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Dictatorships do not understand subtle threats and polite warnings. Language of understatement and civilized manners are foreign to them. Liberal democracies are wrong in expecting them to behave in a liberal fashion, adhering to the accepted norms of respecting others, and of not harming others.

Raphael Cohen-Almagor



I have been traveling this month: Israel, Scotland and Yorkshire. Yorkshire is considered to be one of the most beautiful regions in the United Kingdom. The reputation is certainly justified. Whitby, Scarborough, Robin Hood Bay and York are all worth a visit.



Edinburgh is stunning, to my taste the most beautiful city in the UK.

In Scotland it was interesting to visit the Edinburgh castle, where you can see and read about the Scots annulling their parliament and giving in to the English. Then you walk the Royal Mile, at the end of which stands the new parliament.



This modern building, built in 2004, is striking in its modernism, very different from all other royal buildings in the area. I took a tour of the building, and the guide went the extra mile to explain each and every motif and symbol of the architect.

Scotland should have elections soon, and Israel (and England for that matter) can learn something from its mixed election system. The Scottish decision makers certainly did their homework.



The voting system used by the Scottish Parliament is known as the Additional Member System (AMS), a type of proportional representation. This means that the share of seats each party receives reflects its level of support among voters.

At a Scottish Parliament election each voter has two votes. With the first vote, voters choose between candidates standing in their constituency. The candidate winning the largest number of votes will gain the seat. There are a total of 73 constituency MSPs.

The second vote is for a political party, or for a candidate standing as an individual, within a larger electoral area called a Scottish Parliament Region. There are eight Scottish Parliament Regions. Each region has seven additional seats in the Parliament. Within each region, parties are allocated additional seats dependent upon the number of constituency seats won. The members chosen to fill these 56 additional seats are known as 'regional members'. Each voter has one constituency MSP and seven regional MSPs. All MSPs have equal status in the Parliament.



Israeli politics continues to be in a standstill. The only thing that seems to be on the move is corruption, and the struggle against it. The public and institutions await two important events in the life of the nation: The interim report of the Winograd Committee, and the internal elections of the Labour Party, where a new leader will be elected to replace Peretz. This is wishful thinking. Emphasis is on the word “new”, meaning that I hope the leader will, indeed, be new; that is, neither Peretz nor Barak.

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The Hezbollah War

Members of the Winograd Committee should ask themselves very simple questions:

Did the government know that the massive bombardment of Southern Lebanon will spark war?

Was the Israeli retaliation proportionate to the act of kidnapping three soldiers and killing five other soldiers?

Did the government expect the extensive barrage of rockets of the Hezbollah on the north of Israel?

Did the government do whatever that was in its power to provide defence and adequate livelihood to the people in the north of Israel who had to live under fire for long weeks?

Were the aims of the war clear to the army and its generals?



If members of the committee think that the answer to all these questions is “No”, as I think, then their recommendations should be critical and crystal clear: This government is unfit to govern. Elections should be declared as soon as possible.

It is striking that no one in this failing government thinks that s/he needs to take responsibility and resign.

On this they are taking example from their leader, Prime Minister Olmert. If he does not take responsibility, why should they? After all, he is first among equals.

Olmert gave lengthy interviews to the Israeli media, as is customary in Passover. The guy lives in a different world. He is the only person who is confident in his ability to govern. Without blinking he says: I was elected to serve as prime minister for four years, and I am determined to govern the entire period. He does not get the message. No one wants him in office. No one trusts his abilities as a leader. Yet, he refuses to fade away. I presume the survival sentiment is very powerful when one serves in such high-powered office. Olmert would not like to be remembered as the worse prime minister in the history of Israel. He does not understand that whatever he will do, he could not escape this reputation.

On April 19, 2007 Aluf Ben published an Op. Ed. in Haaretz newspaper. The article titled “Olmert's double failure” argues that there's something disturbing about Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's version of the circumstances in which the Hezbollah War broke out. In his testimony to the Winograd Committee and in subsequent interviews, Olmert said that from the day he stepped into office in January 2006, he had prepared for the possibility of the abduction of soldiers to Lebanon, and later on decided to change his

predecessor's policy of restraint and react to provocations by Hezbollah. As such, he accepted and approved the targets the Israel Defense Forces presented to him, and waited for an eruption.

Criticism of Olmert's version has focused on his responsibility for the army's preparedness. If he had anticipated a conflagration in the North, his critics argue, why did he appoint the inexperienced Amir Peretz as defense minister and why did he not ensure that the IDF was preparing to fight Hezbollah? These arguments are important, but they miss the main point: The retaliatory operation Olmert approved was aerial not ground, and the air force was prepared and carried it out successfully. The appointment of Peretz was mistaken, but it did not affect the operational plans, which had been approved previously.

The main problem lies in what Olmert did not do: Once he decided to end the restraint in the North he did not prepare the public for the possibility of war nor did he enlist the international community to prevent it. This is his double failure. The government's responsibility does not end with hearing intelligence assessments and approving the army's plans; the prime minister's supreme responsibility is to use all the means at his disposal to prevent war.

But Olmert kept his decisions secret and left the initiative in the hands of Hassan Nasrallah. From his statements during and after the war it emerged that Olmert saw in the soldiers' abduction and Israel's sharp response an opportunity for a comprehensive change in the rules of the game in Lebanon and for strengthening public support for his convergence plan. These are far-reaching goals and the attempt to achieve them has exacted a high price in dead and wounded, in property damage and in the call-up of the reserves.



Olmert did not tell the public to prepare for a confrontation with Hezbollah and he did not explain that a change in the situation in Lebanon is essential for Israeli interests. Lebanon was absent from his public statements before the war. The result was that the public was surprised, and after its initial support for the bombardment of Lebanon, it found that it did not understand what the fighting was about. When things got complicated the public turned its back on Olmert.

To this day, it has also rejected the claim that Israel won the war. Olmert's second failure is that he did not enlist the international community. If he really thought there would be an outbreak of war on the northern border, why didn't he make the seriousness of the situation clear to U.S. President

George W. Bush, French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, with whom he met in the weeks leading up to the war? Why didn't he tell them Hezbollah was about to abduct soldiers and was publicly threatening Israel and that if this happened Lebanon would be destroyed by IDF bombardments? Why didn't he tell them that if they wanted to rescue Lebanon, they should hasten to implement the UN Security Council resolutions and neutralize Hezbollah? Olmert did speak with Bush and Chirac about an agreement on the Shaba Farms, but did not give them a sense of alarm about a war at the gates.

An Israeli ultimatum could have achieved two results. Either Bush and Chirac would have mobilized the international community against Nasrallah or the two would have made it clear to Olmert that Lebanese infrastructures must not be on the air force's list of targets. In the second case, Olmert would have returned to Israel and asked the army for a list of alternative targets.

In the absence of a prior understanding, the American prohibition on harming the Siniora government and Lebanese infrastructures came only on the day the war broke out and after Olmert had already committed himself publicly to a "very painful" response. The result was that the IDF, which had prepared to destroy power stations and bridges in Lebanon, was left without targets and was dragged into a war on the ground in territory convenient to the enemy.

Olmert has changed his approach since the war. In recent months he has gradually been preparing domestic public opinion and the international community for a large military operation in the Gaza Strip and has been warning Syria about "miscalculation" that could lead to war. From this it is possible to understand that he realized he erred last summer. This, however, is not enough. It would be appropriate for the Winograd Committee to examine Olmert's functioning before the war and to establish rules for government responsibility in preventing future entanglements.

Peace Index – March 2007



The Peace Index for March, which was carried out on the 26th and 27th of the month by a team headed by Prof. Eppie Yaar and Prof. Tamar Hermann found:

About two-thirds (63%) of the Jewish public had already heard of the Arab peace plan before the Riyadh conference. After the main points of the plan were presented to them, 46% of the interviewees said it could constitute at least a basis for negotiations on a comprehensive peace, and much the same number said Israel should reject it hands down. Checking for a link between

prior awareness of the plan and the position on how Israel should react to it reveals that among those who had heard of it, 52.5% support it as a basis for negotiations and 41% oppose it. Among those who had not heard of it, 55% oppose it and 33.5% support it. The disparities between those who had and had not heard of the plan could stem from gaps of education and knowledge, but it is also possible that those who basically are more open to a settlement also take more interest in this issue and therefore had heard of the plan.

In the Arab sector it emerges that fewer had heard of the Arab peace proposal (56% vs. 44% who had not heard of it). However, after the main points of the plan were presented to them, there was near-unanimity—92%—that this proposal offers a basis for negotiations on a comprehensive peace agreement.

An overwhelming majority—72%—think the Olmert government currently lacks sufficient public support to enter negotiations on a comprehensive settlement, somewhat similar to the views on the Barak government's lack of a mandate to enter the negotiations in Taba late in 2000, close to the elections in which Barak lost to Ariel Sharon. An especially interesting finding is that the view of Olmert as lacking a mandate for such negotiations cuts across the political parties. This is the dominant perception among voters for all the parties, including Kadima.

Corruption



Headlines in Israeli media are devoted to ministers suspected of various criminal activities. Minister of Finance, Avraham Hirschson, is under incisive police investigation. His days, I suspect, are numbered; another blow to Olmert and his tottering government. Israelis are worried witnessing all those affairs of their leaders. They do not really understand how all these corrupt people reached leading positions of the nation. At the same time, they prefer to see such headlines, and not the headlines they were used to since November 2000: terror attacks, casualties, war, war victims and refugees. Everything is relative in life.

Some twenty years ago I cooperated with Hirschson. I was then Chairperson of “The Second Generation to Holocaust Remembrance” in Israel, very active in educating the public, especially the youth, of the horrors of the Holocaust, its lessons, and of the way Jews survived the dreadful years 1933-1945 in Europe. One of the initiatives that the organization pushed forward was to bring young people to Poland. There is nothing like eyesight to fathom the destruction, the agony, the suffering.



Proud Israeli youth believe that the Holocaust could not have happened to them, only to the old-generation, frail Jews of the golah (Diaspora) who marched to meet the slaughter ax without pride and resilience. I used to lecture in schools and army camps about Jewish life in Europe, taking one human story with which they could identify and explaining that the partisans were lucky: they had a place to run to, hide and fight. How many Jews did not have such a luxury? Anyway, we thought that the proud sabras should visit concentration and death camps, the Nazi machinery that was utilized to break the spirit and the person. At that time we did not find a listening ear within the government and then shifted to local authorities. Shlomo Lahat, the visionary Mayor of Tel Aviv, liked the idea and was the first to organize youth delegations to Poland. Hirschson was one of the few politicians who understood the importance of this project and joined forces in launching the March of Life which flies Israelis to Poland's death camps every year.

On April 22, 2007 Olmert announced that Hirschson has asked him to suspend himself for a period of three months. For the past three months, Hirschson was more in police offices than in his ministerial office. The most capable Olmert has assumed the role of Finance Minister for the next three months. I will be impressed if he will continue to serve as prime minister and finance minister in three months time. We are lucky to have some capable officers in the Finance Ministry. Otherwise with this government everything would have collapsed.

Sanctions on Iran



Dictatorships do not understand subtle threats and polite warnings.

Language of understatement and civilized manners are foreign to them. Like brutes in the streets, they colour their world with black and white divisions, and resort to force to advance their agenda. Therefore, with countries like Iran, Syria and North Korea, mild sanctions are ineffective. They simply do not work. They convey the message that those who initiate them are not strong enough, or not resolute enough. With such countries, either offer persuasive carrots to convince them that it is prudent from their perspective to change their policy, or move to harsh measures. North Korea was offered persuasive carrots and decided to adopt and change, as its leaders thought they will gain more economically by compromising. To date, no carrots that were offered swayed Iran and Syria to abandon their violent international behaviour that undermines law and order, and poses a real threat to world tranquility.



On March 24, 2007 the United Nations Security Council unanimously agreed to tighten sanctions against Iran; better late than never. The package of sanctions, aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear program, targets the country's arms exports, its state-owned Bank Sepah and the elite Revolutionary Guards. They will impose an embargo on all conventional weapons Iran can sell and freeze the assets abroad of Bank Sepah, as the United States has already done, isolating it from international financing. The text does not order but calls on nations and international financial institutions to restrict new grants, credits and loans to Iran, which the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund are unlikely to issue. The resolution also calls for a voluntary travel embargo on Iranian officials and Revolutionary Guard commanders listed in the text and urges restrictions on the import of heavy weapons to Iran.

Diplomatic sources in Jerusalem expressed satisfaction at the UN Security Council's resolution. "These sanctions are an appropriate response to the Iranian refusal to honor past resolutions". Diplomatic officials in New York said the resolution deals a harsh blow to Iran because it expands the list of boycotted Iranian organizations, and for the first time imposes sanctions on conventional arms deals with Iran. It also issues a warning to all nations and financial bodies against doing business with Tehran.

The U.S. Record 2006

On April 5, 2007 US Department of State published Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2006 which describes the wide range of diplomatic tools United States had applied last year to support indigenous reform efforts across the globe. The report is submitted to the Congress by the

Department of State in compliance with Section 665 of P.L. 107-228, the FY 03 Foreign Relations Authorization Act, which requires the Department to report on actions taken by the U.S. Government to encourage respect for human rights. This fifth annual submission complements the longstanding Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006, and takes the next step, moving from highlighting abuses to publicizing the actions and programs the United States has employed to end those abuses.

Statement by the President

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[Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2006 \(PDF\)](#)

04/05/07 [On-The-Record Briefing on the Release of the Annual Report,](#)

["Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record - 2006";](#)

Paula Dobriansky, Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs;
Washington, DC

"Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2006" is available in both a [PDF version](#) and a HTML version (below). See

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/shrd/2006/>

Racism in Israel

A Poll sponsored by the Center for the Campaign Against Racism found that half the Jewish population of Israel believe the state should encourage Arab emigration. The poll conducted by the Geocartography Institute and presented on March 27, 2007 found a sharp increase in the number of Israeli Jews who support Arab emigration in comparison to a similar poll conducted last year.

The poll was carried out in December 2006, and included 500 participants. The margin of error is 4.4 percent.

The poll addresses the Jewish reaction to hearing the Arabic language spoken on the streets of Israel. According to the data, some 50 percent of the participants said they become fearful when they hear the Arabic language spoken around them. 43 percent said they feel uncomfortable, and 30 percent feel hatred.

In contrast, last year only 17.5 percent said they feel hatred when faced with spoken Arabic. The poll participants were also asked about work relations with Arabs.

50 percent said they would refuse to work at a job in which their direct supervisor would be Arab. This number represents a 47 percent increase since the 2005 poll on the same topic.



Center for the Campaign against Racism director Baher Awdeh called on the state of Israel on Tuesday to "wake up" in light of these findings, and utilize its judicial and education systems to combat this rise in racist sentiments. Awdeh said that the fact that Israel is defined as the "Jewish state" is discriminatory against Arabs in and of itself. "Jewish citizens interpret this definition to mean that they are superior or entitled to more rights than Arab citizens," he said. Awdeh offered his explanation for the deterioration of Jewish-Arab relations, saying the war in Lebanon, and the opposing views it generated among Jewish and Arab citizens, could have contributed to the deterioration. Another reason could be the entry of Avigdor Lieberman (Yisrael Beiteinu) to the coalition, being a politician known for his anti-Arab views. He added that Israel's policy of expropriating Palestinian lands and destroying Palestinian homes may have also contributed to the problem.

Nazi Archive Made Public



Documents of Nazi atrocities during the Holocaust were kept locked for decades. Now for the first time, secrets of the Nazi Holocaust that have been hidden away for more than 60 years are finally being made available to the public. We're talking about thousands of filing cabinets, holding 50 million pages. It's Hitler's secret archive.

The Nazis were famous for record keeping but what 60 Minutes found ran from the bizarre to the horrifying. The documents were taken to a town in the middle of Germany, called Bad Arolsen, where they were sorted, filed and locked away, never to be seen by the public until now. The storerooms are immense: 16 miles of shelves holding the stories of 17 million victims – not only Jews, but slave laborers, political prisoners and homosexuals. To open the files is to see the Holocaust staring back like it was yesterday: strange pink Gestapo arrest warrants as lethal as a death sentence, jewelry lost as freedom

ended at the gates of an extermination camp. Time stopped here in 1945. Most of the names here are of unknown people. While the Nazis did not write down the names of those executed in the gas chambers at places like Auschwitz, they did keep detailed records of millions of others who died in the camps. Their names are listed in notebooks labeled "Totenbuch," which means "death book." The names are written here, single-spaced, in meticulous handwriting.

Those records make up the largest Holocaust archive anywhere. Run by the Red Cross, the International Tracing Service was set up after the war to trace lost family members. Survivors could write for information, but there was a backlog of 400,000 unanswered letters. And neither survivors nor scholars got past the lobby. See article and video clip on

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/12/14/60minutes/main2267927.shtml>

Save the Day: May 3, 2007 World Press Freedom Day

Focus on Security Measures That Stifle Freedom



Major terrorist attacks and threats against countries world-wide have led to the widespread tightening of security and surveillance measures which all too often are also used to stifle debate, individual liberties and freedom of the press, according to the World Association of Newspapers.

Media around the globe will highlight the dangers of these measures for their audiences on World Press Freedom Day, May 3. The World Association of Newspapers is once again offering a package of interviews, articles, essays, infographics and advertisements to publish on 3 May to commemorate the importance of a free press and the necessity of protecting it against attacks, even in democracies.

The materials, on the theme "Press Under Surveillance," can be downloaded, free of charge, at <https://exfs.adir.hull.ac.uk/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.worldpressfreedomday.org>. The package of materials examines anti-terrorism and official secrets laws, criminalisation of speech judged to justify terrorism, criminal prosecution of journalists for disclosing classified information, surveillance of communications without judicial authorisation, and restrictions on access to government data. "All of these measures can severely erode the capacity of journalists to investigate and report accurately and critically, and thus the ability of the press to inform," said Timothy Balding, CEO of WAN, the global organisation of the world's press.

"Balancing the sometimes conflicting interests of security and freedom might indeed be difficult, but democracies have an absolute responsibility to use a rigorous set of standards to judge whether curbs on freedom can be justified by security concerns," he said. "This is the clear message we need to impress

on governments and their agencies on World Press Freedom Day."

Contributors to the articles, essays, interviews and editorials being offered for publication include Bill Keller, Executive Editor of The New York Times, Dinah PoKempner, General Counsel of Human Rights Watch, Agnes Callamard, Executive Director of Article 19, David Banisar of Privacy International, Andrei Richter, Director of the Moscow Media Law and Policy Institute, Chinese Journalist Gao Yu, Seamus Dooley of the London-based National Union of Journalists, and Raymond Louw of the South African National Editors Forum.

In addition, the package, which is available in English, French, Spanish, German and Russian, includes:

Compelling public service advertisements, produced by major advertising agencies world-wide, on the theme, "press under surveillance."

Materials for engaging younger readers, with information about Chinese journalist Shi Tao, the WAN Golden Pen of Freedom laureate who has been jailed since November 2004 for distributing information about Chinese press restrictions. The materials include a postcard to be sent to Chinese authorities protesting against the jailing.

Infographics on the number of journalists killed and jailed, and editorial cartoons on press freedom themes.

- A video spot for broadcast or for web sites will be available shortly. Full materials at <https://exfs.adir.hull.ac.uk/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.worldpressfreedomday.org>
- *The Future of the Media*



The World Editors Forum, Reuters and Zogby present the first NewsroomBarometer survey:

Vast Majority of Editors Optimistic About Future of Newspapers Two-thirds Say Opinion and Analysis Will Grow in Importance

The vast majority of newspaper editors world-wide are optimistic about the future of their newspapers, according to a new global survey released today that provides an insider's view to newsroom attitudes and strategies.

The "Newsroom Barometer," conducted by Zogby International for the Paris-based World Editors Forum and Reuters, found that 85 percent of editors are very optimistic or somewhat optimistic about the future of their newspapers. The survey found that:

- 40 percent of editors believe on-line will be the most common way to read the news ten years from now;
 - 35 percent believe print will reign supreme;
 - two-thirds believe opinion and analysis pages will grow in importance;
 - Half are convinced that the quality of journalism will improve;
 - Half believe that shareholders and advertisers present threats to editorial independence.
- The survey of 435 editors-in-chief, deputy editors and other senior news executives from around the world, and of whom half are from Europe, provides a picture of an industry in transition, but one that is rapidly adapting to the new media environment.
- "Eighty-five percent of senior news executives see a rosy future for their newspaper, and it's quite a surprise," said Bertrand Pecquerie, Director of the World Editors Forum (WEF), the organisation of the World Association of Newspapers that represents senior newsroom personnel. "Editors recognize competition from online sources and free papers, and in turn are making efforts to adapt to 21st century readership," he said. "They know how to effectively make the transition to online journalism without reducing editorial quality. Editors-in-chief realise that content matters more than ever and cutting newsroom resources is not at all an effective solution: the reshaping of news will take place with journalists, rather than at their expense."
- Monique Villa, Managing Director of Reuters Media said: "The Newsroom Barometer survey reveals an industry ready and willing to face dramatic change. Training journalists in new media skills has emerged as the most popular method for senior editors to increase editorial quality in their newsrooms, and 51 percent believe that the general quality of journalism will improve over the next decade." This optimism builds on deep changes in the way news is consumed. Many editors view news as a 'conversation' with readers rather than a 'lecture' from journalists, and the perceived increase in the importance of analysis and opinion pages shows newspaper editors realize that they must change their content offering in order to survive and prosper," Villa added.

The results of the Newsroom Barometer survey, released at a news conference at Reuters headquarters in London today, are contained in Trends in Newsrooms 2007, the annual WEF report on the latest editorial developments from around the world

(<https://exfs.adir.hull.ac.uk/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.trends-in-newsrooms.org>).

The Newsroom Barometer, a partnership among WEF, Zogby and Reuters, will be conducted annually to assess changes in attitudes and strategies in newsrooms around the world. The survey found:

- One in ten says mobile devices will be the most common platform, while 7 percent cite e-paper. And two out of 10 respondents say it will be technologies that are still in the emerging stage.
- Half the respondents believe that journalistic quality will improve over the next 10 years, versus one-quarter who think it will worsen.
- Eight in ten respondents view online and new media as a welcome addition. Those with high volume web traffic—more than 200,000 unique visitors per day—are more likely to view new media positively, but the majority of editors at newspapers with modest traffic or no web sites also viewed new media positively.
- Three in ten respondents view free newspapers as a threat to the market, while the majority takes a more benign view -- 34 percent view them as a welcome addition, and 28 percent consider them negligible. Smaller newspapers are more likely to see free papers as a threat than larger newspapers, perhaps because larger newspapers have the resources to fight off free paper competition, as well as produce their own free papers.
- Respondents are almost evenly split over whether they think that the majority of news both print and online will be free in the future.
- Three-quarters of respondents view the trends toward increased interactivity between news organisations and their readers as positive for quality journalism, while only 8 percent take the negative view.
- Fifty-four percent of editors think shareholders and advertisers pose the principal threat in the future to editorial independence of newspapers. Nineteen percent of respondents, mostly from the developing world, cite political pressure as the main threat.
- Two-thirds of respondents say that the number of opinion and analysis pages will increase in coming years.
- Training journalists in new media is cited most often by editors as a priority to increase editorial quality. Hiring more journalists is the second most frequently cited priority.
- 435 respondents participated in the Newsroom Barometer, which was conducted between October 8 and December 7, 2006.

Full details of the survey can be found at

<https://exfs.adir.hull.ac.uk/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.editorsweblog.org>. More on the Trends in Newsroom report at <https://exfs.adir.hull.ac.uk/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.trends-in-newsrooms.org>.

The Paris-based World Editors Forum

(<https://exfs.adir.hull.ac.uk/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.worldeditorsforum.org>) is the organisation of the World Association of Newspapers that represents editors-in-chief and other senior news executives. WAN, the global organisation for the newspaper industry represents 18,000 newspapers; its membership includes 76 national newspaper associations, newspapers and newspaper executives in 102 countries, 12 news agencies and ten regional and world-wide press groups. Inquiries to: Larry Kilman, Director of Communications, WAN, 7 rue Geoffroy St Hilaire, 75005 Paris France. Tel:

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**Recipients of the Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievements:
Professor Alice Shalvi and Mr. Dov Lautman**

The Israel Prize is the most prestigious award in Israel. Often it is recognition for life-time achievements, as most recipients are well into their seventies, if not eighties, when they are granted this remarkable honour. The Prize is given annually by the State President and Prime Minister to a selected group of people (around 20) on Israel's Independence Day. Recently, the Prize Committee published the names of two much deserved recipients, and I wish to congratulate them all heartedly.



Professor Alice Shalvi is a religious scholar and one of the country's leading feminists. Dov Lautman is the former head of the Israeli Manufacturers Association. In their decision, the judges called Shalvi "revolutionary and courageously trailblazing, with intellectual integrity and long-term vision." Shalvi served as principal of the Pelech School for Girls in Jerusalem, turning it into one of the first religious experimental schools and a model for other experimental and democratic schools throughout the country. She began her feminist activity in the 1970s, battling for the rights of women whose husbands refused to grant them a divorce. She was also among the founders of the Israel Women's Network, and chaired it from its founding in 1984 until the beginning of this year.

Shalvi was born in Germany in 1926 but fled to Britain shortly after the Nazi rise to power, when she studied English literature at Cambridge. After immigrating to Israel in 1950, she received a position as a professor of English at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.



The Prize Committee cited Dov Lautman, 71, as someone who has set an example for others for 40 years, while working to build Israel's economy, as well as to promote peace.

Lautman was the founder and is now chairman of Delta Galil Industries. He built an "old industrial factory" with his own hands, but was also the first local industrialist to understand that it was necessary to manufacture items abroad instead of demanding help from the state to compete with foreign producers. He was also the head of the Israel Manufacturers Association from 1986-1993, and served as the prime minister's special representative in charge of advancement of foreign investment and economic development from 1993-1995.

Delta was the first traditional industry in the country to become a global manufacturer. It also served as a bridge of peace to Jordan and Egypt by setting up cooperative ventures, while other enterprises continued to ask the government for help.

When Delta hit hard times a year and a half ago, Lautman returned to the CEO's office for a year to rehabilitate his company.

"It is a great honor to receive the prize and I would like to thank the awards committee," said Dov Lautman yesterday when he heard the announcement. "I hope I will continue to be worthy of the prize in the future, too. I am at the age where the future is still ahead of me."

Lautman said that he was "most proud of the fact that a small town in the Galilee is the center for a global company, which is one the world leaders in undergarments and socks. We are one of the five largest [of these] companies in the world. Secondly, I am proud of the coexistence within which we manage the business - where Arab, Jewish, Druze and Christian employees have worked for 31 years."

This proves he explained, "That it is possible to live in Israel in harmony and coexistence. I am proud each time I see a beautiful product leave the development lab or the production line. I have been in the textile business for 40 years and still wake up in the morning and love to go to work, and hope that I will continue to do so in the coming years."

Lautman added that he is worried about Israeli society, and if something is threatening the country, he said, it is not the Iranians or Hamas, but the growing gaps in education, and those between rich and poor, between Jews and Arabs, and between the ultra-Orthodox and the non-religious. That is why Lautman says he's spending a lot of his time and effort on educational activities and nonprofit organizations that promote coexistence.

Murder of Dolphins in Japan

The following short video (two minutes) shows the brutal murder of dolphins in Japan. Hard to believe the bloody scenes.

The second link is a petition to stop this "fishing". **The petition reads:**



Dear Prime Minister Abe,

We are outraged by the annual brutal slaughter of dolphins and whales that takes place in Japan. The images of bloody red water clearly show the world that Japan has little respect for the state of the world's oceans and for the conservation of the marine resources it claims to support.

Many scientific studies show that the oceans are in decline. We must take whatever actions are necessary to stop their over-exploitation and to protect the creatures that live in them. These dolphins do not belong to Japan. The status of the species of dolphins and whales that you kill are either endangered, threatened, or unknown. It is an unthinkable waste that they will likely end up as a meat product or deceptively sold as whale meat, polluted with toxic levels of mercury and cadmium, killing people that eat it. It is tragic and unacceptable that the remaining dolphins that are not killed will end up destined for death in an aquarium, water park, or "swim with dolphins" program.

In addition, the methods used to kill these animals are cruel.

Corralling the dolphins into bays, then making them suffer a long and painful death by spears, hooks, and drowning is an inhumane way of fishing. This action is disgraceful and has caused much disappointment in the international community.

We demand that Japan permanently and immediately renounce and stop this slaughter. We will work diligently to bring this issue to international light until you have ceased your reprehensible violence.

The petition will be sent to the prime minister of Japan. I signed.

Please consider adding your name.

<https://exfs.adir.hull.ac.uk/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.glumbert.com/media/dolphinhttp://www.petitiononline.com/golfinho/petition.html>

New Article



Just published my new article, written with my former student

Mark Bianco, who was murdered in the Maxim suicide bombing in 2003: "Israeli Wars as Seen by Haáretz Newspaper", Keshet, Vol. 35 (winter 2007), pp. 15-30 (Hebrew).

See <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-%20Obstacle%20to%20Peace/Memorial/2003/Mark%20Biano>

The article is dedicated to the memory of Mark and his wife Naomi, also killed in the terrorist attack.

Against the common assumption, this piece of research holds that Haaretz newspaper did not become more critical of the governments' war conduct in the years after the Yom Kippur War.

Upon request, I'd be happy to send the piece to interested parties.

Art Recommendation

If you are in London you may consider a visit to the National Gallery. It has one of the best art collections in the world and until 20 May 2007 a special exhibition: Renoir Landscapes 1865-1883 which focuses on Renoir's early and most innovative period of landscape painting. You can see the work of this impressionist genius at his best.

For further information, see

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/exhibitions/renoirlandscapes/default.htm>

Jerusalem



I try to avoid the term "unique" as I believe only a few things are uniquely unique, and that people are using the term far too leisurely. The attached gives some idea why Jerusalem is important, even unique, among world cities and capitals, and why Jews have yearned for thousands of years to return and settle in Jerusalem. Enjoy.



I trust my Israeli friends had Happy and Joyful Independence Day.

By the third week of May I intend to visit SF and LA. I hope to see as many of my Californian friends as possible.

With my very best wishes,

Yours as ever,

Rafi

My last communications are available on <http://almagor.blogspot.com/>
Earlier posts at my home page: <http://hcc.haifa.ac.il/~rca/>
<<http://hcc.haifa.ac.il/~rca/>>