

President's Comment

We have just commemorated our exodus from Egypt at our Passover seders, but more current developments provide little to celebrate. Starting erev Pesach there has been extreme and excessive violence at the fence that separates Gaza from Israel, including the killing of at least 24 Palestinians and the wounding of hundreds more, as of April 8. The demonstrations are expected to continue for another six weeks, until May 15, the 70th anniversary of Israel's establishment which Palestinians call Nakba Day.

Can we do anything? Well, we can't stop the violence but we can try to organize against it. I want to remind everyone that the 10th J-Street National Conference will take place in Washington D.C. on April 14-17. The J-Street Conference has become the primary meeting and discussion place to be for liberal and peace-oriented Jews in the US and even abroad, and I urge you to attend if at all possible. Elsewhere in this issue of IH is full registration information, as well as an invitation to a **PPI meetup at the conference on Sunday, April 18 at 6pm**, in the Palladian Ballroom. We expect several Meretz official and Knesset members participating in the Conference to join us then.

I also invite everyone to the session on "**The Path to Power: Strategies for Political Change in Israel**" that Sunday at 1:45pm, where I'll be one of the discussants.

I also hope you will consider joining PPI's annual Symposium in Israel, June 14-21. Information and registration are available elsewhere in this issue of IH. We will be meeting Knesset members (including Meretz's brand-new chair, MK Tamar Zandberg), PA officials, and a wide range of activists, as well as travelling all over the country and to the Palestinian territories. No matter how much time you've already spent in Israel, this is sure to be an eye-opening and exhilarating experience.

As mentioned, Israel's celebration of the 70th anniversary of its founding will take place on April 19. For us at PPI, and for many other Israelis and Jews worldwide, this is a bittersweet occasion. We wholeheartedly celebrate Israel's many successes and the reestablishment of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel after 2000 years, but we simultaneously are acutely aware that Israel today has moved far away, especially in recent years and decades, from the ideals of peace and social justice that were envisioned and – in some instances – institutionalized by its founders. We already commemorated the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Occupation last year, and an end

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UPCOMING EVENT

PPI Meet at J STREET CONFERENCE

Washington, D.C.
Sunday, April 15, 6-7:30 pm

**Palladian Ballroom,
Shoreham Hotel**

More information
on page 9

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AND GIVE YOUR FEEDBACK

SUBSCRIBE TO ISRAEL HORIZONS

Hillel Schenker on the Meretz Elections and its Implications

By Lenny Grob



On March 28th Hillel Schenker, co-editor of the Palestine-Israel Journal, spoke via conference call about the March 22nd Meretz primary and the ramifications of Tamar Zandberg's election for the future of Israeli society in general, and of the left in particular. Hillel began with the history of Meretz as a political party, noting that MK Zandberg was the first elected leader to have come from within Meretz itself, others having come from older parties.



Hillel Schenker

The elections, Hillel explained, were preceded by a struggle within the party centering around the issue of whether Meretz would proceed as in past primaries, when only about a thousand party activists could vote, or whether the primary would be open to all members. Following a tense internal debate, it was agreed the primary would be open to the entire party.

Initially it was expected that current party leader Zehava Galon and MK Ilan Gilon, along with Tamar, would prove to be the leading candidates. However, three weeks prior to the election, Galon and Gilon dropped out, leaving Tamar to face Avi Buskila, former Executive Director of Peace Now, and Meretz activist Avi Dabush as her main opponents, all of them

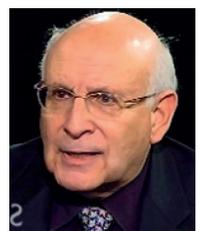
representing a younger generation. MK Zandberg, (who's 42), won 71% of the vote. Hillel noted that Tamar, an MK for five years, was perceived to hold a more comprehensive worldview, including emphasis on areas such as social and economic justice, gender equality, and care of the environment, as well as providing leadership in the struggle against the Occupation. Hillel believes these goals are integrally linked and need more political emphasis. Tamar has also been outspoken about the need for Meretz to be part of a coalition when possible, to be proud of its ideology, and to energize others to move leftward.

Having won 28 % of the vote, Avi Buskila, a Mizrahi activist, has positioned himself as a promising candidate for election to the Knesset in the next election. Hillel sees Buskila and Avi Dabush—also Mizrahi—as comprising a significant part of a new leadership team with Tamar, leading the party to reach out beyond its comfort zone of Ashkenazi Tel Avivians to those living in the geographic and social 'periphery'.

Hillel noted that following the primary, a poll showed Meretz—currently with five MKs—winning nine seats in the next general election, just one short of the ten that Tamar had projected as her goal. He sees the real possibility of a left-center coalition forming prior to the next generation; much depends on the disposition of the charges currently facing PM Netanyahu, as well as the ability of the left in general, and Meretz in particular, to reach out to Russians, Palestinian Israelis, and some religious parties, as well as Mizrachim.

Since Israel is always engulfed in political crises, it was not surprising to Hillel that Tamar faced her first challenge right after the election. Tamar was harshly criticized in the media for having accepted advice from a public relations specialist with a history of working with the extreme right. Hillel opined that the crisis would soon pass.

We're grateful to Hillel for his on-the-spot and informed commentary, as well as his upbeat account of what may lie ahead for a left energized by Meretz's new leadership. The call was recorded, and a link is available [here](#). ■



Lenny Grob is Vice President of Partners for Progressive Israel.

Poems by Myra Shapiro

Around the time of the first Intifada an Israeli friend invited us to come to Israel when Harold refused to believe Jews were mistreating others. Our friend, a professor and writer, was active in Gaza, going there to hear complaints having to do with the Israeli occupation, in particular the army; he would then report in articles or directly to politicians. "Come see for yourself," he said to

Harold; I'll take you to the Knesset to meet Shulamit Aloni, to East Jerusalem to the home of Faisal Husseini to talk to him, to journalists in Israel and the West Bank, then to Gaza. We went. That trip, especially sitting with the family of a murdered boy in Gaza, radicalized Harold. He promised to describe what he had seen, and to organize others to travel to Israel to witness as he had. *Myra Shapiro*

Two Leaders, 1990

for Faisal Husseini (1940-2001)
and for Shulamit Aloni (1928-2014)

1. East Jerusalem

"Imagine a son," he says --
we sit in the circle of
his living room, sipping sweet
grainy coffee from chipped
demi-cups--"and imagine he sees
his father beaten, made desperate
and weak, imagine how the son feels
for the weakness of the father he loves."

In this room of a sheik's son,
doors beyond open and close,
people enter and wait, wait
for this man whose hair is thinning,
sweat on his forehead, patience in his
quiet voice, his grey wool sweater.

"I thought my father a stronger man
than Tarzan," he says.

This man, who leads his people from his house,
learns from Hollywood and Gandhi and Thoreau.
A poster shouts --PALESTINE--
a young girl smiles, her arm thrust up
and forward, fingers in a Churchill V.

PALE STINE. Stein, my father's name
given him at Ellis Island.
Past Russia, past Germany I am here
in a Jewish state for those who need
a homeland. With others pushed
out. Like musical chairs, the game
that always made me hate--

The door opens; it's his son. A boy of 11 or 12.
"Imagine, even his grandmother
yesterday surprised a soldier,
grabbing him by the wrist: 'You
take Lod. Give me Ramallah.' She,
even she, knows now there's two of us."

2. In the Dining Room of the Knesset

Her polka-dotted dress flaunts a dove
at its v, violets at the collar
of her jacket. Over tea, with passion
she insists, *To flourish
requires self-determination,*
and I hear the Wife of Bath, Chaucer's
Middle English pilgrim-- red stockings
on her feet-- journeying to Jerusalem.
Her story held what women most desire:
sovereignty ever after--
and in this ever after
a woman leads her Party: Citizen's Rights:
*Strength is in ending occupation, she says,
strength is sovereignty.* That very word
of women given voice, and men who listen.

Gaza

The Story

“It was at the time when boys begin to play volleyball-- about two hours after noon. At 3, when soldiers circle in their trucks on the other side of the barricade, some boys near the game picked up stones to throw them. Then one soldier stood on the shoulders of the other to be above the barrels. All the boys ran. But this boy was last-- his friends yelled *run, run*-- but this boy wanted to pick up his volleyball and suddenly the shot-- the others heard it, saw the nose of a rifle through the crack of the barrels. Everyone stayed away from the boy bleeding from the back of his neck, his mouth, afraid if they ran to him.” His cousin is telling the story. Outside, in the alley, boys chant *Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar*. A doctor sitting near the father speaks; he has examined the X-ray, the plastic bullet. The father stares, body sunk in his windbreaker.

The Home

Thirty men sit against four walls
where we have entered. Unsweetened
coffee comes round. The father,
looking nowhere, sits, young father
in his blue windbreaker. Bundled grey
the grand-uncle, in perfect English,
lifts his voice. Tremulous:
“A 14 year old, an innocent-- see him-
(a picture of a dark-haired boy
passes to face us-- the fringed black and white
keffiyeh draping his shoulders, the smile,
his dark eyes) murdered. Could they
not have aimed for his feet, his legs, his
ass? but to aim for his head . . .” He touches my

knee as if to punctuate
each plea. “Are we animals with tails hanging
they chase us? We love, we cry.
Yet I speak to live in peace with you-- we are
brothers.” His voice ascends, his cheeks go red.
Tears make his eyes glow.
I know this is real life but I think
we are in *The Merchant of Venice*.

*Myra Shapiro, author of the memoir **FOUR
SUBLETS, BECOMING A POET IN NEW
YORK** and most recently the book of poetry,
12 FLOORS ABOVE THE EARTH, has
served on the board of Poets House for many
years and teaches poetry workshops for the
International Women’s Writing Guild.*





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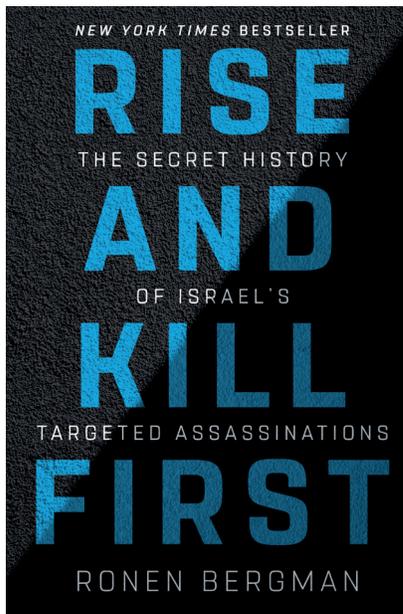
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Ronen Bergman, *Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations*

Reviewed by Peter Eisenstadt



King David, the greatest Jew of them all, was on his deathbed. His final words to his chosen heir, Solomon, were at first properly pious: Obey God and follow the laws of Moses. Then he got to the point: Also, please kill Joab, who had been David's chief general, and Shimei, a descendant of Saul, both of whom had done him wrong. Solomon listened to his father, adding his half-brother, Adonijah, to the hit list, and using Benaiah, son of Jehoida, as his henchman. Benaiah went about his business with a proper disregard for the laws of Moses, striking down Joab as he sought sanctuary at the high altar. After the offings, we read in 1 Kings 2:46, "the kingdom was unshaken in Solomon's hands." Perhaps.

Solomon was, of course, according to Jewish tradition, the wisest person who ever lived. But he ended his days cavorting with his 700 wives and 300 concubines, worshipping foreign gods, bankrupting his people with expensive building projects, and in general ruining the state he inherited, which immediately after his death split into the separate states of Judah and Israel. So did Solomon mistake brutal cleverness for wisdom? Did he think he could assassinate his way to political stability? These questions crossed my mind as I read the saga of Solomon and Benaiah's descendants in Ronen Bergman's recent gripping history, *Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations*.

The desire for revenge, resounding like a primal scream, was a founding and animating emotion behind the founding of Israel. In the wake of the Holocaust, for which no possible compensation could have been adequate, it was easy to reach the conclusion that justice

for Jews could never be found in a courtroom. (Any strictures in this review against extra-legal killing has a Nazi war-criminal exemption.) According to Bergman, Haganah operatives in Germany killed about 100 to 200 Nazis before the British put a stop to it. But despite a few spectacular operations, notably the capture of Eichmann in 1960, which of course led to the only targeted legal execution in Israel's history, Israel's secret operations were focused on its Arab neighbors and the Palestinians, but carrying over the absolute determination that no one will ever again be allowed to even think of killing Jews without proper, timely, and abundant retaliation.

Bergman accepts with little moralizing Israel's situation since 1948, the endless warring, the terror and counter-terror, and its grim consequences, as a given. However the cycles of violence began, both sides have played their assigned roles. Palestinians have never gotten over 1948 and 1967. Some of them strike back violently. Israel's responsibility is to stop the violence and neutralize its perpetrators, one way or another. Imprisoning them can be inconvenient; it just encourages the other side to take hostages. For Israel, killing civilians is to be avoided when possible. Israel is a moral country, but on the other hand, high-level espionage is a not a profession for the squeamish.

Bergman's history of Israel's covert operations branches, principally the Shin Bet and the Mossad, but also the IDF's special units on occasion, makes for compulsive page-turning, brimming with Israeli James (and occasionally Jane) Bonds and their arcane tradecraft: exploding hubcaps, poisoned tubes of toothpaste, and (usually) elegantly staged hits. But the book's purpose is not just to entertain, if a book of assassinations can be entertaining. His point is to make his readers think about the role of targeted assassinations in Israel's history. They play a central role, both in terms of their operational successes and failures, and that role constructs the dominant Israeli political mentality. It is striking to consider that at least four Israeli prime ministers, Shamir, Sharon, Barak, and Netanyahu, as younger men, were personally involved in special operations, and all of Israel's prime ministers have drunk the special ops Koolaid; the enemy has to not only be defeated but destroyed, and at minimum risk to Israel and Israelis. Rather than considering that enemies will have to be partners in negotiations at some point, they are seen just as targets be endlessly manipulated, confounded, and bamboozled, in ways that demonstrate their incapacity to retaliate, and Israel's inherent moral and intellectual superiority.

Let me stipulate that almost all of the intended targets of Israeli special operations, collateral human damage aside, got what was

coming to them in the grand scheme of cosmic justice, but at some point all of this violence begetting further violence begins to pall. As Bergen points out, spectacular tactical success rarely translates into strategic victory.

Although the book goes back to the early years of the Yishuv, much of it is concerned with the PLO, and then Iran and Hezbollah, as the most prominent targets of Israeli assassination attempts. Yasser Arafat was perhaps the target of more abortive assassination schemes than any other person in human history. Israel thought seriously about killing him dozens of times; there were even discussions of the morality of shooting down a commercial airliner if Arafat was a passenger. Not being conspiratorially minded, I thought it had been proven that he had died of natural causes, until I read the following strange and provocative statement by Bergman: "If I knew the answer to the question of what killed Yasser Arafat, I wouldn't be able to write it here in the book, or even be able to write that I know the answer. The military censor in Israel forbids me from discussing this subject."

The problem with targeted assassinations, as Israel of course recognizes, is that it is not a very effective political strategy. It is difficult to control what happens afterwards, and the other side is more likely to ratchet up the retaliation than be cowed. (This is not a new observation. Brutus and his fellow assassins of Caesar only hastened the demise of what they were trying to defend, the Roman Republic. On the other hand, someone, ca. 1933, really should have taken out Hitler.)

Bergman argues that Israel's history of targeted assassinations demonstrate frequent tactical brilliance combined with strategic ineptness, each success setting the stage for a later failure. Efforts to get at Arafat prompted the disastrous 1982 invasion of Lebanon, which led to the rise of Hezbollah; Israeli assassinations of PLO leaders helped pave the way for the rise of Hamas. The assassination of Hamas's founder and leader, Sheikh Yassin, in 2004 led to the rise of Iranian influence in Hamas and subsequent wars in Gaza, and so on.

If the book has a hero, it is Meir Dagan, who spoke softly (sometimes defying the censors) but carried a very big stick for decades, ending his career as head of the Mossad from 2002 to 2010. He played an important role in bringing an end to the second intifada (perhaps an instance in which Israel's special operations did play a significant role in curbing widespread Palestinian violence), and then directed his considerable energies to trying to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions with Stuxnet and killing Iranian nuclear physicists, among other creative measures. But Dagan quarreled with Netanyahu and was dismissed in 2010. He soon became his outspoken opponent and campaigned vigorously against him in 2015, arguing valiantly that Israel has no

alternative but to seriously work towards a two state solution with the Palestinians. But Bibi won the election and Dagan died the next year, seemingly perplexed over his inability to triumph over this last adversary. He is one of a surprisingly large number of retired security chiefs who, once they no longer have direct power, denounce, often forcefully, the policies they enforced during their professional lives.

As Bergman points out, with the development of precision bombing strikes and killer drones, Israel's targeted assassinations have become much less secret over time. But since Palestinians can do little but impotently protest, there's no need to hide one's actions anyway. What has perhaps been most crippling about Israel's targeted assassinations are their fundamental asymmetry. Israel conducts those operations because it knows there will not be serious repercussions. And once you get used to manipulating your enemies almost at will, it is very difficult to take them seriously as equal negotiating partners.

Israel has, over the decades, weakened the Palestinians enough to make talk of peace seem implausible, but cannot weaken them sufficiently to make them accept their powerlessness. And it has been too easy for Israel to rationalize almost any attack in the name of national self-defense, and thereby escape further scrutiny. After the killing of a high Hamas official in 2002, Israeli gadfly Gideon Levy, quoted by Bergman, says that if he could have been killed alone, it would be justified, but he was murdered in a bombing raid that killed 10 others (including seven children) and injured 150. "It is impossible to rely on them [Shin Bet and Mossad] to restrain themselves. There is no control, neither internal nor public, and ultimately, they do whatever they wish. The cost-benefit of assassinations is terrible." The belief that you are entitled to operate behind the scenes, extra-legally and with no repercussions, necessarily has a chilling effect on democracy.

Of course Israel has a right to defend itself against those who would murder or harm its citizens. But the best defense, contrary to the football coach's adage, is not always a good offense. The point is not to win this endless, unwinnable game, but to find a way to end it, with honor and dignity all around. Israel will never be able to assassinate its way to peace with the Palestinians. If the descendants of David and Solomon want to do a better job than they did in keeping a Jewish state intact and vibrant, it is a lesson they must learn. ■



Peter Eisenstadt is a historian and a member of the Board of PPI.

Power and Possibility: Women Leadership in the US & Israel today



International
Women's Day
2018

NAOMI
CHAZAN

JANE
EISNER



On March 8, 2018, Partners for Progressive Israel (PPI) and The Alliance for Israel's Future (AIF) hosted a conversation with Naomi Chazan and Jane Eisner. Hillit Zwick of AIF moderated. Naomi Chazan was a Member of Knesset from Meretz (1992-2003), where she served as Deputy Speaker for seven years. She is Professor Emerita of African Studies at the Hebrew University and was President of the New Israel Fund from 2008-2012. Jane Eisner is Editor in Chief of the Forward newspaper.

This is an edited condensation of the discussion, which lasted an hour. The entire discussion is available here.

Hillit: Good afternoon everyone, and thank you for joining us for our webinar, "Power and Possibility: Women's Leadership in the US and Israel Today." I am very pleased to have with us today two formidable women as our guests, Jane Eisner, who's calling in from New York, and Naomi Chazan from Jerusalem.

I am pleased, on this International Women's Day, that we find ourselves in the midst of significant and positive change in the status of women. However, restrictions on women's rights have also been given new primacy in the current political discourse in both countries. Now, I want to ask each speaker to give some opening remarks.

Jane: There are systemic and real challenges to women in leadership that I feel have been persistent and really deserve attention. We just published our most recent salary survey in December of 2017 of the heads of about 70 major Jewish organizations, and it's rather

depressing reading. Only about 12 organizational chief executives are women, and their salaries are 40% lower than those for the top men. We rank them according to salary, and I think this year we were up to no. 24 before we reached a woman. There is only one woman in charge of a major federation. There are more American Jewish women on the United States Supreme Court than there are running a major federation in America. And among Jewish charities in America, about 75% of the workforce is women.

Naomi: There have been improvements in Israel, and some are very impressive. There are more women in the workplace. In the Knesset now there are 34 women; over a quarter of its membership. You find women in every key position in the country, such as law and medical schools. On the other hand, and here's the paradox, as the status of women improves, the status of men improves even more. In other words, we're moving forward, but we're not closing the gap. The income gap between men and women is now 32%, and even went up last year a little. That means women make only 68 agorot for every shekel a man makes. Women appear in the news only 24% of the time, while men appear the other 76%. And though there are 34 women in the Knesset, if you pressed me very hard, I think I could count only five or six who are truly and proudly feminist. There's a real gap between descriptive and substantive representation.

Jane: I think there are small things, gestures, that represent important changes that need to happen. For a long time now, I and other people have been saying that any time there is a public program, a woman should be part of it. In the workplace environment, there

should be family leave policies and, of course, the US lags terribly behind Israel in issues like family leave and health care. The pulpit is one of the places where in the US we are seeing Jewish women rise quite prominently.

Naomi: I wish women would advance in Israeli pulpits. Quite the contrary, however, most women can't get near a pulpit, let alone the Western Wall pulpit.

But now we have to focus on a slightly different question; that is, how do we close gender gap? We have to start dealing with the big structures that have perpetuated and continue to perpetuate the real gap. That means bringing a gender perspective and representation and their implications into every single question that comes onto our agenda. Gender mainstreaming implies representation, inclusion of women's perspectives, and thinking of every decision in terms of its gender ramifications.

Hilit: Many of us, obviously, are intensely disappointed not to see female leadership in the White House after 2016. It seems that out of this disappointment, some kind of energy did formulate around the #MeToo movement.

Jane: There's no doubt that the #MeToo conversation has changed things, and that stories are being shared that never were before. There are real consequences; people who have abused other people have lost their jobs.. Whether or not this is going to create bigger change, we still have to see. But I'm afraid that we still have a situation where Jewish institutions tend to want to protect their own. I see this in the nuts and bolts of our reporting. I don't see major changes yet in the way our institutions are functioning, that allow for the stories to come forth and therefore for new kind of arrangements to be made.

Naomi: The #MeToo movement got transferred to Israel within 24 or 48 hours. It started with several television presenters who simply got on and said that so and so harassed me 20 years ago when he was interviewing me for my first job on television. The #MeToo movement in the US inspired Israeli women, including Arab citizens of Israel, to come out and talk about their experiences. But we have not really dealt with the heart of the problem of the two powerful patriarchal institutions, the Orthodox rabbinate and the IDF, that have such a large influence in Israel.

There are two trends. One is an increase in the number and the activism of diverse groups of women; Orthodox women, ultra-Orthodox women, Ethiopian women, Arab women, Bedouin women within the Palestinian Israeli society, Russian speaking women, you name it. On the other hand, I think there was a lapse in the women's movement on the national level during the past

decade, until about two or three years ago. Now, we're seeing the revival of some of the major women's organization with much stronger positions. For example, the Israel Women's Net-work, the key advocacy group of Israeli women. They're women in their 30s.

By the way, I'm the one who passed the famous law in 2000. Proposed and passed the important law on opening up all positions in the military to women. But there was a big pushback, and it keeps really qualified women away from the top positions in the army. In education, we often ignore the fact that ultra-Orthodox men are not willing to be taught by females.

Jane: The challenges are known, but I think that the conversation really has shifted in the last six months. I'm very proud to be part of a profession, journalism, that has accelerated that shift. I now hope that we can use it to actually make the structural changes that we need to have a more equitable society.

Naomi: Yes, these are exciting times. I think they're much more challenging than we perhaps realized. That calls on us us to act now, because if we don't unite and act together, our societies are going to fall back into places that are dark indeed. ■

JOIN PPI AT THE J-STREET CONFERENCE IN Washington, D.C.

APRIL 14-17

Come by our table in the exhibition area!

Join us Sunday at 6-7:30 pm in the Shoreham's Palladian Ballroom for the PPI Meetup, to schmooze with the new Meretz Chair, Tamar Zandburg and other Knesset members.

Wine and light refreshments will be served

PPI is cosponsoring the session at 1:15 pm to 2:45 pm: Sunday entitled "The Path to Power: Strategies for Political Change in Israel." PPI President Paul Scham will be one of the discussants.

We hope to see you in D.C.!

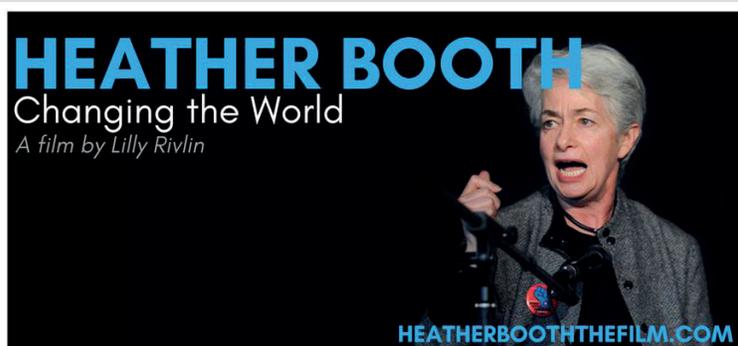
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President's Message

to it seems farther away than ever. Likewise, Israel, despite its awe-inspiring technological and economic achievements, has moved from a position as one of the most egalitarian countries on earth in its early decades, to one of the most unequal countries in the world, and the gaps between the rich and poor are still growing. These are issues that will be explored at length during our Symposium and in our other programming in the coming year.

So there is a lot for us to think about and participate in during the next few months, and I hope I will see many of you at J-Street or on our Symposium (or both!). Please introduce yourself if you see me at J-Street – and feel free to share your thoughts, especially about IH, which began in November 2017 and has now reached its 4th issue. The next edition will appear in late July, as we will be pretty busy with J-Street and the Symposium, as well as other activities, till then.

Best wishes for Yom Ha'atzma'ut and Shavuot. ■



Paul Scham
PPI President

Paul Scham is President of Partners for Progressive Israel and a Research Associate Professor of Israel Studies at the University of Maryland.



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