

For the past twenty years, *Jewish Action* has been guided by the wise and thoughtful leadership of Publications Commission Chairman Joel M. Schreiber. Under Joel's direction, the magazine has sought to demonstrate the breadth, sensitivity and dynamism of Orthodoxy. Reflecting the Orthodox Union's commitment to being inclusive, *Jewish Action* has presented differing points of view on issues including brain death and *halachah*, spirituality in the workplace, the Torah codes, the conversion crisis and a host of other timely, important topics. Joel's intellectual curiosity, pursuit of excellence and willingness to be a hands-on leader has helped make *Jewish Action* a unique publication in the Orthodox world. It has been a privilege to work with such a dedicated lay leader and fine human being.

**Nechama Carmel
Matis Greenblatt
Dassi Zeidel**

Campus Concern

■ Regarding Rabbi Aryeh Z. Ginzberg's letter ("Revisiting the Campus," spring 2004), when a young Jewish soul goes off the *derech*, it is a tragedy both for the family and for *Klal Yisrael*. However, we cannot bubble wrap our children and forever insulate them from the world at large.

The heretofore *frum* young adult marrying the minister's daughter has nearly become a Jewish urban legend. Of course, he's the valedictorian. The

tale is usually further embellished with the parents or grandparents being Holocaust survivors and tearing *keriyah*. Make him the heir to a Chassidic dynasty, and we have a Chaim Potok novel. In reality, there are plain, ordinary kids from plain, ordinary homes, and they get into trouble—whether away at college or living at home.

While I understand Rabbi Ginzberg's concern, I respectfully disagree with his proposed "solution," as it is naively ineffective. Despite the best of intentions, an Orthodox community or rabbi cannot baby-sit a troubled soul. Trouble will find the troubled youth and vice versa. Furthermore, after this young person graduates from college, leaves home and goes off into the world, there will be plenty of other temptations—who will watch him or her then?

The young adults who thrive at Yeshiva University, Touro College, et cetera, are the rule. But there are unfortunate exceptions. Similarly, there are young adults who seek the best education that they can afford, wherever it is available—they may live on peanut butter when there is no other kosher food available, they may drive several hours to get to a kosher butcher—and they emerge well educated, with their *Yiddishkeit* wonderfully intact.

**Carl A. Singer
Passaic, New Jersey**

I appreciate Rabbi Ginzberg's thoughts concerning Jewish students on college campuses. However, I must respectfully disagree with him. Less than a month after I graduate from the

University of Maryland, I will be marrying a wonderful man who did not practice Orthodox Judaism until he attended this same university. Our wedding will be graced by the presence of two of our friends who are in the process of converting due to the exposure to Judaism they had at the university. It will additionally be enhanced by the numerous friends we have learned, *davened* and grown with at school. Our wedding will be a strong testament to the vibrant Jewish community present at the University of Maryland.

Rabbi Ginzberg is worried about losing Jewish souls; what about all the souls that would not be gained if we took the role models, minyanim, kosher food and learning opportunities away from campuses because we do not want our "good" youth to attend these schools? We have the potential to arm Jewish youth with the power to not only grow in their own Judaism, but also to help others. Maybe we should provide Jewish youth with a strong, solid *hashkafah* rather than hide them in a few select universities.

**Ilana Sommer
Silver Spring, Maryland**

A Euphemism for Hate

■ Please allow me to offer an addendum to Harvey Blitz's thoughtful words ("Countering Anti-Semitism," summer 2004).

Perhaps one way to focus attention on the persistence of this scourge would be to eschew the terminology of our enemies. "Anti-Semitism" is a term that was coined in 1879 by a German Jew-hater named Wilhelm Barr, in an

effort to make Jew-hatred politically and socially palatable. It enables a rabid Jew-hater to say: "I have nothing against Jews, only Semites." But such nomenclature is unique to us. Bigoted white supremacists are not referred to by anyone as "anti-Hamites." Indeed, I know of no other ethnic group that embraces the use of a contrived euphemism to describe its enemies and their ideologies. As I have never met even one Jew who characterizes himself as a Semite, our tolerance—and our own use—of this term mitigates and softens the impact of this evil. We should immediately cease using the term and demand that others cease as well. We are plagued not by "anti-Semitism" or "anti-Semites" but by "Jew-hatred" and the "Jew-haters" who foment it.

**Rabbi Steven Pruzansky
Congregation Bnei Yeshurun
Teaneck, New Jersey**

On the Hebron Massacre

■ I appreciate your commemoration of the Hebron Massacre of 1929 ("The Story of Hebron," summer 2004). Each time I read about this horrible event, it reminds me of the fear and sadness this brave community has had to endure over the years.

However, I have to react to the section about Dr. Baruch Goldstein. Yes, it is true that Mordecai Lapid died in the arms of his close friend, Dr. Goldstein. Unfortunately, this was not the first time that a precious victim died in the arms of his friend.

There is never an excuse for randomly killing innocent victims. If we somehow justify what happened, what are we to say about the Palestinian homicide bomber who blows himself up in retaliation for having lost a sibling or parent?

By referring to the massacre of Arabs at Me'arat Hamachpelah as an "incident," the author belittles the event. I am sure she wouldn't call the killing of Jews at the Park Hotel in Netanya on Seder night in 2002 an "incident." It was a planned massacre of innocent

people in the midst of prayer, as was that perpetrated by Dr. Goldstein in Hebron. Let's call a spade a spade.

**Howie Kahn
Jerusalem**

Toby Klein Greenwald responds

I am grateful for Mr. Howie Kahn's letter because it gives me the opportunity to expand on a topic that was beyond the scope of my article. Like the Kennedy and Rabin assassinations, the Goldstein event obviously needed a "cooling-off" period before genuinely objective investigations could be instituted or, in this case, before the facts as presented to the Shamgar Commission of 1994 could be made public.

It was, indeed, a painful event that stunned Israeli society and that is still cloaked in mystery. Part of that mystery stems from the well-documented fact that Dr. Goldstein was a highly respected physician who was honored by both the military and civilian medical establishments, and was known as a gentle man who saved the lives of many Arabs as well as Jews.

Mr. Kahn is correct in saying that grief cannot be used as "an excuse for randomly killing innocent victims." However, whether those who died were "innocent victims" remains an open question.

Furthermore, Mr. Kahn ignores the fact (mentioned in the article) that preceding the events of that Purim morning, the highest IDF echelons in Hebron warned the Kiryat Arba councilmen, and others warned Dr. Goldstein, that Hamas was planning a large-scale terror attack against the Jews.

Let's examine the facts, many of which were not reported in the Israeli media following the event. Perhaps the most cogent source about the event to date is a 130-page book by Rabbi Dr. Chaim Simons, who spent years researching the topic. The book's 714 footnotes are drawn mostly from the minutes and findings of the Shamgar Commission report, accompanying

legal petitions and records from the Israel State Archive, the Jerusalem Magistrates Court and the Tel Aviv District Court, as well as records of jurisprudence regarding pre-emptive attacks in times of war and related issues from several countries including Israel, England, Canada and the United States.

Dr. Simons states that he does not draw conclusions; rather he calls for "a Commission of Inquiry ... to determine whether the killings by Dr. Baruch Goldstein should be classed as a massacre of Arabs or a pre-emptive strike to prevent a massacre of Jews." I second that demand.

Here are the facts:

1. No less than nine officers and enlisted men in the defense establishment attested that there had been numerous, explicit and unequivocal warnings from the IDF regarding an impending terror attack against the Jews, including the timing—Purim.

2. Following the killings, weapons were discovered in the Isaac Hall, where the attack was perpetrated, and among the Arabs there. (An Israeli newspaper reported that weapons were discovered under the Muslim prayer carpets in the hall as well.)

3. According to IDF sources, leaflets were distributed by Hamas in Hebron stating that on February 25 or 26 (the stress being on February 25—Purim), a terrorist attack would take place in Hebron; Arab residents were also notified by leaflets, loudspeakers and signs to stock up on food in anticipation of a long curfew that would follow a massive attack by Hamas against the Jews. (I was also told by a member of the Israeli security forces that while making his rounds in Hebron, he heard one of these announcements.)

4. Military and civilian sources reported that, in addition to the volatile atmosphere that had been building in Hebron in the preceding weeks, there had been many cries of "*Itbach al Yahud*," "Slaughter the Jews," on the days leading up to Purim.

5. According to IDF sources, the

night before the event, Arabs further wrecked an already damaged metal detector at one of the entrances to Me'arat Hamachpelah. On Purim morning, the vast majority of Muslim worshippers entered through that gate.

6. Dr. Goldstein was personally instructed by IDF and civilian authorities to prepare the Kiryat Arba infirmary to receive a large number of Jewish casualties due to an impending Arab terror attack.

7. An unusually large number of Arab men and women packed Me'arat Hamachpelah that Purim morning, in numbers that, according to Wakf guards, were unprecedented. Dr. Simons writes that in Muslim culture, large crowds turn out to witness killings, amputations, et cetera.

8. Individual Arabs in the area warned their Jewish acquaintances not to go to Me'arat Hamachpelah on Purim.

An IDF officer pointed out to the Shamgar Commission that had killing a large number of Arabs been his only goal, Dr. Goldstein could have killed a larger number of Arabs later that day in the Hebron marketplace, and in that case, he would have had an opportunity to escape.

The Shamgar report indicates that there were very few soldiers serving in and around Me'arat Hamachpelah, despite the warnings. The commander was in a different building, in bed, without his shoes on. The report further states:

... life for Jews in the area has become unbearable ... breaches in law and order by Arabs have become a permanent phenomenon... The authorities' helplessness in enforcing the law is apt to make the residents feel abandoned, and accordingly, encourages them to take the law into their own hands.

Dr. Simons quotes from the laws, statutes and precedents of Israel, Britain, America and other countries on the permissibility of pre-emptive strikes; he also cites the well-known Talmudic dictate, "He who would kill you, rise up and kill him first." Cases in which Israel conducted pre-

emptive strikes include the Six-Day War (1967), the Sinai Campaign (1956) and the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor (1981). Dr. Simons also explores legal opinions regarding the actions of individuals, not states, who take pre-emptive actions even in cases where the danger is not "imminent," but where there is a reasonable expectation that grave harm or death will be caused if action is not taken.

All of these are issues that should be put on the public agenda and explored without prejudice.

Perhaps most disturbing in Dr. Simons' treatise is the documentation of what he claims is the Shamgar Commission's disregard for justice: Neither the Goldstein family nor their attorney was given the opportunity to present evidence, examine documents or cross-examine witnesses. As Dr. Simons points out, even Adolph Eichmann's lawyer was able to cross-examine the prosecution's witnesses.

He also documents that, indicative of the climate at the time, in the wake of a bill introduced by Meretz MK Ran Cohen, the Israeli government carried out the destruction of the floor, lights and washing stand surrounding Dr. Goldstein's gravesite, all of which had been authorized by the government.

Dr. Simons cites the fact that three of the five dignitaries who sat on the Shamgar Commission repeatedly referred to Dr. Goldstein as "the murderer" before they had heard all of the evidence, and that one of them, Judge Abed el-Rahman Zouabi, who referred to Dr. Goldstein seventeen times as "the murderer," had stated in an interview: "When I came to the [Shamgar] Commission, I knew that the cruel side in the territories was the settlers."

The State of Israel owes it to the memory of those who were killed that morning, to the memory of Dr. Goldstein and to the surviving relatives on both sides to put the subject to rest by reopening the case for an

honest and thorough investigation, in which all individuals with information will be heard. **JA**

Correction:

In the summer 2004 issue of *Jewish Action*, Toby Klein Greenwald ("The Story of Hebron") mentions that Mordechai Makleff was the fourth IDF chief of staff; in fact, he was the third.