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# Jerusalem Letter:

## VIEWPOINTS

the Jerusalem center

JERUSALEM INSTITUTE FOR  
FEDERAL STUDIES

CENTER FOR  
JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDIES

Daniel J. Elazar, Editor and Publisher • David Clayman, Executive Editor

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### THE GUILT OF THE ISRAELI LEFT

Shmuel Trigano

Dr. Shmuel Trigano, a leading young French Jewish intellectual and a Sephardi born in Algeria, is one of the foremost articulators of the new Sephardi consciousness which seeks to give positive expression to the Sephardic heritage in the context of contemporary Jewish and Israeli society. In this article, he attacks the Israeli leftist critics of the Sephardim and suggests that there are deeper reasons for their propagation of negative stereotypes about Israel's new majority. In its place, Dr. Trigano offers a Sephardic vision of the contemporary Jewish crises.

Dr. Trigano was recently elected an Associate of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. He teaches at the Universities of Paris and Montpellier where he is developing a Center for Jewish Community Studies in association with the Jerusalem Center, which will provide us with a better articulated European extension than we have had in the past. In May 1979, he edited the special issue of Jean Paul Sartre's journal, *Les temps modernes*, devoted to the "other Israel." Politically, he is close to the Israeli left. This is his first appearance in these pages and we welcome him to the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and the *Jerusalem Letter*.

### THE ATTACK ON THE SEPHARDIM

For the past several years, Israeli writers and public figures have been publishing articles in the world press analyzing the political crisis in Israel as if it were an ethnic one. Ze'ev Sternhell, for example, speaks of "the Oriental Jews' enmity towards the Arabs." Arie Eliav, despite his scrupulousness, believes that "the two Israeli camps which contended against one another in the past (the Socialists and the Revisionists/Liberals--ed.) were of the same (European) origin and shared almost the same culture. But this is not the situation today when elements of the Israeli

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public are easily influenced by demagogic slogans." Professor Shlomo Avineri states:

With the growth in the number of Sephardic voters, there was a parallel growth in that segment of the Israeli population originating from very traditional societies, whose general outlook is much more ethnocentric than that of the more liberal and secular Europeans who dominated Israeli politics for generations .... It is doubtful whether what happened (in Sabra and Shatilla) significantly reduced support for Begin among those Israelis who like his inflexible style, his attacks against the gentile world, and his ethnocentric approach.

Western reporters and journalists have found in these ideas the most convenient and clearest way of explaining the present political situation in Israel.

Thus, for the first time, there has been an inherently dangerous "internationalization" of Israel's Ashkenazic-Sephardic conflict. Under the guise of national and ideological argument, the intellectuals of the Israeli left, mostly Ashkenazim, are concealing a shameful "ethnic" chauvinism. By means of moral denunciations they are trying to save the image of the "good Western Jew"--enlightened, democratic, and liberal--while branding Sephardic Israel with the mark of the "bad Jew", who scorns education, is fanatic and backward, hinting that all evil stems from him. They reinvent all the stereotypes of the colonialist West towards the East. An analysis of their deeply complex behavior may help clarify the political crisis behind the curtain which these intellectuals have drawn to protect their delusions. Their verbiage has prevented the self-examination which the Israeli left must carry out in order to present itself as a viable alternative to the present government.

#### A POTENTIALLY REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION

The situation of the Jewish people can be described as potentially revolutionary. The leadership crisis in the diaspora and in Israel reflects the fact that there are today no influential thinkers capable of analyzing the crisis and guiding the people to positive action.

One segment of the Jewish people feels itself besieged by the "other Israel," whose existence it fails to perceive clearly due to a total lack of compassion. The speech by Amos Oz during the demonstration in memory of Emil Grunzweig ("when the state is in a state of siege") exemplifies this feeling. Another man, Shimon Yehoshua, had previously been killed in Kfar Shalem, but his death did not shock Peace Now, the Israeli left, the intellectuals, or even the media into public protest. This Israel is concerned with the fate of Israeli democracy, because of its fear of the "other political culture," utterly mythical, of the Sephardim. But it was not concerned, over a thirty year period, with the danger inherent in a democracy in which 65 percent of the population was represented by only two and a half ministers, when 500,000 people in Israel were living below the poverty threshold. And what of the "other Israel"? They feel themselves in terrible exile within the bosom of the Jewish people. A deep silence dwells within them, but, neglected and thrust aside, they must heed the "first Israel," they must recognize it because they are in the minority in power and in representation.

#### IDEOLOGICAL STEREOTYPES

If progress is going to be made in breaking down the barriers between the "two Israels," the erroneous arguments which place a moral stigma on the Sephardim must be discounted once and for all.

**The first stereotype:** the assumption that the political consciousness of the Sephardim is by nature primitive and tribal--that the Sephardim, who come from Eastern countries, identify only with a charismatic and forceful leader.

**The second stereotype:** The Sephardim are not familiar with the democratic idea and with all the special processes of a democratic regime. They cannot grasp the abstract meaning of the modern state.

**The third stereotype:** The Sephardim have no political culture or political consciousness.

**The fourth stereotype:** The Sephardim inwardly hate the Arabs like the European Colons.

While it is the members of the Israeli left who are responsible for this polemical stereotype, Western media have contributed their share to it. Begin has become the embodiment of the cursed and heinous Jew (i.e. Sephardim) as depicted in the Western consciousness in its worst nightmares. His supporters, by association, are also evil.

I do not count myself among former Prime Minister Begin's supporters. Following Begin's rise to power, I wrote an article outlining the impasse into which his policies would lead us. However, democratic processes should not be exploited to abuse rival political parties in such a manner. Through this mistaken process we have no alternative but to make a spurious choice: for or against Begin. For Begin and against peace; or against Begin and in favor of peace.

## WHY THE SEPHARDIM VOTE LIKUD

Without going into demographic calculations, it is generally agreed that most Sephardim supported Begin in the elections. How can we explain why most of the Sephardim vote for the Likud? This political choice is the result of thirty years of organized and almost deliberate social injustice. The political responsibility for this must be placed on the Labour Alignment, for it is they who were in power and who administered the absorption of the Sephardim in Israel. The Sephardic vote is a reactive choice against the Labour Alignment because this is the only alternative which the political system provided. On a more profound level, this lack of an alternative can be attributed to the fact that Israel closely resembles a "party state," in the terms used by De Gaulle to describe the Fourth Republic of France. Because the central organs of the parties control the party lists for elections, the Israeli political establishment does not renew itself and is free to choose its members from among those of similar ethnic and geographical origin. Thus, several of the basic givens of the political game by their nature, cannot be answered by the Sephardic voters, and on a broader plane--by all younger Israelis.

## THE SEPHARDIM AND DEMOCRACY

**The second stereotype:** The Sephardim do not know the meaning of democracy or democratic behavior. This is a problem of definition: democracy is a form of regime, and also an idea which will, in practical terms, never be realized. A minimal definition of democracy is to willingly accept the procedures of a political community and to behave accordingly. In cases of revolution or rebellion, democracy collapses and is ineffective because this consensus no longer exists: all the givens combined no longer constitute a unified system. On this point, it seems to me that the

Sephardim have in fact demonstrated their democratic consciousness by not voting for ethnic lists, which have failed throughout Israeli history. This democratic consciousness is also clearly expressed in the fact that the Sephardim have voted for an Ashkenazic leader during whose term of office the poverty line dropped to a level lower than that which existed ten years ago. While the Sephardim had every reason to withdraw and to rebel within the framework of an ethnic, political movement, violent or nonviolent, they have displayed an unparalleled sense of restraint and compromise. It is this restraint exercised even after they had perceived how serious their situation had become that allows the Israeli democratic system to function.

### SEPHARDIC POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The third stereotype: the lack of political consciousness. In the eyes of all sociologists, everyone has a political consciousness. Political consciousness should not be confused with individual ideology--political consciousness exists whether one identifies with the left or the right, or with any other camp. Everyone has his own image of government. At the same time, it is clear that the Sephardim lack a clear consciousness of their group and ethnic interests. They have not articulated political goals for themselves or for others. Perhaps the Sephardim lack a "separatist" political consciousness because they are aware that they constitute a majority within the Israeli population. It is incongruous for a majority to maintain separatist mentality. Thus, while we can assume that the basis of the political system is false, we cannot assume that a Sephardic consciousness does not exist. Activists would undoubtedly prefer that they had a sharper awareness of their situation. It may be that the lack of such a separatist consciousness has a certain intrinsic wisdom. The Sephardim have brought the political system to the brink of its present impasse; instead of fighting directly, instead of breaking the system which does not recognize them, they have brought it to a crisis point.

Perhaps there is an advantage in their abstention from a party or separatist consciousness, for in this way they maintain the universality of their approach. They have placed the entire system in a crisis, which goes beyond the confines of the Sephardic question. Because the Sephardic question is the Jewish question in the fullest sense of the word--the question of history, the question of identity--an ethnic question--its solution can only be a Jewish solution, or an overall Israeli solution. No one can evade this problem; but the intellectuals of the left could prefer to use ethnicity as an excuse for avoiding overall solutions.

Also regarding political consciousness, there are those who contend that the Sephardim do not know what politics is. The truth is that because of their historical experience, the Sephardim have a different political culture than that which was formed in nineteenth century Europe. Those with a European mindset label this consciousness "primitive." What they are actually referring to are the importance which Sephardim attach to the Jewish tradition and the influence of Islamic culture. The fact that the Sephardim lived in the Arab countries had a decisive effect on their approach to the political world. This does not mean that their approach was defined by some tribal, primitive nature, but that in the Arab countries no one ever tried to deprive the Sephardim (who were simply "Jews") of their identity as a people, and no one denied the historical dimension of their peoplehood, as happened to European Jewry. It should not be forgotten, however, that the first communities to enter the modern era were Sephardic: the Jews of Amsterdam, of Surinam, and the Jewish community of Bordeaux, which played an important part in the French Revolution. Of course, Sephardic Jewry experienced oppression and persecution, but never of a metaphysical, spiritual nature. The Sephardic communities were always characterized in political, social, cultural and national terms. Even with the status of

dependents, Sephardim could always preserve their identity as a people.

People speak of identity only when their identity is threatened. The Sephardim were permitted to remain "Jews," hence they do not speculate on "Jewish identity" or "Sephardic identity." They never had to develop an abstract attitude towards themselves (their attitude was, and continues to be, immediate, concrete, historical). This attitude governs their approach to the state and to government--an approach which was never abstract or ideological.

## THE SEPHARDIM AND THE ARABS

The fourth stereotype--that the Sephardim have a "gut" hatred of the Arabs, reflects the failure to understand a central characteristic of the Sephardic attitude towards the Arabs. The Sephardic consciousness contains no sense of guilt towards the Arab world: They were never on the side of the imperialistic camp, except very marginally; they never displayed disdain for the Arabs. The reason for this is simple: the Jews lived together with the Arabs with relations based on dissimilarity--rule or submission. These relations, in turn, were based not on prejudice, but on the success or failure which characterize human relations in any society. Although the Arabs recognized the Jews as a people (at least until the establishment of Israel), they objected to Jewish nationalism. The Sephardic attitude towards the Arabs was at root a direct one. They can fight against the Arabs when necessary, or live together with them in peace, without any complexes.

## THE JEWISH SECRET OF THE MODERN EPOCH

Up to this point the arguments presented have been in reaction to current stereotypes. Political forms are but the tip of the iceberg of the basic human problems. It is clear that the reemergence of the Sephardim as a factor within the Jewish people has rocked the edifice of contemporary Jewry. This eruption was, of course, most saliently and massively felt in the land of Israel, in the bosom of political Zionism, where fundamental assumptions ignored the existence of the Sephardim. The same thing occurred in the French Jewish community, where the influx of North African Jews completely shook the then accepted forms of Jewish identity and the general consensus on the status of the Jews in French society. The reemergence of the Sephardim is generating an epochal upheaval, upsetting an entire strategy of life in Jewish history.

Since the eighteenth century, Western society has emphasized individualism but at the price of atomization. In the nineteenth century, the effort to overcome atomization led to European nationalism. Modern society as anti-social. In response to this, modern man resorts to an abstract, mythical, romantic perception of the nation, in order to recreate the disappearing society. In the twentieth century, fascism and totalitarianism also attempted to create a missing sense of solidarity. People sought a way to renew the sensation and the essence of sociability (through trade unions and the state) which had been lost in liberal democracy.

In the Jewish dimension of this problem, the Western Jew, by force of circumstance, had to think of himself as an individual, of one nationality or another, whose Jewishness was no longer a group phenomenon but abstract, internal, imaginary. On the other hand, the Sephardim--because of their different historical experience--preserved their identity as a Jewish society.

## THE IMPACT OF THE SEPHARDIC ERUPTION

The unexpected eruption of the Sephardim into contemporary Jewry is the eruption of the concrete, historical Jewish people into the abstract, modern nation which political Zionism tried to build. In this sense, political Zionism is moving from west to east. Zionism was, in a sense, a regression from Jewish modernity: it rejected an atomized Jewish existence and sought to restore the Jewish people, which had been sacrificed by the Enlightenment on an altar of the (dark) "lights" of Europe. But this regression was only half-way: it has always been conducted in Western dress. Hence, the meeting place between Sephardim and Ashkenazim which should have occurred within the Zionist enterprise occurred but did not succeed. The Ashkenazim turned to the Sephardim without seeing them, even when confronting them. They were divided by the myth of the West.

On this conceptual basis, we can better understand those who say, as if subconsciously, that "the Sephardim belong to the Middle Ages," that they have a "tribal mentality," and the like. There is a certain truth in this, because in the consciousness of modern man, the group social dimension which we have described is primitive and belongs to the past. No one can renounce this dimension. It is a fact that the social machine creates: the modern effort to come to grips with this fact creates nationalism, fascism, fascist totalitarianism. In Israel, it creates Gush Emunim and Peace Now. All these ideological movements demonstrate the inability of groups of individuals to maintain their social existence naturally, historically, creatively. It is from this complex that the phenomenon of modern ideologies is derived. In Israel, these ideological movements testify to the deep, subconscious failure of the Ashkenazim to live in this country, this culture; their failure to willingly accept the geography. The descendents of Spanish Jewry do not know these problems, this terminology. They have no part in this impasse.

There is also a second type of problem in which the Sephardim have no part. In this whole polemic, the Ashkenazim present the idea of the Enlightenment and universal secularism which granted the Jews admission into the world of culture, as opposed to the conservative Jewish tradition which despises the Enlightenment. In this case, the historical experience of the Sephardim proves that both these ideas are erroneous. Secularism is not abstract and universal, as is generally thought. It was born out of the Western Christian culture, and it remains Christian in form, in all areas of modern culture. On the other hand, Jewish tradition is not a dogmatic religion but a universal approach to the world, the comprehensive culture of a people. Napoleon (and afterwards the modern state) transformed Judaism into a religion in order to make it disappear.

In the Sephardic world, no different or rival schools and ideologies of Judaism emerged. The term "Judaism" itself was born two hundred years ago in Europe. Among the Sephardim, there is no orthodoxy, no liberalism, no secularism, no "religion!" There are those who say that this is because the Sephardim are underdeveloped. This view is totally unfounded. The Sephardim have a different strategy of modern life which continues the chain of the Jewish people from Biblical times and preserves the unity of the people. We did not have a class of ruling rabbis, but the culture of the people was traditional. This special way of life comes closer to religious secularism, or if you wish, to Jewish secularism, in the fullest sense of the word. The secularism of Western Jewry is Western secularism. In the present situation, with its lack of alternatives, the Sephardim cannot take a position because they are living in a totally different intellectual world. It is sad that there is a general failure in recognizing that through the Sephardim a new form of life for the Jewish people in contemporary human culture is dawning.



It is intimated that the leftist "peace camp" in Israel is being blocked by the right-wing majority of the Israelis, namely the Sephardim. In fact, the Israeli right does not exist today except within the religious camp. However, Gush Emunim's basic ideology is nineteenth century European nationalism, together with territorial irridentism. Thus, the left and the right alike represent two outcomes following from the same logic, which is the logic of modern Judaism--the integration of the Jews into the West. Already in the time of Jabotinsky, the right adopted the symbols of Jewish tradition and the Biblical heroes, but forgot their Jewish meaning. The left retained several moral ideas from Jewish tradition, but neglected their manifestation, the embodiment of the Jews throughout the world. Hence, as it was the same processes which created the Jewish left and right, the ideology of Labor seems to belong to the same world and the same logic as that of the Revisionists. What this means is that the Jewish people is today faced with an impasse. The choice which we are offered is a false one, and in fact we scarcely believe in its credibility. All the camps, all the ideologies, seem to be caricatures of the Jewish people's existence, history and tradition.

If we ignore the polemic aspect, this seems to imply that there are within the Jewish people two levels of modern existence; each segment of the people experiences the same history in a different way. This gap is in my opinion very significant, because the historical experience of the Ashkenazic world is today undergoing a fundamental crisis brought on by the establishment of the State of Israel, namely the establishment of a Jewish society.

Israel's culture is a case in point. Two cultures do indeed divide the Israel people. On the one hand, the culture of the largely Ashkenazic intelligentsia which combines the pompous culture of the universities with a literary, provincial culture which tries, at times successfully, to elevate itself to a European level. This culture is becoming more and more a Hebrew-speaking Western culture. On the other hand, we do not find the great and magnificent culture of the Sephardic world, but a groveling culture nurtured by Aris San (*a pop singer of Greek-style music - Ed.*) and "Dallas," a sub-culture of "made in Hong Kong and Macao."

Thus, Israel suffers from an intelligentsia which does not try to arouse or express the creative forces of the people but rather imposes upon them a culture which is foreign to the thirty century-old Jewish culture. This approach contributes even more to the split within the Jewish people and adds to the spiritual isolation of most Israelis within their own state, their own culture, their own language, their own philosophy, their own religion, their own history. Thirty-five years after the establishment of the state, and despite its fabulous successes in many areas, Israeli society remains very average, and is lagging behind the advances made in perceptions and thought in the Western world. Israeli society is ultimately very similar to the societies of the Eastern bloc, from which the founders of political Zionism originated, societies which are engulfed by a powerful and undemocratic bureaucracy. Jewish history sometimes surprises us: after twenty centuries of exile, the voice which is finally going forth from Zion speaks to us in a mixture of Shakespeare and Dallas, in an accent which tries to conceal the accent of the *shtetl*.

## THE END OF THE TUNNEL

It is very important to understand these pangs, the profound processes which are interwoven in this problem, with which we are familiar today only in polemical terms of civil war. But it is urgent that we study them if we wish to find a way out of the impasse that will preserve the Jewish people and its culture. In any event, we are today living one day before the explosion. The red light is already on.



# Jerusalem Letter

## Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs

JERUSALEM INSTITUTE FOR FEDERAL STUDIES • CENTER FOR JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDIES

Daniel J. Elazar, Editor and Publisher • David Clayman, Executive Editor

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### THE ENEMY IS NOT ANONYMOUS

by Oded Zarai

#### ACTION AND ANALYSIS

One Saturday last October at 10 O'clock in the morning, a black Mercedes with Lebanese license plate number 338804 pulled up at the Shi'ite "Amal" organization headquarters in Bourj Al-Barajneh in West Beirut. The car, which was escorted by an armed white "Landrover" pick-up, was carrying three senior commanders of the Fatah rebels led by Abu-Mussa. One of the three was Habib Siam, who was in charge of the PLO camp in this area before the evacuation. The three officials stayed at the "Amal" headquarters for about three hours. The next day, the officials' families arrived in West Beirut. They belong to the group of cadres that arrived last week, in cars loaded with arms and explosives, via the "Abu-Mussa route" to the southern suburbs of Beirut, and from there to the western part of the city.

Seemingly an unremarkable event, this is in fact one of a number of steps taken in past weeks to revive and expand what remains of the terrorist infrastructure in West Beirut. Among those arriving during this period have been experts on large-scale terrorist actions from the Popular Front-General Command organization led by Ahmed Jibril. These experts, or at least some of them, come from the headquarters of the pro-Syrian organizations in Damascus. They spend some time in the Beka'a, at the Syrian intelligence command which is shared with the Soviet military advisers; and from there they go via the Beirut-Damascus highway through the Tzofar-Bahamdoun area, to the Abu-Mussa route -- from Beitzur in the east to Shu'eifat in the west -- escorted by Jumblatt's men, who control the length of that route.

These are the elements in action out in the field who are counted among the allies of Syria -- which enjoys Soviet patronage. That is to say that every terrorist action or shooting at Lebanese army positions, at the Eastern (Christian) suburbs of Beirut, or at the areas where the Multi-National Force is located, are carried out in coordination with and/or under the direction of Syria. From the American intelligence report, a clear picture emerges of the part the Soviet experts play in the entire scope of military elements that control some of the southern and western suburbs of Beirut. It follows, therefore, that the terrorist activity and shooting planned in these areas are coordinated and directed, directly or indirectly, by operators in Damascus or in the Beka'a. This is even more true of a sophisticated, ambitious, well-planned action such as the despicable crime at the American Marine headquarters in Khalde and at the French battalion headquarters in Janakh in West Beirut.

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This picture, in even greater detail, is well known to Lebanese security forces, to the Multi-National force headquarters -- and especially to the Americans, who have excellent intelligence resources at their command. As to the case in hand, sources in Beirut contend that in recent weeks the Americans had been warned against ambitious terrorist actions directed against them, based on reliable information indicating intensive Syrian attempts to smuggle car-bombs into West Beirut. In the wake of Sunday's tragedy, it is only natural for the communications media in the region and throughout the world to wonder about the identity of the perpetrators, and thereby to fall into the "communications trap" generally laid for them by the real perpetrators, who let some fly-by-night organization take responsibility for the crime.

Arafat employed this method in the murder of the Israeli athletes in Munich, when he hid behind "Black September." This is also the method the Syrians are employing now in Beirut. But if the media may be permitted to wonder at the true identity of the perpetrators, and to conclude, at least in the early stages, that it was an "unknown enemy," this does not apply to those injured in this case -- because both the American and French intelligence services know well that the enemy is not in the least anonymous.

Pointing an accusing finger at Iran is perhaps an easy policy for the Americans. But any military man who has passed a junior officer's course, and has served in Lebanon for more than a month, knows that even if Iran had wanted to carry out the attacks at Khalde and Janakh, it could not have done so. Possibly the Iranians contributed two drivers from the revolutionary guards to drive the booby-trapped vehicles to their target, but it is doubtful whether they were capable of more than that. Syrian control over what goes on in Lebanon has increased immeasurably in the wake of the takeover by Walid Jumblatt's men and the terrorists in the areas evacuated by Israel last month. One need not be a military man to understand the overwhelming importance of opening a connecting route between Tsofar and Shu'eifat. The two truck-bombs could have easily passed over that route. At the same time, the sabotage materiel and the necessary equipment could easily have been brought in via that same route in several installments and the two trucks readied at a spot close to Khalde and Janakh.

- The American Marines in Khalde do not control what goes on in the Solana quarter, hence sniper fire is directed at them, nor do they control the Fakahani area, where car-bombs are made.
- One can snipe at the forces of the greatest power in the world, and even shell them without risk; one can blow up the American Embassy in Ras Beirut without risking retaliation; and if so, why not dare to blow up the Marine headquarters, especially when it serves the desired end of bringing about the removal of the Multi-National Force from Lebanon?

Actions of this sort bring immediate repercussions throughout the country. Not only does Syria's prestige go up in Lebanon and in the entire Arab world, but the other elements who operate in other parts of the country are encouraged thereby, and they step up their activity -- like the Shi'ites in the South. At the same time, the criminal action sends a shock wave through other elements in the Lebanese arena who have staked their bets on the "American trump card" -- just as happened to those elements that had been friendly to Israel following the events in the Aley and the Shouf. These elements -- today more than ever, as the press in Beirut points out -- have their eyes on the American administration and what it is doing in the wake of the disaster. They aren't asking themselves whether President Reagan will stand firm on leaving the Marines in Lebanon, but whether this time, too, the United States will carry on as usual and not retaliate.

In such a case, and especially if the Marines should withdraw from Khalde to one of the aircraft carriers off the coast of Beirut, it may well be that the way may be paved to renewed Lebanese recognition of Syrian dependability, with all that that implies both for the United States and Israel.

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*Oded Zarai is Arab Affairs Editor for the Hebrew daily **Ha'aretz** and is a television and radio commentator. This article is based on an original Hebrew version which appeared in **Ha'aretz** on 26 October 1983.*

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### AMERICAN JEWS AND ISRAEL: PRAGMATIC, CRITICAL, BUT STILL IN LOVE

Steven M. Cohen

*Jewish involvement with Israel. Americans for a safe Israel. Privately critical, publicly supportive. A loving relationship.*

In recent years, many American Jews, from all walks of communal life, have voiced not only private, but increasingly public disagreements with certain Israeli government actions or policies. As a result, it has become fashionable among American journalists to speak, as did *Newsweek*, of the "Anguish of American Jews," or, in other words, of some sort of growing alienation between American Jewry and Israel. According to this view former Prime Minister Begin's persona, the West Bank settlements, the war in Lebanon, and the ascendance of Sephardic political leadership all have contributed to making American Jews less enamored of Israel. If true, then such a development would not bode well either for Israel's political clout in the United States or for American Jewish identity, which, since 1967, has become increasingly centered on Israel.

To examine these issues, I conducted three national surveys of American Jews for the American Jewish Committee. Conducted before, during, and after the height of hostilities in Lebanon (in Winter 1981-2, August 1982, and Summer 1983), the three studies provide the first in-depth reasonably comprehensive, and dynamic understanding of American Jewish attitudes toward Israel.

Three major themes emerge from these studies. First, American Jews, far more than most observers imagine, are incredibly involved with Israel and care for the Jewish state very deeply. Second, their orientations toward Israel's foreign policies are primarily pragmatic. American Jews want policies that work, policies which they think will maximize Israel's security and her defenses against military and diplomatic assault. Third, American Jews are reluctant--though in recent years less so--to openly express views at variance with official Israeli policies for fear of harming Israel in the potentially hostile public arena. The three points bear elaboration.

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## JEWISH INVOLVEMENT WITH ISRAEL

The extraordinary involvement of American Jews with Israel can be well illustrated with a few pertinent statistics:

- About 2 adult Jews in 5 (40%) have been to Israel; almost half of these (17%) have been there twice or more.
- Over a third of American Jews (34%) have family in Israel.
- Over a third (many of these same people) have "personal friends" in Israel.

For many observers, the high travel figures are quite surprising. For some reason some authoritative Israeli source has been bandying about the figure of 10%. In actuality the 1970-1 National Jewish Population Study found that at that time, as many as 16% of American Jews had been to Israel. Since then, the figure has gone up about 2-3% a year. In 1981, a national study conducted for the Israel Government Tourist Office found that 38% of American Jews had been to Israel. (The 1981 New York Jewish Population Study that Paul Ritterband and I are conducting found exactly the same figure for the New York region.)

The large number of Jews who have travelled to Israel does not, in itself, incontrovertibly demonstrate a commitment to Israel. The Ministry of Tourism study that found 38% had been to Israel also found that almost as many--35%--had been to Italy. Our New York survey found that Jews of Manhattan score very low on all measures of Jewishness, save one: by 1981, 44% of Manhattan Jews had travelled to Israel, more than any other country in the area. Clearly, travel to Israel is no guarantee of pro-Israel or Jewish commitment, but it is still a very strong indicator of such. Those who have been to Israel, especially those who have been there at least twice score much higher on ritual practice, communal affiliation and pro-Israel attitudes.

The substantial minority of Jews with friends and family in Israel implies that for them, if not for many others, their connection with Israel is very genuine, immediate, and personal. When they think of Israel and worry about her future, they think not merely of some abstract spiritual symbol (powerful as that may be), but of real places they have seen, and, more importantly, real people who are close and dear to them.

This large minority of American Jews intensely involved with Israel comprise but the inner circle of the vast majority of Jews who, while less involved, still care deeply about Israel. Over nine Jews in ten (somewhat less during the Lebanon war, somewhat more before and after) said that they are "pro-Israel." Over 3 in 4 said that "Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew" and an equal number claimed that "If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest personal tragedies in my life." Conversely, only 1 Jew in 10 reported that "I am sometimes uncomfortable about identifying as a supporter of Israel."

Even the least committed American Jews reported attending a Passover Seder (whatever that might mean to them; perhaps only a big family meal with matzah). Just like 9 in 10 say they are pro-Israel, the same percentage claim to attend a Seder. From the figures above on Israel involvement then, we may say that Israel, like the Seder, also defines an outer limit of Jewish commitment in America. Thus, if you are in any way positively "Jewish" in America you will probably do at least two things: go to a Passover Seder and express caring and concern for Israel.

## AMERICANS FOR A SAFE ISRAEL

While American Jews may love Israel, many do not agree with her all the time, especially when it comes to matters of security and international relations. American Jews are united in their anxieties over Israel's safety in a hostile international environment. But their approach is safety-conscious and pragmatic, rather than oriented toward historical or religious principles of territorial control. Thus, their views sometimes appear paradoxical.

In the 1983 survey a plurality (42% to 29% with the rest undecided) said "Israel should maintain permanent control over the West Bank." But control does not imply annexation. By a similar margin (42% to 34%), they also endorsed Israel offering the Arabs "territorial compromise ... in return for credible guarantees of peace." And they are willing for Israel to go to great lengths in her search for peace. By nearly a 2-to-1 majority (51% to 28%), they said "Israel should suspend the expansion of settlements ... to encourage peace negotiations."

Their willingness to endorse conciliatory policies, presumes that Israel will not be endangered, but rather that her security will be enhanced. For threat and vulnerability are pivotal concepts in American Jews' mind-set about Israel and her search for peace. In 1981 and 1982, overwhelming majorities flatly rejected either US or Israeli talks with the PLO as presently constituted. However, in 1983, similar majorities endorsed talks with a hypothetical PLO not committed to Israel's destruction. By 70% to 17% they said "Israel should talk with the PLO if the PLO recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism." (The wording approximates the Yariv-Shemtov formula incorporated in the 1981 Labor Party platform.) By almost 2-to-1 (48% to 26%), they also agreed that "Palestinians have a right to a homeland on the West Bank and Gaza, so long as it does not threaten Israel." The centrality of threat and vulnerability is further demonstrated by another telling piece of evidence: the fluctuations in opinions on Israel's policies before, during, and after the height of hostilities in Lebanon. In 1981, American Jews could be evenly divide--on the basis of several questionnaire items--between "hawks" and "doves." During the summer of 1982, the hawks grew in number to hold a 10% edge. A year later, in the summer of 1983, doves gained the edge outnumbering hawks by about 10 percentage points (roughly 45% to 35% with 20% ambivalent). Moreover, although in all three surveys American Jews endorsed their option to criticize Israel's policies publicly, the margin of such support was smallest in the Summer 1982 survey (during the height of the war) and largest a year later. (By 57% to 31% as they rejected the view that "Jews should not criticize the policies of Israel's government publicly.")

In numerous other questions--such as those testing the popularity of Labor and Likud personalities--the 1983 sample clearly displayed a tilt toward more conciliatory policies and toward Labor Party over Likud leaders. Despite their dovish tendencies, though, American Jews are reluctant to openly voice their differences with Israel's elected leaders for a variety of interrelated reasons.

## PRIVATELY CRITICAL, PUBLICLY SUPPORTIVE

Although American Jews tend to prefer dovish Israeli policies and leaders, and although they largely support the right (in theory) to openly express differences with Israeli government policies, they generally resist airing their discordant views in public. One important reason for this stance is that they are plainly worried about American support for Israel. Most American Jews believe that US support is far from solid; most believe that "When it comes to the crunch, few non-Jews will come to Israel's side in its struggle to survive;" and most believe that anti-semitism in the United States is still "a serious problem." Many are plainly worried that having Jews voice differences with Israel could contribute to a diminishing American diplomatic, military and economic support for Israel.

Aside from this political calculation, American Jews feel morally inhibited from criticizing policies formulated by a democratic society of fellow Jews who are actually under the gun. Even if they feel Israel would be better off if it pursued more conciliatory policies, many closet doves believe it is not their place as American Jews--even well-informed and communally active Jews--to advise Israel on its foreign policy.

The results from a parallel 1983 survey of national executive board members of five prominent Jewish organizations (American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith International, and the United Jewish Appeal) pointedly illustrate this phenomenon. More than the public, the leaders endorsed dovish policies. By 74% to 16% they supported "territorial compromise;" by 3-to-1 (59% to 21%) they rejected the notion that Israel should permanently control the West Bank; and by narrower margins they agreed that continued occupation of the territories will erode Israel's democratic, humanitarian and Jewish character. Like the public, most leaders endorsed the right of individual Jews to publicly criticize Israeli policies. However, as opposed to the public, the leaders split down the middle (42% to 37%) on whether "American Jewish organizations should feel free to publicly criticize the Israeli government and its policies" (the public endorsed this view by 2-to-1: 60% to 27%).

Jewish communal leaders, then, are even more privately critical of Israel's policies and its current directions than is the general American Jewish public. But, as official leaders, they take their roles quite seriously; hence, they are reluctant to appear to lend support to Israel's opponents by publicly criticizing her elected government.

## A LOVING RELATIONSHIP

The emergence of disagreements among Jews over the best ways to achieve the shared goals of peace and security for Israel should not obscure the loving nature of American Jews' relationship with Israel. Loving partners may disagree; and when they do, they sometimes are compelled to let others learn of their disputes. Generally, though, they prefer to keep their differences to themselves. Signs of American Jewish unhappiness with certain Israeli policies, then, cannot be understood as signifying any diminution in their caring and concern for Israel (at least not at this stage). Similarly, the paucity of overt expression of those disagreements does not imply solid wall-to-wall American Jewish support for all of Israel's foreign policies. Fervent attachment to Israel, selected policy differences with her, and restraint of public criticism are distinctive, somewhat conflicting features of American Jews' relationship with Israel.

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Against this background, Israel's adversaries have little hope of driving a wedge between American Jews and Israel. Almost all outspoken American Jewish critics of Israel's current policies ardently support such matters of consensus as the indivisibility of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the essentiality of maximal US economic aid. Thus, when these critics voice their views, neither Israel's opponents nor her dearest friends should infer that they are witnessing anything other than a public airing of differences between loving, loyal, and mutually dependent partners for whom a divorce is as improbable as it is unthinkable.

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# Jerusalem Letter

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### THE 1983 ISRAELI MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS:

#### MIXED TRENDS AND MINOR UPSETS

Avraham Lantzman

*Local issues and personalities influenced the voters. The major surprises. Who won and who lost in the municipal elections? Results of the elections to the municipal councils. Conclusion.*

Most election analysts in Israel today are grappling with the question of what conclusions can be drawn from the results of the municipal elections, which were held on 25 October 1983, with run-off elections on 8 November in thirty-four communities where no mayoral candidate won the requisite 40 percent of the votes cast in the first round. For those who would like to draw conclusions about the next elections to the Knesset from the vote, the question of who won and who lost is considered in terms of Likud versus Labor. In fact the results of the balloting in the 120 local authorities in the Jewish and Arab sectors do not provide answers to that question because they reflected local issues first and foremost.

The recent elections were characterized by upsets and by mixed trends. Each of the major parties--the Labor Alignment and the Likud--can boast of achievements and turnovers in a number of important localities. Not only is the overall picture far from being uniform, but it does not indicate any clear trends in state politics. Even if it were possible to project the local voting results forward to the Knesset elections, the fact that in both rounds of the municipal elections the actual voter turnout in the Jewish sector was about 50 percent, in contrast to the traditional 80 percent turnout in elections to the Knesset, means that the preferences of 25 to 30 percent of the voters remain unknown.

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## LOCAL ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES INFLUENCED THE VOTERS

The proper conclusion to be drawn from the election results is that, in casting their ballots, the voters focused primarily on local issues and were not distracted by such vital statewide issues as the formation of a new government headed by Yitzhak Shamir; an acute economic crisis, leading to the resignation of Finance Minister Yoram Aridor and the collapse of the stock market and the capital market; and growing tension in the relations between Syria and Israel following the fatal attack on the Israeli soldiers in Tyre. From the point of view of the Likud, the timing could not have been worse. However, the election returns showed that those issues did not play a significant role, and there was no tendency on the part of the voters to punish local Likud candidates for the difficulties of the government.

The increased importance of personality at the expense of traditional party affiliation testifies to a further decline in ideology as a factor in determining voter behavior. Until the 1969 elections, there was a close correlation between voting for the Knesset and for the local authorities. In 1973, change could be discerned in the behavior of the Israeli voters, who began to differentiate between the various levels of political activity. There is no doubt that the law providing for direct personal election of the mayor, first put into operation in the 1978 elections, has accelerated this process.

## THE MAJOR SURPRISES

Parallel to the increased importance of personality in local politics, there has been a decline in the relative importance of length of time in office for incumbents standing for reelection. True, in the three major cities--Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa--the incumbents Shlomo Lahat (58.4 percent), Teddy Kollek (63 percent), and Arye Gurel (65.5 percent) were reelected by impressive majorities. However, the real drama of the recent municipal elections can be found in Herzliya, Ramat Gan, Rishon LeZion, Ashdod and Kiryat Shmona. The defeat of incumbent mayors--Yosef Nevo (Labor), Dr. Israel Peled (Likud), Hanania Gibstein (local list), Zvi Zilker (Likud), and Avraham Aloni (Labor)--by political rivals, some of them relative unknowns, serves as a welcome indication that the mayor's seat is not in the pocket of any particular candidate.

Yosef Nevo, mayor of Herzliya for the last fifteen years and a former Major General in the Israeli Defense Forces, lost to his rival Eli Landau, a dynamic and controversial figure who served in the past as military correspondent for *Ma'ariv* and as aide to former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. In contrast to the prevailing atmosphere of indifference throughout the country, the election campaign in Herzliya was particularly animated, accompanied by an exchange of personal accusations between the candidates, leading the supporters of the rival candidates to demonstrations of physical and verbal violence. Landau surprised everyone by winning 57 percent of the votes cast, as opposed to 43 percent for his rival, despite the fact that all the Labor leaders--Peres, Rabin, Mota Gur, and Barlev--came out in support of Nevo.

In Rishon LeZion, the incumbent mayor Hanania Gibstein was defeated (32.9 percent) by the Labor Alignment candidate Brigadier General Meir Nitzan (52.8 percent), a new figure on the political scene. Gibstein places the blame for his failure to win reelection on his obstinate and unpopular campaign against the parents committees and school principals in the city, who strongly opposed the implementation of the Ministry of Education's educational reform program establishing middle schools to foster the integration of children from disadvantaged neighborhoods with middle class pupils.

Zvi Zilker, the incumbent mayor of Ashdod, led in the first round of elections. Were it not for the split within the Likud faction, which ran three separate lists, Zilker might have succeeded in winning the 40 percent necessary for election in the first round. In the second round, the Labor candidate Azulai was elected by a narrow margin of 2 percent, thanks to the support of the more recent immigrants, especially the Georgian community, who backed him solidly.

A particularly interesting contest was waged in Ramat Gan, a Liberal Party bastion since its founding, where the Labor Alignment candidate Uri Amit, chairman of the Ramat Gan Workers' Council, succeeded in forcing Dr. Israel Peled to another election. In the first round, both candidates were only one percent short of victory. Prior to the second round, Dr. Peled formed a coalition with a local faction identified with the Likud. In addition, he mobilized huge sums of money--there are those who quote a sum of \$700,000. He also employed hundreds of volunteers and a fleet of eight hundred private cars and taxis. He hired public relations firms to stage a showy publicity campaign. On election day, Likud workers telephoned the voters to persuade them to go to the polls and vote for Dr. Peled. Amit, on the other hand, had the backing of the Jews from Iraq (he is of Iraqi background), a large minority in Ramat Gan, who united behind him in the second round once they perceived that he had a chance to win. Peled's intensive efforts were in vain, and ultimately Amit, the Labor Alignment candidate, won by a slender margin of 465 votes to become the first Labor mayor in Ramat Gan's history. Perhaps even more important, he is the first Sephardi to hold an important municipal office in that city, a bastion of the Ashkenazi establishment.

In Kiryat Shmona, both parties--the Likud and the Labor Alignment--brought in their heavy artillery in support of their local candidates. The Likud sent to Kiryat Shmona a large number of government ministers and Members of Knesset, among them Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. For the Likud, victory in Kiryat Shmona transcended the purely local dimension and became a national issue: Kiryat Shmona symbolizes the motive for launching the war in Lebanon, called "Operation Peace for Galilee." A defeat in Kiryat Shmona would have constituted a defeat for government policy. The Labor Alignment understood the significance of this electoral contest, and sent its leading spokesmen to Kiryat Shmona, headed by former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. The results of the second round of balloting showed a sweeping victory for the Likud candidate Prosper Azran.

#### WHO WON AND WHO LOST IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS?

An analysis of the election results in the fifty-four cities and local councils in the Jewish sector indicates that, on the whole, there were no dramatic changes in the balance of power, as can be seen from the figure in Table 1. In comparison to the 1978 elections, the Likud succeeded in adding to its roster only two local authorities, while the Labor Alignment lost two. This change is not significant. On the contrary, as can be seen from the figures in Table 1, the Labor Alignment did well precisely in the large and established cities. According to some election analysts, this may be of great electoral significance, since 75 percent of the Israeli population is concentrated in the thirty larger and older cities. Moreover, in several of the suburban cities, such as Bat Yam, Holon, Givatayim, Hadera and Kfar Saba, the Labor Alignment candidates won sweeping victories over their Likud rivals. To this should be added Labor's achievement in winning the office of mayor in Ramat Gan and Rishon LeZion. Ramat Gan has always been an impregnable bastion of the "civil camp," whose representatives (General Zionists, Liberals, Likud) ruled the city uninterruptedly for fifty-eight years. However, it should be stressed that even in this sector there is no consistent trend, and the Likud can point to achievements and upsets in Netanya, Herzliya and Safed.

TABLE 1: BREAKDOWN OF MAYORALTIES IN THE 1983 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

	LARGER AND OLDER CITIES	DEVELOPMENT TOWNS AND SMALLER CITIES	TOTAL
Labor Alignment	21	6	27
Likud	4	11	15
NRP	1	2	3
Agudat Yisrael	1	1	2
Tami	1	1	2
Local Lists	2	3	5
TOTAL	30	24	54

The Likud scored several important victories in the development towns and smaller cities, including several upsets seizing the mayoralty from the Labor Alignment, the NRP, and Agudat Yisrael in a number of localities. The outstanding examples were Dimona, Kiryat Shmona, Beit Shean, Hatzor, and Shlomi. In these communities, the Likud seems to have succeeded in translating the electoral success and massive support it received in the elections to the Tenth Knesset to the local plane. On the other hand, the Labor Alignment can point to achievements of its own in several development towns, including Sderot, Ofakim, Yeruham, Ramle and Ashdod.

The leaders of the Labor Alignment accorded special importance to the election returns in the development towns. In the last general election, the Labor Alignment suffered a heavy blow in this sector, losing by significant margins. Moreover, in many of the development towns, a rift had developed between the voters and the Labor Alignment. The voters, most of whom are of Sephardic origin, felt alienated from the Labor Party, which they perceived as representing the Ashkenāzim. The results of the recent municipal elections indicate a certain rapprochement and the reestablishment of confidence in the representative of Labor, even if this was not always directly expressed in the choice of a mayor. The question that remains is whether these achievements are only on the local plane, where Sephardic candidates ran under the Labor banner, or whether they reflect increased strength of the Labor Alignment within those segments of the population whose political support is vital if it wishes to regain control of the government.

#### RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

There are those who argue that in order to obtain a more accurate picture of the results of the elections, we should use as an indicator the balloting for the municipal councils. The mayoral

law, first implemented in the 1978 elections, clearly differentiates between direct election of the mayor and the election of the municipal councils through a party list, according to their relative strengths.

Indeed, in many places we find a distinction between the ballots cast for the mayor and for the party list he represented. In general, support for the party list is less than support for the mayoral candidate. It is on this level of the competition between party lists for election to the councils that election analysts find a more authentic link to the country's political moods. The point is further reinforced by the results in those cities where the candidate of one party was elected mayor, while the other party won a majority in the council--for example, Herzliya and Rehovot.

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TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS BY PARTY AFFILIATION

	NUMBER OF SEATS	CHANGE FROM 1978 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS
Labor Alignment	400	+24
Likud	273	-16
NRP	199	-12
Others*	278	+44
TOTAL	1150	-

\*Includes representatives of Agudat Yisrael, Tami, Shinui, local lists

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Table 2 shows that the NRP suffered the heaviest blow, losing twelve seats and declining by almost 6 percent. In the mayoralty races, the NRP won only a single significant victory, in Tiberias, where its candidate Yigal Bibi won reelection. NRP representatives have tried to show that the number of seats the party received in these elections was proportionately no less than the number it received in the elections to the Tenth Knesset. However, in comparison to the 1978 municipal elections, the NRP took a serious beating. Perhaps the disappointing results will accelerate the trend towards a split within the NRP between the veteran faction headed by Interior Minister Dr. Yosef Burg and the Young Guard, headed by Education Minister Zevulun Hammer and Deputy Foreign Minister Yehuda Ben-Meir. The recent elections showed signs of the impending split; in a number of localities, two parallel lists appeared both claiming to represent the NRP.

Tami can draw encouragement from the election results. Its success, which rests primarily on support among Sephardic Jews, is apparently not a one-time phenomenon in Israeli politics. In many localities, not only in the development towns, Tami succeeded in sinking roots. Its most impressive achievement was in Ashkelon, where its mayoral candidate, Eli Dayan, was elected by a decisive majority, principally because of his personal popularity.

## CONCLUSION

An analysis of the election results shows that there was no uniform countrywide trend. While Labor did succeed in somewhat increasing its strength, reflected particularly in its increased representation on the municipal councils and in its acquisition of several "safe" Likud and NRP bastions, there were no far-reaching changes. The Likud declined slightly, but considering the poor timing of the elections from its point of view and the presence of breakaway lists identified with the Likud in many communities, such as Ashdod, Ramat Gan and Ramle, it would seem that the Likud can take comfort from the fact that it did not suffer a more serious blow.

The elections to the Tenth Knesset revealed a tendency towards near parity in the number of mandates received by each of the two major political blocs--the Likud and the Labor Alignment. The 1983 municipal elections did not indicate a real change in this trend. What was demonstrated in these elections is that many voters attribute greater importance to the candidate's image and personality and less to his party affiliation. Most of all, they cast their votes from a local perspective, not to express their opinions on state affairs. Hence, it is doubtful whether, on the basis of these results, we can draw any conclusions with regard to the anticipated behavior of the voters in the elections to the next Knesset.

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*Avraham Lantzman has completed a study of Israel's local press and its influence on Israeli society which the Center will be publishing this year. He is also the author of "A Surfeit of Democracy: The Multiplicity of Candidates and Party Lists in the Israeli Municipal Elections" -- a Jerusalem Letter published October 14, 1983.*

# Jerusalem Letter

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### THE KIBBUTZ IN ISRAEL TODAY

Saadia Gelb

*The Facts / The Continuing Issues / The Impact of the 1977 Likud Victory / The Establishment of TAKAM (1979) / Responses to the 1982 War in Lebanon / Conclusion*

The kibbutz has been on the scene for almost three quarters of a century. It is known worldwide and the word appears in the dictionaries of many languages. Yet we on kibbutz are perpetually surprised by the misconceptions that linger. The kibbutz is not a profit-making corporation, although it operates on the profit system and strives for maximum yield with minimum expenditure. Nor is the kibbutz an autarchic village, supplying its own needs in a closed and sheltered environment. A true picture of the kibbutz is best provided by a factual account of kibbutz reality rather than by a theoretical discussion.

#### THE FACTS

At this writing, there are 280 settlements organized into different movements. The largest movement is HaTnua HaKibbutzit HaMeuchedet (The United Kibbutz Movement) or TAKAM for short. All the other movements come together under it, save for two: HaKibbutz HaArtzi (National Kibbutz movement), which represents eighty-five settlements; and one independent communist-affiliated kibbutz. A breakdown of the members and affiliates of TAKAM, and the number of settlements in each, is as follows:

Full Members	166 (2 are from the World Reform Movement)
Affiliated Religious Kibbutzim (Poalei Mizrahi)	16

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Associate Members ( <i>moshavim shitufim</i> <sup>1</sup> , now known as <i>meshakim shitufim</i> )	6
Affiliated Orthodox Kibbutzim (Poalei Agudat Yisrael)	2
Affiliated <i>Meshakim Shitufim</i> of Poalei Agudat Yisrael	4
Total in TAKAM	194

Poalei Mizrachi and Poalei Agudat Yisrael are affiliated with TAKAM for economic and personnel reasons only. They steer their own course ideologically. The Conservative Movement now has a *garin* (core group) in training for the settlement of an independent kibbutz at Kfar Hachosh. When this group is settled, it will complete the participation of all of the religious movements within Judaism in the kibbutz enterprise except for the most ultra-Orthodox anti-zionist groups.

The kibbutz population exceeds 120,000 souls or roughly 3-1/2 percent of Jewish Israel. Kibbutzim are 24 percent of the state's agricultural sector and account for over 40 percent of the state's agricultural production. They are responsible for 10 percent of Israel's gross national product — 5.6 percent of the industrial portion of the GNP (including 6 percent of the export) and 4.4 percent of the agricultural portion. In each case, the yield is about twice the numerical expectancy. How such a record is achieved without any direct personal remuneration has been amply discussed in the literature already extant and is outside the scope of this article.

In reviewing the current issues, problems, and dilemmas of the kibbutz, two aspects become pronounced: one, the continuing issues of recent decades, and two, the impact of events in 1977, 1979, and 1982.

## THE CONTINUING ISSUES

*Coping with a Multi-Generational Society.* The kibbutz has aged. Sixty year old swarthy men and robust women blend with the stereotypical concept of a kibbutznik. Frail octogenarians using walkers, wheelchairs and electric carts change the landscape. One third of the kibbutzim must deal with the results of aging and even the young members of kibbutzim in formation now know that they too will someday face this fact of life. The solutions range from establishing homes on the premises adapted to the special needs of the aged, to institutional care outside the kibbutz. The kibbutz movements have built two homes for the aged serving kibbutzim country-wide, but now the emphasis has shifted to home care.

Eighty percent of the kibbutzim are multi-generational societies. That, and the emphasis on the family unit, has produced the extended family, the *hamula* (an Arabic word and concept representing close kinship but less than a tribe). It is not unusual to see kibbutz family pictures with forty to sixty faces. The second and third generations are less ideological than the founders. They are pragmatic, practical, forthright. Many like kibbutz living because it is "home" and not because it is a purposive community. Roughly 50 percent of the youth prefer to attempt other forms of Israeli living. Three percent of that 50 percent (or 1-1/2 percent of the youth) leave the country. Eventually 10 percent of the departees return home.

*Coping with Outside Influences.* Pragmatism has encouraged kibbutzniks to pursue "self-actualization" (*mimush atzmi*), namely the search for self-expression and self-development as a goal equivalent to the

good of the community. Among the factors fortifying this trend is the large number of foreign volunteers. Since 1967, volunteers, eighteen to thirty years old, have come in large numbers, mainly from England, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Holland and the Americas. At first they came to help. Later they arrived with ulterior motives such as a vacation without out-of-pocket costs, escape from home, a search for soft drugs or because of unemployment in their own countries. Some came because of curiosity about communalism. Whatever the motives, their presence on the kibbutz was felt. The drug users and pushers were weeded out and the undesirable elements were not accepted, but the volunteers still opened a wide aperture to a different world. Had they not been a real asset to the labor force, their numbers would have been restricted severely. In practice, their presence is of mutual benefit.

The impact of the media on kibbutzim has been revolutionary. Once, long ago, the kibbutz was a haven for lengthy discussions, classical music, "serious" literature, the daily newspaper which reflected the members' consensus, violent arguments over plans and programs, etc. Then the media crept in. First came the radio; then the tabloid newspapers; the bewildering variety of magazines; the television and in its wake new arts and fads and styles. Thirty years ago, a discotheque was rank heresy. Today, the discotheque is a clubhouse among several: there is the clubroom for the old folks, the children's center, the cultural center, the synagogue. Every member has his outlet.

The influence of the media was not only direct as described above, but was far more potent via its influence on general Israeli life and culture. Commercial advertising, instant communications and satellites shrank the globe. Israel changed radically and the media brought those changes into the kibbutz.

*Industrialization.* On the economic level, the most significant change has been industrialization. Since land is restricted, water scarce, and economic demand ever-rising, there was only one answer — industry. There are 363 kibbutz factories, ranging from small to huge operations. The areas of production are as follows:

<i>Type of Factory</i>	<i>Number</i>
Metalworks	86
Electricity and Electronics	31
Rubber and Plastics	80
Woodwork and Furniture	15
Textiles and Leather	20
Glassware and Optics	15
Food Products	20
Quarries and Building Materials	10
Medical Supplies and Chemicals	15
Arts and Crafts	20
Paper, Cartons and Printing	10
Writing Supplies, Musical Instruments and Industrial Services	15

Guest Houses and Tourist Facilities	26
Total	363

The annual export figure for the kibbutzim is \$200 million or 23 percent of the total production of kibbutz industry.

My kibbutz, Kfar Blum, is a good example of the trend. Located in the northern Hula Valley, far removed from the industrial centers of the country, industry and services have nevertheless long since come to replace agriculture as the primary source of employment on the kibbutz, even though agriculture remains the major single source of income. The total income of Kibbutz Kfar Blum in 1982/1983 was \$7.5 million, of which agriculture accounted for 35 percent, equal to the total amount brought in by industry and services combined. The remaining 30 percent came from National Insurance, kibbutz members working outside of the kibbutz, and the kibbutz's financial transactions. The 7 percent of the kibbutz population engaged in agriculture compares favorably to the ratio in most Western countries where the agricultural sector has declined to a very small percentage of the population but still contributes a great deal to the gross product.

The annual production of a worker in kibbutz industry is \$63,000. (Workers in Israeli industry outside of kibbutz have an annual individual production rate of \$51,000.) Roughly fourteen thousand workers are engaged in kibbutz factories. Nine thousand of these are kibbutzniks and five thousand are people hired from outside the kibbutz.

Industrialization has perpetuated the practice of hired labor. Kibbutzim first departed from the ideological premise and practice of no wage workers as a temporary measure to alleviate unemployment after the founding of the state. Under the prodding of Ben-Gurion and the new government it was agreed to accept new immigrants until permanent jobs could be created for them. That transitional act remained permanent once factories were built and demanded hands. A multitude of theoretical and practical dilemmas ensued.

*Leadership.* Technological development and specialization yielded a predicament of leadership. An egalitarian society cannot tolerate permanent stratification into leaders and followers. Reality, however, is harsh and demands skilled and trained leaders. The accepted solution of rotating functionaries chosen by democratic elections has a high price tag in loss of efficiency. Nevertheless, kibbutzim willfully pay the price. (To everyone's surprise, studies indicate that the loss of efficiency is less than expected.)

*Serving the Kibbutz and the State.* With the establishment of the state, the concept of voluntarism was downgraded. Many individuals and leaders, Ben-Gurion among them, believed that the state would assume all essential functions for the commonweal. Were it not for the normal inertia of society, the very existence of the kibbutz would have been threatened. In fact, many a professor and journalist predicted its early demise. The fallibility of the state and its leaders and functionaries, especially since the rude awakening in 1973, altered the "dire premature conclusions" (as Mark Twain once said). There is a growing realization that democracy requires local initiative and voluntary activity. Kibbutz members are reacting positively to the challenge implied by voluntarism.

A growing economy requires manpower with none to spare. Yet, a major purpose of kibbutz living is to engage in building the land of Israel. That requires people, both skilled and unskilled. The confrontation within each kibbutz between those who insist that everyone must remain at home and those who stress the duty of helping others has plagued many a general meeting. Kibbutzim are endlessly requested to

contribute people to the national organization, to guide new settlements, to the Histadrut (labor organization), for *shlichut* (representation abroad), to the defence forces, for political activity, for welfare tasks, and on and on. To cope with these requests, a fixed percentage of the population is allocated by the kibbutzim for national service. The specific decisions are the subject of complex, tough bargaining.

*Coping with Private Income.* Kibbutz members' private income has again become a matter of great moment. The first crisis arose when German reparations were paid on an individual basis. Since the possession of wealth is not consistent with the collective idea, some members left kibbutz. The vast majority remained and presented the reparations monies to the common treasury, usually for public edifices. The kibbutz in turn agreed to permit to the recipients one time expenditures such as a trip overseas or desirable consumer items. Since then, other sources of private income have surfaced: inheritance, residue from missions abroad, gifts from wealthy relatives, hobbies, frugal accumulations from modest annual budgets, and other less legitimate sources. A kibbutz cannot long tolerate discrepancies in economic status even though daily life is absolutely equal. A solution is yet to be found.

## THE IMPACT OF THE 1977 LIKUD VICTORY

As the kibbutzim grappled with their cumbersome problems, external events exerted new influences. The elections of 1977 toppled the coalition government dominated by Labor. The Likud upset the tradition which had dominated Israeli politics since 1948. Suddenly the kibbutz, which had been the acknowledged favorite, turned orphan (or at best was trimmed down in influence to its numerical size). This was a trend which had been developing within Labor as well, but not vociferously or rapidly. For the Likud, a socialist society was unsavory. A successful socialist society was an ideological threat since it upset the proper order of things.

No less an authority than Simha Ehrlich, the late minister of finance, accused kibbutzim of evading income tax payments. When shown that the law was adhered to scrupulously, he accused the law of favoritism. The resultant outcry caused him to appoint an impartial committee chaired by the head of the auditors' association. When the commission reported that, in fact, kibbutzim overpaid on their taxes and were entitled to a rebate, an effort was made to bury the findings in the files. The controversy ended, there was no rebate, but the rumor persisted that kibbutzim were tax dodgers.

The political upheaval changed the priorities of the settlement policy. Henceforth, the funds would be allocated to Judea and Samaria. The vast majority of kibbutz membership and leadership preferred development within the Allon Plan (green line plus unpopulated areas and essential defence areas). Conflict was inevitable. It persists to this day.

One issue about which there is overwhelming agreement within the kibbutz movements is the location of NAHAL (*Noar Halutzi Lochem* — Fighting Pioneer Youth) units. As originally conceived and until recently implemented, the purpose of NAHAL was to form nuclei for new settlements or to buttress existing ones, primarily kibbutzim. Until their settlement, NAHAL groups would serve the army wherever needed. Since the Likud administration, NAHAL has been sent by the army to areas outside of the designated points for movement settlement. The army sends them to *maahazim*, which are strictly military outposts and to *heiachzuyot*, designated settlements in Judea and Samaria. The kibbutz movements maintain that in both cases the result is the disintegration of the units.

A major encounter with the Likud government was over agricultural policy. The policy for decades had involved planning, allocation of resources, organized export, subsidized research, and high national priority for development. Implementation was entrusted by agreement and rotation to either a kibbutznik,

moshavnik, or sympathizer as minister of agriculture. The Likud's new approach aimed to achieve greater liberalism and freedom. The past was alluded to as favoritism. The net result as of 1983 was a major crisis in agriculture with dozens of moshavim facing bankruptcy. Some agricultural exports were seriously injured by unchecked competition. Kibbutzim were damaged but had the industrial backup to weather the economic crisis.

In January 1977, Israel's inflation was 10.2 percent and would have reached 27 percent by December. After Simcha Ehrlich's liberalization and after the policies of subsequent finance ministers, inflation rose to a rate of 400 percent by mid-1984. This has changed the kibbutz economy by adding a new dimension. What used to be agro-industrial is now a financial and banking operation as well. Kibbutzim were forced to join in the financial manipulations of the stock market to protect their incomes from shrinking. This posed endless soul-searching and controversy. Until the economy stabilizes there seems to be no release from financial juggling. This is a far cry from original intent.

Probably the worst aspect of the political upheaval was the ideological onslaught led by then Prime Minister Begin. He left no doubt that kibbutzim were not his favorites and thereby polarized the conflicts: exacerbating existing ones and creating new ones. His lieutenants understood the cue and did not restrict themselves to words. The best example is provided by the development towns and the regional industries. Development towns and kibbutzim have been thrust together and are inseparable. There were years of honeymooning, periods of aloof coexistence, times of close cooperation and times of open conflict. Delicately stated, the Likud government did not add to good neighborliness.

The connection between the development towns and kibbutzim came about as a method of solving two dilemmas: that of wage workers in the kibbutzim on the one hand and of unemployment in the development towns on the other. It was decided to transfer certain operations to the development towns. Thus, the regional industries were started and grew to formidable proportions. Sorting of apples, pears, avocados, citrus, potatoes, etc; dressing plants for chicken, turkey, beef; feed mixing, storing, pelletizing; canneries; cold storage; bakeries; motor transport and garages — were all needed services which could benefit from large, joint operations. The beginning was auspicious but in time workers resented that the managers and owners were kibbutzniks. What was acceptable in a capitalist economy was not seen as valid for socialists. The number of workers involved is very small — less than five thousand — but the implications reach far and wide. The national kibbutz movement, the Histadrut, and the political parties argued the issue. Individual kibbutzim adopted position papers. The Likud added to the turmoil. It is an ongoing debate.

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TAKAM (1979)

Partly in response to the rise of the Likud government but mainly because of natural maturation, two of the three largest national kibbutz organizations united. The HaKibbutz HaMeuchad (United Kibbutz) and the Ichud HaKvutzot veHaKibbutzim (Union of Kvutzot<sup>2</sup> and Kibbutzim) united to form the Tnua HaKibbutzit HaMeuchedet (United Kibbutz Movement) — TAKAM. Each organization had a long and involved history of unions, schisms, and political affiliations which are fully documented in Hebrew. (Some material is available in English).

This union had organizational implications for the structure of the Brit HaTnua HaKibbutzit (Kibbutz Movement Federation) which is the loosely federated coordinating body. Prior to the establishment of TAKAM, the federation had included the Kibbutz HaMeuchad and Ichud HaKvutzot veHaKibbutzim movements as roughly equal partners with HaKibbutz HaDati (Religious Kibbutz movement) as a minor partner. TAKAM united the first two into one body, thus drastically shifting the balance of power within the federation.

TAKAM also had sizeable impact on the internal politics of the Labor Party. The two newly united movements had little difficulty integrating economic, educational, and organizational functions, but political nuance and style cast long shadows. It had been easier to resolve political differences at the old Brit conference table. Meanwhile, because of its size, new political blocks flourish. TAKAM has sustained a small loss on the 1984 Labor Party list. However, TAKAM is becoming a potent force. It is no small matter to speak authoritatively on behalf of 194 communities.

## RESPONSES TO THE 1982 WAR IN LEBANON

The war in Lebanon gave rise to a host of predicaments. The "doves" (the majority of kibbutzniks) and the "hawks" (the minority) organized to advance their views. An active group of young members banded together, calling themselves Tz'irim L'p'ilut Politit (Youth for Political Activism) or TZALAF for short. This group was mainly dovishly inclined. To counteract TZALAF, a smaller group of prestigious army officers from kibbutzim met to exert educational pressure. The official kibbutz bodies steer a cautious course. Without inhibiting either individual or group initiative or expression, only decisions taken at legally constituted meetings are sanctioned.

An unhappy result of the war in Lebanon is the appearance of individual protestors who refuse to serve in the army if assigned to Lebanon. Although very few in number, the very thought of a kibbutznik refusing an army command created shock waves. There had been dissatisfaction with serving on the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) before the war, but that had never reached the vociferous proportions of the reaction to the war in Lebanon.

Another unnatural phenomenon that emerged was that of the *rosh katan* (literally, small head). The meaning of this expression is to avoid responsibility and stay invisible — a completely atypical response for kibbutzniks and a departure from the behavior of previous generations. The *rosh katan* syndrome has been of concern to many. It is a reaction to Begin and Sharon who were deeply mistrusted even before the war.

## CONCLUSION

That, in a nutshell, is a cross-section of the kibbutz 1983-1984. It is far from being comprehensive. There is much to be said about the arts, about education, and a host of other matters that are integral to kibbutz life. Yet the facts and issues outlined above go a long way toward defining the reality of kibbutz today and will have an important impact on what its future will be.

\* \* \* \* \*

1. *Moshavim* are smallholders' cooperative agricultural settlements where homes and holdings are owned individually though there is cooperation in the purchase of equipment, etc. On *moshavim shitufim*, homes are owned individually but the agriculture and economy are run as a collective unit.
2. *Kvutzot* were small communes of pioneers constituting agricultural settlements. Today, these are not distinguished from the kibbutzim.

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# Jerusalem Letter

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### THE DECLINE (AND COMING FALL?) OF ISRAELI HIGHER EDUCATION

By Samuel Halperin

*The Halcyon Days of Israeli Higher Education / The Advent of the Planning and Grants Committee / Institutional Autonomy and State Funding / University Tuition: An Israeli Bargain / The Future Beclouded*

When Israelis went to the polls on July 23d they had numerous crises on their minds, foremost among them those of the economy: runaway inflation, spiralling external debt, and the specter of rising unemployment. But one of the most fundamental of all Israeli crises was once again overlooked.

Israeli higher education—one of the prides of the Jewish people—has been sliding into mediocrity for quite a long time. Despite the generosity and hard work of diaspora Jewry mobilized through the various “Friends of” organizations (for example, American Friends of Hebrew University, Weizmann Institute, Bar-Ilan, Technion Society, etc.) Israeli universities are now consuming the investment “seed-corn” of earlier generations. In the words of Israel’s respected, non-political university Planning and Grants Committee:

After . . . nine years of financial constraint, we have no alternative other than to determine unequivocally that the system of higher education in this country is now in deep crisis, the consequences of which will most adversely, and in the near future, affect Israel’s security, economy, culture and general well-being.

### THE HALCYON DAYS OF ISRAELI HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education in Israel shares most goals in common with educational institutions elsewhere: training the nation’s professional manpower, furthering national development through scientific research, developing the country’s culture, advancing the boundaries of knowledge generally, and contributing knowledge and

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skills to the family of nations, particularly countries in the developing Third World. In addition, Israeli educational institutions have taken on key roles in the strengthening of Jewish culture and scholarship and in forging human links with the Jewish people everywhere.

During Israel's first twenty-five years, Israelis and world Jewry generally shared a national consensus: a country poor in natural resources and surrounded by hostile states simply *had* to invest heavily in university teaching and research. Consequently, Israeli higher education grew and prospered. Few small countries have done so much in so short a period. Enrollment in the eight degree-granting universities grew from 2,572 students in 1949-50 to over 64,000 in 1983. During the same period, degrees awarded rose from 239 to over 10,000 annually, including 7,400 bachelor's degrees. Today, approximately 11,000 students are pursuing master's degrees and 3,000 the doctorate. In 1982, the percentage of Israeli workers having completed 16 or more years of schooling was 13.4 percent, believed to be the world's record.

Like much else in Israel, higher education grew like topsy in "the seven fat years" between the Six Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Of the 1.2 million square meters of university buildings constructed between 1964 and 1984, three fourths were started in the decade ending in 1974. Similarly, from 1960-75, the academic staff of Israeli universities grew by over 500 percent, an average annual growth of 10 percent, while from 1965-70 their growth rate reached a dizzying 18 percent annually. With the financial encouragement of the then minister of finance, Pinhas Sapir, and an expansionist Labor government, universities incurred large deficits in the building and operation of very substantial campuses. That was considered the best way to "establish facts" --to build an infrastructure which would "demand completion" in subsequent state budgets. Entire new universities obtained public funds simply by the unilateral agreement of powerful ministers of finance who effectively set the country's budgets. As a result, by 1973 the taxpayers of Israel were supporting some 83 percent of the universities' operating budgets, up sharply from their 45.5 percent share in 1959-60.

## THE ADVENT OF THE PLANNING AND GRANTS COMMITTEE

The cornucopia for Israeli universities, however, emptied much earlier than for most other sectors of the economy. An atmosphere of austerity generated in the wake of the Yom Kippur War quickly replaced the era of individual university entrepreneurship. In all events, campus budget deficits had to be eliminated and inter-university rivalries for direct funding by the Treasury had to be curbed. Gone were the "seven fat years."

Beginning in March 1974, a powerful Planning and Grants Committee (PGC), consciously modelled on the British University Grants Committee, was empowered to build a system of organized state support for higher education. Consisting of six members, at least four of whom must be distinguished academicians, the PGC's small staff of about seventeen employees headed by a prestigious full-time chairman (first Professor Natan Rotenstreich, today Professor Haim Hariri) exercises a wide range of impressive powers: controlling all public funding of university development and operating budgets; coordinating of university programs "to encourage efficiency", preventing "superfluous duplication and encourage economy;" ensuring balanced university budgets and, in effect, determining whether new institutions, new programs or new units may commence operations.

Wielding their powers skillfully, the PGC focused on establishing orderly budgeting procedures: insisted on balanced university budgets, elimination of past debts and prevention of new ones; and gained control of costly development and construction programs. As the PGC's work bore fruit, the taxpayers' share of

financing the universities' operating budgets was stabilized and gradually reduced. Public funding fell from a high watermark of 83 percent in 1973 to about 65 percent today. The PGC had won control, but not at the expense of university quality or essential autonomy.

## INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY AND STATE FUNDING

Higher education in Israel is today, in fact if not in name, a state system. Israel prides itself, subjectively, on the diversity, quality and independence of its "private" institutions of higher learning. Objectively, there is little question, however, that the role of the state—by exercise of the power of the purse—is decisive in three major areas. First, about 70 percent of university operating budgets and a quarter of all construction and equipment budgets come in direct support from the central government. Second, tuition fees have been deliberately set low by government policy and cover only about 7 percent of today's universities' budgets. Finally, academic and administrative salaries—over 80 percent of a university's total budget—are controlled by the government through its bargaining power in all collective wage agreements governing the public and quasi-public sectors. In fact, it is through the last device that universities in recent years have been able to make ends meet, keeping their tenured staff employed but at the expense of serious wage erosion for both academic and administrative personnel.

Perhaps the best way to note the critical dependence of Israel's institutions of higher learning on public funds allocated by the PGC is to look at the institutions' budgets overall:

TABLE 1  
SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR UNIVERSITY ORDINARY BUDGETS, 1982-83  
(millions of shekels)

	PGC	Tuition	Donations	Other*	Total
Eight universities percentage share	13,032.0 (68%)	1,371.1 (7%)	1,180.0 (6%)	3,627.1 (19%)	19,210.2 (100%)
Other higher education institutions	293.6	34.2	25.2	46.2	399.2
Other expenditures (research, special projects)	1,169.6			80.4	1,250.0
Total	14,495.2	1,405.3	1,205.2	3,753.7	20,859.4
Overall percentage share	(69.5%)	(6.7%)	(5.8%)	(18%)	(100%)

\* About half of these sums also derive from the public in the form of special or categorical grants from the Planning and Grants Committee.

## UNIVERSITY TUITION: AN ISRAELI BARGAIN

Tuition fees are not set by the universities, but rather by the government in negotiations involving the Ministries of Finance and Education and representatives of the universities and their student organizations. Tuition is uniform throughout the country regardless of university chosen, undergraduate or graduate level, or field of study. Overall, student tuition covers no more than 20 percent of the actual cost of instruction and less than 7 percent of the universities' ordinary operating budgets.

Under the Katzav Committee plan adopted by the government in 1982, the level of tuition fees is determined annually in accordance with changes in the cost-of-living allowances paid to workers. In practice, this method of adjusting tuition fees in a period of rapid inflation has eroded the real value of this income to the universities to only half of what it had been in 1974-75. At the time of determination of the fee for 1983-84, the dollar equivalent of tuition for a full academic load was \$615 annually. This is less, observe the critics, than the fees paid by many parents for nursery school. In truth, in a country noted for its relatively high costs, university tuition levels are properly considered a bargain. (No wonder, then, that over 2,000 overseas students choose to study in Israel, taking advantage not only of quality instruction and cheap tuition, but of student financial aids especially designed to attract potential immigrants.)

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Finance attempted to abrogate the tuition-setting agreement which it had accepted in 1982 as valid until 1987. In place of a tuition fee in 1983-84 of approximately \$615, the Ministry sought and obtained an immediate rise to \$1,000 and a long-term rise to perhaps half the cost of education.

It seems apparent that tuition income will play a larger role in financing Israeli higher education in the future than it does today. While there is as yet no agreement on how much the cost of higher education should be "privatized," there is an emerging consensus that public subsidies in areas like university education should be reduced and the burdens shared with student-users and their families. At the same time, there is renewed public discussion of the possible need to create more scholarship and loan funds and to explore tuition subsidies in exchange for post-graduation public service and employment in professions vital to the national interest.

## THE FUTURE BECLOUDED

What is the nature of the crisis in Israeli higher education? Unlike problems of rapid growth, which are easily expressed in quantitative terms, the issue appears more insidious, characterized by persistent erosion of intangibles like quality, morale, and innovation.

The data we have from the Planning and Grants Committee is clearly cause for deepest concern. The following two tables deserve to be pondered by all who recognize the primacy of higher education in determining what kind of Israel will enter the 21st century:

TABLE 2  
DISINVESTMENT IN ISRAELI HIGHER EDUCATION, 1974-83

	1974	1983	CHANGES IN %
Number of students	48,140	62,500	+30
Number of academic positions	6,630	6,451	-3
Number of administrative-technical staff	9,120	8,094	-11
Non-wage expenditures (millions of shekels)	3,754	2,791	-26
Share of higher learning in Israel's regular state budgets	7.9%	4.4%	-44
Size of development budgets (millions of shekels)	3,815	1,350	-65
Government share of university development budgets	1,897	370	-81
Government share of university regular budgets	82.9%	60% est.	-28

TABLE 3  
HIGHER EDUCATION AND ISRAEL'S GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT  
1974-80

	1974-75 %	1979-80 %
National expenditure on education as % of GNP	8.3	9.0
National expenditure on higher education as % of national expenditure on education	27.2	24.0
Current expenditure on higher education as % of current expenditure on education	25.1	23.0
Fixed capital formation in higher education as % of fixed capital formation in education	34.2	30.5

Beyond such statistics, there are other manifestations of serious university decline, evident to any careful observer: most campus building has ceased; purchases of the latest scientific equipment have been severely curtailed; library resources, including an expanding array of critical scientific and technical literature, are seldom purchased; intellectual exchanges with foreign universities and the hosting of international scholarly events have been restricted; the maintenance of numerous campus facilities has been severely reduced and signs of physical decay are increasingly evident; small (but potentially vital) university programs and departments have been terminated; student-faculty ratios are on the rise and campuses have become more impersonal; support personnel, supplies and operating hours for various university services have each been severely pared back. Budget deficits, once totally eliminated, have reappeared and now approach 10 percent of total expenditures. Perhaps most ominous for the future, the brightest, best-trained, "up-to-date" Ph.D.s have little opportunity of finding new positions either in research or in instruction. Rather, junior-level "external teachers" are hired on low-pay, one-year contracts with little or no prospect of permanent employment or professional development in their respective fields. No wonder that many choose the "brain-drain" route and accept overseas challenges or else leave academic pursuits altogether.

Thus far, only one solution to these multiple assaults on the quality of Israeli higher education seems to have developed any substantial political support: the raising of student tuition. But raising tuition, while it may help, will not solve the financial crisis of Israeli higher education. The crisis has gone on too long and proceeded too far. Even a doubling of tuition cannot, in itself, repair the damage suffered over the past decade.

What is urgently called for is a deliberate *strategy of renewed public investment in higher learning* in which the respective roles of tuition, philanthropy and government support are each considered and set forth in a long-term financial plan. The development of such a strategy ought to be high on the agenda of Israel's new government. But this will not occur unless there is clearer recognition among the leaders of world Jewry that this crisis has already been with us far too long.

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