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Hebrew Cover: A state is born — Israel as it looked to artist Zvi Narkis, depicted in a poster of the early 1950s. Most of this issue of *Qeshet* is devoted to the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the State of Israel, with a focus on the media of 1948 in Israel and the Jewish world.

FROM BASEL TO SHEINKIN: THE ROAD FROM THE "OLD-NEW LAND" TO "FREHA-LAND"

At Basel I founded the Jewish State... Theodor Herzl, Diary.
In my mind's eye I envisioned an aristocratic republic... Theodor Herzl, The Jewish State.

Shalom Rosenfeld

Naturally, both the Basel and the Sheinkin of the title should be read as if in quotation marks. **Basel**, in this article, does not refer to the delightful treasures of that beautiful city on the Rhein, but rather to the city as it is identified with the first Zionist Congress, which decisively altered the ideological map and the fabric of Jewish hopes in the Diaspora 101 years ago. It is also the site of the solemn convening of the 22nd Zionist Congress immediately after World War Two, the first congress to be held after the Holocaust of the Jews of Europe. **Sheinkin**, in this article, does not necessarily depict the colorful street in the heart of Tel Aviv that "never stops," site of the diversions and the yearnings of the young who are beautiful in appearance and hungry for excitement. If I may be permitted a personal aside, it is a street that I knew well before it became "in," and to which I had a great attachment, for it was the poor man's Fleet Street then (it later housed the editorial offices of the prestigious daily *Davar*), where the famous Alexander Moses printshop was located in which commercial advertisements were intermingled with holiday-time humor magazines and subversive political wall posters to which I myself contributed on occasion.

Basel and Sheinkin were selected by me as symbols and metaphors entirely arbitrarily. Basel — whence the classic political Zionist message went out, spearheading the war of the Jewish people for independence and freedom in Palestine, and again as the site where the Zionist movement made the first collective effort to assess the terrible loss that had befallen the Jewish people in the Holocaust. To assess, and perhaps also to draw conclusions from that historic cataclysm whose nightmares still pursue us, perhaps because many of us do not want to be released from their bonds. And Sheinkin? When the poet Natan Alterman was asked why he named his famous play "Kinneret, Kinneret," he replied: It was not the place that

I meant, but the era. I dare allow myself to borrow his conception: by Sheinkin I mean not the place but the era.

I suspect that if I should be called before the court of history, accused of libeling an entire population in Israel — which I call "Sheinkin" — I will have little chance of emerging entirely acquitted. For every generalization is a priori a stumbling block, a minefield for the cautious to avoid. Still, I take on this accusation knowingly, primarily because the signs of this subculture are also clearly discernible in the realm that this article will touch on — the Hebrew press in Israel during its first half-century as the press of a free and independent country.

What will be discussed in the main are the changes of values within the press and not the structural, economic or sociopolitical changes, although these are largely interrelated and even inseparable.

Chronologically, we will have to stray somewhat from the rigid time frame imposed by the round number 50 and skip back from time to time to the pre-state period in what was then called the *yishuv* (the Jewish population in Palestine), and forward to the early years of statehood. A vibrant, fighting Hebrew press — a small part of which was commercial but most of which was political — existed in Palestine well before the establishment of the state, during the entire period of struggle against British rule and during all the years of bitter internal debate over means and even ends. Possibly, and perhaps even necessarily, our review must step back a whole generation or even two, to the period when authors were the pillars of the fighting press, and author-journalists of the first degree served as the mentors of an entire generation: Herzl and Nordau, Sokolow and Jabotinsky, Berl Katznelson and Zalman Rubashov (Shazar), Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and his son Itamar Ben-Avi, Moshe Gluecksohn and Moshe

Beilinson, Abraham Shlonsky and Natan Alterman, Uri Zvi Greenberg and Abba Ahimeir, Moshe Smilansky and Rabbi Meir Berlin (Bar-Ilan), Ezriel Carlebach and Moshe Sneh, Joseph Heftman and Dr. Herzl Rosenblum. These are the most outstanding and famous (some of them, alas, known to the younger generation only by virtue of the streets named for them) of a long and impressive series of authors, poets and political commentators whose pen was their sword. Their encyclopedic knowledge of both religious and secular topics was the wellspring of their rich language and imagery, and the fire of their faith, the logic of their thinking, and their powers of persuasion lit the way for hundreds of thousands of pioneers, fighters and communal activists.

Clearly, the years of active, or activist, struggle for the independence of Eretz Yisrael were the formative years of what we knew then as the "recruited press" and what I call here the "Basel press." It was a Zionist press in essence and in character, a press that despite its bitter fractiousness was sovereign even before the country had attained sovereignty, stubbornly fighting — each paper according to its ideological vision — to fulfill the final goal of Zionism, whose historic necessity was never in question.

I shall begin, perhaps, with the Editor's Committee, which initially called itself the "Response Committee." Following the "Struma" affair, in which 769 Jewish refugees drowned when the ship of that name sank at sea in 1942 after being refused entry into Haifa port by the British, this body was established to coordinate the responses of the *yishuv* press to life-and-death issues affecting Jewish interests in Palestine. Issues dealt with included the brutal searches by the British for weapons in Jewish settlements (especially the shocking search in Kibbutz Ramat Hakovesh in 1943 that prompted a revolt by the entire Hebrew press against British censorship); the issue of land purchase by Jews from Arabs, which was forbidden by the British; the welfare of the Jewish activists from the Etzel and Lehi underground organizations who were exiled by the British to Africa; the press coverage of the trial following the murder of Lord Moyne in Cairo by two members of Lehi; and, near the end of World War Two, the coverage of the Holocaust in Europe, whose true dimensions were unfathomable until then. Although we did not know it then, the "old historians" (in contrast to the "new historians"), such as Prof. Dov Stock (Sadan), would point out in the *Journalists Year Book* of 1947-48 that only the pogroms and the slaughter in Ukraine and

Russia 300 years earlier, when approximately a third of our nation was annihilated, could compare with the Holocaust.

What was the Response Committee's credo? In a letter to the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, David Ben-Gurion, on April 7, 1943, the chairman of the Journalists' Association in Tel Aviv, Joseph Heftman, wrote:

We have the honor to inform you that the Response Committee of the Journalists' Association of Tel Aviv, comprising representatives of the daily newspapers, formed during the "Struma" disaster, has decided to continue its existence as an institution to guide and coordinate the response of the Hebrew press in the country to all matters related to Zionist and *yishuv* policy at this time. We ask you to regard the Response Committee as a fitting and desirable means for influencing public opinion in the spirit of Zionist policy at this time. The Hebrew press in Eretz Yisrael is the sole means of self-expression at this time not only of the Jewish *yishuv* but of the entire Jewish nation vis-a-vis our own history and vis-a-vis other nations.

The committee convened ever more frequently as more and more bodies initiated contact with it, and as it wrestled internally with the dilemmas of whether or not to publish given materials.

Let us take a step backward in time. Although we viewed ourselves as the "fighting press of a fighting people," we often used the term "recruited press" then. In time, however, this expression acquired an unflattering connotation, especially in certain countries, and we began to favor the term "fighting press" instead. Fighting, but not blind to the notion of freedom of the press even in times of emergency. The few extant recorded minutes of the Response Committee during 1943 and 1944 contain comments by the editors in chief then — Gershom Schocken, Peretz Bernstein, Ezriel Carlebach, Herzl Rosenblum, Aryeh Dissentchik, Isaac Remba and others — about the necessity to preserve freedom of the press even during the period when the interests and safety of the *yishuv* were of the gravest concern. Even then, the "Basel" factor never contradicted the other values inherent in a serious, free press, but rather fixed priorities in the spirit of the time and in response to the needs of the hour. In a frank remark during a meeting on November 30, 1944, Gershom Schocken said: "We must establish

and emphasize that we want, first, freedom of the press, a life of freedom. But with all my insistence on freedom of the press, I am aware of the need to take reality into consideration, and that cooperation with the Political Department and other departments of the Jewish Agency is a necessity. Yet always to be vigilant that the press not yield its freedom."

Peretz Bernstein, balanced and restrained, a co-editor of *Haboker*, said at one meeting: "I oppose expanding the authority of the Response Committee. The extent of our secrecy has reached the point of absurdity, or sickness." Isaac Remba of *Hamashkif* held that "in political, as opposed to security, matters, each newspaper must be guided by its conscience. Sometimes it is a Zionist *mitzva* to print material that others seek to conceal perhaps for political reasons."

A relatively large body of documentary material relating to the struggle for the differentiation between security censorship and political censorship is to be found in Dina Goren's doctoral thesis, *The Press in a State under Siege*. Even then, before statehood, we were aware that certain elements were exploiting our "Basel spirit" for illegitimate purposes and were thereby harming freedom of the press. Even then we also dealt with the question of leaks and internal disinformation and tried hard to be vigilant and not fall into this trap, although not always successfully.

We conducted serious arguments and debates with the leadership bodies on this topic, and often gave in as a result of what might be viewed today as an exaggerated sense of responsibility. We were not always prepared to take the risk — at times these were risks of actual survival — that the publication of a secret news item might cause irreversible damage or even sacrifices of life.

In this way, independent Hebrew self-censorship was established even before the independence of the state. I am certain that few among the journalists today know or remember that the basis for censorship in the State of Israel — "the first Hebrew censorship in 2,000 years" — was laid by the journalists themselves, in the belief that they were thereby strengthening the "Basel spirit" of the fighting nation. Reportage of certain military incidents in the press gave the enemy information that could be advantageous to them in their war against the *yishuv*, prompting the decision that a committee of newspaper editors, together with representatives of the *yishuv* and the Haganah leadership, should work out a list of "noes"

that would be binding for the entire press. A document containing 16 such "noes" was drawn up, which may be viewed as the beginning of Hebrew censorship in the State of Israel. Although I was not then at that decision-making level, I can imagine the editor of a Hebrew newspaper then intoning the "*Shehehiyanu*" blessing.

The extent of the opinion-molders' emotional identification with the goal of independence and their belief in Zionism then, at the height of the War of Independence and during the early years of statehood, is demonstrated in a journalistic episode that I have referred to in the past in a different context. Some years ago, Ezriel Carlebach's daughter, Tekumah, allowed me to read her father's appointment book, in which the then-editor in chief of *Ma'ariv* jotted down not only meetings and events but also brief summaries of conversations with various people as well as snatches of ideas to be developed later on. On February 14, 1952, nearly four years after the proclamation of independence, Carlebach noted:

B-G [Ben-Gurion] announces the new economic policy, with a superfluous and vague introduction. The editorial board [of *Ma'ariv*] decides to continue to give the economic policy a chance to reassure and encourage the public, even though there is no confidence whatsoever in the sincerity of the effort.... Panic buying and confusion have erupted in the market. *Ha'aretz* predicts terrible price rises, closures of plants and unemployment. But I insist that the news desk, and an editorial article, give the program a chance even to the point of distorting reality. A journalistic conscience that is not clear; a Zionist conscience that is.

The crowning achievement of the Response Committee's activity was its decision on May 12, 1948, to publish a joint edition of all the daily newspapers on the day of the proclamation of the state. Indeed, that is what the paper — today a valuable collectors' item — was called: *State Day*. It announces for posterity: "This joint newspaper of all the country's newspapers appears in accordance with the decision of the Response Committee in its meeting of May 12th."

Following the establishment of the state, the Response Committee renamed itself the Editors' Committee, a decision conveyed to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion at a special meeting on August 27, 1948. I daresay that on

that occasion, neither Ben-Gurion nor the editors could foresee what an important — and controversial — role the Editors' Committee would play in the life of the country and particularly in the history of the Hebrew press in the State of Israel. Arguably, this role is still being played out today, when the breach in the walls of secrecy is greater than the portion left standing; when Israel is a part of the global village, quite literally exposed to the four winds of the world; when heresy against timeworn truths is more prevalent than the belief in them, and anarchy is sometimes more widespread than public order. The reader who leafs through this issue of *Qesher* will find evidence of the deep excitement that swept up the Jews of the Diaspora on every continent when the state was founded. Even the actual events of the historic Basel cannot compare with the metaphoric "Basel spirit" that serves us in this article, as articulated during the great days of May 1948 in Jewish newspapers in all languages, including the press of the Holocaust survivors in the ruins of Germany. The articles in this issue of *Qesher* depict the excitement and spiritual uplift that overtook masses of Jews from New York to Buenos Aires, from Moscow to Tunis (site of the single, or one of the very few, Jewish newspapers to appear in the Arab world then), documented as well in a unique supplement to this issue that covers the reactions of Jewish newspapers on all continents then, as reflected on their front pages.

From all five continents, let us return to our small world — to our "Sheinkin," which I have dubbed the antithesis of "Basel," and to what it says to us today, 50 years later.

Researchers who will study the changes that occurred in the Hebrew press since statehood (and perhaps several years preceding it) will soon discover that above and beyond the recognized trends that influenced it, especially from across the ocean, the changes that took place both in content and spirit overlap with the decades during which we sacrificed the best of our youth to the Moloch of war. I know of no other country whose decade-by-decade history is characterized by a series of wars. Each decade and its war. Each war and the scars it leaves on the body and spirit of the state. Consciously or unconsciously, we recall the 'sixties, the 'seventies or the 'eighties with nostalgia as way stations in the development of the various branches of culture — literature, music, painting, sculpture, fashion, interpersonal relations, the relationship between the individual and the community, the relationship

between man and his Creator, and so forth. While a similar classification by decades exists in America and in other Western countries, theirs does not fall into the same context as ours. The exception is the Vietnam war and its influence on two generations in America as well as Europe, even East Europe, especially the mythological 'sixties with its free sex, hard drugs and student demonstrations.

I speak in this article of the interconnection between the decades and our wars. Each war and its bereavement and grief; each war and its moral stock-taking and its emotional and intellectual responses; each war and the political and social fractures that it causes; each war and its influences on the written and spoken language, especially among the young. This interrelationship between the sword and the book is not a new sociological phenomenon, neither in our literature nor our history. In an interesting article in *Encounter* ten years ago, English journalist and former government minister George Walden referred to the link drawn by the German philosopher Oswald Spengler between "gunpowder and printing" in his book *The Decline of the West*. I leafed through this book again (in English translation) and indeed, in the final chapter on the press and democracy, in which the author deals with the primary centers of political power in the state, he points out that historically, gunpowder and printing came into use practically simultaneously. The appearance of the first political pamphlets coincided with the appearance of the first field-guns. The first mass-fire of artillery took place in the battle at Valmy in 1792 (when the French defeated the Prussians and Austrians), before which vast quantities of propaganda pamphlets were distributed. The very notion that the ability to cause mass death flowered at the same time as the mass dissemination of simple ideas in print (i.e., in flysheets, pamphlets and bulletins) is food for thought. From our point of view, what is particularly interesting is the behavioral patterns of the war generation and their influence on the generation of the "next war."

In attempting to trace the changes that occur in our society in the areas of education, literature, music, the plastic arts and the theater, I inevitably pay special attention to my particular field — the press. Here, too, I perceive "Sheinkin," or "Sheinkinism," as a highly significant element in the shaping of fads both material and spiritual: journalistic fads, fads of strange and unusual fashion items, new styles in pop and rock music, new styles in speech, writing, hobbies; and the myriad ideological fluctuations that emanate from the "post-" fads, i.e., post-modernism, post-feminism, post-rationalism, post-patriotism and, what

vexes me greatly, post-Zionism.

The idea I want to convey here is that in the 1990s, and perhaps in the late 1980s as well — that is, during the last decade, we have witnessed the "freh-ization" of our lives. Do not ask me what "freh-ization" means exactly, because I can only answer in the words of the American judge who, when asked what pornography was, replied: I don't know but I can tell immediately when I see it. Moreover, again, if ever I should be called before the court of history and be asked by the judges why I have linked this "freh-ization" to Sheinkin Street in particular, I will have no decisive or convincing answer. Perhaps I have fallen victim to a widespread stereotype. Perhaps I have not been accurate enough in the apportioning of blame between the print and the electronic media — especially television, or in differentiating between cause and effect, if that is possible at all.

Still, what is this "freh-ization"? For lack of an alternative, and without receiving the permission of persons whom I shall cite here, I will call up in testimony several veteran colleagues who, apparently like myself, have attempted to define the term in some fashion. A long time ago, for example, Yoram Bronovsky, one of the learned writers in the Israeli press, took on this task, pointing out that once, the pejorative *freha* had an ethnic aura, but with the passage of time, *freha* underwent many perversions. In his view, it is a mixture of "vulgarity, lack of culture, an exaggerated tendency toward gossip, excessive self-confidence and a large measure of coquettishness and imitativeness."

Gidi Gov, one of our popular comedians, when asked his opinion as to the difference between our two TV channels in an interview published last year, replied that he thought that Channel 2, on which he himself appears, was more "freh-ic." Yet he, too, did not explain what precisely he was alluding to. In an article titled "Freha-land," published in *Yediot Aharonot* five years ago, Natan Brun, the veteran journalist, wrote:

When a member of Knesset clutches his testicles and shouts: "I've got you by the balls"; when respectable newspapers carry a report that a certain boutique-owner stood and urinated on a street in Tel Aviv; when criminals become VIPs — when all this happens here and now, the conclusion that "freh-ism" is taking over our lives, and that we are truly living in "freh-land," is inescapable.

Brun tried to provide identifying marks for the typical

freh (m.) but then admitted that it was no longer easy to distinguish them. "It seems to me that lately, 'freh-ism' has crossed all the lines and is taking over every area of our lives."

Brun went even further by putting Prof. Yeshayahu Leibowitz into the category of *freh* by virtue of his body language and his extremism, stating: "It seems to me that Prof. Leibowitz is simply a *freh* — a genius, talented, brilliant, profound, but in his behavior, his body language, his mode of expression, his lack of responsibility, he is actually a *freh* like any *freh* in the street."

Writer Meir Shalev, in a satiric article in *Yediot Aharonot* on April 3, 1998, refers to a speech given by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to high school students in which he used the expression: "We are not *freierim* (suckers)." Says Shalev: "This is a sentence that derives from 'freh-ic' pop songs."

An article in *Ha'aretz* of February 27, 1998, covering an exhibit by artist Ya'akov Mishori includes these comments by the artist: "Sometimes I make use of old figurative works of mine in which many of the backgrounds are discoteques or amusement parks with a kind of graphic decadence and 'freh-ness.'" Elsewhere he states: "I am very Israeli. Not a Zionist, not a patriot, but I feel part of the landscape of this country."

The *freha* has also entered politics and the Knesset by the back door. On March 9, 1998, the Labor Party Knesset faction, debating a proposal by MK Dalia Itzik to initiate a mediation effort to end the hostility between the Rabin and Weizman families, heard MK Sonia Landwer declare that "Mrs. Rabin behaved like a *freha*." When the MK saw that the participants in the session were startled by what she said, she quickly retracted the wording as inappropriate. What was it about the expression that startled her colleagues? I do not know. She did not elaborate and her associates did not explain.

I began searching for meanings in dictionaries. The large Even-Shoshan Dictionary does not contain the expression at all. It goes without saying that the expression does not appear in Gur's older dictionary either. Recently, two new, up-to-date dictionaries have appeared. One, the *Sapir Dictionary*, edited by Eitan Avnion, contains the entry but with a skimpy, and in my mind incomplete, definition: "a flighty, common, talkative and cheerful young woman." The second dictionary, edited by Prof. Ya'akov Shoueka, contains a more comprehensive explanation, and one that I think comes close to the "Sheinkinist" perception: "*Freha* — slang. Appellation for a flighty, common girl or woman

whose demeanor and behavior suggest that she is cheap, vulgar, rough and crude, and reflects superficiality in the way she relates to her surroundings." The dictionary also contains the masculine form — *freh*. This definition comes close to the real significance of the expression, and by extension to what I term in this article "freh-ization."

"Freh-ization," at least in the media, is also a form of pornography in the accepted sense of the term, i.e., the arousal of sexual instincts by pictures and words, as well as pornography in the sense of stimulating acute sensations by means of viewing oversized headlines and revolting pictures of death by accident, criminal act or terrorism. In some cases, the color of blood dominates nearly every page of a newspaper edition, replete with blood-curdling descriptions and panoramic photographs designed to frighten, terrorize, depress, invite feelings of revenge, incite, or engender deep despair with life. One example is the headlines in the country's two afternoon papers following the terrorist attacks on buses in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: "A Country in Fear," "Mortal Fear," "Hell," and so forth. The sins of both our TV channels in this context have also been discussed at length, and I will not reiterate this criticism here.

Side by side with this is another emerging phenomenon, equally worrisome in the "freh-ization" context: the fixation with political and society gossip as quintessential news. Gossip columns, which a decade or two ago were considered slightly embarrassing, and which occupied a marginal place in the newspaper, have now moved to a central position in some papers, with all the rest of the content serving merely to fill up the empty spaces left after everything possible has been written about a given *freha* or *freh* who, as a result of "Tsipora" (the spiritual mother of the highly popular gossip column in the late daily, *Hadashot*), has entered our living rooms by the front door. Luckily, the heroes of these columns change rapidly, so our lives are at least varied.

The culture that creates idols of plastic and then destroys them, and the "freh-ization" of the press, go hand in hand with several other phenomena, no less worrisome: the corruption of the language, the terrible distortion of style and composition, and rank ignorance.

Once, only certain local newspapers excelled in this kind of shameless ignorance and superficiality. Today, it is much more widespread. I am grateful each morning if I discover an intelligent article devoid of ignorance and linguistic distortion, or an editorial column of substance which at least attempts to deal seriously with reality. I

hasten to add, with satisfaction, that these kinds of pieces do indeed appear, are proliferating, and are qualitative, even if they lack the tone of the old days, which, inevitably, I recall with such nostalgia. But, good God — the ignorance!

Some years ago, Carl Bernstein, of the Woodward and Bernstein team of Watergate fame, published an article in the *New Republic* whose title sums up its content succinctly: "The Idiot Culture." What is this culture? Space does not permit me to quote the particularly apt examples cited in the article, as if with us in mind. Suffice to say that from start to finish it is a lament over the deprecation of truth, the elevation of ignorance, grave breaches of ethics, the abandonment of self-criticism, and the blurring of the boundaries between legitimate information and advertisement.

In an era in which culture is perceived as an industry, and public discourse is vulgarized, it would appear that anyone and anything that lowers the standard is praised. I certainly do not wish to make comparisons, for these things are truly distant from each other, yet when I look at the cover of this issue of *Qesher*, with its naive, "Basel"-like picture of Eretz Yisrael, I cannot help thinking of the official poster chosen for this our most celebratory Independence Day in the last 50 years. What is the dominant motif in it? A *hamsa* (the depiction of a hand, a traditional good-luck talisman in some Jewish communities). The noted artist and illustrator David Tartakower commented about this work: "The poster that was selected reflects the cultural image of the country as built into today's reality. It features a drawing of a talisman that stems from the tradition of the Babi Sali and Rabbi Kadduri. It harbors the messianic primitivism of the dispensors of slips with blessings, and good-luck charms, with a simulated connection to the modern milieu."

It is perhaps fitting to conclude this essay on "freh-ism" with remarks made in an interview conducted by Rami Rosen of *Ha'aretz* on March 24, 1998, of someone who has something to say and whose message is worth hearing: Sefi (Joseph) Kravitz, a wounded veteran of the Six Day War who was cited for outstanding bravery, overcame his disability, and today is a successful industrial and management engineer. He stated: "We speak on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the state, which is also the 50th year of my life, and I cannot help but think that today, in contrast to the beautiful days of innocence of

my past, I live in a country of *frehim* [pl.]" He adds, in the same breath, that he is referring to behavior, not to ethnic origin.

I do not particularly like those who expect to be handed everything without demanding of themselves as well, and, moreover, demand and expect with an arrogance that they accuse others of displaying. On the other side of the divide are the crowd of *nouveau riches* for whom social status is all. A building contractor drives a Mercedes, and everyone thinks this makes him worthy of friendship or esteem. Or all sorts of labels that a person will carefully display in his attire in the knowledge that this will make him worthy. The former, as the latter, are two extremities of the same "freh-ic" culture: loud, flashy and seeking shortcuts.

In my mind, this is the ultimate "freh-ness," as perceived by a man who stands firmly on the ground with both feet

despite his wounds, and is undoubtedly aware of what this vulgarity does to our media.

Theodor Herzl, the visionary of Basel, imagined a Jewish state that would be an "aristocratic republic." He did not mean an aristocracy of money, certainly not as a sole criterion. Probably, he envisioned something similar to that described by one of the great journalists and publishers of the early twentieth century, Joseph Pulitzer, who, in a lead article in his newspaper, the *World*, held up the "aristocracy of labor, aristocracy of intellect and aristocracy of virtues" as his ideals of society. If I may take the liberty of poking my head between two such high mountains, I would, perhaps, add: the aristocracy of modesty and good taste. But this, of course, is so remote from, so opposed to, our ubiquitous "freh-ness," that it cannot even be dreamt of. Not even on the jubilee of the nation.

Abridged version of the Hebrew

THE STATE OF ISRAEL IS ESTABLISHED: A SURVEY OF FOURTEEN EDITORIALS IN THE ISRAELI PRESS, MAY 14-16, 1948

A study of 14 editorials that appeared in the daily Israeli press upon the declaration of the establishment of the new state on the 5th of Iyar 5708 (May 14, 1948) and during the two days following reflects the wide range of political opinion in the Jewish Yishuv during that fateful period.

Eleven of the newspapers were published in Tel Aviv, while three came out in Jerusalem, which was still under siege. All but two were Hebrew-language dailies, with the *Palestine Post* published in English and *Yediot Hadashot* in German.

Following are excerpts.

Ha'aretz (privately owned), May 14, 1948

5 Iyar 5708

Today is a historic day for Israel. Today marks the end of an era and the start of an era. Today the British Mandate in Palestine ends, the Mandate that a quarter century ago stirred great hopes, nearly messianic hopes, in the Jewish people, but that in the course of time became the symbol of a great moral failure. Today the White Paper becomes invalid, that shameful document that unsuccessfully attempted to cloak the great betrayal of the Jewish people's historic rights in legal dress, yet managed during its nine years of existence to close the gates of the country to hundreds of thousands of Jews who could have been saved from the Nazi ovens. Today Jewish independence is revived on the soil of Israel after 1,900 years of exile.... And today [our people] begins a new stage, a stage of heightened danger in our desperate struggle with the neighboring Arab nations who until now have refused to accept the historic imperative of the return of Israel to its land.

Great nations view us as an uninvited guest at the table of the nations. But we have no other course. Having reached our present status entirely by our own strength, we must continue to conquer our state by our strength alone, in the hope and conviction that the world of power will accept us when we demonstrate that we too have the power to protect what is ours.

Davar (sponsored by the Histadrut and the Mapai Party), May 14, 1948

Message of the Day

The Jewish Yishuv is neither lighthearted nor deluded as it strides toward its independence. Israel knows what lies ahead. It knows all those who boast of attacking it. The campaign is grave. All its sons are armed. Rising out of self-preservation and national aspiration, the longed-for state emerges. The decisive day falls on the morrow of Kfar Etzion Day. The wings of bravery of the sanctifiers of Israel's name and the defenders of the homeland are spread over the dawn of its unfolding day. True, behind us — the sea of blackness and bereavement of the exile's orphanhood. Before us — the eternal vision of hope for redemption. On our shoulders — the fate of all the generations of Israel.

Today the Yishuv strides toward the pangs of its independence on behalf of the entire House of Israel in all its dispersal. The yearning of all the generations and the hopes of all the nation's dwelling places of this generation accompany it. And the bravery of the defenders of Israel paves the way.

Haboker (sponsored by the General Zionists and the business community), May 14, 1948

This Day

If not now, when? This is the motto that has been transformed from an ancient bookish saying to the living truth of our generation. If this generation does not fulfill the historic mission that fate has thrust upon it at this time, there is no hope for the Jewish people to renew its independent political life. This is the awareness pulsating in everyone's heart, strengthening the hands of our boys in battle, girding up the entire Yishuv, old and young, man and woman, to deeds and sacrifice. This fateful rejuvenation, quivering with mystery, will not flinch in the face of political warnings or programs of one kind or another crafted by calculating statesmen. The Jewish people has taken its fate in its hands after hundreds of years of delusions and disappointments, and is striding toward its future with a single awareness: it has ceased to

exist by the grace of others, and will prove to the world that it has no less talent for life than others.

Hatzofeh (sponsored by Mizrahi and Hapo'el Hamizrahi), May 14, 1948

This is the Day

This day is great, and, God willing, we will have a "Great Sabbath" this Sabbath — the first Sabbath in the independent Jewish state. The emotional turmoil of every Jew in the homeland, of the entire Jewish people throughout the world, surges like the sea on this great, exalted day. Yet our gladness is not yet complete on this day and the time for rejoicing is not yet here. On this very day we stand... in the fire of harsh and bitter battles, and the precious, holy blood of the best of our sons and daughters is spilled on the stones of the homeland, acquired and conquered by blood, sweat and heavy sacrifices. Today the bitter news arrived of the catastrophe in Gush Etzion, overrun by the armed forces of the enemy. On this very day, at any moment, a concerted invasion of the Arab armies is anticipated — supported, instructed and equipped by the "neutral" former government that departs from the country today. On this great day, the day of the resurrection of the Jewish state, we are all called to the flag, to the widening front, each according to his ability and his task. On this very day the motto "The entire country is a front, the entire people an army" becomes an increasingly grave reality, a reality that...envelops both our private and our public lives.

Al Hamishmar (sponsored by the Mapam Party), May 14, 1948

The End of the Mandate

The Mandate was granted at a time when the liberal democratic countries embraced Wilhelm's Germany, when the czarist regime collapsed in Russia, and when the liberal bourgeoisie was certain of its power to restrain the proletarian revolution on the one hand and eliminate the vestiges of reactionary feudalism on the other. The representatives of the British bourgeoisie relied on enhancing modern progressive elements in the Eastern countries as the best way to guarantee their status there. They thus aided the establishment of a progressive Jewish community in Palestine.

Meanwhile, the socialist revolution was victorious in Russia, [while] the revolution in Germany, which eliminated the kaiser's throne, turned into a struggle by the proletariat to eliminate the capitalist regime. Fear gripped the bourgeois world and it turned its back on liberal methods, extending its hand to reactionaries everywhere.

The Mandate had placed the governance of Palestine in British hands, but the intentions of the British changed meanwhile: from the establishment of a "Jewish national home" to its destruction and its reconstitution as a new ghetto.

Mivrak (sponsored by Lehi supporters), May 14, 1948

The State of the Israel War

It is well that the rejoicing in the streets today is not as it was on that joyful night of November 29 [1947], the night of the big lie. The lie that by means of a vote someone will grant us a state and then with his army defend that vote.

It is well that the joy is constrained and serious, just as our freedom is still very constrained and our campaign very serious.

When the Philistine announces the military conquest of the western shore of the country. When Amalek invades from the east. And when the cross hangs over the epicenter — our Jerusalem — it is well that a state such as has been founded today will not be able to rest quietly and will not have a real existence so long as these three hover around and over it.

We must know this on the day marking the holiday of the State of Israel: So long as even a single soldier of an evil, destructive and cunning empire stands here; so long as Transjordan is desertland, no-man's land for all wild, murderous, plunderous pariah tribes; and so long as the cross rules in Jerusalem — the state is like the Castel only [i.e., the hilltop that served as an outer defense for Jerusalem].

Let us not rejoice in it any more than we rejoiced upon the conquest of the Castel. The Castel exists not for its own sake but to liberate Jerusalem. In the same way, it is not the State of Israel that has been established for us today but the State of the Israel War — the basis for the war of the independence of Israel.

Yediot Hadashot (in German, privately owned), May 14, 1948

This is the Day!

The mind cannot grasp it, the heart beats strongly, the hand that holds the pen trembles, a tear steals into the eye. Can it be?

Will the seige along the shores of the homeland be lifted at midnight and will every Jew anywhere be able to enter? To enter and not run a blockade? To leave the Diaspora, the death camps, the cemeteries of our forefathers who died sanctifying the name of God, murdered, butchered, slaughtered, hanged, suffocated in the gas chambers?

Will the vision of generations who faced east day after day with devotion, with zeal and with unshakable faith be realized? Will the cry of "Hear O Israel" of the six million, the last utterance welling from the broken heart, be heard?...

The chains are broken, the fence removed, the seige ended. The nightmares of Mauritius, Cyprus, Kenya, Port-de-Bouc and Hamburg are gone with the wind. Things are turned upside down: the invader-conquerors have left in shame while the sons have returned to their territory.

The gate is open wide and the hands are the hands of Jacob guarding over it. The arms are open, the arms of a mother, a father, a kinsman. The arms of home and of the homeland.

Yediot Aharonot (privately owned), May 16, 1948

I am Proud of Israel

The greatest concession, the most visible patriotism at this time, comes from the leaders of Etzel and Lehi [the two rightist underground movements during the pre-state period].

Every schoolboy knows that if anyone among us could be dissatisfied with the achievement [of statehood], it must first and foremost be they.... For it was not for the establishment of the state in a fifth of our land that they shed their blood in the years gone by...

The danger that they would say "no" was anticipated. That they would highlight the territorial loss at the expense of the achievement of independence in the part that remained....

Yet, what happened...was that all of them rallied to the

flag. To the last man in the camp. Etzel and Lehi came up out of the underground and presented themselves in the united front.

What Bevin's 150,000 armed and equipped soldiers failed to accomplish, the miracle of Jewish freedom did: there is no longer any hidden Jewish underground in the liberated part of our land.

Here an entente cordial was forged by all. The complete unification of the people has been established, [a people] who had reached a pinnacle of fractiousness in the past. A people who have become a defensive wall from top to bottom.

If so, then the people will not fall. This kind of people will not lose its freedom. This kind of people will witness wonders, even at the fronts.

Ma'ariv (privately owned), May 16, 1948

The Campaign Diary

The events of the hour have shown us beyond a doubt that because this is a real war we need a real army. Without a moment's deferment.

We trust that this will be our government's first decision. It is the logical first step. Now that we have become a state, it is self-evident that there is no more room for private or semi-private armies.

From the statement last night by the commander of Etzel it is clear that the moment the Haganah becomes the [state] army, the Etzel soldiers will join it. The Lehi fighters, of course, will do the same. Both have accepted the authority of our government as self-evident, and, with the dissolution of their armed organizations within the Jewish army, they will become political parties like all the other parties.

However, it is not this internal problem — whose importance has diminished considerably — that demands the announcement of the [state] army immediately. The presence of the enemy outside demands it, and does not permit its deferment for even a single hour more.

Dr. A. Carlebach

Hayoman (sponsored by Agudat Yisrael) May 16, 1948

An Eternal Edifice

Not by our righteousness but by the evil of the nations

did the Lord create an opening narrow as the point of a needle for us. Now, it is up to us to widen the edifice, to fashion it into an eternal edifice. This depends on us. On our young people and on the elderly, on our multitudes and on our leaders, that we open our hearts and our ears to the voice of God who calls to us in the tumult of war: Return to me, my sons, remove the foreign gods from your midst, purify the land and sanctify it to God and His Torah, and I will open the approach to redemption as wide as the gate of a palace. The Lord is the builder of Jerusalem; He will gather in the exiles of Israel.

Hamashkif (sponsored by the Revisionist movement), May 16, 1948

We are Independent

Our independence was annointed and sanctified on the day of the proclamation by the blood of the heroes of Gush Etzion and by the blood of those who broke through a road to Jerusalem, and we sanctified the whole country that day with our blood, with the blood of the best of our sons. These are the borders that we fixed that day. The fallen at Gush Etzion willed us not only to rebuild the ruins of this bloc, but, and especially, to realize their will that there be no isolated settlements in the Jewish homeland, or settlements isolated as a result of evacuations "according to a plan," but rather the expansion of borders according to our own plan and by means of preserving the historic borders sanctified by the new blood of the best of our nation.

This is a great day and a great hour, not a time for debate or the settling of accounts. The heart is filled with joy at the beginning of the fulfillment of the vision of Herzl and Jabotinsky. The heart is proud that the toil of the head of Betar has been rewarded. However, the road...of torment and blood has not yet ended. Let us remember those whose blood enabled us to achieve what we have achieved and let us stand by those whose efforts will enable us to fortify and expand Jewish independence.

Kol Ha'am (sponsored by the Communist Party), May 16, 1948

Our Response to the Invaders

A day after the declaration of the Jewish state we learned of the de facto recognition by the United States of the

Government Council. Although the recognition is not yet official, there is no doubt that it is an important step which will help recruit practical aid in the United States for our war. This proves that creating independent facts, disregarding threats by hostile imperialist elements, and standing firm tend to elicit serious consideration in the wide world. No doubt the motives for this step by Truman were linked more to the elections for the U.S. presidency than to a "pro-Jewish" about-face. No doubt, too, that despite this recognition, steps will be taken and plans will be made for the economic and political subjugation of the young Jewish state. It is clear, therefore, that side by side with an appreciation of the importance of this fact, vigilance is essential regarding attempts to lead our government and our state toward dependence on imperialist American elements.

Jerusalem Post (in English), May 14, 1948

1918-1948

A time will come when Palestine's people will be able to drag their feet out of the trenches and raise their eyes to the peaks. When that time comes, the closing today of the Government House door on Britain's last High Commissioner will be seen as the sealing of a chapter in history which, for all the sordidness at the end, has held grace and greatness, vision and dignity....

The tragedy which ends today began over ten years ago when the British Administration first substituted security for policy, policing for justice, force for courage....

The British Government in Palestine was once a fine and solidly wrought thing — how solid was only seen when its turn came to be destroyed, department by department, section by section, so that the organized chaos could lead straight to a vandals' holiday....

We were with Britain body and soul, in adversity and advance, when Britain fought the civilized man's fight. We shall live in the hope that the good, the gracious and the just will triumph once more wherever Britons go or destiny takes Britain.

G. Agronsky

Hayom (privately owned), May 16, 1948

The Jewish State is Proclaimed

Herzl's vision has been realized: the Jewish State is vital

to the Jewish people and vital to the nations of the world, and therefore it has been established. He perceived it, in his intense imagination, rising out of the regions of suffering, the sea of blood and the columns of ruins. He dared call it by its name in those days when only the first rays of the dawn of our renewal were beginning to break through the darkness of exile and slavery, the sorrow, and the illusory freedom and adjustment to life in the Diaspora. He recruited the power of the people and channeled it into an unceasing drive for the freedom of the nation and the building of its homeland and country at a time when only a handful of pioneers were beginning to lay the cornerstones of the community in Palestine, while doubt and hesitation gnawed at the hearts of the leadership as to whether we were capable of the wondrous task of building the homeland of the wandering Jewish nation.

Herzl did not doubt. He knew that greatness and achievement in the lives of people are the product of distress and suffering, sorrow and rage, which lead to

rebellion and resurrection. He therefore believed in the strength and ability of the people, and implanted this belief in us. He aroused in us the enormous strength that never surfaced during the darkness of exile. We were freed of the burden [of exile] even while still rotting in it. He developed in us the courage to act, the ability to sacrifice, the understanding of our reality, and the talent for exploiting the moment. We followed the road he laid out, we built the land in our souls, we organized the people, we renewed our national life, we carried out our campaigns in the war for independence until we have arrived at this point, harboring the miracle of rejuvenation and renewal after nearly two thousand years of enslavement and exile, and the Jewish state has been established.

...We shall not resume being an exiled, wandering people, bereft of homeland and sovereignty! We will be a free people, with a land and a state, a member of the family of free nations!

Y. Gruenbaum

A CITY UNDER SIEGE, BUT WITH MANY NEWSPAPERS: THE PRESS IN JERUSALEM DURING THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE / Yehiel Limor and Inés Gabel

The phenomenon of the press in Jerusalem during the tense period when the city was under attack and siege, from the end of November 1947 until the end of November 1948, reveals that despite the dire straits of the small Jewish population that remained in the city (some 70,000), and the difficulty in obtaining news information, a vibrant daily and weekly press operated there. It was, moreover, national, not merely local, in scope.

This outpouring of newspapers, most of which sprang up during the war itself and died out thereafter, resulted first and foremost from the absence of alternative sources of information for the population. The siege of the city had cut it off from the country's press center, Tel Aviv, which supplied most of the dailies read by the Jewish population in the country, while the radio was an unreliable news source because of prolonged electricity blackouts and the fact that many homes had no radio sets at all. The sense of isolation that resulted served to heighten the fears of the population.

The papers that rapidly began to be published in the

city to fill this vacuum were snapped up by Jerusalemites in part because they served to confirm, or dispel, the plethora of rumors that circulated constantly, and partly because they supplied vital daily notification of distribution points and times for vital foodstuffs, water and fuel. Even the ads, however skimpy, filled an important role, for between bombings the population shopped, relaxed in cafes and cinemas, and even attended courses in an effort to maintain a semblance of normal life under siege conditions.

With the decision by the UN to partition Palestine, on November 29, 1947, the road from the coastal plain to Jerusalem was blockaded by the Arab Legion with increasing frequency; terrorist acts were executed throughout the city; outlying neighborhoods were attacked; interurban and local public transportation was paralyzed; and vital supplies had to be brought into the city by convoys of trucks, often at the price of tragic sacrifices by volunteer drivers and escorts.

By April 1948, the siege was total and the city was

entirely cut off from the rest of the country except for a wireless connection and a daily flight by a two-seat aircraft. The implications for the population were strict rationing of food, water and fuel, a cut-off of electricity during most of the day, and no regular radio broadcasting.

Nevertheless, despite acute shortages of paper, electricity, news sources and press personnel (who had been called up for the defense effort), 13 dailies sprang up in Jerusalem, joining the only pre-existing Jerusalem-based paper, the *Palestine Post*. These papers were published both by private concerns and political parties, the latter intent on preserving readership and winning new supporters to their particular ideologies during that fateful moment in history.

The dailies were :

1. ***Hadashot Ha'erev*** ("Evening News"), a sister daily to the existing Tel Aviv-based paper of the same name, sponsored by the Mapai Party. Initiated on December 2, 1947, it closed on March 19, 1948, while its Tel Aviv edition was discontinued some two weeks later.
2. ***Yediot Aharonot*** ("Late News") — Jerusalem edition, sister to the Tel Aviv-based paper of the same name. *Yediot* had begun publishing a Jerusalem edition partially printed locally beforehand, shifting to a fully produced Jerusalem edition on January 1, 1948, and continuing publication until September 3, 1948. It had the largest distribution of the Jerusalem dailies during this time — 6,000-7,000 daily, and up to 10,000 on special occasions. The paper acquired a high degree of reader loyalty in the city during the war, which it retained for years thereafter, even when elsewhere in the country its close competitor, *Ma'ariv*, topped it in circulation.
3. ***Hayom*** ("Today"), begun on January 18, 1948, the first independent Hebrew daily to be started up in Jerusalem in many years. The established Tel Aviv-based papers, regarding it as a long-range threat, promptly banned Jerusalem distributors from handling it, and a press war developed. The issue became a topic for deliberation by the Jewish Agency, which backed *Hayom* and attempted to break the ban. The paper gained considerable success on days when communications with Tel Aviv were completely cut off, with distribution reaching up to 10,000 a day. Once the war ended, however, it could not compete with the Tel Aviv-based papers, and closed on July 18, 1949.
4. ***Hayoman*** ("The Diary"), sponsored by the Agudat Yisrael Party and serving the ultra-Orthodox population. Launched in February 1948, it was published until January 20, 1949, when it was discontinued not for marketing reasons but because of an internal split in Agudat Yisrael.

5. ***Yediot Yerushalayim*** ("Jerusalem News"), published April 7-May 17, 1948, only. This was an unusual cooperative effort by six Tel Aviv-based Jerusalem newspapers that decided to set aside ideological and commercial rivalries for the sake of mutual survival once Jerusalem was cut off completely. The publishers feared the flight of their Jerusalem readership to locally based newspapers. The six were the independent *Ha'aretz*, and five politically sponsored papers: *Davar*, *Haboker*, *Hatzofeh*, *Al Hamishmar* and *Hamashkif*. The paper's editorial point of view was, by mutual agreement, politically neutral. However, five days after the joint effort was launched, the leftist *Al Hamishmar* dropped out of the union in light of what it perceived as unconscionably moderate reportage of the bloody raid carried out by Etzel forces on the Arab village of Deir Yassin.

6. ***Hadashot Tsaharayim*** ("Afternoon News"), a stenciled daily sponsored by the Histadrut, published during May 18-June 27, 1948, laying the foundation for the more substantial *Dvar Yerushalayim*.

7. ***Dvar Yerushalayim*** ("Jerusalem Message"), sponsored by the Jerusalem branch of the Histadrut, initiated as a substitute for its parent paper, the Tel Aviv-based *Davar*, when Jerusalem was cut off. It was published from July 13th to the end of November 1948, when the military situation permitted the resumed distribution of Tel Aviv newspapers.

8. ***HaHerut*** ("The Freedom"), launched June 1, 1948, by the Etzel underground. A precursor of the daily *Herut* founded in Tel Aviv four months later, *HaHerut* ceased publication then, while *Herut* went on to become the organ of the movement of the same name.

9. ***Palestine Post***, the veteran Jerusalem-based English daily founded in 1932 (today, the *Jerusalem Post*), continued publishing throughout this period. With the evacuation of the British, the *Post* lost most of its readership and was left with fewer than 1,000 subscribers in Jerusalem in May 1948. It faced a reverse problem from the other papers in the city: they relied on Tel Aviv to supply them with the newspapers, while the *Post* relied on Tel Aviv and the rest of the country for its readership. Additionally, its offices and press were heavily damaged in a terrorist explosion. However, founder-editor Gershon Agronsky managed to recruit investment to sustain the paper.

Besides the above newspapers, four stenciled information bulletins were issued daily by various public bodies: *Kol*

Yerushalayim ("Voice of Jerusalem"), issued by the Jerusalem Council in cooperation with two local radio stations; *Kol Hamagen Ha'ivri* ("Voice of the Jewish Defender"), issued by the Jerusalem office of the Haganah; *Yediot Hamagen* ("Defense News"), issued by the Jerusalem Brigade of the Israeli army; and *Lahaverim Babesisim* ("For Members in Their Bases"), a military update for soldiers.

Weeklies and other periodicals published in Jerusalem during this period included: *Iton Hamagen* ("Defense Newspaper"), published by the Haganah; *Kol Yisrael* ("Voice of Israel"), published by Agudat Yisrael; *Nerot Shabbat* ("Sabbath Candles"), published by the Rabbi Kook Institute together with other religious bodies; *Hed Hamizrah* ("Echo from the East"), published

by the Sephardi Council of Jerusalem; and three radio magazines: *Hagalgal* ("The Wheel"), published by the British Mandate broadcasting authority; *Hama'azin* ("The Listener"), a short-lived successor of *Hagalgal*; and *Kol Yerushalayim Latalmid* ("Voice of Jerusalem for the Pupil"), a juvenile version of *Hagalgal* and *Hama'azin*.

Five periodicals published by Zionist bodies were: *Ha'olam* ("The World"), a weekly issued by the Zionist Organization; *Hahed* ("The Echo"), a monthly issued by the Jewish National Fund; *Yediot Keren Hayesod* ("Keren Hayesod News"), a periodical published by that organization irregularly; *The Jewish Agency's Digest of Press and Events*, an English weekly; and *Die Woch in Erets Yisroel* ("This Week in the Land of Israel"), a Yiddish edition of the Jewish Agency English weekly.

MAN AND WAR: A COMPILATION OF LITERARY WORKS BY SOLDIER WRITERS PUBLISHED IN 1949 / Nurit Govrin

A powerful Hebrew compilation, "A Spectrum of Authors — A Compilation of Literary works by Soldier writers," published in April 1949 by the Israel Defense Forces Cultural Service at the height of Israel's War of Independence, contains powerful and moving prose, poetry and essays by many of the young country's leading authors. Reading it 50 years later reveals, startlingly, that even then, when the myth of the certainty of the "Palmah Generation" in its prowess and the rightness of its cause was presumably at its apex, this very myth was being challenged from within. The seeds of doubt and self-questioning that were to flower in succeeding generations are evident in these works, leading to a realization that the myth had never been firmly grounded, certainly not in the literary context of that time.

The general sense of a questioning of the moral imperative of the war jumps out at the reader of this compilation today, especially in light of the establishment imprint of the publication. What emerges as a central theme is an ambivalence about the war and its results on the part of those caught up in it. Many of the works express a tension between the willingness for self-sacrifice and doubts about the need for it, and between the longing for a state and the sense of loss once it was founded, along with the struggle under the weight of the moral responsibility felt by the fighters.

Conceivably, this body of work can be viewed as the calling card of the so-called "1948 generation" in the personal, literary and moral contexts. It includes some of the most daring work to be written not only then but ever since. Disturbing moral and ethical questions are raised regarding the price exacted by the war, memory and oblivion, death and life, and many of the issues that continued to preoccupy Israeli society and literature from then on.

The soldier writers included in the anthology were a homogenous group in terms of age and background. Most fought in the War of Independence and many had served previously with the British army. They were: Moshe Shamir, editor (*The Things Created in Turmoil*, introduction; *The Night of Sarona*, a chapter from a novel); Ayin Hillel, (*The Grey Soldiers' Message*, poem); Natan Shaham, *Seven of Them*, short story); Hayim Guri, *The Colts' Mane*, poem); Aharon Amir (*Restitution*, poem); Yehudit Hendel (*His Memory was Damaged*, short story); Amir Gilboa (*Progenitor of the Light*, poem cycle); Matti Meged (*His Imprint in Stone*, short story; *Man at War: A Forward to Reflection*, essay); Michael Desheh (*Vanity of the Written Word; In the Crucible of Night*, poems); Yehiel Mohar (*With the Poor; Tree and Man*, poems); Menahem Talmi (*Left Behind*, short story); Sando David (*Poems*, five poems); Gidon Shemer (*Moroccan*, short

story); Hayim Feiner (*The March to the Dunes*, poem); Dan Ben-Amotz (*So Sad*, short story); Binyamin Galai (*Meditative Poems*, poem); and Yitzhak Avrahami (*And the Land will Indeed be Peaceful*; essay).

So well crafted and finely edited were these 16 pieces, that nearly all were later selected by their authors to be reprinted in anthologies of their own work at various times.

THE BIRTH OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AS REFLECTED IN FOUR NEW YORK YIDDISH DAILIES / Akiva Zimmerman

Although the four major Yiddish dailies under review represented varied ideologies, all gave the establishment of Israel enthusiastic editorial support and detailed coverage. Interestingly, the reaction to the event by *Morgen Freiheit*, the organ of the American Jewish Communists, barely suggested the paper's Communist identity, in contrast to the Yiddish newspaper in the Soviet Union, which referred to the founding of Israel only briefly (and see article by Mussia Lipman).

The Forverts ("Forward"), founded in 1897 and edited until 1951 by Abe Cahan, was initially Bundist in orientation, but after a visit by Cahan to Palestine in the 1920s, coverage of the Zionist movement, and the Mapai position in particular, became sympathetic.

The Friday, May 14, 1948, issue, with 12 pages, ran an oversize three-line headline across the entire width of the front page: "Jewish State to be Declared Today; Siege of Palestine Ends; Jews Enter Freely; the UN Proposes a Peace Negotiator." A subhead notes that the Egyptian army has been ordered to cross the border at midnight, while another headline quotes Foreign Minister-designate Moshe Shertok announcing a US demand that Israel refrain from declaring the state. Pages 2 and 3 carry related material, including reports on the Jewish-Arab battles in Palestine and on planned sailings of immigrant ships bound for Israel. A giant ad announces a rally by the Zionist movement in New York's Madison Square Garden on May 16th in the presence of Dr. Chaim Weizmann, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, Emanuel Neumann, Eleanor Roosevelt, New York Mayor William O'Dwyer and Senator Robert Taft.

Another ad, by Macy's department store in New York, announces the sale of 8x12" Israeli flags at 14c each and 12x18" flags at 24c.

Nearly the entire 12-page Saturday, May 15th issue was devoted to the new Jewish state. The large-type two-line headline on the front page announced: "America Recognizes the New State 'Israel'," with photos of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and U.S. President Harry Truman. Other front-page items reported Haganah victories in Jerusalem and the appointment of a UN peace negotiator to be sent to Palestine. A Yiddish translation of the Israeli Declaration of Independence appears. A long article by one of the editors, Leon Kristal, assures the new Jewish state of the existence of a loyal rear guard in the form of the American Jewish community. The Sunday, May 16th issue also devoted its entire front page, as well as much of the rest of the paper, to Israel.

Der Morgen Zhurnal ("The Morning Journal"), founded in 1901, was the second-largest Yiddish daily after the *Forverts*. Religious in orientation, it was considered an organ of Mizrahi supporters, edited for many years by Mizrahi leader Gedaliah Bublick. Eventually, in 1953, it merged with the daily *Der Tog*, both papers sharing a Zionist outlook. The combined daily appeared until 1971.

The Friday, May 14th issue of the *Zhurnal* ran a banner over the logo: "Oh, that the salvation of Israel were to come out of Zion! When God turneth the captivity of His people" (Psalms, 53:7). The oversize headline read: "The Jewish State will be Proclaimed Today," with a two-line subhead announcing: "Blue and White Flag over

the Jewish Agency Building to Signify the Founding of the State Today." The editorial, usually in an inside page, appeared on page 1, titled: "This is the Day," bearing a message of Jewish unity. News items on the event were run on various other pages, and a full page was devoted to greetings by the heads of various parties and organizations. A full-page ad by Etzel appealed for funds for weapons and included a message by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver.

The Sunday, May 16th issue (the *Zhurnal* was not published on the Sabbath) was devoted almost exclusively to the declaration of the new state. The *Shehehiyanu* (Thanksgiving) blessing appeared over the logo, while the front-page headline read: "Israel Repels Attacks," with the subhead: "Demands Made on the UN to Impose Sanctions on the Arabs." Photos of Ben-Gurion, Shertok, Weizmann, Truman and Silver appeared in the center spread. Reports on page 1 covered the arrests of Jews in Egypt; Jews in Paris dancing in the streets upon learning of the proclamation of the state; and a speech in the Security Council by Jewish Agency delegate Dr. Mordecai Eliash accusing Egypt of following in the Nazis' footsteps. The Madison Square Garden rally was again announced. Large parts of the paper were devoted to editorials, articles, poetry and features on the independence theme.

Der Tog ("The Day"), founded in 1914, was a pro-Zionist paper that provided a platform for the full range of Jewish political opinion, from the right, represented editorially by Dr. Samuel Margoshes, to the left, represented by B. Z. Goldberg, son-in-law of Shalom Aleichem. Its headline on Friday, May 14th, was: "Jewish State to be Declared Today; Jews Stream to Palestine," with the subhead: "The Jewish Agency Opposes the American Plan for Palestine." A photo of Haganah soldiers saluting the flag appears on page 1, along with a map of Palestine showing the progress of Haganah forces beyond the partition lines. Other reports on page 1 include coverage of the UN talks at Lake Success on the future of Jerusalem and various analyses of the situation in Palestine.

The front page of the May 15th issue featured the oversize headline: "The Jewish State is Proclaimed — Its Name is Israel," with the subhead: "The Jewish Army Captures the Arab Port City of Acre." Other page 1 headlines were: "The Jews Nullify the White Paper"; "The Haganah Captures Additional Parts of Jerusalem"; "News of the State Welcomed by the UN Delegates"; "The Israeli Flag Flies over the Jewish Agency Building in Washington"; and "Both Parties in Congress Congratulate

the New State in Speeches in the House." Photos of the Israeli flag and of Ben-Gurion and Shertok appear on page 1. Articles in the rest of the paper deal with support by the U.S. Congress for the establishment of the state; the capture by the Haganah of parts of Jerusalem; the preparedness of 12,000 Jews interned on Cyprus to join the Israeli army; and debates that preceded the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. Editorials reflect solidarity with the new state.

The May 16th issue carried reports on Egyptian air attacks on Tel Aviv; the mass rally scheduled that evening at Madison Square Garden; and the new Israeli government. A supplement contained a large map of Palestine and a photo of the new Israeli government ministers.

Morgen Freiheit ("Morning Freedom"), the American Jewish Communist organ founded in 1922 by Pesah Novik (published until 1990), had until then followed the party line in advocating Jewish settlement in the autonomous region of Birobidzhan in the Soviet Union, with a visit by Novik to Palestine in 1932 eliciting an anti-Zionist reaction. However, the issues of the newspaper at the time of the declaration of Israel's statehood show pronounced empathy for the Yishuv and consistent references to the new state by its official name and not as "Palestine." This response was to lead to Novik's ouster from the party and a ban on the distribution of his paper in the Soviet Union.

An oversize headline on May 14th read: "The Jewish State — Today," with the subhead: "A Jewish Republic in the Land of Israel to be Declared Tonight." The text refers to Washington's demand to defer the declaration of the state, and the proposal by the U.S., England and France to appoint a UN commissioner for Palestine. The front page is devoted almost entirely to reports from Israel, with the single photo showing a soldier holding a blue and white flag. An item on a mass rally for Israel scheduled for the Polo Grounds in New York ends with the words: "Long live the Jewish State! Long live the Jewish people!" Page 2 is dominated by a large ad for the rally, listing senators and congressmen scheduled to participate. Page 3 contains a large ad for the Madison Square Garden rally by the Zionist movement. Page 4 has an editorial titled: "Not Only Welcome the Jewish State But Support It." *Morgen Freiheit* ran two editions that day, with four of its six pages devoted to Israel.

The eight-page issue of May 15th featured a banner above its logo: "Salute the Jewish State This Evening at Seven at the Polo Grounds," while the oversize headline,

covering the entire width of the page, read: "The State of Israel is Declared," with the subhead: "Silver Announces the Establishment of the State of Israel at the UN." Other headlines announced: "America Recognizes the State of Israel," and "Jews Kiss, Weep and Pray Upon the Proclamation of the State of Israel." The two photos on page 1 show Ben-Gurion and the Israeli flag. A Yiddish translation of the Declaration of Independence also appears on page 1, along with greetings from the Communist Party in the U.S. to the State of Israel and a demand to remove the embargo on arms deliveries.

A repeat of the large ad for the mass rally at the Polo Grounds runs on page 2; page 3 contains an article reviewing the 30 years of the British Mandate and a poem in praise of the heroic Jewish soldiers of Israel; and page 4 carries an editorial titled: "The Jewish State — Mazel Tov," with a cartoon captioned: "Long live the Jewish state!" The rest of the paper contains related material on Israel's independence. The issues of *Morgen Freiheit* at that time mark a unique phenomenon in the annals of the Jewish Communist press.

THE DECLARATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE SAD REALITY IN THE SOVIET UNION AS REFLECTED IN "EYNIKEYT" / Mussia Lipman

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Soviet regime initiated a campaign to heighten ethnic solidarity among the various national groupings of the U.S.S.R., including the Jews, with the aim of coalescing the anti-Nazi effort.

A conference was organized in Moscow of representatives of the Jewish people — the first of its kind — in August 1941, calling on "Jewish brethren" worldwide to aid the Red Army in the war effort. This resulted in the formation of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, which from 1942 recruited support from world Jewry for the Soviet fight against the Nazis. Chairman of the committee was Solomon Mikhoels, the noted Soviet Jewish actor, with other prominent Jewish figures from the arts, sciences and military serving on the presidium, including writers Itzik Fefer, Peretz Markish, Samuel Marshak, David Hofstein and David Bergelson, and stage director Sergei Eisenstein.

Speakers at the second conference of the committee, held in May 1942, made frank references to such Jewish symbols as the Bible, the Maccabees, Maimonides and Hebrew verses. In June 1942 the committee introduced a Yiddish periodical, *Eynikeyt* ("Unity"), dedicated to the world unity of the Jewish people, appearing initially every ten days, later weekly, and following the war every three days.

The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the periodical constituted the first crack in the wall of isolation that had surrounded Soviet Jewry for years, and would play an

important role in preserving Jewish identity and a sense of Jewish national existence in the Soviet Union over a six-year period. Editor in chief of the periodical was journalist Shakhne Epstein, who also served as deputy chairman of the committee, and who in the past had worked for the regime in intelligence roles in the U.S. and Europe. At one point he had been a staff member of the Yiddish Communist *Morgen Freiheit* in New York. His party loyalty was proven by his survival of the purges of the 1930s. Staff members included such Yiddish writers as Bergelson, Fefer, Y. Dubroshin, Shmuel Halkin, L. Strungin, Leib Kvitko and Aaron Kushnirov.

The lead article in the first issue of *Eynikeyt* in 1942 appealed to "Jewish brethren in all parts of the world" to unite in support of the Soviet Union and take part in the war against Hitler in order to hasten the day when Isaiah's vision of the world as a place of happiness and peace would be realized. Writer Ilya Ehrenburg, who took part in the committee meetings, reminisced about the Yiddish he had heard in his grandfather's house. Bergelson praised the immediate response of the Jews of Palestine to the appeal for support by the committee.

During this period, the works of Yiddish writers in the Soviet Union were disseminated throughout the Jewish world for the first time. Moreover, in 1943 Mikhoels and Fefer were sent on a mission to the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Great Britain, where they emphasized the unity of the Jewish people in numerous addresses to Jewish audiences.

An emotional mass rally in New York in July 1943, addressed by the two, culminated in a performance of songs in Yiddish by singer Paul Robeson.

Eynikeyt regularly published war reports about the front, highlighting acts of Jewish bravery; achievements in industry and agriculture and the surpassing of quotas; and praise for the Soviet leadership, especially Stalin. In a bold article on the anniversary of the October Revolution, published in November 1944, editor Shakhne Epstein discussed Jewish nationality, anti-Semitism and the Palestine problem, referring to the development of the "Jewish home" in Palestine as rightful and deserving to be continued. However, he pointed out, the Jewish community in Palestine was, and always would be, only a small proportion of the total Jewish population, whose interests and destiny were bound up with the countries in which they lived. The world after the war would be rebuilt on the basis of solidarity and unity between peoples, which would ensure a better future for the Jews as well.

Tass reports on the efforts to land Jewish immigrants in Palestine illegally were reprinted in *Eynikeyt*. In May 1945 special mention was made of the Jewish role in winning the war. In 1946, however, the Soviet regime launched a campaign against "cosmopolitanism" and "national nihilism," singling out Jewish writers and artists who were guilty of "excessive" nationalism. Yiddish educational facilities and institutions devoted to Jewish research began to close. Prominent Jewish personalities were systematically derided, branded unpatriotic or ideologically deviationist. Nevertheless, in a series of speeches in the U.N., Soviet delegate Andrei Gromyko supported the partition of Palestine and praised the Jewish "national liberation" movement that had sprung up there.

Eynikeyt and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee carefully toed the line, barely referring to the partition plan. The year 1948 proved decisive for both the committee and the periodical. In January, Mikhoels was murdered in a fabricated traffic accident, marking the beginning of the end of the brief period of Soviet outreach to world Jewry. Although reports on the publication of Yiddish books and other Jewish cultural achievements appeared in *Eynikeyt* for a while, significantly, the reportage on the declaration of the State of Israel in May 1948 emanated entirely from spare Tass sources, with barely any editorial comment. The actual announcement of the state, in the

issue of May 18th, consisted of a series of factual reports focusing on military developments and an exchange of telegrams between Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov and his Israeli counterpart, Moshe Shertok. The issue of May 20th contained a telegram from the presidium of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee to Israeli President Chaim Weizmann offering congratulations on the establishment of the state, expressing the hope that it would follow the road of "progress and democracy," and citing the Soviet Union as the "true protector" of Israel's rights, as of those of all peoples.

On May 22, 1948, *Eynikeyt* carried the first commentary piece on the establishment of Israel, by staff writer Leib Goldberg. Titled "What's Happening in Palestine," the article emphasized that the establishment of the State of Israel was made possible by the aid of the "progressive democratic forces" of the world, led by the Soviet Union, and castigated the "intrigues of Anglo-American monopolists" who aimed at harming "progressive Arab forces" by supplying arms to the Arab states.

During the course of the year, the periodical carried a growing number of articles attacking the West, the government of Israel, and the World Jewish Congress. In September, Ilya Ehrenburg published a sharply anti-Israel piece in *Pravda*, reprinted in *Eynikeyt* in Yiddish translation, which signified the complete turnaround of the party line toward the Jews of the Soviet Union and may have constituted a warning as well. Jewish nationalism was denounced, Israel was labeled a bourgeois capitalist ally of Anglo-American magnates, and the link between Jews around the world was pronounced nonexistent. Other Jewish writers, including the *Eynikeyt* editorial staff, produced articles along the same lines.

The die was cast. *Eynikeyt* was discontinued in November 1948. The "unity" that it signified had become extraneous and even dangerous, in the perception of the regime, as was the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, which was disbanded at the same time. The closure of all Jewish cultural institutions was a fait accompli, and large numbers of Jewish personalities in the literary world, the arts, the army and the last of the Jewish institutions were imprisoned. Most were executed or sent to the gulag, where many perished. Yiddish books were confiscated and the Yiddish typeset presses were destroyed. The obliteration of Jewish culture was complete.

MAY 14, 1948: THE PROCLAMATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AS REFLECTED IN THE JEWISH PRESS IN ARGENTINA / Dov Sieskel

The first Jewish newspaper in Argentina, the Yiddish *Der Vider Kol* ("The Echo"), was launched in Buenos Aires a century ago in March 1898, to be followed by the emergence of a large, qualitative, mostly Yiddish press that played a vital role in the communal life of the largest center of Jewish population in Latin America.

The Jewish press was especially decisive in instilling the Zionist idea widely. With the end of World War Two and the realization of the full extent of the Holocaust, side by side with reports of the heroic struggle being waged by the Jews of Palestine, Jewish public opinion in Argentina became overwhelmingly pro-Zionist, reaching a peak of intensity with the proclamation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948.

The reactions to that event of four Buenos Aires-based Jewish newspapers are surveyed. They are: *Die Idisheh Tzeitung* ("The Jewish Diary"), a Yiddish daily; *Die Presse*, another Yiddish daily (both of these reflected the views of the immigrant generation); *Mundo Israelita* ("Jewish World"), a Spanish weekly representing the Argentinian-born and -educated Jewish intelligentsia; and *La Luz* ("The Light"), a Spanish biweekly serving the Sephardi community.

Die Idisheh Tzeitung, founded in 1914 with the outbreak of World War One when Argentina was cut off from the rest of the world, served a Jewish community of some 50,000, mostly immigrants from Eastern Europe, who developed intense loyalty to the paper. It was for them a guide to their new milieu, a vehicle for the dissemination of vital commercial and labor information, and an ideological platform. Its founding editor was Jacobo Simon Liachovitzky, one of the earliest Zionist activists in Argentina, who gave the paper a Zionist orientation. He soon resigned, however, to be succeeded by the pro-Bundist Levi Mass. The third editor, Joseph Mendelson (1922-29), revived the paper's Zionist point of view, and from then on it projected a Jewish national cultural message. Undergoing modernization, it attracted prestigious contributors and gained wide influence in the Jewish population throughout the country.

Although it was not published on Saturdays, *Tzeitung* came out with a special 12-page edition on Saturday, May 15, 1948, underscoring the importance of the occasion.

The first page ran an oversized one-word headline over the masthead: "Israel," with the subhead: "A New State in the Family of Nations," flanked by photographs of Ben-Gurion and Moshe Shertok. The page included the psalm that begins: "When the Lord restored the exiles, we were like dreamers"; photographs of Herzl and Chaim Weizmann; the text of the Proclamation of Independence; a report by UP on the proclamation ceremony; and a map of Israel according to the partition plan of November 29, 1947. All the rest of the pages featured related news, photographs and a large number of editorials.

The main editorial was divided into two columns, one in Yiddish and the other a Spanish translation. The topic — the establishment of Israel — was treated in the context of the history of the Jewish people and the duty of the world to it. Another editorial expressed the paper's position: "Every Jew, no matter what his ideological affiliation or social status, must engrave in his heart and mind that as of yesterday, a change occurred that has been awaited for two thousand years." The editorial concluded with an appeal to every Jew in Argentina to do his share for Israel's war effort.

Guest contributors included foreign correspondents, Israeli spokespersons and leaders from the US. Their editorial views may be divided into three categories: the perception of the occasion as the realization of a seminal age-old vision (essentially that of the Yiddish-speaking community); the fulfillment of the ancient dream in the context of the bitter struggle in Israel, which demanded the solidarity of the Jews of the Diaspora (essentially the Israeli view); and the universal message of the victory of the values of freedom and democracy symbolized by the establishment of the state, as well as the forging of a new image of Jewish civilization (essentially the view of the younger Spanish-speaking generation).

The large number of congratulatory notices by a variety of Jewish organizations attested to the strong communal infrastructure. Even so, spontaneous rallies or demonstrations were clearly out of the question under the Peronist regime.

Die Presse, launched in 1918 by former *Tzeitung* staffer Pinya Katz, was a socialist-oriented pro-Soviet Yiddish daily organized as a cooperative. Rejecting the Zionist

movement as reactionary, the paper eventually witnessed an ideological split in its staff on this question, which climaxed following a visit by one of its writers, Jacob Botoshansky, to Palestine shortly before the announcement of the state. In the event, he was the only reporter from the Diaspora Jewish press present at the ceremony.

Unlike *Tseitung*, the *Presse* came out seven days a week. Its Saturday, May 15th issue devoted its front page to the announcement of the State of Israel, with an emphasis on the need for solidarity in the "struggle" and with reference to the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. No photographs of Israeli leaders, or maps, appeared on page 1, although these appeared on page 6. Surprisingly, Botoshansky's presence at the proclamation ceremony was noted only on page 6 as well. A report by him depicted the experience as a "momentous and holy" moment, and in a later report he described the invitation he had received to the proclamation ceremony as his most precious possession. The editorial, on page 6, discusses the centrality of the occasion to all Jews and concludes with the desire to share the joyful event with all peoples, wishing peace for all.

No other editorial commentaries appeared in that issue. Several pages were devoted to congratulatory notices similar to those in *Tseitung*, and a whole page featured photos and text describing the holiday atmosphere in the Jewish community, but most of the paper consisted of its standard columns. However, on the following day, Sunday, May 16th, the paper carried a larger proportion of articles and notices relating to the establishment of the state, a reflection of the complexity of the ideological transition that *Die Presse* faced from loyalty to the Soviet line to an embrace of the Zionist viewpoint.

The Spanish-language weekly *Mundo Israelita*, founded by Leon Kobrik in 1923, aimed at building a bridge between Jewish and Argentinian culture and perpetuating Jewish culture in Spanish among the generation of Jews born there. Originally non-Zionist, the periodical became pro-Zionist following the Arab riots in Palestine in 1929. Its Saturday, May 15th issue (the weekly was published on Saturdays) appeared in its usual 12-page format, with articles on the significance of the establishment of Israel,

along with photos, on page 1 and on the back page. Overall, the impression obtained is that no deep change was perceived in the Jewish condition in light of the event, whether on an individual or a communal level, conceivably because the a priori viewpoint of the periodical was Zionist.

La Luz was a biweekly founded in 1931 by David Elnecape, an immigrant from Constantinople, where he had edited a Ladino newspaper. The aim of the periodical was twofold: stimulating Jewish national consciousness while preserving Jewish tradition. Inasmuch as its publication date was May 21st, *La Luz* had time to prepare a special issue devoted entirely to the founding of Israel. A wide variety of topics were covered, including the fulfillment of the 2,000-year-old dream of return and the obligation of the Jewish people to the new state (editorial); the text of the proclamation of independence; Israeli-Arab relations; a profile of Israel's first president, Chaim Weizmann; a report on a visit to Argentina by Prof. Even-Ari of the Hebrew University; an article on the Zionist philosopher Moses Hess; and a report on the second conference of the Sephardi Jewish community. Two pages were devoted to celebrations of the event in Buenos Aires.

Surprisingly, one of the articles was a rebuttal of critical remarks made by a visitor from Israel, Elie Eliashar, president of the Sephardi community in Jerusalem, who appealed to the Argentinian community to come to the aid of thousands of underprivileged Sephardi children in Israel's cities who were not receiving any formal education. The rebuttal came from a leader of the Sephardi student community in Buenos Aires, Leon Perez, who asserted that the greater priority at that moment was the safety of the entire 600,000-strong Jewish population of Israel.

Here, too, the consistently Zionistic point of view of the periodical accounted for the perception of the creation of Israel as the natural fulfillment of the Zionist dream.

May 14, 1948, symbolized the emergence of a new national Jewish ethos based on a greater internalization of the Zionist idea and the centrality of Israel to the Jewish people, as illustrated in four exemplars of the Argentinian Jewish press.

THE PRESS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL / Mordecai Naor

Fifteen dailies were published in the Yishuv at the time of the declaration of Israeli independence in 1948: *Ha'aretz*, *Davar*, *Haboker*, *Hatzofeh*, *Hamashkif*, *Al Hamishmar*, *Kol Ha'am*, *Hayom*, *Mivrak*, *Yediot Aharonot*, *Ma'ariv*, *Yom Yom* (all Hebrew), *Palestine Post* (English), *Yediot Hadashot* (German) and *Yediot Hayom* (German). In addition, two other dailies appeared in Jerusalem, which was still under siege then and virtually cut off from the country: *Yediot Yerushalayim* — a pooled effort by several Tel Aviv newspapers, and a Jerusalem edition of *Yediot Aharonot*. This abundance of dailies for a population of 650,000 was the product of an insatiable demand for news combined with the absence of other media.

Two years later, in 1950, the picture had changed somewhat: 17 dailies were published, only 11 of them in Hebrew. The six foreign-language papers were, in addition to the renamed *Jerusalem Post* (English) and *Yediot Hadashot* and *Yediot Hayom* (both German): *Al-Yom* (Arabic), *Uj Kelet* (Hungarian) and *L'Echo d'Israel* (French).

Most of the Hebrew dailies were veteran newspapers by then (*Ha'aretz* had been in print 32 years, *Davar* 25 years, *Haboker* 15 years and *Yediot Aharonot* 11 years), a reflection of the ban imposed by the Yishuv leadership on non-Hebrew journalism in the general drive for Hebraicization. With the mass immigration following independence, however, the needs of the diverse new populations superceded ideological considerations. By the end of the 1950s, new dailies were being published in Yiddish, Polish and Romanian as well.

With a population that had spiraled to 2 million (90% of it Jewish) at the end of the decade of the 1950s, 14 Hebrew-language dailies were in print — a large number indeed, especially in comparison with the situation today (1998) where Israel's population of 5.9 million (81% Jewish) is served by 8 dailies in Hebrew and 6 dailies in other languages (4 Russian, 1 English, 1 Arabic).

The first decade of independence was a continuum of the pre-state period in terms of the nature of the Israeli press in that it was largely a politically sponsored press. Eight of the 11 Hebrew dailies in 1950 were sponsored by, or under the influence of, political parties or groupings. The three exceptions were *Ha'aretz*, *Yediot Aharonot* and *Ma'ariv*, which were privately owned, a status that was considered inferior. Ben-Gurion, for example, regarded such

newspapers as commercial vehicles only, devoid of any message. At the time, every political party considered the publishing of an organ as essential, and until the first half of the 1950s all major parties had their own dailies: Mapai — *Davar* (the Histadrut organ which generally reflected the opinion of the majority party in it — Mapai) and *Hador*; Mapam — *Al Hamishmar*; Mizrahi and Hapo'el Hamizrahi — *Hatzofeh*; the Herut movement — *Herut*; and the General Zionists — *Haboker*. Despite severe financial deficits, Maki, the Communist Party in Israel, maintained *Kol Ha'am*. Similarly, the small Progressive Party put out *Zemanim* for two years until 1955 under difficult conditions. That year, Mapai's *Hador* also expired, demonstrating the extent of the burden that publishing a daily represented even to a major party. Still, following the Mapam split in 1954, the newly established Ahdut Ha'avodah-Po'alei Zion Party immediately began publishing a weekly, *Lamerhav*, which soon became a daily.

Of the privately owned dailies, only *Ma'ariv*, which was established in 1948 by a breakaway group of journalists from *Yediot Aharonot* led by Editor Azriel Carlebach, was a successful venture, having the largest distribution in the state in 1950. The political dailies, however, although perpetually in financial straits, were viewed as better entrenched because of their iron-clad backing — a premise that was to be systematically disproved in the decades that followed.

Relations between the government and the press during the 1950s were uneven. A representative editors' body founded in 1942 — the "Response Committee" (later, the "Editors' Committee"), comprising the editors in chief of all the dailies, was carried over after statehood. This body met periodically with the prime minister and other high-ranking government officials for briefings on classified information, with an a priori agreement to maintain self-censorship on sensitive political and military matters. The committee also functioned in tandem with the military censor in order to minimize friction in cases of dispute over excisions by the censor. Generally, these bodies were effective in balancing freedom of the press with the state's need for secrecy in a climate of ongoing military threat. However, conflicts did arise between the two sides periodically. In a landmark case in 1953, the Supreme Court nullified the closure by the minister of interior of the Communist newspaper, *Kol Ha'am*, which had charged that the government planned to

dispatch Israeli soldiers to fight alongside the Americans in Korea. The court ruled that the closure of a newspaper by the government was warranted only if material that it published posed a clear and present danger to public safety.

To the chagrin of the government and the army, the press often published items based on leaks from government offices. A leak published in *Ha'aretz* that caused a stir in November 1951 claimed that senior Israeli army officers opposed a request by Israel for American military aid because it would oblige the sharing of military intelligence with the Americans. Another leak brought about the dramatic denouement of the fall of the government. Late in 1957, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion accused two government ministers of leaking a "government secret" to *Lamerhav* and demanded their resignation. The "secret" was the planned first trip by Israel's chief of staff (Moshe Dayan) to Germany — a loaded topic at the time. Taking responsibility for the revelation, Ben-Gurion tendered his own and his government's resignation. He was soon reinstated, whereupon he introduced legislation that led to a restrictive Government Secrets Law prohibiting government officials from passing on information to journalists. The issue was to engender further confrontations in the 1960s.

Another journalistic issue in the 1950s involved the divergent role perceptions by the politically sponsored vis-a-vis the privately owned newspapers. The politically

affiliated journalists viewed their role as educational and moral in addition to informational, while the "independent" journalists believed that the commercially owned press could be — and in Israel was — non-sensationalist, while presenting a dispassionate, balanced picture.

Dozens of weeklies also appeared during the 1950s. Noteworthy were the popular *Dvar Hashavu'a*, sponsored by *Davar*, which conveyed positive pro-government messages; *Bamahaneh*, the Israel Defense Forces magazine founded during the War of Independence, which was given privileged access to military news; *Ha'olam Hazeh*, the anti-establishment "bad boy" of the Israeli press then and thereafter; and *La'ishah*, the women's weekly published by *Yediot Aharonot*.

A political scandal that occurred in the mid-1950s, with repercussions that were to reverberate for a decade thereafter, was also a benchmark in the development of the Israeli press. The event, known as the Lavon Affair, began with an expose in the press of a botched Israeli espionage plan carried out in Egypt when Pinhas Lavon was defense minister. The "Affair" ultimately fractured the Mapai Party, engendered a proliferation of leaks from the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and led part of the press to take sides as pro- or anti-Ben-Gurion (who attacked Lavon). It also altered the Israeli press irrevocably, turning it into a more daring investigative medium from then on.

ON HEBREW NEWSPAPER HEADLINES AND SLANG / Nisan Netzer

Some 40 years ago, Hebrew journalistic usage might have rightly been described as positioned midway between the literary and the spoken language. By now, however, journalistic Hebrew has swerved markedly toward the idiomatic, distancing itself from literary frames of reference. While this is especially pronounced in the lighter journalistic fields — gossip, sports, fashion and film reviews, for example — slang continues to make inroads into every area.

Headlines in particular tend to be written idiomatically for the following reasons, as illustrated by several examples:

1. They aim at catching the eye. Examples are: *halkhu*

makot ("they beat up on each other"); *fashla* ("screw-up," from Arabic); *likhlekhal al* ("slung mud at").

2. They avoid the risk of usage that is over the heads of the readership. Examples are: *al hapanim* ("a mess"); *dafak hofa'ah* ("dressed to kill").

3. They are short. Examples are: *lahutz* ("pressured," instead of under pressure, under duress, in distress); *al ham* ("in the act"); *kibbutznik* ("kibbutz member," using the Yiddish possessive suffix *nik*); *magav* (acronym for *mishmar hagvul*, or "border patrol," an example of the widespread usage of acronyms in Hebrew journalism).

4. They solve the problem of a lack of the precise term

in formal Hebrew. Examples are: *lefargen* ("to promote," "to further," from the Yiddish); *hitlabesh al* ("come down on" or, in another sense, "execute a task thoroughly and/or quickly"); *rosh katan* ("by the book," or "without asking any questions").

Indisputably, idiomatic usage embraces the largest possible audience. Moreover, it flatters the reader, removing the unspoken barrier between the elevated writer and the ordinary reader.

A DOOMED STRUGGLE: HEBREW DAILIES IN WARSAW BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS / Natan Cohen

Following a two-year period as a weekly (1917-19), the veteran Hebrew *Hatzfirah* ("The Dawn"), established in 1862 in Warsaw, reverted back to its previous daily format at the end of 1919, while also becoming the main organ of the Zionist Organization at the initiative of its editor, Dr. Yitzhak Gruenbaum. The response of the Hebrew-reading public was enthusiastic and distribution soon reached approximately 7,000, but management crises, poor editorial standards and a decline in circulation brought about the closure of the paper in 1921.

A new Hebrew daily, *Hayom* ("The Day"), edited by Joseph Heftman, was launched at the start of 1925 and it, too, met with initial success, selling 10,000-15,000 issues daily. Less than a year and a half later, however, it was forced to close for lack of financial viability. In both cases, the competition by the thriving Yiddish press, as well as by the Polish-language Jewish press, was clearly the salient cause of failure.

A public committee formed to finance a new Hebrew daily venture raised sufficient funds to revive *Hatzfirah* toward the end of 1926, this time with the active editorial participation of Nahum Sokolov, long identified with the paper in the past. However, less than two years later, the paper folded again.

In a debate on the need in Poland for a Hebrew daily, and for Hebrew literature generally, Haftman argued, at a country-wide conference of the Tarbut ("Culture") organization in 1927, that the Hebrew press was a symbol and a tool of Jewish unity. However, in an incisive article in *Haynt* a year later, the veteran Hebrew journalist Ben-Zion Katz took a more pessimistic view, claiming that a Hebrew daily could never compete with the diversity

of the Yiddish and the Polish Jewish press, and was doomed. Even in America, he pointed out, where people could allow themselves to purchase an "extra" daily (i.e., a Hebrew paper), the community could support only a weekly (i.e., *Hado'ar*).

Nevertheless, intensive efforts were made both in Poland and in the Jewish yishuv in Palestine during 1929-30 to revive *Hatzfirah* once again. A wealthy donor was found in 1929 — Zalman Shalit — who was prepared to finance all the costs, but disagreement over the choice of an editor delayed reorganization until March 1931. A voweled, illustrated children's edition appeared soon thereafter. However, by August 1931 the paper was shut down, marking the last time that a Hebrew daily was published anywhere outside the yishuv in Palestine.

Meantime, a group of writers in Vilna launched a Hebrew weekly news magazine, titled *Zramim* ("Currents"), which soon turned into a monthly with an uncertain future. A Hebrew weekly, *Baderekh* ("On the Way"), was then initiated by a publisher in Warsaw in September 1932, with A. L. Jacobowitz as editor. A year later, in 1933, the weekly was reduced from eight to six pages and its children's supplement was cut back as well. While in April 1936 Hebraists marked 50 years of the Hebrew daily press in Europe, an article in *Baderekh* surveying the history of the Hebrew press expressed bitterness over the fact that while there were 25 Yiddish and three Polish Jewish dailies in Poland then, only three Hebrew weeklies were published throughout the world, an imbalance attributed to the indifference of the public and especially to the ineffectiveness of the Zionist movement.

THE "TARBUT" NETWORK AND ITS CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPERS IN POLAND / Adina Bar-El

"Tarbut," a Zionist network of Hebrew-language educational institutions that functioned in Poland between the World Wars, operated kindergartens, elementary schools, gymnasia, teachers' seminaries, adult education courses, lending libraries and a publishing house that produced pedagogic materials, textbooks and children's newspapers.

The network was launched in 1922 when the first national "Tarbut" conference was held in Warsaw, and operated primarily in the eastern region of the country in territories previously controlled by Russia. By the outbreak of World War Two, it had 45,000 students enrolled in some 270 institutions, constituting roughly 25% of all students enrolled in Jewish schools in Poland, and 9% of the entire Jewish student population in Poland.

The "Tarbut" schools were secular in nature, offering general studies in the sciences and humanities, Polish studies and Hebrew studies. The ideology was Zionist-nationalist, grounded in Jewish history and aimed at guiding the Jewish student toward playing a pioneering role in Palestine.

After World War One, the center of Hebrew literature shifted from East Europe to Palestine, a development that was palpable, inter alia, in a drop in the number of Hebrew materials for children. "Tarbut"'s role in this area as publisher and co-publisher of various children's Hebrew newspapers was thus vital.

Its first venture in the field was *Shibolim* ("Ears of Corn"), a Hebrew biweekly published in Warsaw during 1922-23 edited by A. L. Jacobowitz and later by Aaron Zeitlin with the participation of Jacob Fichmann. The text contained voweled as well as unvoweled materials, indicating a wide range of readers' ages. Some 70% of the content of *Shibolim* was literary — both original and translated works in a variety of genres, and the rest was devoted to general topics such as nature and inventions. Columns were also devoted to games, sports and crafts. Current events, whether related to the Jewish world or to Poland, were not covered at all. The illustrative material was minimal, generally reproduced from the sources of the translated texts or from other published Jewish sources.

With financing based on subscriptions, the publisher soon issued appeals to the young readers, their parents and their teachers to help expand the readership, but this failed to produce the needed results. Publication was halted for two months after the first year, the periodical then reappeared as a monthly, and finally it ceased entirely,

clearly as a result of lack of financing. This problem was endemic to the Polish press generally and to the Jewish press in particular during the early 1920s when Poland was struggling to recover from the war.

Twelve years later, in 1935, "Tarbut" launched another Hebrew-language periodical, *Olami* ("My World"), which was to be followed by *Olami Hakatan* ("My Small World") and *Olami Haketantan* ("My Tiny World"), all biweeklies geared to three age groups respectively: 5th-7th graders, 3rd-4th graders and 1st-2nd graders. While "Tarbut" was in difficult financial straits by then, the distribution of the *Olami* periodicals was apparently successful, in contrast to the *Shibolim* venture, handled through schools and reaching thousands of young readers. Publication of the three biweeklies was cut off by the outbreak of the war in 1939.

Better illustrated than *Shibolim*, *Olami*, edited by Samuel Rozenak with the assistance of Elhanan Indelman, featured a reverse proportion of content devoted to general topics (some 70%) vis-a-vis literature (30%), as compared to *Shibolim* although reading was encouraged through the listing of new books, and reader self-expression was sought and was published in the periodical. In contrast to *Shibolim*, current events in Palestine were covered extensively, including the conflict with the Arabs, facts and figures on Jewish settlement, nature and agriculture in Palestine, and the development of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Side by side, material on Polish history was presented, with an emphasis on the Jewish role in Poland's battles and the contributions of Jewish writers, statesmen, scientists and athletes. The celebration of Jewish holidays and festivals both in Palestine and in the "Tarbut" schools was depicted. Columns on crafts, on sports in Poland and on popular science also appeared regularly. Both *Olami* and *Olami Hakatan* referred to growing anti-Semitism in Europe and particularly to the deteriorating situation of the Jews in Germany.

Olami Hakatan featured letters and other creative efforts by the young readers mostly on serious Zionist themes, reflecting the probable influence of their Hebrew teachers and/or the editors. The periodical also instituted correspondence between children in Poland and Jewish children abroad, particularly in Palestine, reprinting some of these letters. *Olami Haketantan*, which began publication in 1939, put out only eight issues before the outbreak

of the war. Designed with large voweled letters and line drawings, the periodical consisted of games and content related to children's everyday routines.

All four periodicals expanded their readers' Hebrew

vocabulary and stimulated Hebrew reading by providing varied subject matter. *Olami* and *Olami Hakatan*, in featuring material on current events and highlighting the milieu of Palestine, clearly reflected the Zionist agenda of the latter 1930s.

THE POPULARIZATION OF THE HOLOCAUST — ASSET OR ABOMINATION? / Moshe Zimmerman

The theme of the Holocaust has attracted more attention in the 1990s than ever before, as reflected, inter alia, in the capacity crowds visiting the Holocaust Museum in Washington, the ongoing pilgrimages by both Jews and non-Jews to the death camps, and films such as *Shoah* by Claude Lanzman and *Schindler's List* by Steven Spielberg.

These phenomena have evoked debate over how to project the Holocaust, a controversy that in fact goes back to the early 1940s when reports of the horror were first received, and the leaders of the Zionist movement were in conflict over how to publicize it. Undeniably, legitimate and authentic methods of commemoration have been paralleled over the years by distorted, exploitive and commercialized projects.

One of the most gripping controversies on the subject revolves around the film *Schindler's List*, a debate documented in Israel in articles that have appeared in the country's sole film periodical, *Cinematique*. Claude Lanzman has acted as a major catalyst in this debate, mounting an aggressive attack on Spielberg for the way he portrayed the Holocaust. Lanzman claims that Spielberg turned the Holocaust into a "cartoon," a reference to large segments of the film that are no more than Hollywood melodrama, i.e., an appeal to the audience at any cost, including a distortion of the truth. Numerous devices have been used by Spielberg to achieve his goal of stirring up the audience's emotions to reach a catharsis. The most blatant of these is the scene in which the women on Schindler's list are brought into the showers at Auschwitz — a made-up episode — with elements of eros, and worst of all the viewer's fear that Schindler, the super-hero, will fail. Following these tense moments, Schindler the superman appears from nowhere to save the day.

Lanzman goes even further in his criticism by insisting that neither fictionalized films of the Holocaust nor actual documentary footage are legitimate tools, for the Holocaust cannot be depicted artistically or representationally. Films

such as *Schindler's List*, he charges, are, first, unrealistic, and second, ignore the sociocultural role they ought to play.

Four points of view were expressed in the Israeli film magazine *Cinamateque* on the issue of whether *Schindler's List* ought to mold the collective memory of the Holocaust and whether such films, in bending the Holocaust to the rules of Hollywood drama, stamp it with a banality that mitigates against a deeper study of its uniqueness. One view, which is similar to Lanzman's, sees Spielberg's film as dangerous, for in attempting to approximate a documentary feeling and arrogantly create the definitive Holocaust story for posterity, the filmmaker violates an immutable rule for depicting the undepictable: the necessity to approach the process of creation with caution and self-questioning, qualities that must be palpable in the final product itself.

Another point of view attributes importance to *Schindler's List*, if only because it was created at a critical period — the crystallization of the historical memory of the Holocaust, and because it reached such large audiences. However, this view also holds that any conceptualization of the Holocaust ultimately reduces it to comprehensible terms, which ipso facto refutes the horror. Moreover, Spielberg's cinematic skill is so great that it creates a "pornography" of terror, blunting the viewer's emotions about the fate of the six million in light of the happy end in *Schindler's List*; ignoring the anti-Semitic forces that produced the Holocaust; and highlighting the role of the non-Jew as savior.

A third point of view addresses the question of why the film was perceived as important, and, more broadly, whether it is possible to deal with the Holocaust through fiction. Conceivably, more than the film heightened awareness of the Holocaust, the heightened awareness of the Holocaust elicited the strong impact of the film. This awareness is a belated aspect of the long process of healing from the trauma of World War II experienced by many countries,

including the Soviet Union, which lost some 20 million people during the war; Germany, which is still uncertain of its identity, especially following reunification; France, which is still trying to forget the shame of Vichy; Poland, which "lost" its large Jewish community; and Japan, the first victim of atomic warfare.

The fourth point of view justifies Spielberg's excising of the most gruesome of the Nazi acts connected with the Schindler story — the piling up of corpses, the smashing of babies' skulls, and the mass murder of children, for example — lest he be accused of creating a fictionalized horror film. By contrast, showing the nakedness of the women lined up for selection, according to this view, was justifiable and honest. Spielberg is criticized for prettifying various details, as well as for failing to project the Jews as people rather than as stereotypes, but ultimately he is praised for creating a film to which the Jews owe a debt no less than that owed Lanzman, despite the differences in conception between the two.

Contemporary Israeli observers also differ in their view of the role of the Holocaust in Israeli consciousness. Israeli historian Moshe Zuckerman has pointed out that in Israel, the Holocaust has generally been dealt with as an important element ideologically in the justification of Jewish statehood. However, according to another Israeli historian, Anita Shapira, the Holocaust has not played a central role in Zionist developments nor has it influenced Israeli policies, except as it reinforces the conviction that the state must continue to struggle on. Israeli journalist and historian Tom Segev has observed that the Holocaust has become entrenched in Israeli consciousness as a popular symbol of Jewish roots and collective memory, especially with the passage of time.

In summary, films such as Claude Lanzman's *Shoah* and Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, along with other artistic as well as documentary projects, are all legitimate facets of the post-traumatic effort to deal with the Holocaust.

המחברים

דב מ. סיסקל: עורך חדשות ותוכניות בידיש ב"קול-ישראל". מתמחה בחקר העתונות היהודית באמריקה הלטינית.

ד"ר ניסן נצר: מרצה במחלקה ללשון העברית וביתחידה לעריכה לשונית, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן, רמת-גן; מרצה בהתמחות ללשון עברית, מכללת בית-ברל.

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ד"ר משה צימרמן: מרצה בחוג לקולנוע וטלוויזיה באוניברסיטת תל-אביב. מתמחה בהיסטוריה של הקולנוע הישראלי.

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פרופ' נורית גוברין: החוג לספרות עברית, אוניברסיטת תל-אביב.

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

מוסיה ליפמן: ארכיונאית ראשית לשעבר, מכון לבון, תל-אביב.

ד"ר מרדכי נאור: סופר וחוקר תולדות ארץ-ישראל. מ"מ ראש המכון לחקר העתונות היהודית, אוניברסיטת תל-אביב. עורך "קשר".

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