The Andrea and Charles Bronfman
Center for the Media of the Jewish
People, Tel Aviv University

No. 30, November 2001

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Hebrew Cover:
The Israeli public bombarded by the media. Illustration in a series by artist Shmuel Katz for the article by Attorney-General Eliakim Rubinstein, Hebrew, p. 3; English abstract, p. 3e.

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The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Center for Media of the Jewish People
Information Center
The Information Center has developed a computerized research library with an on-line database of some 110,000 articles and newspaper clippings published in the Jewish and Israeli media from 1989 onward, updated daily. Topics include the functioning of the Jewish print and electronic media; relations with governmental, public, legal and economic networks; the mutuality between media and society; and information on media figures. A special section contains a wide range of bibliographic materials on the history of Jewish media in Israel and throughout the world. The Center also houses several collections of current and historical exemplars of the Israeli and Jewish press, including special issues, books, video cassettes and photographs. Opening hours: Sun-Thu 10.00-16.00.
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INTRODUCTION / Michael Keren

Kesher, presenting its 30th issue, is a periodical published by the Institute for the Study of Jewish Press and Communications, which has recently become part of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Center for the Media of the Jewish People. *Kesher* was launched 15 years ago by the founder of the Institute and its head for many years, Israel Prize laureate for journalism Shalom Rosenfeld, and has been published semiannually ever since under the editorship of Dr. Mordecai Naor.

Writing in the first issue in May 1987, Shalom Rosenfeld defined the distinctive social function filled by the Jewish newspaper as a substitute for the political experience that was absent for the Jewish people over the years. Indeed, *Kesher*, in its 30 issues, has contributed significantly to an understanding of the complex and subtle link between the press and other media, on the one hand, and the social, cultural, economic and political community in which they have operated and which they have addressed, on the other.

Kesher has rescued the annals of hundreds of Jewish newspapers throughout the world, along with the biographies of publishers, editors, journalists and others involved in the media, from oblivion. It has published research studies, articles and surveys about the beginnings of the Hebrew press in Holland in the 17th century; about well known Jewish newspapers such as the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Forverts* and less known newspapers such as the dozens of Jewish newsletters that appeared in North Africa; about the Jewish press that appeared in the ghettoes and the Jewish press of the Holocaust survivors; about Zionist and other periodicals in Latin America; and about the multi-faceted Jewish media that blossomed in Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Turkey, Lithuania, Cairo, Paris, Livorno, Baghdad and many other places. *Kesher* sketched the portraits of the great Jewish writers of the modern media: Heinrich Heine, Nahum Sokolow, Theodore Herzl, Egon Erwin Kisch, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, Itamar Ben-Avi, Robert Weltsch and others. Surveying these 30 issues, the reader cannot help but be moved by the great vitality that typified the Jewish people, who established a medium of self-expression during the past few centuries in over 40 languages – Hebrew, Arabic, Ladino, Yiddish, English, French, German, Russian, Spanish and many others.

Kesher has also told the story of the press and media in Eretz Yisrael during the pre-state period and thereafter; published research on the underground press, the party-affiliated and unaffiliated press, the sensationalist press, the army press, the Arab press, the haredi press, the press in foreign languages, the juvenile press and the humor press; and dealt with other media, namely, radio, TV, books, poetry and lyrics, theater, film and the Internet. A number of issues have been devoted to specific topics, e.g., Heinrich Heine as a journalist, the American Jewish press, the dilemma of the identity of the media as high or low culture, women in the Jewish and the Israeli media, and economics and the Jewish press.

Important conceptual and therotical insights have coalesced thereby in the issues of *Kesher* regarding the Jewish media and the media generally. First, the periodical has served as a springboard in pointing to the importance of newspapers as a key resource for the study of culture. This overrides the frequently deprecating attitude toward newspapers as a research asset, especially in contrast to books and historical documents. Secondly, *Kesher* has demonstrated the research contribution to be made by the integration of analytical thinking in the field of the media with historical research. Under the leadership of its founders, *Kesher* has generally avoided the pitfall of judging the media within the parameters of accepted axioms (e.g., "The press is the watchdog of democracy") not anchored in actual historical research. Lastly, *Kesher* has outlined directions for thought and analysis that can aid in understanding the complex relationship between the Jewish media and their social, cultural, economic and political environment both before the founding of the State of Israel and thereafter.

The readers of *Kesher* have been presented, for example, with studies that shed light on the role played by the Jewish press of Germany as the sole source of information, in some instances, about activity that was undertaken to counter anti-Semitism; the function filled by the Soviet literary monthly, *Sovetish Heymland,* in supporting young Yiddish writers during the waning years of the Soviet Union; the cultural and political importance of the circulation of the Cairo newspaper, *Israel*, in three languages; the manifold links between the development of the Jewish press in Eastern Europe and the

spread of universal education in Jewish communities there; the link between the struggles that took place over the nature of the Hebrew press and the coalescence of the Jewish yishuv in Eretz Yisrael; and the nature of the relationship between government and the media in Israel during the early years of statehood – and these are only a few examples.

Kesher has also contributed to an understanding of the relationship between the media and a sovereign government in articles on freedom of speech, communications institutions, the structure and the financing of the Israeli media and other aspects.

The present, 30th issue continues this laudable tradition in offering articles on various fields related to the Jewish media in Israel and throughout the world. The issue opens with an article by the attorney general of Israel, Eliakim Rubinstein, on "The Media, Truth, Public and Commercial Broadcasting, and the Public Interest," followed by articles on the consumption of news by Dr. Mira Moshe, the media in the haredi world by Dr. Kimmy Caplan, cultural representations in TV programs ("Touch the Sky" by Prof. Dan Urian and "'We' and 'Everyone'" by Dr. Ayelet Kohn), community TV by Dr. Hillel Nossek, discourse in "Walla Chat" by Dotan Blais, and the development of journalistic ethics in Israel by Dr. Yehiel Limor. These are followed by two portraits – one of Dr. Ezriel Carlebach in the context of the founding of *Ma'ariv*, by Shalom Rosenfeld, and the other of author, reporter and editor Bracha Habas, by Dr. Mordecai Naor. Prof. Bruno Di Porto describes the history of the first Jewish periodical in Italy, *La Rivista Israelitica*, and Shlomo Sheva offers a glimpse of the pictures taken by Rudi Weissenstein, a pioneer of press photography in Israel.

We plan to devote *Kesher* 31, which will appear in May 2002, to various aspects of Zionist and post-Zionist discourse in various media – newspapers, periodicals, the Internet, books, films, plays, academic conferences, radio and TV discussions – in Israel and the Jewish world. The Board will be glad to receive proposals for articles on this topic.

THE MEDIA, TRUTH, PUBLIC AND COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING, AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST / Elyakim Rubinstein

Excerpts from an address by Israel's attorney-general upon the awarding of the Harela Modai I.D.F Radio Prize, Tel Aviv, July 9, 2001.

The intensifying exposure to the media today raises the issue of the implications of the influence of this phenomenon. Ceaseless efforts by politicians and others to gain media exposure, on the one hand, and the right of the public to know as integral to the democratic process, on the other, have engendered an endless ocean of information. While the media have vital attributes – their exposure of the ills of society, their condemnation of corruption, and the link they constitute between democracy and freedom of expression – the question that must be addressed is whether the media perform these tasks in good faith, especially in terms of fundamental norms of professionalism and fairness.

An important issue in this context is that of libel, which our sages likened to the spilling of blood. The media serve as a powerful vehicle for libel. Journalistic reportage is particularly sensitive in the realm of national security, in light of the shift in Israel from a collective national ethos to a more individualistic one. The balance between security needs and the right of the public to be informed is complicated by issues of media ratings, a built-in suspicion of the establishment, and altered censorship norms.

What must be demanded, therefore, is honest reporting. While the reporter and editor are not responsible for Israeli society, they are responsible for their role in it, i.e., for keeping their professional activity honest and fair. The media agenda is to a large extent the national agenda, and for the individual who is harmed by irresponsible reporting it is the total agenda. Today, the level of reportage is far from satisfactory: news items are often poorly researched, while the perception of news as entertainment is palpable.

On the legal level, the attorney-general office follows a highly restrained policy regarding libel claims. Few such complaints are investigated by the office, and fewer still reach the stage of indictment, in light of judicial precedents in Israel that support freedom of speech as the essence of democracy. Legal intervention is applied only in the rare cases of potential violence or serious harm.

We sometimes tend to forget that until some15 years ago, the only electronic media available to the Israeli public were public broadcasting, i.e., several radio stations and a single TV channel. Today, there are cable TV channels, a commercial channel, a new satellite station, and the Internet. The Israeli public is a consumer of manifold media, and this makes the citizen a participant in democratic public discourse. At the same time, this situation poses problems and challenges, including the trend toward the transfer of control of the media from public to private hands, as well as the development of technologies that allow many more media to reach the citizen, thereby blurring the boundaries between the private and the public domain and turning the world into a global village.

In order to guarantee freedom of expression, the right of the public to know, and the existence of public discourse in the present time, two elements must be assured: public broadcasting and the definition of its goals; and balanced commercial broadcasting, including limitations placed on cross-ownership of the various media.

Independent, objective and fair public broadcasting can raise the cultural threshold of society and bring beneficial contents to the attention of the public that would not reach it otherwise, such as surveys and documentaries, original productions, and creative works that show our country to be a Jewish and a democratic state. The commercial media, too, have a responsibility to contribute to societal cohesion and to mold public discourse, and should be made to assume this responsibility by law. These media have the potential to contribute to democracy and to non-dependence on government.

How can such noble aims be implemented in a situation of the concentration of media ownership in a few hands? Cross-ownership of the media limits media pluralism, engenders self-censorship by journalists, and constricts employment opportunities in the media for reasons of cost-effectiveness. This necessitates the creation of a balance by imposing carefully

thought-out limitations on media cross-ownership. Despite the common wisdom that unfettered competition is its own regulator, the reality is more complex. Without brakes, and in light of the trend toward mergers, what appears to be competition might prove to be concentration. Many countries – Great Britain is one example – have reached the conclusion that in order to assure freedom of expression and pluralism in the media, a variety of platforms must be guaranteed.

"AND NOW FOR A MESSAGE FROM OUR SPONSORS": THE COMMERCIAL-CHANNEL NEWS VS. THE PUBLIC-CHANNEL NEWS IN ISRAEL / Mira Moshe

The news that is conveyed by the media may be perceived in two ways: as a source of information for discourse and public activity, or as "consumer merchandise" that sells viewers to advertisers. The author examines the popularity of both models of news programs in Israel – public and commercial – based on "peoplemeter" viewer statistics between February 1998 and January 2001, and finds a distinct preference for the news as presented by the commercial channel. With this, the findings reveal a trend toward reduced viewing of the news on both channels.

Clearly, the difference between "news" and entertainment is becoming progressively blurred. Bereaved parents become a news "item," and footage showing death and murder are cynically exploited as tear-jerkers. The commercialization of broadcasting has turned news into "infotainment" which markets feelings, pain and bereavement and substitutes emotional stimuli for information. The documentation of news has been made a marketing gimmick and a coarse provocation whose aim is elevated ratings.

The impetus for the shift from publicly sponsored to commercially sponsored news programs relies on the widespread assumption that a multiplicity of media channels will engender the development of more sources of information and the broadening of public awareness. However, the link between technological innovation and social benefit inevitably involves economic considerations: it is impossible to separate the large selection of media in the developed countries from the advertising base that supports them. In this way, the nature of political culture is often determined by political and economic forces.

Political forces, which operated with exclusivity in the TV arena in Israel for two decades, were pushed aside in the mid-1980s by market forces. The question that must be addressed is whether market forces contribute to a constriction or an expansion of the democratic process embodied in the media. The answer to this question is especially important in relation to the conveying of information through news programs, inasmuch as TV news, along with newspapers, mold the views of their audiences and reinforce the link between the individual and society.

The common wisdom is that public broadcasting should be the arena that outlines the parameters of public discourse by creating the infrastructure for the free and open flow of sources of information and a marketplace for ideas in civil society. Such broadcasting in Israel continues to provide a variety of programs as a public service, with the goal of creating and reinforcing a distinctive cultural milieu. The importance of such broadcasting is that it becomes a national forum for the free expression of opinion, which is vital to the democratic process. It creates a public sphere, yet it does not force participation in it.

Side by side with this concept is the concept of news as consumer merchandise. In effect, this means that a great deal of what is packaged in news programs on the commercial channels is intended as a marketing tool for goods. As a result, the journalistic presentation tends to highlight the personal and the emotional at the expense of the objective and the documentary. Drama and action replace analysis and explanation. The broad conceptual picture is eschewed in favor of the intimate, personal and, conceivably, less relevant one.

In Israel, public TV (Channel One) views itself as an educational vehicle for disseminating information, eliminating ignorance and promoting national identity. The channel, however, is beset by serious managerial and operational problems that stem, according to the state comptroller's report of 1999, from a lack of clarity in the organizational conception of the

original Broadcasting Authority Law of 1965.

By contrast, commercial broadcasting in Israel (Channel Two) has been relatively successful. Regulated by the Second TV and Radio Authority Law of 1990, and amendments ratified thereafter, it has a status similar to that of a corporation, with explicit restrictive measures aimed at preventing advertising incursion into news broadcasts. Channel Two gives priority in its news programs to visual elements and live field coverage at the expense of studio broadcasting, highlighting the "interesting" over the important. Human interest and colorful stories offset the more serious foreign affairs, defense and economic reports.

Statistics covering March 1998-June 2000 indicate that Channel Two news was rated as the 11th most viewed program, in contrast to the Channel One rating – 17th place, with the average rate of viewers of Channel Two news 19.3% as compared to 15% for Channel One news viewers. With this, both channels' news programs showed a steady decline in viewing. Moreover, both channels showed an overall drop in viewers in 2000, while the cable channels showed a rise in viewers.

Whether this indicates a decline in news viewing generally is unclear. The cable channels do not broadcast local (Israeli) news, but the Internet does: over ten Israeli news sites provide updated news reports, and others cater to specific audiences. This medium might develop into a significant competitor to TV in the news sphere.

Another serious competitor will be the new Israeli round-the-clock news channel scheduled to be launched soon. The author predicts that in light of the current decline in news viewing generally, the appearance of this competitor will evoke a continued softening of the news and the conversion of private tragedies into media happenings in the race for ratings.

THE MEDIA IN HAREDI SOCIETY IN ISRAEL / Kimi Kaplan

The haredi (ultra-Orthodox) community, which coalesced in Europe during the early decades of the 19th century in reaction to the Enlightenment movement, secularization and, later, Zionism, is relatively recent historically. Moreover, it does not constitute a direct continuation of traditional Judaism, although the community views itself as the only true perpetuator of traditional Judaism.

Having emerged as a reactionary force to developments in Jewish society, the haredi community lives in constant awareness of its minority status, perceiving itself as threatened culturally by the majority Jewish society in Israel. This awareness has led the community to segregate itself socially, culturally and physically. With this, it decided to become increasingly involved in Israeli political life from the late 1970s onward.

The community's perception of the threat emanating from the society surrounding it leads it to shun and denigrate the secular media and to develop a distinctive alternative media of its own. These media have parallels in those of fundamentalist Christian and Muslim groups. Like them, the haredi community uses a modern vehicle – mass media – to battle modernization.

An important attribute of this community is that it is a composite of various groupings: hasidim, misnagdim, Sephardis and Ashkenazis, all with subgroupings of their own with complex intra- and interrelationships. Despite the united front presented to Israeli society, ideological friction between these groups is strong and constitutes an important element in gaining an understanding of the haredi media.

The haredi fear of the secular media, especially their visual aspect, including the Internet, engenders extremist rhetoric warning against having or using these media, which are demonized and likened to idol worship. With this, the community makes use of its own daily and periodic press, radio, satellite TV, Internet, audio and visual cassettes, sermons, printed commentaries on the weekly Torah portion and wall posters. The common denominator in all these media is their reliance on references to the traditional canonic Jewish texts: the Bible, Mishna, Talmud and midrashim. The basic premise is that the audience has an associative relationship with these sources, so that a particular turn of phrase, or abbreviation, will suffice to convey a certain message.

A few of the haredi media are operated by media professionals, namely, the editors and some of the reporters of the haredi press. By contrast, the editors of the major weekly Torah portion commentaries, including *Ma'ayan Hashavu'a,*

Shabbat Beshabbato and *Sihat Hashavu'a*, are not media professionals in the formal sense, although they are highly media-sensitive. The cassette market is based entirely on material by rabbis, preachers and lecturers.

One way of categorizing the haredi media is by defining its target audiences. The content of such haredi Internet sites as those of Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak, the Bratslav hasidim and Baba Baruch of Netivot is aimed primarily at secular, traditional or penitent audiences. By contrast, the complexity of the Habad Internet sites make the identification of their target audience less obvious. Wall posters, widespread in the haredi neighborhoods, are aimed entirely at the haredi public. Most of the cassettes are aimed at haredi and repentant audiences, although those produced by Rabbi Yitzhak, whose organization, "Shofar," distributes them free at traffic intersections and in mail boxes, are geared primarily to the secular public.

To summarize, the boundaries of the haredi media are not clearly defined, a situation that parallels haredi society generally, despite the desire of that society to project a unified image. This diversity is well reflected in advertisements that appear in Habad published materials in Israel and abroad, aimed at a wide gamut of audiences ranging from the Habad community itself to Jews anywhere.

The situation is even more complex in the fields of the press and radio. The haredi press, which is almost the last remnant of the ideological party press that once flourished in Israel, is sharply divided along rival factional lines. The *daily Yated Ne'eman* is the product of the split-off from the Agudat Yisrael movement of the Lithuanian stream led by Rabbi Schach. *Yom L'Yom*, the organ of the Sephardi haredim, reflects the breach between the (Sephardi) Shas movement and Rabbi Schach. *Hamode'a* is the oldest haredi daily. *Hamahaneh Haharedi* is the organ of the Belz hasidim. However, not only are the readerships of these papers not confined to the ostensible target audience of each, but the papers are used extensively as vehicles for settling scores between the various camps, in the knowledge that they will be read by the opposition. Moreover, the haredi press, aware that media professionals and other interested parties outside the haredi camp read their press, make use of this medium to convey messages to the majority society, especially on public issues sensitive to the haredi community.

The fact that every haredi newspaper is censored by a rabbinic committee, and that many areas are not covered or even mentioned (e.g., sports), suggests that the messages in this press are homogeneous. However, the reality is quite the opposite. Varied and sometimes conflicting views may be found in the same newspaper, not to mention in opposition papers. An example is the reaction in *Hamode'a* to the controversial decision by the publicly owned Electric Company in 1999 to transport giant turbines on the Sabbath (so as not to block the highways during weekdays), which prompted the Agudat Yisrael Party to quit the government coalition. Side by side with castigation of the move as an affront to Sabbath-observers, as a delegitimation of the observant community, and as yet another fault of the secular majority, some of the paper's commentators argued the issue on a purely legalistic basis (violation of the legal status quo regarding public Sabbath constraints), emphasized the joint responsibility of all sectors of the population to the state, and voiced self-criticism of the haredi camp. Moreover, an unusual nonpolitical article containing photos and statistical tables described the history and development of the electricity system in Israel.

Nevertheless, the haredi press basically reports events through the prism of how life ought to be lived, with the result that reality is often portrayed negatively, ironically, satirically or derisively. With this, the haredi journalists seem to be well aware of developments and news events in the majority society. How the haredi press is operated, and how editorial decisions are made is little known outside the community.

Haredi radio, which consists mostly of pirate stations, has proliferated during the last few years. Some stations are devoted entirely to a defined audience, i.e., women, or Sephardim, while others broadcast particular programs for a specific audience at certain times. The proliferation of this medium is noteworthy in light of the strict gender separation in haredi society, on the one hand, and the inability to control listening, on the other. Moreover, the issue of control over the content of numerous stations has engendered tension between haredi rabbinic leaders and the management of several of the stations. According to one view, the haredi stations are not aimed at the haredi population at all, but at listeners who might be interested in drawing closer to religion and repenting. Another opinion holds that a large number of haredi families allow their children to listen to these stations in the absence of TV. Haredi leaders are divided over whether a radio in the home is permissible at all. Those who allow it view listening to the haredi stations as the lesser evil in comparison to listen-

ing to non-haredi programs or worse (watching TV).

Another significant issue is the use made of the repentance movement as a justification for introducing topics heretofore banned from the haredi media. An example is the subject of the Holocaust, which is highly sensitive for the haredim. Nevertheless, a large body of popular literature has been written about the Holocaust from the haredi point of view, following the rationale that explanations of the catastrophe must be supplied to penitents, inasmuch as silence on this topic casts haredi society in a negative light. Most of the readers of this literature, however, are actually within the haredi community. Similarly, most of the audience that listens to haredi radio stations that are ostensibly geared to penitents are haredi-born.

A distinctive functional aspect of some haredi media is the central role they play in the leisure time of the haredi population, given the highly limited recreational activities that are permitted. Sermons and lectures in particular become central social events, with the speakers frequently using humor and theatrics to keep the attention of the audience. On another level, certain media, including the women's monthly, *Beit Ya'akov*, often express surprisingly sharp criticism of the status of the haredi woman, thereby constituting an important vehicle for communal self-criticism. Such criticism, however, is rarely aired in the broader public, for haredi rhetoric directed at the society outside blames everyone except itself for the ills that have befallen Israel and the entire Jewish people in modern times.

One of the central attributes of the haredi media is their educational and moral mission. This underlies such policies as the right of the public *not* to know everything and the avoidance of topics deemed unworthy of reportage, as well as the importance of internalizing the correct ideological and moral messages. In this context, the media are used as a vehicle to convey haredi historiography and mold the collective memory of the society. A central message of this historiography is that the haredi way of life is the sole legitimate continuum of Orthodox Judaism.

"TOUCH THE SKY": JEWISH IDENTITY IN THE MODERN ISRAELI CULTURE / Dan Urian

The screening of an original eight-part drama on prime time Israeli TV during the winter of 2000, titled "Touch the sky," was significant in that it revealed changing Israeli perceptions of the phenomenon of religious repentance (*hazarah bitshuvah*). The series was based on a book by Ora Morag, "A Hundred New Apples, Including V.A.T.," and inspired a play thereafter.

The theme was the female aspect of religious repentance, written from the point of view of a secular Israeli woman whose husband becomes Orthodox and who persuades her to follow suit. The narrative begins after she has separated both from her husband and from religion.

Both the book and the play took a humoristic approach to the woman following the man's lead and, as a consequence, becoming empowered through the process of acquiring a religious life style. She must adapt to a new world which imposes on her, in addition to her ongoing professional work obligations, the rigorous duties of homemaking according to religious law; radical changes in her husband's habits – most dramatically, his attitude toward the body and toward sexual relations; and wearing clothing that she finds strangulating. With this, she discovers the sensuality hidden beneath the garb of piety, reflecting a tension between the spiritual and the physical.

During the 1980s, the mass media in Israel played an important role in molding the popular perception of the repentance phenomenon by portraying it positively. The personal accounts that were depicted generally focused on secular/anti-religious/leftist/criminal/drug-addicted/or suicidal personalities who, by virtue of finding religion, became righteous/content/family-oriented/or rabbis. These accounts tended to follow a search-and-redemption format, with the former life depicted as restless, confused and failed, and the new life as joyful and serene.

The theater, by contrast, projected a negative image of the phenomenon, namely as a threat to the Zionist credo of the secular Israeli bourgeoisie, an approach adopted by TV dramas during the 1990s. "Touch the sky," typically, reflected the ongoing struggle for the soul of the believer from the secular point of view.

To some extent, the repentance phenomenon was depicted negatively in the secular theater because it had caught on with the young generation, the progeny of educated, middle-class parents of Western origin. The penitents were portrayed as feeling alienated from the values of the society in which they lived, implying strong criticism of the Zionist "civil" religion and the secular way of life. Other explanations for the intensity of the stage presentations on this theme – and the dramatic counter charges by various religious spokespersons – are the Freudian interpretation of religion as an alternative form of paternalism, and the attachment theory as put forward by John Bowlby. The Israeli theater and TV dramas of the 1990s perceived religious repentance as grotesque and deceptive, and the penitents as in need of an authoritative father figure. Toward the end of the 1990s, the phenomenon was presented in TV dramas as a malicious attack on the most important of all societal institutions – the family.

The first of these TV dramas, "Butcheh," based on a play, was non-judgmental. Broadcast in 1992, it depicted religious repentance as linked to dysfunctional parent-child relationships. By contrast, a 1997 TV series, "A Whale on the Sheraton Beach," which dramatized the religious repentance of film and TV star Uri Zohar, showed him before he found religion as abrasive, unprincipled and facing a midlife crisis. This implicit explanation of why he sought religion seemed to reinforce the secularist point of view. Another treatment of the phenomenon was shown in a segment of the sitcom, "Itcheh," starring Sefi Rivlin, who portrays an Israeli Archie Bunker type of everyman. Here, Itcheh's attempt at repentance is depicted as reflecting the ignorance, superstitions and laughable attributes of his character.

"Touch the sky," too, reflects the secular opposition to the repentance phenomenon, albeit less bluntly than some of the earlier treatments of the subject. Not only does the return to religion challenge secular Zionism, which in any case evokes a more diminished commitment than in the past, but it engenders fear of the breakup of the family, which remains a cornerstone of Israeli society. For example, the couple's young daughter describes her first glimpse of her newly penitent father wearing *tefillin* (phylacteries) in imagery that suggests a hanging. And, the rabbi, himself a penitent, arriving at the home to lead a study session, advises the family to get rid of their pet dog because dogs are ritually impure.

Each chapter in the series ends with an attempt by the couple to bridge the gap caused by the husband's repentance, and has a cathartic effect on the viewer. Written in a melodramatic genre, "Touch the sky" typically presents life as a battleground between good and evil that ultimately cannot end in compromise; the only ending is either victory or failure.

Interviews with penitents conducted prior to preparing the script revealed that the single common denominator they shared was a sense of void and lack of satisfaction in their previous lives. Thus, while the message of the series is undeniably secularist, the treatment of the hero and heroine is nuanced. Unlike earlier dramatizations of this theme, there is no demonization or satirization of the religious figures. Stereotyping, however, is used in portraying both the secular community (positive) and the *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) community (negative). Ultimately, the story ends in divorce, symbolizing the detachment of secular Israeliness from its already tenuous tie with Orthodox Judaism and its values.

The series attracted a large viewing audience and evoked wide responses. It was favorably reviewed in the media, but sharply criticized by the religious Zionist public as one-sided and as failing to present the positive aspects of religion. It also stimulated a great deal of discussion on TV talk shows and on an Internet site opened by the producers which ran from November 2000, when the series began, until long after it ended – June 2001. The contributors to the site, which was called a forum, were young people, three-quarters were women, approximately half were religious of various streams, and the other half were secular. The responses were polarized. The negative responses, mostly from religious people, criticized the portrayal of religious repentance as unsympathetic, one-sided and enhancing hatred of religion by the secular population. The positive responses, generally from secular or formerly religious people, praised the drama for dealing honestly and fairly with an important issue.

The intent of the creators of the series, the dramatization itself, and especially the response to it, showed that "Touch the sky" was an accurate reflection of worsening attitudes toward Judaism among secular Israelis in recent years. The sadness reported by many viewers at the divorce at the conclusion of the series may have been an unconscious manifestation of sorrow at the fading away of the symbols representing their tenuous link with their Jewishness.

"WE" AND "EVERYONE": THE REPRESENTATION OF ISRAEL'S MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY IN THE MEDIA / Ayelet Cohen

In defining and examining the media representation of Israeli society as multi-cultural, the author notes the transition that has taken place in society from a widely held perception of "we" to that of "everyone," i.e., a recognition of social diversity, as reflected in TV and film contents.

The pattern of representing multi-culturalism in Israeli society in various TV texts generally involves highly charged societal encounters and how they are dealt with. The basic premise of the creators of these texts is that the very fact of using social confrontation as a central theme suffices to defuse such issues and to posit an alternative that will be accepted as a workable model for "multi-cultural" existence. The author contends, however, that these representative conceptions aim to deflect debate in Israeli society rather than induce addressing the complex and problematic encounter with diverse communities honestly. Instead, an ostensibly progressive, "normal" ideology of social pluralism is presented which views the blurring of divergent identities as an acceptable and even desirable phenomenon. Members of these diverse communities in Israeli society are depicted as "included" others and not as "concrete" others, thereby preventing a recognition of their distinctive identities and needs.

This kind of perception assumes that Israeli society has reached an advanced stage in the coalescence of its identity, which enables it to examine the individuals and groups in its midst (who by now ostensibly share a common cultural agenda) from a certain distance, with irony, and even to revive stereotypes that in the past were labeled problematic, while ignoring their charged emotional baggage in the present.

An analysis of a scene from the Israeli TV drama series, "Zinzana," dealing with the lives of prisoners, which was broadcast on Channel Two in February 2000, demonstrates how representational depictions serve the creators of the drama as an escape route from the need to address complex societal issues directly. They also reveal the overt and covert discourse that develops between the different communities presented in the text. The analysis covers the attributes of the genre selected; the choice of venue and the content of the encounter; the use of cliches and stereotypes; the characters' voices (authentic, integrated, or echoing the ruling voice); and the visibility and presence of the various communities, whether by means of spoken language or by cinematic elements.

The author points to the problematic basic premise in the presentation of the society as multi-cultural. An examination of the discourse between the various elements in the prisoners' society, on the one hand, and the guards and warden, on the other, focuses on the attributes of protest by the diverse group, who demand dialogue and recognition, in contrast to the goal of the administration, which is to mold a uniform population that will comply with a system based on common denominators. The spoken text and the visual cinematic elements blend to highlight the concrete identity of each community, in opposition to the imposed framework dictated by the genre. The research model illuminates the difficulties and dangers of portraying an artificial unified society in popular terms, raising the question of whether Israeli society is capable of truly listening to the diverse voices of the communities in its midst.

"THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE" – FOR ALL THE PEOPLE? COMMUNITY TV IN ISRAEL / Hillel Nossek

Community television in Israel was introduced in the 1990s side by side with, and under the management of, cable TV. By then, community TV had acquired some 20 years of experience in various places in the world, and, for a decade, in a distinctive format in the kibbutzim in Israel. The extent to which this medium in Israel today is truly the voice of the people, and is accessible to all, is the subject of the article.

The 1990s witnessed an accelerated proliferation of the mass media in Israel. The situation shifted from a monopolistic single TV channel and two public radio stations to a multichannel, partially privatized, commercial and competitive milieu in all the media. Today, new regional radio stations cater

to audiences defined according to political orientation, religious identification, ethnicity and local commercial interests, while new TV stations in formation plan to target every sector and taste, all to be financed commercially. These developments dovetail with the shift in print media ownership from public to private hands, including involvement by non-media interests and multi-national media conglomerates; the development of local media alongside the previously dominant national media; media-ownership concentration in a small number of hands; a multiplicity of production companies alongside a drop in public, local and original productions; and a shift in the orientation of the mass media from ideological/ service to business/profit-making. The overall result of these changes in terms of content is a seeming multiplicity of contents but, in actuality, a multiplicity of formats with the same kind of contents.

Theoretically, the community media generally and community TV in particular aim to implement three principles: *accessibility* for individuals in order to express themselves; *participation* by groups and individuals in planning, producing and broadcasting their messages; and *self-management* in the realms of decision making, planning and setting policy, while preventing commercial or political intervention in the production and distribution processes.

Three main modes of community TV have emerged worldwide: 1) *The access channel*, which gives citizens the opportunity to communicate their individual views, as exemplified by the Access Channel in Manhattan, which is financed by the cable franchisee; 2) *The open channel*, which allows individuals and groups to express themselves about the community, as exemplified by the German model, funded by a broadcasting tax and operated under the regional broadcasting authority; and 3) *The community channel*, which offers groups and individuals an opportunity to participate actively in community life, exemplified by models in Canada, several European countries and to a great extent Israel. Responsibility for this channel is given to a regional franchisee, who imposes certain limitations on participants. Financing sources are varied and may include governmental, public and commercial funds.

In Israel, cable TV is controlled by legislation adopted in 1986 which originally aimed at expanding the range of TV broadcasts while also creating community TV channels based on a model introduced in the kibbutzim. This legislation received wide support in the Knesset, as it was viewed as filling a media gap in that it would focus on outlying regions and their problems. However, amendments to the law in 1987 imposed numerous limitations on cable broadcasting by dividing up the country for this purpose into a mosaic of franchise regions that prevented cohesive regional programming. Limitations were also placed on content, barring programs sponsored by governmental bodies and programs with political or commercial content.

From the mid-1990s, some 200 educational and community groups have produced programs on an average of once a month for approximately 30 minutes. The educational groups consist of high schools and colleges, mostly those that have communications or film departments, while the community groups consist largely of the Matnas network of community centers along with several local golden age groups, municipal communications centers and public service organizations.

A major failing of the system is the absence of legislation that would require the franchisees to finance community broadcasting as well as make the necessary equipment available, as is the practice in various other countries. The franchisees, for their part, claim that the state should bear these costs, as it receives large royalties from the cable companies but does not allocate appropriate sums for subsidizing community broadcasting.

Essentially, governmental fears of the emergence of an undesirable alternative medium blocked the adoption of a more open model of community TV in Israel. A narrow definition of "community" limited such broadcasting to a geographic location or a local interest, preventing the wider broadcasting of contents relevant to similar communities, such as ethnic communities or various cultural interests. Moreover, the supervision of the contents is in the hands of the franchisees themselves – a commercial element - rather than the populace, thereby subjecting the lay broadcasters to commercial considerations. The franchisee does not in fact have any incentive to promote this type of broadcasting, and performs this duty merely to discharge an obligation.

Furthermore, community TV broadcasting is dependent on government and public funding, thereby contradicting the underlying goals of this medium as an open platform for the free expression of opinions. Another contradiction lies in the prohibition against political content, which constrains the original intent of airing local issues.

One result of these restrictions is that alternative broad-

casting has become the province of pirate radio stations, which are less costly, simple to operate and able to easily evade governmental supervision.

With this, surveys show relatively high viewing rates for the existing community TV broadcasts, suggesting a real potential for this medium to provide an important outlet for the expression of local, political, cultural and geographic interests. This can be realized if the approach to management, accessibility and use of the medium is altered substantially. One way of achieving this, the author suggests, is by establishing local communications centers independent of national or local institutional funding, to be financed by non-profit organizations formed for this purpose.

THE EVOLUTION OF A CONSCIENCE: THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF JOURNALISTIC ETHICS IN ISRAEL / Yehiel Limor

The journalistic ethic in Israel evolved in the 1950s under the aegis of the Journalists Association several years before the formation of the highest body in the country's media establishment, the Israel Press Council. The fact that the rules of ethics were first formulated by journalists rather than by newspaper owners or editors may be viewed as the coalescence of a professional approach to the field; an enhancement of the status of the profession; and, more specifically, the reinforcement of the status of the veteran journalists vis-a-vis the newcomers.

A proposal containing 11 ethical principles drafted by the Journalists Association in 1957 was circulated in all the newspapers and was approved by a general meeting of the Association in 1958. The document included not only purely ethical rules but also guidelines for journalistic behavior at the workplace and rules with a clear unionist orientation regarding the status of the Association. The brevity of the document shows that it was not intended as a detailed rule book but as a basic guideline. Two factors prompted its creation: the desire to form an internal monitoring system that would protect the press and the journalists, and the desire to maintain the integrity of the profession and keep it separate from the fields of public relations and spokesmanship.

The professional/ethical issues that concerned journalists then, and that underlay the drafting of the code, centered on: 1) Journalists who procured advertisements for their newspapers; 2) Journalists who did outside or additional work; and 3) Journalists who received gifts and benefits from institutions within the province of their work as journalists – problems that remain widespread and timeless in the journalistic profession. A fourth issue, which was specific to Israel, was related to the vast demographic changes in the country in the wake of the massive immigration of the time. This engendered the appearance of new newspapers in foreign languages and the rapid recruitment of workers to staff them, many of them untrained. The veteran journalists wanted to set minimal standards of professionalism. One of their demands (ultimately rejected) was proficiency in the Hebrew language and knowledge of the country. In the view of the old-timers, any lowering of linguistic standards constituted a blow to the national revival, which was intimately linked with the revival of Hebrew. Additionally, they feared a weakening of the status of the Journalists Association not only as a professional body but as a guarantor of employment opportunities for qualified journalists.

In 1959, a year after the ratification of the code of ethics, a series of amendments to it was passed by the Journalists Association reinforcing both the ethical and the unionist dimensions. Freedom of the press and of expression was now defined as a basic human right and as a cornerstone of a democratic form of government. The journalists' social responsibility was underscored by defining them as public servants. Warnings regarding libel and incitement were sharpened, as was the obligation of the journalist to publish the response of any party injured by the press. Other areas that were amplified were prohibitions regarding the gathering of information by unethical means, confidentiality of sources of information, and integrity when information was obtained off the record.

The unionist element was reflected in the stipulation that journalists had a duty to protect the standing of their colleagues and of the Association. Additionally, a professional Ethics Committee was established in 1959 to deal with complaints of ethical infractions by journalists, and meted out significant punishments to violators of the code.

Upon the establishment of the Israel Press Council in 1963, the Journalists Association demanded that its code of ethics be adopted by the new body, as the code had evolved over time and represented the professional perceptions of the journalistic community. The Israel Press Council assented, while inserting several changes relevant to membership in the new body of newspapers and editors, alongside journalists. Shortly thereafter, it added three new explicit rules: 1) A journalist as an individual is prohibited from approaching any institution or body related to his work for a benefit of any type; 2) Approaches to a travel or tour agency for reduced travel prices cannot be made by the journalist but only by the newspaper itself; and 3) Journalists may not receive any products from firms with which they have professional contact.

The Israel Press Council code of ethics was to be further amended several times, most recently in 1996, but the Journalists Association code of 1958 remained as its foundation. This original document signified not only a desire to enhance the professional aspect of the journalistic field but, perhaps even more importantly, it reflected an impetus to reinforce and protect the status of the journalists' union under the guise of ethical rules. Whatever the original intenet, these rules formed the basis for the crystallization of the journalistic conscience in Israel.

"WALLA CHAT": AN ETHNOGRAPHIC VIEW OF AN ISRAELI INTERNET CHAT SITE / Dotan Blais

The author explores the nature of a virtual Israeli community in terms of its communal values and the extent that they reflect mainstream cultural values in actual society. Socio-linguistic patterns in two Israeli chat rooms were examined – "Thirty-Plus" and "Forty-Plus" – located in the Israeli portal, "Walla." Characteristic talk events and key words were identified and studied as components of a linguistic code that reveals underlying values, i.e., the permissible and the taboo in a chat environment. This was followed by an analysis of the relationship between the chat discourse, chat community identity, and mainstream cultural identity.

As in all virtual communities, a series of linguistic patterns and combinations were revealed, having symbolic connotations of identity and status. Despite the absence in chat rooms of conventional identifying characteristics such as gender, ethnic origin, age or appearance, two distinct social categories emerged in the Walla chat rooms: permanent and non-permanent participants, identified linguistically as "we" and "they." The regulars largely set the parameters of the discourse and tended to reproduce values that typify mainstream Israeli discourse. The irregulars tended to undermine these chat norms.

The permanent participants established a consistent identity and a sustained presence in the site, guarding their chat name vigilantly. New or temporary participants had to demonstrate to the regulars that they merited their attention, often by provocative remarks. Moreover, non-permanent participants often changed names or "stole" names from, or used similar names as, regulars. This evoked responses similar to those in real-life situations when identity or status is stolen.

Other raw materials used in establishing a virtual identity were specific words, sentences, linguistic virtuosity, rhetorical ability, keyboard speed and dexterity, and the use of keyboard symbols. Non-regulars purposely avoided establishing a recognizable "face" and kept changing their identities, thereby enjoying greater freedom, preserving anonymity and protecting themselves against harm to their "face."

A chat practice that served to enhance the coalescence of the regulars was prolonged ritual greetings and farewells upon entry and departure from the site, often punctuated by smiley and kiss symbols. Temporary participants, by contrast, were not accorded these greetings, an attitude comparable to that toward a tourist in a foreign country.

Alongside the solidarity-enhancing attitudes of the linguistic practices in the chat site, participants have broad personal space for self-expression, thereby justifying a definition of such sites as a social body with a communal and tribal character. Clearly, however, not all the participants in the Walla site are part of the community. Whether by choice or as an intermediate stage in becoming members of the community, a large segment of the participants are impermanent, and some constitute an element of subversive opposition to the values of the community. They can be aggressive and abusive sexually or otherwise. The non-permanent participants help define the identity of the permanent participants in that they are perceived as a threat to the community, to the pleasurability of the chat experience, and sometimes to the solidarity of the community. This often evokes assertive linguistic counter strategies by the permanent members which weaken the non-permanents while reinforcing the normative community. Sometimes, however, the permanent group is unable to overcome the opposition of the outsiders. When a non-permanent participant feels no threat whatever to his/her "face," his/her challenge or harassment can harm the group. The existence of these two distinct social categories engenders perpetual tension between the normative and the non-normative, and chat norms are subject to the effects of recurring cycles of community buildup and breakdown, or boundary establishment and violation.

In the absence of a perceived threat to their face, some non-permanent participants go beyond challenging the community ethos and attack the Israeli ethos. The response by the permanent chat community to this kind of challenge is ambivalent, as their chat identity and their broader Israeli identity only partially overlap. Linguistic patterns in the chat discourse show a distinctively Israeli character, e.g., in an emphasis on communal togetherness; recurring demands typical of the sabra attitude to avoid intellectual pathos; and an Israeli approach to bereavement. These patterns, however, appear to undergo a certain restructuring to fit the chat mold.

Broadly, the author found that the identity of the permanent participants wavers between an Israeli component and a virtual component. His premise that culture, rather than medium, is the dominant element both in the construction of chat discourse and in defining its identity was not proven conclusively.

RECOLLECTIONS OF EZRIEL CARLEBACH AND THE FOUNDING OF "MA'ARIV" / Shalom Rosenfeld

This article is based on an interview with Shalom Rosenfeld for the TV program, "It's All About People," devoted to Dr. Ezriel Carlebach, broadcast on Israeli Educational TV. Mr. Rosenfeld, founder of the Institute for Research of the Jewish Press, was one of the founders of Ma'ariv.

Ezriel Carlebach, born in Leipzig, Germany, in 1908, came from a noted rabbinic family and showed early signs of genius. At the age of 15, he made a bold decision to leave home and acquire a yeshiva education in Eastern Europe as well as familiarize himself with the Jews there. In this he replicated a visit to Warsaw and Galicia by the young Heinrich Heine exactly a century earlier, following which Heine wrote enthusiastically about the Jews of Poland. Carlebach, too underwent a powerful perceptual change regarding the "*Ost Juden,*" who were viewed derogatorily by the Jews of Germany. A moving article he wrote later, titled "I Would Like to Be Buried in Warsaw," reflects his sense of identification with East European Jewry.

Studying at the Telz and the Slobodka yeshivas in Lithuania, he acquired fluency in Yiddish and Hebrew. He then spent two more years of study in Eretz Yisrael at the Merkaz Harav yeshiva under Rabbi Abraham Kook, where he proved to be an exceptional student

In his early twenties he embarked on a career in Yiddish journalism that was to be meteoric. He quickly became a celebrity in the Jewish world in Poland, contributing regularly to *Heint* ("Today"). His love of Yiddish lasted throughout his

life. He also wrote in Hebrew, and was the *Ha'aretz* correspondent in Germany during the 1930s.

Immigrating to Eretz Yisrael in 1937, he became editor of the daily *Yediot Aharonot* in 1939, a post he held until early 1948, when he left the paper abruptly. A near-mythological account of the straw that broke the camel's back in his relationship with the publisher of *Yediot*, Yehuda Moses, relates to an incident when he was covering the fateful U.N. General Assembly session at Lake Success, N.Y., in November 1947, which debated the question of the partition of Eretz Yisrael into a Jewish and an Arab state. Carlebach had sent a series of lengthy telegrams to *Yediot*, which he marked "Urgent" – i.e., to be sent by a more costly priority rate. Moses, irate at the added cost, telegraphed Carlebach back: "Stop cabling urgent." Carlebach was deeply offended not only by the insult to his status but by the attack on his sense of journalistic responsibility: he was sent to New York as a witness to history, but had to contend with pettiness. Undoubtedly, he was also aware that his coverage of the event had boosted *Yediot*'s circulation significantly. The paper was the only one in Eretz Yisrael to report this chapter of history in the making so fully.

Moses was a businessman with no specific expertise in journalism, but he did not hesitate to intervene in editorial matters. This angered the editors, who coalesced around Carlebach and began discussions about forming an independent newspaper, although there was no backing on the horizon. Carlebach, together with Aryeh Dissentchik, who was a senior editor with an economics background, mounted an intensive search for funding and ultimately succeeded in obtaining it from *the founder and mayor of Netanya*, Oved Ben-Ami, and from Shmuel Hefetz and his family, both of whom took charge of the business end of the new paper.

From the start, *Ma'ariv* was perceived as a journalists' newspaper, not a business venture. The founders adamantly refused to give over majority control of the paper to any commercial interest, so as to guarantee that it would remain in the hands of the founding newspapermen. Carlebach led the *Yediot* "rebels" in a putsch that was to leave *Yediot* stripped bare of its top staff. The founding *Ma'ariv* group of six were all experienced editors: Carlebach, Dissentchik, Dr. David *Lazar*, David Giladi, Shmuel Schnitzer and the author. Significantly, in the highly politicized atmosphere of the founding of the State of Israel, the group had divergent political affiliations (Carlebach and Giladi supported the Haganah, Schnitzer was a Lehi member, and the author was active in the clandestine Etzel radio station), but this did not threaten their cohesion.

While the author and others in the group had had a warm personal relationship with Moses, they, as Carlebach, were motivated by the desire to create a newspaper on a professional level both in terms of content and design, with complete journalistic freedom and with the ability to control the technical and organizational aspects as well. Carlebach, who was known as an exceptional writer and editor, also had a rare capacity to grasp the economic, financial and technical facets of newspaper publishing and immersed himself in all aspects of the enterprise down to the smallest detail.

The founding group gathered on the night of February 14-15, 1948, at the *Al-Hamishmar* press, where *Ma'ariv* was to be printed. Tension was in the air, stemming from the fear of leaving a secure place of work (most of the group had families) and facing the unknown. Yet, no one doubted the quality of the paper they were about to produce, or the chances of its success. The fact that their leader was an incomparable editorial writer and editor, second to none, gave the group the courage and confidence that the venture would succeed.

Indeed, the next morning, the paper proved to be a great success, although the founders were experienced enough to be familiar with the phenomenon of "curiosity sales" of new papers and were not carried away. However, the success of *Ma'ariv* proved durable. The paper gathered momentum and attracted additional journalistic staff not only in Israel but from abroad. Such respected journalists as Moshe Zak, Aaron Klaus, Joshua Justman, Efrayim Kishon, Moshe Meisels, Philip Benn and Berl Koralnik soon joined the staff. *Ma'ariv* became the most widely circulated paper in Israel and remained so for many years.

To the surprise of the founders, and contrary to their assumption, *Yediot* continued to appear. Yehuda Moses co-opted his family to help run the paper, raised a large amount of capital to keep it afloat, and found new staff. The paper was far from perfect, but it came out. Although the *Ma'ariv* founders were not happy about this development, they were not overly concerned because the success of their fledgling paper was sustained.

The first issue of *Ma'ariv* appeared three months before the proclamation of the State of Israel. The country was already at war and the future was uncertain. It was clear to the founders of the paper that theirs must be a fighting Zionist

nationalist newspaper. Holocaust survivors in Europe, straining to reach Eretz Yisrael, faced closed gates, a British Mandate policy that everyone working on the paper, regardless of political affiliation, opposed implacably. With this, the paper was to be independent and liberal, i.e., every writer was free to express his point of view. There would be editorial consultation but no dictatorship.

The founders functioned as a close-knit family. Still, there were crises. One occurred when Carlebach referred to Herut leader Menachem Begin, in a lead article, as a "village idiot" for spearheading the bitter demonstrations against German reparations in 1952. This was a sharp blow for several of the editors who were close friends of Begin. Carlebach responded to criticism of his choice of words by pointing out that each writer, including himself, was free to editorialize as he saw fit.

He himself had an unparalleled editorial talent both in self-expression and in predicting, capturing and influencing the public mood. The impact of his writing was nearly magical. Thousands of readers awaited his weekly column with anticipation, especially when tumultuous events occurred. They stood in line at the kiosks waiting for newspaper deliveries, snatching up the papers. His style blended logic with pathos, and razor-sharp analysis with emotion that could bring tears to the reader's eye.

THE FIRST WOMAN FIELD CORRESPONDENT IN ERETZ YISRAEL: BRACHA HABAS AND HER JOURNALISTIC AND LITERARY ROLE / Mordecai Naor

If the mass media generally and the print media in particular are increasingly the province of women journalists today both worldwide and in Israel, this was far from the situation when Israel marked its first anniversary in 1949. Then, of a total of 197 registered members of the Journalists Association, only seven were women. Of these, Bracha Habas (1900-68) was unique in the reach of her career as the country's first woman field correspondent and as editor, author and media innovator.

Brought to Eretz Yisrael from Lithuania at age eight during the Second Aliyah period, she grew up in a religious family in a milieu that could not have predicted her choice of so improbable a career for a woman. She was a student at the new Levinsky Teachers Seminary in the Neveh Tsedek neighborhood of Jaffa during World War I when the Ottoman authorities exiled the entire Jewish population from the Jaffa area. She and her family, divided up and sheltered in Jewish homes in Petach Tikva and Kfar Saba, endured hardship until the conquest of the area by the British, when they returned to Jaffa and Bracha completed her studies.

Devoting herself to teaching in the poor Jewish neighborhoods of Jaffa and Tel Aviv, she began developing a second career as a writer, her talent encouraged by a teacher at Levinsky, author Joseph Hayim Brenner. Side by side with teaching, she wrote on educational and cultural topics for the leftist Ahdut Ha'avodah Party and for the newly formed Histadrut - General Federation of Labor. Her first short stories and columns, dealing with the hardships of children who had to go out and work, were published in Histadrut periodicals and the weekly *Hapo'el Hatza'ir* ("The Young Worker").

Leaving Tel Aviv, she taught at an agricultural training farm for women near Rishon Lezion and also worked in the chicken coop there. Thereafter, she became a teacher in the village, Kinneret. As many other idealists of the Second Aliyah, she became deeply attached to the Kinneret and the Jordan Valley region. Later, she compiled two books published by Kibbutz Kinneret.

Upon the establishment in 1925 of the Histadrut daily, *Davar*, Habas became one of its first women reporters, covering the topic she knew best – working children and deprived childhoods. She also wrote short stories, generally about social ills. She became the pioneer of reportage in this as yet undeveloped field of journalism.

She was part of a circle of writers, artists and political leaders connected with the labor movement, including Moshe Shertok, Zalman Shazar, Berl Katznelson and the poetess Rahel. An early marriage to Joseph Berchenko was short-

lived.

Her first book, written in rhyme for children, appeared in 1926. Titled "The Treasure File," it was her only work dealing with Jewish life in the pre-Holocaust Diaspora. Most of the rest of her books were to focus on Eretz Yisrael or on the efforts of Jews to get there.

Following a period of study in education at the university in Leipzig, where she also taught in a local Hebrew school, Habas returned to teaching in Eretz Yisrael while continuing to write articles for *Davar* on children in distress. In this, she played a role in realizing one of Berl Katznelson's aspirations – developing *Davar* into a multi-faceted publishing house. One of the earliest products of this aim was the appearance in 1931 of the pacesetting children's periodical, *Davar Leyeladim* ("*Davar* for Children"), started by Habas and several other writers and illustrated by artist Nahum Guttman. Habas, one of its most important contributors, edited the magazine (which was to appear for 48 years) for a time and contributed hundreds of literary and reportorial pieces, mostly in the spirit of labor movement and nationalistic ideals.

Leaving again in 1933 to further her pedagogic training, this time in Vienna, she then went on to Warsaw, where she was involved in publishing newspapers and pamphlets for the Hehalutz pioneer movement. From there she traveled to Prague to report on the 18th Zionist Congress, the first of many international Zionist and other conferences she was to cover. Upon her return to Eretz Yisrael, she joined Katznelson in establishing the Histadrut Center for Youth and was put in charge of writing, editing and publishing its editorial and literary materials. By then, she was working for *Davar* full time, and from 1935 was a member of its board. She began editing a column devoted to immigrants, mostly German-speaking, and during World War II she edited a supplement for Diaspora readers.

The 1936-39 riots (the Arab Revolt) saw Habas become the first woman field reporter in the Jewish *yishuv*, and in effect the first woman military reporter as well. She covered all the dangerous events of the period, including the clandestine construction of the stockade-and-watchtower settlements and the building of the northern perimeter fence along the Lebanese and Syrian border. Exceptionally prolific, she produced hundreds of articles and several books during this turbulent period. Her book, "The Incidents of 1936," remains one of the best-documented accounts of the time. Three other books appeared in 1938-39: "Alexander Zeid" (legendary founder of the Jewish self-defense organization, Hashomer, in the early years of the yishuv, who was murdered in 1938), "Stockade and Watchtower," and "The Fence Builders of the North." A series of books for children that she wrote during 1933-40 were widely read during the pre-state period, especially "Children of Toil," "Child Heroes" and "The Four From Kinneret."

Habas immersed herself in coverage of World War II, reporting on recruitment in the *yishuv* for the British army, Holocaust survivors, and the work of Youth Aliyah (the Jewish youth rescue operation), which brought Jewish youngsters from Europe to Eretz Yisrael. She published four books on these themes during 1943-46: "Letters from the Ghetto," "Rescued Children," "Twelve Refugees" and "Roads of Grief." At the same time, she continued writing for *Davar* and *Davar Leyeladim*, while also working on the launching of a photo weekly, *Davar Hashavu'a*, which appeared in 1946. In addition, she was involved in another new project initiated by Katznelson, the founding of the Am Oved book publishing house, where she was named editor of children's and young people's books. Within a few years, she oversaw the publication of several dozen books that were highly popular with young readers at the time.

In 1947 she was sent by *Davar* to cover the All-Asian Conference in New Delhi, to which a delegation from the *yishuv* was invited. The delegation was headed by her husband of two years, David Hacohen, a leading figure in the Mapai Party and the Histadrut. Upon their return, they co-authored a book titled "Twenty Days in India." That same year saw the appearance of one of Habas' most important books, "The Book of the Second Aliyah," based on hundreds of interviews of, and published materials by, old-time immigrants who had arrived in Eretz Yisrael in the early years of the 20th century.

Held in high esteem by Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, and by Foreign Minister Moshe (Shertok) Sharett, Habas was called upon to take part in discussions on the commemoration of the state in formation and the role of the press in the new state. In 1949 she interviewed Ben-Gurion for a semi-official biography of him, which was serialized in *Davar Hashavu'a* during 1950. She continued documenting the early history of the state with a focus on the years of struggle and the clandestine immigration in books and articles published during the 1950s and 1960s. The books she wrote on this immigration – "The Ship That Won" (about the "Exodus," 1949, 1954), "The Gate Crashers" (1957), and "The Gate

Crashers from the East and the Sea" (1960) – constituted invaluable source material for years to come, alongside her books on the founding of the *yishuv*, its pioneers and its leading figures.

Accompanying her husband to the Far East during 1954-55 when he served as Israel's first envoy to Burma, she continued to write for *Davar* in addition to her duties as a diplomat's spouse. From her return to Israel until her death in 1968, she wrote and edited 12 more books. These included "Women Soldiers" (an account of the women volunteers from Eretz Yisrael in the British army during World War II), "A Movement Without a Name" (about the voluntary assistance given by old-timers in Israel to newcomers during the mass immigrations), and a book about Dutch educator and poet Joop Westerweel, the Righteous Gentile who saved young Jews during the Holocaust.

Books and booklets written by Bracha Habas take up 58 entries in the National and University Library in Jerusalem, spanning over 40 years, in addition to her prodigious journalistic output, which at times reached several hundred articles annually. Inter alia, she was one of the media figures who molded the myth of pioneers and heroes underlying the ethos of the new Jew that emerged in Eretz Yisrael. With this, she consistently highlighted the human aspect – the distress of children, women and marginalized sectors of the population. Her cooption in a leading journalistic role in the prominent daily, *Davar*, also signified an important gender breakthrough in Israel's journalistic history.

"LA RIVISTA ISRAELITICA" OF PARMA: THE FIRST JEWISH PERIODICAL IN ITALY / Bruno Di Porto

Founded in the tolerant milieu of the Duchy of Parma in 1845, *La Rivista Israelitica* ("The Jewish Periodical") was launched by a young physician, later to become an army officer, Cesare Rovighi (1820-90), of Modena. He intended it to be a monthly but its 11 issues appeared irregularly, ending in 1848. Setting the tone of the journal in an introductory article, Rovighi criticized the conservatism and insulation of the Jewish community, advocated broadening the range of education in the community – a reflection of the same ideal expressed in the Italian press of the period, and called for ameliorating the distress of the poor strata in the community, another widespread concern in Italian society. His aim was to prepare the Jewish community for emancipation while preserving its Jewish identity. The perception of this identity – the notion of the "Jewish people" – was both national and religious, although the last issues of the periodical reveal a crisis in the national component of Jewish identity in the wake of the emancipation atmosphere and the anticipation of integration into the Italian nation in the future.

Regarding the religious component, the periodical reveals the development of an internal debate over orthodoxy vs. reform, reflecting the Jewish situation in Europe generally. Rovighi openly sided with moderate reform, i.e., simplifying the prayer texts and easing pedantic restrictions in the ritual, with the aim of removing obstacles in the way of integration in Italian society and keeping Jews who tended to stray from tradition within the Jewish fold. The idea was that synagogue ritual needed to be abbreviated and made more attractive in order to compete with the magnetism of the Church experience, a comparison that was never made overtly but was implicit. The moderate reformism advocated by the periodical viewed the Talmud as a source and as proof of gradual change in Jewish tradition as a result of flexible interpretations and adaptations of the law to changing times; the entrenched custom of debate; and the creativity of prayer formats.

The most authoritative figure to back moderate reform in Italy then was the chief rabbi of the community in Mantua, Marco Mortara, who viewed the authors of the Talmud as models of religious dynamism. Thereafter, he held, catastrophe and ignorance had halted the Jewish tradition of dynamic theology, a tradition that needed to be revived in order to reinforce religion. He viewed the sages of the past as a source of

encouragement for creativity and innovation in ritual. This was needed, he wrote in *La Rivista Israelitica*, in order to staunch the contemporary flight of Jews to indifference toward their religion as well as to prevent the advance of radical reform of the German Jewish variety.

In the event, the moderate reform advocated by Rovighi, Mortara and another journalistic innovator, Rabbi Giuseppe Levi, did not make headway. Rabbi Levi continued the line of thought championed by Rovighi in the second Jewish periodical to appear in Italy, *L'Educatore Israelita*, published in Vercelli from 1853 until Levi's death in 1874. Thereafter, this periodical, renamed *Vessillo Israelitico* ("The Jewish Flag"), edited by Rabbi Flaminio Servi, reflected the limitations of reform in the face of the insistence by most rabbis on adhering to strict observance of the traditional ritual.

The aspiration of the reformists during the period of *La Rivista Israelitica* and its successor, *L'Educatore Israelita*, was not to establish new congregations or independent synagogues but rather to enhance the existing austere prayer houses by raising them to a higher esthetic level. This served as the basis for a distinctly Italian Jewish impetus for greater flexibility in ritual, a struggle that was waged against the Orthodox hard liners quietly but explicitly. The two most articulate representatives of the Orthodox point of view, as revealed, inter alia, in *La Rivista Israelitica*, were Rabbis Samuel David Luzzatto and Lelio Della Torre, both of the rabbinical seminary in Padova. In their view, the laws of ritual were indivisible from the historic, ethical and liturgical legacy of the Jewish people, with only minimal exceptions. Luzzatto held that not only could the observance of *mitzvot* be carried out side by side with full participation in European social and political life, it could be considered a source and a guarantee of moral integrity for the benefit of society and politics. A Jew need not sacrifice his religious loyalty or way of life in order to gain citizenship; on the contrary, he should cling to these practices and demonstrate their value by behaving both as a good Jew and a loyal citizen or subject. Similarly, the national aspect of Judaism, in Luzzatto's view, in no way conflicted with loyalty to the state. This aspect, however, was to shift later on to a form of ethnicism as Jews integrated into the Italian state with its pronounced national emphasis. Eventually, the rise of Zionism was to evoke prolonged debate within the Italian Jewish community.

The reformist trend of the mid-19th century, however, viewed ritual as manmade and historic, and therefore capable of change for the benefit of Judaism. Ritual, the reformist advocates argued, constituted a socially cohesive force in the synagogue milieu. Such old practices as payment for the privilege of reading from the Torah, or the noisy recitation of the prayers, were regarded as objectionable and expendable. Additionally, the education of women was promoted by the reformists, and the new practice in the synagogue of Verona – the bat-mitzva ceremony – was praised in *La Rivista Israelitica*. The periodical also cited Jewish women authors and poets as exemplifying emancipation.

Midway between the Orthodox and the reformists were such figures as the young Rabbi David Tedesco of Venice, and an anonymous writer, apparently from the Piedmont region, who signed his articles with the Hebrew initials *shin* and *yud*. Both pointed to the grave crisis of faith experienced by the Jews of Italy, criticizing both the conservative and the reformist camps for putting forward agendas that were extremist.

Clearly, the periodical sought to prepare the Italian Jewish community for the encounter with the Christian world and for participation in civic life. It was also careful to apply self-censorship. Rovighi avoided any debate with or complaint against the Christian world for the treatment of the Jews historically, blaming the norms of the times rather than persons or religions for the persecution of the Jews in the past. This reticence contrasted with the unconstrained expression of ideas that was to follow emancipation. Rovighi encouraged his readers to enter the wider world unafraid, reflecting a spirit of optimism shared by contemporary Catholic liberals as well, although their underlying premise was Christian mercy and forgiveness for the sin of murder committed by the Jews in the distant past.

Side by side with generosity of spirit and restraint toward the Christian world, the periodical emphasized renewal and self-improvement from within. A detailed three-part essay on the history of the Jews in Tuscany and their contributions to society appeared, followed by a study of the Jews of Lombardy-Veneto. The conditions of the Jewish communities in all the states of Italy were reviewed, with the community in Rome shown to be in the worst situation. With this, reforms introduced, uncharacteristically, by Pope Pius IX at that time elicited praise and support in *La Rivista Israelitica*. The periodical is a treasure trove of information about Jewish life in the 19th century both within Italy and elsewhere in Europe. It

contains sermons, responsa, research on the Bible and other Jewish texts, biographies of contemporary Jewish figures and quoted materials from the contemporary press.

While the periodical was careful not to overstep the bounds of loyalty to the Duchy of Parma (it was published before Parma united with Italy), the young editor's patriotic feelings for a unified Italy were evident in his statements about the preparedness of the Jewish community to make any sacrifice for the homeland. Cesare Rovighi went on to devote himself fully to the *Risorgimento* (the national awakening), becoming secretary of the provisional government of his city, Modena; an officer in the Piedmont army and a fighter in the Italian army; a military historian; and a member of the administration of his city and region in united Italy. Throughout, he remained loyal to his religion and to the Jewish community of Modena, where he served on the Jewish community council.

RUDI WEISSENSTEIN, PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE DECLARATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL / Shlomo Sheva

The manufacture in Germany of small, high-quality portable cameras at the end of the 1920s engendered the emergence of photo-journalism – a series of photos that told the story of an event or an experience. Many of the founders and leading photographers of this genre were Jews, such as Erich Salomon, who photographed Europe's heads of state, diplomats and other personalities in unexpected moments; and Alfred Eisenstadt, who was to become a founder of *Life* magazine. With the rise of Hitler, the Jewish photo-journalists were forced to flee.

More than other professionals in the arts who left Germany, Jewish photo-journalists were able to find both refuge and a livelihood in Eretz Yisrael then. Language was not essential for photographers. At the same time, the major Jewish institutions in the country – the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund, Keren Hayesod, the Histadrut and other public bodies sought photographers to publicize their projects throughout the world. Such well-known photo-journalists as Helmar Larski, Tim Gidal, Walter Zedek, Zoltan Kluger, Hans Pinn and Rudi Weissenstein produced high-level journalistic photography in Eretz Yisrael during the 1930s.

They were not press photographers, for the local newspapers lacked the technical means and the funds to use photos. However, they were international photo-journalists, for they documented newsworthy developments in Eretz Yisrael that were publicized throughout the world. Such developments were not lacking: the building of new settlements, violent riots, the arrival of immigrants from Europe, and the unfamiliar Arab milieu.

The photos also documented the Zionist agenda, and in this sense they were "commissioned" photos, parallel to the Soviet-produced photographs that were commissioned to glorify Communism. Yet, they may also be compared to the photos of the great depression in the U.S., which were commissioned by the government to serve social needs.

Rudi Weissenstein, born in Czechoslovakia in 1910, studied photography in Vienna and became a press photographer for a Prague newspaper. Arriving in Eretz Yisrael in 1936, he was immediately commissioned by various institutions to take pictures and within a few months time produced a body of documentary work of distinction.

That same year, violinist Bronislaw Huberman gathered Jewish musicians who had fled the Nazis and established the Palestine Philharmonic. The opening concert, conducted by the legendary Arturo Toscanini, nearly ended in disaster when a photographer used a flash to photograph Toscanini in the middle of a piece, prompting the infuriated maestro to walk off the stage. Only after considerable coaxing did he consent to return, and the event ended in success. Meanwhile, Weissenstein, unnoticed, caught Toscanini and Huberman in a series of rare candid photos using his small, flashless camera, producing some of his most unforgettable portraits. From then, he served as the Philharmonic's photographer for a period of 40 years.

He photographed the international Levant Fair held in Tel Aviv in 1936, and the opening of the Tel Aviv port soon thereafter. Throughout the period of the Arab riots of 1936-39 he

photographed the establishment of new settlements, the arrival by ship of European children as part of the Youth Aliyah rescue effort, and the clandestine arrival of other ships with "illegal" immigrants fleeing Europe, hastily disembarking at the Tel Aviv shore before they could be caught by the British police.

With the outbreak of World War II, the institutional demand for photos of Eretz Yisrael declined. Weissenstein and his wife, Miriam, opened a photography shop in Tel Aviv opposite the Mograbi Theater, while he continued photographing the city and its people. Only in 1948, during Israel's War of Independence, did the local press begin to run photos of events and use press photographers. Weissenstein photographed everything that came his way, but people were his deepest interest. Over the years, he photographed all the leaders of the country at various stages of their lives, thereby compiling a documentary record of the history of the country.

Perhaps his most notable achievement was the request he received to photograph the ceremony of the declaration of the state, which took place on May 14, 1948, at the modest Tel Aviv Museum on Rothschild Boulevard at the height of the War of Independence. He took some 30 photos of the event, including photos of the crowd waiting outside, images that are well known to this day.

He continued to photograph for many years. Ambitious young politicians knew that to be photographed by Weissenstein meant to have arrived. His work was shown in exhibitions in Israel and abroad. He was admired by the young generation of photographers not only for his skill but for his gentlemanly manner. He died in 1992. His shop still stands in its old location, run by the energetic Miriam, the faces of the founders of the state still peering out of its display windows.

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