

# Betar Reunion: Mifkada Meeting

Monday, 9 May 1988

Present: Henry Burstyner, Mefaked; Louis de Vries, Mefaked; John Goldlust, Mefaked; Evie Katz, Mefakedet; Judy Weinstein, Mazkira.

The aim of this Betar reunion festival is, like Moomba, to get together and have lots of fun. The theme is Camp Betar.

Date: Saturday, 30 July 1988 at 7.30 p.m.

Venue: 27 Olinda Street, Caulfield.

## Activities

- When people arrive there will be Israeli/Betar background music. Attention: EK, JW, LdV.
- Video—A celebration of times past. Attention: JG. (Contact Judy Rudzki about old photos.)
- Films on video. Old Camp Betar movies, if available. Attention: HB will contact Harry Stuart about his videotape; JW will pursue Brian Diskin; LdV will ask Avraham Appel if he knows of the availability of films; LdV's Betar films.
- Dramatics. The staging of *Rinse the Cordial off My Kafia* will be organised by HB and JG. EK and HB will discuss the presentation of anecdotes/memories/this is your life . . . HB will ask Aaron Ninedek if he is prepared to tell a ghost story around the campfire (fire to be arranged by A. Appel).
- Music. Background music is noted above. HB will produce a small song book based on the South African opus of renown. Shoshana Yanoshevitz Jordan Kol will be asked to lead the group singing (maybe with A. Appel). LdV to locate and copy 1964 tape of Shimshon Feder's accordion version of Betar songs. JG will present a short bracket of Betar songs with collaborators of his choice.
- Dancing. JW will organise and lead the dance troupe. HB was asked not to dance.

## Other issues

- LdV to coordinate the evening to obviate the need for further meetings.
- EK will coordinate the supper and drink arrangements, on the basis that each couple will be asked to bring a specified dish and BYO grog. Although Betarim can be advised of this at the time of the invitation, the details can be left till closer to the party.
- Decorations to be arranged. HB to get another dummy from his father (the last one his father gave us has pretty much had it, and it talks too much). JW to locate an old Betar uniform. Possibility of a tent, sleeping bags, hurricane lanterns, stretchers etc. for decorations. Volunteers needed for shmirah.
- HB to put together a newsletter for the night.
- Betarim should be invited early in June. The present invitations list can be added to but please run your suggestions past the Mifkada. The list is headed by the Mifkada member who will be personally doing the inviting. (No printed/written invitations as that would make it look like a fund-raising event.) Where no spouse is listed it either shows my ignorance or their lack thereof.
- Please keep LdV informed of changes etc.

### JW

Marl Rosens  
Bill Borovski  
Nonny Reich  
Hannah Kurfurst  
Ilana & Phil Lipton  
Sam & Ruth Parasol

### HB

Avraham & Raymonde Appel  
Peter Revelman  
Louis & Miriam Chester  
Aaron Ninedek  
Harry Chojna  
Brian Rudzki  
Helen Webberley Pepper

### JG

Bill Fayman  
Nadine & Lloyd Perry  
Eric & Rachel Aufgang (if approved)

### LdV

Shoshana & Zvicka Kol  
Raphy & Ann Star  
Emmy & Peter Guttmann  
Jacques & Gabrielle de Zoete  
Linda & Norman Yaffe  
Henry & Chava Yanoshevitz  
Betty Levie

IN THE MATTER OF:

BEIAR REUNION: MIEKADA MEETING

MIEKADA MEETING

Saturday the 13th day of August, 1988  
27 Olinda Street, South Caulfield in the State of Victoria  
(hereinafter called "the Company Party")

MR. LOUIS DEVRIES  
27 Olinda Street, South Caulfield  
in the said State.  
(hereinafter called "the Party of the First Part")

MR. JOHN COLLUST  
20 Union Street, Armadale,  
in the said State.  
(hereinafter called "the Party of the Second Part")

MR. HENRY S. BURSINNER  
27 Briggs Street, South Caulfield  
in the said State.  
(hereinafter called "the Party of the Third Part")

NOTICE OF COMPANY PARTY CONFIRMATION

WHEREAS the Party of the First Part in company with the Party of the Second Part excluding the company of the Third Part on or about June animus et factum, having arrived at the situs of the proposed aforesaid Company Party, after having travelled, in self-propelled vehicular transportation to arrive at the aforesaid situs of the proposed Company Party; the aforesaid Parties of the First Part, Second Part and Third Part consented to the Company Party being held and arranged by the aforesaid Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF all the Parties of the First Part, Second Part and Third Part herein by their presence confirm the holding of the Company Party.

SIGNED by the Party of the )  
First Part in the presence )  
of: )

SIGNED by the Party of the )  
Second Part in the presence )  
of: )

SIGNED by the Party of the )  
Third Part in the presence )  
of: )





IN THE MATTER OF:

BEIJAR REINIC: MIKADA MEETING

MIKADA MEETING  
(hereinafter called "the Company Party")

MR. LOUIS DEMRIES  
(hereinafter called "the Party of the First Part")

MR. JOHN GOLDUST  
(hereinafter called "the Party of the Second Part")

MR. HENRY S. BURSYNER  
(hereinafter called "the Party of the Third Part")

---

"CH...FISL...SHALL"  
NOTIFICATION

NOTICE OF COMPANY PARTY CONFIRMATION

---

# Olinda (Street) Camp—1988

## Special Souvenir Edition

Welcome and Tel Hai!

Betar was founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky in 1923. Most of those present this evening were either members of Betar, Machoz Melbourne, or are married to ex-Betarim. For those of you who married an ex-Betari and are fed up with feeling excluded from the anecdotes, reminiscences, and connections of your Betarian spouses, get ready for a night of it!

Betar was started in Melbourne in 1948 and led in the early years by Shimshon Feder, Yosef and Dora Steiner, Jack Mirjam, Theo Balberyszski, and others lost in the mists of time. Most of us were members in the fifties and sixties. Indeed, among those present tonight are a number of former natsivim, mefakdim, and madrichim.

Our program this evening incorporates some of the activities that we enjoyed at Camp Betar. Indeed, camp is the theme of the evening. Regrettably we can't give you tass, an overnight hike, or ghost stories around the camp fire, but supper is being provided by those brought up on camp food.

This evening has been organised by a small, hardworking committee and Henry Burstyner. Thanks are due to Evie Katz, Judy Weinstein, and John Goldlust.

—Louis de Vries  
Convenor

## Program

- Background music—Shimshon Feder on accordion; recorded 1963
- Video—*The Nudnik Film*; made 1955, starring Aaron Ninedek, Henry Kranz. This film used to be shown at camp reunions and the like.
- Drama: *Rinse the Cordial off My Kafia* (A travesty of a mockery of a sham in three-quarters of an act). Written more than a quarter of a century ago by actors who wish to remain nameless.
- Video: *Memories of Camp Betar*, produced by John Goldlust.
- Song: "I'm Not Telling", by John Goldlust.
- *Ha yo, ha ya pa'am* Eight Betarim reminisce (briefly!)
- Trivial Betari Pursuit, coordinated by Elliott Katz, in honor of those who through no fault of their own failed to be members of Betar.
- Dancing troupe—organised by Judy Weinstein.
- Singing—organised by Shoshana Kol
- Supper
- Shmirah—see Avraham Appel to be allocated your street to patrol.



## *Iton hamachane*

Whatever else Betar was about, the highlight of each year was the summer camp. For many, it was the main reason for being a Betari. We all have the fondest recollections of the friendships formed and good times had, frequently in paddocks by riversides in places such as Woori Yallock, Kinglake West, Wonga Park, Point Lonsdale, Launching Place, and Ballarat.

Who among us will ever forget the sight of Avraham Appel in full military mode organising the erection of tents and flagpole, digging (let alone using) latrines, shmirah, overnight hikes, ghost stories around the campfire (especially when Aaron "Nudnik" Ninedek was doing the telling), misdarim, tent inspections, concerts, and more. And what about the camp food! Only at camp would we enjoy such delights as tomato soup with a kerosene flavor, salmon patties, camp cocoa, cordial, and canned everything. Most years the cooking (if that's what it was) was cobbled together by a madricha or a shaliach's wife, but in the latter years of this group's connection with Betar, we actually hired cooks, such as Mrs Gordon and Mr Maas. I still remember Mr Maas cooking for us for the second year in succession at Ballarat (1964-65), when a chanich confronted him with the news, "The cook's not as good as the one we had last year."

Some of the memories Betarim have dredged up for tonight:

- Threepenny bangers under Harry Stuart's sleeping bag.
- Puncturing the water tank in the bushfires at Point Lonsdale, 1961.
- At one junior camp Raphy Star was in the males' showers while Betty Brisson was in the females' showers. Raphy called out, "Come and soap me", and Betty did! Raphy suffered a near collapse.
- Aaron Ninedek spent three days straight playing mah-jong with Alfie van der Poorten at Point Lonsdale senior camp.
- Jack Katz took out a group at midnight and "lost" them. Max Strubel went to look for him. Judy Skall suggested dancing to keep warm. Jack then returned and gave them a lecture on what they "should have done".
- Garry Rudzki was the madrich in charge of the kitchen at Wonga Park when we first tasted kerosene-infused tomato soup. Thereafter it became a regular camp treat.
- Avraham Appel decided to wake the whole camp in the very early hours of the morning. The tents were lifted and removed with the chanichim still on their stretchers.
- The big night when Loy Lichtman decided between Nadine and Jesse.
- The train ride to Brisbane when Ruth decided between Raphy and Sam.
- The Ballarat Kidnap Debacle.

One of the features of summer camps was the daily Camp News, variously called *Iton Hamachane*, *Ha Shemesh* or whatever. Here, from the bowels of our archives, are a few items from a 1963-64 *Iton Hamachane*.

### Prep party

The Prep party came to Ballarat a few days before the other campers. Its leader was Morry, who was flat out all day—on his stretcher. The members of the Prep party: Jack, Bill, Joe, Abe, Allen, Louis, and Max (double)—worked incessantly to prepare the camp site for the chaverim. The tents were put up in blistering heat (unfortunately we did not know they would come down in a howling gale); huts were swept out; stretchers were set up; toilets and showers were cleaned; etc. After a gruelling four sleepless days (we slept at night), the weary Prep party staggered into bed (separate) and awaited the campers.

PS: I would like to thank Max for his hard work?

### General comments on hut inspections

On the whole huts are reasonably clean inside, but greater care could be taken to keep the outside clean, especially around the areas where dishes are washed. The place for rubbish is in the bin, not the ground.

### Overheard in tents

"I can't go on shmirah tonight because my mouth hurts."

### The runaround

On Tuesday night all the campers were given a real runaround in the form of a new, exciting night game (with the let's have another cup taste). After a spectacular race against time which led them to all corners of the camp site, the game ended in a dead heat between a group led by that lovable Mefaked Raphael Shtair, and that dancing Sabra, Shoshana Yanoshewitz.

### Independence day

Independence day started on Wednesday evening when Rudy de Zoete was elected Mefaked Ha Machane, and Eva (Goldbaum) was elected K'tzin Toran. The madrichim were Jack, Gabriel, Alan, Ziggy, Rochelle, and Rosalie.

In the morning all the ed-madrichim were woken up and given a tough PT run. (So tough in fact that the new madrichim collapsed from trying to keep up with those whom they were trying to torture.) Then all of the ex-madrichim took up KD and latrine duty except for Loy and Abe who wisely chickened out. . .

—*Ha Shemesh*  
1 January 1965



# Lighting up Betar

On this page you will find some extracts from *HaLapid*, "The Torch, Official organ of Betar Melbourne". The cover carried these immortal lines:

The torch you threw at us  
We caught and held it high  
Its glorious light  
Will never die.

*HaLapid* was edited by various Betarim over the years, including **John Goldlust**, **Bill Fayman**, **Loy Lichtman** and **Susan Aufgang**.

One of the interesting questions to ask yourselves as you reread these contributions from more than a quarter of a century ago is this: Have our friends really changed very much? Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, *HaLapid*, and will be published in the next issue. See John Goldlust for details.

Incidentally, *HaLapid* was only one of numerous publications issued at various times by Betar in the fifties and sixties. Others included *Haderech*, a monthly journal; *Altalena*, a political news bulletin; *Betar*, a monthly newsletter; as well as educational booklets on the history and ideology of Betar, the geography of Israel, and so on.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I would like to complain about the attitude of Betarim at group parties. Recently there was a party held by Amatzia and quite a few chaverim came, but because it was dull at the beginning most of the kids left and went to another dance. This doesn't show any Hadar at all from my point of view. When you come to a party you shouldn't just think of yourself but think of your host who went to all the trouble and expense to prepare a party for your enjoyment.

Also, how about a few more people attending our Neshefim (especially females). Dancing the part of a girl is not one of my routine occupations

—**Henry Yanoshewitz**  
*HaLapid*, April 1962

Dear Herschl,

I am ravishingly beautiful, wear gorgeous clothes, am highly intelligent, am very rich, 18 years old, and have never been out with a boy yet my mother will not let me go to camp because she says I'll catch cold. How can I convince her that everything will be all right?

—Harry Stuart, Windsor

• Never mind. We'll send Avraham down to clear things up, but we want him back unharmed please.

Dear Herschl,

I'm sick of immature teenage boys. I'd like to go out with an older fellow. I was thinking of calling Peter Revelman next Saturday and also asking him if he has a friend for my friend. What do you think?

—Lady Muck, Sela

• I think you are quite immature, and have a lot to learn about dating. Your idea is childish and completely ridiculous. Why drag a friend along?

—*HaLapid*, October 1961

## Editorial

Over the past year the membership of the Movement has been on the increase and Melbourne especially has been expanding rapidly. The successful camp at Pt Lonsdale is an example of what can be achieved with a combination of numbers, spirit and enthusiasm of both chaverim and madrichim.

However, as often happens when we rest on our laurels and relax, apparent disinterest of many madrichim has been noticeable since camp. More interest and drive is needed if we are to continue our membership drive and expansion. It is hoped that this will be shown in the near future.

—**John Goldlust**  
*HaLapid*, April 1962

## Poetry

"In ten years there will be for the Jews a state,  
And if not ten, then in fifty years, but we will fight and wait . . ."  
These were Herzl's words; they all came true:  
Now we have a state, with soil, where the sky is blue.  
The land of our ancestors, the State of Israel.  
It is still young but it will grow,  
And as it grows, young seed we will sow.  
It will again be called the land of milk and honey  
And will supply those who have no money.  
In Israel, a generation will arise  
Pushing aside the irons, with light in its eyes,  
Defending its land from every war.  
The Maccabees will arise once more.  
The Lord's name will be glorified and never die.  
Israel will rejoice on soil where crops grow high,  
For we have turned ours into fertile land  
Despite having suffered all that is on hand.  
Pogroms, massacres, executions, genocide,



And we cannot replace our dear ones who have died.  
But through all this, the Jews live on,  
Fighting, struggling, always singing a song,  
And in the centre of this is in every Jewish heart:  
It's the one belief from which we will never part.  
This is the faith in God, our Helper and Creator,  
For without him there would be nothing, not even an equator.  
Therefore, a race of wonderful Jews will emerge on that soil,  
And one which no other country will be able to spoil.  
And always that thought which sets us ready to sail—  
We have our Holy Land, the State of Israel.

—Judy Skall  
*HaLapid*, April 1962

### Foreign Land

It was the same world  
Yet . . .  
It seemed so different.  
Here I was, alone  
In the midst of a happy reeling world  
Of noise and commotion.  
Why was fate so cruel to me?  
When did I sin?  
I could not answer these questions.  
The tears felt like heavy stones in my throat,  
My heart was ready to burst.  
I was deserted.  
I was deserted by my homeland,  
I was taken to this foreign land  
Where skies are just as blue  
Where the trees are just as green  
Yet . . .  
I pause . . .  
And look . . .  
No.  
I can not find my happiness here!  
The laughter of these children weaves a strange music in my ears.  
While the droplets on my cheeks keep rolling  
With each memory of the life I had just lost.

—Shoshana Yanoshewitz  
*HaLapid*, April 1962

### Report on the other machozot

Did you know that while you are enjoying yourself at your group meeting on Sunday afternoon there are some 500 boys and girls who are doing the same thing? Yes, there are 500 Betarim going to Sunday afternoon meetings in Australia today.

I found this fact when I went visiting all the machozot of Australian Betar.

Betar is the only Zionist Youth Organisation to have groups in all the Eastern States. There is a machoz in Melbourne (as we all know), Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane. These four groups have a total membership of over 600 Betarim . . .

—Jack Katz  
*HaLapid*, April 1962

### Views and opinions

One of the features of Betar life that we may have forgotten was the vigorous and robust intellectual debate on controversial matters. In 1964 work started on raising money for a moadon, which provoked some dissent. But the most controversy was aroused by an article entitled "Betar ideology: Universally valid or a mass of contradictions". That article is reprinted in full, and is followed by excerpts of the numerous responses.

It is now 16 years since the establishment of the state of Israel and for a long time now Betar has found itself in an ideological dilemma from which it has not as yet succeeded in emerging one way or another.

The main differences of opinion concern themselves with interpretations of what we have come to call Betar ideology—the manifesto written by Jabotinsky in the late 1920s. The fact that the ideology was not written until some five years after Betar as a movement was established is of some importance. We must look at the ideology within its historical context. In my opinion Jabotinsky's aims in this carefully worded piece of work were threefold:

- **Political.** This can be seen in the section concerning the "class struggle" and his opposition to socialist Zionism. Betar was to be an organ to be used in his fight against socialism and for the Revisionist Zionism which Jabotinsky was propogating.

- **Nationalistic.** This is apparent in the glorification of Jewish history and concentration on Jewish heroes and strong-men. This was also Jabotinsky's main method of attracting the Jewish youth to the movement. He supplied an answer from the past for their inferiority complexes and by clever uniting of religion and nationalism, he attempted to make militant Zionism respectable and desirable to the Jews of the ghettos.

- **Idealism.** Undoubtedly Jabotinsky thought that through Betar and Zionism could be set up a Jewish Utopia upon liberal rather than socialistic lines. He envisaged some kind of capitalist-social welfare state, but he kept practical considerations to the background.



When we look closely at the details, the few that there are, of this ideology, we are immediately struck by the internal inconsistencies which have caused the dilemma we face today. Firstly, the basis of the *Shtei G'dot* war cry is the bible. (Some people would argue that there are economic, geographic, and defence motives. This may be so, but we are only dealing here with Jabotinsky's reasons.) However on matters of religion Jabotinsky decrees "freedom of conscience". One must respect the Jewish religion but belief and worship are left to the individual alone. Now we are faced with some screaming *Shtei G'dot* and waving a bible, yet with full Betarian rights, not believing on one word written in the bible.

Secondly and perhaps much more seriously to be considered is the question of the opposing concepts of "freedom of the individual" and "Betarian discipline". One can overcome the contradiction perhaps by arguing that Jabotinsky's accent on discipline and militarism was necessary to organise the Jewish youth into a powerful enough force to recapture a state for the Jewish people, while freedom of the individual was to be the doctrine within this new state. But look at us today. We continue to maintain the old ranks and hierarchy as if we were still fighting a war. Instead of treating the period of the Irgun as one of a regrettable necessity we look upon it as a justification of the use of military force and an example for the future of the "good" and "noble" reasons for military activity.

The "freedom of the individual" idea comes into conflict again with the neo-nationalistic concept of the *chalutz*. This was probably thrown in to oppose the limited socialist concept of an agricultural worker as the only type of *chalutz*. We are told therefore that we must be anything that the state needs, so subordinating the individual completely to the will of the all-powerful state.

These are only a few of the glaring contradictions which can be seen in the framework of what we call the Betar ideology. It should be quite apparent that this kind of hotch-potch of politics, nationalism, and idealism may have been valid for the 1920s and 30s but that it is quite meaningless and contradictory to accept it as a universal truth which is relevant to the 1960s and will be so in the future.

The main blockage to any reform has been and still is the refusal to accept the fact that Jabotinsky meant the ideology to be relevant to the times. There are too many—among the older Betarim especially—whose blind idol worshipping of Jabotinsky have prevented any changes in the ideology which would make it more consistent and meaningful.

We must decide in which direction to go, and we must decide now. The longer we wait, the deeper we sink in the morass of antiquated and inconsistent half-truths and the further we slip from any obvious goal.

—John Goldlust  
*HaLapid*, August 1964

#### Betar today and tomorrow

I was disgusted by [John Goldlust's] article, it contains a well thought out attack on Betar based on the doubtful (but imaginative) interpretation of Betar's ideology. Although I do not question the author's rights to air his views, I do question his motives . . . in causing

the disillusionment of our younger members, and a possible split among older members. This could only harm the movement. . .

**Contradiction.** This is the key word of the article, and yet, right from the start the author has committed the greatest contradiction of all, the contradiction that Rosh Betar was trying to counter the fact that Zionism alone and socialism hampers it, i.e. Zionism plus socialism equals contradiction. Monism, one aim, that is the fundamental idea in our ideology and the fact that the author has omitted it may tell us something of his political inclinations. . . The author has given me *sichot* on Jabotinsky's reasons for turning to the youth, *sichot* on the revival of Jewish dignity, and Jabotinsky's fight in the face of tremendous odds—it is a pity he did not listen to them as he may have learnt something.

—Sam Scherer  
*HaLapid*, September 1964

#### A closer study of the Betar ideology

. . . If a Betari does not agree with *shtei g'dot* and Betarian *chalutzit* he is at liberty to join a less extreme Zionist movement. . .

Let us look at the reasons for the emphasis in Betar on nationalistic thinking. In the earlier years of Betar it was essential to get rid of the ghetto-Jew mentality. What Jabotinsky wanted and what was needed is clearly stated in *Shir Betar* . . .

It appears that at least one Betari . . . is puzzled by what at first glance appears to be a contradiction in the ideology of Betar. This is "freedom of the conscience" concerning religion and *shtei g'dot* which uses the bible as a basis. If one looks at the bible for its historical value alone there is sufficient reason for the Jews as a nation, not only as a religion, to have a claim to Eretz Israel. Also it is necessary to respect the Jewish religion, and this involves the respect of our religion's right to Israel.

Another supposed contradiction is that of "freedom of the individual" and Betarian discipline. The writer has linked the hierarchical system with that of an army. Surely it is obvious that in all everyday activities a form of hierarchy is used. At school, work, university; in the government it is used. The alternative would be everybody trying to be boss as occurs at ill-fated Betar senior camps . . .

—Susan Aufgang  
*HaLapid*, September 1964

#### The ideology of Betar—today and yesterday

. . . I must say I am a little disappointed, that an ideology which is as complex and flexible as Betar's is summed up in one and a half pages as "a mass of contradictions". . .

I must agree with the author that Betar is facing an ideological dilemma, but it must be seen in its true perspective, for Betar is only part of the whole Israel and Zionist complex which is facing a similar problem, and to simply decry the Betarian ideology without looking at the complete framework of the Jewish work today, and the role of the Betar and the Zionist in it would be wrong. And to apply mechanical logical terms such as universal contradiction or truth to an ideology would be slightly unrealistic, for if these terms would



have applied, the state of Israel would probably not be in existence today. . .

There are difficulties, the main one is being able to face reality, and look at the problems in their true perspective, and the answers cannot and need not always be found in Jabotinsky's writings. I doubt if Jabotinsky wanted them to. He laid a foundation upon which one can build a varying edifice, but this will not be done by wrecking the foundation. The ideology is a flexible one, and there is not always a right and a wrong, and we mustn't be afraid to build on this foundation. The foundations were laid by a man who was not afraid to stand up for a concept which was new to the Jewish people, and today if we look at the State of Israel, many parts of the foundation Jabotinsky laid are being used by those who tried to wreck them.

—Raphy Star  
*HaLapid*, September 1964

### To be or not to be

. . . we should make the mistake of supposing that "Betar" is a magic word, and by uttering it, or by evoking memories from the past, we can solve our problems. In fact, Betar is no more than its members. If its members are enthusiastic and strive to follow the ideals set by the movement, then Betar is "good"; but if its members are indifferent and uninspired then we have no right to exist.

Discussion is good only if it achieves something. In Betar discussion is going in a vicious circle. We recognise that we are failing somehow in carrying out our aims, that our movement is not the size and calibre it ought to be, but instead of acting we talk: the native hue of resolution is sicklied over with the pale cast of thought.

Is there then a practical solution? So far there has been no answer to satisfy anyone as regards the ideology of Betar, nor a solution for attracting members to Betar. But while we talk we do not act. . .

"To be or not to be: that is the question", and it is up to our generation to decide.

—Louis de Vries  
*HaLapid*, December 1964

