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East German mission, 1989.

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A LIVING
MEMORIAL
TO THE
HOLOCAUST

MUSEUM
OF
JEWISH
HERITAGE

November 3, 1988

David Altshuler
Director

Rabbi Philip Hiat
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Phil:

Thank you once more for meeting with us and sharing the news of your trip to Europe and your contacts made on our behalf in East Germany. Your value to us as an ambassador of goodwill and scholar is inestimable. For that reason I want you to focus on those aspects of any transactions involving potential acquisitions of artifacts for our collections. Because our board and legal counsel insist that we bend over backwards regarding various technicalities of acquisition I thought it would be helpful to inform you of some of the guidelines and strictures we must operate under as a museum.

For example:

1. The Museum of Jewish Heritage is liable and responsible for all artifacts that enter our possession.
2. Due to the strict laws enforced by Eastern bloc countries regarding the export of items and in accordance with stringent customs procedures for museums in the United States, we cannot simply accept items that are mailed to our premises. Certain procedures must be followed prior to accepting any objects. It is also impossible for the Museum to return items that are not acceptable for the collection without proper international customs paperwork.
3. Prior to the Museum accepting any objects into its collection the following information must be received, in writing:
 - a. Donor name
 - b. Description of item(s)
 - c. Valuation, if available
 - d. Provenance, who currently owns the object? How did it come into his/her possession?

I think it would be best if we could consolidate all this information prior to shipment. For insurance purposes we need to arrange for proper and safe transport of all donations to the Museum. The most sensible process would be for you to work directly with our Acquisitions Coordinator, Deborah Wolff. Ms. Wolff has had a great deal of experience in international shipping as well as with the customs procedures of Eastern bloc countries. If you keep Debbie fully informed she will be most helpful to you in this area.

One last item, all purchases for the Museum must first be cleared with the Board. If you are offered an object for purchase please provide us with all the aforementioned information as well as the purchase price. This information can then be passed on for approval.

I want to do everything possible to facilitate the very important work you are doing on behalf of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, however you must understand our need to adhere to the these guidelines.

Best wishes for a safe trip.

Warm regards,



David Altshuler

DA:mb

FOX, ROTHSCHILD,
O'BRIEN &
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February 8, 1989

TO: Stanley Dreyfus
Phil Hiat
Bob Kopell
Matt Ross
Marvin Rumpler

FROM: Horace A. Stern

Please substitute the enclosed pages for the comparable ones in the East German Mission diary that I gave you at the Executive Committee meeting in New York. They should correct several incorrect statements of fact in the original version.

Any comments that any of you have would be very much appreciated.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1988

Promptly at 1:00 P. M., the private car which Joan and I had ordered on the recommendation of friends, arrived at our door, and we were soon on our way to JFK Airport in New York. The trip over was uneventful, although the traffic at the tail end of the drive was quite slow, partly, I think, because of the effect of the New York Marathon, which was taking place that day. Nevertheless, we arrived at JFK ahead of our scheduled meeting time of 3:30 P. M. The first news that greeted us when we arrived was that Rabbi Alexander Schindler the President of the U.A.H.C., who had last been in Germany as an American serviceman in World War II, and who was to lead the mission and play an important role in everything we were to do in Germany, would not be going with us. He had been taken ill a day or two earlier and was, at that very moment, on his way to New York's University Hospital where, as we learned while we were in Germany, he was diagnosed as having a kidney infection. That put an immediate damper on the first day, because we knew how much Alex had been looking forward to the trip, albeit with mixed feelings about going back to Germany (his birthplace), and because we knew that his non-participation would take away a very important element from the events that were to follow.

By 4:30, most of the group had assembled for the American Air Lines flight to Frankfurt, West Germany. I say "most," because some members had already gone on to Europe days earlier, and others were flying to Frankfurt from other American cities.

First came a series of liturgical melodies by a variety of composers, sung by a magnificent 26-voice choir from Leipzig. The selections were regulars in every Shabbat service, including "L'Cha Dodi," "V'shamru," "Shema Kolaynu" and "Naariz Cho." With the exception of Lewis Lewandowski, much of whose music we use at home, the other composers were not ones I knew. The renditions, however, were both melodically and meaningfully done. What was particularly impressive about the performance was the fact that the choir is made up almost entirely of non-Jews who have a fondness for Jewish music.

Following a dramatic organ solo of a sonata by Felix Mendelsohn Bartholdy, we were treated to a combination orchestral, choral and solo (both sung and spoken) rendition of a Judische Chronik, that is, a history of the persecution of the Jews. This, too, was exceptionally well done, with the spoken lines adding a stark and effective dramatic note. After we returned to the hotel, we heard the concert several more times - it was on virtually every television channel.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1988

At 8:00 A.M., just as we were getting ready to go down to breakfast, Armed Forces Radio told us what we all expected to hear, namely, that George Bush had been elected President of the United States. It marked the first time, as I said earlier, that I had not been at home to hear the election returns since 1944. At breakfast, we learned that eight of our group had actually gone to the American

room, we watched the first act of "Nathan the Wise." But more about that later.

In the earlier program, we were again regaled by the Leipzig Choir, who were just as impressive as they had been on Tuesday night, and by Cantor Marcel Lang, who sang several selections, but none more dramatic or moving than the El Mole Rachamim with which the program ended, in which the cantor intoned, at the place normally reserved for the name of the deceased, the names of all the major concentration camps as part of the memorialization theme. In between, we had listened to seven speeches from various persons in positions of Jewish community leadership, including Moses Rosen, the Chief Rabbi of Roumania, and Gerhard Riegner, whom we had met on Monday night. All of the speeches, except Phil Hiat's rendition of the statement that Alex Schindler would have made, were in German, which was the first of the gruelling experiences to which I referred earlier. I understand only a few words and phrases in German, and it took an intense degree of concentration for me to extract from their presentations the messages they were trying to leave with us. Those messages ranged from expressions of appreciation to the government for its interest in the commemoration of Kristallnacht to statements deploring the inhumanity of what had happened a half century before, and even some calling for the reunification of the two Berlins. Fortunately, after we returned to the hotel, Marianne, who had taken copious notes, synopsized for us what each speaker had said. Each, in his or her own way, had told us how important the lessons of history were for us as

memory of those who had died between 1933 and 1945. A beautiful commemorative marble stone had been erected just inside the entrance of the cemetery, and a huge number of floral bouquets were impressively arrayed before it, placed by organizations and individuals (mostly non-Jewish) who wanted to express their sentiments in a tangible way. Promptly at 10:00 A.M., a government car delivered Erich Honecker to the site, where he joined a corps of other government leaders who had arrived earlier, in a tight formation directly in front of the commemorative stone. Clad almost uniformly in black coats and hats, they stood stiffly but respectfully at attention while Cantor Marcel Lang, with a scarf around his neck his only extra protection against the chill wind, again intoned the El Mole Rachamim as thrillingly as he had done the night before, then bowed solemnly and left. Our group remained behind for a short memorial service, despite the urging of some of the cemetery personnel that we should be on our way to the next public event. We stood at the grave bearing the name "Baeck" on the tombstone. Although the names of both the revered Rabbi Leo Baeck and his wife appear on it, only she is actually interred there. Leo Baeck, as the inscription indicates, is buried in London. Rabbi Stanley Dreyfus conducted a brief memorial service, in which his wife, Marianne, who is the granddaughter of Leo Baeck, read a moving tribute. We were again favored with the El Mole Rachamim, done this time by a young cantor from Brooklyn's Union Temple, Avery Tracht, who had joined our group that morning. The service brought back memories of the occasion

THE U.A.H.C. MISSION TO EAST GERMANY

One Man's Perspective

From November 6 to November 13, 1988, I was part of a mission to East Germany, more particularly, East Berlin, sponsored by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in connection with the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Kristallnacht, the "Night of Broken Glass" on November 9, 1938, one of the most tragic events in Jewish history, when synagogues and Jewish places of business were desecrated and burned, and thousands of Jews were arrested and sent off to concentration camps. That event was the beginning, on the eve of World War II, of what the Nazis would later call the "Final Solution."

The trip was certainly not a vacation, but all the members of our group, approximately forty in number, became closely knit and friendly in the process, although some had never met most of the others before. I did not ask each person what his or her motivation was for going on the trip, but I think it safe to say that each of us sensed that it was a historic, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in a program which would, hopefully, answer many of the questions we had about what happened in 1938 in Germany, and how the German people reacted to it after two generations. Whether those questions were answered is something each participant must decide for himself or herself. I began this diary a week after the end of the trip, and am completing it almost two months later, and I am still far from certain whether mine were.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1988

Promptly at 1:00 P. M., the private car which Joan and I had ordered on the recommendation of friends, arrived at our door, and we were soon on our way to JFK Airport in New York. The trip over was uneventful, although the traffic at the tail end of the drive was quite slow, partly, I think, because of the effect of the New York Marathon, which was taking place that day. Nevertheless, we arrived at JFK ahead of our scheduled meeting time of 3:30 P.M. The first news that greeted us when we arrived was that Rabbi Alexander Schindler, the President of the U.A.H.C., who had left Germany fifty years earlier and had never been back there, and who was to lead the mission and play an important role in everything we were to do in Germany, would not be going with us. He had been taken ill a day or two earlier and was, at that very moment, on his way to New York's University Hospital where, as we learned while we were in Germany, he was diagnosed as having a kidney infection. That put an immediate damper on the first day, because we knew how much Alex had been looking forward to the trip, albeit with mixed feelings about going back to Germany, and because we knew that his non-participation would take away a very important element from the events that were to follow.

By 4:30, most of the group had assembled for the American Air Lines flight to Frankfurt, West Germany. I say "most," because some members had already gone on to Europe days earlier, and others were flying to Frankfurt from other American cities.

There were, nonetheless, about twenty-six of us from various parts of the country, mostly in the Eastern section, who had an initial opportunity to say hello and get to know a little bit about each other. It was particularly refreshing for Joan and me to see Sylvia and Henry Greenwald there, because Henry, who used to be a very active member of the U.A.H.C.'s Board of Trustees, but who has not been at all well, had not been to very many meetings during the last few years. As it was, he was in a wheel chair, which he needed throughout the trip, but since the Greenwalds' son, John, whom we were to meet in East Berlin, is a Secretary at the American Embassy there, they could not pass up this chance to be with him.

Precisely at 5:30 P.M., our 767 pulled away from the dock and we were airborne shortly afterward. Joan and I found ourselves seated right in the middle of a family of seven or eight, including three or four children, whose language was hard to understand. At first I thought it was a Scandinavian tongue, but one of the children used a word which sounded like "Mamika" in addressing her mother, and that led me to conclude that it was Slavic, perhaps Czech. Considering the difficulties a group that size might have encountered, the children were very well behaved and travelled without incident. Cocktails, which were free, and a better-than-average airline dinner (filet mignon as the entree) followed, and, at about 9:30, the lights were dimmed and the movie "18 Again," with George Burns, was shown. It's no Academy Award winner, but it was mildly entertaining and about right at the outset of what was to be a serious and sobering experience.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1988

We landed in Frankfurt at about 6:45 A.M., West German time, which was, of course, six hours later than our body time (I had already set my watch ahead). After a brief excursion through Customs and Passport Control, we found ourselves with almost three hours to kill while awaiting our Pan American flight to West Berlin. We spent the first half of that time perusing the shops of the huge, sprawling Frankfurt Airport, most of which were still closed or just getting ready to open for the day, and they ran the gamut from McDonald's to Harrod's. The last hour or so I spent sleeping on a chair in the Pan Am passenger lounge, trying to add at least some rest to what had been basically a sleepless night.

The flight to Berlin was uneventful, taking just about an hour in a jam-packed A-310 Airbus, and shortly after touchdown, we were in the bus which was to be our means of transportation for the week. There was only one casualty - Larry Sherman's luggage failed to arrive (he had flown from Chicago), but every man in the group gallantly offered jackets, suits, shirts and what-have-you for his use (the luggage arrived about two days later). After a brief drive through West Berlin, we arrived at the famous Checkpoint Charlie, established by the Allies at the end of the War, which divides the two Berlins, and through which most Easterners going West and Westerners going East must pass. Again, I say "most," because Charley is but one of twenty-one checkpoints, but it is the best known. In passing, it is important to remember that the entire city of

Berlin, West and East, is literally an island in the middle of a foreign country, East Germany. From this point on, however, I will refer to that country in the way the East Germans know it, namely, the German Democratic Republic, or GDR for short. Actually, they call it the DDR, which stands for Deutsches Demokratische Republik, three words that we were to hear over and over again during the next six days, from public platforms and on radio and television. The "other" Germany is the Federal Republic of Germany.

At Charley, our bus was boarded by a female guard who saluted us with a pleasant "Guten Tag," and immediately collected all our passports. During the ten minutes or so that she was inside the administration building, several of our group and Mr. Kurt Koch, from the travel agency in New York which had arranged the trip, debated the question of how difficult it might be to obtain visas which would permit us to travel freely between East and West Berlin on our own. That debate proved academic, however, when the guard returned with our passports, inside each of which was stuffed a special visa permitting free and unlimited passage in either direction. We were also joined by the two young women who were to be our guides throughout the week (except when we went to West Berlin, where they were not permitted to go). Their names were Marianne and Sabina (I never did learn their last names), and they immediately made forty friends by telling us that lunch would be waiting for us at our hotel after we checked in, followed by an optional walking tour in the immediate area.

Minutes later we found ourselves at the entrance of the Hotel Metropol on Friederichstrasse, where virtually the entire hotel management staff was waiting in the lobby to greet us, to tell us how pleased they were that we were there, and how much they wanted to make our stay as pleasant as possible. I am sure they had been told in advance that it was important that we get a good impression of East Germany and its people, but the welcome seemed genuine, and the service that the hotel gave us throughout our stay could not have been more satisfactory (notwithstanding an occasional gripe about the dining room service or the pricing policy for beverages). My room was on the 7th floor (actually the 8th, because the 1st floor is the one above the lobby), and immediately in front of the elevators, which made it very convenient. The room was quite attractive, with twin beds complete with thick down comforters. It had both television and radio, with Armed Forces radio providing English language news all day long.

Lunch was served in one of the 1st floor function rooms. The waitresses and kitchen staff were most attentive that first day, and the meal itself was excellent, consisting of a hot vegetable beef or ox-tail soup (I wasn't sure which), a very tasty beef kabob and a large assortment of small open-faced cold meat sandwiches. By the time we got back to our rooms, the luggage had been delivered to them, so we took a few minutes to unpack. We were told by our guides that if we wanted to go on an introductory tour of the center

of the city, we should be in the lobby at 3:15. Although we were all pretty tired at that point, having been up almost continuously for more than twenty-four hours, most of us opted to go.

I pause here to make several seemingly irrelevant observations, but ones which may help my readers to have a better impression of the country in which we found ourselves (I will have more to say about that later in this account). They have to do with money, language and German (GDR, that is) society.

1. In the Frankfurt Airport, some of our group went to the bank to convert their money. I wondered why they were doing that, in view of the fact that we were going to East Germany, and they were about to get West German marks. We learned not long after that that the West German currency was readily spendable in most of the GDR establishments, which also took American dollars, thus rendering conversion basically unnecessary. The exchange rate for those still intent on converting, was about 1.8 marks to the dollar (either Western or Eastern), with the actual rate fluctuating somewhere between 1.73 and 1.83, depending on whether one was buying or selling them. The only real caveat for the outsider is not to convert too much money into East German currency because it is not easy (although not impossible as we had at first believed) to convert it back when you leave the country.

2. The German language must be intimidating to the non-German, because it is guttural and is not a Romance language, which is what most Americans have studied (Latin, French, Spanish, etc.). Additionally, words tend to be very, very long, but most of them are long simply because they are, for the most part, compound words in which several words are strung together to express a concept, although the end result is one long word. For example, the formidable SPEZIALITATENRESTAURANT simply means a specialty restaurant (SPEZIALITATEN RESTAURANT), REPARATURARBEITEN means repair work (REPARATUR ARBEITEN), and LUFTVERKEHRSGESELLSCHAFT means aircraft workers association or union (LUFT VERKEHRS GESELLSCHAFT). Not as many people in East Germany are bilingual, at least not in German and English, as I quickly discovered when I visited an optician's shop behind the hotel to try to get my glasses fixed, and the proprietor replied "Nein" to my "Sprechen sie Englisch?" (I was, however, able to make myself understood.) As we learned later from Marianne, the second language in East German schools is, not surprisingly, Russian, with English only an optional third language along with French.

3. While the people walk the streets in what appears to be total freedom, East Germany is, after all, a Communist country, where, as we were to learn later, the government owns or controls almost everything, and nobody can really make a

great deal of money. The shops on the main street on which we walked, the famous Unter den Linden, all have lovely merchandise in the windows, but the shelves inside are, according to what we were told, sparsely filled. Most East Germans (they themselves do not use the "East") make modest livings and cannot afford much more than the basic necessities. On the other hand, as we also found out later, they really do not need much more, since the state furnishes medical and hospital care, education, pensions and all the extras that we in democratic countries have to pay for. There are two domestic automobiles in East Germany, the Trabant, which has a plastic body and a motor that sounds like a string of tin cans being tossed about, and the Wartburg, which has a metal body and is slightly larger, although both of them are quite small by our standards. Sabina told us that the price of those cars ranged between \$2,500.00 and \$3,000.00, although somewhat higher figures (but still quite low) were given to others. The apparent freedom of the East Germans has other limitations, too. As we learned from Marianne, they may not leave the country unless they are going to another Soviet bloc country, or to a country where they have relatives (even in the West), but whole families may not leave the country together. There has been some relaxation in the restrictions on travel to West Berlin, but certainly not what we would call "free."

In the schools, the curriculum, interestingly enough, includes the Nazi era and World War II (but not in West Germany), although, as events would show us in the ensuing days, the emphasis, in dealing with the Hitler era, is on what the "fascists" did. That term surprised me at first, because it is a designation which, as I grew up during those days, was generally applied only to the Italians, but it soon became apparent that the "fascist" reference stems from the Communist influence in the country, because Communism and fascism have always been, in the eyes of the Russians, the antitheses of each other.

Now, away from the irrelevant observations and back to the walking tour. Sabina took us for a stroll down the Unter den Linden, which is, indeed, lined with linden trees. There are no homes, but only commercial buildings and embassies on that thoroughfare. and the green-uniformed police were very much in evidence guarding each of the embassies. Several blocks away from the hotel, the Unter den Linden comes to an abrupt end about 200 meters short of the famous Brandenburg Gate, and, just beyond it, the infamous Berlin Wall. The space between the fence at the end of the street and the Wall is constantly patrolled by the police, and anyone trying to escape to the West would not only have to traverse those 200 meters of open space just to reach the Wall, but, as we were to see quite clearly on Friday when we were in West Berlin, another 200 meters of "no-man's land between the Wall and a second Wall on the actual border between the two Berlins. As we turned away from the Gate to start back,

Sabina pointed out a nearby construction site with a mound of earth marking it, and identified it as the place where the bunker had been where Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun had died. On the way back to the hotel, we passed the large, impressive Soviet Embassy with an imposing white bust of Lenin sitting directly in front of the entrance. Immediately next to it is the headquarters of Aeroflot, the Soviet national airline, also an impressive building.

Back at the hotel, we dressed for dinner, which was in another of the hotel's attractive private function rooms, and again the food and service were first rate. Before we began to eat, however, we were addressed by several leaders of the community, both governmental and Jewish community representatives. Kurt Loeffler, the State Secretary, told us that his government shared our anguish over the events of November 9, 1938, and wanted us to know that there was now a new Germany, which we could respect and trust. The president of the Berlin (East) Jewish community, Peter Kirschner, also spoke briefly, thanking us for coming and stressing how important it was that we were there. Several presentations were made by Rabbi Philip Hiat, filling in at the last minute for Rabbi Schindler, assisted by U.A.H.C. leaders Mel Merians, Matt Ross and B. J. Tanenbaum. The dinner that followed marked the end of a very long first day, and bed was a welcome spot, indeed, at about 10:30.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1988

The alarm went off at 7:00 A.M., and, after stealing a few more minutes sleep, I was up, shaved and dressed, and down for breakfast at 8:00 A.M., after listening to Armed Forces Radio reminding me that my fellow Americans back home would be going to the polls to elect a new president later that day. It felt strange to be so far away while my country's destiny for at least the next four years was being decided. It was, in fact, the first time since 1944, when I was in the service during World War II, that I had not been at home on Election Day. In any event, breakfast, as it would be every day thereafter, turned out to be a very attractive buffet, with several choices of juice, a cold cereal (something like corn flakes), and a generous choice of cold meats, all quite tasty, as well as bread or rolls and coffee. Shortly thereafter, we were back on our bus, heading for a city tour of metropolitan Berlin (as I said earlier, the Germans don't call it "East" Berlin). Two stops on the way are worth mentioning. The first was on Oranienburg Street, where the once beautiful Oranienburger Synagog, virtually destroyed on Kristallnacht, is being reconstructed by the East German government. Explaining its history and the reconstructionist was our new guide-for-a-day, Dr. Demps of Berlin's Humboldt University, who spoke only German, but whose words were translated for us by Babina. Several of our group had the advantage of being able to speak and understand German, including Marianne Dreyfus, who is the granddaughter of Rabbi Leo Baeck. Although the new commemorative plaque on the front of the

synagog clearly indicated that the original building had been destroyed on Kristallnacht, we learned that the Germans (East) more commonly refer to that event as Pogromnacht, and we were to hear that word frequently from then on. Regrettably, the entire structure will not be restored, but only the facade and about 180 feet of the original 600-feet deep building will be rebuilt. It will not be a place of worship, but only a museum. The East German Jewish community is so small that it really does not need another synagogue, because the one in which we were to worship later in the week, the only functioning one in East Berlin, is more than adequate for that purpose.

The second stop was on Grosse Hamburg Strasse, where we found ourselves in what to all appearances was a small park, where a group of very small children was playing. But this was no ordinary park, for it was built on top of the graves of hundreds of Jews who had once been proud citizens of that city. The grave markers were gone, having been destroyed many years earlier. The remnants of that cemetery were two-fold, first, a stone and the outline of a bier where Moses Mendelsohn was believed to have been buried, and second, the wall of an adjoining building into which had been literally impressed the grave markers from half a dozen Jewish graves in an effort to keep them from being destroyed. A final stop was at an adjacent school building, once the oldest Jewish boys' school in Berlin. Near the door was a large bronze plaque telling the chilling story that this had been the spot where Jews had been rounded up by

the Nazis for deportation to the concentration camps at Sachsenhausen (which we were to visit the next day) and Theresienstadt.

From the park, we went to the American Embassy, just around the corner from our hotel, where we were greeted by Ambassador Meehan, a career diplomat nearing retirement, and three of his top staff people, including John Greenwald, who is the Embassy's Secretary for Political Affairs. They spoke briefly about the GDR, its relations with the United States, which are cordial but very limited, and their feelings about why we were there. As we prepared to leave, we were invited to come to the Embassy late that night - actually early the next morning - to hear the American election returns via satellite. Among the things we learned from the Embassy staff were that trade between East Germany and the U. S. is virtually non-existent (about \$60,000,000.00 one way and \$150,000,000.00 the other), and that, despite efforts to do something, there is almost no tourism from the United States to East Germany.

Lunch was on our own, but since neither Joan nor I was hungry, we used the lunch hour to do a little strolling on our own, visiting the magnificent new Grand Hotel, sporting a Hyatt-Regency style lobby, a regal staircase to the first floor and an open air space all the way up to a colored skylight eight stories up. As beautiful as it was, however, the hotel itself seemed empty, with only a handful of people in the lobby or in its highly recommended restaurants. The 350-400 marks room rate for a double room explained why.

At 1:30, it was back on the bus, in which we toured sections of the city we had not seen earlier, this time without leaving the bus. The many new buildings, as well as some old restored ones, were very impressive. I was astonished at the number of attractive apartment buildings where, we were told, the monthly rental was about 100 marks, including heat (about \$55.50). We were back at the hotel by 3:00, where we had about half an hour to get ready for a very unusual experience. Rabbi Hiat had told us that the Jews of West Berlin, led by Willy Brandt, would be conducting a silent march in their city at about 5:00 P.M. in memory of Kristallnacht, and asked us to participate in a similar march in East Berlin. The bus took us to a spot on the Unter den Linden where we got out, lit Yahrzeit candles (which were not easy to keep lit in the bitter, chilling wind that blew constantly that evening), and marched about a block to a parking lot facing Humboldt University, where we gathered in a small circle to maintain our unity as well as to try to keep warm. With the press and television media surrounding us in considerable numbers (they followed us everywhere for most of the time we were in East Germany), we were joined by a small group of Jews and non-Jews from California, who were on their way to Israel, and, at the approximate site where the Nazis had burned countless thousands of Jewish books in 1933, expressed the feelings that we had; the statements were simple, eloquent and moving. We concluded with recitations of the El Mole Rachamim and the Kaddish, following which many of our group were interviewed by the media. I found the recitation of the Kaddish at that spot particularly moving.

Dinner at the hotel was, once again, very good and very pleasant, although a trifle rushed, because we were due at the Schauspielhaus of Berlin for a truly wonderful concert. The concert hall had been rebuilt after the war - in fact, restored to its pre-war condition. To describe it as beautiful or majestic would be, in part, accurate, but also an understatement. It was breathtaking and magnificent, almost opulent and, in a country which is basically poor and struggling, somewhat out of character. The hall must have been easily four or five stories high from highly polished floor to ceiling. The entire front above the orchestra platform and a balcony on each side for an 80-voice choir, was covered with brilliant organ pipes, with the organ console in the center at their base. A two-tiered balcony ran along both side walls, each holding about three rows of seats that I could see. The ground floor accommodated perhaps 1,200 people in fixed-position arm chairs richly upholstered, with seats that could be raised and lowered. I could think of no concert hall I had been to anywhere else that was more impressive. Our group was about the last to arrive because, as we entered the hall, it was already filled with specially invited guests, and the performers were already on stage, ready to begin the special concert which had been arranged for the occasion. Attendance was by invitation only, but we (Joan and I) were indeed fortunate to have seats in the eighth row on the center aisle.

The production was called Gedenkkonzert, or "Concert of Remembrance," and was professionally and beautifully presented.

First came a series of liturgical melodies by a variety of composers, sung by a 26-voice choir from the Leipzig Synagog. The selections were regulars in every Shabbat service, including "L'Cha Dodi," "V'shamru," "Shema Kolaynu" and "Naariz cho." With the exception of Lewis Lewandowski, much of whose music we use at home, the other composers were not ones I knew. The renditions, however, were both melodically and meaningfully done. What was particularly impressive about the performance was the fact that the choir is made up almost entirely of non-Jews who have a fondness for Jewish music.

Following a dramatic organ solo of a sonata by Felix Mendelsohn Bartholdy, we were treated to a combination orchestral, choral and solo (both sung and spoken) rendition of a Judische Chronik, that is, a history of the persecution of the Jews. This, too, was exceptionally well done, with the spoken lines adding a stark and effective dramatic note. After we returned to the hotel, we heard the concert several more times - it was on virtually every television channel.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1988

At 8:00 A. M., just as we were getting ready to go down to breakfast, Armed Forces Radio told us what we all expected to hear, namely, that George Bush had been elected President of the United States. It marked the first time, as I said earlier, that I had not been at home to hear the election returns since 1944. At breakfast, we learned that eight of our group had actually gone to the American

Embassy to watch the election returns, and had been up since about 4:00 A.M., which would have been 10:00 P.M. the night before in the United States. No vote totals were announced, because the tally in some states was apparently still undecided, but we knew that the result was irreversible. We also heard the very disappointing news (at least to most) that Lowell Weicker had lost his Senate seat in Connecticut.

At 9:00 A. M., we were on the bus once again, this time for a never-to-be-forgotten trip to the former Nazi concentration camp known as Sachsenhausen, about twenty-five miles north of Berlin. It proved to be, at least for me, and I think for most of the others, a discomfiting and emotional experience, although a few who had been to Auschwitz and some of the other more notorious camps were less affected. The first surprise came when we arrived at the entrance to the camp, to find a number of other groups already there, several of which were made up of high school students learning about the camp as part of their history courses. There was also a group of Poles, because their forbears had been badly treated there, too.

Sachsenhausen was not the largest of the concentration camps, but it was the administrative center for all of the camps during the Hitler period. As we entered the gates in a cold, chilling wind, we were accompanied by Werner Handler, a 68-year old German Jew who had been an inmate in the camp in 1938, and hearing him tell about life (and death) there added a very real dimension to the occasion.

We gathered first in a huge, flat assembly area where, Werner said, the inmates assembled every morning for roll call. It was barren and ugly, with not a blade of grass anywhere on the cold, hard ground, but the wall with its guard towers and the barbed wire in front of it were grim reminders of the folly of trying to escape, which some inmates attempted, usually with fatal results because the barbed wire was charged with high voltage electricity. From there we moved on to one of the barracks or, as Werner called them, "huts," where the inmates had been housed. I had seen the crudely fashioned bunks many times before, in pictures and in movies, but seeing them in front of my eyes, with their burlap-covered straw mattresses, where many inmates were crowded into very tight quarters where they had to share their single blankets in order to keep warm, made me shudder both inwardly and outwardly. The sanitary and eating facilities were spartan, but since Sachsenhausen had originally been built to house political prisoners and prisoners of war, those facilities were a cut above those at other camps designed by the Nazis to solve the "Jewish problem." A second hut we visited had been converted mostly into a museum, and some of the objects preserved there, as well as the photographs and charts, were sobering reminders of man's inhumanity to man. Most disgusting to me was what appeared to be a height-measuring device, not unlike those found in doctors' offices (but made of wood), against which inmates were made to stand, under the pretext of having their heights measured, only to have an SS soldier, hidden by the partition between that room and the next, shoot them in the back of the head through the device. Even Werner

seemed to quiver when he told us about that. 200,000 men went to Sachsenhausen during the Nazi regime, and 110,000 of them died there, some in the manner I have just described, some from being worked too hard, some in the camp's gas chamber, and some by taking their own lives. The gas chamber and crematoria, which were our last stop in the camp, were only a shadow of what they had been, but just enough of them had been preserved so that, with the help of a scale-model reconstruction, we could get a very vivid picture of how they had been used during those terrible years.

I asked Werner, as we were on our way out, whether the people in Oranienburg, the town bordering the camp, had known what was going on there, having remembered the Xerox film (I believe it was called "Exodus") we used to show our religious school students in the years following the war, in which General Eisenhower, after liberating the concentration camps at Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen (I think), forced the local townspeople to enter the camps and witness the piles of corpses. Werner quickly and emphatically said: "They knew!" He added, however, that they knew that the camp was being used for detention and punishment, but were probably unaware of the extent of the torture and killing being carried out. I wonder.

This was my second visit to a concentration camp. In 1976, when I had been in Brussels, Belgium, as a delegate to the Brussels II Conference on Soviet Jewry, I had been to Breendonk, a small camp just outside the city. That had been a sobering experience, but

Sachsenhausen sharpened my awareness of a period that I had lived through but really didn't understand fully. In retrospect and prospect, I shudder at the realization that one group of God's creatures could deal so maliciously and consciencelessly with another.

Back in Berlin, Joan and I had a pleasant and tasty luncheon at one of the Grand Hotel's many delightful eateries, the Stammhaus. We both thoroughly enjoyed the Schwartzbier which, true to its name, was almost black, and very rich. At 3:15, most of us gathered in one of the hotel's function rooms where Bob Hess, who is President of Brooklyn College and, along with his wife Fran, one of the real literati of the group, gave us a synopsis of Gotthold Lessing's "Nathan the Wise," which we were to see at the theatre that evening. Since the play is not well known, and was going to be performed entirely in German, the session was extremely valuable. Not only that, but Bob's presentation was so engaging that I found myself wishing that I were a college student again so that I could take a course with him, yes, even in his specialty, African History.

At 4:30, we were seated in the Deutsches Theatre, not too far from our hotel, for what was to be both a fascinating and gruelling experience. From 4:30 to 5:30, we heard a combination musical program and series of speeches relating to Kristallnacht and the Shoah, that day being, of course, the actual anniversary of Kristallnacht. At 7:30, after a sumptuous repast in the theatre's large reception

room, we watched the first act of "Nathan the Wise." But more about that later.

In the earlier program, we were again regaled by the Leipzig Synagog Choir, who were just as impressive as they had been on Tuesday night, and by its cantor, who did a variety of numbers, but none more dramatic or moving than the El Mole Rachamim with which the program ended, in which the cantor intoned, at the place normally reserved for the name of the deceased, the names of all the major concentration camps as part of the memorialization theme. In between, we had listened to seven speeches from various persons in positions of Jewish community leadership, including Moses Rosen, the Chief Rabbi of Roumania, and Gerhard Riegner, whom we had met on Monday night. All of the speeches, except Phil Hiat's rendition of the statement that Alex Schindler would have made, were in German, which was the first of the gruelling experiences to which I referred earlier. I understand only a few words and phrases in German, and it took an intense degree of concentration for me to extract from their presentations the messages they were trying to leave with us. Those messages ranged from expressions of appreciation to the government for its interest in the commemoration of Kristallnacht to statements deploring the inhumanity of what had happened a half century before, and even some calling for the reunification of the two Berlins. Fortunately, after we returned to the hotel, Marianne, who had taken copious notes, synopsisized for us what each speaker had said. Each, in his or her own way, had told us how important the lessons of history were for us as

Jews, and how significant were the events that were being commemorated during that week. I was pleasantly surprised at how much I had been able to grasp on my own.

Following the first program, everyone in the theatre moved downstairs to the reception room, where there was a huge variety of excellent foods and beverages, much more than the "snack" which Bob Kopell had told us we were going to get. Erich Honecker, the General Secretary of the East German Communist Party, was the center of attention as the media types crowded in on him. That made the food service something of an adventure, but we managed to enjoy ourselves. There was, however, something incongruous about the quantity and quality of the food in what is admittedly a poor country, and I wondered what the average East German would have thought if he or she could have been in that room.

One incident bears repeating. As we were standing at a counter enjoying the interlude, a short man wearing a Kipah, who was eating a few feet from us, hearing our English, asked where we were from, and then proceeded to tell us that he had family in Boston, Cincinnati and Miami, and that he had recently visited them under the government's policy which permits travel to the West to visit family members. He then informed us, somewhat sadly, that there are only 350 affiliated or, as he called them, "believing" Jews in East Germany. Since we had already learned that the one functioning synagog had about 180 members, that did not leave very many for the rest of the country.

The combination of food and wine, the heat of the second balcony of the theatre and the difficulty of listening to another presentation entirely in German (notwithstanding Bob Hess's heroic effort to make it easier for us) persuaded all of us who were still there to call it a day after the first act of "Nathan the Wise." That act alone took almost an hour and a half. What made it bearable even for that length of time was a combination of Bob's presentation and the fact that I was able to recognize the iambic pentameter in which the play was written, thanks to my high school Latin and English teachers who had first introduced me to iambic pentameter in Vergil's "Aeneid" and Longfellow's "Hiawatha," respectively.

There was more food back at the hotel for those who were still hungry. I wasn't, but it was astonishing to see how many were.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1988

Thursday was to be a kaleidoscope of public events with one private one worked in, all related to the events of the week which had brought us to the GDR.

We began with a trip to the Weissensee Cemetery, the largest Jewish cemetery in Germany. Stretching for hundreds of yards in all directions, much of which we simply did not have time to see, it is the final resting place of thousands of Jews who lived and died in Germany. We were there, however, to pay particular tribute to the

memory of those who had died between 1933 and 1945. A beautiful commemorative marble stone had been erected just inside the entrance of the cemetery, and a huge number of floral bouquets were impressively placed before it, brought by organizations and individuals (mostly non-Jewish) who wanted to express their sentiments in a tangible way. Promptly at 10:00 A.M., a government car delivered Erich Honecker to the site, where he joined a corps of other government leaders who had arrived earlier, in a tight formation directly in front of the commemorative stone. Clad almost uniformly in black coats and hats, they stood stiffly but respectfully at attention while the cantor from the Leipzig Synagog, with a scarf around his neck his only extra protection against the chill wind, again intoned the El Mole Rachamim as he had done the night before, then bowed solemnly and left. Our group remained behind for a short memorial service, despite the urging of some of the cemetery personnel that we should be on our way to the next public event. We stood at the grave bearing the name "Baeck" on the tombstone. Although the names of both the revered Rabbi Leo Baeck and his wife appear on it, only she is actually interred there. Leo Baeck, as the inscription indicates, is buried in London. Rabbi Stanley Dreyfus conducted a brief memorial service, in which his wife, Marianne, who is the granddaughter of Leo Baeck, read a moving tribute. We were again favored with the El Mole Rachamim, done this time by a young cantor from Brooklyn's Union Temple, Avery Tract, who had joined our group that morning. The service brought back memories of the occasion

when Dr. Baeck visited our congregation in Philadelphia not long after his release from Theresienstadt, and I had the privilege of writing an article for our Temple Bulletin about his very moving sermon. On the way out of the cemetery, we passed the graves of Herbert Baum, a leader of the resistance against the Nazis who had died at Sachsenhausen, and the great composer, Lewis Lewandowski, whose music we had just heard the day before.

From the cemetery, our bus took us to Oranienburg Strasse and the site of the Oranienburger Synagog, which we had visited on Tuesday. The street had been cordoned off by the police, and there were literally thousands of people crowded into the area in front of the synagog. Mr. Honecker and his entourage were again very much in evidence, and there was a brief but impressive ceremony followed by the unveiling of a bright bronze commemorative plaque on the front wall which, on Tuesday, had been partially obscured by the scaffolding in front of the building. We were able to view the ceremony from a reserved area close to the speakers' platform, to which we were quickly ushered, because we had gotten there a few minutes after the announced starting time of the program. I was astonished at the number of spectators in attendance, most of whom were, of course, non-Jewish, and who showed a keen interest in what was going on. Many of them crowded around the front of the building to take pictures of the plaque. The crowd included many school children who had been brought there as part of their educational process, which includes courses on the Nazi period and the Holocaust.

It was then back to the bus for a short drive to the Town Hall, where the tributes continued, this time by the local mayors or burgomeisters. The presiding official, Cultural Minister Hoffman, put his script down after his formal remarks, and in a show of emotion which was rare for the Germans we had heard from up to that point, told how, as a small boy on November 10, 1938, the morning after Kristallnacht, he had walked by the Oranienburger Synagog which had almost been destroyed, and that when he questioned his mother about it was told that Germany "would never be the same again." The Union of American Hebrew Congregations was especially honored, with Rabbi Hiat receiving a gift which will reside in our museum.

The burgomeisters proved to be excellent hosts as well, with a luncheon along the lines of Wednesday's dinner being served in the adjoining hall.

From the Town Hall, we drove to the site of the famous Hochschule, not a high school as its name literally translates, but actually a college organized for the advancement of Judaism (Wissenschaft des Judentums). Leo Baeck and Abraham Geiger were among its most famous alumni, which included some of the greatest Jewish scholars. As we gathered in front of the plaque on the wall of the building - it is no longer a school, we once more listened to the haunting strains of the El Mole Rachamim.

That ended the formal program for the afternoon, but many of us then opted to get off the bus at the Pergamonmuseum, where we viewed a magnificent reconstruction of the classical structures of Pergamon and of Babylon and other centers of ancient culture. The interior of the museum was literally overwhelming. with gigantic rooms accommodating whole reconstructed temples. After about an hour of wandering through the halls of the museum, we eschewed the bus ride back and walked to the hotel, perhaps six or seven blocks away.

At 7:00 P.M., we were at the Ephraim-Palais for a private showing of the current and very popular Jewish Exhibition, which the locals had lined up daily to see. In four or five rooms on each of two floors, which we were required to traverse wearing oversized slippers over our shoes in order to protect the floors, there was an incredible collection of letters, posters, military documents, periodicals, pictures and other memorabilia dealing with the Jews of Germany, with particular emphasis on the Hitler years. It was a fascinating and undoubtedly priceless collection, most components of which will, according to Mr. Simon, our personal guide, have to be returned to their lenders when the exhibition ends.

Although the exhibition was extremely worthwhile, I was disappointed with one aspect of it. Mr. Simon had allotted to us just one hour, from 7:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M., the official closing time of the exhibition. It was simply not enough time for anyone to examine more than a fraction of the items with any degree of care. Mr. Simon had, in fact, only time to take us to each of the rooms for

five or six minutes, give us a brief synopsis of what the room contained, and then move on to the next room. The fact that there were other visitors wandering in and out of the same rooms and into and out of our group, did not make things any easier. In any event, each of us came away with a catalog of the exhibition, a gift from the museum for which members of the public had to pay ten marks, and if I can wade through its German-language text, I hope to fill in the details which our visit did not give us time to supply. I will, however, not soon forget one moment during the tour when Mr. Simon pointed out a letter in a glass show-case bearing a signature which he refused to identify, saying that he could not bring himself to pronounce the name. It was the signature of Heinrich Himmler.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1988

This was to be our day in West Berlin, and a very crowded day it turned out to be. Our faithful bus - well, no, this was a West Berlin bus specially engaged for the occasion - left the hotel at 9:00 A.M., arriving at Checkpoint Charley a few minutes later. The guard came aboard and collected all our passports after carefully comparing our faces with the pictures in the books. They were then returned to us, minus the visas; they would be returned to us when we came back.

As we emerged from the Checkpoint, our West German guide for the day came aboard. His name was Mikhail Weiss, and it seemed strange

that Marianne and Sabina were no longer with us. Unfortunately, they were not permitted to enter West Berlin, where neither of them had ever been, and we had to leave them behind in East Berlin. They probably could not admit it, but I sensed that they would very much like to have gone with us to the "other" Berlin. In any event, we had not gone more than a few blocks when the Berlin Wall came into view, this time, of course, from the West German side, and since West Germans can go right up to the wall, which they consider an abomination, it is covered with messages, crude art and graffiti, some of it very professional looking. Mikhail then made a comment, almost casually, which told us quite eloquently, that we were in West Berlin. He said, as nearly as I can remember, "On your right is the Berlin Wall, which is of absolutely no interest to us, and only concerns the Allied Powers and foreigners." He then took us to an observation point where we could climb to the top of a ten-foot platform and get a clear view of the long stretch of wall. It was an eye-opener.

There are, in fact, two walls, both built by the East Germans, with a no-man's land of 200 or 300 feet of open space between them, so that it was immediately clear how lopsided the odds are against someone successfully escaping from East to West. It was also depressing to be able to see across into the city from which we had just come, and immediately recognize some of the landmarks there with which we had just become familiar. It was even stranger several minutes later when we were at the West German side of the Brandenburg

Gate, knowing that we had only recently been standing on the other side, and the Unter den Linden was now the 6th of June Boulevard, in memory of the Russian Revolution. Even that was somewhat incongruous, since the Communist influence was much more in evidence on the East Berlin side. That side seemed so near, and yet so far away.

A whirlwind tour of West Berlin then followed, which lasted about two and a half hours, with two stops along the way. The first stop, for about 45 minutes, was at the Charlottenburg Palace, built by Frederick II as a gift to his wife, Sophie, where we had the opportunity to enjoy the considerable art collection on its walls, as well as a stunningly opulent dining room table fully set with china and silverware for 42 persons. The second, for about 20 minutes, was in front of Berlin's famous Hotel Kempinski, which was not the immediate attraction, although we stopped in the lobby for a souvenir to take home to Joan's Aunt Ruth, a legitimate world traveler in her younger days, who had always admired the Kempinski, but to visit the Jewish Community Center on the other side of the street. It is an extremely attractive and functional building with many graphic reminders of the Nazi period on display, the most dramatic of which was a large wall map of Europe pinpointing all of the concentration camps and disclosing the number of Jews who had died in each of them.

In between and before and after those stops, we drove through the famous Tiergarten District, saw the old and new symphonic halls,

the imposing Carillon and the Reichstag, the seat of governmental power until it was virtually destroyed by fire in 1933 - it was gray, grim and majestic as we drove completely around it. Our last contact with the Berlin Wall came at a point where eight gleaming white crosses stood at its base, each engraved with a name or the word "Unbekannt" (unknown) and the date on which he had lost his life attempting to scale the wall. The most recent date was February, 1987.

We were also treated to a close-up look at the Olympic Stadium, used in the now infamous 1936 games, the ones at which Adolf Hitler refused to acknowledge the accomplishments of Jesse Owens. Appropriately, one of the prominent streets adjacent to the stadium was called Jesse Owens Allee. From there, we moved on to the Grunewald, where we saw some of West Berlin's finest private homes, some traditional, some modern, all with some ground around them, but not quite up to American standards. In response to my question, our guide told us that the cost of one of those homes would be about one million marks (about \$550,000.00).

In the center of the commercial area of the city, particularly along the Kurfurstendamm, modeled after Paris' Champs Elysees, two things caught our attention. The first was the Kaiser Wilhelm Church, with the new modern structure standing right along side the ruins of the old one, apparently destroyed in a World War II air raid. The other was directly across the street the entrance to Berlin's famous KaDaWe department store. It was a signpost on which were

listed the twelve major Nazi concentration camps, below a message which told Berliners that what those places stood for must never be forgotten. It was really the only visible evidence we saw in West Berlin of that community's concern about the events of the week and their historical precedents. I wondered, but could not find out, whether the sign would be gone the following week.

From about 12:45 to 1:30, we had a fascinating visit with Rabbi Ernst Stein at the West Berlin Jewish Congregation. After entering through an ordinary doorway off the street, which gave no indication that it led to a synagogue, we walked down a darkened hallway at the end of which a large door opened onto an interior courtyard, where we were suddenly confronted with the beautiful exterior of the synagogue. It reminded me of the entrance to the synagogue in Curacao, where we had been six years earlier for that institution's celebration of its 250th anniversary. The interior was equally bright and attractive, and we learned that the original synagogue had been destroyed on Kristallnacht, and that the one we were in had been reconstructed in 1947, with the help of the West Berlin government.

After we were welcomed by a song impressively sung by the cantor a capella, Rabbi Stein said that he would take our questions for the remainder of our time together. Here are some of the answers he gave us:

1. There were more than 500,000 Jews in Germany before World War II.

2. There are 28,000 Jews in West Germany today, with about 650 of them in West Berlin.

3. 50% of the German Jews are Soviet emigres.

4. The members of Rabbi Stein's congregation are, in the main, successful and wealthy.

5. Although the congregation is affiliated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism (a fact not known to some of its orthodox members), its religious services are non-orthodox - not liberal, but not totally traditional, with the liturgy a combination of the orthodox Siddur, "Service of the Heart" and Rabbi Stein's own prayers.

6. The congregation has a full house on the High Holidays, but not more than 100-150 at other services. It will, however, have 28 Bar and Bat Mitzvahs during the year.

7. There is an intermarriage rate of 70%-75% in West Germany. In that connection, Rabbi Stein expressed interest in securing the U.A.H.C. materials on our Outreach program.

8. With respect to our visit to East Germany, Rabbi Stein made several pointed observations. First, he said that people really don't change with respect to anti-Semitism, and that the apparent diminution of its overt manifestations is simply the result of the fact that it is not presently acceptable to so display them. Secondly, he suggested that there are no human

differences between East Germans and West Germans, and that all of the East German activity in support of the Kristallnacht observance is only a flash in the pan. Along the same line, he cautioned us against allowing ourselves to be political pawns in what he perceived to be an East German effort to obtain "most favored nation" status from the United States and an invitation to Mr. Honecker to visit our country. When I asked him if he was suggesting that we should not have come, he quickly disclaimed that sentiment, but added that we should "be careful."

After an hour and a half of shopping at KaDaWe (simply the way the Germans pronounce the letters K, D and W) and strolling along the Kurfurstendamm, we reboarded our bus and were back at the Metropol at about 4:30 after again going through Checkpoint Charley. The visible difference between the two Berlins was never more apparent than it was at that moment, because we had suddenly moved from a world in which the traffic was heavy and constant, both vehicular and pedestrian, and the shops were laden with merchandise and teeming with activity, into one where the traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, was moderate, and where the shops had little merchandise and only a modest number of customers. Never had I experienced such an instantaneous comparison between the socialist and capitalist systems.

At 5:15, we were on our way to the East Berlin Jewish Congregation for Erev Shabbat services, at which Alex Schindler had been scheduled

to preach, blending the Armistice Day theme into the events which had brought us to Germany, In a city where there are only 180 members of the one active congregation, this was a banner occasion, with at least 300 people in attendance, including our group and some other visitors. The service was essentially orthodox, but following the service was quite an adventure, because the congregation had an assortment of prayer books which were not all alike, with publication dates ranging all the way from 1837 to 1922. For those who had particular difficulty following the service, because of (1) the variation in the prayer books, (2) the failure of the officiant to give page numbers or other clues, (3) the fact that the cantor (the congregation has no rabbi) read from a bimah which required him to read with his back to us, and (d) the strangeness of the Hebrew pronunciation and some of the melodies, there was the opportunity to admire the brilliantly ornate front of the sanctuary, which stood out in sharp contrast to the rest of the room, which was dark and drab. The reason for the distinction soon became apparent when we learned that when the Nazis were beginning their oppression of the Jews, they boarded up the front of the sanctuary and used the rest of it as a stable for their horses. But the front remained protected and thus retained most of its beauty, and only a little post-war rehabilitation was necessary to restore it to the condition in which we found it. We also found out that most of the congregation's sacred objects had been successfully removed and hidden from the Nazis during the war, and were now back in place and in use.

Back to the service - the men sat on the right, the women on the left, hence it was a traditional service, but I found it absorbing nonetheless, although it was a far cry from the way I ordinarily worship. Stanley Dreyfus' delivery of Alex Schindler's sermon was excellent, although the high ceiling and the empty spaces along both sides of the auditorium created a reverberation which made some of his words difficult to understand. Some heard it more distinctly than others, including a young American (not one of our group) who baited Stanley rather vigorously after the service, taking strong issue with Alex's comparing the Holocaust with the suffering of other peoples. Stanley handled the confrontation quite well, so that we were all able to enjoy a very elaborate Oneg Shabbat with the congregation, where both the Challah and the Bulgarian red wine were very tasty. I thought that the members of the congregation went out of their way to be friendly and hospitable, although the fact that many of them did not speak English made communication somewhat difficult. Some of our group, as we learned on our final night recap, thought that they had been aloof and unfriendly, but I believe that if there was aloofness, it resulted from the fact that they rarely have visitors from the West and may have been somewhat overwhelmed by the experience.

Dinner back at the Metropol was quite late because of the length of the service, but a number of us repaired to the Hallenbar on the 1st floor (not the lobby) for a nightcap before calling it a day.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1988

Nothing was formally scheduled for Saturday morning because it was Shabbat. Most of our people used the occasion for leisure activities, some museum visiting or last-minute purchases of gifts to take home. I opted to accompany the Dreyfuses and Bob Koppel to the synagogue for the second Shabbat service, because I thought that Stanley deserved an audience for the sermon (his own) he had been invited to preach that morning, and because there had been a serious suggestion the night before that the congregation might have difficulty achieving a minyan. Both reasons proved ill-founded, because (a) Stanley Dreyfus' sermon never materialized for reasons known only to the cantor who opted to eliminate it and (b) nearly 100 people, mostly males, showed up for the service, most, I suspect, to be part of a baby-naming, a rare event in either Germany these days. The service itself was subject to the same difficulties which had been present the night before and was somewhat longer, but, all in all, a very interesting experience. Phil Hiat was given an Aliyah and Stanley Dreyfus named the baby instead of delivering a sermon (there was none), an experience which Stanley later described as one of the most moving he had ever had.

As I think back now over the two services, I realize that I have failed to mention one component which made the Friday night service particularly memorable. A significant portion of it was chanted by Avery Tract, whose powerful, operatic quality voice filled the

sanctuary with the kind of musical power it had probably not heard or felt in at least a generation.

We returned to the hotel at a little after 11:30, where we had less than an hour to get a bite to eat before leaving for Potsdam, the final chapter of our East German odyssey. Since Joan was not hungry and wanted to read a bit, I hustled over to the Stammhaus at the Grand Hotel for a reprise of Wednesday's lunch experience. This time, since I was alone, I sat at the bar in an almost empty establishment to enjoy a Kindl-Brotchen and a glass of very good German beer on draft, the regular kind this time instead of the Schwarzbier we had previously enjoyed. At 12:30, we were all on the bus again, this time with our excellent East German guides, Marianne and Sabina, on the way to Potsdam, a drive of 60-75 minutes from Berlin. Actually, there was a shorter route, but it was one which would have taken us through parts of West Germany, where the guides were not permitted to go. On the way to Potsdam, we passed Schonefeld, the East German airport, into which we might have flown if we had opted to fly KLM via Amsterdam to East Berlin. I asked Kurt Koch of the travel agency which had arranged our trip, and who was with us almost constantly throughout the week, whether that had been considered, and he confirmed the fact that he had suggested such a routing, but had been told that the route through Frankfurt and West Berlin was preferable.

Since we had some extra time on the drive to Potsdam, Sabina used the opportunity to give us a precis on the East German political and socio-economic systems. It was fascinating, because it confirmed what we had been part of for almost a week, although most of us had not really focused on it. We learned, among other things, the following:

1. East Germany has a population of about 17,000,000, with East Berlin, its largest city, having about 1,200,000, followed by Leipzig and Dresden. Potsdam, where we were heading, numbers about 150,000.

2. The DDR (Deutsches Demokratische Republik) is a poor country, having very few products which it can export profitably.

3. There are five major political parties, of which the Marxist-Leninist Party is the largest, having about 2,200,000 registered members. It is the party which controls the government and whose leader, Erich Honecker, is the head of that government. None of the other parties, each of which, ironically, has the word "Democratic" in its name, has more than 50,000 members.

4. There is no unemployment in East Germany, and the average take-home pay for a citizen, after deductions for medical insurance and pension benefits, is about 800-900 marks (\$440-\$495) monthly.

5. All citizens have unlimited medical insurance coverage

and can receive treatment at any hospital or from any doctor free of charge.

6. Education is free, all the way through our equivalent of college and professional school, although only the first ten years are compulsory. A student entering a professional school must sign an agreement committing himself or herself to work for three years wherever the government determines there is a labor shortage, and is then guaranteed a position in the professional field for which he or she has studied.

7. There is a generous pension system which assures each individual a lifetime of 70%-75% of his or her salary after retirement, at age 65 for men and 60 for women.

8. Professional people, like doctors and lawyers, work for the state and are paid by the state, rather than by private clients.

It was Saturday and, unfortunately, virtually all of the shops in Potsdam were, as elsewhere in the country, closed for the afternoon. All we could do, therefore, during the first portion of our visit, was to stroll through the walking street (reminiscent of the Kalverstraadt in Amsterdam and the Strøget in Copenhagen), sightsee and do a little window shopping. After that, we were joined by a new guide who was familiar with Potsdam and its attractions, and she quickly steered us to two palaces which are tourist attractions there.

The first bore the rather non-Germanic name Sans Souci, built by Frederick Wilhelm II (i. e., Frederick the Great) for his summertime pleasure. A sumptuously ornate structure with only twelve rooms, almost all of which were in Prussian rococo style, featured gold filigree on the walls and ceilings. We cut short our visit there, which was not easy because of the slow room-by-room pace of our inspection necessitated by the layout of the building, but our guide wanted to be sure that we got to the second palace before it closed at 4:00 P.M. That was the Ceceliahof Palace, where the Potsdam Agreement was signed in 1945, and since it was some distance away, we had to get back on the bus and drive to it. As it was, we did not get there until after 4:00, but the guides there had been persuaded by ours to keep the palace open so that we would not be disappointed.

Ceceliahof was built in the early 20th Century, and while it is by no means plebeian, it is relatively simple in comparison to the grandeur of Sans Souci. I was reminded of the contrast between the Vanderbilt Mansion and the Roosevelt home in Hyde Park, New York. We stood in the main conference room, which featured a circular conference table perhaps ten feet in diameter with at least a dozen chairs placed around it. The guide very carefully pointed out the chair which had been occupied by President Harry Truman, who had chaired the Potsdam Conference very shortly after Franklin Roosevelt's death had catapulted him into the White House. She also identified the seats occupied by Clement Attlee, who had ousted Winston Churchill from the Prime Minister's post in Great Britain's first post-war election, and the one in which Joseph Stalin had sat, representing

the U.S.S.R. throughout the Conference. Although basically unrelated to the purpose of our trip to East Germany, this visit was, I think, particularly meaningful to all of us, and many memories flooded back for me and many others in the group as we stood before the enlarged life-size photograph on the wall of the conference room, staring at Truman, Attlee and Stalin and their respective compatriots, Secretary of State James Byrnes and Admiral Leahy, Ernest Bevan, and Andrei Gromyko and Vyacheslav Molotov, respectively. Since returning from the trip, I have asked many people, some of whom were adults in 1945, to name the three Great-Powers signatories to the Potsdam Agreement, and it is amazing how many of them, almost instinctively, named Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin.

A fascinating aspect of the Ceceliahof visit came when we stopped in the palace's modest gift shop, where some of us bought picture post cards to send or take home. One of the items on sale was a small brochure about the palace and the Potsdam Agreement, and since it contained an excellent picture of the conference room, better than most of us could have taken, many of us bought the English language version of it for one mark. The text was a real eye-opener, making none too kind references to the United States and its plans, during World War II, to "conquer the world," citing as evidence of that assertion the fact that the U. S. had dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We were informed that the text had been composed in Russia after the war (the publication date was not ascertainable), and we were quickly reminded that the apparent accord reached in Potsdam had been replaced by suspicion and distrust soon afterward.

The trip back to East Berlin was relatively quiet and contemplative, with some using the time, in the growing darkness of the late afternoon, to catch up on lost sleep, while others, including me, used it to reflect on the momentous events of the preceding six days, in anticipation of the farewell dinner we would have back at the hotel and the recap of the trip which we had been told would follow. It would soon become apparent that reactions were very different, but more about that later.

Dinner was thoroughly enjoyable, with much picture taking and reminiscing. Each of us received a copy of "The Six Days of Destruction," by Elie Wiesel and Albert Friedlander, individually inscribed by Phil Hiat with a personal message, as well as a first day cover specially issued by the East German government in recognition of the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht - that may be a collector's item some day.

Then came the recap and evaluation, in the context of an open forum, in which we were asked to express our individual reactions to the trip and to evaluate what, if anything, we thought had been accomplished by our being in Germany. Uppermost in the minds of some was how we would publicize the trip when we got home, with many believing that an article in Reform Judaism would be the most effective way to get the message to the largest audience, although there was evident disagreement as to whether that article could be anything more than a travelogue, depending on the orientation of the author.

The reactions of the participants varied greatly, running the gamut from great satisfaction to great disappointment. For example,

1. Some thought that the trip had been very positive, that they understood the events of the era preceding World War II much better, and that the East Germans had made a real effort to make amends, even if only in a small way.

2. A number of people thought that we had been "used" by the East German government for propaganda purposes, and that the seemingly cordial treatment we had received was a smokescreen for an effort to secure "most favored nation" treatment for the GDR, to secure an invitation for Mr. Honecker to visit Washington, and to lay a favorable foundation for the East Germans' belated attempt to pay reparations to Jews and Jewish organizations.

3. Some thought that the East German Jewish community had put itself out to welcome us and to make us feel at home, despite our very different political and religious orientations.

4. Others thought that the East German Jewish community had been cold and unfriendly to us, even rude.

5. Some expressed great disappointment that virtually all of the programs we had attended were in the German language, and that no real effort had been made to provide us with English translations, either simultaneous or subsequent.

6. One member of the group told us that he had not felt really comfortable at any point during the trip, and that he felt like "dropping a bomb" on every building.

7. All agreed that the unfortunate absence of Alex Schindler had taken a very important element out of the trip, and that his insights and commentaries on a daily basis would have added depth and meaning to the experience.

For myself, I am very glad that I went to East Germany, because I had lived through the events leading up to Kristallnacht and had served my country during World War II, and had, frankly, forgotten some of the details. I went because I wanted to refresh my recollection, and because I wanted to avoid the trap of George Santayana's famous dictum that "those who fail to learn from the past are destined to relive it." In that respect, my goals were reasonably well met, because the recollections were sobering, unsettling and meaningful. Did I find the Germans (East or West) repentant and seeking forgiveness? No, but it would have been naive for me to have expected that - as Rabbi Stein had told us in West Berlin, there is little difference in the humanism of East and West Germans, and attitudes about anti-Semitism don't really change - but I choose to believe that the outward manifestations of the East Germans, as evidenced by the high-quality programs offered in commemoration of Kristallnacht, were genuine and well meant. Was I disturbed by the emphasis which the East Germans are placing on the role of the "fascists" in the terrible events of the pre-War and War years, and the distancing of themselves from

involvement in and responsibility for those events? A little, but I reminded myself that East Germany is a Communist country, and that the Soviet influence is so strong that a rewriting of history, in what George Orwell would have called "newspeak" should not be totally unexpected. I was very much encouraged, moreover, by the apparent interest of the general population in the events of the week, because many ordinary citizens appeared at all the programs we attended, and I choose to believe that their participation in them was voluntary, and furthered by a curiosity to learn more about the past and the lessons it has to teach. My feelings in that regard were bolstered by the considerable number of students of all ages who were among the participants, and the very great interest which had been shown in the Jewish exhibition to which I referred earlier. The Germans could easily have stayed away from that, for its components were grim, but they did not; in fact, their interest was so great that the life of the exhibition had been extended well beyond its original closing date, and there was talk of extending it even further.

Did I feel, as some of the group did, that we were being "used" by the East German government (and people)? Well, it would be naive for me to pretend that the East Germans did not derive some public relations benefit from our being there that week, or that they had not foreseen that this would be so, because visitors from the West, especially Jewish ones, are a rarity in the GDR, and it was clearly important for the country to have groups like ours there during the commemoration of Kristallnacht. If that meant that we were "used," then perhaps we were, but I don't regard that as a negative. And I

emphatically reject the thesis expressed by some that our visit had anything realistically to do with the GDR's desire for "most favored nation" status with the United States, or Mr. Honecker's hoped-for invitation to visit our country. Forty Reform Jews from various parts of the U. S., with no perceivable political clout or influence, were hardly the vehicle for the GDR to achieve those objectives.

Did I feel that the East Berlin Jewish community had been cold, indifferent or rude to us? Not at all. Some of them were reserved and not particularly communicative, but I am convinced that this was so because they, too, are unaccustomed to having Jews from the Western world visit them, and they were probably somewhat uncomfortable about the situation in which they found themselves with us, and were not quite sure how to interact with us. Many of them were quite open and friendly, however, and I believe that they reflected the feelings of the entire community. I think that they were very pleased that we had been there with them.

Will I ever go back to Germany? That is a question I must leave open for now. I am, however, pleased that I was able to be part of this historical mission.

HORACE A. STERN

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*New exhibition at Art Museum
shows the relationship between
the Jewish and Christian worlds.*

Judaic manuscripts from the Vatican

By Leonard W. Boasberg
Inquirer Staff Writer

02

Ulrich Fugger, who lived in Augsburg, Germany, in the 16th century, was something of a black sheep. For one thing, he was a Protestant, the only Protestant in his Catholic family. For another, he loved books far more than banking, the family business, and spent much of his time and money in collecting them.

Too much, apparently. In 1564, he went broke and moved to Heidelberg. He managed to hold on to his library, though. Twenty years later, when he died, he bequeathed it — including the 175 Hebrew manuscripts he had purchased — to the Palatine library in Heidelberg, already a celebrated repository of books and manuscripts.

In 1622, the troops of the Catholic Maximilian of Bavaria captured Protestant Heidelberg,

and a year later, the contents of the Palatine library were packed onto 60 wagons and sent to the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana — the Vatican Library.

The Vatican has been collecting Hebrew manuscripts since at least the 14th century, Hebrew being one of the three holy languages of the Bible. (The others are Latin and Greek.) Now, for the first time, the general public can see rare works previously available only to scholars who traveled to Rome, in a two-year traveling exhibition that opened yesterday at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Called "A Visual Testimony: Judaica from the Vatican Library," the exhibition displays 56 manuscripts, selected from the 801 Hebrew manuscripts in the Vatican's collection. Many of the works are embellished — in rich golds, blues, greens and reds — (See MANUSCRIPTS on 4-D)



This illustration from an 18th-century Hebrew translation of the homilies of Pope Clement XI is part of "A Visual Testimony," at the Art Museum through April 2.

Judaic manuscripts from the Vatican

MANUSCRIPTS, from 1-D
with hunters, knights, worshipers, mermaids, fanciful birds, strange beasts and grotesqueries.

Dedicated by Pope John Paul II, in September 1987 in Miami, the exhibition includes Bibles, biblical commentaries, prayer books, legal treatises, a 14th-century Hebrew translation of a 13th-century Latin medical textbook, a 15th-century Italian version of the 12th-century Spanish-Jewish philosopher Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, a 17th-century Italian riddle book, an 18th-century Hebrew translation of the homilies of Pope Clement XI and other manuscripts.

"They're tremendously exciting in terms of the visual beauty of some, the decorative calligraphy of others, the vellum bindings and the sheer age," said Innis Shoemaker, the museum's curator of prints, drawings and photographs, who for the last two weeks has supervised the setting up of the exhibition in the ground-floor Berman / Stieglitz Gallery.

The idea of bringing the Vatican's Hebrew treasures to the United States originated with Rabbi Philip Hiat of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Rabbi Hiat said that the Rev. Leonard E. Boyle, prefect of the Vatican Library, gave it his enthusiastic support. The exhibition, Rabbi Hiat noted, is in the spirit of *Nostra Aetate*, the 1962-1965 Second Vatican Council's declaration that Christians and Jews shared "a great spiritual patrimony" and that Jews bore no collective responsibility for the Crucifixion of Jesus.

"The exhibition recognizes that relations in the past between the [Roman Catholic] Church and Judaism were not always pristine," said Rabbi Hiat. Its purpose, he added, was not to ignore the past but to "improve on the improved relations that have existed these past 25 years."

The oldest manuscript on display is a *Sifra*, also known as *Torat Kohanim* — a rabbinic commentary on the

Book of Leviticus — from the Palatine collection. It is the oldest complete manuscript of rabbinic literature in existence, according to Philip E. Miller, librarian of Hebrew Union College in New York City, who selected most of the works on display. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition dates the *Sifra* from the eighth century, although Miller said it might date from a century or two later.

Another manuscript, which also may have been owned by Fugger, is called *Bereshit Rabba*, a collection of *midrashim* — rabbinical commentaries — in this case, on the Book of Genesis. Dating back to the 11th century, it is considered one of the Vatican Library's most important Hebrew texts because it is not only complete but in quite good shape.

The largest manuscript, 21½ by 15½ inches, is a Bible by the scribe Isaac ben Simon ha-Levi, dated 1294. It features birds, animals and geometric patterns made by the technique of micrography — miniature writing — which is unique to Jewish illumination (colorful illustration). It came to the Vatican library from the collection of the dukes of Urbino in 1657. The smallest manuscript is an exquisitely illuminated *Festival Liturgy*, 3¼ by 2½ inches, dating from the third quarter of the 15th century.

One of the more curious manuscripts is the 15th-century *Mishneh Torah* (*The Repetition of the Torah*), in which Maimonides reflects on how man, through study and prayer, can attain the love of God. The artist, presumably non-Jewish, illuminated the book's opening with jousting knights, who symbolized a courtly love quite different from what Maimonides had in mind and one of the many professions from which Jews in those days were barred.

The Vatican Library dates to the time of Pope Nicholas V (1447-55), although Hebrew works appear nearly a century before in papal inventories. But how do all those illus-

trations of birds and beasts and humans square with the Second Commandment's proscription on the making of graven images?

"It depends when and where you are living," explained Miller, the Hebrew Union College librarian. "Some societies that we might call strict constructionist took the commandment very literally. Later on, with the renewal of classical learning, especially in Italy in the Renaissance, you had a more liberal attitude which looked at the second half of the verse — 'you shall not make these things lest you worship them.' Since there was no intention of worshipping them, there was theoretically no objection to them."

The exhibition will be at the Art Museum until April 2, when it goes to the Harvard Semitic Museum before returning to the Vatican. On Feb. 20 the museum is sponsoring a symposium, "The Art of the Manuscript," with lectures by Miller; Elizabeth Beatson of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton; Evelyn Cohen, curator of Jewish art at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, and Michael Signer, professor of Jewish history at the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. The fee is \$15 for members and seniors, \$20 for nonmembers; preregistration is required. On March 12, a family day will include Jewish folk tales told by Syd Lieberman, concerts, workshops, films and discussions. The program is free with admission to the museum. For further information on museum events, call 787-5455.

On March 5, Rabbi Marc J. Rosenstein, principal of Akiba Hebrew Academy, will discuss what the existence of the Vatican Judaica collection tells about the relationship between the Jewish and Christian worlds. The free lecture will take place at the Kaiserman branch of the Jewish Community Centers, City Avenue and Haverford Road. For information, call 896-7770.

Leisure

At Art Museum**Rare Manuscripts Link Christian and Jewish Faiths**

By ERIN C. WALSH

What is micrography?
What is a Babylonian Sifra?
And just who was Moses
Maimonides? Not the usual
dinner table conversation.
Sounds like the queries of

scholars. And it is.

On a recent visit to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, I browsed through the fascinating exhibition, "A Visual Testimony: Judaica from the Vatican Library," with the helpful guidance of Innis Shoemaker, senior curator of prints, drawings and photographs. After stops in Miami, Houston, Los Angeles, Memphis, and New York, the exhibit is here through April 2 and then goes to Harvard.

Prepared for tour by the Center for Fine Arts in Miami, the exhibition consists of 56 rare illuminated (decorated) and non-

Dating as far back as the eighth century through the 18th century, the manuscripts from the Vatican Library have until now only been available to scholars who traveled to Rome.

illuminated Hebrew and Latin manuscripts chosen from more than 800 such manuscripts in the Vatican Library. Dating as far back as the eighth century through the 18th century, they have until now only been available to scholars who traveled to Rome.

I am not a scholar. I do not know Hebrew. And I never heard of a Babylonian Sifra. But the interesting thing about this exhibit is, although at first I was not overly excited at the sight of 56 books opened onto cradles enclosed in glass cases, I was somehow drawn into the wonder of it all — the wonder of actually seeing the work of learned scholars who studied *hundreds* of years ago, and the wonder of how intertwined the Christian and Jewish traditions really are.

The word "manuscript," as do most of our words, comes

works were done on vellum, or animal skin, which has helped the preservation of the pages over time. Unique to the Hebrew writings is the decoration of the first word of a section of text (rather than the first letter as in Latin text) due to the absence of capital letters in Hebrew scripts — something I didn't know about Hebrew, but was glad to learn.

A few of my favorites, which perhaps can only be appreciated if seen with the naked eye, are illuminated with beautiful art and rich in theological tradition.

One favorite is a tiny little book by a Jewish mystic from the 14th century with one full-page illustration of a man standing in prayer in a temple. The page is small but the man's devotion in prayer seems larger than life.

Or there's a book of sermons of Pope Clement XI,

book written in 14th century Italy that was translated into Hebrew, writings of ancient Greek philosophers also translated into Hebrew, beautiful bibles, prayer books — so many brilliant pages.

One suggestion I have is to buy the fully illustrated catalogue that accompanies the exhibit. Selling for \$25 in the Museum Shop, it is worth every penny and explains the history of the manuscripts in depth. Actually, after studying the catalogue, I may be making a second trip. There is much to learn and enjoy — scholar or not.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is sponsoring various programs in conjunction with "A Visual Testimony: Judaica from the Vatican Library." Among the programs are:

Catholic Social Services of the Archdiocese, Senior Adult Services, archdiocesan office center, is sponsoring a film, lecture and project, "The Art of Illumination," Tuesday, Feb. 7. All materials provided; no experience necessary. Call 587-3581/3582.

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Overbrook, is sponsoring a lecture, "Images of Letter Forms," Sunday, March 5, at 3 p.m.

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enclosed in glass cases, I was somehow drawn into the wonder of it all — the wonder of actually seeing the work of learned scholars who studied *hundreds* of years ago, and the wonder of how intertwined the Christian and Jewish traditions really are.

The word "manuscript," as do most of our words, comes from the Latin word *manus* (hand) and *scriptus* (written). Perhaps the most fascinating realization is that the beautiful calligraphy, the rich reds, blues, greens and golds that decorate the pages in the shape of flowers, birds and butterflies, were all carefully crafted by hand. In our fast-paced, laser-printer computer age, certainly we can stand in awe.

After centuries and centuries, the colors are still as brilliant as ever. Many of the

theological tradition.

One favorite is a tiny little book by a Jewish mystic from the 14th century with one full-page illustration of a man standing in prayer in a temple. The page is small but the man's devotion in prayer seems larger than life.

Or there's a book of sermons of Pope Clement XI, elected pope on 1700, with one page in Latin and the other in Hebrew, with intricate 18th century Roman drawings on facing pages.

A biblical commentary, done by two brothers in 14th century Paris, shows the interchange between the Christian and Jewish faiths. Richard and Andrew, canons of the Abbey of St. Victor, specialized in writing commentaries on the Old Testament scriptures and consulted constantly with Hebrew scholars in Paris.

I could go on describing a riddle book written by a 17th century student, a medical

center, is sponsoring a film, lecture and project, "The Art of Illumination," Tuesday, Feb. 7. All materials provided; no experience necessary. Call 587-3581/3582.

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Overbrook, is sponsoring a lecture, "Images of Letter Forms," Sunday, March 5, at 3 p.m. Renowned calligrapher Fritz Eberhardt will discuss calligraphy, printing and bookbinding. Call 667-3394, ext. 280.

The Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs will conduct its annual archdiocesan PER workshop for all parish ecumenical representatives at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Feb. 12, from 3:15 to 8 p.m. Featured will be a video introduction and tour of the exhibit. Call 587-3624.

Chestnut Hill College will sponsor an academic lecture in March. For more information, call 248-7000.

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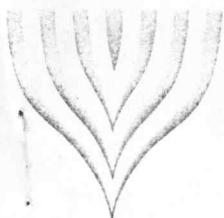
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FILE COPY

RABBI PHILIP HIAT
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
SPECIAL PROJECTS

January 25, 1989
19 Shevat 5749

Mr. Bernard Hyatt
Publisher
The Jewish Advocate
1168-70 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02134

Dear Mr. Hyatt:

Your January 5th issue carried a story by your Staff Writer, Bette Keva, captioned "Origin of Harvard Vatican Exhibit Provokes Debate." Her opening statement, "When the Vatican brings its awesome display of Judaica to the Semitic Museum", reflects a paucity of knowledge regarding her subject.

The Vatican brings nothing to the Semitic Museum at Harvard, rather the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Center for the Fine Arts of Miami co-sponsored this exhibit in cooperation with the National Committee for the Vatican Exhibition. They are the group that brings the exhibit to your fair city.

If, as your reporter states, the exhibit is a shocking act of Chuzpah, then it is "Jewish Chuzpah" not Roman Catholic. The only thing the Vatican and its Biblioteca Apostolica did was to permit the organized exhibition to travel to the United States with no strings attached.

The second misstatement refers to the catalogue that accompanies the exhibit. We would surmise from Ms. Keva's report that so great was this outcry that the exhibitors were forced to produce the catalogue as a rejoinder. The opposite is the fact. The catalogue 18 months to to be prepared and edited, and 6 months to be produced. As editor of the catalogue, I state without reservation that the catalogue is in no shape, manner or form a response to the ad taken by this ad hoc committee. The statement or illusion to it in your story is without foundation. Anyone involved in museums, libraries or scholarly works knows full well that catalogues aid in understanding an exhibit and are a source of enrichment.

ENDOWED BY MOUNT NEBOH CONGREGATION

Mr. Bernard Hyatt
Publisher, The Jewish Advocate

January 25, 1989

Page 2

Thirdly, Dr. Philip Miller, my colleague and curator of the exhibit in several cities was asked by Moment Magazine to write its story on the exhibit. It was Moment Magazine, and not Dr. Miller, that gave their caption on his story, "Theirs or Ours, a Defense of the Vatican Hebrew Manuscripts."

What the thrust of your page one story indicates is that some self-annointed spokesperson has decided to create a cause celebre regarding the exhibit as if some sinister motive and/or ill-gotten gain were at the core of the enterprise. This is pure nonsense.

The Advocate sought the independent corroboration of Dr. Bernard Cooperman of Harvard University. For this you should be congratulated, for it brings a breath of fresh air to some of the misstatements and allegations in the story.

The demand for the return of these manuscripts so that Jewish scholars can study them shows a total lack of history and continuity. Since 1877, Jewish scholars have had access to the Judaica at the Vatican Library. Scholars such as Zunz, Berliner, Hildesheimer, Bacher, Cassuto, Urbach, Finkelstein, Mirsky, and Schalom have published major Jewish studies on this research at the Vatican Library.

Since 1950, the entire collection of the Vatican Library on microfilm was made available through Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. Portions of and the entire collection of the Vatican can be seen in major Judaic libraries in the United States including, The Jewish Theological Seminary, Harvard, The Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Reproductions in art form of some of this material is available through Belser Publishers of West Germany, the sole agent for reproducing Vatican Library material. Some of this material is on sale in poster form at the Jewish University and National Library as well as the Bet Hatfuzot Museum in Israel.

Dr. Bezalel Narkis of the Hebrew Univeristy Center for Jewish Art has reserachers studying and cataloguing illuminations at the Vatican Library for the Index of Jewish art at the Hebrew University.

Mr. Bernard Hyatt
Publisher, The Jewish Advocate

January 25, 1989

Page 3

It is not some dark secret being exposed for the first time by this so called group. As the one who was responsible for this endeavor, and who signed the agreement with the Vatican Library, I feel compelled to respond to the many misstatements and ill-conceived notions one gets from reading your writers account and the conclusions she reaches.

This exhibit is not a whitewash. It recognizes that relations in the past between the Church and Judaism has been adversarial. Now, however, in attempting to build good relations one does not ignore the past, but faces it squarely and asks, how can we improve things. Surely not by inflaming passions with half-truths that produce negative results.

I trust this letter will receive the same exposure in your paper as did the original story.

Most cordially,



Rabbi Philip Hiat

cc: Father Leonard Boyle
Mr. Bob Frankel
Rabbi David Mersky
Mr. Philip Perlmutter
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler



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Memo

From the desk of

RABBI PHILIP HIAT

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Dear Leonard

The Dutch Article is from the Jewish Museum in Amsterdam.

I received the letter from Mr Frankel.
It is hazy can you enlighten me.

He tells me what you "might have said" not what you "actually said".

Please guide me.

Your request to Howard will be fulfilled with joy.

Philip

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

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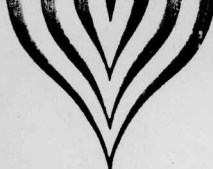
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fulfilled with joy.

Philip

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

February 27, 1989

Father Leonard Boyle
Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
00120 Vatican City
Europe

Dear Father Boyle:

It was good to speak with you last Thursday.

As I understand from our conversation, any filming or video taping of the exhibition material is to be done only at the point that the manuscripts are being packed or unpacked. I further understand that such filming or video taping is to be done under supervision of the professional staff member of the Center for the Fine Arts who accompanies the material when it travels. We will of course, with your permission, allow access to anyone outside the staff of the museum.

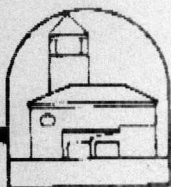
Enjoy your trip to Philadelphia. I will speak with you when you return to Rome.

Sincerely,

Robert H. Frankel (a&R) for-

Robert H. Frankel
Director

cc: Rabbi Philip Hiat



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LIST
OF PHOTOCOPIES IN THE INSTITUTE

Part III

HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS IN THE VATICAN

by.

N. ALLONY and D. S. LOEWINGER

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PREFACE

The Institute of Hebrew Manuscripts of the Ministry of Education and Culture was sponsored by the former Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Mr. David Ben-Gurion, twelve years ago.

During the last twelve years the Institute has collected photocopies of mss. in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the Vatican. We also possess photocopies of Hebrew mss. from Australia, Lebanon, Poland, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.

The Institute endeavoured to discover the manuscripts and to list and copy them for filing in Jerusalem by a number of photographic methods: microfilms (the majority), photostats, enlargements, microsheets, coloured microfilms, infra-red etc., the choice always depending on the best way of reproducing the mss. for the preservation of their contents and of facilitating their consultation by scholars.

Our first publication, was a list of those Hebrew mss. recorded and photocopied by the Institute in Austria and Germany, which are not included in the catalogues published by A. Z. Schwarz and M. Steinschneider.

Our second publication lists the Hebrew manuscripts photocopied for the Institute in Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Spain and Switzerland.

The present publication, our third, is a catalogue concerning the Vatican Library. This Library, one of the best in Europe, contains, moreover, many collections of Hebrew mss. The Vatican is the sixth in importance in this field after England, France, U.S.S.R., Italy, and Germany. With the exception of some synagogal mss., the Institute possesses photocopies of all the Vatican collections, for which it is much indebted to the Vatican authorities.

In the Vatican Library are upwards of 800 mss. in no less than eight collections. Only one of these is in the name of the Vatican. Since the collections are not generally known to scholars we list them here, with the numbers of mss. in each.

1. Vatican	619 mss.
2. Urbinati	59 "
3. Neofiti	51 "
4. Rossiana	38 "
5. Borgiana	19 "
6. Barberini	13 "
7. Chigiana	1 "
8. Ottoboniana	1 "

Total	801 mss.
-------	----------

To date, there is no general catalogue of Hebrew mss. in the Vatican¹ and scholars draw their material, almost exclusively, from Assemani's Catalogue, published over 200 years ago. Printed lists of parts of the so-called Vatican collection do exist, together with similar lists of the Urbinati and Neofiti collections. But, for the present, the remainder of the collections is uncatalogued. The following are the catalogues in existence at present²:

1. Assemani ³	(a) Vatican	453 mss.
	(b) Urbinati	59 "
	(c) Samaritan	2 "
2. Mai	Additions to Assemani's Catalogue	78 "
3. Sacerdote	Neofiti mss.	51 "
4. Cassuto	(a) Preface on the history of the Palatina Vaticana	
	(b) Description of mss. in the Vatican Collection	115 "
5. Ben-Menahem	(a) Vatican	34 "
	(b) Urbinati	1 "

In the various printed works on the Vatican collection, 531 codices have been described. There are also about 200 fragments in one file, many of considerable importance, which have as yet not been catalogued. Hebrew mss. in the five collections (4-8), which contain some 70 codices, are not given in the published lists. The present catalogue includes in one list not only the unlisted mss, but all the mss. in the Vatican, for the convenience of scholars.

The important collection of Hebrew mss. in the Vatican has been assembled from various sources and in many ways:

1. Mss. acquired over a long period of time.
2. Donations from colleges and convents, e. g. Maronite and Neophyte colleges, and the Borgiani convents, the Rossiana mss. are from a Jesuit House in Vienna.
3. Mss. which were willed and donated by important members of the Church e. g. Zelada, Assemani, Pope Pius IVth etc.⁴

1. Two scholars have attempted to compile a general catalogue of the Hebrew Mss. in the Vatican: A. Freiman and U. Cassuto. Other lists can be found in the Vatican between the Latin Mss. See Steinschneider, Vorlesungen, p. 71.
2. See Literature (Hebrew and non-Hebrew).
3. The author was Antonio Costanzi. See Steinschneider, HB, I (1869), p. 91.
4. See Steinschneider, l. c., p. 70.

4. Mss. of scribes who worked for the Vatican Library over the years and also of Jewish converts⁵ invited to work for the library, which made use of their knowledge of Jewish literature, e. g. Jacob de Nolah, Jonah from Zefat, etc.
5. The Urbino City Library collection⁶ which was transferred to the Vatican in 1658, and had been in existence in Urbino for 200 years before this date; this is known from a general inventory⁷ of the collection made in the second half of the 15th century. The number of mss. in this collection is 59 and it was listed in 1752 in Assemani's Catalogue. In a periodical published a hundred years later, however, this collection is claimed to have 60 mss. It seems that the Urbinati collection belonged at one time to a rich Jew, since two thirds of the mss. are listed under the name of one owner: Menahem ben Aharon from Volterra.⁸

6. The collection of the Palatina Library, from Heidelberg, which numbers 288 mss., has an interesting history described by different people. Here we present one version by A. Berliner¹⁰ (translated from German):

"Here you will find many Hebrew mss. from Heidelberg. In the disastrous year 1391, the Jews in the Rhineland and Neckar suffered many persecutions. Ruprecht II expelled them and confiscated, as was the custom in those times, all their possessions. The valuable Hebrew mss. which he took from them by force, were donated to the University Library in Heidelberg, founded 5 years previously.

During the 30 Years' War these Hebrew mss. were taken with other valuables to Rome, where they form an important part of the Vatican Hebrew Collection. There are 287 Hebrew mss. in the collection, and among them very precious mss. of the Bible and the Talmud and many unique ones. Some of them are from the famous Pfalz Library (Heidelberg) but most were the property of the expelled and tortured Jews.

I would like to draw your attention to something strange and interesting. On some of the mss. there are the stamps of the Palatina Heidelberg Library, beneath which is also found a red stamp of the French Republic. How can this be explained?

In the peace treaty signed in Tolentino in 1797, a clause was inserted, that the Pope had to deliver 500 mss., to be chosen by French

5. I. c., p. 71.

6. I. c., p. 70. ;45 אלוני, רשימת ספרים כתבי-יד, עמ' 70.

7. *Giornale degli Archivi Toscana*, VII (1836), p. 152.

8. See Allony I. c., p. 45-46 (37 Mss. and not 26 according to Steinschneider, I. c., p. 70).

9. See Cassouto, *I manoscritti* pp. 1-16

10. *Gesammelte Schriften*, Frankfurt a. M. 1913, pp. 8-9

Commissioners, to the French Government. Consequently, between 1779 and 1815, some Hebrew mss. from the Palatina Heidelberg collection together with other Oriental mss. were in the National Library in Paris.

In 1815, after Napoleon's defeat, the victors demanded that the French return all the valuable art objects that had been taken during the war. The Pope was the first to ask his treasures to be returned, whereupon the Heidelberg University declared that if the Pope asked for his art objects back he must also be prepared to return those things which belonged to other places.

The Prussian Government took up the matter and pressed for fulfilment of the treaty. With King Friedrich Wilhelm III as intermediary, they succeeded in arranging that the Pope would hand over to the Heidelberg University Library 890 mss. The French Library, however, was not ready to comply until the Prussian grenadiers had entered and Prof. S. Wilken, Pro-Rector of the Heidelberg University, had examined the Mss. in the Paris Library. together with the Pope's commissioners".

It is fortunate that Prof. Wilken was neither a Semitic nor an Oriental expert and did not examine this section of the collection. Thus, although many classical mss. were taken back to Heidelberg, the Hebrew mss. were returned to the Vatican, where they have always been kept in excellent condition.

There are a large number of important hebrew munuscripts in the Vatican collection.

The oldest mss. are: 8th century (No. 66); 10th century (Nos. 32, 60 and 615); 11th century (Nos. 30, 31 and 269). The bulk of the Hebrew mss. are from the 14th and 16th centuries, and few are later than the 16th century.

One ms., a Hebrew-Italian dictionary, has disappeared. This was due to the transfer of the mss. from the Vatican to Paris during Napoleonic times, as related in Berliner's story.

We should like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and thanks to Cardinal A. Albareda, the former Director of the Library, who not only gave us permission to inspect all the collections and to make microfilms for the Institute, but also let us publish this catalogue, and in the period of our work there, rendered much help to the Institute and greatly facilitated our efforts. We must also mention here Msg. Van-Lantschoot, Vice-Director of the Library and Head of the Reading Room, whose help was of great value during the inspection of the mss. Special thanks are due to Cardinal E. Tisserant, who aided us in all aspects of our work and even assisted us in acquiring microfilms of the Hebrew mss. in the Ambrosiana Library in Milan, which are now in the Institute's collections.

The authors will be grateful to scholars and librarians for any notes on Hebrew mss. known to them and not mentioned here. The authors are well aware that their list is not complete, and that many of the listed mss. are not identified. Any help in their identification for the benefit of research and scholarship will be greatly appreciated.

The authors take this opportunity to thank the Jewish National and University Library, which supplied them with bibliographical books, and with its vast experience, helped them in the preparation of this publication.

N. Allony and D. S. Loewinger

Jerusalem, 6th Shevat 5723
1st February 1963

ment in the peace process's primary objective. It is for him and for Arens' counterattack against the onslaught. In particular, Washington back on the fence.

that formidable task, it must produce a political as a basic agenda for coming administration. It is to believe that the talk to the PLO is still and that even a semi-flexibility will bring away from Yasir Arafat.

analysts disagree, claim-irican decision is a strange one. According to unsuccessful attempts to convince Washington that it is impossible, in either long range, to achieve a

(Continued on Page 22)

al Pacts Israel

Texas and 12 other states are participating in the latest wave of U.S.-Israeli cooperation: trade and cultural accords. The others are California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, Virginia and Wisconsin.

In all but Connecticut, the state's governor or his designate signed the agreement. In Connecticut, the state's house of Representatives approved the accord, which did not require the governor's signature.

New York is in the process of negotiating an accord, said Milton Elbogen, Israel's deputy trade commissioner to the United States.

All but two of the states'

(Continued on Page 22)

Origin of Harvard's Vatican Exhibit Provokes Debate

By Bette Keva
Advocate Staff

When the Vatican brings its awesome display of Judaica to the Semitic Museum of Harvard University this spring, will it be viewed as a warm and embracing gesture of brotherhood between Christian and Jew, or will it be seen as a shocking act of *chutzpah* of the Roman Catholic Church flaunting its plundered booty?

"A Visual Testimony: Judaica from the Vatican Library," has been touring the United States for more than a year.

Its 56 Hebrew manuscripts ranging from the 8th to the 18th centuries have been described by *The New York Times* as "dazzling and enlightening . . . showing not only the development of thought within Judaism, but a millennium of cultural and intellectual exchange between Christians and Jews."

Nitza Rosovsky, curator for the Vatican exhibit at Harvard, is thrilled that the relatively small Semitic Museum was able to acquire it before it returns to Rome.

But Dr. Manfred Lehmann, a leading collector of Judaica, is far from enthused. He bought full-page advertisements in *The Miami Herald* and *The New York Times* in the fall opposing the exhibit when it toured those cities.

In an appeal directly to Pope John Paul II, the advertisement, endorsed by the Committee for the Recovery of Jewish Manuscripts of Miami Beach, Florida, demands: "Return your Hebrew manuscripts to the Jewish people — their rightful owners."

The ad states that the manuscripts in the Vatican Library have their roots in the Jewish communities in Europe which were sacked and destroyed through pogroms. For centuries the Church engaged in an ongoing "cultural genocide so thorough that only one single handwritten copy of the Talmud survived the popes' crusade."

The ad refers to the Palatine Collection, part of the exhibit, which had its roots in the sacking of the Jewish community of Heidelberg in the 14th century. It also refers to the "Reginenses" collection which, Lehmann states, is composed of manuscripts which Sweden's King Gustav II Adolf plundered in the 30 Year War after the sacking of the Jews of Prague.

"These manuscripts should be housed in the National Library in Jerusalem," declares the ad.

Lehmann has created such a stir that the 100-page color

catalogue for the exhibit gives a lengthy description of how the manuscripts found their way to the Vatican.

In addition, Philip E. Miller wrote an article in the November issue of *Moment Magazine* entitled: *Theirs or Ours? A Defense of the Vatican Collection of Hebrew Manuscripts*.

Miller states that out of 8,000 manuscripts, printed books and maps in the Palatine collection, there are only 700 Jewish manuscripts.

Lehmann's ad claims these had been confiscated in 1391 at the time of the expulsion of the Jewish community from Heidelberg. Miller states that in Heidelberg in 1391 there were only 12 Jewish families. "It is highly unlikely that a Jewish community of this size would possess an enormously valuable collection of nearly 700 manuscripts."

While rabbinic scholar Abraham Berliner in 1877 attributed Hebrew manu-

(Continued on Page 20)

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scripts in the Palatine Collection to the despoiled Jewish community of Heidelberg, Miller points out that the local government awarded the booty to the university, which later sold it.

"It is likely that the books were . . . either ransomed back to the Jews or sold. They had little value for the Christians, who could not read them," states Miller.

As for the manuscripts of the Reginenses collection, "there is absolutely no evidence that they had been confiscated from the Jewish community of Prague. The Latin and Greek manuscripts in Queen Christina's collection number 2,400. The sum total of Hebrew manuscripts is nine," Miller states, adding that he had never before heard of the Prague story and devoted much time to tracking it down. "Consequently, I now believe it was made up by the anonymous author of this advertisement."

Dr. Lehmann told the *Advocate* he is a scholar in the field of biblical history and rabbinic literature. He is president of the Manfred and Anne Lehmann Foundation. He has a masters degree from John Hopkins University, a doctorate in talmudic literature, and is an ordained Orthodox rabbi, he said, although he has never practiced as a rabbi. He has authored dozens of scholarly papers and several books, including *Torah From Kenya*, *Critical Attention of Rashi* and some 40 papers on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

His foundation, however, is a hobby. He is a telecommunications executive for an international company with offices in New York City, London and Kenya.

Lehmann's Committee for the Recovery of Jewish Manuscripts is spearheading a petition drive addressed to Reverend Pio Laghi, the apostolic nunciature, for the return of the sacred books to the National Library in Jerusalem. Hundreds of petitions are being sent to 200 branches of Young Israel throughout the country, according to Lehmann.

Rabbi Ephraim Sturm, executive vice-president of the National Council of Young Israel is at the center of the petition drive.

Sturm, who has seen the

exhibit, which is now at the New York Public Library, calls it "almost awesome." Looking at the displays, "you get a certain thrill and pride," he added.

"We are not talking about one manuscript in the Vatican. There are many that we know and they know and everyone knows belong to the Jewish people," he said. "None of these manuscripts were voluntarily given up."

Wouldn't it be better to allow these bridges between Christian and Jew to be mended, he was asked.

"People have called me and said I shouldn't do this. I shouldn't be nasty to the Vatican. But there are two kinds of life. There is the pragmatic type of life where you do the best at any given moment, and there is the type of life that is beyond pragmatism. There are certain overriding truths, cardinal truths.

"Henry Kissinger in his book writes that the Soviets say that truth is that which works. For us truth isn't always what works," offered Rabbi Sturm.

Rabbi Gershon Gewirtz of Young Israel of Brookline said that he was not aware of the petition drive.

"There is no evidence that any of this stuff in any way was stolen from Jews," stated Dr. Bernard Cooperman, Harvard University professor of Italian and Jewish history. There is no reason to believe that it came from the 13th century expulsion of Jews, he claims.

"So this is all nonsense," said Cooperman, who will deliver the introductory lecture when the exhibit opens at Harvard. "The collection is enormously important. It includes the oldest complete rabbinic text we have. The Vatican Library sent out some of the most important books they have."

Most of the exhibit is post-Renaissance, said Cooperman.

He praised Cardinal Bernard Law and the Boston Archdiocese for providing the impetus to bringing the exhibit to Cambridge.

"It's safe to say 98 percent of all museum and book material, rare Judaica included, is stolen. In Italy, one of the largest collections of Judaica,

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"We are practically booked on Sundays for the exhibit and we are trying to organize joint visits by bus. The whole idea is to improve relations. It is a big task," she concluded.

RETURN THESE PRECIOUS HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS TO THEIR RIGHTFUL OWNERS: THE JEWISH PEOPLE!



The traveling exhibition of sacred Hebrew manuscripts held by the Vatican is now, after a year-long country-wide tour, reaching New York. The people of New York deserve an insight into the true background of this collection.

It is well known that the Church, for centuries, as part of her deliberate plan to eradicate Judaism, engaged in a systematic campaign to seize Hebrew books and destroy Jewish libraries. This was done for several reasons. Firstly, to create and maintain the absurd notion that Judaism, after the death of Jesus, was a sterile and unproductive religion. Secondly, to deprive Jews of their means of education and thereby to throttle the unusually high level of Jewish scholarship. Thirdly, to search in Jewish writings for some glib arguments which could be turned against Judaism and force conversions to Christianity. Lastly, while most of the Hebrew manuscripts thus wrested by force from the persecuted Jewish communities were burned at stake, or hidden in churches or monasteries. Some were torn apart to be sold, retail, parchment folio by parchment folio, as book binding material—a lucrative business in the Middle Ages.

Pope Urban II unleashed blood-thirsty mobs for the First Crusade in 1096 who promptly slaughtered thousands of outstanding Jewish scholars in communities along the Rhine River and destroyed their libraries. In 1244, under Pope Innocent IV, twenty-four cart loads of Hebrew manuscripts, mainly copies of the Talmud, were burned in public in Paris. Pope Paul IV, before he died in 1559, destroyed every Hebrew book owned by the Jews of Rome. His successor, Pope Pius V, punished any Jew caught still owning a single book.

This on-going cultural genocide was so thorough that only one single hand written copy of the Talmud survived the Popes' crusade against Jewish writings—the famous Munich Talmud manuscript.

Can anyone imagine that Jews, thus constantly fighting to preserve their sacred books, would sell or give even one of their precious possessions to some Italian noblemen, to be "donated" by them to the Vatican, as the promoters of the Vatican exhibition want us to believe? NO! Every manuscript in the Vatican has its blood-drenched roots in pogroms and massacres of Jewish communities throughout the centuries. The heroic and ultimately successful fight for survival of the Jews to preserve their unbelievably rich religious literature, is evidence of their superior intellectual prowess and religious piety and, of course, of Divine Providence.

In view of the tragic trail of suffering and persecution which these precious books represent in Jewish history, it must be considered highly inappropriate to use them as a kind of traveling circus, for the financial gain of the Vatican and the Reform promoters of the exhibition. Certainly, the whole enterprise betrays gross insensitivity to Jewish suffering and pride.

Now let us look more closely at the composition of the Vatican collection.

The so-called Palatine Collection of Hebrew books has its roots in the sacking of the Jewish community of Heidelberg in the 14th century.

Almost two hundred years ago, France, Germany and the Vatican were still fighting over who should hold them. But while neither party could claim title, no one can deny the primary claim to them by Jews.

The "Reginenses" collection in the Vatican represents the Hebrew manuscripts which Sweden's King Gustav II Adolf plundered during the 30 Year War after sacking the Jewish community of Prague. His daughter, Queen Christina, brought them with her to Rome.

The most sinister group of Hebrew manuscripts is the so-called Neofiti Collection. These were consigned by the Vatican to a special building where renegade Jews, most of them converted by coercion or bribery, were kept. They were not used, as the exhibition promoters want us to believe, to "educate" these disgraced Jews, but to be used to induce them to fabricate ammunition against Judaism in rigged disputations which rabbis were forced to attend.

The exquisite manuscripts, painstakingly penned by skilled Jewish scribes and artists, were produced generation after generation to be used for religious devotion and Jewish scholarship. The mint condition of most of them proves that they were snatched from their owners before their purpose could be fulfilled for any length of time.

We call on Pope John Paul II to let them return to their rightful owners, the Jews, to be used again for the purposes for which our ancestors intended them. These manuscripts should be housed in the National Library in Jerusalem, again the center of Jewish scholarship, in the midst of the Jewish capital, again a thriving center of Jewish religious devotion and practice.

While many other expectations which Jews everywhere had of the Pope have been dashed, this gesture would bring about a small measure of atonement and conciliation which would not be costly to the Vatican in either theological or political terms. While it is impossible for the Church to atone fully for the centuries of persecution of the Jews and Judaism—reaching from early pogroms to the Vatican's silence or collaboration during the Holocaust—the return of the Hebrew manuscripts now in its custody, would bring a degree of goodwill and honour to the Pope. We sincerely hope the Pope will seize this opportunity to fulfill our hope.

**"FOR FROM ZION SHALL AGAIN GO OUT THE TORAH,
AND THE WORD OF GOD AGAIN FROM JERUSALEM"**

ISAIAH II:3, MICAH IV:2

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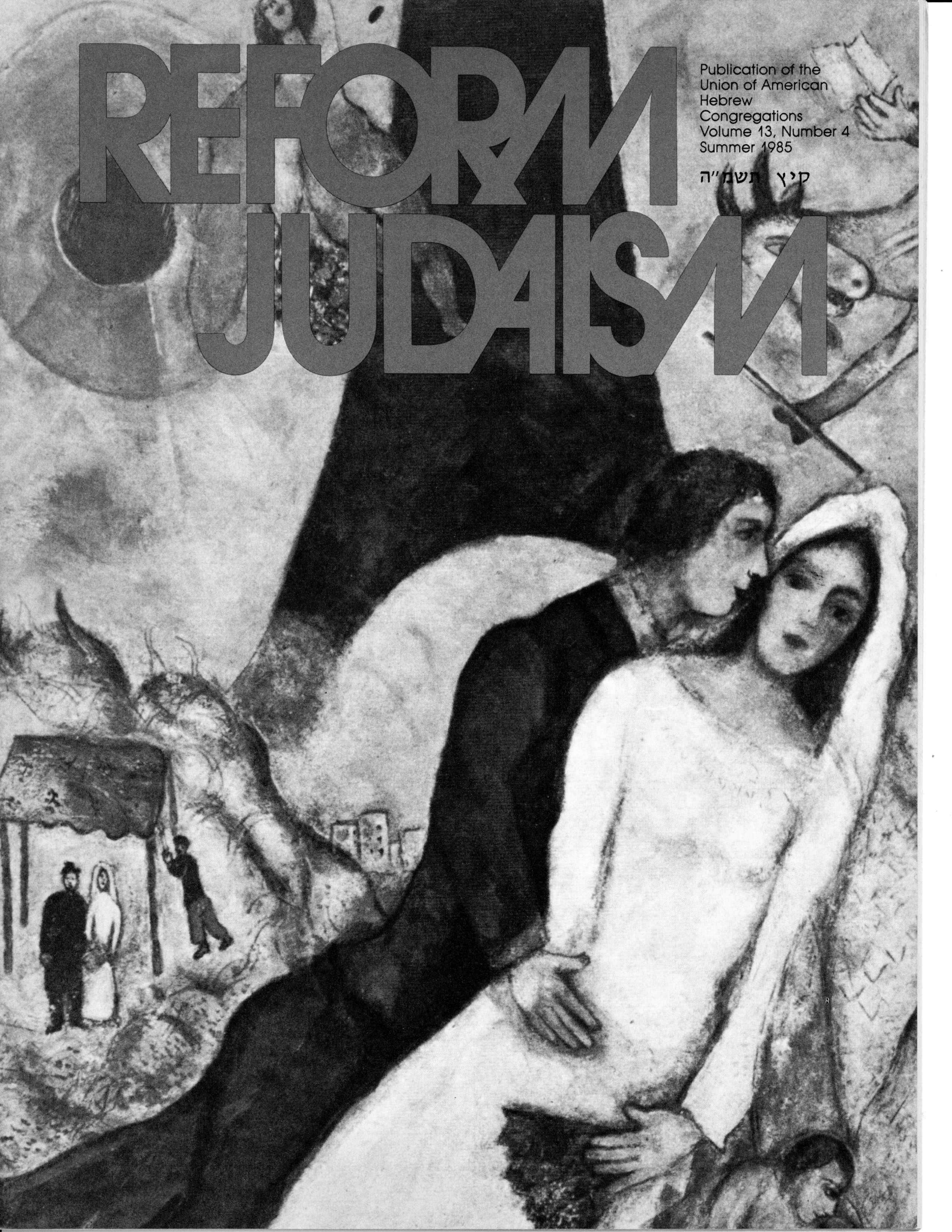
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About Our Cover

The *Bride and Groom of the Eiffel Tower* was painted by Marc Chagall in 1938, midway through his astonishing seventy-five-year artistic career. When he died last March at the age of ninety-seven he left behind an enormous body of work that included oil paintings, stained-glass windows, tapestries, book illustrations, and theater designs, among other works. While his frequent use of traditional Jewish symbols drawn from his Hassidic upbringing endeared him to Jews around the world, his depiction of the crucifixion of Jesus disturbed many as well. Asked about the mystical, ethereal atmosphere that pervades his work, the artist once responded that he felt "as though I've been born between heaven and earth." At the time of his death he still devoted his days to painting, lithography, and writing. His legacy stands as an enduring monument to a vanished world.

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Letter from the Editor

With the rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev, hope has been rekindled that the Kremlin may relax its exit quotas and allow Soviet Jews to emigrate once again in large numbers. According to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, dozens of refuseniks have been asked to resubmit their application for exit visas and several long denied permission to leave have been issued the required permits. In his analysis of the pogromist mentality, William Korey notes that Gorbachev, like his predecessors, comes from the same peasant background that has fueled Soviet anti-Semitism for generations. Still, there is reason to hope that a thaw in US-Soviet relations will improve the conditions of Russian Jewry.

In America, where recent surveys indicate that one out of every three Jews is intermarrying, the Reform movement has taken historic steps to deal with the rise of two-faith families, reaching out to non-Jewish spouses and instituting the new patrilineal descent guidelines. In such families, the child

of Jewish mother or father is to be considered Jewish provided that child is raised as a Jew. A joint UAHC/CCAR task force has begun to study the role the rabbi should play, if any, in mixed marriage wedding ceremonies. Mark L. Winer, a member of that task force, as well as a sociologist and congregation rabbi, spoke with scores of Reform leaders across the country in an effort to assess the mood of the movement toward the question of rabbinic officiation at such weddings.

And finally, last March, several hundred Reform rabbis and congregants streamed into Washington for the Religious Action Center's annual Consultation on Conscience. In the Senate and House caucus rooms the conferees were briefed by members of both houses on such issues as Central America, the sanctuary movement, South Africa, tax reform, and the Christian right, returning to their communities with a fresh and informed perspective. These annual consultations are open to all members of the UAHC.

The Lubavitch Obsession

Rebbe Directs Campaign to Amend Law of Return



Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, addresses his Hassidim in Brooklyn.

by Eric H. Yoffie

Berka Wolf does not hold a Knesset seat, but he is envied and feared by many who do. As unofficial "ambassador" of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to the Israeli Parliament and as director of a tenacious and effective lobbying effort, he has amassed such influence over the last fifteen years that he is probably more powerful than any Knesset member from the religious parties. The extent of his political clout was dramatically demonstrated last January when the government of Israel, faced with a desperate economic crisis while in the midst of a heated debate on serious security issues,

Eric H. Yoffie is executive director of ARZA.

was forced to spend nearly two weeks disposing of a religious bill pushed by Wolf's lobby, a bill that most Israelis care little or nothing about.

Wolf is a sabra from Kiryat Malachi. A public relations expert who gains access to the Knesset as an accredited journalist for a small ultra-Orthodox publication, he wanders through its corridors and cafeterias smiling, shaking hands, and talking to everyone he meets. His associates, Rabbi Shmuel Hafer and Yitzhak Holtzberg, are chairman and secretary respectively of the so-called "Committee for the Unity of the Jewish People." Although technically independent, the committee is closely tied to Habad (the formal name of the Lubavitch Hasidic movement). Rabbi Hafer is director of Beit Rivkah, a Habad educational institution.

The sole issue with which the three-man lobby is concerned is the Law of Return, which states that any Jew who wishes to immigrate to Israel will be granted automatic citizenship. The latest version of the Law, passed in 1970, includes in its provisions individuals converted to Judaism by Reform and Conservative rabbis. But for the last fifteen years, Habad has directed an effort to pass an amendment which would limit the Law's benefits to Orthodox converts only. The Reform and Conservative movements in Israel and the Diaspora have vigorously opposed the amendment, pointing out that it would deny the legitimacy of non-Orthodox interpretations of Judaism, and would thus seriously divide the Jewish people.

The campaign to amend the Law was undertaken at the request of the Lubavitcher



Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who directs Habad from its headquarters in Brooklyn. For Rabbi Schneerson, this issue has become an enduring obsession. His followers in Israel receive a steady stream of video-cassettes and radio broadcasts from Habad's private radio station in which he endlessly reiterates the dangers of the "evil decree," as the current Law of Return is always called. When speaking of the consequences of the Law, he has made such theologically preposterous claims as Israeli casualties in the 1970 War of Attrition resulted from the passage of the Law. Schneerson has also said that Israel's "decline" since 1970, as evidenced by the Yom Kippur and Lebanese wars and a variety of social and economic problems, is also attributable to the Law of Return.

From the beginning, Rabbi Schneerson understood that amending the Law would require more than hortatory messages. In the United States, where his institutions receive substantial financial support from non-Orthodox Jews, little is said on the subject. In Israel, however, a large lobbying apparatus was created. Akiva Eldad, writing in a recent issue of the *Haarets* magazine, describes the extreme efficiency of the operation. Berka Wolf and Rabbi Hafer, he points out, know everyone in the Knesset. When a Knesset member's son celebrates his Bar Mitzvah, a present is dispatched. If a daughter is about to be married and a rabbi is needed to perform the ceremony, they offer their assistance. They are most active prior to holidays, distributing *hamantaschen* at Purim and *shemura matzoh* at Passover.

Wolf and Hafer use more traditional lobbying techniques as well. Advertisements are placed in the secular press, and thousands of telegrams are sent to Knesset members from Israel and abroad. This January, as the vote on the amendment was approaching, all stops were pulled out. No Knesset member was considered a lost cause, no matter how firm his position; every conceivable contact was exploited.

Wolf and Hafer save their toughest tactics for the twelve Knesset members from the four major religious parties. Historically, Israel's religious parties have shown little enthusiasm for the Lubavitch position. Some leading Orthodox rabbis have openly opposed it; Rabbi Eliezer Schach, a prominent non-Hasidic leader of Agudat Yisrael, was quoted in the Israeli press as saying that "the *meshuggana* who sits in Brooklyn is driving the world crazy with nonsense." In private, religious Knesset members freely admit that the Lubavitch amendment has little practical import, and they dismiss as nonsense the claim that amending the Law of Return will put an end to intermarriage and assimilation. Most of them speak disdainfully of what they refer to as Habad's "Coca Cola Judaism," which they see as a crude popularization of traditional Jewish teachings. They note further that the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who is so determined to exert his influence over the Jewish state, has never set foot in Israel.

Nonetheless, no religious politician in Israel today opposes the Habad campaign. The lesson that Habad has learned best is how to intimidate its religious adversaries, organizing demonstrations outside the homes of those not committed to changing the Law of Return and accusing them of insufficient devotion to Torah. In the case of politicians from Agudat Israel, pictures and stories are relayed to the Yiddish press in Brooklyn, and accusatory statements are sent to certain Brooklyn synagogues whose members provide financial support to Agudat Yisrael institutions.

When the Knesset is not in session, the committee organizes special projects to keep the "Who is a Jew" issue before the public. It recently claimed to collect over one million signatures on a petition demanding an im-

mediate change in the Law of Return. According to Rabbi Hafer, this was proof of broad public support for his efforts. (He has not explained a newspaper poll, published on February 14, 1985 showing that 60% of Israelis oppose amending the Law of Return, and only 27% favor his position.) Other projects have included a "Who is a Jew Week," during which protest meetings were encouraged and telegrams sent to political leaders.

The Committee, which has an annual budget of about \$40,000, operates out of a modern office in Tel Aviv, which is staffed largely by volunteers from Habad. Its leadership claims twenty-three chapters around the world.

Despite this massive effort, Habad has not succeeded in getting its amendment passed. The vote last January was 62 against the amendment and 51 in favor. Nonetheless, the accomplishments of Lubavitch should not be minimized. Until a few days before the vote, most experts predicted that the amendment would get the support of 58 or 59 Knesset members. Moreover, the Law of Return issue will not go away; it is certain to be raised again.

There is nothing illegal or improper about Habad's activities. Israel is a vibrant democracy, and political and ideological interest groups that operate within the law have every right to pursue their interests in the legislative arena. In fact, the Habad efforts point up the need for a vigorous, full-time lobby in the Knesset to counter Habad claims and to present an honest picture of non-Orthodox Judaism. Without the establishment of such a lobby, the Habad amendment will eventually be voted into law. Rabbi Richard Hirsch, executive director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, has succeeded in rallying the Knesset opponents of Habad, but he and his Conservative colleagues are burdened with many other responsibilities, and at best they can only react to Lubavitch initiatives.

With this in mind, Charles Rothschild, Jr., chairman of the UAHC Board, has called upon the UAHC and ARZA to raise the necessary funds to conduct an ongoing lobbying campaign in Israel which will advocate Progressive Jewish values and oppose changes in the Law of Return. Speaking to the UAHC Executive Committee in February, he urged the hiring of a full-time Knesset lobbyist; the publishing of a newsletter for Knesset members, government officials, and opinion makers; the conducting of public forums; and the placing of newspaper ads in support of our positions. He noted that Habad currently employs all of these tactics in its efforts to amend the Law of Return, and that the time has come for Reform Jews to employ them as well in the interests of preserving Jewish unity and preventing deep divisions in Jewish life.

Individuals interested in offering their assistance may contact ARZA, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10021, or may phone (212) 249-0100. ★

We Made It, Why Can't They?

The Black/Jewish Analogy Fallacy



Photo by Jacob A. Riis, inset Steven Schuur

by Lawrence Bush

September, 1908: New York City Police Commissioner General Theodore A. Bingham charges that Jews, 25% of the city's population, account for half of New York's criminals. The charge is proved false with readily available statistics, and Bingham is forced to apologize, retract and eventually resign. His anti-Semitism has longer-lasting effect, however, as it sparks the formation of the New York Kehilla, an arm of the American Jewish Committee consisting of 300 delegates from 222 Jewish organizations. Under the leadership of Rabbi Judah L. Magnes, the Kehilla effectively works to decrease Jewish juvenile delinquency, gangsterism and prostitution, to mediate and arbitrate labor disputes between Jewish workers and employers, to systematize Jewish education, to upgrade social work in the Jewish community, and to do much in the way of communal self-help.

I kept thinking about this tidbit from Jewish

Lawrence Bush is author of *Bessie*, a novel (1983, Seaview/Putnam) and is presently co-authoring a book for children on anti-Semitism for the UAHC.

history as I read Roger Starr's article on urban crime in the Jan. 27, 1985 *New York Times Sunday Magazine*: "Crime, How It Destroys, What Can Be Done." Written in the wake of Bernhard Goetz's vigilante shooting of four Black youths in a New York subway, Starr's piece was statistically accurate but as pernicious in its social analysis as Commissioner Bingham's 1908 misinformation. Starr, a member of the *Times* editorial board, minimizes the significance of social remedies for our urban crime plague:

"In 1945, people believed that prosperity, abolition of laws and customs that segregated the races and discriminated against non-whites, and humane prisons set in a compassionate social system would reduce crime. . . . That prosperity, employment and the development of social institutions do not themselves reduce crime to a bearable level is now obvious."

Apparently Starr believes that prosperity has been achieved for Blacks—even while the New York Urban League recently reported that one-third of the city's Black fam-

ilies live below the poverty line. Apparently, too, Mr. Starr believes that segregation and discrimination against nonwhites have been abolished.

Indeed, in so utopian a setting as Roger Starr feels we have achieved, who can you blame for the prevalence of Black crime other than the Black community itself? Starr feeds this blame-the-victim mentality when he writes: "Socially acceptable behavior is not instinctual, but learned. The most effective movers in any effort to strengthen family and community structure in urban populations will be members of the most recently arrived groups themselves, the Blacks and Hispanics."

Starr prompted my recollection of the Bingham incident, when he speculated about the differences in intensity between the crime/fear factor in city life today and in the days of mass immigration: days when the American Jewish Committee realized that Jewish crime was, indeed, a serious problem. Starr's only explanation is that in the olden days, infectious diseases like tuberculosis cut short

many more impoverished lives than today, so that the pool of potential criminals was smaller back then! Beyond that, Starr leaves his readers to wonder why "we made it" and "they can't"—a common question that becomes more and more accusatory as conservative rhetoric against government social spending permeates our American political culture.

There are, I realized, two gross misperceptions contained within that question.

The first is that the Black community is not and has not been involved in self-help efforts. On the Jewish side of the analogy is the New York Kehilla and the wave of self-help that it initiated on an unprecedented scale: the establishment of settlement houses, charity and loan associations, extensive educational services, playgrounds, and athletic leagues. Many of these institutions and activities, founded by the wealthier German Jewish community on behalf of their arriving "co-religionists," the impoverished East European Jews, have been rightly criticized as being condescending, assimilationist, rooted in class prejudice and worse. Nevertheless, modern Jews take pride in the philanthropy of the "uptown Jews," who did much to alleviate social misery on the Lower East Side and pave the way for Jewish upward mobility.

The fact is that the Black community is trying to do the same, and has been for decades. Reading, for example, the National Urban League's *State of Black America*, 1985, I am struck by the similarities in attitude towards community problems between Black leadership, 1985 and Jewish leadership, 1908. In his introductory essay, Urban League President John E. Jacobs writes:

"... (T)he strongest message coming out of Black America in 1984 was that it became increasingly aware of its own strengths and increasingly willing to act independently to achieve what it considers its own best interests. . . . Black America is not standing still waiting for others to come to its rescue. It recognizes that its salvation lies within itself."

His statement is supported by the N.Y. Urban League's "State of Black New York, 1984" report, which describes community groups that are seeking to redress Black grievances. Among them are: Bronx Mind-Builders, a tutorial and arts-instruction center; Manhattan Hale House, a residential facility for children born with an addiction to drugs; the Bronx Sports Foundation, the motto of which is "Building Social Responsibility through Sports"; and several others that together form a network into which the Educational Alliance would have nicely fit!

But the second and worse fallacy of the "We made it, why can't they?" analogy is the analogy itself. Conditions that spawned the Jewish "success story" and the Black misery index in America are by no means equal or even comparable.

Blacks were slaves for over two hundred years and disenfranchised for a hundred more. Jews came here of their own volition,

usually with education of some sort, work skills, and political sophistication enough to pull the right levers in our American democracy—including the lever that could force the resignation of an anti-Semitic police commissioner.

Racism was a core element in American history—both the Indian wars and the Civil War were fought with strong racist conviction. Anti-Semitism was never so central to the demon side of our nation's psyche, in large part because the Church, spawning ground for so much anti-Semitism in Europe, was less influential here.

Blacks, until very recently, had no middle- or upper-class strata offering aid from above. Jews did.

Blacks were lynched and terrorized. Jews, for the most part, experienced America as a haven from such terror in the Old Country.

Blacks, in summary, were black in a white supremacist society that had something at stake in keeping them down. Jews, were, in the great majority, white, and found emancipation in the opportunities that America held out to them. Black progress has always

Church and government, both anti-Semitic. Blacks own less than 1% of commercial television stations, less than 2% of radio stations, less than one-half of 1% of cable TV systems, only one general circulation daily newspaper (out of 1,710 in the country), and comprise less than 3% of all news executives in the media.

Nearly 50% of political prisoners in Siberian exile were Jewish. A similarly disproportionate number of prisoners in America are Black.

Jewish exclusion from professions, from land-owning, from the mainstream of the Russian-Polish economy and culture, produced a certain degradation within the Jewish community, as if the anti-Semitic stereotypes held by the population generally were a self-fulfilling prophecy. The early Zionist movement, in particular, dreamed of eradicating these Jewish traits and "normalizing" the Jews through the process of nation-building in Palestine. The Black community has been misshapen by its victimization and is extremely alarmed at the criminality, hustler mentality, addictiveness, self-

"Blacks were lynched and terrorized. Jews, for the most part, experienced America as a haven from such terror."

had to be made against the tide, against strong opposition. Jewish self-help in America served more to teach Jews how to swim with the current of American development.

I am talking about power. The key question in evaluating historical analogies is: who in each of the supposedly comparable situations holds power, and in what moral vein is it being exercised?

Perhaps, therefore, to find an appropriate analogy between Jewish and Black experience—for the sake of empathy and compassion if not analysis—we need to look back to the days before the relative empowerment of the Jews in America's democracy. The state of Black America, 1985 most closely resembles, from a Jewish perspective, the state of Jewry in Eastern Europe, pre World War I. Some of the parallels are striking:

Jews comprised about 10% of the Polish population. Blacks comprise about 10% of the American population.

Shtetl Jews were distinctly recognizable from the Gentile mainstream by their garb, language, and customs. Ghetto Blacks are distinctly recognizable from the American mainstream by their race, language and customs.

Jews faced regular, organized violence that was often condoned by the state. Blacks have faced regular, organized violence that was often condoned by the state. The similarity of accounts of pogroms and of anti-Black race riots and lynchings is positively chilling.

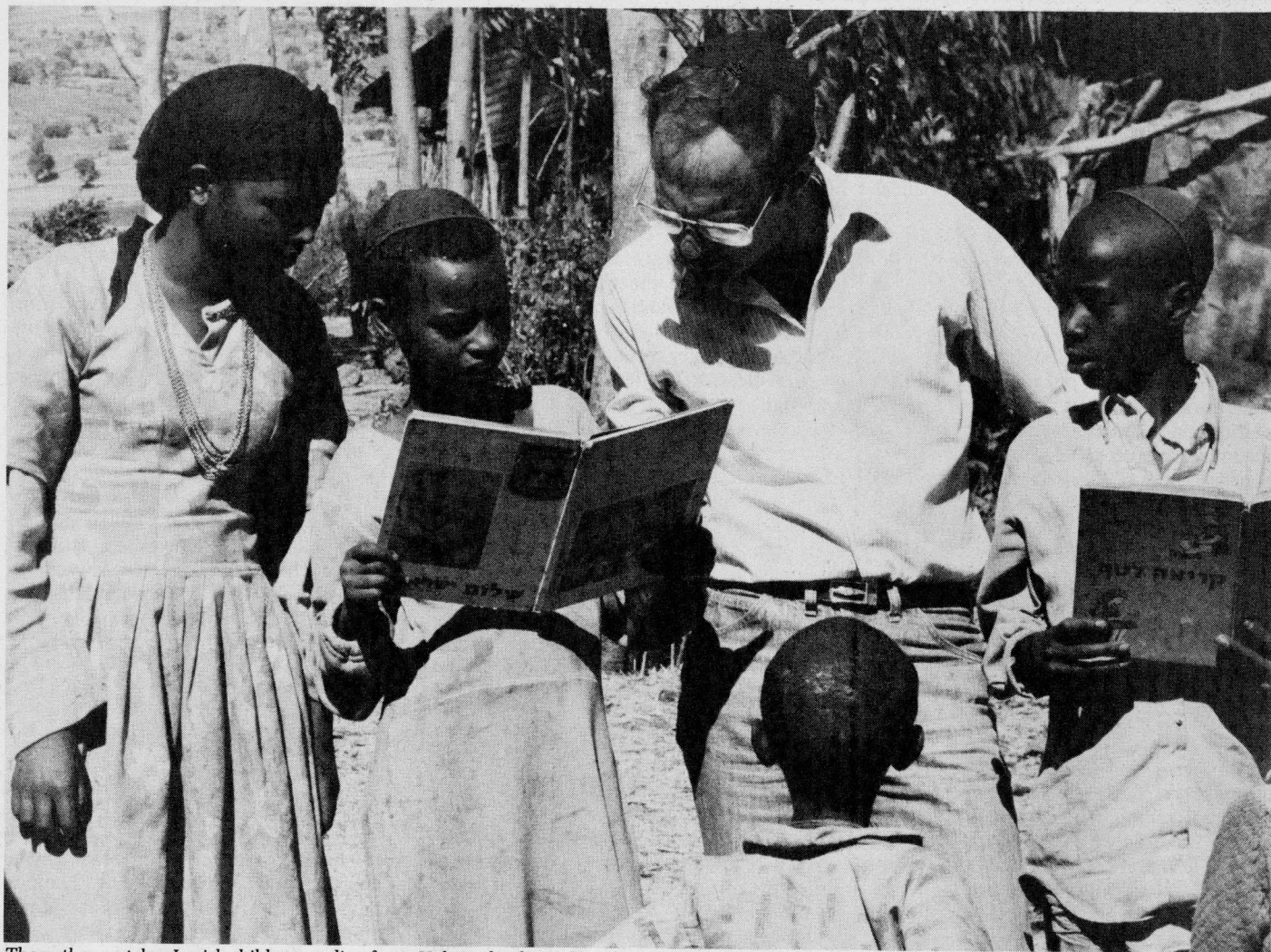
Jews had little chance to influence the mainstream culture or set the terms of discourse, most of which was done by the

destructiveness and lack of pride that plague its people, especially Black youth. Nationalistic groups like the Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) strongly emphasize the elimination of negative character traits as the first step towards liberation, with rhetoric that closely resembles Zionist rhetoric of the past.

Jews were seen as essentially alien to Poland. Blacks are, despite their enormous economic and cultural contribution to America, seen as an "other" by the white mainstream. Black patriotism is often held suspect; Black access to the rights of citizenship is rarely automatic. Thus we hear from those opposed to affirmative action protests, "They're taking away our jobs and giving them to Blacks," as if American jobs rightfully belong to whites.

The common denominators on both sides of this Black-Jewish analogy are vulnerability and exclusion. The crescendo of this powerlessness for the Jews of Eastern Europe was the Holocaust, for which there is no Black equivalent. But contemporary Black powerlessness already takes a toll that adds up to a monumental tragedy: in the destruction of Black lives by a drug trade that could be stopped at the source, in foreign poppy fields; in the wasting of Black talent and creativity through unemployment and marginal employment; in the handicapping of young Black minds through inadequate, overcrowded public education (the Urban League reports a 72% high school

(continued on page 25)



Clifford D. May/NTT Pictures

The author watches Jewish children reading from Hebrew books in the Ethiopia village of Wallaga.

AFTER OPERATION MOSES

Ethiopia's Jews Face Deepening Isolation

by David Saperstein

Two major concerns brought me to Ethiopia last February: fear for the seven thousand Beta Israel still living in towns and remote villages, and concern for the millions of Ethiopians threatened with starvation. Few moments in my life have made me more proud of being an American Jew than when I saw starving children being fed from sacks of food marked, "From the U.S.A." or when I watched Abie Nathan arrive with tents marked "From Jerusalem with Love," tents purchased with funds from UAHC congregations to shelter another 10,000 refugees in Senbete, his second tent city.

I was joined on the trip by two Senators

Rabbi David Saperstein is director of the UAHC Religious Action Center, Washington, D.C.

and a Congressman: Dennis Deconcini (D-AZ) and Paul Trible (R-VA), and Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-NY). Their presence drew international attention when our non-Jewish Ethiopian escorts to Jewish villages were beaten by security police.

Prior to our arrival, no outsider had been to the Ethiopian Jewish villages since Operation Moses, the Israeli airlift of Ethiopian Jewish refugees. In the international Jewish community there was deep uncertainty about the remaining Ethiopian Jews. How had the Ethiopian government responded to Operation Moses? Had they taken out their resentment on the remaining Jews in the Gondar? Indeed, how many Jews are left in Ethiopia? What are their needs? Could a safe and legal way be negotiated to bring out the remaining Jews?

On arriving in Ethiopia it was immediately evident that Operation Moses had traumatized the political establishment in Addis Ababa. The news that thousands of Jews

had left in pursuit of freedom was viewed as an attack on the government. The overwhelming attention given in the Arab and African press to stories barely mentioned in the West, such as the reports of Ethiopian Jews being trained for the Israeli army and the handful of Ethiopian Jews being settled at Kiryat Arba on the West Bank, was a political embarrassment to the Ethiopian government in the third world. Most grating were the human interest stories so favored by the Western press depicting the Ethiopian Jews as primitive natives, ignorant of electricity, appliances, even keys and staircases. In Addis Ababa, this was regarded as a national affront.

As we visited Jewish villages, no overt reprisals or harassment were evident. All of the Jews with whom I spoke had heard of Operation Moses, but only one or two in the larger villages had any idea of the political controversy it had engendered. Life in the villages continues essentially the way it has

in the past year and a half, since the dictatorial and anti-Semitic former Governor Malaku was moved by the authorities out of the direct governance of the region. Under Malaku, synagogues were closed, Jewish teachers were thrown into jail and tortured, and the teaching of Hebrew was forbidden. Today, the Jews are treated with relative tolerance.

Nevertheless, drought, disease, inadequate health care, and the raging, near-by civil war all serve to make the lives of the remaining Jews perilous. The flight of many Jews to the Sudan has left the infrastructure of the villages so badly eroded today that little teaching goes on outside of Wolleka, the government's "showcase" Falasha village. Yet, despite these conditions, the Jews we met were optimistic, proud of their Jewishness, and secure in the belief that someday, with the help of world Jewry, they would live freely in Eretz Yisrael.

The government's response to Operation Moses has been to isolate the remaining villages from the outside Jewish world, physically and psychologically. When I initially applied for permission to visit the Gondor villages prior to the arrival of the Congressmen, I was told I could not "because of what the Israelis did in Operation Moses." I explained that the purpose of my visit was to meet Jews living in Ethiopia, which had nothing to do with Jews who had fled to the Sudan. The Director of Tourism responded that it had been determined at the highest levels of government that all foreign contact with the villages was to be cut off to prevent outsiders from "instigating" these Jews to leave. Recent statements of the government indicating that it would no longer consider Falashas as Jews reflect its determination to further isolate the Beta Israel from world Jewry.

While the official response to Operation Moses seems clear (leave the villages alone but cut-off contact with the outside), it appears that the security forces and elements of the power structure backing them (including former Governor Malaku) had preferred harsher measures. They regarded the decision to allow our Congressional party to visit the villages as a sign of weakness. It is in this context that the surreal and frightening beating of the Ethiopian nationals with us must be viewed.

We brought Jewish and Hebrew educational materials for distribution to the Beta Israel and reassured them by our presence that they were not forgotten. The Congressmen were exceedingly helpful in negotiations with Gondar officials about expansion of the UAHC Operation REAP (Reform Movement's Ethiopian Jewry Assistance Program), which sends doctors to Jewish and non-Jewish villages in Gondar. Their most important negotiation, however, took place in Addis Ababa, where they discussed implementation of a family reunification program to allow Jews to leave for Israel legally. Though accepted in theory by the Ethiopian government, its implementation in the near future is doubtful.

After visiting with the Beta Israel, I visited camps run by two of the finest relief organizations working in Ethiopia: Catholic Relief Services and World Vision. Once people are taken into one of the sixty camps, they are sheltered, fed, and provided with adequate health care. Children who come into the camps weighing as little as 50% of normal

"Drought, disease, and the raging civil war all make the lives of the remaining Jews perilous."

body weight are put on high caloric diets that restore them to ninety percent within one month.

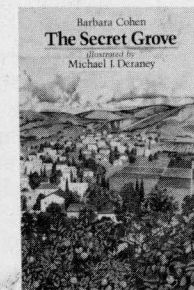
But the camps serve only one half million of the eight to nine million at risk. The drought has lasted six years. In many regions not enough top-soil remains to sustain crops. Virtually no conservation, reforestation or irrigation projects exist. As good a job as the relief groups and the U.S. government (which supplies half of all emergency relief supplies) are doing, only an international effort of relief and development offers long-

term hope. Currently, U.S. developmental aid is prohibited as the result of an Ethiopian-U.S. dispute regarding a thirty million dollar claim filed by U.S. companies arising from the 1978 Ethiopian nationalization of industry.

Many of the children who are being cared for in the camps have suffered so long from malnutrition that they are distressingly vulnerable to disease. Measles remains the biggest killer of children. Whooping cough and tuberculosis take a heavy toll. Every rain is a mixed blessing, replenishing needed water supplies but striking down with colds, influenza, and hypothermia hundreds of adults and children who have lost their natural resistance.

The problem of disease is an everpresent danger in the camps. Dr. Rich Hodes, an infectious disease specialist sent over by the UAHC REAP program, worked for a time in the first Abie Nathan/UAHC camp in Harbu. Scores, perhaps hundreds, of lives were saved because of his early diagnosis of cholera and successful efforts to stem the epidemic.

With the help of congregations and congregants throughout the country, the UAHC will continue to support legislation and field service programs aimed at providing relief and development for East Africa's starving people, as well as rescuing the remaining Jews in Ethiopia. As crushing as the problems are, our visit convinced us that we can make a difference. But we can do even more, and there is so much yet to do. ★



The Secret Grove

by Barbara Cohen

illustrated by Michael J. Deraney

Award-winning juvenile author Barbara Cohen turns her skilled pen to the Middle East in this tale of two young boys, one Israeli, the other Jordanian, who meet one afternoon in an orange grove separating their two border villages and there make a secret pact. A subtle

examination of the roots of prejudice, *The Secret Grove* teaches young readers how hatred can be overcome when children refuse to accept the stereotypes of their parents.

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by Joshua L. Segal

Every morning I leave my house at 6:40 to meet my carpool. I use the morning commute time to study, write sermons, or read. Depending on traffic, I arrive at MITRE between 7:30 and 7:45. At this point, I mentally change gears. While I carry my rabbinic values to MITRE, it is important to me that

While I try to avoid doing “rabbinic work” at MITRE, I occasionally have to make phone calls during normal business hours. These calls have been sufficiently infrequent that my colleagues assume they are personal calls. However, if I leave a message to call back, I request that the caller ask my secretary for

Saturday is usually my day off. Unless there is a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, there are no Saturday morning services, so despite my heavy schedule, I get to enjoy *Shabbat*.

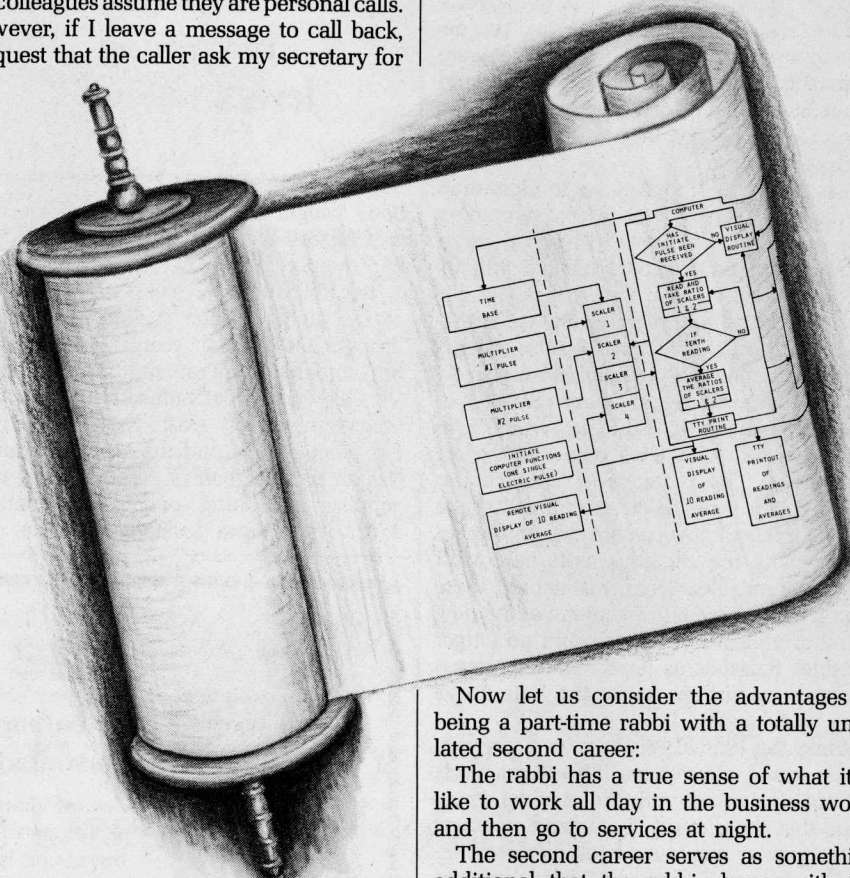


Illustration by Lee Bearson

The dual career, however, does have its drawbacks. The primary disadvantages are the following:

(continued on page 25)

by Harvey J. Fields

Born on July 1, 1890, in San Francisco, where he spent his childhood, he was ordained at the Hebrew Union College in 1914. After serving for a year as rabbi in Stockton, California, he became rabbi at B'nai B'rith Temple, the first Jewish congregation of Los Angeles (since 1929, known as Wilshire Boulevard Temple). Under his leadership the congregation grew from 200 to 2700 families. In 1924 he was named a member of the Charter Board of the Hollywood Bowl. In 1934 he went on radio with a weekly program broadcast throughout the western United States. In 1947 he was named founding president of the Los Angeles College of Jewish Studies, the predecessor of the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. From 1964 to 1984 he wrote a weekly column for the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*. His ninetieth birthday was celebrated with a banquet attended

Harvey J. Fields is rabbi of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Los Angeles, California.

He called himself a "Jewmanist." On his bedstand he kept a copy of the Bible and Shakespeare's writings. And his speeches



"Don't let any committee of half-wits white-wash the sanctuary."—Magnin.

And he was a gifted educator and communicator. "I don't beat around the bush, and I don't take an hour to say what should be said in five minutes. Brevity is next to



Edgar F. Magnin (l.) with Cecil B. De Mille.

Above all, he remained determined to be himself, no carbon copy of anyone else. And he was fond of revealing how he had come to that conviction early in his life. "I was a kid in 1907 at the Hebrew Union College. And along came the brilliant Rabbi Emil Hirsch of Chicago. He sneered at us and

On our mental tents: "Abraham pitched his great tent at a crossroad. The flaps of that tent were lifted on all four sides so that he might discern the approach of any stranger and hasten to meet him. . . . Lift the flaps of your own tent, and scan the horizon beyond the limits of physical sight and across the boundaries of prejudice and ignorance. Enrich your life with the fruits of all the worlds. You are the one who can stretch your own horizon; you are the person responsible if that horizon is small."

May his spirit, vital and creative, live on.

Vancouver Synagogue Appeals for Help

by Philip Bregman

On Friday, January 25th, 2:00 a.m., I was awakened by a telephone call from the security company that protects our temple. The alarm system had been activated and the police were on their way. I quickly dressed and headed for the syn-



The charred remains of Temple Shalom.

agogue. Perhaps it was only a false alarm, I thought, or maybe a window had accidentally been blown open by the wind. A mile from the temple, a fire engine screamed past me. I drove faster and in a minute realized that that truck and many others were heading for Temple Shalom.

When I arrived, fire trucks and hoses were everywhere. Flames were shooting out of first floor windows, while firemen were climbing up icy ladders to cut holes in the roof with axes. Shattered glass was strewn all over the sidewalk and a thick smell of smoke blanketed the entire neighborhood. I quickly located the fire chief and asked if the fire had spread to our second floor sanctuary. I told him I had to get inside to rescue the Torahs, but he refused to allow me near the building. I went to the nearest pay phone and called my wife, the president, and past president of the congregation. When they arrived fifteen minutes later, the fire chief gave us permission to enter the building and retrieve the Torahs.

During that fifteen minute wait, as I watched the synagogue burn, my thoughts turned to Germany—to November 9, 1938,

Philip Bregman is rabbi of Temple Shalom.

Kristallnacht. It seemed incredible that such a thing could happen again. This time in Vancouver, Canada. Only six weeks earlier someone had thrown a Molotov cocktail through the window of the temple administrator's office. We were fortunate that the damage was minimal. But in three-and-a-half years, Temple Shalom had been the target of numerous acts of vandalism and anti-

Semitism—threatening phone calls, windows smashed, red paint splashed over the building, and once someone took a sledge hammer to my car in the temple parking lot. As a result, we increased our security by replacing the first floor windows with wire-mesh glass and arranging to upgrade

"The next day I sifted through the ashes, looking for the remains of the scroll."

our alarm system. Yet, despite these precautions, our synagogue was destroyed.

When the fire chief allowed us to enter the dark building, we rushed upstairs. The floor was covered by several inches of water, thick smoke burned our eyes. Hardly able to see, we made our way to the front of the sanctuary, grabbed the four Torahs from the

ark and ran outside, tripping over shards of glass and bits of wood. We rejoiced in the recovery of our precious scrolls, but then we remembered that an additional Sefer Torah was kept downstairs in a portable ark in the social hall. We lost that Torah. The next day, as I sifted through the ashes looking for remains of the scroll to bury, I was again reminded of the Holocaust.

The police were quick to establish that the fire was set deliberately. Someone had broken through the wire-mesh window and thrown a bucket of flammable liquid over a table. A Molotov cocktail had ignited the substance. Both the bucket and the bottle which contained the Molotov cocktail were recovered inside the building.

For the last twelve years, Temple Shalom had been housed in a small two-story building in a quiet middle-class neighborhood. Our social hall, kitchen, library, and administrator's office were on the first floor, my study and the sanctuary on the second. The fire completely destroyed the first floor. A false ceiling prevented the fire from burning the second story, but the sanctuary was destroyed by smoke and water. At first glance it appeared that we could salvage what had not been reduced to ashes. Unfortunately, we soon learned that this was not to be the case. Prayerbooks, bibles, *tallitot*, all of the books in my study, our *bimah*, the ark, and even the four Torahs we had managed to save had sustained such severe smoke damage that restoration would be difficult and in many instances impossible.

In the last four years, Temple Shalom has grown from 160 families with 70 students in the religious school to 300 families with 165 students. We are the only Reform congregation in the Province of British Columbia. Because Reform Judaism is still in its formative stages in Western Canada we are isolated. Temple Shalom is the oldest Reform congregation in this area, and we are only twenty-two years old. The closest Reform congregation with a full-time rabbi is in Winnipeg, 1500 miles away.

Because of our growth, we were planning to expand, but now we are forced to do so immediately and without the benefit of an existing facility. While we are grateful that the Jewish Community Centre has provided us with a temporary space for services, we must rent office space elsewhere and run our school in still another location. The cost of these temporary arrangements is great, both in financial and emotional terms.

Despite all of this, the resolve of the congregation is strong and our spirit has not been broken. We have received numerous letters and contributions from non-Jews. Christian Sunday school children have sent us hand-written notes of sympathy. The mayor has become a friend. But it is difficult to begin from nothing. A new building will cost an estimated \$2 million. And even with insurance, we will never be able to totally recover all that we have lost. We welcome contributions, which may be sent to Temple Shalom, Box 35214, Station E, Vancouver, B.C. Canada, V6M 4G4. ★

Temple of the Deaf Celebrates Silver Anniversary

by Alan Henkin

Throughout their history, deaf Jews have both enjoyed and suffered from an exceptional status in Jewish tradition. The Torah says, "You shall not curse the deaf." But because the ancient rabbis were unable to communicate with deaf Jews, they surrounded them with a cocoon of laws that, while intended for their protection, isolated them. The deaf Jew, technically called a *heresh*, could not marry, sue or be sued, own or buy real estate, or be counted in a *minyan*. Given these harsh laws, the rabbis tried to circumscribe the category of the *heresh*. Indeed, several years ago the former chief Ashkenazic rabbi of Israel announced that with the advances of special education today, hardly any deaf person truly qualifies as a *heresh*. Nevertheless, twenty-five years ago the founders of Temple Beth Solomon, the world's first synagogue for the deaf, found themselves unwelcome among the Conservative and Orthodox branches of Judaism. Only the Reform movement saw the need to charter the temple.

When deaf Jews came to the United States in large numbers in the late nineteenth century, they began to congregate in major cities and form clubs. The first such organizations, the Hebrew Associations of the Deaf in New York and Philadelphia, were founded in 1907. Later, other HADs were established in Baltimore, Brooklyn, Cleveland, Chicago, and elsewhere. In July 1947, the HAD of Los Angeles was formed and, like other HADs, it focused on social programs with very little religious content. By the late 1950s members who wanted more than just a social club joined with hearing parents of deaf children in an effort to create something new: a synagogue of, by, and for deaf Jews.

On June 10, 1960, with a teary-eyed Georgie Jessel in attendance, Temple Beth Solomon held its first Shabbat service at Temple Israel of Hollywood. Prior to 1965, the temple was known as 'the mobile congregation' because our members traveled to host congregations. For many years Wilshire Boulevard Temple allowed the Beth Solomon members to meet for services in a small chapel led by student-rabbis from Hebrew Union College. Finally, in 1965 Temple Beth Solomon bought the buildings and property of another synagogue that was relocating, finding a permanent home in Arleta, a Los Angeles suburb in the San Fernando Valley.

Temple Beth Solomon is an active and respected leader in the deaf community in Los Angeles and throughout the United States. Jewishly, the temple has demonstrated

Alan Henkin is rabbi of Temple Beth Solomon of the Deaf.

strong leadership in the National Congress of the Jewish Deaf, which embraces eighteen Jewish deaf groups across North America.

Visitors to Temple Beth Shalom find very little difference between our synagogue and hearing synagogues—with the exception of sign language. Philosophically we are committed to simultaneous, total communication, meaning that we use our hands and

"A heresh could not marry, sue or be sued, own real estate, or be counted in a minyan."

voices at the same time. The temple serves our nearly 250 members with a full range of religious, educational, and social programs. The temple's members represent a cross-section of the deaf world: people deafened before acquiring English, people deafened later in life, oralists, manualists, hearing people with deaf children or parents, and hearing people professionally connected with the deaf world, including interpreters, social workers, and teachers.

Temple Beth Solomon has experienced several watershed events in recent years.



Rabbi Henkin, lower left, with congregants.

Most notable was our arranging for Horst Biesold to lecture in Los Angeles. A professor of special education at the University of Bremen (West Germany), Biesold, neither Jewish nor deaf, specializes in the study of deaf victims of the Holocaust. Unknown even to most Holocaust survivors, the Third Reich's policy of "eugenic improvement" gave the Nazis broad power over all people with disabilities, denying them marriage licenses, sterilizing them, and sometimes executing them outright. The deaf Jew was doubly vulnerable.

Another highlight occurred in the fall of that same year. Members of Temple Beth Solomon, joined by deaf Jews from around the country, toured Israel. The visit coincided with the holiday of Sukkot, so on *erev Sukkot* we worshipped at Reform Congregation Har-El in Jerusalem, on the morning of Sukkot at the Hebrew Union College, and on *Simchat Torah* at Congregation Or Hadash in Haifa. In Israel the sight of Jews praying in sign language is so rare that the *Jerusalem Post* published an article about our visit. In addition to touring, we met with deaf groups in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Tel Aviv.

While the deaf population in Israel is small, in America about fourteen million people have some kind of hearing impairment. Of these, about a half-million depend on sign language, making American sign language the fourth most-used language in the United States (behind English, Spanish, and Italian). We estimate that the Jewish deaf population in America is about a quarter of a million people, and in Los Angeles alone there are an estimated 35,000 to 50,000 deaf Jews.

So although the size of our membership roster may sound impressive, and although we have accomplished an enormous amount in the last twenty-five years, we have only just begun. ★



Illustrations by Lee Beanson

by Robert Sloan

The rabbi's secretary put me on hold. I guess that's all right, I thought. It makes sense. Rabbis have secretaries, secretaries have hold buttons. But I was disappointed. A little hurt. After all, my call was different. I wasn't complaining about lousy High Holy Day seats or the latest increase in dues. I was calling to announce that I was coming back! Returning to the fold! One who had strayed these many years was knocking at the gate. And not alone either. I had with me my wife and the ever-swelling prospect of our child. And who knew how many more after this one. My call should have been spirited past the secretary's eager fingers directly into the rabbi's ear.

But there I was on hold. Like the airlines. Come on, Rabbi, I said into the dead mouthpiece, I've been on hold for the past ten years. I haven't been inside a temple, I haven't prayed, I haven't atoned. I've been busy, Rabbi. With career and New York bachelorhood and now marriage. I haven't cracked open a bottle of Manischewitz in a decade. I've consumed countless paper containers of shrimp lo mein. I've been to all the movies, Rabbi, but I haven't been to shul. Come on, you've got a hot one here. A real prospect.

Robert Sloan is a free-lance writer.

Rabbi, I'm coming back.

Finally the click.

"This is Rabbi Shapiro speaking. How can I help you?"

"Rabbi, I want to come back."

"What?"

"Rabbi, my wife and I have just moved to the neighborhood, and I would like to talk with you about our joining the synagogue. When can I come and speak to you?"

"You? Mr. Pork Fried Rice? Orthodox?"

We made an appointment for the following afternoon.

"By the way," he asked, "what congregation did you belong to before you moved?"

"Rabbi," I said, "it's been a long time."

We had a pleasant chat. He was young, clean-shaven, collar open. We both agreed the latest Woody Allen movie wasn't as good as *Annie Hall*, and the rest was easy. He was nice. Single. I would have introduced him to my sister if I had one.

We talked about all the young couples who were moving to our neighborhood and how

many of them were joining the temple.

"We're a young congregation and we're growing."

I left feeling very safe. I liked the rabbi. We would grow into middle-age together. I'd talk to my wife, and we'd send out the check.

"So how was the rabbi?" my wife asked, as we sat down to dinner.

"Nice."

"Just nice?"

"Yes, but very 'just nice.' Smart. Considerate. I felt we understood each other. And, you know, while I was speaking with him I realized I never wanted to drift so far away. My whole Jewish life since my Bar Mitzvah has been one big void."

"Are you sure this isn't going to be like the time you dug your clarinet out of the closet after fifteen years, took two lessons, then gave up because you said your lip was gone? I mean, we shouldn't rush into anything."

"This is not the first time. I returned to Judaism once before. In a big way. With my friend Modell. We became Orthodox."

"You? Mr. Pork Fried Rice? Orthodox?"

"I never told you about my Great Jewish Reawakening?"

"Not that I remember."

"It was 1973 and Modell and I were high school seniors outside of Boston. One afternoon we were sitting around making the usual Bar Mitzvah jokes; about the shape of the chopped liver mold, or how many sta-

plers we had received as gifts from our friends. (Modell had gotten six, I only five. But his was a larger affair.) Our Bar Mitzvahs were supposed to be the beginning of our lives as Jewish men. We became members of the congregation, were counted for a minyon. But for Modell and me and most of our friends it was more of an end; the end of Haftarah cramming, of Sunday school, of torturous afternoons in Hebrew class while the gentile kids were at baseball practice. After thirteen, we just stopped having anything to do with temple.

"But Modell and I loved being Jewish. We were dying to be Jewish. But, except for standing in line for bagels on Sunday morning, we weren't sure how. We wanted a real taste of Judaism, something we hadn't gotten at our temple where everyone seemed too busy showing off their new Coupe de Villes and floor-length minks to think much about the service. We wanted to find out what it really felt like to be Jewish. So Modell and I decided to hop the fence. We became Orthodox.

"This was the time when Dorchester and Roxbury, the old Jewish neighborhoods of Boston, were going through their final transition. Most of the synagogues had closed down. A few tried to relocate in the suburbs. One that did was Temple Beth Elochim. They found a building in Newton that used to be a funeral chapel. The rabbi had his office in the room-size refrigerator that once held the cadavers. Rabbi Korf, brother to the infamous, Nixon-loving Rabbi Korf of Providence, was a great man. He was old and majestic and spoke with a heavy accent. He was nothing like the sporty, clean-shaven rabbis we remembered from our youth, rabbis who liked golf and waterskiing and barbecuing in their backyards. When we met Rabbi Korf in his ill-fitting brown suit and dented black hat, the entire weight of Jewish history seemed to rest on his shoulders. Modell and I thought him a great sage.

"So we started going to services. At least three mornings and four evenings a week. My Hebrew was deplorable, but I worked at it. I put on *tefilin*, or at least tried to put them on. One of the old guys helped me out, but it usually turned into a kind of vaudeville routine. I wanted desperately to have a deep religious experience, for the *tefilin* and *tales* and Hebrew prayers I chanted to transport me, elevate me to some higher sphere. But, no matter how hard I tried, it remained out of reach.

"My enlightened parents weren't quite sure what to make of my conversion. Suddenly they had a Jew in the house. I adopted a modified Kosher plan; no milk with meat, no pork or shellfish. I neither spoke nor ate before morning prayers. I lit the candles on the Sabbath. My mother picked up a chalah on her way home from work. They were patient with my demands. Secretly I think they were a little worried. I wasn't drinking or taking drugs or trying to find out how far I could drive with my eyes closed, but maybe they would have liked to see me involved in some slightly more normal ad-

olescent abnormalities. Heeding a law that prohibited touching leather before one's *tefilin*, I wore my red high-top basketball sneakers to shul. Perhaps this reassured them a bit.

"Despite our parents' sidelong glances and the lack of any transcendent religious experience, Modell and I attended services regularly. Soon our Hebrew improved and we were swaying with the others. Our congregation (depending on the condition of their prostates) consisted of about twenty old men, each over seventy. We usually had no problem assembling a minyon for morning services. It was in the evening that we sometimes had trouble. I remember one night waiting a half-hour and still we had only eight men. It was ridiculous. Thousands of Jews lived within a mile of the shul and we were short two for our minyon. We waited a few more minutes, watching Rabbi Korf grow older and sadder before our eyes. Finally Modell had enough. He was incensed as only Modell could be.

"Come on," he said, "we're going to rustle up some Jews."

"A block away was the China Palace, famous for its combination dinners. Modell stalked through the parking lot and pushed open the door. The owner's daughter greeted us with a wide, toothy smile and a pair of menus.

"Table for two?"

"Modell brushed past her and entered the dining room. Several diners looked up. Modell still had on his *talles*.



"Split up," he said. 'Find someone already on their pineapple and tea.' I walked around the room looking for dessert.

"Over here," Modell was standing by a corner table. Sitting there were a man, his wife, and their son and daughter. In the center of the table was a plate of fortune cookies. The man's pants were unbuttoned.

"Modell stood over them in his *talles* and yarmulke. 'You and your son are needed next door for a minyon. You have an obligation as a Jew to attend.'

"The man looked at his wife in helpless supplication, but she could only raise her eyebrows in wonder.

"Come," harkened Modell.

"Resigned to his fate, the man pushed himself up and followed Modell out of the restaurant. The son walked dutifully behind, his moo goo gai pan stained napkin still tucked in his pants.

"Rabbi Korf's eyes lit up when he saw us return with the two men. *Tallesim* and yarmulkes were quickly found.

"Actually," the man said, 'my son isn't quite yet Bar Mitzvah. He's a year away.'

"Not to worry," said Rabbi Korf. 'In a situation like this, nine and a half men will suffice.' And with that, evening services began.

"We continued going for a few more months, but gradually we found that even Orthodoxy had something missing. Praying in shul with a bunch of old men wasn't enough. We wanted to help out people in a real way, give to them our youth and strength. So we joined the JDL."

My wife's jaw dropped.

"Did you shoot anybody?" she asked.

"I went on patrol only once. We were supposed to walk around Roxbury making sure the synagogues weren't being vandalized and protecting the few old Jews who were left. Really the whole thing was a joke. After that first night I put my black beret in my bottom dresser drawer and didn't wear it again until I went to a costume party dressed as an Impressionist painter. It was not long after that that I also stopped going to synagogue.

"About a month later I received a phone call from Rabbi Korf. I didn't even think he knew my name.

"Rabbi, I'm sorry I haven't been to shul lately. I've been busy with school and . . ."

"I understand," he said knowingly. 'I am calling because I have something for you. Mr. Samuelson died last week. He left you his *tefilin*. He wanted you to have them.'

"I didn't know what to say.

"Perhaps you can come and pick them up sometime."

"Yes, Rabbi, I'll come by real soon."

"So, did you ever go pick them up?" my wife asked.

"No, I couldn't bring myself to go. I heard Rabbi Korf died around the time of my graduation. I went off to college and haven't been in a temple since. I think I'm ready to return. And besides I want to give our kids a chance to hate Hebrew school. And who knows, they may even like it." ★



THE MANY MASKS OF SUZANNE BENTON

Sculptor, mask maker, and performer, Suzanne Benton has revived an ancient art form that is an amalgam of several disciplines. An ardent traveller and student of foreign cultures, she creates her welded masks and sculptures after steeping herself, sometimes for months at a time, in the traditions of other lands. She then dons these masks in theatrical settings, and creates tales around her characters. In recent years these productions have included masks of the Holocaust, women from the Bible, and the women of Shakespeare.

Ms. Benton's work is in numerous private and public collections and has been featured in more than 100 ritual theatre performances, two dozen one-woman shows, and numerous group exhibitions. The author of *The Art of Welded Sculpture* and a published poet, Ms. Benton recently exhibited her work at the House of Living Judaism in New York.

UAHC Leaders View Rare Vatican Judaica

by Philip Hiat

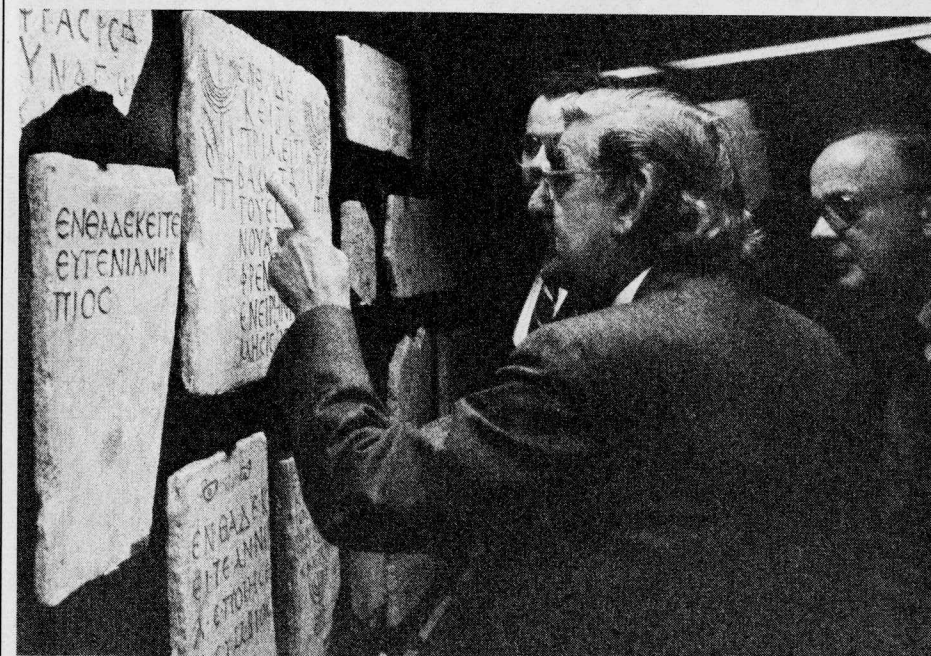
Four years ago, Dr. Philip Miller, librarian of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, and I were invited to Poland to seek out important Judaica that had survived the Holocaust. That pilgrimage resulted in the exhibit "Fragments of Greatness" and initiated a continuing quest to uncover and make available to the public other hidden pockets of Jewish ritual objects and manuscripts left behind by our ancestors. The success of "Fragments of Greatness" paved the way for our current work at the Vatican in Rome. After an extensive period of negotiations, the UAHC received an invitation from the Vatican to view Judaica that has been seen previously only by a handful of scholars. As a result of our trip a selection of the Vatican collection will be exhibited for the first time in the United States.

Our delegation, headed by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, arrived in Italy last February. Dr. Walter Persegati, secretary of the museum, and Monsignor Mejias, an official with the Commission for Relations between Catholics and Jews, joined us as we examined various tombstone inscriptions dating back to the second century of the Common Era. With the exception of one small inscription, all of these were chiseled in Greek, the dominant language of that period. Yet many of the tombstones were heavily decorated with Jewish symbols—the menorah, the lulav, the etrog, and, in one case, a matzoh, possibly indicating that the person had died at Passover. Within the Vatican's ongoing exhibit of Judaica, we viewed a Spanish Torah, a megillah, two candelabra from the apartment of Pope Paul VI, one of a pair of tefillin, and a silver filigreed megillah case.

The next day, Father Leonard Boyle, prefect of the Vatican Library, accompanied us as we toured the manuscript collection. With the help of our two specialists, Dr. Philip Miller, librarian at HUC-JIR in New York, and Dr. Michael Signer, associate professor of Jewish history, HUC-JIR, Los Angeles, we selected a dozen manuscripts and printed books for closer examination. One of the items was a twelfth-century Torah written on leather in the tradition of North Africa. Because the lettering is slightly different from what we know to be the traditional, now mandated, script found in the Torah, this Torah is considered *pasul*, unclear for reading in the synagogue today. We read codices of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, produced in Rome, Spain, and Ger-

Rabbi Philip Hiat is assistant to the president of the UAHC for special projects.

many—the Spanish codex distinguished by its exquisite illuminations. Also on display was the first Soncino Bible, printed in 1488, and the Bomberg Bible, printed in Venice in 1522 with the permission of the Vatican authorities. We also saw the famous Samaritan tri-columnar Bible with commentary, written in Palestine, and the Polyglot Bible printed between 1514–1517 in Hebrew with five translations.



Rabbi Philip Hiat reads from ancient Jewish burial tablets, mounted for the first time at the Vatican Museum. He is accompanied by Dr. Philip Miller (l.) and the Honorable William Barnes.

The library's collection of gilded glass—some pieces intact, others fragmented—includes a second-century C.E. piece that depicts the Temple of Solomon. We also were shown seven ancient oil lamps decorated with engraved menorah.

What did all this signify? First, that Hebrew, along with Latin, Greek, and Arabic, was, in former times, not only respected but venerated, that the mark of a scholar was his command of any or all these languages. For example, in 1701, a Vatican Library scribe took some thirty of Pope Clement XI's sermons and translated them into Hebrew, completely annotated and vocalized.

At the conclusion of our visit, Rabbi Schindler presented Archbishop Foley, head of Vatican communications, Father Boyle, and Dr. Persegati with inscribed copies of the UAHC *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* and copies of *The Challenge of Shalom for Catholics and Jews*, edited by Annette Daum and Eugene Fisher. During our stay Rabbi Schindler also met with Tullia Zevi, president of Italy's Jewish community, to discuss her ongoing interest in exploring

Rome's Jewish catacombs. As of this writing, Dr. Persegati has received clearance from the Director General of the Vatican Museum to release its Judaica for exhibition in the United States. We await final word on the material in the Biblioteca Apostolica. The Vatican must be commended for having worked so hard to bring about this exhibition, and, above all, for having preserved our Jewish heritage, making it possible to fill gaps in our knowledge of the past.

Included in our group were Dr. Maury Leibovitz, benefactor and patron of special projects in Jewish history and president of the Knoedler Gallery; Mr. Spencer Partrich, of Detroit, Michigan; Rabbi Dannel Schwartz of Detroit's Temple Beth-El; Dr. Michael Signer, associate professor of Jewish history

at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles; Dr. Philip Miller, librarian at New York's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; and this writer. Joining us in Rome was Miss Pamela Ilott of CBS television. ★

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A Golden Land for Yiddish Theater



Stars of "The Golden Land."

by Masha Leon

Near the end of the nineteenth century, historian Leo Wiener predicted that the Yiddish theater would survive in America for only another ten years. Today, a century later, the success of such hits as *The Golden Land* and *Kuni Leml* lays to rest all early prognostications about the life expectancy of this enduring art form.

The recent resurgence of Yiddish theater accompanies the revival of interest in the Yiddish language among second- and third-generation American Jews. Today, Yiddish is a credit course at more than fifty uni-

Masha Leon is a freelance writer and a theater critic for *The Jewish Forward* (English language supplement).

versities, while at Queens College, New York, 400 students a year enroll in the Yiddish Studies Program.

How can one explain the long lines at the Westbury Fair for the suburban mounting of *The Golden Land*, a Yiddish-English production about immigrants coming to America, sweatshops, labor, Americanization, the two World Wars, the Holocaust, and Israel. Actor-producer Moishe Rosenfeld explains that the play "would not have found an audience without the authenticity of its Yiddish base." What might have been an obstacle—Yiddish—became the attraction of the play, which extended a run of ten weeks into four months plus. With nearly thirty thousand ticket-buyers in New York and another eighteen thousand at Westbury, it's a bit early for eulogies. And not only in New York. In Atlanta, Louisville, Toronto, Cleve-

land, and Detroit, the cast was greeted with standing ovations.

But how does one explain the ongoing success of the *Folksbiene*, currently celebrating its seventieth season with Isaac Bash-evis Singer's *A Play for the Devil*? Or the all-Yiddish production of the Shalom Yiddish Musical Theater's latest *Mary Soreanu* vehicle, *Oy Mama! Am I In Love!* And not only are full-scale dramatic and musical productions showing vitality, a number of one-man/woman shows such as Avi Hoffman's portrayal of Yiddish poet Itzig Manger are expanding the repertoire. Taking his show on the road, Hoffman, one of Yiddish theater's youngest stars, was astonished to find an enthusiastic response from audiences that were one-third young people. The actors are getting younger too. The souvenir book of the 1945-46 season of the Yiddish Art Theater reveals that not one actor is under forty. Today, the Yiddish theater boasts a roster of young professional actors, many in their twenties, who speak Yiddish fluently: Eleanor Reissa, Raquel Yossifon, Moishe Rosenfeld, Bruce Adler, Mike Burstyn, Betty Silverman, and Joanne Bort, to name a few.

Although Ron Avni, director of the Jewish Repertory Theater, disclaims any association with Yiddish theater, his hit, *Kuni Leml*, now in its tenth month on Broadway, is based on Abraham Goldfaden's classic farce. Though staged in English, it is historically rooted in the Yiddish theater tradition. As the youngest member of the Yiddish culture club (language, press, literature), the Yiddish theater attracts fans who do not read or speak Yiddish. It offers them a unique link with a past—an ethnic family album, a panorama of warmly remembered traditions. And beyond this opportunity for communal sharing of *Yiddishkeit*, it entertains.

At first the Yiddish theater flourished in America because it served working-class immigrants from Eastern Europe who did not care that the "uptown" German-Jews found the repertoire vulgar. But as playwrights began to write serious works, often translating classics into Yiddish, and as distinguished actors like Jacob Adler and David Kessler emerged, Yiddish theater gained legitimacy.

But by 1940 the Yiddish theater was in decline, the result of a variety of factors: aging actors and a shrinking Yiddish audience due to assimilation, the curtailment of immigration, and the Holocaust. Competition from radio, film, and television, as well as Jewish flight to the suburbs, also contributed to the decline.

Today, the Yiddish theater is making a comeback, enabling young Jews to join hands nostalgically with past generations.

Newsweek called 1985 "Broadway's Lean Season," reporting that young people were not going to the theater. Of eighteen shows that opened on Broadway this season, only five are still running. Yet all of the Yiddish productions that opened, not only completed, but extended full runs. So those who think that the Yiddish theater is *oyf tsores* (having problems) should know that we're not doing so badly after all.

HERE COME THE ZAMLERS!

by Laura Folkman

Elsewhere in the world Yiddish may be dying, but in an old brick school house in Amherst, Massachusetts a group of dedicated preservationists have already rescued from oblivion more than 150,000 worn Yiddish books, volumes covering everything from Zionism and Jewish History to Psychology and Linguistics. Led by Aaron Lansky, director and founder of the National Yiddish Book Center, this energetic crew has been gathering forgotten Yiddish books from across the country and bringing them together at the National Yiddish Book Center.

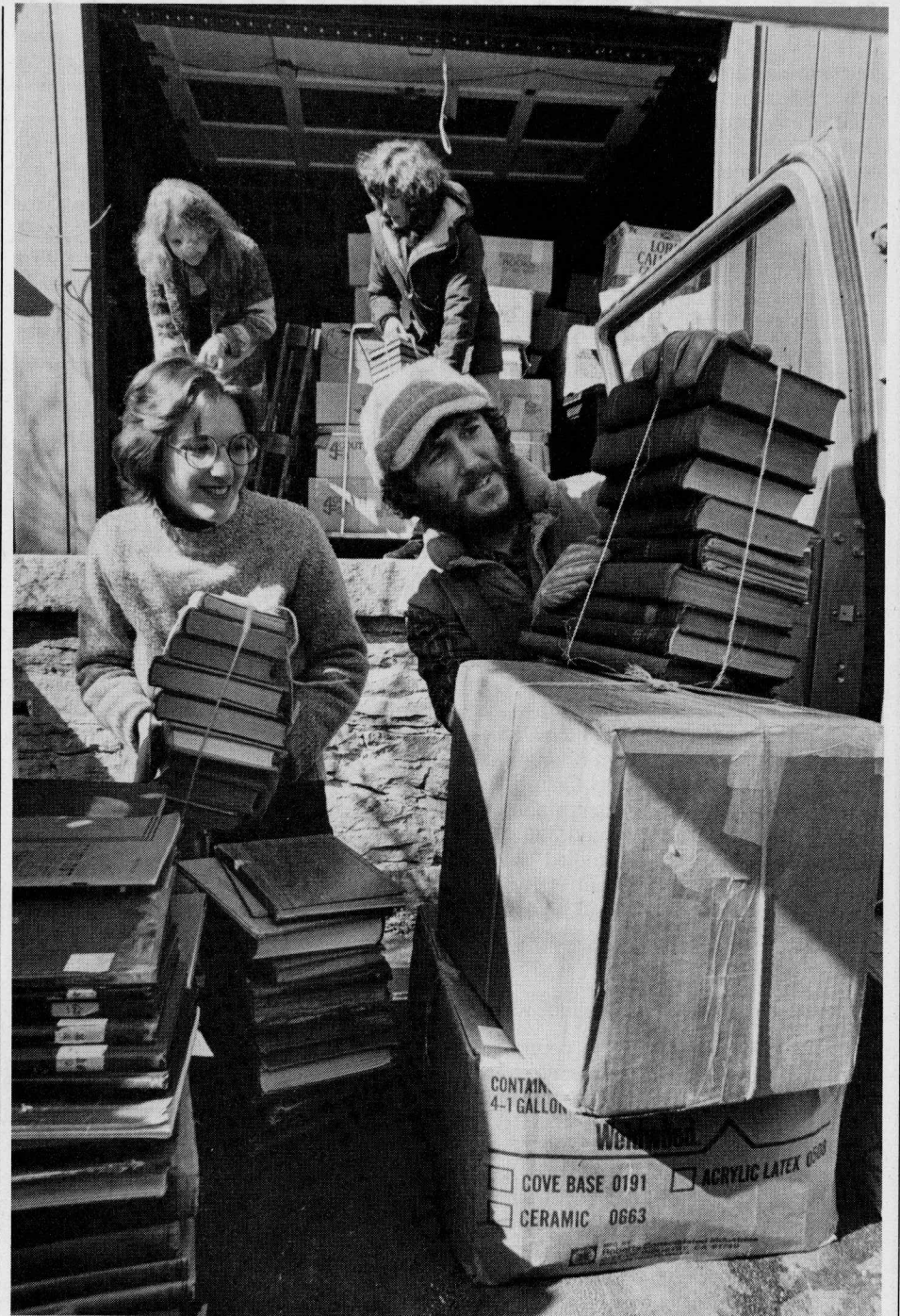
The staff at the Center works meticulously to recover the thousands of valuable Yiddish books which might otherwise be discarded. Established in June 1980, the non-profit organization is now the world's largest resource for new, used, and out-of-print Yiddish books.

Lansky, who was cited by *Esquire* magazine as one of 272 men and women under forty who are changing America, conceived this project as a graduate student at McGill University, where he received a degree in Yiddish Literature. Because he had access to only the most basic Yiddish titles, he decided to create a repository for those scarce Yiddish books he believed were stored in attics and closets across America. What began with a factory loft and a great number of press releases suddenly grew into the National Yiddish Book Center.

Deluged before long with offers, requests, and information pertaining to his collection of literature, Lansky and his staff moved to the old building in Amherst, where they now house more than 350,000 volumes, some of which are waiting to be indexed in nearby Holyoke, MA in a building which will soon be their permanent library.

The task of those who work at the Center is, quite simply, to rescue these books. Volunteer book collectors, known as *zamlers*, are an important source for the books; those at the Center also go on "truck runs" throughout the country, picking up books from house-bound or elderly donors. In addition, Lansky says, they receive several hundred books a week by mail. Although they have few English translations in the collection, Lansky hopes to acquire more in the future. The collection also contains records, bound newspapers, and precious manuscripts celebrating Yiddish language and culture. There is even a rare Yiddish Smith Corona typewriter,

Laura Folkman, a junior at Amherst College, is co-editor of *Shofar*, a five-college Jewish news magazine. This article is copyright 1985 by the Jewish Student Press Service.



Aaron Lansky and volunteers on Yiddish book rescue mission.

which belonged to the author Lamed Shapiro.

Scholars, students, and libraries from more than twenty countries on five continents have turned to the Center for needed texts and resources. Interest in Yiddish is on the rise, with courses offered at sixty American Universities.

To respond to this revival in Yiddish language and culture, the National Yiddish Book Center offers its own summer program. During the year Lansky and his assistant, Sharon

Kleinbaum, present educational lectures and slide programs around the country. The Center publishes an impressive amount of its own literature, ranging from pamphlets to newsletters and catalogues.

The National Yiddish Book Center was created to fill a void, and in the process has preserved countless volumes of Yiddish literature, thus preserving an important part of our Jewish heritage for future generations.



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A Conversation with Author AHARON APPELFELD

Four novels by the prize-winning Israeli author Aharon Appelfeld have appeared in English in recent years—Badenheim 1939 (Godine), The Age of Wonders (Godine), Tzili: The Story of a Life (Dutton), and most recently The Retreat (Dutton). The writer, whose imagination is preoccupied with the Jewish response to the gathering tragedy of the late 1930s, lives in Mevasseret Tzion outside Jerusalem. There he was interviewed by free-lance writer Haim Chertok.

Would you describe yourself as religious?

When I came to Israel in 1946, alone at the age of thirteen, the religious community here was very small. Anyone who reads *The Retreat* or *The Age of Wonders* can tell that I was raised in an assimilated home. But the cauldron of the Holocaust drew me very close to the Jewish people. I was in the camps from the age of eight until I escaped into the countryside at age eleven. That experience was fundamental to my self-understanding. I may not wear a kippah, but I am a religious Jew.

In the Europe where I grew up—Czeronovitz in Bukovina, now part of the USSR—Yiddish was the essential sign of one's Jewishness. When I arrived in Israel, being drawn to my Jewish roots meant that I chose to live in a religious neighborhood, but more importantly, it meant that I studied Yiddish literature when I went to the university. This was my path to my people and myself, my substitute for a normal Jewish education or upbringing.

So you consider yourself a religious writer?

Of course. Our religion is the preeminent expression of Jewishness, the essence of our culture. To me, Jewish culture without a religious basis is unimaginable. But I don't mean to talk narrowly about this. The insistence that life has a moral purpose lies at the core of our culture, and can be found among the "secular" as well. The labor Zionism of the kibbutznikim emitted authentic Jewishness. There were, especially in earlier years, many people for whom the Hebrew language itself was a religious vehicle. Reclaiming it from the past and from exclusively religious matters constituted a genuine religious experience for them. Even communism is a kind of distorted Jewish messianism.

Does the present tilt toward messianism in Israel pose dangers?

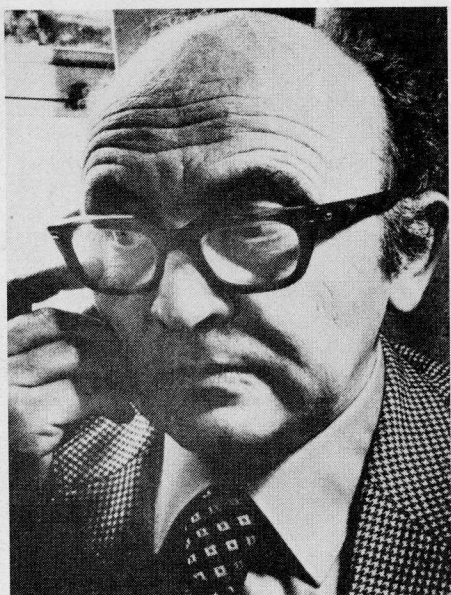
Authentic messianism is a permanent legacy of Judaism. The Hassidim have internalized their messianism. They leave the "Egypt of the heart" when they pray and strive for a

vision of perfection, a purification of impulses.

And its political manifestation?

Political messianism is a cheapening of the impulse. We sometimes forget that we are living not very long after a period of almost unparalleled catastrophe. It is both a time of danger and of transition. Messianism is one of many competing tendencies today. There are people who live in Israel and are

"The cauldron of the Holocaust drew me very close to the Jewish people."



Aharon Appelfeld

not fully at home here. They live in a *galut* of the heart. For them, especially, messianism has its attractions.

Where did you send your children for their schooling?

All three attended the state religious schools for their primary education. They share my own warm attitude toward Jewish traditions and are in their way "religious." The Oriental Jews come by their Jewishness, their heritage, more naturally than do we former Europeans. Their religious shell is not yet crystallized: their background is their culture. But Zionism was for so long a specifically anti-religious, secular rebellion against Judaism that for many of us, religion must be reclaimed. The oddity is that now Zionism

is increasingly becoming a religious movement.

Your children, then, have not rebelled against your values or outlook?

On the contrary, they share my approach of openness and dialogue with all Jewish people. As I hope is clear from my novels, it is important to comprehend all Jews as human beings and to recognize that secular Jews are, of course, Jews. There are two falsifying tendencies toward Judaism that we are heirs to: the nostalgic, sentimental approach of those who tried to sweeten Judaism, exemplified in the works of I.L. Peretz; and the ideologues like Mendele Mocher Seforim and Joseph Brenner, the anti-religious social critics. We live today in the space between these two approaches. At present, the critical element is on the defensive; the nostalgic seems to be prevailing. But both are superficial. As I tried to show in *The Age of Wonders*, life is nothing if not complicated. Each person contains contradictions.

You hold the chair in Holocaust studies at Ben-Gurion University in Beersheva. What's your chief aim there?

To impart an attitude, an atmosphere to the students; to create an environment where one can speak freely about the Holocaust, to free oneself from inhibitions. The problems are great, for the Holocaust has been abused and misused and the slate must be wiped clean before one can begin. A language to deal with the immensity of the event must be found or created—one neither too emotional nor too rational. The victims for long have just wanted to forget what happened to them. And the others have been content not to hear: they are afraid of it. It's a sort of quiet conspiracy. This is especially true among Israeli students, more so than among Americans whom I used to teach at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem. There is a long Zionist tradition against the Diaspora as *galut*. There is also the belief that Zionist theory justified itself with the Holocaust, proving that Diaspora Jews were defenseless and therefore destined for disaster. It is, of course, a cruel and unpleasant, even sinful argument. When I first came to Israel, the question of why we permitted ourselves to be led "like sheep to slaughter" was in the air—often unstated but continually an implied accusation. Zionism seemed a ready weapon to turn against the survivors. It was very painful.

Do you ascribe religious significance to the State of Israel itself?

No. The state is only a frame within which

to live. For the Jewish people, Israel is, of course, a wonderful frame—but not more. And it is not the frame for all Jews. The fine Hebrew poet Gabriel Priel lives in a small, dark, depressing apartment in the Bronx, the last of a group of Hebrew poets in New York. He's in his seventies. Some years ago, a group of us arranged a fund for him and an apartment in bright, sunny Israel. He

hadn't made much money writing Hebrew poetry in New York, so he came. Here in Israel he was among friends and admirers in a climate that seemed more agreeable in every conceivable way. And yet he couldn't function. After a time, he returned to his gloomy Bronx apartment. For me, however, Israel is the frame in which I feel most at home. ★

WITH APPELFELD IN MEA SHEARIM

by Steven Schnur

In the gathering darkness of a Jerusalem evening, I walked the alleyways and sudden courtyards of Mea Shearim, listening to the memories of my guide, Aharon Appelfeld. It was here, he said, pointing through the shadows to a lighted window, that he took his meals as a penniless student, here among the gartered and robed ultra-Orthodox that he studied Jewish law, losing himself in the intricate maze of mitzvot, deep within this eighteenth-century monument to Chasidism. These were the people, in their fierce and unrelenting hold upon time, who had provided the orphaned, thirteen-year-old survivor with the means to reconstitute his shattered life, a people curiously, perhaps blessedly, deaf to the violent crescendo of the twentieth century. He had almost disappeared within a timeless fold of that world, he said, shivering slightly in the sudden cold of night, but in the end his past had laid too great a claim upon him. He needed to remember.

I had to intuit much about this soft-spoken writer of short stories and novels; he said little and spoke in a respectful hush that transformed the ancient district into a place of private worship. He did not exchange words with the black-hatted men who hurried past in the darkness but knew the houses they entered, the prayers they chanted, the books they studied, and the thoughts that guided them through their days. He was both tourist and native, stranger and landsman, one who loved those archaic ways but did not have the freedom to adopt them. The lien of his brutal past impelled him to confront, organize, and explain a decade so violent and so foreign to that tranquil remnant that he could not, in good conscience, live among them.

Escaping from the cold, we climbed worn, uneven stairs to a study room, a *shtible* that had cradled him years before. Though clean-shaven and dressed like most modern Israelis, he passed freely into that world of long beards and side curls, deferential without awe, discerning without cynicism. Within the cramped room, men and boys chatted,

Steven Schnur is editor of Reform Judaism and Keeping Posted.

pored over volumes of the Talmud, and smoked the air blue. Tall, lank fathers entered with sons in hand, hung their broad-brimmed hats on the wall, and disappeared into the crowd of ageless students, no different in appearance from those who had shared the room with Appelfeld thirty years ago. He took great comfort in the stability of that place, a stability so glaringly absent from modern life.

"Are there no hidden terrors in this life?" I asked, as we returned to the darkness.

"Of God, not of man," Appelfeld answered.

From across the courtyard came the muffled Yiddish shout of an angry father. "You want noise, I'll give you noise." A door slammed, shattering a pane of glass.

"They are human too," Appelfeld smiled, taking pleasure as perhaps only an orphan can in a father's rage.

Among these people he had discovered his vocation, becoming his own father in the process of explaining to himself and others the reasons for the evil, for the pain and loss, for the destruction of a young boy's dreams.

Appelfeld writes with exquisite patience, feeling his way slowly through the labyrinth of language, conscious, it would seem, not only of its healing powers, but of the destructive potential of oratory. Those who perished in Bukovina, his birthplace, who labored beside him as slaves, who crowded into ships with nothing but unspeakable memories, are never far from his thoughts. To these he returns repeatedly, obsessively, in his stories and novels. He does not write of his second home, explaining that the demands of memory are too great. He has no time to digress. But his use of Hebrew conjoins ancestral heritage, childhood, and adopted land, providing his richly allegorical tales with a texture of biblical allusiveness.

If Appelfeld the writer has an enemy, it is not mankind, not the handy villains of the recent past, but the self-evident, the logical, the half-blind modern conception of life that fails to probe feeling. Those who value his work speak of jewels. They treasure the quiet intimacy of his prose, his power to imbue subtle distinctions with enormous consequence. He who has witnessed life at its most debased is able to distill a value from it few others perceive, writing, as he lives, with quiet piety. ★

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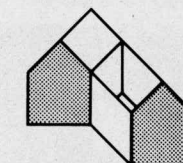
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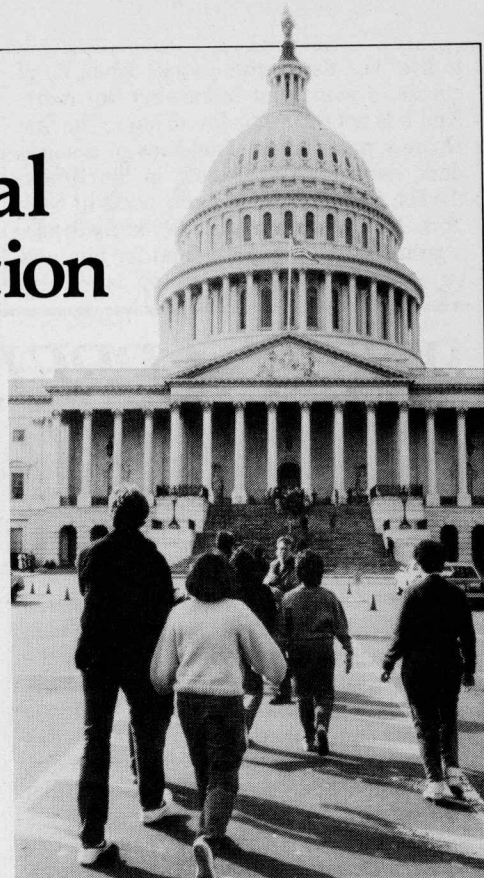
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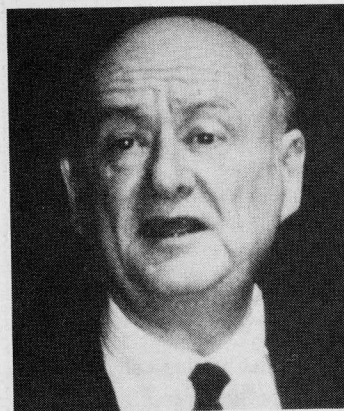
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Youths Attend Second National NFTY Convention



Under the banner, "Making a Difference," more than 700 teenagers from across North America gathered for the second National Federation of Temple Youth convention last February in Arlington, Virginia. For five days the youth delegates from 339 Reform synagogues in 38 states, Ontario, and British Columbia attended workshops, lobbied on Capitol Hill, and attended a religious service entitled "In Celebration of Freedom" at the Lincoln Memorial. Mayor Edward Koch of New York City addressed the gathering along with Dr. Sol Gordon, director of the Institute for Family Research and Education at Syracuse University; Rabbi Lawrence Kushner of Sudbury, MA; Dr. Michael Meyer, history professor at HUC-JIR; Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the UAHC Religious Action Center; and Marc Pearl, Washington representative of the American Jewish Congress. During the convention Jonathan Miller of Lexington, KY, was elected president; Sarah Lisa Bendiner of Pomona, CA, executive vice president; and Rachel Tatiana Sabbath of Minneapolis, MN, special projects vice president.



Dual Careers

(continued from page 12)

Time for my family is not as plentiful as I might like, although I do spend more time with my family than many one career workaholics.

It's impossible to like two things precisely equally, so there is always a tendency to want to migrate one's efforts in the direction of the more enjoyable career.

Most of my rabbinic colleagues who meet together do so during the day and reserve evenings for temple meetings and their families. My days are taken up with my scientific career, which has the effect of isolating me from other rabbis in the region.

Being a rabbi with two careers allows me to serve a portion of the Jewish community who need the resource materials provided by a rabbi as well as the rabbinic leadership which comes only with *smichah* (ordination). Most congregations have one or more individuals who aspire to the role of the rabbi. On more than one occasion I've heard congregants say, "If I could decide my career today, I'd become a rabbi." If you've said this, it may not be too late. You can still add "rabbi" to your other career and in so doing you may become the answer to the needs of some of our smallest Jewish communities.

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Jews and Blacks

(continued from page 9)

drop-out rate among Blacks); in the extraordinarily high levels of Black crime, suicide, and mental illness.

Yet the scope of Black powerlessness also makes awesome the fact of Black resilience and survival—again, on a level comparable to or surpassing Eastern European Jewry. As Urban League President Jacobs writes: "That Black America is not worse off today than it is, is more of a testament to its traditional ability to survive under the most difficult of conditions than to anything else. Survival is a way of life in all too much of Black America, but the word also carries with it the implication of being able to make those changes and adjustments necessary to meet the circumstances of the moment."

Can we build upon this Black-Jewish parallel of survivability to draw an analogy in terms of empowerment? For the Jews it took huge upheavals, within and outside the Jewish community, including virtual transplantation to America and Israel, to "solve" or at least attenuate the twin problems of anti-Semitism and Jewish victimization. Indeed, Israel has been described as the world's "affirmative action" for the Jews in recompense for the neglect that allowed the Holocaust to happen. For Blacks an equally massive effort will have to be made, by the Black community itself and by the society

as a whole, in willing cooperation, to uproot the enduring legacy of slavery and racism and give truly equal opportunity to American Blacks. The answer is not transplantation, for there is no more golden land for American Blacks than America. The answer, rather, is *transformation*: the fulfillment of the best of our country's dreams.

"The question is often asked," writes John Jacobs, "What do Black people want?" The implication therein is that having had legal racial restrictions removed, having seen some of their own move into positions from which they were once excluded, and having been blessed by living in the most prosperous democratic society on earth, they should be satisfied. My response . . .

"We want what white people want—decent jobs, homes and health care, and quality education for our kids so they can grow up in peace and dignity.

"We want an open society in which everybody has a chance to make it on their own—a society in which whiteness and wealth confer no special advantages—a society in which Black people and poor people are full partners in democracy. . . .

"We want an America that nurtures its many peoples with respect for the divine spark that dwells within all of us—an America that moves beyond racism to a new era of progress and reconciliation."

Our society is far from making this transformation, and the political road even to the starting gate is twisted and long. The elim-

ination of racism and all of its effects from American society will involve the harnessing of major resources—but chief among them will be *goodwill*, the national will to atone for the heritage of slavery and to reconstruct on a scale not nearly attained during post-Civil War Reconstruction.

For now, perhaps, the task is to keep this dream of transformation alive and defend the gains made in more progressive days. To be part of this transformation, we must not be seduced by Roger Starr's fantasy, in which twenty years of grudging federal aid to the Black community overturn three centuries of deprivation and soul-crushing oppression. We must not allow our fear of Black crime to translate into Bernhard Goetz's vigilantism; we must not allow the intimidating violence of a Black, teenage mugger to make us forget the essential powerlessness from which his violence grows. We must not allow President Reagan's cruel-spirited, rugged individualism to redefine our political goals and beliefs.

"Black America," writes Jacobs, "is a special place that requires special understanding." By maintaining an empathetic Jewish perspective on Black America, we can achieve that special understanding: an identification not with Pharaoh, who hardened his heart against the demands of his slaves, but with the slaves themselves, who had to spend forty Biblical years wandering in the wilderness before they could reach the promised land. ★



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by Seymour Rossel

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In 1934, Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, son of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, founder of the UAHC and the other major institutions of Reform Judaism, established the weekly radio program, *Message of Israel*. After more than 2,500 broadcasts, it continues as the oldest uninterrupted national weekly Jewish religious program in America. Under the direction of David J. Wise, son of Jonah B. Wise, and originating from Central Synagogue in New York City, the program is aired over approximately 200 ABC affiliated stations across the country. Mr. Wise was interviewed by RJ editor Aron Hirt-Manheimer.

The Message of Israel was founded in 1934 in order to satisfy the needs of the day and of the radio industry. At that time, by law, the National Broadcasting Company, and later the American Broadcasting Company, had to give free and equal time for public service and religious programs. Leading Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish pastors and laymen participated in bringing what NBC called the Word of God to mankind. The Message of Israel was founded by my father, Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, in conjunction with financier and philanthropist Felix M. Warburg and RCA and NBC chairman David Sarnoff. The broadcast was instituted partly to combat anti-Semitism, which was rising at that time in Europe under Hitler and was showing its face in this country as a result of people like Father Coughlin, whose anti-Semitic weekly radio program reached millions. At first, my father was reluctant to take on the responsibility. Although he had appeared from time to time on radio programs out West, he felt this was not his métier. But he was an accomplished extemporaneous speaker and adapted well to the demands of the radio of his day. So, until his death in 1959, he was the voice of the Message of Israel. My role from the time I joined the staff in 1950 as producer was to arrange for speakers, get sermons in on time, assemble the program components, respond to "fan" letters, and keep contact with our affiliated stations.

From the beginning the program has been a creative worship service highlighting a sermon and usually built around a central theme, such as a holiday or commemorative occasion, or the works of a distinguished composer. It strives especially to explain Judaism to non-Jews and to those of our faith who may not fully comprehend its many facets. The programs are greatly enhanced by the voices of Cantor Richard Botton, the late cantor Frederick Lechner, and the temple choir, as well as guest ensembles. Great Jew-

Our faithful listeners include the homebound and those who live in remote areas, as well as many Christians who listen while en route to church. In addition to the letters from our Jewish friends, we have received many from nuns, priests, and other non-Jewish listeners, all of whom are afforded a unique opportunity to see how rabbis think about a wide range of social and personal issues that affect Jews in every land.

No. Our favorite speakers have included Conservative rabbis Dr. Israel Goldstein and Robert Gordis and Orthodox rabbis David de Sola Pool, Emanuel Rackman, and Joseph Lookstein. Very often, we feature lay leaders like UAHC board chairman Charles Rothschild and the presidents of major Jewish organizations.

Christian denominations, with their vast constituencies, are able to raise enormous sums of money and can afford to pay for their air time. As a result of FCC radio deregulation, free religious broadcasting time is no longer mandatory. Most stations in New York City now charge for religious air time. So, although ABC "feeds" the Message Of Israel all over the country as a public service, not every affiliated station picks it up.

No, and we feel we should not, as a matter of principle. We are rendering a valuable service to the community, one which stations should be more than happy to air, if only to counterbalance for a few minutes each week the voices of other religions. Our faithful stations continue to air us every Sunday in such major population areas as New York (WVOX, WFAS), Miami (WFTL, WCGY), Chicago (WIND), Pittsburgh (WTKN), Washington, D.C. (WMAL), Baltimore (WBAL), Providence (WLKW), Stamford (WSTC), and Boston (WEZE).

At present the program originates from Cen-

tral Synagogue, which has indicated its desire to continue it. The cooperation and participation of Rabbis David J. Seligson (Emeritus) and Sheldon Zimmerman have been integral to our weekly broadcasts. Our good relationships with HUC-JIR and the CCAR have also been helpful. For example, we are in the process of building up a cassette library at the College Institute to perpetuate for posterity the voices of our greatest preachers and musicians.

The program offers free printed copies of the sermons that are delivered on the air. We also send out tapes free of charge to those remote stations not equipped to tape the program directly from ABC. However, these services are expensive. We rely on tax-deductible contributions from our listeners and friends to continue broadcasting for another fifty years.

For further details about the program, write to David J. Wise, c/o Message of Israel, 123 E. 55 St., New York, N.Y. 10022 (phone 212-838-5122). ★

Q: Could you explain the phrase, "God is in His Holy Temple?" Is God confined to a specific area?

A: The phrase, "God is in His Holy Temple" is not to be taken literally. God is both immanent and transcendent. The phrase merely means that there are places conducive to worshipful experiences. But this does not negate or exclude the belief that God's presence is all-pervasive. One can pray to God wherever and whenever one wishes to do so. We may pray to God at home, in the field, in the market place, in any place.

At one time the worship of God was confined to certain geographic locales. God told Moses and Aaron that He wanted Pharaoh to free the Jews so that they may worship Him in the desert, indicating that God was confined to a territorial area. After the conquest of Canaan, it was believed that God could be worshipped only in Israel. But when the first Temple was destroyed and the Jews were exiled to Babylonia, they realized that they would disappear as a people if they followed the general custom of worshipping the local deity. The ten tribes of Israel, dispersed after the Assyrians destroyed the Northern Kingdom, had adopted the worship of the country deity to which they were dispersed and thus became lost to Judaism. In the same way, when the Samaritans were brought into Israel, they adopted the worship of God and looked upon themselves as Jews.

The Jews in Babylonia, in order to avoid the fate of the ten lost tribes, taught that God may be worshipped everywhere. To affirm this, the Adoration Prayer was written, recognizing the universality of God. This concept saved Judaism and the Jewish people.

Rabbi Zlotowitz is director of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues.

(continued from page 7)

human face” movement in 1967–68, official Soviet anti-Semitism took on an especially virulent form. On one level, it assumed a racist drive in the media. A massive propaganda assault against Jews was launched in August 1967 in reaction to the Israeli victory in the Six-Day War. Thinly masked as anti-Zionism, the drive was directed against Judaism, Jewish tradition, and Jewry

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itself. The Torah and the Talmud were presented as preaching racism, hatred, and violence. A typical comment on the Torah can be found in the aforementioned *Invasion Without Arms*. Begun writes: "... it proves to be an unsurpassed textbook of bloodthirstiness, hypocrisy, treachery, perfidy, and degradation—all the basest human qualities."

The campaign is centrally coordinated and directed. A study of the central and provincial Soviet press revealed that since 1967, the number of articles critical of Zionism has increased sixfold. Zionism has been the main subject of as much as two-thirds of newspaper space on Jewish subjects. And 112 anti-Semitic books were published in the 1960s and '70s, some in editions of 200,000 copies, receiving enthusiastic reviews in the Soviet press.

Especially disturbing is the anti-Zionist campaign in the Soviet military. When a major Soviet military journal, *Sovietskii voyn*, in 1982 echoes the dark and hoary language of Tsarist anti-Semitism, it inevitably raises questions about the character of the ideological training in the Soviet armed forces and, beyond that, the perspective of the Kremlin. The periodical describes an alleged "Masonic-Zionist strategy" for subverting both Soviet society and the Warsaw Pact structure and for achieving world domination.

The profound trauma which such propaganda causes among Soviet Jews is compounded by the drastic cutback in emigra-


tion—over ninety-nine percent since 1979. In the face of such desperation, it is hardly surprising that a refusenik document to the last Soviet Communist Party Congress in 1981 warned “that the Jews of the USSR are facing the threat of a national catastrophe.” A century of the pogromist mentality has reached a critical turning point. The Cassandra-like cry from Soviet Jews must shatter the complacency of the West. ★

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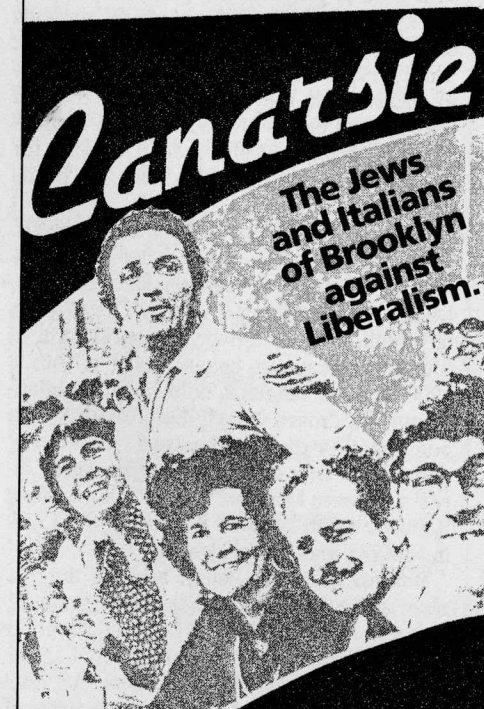
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Tell and Qvell

by Bettijane Eisenpreis

In Falls Church, VA, 400 parents, working from Tuesday noon through late Sunday (but taking Shabbat off) held the present day equivalent of a barn-raising for the children of the Temple Rodef Shalom Nursery School. "Wonderland," an all-wooden creative play area designed by Ithaca architect **Robert Leathers**, was constructed entirely by volunteers. The project was the inspiration of Nursery School Director **Judy Seiff** and encouraged by **Rabbi Laszlo Berkowitz**.

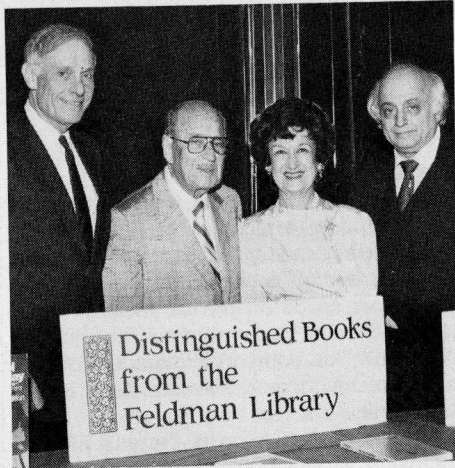
In Chattanooga, TN, Blacks and Jews made history when the Greater Brainerd Area Jaycees chose as the theme of their Jaycee Week Banquet "Black-Jewish Relations" and invited UAHC Board member **Robert J. Lipshutz**, former counsel to President Jimmy Carter, to be one of the speakers. Dinner profits went on an equal basis to the United Negro College Fund and to the Jewish Community Center Day Camp, which offers scholarships to needy, inner-city children. The project received the full cooperation of Chattanooga's Reform Mizpah Congregation under the leadership of Rabbis **Kenneth A. Kanter** and **Abraham Feinstein** and President **Harold A. Schwartz, Jr.**

LIFTY (Long Island Federation of Temple Youth) held a "Tree Dance" in conjunction with Temple Emanu-El of East Meadow, NY to plant a LIFTY Garden in the Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler Forest in Safed, Israel. As a result, 137 trees were planted in the garden and a good time was had by all.

The Stars of David, a Boston area support group for Jewish and part-Jewish adoptive families, is going national. Co-sponsored by Temple Shalom Emeth, Burlington, MA and the Northeast Council of the UAHC, it was begun by the temple's **Rabbi Susan Abramson** and **Phyllis Nissen**, the mother of eleven-year-old Misti and nine-year-old Melanie, both from Korea, and Greg, age five, biological. For information, contact Phyllis Nissen, 24 Lisa Lane, Reading, MA 01867.

Annette Daum, coordinator of Interreligious Affairs for the UAHC, has been named associate director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. The commission, a joint body of the UAHC and the CCAR and chaired by **Harris Gilbert**, speaks for the Reform movement on world peace, religious freedom, civil liberties, and other social justice issues. Ms. Daum currently staffs four key UAHC groups—the task force on women and minorities, the task force on equality of women in Judaism, the interreligious committee, and the committee on cults and missionaries.

Rabbi Steven Reuben of Temple Judea, Tarzana, CA, was recently nominated "Neighborhood Hero" by a ten-year-old con-



Milton Feldman was honored at the December 1985 UAHC Board meeting in Miami Beach, FL, which celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Feldman Library Fund. Shown here (l. to r.) are UAHC chairman Charles Rothschild, Jr., Milton Feldman, Stecia Feldman, and UAHC president Rabbi Alexander Schindler.

gregant, **Beth Bortz**. When Beth learned that the Tarzana Daily News was running a "Neighborhood Hero" contest, she hastened to submit the rabbi's name. "He keeps the Jewish family traditions, he collects food and gives it to the needy, and he sings and makes me laugh," she wrote in her nominating letter. It worked. Reuben was chosen one of nine heroes!

Eugene Margolis, a member of Reform Congregation Rodef Shalom of Falls Church, VA, was named one of two top Community Service Volunteers of the Year by B'nai B'rith International. Margolis brought B'nai B'rith's Project H.O.P.E. (Help Our People Everywhere) to Virginia. Through H.O.P.E., Pass-over food is provided for poor and isolated elderly Jews. Other projects which Margolis organized in his area are Sherut Shalom, a B'nai B'rith service that enables newcomers to acclimate to the Jewish community, and the Mitzvah Corps of the Northern Virginia council of B'nai B'rith, a fix-it service for the elderly and incapacitated. He also heads the latter.

Forty years—but not in the wilderness: **Dr. Leon A. Kronish** celebrated his 40th anniversary as rabbi of Temple Beth Shalom, Miami Beach, this past winter. The 67-year-old rabbi, who took over a congregation of fifty members and helped build it into a 1200-member religious, cultural, and philanthropic landmark, was honored both by his congregation and by the Israel Bonds Organization. In a congratulatory message, Israel's Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin called Rabbi Kronish "one of America's outstanding rabbis and Jewish leaders."

Balfour Brickner, senior rabbi of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in New York, has been awarded the first Louis D. Brandeis Award by the American-Israeli Civil Liberties Coalition for his "leadership in civil liberties, human rights, and protection of

individual dignity." The award was presented at a reception held at the Hebrew Union College's New York campus. The reception helped to raise funds for the Coalition-supported Kol Koreh School for civil liberties and democratic action, now being created in Israel with the aid of a Ford Foundation grant.

Miriam Goldberg, a member of Temple Chai, Phoenix, AZ, has been hailed "world-class volunteer." Wherever she has lived—Boston, New York, San Diego, or Phoenix—she has used her many talents—music, translating, counseling—for the benefit of her fellow citizens, 5,000 hours worth. In 1983 she received tributes from Sen. Pete Wilson, Sen. Ted Kennedy, and Mayor Ed Koch. Now 87, she entertains senior citizens at the Kivel home in Phoenix and helps the Alzheimer Foundation.

Herbert Fromm, one of Reform's most prolific composers, celebrated his 80th birthday on February 23, 1985. From 1941 to 1972, Fromm served as music director and organist of Temple Israel, Boston, and, since 1972, has been "emeritus" in both positions. In honor of his birthday, Temple Israel held a Fromm evening on Feb 1, when a new composition of Mr. Fromm's was performed. In addition, Temple Beth Zion, Buffalo, NY, where Fromm first served after coming to the U.S. from Germany, honored him in January with a service of his music. Temple Sinai in Boston has also held a Fromm evening. Though retired, Mr. Fromm still works in his study at Temple Israel almost every day.

Three UAHC Board members now have a child or in-law to be ordained rabbi or invested cantor come June: **Norman and Lynore Schwartz's** daughter, **Karyn Kedar**, in Cincinnati; **Gerry Voit's** daughter-in-law, **Laurie Coskey**, in Cincy; and **Shirlee Goldman-Herzog's** son-in-law, **Kaben Wartell**, a cantorial student in NY.

For the past eight years, worshippers at Temple Emanu-El, Westfield, NJ, have held a weekly "minyan" as an alternative to regular Shabbat services, according to **Rabbi Charles Kroloff**. The prayer and study group is entirely lay-led, although assistant **Rabbi Arnold S. Gluck** often attends and helps supply source material. With a core group of about 25 people, it has inspired its members to pursue adult education, to become congregational leaders, or to feel more positive about being Jewish.

Corrections

Judge Emil Baar's name was spelled incorrectly in our last "Tell and Qvell" (Spring 1985).

In "Tell and Qvell" (Winter 1984-85) we incorrectly stated that the Jewish Hospital Skycare, the first hospital-based air ambulance service, was located in Lexington, Kentucky. In fact, the Jewish Hospital Skycare is located in Louisville, Kentucky.

Reform Round-Up

by Bettijane Eisenpreis

The UAHC is proud to announce that its film, *The Lives We Touch*, won a Silver Anvil, the number one honor in the public relations profession, from the Public Relations Society of America. Produced by the UAHC Communications Committee, the film was among 29 winners chosen from 433 entries all over the United States and foreign countries, including the People's Republic of China. The half-an-hour documentary highlights UAHC programs put into action from the congregations' viewpoints, thus showing the successful interrelationship between the Union and its members. The film is available free of charge by writing: UAHC, Box 2087, Charlotte, NC 28211. Please include the date the film is needed and the preferred format (16 mm, ¾ inch, Beta or VHS).

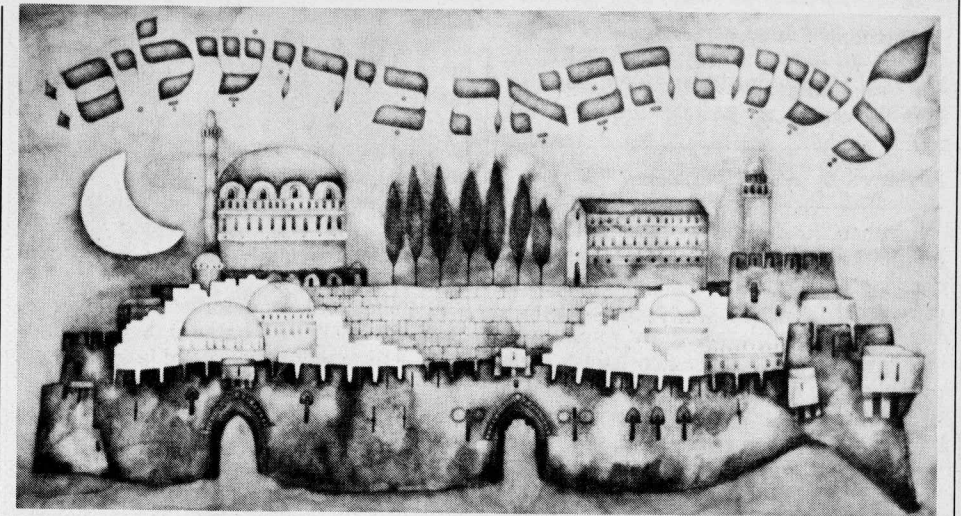
Once again, it is our pleasure to welcome the following new congregations into the UAHC family: Temple Sinai, Forest Hills, NY; Northern Illinois Jewish Community Center, DeKalb, IL; Congregation Beth Shalom, Bloomington, IN; Congregation B'nai Torah, St. Charles, MO; Troy Jewish Congregation, Troy, MI; Congregation Kehillat Chaim, Atlanta, GA; Temple Beth Shalom, Winter Haven, FL; Temple B'nai Shalom, Deerfield Beach, FL; Temple Beth Israel, Harlingen, TX and Congregation B'nai Israel, Riverdale, GA. (Note: Three of the ten congregations have female presidents.)

All NFTY-Kutz Camp alumni please note: the NFTY national camp at Warwick, NY is celebrating its 20th anniversary year and invites all alumni to a reunion on August 3, 1985. Please write or call Kutz Camp, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021, 212-249-0100 for more information.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded more than \$100,000 to HUC-JIR for the preparation of the first fourteen volumes of a complete edition of the works of Sholem Aleichem. **Dr. Herbert H. Paper**, professor of Linguistics and Near Eastern Languages at HUC-JIR, will be co-editor of the project.

Fast for Soviet Hebrew teachers: Jewish religious schools and synagogues in the San Francisco Bay area supported a nationwide fast in support of Soviet Hebrew teachers who are severely penalized for attempting to teach Torah. One synagogue, Congregation Beth El of Berkeley, conducted a day-long fast, followed by a study and protest session in front of the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco.

Baha'i contribution: The UAHC is involved in a number of dramatic projects to aid Ethiopian Jews, many of whom have been rescued by Israel. As of last report, the UAHC had raised about \$250,000 for general Ethiopian relief plus several thousand for our own project REAP (Jewish doctors from the U.S. working in Jewish villages in Gondor). Help has come from everywhere, including a donation of \$70 from the Spiritual



Next Year in Jerusalem, painted by former Russian dissident Tanya Kornfeld in Los Angeles, is one of forty works tracing the young artist's journey from social repression to freedom. The paintings were part of an exhibit entitled "Soviet Jewish Life in America: Two Perspectives," in the Skirball Museum, Los Angeles.

Assembly of the Baha'is of Wilmington, Delaware. Ivan Loder, the Baha'i treasurer wrote, "We know that the mighty ocean of compassion and assistance needed so desperately by the people of Ethiopia is made up of countless drops. We welcome the opportunity to help."

An Amharic (Ethiopian)—Hebrew dictionary to aid in the absorption of Ethiopians in Israel is being funded by the UAHC's Canadian Council through its Ethiopian Relief Fund.

A temple that cares: The Caring Committee of Temple Emanu-El, Birmingham, AL has set up a "Jewish support system" for families of patients at the University of Alabama-Birmingham Medical Center, which receives patients from all over the world. Among the services they will offer are transportation to and from the airport, remaining with the family during surgery and assisting with personal needs such as phone calls, errands, meals, time away from the hospital and transportation to and from temple worship services. **Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs** invites anyone who might need the committee's services to call his congregation at (205) 933-8037.

Wallenberg Remembered: Congregation Beth Israel of Houston presented an original Shabbat service in honor of Raoul Wallenberg, the "Righteous Gentile" who saved thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. Copies of this service are available from: Katharyn Reiser, 4910 Braesvalley, Houston, TX 77096.

Please note:

All synagogues may face a 100% increase in nonprofit mail rates starting October 1, third-class piece rate increasing from 6.0 cents to 12.5 cents, and the pound rate increasing from 20.9 cents/lb (plus 2.6/piece) to 38 cents/lb (and 4.2 cents/piece). To prevent such a catastrophe, please write to the House Committee on Budget and the House Post Office Committee in Washington, D.C. For assistance in registering your synagogue's opposition you may want to contact the Nonprofit Mailers Federation, 2555 M. Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20037 or Mr. S. Bernard Lieberman, Cong. Emanu-El B'ne Jesurun, 2419 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53211 (414-964-4100). Mr. Lieberman represents the National Association of Temple Administrators in this effort.



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LVII. DEATH AND MOURNING: PREPARING FOR THE FUNERAL SERVICE, PART II

by Daniel B. Syme

In contrast to some of the more intricate mourning customs we have studied, the Jewish funeral service is a relatively simple ritual, consisting of the following elements: "cutting *keriah*" prior to the service; recitation of psalms; the *hesped* or eulogy; chanting of the *El Male Rachamim*; and recitation of the Mourner's *Kaddish* after interment.

1. Were Jewish funerals always like this?

No. In ancient times, the funeral service began in the home of the deceased. Psalms were recited, followed by a procession past the home to the grave, where the burial took place. There was no *Kaddish* and no *El Male Rachamim*, both of which originated in later times.

2. What about today?

The major portion of most Jewish funeral services takes place in a funeral chapel or synagogue. A procession then travels to the cemetery, where *Kaddish* is recited following interment.

Some Jews, however, hold the complete service at graveside.

3. How do we "cut *keriah*?"

As we have already learned, the ritual of *keriah* may take place following the moment of death. More commonly, however, it is observed just prior to the service with only the immediate family present.

To review: In Orthodoxy, only one's actual clothes may be used, a coat or dress. The tear in the garment is never resewn. Liberal Jews will often use a black ribbon provided by the funeral home in place of clothing.

Keriah is always performed standing. A cut is made on the left side for parents and on the right side for all others. As the cutting of *keriah* takes place, the family recites the following *berachah*: "Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, Dayan ha'emet." "Blessed are You, O God, Ruler of the universe, the true Judge." The torn garment is traditionally worn for at least seven days, and often for thirty days, following the funeral.

4. What happens next?

After *keriah*, the service begins. Depending upon local custom, the family either remains in a private room or is seated in the first row of the chapel or synagogue. The closed casket remains in view.

Generally, just prior to the start of the service, the funeral director, rabbi, or a family

representative announces where the family will be sitting *shivah*, a seven-day mourning period.

5. How does the actual ceremony begin?

In the Orthodox tradition, the rabbi, or the cantor if one is present, reads or chants one or more psalms, usually Psalms 49, 90, and 91.

6. Why these particular psalms?

Nothing in Jewish law specifically dictates these three psalms, but Orthodox Jewish texts "recommend" them consistently.

The most probable explanation is that the people themselves "chose" these psalms for use at funerals with such regularity that they became an established custom over time.

7. What about the Psalm 23, "The Lord Is My Shepherd"?

Inclusion of this psalm in the funeral service was a Reform innovation. Just as Jews of the past were deeply moved by certain of these poetic compositions, so the rabbis and congregants of Reform temples were touched and comforted in grief by Psalm 23, and thus made it their own. Many traditional Jews today have also adopted this psalm as part of the funeral service.

8. What is the *hesped* or eulogy?

The Hebrew word *hesped* means "mourning," while the Greek derived eulogy means "praise." Both refer to a tribute to the deceased, delivered during the funeral service.

The *hesped* is an old and venerated Jewish custom, dating at least as far back as talmudic times. Its purpose is threefold:

1. To capture briefly the life and major accomplishments of the deceased in an uplifting manner.
2. To pay honor in this manner to the memory of the deceased.
3. To bring comfort to the family and friends who are present.

9. Who delivers the *hesped*?

The eulogy is usually offered by the rabbi, who spends time with the family prior to the service and becomes acquainted with the life of the deceased through the eyes of those who knew and loved him or her best.

Most rabbis feel that their task is to say what the members of the family would say were they speaking. Accordingly, a eulogy will often contain anecdotes, reminiscences, and occasionally even humorous recollections shared by the family.

10. May anyone other than the rabbi give the eulogy?

Yes. It is not uncommon today for a member of the family to speak instead of or in addition to the rabbi. This tribute may be a speech, a poem, or a reading of something written by the deceased.

The great Jewish poet, Chaim Nachman Bialik, for example, wrote a poem entitled "When I Am Dead":

When I am dead, thus shall you mourn me;
There was a man, and see he is no more;
Before his time has come, did this man die;
And his life's song was hushed before it ended.
And woe, and woe, yet one more song,
One more song he had within him,
And lost forever is that song unsung.
Forever lost, forever lost.

11. Are there any times when a *hesped* may not be offered?

According to Orthodox law, eulogies are not to be part of the funeral service during the month of Nisan and during the holidays of Pesach and Sukot, inasmuch as these seasons of the year celebrate God's great blessing of the Jewish people and are therefore times of great joy.

In Reform Judaism, however, eulogies are considered appropriate at any time. One great Jewish scholar, Rabbi Solomon Freehof, has written that a *hesped* may even be delivered on *Shabbat* (though funerals may not take place), if it is edifying and not sad, and if it is not tied to the study of a piece of Torah.

12. What is the *El Male Rachamim*?

El Male Rachamim means "God, full of compassion" and refers to a prayer offered at the conclusion of the service at a chapel or synagogue, and/or just before the *Kaddish* if the funeral is held at graveside. The prayer beseeches God to give rest to the soul of the deceased and includes the deceased's Hebrew name.

The *El Male Rachamim* is a late addition to the funeral liturgy. Though no one knows for certain when it was written, it is usually traced to the seventeenth century, and it has become a standard part of all Jewish funeral services.

13. Why is the *Kaddish* not part of a chapel or synagogue service?

Jewish law dictates that the *Kaddish* is to be recited at graveside, just after the casket is covered. When the entire service is at the cemetery, the *Kaddish* follows the *El Male Rachamim*. When the service is conducted at a funeral home, the funeral cortege proceeds to the cemetery for *Kaddish* and other elements of the service.

Letters

Kaddish Custom

Dear Editor:

In many Reform congregations today, all worshippers rise for *Kaddish*, motivated in large part by the desire to pay tribute to the six million martyrs of the *Shoah*. Some of our congregations, however, maintain the practice of an individual *Kaddish* in which only the bereaved and those observing a *Yahrzeit* rise.

At Emanuel Congregation in Chicago, we wanted to retain the cherished *minhag* (custom) of individual *Kaddish* and, at the same time, commemorate and pay tribute to the six million martyrs of the Holocaust.

In our Sabbath notes we publicize the name of a volunteer who rises as the congregation's representative to memorialize the six million during the recitation of the Mourners' *Kaddish*. We have no dearth of people willing to act on behalf of all of us, and everyone knows who the designated person is each Sabbath. Even children who have become *B'nai Mitzvah* are given this honor. We thus observe a weekly memorial for the victims of the *Shoah* and retain our preferred custom of individual *Kaddish* observance.

Natalie Feldman
Chicago, IL 60660

14. Is a *minyan* required for a funeral?

In Orthodoxy, a *minyan* of ten male Jews is required for *Kaddish*. Technically speaking, a *minyan* is not required for that portion of the ritual conducted at the funeral home. Still, it is desirable. Orthodox Jews will often ask Jews who are present to make up the *minyan*, even if they are not part of the funeral party. It is considered a *mitzvah* to serve in this capacity.

Reform Jews desire but do not demand a *minyan* at the funeral. Where a *minyan* is sought, men and women count equally.

15. Are children allowed to attend funerals?

Nothing in Jewish law proscribes a child's attendance at a funeral. Accordingly, the decision should be based on the child's maturity and a sense of whether or not the participation will be beneficial to the young person in expressing grief and in honoring the deceased.

At the conclusion of the *El Male Rachamim*, the casket is carried or rolled out the door to a waiting hearse. Those mourners who will accompany the family to the cemetery go to their cars and form a funeral procession. With the hearse and cars of the family in front, the cortege proceeds to the cemetery.

NEXT ISSUE: AT THE CEMETERY

Reform Music

Dear Editor:

An otherwise excellent article on "A History of Reform Music" which appeared in the Winter edition of *Reform Judaism* contained two mistakes which should not go uncorrected. In the second paragraph on page 23, it was Edward Stark, and not his father Josef, who served at Temple Emanu-El of San Francisco. His published works include both *Shabbat* and High Holiday services, but it was the latter that proved the most popular over the years.

On page 22, in the paragraph on Sulzer, the information regarding Schubert's contribution to Sulzer's *Schir Zion* is incorrect. Schubert, who died in 1828, certainly was not a "shy young schoolmaster" in 1840 when *Schir Zion* was published. By the time Schubert was commissioned to compose for the Vienna synagogue, he was already a known composer. Note that Sulzer was appointed cantor in Vienna only in 1826. Interestingly, Stark made a similar error in a biography of Sulzer published in *Emanu-El* on March 18, 1904, to mark the centenary of Sulzer's birth.

Hazzan Jeffrey S. Zucker
Nazareth, Israel

Tay-Sachs Help

Dear Editor:

I wish to compliment *Reform Judaism* and Joan Samsen on the publication of her article, "A Tragic Legacy" (Winter, 1984-85).

I should note, however, that there are others who share her organization's goals. National Tay-Sachs and Allied Diseases Association has been working for twenty-six years toward prevention of and cure for such diseases. Our local chapters fund testing and research programs in local hospitals across the United States and abroad while the national organization funds a quality control program that monitors laboratories worldwide ensuring the accuracy of test results. We fund a nationwide Parent Peer Group support network and fund scientific research, symposia, and physician and public education programs. We are particularly proud of our rabbinic education effort in cooperation with the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

We invite your readers who wish to receive our materials or need information or help to contact our executive director, Ms. Jane Birnbaum, at 92 Washington Avenue, Cedarhurst, NY 11516 (516) 569-4300.

Steven G. Laver
Cedarhurst, NY

National President of National Tay-Sachs and Allied Diseases Assoc., Inc.

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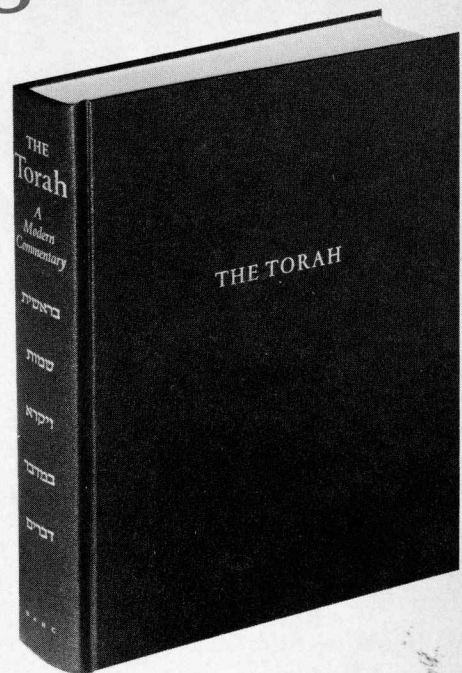
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