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Editorial

Baruch Haba

The coming to our shores next week of Israeli President Zalman Shazar is an event that transcends interest in the Jewish community, though quite obviously we are among the closest mechtunim.

The President of Israel comes to our land after a triumph visit to a number of South American countries where he made a profound impression with his humility and deep sense of Jewish history. We are certain that this scholarly man who is Israel's head of state will find in the American people genuine understanding for Israel, its pioneering spirit and its striving to build a truly democratic society in a world of turmoil and political confusion.

President Johnson in his days in office has met many foreign dignitaries. In president Shazar, when he meets him he will find a truly unique man -- a chief of state who is still more concerned with letters than with politics, a still voice that echoes in Israel above the din of the politicians a genuine lover of people and of books, a writer of recognized merit in Hebrew and in Yiddish, and a man who seemingly would prefer library to presidential chamber if given another chance.

Israel is a country where an old people is undergoing a transformation. President Shazar symbolizes that change, guarding and preserving tested Jewish values while looking forward to a future that will surely test all values.

We welcome the Israeli guest and wish him well both in his coming and in his going.

Stamp of Approval

by Nathan Ziprin

Philip Slomovitz of the Detroit Jewish News recalls in a recent column that when he suggested in 1954 issuance of a postage stamp on the occasion of the observance of the American Jewish Tercentary, the proposal was rejected by the U.S. Post Office.

Obviously it could not have been rejected out of reluctance to introduce a religious element, since observance of three hundred years of Jewish life marked basically a historic rather than a religious event in the history of Jewish settlement.

Now, twelve years later, we find the Postmaster General of the U.S. not only approving but defending publication of a Christmas stamp depicting the "Madonna and Child," a theme and a concept that is unique only to Christendom. The office of the Postmaster General defended the action in letter to the American Jewish Congress on the ground that those who find the stamp offensive need not buy it and on the further ground that the painting is identified as part of a work of art that is on display in the National Gallery of Art

Dear Mr. Tell:

In the July 15th issue of the Israelite, Rabbi Hecht calls for rabbis not to be involved with Viet Nam or civil rights, but to pay attention to the traditional functions of the rabbinate, namely duties to his congregation and community. He further says the rabbi should set an example to his flock by erudition and learning (a redundancy), and to bring "true religious values" to his congregants. The rabbi's statements show a shocking insularity and ignorance of the role of the modern religious leader.

The present day devoted rabbi, in order to give substance and meaning to the teachings of the Bible, must relate Judaism to present day morality and world problems. He can no longer remain silent when injustice is perpetrated -- no matter where it occurs. Rolf Hochuth in The Deputy criticizes Pope Pius and the ENTIRE WORLD for not being involved with the fate of the Jews in Germany. Similarly, our Bible teaches us to be involved with the stranger in our midst and our neighbor. I'm sure Rabbi Hecht could quote passages to illustrate this doctrine. If nothing else, the past history of Nazism forces us to face our oneness with the world -- we can't escape it. Furthermore, it is precisely his attitude which is driving the Jewish youth away from any attachment to Judaism. To them our religion must have more meaning and relevance than what he terms "tradition". Most "traditions" are recent ones -- that is, within the past 200 years. And other traditions existed prior to the present ones as long as they had relevance to the time and situation.

No, it is not Rabbi Hecht but the contemporary clergyman and his Christian counterpart who sets the example to his flock by his own involvement with humanity. It is he who carries out not only the letter but the spirit of his religion. And he has every right -- nay -- obligation to criticize Mississippi justice, Apartheid in South Africa, American bombing of Vietnamese, Russian terror in Hungary, Soviet suppression of Jews -- or any other abuse of people.

Could the good Rabbi have been one of the "un-involved" spectators of the Kitty Genovese murder? Did Judaism teach him that? I doubt it.

Cordially,
David Katzman

in Washington, D.C.
The thesis that offended people needn't buy the stamp is an argument unworthy of reply.

There can be no quarrel with the Post Office people over their choice of the work in question as a piece of art, but the pertinent question is: Since when has it been the function of that department of our government to promote art?

Had the Postmaster announced that his office was embarking on a campaign to promote the visual arts and that the Madonna and Child painting was one in a series that would include the works of major artists, ancient and modern, there would be no quarreling with him. But when he chooses the Madonna and Child theme for a specific occasion, one that has purely Christological undertones, we are afraid that what the Postmaster General has done, perhaps unwittingly, was to give his stamp of approval to a practice that is clearly in violation of the concept of severance of religion from governmental functioning.

The Madonna and Child theme has fascinated artists ever since the rise of Christianity not only as a subject of artistic and religious expression but as an instrument for advancing the Christian idea. Whether the artists at any given time intended it so or not, the fact remains that the Christological theme in art has been welcomed and encouraged by the Church precisely because of its potential for promoting Christian thought, Christian values.

There is no questioning the fact that the Madonna and Child painting that is to decorate the special Christmas stamp is a work of art, but only when it hangs on the walls of an art gallery.

The moment it is placed within the limited framework of a stamp designed to commemorate an admittedly Christian event, it loses its character, ceases to be a work of art and becomes instead the bearer of a message.

By lending himself to that message, the Postmaster General it seems is distinctly out of step with the climate in the land on the relation between church and state.

For the in-between national elections, the breakdown was as follows:

YEAR	JEWISH	PROT.	CATH.	UA
1938	73	48	40	42
1942	74	49	43	43
1946	71	42	38	41
1950	70	41	37	40
1954	76	52	46	45
1958	75	50	45	44
1962	77	52	50	46

TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth
Constitutes A Majority"

BY JACK TELL



(Continued from Page 1)

a Liberal-Fusion ticket with William Buckley Jr., an intellectual leader of the Radical Right, defeated Abraham D. Beame, a member of an Orthodox synagogue who refused to campaign on the Sabbath. Mind you, this took place in a predominantly Democratic city housing the largest concentration of Jews, not only in America, but in the entire world, according to 1961 figures submitted by Dr. H.S. Linfield, director of Jewish Statistical Bureau.

There were 5,530,000 Jews in America of a total population of 179,323,175, according to the 1960 consensus. A conservative estimate for 1966 would advance those figures to 6,000,000 and 190,000,000, or slightly above an unimpressive 3%. But let's delve a bit further.

During the last presidential election, 1964, there were 112,500,000 eligible voters, of whom 88,000,000 registered and 70,700,000 went to the polls. This means that 62% of all eligible voters and 79% of all registered voters actually cast their ballots.

Now let's see the figures for the Jewish population, as close as they may be determined. In 1964 there were 4,000,000 Jews of voting age, of whom 3,600,000 registered and 3,240,000 voted. The percentages of Jews in this category meant 90% who registered and 83% who voted.

It is interesting to note at this point that the percentage of Protestants who voted in 1964 was 65, while 59% of Catholics and 57% of undetermined denominations cast their ballots. These are percentages of those eligible to vote.

The complete national chart for presidential elections according to actual voting of denominations as follows:

YEAR	JEWISH	PROT.	CATH.	UA
1936	81%	59%	52%	53%
1940	82	61	54	54
1944	79	53	48	51
1948	78	51	46	50
1952	84	65	62	57
1956	83	63	56	55
1960	85	65	62	57
1964	83	65	59	57

National figures, you say, and while they may hold true in the all-over picture or in the areas where there are large concentration of Jews, how accurate are they for most states and local communities?

Here are the figures for Nevada and Clark County (Las Vegas are) for 1964:

The total estimated populations were 425,000 and 225,000 respectively, of whom 275,000 and 140,000 were eligible to vote. Of those eligible, 163,475 registered to vote statewide, and 79,633 registered in the county. Therefore we have 59% of eligible state voters registering and 49% of the county eligibles registering. Now we carry it a step further and the figures show that actual voters in the state were 135,433 and in the county 64,680. In the final analysis, 49% of those eligible in the state actually voted, which included 82% of those registered. In the county 46% of those eligible actually voted, while 81% of those registered cast ballots.

Let's see how this compares to the Jewish vote in the state and county, utilizing the same proportionate figures that have been determined on a national scale.

It is conservatively estimated there are 6,000 Jewish families in Nevada, which would mean there are approximately 14,000 Jews of voting age. On the basis of 90% of those eligible, there were 12,600 who registered. With 83% of eligibles voting, 11,620 went to the polls. This, in simple arithmetic means that 92% of those Jews in Nevada, who had registered, actually cast ballots.

Using the same breakdown for Clark County, where most of the Jewish families reside (approximately 5,000), we determine there were 11,600 of voting age, with 10,500 registering and 9,700 actually voting.

It is no big secret that registration and voting falls off during the in-between elections, like the present one coming up. We disregard all other factors, including the phenomenal growth of the Jewish population in Clark County during the past five years, and sticking strictly to figures, we strike a mean average of the percentage of Jews who voted in the past seven off-year elections. This amounts to 74% which means that 8,468 members of the Jewish faith will be in the voting booths come November.

In the near future, possible next week, we will bring you up to date with some really surprising information from authoritative sources on the nature of the Jewish vote since 1936, accompanied by polls and reasonable editorial comment, also from authoritative sources, as to why the Jewish vote fluctuated from one party to the other.

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