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ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
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Events...

Thursday, January 27, 7:30pm

Harvard Professor **Ruth Wisse** will speak on "Life in the Diaspora" at Adath Israel.

Tuesday February 8, 8:00pm

Rav Mordechai Elon, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat HaKotel, will lecture in Hebrew on Parshat Hashavua at **B'nai Torah**.

Commentary...

The Demographic Bomb Is a Dud By Caroline Glick

For the past generation, Israel has found itself engaged in post-modern warfare. Whereas Arab armies have proved themselves in five wars to be no match for the IDF on the battlefield, our enemies over the last 20 years, since the IDF withdrawal from most of Lebanon, have found that the most effective means of fighting Israel is on the post-modern battlefield.

The most conspicuous component of the post-modern battlefield is terrorism. Terrorist foot soldiers of the post-modern army sow fear and revulsion in the heart of the target population in order to induce a sense of helplessness. In the face of photographs of the charred remains of babies being pulled from bombed-out cafes and buses, the mighty Israeli army suddenly seems small and impotent.

While terrorism is the outward face of the post-modern aggressor, social psychology is perhaps his greatest weapon. If the target population can be manipulated to view itself as the aggressor, if it can be brought to view its position as untenable, then it will sue for peace and surrender. So it was that Kadoura Fares, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and one of the heads of Fatah who signed Yossi Beilin's Geneva Accords, said in an interview with the pan-Arab London-based newspaper Al-Hayat in October 2003 that the Palestinian aim in signing the accords was to "foment a piercing public and political debate in Israel."

While Hamas has placed its emphasis mainly on the terrorist aspect of the post-modern battlefield, the PLO has placed an equal emphasis on the psychological component of the war. In fact, it could be said in retrospect that the greatest single victory the PLO has scored in its 46-year-old war with Israel was the publication of a single report in 1997. That report, "Demographic Indicators of the Palestinian Territory, 1997-2015," is based on a census carried out by the PA's Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 1997. It projects that the Arab population west of the Jordan River will by 2015 outnumber the Jewish population.

These numbers were immediately adopted by such prominent Israeli demographers as the University of Haifa's Arnon Soffer and the Hebrew University's Sergio Della Pergola, who have both warned that by 2020 Jews will make up between 40 and 46 percent of the overall population of Israel and the territories. The Palestinian projections, which place the Arab population of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip at 3.83 million and the Israeli Arab population at 1.33 million for a total of 5.16 million Arabs west of the Jordan River, put Israel with its 5.24 million Jews at the precipice of demographic parity with the Arabs.

Largely in reaction to these statistics, which were bandied about by everyone from politicians to diplomats to defense officials, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon decided a year ago to adopt the Labor Party's campaign platform and withdraw the IDF from Gaza and northern Samaria and forcibly remove the Jews living in those areas from their homes. In his interview with Yediot Aharonot in December 2003, which was the curtain raiser for Sharon's announcement of his policy shift later that month, Vice Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said: "Above all hovers the cloud of demographics. It will come down on us not in the end of days, but in just another few years. We are approaching a point where more and more Palestinians will say: 'There is no place for two states between the Jordan and the sea. All we want is the right to vote. The day

they get it we will lose everything."

BUT WHAT if the numbers are wrong? What if the doomsday scenarios we hear on a daily basis, arguing that Israel is about to be overrun by the Arab womb, are all based on fraudulent data – part of an ingenious Palestinian plan to psychologically manipulate Israel into capitulating?

This week a team of American and Israeli researchers presented a study of the Palestinian population statistics at

the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation in Washington. The team, led by American businessman Bennett Zimmerman and Israeli strategic consultant Yoram Ettinger, compared the PCBS data to birth and death records published annually by the PA's Health Ministry; to immigration and emigration data from Israel's Border Police at the international crossing points into the Palestinian Authority and at Ben-Gurion Airport, and to internal migration records of Palestinians from the territories into Israel recorded by the Israeli Interior Ministry.

The researchers also compared Palestinian population data from the PCBS to voting records compiled by the Palestinian Central Elections Commission before the 1996 Palestinian elections and this week's Palestinian elections, as well as to the Israeli Civil Administration's population survey of Palestinians carried out in the 1990s before the transfer of authority over Palestinian population records to the PA.

The PCBS forecast was further compared to Palestinian population surveys carried out by UNRWA and the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) in the mid-1990s, and to World Bank Palestinian population studies. All of the team's comparative analyses led to the conclusion that the Palestinian population forecasts upon which Israel is basing its current policy of withdrawal and uprooting of Israeli communities in the territories are faulty in the extreme.

The PCBS count includes the 230,000 Arab residents of Jerusalem. Yet these Arabs are already counted by the ICBS as part of Israel's population, which means that they are counted twice.

The PCBS numbers also project Palestinian natural growth as 4 to 5 percent per year, among the highest in the world and significantly higher than the natural population growth of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Yet Palestinian Ministry of Health records published annually since 1996 show that Palestinian natural growth rates in Judea, Samaria and Gaza average around 3 percent. In 2002, the Palestinian Ministry of Health retroactively raised its numbers and yet even the doctored figures never extended beyond 3.7 percent. The original data show a steady pattern of decrease in natural growth leading to a natural growth rate in 2003 of just 2.6 percent.

Indeed, the total fertility rate of Palestinian women has been trending downward in recent years. Palestinian women in Judea and Samaria averaged 4.1 children in 1999 and 3.4 in 2003. Palestinian women in Gaza averaged 5 children each in 1999 and 4.7 in 2003. The multi-year average of Israel's compound growth rate from 1990-2004 is 2.5 percent. And even as Israel's growth rate went down to 1.7 percent between 2000 and 2004, a similar decline occurred among Palestinians in Gaza, where growth decreased from 3.9 percent to 3.0 percent, and Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, where growth declined from 2.7 percent to 1.8 percent.

The PCBS also projected a net population increase of 1.5 percent per year as a result of immigration from abroad. But the study's authors found that except for 1994, when the bulk of the Palestinian leadership and their families entered the areas from abroad, emigration from the Palestinian areas has outstripped immigration every year.

Aside from this, the PCBS numbers include some 200,000 Palestinians who live abroad. This fact was corroborated by an October 14 press release by the Palestinian Central Elections Commission which stated that "200,000 eligible voters are living abroad." The number of Palestinians living abroad constitutes 13 percent of the Palestinians counted in 1997 and forms the basis of the projections of that population's growth in spite of the fact that they don't live in the territories.

The report also shows that while the Israeli Interior Ministry announced in November 2003 that in the preceding decade some 150,000 residents of the Palestinian Authority had legally moved to Israel (including Jerusalem), these 150,000 residents remain on the Palestinian population rolls. Parenthetically, this internal migration is largely responsible for the anomalous 3.1 percent annual growth in the Israeli Arab population. Absent this internal migration, the Israeli Arab natural growth rate is 2.1% – that is,

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below the Israeli Jewish growth rate.

The study presents three separate scenarios for calculating the actual Palestinian population in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Its authors prove that the first scenario, based on the PCBS numbers, minus the double counted Jerusalem Arabs and minus the internal migrations, is not statistically plausible. Yet even this scenario places the Palestinian population at 3.06 million, or 770,000 less than the number that currently informs Israeli decision makers.

The average of the last two scenarios, which corrected for the Palestinians living abroad and were based on base populations comprised of ICBS Palestinian population survey projections from the 1990s and Palestinian voting records in 1996 and 2004, brought the final projected number of Palestinians in Gaza, Judea and Samaria to 2.42 million – nearly a third less than the 3.83 million figure currently being used.

The study, which has been accepted by prominent American demographers Dr. Nicholas Eberstadt and Murray Feshbach, shows that contrary to common wisdom, the Jewish majority west of the Jordan River has remained stable since 1967. In 1967 Jews made up 64.1 percent of the overall population and in 2004 they made up 59.5 percent. Inside Israel proper, including Jerusalem, Jews make up 80 percent of the population.

While reading the report, the inescapable sense is that something has gone very wrong within Israeli society. The numbers are so clear. The data have always been readily available. And yet, like bats attracted to the darkness of a cave, we preferred the manipulative lies of the PA to the truth.

The entire 117-page report can be accessed on-line at www.pademographics.com. Given that it shows that the government's current policies are based in large part on an uncritical acceptance of fraudulent data whose purpose was to demoralize us into capitulating to our post-modern foe, hopefully Olmert and Sharon will take a look at it. (Jerusalem Post Jan 17)

Who Are You, Abba Mazen? By Yoram Ettinger

The stronger the flow of Israeli and Western greetings to the office of Abu Mazen, the weaker is the prospect for the rise of a moderate Palestinian leadership, and the slimmer is the chance for peace.

The US did not embrace bin Laden's and Saddam's confidants and deputies. The US demanded – and rightly so – the dismantling of the entire terror regimes in Kabul and Baghdad as a prerequisite for a new chapter in Afghanistan's and Iraq's international relations. The elimination of rogue regimes has also been a pre-condition for the willingness of moderate elements to stick their neck out and enter the political arena.

A condition qua-non for fresh start in the attitude toward the Palestinians, must be the uprooting of the "old regime", which has earned the notoriety of role-model of hijacking, international terrorism, inter-Arab treachery, systematic and brutal violation of commitments, corruption, human rights violations, hate-education and idolizing homicide bombers. The persistence of the old Palestinian regime precludes the possibility that moderate Palestinian elements would rise to power.

Abu Mazen has been Arafat's effective #2 since the departure of Abu Jihad and Abu Iyaad. Abu Mazen has been recognized as Arafat's #2 since the 1993 signing of the Oslo Accord. Along with Abu Ala', Abu Mazen has been an intimate of Arafat since the 1950s. Abu Mazen did not emerge in the 2005 election from his underground hiding or from exile overseas. Abu Mazen campaigned as the top loyalist of Arafat, who was at his side during the rough days at the Ramalla's Muqaata. During the 1950s, Abu Mazen starred – with Arafat and Abu Ala' – in the Palestinian cell of Cairo's Muslim Brotherhood (the mentor of Hamas!). There he acquired the skills and connections, which have facilitated him engineering a series of understandings with Hamas since 1993. According to the understandings, the strategic common denominator between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas (Israel's elimination via the "claim of return") supersedes their tactical disagreements. Therefore, Abu Mazen does not proceed to eliminate Hamas, but rather attempts to integrate it. Therefore, Abu Mazen disagreed sometimes with Arafat tactically, but never disputed the strategy of Arafat, the founding father of the step-by-step policy to destroy the Jewish state.

In 1959, Abu Mazen was a prominent member in the newly established Fatah terror organization in Kuwait, which was the safe haven for Arafat, Abu Mazen, Abu Ala' and their colleagues, who had to flee Egypt for subversive activities. In 1964 he joined Arafat in the Syrian safe haven, but had to flee in 1966 along with his leader, following the murder – by Fatah – of Syrian intelligence officers. In 1970, Abu Mazen played a central role in the attempted PLO coup against King Hussein, and during the 1970s he was a member of the PLO leadership, which fueled a series of civil wars in Lebanon and tried to topple the Beirut regime.

In 1972, Abu Mazen was responsible for raising the funds, required for the Munich Massacre of 11 Israeli athletes. He acquired much of his subversive skills at the KGB headquarters in Moscow, where he received (at Moscow University) his Ph.D. on Holocaust Denial. No Western society would tolerate a holocaust denier holding a prominent position, but Abu Mazen has been accorded respect...

Since 1993, Abu Mazen has been the second most important Palestinian, forging the nature of the Palestinian society in general and its hate-education

in particular (in PA schools and kindergartens, mosques and media), which has served as the manufacturing-line of Palestinian homicide bombers. Abu Mazen has been a master of double-talking and fork-tonguing. He has misled Israeli and Western policy-makers and public opinion-molders by leveraging his non-Arafat appearance: well shaved face, trendy ties, grandpa-like looks and a seemingly moderate rhetoric (when addressing Westerners).

Israeli and Western movers and shakers have been inclined to sacrifice a 50 year old track record on the altar of the wishful thinking, which has sanctified Oslo and its offshoots (Hebron and Wye Accords, Road Map and Disengagement). A US colloquialism states: "Fool me once shame on you, fool me twice shame on me." Abu Mazen and his colleagues have fooled Israel and the US since 1993. Are Israel and the US intent upon earning the dubious title of "Suckers of the globe"?! (Ynet Jan 14)

Don't Fall in Love With Abbas Yet By Max Boot

Visiting Israel last month, I ate in crowded restaurants and shopped in crowded malls. Most tourists may not have gotten the message yet — Jerusalem's Old City was almost empty just a week before Christmas — but it is clear that the 4-year-old intifada has faded into insignificance. Life in Israel has returned to normal, or at least as normal as it ever gets in a country that has faced threats to its existence from day one.

Conventional wisdom holds that it is almost impossible for a democracy to defeat a determined insurgency — an impression strengthened by recent events in Iraq. Israel provides a contrary case. Suicide attacks in 2004 were down more than 40% from the year before. And not for lack of trying on the part of Palestinians. It is simply that "martyrdom" operations are being stymied by a combination of defensive and offensive measures.

Most of these are fairly innocuous, such as the security guards posted in front of every restaurant and shopping center who search purses and operate metal detectors. More controversial is the security barrier, tendentiously characterized by Israel's enemies as "the Wall," that is being completed between Israel and the West Bank.

I drove about 10 miles out of Tel Aviv to see the barrier separating the Israeli town of Kfar Saba from the Palestinian town of Kalkilya. There was a small stretch of concrete wall to protect the highway from snipers, but the barrier I saw was mostly a chain-link fence. On either side of it was a dirt strip that is kept clear to show footprints of infiltrators. A sophisticated system of electronic sensors and cameras provides constant coverage.

At a nearby Israeli army base, a roomful of college-age intelligence specialists — all women — sit before banks of video screens and computers monitoring the fence. If the alarm goes off — in the form of a tune from the 1970s British rock group Queen — a patrol is sent out to investigate.

The erection of this barrier has actually meant a decrease in disruption in the lives of the residents of Kalkilya, who no longer have to pass through an Israeli checkpoint when they travel to other parts of the West Bank. A checkpoint still exists for entry to Israel, but traffic was moving briskly when I was there.

Israelis attribute much of the decrease in suicide attacks to the barrier's ability to keep out terrorists from the West Bank. But Israeli commandos also conduct nightly raids in the West Bank to gather intelligence and arrest suspects. In the Gaza Strip, where the Israel Defense Forces have less of a presence, it's harder to nab terrorists, so the IDF kills them with bombs and missiles — a campaign that, despite worldwide condemnation, has decimated Hamas.

The success of these anti-terror initiatives, combined with the death of Yasser Arafat, has produced a propitious moment for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Most Israelis are willing to make concessions like pulling out of the Gaza Strip. Most Palestinians are sick of violence. Optimists are convinced that the election of Mahmoud Abbas will solidify this trend and result in a long-awaited deal.

Maybe they're right. But it wasn't encouraging to see Abbas literally embracing top terrorists and referring to the "Zionist enemy." Nor has he ever renounced Palestinians' "right of return," which is tantamount to not recognizing Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. And even if Abbas genuinely believes in peaceful coexistence, it is not clear that he has the will or the power to repress militants who want to drive the Jews into the sea.

All of this suggests that it would be a mistake for the West to embrace Abbas in a bearhug — the same mistake that was made with Arafat in the 1990s. What's needed now is not another Palestinian strongman puffed up by the West, but a vibrant Palestinian democracy with a multitude of leaders. Last weekend's election, in which Abbas had no significant competition and which he won by 40 percentage points, hardly qualifies.

Self-styled "realists" disagree, arguing that only a strongman like Egypt's Anwar Sadat can make peace, but that's precisely the mind-set that led to the failed strategy of the last decade, which only begat more violence.

There is no reason to think that most Palestinians want to sacrifice their children as suicide bombers; indeed, Hamas boycotted the presidential election partly because it didn't want its unpopularity exposed. The strongest demands from Palestinians are for more economic growth and less corruption. Until Abbas shows himself willing to seriously address those

needs, the West should lavish its largess on independent Palestinian groups, from websites to human rights monitors, not on the dysfunctional Palestinian Authority.

The democratization option may ultimately fail, but at least Israel's victory over terrorism has bought time to give it a fair shot. Sunday's election was, at best, only a modest beginning. (Los Angeles Times Jan 13)

No More Dilly-Dallying By Michael Freund

Fifty years ago next month, a promising young soldier named Ariel Sharon led a daring raid into Egyptian-controlled Gaza aimed at halting terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians.

Dubbed Operation Black Arrow, the goal was to slip across the frontier and raid the Egyptian Army's headquarters outside Gaza city.

A wave of Arab fedayeen attacks had outraged the Israeli public, with lethal assaults on a wedding party at Moshav Patish and the murder of a cyclist near Rehovot leaving the nation in shock.

All told, between 1951 and 1955 more than 400 Israelis were killed by the fedayeen, as the terrorists back then were known, and the government was determined to strike back hard.

With a squad of paratroops under his command Sharon succeeded in penetrating the enemy's defenses on February 28, 1955, killing 37 of their soldiers and sending the Egyptians a message they would not soon forget.

Years later, when Sharon reflected back on this period in his life, he wrote in his autobiography, *Warrior*, that he "came to view the objective not simply as retaliation, or even deterrence in the usual sense. It was to create in the Arabs a psychology of defeat, to beat them every time and to beat them so decisively that they would develop the conviction they could never win."

What a difference half a century can make.

The same Sharon who once understood the need to hit back at those who would attack us now hems and haws before doing so, preferring hesitation over action, dilly-dallying over decisiveness.

Instead of launching a full-scale assault aimed at uprooting the terrorist infrastructure, he has preferred to limit himself to pinpoint military operations.

For months Gaza has been serving as a platform for terror, with daily attacks on Israelis living both in and near the Strip. Children in Sderot are afraid to go to school, businesses have been forced to close, and some residents are said to be thinking of moving out.

Whatever happened to the "psychology of defeat" Sharon spoke of imposing on the Arabs? Or, to put it more bluntly: Why is he allowing this country to slide into despair?

Think back to last summer.

On June 28, 2004, Mordechai Yosefov, 49, and three-year-old Afik Zahavi were killed outside a kindergarten in Sderot by Palestinian Kassam rockets launched from Gaza.

As a result Israel launched Operation Forward Shield, seizing control of Beit Hanun and other parts of northern Gaza.

At the time, Sharon vowed to do everything necessary to bring about an end to Palestinian rocket attacks.

"We are determined to take action to ensure that what happened here will not recur," he said.

Nevertheless, Israel did not remain in the area, and eventually withdrew its forces. Not surprisingly, it didn't take long for the rocket attacks to resume.

On September 29 two more Israeli children in Sderot were killed by a Kassam - cousins Dorit Aniso, aged two, and Yuval Abebeh, aged four. They were playing outside their home when the rocket hit, destroying their lives and those of their families forever.

So Israel launched yet another grand military operation, with the catchy title Days of Repentance attached to it.

There was talk of carving out a security zone in northern Gaza, of IDF forces remaining in the area for a prolonged period of time, of pushing back the Palestinians so they would be out of range of Sderot and other parts of southern Israel.

Plenty of talk, but insufficient action. Once again, after taking out some of the terrorists, Israel eventually pulled out, leaving the job unfinished and incomplete.

AND SO Israel now finds itself once more confronting ongoing rocket and mortar attacks on Gush Katif and Sderot.

Hold back, opponents of a full-scale IDF operation in Gaza are saying, we have to give the new Palestinian chairman, Mahmoud Abbas, a chance. He needs time to get organized, they say, so why not wait a little more before going in?

On Monday afternoon PA Communications Minister Azzam al-Ahmed told reporters that Abbas had ordered his security forces to try to prevent attacks against Israel.

This follows a statement issued on Sunday by the PLO Executive Committee which "demanded halting all military acts that harm our national interests and provide excuses to Israel."

Nonetheless, Abbas hasn't said what, if any, punitive steps would be taken against those who carry out additional assaults against the Jewish state.

The fact is that the situation has become intolerable, and Israel must act at

once to bring about a permanent end to the attacks on Gush Katif and Sderot.

Only a prolonged and open-ended military operation can ensure such a result for, as we have seen in the past six months, limited measures have proven sorely inadequate.

Indeed, as Sharon noted in his autobiography, the success of the Gaza raids in the mid-1950s strengthened his opposition to "the idea of extremely limited surgical strikes.

"I came to believe," he wrote, "that whenever we were forced to strike, we should do so with the aim of inflicting heavy losses on the enemy troops."

Abbas's statements aside, that, once again, must now become Sharon's guiding principle in the war on Palestinian terror. Anything less will only prolong the suffering of Israel and its citizens. (Jerusalem Post Jan 18)

The writer served as an aide to former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

Mahmoud Abbas: A Look at the Man By Naresh Raghubeer

On Sunday 1.8 million Palestinians were eligible to cast votes in the second presidential election since 1996 when the Palestinian Authority was established. During the last election, which was deemed to be "free and fair" by the international community, Yasser Arafat was elected leader of the 3.6 million Palestinians and then went on to reject a generous peace proposal with Israel. He capped off his career by launching the current intifada against Israel in which over 1000 Israelis and 4000 Palestinians were killed, and thousands more remain maimed or injured. The election of Mahmoud Abbas is significant, however before we rush to embrace him, we should examine his record.

Mahmoud Abbas is "more extreme than Arafat, since he was among Arafat's restrictors during the Camp David summit," notes Arlene Kushner in her book *Disclosed: Inside the Palestinian Authority and the PLO*. According to Kushner, Abbas was at the forefront of those who welcomed Arafat's decision to reject Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's offer at Camp David of 95% of the territory demanded by the PLO leader, as a condition for peace. Abbas' motive for urging Arafat to refuse a permanent peace with Israel is not publicly known, but his track record offers us a glimpse into the man the who will lead the Palestinian people.

In the last two weeks of the campaign, Abbas has stepped up his rhetoric as a means of consolidating status as the undisputed leader of the region's three million Palestinians. He pledged to continue the Palestinian struggle for an independent homeland; promised to protect wanted terrorists living in Palestinian areas, and he referred to Israel as the 'Zionist enemy.'

Clearly, the man who would be President is not fitting into the role of a 'moderate' as some had hoped. This does not come as a complete surprise.

In his doctoral thesis about "Zionist leadership and the Nazis" Abbas postulates about the role played by Jews to encourage the Holocaust. He writes that "[the Zionists gave] permission to every racist in the world, led by Hitler and the Nazis, to treat Jews as they wish, so long as it guarantees immigration to Palestine....Having more victims meant greater rights and stronger privileges to join the negotiation table for dividing the spoils of war once it is over," in his book, *The Other Side: The Secret Relationship Between Nazism and the Zionist Movement*.

These disturbing views were echoed in a recent Palestinian TV interview when Abbas claimed that the 'Nazis had no specific plan to murder Jews, [and] that the term Holocaust can be applied only to Gypsies and Palestinians and that the Holocaust Industry is a Zionist plot to generate billions.' To date, Abbas has refused to repudiate these views.

If Abbas' denial of the Holocaust was not enough to make him an unwelcome house guest, documentation recently emerged in the WorldNet Daily quoting Abu Daoud, the terrorist who planned the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre of 11 Israeli athletes, alleging it was Mahmoud Abbas who financed the terrorists who carried out the attack. This allegation has not been fully investigated and it remains to be seen what role Abbas played in this horrific terrorist attack.

According to the Jerusalem Post, the election represents a 'contest between hard-liners who differ on means rather than the end.' Contrary to what many donor nations like Canada may wish, that end is not peaceful relations with Israel, but rather its elimination.

For Abbas and Palestinians, it means Palestinian control of large sections of Israel defined by the PRE-1967 borders, with Jerusalem as their capital. It means ensuring the 'right of return' to their original lands or homes in Israel, even if it was properly purchased by Israelis, as was the vast majority of the territory of pre-1967 Israel. Moreover, it means dismantling Israel's security fence and granting full protection for those who carry out terrorist attacks against Israel. Such demands by the 'moderate' Mahmoud Abbas form the core of his campaign for the Palestinian presidency, and will serve as his bargaining position when world leaders seek a negotiated peace in the region.

Given what is known about Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Paul Martin should take steps to ensure that Abbas is truly a man of peace before we rush to his assistance. Canada will become an 'honest broker' in this region, only if we show leadership in demanding that Abbas to take concrete steps to dismantle and disarm the terrorist networks operating amongst the Palestinian people. Moreover, Canada must insist that Abbas' presidency is

one which will permanently end Palestinian attacks against Israelis while his government actively purges Palestinian schools of hateful and anti-Israeli teachers, textbooks and graffiti which serve to incite young Palestinians to martyrdom.

Before the government of Canada embrace the new Palestinian President we must set conditions to prove that he is truly a man of peace, rather than a wolf in sheep's clothing.

The writer is Executive Director of the Canadian Coalition for Democracies.

Welcome Home, Stanley Fischer By Daniel Doron

The enthusiastic reception to the appointment of Stanley Fischer as governor of the Bank of Israel – mostly by those who understand economics – and the negative reactions by so many other public figures help illuminate why our civil service seldom recruits top talent.

The criticism of Fischer's appointment, and some of the praise, reflected more the collectivist ethos that still governs our public life, than the suitability of the appointment. For even the shrillest critics conceded that Fischer is an accomplished economist and banker, and that his high standing in international finance reflected talent and extensive knowledge.

Many public figures are oblivious of the crucial role the economy plays in Israel's destiny. They don't appreciate the impact that decisions by a central banker can have, and how knowledgeable, skilled, and responsible he must be not to cause harm. The central banker must also be perceived by the public as having these qualities.

Only ignorance can cause critics not to appreciate how difficult it is for a small and peripheral country like Israel to recruit a person with Fischer's rare attributes, and what good fortune it is that he chose to help reform our ailing economy.

Otherwise, they would not seek in a governor such nebulous qualities as empathy for the "weak strata" or a "social consciousness." These qualities have little to do with the professionalism the job requires.

As usual, our social lobbyists – who, after the bankruptcy of socialist Zionism, were left with "caring for the weak" as their only shield against despair and cynicism – are opposed to anyone who does not believe that salvation lies in greater welfare expenditures, and in ritually supporting wasteful government programs just because they profess good intentions.

They do not seem to care whether the programs they push so fervently, involving huge expenditures of taxpayers' money, are also likely to get good results, or their cost/benefit balance.

So why should they suddenly pay attention to the fact that a governor of Fischer's stature could help advance policies that will greatly enhance stability and growth; that he would be more likely to succeed in convincing foreign financial institutes to raise Israel's credit rating, and that his policies and ability to market them can mean the addition of many billions to our GNP?

These additional billions can foster higher employment and salaries (as well as lower prices, which derive from enhanced competition). This will do much more for the weak sectors than all the empty rhetoric and counter-productive programs our self-appointed protectors of the poor (like Channel 1's Oded Shahar, who has made a career out of fulminating against the rich) ceaselessly generate.

SOME OF the loudest criticism against the appointment of Fischer was simply mean-spirited. The appointment was another opportunity for partisan media attacks on Finance Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. "When we hear Bibi, we do our best to make fun of him," confessed Idan Greenbaum, channel 10's economic editor, at a recent Tel Aviv University media conference.

"We try not to follow his line but our own truth," Greenbaum stated.

Lest you believe that this kind of subjective journalism is a Channel 10 exclusive (ironically, Channel 10 is owned by an excellent capitalist, Ron Lauder), along comes an Avi Weiss, deputy news editor of the more popular Channel 2 (also owned by capitalists), and states: "We present an opposite reality to what Bibi says. I believe this is our duty."

No matter, it seems, whether Netanyahu is right or wrong.

Weiss describes how for a month he and his colleagues exploited the media outlet entrusted to them to provide the public with factual information, in order to wage a personal campaign against the finance minister. They tried to force him to change government policy and to pay hundreds of millions of shekels to municipalities that had gone broke thanks to politicized, inflated job rosters.

Weiss did not bother to explain what gave him the right to abuse the public trust by trying to brainwash his audience with an ideological campaign designed to undermine the policy of an elected government.

Another media pundit, Yediot Aharonot's Sever Plocker, tried to use Fischer's appointment to advance his one-man campaign against banking reform.

He dared Fischer to oppose the Bachar Commission reform proposal, ostensibly to test his well-wishers' trustworthiness - a heavy-handed attempt to manipulate the governor into opposing government policy.

As for the academy, Ariel Rubinstein, a Tel Aviv university professor, who holds a parallel US appointment, reportedly objected to Fischer's appointment because he chose for years the fleshpots of America.

If Israel is not always successful in convincing its best to do a stint as public

servants, if our system of governance leaves so much to be desired, perhaps the attitudes toward Fischer's appointment can explain why.

The writer is president of The Israel Center for Social and Economic Progress.

Yad Sarah's Success Jerusalem Post Editorial

It all started with one hot-steam vaporizer, lent by a neighbor to a young Jerusalem high school teacher named Uri Lupolianski and his wife Michal, whose sick child was having difficulty breathing.

Discovering that such electrical devices were expensive and hard to get, the future first haredi mayor of Jerusalem bought a few to lend out, and neighbors started dropping off items they had finished using. The small apartment in the Ezrat Torah neighborhood was soon overflowing with a variety of medical equipment needed for only a short time, such as walkers, crutches, vaporizers and wheelchairs.

Lupolianski's father Jacob retired and sold his small shoe store in Haifa, donating much of the proceeds to establish a non-profit organization in memory of his mother, Sarah, who perished in the Holocaust. The vaporizer incident, in 1976, launched Yad Sarah, one of the country's most respected voluntary organizations, which now has a new feather in its cap – official recognition by the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as an advisory body.

The unanimous decision last week makes it possible for Yad Sarah to participate in international UN-sponsored conferences, special meetings of the UN General Assembly and meetings of other international bodies. It will send experts to governments and UN institutions, actively take part in ECOSOC council and subcommittee sessions and even raise new topics for discussion.

It is said in Ecclesiastes that "there is nothing new under the sun," but the Lupolianskis' idea of lending out medical equipment required temporarily (for only a returnable deposit) that could help patients remain at home rather than be hospitalized was as innovative as it was brilliant. By word of mouth, a growing cadre of volunteers was assembled, and the number of branches grew to 103.

Over the past 29 years, Yad Sarah built with donations its landmark headquarters near Mount Herzl, which provides and coordinates a rainbow of services to the young and old, sick, lonely and disabled without any ongoing government aid.

Today, more than 380,000 people – members of one out of every two Israeli families of all religions and ethnic backgrounds – benefit from Yad Sarah each year. With a paid staff of only 180 and 6,000 regular volunteers, it has a stock of more than 250,000 medical items, from crutches and wheelchairs to oxygen concentrators and electronic monitors. With an annual budget of \$12 million, it saves the economy about \$320 million by keeping people out of hospitals, reducing individual purchases of equipment and providing an ever-growing variety of services not provided by the state.

Keeping their ears to the ground, Lupolianski and other activists, including the organization's late president Prof. Kalman Mann, gradually introduced services for which there was a great need, including geriatric dental clinics, home repair and visits by volunteers, laundry services for the incontinent, legal aid for the elderly, emergency alarms for those living alone, meals on wheels, oxygen services, a display center of medical aids, transport of the wheelchair bound to clinics and special events, a toy library for disabled children and even a center for rehabilitating the elderly and disabled by teaching them computer skills. It does all this with a sympathetic ear, free of bureaucracy and discrimination, and has served as a model for the establishment of medical-equipment lending and other services throughout the former Soviet Union, South Africa and other countries.

Although it won many prestigious awards including the Israel Prize, Yad Sarah and Lupolianski (who seems likely to have a greater impact on the country as Yad Sarah founder than as Jerusalem mayor) are perhaps most pleased with the improved image that it lent to his haredi community. Long denigrated for avoiding military service, haredim have served as the core of Yad Sarah's volunteers, though they have since been joined by modern Orthodox, secular and non-Jewish Israelis.

The UN has not exactly been friendly toward Israel of late. The fact that one of its agencies last week elevated Yad Sarah to adviser status, the highest international status available to an NGO, despite political opposition from some members, is a tribute to the organization's founders, planners, staff and volunteers and to the Israeli diplomats who laid the groundwork. (Jerusalem Post Jan 18)

This issue is dedicated in commemoration of Shloshim for
משה בועז ז"ל בן חיים יוסף זייפמן

Boaz Zeifman ז"ל

The Siyum Mishnayot and Shloshim service will be held on
Monday January 24 at 8:00pm at Clanton Park Synagogue.

Rav Avishai David will deliver the keynote address.