

# THE JEWISH POST

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## TOWARDS 5710

The somewhat inconclusive close of the U.N. Commission's sessions at Lausanne resulted in one development which writes finis to one chapter in the long epic called 'Israel.' By demanding that the Jewish state limit itself to Tel Aviv and environs, Arabs collectively affirmed Israel's claim to some sort of existence. The fact itself is stale from the viewpoint of 'newsworthiness,' but it proves that the Arabs, notoriously slow at learning political facts of life, have made a step forward. (It must have been concern for the Arabs' relative immaturity that moved the U.N. Commission to so zealously keep Jews and Arabs from direct negotiations.) Now that the sittings are over . . . and the total outcome simmers down to concern for the Holy Places, Arabs and Jews will be thrown on their own resources . . . and direct talks may lead to more fruitful decisions.

With Israel's territorial integrity not seriously challenged, and with Jewish prestige and military prowess still dominant in the minds of world Jewry, there is today a dangerous inclination to relax prematurely, to cast Israel adrift on her own. The message of her critical economic plight has been drilled home incessantly in the past weeks. Perhaps devaluation of the Israeli pound might attract needed capital for industrial development; certainly it cannot bring more food, more homes, or more basic necessities of living (purchased here with American and Canadian gift-dollars) into the country.

On the subject of Jewish cultural growth on this continent, and the advance in broad community planning, it is already apparent that on the day-to-day level of achievement, Israel will contribute little of immediate, practical applicability. Top leadership of the Zionist organization of American today is soberly concerned with deepening Jewish culture here with its chief validity as an end in itself. Teachers will be trained in (Continued on page 16c)

## Welfare Women's Drive

Next Wednesday, when the women of Winnipeg gather at the Jewish Welfare Fund's Women's Rally to contribute to local and overseas causes, should be an occasion of great rejoicing. Rejoicing because Winnipeg's women are in the envied position of being able to give generously . . . and give voluntarily.

Few Jewish communities throughout the world today remain where voluntary giving on an equivalent scale is still possible. Few communities are entirely independent in the economic sense. The entire European, North African and Middle East Jewish community is still in a state of flux; temporarily lulled into falsely-secure calms, only to erupt in a mad scramble for visas to a more certain home, a more promising future.

Blessed are they who can give; blessed are they who can plan with security for their home community and know that their children will reap the harvest they sow today.

Jewish hopes are flying high today throughout the world. The generosity of Winnipeg's women can keep them high. A record attendance next Wednesday, and generous giving, not only spells hope for overseas Jewry; it spells strength, intensified education, improved and expanded services in every field and for every age . . . here, at home.

The significance of the timing of the Women's Welfare drive will not be lost. The period between Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur is traditionally one for soul-searching and self-examination.

Here is a focus to concentrate the probings of the Jewish hearts: how to strengthen the resources of Jewish living. The Women's Division Jewish Welfare Fund drive provides a ready answer.

# CANADIANS IN ISRAEL

By MELVIN FENSON

As world Jewry looks forward to a new year, with hope in their hearts, and a prayer on their lips, the attention of all will be turned to that little land . . . half desert, half garden-of-Eden, that has beckoned to them for the past two millennia.

The act of taking up residence in Israel . . . of going up into Zion, has been granted the privileged status of a Mitzva in Jewish tradition . . . a commandment that is also a blessing. Especially in these momentous days for Israel, does world Jewry view with a special affection and zealous envy those who have chosen to make Israel their home.

Here is the simple sketch of some of those from our midst who have moved to Israel . . . whose presence alone has been a source of strength to the infant republic . . . whose labors there today are reclaiming her original bounty.

Gesher Hazib is the site chosen by the newest Habonim Kibbutz in Israel. It is situated in the water-saturated Western Galilee, where age-old springs have always supplied an ample water supply for all irrigation needs. The famed Wadi Kurn, a water source already known in Old Testament days, waters the settlement's rich orchards and even today, running south almost from its lands to Acre, may still be seen ancient Roman open aqueducts, rebuilt in Crusaders' days. Strangely, the name of the place . . . Gesher Hazib . . . meaning Bridge of Disappointment, refers to a wadi or riverbed which suddenly dried up for a number of winters and failed to

Winnipeg Jewish youth of all political persuasions and degrees of religious interests have settled in Israel during the past several years. Only recently has a group of any stable proportions from Winnipeg settled together . . . and it is with this group of young Habonim members, settled at Gesher Hazib, that the following article is concerned. Later articles will describe ex-Winnipeggers at Hatzor, Kfar Darom, Kfar Blum, and Sasa.

measures up to the hopes of Arabs in the region. Today one walks about 40 minutes inland from the main coastal highway to Beirut . . . at a point three-quarters of an hour busride north of Acre . . . and mounts a rolling series of hills before reaching the entrance to Gesher Hazib. A small, two acre vegetable garden greets the newcomer . . . and then a series of freshly varnished, barrack-like cabins faintly reminiscent of some rough camping site in Lake Of The Woods region. Straight to the north ahead lie scattered shells of concrete block halls with galvanized, curved tin roofing . . . former British army encampment accommodations now serving the group as temporary dining hall, barn, wood-working and metal shop sheds. Eastward, across the broad valley filled with some of Israel's richest and oldest orchards, rise the ranges of Upper Galilee mountains . . . rich in ancient Jewish history of the time of Flavius Josephus . . . equally rich in Christian lore stretching from Tiberias and Nazareth to the majestic Crusader's castle known as Montfort, clearly visible by the young settlers.

First to greet me on my visit was Asher Chaiken, young Winnipegger whose pals back at home would certainly envy the spirited Arab steed he rides. Asher is the settlement's shomer or guard . . . and patrols the open Lebanese border on a regular nightly schedule, carrying a heavy pistol and sten on these expeditions. (Continued on page 16c)

# MEDINAT YISROEL IN THE PRAYERS OF THE HIGH HOLIDAYS

By RABBI DR. A. KRAVETZ

Legend tells us that once a young literateur came to the famous critic George Brandes greatly perplexed. What was the matter? He felt an urge to write on a Jewish theme, but can think of none.

"This you can readily solve," answered Brandes ironically. "Take down a volume of the encyclopedia and open it. To the first word that catches your eye, merely add the words 'and the Jews.' Thus you will have a ready subject on which to write. Should you meet up with the word 'Socialism,' for example, you then have 'Socialism and the Jews' and the rest you will say yourself."

I say this with reference to my present subject, Rivers of ink have been spilled on the subject of Medinat Yisroel, and yet the subject remains like a tabula rasa. We find ourselves too close to this event to appraise it properly; it would appear wiser to leave that task to the coming generations. All I seek is to give a retrospective review of this subject as it appears in the High Holiday liturgy.

Medinat Yisroel has in the High Holiday prayers particularly, and in all prayers generally, a more spiritual than political form. I would say it has more the formulation of a "Mercaz Ruchani," or spiritual centre, than a Mercaz Medini, or political one. The Jew, in his High Holiday Shmoneh Esrey, the holiest of all prayers, asks more for the reign of God's Kingdom than for a political centre. From the narrow, national viewpoint, it passes over to a cosmopolitan orientation. He sheds tears for a world of justice in which Zion and Jerusalem would be the symbols of this world. Vsimach Ata Adonai l'vachdo b'har Tzion mischan K'vachdo un'Yerushalayim ir kodsheshon yimloch Adonai Yalom Elohalayich Tzion.

The symbol should be the God of Zion and Jerusalem, not only the God of Israel. From a

narrow, nationalist realm, his is elevated till he becomes the God of the whole universe . . . the Universal God.

In the light of the following prayers, we see that Achad Ha'am, the disciple of the chedarmim and yeshivoh, notwithstanding the dry approach to the following problem, was a great deal closer to Jewish psychics than the modern European trained but emotional Herzl.

For Herzl was posed the problem of Yudennot more in the physical sense than in the spiritual sense, and as an answer to this problem, he saw Judenstaat. Achad Ha'am, with his logical and analytical understanding, saw this problem in a wider and broader sense. He looked upon the problem sub specie aeternitatis, from a universal viewpoint, and this led him to the idea of a (Continued on page 105)

## NEW YEAR GREETINGS FROM MID-WEST REGION, Z.O.C.

On the eve of our New Year, 5710 — the second year of our deliverance from the Diaspora, may I extend warmest greetings to all my fellow Jews in Winnipeg and Western Canada, on behalf of the Mid-West Region, Zionist Organization of Canada.

With the resonant ringing of the Shofar, let us rededicate ourselves to Judaism and our homeland reborn.

Let us pledge anew not to break faith with those who made the supreme sacrifice so that we may live and rejoice in the redemption of our people.

Let us not lessen our vigil and let us continue to give of ourselves and our resources to the utmost.

"Shall I bring to the birth and not cease to bring forth? Shall I cause to bring forth and shut the source" saith the Lord." — ISAIAH.

MARK H. DANZKER,  
Chairman, Mid-West Region,  
Zionist Organization of Canada.

# DOES ISRAEL HAVE Religious Freedom?

By PROFESSOR MILTON R. KONVITZ

The Jews in the Galut need a spiritual centre in Palestine, said Achad Ha'am. But one should add that the Jews in Palestine need the spiritual values that the Galut has created or accepted. What Israel will contribute to the Galut remains to be seen. At the present time, however, I should like to submit the thought that Israel can learn something from us in the Galut, more particularly from American Jews . . . ideals and institutions which it would repay the citizens of Israel to study and to duplicate.

The Reconstructionist (April 1, 1949) reports a ruling made by the Israeli Minister of the Interior that calls for the compulsory circumcision of uncircumcized male children of immigrants. The same magazine also reports (March 18, 1949) a case of a young woman whose marriage has been prohibited. The woman was a childless widow, and was interested in an offer of marriage, but the rabbi, following Deuteronomy 25:5, have prohibited her from marrying until her late husband's brother, now a mere infant, reaches the age of thirteen, the Biblical age of legal consent for males, and chooses to give her halitzah; for the Biblical law provides that, if a man dies, leaving a childless widow, his brother must marry her, and their first-born son must be given the name of the deceased man. Should the brother refuse to marry her, he may be released from his obligation by engaging in "a degrading ceremony." Since marriage and divorce are matters that rest in the jurisdiction of the Orthodox rabbis, the woman is prohibited from marrying.

In the March, 1949 Jewish Horizon, published by the Orthodox Hapoel Hamizrachi of America, Rabbi S. Z. Shragai, member of the Jewish Agency executive, writes that "the overwhelming majority of the State (of Israel) is in favor of retaining religious marriages, for it is appreciated that without them the Jewish people might well find itself divided into two sections. One section would in course of time, when Arab standards will have been raised, intermarry with them, become in fact a new Palestinian people and cease altogether to exist as a Jewish people. The second section would adhere strictly to Jewish family life and uphold the basis of the existence of the

original Jewish people. And so to prevent such a tragic split as this, a large proportion of our irreligious leaders have given their consistent support to the retention of religious marriages.

What an amazing statement this is! The "irreligious leaders" of Israel are against permitting civil marriages and favor placing marriage in the exclusive jurisdiction of the Orthodox rabbis because rabbis will refuse to officiate at the marriage of a Jew and an Arab, and so intermarriage will not be possible, and thus "the existence of the original Jewish people" will be assured!

In February, Rabbi Shragai and Rabbi Isaac Werfel, leaders of the Labor Mizrahi party and

This sombre account of the state of religious freedom in Israel gives food for thought even to those who favor more widespread observance. It must be kept in mind that Professor Konvitz bases his summation on what he has read and knows to be officially true; under actual conditions of life in Israel far more leeway than he imagines, exists in religious life. Furthermore, until men of his religious and cultural temperament move to Israel in large numbers, few basic improvements or changes can be seen. Consistent observance on the one hand, and thorough going indifference to religion on the other are the two major trends in Israeli religious life. — The Editor.

head of the immigration section of the Jewish Agency, were interviewed by some thirty representatives of the Jewish press in New York. They



Modern Hatzor, rivaling in technological advance and bustling commerce leading European ports . . . does not permit vessels to disembark passengers on the Sab bath. Ruling was set by Meah Shearim, Mizrahi leader, and Minister of the Interior. Non-Orthodox majority bitterly opposes such restrictions.



These small boys of Meah Shearim, Jerusalem's orthodox quarter, symbolize the future strength of Israel's religious life. Against the numerically superior stand of their orthodoxy, no liberal or conservative version of American Judaism can hope to effect much official progress in Israel today.

were asked how they viewed the role of Orthodox Judaism in the state of Israel. Their reply was that the aim and object of Orthodox Jewry is to introduce laws which would enforce Sabbath and dietary law observance, and which would vest in the Orthodox rabbis and their religious courts jurisdiction pertaining to marriage and divorce and other aspects of family life. They stressed the fact that civil marriages must not be tolerated and stated that children born of a marriage not performed by an Orthodox rabbi would be treated as illegitimate, and illegitimately born persons could not be married to legitimately born Jews. They emphasized their belief that the only guarantee for the preservation of the Jewish people and its "purity" is a law prohibiting civil marriages and divorces.

Some months ago, the Orthodox Mizrahi News Bureau in New York reported that the Israeli authorities had decided not to grant immigration certificates in cases where one member of a married couple is not a Jew. Exceptions were to be made if the non-Jewish mate had been active in helping Jews during the destruction of the Jewish communities in Europe. Even in such cases, however, express permission would have to be obtained from the Minister of Immigration, and, following the grant of such permission, the non-Jewish man or woman would be required to accept the Jewish faith.

Following protests against this order, made by some Jewish publications in England, Canada and the United States, the Israeli authorities issued statements to water it down. The Immigration Department said that each case of immigration of mixed couples "is subject to individual clarification and decision"; and Rabbi Werfel stated that while non-Jewish members of mixed marriages will not be barred as immigrants, "visa preferences will be accorded to Jewish immigrants and their families. . . ." Since there will be no dearth of Jewish immigrants for years to come, it is apparent that, although the formula will be different, the practice might well be the same. Rabbi Werfel added an "explanation": the purpose of the order is to keep out of Israel former Nazis who sought conversion to Judaism so as to gain admission to Israel.

All these orders and prohibitions are consistent with the provision in the Israeli draft Constitution that the Jewish community shall have religious courts which are to have exclusive jurisdiction over the members of the Jewish community in all matters of personal status. Whether he be Orthodox or Reform, believer or atheist, in matters of personal status he is to be subject to the Orthodox rabbinate and the traditional laws of Judaism. (Of the three non-Orthodox rabbis in Israel, two are not permitted to officiate at marriages or other functions.) The rabbinic judges receive their salaries and the funds for the maintenance of their courts from the government treasury; and since state and religion are so intimately related, there is a Minister of Religion. Religion has thus become a department of the state apparatus.

We used to hear it said that whether or not you like strawberries and cream, "comes the Revolution, you'll eat strawberries and cream." In the same way, it appears, Orthodox leaders in Israel say, "whether or not you like kosher meat, comes the State of Israel, you eat kosher meat!" Now I per-

(Continued on page 30)