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**English Cover:** The cover page of the Ladino newspaper *El Tiempo*, which was published for 60 years. An article on the paper during the 1882-83 period appears in this issue.

**Hebrew Cover:** Sultan Bayazid II welcomes the exiles from Spain upon their arrival in Turkey at the end of the 15th century. The painting is by Ömür Koç, born in 1963, a multi-faceted Turkish artist and art lecturer who specializes in miniature and traditional art forms.

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## A PRESS THAT HAS A STATE

To gain an understanding of the uniqueness and complexity of the problem of censorship in the State of Israel, one must go back 45 years to the War of Independence period when the press, or at least most of it, viewed itself as serving the *Yishuv* in the struggle for the establishment of the state.

There was no need then for any special persuasion to be exerted on the newspaper editors in order for them to accept that certain news items or even opinions ought not be published lest the enemy acquire information from them about the state of the *Yishuv*, then fighting for its life, or about preparations by the small armed forces that we had then, or about the state of stocks and arms or any other information that could aid the enemy's war effort. The 16 "No" rules in a February 1948 document which the newspaper editors helped formulate constituted the first Hebrew censorship "in 2,000 years," and were its ideological basis.

The Jewish people have long experience with "Noes," dating back to the time of Moses, yet in contrast to the Ten Commandments, which also include positive commandments, the noes of censorship did not provide for laws or amendments that would also institute the right of the press to have access to sources of information, or the duty of the establishment to reveal information and events that are not entirely flattering to it. Paradoxically, the 16 "Noes" drawn up by the representatives of the *Yishuv* fighting for liberation from the yoke of the British Mandate were inherited by the Hebrew state lock, stock and barrel. Lacking any other legal apparatus then, the state adopted the Mandate Emergency Regulations in order to impose censorship on the press. A further paradox is that most editors today prefer to keep those regulations in force, so long as censorship is deemed necessary. The British regulations to which they have grown accustomed are deemed preferable to the possibility of the politicians passing new Israeli legislation, which they fear might be worse still. After all, an agreement between the newspaper editors and the defense establishment had been worked out over the years within the framework of those regulations, allowing for the present coexistence of both sides — an agreement to disagree.

At this very time, as this issue of *Qesher* goes to press, a sharp debate is being waged of the type that recurs in the country every time a security issue erupts, moving the censor and the newspaper editors to the forefront of our political stage, sometimes hand

in hand, often as antagonists, but always certain of their ability to solve the conflict between them without outside interference. At least that is the way it was until recently when certain newspapers rebelled against this tradition and began involving the courts, especially the Supreme Court, in the issue.

It may be said that the sides in this conflict are, on the one hand, the politicians represented by the Law Committee of the Knesset and aided by certain public figures and even by journalists who are not newspaper editors, and on the other the majority of the newspaper editors. The core of the issue is whether censorship is still required at all, and whether concealment of information is possible in this day. Located at the epicenter of the debate is the Press Council.

What are the issues that cause the divisions of opinion in the Press Council? Let us begin with the most far-reaching one, which posits that there is no room for preventive censorship such as exists in the State of Israel in a modern, democratic state. Certainly there is no room for administrative sanctions against the media which can lead to closure of a newspaper for a prescribed period — a penalty imposed by the censor on various papers in the past. In the event of a violation of the law, a paper, or any other communications medium, could be punished legally according to existing laws. Opposing this view are newspaper editors who recognize the necessity of censorship in security matters — and in security matters only — but who a priori fear any law legislated by politicians. Based on their experience, it is not inconceivable, they claim, that members of Knesset will function out of considerations that are not necessarily related to state security and press freedom.

As if lending credence to these fears, the draft of the law currently put forward by the advisory committee of the Knesset Law Committee proposes transferring the censorship authority from a military to a civilian body — and a civilian body almost by definition ultimately turns into a political body. Another view holds that the very act of legislating an original Israeli law perpetuates the institution of censorship in the state's body of law, which is ideologically and normatively unacceptable. Two options emerge therefore: either to abolish the existing arrangements between the newspaper editors and the defense establishment entirely and rely on the courts, or to continue on with the existing arrangement as the least of all evils, especially as it has proven over the years to be flexible and open to change

in accordance with changing circumstances. The Press Council, headed by Prof. Amos Shapira, its acting president, has submitted a summary of the range of opinion held by its members to the Knesset Law Committee.

Forty-five years ago the Hebrew press in Eretz Yisrael fought side by side with other bodies for the establishment of the state, with the editors willingly forfeiting a portion of their rights. Now they are faced with dilemmas of a press that has a state, a democratic country that has been subject to a state of war with its neighbors since its inception.

The major essay in this issue is devoted to the mutuality between the press and censorship during wartime. The writer, Moshe Zak, a past editor of *Ma'ariv*, brings to his article the experience and knowledge accumulated over many years both as an editor and as a member of the Censorship Committee on behalf of the Editors Committee. We have come a long way since the censor deleted poems by Natan Alterman, Hayim Guri and Uri Zvi Greenberg, and have arrived at a point where the censor today adheres more or less to the ruling that forbids the disqualification of material "unless near certainty exists that its publication shall cause tangible harm to the security of the State." And we have not yet reached the end of the road.

## A Gate to the East

The color cover of this issue of *Qesher* leads us toward a press that has been researched or written about only minimally: the Jewish press of the Ottoman Empire, especially in Turkey, in its various periods and languages. The Turkish artist Ömür Koc, who is also a miniaturist, drew this cover originally as a postcard, commissioned by the newspaper *Shalom*.

*Shalom*, whose story is told in this issue by Nana Tarablus, the paper's domestic news editor, is the only Jewish newspaper appearing in Istanbul today. It is published in Turkish, with only one page in Ladino, testimony to better days that this language knew. Even the untrained eye can detect two interconnected motifs in the cover drawing: the expulsion of the Jews from Spain 500 years ago, and the welcome extended to them by Sultan Bayazid II as they reached the safe haven of Turkey. This welcome meant not only the physical survival of tens of thousands of exiles from the Iberian peninsula, but their cultural survival as well. Over 400 years later, the descendants of the exiles were to express this cultural rootedness in their new homeland in dozens of periodicals written in the

language spoken by their forebears — Judeo-Spanish, better known as "Ladino," printed in Hebrew, in Rashi script and in the Latin alphabet. Periodicals were also published in other languages, including Hebrew.

This issue of *Qesher* presents the stories of several of these newspapers, starting with *El Tiempo*, which appeared in Ladino for 60 years continuously and seems to have justifiably earned the title of the greatest of the Ladino newspapers. It was also the only Ladino paper in the world to be published as frequently as three times a week, which was the case during its most flourishing period. According to a reliable estimate, 52 Jewish periodicals appeared throughout the Ottoman Empire from 1667-1920, most of them in Ladino (34) and the rest in the other languages spoken by Jews — Turkish, Hebrew and French. Dozens of additional periodicals were published in Ladino from 1920 until World War II in Turkey — in Istanbul, Izmir and Adrianople — as well as in Paris, Vienna, Cairo, Salonika, Belgrade, Sofia, Sarajevo and Jerusalem.

The Jewish press in Turkey, especially the Hebrew-language press, reflected nearly every ideological and cultural trend in Judaism, from the Enlightenment and Zionism to socialism. This segment on the "Gate to the East" may thus be fittingly concluded by a quotation from a Hebrew periodical, *Yosef Da'at* ("An Addition to Knowledge"), published in Adrianople in 1888. This biweekly was committed to "tell of the events of the Judean diaspora in the land of Turkey and of all that happens to them in the shadow of the kind rulers, the sultans of Ottoman origin." Notice what it would not report: "day-to-day news, or the wars of writers who quarrel and hate, will not come into this house."

Having mentioned "the wars of writers," this issue of *Qesher* offers as a treat an amusing story by one of the great Jewish authors and journalists, Shalom Aleichem, about quarrels, hatreds and competition — Heaven forbid — between two Jewish newspapers in Kasrilevke. Whoever seeks allusions to other times and other places in this story does so at his own risk.



Head of the Journalism Studies Program  
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# CENSORSHIP AND THE PRESS IN FIVE WARS

Moshe Zak

## The War of Independence

On August 27, 1948, during the second truce in the War of Independence, David Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: "A delegation of journalists — against censorship interfering in political matters. They gave examples of astonishing behavior during 'Project Betzer' (harassment with dogs, etc.)."<sup>1</sup>

That operation (it was not a "project") was designed to round up draft-dodgers in Tel Aviv. The Military Police were helped in their search by dogs, and the newspapers tried to voice criticism of this foolish method, but the censor intervened and forbade publication of the critical remarks.

This was not the sole complaint raised by the editors with the prime minister, but Ben-Gurion saw fit to emphasize the matter of the dogs specifically. A few days before that meeting, the chief censor had ordered the closure for three days of the *Yediot Aharonot* press for publishing an article in that paper demanding the release of five former IZL commanders (Ya'akov Meridor, Hillel Kook, Eliyahu Lankin, Betzalel Amitzur and Moshe Hasson) held in the police jail at Beit She'an. The censor claimed the paper was forbidden to reveal the place of detention of the five men, but the editors did not accept this explanation and regarded it as political censorship.

The prime minister tried to placate them, promising the editors that a law would soon be promulgated declaring "there is no censorship except for matters of security." The draft law was not published right away, but only half a year later, and was far from satisfying to the journalists since it required that "all

material which is of public interest" must be submitted for censorship.<sup>2</sup>

However, the five IZL men were set free the day after the meeting between the editors and Ben-Gurion. The journalists had willingly accepted the security restrictions of censorship in time of war, but did not want to acquiesce to the chief censor's method of beginning to issue orders to them to the point where even Herzl Berger, a *Davar* editor (who was not an oppositionist) published an open letter to the attorney general in that paper at the end of July 1948. In it he wrote: "We are interested in military censorship, not political censorship. It is not acceptable that political censorship should function under the guise of military censorship."

## An Egyptian Plane Bombs the General Staff HQ

On February 22, 1948, some three months before the establishment of the state, David Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: "Katriel (Katz) reported to me on the censorship arrangements; the journalists undertook to refrain from publishing anything which the 'organization' (i.e., the Haganah) wanted to bar. They established 16 rules."

These "rules" were in fact 16 groups of "noes" which included reports on army movements, the size of units, identifying insignia, the number of inhabitants in small border villages, the location of installations of security/defense importance, equipment-purchasing activities abroad, and the movements of the leaders of the Yishuv. The editors objected to only one of the definitions, namely, "publishing reports which could arouse panic." This definition in theory could embrace

a wide spectrum of censorship deletions on the grounds that a report could generate panic among the public.

The editors agreed to all the other prohibitions, and thus voluntary Hebrew censorship was established at a time when, theoretically, British censorship still prevailed in the country.

Less than two months had gone by after the April 8, 1948, signing of the agreement, when the Hebrew censor let *Al Hamishmar* feel the weight of his authority for publishing a "forbidden" photo of Mount Kastel.<sup>3</sup> It was the first time a squad of soldiers had been sent to a newspaper editorial office — but not the last.

During the night of June 22-23, 1948, an army detachment broke into the offices of *Hamashkif* at 2 Chlenov St. in Tel Aviv and awakened the duty editor. The soldiers disconnected the telephone lines and thoroughly searched the editorial offices. After failing to find the subversive material they sought, they left without apologizing or saying that they had come on behalf of the censor or of any other governmental branch.

This incident was swallowed up in the turbulent events occurring on the day the vessel "Altalena" was beached on the shore at Tel Aviv.

Walter Bar-On, who was the second chief censor, described the tension prevailing between the first chief censor and the press thus: "In accepting the yoke of censorship, the newspaper editors had in mind a censor who would guide and instruct them, not some kind of super-inspector whose decisions could not be appealed and who held the means of punishment in his hands...."

The first Hebrew censor, one of the senior officials of the British Mandatory censorship division, was under heavy pressure from his first day by the army commanders who demanded that he categorically impose blackouts on the grounds of harming state security. Lack of experience in distinguishing between authentic demands and spurious ones, or demands with a political "sting," he accepted most of them.

In going through the file of deletions for the first year, I found some whose motivations I could not understand.<sup>4</sup>

The journalists did not appeal against the ban on publishing reports about the bombing of the hill at Ramat Gan where the General Staff headquarters was located, in June 1948, and in which three soldiers were killed and two of Ben-Gurion's aides were wounded.

"Clearly they have planted spies," wrote Ben-Gurion

in his diary after the Egyptian plane not only dropped its bombs on the roof of the building in which he was sitting but also fired in his direction with its cannons. Although hundreds of residents of the surrounding area saw and heard the bombing, there was no mention of the attack in the papers of those days, in order to withhold confirmation from the enemy of the direct hits from the air.

The authorities did not have to exert themselves to convince the editors not to publish things which could harm the war effort of a besieged people. Thus, even a political event of top importance, which occurred on July 2, 1948, when the government appointed a committee of ministers ("The Committee of Five") after the second "rebellion of the generals" in the General Staff, received no newspaper coverage.

There was no echo in the press of the grave government crisis, which erupted against the background of the differences between Ben-Gurion and the ministers who supported the stand of officers in the High Command. Only when it was over, after Ben-Gurion had retracted his resignation, did it become known that Yisrael Galili has stepped down from his job.

It was basically a political crisis, and the editors understood that mention of a crisis on the eve of the termination of the first truce could aid the enemy, and therefore did not appeal against the cloak of secrecy.

But when the censor tried to acquire authority to punish censorship violations, a storm broke out.

### Not a Word About "Eternal Woe"

On July 27, 1948, *Al Hamishmar* published a photo of Yigal Allon, commander of the Palmah, in contravention of an order banning identifying IDF commanders. The next day, the censor punished the paper by closing it for a day. The Editors Committee could not let this pass and published a communique expressing "sharp protest at the unacceptable way the prohibition was imposed and the serious damage caused by the censor to cooperation with the press."

The censor, Walter Bar-On, voiced his negative opinion of this method of punishment and wrote in his book: "The chief censor also adopted a method of punishment prevalent during the Mandate: for breaches of censorship, he would close papers by order, as the British had done in their day."<sup>5</sup>

This behavior by the censor sent the editors running to Ben-Gurion: their claim was that "because we see

ourselves as partners in the activities of the government and the state, it is to be greatly regretted that the censor regards us as a hostile factor.”<sup>6</sup>

The motive for the charge that the censor perceived the journalists as a hostile factor was also psychological: the editors regarded themselves as partners in Israel's defense, and here was Ben-Gurion appointing someone from the Mandatory Censorship to tell them what was good for the state and teach them procedures for responsible conduct in the form of issuing orders.

For years, the editors had fought the censorship of the foreign rulers. Since then, everything had changed, except that the attitude of suspicion and lack of trust which had characterized the hostile administration was retained in censorship.

They did not say this explicitly to Ben-Gurion but rather preferred to cite details. The minister of labor and housing, Mordechai Bentov, who had only half a year earlier been a member of the Reaction Committee (the precursor of the Editors Committee), supplied the papers with material on the paving of the “Burma Road,” and the censor tried to prevent publication of the reports based on that material. The editors did not know that the order had been given by Ben-Gurion himself, who wrote in his diary on August 17, 1948: “I summoned the military censor and ordered him to clamp down in preventing reports which could harm and damage the war effort. In the past few days, things have appeared which should not have been published — the paving of the Burma Road, war expenditures, recruitment of youths, etc.”

When the defense authorities confronted the problem of countering the psychological warfare waged by the Arab countries, they did not convene the newspaper editors nor co-opt them in this campaign, but recruited the services of the censor, who issued an order saying: “No material may be quoted from news agencies or foreign newspapers containing military or economic reports which could harm the IDF or the State of Israel.”

These orders angered the editors, and they complained about them to Ben-Gurion as well. At that time, Ben-Gurion needed the goodwill of the press for measures he was about to execute both domestically and externally in that stormy month of September. Domestically — dissolving the IZL and Lehi in Jerusalem and dismantling the special command structure of the Palmah; and externally, launching a military initiative

to break through to the Negev.

Ben-Gurion sought the help of the editors at a special meeting he convened in his office in the Kirya in Tel Aviv on September 9, 1948, telling them that “in the Yishuv, there is no apprehension of the situation and we must not be contemptuous of the strength of the enemy.” At his side was Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Yaakov Dori and Chief of Operations Yigael Yadin, who described the Egyptian preparations for renewing hostilities.

The picture was gloomy and was designed to concretely portray the danger of the imminent war to the editors, in the face of which all their complaints about the censor would pale in significance.

When one of the participants wanted to know whether the censor would permit publication of the information on the Egyptian concentrations along the confrontation lines with the IDF in the Negev, he was given a categorical “No.” Ben-Gurion conveyed to the editors the secret of Egyptian preparations to resume the war, but did not impart another secret to them. This was that the Egyptians had sent an emissary to Paris to speak with Eliahu Sasson to clarify conditions for a settlement, despite the fact that a few days earlier, Kenneth Gilby, correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune*, had published a report that an Arab state had put out feelers in a European capital to examine the possibilities of an Egyptian-Israeli accommodation.

The gloomy description of the situation of the Egyptian front contributed to a feeling of emergency among the editors, who did not bother the prime minister by asking what he intended to do to break the Egyptian siege in the Negev. The censor was not required to use his blue pencil at all to ban forecasts and guesses about Ben-Gurion's next move. The censor was not required to interfere, and no paper reported on the cabinet meeting of September 26, 1948, which, by a majority of seven ministers to six, rejected Ben-Gurion's plan to launch an operation to conquer the area between Latrun and the Dead Sea, including the southern salient embracing Bethlehem and Hebron.

Later, Ben-Gurion would describe the rejection of his plan in the traditional Hebrew phrase “*bechiya le-dorot*,” signifying a cause for eternal woe. But while the argument was raging in the government, there was no glimmer of it in the press, not even in the censor's deletion files.

## Two Agreements

The day after the editors had met with the defense minister, the editor of *Mivrak*, Eliyahu Amikam, was detained for publishing an article critical of the activity of the UN mediator, Count Bernadotte. At the same time, the censor closed *Mivrak* for a day for printing a report on a search conducted in the Lehi camp at Sheikh Munis. On September 24, the day Ben-Gurion concluded his plan for opening the Latrun campaign with the CGS, which was projected to encompass the area to the Dead Sea and Hebron respectively (the plan was rejected two days later by a cabinet majority), he found the time and had the inclination to discuss matters on censorship.

In his diary of that date, i.e. Sept. 24, he writes of the discussion in his office on censorship affairs and on the proposal "to establish an appeals committee, to which an article banned by the censor would be submitted — the Defense Ministry is setting up an appeals committee."

This was the first breakthrough vis-a-vis the Mandatory censorship laws — the setting-up of a committee to examine appeals by the press against decisions of the censor. It was the basis for the draft bill for "Regulating the relationship between the press and censorship," which was tabled in December 1948, even before the guns fell silent in the War of Independence. The proposal was signed by Lt.-Col. Isser Be'eri, the head of "Shai," the "Information (Intelligence) Service" of the IDF (the GHQ Intelligence was not yet a separate branch).

This proposed arrangement was given impetus by the action of the censor on November 1, 1948, when he decided to penalize two papers, *Davar* and *Haboker*, for breaches of censorship without granting the editors the right to a hearing to justify their cases. The two papers were ordered closed for a day, *Davar* for publishing the names of the two brigades which took part in Operation "Ten Plagues," and *Haboker* for a sentence reading "IDF forces have opened an offensive."

The censor's punishment was not carried out, however, owing to the intervention of the defense minister, who accelerated the beginning of discussions between the General Staff and the Editors Committee for the signing of an agreement on the relationship between censorship and the press. Isser Be'eri's proposal, which did not elicit a positive reaction from the editors, served as the basis for contacts which continued for a

whole year between the editors and the General Staff.

In the course of the negotiations, the attorney-general, Ya'acov Shimshon Shapiro, also intervened, questioning the granting of judicial authority to the joint censorship committee of the press and the IDF. He was the person who had suggested the establishment of the appeals committee against censorship decisions, but he firmly opposed devolving the authority of a court to judge censorship violators and reposing it in the hands of an external body. Ben-Gurion decided the matter against the attorney-general's stand, and in December 1949 an agreement was reached between the IDF and the Editors Committee. It was in the form of a letter from Lt.-Col. Chaim Herzog, then chief of the Intelligence Section at GHQ, saying:

Following the talks conducted between the Journalists Committee and the representative of the Chief of the General Staff, I hereby notify you that the Chief of the General Staff agrees to a new arrangement for exercising military censorship of the press. It is agreed that censorship shall be applied along the following lines:

1. The purpose of censorship is to prevent the leaking of security information liable to aid the enemy or damage the defense of the State.

2. Censorship is based on full cooperation between the military authorities and the newspapers, in order to attain this objective.

3. Censorship shall serve as a guide to the press in the direction of this goal.

4. Censorship shall not apply to political matters.

5. In order to reach mutual understanding between the press and the General Staff, a committee shall be established, composed of a representative of the army, of the press and of the public, in order to advise concerning matters of censorship.

6. The censor shall not impose a penalty but shall submit his complaints to the committee and it shall advise the General Staff regarding the penalty, according to law.

7. The committee shall examine disallowed material in order to advise regarding confirmation of its disqualification after hearing the censor's comments. Before deciding to submit his complaint, the censor must clarify the charge with the editor of the paper or his representative.

8. In the hearing before the committee, the



ensor shall appear as the prosecutor and the newspaper editor as the defendant.

9. Reservations regarding the material banned by the censor shall be brought before the committee by the newspaper concerned only with the approval of the Press Committee.

10. The hearing must be held rapidly; the committee shall convene no later than 24 hours after it is approached.

11. The committee's activity shall be secret and it will not be obliged to issue explanations in public regarding its decisions.

12. The General Staff shall usually accept all committee decisions reached by a majority vote, but reserves the right not to approve a decision.

While the first clause of the agreement explicitly established that "the purpose of censorship is to prevent the leaking of security information liable to aid the enemy or damage the defense of the State," the censor, accustomed from wartime to wielding unrestricted authority, tried to continue in this manner even after the war, and even after the conclusion of the agreement.

These attempts caused many clashes between him and the papers. In the first year of the agreement's existence, the censor lodged 22 complaints with the censorship court, and continued to penalize newspapers by closing them.

The agreement determined procedures for judging censorship violators and appeals against deletions in order to prevent negative exploitation of subjects outside the category of security. This was not changed in the second — amended — agreement between the Editors Committee and the General Staff, reached on May 21, 1951. In Clause 13 of that amended agreement, it was laid down that the CGS could not impose a harsher ruling against a paper if the committee's verdict had been unanimous. Should he wish to deviate from a decision by a majority of the committee, he must first hear the submission of the newspaper's representative.

This amendment came in the wake of a crisis between *Ma'ariv* and the CGS, Yigael Yadin, who increased the punishment and ordered the paper closed for a day, while the three-member committee had sufficed with only a financial fine. A corollary to this crisis was the conclusion of a reciprocal agreement that the censorship committee attached to the Editors Committee (of which one member sat as a judge in censorship trials) would

re-examine the list of subjects forbidden for publication that was drawn up by the censor.

One of the motives for this re-examination was a reply given in the Knesset by Minister Pinhas Lavon to the effect that the censor had banned further publication of a report in *Kol Ha'am* that the government had sealed an oilwell near Bir Hindis (Be'er Orah) in the Arava at the demand of an American company "because the censor thinks that further publication of a false report stands in contradiction to elementary public morality."

Meir Wilner, who raised this question in connection with the debate on economic policy, angrily retorted: "Is there censorship on morality, too, or only military censorship?"<sup>7</sup> Even though the editors dissociated themselves from *Kol Ha'am's* charges, they could not, and did not want to, acquiesce in the introduction of censorship being applied to preserve public morality.

The first seven years, the formative years of Israeli democracy, were seven years of searching for the dividing line between the needs of defense and security and those of political origin. They were the stormy years of the "Security Disaster" (*Esek Habish*) in Cairo, terrorist infiltrations and retaliatory raids, American sanctions against Israel for excavations in the Jordan Valley near Gesher B'not Ya'akov, changes in the premiership and the defense portfolio, sharp arguments in the ruling party over Israeli policy, seizures of Israeli cargoes in the Suez Canal and the imposition of the Egyptian blockade on the Gulf of Eilat, and the engulfing of the fabric of Israeli society, including the delicate security network, by the superpowers' Cold War.

All these left their imprint on the pattern of relations between the censor and the press, and delineated the lines of conduct beyond the two agreements between the General Staff and the press.

## The Sinai Campaign (Operation "Kadesh")

### Egypt, Not Jordan

The following report appeared in *Ma'ariv* of October 22, 1956:

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion, has decided to retract "wholeheartedly and unreservedly" his words directed against Herut in his summing-up speech in the political debate in the Knesset, which aroused a public storm. ("I do not believe in their crocodile tears over the spilled blood.")

D. Ben-Gurion announced that "it is likely he will not be present at the Knesset meeting because of urgent matters."

The paper did not detail what these urgent matters were which would keep B-G from making his statement in the Knesset. But the other newspapers reporting the next day on Ben-Gurion's letter to the Knesset speaker — in which he wrote "if, during the debate, words slipped out of my mouth which should not have been heard in the Knesset, I regret it and take them back wholeheartedly and unreservedly"<sup>8</sup> — did not say the prime minister was at that moment in Paris conducting political talks with France and Britain on joint action over Suez. His trip was kept secret, and the censor, who was alerted to prevent any leak, did not need to delete reports on preparations which then were in high gear for Operation "Kadesh."

American documents uncovered years later disclosed that, in Washington, an Israeli attack on Jordan was feared; it was not conceived that the callup of reserves in Israel was directed at Suez. President Eisenhower ordered Secretary of State Dulles to warn Ben-Gurion against being drawn along by extremists in Israel wishing to take control of part of the Hashemite Kingdom. When Menachem Begin spoke in the Knesset on October 17, 1956, of the need for pre-emptive action, Ben-Gurion totally ruled out his proposals and claimed that this was "insane advice." This crushing criticism of Begin certainly contributed to the conclusion by the American intelligence service to ignore the aerial photos supplied by a U-2 spy plane, used for the first time, of Israeli troop concentrations and warlike preparations by France and Britain, and to reach the evaluation that war was not imminent.

Censor Bar-On recalls that even before the General Staff discussions began on the coming war in Sinai, and much before there was mention of cooperation with the French and British on this, he was ordered to censor publication of certain of Ben-Gurion's statements. In his speech at a conference of the Moshav Movement on March 10, 1956, Ben-Gurion had said: "In the next war with Egypt, should it come, the IDF will be capable of deciding the outcome within four days."

After this report was published in *Yediot Aharonot*, Ben-Gurion asked the censor to stop its repetition in Israel or abroad.<sup>9</sup> And, indeed, this was done. But half a year later, during a political debate in the Knesset (October 18, 1956) mainly about the danger of the entry

of the Iraqi army into Jordan, Ben-Gurion uttered a highly significant sentence which evoked headlines to the effect that the main enemy was Nasser's Egypt.

Nevertheless, all eyes were directed that month at the Jordanian border, the Israeli retaliatory actions at Gharandal and Kalkilya, and the tension surrounding the question of the entry of the Iraqi army into Jordan. The press even relayed British threats to use the Royal Air Force to defend Jordan, and the censor did not stop publication of this report. Accordingly, there was no conjecture whatsoever in Israel or the world of another possibility, viz: the Egyptian border.

In fact, military censorship had intervened in this matter years before 1956, and banned articles advocating a pre-emptive strike against Egypt. For years, Dr. Azriel Carlebach contended with the censor who had banned his article calling for the IDF to deploy on the banks of the Suez Canal in order to constitute an intervention, instead of engaging in retaliatory raids which in his view solved nothing. However, when his proposal was realized, Dr. Carlebach was no longer alive.

This was not the only intervention by the censor in publicist opinion pieces. On March 24, 1954, Menachem Begin related in a Knesset speech: "I have received a telegram from Dr. Herzl Rosenblum, editor of *Yediot Aharonot*, who tried to publish an article in his paper today that included a demand that General Bennike (chief of staff of the UN Observer Force) should leave our country. The military censor banned the article. Is a demand voiced for Gen. Bennike to go the revelation of a military secret?"<sup>10</sup>

This issue of intervention in published opinion digresses from the scope of this article, which deals with censorship during and between the wars, but, undoubtedly, the ongoing showdowns between the press and censorship in the years between the wars had ramifications during wartime itself. However, during Operation "Kadesh" there was no time for the papers, or for the political parties, to break away from the national consensus, which crystallized rapidly thanks to the surprise element of Ben-Gurion's move and the amazement at the speed of movement of the IDF to the banks of Suez.

### **The Kafr Kassem Affair**

Neither the war nor the secret preparations for war created points of friction between the press and the censor during Operation "Kadesh," but this did occur

over a serious event outside the war zone: Kafr Kassem.

On October 29, 1956, the day IDF soldiers parachuted at Mitla in Sinai, a very grave incident occurred at Kafr Kassem, not far from the Jordanian border, which was under curfew. A unit of the Border Police fired at a group of Arab farmers returning from their fields during the curfew (of which they knew nothing at all) and killed 43 of them. On orders of the General Staff, the censor blacked out the report until the end of the war in Sinai. On November 1, 1956, Ben-Gurion appointed a commission (headed by a judge) to investigate all the facts connected with the grave incident. However, before the commission completed its investigation, the papers began to submit reports to the censor on what had happened at Kafr Kassem, which were then banned.

Only after publication of the official statement on November 12, 1956, which also reported that a Border Police battalion commander and some of his subordinates were put on trial, were the papers allowed the possibility of publishing details of the incident, without mentioning the number of casualties.

And only on December 17 did Ben-Gurion, under pressure from members of the Editors Committee (as testified to by the censor), permit publication of the number of casualties. The chief censor, Walter Bar-On, commented on this in his book: "Even today, at a distance of years, I look upon the Kafr Kassem affair and its reverberations in censorship policy with a very strong feeling of unease; in this affair, I lent my hand to silencing the press, even when there was no longer any security justification."<sup>11</sup>

The struggle connected with the Kafr Kassem affair did not harm the solid fabric of relations prevailing during the entire period of the war between the censor and the press. Even the sweeping ban on reports from abroad of British and French preparations to attack Egypt did not shake the editors. Without doubt, the fact that on the eve of Operation "Kadesh" Ben-Gurion revealed to the editors the secret of French arms shipments to Israel, contributed to this.

The night visit of the editors to the port where the advanced weaponry was being unloaded, months before the outbreak of the war, had accomplished its task. The amiable atmosphere prevailing then allowed the censor to request two newspapers not to publish a report they submitted in September on the visit to Israel of a statesman from an Arab country. The

censor was careful not to ban the report, since this was beyond his authority, but he used his authority to delay the report in order to allow the government time to demonstrate, directly or through him, that publication could be harmful.<sup>12</sup>

That was also the case half a year earlier, on April 20, 1956, with the banning of a report on the visit to Israel of Ibrahim Izzat, a journalist from the Egyptian publication *Rose el-Youssef*. Concealing his visit turned out to be pointless since the news was published abroad, and his superiors in Egypt introduced in his articles virulent anti-Israel remarks which he had not written. But at the time the papers were persuaded that by withholding publication they were protecting the life of the Egyptian journalist, who had interviewed many Israeli leaders. The first news of his visit was also delayed, with the purpose of persuading the papers not to print it.

### **What Did Chief of Staff Dayan Mean?**

How did this system work? We can learn about this from Moshe Sharett's diary entry for April 21, 1955. There, he relates a conversation with Ben-Gurion on an article by the present writer about differences between the Foreign Ministry and the IDF on the question of the accountability of the Armistice Commissions. The article was due to be published in *Ma'ariv* and was held up by the censor, who passed it on for perusal by Sharett and Ben-Gurion. At a meeting between the two, Ben-Gurion claimed there was no security basis for the censor to ban the article. Sharett wrote:

I glanced through the text and realized that indeed that was the case. From the outset, I had suggested delaying its publication not because I thought it might be possible to bring about its prohibition on security grounds, but in the hope of influencing *Ma'ariv* to desist from blowing up the matter. This hope was disappointed; *Ma'ariv* insists on its right, and the choice is between prohibiting and permitting. It was clear there was no escaping granting permission, but I decided this was the last moment to convince B-G to change his mind and take the matter into his hands, and we would then notify *Ma'ariv* that the reports it had received were not compatible with the facts.<sup>13</sup>

The censor was thus both a source of information and of advance notice for the government on what was

about to be published so that, to the extent necessary, it could apply the bulldozer of persuasion to prevent publication.

With the conclusion of Operation "Kadesh," tensions again surfaced between the censor and the press. They arose mainly from contradictory instructions issued by various government ministries to the censor. The Finance Ministry tried to maintain secrecy over the Soviet boycott on oil supplies to Israel, while the Foreign Ministry publicized the fact. By order of the CGS, the censor blacked out word of the freeing of 5,000 Egyptian prisoners of war, while at the same time the director-general of the Prime Minister's Office summoned a news conference and revealed details of the manner of their release.

Ben-Gurion invited the newspaper editors to sail aboard a Navy craft in the Gulf of Eilat to emphasize that he had no intention of giving it up, despite the resolution of the UN Security Council, but the Foreign Ministry and the CGS tried to use censorship to prevent publication of articles by journalists who had accompanied Ben-Gurion on the trip. The director-general of the Defense Ministry held a press conference on the enemy's military equipment seized in Sinai, while the CGS and the Foreign Ministry tried to lower its profile. It was hard for journalists to follow these fluctuations in censorship policy, generated in the pressure cooker in which Israel was situated after Operation "Kadesh."<sup>14</sup>

On March 10, 1956, Moshe Dayan said at a General Staff meeting:

I wanted to say something almost personal, but since this has reached the public and caused waves and rumors, it has become almost a public matter. I am leaving on Sunday for an annual leave of six weeks. Rumors have been spread about my resignation. There is no foundation to this. As a citizen and a soldier, I would regard it as a most negative thing if the CGS would want to throw his weight into influencing a government decision. Whoever takes it upon himself to be a soldier, including the CGS, accepts the defense policy of the government.<sup>15</sup>

This was a firm denial of rumors spread among the public and even hinted at by the press that the CGS opposed a retreat from Sharm-el-Sheikh and submitted his resignation to Ben-Gurion. The impact of those rumors was discerned in the lead editorial

in *Ha'aretz* two months later. The paper interpreted the Order of the Day of the CGS for Remembrance Day for fallen IDF soldiers (in which the question was asked "Are those holding the reins losing their grip?") as questioning the government's policy decisions concerning the withdrawal from Sinai and Gaza. The paper added: "The CGS intruded into the political debate when he drafted the Order of the Day for Remembrance Day for fallen soldiers; in doing so, he ignored one of the basic principles of a democratic state."

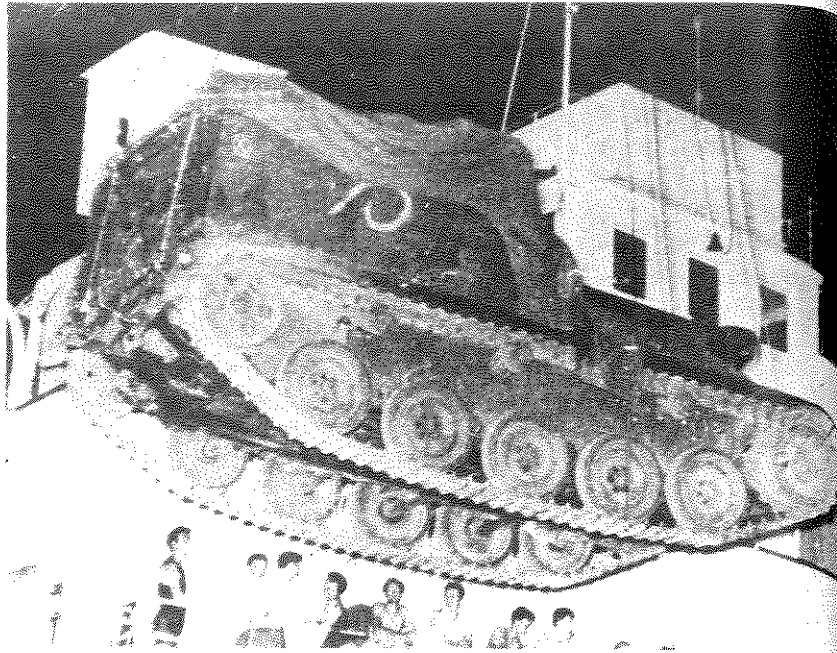
The article was banned by the censor, and the paper appealed the prohibition to the Committee of Three (i.e., the censorship committee). Countering the charge of the *Ha'aretz* editor before the committee, that the Order of the Day appeared to be a political argument with the prime minister over the issue of the withdrawal, Dayan replied: "The article is libellous because it attributes political intentions to the Order of the Day: I declare that I had no such intention, and there is no expression of opinion in the Order concerning the withdrawal in Sinai."

The committee upheld the ban on the article and determined that "it is liable to affect the morale of the army and hurt the feelings of bereaved parents."

This question of army morale would engage the censor and the press for many more years.

Between Operation "Kadesh" and the Six-Day War, there were various storms involving the censor, chiefly the handling of "The Affair," which shook the establishment, the arrest of Dr. Yisrael Beer, the arrest of the editors of the weekly *Bul* for publishing reports on the "Mossad" and the government of Morocco, the resignation of the chief of the "Mossad" following the affair of the German scientists, the arrest of Aharon Cohen of Sha'ar Ha'amakim, and the visit by the "Senior Military personality" to Germany. All these were widely treated in books by Walter Bar-On ("Stories That Were Not Told") and Dr. Dina Goren ("Secrecy, Security and Freedom of the Press"), and I shall not repeat them here. I shall cite only one curious affair: In November 1966, Prof. Yeshayahu Leibowitz complained in the press that, in the article on "Ben-Gurion" which he had written for the Hebrew Encyclopedia, corrections were inserted by the censor.

In reply to a parliamentary query, the deputy defense minister, Zevi Dinstein, denied that the censor had demanded changing the original text on the



**Scenes from five wars and in between.**  
Above (l. to r.): the capture of Beersheba by the IDF during the War of Independence; materiel arriving in Israel from France being unloaded at Haifa.

Middle: an Egyptian convoy hit in Sinai, 1956. Below (l. to r.): Israeli armored vehicle during the war in Lebanon, 1982; bridge over the Suez Canal during the Yom Kippur War.



subjects of the Sinai Campaign, "The Affair" (i.e., "The Security Disaster"), and relations with Germany. But it had amended individual words out of purely security considerations on the subject of the Sinai Campaign, changed one word in the article on "The Affair," at the suggestion of Prof. Leibowitz himself, and not changed anything regarding relations with Germany.<sup>16</sup>

Reading the Knesset protocol might give the impression that the censor had interfered and attempted to prevent criticism of Ben-Gurion in the encyclopedia. But a reading of the article in the encyclopedia, "Ben-Gurion," by Prof. Leibowitz, refutes this impression. The nine columns in the supplementary volume, which completed the five columns by Yehuda Erez in the article "Ben-Gurion" in Volume 9, are polemical and critical in nature. The writer did not spare criticism of Ben-Gurion on any topic, from the Sobelin Affair to the Lavon Affair. The censor did not prevent the writer, Prof. Leibowitz (who was an opponent of the nuclear armament of Israel), from publishing the following segment, which is of direct relevance to the press: "It became clear that the establishment of the reactor in Dimona was accomplished without the knowledge of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee or the Finance Committee. B-G and his aides attempted to keep this matter from the Israeli public by silencing the press even after details were known abroad and were published in newspapers there."

## The Six-Day War

### The Argument Between the CGS and the Politicians

The public debate on the eve of the Six-Day War and the controversy between those advocating waiting and their opponents would have found no expression at all in the Israeli press, had a new agreement not been signed a year earlier between the General Staff and the Editors Committee of the daily press.

The agreement, which went into effect on July 26, 1966, replaced the earlier one of May 20, 1951; while that had stipulated that "censorship shall not apply to political matters," the new formulation of 1966 intensified the restraints on censorship intervention in the expression of opinions. It said: "Censorship shall not apply to political matters, to opinions, or commentaries or assessments or any matter except if

they contain security information, or if that may be deduced from them." This clarification left wide scope for expressing opinions on government moves on the eve of the Six-Day War without impairing the element of surprise at its outset.

Indeed, the papers were not able to report on the secret mission to Washington of Mossad Chief Meir Amit, but they could indicate through commentaries and publicistic articles what IDF generals were saying to the government in confidence — that waiting could be fatal. This feeling of throwing off the shackles was augmented by the government's decision of March 28, 1967, to cancel the order of June 29, 1966, declaring an absolute ban on publication of the existence or contents of meetings of the Ministerial Defense Committee.

For some reason, the government had forgotten to publish the cancellation of the order in the Official Gazette (*Reshumot*) but the censor, who knew of it, acted in accordance with it<sup>17</sup> and this, too, opened the valves for public debate in the press at a decisive moment.

This agreement with the censor, like the previous one, was also in the form of a letter from the General Staff to the chairman of the Editors Committee. Signed by Col. David Carmon, acting chief of Military Intelligence, it included the following changes in the texts of Clauses 2, 4 and 5:

2. Censorship shall not apply to political matters, or opinions, commentaries, assessments or any matter whatsoever unless it contains security information, or from which such information can be deduced.

4. The censor shall, from time to time, update the list of subjects requiring prior inspection, in accordance with this agreement, and shall notify the press of this.

5. (a) A Committee of Three shall be formed, comprising a representative of the army to be appointed from time to time by the CGS, a representative of the press to be appointed from time to time by the Committee of Daily Newspaper Editors, and a representative of the public to be chosen by both parties and who shall serve as the committee's chairman.

5. (b) Before the censor decides to submit a complaint, he will first clarify his claim with the editor of the paper or his representative.



5. (c) The committee shall be authorized:

- To discuss the censor's complaints against papers which publish material that has been banned by him under Clause 1, or for non-submission of material for prior inspection, or for not complying with the censor's instructions. Should the committee decide there is a basis for the complaint, it shall recommend to the CGS in each case what penalty shall be imposed on the paper.

- To discuss a complaint by a newspaper editor or his representative regarding the prohibiting of material by the censor and either confirm the prohibition or cancel it, wholly or in part.

5. (d) All decisions by the committee shall be submitted for approval by the CGS. A decision adopted unanimously shall not be subject to change. When a decision is adopted by a majority, but the CGS intends to change it, the opportunity shall be afforded to the newspaper's representative to state his case before the CGS before the adoption of the decision to change it. If there is a majority decision or a suggested minority decision, one of them more severe than the other, the CGS shall not decide to confirm the more severe one.

Prior to this, on July 15, 1966, the chief censor had sent the editors a detailed list of 68 subjects requiring prior inspection by military censorship, in addition to six subjects which the government had specified in special orders, such as immigration from countries from which it was restricted, the Eilat-Ashkelon oil pipeline, the movement of oil tankers, and negotiations by the government to obtain loans from abroad.

The 68 subjects included obvious matters such as the IDF's order of battle, military acquisitions, training and secret operations, as well as details on the Israeli intelligence community. These aroused no dissent.

But that was not the case with a subject such as "army morale," which included "criticism of what was going on in the IDF, or differences of opinion, complaints about arrangements and conduct in the IDF, political trends and moods, except for commentaries not containing reports about the army."

Sharp arguments occurred through the years between the censor and the papers, and also between the CGS (Yitzhak Rabin) and the politicians, about the

interpretation of this clause.

In May 1967, politicians approached the CGS and asked him "to enlist the censor to delete the harsh remarks against (Prime Minister) Eshkol from publications and articles." Levi Eshkol was then defense minister as well, and this could harm the army's morale. Nonetheless, the CGS ordered the censor to "adhere faithfully to the area he was in charge of, defense matters exclusively, and not to use his pen or scissors on political subjects."<sup>18</sup>

### Army Morale

When the crisis of May 1967 erupted, the arguments disappeared. Whoever was not mobilized in the reserves occupied himself with defense measures at home, digging trenches. Public apprehension found expression in commentaries on the possibility that the Egyptians would launch poison gas attacks on the Israeli home front, as they had done in Yemen.

The censor banned these articles, as it forbade all criticism about the absence of sufficient preparations for civil defense. Retrospectively, this was a wise decision, and the papers did not question it.

The pace of the war allowed no time for confrontations between the censor and the press. The Israeli press meticulously complied with the order for "battlefield blackout" on the first day of the war, and made up for it with news in the following days and for many days after the end of the war.

IDF commanders supplied much material for stories of the "Now it can be told" variety. The censor acted with great liberality in permitting publication of the military moves as related by the generals, until, on June 16, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan ordered the generals to end the carnival. Indeed, it had been a major outpouring compared to the secrecy which surrounded the War of Independence, when the censor had ordered the closure of *Al Hamishmar* for a day for printing the photo of Yigal Allon, commander of the southern front.

Harder times awaited relations between the press and the censor after the Six-Day War, when political evaluations began. In the context of the clause dealing with contacts between states which did not maintain diplomatic relations with Israel, the censor was empowered to ban the report on the meeting in London, on July 2, 1967 (three weeks after the Six-Day War), between Dr. Ya'akov Herzog, director-general of

the Prime Minister's Office, and King Hussein.

But the government did not suffice with this; it asked the censor to impose a blackout on political subjects as well, which was not compatible with security censorship — for example, the request to the United States to veto the Indian proposal to dispatch a UN emissary for refugees of the Six-Day War. In their anger at the leak from a cabinet meeting, some ministers threatened to issue an order preventing publication of reports from Ministerial Defense Committee meetings, a ban which only months before had been suspended.

Since Israel's entire political struggle was discussed in that ministerial committee, such an order could disqualify from public assessment the central issue then heading Israel's concerns. Accordingly, the journalists fought this trend of the government and even, to a considerable degree, blocked it.

The subject of "army morale" was put to the test a few months afterward. On October 21, 1967, a missile was fired from an Egyptian missile boat at the Navy vessel "Eilat" and sank it. There were many casualties, and the shock touched off a controversy within the defense establishment leadership over whether there had been prior warning of a possible strike at the destroyer. The argument has not yet ended, but it appeared to be the first time the censor did not apply the clause concerning "army morale" to prevent a discussion of the debate.

The distress caused by the prolonged War of Attrition slowed down the rate of this process of censorship liberalization. Thus, we cannot find in the press of those years (1969 and 1970) traces of the vigorous argument conducted then between the ambassador in Washington (Yitzhak Rabin) and the defense minister (Moshe Dayan) over bombing raids deep in Egypt. Nor could the press be the first to reveal that the Egyptians had advanced their missiles to the banks of the Suez Canal under the protection of the August 1970 ceasefire agreement.

To the same extent, the press did not reflect the differences of opinion in the political-defense establishment in September 1970 over the question of principle as to whether to help King Hussein in his struggle against the Syrians and the Palestinians, and how to deploy Israel's deterrent power to prevent a change in the status quo in the Kingdom of Jordan.

Indeed, there was a point in preventing publication of operative details, including IDF concentrations on the

Syrian frontier; however, not only these were blacked out by the censor but also the existence of the debate on the political issue and the question of Israel's policy orientation — whether to prefer the Hashemite regime to the Palestinian alternative.

## The Yom Kippur War

### Earthquake

The censor did not ban publication of the report from the (Egyptian) Middle East News Agency which said on the night of October 1/2, 1973, that Egypt had declared a full alert of its army in the central and northern sectors of the Suez Canal. After the war, Hassanein Heikal related<sup>19</sup> that this report resulted from a technical error by an editor and greatly worried the government of Egypt, which feared it might have lost the element of surprise in the war.

The ME News Agency telegram was published in *Ma'ariv* of October 2. A day before, the same paper had prominently printed a report on "tension along the Golan border with Syria." The Syrian press reacted by saying "the Israeli media are publishing reports on Syrian concentrations on the Golan Heights in an attempt to justify what Israel is planning to perpetrate, namely a broad attack on Syria."

At a symposium on "Freedom of the press in peacetime and wartime," in memory of Ted Lurie, Shalom Rosenfeld mentioned not only deletions of reports about Egyptian reinforcements flowing to the Suez Canal, on the grounds that secret intelligence material should not be revealed, but also of a request by the IDF spokesman who had asked him as editor to prevent, or alternatively not to give prominence to, items of this nature, so as not to arouse panic among the public.

On the other hand, Brig.-Gen. Yitzhak Shani, who during the Yom Kippur War headed the Tel Aviv censorship bureau, claims he did not prevent publication of reports of tension on both frontiers, but merely banned, as usual, use of secret intelligence sources. As proof, the censor cited an article in *Ma'ariv* on the eve of Yom Kippur, which was passed by him, which said: "IDF forces are closely following events on the Egyptian side of the Suez Canal. All steps have been taken to prevent the possibility of surprise by the Egyptians."



Through no fault of the paper, nor of the correspondent, and certainly not of the censor, this information was not accurate. Disasterously, not all steps were taken to prevent an Egyptian surprise. The war that broke out was in the nature of an earthquake, and shocked both the press and the defense establishment.

Suddenly, the Editors Committee became a station in the pattern of daily meetings of the defense minister and the CGS. In between meetings at the War Room with the General Staff and those with the Ministerial Defense Committee, Moshe Dayan and Lt.-Gen. Elazar were rushing to meetings with the Editors Committee.

We now know that even if there were more than just a few moments of candor, Dayan did not reveal all to the editors. But the frequent and exciting conversations left their imprint on the sense that the editors had of being partners in keeping secrets. Accordingly, during the entire war, not a single censorship complaint was submitted against a paper, nor, conversely, one by a paper against the censor.

Moreover, on the third day of the war, the censorship committee of the Editors Committee met with the censor and accepted a decision that it "empowered the censor to ban publication of matters revealed off the record in briefings to military correspondents," while confessing that the papers had not struggled sufficiently with the censor on the eve of the war concerning publication of complaints by reservists about irregularities in emergency stores, or about the feeling of superiority that prevailed in the IDF before the war.

Members of the censorship committee expressed the view that had they warned of the defects in time, perhaps the shortcomings that became apparent on the first day of the war might have been avoided, although the censor might have banned these expressions of criticism on the grounds that they might harm the army's morale.

Ten days after the official end of the war, the censorship committee convened again and its members discussed the military censorship policy after the war at length. Following the debate, the chief censor, Bar-On, established the following rules (as they were worded in the official minutes):

Three prohibitions that may not be transgressed:

1. Preventing the disclosure of military secrets (matters which could help the enemy and harm the security of the state);

2. Preventing publication of material damaging to commanders active in the field and responsible for the lives of their subordinates;
3. Preventing publication of items harming the morale of the fighters.

On the other hand, subjects "which the press is permitted to deal with in a general way without entering into detail" were:

1. Criticism of, and argument with, the government's policy before the war, and whether it was wise;
2. Publication of intelligence warnings which found expression in existing publications;
3. General criticism such as that levelled at the IDF without relating to operative or tactical steps which could reveal secrets;
4. Excessive confidence in our forces and/or contempt for the enemy (subjects which were widely aired);
5. The concept of, and argument over, the Bar-Lev Line;
6. Senior officers in the reserves and political aspects;
7. Criticism of the IDF's and the entire state's information methods.<sup>20</sup>

So much for what was recorded in the minutes, which show the turnabout in censorship practice and an end to hiding behind the veil of "army morale." It is inconceivable that at the end of the War of Independence a book such as *Hamehdal* ("The Blunder") could have been published, as it was after the Yom Kippur War.

Though the IDF was "opened up" to the press in the Six-Day War, nonetheless it was not possible in 1967 to publish the order of the minister of defense not to approach the Suez Canal — an order not obeyed — as became possible at the end of 1973 and the beginning of 1974. At that time, differences between the defense minister and the deputy CGS (Maj.-Gen. Yisrael Tal) concerning the dimension of the IDF's reaction across the canal in the days between the Geneva Conference and the Disengagement Agreement were published.

During the war, the censor permitted publication of commentaries favoring and opposing the conquest of Damascus, articles which it is difficult to conceive would have been allowed in previous wars.

The shock of the war, which staggered the IDF, brought with it a spirit of openness in the policy

governing publication, but the more the leash was loosened vis-a-vis military aspects of the war, the more the national leadership developed a tendency to use censorship to ban the exposure of political ramifications.

The government reached a record level when, in March 1975, it enlisted the censor to ban the book by journalist Matti Golan on the negotiations with US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, on the grounds that it included secret documents. The author was forced to struggle for an entire year before the book was passed for publication.

As a direct consequence of that affair, an order was issued by the government and published in the Official Gazette of January 18, 1976, saying:

These shall be the secret matters within the scope of Clause 23 (D) of the Law unless their publication has been allowed by the Prime Minister or on his behalf or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs or on his behalf:

1. A report on the existence or content of a document relating to Israel's foreign relations and classified as "most secret," or given a classification of equivalent significance, it being a document from Israel meant to be given to the representative of a foreign state or one from a foreign state meant for an Israeli representative (the reference was to messages and diplomatic notes of various kinds).

2. A report relating to the visit by an Israeli representative to a foreign state, or by a foreign representative to Israel, or a meeting between an Israeli representative and one from a foreign state with which Israel does not maintain diplomatic relations, and a visit or meeting not conducted publicly and not publicized officially in Israel.

Two immediate factors impelled the government to promulgate this order: a report published in April 1975 on Yevgeny Primakov's mission on behalf of Soviet President Brezhnev to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Jerusalem; and a second disclosure at the end of that year of Rabin's refusal to accept a sharp note from President Ford through the American ambassador regarding the Israeli settlements in the Administered Territories.

An energetic campaign in the Knesset by journalists prevented this widening of censorship parameters, and the government retreated from its intention.

## The War for the Peace of Galilee

### A Change in Censorship Policy

The censor did not lodge a single complaint against papers for violating censorship in the Six-Day and Yom Kippur Wars; by contrast, two complaints were tabled in the "War for the Peace of Galilee" (the campaign in Lebanon in 1982). *Ha'aretz* was accused on July 6, 1982, of not carrying out instructions by the censor to delete passages in an article by Ze'ev Schiff. *Ha'aretz's* claim was that the censor had not restricted himself to ordering deletions but had tried to rewrite a number of lines in the article in a manner which introduced a degree of political intervention.

The Committee of Three imposed a fine on the paper but, at the same time, found that "the paper is not obliged to publish what was rewritten by the censor. If the rewritten segment is not agreed to by the paper, it should appeal to the Committee."<sup>21</sup>

The other complaint related to *Al Hamishmar* which, on October 29, 1982, was fined by the Censorship Committee for publishing a report on a cabinet meeting at which Defense Minister Ariel Sharon proposed bombing terrorist concentrations near Tripoli (claiming the terrorist camps were located at a distance from Syrian Army positions and from centers of civilian population). His proposal was not accepted.

In May 1982, reports were printed of differences between ministers concerning courses of action to restrain the terrorists in Lebanon, for example that seven ministers did not agree with the course advocated by Prime Minister Begin of strong reaction to provocations by terrorists in Lebanon. The reports did not include operative details, nor was there explicit mention of differences of opinion becoming apparent at the meeting of the Ministerial Defense Committee, since its discussions were confidential.

However, both the reports and publicistic articles published at that time created an eve-of-war atmosphere.

On May 12, the chief censor charged *Ha'aretz*, in the Censorship Committee, with failing to submit a report on differences within the government over prior inspection by the censor. *Ha'aretz* defended itself by asserting that the report had been made public the previous day by *Kol Yisrael* (the national radio network) and by the evening papers.

The verdict issued by the judicial censorship

committee (the Committee of Three) headed by Dr. Yehoshua Rottenstreich, and which the representative of the IDF endorsed, shows the liberalization on the part of the censorship in dealing with political-military matters. The verdict said, inter alia: "In the committee's opinion, the report should have been submitted for prior censorship. However, we do not think any damage was caused to the State's security, since it is clear to us that the censor would have passed most of the article, according to his own statement, or the Committee would have done that."<sup>22</sup>

The fine imposed on the paper by the Committee was only symbolic, and, as indicated, the decision illustrated the great change in censorship policy.

Prior disclosures of discussions within the top leadership did not inhibit the war initiative on June 6, 1982. From documents captured by the IDF in Lebanon it became clear that the terrorists had indeed known in advance of Israeli preparations for war — but not from reports in the Israeli press, which they regarded with suspicion. Rather, they received the information from one of the Falangist Party leaders in Lebanon, who continuously reported to them on the meetings between Bashir Jemayel and Israeli emissaries.

Before the outbreak of war, the censor permitted publication of internal debates for and against action. The moment the decision was adopted by the cabinet, and the wheels of war began turning, however, the censor was forced to clamp a blackout on all military moves, as is customary in war.

But in the course of hostilities, the Censorship Committee intervened in favor of *Ha'aretz* and on January 3, 1983, permitted publication of a segment banned by the censor concerning a demand for the suspension of the chief of military intelligence. The Censorship Committee determined unanimously that "in order to prevent doubt, we wish to establish that the censor's considerations were not political."

## Conclusion

An account of relationship of the press with censorship during five wars cannot reflect the constant struggles of the press against the restrictions which the administration tried to impose on it by means of censorship. During the wars, the struggles subsided. The immense progress made in delineating the dividing line between what was permitted and what prohibited in publications, between legitimate security requirements

and freedom of information, was attained not during the wars, but rather in the intervening years, as testified to by Brig.-Gen. Yitzhak Shani: "Every agreement between the Editors Committee and the IDF High Command caused additional erosion in the censor's powers in favor of the press, i.e., it adjusted the borderline in favor of freedom of publication."<sup>23</sup>

The clause mentioned above appeared in all the agreements between the IDF and the Editors Committee: "Censorship is based on full cooperation between the military authorities and the newspapers." The clause, born in the days of voluntary censorship in the period before the establishment of the state, created the mistaken impression that censorship existed by virtue of the agreement of the Editors Committee. But this was not so. Censorship operated according to the Defense (Emergency) Regulations of 1945, i.e., from the time of the Mandate.

These regulations allowed unrestricted leeway to the censor both regarding punishments he was authorized to impose and in defining the "sins" he was empowered to categorize. By virtue of the agreements between the Editors Committee and the authorities, the censor was accorded the power to punish under the law, and the purview of his supervision was limited to security matters only.

It is hard to conceive today that a newspaper should submit a poem for inspection, but in the state's first decade, two poems by Natan Alterman were banned — one about the Palmah and the other about an armed clash at Umm el-Fahm — and one poem by Haim Guri (following the dissolution of the Palmah). In addition, the editor of *Herut* complained to the Editors Committee that the censor had asked him to submit a poem by Uri Zvi Greenberg for prior inspection.<sup>24</sup> Poems were banned not only in *Davar* and *Al Hamishmar* but also, when read out by Knesset members, in the Knesset Record.

Years later, the censor recognized the absurdity of this and wrote: "I am convinced that, today, things would not have turned out like that. The State of Israel as well as censorship have matured sufficiently to understand that criticism is not necessarily a danger to security."<sup>25</sup>

In September 1955, the censor responded to a request by ministers and put a temporary ban on publicizing the discovery of oil at Heletz in order to prevent speculation in shares. In 1993, the censor would not

bow to such a demand by the government and it is not conceivable that the papers would agree to submit reports on the discovery of oil to prior inspection. This subject is no longer included in the list of matters requiring supervision. That list has become shorter in the course of years, thanks to the struggles by the press.

The defense minister did not need the consent of the editors to place a blackout on the "Jibril deal," since any disclosure of negotiations on freeing captured Israelis falls within the authority of the censor. But when, in May 1985, he mentioned at a closed meeting with the editors that this deal was imminent, he said "the other side" had conditioned the release of three IDF soldiers on the maintenance of secrecy. None among those present objected, since the issue was human life.<sup>26</sup> No editor wished to take the responsibility for the fate of the prisoners in the event of premature publication. Even those who thought the deal wrong did not break the rule of silence.

The newspaper editors gave no seal of approval to the censor, neither in this case nor in others where it was made known that the blackout was ostensibly with the consent of the editors. Only during the War of Attrition were reports stopped through agreement between the IDF authorities and the press. Agreements not to publish the photos of IDF casualties in the strongholds along the Suez Canal were not the product of censorship regulations, nor even required by the censor, but arose out of agreement between the papers and the authorities in order to preserve home-front morale during wartime. This agreement was cancelled even before the end of the War of Attrition. But it was an unusual occasion, not having to do with censorship.

On the other hand, the press struggled through the years against attempts by the authorities to widen the scope of censorship. Prominent in this endeavor was the prolonged struggle against the government order to ban publication of reports from cabinet meetings and the Ministerial Defense Committee.

The order was not annulled, but the vigorous posture of the press against it caused a situation in which it became a sort of "statute not ordered implemented." Confirmation of this came from Cabinet Secretary Elyakim Rubinstein in his letter of July 15, 1990, to the subcommittee on censorship of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, containing the following announcement:

In view of the recommendations of the Censorship Committee, it has been determined that the Prime Minister (Yitzhak Shamir) shall strive to minimize as far as possible announcing that subjects were discussed in the Ministerial Defense Committee (about which publication is banned). But when reports on political subjects include the updating of the defense system, then by their nature they are subject to censorship.<sup>27</sup>

At the beginning of 1976, the government requested endorsement by the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of a new order prohibiting publication of exchanges of notes with foreign heads of state, and visits by envoys from countries which do not maintain diplomatic relations with Israel. The strong objection of the Editors Committee and the National Federation of Journalists blocked confirmation of the order by that Knesset committee.

An additional achievement was chalked up to the credit of the Editors Committee in May 1989 when the defense minister (Yitzhak Rabin) introduced an additional amendment in the agreement with the press saying: "Censorship shall act according to the principle that a report shall not be prohibited unless near certainty exists that its publication shall cause tangible harm to the security of the State."<sup>28</sup>

In other words, the defense minister limited the discretion of the censor and allowed him to ban security-related material only if there was virtual certainty that publishing it would cause concrete harm to state security.

This order was also reflected in the reduced number of complaints from the censor against the press in recent years. These totalled one or two annually, compared to five or six appeals by the press against censorship deletions.

On the eve of the Yom Kippur War, Maj.-Gen. (res.) Chaim Herzog related that "the papers refused to be their own censors on matters of security, for they recoiled from the responsibility involved in this."<sup>29</sup> The proposal was to proceed on the British model of guiding the press through prior notifications that this or that security matter should not be published (the D-Notices, standing for "Defense / Security-Notices").

Is this model ideal for preserving the desired balance between freedom of information and the state's security requirements? After the Falklands War, the British Defense Ministry dispatched a high-ranking delegation

to Israel to examine Israeli censorship activity during the Lebanon War. On its return, it recommended adopting the "Israeli model."

In any event, the editors of the daily newspapers prefer the legal arrangement that has been in existence since the Mandate period over legislating an Israeli law, even though its intent would be to reduce censorship and censorship authority.

In its general meeting on March 30, 1993, the Committee of Daily Newspaper Editors decided to reject a draft law submitted by the chairman of the Knesset Constitution, Law and Judiciary Committee, despite his assertions that the proposal aimed to assure more liberal censorship.

The editor's attitude in 1993 was no different from that in 1949, namely that censorship must not be perpetuated as a permanent institution in the media but rather must be restricted to emergency use. The government's proposed law in 1949, published in *Reshumot* ("Official Gazette") on June 24, was shelved then, while the law initiated by the chairman of the Knesset Constitution Committee in 1993 was rejected by the editors. Today, as then, the editors prefer the temporary status of censorship during an emergency period only (even though the emergency period has lasted 45 years) to a new Israeli law.

Translated by Yosef Yaakov

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1. David Ben-Gurion, *Yoman Milhama* (Tel Aviv, 1982), Vol. II, p. 664.
2. *Reshumot*, Draft Law 13, p. 24, June 17, 1949. The bill was dropped and was replaced by the agreement between the daily press and the IDF General Staff, which limited the application of the Mandatory Defense Regulations.
3. Shalom Rosenfeld wrote widely about this affair, in his article "Kitat Hayalim Ba'ah Le'akev Hotza'at Al Hamishmar." In *Qesher* 4, November 1988, pp. 50-54.
4. Walter Bar-On, *Ha-Sipurim Shelo Supru* (Tel Aviv, 1981), p. 18 (henceforth, Bar-On).
5. *Ibid.*
6. Dinah Goren, *Sodiyut, Bitahon ve-Hofesh Itonut* (Jerusalem, 1976), p. 95 (henceforth, Goren).
7. *Divrei Ha-Knesset*, 5711, Vol. A, p. 258.
8. *Ibid.*, Oct. 22, 1956, 174th Meeting of Third Knesset.
9. Bar-On, p. 61.
10. *Divrei Ha-Knesset*, March 24, 1954.
11. Bar-On, p. 83.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
13. Moshe Sharett, *Yoman Ishi* (Tel Aviv, 1978), Vol. IV, p. 955.
14. Bar-On, p. 85.
15. Moshe Dayan, *Avnei Derekh* (Tel Aviv, 1976), pp. 341-42.
16. *Divrei Ha-Knesset*, 128th Meeting of Sixth Knesset, pp. 669-70.
17. Bar-On, p. 190.
18. Yitzhak Rabin, *Pinkas Sherut* (Tel Aviv, 1979).
19. Hassanein Heykal, *The Road to Ramadan* (English), p. 30.
20. The official minutes (verbatim) of the censor's statement at the Censorship Committee meeting of Nov. 5, 1973.
21. Minutes of the meeting of the Censorship Clarification Committee, headed by Dr. Yehoshua Rottenstreich, attended by a representative of the General Staff.
22. Minutes of the verdict of the Censorship Committee, May 13, 1982.
23. Colloquium at Tel Aviv University, Jan. 1, 1990.
24. Goren, p. 195. The poetess Aliza Tov-Malka, Uri Zvi Greenberg's widow, told me that the banned poem was published years later in one of the booklets commemorating the anniversary of the poet's death, but she could not find the booklet.
25. Censor Y. Shani in a personal conversation with the author.
26. Personal testimony.
27. Letter from the cabinet secretary, on behalf of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, to the chairman of the committee, MK Yossi Sarid.
28. Letter from the defense minister to Hannah Semer, rotating chairwoman of the Editors Committee, May 17, 1989.
29. Article by Chaim Herzog, *Ma'ariv*, Feb. 16, 1972.

## THE LOCAL KASRILEVKE NEWSPAPERS Impressions by Shalom Aleichem, 1914-15

Just as everything in Kasrilevke is to be found in duplicate, there are two Jewish newspapers as well: *Yarmulke* ("Skullcap") and *Kopelush* ("Cap") — the former Orthodox, old-fashioned and conservative, the latter radically modern. Each paper does its best to ignore the other, although when there is no choice, each insults the other lavishly and alphabetically, from A to Z, a literary device well received by the public, which terms this type of prose "criticism." In fact, when such "criticism" does not appear, circulation drops, so the editors try to wash each other's dirty linen often.

The competition between the two is fierce, and each knows exactly what the other is up to. When *Yarmulke* published a special Friday issue entitled *Shabbat Shalom*, *Kopelush*, despite its reputation as a radical paper, followed suit. But *Kopelush* grew tired of imitation, and one Friday announced that, inasmuch as many of its readers were not interested in the Sabbath supplement, it would be discontinued. Surprisingly, *Yarmulke* followed suit. Once, during the slow summer season, *Kopelush* came up with the idea of inviting its readership to respond to a questionnaire on whether they desired a change in the design of the masthead or not. The very same day, *Yarmulke* ran the identical questionnaire, using the exact wording that appeared in the competing paper. Moreover, eventually, when *Kopelush* announced that of its 20,000 readers, 187 criticized the old masthead but 19,813 wanted to retain it, that same day, *Yarmulke* ran the identical announcement, using the very same figures.

The Kasrilevke papers, like newspapers all over the world, exist by virtue of sensational news items. But while elsewhere there are limits to these items, in Kasrilevke there are no such limits. For example, *Kopelush* runs an item that a woman in France gave birth to a baby with two heads, and the following day *Yarmulke* embroiders the same item so that the French baby has three heads and eats with all three mouths. *Yarmulke* reports one Friday that a woman bought a fish for the Sabbath weighing two kilos, brought it home, removed the scales, cut it up and discovered in it a ring and two earrings of pure gold. Readers were invited to view them at the newspaper office. Not to be outdone, *Kopelush* reports the following Sunday that a

woman bought a five-kilo fish for the Sabbath, which she could barely carry home, removed the scales, cut it up and discovered in it half a dozen soup spoons, a dozen teaspoons, three gilt goblets, two trays and several silver candlesticks — all 84 carat. Readers were invited to view them at the newspaper office.

But the most sensational feature of all is the serialized novel. Both papers run a suspense novel titled, respectively: "The Stolen Bride's Forbidden Kiss" and "The Forbidden Bride's Stolen Kiss," adapted from an old Russian book by two journalists who are assigned, respectively, to stretch out the adventures as far as possible. The stories are followed with great enthusiasm in Kasrilevke, and although the writers have grown weary of the project and long to end it, neither editor is willing to be the first to do so. Meanwhile, the heroes have been shot three times over and the forbidden brides have been stolen twice, seduced, tortured and rediscovered yet again.

Regarding advertising, the Kasrilevke papers can be said to follow American practice and even to outdo it. Advertising is all the rage and everyone puts notices in the papers, whether voluntarily or not. Marriages, births — every event warrants a notice, and heaven help anyone who is recalcitrant in this respect. For example, when Nahum the grocer became fed up with advertising and stopped putting notices in the papers, he was horrified to read one morning: "Last night rats converged on a large local grocery and demolished all the goods. Once sated, the rats began expiring in droves." Nahum swore he would sue the papers. But in the end each paper carried the daily ad: "Good, Fresh Groceries of all Kinds Only at Nahum the Grocer's."

In another case, a young couple gave birth to their first child but forgot to submit an announcement to the papers. The morning after the *brit milah*, the Kasrilevke papers reported on a "phenomenon": A young woman gave birth to a sound and healthy baby boy only five months after her wedding. The "phenomenon" had his *brit milah* the previous night....

Politics is another major topic in the Kasrilevke papers. Every three years the political scene in the town is shaken up when elections are held for the post of *rabbiner* — the town's representative to the

authorities. There are two parties and two candidates — one supported by *Yarmulke*, the other by *Kopelush*. Each candidate has his own platform. The “Yarmulkist” claims he arrives at synagogue earlier than anyone else on the Sabbath, always wears a *yarmulke* at home, and knows how to bargain. The “Kopelushist,” by contrast, never goes to synagogue — except for holiday eves, does not cover his head at home, is said to eat sausage, and his motto is: A pox on everyone. What editorials are printed! For example, *Kopelush* writes: “What sweat, what stench, what filth has accumulated under the Jewish *yarmulke*.... The day we rid ourselves of this *Yarmulke* will be the day of our second exodus from Egypt.” *Yarmulke* retorts: “The tattered and torn *Kopelush* has opened its mouth once again. Why does it bother pushing its candidate? Doesn’t it know that Kasrilevke is a Jewish town which would never elect a candidate as *rabbiner* who feeds on piglets fried in butter on the ‘ten days of awe’ with head uncovered, without washing his hands and saying the prayer?”

The author is interviewed by one of the town’s journalists, who begins by admitting that he is not certain which of the two papers will run the interview. *Kopelush* would seem the more likely, being a progressive paper, although, he says, its “progress” is based entirely on ridiculing Jewish laws and customs. Fasts, for example. The paper quotes fictitious doctors and professors on the hazards of fasting and cites statistics on deaths caused by fasting. It predicts that if Jews continue to observe all the prescribed fasts, there will not be a single Jew left alive in 11 years and 3 months’ time. The paper also campaigns against other “negative” customs, such as “*kapparot*” and “*tashlih*,”

the journalist relates. In any event, both papers are peeved at him, the journalist confides. Once, he had been a member of the *Kopelush* staff, while a good friend of his had been on the *Yarmulke* staff. The two exchanged all the secrets and scoops of their respective papers freely. One night, while on duty, his colleague telephoned, inquiring what was new, and he made up a grisly story about a new pogrom in Kishinev complete with murders and rapes. The next day, *Yarmulke* ran the story under a screaming headline, while the *Kopelush* editor raged and fumed. Later, the story was proven a fabrication and the loquacious journalist was exposed.

Another journalist requests an interview. He begins by depicting the first journalist as a liar and fool, and himself as a humorist specializing in satire. Once, he says, he wrote a satire on a certain couple and read it out to a few friends in private. Later the woman in question had the gall to threaten suicide and the man that he would murder the journalist.

A third journalist, also seeking an interview, accuses the second one of perpetual thievery — whether of watches and spoons or someone else’s writing. He himself is a prolific poet. Once, after reading a poem to several friends, he relates, he discovered that the thieving journalist subsequently stole it verbatim and published it as his own. The poet called for arbitration on the matter, and a panel of journalists and writers indeed found that the other fellow’s material had been reproduced verbatim from his. But the panel then had the nerve to conclude that his poem was strikingly similar to a work of Pushkin’s in the first place.

## THE LADINO “EL TIEMPO” OF ISTANBUL DURING 1882-83 / Avner Levi

*El Tiempo* (“The Times”) was the most important Jewish newspaper to have appeared in the Ottoman Empire and the outstanding exemplar of the Ladino press. Founded in Istanbul in 1872 by Hayim Carmona, scion of a prominent family, it was taken over by his son Isaac in 1883 upon his father’s death. Father and son endowed the publication with high intellectual and linguistic standards that led to its widespread reputation for excellence and its designation as the official organ

of the Jewish community in Turkey in 1883. The paper lasted for 60 years, until 1931, when it was edited by David Fresco.

Eschewing sensationalism and vulgarity, *El Tiempo* maintained a serious and objective approach to news, while consistently battling against anti-Jewish developments of any kind and advocating enlightenment within the Jewish community.

The 1882-83 period, the focus of this study, is pivotal

because it constituted a watershed in the Jewish people's attitude toward Eretz Yisrael in terms of possible settlement there. Another important development within the Turkish Jewish community itself during this period was the transfer of leadership from the traditional elite based on wealth to a modern elite made up of bureaucrats and members of the professions.

Appearing twice weekly in a four-page format until July 1882, *El Tiempo* grew to six pages published three times a week at that time, when it became the organ of the Jewish community and received subsidization. Most of the issues of the paper then were dominated by a lead article that filled between one and three pages, with the rest of the paper taken up by news items, articles, readers' letters, financial information, advertisements and a literary section. There was no entertainment material or gossip columns. Circulation was mostly by subscription.

Significantly, no financial difficulties in running the paper were referred to during the period, in contrast to the other Ladino newspapers, possibly because the wealthy Carmona family underwrote the enterprise. This must have helped the editors devote themselves entirely to the content of the paper, creating a better-quality publication than any other. It may also have attracted additional capital. In any case, advertising was limited, consisting mostly of official municipal and *waqf* notices. There were no photographs or illustrations. There were, however, translated items from the French, Turkish, English, German, Italian, Greek and Armenian press, reflecting the senior and junior Carmona's knowledge of languages. The newspaper also regularly published news received by telegraphic agencies.

Over half the lead articles that appeared during the period were devoted to Jewish topics, although only a few focused on Turkish Jewish matters specifically. Most of these articles dealt with political developments in Russia and the oppression of the Jews there. The rest of the lead articles dealt with international and regional developments.

The settlement of Eretz Yisrael was another important topic in the paper, viewed primarily in the context of a solution to the pogroms and anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe then. The paper appealed to Turkish Jewry to support the settlement effort wholeheartedly, emphasizing the benefits not only to the persecuted Jewish people but to the Ottoman Empire as well as a result of the development of barren lands. It also

urged Turkish Jews, particularly those not well off, to join this movement and settle in Eretz Yisrael as agriculturalists, which was defined as a *mitzva*. The establishment of settlement organizations in Istanbul and Adrianople was reported at this time.

The persecution of Russian Jewry received more attention than any other topic in the paper then, and rescuing this population was projected as the most urgent priority of the entire Jewish people, a vivid illustration of the sense of oneness shared by Jewish communities of varying origins. The situation in Russia was analyzed as a confluence of the age-old hatred of Christians toward Jews, and the systematic exploitation of this tendency by the regime to deflect attention from Russia's problems. Russia was likened by the paper to Spain during the expulsion. "This kind of barbarity is inconceivable in the present enlightened age," wrote *El Tiempo* in January 1882. "Our brothers must get out of this modern Egypt immediately."

With the beginning of mass Jewish emigration from Russia, the paper devoted attention to the awesome problems of the refugees making their way from southern Russia through central Europe to England and America. Its premise was that the entire Jewish population in Russia must abandon its homes and emigrate immediately. America was the most likely destination for this exodus because of its opportunities and its liberalism, although the vast distance and expenses involved were daunting. The idea of settlement in Eretz Yisrael, the paper reported, was becoming a central issue. However, a reference to the fact that the Turkish Consulate in Odessa was not issuing permits to Jews interested in going to Eretz Yisrael probably accounts for a shift in the paper's editorial emphasis toward the concept of Turkey as a whole constituting a refuge for the Russian Jews, as it had been during the expulsion from Spain.

Covering efforts by Jewish communities in Europe and America to assist their persecuted brothers in Russia, the paper detailed fund-raising activity by Turkish Jewry, appealing to the community to increase this aid. It also reported that Count Isaac Camondo, a prominent Istanbul banker, was granted a meeting with the sultan on this question and received a *firman* (royal decree) ordering the governor of Syria to allow all Jews who so desired to enter the country, buy land and settle anywhere in Turkey (the question of Eretz Yisrael was not raised at the meeting). The meeting



was reported in detail in the general Turkish press.

The central problem of contemporary Jewish life — anti-Semitism — was analyzed by editor Hayim Carmona in a series of penetrating articles that also included translated and quoted material on the subject from other sources. Of particular interest was his fear, in 1882, not so much of anti-Semitism in Russia, where he wrote off any future for the Jews and urged wholesale emigration, but of anti-Semitism in Germany and to a lesser extent in other highly civilized countries. Germany is the inventor of anti-Semitism, wrote Carmona, and the disease had spread from there to the other Central European countries, especially Austria. In Germany, the richest and most advanced country of Europe, it was not the rabble that motivated anti-Semitism, he pointed out, but rather the intellectuals in their pseudo-scientific tracts. For Carmona, this phenomenon was beyond comprehension, and he could only warn Jews everywhere about the “plague of German anti-Semitism.” This fear of German anti-Semitism 60 years before the Holocaust was apparently shared by other aware Jews in Turkey, as reflected in a statement by the Jewish settlement organization “Ozer Yisrael” of Adrianople, printed in *El Tiempo* in July 1882, accusing German philosophers of “convicting”

the Jewish people, and the Rumanians and Russians of acting as “hangmen.” The only solution: immediate exodus from all anti-Semitic countries and transfer to America or, better still, since the immigrants in America tended to abandon their Jewish roots, to Turkey.

Curiously, there were relatively few reports on the Jewish community of Turkey itself, while many articles were devoted to regional and international news and analysis. Hayim Carmona, in 1882, identified the principal international problem as centered on the southern Slavic peoples, predicting that Austria and Russia would eventually go to war over this issue, and that an alliance between Germany and Austria was inevitable. Essentially, he foresaw the circumstances that would lead to the outbreak of World War I more than 30 years later.

The paper devoted considerable space to publishing European literary works translated into Ladino both in serialized versions and in book form. A high linguistic standard was maintained, with minimal borrowing from French or Castilian, as was the norm in the Ladino press. Turkish and Hebrew influences were also kept to a minimum, and the pure Spanish that was used exemplified journalistic Ladino at its best.

## THE TURKISH CHAPTER IN ZE'EV JABOTINSKY'S JOURNALISTIC CAREER / Shmuel Katz

With the takeover of the regime in Turkey by the Unity and Progress Party in July 1908, Jabotinsky, then a noted Russian-language journalist, was assigned by the Petrograd *Rus* to cover the revolution there.

The nationalistic aspirations of the Young Turk movement, which sought to Ottomanize the varied ethnic groups within the empire, were viewed with skepticism by the Jewish journalist, who drew a parallel with the failure of the Germans to assimilate the Slavs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Young Turks, he predicted, would eventually have to resign themselves to the fact of a multi-national state. Yet he admired the freedom of self-expression and personal liberties introduced by the new regime, which he felt would facilitate achieving Zionist goals in Palestine. Toward this end he advocated enlisting the aid of Sephardi Jews

in the empire who were active in the revolution and who had close connections with Young Turk leaders. He also made contact with Zionist activists in Istanbul and Salonika, and exerted a strong influence on the two Jewish representatives in parliament and in the Unity and Progress Party, Nissim Matzliah and Nissim Russo, as well as a third Jewish representative to the party, Emmanuel Carasso.

Jabotinsky's presence stimulated increased Zionist activity in Turkey, to the extent that Zionist leaders in Russia advocated that the world Zionist movement mount a political and propaganda campaign there headed by him. Toward this end, the movement decided to acquire Turkish newspapers in several languages: a French daily, *Le Jeun Turc*; a French Zionist weekly, *L'Aurore*; a Ladino weekly, *Il Judeo*, edited by David

Elnecape; and a Hebrew weekly, *Ha-Mevasser* ("The Announcer"), the work of Aaron Hermoni. Jabotinsky, who had since returned to Russia, was retained by the Zionist movement to return to Turkey on its behalf.

Setting about this task, he wrote most of the lead articles in *Le Jeun Turc*, mastering French so quickly that in three months' time he wrote nearly flawlessly and was acknowledged as a major journalist in Istanbul. The newspaper's standing and circulation were significantly enhanced as well. Its stated goals were support of the Young Turk regime and its Ottoman unification policy while preserving each people's language, culture and religion; advocacy of modernizing the country's political and economic infrastructure; and support for the Zionist movement as a means for fostering the growth of a cultural center in Palestine that would attract world Jewish financial and moral support.

The Jewish weeklies became successful as well, exerting a significant influence on the Jewish communities throughout the empire. Jabotinsky's first articles in Hebrew appeared in *Ha-Mevasser*, dealing with the importance of the Hebrew language.

But he did not confine his activities to writing and editing alone. He lectured extensively to Jewish audiences in Salonika and Istanbul on the Jewish national revival, stirring the dormant community and attracting hundreds of young activists to the fledgling Zionist movement.

Two years later, in 1910, he resigned in the wake of differences with the president of the world Zionist movement, David Wolffsohn, reflecting deeper antagonisms between the leadership of the movement in Cologne and the Russian Zionists. In any event, Jabotinsky had reached the conclusion that the hopes entertained by the Zionist movement that the Young Turks would institute a change in Ottoman policy and permit Jewish settlement in Palestine were unrealistic. Events were to show that the new regime actually hardened its position regarding Jewish immigration, while the Turkish Jewish establishment, led by the Sephardi chief rabbi, discouraged Zionist sentiment in an effort to demonstrate the loyalty of the Jewish community to the Ottoman regime.

## TWO HEBREW WEEKLIES IN TURKEY / Aryeh Shmuelewitz

*Ha-Mevasser* ("The Announcer," Istanbul, 1910-11) and *Haverenu* ("Our Friend," Izmir, 1922), two Hebrew weeklies, were published during a critical period in Turkey: the final stages in the formulation of a Turkish national ideology and the rise to power of the Turkish national movement. The emergence of these periodicals is largely attributable to the influence of this movement, with both publications calling upon the Jewish community to emulate their neighbors and develop their own national and cultural consciousness.

*Ha-Mevasser*, edited by Shmuel (Sammi) Hochberg and Aaron Hermoni, aimed to promote the Jewish national and cultural revival within the Jewish community of the Ottoman Empire and strengthen ties with other Jewish communities throughout the world. The paper viewed itself as the standard-bearer of the Hebrew renaissance in the East and as the primary bridge between East and West. It reported on the Jewish communities within the empire and abroad; Zionist activity in Eretz Yisrael; and major domestic

developments in the empire, especially relating to the Young Turks, whom it supported. It also published short stories, plays and poetry in Hebrew.

Its underlying goal was to draw the Jewish community to the Zionist movement, and it openly advocated the renewal of settlement in Eretz Yisrael. This position found support in the Young Turk ideology, which was initially sympathetic to the idea of an autonomous status for the non-Muslim communities within the empire. However, once that broad view was replaced by a more constricting Turkish national doctrine, the periodical ceased to appear. Another contributing factor to its closure was heightened opposition to Zionism within the Jewish community itself.

*Haverenu*, published 11 years later by pupils of Izmir's "Talmud Torah" — the Jewish high school — was similarly dedicated to the advancement of Hebrew and the fostering of Jewish national consciousness, advocating strengthened ties with the Zionist movement and Eretz Yisrael. However, no editor was listed,

and only occasionally were articles signed. The paper contained school news, Biblical stories, events in Jewish history, letters from Eretz Yisrael and Jewish community news. Strongly influenced by Mustafa Kemal's national Turkish movement and its struggle for independence, the pupils embraced Zionism enthusiastically. Publication did not resume after the summer vacation of 1922, however, probably because of hostilities around Izmir, then under Greek control.

Both publications emphasized the renaissance of the Hebrew language as the most important element in the Jewish national revival, with *Ha-Mevasser* highlighting its sociocultural aspects while *Haverenu* emphasized its political implications. *Haverenu*, being a student publication, necessarily reflects a narrower historical picture and is important primarily for material on the Jewish community of Izmir and its ties with the Zionist

movement and Eretz Yisrael. *Ha-Mevasser*, published in the capital of the empire with the backing of the Zionist movement, and covering a wide range of topics, is a valuable source for the 1910-11 period in the entire Ottoman Empire, which was then witnessing a struggle between liberals and conservatives and the emergence of a Turkish nationalist ideology within the ruling Unity and Progress Party. The paper offers information not only on the Jewish community of the empire, but on domestic developments generally, as viewed from a Zionist perspective. Four areas of its contents are of particular importance to the historian: (1) political, socioeconomic and cultural developments in the empire; (2) Ottoman-Jewish relations, including the question of the Zionist movement; (3) internal Jewish communal matters; and (4) developments and events in other Jewish communities.

## “SHALOM” — THE ONLY JEWISH NEWSPAPER IN TURKEY TODAY / Nana Tarablus

The weekly *Shalom*, published in Istanbul for the past 45 years, is the only Jewish newspaper in Turkey today. It was founded in 1947 by Avram Leyon, a veteran journalist, who published it in Ladino until 1983. It then passed to a young staff of volunteers that changed the major language of publication to Turkish, retaining Ladino for only a section of the paper. Today it is a 12-page large-format newspaper printed on high-quality paper with color photographs, containing news and articles on Israel and the Jewish diaspora. Foreign news is obtained from special correspondents and from news agencies, as well as from the Israeli press. The paper aims to present news objectively, but avoids criticism of Israeli policy, which, according to the author, in any event abounds in the Turkish daily press. *Shalom* also publishes informative material on Jewish traditions and history in order to heighten Jewish identity, along with historical and current information on the Jewish community in Turkey. An illustrated children's supplement comes out monthly, while a French-English edition appears bimonthly for the readership abroad.

The paper has 4,000 subscribers, including 500 abroad, with an estimated readership of 60 percent of

the Jewish families in Turkey. The great majority of the Jewish population of some 26,000 live in Istanbul, while 2,500 live in Izmir and some 500 live in each of the cities of Ankara, Bursa, Iskanderun, Antakya and Edirne. Turkey today has a population of 60 million, 99 percent of them Muslims.

*Shalom* organizes seminars and conferences devoted to Ladino, with the aim of preserving the language. The paper's editorial offices are located in a building that contains a Jewish cultural center with a multilingual library that is used by researchers and students. *Shalom* also sponsors an art gallery devoted to Jewish themes, and organizes study courses on Jewish culture and art.

The volunteer staff is headed by Silvyo Ovadya, 38, an electronic engineer and manufacturer who functions as editor, joined by a group of eight, including the author, who view this effort as a way of encouraging Jewish continuity and providing the community with a focus. Another goal is the preservation of the Ladino language. The paper also aims to strengthen ties between the Turkish Jewish community and Israel as well as with the rest of the Jewish world. There is no communal subsidization, and the paper covers its expenses by subscriptions and advertising.

## “HA-HERUT” (1909-17) AND ITS EDITOR, HAIM BENATTAR / Yitzhak Bezalel

*Ha-Herut* (“Freedom”), published in Jerusalem, became known essentially as a “Sephardi” newspaper and as a champion of the Hebrew language during the “language war” in Eretz Yisrael (1913-14), but these depictions do not do justice to its distinctiveness, nor has there been any research on the real nature and contribution of the publication. Similarly, there has been little research on its talented editor for most of its duration (from 1911 onward), Haim Benattar.

The newspaper was launched in May 1909, some 10 months after the Young Turk revolution, which liberalized government control of the press and resulted in intensified journalistic activity throughout the empire. Up until then, there were three ongoing Hebrew newspapers in Eretz Yisrael: *Havazelet*, which represented the Ashkenazi old *Yishuv*; Eliezer Ben-Yehuda’s *Ha-Zvi* (previously, *Hashkafa*), criticized by labor groups for its politics, its linguistic fixation and its nepotistic base; and the labor groups’ *Ha-Po’el Ha-Za’ir*. The emergence of *Ha-Herut* was associated with the benefits of the new Turkish constitution.

The paper was the product of a bilingual Ladino-Hebrew initiative by the three Sephardi founding editors — Moshe Azriel, publisher and owner of a printing press, Abraham Elmaleh, a journalist and communal leader, and Benattar. The Ladino version of the paper, *El Liberal*, preceded it by three months.

The question of who actually initiated and later edited *Ha-Herut* is in dispute. Elmaleh, in an obituary article upon Azriel’s death in 1916, claimed that the initiative was his and that he had proposed a partnership to Azriel. In a later article, he described himself as the founder of the paper with the support of Albert Antebi, a well-known Sephardi public figure, and of Rabbi Nahum, the *Hakham Bashi* (chief rabbi) of Turkey, as well as with the assistance of Azriel. It is likely, however, that Azriel was the initiator and that he and Benattar, who worked with him, constituted the driving force behind the project.

*Ha-Herut* began as a twice-weekly periodical, gradually increasing its frequency until it became a daily in May 1912. It usually ran four pages, and occasionally six. The editors took special pride in the paper’s regularity, in contrast to Ben-Yehuda’s and

other newspapers then. Moreover, it was the only paper in the *Yishuv* to appear during most of World War I, until its editor was drafted into the Turkish army in April 1917 and the authorities then closed it down. Considering the stringent censorship during the war, and the hostile attitude of the Turkish authorities toward the Jewish *Yishuv* — especially toward the nationalistic-Zionist sectors in it — the appearance of the paper at all during that period was an achievement. Each article had to be submitted to the censor in advance, in triplicate, and the censor’s deletions were arbitrary. Benattar, explicitly advised by the censor to discontinue publication, ignored the threat.

Devoted primarily to reportage, the newspaper was written in a popular style and was published on an independent commercial basis, attaining a relatively large circulation. Its first issue of 1,200 copies was sold out, according to its editors. It contained sparse literary material, and its editorial columns were not especially profound. Together with Ben-Yehuda’s papers, *Ha-Herut* was a forerunner of the mass Hebrew-language dailies that were to develop later on. It may also be considered part of the new press in Eretz Yisrael in that it was committed to catering to the public at large, rather than to a specific sector of it, as had been the norm until then.

The paper’s policies, as reflected in its columns, were: (1) Intense commitment to disseminating the Hebrew language and to the nationalist-Zionist revival. This policy was particularly noteworthy because the paper and its editors sprang from the Jerusalem Sephardi community, which, like the old *Yishuv*, was not widely identified with the Zionist movement, particularly by Joseph Hayim Brenner, the writer.

(2) Opposition to anti-Zionists, especially within the Sephardi diaspora. Benattar, in particular, worked toward advancing Hebrew education, visiting Jewish communities in Egypt in 1913 and Syria in 1914 for this purpose.

(3) Protecting the Jewish religion from deprecation by modernists, particularly by Joseph Hayim Brenner, the writer.

(4) Maintaining a neutral position in the bitter conflicts between the new and old *Yishuv*, and covering events

and developments in all of the communities in a balanced fashion.

(5) Vigorous support for the candidacy of Rabbi Ya'akov Meir as *Hakham Bashi* during the prolonged controversy within the Sephardi community on this issue. Rabbi Meir represented the progressive sector of the community and was sympathetic to Zionism as well. The paper took similarly strong positions on related issues, advocating modern education, Jewish national awareness and greater participation by the community in public life.

(6) Intensive focus on the Arab question, including editorials, translations from the Arabic press and reportage of Jewish-Arab tensions. Although the positions expressed in its columns varied widely, the paper was single-minded — and unique — in warning that the issue posed a serious danger to the Zionist endeavor and that finding a solution was urgent. The prevalent attitude within the Zionist movement then, however, was that Arab opposition to Zionism would pass.

(7) A generally pro-Ottoman stance stemming from the sense in the Sephardi community that traditionally the empire had been sympathetic toward the Jews from the time of the expulsion from Spain and the absorption of the exiles onward.

Haim Benattar, a somewhat forgotten figure, was born in 1885 to a prominent rabbinical family of Moroccan origin. Fluent in French, Ladino, Arabic and Turkish, in addition to Hebrew, he displayed an early literary bent and began working at Azriel's

press when he was not yet 16, translating and adapting foreign literary works for publication in Ladino. In 1908 Azriel proposed that he become a partner, manager and editor of the Ladino *El Liberal*, which Azriel launched in 1909, intending to publish it occasionally in Hebrew as well. Instead, he decided to publish a separate Hebrew periodical, *Ha-Herut*.

There is reason to believe that friction existed between Elmaleh, on the one hand, and Azriel and Benattar, on the other. While Elmaleh's name appeared at first as editor, it disappeared from the masthead at intervals, and in 1911 a brusque announcement in the paper stated that he was no longer associated with it. Benattar's name appeared as editor from then on. He edited it for six and a half years of its eight-year existence, including the difficult war period. Caught by the Turkish army on three separate occasions for recruitment, both Benattar and Azriel managed to have themselves released through ransom. After Azriel's death in 1916, Benattar continued running the paper until he was finally drafted by the Turks in 1917 and sent to the Gallipoli front. However, he fell ill and was returned to Jerusalem, where he witnessed the liberation of the city by the British. He had hoped to revive the paper, but failed to receive a permit from the occupation forces. Meanwhile, he fell ill again, and died of pneumonia in 1918 at age 33.

The columns of *Ha-Herut*, which contain numerous articles by Benattar, illuminate the paper's consistent commitment to its principles, as well as Benattar's development as a journalist and public figure.

## THE VIEW OF JEWS AS CAPITALISTS IN THE EARLY ARABIC PRESS / Sha'ul Sehayik

As part of a doctoral work entitled "The Image of the Jew in the Arabic Press During 1858-1908," the author shows that while the Arabic press was consistently hostile toward the Zionist movement and the Jewish people from the period of the Young Turk revolt in 1908 onward, the image of the Jew previously (1858-1908) was positive, with the exception of a few Catholic and Coptic newspapers.

Unlike Europe during this period, where Jews were portrayed by anti-Semitic writers, politicians and newspaper editors as exploiters whose influence as

capitalists and bankers was negative, the Arabic press viewed the Jews' contribution to economic development in their countries of residence as positive. Most Arabic newspaper editors expressed admiration for prominent Jewish capitalists and bankers and advocated emulating them. Moreover, Arabic writers pointed to the success of Jews in Europe as evidence of Semitic superiority generally, in order to counter the widespread image in Europe of Arabs as an "inferior" race and Islam as a "backward" religion.

The subject of the origins and activities of Jewish

bankers and capitalists was of interest to the Arabic press throughout this entire period, with the Rothschild family in particular symbolizing the glory of the Jewish people in the editorial view. Most of the articles on the topic emphasized the efforts of successful Jews to help their persecuted brethren throughout the world, their support for humanitarian projects benefiting non-Jews as well, and above all their involvement in the economies of a variety of countries.

An article in the Muslim *al-Mu'ayyad* in Cairo in 1900 put forward the thesis that a new Western world had emerged in which financial power was the only real power, and that whoever controlled the world of finances was the real king. The Jews had this power, the article maintained, and they thus superceded politics even though they had no state or government of their own.

Several writers and newspaper editors attributed the secret of Jewish success to the dispersion of the Jews, which prompted them to apply their talents maximally in order to survive. Closely bound up with this ability was their preservation of religious values, solidarity and mutual aid. An editorial in the Egyptian *al-Hilal* in 1892 pointed out that the Jews had aided the early Muslims, and that historically, good mutual relations had developed between both groups. Examples were relations with the Abbassids in Iraq, the Fatimids in Egypt and the Umayyads in Spain, while during the same period the European states persecuted the Jews. Only later, with the liberalization of Europe, did the Jews achieve great success there in science, administration, government policy and above all economic affairs.

The editor of the Istanbul *al-Ju'ayiv* in 1869, citing joint communal effort as a basis for national development, pointed to institutions in Europe that included Catholics, Protestants and Jews working together for the good of society. The House of Rothschild was singled out as the ultimate example of multidemonational and multinational financing — the symbol of “true modernity” in the newspaper’s view.

The image of the Jew as traitor, usurer and coward, as in Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, therefore, was inapplicable. Instead, the image was of a generous, high-principled patron, patriot and symbol of modernity. Moreover, the Jewish example was worthy of emulation by the people of the East both in terms of accumulating

capital and devoting it to national social and economic betterment.

The annals of the Rothschild family were a particular focus of the Arabic press as a symbol of pride for the Eastern lands and the Ottoman Empire, in that a poor family that preserved its religion, traditions and lofty values had attained such vast wealth that royalty and heads of state were dependent on it. The family also symbolized patriotism, generosity, charity and humanism in its founding of cultural and educational institutions. Above all it symbolized honesty and fair-mindedness, brotherhood and integrity, held up by the press as an instructive example. The press even saw in the Rothschilds a symbol of Arab self-dignity in the ongoing conflict with Europe, arguing that had it not been for the corruption of the Eastern rulers, world economic control would have remained in the hands of the East. One of many examples of praise for the Rothschilds in the Arabic press was the selection of the family by the Beirut *al-Muktataf* in 1902 as the first subject in a series of biographical pieces on influential personalities in Europe and the Americas. Even the anti-Jewish Lebanese Catholic *al-Bashir* eulogized Baron Alphonse de Rothschild upon his death in 1905 for his ability and influence. This paper, however, generally followed a line that was exceptional in the region, reflecting European anti-Semitic attitudes and accusing Jews of exploitation of farmers, land appropriation and financial manipulation.

Another Jewish financier who attracted coverage in the Arabic press was Baron Maurice de Hirsch (1831-96) of Germany, who financed railways in Turkey and contributed generously to charitable institutions there, including the funding of a complete new hospital. The baron was awarded the highest Ottoman title of respect — *majidi* — and was praised extensively by the press for his generosity. *Al-Muktataf* named him “the ultimate philanthropist” in 1901. The paper also singled out his wife for continuing his tradition of good works and founding charitable institutions in most of the cities of the East. “This is magnificent nobility,” it noted, “...the man and his wife Easterners of the Children of Israel, from the land of Palestine — i.e., the Semitic race — even if Europe was their place of residence and their birthplace.” Although various governmental and legal complications arose over Baron Hirsch’s financing of the railways in Turkey, there were no anti-Jewish inuendos in the press reports covering

these developments.

Yet another world-famous Jewish personality to receive attention in the Arabic press was Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885), who devoted much of his life to protecting the rights of Jews throughout the world, including intervention in the "Damascus Affair" of 1840 and visiting Morocco in 1864 to intercede for the Jewish community there. His efforts on behalf of his people impressed many Arab journalists, as did his philanthropic generosity both in Jewish and non-Jewish causes. His biography and life's mission were described in the Beirut *al-Jana*, while an article in that city's *al-Janan* also cited his important work on behalf of the Jews of Eretz Yisrael. Alexandria's *al-Ahram* eulogized him upon his death, and even *al-Bashir* did the same.

Curiously, the Sassoon family of Baghdad origin, which gained prominence and wealth throughout Asia and in England, barely received any attention in the Arabic press, although it had been closely involved in the commercial development of the cities of Bombay and Baghdad, as well as in philanthropic work. Yet the press did devote considerable space to a variety of other successful Jewish businessmen involved in national and international economic activity, praising the Jewish role and criticizing manifestations of anti-Semitism. Jewish investment in needy Middle Eastern countries elicited particular praise, such as loans to Egypt by the Rothschild family during the 1890s. The press also praised the success of Jewish immigrants in America who had prospered under the free enterprise system.

## "NEW OUTLOOK" (1957-93) / A talk with Hayim Shur

*New Outlook* magazine, founded in Israel after the Sinai Campaign by a group of Mapam Party members who had been advocates of a binational Jewish-Arab state in the past, was devoted to the ideal of mutual Arab-Jewish understanding. Its founding editor, Simha Flapan, was a well-known Mapam leftist who organized a group of Arabs and Jews to work for peace. Flapan remained the driving force behind the magazine for 25 years. The most prominent Arab member of the group was Abdul Aziz Zuabi, while the most prominent Jewish member was Professor Martin Buber, who was considered the founder of the publication. Another noted contributor was Professor Hugo Bergman. Flapan, anxious to minimize Mapam's role in the magazine, sought to enlist a wide spectrum of viewpoints.

English, the common language between Jews and Arabs, was chosen as the language of publication. This factor, along with the high level of articles published on the Jewish-Arab conflict, elicited considerable interest in the magazine abroad, and its orientation eventually became more foreign than domestic.

*New Outlook* did not arouse particularly strong reactions on the part of the Israeli governmental establishment at first. Yet it was received enthusiastically abroad, and attracted a prestigious international following that included Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Willy Brandt, Primo Levi and Pierre Mendes-France. It was nominated twice for the Nobel

Prize for Peace. When Sadat made his first visit to Israel, the only nongovernmental body he met with was *New Outlook*. The magazine became the unofficial representative of the Israeli peace camp, better known abroad than in Israel itself. During the last decade of its existence, under the author's editorship, it became more decidedly Zionist than previously, widening out its influence in the Jewish community. It was also able to reach Jewish audiences that were estranged from Israel, for example Jewish leftists. With that, it was never monolithic in its policy, and included varying, and conflicting, points of view.

Having no governmental or other public subsidization, the magazine relied on contributions throughout its 35-year history. It published 5,000 copies per issue, 20 percent of which were sold in Israel and the rest abroad — an unusual proportion of foreign sales for an Israeli periodical. It was widely quoted internationally, particularly in scholarly studies of the Middle East.

A singular attribute of the magazine was the personal relationship that it developed with its readership. Groups from all over the world made it a point to visit its offices when in Israel, after stopping at the Foreign Office. Now, with the closure of the magazine, these friends feel a keen sense of loss. *New Outlook* closed for lack of contributions, especially in light of the recession in the United States. Another factor was that its message was no longer unique — many people think

along the same lines nowadays. Its contribution over the years had been that it expressed views that others did not dare articulate.

*New Outlook* was originally established not as a magazine but as an organization, with the goal of working toward peace and mutual Jewish-Arab understanding not only through the written word

but through encounters and conferences. The most impressive of these was held in 1989 in the United States, attended by 700 participants from all over the world and covered by 250-300 journalists. It was organized by a joint Arab-Jewish committee headed by the author and by Hana Siniora, editor of the East Jerusalem *al-Fajr*.

## A GLANCE AT THE SOVIET JEWISH PRESS IN THE EARLY 1920S

In its September 1992 issue, *Mazhdonrodneyeh Yevreiska Gazetta* ("The Jewish International Newspaper"), which was founded in Moscow in April 1989, published a digest of newspaper clippings from periodicals that appeared in the Soviet Union in the early 1920s, including material from the Russian Jewish emigre press in Western Europe quoted in the Soviet press. The digest sheds light on the vicissitudes endured by this large body of Jewry during the early years of the Communist regime, and constitutes authentic evidence of the futile efforts to rehabilitate Jewish cultural life during the destitute post-Revolutionary period, as well as of the death throes of institutionalized Jewish religious life.

A 1922 item from the weekly *Yevreska Tribuna* ("Jewish Forum") published in Paris reported on the establishment in Petrograd of a new private periodical devoted to Jewish life — *Yevreiski Vestnik* ("The Jewish Herald") — a "ray of light" in the otherwise bleak picture of the entire Russian press trampled under the Bolsheviks' boots in 1918.

*Ruski Vestnik*, a private periodical in Petrograd, reported in 1922 that as part of the 300th-anniversary commemoration of the city of Vitebsk, a group of Jews had formed a committee devoted to documenting the rich Jewish history of the city and its environs. Similarly, vocational schools in the city of Minsk, where the large majority of students were Jewish, had decided that the language of instruction would be Yiddish.

*Yevreska Starina* ("The Jewish Past"), published in Leningrad, reported on a gradual awakening of Russian Jewish literature in 1924, pointing to new or revived literary periodicals and anthologies, evidence that forecasts of the end of this literature were premature. In addition, a Jewish historical-ethnographic

organization in Petrograd was revived in 1923 with 75 members, and had received permission to conduct research, hold meetings, publish articles and maintain a museum, archive and library. The periodical itself was a result of the efforts of this organization. Its museum had a collection of Judaica, Jewish art and photographs documenting religious Jewish life and institutions, as well as photographs of Jewish workers and modern life.

The establishment of a school for Jewish theater in Petrograd, its curriculum and its goals was reported in *Yevreiski Vestnik* in 1922. Additional reports on this topic were included in a booklet on the governmental Jewish theater — "GOST" — which referred to items in *Zhizhan Iskosteva* ("The Arts Scene") on the formation of the "Jewish Labor Theater in Petrograd" in 1918, on staff members and on plays presented in 1919. The theater and school moved to Moscow in 1920, and lasted until 1949.

*Yevreiski Vestnik*, quoting a report in the Yiddish *Emmes* ("Truth") in 1922, described the physical destruction of the Volga region and the Ukraine during the revolutionary period, when vast tracts of land were laid to waste, resulting in widespread famine. The relatively recent Jewish agricultural settlements in the Ukraine — a source of pride to the Jews of Russia — which had shown promising results, were also destroyed by these ravages. Reports on a different topic provided details on the confiscation of valuable ritual objects from synagogues in Minsk and Peterburg, and recorded that the rabbi in Tambuv, who refused to hand over his synagogue's treasures, was tried in a rabbinic court.

*Yevreska Tribuna* reported in 1922 that the Bolshevik campaign against synagogues resulted not only in pillage of ritual objects but in stirring up anti-



Semitism. In another issue, the same paper quoted an article in *Emmes* warning that the campaign against the "Jewish bourgeoisie" was being waged by the workers not only through propaganda but through every means of suppression at the government's disposal. *Emmes*, as quoted by *מחשבת העם* ("The People's Conception"), cited statistics showing the diminishing Jewish population in Russia since the Revolution: 1,300,000 Jews emigrated from Russia during this period, 70,000 Jews were killed during the civil war, 500,000 were left penniless and over 200,000 children were orphaned.

*Yevreskya Tribuna* reported in 1923 that \$10,000 was received from the Joint Distribution Committee to support 50 Jewish libraries in Moscow and its environs, the Jewish theater in Moscow and other Jewish institutions. *Yevreskya* also reported that same year that *Yevreiski Vestnik*, launched in 1922, had closed down for lack of paper. Another news report, quoting the *Folkszeitung*, stated that the Soviet authorities in Byelorussia permitted the opening of *heder* schools so long as there were no more than six students in attendance.

## OBITUARY NOTICES IN THE JEWISH PRESS FROM THE 18TH CENTURY TO MODERN TIMES / Luis Roniger

Judaism, as other Western religions, perceives death as ending the stage of existence but not as an end to life, thereby allowing for memorializing the departed in varied ways. One aspect of this memorialization is through published obituaries, although this is a relatively modern phenomenon and is nowhere mentioned in the large body of rabbinic law devoted to mourning customs. The Bible, however, provides many literarily esthetic examples of lamentation for the deceased, including David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan.

Publishing formal eulogies delivered at the funerals of prominent persons was a widespread custom both among Jews and in other religions until the end of the 18th century. With the growth of the Jewish press thereafter, obituaries and death notices for a larger proportion of the deceased became popular during the 19th century, although it was not a universal custom, as compared to marriage and birth announcements.

The author's analysis of 80 Jewish periodicals in Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino and various European languages during the period 1784-1930 reveals that two essential obituary styles prevailed up until the late 19th century: traditional eulogies that approximated lamentations, and obituary articles depicting and praising the attributes and activities of the deceased, similar to the Anglo-Saxon obituary tradition. The traditional style, published especially in Hebrew but also in other languages, was devoted to honoring the deceased by lamentation and scholarly exegesis on death and bereavement based on the Bible and other

sources. The second style emotionally emphasized the milestones in the life and work of the deceased.

A new style of death notices began appearing in Jewish periodicals in the late 19th century that resembled the format in Israel today, replacing the eulogies of the previous period. Like the traditional eulogies, they represented a transfer of personal loss into communal loss, thereby honoring the deceased and his family publicly. However, they were more "democratic" than the obituaries of the past, which were reserved for prominent persons alone, and enabled mourners to draw attention to the achievements and attributes of the deceased.

While obituary notices became briefer and more specific, eliminating lengthy eulogies and exegesis, they were, nevertheless, varied, reflecting the taste and the financial capability of the individual or institution that inserted them.

The shift from the traditional to the contemporary style of obituary began in the Jewish press of Central and Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, spreading to Eretz Yisrael and to the United States between 1910 and 1925, and becoming well established in modern Israel. The emphasis of this obituary style is on providing information regarding funeral and mourning arrangements as well as offering condolences, rather than eulogizing the deceased.

Obituaries in Israel today are widespread. For example, the daily *Yediot Aharonot* ran an average

of 1,600 notices monthly during 1989-90. Newspapers in Israel provide a 24-hour telephone service for obituary notices. While "family notices" in the Hebrew, German and Yiddish press during the first three decades of the 20th century consisted primarily of announcements of brit-milahs, bar-mitzvas, engagements and weddings, with obituary notices consisting of only a small proportion in this category, today obituaries are virtually the only type of family notice in the Hebrew press.

These changes in style and function of obituaries reflect basic demographic and social developments in the Jewish world during the 19th century. Foremost among these was significant demographic growth of the Jewish population, especially in Eastern Europe, as a result of

high fertility and increased longevity. This population explosion led to a process of Jewish urbanization within Europe and to emigration to the Americas, involving both cultural assimilation into non-Jewish societies and a need to retain Jewish identity in new formats. Obituary notices in the modern period reflected this need for communal identification in a changing world. They also reflected the increased importance of voluntary organizational as well as employment affiliation — two ongoing sources of obituary notices. Moreover, they helped retain ties between far-flung populations. More broadly, obituary notices in modern times reflect an emphasis by secular Jews on the element of memory as basic to ongoing collective Jewish identity.

## "HA-DOR": THE TRIALS OF A PARTY NEWSPAPER / Mordecai Naor

While nearly every political party during the pre- and post-State of Israel period sponsored its own daily newspaper, most of them for fairly long periods, the largest party — Mapai — was an exception. During its existence of nearly 40 years (1930-68), it sponsored a formal organ — *Ha-Dor* ("The Generation") — for only seven years (1948-55), relying on its connection with *Davar* (the Histadrut — General Federation of Labor organ) most of the rest of the time, with the exception of 1946-48 when it unofficially backed *Hadashot Ha-Erev*.

That sponsorship of a party newspaper is a complicated undertaking is revealed in minutes of the Mapai Party Executive Committee meetings during the relevant period, researched here for the first time. The committee repeatedly debated the necessity for, and the attributes of, such a publication, its relationship to the party, and the party's relationship to the press generally.

*Ha-Dor* was launched just before the elections to the first Knesset, in November 1948, edited by Eliezer Liebenstein (later, Livneh), a leading party activist, journalist and later member of Knesset. The most consistent advocate of the idea of a party newspaper was Zalman Aharonowitz (later, Aranne), secretary-general of the party, who envisioned the paper as an ideological organ. While the paper attained a measure of success within the party membership, it had only limited

circulation within the broader public. Conflict between the party and the editor soon developed, and an extended series of discussions of the issues was held in the party's executive during June-July 1949. The paper was criticized as being unrepresentative of the collective ideology of the party; as attacking the party's shortcomings unjustifiably; and as being sensationalist, although it also received praise for exposing problems within the party. A question was raised as to the differentiation of roles between *Ha-Dor* and *Davar*, with the reply offered by Zvi Shiloah (who was to become secretary of the editorial board) that the former dealt with political and party issues, while the latter with labor and union issues. For example, he pointed out, *Ha-Dor* was the only newspaper then waging a public campaign against Communism in the Soviet Union.

Ben-Gurion, present at the session, emphasized the necessity for a party newspaper in order to articulate the party's reactions to daily events. Praising Liebenstein's personal independence of spirit and unconventional viewpoint, Ben-Gurion nevertheless criticized these qualities when transferred to a party organ, which ought to be a unifying and collective vehicle, in his view. He was troubled by the fact that part of the party's membership did not identify with the paper, and therefore suggested that an editorial board be formed to represent broad party interests.

A board had, in fact, been projected from the start, but the editor was accused of opposing it. In his defense, Liebenstein asserted that in fact he did accept party discipline, but had created the impression that he did not. He cited a circulation figure of 7,600, which was higher than *Herut's* and no lower than *Al Hamishmar's*, two well-established party newspapers, commenting that circulation could be much higher had the paper enjoyed party loyalty, especially from the Executive Committee. He pointed to the consistent victimization of the paper by institutions and individuals that were criticized editorially. Reminding the committee that party newspapers are expensive to produce and always operate at a loss, he pointed out that *Ha-Dor* required less investment, for example, than *Davar*, which had existed for 24 years and had received large-scale backing by the Histadrut. Regarding the editorial board, Liebenstein blamed the secretary-general of the party, Aharonowitz, for sabotaging it from the start as an effective liaison body between the newspaper and the party, a tie which he felt was essential.

Following these discussions, the secretary-general of the party announced the cancellation of the position of editor in chief and the formation of a five-member editorial board to run the paper. Liebenstein resigned as editor, and in August 1949 and for three years thereafter, the position of "Editor-in-Charge" was listed on the masthead (filled by Moshe Katznelson), although the dominant figure for most of this period was Zvi Shiloah, secretary of the editorial board, who also wrote short, critical political pieces that were well received by the public. A new personality to join the board was Binyamin Eliav (Lubotzky), a former Revisionist who had moved over to Mapai.

A new editor in chief, Shlomo Grodzinski, who was a journalist with the American Jewish labor press, was brought over from the US in 1951, but resigned that same year in the wake of a series of crises experienced by the paper. Ben-Gurion, at an Executive Committee meeting in November 1951, observed that Grodzinski was not a political person, and that the press in America was entirely different from its Israeli counterpart. The Israeli press was a fighting press, he said. In December 1951 Eliav agreed to become editor, provided he was allowed to attend the party's Political Committee meetings, a condition that was met. His name, however, was not listed as editor.

*Ha-Dor*, together with the party's other two

periodicals — *Ha-Po'el Ha-Za'ir* and *Ashmoret* — continued to be problematic for the party, primarily budgetarily. One solution was to reduce the large-size format to tabloid size. But Aranne, the paper's most devoted champion, opposed this measure as spelling certain demise, claiming that a tabloid format necessitated content that was less serious and less educational. Another problem, raised by Aranne in a meeting in May 1952, was the need to replace unproductive staff workers without closing down the paper in the process. Still another issue was insufficient circulation. Aranne stressed that the paper could never compete with the mass-circulation *Ma'ariv* and *Yediot Aharonot*, yet he was optimistic that circulation could reach 25,000 (from 7,500), which would make *Ha-Dor* a newspaper to contend with. In any event, he was convinced that the party could not exist without a daily, and that additional financial and other efforts would put it on the road to self-sufficiency.

Ben-Gurion, in the same May 1952 meeting, emphasized once again that the paper must be a fighting paper, just as the party must be a fighting party, constantly attacking the opposition. Moreover, he indicated, if a choice had to be made between reducing the paper to a tabloid format or closing the paper entirely, he would opt for the tabloid format.

Eliav, at the same meeting, pointed to the need for a political editor with the knowledge and the authority from the party to decide what material should be published and what should not, leaving the technical aspects to the rest of the staff, including himself. Furthermore, the staff needed to be replaced by more professional workers, and the size of the newspaper, he recommended, should be reduced.

Indeed, in August 1952 *Ha-Dor* changed to tabloid size, and a new editor took over — Hayim Shorer of *Davar*. But the problems were not solved. At a meeting in November 1952, after budgetary and circulation issues were raised, Pinhas Lavon offered two dramatic options: increasing Mapai's shares in *Yediot Aharonot* until it controlled the paper and turned it into the party's organ, or buying advertising space for the party in one of the major general dailies. In the end, however, he retracted these suggestions and recommended giving the paper another chance to achieve self-sufficiency. The paper continued on, with another change of editor in 1953 when Yona Yagol (Goldberg) took over, until November 1955, when it closed.

## **“HA-DEGEL”: URI KESSARI’S CHILDHOOD NEWSPAPER / Ilana Kedmi**

Uri Kessari (1901-79) was a noted Israeli journalist whose long career included affiliation with *Davar*, *Doar Ha-Yom* (where he was Ithamar Ben-Avi’s assistant and secretary-general of the editorial board), *Ha-Aretz* and *Ma’ariv*. He also founded and edited the weekly *Teisha Ba-Erev* and *Ha-Olam Ha-Zeh*, and was, inter alia, a theater critic.

Recently, a newspaper that he edited as a child in Tel Aviv has come to light — *Ha-Degel* (“The Flag”), begun in 1911 as a weekly (it later became a fortnightly) by a group of pupils at the Gymnasia Herzliya in the newly founded city of Tel Aviv. The group called itself “*Agudat Kadima*” (“The Forward Association”), defining itself as “a federation of children striving for spiritual development.” This paper was to run for three years, with a total of 37 issues. Four goals were articulated by the association: reading books, presenting plays, organizing hikes and publishing a newspaper. According to the young editor, the

newspaper, which represented the culmination of the association’s activities, hoped to acquaint pupils with contemporary Jewish writers.

*Ha-Degel*’s contents included original and translated stories, brief sketches and poems devoted to holidays and special events, local and foreign news, and personal items related to the students’ lives. An early and consistent collaborator was the young Nahum Gutman (1898-1981), later to become a noted painter and children’s book writer. Another contributor was a talented new immigrant from Poland, Yitzhak Yaffe, who, far away from his family, committed suicide several years later. Yet another figure referred to was David Hacoheh (1897-1984), later to become a prominent political personality.

The newspaper conveys a great deal of information on the lives of these young people in the early years of Tel Aviv.

## **BETWEEN “LIGHT” AND “DARKNESS”: A DIFFERENT REACTION TO THE 1992 ELECTORAL UPSET IN ISRAEL / Ya’akov Ahimeir**

The explicit impression given by Hayim Yavin’s article in *Qesher* no. 12, “Between One Electoral Upset and the Next” (November 1992), was that a large number of people were greatly relieved by the return of “light,” as a result of the political upset of June 1992, to the “darkness” that had prevailed in the Israeli electronic media for the previous 15 years. This point of view, which is currently widespread in evaluations of the Broadcasting Authority, smacks of political opportunism. Where was the criticism previously?

Up until the first electoral upset, in May 1977, which brought the Likud to power for the first time, most of the TV news reporters were identified with a political outlook that viewed Begin and his camp as war-mongers and political radicals. Many of them hated Begin and

his movement, an outlook that reflected a large measure of ignorance. Begin’s opposition camp was considered eternally confined to the status of opposition, so that when that first upset occurred, the journalistic world — and not only that world — was unprepared to deal with it. The upset that occurred, in fact, was not only political but social as well, giving prominence to development-town populations, for example, and exposing grave economic problems within the kibbutz movement and the Histadrut holding company.

Significantly, many of the old-guard decision-makers remained in power during that 15-year period and still hold key positions today, which makes the universal sense of relief depicted by Yavin puzzling.

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ד"ר מרדכי נאור: מרצה לעתונאות באוניברסיטת תל אביב. כתב וערך ספרים בנושא תולדות ארץ ישראל. עורך "קשר".

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