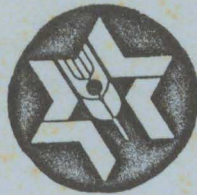


Habonim Dror

הבונים דרור

Segunda Conferencia Mundial

הועידה העולמית השנייה



אפעל 4.5.6.7-1-1989



הגות

וכתובים

pensamentos e escritos



Coordinators write (imaginary) letters



Everyone was carried by the spirit  
Everyone was swept by the light  
And I am under God's wings

The poet cries in this fashion. He feels that everyone has gone home. That he remained alone. He sits with a candle and studies and knows that the world is not for him, that the world that the poet represents is expiring. In it there is all the holy anger and shame.

... And I refuse to accept the holy anger as the road. Its power of destruction, of shocking while planting panic. I beg you to find a way to spring towards your roots and towards the tree-top.

Growing requires a great deal of photosynthesis, rapport with light, happiness of growing, a perception of mutual supporting.

In this way I would like to approach you, my friend: within a belief in your strength, in your doubts, in your rebel refusal to accept reality. But not just the overt reality but also the thicket within it and the chance within it. To exhibit the goodwill and its limitation of the ample horizons of the destiny of the contemporary Jews, and the restricted road with respect to which, each one has to make a decision.

MOKY

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Dear friend,

In our last meeting you claimed that, according to you, there is no meaning in any of the Jewish customs. Nor do you give importance to the Israeli celebration as an expression of a common identity of the "People living in Zion". You have tried to look at the will of your heart. To be a people like other peoples whose identity is shaped by its citizens, as a national and democratic identity, a universal identity with no link to any religion or to any customs of tradition of this kind or another. Reality brought me back to a different perspective. Still in the same evening we were sitting with my family around the table (including my mother, my parents-in-law, our four children, two adopted sons, a British volunteer, and we -my wife and I) to light the first candle of Hannukah. When we were lighting the candle, singing songs and tasting the delicatessen of the celebration, I looked at our adopted daughter (a member of a group who left the kibbutz a year ago and with whom we keep a close relationship), and I saw that her sad eyes veiled something. I asked her about her sadness. And the young woman told me with a teary smile: "In a week's time I am travelling to the USA and I think I will not be able to make it there. It is so hard to give up this togetherness, which is so human and so familiar". You already know that in the kibbutz, by nature, every Jewish holiday becomes a celebration, and in this way, even the taste of my mother's "sufganiah" was not poured in my mouth, that we ran to the dining-room of the whole kibbutz. And then, there,



among all the people sitting around the tables with lit candles, the blessing, the songs, and the children's happiness, suddenly I thought of you and, inside me, I asked to you: "Is it really that this togetherness of the celebration has no meaning? Is it true that the fact that all of us, "all the Jewish People", celebrate at the same time, with the same words, and with the same religious songs, has no meaning?"

I do not know where you have been in that same evening, or how did you celebrate Hannukah. I only know this: I feel the same identification, the same emotion each time I am part of this environment of spiritual exaltation together with others, and I know that at the same time, hundreds of thousands of Jews in Israel and in the rest of the world are part of this (in this level or another). The feeling of national identity is condensed in these moments within me. For me the answer is clear.

Affectionately,

Yotam

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Dear Vasha,

I reach you exactly in these days... the evening of the earthquake. Days when all the question marks disappear and only the threatening exclamation marks are left; the question mark at least leaves an option of answer in the desired direction, but in our reality they erode frightening inscriptions in the walls. Why are these words directed to you? Because the inscription on the wall was discovered by you, probably when you decided to leave Israel with the internal hope that you are making a mistake, and that the development will be positive anyway. But you have not erred! The process of the revolution of the opposition is in its intensification, and we, who went with our faces towards the sun, became dazzled, and today we see darkness. It also happened to you, you have crossed the bridge twice and you became dazzled, it seems to me, when you left the Movement for the sake of the revolution here and now, that is to say then, 20 years ago, and you paid a terrible price for the gamble. You arrived to Israel doubtful, skeptical, in the end of the Zionist revolution when the powers of the reaction started to blow. After a short while you decided to leave because of the resignation that History will not dare to influence me again - the lesson was hard. We did not want to see, and reality slaps our faces, moving us and our most basic truths from place to place. We, that used to examine phenomena according to the criteria of our social view, find out that we get out of the historical road to the banquet, and that we are not relevant to our reality the way it looks today. Not only the negation of the Diaspora, because even the negation of "diasporism" is already not significant. We have only remained with a geographical change, because the diasporic degeneration that we rejected, returns and dominates us like ghost spirits. Economical clericalism and parasitism. Complex of persecution and danger of physical existence. All the diasporic devils come back and threaten us, and the messages that I absorb are not only of resignation but also of enthusiasm; in the end, we came



back to be what we used to be. The problem is that we do not have the possibility to become intellectually distant so as to look with perspective to the historical process, because we are part of it, almost foreigners within our own creation. A revolution against Zionism, and all this in two generations! How can we influence this process? How can we react towards it in the personal, familiar, and movement's level? It is a hard feeling of loss of indispensability in this way. It is true that Zionism has always been a minority within the Jewish People. But we, the fulfillers, thought that the deed of fulfillment would place us at the beginning of the line, and that we would have the power to influence the mass. The mass reached us and we were thrown to the road shoulders. There are others who lead and there is no possibility of influencing towards a shift of way from within. We are not meant to be the opposition of the State! I am writing to you in the Diaspora and I remember that the pioneers of the Second Aliya arrived in Israel - a degenerated and anti-Zionist reality and they overcame it, but the attempt of turning actual historical past situations, only adds despair, because the conditions have changed. Nevertheless, as it is widely known, maybe belief lives irrationally.

Raphael P.

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#### Letter to a friend in the Diaspora

I have renewed the relationship with you namely because an internal need of mine and also of yours. The content talks about Zionism. In these days, we, the ones who live in Israel, feel internal distress, not less than the distress that accompanies you there. I have the need to reveal you that we, the Zionist fulfillers, need a serious reinforcement here, in all the areas, and only the sons of our People can answer to this need.

Considering that you are the head of your family and in spite of your status over there, do you feel the right and think about the future of your family there? You used to think in this way always; it is natural, it happens to every Jew for whom not everything is clear, or who sometimes is reminded (by others) that he is Jewish.

I understand that in the community they deal with the word assimilation, at least they talk about it. Here, for example, we talk about the yordim, the political processes, the results of the last elections, but within a feeling of home, that sometimes trembles, nevertheless, home. In my opinion, this home is my unique home, a place where it is possible to create a new culture, reinforce it; a place of permanent creation, a place where it is only possible to live as a Jew, liberated from all the pressures of a population foreign to us.

In spite of the problems I have just enumerated, that occur here in Israel, I feel the need to participate you of them here, with me-with us, and not wait for local problems over there so as to start considering your coming to Israel. I want to see you here,



proud of your decision of coming back home, and not folded because of feeling impotent.

I hope to see you soon among us at home, with a great deal of energy and strength to adapt yourself and to build in Israel.

With hope and love,

Jorge

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Shalom,

More than ten years have passed since our long talks about our personal responsibility towards the Zionist idea and the State of Israel. As we have then estimated, you have stayed there and I here, and maybe it is useless to try to consider who made the more important deed, the more moral, or the moral idealist one.

When we talked about Israel it used to be always referring to a socialist Israel. Today I understand more what is the essence of socialism. I understand that you meant a liberal and humanistic Israel. Humanism and Zionism have always been one a condition for the other, and meanwhile, reality passed in front of us.

The dream of an Israel living in peace with her neighbors has never been so far away. And the powers of Fundamentalism and Nationalism daily intensify. We have always agreed on the idea that each of us is first of all a person, and only afterwards Jewish and Zionist, and maybe here is the basis of humanism.

The question that arises today is which is the red line to our life here. Whether, indeed, the person that is inside me can go on suffering in the presence of the negation of the basic rights of a million and a half Palestinians, which is an eternal attack to the regime of law and a basic undermining of the foundations of democracy, also within the boundaries of the State.

You will, for sure, answer me that it is possible to shout, to demonstrate, and influence; but reality is much stronger than the protest and the cry, and the processes seem unchangeable from their basis

And probably, one day, History will judge both of us -you, the doctor absorbed by money, property, and stock exchange, but also in saving lives and preventing the pain. And me, that was absorbed by settlement and education, is also absorbed by repression and occupation - So, who of us is more moral or more Jewish?

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Dear Pepper,

Only two days have passed from the moment we separated in Bierce airport. It is hard to me, or even almost impossible, to get rid of the feeling that both of us must do something. We walked



together along a long road: at the Jewish school, at the Movement, in the defreezing year, and when we returned to Argentina, our roads got separated.

During 15 years our relationships have been severed. During 15 years each of us grew up and developed in different directions. I, in Israel, in the kibbutz, I am absorbed in the making and searching for a new culture, Jewish identity, and the love for the Land of Israel.

You, in Argentina, looking for universalism, for a position in the surrounding society, economically and culturally.

You and I have built a family. In my case, my children at the kibbutz, free, happy, I would say, sure of themselves, and proud of their identity.

In your case, great children!!!... that once again start the road that both of us had started a long time ago. Jewish school and Jewish Movement.

In my case, the circle, meanwhile, is closed.

In your case it is still open.

The search for identity and integrity that you have stopped then, goes on in your children.

In our meetings I felt a strong need of reinforcement and a feeling of lack of integrity. We have to work together on this feeling. I, as a friend and as a Zionist that feels obligation towards you; and you - as a Jew who looks for his identity.

It does not seem to me that I will be able to translate writtenly all that we have discussed till late hours at night in our meetings during my short visit.

It is important to me that you should know that our destiny is linked today more than ever.

The renewed meeting with you and with your family reinforces the relationship and the importance of our making together. I hope that the relationship between us will continue, and that soon we will be able to continue our talks here, in Israel.

Affectionately

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Dear Daniel,

Since your last visit to Israel, in the last Summer, several things took place here that, of course reached you in the Diaspora. But beyond the results of the elections and the strong confusion that accompanies us in the domain of the establishment of the next government, I am absorbed -and it seems to me that several people too- in thinking which is the image of state that we create here in Israel. It is possible to refer to what was done here as part of the routine, as an internal affaire, as a legitimate event of the Jewish democratic State. However, my crying heart feels that we are not in the same play we used to be in before. And in the beginning of this new play, I listen (even if words are not been said explicitly) very worrisome sounds connected to our destiny in common here in Israel, and yours in the Diaspora. Penetrating questions about the essence of the existence of Zionism as a real historical fact, or just an instrument serving certain strengthening sectors that consider us like an accident on



the way to redemption (your redemption!)? Are we turning from the road of creating a national state, a return to the dogmatic concepts of the 18 th century Judaism? Have we already touched the Jewish point, then it is possible that the shameful game between politicians and peoples will not be considering the way I belong to the Jewish People.

For sure you think that I have got many troubles... but one of my problems is that, willingly or unwillingly, you participate in these troubles. In the last Summer, the fact that you, against your will, you could not fly El Al, bothered you (you have arrived on Shabbath!). What will you think when your children, who go to a Reform school will have to deal with the stigma that some of the Jews try to put to the community in which you grew up and was raised? There is, of course, an easy way to overcome a prblem of this kind. To postpone the alya of the whole family.

Obviously I suppose that you will not accept this suggestion. My opinion is plain and simple: you can remain a Jew only according to one of the following two manners:

- a) to wear a quipa.
- b) to face the difficulties, and you, together with others like you should stop being the audience of the played called "The State of Israel", and should be actors of the cast. Because it is impossible to complain on what have been done here (even if I know that everything has been done full of honesty and identity) and we will not add to your worriness the physical dimension: to be here in Israel.

There is something important we must learn about the Israeli political reality. We do not need to be in numerical majority so that our influence will be important. But on the other hand, your presence here (and that of all the ones who think like you do) is the only guarantee to the fact that your ideas about Judaism and about Israel will be fulfilled.

With blessings

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#### Letter to a trainee towards his alya

Shalom,

I have listened about your decision to "make alya".

I am very pleased about your decision, and I want to reinforce you on this decision. I think that I know how to appreciate the meaning of the step you are going to take. Today, only deeds fulfill the alya, among those who face the alternative of a Jewish bubbly life in the Diaspora, within physical security and economical abundance.

I am sure that your decision, together with all the personal motives, is in the end, a valuable decision which puts first in the order of priorities the fulfillment of the gamut of elements of your Jewish identity.

I want to make myself understood on this point.

To be Jewish -a Jewish person, humanist in his point of view, who wants to be attached to his Jewishness, who is not Orthodox. And he wants to live a Jewish sovereign life , in which he



experiences the culture of his People in all its layers, but who does not accept the rabbanite authority, and lives according to his moral necessities and decisions as a sovereign person, it is worthy to create for himself links with the cultural and national foundations of the Jewish People -language, history, land, culture.

To be a Jew and to "come up" to Israel -the fulfillment of which can be achieved by the alya to Israel. The meaning of staying in the Diaspora -divided identity, possibility of assimilation for you and for your children.

To "come up" to Israel and to choose a kibbutz is an election that portrays the decision about the social way and view. ~~Someone~~ <sup>who</sup> believes in the extraction of Judaism from the Movement, that strives to attain the elevation of the person and the amendment of the world. The kibbutz is a framework that deals with this area more than any other form of life, in the community domain, and also in the national domain, in an attempt to shape the face of the whole society.

In my opinion, there is a straight line that links the decision of a person with a humanist world view to pour his content into his Jewish identity, with the decision to live in a kibbutz in the State of Israel. We are going through hard times in this period. The kibbutz Movement and the State of Israel are living a difficult crisis. Other Zionist ideologies accumulate acceleration and power, but the struggle about the shaping of the image of Judaism and that of the Israeli society are in their intensification. The future is open and has got many options. The aim is so worthy that it justifies the struggle and the price bound to it. This is my belief, and I am present in this struggle.

I really hope that you will decide to join me-us, and together we will try to advance, to continue, and to shape the way of the kibbutz, the image of the State of Israel, and the image and character of the Jewish People.

Good-bye by now

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#### Letter to a trainee

I was pleased to hear that you seriously consider to "come up" to Israel, and I obviously see in this the fulfillment of all the educational process that you went through in the Movement till now.

I know that if you will decide to "make alya" it is because you feel attracted to hard challenges: leaving the well known world, your parents' culture, and the environment where you grew up and where, of course, you could see your future, if you stayed there. You are attracted to leave all this towards a becoming country, that fights, that doubts, that makes mistakes, and that sometimes angers. And if you have already chosen a new challenge, it



seems to me that you are a possible candidate for a more serious fulfillment: the life in a kibbutz. And life in a kibbutz is difficult from many points of view: there they are continually dealing with the gap between vision and daily reality. The distance between both is very large and there is no agreement among all the kibbutz members on the essence of the vision on the one hand, and on the ways of translating it to deeds, on the other. There exist many combinations and it is possible to discuss about all of them. If you will come to the kibbutz, you will work hard and it is not sure that you will see blessing from your labor. If you will come to the kibbutz, you are in need of a personal vision and consciousness so that in the daily life, in your smallest deeds in your work, in society, in the family, you will be able to diminish the distance between the available and the desired. The "desired" is an ample and ramified aim that refers to every domain of the private life, the kibbutz's life, the State of Israel's life, and maybe even beyond.

Does this look "big on you", or maybe it seduces you to come and try? Is it important to you today as a Jew, as a Zionist, as a Movement graduate, or as a person at all?

I hope it is so...

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Efal, 12/7/88

To the trainee of the Movement "Bonim Dror",

We have long talked about the Jewish identity and about the Zionism of each of us. There is almost no essential discussion about these topics, even if we have not reached high levels of discussion in each subject yet.

When arriving to the topic of the kibbutz as an aim of Jewish and Zionist fulfillment, I am interesting in stopping at the Jewish parts of this aim.

The question arises of whether the kibbutz can be related to Judaism, when it is known it is almost its reverse, "a secular product that gets rid of all religious spark and behaves exactly the opposite to any accepted Orthodox group".

It will be interesting to see the internal process of your pecking after your Jewishness. We will try to enter the subject and examine it deeply. What is Judaism? Is it that all of it focuses on the religious ritual and in the observing of the mitzvot? Is it this the entire outlook? It is worthwhile to examine the philosophy that is hidden behind Judaism, and so, as part of your answers, you can try to start checking whether the kibbutz represents an aim for the real fulfillment of these same answers.

I am anxiously looking forward to receiving your first answers. I will be pleased to direct you to suitable bibliography, but before this you have to try to get into the subject by yourself.

Good-bye by now,

Kiko



Dear leader-trainee,

We have met here towards the congress about our future means of action. It is my turn to be engaged in matters about Judaism, since the Movement is built on our being entire Jews.

Sartre thought that the Jew is someone that the others define as a Jew. The truth is that we start the definition in a positive manner: a Jew is someone who decides to be and to continue to be Jewish, and to continue the long chain in his child and grandchild.

The vicissitudes of these times turn the Jewish person into something that changes continuously. The important point is to accept the history of the Jews as our History. Accepting the culture, its construction and its fulfillment is to give a human and true dimension. You are not just a citizen of the world, because if we differentiate your being a son of special heritage, like all the other peoples, ours also opened a bleeding world, special dreams and ideals. We love the heritage; we live and renew it all the time.

We have decided to fulfill Judaism in a search for freedom. In the Diaspora Jews are in a cage, even if a golden cage, but cage and in the end, a different Judaism, slavery; and therefore, we demand from it identity and identification with the values of the People, of the kibbutz.

We have emphasized the difference between discipline and meaning - we turn to the need of understanding and of change; we do not accept the lies of "there is no discipline without meaning" and when discipline opposes meaning, we will improve behavior.

In brief, it is allowed to be heretic; it is forbidden to be ignorant.

Friendly

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Dear Meiri,

We worked together during three years; we experienced the issue of Zionism in those days. We doubted together, and we thought together how to transmit our doubts and thoughts to the others, to the friends, and to the young trainees. The question of whether we are sons of a people has never arisen in our conversations; we experienced it as taken for granted. In my mission (shlijut), the main message has always been that Jewish culture beyond the synagogue's walls (and they call it secular Judaism) is only possible in the Land of Israel or in contact with the Jewish culture that is coming into being in the Land of Israel, and it seems to me that here we have found a common basis for our way.

And in the last Summer, when we were analyzing Amoz Os' article, "The Jewish culture in the Diaspora is a Museum", you rose and told me that Jewish creation in the Diaspora is certainly feasible, a creation which draws its sources from the Jewish existence in



the Diaspora, such as the Talmud, the Hassidim, and even Zionism. And if during the last forty years this has not happened, it is because forty years is a short time in the historical perspective. You have also asked me if I believed that an authentic Jewish kibbutz secular creation could take place in the Diaspora, if this could influence my decision with respect to the place where I would live. I replied that in my Zionism, there is not just the ideological component, but that for sure it would undermine in me the absolute perception with respect to the place where I have to live so as to live as a modern Jew. It is a pity that we cannot continue that conversation. We are so far from each other as the West is far from the East. I read the newspaper "Haaretz" and you read "El Excelsior"; I am absorbed in the destiny of the government in Israel, in the future of the collective society here; and you are hardly absorbed in who will be the next leader of your community, and even more, who will be your next Mexican president. I am interested in the destiny of the shekel; and you on the destiny of the peso; I listen to Shlomo Artzi, and you to Sakarel, and it is possible to continue, but if meanwhile this is the situation, is it possible a creation in common between us? Will we be a people? And on the basis of this development, how come will creation in common, among you, me, and the British Jew be possible? I have listened to you express with envy about the Bnei Akiva; they have a way, a belief; does this bring us back to the idea that our common future is only in our past? Or in Amoz Os' words, will we be together only when we will be enclosed in a museum? Isn't it there the advantage of the possibility of a new kibbutz Jewish creation that could give meaning to the life of the People, and in fact, meaning to continue being Jewish? I saw the doubts on you, and even the affliction among three opposing forces, which shake you, each of them towards its own direction - the ancient Jewish tradition and the synagogue, the Zionism of the Land of Israel, and the fact that you are not a Hebrew speaker. I was one of the founders of the Movement that calls for the fulfillment in Israel, and for the belief on the Jewish communitary and creative continuity in the Diaspora. I will not be surprised to find out that you have been clearly dragged by one of these tendencies. What hurts me is that your daily and lively dialogue is mainly with the Judaism of the synagogue and with the communitary museum Judaism. With respect to me, and you, the dialogue about the third trend (the Israeli-Zionist one) is problematic because you do not experience it everyday, and mainly because you are not in the Movement any more. Renew this dialogue. You have promised to me and to you that you would be involved in this dialogue, so that in the future your decision about your life will be more entire. Come to complete your studies in Israel as you have intended; come and try, because this is the real dialogue. Here we will also be able to continue the debate that was cut, and it will be interesting for me to see where will this fascinating dialogue lead.

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Kisufim, 12/7/88

Dear Vanessa,

I am writing to you in a time close to the preparation of the Movements's congress. I had the opportunity to deliberate



on the subject "Judaism in the Movement", which, in my opinion, is a main issue linked to the last events in Israel, to the demands of the Ultra Orthodox parties with respect to the change of the law "Who is a Jew?". Where do we stand in the content of this question? What do we have to say about this subject, as representatives of the secular Judaism? It is the right moment to claim that we do not agree to leave the monopoly over Judaism in the hands of the religious Judaism (Orthodox and Reform). We represent the Judaism of meaning and not of discipline. A Judaism that can adapt its tradition to the universal values, and not only to the need of the Jewish laws observance (mitzvot). We must discuss in the Movement on the Jewish values such as Shabbat and candle lighting. We have to remember that only the secular Jew succeeded in saving the Jewish People through the establishment of the Zionist Movement (like Moses, who also used to be a secular Jew, and who could understand the essence of freedom, while the religious understood slavery as a punishment of God). Because of this, I suggest to start concentrating on the issue, and to organize a seminar so as to deepen the ideas among all the Movement's graduates, and to express our opinion on the question "Who is a Jew?". Departing from this subject will help us to understand why Zionism, why socialism, and why kibbutz.

See you soon,

Meni

P.S. I have written all this rather bluntly.

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Dear Menachem,

Shortly and to the point, I will ask you about your things and about the Movement in another occasion.

To summarize the study journey, whose aim was to prepare the subjects we will remark in the Congress within the area of Judaism, I will try to emphasize some lines of thought, main ideas or, if you want, idle-force vectors, that is desired to develop.

- 1) The universal message of Judaism in which the person stands in the center of the world and is responsible for what happens in it.
- 2) From here to the moral dimension of Judaism ("Do not do...") and the punishment that the Jew receives for choosing to belong to the Chosen People.
- 3) The suckling from the Jewish sources (and also human sources in general that belong to the whole Humannity) which are expected to give "inspiration" for renewal and change.
- 4) From this point, to the legitimation of this renewal, of the changes in the adaptation of the Jewish values to the changing world.

I have written this in a telegraphic style, rather bluntly.

My blessings



## Compilation of articles



ERETZ MOLEDET (HOMELAND)

Amos Oz

I am a Zionist in what respects to the redemption of the Jews, but not in what respects to the "redemption of the Holy and Promissed Land". According to my opinion, we came to this country so as to be a free people. We did not come to liberate the profaned land that grieves under the foreign yoke.

THE WORD LIBERATION REFERS TO PERSONS, IT DOES NOT REFER TO THE LAND; I was not born to play the 'shofar' or to purify the holy sacred place that was profaned by the heather.

Why precisely on this land? Because this is the only place where the Jews were ready to come, to achieve their independence. Because the independence of the Jews could have not been fulfilled in any other territory. Towards here, towards the land of Israel, converged all the prayers and the eagerness.

Does it sound contradictory? Maybe. I have already said it: it was the religious feeling who gave the guidelines so that the Zionist Movement, secular and political, could achieve the historical and territorial objective, not the miraculous or messianic one.

The belief, together with the common destiny, maintained continually the unity of the People of Israel.

Nevertheless, we must not forget nor allow to be forgotten: THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JEWS IN THEIR LAND WAS NOT ACHIEVED BY GOD, NOR BY THE MESSIAH, NOR BY MIRACLE, NOT EVEN BY AN ANGEL OF THE SKY. THIS INDEPENDENCE WAS ACHIEVED BY A SECULAR AND POLITICAL MOVEMENT, WITH A MODERN IDEOLOGY AND MODERN TACTICS.

Because of this, in the Zionism of the secular man, maybe there exists a fissure in the principles. This fissure cannot be covered by the saliva of the versicles or of some mottos.

I will accept the contradiction (if it really is a contradiction) and I will say: "I am present, here I am. In social life, in love, present in front of the other, in front of



death." We, those people who are not religious, are destined to a life full of contradictions and fissures. The same happens to Zionism.

Bearing this in mind, maybe my Zionism is not entire: for instance, I do not see as an insult or humiliation the fact of mixed marriages, if it is that these mixed couples will "make alya"; nor the one who converted to Judaism, who also decides to "make alya".

Only the Jews who chose to be Jews, or those that question themselves about their Judaism, in my opinion, belong to the Jewish People. For them and only for them 'Medinat Israel' is an existant possibility, and I would like to turn it into an attractive and fascinating possibility.

I do not consider myself Jew because of racial matters, nor do I consider myself Hebrew because I was born in 'Eretz Canaan'. I "chose" to be Jewish, and this means to participate in the collective experience of our parents and ancestors through generations. Certainly I fulfill it in a selective way: not everything that is fair to them, will be fair to me, and not everything they did, built, and raised, I am ready to continue in an obedient manner.

As a Jew, I do not want to live like a stranger, nor that the others will look at me as a symbol or as a determined stereotype, but I want to live in a state of Jews.

This state can only exist in 'Eretz Israel'.



## INTERVIEW WITH GERSHOM SHALOM

SHALOM: You ask about the price of Zionism, and the question is not what is the price of Zionism but what is the price of the Diaspora?

Claims of people such as George Steiner were already heard sixty or seventy years ago. There have always been claims about Zionism, and the Zionists have been a minority within the Jewish People. Only after the Holocaust the accusers fell silent, for a while. I do not argue with George Steiner. He tries to live out of History. While we, in Israel, live within responsibility and within History.

You ask about "strangeness"? We paid a high price for our being strangers and alienated during thousands of years we have been in the Diaspora: the price of hatred, persecutions, extermination, and martyrdom. Today the outsider is in fashion in the Western world and it is as if the Jewish intellectual enjoys this. But, what will it be tomorrow? Aren't they going to throw into his face his Jewish strangeness as a shame? In Germany and in France the fashion of the Jew was to belong and not to be a foreigner. In the version of "The German people are the sons of the religion of Moses". In those days the Jews were proud of their belongingness and not of their strangeness.

If today you are captivated by the special magic of the Jewish intellectuals in the Diaspora, I say -please. Go there. Live five years in their partition. And see what is the price of Diaspora that they pay. The one who feels "narrowed" in Israel, should go to New York or to Cambridge and should see if he feels wonderful, like George Steiner.

The claims of the enlightened people who do not want to identify themselves with any national body? Not at all, I heard that sixty years ago exactly. When they looked at me with contempt about the fact that I belong to the Zionist Movement. These questions are not new, and George Steiner did not create them. We heard them even before the First World War, and after it.

if you had asked me fifty years ago, how do I define myself,



I would have told you that I am "Ahad Haamist", a practical Zionist according to my point of view. In opposition to Herzl's Zionism of the founding of the State. Herzl considered the framework to be important in the first place. He wanted to achieve the establishment of the State through a national action of ample scope. Instead, the practical Zionism, according to Ahad Haam's view, was perceived first of all as the revival of Judaism from within, by the Jewish society to be built in Israel. Therefore, I "made alyah" and came here. The cause of rebirth is indispensable for the People of Israel, which embraces the hope of renewal, the lack of which will provoke the degeneration of Judaism.

I was "Ahad Haamist". I believed that Judaism has a spiritual face that is meant to change. Ahad Haam did not think that he would live according to the rabbies. He raised his children with no religious commandments (mitzvot). And of course, he was a Jew who thought there is something in Judaism that will live within this construction, the Zionist. It is possible that he did not see the Holocaust, but he did see Judaism's development.

If you asked me why did I come to Israel, I would tell you that I came because I thought that Judaism and the People of Israel have value. I wanted this People to exist. I did not believe in the issue of assimilation, or in the Jewish intellectuals' claims, that used to be then the same that are now. They talked about their big perspectives. They scorned and denied our small and -so to speak- provincial perspectives. They told us: "What are you going to create on the whole? Another small nation? Meanwhile we will integrate the development of the world".

BEN EZER: You said that in the debate with the Jewish intellectual that is not in Israel, there is no possibility of a logical decision, but only a moral one. What is the moral decision?

SHALOM: The moral decision on the part of the intellectual means that he worries first of all about his spiritual entanglements, and he thinks to do only his individual way. But the moral question at all, is whether a living body of several million people -who are not only intellectual but an entire People- can live in this way? The intellectual, according to his nature, does not look forward to a future in common. He is fascinated with his loneliness. And when we is more lonely, he feels better. Perhaps the person



who cannot overcome the inclination to his intellectual loneliness is right, but the question is in the scope of the shared responsibility towards Judaism. I agree that the People of Israel do exist and live. I do not see myself detached from the People. I felt that my place is here, and consequently I am here. To me, the alya to Israel was a question of personal and general decision. Therefore, I "came up" to the Land of Israel already in the twenties, before Hitler and before the economic question. And I "came up", not because I could not manage in Germany, but because I decided that my place is here, as an individual, and as part of the People as well.

Consequently, I tell you - it is impossible to decide between the two moral options. The decision is presented individually to each person, to the extent he can be the master of his own destiny: whether he thinks he has something in common with his People, or he sees alienation as a supreme value? I do not believe in the second possibility.

Alienation is a concept that is in fashion. And fashion changes. Ten years ago we witnessed the peak of this fashion. And probably the day still will come when people will scold us, the Jews, for our being alienated, and we will pay a heavy price for having been like that. Do you think, for instance, that we will not pay the whole price for the malicious play about the relationship to foreign women, in "Portnoy's Complaint", by Philip Roth?



Has the battle, in the individual's soul, been declared between the passion for profit and the guarantee of the whole humanity? Have the Israeli economics, the Zionist fulfillment, the absorption of new immigrants, the settlement of the desolated land, have they got a future? Is it there to be built a barrier to labor and to desertion by the abandonment of the economic initiative, created by the productive workers?

Will the wild gaps -characteristic of the capitalist world- between rich and poor, between healthy and ill, between urban and rural, between the academic researchers and philodophers and the Stock Exchange middlemen and embezzers by the State's money, will these gaps be reduced? Will the State be able to stand in front of its enemies, when the combatant in the front will find themselves without home, knowledge, or personal respect? Will the combatants give their lives for the sake of assuring their government, the one of those who do not pay back their defense debts? Will the ultra orthodox decide on questions of life or death with respect to the sons of his fellow men, and continue to shelter forever in their defended neighborhoods, under the wings of the "lawless", and the "permissive"?

All these points appear in the agenda - in order to teach you: professional union and freedom of professional struggle, fair sallary and democratic sovereignty on the representation of the workers' rights, fair price for the fruit of your labor in the field and in the workshop, precise balance between living expenditures of the consumer and the standard of living of the producer, shaping the child and the young man as an autonomous entity, free and with opinion, as creator and master of his judgement and consciousness; creative culture, liberated from all kind of threat or dictation from the rabbies' reactionary censorship; education of a strong combatant but who, at the same time, hates war and carries a message of peace to his enemies; an Israeli society linked to the contemporary Jewish trends and with living and equal relationships with the main enlightened of the worldwide community; striving with no recoil for a society with vision of equality and value of labor, free from any kind of



authoritarian imposition on the part of the Rabbinate or State network

Maybe it is even reasonable to suppose that the mission of forging a people as a democratic community, enlightened and sovereign, is a cultural and educational mission, heavy and full of suffering, and because of this we will ask ourselves the question of the Genesis:

How and why did we come to the world, and in which way will we be separated from it in the future, so that the day of tomorrow will be better than the previous day, and so that our heirs will be strong, beautiful, and more loving than their predecessors. This is the light hidden in the individual's soul, secular and religious as well. Political movements, not only ideological trends, must become domesticated on this point in the individual's consciousness. Manual and intellectual workers, please, remember - man not only lives on bread. This ancient axioma and the complementary spirit and vision, is like our political and professional philosophy.

The struggle has been decided, in essence, deeply in the consciousness and in the belief of every individual of Israel and of the world.

BEN AHARON



## THE JEWISH MEANING OF THE KIBBUTZ

The person who asks whether the kibbutz is a trend within Judaism considers Judaism as a religion. Judaism is not at all a religion in the same sense as Christianity is a religion, that is to say, that Judaism does not exhaust itself mainly in the area of belief and ritual. Culture, that is to say, a world-view and its fulfillment in the daily deeds of the current history. If so - the kibbutz is not a trend in Judaism but it renders the culture trustworthy, that is to say, the Jewish world view.

The kibbutz is the only cultural-spiritual entity that shapes the Jewish view in our days. The common people of the Jewish State live their Judaism in their Hebrew and in a confusing spiritual relationship to tradition. The kibbutz shapes in essence the Jewish view, (even if this does not mean that it materializes it every minute). The basis of the idea of the kibbutz is the amendment of the world in the "Kingdom of God".

This is the meaning of the Messianic outlook of Judaism, and it is realized in the kibbutz. The communitary view of Judaism realizes itself in the kibbutz, creating a life of belongingness, that is to say, shaping a swarm of relationships as a basis for the personality of the individual. The Jewish point of view concerning the ritual observance states "the worthy and unworthy", "acts to do and acts to prevent".

After almost 200 years of having reduced religion to its ritualistic dimension, the State of Israel in general and the kibbutz in particular give back to Judaism its integrity, and they may become the guarantors of keeping its integrity against the reducing and practical tendencies of the Fundamentalist and the Orthodox. With time it is possible that processes of creating systems of symbols anchored in tradition will increase, as a continuation of the tendencies that were never absent in the kibbutz: celebration of Jewish holidays, customs, life organization in which there is a significant continuity with tradition, also in the formal aspect. The mistake in the understanding of the kibbutz's role arose from looking at it as being an instrument



for the fulfillment of Zionism. None of them was the essence of the kibbutz, but they were part of the service with<sup>which</sup> the kibbutz contributed to the Zionist enterprise. In the universal thought the kibbutz is considered as the most loyal expression of the Jewish tradition, even more than Orthodoxy.

ALEX BARZEL



Chaverim write letters from the Diaspora



HABONIM AND ZIONISM - THE RELATIONSHIP

By: Natan Zeligson

For over 50 years Habonim has been a movement unequivocally committed to Zionism. Our record of Aliyah is unprecedented among the Zionist youth movements of this country and indeed rates exceptionally well relative to Zionist youth movements worldwide. A significant proportion of the youth Aliyah from this Jewish community are graduates of Habonim. Why have we been able to maintain such a high standard? What is the relationship between Habonim and Zionism?

Our Zionism firmly rooted in the central conviction that the most viable place for Jews to live is in the land of Israel. In survival terms, there is no doubt that only a sovereign Jewish National State can most guarantee the safety of the Jewish people. Throughout our long history as Jews in the diaspora, we have been witness to the consequences of not having our own country. The most recent evidence supporting the dire necessity of an independent State was the holocaust. There is little doubt that the Nazi atrocities against the Jews of Europe would have been significantly reduced had we had our own place of refuge. We should not be deluded into believing that the Diaspora is a viable haven against anti-semitism. The only ultimate protection is a sovereign state.

Surely however, a physical threat is not the only reason for Jews to settle in Israel? Indeed we in Habonim focus more on 'positive' reasons for living in Israel. It is our strong belief that an environment which facilitates and stimulates our potential as individuals and as a nation, can only be created and maintained within a Jewish homeland. In the political sphere, for the first time in two thousand years the Jewish nation have an opportunity to govern themselves. not only is this phenomenon in its own terms invaluable, but more significantly self-government guarantees self determination. For too long we were restricted in our cultural, social and religious expressions and way of life. In the modern Western world of apparent freedom of expression and cultural and religious tolerance, we in the Diaspora still find ourselves limited in our 'spiritual' dimension. How many times have we been frustrated in our efforts to express ourselves culturally and nationally in this country? Whether it be on Yom Kippur when our meditations are undermined by noisy traffic outside, or on Yom Ha'atzmaut when we have to limit publicizing the celebration in the light of the political climate of this country, we nevertheless find ourselves continuously having to compromise our individual and communal expression as Jews. I am not saying that as Jews, life (on the physical, political and spiritual levels) in the Diaspora is impossible or totally meaningless. However, as a Zionist I am asserting that our Jewish potential cannot be as fully realized outside our own national homeland.



I originally asked the question of how Habonim has managed to maintain its high standard of Aliyah. How have we been able to send over 70 Jewish youth on Aliyah since the beginning of last year? I believe the answer can be found by examining one central theme of our movement. Ever since the earliest days in the movement the leadership of Habonim has regarded the concept of "Dugma Ishit", i.e. self example, as an indispensable element in our ideology. Our education is premised by the principle of conviction and action, and as such we demand a high level of ideological commitment from our Madrichim and Madrichot.

In the light of the above principle, the central leadership of the movement is <sup>continuously</sup> changing, as older leaders make Aliyah and a younger generation takes over the reigns. This flux of leadership is what makes Habonim dynamic and a true movement.

Habonim defines its Zionism in a particular way. We firmly believe the most constructive form of Zionist expression is Aliyah, i.e. settling in Israel. We are certain that our continued commitment to education through self example, and the viable Zionist alternative that we promote in the movement, is the reason for our vitality and dynamism. Habonim in its ideological aims and ideological actualization, continues to remain a youth movement committed to the vision of Zionism through Aliyah, and Aliyah through self example.



## IDEOLOGICAL ZIONISM. DID IT FULFILL ITS TASK?

Today we find ourselves in the year of the 40th anniversary of the State of Israel, that is to say, in a time considerably prudential since that historic journey of May 14, 1948, which imposes us an analysis of the consequences brought by this transcendental deed in the way followed by our People.

And then a question arises, that concerns us as members of a Young Zionist Movement: Has the aim of the ideological Zionism been fulfilled?

Before going on, I would like to give a brief explanation of the meaning of "ideological Zionism", so as to prevent free interpretations that may arise.

Ideological Zionism has three main pillars, namely:

- Creation of a national home for the Jewish People.
- Security for the existence of the Jewish People.
- Consolidation, in that place, of a society based in the humanist values of Judaism.

Let's go back to the question recently asked. If the answer is YES, so, which is our role as ideological movements nowadays?, and what is the meaning of the existence of an organized Zionist movement?, and additional questions that we could also ask ourselves.

But let's be realistic and let's examine the present situation.

Out of a superficial look at reality arises that the last two points aforementioned, with respect to the basis of the ideological Zionism, have not been fulfilled, and the proof of this can be seen in the internal and external conflicts that affect the State of Israel.

And then, yes, the moment has come for us to emphasize the importance of our role as movements, carriers of an ideology and being consequent with it.

This role implies an education towards Alya as a way of enriching the State of Israel, not only in what respects to demography, but in the different aspects that can contribute to a progress and consolidation of the Israeli society as well.

The number of olim from Argentina in 1987 has reached almost



the thousand, and a number of 2000 is calculated for 1988, that is to say, double.

The reasons for this increase are clear: the socio-economic situation of the country has deteriorated, resulting in a lowering of the level of income, that specially affects the middle class. And it is in this situation that the option of Israel enters in some homes where the issue have not had transcendancy before. Considering the uncertainty generated at present by the proximity of the elections (to be held in 1989), it is very probable that the number of olim will increase still more.

It is very possible, and I would even dare to say very sure, that this situation is similar to the one in other countries with similar characteristics.

Which are the consequences of this kind of Alya?

In these conditions, the State of Israel would become an asylum of Jewish exiles because of socio-economic and political reasons, instead of being "the National Home for the Jewish People".

If what we intend is not to relinquish this ideal, what can we do?

Preventing the Alya of these people would mean to go against our basic principles and at the same time, we would be violating the normal evolution of history, which indicates the importance of socio-economic phenomena for its development (we cannot forget the transcendancy of these in revolutionary processes); and it is here where the dilemma arises: what to do?

The main task to carry out is to take advantage of this movement that is taking place, explaining to the people the importance and function of their Alya for the State of Israel and for the history of the Jewish People.

The renowned Organized Zionist Movement now makes its appearance in scene, inserted in the World Zionist Organization (the WZO), whose one of its main functions should be that of elucidation, for its own part, as well as for the institutions that it agglutinates.

Reality indicates that the interests of the WZO are centered around other issues that are not precisely Alya and its elucidation;



in the same way as it is not the essential problem of many institutions that belong to the WZO, and I consider it unnecessary to specify which ones I refer to

The consequences of this situation can be seen reflected in the lack of support that we, the tnuot, receive (and we are really and intensely interested in the subject) from the WZO, and this crystallizes in concrete facts, such as reduction of the amount of shlichim and reduction of budgets, which imply difficulties in our work.

Because of this, it is necessary for us to help the individual who decides to make Alya to be conscious of it, trying to help him understand the meaning of his Alya.

And what do<sup>we do</sup> we do to achieve this? Our educational task is known in the framework of our tnuot and it is not necessary to deepen in the subject, knowing that, in spite of some difficulties, the work is positively performed in this aspect.

But it becomes necessary to analyze what happens with respect to the issue of Alya outside the framework of the tnuot; and to that end we took the link of the Argentinian reality with this subject.

We have stated a serious difficulty: on the one hand, the need of elucidation and consciousness for Alya, and on the other hand, the meager importance that the WZO gives to the subject, a fact that difficulties the task.

Chaverim, the only thing we can do before this hard situation is to show that we are on the correct way, and this is shown through action, because even if not everyone is interested in this, we will try to achieve our ideals, because if we do not do it, who will do it for us?

ALE VEHAGSHEM

ALO NAALE

Peter Garin 89



New Zealand is a small country. The New Zealand Jewish population numbers only 5,000 at most. There are two Jewish Youth Movements in New Zealand: Habonim Dror and Bnei Akiva. Bnei Akiva caters for those who want a Youth Movement with an orthodox religious perspective. Habonim Dror caters for everyone else.

Habonim Dror in New Zealand has remained strong over the years. However a commitment to the ideological principles on which World Habonim Dror is based has never been required of our madrichim. The reason is quite simple. With a small but diverse Jewish community, and a capacity for only two Movements, ideological rigidity would be suicide not only for Habonim Dror, but probably for the Jewish community as a whole. Our primary commitment must be to the maintenance of the Jewish identity of our chaverim.

The position of the kibbutz in the ideology of our New Zealand movement is somewhat uncertain. We have madrichim who have absolutely no intention of making aliya to kibbutz, and that's acceptable to us. It is set out in our Constitution. Aliya to kibbutz is seen as the ideal form of chalutzic aliya, but other forms of chalutzic aliya are considered worthy of the Movement's support, and even plain old "other forms of Aliya" is constitutionally encouraged.

Aliya to kibbutz is still held dear by more of our madrichim than any other form of aliya. And for the Movement as a whole, it remains the sentimental favourite, and the kibbutz is still used as our basis for Zionist education. But a commitment to kibbutz is not to be found in all of our madrichim, nor is such a commitment required.

The question must be asked: Are we morally bankrupt, and no longer worthy of bearing the name Habonim Dror? Or are we merely accepting the inevitable, recognising in the late 1980s, aliya to kibbutz may not be the single ultimate form of chalutzic aliya? What is chalutzit in 1989?

Perhaps to answer that question we had better look back to see what was chalutzit in 1909, and in the following years. The early kibbutzim were objectively useful to the Yishuv and the young State for three reasons: settlement of the land, border security and agricultural development. However the early kibbutzim saw themselves far greater than was inherent in those basic values of settlement. They were creating the New Society, where



equality and freedom would be attained through the collective, the ultimate form of Socialist Zionism.

The early kvutzot and kibbutzim were the vanguard of the Yishuv. Those chalutzim saw themselves as setting a spiritual and physical example for the other Jews in the country, by their high moral standards and their tireless physical labour.

And while they might have been considered a bunch of crazies, at first, the kibbutz eventually became the symbol of the young Jewish State. No one was having an easy time of it, but these kibbutznikim were deliberately going out to the most desolate and dangerous areas in the country, and living in the harshest conditions, to populate and break in the land.

What was the essence of a kibbutz to those pioneers? What is the essence of kibbutz today? Yitzhak Tabenkin gave the following factors as being the essentials. Kibbutz (for Tabenkin it was Kibbutz HaMeuchad) must be:

- Zionist
- Communist
- Educating
- Have a Jewish national character
- Non-separatist
- Moralistic
- Voluntary

A contributor to Shdemot (volume 27, 1986) gave his six basic factors which identify the kibbutz:

- Collective production
- Collective consumption
- Mutual aid
- Equality
- Democracy
- Zionism

The former list is somewhat more specific than the latter, and the lists are not equal. Accepting Zionism as the context in which any Israel endeavour is set, the common factor to both lists, among all the different values, is the principle of the collective. Communism, or collective production and consumption, that is the common thread. To quote another contributor to the



goal of co-operation in front of us and strive towards it..."

In kibbutzim all over Israel today, people are wondering what has happened to the "values-laden" life that the founders led. Kibbutzim have become affluent, which has made their members increasingly materialistic. The violent debate over the introduction of kettles into private living quarters has given way to quiet acceptance of private video recorders and stereo systems.

Of those born on kibbutz, only half are remaining to commit themselves to a life on kibbutz. The rest are leaving, and they are not leaving to spread the socialist word, they are going to make money. Those who remain seem to do so primarily because kibbutz is their home, not because they want to build the New Society. Many of those who live on a kibbutz today do so simply because they live on a kibbutz, and not out of any "values-laden" reasons.

Many kibbutzim hire labour. Thus the kibbutz stands in a state of limbo, if we may use that term, uncertain as to exactly which principles are essential to the existence of a kibbutz. There seems to be only one bare principle which characterises every member of a kibbutz. That is the desire (or perhaps only the preparedness) to live in a society which produces and consumes collectively. All other values (or lack thereof) are now accepted, tacitly or otherwise.

The rest of Israel can sense this. The vanguard of the Jewish State, the kibbutzim, are hardly looked up to with awe and respect these days. They are envied because of their wealth. They are disliked because of their arrogance and elitism, especially that of the youth. As a political force they are ignored. The moral light of Israeli society seems to have been extinguished.

All this harshness is not intended to suggest that kibbutz is a failure, or is valueless. The object of this discussion is to show that the highest level of morality, rigid equality of property, a desire to strive constantly for the improvement of society as a whole, that all of these are not necessarily values held by every kibbutznik. And it is suggested that in the 1980s, it is ridiculous to suggest that they should be.

Kibbutz in the late 1980s, cannot be considered to be an institution which alone embodies the goals of a Youth Movement such as our own. It is interesting that in neither of the two lists of "kibbutz essentials" set out



above is the word "chalutzit" given. This is odd, because it would seem to us that chalutzit is the one truly essential factor when one is looking at kibbutz as a Youth Movement ideal.

Chalutzit today is not what it was in the good old days. The word is usually held synonymous with the breaking in of the land, yet we know that on a great many kibbutzim today, it is the factory which is bringing in the money. Chalutzit involves a pioneering spirit, a desire to bring Israeli society forward, to work for its people. In New Zealand we find it hard to see why the scientist who is working on technological development, the teacher who educates the children in Development Towns towards a higher standard of education, the artist who strives to raise the level of cultural awareness, or the factory worker who produces goods for export, need necessarily be any less chalutzic than a farmer on a kibbutz. What we would require is that the scientist, teacher, artist, factory worker and farmer be acting not with sole interest of their own advancement at heart, but be working for the benefit and improvement of the State.

Surely this is what a Movement such as our own must primarily strive for, to be at the forefront of the improvement of Israeli society as a whole. Tabenkin said that there is an abyss between those who identify with their society, and those who negate it. Habonim Dror in New Zealand aims to keep its members on the side of the abyss where those who identify with their society stand.

Linda Levine of Kibbutz Amiad has suggested that "The national need today is no longer agriculture and nationhood but technology and brotherhood. Youth needs challenges which fire the imagination." Kibbutz is one of those challenges in Israel today. But it is not the only one, and we would suggest that wherever the spirit of chalutzit is to be found, Habonim Dror should be ready to encourage it.

Habonim Dror  
New Zealand



When thinking about the topic of Jewish Identity, I feel it best to talk about myself, and my community. That is, what it is to be a Jewess in Melbourne, Australia - in the 1980's.

Like so many of my Jewish peers, I was brought up in a somewhat observant household. Lighting candles on a Friday night, going to Synagogue on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur - but not terribly much more than this.

I attended Mt. Scopus College - supposedly the largest Jewish day school in the Southern Hemisphere - for all my school life. There, I received an education in both secular and Jewish subjects, including Jewish History, Hebrew, Tanach and Torah She Be'al Peh.

It wasn't until 7th grade that I began to go along to meetings at Habonim Dror - the Zionist, Socialist Youth Movement. Although it was all really fun and games and meeting new Jewish kids in the beginning, I can now look back on my 10 years in Habonim and I am able to say that I received a very special and important education in the movement.

Through regular meetings, camps and Seminars, I learned what it was to be a responsible Jew. A Jew who realises the effects of assimilation. A Jew who learns the significance and beauty of Israel and Israeli culture. A Jew who learns the meanings and manifestations of Zionism. A Jew who cares about others, not just other Jews - but all others. And finally, a Jew who learns the meaning of Kibbutz and Aliya.



I completed a Hadracha course and later, after finishing school, went on a 1 year program to Israel. Half of this year I spent in a Yeshiva in Jerusalem. Although I am not a "religious" Jewess, I can honestly say that the learning that I did in this time was extremely valuable. Too many Jews reject the practise of Halacha without understanding its meaning. Too many Jews believe that they know enough about Judaism without ever really having studied the rich texts and ideas of our religion.

Later, I went to kibbutz and found a certain contentment and cultural society that I had never found before. There can be no doubt that there are many many problems facing kibbutzim in Israel today. However, I still believe it to be a very full life - culturally, socially and a lifestyle that is still striving for socialist equality in a capitalist world.

Now it is my turn to provide the Hadracha and Chinuch in the movement back home. I feel it so important to carry on the type of education that I received. There are so many young Jewish children who are missing out on a very important part of Jewish education - Zionism, Kibbutz, self-awareness, self-fulfillment, Israel, Aliya.

As I complete my University degree and continue to educate others through Habonim - I have not forgotten to keep up the education of myself and my peers. One should never stop learning - there is always something to discover about Judaism, and about being Jewish.

I am also happy to state that I am a member of a 15 strong Garin Aliya - made up of young men and women from Australia and New Zealand Habonim Dror. We have all pledged to be in Israel - as Olim Chadashim - on kibbutz - by the end of the year 1992.



Finally, I feel that I must state something of the struggle and frustration involved in keeping a movement running from year to year. Every year is a new battle to bring in the children (it is a shame that so few Australian parents realise the value of youth movements), to keep afloat financially, to secure shlichim from Israel, to find the financial support from Zionist bodies to run programs, and so on.

Yet, we still have the highest Aliya rate of all Australian Youth Movements. We still have a Meshek Ya'ad - Kibbutz Kadarim - where many ex-movement members are now chavrei kibbutz and building new lives in Israel. But most of all, we have a belief in our identities as Jews, and in the strength of a movement ideology that strives to educate the young Jew in a way that cannot be fully achieved at home, at school or with friends - but only in a Zionist Youth Movement.



### THE POLAND SUGGESTION

Shortly after Peretz's arrival in Australia, he suggested the idea of incorporating a Holocaust/Poland tochnit into the year-12 Shnat/Machon tochnit which would culminate in a visit to Poland on the way to Israel.

This visit to Poland is a program that is already well-developed in Israel with Israeli kids of approximately the same age, visiting Poland after completing a Holocaust/Poland program. Kibbutz Be'eri is very involved in this program and I plan to meet with people from Be'eri, as well as meeting with a representative of the institute for Holocaust Learning during my time in Israel. I will endeavour to find out full details of the preparation program, the actual visit and logistical details such as cost, places to stay, connections in Poland, flights etc,etc.

Meanwhile, the task facing Habonim Australia/New Zealand at the annual Veida is to discuss this following proposal keeping in mind that full details will be supplied by me, upon my return in March 1989. However, we must decide a yes or no answer to this proposal at the Veida so as to ensure the incorporation of this tochnit, by all states during 1989, with the first Poland visit being made by the 1990 Shnat/Machon group (providing the Veida vote is affirmative).

### THE PROGRAM OUTLINE

- The Poland tochnit will begin in Bonim 11 as part of the Bonim - Shnat/Machon Program. This tochnit will concentrate on Poland during the Second World War with emphasis on the Concentration camps, and Ghettos.



- The culmination of this tochnit will be a visit of approximately 10 days duration - to Poland. The Shnat/Machon group will be accompanied by an Australian madrich/a who will have been involved in the preparation of this tochnit with the group.
- Whilst in Poland, the group will visit the camps -: Auschwitz/ Birkenau, Majdanek, Treblinka and the Ghettos of Warsaw, Lublin and Crakow. It has also been suggested that the group take part in some kind of memorial ceremony during their stay in Poland.
- There are three main aspects of preparation in this program:
  - (i) Social preparation - preparing the group to act as a support group for each other during this somewhat emotional experience.
  - (ii) Historical Background - illustrating the events leading up to and during the Holocaust - and more specifically in Poland.
  - (iii) Emotional Preparation - this will be more by way of movies and talking to people (survivors perhaps) to prepare each individual to the best capacity for their well-being.
- The suggested topics to be covered in the preparation tochnit (as taken from the tochnit run in Israel), are as follows:
  - a) Poland Jewry before the war.
  - b) Simulation Games "The end of the world". A group building exercise. A game where individuals assume different characters all trying to escape a bomb-shelter in order to get to Poland to see the existing evidence of the Holocaust.
  - c) History - the Final Solution.
  - d) Judenracht/ The Warsaw Ghetto.
  - e) Warsaw - the city/ Jewry/ before the war/ the cemetery/ Mila 18.
  - f) Lublin - The concentration camps were in full view of Lublin citizens - their actions/non-actions etc.
  - g) Majdanek, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka.



- h) Crakow, Lublin, Warsaw - to learn about the cities and the Jewish communities of the time.
- i) Poland today - financially, socially, culturally.
- j) A meeting with a psychologist - to prepare the group to help each other through the experience.

These are the details that we have so far. Remember that I will obtain full details in Israel as well as requesting financial help from certain Holocaust funds that exist in Israel. I will provide a full written report as well as a program booklet on my return.

Meanwhile we should consider the feasibilities/possibilities/ desires of Habo to be running this program (a program also run by England Habo - to Amsterdam - by the way). I would suggest that one very important aspect of this program is that we would be providing an opportunity to these kids that many will never receive, or probably even think of again. This type of program provides the framework for an experience that few people would consider to do individually.

Finally - it is an opportunity to experience and see firsthand this atrocious chapter of our history. A chapter that is fast losing meaning to younger Jewish generations as time moves on.

I urge you to consider this proposition thoroughly and carefully.

Aleh v'hagshem

*pp David Samuel*

Ilana Sharp

(Rosh Chinuch - Melbourne)



## DIFFICULT DECISION

AT THE TIME OF AN EXTREMELY COMPLICATED POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION, WITHIN WHICH ANY KIND OF HYPOTHESIS OF SOLUTION INVOLVES THE MODIFICATION OF THE STATUS QUO OF ONE OF THE PARTS, THE CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONTINUES TO STAND AS AN ETERNAL SYMBOL, COMMON TO THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE REGION FOR THE LAST 50 YEARS.

The problem is much more complicated than what our imagination can reach. It is so enigmatical that even the deepest researches, the most ornamented publications, and the clearest political stands regarding the Middle East conflict, make of it a paradox whose end is unpredictable.

Every political solution to the Jewish-Arab problem remains blocked, at the moment, by any of the sectors implied in the conflict, to whom, supporting it (stubbornly and not so stubbornly) costs lives and money. A practical solution is regarded as impossible. Its enemies, ambiguity and politics.

(1) With a vast collection of confrontations of all colors and for every season, these are some of the models:

- Israel - Arab countries (each of them, another history).
- Israel - Palestinian Arabs from the occupied territories (adding the Israeli Arabs).
- Israel - P.L.O. (and other various rival factions within and outside them).
- Israel - Fundamentalist Arabs.

Conditioning elements: the Jewish presence in the Middle East, which is absolutely Arab.

(2) The unauthenticity of the common Arab aim of conforming the BIG ARAB MOTHER in the Middle East is totally confirmable. That old Arab aim of unity lost all its standing. Anyhow, Israel is a bothering element, aggregated to the bloody rivalries that exist among the Arabs themselves in the immense region. Not only are Christian and Moslem Arabs in confrontation in Iran-Irak, the Shiitas, pro-Syrians are against pro-Iranian Fundamentalists (Lebanon), and there is an endless amount of conflicts that I will not enumerate here.

Definitely, Arabs do not constitute an HOMOGENEOUS BLOCK



WITH SHARED IDEALS.

(3) Approximately 1.5 million of Palestinian Arabs live in the occupies territories (Judea and Samaria) and Egypt (Gaza's Strip) until 1967. In these days, Jordan decided to give up these territories, a step that complicated the panorama.

After the Israeli occupation the standard of living of the Palestinian population rose considerably.

(4) The P.L.O., led by Yaser Arafat, aspires to agglutinate the Palestinians, who live in the occupied territories, in search for a political way out.

What are his objectives in the long run? They are not known. Which people follow Arafat? What would happen if an Arab Palestinian state is established in those territories? Would political options even more extremist than Arafat's be conformed in the territories?

(5) I would look for a global negotiation (put aside the fact that in the country no one agrees with no one). With whom? With Hussein, who killed and expelled the Palestinians in Jordan's Black September, in 1971, and today gives up the territories confiding them to the Palestinians? With the USA and the USRR? With Assad from Syria? With Arafat himself?

(6) That is Unpredictable! This corresponds to a partial political solution. Almost a million and a half Palestinians live in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, a people attached to the land in which they have always lived. Not all the Palestinians know what they want. To follow Arafat? To resign themselves to the territories with no expansionist aspirations? To go back to Jordan, who seems to want to get rid of the West Bank? To stay with Israel?

THE PALESTINIANS WANT THEIR OWN STATE. Some leader will have to crystallize unity the way Ben Gurion did it when bombing the ship Alta Elena, which was destined to the factions of the Jewish struggle, in the days of 1948, close to the Independence. In this way, out of these clashes of power, Tzahal was born.

Some representative of the million and a half Palestinians



MY POINT OF VIEW ABOUT ZIONISM IN FRANCE AND ABOUT THE  
MOVEMENT            by Bluma KALUSKI

Before talking about Zionism (an ample term) I will try to give a definition of Israel. Israel is a land that was given to the Jewish People approximately 2000 years ago. Forty years passed and we can talk about a STATE. Israel is a JEWISH STATE, a country FOR the Jews.

Where are, then, all those Jews, because there are only 3.5 millions in Israel? There are still ten millions spread in the world. The French Jews represent about 6% of this "diasporic community"...

I would like to transmit the thoughts, the ideologies of the French Jews; afterwards those of the young people of the Movement, and finally my own visions of israel and of Zionism.

What is Israel for the French Jews? To this question, some people would answer that it is their land, their country, their state... I would not be extremist in telling you that few of them really mean it. There are some, it is true... On the other hand, many of them think that, indeed, Israel is a nice country for vacation. Yet, I remember that in 1982 the French tourism was in strong regression! It is true that a country in war attracts little for vacation; so for alya, the question should not be asked!! Nevertheless, I ask it to me! The Jews in France have many reasons for not making their alya. This country, constantly threatened by war, is far from attracting them. Fear of a bomb falling on one's head, of seeing one's son falling in the front, the fear of being victim of a terrorist attack... hinder every Zionist fulfillment. But if there were not only these fears, that I could qualify as "physical"? There are also material fears. One has to be crazy to pay so many taxes. One has to be crazy to live in a country where everything is so expensive and where you earn so little money... One has to be crazy to pay 1000 Francs each time you leave the country. One has to be crazy to buy a car, a video ... at such a high tax.



All these fears put aside, there are still other difficulties: how to move from one's house, from one's country, how to change language, friends while we reach an "adult age", an age when all the tasks become so difficult to do?

If these Jews do not "make alya", what is the meaning of Zionism? How do they experience it? Well, some of them attend Zionist Congresses, Zionist lectures. Others send a little money to Israel... There are some who simply raise the T V volume when they talk about Israel in the news... I do not want to talk about those who had the nerve to demonstrate in front of the Israeli Embassy in Paris, to denounce the way of maltreating the Palestines in the occupies territories... I consider those as "anti-Zionist Jews".

Now I will try to describe to you the French young Jews who belong to the Movement. There are some who are active. These consider Israel as their only and unique country. Others, more moderate, see in Israel a possibility of fulfilling their ideology. Still there are others who simply have conscience that it is a country for the Jews, a country that is waiting for them... There are others, little active, who consider Israel as a country among many others. The Dror youngsters find themselves facing these difficulties when they want to fulfill their Zionism.

The mentality of the 18 year-old young people has nothing to do with the Israeli mentality. In Israel, an 18 year-old youngster will serve in the army, and this during three years. In France, a young person who obtained his Bac will immediately think about his future studies. Studies present one of the most serious problems to alya. A youngster starts studying, he leaves the Movement, he loses a little of his Judaism, of his Zionism... It is then that he starts working, to "know the taste" of money, to get married, to have children, to become old, and to face the difficulties of the French Jew (that I have already mentioned).

When the problem of studies does not appear, there is the "problem of the parents". Parents that the youngster does not want to leave alone in France; parents that oppose any departure to



Israel... There are also other problems, such as the fear of changing country, language, friends; the fear of serving in the Army... If I were a little optimistic I would probably dare to say that the young people are Zionist but not enough to fulfill their Zionism.

Now I will be very personal because I will tell you about me !!! I went to Israel two years ago in the framework of the Ma'hon. We were a garin of 14 people (garin= united group). We spent five months at Kiriath Moriah, afterwards nine months in a kibbutz, and finally a year at the Army. As you cannot doubt, I work now for the Movement. At the same time I study (Publicity), and I strongly intend to make my alya. I have always regarded Israel as the country where I would live. It is true that there are some positive factors: my parents are yordim (they remained a little Zionist), my family lives in Israel, and I have been in contact with them for a long time.

The Movement has offered me a kind of Zionism, a pre-alya, which I have immediately accepted. If I study here, it is to absorb the good old French ideas, so as to apply them in Israel afterwards (above all, in Publicity).

For me Zionism is the safeguard of the Jewish People. The religion knew how to keep it during 2000 years, but do not make illusions, religion cannot do it anymore.

Only Israel is able to.