

# A Dream Come True

BY DAVID GROSS



DR. EMANUEL RACKMAN

Five years ago this month, Rabbi Emanuel Rackman left the Fifth Avenue Synagogue in New York and made Aliya -- fulfilling his lifetime dream of settling in Israel.

In so doing, "Manny" Rackman exchanged the luxuries and comforts he enjoyed as a major leader of the American Jewish community for a vision he had of helping to move forward a university that was religiously-oriented and that he felt could have a powerful impact on the problems confronting Israel and the Jewish people.

Recently Dr. Rackman (a respected professor of political science and an attorney, as well as a rabbi) took time out from a hectic schedule to talk about his decision and of the institution he heads.

Looking fit and younger than his age, Dr. Rackman (who became an Israeli citizen a year ago, and now enjoys both U.S. and Israeli citizenship) said that he felt happy and constructive in Israel and that Aliya in the autumn of his life was "a dream come true."

His gentle eyes become animated when he speaks of Bar - Ilan University, whose campus is in a garden suburb of Ramat Gan, outside of Tel Aviv and which now numbers some 10,000 students.

As president of Bar - Ilan, Dr. Rackman said he was eager to correct what he called "a few misconceptions" about the University, founded in 1955 by American and Israeli Orthodox leaders.

"For one thing," he said, "Bar-Ilan is not

a ghettoized institution -- we are in the mainstream of life in Israeli. Israeli military officers sit in our classes, and we send our faculty members to military bases -- to teach Jewish identity, knowledge of Zionism, religion, philosophy.

"At Bar - Ilan, we also have a great many skilled scientific and medical researchers and there are lots of exciting medical research projects underway -- in diabetes, heart disease, senility, and other areas.

"But our chief concern, as a university, is to offer solutions to Israel and to the Jewish people for specifically Israeli and Jewish problems -- social problems, identity problems, questions of Israel's future relationships to neighbors in the Middle East, and of course the social gap that must be bridged between our Ashkenazic and Sephardic communities.

"It is not too well known that the largest percentage of Sephardic students in Israel is to be found at Bar - Ilan -- 27 percent. Recently we instituted a special tutorial program to expand the knowledge and background of Sephardic students so that they could gain admission, based on equal grades in admission tests.

"Ours is also the only university that insists that every fully matriculated student must add a 25 percent study load to his or her studies, consisting of studies in Bible, Talmud, Jewish history, Jewish literature and Jewish philosophy. Do you realize that at Bar-Ilan we have 20 professors of Jewish philosophy?!"

"We feel we're performing an invaluable service to Israel when we help to teach -- all right, indoctrinate -- love of Israel and knowledge of our past to young Israelis. And this is sandwiched in between practical courses that our students pursue in business administration and a wide variety of other university-level courses. We even have a unique course that seeks to decrease the bureaucratic methods of our bureaucrats!"

Rabbi Rackman paused, smiled, reflected. "I'm very excited and gratified by our contributions to Israel, and I'm very frustrated over my difficulties in persuading more Orthodox Jews to support us. They still prefer to aid the traditional yeshiva, and look away from the value of our work."

UNITED NATIONS (WNS) -- The United States vetoed a Security Council resolution calling for Israel to reinstate three West Bank mayors it has removed from office. The resolution was back by 13 countries. One, Zaire, abstained.

## WOMEN'S PLEA FOR SOVIET JEWRY AT UNLV ON APR. 25

A large number of Jewish Women's Organizations in Las Vegas, together with the National Conference of Christians and Jews are coordinating efforts to make the annual Women's Plea for Soviet Jewry an outstanding success. This inter-religious function will take place in the UNLV Moyer Student Building Ballroom on Sunday afternoon, April 25th, at 2 P.M.

This event is to call attention not only to the plight of Soviet Jews, but also to the plight of all people in the Soviet Union who are subject to persecution, and their numbers are legion.

Leonid Feldman, a former Soviet Refusnik and playwright, will be one of the featured speakers. He is presently a student in Los Angeles, struggling to make his mark in America. Featured also will be Dr. Donald W. McEvoy, Senior Vice President and Director of Program Development for the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He has met with the

Soviet Pentacostals, who for the past three years have shared a small room in the basement of the American Embassy in Moscow. A play written by Feldman will be presented by inter-religious students of the Las Vegas area.

The three Chapters - at - Large of Women's ORT - Las Vegas, Oasis, and Southern Nevada Business and Career - were chosen as the convening body for this event in Las Vegas this year. Mildred Cohen and Mollie Loewy are co-chairwomen, and they are working closely with Miriam Shearing and Alida Nelson of the National Conference of Christians and Jews to make this a most impressive event.

Many prominent members of the Las Vegas community as well as members of the clergy will participate in the program. The public is urged to attend this very important afternoon. There will be no admission charge.

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- Beth Haftefusoth, the Hahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora on the Tel Aviv University Campus, is appealing to anyone possessing material on Jewish agriculture in the 19th and 20th centuries to inform the museum as soon as possible.

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