

## Editorial/comment

### Apathy re war criminals tarnished Trudeau's record

Pierre Elliott Trudeau's death September 28 unleashed an outpouring of emotion in Canada.

Liberal-minded Jews, like other such Canadians, owe a debt to Trudeau for making this a more humane, independent country during his 15 years as prime minister; he oversaw abolition of the death penalty, easing of Canada's divorce and abortion laws, decriminalization of private homosexual acts and adoption of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Jews are also indebted to him for successfully leading the campaign against sovereignty in Quebec's 1980 referendum, and preventing the separation of a province that has one-third of Canada's Jewish population.

But a history of contemporary Jewish Canada offers mixed opinions, when judging Trudeau's record on Canadian Jewish issues.

"Trudeau...opened the window of opportunity to Jews in public service as no other prime minister had ever done," says *The Jews in Canada*, co-written by Robert J. Brum, William Shaffir and Morton Weinfeld. He appointed a Jew chief justice of the Canadian Supreme Court.

He appointed three Jews to his last cabinet, appointed a Jew Canadian ambassador in Washington, and "peppered" his personal advisory staff with Jews.

But Trudeau "showed little patience for the special pleading of the Jewish polity or that of other ethnic lobbying groups."

Trudeau viewed Canadian Jewish Congress requests for prosecution of Nazi war criminals living in Canada as a "parochial Jewish issue" with little support beyond the Jewish community. He also felt such prosecutions would create anger and divisions in Canadian society; Trudeau worried that Canada's sizable Ukrainian population, in particular, would resent such legal action against Canadian Ukrainians suspected of Nazi war crimes.

The last Trudeau government's views on the subject in the early 1980s reportedly softened, as his advisors saw the party's popularity slumping in the polls. "Guarded hints were dropped that the government might...be prepared to test Canadian law by bringing charges against several documented Nazi war criminals in Canada."

But the Liberal Party's defeat under its new leader, John Turner, in 1984, dashed those plans. And it was left to the Progressive Conservative government that followed to appoint a commission to investigate the need for such prosecutions. It was also that party which tabled and oversaw passage of legislation authorizing them.

More-Nazi war criminals probably could have been brought to justice in Canada, had Trudeau shown more sympathy to the official Jewish viewpoint on war crimes prosecutions, earlier rather than toward the end of his 15 years as prime minister. His position on that subject leaves a stain on an otherwise admirable record.

### Dry Bones



KIRSHEN  
JEWISH POST  
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ISRAEL

## Problems facing Israel in the coming year

From Palestinian statehood to violence

During this period, which for many induces religious introspection, we not only contemplate personal affairs, but also seek to peer ahead and take stock of the many problems which Israel will face in the coming 12 months of the Jewish calendar.

Following is the list in

what we consider the order of their importance.

1. Palestine. The very likely declaration of a Palestine state will create serious problems affecting the drawing of border lines, and all the security, diplomatic, political and economic relations which will ensue.

2. The settlements. Creation of the new state will result in immediate problems of the status of those Jewish settlements which, under Barak's agreement with Arafat, are due to be dismantled. The problems of



**YASSER ARAFAT**, Palestinian Authority president: Expected to declare Palestinian statehood.



**EHUD BARAK**, Israeli prime minister: He'll likely have to contest a bitterly-fought election.



**ARYEH DERI**, former Shas leader, lost appeal of his conviction for bribery: Sephardi leaders have stirred up dangerous anti-government agitation since then.

Yamit will here be magnified manifold.

3. Elections. The collapse of the Barak coalition and the emergence of a widespread public feeling that the efforts to achieve a peace will not lead to a real peace, will result in national elections that could well result in a new government which would adopt a harder line toward Palestinian demands. It will be a bitterly contested election.

4. Water. Should the country be faced with another year of drought, there will be need for strict rationing of this precious commodity for agriculture, industry and domestic consumption. Import of water from Turkey and acceleration of plans for desalination plants will be high on the agenda.

5. Sephardi-Ashkenazi Conflict. An unfortunate result of the Deri conviction and imprisonment has been the opening of a Pandora's Box, with some Sephardi leaders stirring up a dangerous agitation.

6. Religious Tensions. Alongside the above is the ever present conflict regarding the role of religion in the state, now particularly in view of Barak's program for reducing such influence, and giving priority to what he calls civil reform.

7. Transportation. The multiplication of vehicles on the roads has caused endless traffic jams and has led to increase in fatal road accidents. Plans for improvement in the rail-road service and inaugu-

8. State of the economy. While there has been a flowering of high technology, the overall national unemployment rate remains high, together with an unhealthy widening of the economic gap between the so-called haves and have-nots.

9. Syria and the Golan Heights. Since the death of Hafez al-Assad, this matter has been placed on a back burner, but should Syria's new ruler, Bashar Assad, indicate a desire to resume negotiations, the delicate question of the fate of the

Golan will again come to the fore.

10. Foreign labor. The presence of some 200,000 foreign laborers alongside the masses of unemployed Israelis, and the many delicate human problems involved, threaten to disturb the social equilibrium. Some have referred to the problem as a ticking bomb.

11. Violence. Violence in the schools, in the home and on the streets has become a disturbing element of daily life. Those responsible for public order on all levels have not yet been able to face up to the problem adequately.

12. Internal Arab Relations. There has been increased unrest on the part of Israeli Arabs and Druzes who claim that their sector has been discriminated against in general regional development. While some proclaim loyalty to the state, small groups advocating violent reaction have been uncovered.

Against the background of all that is flourishing, optimistic and upbeat about Israel, the forecast for the coming year is not very encouraging. How closer to solution will some of these problems be when we draw up our list next year?

The writer lives in Haifa, Israel.

## Comment/books

### Biography recalls how Jewish woman lived as Nazi officer's wife

An absorbing story of survival

*The Nazi Officer's Wife: How One Jewish Woman Survived The Holocaust.* By Edith Hahn Beer with Susan Dworkin. Published by Rob Weisbach Books. An imprint of William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019. Copyright 1999 by Pritchard Trustees Ltd. as Trustee of the Edith Hahn Trust. Review by SAM TRACHTENBERG

The photographs and documents reprinted in this work are part of the permanent collections at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and are reprinted courtesy of Pritchard Trustees Ltd. and Angela Schluter.

The book tells the story of deception and survival during the Holocaust by a Jewish woman - Edith Hahn Beer. She writes in detail of her life in pre-World War II Vienna, Austria, and of her astounding hidden life in Germany during the second World War, and the accompanying Holocaust.

Edith Hahn was an outspoken young woman studying law in Vienna when the Gestapo forced Edith and her mother into a ghetto, issuing them papers branded with a J. Edith was taken to a labor camp, and when she returned months later, she found her mother had been deported. Knowing she would become a hunted woman, Edith tore the yellow star from her clothing and went underground, scavenging for food and searching each night for a safe place to sleep.

Her boyfriend, Pepi, was too terrified to help her, but a Christian friend was not and did help. Using the woman's identity papers, Edith fled to Munich. There she met Werner Vetter, a Nazi Party member, who fell in love with her. Despite her protests and even her eventual confession

that she was Jewish, he married her and kept her identity secret.

In wrenching detail, the author recalls her life of constant, almost paralyzing fear. She tells of German officials who casually questioned the lineage of her parents; of how, when giving birth to her daughter, she refused painkillers, afraid that in an altered state of mind, she might reveal her past; and of how, after her husband was captured by the Soviet Army and sent to Siberia, Edith was bombed out of her house and had to hide at night with her daughter in a closet, while drunken Russian soldiers raped women on the street.

Despite the risk to her life, Edith proved a remarkable survivor. She saved every document and paper issued to her, letters she received from her lost love, Pepi, and photographs she managed to take inside labor camps. Now part of the permanent Collections at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., these hundreds of documents form the fabric of an epic story - complex, troubling, and ultimately triumphant.

LIVES IN ISRAEL

Born in Vienna in 1914, Edith Hahn Beer has lived in Netanya, Israel, since 1987. She and Werner Vetter divorced in 1947. Her daughter, Angela, lives in London and is believed to be the only Jew born in a Reich Hospital in 1944.

Susan Dworkin is a prolific novelist, playwright, and television writer. She has collaborated on projects that have received the Peabody and Emmy Awards and has been nominated for the National Book Award. Her writing has appeared in *Ms Magazine* and the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and other publications. As Edith Hahn's collaborator, Susan Dworkin shows sympathy and understanding in helping her to express her memories.

For the first time, the woman whose courage, strength, and defiance made international headlines tells her riveting story of identity and conscience - it is a gripping new chapter of survival in the history of the Holocaust.

In the preface, Hahn writes that her story was purposely hidden for a long time.

Like many people who survived a great calamity in which so many others perished, she did not discuss her life as a "U-boat", a fugitive from the Gestapo living under a false identity beneath the surface of society in Nazi Germany, but preferred to forget as much as possible. It was her daughter, Angela, who urged her to tell the story, to leave a written record.

In 1977, Hahn decided to sell at auction her archive of wartime letters, pictures, and documents. The archive was bought at Sotheby's in London by two long-time friends who donated it to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

She notes that this book owes everything to Angela Schluter, her daughter, for it was the loving spirit of her inquiry, her need to know, her search for the strange, miraculous past, that inspired Hahn to tell the story at last.

Edith Hahn emphasizes the prison of her pretense. She kept her identity unobtrusive.

For a while, in later years, when she was married to Fred Beer and living safely in England, she cast off these wartime habits. But now that Fred is gone (died in 1984), and she is old and cannot control the impact of her memories, she has put them on again.

We learn from Edith Hahn's memoirs what it was like during the war, living with a Nazi Party member inside Germany, pretending to be an Aryan, and concealing your true identity, always fearing exposure. We gain insight into those days in Brandenbourg, when she was a 29-year-old

Jewish law student on the Gestapo's "Wanted" list, pretending to be an ignorant 21-year-old nurse's aide.

*The Nazi Officer's Wife* is an absorbing biography, an engrossing story of survival by

one Jewish woman during the Holocaust. We are indebted to Edith Hahn Beer for opening the door to her past, and for the insight she gives us into a unique chapter of the Holocaust that engulfed European Jewry.

The reviewer is a retired Professor of Public Policy from the University of Manitoba and of Public Administration from the University of Winnipeg.



Yonina Lamdan and her lions at Noah's Ark in the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo: Two dozen whimsical paintings. Photo by Nechemia Meyers.

## Art in the Ark

Exhibition taking place at Biblical Zoo

A current Jerusalem art exhibition hasn't aroused much interest among the residents of the area in which it is being held, and they couldn't come to see it even if they wished to do so. This is because the exhibition - featuring two dozen whimsical paintings of animals by kibbutz artist Yonina Lamdan - is taking place in the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo.

While she still paints, animals and other objects, in recent years Lamdan has concentrated mainly on sculpting, and now has a large sculpture workshop and an exhibition area at her disposal on the grounds of Urim.

She usually works on small pieces of marble, bronze and a variety of other materials, but at the moment she is chipping away at an enormous five-ton stone. It will, she says, "be transformed into a representation of the sun - a ubiquitous element of life in our area."

Her "sun" will eventually become part of a 30-piece Sculpture Pathway on the outskirts of Beersheba.

The Pathway will run from Kibbutz Hazerim all the way to the Air Force Museum at Hazerim Air Base.

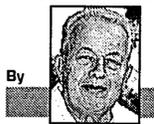
"The participating artists," notes Lamdan, "are doing their best to ensure that their work fits into the desert environment where it will be on display. And it is their hope," she adds, "that the Sculpture Pathway will help bring art and people into closer contact with one another, serve as a venue for cultural events and attract more tourists to the area."

Yonina Lamdan and her fellow Urim artists are clear proof of the fact that kibbutz members, though presently confronted with enormous economic and social problems, remain extraordinarily creative.

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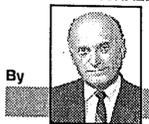
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### ISRAEL UPDATE



NECHEMIA MEYERS

### INSIDE ISRAEL



CARL ALPERT

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