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**LITERATURES OF THE MIDDLE EAST:
A FERTILE CRESCENT .**

SPRING 1986

Israel's Theatre of Confrontation

By **EMANUEL RUBIN** Israel, as an open, democratic society existing in a state of siege, is a country in which all the measures of artistic and individual expression are daily put to the test of whether they do-or should-serve the nation's interests. In those circumstances Israeli theatre, especially in the past few years, has moved into the vanguard of the arts in taking a didactic tack that has often brought it into outright confrontation with the public. That approach is hardly an Israeli invention, but it does represent a departure from the mainstream of Western theatre, recently dominated by a focus on self-discovery and the relationship of individuals rather than ethical or cultural values. In this article the Israeli stage is examined as a forum for expression of the artist's vision of a higher law, the roots of that attitude are traced, and its implications explored.

Theatre attendance is very high in Israel, with some three million tickets reliably estimated to have been sold in 1980, a number equal to the total population of the country.¹ That gives Israel the highest per capita theatre attendance in the world, about eight times that of the United States. Nor is attendance class-related. It cuts across all social and economic lines, making the stage a truly demotic forum for ideas: "In Israel. . . bringing the blue-collar worker and lower classes to the theatre was never a problem" (Levy, 40). Then too, the country is small enough that almost everyone knows almost everyone else in the professional world, and because of its strong egalitarian outlook there is more offstage fraternization between actors and their audiences than one finds in most Western countries. Being so deeply entwined in the society, actors, playwrights, and directors have always been unusually sensitive to national moods. It would come as no surprise, then, to see the present depression and frustration reflected on the stage. What does strike an observer as unusual is to find professional theatre acting as a brutal goad rather than a sympathetic nurse. Where one might expect to find solace, Israeli theatre doses its public with wormwood and gall. Sartre's *Trojan Women*, for example, was set in a refugee camp with the guards wearing Israeli uniforms and carrying Israeli weapons. This was not a random choice for dramatic updating, but was staged during the turmoil that followed charges of Israeli negligence in permitting Phalangist massacres in Lebanon's Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. "It was very hard to take, but it had some truth in it," said actor Misha Asherov.² To make a play of the past come to grips with the present is hardly a new idea; but methodically to create a setting with the intent of affronting the audience is not simply "relevant," to use a word with hackneyed overtones; it is provocative. It is a theatre of confrontation.

Such a stance produces practical, not just theoretical, problems in the politics of art. When poet Yitzchak Laor, seething with anger, wrote a poem for the literary journal *Siman Kri'ah* that included the phrase, "and in our *matzot* the blood of Palestinian youths," he enlisted two thousand years of blood libel against the Jews as a powerful yet extremely offensive ally in opposition to the government's internal policies. The potency of burning Israel's sacred Torah onstage, as was done in the play *Tashmad*, cannot be denied; but must any society stand by and watch its most cherished symbols desecrated, its history flogged, and its recent wounds torn open publicly in the name of "Art"?

The answer, of course, is clear if one lives in Switzerland, Denmark, or the United States. There society is strong enough and the freedom great enough to withstand such attacks. The long-range value to the culture far outweighs the shock to community delicacy, and the principle of untrammelled artistic expression is of greater import than any temporary discomfort. In more stringently regulated countries such as the Soviet Union or Chile, the question is moot. Whether by consensus or fiat, those societies have subscribed to the Platonic vision of art regulated in support of a prescribed political vision. Violation of that aim, however courageous, is viewed as a thoughtless or selfish aberration, like someone who insists on driving through red lights or absconding with his neighbor's goods, and is treated accordingly.

Israel presents a more problematic situation. Maintaining the ideal of an open society, it is beset by external enemies and internal tensions that threaten imminent destruction in very real terms. Those who widen existing fissures or diverge from the common purpose can easily be viewed as insurgents or dangers to the integrity of the body politic. One need only think of the treatment accorded to American Vietnam protesters of the sixties and seventies under much less stringent circumstances to imagine the situation. This is further complicated by the fact that the performing arts are publicly subsidized in Israel, with all that implies, from government intervention in their content and presentation to the right of the artist to bite the hand that feeds him.

During a brief return of several weeks to Israel I spoke about this to a number of people in the theatre and uncovered not a festering sore, as I had expected, but a pot boiling with philosophical currents and cross-currents, arguments and convictions on every side of the issue. In a country where 26 percent of the population are theatregoers,³ the events of the 1983-84 season outline the main themes of that debate, as the arts, with theatre in the vanguard, attempt to delineate the ethical and moral center of the country's national life. Israeli theatre sees itself as a voice of opposition, probing

at national ideals from the stage in an abrasive way that is uniquely and aggressively Israeli. Art in the public market has once again become a vehicle for reform, as it had been in an earlier Jewish commonwealth for Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea.

Some fundamental assumptions about theatre's place in modern society were made and questioned in such presentations as Moshe Shamir's *Judith of the Lepers*, a 1968 play based on the biblical story of Judith and Holofernes. *Shamir's Judith* was not simply a Bible story. It carried a bitter message that there is no morality in war or international relations. "For Jews, even fanatical ones," laments Uri Rapp in his review, "the play is a rejection of whatever they believed in."⁴ The content may have been about characters from the Bible, but the subject was today's world, and an unpleasant view of it at that.

This is not to say that the entire season is an unrelieved succession of head-on collisions between the theatrical establishment and its public. *Much Ado about Nothing* was on the boards at the Haifa Municipal Theatre, and the national theatre, the Habimah, presented the Neapolitan farce *Caviar and Lentils* in Tel Aviv along with a setting of *Hamlet* as "readapted"

by David Avidom and directed by Dino Cernescu. *Mephisto* was imported, based on Klaus Mann's novel by Ariane Minouchkine, founder of the Theatre de Soleil in Paris, and for local color, *Behind the Fence*, an adaptation of a Bialik love story by Avi Koren, was presented. Those only served, though, to make the Israeli plays of confrontation and the controversies surrounding them stand out in bolder relief.

Nola Chilton, 1972 winner of the Tel Aviv Prize for directing and developing Israeli drama and twice winner of the "David's Harp" Award (1974, 1982), staged a play by Yehoshua Sobol, *The Seamen's Mutiny*, dealing with a scandal from the early days of the state in which many felt that the ideals of Zionism were sacrificed to the exigencies of politics. Motti Barhav's *Sanjer* dealt with drug addiction and Haim Marin's *Bunker* with the unpleasant but ever-present topic of war. A new play called *Ali the Galiean* by Francois Abu Salem, a Palestinian theatre director living in Jerusalem, was produced. In spite of many trials, at the end Ali is still an Arab and not "a hollow man calling himself Eli and trying to pass for a Jew."⁵

The message of the play for an Arab audience is . . . keep your chins up and hang on to your culture. . . . The message for a Jewish audience is: Here's what you look like to the people who clean your streets and bake your bread. (Grossman, 17)

Hanoch Levin's cynical and scatological play *The Patriot* was excoriated by the government censorship board, which sued to have it banned. *The Patriot* rubbed Israeli sensibilities the wrong way. The protagonist is a cynic who, unwilling to participate in the spiritual or physical defense of the country, falls back on Johnson's "last refuge of a scoundrel" to profiteer from his fellow citizens' plight. Another committee of

the same government, though, awarded the author the Leah Porat Prize for Literature only a few months later, confusing the issue still further.

In December 1983 Haim Druckman, a conservative member of the Knesset, had had enough and initiated a parliamentary debate on the "offence to the basic values of Judaism, the nation and the state in theatre productions."⁶ That, in turn, sparked a March 1984 meeting of two hundred Israeli writers, artists, and academics in Tel Aviv's Tzavta Theatre, where a resolution was unanimously adopted establishing a watchdog committee to "defend freedom of expression in the arts." In fact, the Israeli arts in general have come under increasing fire from the country's conservative elements. Deputy Minister of Education and Culture Miriam Ta'asa-Glaser referred to poet Yona Wallach as a "beast in heat" in an interview for the now-defunct newspaper *Rehov Rashi*. The remark was made in reference to a poem published in the monthly literary magazine *Iton 77* entitled "T'fillin," in which "the phylacteries of the title are used to embellish sexual intercourse" (Pomerantz, 12). Tel Aviv University suspended support of the literary review *Siman K'riah* when it printed an offensive political poem by Yitzchak Laor. "Liturgica," an international festival of religious music held annually in Jerusalem, had a performance of Bach's *Passion According to St. John* disrupted by an organized demonstration of students from one of the yeshivas.⁷

The case of *The Patriot*, which engendered angry censorship on the one hand and inspired a national award on the other, was just one of a series of contradictions. Another play, *The Soul of a Jew*, by Yehoshua Sobel (directed by Gedalia Besser), had a run at the Riverside in London and was a hit at the 1983 Edinburgh Festival, where "the audience gave it a rapturous reception."⁸ Theatre critic John Clifford, writing in *The Scotsman*, praised it as "intellectually enthralling and very deeply moving. . . it is easy to understand its impact in Israel, given its intense relevance to the country's current crisis of ideals and identity." In Israel, though, the play met with a mixed reception, to say the least. Performances were disrupted by zealous demonstrators, and even erstwhile supporters occasionally walked out of the theatre in distaste. Professionals and audiences alike were divided in their opinion of the play, which may be as it should be, for the work deals, in explosive language, with a Jewish protagonist living in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century who represents an assault on every value held dear to the Israeli: a sexist, self-hating, homosexual nihilist who finally commits suicide.

A speech in Martin Sherman's *Messiah*, given at the Haifa Municipal Theatre, resulted in threatening letters and two bomb scares at the theatre. The play is about Shabetai Zvi, the sixteenth-century poseur and false messiah, and the particular lines cited as so offensive are those of a young woman who, in an intense dialogue with God, cries out, "Cursed be You, God

Almighty," then "You do not exist" and "I hate you." The embattled government and the religious establishment did not take this lightly. Moshe Blimenthal, head of the three-member United Religious Front of the Haifa City Council, filed a complaint with the city police, who finally decided that there were insufficient grounds on which to act.

The artistic director and playwright, of course, stood firm on leaving the lines in. At that point, in this already overheated atmosphere, Shlomo Lorincz, an Orthodox rabbi, member of Agudat Yisrael (a right wing religious-political party), and chairman of the Knesset Finance Committee, threatened to withhold some two billion shekels in government funds owed to the city unless mayor Arieh Gurel forced the theatre to remove the lines. The issue was finally resolved with the lines' being stricken, but the intervention of Israel's president, Chaim Herzog, was required. Without having seen the play, Herzog asked that those lines be deleted "in the spirit of tolerance and mutual respect."⁹ The president's polite request, however, did not neglect to bring up the matter of a little-used 1973 law that could be used to impose a one-year jail sentence for any person who "offends in speech or writing the religious faith and feelings of others." Israeli political scientist Allan Shapiro explains:

Offending religious sensibilities was a punishable offense under the Ottoman code, and was perpetuated in British ruled Palestine even before the formal inception of Mandatory rule. In independent Israel it has been evoked to protect Christian sensibilities, as in the banning of Amos Kenan's play, *Friends Tell about Jesus* in 1972, which resulted in a high court decision referred to . . . by president Chaim Herzog in the matter of the Haifa production of *The Messiah*.¹⁰

In reaction to Herzog's plea, the author Aharon Megged, president of the Israeli branch of PEN, released a statement attacking the president for his interference with free speech.

Somewhere in this mixed bag of provocations and responses one can sense a confused search for a principle that would harmonize the heritage of openmindedness with the fears of a religious-political establishment that feels beset from within the country as well as from without. What is taking place is something more complex than a descent down the dreary path of repression already trod by so many nations. Having inherited censorship laws from both Turkish and British administrations together with a centuries-old tradition of individualism and the free exchange of ideas, Israel is wrestling anew with the question of the mutual responsibilities of the artist and society. Time-honored arguments over the purpose of art have become pressing, practical issues in Israel today, perhaps more so than anywhere else, and the answers are making headlines and lawsuits on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean.

For every attempt to quash the confrontational nature of Israeli theatre there has been a counterploit to support it. The parliamentary debate on theatre as an

"offense to the basic values of Judaism" was met by another motion opposing any intervention whatsoever in the country's artistic, creative, and intellectual life. Given the complex structure and party discipline of Israeli politics, it is heartening to note that even though it was defeated, the countermotion proposed by M.K. Yossi Sarid received forty-seven votes, whereas the floor had been opened to the original debate on a vote of only fifty.¹¹

The theatre critic Uri Rapp wrote, quite reasonably, in *The Jerusalem Post*:

The girl [in Martin Sherman's *Messiah*] who curses God and denies his existence in one breath. . . is an ardent believer. Only a deeply religious person could give vent to such disillusionment. . . . The offending sentences are part of a very intimate relationship with God.

There are few other forums [besides theatre, in Israel] where issues can be thrashed out publicly. Thus constant vigilance is imperative against any attempt to silence the debate. Art is not a matter of consensus but of controversy, at least in a pluralistic society. A play like Martin Sherman's *Messiah* could have been a case in point. . . but no genuine debate materialized for two reasons. First, *Messiah* is simply a bad play. . . [but] this is not the first time that artists and intellectuals have had to fight over a piece of little artistic value all for the sake of freedom of expression. The second problem was the attempt to get the play taken off the stage, or at least to get the theatre to delete a passage which "offended" the kind of people who don't go to the theatre anyway.¹²

What is taking place in this pragmatic pressure cooker appears to be a gradual redefinition of theatre's socio-political role in the country. Aharon Megged, who had castigated President Herzog for his attack on free speech, also said, following the protest meeting at the Tzavta Theatre in Tel Aviv: "Someone coming to the Tzavta meeting from the outside might have thought this was Chile. We don't have to act as if we're in a fascist regime."¹³

The Haifa police found no cause to close the municipal theatre over Martin Sherman's *Messiah*, and the fuss, as might be imagined, contributed greatly to the financial success of the play, as it had for Levin's *Patriot*.

Is it possible for a government that holds the purse strings of the arts and carries a public censorship law on its books to maintain even a façade of freedom of expression? Most in the West would answer no. It can only lead, one would think, to state control of the arts, a horror that seems to follow logically from state support of the arts, at least in American eyes. It is also clear, though, that official attempts at repression have put no appreciable brake on the assault emanating from the state-subsidized stage, and that until the issue is finally resolved, it will bear close observation.

That all this should be coming to the fore now is no accident. A national culture grows out of the weaving of threads into a fabric that becomes a cloth of assumptions against which value judgments can be projected by members of the society. The Israeli stage has a history of political awareness dating back to the birth of the Habimah in Moscow during the second decade of

the century as a Hebrew theatre-in-exile. From the earliest days of its existence, "Most of the idea-elements in the *Habimah* ideology, artistic and nonartistic, were based primarily on moral and ethical, rather than aesthetic, considerations."¹⁴

The establishment of a national theatre was an early priority to the founding fathers of the state. That meant more than simply creating a paid troupe of actors with a performance venue; it meant developing the language and creating new plays relevant to the culture expressed in modern Hebrew as well as transmitting the heritage of the past. At the same time that new literature came into being in a revived Hebrew, Haim Nahman Bialik translated *Don Quixote* and Saul Tchernikovsky brought out the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Kalevala* in Hebrew as part of the earliest stages of revitalizing the national language and culture.

The *Habimah* was performing in Hebrew in Moscow by 1918 and established itself in Tel Aviv by 1926. Its first production, opening on 18 October 1918, was the Hebrew-language composite *Neshef Bereshit* (An Evening of Beginning), composed of *The Eldest Sister* by S. Asch, *The Hot Sun* by I. Katznelson, *The Fire* by I. L. Peretz, and *The Bone* by I. D. Berkowitz. The balance between theatre as national expression and theatre as world art has seesawed back and forth since then, but "The topic of the play, i. e., Jewish or non-Jewish, did not in itself guarantee a successful or popular production. . . . What accounted for the popularity of these plays was not their topic or ideas, but their artistic level" (*H*, 48-49).

By 1948, when the nation gained official recognition, state support of theatre was well established. The theatre had played a significant role in setting the standard of a reconstituted Hebrew language as well as disseminating Zionist ideals of the collective future of the land, the value of physical labor, and aspirations to intellectual achievement. In the next twenty years Israeli theatre grew in a climate of financial and intellectual expansion, developing new performance venues throughout the country and strengthening an already solid popular base.

Emanuel Levy, in his 1980 study of the *Habimah*, concluded that Israeli theatre has been, from its outset, internationally oriented, with artistic quality being the most important factor in establishing a play's success (*H*, 48-49). He also noted a high proportion of new native plays produced by the country's four major theatres, remarking as an aside to the main thrust of his interest, "Indeed, most of the Hebrew-Israeli plays were topical and realistic. . . for their subject matter they drew upon current events and issues" (*H*, 43). His point was that an affinity for "imported" culture exists in Israel as a manifestation of opposition to ethnocentrism and that Israeli theatre strives for universality in repertoire and outlook, downplaying parochial interests and local playwrights.

There has been a change in the mood of the country, though, in reaction to the situation in Lebanon, and in response, confrontational theatre has come to play a

more important role in Israel within the last few years than in the period covered by Levy's study. Productions that "draw upon current events and issues" have promoted the sense of social commitment, always an important secondary role in Hebrew drama, into a frothing, cudgel-swinging main character prowling the forestage. There are two principal reasons for this. The first is based on the particular social and financial circumstances in which the theatre establishment finds itself today; the second, and more far-reaching, grows naturally out of the traditional mission of theatre within the Zionist enterprise.

To understand the first of those reasons, it is necessary to recall as background that until 1969 all the theatres in Israel were cooperatives, with actors and professional staff enjoying a beneficent system that virtually assured tenure. A few years of work guaranteed, if not assignments, then at least a low-pressure sinecure followed by a comfortable pension. It took a fortunately-timed financial and administrative crisis in the government to impose belt-tightening, which resulted in the present structure of public corporations. Those corporate theatres were provided with substantial subsidies jointly from the central government and their local municipalities in order to maintain what was perceived as a central role for theatre in Israeli cultural life. While standards have risen in the permanent repertory troupes, the division of responsibilities and loyalties has produced an administrative ambiguity that has, in effect, given artistic directors greater independence than they might have enjoyed under the earlier system.

The second reason is far more compelling, for it grows out of the reactions of artists themselves to frustration with their society and its loss of innocence. Zionism, whatever else it may have been, was based on a unique melange of political and spiritual ideology envisioning the reentry of a people into the realities of history after a two-thousand-year hiatus. That reentry, though, was to have been on a basis that would establish new societal standards for humanitarian and egalitarian behavior among nations as well as among its own citizens. The facts of the matter have resisted that idealization. The triumph of the 1967 "Six-Day War" may have done more damage to the values of Zionism than any other single event. Culturally, it was a pyrrhic victory. "It killed us," said sixty-year-old Misha Asherov.

You can't even imagine what happened. . . . I was in Chicago the day it happened [6 June 1967] and I couldn't come [home]. And when I arrived it was four days after the war was finished. When I arrived I took a Jeep with a friend to the Golan Heights, and when I came there and saw the things, the defeated [Syrian] army. . . all of a sudden I felt myself like—no use! I felt, maybe, like Alexander the Great when he is in his prime. And if you are not sane, at that moment you start to become the megalomaniac. . . . With the inflation we had and the boom we had. everyone [thought] we could buy America!

. A great euphoria, almost akin to megalomania, swept

the country. At that moment many of the younger generation of Israeli artists began to see their homeland not as the conquering lion of Judah portrayed in the world press, but as a defector from the social ideal toward which all their history had aspired. The stage was set for a generation of socially-oriented artists to charge their elders with living up to their teachings. Nola Chilton put together her emotionally charged "docudrama," *Soldiers Talk*, a powerful series of dialogues assembled from interviews with young Israelis still hot from the battlefield. A generation of artists looked at what had been foisted on them by friends as much as by enemies and were dissatisfied. What they saw was a country aspiring to wealth, power, and material values, not to freedom and justice. Israel was to have become a "light unto the nations," but it appeared to be only one more country on the map, no different than the others.

Actors and directors took every opportunity to express their opinion of the wrong turn they saw the country taking. Asherov recounts a typical story describing the forms that expression took.

You know that I played in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* . . . We planned this play as a political play, a social political play. We planned the subject of false belief, that they believed that they had a child. We planned it for Israel to [relate to] the actual life that we have here now. What's the actual life that we are living and dreaming? That we are big, that we are rich, that we can afford everything. Then all of a sudden, all the banks are down and all the economy is down: the child is dead. That's the thing we turned into the play. You see, it depends what drives you to give the interpretation.

Prodded as to whether such an interpretation was legitimate for a group of actors to take upon themselves, he responded, "Yes, especially now." It wasn't, he explained, that they favored this or that political party as much as it was that artists needed to be on guard against government itself.

Look, from one side it doesn't matter if it is Russia or the way it was in the Nazi time; they wanted that the artist will serve the regime. Artists here say that we have to serve the ideas that we believe are right. As I told you about *The Trojan Women*, if you play it in Athens or Troy in that time, what do you care about it? But if things [are represented], actual things that happen to you now, and you have to give the answers now, it turns the theatre. . . the theatre becomes a live theatre. You see, we have to say what we have to say because. . . I don't know how it is in America . . . maybe what happened now with the Marines. . . . My dear friend, two hundred and some people killed in Lebanon. Isn't it your relative, isn't it your neighbor, isn't it an American? Why did people not ask [in 1982], "What are Americans doing in Lebanon?"

Viewed in this way, every play becomes more than a theatre event. It becomes, as well, a tool for the artist to shape society. In Haifa, at the municipal Theatre, manager Noam Semel and artistic director Omri Nitzan have developed a policy in which they see each

new Israeli play as "another point in a sort of connect-the-dots game: it's our self-portrait. With local material, by necessity, we make more mistakes. But point by point we begin to see ourselves."¹⁵ That approach carries through even in the choice and staging of foreign plays. *The Island*, for instance, was not set in South Africa with prisoners of Soweto, but in Israel, and was performed by two Arab actors—in Arabic.

It is clear that the recent theatre seasons were not simply an aberration of dirty words, offensive phrases, and antigovernment sentiments, as may appear at first glance. They were the fruits of a scenario that had its roots in the earliest principles of public theatre in Israel, then grew to maturity in the atmosphere of disgust with a '67 victory that smacked of too much triumph and despair at the '73 victory that tasted too much of defeat. The disastrous Lebanon adventure, a divisive and perhaps pointless exercise, ground an additional sense of bitter disillusionment into Israeli idealists.

Conventional wisdom has it that, to the extent that art remains pure, it better serves the muse. "The arts as a political weapon proved impotent,"¹⁶ wrote Robert Corrigan, who found that politics proved "de-aestheticizing" to American theatre of the sixties. It has certainly been true that for every *Guernica* there have been hundreds of polemical works that have not survived their immediate political point. There is no reason, though, to believe that a work's subject matter must necessarily weaken its artistic thrust. Corrigan's concern, and thus his conclusion, was less with the uses of theatre than with its form; but theatre has been a didactic art since its beginnings. In all its rituals and expressions it has served the purposes of education, propaganda, and public morality from time immemorial. Whether demonstrating the fate of Oedipus, the prayer of the *Pattukaran*, or the post-adolescent problems of Laverne and Shirley, a principal impetus for theatre through most of its history has been the transmission and explication of culture.

The theatrical establishment in Israel is imbued with a fierce sense of mission. Only in a brief period toward the end of the Vietnam War did American theatre attempt to serve as the country's political conscience, and as important as that effort may have been as a political gesture, its impact on either history or theatre in the United States was infinitesimal. Israeli writers, though, have taken the tough stance of biblical prophets with their audience and have touched off a predictably heated reaction. Hardly a single new play has appeared in the last few years that did not have some such component, and many productions of traditional and foreign works gained a dimension in their direction and staging that put them into just such a posture. Seen from that perspective, the recent swirl of conflict takes on a pattern that reflects a view of theatre as a socio-critical voice actively creating and maintaining the values of a cultural system.

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1 Emanuel Levy, "National and Imported Culture in Israel," *Sociological Focus*, 13 January 1980, p. 40.

2 Misha Asherov was a student of Stanislavsky and has been a member of the Habimah's staff in Tel Aviv since 1946. The direct quotes from him in this paper are taken from a personal interview which I conducted with him at his home in Tel Aviv on 3 January 1984.

3 Augustine Zycher, "Israeli Theatre Is Now Developing Its Own Character," *New York Times*, 3 December 1978, pp. 61f.

4 Uri Rapp, "Kill or Be Killed," *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), 22-28 January 1984, p. 18.

5 Ed Grossman, "A Palestinian's Message," *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), 3-9 October 1984, p. 17.

6 Marsha Pomerantz, "Muzzling the Muses," *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), 15-21 April 1984, p. 12.

7 Exception was taken to specific anti-Jewish sentiments expressed in St. John's account of the Passion, not to the work as a whole or its other theological content. Berlioz's setting of the Te Deum, for example, met no objections when it was performed in that same series, because the text conveyed no such offense.

8 "Israeli Play Is Edinburgh Hit," *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), 28 August-3 September 1983, p. 16.

9 "Herzog in Flap over Haifa Play's 'Blasphemous Line,'" *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), 5-11 February 1984, p. 9.

10 Allen E. Shapiro, "A Question of Blasphemy," *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), 12-18 February 1984, p. 14.

11 There are a total of 120 members in the Israeli Knesset or Parliament. Members are designated, in English, by the letters M. K. ("Member of the Knesset") preceding their name, or sometimes by H.K. ("Haver Knesset," Hebrew for the same).

12 Uri Rapp, "A Challenge Missed," *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), 12-18 February 1984, p. 17.

13 Pomerantz, p. 12.

14 Emanuel Levy, *The Habimah: Israel's National Theatre, 1917-77*, 1980, p. 27. Subsequent citations use the abbreviation H. For a review, see *WLT* 54:3 (Spring 1980), p. 482.

15 Marsha Pomerantz, "Shakespeare and the Jewish Question," *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), 6-12 November 1983, p. 19.

16 Robert Corrigan, "The Search for New Endings: The Theatre in Search of a Fix, Part III," *Theatre Journal*, 36:2 (May 1984), p. 153.

