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Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
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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-appointed 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 University Center for Jewish Art has researchers 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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מתקדמות
באמריקה

FATMA Bayle.

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Memo

From the desk of

RABBI PHILIP HIAT

3.1.89.

Dean 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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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.

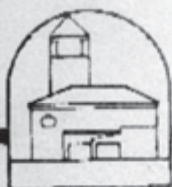
Enjoy your trip to Philadelphia. I will speak with you when you return to Rome.

Sincerely,

Robert H. Frankel (ADR) for-

Robert H. Frankel
Director

cc: Rabbi Philip Hiat



Center for the Fine Arts

101 West Flagler Street / Miami, Florida 33130 / Telephone (305) 375-3000

STATE OF ISRAEL
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
THE INSTITUTE OF HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS

LIST
OF PHOTOCOPIES IN THE INSTITUTE

Part III

HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS IN THE VATICAN

by.

N. ALLONY and D. S. LOEWINGER

CONTENTS

PREFATORY NOTE

5

List of Facsimiles; Bibliography; Abbreviations

8-10

PREFACE

11-14

LIST OF MANUSCRIPTS IN THE VARIOUS COLLECTIONS

15-90

1. Vatican, 613 mss., nos. 1-613	15-75
2. Urbinati, 59 mss., nos. 614-672	75-80
3. Neofiti, 51 mss., nos. 673-723	80-84
4. Barberini, 13 mss., nos. 724-736	84-85
5. Borgiana, 19 mss., nos. 737-755	85-86
6. Rossiana, 38 mss., nos. 756-793	87-89
7. Ottoboniana, 1 ms., no. 794	89
8. Chigiana, 1 ms., no. 795	89
9. Supplements, 6 mss., nos. 796-801	90

INDICES

91-140

1. Authors	91-103
2. Scribes	104-106
3. Works	107-130
4. Poetry and Liturgy	131-132
5. Places	133-135
6. Languages	136
7. Subjects	137-138
8. Dated Mss.	139-140
9. Illuminated Mss.	140

ENGLISH SECTION

-XI

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. Borgia	19 "
6. Barberini	13 "
7. Chigiana	1 "
8. Ottoboniana	1 "

Total	801 mss.
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To date, there is no general catalogue of Hebrew mss. in the Vatican, 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 present:

1. Assemani	(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 converts 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 collection 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 inventory 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.

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' עמ' ד, רשימת ספרים כתבו-יד, עמ' 45.

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. ty for him and for Arens unterattack against the onslaught. In particular Washington back on the fence.

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

analysts disagree, claim- ican decision is a strange one. According to unsuccessful attempts to finians convinced Wash- as impossible, in either long range, to achieve a

(Continued on Page 22)

al Pacts Israel

Texas and 12 other states re participating in the latest ave of U.S.-Israeli cooperation: trade and cultural ac- uards. The others are California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massa- husetts, Michigan, Minneso- a, Missouri, New Jersey, Virginia and Wisconsin.

In all but Connecticut, the state's governor or his design- ate signed the agreement. n Connecticut, the state's louse of Representatives ap- proved the accord, which did ot require the governor's signature.

New York is in the process f negotiating an accord, said filton Elbogen, Israel's dep- ty trade commissioner to he 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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Sturm, who has seen the

(Continued from Page 9)

Bob Gluck will be ordained as a rabbi this June by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, Pennsylvania. This article is taken from one that will soon appear in the Reconstructionist magazine.

"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 nobleman, 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,
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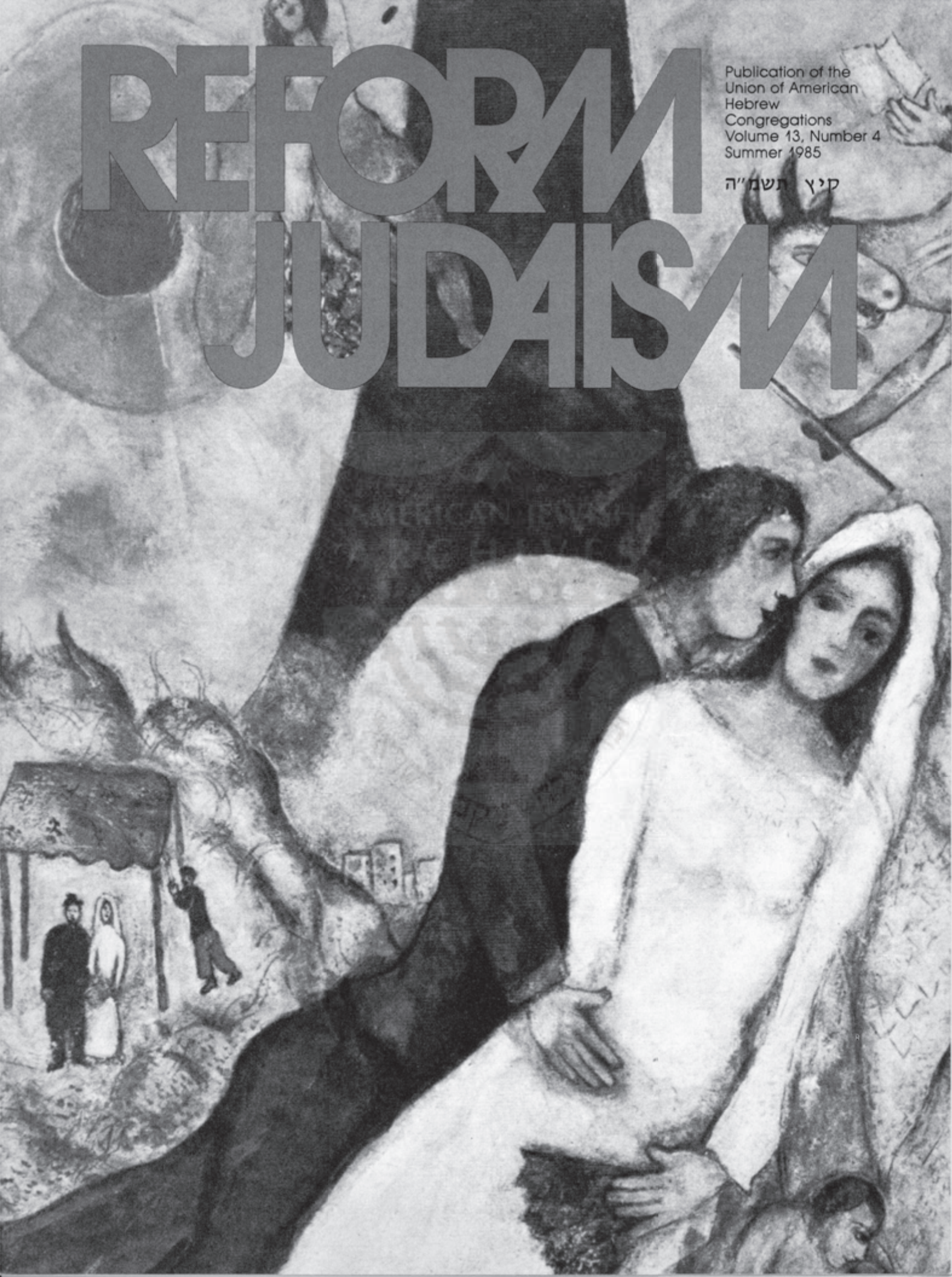
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Publication of the
Union of American
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Volume 13, Number 4
Summer 1985

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REFORM JUDAISM

Official Publication of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Volume 13, Number 4 Summer 1985

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Reform Judaism (ISSN 0482-0819) is published quarterly (fall, winter, spring, summer) by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Circulation Offices: 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10021. © Copyright 1985 by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Second Class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing office. Postmaster: Send address changes to Reform Judaism, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10021. Subscription rate: \$10.00 a year (\$5.00 student), members of UAHC congregations receive Reform Judaism as a service of the UAHC. The opinions of authors whose works are published in Reform Judaism are their own and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the UAHC.

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.

Contents

THE WORLD

The Lubavitch Obsession	Eric H. Yoffie	4
The Politics of Pogromism	William Korey	6
We Made It, Why Can't They?	Lawrence Bush	8
After Operation Moses	David Saperstein	10

THE MOVEMENT

Should Rabbis Perform Mixed Marriages?	Mark L. Winer	2
A Life of Torah and Technology	Joshua L. Segal	12
The Wit and Wisdom of Edgar F. Magnin	Harvey J. Fields	13
Vancouver Synagogue Appeals for Help	Philip Bregman	14
Temple of the Deaf Celebrates Silver Anniversary	Alan Henkin	15
UAHC Leaders View Rare Vatican Judaica	Philip Hiat	19
Youths Attend Second National NFTY Convention		24
Message of Israel Marks 50th Year		26
Jewish Q and A	Bernard M. Zlotowitz	27
Tell and Qvell	Bettijane Eisenpreis	28
Reform Round-Up	Bettijane Eisenpreis	29
The Jewish Home	Daniel B. Syme	32
Letters		33

THE ARTS

The Moo Goo Gai Pan Minyon	Robert Sloan	16
The Many Masks of Suzanne Benton		18
A Golden Land for Yiddish Theater	Masha Leon	20
Here Come the Zamlers	Laura Folkman	21
A Conversation with Author Aharon Appelfeld	Haim Chertok	22
With Appelfeld in Mea Shearim	Steven Schnur	23
Reviews		30

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



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



Photo by Jacob A. Rias, inset Steven Schuur

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)



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.

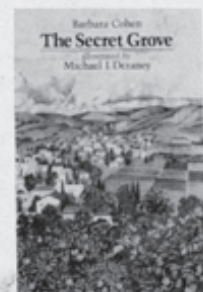
But the camps serve only one half million of the eight to nine million at risk. The drought has lasted six years. In many regions not enough top-soil remains to sustain crops. Virtually no conservation, reforestation or irrigation projects exist. As good a job as the relief groups and the U.S. government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

Of the more than 750 UAHC congregations, approximately 250 number fewer than 125 families. One-third of these congregations hire a full-time or part-time ordained rabbi, another one-third hire student rabbis, and the final one-third have no rabbi. With newly ordained rabbis receiving a salary of \$35,000, a 100 family congregation would have to commit itself to \$350 per family just for the rabbi.

At larger congregations, life-cycle events are a daily occurrence. In my entire year at a 55 family congregation, I was asked to officiate at two funerals, two unveilings, one wedding, one conversion, three *b'nai b'not mitzvah* and two *britot milah*. As for counseling and consultations, I am called upon somewhat less than once a week. Inevitably, full-time rabbis in small congregations become bored. There is just not enough Jewish activity to keep them going.

My weekdays, however, are quite different. My engineering position and my pulpit are 80 miles apart. Since commuting the entire distance either to the congregation in Keene, NH, or to my engineering office at the MITRE Corporation in Bedford, MA would be too taxing, my family chose to live in Nashua, NH, which gives me only a thirty mile commute each way on weekdays.

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*.

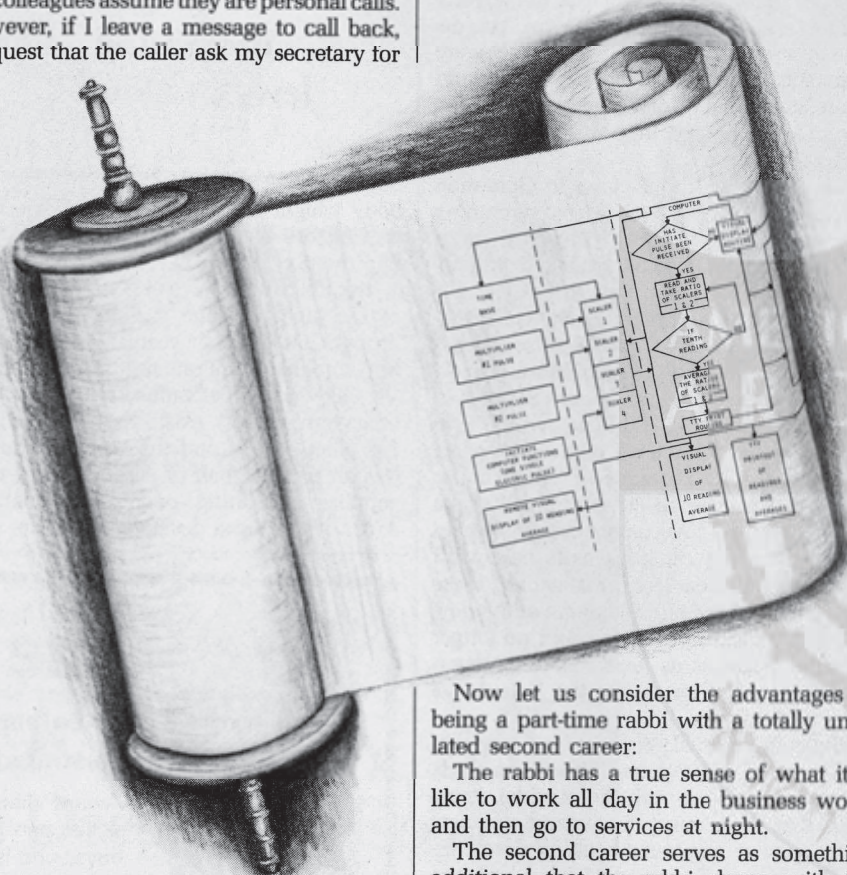


Illustration by Lee Pearson

The rabbi has a true sense of what it is like to work all day in the business world and then go to services at night.

The rabbi, by earning most of his or her income from non-rabbinic sources, is not totally dependent on the congregation for a livelihood and can, therefore, retain his or her integrity on controversial issues.

Also, in my engineering work, since I do not make a point of being a rabbi, people do not treat me with ecclesiastical distance. As a result, I am more capable of retaining my perspective on interpersonal relationships.

(continued on page 25)

by Harvey J. Fields

Until the end, he was the wise and witty human being that Presidents Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Ronald Reagan; Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren; scientist Albert Einstein; comedian Bob Hope; Hollywood moguls Samuel Goldwyn and Louis B. Mayer; L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley and countless thousands reverently claimed as "my rabbi."

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.

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

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 disdained "sermons." "Sermons are preachments meant to save people, and we don't need to save people, we need to educate them."

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.

Who else but Edgar Magnin could listen to a prolonged introduction of him, and when it was over, get up to the rostrum and declare: "In the time you just took to introduce me, I could have buried five people."

Or who, so packed with faith, could stand at the first fairway, club in hand, golf ball on the tee, and playfully pray: "Thanks God. As long as I am above the ground and not below it, I don't care where I hit the ball."

On Jewish survival: "Be proud Jews. What has made us different was the Torah. We believed, and this has kept us alive. This is the secret of our survival—not persecution, but the Torah."

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.



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 menorahs.

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?

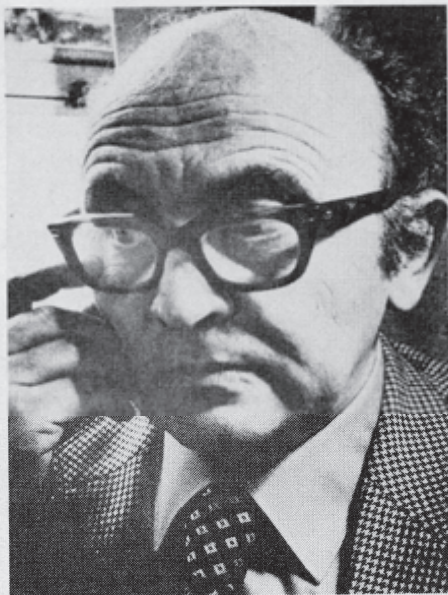
Authentic messianism is a permanent legacy of Judaism. The Hassidim have internalized their messianism. They leave the "Egypt of the heart" when they pray and strive for a

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 shtetle 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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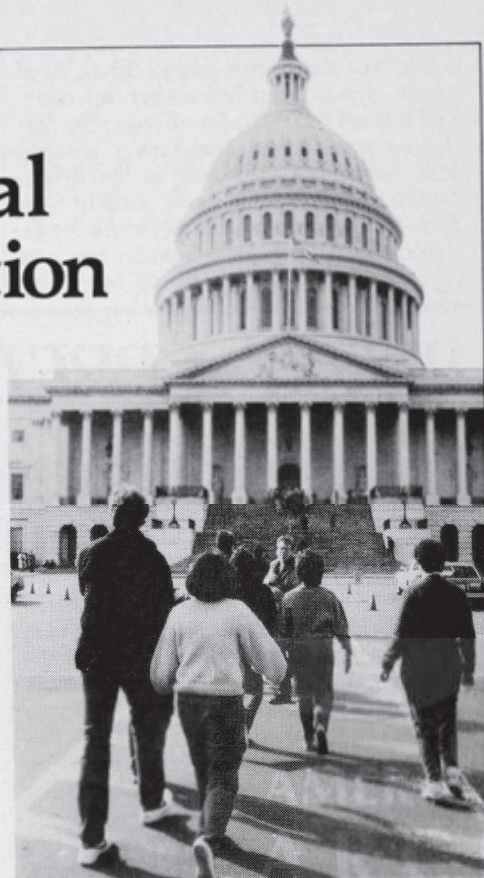
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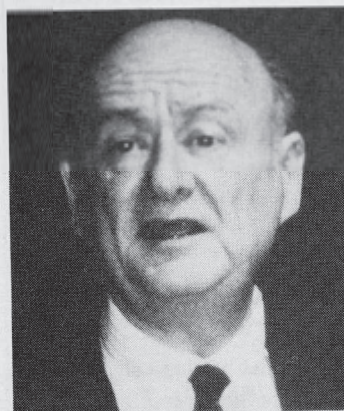
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Youths Attend Second National NFTY Convention



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 Sabath 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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Message of Israel Marks 50th Year

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.

How did the Message of Israel program begin?

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.

What was the original format of the Message of Israel?

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-

ish composers like Bloch, Fromm, Milhaud, and Weiner have provided unique settings for the liturgical portion of each program.

Who listens to the Message of Israel?

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.

Are only Reform rabbis invited to speak on the program?



Rabbis Jonah Wise (L.) and Maurice Eisendrath, and David J. Wise (inset).

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.

With more evangelical programs being aired, is competition for radio time affecting the Message of Israel?

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.

Your program cannot afford to pay for air time?

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).

It has been a family mission to keep this program going. What happens when you retire?

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.

Besides airing this program, what services does Message of Israel provide?

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).

Jewish Q & A

by Bernard M. Zlotowitz

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.

Pogromism

(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

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 Voin*, 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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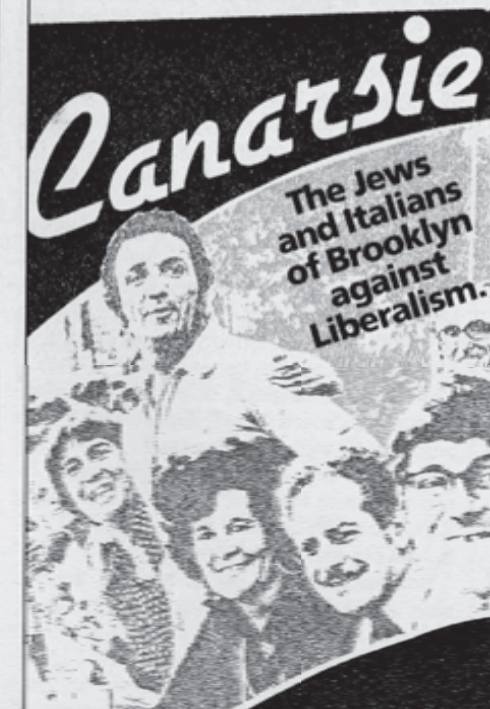
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Tell and Qvell

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**.

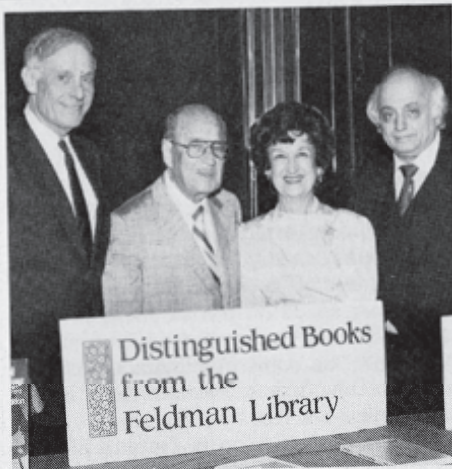
In Chattanooga, TN, Blacks and Jews made history when the Greater Brainerd Area Jaycees chose as the theme of their Jaycee Week Banquet "Black-Jewish Relations" and invited UAHC Board member **Robert J. Lipshutz**, former counsel to President Jimmy Carter, to be one of the speakers. Dinner profits went 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., Passover 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).

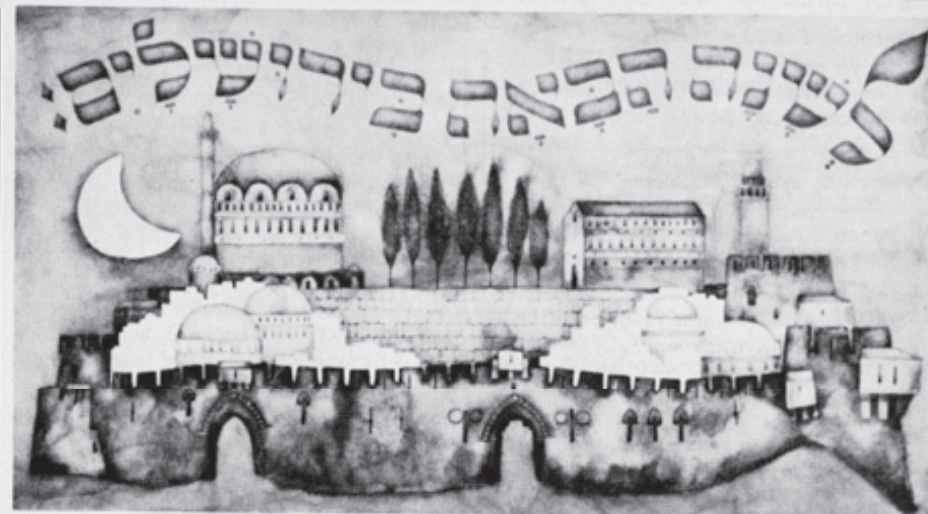
Once again, it is our pleasure to welcome the following new congregations into the UAHC family: Temple Sinai, Forest Hills, NY; Northern Illinois Jewish Community Center, DeKalb, IL; Congregation Beth Shalom, Bloomington, IN; Congregation B'nai Torah, St. Charles, MO; Troy Jewish Congregation, Troy, 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 NIFTY-Kutz Camp alumni please note: the NIFTY 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."

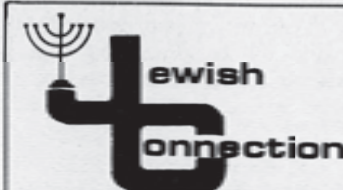
An Amharic (Ethiopian)—Hebrew dictionary to aid in the absorption of Ethiopians in Israel is being funded by the UAHC's Canadian Council through its Ethiopian Relief Fund.

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 Yeshurun, 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
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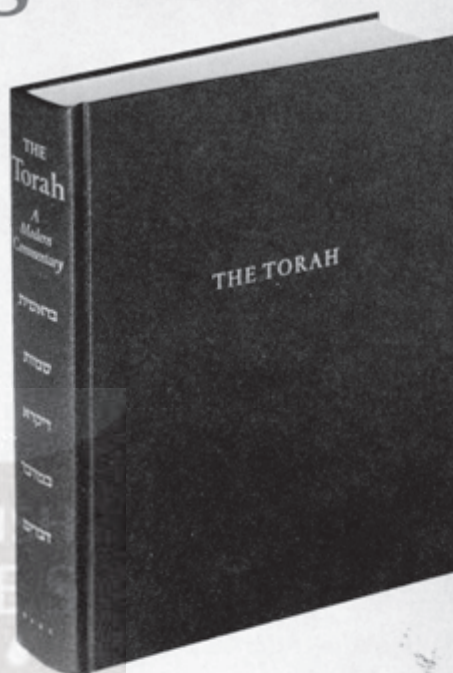
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