



Events...

Monday, December 1, 8:30pm

Aish Hatorah's Israel @ 60 Event "**The State of our Future**" featuring **Caroline Glick**, Nobel Laureate Professor **Robert Aumann** and **Jonathan Medved**, at **Shaarei Shomayim**. For info and tickets, call 905-964-9340.

Quote of the Week...

"Peace is like love. In order to love you must close your eyes and open your heart." - President Shimon Peres, at the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the The Peres Center for Peace - October 27, 2008 (Globes Oct 30 / IMRA Nov 1)

Commentary...

American Interlude By Danny Hershtal

A few people have already asked me why I haven't commented on the US elections yet. The short answer is that I don't think it really matters.

Barack Obama in the White House and Democratic majorities on both sides of the Capitol do matter to many people: to the American taxpayer, to worldwide investors, certainly to Iraqi citizens who are yearning to breathe free, or are yearning to see more spilled blood, and to many others.

However, I don't think Obama's victory should have any impact on Israeli policy per se. Does Obama understand what is really going on here? I don't know, but I wasn't so sure about John McCain, either. Yes, both candidates spouted the platitudes to Jewish leaders, to AIPAC and to Protestant groups, but both candidates implied that, in the end, the basic State Department line would hold them to the same approach taken by the last three presidents.

It was folly for anyone in Israel to believe that George W. Bush or any American official could substitute his or her personal feelings toward Israel for Israel's own conciliatory and self-abasing internal policies. The prevalent Israeli opinion that appeasement is more important than reciprocal alliance, that recognition is more important than respect, is the attitude that drove Israel to the Oslo Accords, the Gaza Disengagement and to various other strategic blunders.

November is the month to remember this crucial lesson. The month begins with the commemoration of the Balfour Declaration of Britain's willingness to set up a Jewish homeland in the Palestine Mandate. The month concludes with the memorial for the UN General Assembly vote to partition the remnant of that mandate into Jewish and Arab states. Both these events condition Israel's existence on international whim. And both, in the end were failures.

The Balfour Declaration indeed inspired a huge wave of Aliyah, but this only forced the British to curtail Jewish immigration to the Palestine Mandate significantly. The idea of a Jewish homeland faced the hard truth that most Jews would be kept out of it. UNGA Resolution 181 was completely stillborn. Arab refusal of the partition plan meant that the resolution would not be elevated to Security Council for ratification and was, therefore, a useless piece of paper.

Israel's independence came about through those who disregarded the British Mandate restrictions: Aliyah Bet, the Palmach, and those who fought for independence regardless of international opinion: the Irgun and the

ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee
of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

Haganah.

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Today, what Israel needs is not a sympathetic UN or a sympathetic American President. What Israel needs is confidence in its own right to exist; a right won through the strength and conviction of its settlers, its army and, if I may be so bold, its Rock and Redeemer.

I predict that as Israel's campaign shifts into high gear, we will hear Israeli politicians, especially in the

Labor Party, claim that a vote for the Left will reduce the friction between Israel and America with its leftist President. This is not the message we have to hear. Harvard professor Ruth Wisse, in her study Jews and Power, poignantly indicates that this mentality was the most beneficial for the Jews in exile, who were dependent on the grace of their sovereign to survive. However, Wisse points out that this is the most dangerous attitude for a Jewish State to exhibit if that state truly wants to remain independent.

Alliances are important. There is a reason Israel should forge strong ties with America and with Egypt. However, these ties must be built on reciprocity, on our allies treating us with the importance with which we treat them; so that we not be seen "as crickets in their eyes," and that we not "seem as such in our own eyes."

The opportunity to effect this change in attitude and direction will be presented to Israel on the coming 16th of Shevat - February 10, 2009. This will be the chance for Israelis to vote for a more confident foreign policy and a confident step forward for our country.

Let us use this opportunity to create the country we feel we deserve, that we can shape in our image and whose destiny we control. To quote a certain American politician, "We are the change that we've been waiting for."

The writer, originally from Toronto, is the Director of the Yisrael Beiteinu Anglophone Division. He blogs at electme.blogspot.com. (IsraelNationalNews.com Nov 5)

The Left's Assault on Language By Caroline Glick

On Sunday Attorney-General Menahem Mazuz drove yet another stake into the country's political discourse. Last week, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced that despite his resignation and the fact that elections have been called for February 10, he intends to renew negotiations with Syria. He hopes to commit Israel to surrendering the Golan Heights to Bashar Assad, Iran's Arab proxy, before he is replaced by a new prime minister.

Olmert's plan to compel a future government to accept such a commitment - which is opposed by a large majority of Israelis - caused an uproar. Opposition leaders and even members of Olmert's own Kadima party claimed that as the head of a transition government, Olmert has no legal right to make such a commitment.

After all they noted, just a few weeks ago Supreme Court President Dorit Beinisch announced that the transition government has no legal right to appoint new judges. Beinisch claimed that as a transition government, Olmert and his colleagues had no legal right to make decisions that will have a long-term impact on Israeli democracy and since appointing judges would have such a long term impact, they are legally barred from appointing them. If the government is barred from appointing judges, certainly it must be barred from surrendering the strategically vital Golan Heights.

But Mazuz thinks differently. Appointing judges, he asserted, is a legal action. Surrendering the Golan Heights, in contrast, is a political action, he claimed. So while the transition government may not be allowed to appoint judges, it is allowed to give Syria control over the country's water supply.

By claiming that appointing judges is a legal act and surrendering vital lands is a political act, Mazuz made a mockery of both the law and of politics. And he did so without blushing because from his perspective, both the rule of law and the powers of politicians can only be determined in light of their impact on the rule of the Left. Actions are permissible, democratic and legal when they advance the rule of the Left. They are impermissible, anti-democratic and illegal when they detract from the rule of the Left.

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Mazuz of course is far from alone in his assault democratic norms in the service of leftist ideology and power. Beinisch herself has never shied away from hypocrisy when it serves the interest of her ideological camp of radical leftists. As Justice Minister Daniel Friedmann noted wryly, given that Beinisch herself was appointed to the Supreme Court by a transition government, her concern about enforcing the limited powers of a transition government is remarkable.

Mazuz's decision to permit Olmert to cede the Golan Heights to Syria is also extraordinary when viewed in the context of recent history. In 1999, the Supreme Court placed a temporary injunction against then prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu's order to close the PLO's diplomatic mission in Jerusalem at the Orient House. The court's move was a legal scandal since Netanyahu's decision was clearly legal. Israeli law bars the PLO from conducting official business of any sort in Jerusalem. The PLO carried out official diplomacy at the Orient House. The law required the government to close the Orient House.

The Supreme Court's decision on the Orient House was revealing. It showed that the court was more interested in advancing the political interests of the Left than in upholding the rule of law. Indeed, it showed that the court had willfully co-opted the language of law and democratic norms to advance its ideological interests.

When a transition government advances the Left's political interests by offering the Golan Heights to Syria, its actions are legal and democratic. When a transition government advances the Right's political interests by curtailing PLO activities in Jerusalem, its actions are illegal and anti-democratic. When a transition government advances the Left's interests by appointing radical justices to the courts before elections, its actions are legal and democratic. When a transition government harms the Left's interest by appointing leftists who aren't radical to the courts, its actions are illegal and anti-democratic.

All of this demonstrates a disturbing state of affairs. Whether they are politicians like Olmert or jurists like Mazuz and Beinisch, the Left uses the rhetoric of democracy not to advance liberal norms and the rule of law in society but to destroy them both in the interest of advancing the Left's political interests.

The Left's co-optation of the language of law and democracy is not limited to geopolitics. It extends to issues of cultural politics as well. Take feminism for example. Education Minister Yuli Tamir fancies herself a great champion of women's rights. She has written about feminism and the need for women to have mandated equal representation in both public and private forums. In all of her work on behalf of women's issues, Tamir has been clear that a society's refusal to mandate full equality for women goes hand in hand with militarism and other violent and anti-liberal tendencies.

And yet, in 1996, while a visiting professor at Harvard, Tamir authored an article defending female genital mutilation in the Arab world. In the Islamic world, girls are forced to undergo clitoridectomies to deprive them of sexual pleasure and so "preserve" their "modesty." Yet Tamir argued in her article, "Hands off Clitoridectomy," published in *The Boston Review*, it is wrong to oppose the practice because doing so requires a rejection of multiculturalism. As she put it, opponents of the barbaric practice, "intentionally widen the gap between our culture and those in which clitoridectomy is practiced, thus presenting those other cultures as incommensurable with ours. The effect of this distancing is to disconnect criticism of their practices from criticism of our own, and turn reflection on other cultures into yet another occasion for celebrating our special virtues."

Celebrating Western virtues is a no-no for Tamir, because doing so makes us likely to defend those values at the expense of her leftist appeasement agenda. If the West judges Arab societies that mutilate women and girls objectionable, it is likely to judge appeasing them as objectionable and so reject the political message of Tamir and her comrades. And so, as she sees it, it behooves "feminists" like her to defend clitoridectomies, which she did in that article.

As far as Tamir is concerned, cutting out a girl's genitalia is no different from pulling her teeth. As she put it, "Removing a tooth is also a painful procedure, often imposed on children, and if performed in non-hygienic conditions, it can produce permanent damage." Tamir then went on to say that criticizing female genital mutilation is itself an act of misogyny because by expressing concern for the practice, critics objectify women. They reduce them to mere sexual objects.

So for Tamir the feminist, rejecting the superiority of Western culture - which allows her to freely express her demented views, vote, run for office, own property and control the fate of her genitals - over Islamic culture - which allows her to do none of these things - is more important than defending women. Indeed, she is willing to empty the rhetoric of women's rights of all intrinsic meaning to advance the interests of her radical leftist ideological

platform against its rightist rivals who trenchantly criticize the mutilation of women and girls.

AND, OF course, Tamir is not alone. In the US presidential race, American feminists have lost all credibility as champions of women's rights in their support for the often pornographic, openly misogynist and unabashedly chauvinist assaults against Governor Sarah Palin. Kim Gandy, the leader of the National Organization for Women, has argued that due to Palin's opposition to abortion, she is not a woman.

Ignoring her record of service and achievement in Alaskan politics, leftist commentators and politicians have attacked her clothes, her shoes, her hair, her glasses, her children, her figure. They have insinuated perverted sexual proclivities and they have accused her of everything from harlotry to illiteracy.

In an interview with Yediot Aharonot on Friday, the leftist American novelist Paul Auster said of Palin, "There is something erotic about Palin that attracts people to her. Someone said that she reminds him of a strict schoolmarm, who wears a stripper's costume under her modest clothing. I know this might sound funny, but I think that a lot of men are attracted to her and fantasize about being with her in bed. Particularly because she is conservative and far from all these erotic descriptions, the fantasy becomes even more powerful."

Auster then warned that if Palin is elected vice president, "a lot of good values will disappear from this country and we will become an evil, ugly country."

It apparently never occurred to him that his "funny" statements about Palin are the very epitome of ugliness and the absence of values like decency, tolerance and respect for women. And that's the thing of it.

The essence of liberal democracy - the edifice on which liberalism and the democratic form of government were built - is reasoned discourse. Reasoned discourse can only take place when words like "values," "democracy," "law," "rights" and "equality" have intrinsic meanings that all members of society accept. When the Left empties these terms of their fundamental meaning and uses them only to enhance its political power at the expense of the Right, reasoned discourse is abandoned in favor of propaganda.

When equal rights are the exclusive privilege of leftist women rather than the natural right of all women, no woman can ever trust that her rights will be preserved. When the rhetoric of law is abused to advance the political power of the Left instead of defending the cause of blind justice, the rule of law is sacrificed in the name of leftist tyranny. When the cause of a nation is ignored in the interest of the fortunes of a faction, the fortunes of that faction will be advanced at the expense of the nation.

Auster told Yediot that the political discourse in the US has become so charged that dialogue is no longer possible between leftists and rightists. In his words, "We have reached a point where the two sides are no longer capable of speaking to one another, and I view this situation as a sort of civil war. There are no weapons or shooting. This is a civil war of ideas and separate ways of thinking, and often a war of ideas is the worst sort of war."

Auster's statement is true, and it applies to the entire Western world. But it is also true that one side bears the brunt of responsibility for the absence of discourse. The side that has destroyed the meaning of democracy, liberalism, feminism and racism to castigate and criminalize its political opponents is responsible for the absence of dialogue. And until the Left is compelled to acknowledge the intrinsic meaning of words rather than use vocabulary as a tool of political warfare, it is hard to see how this situation will improve. (Jerusalem Post Nov. 3)

Are We Reliving the 1930s? By Manfred Gerstenfeld

Elie Wiesel noted that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's speech at the recent United Nations General Assembly calling for the destruction of Israel demonstrates that the world has learned nothing from the Holocaust. The upcoming 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht on November 9 and 10 provides an occasion to grapple with the question of whether, in the current decade, the Jewish people are reliving the 1930s.

To answer that one has to look at issues such as genocide and hate promotion, appeasement of totalitarians, Western leadership and so on. The correct answer must then be: "Yes, but only in certain aspects." The existence of the State of Israel is the main difference between the two decades. In the 1930s the Jews were an incoherent, leaderless group, with no tools to defend itself against enemies. Today there is a Jewish state, which is threatened by substantial parts of the Muslim world and others, but is not helpless.

There is furthermore no country today like Nazi Germany with systematic state-promoted anti-Semitism and state-sponsored violence against its Jewish citizens. There is, however, an explicitly genocidal anti-Semitic power - Iran,

which proclaims that it is out to annihilate the Jewish state and is developing an atom bomb to do so. Extermination policies have mutated as a result of technological development.

There are few Jews within the borders of Iran. Its allies and the countries it might invade have even fewer. Iran aims mainly at Israelis. It instrumentalizes its own Jews for political purposes and was at the origin of the attack against Jews in Buenos Aires. In the 1930s Germany, ruled by Hitler, together with its future allies and the countries it would invade, had many millions of Jews within their borders, and they were an easy target. Today Israel can probably prevent attacks and certainly retaliate.

Israel also has an ally in the United States, and other states are willing to support it to varying degrees. This is radically different from the structural disarray of the Jews in the 1930s and the unwillingness of any nation to help them. That became fully clear at the 1938 Evian Conference, where no major country was willing to commit to receiving Jewish refugees.

While widespread anti-Semitism - disguised as anti-Israelism - has made a major comeback in this decade, it has not been turned anywhere into discriminatory legislation. Another major departure from the 1930s is that the radical improvement in international communications impacts on societies in so many ways that it is difficult to analyze which one is most important.

Yet ominous similarities between the 1930s and now do exist. First of all, there is totalitarianism. Leading Holocaust scholar Prof. Yehuda Bauer has said, "In Islam there are major forces which are mentally prepared - given the power - to carry out genocide against all others... Islamic radicalism is the desire for a global utopia, to be achieved through violent means, which aims at global dominance. This is equally true for National Socialism and communism. Every universal utopia is murderous and every radical universal utopia produces radical murderers."

As in the 1930s, Western leadership is weak and little aware of looming dangers. British prime minister Neville Chamberlain was reviled for his appeasement of Nazi Germany for decades. Nowadays a rehabilitation of Chamberlain is indirectly on its way, as more and more revisionist historians claim that World War II could have been avoided and that Churchill was a warmonger.

Today, many in the West favor both external and internal appeasement of radical Muslims. In foreign policy, Europe is pushed toward appeasement because it possesses little military force. Domestically, it seeks to placate its resident Muslim extremists through proposals that Shari'a be allowed to operate within the framework of national legal systems.

Some appeasement movements and motifs are the same as in the 1930s. Pacifists have frequently been of use to totalitarians. Moral relativists, fearing to be judgmental, are another type of appeasers. There is also a parallel between those in the 1930s in Western Europe who felt guilty about the severe conditions of the Versailles peace treaty regarding Germany and those who nowadays feel guilty toward the Third World for the sins of colonialism. Similarities also abound between those who were willing to sacrifice Czechoslovakia for an illusionary peace and those who want to pressure Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians on the false assumption that once this conflict is solved, Western relations with the Islamic world will improve permanently.

One phenomenon that may be unique to our time is what can best be called "humanitarian racists." One finds many of these in NGOs, whose number has exploded in recent decades. Left-wing politics, the media and the academic world are also hotbeds of this poorly recognized form of racism. Humanitarian racists believe, to varying degrees, that only whites must be held accountable for their acts, whereas Third Worlders or non-whites are mainly victims. By diminishing non-whites' responsibility for their criminal deeds, one is in effect ranking them somewhere between "real" humans and animals, which live by their urges. The behavior of the NGO gathering at the 2001 UN Durban Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia made humanitarian racism visible internationally.

Humanitarian racism can often be discerned in the debate on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, where it consists of systematically ignoring the criminal character of large parts of Palestinian society, such as its many promoters of genocide and its education of children to become "martyrs" through murdering Jews.

In a globalized society, the forces of radical Islam, genocide promotion and appeasement of totalitarians are increasing - as are those in opposition to them. Their relative strengths will determine whether the similarity of our world to that of the 1930s will grow or decline. (Jerusalem Post Nov 5)

The writer is chairman of the Board of Fellows of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

Why US Universities Are Wealthy While Israel's Are Broke

By Evelyn Gordon

Writing in Haaretz last month, Prof. Eli Podedh of Hebrew University aptly summarized the root of the university funding crisis in three words: "Nobody really cares." He even correctly attributed this apathy to Israelis' "negative view of academe." Yet rather than acknowledging the universities' own responsibility for this attitude, he blamed it on the population's obsession with "reality television and the pursuit of money" - a theory that unfortunately fails to explain why Americans, equally obsessed with reality television and making money, nevertheless boast the world's best and wealthiest universities.

When comparing the Israeli and American systems, two facts immediately stand out. First, while our universities are state-funded, America's best and wealthiest universities are private. Second, annual tuition at top American schools is about 15 times the NIS 8,600 here.

These differences are not coincidental. In societies where money is considered a measure of value, American tuition proclaims higher education valuable, while local tuition labels it virtually worthless. Moreover, while our system makes higher education another state-funded entitlement, America's private system makes it a privilege.

Top American schools are therefore attractive to funders, who like the idea of enabling deserving students to obtain a valuable but otherwise unaffordable education. Moreover, since high tuition means that a majority of students receive financial aid, alumni feel obligated to help others as they were helped.

This country's universities, however, face strong disincentives to giving: Private donors object to funding a government entitlement; most alumni paid "full" tuition, and therefore feel no obligation to help others; and the product, as indicated by its price, is worthless anyway - a point that also argues against generous government funding.

And since, as last week's column explained, all Western universities must increase their non-state funding to survive, these disincentives put our schools at a serious disadvantage. Hence the importance of raising tuition, as the Shochat Committee recommended last year. In addition to increasing the universities' revenues in itself, it would encourage private donations by sending the signals necessary to attract them - that higher education is valuable, that it is not a government entitlement for which civil society bears no responsibility and that many deserving students cannot afford it without help.

Yet for all the importance of this issue, another American-Israeli difference that is less immediately obvious may be even more important. Prof. Israel Bartal, Hebrew University's dean of the humanities, enunciated this difference in the Los Angeles-based Jewish Journal last February, when he declared that "trying to shape a generation of Jewish leaders" is "beyond our scope." Substitute the appropriate nationality, and that statement would apply most leading non-Israeli schools.

England's Oxford and Cambridge, France's grande ecoles, America's Harvard, Yale and Princeton - all view producing future leaders as part of their job. That is why France has a grande ecole devoted exclusively to public administration, why Harvard's Kennedy School of Government or Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs rank among their respective universities' most prestigious departments, why a school like Princeton unabashedly boasts of "Princeton in the nation's service."

It is also why American scholars easily move between academia and government - people like Larry Summers (who left Harvard for government service, ultimately became secretary of the treasury, then returned as Harvard's president), Henry Kissinger (who left Harvard to become national security adviser and secretary of state, then returned to Georgetown University) or Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (a former Stanford provost). In Israel, such transitions are exceedingly rare.

The point is not that Israel needs more academics in politics; rather, it is the attitude this trend reflects. While American (or British or French) universities feel a responsibility to give back to the communities that produced them, our universities acknowledge no such responsibility. They view their job strictly as churning out experts in particular academic fields. But if universities feel no obligation toward society, why should society feel any obligation toward them?

Our universities do not even feel obliged to produce well-rounded citizens with a broad base of knowledge. Except at Bar-Ilan, where students must take some Jewish studies courses, there are no distribution requirements. Thus science majors can graduate without ever taking a humanities or social science course, while humanities majors can graduate without studying any natural or social science.

The result, as Nobel laureate in chemistry Prof. Aharon Ciechanover lamented in Yediot Aharonot two years ago, is that "even among people with

academic degrees, I find garbled language, a lack of cultural depth and ignorance of general history and the history of the Jewish people. We need institutions of higher learning headed by path-breaking leadership, but that kind of leadership has disappeared."

Added to all this is rampant academic post-Zionism. Consider some examples: Two lecturers at Ben-Gurion University and its affiliate, Sapir College, refused to teach IDF reservists in uniform; many of their fellows supported them. A University of Haifa master's student received top marks for a thesis accusing IDF soldiers of massacring Arabs during the War of Independence, yet the veterans later won a libel suit by proving gross fabrications of the evidence. A Tel Aviv University professor published a book asserting that there is no Jewish people. A Ben-Gurion lecturer described his university, located well within pre-1967 Israel, as being in "Palestinian territory." Sociology professors awarded a prize to a Hebrew University graduate student for a paper claiming that IDF soldiers rarely rape Palestinian women because they view Palestinians as subhuman.

Since most Israelis love their country, and willingly defend it when necessary, their "negative view" of an academic establishment that prizes anti-Israel libel over academic rigor and deems military service an offense is understandable. When academia actively undermines all that ordinary Israelis hold dear, why should they, or the governments they elect, wish to fund it?

Raising tuition is the government's job. But only the universities can change their own attitudes, their own relationship with society. And if they care about their financial future, they must do so - because unless ordinary people are convinced that the universities do contribute to society, and are thus worth funding, the stark truth is that they have no future. (Jerusalem Post Nov 5)

Stop Picking on the Settlers By Assaf Wohl

I am sick and tired of exaggerated attention given to small minority of rightist provocateurs

Recently it appears that one can no longer evade the settlers. For example, there they are on the television screen, burning an olive tree. On the radio, once an hour, they beat up members of the security forces. In news website headlines, they fill the land with unauthorized outposts and even dare not name them after Rabin.

Every Jewish burp across the Green Line becomes a major headline on the news channels. Hard-working reporters rush to record it, leftist groups document it on video, and news commentators make sure to analyze its aroma and acidity level.

The politicians, the media's servants, do not disappoint either. "Radicals want to crack the State's authority," said Barak. "We shall not accept rebellious settlers," screamed the headlines, quoting what seems like a sort of swan song by our prime minister. And there we have Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, wisely ruling that "there will be another assassination around here." They are all followed by a whole parade of bandwagon riders fighting for the leftist vote.

I'm sick and tired of seeing the settlers every day, the whole day, making headlines. Any person who is a little honest, even a tiny bit so, would notice the disproportional media coverage. For a long time now this has not been journalism, but rather, outright propaganda.

The media-covered provocateurs among the settlers are merely a small minority out of 250,000 law-abiding citizens. Yet if our leaders decide to enforce the law, perhaps they should also show some interest in what goes on within the Green Line. We, the citizens, suffer the actions of law-breakers who are no less violent than the "hilltop youth," yet nobody does anything.

Citizens are being run over in hit-and-run accidents regularly. Crime families do whatever they want. And those who enjoy talking about unauthorized buildings would do well to visit Bedouin areas in the south and north once in a while.

Yet even beyond the Green Line, the coverage is one sided. Anarchists and "peace activists" attack our soldiers every week. Not too long ago, a soldier lost his eye in the Palestinian village of Bil'in; just imagine this would have happened in the settlement of Yitzhar. As it turns out, the writers and speech-makers are not guided by the desire to see enforcement.

What surprises me is the lack of judgment shown by the reporters. Not because I'm naïve enough to think they still possess some kind of decency, but rather, because such hysterical coverage often works against them. It prompts a deep sense of antagonism within the public, which also manifests itself quite clearly in the responses to such news items. So why do they do it? It appears that there is no escaping the conclusion that the hatred often makes them lose their professional decency.

Because these settlers reflect what the Israeli Left used to be in the past, and will never be again. Ideologically motivated, self-confident, and most importantly, willing to sacrifice.

The settlers know exactly why and for what purpose they are here. On the other side, I fail to notice any leftist ideology that is not about hedonism. Even socialism finds it hard to connect to the well-established and well-to-do strata of Israel's Left; strata that openly condemn Bibi, but secretly hope that he returns to the Finance Ministry.

The days of ideology are over. The way leftists look at the settlers today is similar to the way a 60-year-old woman looks at the youth of a fitness instructor who just joined the army. Deep inside, they know what even Yossi Beilin and Ran Cohen have internalized: Their time has passed. (Ynet Nov 3)

Anti-Semitism in Israel By Michael Freund

There is a new menace facing the Jews of Israel. And though you will never hear it said openly, let alone discussed at length, the fact is that anti-Semitism is alive and well in the Jewish state.

Indeed, in just the past week alone, there were two incidents involving the wanton desecration of Jewish religious sites, both of which were more reminiscent of medieval Europe than of a proud and sovereign Jewish realm.

Last Wednesday, two Arab youths tossed a flaming Molotov cocktail into the Adat Moshe Ve'Yisrael synagogue in Lod, which caught fire and suffered interior damage. Fortunately, nobody was inside at the time.

Just a few days previously, three Arabs had firebombed the Ruah Tzfonit yeshiva in Acre in an attempt to burn it down. No one was injured, but the school's office went up in flames.

It is easy enough to dismiss these events merely as passing blips on the radar, or as the type of senseless vandalism that strikes societies everywhere. Others will content themselves with the thought that political tensions lie at the root of the attacks. After all, even the police have termed the episodes "nationalistically motivated."

But don't be fooled by such pseudo-sophistry. When villains attack a house of prayer in Lod or a talmudic academy in Acre, they are attacking Jews and Judaism itself. Their choice of target is indicative of whom they are aiming to hurt.

Had the perpetrators been seeking to make a political statement, they could easily have chosen a political target. It is only when you really hate someone in a profound and nefarious manner that you go for the jugular, as the assailants did in these cases.

Sure, politics may have fanned the flames, and last month's riots in Acre further exacerbated the situation. But the fire underneath was already there, and at its root lies a blazing and ancient hatred called anti-Semitism.

So where is the outrage? Where is the outcry over this willful assault on Jews and Jewish tradition? When these kinds of incidents take place in any other country in the world, they are rightly and roundly denounced as anti-Semitism, and Jewish organizations clamor for the microphones to make statements and demand justice. Yet for some reason, when they happen here, everyone seems to fall silent.

But Jew-hatred is Jew-hatred wherever it takes place. And however uncomfortable it might make us feel, we need to acknowledge that there is anti-Semitism in the Jewish state, and that steps need to be taken to counter it.

These range from fostering more tolerance and greater education among Arab citizens to stricter enforcement of the law. In both Acre and Lod, the police caught the perpetrators of the attacks, and nothing less than the maximum sentence should be imposed on them.

It needs to be made clear to other would-be arsonists of all stripes that when they attack public institutions or religious sites, they will be made to pay for their crimes.

Public pressure to denounce such acts should also be brought to bear on various Arab religious and political leaders, and those who fail to do so should be called to account. There is simply no excuse for their silence in the face of such hatred.

Apologists will suggest that such attacks are motivated by fear, but I believe precisely the opposite to be true. It is because of a lack of fear, a sense of impunity, that the assailants felt uninhibited about carrying out their plans.

That, combined with a base hatred of Jews, makes for a combustible mix.

Many of us are still uneasy with such a notion, if only because such things are not supposed to happen here. Israel was established to serve as a homeland and a refuge, a place where the ills of the Diaspora would be left behind, chief among them anti-Semitism.

But like it or not, that hatred has followed us home, and it is alive and well here in our midst. And sweeping the issue under the rug, or chalking it up to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, will not make it go away. (Jerusalem Post Nov 4)