

HAMEVASER

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An Interview With Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

By NATI HELFGOT

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, a prominent rabbi on the American scene for almost twenty years, recently made Aliyah to the new town of Efrat in Gush Etzion which he helped found.

This past month Rabbi Riskin was in the States, something he will continue to do in future years as part of his contract with the Lincoln Square Synagogue. Hamevaser spoke with R. Riskin in his study on 69th Street a few hours before his return home to Efrat.

Q—As a rabbi who has made Aliyah, do you think American rabbis will find a place in Israel or will they be unemployed?

A—I don't know enough about the general Israeli scene to be able to say, but I think that a rabbi who is not retired and who loves to teach will find a place. In Israel, the rabbinate is much more bound up in teaching and paskening halachic questions than it is in preaching and in counseling. So if an American is interested in this I think that he will find a place. I think that there is room for a rabbi to be involved in other issues as well, but they have to be secondary to his function as a teacher and a posek.

Q—Many people involved in Chinuch feel a conflict between their responsibility to serve the Jewish people here and their desire to go on Aliyah. What is your approach to this issue?

A—I stayed in America for nineteen years in the rabbinate because in a large measure I felt this responsibility. When I honestly felt that I had brought my shul and school to the point where I could leave them, I felt it was time to go.

Q—Do you see your "life plan" as a model for other people in Chinuch spend ten or twenty years in America and then Aliyah?

A—If they are involved in Chinuch and rabbinate, I don't know if it has to be ten



or twenty years. It can be five years; until the point where they feel they are truly accomplishing in America and giving of themselves. Also, part of what a rabbi has to do is to teach his congregants about the mitzvah of Aliyah and there is no better way of teaching than going yourself.

Q—What do you find are the differences in the educational approach needed for a Yeshiva U.S. in Israel?

A—Right now I am absolutely startled to see how easy it is to transfer.

Q—People always talk about different mentalities.

A—I was very nervous before I arrived. I even had sleepless nights before my trip. I must add, however, that I spent the last 8 summers teaching on a religious kibbutz so I imagine this helped me adjust more easily.

Q—What is your position on the current controversies in Israel between the Orthodox and the Conservative communities on who is a Jew and other such topics?

A—The Conservative community has demonstrated, especially with its last decision vis a vis women rabbis, that it is only another form of the Reform movement and that it does not accept halacha as well; we cannot accept any Jewish position that does not accept halacha as binding. The Conservative movement cannot be given any recognition whatsoever by the religious establishment in Israel.

I have to add that "Who is a Jew" touches Kedushat Yisrael. If Kedushat

Lecture on "Daas Torah"

On Wednesday, December 23, the student Vaad sponsored Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter, rabbi of the New York Jewish Center, who dealt with the issues of "Daas Torah" and "Emunas Chachamim", both as understood by present day gedolim and in the context of traditional sources.

Rabbi Schacter first described his own background. He grew up in a "YU modern-Orthodox home," but he learned in the Philadelphia Yeshiva, Mir, and Tora Vadaas. At the same time, he earned a degree in history from Brooklyn College, and is now pursuing a doctorate in Jewish History at Harvard. In terms of the issues he raised in his talk, he said at the outset that he had no real answers. "I am still drawing conclusions, and I may still be for a long time."

The talk dealt with defining three phrases: "Daas Torah," literally an opinion based on Torah; "Emunas Chachamim," faith in the Torah Sages; and the verse "Lo Tasur," the forbiddance to deviate to the right or left from what the sages say.

DAAS TORAH

Rabbi Schacter first gave a formulation of "Daas Torah" based on an article on "The Role of Gedolim" by B. Weinberger that appeared in the October 1963 issue of the Jewish Observer. According to Weinberger, the *Gadol b'Yisrael* has the ability to accurately address any subject he chooses—whether it's a halachic or non-halachic issue. Since our Gedolim have the unique ability to see through the Torah's eyes, they can give the proper advice on political, social, and economic issues.

According to the Choletz Chaim, "he who has 'daas Torah' can solve all the problems in the world, both in general and in particular." However, if someone has "daas Torah," but it is mixed up with other opinions, "such as those from the

street or from the newspapers, it is contaminated with refuse, and there is no end to the matter."

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, a student of the Choletz Chaim, wrote two major books dealing with the daas Torah perspective on contemporary issues. He discusses communism and Zionism, and shows that they are against Daas Torah. However, he takes the right of Gedolim to make these absolute pronouncements, for granted. He assumes Daas Torah; he does not explain it.

Is there a source for this assumption? Has "daas Torah" always been understood this way? Rabbi Schacter pointed out that the only reference in Shas to the term "daas Torah" is the Gemora in Hulin 90b. The Mishna there states that the *gid hanashe* is from both the right and left thigh. Rabbi Yehuda disagrees, saying that it is from only one, and the *da'as* (reason) determines that it is the right thigh. The Gemora then asks, is it obvious to him (from the *p'sakim*) that it is the right thigh, and is his da'as therefore "daas Torah", or is he unsure, and is his da'as based on his own inclination and logic? From this it seems that the phrase "daas Torah" means using *p'sakim*, basing one's opinions on texts, as opposed to using logic. This is not the contemporary understanding of the phrase, as expressed by the Choletz Chaim.

Maimonides uses the phrase Daas Torah in *Moreh Nevuchim* in contrast to *Daas Hamon*, the opinion of the masses, and *Daas Philosof*, the opinions of the philosophers. It is used in the sense of "the Jewish point of view," or "the Jewish position." It does not mean the opinion of a physical human being who can determine policy. Similarly, Rabbi Schacter brought a *Mshva* of the Rashba

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HAMEVASER

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Grading and Degrading

This semester, Yeshiva College showed a marked improvement in its academic atmosphere. It is unfortunate that the infantile act of a minority of students should impede the College's progress.

A student, or a group of students, obviously unsuited for college, posted a malicious sign that slandered one of the College's most respected and successful instructors. The libelous content of this sign only demonstrates the immaturity of its authors.

Even more outrageous was the response of some students after the sign was posted. It is incomprehensible that students could have read the sign and entertained thoughts of supporting the slander. One quickly runs out of derogatory adjectives in describing the absurdity of the situation. It is especially disturbing that in a university that espouses the ideals of Torah and Judaism students would flagrantly violate the prohibition of *Lashon Hara*.

It would be futile to affirm herein an instructor's right to determine his or her own grading policy. It would further be futile to list statistics on the exact number of "A's," "B's" or "C's" awarded by a given instructor. Suffice it to say that the entire attack is so far beyond the bounds of reason that the whole affair was at first dismissed as a prank.

(It is sadly ironic that the sign protested unduly harsh grades. The sign was so poorly written, that the entire argument is made ridiculous and indeed is deserving of a "D.")

Finally, attributing the instructor's "poor" grading policy to his lack of a doctorate is profoundly absurd. The Ph.D. is not awarded as a sign of pedagogic proficiency. Success in the classroom is measured by other standards, and by those standards, this instructor has succeeded as much as any.

We look upon this incident with sadness and anger, and sincerely hope that such statements will never again appear on the walls of Yeshiva University.

More of the Right Stuff: MBAT's

In the past, the Mishna Brurah requirement was not treated with proper seriousness by many MYP students. A cursory glance through the text was the extent of the preparation put in by most students.

Much of the blame, however, did not lie with the students.

Many students felt swamped by the wide scope of the material assigned. Others felt they were not motivated to learn Mishna Brurah on their own. Still others were discouraged by the extreme detail of the questions on the exam itself. Students—and a **Hamevaser** editorial—claimed that a more general exam would encourage preparation prior to the exam and a more serious attitude.

We applaud the administration's efforts to revamp the Mishna Brurah portion of the MYP curriculum. It is hoped that the increased interest on the part of the administration that led to a more reasonable amount of material for the Mishna Brurah *bechina* and made the *bechina* more generally representative of the material studied will filter down to the students as well.

In turn, students should assume a more responsible and enthusiastic attitude towards the Mishna Brurah *bechina* and other aspects of the MYP curriculum.

If any of **Hamevaser's** readers have a relatively complete collection of back issues, dating from January 1976-June 1982 please call us at 927-1562. We are trying to fill in some large gaps in our files. All expenses paid.

HAMEVASER

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The Right Stuff

In recent months, there have been several informative and scholarly events on campus that we feel merit praise. The Isaac Breuer College, in conjunction with **Tradition**, sponsored a Yom Iyun on the philosophy of Isaac Breuer; the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Judaic Studies held a conference entitled "Apostates and Missionaries: An Historical Perspective"; and Robert Alter of the University of California delivered the Hillel Roghoff Memorial Lecture on "Truth and Poetry in the Book of Job."

Student organizations were also involved in sponsoring such events. The Student Organization of Yeshiva ran its annual series of Alumni Shiurim. The shiurim given by several of the Roshei Yeshiva were well attended by both students and alumni. In addition, the newly formed Student Vaad coordinated two lectures. The first was a dialogue between Rabbi Walter Wurzbarger and Rabbi Bernard Weinberger on Orthodox Jewish cooperation with non-Orthodox organizations. The second was a discussion on "Daas Torah and the Modern Orthodox Jew" led by Rabbi J. Schachter.

The most encouraging aspect of these events was the large attendance. In the past, many lectures were unable to draw substantial crowds. Perhaps it's not presumptuous of us to find a certain trend in these recent events. This trend may mark a return to the academic ideals we have searched for in recent years.

We feel that these events are vital to our institution. They help define Yeshiva University and its goals, and contribute to the intellectual atmosphere on campus. We hope that all organs of the University Administration, Faculty and Students will take note of the increased interest in these events and continue to sponsor them on a regular basis.

Choosing a College

To the Editor,

Listen my friends and you shall hear.

The sad tale of a boy both kind and dear.

This boy (call him Yitz) came to Y.U.

Because at Ivy schools he couldn't be a good Jew.

He set up a night *chavrusa* right away.

Then gave it up because he joined the play.

He was always at minyan right at the start.

Until he realized that getting there for *borchu* was the main part.

Seder starts at nine and he was always there
Until the day he slept late, and realized that nobody cares.

Now my friends listen one more time.

To the story of another friend of mine.

He went from Israel to an Ivy League school,

Y.U., with him, just wasn't too cool.

To go to minyan in the morning he had no yen.

But he felt guilty and went, because he made ten.

He only learned Gemara an hour and a half a day.

But his *zikah le Torah* was greatly heightened in this way.

Both of these stories are quite true.

And they just show that it's tough to be a Jew.

The decision about where to attend college is quite a difficult one for a Torah-committed Jew and, as the two examples I've quoted above show, not always an obvious choice. Shalom Stone's article does present one scenario for what can happen in an Ivy League school, but by no means the only one. Perhaps **Hamevaser** should have printed a more complete article dealing with the possibilities (and advantages and disadvantages) of each choice from a Torah point of view, rather than satisfying itself with the rather flippant, unproductive "Ballad of Danny B."

GIDON ROTHSTEIN

Proper Authority

We, at Yeshiva, have been blessed with three generations of leadership that have shaped and directed the unique course of our University. The very lives of Dr. Revel, Dr. Belkin, Dr. Lamm, and of course, the Rav have given meaning to a motto which might have otherwise remained a mere catch-phrase. Through their dedication to Torah Study and their specific academic fields and interests, we have before us a living definition of Yeshiva's uniqueness: an unwavering commitment to Torah-Judaism and a broad intellectual sensitivity to the world in which we live.

However, despite the articulateness with which these leaders have defined our objectives, time and time again we are witness to individuals who use forums provided by Yeshiva to either denigrate or redefine our purpose. We consider it deplorable for individuals from both inside and outside Y.U. to abuse their authority when addressing students (be it in a class, a shiur, at a hesped or a chagiga) by spurring forth public criticism and/or offering very narrow interpretation of the meaning of Torah U Mada.

In recent months we have been victimized by such abuse on our campus a number of times. We hope that in the future people will become more responsible in their use of institutional authority by being more sensitive to the ideals that have guided us for well over 50 years.

Join Hamevaser

A MINORITY OF ONE

Writing

In which the editor revives
the ancient art of rambling...

Got the Time

It happens all the time. 1:30 a.m. you're putting your books away or washing dishes from a supper cooked illegally 4 hours before. You tell your roommate that the Rangers lost again. Turn around, and it's 3:00 a.m.

The hours between 1:30 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. don't exist. That pseudo-scientific theory was postulated recently by several imminent graduates of YU.

The phenomenon seems to defy scientific logic, but so does the remainder of the 24 hours.

Consider your schedule. Class until, say, 6:30 p.m. Supper. M * A * S * H, a few phone calls, some studying (if you're not a senior). Maariv, a few more phone calls. "Star Trek"... It's 3 o'clock again. Every time, like clockwork.

Perhaps, from your personal perspective, you don't appreciate the insanity of all this. Maybe we're all a little too used to it by now.

I was set straight by some fellow college newspaper editors at last week's national conference of the JSPS (Jewish Student Press Service). Try explaining your schedule to a Berkeley girl or a UCLA fellow.

When they start class at 9:00 a.m. Pacific Standard Time we've already been in *shiur* for three hours, and when they go home at 1:00 p.m. PST, you'll still be in class for another three. Tell them that.

It's not surprising that many of them reached a similar conclusion: We're all crazy. Every one of us screwballs whose first class ends after sunset. Every nut who has two classes after supper. All 1400 of us.

So relax. If your Timex has been playing tricks with the springs in your head, you've got nothing to worry about. You're in good company.

Look Sharp

It's a favorite pastime of editors to save some of the more interesting but as yet unprinted letters-to-the-editor for a single, *en masse* publication. I'm not going to sink that low. Most of them are more silly than funny, anyhow.

Some, however, are truly sad. It's very frustrating for the Hamevaser staff to stay up nights correcting and polishing when the letters we receive indicate that some of our readers don't bother reading the black and white. More precisely, I suspect---there's a problem of sloppy reading.

One letter, from an anonymous YU alumna living in Israel, comments on Charles Abrams' article, "Women Behind the Pulpit" (Dec. 2, 1983). She is distressed at his suggestion that the JTS vote is waking up Orthodoxy to the "women" issue. Perhaps it's true and perhaps it isn't, but Mr. Abrams didn't say so. He did say it "merely refocuses our attention on a problem which has existed for many years. The problem...is one that has been grappled with many times."

Please, Miss/Mrs., look sharp.

One More Time

The same writer, different article, tried to pin on YU the beliefs that Joey Lipner used in order to define the Conservative movement in his printed response to last issue's letter (12/2/83). Is it possible to write an objective article without being accused of taking sides? Twice? I'm beginning to wonder.

And how did the school get mixed up in this? The small print on page 2 reads "The views of signed articles are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Hamevaser or Yeshiva University." Now it's in large print, so no excuses. Don't drag the school into newspaper politics. They have their own things to worry about.

Amateur Hour

Another letter came from Rabbi Aaron Reichel, a practicing lawyer, YC '71, BRGS '74, RIETS '75. Referring to Larry Yudelson's article on the New York State *Get* Law, he disparaged those who feel more strongly about the legal principles involved than the importance of dealing with the "unscrupulous sub-humans" who cause misery to innocent Jewish women.

Firstly, a lawyer should know better than to use terms like "sub-humans" in a logical argument. Secondly, no one said they felt "more strongly" about one than the other. Both Mr. Stern and Mr. Lewin were assessing the merits and flaws of the law from a legal point of view. Neither one addressed the balance of the legal/religious perspectives.

Most alarming, however, is the implication by Rabbi Reichel that rigid adherence to New York laws should be suspended in order to accommodate these victimized women. He seems shocked that "sophisticated Yeshiva College graduates" could support the separation of church and state in spite of the distressing situation faced by the Orthodox community.

1) Just because something is "good for the Jews" doesn't mean it should transcend our obligation as American citizens to preserve the laws of this country.

2) The purpose of the church/state separation in the Constitution is to protect religion. We are much better off with the separation, even if it means solving our problems without the help of Governor Cuomo, than

we would be were the state to become involved in this sensitive situation.

Although admittedly an amateur in the practice of law in this state, I think that the *Get* Law is not so good for the Jews.

But please, folks, keep writing. At the very least, it gives me something to read during lunch.

Is he is or is he ain't?

From the Titles department, a couple of corrections: HAMEVASER has rescinded neither Dr. Louis Feldman's Ph.D. nor Rabbi Saul Lieberman's *semicha*. Both are entitled to their well-earned designations.

Back to the subject of "time:"

As I began this ramble and searched for a theme to tie it all together (which, you will note, I never found), my junior Feature Editor suggested I include some topical items: My paper on William Wordsworth for Dr. Fleisher was three days late and not begun; I hadn't written home in three weeks; Thomas Becket (who is posthumously responsible for *The Canterbury Tales* and for which is eternally damned) celebrated his *yartzeit* on December 29; and the fall of Western Civilization was imminent.

Since only the last of these was relevant to the general readership, I dropped the whole lot.

Except one: Hi, Mom.

SHALOM D. STONE

"Perhaps a lunatic was simply a minority of one."
George Orwell, 1984

Falashas' Plight

Dear Editor:

As someone particularly concerned with the plight of Ethiopian Jews, I was interested in David Rosenberg's article "Two Groups, Two Views of Falashas" in the October 27 issue of Hamevaser. I believe, however, that you would have presented a more balanced picture of the situation if you had included other views---e.g., views of members of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews (AAEJ) or the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jews (NACOEJ), or of people who attended the October 30 national conference on Ethiopian Jews in the Washington, D.C. area. According to many of these people, the Falashas' condition is still very bleak.

The most glaring omission in your article is its failure to mention the drought and famine now affecting much of Africa, including Ethiopia. A member of Catholic Relief Services working in Ethiopia testified at a recent House subcommittee hearing on the food crisis in Africa that many Ethiopians suffer from severe malnutrition and disease as a result of lack of food.

I don't know when the World Jewish Congress group visited Ethiopia, but the quotation that they "found no signs of hunger" is misleading since both U.S. representatives in Congress and State Department officials admit that a severe famine has struck Ethiopia and that significant problems exist in getting emergency food to the people who need it.

Yeshiva University students who wish to know more about the Falashas should contact the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, 2789 Oak Street, Highland Park, Illinois 60035, or the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry, c/o Lincoln Square Synagogue, 200 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10023. They can provide lists of appropriate books, articles, films, slides and tapes. The Jewish Media Service, 15 East 26th Street, New York, 10010, also has a supply of up-to-date material on the Falashas.

I hope you will print reports of the Falashas' situation regularly. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,
Gitelle Rapoport

Volunteers Needed
As Much Time As You Can
Give

Dear Student:

My name is Dr. Charles Kremer and I am President of the Committee to Bring Nazi Criminals to justice in USA Inc. For over thirty years I have worked to bring to justice, criminals living in the United States.

At a time when anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are on the rise, this work becomes even more critical. However I need your help.

I need people to help organize my archives, type my autobiography, and in general, help me with my work. Whatever time you can give to this cause, even an hour a week, will be appreciated. Our office are at 135 West 106th St., Apartment 2-M. Hours are generally 10:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M. However, we can make special arrangements to fit your schedule.

Please call me at the office at 866-0692, or at night at 799-0135, if you can give some time.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charles H. Kremer

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No News Is Bad News

By LEE KRAVITZ

(JSPS)—“If you hear a siren all day long,” says Jim Jensen, Channel 2 anchorman, “it just becomes an annoyance.”

That, in sum, is the problem now facing the Soviet Jewry movement.

Shcharansky and others are still in jail. There are more than 300,000 Jews still waiting to leave Russia. On all fronts, publicity for Soviet Jewry continues to be urgent. Yet for a variety of reasons—not least of which is the tragic persistence of the issue—Soviet Jewry has become less and less newsworthy.

At its national convention in Washington, D.C. last month, the Union of Councils of Soviet Jewry moved to do something which surprisingly, no Soviet Jewry activist group has done in the movement's 20-year history: the group voted to hire its own public relations firm, one of the nation's largest.

The firm and details of the campaign have not been revealed, but Lynn Singer, president of UCSJ, says the decision to hire professional public relations consultants was made because “ever since the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, there has been scant media coverage of Soviet Jewry. And now,” she adds, “the need is even greater and more urgent than ever.”

The Soviet Jewry movement, object of world Jewry's longest-running media campaign, now stands at a critical juncture in its fight to retain world attention. Until recently, much of the movement's success has been based on its ability to get wide press coverage for the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews who have not been able to emigrate.

But against a background of deteriorating relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, only 91 Jews were allowed to leave the Soviet Union last month—down from an average of more than 4,000 a month in 1979. The drop has also been accompanied by a dramatic resurgence of officially sanctioned anti-Semitism in Russia.

The media have allotted a little news space to these events. Paradoxically, say activists, the Western press is finding Soviet Jewry less and less newsworthy, even as the situation becomes more urgent, and many Soviet Jews stand in more need of publicity for their plight.

“It's a shame,” says Tom Tomizowa, a producer for NBC's “First Camera,” “but we simply don't have the luxury of putting something on the air because it interests us or we think it's important. By awful necessity, it's the breaking news, the most timely events that get covered.”

To educate viewers on an issue takes time—a precious commodity in the news

business. Faced with covering an issue like Soviet Jewry—an issue that's both ongoing and intractable—journalists say they need either a new angle or a major breakthrough. And here lies the crux of the problem.

As Lynn Singer puts it: “The plight of Soviet Jewry is not a glamorous one. It goes on 365 days a year. From the media's point of view, it's the same old story all the time—harrassments, beatings, arrests and denials. So what's new?”

Confronted with this bleak scenario, activist leaders are working to develop new strategies to keep the issue in the public eye. In the early 1970's, the Jewish Defense League garnered extensive press

knowledge of the Soviet Jewry issue. He admits that much of his job entails designing events in such a way that they will get attention from the media. “Do we manipulate events for the media?” he asks rhetorically. “Of course. In order to get coverage you fulfill stereotypes, you give them the screaming crowds. No one wants to cover a press conference concerned with a particular issue. I mean, who wants to show talking heads?”

“The press runs in cycles,” he says. “They'll report on Soviet Jewry for awhile, then move on to other things. Everything gets its day in the sun and then is dropped.”

Of course, the Jewish newspapers

on a 120-day hunger strike to protest the deplorable conditions in his prison. The few stories written about him then represented almost the only coverage he had gotten since his dramatic public sentencing in 1977.

In solidarity with Shcharansky, Rabbi Avi Weiss staged a six-day hunger strike in front of the Soviet Mission on 67th Street and Lexington Avenue. He recalls being joined by over a thousand people who fasted, prayed and protested each day on Shcharansky's behalf.

Channel 2's Jim Jensen, lived directly across the street from the mission. At the time, Jensen's face was visible throughout the city on bus and billboard ads bearing the slogan of his news show: “If it concerns you, it concerns us.”

Recalls Weiss: “Every day Jensen would walk by and we'd shout out to him. ‘It concerns us, does it concern you?’ But he would keep walking. Channel 2 never covered the protest; nor did anyone else for that matter. Obviously, what concerned us did not concern them.”

But to Jensen, things looked different from the other end.

“Demonstrations go on nearly every day in front of the Soviet Mission,” he explains. “And it's impossible to keep track of who's protesting what.”

Asked about this specific incident, Jensen says he has no recollection of encountering either Weiss or the protestors. And he angrily denies the allegation that he was not concerned with Shcharansky's plight.

Still, few activists are willing to give up the fight.

“We have to be realistic,” says Kate Halpern, public relations director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. “You can't expect articles on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* every day when you don't see that coverage for the nuclear arms race—the most significant issue of our day.”

It is to deal with this dilemma that Lynn Singer has hired her high-priced public-relations firm.

“We simply can't let ourselves become frustrated,” she says. “We've made a major commitment to two-and-half million human beings, and we have to keep that commitment to the best of our ability. That means we're going to keep plugging away for every column-inch of press coverage we can get.”

Copyright Jewish Student Press Service, December 1983

Lee Kravitz, a recent graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, is a free-lance writer in New York City.

“In order to get coverage you fulfill stereotypes, you give them the screaming crowds. No one wants to cover a press conference concerned with a particular issue. I mean, who wants to show talking heads?”— Glenn Richter, Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry.

coverage for the issue by harrassing Soviet diplomats and bombing Soviet missions.

Most activists, though, have followed a less militant course. To protest Soviet policies, they have demonstrated in the streets and spearheaded hundreds of letter-writing campaigns to Soviet officials and to U.S. congressmen. To keep the public abreast of the latest arrests, trials and emigration figures, they have sent out literally thousands of press releases. They have also created a slew of imaginative and well-attended media events, including Solidarity Day, Shcharansky Day and the National Sabbath for Soviet Jewry.

“Individual cases like Shcharansky illustrate the problem,” says Glenn Richter, national coordinator of Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry. “If he leaves Russia the problem will still remain. The issues will continue, only the players will change.” To the press and general public the successive sufferers soon begin to look faceless and interchangeable.

During the past few months, a few other kinds of techniques have worked reasonably well in gaining press coverage. For instance, the day after Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev's death was announced, Richter's group held a “Brezhnev is Dead” demonstration at the New York offices of Aeroflot, the Soviet airline. CBS covered the demonstration live and a number of other broadcast and print outlets gave it play shortly after.

“We gave them a local angle on the breaking news story of the week,” says Richter, displaying a perceptiveness of the media's own needs as keen as his

lavish extensive and continuous coverage on all aspects of the Soviet Jewry issue as part of their larger Jewish coverage. They treat the issue in much the same way that local newspapers cover their sports teams, public schools and city government—as a regular beat.

“In the media, Soviet Jewry is more powerful as a human rights issue than as a Jewish issue,” says Suzanne Garment, an associate editor of the Wall Street Journal. “You have to remember that we in the media are in the business of exciting and educating a wide, general audience—and the best way to do that is in the most universal terms possible.” Garment says this leads editors to group Soviet refuseniks together with numerous other oppressed peoples. In the limited space available, the human rights of all these groups are treated as generic issue.

The real problem, she says, is that “The press gets tired of any humanitarian issue after awhile, especially when that issue seems intractable.”

With relations between the two superpowers getting frostier, the prospects of any progress in the human rights arena are bleak. Yet Soviet Jewry activists say they must keep the story alive in the press.

Igor Reichlin, a journalist who emigrated from the Soviet Union three years ago, says: “Without the West's awareness of their plight, the refuseniks would never get out of the Soviet Union.” But he adds that the resumption of cold war rhetoric will only add to the difficulties faced by American journalists.

A year ago, Anatoly Shcharansky went

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The Editor-in-Chief and Governing Board of *Hamevaser* wish a hearty *Mazel Tov* to former Technical Editor Zev Berman on his marriage to Judy Hecht.

Also, *Mazel tov* to the parents Dr. and Mrs. Michael Hecht and Rabbi and Mrs. Julius Berman.

Rabbi Alvin Marcus Elected President of RA

By JONATHAN SCHMELTZ

Rabbi Alvin Marcus, musmach of RIETS and spiritual head of *Congregation Ahavas Achim Bnai Jacob and David* in Paramus, N.J., was elected president of the Rabbinic Alumni of Yeshiva University in a convention which was held in October.

"Rabbinic Alumni was founded in the 1930s to enhance the principles and ideals of the Yeshiva, provide guidance to students, and compliment the curriculum of the smicha program," according to Rabbi Avraham Avrech, Director of the Office of Communal Services.

Rabbinic Alumni consists of 1800 Rabbis who have been ordained by RIETS and are currently serving in the United States and abroad. They work as leaders in the Jewish community as Hillel directors, teachers, and administrators for Jewish education, as well as executives in community agencies and other functionaries. Approximately 200 RIETS alumni reside in Israel where they occupy important roles of leadership in that nation's military, civil service, hospitals, universities, kibbutzim and private business sector.

Rabbi Marcus is experienced in the field of community service; he has previously contributed to vital committees, such as the Rabbinical Council of New Jersey, The Executive Committee of the Rabbinic Council of America, the Jewish Federations of Metropolitan New Jersey, and other organizations which have worked extensively to bolster Jewish education in America.

As President of Rabbinic Alumni, Rabbi Marcus' top priority will be to establish a task force to work with the Department of Community Services of Y.U., encouraging promising young men

to seek positions in the Rabbinate. "There is a need for strong community Rabbinic leadership, and young men should think of it as a first rather than last choice for a profession," Rabbi Marcus said in an interview last week. He went on to describe the rabbinate as a satisfying vocation and calling.



Rabbi Marcus

Rabbi Marcus maintained that financial assistance need not be the only direct reason for indebtedness to Yeshiva College. Any student who attends, owes Yeshiva College both moral support as well as financial support. He noted that RIETS is underrated by many people who don't appreciate the scholarship and learning which takes place in the student body and faculty. "There is a need for Yeshiva University to project its Roshei Yeshiva to the Jewish community," the newly elected President maintained.

Interview With Rabbi Riskin

(Continued from page 1)

Yisrael will be established by any means other than halacha, then we will have to establish sifrei yuchsin, and make a terrible cleavage between Jews in Israel; this is an impossible situation.

Q—What is your attitude on the polarization between the "black" yeshiva world and the "white" world in America and in Israel?

A—It is interesting. I have different views on both places. In America, I think we have to come closer to the "black world." In other words, I think the only way we will not assimilate in America is if we are religious and observant and build walls in order to separate ourselves from the gentile community because the gentile community no longer has those walls. That means little things like tzitzits out. As the Midrash states about our forefathers in Egypt, that they did not change their dress, names and language. This enabled them to survive the Egyptian exile. I think the American Jewish community has to become more observant if it wants to exist as a

A—Yes, I don't think you can send a normal student to an Israeli yeshiva, give him one shiur a day and expect him to truly learn. It has to be a more educational experience on top of the religious experience. I think that there has to be objective testing and the students have to be guided in terms of their learning.

Q—Basically, you're advocating changing the format of a normal Israeli yeshiva?

A—That's right.

Q—You were at the forefront of the Soviet Jewry movement when it started in the 60s; what's your outlook now?

A—We've got to do everything we can; there was much less immigration when we started than there is now. We have to do everything we can on two levels, bringing Torah into the Soviet Union through cassettes and shiurim as well as pressure for immigration.

Q—During your stay, you have been involved in a dialogue series with prominent rabbis and speakers on the future of the American Jewish community. If I am not mistaken you

"In America, I think we have to come closer to the 'black [yeshiva] world'."

community. That includes davening with a minyan three times a day and that includes a lot of little things. Also we must train our children to understand the differences and what keeps us apart. Total commitment on every level. I think that the community which is more observant is the community which is demonstrating its strength.

In Israel the problem is a bit more complex because of the citizen's responsibility to the State of Israel. Religion must mean more responsibility and not less; this is especially expressed in terms of army service.

The religious Jew in America is seen by all aspects of society as being more committed, not less committed. In Israel, those who study in yeshivot and do not express their commitment by being willing to put their lives on the line in effect are showing less commitment than their non-observant brethren. Since in Israel today there is the possibility of capturing the imagination, the religious commitment of all of Israel—and tragically the commandment of the hour has to do with military service because this is vital to the survival of the Jew in Eretz Yisrael—I believe that the "black" community has made a grave error in terms of its relationship to army service.

On the question of women serving, I think that the religious position should be that either all women go or no women go.

Q—Army or Sherut Leumi?

A—Either everyone does Sherut Leumi or some form of army acceptable to the religious community, but it has to cover all religious girls. However, again, religious Jewry cannot put itself in a position where its lives are less on the line than their non-religious brethren, if it expects to achieve their respect.

Q—From your involvement over many years with high school students, do you think there are needs for improvements in the Israeli programs?

wrote an article in which you spoke on Aliyah and the fact that we "are witnessing the funeral of American Jewry?"

A—That's correct. We are today viewing the funeral of the American Jewish community. The fact is that 2/3 of American Jewish children do not receive any Jewish education. The only communities that are going to stay strong in America are the Chassidic and yeshiva communities. I believe that. I stand by that statement, and I believe that unless the community at large changes its priorities that is going to be the situation in America. I think if we are honestly concerned for our children and grandchildren, because of the way the American Jewish community looks, and because of all the positive reasons for going to Israel, every religious Jew has to consider the obligation to live in Israel seriously.

The National Council of Young Israel has an Israel Scholarship Program for students attending BMT. The deadline for applications for next year is Feb. 29, 1984. Applications can be obtained from NCYI or from Mr. Wachsman, F413.

The Editor-in-Chief and Governing Board of **Hamevaser** wish a hearty *Mazel Tov* to Editor Em eritus Adam Karp on his engagement to Debby.

The Editor-in-Chief and Governing Board of **Hamevaser** wish a hearty *Mazel Tov* to Naftali Hammer on his engagement to Miriam Gross.

The Editor-in-Chief and Governing Board of **Hamevaser** wish a hearty *Mazel Tov* to former Associate Editor David Jacobs on his marriage to Sari Borvick.

OP-ED

Standing By

By NATI HELFGOT

Although Chanuka is behind us, I would like to reflect for a moment on this past year's Chagiga. Unfortunately, as has been the pattern over the past few years, the turnout was rather low and would have been lower had it not been bolstered by a large contingent of High School students. The interesting fact is that the "no shows" were comprised of three major groups of students: (1) Those who have no affinity to the Bais Midrash and therefore had no reason to attend the Chagiga; (2) Those burdened with midterms who could not spare a moment and presumably would not have been learning at the time either; (3) A group of *bochrim* who were learning in side rooms, dorm rooms, or their homes during the chagiga.

It is this latter group upon whom I wish to focus my attention. This group has a tremendous affinity for the Beit Midrash

and this is why I find it difficult to understand their attitude. It is a well-known custom to have a Chanukah Chagiga where everybody sets the night aside for eating, singing, dancing, and divrei Torah. It is at this time that we celebrate the miracle of Chanuka and what it represents to us. Why is it, then, that students in Y.U., unlike those in other Yeshivot, begin to make calculations as to the wisdom of a Chagiga? Indeed, ten Roshei Yeshiva felt that it was worth their precious time to come and participate with the Bnei Yeshiva in this year's celebration. Moreover, what kind of impression does a young high school student get when his other Chavrusa—who is supposed to act as a role model—does not attend the Chagiga?

The question here is not one of the worthiness of doing a bit of dancing, or hearing a shmooze from Rav Tendler. It

(Continued on page 6)

Mezuzah Campaign

By JONATHAN SCHMELTZ

The Student Organization of Yeshiva has recently undertaken the Herculean task of checking and replacing all of the *Mezuzot* on the Main Center Campus of Yeshiva University. "There was an urgent need for a project of this sort," claimed S.O.Y. vice-president and coordinator of the mezuzah drive, Yakir Muszcat, "as there were many rooms with *mezuzot* that are *posul* or no *mezuzot* at all." The idea was originally conceived by Rabbi Reichman, who immediately took it to Rabbi Dovid Lifschitz and S.O.Y. Dr. Israel Miller guaranteed that the University's Century Fund would help cover the costs, as sixty percent of the campus's *mezuzot* were found to be *posul*, and *sofer* Rabbi Dovid Lesdune had to be called in on a full time basis. Assisting in the project was JSS junior, Franklin Smiles, who undertook much of the work. "When we finish our campus, there are plans to do the same at the Stern College Midtown Campus," said the S.O.Y. vice president.

Standing By

(Continued from page 1)

is a question of what our perception of a Yeshiva is and should be. Is the yeshiva a place where a *bochur* spends "X" hours in shiur and "Y" amount of time in Chevrusa? Or is it a place where one is exposed to a loftier concept of an institution containing the total Jewish experience? Shouldn't it be a place where not only the mind is engaged intellectually but also where the heart and soul are emotionally stimulated. A yeshiva should be a place where much time and effort is spent in learning while at the same time it is a place where bonds are forged as we participate in a Chagiga or *חג ושלום* as we mourn the loss of a Rebbe or Talmid at the yeshiva. So why do students feel that the Chagiga is not important and that Y.U. is not a "real" yeshiva?

In the Beit Midrash, people with differing views on Talmud Torah, Zionism, secular studies, etc. live and learn together. Just as K'lal Yisrael is composed of many distinct units, so too is our yeshiva a microcosm of many different styles, customs and beliefs. However, there are certain times when the Y.U. community must speak as one. Y.U., with its spectrum of ideas, still represents one *derech* in the Torah world. Therefore, it is incumbent for us as Bnei Hayeshiva to be unified as we listen to *divrei Chizuk* and sing and dance together, sharing the same spirit of Torah.

I must repeat that a yeshiva is an institution of total Jewish learning and experience. It is a place where an individual can develop intellectually, emotionally, morally and ethically. The challenges that face modern Jewry are great, all the more reason why we should be armed with the full arsenal of learning and experience that yeshiva provides in totality for its students.

"Daas Torah," "Emunas Chachamim" Are Discussed

(Continued from page 1)

who uses "Daas Torah" in the sense of the correct position.

More recently, the N'tziv used the phrase "Daas Torah" in explaining that most people today lack it, meaning they don't have knowledge and understanding of Torah's its importance and centrality.

This is still a far cry from the Chofetz Chaim's opinion, i.e. the power of Gedolim to make authoritative pronouncements on all issues. According to Rabbi Schacter, to the best of his knowledge there are no sources prior to the 20th century defining the term as it is defined by the Chofetz Chaim.

EMUNAT CHACHAMIM

The second term that Rabbi Schacter dealt with was "Emunat Chachamim," literally, belief in the sages. This phrase first occurs in Pirkei Avos (6:6) as one of the 48 qualifications for acquiring Torah.

Its modern connotation is very similar to that of "Daas Torah": believing in, and following, the gedolim.

Rav Elyahu Dessler, in *Michtav MeEliyahu*, deals with the approach we should take when we are faced with problems in our lives. Should we stay in Yeshiva, should we get a job, or should we do something else? Rav Dessler answered that we have to follow the rabbis—Emunat Chachamim. We are nothing, so we must use the eyes of the Gedolim. They have the power to see things correctly in all areas, and until we can approach their level of Torah, we have to follow their advice.

Rav Dessler deals with this concept more extensively in another letter. He had been asked about the Gedolim of the generation before World War II, who had told the people not to emigrate to Palestine. People had followed daas Torah, had had Emunat Chachamim, and followed the Gedolim right into the gas chambers. What did they have to show for this?

Rav Dessler answers that we have no right to question the Gedolim. Anyone who had seen the meetings of those Gedolim would have seen that they had *Ruach Ha-Kodesh*, and the *Shechina* rested among them. One may not doubt them. Chazal have said that we are required to listen to the Chachamim, even if they say that our left hand is our right hand ("lo tasur"). Rav Dessler concludes by saying, in fact, that "the lack of our recognition of our insignificance compared with our Rabbis—this is the root of all sin and the beginning of all destruction (Churban)." Having established that the contemporary conception of "Emunat Chachamim" means listening to Gedolim no matter what they say, without considering the possibility of error on their part, and that "Emunat Chachamim" is considered to be such an important element of Judaism that transgressing it can cause a Holocaust, Rabbi Schacter proceeded to analyze the sources pertaining to it.

He noted the Mishna in Avos, that Torah is acquired through, among other things, "Emunat Chachamim", and pointed out that commentaries on Pirkei Avos, being essentially *musar* seforim, are the appropriate place to find analyses of a concept that is as significant as "Emunat Chachamim" seems to be. However, after looking through nearly 50 commentaries on Pirkei Avos, Rabbi Schacter found little indication that Emunat Chachamim was understood by the Mishna or the rishonim in the same fashion that it is understood today. As examples, he quoted:

—the Abarvanel: one should assume that the gedolim have their reasons for any strange pronouncements or decisions that they make.

—the Medresh Shmuel: if one doesn't believe everything that Chazal said, one can't reach the secrets of Torah.

—the Meiri: one must believe all that the Chachamim say, even if it doesn't make sense.

These commentators (even the Meiri) do not seem to be saying that Emunat Chachamim means depending on the Gedolim for all decisions.

LO TASUR

The third relevant term is "lo tasur" referring to the pasuk (Deuteronomy 17:11), which commands that when a dispute arises (the psukim refer to an halachic dispute), the parties shall go to the Judges (ultimately the Sanhedrin) and do what they declare. The parties "shall not turn aside from the sentence which they (the Judges) shall declare unto thee, to the right hand, or to the left." Rashi comments that even if they say your left hand is your right hand, you must follow their decision—an idea we have seen among contemporary advocates of daas Torah.

The Sifri, however, is not so extreme — it says that if the sages tell us to do something that *seems* to be as ridiculous as saying your right hand is your left hand, we have to listen to them, but not that we have to listen to something that is actually nonsensical.

The Yerushalmi in Horayos, on the other hand, learns the exact opposite. The verse teaches that we only have to listen if they say "left is left," not "left is right."

The Chovos Halevavos explicitly states that the verse is referring only to halachic

disputes, not to questions of philosophy or other issues. Things that are related to logic must be decided by logic.

To summarize, when we look in the sources we find that the terms "Daas Torah," "Emunat Chachamim," and the pasuk of "Lo Tasur" were not used to indicate an absolute Torah perspective on all questions, nor an obligation to follow the gedolim on all issues. There seems to be no real basis for the doctrine of Daas Torah prior to this century.

In addition, Rabbi Schacter pointed out problems with the idea of Daas Torah. For one, even in halacha there is no such thing as infallibility. R' Moshe Feinstein, in his introduction to his *Igros Moshe*, says that there is no infallible pak in halacha.

If there is room for legitimate differences of opinion on halachic issues, how can Gedolim be infallible on issues of hashkafa? If they say not to march for Soviet Jewry, and experts in the State Department say that the Soviet Union responds to public pressure, why should we assume the Gedolim are correct?

Another problem is whose Daas Torah do we follow? The views of Rav Soloveitchik are not compatible with Daas Torah as stated by Agudas Yisroel. If we accept Rav Soloveitchik, Rav Kook, and Rav Moshe Feinstein as infallible Gedolim, we discover that we have three different perceptions of proper behavior.

In response to a question, Rabbi Schacter pointed out that there is no historical evidence pointing to the idea of Daas Torah prior to the modern era. In fact, in the medieval period, the rabbinate didn't have any such power. On the contrary, the kehilla was the dominant force, and it resisted attempts by rabbis to control it. Today, it is not even the rabbinate that has "Daas Torah", but the roshie Yeshiva—a group whose influence on the community is a very recent phenomenon.

Rabbi Schacter concluded by stating that the beginnings of the present doctrine of Daas Torah "may well be an historical reaction" to 19th century Reform. Daas Torah, in the modern sense, existed prior to that time neither in practice nor in theory. We are left with a contradiction between the historical lack of evidence for Daas Torah, and the fact that its advocates include Gedolim Yisroel. His conclusion: "It's not so *pashut*."

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Azrieli Institute Founded

By STEVEN F. COHEN

In recognition of a substantial benefaction, Yeshiva University President, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm recently announced the renaming of the Graduate School of Jewish Education, the David J. Azrieli Graduate Institute of Jewish Education and Administration. Mr. Azrieli, a leading Canadian architect and developer, has made his contribution in order to promote Jewish education, especially the training of Jewish teachers and administrators of Jewish schools.

Mr. Azrieli, who studied at Yeshiva University in the 1950's, has been a pillar of support to world Jewish education for many years. The Montreal builder is a major contributor to virtually every university and institute of higher education in Israel as well as many in North America. Mr. Azrieli, national vice-president of Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University, also serves on the governing boards of countless Jewish organizations in Canada and Israel, amongst them State of Israel Bonds and the Israel Student Scholarship Program as well as being president of the Canadian Zionist Federation.

"Jewish education is the only way we can maintain our Jewishness in the modern world. Jewish education is as important, if not more important, than secular education," he said. Moreover, Mr. Azrieli sees the improvement of academic excellence as directly related to enrollment. "The more children (in) Jewish school...the better the schools (will be)."

The Azrieli Graduate Institute, located in Y.U.'s Midtown Campus, offers a master's degree program in Jewish elementary and secondary education as

well as a unique doctoral program in educational administration. Rabbi Dr. Yitzchak S. Handel, director of the Institute, is very enthusiastic about the new program. The school, which had previously been under the auspices of Y.U.'s Ferkauf Graduate School, offers courses in teaching methodology, Jewish studies, psychological foundations, Jewish school management, and leadership, among others.



David Azrieli

"Our goal," explains Rabbi Handel, "is to train individuals with intensive knowledge of Jewish studies to be expert teachers and to provide an opportunity for qualified teachers of Jewish studies to fill a major need and become more capable principals and administrators."

The program, designed to upgrade Jewish educational qualifications and administration in the United States and Canada, also operates a Block Education Program, similar to the Block Program of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work. With the help of Mr. Azrieli, Yeshiva University will be able to assure the vibrancy of Jewish education for students, teachers, and administrators of Jewish studies.

Arab Students at Hebrew U.

(Continued from page 8)

increasingly hears the view that the Arab students seem to enter Hebrew U. solely in order to exploit it, and later will use the education they gain here in the struggle against Israel. A leaflet recently distributed on campus by Rabbi Meir Kahane's "Kach" movement (as the Jewish Defense League is known in Israel) stressed this point. "Why Should Hebrew University Train the Future Leadership of the P.L.O.?" it was headlined. The pamphlet pointed out that the P.L.O.'s Minister of Information, Sabri Jiryis, holds a Master's degree in Communications from Hebrew U.; it also cited the case of Salem Abduljani, a doctoral candidate at Hebrew U. who interrupted his studies to become the London spokesman for the P.L.O. in 1978, but was later awarded his Ph.D. nevertheless.

The Arab students' uncompromising support for the P.L.O. is an additional source of friction. Pro-P.L.O. rallies held on campus by the Arab Students Front have repeatedly sparked violence between Arab and Jewish students. "Our boys are sent to Lebanon to give their lives in the fight against the P.L.O., and we're supposed to stay quiet while these Arabs here cheer on the P.L.O.?" a second-year law student named Avi recently told a visiting European journalist. "If they try to demonstrate for the P.L.O. here, there's going to be violence, that's certain." Few expect the Arab students to halt their political agitation, however. Even Dr. Jack Cohen, a dove who directs the campus Hillel, concedes that "All Arab students readily and totally identify themselves as

'Palestinians'."

Because the majority of Arab students live in the Hebrew University dormitories—whereas the majority of Israeli students do not—an additional point of tension has emerged: resentment over social mixing between Arab men and female Jewish students from abroad. More than 1,000 Jewish students from the U.S., South America and Western Europe attend the University's special One Year Program and are housed in the campus dorms alongside the Arab students. The Arab men, who come from ultra-conservative villages where contact between the sexes is strictly prohibited, are 'unleashed' on campus and tend to be socially aggressive. Lynn K, a psychology major from Pennsylvania studying in the One Year Program, says that the Arab men are "arrogant, but in a suave way which fools a lot of naive American girls."

"Some of the girls find the Arabs 'exotic' and are sort of fascinated by them," according to Lynn. "There are others who would never think of going out with an Arab, but went out with one thinking the guy was an Israeli—they (the Arab students) speak Hebrew fluently, so for us, sometimes it's hard to tell the difference." The Hebrew U. campus has been the scene of repeated fistfights between Arab men trying to flirt with Jewish women, and enraged Israeli or American Jewish students.

The tensions over Arab-Jewish social mixing, like the Arab students' support for the P.L.O. and their political agitation, are problems which Israeli society at large faces from its Arab minority. How to deal with these problems remains one of the most formidable challenges facing modern Israel. Until they are dealt with, they will pose an internal threat to the Jewish State perhaps as urgent as the external menace of the armies of Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

Candle in the Wind

(Continued from page 8)

true. Projections based upon trends are only viable if the trends continue unchanged. They never do, or both history and the stock market would be easy to predict.

If there is any pattern in our history it is that our exiles end in tragedy. But our history is alive and changing, not a set of repeating patterns. That is why we must study our history: to see where we got our Torah, how and why it changed, and why we're where we are today.

One of the strong points in the YC curriculum is the Jewish history requirement. Unfortunately, in the broad scope of a survey course, there isn't enough time for the students to fully develop an understanding of how certain events and trends have shaped the way we live today. Even after seven graduate courses in Jewish history I still don't know enough to be confident during my Master's Exam. Fortunately, Jewish history is not one of the victims of the curriculum revision.

While it is possible to be a perfectly good Jew without any knowledge of history beyond the Exodus and Sinai, it is very hard to be a *thinking* Jew without it. How can we understand how a Jew relates to his country, his leaders, his enemies or himself without history? How else can we understand concepts like *Z'chut Avot*, or *Chevlei Mashiah*?

In this respect, the YC student has a tremendous advantage. The Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, conveniently located in Furst Hall, provides a wealth of knowledge and expertise in Jewish history usually unavailable to undergraduates. The graduate school not only offers high-level courses in Judaic Studies (which are available to undergraduates), but also lends to the college its faculty and a positive academic attitude. The study of Jewish history at YC can be a very rewarding experience. Through its study we see not only the distinct points in our history: the Exodus, Sinai, the Exiles, the Inquisition, the Holocaust, and the Six Day War. We see the many events in between, i.e. the causes and effects of the highly visible events, that when summed

have a very great impact on our lives.

Thus, the Holocaust is a major event in our history but not the basis of it. To remember the Holocaust properly we must maintain our strength. We must restore our numbers, our spirit, our Torah and our unity to the level that it was before the Holocaust, or rather to a higher level. We must attempt to gain as many positive lessons from the bad experience as we can. We must not fall into the trap of misusing, misquoting and misinterpreting history as Timmerman has.

Historian Salo Baron said that there is no direct correlation between the fate of Jews and the fate of Judaism. As long as there are any Jews, Judaism will be vital. We can be part of this history and that is its lesson. Understand and learn from experiences. Hopefully, the students and alumni of Yeshiva will take advantage of the unique education available to them at YU, and use these concepts to further their understanding of themselves and their people.

Nachum Stone, YC '82, BRGS '84, is in his second year at the Maryland University School of Dentistry.

RAFAEL MEDOFF, a Modern Jewish History major at Bernard Revel Graduate School, is currently doing research in Israel.

Student Vaad

The student vaad was founded this year by SOY and MSDCS to acquaint the students with the issues facing Orthodoxy today. Having seen that there is a student interest in such activities, as shown by the success of TSFPOTAY (now THInc), the vaad is using its resources to bring to YU Jewish leaders.

According to the SOY president Shlomo Huttler, a major organizer of the group, the vaad is based on the idea that the students of our Yeshiva "will eventually become both the rabbinic and lay leaders of the future, and as such we feel it imperative to acquaint them with the issues facing orthodox Judaism today."

927-6691—Brian Azizolloureff chairman of the student vaad

Candle In The Wind

By NACHUM J. STONE

Instead of sleeping Sunday morning, like any sane dental student would, I, and my hardworking wife, attempt to bring some Judaism to a bunch of teenagers who couldn't care less. They go to Sunday school only because their parents force them to. Many can't read Hebrew after nine years of Sundays.

Ostensibly, I am teaching the History of European Jews, 1935-45; the Holocaust. It means nothing to them. Jewish history is as important to them as is Australian sheep farming. They have no connection to our history and its lessons. They recognize no tradition, so its transmission is irrelevant.

One can not *prove* to succeeding generations the validity of Judaism. We can transmit the values, the laws, and the wisdom, but our proof is in the testimony from father to son, all the way back to Sinai, that *we were there*. The rest of the world's history is either national or religious, but our history is both national and religious. They are inseparable; indeed, they are usually the same.

The very nature of our history makes it relevant for all time. Our history doesn't begin with our diaspora or with the Exodus. It begins with the creation of the world. As Rashi notes, the origin of life on earth is important for it establishes the dominion of God over all the actions of the world. From this comes our claim that the revelations of Sinai are ours—ours alone and ours forever. Today, this is vital to the State of Israel. Israel does

not exist because the U.N. created it. Israel exists because God gave his land to his people.*

When we analyze our position in the world it is important to remember, for example, the Holocaust and the millennia of exile. However, the historical significance of such events must be appreciated in their proper perspective. Former Prime Minister Begin had the annoying habit of living in the past, responding to criticism of his actions with visions of the Holocaust.

Without question, the Holocaust is a large and painful wound in our memory, but it is not so awesome merely because it is recent. The Holocaust was unique in its trauma. Never before has a national government, with the aid of its people, deliberately, carefully and in an organized fashion attempted to destroy the Jewish people, without even faking an excuse.

Begin drew an analogy between Arafat in Beirut and Hitler in Berlin. Would killing Arafat be killing Hitler? Would paralyzing the PLO avenge the death of Six Million? Would the world then be allowed to forget the Holocaust, since Begin avenged its victims? Begin dare not cheapen the memory of the Holocaust.

Nor should Begin have said that our morality is above reproach from a world with a history of immorality. Germany's or whoever's—immoral history in no way justifies our own, nor does it blunt their criticism. Rather, Begin could have simply and correctly explained that no

immorality was committed. His misuse of our history weakens our position in the world.

Where Begin was wrong, Jacobo Timerman was inexcusable. In his book, *The Longest War, Israel in Lebanon*, Timerman attempts to use our present history, without even the benefit of a few years hindsight, to draw conclusions and predictions of the future. Timerman claims a strong insight into our history. Yet, before his imprisonment in Argentina, he wouldn't associate with

Timerman's misuses of history is dangerous so it distorts the true lessons our history contains.

What we can learn from history is how the Jewish people have survived as a nation for nearly the entire length of human history. We must realize that the Jewish people and its history exists only in the context of the Jewish religion and vice versa. Without the study of Jewish history it is difficult to understand the evolution of the laws, customs, and morals that comprise Judaism as we

"Israel does not exist because the U.N. created it. Israel exists because God gave his land to his people."

Judaism. Now, Timerman has proclaimed himself Israel's leading critic, historian, and prophet.

In his "historical" analysis of the "destruction" in Lebanon, Timerman says everything can be attributed to Begin. he says that Begin was trying to "destroy their will to live and liquidate their national identity." Has Timerman forgotten history? Surely Begin, as one of Israel's early fighters, knows that a nation's will can not be broken in 2000 years, let alone 30 years or six months. Timerman confuses history's lessons with his hatred for Menachem Begin.

Timerman could be excused for his many factual errors, by attributing them to poor judgment, were it not for the fact that he insists on trying to predict history from his facts. He states that Arafat would have recognized Israel, were it not for the war in Lebanon. He has no more right to prophecy than I. Jacobo

know it. The *Tana'im* were aware of the importance of understanding where our tradition came from, so the first Mishna of Avot tells us that Moshe, who received the Torah at Sinai, passed it on to Yehoshua, starting the chain of tradition. It is through this chain that we are able to accept the *Torah Sheba'al Peh*. Today's Torah scholars who have to make daily decisions rely on their understanding of this tradition when they apply old principles to modern situations. It is fascinating to read Medieval responsa and glean historical tidbits from their stories, but conversely it is vital to the understanding of that responsa that we know the context of where, when, and by whom it was written.

A wise student of Jewish history will realize that the old saying about history repeating itself are very nice but not really

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VIEW FROM ABROAD

Arab Students At Hebrew University: Dilemma For the Jewish State

By RAFAEL MEDOFF

JERUSALEM—Perhaps it is a reflection of the ironic times in which we live that while in the United States a Jewish student can choose to attend any of half a dozen or so all-Jewish universities, that is not at all the case in Israel. For in the Jewish State, there is not a single secular institution of higher education which does not number among its students a sizeable group of antagonistic Arabs.

For Jewish students at Israel's universities, the presence of so many Arab students is an increasingly worrisome development, both because of the Arabs' political activities as well as the spread of Arab-Jewish social mixing. For the Jewish State, the Arab students pose a dilemma which, in many ways, is a microcosm of the problems and controversies which have emerged with the presence of a large and growing minority of hostile Arabs within Israel's borders.

Tel Aviv University, Haifa University and even the Orthodox-sponsored Bar Ilan University each have several hundred Arab students. The focus of the most serious controversy, however, has been the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with its 1,000-plus Arab student population.

Unlike their Jewish counterparts, the Arabs at Hebrew U. are both politically active and remarkably united. The majority of Jewish students are politically apathetic; the minority which is involved in campus politics is sharply divided. The "Ofek" bloc, which is ideologically aligned with the Labor party, currently has a majority in the Student Senate; a Likud-affiliated group known as Kastel (acronym for Nationalist Students Front), and a far-Left faction called Campus (acronym for Movement for Student Political Involvement) both have much smaller numbers of representatives in the student government. The Arabs, in contrast, have

just one organization to which nearly all Arab students belong, a militant nationalist group called the Arab Students Front. The Front has refused to compete in campus elections on the grounds that the Student Senate is "a tool of Zionism", and thus has no official representation in the student body. The Front's uncompromising militancy, however, has repeatedly succeeded in bullying the Hebrew U. administration and the dovish Jewish groups into making concessions to the Arab students.

The Arab Students Front flexed its political muscle to the utmost in the Guard Duty Affair, as it has come to be called. A University regulation requires that all students who live on campus participate once or twice each semester in all-night guard duty. The matter of guard duty is taken very seriously by the authorities, especially since the 1970 cafeteria bombing at Hebrew U., which maimed dozens of students (an Arab woman student who was jailed for her

complicity in the attack was, ironically, readmitted to the University after completing her prison term). When guard duty was first made compulsory, in 1974, the Arab Students Front immediately issued a declaration refusing to participate in what it called "actions aimed against our brothers in the Palestinian revolution." The Administration backed down and has for the past nine years had an unofficial policy of never calling up Arab students for guard duty. The Arabs' refusal to do guard duty posed a dilemma for the various campus Jewish groups. The rightwing Kastel group, which opposes allowing the Arabs to guard for fear that they cannot be trusted to do the job properly, has demanded that the University obligate the Arabs to do some sort of "alternative service." The leftwing Jewish blocs, anxious to avoid antagonizing the Arab students, have refrained from calling on the Arabs to do either guard duty or alternative service. This has left the doves open to charges that they are concerned primarily with appeasing the Arabs rather than arriving at a solution to the guard duty controversy.

The rejectionist attitude of the Arab students has created deep animosity between them and their Jewish colleagues. Among Jewish students, one

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