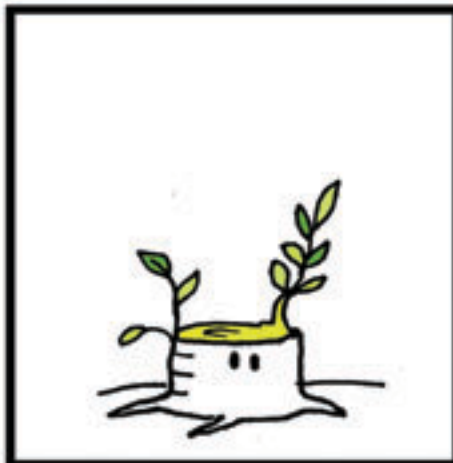
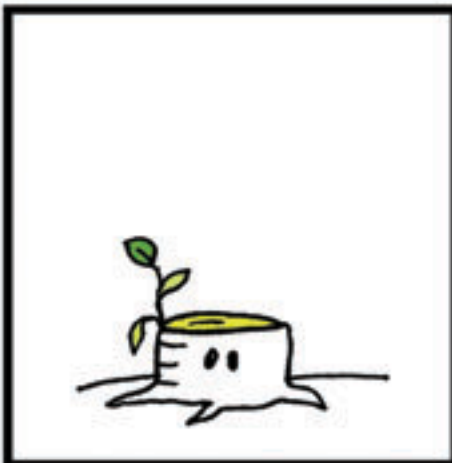
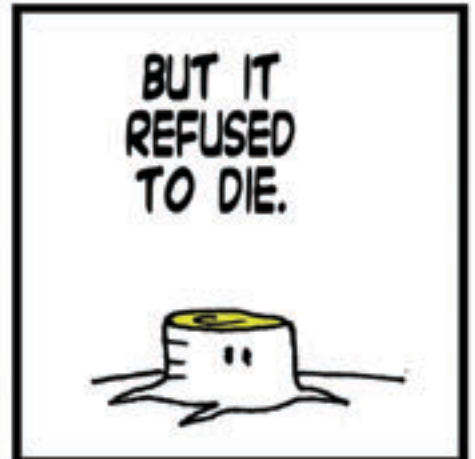
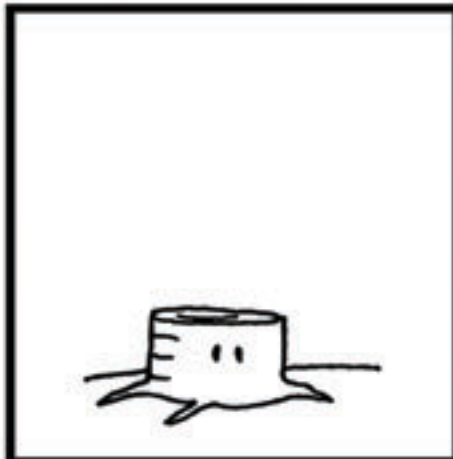


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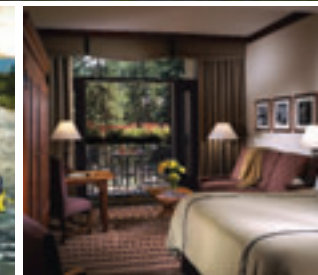


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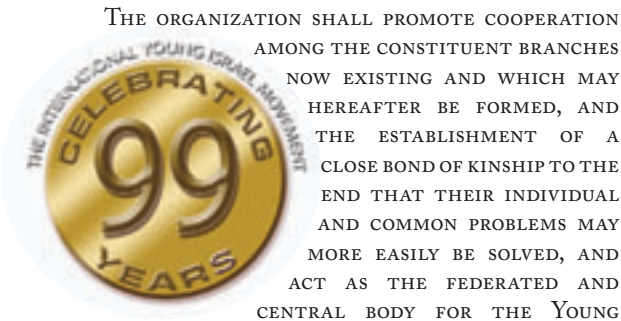
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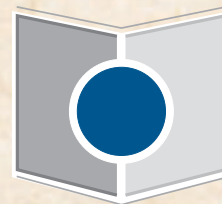
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Message from the President



With US ambassador to Greece Daniel B. Smith



With Israel ambassador to Greece Aryeh Mekel



With the artist Yaakov Agam



Tammy Silberschein

At the Seder we are supposed to remember. Unfortunately, through the ages, the nations of the world have taken great pains to assure that we would have a lot to remember.

Just a week before Purim, the Fogel family was savagely attacked and murdered by vicious terrorists. Young children were stabbed to death. We seem surprised, perhaps because we have stopped remembering - Chevron, Maalot, the Park Hotel, Sbarro's...the list goes on and on. Perhaps we need to forget them because the enormity of the suffering would be too much for our collective psyches to bear. These things were never supposed to happen in Israel, where the Zionist dream was meant to transform us into a nation like any other nation of the world.

A few weeks ago, I heard former Israeli PM Tzipi Livni decry the fact that large portions of the Israeli population were not Zionists. She singled out two groups: Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews.

It is difficult to hear politicians and pundits claim that the ultra-Orthodox are not Zionists, when they are the fastest growing segment of the Israeli Jewish population. In fact, even the old claim that the ultra-Orthodox don't serve in the Army is no longer true. The number of soldiers serving in the Nachal Chareidi continues to grow, while secular Jews are avoiding reserve duty in record numbers.

Over the last two years when I have made visits to Army bases, I have been surprised by the number of secular Americans serving in the Israeli Army. Many of these young men and women came to Israel for the first time with Birthright and decided to return or remain and enlist. Others realized their dream of moving to Israel and supporting its people by joining the IDF. Some told me that they still had

trouble with the Hebrew language and that their commanders and fellow soldiers had to adjust to enable them to communicate. These young men and women are certainly Zionists.

When I recently visited Ariel, I heard Tammy Silberschein speak. Tammy grew up in New Jersey, attended Orthodox high school and became Orthodox. She moved to Israel and eventually, with her family, settled in Gush Katif. After the disengagement, her family was relocated to Ariel. Speaking in Ariel, Tammy explained that although many of the other Gush Katif refugees relocated to Nitzan, she and her husband decided that since HaShem brought them to Ariel, He had a reason and they remained there. Because Ariel is across the Green Line, and it has been subjected to various construction freezes, Tammy, her husband and seven children live in a caravan.

Tammy asked me what organization I represented, and I told her, "Young Israel." She wasn't really sure what that was, and I then asked her if she remembered the people who distributed Purim costumes to all the children after the disengagement. Her eyes lit up. She told me how important those costumes were to the children and how they lifted everyone's spirits.

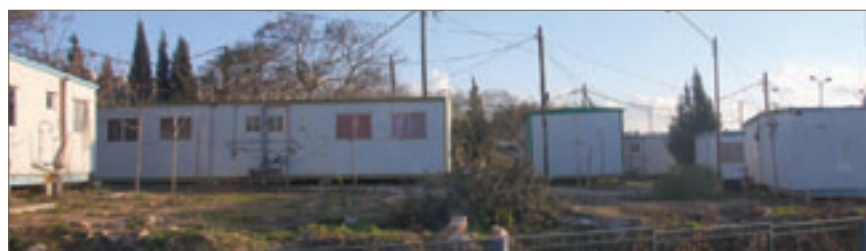
Zionists may have different levels of religious observance and wear different head coverings. But regardless of these differences their love for Israel and its people makes them all Zionists. It is with great pride that we dedicate this third special issue of Viewpoint to Zionism.

I wish everyone a Chag Kasher V'sameach and L'Shana Habaah B'Yirushalayim Habinuya.

Shlomo Z. Mostofsky
President



Shlomo Z. Mostofsky with Mr. Dry Bones, Yaakov Kirschen



Caravans in Ariel where Gush Katif families still live

Message from Executive Office



R-L: Rabbi Shlomo Amar, Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel; Rabbi Pesach Lerner, NCYI

We are proud to present the third in a series of Special Editions of NCYI Viewpoint Magazine dedicated to Israel and Zionism.

We are often asked, why does NCYI focus so much on Israel, on Zionism?

There are many obvious responses, many of them you can read in this issue and previous issues. Allow me to add one more: King Solomon, in his liturgical poem, "Shir HaShirim," The Song of Songs, chapter 2, verse 9, writes: "(In His swiftness to redeem me), my Beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart, (I thought I would be forever alone), but behold, He was standing behind our wall, observing through the windows, peering through the lattices."

Our Sages explain (see Medrash Rabbah and Yalkut Shimoni) that "our wall" refers to the Kotel HaMaaravi, the Western Wall of the Temple Mount. G-d stands behind the Western Wall; the Shechinah, the Divine Presence

has never departed from the Western Wall; G-d has sworn that it, the Western Wall, will never be destroyed.

Where else in the world can one experience the Shechinah, the Divine Presence? Where else can one see – right in front of our eyes – the fulfillment of a promise made thousands of years ago, that the Western Wall will never be destroyed? During the times other nations of the world controlled Jerusalem, they could have destroyed the Western Wall, but they didn't. Why? Because they could not; G-d promised otherwise.

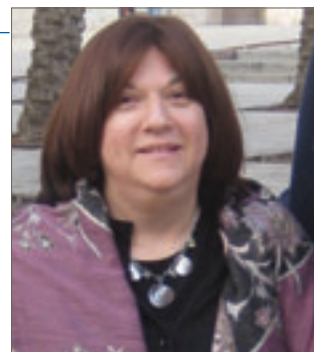
Jerusalem and Israel are the center of the universe. That is why NCYI gives it so much attention, attention they deserve.

We hope you will enjoy this issue.

Have a wonderful Pesach-Passover Holiday.

Rabbi Pesach Lerner
Executive Vice President

From the Editor



With our Spring 2011 issue of Viewpoint Magazine, we offer our third special presentation, "Zionism in Our Time III," a collection of essays and articles discussing the meaning and place of Zionism at this time in our history. Why is it so important to talk about Zionism yet again? What is there to say that has not been said many times over? The answers to these questions are simply stated: In the contemporary political world, Israel is in a difficult and dangerous position. **It is our duty and responsibility as Jews to take a stand, and to present Israel's case intelligently, fearlessly and without equivocation. In order to undertake this task, we need to have the facts readily at our fingertips** and furthermore, understand their implications, for the stakes are very high – the survival of Israel as a nation is hanging in the balance. Many, perhaps most aspects of the situation are outside of our control, but, to the extent that we are able to act, it is incumbent upon us to speak out and to act on our own behalf.

Many of the articles in this issue explore the issue of hasbara – the dissemination of information – public relations. How is this most useful and vital tool in the ongoing psychological war being applied? Is the case of the State of Israel being put forth in the most cogent and forceful manner? Many argue that this effort has seriously failed. There are many voices and thoughts expressed here by writers we turn to for sage and in-

formed commentary, Melannie Phillips, Charles Jacobs, among them, who make imaginative and innovative suggestions for an alternate approach.

No less essential to our survival, is a firm and unshakeable belief in our right to have a sovereign Jewish nation – a belief that has faltered in some quarters over the years. In this issue of Viewpoint there are also voices speaking of the love of Zion, beautifully expressed on the cover and the article by beloved Dry Bones cartoonist, Yaakov Kirschen. You can read about the courageous and inspiring actions of the New Guardians, who are putting their lives on the line to preserve Jewish presence in the Galil, and about the efforts of groups such as CAMERA, StandWithUs and Hasbara Fellowships to monitor the media and take action to refute the lies that currently abound in the public sphere. We hope you will find information and inspiration in this special issue and that together, we will stand with Israel in the unity that distinguishes Am Yisrael at its best.

Wishing all the Young Israel family and friends a Chag Kosher v'Sameach,

Esther Altmann
Editor

NCYI RABBINIC TRAINING PROGRAM 2010-2011

COORDINATED BY RABBI BINYOMIN HAMMER, DIRECTOR OF RABBINIC SERVICES, NCYI



Rabbi Chaim Wasserman, Rabbi Emeritus, YI of Passaic-Clifton, NJ, Co-President, Council of YI Rabbis in Israel



At session at YI of Bedford Bay-Madison, Brooklyn, NY



Rabbi Dovid Weinberger of Congregation Shaarey Torah of Lawrence, NY



Rabbi Moshe Taub, YI of Greater Buffalo, NY, addressing the group at Yeshivas Ner Yisrael in Baltimore, MD

NCYI AND EL AL AIRLINES: A STRONG RELATIONSHIP



R-L: El Al President/CEO Elyezer Shkedy, Rabbi Pesach Lerner, NCYI



R: Danny Saadon, Vice President, EL AL Airlines, North and Central America, replacing Offer Gat, who is moving to Israel and will be the new Vice President, Global Sales, EL AL Israeli Airlines

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NCYI'S FOCUS ON ISRAEL



At a meeting discussing Israel and Jonathan Pollard. L-R: Shlomo Z. Mostofsky, NCYI Pres., NY Senator Charles Schumer, Rabbi Pesach Lerner, NCYI Exec. Vice Pres., Dr. Chania Gang, NCYI Exec. Board Member



R-L: Israel Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren, J.D. Golden of Houston, TX, Past NCYI Dinner Honoree, Rabbi Pesach Lerner, NCYI at International Israel Allies Caucus Foundation Event, Capitol Hill, Washington, DC



At NCYI Headquarters, L-R: Ido Aharoni, Israel Counsel General of NY, Rabbi Pesach Lerner, Exec. VP, NCYI.



L-R: Nir Barkat, Mayor of Jerusalem, Rabbi Pesach Lerner



Rabbi Pesach Lerner, presenting \$30,000 check to Israel Trauma Coalition Haifa Emergency Fund, monies raised from YI Membership. R-L: Talia Levanon, Dir. ITC; Omer Egozi, Dir. Resource Development, ITC; Rabbi Pesach Lerner.



Rabbi Pesach Lerner, NCYI, at Israel Air Force base in Central Israel, as guest of base commander and base rabbi

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YOUNG ISRAEL PROGRAMS SENIOR CENTERS

by Henry N. Alper, Director of Senior Operations

What does a senior citizen do with the extreme changes in the weather conditions? Winter conditions not seen in recent memory, summers with temperatures continuously in the 90s. Day after day challenges a younger person would find daunting. Add to that fixed income and huge raises in the cost of living. Day after day it's the same all over again. Where to go for help?

National Council of Young Israel to the rescue. Funded by the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) and sponsored by Young Israel Programs, our Senior Centers are caring for New York's older folks in three areas of Queens and in Brooklyn. Cli-



ents from all walks of life, from 60 to the high 90s enjoy a variety of Glatt Kosher food and activities 5 days each week.

These dynamic, active, modern activity magnets are located in Forest Hills, Queens Valley, Wavecrest/Bayswater of the Rockaways and Midwood in Brooklyn. They are designed to encourage those over 60 to get out and interact with others of similar interests. Based on that Glatt kosher catered noon meal, the day begins as early as 9 AM with arranged transportation, for those in need. Additionally, DFTA has added funding to allow seniors to enjoy the centers' pleasant atmosphere with extended hours, reducing the impact of heating and air

conditioning costs on their fixed income.

Upon arrival, coffee and light fare are available and there are a variety of activities to keep attendees busy until lunch. Physically, there is yoga, tai chi, reflexology and standard exercise classes. Arts and Crafts include painting, bead work, quilting, sewing, cooking. All centers have guest speakers and programs from major national organizations dealing with current issues of health and well being. Monthly birthday parties and live entertainment bring the group closer together, as do trips to the many activities the New York area has to offer. Afternoons include learning groups, movies, lectures and whatever games a group

On March 3rd, 2011, NY State Assembly, Senate and NY City Council released their lists of Senior Centers to CLOSE due to budget cuts. The following Young Israels will lose their programs if the elected officials allow this to go into effect:

Young Israel of Forest Hills Senior League
Young Israel of Wavecrest/Bayswater Senior League
Young Israel of Bedford Bay/Madison

Emails, calls and letters from Young Israelites nation-wide will show your concern and wishes that the 40 years of Glatt Kosher service, open to all Seniors regardless of their beliefs, is continued.

Governor Cuomo: (518) 474-8390

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver: (212) 312-1420

You can also contact the centers directly for additional ways to show support.



wishes to organize.

With 21st Century technology widely available, DFTA has granted the centers computers as well as web sites to provide the public with wider access to the details of the programs. Using the search engine of choice (Yahoo; Google; etc) these sites can be located. It is advisable to contact each center to ensure the accuracy of the information. With the city's financial belt tightening home delivery of meals was moved to central organizations, such as JASA.

On the financially positive side, the Council for Jewish Material Claims against Germany granted funding to the Midwood center for a special monthly gathering known as "Café Europa" honoring Holocaust survivors and open to all. The Forest Hills center was able to fully modernize its 30 year old dining room, kitchen, office and sanitary facilities thanks to their local government representatives prior to the budget crunch.



For those wishing more information for themselves or those they feel would benefit, contact information for the centers follows:

Young Israel of Forest Hills Senior League
68-07 Burns Street,
Flushing NY 11375
Telephone: 718-520-2305
Director: Susan Rabinowicz

Young Israel of Queens Valley Senior League
141-55 77th Avenue,
Flushing, NY 11367
Telephone: 718-263-6995
Director: Alan Gombo

Young Israel of Wavecrest/ Bayswater Senior League
2716 Healy Avenue
Far Rockaway, NY 11691
Telephone: 718-327-0297
Director: Fay Gross

Young Israel Senior Services of Midwood
1694 Ocean Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11230
Telephone: 718-253-7800
Director: Sarah Klein

Young Israel of Bedford Bay/ Madison
2114 Brown Street
Brooklyn, NY 11229
718-332-4120

1 Why does
Passover food
always taste
bland?

a:
It doesn't have to!



Tip!

Season chicken, veal or steak and bake or broil as you normally would.

Coat liberally with Gold's sweet or savory sauces and brown under the broiler for 5 minutes for a flavor and texture boost.

Gold's



KeepKidsSafe PRESENTED FOR THE QUEENS, NY COMMUNITY



Speakers and Community leaders for KeepKidsSafe included: (left to right): Standing: Rabbi Yoel Schonfeld, Daniel Maurer, Jay Horowitz, Warren Hecht, Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, and Rechel Schoenfeld. (seated): Rabbi Noach Isaac Oelbaum, Rabby Zvi Y. Gluck, Dr. Shloimie Zimmerman, Psy.D., and Lois Raff

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In an effort to educate people about protecting children from improper behavior, the Queens, NY Jewish community hosted a critical program that focused on prevention, awareness and action strategies. The program, which is entitled, "Keep Kids Safe from Inappropriate Behavior at School and in the Neighborhood," took place on Sunday, January 2, 2011 at the Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills, New York. The program drew hundreds of concerned parents, grandparents, teachers, and rabbonim, and was provided as a community service by the National Council of Young Israel, the Queens Jewish Community Council, the Queens County District Attorney's Office, the Vaad Harabonim of Queens, and JBFCS' UJA-Federation's Partners in Caring @Pride of Judea.

Rabbi Noach Isaac Oelbaum, the Mara D'asra of Congregation Nachlas Yitzchak in Queens, New York, discussed halachic perspectives; Dr. Shloimie Zimmerman, Psy.D, a psychologist in private practice in Brooklyn,

New York, spoke about psychological perspectives; and Lois Raff, Esq., Counsel to the Queens County District Attorney, dealt with legal perspectives. The communal response was given by Rabbi Zvi Y. Gluck, Clergy/Liaison to the Community Affairs Division, NYPD/Queens South; Other community leaders who spoke during the program included Rabbi Yoel Schonfeld, Rabbi, Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills and President, Vaad Harabonim of Queens; and Daniel Maurer, the President of the Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills, Warren Hecht, Esq., President of the Queens Jewish Community Council, Jay Horowitz, LMSW, Therapist, JBFCS, Pride of Judea, and Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, Director of Programming, National Council of Young Israel.

To obtain the CD recording of the program, contact Zalman Umlas, 718-252-5274; for more information or bring this program to your community, call Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, at 212-929-1525, ext 112 or send an e-mail to jsteinig@youngisrael.org



Hundreds of people from the Queens community listened attentively to the halachic perspectives given by Rabbi Noach Isaac Oelbaum.

LONG ISLAND, NY REGIONAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

The National Council of Young Israel presented a Regional Women's Leadership Seminar on Sunday, February 27, 2011, at the Young Israel of Oceanside, New York. Sisterhood leadership of Young Israel of Oceanside, Young Israel of North Woodmere, Young Israel of Hewlett, and Young Israel of Hillcrest participated in the interactive program that was led by Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, Director of Programming, National Council of Young Israel. Rebbetzin Steinig discussed the changing roles of sisterhoods throughout the Young Israel movement and provided many ideas for programming, fundraising, publicity, and strategies for Sisterhood and Synagogue growth. To bring this program to your community, call 212-929-1525 x112, or send an email to jsteinig@youngisrael.org.



Participating in the Regional Women's Leadership Seminar were: standing left to right: Shira Kessock, Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, Amy Goodstein, Shani Cohen, Leah Diamond (seated) left to right: Ellen Abberbock, Sharon Lindenauer, Leah Schanke, Sheila Feirstein, Tamara Haviv, Lorraine Grun, and Sondra Gottesman. (Not pictured but in attendance at the program were Natalie Hirschel, Esther Weinstein-Krown, and Rochelle Zabusky.)



Following the Women's Leadership Seminar, representatives of the participating Young Israels stayed to network with each other.

2 Why is Horseradish always either red or white?

a: *It doesn't have to!*



Tip!

Gold's Wasabi Sauce is the perfect complement to any Cuisine.

Spread some Gold's Wasabi Sauce inside a leaf of Boston Lettuce. Lay strips of gefilte fish, cucumber and/or scallions. Roll up and slice as you would Sushi for a creative snack or appetizer.

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■ **Prima Kings**, a Glatt Kosher landmark in the City center, offers majestic hospitality and regal design

■ **Prima Palace**, a Glatt and Agudah Kosher hotel, next to the Geula neighborhood with a Haredi atmosphere and dignified design

TEL AVIV

■ **Prima Tel Aviv**, superbly located across from the lovely sea promenade, reflects the spirit, culture and history of the White City

6TH ANNUAL WEST COAST WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

The 6th Annual West Coast Women's Programs were held recently, sponsored by the National Council of Young Israel and the Rabbinical Council of California at YI of Hancock Park. The first event, on February 13th was attended by Rebbetzins from many areas of Southern California.



L-R: Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, Rebbetzin Tziporah Block, & Rabbi Tzvi Block of YI of Valley Village, CA

Rebbetzin Bracha Goldberger from Kehillas Tiferes Yisroel, Faculty, Maalot Seminary, Baltimore, MD spoke on "A Happy Family Order": What do we want for our children? What do our children need from us? " Mrs. Chaya Sauer, LCSW, Associate Exec. Dir., Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, spoke on: "Rebbetzin as Mentor: Friend, Guide or Counselor?" The Rebbetzins were a diverse group of ages, experience, and hashkafos. On Sunday evening the women and girls of the greater community were invited to hear Rebbetzin Goldberger. Prior to Sunday's events, Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, program coordinator, was hosted for Shabbat by Mara D'asra Rabbi Zvi and Rebbetzin Tziporah Block of YI of Valley Village. On Shabbos afternoon, Rebbetzin Steinig gave a shiur for the women and girls of the community on candle lighting.



Rebbetzin Bracha Goldberger addresses the West Coast Rebbetzins' Conference



L-R: Rebbetzin Fruma Krause, YI of Hancock Park, Rebbetzin Jordana Topp, Beth Jacob Congregation, former Rebbetzin of Y Israel of Woodmere, Rebbetzin Bracha Rubanowitz, YI of Los Angeles, Rebbetzin Ellen Fischer, YI of Orange County, Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, NCYI, Rebbetzin Bracha Goldberger, Presenter, and Rebbetzin Michelle Klein, YI of Northridge.

Why does my
Passover Brisket
always taste the
same?

a:

It doesn't have to!



Tip!

For an enhanced, richer flavor rub prepared horseradish on the brisket and whisk some more into the meaty sauce for a little zest just before serving.

Visit:

www.goldshorseradish.com/new/2.html
for complete recipe and instructions

Gold's



Keviat Mezuah of new International Young Israel office in Jerusalem

Rabbi Emmanuel
Quint affixes the
mezuzah.



On Thursday January 20th, 2011 members and friends of IYIM ISRAEL Region celebrated the inauguration of the new office of IYIM - Israel Region on the 4th floor of the famed Heichal Shlomo building next door to the Jerusalem Great Synagogue. The intimate crowd was addressed by IYIM President Ceec Harrishburg, Rabbi Emmanuel Quint (IYIM-Board

Member) gave Divrei Torah and was honored with affixing the first mezuzah followed by Rabbi Pesach Lerner (Exec.-VP, NCYI) who affixed the second one. Daniel Meyer (Exec.-Director, IYIM Israel) added: "The expansion of

our offices reflect our increased activities. This is an exciting moment for the Movement and we invite you all to become our partners". We look forward to greeting you in our new offices on your next visit to Israel.

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IYIM – Individual Empowerment Project

IYIM - Israel in its ongoing efforts to provide services and programs to strengthen Israeli society on the individual and communal level, has launched an Empowerment Project. Taking advantage of our new offices in Jerusalem, we have selected a leading life coach to assist those individuals and parents that need help in strengthening relationships with others.

Jenny Sassoon is a licensed social worker and professional certified life coach for families and young adults. She provides one-on-one coaching programs and workshops to parents, young adults, and young couples. Jenny specializes in teaching simple, yet powerful, relationship building tools that help individuals strengthen their relationships, be it with their family members, peers, or fellow employees.

IYIM Leadership visits the fire devastated North

On Thursday December 16th, the leadership of IYIM – Israel travelled up North on an investigative trip to see the fire-ravaged areas of Northern Israel. The delegation led by Mr. Ceec & Mrs. Tema Harrishburg (President, IYIM) , Daniel M. Meyer (Exec.-Director, IYIM-Israel) and board members Harvey Schwartz, Joe & Rozanne Polansky, together with other “movers & shakers” had an eye opening experience. The head forest rangers of the KKL-JNF in the Northern regions gave firsthand accounts of fighting the fires, as well as explaining what will be the future of the trees and vegetation, in the burnt out forest. In addition, the delegation met with the Druze leadership and visited the Druze villages of Usafiya



R-L: Deputy Minister Abouye Kara with Daniel Meyer, (Exec. Dir. IYIM Israel)

and Dalit-al-Carmel on the edge of the fire scenes. The delegation was addressed by Deputy-Minister Ayoub Kara. The delegation left with a “behind the scenes” appreciation of this natural disaster and a commitment to make efforts to help with the rebuilding of the affected areas.



J.N.F. Northern fire fighting division



R-L: Mr. Harvey Schwartz (IYIM Board Member) with Deputy Minister Abouye Kara



L-R: Jan Fenster & Toby Willig amongst the burnt trees



Mr. Ceec Harrishburg (Pres., IYIM Israel) being interviewed by IBA news.

4 Can I find the Gold's Family of Kosher Products in a store near me?

a:
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Gold's Family of fine products wishes you e' your family a Happy e' Healthy Passover!



Annual Mishloach Manot Campaign



As the deadline for this magazine is reached, IYIM-Israel is putting the final touches on its annual Mishloach Manot campaign in close partnership with the American Friends of Yisrael Hatzair headed by Mr. Meir Mishkoff of Jamaica Estates, New York. This year we will have four nights of packing the Mishloach Manot by volunteers for the chayalim of the I.D.F. and then two days in which our members and friends will deliver just over 4,000 packages to bases throughout Yehuda and Shomron. These packages have been made available by kind donations from throughout the world. Of special note is Mr. Rubin Margules of Brooklyn, New York who has helped to spearhead the campaign. Donations were also made to fulfill the mitzvah of Matanot Le'Yevonim which will help to give food to the poor families of Sderot for their Purim Seudot. These funds will be disbursed via the Young Israel of Sderot's Mercaz Chesed that feeds over 500 families every Shabbat.

YI of Karmiel our newest branch in Israel

IYIM-Israel is proud to announce the establishment of its newest community in Israel, the Young Israel of Karmiel in the Galilee. This branch was the brainchild of Rabbi Ephraim Schwartz a new arrival from America. Rabbi Schwartz and his family moved to Karmiel a few months ago and immediately upon arrival set up the community that revolves around Shabbat services and the Rebbetzin's famous cholent that is served at the Kiddush. Week by week the number of attendees grow thanks to the warmth and dedication of the Schwartz family.



Young Israel of Karmiel is being used as the prototype of 4-5 Young Israel communities that IYIM-Israel hopes to develop in the North, which is a National priority area due to demographic problems. Kehillot will be established where there is a number of English speaking families and more are expected in the next 2-3 years. The Young Israel communities will be used to facilitate absorption of new immigrants, to build bridges between the new arrivals and veterans, serve as kiruv and chinuch centers and more. We invite you to take part in this crucial initiative: iyimisrael@gmail.com

The Yehudit Bobker Scarves and Hats for the I.D.F Project



With the onset of the "real" winter in Israel, IYIM-Israel was proud to be able to distribute scarves to the soldiers serving in the greater Gush Etzion area, South of Jerusalem. The scarves were hand knitted by Mrs. Yehudit Bobker of Sydney, Australia. If you think Sydney is far from Israel, what is more amazing is that Mrs. Bobker is 94 years old! Furthermore, this is her fourth donation of scarves to our brave soldiers, this after she knitted over 200 blankets for the residents of the Jewish old age homes in Sydney. The scarves were distributed by her grandson, Exec. Director of IYIM-Israel, Daniel Meyer. The soldiers were overcome with this great act of chesed by this incredible woman and how Jews living in the Diaspora communities care about them and appreciate them. If you would like to knit and send scarves/hats to the I.D.F., please contact us at: iyimisrael@gmail.org

Shabbat Chanukah in Young Israel of Sderot

On Shabbat of Chanukah, the leadership of IYIM-Israel was hosted by Young Israel of Sderot – Doresh Tov. The aim of the Shabbat was to allow the IYIM leadership to see Young Israel Sderot in action. YI Sderot is made up of young families who have moved into the city over the past eight years. The synagogue welcomes all those who live in the city, and this was in evidence by the range in age, clothing styles and head coverings of the overflowing numbers of participants in both Friday night and Shabbat morning prayers. Of great note were the Chanukah activities that YI Sderot organized for the wider community including: candle lighting, a games evening for the youth and a tefilat yeladim with the obligatory "sufgayniot" (donuts). A special siddur for children was produced for the Shabbat and will now be mass produced and available to other synagogues. The IYIM leadership were hosted for meals by David & Yael Sprangental and Yigal & Tova Bracha. The IYIM Leadership was able to interact with the "locals" and hear and see firsthand what the needs are for the development of this important branch. The next stage in the expansion of YI Sderot is to open a teen café for the youth of the city to help with delinquency issues that will be operated on a nightly basis.

Benefit Concert for Widows and Orphans of the Carmel Forest Fire



In the Heichal Shlomo Auditorium, Jerusalem on January 2nd 2011, IYIM-Israel in cooperation with the Council of Young Israel of Rabbis hosted a Benefit Concert for the families of the brave fireman, prison wardens and police forces who gave up their lives "al Kiddush HaShem" in the terrible blaze.

The concert was made possible by the kind contribution of Mr. & Mrs. Frank Storch of the Chesed Fund of Baltimore, MD, who kindly underwrote the costs of the evening and Mrs. Susan Taragin of the Young Israel Jerusalem office. Performing was the Ayelet Hashachar band of Baltimore who flew to Israel especially for the performance.

350 women, seminary students and children were in attendance to hear the band sing the entire repertoire of their original compositions. Their soulful music was well received by the appreciative crowd who danced throughout the performance.

The crowd was addressed by Mrs. Susan Taragin on behalf of Young Israel and Mrs. Nava Shoham, the Chair of the IDF and Security Services Widows and Orphans Organization to whom the funds were forwarded. Her moving words about the families of the victims brought many in the crowd to tears. Presentations of thanks were made to Mrs. Taragin and Mr. Daniel Meyer.

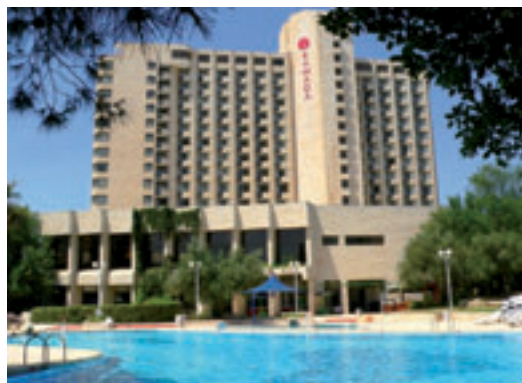
Due to the kind contribution of the Storch family all expenses were covered which has allowed 100% of funds received on the night to be channeled to the families' devastated by the fire.

BREAKING NEWS

RedeemaTorah.org

IYIM – Israel is proud to announce the launch of its newest website – www.RedeemaTorah.org, which is the website for the NCYI/IYIM Sefer Torah for the I.D.F. Project. This project which has been renamed in memory of long time Young Israel activist Ruby Davidman, and now is chaired by his grandson Mickey Cimmering, has seen 190 plus old or pasul Sifrei Torah brought from Diaspora communities (mainly North America), where they have been fixed through kind benefactors and donated to I.D.F bases throughout Israel. To find out how you can take part in this project, visit us at: www.iyimisrael.org

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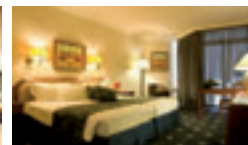
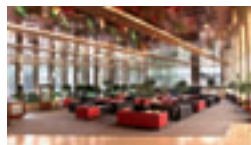
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IYIM SINGLES DIVISION

Member of Knesset Uri Orbach lauds IYIM Singles



MK Uri Orbach consults with Mrs. Micki Lavin-Pell (Director, IYIM Singles Division)

Director of Singles Programming for IYIM-Israel, Mrs. Micki Lavin-Pell was invited to the Knesset to meet with MK Uri Orbach of the Jewish Home party after he became aware of the dynamic and successful programs being run by the IYIM Singles division.

MK Uri Orbach has taken on the mission of working to help support singles get married. He is particularly focused on Orthodox singles, as there appears to be the greatest need in this group. At the moment, according to an article that appeared in Ha'aretz

in January 2011, there are 40,000 religious singles between the ages of 25-40 in Israel.

Orbach hopes to create a more supportive environment via the communities and shuls at large, to enable singles to have more opportunities to meet their partners as well as have community backing. He also hopes to create a network of professionals to provide a mentorship service on a more individual basis, to enable singles to better identify their needs and to provide a listening ear.

Paintballing

Advertised as, "Meet your significant other while causing them bodily harm," the IYIM-Israel Singles division led by Micki Lavin-Pell, went with a large group to achieve just that. On the 5th night of Chanukah these brave warriors headed out to the Caliber 3 range in the back of Gush Etzion. On arrival teams were decided upon, serious safety and other instruction were given ("no shooting to kill, only to be splattered"), protective gear was adjusted, guns were loaded and four very intensive battles took place. In the end all were victorious, because a fun time was had by all. At the conclusion of the war a festive meal was held in a big hangar where participants were able to mingle and socialize. Feedback has been only positive and a number of couples have begun to date.



Musical Evening

On November 20th, a beautiful Rehavia, Jerusalem residence was the venue for a wonderful concert, where over 40 singles were treated to the music of Bach, Chopin, Debussy and Rechter played exquisitely by pianist Rachel Verter. This informal gathering allowed participants to, not only enjoy the music, but to let "their hair down" and forget the stresses of everyday living. The Shalsholet facilitators were once again out in force to ensure that no one left without meeting most of the other participants.



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Trivia Night

On Motzei Shabbat Vayekel (02.26.11) IYIM-Israel, in close cooperation with Shalshelet, headed by Dr. Pessy Krausz, held a Trivia night for Singles in the Young Israel of Rehavia. This well attended event saw participants divided into small groups as they endeavored to answer the tricky and sticky questions. By the time supper was served at the end of the quizzes a jovial atmosphere had been created and a fun time was had by all.

Meet U for Dinner #2

Meet U 4 Dinner, a Friday night meal program that boasts 64 attendees (32 men and 32 women) between the ages 26-38 from around the country, was a huge success. Two-thirds of the attendees were Anglos, and a third were Israeli. Ten young families from the Katamon area in Yerushalayim hosted three men and three women for Shabbat meals. The meals were designed in such a way that people would meet like-minded people. The meal was followed by an Oneg Shabbat for all of the participants combined that took place at the Shir Chadesh shul.

Meet U 4 Dinner is structured as an invitation only event. This allows participants to go into the event feeling as though they are being personally catered to. Because it is often difficult for people to let loose and talk to new people, the oneg is structured so that people are gradually brought out of their comfort zone through interactive games and mingling. The games and mingling are done in a very gentle, non-threatening way, so that people feel comfortable opening up and sharing themselves with the other members of the group. This was followed by an enthralling shiur by the Rav of the shul, Ian Pear.

Many people told Micki Lavin-Pell, the event coordinator following the event that the true success of the program is being able to introduce them to new people. After the event thirteen individuals contacted Micki to request contact details for people that they were interested in getting to know better.

If you would like information about how to attend a future Meet U 4 Dinner, or if you are interested in knowing about any of the other Singles events (25-40 age range) we organize, feel free to contact Micki at: mgpell@gmail.com.

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Daniel (Danny) Ayalon (MK Beitenu) was born in Israel in 1955. He served as Foreign Policy Advisor to PM Ariel Sharon and as Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. (2002-06). Ayalon was elected to the 18th Knesset in 2009 and was appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Reenergizing Zionism

By Danny Ayalon

The moment G-d said to Abraham Lech-Lecha, Zionism was born. Almost 4,000 years later, the Jewish People as a nation have never known any other home. Through 2,000 years of exile, our people faced the land of Zion during every prayer, remembered its destruction at every wedding and hoped for its rebuilding at the end of every Pesach Seder and the Yom Kippur Neilah Service.

Over the years many have sought to attach appellations to the term Zionist, whether as a Religious Zionist, Labor Zionist, practical Zionist, or other such terms. However, what unites us is Zion, what divides us is minimal and superficial. Firstly, it is vital that we get our facts in order. The term "Jewish State" was not created in the year 2010. Since the inception of modern Zionism, which stood on the shoulders of thousands of years of historical and Biblical Zionism, the "Jewish state" has been the rallying call for the return to political sovereignty in our ancestral land. The term is recognition of a sovereignty stolen from the Jewish people 2,000 years ago, but remaining in our hearts wherever we sojourned.

The father of modern political Zionism, Theodor Herzl, was the first to coin the modern political phrase when he wrote *Der Judenstaat*, "The Jewish State," during 1896. Almost a decade earlier, Naphtali Herz Imber wrote the words to our national anthem, unashamedly reflecting the Jewish yearning for a national return to Zion.

In 1917, the Balfour Declaration was secured from Great Britain and endorsed by the League of Nations through the British mandate for Palestine. The mandate explicitly provided for Jewish national rights while safeguarding the civil and personal rights of non-Jews in Mandatory Palestine. In fact, the mandate was given to Britain for the specific purpose of facilitating Jewish immi-

gration, settlement, and the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people".

On November 29, 1947, the international community overwhelmingly recognized the need for the establishment of a Jewish state, when the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 181. Although the resolution was not binding and does not serve as the legal basis for the State of Israel, it demonstrates unequivocally that the idea of a Jewish State had the support of the majority of the international community.

Less than one year later, the Jewish state was realized as David Ben-Gurion read the immortal words of the Declaration of Independence, which contained the term "Jewish state" no less than five times. In fact, the name for the new nation was at one time to be called simply 'The Jewish State'. As a result, US President Harry Truman prepared a text recognizing the new state with the words "Jewish State", which were struck through in pen when he was informed that the new state would instead be called Israel.

Thus we see that the concept of the Jewish State was far older than the name of our state. As Professor Amnon Rubinstein recently and correctly observed, "It is not Israel that was to become a Jewish state, but a Jewish state that was to be called Israel."

This is also expressed in our Basic Laws which hold a quasi-constitutional basis. The Basic Law: Human Liberty and Dignity, passed by the Knesset in 1992, states as its purpose "to protect human dignity and liberty in order to establish in a basic law the values of the State of Israel as a

Jewish and democratic state.”

Thus, the term “Jewish State” has a firm constitutional status from the Declaration of Independence and is enshrined in our Basic Laws whose legal standing is superior to all other laws.

Today, regrettably, large sections of the Israeli public and Jewish Diaspora feel uncomfortable with the notion of a Jewish State or Zionism. Perhaps this is because they confuse the term with a solely religious or ideological connotation. There are also those who point to the current unrelenting delegitimization campaign against the State of Israel, and say that touting this term is merely adding fuel to the flames.

If we allow our enemies to dictate the definition of our national character then we are on a very slippery and dangerous slope towards national extinction. We should remain proud of our national character, as others are of theirs.

Many American politicians tout the idea of “American exceptionalism”, while in Japan, *Nihonjinron*, refers to the unique aspects of Japanese national and cultural identity. Yet in Israel and the Jewish World, we are frequently embarrassed of our uniqueness and wish to strip it of any defining features, to make our nation a “Hebrew-speaking republic” which leaves us little to be proud of.

Those of us who are proud to affirm their continued and enduring support for Zionist ideals have to pick up the gauntlet that has been thrown down. This is not an issue of Right or Left, it is an issue of those who proudly state that our full adherence to the principles enunciated by the Zionist fathers and mothers are still as relevant today as they were then, against those who feel that Zionism has concluded its role and our uniqueness is more a source of embarrassment than shame.

We need a movement to reclaim our base foundations, values and national character. This must begin with education. We must educate our children as to the meaning of being Jewish. To be Jewish is to be part of a great nation, civilization, culture and people. We are a people who had a language, borders, sovereignty and the rule of law before the vast majority of most states came into existence. I frequently tell visiting dignitaries who are similarly uncertain that Jews are to Israel as the Chinese are to China and the Greeks are to Greece.

Many on the international stage understand our position well. The U.S. administration’s national security strategy released last year reaffirms Israel’s national character. The strategy

cites the goal of “a Jewish state of Israel, with true security, acceptance and rights for all Israelis.”

It is precisely now, because of this unparalleled assault on our legitimacy, both from without and within, that we need the Jewish community and our friends not afraid to state objections to those who seek the relinquishment or dilution of our national purpose, ethos and uniqueness.

It is worrying that a new generation of Jews has become too comfortable and too complacent and accepts many of the distorted barbs aimed at our country. Before we challenge the ill-informed outside of our community, we must first reach out to our own.

We need to reengage with the young generation using the three R’s. Firstly, we need to **reach-out**. We need to engage with high school students before they reach universities and become overwhelmed or engulfed in the anti-Israel maelstrom that permeates certain campuses in the Diaspora.

We need to **report**, by teaching and educating our youth about the history of Israel. While the notions of freedom and democracy are for the first time gaining credence in parts of the Arab world, how many are aware of Israel’s historic challenges.

The Jewish State created one of the most robust and dynamic democracies anywhere in the world out of a nation of people that arrived from 130 countries, most escaping repression and autocracy.

Our challenge is to remove the fog of ignorance that surrounds our history and the conflict.

Finally, we must teach our youth how to **respond**. For every canard there is a response, for every assertion there is a fuller picture and for every lie there is a truth. The new generation of Jews, in Israel and the Diaspora, only knows the Israel of today and not the heavy challenges that were met to sustain this very presence. To maintain a relationship with Israel we need a longer-term program which presents the Israel of today in its proper context.

While many are creating new programs or strategies to reboot our *hasbara*, or public diplomacy, there remains absolutely no substitute for knowledge. It is our task to ensure that the Jewish future is equipped with all of the tools to meet the challenge of identifying openly and unashamedly with Zionism and the Jewish State. ▲

We need a movement to reclaim our base foundations, values and national character. This must begin with education. We must educate our children as to the meaning of being Jewish. To be Jewish is to be part of a great nation, civilization, culture and people.



Yoel (Yuli) Edelstein (MK Likud) was born in 1958, in Chernovitz, Ukraine. He is a former aliya activist, a Hebrew teacher in Moscow and a Prisoner of Zion (1984-87). He emigrated to Israel in 1987 and has held several positions in Zionist organizations.

He is a founding member of the Yisrael ba-Aliya party, and has been a member of Knesset since 1996.

He has served as Minister of Immigrant Absorption; Deputy Minister of Absorption; Deputy Speaker in the 16th and 17th Knesset, and in March 2009, he was appointed to his present position, Minister of Public Affairs and the Diaspora.

“Zionism, Say It With Pride

By Yuli Edelstein

Over 3,000 years ago, G-d promised the Jewish people the land of Israel in its entirety, a promise passed down from our forefathers, to Moses, Joshua and the twelve tribes who entered and settled the land following our exile in Egypt. 3,000 years later, we have seen the Jews of the world reestablish themselves in our promised land.

Israel was built up by immigrants and refugees – out of swamps, deserts, and malaria infested coastlines, the Jews of France, Russia, Morocco and Yemen created orange groves, vineyards, cities and factories. The generation who founded Israel fled from war zones, pogroms, discrimination, and hunger. They came to Israel because this land was to them a dream, it was a symbol, it held for them the promise of restoring their humanity and Jewish pride. They came to Israel as refugees, drifters, and hopeful immigrants, and they laid down foundations, highways, farms, universities, and hospitals – that 63 years later allow Israel to lead the world in agriculture, hi-tech, and medicine.

In times of peace and in times of war, Israel has given substance and meaning to the term “a light to the nations”. Israel is producing the world’s first affordable electric cars, and for two decades has led the free world in the fight against Islamic terrorism. At the same time, Israelis pioneer fields as diverse as human rights, bio-ethics and semi-conductors.

The State of Israel, poor in natural resources, lacking oil, coal, and drinking water, has succeeded because of her ability to harness and develop the human capital of her citizens. The citizens leading much of Israel’s hi-tech revolution today, founding companies and copyrighting patents for new technologies, are to a large

degree new immigrants, Olim, who came to Israel by choice, not by force or for lack of brighter opportunities elsewhere, but from developed countries around the world.

They came home to Israel to live out their lives as a part of their people. They came to build a life steeped in Jewish values, traditions, and culture.

I encourage each and every one of you to take a moment to reflect on the place of a Jew and the place of Israel in the modern world.

Following the horrors of WWII, being anti-Semitic is no longer politically correct, but acting against Israel, acting against the Jews of Israel, this has moved from acceptable, to fashionable. Israel’s legitimacy, the right of a Jew to live freely in our homeland is very much under attack. The word ציוני - Zionist, will fast become a curse word, unless we, the Jewish people, use it with pride and use it often.

We must let people know what Zionism is, and let people know we are proud Zionists. Zionism is the right of the Jews to live freely in their homeland, like any other nation on earth. Zionism is supporting the Jews of Israel, and ultimately, Zionism is gathering your belongings, and moving to the country of Zionists.

I encourage you to continue supporting Israel, supporting Zionism. I hope you will always be proud to be a Jew, and always think and act to protect and strengthen the Jewish people. ▲

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Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman is the head of the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora of the World Zionist Organization.

He holds a Masters degree in Education and a B.A. degree in Education and Criminology from Bar Ilan University. He studied six years at Yeshivat Hesder, Yeshivat Hakotel in Jerusalem, where he received his ordination.

He served with the Israel Defense Forces as a tank crew-member.

He served in a number of educational positions for twenty years: nine years as a Rabbi in B'nei Akiva Yeshiva high school Givat Shmuel, eight years as an educational supervisor and three years as an educational representative of the Jewish Agency on the West Coast of U.S.A.

He served ten years as a deputy mayor of the City of Givatayim.

Rabbi Wasserman has served as an active member on a number of educational committees. He has also written several booklets on the Oral Law and Judaic thought, and has published numerous articles over the years on a variety of topics in Israeli journals and academic periodicals.

Bless the State of Israel

Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman

The prayer for the State of Israel is recited in most synagogues every Shabbat, before Mussaf. This prayer begins with the following words: “Our Father in Heaven, Rock and Redeemer of the people Israel; Bless the State of Israel, with its promise of redemption”.

The fact that the State of Israel was established; that Jews have sovereignty in their own land after two thousand years in exile – a place where death camp and other Holocaust survivors could come to, a country that embraces all Jews, wherever they come from and at any time, is a promise of redemption. Other elements also prove this: Shabbat is the official day of rest in Israel for all intents and purposes; the IDF and other public institutions only serve kosher food; rabbinical courts have exclusive jurisdiction over matters of marriage and divorce, and on the practical level – Torah study is widespread like never before – song and prayer resound. And the list goes on.

True, we cannot yet sit back and relax. We cannot ignore the basic points of disagreement on Israel's exact nature. Quite a few voices speak in favor of a non-nation state rather than a Jewish one, whereas others would prefer Israel to be Democratic first and only then Jewish. These ideas have numerous consequences. The Israeli high street is far from being the ideal Jewish high street, and in many places Shabbat is not properly kept. But we must look to the lights rather than the shadows.

We all agree that during its 63 years, the State of Israel has faced many difficult challenges, successfully – absorbing the mass immigration in its early days, opening its

doors to the Ethiopian Jewry, embracing a million FSU Jews and welcoming olim from many other places over the years. Throughout its existence, Israel has provided all immigrants with proper basic housing, education and places of work. Israel has come a long way in every area: science, health and medical services, roads and transport, education and matters of religion as well – thousands of Torah schools catering to various denominations can be found across the country. It seems no country has ever done so much in so short a time, while constantly dealing with its own survival and security issues. The Arab states have not accepted its establishment and indeed its existence, and the State of Israel has been forced to war several times to protect its citizens and territory.

A religious Zionist Jew believes that the Torah is Divine, observes Mitzvot and relies on the written and oral Torah as authoritative texts dictating one's way of life. At the same time he believes that the establishment of the State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people is a stage in Shivat Zion – the return to Zion – as depicted in the Prophets' visions, hopes that Israel is the promise of our redemption and sees in it the Jews' spiritual center and preferred place of residence.

A religious Zionist Jew views himself as part of the religious Zionist society, which in turn perceives support of Jewish nationalism and the establishment of the State of Israel as a Torah-dictated duty. Religious Zionism has therefore actively sought to gain Jewish sov-

ereignty over Eretz Yisrael in the past, viewing Israel's establishment as part of the Shivat Zion process and hoping that it is a promise of redemption. Religious Zionism does not content itself with praying, but promotes strengthening of the State and conforming to its laws and institutions in every way. It has been involved in all matters of the State from the very beginning, and such involvement must be in full and active cooperation with other, non-observant parts of the Jewish people. Religious Zionism raises the banner of involvement and rejects all forms of separatism; it speaks in favor of tolerance and denounces violence and inconsideration, and it does so with a display of restraint, willingness to compromise and search for the common denominator that will bring together and unite all sectors of Jewish society.

Religious Zionism began with the command G-d gave Abraham thousands of years ago: "Go out of your country and depart from your kindred to a land that I will show you," and continued throughout the long history of the Jewish people, who had Eretz Yisrael on their lips and in their hearts wherever they were. It relies on the writings of great rabbis and spiritual leaders, and upon the Jews' return to their homeland – their roots and birthplace – they are undergoing a long process that is unfortunately also difficult and painful at times, and we are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance. Religious Zionism believes that Eretz Yisrael belongs to the Jewish people and ideally, we should live there according to Torah law. The matter of Israel's Jewish nature is therefore an essential part of religious Zionism's ideology.

The Zionist movement was set up against the backdrop of several historical processes that peaked in late 19th century Europe and amidst Jews, among which were increasing anti-Semitism; European national revival; the Jews' distress and assimilation, and a longing to find a national solution to the Jews' problem. Religious Zionism was an active member of the World Zionist Organization, mainly through the Mizrachi movement established in 1902 by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaacov Reines. Many observant Jews joined the Mizrach because they saw in it and in its actions a promise of redemption.

At the basis of the religious Zionist ideal lies the combination of religion and nationalism. Judaism has been defined throughout history as a collective identity, emphasizing religious faith first and foremost. The common principles of this identity are faith in G-d and his Torah, from which we derive the meaning of the Jewish

people's existence and their ties with the Land of Israel. This fact has kept Jews united from one generation to the next and has given the term Eretz Yisrael the meaning of 'the promised land'. This collective identity puts forward a solid, universal view whereby the Jewish people are the chosen ones, G-d is one and universal and the Torah has appointed Jews to be a light unto nations and the world's redemption.

In the history of the Jewish people there have been two exiles, and the establishment of the State of Israel is a symbol of the third return to Zion, to the land the Creator promised to Abraham in Brit bein Habtarim – the covenant of the pieces. It is not merely a question of territory intended to solve the Jews' problem while in exile by forming a national identity and immigrating en masse to a new geographical location – this is the return home with the purpose of implementing the universal vision of 'a light unto nations'; as Isaiah the Prophet said: "in the last days, the mountain of HaShem's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and all nations shall flow unto it".

As we approach Israel's 63rd anniversary we should reflect on the significance of being an independent, sovereign state for Jews. In Judaism we praise and give thanks to the Creator for a miracle performed for us by singing, and such an act is found in several places in the Bible. For instance, after the crossing of the Red Sea it says "then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song"; after Jabin, King of Canaan was defeated it says "then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam", and when King David was saved from his enemies the Bible tells us "and David spoke the words of this song on the day that He had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies".

There was once a king of Israel by the name of Hezekiah who did right by G-d, and whose righteousness, honesty and good ways are elaborated on greatly in Kings 2. The Talmud goes on to say that his name literally means "strengthened G-d" since he strengthened the ties between Israel and their heavenly Father. King Hezekiah did great things, of which the Mishna tells us, and the sages of his time were grateful to him for them. He lived through a time of sieges, hunger, enemy conquests and despair, but had also witnessed Divine miracles and deliverance. Yet he failed to sing.

King Hezekiah was a man of G-d, strengthened the Israelites' faith in G-d and lived to do great things, but because he witnessed great miracles and failed to sing G-d's praise for them,

In the history of the Jewish people there have been two exiles, and the establishment of the State of Israel is a symbol of the third return to Zion, to the land the Creator promised to Abraham in Brit bein Habtarim

As we approach Israel's 63rd anniversary we should reflect on the significance of being an independent, sovereign state for Jews.

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- Hezy Levi, Haifa region firefighter



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he lost the moment for himself and for generations to come. And on this topic the Talmud says “Hezekiah should have sung praise for the fall of Sennacherib, but he was too arrogant to sing praise”. One wonders why Hezekiah refrained from singing praise after witnessing all the miracles that HaShem had performed in his lifetime, and the Midrash gives one answer: “Hezekiah said ‘my Torah study makes up for songs of praise. What is the use of speaking of G-d’s miracles and brave acts? They are known to all from one end of the earth to the other”. The Talmud goes on to say that “G-d wished to make Hezekiah the Messiah and [the war with] Sennacherib, Armageddon, but Justice came and said to G-d: ‘Master of the Universe, You did not name King David, who sang several songs of praise before You, Messiah’”. Our Rabbis explained the purpose of such songs of praise and said “one must make the miracle known and speak before Him of all that He had done, because these words go up, and the Heavenly Host gather and see one singing, and thank G-d, and His honor grows both in heaven and on earth”.

During the 1948 Arab-Israeli war we endured sieges, hunger and turmoil but also witnessed great miracles – seven Arab armies besieged us, but G-d delivered us. The same Divine deliverance took place in the Six-Day war, the Yom Kippur war and throughout Israel’s existence. That is why we sing about the miracles and Israel’s revival during its Independence Day festivities.

And as we approach the State of Israel’s 63rd anniversary we should say a prayer to our Creator “Our Father in Heaven, Bless the State of Israel, and guide its leaders and advisors with Your light and Your truth, and help them with Your good counsel”, and end with the hope that G-d “bless the land with peace, and its inhabitants with lasting joy”. ▲

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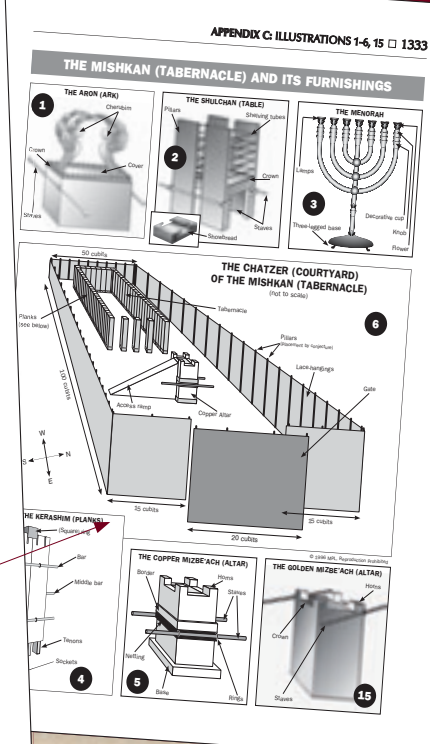
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LATER PROPHETS

ISAIAH 52:7-53:6

7 "How pleasant are the footsteps of the herald upon the mountains announcing peace, heralding good tidings, announcing salvation, saying unto Zion, "Your God has reigned!" 8 "The voice of your lookouts, they raise their voice, they sing glad song in unison; with their own eyes they will see that HASHEM returns to Zion. 9 "Burst out, sing glad song in unison, O ruins of Jerusalem, for HASHEM will have comforted His people; He will have redeemed Jerusalem. 10 "HASHEM has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; all ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God! 11 "Turn away! Turn away! Get out from there! It is defiled; do not touch it! Get out from inside it! Cleanse yourselves, O bearers of HASHEM's armor. 12 "You will not leave in chaos, nor will you go in flight; for HASHEM will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard. 13 "Behold, My servant* will succeed; he will be exalted and become high and exceedingly lofty. 14 "Just as multitudes were astonished over you, [saying,] "His appearance is too marred to be a man's, and his visage to be human," 15 so will the many nations exclaim about him,* and kings will shut their mouths [in amazement], for they will see that which had never been told to them, and will perceive things they had never heard. 16 "Who would believe what we have heard! For whom has the arm of HASHEM* been revealed? 17 Formerly he grew like a sapling or like a root from arid ground; he had neither form nor grandeur; we saw him, but without such visage that we could desire him.* 18 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 19 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 20 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 21 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 22 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 23 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 24 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 25 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 26 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 27 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 28 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 29 He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pains him.* 30 He was despised and isolated 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Perspectives on Zionism

Professor Yisrael Aumann

speaks with Viewpoint Editor, Esther Altmann

Professor Yisrael Aumann is an Israeli-American mathematician. He was born in Frankfurt am Main in 1930 into an affluent Orthodox home. In 1938 he fled together with his family and settled in New York in 1938. Aumann attended yeshiva elementary and high schools, and received bachelor's degree from the City College of New York in 1950, and a Ph.D. in mathematics from MIT in 1955. He joined the mathematics department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1956, and has been there ever since. In 1990, he was among the founders of the Center for Rationality at the Hebrew University, an interdisciplinary research center, centered on Game Theory, with members from over a dozen different departments, including Business, Economics, Psychology, Computer Science, Law, Mathematics, Ecology, Philosophy, and others.

Aumann is the author of over ninety scientific papers and six books. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Sciences (USA), the British Academy, and the Israel Academy of Sciences; holds honorary doctorates from the Universities of Chicago, Bonn, Louvain, City University of New York, and Bar Ilan University; and has received numerous prizes, including the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for 2005. Prof. Aumann is a member of Professors for a Strong Israel and is a professor at the Center for the Study of Rationality in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel. He is a member of the prize committee for the Moskowitz Prize for Zionism.

Webs ite:
www.ma.huji.ac.il/raumann

How would you define "Zionism"?

The term "Zionism" means a love of Israel, of the land of Israel and also of a political entity called Israel. There is a tremendous amount of Zionism in all of our sources, beginning with the first Rashi on the Torah. This is an amazing Rashi, for when you think of it, we shouldn't have begun the Torah with the creation of the world, since all of that is ultimately unimportant. What is important are the mitzvot. The first mitzvah in the Torah is "hachodesh hazeh lechem..."

So, why do we start with B'reshit? The whole reason for starting with the story of creation is only in order that Am Yisrael should possess the land of Israel. If it weren't for the giving of the Land of Israel to the people of Israel, you wouldn't need the whole Torah! And not only Rashi, but the whole Talmud is full of Zionism; it is central in our sources. Nowadays, there is also a connection to the state of Israel. What is called for is not only an abstract love, but it is also necessary to be actively involved, and that means living in Israel and visiting Israel.

How do you see the state of Zionism today?

It's in bad shape. And the greatest cause is in Israel itself. People have forgotten what they're doing here. Sadly, there are many people – certainly not all -- but those who are very active in media, politics, academia - the opinion makers – the "elite," who have forgotten what they are doing in Israel. They want simply to live in Israel (itself, not an easy or trivial task, a constant challenge) as if it were any other place. They've forgotten the land. For Israel, you must either love it or lose it. There is no place in this situation for a person to say, "I'm not going to make any further concessions." If you don't love it, then why not do as Helen Thomas says and move to Europe or the U.S.? If you don't love it, why do you need all this trouble and anguish?

The term "post Zionism" is used to describe our time. Do you agree that we are living in a "post-Zionist" era?

Yes, to a large extent, I would say, that is accurate. Many people are still Zionists; especially the "kipot srugot" ["knitted yarmulkas] who are by no means post-Zionists. Even among the non-religious there are many Zionists. Among the chareidim it's different, since most of them really never got into political Zionism. They possess a love of Eretz Israel, but never identified with the political side of things. The identification of the land of Israel with the state of Israel – this idea doesn't apply to them. There are many post-Zionists among opinion-makers: the media and the higher echelons of the society.

Does the survival of Israel require that we have a Jewish political state ?

We are beset by dangers – dangers unlike any other country. These dangers are also internal – even, mainly internal. If we abandon Zionism, we are simply co-

lonialists – people who came from the United States and Europe and settled Palestine. Without Zionism, we are no more than “settlers,” just like the settlers that are so much derided, not only by outsiders, but also by our own people. In this light, Tel Aviv is also a “settlement”. What about Gush Etzion? If Israel is not a legitimate enterprise, we have no right to any of it. Our claim to Gush Etzion is the same as our claim to Tel Aviv. Not only was Israel Jewish 2,000 years ago, but even 100 years ago there was a Jewish majority in the city of Jerusalem, including all the sections of the city. There were more Jews in Jerusalem than all the other peoples combined. Remember, when Jews were expelled from Kfar Darom during the disengagement in 2005, that was the second time Jews were expelled - the first time was in '48 when the Arabs expelled them. The “1967 borders” is a ridiculous concept. 1967 has no particular significance at all - it is an arbitrary date that has acquired artificial significance. If we do not have Zionism, we have no right to the state, and we will lose it. We cannot ignore the possibility that we will either all get killed or Israel will turn into another Middle East Arab entity.

What has happened to the Israeli ethos? What changed? What is missing in Israel society?

What is missing is a “pulling together.” When I came to Israel in 1956, everybody was pulling together as far as the state enterprise is concerned. At that time, all segments of the society – both the religious and the non-religious segments – everybody was a patriot. Now, it is very different; the Israelis themselves are challenging the legitimacy of the state. We are doing it. Why? What happened was that the early ruling elite – the kibbutzim, the Mapai - most were people who came from Europe and founded the Zionist entity and the state of Israel. Even though they were mainly not religious, they were imbued with Jewish values. Of course, many of the Jews in Europe were not imbued with these traditional values, and they did not come.

Those who came and founded the Jewish state were a self-selected group - Ben Gurion, Ussishkin, etc. “I’m Jewish,” they thought, “and I want to have a Jewish state,” and they came. Others became Bolsheviks, socialists, they went elsewhere. The group that came and stayed didn’t have Torah, but they had Jewish values; they knew about Torah. They grew up with this. But then what happened? If you’re not religiously observant, then what you are pass-

ing down to your children is a very weakened product. Since the children of the original Zionist pioneers didn’t have the fundamental Jewish values, since they didn’t get a Torah education, they didn’t have the foundation, and of course, they were not self-selected, they were born in Israel. The result is that they literally didn’t and don’t know what they were and are doing here. These descendants of our founders have taken over leadership positions and the reins of the state, in government, in the media, and in the universities. They mistakenly believe that by shouting out peace, peace, they will have peace. I recall that President Barack Obama, in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, made this remark, which I thought was quite good: “The belief that peace is desirable is really not enough to achieve it.” These Israelis are not interested in the land of Israel for its own sake, and without that, you will not be able to hold on to it. People who are born into it and don’t choose it and do not have the love and commitment, they will lose it. The Russian immigrants, the Americans who come here – they choose to come here, and there is a high degree of patriotism and Zionism among these new citizens.

What should the organized Jewish community do to promote Zionism?

In Israel we have our hands full. Many here are opposed to Zionism. It’s our biggest problem – we are the biggest problem, as the famous line in Pogo said, “We have met the enemy and he is us.” For those Jews outside of Israel, there are many Israel-related programs. But, to a large extent there is a drop in interest in Israel in the religious community and there is a need to change these programs in order to spark the interest of our youth. It’s true that to the outside world Israel seems to be a relatively peaceful place, in spite of all our problems. From the inside, too, it seems like a place that is stable. But that doesn’t reflect the whole truth; in actuality, Israel is a place with many real challenges and needs.

Youth respond to a real challenge – the idea of danger and commitment. I think that by stressing the challenge aspect, there would be a better chance of attracting the young people, since by definition, youth need a challenge in order to get a sense of accomplishment. Water rafting, caving in Guatemala – these activities give them a challenge – and maybe challenge is what’s needed. The early Zionists came to Israel in order to meet the big challenge. There was something to accomplish and to do. Perhaps

The whole reason for starting with the story of creation is only in order that Am Yisrael should possess the land of Israel. If it weren’t for the giving of the Land of Israel to the people of Israel, you wouldn’t need the whole Torah!

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some youth have developed a "syndrome" – they come to Israel for the chagim, for weddings and other simchas, and it has become like going to Florida to visit your aunt – boring. It is for the Israel programs to offer these young people experiences in Israel that will challenge them and give them opportunities to achieve something that will provide them with a sense of accomplishment.

The post-Zionist agenda is big problem. Why live in Efrat rather than Hadera? A Zionist explains that, "I want to live in the land of Israel - Hevron, Shechem, because these places are meaningful to me, they are not just a place to live. This is a tremendous debate in Israel. We are trying to overcome this attitude. It's something that requires education. One new undertaking is the Jewish Statesmanship College, a program established to train leaders, to imbue young people with the Zionist idea. People have to learn these ideas from their youth. If you don't love it, you can't be forced to love it. Love is an emotion which you can't force – you need an educational effort.

Visiting Israel is very important and real activities – archeological digs, excursions which require some effort are very important – not just touring in buses. Young people like to accomplish something.

Can you comment on the international delegitimization campaign against Israel?

The delegitimization campaign starts in Israel. We ourselves began it with the delegitimization of settlements, which were defined as everything beyond '67, and with this, we automatically delegitimized the whole of the Israeli state. It starts with us. We should say, this is our land; we have lived here not only for thousands of years, but also for [the last] hundreds of years. When we use the word "Palestinian" to denote only Arabs, we are delegitimizing ourselves. If they are the native Palestinians, we by default, categorize ourselves as colonialists – settlers. The natives, the Palestinians are the Arabs and this is Palestine, ergo, you are not a native; you don't belong here. Even if the implication is not there in conscious awareness, make no mistake, it trickles into the consciousness and makes a strong impression. Once, I was in the faculty room and a colleague asked me, 'Do you ever speak to any Palestinians?' I replied, 'All the time - I'm married to a Palestinian!' My wife is a native of Palestine and therefore, a Palestinian!

When we have to evacuate the "settle-

ments," when we do this, we delegitimize Israel. In reality, there is no better reason we should be in Tel Aviv than in Yehuda and Shomron. If we talk about the '67 borders as if the world began there, we are delegitimizing Israel. We have to stop first. This is our land.

How important is Zionism within our lives as Torah Jews?

The first Rashi answers the question – the only reason the Torah starts with Bereishit is Zionism. Three times a day, we ask HaShem to return to Yerushalayim: L'Yerushalayim ircha, b'rachamim tashuv (Return in mercy to Jerusalem, Your city), but we have to help HaShem stay here. He needs us. He can't do this job with everybody else saying we should give away Yerushalayim. We recite words, but perhaps, many of us don't mean what we say. Zionism and the land of Israel have always been central for Torah Jews. We need the state in order to live. Even chareidim, who have no commitment to the state, as such, see they are better off with a Jewish government than a non-Jewish government.

Should we teach Zionism in our day schools?

Zionism is not a subject which has to be taught, though what perhaps needs to be taught is the concept of Eretz Yisrael, Talmud, Torah, Yehuda HaLevi, things that have to do with the love of Israel. Maybe teaching Israel studies and the history of modern Israel is what needs to be taught, for this curriculum is missing in Israeli schools, and when it is taught, it is taught in a post-Zionist manner, such as teaching that the Six Day War was provoked by Israel. We should try to give some idea of the attitude found in our foundational sources, from Chazal, to Medinat Yisrael and to teach some modern Israeli history, but in a truthful, not ideologically corrupted way.

How can parents instill Zionism in their children?

There is nothing like example. If you are constantly talking about Israel, if you give a dvar Torah about the love of Israel, if you subscribe to a publication from Israel or about Israel, have Israeli objects around your house, teach your kids Hebrew – all of these actions speak loudly, and show your children what's important to you. That is the most effective and profound pedagogical method. ▲

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HaShomer HaChadash

The New Israeli Guardians



Yoel Zilberman, 26, is the son of a third-generation cattle breeder in Israel's lower Galilee region. Yoel saw his father brought to the brink of bankruptcy by marauders who destroyed his fences, stole and slaughtered his livestock, set his barns on fire and physically threatened him. He, like other farmers and ranchers in the north and south, who administer vast tracks of state-owned land, could no longer protect his land from the Bedouin and Israeli-Arabs who tried to illegally seize it.

By Lisa Samin

Zilberman, who was on active duty in an Israel Defense Force (IDF) elite commando unit at the time, decided to act. "When my father told us that he was ready to give up 650 acres I said, no way. I couldn't just stand by and watch everything my family worked for generations be destroyed," said Yoel. "I asked my commanding officer for a special leave of absence to help my family."

Zilberman, a decisive, no-nonsense young man, settled in a modified shipping container overlooking his father's property, and for two years he kept watch day and night over the land and the herd. He was joined by friends, and by other rancher's sons and daughters, who were dealing with similar situations.

At the same time, On Rifman, a young man with deep family roots in the Negev, was facing the same problem. And like Zilberman, Rifman was joined by friends, sons and daughters of other ranchers and supporters who helped him to keep watch and protect the land.

A chance meeting between Zilberman and Rifman gave rise to the founding of the New Israeli Guardians, named after the original Guardsmen who protected remote Jewish settlements 100 years ago.

"We saw that when we were present on the land and the land-thieves saw that we were there, they were less inclined to cause damage," says Yoel. "We decided that given the inactivity of the officials responsible for this, it was time to take strong civic action."

Even Israel's Comptroller wrote in 2009 that the situation was getting out of hand. In a Jerusalem Post article, reporter Carolyn Glick wrote, "By the end of 2007 there were more than 100,000 illegally built structures in Israel. The overwhelming majority were constructed



Putting up fences



What started out as a volunteer organization to protect the land, has expanded to include programs that are reconnecting young Israelis to the Zionist values on which the State of Israel was founded, and instilling a sense of pride and ownership among Jewish young people.

Patrolling on horses

on state land seized by Arab land thieves in the Negev and the Galilee. By the end of 2009, the number of illegal buildings grew to an estimated 150,000. The scope of the theft is so vast that the Comptroller's Report referred to it as a 'national scourge'."

The New Israeli Guardians was officially established in 2007 as an apolitical, non-profit organization, and witnessed a meteoric rise. What started out as a volunteer organization to protect the land, has expanded to include programs that are reconnecting young Israelis to the Zionist values on which the State of Israel was founded, and instilling a sense of pride and ownership among Jewish young people.

"Today's generation is growing strawberries on Facebook and disenfranchised from the values of the Jewish state," says Zilberman quietly but strongly. "We need to return to our connection to the land, to work to protect our country, to feel a sense of mutual responsibility and commitment to one another. These values are erod-

ing and we want to bring them back."

In fact, one of the organization's mottos is *Shomer Achi* – my brother's keeper, a play on the famous passage in the Bible, when Cain turns to G-d and asks, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Since its inception, the number of volunteers has grown from 40 to over 1200 today. The volunteers consist of the Guardsmen, who undergo intensive training and then patrol the lands from outposts set up by the New Israeli Guardians. These volunteers give anywhere from six to 20 days a year to the organization. "Our guardsmen are men and women over the age of 21, who have completed their army service, and want to do something for their country. When you give people something meaningful to do, they respond," says Zilberman.

The guardsmen are law-abiding citizens and work in conjunction with the local authorities. They are trained in self-defense methods, but do not carry weapons, and immediately contact the police when there is a problem. "At first, the

Since its inception, the number of volunteers has grown from 40 to over 1200 today. The volunteers consist of the Guardsmen, who undergo intensive training and then patrol the lands from outposts set up by the New Israeli Guardians.

The Guardians started a Young Leadership Program to train a new cadre of young leaders who care about the land of Israel and are committed to the values of Zionism, connection to the land, volunteerism and activism. The 14-month pre-army, work-study program includes intensive field training, theoretical studies, values education and actual manning of observation posts and patrols.

“The minute the Arabs saw that we had people all the time patrolling the land, they started to back off. But I was almost at the breaking point.”

police didn't respond to us,” explains Zilberman. “But now, as the problem is spiraling out of control, and they see that we are not going away, we are working in cooperation.”

The organization currently has 11 outposts, seven in the Galilee and four in the Negev. “With additional funding, we will expand the number of outposts,” says Zilberman. Each outpost guards between 5,000 – 20,000 acres of land, but there is need for many more.

The other group of volunteers is those who help the farmers and ranchers to rebuild terraces, to define borders and keep the cows from roaming off the property, mend fences and repair the damage caused by the marauders. Many of these volunteers are high school and pre-army young men and women and groups from Jewish communities who want to help in any way they can.

In September of 2010, the Guardians started a Young Leadership Program to train a new cadre of young leaders who care about the land of Israel and are committed to the values of Zionism, connection to the land, volunteerism and activism. The 14-month pre-army, work-study program includes intensive field training, theoretical studies, values education and actual manning of observation posts and patrols. Twenty –seven participants were carefully chosen from over 250 applicants.

Yaakov Edri, 19, from Atlanta, Georgia was born in Israel, went to the US with his mother at age six and then returned to Israel by himself at the age of 15 to complete high school. He could have gone straight to the army upon graduation, or to a mechina, or Yeshiva. He decided on the Guardians.

“Everyone needs to choose their way to help the country,” says Edri. “This program is so real and so close to the Zionist values that I grew up with. I feel that I am defining who I am and the path I want to take, and then I'll be able to do more for my country.”

Raz Radan, from Moshav Timrat in the north, feels that he is a different person. “I am a secular Israeli, but I learned a lot about my own religion and I have more respect for it now and more openness to religious people. I feel so much more connected to my country, to my land.” He pauses for a moment and adds, “When I go home and get together with my high school friends, I see just how much I've grown.”

The participants have a rigorous schedule, which they feel pushes them to go beyond their limits and become stronger, physically and mentally. They rise at 5:30 am and work the

land until 12:30 pm. They build, mend, weld and herd sheep and cows. In the afternoon they take classes in Zionism, textual study, self-defense, Islamic culture, Jewish history and Arabic. In the evenings they take shifts patrolling.

“We believe that in order to build real understanding we need to know our neighbors,” says Yoel, who is an Islamic Studies major at the Open University. “We don't pay lip service to this. Every Young Leader needs to learn Arabic and Arab culture. Only in this way will we be able to live together.”

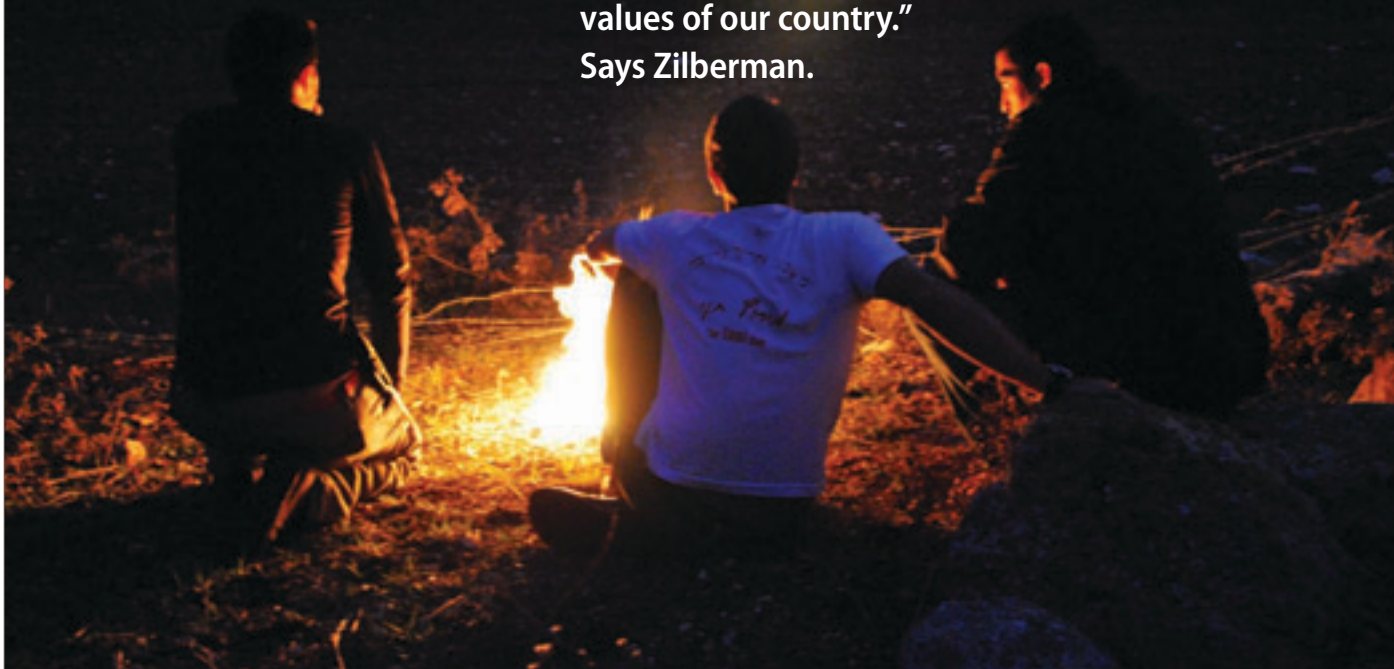
Ayelet Gordon, 44, a dynamic rancher from Kibbutz Ramat Yohanan, in close proximity to the Guardian's outpost near Zippori, feels that the organization has been a godsend. “We were on the verge of collapsing,” says Gordon. “The stealing of our herd and destruction of our fences was just wearing us down. I felt like I was a policewoman instead of a rancher.”

Gordon reached out to Zilberman through the internet, explaining the desperate situation she was in. With the help of the Guardian's Gordon says that the Kibbutz ranch is once again flourishing. “The minute the Arabs saw that we



On and Yoel

**“There is so much to be done... We have to reclaim our right to our land and take pride in protecting the Zionist values of our country.”
Says Zilberman.**



Campfire at night

had people all the time patrolling the land, they started to back off. But I was almost at the breaking point.”

Gordon’s 18-year-old son, who previously took no interest in his mother’s work, was so impressed by the Guardians that he applied for next year’s Young Leadership Program.

“When he did the three-day physical training in the field that is necessary to be accepted to the program he told me that it was the biggest challenge of his life,” explains Gordon, “but it was also the most satisfying. Away from the television and the computer, he had to rely on his own strength, intelligence and sheer determination.”

The impact of the Guardians was clearly seen during the recent Carmel fire. Within hours of the outbreak, the Guardians sent out a text message and 500 volunteers from all over the country immediately mobilized. “It was incredible,” says Zilberman. Two of the Guardsmen on patrol actually caught and prevented additional arsonists from adding to the raging flame.

The Guardians operate on a shoestring budget, with most of the funds coming from donors in Israel and North America. And now, almost four years after its inception, the Israeli Govern-

ment has passed a decision to provide three-year funding for the Guardians to expand its volunteer program.

“We have 265 people waiting to be trained as Guardsmen in the Galilee,” says Zilberman, “but we don’t have the manpower to set up additional outposts and oversee the volunteers. This funding will give us the opportunity to do this.”

In fact, in the past year, the Guardian’s professional staff has gone from four full-time workers to 12, and Zilberman says that another five positions will be added by August.

“There are incredible logistics involved in running the organization,” explains Zilberman. “Every outpost has a supervisor, most of who have been in elite army units. The Young Leadership program needs both supervisors and educators, in addition to the living expenses for each participant.”

“There is so much to be done, and we are seeing the impact of our work,” says Zilberman. “Service to the country doesn’t stop after the army. It is just the beginning. We have to reclaim our right to our land and take pride in protecting the Zionist values of our country.” ▲

For more information, see their web site: www.shomer-israel.org

You may contribute by making your check to: The Israel Independence Fund c/o NGN Capital 369 Lexington Avenue, 17th Floor New York, NY 10017. Please make sure to include in the memo: Donation for Hashomer Hachadash. The Israel Independence Fund is an IRS recognized 501 (c) 3, US Tax Identification Number is: 20-8676286

You can hear Yoel Zilberman’s inspiring speech at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGfc2oRYxA&feature=email>

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Trees

It was 1971, I was a cartoonist for a well-known magazine. I was married, and lived in Upper Manhattan. I had grown up in a “normal” Jewish family in Brooklyn. (not religious, not anti-religious, not involved with any “movement” or “ideology” other than the Democratic Party). In 1968 I had campaigned and been elected to be a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. I was a typical, politically active, upper-west side, contented Jew, who “fit in” . . . and yet 3 years later, in 1971, I moved “home”. I dragged a wife and three children with me, to “return” to the land of Israel, a place that we had never even visited.

I wanted to do something bigger than commenting on the news of the day! I wanted to tell the “big” story. I would write a book to present an “objective” view of the Zionist idea.

In 1973, two years after arriving in Israel, I began drawing a political comic strip for the Jerusalem Post. I called it Dry Bones. It became an overnight success and was soon being quoted by major international media as revealing what the Israeli “man in the street” was thinking. The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, International Herald Tribune, Forbes Magazine, and CBS news all did major stories on the Dry Bones phenomenon. Soon the cartoon was being syndicated internationally.

In 2005, after 32 years of non-stop newspaper publication, the digital world beckoned and so I started the Dry Bones Blog. Every day I post a Dry Bones cartoon along with a column of explanation/commentary. Dry Bones cartoons became quite popular in the digital world of the Internet. A Facebook Fan Page followed, as did a “Dry Bones app”, and Dry Bones at Twitter. Today my comments, cartoons, and explanations are emailed, shared, reprinted, reposted, face-booked, tweeted, and syndicated internationally.

But in the forty years that have passed, only once did I ever try to explain the vision and passion that had gripped my imagination and had totally changed the path of my life.

Only once did I ever try to explain Zionism.

It was back in the Nineties.

I’d been drawing Dry Bones for twenty years. But this would be a book-length cartoon . . . a graphic novel. It would attempt to present an “objective” view of the current miraculous

ingathering of the people of Israel to the land of Israel.

I had titled my political comic strip “Dry Bones” because of my fascination with the 2600 year-old prophecy of the ingathering as described in the “vision of the dry bones” by the Prophet Ezekiel. But now I wanted to do something bigger than commenting on the news of the day! I wanted to tell the “big” story. I would write a book to present an “objective” view of the Zionist idea. This required an objective storyteller. My first task as a cartoonist/writer was, therefore to invent the character of the narrator. Maybe Theodore Herzl? The Prophet Ezekiel? Maybe a totally objective narrator would have to be non-Jewish . . . perhaps non-human? . . . a little space alien in a diminutive flying saucer? . . . a time traveler from the future? I mulled over the problem with a sketch pad on my lap, as I sat on a bench on Emek Refaim Street, early one blindingly sunny morning in Jerusalem.

Space aliens? . . . Time travelers? . . . Maybe some kind of animal? Across the street a thick-trunked venerable old tree stood in the front garden of an old Jerusalem stone building, looking as if it had been there forever. I began to mindlessly sketch the tree. My eyes followed the curve of its limbs and the twists of its branches while the pen in my hand mirrored on the paper what I was seeing. I became lost in capturing the roughness of its bark. Buses began to clog the road in what had become the morning rush hour. I sat on the bench, each passing bus taking turns hiding the tree’s trunk as they rolled by. Suddenly, shouting laughing noisy

The creatures that could objectively tell the story of the Children of Israel and the Land of Israel were the Trees of Israel! What would they say about the Bible, our history, our miraculous ingathering, and our (and their) future hopes on this planet that we share? They were all around me.

school kids were everywhere, a bell rang and they disappeared! My bench was in front of a school. The traffic had thinned now. I continued the sketch of the tree that stood in the Jerusalem courtyard across the street. Now a parade of young mothers chatting as they pushed baby carriages along the pavement. Soon the screaming school kids reappeared. Recess?! I was exasperated at the disturbing movement and noise that kept interfering with my concentration on and communion with the tree. I fumed to myself "Don't these creatures have any roots?!!" I stopped. I realized that for an instant I had seen our species through their eyes. The eyes of the trees. Their roots grew into the soil, we were the rootless ones. We ran from place to place, like dry leaves in the wind. Our species judged progress by how much land we had "cleared" of trees. We, the rootless ones had carved up the planet, we poured asphalt on the earth to make roads so that we could speed further and faster in our vehicles than we could ever move on our feet

I understood.

The creatures that could objectively tell the story of the Children of Israel and the Land of Israel were the Trees of Israel! What would they say about the Bible, our history, our miraculous ingathering, and our (and their) future hopes on this planet that we share? They were all around me. Some stood in a line at the edge of the schoolyard. I could see some ancient pines watching from a park down the road. And, of course, the venerable old tree that stood, looking at me from across the street.

The narrators of my book about Zionism would be ...the Trees!

But if the Trees could speak, what would they say?

As the months went by my pen often flew as if I were taking dictation. At other times there seemed to be nothing to say. During this time I moved from mountain-top Jerusalem down to sea shore Tel Aviv and discovered the trees that stood in rows on Rothschild Boulevard and the slender Palms that grew near the sea. At last the work was completed. It was a 192 page cartoon. A graphic novel called "Trees ...the Green Testament". It had in it everything I knew and felt about this land, our relationship to it, and the meaning of our return to it. All as seen through the eyes of the trees.

I decided to have a few people read the manuscript before we went to press. And that's when things began to get strange. An ultra-Orthodox friend sat at a café with me on Yoel Solomon Street in Jerusalem and solemnly declared that I had not written the book. That it had, in fact, been authored by the "Gilgul" of some long-dead "Tzadik". A Lutheran minister who met with me after reading the manuscript greeted me with "Praise the Lord". With tears running down his face he declared that the book was a book of prophecy.

The book was published in 1993 and sold out its complete first printing of 40 thousand. Soon major newspapers and Jewish journals let out the secret that an Israeli cartoonist had written or "channeled" a book of prophecy.

But what it was, was a book about that vision that had seized me long ago and brought me "home" to a place I'd never seen. It was simply a book about Zionism.

There's never been a second printing.

But I've decided to freely share the book with all. So I scanned it and put it online. To download your free copy of trees just go to:

www.drybones.com/trees



Advertorial

Kosherica, the leader in glatt kosher cruises and Passover vacations, is proud to announce its all-star line up of cruises for 2011. **Kosherica**, well-known for its exciting destinations, fine glatt kosher gourmet cuisine, five star ships and exciting programming, will be hosting some truly wonderful cruise adventures beginning with its July 3, 2011 "Enrich Your Relationships" Alaska cruise.

For a fun, relaxed Alaska experience, **Kosherica** vacationers can choose a Jewish Comedy Cruise, featuring Yisroel Campbell, from the hit Broadway show, "Circumcise Me".

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features world-renowned Cantor Yaakov Motzen; Portugal Belgium and Spain; the Greek isles; Spain, Monaco and Italy; and three tours to the Baltics and Russia and the Norwegian Fjords, featuring Cantor Chaim Adler, Chief Cantor in the Tel Aviv Great Synagogue. A new addition to Kosherica's offerings are the exclusive Australia/Great Barrier Reef cruise and an Asian cruise both departing this winter.

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HAIM GUTIN
CONSUL
TOURISM COMMISSIONER
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Dear Friends,

There are few journeys any of us can make that take on the persona of a mitzvah, but visiting our homeland is certainly chief among them. For 3,000 years, Jews have been hiking, sailing, riding on horseback or in creaking carriages and, in our era, flying to Eretz Israel, and each visit has always encompassed countless emotions and spiritual awakenings. It is no less true today as it was ten, twenty, thirty centuries ago.

I am deeply gratified that tourism to Israel is at an all-time high. In 2010, more visitors came to Israel than in any year since Medinat Israel was founded in 1948, and the outlook for 2011 is very encouraging. We know that much of that achievement comes as a result of the devotion to Israel by the Orthodox Jewish community in the United States. Every Israeli appreciates your support, and every Israeli is grateful for your investment in our homeland, in our tourism infrastructure, and in our future.

We know that many American Jews consider Israel their second home and their spiritual home. It is a privilege for us in Israel to be your hosts when you come home to us. In the words of our current advertising campaign: "There's a little bit of Israel in all of us; come find the Israel in you."

Shalom,

Haim Gutin

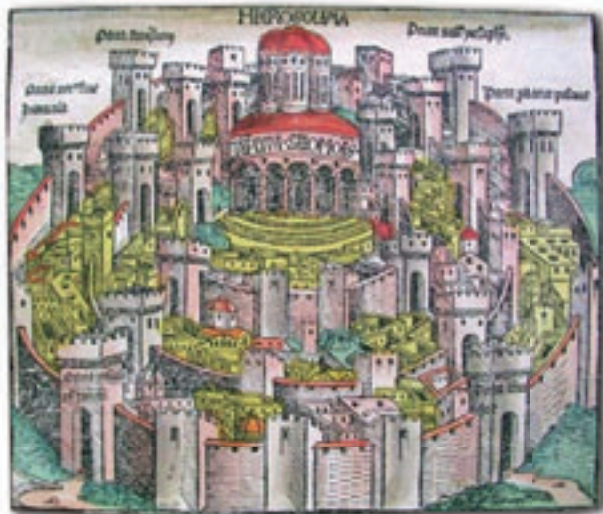
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A HISTORY OF TRAVEL TO ISRAEL

Reflections on a 3,000 Year-Old Saga

Gershon Simon





No country on earth has for so long been so intimately involved with traveling – or, as its successor is known today, tourism – as Eretz Israel. The choice of Mt. Moriah as the site of the Beit HaMikdash – The Holy Temple was not arbitrary: it was atop the very same mountain that Abraham had prepared to sacrifice Isaac, and had received G-d’s covenant that this land was “promised Abraham and his seed forever.”

With the giving of the Torah, Jews were mandated to “ascend” three-times a year on the “Aliya l’regel,” first to Shilo and later, to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot, bringing with them the various sacrificial offerings of new agricultural produce and animals. These annual events established and enshrined the practice of regular pilgrimage within Jewish tradition. It is estimated that 25 centuries ago, it was not uncommon for as many as a million Jewish pilgrims to go up to Jerusalem three times a year with giant tent cities erected to the city’s north and west to accommodate the “olim.” The observance of these three Shloshat Haregalim – or the three “foot” festivals, in reference to the physical walking required to reach the Temple in Jerusalem – added an interesting bit of Jewish lore, for in medieval times, when Jews from Ashkenaz (Germany and Poland) completed a rare and arduous pilgrimage to Eretz Israel, some took to adding the appendage “drei fuss” (German and Yiddish for three feet), to their names alluding to their status as a pilgrim of one of the “three foot” festivals. Thus evolved the German-Jewish

family name “Dreyfus.”

After the Romans destroyed the second Temple in 70 CE, Jewish prayer and devotion became attached to the only remnant of the Temple, the western retaining wall (the “Kotel”) of the Temple enclosure. Over the centuries, the anguished prayers and grief of the Jews over the Temple’s loss prompted gentile observers to refer to the Kotel as the “Wailing Wall.”

With the advent of Christianity, Christian pilgrims began traveling to the land of Israel. In 324, the newly Christianized Byzantine Emperor Constantine charged his mother, Queen Helena, with the task of traveling from Constantinople (today, Istanbul) to Israel to identify the sites associated with Christianity.

With the ascent of Islam, Jerusalem became sacred to a third faith, for Islam venerated not only the traditions of both Judaism and Christianity, but also regarded their prophets as its own. The great mosques of the Temple Mount – were constructed in the seventh century. First came the Dome of the Rock, atop the site of the Temple, and when it was deemed too small, Emperor Justinian’s 6th-century St. Mary’s Basilica was converted into the



vast mosque of Al-Aksa.

Although the Crusaders forays into Israel were nominally “religious,” their brutally appalling passages throughout the holy land were anything but “pilgrimages”. For in their quest to liberate Jerusalem in the name of their religion, they tortured and slaughtered untold thousands of indigenous Jews and Arabs. Only Nazi Germany, seven centuries later, would surpass their barbarity. In their wake, the Crusaders left behind a network of castles and basilicas, fortresses and ramparts that stand to this day, an incongruously magnificent tribute to so vicious a horde.

After the crusaders were finally vanquished in 1291, pilgrims – Jewish, Christian and Muslim – continued to reach Israel, but their numbers dwindled until, by 1800, Israel, now usually referred to as Palestine, the Roman bastardization of “Philistia,” had become an unimportant backwater of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. As travelers everywhere became more adventurous, travel to the “Holy Land” began to revive. In Britain, Eothen, the account of a visit to Palestine by A.W. Kinglake, was widely popular, a 19th-century

equivalent of a blockbuster. Gustave Flaubert charmed France with his tale of Salome dancing for Herod at Herodion, Herod’s palace south of Jerusalem. Closer to home, Mark Twain’s account of a benighted and melancholy Palestine in *The Innocents Abroad* ignited America’s imagination.

The 19th century brought, not only the first inklings of the modern age to Eretz Israel, but also a stream, slow at first, then a gusher, of Jews returning from the Diaspora to restore their homeland, physically and spiritually. By 1840, Jerusalem had a Jewish majority for the first time since 70 CE, and Jewish agricultural settlements were started in the Plain of Sharon and the Galilee. In 1869, England’s Thomas Cook brought his first group of “excursionists” to Palestine, attended by teams of dragomen and herds of camels and donkeys hauling tents, oriental carpets, brass beds, tin baths, potted plants, dining chairs and damask tablecloths to provide the comforts of home to the intrepid travelers. In 1876, Germany’s Karl Baedeker published his first guidebook of “Jerusalem and its Surroundings.” And in 1892, the Turks built a railroad to cover

the 50 twisting miles from Jaffa to Jerusalem, cutting the two-day journey to a comparatively effortless four hours. Seven years later, in order to provide an appropriate atmosphere of pomp to surround the arrival of Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm, an imposing train station was constructed in Jerusalem. And, at the turn of the new century, the Fast Hotel was opened next to Jerusalem’s Jaffa Gate, the first establishment in the city designed solely to accommodate tourists. It was two hundred yards from the Jaffa Gate that Theodor Herzl stayed (in the “Stern House” in what is now the chic Mamilla neighborhood) during his visit to Eretz Israel in the hope of persuading the Kaiser to support his dream of a Jewish State.

With the arrival of the British in 1917, Palestine became – if not literally, certainly in practice – part of the British Empire. By the end of the 1920s, a flood of Jewish immigration had transformed the country on every level, including tourism. The ancient port city of Jaffa was now outclassed by Tel Aviv, the garden suburb it had spawned in 1909. Tel Aviv brought an entirely new dynamic to Palestine – a European sense



The Old Jaffa train station



Old port of Jaffa



of style and the outdoors. Like Miami's South Beach, it even spawned its own architecture, a tropical, Mediterranean version of the Bauhaus. (In 2011, Tel Aviv boasts more Bauhaus architecture than any city on the planet.) While Israel's ancient cities had built ramparts for protection from the sea, Tel Aviv was designed to embrace the Mediterranean, with a seafront promenade of cafes and beaches, and most notably, small hotels, including the moderne Gat Rimon and San Remo, and the Palatine, opened in the mid-thirties by the Schlossberg family who had recently arrived from Königsberg, Germany. The Schlossberg's daughter, Leah, would later marry Yitzchak Rabin. In 1931, a group of Egyptian Jews, experienced in hosting travelers sumptuously in Cairo and Upper Egypt at their Shepherds, Winter Palace and Cataract Hotels, opened a similarly imposing colonial "grand" hotel on Jerusalem's Julian's Way. They named this sumptuous hotel for "King David," in honor of the monarch who made the city his capital 3,000 years earlier.

The port of Haifa soon expanded into a major base both for the Royal Navy and as an important ocean terminal, adding Palestine to the routings of the world's shipping lines. In 1936 at Lydda (Lod), midway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the British built an aerodrome.

When it opened, Lydda's art deco terminal building was the world's largest and soon became an important stop for colonial airlines en route to the Orient. In 1935, the Jewish Agency - the quasi-governmental body created by the Jews of Eretz Israel as a precursor to an independent government - created its "Tourist Development Association of Palestine," and art-deco posters encouraging travelers to "VISIT PALESTINE" soon vied with soaring profiles of the Normandie on the walls of travel bureaux in Europe and the United States.

In the wake of World War II, with the trauma of the Holocaust, the Jews of Palestine set about concentrating all their efforts on winning independence, and in 1948, after a lapse of 1,878 years, an independent Israel was restored. The first task at hand, apart from fighting off the coordinated invasion of its five neighbors, was to rescue hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors, as well as refugees from Arab North Africa and the Middle East. Battered, war-vintage airplanes were procured and pressed into service to fly the immigrants "home" and, taking a phrase meaning "to the skies" from the book of Hosea, the Israelis called their fledgling airline "El Al."

For almost ten years, Israelis labored to build a state, ward off their enemies and absorb,

feed, clothe, employ and house a million immigrants: there was little time to think about anything as trifling as tourism. But the infrastructure was sound. By 1956, El Al had grown into an airline of international prominence. The ships of Zim, Israel's very own shipping line, were plying the Mediterranean and North Atlantic. In 1953, another family of German-Jewish immigrants, headed by Yekutiel Federmann, converted its small Kaete Dan guest house on the Tel Aviv sea-shore into the ultra-luxurious Dan Hotel, whose opulence and Miami-Modern architecture staggered Israelis and visitors alike. The government made attempts to interest overseas investors in the hulk of the King David Hotel, whose southern wing had been blown up by the Irgun in 1946. Now, with Jerusalem divided by barbed wire and tank traps, the King David was not only partly wrecked, but smack on the border of "No Man's Land" and nobody was buying. In 1950, even the Jewish owners of Washington's Willard Hotel and Chicago's Palmer House declined to purchase it for the rock-bottom price of the value of the hotel's linens and silver. But the Federmanns had more vision. They bought the King David, restored its grandeur and, within the decade, it was once more, as it remains to this day, Jerusalem's pre-eminent address.



The Haifa port in the 1940s



King David Hotel, Jerusalem



Beach front, Eilat

In 1957, as Israel prepared to celebrate its 10th anniversary, the government decided that the state's foundations were now sound enough to permit the expenditure of effort and funds on tourism. The task of promoting travel to Israel for the anniversary season was assigned to a civil servant in the Prime Minister's Office, Teddy Kollek, who, ten years later, would become Jerusalem's mayor. Spectacular promotion campaigns were mounted overseas, and a sophisticated series of advertisements appeared in the *New York Times*. Several Jewish organizations opened travel departments in 1958, giving birth to a vast movement of American Jewish visitors to the land of Israel. The flow of Jewish Americans coming to Israel was so poignant and extraordinary that "Shalom," a musical comedy about a group of American Jewish ladies touring Israel, opened on Broadway in 1960, written by composer Jerry Herman (who later was to write "Hello Dolly," "Mame" and "La Cage aux Folles"). The following year, the Tel Aviv Sheraton Hotel opened, the first venture in Israel financed by a foreign hotel chain, notable for its decision to flout the Arab economic boycott of the Jewish State.

More than 50 years later, in 2010, Israelis welcomed some 3.5 million tourists (an all-time

record) to a country that remains exotic, but which has also become amazingly sophisticated and Western. The government's foresight back in 1957 has paid off, for tourism has become the country's chief source of foreign currency income. El Al's fleet of ultra-modern, made-in-the-USA jets, as well as 70 foreign airlines, connect "Lydda," now Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport, with 40 countries. Jerusalem, a divided provincial backwater from 1948 until 1967, has developed a prominence equal or surpassing the days of Solomon or Herod. Tel Aviv literally never closes, a burgeoning city of business and finance, restaurants, shopping malls and tumult, at the very same time it is one of the world's only cities which is also a glamorous and spirited beach resort. Eilat, no more than an army hut on the Red Sea in 1948, has developed into a major and sophisticated resort, with floods of European visitors in the winter, eager to visit one of the only spots within a few hours of London, Stockholm or Paris, where winter sunshine and warmth is guaranteed. And at the Dead Sea, an array of hotels hosts visitors eager to sample the climate and the mineral-filled sea at the lowest point on earth.

Throughout Israel, hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions abound, with not only Israeli and international

chains represented, but a flood of chic boutique hotels. Many kibbutzim – the network of collective agricultural settlements started in the first decade of the century which, to many, have long symbolized the uniqueness of Israel – long ago entered the tourism business. All over the country, and particularly in the Galilee, dozens of kibbutzim have opened extremely comfortable motel-style guest houses. But tourism can be small-scale too, for across Israel, a wave of bed-and-breakfast accommodations, known as "zimmerim," has brought new standards and choices to travelers.

To many, perhaps most tourists, Israel remains, first and foremost, a destination for the religious traveler. But Israel has also earned its place as a uniquely charming vacation destination with an extraordinary assortment of moods, attractions, facets and possibilities. Indeed, more and more travelers, from countries such as Japan and India, who have no religious connection to Israel, are including the Jewish State on their travel itineraries. And the Israel Ministry of Tourism is developing plans to welcome 5 million visitors annually by 2015.

ANYWHERE ELSE THIS WOULD JUST BE A



SPECIAL ZIONISM ISSUE III • Special Section Israel Ministry of Tourism

NIGHT AT THE OPERA.



BUT THIS IS MASADA

Israel's mountain fortress was the site of the famed last stand of the Jewish rebels against the Roman legions. It may be the only venue for world-class opera with a history that rivals the drama onstage. Last year, it premiered "Nabucco," to great acclaim, and this year, "Aida" will be staged – don't miss it.

Just one and a half hours from Jerusalem, it stands high above the breathtaking Dead Sea, where renowned spas and stunning landscapes abound. Come experience where the drama, history and culture that makes us who we are still lives.



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THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF ISRAEL

From Antiquity to the Avant Garde

Many travelers planning a trip to Israel are motivated by a connection with family or a reaffirmation of religious heritage or even just by thoughts of a sunny Mediterranean getaway. Fewer visitors, however, think of Israel on par with such international destinations as France, Italy or Spain. But, why not? No other place on earth boasts the kind of cultural and artistic diversity that tiny Israel packs into an area only the size of the state of New Jersey. Where else can a tourist start the day with a stroll through the millennia-old streets of the Old City of Jerusalem, visit the quaint independent arts and crafts galleries of Tzfat, tour the endless (and endlessly diverse) museums of Haifa, stop for a visit at the most talked-about new design museum in the world in Holon, and end the day in Tel Aviv and Jaffa with a walk through the twin cities' many fascinating outdoor bazaars?

Old City of Jerusalem



Qumran



Masada



Megiddo



Caesarea



Jerusalem

Discover Israel's archeological wonders

Home to some of the world's richest archaeological wonders, Israel is the ultimate destination for travelers in search of historical, cultural and religious discovery. In the City of David, the oldest settled neighborhood of Jerusalem and a major archaeological site, travelers can explore artifacts dating as far back as the Chalcolithic period (4500-3500 BCE), and trek through Hezekiah's tunnel—a water supply system from around 700 BCE. In the Old City of Jerusalem, visitors can continue their underground tour of the city through the Western Wall Tunnel, the original Western Wall of King Herod's Temple Mount, traversing across 1,445 feet of 2,000-year-old Herodian stones.

Walking the streets of Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter is an ideal way to explore the Jerusalem of old, a history richly commemorated in such sites as the Burnt House museum (the former

residence of the Katros family, a priestly family named in the Talmud, that was destroyed by the Romans during the period of the fall of the Second Temple) and the Herodian Mansions, where visitors can discover how the wealthy Jerusalemites of 2,000 years ago lived. The archeological wonders of Jerusalem continue to be revealed in the Archaeology Wing of the recently renovated Israel Museum, which boasts not only the Model of the Second Temple, but also the world-famous Shrine of the Book, which houses the Dead Sea Scrolls and more recently, a 2,000-year-old royal box uncovered at King Herod's palace at Herodium.

The archeological activities do not stop in Jerusalem—travelers can drive one hour southeast of Tel Aviv to Beit Guvrin National Park to dig and sift for pottery and other finds and spelunk through the park's ancient cave systems.

Farther south in the desert, travelers can explore the wonders of Qumran National Park, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, and Masada, the site of Herod's magnificent hilltop fortress and the epic Jewish rebellion against the Roman invasion. Traveling north, one may visit Caesarea - a UNESCO World Heritage site containing a wealth of archaeological ruins, including a massive Roman theater built in the 1st century BCE. At Acre, the medieval gem on the Mediterranean, visitors can explore the ancient ramparts, the fishermen's port and the impressive medieval water cistern over which the ancient city is built. Near the town of Afula, one of the most important archeological sites in all of Israel, Tel Megiddo boasts the remains of several civilizations and is just one of Israel's seven amazing UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Visit Israel's More Modern Treasures

In addition to its wealth of ancient archeological wonders, Israel is also home to a widespread collection of contemporary art and design museums that is sure to engage travelers of all ages and interests. The newly renovated 20-acre Israel Museum is the largest cultural institution in Israel and is ranked among the world's leading art and archaeology museums with a large and impressive collection of art and historical artifacts, including the Dead Sea Scrolls. For the history buff, the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum offers an unsurpassed record of the history of the Holocaust.

In Tel Aviv, the art-loving tourist can delight in major museums such as the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, the Eretz Israel Museum or the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, or set off in search of smaller, lesser-known gems, such as the Rokach House, the Nahum Gutman Museum in the city's bohemian Neve Tzedek neighborhood, or the Ilana Goor Museum in Jaffa. The architecture aficionado can spend days just wandering the streets of Tel Aviv, itself a living museum known as the White City, a UNESCO World Heritage site, recognized for being the largest concentration of Bauhaus architecture in the world. The twin cities of Tel Aviv and Jaffa are also noteworthy for their profusion of outdoor sculptures, artistic installations and independent art galleries, a perfect venue for exploring the best of the new Israeli artists.

Just south of Tel Aviv is the recently opened Design Museum Holon, a Ron Arad-designed museum which hosts a diverse collection of design and fashion-based exhibits. In the north, history is brought to life throughout the exceptional museums in Haifa including the Haifa Art Museum, the Dagon Grain Silo & Archeological Museum, Maritime Museum, the Hecht Museum at the University of Haifa and The Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art—an extraordinary concentration of world-class museums in a city of Haifa's modest size.



Sculpture in Jaffa



The restored Tachana in Tel Aviv - Jaffa



Meiri Museum in Tzfat

Explore Israel's Best Shopping Markets

With its temperate year-round climate, Israel is ideally suited to open-air markets, bazaars, gallery crawls and outdoor art and performance events, making it a perfect destination for travelers who delight in the unusual and memorable souvenirs. Tel Aviv is a veritable treasure trove where shopping enthusiasts and bargain hunters will find everything from ritzy designer shopping along Dizengoff Street to more affordable finds at the Nachalat Binyamin crafts market and the legendary Jaffa flea market.

The narrow alleys of the Jaffa flea market, which are open year-round and within easy walking distance of Jaffa's landmark clock tower, offer bargain hunters anything and everything from new fashions, secondhand clothing and furniture to vintage vinyl records, antiques, toys, even scrap metal. One store is devoted purely to lamps, others to antique sideboards and ancient carpets. Those wanting to pick up gifts and a souvenir or two, will find stylish mother-of-pearl chess sets, ornate water pipes (*hookahs*), mounds of Judaica and unique artifacts from Israel's early days. Known in Hebrew as *shuk ha'pishpishim*, the market has

been around since the 19th century, when the port of Jaffa was a hive of commerce and the chief point of disembarkation for pilgrims visiting the Holy Land. Today, shoppers can explore to their hearts' content and then sit down for a cup of tea or a delicious lunch in one of the market's bohemian-chic outdoor cafés. During the summer months, the market stays open to the wee hours and is thronged with shoppers.

More recently, the renovated Tachana, formerly the city's historic bustling train station complex, now a thoroughly modern center for shopping, dining and entertaining has been reopened near Jaffa/ Neve Tzedek. Shoppers can now explore the entire 49-acre complex of 22 buildings, featuring areas devoted to fashion, food, culture, history, art, music and children's activities. And every Thursday evening, the Tachana hosts an arts and crafts fair, while Friday mornings welcome an organic farmers' market, open to locals and international visitors alike.

And no trip to Jerusalem would be complete without a stroll through the serpentine cobblestoned lanes of the shuk in the Old City. There, visitors can

scoop up treasures from beautiful handmade ceramics to souvenir T-shirts to rugs, housewares and jewelry—a shopper's delight!

Visitors from around the world come to visit the workshops, studios and shops in the artists' colony town of Tzfat in the Galil, operated by the immensely creative residents. It is easy to spend several days hopping from gallery to gallery – check out the Ohr Yaacov Gallery, the David Friedman Kabbalah Art studio, Iris's Gallery and the Morris Dahan gallery -- browsing the works on display and watching artisans at work. Whether you are in the market for original art, reproductions, or handcrafted items, there is something at every price, and visitors to Tzfat will not be disappointed by the wealth of unique arts and crafts on display.

Throughout the tiny nation of Israel, there are countless opportunities to witness the seemingly infinite creativity of the country's inhabitants—from antiquity until the present day. For more information about touring the archeological sites, modern museums and arts and crafts markets of Israel, please visit www.goisrael.com.



Moskowitz Prize for Zionism

Announces Winners for 5771-2011

Ruth J. Lieberman and Elana Tova Kieffer

The Moskowitz Prize for Zionism is an expression of Hakarat Hatov (recognition of good) for people who act in varied methods and in varied fields, and as in past years is being awarded to three special and unique individuals who have gone above and beyond in their own lives to help make Israel into a better, safer, more just homeland for the Jewish people.

*For more information
please visit our website
www.moskowitzprize.com*

For the fourth consecutive year, the Moskowitz Prize for Zionism will be awarded to three deserving individuals during the week of Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day) on the historically significant site of Ir David (City of David), where King David's Jerusalem began. This distinguished prize was established by Dr. Irving and Cherna Moskowitz as an expression of support for people who put Zionism into action in today's Israeli society, acting for the benefit of the common good in order to ensure the strength and resilience of the national Jewish homeland. This Prize is seen as an expression of public gratitude for extraordinary Israeli individuals. The process begins with nominations submitted by the general public, with winners chosen by a committee headed by Mrs. Cherna Moskowitz and including Professor Moshe Arens, Rabbi Yedidya Atlas, Ambassador Yoram Ettinger, Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis, Brig. Gen. Avigdor Kahalani, Rabbi Pesach Lerner and Rabbi Daniel Moskowitz, along with Special Academic Advisor, Nobel Prize Winner Professor Yisrael Aumann, and Prize Director Mrs. Ruth Lieberman.

Past winners of the prize include Brig. Gen. (ret.) Aharon Davidi (IDF hero and Sar-El Chairman); Rabbi Yoel Schwartz (rabbi of IDF's Nahal Haredi Unit); Anita Tucker (leader of Gush Katif communities); Noam Arnon (leader of the Hebron Jewish community); Sammy Bar Lev (mayor of Katzrin); Ronit Shuker (founder of Givat Achiya); Rabbi David Fendel (head of the Hesder yeshiva in Sderot); Moshe "Moshko" Moshkowitz (builder of Gush Etzion); and Brig. Gen. (res.) Ran Pecker-Ronen (founder of "Tzahala"). These Israeli men and women were chosen to receive the Moskowitz Prize because of their heroic, inspiring actions, their personal responsibility, vision and national mission, often including a sacrifice of their individual welfare.

This year's Moskowitz Prize for Zionism will be awarded to Meir Dagan, Chanan Porat, and Yehoshua Fass.



Meir Dagan

Former Mossad Chief, Maj. Gen (res.) Meir Dagan has contributed immeasurably to the security of Israel.

Born in 1945 to Holocaust survivors, Dagan has a rich past of IDF service, serving as a paratrooper and rising through the ranks from Company to Division Commander. He fought in Israel's wars, was injured twice, and earned the Medal of Valor, the second highest honor in the IDF. Dagan has also served in various GHQ staff positions until he commenced his service at the rank of Major General. Dagan served as head of the counter-terrorist staff at the Prime Minister's Office from July 1997 until December 1999. Dagan then served as Director General of the Israel Secret Intelligence Service from 2002 until January 2011, after his term was extended twice. Dagan's term as Mossad Chief is considered especially successful, and he has left a legacy of creativity and action which are held in high esteem by Israeli and international leaders alike, including Arab leaders and international heads of state. He now heads the Israeli Port Authority.



Chanan Porat

Rabbi Chanan Porat has been an inspiration to both young and old throughout his career – as an IDF paratrooper in the six-day war, leader of the movement to settle Yehuda and Shomron, political figure and chessed activist.

Chanan Porat's life's work has been a mix of taking an unfaltering ideological stand in order to affect the national agenda, and creating new and innovative ways of learning Torah, using influences from outside the religious world. His parents moved to the new Kibbutz of Kfar Etzion when Chanan was six months old. During the 1948 War of Independence he was among the children of Kfar Etzion evacuated from the Kibbutz before it was subsequently overrun by Arab attackers. His father was among the last defenders and was killed in the battle to hold on to the Etzion bloc (Gush Etzion). Chanan grew up to be one of the leaders of the surviving children and vowed to return to Gush Etzion to reestablish the Jewish presence there.

Porat served as member of the Israeli Knesset for many years, as a member of the Techiya party, the NRP and a founder of the National Union, always true to his ideological roots. Since leaving the Knesset, Porat has taught in the Herzog Institute next to the Har Etzion Yeshiva which he helped establish, and in the Bet Orot Yeshiva in East Jerusalem. He has also taught in the Birkat Moshe Yeshiva, which is part of the Hesder IDF-yeshiva joint program. Porat established the "Me'at Min HaOr" magazine, and joined the first broadcasts of the Galei Yisrael radio station. He is also among the founders and leaders of the "Orot Hachessed" organization which provides food, electricity and clothing to the less fortunate.



Yehoshua Fass

Rabbi Yehoshua Fass is co-founder of Nefesh B'Nefesh and has served as the organization's Executive Director since 2002.

After an Israeli relative of Rabbi Fass' was murdered in March 2001 by a terrorist bombing, he was compelled to embark on a personal mission, which in the following years made a significant impact on the State of Israel and the Jewish people. Together with Tony Gelbart, he founded Nefesh B'Nefesh, which revolutionized western Aliyah by removing the financial, professional and logistical obstacles that prevent many individuals from actualizing their dreams. The organization has revamped the Aliyah process making the idea of moving to Israel a more realistic option for many. Since its establishment in 2002, the organization has assisted over 27,000 Western Olim and has maintained a retention rate of 97%. These Olim contribute greatly to the social, economic and demographic welfare of Israeli society by serving in the IDF, settling in Israel's cities and periphery, and boosting economic growth, while infusing the country with idealistic enthusiasm and optimism.



Melanie Phillips is a British journalist, author and playwright known for her incisive commentary on political and social issues. Her book, Londonistan, published in 2006, became a bestseller. Her latest book is The World Turned Upside Down: The Global Battle over God, Truth and Power. Visit her web site: melaniephillips.com and follow her blogs.

The Battleground of the Mind

The challenge of public diplomacy vis-a-vis the delegitimisation of Israel

By Melanie Phillips

Address to the Ariel Conference on Law and Mass Media, December 2010

As we all know by now, Israel has lost the battle for public opinion in the west. Even the Israel government is now acknowledging this fact. Israel and its defenders have been outclassed and outmanoeuvred in a war of the mind being waged on a battleground it never even acknowledged it was on.

Calls for more and better hasbara, however, are meaningless if the message or narrative promoted by Israel and its defenders misses the point of the attack being waged upon it. And it does miss that point, by a mile.

You cannot resist or overcome a threat unless you first understand its nature. The first thing to say is that this phenomenon is characteristic not just of the media animosity or economic or academic boycotts. It goes across the intelligentsia and political class, spreading well beyond the normal suspects on the left into the mainstream middle-classes.

In Britain, the universities, the established church, the theatrical and publishing worlds, the voluntary sector, significant elements within the Foreign Office, members of Parliament across the political spectrum, as well as the media have overwhelmingly signed up to the demonisation and delegitimisation of Israel.

The scale of this phenomenon is nothing short of a multi-layered civilisational crisis.

The west is experiencing a total inversion of truth evidence and reason. A society's thinking class has overwhelmingly subscribed to an immoral, patently false and in many cases demonstrably absurd account of the Middle East, past

and present, which it has uncritically absorbed and assumes to be true.

In routine, everyday discourse history is turned on its head; logic is suspended; and an entirely false narrative of the conflict is now widely accepted as unchallengeable fact, from which fundamental error has been spun a global web of potentially catastrophic false conclusions.

This has led to a kind of dialogue of the demented in which rational discussion is simply not possible because there is no shared understanding of the meaning of language. So victim and victimiser, truth and lies, justice and injustice turn into their precise opposite.

This madness is being promulgated through a global alliance between state and non-state actors – diplomats and journalists, politicians and NGOs and websites. Many of these are waging war not just against Israel but against the west.

There are two preconditions for an effective fightback. First is to form effective structures of resistance. Those structures, however, depend in turn on a correct understanding of the nature and scale of what we are up against.

So far, the structures are not in place, and more important still, what Israel is up against is grossly — and fatally — underestimated and misunderstood.

The problem is that we are dealing with a pathology — to which we nevertheless respond as if it were rational behaviour.

What's happened is a pattern of thinking in the west which turns reality upside down. Remarkably, this in turn echoes a very similar inversion of reality within the Islamic world, where

such inversion has a theological base.

Because Islam is considered perfect, its adherents can never do wrong. All their aggression is therefore represented as self-defence, while western/Israeli self-defence is said to be aggression.

So in this Orwellian universe the enslavement of Muslim women is said to represent their liberation; democracy is a means of enslavement from which the west must be freed; and the murder of Israelis is the purest form of justice.

Furthermore, this is overlaid by the phenomenon of 'psychological projection' in which the Islamic world not only denies its own misdeeds but ascribes them instead to its victims.

So while Muslims deny the Holocaust, they claim that Israel is carrying out a holocaust in Gaza. Antisemitism is central to Jewish experience in Europe; Muslims claim that 'Islamophobia' is rife throughout Europe.

Israel gives all Jews the 'right of return' to Israel on account of the unique reality of global Jewish persecution; the Muslims claim a 'right of return' – not to their own putative state of Palestine, but to Israel. They even claim that the Palestinians are the world's 'new Jews'.

These and many other examples are used within the Islamic world to negate Jewish experience and appropriate it for itself to obtain what Muslims want in terms of status, power and conquest.

What is remarkable is that instead of treating this as a pathological deformity of thinking, the western progressive intelligentsia has largely embraced it as rational and true. And to a large extent this is because that same western intelligentsia has itself supplanted rationality by ideology – or the dogma of a particular idea.

Objectivity, evidence and truth have been ditched for ideologies such as moral and cultural relativism, multiculturalism, feminism, environmentalism, anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism, transnationalism, anti-Americanism, anti-Zionism.

Across a wide range of such issues, it's no longer possible to have a rational discussion with the progressive intelligentsia, as on each issue there's only one story for them which brooks no dissent.

This is because, rather than arriving at a conclusion from the evidence, ideology inescapably wrenches the evidence to fit a prior idea. So ideology of any kind is fundamentally anti-reason and truth. And if there's no truth, there can be

no lies either; truth and lies become merely 'alternative narratives'.

Moral and cultural relativism – the belief that subjective experience trumps moral authority and any notion of objectivity or truth – has turned right and wrong on their heads.

Because of the dominant belief in multiculturalism, victim culture and minority rights, self-designated victim groups — those without power — can never do wrong while majority groups can never do right. And Jews are not considered a minority because – in the hateful discourse of today – Jews are held to be all-powerful as they 'control' the media, Wall Street and America.

So the Muslim world cannot be held responsible for blowing people up as they are the third world victims of the west; so any atrocities they commit must be the fault of their victims; and so the US had it coming to it on 9/11. And in similar fashion, Israel can never be the victim of the Arab world; the murder of Israelis by the Arab world must be Israel's own fault.

So the way has been opened for mass credulity towards propaganda and fabrication. The custodians of reason have thus turned into destroyers of reason – centred in the crucible of reason, the university.

All these different ideologies are utopian; in their different ways, they all posit the creation of the perfect society. That is why they are considered 'progressive', and people on the progressive wing of politics sign up to them. That helps explain the distressing fact that so many Jews on the left also sign up to Israel-hatred, since they too sign up to such utopian ideologies.

But when utopias fail, as they always do, their adherents invariably select scapegoats on whom they turn to express their rage over the thwarting of the establishment of that perfect society. And since utopia is all about realising the perfect society, these scapegoats become enemies of humanity.

For Greens, such enemies of humanity are capitalists; for anti imperialists, America; for militant atheists, religious believers. Anti-Zionists turn on Israel for thwarting the end to the 'Jewish question': the redemption of western guilt for the persecution of the Jews — a guilt which can never be redeemed as long as the wretched Jews continue to make themselves the targets of attack.

In short, therefore, the west cannot defend itself against the Islamic jihad because it can't itself even think straight any more.

The west is experiencing a total inversion of truth, evidence and reason. A society's thinking class has overwhelmingly subscribed to an immoral, patently false and in many cases demonstrably absurd account of the Middle East...

Because Islam is considered perfect, its adherents can never do wrong. All their aggression is therefore represented as self-defence, while western/Israeli self-defence is said to be aggression.

It cannot be stressed enough that the reason why those promoting genocidal bigotry are winning is that the western world has not sought to defeat them but instead has appeased them from the very start.

What Israel has failed to recognise is that the battleground on which it is being forced to fight is not just military. It is also a battleground of the mind, and the strategy being used against it – and to which it needs to respond in kind – is psychological warfare.

But this lethal muddle in the minds of the intelligentsia must be viewed in turn in the context of a global diplomatic process which itself embodies upside-down thinking, which fans the flames of bigotry and defeatism – and in which Israel itself has been tragically, and suicidally, complicit.

It cannot be stressed enough that the reason why those promoting genocidal bigotry are winning is that the western world has not sought to defeat them but instead has appeased them from the very start.

In Palestine under the British Mandate, when the Arabs used terrorist violence to frustrate the will of the League of Nations in restoring the Jewish home, Britain rewarded them by offering them part of the Jews' legal and moral entitlement. When the Arabs started hijacking planes, the west's response was to invite them to the UN to plead their cause.

And despite the Arabs' repeated refusal to accept the two state solution, offered in the 1930s, in 2000 and under Ehud Olmert and their current refusal to negotiate at all, America punishes Israel for not making enough concessions to them — while giving a free pass to those who still refuse to accept Israel's right to exist.

It is astonishing that the west expects Israel to make any concessions to such attackers at all. After all, forcing a country which has endured more than six decades of existential siege to give any ground to its attackers amounts to forcing such a victim to surrender. This is expected by the civilised world of no other country.

Yet we are repeatedly told even by certain supporters of Israel that the Palestinians have a right to a state. Why? In any other conflict, such aggression forfeits any rights at all.

I am not saying that Israel should retain all the disputed territories; it may well be in its own interests to give some of them up. But the point is that Israel has made all the concessions over the years while the Arabs have made none – yet it is Israel, not the Arabs, that is under pressure from the west.

This is diplomacy as scripted by Franz Kafka.

The single greatest reason for the endless continuation of the Middle East impasse is that Britain, Europe and America have continuously rewarded the aggressor and either attacked the victim or left it twisting in the wind.

That's what needs to be said by Israel and its defenders. But Israel and its defenders themselves have been crippled or cowed by the false analysis of the enemy's narrative.

Even many of Israel's friends spout the demonstrably absurd proposition that a Palestine state would solve the problem, that the impediment to a Palestine state is the 'settlers', but that Israel is not taking action to remove the 'settlers' — and so therefore they too inescapably agree that Israel is the problem.

Israel and its defenders have been fighting on the wrong battleground: the one that has been chosen by its enemies. The Arabs brilliantly reconfigured the Arab war of extermination against Israel as the oppression by Israel of the Palestinians.

That has transformed Israel from victim to aggressor — the reversal of reality which lies at the very heart of the western obsession with the 'settlements' and the territories.

Yet since Oslo, Israel has meekly gone along with this mad pressure. It has never said it is totally unconscionable. It has never put the all-important argument from justice on its own account. So it has allowed its enemies to appropriate this argument mendaciously as their own. But if Israel doesn't make the case properly on its own behalf, how can anyone else do so?

To which Israel says realpolitik dictates it has to go along with the diplomatic game being played. But diplomatic realpolitik is what brought us all to this position — the brink of a terrible war with Iran which is treated by America with kid gloves while Israel is put under the cosh.

For the west to suck up to its enemies while bashing its friends like this is the diplomatic version of auto-immune disease. And eventually this disease will kill it.

What Israel has failed to recognise is that the battleground on which it is being forced to fight is not just military. It is also a battleground of the mind, and the strategy being used against it – and to which it needs to respond in kind — is psychological warfare.

The Arab and Muslim world long ago realised if it set the narrative in its own image, it would recruit millions of fanatics to its cause and also confuse and demoralise its victims. In this it has wildly succeeded.

There is therefore an overwhelming need for Israel to alter its strategy. Indeed, it needs to have a strategy.

And this brings us to perhaps the most difficult challenge in all of this – the fact that the role played by the Israel government is of critical importance. Unless it adopts the correct strategy, its defenders will remain crippled.

Yet any promising initiatives seem to fall victim to Israel's chaotic political structure, which appears to prevent the Prime Minister from being master in his own house. Good ideas are habitually destroyed by rampaging egos and turf wars between Israeli Cabinet ministers.

This is no way to run a chip shop, let alone a country under existential siege.

The fact remains that both Israel and diaspora Jews have to rethink. They have to realise they must start fighting on the battleground where the attack is actually being mounted against them. And the goal has to be to seize and retake the moral high ground.

This strategy requires two different tactics: one for those who are capable of rational thought, and another for those who are not.

The first group comprises those who are not irrational but merely desperately ignorant. Much of the obsession with Israel's behaviour is due to the widespread belief that its very existence is an aberration which, although understandable at the time it came into being, was a historic mistake.

People believe that Israel was created as a way of redeeming Holocaust guilt. Accordingly, they believe that European Jews with no previous connection to Palestine — which they believe was the historic homeland of Palestinian Muslims who had lived there since time immemorial — were transplanted there as foreign invaders, from where they drove out the indigenous Arabs into the West Bank and Gaza. These are territories which Israel is now occupying illegally oppressing the Palestinians and frustrating the creation of a state of Palestine which would end the conflict.

Of course every one of those assumptions is false. But from those false assumptions proceeds the understandable belief not just that Israel's behaviour is unjust, illegal and oppressive but that it is unjust and oppressive by virtue of its very existence.

For these people there is an urgent need for a proactive educational approach. No-one has ever told them that these beliefs are false — and when they are told, the effect is often transformative.

There is a desperate and urgent need to educate such people in Jewish and Middle East history; to enlighten them about the shameful role played by Britain in Palestine in tearing up its treaty obligations; to tell them that under international law Israel is entitled to the disputed territories — land within which Britain undertook

to settle the Jews 'from the river to the sea' because of their historic and unique rights to that land.

That's all necessary for those who are still rational. For bigots, however, there is no point arguing with them. They are, by definition, beyond all reason. Their influence simply has to be destroyed. They have to be held to account for their lies and bigotry which should be forensically exposed.

So Israel and its defenders should be demanding of the world why it expects Israel alone to make compromises with people who have tried for nine decades to wipe out the Jewish presence in the land and are still firing rockets at it.

They should expose the pretence of Britain or European countries which claim to have Israel's security needs at heart but forbid it from using military means to defend itself; and which — as did the British Government recently — turn Israeli self-defence against the jihadi lynch-mob on board the Turkish terror ship Mavi Marmara into an attack to be condemned, or demand the opening of the border with Gaza which would allow in arms to kill more Israelis.

Israel and its defenders should be asking why so-called friends in the west want a Palestine state, since once the IDF depart the disputed territories they will become in short order yet another Iranian-backed Islamic terrorist entity which will pose a further threat not just to Israel but to the west.

They should be asking why the EU is continuing to fund the genocidal incitement against Jews promoted by the Palestine Authority.

They should be asking so-called 'progressives' — including Jewish 'progressives' — why they support the racist ethnic cleansing of every Jew from a future state of Palestine.

They should be asking them why they are not marching against Hamas on account of its tyrannical oppression of Palestinians in Gaza. Why they are ignoring Arab and Muslim persecution of women and homosexuals.

Why they are not mounting a boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Mahmoud Abbas's PA and Hamas, on account of Abbas's Holocaust denial and the clear evidence of continuation of Nazi Jew-hatred in a direct line of descent from predecessors who were Hitler's supporters in Palestine.

As for western Israel-bashers, Israel and its defenders should accuse them not of Jew-hating motives that cannot be proved but of absurd

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curities and contradictions and untruths they cannot deny. They should ridicule them, humiliate them, destroy their reputations; boycott them, not invite them to social gatherings, show them disapproval and contempt. Treat them as pariahs. Turn their own weapons against them.

They should be telling the Jews' own story of refugees and ethnic cleansing – the 800,000 Jews driven out of Arab lands after 1948, and who now make up more than half of Israel's population. It's good to see that at last Israel is beginning to bring this to the world's attention. In Britain virtually no-one knows about it. At a stroke it takes the ground from under the feet of those demanding the 'right of return' for Arabs.

They should be holding Arab and Islamic democracy weeks on campus, to expose the oppression and persecution within that world against women, homosexuals and others.

They should be singling out the Anglican church and the revival of ancient theological Jew-hatred being spread within the Anglican world by the Palestinian Christians of the Sabeel centre.

At the same time, they should be focusing on their true friends within the Christian world, not just in America but also in Africa and Asia where there is an enormous reservoir of goodwill towards Israel which could be mobilised into a global fighting force.

They should be campaigning against the UN and the hijacking of international law and human rights by anti-western, anti-Jewish and anti-Christian ideologues.

They should be confronting head-on the false claim that bigotry is confined to the right. They should be pointing the finger at the 'progressive' left to show how it is actually supporting the mortal enemies not just of Israel but the west.

And they should be making this case to Israelis themselves, to counter the delegitimisation and ignorance in Israeli universities and to

educate the Israeli young in their own national history.

In other words, both Israel and diaspora Jews have to stop playing defence and go onto the offence. Israel has nothing to be defensive about or for which it needs to apologise. It is the enemies of Israel who are promoting injustice and the denial of international law and human rights. Playing defence intrinsically cedes ground to the enemy.

It is time for Israel and its defenders to stop conniving with that smokescreen for the war of annihilation being waged against Israel – the claim that the Middle East impasse would be solved by establishing a state of Palestine to which the settlements, and thus by extension Israel, are the obstacle. It is time for them to stop agreeing that the Jews are to blame for their own predicament.

Israel and its defenders need to make the argument from justice and reclaim that moral high ground from the enemies of Israel and the west, both at home — including within Israel — and abroad. It is those enemies who deny truth, justice and human rights. It is those enemies who should be in the dock. It is time to take the gloves off and put them there.

In short, Israel and its defenders must understand that the tsunami of bigotry against Israel sweeping the west is intimately related to Israel's seriously flawed diplomatic strategy.

For years, Israel has been playing a defensive diplomatic game, which suggests inescapably that it has a case to answer. Such diplomatic cringing has badly undermined it and hugely strengthened its enemies, who are taking advantage of such weakness over and over again.

It's time for Israel to realise that military campaigns against its enemies are not enough. It has to call time on its false friends too, and start fighting both these and its more obvious enemies on the battleground of the mind. ▲

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Rabbi Dov Fischer, Rabbi of Young Israel of Orange County of California is a nationally prominent Jewish leader and speaker. Previously, Rabbi Fischer served as National Vice President of the Zionist Organization of America. He is a widely published author, a columnist for Jewish World Review, Cross-Currents, Frontpagemag.com, a contributor to The American Thinker, and a Rabbinic Scholar Panelist for Jewishvaluesonline.org

After receiving his undergraduate degree at Columbia University, Rabbi Fischer studied at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) of Yeshiva University and was ordained a Rabbi in 1981. In 1983, Rabbi Fischer was awarded his master's degree in American Jewish history. Rabbi Fischer has authored two books -- Jews for Nothing: On Cults, Assimilation and Intermarriage (N.Y.: Feldheim, 1983) and General Sharon's War Against Time Magazine (N.Y.: Steimatzy, 1985). Rabbi Fischer received his Juris Doctor degree in 1993 at UCLA School of Law.

From 1985 to 1987, Rabbi Fischer lived in Israel where his was one of 40 pioneering families that created a new Jewish community in Samaria. He taught in the Overseas Program at Orot Women's College for Torah Studies, guest lectured several times at Bar Ilan University for a course in Jewish Values taught to members of the Israeli Defense Forces, and he worked intimately with Ethiopian Jews at the Merkaz Klitah Absorption Center in Hadera.

Zionism is Not Offensive and Finally Should Be

By Rabbi Dov Fischer, Esq.

The great tragedy within contemporary Zionism is that Zionist leadership and articulators operate on a continuum of defensiveness, always reacting to the latest attack on Israel's legitimacy. This "reactive defensive Zionism" is the same whether we look at Jewish organizations, Jewish political figures, or even at college Jewish activists. Zionists always "play defense."

The great tragedy within contemporary Zionism is that Zionist leadership and articulators operate on a continuum of defensiveness, always reacting to the latest attack on Israel's legitimacy. This "reactive defensive Zionism" is the same whether we look at Jewish organizations, Jewish political figures, or even at college Jewish activists. Zionists always "play defense."

Defense certainly is an important part of a winning strategy. The best hockey and soccer teams still need to field a goalie. Football teams need a defensive squad, and baseball strategy includes defending against a bunt, pulling an infield-in, and over-shifting towards right field when a left-handed hitter comes to bat. Even so, no team ever wins if it fails to score. And teams well ahead of their opponents see their leads disappear when they excessively shift into a "prevent defense mode" that concedes offense exclusively to the opposition.

We who follow spectator or competitive sports understand this philosophy so clearly – the primacy of offense – yet abandon this simplest of survival principles when Israel's survival is on the line. Thus, we wait for others to call Israel "racist," and then we respond that she is not. They speak of an "Apartheid wall" being constructed along Judea and Samaria, and we reply that the wall is not separatist but protective. They accuse Israel of starving out the citizens of Gaza, and we counter with photographs of shopping malls in Gaza and with statistics of food supplies that pass into Gaza through Israel.

They accuse Israel of human rights violations, and we respond that Israel is hu-

mane. They say that land belongs to “Palestinians,” and we present compromise: “Let us have a two-state solution.” They propose boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS), and we produce reasons not to boycott Israel, not to divest from holdings in Israel, not to sanction Israel.

Seventy years ago, Sid Luckman was the most prominent Jew in American football. A star quarterback for the Chicago Bears, he once brought his immigrant parents to a game to watch him. With Luckman masterfully at the helm, the Bears won handily. After the game, he proudly asked his parents what they thought of his performance. Even though he successfully had scrambled away from defensive front-linemen and had a wonderful passing game that day, his parents responded: “Sidney, you know those men would not try to keep hurting you all day if you would just give them the ball.”

It is time for Zionists to stop giving them the ball.

We need to initiate the discussion, not to react. We need to be creative in our presentation, not predictably defensive. We need to capture the imagination by shifting dynamically, as Sid Luckman did on the field, into a T-formation with men in motion.

It is time to start a nationwide campus movement to boycott, divest, and sanction Arab racist regimes like Saudi Arabia. It is true that they manufacture virtually nothing useful, so we have to find that one thing besides oil, and start a BDS campaign on campuses throughout America. We need petitions on campuses, calling attention to racism – particularly against Black people – in the Arab world, gender discrimination, religious intolerance. We need to promote boycotts of travel to any Arab country that mistreats Christians and that burns churches. We need to promote sanctions against the destruction of churches throughout the Arab world. We need to go on the offensive and let people know how bad that world’s racism, misogyny, religious hatred, and bigotry extends.

We need to start bringing Ethiopian Jews from Israel to American campuses and to African-American communities to tell them their stories. Israel is the only country on the face of the earth – in all of recorded human history – that ever expended national resources including risked lives and material resources for the exclusive purpose of bringing Black people from Africa into their country to join the landed classes in freedom. Others have taken Blacks out of Africa for slavery. No one but Israel ever

brought Black Africans into their country to join them in freedom.

We need to expend extra breaths and use eight syllables to say “Judea and Samaria” even though we prefer the two-syllabic “West Bank.” We have to stop saying “West Bank.” We have been taught to say “African American” instead of “Negro,” “Native American” instead of “Indian,” “Mizz” instead of “Missus,” and “Latino” instead of “Hispanic.” It is time to teach others to say “Judea and Samaria.” As the Left so well demonstrates, language is powerful. If we fear that the listener will not understand us when we say “Judea and Samaria,” then we must expend extra breaths each time we use the term, just as we do when we give an address to a telephone marketer when we order a product and need to repeat the spelling of our street.

On the “refugee question,” similarly, we have to go beyond playing defense. If there are refugees, then there were 800,000 Jewish refugees who lost everything when the Arab world drove them out but held their property in the 1940s. Today they number in the many millions. So, if the 400,000 or 500,000 Arabs who left Israel during that period, mostly voluntarily, now number in the millions of “refugees,” it is time to demand justice for our more-millions of refugees. Demand hearings in Washington on restoration of property and reparations for Jewish refugees. Then, with the issue explained and the public educated, demand freezes on Arab governmental assets in America for transfer to American families among the Edot HaMizrach to compensate and restore refugee property – just as we have been doing for Holocaust victims who today are recovering damages for stolen Nazi-era property, for unpaid wages during their enslavement, and for insurance benefits they were owed after having paid their premiums in Europe during the years of the Holocaust.

And demand a complete end to all American funding for the UNRWA, the United Nations agency that promotes anti-Jewish hatred throughout Gaza and in Judea and Samaria by acceding to the myth of “Palestinian refugees in Palestine.” We are so accustomed to playing defense that we never even ask: “How in the world can people who were not alive in the 1940s be called ‘refugees’ from somewhere they never fled? And even if they were ‘refugees,’ how can they still be deemed as ‘refugees’ now that they are living in their supposed homeland?” When people “return home,” the idea is that they no longer are “refugees.” At that point, the UNRWA

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needed to close down in Gaza, in Jenin, and elsewhere – and America needs to stop funding it. In today’s economic environment, there will be many in Washington who will be delighted to see this aspect of an offensive approach to Zionism once they are educated to this incredible anomaly.

We need to go on the offensive and start pointing at the logos of the Arab groups: the Hamas, the P.L.O., Fatah. Each and every of their logo designs bears depictions of their aspired-to homeland. None of those logos depicts Gaza or Judea and Samaria. Rather, they all depict pre-1967 Israel. Similarly, we need to start pointedly asking: What do the Arabs even mean by “Palestine”? When they founded the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964, to liberate Palestine, what area were they liberating? Not Gaza, then in Egyptian hands. Not Judea and Samaria, then under Jordanian occupation. We need to point to the logo – a picture is worth a thousand words – and to 1964, and we need to start advertising those pictures and explaining what 1964 means.

A movie will be coming out on April 15, 2011 that will introduce many people to a simple libertarian question: “Who is John Galt?” Wait and see. It is time to ask – on T-shirts, at soirees, even at the beginning of every speech at every Young Israel dinner: “What did they want to liberate in 1964?”

In the last half century, perhaps the only issue on which an Israeli Government has stood firm in the Great Debate was last year when the Netanyahu Government finally refused to blink any longer on one issue: refusing abjectly to continue any further construction freeze in Jerusalem for a second round. For once – literally, once – Israel finally said: “We will not freeze construction in Jerusalem not even after Hell, Michigan freezes over.” And, remarkably, the American Administration backed down.

That is what happens when your cause is just, and you do not give them the ball. For those who hate us and find Zionism offensive, maybe it is time that we Zionists finally went on the offensive. ▲



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Dr. Charles Jacobs is a long-time social activist, who, over two decades, has founded organizations that have had a profound impact on social and political fronts. They include the David Project, CAMERA, the American Anti-Slavery Group, which campaigns against slavery worldwide and the Sudan Campaign. His work appears in The New York Times, The Boston Globe, The New Yorker and The Wall Street Journal.

See his web sites: charlesjacobs.org and peaceandtolerance.org

Jewish Malware

By Dr. Charles Jacobs

Jews have been quietly exulting over reports that *stuxnet*, the computer virus mysteriously implanted in the computers running Iran's nuclear sites, has wrought havoc, indeed may still be wreaking havoc, despite claims by Teheran that it has been contained. No one knows for sure how much damage is being done, or if it can be stopped, or who is the culprit that infected Iran's mass-death program -- but Israel has been mentioned as a prime suspect. When it was found that the name of a key file in the computer worm's code is easily a cognate for Queen Esther, many imagined that a Jewish genius delivered the poison pill to the Persian plotters -- and did it while poetically recapitulating the Purim story -- in malware. Compared to that feat, the wiki-leaks gambit is child's play, simple pilferage.

But even if this is true, and Jewish technological genius can thwart or mitigate a looming disaster – just as her military genius has done in the past – Jews cannot afford a truly needed rest, because the sobering reality is that Jewish technological and military prowess has proved inadequate, necessary but not sufficient, to safeguarding Israel. For her long-term security, what matters is how the Jewish state is viewed and valued in the world, especially in the Jewish community, and the skill set required for this fight -- what we now called “the information war” – seems congenitally absent from the Jewish collective. Far from being geniuses, when it comes to rhetorical combat with Israel's defamers, or creating a culture of discourse that is honest and fair, world Jewry seems, tragically,

imbecilic. Compared to almost every nation on earth, but particularly compared to her adversaries and accusers, Israel is a stellar state. Yet she is branded and portrayed in the media, on campuses, and in increasing swaths of civil society in the West, as among the cruelest of nations. How can this be?

I think the dynamic is something akin to the virus that flummoxes Iran's computers. Jews may be susceptible to a particular type of rhetorical virus -- so devastating that once implanted it prevents them from acting in their own self-defense and turns otherwise eloquent people into stuttering blockheads. The worm, simple and ancient, is called “accusation.” Accuse the Jews. Accuse them unfairly and with such disproportionate frequency that anyone who wants to can see there's an agenda at work that has little to do with the actual charges raised. Accuse the Jews and they instinctively,

like moths fly to candles, do the stupidest thing imaginable: they start believing they can cleverly explain themselves, and convince their accusers of their innocence and their goodness.

I bring this up because it is being reported in the Jewish media that the major Israel Advocacy organizations have done a serious re-think and are now calling for a “more open, critical approach to teaching about Jewish state.” “Even centrist players,” Weiner wrote, “like Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the David Project and people in the Jewish federation system are calling for more open, critical discussions about Israel.” Why? Because much of our youth feels that Israel Advocacy as it is now taught, makes them “check their liberalism at Zionism’s door.”

And so, rather than lose the kids who have fantasy notions about international politics, Jewish educators now think (I’m hoping the reports got it wrong) students shouldn’t be advocates for Israel, but referees or judges in the Middle East contest. Their lessons will no longer be: “Israel is imperfect but fundamentally right, and the obstacle to peace is nothing more and nothing less than the Arab/Islamic refusal to abide Jewish sovereignty.” Instead it will be “on the one hand the Israelis say ‘x,’ and on the other hand, the Palestinians say ‘y.’” “Can’t we all get along?!”

So the net result is that the radical leftist professors and the growing Muslim student population are permitted to be advocates and propagandists for the Arabs while Jewish students rise above the fray to contemplate the conflict. The vast student body will still only receive a mostly one sided version which will demonize Israel and so the next generation of American leadership will be less likely to empathize with the Jewish State -- like the man in the White House.

But what’s really happened in the discourse is that authentic Jewish liberalism has been paralyzed – not by Zionism, but by anti-Zionism. Inserting the “accuse the Jews” worm into the discourse anesthetizes the Jewish instinct to fight the good fight. Infected, Jewish students forget the ideals and the history of valiant battling for a universal standard of human conduct, of fighting for precisely those victims abandoned by the “civilized world.”

Instead of explaining to our students the dynamic of “accusation” that has been used to hobble Jews from time immemorial, we teach them to sit in the dock. Instead of exploring with them just how Israel is under a massive

ideological assault which masquerades as legitimate criticism, we teach them to keep the focus of discourse on Jewish conduct, Israeli behavior -- which is exactly what our adversaries want. Instead of turning our fingers back on the tyrannical Arab/Muslim world whose criticism of Israel defineschutzpah, we answer their charges. Instead of exposing the hypocritical Western liberal elites -- the “human rights” establishment, the media, and the professoriate – who have abandoned for reasons of political correctness whole classes of people in the worst of circumstances: women, gays, apostates, Christians, democrats in the Islamic realm – we instinctively and without much complaint accept playing the role of defendant. In other words, instead of making the subject of this entire discussion the human horrors of the world tyrannies, and the execrable Western hypocrites who aim to destroy us, we are bitten by the “accusation” virus, and we simply lose our minds.

Yes, it is not easy to educate a generation, brought up to believe that everyone has his own truth, about a global campaign to defame the Jewish state. And it is not easy to tell the hard truths about the world of radical Islam to students who are taught the multiculturalist dream, taught that even to suspect another culture of being supremacist is itself “racist.” And yet it is not easy to include in pro-Israel education an honest representation of the Palestinian narrative, so that it can be truly understood and seen for what it is. Pro-Israel organizations need to learn (with the help of our thus-far mostly silent professors, please!) to do all this. But Jewish organizations must first deal with the “accuse the Jews” killer virus.

In 1911, Jabotinsky had it perfectly right. “Every accusation causes among us such a commotion that people unwittingly think, ‘why are they so afraid of everything?’ Apparently their conscience is not clear.’ Exactly because we are ready at every minute to stand at attention, there develops among the people an inescapable view about us, as of some specific thievish tribe. We think that our constant readiness to undergo a search without hesitation and to turn out our pockets, will eventually convince mankind of our nobility; look what gentlemen we are—we do not have anything to hide! This is a terrible mistake.” You’d think all the smart Jews would’ve figured that out. By now. ▲

(A version of this column first appeared in the Boston Jewish Advocate.)

For her long-term security, what matters is how the Jewish state is viewed and valued in the world, especially in the Jewish community, and the skill set required for this fight - what we now called “the information war” – seems congenitally absent from the Jewish collective

WE KNOW

Hasbara is broken... How do we fix it ?

By Eldad Tzioni

It is no secret that Israel has a severe problem with hasbara. Over the past forty years, the Jewish state has slowly but surely been transformed in the public eye from a tiny nation proudly defending itself from annihilation into a state that is perceived as an oppressor, a human rights violator, and – to many of its detractors – to one of the most evil regimes on the planet.



Eldad Tzioni

*blogs at
<http://elderofziyon.blogspot.com>*

Our enemies, spend their time reaching people on an emotional level. They show photos and videos of crowded camps, of bombed out buildings, of old women crying. In the real world, the emotional argument wins.

Most Zionists who follow the news know how absurd these characterizations are. We also know that Israel is, to put it charitably, inconsistent in getting its message across properly to the world. Everyone complains about it, and everyone has their own ideas on how to fix it – but very few people are actually doing anything about it themselves.

This is a shame, because everyone who is reading this article can help Israel, starting today.

I have a pro-Israel blog, Elder of Zion. I have written thousands of articles about Israel and the Arab world over the past six years, and I get a fair number of readers. Lately, I have been using my blog as a laboratory to test out different ways of getting the message across. I can track the number of readers for any particular post, how many times people “tweet” the post and how many link to it on Facebook and other social media sites. Using these methods I can see what works and what doesn’t. The lessons are valuable not only to bloggers but to everyone who cares about helping Israel.

One problem that we Jews have is that we are too logical. Thousands of years of studying Gemara may have made us good at arguing, but it also convinced us that anyone can be swayed by a good argument. So we happily read and write long texts explaining why the “settlements” are legal, why US Resolution 242 does not imply that Israel must stay within the Green Line, and why a blockade of Gaza does not flout international law.

Our enemies, on the other hand, spend

their time reaching people on an emotional level. They show photos and videos of crowded camps, of bombed out buildings, of old women crying.

In the real world, the emotional argument wins.

As much as we like to pretend that everyone shares the Jewish love for an innovative and logical thought process, in reality people usually make up their minds about Israel (and everything else) based on their gut. If a person who is not already emotionally invested in the argument one way or the other sees a tear-jerking film that pushes one side of the story, nine times out of ten that person will instinctively gravitate towards the side that pulled at his or her heart-strings.

We need to prioritize our emotional arguments. We need to talk about our deep connection to the land of Israel. We need to emphasize how we have cried every year over the destruction of the Temples. We need to show the human toll that would result from hundreds of thousands of Jews who the world wants to uproot from their homes. We need to describe the pain that would result from losing Har HaZeitim again, and what happened to it during those tragic 19 years that Arabs had control.

Not only is our emotional connection to the Land far deeper than anyone else’s, but no one can argue against love and fear. Emotions are our most potent weapon, but one that we are ceding almost completely to those who hate Israel. We know that we are right from a legal, historical and moral perspective – but we need to humanize the message.

It is not only the message that must hit emotional chords – but also the media that the message is communicated in. People respond to

messages that are visceral, and that hit all of their senses. Powerpoints, posters, songs, poetry, film, novels, plays, even cuisine - all need to be employed to impact people on every possible level. Text alone generally does not have the same impact as more visual media.

On the Internet, the goal is to create something that will “go viral” – that ordinary people will see and want to forward to their friends. Videos do better than written articles, and humor is possibly the biggest weapon of all. Most of us have seen Latma’s “We Con the World” video created last year, and it was hugely effective with millions of views on YouTube. Why? Because it was funny, timely, and visceral.

While defending Israel is important, it is vital to go on the offensive. No one wins any games by only playing defense. The fact is that every accusation made against Israel – true or false – can be made much more plausibly and effectively against Israel’s neighbors and enemies. Attack the abysmal human rights records of the Arabs themselves. Publicize how nearly every Arab country has laws that specifically deny citizenship to Palestinians alone.

Arab nations constantly attack Israel to distract their people from their own human rights violations. The recent riots in Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen Egypt and Jordan – and the deadly police responses – prove that Israel is not the problem in the Middle East, not by a long shot. The Arab and Islamic dictatorships, where there is no freedom of expression or of the press, are the ones who need to be put on the defensive.

Beyond that, we need to publicize the good things that come out of Israel every day. Art, dance, fiction, scientific achievements, medical advances – we know it is amazing, but the world doesn’t get to see these parts of the country.

So how can you, personally, help?

There are two basic ways to help: by creating pro-Israel content, and by publicizing the best content that is made by others.

For those who have the ability, creativity and time, by far the best thing to do is to apply the concepts of emotional and visceral media to the creation of pro-Israel videos, songs or song parodies, articles, comics, or even video-games and phone apps. One of my readers says that a good romance novel with a strong, masculine Zionist protagonist could do wonders to change Israel’s image among those that read them.

Challenge yourself to distill a pro-Israel argument into a 140-character tweet (or even a bumper sticker.) Think outside the box and use your

talents! Then send your efforts to popular Zionist websites to get publicized.

Think of ways that Zionist messages can be made available to the world. Do you have interesting video of your last visit to Israel that shows a side of the country that the news media ignores? Upload it to YouTube!

Once one of my readers sent me a photo taken in the Rami Levy supermarket in Gush Etzion, showing a smiling religious Jew joking with an Arab woman. I put it on my blog, to show how life really looks in Judea and Samaria, and a number of European websites picked up the story. A simple thing like that humanizes the “settlers” that the world regards as faceless, evil creatures.

Are you going to a fundraising dinner with a terrific speaker? Take video of the speech and upload it to YouTube. I did this with a speech by Mike Huckabee and thousands of people viewed it – people who would never have even known about it otherwise.

Don’t just write letters to the editor of a local paper – post them on the Internet, too. Make sure that everything you write remains somewhere permanent on the web so that search engines can find it. Put them on a blog (easy to set up) or email them to influential sites, so your points can be seen by many more people.

If you are multilingual, translate the best pro-Israel articles you see into other languages and post or forward them to spread the message. There is a real hunger for pro-Israel content in Europe, and if you can break the language barrier, it can make a big difference.

If an anti-Israel article bothers you, take the time to examine where the logical fallacies are - they are often subtle and such an exercise can hone your own ability to defend Israel. Learn how to take apart an argument from anti-Israel writers, point by point (called “fisking” on the Internet) and expose the lies that they build their essays on. When a good criticism is written quickly after an influential anti-Israel article, it can blunt the effect considerably – but speed is of the essence.

Write your own articles for so-called “citizen journalism” sites that already have a built-in audience. Such sites are often indexed prominently by Google and Bing, and they often lean against Israel so that pro-Israel articles can make a splash.

I don’t think that on-line comments on articles in newspapers is necessarily the best way to spend your time, but it is worthwhile to put short pro-Israel messages in the comments if only to show that not everyone agrees with the haters who flood these sites. And don’t only put Zion-

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ist messages in political sites – if it is appropriate, mentioning Israeli companies in financial sites or Israeli novelists in book sites is very powerful.

If you love to read, Amazon book reviews are a very good way to reach an intelligent, articulate audience.

If you don't have the time or talent to create content, you can still be a wizard at publicizing good pro-Israel articles and videos. Twitter and Facebook are the major tools you cannot ignore, and they can help make good material get tons of views. Grow your "friend" lists so that your own influence grows, and copy or link to the best articles and videos on Facebook and Twitter.

It is also worthwhile to join social bookmarking sites like

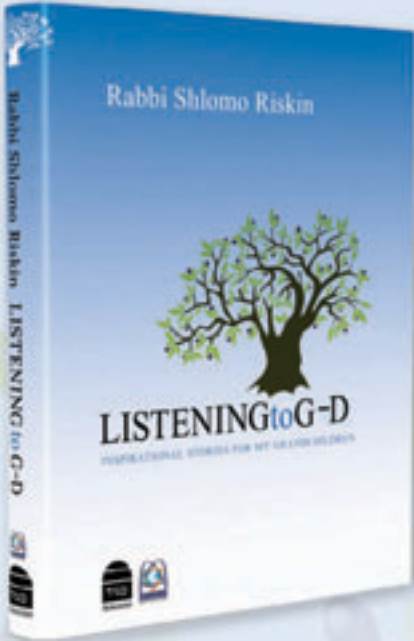
Reddit, PopURLs and Delicious. If some material is interesting, people will read it, rate it and link to it themselves.

Similarly, take good material you find and post them to popular message boards. Old fashioned email is essential as well – share your discoveries with friends.

The important point is to publicize the best material. This amplifies the effectiveness of the pro-Israel message immensely - and it only takes a few seconds to retweet or click a Facebook "Like" button that most websites and online magazines have.

Don't complain about how others aren't doing enough to help Israel. The Internet allows you to do it yourself, and you can make a real impact!▲

www.ElderofZiyon.blogspot.com





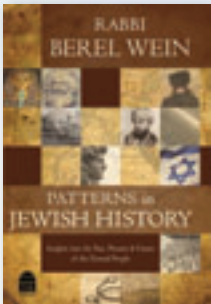
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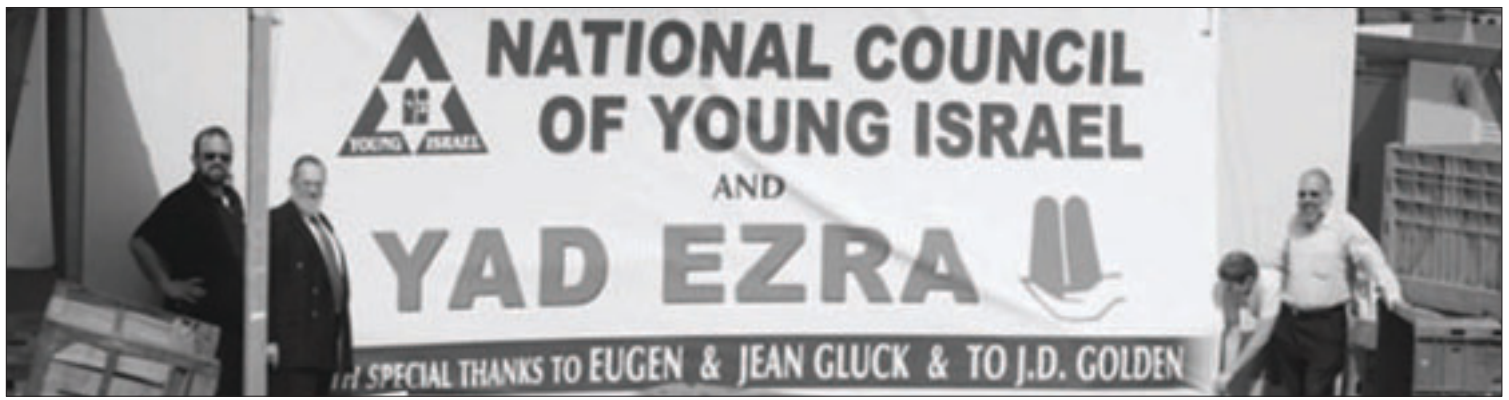
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Caroline Glick is Senior Contributing Editor of the Jerusalem Post, where she writes a regular syndicated column. She has received numerous awards and recognition for her work over the years, including the recent Abramowitz Prize for Media Criticism by Israel Media Watch and Bar Ilan University's Guardian of Zion Award. She has served in many positions within the IDF, where she was an officer for 5 ½ years, including Coordinator of Negotiations with the PLO. She also served as Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's assistant foreign policy advisor during his first tenure in office. She was chief diplomatic commentator at the newspaper Makor Rishon before accepting her current position at the Jerusalem Post. Her first book, Shackled Warrior: Israel and the Global Jihad was published by Gefen Publishers in 2008. Visit her web site: carolineglick.com Thanks to Caroline Glick for her assistance in preparing this article.

Latma TV Using Humor to Make Serious Points

By Esther Altmann, Editor, Viewpoint Magazine

With Israel the favorite whipping-boy of the international media, and the Israeli Right the favorite whipping boy of the Israeli media, Jerusalem Post columnist and senior editor Caroline Glick and a talented group of writers and performers decided to strike back – and strike they have, with a “Latma” – Arabic/Hebrew slang for “slap.”

Since the founding of the Hebrew language, satirical media criticism website Latma (latma.co.il) two years ago, Israelis finally have an effective tool to strike back at the myriad slanderous attacks against Israel generally and to defend the majority of Israelis who do not ascribe to the post-Zionist views favored by the local media. Latma's often hysterical and biting satires have awakened millions across the globe to the virulent hypocrisy of Left-wing liberal media attacks on Israel and have empowered Israelis to demand more accurate and less biased coverage of current events at home.

“In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man,” so goes the saying. In a world where blatant lies are lauded as sacred truths, and where anti-Jewish hatred has been repackaged as a nouveau anti-Zionism, Latma is leading the charge against the delegitimizers of the Jewish state. Latma, which was created for Israelis with the goal of standing up against the onslaught of anti-Israel Leftist propaganda, has evolved into a popular online satirical news review that delivers resounding repartee to Israel's detrac-

tors and is celebrated by lovers of Zion all over cyberspace, using English subtitles to reach the non-Hebrew speaking world.

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, satire has been used to influence public opinion whether it is employed in plays, novels or political cartoons. The advent of the worldwide web has enabled satirists to touch an almost unlimited mass audience nearly instantaneously.

In an interview following Latma's receipt of the prestigious Israel Media Watch Abramowitz Award for Media Criticism, Glick said that the goal of Latma is “to widen the boundaries of the international and national discourse.”

She explained that through the use of humor it is possible to “open minds by making people laugh.”

In an interview with this writer she elaborated on the point. “People understand viscerally that there is something basically false about the overwhelmingly leftist media's depiction of current events but they are intimidated by the media's power. When you subject the media and other strong forces in society to ridicule, you demystify them and empower people to think for themselves.”

True, it may be more intellectually gratify-

ing to plow through a lengthy article in order to understand a situation fully. But long attentions spans are hard to come by in this day and age, and who says that everyone is so dedicated to the subject matter? No, reasoned prose doesn't pack the same punch as a funny shtick that makes the viewer laugh and at the same time imperceptibly delivers the same message in shorthand.

Latma's work combines short, Hebrew language blog posts updated several times a day with their groundbreaking weekly television-on-Internet satirical news broadcast The Tribal Update. The show, which is released with English subtitles is broadcast on Latma's YouTube channel and has been viewed by more than 6 million people, making it one of the greatest hits in the new media.

The first installment of the Tribal Update that attracted worldwide attention treated the blood libel perpetrated by the Swedish newspaper, Aftonbladet in September 2009 that accused the IDF of murdering Palestinians to steal their body parts. Despite the angry response from Israel, and although the newspaper's editor admitted that he had not ascertained the facts of the matter, the story was republished in news outlets throughout the world.

Latma produced a musical parody of the Swedish band Abba's hit song "Give me a man after midnight," depicting the Swedish foreign minister as a fool seeking to curry favor with murderous jihadists in Sweden. The song marked the first time Latma released its work with English subtitles. The public response to the Latma production was overwhelming. The very fact that Israelis were standing up to Sweden's monstrous behavior became a major news story in Sweden and throughout Scandinavia. People were amazed that finally, there was a voice representing the mainstream, Zionist majority in Israel.

While much of the programming is geared towards the Israeli audience, since the material is written in the context of Israeli society, major events that occupy the world stage are grist for Latma's mill as well. For instance, Latma's biting treatment of the US government's refusal to admit that the Fort Hood shooter acted out

of jihadist motivations was seen by hundreds of thousands of Americans.

The most prominent example of Latma's impact on the global discourse was its first venture into English language production. In response to the international condemnation showered on Israel in the wake of the IDF's takeover of the Turkish-Hamas terror aid ship Mavi Marmara on May 31, 2010, Latma produced a musical parody of Michael Jackson and Lionel Ritchie's song "We are the world," titled, "We Con the World."

The combination of its catchy tune, biting satire and brilliant humor captured the attention of viewers around the world. More than a million people watched the clip in four days. Since it was first broadcast on June 2, "We Con the World" has been viewed more than 5 million times and has been translated into more than a dozen languages. The next huge Latma hit was "The Three Terrors,"



that employed the vehicle of the famous "Three Tenors" concert to parody the Syrian, Turkish and Iranian leaders Bashar Assad, Recip Erdogan and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. With no publicity other than one friend forwarding the link to the other, this video and subsequent ones like "Under the Sea," and "Jihad Bells," reached millions of people in minutes.

Fed up with Leftist propaganda that abounds both in Israel and outside the country, the public has received Latma with enthusiasm, a hearty laugh and a big sigh of relief - It feels so good to see their own views aired in the wide world of cyberspace. With their tiny dedicated staff of hugely talented writers and performers and (in spite of) their shoe-string budget, Latma has made an amazing impact and has shown that it is possible, with talent, ingenuity and drive to make a formidable counterattack and light up the truth in a really dark world.

Latma is a project of the Washington, DC based Center for Security Policy, where Caroline Glick is a Senior Fellow for Middle East Affairs.

Go to their web site: latma.co.il where you can watch current and archived installments. After you stop laughing (and sometimes crying) at the absurdity of the situations parodied, you may be inspired to take some action of your own - maybe even write a check to keep them on the web. ▲

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, satire has been used to influence public opinion whether it is employed in plays, novels or political cartoons. The advent of the worldwide web has enabled satirists to touch an almost unlimited mass audience nearly instantaneously.



Willem Griffioen is a founding member and the COO of the International Israel Allies Caucus Foundation in Washington, D.C. The IIACF is the umbrella organization for pro-Israel caucuses in governments worldwide, including the original caucus in Israel, the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus. He worked previously as the International Director of Development at Exobus, an aliyah non-profit organization based in the UK with branch offices around the world. Before working with Exobus, Willem served as the Director of Organizational Development with Christians for Israel, an organization committed to supporting the Jewish people in Israel and abroad.

Mobilizing Israel's Allies

By Willem Griffioen

Over the years there have been many individuals, groups and organizations which have existed to support and defend Israel- and with great success. Today there are a plethora of pro-Israel organizations working all over the world. Several of these organizations are focused purely on fostering relationships with politicians who consistently stand by Israel. However, until recently, there had never been a globally coordinated effort to work with these pro-Israel politicians, in their various respective governments, to create a coordinated, united front in defense of the only democracy in the Middle East...until now that is.

Four years ago Rabbi Benny Elon, who was at that time a member of the Israeli Knesset, understood that there was something missing. He felt it was the moment to seize the opportunity to do something unprecedented in support of Israel. Some have described Rabbi Elon's idea as visionary – an international network of hundreds, if not thousands of Israel supporting politicians, working in a coordinated effort to bolster support of Israel. It was out of this vision that the International Israel Allies Caucus Foundation was born. During the almost 15 years that Rabbi Elon worked in Israeli politics, he had developed strong ties with influential pro-Israel politicians and Christian leaders all over the world. He saw the formation of the IIACF as the natural progression of his life long work to defend the Jewish homeland.

The name of our organization is a mouthful, however it provides a very clear picture of what we do – the International Israel Allies Caucus Foundation (IIACF). The IIACF is a network of associated caucuses worldwide. You



R-L: Rabbi Benny Elon, Willem Griffioen, Enja Krivine, Dir. of Congressional Affairs

may ask, "What is a caucus?" A caucus is an organized group of members of a congress or parliament who want to join forces and work together on a particular issue. In the U.S., caucuses are essentially internal lobbies made up of members of Congress who self elect to join the caucus. It is a great example of what happens when members take the lead on a particular issue and do so with a group of like-minded Members within a legislative body of government. Our U.S. Congress has hundreds



Elliott Engel (D) NY, Co-Chair; Trent Franks (R) AZ, Co-Chair



Caucus Press Conf. on issue of Gaza Flotila. At podium, Eric Cantor, (R) VA, House Majority Whip

of caucuses, which can be searched on the Committee of House Administration website.

This leads us to the overall goal of the IIACF, which is to help build an indigenous support for Israel amongst political leadership worldwide. Our strategy for coordinating this global effort is to connect pro-Israel politicians working within parliaments, congresses and legislative bodies on every continent. We believe that support for Israel should be the natural position taken by those who love and cherish Judeo-Christian and democratic values. Israel Allies Caucus Members all over the world take the lead on these issues because they are committed to the values and history that we have in common with Israel – not as a result of outside pressure from political interest groups, but rather because they feel a moral imperative to defend these precious, shared values.

Since the formation of the IIACF in 2006, member caucuses have sprung up across the globe – starting in the USA and spreading from Europe to South America, Asia and Africa, a complete list of Caucuses can be found on our website. In 4 short years 18 caucuses have been formed with another 10 under development. It is incredible to see hundreds of politicians from around the globe join forces in their stand for Israel. Our goal at the IIACF is to foster this understanding of shared values and history and to work towards creating an international coalition of politicians who stand by Israel.

There has been a flurry of activity since the IIACF was launched as our small but effective teams have worked to build an influential program for our caucus members. The IIACF has already hosted a global conference of caucus leaders in Washington to launch joint legislative initiatives. We have been able to host more

than 250 members of parliament from around Europe for an event focused on defunding UNRWA. We have held receptions, briefings, and symposiums in parliaments around the world.

With all that we have accomplished there is still so much to be done. For example, in the U.S. Congress alone there are almost 100 new members following the November 2010 election. That is nearly a quarter of the Congress! In fact, the recent shift in the majority is historic in its drastic nature. Many of these members still need to be educated on the issues. A majority of the new freshmen members were backed by the T.E.A. (Taxed Enough Already) Party and were elected on a platform for fiscal reform, not necessarily for their savvy on U.S. foreign policy. It is the goal of our U.S. team to reach out to these members in particular and educate them on the crucial issues regarding Israel. One of our primary issues we will be taking on in the coming months is the issue of moving the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Too many in Congress today are unaware that although legislation was passed in 1995 to move the U.S. Embassy to Israel's capitol, Jerusalem, it has not been done even though it is the law! This is just one example of the many issues about which the IIACF will raise international awareness.

The IIACF team has our work cut out for us, this year more than ever. We stand committed, in partnership with an international coalition of politicians, to providing unwavering support of our democratic ally Israel. ▲

See their web site: www.iiacf.org

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StandWithUs

Turning the anti-Israel tide on campus: successes and future challenges

Roz Rothstein is the CEO and co-founder of StandWithUs.

Roberta Seid, PhD, is the education and research director of StandWithUs.

To learn more about StandWithUs or to support their extraordinary efforts, please go to www.standwithus.com

Roz Rothstein and Roberta Seid, PhD

An organized, well-funded network of anti-Israel groups has worked hard to turn our campuses against Israel, but they are beginning to meet their match in empowered students who know that standing up for Israel means standing up for social justice and peace. Turn back the clock 10 years. The grisly Intifada was in full swing by May 21, 2001, when concerned Los Angeles religious and lay leaders formed StandWithUs to respond to skewed media coverage, which too frequently accepted Arab propaganda at face value or omitted history and context that would tell Israel's side of the story.

But StandWithUs quickly learned that a similar problem was brewing within communities, especially on college campuses. The student arms of leftist extremists and radical Muslim organizations, along with ideologically driven "post-colonial" faculty members, were forming a worldwide movement to demonize and isolate Israel. They deployed a one-two punch: incite hatred against Israel, then call for punishment—boycotts, divestment, UN condemnations, and other punitive actions.

Jewish students, stunned by these unexpected, hate-filled eruptions on campuses, felt intimidated and had no idea how to respond. They had come to college to learn and prepare for their futures. Defending their Jewish identity and Israel was not even on their radars. When these students were growing up, Israel was a decades-old, well-established state engaged in the Oslo peace process, not an imperiled nation still fighting for legitimacy or survival. They had few places to turn to for help. Few student groups had a mission that included Israel.

University administrations were usually not helpful. They overlooked—or were apologists for—the anti-Israel bigotry that created a hos-

tile environment for pro-Israel students. Pro-Israel professors rarely helped. In academia, pro-Israel views had become so unfashionable that expressing them could undermine a faculty member's collegial relationships and professional career. Nor could students get much help from established Jewish organizations. These groups were fulfilling their own missions, and many expressed hope the hostility on campuses would subside, perhaps justifying their lack of involvement.

StandWithUs mobilized to fill this vacuum. Our goal was to empower students to stand up for Israel and educate their campus communities. We aimed to give students the tools they needed through education, advocacy training, financial and organizational support for programs and newly forming pro-Israel groups, sponsoring speakers, and creating appealing, informational booklets, flyers, signs, and Web sites.

StandWithUs was also aware that each campus climate is different. We believe that students usually know best about their own campus climate and have many creative ideas, which we support. StandWithUs' seven regional campus coordinators work with students across North America to formulate strategies and materials tailored for their campuses. If students request a custom flyer or booklet, the StandWithUs research and graphic teams design and produce it.

StandWithUs also prepares specific responses to anti-Israel campaigns that can be used on any campus. For the annual "Israel Apartheid Weeks," we prepared booklets that show how democratic, pluralistic Israel is the opposite of an apartheid state, while another booklet exposes the apartheid that does exist elsewhere in the Middle East—gender, religious, political, sexual, and racial apartheid. When boycott and divestment resolutions hit campuses, we prepared specific Web sites, films and download-

When these students were growing up, Israel was a decades-old, well-established State engaged in the Oslo peace process, not an imperiled nation still fighting for legitimacy or survival

able materials so pro-Israel students could counter these malicious, anti-Semitic campaigns.

We have rapidly expanded since our founding, with 12 offices located across North America, in the UK, and in Jerusalem. Our booklets have been translated into Spanish, French, Hebrew, and Chinese and have reached literally millions of people worldwide. We host advocacy conferences in North America, Europe, Israel, South Africa, and Australia, and our signature national advocacy conference in Los Angeles draws hundreds of outstanding student leaders each year. We sponsor hundreds of speakers annually in North America and in cities around the world. Our educational Web sites refute misinformation and provide tools for countering anti-Israel speakers. Our StandWithUs Emerson Fellows program selects top student leaders at 40 North American campuses and trains them to run proactive programs and counter anti-Israel events with our help. Today, 10 years later, the situation on campuses has changed dramatically. The anti-Israel campaigners are better funded, more organized, more shamelessly aggressive, and expanding their efforts—but there has been backlash against them, because they spawned a counter-movement of young people who have mobilized to effectively challenge them. Students for whom Israel had not been a priority developed a passionate commitment for defending Israel. Many metamorphosed into campus leaders, and for some, the commitment led to working for organizations like StandWithUs after graduation.

Pro-Israel groups formed, became more energetic and self-confident and are now setting the agenda on many campuses. At UC Irvine, Anteaters for Israel grew dramatically as students realized they needed to defend Israel. In the early days, StandWithUs helped the few UCLA students in Bruins for Israel, and it has become a solid group of student activists. At exceptionally difficult campuses like Columbia, the StandWithUs Emerson Fellow has helped a growing pro-Israel group build coalitions,

We should celebrate the courage and great work of students who have refused to be intimidated and continue to challenge the hate-mongering directed at Israel and educate their campus communities.

plan sophisticated events, and countered anti-Israel campus displays. Even Evergreen College has developed a small core of pro-Israel students, headed by a StandWithUs Emerson Fellow, willing to buck the overwhelming anti-Israel environment.

At UC Riverside, an "Israel Apartheid Week" was unexpectedly planned for the week after winter vacation. There was no pro-Israel group on campus. Working with Hillel, StandWithUs sent four campus professionals to set up a table just opposite the anti-Israel displays. Within two days, the StandWithUs staff gathered 40 students—Jewish and non-Jewish—and they have formed their own pro-Israel group.

StandWithUs has found the same encouraging pattern in its wider work with non-campus communities around the world. The challenges remain formidable, but the pro-Israel movement has come a long way. We should celebrate the courage and great work of students who have refused to be intimidated and continue to challenge the hate-mongering directed at Israel and educate their campus communities. Heartened by this response, StandWithUs remains deeply committed to empowering students and communities to stand up for Israel. ▲



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Hasbara Fellowships

Hasbara Fellowships is a NY-based organization that was conceived by Aish HaTorah in conjunction with the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2001, in the wake of the second intifada. Its mission is to train student activists to address the anti-Israel campaigns on college campuses, and to that end they have trained approximately 2000 students from 250 campuses. Hasbara Fellowships offers on-site training in Israel and online for-credit college courses for students ages 18-26.

Among their many successful programs, Hasbara Fellowships has developed strategies to counter increased campus efforts to delegitimize the state of Israel on campus. Hasbara Fellows on the campuses of Johns Hopkins University, Boston University, University of Rochester, University of Cincinnati, and University of Ottawa have created a campaign called "Israel Peace Week" to educate their peers about Israel's true nature as a democratic, peace-seeking nation. This program then spread to more than 25 other campuses, in many instances, eclipsing the so-called "Israel Apartheid Week" organized by pro-Palestinian groups.

Hasbara Fellows at UC Berkeley, UC San Diego and UCLA led the efforts to thwart divestment movements in their student governments, and when it became apparent that biased and untruthful Wikipedia entries were being made, Hasbara Fellowships rallied a group of volunteer-activists to monitor the entries and then counter the disinformation with accurate information. Hasbara Fellowships produced two new campaigns: "Take Initiative on Iran" to teach pro-Israel students how to effectively educate their fellow students about Iran's nuclear quest, the danger of a nuclear Iran to Western interests and global stability, and action items to act against a nuclear Iran.

Hasbara Fellowships offers an interesting and effective Israel program that combines education and activism. Training begins with an online course that presents a general understanding of Israeli history and the Arab-Israeli conflict and continues with more advanced lectures on the current situation, including vital strategic threats and incitement against Israel in Palestinian schools and media. Fellows have the opportunity to meet with Israeli journalists, politicians, and prominent Israel activists, and attend lectures by renowned historians and academics. They also are taken on tours throughout Israel, to strategic sites, such as Metulla and Kuneitra in the north, Sderot and the western Negev, Gush Etzion and Hebron, Jewish and Muslim neighborhoods of Jerusalem, and Palestinian and Arab-Israeli villages. Participants who come from a range of religiously

observant backgrounds, participate in a group Shabbat and many classes held in the Old City of Jerusalem. These experiences build students' Jewish identity and knowledge enabling them to become effective Jewish leaders.

As participants gain familiarity with facts and figures, they simultaneously undergo a 'practical activism' curriculum to help them gain the tools necessary to communicate effectively about Israel, as well as workshops that teach the nuts and bolts of good activism. Hasbara Fellows learn the basics of effective communication, including how to stay on message, confidently answer difficult questions and steer the conversation to relevant topics. These techniques are absorbed through multiple role-playing sessions where participants gain comfort with speaking about Israel in various scenarios, including one-on-one, media, and debating. Training includes sessions on how to build or maintain a campus Israel group, set strategic and achievable goals, foster future leaders, build important relationships with student leaders and administration, developed media and marketing skills, and run successful programming.

Upon returning from the program to their respective campuses, Hasbara Fellows receive

support and ongoing guidance plus resources (including materials, campaigns, speakers and funding), troubleshooting, and motivation. All students who attend the program commit to being activists for Israel on their campuses.

Hasbara Fellowships's new web site contains a wealth of wonderful resources, innovative campaigns and viral videos, many of which have been produced by Hasbara Fellows as part of their new focus on viral activism. The website also features a daily blog, "The Hasbara Campus Pulse," an up-to-the-minute snapshot and analysis of campus Israel programming and trends, as well as anti-Israel activity. "Current Events: The Hasbara Angle" is a weekly analysis of current events, including talking points, designed specifically for campus activists. Hasbara has also greatly increased our social media presence, with daily updates and opportunities for connectivity via Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Hasbara Fellowships is a shining example of what organized, educated response looks like and can achieve. ▲

For more information about their work, view podcasts and videos, sign up for their newsletter, or donate, visit their web site: www.honestreporting.com

Honest Reporting

Defending Israel from Media Bias

To quote from their web site, "Israel is in the midst of a battle for public opinion – waged primarily via the media." The mission of Honest Reporting is "to ensure Israel is represented fairly and accurately." To that end, HonestReporting monitors the media and takes action when they discover cases of bias and media manipulation. Through their activist approach, HonestReporting has prompted hundreds of apologies, retractions, and revisions from news outlets worldwide. Through their efforts, media coverage of Israel is changing throughout the world, since media outlets, correspondents, and editors know they are being held accountable for biased reporting.

HonestReporting was formed in 2000 by a small group of British college students looking to

respond to unfair coverage against Israel in the wake of the second Intifada. In 2001, the project became a major organization in its own right as a US non-profit organization (501c3) with an Independent Board of Directors. In February of 2006, HonestReporting was granted independent Charitable Organization status in Israel to complement its U.S. status.

HonestReporting explains that the struggle for media fairness is vital, since public opinion is directly affected by what is presented and how it is presented, and public opinion, in turn affects foreign policy towards Israel and has real impact on events on the ground. "One person alone may not impact this struggle, but thousands united can!"

Honest Reporting provides educational tools and resources to anyone wishing to advocate for Israel.

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Camera

Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America

When Media Needs Watching Mis/disinformation Intercepted

By Maxime Myer-Smith, *CAMERA Communications Department*

An educational organization devoted to promoting accurate and balanced coverage of Israel and the Middle East. Based in Boston, with offices in Washington D.C., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Israel, CAMERA's 65,000 member households espouse the spectrum of political beliefs, but are united in opposing media bias and misinformation. CAMERA itself takes no political position regarding solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict but believes sound policymaking requires a well-informed public.

CAMERA staff are trained professionals who monitor Middle East coverage in the major media, including newspapers, radio, television, books, encyclopedias, magazines and the Internet. CAMERA works both behind the scenes with editors, producers and reporters and in public campaigns to encourage accurate reporting. Frequently, as a result of CAMERA's intervention, accuracy and context are improved.

CAMERA members are kept informed about media issues via the CAMERA Web site (www.camera.org), the organization's magazine, the CAMERA Media Report as well as via Facebook, Twitter and other social media. CAMERA Action Alerts detailing particular media misrepresentations reach nearly 20,000 readers and generate letters and feedback on media infractions. A campus publication, CAMERA on Campus, is specifically geared to help students deal with the problem of media bias in college newspapers and anti-Israel activity on campus. In addition, CAMERA publishes Op-Eds by its staff in newspapers around the world,

promoting the facts about Israel and the Middle East. The organization also runs educational ads in major newspapers and on the Internet to challenge error and promote.

The CAMERA Fellows program on scores of campuses in the US, Canada, Latin America, South Africa and Spain enlists student leaders to organize pro-Israel, informational events that educate other students and encourage activism on Israel's behalf. A new initiative, the CAMERA Campus Activism Project (CCAP) promotes the formation of pro-Israel groups on campuses where there is little or no such activity.

CAMERA's efforts have become increasingly global, partly as a consequence of the impact of the Internet.

Currently, the organization focuses on British media, such as the BBC and the Guardian newspaper, as well as the Spanish speaking realm, having launched ReVista de Medio Oriente (www.revistamo.org), a Spanish-language counterpart of CAMERA. In addition, a Hebrew-language Web site, www.perspective.org.il brings attention to the serious problems of extreme bias in Israeli media that have an effect internationally.

In an era of concern about the undeniable increase in biased assault on Israel, CAMERA believes that maximum effort should be directed by all people of good will toward exposing and correcting falsehoods about the Jewish state — and challenging the falsifiers.



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Remarkably Different, Remarkably the Same

Two Converging Aliyah Stories

By Erica Hirsch Edvi & Josh Sussman



JFK airport, July 13, 2004. I'm rushing, wedding dress in tow, to get in line to check in for my Nefesh B'Nefesh Aliyah flight, and my father suddenly stops to say hello to someone. He introduces me to the Sussmans, fellow Potomac residents, who are also making Aliyah. We were at very different stages of our lives: I was six weeks out of college and preparing for my upcoming wedding. Josh and Romi were making Aliyah with their two young children.

Despite the hometown connection and the shared vision of raising families in Israel, our lives were totally different. I moved to Jerusalem, married Yoni, and began my graduate studies at Hebrew University. Josh and Romi moved to Neve Daniel in Gush Etzion and settled down to start their lives in Israel (and expand their young family).

A year later our paths would cross again, and from then our Aliyah experiences, despite starting out so remarkably different, have mirrored one another in several ways. We both worked at the same small marketing start-up in Jerusalem, albeit at different times. In 2005, I started my job at Nefesh B'Nefesh, and in 2008 Josh joined our team. That our lives have converged like this is undoubtedly one of

those things that you can explain as “only in Israel.”

Aliyah is, in and of itself, remarkable. The excitement of living in a Jewish country and never having to use your vacation days for chagim is a novelty that never wears off. You delight when your children flawlessly switch from American-accented English to Israeli-accented Hebrew. All Olim remember the feeling they had when they landed their first job in Israel. This experience highlights the reality of Aliyah, knowing that you are not just living in Israel or raising your kids as Israelis, but that you are a contributing member of society.

We are frequently asked, “How did you end up working at Nefesh B'Nefesh?” As with any job opportunity, landing that job is a combination of many factors, most important of which are building a solid network and willingness to put yourself out there. One of our favorite NBN stories is of an Oleh who, upon disembarking from his Aliyah flight, was approached by a journalist. The journalist asked, “What do you have to say to the people of Israel as you step off this plane?” The Oleh took the microphone, looked straight into the camera and said, “My name is Eric and I just graduated from Cooper Union College with a degree in mechanical engineering, and I will work anywhere.” Eric gave his cell phone number and within two weeks had landed his first job in Israel as a mechanical engineer.

Continued in two pages...

Erica Hirsch Edvi lives in Modiin with her husband Yonatan and their two children. Josh and Romi Sussman live in Neve Daniel with their six sons.

Impacting Israel

**Rav Zvi & Sharon Ron
From Richmond, VA
to Neve Daniel, Israel**

By Laura Ben-David

“The perfect time rarely presents itself for the major things in life” says Rabbi Dr. Zvi Ron. “It’s never the perfect time to make Aliyah. You need to just go for it.” And “go for it” they did.

Before moving to Israel, whenever the Ron family brought up the topic of Aliyah it was Zvi’s wife Sharon who would hold back. Although she very much wanted to be in Israel, she was comfortable with their life in Richmond, Virginia, where Zvi was the Rav of the community. One day she finally said, “Okay, we’re making Aliyah,” like a switch that had suddenly been turned on. Her relief at making the decision was shared equally with her husband Zvi, as well as 8 year-old twins Netanel and Kinamon, and 4 year-old twins Shoshana and Adina.

The Ron family made Aliyah in 2004 ultimately making their home in the Gush Etzion community of Neve Daniel in 2005. The kids all took to life in Israel immediately and very quickly became fluent in both English and Hebrew. But like most people making Aliyah, it was employment that was the biggest concern.

In the USA, Sharon’s work as a speech pathologist had always been in hospitals. Before making Aliyah she had

researched speech therapy in Israel, and contacted fifty therapists to find one she could shadow. Strangely enough they all directed her to one therapist named Miriam, who agreed and even helped get her a teaching job at a University – which she has kept for the past seven years. Right at the start Sharon prophetically said to her, “You and I are going to be partners and open a clinic together,” and surely enough after a few years they opened the ONLY free-standing adult speech therapy clinic in the whole country.

Zvi, who received his Semicha from the Israeli Rabbanut and has a PhD in Jewish Theology from Spertus University, has looked at Aliyah as a great opportunity. Apart from being an extremely popular teacher in several post high-school, ‘gap year’ programs, Zvi has published a number of articles and is acting editor of the Jewish Bible Quarterly. His recently published book, *Sefer Katan ve-Gadol*, - which he wrote in Hebrew - is a favorite for bar mitzvah gifts. The book, which investigates the reasons behind the big and small letters in the Torah, incorporates a vast amount of research, including old, rare manuscripts. His upcoming 2nd book involves even more research and promises to be just as intriguing – but he’s not giving anything away just yet. Zvi also happens to be the resident barber, where people can discuss a machloket between Rashi and the Ramban while getting your pre-holiday trim.

Continued on next page...

Laura Ben-David is the author of numerous articles and the book, MOVING UP: An Aliyah Journal, a memoir of her move to Israel. For more from Laura Ben-David see her blog at <http://www.blog.aliyahbook.com>.

Continued from: Remarkably Different...

Thousands of North Americans make Aliyah each year, but the accomplishments and idealism they bring with them never cease to impress and inspire. Drawing on all the gifts the Diaspora has to offer, the new Olim bring their talents and channel them into strengthening Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. Many of the stories are truly inspiring, but there is always a swell of pride when we see another Oleh arriving from Potomac.

Sixty two years ago Israeli pioneers labored to turn a desolate wasteland into the Jewish homeland. "Israeli" is a misnomer used for second and third generation Jews born in Israel. What ties an Oleh from Maryland to another from Kiev and a Sabra from Beersheva whose grandparents fled Egypt is

the simple truth that we are all Jews living in our homeland. Today, the new pioneers of Israel, whether out of ideology or necessity, are choosing to build their futures in Israel. Israel's new pioneers are at the forefront of the hi-tech world just as much as they are leaders in the realm of social action. They contribute to Clal Yisrael by trading plowshares and shovels for microscopes and PhDs. Our professional lives as Olim are infused with the Zionist dream; when an Israeli hears your accent and asks how long you've been in Israel, you tell them, plain and simple. Often your personal story elicits the telling of their story, different from your own in so many ways, but with the same underlying value that you find only in Israel. As Olim ourselves, and as employees of Nefesh B'Nefesh, we are privileged to help other Olim fulfill their dreams.

Continued from: Impacting Israel...

Zvi is not the only one with such a varied and packed schedule. Sharon wears many hats as well. She lectures frequently to doctors, nurses, and other medical and paramedical professionals in many hospitals and nursing homes throughout the country, even to the Ministry of Health. She teaches five university courses, and somehow manages her speech pathology clinic. And in her spare time she volunteers on the Culture Committee in her neighborhood of Neve Daniel.

Zvi sees their new multi-faceted life as comparable to being pioneers in the Wild West. "In Israel we can blaze new trails and create things that didn't exist," he says. Sharon agrees. "If I hadn't made Aliyah, I would have stayed working in hospitals," she recounts. "I would never have owned a business. I would never have taught at university. It's incredible to be able to make this integration of all the things I love."

Nefesh B'Nefesh Special Aliyah Programs



Go North

The 'Go North' program, is an unprecedented initiative offering significant incentives for Olim who settle in Northern Israel. www.gonorth.org.il



The Soldier Aliyah Program

This program was established by Nefesh B'Nefesh in order to assist and support the brave young men and women who choose to serve in the Israel Defense Forces upon making Aliyah. www.nbn.org.il/soldier



Physician Aliyah Fellowship:

Nefesh B'Nefesh launched this fellowship to create an incentive program that better integrates physicians into the Israeli medical system. www.nbn.org.il/md

**For more information about Aliyah and Nefesh B'Nefesh:
www.nbn.org.il or 1-866-4-ALIYAH**

**YI SHOMREI EMUNAH OF GREATER WASHINGTON,
SILVER SPRING, MD**



**ANNUAL DINNER
SUNDAY FEB. 13**

R-L: Honorees Adam Siegal (Young Leadership Award) and Robert (Bob) Levy (former President) and Guest of Honor, Rabbi Rosenbaum, Mara D'Atra and Chaim Leibtag, COO, NCYI

YI OF ORANGE COUNTY, CA

Young Israel of Orange County, California (YIOC) hosted a Shabbat with Anita Tucker, winner of the Moskowitz Prize for Zionism, for her leadership role on behalf of the 8,600 Jews expelled from Gush Katif by the Sharon Government. Mrs. Tucker moved the congregation with a stirring presentation of the history of Gush Katif, the tragedy of the expulsion, and the struggles of the families to recalibrate their lives, still in disarray more than five years later.

Meanwhile, YIOC and Rabbi Dov Fischer, its spiritual leader, have taken the lead in seeking to reverse a misguided Hillel initiative at the University of California at Irvine where, with the financial backing of a Federation fund, Jewish students are being sent with Moslem Arab students for a two-week program to Israel and "Palestine," where they will be addressed by anti-Israel propagandists in places like Jenin and Bethlehem, as well as by a range of speakers in Israel including some very far to the left. Last year, the same program took Jewish students to "Palestine" and Jordan to hear such anti-Israel propagandists on the first day of Rosh Hashanah after spending the evening before in Jerusalem.

The Women's Group of YIOC spent a Sunday this month traveling to the exquisite Terra Sur restaurant in Oxnard, California on the grounds of the Herzog Winery, where they enjoyed a gourmet luncheon and a tour of the winery. It was so successful that more of the shul will be going as a group to a major kosher restaurant in Los Angeles for Seudat Purim.

On the Torah-learning front, Rav Fischer began a new intensive Gemara B'iyun shiur, something virtually unprecedented in Irvine on that level, and announced that, because of the intensity, attendance would be limited to ten men who would commit to the group not to miss any shiur or arrive even a minute late except for a truly extenuating reason. Requests to participate in the shiur on those terms saw the class closed out almost immediately. It is now in its second month, and the shiur that began as an hour weekly now runs 90 minutes each week. Meanwhile, Rav Fischer's 90-minute weekly Chumash-Rashi-and-More shiur, now in its fifth year, continues attracting people who drive in from as far as 45 minutes away.

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View an exciting video of last year's program at:
<http://tinyurl.com/5rhmxj>

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FLORIDA REGION

A recent trip to Florida was filled with activity for Young Israel branches. Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, Director of Programming traveled to South Florida in early January, spending Shabbos at the YI of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale, enjoying the warm hospitality of Mara D' Asra Rabbi Edward and Rebbetzin Meira Davis.

The next stop was YI of Greater Miami, where Rebbetzin Steinig coordinated and spoke at a Women's Leadership Seminar on Sunday, January 16, 2010. Leadership from YI of Greater Miami, Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale, Boca Raton, and Pembroke Pines had the opportunity to network with each other and learn about various programs offered by the National Council of

Young Israel. Publicity strategies were also discussed.

On Monday evening, Rebbetzin Steinig traveled to YI of Kendall, where she met with Rabbi Herschel Becker, Mara D'asra and a group of concerned members regarding the issues in shidduchim. Rebbetzin Steinig facilitated an interactive talk where various strategies were discussed to help the singles in the community.

The final visit on the trip was on Tuesday at YI of Deerfield Beach, where Rebbetzin Steinig had the pleasure of presenting the Aishes Chayil award to Mrs. Roslyn Snyder, honoree of the YI of Deerfield Beach. Mrs. Snyder was not able to attend the Women's Division Fall Festival, which was held in Great Neck, NY in November.



Seated: YI of Kendall's Mara D'asra Rabbi Herschel Becker L: Dr. Alan Lewin R: Rebbetzin Judi Steinig standing

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L-R: YI of Deerfield Beach Aishes Chayil Presentation: Presidium, Barbara Fischer Tami Braun, Rebbetzin Judi Steinig; Honoree Roslyn Snyder; Suzanne Hausdorff, Presidium member



Participants in the Leadership Day at Young Israel of Greater Miami included: Left to Right (seated): Jackie Horowitz, Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, Mirele Groffman, Jean Genuth. (standing): Blima Cohen, Jillian Galbut, Rebbetzin Elaine Levine, Alice Chernoff,, Leah Ring, Debbie Weitz, and Edie Adler. (not pictured but in attendance was Rebbetzin Miriam Lehrfield).

YI OF TEANECK, NJ

There is a well-known Jewish proverb; "These three are the marks of a Jew - a tender heart, self-respect and charity". We witnessed a celebration of these principles at a Young Israel of Teaneck youth activity event on Feb. 6.

Susan Weinstock and Deena Segal volunteered, over a year ago, to organize a monthly activity for the children of the shul and the community. The "Stuff a Bear" event was attended by over fifty children. Stations were set up and the children, from the age of 3 and up started by stuffing a variety of animals. They each picked out a favorite animal for this occasion. Each child was also given a star, told to make a wish on it and to be placed

in the animal before sealing it. At the next station they colored and drew on a t-shirt made to fit the stuffed animal. After bathing it and giving it a good-bye kiss, with proper seriousness and enthusiasm, the animal was carefully placed in a charity box. The children were told that the animals will be given out to sick children in hospitals, both in the Teaneck area and in Israel. The last station of this assembly line was the Mitzvah table where cake and snacks were served to celebrate the completion of this Mitzvah event.

Daniel Rothner, founder of a local charity organization Areyvut, a non-profit organization that creates programs for Jewish Youth, explained to

the children that the stuffed animals will end up in the hands of little children who will love these presents and will appreciate the wonderful Mitzvah act of the children of the Young Israel of Teaneck.

This event was a lot of fun and thanks to Areyvut it was elevated into a memorable and meaningful celebration. Learn more about Areyvut at:

Areyvut.org.



Kids at the Young Israel of Teaneck celebrating the beautiful Mitzvot they did!



(Left) Daniel Rothner founder of Areyvut, (middle) Deena Segal and (left) Susan Weinstock



Kids getting tattoos and stickers



Emily Segal (left) and Brianna Weinstock putting their bears in a box going to sick children

YI OF NORTHBROOK, IL



We are getting ready to celebrate the completion of our newly remodeled Beit Midrash. The Beit Midrash was donated and built by Bernie Lisitza memory of his mother. It has taken a few years to complete because of the great attention to detail. Every step of the way has been carefully thought out and planned for by Rabbi Herschel Berger. The date of the dedi-

cation has not been officially set yet. Not only do we have a plentiful breakfast, we get a short drash on the weekly parsha from the Rabbi, (In the past we went over some Mishna). In addition we have weekly classes on Thursday nights in the Shul, (dinner included) and the Rabbi has a weekly class at his house.

YI OF SOUTHFIELD, MI

We are very happy to report that, Baruch HaShem, we have had many new families move into our Southfield neighborhood over the last several years! We are now providing many types of chesed to our community in a wide variety of situations, including the following: New Baby Meals (Linda Lefkowitz, Coordinator) provides home-cooked meals for one week following birth of a baby and assistance in coordination of Shalom Zachor. Our Nichum Aveilim committee (Joanne Gotlib, Coordinator) brings catered meals during the Shiva period for the mourners and the immediate family and also posts the announcement to YI Metro Council phone list. Our Bikkur Cholim committee (Cookie Gonik, Coordinator) provides home-cooked meals as needed,

does shopping, provides transportation to doctor appointments, and helps with babysitting (by teenagers). We also provide Bikkur Cholim Visits in home, hospital or nursing home visits. Our "New Members Package" (Rosie Cappell and Marlene White, Co- Coordinators) greet our new members with a welcome basket with Shabbos candles, challah rolls and grape juice and a members binder, compiled by Rita Schreiber, with information about Southfield/Greater Detroit area as well as a YIS phone list.

We thank Julie Halpern, Rita Schreiber, Myra Selesny, and Shifra Zwick for their many years of dedicated service for our Bikkur Cholim Visits, New Members Package and Nichum Aveilim Committees.

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YI OF HOLLYWOOD
BEACH, FL

Young Israel of Hollywood Beach, Florida had a wonderful Sisterhood meeting on Sunday, February 6, 2011.

Sisterhood enjoyed a "CHAI TEA," which successfully combined a "ROY-ALLY" fine time with our focus on funding for our annual beautification project for the Shul.



YI OF OAK PARK, MI

MEN'S INTER-CONGREGATIONAL DINNER

The Metro Detroit Jewish Community has an annual dinner, where Jewish men, from all backgrounds, get together to break bread. This year's dinner was hosted, for the first time, by Young Israel of Oak Park. A record 258 men attended to dine together and to hear Israel Coalition on Campus Executive Director Steve Kuperberg explain how the coalition is fighting the anti-Israel bias on today's college campuses throughout America.



Tu B'Shvat



Tu B'Shvat



At the Detroit-Piston Game



YI OF ST. LOUIS, MO

THE YOUNG ISRAEL OF ST. LOUIS ANNUAL TRIBUTE DINNER HONORING DR. ROBERT AND BARBARA STRASHUN, WAS CHAIRED BY ADINAH RASKAS AND JAN ADELMAN, AND WAS HELD ON FEBRUARY 13, 2011.



L-R: Rabbi Moshe Shulman, Dr. Robert & Barbara Strashun (Honorees), Jan Adelman (Co-Chair), Adinah Raskas (Co-Chair) at the Young Israel of St. Louis.

THE ST. LOUIS JEWISH COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE, HELD AT YOUNG ISRAEL EVERY YEAR, JANUARY 16TH, 2011



L-R: Judy and Robert Hellman (Event chairs), Rabbi Moshe Shulman, Bobby Meadow (Past president, giving blood), and a nurse from the Red Cross at Young Israel of St. Louis.

YI OF OCEANSIDE, NY

Sisterhood of Young Israel of Oceanside sponsored a very unique program at its Paid Up membership event. "Humor and Healing with Lev Leytzan," the Therapeutic Clowns, was held, Tuesday, December 14th, 8 p.m. President Sharon Lindenauer opened the program, introducing Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, who gave greetings from National Council of Young Israel. Rachel Pill, LCSW, Lev Leytzan's Director of Community Relations, spoke about humor and healing

through an interactive, enjoyable and informative clown act that shows what to do and what not to do when performing the mitzvah of Bikur Cholim. Sondra Gottesman spoke very eloquently about the YIO Bikur Cholim Committee. Following the program, everyone learned how to make balloon animals. Rock Davis, Program Chairman and Lev Leytzan clown coordinated the entertaining and inspiring evening.



Rachel Pill, LCSW, Director of Community Relations, Lev Leytzan

L-R: Sharon Lindenauer, Sondra Gottesman, Rock Davis, Rebbetzin Judi Steinig and (sitting): Mendy Rubin, a Lev Leytzan clown, is the grandson of Sondra Gottesman

YI OF PEMBROKE PINES, FL By Ruth Ort

For most retirees who downsize, love the warm weather, want a Shul they can walk to on Shabbos, and don't want to move next to their children, finding the right place is a daunting task. As an Orthodox Jew, there are just not that many choices.

Young Israel of Pembroke Pines, I would suggest, is the answer! Located within Century Village, in South Florida, we are west of Hollywood, north of North Miami Beach. The newest Century Village (completed in 1998), our community offers an unsurpassed array of recreation and entertainment activities for seniors who want a warm, dynamic setting with a convenient, active Shul. YI of Pembroke Pines opened in 1990 and our present building was completed in 2002.

For Easterners, such as me, Pembroke Pines is a welcome breathe of warm, balmy air, with one of the best climates in the country; and being somewhat inland, a diminished threat of a hurricane. With an average temperature ranging from the mid-60s in the winter to the mid- 80s in the summer, it offers a life without shoveling snow, and without the need for heavy winter coats. What a pleasure! Since our Young Israel is located within Century Village, there is no shortage of (affordable) housing within walking distance of the Shul.



For those who aren't acquainted with it, let me describe Century Village: picture a gated community, complete with 24/7 security, a sophisticated medical alert system, a luxurious clubhouse with a huge theatre where one can see first run movies or Broadway shows. For the fitness-minded, there is a state of art Club Health, 23 swimming pools scattered about, jogging and bike trails, tennis courts, fishing, sailing, an 18 hole par 71 championship golf course. All of this is made even more accessible by the availability of free transportation within and outside the Village.

If I sound enthusiastic, it's because since coming here, I have found won-

derful opportunities to expand my own horizons, not only with a comfortable lifestyle, but with new experiences and friendships that many doubt are attainable after a certain point in life. As for me, I have taken advantage of the many classes available by learning to play the piano – something I had always wanted to do, but never had the time. For others, there are so many learning and recreational opportunities, we feel like we are in an adult summer camp all year round. It's important to mention that shopping malls are immediately outside the Village with all the big name stores and kosher establishments, such as restaurants and markets nearby.



Photo credit: Mendy Bleier



YI OF PEMBROKE PINES, FL CONTINUED

Who could ask for more? And the best is to be among one's own peer group to share life's experiences, brush up on our Yiddish, do some kvetching about the children and kvelling over the grandchildren and the special delight upon finding someone from the "old" neighborhood. I incredibly found out that our Rabbi was at the Shul where my father davened for fifty years in Ozone Park, N.Y. What a connection!

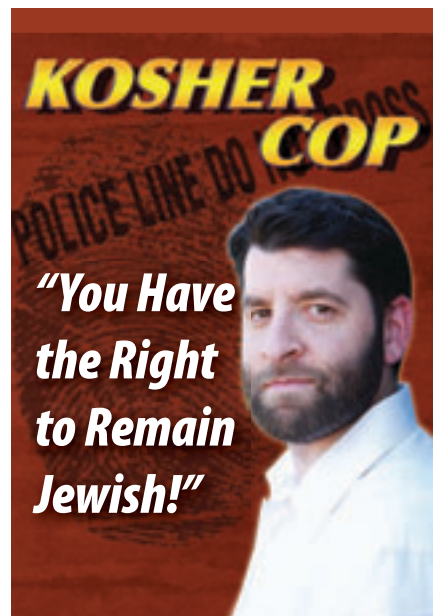
Our Young Israel is a mixture of full-time residents and "snowbirds" who fly South for the winter. Our Rabbi BenZion Levin has served our congregation since September, 2004. There is a daily minyan, ongoing classes three evenings a week, an active Sisterhood with monthly meetings including a program and lunch and a Men's Club. With various programs and events throughout the year such as our eight

week Lecture Series, the synagogue provides not only a place for prayer and learning but is a place where tikun olam is a concept that has meaning for us. This place is "mitzvah central." There is always someone who needs a ride, some help, some advice, a friend, or just some hand holding. One of the most active groups here is Amit whose work is known worldwide. We have become a "family" for better and occasionally for worse, being there for one another in good times and not-so. But that's what families are all about.

The initial founders of the Shul are now in their 70s and 80's and we are rolling out a special welcome mat to invite new members to join us by moving into the Village on a full-time or seasonal basis. As more baby boomers reach the age of retirement, we are hoping that they will consider finding their new home with us. Young Israel of Pembroke Pines and Century Village of Pembroke Pines should no longer be unknown to Orthodox Jewish seniors. As a new resident for the past two years, I have been fortunate to have found and become part of this wonderful community. It has indeed been a blessing that I want to share.

As a community, we have decided to roll up our sleeves and create a program to help everyone make the move: from finding the right condo, getting the best deal, learning about the area, meeting the members, and answering all their questions. We have just started, but we are determined to increase our membership "Yiddle" by "Yiddle".

To find out more about YI of Pembroke Pines, visit our website: www.youngisraelpembrokepines.com. There you will find pictures of our synagogue which is small enough to create the intimacy of a family and large enough for growth and expansion. Visit us and join in our community. You will have the opportunity to become a member of a group that is in the process of recreating new life and new vibrancy in their community in a beautiful, warm, affordable setting.



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Wishing all NCYI Members and Klal Yisrael a Happy and Healthy Passover Holiday - Chag Kasher V'Sameach

Rabbi Mordechai Roizman, Director of Synagogue Services, NCYI, visits the Shul



Standing, L-R: Norman Reinhard; Noah Rothman; Harold Wolf, Past President; Martha Goldsmith, Recording Secretary Herb Goldsmith, Gabbai; Rabbi Mordechai Roizman, Andrew Schwartz, President and head of Men's Club; Ruth Ort, Publicity; Melvin Bodner, President
Sitting, L-R: Miriam Yuter, Second Vice President and Financial Secretary; Alice Chernoff; David Ushkow; Sidney Kirscher, First Vice President

YI BOCA RATON, FL

February 2011 was anniversary month for the Young Israel of Boca Raton. On February 1st we celebrated the first anniversary of our morning Bais Medrash program. The Bais Medrash program provides organized learning Monday through Thursday mornings in Chumash, Mussar, and Talmud. The anniversary was marked by a festive breakfast on that day and by a special Shalosh Seudos on Shabbos February 5th. We thank our member Dr. Alan Josephs for spearheading the Bais Medrash program.

On Sunday February 20, 2011 we



Yakov Lyons emcee at YIBR 23rd Anniversary Dinner

celebrated the shul's Twenty-third anniversary and honored Stewart Birnbaum, Harriete Birnbaum, and Evelyn Solomon for all of their years of dedicated work on behalf of our Young Israel. Everyone who attended was impressed by the venue, the cuisine, and the speeches of the honorees. Our Master of Ceremonies, Yakov Lyons, navigated the multifaceted program with humor and grace. There was delight in the air when he announced that, Baruch HaShem, we had sur-



Morning Bais Medrash learning

passed our fundraising goal for the campaign.

A special thank you goes to Lola Lever, Ira Plitt, and Perri Plitt our dinner co – chairs for all of the time and effort that they invested to make the journal campaign and the dinner such a rousing success. We also thank all of our members and friends for their donations and solicitations.

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YI OF DEERFIELD BEACH, FL

Col. Myer and Esther Tulkoff were honored by the Young Israel of Deerfield Beach and State of Israel Bonds at a tribute breakfast at the branch, February 13. Presenting a plaque to the Tulkoffs is Irving Waxman (center), co-chair of the tribute committee.



YI of Deerfield Beach elected the following officers for two-year terms: Rabbi Nathaniel Steinberg, President; Nathan Braun, First Vice-President and Chairman of the Board; Albert Zachter, Second Vice-President; Hanna Zehnwirth, Third Vice-President; Arnold Berkovits, Treasurer; Phillip Gold, Financial Secretary; Dotty Gross, Recording Secretary and Norma Cohen, Corresponding Secretary.



More than 400 members and guests participated in the festivities marking the branch's 31st Annual Dinner Sunday on January 9th at the synagogue. Special awards were presented to Dotty Gross, Guest of Honor (right) and Phyllis Eisenberg, Aishes Chayil Awardee (left).

National Council of Young Israel, Ohel Children's Home & Family Services
& Young Israel of Jamaica Estates
present a community symposium

Caught between the Generations?
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*Ohel Children's Home and Family Services Intake Coordinator,
Geriatric Mental Health Program Coordinator*

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For more information, contact 212-929-1525 x 112
or email: jsteinig@youngisrael.org

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DONATE A SEFER TORAH TO THE IDF

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Additionally, we encourage all synagogues to conduct a special appeal to raise funds with which additional Sifrei Torah will be purchased for the IDF.

For info and/or to make a donation, please contact: NCYI-IDF Campaign
111 John St. Ste. 450, NY, NY 10038 **212-929-1525, Ext. 100**
execvp@youngisrael.org

To date, the NCYI-IDF Project has sent over 190 Torahs to the Chief Rabbi of the IDF. Many more are still needed.

To include your shul's Branch News in our next edition of Viewpoint Magazine,

Contact Esther Altmann, Editor
ealtmann@youngisrael.org

YI OF VALLEY VILLAGE, CA



R-L: Michael Kublin, President; Rabbi Pesach Lerner; Rabbi Zvi Block, YI Rabbi; Rabbi Aaron Parry



Rabbi Pesach Lerner, Scholar-in-Residence at YI of Valley Village, CA, speaks about Jonathan Pollard.

YI OF AVENTURA, FL



L-R: President of shul Elán Bittman, Aventura, FL, Rabbi Mordechai Roizman, Dir. Synagogue Services, NCYI

YI OF SUNNYSIDE, NY



Rebbetzin Nechama Lerman (left), Rebbetzin Judi Steinig (right) and Shoshana Lerman (center) at Young Israel of Sunnyside. They are standing in front of the beautiful mechtzas that were designed by Betty-Anne Weiner, Executive Director of the synagogue.

Young Israel of Sunnyside received a Branch visit from Rebbetzin Judi Steinig, Director of Programming on March 1, 2011. Rebbetzin Steinig met with Rabbi Nesanel and Rebbetzin Nechama Lerman at the synagogue, where they discussed various programs of the National Council of Young Israel and services that are available to branch synagogues. Rebbetzin Steinig had the opportunity to learn more about the shul's history, including the recent Sefer Torah dedication.

YI OF BAYSIDE, NY



At a recent Shul meeting, Rabbi Pesach Lerner, NCYI (not shown), addressed the group

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Centers For At-Risk Teens Themselves, At Risk

**With its funding slashed,
future of Our Place™ in jeopardy;
'I'd be on the street without it,' teen says.**

Stale cigarette smoke hanging in the air behind him, the sounds of weights clanging and billiard balls crashing in the background, Motti sits on a frayed couch in the heart of Flatbush one recent night and talks about what it is like — or was — to be an at-risk Jewish teenager.

Now 17, he came to Brooklyn seven months ago from the Midwest, where he was failing at school and fighting at home. Here, he says, he lived with a member of his family, but was still lost, “chilling on the streets, doing drugs.”

That changed a few months ago, Motti (not his real name) says, when “a friend,” someone he’d hang out with wasting time, told him about Our Place, a drop-in center for teens, many from Orthodox backgrounds.

He came one night, one of the more than 6,000 troubled teens helped by the center in the last dozen years. And he kept coming back. “Every night,” Motti says. Shooting a little pool, watching some TV, talking with the adult volunteers and teenage peers who hang around the center, down a flight of stairs, through an unmarked door on Avenue M, a business center of Brooklyn’s heavily Orthodox neighborhood.

The teens, mostly from Modern Orthodox and black-hat backgrounds, have the classic street look — garish T-shirts, jeans or cargo pants, suspicious eyes that give every visitor the once-over. Some of the boys are bareheaded; some wear stocking caps.

Were it not for Our Place, a 12-year-old independent institution under Orthodox auspices, “I’d be on the street,” Motti says.

Now, he says, he’s afraid he may

end up back there. Our Place may have to close.

The organization has depended on state aid and some private philanthropic support. Since the middle of this year, when government funding, the victim of budget cutbacks, stopped, Our Place has gone into major debt to keep its doors from closing. Due to the economic conditions the past few years have been more and more difficult for the organization, so cuts have been made and locations closed. With the new circumstances the organization will have to close its doors. Just a few years ago, before the economy collapsed, the Our Place annual budget was \$1.8 million, Chaim Glancz a program director says.

Glancz, 50, a “Brooklyn-born-and-bred” resident of nearby Borough Park who started befriending at-risk Jewish youth two decades ago and has served at Our Place since it was founded, called some of the center’s major supporters together earlier this month. “I wanted to pull the plug,” to close down Our Place before the debt grew larger, he says.

Give us a little time — we’ll try to raise the needed funds, the supporters said.

The boys — a separate “Our Place Too” for Jewish girls is located a few miles away in Flatbush — come up to Glancz, slapping him five or offering him a bite to eat, as he shows a visitor around the 4,000 + square-foot converted karate studio.

In one wood-paneled room is a ping-pong table, along a row of pool tables. In the corner, a few boys are huddled around a large-screen TV, watching “N.C.I.S.” On the other side

of a dividing wall are teens grunting on free weights and weight-lifting machines. There’s a jamming room with a complete set of drums, a small therapy room for personal counseling, and rows of prayer books and Jewish texts.

“We do no kiruv,” he says, using the Hebrew term for religious outreach — there are plenty of rabbis who do that.

Our Place, a response to the growing number of teens from Orthodox homes who have turned to street-life and substance abuse in recent decades, concentrates on the kids’ psychological and educational needs. Through its day school division, it helps students receive a GED high school diploma.

A separate co-ed post-rehab recovery program, titled The Living Room, is based at yet another location. Hundreds of young adults in their early 20’s are part of this program.

“Today’s troubled youth have a common denominator: they are searching, seeking and looking for that elusive answer to quell their inner turmoil,” an Our Place brochure states. “Naïve, frightened and alone, they are seduced and beguiled by drug dealers, molesters and criminals. Our Place offers troubled youth the opportunity of rediscovering themselves, their beliefs, aspirations ... and ultimately, their future.”

“It’s a home away from home — my friends are here,” says Robert, 16. He says the therapists and volunteers have helped him tame his temper. “I used to be angry all the time.”

Our Place has made him “a better person.”

“Our mission is to get the kids back into the community,” to restore then

to their families, Glancz says.

"We treat them like our family," Glancz says.

Of the some 7,000 Jewish teens — mostly boys — who have passed through the Our Place doors, Glancz says, about 70 percent are considered successes. They're off drugs, back in school, back at home, happily married.

The rest?

"Some are still hanging around," still drifting, still doing drugs. "Some we lost" to the streets, Glancz says. "Some we buried." This past year alone over 25 teens in the New York Tri-State region died from overdose.

Without Our Place, he says, "we would be burying more kids."

While Our Place is likely the largest organization with such drop-in centers for at-risk Jewish teens, and spon-

sors "the most extensive" array of daily services for members of both sexes, it is not only located in Brooklyn NY. Our Place has a program in Israel called "Our House" and has opened similar drop-in locations in several other Jewish neighborhoods, including Lakewood, NJ, Queens NY, and Monsey in Rockland County., NY. The teens, he says, are concerned by reports that their place may close.

"I can't believe it," Motti says. "This is my home. I've been clean [off drugs] for a long time because of this place."

What will he and the other nightly drop-in visitors do if Our Place closes?

"I have no clue," he says. "[We're] in trouble... I really have no clue."

Joey, 15, who also comes every night to "chill" and play chess, says he'll probably be "back on the streets"

if Our Place closes; the same for most of his friends.

Joey's parents, who live in Brooklyn, encourage him to come here, he says. "They're happy I'm not on the streets."

On a typical night, about 70-80 boys come and go at the Avenue M site, like the tide.

When the boys walked down Avenue M after dark this week, they saw a familiar sight down the block — a group of teens, hoods over their heads to protect against the early winter cold, hanging out on the street.

For further information, or to donate please visit www.OurPlaceNY.org

Excerpts from an article written by Steve Lipman

NCYI branch news

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L-R: Jerry Dorf, Rabbi Mordechai Roizman, Aaron Halprin, George Goldsein (President)

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L-R: Rabbi Yisroel Edelman, Rabbi Mordechai Roizman, Rabbi Nathaniel Steinberg, President

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