice Chairman for Trades and Industries; Joseph Shulman, Paterson, National Chairman of the Textile Division of the UJA; Fred Monosson, Boston, National Chairman of Rainwear Industry for UJA; Leon Mohill, Pittsfield, National Vice-Chairman for the Newspaper and Publishers Division; Joseph Cherner, Washington, National Vice-Chairman of the Automobile Division; E. N. Grueskin, Sioux City, Associate National Chairman for Regions; Samuel Daroff, National Vice-Chairman of the Clothing Division.

Many other distinguished American Jewish leaders have associated themselves with this committee, now known as the COMMITTEE OF CONTRIBUTORS AND WORKERS. They are serving in their capacities as individuals and not in relation to the positions they hold in their local communities. The Committee includes such men as Milton Kahn and Herman Gilman of Boston; Michael A. Stavitsky, Herbert Abeles, Joel Gross, George Sagan, Ivan Levenson, Samuel Klein of Newark; Eugene M. Solow of Dallas; Nathan Shainberg of Memphis; Israel Rogosin, Nathan Scheinman, David Kluger, Nahum Bernstein of New York; J. Benjamin Katzner, Elkan Meyers and M. I. Speert of Baltimore; Morris W. Berinstein and Alex Holstein of Syracuse; Harold A. Goldman of Des Moines; David Uchill and Rabbi Herbert Friedman of Denver; Morris Cafritz, Edmund I. Kaufmann, Isadore Breslau of Washington; Benjamin R. Harris of Chicago; Manuel Eskin of Nashville; Louis Berry, Max Osnos and Joseph Holtzman of Detroit; I. E. Goldstein and William S. Cohen of St. Louis; Maurice S. Tabor of Buffalo; Sol Luckman of Cincinnati; Rabbi Barnett R. Brickner and Eugene Klein of Cleveland; Moritz Gottlieb of Allentown; Alex Lowenthal of Pittsburgh; and Harry Levine of Leominster.

At the October 22 meeting, Abraham Feinberg of New York, Associate Chairman of the New York United Jewish Appeal, and President of Americans for Haganah, was named Chairman; and Joseph Shulman of Paterson, Secretary. Other officers will be selected at subsequent meetings of the Committee.

WHY THE COMMITTEE WAS ESTABLISHED

The purposes of the Committee were first explored at a meeting held in New York City on September 26. It had become clear that changes in the fund-raising structure in America were necessitated by events that had taken place in Israel. In the first place, the State of Israel had been proclaimed on May 15. In the second place, in order to make a sharp distinction between philanthropy and government, the Jewish Agency for Palestine had, in July, adopted a resolution barring it from turning any of its receipts over to the State of Israel and barring the use of any of its money for political and military activities. In the third place, the Zionist Actions Committee, meeting in August in Israel, had brought about substantial changes in the

personnel of the Jewish Agency Executive which is ultimately responsible for the expenditure of funds raised in the United States. With the exception of Eliezer Kaplan, Minister of Finance in the State of Israel, none of the other powerful figures known to the American Jewish community who are now the principal officers of the Government of Israel, remained on the Jewish Agency Executive. Mr. Kaplan, who had been Treasurer of the Executive for fifteen years, remains on that body but without any special portfolio.

The men who met in New York on September 26 felt that substantial changes were required on the American scene. They understood that more, and not less, money would be needed in 1949 for the immigration and settlement program in Israel. They recognized that in order to achieve that objective, there had to be the utmost re-assurance that funds were being wisely administered by fully representative groups. Questions were raised as to whether it was desirable at this time to consider at all constitutional questions of responsibility, inasmuch as public debate might lead to acrimony and the loss of much needed funds. There were others who said that the best interests of Israel itself required that all contributors and communities be assured that there was full community responsibility for the funds, rather than through only one segment of the community. It was, therefore, essential in the interests of better and greater fund-raising to clear the air and meet the issue frankly.

Note was taken of the fact that the United Palestine Appeal, as at present constituted, is established on an annual basis by the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth in the United States. Of the 125 directors of the Keren Hayesod, 69 are named by the Zionist Organization of America, and most of the others by the three other Zionist bodies. Of the directors of the Keren Kayemeth, an effective majority of 40% is selected by the Zionist Organization of America.

The meeting on September 26 felt that good organization alone, as well as the inherent rights of workers and contributors for the campaign, required that the Jewish communities, now having no representation whatsoever in these organizations, should be brought into them on an adequate, effective basis.

A letter was then addressed by 22 men to the Jewish Agency Executive. It read as follows:

"We, the undersigned, contributors to and workers for the United Jewish Appeal, believe reorganization in the fund-raising for Palestine in the United States is indispensable.

"We are mindful of the fact that the Extended Jewish Agency and its fiscal instrument, the Palestine Foundation Fund, were designed to give representation to the total Jewish community in their administration. Today, the Zionist Organization of America alone exercises complete control, in effect, of the basic institutions for Palestine fund-raising in this country. We do not believe that this is in accord with the fundamental charters or calculated to evoke the most generous response from the American Jewish community.

"We recognize that the need for funds to speed immigration and settlement in Israel is urgent. We believe also that every step must be taken to reassure the Jewish community in the United States that the soundest procedures in fund-raising are being followed; and that the wisest precautions have been taken to see to it that all funds intended for Palestine are so disposed.

"In recent years, the United Jewish Appeal has been the channel through which

funds for Palestine have been raised. Not any one segment of the community, but the total community has responded. If the funds for Palestine are to be raised on an adequate level, then the total community must have a significant part in responsibility for the administration of these funds. This is the essence of the democratic Jewish spirit. It is best calculated to advance the interest of fund-raising for Israel.

"Therefore, we urgently ask the officers of the Jewish Agency to take steps at once to reorganize the United Palestine Appeal so that it may be fully representative of American Jewry's deep interest in Israel; and that it may provide fullest guarantees that the large sums that will be needed for Israel are being most wisely administered.

"A subcommittee of the undersigned has been formed to confer with you promptly so that action may be taken in time to safeguard a successful United Jewish Appeal campaign in 1949.

"Our interest in Israel cannot be shaken. But we must emphasize that the channels we shall use for the manifestation of that interest will be determined by the understanding of our position that you will show.

"We would respectfully ask that you arrange a date for a meeting within a week.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Shulman"

The other signatories were Milton Kahn, Boston; Leon Mohill, Pittsfield; E. M. Solow, Dallas; Nahum Bernstein, New York; Nathan Shainberg, Memphis; M. I. Speert, Baltimore; Morris W. Berinstein, Syracuse; Fred Monosson, Boston; Abraham Feinberg, Mt. Vernon; Harold J. Goldenberg, Minneapolis; Harold A. Goldman, Des Moines; Michael A. Stavitsky, Newark; Joseph Cherner, Washington; Nathan Sheinman, New York; Sol M. Reiter, Newburgh; E. N. Grueskin, Sioux City; Rudolf G. Sonneborn, New York; Samuel Rothberg, Peoria; J. Benjamin Katzner, Baltimore; Julian H. Venezky, Peoria and Herman Gilman, Boston.

A HISTORY OF MEETINGS

On September 29, the Jewish Agency, American Section, replied that "the problem you raise is .. the concern of the United Palestine Appeal (and) that the UPA is an autonomous body and that the Jewish Agency for Palestine in no way determines its structure or form of organization."

Taking this suggestion, the group endeavored to arrange a meeting with representatives of the UPA. The first such meeting was held on October 5, with Rabbi Israel Goldstein, Chairman of the UPA, Judge Morris Rothenberg, President of the Jewish National Fund, and Jacob Sincoff, Associate Treasurer of the UPA, representing the UPA.

At this first meeting, the viewpoint of the group was expressed by Mr. Shulman when he said that a very large number of contributors in the United States and those who do a great deal of the work in campaigning feel they have no voice whatsoever as to what becomes of those funds. They want to correct that. They do not look backward in comment upon anything that has been done. They only look forward. They want to be able to go on campaigning and be able to say conscientiously to the contributing public: we are fully aware of how disbursements are made; the work is carried on with maximum efficiency; we can testify to that of personal, first-hand knowledge.

Harry Levine of Leominster, Mass., another representative of the Committee, observed that a psychological change has occurred in American Jewry. Only in the last three years has American Jewry learned how to give big money. Now the givers have matured. They are beginning to ask questions. Nobody doubts that a good job has been done and that the money has been spent well. From this point on, more and more money will be required for Israeli development. Men who are giving the kind of money being contributed now want to know more. It was his assumption that the UPA would welcome that interest. He urged the UPA to give an answer in reasonable time and not prolong discussion endlessly.

Abraham Feinberg pointed out that the United Palestine Appeal is the only segment of the United Jewish Appeal which has any political affiliation. In view of the changes in the political sphere in the last few months, it is important to review the situation anew. Regardless of the purity of the motives of the people now responsible for the funds, if they have a political orientation they should be the first to invite the cooperation of non-political and apolitical forces. Those now responsible for the funds belong to a political sphere. But the money is raised by all the people. He estimated that there are 1,300,000 contributors to the United Jewish Appeal. There may be at the most some 400-500,000 enrolled Zionists. Obviously, he said, there are more non-enrolled people than enrolled Zionists. These people, too, have a right to a voice. Since they constitute, in fact, a majority of the givers they have the right to demand a voice.

At a meeting of the UPA Executive Committee on October 7th, it was stated that the UPA had no powers to determine the structure of the UPA, but that this was the responsibility of the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth. Later, meetings were held with representatives of these two organizations.

The demand of the Committee was substantially along these lines:

(1) The United Palestine Appeal, which is now set up by virtue of an annual agreement between the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth, should be reconstituted as a permanent body, with the Jewish communities of the United States naming at least fifty percent of the Board and all governing bodies.

(2) The United Palestine Appeal, which now has no powers whatsoever, should have power given to it so that it would have control over the disbursement in the United States of funds obtained by the UPA; with the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Israel determining expenditures in Israel.

THE OCTOBER 22nd PITTSBURGH MEETING

Prolonged conversations with UPA and with associated bodies having proved fruitless, it was decided to convene a meeting at Pittsburgh on October 22nd. Unanimously, the men gathered at Pittsburgh felt that the existing situation was not tolerable and required improvement. A discussion that lasted for many hours went into all aspects of the situation. The following resolution resulted.

(1) A Committee of Contributors and Workers shall be established; (2) Officers of the Committee shall be named; (3) every effort must be made to mobilize pressure upon the United Palestine Appeal so that it shall be reconstituted with adequate representation named by the Jewish communities themselves and with full powers over expenditures in the United States; (4) the Committee shall be empowered to communicate with all communities and individuals to obtain support for the Committee deliberations and actions; (5) authorize the Committee to publicize its

activities as required; (6) only in the event of failure to bring about a satisfactory reconstitution of the UPA, the desirability of setting up a new Israeli fund shall be explored, after consultation with all interested parties, and only after convoking a meeting of the Jewish communities to advise upon this step; and (7) the Committee shall advise the JDC and USNA of its actions.

This resolution was adopted unanimously, except that four votes were recorded in opposition to point six.

WHAT DOES THE COMMITTEE WANT?

The Committee of Contributors and Workers wants a partnership between the agencies which spend the funds and the communities which raise them. Both Jewish and American principles justify "representation with taxation." It is the view of the Committee that any refusal to accord at least fifty percent representation on the UPA governing bodies can only lead to misconstruction, on the one hand; and weaken the interests of American Jewish communities in the Israel development program, on the other.

WHO MAY JOIN THE COMMITTEE?

Seeking endorsement of its position, the Committee of Contributors and Workers welcomes the support of any Jew or Jewess in the United States who takes part in local fund-raising efforts from which the United Jewish Appeal benefits. The Committee will appreciate the written expression of support of its proposals so that in its further negotiations it may be strengthened by the knowledge that it truly represents the thinking of the great majority of contributors and workers of the United Jewish Appeal.

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THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED PALESTINE APPEAL

What It Used To Be -- And What Is Intended Under the New Agreement

(The following parallel columns carry, first, the exact language of the major provisions of the agreement reached between the Committee of Contributors and the United Palestine Appeal affecting the reconstitution of the UPA; and, secondly, a description of the situation that used to prevail in that particular area in previous years.)

<u>NEW AGREEMENT</u>	<u>OLD STATUS</u>
"1. REPRESENTATION ON GOVERNING BODIES	
All governing bodies of the United Palestine Appeal shall consist of representatives of the Keren Hayesod and Jewish National Fund in the proportion of 60 percent, and representatives designated by the communities in the proportion of 40 percent. The procedure for designation of community representatives shall be determined by the United Palestine Appeal in consultation with the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, which latter body will consult also with a sub-committee of the Committee of Contributors and Workers."	At no time since it was founded in 1925 has the United Palestine Appeal had representation on its governing bodies chosen directly by the Jewish communities of America.
"2. DISBURSEMENTS	
The United Palestine Appeal will with the greatest promptitude make available all monies received in 1949 to the principal beneficiaries, namely, the Treasury of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the head offices of the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth in Israel, and will disburse such funds through agencies and procedures authorized by them."	Previously the UPA turned over its income to the New York offices of the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth for eventual transmission by these latter.
"3. SPECIAL GRANTS AND ALLOCATIONS	
The United Palestine Appeal will henceforth be empowered to make its own recommendations regarding all proposals for allocations or grants outside the principal beneficiaries, namely the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth in Jerusalem. Nothing herein shall preclude the American Keren Hayesod and Jewish National Fund from continuing to consider proposals of this character and to make their recommendations	

NEW AGREEMENT

thereon, provided, however, that they communicate their recommendations to the United Palestine Appeal for consideration and action by it before communicating them to the principal beneficiaries in Israel. In case of disagreement within the United Palestine Appeal or the constituent funds both majority and minority views will be transmitted. Final authority on all grants and allocations rests with the head office or head offices concerned and the Executive of the Jewish Agency.

OLD STATUS

Hitherto, the United Palestine Appeal had no voice whatsoever in decisions as to what money was to be awarded to any purpose or organization, aside from the funds intended for the principal beneficiaries. Millions of dollars have been involved.

Now, for the first time, the UPA -- and that means the Jewish community of America -- will have brought before it recommendations on which it may decide. The whole public will be involved. The Committee of Contributors also gained its purpose of emphasizing that the final decision must be made in Israel, not in America.

(The fourth paragraph referred to the cancellation of the December 11-12 conference scheduled at Atlantic City by the Committee of Contributors)

(The fifth paragraph referred to the single announcement of the agreement)

"The Board of the United Palestine Appeal will elect its own officers and Executive Committee, in accordance with the provisions of Section One of the agreement; will determine the administrative budget of the United Palestine Appeal; will determine all matters of staff personnel; and will establish all rules of procedure as required for the functions of the United Palestine Appeal."

Hitherto, the Board and Executive Committee and the officers of the UPA were all selected by the New York offices of the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth which, in turn, have majority representation from the Zionist Organization of America.

Up until this time, the UPA has not been governed by any by-laws of its own. All substantive decisions were transferred to the New York offices of the Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund) and Keren Kayemeth (Jewish National Fund)

NEW AGREEMENT

"Provision will be made for mail or telegraph votes by the United Palestine Appeal Executive Committee on important matters when requested by any two members of the Committee so that all may have an opportunity to vote on such items."

OLD STATUS

' Previously, only the votes of
' members who attended meetings
' were recorded. The Committee
' of Contributors pressed for
' this clause to assure the most
' representative kind of decision
' and because it realized that it
' might happen that representa-
' tives of communities might not
' always be able to be present in
' person.

"The United Palestine Appeal will have the responsibility for negotiating an agreement with the Joint Distribution Committee for the joint campaign of the United Jewish Appeal, subject to the final authority of the head office or head offices concerned and the Executive of the Jewish Agency."

' Hitherto, negotiations by the
' UPA with the JDC were subject
' to ratification by the New York
' offices of the Keren Hayesod
' and Keren Kayemeth.





The Rocky Mountain Lavender Hill Mob

By Chris Leppke



Lower left, Sam Sterling; above, Haganah fighters in 1948; upper right, Bernard Springer.

Denverites who helped Israel stay alive in 1948

**See
42nd Israel
Independence
IJN special edition**

"No man is strong unless he bears within his character anti-theses strongly marked."

What's toughest? To my mind, one of the toughest requirements of Judaism is contained in this week's Torah reading: "Do not place a stumbling block before the blind."

The verse's meaning is literal and figurative. Literally, it means just what it says — don't trip up blind people. It's the figurative meaning that's tough: *do not mislead people who are "blind"* — blind in the sense that they do not know how to commit a misdeed unless someone comes along and helps them out.

For example, someone wants to steal, but does not know how. Then I come along and hand him a crowbar. I have violated "do not place a stumbling block before the blind."

I cite a rather vulgar example just to illustrate the figurative meaning. There are subtler examples, hundreds of them, which weave their way into our daily lives.

For instance, businesses and communities are full of secret information that is often leaked — information about the plans of companies, institutions or their officers. Suppose an honest, legitimate company, institution or its officers are my competitors. Suppose, based on informal information I have acquired, perhaps in perfect innocence, I drop hints that enable others to damage this company, institution, or its officers. Suppose that such hints (or even outright statements) are perfectly legal. Still, by the high Torah standard of "do not place a stumbling block before the blind," I am guilty. I have helped others inflict damage, have misled them, have made them stumble.

Another example, from a different sphere:

Suppose I see a youngster who manifests an inclination to put on tefillin, to keep kosher or to observe any other ritual commandment of Torah. I see this, yet I discourage this youngster.

Overtly or covertly.

Directly or by body language.

I am guilty of "do not place a stumbling block before the blind."

JEWISH DECISION works through the generation and resolution of disputes. Over the past 150 years, a fascinating dispute has arisen concerning the reach of "do not place a stumbling block before the blind."

One Talmudic scholar of the pre-

vious generation, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kuk (1865-1935), could find no basis in Jewish law for limiting the reach of this ethical mandate. Accordingly, he doubted the conclusion of a certain "great man" who did severely limit it.

The unnamed "great man," I take it, was another Talmudic scholar, Rabbi Israel Salanter (1810-1883), for he reasoned that when it comes to traits of character — honor, humility, anger, for example — "do not place a stumbling block" does not apply. My present purview is not the reasoning behind Rabbi Israel's conclusion, only the conclusion itself. He taught:

Torah says I must shun honor. To expect more than G-d's honor for doing the right thing is unseemly. It is wrong. But this does not mean that I should refrain from honoring others. I must be humble, but not impose humility on others. To the contrary, I must honor other people in every way possible.

But, then, am I not guilty of "placing a stumbling block before the blind" — of facilitating others' search for honor? No, said Rabbi Israel, I am not. The stricture of "placing a stumbling block" does not apply to character traits.

More examples from Rabbi Israel:

It is a high ideal to live modestly — to do without. It is unseemly to place material above spiritual pursuits. But this does not mean that I should refrain from meeting other people's material needs. I must live modestly, but not impose my conditions on others. To the contrary, I must recoil at poverty and injustice, and do my best to set them right. To quote Rabbi Israel, I must "go into marketplaces and city streets to seek means to provide others with the very best."

Not just charity, but the very best.

Am I, then, guilty of "placing a

stumbling block before the blind" — of facilitating others' search for materialism? No, said Rabbi Israel, I am not. The stricture of "placing a stumbling block" does not apply to character traits.

A related, subtler twist: Sometimes it is necessary to be commanding, not humble. Sometimes, even anger is necessary to sustain my commanding presence. But if anger is all right for me, doesn't it become all right for others who see me angry? Am I not guilty of encouraging others — "placing a stumbling block before the blind"?

It depends.

Here, Rabbi Israel drew a distinction between *showing* anger and *being* angry. If I *show* anger when it is the only way to secure justifiable obedience or to instill justifiable respect, I act properly; but it is never proper to *be* angry. It takes wisdom to know when to — and training to know how to — *seem* angry, without letting the emotion of anger touch one's heart. Again: one approach to myself, an opposite one to others.

"HIDDEN DEPTHS of the Torah," wrote Rabbi Israel, define this subtle use of character traits, this psychological dexterity: being harmonious without recognition from others, while giving recognition to others; living without material wealth, while bestowing it on others — being one way in my needs, another way in others' needs.

Wait. Does G-d want schizophrenics?

Reb Yisrael:

Said the Holy One, Blessed be He: "Should I create man from the higher beings or from the lower beings? Behold, I shall create him from both."

So it is that man acquired the ability to transfigure himself. In relation to himself he can possess every crowning virtue, resembling the higher beings, separated from all worldly delight; in relation to others he can resemble the lower beings, feeling and knowing all worldly delight.

Man has the capacity for both inner harmony and its opposite, because that is the way the Holy One, Blessed be He, created him: with a soul, tying him to G-d's perfection; and with a body, tying him to humanity's needs.

This is not schizophrenia. Man can — and should — function normally with inner contrasts without feeling torn by them. To quote an American thinker:

A French philosopher said, "No man is strong unless he bears within his character anti-theses strongly marked." The strong man holds in a living blend strongly marked opposites. Not ordinarily do men achieve this balance of opposites. The idealistic are not usually realistic, and the realists are not usually idealistic. The militant are not generally known to be passive, nor the passive to be militant. Seldom are the humble self-assertive, or the self-assertive humble. But life at its best is a creative synthesis of opposites in fruitful harmony. The philosopher Hegel said that truth is found neither in the thesis nor the antithesis, but in an emergent synthesis which reconciles the two.

As Rabbi Israel explained, G-d marked man's character after his own. Man's ability to reconcile opposites is nothing less than evidence of his nature as a creature of G-d. G-d is One, yet manifests Himself dialectically, in both justice and mercy. Likewise, man can manifest himself dialectically. With his soul he can know the world of inner unity; with his body he can know the world of human needs. Man's capacity for "a thing and its opposite" is nothing more — nothing less — than evidence of Genesis' definition of the human soul, the *tzelem elokim* or "human-face Divine."



View FROM DENVER

Does G-d want schizophrenics?



Hillel Goldberg

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Photos must be quality black and white glossies (no Polaroids). Everyone in the photo must be identified. Include address for return of photos.

Yasir Arafat

'Shoot immigrants'

By HUGH ORGEL
Jewish Telegraphic Agency

TEL AVIV — A report that PLO leader Yasir Arafat has ordered his men to "open fire" on Jews immigrating to Israel has aroused anger here and renewed calls for direct flights of Jews from the Soviet Union.

Ma'ariv on Sunday cited a report

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in the Lebanese weekly Al-Muharrar that quoted instructions Arafat reportedly gave at a meeting in Baghdad with senior officers of Al Fatah, the largest and most moderate of the PLO's military factions.

'Today I give you instructions to use violence against the immigrants. I will jail whoever refuses to do this'

He threatened to jail anyone who failed to obey.

According to Al-Muharrar, Arafat declared, "I want to say clearly: Open fire on the new Jewish immigrants."

"I want you to shoot, on the ground or in the air, at every immigrant who

Please see ARAFAT on Page 23

42nd Israel Independence Day



Bill Saxon, the one martyr of the cause.

By CHRIS LEPPER
IJN Special Assignments

The old gunrunners left few traces behind them. Some of the buildings in which they used to stockpile lethal fire-arms, explosives and ammunition, all bound illegally for Israel, are still standing in Denver. Somewhere in the nearby Rocky Mountains there is still an old gold mine, long abandoned, which once served as a storehouse and staging point for weapons bound for a still unborn Jewish state anticipating a tough fight for existence.

But the runners themselves, who remained a cautious bunch even after the statute of limitations ran out some two decades ago, never spoke very much about their highly clandestine activities during the historic period of 1946-49. They seldom spoke of those things even amongst themselves, and they never bragged. Today, all but five of them have died.

Sam Sterling and Bernard Springer, two of those five, agree that it's time the story was finally told in some detail. Other than a brief

They amassed half a million percussion caps, hundreds of rifles, boxes of ammunition — even a bomber aircraft!

article in the Intermountain Jewish News by the late Max Goldberg and a few paragraphs in Leonard Slater's 1970 book *The Pledge*, the story of the invisible Denver arm of Israel's Haganah has remained largely untold. That's unfortunate because, even though the men Slater admiringly called the "Rocky Mountain Lavender Hill Mob" preferred their anonymity, their story is a remarkable, even heroic, one.

"All we wanted to do was help," Springer told the IJN in a recent interview. "That's all."

That's a bit of an understatement. In a period less than three years in duration, a core group of 10 or so Denver Jewish men, assisted by a handful of sympathetic gentiles —

The Rocky Mountain Lavender Hill Mob

First time the story is told



The late Nathan Gart facilitated the purchase of gunpowder by suggesting the formation of multiple gun clubs.

Yom Hazikaron — the price Israel pays

By HUGH ORGEL
Jewish Telegraphic Agency

TEL AVIV — The wail of sirens ushered in Yom Hazikaron, the 24-hour Remembrance Day when Israel memorializes its war dead.

The ritual hasn't varied much since 1948, but the numbers keep growing. This year, Israelis have 16,951 fallen soldiers to mourn.

The observance began at 9:30 pm last Saturday, later than usual to accommodate Sabbath observers.

A memorial flame was kindled at the Western Wall, where the national flag flew at half-mast. An honor guard changed hourly during the night and all day Sunday.

President Chaim Herzog, who officiated, referred obliquely to the current sharp polarization in Israel, when he observed, "In the military cemeteries, divisions are silenced, there are no disputes, the victims are all equal."

"And this calls for our unity, brotherhood, tolerance, magnanimity and benevolence," he added.

On Sunday, families gathered at the 40 military cemeteries and at war memorials around the country.

The law forbids places of entertainment to be open, including



Throughout Israel, all traffic and all other activities came to a halt for two minutes in memory of Israel's fallen heroes.

restaurants, cafes and movie houses. The ban was enforced by beefed-up police patrols in Tel Aviv.

In Jerusalem, the police were more lenient. Cafes and restaurants were allowed to stay open, as long as they played no music or offered any entertainment.

Sirens sounded again at 11 am Sunday, signaling the start of official memorial services at the military cemetery on Mount Herzl and others around the country.

There are two war cemeteries in Druse villages, where 211 Druse soldiers, killed while serving in the Israel Defense Force, are buried.

Speaking at Mount Herzl, Yitzhak Shamir, who is acting prime minister and acting defense minister, expressed condolences to the bereaved and the nation's gratitude to the fallen.

"To our great sorrow, a homeland is bought with blood, and independence is achieved and protected by the struggle with an enemy who has not yet come to terms with our existence," he said.

"Those who have fallen in Israel's wars and in the line of duty have willed us to live, shown us the one path, and that is to move forward, to continue to strengthen the country," Shamir said.

Jewish teenagers celebrate rebirth

By CATHRINE GERSON
Jewish Telegraphic Agency

JERUSALEM — The same 3,000 Jewish teen-agers who re-enacted a death march from Auschwitz to Birkenau a week ago gave new life to an Israeli hilltop last Sunday, planting the "March of Living Forest" near Jerusalem.

The teen-agers, from 36 nations around the globe, spread over a hill near Moshav Neveh Ilan, their costumes painting the area blue and white.

Clasping a sapling with one hand and a friend with the other, they stood in silence for two minutes while sirens wailed all over the country, calling a halt to all activity at 11 am,

in honor of Israel's fallen soldiers.

The significance of the ceremony was not lost on the youth fresh from the gray Jewish past of Poland to the vivid present of Israel.

The vast difference between the two worlds was further underlined for them by the chairman of the Jewish National Fund of Israel, Moshe Rivlin. He told the teen-agers about the changes since Israel's independence in 1948.

He mentioned, for one thing, that 42 years ago, Jerusalem was cut off from the rest of the country. There was only a single road to Jerusalem, under fire by the enemy, who made it "a road full of death."

"But now," Rivlin said, "there are 11 roads leading to Jerusalem, the

road of life."

Talking to the youths during the ceremony, it was clear that their experiences of the last 10 days left a strong impression.

Although they studied the Holocaust before leaving for Poland, their journey has given them much more than would have been possible from only reading books.

Just before planting his sapling, Scott Schneider, 18, from Harrisburg, Pa., said he joined the "March of Living" to "experience the death of our people back in

Poland and experience the life of the people in Israel."

He said he wanted to learn more about the Holocaust, to understand why it happened and what had happened.

Although this visit to Israel is not his first, he said he experienced something different this time.

"I was really excited that when I got off the plane here in Israel, I kissed the ground," Schneider said. "The feeling of life here is just amazing."

Another participant, 16-year-old

Leora Salzhauer from Orangeburg, NY, said her experiences over the last two weeks have made her decide she wants to live in Israel.

"I joined the 'March of Living' because I thought it would be a wonderful experience," she said. "I wanted to learn more about the Jewish fate during the Holocaust, to know how important it is that we Jews stick together."

Salzhauer said that coming from Poland to Israel was "absolutely amazing" and that she now feels and knows that "Israel is the most beautiful place in the world."

Congress affirms Jerusalem

By HOWARD ROSENBERG
Jewish Telegraphic Agency

WASHINGTON — The House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a non-binding resolution declaring that "Jerusalem is and should remain the capital of the State of Israel."

The 378-34 vote came despite a threat from a little-known Palestinian terrorist group in Beirut, which announced it would kill Americans unless the Senate rescinded within 10 days an identical resolution it adopted a month ago.

The resolutions were initiated by Sen. Daniel Moynihan and Rep. Eliot Engel, both New York Democrats.

While American presidents have objected to Jewish settlements in the West Bank, only Bush has raised questions about Jews living in parts of Jerusalem, which Israel considers to be its indivisible capital.

The Bush administration, like prior ones, has not recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and believes the city's final status should be decided through negotiations, though it opposes redrawing of the city. It did not lobby against the resolution.

Thomas Dine, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, said he was "delighted" with the vote by House members, saying they "affirmed

their commitment to Jerusalem as Israel's capital."

Rep. David Obey (D-WI.), who voted against the resolution, argued that Congress did not have to respond "collectively" to what he called Bush's "misstatements."

Obey, who is chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over foreign aid, said he would have preferred to have members of Congress respond individually to Bush's statement.

"I happen to personally believe Jerusalem will remain the capital of Israel, and that Jerusalem should and will remain undivided. Everybody knows that," he said.

**HAPPY
42nd
BIRTHDAY
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From the Students, Faculty and Parents of
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42nd ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE

Survivors of St. Louis offer support

By ELENA NEUMAN
Jewish Telegraphic Agency

NEW YORK — Fifty-one years after they were denied entry into the US and turned back to Europe, survivors of the St. Louis gathered to offer their moral support to Soviet Jews now seeking refuge.

Susan Schleger, Dr. Hans Fisher and Liane Reif-Lehrer held a small rally at the Isaiah Wall opposite the UN to warn that American failure to support Israel could leave Soviet Jews to a similar fate they themselves suffered in 1939.

"We were not wanted. We were abandoned by the world," said Schleger, a 68-year-old survivor now residing in New York. "We must now try our utmost to get the Soviet Jews out. It's not fair to ask the Russians to let the Jews out and then not to do anything about it."

The gray and threatening sky did not diminish the symbolic impact of the setting. The survivors stood beneath a prayer shawl rescued from the Holocaust with the prophet Isaiah's famous words etched into the wall in the background: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

On what is now called "the Voyage of the Damned," the St. Louis embarked from Hamburg in May 1939, with a human cargo of 1,128 Jews fleeing Nazi Germany. Bound originally for Cuba, the ill-fated ship was denied entry into any port on this side of the Atlantic, including a US port in Miami.

With no place to land, the ship was forced back to Europe, where the passengers were received according to an international agreement signed by England, Holland, Belgium and France.

After most of Europe, with the exception of England, was overrun by the Nazis, few of those refugees survived the war years.

The 75 who did survive met last year in Miami for their 50th reunion. Only then did some of them decide to become vocal on behalf of the Soviet

Jews now fleeing rising popular anti-Semitism in their homeland.

"I spent a lot of my life trying to forget about all this," said Reif-Lehrer, a scientist from Boston, who was a small child at the time of the voyage. She is now writing a book about her and other St. Louis survivors' stories.

"It's hard to compare" the flight from Nazi Germany and the Soviet exodus now taking place, she said. "But I feel that where people are being hassled or persecuted, Jews or otherwise, they need to be given a haven."

"As open and violent anti-Semitism begins to reappear in parts of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," said Fisher, a professor at Rutgers University, "Israel becomes the only haven for hundreds of thousands of Jews."

The three urged Jews and non-Jews alike to participate in the Salute to Israel parade to take place in New York on May 13.

According to Rabbi Joseph Sternstein, chairman of the American Zionist Youth Foundation, which is sponsoring the parade, AZYF thought that the St. Louis survivors

would be a strong reminder to American Jews of what could happen to Soviet Jewry if they fail to support Israel and Israeli resettlement of Soviet Jews.

"This is a stark symbol of the historic contrast of the world in which we live today, in which the State of Israel exists as a national homeland for Jews, and 1939, when it didn't," he said.

"That Israel is now under political pressures from all sides, not excluding our national administration, indicates the importance of this public demonstration of Jews as

reflective of their support for the State of Israel," he said.

New York City Councilman Robert Dryfoos said it is "morally egregious and politically wrong" that the US put a lid on Soviet Jewish immigration here when it decided last fall to set the annual quota at 50,000.

"The Statue of Liberty means something," he said. "In light of the tremendous anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, America must prepare its shores, so that we are not damned again as we were in 1939. We are on notice."



WZPS photo by Sammy Avnisan

Just as the Exodus, shown here as a model, unsuccessfully attempted to ferry 4500 Holocaust survivors to Palestine, the St. Louis was unsuccessful in gaining entry to the US and few of the passengers survived the Holocaust.

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WZPS Photo by Douglas Guthrie

Denver's heroes of 1948



The late Morris E. Adelstein



Sam Sterling



Harry Pells

MOB from Page 1

white-collar professionals and businessmen for the most part — managed to amass more than a ton of gunpowder, half a million percussion caps, hundreds of rifles and pistols, boxes upon boxes of ammunition, field radios, various weapons-related machinery — even a bomber aircraft! This unofficial arsenal was painstakingly, often illegally acquired, carefully hidden and stored, and through various ingenious means, successfully shipped to Israel.

In the tense months before Israel's declaration of independence, the underground Jewish army known as the Haganah was correctly assuming that a fledgling Jewish state would soon have to face the hostile armies of the Arab League. It wanted and needed arms and war materials so badly that it set up and financed an extensive arms procurement network across the US, and

elsewhere, in order to gain the physical means of self-defense and survival.

Underground cells of American Jews were organized by the Haganah into four major regions. Groups

favor during the War of Independence.

Today, Bernard Springer is semi-retired from a long and successful career in the life

Veterans Post 342, including Denver attorney Sam Sterling, the group's leader and initial Haganah contact.

"Sam Sterling, he was the key man," Springer says. "He started the thing. He tapped me and the rest

back in Denver by 1946 after being hospitalized for a frostbite injury to his legs and had yet to re-establish his law practice here.

Sterling's involvement with the Haganah really began at an Allied Jewish Council (forerunner of the Allied Jewish Federation) meeting in 1946. "When I got up to make my pledge," he recalls, "I said, 'I will give \$250 and a case of rifles to be sent to Palestine.'" The comment was made half in jest, Sterling says.

But Rabbi Herbert Friedman, then of Temple Emanuel, was at the same meeting, and he took Sterling's comment seriously. "The day after the meeting, Herb called me. I knew him well enough to talk quite freely. He asked whether I would like a chance to try some log-rolling. I asked him what he meant. He said they needed someone who was willing to go out and put themselves on a rolling log, with a good chance of falling off."

Rabbi Friedman later explained that he was talking about gunrunning for the Haganah, describing to Sterling the sorts of munitions and supplies the Haganah was requesting.

Sterling said yes and a few months later, after Rabbi Friedman had taken a position with the United Jewish Appeal in New York, he called Sterling to offer him the leadership of the Haganah's Rocky Mountain region for arms procurement. When he accepted the post, Sterling was quietly given a major's commission in the Haganah.

Sterling chose primarily Jewish war veterans like himself as his recruits, enlisting insurance men Springer, Sidney Golden and Harry Pells; businessmen Morris Adelshtein, Bilik Saxon and Joseph Pepper; clothier Bernard Golden; florist Michael Jultak; and attorneys Sam Weinstein and Ben Girsh.

Another attorney, Irving Oxman, was commander of JWV Post 342 when the Haganah activity began in Denver and although sometimes listed as an active participant, says he kept himself at a distance from most of it. "I think there were very few people who really knew what they were doing," Oxman says. "I had the type of involvement where I knew what was going on but I didn't know any of the details of it. It was all kept pretty much on the Q.T."

"When I got to make my pledge, I said, '\$250 — and a case of rifles to Palestine.' The comment was half in jest, but Temple Emanuel's Rabbi Herbert Friedman took it seriously"

similar to Denver's operated in a host of American cities during this critical period, most of them managing small miracles in smuggling various arms and materials into Israel. Historians agree that the efforts of these loosely-connected and highly secretive cadres may well have tipped the balance in Israel's

insurance business. A New York native, he has lived in Colorado since WWII when, as a Military Policeman, he saw duty in Denver and at regional prisoner-of-war camps. Most of those involved in the Denver arms network were, in fact, recent military veterans of WWII, active members of Denver's Jewish War

of the guys."

Sterling also resides in Denver, and is still listed as being of counsel to his law firm, but he considers himself retired. A Denver native, he served as a reserve officer in the US Cavalry from 1923-40; and in the Air Corps, as an inspector general on stateside duty, during WWII. He was

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on Israel's 42nd anniversary

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42nd ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE

Of this basic core group who knew of or participated in Haganah activity in Denver, Sterling, Oxman, Weinstein, Pells and Springer are alive today.

In the late 40s they were, for the most part, a group of young men fresh out of uniform, newly married with young families, just getting started in their careers. Yet, at Sterling's request, they were ready and willing to commit a handful of rather serious federal offenses.

Sam Weinstein, who still practices law in Denver, acknowledges that some of their activities were illegal — "if you could call it that" — but says he never felt their offenses to be morally wrong. "I wouldn't have participated," Weinstein says, "if I didn't feel it was warranted at the time."

While Springer would undoubtedly agree as to the work being warranted, he has no illusions about much of its legality.

"Well sir," he says in a tone of unrepentant confession, "I was carrying a gun, which was against the law. We were gunrunning, which was against the law. We were buying more ammunition, gunpowder, rifles and pistols than we were allowed to, and we were shipping it, which was against the law. A lot of things!" Springer says he never asked what the penalties for these offenses might be. He didn't really want to know.

That wasn't a luxury that Sterling, as an attorney, felt he could afford to enjoy.

"I thought about it," Sterling says with a smile. "I thought about it a lot. I figured that if I were arrested, I would have had to plead guilty because it was an *ipso pro facto* case — we had everything right there."

However, based on the fate of his colleague, the late Hank Greenspan, who ran the Haganah's Pacific region out of Las Vegas, Sterling doesn't think the penalties would have been that stiff. After pleading guilty of gunrunning, Greenspan was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and gained early release with a pardon from Harry Truman. Still, Sterling was careful not to implicate any more Denver men in the operation than was absolutely necessary.

"The fewer people who knew about all this," he says, "the better."

Their reasons for taking such risks were direct and simple enough. For Sterling, the clandestine work was a tonic which helped him recover from his Army injuries, and gave him meaningful work at a time when nothing much else was going on for him. "And I was 40 at the time," he says. "I thought maybe this might be my last chance for a fling in life. I also found it very satisfying, very attractive, because of what it was doing and because I wanted to do what I could to help create a state."

"It was my opportunity to help," Springer says. "Here was something I could do for Israel. It was a new, fledgling country and already there

was a war going on. I had enough of that during the war. I had enough of that during the Holocaust."

Although Springer's WWII service was far away from the Holocaust itself, one of his Army duties was policing a Colorado mountain POW camp reserved for Nazi SS troops, a group of prisoners he describes as "the worst there is — animals, every

recalls, "and I never saw so much cash in my life."

In fact, Sterling had set up a business based in Boulder, incorporating it as a mining concern, a distinction which allowed the firm to purchase certain explosives and other controlled materials. Haganah monies were funneled through this firm's checking account and then

gunpowder, carbines, .45s, .38s, Springfield rifles and ammunition so desperately needed by Israel. Sterling usually took care of acquisition on a regional basis.

Much of it was gathered on a host of rather unusual weekend jaunts. In his brown sedan, "a big old Plymouth," Sterling ranged as far from Denver as Las Vegas, El Paso

Sterling admits that "I made sure to drive with extreme caution."

One sporting goods dealer in Durango regularly sent cans of powder to Sterling in Denver, cleverly concealing them in bushel baskets of Western Slope peaches. "We had peaches coming out of our ears for awhile," Sterling says.

Springer was usually in charge of



Palmach jeeps at December 1948 opening ceremony of the Road of Valor (Kvish Hagvura) which circumvented Arab positions and enabled supplies to reach beleaguered Jerusalem from Tel Aviv.

'It was my opportunity to help. Here was something I could do for Israel. It was a new country and already there was a war. I had enough of that during WWII. I had enough of that during the Holocaust.'

one of them."

"I was angry," he says. "I figured this was one way to get back, one way to help. I feel like I became part of history itself, that I helped create a country. It wasn't shooting or fighting, but I was doing what had to be done."

Acquisition, of course, was priority one. Money for the war materials was provided to Sterling through Haganah contacts. All transactions, naturally, were done strictly with cash. "Everything was cash," Springer

transformed by Sterling into usable cash. "Money was no object," Sterling recalls. "Whatever we wanted to get, we could get the money for it."

The Haganah, through occasional nocturnal meetings with Sterling or telephone calls, made quite explicit requests for materials. Sterling was also regularly in touch with Teddy Kollek, present-day mayor of Jerusalem, who was then in charge of Haganah purchasing in New York and kept an office above the famed Copacabana Club.

The Denver group used a number of approaches to acquire the TNT,

and Pueblo, scouring sporting goods stores and sundry other sources. He'd fill the Plymouth's trunk and backseat floorboard with several hundred pounds of powder and cruise back to Denver.

"What I did in order to make it as inconspicuous as possible," Sterling says, "was to take Mildred and the two boys along — I think they were 14 and 10 at the time. The boys would sit in the backseat and we'd put the cans of powder or whatever on the floor beneath them." Even though these trips weren't really as dangerous as they might sound,

procurement in Denver, making the rounds of local sporting goods dealers and pawnbrokers, looking for the same sorts of munitions. He purchased many weapons, he says, from pawnbrokers on Denver's Larimer Street, but never discussed their destination. The proprietors, however, many of whom were Jewish, seemed to sense the reason for the purchases.

"It was all surplus," Springer says. "It was 1948, what the hell, the stuff was all over the place. There

Please see MOB on Page 6

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**OPERATION
EXODUS**

Denver's heroes of 1948

MOB from Page 5

was one guy who wanted a stiff, fat profit, but the rest of the Larimer Street guys were just great. Whatever we wanted, they bent over backwards and got it. They had it in

Denver sporting goods merchant. "One of the nicest guys in town was the late Nate Gart," he says. "I'm grateful to him to this day. You could only buy so much gunpowder at a time, for a group. So I went in to Gart's the first time and told him

fishing clubs, rifle clubs, collector's clubs. All phony. You had to sign for this so I signed left-handed. I was president of a dozen clubs in three or four minutes!"

The material was stored temporarily in various locations — an

'Suddenly, in two or three minutes, there were two dozen gun clubs, gun and fishing clubs, rifle clubs, collector's clubs. All phony . . . so I signed left-handed.'

stock and if they ran out, they went and got more. Most of the guys took the profit and dropped it to a point where it was almost trade. We didn't tell them what was going on, but I think they knew up to a point."

Much of the explosive material, Springer says, came from Nate Gart, the

what I'd like to buy. He said, 'Come on, let's have a chat. What are you going to do with it?' I said, 'I can't tell you.' He said, 'Okay, you can only buy so much, but there's a way to do it.'

"And suddenly," Springer continues, "in two or three minutes, there were established two dozen or so gun clubs, shooting clubs, gun and

Alameda Ave. warehouse owned by Sterling's father-in-law or Springer's West Side garage. Once Sterling and Springer had amassed a sizable cache, the packing process would begin, which was where most of the others participated. At irregular times, the group would gather at various warehouses or vacant buildings or in an apartment building owned by Sterling at 1210 Harrison St. in East Denver, carrying their deadly cargo in golf bags and boxes marked "Books."

"I seem to recall an empty building or a factory on the West Side," Weinstein says. "It was what you could call a packaging area."

At Sterling's apartment building, they would gather in a basement workshop, where a number of empty oil drums would have been collected, and very carefully begin to pack the munitions.

First, to stabilize the contents, a layer of plaster of paris would be poured into the drum, followed by a layer of newspaper, the contraband cargo itself, more newspaper, another layer of plaster of paris and then a few inches of oil. The idea was to make the barrel weigh roughly the same as a full barrel of oil. To further mislead any curious customs inspectors, the group marked the drums with such routine, but technically honest, terms as "Parts" or "Machinery." Once, when they shipped a disassembled field radio, they semi-truthfully labeled the barrel "Musical Equipment."

The whole process was handled quietly and with extreme caution. No matches, cigarettes or pipes were even allowed on their persons while the packing was taking place. "If anything had happened down there," Springer says with a grimace, "all they would have found was dust. The place was dangerous."

For that very reason, as soon as several barrels had been packed at Sterling's place, they would be driven via truck to the warehouses for temporary storage. After a certain quantity had been collected there, some would be shipped directly from these sites. Others would be moved to an inactive gold mine near the old town of Gold Hill in Boulder County. The owner of the mine (the precise location of which is still being kept secret) not only knew what was being stored there but helped with the storage and shipping himself. In fact, even the Boulder County sheriff knew of the hidden horde, Sterling says, and allowed the storage to proceed uninterrupted. In this rustic and quiet retreat the barrels would be stored until a large truckload had been gathered.

And then came shipping day. "Our job was to go downtown," Springer recalls. "In those days, on Larimer St., you used to have what was called — and I hate to say it — the 'Slave Market' — poor guys who needed work. I used to pick



Sam Weinstein



The late Mike Jultak



Irving Oxman

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42nd ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE

Denver's heroes of 1948



The late Joseph W. Pepper



The late Bernard Golden



The late Ben Girsch



The late Sidney Golden

MOB from Page 6

up five at a time, all strong, young-looking guys."

The workers were offered \$15 for a day's labor, but only if they did not ask the nature of the work beforehand. Springer would drive them up to the mine in his Ford, stopping along the way to say only that their work that day was to be kept absolutely secret. He kept a large pistol in a shoulder holster, and displayed it to the workers as a not-so-subtle hint as to the consequences of their saying anything. They were told only that they'd be moving heavy containers and that the contents were very, very fragile, and would have to be handled with the utmost care.

The Denver group mobilized these temporary work crews a total of four or five times, using totally different men each time. "And never, ever, did any one of those guys talk about it," Springer says.

They loaded the barrels onto a semi-trailer owned by a Denver man of Irish origin, an employee of Bilik Saxon who owned the mine himself. "He detested the British with a passion," Springer says, "and had an affinity for Jews and the state of Israel. He equated Israel with Ireland and he wanted in so badly he could taste it."

To keep things vague in front of the workers, Springer and the Irishman called each other by the same name — Joshua. The license plates, PUC numbers and other identification on the truck were covered during the loading and once Springer headed back to Denver with the workers, the coverings would come off. The Irishman insisted on paying for the gasoline himself.

"I think the truck went to Omaha," Springer says. "From there it went on an airplane to New York. But once it left here, we didn't want to know where it was going next. We only knew what we were doing here."

In fact, the loose organization and compartmentalization of much of this activity has resulted in the fact that, even today, participants sometimes express ignorance of each other's activities. For example, even the Denver men helping Sterling often didn't know of other operations he was conducting independently. But Sterling was indeed a busy man.

Through the aid of a Denver "junk dealer," Sterling managed to purchase a bullet loading machine from Remington's old armament plant on 6th Avenue. The entire apparatus was painstakingly dismantled, packed in drums marked "Agricultural Equipment" and sent to awaiting Haganah troops in Palestine.

On one occasion, Sterling travelled to Dallas after receiving word that a wealthy Jew there desired to do something on Israel's behalf.

Sterling suggested the man come up with \$100,000 to purchase a surplus B-29 bomber which he knew to be available. After a moment's hesita-

discussions never took place. Their car missed a curve near Hot Springs, NM and Saxon, along with Barash, perished in the ensuing crash.

By early 1950, with Israel an established political reality and the war for its independence won, the "Rocky Moun-

"It was the glory days," Springer says, "and I loved every minute of it. I'd do it again at the drop of a hat." Sterling says simply: "I feel as if I did the right thing."

Sterling would receive a book signed by David Ben Gurion and on later trips to Israel would be re-introduced by Teddy Kollek to some of the former Haganah officers he'd met during secret Denver meetings. For awhile, he worked with Israel's "Land and Labor Movement," encouraging specialists in needed fields to make the move to Israel.

Springer and other members of the group were eventually to receive — with appropriate anonymity and lack of fanfare — a large plate made in Israel. Accompanying it was a little card, unsigned, with a message eloquent in its simplicity.

"Thank you" was all it said.

'It was the glory days, and I loved every minute of it. I'd do it again at the drop of a hat.' 'I feel as if I did the right thing.'

tion the man agreed, and within weeks a valuable B-29 was winging its way to Palestine via Mexico and the Canary Islands.

Sterling recalls that the deal was struck at the wedding reception of the Dallas man's daughter. "He said, 'Consider this my wedding present to Israel,'" Sterling says.

And for six months, the group's Colorado mine was home to a huge store of US government TNT, a quarter of a million pounds of it, which the Haganah had somehow managed to purchase. Sterling tried for months to find a Mexican national to help him incorporate a subsidiary of his Boulder firm so that the incredible cache could be shipped out of Veracruz. He found no willing partners among the nervous Mexican Jewish community, however, and the Boulder sheriff was growing increasingly nervous about the TNT's volatility. "He said, 'Sam you know if this stuff goes up it'll blow up half of Denver, not to mention Boulder,'" Sterling recalls.

At last, Sterling was forced to sell the TNT to a munitions manufacturer in Baltimore, and hired a small fleet of truck drivers to transport the material back east, instructing them not to mark their trucks with the usual explosives warning. Even after paying the truckers double rate for the haul, however, Sterling compensated for the loss of the TNT by handing the Haganah a tidy \$11,000 profit on the deal.

Throughout the entire history of the Denver operation, both Sterling and Springer say, not once was there a serious threat to its security. Their caution and care paid off handsomely.

But there was one tragic price. Just after New Year's Day in 1950, when these covert activities were virtually completed, Bilik Saxon, one of the Denver group, was driving to Texas to visit the Army post at Ft. Bliss. Accompanying him were Ike Barash and Manny Feder, Denver businessmen whose ties to the Haganah remain unclear. Saxon, a military surplus dealer, was to pursue the chance that machine guns might be available from certain Army personnel at Ft. Bliss, but these

"Bilik actually gave his life working for this program," Sterling says quietly. "He died there, but he died while . . ."

The memory still brings tears to Sterling's eyes.

tain Lavender Hill Mob" quietly ceased to exist. The strange combination of lawyers, guns and money went back to jobs, families and more genteel means of supporting Israel. They haven't forgotten, however.

**We salute the
42nd Anniversary
of the
Re-establishment
of the
State of Israel**

"For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up."

Jeremiah 24:6

Faith Bible Chapel

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Pastor George and Cheryl Morrison

Faith Bible Chapel Southwest
Pastor Russ and Lana Frase

Faith Bible Chapel North
Pastor Rob and Iona Morrison

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42nd ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE

Electoral reform high in demand

By GIL SEDAN and HUGH ORGEL
Jewish Telegraphic Agency

JERUSALEM — Petitions bearing the signatures of half a million Israelis demanding reform of the electoral system were delivered to President Chaim Herzog on Monday, as Israel marked the 42nd anniversary of its independence.

Indicative of a swiftly growing grass-roots movement, the petitions were brought to the doors of the president's official residence here in cars, pickup trucks and other vehicles.

They were carried into the reception room in all manner of boxes, parcels and envelopes, to be deposited before a chief of state who is himself firmly committed to the principle of reform.

Herzog, in fact, devoted much of his televised Independence Day address to the subject.

"The political process as it unfolds before us has become unacceptable in the eyes of many," the president said, in a clear allusion to the efforts by both major parties to establish governing coalitions.

He spoke of mounting public disgust with the spectacle of back-room bargaining, deal-making and outright political bribery that have characterized those efforts on both sides since the Likud-Labor unity government was toppled March 15.

to the size of their vote.

The system has effectively prevented either of the major parties from winning a governing majority, thereby placing disproportionate bargaining power in the hands of small factions.

Some reformers want Herzog to appoint a presidential commission to devise an alternative system. Others want the Knesset to name the experts. At the same time, there are signs of mounting distrust of all politicians.

As Herzog noted in his address, there have been calls for electoral reform since the era of David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, who warned of a "catastrophe" unless officeholders were made directly accountable to the voters.

What seems to have captured the public imagination and media attention this time around is the current political vacuum and the activism of a group of Israel Defense Force combat veterans.

It began last month, when IDF reserve Lt. Col. Avi Kadish and two fellow reserve officers began a month long hunger strike outside the Knesset building. They were soon joined by other IDF reservists, including Maj. Eliad Shraga, who staged his own hunger strike outside the president's residence.

Then, on April 7, over 100,000 Israelis gathered outside Tel Aviv City Hall in a massive demonstration for reform.

Kadish wants the Knesset to pass a law authorizing the president to appoint a commission for electoral reform. "We are no experts. We want to force the Knesset members to appoint the experts, who will come up with the solution," he said Monday.

But Shraga, a 30-year-old former commando, does not trust the politicians. He has only one word for them: "nimastem," meaning "We are fed up with you." Already it has become the watchword of the reform movement.

"You cannot fight the establishment and be part of it at the same time," he said. "This is semi-guerrilla warfare."

Sharaga insists no real progress toward reform can be made unless deadlines are set by law for completion of the deliberations of a presidential commission on reform, the Knesset's debate and vote on the options, and elections under a new system.

Otherwise, the old system "could survive for decades," he warned.



President Herzog

"There has almost never been so overwhelming a public protest. The citizen who has the democratic right to choose his representatives freely cannot react calmly when political machinations make an absolute mockery of the principles of democracy and lead to distortions unworthy of a free society," Herzog declared.

Nevertheless, the president, whose office is non-political but prestigious and influential, has been careful not to lean toward any specific plan for reform. He stressed only that all movements toward that goal should follow democratic guidelines.

Herzog is aware that plans abound and that while the reformers may agree in principle on the need to change the system, differences prevail among them as to how.

Under the present system, voters cast ballots for party lists, which are awarded Knesset seats in proportion

ONE PEOPLE, ONE DESTINY



42ND ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN JEW

A UNIQUE STATE OF CELEBRATION

SUNDAY

MAY 6, 1990

10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

9:30 a.m. "Destiny Walk"

1st Lady Bea Romer will "Kick-Off" walk
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

ENTERTAINMENT

Indoor Shwayder Theater

11:30 a.m. Apples and Honey
12:30 p.m. Music International
1:30 p.m. Klezmer V'Od
2:30 p.m. Shir Ami Singers

Outdoor Stage

10:15 a.m. Klezmer V'Od
12:00 p.m. International Singers and Dancers
1:00 p.m. Shilohim Dancers
2:00 p.m. Music International

Performers including mimes, clowns, jugglers, belly dancers and musicians throughout the celebration...

Informal Israeli Dance instruction led by Zahava Koll throughout the day.

NOSHES

Falafel, hot dogs, bagels, ice cream and desserts are just some of the delicious foods for sale to tempt your taste buds.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS' EXHIBITS

Community organizations will exhibit information on how Jews from other nations present and keep the tradition of their Jewish identity in Israel.

ISRAELI SHUK (Market Place)

Shop for jewelry, clothes, art work and other exciting treasures.

JUDAIC ART SHOW

The 4th Annual Judaic Art Show with works by many artists in a variety of media is sure to be a delightful visual feast.

PRESCHOOL AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

- 11:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. Puppet Show performances by the Beth Joseph Torah Puppet Theatre
- 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Emet O Chova (Truth or Dare) — musical presentation
- Ongoing Israeli films
- Informal Israeli dance instruction, PLUS carnival booths, activity booths, rides and more!

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East

Aurora Newsland, Iliff & Chambers; East Side Kosher Deli, Inc. 5600 E. Cedar Ave.; Hummel's Delicatessen in Cherry Creek; Jewish Community Center, 4800 E. Alameda; Rose Medical Center Gift Shop; Tattered Cover Bookstore, 2955 E. 1st Ave.; The General Store, 2600 E. Colfax.

South (of Alameda)

A Taste of Europe, 760 S. Colorado Blvd., Unit H; Bagel Store, 942 S. Monaco; Boutique Judaica, 5078 E. Hampden; Jacob's Bagelry, 290 S. Downing; New York Deli News, 7105 E. Hampden; Star Market, 2377 E. Evans Ave.; The Drugstore, 930 S. Monaco; Yarbrow's Drug, University Hills Mall.

West

B & J Utica Grocery, 4500 W. Colfax; Steinberg's (Kosher) Grocery, 4017 W. Colfax; Tobin's Pharmacy, 4100 W. Colfax.

Downtown

City and County Bldg., First Floor; Denver Press Club, 1336 Glenarm Place; Jacob's Bagelry, 1312 - 17th St.; Johnny's Newstand, 1555 Champa, Lower Level, 16th St. Mall; News Gallery, 200 E. 13th Ave.

Boulder

Eads News & Smoke Shop, 1715 28th St.

Westminster

Westminster Newstand, 5088 W. 92nd Ave.

Albuquerque, NM

The Kosher Food Store, 1619 San Pedro, NE.

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