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## THE PRESS AND HISTORY

"When I see banner headlines in the press, as though the world has stopped, and astounding changes occur that will revolutionize the fate of mankind and the cosmos, day after day, week after week, then I settle a pair of glasses on my nose that belong to a grandmother grey with years and vast experience, and think that despite her great age she preserves her youth and freshness: She is History. Seen through her glasses the bold headlines on earthshaking events dwindle and disappear. Then there are things that never appear in the paper, and nobody even mentions them, that are seen to be hugely important and decisive. The glasses help to distinguish whether these are matters of merely foam and froth that make a mighty splash, but vanish, or whether they have closely to do with the verity of mans' happiness, and which elevate mankind to a higher level."

David Ben Gurion, then Prime Minister, said these words in March 1953 at a general meeting of the Journalist's Association in Tel Aviv.

When you "leaf back" through the hundreds of pages written over the last 40 years you see how right Ben Gurion was. Events that looked "earthshaking" at that moment have been truly so dwarfed by the passage of time that you wonder how they ever got to the front page. But other events, of whose pivotal importance to political or social development whether in Israel or abroad you are totally sure of today, these were spurned by the news editors of thus and so many years ago who did not anticipate the role these events would play.

But this is only part of the truth.

Though he was right, Ben Gurion omitted one very relevant fact from the picturesque metaphor he used in that speech: what age is this Grandmamma? It is impolite to ask a lady's age, grandmother though she be, but for those who engage in both professions, the answer to one of the chief dilemmas that occupy journalists and historians lie in this "grandmother's" age.

A number of secondary issues create the dilemma. When does that which we term contemporary history actually begin? Who determines this, and upon what criteria? What is the temporal crossroad at which this magical metamorphosis occurs that turns what was a news item into "history", or a headline that that dealt with a "moment in time" soars suddenly to immortality. Is this time measured in centuries? Can merely a few decades suffice? Is the moment perhaps recognised for what it is? George Eliot once said that happy nations are like happy women, they have no history. Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first president, remarked one time that the nation of Israel "has too much history too little geography".

Epigrams aside, it seems to me that we may accept as given that at some time we begin to record and file events whose totality, (together with footnotes by scholarly researchers) comprises written history. None will deny that from among its many sources contemporary written history must rank the press as one of the most important, together with published biographies, memoirs, even belles lettres. The press is an almost inexhaustible, albeit often

biased, mine of information.

Journalists write either "a rough draft of history" or "instant history" according to whichever variant is preferred — their own time is what one historian called "human time", in contrast to the "collective time" of a people or a nation. Both kinds of time are intertwined.

What are newspapers after all if not the daily diary of almost every area in the life of a nation or a state, from diplomacy to crime? News are recorded by human beings who are unaware — who cannot be aware — which of these events will be remembered in future years as something that "made history". The historian has the advantage of hindsight. He can compose his picture from the many diverse sources that served the press of that time.

When a journalist covers a particular event, does he know it may be historically momentous, something epic and heroic, or a blunder fated to end up in Barbara Tuchman's "March of Folly" collections? We assume, we prophesy, we surmise that this or another occasion will be historic, but not one of us can be sure that Ben Gurion's "grandmother" will see it the same way.

We may ask the same question, but in reverse. Can "grandmother History" also become a source for press research as an autonomous political, cultural or social experience?

This issue carries an article by Professor Andrzej Paczkowski, a Warsaw historian who participated in the International Conference on the History and Culture of Polish Jews that took place in Jerusalem at the beginning of February, where he lectured on his subject, which is the Jewish press in Poland between the two world wars. During the course of a conversation we had when Professor Paczkowski visited Tel Aviv University, he developed the thesis that is central to his paper: that the press itself constitutes a political and social phenomenon independent of, or if you will, in addition to providing future source material for researchers.

His keen interest in Poland's Jewish press between the wars stems from research he did on Poland's ethnic minority press, especially that of the Jews and Ukrainians, and he has written a number of books and monographs on the subject. The Jewish press was inestimably richer and more diverse than that of any other ethnic minority in Poland.

The Jewish press is a unique phenomenon. To understand its essence, ideology, structure, circulation and languages, its relationships to the authorities or the gentile population and so forth, one is obliged to approach "Grandmother History" and learn from her.

This interaction between the press and history — that flows in both directions — has provided in recent centuries an enthralling backdrop to civilisation.

  
Head of Journalism Studies Program

## THE PRESS REVIEWS OF KNESSET DELIBERATIONS / Giora Goldberg

Does the Knesset suffer from a negative image? The initial answer would appear to be positive, but the assumption is not borne out by research studies.

Accordingly, if the Knesset's image is not so negative, it is possible that attitudes regarding the manner in which the press reports on the work of the Knesset is biased, and it is feasible that reporting has become distorted over the years.

The present study examines the how two dailies, "Ma'ariv" and "Al Hamishmar" related to Knesset deliberations from 1953-1987. Ma'ariv is politically independent whereas Al

Hamishmar is the voice of Mapam.

The study revealed that the amount of Knesset reporting increased over the years, but that there was a decrease in the review of regular Knesset activity in favor of reports of committee action and the activities of individual Knesset members.

It appears also that the gloss had worn off the excitement generated by this new parliamentary body in the State's early years.

## TEN LEAKS / Moshe Zak

Stories on sensitive and even secret state affairs leaked by the press over the last four decades rarely harmed the security of Israel, and official attempts to discover the sources of these leaks were generally inconclusive.

One leak, which caused an uproar in the fall of 1948, concerned Israel's "Operation Yoav", represented as a local skirmish, and which a New York Times article had revealed as a major military operation that opened up the road to the Negev. Prime Minister David Ben Gurion's anger and anxiety were fueled by the knowledge that Jordan's King Abdallah had signified his willingness for a dialogue with Israel. Fearful lest these news should leak, Ben Gurion ordered a clampdown on any press mention of government or Council of State deliberations.

It appears that lack of communication between the Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Office was primarily responsible for a leak in January 1950 to the semi-official Mapai newspaper "HaDor", that effectively scuttled what might have been serious peace discussions between Egypt and Israel. The Egyptians, who feared precisely such a premature disclosure, withdrew from the proposed talks because they were unwilling to antagonise Azzam Pasha, the powerful and adamantly anti-Israel secretary of the Arab League.

That same year the Mapam's daily "Al HaMishmar" leaked the news that Ben Gurion was considering the despatch of a symbolic Israeli force to aid the UN in the Korean conflict. The

findings of a subsequent enquiry included the fact that more than one Knesset member had known of the Prime Minister's suggestion prior to its publication, and pointed out that under such circumstances leaks were almost unavoidable.

The Knesset, however policed itself more effectively than the government. It passed a law in July 1952 forbidding the publication "until a suitable time" of the State Comptroller's Annual Report following a leak betimes of this report in "Ma'ariv".

A storm in a teacup blew up over an article written by the New York correspondent of "Ha'aretz" in November 1951 which revealed that the Israel Defence Force (IDF) high command was reluctant to host a high level US Army delegation in Israel as part of an American military aid package to Israel. Abba Eban, then ambassador to the US, demanded an enquiry to disclose the source of the leak even though the IDF's well-founded reluctance was an open secret in Israel.

From books written many years later, it transpires that Levi Eshkol, who was Israel's Prime Minister in 1965, had established an official commission of enquiry not to discover the source of a leak, but to prevent the revelation of additional details because Israel stood to gain both militarily and economically if it allowed a proposed \$50 million arms deal between Jordan and the US to go through. A newspaper article had published Israel's concern that the projected sale of Patton tanks to Jordan would upset military balance in the Middle East.

## THE JEWS IN TELEGRAPH NEWS AGENCIES FROM WOLF AND REUTER TO PULITZER / Menahem Blondheim

The industrial revolution and the communications explosion in particular enabled the Jew to move from the fringes of society into its center. This historic opportunity was not neglected and Jews very quickly attained preeminence in the telegraphic news agencies that sprang up world-wide.

Jews may be said to have founded the telegraph news agency with Reuter's telegraphic link between Aachen and Brussels, though it is doubtful that Reuter envisaged the consequences of his line at the time.

Historian Ya'akov Talmon asserts that that a tradition of rational thinking enabled the Jews to grasp the advantages that could accrue from the new technologies of the industrial revolution, especially in the communications field.

Jews, by virtue of their geographical nomadism, and their analogous ability to transpose cultural systems, adapted readily to telegraphic communication. Also, as a minority within an ethnic or national majority, Jews lived with two discrete cultural and experiential systems simultaneously.

The invention of the telegraph created a communications "nervous system" that linked what Canadian economic historian Harold Innes defined as the 'poles of time and space'. Existing dichotomies within the poles changed character. Geographical location almost ceased to be a dominant factor of communications. The distinction between center and periphery as a source and recipient of information vanished. Power wielded by the possessors of information was no more dispersed than formerly; there was merely a change of emphasis.

It was at the periphery that the telegraph first caught on, with Hearst in San Francisco and Pulitzer in New York. The Civil War (1861-1865) augmented its importance. By 1879, not without a takeover battle, The Western Associated Press (WAP) and the New York Associated Press (NYAP) amalgamated, due in no little to the efforts of Joseph Pulitzer.

Because it was uneconomical to duplicate services, almost any

telegraph news agency, by virtue of the speed at which it could supply information, usually became a national monopoly. As such it held tremendous power, and was also a source of temptation to parties or individuals. Bismarck's takeover of the Wolf Agency, by setting up a rival agency to further his own political goals of united Germany, illustrates the point.

The career of Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911) illustrates the movement of Jews from the fringes to the center of power. Pulitzer, who started with the 'St Louis Post Dispatch', needed and acquired a New York paper to give him access to the East Coast. Following his acquisition of the New York World, his journalistic influence grew enormously. A peripatetic, Pulitzer directed his empire from his yacht.

Pulitzer understood the importance of telegraphy very well.

In contrast to the late nineteenth century "robber barons" such as Western Union's Jay Gould, Pulitzer believed that a newspaper or news agency had a duty to prevent the exploitation of information for the benefit of an individual or interest group. He was against news monopolies.

In the hotly contested 1884 presidential election between Grover Cleveland (D) and James Blane, (R) Pulitzer accused NYAP and Western Union of withholding the results of the New York ballot in order to enable the Republican southwest to rig the election in favor of Blane. In the public outcry that ensued — and there were riots — the agencies' reputation was almost irreparably damaged.

Pulitzer's successful attempt to break the East Coast news monopoly may have prepared the way for the acceptance of Adolph Ochs into the inner sanctums of AP.

Ochs, from Chatanooga, Tennessee, had acquired the ailing New York Times, and made no secret of his Jewishness as Pulitzer had done. Pulitzer's fears that the antisemitic attacks he had experienced would be renewed against Ochs proved groundless.

## FROM OUR PALESTINIAN CORRESPONDENT / Yehoshua Rotenshtreich

The opening of the Mandatory Government's radio station in 1936 was an event around which Dr. Yehoshua Rotenshtreich, a lawyer and journalist, built one of his most fascinating reports on the emerging state. Rotenshtreich, who was president of the

Press Council in Israel, was a prolific journalist when he was young. He began his career in Poland, and after he immigrated to Eretz Israel in the thirties, he was the correspondent for no less than three Jewish papers in Poland.

## HERZL AND THE MEDIA / Mordecai Naor

Press coverage of ideas or people thrust suddenly into public awareness is apt to be frequently disparaging.

Most of the major Jewish journals of the day responded warily to Theodore Herzl and his efforts to realise a Jewish State. Initial attitudes ranged from the carefully non-committal to the vehemently hostile.

It appears that few editors or reporters recognised the importance to Jews of the First Zionist Congress that opened in Basel on August 29, 1897.

Nahum Sokolov, editor of the influential paper, HaZfira, had used a folk allegory to accuse Herzl of playing with a fire that could consume the progress already made in Eretz Israel. The editorial followed the 1896 publication of Herzl's "The Jewish State."

Indeed, until Sololov himself reported from Basel on September 1, HaZfira had given the Congress no coverage whatsoever. During the ensuing days Sokolov, utterly captivated by Herzl's charismatic leadership and moral force, became devoted to the Zionist cause. Supportive reporting in HaZfira followed.

HaMelitz in St. Petersburg was equally silent until the third day when a seventeen word cable announced the congress' gala opening to its readers. Coverage gradually increased however,

and a September 10 editorial voiced cautious approval of the "new Zionists" and their aims for Eretz Israel.

The Odessa Shiloah, on the other hand, doubted that the Congress would do more than talk. "Talk, lots and lots of talk and little action," wrote Shiloah's editor, Ahad Ha'am. Towards Herzl himself, Ahad Ha'am was indifferent.

These attitudes typify press reaction to Herzl and the Zionist Congress. Strangely, papers in Eretz Israel like the Orthodox Havazelet or Eliezer Ben Yehuda's paper HaZvi ignored or barely mentioned the event. The British Jewish Chronicle blew hot and cold by turns. A pictorial spread of Herzl and dignitaries such as Max Nordau, whose speech was reported verbatim, contrasted with an article that determined Zionism to be an eastern European enthusiasm not applicable to western Jews.

The non-Jewish press was clearly less partisan. The New York Times, although it dubbed Herzl the "New Moses," published factual reports of Congress deliberations and plans for the revival of a Jewish state in Eretz Israel.

The London Times was content to use the Reuters News Agency, but allowed its correspondence columns to become the forum for a bitter and wordy anti-and pro-Herzl war. The combatants respectively, were one Oswald Simon and Moses Gaster, the Sephardic Chief Rabbi.

## OUTLINES FOR A METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCH OF THE PRESS / Menucha Gilboá

Methods for researching the press exist in Israel and abroad and research studies of both the press and existing methodologies have been presented here and are available to researchers.

One method is to divide the material according to defined press phenomena which include the primary journalistic event, monographs and classification. A second method employs the biblio/historiographic listing of each press item according to the broadest definition of the word "press", grouped by category within established parameters. Such categories include daily, weekly or monthly papers; professional and other specialised journals; even fringe journalism such as the "yellow" press or pornography. The obvious disadvantage of this latter method lies in that it is too generalized and tends towards the

quantitative. Historical perspective and characteristics peculiar to a particular press genre may be lost.

The media explosion of the late 20th century, especially in print, requires more specific definitions, categories and sub-categories for effective research. Other disciplines, each having their own methodology, also impinge on the definition and categorization of any type of press. The categories too, diverse in themselves, also pose problems.

The most appropriate approaches to research are both synchronous and diachronous. The former method affords a broad cross-section of many kinds of press together with the manner in which each relates to contributing disciplines. The diachronous approach adds to these aspects of development or

change in norms of the public's "right to know," i.e. the method by which information is conveyed.

These methods allow broad based comparisons of, for instance, the norms of information transfer between Israel and

other countries, exploration of the socio/cultural differences from country to country as reflected in the Hebrew press and the fluctuations of the Yiddish press in 19th century Russia.

## THE JEWISH PRESS IN SALONIKA / Margalit Mattitياهو

The tradition of printing in Salonika began in earnest with the arrival, in 1741, of the brothers Halevi Ashcenazi from Amsterdam, and lasted 175 years.

The presses turned out only religious works until the mid-nineteenth century when secular newspapers and periodicals began to appear. Most were written in Hebrew, but a number appeared in Ladino written in Rashi Hebrew script. "El Lunar" (The Moon) edited by Yehuda Nehama, was the first Ladino periodical. It came out in 1864 and appeared monthly for two years. El Lunar sought to educate its readership in Jewish affairs and general knowledge.

The Ladino press in general sought to raise Salonikan Jewish consciousness. None more so than "La Epoca" (The Epoch), a self designated political, economic and literary journal that published from 1875 to 1912. Initially a little boring both in content and layout, the paper developed in both directions over the years, and by 1900 its columns contained a lively mix of news, instruction and entertainment.

Salonika proved very fertile soil for the growth of Zionism and several Zionist journals came out between 1899 and 1927. These included "La Avenir" (The Future) in 1897, the weekly "La Esperanza" (Hope) in 1915, and "La Renesansia Judaea" (The Jewish Renaissance) in 1919. La Esperanza was the voice of mainstream Zionism and became the official paper of the Greek Zionist Federation. The other papers were no less nationalistic and some campaigned enthusiastically for Eretz Israel.

As the Zionist press developed so too did another genre. Names like "Charlot" (after C. Chaplin), "The Cat" and "The Trumpet" characterise the more than 15 humorous and satirical papers that flaunted their irreverently light hearted view of even serious issues between 1900 and 1938. The press establishment heaped scorn on the papers' colloquial language and levity alike, yet they flourished unrepentantly.

The Ladino papers published until the Nazis overran Greece in World War II.

## THE JEWISH PRESS IN POLAND BETWEEN TWO WORLD WARS / Andrzej Paczkowski

In the first half of this century the press was the most important medium of communication. Unfortunately historians have only seldom regarded the press as historical documentation of an era in its own right.

Characteristically, those researching events in Poland between the wars have disdained research of the press in general and of the Jewish press in particular.

Poland's Jewish community numbered 3.1 million in 1931, 75 percent of which lived in urban centers. (This figure had grown

to 3.3 million by 1939.) Warsaw, Lodz, Wilna, Cracow and Lvov were Poland's largest "Jewish" cities, but two thirds of Poland's Jews lived in small towns. The territorial boundaries between the Jewish community and the rest of the population were clearly defined. The common languages were Yiddish and Hebrew with some Polish and Russian, and a little German.

"Nasz Przegląd", the largest Jewish daily in Polish employed 37 foreign correspondents in 1938. Jewish newspapers in Polish, were only 14.2 percent of the total Jewish press.

Europe was in a social and political ferment following World War I, to which Poland's Jewish press reacted sharply, according to the specific political ideology of individual papers. During the thirties in particular, European Jewry awoke to the need of using the press to campaign against the rise of antisemitism, fascism and Nazism.

Throughout the twenties and thirties the Jewish press in Poland expanded more rapidly than did its gentile counterpart. After 1923 the provincial Hebrew and Yiddish press, nicknamed the "shtetl press", grew faster than that of the big cities, especially Warsaw, whose share of the Jewish press after 1920 fell from about 60 percent to 40 percent.

Many Polish language dailies, such as Warsaw's influential "Ostatnie Wiadomosci", that were owned by Jews and appealed mainly to a Jewish audience, could yet not be called unequivocally Jewish. Publications that catered exclusively to Jewish interests included the Zionist Polish language dailies "Nasz Przegląd", "Chwila", and "Nowy Dziennik", that came out in Warsaw, Cracow and Lodz respectively. The Jewish dailies increased their circulation from 87,000 in 1925 to 350,000 in 1938.

Poland's Jewish press between the wars developed into an autonomous and influential body whose political and communal activities helped bring Poland's relatively backward Jewish community into the modern era.

## JUNA - A JEWISH PRESS AGENCY IN SWITZERLAND DURING WORLD WAR II / Raya Adler

The Jewish press agency, JUNA, operated in Switzerland in World War II within the framework of the government's policies of appeasement towards Nazi Germany. Afraid of invasion by the Axis powers during the early years of the war, the government, narrowly interpreting the laws of neutrality, imposed strict press censorship, and limited the right of asylum, especially for Jews.

The Swiss Jewish community leadership within its association, the S.I.G. (Schweizerischer Israelitischer Gemeindebund), had established JUNA in 1936 to counter rising antisemitism, and in 1938 had appointed Benjamin Segalowitz to head the agency.

Segalowitz, an independent journalist, was militantly Zionist, tough minded and politically acute. He despised "Jewish politics" or the S.I.G.'s preferred low political profile and quiet personal diplomacy. Segalowitz favored instead a direct and open approach to public opinion. In JUNA he saw a political tool with which to link Swiss anti-semitism to the fate of the Jews in Nazi occupied countries.

Mindful of censorship, Segalowitz spent JUNA's entire and small budget on the collection and concentration of substantiated (and therefore credible) news items from already published press accounts. This material, all of it dealing with anti-Jewish measures in and outside of Switzerland, acquired enormous force thereby.

The four page German language bulletin that Segalowitz prepared weekly was sent to the editorial offices of influential

papers and periodicals. JUNA's success may be measured by the 180 items published by the Swiss press from 1940-41, among these were articles against the prevailing anti-semitic sentiments.

Clashes with the censorship that forbade any mention of Nazi persecution were nonetheless inevitable, and tension, never completely resolved, developed between Segalowitz and the S.I.G. leadership.

Segalowitz' manipulation of JUNA's activities contributed to the rising chorus of voices that spoke out against Swiss anti-semitism. Yet such was the fear of antagonizing Nazi Germany that the government relaxed its censorship only in the summer of 1944 when it became apparent that Germany would lose the war. Segalowitz then openly reported in JUNA's bulletin direct news of the deportation of Hungary's Jews to Auschwitz.

Evidence of Nazi frightfulness had mounted steadily throughout the war, but proof positive of Hitler's proposed "Final Solution" was supplied by JUNA in the summer of 1942. Stephen Wise had received from Segalowitz the notorious "Regener Telegram" which he conveyed to US president Franklin D. Roosevelt. Segalowitz' political acumen and ability to synthesize had enabled him to accept without question the infamous information delivered to him through a German industrialist.

The Swiss government, in 1955, paid an equivocal tribute to JUNA when it requested the agency's archival material for a report on wartime refugee policies.

## THE WARSAW GHETTO REVOLT AS MIRRORED IN THE ERETZ ISRAEL PRESS — APRIL/MAY 1943 / Hava Zeinfeld

The Eretz Israel morning daily "Davar" was the first, on April 22, 1943, to break the news of the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt that had begun on April 19. The news came from United Press London via Stockholm and Poland's clandestine radio station "Dawn". The uprising continued to occupy the front pages of the press during the last week of April and until the middle of May.

During the entire period, all the newspapers printed identical news stories, only the headlines differed, so that on April 30 they printed verbatim the anguished plea for help that had come, via Dawn, from the Zionist Worker's Left in Poland.

On May 6, General Sikorski, head of the Polish government-in-exile in London, made a radio speech in which he praised the heroism of the Ghetto fighters and of all the Poles. All the Yishuv papers reported the speech. It was especially important, as Davar commented on May 16, for three things: a non-Jewish source had authenticated the uprising; the General supplied more details than had been published; his own standing, and the fact that he was a known antisemite, lent credence to his report.

On May 16 Davar also printed a full page of news on the Revolt that had been received in a telegram from a news agency

in Kubishev (USSR). Other papers, such as "HaZofe" and "HaZman" reprinted the story the following day. The same report also gave news of the Bialystok ghetto uprising, that signaled to Jews everywhere that more than passive resistance had begun among the Jews of occupied Europe.

The press began to report on the end of the Warsaw Ghetto from May 13 on. During the last half of May and in early June, the papers reported on the atrocities perpetrated during the Revolt, and on its tragic aftermath.

The press in Eretz Israel reacted characteristically during the entire period: news, analysis, editorials, independent views and readers' letters. Organisations utilised the press to print their responses to the news. Public figures and the community reacted spontaneously at first. Measured responses came later. The press was the natural outlet for national feeling.

News reports on the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt were as straightforward as possible in a highly charged situation. In retrospect they were also accurate. It was only later, during the second half of May, when the extent of the tragedy became known, that a note of tragic pathos became unavoidable.

## "BAD NEWS" AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY (Excerpts from a symposium organised by the Journalism Studies Program at Tel Aviv University)

### The Messenger-of-Bad-news Syndrome — Shalom Rosenfeld — Head of Journalism Studies.

Apathy is the enemy of a free society. News are necessary and the purpose of this discussion is to examine their quality, content, style and impact. What are the correct definitions for news, for both the event and the report of it? There are probably as many definitions of news as there are news gatherers and news disseminators. It is even more difficult to define "bad news".

In latter years, emphasis has come to be laid increasingly on

the dramatic, the unusual, the extraordinary and the negative, resulting in asymmetric reporting. Even the publication in the media of "bad news" is in itself considered bad news.

Theories to explain this trend are many: negative news have immediacy and are unequivocal; they parallel the fast turnover required by the media; they fulfil a need, or even create needs.

People have traditionally blamed and "punished" the bearer of bad news from ancient times to the present day, as literature from Sophocles to Agnon, and speeches by heads of state and politicians in democratic countries witness. This symposium seeks to determine to what extent and at what level "bad news" affect society and the individual.

## Give Us Less News — Asa Kasher — Professor of Philosophy

The names of TV news programs, such as Mabat (A Look), Zarkor (Searchlight), emphasise the idea that news exist, and that the broadcaster's duty is to focus public attention on them.

The press, on the other hand, chooses which news it will or will not print. It is frequently opaque, often inaccurate and given to arrogance. News have no independent existence. They are manufactured in pressrooms which are a social institution. News therefore need not be an immediate event, they need not be important, they may even not have happened yet.

Bad news, therefore, do not exist. Good and bad news are in the eyes of the beholder, whether or not they have been filtered through the pressroom editors.

Newspapers should, but do not, preserve a neutral and objective attitude to news. Their concern should be whether news are bad according to the set of democratic principles our society has determined as just, and to which we are partners. In these terms bad news occur when democratic principles are assaulted, even within the law.

For those to whom an independent Israel is a given, press carping is an expression of their concerns regarding the quality of democratic life in Israel. Asymmetrical and slanted though the news are, they are necessary for the citizen as voter who cannot make an informed choice without them.

News have become the new "opium of the masses". Less of them, more neutrally presented, might wean us.

## "Bad News" and Human Health — Jan J. Kellermann — Head of Cardiac Rehabilitation Institute, Chaim Sheba Medical Center

Coronary artery disease, greatest killer of our times, is a multifactorial disease. Various risk factors have been found to be of paramount importance in the epidemiology of the disease: hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, cigarette smoking, diabetes and physical inactivity are among the most important. Acute and chronic stress have always been among the factors which may cause sudden death due to uncontrollable emotional reactions, or influence the clinical course of coronary heart disease by increasing blood pressure, cholesterol levels and the oxygen requirement of the heart muscle. Environmental and psychosocial stresses are being linked with high morbidity and mortality rates in selected societies, especially in those with a highly developed technology and standard of living.

This observation has shown that cultural, ethnic and educational backgrounds may play an important role. Yemenite Jews who migrated to Israel in the late forties were almost free of coronary artery disease. With the changes in life style, habits and environment over the years the morbidity rate has increased significantly in this ethnic group.

Despite the fact that scientific proof is still lacking, there is casuist evidence that "bad news" and systematic negative reports published in the newspapers and transmitted by radio and television, may negatively influence the dispositions of an individual to blood pressure elevation, cardiac arrhythmias and emotional instability. Sudden death has been repeatedly reported in cardiac patients who watch T.V.

Stress is an integral part of our life and there is no prescription against the chronic stress to which man is subjected. But journalists everywhere should be aware that their audience is aging. They should therefore be more responsible not only what they report and how they report it.

## "You don't need an axe to kill a bee" — Amos Shapira — Professor of Law

News must be published. To select or balance smacks of censorship. The constitution of the Israeli Journalists' Association guarantees a free press and the public's "right to know." Its code of ethics requires adherence to these democratic principles together with professional competence and public responsibility.

The public in a democracy has not only the "right" but an obligation to be informed. Selectivity is needed not in "what" but in "how" news are delivered. Even bad news can be sensitively told.

The Interior Ministry has the right to prevent publication of misinformation or lying rumors "liable to cause public panic or despair." Good or bad taste, as tabloids prove, is not the issue. At issue is the kind of society we want. We should avoid a paternalistic dependency. A mature society can deal with bad news.

## Information Causes Emotional Pressure — Shlomo Breznitz — Professor of Psychology

Superfluous stress needs to be mentioned in addition to those cited. It results from a lack of control and understanding by those who deliver the news.

We are belabored by dramatic events in far places that diminish and warp the world the world and our view of it. Basically



routine lives cannot stand a steady diet of the extraordinary, for the incredible becomes plausible and then routine. For instance, a study in Britain determined that the average child of 14 has witnessed some 10,000 TV murders, so that murder becomes a commonplace.

Information is a critical factor of psychological stress. Information has an objective weight even in acute situations. It has been shown for instance that ignorance may be life-saving to a patient unaware that he is gravely ill. But persistently negative

information blunts the senses, which then require greater stimuli for arousal.

Bad news in Israel tend to involve intimately a proportionately larger share of the public because Israel is a small country. A country's morale is influenced by the way reality is represented to its people. Bad news for which the media bear much responsibility, have a cumulative effect on morale. There is a limit to the amount of bad news a community can absorb before it totters.

## "THE EVENING NEWS" — MAPAI'S EVENING PAPER, 1946-1948 / Bella Kempel

"Hadashot HaErev" (The Evening News), published and edited by Dr A. Poretzki, was a Mapai paper even though it was ostensibly unaffiliated.

The evening daily covered the major events of 1946 — 1948, such as the Anglo-American Commission, or the blowing up of the King David Hotel. There were emotional reports of the 22nd Zionist Congress at Basel, illegal immigration and the November 1947 UN decision on Partition.

The Evening News was founded because Mapai wanted to attract readership from the evening daily "Yidiot Aharonot" which had a circulation of more than 20,000. Also the other party newspapers were frequently criticised for being too narrow. Party leaders all agreed that a party press was essential, but wanted it to have an appeal beyond party politics. The Evening News was supposed to fill this bill.

The paper came out on March 10, 1946, and was well received. It comprised two pages. The front page, thick with bold headlines, dealt with domestic and foreign news. The back page

carried editorials and regular columns of analysis or comment, such as "From Evening to Evening" or "Here and There". Extraordinary events, such as the Night of Bridges, or the capture of an illegal immigrant vessel, inspired one and sometimes two extras.

Correspondents included Avigdor Hameiri, Herzl Berger, Rivka Katzenelson and Editor Poretzky whose lengthy page two articles dealt with Zionist or Yishuv issues.

Mapai, which in 1946 had conceded that the Evening News was an effective mouthpiece, decided in 1948 that it was too lukewarm and objective to be a successful party voice. And although the party had financed the paper's publication, the Evening News had never received official party backing.

The Evening News had also been in financial difficulties from the start, nor had its circulation ever increased from the initial peak of about 8000. These were the primary reasons that decided the Mapai leadership to close the paper in March 1948.

## "MIVRAK" - THE DAILY THAT EMERGED FROM THE UNDERGROUND / Ilana Kedmi

The newspaper "Mivrak", that came out daily between December 1947 and September 1948, voiced the ideology of the Lehi underground Movement. Lehi published Mivrak in order to give a legal voice to its opinions. It was an attempt by the

members of an heretofore clandestine organization to move their activities into the open.

Mivrak was a four page newspaper that expanded to eight pages on Fridays. It published 234 consecutive issues, sometimes

coming out with one and even two extras per day. Its contents ranged from news to fashion, sports and poetry. The popular Fifth Column, for instance, consisted of fun and satire, criticism of all kinds, social and editorial comment, and the political cartoons of famed Israeli cartoonist Dosh, who started his career in Mivrak.

Mivrak covered the stirring events of the period between the beginning of the War of Independence, and the murder of U.N. mediator Count Folke Bernadotte in September 1948.

Published in Tel Aviv by Benjamin Lobotzky, Mivrak's editor was M. Barak. His editorials on the paper's back page are a genuine mirror of Mivrak's philosophy. This was characterised by a massive distrust of the British, a real concern for social issues, and by bitter criticism of the Zionist leadership and institutions.

## "A SPECIAL PAPER" / Gabriel Tzifroni

Alexander Zauber's "Eton Meyuhad" (A Special Paper) was an unabashed tabloid, the first of its kind in the Eretz Israel of the thirties. Despite the prophets of doom who predicted its early demise, the paper published from 1934 to 1952.

Zauber was born and learned his trade in Hungary. He published his first weekly, in Yiddish at the age of 20. He arrived in Eretz Israel in the spring of 1934. Zauber got the idea for his tabloid from the pulp detective fiction that appeared then in Eretz Israel.

The paper's success after only eight months led to its sponsorship by a revisionist leader, Meir Grossman, who sought a voice for his movement's ideology. Eton Meyuhad became an evening daily for three months, but then reverted to a weekly.

Zauber, who used to say that putting out a paper was a craft,

Editorials and features both accused the British authorities during their final months in Eretz Israel of collaborating openly with the Arabs. The leadership faced charges of moral cowardice, trucking to the British, and neglecting the material needs of the people.

Although the paper had started out by being politically cautious, it gradually became more outspoken, even blatantly provocative.

After a period of patriotic euphoria and cooperation following the establishment of the State in May, 1948, Mivrak reverted. It came out vociferously against the armistice talks, attacked Chaim Weizmann and openly espoused the expulsion of Bernadotte.

The paper was closed by the Israeli government, after Lehi members killed Bernadotte in Jerusalem, on September 17, 1948.

but that selling it was an art, composed his headlines to sell papers. He was a master of eye-catching headlines that shouted Eton Meyuhad's beat of crime, sex, and human interest. The most minor of incidents was always magnified to crisis proportions, nor did Eton Meyuhad always preserve a strict regard for veracity.

Zauber delighted to slay sacred cows, but he avoided foreign policy and politics in general. As his views slid more to the right in later years, Zauber did criticize Mapai from the pages of Eton Meyuhad.

Eton Meyuhad was the first to publish a matchmaking column and to present a page of cartoons collected from other papers.

## "HEHAVER" - THE ONLY CHILDRENS' DAILY IN THE WORLD / Uriel Ofek

"HeHaver" (The Friend), the first and only childrens' daily newspaper, came out on January 1, 1908 in Vilna. The four page paper was written in vowelized Hebrew with three columns to a page.

HaHaver's editor, Y.H. Tavyov, promised and delivered to his young readers a wealth of subjects, from literature, games

and jokes to science and even a summary of "grown up" news. The children were invited and encouraged to write to Tavyov and express their opinions and offer suggestions.

The news section contained a column on current events in Eretz Israel. HeHaver also published serials, but no poetry as Tavyov thought most childrens' poetry vacuous, and adult

poetry too taxing.

To the surprise of many, HeHaver succeeded from the start and appeared daily for a heady four and a half months. But the

paper needed money as well as acclaim and even though Tavyov tried to perpetuate HeHaver as a weekly, it was forced to close.

## REQUIEM FOR "TLOMTZKA 13" / Ber Rosen

"Tlomtzka 13", once the home of Warsaw's Writers and Press Association, was destroyed in World War II. The article is excerpted from a book by the author.

September 25, 1939.

This was the last time Tlomtzka 13 opened its doors. The Germans were approaching rapidly. The President and government had fled. At noon that day the committee met to decide how best to evacuate the Jewish journalists and their families, perhaps even some of the equipment. Everyone was assigned a job, and at first things looked promising.

What a joke! By 3 pm the grandiose evacuation plan was down to just a few journalists, and there were arguments over how many of the Jewish journalists — no-one spoke of families now — would get a place on the government train leaving Warsaw that night.

Anxiety mounts. Night falls and the streets are dark. The Jewish journalists got 25 places. It might go down to 15. A list is drawn up with 15 names.

They left at 11 pm and at midnight the doors of Tlomtzka 13 closed forever.

## THE "NEW YORK CAFE" IN LONDON / Egon Kish

The name of the New York Cafe in London's Whitechapel, in the beginning of the 20th century, gave no indication that its clientele was mostly Jews, or that the dominant language was Yiddish. Naturally the owner was a literary man. Everybody called him "Abramel", the name he used to sign his satirical pieces, but none knew his real name.

Some of the regulars were the non-Jewish reporters sent by their Fleet Street editors to collect local color from the Jewish ghetto. Even Joe the waiter was a literary fellow, who audited philosophy classes in Berne. He came to London to finish his studies, but was broke and had to take a waiter's job.

## THE FIRST JEWISH WAR CORRESPONDENT / Moshe Dor

Getzel Zlikowitz, a poet and writer, sent vivid and compelling despatches in Hebrew from the front during Britain's 1882 campaign against the Mahdi, in Sudan.

Zlikowitz was an unlikely correspondent. At the age of thirteen he was already considered a brilliant scholar in the talmudic tradition, a life for which he had been destined by his father; but his father died in 1879, and three months later,

buoyed by a small inheritance, the sixteen year old Zlikowitz left his native Lithuania and went to Paris. There he insinuated his way into the Sorbonne where he studied the ancient eastern languages.

In 1882 the British more or less annexed Egypt and the Sudan. In 1885 the Mahdi led his fanatic followers in a jihad against the British. General Gordon, who had been sent to quell the revolt,