

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

No. 33, May 2003

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Hebrew Cover:
The struggle against anti-Semitism
and Nazism during the 1930s, as
reflected in a segment from an
American Jewish poster, 1935.

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**The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Center for Media of the Jewish People
Information Center**

The Information Center contains 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 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, videocassettes and photographs. Hours: Sun.-Thurs. 10.00 am-4.00 pm. Tel: 972-3-6408102. Fax: 972-3-6422318. Email: ocarmen@post.tau.ac.il http://www.tau.ac.il/institutes/bronfman

Introduction

Mordecai Naor

This issue of *Kesher* is devoted almost entirely to the question of anti-Semitism, an issue that does not fade away. Jew hatred is not new; its duration can be measured in millennia. However, modern anti-Semitism is a product of the late nineteenth century, and it has not ceased to hound us since. The use of the term anti-Semitism in this issue relates to the media context, especially to the Jewish media and how it has dealt with anti-Semitic attacks in the past and the present.

First, however, two "general" articles relating to Israel. In the first one I trace the opening stages of a "war without an end" between the two Israeli afternoon dailies, *Yediot Aharonot* and *Ma'ariv*, revealing the full story – conceivably for the first time. The article takes the reader back to February 1948 and to the reasons for the "great putsch," when the editor of *Yediot*, along with the leading members of the staff, quit that paper and founded *Ma'ariv*.

The second article, by Dr. Yehiel Limor and Eitan Lachman, is both historical and contemporary, focusing on the topic of the right of response in journalistic ethics and in the rulings the Israel Press Council since its formation in 1963.

Articles and research dealing with Jewish and Israeli media responses to anti-Semitic attacks, and with blatant anti-Semitic materials that have appeared in the world media in the past and present, are introduced by Prof. Ziva Shamir's essay analyzing the treatment of this topic by Hayim Nahman Bialik, the Jewish national poet, during a period of over 40 years. Next, Prof. Gideon Kouts expands on his research (first published in *Kesher* 16) about the response of the Jewish press in Western and Eastern Europe and in Eretz Yisrael to the first stage of the Dreyfus Affair. The strange chapter of anti-Semitism in the U.S. as promoted in the early twentieth century by auto magnate Henry Ford is discussed by Prof. Robert Rockaway. In another American-related topic, Dr. Ehud Manor delves further into the philosophy of Abe Cahan, the legendary editor of the Yiddish-language *Forverts* (analyzed by the author in *Kesher* 32), discussing Cahan's view of anti-Semitism in the U.S.

An unusual document published in a British newspaper before the outbreak of World War II presents conflicting views about Jews and anti-Semitism expressed by two well-known personalities then: author H. G. Wells and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Two Israeli academicians, Professors Joseph Gorny and Shlomo Aronson, respond from the vantage point of the here and now.

The next seven articles in this issue of *Kesher* are devoted to newspapers, personalities and events related to the struggle

against anti-Semitism in various countries from the mid-nineteenth century until the present. The articles survey this struggle in Weimar Germany (Dr. Jürgen Michael Schulz), Argentina in the 1930s (Dr. Graciela Ben-Dror), the Jewish media in Italy (Prof. Bruno Di Porto), Hungary on the eve of the Holocaust (Dr. Guy Miron), post-Communist Romania (Dr. Raphael Vago), anti-Semitic incitement in the Arab world (Esther Webman), and attempts at Holocaust denial in Canada (Prof. Raphael Cohen-Almagor).

The two final articles deal with current topics: Prof. Dina Porat discusses the Israel Defense Forces siege placed on armed Palestinians who broke into and took over the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in the spring of 2002, and the reaction in the Christian and world press, which was mostly hostile to Jews and Israel; while Thomas von der Osten-Sacken describes the struggle against anti-Semitism on the Internet, and the role in this effort of the "Hagalil" portal, formed by German Jews.

Plainly, anti-Semitism today, as in the past, is a worldwide malignancy that appears in one region or another from time to time, or in several regions simultaneously. It is a topic, as noted at the start, that does not disappear from the Jewish, Israeli or world agenda.

* * *

This issue of *Kesher*, the 33rd, is the last under my editorship. I have edited *Kesher* since it first appeared in May 1987. The 16 years that have passed since then have been fascinating and have yielded hundreds of articles and thousands of pages, all related to the Jewish and Israeli media. *Kesher* is, in all modesty, a periodical that has attained an important place in the research of the media.

I would like to acknowledge all those who have assisted me in this undertaking: first and foremost my friends Shalom Rosenfeld and Prof. Michael Keren, who headed the Institute for the Study of the Jewish Press and the Bronfman Center for the Media of the Jewish People at Tel Aviv University; Yardena Bar-Uryan, who accompanied this project in the early years, and Carmen Oszi, who assisted in gathering materials and in editing; Judy Krausz, devoted translator and editor of the English section; the contributors, manuscript readers, editorial, graphic and production staff; and, last but not least, our loyal readership.

Kesher (which means connection) will continue to be published, and my hope is that many, many readers will remain connected with it.

THE GREAT "PUTSCH" IN ISRAEL'S PRESS HISTORY / Mordecai Naor

On February 15, 1948, when the *yishuv* was fighting for its survival as the end of the British Mandate approached, a dramatic journalistic event momentarily overshadowed the gravity of the country's military situation: the unannounced appearance of a new daily which, oddly, closely resembled an existing one. The new paper was titled *Yediot* ("News") - a name well known to the Israeli public, which had been reading *Yediot Aharonot* ("Latest News") in large numbers since 1939. Beneath the word "*Yediot*," however, in tiny print, appeared the word "*Ma'ariv*" ("Evening"). Confused readers who asked the newsboys what paper they were distributing were told: "*Yediot*, but new."

Yediot Ma'ariv, which later became, simply, *Ma'ariv*, quickly surpassed the circulation of its progenitor, although it did not displace it, as was the intent. By the mid-1970s, *Yediot Aharonot* was to pull ahead of its offspring, and from then on resumed its pre-1948 status and became "the no. 1 newspaper of Israel." By the turn of the 21st century, it commanded an unprecedented 70% of the country's readership. The bitter rivalry between the two papers, however, did not subside until the main players had disappeared from the arena.

Yediot Aharonot itself had been a pioneer in Hebrew journalism in 1939 when it was founded as the first evening paper in the *yishuv*. Until then, there were three Hebrew morning dailies - *Davar*, *Ha'aretz* and *Haboker*, each of which also printed late editions in the early afternoon. *Yediot* was also distinctive in another way: it was not politically affiliated or sponsored, as were virtually all the other newspapers then. After an uncertain start, it became a going concern in 1940 under the ownership of the Moses family - Yehuda, a prominent Tel Aviv businessman, and his sons Alexander, owner of a printing press, and Noah. Its editor in chief, Ezriel Carlebach, was a highly respected journalist whose editorials attracted wide interest. He co-opted in a group of talented writers, including Shalom Rosenfeld, Shmuel Schnitzer, Dr. David Lazar and David Giladi.

Increasingly, this senior staff was uneasy with work conditions at the paper due to the systematic intervention of the publisher, Yehuda Moses, in editorial matters, especially in

the area of economic reportage. Moses would read the proofs of the paper each morning and order deletions and changes based on his personal and commercial interests. The straw that broke the camel's back occurred when Carlebach was in New York in late November 1947 covering the fateful UN debate over the partition of Palestine. Following several reports which he cabled using the "urgent" rate to rush them to Tel Aviv (a competitive advantage that increased the paper's circulation significantly), Moses telegraphed him curtly: "Stop cabling urgent." Carlebach regarded this dictate as a gross personal insult and a violation of his journalistic principles.

The incident set into motion a covert plan for a mass exodus of *Yediot Aharonot* staff that took place less than three months later on February 15, 1948. It was led by Carlebach and the senior staff cited above, along with a talented outside journalist, Aryeh Dissentchik, who was to join the newly planned paper (he eventually became its editor in chief upon Carlebach's death). Several dozen other workers were also involved in the "putsch," including reporters, press workers, administrative staff and even the distributors of the paper. An attorney, Yitzhak Berman (later speaker of the Knesset and a government minister) was hired by the rebel group to attend to the legal aspects of the anticipated walkout.

Carlebach and the senior staff made several vain efforts to persuade Moses to change work procedures at the paper so that the staff could do their work properly. These demands were rejected out of hand, and the die was cast.

Not all the rebels were happy with the "putsch" strategy. Several would have preferred a face-to-face confrontation with the publisher and a formal resignation, but the majority were convinced that there was no alternative. On Saturday night, February 14, 1948, an ultimatum written by Carlebach was delivered to Moses demanding that he resign, in return for which the newly organized paper that was about to appear would convey the impression that a reorganization had taken place by mutual consent. Otherwise, there could be no goodwill. That same night, Moses called the rebels' attorney, Berman, informing him that he rejected the ultimatum and that he was going to set up the next day's issue of *Yediot*

Aharonot on his own that very night. Carlebach, upon hearing this response, dismissed it as the raving of momentary madness.

Yet, the next day, when the first issues of *Yediot Ma'ariv* appeared, an edition of *Yediot Aharonot* appeared too. Carlebach and his people were astonished and dismayed at this nearly impossible feat. After all, they had taken away most of the staff, along with office equipment, printing plates, editorial content, and even the ongoing serialized novel! Not a word appeared in *Yediot Aharonot* about the breakaway. The only noticeable change that day was the removal of Carlebach's name from the masthead. *Yediot Ma'ariv*, for its part, introduced itself in a manifesto under the curiously minimalist heading: "A New Format," which appeared on the back page. New American printing machinery, the column explained, made possible the production of an expanded (four sheets, as compared to *Yediot Aharonot's* two) and improved evening paper. A change of ownership, the article continued, was necessary to implement this change. Moreover, the new paper promised, it would be non-dependent, whether on its backers or on any political body.

Yehuda Moses, having managed to continue putting out his paper against all odds, promptly applied to the Tel Aviv District Court for a temporary restraining order against any newspaper named *Yediot* or *Yediot Ma'ariv*, which was granted. Carlebach, however, succeeded in having the order rescinded until the case was heard in court, on condition that the title

THE RIGHT OF RESPONSE IN JOURNALISTIC ETHICS AND RULINGS BY THE ISRAELI PRESS COUNCIL / Yehiel Limor and Eytan Lachman

The right of response by an injured party to a damaging published report is a basic right recognized by the media and viewed by them as correct ethical behavior. This right, of course, is linked to the duty of the media to publish such a response, just as it had published the damaging report.

The Israeli legislature has not explicitly grounded the right of response in law, although it is referred to in a section of the 1965 Libel Law which penalizes the media should it fail to comply with a demand by the injured party to publish his/her response. With this, the right has been embedded in a series

of statutory rules regarding the electronic media. Still, only a small number of court judgments have addressed the issue thus far. As a result, treatment of this right has remained in the ethical/voluntary realm, both on the paralegal level (i.e., as encompassed in the code of professional ethics of the Israel Press Council) and the judgmental level (the Council's investigative committees and courts of ethics).

The majority of the rulings on the right of response issued by the Press Council since its formation in 1963 fall into nine categories: the right of response to an opinion; the right of

response to a news report; the right of response to a report of legal proceedings; the timing of a published report (i.e., urgency) as a justification for not granting the right of response; granting a delayed opportunity to respond as a justification for not granting the right of response; the right of response of someone other than a private person; a response published in an altered form from the original; the placement of the response in the publication; and the treatment of letters to the editor.

Significantly, nearly a third of all the rulings handed down by the Press Council in its 40 years of existence have dealt either directly or indirectly with the question of the right of response. This might be attributed to widespread ignorance by journalists of the existence or content of the Press Council code of ethics, along with the often equivocal phrasing of parts of the code itself. Yet, the proper implementation of the rules of the code is vital in order to demonstrate social responsibility on the part of the media and avoid the prospect of external legal supervision. Furthermore, the code of professional ethics and the rulings of the Press Council exert an influence on other ethical codes, for example on the rules of ethics of the Second Channel TV and Radio Authority, and of the Council for Cable and Satellite TV.

Moreover, the Press Council rulings can be an effective auxiliary tool for the judicial system. During the 1990s, the possibility that the Council's rules of professional ethics could assist in the interpretation of the law in situations relevant to journalistic activity was considered for the first time. The Jerusalem District Court noted that the failure of a journalist to act in accordance with the Press Council code of ethics is liable to undermine a defense of "good faith" in the case of a

libel suit. The court rejected a journalist's defense of good faith after finding that he had not bothered to obtain the plaintiff's response before the publication of the article, in contravention of the code of professional ethics. This judgment was adopted in later cases, while the Public Commission on Press Laws (the Zadok Commission, 1997) recommended the adoption as law of the principle that violation by a newspaper of any part of the Press Council's code of professional ethics constitutes a presumption of failure to act in good faith and disqualifies a defense based on good faith in the case of a libel suit. |

With this, the Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that the code of ethics carries no legal obligation, partly because of the "chilling effect" it might have on the press, and partly because of the absence of a factual infrastructure – a ruling that shows the necessity for stricter ethical monitoring of the media. The court, however, did not rule out the possibility of adopting sections of extant codes of ethics in the future as auxiliary aids in interpreting the law. This was demonstrated in 2001 when the Supreme Court rejected a defense of good faith by a newspaper on the grounds that the paper had not interviewed the relevant elements in the case, as it was obliged to do – so the court ruled – by the Press Council code of ethics. While the court stipulated that the code cannot be viewed as an obligatory standard, it may, however, be taken into consideration in determining reasonable behavior on the part of a journalist. The fact that the judgment was handed down unanimously by the panel of justices in the case may signal a change in the status of this issue in the future, possibly reflecting the view held by President of the Supreme Court Justice Aaron Barak that the media have a dual essence or purpose.

A THOUSAND MOUTHS ANOINTED WITH POISON: THE ANATOMY OF MODERN ANTI-SEMITISM IN BIALIK'S OEUVRE / Ziva Shamir

When he was 16 or 17, Hayim Nahman Bialik (1873-1934), then a yeshiva student in Volozhin, began writing allegorical poetry in Hebrew with a Zionist nationalist theme. One of these youthful efforts stands out – “Jacob and Esau,” a dramatization of the eternal persecution of Jews as scapegoats. Set in the Ukraine in Czarist Russia, it likens the darts of snow that cover the solitary house of Jacob in the alien wilderness to “a thousand mouths anointed with poison” – the poison of anti-Semitism. It ends with a plaintive cry for a place of refuge. Bialik, an admirer of the Zionist thinker Ahad Ha’am, implies that the only place for Jewish survival is Eretz Yisrael.

Years later, in 1903, Ahad Ha’am approved Bialik’s membership in the Jewish Historical Commission headed by historian Simon Dubnow and sent him to Kishinev to document the cataclysmic pogrom there and interview survivors. The mission evoked the poet’s opus, “In the City of Slaughter,” which was to earn him the appellation of “national poet.” The poem, in its denunciation of submissiveness, shocked its readers by its searing reproof of the victims’ meekness. The language is brutal and merciless, the text filled with references to bats and vermin suggestive of common anti-Semitic imagery. Jewish history is held up for judgment and is found to be disgraced and pitiful. Its attainments, both physical and intellectual, built up laboriously over centuries, have been cast into an abyss, with no one to cry out against the absence of justice. Jews who adopted gentile ways – the poem refers to the practice of keeping dogs, reminiscent of the dog at Esau’s side in “Jacob and Esau” – merely likened themselves to those who sought to murder them. “This is not the way,” the poet concludes. The only solution left is to take up the wanderer’s staff.

In his best-known poems, Bialik focuses on the personal/national I, rather than on the sons of Esau – half-brothers who over the centuries became Jew-haters and Jew-murderers. His stories, by contrast, center on Jews who have settled in peripheral regions outside the shtetl and have adopted gentile ways. These stories reveal that the Haskalah advocacy of an emancipated life style (“Be a [Russian, German, etc.] out in

the world and a Jew in your tent”) have proven illusory. The Jew who lives close to nature, in the style of Esau, not only fails to engender tolerance, but actually perpetuates the eternal hostility toward Jews, Bialik shows.

With this, and despite the mantle of “national poet” placed on his shoulders, Bialik eschewed a one-sided view of the persecution of Jews. He sought as well to understand the Jewish role in the recurrence of anti-Semitism. Several years after his masterpiece “In the City of Slaughter,” he wrote the story “Behind the Fence,” describing a Jewish community from the gentile point of view. A gentile woman stubbornly refuses to move out of her home in a neighborhood that has become Jewish, thereby antagonizing her Jewish neighbors, who do everything possible to force her out. She fortifies herself in her house, ghetto-like, while the Jewish children of the neighborhood goad her cruelly. She fears leaving her house, using roundabout routes when she does. Her condition perfectly replicates that of the persecuted Jew. She keeps the foundling child, Marinka (Miriam), whom she raises, behind locked doors, lest she be harmed by the wild neighborhood children. The hero of the story, Noah (the Biblical father of all races), is a Jewish child who has grown up in a gentile environment. He allies himself with a gentile gang of boys and fights the Jewish *heder* boys in a bloody battle described in the style typical of accounts of the massacres perpetrated by the Crusaders, the Cossacks and other oppressors of the Jews. Noah forms a relationship with the gentile Marinka, but eventually returns to the Jewish fold and marries a Jewish woman, leaving Marinka and their baby boy behind the fence. A generation passes, and the baby grows up to fight Jewish boys who are his half-brothers (their father is Noah). Noah’s behavior thus resembles that of Abraham, who sent away his son born of a gentile woman to join the camp of the enemy of the Israelites. Marinka/Miriam and her child symbolize the Christian branch of the story of anti-Semitism, a story of distorted family love that ends with the unbridled hatred of Jews.

Another story, “The Disgraced Trumpet,” written by Bialik

during World War One, sketches the anatomy of anti-Semitism in Russia in the late 19th century and illustrates the relentless alienation of the Jew from society, even if he lives close to the land. As in most of Bialik's stories, the protagonist is a Jewish lumber dealer (the vocation of Bialik's grandfather, father and uncle). His house at the edge of a forest is temporary and borrowed, he lives without a permit, and he can be evicted at any time. His son, a trumpeter in the Czar's army, is suddenly exiled together with every member of his family, without consideration of his service to the motherland.

A late story, "The Deckhand," written in 1931, centered on two figures – a Jewish poet sailing on a French ship who cannot speak French, and a Swedish deckhand who pretends to be learned in various fields and acts as a translator for the poet. Each serves as a distorted mirror image of the wandering Jew, exiled from every society. The blond sailor is a caricature of the ideal Aryan master race in appearance, while his personality resembles that of the wandering Jew, adept in survival skills but degraded and homeless. The poet, presumably a member of the slave race, is, nevertheless, haughty and admired by the sailor. Bialik, mocking the notion of racial supremacy, reverses stereotypical roles. Ultimately, he implies, the Jew must lay down his wanderer's staff and settle down in a place that is truly his own.

Bialik, however, shows no evidence of euphoria over the Jewish return to Eretz Yisrael, for he senses that a large portion of his people are about to be destroyed, a perception that casts a shadow over the joy of renewal.

Living in Eretz Yisrael during the last ten years of his life, he explored the issue of anti-Semitism as manifested by the Arabs. Their propaganda, as that of the Soviet Union (from which he had narrowly escaped), accused world Jewry of colonialist ambitions in Palestine, thereby ignoring the impetus of the Jewish pioneers to find a refuge from persecution in the barren land of their forefathers at great cost in human life.

During the Arab riots of 1929, he wrote "The Legend of Three and Four," a story with a historic setting about a Hebrew young man and an Aramaic young woman who marry. In it Bialik makes a plea for tolerance and the relinquishing of old hatreds. In a similar vein, a poem in his collection of verse from 1931 to 1934 titled "Orphanhood" joins the Biblical story of the casting out of Ishmael into the desert with that of Isaac being led to the sacrificial altar, signifying the cruelty of Abraham toward both his sons. The poet's message is that the two nations that sprang from these ancestors share a bitter fate, and should devote themselves to breaking out of their syndrome of hate instead of perpetuating it.

HE'S INNOCENT! OR IS HE? THE RESPONSE OF THE JEWISH PRESS IN EUROPE AND ERETZ YISRAEL TO THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE DREYFUS AFFAIR / Gideon Kouts

On October 15, 1894, a Jewish officer in the French General Staff, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, was arrested in Paris on charges of treason and passing secret information to the enemy. His trial was held behind closed doors on December 19-22, 1894, in a military court, where he was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. An appeal which he submitted was promptly rejected. On January 5, 1895, in a humiliating public ceremony conducted in an atmosphere of unbridled Jew-hatred throughout the country, Dreyfus was stripped of his rank. On February 21, 1895, he was transported to Devil's Island (French Guinea, off the coast of South America) to serve out his sentence. This concluded the first phase of the Dreyfus

Affair, which eventually flared up anew in 1896 and came to an end only in 1906 with the full exoneration of the accused officer when evidence showed he had been the victim of an infamous conspiracy.

The two main newspapers of the Jewish community in France at the time, *Universe Israélite* and *Archives Juives*, were cautious in their treatment of the affair in its first phase. While they linked the trial to anti-Semitism, their premise was that it was the affair which engendered the anti-Semitic outburst, and not anti-Semitism that caused the conspiracy. Ideologically, both newspapers were intent on defending emancipation, republicanism, and the full integration of Jews in French soci-

ety as primary values that must not be allowed to be endangered by the affair.

By contrast, the main Jewish newspaper in Britain, the *Jewish Chronicle*, came out firmly in defense of Dreyfus and suggested that French anti-Semitism was indeed a cause of the affair. However, it also cited as relevant other negative factors regarding France and its judicial system, a reflection of widely held national and cultural perceptions of France in Britain then (as today).

An analysis of the coverage of the initial phase of the affair in the Hebrew press in Europe and Eretz Yisrael reveals the importance of the ideological orientation of each publication, especially in terms of its Zionist/non-Zionist point of view. The Zionist press – the St. Petersburg-based *Hamelitz* and the Cracow-based *Hamagid* (both reflecting the Hovevei Zion ideology), as well as the Jerusalem-based *Hatzvi* (Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's weekly, representing the nationalistic "new" yishuv) – argued pointedly that Dreyfus was innocent and that he was clearly the victim of a malicious plot which reflected the entrenched nature of French anti-Semitism. In contrast, the non-Zionist Warsaw-based *Hatsfirah* (edited by Nahum Sokolov, who was later to become an ardent Zionist), convinced of the bright future of the Jews as enfranchised citizens in the countries of Europe based on the French example, tended to accept Dreyfus's conviction, thereby justifying the premise that the behavior of the Jews affects the appearance or disappearance of anti-Semitism.

The coverage of the affair by the Hebrew press also reflected the competition between the two Hebrew dailies in

Europe – *Hamelitz* and *Hatsfirah* – during the period under review. *Hamelitz* had the upper hand, for its ideology was shown to be borne out by the events, while *Hatsfirah*, as most of the rest of the Jewish (and the non-Jewish) press, misread the historical truth. The rivalry between the two papers also constituted a personal competition between two major figures in the history of the Hebrew press: Nahum Sokolov, the editor of *Hatsfirah*, and Abraham Ludvipol, the Paris correspondent for *Hamelitz*. Ludvipol emerged the winner in this contest, inter alia because of the different journalistic conceptions of the two papers. *Hamelitz* reported from the actual scene of the event, while *Hatsfirah* used material that reached Sokolov from various channels of communication, with all the inherent limitations and distortions involved.

Significantly, when the affair resurfaced in 1896, Sokolov hired Ludvipol as *Hatsfirah's* correspondent in Paris, and it was he who covered the next phase of the trial for that paper. Sokolov thereby enhanced the professionalism of his paper, and, with the renewal of the trial, the circulation of *Hatsfirah* passed that of *Hamelitz*. Later, *Hatsfirah* was to metamorphose into the main organ of the Zionist movement.

Hatzvi in Jerusalem faced a different challenge. Its editor, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, wrote sympathetically about Dreyfus but had to be cautious in light of the prolonged closure of his paper (1893-94) by the Ottoman authorities, and his own incarceration for a time, on charges of incitement to rebellion (the paper resumed publication only in 1895). He, too, compensated for this initial caution by covering the second phase of the trial intensively.

HENRY FORD, THE "DEARBORN INDEPENDENT," AND THE JEWS / Robert Rockaway

Automobile magnate Henry Ford (1863-1947), one of the most famous Americans in the world in the 1920s, had immense influence and credibility with the public and his pronouncements were accepted as truth. During that period, he embarked on a campaign against the Jews that was to make him one of the foremost purveyors of anti-Semitism in the 20th century, with a far-reaching impact that caused the Jewish people untold harm.

An enigmatic personality, Ford was in some ways an idealistic pioneer and in others a cynical reactionary. He espoused pacifism during World War One and tried to negotiate a European peace in 1915 by chartering a "Peace Ship" to Europe. Despite his anti-war views, however, he converted his plants to military production during both World Wars. In 1919, the fabulously wealthy Ford brought a million-dollar libel suit against the *Chicago Tribune* for calling him an "ignorant ide-

alist." Although he won the case, the *Tribune* was fined only six cents, and Ford felt the nation's press had ridiculed him and treated him unfairly. He decided that he needed a vehicle for communicating his views, and bought a local weekly, *The Dearborn Independent*, for this purpose.

On May 20, 1920, the paper published an article titled "The International Jew: The World's Problem," launching a series of anti-Semitic articles that was to run for 91 weeks, and that constituted the first systematic anti-Jewish agitation in the United States. Between 1920 and 1922, Ford had the entire series of 91 articles published in four booklets: Vol. 1, *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*; Vol. 2, *Jewish Activities in the United States*; Vol. 3, *Jewish Influences in American Life*; and Vol. 4, *Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States*. He told an interviewer that international Jewish financiers were supreme in Germany, France and England, and that the Jew was a threat in the U.S. as well. "Jewish capitalists" had started World War One and were responsible for all the "thieving and robbery" in the U.S. Jews were profiteers and the inventors of the money and banking system, the stock market and capitalism, all for their own control and benefit.

Ford had become aware of the notorious forgery, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in 1919, and his newspaper used it as the basis of *The International Jew* series to show that the Jews corrupted public opinion, controlled finance, sponsored revolution, and exercised power everywhere. He believed that he was performing a service to mankind by exposing the international Jew's attempt to disrupt and control every area of gentile life. He intended his anti-Jewish crusade to be "educational" and "cleansing," with the goal of inducing Jews to "clean up their own house." However, the impact on the Jewish community was far from what Ford planned. Cities with large Jewish populations showed a steep decline in Ford sales, a trend that continued until after World War Two, when Ford's grandson, Henry II, took control of the company and disavowed his grandfather's attitude toward the Jews.

With this, the *Independent* and the four booklets of its anti-

Jewish articles had an influence far greater than Ford could have imagined. Translated into German as a single volume, *Der Internationale Jude* was published under the name Henry Ford and was distributed widely throughout German-speaking Europe, making an enormous impact on young Germans, including on Adolf Hitler. Ford is the only American cited in *Mein Kampf*, and material from Ford's pieces in the *Independent* was used by Hitler. The Nazi leader's admiration for Ford reached a peak in 1938 when he awarded him the Grand Service Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle, the highest award given by Nazi Germany to distinguished foreigners. Ford rejected all pleas by others to return it.

The reasons for Ford's anti-Semitism remain a matter of conjecture. Nineteenth-century agrarian propaganda holding Jewish bankers responsible for tight money and depressions, combined with an anti-immigration backlash by American Protestants against Catholic and Jewish newcomers, are factors. Ford's mistrust of Wall Street and financiers also reflected widespread upper-class social views. In 1927, he and the *Independent* were sued for a million dollars by a Jewish attorney for defamation of character. As part of an out-of-court settlement, he was required to make a public apology for his anti-Semitic statements, a step described by the *American Hebrew* newspaper as the first public recantation of anti-Semitism in history. However, even after the apology Ford continued to support anti-Semitic groups and spokesmen, such as Gerald L. K. Smith and Father Charles E. Coughlin, right up to World War Two. Moreover, he did little to stop the dissemination of *The International Jew*. It continued to be published with Ford's name on the title page in Germany, Britain and the U.S., where the Ku Klux Klan and other anti-Semitic groups circulated it. Translated into 16 languages, it has been distributed by the millions in Latin America and the Middle East.

The fact that someone of Ford's standing endorsed anti-Semitic conspiracy fantasies likely convinced many people of their truthfulness. *The International Jew* may have done more than any other work to make the *Protocols* world famous.

“SPIRITUAL” ANTI-SEMITISM AS JEWISH IDENTITY? ABE CAHAN’S ROLE IN MOLDING THE MODERN JEWISH AGENDA / Ehud Manor

Freedom of conscience, a supreme value embedded in the First Amendment of the American constitution, harbors both the possibility of tolerance and its very opposite. It entitles the individual to adopt a positive personal or group identity, or a negative one. The defense of the right of neo-Nazis to march in public, as in the famous Skokie, Illinois, case of 1976; and of Muslim fundamentalist groups, which ideologically reject the American society in which they thrive, to establish themselves in the United States, exemplify the antithetical use made of the First Amendment.

The gamut of ideologies protected by the principle of freedom of conscience in the U.S. have included anti-Semitism both in its “spiritual” – i.e., socio-cultural – sense and in its practical sense, i.e., actual discrimination in the political, employment, educational and social spheres. Paradoxically, spiritual anti-Semitism, which was widespread in the U.S. during the period of massive immigration at the turn of the 20th century, served as the basis for the emergence of organized secular Jewish public life.

The impetus for this development was epitomized by the lifework of Abe Cahan (see the author’s article on Cahan in *Kesher* 32, November 2002), the legendary editor of the famous Yiddish daily, *Forverts* (“Forward”). The newspaper, founded in 1897 by a group of immigrant Jewish socialists, was headed by Cahan from 1903, a period marked by the immigration to the U.S. of some 80,000 Jews annually in the wake of rising anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe. The *Forverts* became the leading Jewish newspaper, and one of the largest socialist dailies, in the world, its circulation spiraling from over 70,000 copies daily in 1908 to over 200,000 by 1915. Its growth was engendered not only by a rapidly expanding Yiddish-reading public but by Cahan’s perception of the central Jewish issue of the time: the intensification of anti-Semitism both abroad and locally. Adept at reaching out to his readership, Cahan used his newspaper to mold a new secular Jewish society. Secular Jewish identity was to be based on three elements: socialism, the Yiddish language, and the awareness of

anti-Semitism.

A large proportion (250 pages) of the fifth and final volume of Cahan’s Yiddish-language biography, published in 1931, was devoted to the tragic Leo Franks affair of 1915. Cahan viewed the consciousness of this incident as essential to the self-awareness of the new generation of American Jews. The American-born (1884) Leo Frank, raised in Brooklyn, NY, a civil engineer by training, moved to Atlanta, Georgia (pop. 200,000, including 8,000 Jews), in 1910, where he became manager of a pencil company owned by his uncle. He joined the Reform temple there and also became a member of B’nai B’rith. In 1913, a 14-year-old employee, Mary Phagan, was found murdered in the basement of the factory and Frank was baselessly accused of the murder. A court found him guilty and sentenced him to death. An appeal to the Supreme Court was rejected. Public pressure on the governor of Georgia resulted in the reduction of his sentence in June 1915 to life imprisonment. Soon afterward, Frank was attacked by a fellow inmate and brought to a hospital in Atlanta for treatment. There he was kidnapped one night by a large group of people, and lynched.

Cahan, drawing a comparison between the Frank case and the Beilis blood libel in Russia during the same period, implied that anti-Semitism was not a question of geography or a particular political system but an essential element in Jewish-gentile relations. Nevertheless, as an acute observer of American society (he had been living in the U.S. for nearly 50 years when he wrote his memoirs), he knew that the anti-Semitism reflected in the Frank affair differed from that of Eastern Europe. It was sociopolitical in nature, a manifestation of the frustration of the Southern white establishment by its loss of status, the widening gap with the energetic, entrepreneurial North, and a strong streak of nativism. Commercial, electoral and political factors were at play in the Frank affair, epitomized in the figure of Tom Watson, a racist politician and editor. He launched a vicious anti-Semitic campaign against Frank in his weekly *Jeffersonian Magazine*, a failing publication that

enjoyed a commercial boost from the sensationalist treatment of the case, Cahan pointed out.

Still, despite this sociopolitical analysis, Cahan concluded that Jew-hatred was inescapable. This emphasis on spiritual anti-Semitism as the central element in the emerging secular Jewish identity underlay the philosophy of the *Forverts*. Not only did the paper use Yiddish – the secular Jewish language, it drew upon concepts and metaphors from the Bible, the

Mishna, the Talmud and other Jewish cultural sources to describe events or developments unrelated to Jewish life. It also systematically referred to the traditional differences between Jew and gentile in all contexts, showing that even in economic or political circumstances where Jews and gentiles encounter each others as equals or colleagues, each side will inevitably preserve its prejudices regarding the origins of the other.

THE FUTURE OF THE JEWS, 1939: ARTICLES BY H.G. WELLS AND ELEANOR ROOSEVELT / Responses: Joseph Gorny and Shlomo Aronson

Two strongly written articles about the Jewish people by H. G. Wells and Eleanor Roosevelt appeared in the London Sunday Chronicle on January 1 and 8, 1939, nine months before the outbreak of the Second World War. They have a dual significance. First, they constitute evidence of two conflicting liberal humanistic approaches to the distress of the Jews persecuted by the Nazi regime in Germany and by anti-Semitic governments in Central and Eastern Europe at that time. Second, they point to an ongoing view held by leftist and radical circles in Western Europe (and the rebuttal of it) regarding Zionism specifically and Jewish nationality in general from that time until this very day, when Israel is perceived by the same liberal circles as a "racist" state in the South African mold regarding its repression of the Palestinian population.

Two Israeli writers offer their comments on the articles:

Joseph Gorny

H. G. Wells (1866-1946), the well-known English writer, was a founder of the Fabian Society of socialist intellectuals in Britain and an advocate of utopian social ideas which led him to adopt a radical form of pacifism during the 1930s. This was reflected in his exceedingly conciliatory approach to Nazi Germany along with an uncompromising rejection of nationalism, including Zionism as he perceived it, ignoring the contradiction between his fundamental rejection of any expression of nationalism and his stance of appeasement toward fascist aggression.

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962), the wife of U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was a public figure in her own right. She was a constructive and pragmatic liberal in the

democratic humanitarian tradition dominant then in progressive circles in the U.S., who recruited support for her husband's New Deal social policy. Standing at the forefront of massive humanitarian aid programs for the needy and underprivileged, Eleanor Roosevelt also identified with the suffering of the Jews of Europe, leading to a supportive attitude toward Zionism and Israel. She even served for several years as world president of the *Youth Aliyah* organization.

Wells and his ideological colleagues both of the past and the present, who rejected the existence of a Jewish nation and opposed Zionism, were not anti-Semites, for, adhering to the principles of their radical socialist-liberal world view, they advocated the assimilation of the Jews in the societies in which they lived. However, with modern anti-Semitism sounding the alarm about the anticipated racial, economic and political danger to society presented by the Jews, and demanding, therefore, that they be isolated, any attempt to exclude the Jews from society, whether as a people or as individuals, whether for religious or radical ideological reasons, may be said to reflect anti-Semitism.

The message to be stressed is: Intellectuals, beware of what you say, even if your intent is not malicious. A radical, unbalanced stance invites the paradox of collaboration with the devil!

Shlomo Aronson

The distinctiveness of British anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism lies specifically in its "progressive" underpinning. Not only were conservative circles and many members of the British aristocracy tainted by anti-Jewish prejudice, but the spokes-

men of the most progressive elements developed anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist arguments intertwined one with the other, which grew more acute specifically after Hitler came to power, reaching a peak during the Holocaust.

H. G. Wells, an influential British writer and thinker in his time who was forgotten after World War II, was resurrected several years ago, apparently because of his anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist views. Wells represented a strange mixture of attitudes typical of his circle during the World War II period, about which his admirers today would rather not be reminded. Like them, Wells was a "universalist" who sought to abolish nations, ethnic groups, the nation state, traditional politics, religions and national capitalism, and replace them with socialism and a world government. Like his heirs today, he saw in Judaism (and not only in Zionism) an expression of particularism, exclusionism, a reprehensible claim to "cho-

sen-ness," haughtiness, and contempt toward others and the rights of others.

Wells was thus one of the fathers of the thinking widespread today among post-Zionist writers in Israel such as Dr. Ilan Pappé, a Middle East scholar at the University of Haifa, and Dr. Idit Zartal of the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. Furthermore, he was one of the fathers of the "universalization" of the Holocaust in stating that "If Judaism is murdered and exterminated...it will be only the opening phase of an age of warfare, conquest and extermination" to which the Jews themselves contributed by their nationalist behavior, imbued with hate and fomenting trouble throughout the world.

This loathsome lumping together of victim and murderer was one of the reasons for the total disregard by the Western leaders of the fate of the Jews in the Holocaust, despite the criticism voiced by Eleanor Roosevelt before the Holocaust.

"DER SCHILD" AND ITS BATTLE AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM / Jürgen Michael Schulz

World War I marked the first time that Jewish soldiers could enlist in the German army and, moreover, attain officer rank. Approximately 100,000 Jewish men served, of whom 12,000 fell in battle. The war experience evoked great expectations by the Jews of full acceptance and equality in German society. It elicited deep feelings of patriotism and entrenched a perception among the assimilationist-prone majority of Jews that they were Germans first and Jews second.

The outcome of the war and its aftermath, however, evoked growing anti-Semitism, fanned by the large number of Jewish political figures associated with the Weimar Republic, the object of delegitimation by the anti-Semites. Jews were commonly denigrated as cowards, an accusation reinforced by a process of exclusion of Jewish war veterans from the major war veteran associations. In response, a Jewish war veterans organization was established soon after the war - the Reichsbunds jüdischer Frontsoldaten (R.j.F.), led by Leo Löwenstein, a chemist and a reserves officer who directed the organization until 1938. Löwenstein had worked for the German army in weapons development during the war, and in the 1920s was involved in experimental missile projects. According to its founding declaration in January 1919, the R.j.F. was dedicated to combating the accusation that Jews had dodged

the duty to fight on the battlefield, a charge that would be fought "in political, economic and social life, and wherever needed, by every legal means" in order to destroy the "wall of incitement" that had been erected. By 1920, several chapters had been formed, attracting a membership of about 40,000 in the mid-1920s, rising to 50,000 during the 1930s.

An organ, *Der Schild* ("The Shield"), was launched by the R.J.F. in 1921, begun as a monthly but soon appearing bi-weekly, with a peak circulation of 10,000. It had three successive editors: Fritz Goetz, production manager of the large Ullstein publishing house and editor of the *Vossische Zeitung*; philosopher Ludwig Freund, who also served as legal advisor for the Jewish Citizens Union; and Hans Wollenberg. Political in orientation but non-party, it sought to repel anti-Semitic attacks and to represent the position of Jewish veterans of World War I. It also aimed to constitute a link between the veterans as well as to reinforce the position of the R.j.F. during difficult political periods.

Der Schild promoted conservative values, namely military distinction, discipline and physical fitness as important attributes. The measure of a man, it held, was courage, bravery and honor. Emphasis was also placed on patriotism. The relationship to Germany was a subject of great importance to

the Jewish veterans: the homeland was above criticism and constituted a supreme value. *Der Schild* urged its readers to take part in the electoral process, to vote for any party that supported the republican point of view, and to vote only for a party that unequivocally refused to cooperate with anti-Semitic elements.

The strategy adopted by *Der Schild* revealed four fundamental principles: 1. The Jew who was prepared to fight for Germany constituted the complete antithesis of the widespread Jewish stereotype; 2. Documenting the Jewish military record was essential in the face of the ongoing refutation of the facts by anti-Semites; 3. Athletic achievement, which in 1924 was

incorporated by the R.j.F. as a focus of its youth agenda, was a valuable "weapon" against anti-Semitism; 4. The political struggle against anti-Semitism was a constant necessity, even in periods of relative calm. Side by side with this theme was an emphasis on supporting the principles of the republic and its institutions (e.g., the constitution).

The aggressive stance against anti-Semitism followed by the R.j.F. and its organ during the Weimar era, however, was rendered irrelevant with the announcement of the Nazi race law in 1935, whereupon *Der Schild* was forced onto the defensive until it ceased to function in 1938.

CATHOLICISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA: THE DISPUTE OVER THE ANTI-SEMITIC WRITER HUGO WAST IN THE CATHOLIC AND JEWISH PRESS / Graciela Ben-Dror

Argentina in the 1930s had a conservative, pseudo-democratic government, with the Catholic Church exerting a major influence both on its decision-makers and the population as a whole. Anti-Semitism became increasingly overt during this period, its traditional roots in the Church reinforced by the spread of Nazi ideology. Although Nazi racism did not conform with the Catholic perception, it provided an additional layer of support for anti-Semites. This blend was embodied in the extreme during the 1930s and '40s in a popular writer, Church activist and senior government official, Gustavo Martínez Zuviría, better known by his pen-name Hugo Wast.

Appointed director of the National Library in Buenos Aires in 1931, and president of the National Commission on Culture in 1937, Wast also held high lay positions in the Church, including as head of the Press and Publicity Committee of the 32nd International Eucharist Congress, held in Buenos Aires in 1934. In the political realm, he was named by the conservative President Ramón Castillo as federal representative in the province of Catamarca in the early 1940s, and as minister of education and justice under General Pedro Ramírez in 1943 after the military takeover that year. In the latter capacity he made Christian religious studies compulsory in all government schools. In 1944, when Argentina severed its diplomatic ties with the Axis powers under U.S. pressure, Wast resigned as minister, yet retained his post as director of the Na-

tional Library until 1954.

A prolific author, Wast wrote novels, short stories, plays, biographies, speeches, Catholic doctrinal papers and historic works, establishing his own publishing house. Several of his books received national awards. In 1935, a novel he wrote in two parts, titled *Kahal* (Hebrew for "assembly" or "community"); in the context of the novel, the reference was to the Jewish communal establishment) and *Oro* ("Gold"), became a sweeping success. The first part of the set eventually ran to 22 editions by 1955, and the second, 21 editions. Overtly anti-Semitic, the books drew heavily on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* both in content and style, utilizing a range of Jewish stereotypes and attributing the destruction of Christian civilization to the Jews and Jewish liberalism. The theme of the books was Jewish control over the world and over Argentina particularly – a perception articulated by other Argentinian writers, but which was skillfully and persuasively developed by Wast in a realistic contemporary local setting.

The atmosphere in Argentina in 1935 and thereafter was particularly receptive to anti-Semitic literature. The editor of the Catholic weekly *Criterion*, Monsignor Gustavo Franceschi, printed a segment of Wast's two-part book in advance of publication, pointing to the sociopolitical value of the work and praising the author for taking up the struggle against the influence of the Jews, who were "too numerous" and "unwilling to

assimilate.” Although Franceschi acknowledged such historic facts as the exposure of the *Protocols* as a forgery, he praised the book as courageous and as making a vital contribution to understanding one of Argentina’s “gravest” problems.

The response of the Jewish community, reflected in its press, was outspokenly critical of the anti-Semitic author and the ideas he spread. This criticism, especially as expressed in the Spanish-language Jewish weekly *Mundo Israelita*, evoked a harsh counterattack by Franceschi, who charged that the Jews were unable to accept balanced criticism based on facts, and considered themselves above any criticism at all. Quoting Church sources such as Gregorio de Tours’ *De Insolentia Judeorum* (“The Insolence of the Jews”), he demonstrated that despite his intellectual rejection of the *Protocols*, his anti-Semitic perceptions were deeply ingrained.

Wast himself published a letter in the Catholic press claiming that Jewish efforts to boycott the book showed that the Jewish community controlled Argentina. The anti-Semitic newspaper *Crisol*, edited by Enrique Osés, ran the headline: “Are Argentinians Permitted To Express Themselves In Their Country Against The Jews?”, while the Catholic paper *El Pueblo* warned its readers that “the Protocols of the Elders of Zion were being implemented in the Argentinian Republic.”

Late in 1935, the noted Argentinian Jewish writer César Tiempo responded to Wast in an essay titled “The Anti-Semitic Campaign of the Director of the National Library,” charging Wast with exploiting his status as a senior governmental official, and revealing that Germany had decided to print his

books at a reduced price in order to increase their distribution. Wast, Tiempo wrote, perpetuated what was basest in Hitler’s Germany, and the fact that a person with such hatred holds high positions in the state was all the more serious.

The dispute raged even more intensely with the appearance in early 1936 of a book by an Argentinian Jewish author, Lázaro Schalman, titled *Hugo Wast, Anticristiano*, in which he argued that Wast had strayed far from Catholic doctrine. Responding, journalist José Assaf pointed out in *Criterio* that Monsignor Franceschi had reviewed the book objectively and had even cited several errors, but had found it, nevertheless, praiseworthy and valuable.

At this point, another author entered the fray, the rightist Manuel Gálvez, writing in *Criterio* in 1936 that a true Catholic cannot be an anti-Semite, and in a personal letter to Schalman praising the integrity of his book. Schalman published the letter, with the result that the first cracks in the Catholic consensus regarding Wast’s anti-Semitic books appeared.

Nevertheless, an atmosphere that fostered a homogenous, monolithic Catholic culture, Gálvez’s and several other lone voices that came to the defense of the Jews were a passing episode. Wast’s books continued to be popular even after World War II and revelations of the Holocaust. In 1983, upon the centenary of Wast’s birth, a ceremony was held by the Ministry of Education to mark the publication of a book paying homage to him. To this day, the periodicals reference room in the National Library bears his name.

THE JEWISH PRESS IN ITALY AND ITS RESPONSE TO ANTI-SEMITISM / Bruno Di Porto

The earliest Jewish newspaper in Italy, *La Revista israelitica* (“The Jewish Periodical”), was founded in 1845 in the Duchy of Parma (see *Keshet* 30, November 2001) even before the legislation of freedom of the press or the official emancipation of the Jews. *La Revista* advocated communal reform in matters of education and the improvement of the image of the Jewish community in preparation for the anticipated integration of Jews into society. Short-lived, *La Revista* was followed in 1853 by the Piedmont-based *L’Educatore Israelita* (“The Jewish Educator”), edited by Rabbis Guiseppe Levi and Ezra Pontremoli. By then, freedom of the press had become

law, while emancipation had been granted to the Jews of Piedmont. The new periodical, accordingly, was at greater liberty to report negative developments for Jews, especially in the Vatican State, where the Jews were still compelled to live in the ghetto. Legal emancipation soon evoked an anti-Jewish backlash replete with blood libels, reported by *L’Educatore*.

Despite ongoing anti-Semitism, the integration of the Jews of Italy in society progressed rapidly. By the 1870s, Jews had entered various professions and even parliament. With this, certain sectors of society, including some liberals, viewed the Jews as alien and not as true Italians.

L'Educatore, renamed *Il Vessillo Israelitico* ("The Jewish Flag") in 1874 under the editorship of Rabbi Flaminio Servi, recorded the continued integration of the Jews of Italy side by side with accusations of excessive Jewish influence, Jewish international links, and racial distinctiveness. The periodical reported on a blood libel in Hungary in 1882, on the Dreyfus Affair (supported by the largely sympathetic position taken by the Italian press and public opinion), on pogroms in Russia, and on anti-Jewish acts in Austria, Germany and the Arab countries. Anti-Semitism in Italy, while less aggressive, was also covered, alongside reports of the accomplishments of Italian Jews in academic life, finance, the press, the military, parliament and the government. Prominent Jews claimed that anti-Semitism was not entrenched in Italy, even if isolated incidents occurred. Other Jews were not so convinced and became supporters of Zionism as a means toward Jewish survival. Editor Servi, however, held that Zionism was a divisive element which hindered Jewish identification with Italy and itself engendered anti-Semitism. Servi was succeeded in 1904 by his son, Feruccio Servi, under whom *Vessillo* published both critical and supportive opinion regarding Zionism.

Another early periodical, *Il Corriere Israelitico* ("The Jewish Newspaper," 1862-1916), was founded by Abraham Vita Morpurgo (later edited by his son-in-law, Aaron Curiel) in Trieste, which had one of the largest Jewish populations then (c. 5,000). Initially, *Il Corriere* praised the Austrian authorities for their tolerance (Trieste was then under Austro-Hungarian rule). Later, however, it dealt with anti-Semitism, for example in a report in 1880 about the Antisemitic League founded in Germany, and in coverage of a similar development in the Hapsburg Empire. Under the editorship of Rabbi Dante Lattes, *Il Corriere* became consistently pro-Zionist, viewing Zionism as a vehicle for Jewish self-identity and as the best response to anti-Semitism.

With the outbreak of war between Italy and Austria in 1915, Lattes left Trieste and, with Alfonso Pacific, founded the weekly *Israel* in Florence. *Israel*, functioning on a high journalistic level, addressed the broader Italian as well as Jewish public. Expressly Zionist, it covered the transition from the liberal to the fascist period until the anti-Jewish laws of 1938 closed it down. In 1925 it began publishing a cultural supplement, *La Rassegna mensile di Israel* ("The Monthly Survey of Israel"), extant to this day. Dedicated to Jewish self-awareness in all areas, both the weekly *Israel* and its monthly sup-

plement provided credible information about the condition of the Jews in the world, developments in Eretz Yisrael, and Jewish heritage and culture. Rather than dwell on the pain of anti-Semitism, which seemed to the editors self-evident, the *Israel* periodicals emphasized the importance of Jewish unity, Jewish identity and Zionist activity. With the inauguration of the fascist government in 1922, *Israel* was the object of harassment because of its Zionist stance, yet managed to survive until 1938 by projecting a minimally accommodating position toward the regime.

Other periodicals launched during the fascist period included the Revisionist *L'Idea Sionistica* ("The Zionist Idea") in 1930, which focused on gaining Italy's support for a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael. When Jews who were active in an underground anti-fascist movement were exposed, evoking public anti-Jewish sentiment, a group of pro-fascist Jews responded in 1934 by establishing *La Nostra Bandiera* ("Our Flag"), a newspaper supportive of the regime but attacking the anti-Semitism of several fascist papers and opposing the German-Italian alliance.

Once the Nazis rose to power in Germany, the impending tragedy for the Jews of Italy was aptly foreseen by the Zionist socialist Enzo Sereni (1905-44), an Italian Jew who immigrated to Eretz Yisrael and was sent to represent the Zionist Federation in Germany. Articles by Sereni appeared in *Israel*. Some Italian Jews, however, supported the fascist government and blamed *Israel* for anti-Semitism, going so far as to attack its offices.

The Jewish press ceased functioning upon the implementation of the race laws in 1938. It revived after the liberation of Italy, beginning with the appearance of a newsletter, *Bollettino Ebraico d'Informazione*, following the liberation of Rome in 1944. At the end of that year, the weekly *Israel* resumed publication, edited by Carlo Alberto Viterbo, continuing to appear until 1974. The monthly *La Rassegna mensile d'Israel* was also reactivated (1948), under Dante Lattes. New Jewish periodicals included *La Voce della Comunità Israelitica di Roma*, succeeded in 1967 by the monthly *Shalom* (founded by Lia Levi; edited at present by Stefano Caviglia) – the leading Jewish periodical in Italy today. The *Bollettino della Comunità Ebraica di Milano* was launched in 1945, and *Hakehila* was founded in Turino in 1975. That same year, Italian state TV began running a program devoted to Jewish life and culture, *Sorgente di Vita* ("The Source

of Life”), still ongoing today. Jewish Internet sites have also emerged.

Over the years, a growing consciousness in Italy of the implications of the Holocaust led to the public rejection and delegitimation of anti-Semitism, so that it became the province only of small neo-fascist groups. Broadly, the struggle against anti-Semitism became associated in Italy with anti-fascism. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism has continued to be

manifested in veiled forms by some intellectuals and journalists. The Jewish press vigorously rebuts Holocaust-deniers and -minimizers. A more widespread challenge comes from the Left in Italy, which, as elsewhere, has championed the Palestinian cause since the 1970s. The Jewish press and other Jewish media regularly deal with the issue of anti-Zionism as leading to, or as a form of, anti-Semitism. A recent form of anti-Semitism in Italy, which has not been given sufficient attention, is violent anti-Jewish acts in sports arenas.

CONFRONTING EVIL: HOW THE JEWISH PRESS IN HUNGARY DEALT WITH ANTI-SEMITISM FROM THE LATE 1930S UNTIL 1944 / Guy Miron

Marking the 70th anniversary of the legal emancipation of the Jews in Hungary (1867), the Hungarian Jewish press in late 1937 and early 1938 featured articles by liberal-Reform writers, who represented the major sector of the Jewish community, lauding this “magna carta” landmark event. Most Hungarian Jews viewed themselves as loyal citizens of their country and identified with the ruling Magyar element of the population. Yet, their sense of security at that point was far from complete. The steady rise of Nazi Germany, the impending prospect of an alliance with the Hungarian government, and reactionary domestic sociopolitical trends engendered a sharp rise in anti-Semitism in Hungary, posing a threat to the Jewish population. Indeed, the year 1938 witnessed the first in a series of legislative measures curtailing Jewish civil rights which culminated with their total annulment. The rise of the Hungarian fascist Arrow-Cross Party, and the German Anschluss in neighboring Austria, exacerbated the threatening atmosphere.

The Jewish press, which reflected the full range of religious and political ideologies in the Hungarian Jewish community, provided a vital means for the Jews to deal with the erosion of emancipation and the rise of anti-Semitism during the period in question until the Nazi takeover of the country in March 1944. Despite this erosion; the worsening socio-economic situation; and the restrictions imposed on Jewish communal life, some Jewish newspapers and periodicals managed to function, becoming a unifying element in a community that continued to survive in comparative safety in the heart of Nazi Europe until the spring of 1944.

The prime organ of the Reform-liberal Jewish camp (called the “Neologists”) was the weekly *Egyenlőség* (“Equality”), founded in 1882 by Miksa Szabolcsi. He edited it until 1915, when he was succeeded by his son, Lajos Szabolcsi. Reflecting a point of view similar to the German Jewish *CV Zeitung*, the weekly highlighted the Jewish community’s Hungarian patriotism side by side with Jewish pride and a determination to implement the values of equality and emancipation and combat anti-Semitism. The true Hungarian heritage, *Egyenlőség* emphasized, eschewed anti-Semitism or any other kind of racism, which was alien to it.

In March 1938, as part of an effort to head off the growing influence of the Arrow-Cross Party, Prime Minister Kálmán Darányi proposed a series of legislative restrictions against the Jews as a means of “solving the Jewish problem” through a “better balance” in Hungary’s social and economic life. The move evoked wide public debate, but was adopted as a law in May 1938, referred to as the First Jewish Law. It imposed limits on Jewish participation in such professions as medicine, law and engineering, and in the cultural sphere.

Responding, the organs of the two largest sectors of the Jewish community, the Reform and the Orthodox (represented by the weekly *Zsidó Újság* [“Jewish Journal”]), stressed Jewish loyalty to Hungary, the long history of the Jewish community there, and the violation of the humanist legacy of Hungary represented by the new law. The Jews were being accused of introducing capitalism in Hungary, these papers argued, but in fact they had developed Hungarian industry. In contrast, the smaller Zionist weekly, *Zsidó Szemle* (“Jewish

observer”), and the Zionist monthly *Múlt és Jövo* (“Past and Future”), edited by József Patai, charged that the assimilated Jews of Hungary had lost their Jewish national identity, and that only by renewing it would they truly rejuvenate themselves and gain self-respect.

A government order on January 9, 1939, forced the main Jewish newspapers to close down. However, two new weeklies were given permits to operate: *Magyar Zsidók Lapja* (“Hungarian Jewish Newsletter”), representing the Reform movement, and *Orthodox Zsidó Újság* (“Orthodox Jewish Journal”). Furthermore, several intellectual periodicals, including *Múlt és Jövo*, were allowed to continue publishing. The Reform paper limited its subject matter to internal Jewish matters, as reflected in its subtitle: “A Religious Weekly of a Community of Faith,” eschewing the traditional journalistic focus by this movement on the political struggle for equality and emancipation. The Orthodox organ, however, was bolder, advocating maintaining the struggle for Jewish rights.

By May 1939 the Hungarian legislature had passed a more drastic Second Jewish Law, which no longer bothered to couch its intent in niceties and openly targeted the Jewish community for restrictive measures. *Magyar Zsidók Lapja* responded with apologetic commentaries about the anti-Semitic attacks, emphasizing the contributions of the Jews to Hungary and the recognition they had been accorded by heroes of Hungarian history. *Orthodox Zsidó Újság*, for its part, advocated the reinforcement of faith and expressed appreciation to the minority of parliamentary delegates who had opposed the racist law.

The legal and economic erosion of the status of the Jews in Hungary continued steadily, although their situation was incomparably better than that of the Jews in neighboring countries, in large measure due to Hungary’s continued independence and its refusal to submit fully to Nazi dictates regarding

the Jews. The Third Jewish Law, passed in 1941, was designed to “protect the racial purity of the Magyar nation.” It defined Jewish identity according to the Nuremberg Laws and prohibited any form of intermarriage. Interestingly, the reaction of the *Orthodox Zsidó Újság* on this point was ambivalent: it acknowledged the discriminatory intent of the law, yet pointed to the desirability of banning intermarriage in order to perpetuate the Jewish people demographically.

The next Jewish Law, implemented in July 1942, annulled the official status of the Jewish community, thereby depriving all Jewish institutions of government support, while also prohibiting conversion to Judaism.

Of the few surviving Jewish periodicals and yearbooks, the monthly *Múlt és Jövo* was the sole representative of the Jewish national viewpoint from 1939 until 1944. Curiously, several other periodicals were also able to publish criticism of anti-Semitism seemingly without restriction. Examples are evident in the 1940 yearbook of the Jewish-Hungarian Society for Literature, and in the Jewish cultural yearbook, *Ararát*, during 1939-44.

The takeover of Hungary by the Nazis on March 19, 1944, ended the period of relative security of the Jews of Hungary in the heart of Europe. In less than a month, the roundup and ghettoization of the Jews in the outlying regions was in progress, and in mid-May the mass transports to Auschwitz began. The Jewish press ceased operating, with the sole exception of the weekly *Magyar Zsidók Lapja*, which was taken over by the Nazi-run Central Jewish Council and became a vehicle for the dissemination of Nazi orders. The only way its writers could reinforce their readership during their darkest hour then was to urge them to remain loyal to their faith and draw sustenance from it.

ANTI-SEMITIC MEDIA IN POST-COMMUNIST ROMANIA /

Raphael Vago

The transition between the collapse of the Communist-nationalist regime in Romania in 1989 to a stable post-communist system of government has been highly problematic in Romania, as in the former Eastern Bloc generally. Radical national-

ist, anti-Semitic forces have emerged in Romania to play an active role in politics in the form of the Greater Romania Party (the second largest political party as of the elections of 2000) and in extra-parliamentary groups that seek to resurrect ex-

treme rightist ideologies dating back to the pre-World War II period. Inter alia, these forces sponsor radically anti-Semitic media, which thus far are free to disseminate their messages without restriction.

The collapse of the Communist political structure elicited an unregulated information explosion of hundreds of newspapers and periodicals reflecting the rapidly polarized political spectrum in Romania. The Jewish issue was one of the first to appear in the post-Communist media, reflecting the need to explain the cataclysmic changes in society. Convoluted theories were put forward in the radical rightist camp about the fall of the old order during World War II, including the ostensibly intertwined role of the Freemasons and the Jews. The role of the Jews in establishing the Communist regime after the war was also aired prominently, while the Jews were blamed for the present economic difficulties of the country as well.

In examining the radical rightist political camp in Romania, a distinction may be made between parties and movements advocating "radical continuity" - i.e., retaining elements of Ceausescu's heritage, especially in the nationalist and foreign arenas, represented mainly by the Greater Romania party; and those advocating a "radical return" - i.e., a return to the radical rightist tradition of the interwar period embodied by the Iron Guard movement. Both camps were and remain anti-Semitic. Followers of the "continuity" trend emphasize the damage done by the Jews to the Communist movement, and the betrayal by the Jews of the true values of the Romanian people; followers of the "return" camp put more emphasis on historic Jewish hostility to the Romanian people and on the preservation of Romanian ethnic purity and the Christian values of Romanian culture.

The strongest survivor of the political upheavals that began in 1989 is the Greater Romania party, formed in 1990 by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, one of Ceausescu's poet laureates who maintains his mentor's nationalist line divested of its Communist ideology. Vadim writes the material in the party's weekly organ, *Greater Romania*, which conducts a concerted campaign against the ostensible Jewish influence in the country; Jews in the country's leadership; their influence on the economy; and other prominent Jews or persons of Jewish origin. The basic message is that Jews blackmailed Ceausescu and have continued to blackmail Romania since 1989, thereby disrupting the country's progress.

A periodical that was even more aggressively anti-Semitic, *Europa* (early 1990s- 1996/97), published the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in serialized form in 1992 and referred to the Jews by the derogatory word *jidan*.

The press identified with the "radical return" camp blamed the Jews for the loss of power of the fascist Iron Guard movement during World War II and for the establishment of the Communist regime thereafter, as exemplified by one of several newspapers published abroad, *Tara si Exilul* ("Land and Exile"). After 1989, old-time activists in this camp who returned from exile, along with some who had served sentences in prison under the Communists, attempted to revive the Romanian fascist movement. The monthly *Gazeta de Vest* ("Newspaper of the West"), which appeared in 1990, typically singled out the Jews, alongside the Freemasons, as enemies of the Romanian people. *Miscarea* ("The Movement"), published by the newly formed Movement for Romania from 1992, emphasized the retention of the purity of Romanian culture as embodied by the late Mihai Eminescu, the nationalist poet whose works were imbued with xenophobia and anti-Semitism. In a similar vein, *Noua Dreapta* ("The New Right"), published by the newly formed Nationalist Party of the Right from 1993, followed an ethnocentric line that viewed Jews and others as threats to Romania.

Besides the radical rightist press, Romania's weekly sensationalist press, exemplified by *Atac la Persoana* ("Personal Attack") and *Baricada* ("Barricade"), frequently runs vicious anti-Semitic articles targeting Jewish personalities; depicts Jewish claims for the restoration of property stolen during the Holocaust as "avarice"; and denies the dimensions of the Holocaust.

The single Jewish periodical published in Romania, the biweekly *Realitea Evreiasca* ("Jewish Reality"), is issued by the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania. A continuation of the earlier *Revista a Cultului Mozaic* ("Mosaic Religion Review"), founded in 1956 by Rabbi Moshe Rosen, it is edited by Dorel Dorian, a writer and member of the Romanian Senate representing the Jewish community. Besides covering a wide range of local and international Jewish news, *Realitea Evreiasca* highlights the loyalty of the Jews to Romania and their contribution to their homeland, and praises the positive steps taken by the country's various governments since 1990 regarding the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and the Jewish past in Romania.

ANTI-SEMITIC THEMES IN THE RHETORIC OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT / Esther Webman

The Arab-Islamic discourse about Israel, Zionism and the Jews is laden with anti-Semitic stereotypes, although these are often difficult to differentiate from the anti-Israel and anti-Zionist rhetoric. This blurring of anti-Semitic motifs and hate speech in the context of the national/territorial conflict can lead to distortions in presenting the Arab discourse and in understanding its sources and motives.

Most scholars view Arab anti-Semitism as based on European Christian motifs embellished by distinctive Islamic elements blended into the national and the Islamic discourse primarily in the wake of the establishment of the State of Israel. In contrast to applied anti-Semitism, it is verbal anti-Semitism – found in all the media, in public speeches and in sermons – for it is anti-Semitism without Jews. It is aimed at Israelis/Zionists who live beyond its borders, and at Jews and Judaism generally. Israelis/Zionists are a concrete enemy who conquered what the Arabs perceive as the heart of the Arab and Muslim world, while Jews and Judaism represent not only a religion or a religio-ethnic group but an abstract symbol of an all-powerful, scheming force. The terms Israeli, Zionist and Jew are used interchangeably.

In its Middle Eastern form, anti-Semitism has undergone a process of Islamization reinforced by the rise of the fundamentalist Islamic movements. These groups have radicalized the demonization of Israel by using the anti-Jewish polemic of the Koran and of Islamic traditions to rationalize the delegitimation of Zionism, Israel and the Jews. Such radicalization serves at the same time to reinforce Islamic self-identity and its sense of moral superiority. The Arab-Israeli conflict, in the perception of the fundamentalist Islamic movements, is not simply national/territorial, it is a historic, cultural and existential conflict between Judaism and Islam, between falsehood and truth.

Moreover, the conflict is part of the broader confrontation between Islam and the West. Israel is viewed as an extension

of the West in the region and as a tool of continued control and exploitation by the West. Another aspect of the Arab-Islamic anti-Semitic discourse, which has become integral in it, is Holocaust denial, expounded with growing frequency in recent years, especially by opponents of normalization with Israel.

During the last decade, the Arab discourse about both normalization and globalization has taken on an anti-Semitic tone, with both these terms turning into code words for the motif of the Jewish/Zionist conspiracy to conquer and control the world. Globalization is perceived as a threat to the Arab and Muslim world not only because it challenges social, economic and cultural insularity but primarily because of its implications for the Arab-Israeli conflict: world Zionism, which impels globalization, will position Islam as the main enemy of Christianity and Judaism. Normalization is the opposite side of the coin: acceptance of the alien Western Jewish identity as integral in the region will mark another step in the Jewish strategy to control the Arab world.

In the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, an analysis of the “other” in the Arab-Islamic perception takes on particular importance. Based on stated views by Arab intellectuals, and certainly on the Islamist perception, the “other” is the West in the challenge it presents to the Muslim world culturally and in terms of its supremacy and wealth. Reflecting the Islamization of anti-Westernism, the U.S. is perceived as the “Big Satan” and the Jews as the “Little Satan.” In this perception, the Jews continue to play the role of instigators and inciters of the war by the West against Islam, as they alone stand to benefit by it.

The article is based on an address delivered at a study conference on February 2, 2002, marking a decade since the establishment at Tel Aviv University of the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Racism.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN MEDIA COVERAGE OF HATE SPEECH IN CANADA / Raphael Cohen-Almagor

One of the harmful effects of hate speech, and the cost society is required to pay when it tolerates such speech, is the mental and emotional distress and even psychological harm caused to those targeted. The Canadian Supreme Court acknowledged this by using a harm-based rationale to justify criminalizing hate speech in the 1990 landmark case against James Keegstra, a high school teacher in Alberta convicted for describing Jews in his classes as "treacherous," "money-loving," "child-killers" and "sadistic." Furthermore, Canadian (along with French, German and British) statutory documents affirm a corollary proposition about the effect of hate speech on the community at large, namely that hate propaganda can harm society as a whole.

With due appreciation for the innate liberal inclination to provide wide latitude to freedom of expression, the need to set limits must be acknowledged. The media must develop sensitive and responsible mechanisms in their coverage of hate speech, for by providing unfettered loudspeakers to hate-mongers, the media play into their hands and help spread their hatred and harmful messages.

As far back as 1965 in Canada, a Special Committee on Hate Propaganda (the Cohen Committee) noted that the country had become a major source of supply of hate propaganda exported abroad. The Committee concluded that "the Canadian community has a duty, not merely the right, to protect itself from the corrosive effects of propaganda that tends to undermine the confidence that various groups in a multicultural society must have in each other," recommending that the government take steps to fight against hate propaganda. In as much as Canada remains a major exporter of hate literature in the world, an examination of the extent to which the media cooperate with hate-mongers by providing them with a platform is instructive.

A definition of the role of the media is basic to the issue. Their role is not merely to report what "is there" and to "further truth." Along with the power the media possess come responsibilities to their audience, their profession, and the democratic system that enables them to function. Over the last two decades, the establishment of powerful press empires in Canada

has fueled a vigorous debate about social responsibility, revolving around the questions of what to report and how to report.

Vital to this discussion is the contention that the media are not under an obligation to remain impartial or neutral with regard to all issues. Some issues coexist with the principles of democracy, but others contradict them completely. The media, as one of the foundations of the democratic system, have an obligation to take a firm stand to defend democracy whenever it is threatened.

This principle is illuminated in several trials in Canada of the pro-Nazi Holocaust-denier Ernst Zundel, who emerged during the 1980s and evoked considerable attention in political, legal and media circles. When he was first put on trial for distributing hate literature, the media covered the case extensively, turning it into a media event. Zundel, for his part, maximized every opportunity to capture media attention, issuing controversial quotes and staging appearances designed for camera exposure. He even produced instructional audio tapes, titled "Media Tactics I" and "Media Tactics II," available for purchase during the course of the proceedings. Commentators and experts discussed at length how the media coverage would affect the Canadian public's beliefs about Nazism, the Holocaust, the justice system, and Jews.

The central question is whether the liberty to hate is a liberty that should be safeguarded under the free speech principle. Clearly, denying the Holocaust is not simply offering "another truth" in the free marketplace of ideas. It is a method of provoking hatred against Jews. Hate-mongers should be viewed as the enemies of democracy and not merely as people who offer a credible interpretation of history. After all, not all people are reasonable. Not all people accept the Holocaust as an indisputable historical fact. Zundel preaches his views especially to young people whose minds are still being shaped. When the media cover his views without qualification, presenting him as a legitimate thinker who is offering his truth in the free market of ideas, they provide him with a convenient platform to mislead and to rewrite history, and confer undeserved legitimacy on his views.

In the first Zundel trial, the media provided the pro-Nazi with what he himself called "one million dollars' worth" of free publicity, giving a far wider circulation to Holocaust-denying propaganda than he would have been able to achieve on his own. After a period of self-analysis and debate, however, the media pursued a different approach regarding Zundel's second trial, with some of them electing to give it little if any prominence. In the Keegstra case, the media provided good coverage of the issues and personalities involved.

That the media should not treat hate-mongers in a neutral fashion is supported by statements made by another fundamental agent and guardian of democracy, the courts, in dealing with hate speech. Chief Justice Dickson, in delivering the verdict of the Supreme Court in the Keegstra case, stated that hate propaganda seriously threatened both the enthusiasm with which the value of equality is accepted and acted

upon by society, and the connection of target group members to their community. The court depicted Keegstra as inflicting injury on his target group, the Jews, and as striving to undermine worthy communal aspirations. The language used by the court to describe Keegstra was far from neutral or objective. The court characterized Keegstra as an enemy of democracy who did not deserve the right to free speech to undermine fundamental rights of others.

The media should treat racists in a similar fashion. Notably, Canadian criminal law on the prevention of hate speech is far more extensive in comparison with its American counterpart. In both cultures diversity is believed to be a good thing. In both countries minorities are encouraged to speak and express opinions. But in Canada there is a recognition that hate speech builds on differences, targets minorities for hatred, and destroys the mosaic that is so important for the Canadian identity.

FROM EASTER TO PASSOVER: THE MEDIA AND THE INCIDENT AT THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY IN BETHLEHEM / Dina Porat

On April 2, 2002, over 100 armed Palestinians, including approximately 12 persons wanted by the Israel Defense Forces (I.D.F.), broke into the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and held 50 monks, priests and local workers hostage until the end of the incident on May 10th. The presence of the wanted men prompted the Israeli army to place a siege on the Church compound. For nearly 40 days, the media throughout the world reported the incident heatedly. The main players became the representatives of the three major religions – Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The drama was played out in one of the holiest sites of the Christian religion, against the background of the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians at the height of the second Intifada, and alongside the loaded history of the relationship of Israel as a Jewish state with the Vatican. All these elements combined to create an international crisis that became a focus of interest for the media and for millions of Christians throughout the world.

The author examines whether the reportage of the incident reflected anti-Jewish feeling evoked or reinforced by the event; and whether a Christian response, possibly unconscious in some cases, blurred the boundary between criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism.

Most of the media vehemently denounced the siege of the church by the I.D.F. but not the break-in to it by the armed Palestinians. The fear conveyed by the media related to the damage that the I.D.F. might cause to the holy site and to the possibility that Israeli soldiers might break into it, and not to the damage actually caused by the Palestinian invaders. The impression given was that the main problem was the presence of Jews outside, rather than the forced occupation by Muslims of a site holy to Christians. Moreover, the reportage omitted any mention of the events leading up to the affair, i.e., the massive explosion at the Park Hotel in Netanya on the Seder eve several days previously, the stressful atmosphere in Israel, and the entry of the I.D.F. into West Bank cities to search for wanted terrorists. Another fact not reported was the break-in by the Palestinians specifically into the portion of the church under Catholic control (control of the church is divided three ways, and includes Greek Orthodox and Armenian as well), obviously with the intention of eliciting Vatican pressure on Israel.

On the very first day of the incident, a Catholic news agency reported the murder of a Silesian Italian priest in the church by I.D.F. forces, while a Catholic radio station announced that

he was murdered while bending in prayer at the altar. Several hours later, the news agency briefly announced that an error had been made and that the priest was alive and well. The Vatican nuncio in Israel, too, denied on Israel Radio that a murder had occurred. Nevertheless, Reuters picked up the original item without verifying it, and the following day the daily Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, ran an article about the murder, which appeared on its Internet site for ten days. The article was replete with pejorative phrases such as "infuriating arrogance," "crude rape of history," and "violation of the country," including a reference to damage of a statue of the Virgin Mother which proved fictitious. Not a word was mentioned about the armed intruders into the church, nor that they were holding the church priests and monks as hostages. Furthermore, no mention was made of the announcement by the I.D.F. to the intruders that those who were not wanted by Israel were free to leave unharmed, and those who were wanted could choose between trial in Israel or leaving the territories held by Israel.

The BBC quoted the Franciscan spokesman in the Holy Land as calling the siege "an unbelievably barbarous act." In a radio interview, the secretary of the Franciscan order in Rome pointedly recalled the Franciscan monks who had risked their lives during World War II to save Jews and hide them in their monasteries. The question of refuge was explored in an article in the *Washington Times* by Nicholas Kittrie, a law professor at the American University in Washington, who pointed out that historically, places of worship often offered sanctuary to innocent persons, or persons who committed murder mistakenly, and were being pursued. Such media as Associated Press, Reuters, BBC and the *New York Times*, however, used the term "refuge" misleadingly in describing the act of the Palestinians, implying that innocent victims were being hunted

by the Israelis.

Such reportage reflected two types of responses to the event – emotional and political. On the emotional level, the reaction revealed a real fear that Jews would enter a place so holy to Christianity, while the break-in by Muslims clearly did not evoke a parallel fear. Rabbi Michael Melchior, head of the Israeli government's Inter-ministerial Committee to Monitor Anti-Semitism, conjectured that the Jew is still perceived as the anti-Christ, as he was in the Middle Ages. Similarly, a Swedish scholar pointed out that the media which equated Israel with the Third Reich during the incident demonstrated the need to depict Jews in their age-old role.

Politically, the response is related to a series of interests well defined before the incident: the status of the Christian holy places, which were under Israeli control since the Six-Day War of 1967; the pending beatification of Pope Pious XII of the World War II period; and, ironically, the affinity consistently displayed by the present Pope John Paul II toward the Jewish people and the State of Israel, which, in the minds of the invaders, would result in persuasive Vatican pressure on Israel to let them go free. In the event, this perception proved erroneous, for the Vatican nuncio in Israel filled his role with integrity, while the Vatican's foreign minister eventually announced that the Vatican supports Israel's right to defend itself against terror. With this, the Christian clergy in the Holy Land today is mostly of Arab origin and is strongly identified with the Palestinian cause, possibly more so than with the Vatican itself, which creates a complex situation.

Clearly, deeply implanted anti-Jewish sentiment, even among secular persons, combined with contemporary political interests, dictated an instantaneous acceptance of false reportage in the Church of Nativity incident - a situation all too typical in the field of journalism.

"HAGALIL" – A GERMAN JEWISH INTERNET PORTAL COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM / Thomas von der Osten-Sacken

In recent years, the Internet appears to be playing into the hands of anti-Semitic propaganda. Neo-Nazis and other anti-Semitic groups use the net extensively, and it has become the primary means for disseminating anti-Semitic propaganda. Sites devoted to such materials range from the ostensibly academic,

with discussions of the "world Jewish conspiracy," to unconcealed Nazi incitement, and to leftist portals which, in the name of solidarity with the Palestinians, present pronounced anti-Israel material.

The Internet, which functions both as a means of communication and a public space in the broadest sense, provides the anti-Semites with an unparalleled mass vehicle for incitement, while attracting far less critical attention than the press or television.

Although little research, and little development of combative strategies, have been devoted to this topic, one individual who is exceptional in this respect is Paul Spiegel, head of the Central Committee of Jews in Germany, who aggressively and openly warns about the danger of anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet. Writing in *Die Welt* in April 2002, Spiegel stated that anti-Semitic incitement in Germany following the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada is "worse than it has ever been in the Federal Republic." The proportions it has reached are reflected in the Internet, he pointed out, citing the existence of over 1,300 sites of a radical right and anti-Semitic nature – approximately a thousand more such sites than a year previously.

Unlike the U.S., where this danger was identified at an early stage, nothing is being done about it in Germany except for pronouncements by official bodies. Yet even as far back as 1996, anyone searching the net for such terms as Talmud, Shabbat, Kosher, etc., as well as names such as Auschwitz or Hitler, was led by the search engines nearly exclusively to Nazi sites.

In response to this Internet invasion, a small group of people in Germany has established a private German Jewish portal (www.Hagalil.com), which has become one of the largest in the German language, with over 140,000 entrants monthly. The idea of creating this type of portal stemmed not only, and not primarily, from the need to combat anti-Semitism and the anti-Semitic sites on the Internet, but to utilize the net for communication between Jews and to deal with Jewish topics. In as much as few Jewish centers are left in Germany, in contrast to the U.S., France and England, and because only a small number of Jews are scattered throughout Germany, this medium seemed ideal.

Hagalil today offers basic, up-to-date information about Israel and the Middle East, translations of articles and editorials from the Israeli and the American press, broadcasts from the Kol Yisrael and Galgalatz radio stations in Israel, Israeli pop music, analyses of the Middle East conflict from the German media, analyses of the new anti-Semitism in Europe, and

articles on Jewish issues. The portal has become an important source of information for journalists and other interested parties, thereby changing its original intention of being an internal Jewish communications channel.

During the initial period of the formation of Hagalil, impelled by the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, the confrontation with anti-Semitism was not its founders' first priority. Anti-Semitism in the third generation following National Socialism was not perceived as a loaded issue. No one anticipated that within a few short years it would return so unremarkably, that today leading political figures from mainstream parties can express anti-Semitic opinions openly without provoking public opposition, and the German press can report with a systematically anti-Israel bias.

No sooner was Hagalil launched, then it was targeted for foul verbal attacks and abuse, as well as attempts by hackers to shut it down. This response demanded action. The approach was not to enter into endless arguments in the playing field created by the anti-Semites, but to combat them on a different field: gaining control over the Internet search engines.

A particular terminology, signaling Jews and Judaism, plays a central role in Nazi and extreme rightist propaganda. Underlying such phraseology as "a surplus of foreigners in Germany," "multi-cultural society," or "demon of globalization," lies, in National Socialist theory, the strategy of "world Jewry," "the east coast of America," and "the international Jewish connection." Key words such as Judaism, Shabbat, Israel and Zion are turned into pathways for spreading lies, hatred and violence. The Hagalil team, aware that they are unable to penetrate the closed world of the anti-Semites and the radical right, direct their portal, instead, toward neutral surfers with the aim of preventing them from chance entry into anti-Semitic sites. Their stated goal is to establish a hundred Hagalil sites for every Nazi one, so as to prevent students interested in exploring Jewish topics from receiving anti-Semitic information.

This important goal has indeed been reached. Anyone who enters search words of a certain type into a German-language search engine will probably reach a Hagalil link or other portals that combat anti-Semitism. The struggle against the anti-Semitic sites over control of the search engines has been shown to be more effective than attempts to close them down, although the latter possibility constitutes a political strategy that is also used by Hagalil.

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