

And Abbie had been dismissed as a do-gooder, a headline seeker who was up to no good.

A Re-alignment of Power?

What about more "mainstream" leadership? Were congratulations offered to Ted Mann, or to "Peace Now" whose election to the President's Conference was so very controversial?

It is quite remarkable how much support the agreement between Israel and the PLO has received within the American Jewish community. Yet the scope of this widespread support has created a credibility problem. Did those who preached the doctrine of Likud that settlements, even in populated areas, were essential to Israel's security needs, and a PLO presence in Judea and Samaria a mortal danger to Israel's existence, believe what they were saying then--or what they are saying now?

Norman Podhoretz and Ruth Wisse are at least consistent. They believe what they believe and are willing to maintain their positions. They argue that the dissent of the hawks is legitimate, a warranted caution motivated by genuine concerns for Israel's security needs, hard-headed, right thinking so necessary to correct an Israeli government that is moving in the wrong direction. No apologies, no rethinking of priorities are required. They argue that in contrast the dissent of the dove is intolerable, a betrayal of the Jewish people by self-haters seeking to curry favor with the non-Jews at the risk of their people.

Shimon Peres and Abban Eban were consistent, preaching even at the cost of their own credibility a vision of peace. Rabin is consistently pragmatic. When peace is available on his terms, he is willing to take calculated gambles.

Whither American Jewry?

In Israel, the election of Labor brought a catharsis, a change of direction. The opposition is fighting but says what it believes. American Jewry underwent no similar change of leadership and it seems to be facing a crisis of disbelief--dare we say hypocrisy--that may hamper its ability to be politically persuasive in the future.

My own hunch is that if the peace process is successful, American Jewry and the American Jewish relationship to Israel ten years from today will change dramatically, at least as dramatically as we were changed by the Six-Day-War. □

MICHAEL BERENBAUM is a Contributing Editor to *Sh'ma* and has written *After Tragedy and Triumph: Modern Jewish Thought and the American Experience*.

After nineteen years

Arnold Jacob Wolf

When Arafat went to the United Nations almost two decades ago, I wrote a piece for *Sh'ma* that advocated, almost exactly predicted, the PLO-Israeli concordat of this year. Of course, others would say that the pact could not have been sealed in 1974 while the Soviets were still powerful and disruptive, or when the PLO was rich, and not, as now, beleaguered by Hamas extremists. But, it seems to me, acting on the policy we proposed would have saved many lives lost in the successful Yom Kippur War and in the failed Intifada--on both sides.

I do not feel like a prophet; prophecy has fallen to the lot of fools in our latter days. But I do feel like a premature anti-Fascist. There were Americans who opposed Hitler too early and paid a price for it. I feel like those of us who opposed the madness and cruelty of Vietnam but found our hawkish opponents running the United States throughout the dreadful eighties. When Breira (1973-77, an American Jewish support group for Israeli peace and security, and a non-violent Palestinian state on

"Enough," said the tough old soldier...and the... Jewish peace movement can only add at last: Amen.

the West Bank and Gaza) proposed, almost twenty years ago, the same agreement that Rabin has now signed (including the inevitable peaceful Palestinian state that will be its final consequence), we were vilified, denounced, called self-haters (even in these pages), isolated, and finally, eliminated from the Jewish scene). We were surely premature; we may have even been wrong, but we were not fools and we were not unfaithful Jews.

Witnessing the Birth of Peace

It was strange, accordingly, to see the very people that had strongly opposed our peace proposals sitting in the Rose Garden of the White House to watch its fruition while most of us were watching on television. Not jealous, we are pleased that in the end, the Jewish community has suddenly come over to our views. It is the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Norman Podhoretz who are in the minority now. They have, as we had, a right to express their views. So, of course, do Israelis of all parties.

But the message is not theirs of "no inch of our occupied territories", but of reconciliation and of peace. Clearly, at least it has always seemed so to us, a Jewish

life, a Palestinian life is worth more than holding on to an unwilling and a bitter subject population. "Enough," said the tough old soldier, Yitzhak Rabin, at long last. And we of the small, lonely, often confused, but unyielding Jewish peace movement can only add at last, Amen. □

ARNOLD JACOB WOLF is rabbi of K.A.M. Isaiah Israel congregation in Chicago, and a Contributing Editor to *Sh'ma*.

But others say

Jonathan Pollard

I write to you about a glaring omission from the piece I did for *Sh'ma* (24/453) on Jonathan. Please understand that I feel that I was given the sacred task of expressing what was in Jonathan's soul. The paragraph omitted from *Sh'ma* is an essential part of what Jonathan is struggling with.

The paragraph omitted is:

"But more painful to Jonathan is his deep anguish that leaders of certain American Jewish defense organizations still have their eyes shut and their ears stopped up to his senseless suffering, despite expressions of support for commutation of Jonathan's sentence from the overwhelming majority of grass-roots Jewry and virtually the entire U. S. rabbinate."

This paragraph is a painful one, but a very important one.

I also point out that in the last paragraph, my phrasing was a "vengeful INjustice" not "justice."

Avi Weiss
Riverdale, NY

About Ruth Ginsburg

Regarding Rabbi Borowitz' article on Ruth Ginsburg, a close reading of her resume (e.g., in *Who's Who*) reveals something much deeper than simply a lack of interest in Judaism or Jewish affairs. What really stands out is a lack of interest in *anything* not clearly related to the law. She

claims no publications except in law journals, no hobbies, no outside interests of any type, not even political activity. Moreover, articles at the time of her appointment showed her single-minded devotion to her career (for instance going back to the office nightly after supper).

This is not a problem restricted to Ms. Ginsburg. Read the biographies of Janet Reno, or Donna Shalala or Elizabeth Holtzman, all of whom it would be reasonable to say have stayed single in order to devote themselves to their careers. Nor is the problem limited to women. In my experience, many men too find that the competition at the very top of the heap is so intense that any distraction such as vacations, outside interests, or taking time off for the Jewish holidays puts them at a disadvantage, or at least what they perceive to be one. Just talk to any partner at a major New York law firm....I had a friend who was merely a New Jersey State Assemblyman, but trying to parley that into being a congressman led him to give up playing golf except with lobbyists or contributors, to say nothing of the fact that being out every night at non-sensical political meetings destroyed his marriage.

The heart of the problem is that just those people who should be leaders of communities (and in prior generations would have been) are too wrapped up in their work lives to have time for anything else. There is a funny kind of Gresham's law at work, with the single-minded compulsives setting the standards for judging their competitors, and thus often effectively driving out the reasonable people.

The issue is a real one for society as a whole, but also for the Jewish world. All too often in my experience, the brightest Jews are simply so over-committed in their own work that they don't "have the time" for synagogue to say nothing of serious participation in Jewish organizational work.

Mike Rappaport
Princeton, NJ

Chagall

The letter from Karl Solomon about Marc Chagall (*Sh'ma* 23/454) is helpful as far as it goes but it misses the significance of the painter's burial place in St. Paul de Vence. His grave is at the entrance to the Catholic Cemetery in the heart of town. He could not have been buried there unless he had converted to Catholicism at the end of his life which he apparently did when he married a Catholic woman.

The Marc Chagall of his younger years was a great Jewish artist, possibly the greatest of the 20th century. But the Marc Chagall who died in France was no longer a Jew. He had disowned his heritage totally and irreversibly.

A publication that claims to be a journal of Jewish responsibility should put Chagall's identity in accurate perspective.

Albert Sussman
New York, NY

End thoughts

A prayer for agunot

Shelley Frier List

If we could listen to all the prayers that make their way to God from all the hearts on Earth, we might hear a murmured roar of supplication, as indistinct as a collective sigh or as definite as the outcry at particular moments of a troubled life. Then it's time to distill these vague and private prayers into one *tefillah*.

That time has come for *agunot* and their supporters, who need a unified prayer to the Creator as much as they need a unified front for religious authorities who hold the future of stranded women in their hands. *Agunot* are caught between the recalcitrant spouses who feel that "anything goes" in getting what they want from a divorce settlement, and the rabbinical courts who feel that Jewish law has tied their hands. *Agunot* seek satisfaction in the courts; advocates take their case to the public. But the one ear we should be bending is God's.

The first home for the Prayer for Agunot was the Flatbush Women's Davening Group in Brooklyn, New York, where we recite it once the Torah scroll has been replaced in the ark and after the prayers for the State of Israel and Israel's Armed forces. Any group can use it. I hope this prayer will, like the stages of the seder, make people pause and ask what happened to create the need for this new ritual.

Creator of Heaven and Earth: In lovingkindness You established marriage to join women together with men, and in mercy You devised the means of their separation. When Your wisdom decrees a couple to part, please help them part in trust and good faith.

So may it be Your will, God who blessed our fathers Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov and our mothers, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, and Leah, to free the captive wives of Israel when love and sanctity have fled the home but their husbands bind them in the tatters of their ketubot. Remove the bitter burden from these agunot and soften the hearts of their misguided captors. Liberate Your faithful daughters from their years of anguish, to establish new homes and raise up children in peace and thanksgiving. May the Blessed Holy One grant wisdom to the judges of Israel, teaching them to recognize their power for good alone. "Into Your hand I entrust my spirit; You have redeemed me, God of truth." May our deeds be true and worthy and bring us the redeemer, speedily in our time.*

**Psalms 31:6*

The Flatbush Davening Group has incorporated this prayer, written by member Shelley Frier List, in their monthly *tefillah* services. Other groups are adopting the practice.

Sh'ma

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