

# NC B'nai B'rith Sponsors Institute of Judaism

The 38th annual Institute of Judaism at Wildacres will be held August 26-29, 1985. The theme of the Institute will be "The Jewish Family In Transition." Featured will be two outstanding guest lecturers.

Dr. Robert Chazan is a graduate of Columbia College (1958) and recipient of an M.H.L. and S'micha as Rabbi from the Jewish Theological Seminary (1962). He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from Columbia U. He has been a professor of Jewish history at Ohio State U., Tel Aviv U. and at present is at Queens College, NY. He has written several books on medieval Jewish history.

Egon Mayer, a professor of sociology at Brooklyn College, is also president of the Association for the Sociological Study of Jewry. Dr. Mayer is the author of numerous articles and research reports and serves as consultant to several national and local Jewish organizations. Born in Switzerland and raised in Budapest, Hungary, he emigrated to the U.S. in 1956. He received his BA from Brooklyn College, his MA from New School for Social Research, and his Ph.D. in sociology from Rutgers U.

Chairman of the Institute is Phil Datnoff, Hickory, NC, and reservations chairperson is Ruth Feldman, Asheville, NC. Cost includes room, nine meals (from dinner on Monday, through lunch on Thursday) and the lectures.

## RESERVATIONS

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Please mail check and reservation for the August 26-29 Institute to: Ruth Feldman, Reservations  
Chairman, B'nai B'rith Institute II, P.O. Box 8607, Asheville, N.C. 28804

## World Beat

cont'd from p. 4

bis, who will be consulted in advance.

**JERUSALEM (JTA)** — Yad Vashem, the heroism and Holocaust remembrance authority, will publish the full history of the Holocaust in 25 volumes.

**NEW YORK (JTA)** — An organization combatting the Arab boycott of Israel will launch a drive to expand trade relations between Japan and Israel which have suffered because of "widespread compliance by Japanese companies with the dictates of the Arab boycott."

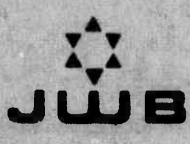
Japanese companies presently refrain from selling consumer items such as automobiles to Israel and that Japanese imports of Israeli goods are very small.

**ATLANTA (JTA)** — A Holocaust project at Emory University, which specializes in interviewing American servicemen and servicewomen who were in the Nazi death camps within the first two weeks of liberation, has received a \$15,000 grant from the Atlanta Jewish Federation. University officials said that more than 110 interviews have been taped, 16 video-tapes have been prepared and several pamphlets brought back by soldiers have been published.

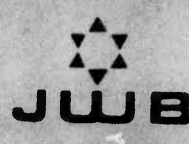
**TEL AVIV (JTA)** — More than a third of the Arab work force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were employed in Israel during 1984, mainly in construction and agriculture, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported.

**GENEVA (JTA)** — Israel has offered to share with drought-stricken African countries its skills in making the maximum use of limited water resources to grow food. "Israel feels duty-bound to share the fruits of its experience with African friends."

**TEL AVIV (JTA)** — The citizens of Saudi Arabia may soon be eating strictly kosher hot dogs made in Israel, though they will not be labeled as such. A European middleman has offered to buy a large consignment from the Soglowek Sausage and Meat Factory in Nahariya.



# Jewish Books in Review



is a service of the JWB Jewish Book Council,  
15 East 26th St., New York, N.Y. 10010

**Menachem Begin**  
*Man of Paradox*

*Begin: The Haunted Prophet.*  
Eric Silver. Random House, Inc., 201 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022. 1984. 278 pages. \$17.95.

Reviewed by J. Robert Moskin

Feelings run so high — both pro and con — about Menachem Begin's effect on today's Jews, that Eric Silver, a British journalist in Jerusalem for a decade, has achieved something unusual. He has written an honest biography of Begin; he has neither crucified nor glorified him.

This is how Silver sums up his subject: "Menachem Begin governed Israel for six years and three months, which made him the longest-serving Prime Minister after the founding father David Ben-Gurion. He revealed himself as a complex, but not a mysterious, man, a paradox but not a puzzle: an unrepentant terrorist who won the Nobel Peace Prize, then launched another war. A democrat and an autocrat. A courtly rabble-rouser, Polish gentleman and Levantine cult hero. A man of honor with whom it was wise to read the small print. A conspirator who found it hard to keep a secret."

Begin personifies a fanatic and militant strain in Jewish and Israeli reaction to the world. He believed single-mindedly all his adult life in the restoration of his vision of the Jews' ancient biblical land. And he repeatedly was ready to kill to achieve that goal. But the book's subtitle—"The Haunted Prophet"—is ridiculous; Begin was certainly haunted but hardly a prophet.

He was born in Brest-Litovsk in Poland in 1913 and the midwife who delivered him was, by strange coincidence, Ariel Sharon's grandmother. Begin's militancy was fueled by the Zionist Vladimir Jabotinsky, whom Begin called "his master" and whose Betar youth movement he joined when he was fifteen.

In 1940 Begin was arrested by the Soviet NKVD secret police. His wife Aliza escaped to Palestine. After nine months of prison and interrogation, he was shipped to the Gulag. He was saved when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union and the Soviet and Polish governments agreed to

release all Polish prisoners to join the war against Germany.

Begin arrived in Jerusalem in 1942 as a private in the Polish army. By the end of 1943, he was on leave and the commander of the dissident underground Irgun Zvai Leumi. From hiding, he fought the British and the Haganah, the armed force of the Jewish Agency. When the Haganah helped the British hunt down Irgun fighters, Silver says, "Menachem Begin never forgave and never forgot." Silver details the role he played in the blowing up of the King David Hotel in 1946; the hanging of two British sergeants in 1947; the massacre at Deir Yassin in April 1948, and the sinking of the Irgun arms ship Altalena that June off Tel Aviv.

Once the State of Israel was born, Begin spent the next three decades in very vocal opposition, insisting the Jewish state include all of Jerusalem and both banks of the Jordan River. He served in a unity government briefly during the Six Day War of 1967, but Silver's suggestions that Prime Minister Levi Eshkol yielded to Begin in making Moshe Dayan Minister of Defense and in deciding to conquer the Old City of Jerusalem are wild exaggerations.

Almost incredibly, Begin came to power in 1977. The next six years saw the rise of enormous inflation, the intensified Israeli settlement of the West Bank, the divisive war in Lebanon, and the massacre in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps. It also saw, more positively, the stunning visit of Egypt's President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem and the signing of the Camp David accords.

Silver waffles on Begin's responsibility for the deceptions and decisions of the war in Lebanon. He says, "There were well-attested (and embarrassing) cases where Begin seems not to have known what was going on." And during the refugee camp massacre by the



Phalangists, under the eye of the Israel Defense Forces, Silver writes, Begin might have intervened if his able military secretary, Brigadier-General Ephraim Poran, had not resigned in 1981. Silver says, "He would have ensured that the Prime Minister did not have to learn about (the massacre) from the BBC." Neither statement has the buck stop with the prime minister.

Begin resigned in 1983, exhausted, feeling betrayed, mourning his wife's death, in the grip, according to Silver, of "manic depression." Silver adds, "On 15 September, the day (Begin) sent his resignation letter to President Chaim Herzog, the IDF buried its five hundred and eighteenth fallen soldier of the Lebanese war."

Silver concludes, "The Israel Menachem Begin created in his own image was more narrowly Jewish, more aggressive and more isolated. Social and religious tensions were closer to the surface." This biography presents a fair and readable assessment of the obstinate leader who did so much to bring Israel to her present crises.

J. Robert Moskin is the author of *Among Lions*, the story of the battle for Jerusalem in 1967, which won the National Jewish Book Award in 1983, and a member of the board of The Jerusalem Foundation. He has reported on Israel over 24 years.

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