

As good as it gets

By Dahlia Karpel

Ammon Rubinstein was just nine years old when the door of his parent's home burst open and his mother's elderly father, Moshe Vilozny, rushed in, crying bitterly. It was several moments before the puzzled youngster understood that the admired leader, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, whose photograph adorned the wall of the apartment's guest room, had died. Rubinstein, who was very confused by his grandfather's tears, already knew the leader's works because he had read Jabotinsky's poems and his translations since the day he had learned to read.

The anniversary of Jabotinsky's death became a day of mourning for the Rubinstein family. In the evening Ammon would put a record of Jabotinsky's speeches on the gramophone and listen, for the umpteenth time, to Jabotinsky's speech denouncing the United Nations Partition Plan, waiting particularly to hear the mantra "Do not take lightly the right to the Land of Israel."

"Childhood in a Revisionist Home" is the account that opens Rubinstein's new book, "One Man's Opinion: Oral and Written Sayings 1960-2001" (Schocken Publishers). The book presents a selection of Rubinstein's newspaper and other media articles from over 40 years of journalism. Is this his way of summing up - of being nostalgic? "I'll soon be 70 and I haven't finished yet," he says. "I actually feel young and I'm also in the middle of writing two more books."

This is a way of clearing out drawers, he explains. "I was putting my drawers in order and I found a letter I'd written to Ha'aretz in 1960, and the thought suddenly struck me that I have been writing for over 40 years. I decided to collect a few of the things that might attest to the spirit of those times. ... I put an emphasis not only on political issues, but also on art and culture, music and literature - fields that interest me no less [than politics]. I oppose nostalgia and have a bone to pick with it. The past was not as nice as people think."

The text that opens the anthology is titled "Childhood in a Revisionist Home" and deals with Rubinstein's revisionist roots. It was written in May 1977 and published in a Ha'aretz supplement a few days after the late Menachem Begin, then leader of the Likud, won the Knesset elections and led his party in government for the first time. Rubinstein's article elicited a flood of responses, most accusing him of conformism.

The Revisionists, who called themselves the Porshim (separatists) were a small, cohesive group from Tel Aviv who were despised by members of the establishment in Israel. The movement's heroes, who were also Rubinstein's childhood heroes, were Uri Zvi Greenberg, Yosef Nadva, journalist and editor Isaac Ramba and Prof. Yosef Klausner. Rubinstein's

childhood, he wrote, "was similar to the childhoods of those who grew up among an ethnic or religious minority." The hostility that surrounded them accompanied him too, for years.

This conflict, deeply rooted in his family, led more than once to friction. Only a few members of his parent's family belonged to the Revisionist camp, while the rest belonged to the opposing, socialist camp. His parents, Aharon and Rahel Rubinstein, lived for a time near the British headquarters, which was often a target for attacks by the Irgun (Irgun Tzvai Le'umi) pre-state underground militia. In June 1947, members of the Hagana, the pre-state army, discovered a tunnel dug by the Irgun under the road leading to the building in an attempt to infiltrate the building and destroy it. A young Hagana soldier was killed in the operation to foil the Irgun's plan. The following day, all the students at the Geula high school, where Rubinstein studied, were told

to march to the Basel market, where some 1,000 students had been assembled to hear a representative of the Yishuv (the pre-state community) eulogize the young man who had died "because of the criminal activities of the Porshim."

All students were to take part in the funeral, but Rubinstein, a hot-headed 16-year-old and an ardent Revisionist, was outraged by the idea. He felt that the youth's tragic death was being exploited to incite people against the underground fighters. None of his friends - many of whom were Irgun supporters - spoke out. Enraged, he marched on ahead and found himself alone in front of the crowd. "Don't you want to be part of the funeral procession?" the Yishuv representative asked him. Rubinstein, whose knees suddenly felt weak, shook his head.

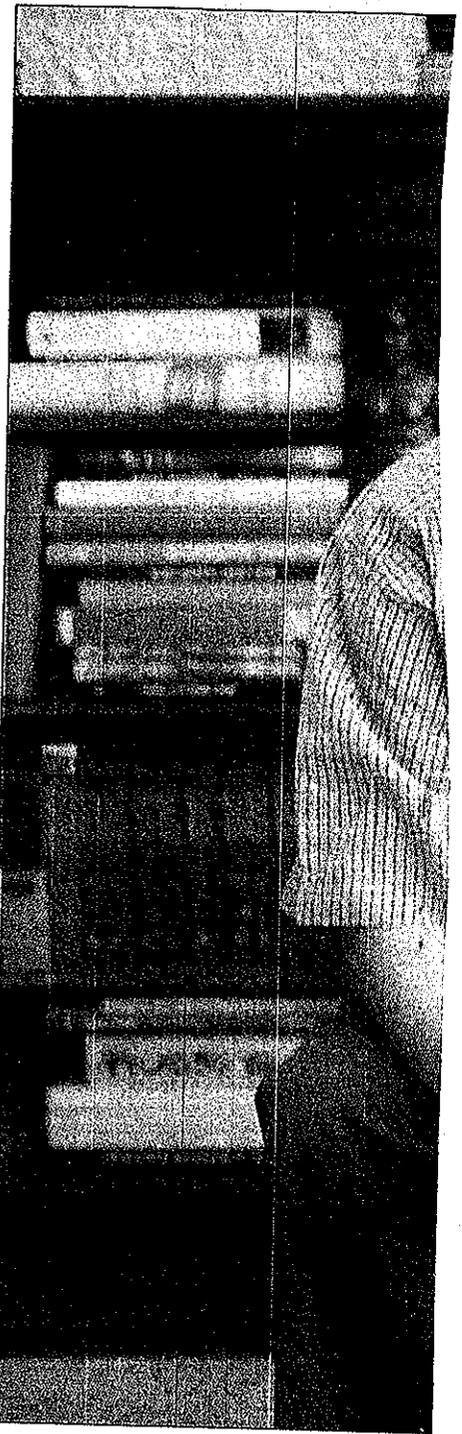
He quickly found himself walking alone to his parent's house and only when he arrived did he allow his angry tears to burst the dam of his emotions. Shortly afterwards his father found out that Rubinstein's name was on a list of suspects compiled by the British. So Rubinstein's parents had him smuggled to Baltimore, Maryland in the U.S., where he stayed with relatives and completed high school. In 1949 he returned to Israel.

In the closing section of "Childhood in a Revisionist Home," Rubinstein wrote that he had left Revisionism. "A long time has passed since that day in the Basel market," he noted. "The disciples of the Revisionist camp went one way and I went another ... but to this day I remember and feel - in my knees, my heart and my brain - that one step that I took forward, those many years ago, in defiance of the crowd at the Basel market in Tel Aviv."

"I am a man who does not toe the line and that is the essence of that incident," says Rubinstein. Today he says that the events of his childhood as depicted at the beginning of his book were actually the experiences that molded his life and his ideas. "The fact that I was not part of the consensus and was part of the minority made me different."

Brought up with a Revisionism he later rejected, journalist and Meretz Party veteran Prof. Ammon Rubinstein says he has always stood outside the consensus. His new book, spanning 40 years, attests to the spirit of those times

ART etc.



Prof. Rubinstein: "I am a man who does not toe the line."

Two sides of the coin

As noted, Rubinstein was nine years old when his beloved leader Jabotinsky died. Faisal Husseini was eight when his father, the beloved Arab leader Abdul Khader al-Husseini, was killed in the battle for Castel village, near Jerusalem, in 1948. Twenty years later, history brought the two together.

In November 1967, Rubinstein was dean of the law faculty at Tel Aviv University and a member of the Ha'aretz staff. An item in the paper announced the arrest of Faisal Husseini, who was suspected of being "the leader of the Fatah gang" in Jerusalem and of

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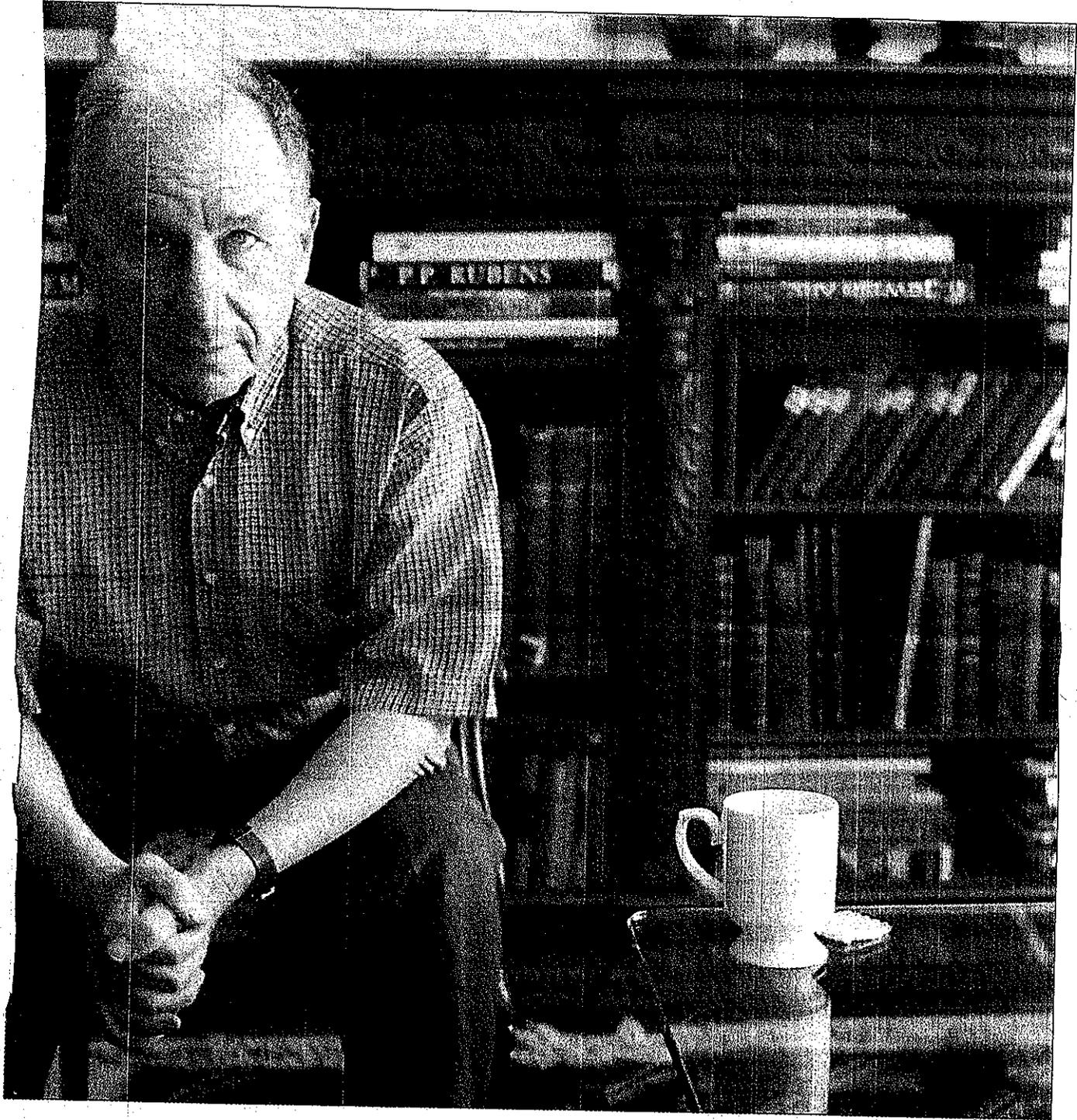


Photo by Nir Kofri

having two rifles in his house. Hussein, then 27, had been surprised to meet Yasser Arafat in Ramallah's main square a few months earlier. The two decided to mount a political propaganda campaign alongside the military efforts against the Israeli occupation. When the two met again, Arafat brought with him two Kalashnikov assault rifles, which Hussein hid in an old bookcase in his house. He was subsequently sentenced to a year in prison for illegal possession of the weapons.

"I submitted an application to the Prison Services to interview Hussein," Rubinstein recalls. "I asked for the interview to take place in a totally free atmosphere, in a separate room without supervision or eavesdropping

and my conditions were accepted. The Israeli public at the time was drunk with the victory [of the Six-Day War], as was I, but I thought that since Israelis conceived Hussein as someone who had come from the other side of the mountains of darkness, it was fitting that we acquaint ourselves with one of the leaders of the other side of the conflict and learn about his world view.

"The interview, which took place in March 1968, lasted three or four hours. It was not easy to speak with Hussein. What he said may have been moderate, but he had the wisdom to foresee, back then, the difficulties that came to light at Camp David. Even during the interview, he brought up the issue of the [Palestinian]

right of return. After he was released from prison we continued to meet. We had a certain rapport. The interview with him was the first time that a member of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was presented as a human being and not as a stone-throwing enemy."

The interview with Hussein, who died two months ago, was the first to be reported in the Israeli press and the only interview Rubinstein had with him during his career as a reporter. In the article, which appears in Rubinstein's book, Hussein is described as a man "born to a divided and restless people." Rubinstein wrote that Hussein looked as if he was "the last of the terror- >

ists." Rubinstein noted that Hussein "accompanies his words with an embarrassed smile that leaves his face only when he touches on particularly sensitive issues." Rubinstein described Hussein's bashful eyes and his hesitant speech. Hussein told him that he denounces terrorist activities and that the PLO does not represent the Palestinian Arabs, adding that he wants to found a new organization for the Arabs of the territories under Israeli occupation.

The section "One Man's Opinion" contains several articles dealing with the Palestinians. In "Two Sides of the Security Coin," written in March 1956, Rubinstein wrote about the Arab students of the Amal school in Safed who were sent regularly to clean the classrooms while their classmates took part in Gadna (Fighting Youth) classes, in which only Jewish students participated. Rubinstein attacked the oft-quoted "security reasons" excuse for the gap between Jews and Arabs, and called for narrowing it "to soften the intensity of the nationalistic Arab tension."

In June 1972, Rubinstein wrote about the Arabs who had been uprooted from the villages of Ikrut and Biram. They had been exiled from their villages in December 1951, even though they had not fought against Israel and even though they were mostly Catholic and Maronite Christians.

A month later he wrote about the damage caused to Arab lands in Akra, near Nablus, in the course of establishing a renewed Jewish presence at the expense of Arab villagers. Back then such actions were called "fencing" or "relocation." The article ends with the words: "There is no similarity or relation between the flight of the refugees in 1948 and the fencing off and relocation of Akra. The policy of fencing off and relocating began after we gained our independence and does not date back to the dawn of Zionism. It is sad to see how far we have come from then until we arrived at Akra."

Are you proud of those articles?

"Those articles created a lot of noise, because of their blatant style, among other things. No one back then was called to task for the discrimination against Arabs and I was one of the first to touch on those topics so strongly. When I was education minister I was also the first to institute affirmative action for the Arab sector. I suppose that that line [of thought] began back then."

So many years have passed and yet the racist attitude of Israel toward her Arabs has not changed much.

"I don't think that Israel is more racist than other countries. I once asked foreign workers from Africa why they are attracted to Israel more than to Europe. They answered that it's easier to get to Israel and that they feel no color barrier here, for the simple reason that Israelis come in many colors."

If everything is so good, what then is the problem?

"Today I am troubled by two rifts in Israeli society. The Jewish-Arab [rift], which is an ongoing process made worse by the behavior of the Arab Knesset members, especially in the past year, and the rift between religious and secular [Jews]. But more than anything else I am troubled by the threat to the State of Israel—from the threat of the Palestinians, the radicalization of some of the Israeli Arabs and the threat of the whole Arab world and of Iran in particular."

We have already made peace with the Muslims and survived. Is that not also the goal of the future peace?

"No. I belong to the peace camp not because I see a rosy future—on the contrary, I see it as dark and threatening. I want to give up territorial assets in exchange for international support and unity in Israel, in order to strengthen Israel and to reach, if possible some sort of modus vivendi with the Arab world. My main red line regarding the dispute with our neighbors is the right of return."

"There is no justification for this claim and it is very serious that the Palestinian leadership, contrary to what Hussein said in his interview in 1986, tried to blur the issue at all the meetings that we had with them. Until not too long ago they were saying that the right of return is an abstract issue and they only want some sort of recognition in principle. Now they are talking about it openly and as far as I am concerned that is the main red line."

"Clinton's paper [on the refugee issue] is unfamiliar to the public and I feel that it presents the maximum [concession] Israel is able to agree to. In that document, Israel agrees abstractly to this matter [of refugee return] and is prepared to contribute to [solving] it, but the main solution is that it would be possible, over a certain period of time, to accept some of the refugees in the framework of family unification, but only tens of thousands."

Do you see yourself as belonging to the growing group of Israelis who were theoretically leftists and have recently been drawn to right-wing stances?

"I was never a leftist in my economic and socialistic ideology. I too have undoubtedly been traumatized by Arafat's behavior in breaching his commitments under



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the Oslo accords. I am still willing to make an agreement with him and return to the situation that existed before the current Intifada. I do not judge him in the High Court of Justice but I think that his behavior is that of a criminal. He has broken the Oslo accords, sinned against his people and against Israeli society, and supports and authorizes terrorist operations. Despite this I am against ousting him by force. That would not solve any problems but would rather create even greater problems both from an international point of view and with respect to relations with the Palestinians. I do not participate in meetings with him and Meretz members. I did not participate in any such meeting since the outbreak of the Intifada."

Are you again in the minority?

"I am in the minority in Meretz on this issue. I support Meretz in most other matters and support its platform, part of which I wrote. I also believe that a large share of those who voted for Meretz support my views."

Do you agree with Israel's assassination of terrorists inside the areas of the Palestinian Authority (PA)?

"Israel has the right to defend itself. If the PA put them [the terrorists] on trial, it would be wrong [for Israel] to target them. ... Killing a person who belongs to a terrorist organization is not something I would support, but when that person is planning a murderous operation in Israel and the PA is not dealing with the matter, I see no other choice. I feel that it would be a lot more efficient to institute a separation between us and the Palestinians."

And the settlers, who are the root of all this trouble?

"When it comes to the settlers, I stand with Meretz. The peace terms must include [former prime minister] Ehud Barak's proposal to evacuate the settlements and concentrate them in two enclaves in exchange for other territory [to be given to the Palestinians]. I have always opposed the whole settlement campaign. This was Zionism's biggest mistake after the Six-Day War. It was a mistake not only on the part of the Likud, but also of the Labor Party and of Golda Meir. The settlements not only prevent peace, they also prevent us from defending ourselves."

Do you think a compromise between the two peoples is ever possible?

"I am not optimistic. I see renewed thoughts of the possibility of destroying Israel. The liberal leader of the government of Iran, which is a member of the United Nations ... has officially declared that Israel must be destroyed."

"We withdrew from Lebanon and then a man like [academic] Edward Sa'id throws a stone at Israeli soldiers from the territory from which we have withdrawn. I think that there is a deep-seated hatred for Israel as a foreign presence in the Middle East and Sa'id, like many Arab intellectuals, does not accept Israel. I think that there will be no option but a historical compromise like that proposed by Barak."

"I feel that the Oslo accords precipitated two very important things—firstly, coming to terms with the idea that there is no such thing as Greater Israel and that there can be no domination of another people. Secondly, they brought about the peace treaty with Jordan."

"But Israel's problems will not be solved. I will not pick myself up and leave just to satisfy the Palestinians. If Nazareth is Palestine, as Ahmed Dehamshe says, and if there is no Jewish people, in the words of MK Azmi Bishara, and if the Jewish people has no right to self-determination, as many scholars in our universities write, then there truly is no alternative but for us to get up and leave."

Steering the party

What is your impression of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon?

"One thing that made a good impression on me was that after the terrorist attack on the Dolphinarium disco there was no [military] response. That was a nice surprise."

Who do you think you currently represent as a member of Meretz?

"Most of Meretz's electorate, and I would like to emphasize that it is the electorate that supports my viewpoints, and not Meretz activists. There is a variety of opinions in Meretz, and there are those who support Yossi Sarid's views. I saw a survey that Sarid showed me, indicating that most Meretz voters would like to see Meretz's entry into the national unity government. This is something that I did not want, which means that those voters are even more right-wing than my views."

Your anger toward Sarid sounds almost personal.

"I do not think he is a leader who can make difficult historical decisions. I feel that he longs for popularity with the Palestinian public. ... He strengthens the most extreme groups in Israeli society and greatly weakens the peace camp. We are currently on the defensive and I see journalists who were once in the left's camp but who now say that Oslo was a mistake. I have friends who feel the same way."

"Arafat did something complex to Meretz. Arafat is the most important voter in Israeli society. He decides who will be prime minister. I think that despite Arafat, Meretz will not become weaker in the next elections because Meretz is a party with a comprehensive agenda."

"I do not use the terms self-destructiveness or self-hatred because they have been directed against me too often. Self-destructiveness exists in every democracy and I welcome that because even though democracy seems self-destructive, it is strong and survives. I am in

favor of freedom of expression and academic freedom, including the right to respond to those claims. Two serious things have happened here. The first is that everything is measured in publications abroad. In the life sciences this has contributed to raising standards, but in other areas it is abstract, not in keeping with the contemporary reality of Israeli society but rather with the reality of how Israel is viewed at Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard. The other troublesome thing is that professors who do not have a post-Zionist worldview have become mute. Prof. Shlomo Zand claimed in *Ha'aretz* that a man with a Zionist worldview should be forbidden from writing history. Not one historian protested this. "Constellation," an international periodical on theory and criticism, a fairly good intellectual magazine published at Oxford, dedicated an issue to Israel and published articles by [Israeli academics] Uri Ram, Baruch Kimmerling, Yiftah Al, Sarah Helman and Yossi Yona. All the articles are extremely anti-Israeli. There is not one article that describes the extenuating circumstances, the difficulties, the animosity regarding Israel or Israel's achievements. Everything is negative. Kimmerling writes against the Declaration of Independence, saying that it is racist to the core because it mentions the vision of the Prophets and the Rock of Israel, which have religious connotations. There is no declaration of independence or constitution that I know of that does not mention the creator of the universe.

"Then Kimmerling claims that the declaration promises equal social rights but does not mention nationality. But the word nationality did not exist and rightly so, because it does not exist even in the universal declaration of human rights and does not appear in the UN resolution for the partition of the Land of Israel into two states; and it is clear that the intention is toward the Arabs. Another religion is mentioned and it is clear that the promise of equal rights in the Declaration of Independence refers to extending our hand to Israeli Arabs also. This type of journalism slanders Israel but is warmly received at Oxford, and also lowers the academic level. At least Kimmerling's article is written in a style with which one can conduct a dialogue.

"I'll give you another example: Prof. Moshe Zimmermann writes to *Ha'aretz* about the Eichmann trial and compares it with the 1935 trial of the convicted assassins. There are two clear analogies to the Eichmann trial - the Nuremberg trials and the Tokyo trials, which tried the Japanese criminals for crimes against humanity. But Zuckerman brings in the Reichstag trial, which, in my opinion, is known for only one reason - after that trial Germany became a Nazi dictatorship, with Hitler as its sole ruler. Is that the analogy that Prof. Zuckerman of Hebrew University is trying to draw? Did that happen in Israel? Are our judges like the German judges of 1933? And this was written by a very influential person. I have no explanation for it. I think that it expresses a desire to injure Israel. I cannot remain silent and on this score my friends say that I have the courage to speak out against those intellectuals and in articles and also on the radio and everywhere else."

Is that the essence of Zionism?

"Zionism is the Law of Return, which is not a racial law at all - and I am willing to prove that beyond a shadow of a doubt. There is no country that doesn't have a diaspora population and doesn't offer preferential treatment to that returning population. I am in favor of a democratic Jewish state and I also included that point in the Basic Law on Human Dignity and Freedom (1992). A country can be Jewish and democratic and all its non-Jewish residents can have equal rights for budgetary allocations and everything else. On that I am not going to compromise."

Do you view yourself as standing apart from the fairly violent and unrefined political culture?

"I don't toe the line. It is impossible to put a label on me: neither right, left nor center. Sometimes I think that I am alone but there are many who want a democratic Israel and who don't want settlers and do want a society without social gaps. I am a Zionist but I oppose the settlements. I am in favor of social justice but oppose a socialistic regime. I do not hate the religious and I do not oppose the ultra-Orthodox. I keep some of the traditions but I am against religious coercion and I oppose the marriage laws with all my being."

What do you regret?

"I think that perhaps I made a big mistake in not joining one of the larger parties in the past, and in founding the Shinui party in 1974. I should have gone to the Labor Party. The Likud actually invited me to join its list and run for mayor of Tel Aviv, but I declined. There are articles I have written that I regret writing, but my biggest mistake, which may also be said of Yossi Sarid, was leaving the Labor Party. Democracy is manifest in the larger parties and not in the smaller ones."

What did you feel when Avram Burg, the Knesset chairman, eulogized you?

"This hysterically funny incident made clear to me that everything is coincidental, and it's only by chance that I'm not six feet under. The world will probably keep on turning when I'm gone."

An Olympian task

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go and some profound changes will have to occur before we're ready to host an Olympics."

It's a great idea, says Zvi Varshaviack, chairman of the Israeli Olympic Committee. "Dreaming is important, but I don't see how this dream can come true. It's not realistic on two counts. The first is the security situation: Until we have quiet here, there won't be an Olympics. The second is economic: A project like this requires an investment on the part of the government of hundreds of millions of dollars, and I don't see them going in that direction."

'Olympics of peace'

Yossi Machtey believes it is all possible. He's 50 years old, lives in Kochav Yair, lectures at TAU, and is CEO of Barnev, a company that's developing equipment that measures the dilation of the cervix in childbirth. When Gilady contacted the university, Machtey was asked to examine the matter from an economic standpoint. MBA students in his entrepreneurship course prepared a business plan for the Olympics.

Not everyone understands the scope of the project, Machtey notes. "Shimon Peres asked why we came to him now. 'Come back in 2011,' he says. Arafat, on the other hand, showed interest. At first we thought about including Gaza in the project, and someone talked about it with him. He didn't reject it out of hand and said it was an interesting idea." Machtey believes that, with proper marketing, anything is possible. "We can market the Olympics as the 'Olympics of Peace.' I always tell my students that the right time to fit the market is during a downturn; then when the good times come back, you're in position. If we start planning for the Olympics when there's peace, it'll be another 20 years before we get it organized."

Construction for the Olympics, he notes, will be integrated with existing projects. "We'll be part of the trans-Israeli highway, Ben-Gurion 2000 and the Ayalon East [highway]. For the dream to come true, we have to think Olympic. I've heard recently that a group of businesspeople is working on renovation of the Yad Eliahu stadium. I'm trying to shoot that down because, if the stadium is renovated, they won't build a new stadium for the Olympics and the whole dream will go down the drain."

In Paris, which competed to host the 2008 Olympics and lost, there are 77,000 hotel rooms. In Tel Aviv, there are only 7,000.

Machtey: "If we add Jerusalem, there are more. The requirements published by the IOC speak of hotels within a radius of 70 kilometers. If we add Haifa and take another few kilometers, there'll be enough hotel space."

You're proposing that the water sports events be held at the Kinneret, but there's no water in the Kinneret.

"A stadium for aquatic events doesn't need water; it only needs enough water to be filled initially. We'll take water from the farmers."

The collapse of the Maccabiah bridge didn't ruin any possible chance?

"I believe that whoever made that mistake won't repeat it. A successful manager is one who has failed in the past. After the failure of the Maccabiah bridge, nothing else will collapse here."

Have you heard about the Versailles wedding hall?

"That teaches us not to build with Pal-Kal at the Olympics. If the Versailles disaster hadn't happened, we might have built with Pal-Kal."

If you have free time and energy, why don't you invest them in social welfare projects?

"Whatever I could say to that would sound bad, but I'm just not inspired by other things. This is what 'speaks' to me, and I believe that the fulfillment of this dream can only be good for Tel Aviv."

His friends laugh at him, says Machtey, but he is unmoved: "It's a dream, but the prospects for it happening are 100 percent. The only question is when. Maybe there'll be no Olympics here before my grandchildren's time, but it will happen sometime or other. I don't mind being Don Quixote."

During the 104 years of modern Olympic competition, no city in the Middle East has won the right to host the games. Cairo competed for the 2008 Olympics and was eliminated early.

The first round of evaluations is based on a 523-item questionnaire from the IOC. A wide variety of issues is addressed - from the quality of the city's drinking water, the municipal air-pollution levels and the state of

sanitation, to the general status of human rights in the country and the level of individual and collective public security, and on to prior experience in hosting large sporting events and the state of sports facilities. IOC representatives are sent into the field to check how credible the responses are.

Cairo got low marks on all the questions. The comparison with Israel is natural, but depressing. The committee prefers a city whose government is committed to the project. The government of Egypt and the City of Cairo promised to fund all development activity. The government of Israel would provide only part of the funding.

In Cairo, serious transportation problems were noted. On a scale of 1-10, Cairo received marks ranging from 1-4. Paris, Osaka and Toronto were in the 7-8 range. Cairo did promise to improve, but the Olympic committee had doubts about its ability to do so by 2008. Tel Aviv, with its collapsing transportation system and no subway, is closer to Cairo than to Toronto.

In the section dealing with the quality of sports infrastructure, Cairo kept things vague, which made grading difficult. In 1991, the city hosted the African Games. The IOC determined that Cairo would have to renovate the facilities used for those games. Tel Aviv has never hosted an international sporting event of like dimensions.

The environmental conditions offered in Cairo resemble those in Israel: The weather is hot in August and

September, with high pollution levels.

Cairo's ranking on this section was between 2.8 and 3.8. Tel Aviv has far fewer hotel rooms - 7,000 - as against Cairo's 20,000. Overall, Cairo's rating was between 4 and 5 out of 10, and the city failed to make the cut for the second round.

Tel Aviv's chances, when compared with Cairo's, are very low.

Tel Aviv needs the Olympics, says Alex Gilady: "The Olympics would be the driving force to propel a lot of projects forward. Only people who think small believe that nothing is ever realistic."

Tourists don't come here; why should thousands of athletes come?

Gilady: "People with puny imaginations the size of a fly see the situation as it stands today. But is it going to be that way in another 15 years?"

Even with Cairo as the yardstick, our situation is terrible.

"Those who wish never to fall should never compete for anything. You fall down and you get discouraged and you try again and again until you make it. This is what drives me. I climb the mountain not because I must, but because it's part of who I am. The problem is that we're a people who abhors failure, and an Olympics is something you don't win the first time around. We aren't good at long-term projects."

Meanwhile, you're one of the people doing well from this whole thing. You've moved up to become a player, representing a candidate city.

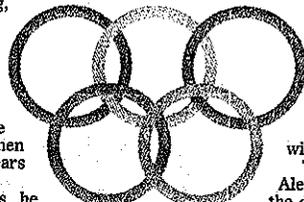
"That's just nonsense from small-minded, weak people. I'm not a player. If Tel Aviv becomes a candidate, I won't be heading the delegation. Thanks to this project, Tel Aviv today is being showcased to the world."

Almost a year and a half has elapsed since the press conference, and your group hasn't accomplished anything.

"Look, you have a nerve making complaints like that to us. We're volunteers. We got to the decision-makers and we made it past them. In September, a presentation for directors-general of government ministries will be made. Every time, someone more important shows an interest."

You don't even have a Web site.

"I know how to win something like this even without the Internet."



Brain strain the answers

- Sean Connery.
- It was the one part of his body that his mother didn't dip in the River Styx.
- Rhubarb.
- Tate Modern, London.
- Yitzhak Rabin.
- A seat with a canopy, affixed to an elephant's back.
- 1970.
- One.
- Selma Lagerlof.
- Tea.

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