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Hebrew Cover: A Jewish watchmaker reading the Yiddish newspaper *Heint*, painting by Yehuda Pen, noted Russian Jewish artist whose students included Marc Chagall. The cover relates to three articles dealing with Yiddish newspapers in this issue: *Moment* (Warsaw), *Idische Bilder* (Riga) and *Morgen Freiheit* (New York).

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THE RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE PRESS IN ISRAEL / Avraham Ben-Yaakov

The Russian press in Israel traces its roots back to the post-Six Day War period, but became a professional press only in the early 1990s and today has reached a peak of development. A sixth of Israel's total population, and nearly a fifth of its Jewish population, reads Russian-language newspapers.

Of the approximately 3 million Jews of the former Soviet Union, about a third live in the CIS, a third live in Israel, and a third are spread out throughout the rest of the world. The third that lives in Israel – some 1 million people – read a highly varied Russian-language press of 4 dailies, at least 10 weeklies, nearly 20 local papers, and monthlies and periodicals of all types. By comparison, the third that lives primarily in the United States, Canada and Western Europe reads only a small number of newspapers in Russian, while the million (or less) remaining in the CIS have a few Jewish weeklies and periodicals with limited circulation. In fact, the largest consumers in the world of print media of all types is the Russian-reading population of Israel. This is all the more impressive in light of the socioeconomically disadvantaged situation of these new immigrants as compared to the established population.

Although a few small, irregularly published periodicals in Russian appeared before and following the establishment of Israel, the first important Russian paper, *Nasha Strana* ("Our Country"), was published in 1968 after the Six Day War, which was a powerful catalyst for the reawakening of Jewish identity in the Soviet Union. Begun as a weekly published by the Mapai Party, *Nasha Strana* became a daily and continues to appear with a circulation of over 5,500. Its monopoly was broken in 1971 with the appearance of another weekly, *Tribuna*, a reincarnation of a Bulgarian-language daily of the same name that expired in 1970. *Tribuna*, which lasted until 1974, was an embodiment of yellow journalism with rightist political leanings. With the wave of immigration from the USSR in the 1970s, three more periodicals were launched: *Alef* ("The Letter A," 1981-97), a religious weekly; *Sputnik* (1986-90), a low-level weekly; and *Krug* ("The Circle," 1977-90), a weekly with varied content. The second, and much larger, wave of immigration, which began in late 1989, expanded the demand for a Russian press considerably. That year, the daily *Novosti Nadel* ("News of the Week") was launched, to be followed in 1991 by *Vremia* ("Time"), edited by Edouard Kuznetsov and published by the mass Hebrew daily *Ma'ariv*, which marked the start of professional Russian-language journalism in Israel. After a falling-out with the new owners of *Ma'ariv*, nearly the entire staff of *Vremia*, with its editor, shifted to sponsorship by the competing mass Hebrew daily, *Yediot Aharonot*, and launched the daily *Vesti* ("News"), which soon

captured first place in the contest between Russian dailies.

By the fall of 1998, a total of 137 Russian newspapers, weeklies, monthlies and periodicals had been published in Israel since its statehood. Most had disappeared for financial reasons stemming from their low level of professionalism.

Notably, an old Russian tradition of "thick journals" (200-250 pages) was kept up in Israel from the 1970s onward, both publicly and privately sponsored. The first exemplar was *Zion*, published through the Liaison Office for the Jews of the Soviet Union (Nativ) attached to the Office of the Prime Minister. A literary bimonthly, it metamorphosed into 22 and appears to this day, featuring discussions on current events, history and philosophy by noted immigrant intellectuals. Its current editor is Prof. of Physics Alexander Voronel of Tel Aviv University.

The Russian press is entirely private, its success determined by market demand only. The potential reader audience remains steady at about 1 million, with mortality rates more or less balanced by new arrivals, a situation that is expected to continue during the coming decade.

This readership is far from homogeneous, linked only by language and the widespread desire to read Russian newspapers, a habit entrenched in Russia. One other unifying trait is the higher average educational level of Russian immigrants in comparison with the overall population in Israel.

Of the four dailies, *Vesti* is explicitly rightist politically, while *Vremia*, *Novosti Nadel* and *Nasha Strana* attempt to maintain a neutral, pluralistic position, generally successfully.

None of the Russian dailies can be classified as leftist. Additionally, all reflect the majority opinion in the community that religion and state should be separated. Significantly, not one Russian newspaper or periodical is religious in outlook.

By the year 2000, the only local foreign-language newspapers in Israel with a stable readership will be those in Arabic, English and Russian. Interestingly, despite the large Russian press, one sector of the Russian-reading population has not been offered a newspaper suitable to its level, namely the intellectual sector. The potential readership for this type of paper is probably even proportionately larger than that of the Hebrew-language exemplar, *Ha'aretz*.

Still, the quality of the existing Russian press is likely to continue to improve as the papers gain expertise. Their rightist orientation is likely to become moderated and political pluralism heightened.

The Russian press has a firm place in the Israeli media landscape, a position that is assured for the space of at least another generation.

THE PRESS WAR BETWEEN MODERNISTS AND THE ULTRA-ORTHODOX IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE YISHUV /

Joseph Lang

The last decade of the nineteenth century witnessed an outpouring of newspapers and periodicals in the small Jewish Yishuv (community) of Palestine, including 22 that were published in Jewish languages (Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino) in Jerusalem alone. Two in particular played an important role in the bitter Kulturkampf between the old and new Yishuv that reached a climax in 1894-95: *Mikhtavim Me' eretz Yisrael* ("Letters from the Land of Israel"), founded in 1893; and *Emet Me' eretz Tizmah* ("The Truth Will Grow From the Land"), founded in 1894. The two, aimed primarily at an audience abroad, reflected conflicting views of the new Jewish nationalism.

Mikhtavim was established by a secret society, Benei Moshe, begun in Odessa in 1889 by Joshua Eisenstadt (later Barzilai) at the inspiration of Ahad Ha'am's notion that spiritual and ethical nationalism must be a prelude to practical nationalism. The society, adopting a Freemason style, avoided religious considerations, thereby enabling both observant and nonobservant Jews in Palestine and abroad to join it.

The first issue of *Mikhtavim*, a monthly that first appeared in Jaffa in 1893, pledged to report about conditions in Palestine truthfully and accurately, in contrast to distorted reportage that it attributed to other publications. Its aim was to be an authoritative source of information for the leaders of Hovevei Zion (a pro-settlement Zionist organization) in Russia. Mimeographed in small quantities, *Mikhtavim* was mailed to activists in Russia and Poland, where it was read out and discussed at meetings. Copies were also sent to the offices of two Hebrew newspapers, *Hamelitz* in Petersburg and *Hatzfirah* in Warsaw.

Mikhtavim indeed served as a thorough and credible source of information on Palestine as well as a guide to Hovevei Zion as to how to best utilize its resources. For example, the importance of establishing the Jewish National Fund (for land purchase) was emphasized as vital for strengthening the Yishuv, as was support of Hebrew schools and aid for the pioneer farmers. Statistical information was published on the purchase of land in Palestine, on agricultural developments, climate, health conditions, immigration and emigration. Schools and libraries were surveyed. The compilers of this wealth of information remained anonymous, although they were known to be in the main members of Benei Moshe from the new villages (*moshavot*) and the cities, such as A. L. Horowitz from Mazkeret Batya and later Jaffa, and Aaron Eisenberg from Nes Ziona and Rehovot.

Barzilai, in the spirit of his mentor Ahad Ha'am, wrote that the

aim of the Yishuv should be to establish "a small center in the land of our fathers based on working the land and on enlightenment." No political activity was envisioned in this scenario. A relatively small Jewish population would live peacefully with the Arab inhabitants. The essence would be to "uplift the ethical spirit" through the establishment of a school in Jaffa that would train Hebrew teachers for work in the diaspora.

The periodical, printed at Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's press, appeared regularly for eight months until Ben-Yehuda was arrested by the authorities for sedition as a result of slanderous accusations by persons from the old Yishuv in Jerusalem. Ben-Yehuda's press was closed down, and *Mikhtavim*'s printing schedule became erratic. Some time later, Ben-Yehuda was acquitted. Barzilai, in a conciliatory editorial, called for an end to the acrimony between the two Yishuv communities. This appeal for moderation, however, was lost in the general mood of antagonism, which spilled over from Palestine to the diaspora. The Kulturkampf that developed was fought, inter alia, on the pages of the Jerusalem-based *Havazelet*, an organ of the old Yishuv which delegitimized Ben-Yehuda, Ahad Ha'am and Benei Moshe and its membership for their lack of religiosity and mocked *Mikhtavim* as filled with fabrications.

Several figures in Europe, including Rabbi Samuel Mohilewer, advised putting an end to the vitriolic atmosphere, but this had no effect on one of the central firebrands of the anti-Ahad Ha'am camp, Yehiel Michael Pines, an early exponent of religious Zionism who had initially supported Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and the Hovevei Zion ideals and had joined the Benei Moshe society but was dismissed from it in 1892 over a management crisis and thereafter affiliated himself with the old Yishuv community, becoming one of its main spokesmen.

Pines was intent on fanning the flames of the Kulturkampf. Organizing a traditionalist camp named Meginei Eretz (Defenders of the Land), which included Yosef Meyuhas, Israel Dov Frumkin, David Yellin and Yosef Rivlin, he issued *Emet Me' eretz Tizmah* to counteract *Mikhtavim*, distributed, as was its rival, primarily in Eastern Europe. Its stated intent was to do battle with "nationalism that was stripped of Torah and...mitzvot," on the premise that Jewish nationalism and the Jewish religion were integrally bound together. Defining religion as a personal matter only, he charged, was analogous to bowing down to "the idol of nationalism." The holders of such views, he asserted, deserved to be imprisoned.

Predictably, the maiden issue of *Emet*, an explicitly

propagandistic forum for Pines' views, evoked sharp reactions. Efforts were made, unsuccessfully, to dissuade him from pursuing the conflict. He and his circle proceeded to recruit influential backers in Russia to discredit the Ahad Ha'am school in Jaffa and to cut off the livelihood of freethinking nationalists. Accusing them of educating Jewish children to rebel against God and king, Pines pronounced the Benei Moshe society excommunicated.

This poisonous propaganda elicited fear among Hovevei Zion supporters in Europe that funds would be cut off from the new Yishuv entirely. A decision was made by that organization's executive to make concerted efforts to mollify Pines. He was

offered a position as a teacher in the school in Jaffa, as well as the job of Jerusalem correspondent for *Hamelitz*. A reconciliation with Ben-Yeuda was also organized.

Mikhtavim was geared to select groups as an ideological and practical guide for the support of settlement in Palestine. *Emet*, by contrast, was a combative propaganda tool aimed at suppressing the secular spirit that was spreading within the Hovevei Zion movement and the new Yishuv generally. As such they represented two conflicting conceptions of Jewish nationalism.

Both periodicals were short-lived.

A PROSPECTUS FOR THE FIRST HEBREW PERIODICAL, "HAME'ASSEF" / Moshe Pelli

The first Hebrew periodical ever, *Hame'assef* ("The Compiler") was launched in Koenigsberg, Prussia, in 1784 and appeared until 1811. Revolutionary for its time, the monthly advocated secular study, a new attitude by Jews to the arts and sciences, and integration into the surrounding milieu.

Prior to publication, in 1783, the publisher issued a 16-page prospectus titled "*Nahal Habesor*" ("Stream of Good Tidings"), signed by Yitzhak Eichel, editor, and three additional editors: Mendel Breslau, Shimon Friedlander and Zanwil Friedlander. Laid out in the same style as the future *Hame'assef* itself, this lengthy manifesto addresses five questions: What? Who? For whom? Why? How? The answers provide information on the content of the planned periodical; the identity of the editors and their initial task – requesting the participation of the Hebrew literary authority then, Naphtali Herz Wiesel, and his encouraging reply; and the founding of a publishing society. The entire document reflects an analytic approach to the undertaking of publishing a periodical.

The authors plan to organize the monthly in five divisions: poetry, articles, biographies, news and new books. The poetry to be published will be devoted to wisdom and ethics, not to "lustful topics" or to "imitations of paganism" (i.e., classical mythology) or foreign gods. The articles section, to be titled "Letters," will contain linguistic essays on all aspects of Hebrew, reflecting Enlightenment research with an emphasis on rejuvenating the language; Bible commentary and translation into German, reflecting the influence of Moses Mendelssohn in this area; general knowledge and ethics; and Talmud study according to a rational system with emphasis on the sources. Education of the mind, the authors emphasized, was to be accompanied by physical

education," a notion typical of the new enlightenment outlook.

Biographies would be devoted to the lives of outstanding Jews in the religious and scholarly area; in the realm of Enlightenment scholarship; and in the mercantile sector. These three sectors reflect the Enlightenment approach: the integration of tradition with innovation. News reports would focus on events in Jewish life in various countries, which, in the editors' view, was particularly important at that time when modern education and an emphasis on tolerance were attributes that were spreading through Europe and would have a significant effect on Jewish life.

Lastly, new books of interest in Hebrew and foreign languages would be announced and reviews would be published. While most of these categories were borrowed from the contemporary European press, what was significant was the distinctly Jewish-Hebraic imprint that the proposed periodical would have. Even the name of the prospectus, the biblical *Nahal Habesor*, and linguistic formulations in the text that reflect the theme of a stream that waters a garden, i.e., the Garden of Eden, are rooted in familiar hallowed biblical texts.

The authors present themselves as a homogeneous group of Enlightenment thinkers who blend religious study with modern scholarship. Anxious not to be perceived as a threat to the traditional Jewish establishment, they are careful to underline their devotion to the Torah, yet they clearly want to draw the young generation – their intended audience – to the Enlightenment.

Nahal Habesor, as *Hame'assef* itself, reflects the unique character of the Hebrew Enlightenment, a movement that stemmed from the general enlightenment atmosphere of Europe but carved out its own particular channel.

"DO'AR HAYOM": THE TRANSFORMATION OF A COMMERCIAL NEWSPAPER TO A PARTY ORGAN / Uzi Elyada

Revisionist leader Ze'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, arriving in Palestine in October 1928 with the intention of settling there, found his movement in Palestine to be small, weak, and embroiled in internal rivalries. Setting about to rectify this situation, he began exploring possibilities for publishing a Revisionist daily.

The movement in Palestine had not had its own newspaper for over a year, when its weekly, *Hatzafon* ("The North"), closed for lack of financing. Three Hebrew dailies were published in the country then: *Davar*, *Ha'aretz* and *Do'ar Hayom* ("Daily Mail"). *Davar*, sponsored by the Histadrut, attacked the Revisionist movement and its leaders systematically. *Ha'aretz*, an independent newspaper, was not in sympathy with the Revisionists either. *Do'ar Hayom*, edited by Itamar Ben-Avi, was the only daily to show admiration for Jabotinsky, although Ben-Avi was not a member of his movement and was in fact cool to its local leadership. At the time, *Do'ar Hayom* was at its height of popularity, with a distribution that reached 7,000 daily. Thus, when in November 1928 both *Ha'aretz* and *Davar* reported that an agreement had been signed between Ben-Avi and Jabotinsky transferring the editorial control of the paper to the Revisionist movement, the reaction was one of surprise. The reports were confirmed when *Do'ar Hayom* announced that as of December 1, 1928, Jabotinsky would take over as editor in chief. Indeed, on that date the paper became the official organ of the Revisionist movement in Palestine, an agreement that was to be in effect for two years.

Do'ar Hayom had been the most modern of the dailies in Palestine during the 1920s. It used a sophisticated rotary printer and linotype machinery, in contrast to the handset technique still used in most of the presses. It was also the first to use lithography and printing blocks, and the first to become a true morning paper. From the start (1919), it was molded by Ben-Avi as a sensationalist mass paper, in contrast to *Ha'aretz* and later *Davar*, which were conceived as elitist and intellectual. *Do'ar Hayom* emphasized fresh news over editorials and commentary. The news was communicated in an exciting, florid style under dramatic headlines set in oversize type. Ben-Avi's aim was not only to inform but to entertain – to stimulate curiosity, shock, fear or laughter. A significant proportion of the paper's news content related to crime, disasters, gossip and the supernatural. Serialized translated novels ran on the inside pages. "Crusades" on such issues as corruption by establishment leaders were mounted periodically, generally in a series of unsigned articles. This sensationalist style contrasted sharply with that of Moshe Glickson, editor of *Ha'aretz*, and Berl

Katznelson, editor of *Davar*, who viewed their papers first and foremost as educational tools by which to mold the reader's social, political and cultural consciousness, largely through editorials and commentary. News items were regarded as secondary, with esoteric items such as crime or disasters at the very bottom of the ladder.

While Ben-Avi's approach proved to be successful, he personally was often abroad on various Zionist missions and his acting editors lacked his imagination and flair for the dramatic, resulting in periodic slumps in readership. Such was the case in the late summer of 1928 when he returned after a long absence. To reinvigorate the paper, he took several drastic steps: he slashed the price by half, pledged earlier morning delivery, and brought in a group of new writers: Bar-Drora, Avigdor Hameiri, Uri Kessari and Abba Ahimeir. All these changes were aimed at popularizing the paper further and acquiring a mass readership.

Ben-Avi's rejuvenation program showed immediate results, as circulation soared. His competitors, accusing *Do'ar Hayom* of exaggeration and even fabrication of news stories, branded the paper a "pathological" phenomenon that catered to "the libido." The left viewed it as nothing less than a symptom of the failure of the socialist vision, as serving the interests of capitalism, and as the beginning of a national slide into nihilism.

Side by side with his populist approach, Ben-Avi had formulated a sociopolitical point of view that was distinctly rightist, identifying with the interests of the private sector. Anti-labor, he singled out middle class political figures for sharp criticism when they tended to cooperate with the growing labor movement. With this, he was moderate on the Arab question, evolving an original proposal, the "canton plan," that sought to turn the country into a confederation of Jewish, Muslim and Christian cantons.

This was far from the Revisionist point of view. However, Ben-Avi was a great admirer of Jabotinsky, viewing him as a heroic leader-redeemer. When Jabotinsky contacted him in late 1928, proposing a joint editorial arrangement (according to another version, it was Ben-Avi who initiated the contact), Ben-Avi decided to turn over the editorship of the paper to him for a period of two years, while retaining his role as copublisher together with his partner Zalman White.

In all probability, Ben-Avi was aware that maintaining the current peak of his paper's circulation would be unfeasible because of his peripatetic life style. He may have believed that under Jabotinsky, an experienced journalist with a wide circle of admirers in Palestine, the paper would retain its aura of success.

Moreover, the agreement allowed for the return of the paper to its original editorial management, as well as a provision for Ben-Avi to continue writing an occasional column in it.

At first, the Revisionist *Do'ar Hayom* attained a large circulation. Soon, however, readership fell off, and conflict between Jabotinsky and Ben-Avi was rumored. Ben-Avi, in his memoirs, claimed that his intention had not been to turn the paper

into a party organ. That, in fact, was what Jabotinsky's staff set about to do. By early 1929, Ben-Avi realized he had made a serious mistake in relinquishing editorial control of the paper. By the terms of the contract, however, he had no choice but to wait until December 1930 to regain direct control of it which he eventually did after a difficult struggle.

A PRESS IN THE SERVICE OF THE MESSIAH / Orly Tsarfati

The religio-ideological gap between secular and extreme Orthodox (haredi) society in Israel, and the non-recognition by the haredi community of the secular State of Israel, has distanced that community from the establishment media and resulted in the development by them of an alternative ideological print media. Haredi newspapers and newsletters have proliferated from the mid-1980s onward, aimed at disseminating a particular ideology. The haredi public makes use of this press both as an internal tool to reinforce solidarity and as a forum for disputes within the religious world and vis-a-vis secular society.

The electronic media, by comparison, are shunned by the haredim as abhorrent, with the exception of the Habad movement, which believes in disseminating Hasidic principles among Jews by every possible means, including not only radio and TV but the Internet, e-mail and satellite communications.

During 1990-94, with the emergence of heightened messianic fervor among Habad Hasidim in Israel and abroad, the media were utilized increasingly to spread the messianic message. Publicizing the yearning for the coming of the messiah was considered a means of spurring redemption, for more and more people would be striving for it. A dramatic development in this context occurred in 1993 with the public announcement that the Lubavitcher Rebbe was the messiah.

New newspapers appeared within the Hasidic community devoted to spreading information related to the messiah and to redemption, while existing papers devoted considerably more space to this topic. Newspapers identified with the main Habad trend, which deal with the topic of redemption side by side with other Habad news, are:

1. *Kfar Habad* ("Habad Village") – a 50-page subscription weekly published by the Society of Habad Hasidim in the Holy Land distributed in Israel and the US, edited by Rabbi Aaron Dov Halperin. Various portions of the periodical are devoted to religious questions, education and politics. Four sections are

devoted entirely to the theme of the messiah. The Habad viewpoint is presented explicitly. The audience is primarily Habad followers.

2. *Be'ohalei Hannah* ("In the Tents of Hannah") – a biweekly supplement of *Kfar Habad* devoted to women. Topics are only minimally related to the messiah.

3. *Sihat Hashavu'a* ("Discussion of the Week") – 4-page weekly published by the Center of the Society of Young Habad Followers in Israel, edited by Rabbi Menahem Brod, who is also the official Habad spokesman. The paper aims at disseminating the Habad message and is written in an easily understood style. It is distributed both by subscription and in synagogues, markets and other public places. One section is devoted to messiah-related topics.

The following newspapers are published by the messianic trend in Habad and deal exclusively with the redemption and the hastening of the coming of the messiah:

1. *Hage'ulah Ha'amitit Vehashlemah* ("The True and Complete Redemption") – a monthly of 8-10 pages begun in 1991 published by the Society for the True and Complete Redemption, based in the Habad House in Bat-Yam, edited by Rabbi Zimroni Tsik. The monthly, which contained ads, put forward the explanation of the Rebbe's death in 1994 as a temporary departure that would soon be followed by his reappearance to redeem the people of Israel. The periodical closed in 1994.

2. *Sihat Hage'ulah* ("Discussion on Redemption") – a weekly that began in 1994 following the closing of *Hage'ulah Ha'amitit*, also published by the Society for the True and Complete Redemption and also edited by Rabbi Tsik. It deals entirely with topics related to the Rebbe, the messiah and redemption.

3. *Bemahaneh Tsva'ot Hashem* ("In the Camp of God's Armies") – children's monthly founded in 1989 at the request of the Rebbe to memorialize the death of Rebbetzin Haya Mushka,

wife of the Rebbe and daughter of the previous Rebbe. A color publication geared to children up to ages 13-14, it is distributed by subscription in Israel and the US. The message is that Habad children are like soldiers in God's army whose aim is to spread the idea of redemption. It is attractively designed, with a serialized comics story on the back page. From 1993, with the announcement that the Rebbe is the messiah, this notion was presented as widely acknowledged in the world media. More broadly, the idea of redemption is portrayed as central to the concerns and activities of all Jews. Underlying this message is the given that all Jews are still in exile, unredeemed until the coming of the messiah, implying non-recognition of the State of Israel as the Jewish state. The term State of Israel is never used – only Land of Israel.

Habad has adopted military and heroic images similar to those of the Israeli ethos as a means to create an activist elite image: soldiers in an army who belong to the World Organization of God's Armies, founded in 1981. The children's "weapons" are *mitzvot* and good deeds, which help them defeat the "enemy" – the evil instinct. As every army, this one too has a commander in chief – the Rebbe – and a military hierarchy which can be entered through the accumulation of good deeds. Activities organized for Habad children involve the awarding of military-style ranks and the manning of "Mitzvah Tanks."

Significantly, two topics that are central to Jewish life today – the Holocaust and the Israel-diaspora relationship – are projected very differently in this Habad medium as compared to the Jewish secular or the non-haredi view. The Holocaust is presented as a test of Jewish religiosity, while it is America, and not Israel, that is

seen as the new homeland for religious Jews.

Moreover, nowhere is the secular Jew mentioned or portrayed in this medium.

The messianic concept is central to Habad thinking and influences the entire outlook of the community. However, the death of the Rebbe in 1994 caused a parting between mainstream Habad, which became more restrained, at least in terms of its use of the media; and the messianic trend, which continued its intensive efforts to spread the message of redemption. The mainstream channeled its energies to another goal – opposing the peace process and preserving the Greater Land of Israel, while the messianists insisted that this and all other problems would be solved with the coming of the messiah.

Today, although Habad no longer publicly articulates its rejection of the existence of the State of Israel – whether because it accepts it as a fait accompli or because the state is perceived merely as a means of sociopolitical organization – it nevertheless rejects the principle that the government has the right to make decisions that conflict with the laws of the Torah. If Jews who observe the rules of the Torah must choose between the law of the land or the law of Torah, they will unhesitatingly choose the law of Torah.

This has obvious implications regarding the peace process, as many other facets of Israeli life, for it involves a process of delegitimation of democratic governance.

The Habad press both exerts a key influence on its community and reflects its thinking, and as such opens a window for the outside observer to better understand the workings of this community.

JEWISH PICTURES BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST: THE WEEKLY "IDISHE BILDER" OF RIGA, 1937-1939 / Akiva Zimmerman

Idishe Bilder ("Jewish Pictures") was one of the most impressive of the prewar Jewish weeklies, an achievement enhanced by the very fact of its appearance in Latvia under the repressive rule of Karlis Ulmanis. Only one Jewish daily, *Heint*, was granted a publishing permit after Ulmanis seized control of the country in 1934. In 1937, however, a permit was obtained for a new illustrated Jewish weekly, *Idishe Bilder*. Apolitical, the magazine was expressly pluralistic, giving full exposure to the entire spectrum of Jewish life. Headlines were printed in four languages: Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish and German, with abstracts of some of the articles provided in Hebrew and Polish.

The publisher and managing editor was A. Baramas, with Zelig Kalmanowitch taking over the latter role a year after the magazine was launched. A permanent contributor and acting literary editor was author, playwright and journalist Marc Razumni, who had been the New York *Forverts* correspondent in Riga.

Idishe Bilder used correspondents and photographers throughout the Jewish world. In Palestine, the correspondent was Moshe Danzigerkron (Ron), later secretary-general of the Journalists Association in Tel Aviv. Photos, most of them exclusive to the magazine, were well reproduced. Articles covered Jewish life throughout the world, including in remote regions.

The cover of the first issue featured a photo of the Jewish community of India. The list of points of distribution of the magazine was: Estonia, England, France, Finland, America, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Denmark, Danzig, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Besides an article on the Jews of India, the first issue included reports on the Rabbi of Munkacs and the Admor of Bobov, who had been excommunicated by the rabbi; Jewish life in Scandinavia, accompanied by portraits of the rabbis of the communities; photos of the development of Tel Aviv; an array of photos of Jews in Warsaw in various occupations; an article on Madame Brunschweig, a Jewish minister in the government of French Prime Minister Leon Blum; and a full page with photos on the birthday celebration of the pretender to the Hapsburg throne, Prince Otto, including a special prayer for him at the Great Synagogue of Vienna. (An interesting aside is that Dr. Otto von Hapsburg is still alive and is a devoted friend of Israel.)

Typically, a serialized novel also began running in the first issue. Additionally, a literary section featured Yiddish works, including novellas by two writers – Zusman Segalovitch and Efrayim Kagnovsky – who were to be regular contributors. A humor section was edited by writer Yosef Tunkel under the pen name Der Tunkeler.

Later issues included articles about such famous Jewish personalities as Leon Blum, Lord Herbert Samuel, German

sculptor Harold Eisenstein, Hollywood actress Sylvia Sidney, a series of commissars in the Soviet government, including Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov (formerly Meir Valakh), Albert Einstein on the occasion of his 60th birthday, historian Shimon Dubnov and many others. The range of subject matter included the Jewish communities of Tunis, China, the Black Jews of Harlem, New York, and the return of Marranos in Portugal to Judaism. Regular columns included Jews in sports and theater reviews. Life in Palestine was covered extensively in every issue.

The first issue of 1939 introduced a new section titled “*Vu’hain?*” (Where?), covering possible emigration destinations for Jews. The first location reviewed was British Guiana in South America. Later issues pointed to Belgian Congo, Liberia, Bolivia, Panama, Haiti and Honduras. Related articles dealt with life in a Jewish refugee camp in Holland, and a fund-raising campaign in Belgium for Jewish refugees. Side by side with these, however, were a full range of general-interest articles as before. This pattern continued until the last extant issue, which appeared before Rosh Hashana 1939. Photos of heads of state conferring, and of weaponry, were featured. A final issue, which was not preserved, bid farewell to the readership and expressed hope that the closure of the magazine would be temporary only.

The complete archive of *Idische Bilder* is housed in the Sha’ar Zion Library in Beit Ariela, Tel Aviv.

THE BEN-GURION – “KOL HA’AM” TRIAL / Mordecai Naor

The *Kol Ha’am* (“Voice of the People”) trial of 1953, which took place in the Supreme Court sitting as the highest Court of Appeals, set a precedent in the history of the Israeli press.

The daily *Kol Ha’am*, organ of the Israel Communist Party (Maki), appealed a closure order issued by then-Minister of Interior Yisrael Rokah which was prompted by the paper’s claim that the government under David Ben-Gurion “was speculating with the blood of our sons” because of its intention to send an Israeli military force to Korea to fight alongside the Americans.

In a precedent-setting judgment, Supreme Court Justice Shimon Agranat revoked the closure order, ruling that the interior minister’s authority to close a newspaper was limited to cases where published material represented a clear and present danger of near certainty to the public peace, whereas the article published in

Kol Ha’am presented no such danger. This ruling became a cornerstone of freedom of expression in Israel.

A lesser-known case involving the same newspaper, which took place earlier (1950-51), has been somewhat forgotten. Curiously, the judicial record of this case seems to have disappeared, an irregularity that is particularly strange in light of the fact that the case against the paper was instigated by Prime Minister and Defense Minister Ben-Gurion.

The period was the Cold War. Israel was unaligned with either camp, although it leaned toward the US and the West. The Soviet Union, which had supported Israel upon its establishment and thereafter, and supplied it with large quantities of weapons via Czechoslovakia as well as with a diplomatic umbrella in the UN, then removed its support and mounted a systematic propaganda

campaign against it. Maki adopted a similar line, frequently attacking the government and its leader, Ben-Gurion, who responded in kind to Maki and on the subject of the Soviet Union generally.

A public attack of this kind by the prime minister in October 1949 elicited an editorial in *Kol Ha'am* titled "A Shameful Speech by the Prime Minister," in which Ben-Gurion was labeled "a drawer of the wagon of his American masters" and was accused of treason. Ben-Gurion, furious, noted in his diary that of the various legal options that he could act upon in response, he would sue the paper for criminal libel as well as for libel against a foreign ruler and harming relations with a foreign country. Interestingly, this was his sole diary entry on the subject, although the legal proceedings dragged on for over a year and a half.

The prime minister's suit, tried in the Tel Aviv District Court, named the editor in chief, Dr. Mordecai (Marcus) Biletsky; the publisher, Eliezer Fidel; and the manager of the printing press, Y. Stavi, as guilty of libeling the prime minister. After four postponements, to the judge's displeasure, the trial began in February 1951.

A key witness for the defense was (ret.) General Yitzhak Sadeh, the well-known and admired founder of the Palmah and a brigadier during the War of Independence (which had ended only one and a half years before the episode in question). The defense attorney set out to prove that Ben-Gurion was indeed, as *Kol Ha'am* had asserted, a "servant of the Americans." To do so, he requested Sadeh to reconstruct the events of the Horev Campaign in the Negev and Sinai in late 1948 and early 1949, which ended with Israel being forced to relinquish its gains "under the pressure of certain foreign countries."

Sadeh, giving his version of the campaign, emphasized that the Israel Defense Forces had beaten the Egyptians from various directions, had penetrated deep into Sinai, and had then received orders to retreat from the peninsula. In his view, there was no military basis for the retreat. He also referred to British aircraft over the battle zone, implying interference by the great powers; the downing by Israel of British planes over Israeli territory; and pressure on Israel. Under questioning by the prosecution, however, he acknowledged that it is the high command that decides on policy.

After a further postponement, Ben-Gurion himself was called to testify in April 1951. Denying that he had referred in his public address of 1949 to Jewish Communists in the Soviet Union, but rather to the Israeli Communists who gave their blessing to Arab pogroms against the Jews, he refused to reply to questions concerning the ostensible presence of an American agent among volunteers to the Israel Defense Forces during the War of Independence; the events of the Horev Campaign; or Israel's

relations with foreign countries.

The defense then tried to show that a loan to Israel of \$100 million from the US influenced the prime minister and the government to "sell out" to the Americans, which Ben-Gurion hotly denied, pointing out that the agreement had been welcomed and approved by the Knesset. Another defense approach tried to show the prime minister as a traitor to the interests of the workers, whom he was elected to champion. This was based on Ben-Gurion's consistent refusal to invite the leftist parties to join the coalition government he put together. Testimony by a defense witness, Member of Knesset Shmuel Mikunis (Maki), tried to show that Ben-Gurion had refused to accept arms and military experts from Communist countries during the War of Independence, when these were desperately needed, another charge denied by the prime minister. Moreover, Mikunis asserted, insulting remarks made by Ben-Gurion about the leader of the Soviet Union, Stalin, had but one goal: "the attainment of an invitation by Mr. Ben-Gurion to Truman's table."

The judgment, delivered in July 1951, found the defendants guilty of defamation of the prime minister in their newspaper, and the accusation they had published that he had betrayed the country and that he had lied, libelous. The judge pointed out that the defendants had failed on all counts to show treason on the part of the prime minister. Furthermore, in calling the prime minister an "enemy of the working class" the defendants had transgressed the law protecting the individual's right to protect his good name. The defendants, therefore, were found guilty of libel, were personally fined, and were ordered to finance the cost of publishing the verdict. Neither the newspaper nor the printing press, however, were ordered to close. Moreover, the fines were small.

The judgment elicited a minimal reaction in the press, probably because elections for the Knesset were scheduled for the following day and were the focus of intense attention. The exception to this indifference was *Kol Ha'am* itself, which ran a large headline: "The Judge Admits B.G.'s Speech Contained a Good Measure of Provocation," with the subhead: "The summoned [not: the defendants] were found guilty of libeling the prime minister and fined 150 liras; the judge exonerated B.G. of the charge of treason against his nation, drawing the cart of his American masters, and enemy of the working class." The innocent reader could well conclude that the defendant was the prime minister himself.

Thereafter, the trial was completely forgotten. Moreover, the prolonged proceedings, the attendant pressure on the prime minister, the minimal fine, and the non-closure of the paper apparently conveyed a discouraging message to future prime ministers: none ever sued a newspaper for libel on the grounds of personal attack, even in provocative circumstances.

THE DE-STALINIZATION OF THE NEW YORK YIDDISH DAILY "MORGEN FREIHEIT" / Gennady Estraiikh

Of the various Yiddish Communist periodicals that appeared in the West, especially in the US, *Morgen Freiheit* was one of the most important. An organ of the American Communist Party, it carried pro-Soviet propaganda on Jewish topics. Its very beginnings, in April 1922, were coordinated with party headquarters in Moscow. Up until the late 1940s-early 1950s, the paper had a significant circulation: some 20,000 persons bought it on the 32nd anniversary of the October Revolution in 1949. At that time, about half the American Communists were Jews, although many readers were members not of the party but of the International Workers Order and other leftist organizations.

Freiheit, besides serving as a Communist organ, was a forum for East European Jewish workers with pro-Soviet sentiments and a strong attachment to Yiddish. By contrast, this community dismissed the mass Yiddish daily *Forverts* for its emphasis on Americanization. For the Communist Yiddishists, the Soviet Union had become a sentimentalized dreamland symbolizing freedom and equality as well as empathy for the Jewish people.

In the late 1940s, reports of the suppression of Jewish life in the Soviet Union reached the West, yet the Communist propaganda machine continued feeding the West news about ongoing Jewish cultural activity there, denying rumors to the contrary. In 1951, articles appeared in *Freiheit* about the flourishing Yiddish cultural life of the autonomous Jewish region of Birobidzhan. Additionally, famous Soviet personalities of Jewish origin, such as violinist David Oistrakh, were written up enthusiastically. Both the journalists on the paper and the readership maintained an unshakable belief in the virtues of the Soviet Union.

By the early 1950s, however, the names of such leading Soviet Yiddish writers as David Bergelson, Peretz Markish, Itzik Feffer and others who had been imprisoned disappeared from the pages of *Freiheit*, although previously their works had appeared in it regularly. An item in September 1955 referred evasively to Markish's presence on the staff of *Pravda*, while reports in 1956 implied that he and other Yiddish writers who had disappeared were no longer alive and that their names had been "purged."

In April 1956, a month after the *Forverts* reported the murder of a group of prominent Yiddish writers in the Soviet Union that took place in August 1952, the *Freiheit* allowed itself to wonder aloud about the fulfillment of Jewish hopes for restoring and maintaining Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union – with no mention, however, of the murder of the writers. The readership apparently was still

unable to relinquish the old conviction that the Soviet Union was the land of true freedom. Significantly, even the *Daily Worker*, the main Communist Party organ in the US, criticized the Soviet leadership for failing to explain what had befallen the Jewish intellectuals, and in June 1956 the American Communist Party expressed concern that Khrushchev had made no mention of crimes against the Jews.

Late in 1956 *Freiheit* published a series of articles by Joseph Barukh (Joe) Saltzberg, a leader of the Canadian Labor-Progressive (Communist) Party and former delegate of the Ontario Legislature, pointing to the suppression of Jewish culture by the Soviet government from 1949 onward. He also accused non-Soviet Communists of acting like "vassals" instead of defending the jailed Jewish intellectuals and thereby possibly saving their lives. Saltzberg himself had been ejected from the executive of the party in 1953 and from the NEC in 1954. However, he was reinstated in 1956 and was part of a group of Canadian Communists who visited the Soviet Union that year to clarify both the past and current status of Soviet Jewry. While government officials who met with the mission acknowledged past oppression of Jews, they would not commit themselves to any formal steps to revive Jewish culture. The most disturbing aspect of Saltzberg's trip, however, was a meeting with Khrushchev, who made crude, insulting remarks about the Jewish people and advised the Jews to reinforce their commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideals.

Probably as a result of Saltzberg's criticism of what he had seen, 26 staff members of *Freiheit* signed a petition demanding that the Soviet government denounce the repression of Yiddish intellectuals and institutions and renew Yiddish cultural life there. At the same time, however, *Freiheit* reported on plans announced by the Soviet Department of Culture to establish a Shalom Aleichem Yiddish Theater and drama school, and to translate into Russian over 100 Jewish literary works, including books by Yehuda Halevi, Hayim Nahman Bialik, Mendele Mokher Seforim, Y. L. Peretz and Shalom Aleichem. Yet, by the end of 1956, the paper reported that these projects had been aborted.

By Rosh Hashanah 1957, *Freiheit* ran an article questioning the relationship between Judaism, or "Yiddishkeit," and Socialism, implying the end of a 35-year period of the supremacy of the class struggle, Socialism, Stalin and the Soviet Union generally. The notion of Yiddishkeit, at that point, began to gain greater weight.

Even the name of the paper, with its distinctly pro-Soviet ring, was under consideration for replacement by *Americaner Yiddishe Folks Zeitung* ("American Jewish People's Newspaper"), which would send a Jewish rather than universalist message. In the end, the name was not changed, although the management of the paper announced a distancing from the Communist Party and the paper was reidentified as: "An independent progressive newspaper of the Jewish people and workers." Moreover, the official Soviet dogma of the "integration" of the Soviet Jews into society at large was criticized, inasmuch as this process had been implemented by means of administrative repression.

The American Communist Party, concerned by then about the damage caused by the revelations of anti-Jewish repression during Stalin's time, accepted this criticism by the remaining stalwarts. By December 1957 the party had only 3,474 members in the US, as compared to 22,663 in 1955. The distancing of its Jewish members caused particular concern. *Jewish Life*, an English-language companion magazine to *Freiheit*, lost 75% of its readership after the revelations of 1956-57.

The new autonomous stance by the paper signaled a gap that continued to widen between *Freiheit* and the American Communist Party. Neither the writers nor the readers could forget the pain of August 1952. Among those executed were personal friends of the paper's editor, Paul (Pesach) Novik, including several former staff members of *Freiheit*. Novik himself was

branded as an "American spy" and a "Jewish nationalist" and in 1972 was ejected from the party for "opportunistic submission to Jewish national and Zionist pressures." For the rest of his life, he and his colleagues denounced Stalinism and delegitimized the newly formed *Sovietish Heimland* – the single official Yiddish newspaper in the Soviet Union – and its editor, Aaron Vergelis.

By the time *Freiheit* closed, in September 1985, the shrinking geriatric circle led by Novik had done an ideological about-face from dogmatic Communism to a return to Marxist-Leninist roots blended with leftist Yiddishkeit and European-style Communism.

For many Western Communists, the revelations of 1956 and the Soviet invasion of Hungary that year triggered an exodus from the party, although a large number continued to be Communist sympathizers even if they were scarred by the trauma of the loss of a central basis of their lives. Novik and his colleagues, by comparison, could fall back on the comfort of belonging to the *Morgen Freiheit* "club," which preserved their old socialist Jewish ideology together with a heightened level of Jewish identity. In 1977 the newspaper still had nearly 6,000 subscribers, as compared to its heyday in the 1920s when it had a circulation of 40,000-50,000.

Today, small groups of American-born Jewish leftists educated in Communist homes keep alive the old socialist Jewish secularist ideology.

THE LADINO PRESS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL / Berta Ares

A series of Ladino newspapers were published in Israel from 1948 until the late 1960s by immigrant journalists from Turkey whose impetus was to further the integration of Ladino-speaking Sephardi immigrants, particularly from Turkey.

Three short-lived examples of independent, apolitical papers were *La Boz de Israel* ("The Voice of Israel"), *La Boz de Jerusalem* ("The Voice of Jerusalem") and *La Union* ("The Union"). Others were supported by political parties: *Libertad* ("Liberty") – Herut; and *El Avenir* ("The Future"), *Deretcho al Buto* ("To the Point") and *Faktos* ("Facts") – all Mapai, the latter two explicitly propagandistic. Two longer-lasting papers were partially supported by political parties: *La Verdad* ("The Truth") – General Zionists; and *El Tiempo* ("The Time") – Mapai.

All aimed at assisting the immigrants' absorption into Israel by providing maximal information on their new homeland, including

explanations of such complex issues facing the new country as the internationalization of Jerusalem, secular vs. religious education, the Ashkenazi-Sephardi divide, and the Middle East situation.

The two most popular and longest-lasting of these papers were the weekly *El Tiempo* (1950-67; Mapai) and *La Verdad* (1949-75; General Zionists), which carried on a sustained mutual ideological confrontation. Interestingly, while they began as immigrant-oriented, they gradually became general newspapers, reflecting the integration of their readership into society. This transition was intensified during the Sinai Campaign period (1956), when the proportion of national and local news reportage rose.

Initially, the newspaper that played a central role in guiding this immigrant community was *El Avenir*, a Mapai-sponsored weekly that was issued in five other languages simultaneously (Yiddish,

French, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Romanian. Written simply and clearly, it was explicitly ideological while also providing historical background on modern Israel.

La Verdad, highly critical of the Labor administration, attacked the entrenched bureaucracy, the propagandistic nature of Mapai, and the widespread "proteksia" (favoritism) system. All these, it charged, demoralized the immigrants to the point that some returned to their country of origin. Two nonpolitical elements in the paper, which were staples in the Sephardi press, were humor

columns and serialized novels.

El Tiempo, partially subsidized by Mapai, was edited by Yitzhak Ben-Rubi with significant editorial input by such personalities as writers Avraham Almaliyah and Sabtani Leon. It focused on political, economic and cultural issues, with an emphasis on settlement. As in *Verdad*, the problem of the temptation to return to the country of origin was addressed, with this option discouraged editorially.

TWO BIOGRAPHICAL "MOMENT"S / Shalom Rosenfeld

Two important yet highly contrasting contributors to Jewish cultural life in Eastern Europe during the period between the two world wars were both linked to one of the great Yiddish newspapers of Poland, and of Europe entirely – *Moment*. The two were Hayim Prushansky, financial backer, manager and developer of the daily *Moment*, and the socially conscious Oscar Perlman, one of the paper's leading editorial writers and a contributor to other influential newspapers as well. Both the "capitalist" Zionist Prushansky and the socialist (later orthodox Communist) Perlman found a home in *Moment*, a newspaper that played an immeasurable role in educating and informing the Jewish masses in Poland.

Hayim Prushansky brought both money and managerial expertise to the rather flaccid *Moment*. He had worked for its rival, *Heint*, for a time and was active in the administration of various Zionist institutions in Warsaw. An intellectual with pragmatic vision, he was capable of translating his ideas into operational programs aimed at financial and technological innovation.

Oscar Perlman's contribution, by comparison, was in the realm of social conscience, given expression in editorials in *Moment* over a 15-year period, in addition to contributions to other periodicals, especially on the theme of Jewish settlement in Birobidzhan, which he came to espouse with a passion. While Prushansky organized trips to Palestine, Perlman organized missions to Birobidzhan, with the encouragement of the Soviets. Perlman was also involved in semi-clandestine activity on behalf of Communist front organizations that dared operate under the noses of the vigilant Polish police.

Both *Heint* and *Moment* exerted a vast influence on the thinking and the cultural life of Jewish Poland. All of the Jewish communal leaders, thinkers and writers contributed to these papers, while their regular editorial staffs were excellent in themselves. The

papers served as a forum that recorded Jewish hardship, ideology, political opinion, hopes and the thirst for knowledge. Bitter rivals, *Heint* and *Moment* fought each other for every reader and every ad, locked in a relentless symbiotic contest.

The early readership of the Yiddish press related to the newspaper of their choice as Orthodox Jews related to their rebbe's court – with total devotion. When a popular writer left one paper for another, thousands of readers would follow him.

Many published pieces in this press were signed by pseudonyms, especially those written by recognized authors who contributed more than one article in a given issue, or those who, for reasons of livelihood, wrote serialized "penny novels," such as Isaac Bashevis Singer or Yehoshua Perle. These novels, too, perpetuated the competition between the two papers by copying each other's themes and formats. Another form of competition was coupons that the reader could cut out of the paper and redeem for a gift.

Moment, founded in Warsaw in 1910, was housed in three separate cramped quarters until Prushansky initiated the construction of a single large building at 38 Nalevsky Street. He then set about acquiring modern German typesetting and printing equipment, especially a high-speed rotary color printer – a first in the Jewish press. These innovations constituted a heavy financial burden, which Prushansky shouldered nearly singlehandedly, convinced of the importance of upgrading the newspaper.

At the same time, the staff demanded wage increases and embarked on prolonged strikes. Additionally, Prushansky was at ideological loggerheads with one of the central figures in *Moment*, Noah Prylucki, son of the paper's editor in chief, Zvi Prylucki. The younger Prylucki, a brilliant writer, poet, philologist, member of the Polish Sejm and head of the leftist Folkspartei, consistently wrote anti-Zionist articles, which incensed Prushansky, who had been a delegate to one of the Zionist Congresses and was a

champion of the Jewish national cause. This conflict, added to his administrative burdens, apparently affected Prushansky's health.

The entire turbulent period at *Moment* was documented by him in a series of letters to his estranged wife, Leah, who had moved to Palestine. The letters were preserved by Prushansky's grandson in Israel.

Shortly after the installation of the new printing equipment, and the appearance of the first color edition of the newspaper in 1930, the 64-year-old Prushansky suffered a fatal stroke. At the time, suicide was rumored as the cause of his death.

Having lost its authoritative and resourceful manager, *Moment* entered a period of financial crisis that ended with the closing of the paper in 1939 upon the Nazi invasion of Poland. At the very end, with Warsaw in a state of siege, only two members of the *Moment* staff managed to reach the office under heavy bombardment and put out a two-page edition which carried an appeal by Polish Gen. Stazhinski to Warsaw patriots to help block the German advance, under the headline: "The Defeat of the Enemy is Assured!" A copy of this issue has never been located despite concerted efforts.

Strangely, Prushansky's printing equipment, for which he struggled mightily, survived the bombardment of Warsaw intact. By a cruel irony, it was transported to Germany by the Nazis and used to publish their organ.

As for Oscar Perlman (b. 1895, Warsaw), a key editorial writer at *Moment* during 1920-34, he was a Folkspartei loyalist until the late 1920s, when he shifted to the communist movement, focusing on the goal of Jewish autonomous settlement on Soviet soil. He organized and led missions to Birobidzhan in 1934. Side by side with his work at *Moment*, he was on the staff of *Das Folk* ("The People") of Warsaw and contributed to *Der Nyer Gedank* ("The

New Idea") of Vilna and *Ibervui* ("Rebuilding") of Warsaw during 1933-35, also writing for *Velt Iberblik* ("Worldwide Survey") and a series of banned Communist publications in Warsaw, Lodz and Lemberg. Fleeing the Polish authorities to the Soviet Union in 1935, he joined the staff of *Emes* ("Truth") in Moscow and wrote for *Biro-Bidzhan Shtern* ("Birobidzhan Star") and *October*.

Once he reached the Soviet Union, all traces of Perlman vanished, as did those of many Jewish writers who wrote in Yiddish. However, some two decades later, his presence in Moscow several years after his release from exile (in 1955) was discovered accidentally by old acquaintances from Warsaw who themselves had experienced the terror of the Communist regime. He was also recognized in Moscow by the well-known Yiddish writer and traveler Hayim Shoshkes. Clothed in tatters, with a wild beard and a shocking look in his eyes, Perlman was seen sitting on the ground near the Great Synagogue, his attention focused on a prayerbook, coins that people tossed scattered about.

A letter he wrote in 1936 or 1937, in the possession of relatives in Israel, reiterates his euphoric satisfaction with living in the Communist homeland. A year or two thereafter, all the writers of the official Soviet Yiddish newspaper *Emes* disappeared without a trace. Details of Perlman's fate in the interim eventually surfaced. He had been arrested in 1937 during the mass trials in Russia, imprisoned for a long period and then exiled to the camps in the far north. He had lost his son in a traffic accident, and his wife Saly (Sarah), sister of the grandfather of Prof. of philosophy Asa Kasher of Tel Aviv University, divorced him for a highly placed Soviet army officer. Released in 1955, ill and broken, he returned to religion and became an observant Jew, telling an acquaintance that the fact that he had rediscovered his roots brought him consolation. Thereafter, all traces of him vanished once again.

PHOTO WEEKLIES DURING ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1948-1949 / Dan Almagor

Three photo weeklies (or illustrated weeklies, as they were called then) were published in Palestine upon the outbreak of Israel's War of Independence on November 29, 1947: the ten-year-old *Ha'olam Hazei* ("This World"); *Dvar Hashavu'a* ("Weekly Matter"), published for two years by the daily *Davar*; and *Hagalgal* ("The Wheel"), a magazine published for five years by the Mandatory broadcasting authority, Kol Yerushalayim,

based on the BBC model, *The Listener* (see *Qesher* No. 21). This last weekly ended in April 1948 with the termination of the British Mandate. Some three months before the declaration of independence, in February 1948, a new weekly, *Bamahaneh* ("In Camp"), was launched as a continuation of the defunct underground *Haganah* ("Defense").

Ha'olam Hazei was edited by Uri Kessari, who had begun his

journalistic career with the tabloid *Do'ar Hayom* ("Daily Mail") under Itamar Ben-Avi and continued its tradition of a mix of news, gossip and culture in the style of the Parisian weeklies. Kessari took on a variety of contributing writers, maintaining a representative sampling of political opinion side by side with light reportage, humor, social chitchat in the American style, and popular columns that elicited strong reader participation, especially among the younger sabra (a term he claimed to have originated) readers. Of the weightier content, the column "Hayishuv Hazeh" ("This Community") played an important role, serving as a platform for independent-minded contributors, including Shimon Samet, Raphael Klatchkin (Habimah actor as well as journalist) and Shalom Rosenfeld.

Essentially a Tel Aviv magazine, *Ha'olam Hazeh* widened out its political scope once the state was established and government offices were set up in Tel Aviv. Profiles of political personalities represented a wide spectrum of opinion, ranging from former radical underground leaders Hillel Kook (a.k.a. Peter Bergson) and Matityahu Shmuelevitch to Shoshana Persitz, Dr. Yosef Burg, the first Knesset Secretary Moshe Rosetti, Shmuel Mikunis, Dov Joseph, the young Abba Eban and Moshe Sneh.

Kessari, a devotee of the arts, dedicated a sizable portion of the weekly to this sphere. Profiles appeared of playwrights, poets, musicians, actors and pop performers. Essays and short stories by young unknown writers were published regularly.

With the outbreak of the War of Independence, a column devoted to biographies and photos of fallen soldiers was introduced, which included an obituary by the author of this article, then age 13, at whose home in Rehovot one of the young soldiers had stayed the night before going out on his fatal mission.

Soldier-journalist Uri Avneri, who was wounded in action, was one of the war's outstanding reporters and a prolific contributor, later to become editor of the magazine.

The events of the war were reflected in many of the magazine's cover pages, which featured photos of military commanders, campaigns, special units and captured locations.

Curiously, the first wave of immigration from the Arab lands was covered only minimally. An article on the "Magic Carpet" airlift of the Jews of Yemen to Israel appeared in March 1949, while three months later Hasidic followers of the Lubavitcher Rebbe were shown arriving and exploring a settlement location, later to become Kfar Habad.

One of the most popular columns was titled "The *Chizbat* of the Week," the *chizbat* (Arabic for tall tale) being a popular form of entertainment then. Readers submitted tales, and the best received a prize of 4 liras. So popular was this column, that the editor soon had to request readers to desist from sending in *chizbatim*, as the staff couldn't keep up with the backlog.

Dvar Hashavu'a, edited by M. Ben-Elul, was undoubtedly the most popular photo weekly during the pre- and immediate post-state period. More truly a photo magazine than its rivals, it filled nearly 50% of its content with photos printed on good-quality paper, constituting a valuable documentary record of that dramatic period with an intensive focus on the war, the military personalities involved, and the home front effort.

The establishment of a temporary parliamentary body and the declaration of independence in the spring of 1948 were also covered intensively, followed by the diplomatic struggle for recognition in the UN and in Washington. The magazine's treatment of the British Administration and its representatives was surprisingly critical and sarcastic, even moreso than the military-oriented *Bamahaneh*. British "neutrality" was mocked in light of the blowing up of a Jaffa synagogue and destruction in the village of Kfar Amal, both carried out by the British.

Curiously, the coverage of the post-Holocaust milieu, the immigrants en route to Palestine interned in camps in Cyprus, and the massive rush of immigration into the country with the opening of its gates was minimal.

Although *Dvar Hashavu'a* was published by the Histadrut (General Federation of Labor), socialist ideology is barely palpable and is limited to an occasional mention of labor events.

In contrast to *Ha'olam Hazeh's* weekly two-page section on war fatalities, *Dvar Hashavu'a* carried only occasional coverage of this painful topic.

Several columns were printed in vowelized Hebrew type in deference to new immigrant readers. At least two pages of each issue were devoted to literature, two to films, and two to sports. Regular columns dealt with radio and entertainment, chess, puzzles, humor and children. Side by side with commercial ads, public service notices called for army volunteers and financial contributions to the war effort.

Bamahaneh, launched in March 1948 as a four-page weekly but in a daily format, did not identify its editor (Moshe Shamir), and pen names were used in by-lines, presumably to preserve the anonymity of Haganah activists from the British, who were still in charge. Written in characteristic military and nationalistic terminology, its content was devoted to morale-building and enhancing pride in the fledgling country's defense efforts in the battlefield and at home. All aspects of the Haganah's – and, from June 1948, the newly formed Israel Defense Forces' – life style were covered, from military campaigns to soldiers' entertainment troupes, the declaration of independence and the imperative to fight to protect the homeland, and popular songs dedicated to various combat units.

Only in the 12th issue, six weeks after the declaration of

independence of the state and the end of the British Mandate, do the full names of the contributors begin to appear. New departments were added as well: literature and poetry, voweled rhymed commentary, and caricatures.

The attitude to the Arab enemy is interesting. A telling article from a historic perspective, "The Problem of the Arab Refugees," by Efrayim Talmi, written three months after the proclamation of statehood, charges that the problem was being exploited by the enemies of Israel, who, having failed to vanquish Israel on the battlefield, were turning the refugee issue into a political tool. Reviewing various proposed solutions to the problem, which, he emphasizes, was not of Israel's making, as Israel did not start the war, Talmi acknowledges that the issue is complex and grave and

will have to be addressed once the war ends and independence is entrenched.

Over half a year after its founding, *Bamahaneh* became a fully illustrated magazine in the style of *Dvar Hashavu'a*, featuring photos, illustrations, reports and literature. Only two months later did the publisher's name appear: The IDF Cultural Service. Military matters continued to occupy the major portion of the content, including day-to-day problems that soldiers faced, such as hitching rides to base or home (then and thereafter a widespread mode of transportation), or the need to provide newspapers in various languages for new-immigrant soldiers. Words and notes of popular new songs about army life (most pop songs then were related to this theme) appeared in every issue.

המחברים

ד"ר אברהם בן יעקב: מרצה באוניברסיטת בר אילן ומכללת אשקלון. ממייסדי העתון ברוסית "ורמיה" ועורכו בראשיתו. כתב "מעריב" במסקוה (1992-1993). עורך ראשי של הרבעון ברוסית "ישראל היום".

שלום רזנפלד: מייסד וראש המכון לחקר העתונות היהודית באוניברסיטת תל-אביב (עד יוני 1997). ממייסדי "מעריב" ועורכו הראשי, 1974-1980.

ד"ר גנאדי אסטרייך: מרצה לידיש, המכון לחקר היידיש, אוקספורד. עמית מחקר בבית הספר למדעי המזרח ואפריקה, אוניברסיטת לונדון.

עקיבא צימרמן: חוקר תולדות המורשת היהודית, נושאי דת וחוננות.

ד"ר דן אלמגור: פזמונאי, מתרגם וחוקר הספרות, הלשון העברית והווי ארץ-ישראל בדורות האחרונים.

ד"ר אברהם בן יעקב: מרצה באוניברסיטת בר אילן ומכללת אשקלון. ממייסדי העתון ברוסית "ורמיה" ועורכו בראשיתו. כתב "מעריב" במוסקו וה (1992-1993). עורך ראשי של הרבעון ברוסית "ישראל היום".

אורלי צרפתי: תלמידת מחקר בחוג לתרבות ולשפה העברית, אוניברסיטת פריז III. מרצה במכללת עמק-יזרעאל.

ברטה ארז: בעלת תואר שני מאוניברסיטת פונטיפיסייה, סלמנקה, ספרד. המאמר נכתב בעקבות מחקר שמומן באמצעות מילגה של המחלקה לנושאי תרבות ומדע, משרד החוץ, ירושלים.

ד"ר מרדכי נאור: סופר וחוקר תולדות ארץ-ישראל. עורך "קשר".

פרופ' משה פלאי: פרופ' לספרות עברית וראש התוכנית ללימודי היהדות באוניברסיטת מרכז פלורידה באורלנדו. מתמחה בספרות ההשכלה העברית.

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