This issue of QESHER was made possible by grants from:

The EZRIEL CARLEBACH Fund
The ZEEV JABOTINSKY Fund
The ERICH GOTTFRETU Fund
The ELIJAHU PORATH Fund
The TOVA and GUTMAN RABINOVICH Economics of Journalism Fund

with the assistance of:
Culture Administration, the Ministry of Education, Culture & Sport

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Hebrew Cover: A Jewish watchmaker reading the Yiddish newspaper Heis, painting by Yehuda Pen, noted Russian Jewish artist whose students included Marc Chagall. The cover relates to three articles dealing with Yiddish newspapers in this issue: Momev (Warsaw), Idishe Bilder (Riga) and Morgen Freiheit (New York).

Typesetting and Production: Motel-Sciencesmame

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THE RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE PRESS IN ISRAEL / Avraham Ben-Yaakov

The Russian press in Israel traces its roots back to the post-Six Day War period, but became a professional press only in the early 1990s, and today has reached a peak of development. A sixth of Israel's total population, and nearly a fifth of its Jewish population, reads Russian-language newspapers.

Of the approximately 3 million Jews of the former Soviet Union, one a third live in the CIS, a third live in Israel, and a third are spread out throughout the rest of the world. The third that lives in Israel — some 1 million people — read a highly varied Russian-language press of 4 dailies, at least 10 weeklies, nearly 20 local papers, and monthlies and periodicals of all types. By comparison, the third that lives primarily in the United States, Canada and Western Europe reads only a small number of newspapers in Russian, while the million (or less) remaining in the CIS have a few Jewish weeklies and periodicals with limited circulation. In fact, the largest consumers in the world of print media of all types is the Russian-reading population of Israel. This is all the more impressive in light of the economically disadvantaged situation of these new immigrants as compared to the established population.

Although a few small, irregularly published periodicals in Russian appeared before and following the establishment of Israel, the first important Russian paper, Nazha Strona ("Our Country"), was published in 1968 after the Six Day War, which was a powerful catalyst for the reawakening of Jewish identity in the Soviet Union. Began as a weekly published by the Majpay Party, Nazha Strona became a daily and continues to appear with a circulation of over 5,500. Its monopoly was broken in 1971 with the appearance of another weekly, Tribuna, a re incarnation of a Bulgarian-language daily of the same name that expired in 1976. Tribuna, which lasted until 1974, was an embodiment of yellow journalism with rightist political leanings. With the wave of immigration from the USSR in the 70s, three more periodicals were launched: Af ("The Letter A," 1981-97), a religious weekly; Sp organ (1986-90), a low level weekly, and Kurg ("The Circle," 1977-90), a weekly with varied content. The second, and much larger, wave of migration, which began in late 1989, expanded the demand for a Russian press considerably. That year, the daily Novosti Nadele ("News of the Week") was launched, to be followed in 1991 by Vremia ("Time"), edited by Edward Kuznetsov and published by the mass Hebrew daily Ma'ariv, which marked the start of professional Russian-language journalism in Israel. After a falling-out with the new owners of Ma'ariv, nearly the entire staff of Vremia, with its editor, shifted to sponsorship by the competing mass Hebrew daily, Yedioth Aharonot, and launched the daily Verst ("News"), which soon captured first place in the contest between Russian dailies.

By the fall of 1998, a total of 137 Russian newspapers, weeklies, monthlies and periodicals had been published in Israel since its establishment. Most had disappeared for financial reasons stemming from their low level of professionalism. Notably, an old Russian tradition of "thick journals" (200-250 pages) was kept up in Israel from the 1970s onward, both publicly and privately sponsored. The first exemplar was Zoro, published through the London office for the Jews of the Soviet Union (Nazi) attached to the Office of the Prime Minister. A literary bimonthly, it metamorphosed into 22 and appears today, featuring discussions on current events, history and philosophy by noted immigrant intellectuals. Its current editor is Prof. of Physics Alexander Vorunt of Tel Aviv University.

The Russian press is entirely private, its success determined by market demand only. The potential reader audience remains steady at about 1 million, with mortality rates more or less balanced by new arrivals, a situation that is expected to continue during the coming decade. This readership is far from homogeneous, linked only by language and the widespread desire to read Russian newspapers, a habit entrenched in Russia. One other unifying trait is the higher average educational level of Russian immigrants in comparison with the overall population in Israel.

Of the four dailies, Verst is explicitly rightist politically, while Vremia, Novosti Nadele and Nazha Strona attempt to maintain a neutral, pluralistic position, generally successfully.

None of the Russian dailies can be classified as leftist. Additionally, all reflect the majority opinion in the community that religion and state should be separated. Significantly, not one Russian newspaper or periodical is religious in outlook.

By the year 2000, the only local foreign-language newspapers in Israel with a stable readership will be those in Arabic, English and Russian. Interestingly, despite the large Russian press, one sector of the Russian-reading population has not been offered a newspaper suitable to its level, namely the intellectual sector. The potential readership for this type of paper is probably even proportionately larger than that of the Hebrew-language exemplar, Ma'ariv.

Still, the quality of the existing Russian press is likely to continue to improve as the papers gain expertise. Their rightist orientation is likely to become moderated and political pluralism heightened.

The Russian press has a firm place in the Israeli media landscape, a position that is assured for the space of at least another generation.
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Although a small, irregularly published periodicals in Russian appeared before and following the establishment of Israel, the first important Russian paper, Nasha Strana ("Our Country"), was published in 1968 after the Six Day War, which was a powerful catalyst for the reawakening of Jewish identity in the Soviet Union. Begun as a weekly published by the Mapai Party, Nasha Strana became a daily and continues to appear with a circulation of over 5,300. Its monopoly was broken in 1971 with the appearance of a second paper, Vremia, a free-for-all in the Soviet market. By 1977, the Hebrew-language daily of the same name that expired in 1970. Tribuna, which lasted until 1974, was an embodiment of yellow journalism with rightist political leanings. With the wave of emigration from the USSR in the 1970s, three more periodicals were launched: Afet ("The Letter A"), 1981-91, a religious weekly; Spinitki (1986-90), a low-level weekly; and Krag ("The Circle," 1977-90), a weekly with varied content. The second, and much larger, wave of immigration, which began in late 1989, expanded the demand for a Russian press considerably. That year, the daily Novosti Nadeli ("News of the Week") was launched, to be followed in 1991 by Vremia ("Time"), edited by Eduard Kuznetsov and published by the hazzan Hebrew daily Makar, which marked the start of a period of Russian-language journalism in Israel. After a falling-out with the new owners of Makar, nearly the entire staff of Vremia, with its editor, shifted to sponsoring by the competing Russ Hebrew daily, Yedi'ot Aharonot, and launched the daily Vesti ("News"), which soon captured first place in the context between Russian dailies.

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The last decade of the nineteenth century witnessed an outpouring of newspapers and periodicals in the small Jewish Yishuv (community) of Palestine, including 22 that were published in Jewish languages (Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino) in Jerusalem alone. Two in particular played an important role in the bitter Kulturkampf between the old and new Yishuv that reached a climax in 1894-95: Mikhtavim Me'orot Yisrael ("Letters from the Land of Israel"), founded in 1895, and Emet Me'orot Tzniot ("The Truth Will Grow From the Land"), founded in 1894. The two, aimed primarily at an audience abroad, reflected conflicting views of the new Jewish nationalism.

Mikhtavim was established by a secret society, Benei Moshe, begun in Odessa in 1889 by Yehuda Ehemin (later Barzilai) at the inspiration of Ahad Ha'am's notion that spiritual and ethical nationalism must be a prelude to practical nationalism. The society, adopting a Freimason style, avoided religious considerations, thereby enabling both observant and nonobservant Jews in Palestine and abroad to join it.

The first issue of Mikhtavim, a monthly that first appeared in Jaffa in 1899, pledged to report about conditions in Palestine truthfully and accurately, in contrast to distorted reports that it attributed to other publications. Its aim was to be an authoritative source of information for the leaders of the Hebrew Zion (a pro-settlement Zionist organization) in Russia. Mirroring in small quantities, Mikhtavim was mailed to activists in Russia and Poland, where it was read out and discussed at meetings. Copies were also sent to the offices of two Hebrew newspapers, Hamizgal in Petersburg and Hamizgal in Warsaw.

Mikhtavim indeed served as a thorough and credible source of information on Palestine as well as a guide to Hebrew Zion as to how best to utilize its resources. For example, the importance of establishing the Jewish National Fund (for land purchases) was emphasized as vital for strengthening the Yishuv, as was support of Hebrew schools and aid for the pioneer farmers. Statistical information was published on the purchase of land in Palestine, on agricultural developments, climatic, health conditions, immigration and emigration. Schools and libraries were surveyed. The compilers of this wealth of information remained anonymous, although they were known to be in the main members of Benei Moshe from the new villages (mishmarot) and the editors, such as A. L. Horowitz from Magenetz Batya and later Jaffa, and Aaron Eisenberg from Nes Ziona and Rehovot.

Barzilai, in the spirit of his master Ahad Ha'am, wrote that the aim of the Yishuv should be to establish "a small center in the land of our fathers based on working the land and on enlightenment." No political activity was envisioned in this scenario. A relatively small Jewish population would live peacefully with the Arab inhabitants. The essence would be to "uplift the ethical spirit" through the establishment of a school in Jaffa that would train Hebrew teachers for work in the diaspora.

The periodicals, printed at Eisenberg Ben-Yehuda's press, appeared regularly for eight months until Ben-Yehuda was arrested by the authorities for sedition as a result of slanderous accusations by persons from the old Yishuv in Jerusalem. Ben-Yehuda's press was closed down, and Mikhtavim's printing schedule became erratic. Some time later, Ben-Yehuda was acquitted. Barzilai, in a conciliatory editorial, called for an end to the acrimony between the two Yishuv communities. This appeal for moderation, however, was lost in the general mood of antagonism, which spilled over from Palestine to the diaspora. The Kulturkampf that developed was fought, inter alia, on the pages of the Jerusalem-based Harvavet, an organ of the old Yishuv which deignified Ben-Yehuda, Ahad Ha'am and Benei Moshe and its membership for their lack of religiosity and mocked the Mikhtavim as filled with fabrications.

Several figures in Europe, including Rabbi Samuel Mofizler, advised putting an end to the virulent atmosphere, but this had no effect on one of the central firebrands of the anti-Ahad Ha'am camp, Yehiel Michael Pines, an early exponent of religious Zionism who had initially supported Eisenberg Ben-Yehuda and the Hebrew Zion ideals and had joined the Benei Moshe society but was dismissed from it in 1892 over a management crisis and thereafter affiliated himself with the old Yishuv community, becoming one of its main spokesmen.

Pines was latent in forming the Times of the Kulturkampf. Organizing a traditionalist camp named Megion Eretz (Defenders of the Land), which included Yosef Meyuhaz, Israel Dot Frumkin, David Yellin and Yosef Rivkin, he issued Emet Me'orot Tzniot, a counterpoint to Mikhtavim, distributed, as was its rival, primarily in Eastern Europe. Its stated intent was to do battle with "nationalism that was stripped of Torah..." on the premise that Jewish nationalism and the Jewish religion were integrally bound together. Defining religion as a personal matter only, he charged, was analogous to bowing down to "the idol of nationalism". The holders of such views, he asserted, deserved to be imprisoned.

Predictably, the maiden issue of Emet, an explicitly
Propagandistic forum for Pines’ views, evoked sharp reactions. Efforts were made, unsuccessfully, to dissuade him from pursuing the conflict. He and his circle proceeded to recruit influential backers in Russia to discredit the Ahul Ha’am school in Jaffa and to cut off the livelihood of freethinking nationalists. Accusing them of educating Jewish children to rebel against God and king, Pines pronounced the Benet Moshe society excommunicated.

This poisonous propaganda elicited fear among Hovevei Zion supporters in Europe that funds would be cut off from the new Yishuv entirely. A decision was made by that organization’s executive to make concerted efforts to mollify Pines. He was offered a position as a teacher in the school in Jaffa, as well as the job of Jerusalem correspondent for Hamelit. A reconciliation with Ben-Yeuda was also organized.

Millianism was geared to select groups as an ideological and practical guide for the support of settlement in Palestine. Emet, by contrast, was a combative propaganda tool aimed at suppressing the secular spirit that was spreading within the Hovevei Zion movement and the new Yishuv generally. As such they represented two conflicting conceptions of Jewish nationalism.

Both periodicals were short-lived.

A PROSPECTUS FOR THE FIRST HEBREW PERIODICAL, “HAME’ASSEF” / Moshe Pelli

The first Hebrew periodical ever, *Hame’assef* (“The Compiler”) was launched in Koenigsberg, Prussia, in 1784 and appeared until 1811. Revolutionary for its time, the monthly advocated secular study, a new attitude by Jews to the arts and sciences, and integration into the surrounding milieu.

Prior to publication, in 1783, the publisher issued a 16-page prospectus titled “Nahal Habesor” (“Stream of Good Tidings”), signed by Yizhak Eichel, editor, and three additional editors: Mendel Breidau, Shimon Friedlander and Zavul Friedlander.

Laid out in the same style as the future *Hame’assef* itself, this lengthy manifesto addresses five questions: What? Who? For whom? Why? How? The answers provide information on the content of the planned periodical, the identity of the editors and their initial task – requesting the participation of the Hebrew literary authority then, Naphat Herz Wiesel, and his encouraging reply; and the founding of a publishing society. The entire document reflects an analytic approach to the undertaking of publishing a periodical.

The authors plan to organize the monthly in five divisions: poetry, articles, biographies, news and new books. The poetry to be published will be devoted to wisdom and ethics, not to “jestful topics” or to “imitations of paganism” (i.e., classical mythology) or foreign gods. The articles section, to be titled “Letters,” will contain linguistic essays on all aspects of Hebrew, reflecting Enlightenment research with an emphasis on rejuvenating the language; Bible commentary and translation into German, reflecting the influence of Moses Mendelssohn in this area; general knowledge and ethics; and Talmud study according to a rational system with emphasis on the sources. Education of the mind, the authors emphasized, was to be accompanied by physical education, “a notion typical of the new enlightenment outlook.

Biographies would be devoted to the lives of outstanding Jews in the religious and scholarly area; in the realm of Enlightenment scholarship; and in the mercantile sector. These three sectors reflect the Enlightenment approach: the integration of tradition with innovation. News reports would focus on events in Jewish life in various countries, which, in the editors’ view, was particularly important at that time when modern education and an emphasis on tolerance were attributes that were spreading through Europe and would have a significant effect on Jewish life.

Lastly, new books of interest in Hebrew and foreign languages would be announced and reviews would be published. While most of these categories were borrowed from the contemporary European press, what was significant was the distinctly Jewish-Hebraic imprint that the proposed periodical would have.

Even the name of the propersies, the biblical Nahal Habesor, and linguistic formulations in the text that reflect the theme of a stream that waters a garden, i.e., the Garden of Eden, are rooted in familiar hallowed biblical texts.

The authors present themselves as a homogeneous group of Enlightenment thinkers who blend religious study with modern scholarship. Anxious not to be perceived as a threat to the traditional Jewish establishment, they are careful to underline their devotion to the Torah, yet they clearly want to draw the young generation – their intended audience – to the Enlightenment.

*Nahal Habesor,* in *Hame’assef* itself, reflects the unique character of the Hebrew Enlightenment, a movement that stemmed from the general enlightenment atmosphere of Europe but carved out its own particular channel.
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“DO’AR HAYOM”: THE TRANSFORMATION OF A COMMERCIAL NEWSPAPER TO A PARTY ORGAN / Uzi Elyada

Revolutionist leader Ze’ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, arriving in Palestine in October 1928 with the intention of settling there, found his movement in Palestine to be small, weak, and embroiled in internal rivalries. Setting about to rectify this situation, he began exploring possibilities for publishing a Revisionist daily.

The movement in Palestine had not had its own newspaper for over a year, when its weekly, Hatziqon (“The North”), closed for lack of financing. Three Hebrew dailies were published in the country then: Davar, Ha’aretz and Do’ar Hayom (“Daily Mail”). Davar, sponsored by the Histadrut, attacked the Revisionist movement and its leaders systematically. Ha’aretz, an independent newspaper, was not in sympathy with the Revisionists either. Do’ar Hayom, edited by Iamar Ben-Avi, was the only daily to show admiration for Jabotinsky, although Ben-Avi was not a member of his movement and was in fact cool to its local leadership. At the time, Do’ar Hayom was at its height of popularity, with a distribution that reached 7,000 daily. Thus, when in November 1928 both Ha’aretz and Davar reported that an agreement had been signed between Ben-Avi and Jabotinsky transferring the editorial control of the paper to the Revisionists, the reaction was one of surprise. The reports were confirmed when Do’ar Hayom announced that as of December 1, 1928, Jabotinsky would take over as editor in chief. Indeed, on that date the paper became the official organ of the Revisionist movement in Palestine, an agreement that was to be in effect for two years.

Do’ar Hayom had been the most popular of the dailies in Palestine during the 1920s. Used a sophisticated rotary printer and linotype machinery, in contrast to the hand type techniques used in most of the press. It was also the first to use lithography and printing blocks, and the first to become a true morning paper. From the start (1919), it was molded by Ben-Avi as a sensationalist mass paper, in contrast to Ha’aretz and later Davar, which were conceived as elitist and intellectual. Do’ar Hayom emphasized fresh news over editorials and commentary. The news was communicated in an exciting, florid style under dramatic headlines set in oversize type. Ben-Avi’s aim was not only to inform but to entertain – to stimulate curiosity, shock, fear or laughter. A significant proportion of the paper’s news content related to crime, disasters, gossip and the supernatural. Secularized translated novels ran on the inside pages. “Cradled on such issues as corruption by establishment leaders were mounted periodically, generally in a series of unsigned articles. This sensationalist style contrasted sharply with that of Moshe Gluckson, editor of Ha’aretz, and Beri Katmenson, editor of Davar, who viewed their papers first and foremost as educational tools by which to mold the reader’s social, political and cultural consciousness, largely through editorials and commentary. News items were regarded as secondary, with exotic items such as crime or disasters at the very bottom of the ladder.

While Ben-Avi’s approach proved to be successful, he personally was often abused on various Zionist missions and his acting editors lacked his imagination and flair for the dramatic, resulting in periodic slumps in readership. Such was the case in the late summer of 1928 when he returned after a long absence. To reinvigorate the paper, he took several drastic steps: he reduced the price by half, pledged earlier morning delivery, and brought in a group of new writers: Bar-Droro, Avigdor Kameiri, Uri Kessari and Abba A’Chim. All these changes were aimed at popularizing the paper further and acquiring a mass readership.

Ben-Avi’s rejuvenation program showed immediate results, as circulation soared. His competitors, accusing Do’ar Hayom of exaggeration and even fabrication of news stories, branded the paper a “pathological” phenomenon that catered to “the libido.” The left viewed it as nothing less than a symptom of the failure of the socialist vision, as serving the interests of capitalism, and as the beginning of a national slide into nihilism.

Side by side with his populist approach, Ben-Avi had formulated a sociopolitical point of view that was distinctly rightist, identifying with the interests of the private sector. Anti-labor, he singled out middle class political figures for sharp criticism when they tended to cooperate with the growing labor movement. With this, he was moderate on the Arab question, evolving an original proposal, the “canton plan,” that sought to turn the country into a confederation of Jewish, Muslim and Christian cantons.

This was far from the Revisionist point of view. However, Ben-Avi was a great admirer of Jabotinsky, viewing him as a heroic leader-educator. When Jabotinsky contacted him in late 1928, proposing a joint editorial arrangement (according to another version, it was Ben-Avi who initiated the contact), Ben-Avi decided to turn over the editorship of the paper to him for a period of two years, while retaining his role as copublisher together with his partner Zalman White.

In all probability, Ben-Avi was aware that maintaining the current peak of his paper’s circulation would be unfeasible because of his peripatetic life style. He may have believed that under Jabotinsky, an experienced journalist with a wide circle of admirers in Palestine, the paper would retain its aura of success.

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Moreover, the agreement allowed for the return of the paper to its original editorial management, as well as a provision for Ben-Avi to continue writing an occasional column in it.

At first, the Revisionist Da'ar Hayom attained a large circulation. Soon, however, readership fell off, and conflict between Jabotinsky and Ben-Avi was rumored. Ben-Avi, in his memoirs, claimed that his intention had not been to turn the paper into a party organ. That, in fact, was what Jabotinsky's staff set about to do. By early 1929, Ben-Avi realized he had made a serious mistake in relinquishing editorial control of the paper. By the terms of the contract, however, he had no choice but to wait until December 1930 to regain direct control of it which he eventually did after a difficult struggle.

A PRESS IN THE SERVICE OF THE MESSIAH / Orly Tsarfati

The religio-ideological gap between secular and extreme Orthodox (baredi) society in Israel, and the non-recognition by the baredi community of the secular State of Israel, has distanced that community from the establishment media and resulted in the development by them of an alternative ideologically print media. Baredi newspapers and newsletters have proliferated from the mid-1980s onward, aimed at disseminating a particular ideology. The baredi public makes use of this press both as an internal tool to reinforce solidarity and as a forum for disputes within the religious world and vis-à-vis secular society.

The electronic media, by comparison, are shunned by the baredim as abhorrent, with the exception of the Habad movement, which believes in disseminating Hasidic principles among Jews by every possible means, including not only radio and TV but the Internet, e-mail and satellite communications.

During 1990-94, with the emergence of heightened messianic fervor among Habad Hasidim in Israel and abroad, the media were utilized increasingly to spread the messianic message. Publicizing the yearning for the coming of the messiah was considered a means of spurring redemption, for more and more people would be striving for it. A dramatic development in this context occurred in 1993 with the public announcement that the Lubavitcher Rebbe was the messiah.

New newspapers appeared within the Hasidic community devoted to spreading information related to the messiah and to redemption, while existing papers devoted considerably more space to this topic. Newspapers identified with the main Habad trend, which deal with the topic of redemption side by side with other Habad news, are:

1. Kfar Habad ("Habad Village") - a 50-page subscription weekly published by the Society of Habad Hasidim in the Holy Land distributed in Israel and the US, by Rabbi Aaron Dov Halperin. Various portions of the periodical are devoted to religious questions, education and politics. Four sections are devoted entirely to the theme of the messiah. The Habad viewpoint is presented explicitly. The audience is primarily Habad followers.

2. Be'odei Ha'amit ("In the Steps of the Rebbe") - a bimonthly supplement of Kfar Habad devoted to women. Topics are only minimally related to the messiah.

3. Shitah Haskana'h ("Discussion of the Week") - a 4-page weekly published by the Center of the Society of Young Habad Followers in Israel, edited by Rabbi Menahem Brod, who is also the official Habad spokesman. The paper aims at disseminating the Habad message and is written in an easily understood style. It is distributed both by subscription and in synagogues, markets and other public places. One section is devoted to messiah-related topics.

The following newspapers are published by the messianic trend in Habad and deal exclusively with the redemption and the hastening of the coming of the messiah:

1. Hage'ulah Ha'amit ("The True and Complete Redemption") - a monthly of 8-10 pages began in 1991 published by the Society for the True and Complete Redemption, based in the Habad House in Binyamin, edited by Rabbi Zimroni Tsin. The monthly, which contained ads, put forward the explanation of the Rebbe’s death in 1994 as a temporary departure that would soon be followed by his reappearance to redeem the people of Israel. The periodical closed in 1994.

2. Shitah Hage'ulah ("Discussion on Redemption") - a weekly that began in 1994 following the closing of Hage'ulah Ha'amit, also published by the Society for the True and Complete Redemption and also edited by Rabbi Tsin. It deals entirely with topics related to the Rebbe, the messiah and redemption.

3. Betzahkef Torah ("In the Camp of God’s Armies") - children’s monthly founded in 1989 at the request of the Rebbe to memorialize the death of Rebbezain Haya Mustika,
Moreover, the agreement allowed for the return of the paper to its original editorial management, as well as a provision for Ben-Avi to continue writing an occasional column in it.

At first, the Revisionist Do'ar Hayom attained a large circulation. Soon, however, readership fell off, and conflict between Jabotinsky and Ben-Avi was rumored. Ben-Avi, in his memoirs, claimed that his intention had not been to turn the paper into a party organ. That, in fact, was what Jabotinsky's staff set about to do. By early 1939, Ben-Avi realized he had made a serious mistake in relinquishing editorial control of the paper. By the terms of the contract, however, he had no choice but to wait until December 1939 to regain direct control of it which he eventually did after a difficult struggle.

**A PRESS IN THE SERVICE OF THE MESSIAH / Orly Tsarfati**

The religious-ideological gap between secular and extreme Orthodox (haredi) society in Israel, and the non-recognition by the haredi community of the secular State of Israel, has distanced that community from the establishment media and resulted in the development by them of an alternative ideological print media. Haredi newspapers and newsletters have proliferated from the mid-1980s onward, aimed at disseminating a particular ideology. The haredi public makes use of this press both as an internal tool to reinforce solidarity and as a forum for disputes within the religious world and vis-a-vis secular society.

The electronic media, by comparison, are shunned by the haredim as abhorrent, with the exception of the Habad movement, which believes in disseminating Hasidic principles among Jews by every possible means, including not only radio and TV but the Internet, e-mail and satellite communications.

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1. *Kfar Habad* (*Habad Village*) – a 50-page subscription weekly published by the Society of Habad Hassidim in the Holy Land distributed in Israel and the US, edited by Rabbi Aaron Dov Halperin. Various portions of the periodical are devoted to religious questions, education and politics. Four sections are devoted entirely to the theme of the messiah. The Habad viewpoint is presented explicitly. The audience is primarily Habad followers.

2. *Be'cholah Hannah* (*In the Teens of Hannah*) – a biweekly supplement of Kfar Habad devoted to women. Topics are only minimally related to the messiah.

3. *Shitah Hashuvah* (*“Discussion of the Week”*) – 4-page weekly published by the Center of the Society of Young Habad Followers in Israel, edited by Rabbi Menahem Brod, who is also the official Habad spokesman. The paper aims at disseminating the Habad message and is written in an easily understood style. It is distributed both by subscription and in synagogues, markets and other public places. One section is devoted to messiah-related topics.

The following newspapers are published by the messianic trend in Habad and deal exclusively with the redemption and the hastening of the coming of the messiah:

1. *Hage’a’ulah Ha’amitit Vehashishlah* (*“The True and Complete Redemption”*) – a monthly of 8-10 pages began in 1991 published by the Society for the True and Complete Redemption, based in the Habad House in Bt-Yam, edited by Rabbi Zimrini Tsik. The monthly, which contained ads, put forward the explanation of the Rebbe’s death in 1994 as a temporary departure that would soon be followed by his reappearance to redeem the people of Israel. The periodical closed in 1994.

2. *Shitah Hage’a’ulah* (*“Discussion on Redemption”*) – a weekly that began in 1994 following the closing of *Hage’a’ulah Ha’amitit Vehashishlah*, also published by the Society for the True and Complete Redemption and also edited by Rabbi Tsik. It deals entirely with topics related to the Rebbe, the messiah and redemption.

3. *Bemahaneh Tevila’ot Hashem* (*“In the Camp of God’s Armies”*) – children’s monthly founded in 1989 at the request of the Rebbe to memorialize the death of Rebbeztn Haya Mushka, wife of the Rebbe and daughter of the previous Rebbe. A color publication geared to children up to ages 13-14, it is distributed by subscription in Israel and the US. The message is that Habad children are like soldiers in God’s army whose aim is to spread the idea of redemption. It is attractively designed, with a serialized comics story on the back page. From 1993, with the announcement that the Rebbe is the messiah, this notion was presented as widely acknowledged in the world media. More broadly, the idea of redemption is portrayed as central to the concerns and activities of all Jews. Underlying this message is the given that all Jews are still in exile, unredempted until the coming of the messiah, implying non-recognition of the State of Israel as the Jewish state. The term State of Israel is never used – only Land of Israel.

Habad has adopted military and heroic images similar to those of the Israeli ethos as a means to create an activist elite image: soldiers in an army who belong in the World Organization of God’s Armies, founded in 1981. The children’s “weapons” are mitzvot and good deeds, which help them defeat the “enemy” – the evil instinct. As every army, this one too has a commander in chief – the Rebbe – and a military hierarchy which can be expressed through the accumulation of good deeds. Activities organized for Habad children involve the awarding of military-style ranks and the meaning of “Mitzvah Tanks.”

Significantly, two topics that are central to Jewish life today – the Holocaust and the Israel-Jewish Diaspora relationship – are projected very differently in this Habad medium as compared to the Jewish secular or the non-haredi view. The Holocaust is presented as a test of Jewish religiosity, while it is America, and not Israel, that is seen as the new homeland for religious Jews.

Moreover, nowhere is the secular Jew mentioned or portrayed in this medium.

The messianic concept is central to Habad thinking and influences the entire outlook of the community. However, the death of the Rebbe in 1994 caused a parting between mainstream Habad, which became more restrained, at least in terms of its use of the media, and the messianic trend, which continued its intensive efforts to spread the message of redemption. The mainstream channelled its energies to another goal – opposing the peace process and preserving the Greater Land of Israel, while the messianists insisted that this and all other problems would be solved with the coming of the messiah.

Today, although Habad no longer publicly articulates its rejection of the existence of the State of Israel – whether because it accepts it as a fait accompli or because the state is perceived merely as a means of sociopolitical organization – it nevertheless rejects the principle that the government has the right to make decisions that conflict with the laws of the Torah. If Jews who observe the rules of the Torah must choose between the law of the land or the law of Torah, they will unhesitatingly choose the law of Torah.

This has obvious implications regarding the peace process, as many other facets of Jewish life, if it involves a process of delegitimation of democratic governance.

The Habad press both extorts a key influence on its community and reflects its thinking, and as such opens a window for the outsider observer to better understand the workings of this community.

**JEWISH PICTURES BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST: THE WEEKLY “IDISHIS BILDER” OF RIGA, 1937-1939 / Akiva Zimmerman**

*Idische Bilder* (*“Jewish Pictures”*) was one of the most impressive of the prewar Jewish weeklies, an achievement enhanced by the very fact of its appearance in Latvia under the repressive rule of Karlis Ulmanis. Only one Jewish daily, Heist, was granted a publishing permit after Ulmanis seized control of the country in 1934. In 1937, however, a permit was obtained for a new illustrated Jewish weekly, *Idische Bilder*, Agrippina, the magazine was expressly pluralistic, giving full exposure to the entire spectrum of Jewish life. Headlines were printed in four languages: Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish and German, with abstracts of some of the articles provided in Hebrew and Polish.

The publisher and managing editor was A. Barumas, with Zeitig Kalmanowitch taking over the latter role a year after the magazine was launched. A prominent contributor and acting literary editor was author, playwright and journalist Marc Razumni, who had been the New York Forverts correspondent in Riga.

*Idische Bilder* used correspondents and photographers throughout the Jewish world. In Palestine, the correspondent was Moshe Danzigerbron (Rim), later secretary-general of the Journalists Association in Tel Aviv. Photos, most of them exclusive to the magazine, were well reproduced. Articles covered Jewish life throughout the world, including in remote regions.
The cover of the first issue featured a photo of the Jewish community of India. The list of points of distribution of the magazine was: Estonia, England, France, Finland, America, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Denmark, Danzig, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. Besides an article on the Jews of India, the first issue included reports on the Rabbi of Munkacs and the Admoner of Bobov, who had been excommunicated by the rabbi; Jewish life in Scandinavia, accompanied by portraits of the rabbis of the communities; photos of the development of Tel Aviv; an array of photos of Jews in Warsaw in various occupations; an article on Madame Bronschweig, a Jewish minister in the government of French Prime Minister Leon Blum; and a full page with photos on the birthday celebration of the pretender to the Hashburg throne, Prince Otto, including a special prayer for him at the Great Synagogue of Vienna. (An interesting aside is that Dr. Otto von Hapsburg is still alive and is a devoted friend of Israel.)

Typically, a serialized novel also began running in the first issue. Additionally, a literary section featured Yiddish works, including novelists by two writers – Zasman Segalovitch and Elizaym Kaganovski – who were to be regular contributors. A humor section was edited by writer Yosef Tunkel under the pen name Der Tunkeler.

Later issues included articles about such famous Jewish personalities as Leon Blum, Lord Herbert Samuel, German sculptor Harold Eisenstein, Hollywood actress Sylvia Sidney, or a series of commissars in the Soviet government, including Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov (formerly Meir Valakh), Albert Einstein on the occasion of his 60th birthday, historian Shimon Dubnow and many others. The range of subject matter included the Jewish communities of Tunis, China, the Black Jews of Harlem, New York, and the return of Maronites to Portugal to Judaism. Regular columns included Jews in sports and theater reviews. Life in Palestine was covered extensively in every issue.

The first issue of 1939 introduced a new section titled “Wunder?” (Where?), covering possible emigration destinations for Jews. The first location reviewed was British Guiana in South America. Later issues pointed to Belgian Congo, Liberia, Bolivia, Panama, Haiti and Honduras. Related articles dealt with life in a Jewish refugee camp in Holland, and a fund-raising campaign in Belgium for Jewish refugees. Side by side with these, however, were a full range of general-interest articles as before. This pattern continued until the last extant issue, which appeared before Rosh Hashana 1939. Photos of heads of state conferring, and of weaponry, were featured. A final issue, which was not preserved, bid farewell to the readership and expressed hope that the closure of the magazine would be temporary only.

The complete archive of *Idiote Bild* is housed in the Sha'ar Zion Library in Beis Ariela, Tel Aviv.

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**THE BEN-GURION – “KOL HA’AM” TRIAL / Mordecai Naor**

The Kol Ha’am (“Voice of the People”) trial of 1953, which took place in the Supreme Court sitting as the highest Court of Appeals, set a precedent in the history of the Israeli press. The daily Kol Ha’am, organ of the Israel Communist Party (Maki), appealed a closure order issued by then-Minister of Interior Yisrael Rokbi, which was prompted by the paper’s claim that the government under David Ben-Gurion “was speculating with the blood of our sons” because of its intention to send an Israeli military force to Korea to fight alongside the Americans.

In a precedent-setting judgment, Supreme Court Justice Shimon Agnon revoked the closure order, ruling that the interior minister’s authority to close a newspaper was limited to cases where published material represented a clear and present danger of near certainty to the public peace, whereas the article published in Kol Ha’am presented no such danger. This ruling became a cornerstone of freedom of expression in Israel.

A lesser-known case involving the same newspaper, which took place earlier (1950-51), has been somewhat forgotten. Curiously, the judicial record of this case seems to have disappeared, an irregularity that is particularly strange in light of the fact that the case against the paper was instigated by Prime Minister and Defense Minister Ben-Gurion.

The period was the Cold War. Israel was unaligned with either camp, although it leaned toward the US and the West. The Soviet Union, which had supported Israel upon its establishment and thereafter, and supplied it with large quantities of weapons via Czechoslovakia as well as with a diplomatic umbrella in the UN, then removed its support and mounted a systematic propaganda
The cover of the first issue featured a photo of the Jewish community of India. The list of points of distribution of the magazine was: Estonia, England, France, Finland, America, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Denmark, Austria, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Besides an article on the Jews of India, the first issue included reports on the Rabbi of Munkacs and the Admor of Boboiv, who had been excommunicated by the rabbi, Jewish life in Scandinavia, accompanied by portraits of the rabbis of the communities; photos of the development of Tel Aviv; an array of photos of Jews in Warsaw in various occupations; an article on Madame Brunswig, a Jewish minister in the government of French Prime Minister Leon Blum; and a full page with photos on the birthday celebrations of the pretender to the Hapsburg throne, Prince Otto, including a special prayer for him at the Great Synagogue of Vienna. (An interesting aside is that Dr. Otto von Hapsburg is still alive and is a devoted friend of Israel.) Typically, a serialized novel also began running in the first issue. Additionally, a literary section featured Yiddish works, including novellas by two writers – Zasman Segalovitch and Effrayim Kagnovsky – who were to be regular contributors. A humor section was edited by writer Yosef Tunkel under the pen name Der Tunkel. Later issues included articles about such famous Jewish personalities as Leon Blum, Lord Herbert Samuel, German sculptor Harold Eichenstein, Hollywood actress Sylvia Sidney, a series of commissars in the Soviet government, including Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov (formerly Meir Yalakh), Albert Einstein on the occasion of his 60th birthday, historian Shimon Dubnow and many others. The range of subject matter included the Jewish communities of Tunisia, China, the Black Jews of Harlem, New York, and the return of Marranos in Portugal to Judaism. Regular columns included Jews in sports and theater reviews. Life in Palestine was covered extensively in every issue.

The first issue of 1939 introduced a new section titled "Ya'aleh!" (Where?), covering possible emigration destinations for Jews. The first location reviewed was British Guiana in South America. Later issues pointed to Belgian Congo, Liberia, Bolivia, Panama, Haiti and Honduras. Related articles dealt with life in a Jewish refugee camp in Holland, and a fund-raising campaign in Belgium for Jewish refugees. Side by side with these, however, were a full range of general-interest articles as before. This pattern continued until the last extant issue, which appeared before Rosh Hashana 1939. Photos of heads of state conferring, and of weaponry, were featured. A final issue, which was not preserved, bid farewell to the readership and expressed hope that the closure of the magazine would be temporary only.

The complete archive of Idan Bider is housed in the Sha'ar Zion Library in Bet Ariela, Tel Aviv.

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In a procedure-setting judgment, Supreme Court Justice Shimmon Agranov revoked the closure order, ruling that the Israeli minister's authority to close a newspaper was limited to cases where published material represented a clear and present danger of near certainty to the public peace, whereas the article published in Koli Ha'am presented no such danger. This ruling became a cornerstone of freedom of expression in Israel.

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The period was the Cold War. Israel was unaligned with either camp, although it leaned toward the US and the West. The Soviet Union, which had supported Israel upon its establishment and thereafter, and supplied it with large quantities of weapons via Czechoslovakia as well as with a diplomatic umbrella in the UN, then removed its support and mounted a systematic propaganda campaign against it. Maki adopted a similar line, frequently attacking the government and its leader, Ben-Gurion, who responded in kind to Maki and on the subject of the Soviet Union generally.

A public attack of this kind by the prime minister in October 1949 elicited an editorial in Kol Ha'am titled "A Shameful Speech by the Prime Minister," in which Ben-Gurion was labeled "a drawer of the wagon of his American masters" and was accused of treason. Ben-Gurion, furious, noted in his diary that of the various legal options that he could act upon in response, he would use the paper for criminal libel as well for libel against a foreign ruler and harming relations with a foreign country. Interestingly, this was his sole diary entry on the subject, although the legal proceedings dragged on for over a year and a half.

The prime minister's suit, tried in the Tel Aviv District Court, named the editor in chief, Dr. Mordechai (Marcos) Bilski, the publisher, Eitan Paleh, and the manager of the printing press, Y. Stavi, as guilty of libeling the prime minister. After four postponements, to the judge's displeasure, the trial began in February 1951.

A key witness for the defense was (ret.) General Yitzhak Sadeh, the well-known and admired founder of the Palmah and a brigadier during the War of Independence (which had ended only one and a half years before the episode in question). The defense attorney set out to prove that Ben-Gurion was indeed, as Kol Ha'am had asserted, a "servant of the Americans." To do so, he requested Sadeh to reconstruct the events of the Horev Campaign in the Negev and Sinai in late 1948 and early 1949, which ended with Israel being forced to relinquish its gains "under the pressure of certain foreign countries."

Sadeh, giving his version of the campaign, emphasized that the Israeli Defense Forces had beaten the Egyptians from various directions, had penetrated deep into Sinai, and had then received orders to retreat from the peninsula. In his view, there was no military basis for the retreat. He also referred to British aircraft over the battle zone, implying interference by the great powers; the downing by Israel of British planes over Israeli territory; and pressure on Israel. Under questioning by the prosecution, however, he acknowledged that it is the high command that decides on policy.

After a further postponement, Ben-Gurion himself was called to testify in April 1951. Denying that he had referred in his public address of 1949 to Jewish Communists in the Soviet Union, but rather to the Israeli Communists who gave their blessing to Arab pogroms against the Jews, he refused to reply to questions concerning the ostensibly present of an American agent among volunteers to the Israeli Defense Forces during the War of Independence; the events of the Horev Campaign; or Israel's relations with foreign countries.

The defense then tried to show that a loan to Israel of $100 million from the US influenced the prime minister and the government to "sell out" to the Americans, which Ben-Gurion boldly denied, pointing out that the agreement had been welcomed and approved by the Knesset. Another defense approach tried to show the prime minister as a traitor to the interests of the workers, whom he was elected to champion. This was based on Ben-Gurion's consistent refusal to invite the leftist parties to join the coalition government he put together. Testimony by a defense witness, Member of Knesset Shmuel Mikulski (Maki), tried to show that Ben-Gurion had refused to accept any military experts from Communist countries during the War of Independence, when these were desperately needed, another charge denied by the prime minister. Moreover, Mikulski asserted, insinuating remarks made by Ben-Gurion about the leader of the Soviet Union, Stalin, had but one goal: "to stigmatize an invitation by Mr. Ben-Gurion to Truman's table."

The judgment, delivered in July 1951, found the defendants guilty of defamation of the prime minister in their newspaper, and the accusation they had published that he had betrayed the country and that he had lied, libeled. The judge pointed out that the defendants had failed on all counts to show treason on the part of the prime minister. Furthermore, in calling the prime minister as "enemy of the working class" the defendants had transgressed the law protecting the individual's right to protect his good name. The defendants, therefore, were found guilty of libel, were personally fined, and were ordered to finance the cost of publishing the verdict. Neither the newspaper nor the printing press, however, were ordered to close. Moreover, the fines were small.

The judgment elicited a minimal reaction in the press, probably because elections for the Knesset were scheduled for the following day and were the focus of intense attention. The exception to this indifference was Kol Ha'am itself, which ran a large headline: "The Judge Admits B.G. Is Speech Contained a Good Measure of Provocation," with the subhead "The summoned [not the defendants] were found guilty of libeling the prime minister and fined 150 liras; the judge exonerated B.G. of the charge of treason against his nation, drawing the cart of his American masters, and enemy of the working class." The innocent reader could well conclude that the defendant was the prime minister himself.

Thereafter, the trial was completely forgotten. Moreover, the prolonged proceedings, the abundant pressure on the prime minister, the minimal fine, and the non-publication of the paper apparently conveyed a discouraging message to future prime ministers: none ever sued a newspaper for libel on the grounds of personal attack, even in provocative circumstances.
THE DE-STALINIZATION OF THE NEW YORK YIDDISH DAILY
"MORGEN FREIHEIT" | Gennady Estrakh

Of the various Yiddish Communist periodicals that appeared in the West, especially in the US, *Morgen Freiheit* was one of the most important. An organ of the American Communist Party, it carried pro-Soviet propaganda on Jewish topics. Its very beginnings, in April 1922, were coordinated with party headquarters in Moscow. Up until the late 1940s-early 1950s, the paper had a significant circulation: some 20,000 persons bought it on the 32nd anniversary of the October Revolution in 1949. At that time, about half the American Communists were Jews, although many readers were members not of the party but of the International Workers Order and other leftist organizations.

*Freiheit*, besides serving as a Communist organ, was a forum for East European Jewish workers with pro-Soviet sentiments and a strong attachment to Yiddish. By contrast, this community dismissed the main Yiddish daily *Forverts* for its emphasis on Americanization. For the Communist Yiddishists, the Soviet Union had become a sentimentalized dreamland symbolizing freedom and equality as well as empathy for the Jewish people.

In the late 1940s, reports of the suppression of Jewish life in the Soviet Union reached the West, yet the Communist propaganda machine continued feeding the West news about ongoing Jewish cultural activity there, denying rumors to the contrary. In 1951, articles appeared in *Freiheit* about the flourishing Yiddish cultural life of the autonomous Jewish region of Birobidzhan. Additionally, famous Soviet personalities of Jewish origin, such as violinist David Oistrakh, were written up enthusiastically. Both the journalists on the paper and the readership maintained an unshakable belief in the virtues of the Soviet Union.

By the early 1950s, however, the names of such leading Soviet Yiddish writers as David Bergelson, Peretz Markish, Itzik Feffer and others who had been imprisoned disappeared from the pages of *Freiheit*, although previously their works had appeared in it regularly. An item in September 1955 referred evasively to Markish's presence on the staff of *Pravda*, while reports in 1956 implied that he and other Yiddish writers who had disappeared were no longer alive and that their names had been “purged.”

In April 1956, a month after the *Forverts* reported the murder of a group of prominent Yiddish writers in the Soviet Union that took place in August 1952, the *Freiheit* allowed itself to wonder aloud about the fulfillment of Jewish hopes for restoring and maintaining Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union – with no mention, however, of the murder of the writers. The readership apparently was still unable to relinquish the old conviction that the Soviet Union was the land of true freedom. Significantly, even the *Daily Worker*, the main Communist Party organ in the US, criticized the Soviet leadership for failing to explain what had befallen the Jewish intellectuals, and in June 1956 the American Communist Party expressed concern that Khrushchev had made no mention of crimes against the Jews.

Late in 1956 *Freiheit* published a series of articles by Joseph Baruch (Joe) Salzberg, a leader of the Canadian Labor-Progressive (Communist) Party and former delegate of the Ontario Legislature, pointing to the suppression of Jewish culture by the Soviet government from 1949 onward. He also accused non-Soviet Communists of acting like “vassals” instead of defending the jailed Jewish intellectuals and thereby possibly saving their lives. Salzberg himself had been ejected from the executive of the party in 1953 and from the NEC in 1954. However, he was reinstated in 1956 and was part of a group of Canadian Communists who visited the Soviet Union that year to clarify both the past and current status of Soviet Jewry. While government officials who met with the mission acknowledged past oppression of Jews, they would not commit themselves to any formal steps to revive Jewish culture. The most disturbing aspect of Salzberg’s trip, however, was a meeting with Khrushchev, who made crude, insulting remarks about the Jewish people and advised the Jews to reinforce their commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideals.

Probably as a result of Salzberg’s criticism of what he had seen, 26 staff members of *Freiheit* signed a petition demanding that the Soviet government denounce the repression of Yiddish intellectuals and institutions and renew Yiddish cultural life there. At the same time, however, *Freiheit* reported on plans announced by the Soviet Department of Culture to establish a Sholem Aleichem Yiddish Theater and drama school, and to translate into Russian over 100 Jewish literary works, including books by Yehuda Halevi, Hayyim Nahman Bialik, Mendele Mokher Sforim, Y. L. Peretz and Shalom Aleichem. Yet, by the end of 1956, the paper reported that these projects had been aborted.

By Rashi Hashana 5717, *Freiheit* ran an article questioning the relationship between Judaism, or “Yiddishkeit,” and Socialism, implying the end of a 35-year period of the supremacy of the class struggle, Socialism, Stalin and the Soviet Union generally. The notion of Yiddishkeit, at that point, began to gain greater weight.
THE DE-STALINIZATION OF THE NEW YORK YIDDISH DAILY
“MORGEN FREIHEIT” / Gennady Estralkh

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By the early 1950s, however, the names of such leading Soviet Yiddish writers as David Bergelson, Peretz Markish, Itzik Feller and others who had been imprisoned disappeared from the pages of *Freiheit*, although previously their works had appeared in it regularly. An item in September 1955 referred evasively to Markish’s presence on the staff of *Pravda*, while reports in 1956 implied that he and other Yiddish writers who had disappeared were no longer alive and that their names had been “purged.”

In April 1956, a month after the *Forverts* reported the murder of a group of prominent Yiddish writers in the Soviet Union that took place in August 1952, *Freiheit* allowed itself to wonder aloud about the fulfillment of Jewish hopes for restoring and maintaining Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union – with no mention, however, of the murder of the writers. The readership apparently was still unable to relinquish the old conviction that the Soviet Union was the land of true freedom. Significantly, even the Daily Worker, the main Communist Party organ in the US, criticized the Soviet leadership for failing to explain what had befallen the Jewish intellectuals, and in June 1956 the American Communist Party expressed concern that Khrushchev had made no mention of crimes against the Jews.

Late in 1956 *Freiheit* published a series of articles by Joseph Barski (Joe) Saltzberg, a leader of the Canadian Labor-Progressive (Communist) Party and former delegate of the Ontario Legislature, pointing to the suppression of Jewish culture by the Soviet government from 1949 onward. He also accused non-Soviet Communists of acting like “vassals” instead of defending the Jewish intellectuals and thereby possibly saving their lives. Saltzberg himself had been ejected from the executive of the party in 1953 and from the NEC in 1954. However, he was reinstated in 1956 and was part of a group of Canadian Communists who visited the Soviet Union that year to clarify both the past and current status of Soviet Jews. While government officials who met with the mission acknowledged past oppression of Jews, they would not commit themselves to any formal steps to revive Jewish culture. The most disturbing aspect of Saltzberg’s trip, however, was a meeting with Khrushchev, who made crude, insulting remarks about the Jewish people and accused the Jews to reinforce their commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideals. Probably as a result of Saltzberg’s criticism of what he had seen, 26 staff members of *Freiheit* signed a petition demanding that the Soviet government denounce the repression of Yiddish intellectuals and institutions and renew Yiddish cultural life there. At the same time, however, *Freiheit* reported on plans announced by the Soviet Department of Culture to establish a Shalom Aleichem Yiddish Theater and drama school, and to translate into Russian over 100 Jewish literary works, including books by Yehuda Halevi, Hayyim Nahman Bialik, Mendele Mokher Sfarim, Y. L. Peretz and Shalom Aleichem. Yet, by the end of 1956, the paper reported that these projects had been aborted.

The three prominent Yiddish writers murdered in August 1952, *Freiheit* ran an article questioning the relationship between Judaism, or “Yiddishkhit,” and Socialism, implying the end of a 35-year period of the supremacy of the class struggle. Socialism, Stalin and the Soviet Union generally. The notion of Yiddishkhit, at that point, began to gain greater weight. Even the name of the paper, with its distinctly pro-Soviet ring, was under consideration for replacement by *Americaner Yidishke Folks Zeitung* (“American Jewish People’s Newspaper”), which would send a Jewish rather than universalist message. In the end, the name was not changed, although the management of the paper announced a distancing from the Communist Party and the paper was reidentified as: “An independent progressive newspaper of the Jewish people and workers.” Moreover, the official Soviet dogma of the “integration” of the Soviet Jews into society at large was criticized, inasmuch as this process had been implemented by means of administrative repression.

The American Communist Party, concerned by then about the damage caused by the revelations of anti-Jewish repression during Stalin’s time, accepted this criticism by the remaining stalwarts. By December 1957 the party had only 3,474 members in the US, as compared to 22,663 in 1955. The distancing of its Jewish members caused particular concern. Jewish Life, an English-language companion magazine to *Freiheit*, lost 75% of its readership after the revelations of 1956-57.

The new autonomous stance by the paper signaled a gap that continued to widen between *Freiheit* and the American Communist Party. Neither the writers nor the readers could forget the pain of August 1952. Among those executed were personal friends of the paper’s editor, Paul (Pesach) Novik, including several former staff members of Freiheit. Novik himself was branded as an “American spy” and a “Jewish nationalist” and in 1972 was ejected from the party for “opportunistic submission to Jewish national and Zionist pressures.” For the rest of his life, he and his colleagues denounced Stalinism and delegitimized the newly formed Soviet Union – the single official Yiddish newspaper in the Soviet Union – and its editor, Aaron Vergelis. By the time *Freiheit* closed, in September 1985, the shrinking geriatric circle led by Novik had done an ideological about-face from dogmatic Communism to a return to Marxist-Leninist roots blended with leftist Yiddishkeit and European-style Communism.

For many Western Communists, the revelations of 1956 and the Soviet invasion of Hungary that year triggered an exodus from the party, although a large member continued to be Communist sympathizers even if they were scarred by the trauma of the loss of a central basis of their lives. Novik and his colleagues, by comparison, could fall back on the comfort of belonging to the *Morgen Freiheit* “club,” which preserved their old socialist Jewish ideology together with a heightened level of Jewish identity. In 1977 the newspaper still had nearly 6,000 subscribers, as compared to its heyday in the 1920s when it had a circulation of 40,000-50,000.

Today, small groups of American-born Jewish leftists educated in Communist homes keep alive the old socialist Jewish secularist ideology.

THE LADINO PRESS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL / Berta Ares

A series of Ladino newspapers were published in Israel from 1948 until the late 1960s by immigrant journalists from Turkey whose impetus was to further the integration of Ladino-speaking Sephardi immigrants, particularly from Turkey. Three short-lived examples of independent, apolitical papers were *La Boca de Israel* ("The Voice of Israel"), *La Boca de Jerusalén* ("The Voice of Jerusalem") and *La Union* ("The Union"). Others were supported by political parties: *Liberidad* ("Liberty") – Herut; and *El Avnei* ("The Fruit") – the Kefalet al Bato ("To the Point") and *Fakist* ("Facts") – all Mapai, the latter two explicitly propagandistic. Two longer-lasting papers were partially supported by political parties: *La Verdad* ("The Truth") – General Zionists; and *El Tiempo* ("The Time") – Mapai.

All aimed at assisting the immigrants’ absorption into Israel by providing maximum information on their new homeland, including explanations of such complex issues facing the new country as the internationalization of Jerusalem, secular vs. religious education, the Ashkenazi-Sephardi divide, and the Middle East situation.

The two most popular and longest-lasting of these papers were the weekly *El Tiempo* (1950-67; Mapai) and *La Verdad* (1945-75; General Zionists), which carried on a sustained mutual ideological confrontation. Interestingly, while they began as immigrant-oriented, they gradually became general newspapers, reflecting the integration of their readership into society. This transition was intensified during the Sinai Campaign period (1956), when the proportion of national and local news reports rose.

Initially, the newspaper that played a central role in guiding this immigrant community was *El Avnei*, a Mapai-sponsored weekly that was issued in five other languages simultaneously (Yiddish,
TWO BIOGRAPHICAL "MOMENT"S / Shalom Rosenfeld

Two important yet highly contrasting contributors to Jewish cultural life in Eastern Europe during the period between the two world wars were both linked to one of the great Yiddish newspapers of Poland, and of Europe entirely—Moment. The two were Hayim Prushansky, financial backer, manager and developer of the daily Moment, and the socially conscious Oscar Perlman, one of the paper's leading editorial writers and a contributor to other influential newspapers as well. Both the "capitalist" Zionist Prushansky and the socialist (later orthodox Communist) Perlman found a home in Moment, a newspaper that played an immeasurable role in educating and informing the Jewish masses in Poland.

Hayim Prushansky brought both money and managerial expertise to the other "social" Moment. He had worked for its rival, Heint, for a time and was active in the administration of various Zionist institutions in Warsaw. An intellectual with pragmatic vision, he was capable of translating his ideas into operational programs aimed at financial and technological innovation.

Oscar Perlman’s contribution, by comparison, was in the realm of social conscience, given expression in editorials in Moment over a 15-year period, in addition to contributions to other periodicals, especially on the theme of the Jewish settlement in Biurodziwan, which he came to espouse with a passion. While Prushansky organized trips to Palestine, Perlman organized missions to Biurodziwan, with the encouragement of the Soviets. Perlman was also involved in semi-clandestine activity on behalf of Communist front organizations that dared operate under the noses of the vigilant Polish police.

Both Heint and Moment exerted a vast influence on the thinking and the cultural life of Jewish Poland. All of the Jewish communal leaders, thinkers and writers contributed to these papers, while their regular editorial staffs were excellent in themselves. The papers served as a forum that recorded Jewish hardship, ideology, political opinion, hopes and the thirst for knowledge. Rival rivals, Heint and Moment fought each other for every reader and every ad, locked in a relentless symbiotic contest.

The early readership of the Yiddish press related to the newspaper of their choice as Orthodox Jews related to their rebbes' court—with total devotion. When a popular writer left one paper for another, thousands of readers would follow him.

Many published pieces in this press were signed by pseudonyms, especially those written by recognized authors who contributed more than one article in a given issue, or those who, for reasons of livelihood, wrote serialized "penny novels," such as Isaac Babel's Singer or Yehoshua Porle. These novels, too, perpetuated the competition between the two papers by copying each other’s themes and formats. Another form of competition was coupons that the reader could cut out of the paper and redeem for a gift.

Moment, founded in Warsaw in 1910, was housed in three separate cramped quarters until Prushansky initiated the construction of a single large building at 38 Nalevsky Street. He then set about acquiring modern German typesetting and printing equipment, especially a high-speed rotary color printer—a first in the Jewish press. These innovations constituted a heavy financial burden, which Prushansky shoulderred nearly singlehandedly, convinced of the importance of upgrading the newspaper.

At the same time, the staff demanded wage increases and embarked on prolonged strikes. Additionally, Prushansky was at ideologicalloggerheads with one of the central figures in Moment, Noah Pryanicki, son of the paper's editor in chief, Zvi Pryanicki. The younger Pryanicki, a brilliant writer, poet, philologist, member of the Polish Sejm and head of the leftist Folkpartei, consistently wrote anti-Zionist articles, which incensed Prushansky, who had been a delegate to one of the Zionist Congresses and was a
French, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Romanian. Written simply and clearly, it was explicitly ideological while also providing historical background on modern Israel.

La Verdad, highly critical of the Labor administration, attacked the entrenched bureaucracy, the propagandistic nature of Mapai, and the widespread "protesta" (fervor) system. All these, it charged, demoralized the immigrants to the point that some returned to their country of origin. Two nepotistic elements in the paper, which were staples in the Sephardic press, were humor columns and serialized novels. El Tiempo, partially subsidized by Mapai, was edited by Yitzhak Ben-Rubi with significant editorial input by such personalities as writers Avraham Alesiah and Sabtani Leon. It focused on political, economic and cultural issues, with an emphasis on settlement. As in Verdad, the problem of the temptation to return to the country of origin was addressed, with this option discouraged editorially.

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The entire turbulent period at Moment was documented by him in a series of letters to his estranged wife, Leah, who had moved to Palestine. The letters were preserved by Prushansky's grandson in Israel.

Shortly after the installation of the new printing equipment, and the appearance of the first color edition of the newspaper in 1936, the 64-year-old Prushansky suffered a fatal stroke. At the time, suicide was rumored as the cause of his death.

Having lost its authoritative and resourceful manager, Moment entered a period of financial crisis that ended with the closing of the paper in 1939 upon the Nazi invasion of Poland. At the very end, with Warsaw in a state of siege, only two members of the Moment staff managed to reach the office under heavy bombardment and put out a two-page edition which carried an appeal by Polish Gen. Staszinski to Warsaw patriots to help block the German advance, under the headline: "The Defeat of the Enemy is Assured!" A copy of this issue has never been located despite concerted efforts.

Strangely, Prushansky's printing equipment, for which he struggled mightily, survived the bombardment of Warsaw intact. By a cruel irony, it was transported to Germany by the Nazis and used to publish their organs.

As for Oscar Perlman (b. 1895, Warsaw), a key editorial writer at Moment during 1920-42, he was a Folkspartei loyalist until the late 1920s, when he shifted to the communist movement, focusing on the goal of Jewish autonomous settlement on Soviet soil. He organized and led missions to Birzadzin in 1934. Side by side with his work at Moment, he was on the staff of Das Folk ("The People") of Warsaw and contributed to Der Nyer Gedok ("The New Idea") of Vilna and Birov ("Rebuilding") of Warsaw during 1933-35, also writing for Veit Berber ("Westwide Survey") and a series of banned Communist publications in Warsaw, Lodz and Lemberg.

Fleeing the Polish authorities to the Soviet Union in 1935, he joined the staff of "Emes" ("Truth") in Moscow and wrote for Biro-Bidshin Shitou ("Biroshibshin Star") and October. Once he reached the Soviet Union, all traces of Perlman vanished, as did those of many Jewish writers who wrote in Yiddish. However, some two decades later, his presence in Moscow several years after his release from exile (in 1955) was discovered accidentally by old acquaintances from Warsaw who themselves had experienced the terror of the Communist regime. He was also recognized in Moscow by the well-known Yiddish writer and traveler Hayim Shalev, cloaked in tears, with a wild beard and a shaking look in his eyes, Perlman was seen sitting on the ground near the Great Synagogue, his attention focused on a prayerbook, crying that people tossed scattered about.

A letter he wrote in 1936 or 1937, in the possession of relatives in Israel, reiterates his euphoric satisfaction with living in the Communist homeland. A year or two thereafter, all the writers of the official Soviet Yiddish newspaper Emes disappeared without a trace. Details of Perlman's fate in the internment eventually surfaced. He had been arrested in 1937 during the mass trials in Russia, imprisoned for a long period and then exiled to the camps in the far north. He had lost his son in a traffic accident, and his wife Sally (Sarah), sister of the grandfather of Prof. of philosophy Ada Kasher of Tel Aviv University, divorced him for a highly placed Soviet army officer. Released in 1955, ill and broken, he returned to religion and became an observant Jew, telling an acquaintance that the fact that he had rediscovered his roots brought him consolation. Thereafter, all traces of him vanished once again.

PHOTO WEEKLIES DURING ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1948-1949 / Dan Almagor

Three photo weeklies (or illustrated weeklies, as they were called then) were published in Palestine upon the outbreak of Israel's War of Independence on November 29, 1947: the ten-year-old Ha'olam Hazeh ("This World"), Davar Hashavu'a ("Weekly Matter"), published for two years by the daily Davar; and Hagegal ("The Wheel"), a magazine published for five years by the Mandatory broadcasting authority, Kol Yerushalayim, based on the BBC model, The Listener (see Qesher No. 21). This last weekly ended in April 1948 with the termination of the British Mandate. Some three months before the declaration of independence, in February 1948, a new weekly, Ramon ("The Camp"), was launched as a continuation of the defunct underground Hagana ("Defence").

Ha'olam Hazeh was edited by Uri Kessar, who began his
journalistic career with the tabloid *De'ot Hayom* ("Daily Mail") under Itamar Ben-Avi and continued its tradition of a mix of news, gossip and culture in the style of the Parushan weekly. Kesuri took on a variety of contributing writers, maintaining a representative sampling of political opinion side by side with light reportage, humor, social chitchat in the American style, and popular columns that elicited strong reader participation, especially among the younger cohorts (a term he claimed to have originated) readers. Of the weightier content, the columns "Hayinshav Hatzeh" ("This Community") played an important role, serving as a platform for independent-minded contributors, including Shimon Saretz, Raphael Klachkina (Haberman actor as well as journalist) and Shalom Rosenfeld.

Essentially a Tel Aviv magazine, *Ha'olam Hazeh* widened out its political scope once the state was established and government offices were set up in Tel Aviv. Profiles of political personalities represented a wide spectrum of opinion, ranging from former radicaled underground leaders Hillel Kook (a.k.a. Peter Bergson) and Matityahu Shoshanovitch to Shoshana Peretz, Dr. Yosef Burg, the first Knesset Secretary Moshe Rosseti, Shmuel Mokhail, Dov Joseph, the young Abba Eban and Moshe Sneh.

Kesuri, a devotee of the arts, dedicated a sizable portion of the weekly to this sphere. Profiles appeared of playwrights, poets, musicians, actors and pop performers. Essays and short stories by young unknown writers were published regularly.

With the outbreak of the War of Independence, a column devoted to biographies and photos of fallen soldiers was introduced, which included an obituary by the author of this article, then age 13, at whose home in Rehovot one of the young soldiers had stayed the night before going out on his fatal mission.

Soldier-journalist Uri Avnori, who was wounded in action, was one of the war's outstanding reporters and a prolific contributor, later to become editor of the magazine.

The events of the war were reflected in many of the magazine's cover pages, which featured photos of military commanders, campaigns, special units and captured locations.

Curiously, the first wave of immigration from the Arab lands was covered only minimally. An article on the 'Magic Carpet' flight of the Jews of Yemen to Israel appeared in March 1949, while three months later Hasidic followers of the Lubavitcher Rebbe were shown arriving and exploring a settlement location, later to become Kfar Habad.

One of the most popular columns was titled "The Chitchat of the Week," the chitchat (Arabic for tall tale) being a popular form of entertainment then. Readers submitted tales, and the best received a prize of 4 liras. So popular was this column, that the editor soon had to request readers to desist from sending in chitchats, as the staff couldn't keep up with the backlog.

*Drar Hashavha's*, edited by M. Ben-Elitz, was undoubtedly the most popular photo magazine during the pre- and immediate post-state period. More truly a photo magazine than its rivals, it filled nearly 50% of its content with photos printed on good-quality paper, constituting a valuable documentary record of that dramatic period with an intensive focus on the war, the military personalities involved, and the home front effort.

The establishment of a temporary parliamentary body and the declaration of independence in the spring of 1948 were also covered intensively, followed by the diplomatic struggle for recognition in the UN and in Washington. The magazine's treatment of the British Administration and its representatives was surprisingly critical and sarcastic, even more so than the military-oriented *Ramahon*.

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Curiously, the coverage of the post-Holocaust milieux, the immigrants en route to Palestine interred in camps in Cyprus, and the massive rush of immigration into the country with the opening of its gates was minimal.

Although *Drar Hashavha* was published by the Histadrut (General Federation of Labor), socialist ideology is barely palpable and is limited to an occasional mention of labor events.

In contrast to *Ha'olam Hazeh*, which is a two-page section on war fatalities, *Drar Hashavha* carried only occasional coverage of this painful topic.

Several columns were printed in voweled Hebrew type in deference to new immigrant readers. At least two pages of each issue were devoted to literature, two films, and two sports. Regular columns dealt with radio and entertainment, chess, puzzles, humor and children. Side by side with commercial ads, public service notices called for army volunteers and financial contributions to the war effort.

*Ramahon*, launched in March 1948 as a four-page weekly but in a daily format, did not identify its editor (Moshe Shapira), and pen names were used in by-lines, presumably to preserve the anonymity of Haganah activists from the British, who were still in charge. Written in characteristic military and nationalistic terminology, its content was devoted to morale-building and enhancing pride in the fledgling country's defense efforts in the battlefield and at home. All aspects of Haganah's - and, from June 1948, the newly formed "Israel Defense Forces" - life style were covered, from military campaigns to soldiers' entertainment groups, the declaration of independence and the imperative to fight to protect the homeland, and popular songs dedicated to various combat units.

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Dear Hashawu, edited by M. Ben-Elul, was undoubtedly the most popular photo weekly during the pre- and immediate post-state period. More truly a photo magazine than its rivals, it filled nearly 50% of its content with photos printed on good-quality paper, constituting a valuable documentary record of that dramatic period with an intensive focus on the war, the military personalities involved, and the home front effort.

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Bamahaneh, launched in March 1948 as a four-page weekly but in a daily format, did not identify an editor (Moshé Shainit), and pen names were used in by-lines, presumably to preserve the anonymity of Hagana activists from the British, who were still in charge. Written in characteristic military and nationalistic terminology, its content was devoted to morale-building and enhancing pride in the fighting country’s defense efforts in the battlefield and at home. All aspects of the Hagana’s—and, from June 1948, the newly formed Israel Defense Forces—life style were covered, from military campaigns to soldiers’ entertainment troupes, the declaration of independence and the imperative to fight to protect the homeland, and popular songs dedicated to various combat units.

Only in the 12th issue, six weeks after the declaration of independence of the state and the end of the British Mandate, do the full names of the contributors begin to appear. New departments were added as well: literature and poetry, voweled rhymed commentary, and caricatures.

The attitude to the Arab enemy is interesting. A telling article from a historic perspective, “The Problem of the Arab Refugees,” by Efrayim Tamir, written three months after the proclamation of statehood, charges that the problem was being exploited by the enemies of Israel, who, having failed to exterminate Israel on the battlefield, were turning the refugee issue into a political tool. Reviewing various proposed solutions to the problem, which, he emphasizes, was not of Israel’s making, as Israel did not start the war, Tamir acknowledges that the issue is complex and grave and will have to be addressed once the war ends and independence is reached.

Over half a year after its founding, Bamahaneh became a fully illustrated magazine in the style of Dear Hashawu, featuring photos, illustrations, reports and literature. Only two months later did the publisher’s name appear: The IDF Cultural Service. Military matters continued to occupy the major portion of the content, including day-to-day problems that soldiers faced, such as hitching rides to base or home (then and thereafter a widespread mode of transportation), or the need to provide newspapers in various languages for new immigrant soldiers. Words and news of popular new songs about army life (most pop songs then were related to this theme) appeared in every issue.