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The Last Great Zionist

Herbert Zweibon

This issue of *Outpost* pays tribute to Shmuel Katz, the last great Zionist of Israel's founding generation, who died on May 9 at 93. Like no one since Zeev Jabotinsky (for whom he acted for a time as secretary), Katz served the Jewish people with selfless political integrity, indifferent to personal advantage. Americans for a Safe Israel is especially in his debt for he inspired its founding thirty-seven years ago.

For me, meeting Shmuel Katz was a life-transforming experience. I had been active in my synagogue, a buyer of Israel Bonds, typical of the vast majority of Jews who supported Israel and were comfortable in their confidence that Israel's government knew and did what was best for the country's future. Katz made me recognize that this was not the case, that the (then) Labor government was profoundly wrong in looking upon the territories Israel had taken in the Six Day War as bargaining chips for "peace" and that United States policy, wedded to the same false idea, had to be challenged.

And so my life has been immeasurably enriched, as I have taken my part, at Shmuel's side, in seeking to bring to pass what Israel Eldad called The Jewish Revolution, "the salvation of the Jewish people in its homeland." It has been a great adventure, bringing me in contact with a range of people I would never have dreamed I would come to know – from the true heroes of Israel, the much maligned "settlers," particularly those dedicated people living in places like Hebron, to Knesset members; from U.S. Congressmen to evangelical Christian leaders. Above all I have been privileged to meet AFSI members from every walk of life who believe that the Land of Israel is the birthright of the Jewish people.

Succeed or fail, this has been an enormously satisfying and important enterprise. The high hopes we once shared with Shmuel and the Land of Israel Movement, of which he was a member, have been frustrated. That Movement arose following the Six Day War of 1967 to emphasize that Israel could be a geopolitical factor in the region, with the historic heartland

of Judea and Samaria restored to the Jewish people, strategic depth and oil from the Sinai, the high ground on the Golan Heights a deterrent to Syria – and that unless Israel was such a regional power, it would be in mortal danger. Especially since the 1993 Oslo agreement, we have been appalled as successive blind and feckless governments, with the United States as determined cheerleader, have pursued the chimera of a New Middle East.

Katz never changed his principles and never lost his unerring ability to analyze events. When he was only 22, Jabotinsky said of his articles: "I must very earnestly congratulate you on the perfect clarity, the forcible simplicity, the *sachlichkeit* [matter of fact, to the point] with which you present the most complicated situations." This was as true of Katz at 93 as at 22, as his essays continued to lay out, with the same perfect clarity, the situation confronting Israel, the consequences of the actions her leaders were taking and the alternative policies they should pursue. We present in this *Outpost* an example of his recent columns as well as brief excerpts from two of his books.

Like prophets generally, Katz has been sidelined, dismissed, ignored by those who most needed to listen. I, personally, am proud to have been a disciple. While AFSI may not have grown to the size and had the impact on policy Katz would have liked, I know he was satisfied that we have kept our message and our focus: a strong Israel, in defensible borders that include its historic heartland of Judea and Samaria, is vital for the preservation of the state, the welfare of Jews throughout the world, and for United States interests in the region, deeply threatened by the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism. •

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Shmuel Katz: Steadfast Zionism, Humorous Charm

Douglas J. Feith

When Shmuel Katz talked about politics and current events, he did so less as a politician than as a prophet. His interest was not so much the art of the possible, but large and basic truths.

Shmuel was a thorough-going Zionist. In his marrow he felt the necessity for the Jewish people to have a sovereign and secure state in their ancient homeland. He defended the Jews' right to their state, a right rooted in law and history.

He knew a great deal of history – of the Jews, of Palestine, of the Middle East, and of the diplomacy of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He had studied all this with scholarly attention to facts and analysis and argumentation. He was a passionate advocate for the Zionist cause, but he did not argue as a mere polemicist; he backed up his views with documentation and lucid reasoning.

He was a stickler for historically precise terminology. He referred to Judea-Samaria, not the West Bank. He spoke of Palestinian Arabs, not simply Palestinians – the Jews are Palestinians too, he observed, and the Jews called themselves Palestinians when the Arabs of Palestine made a point of calling themselves Arabs rather than Palestinians. He rejected expressions – “occupied territories” and “Israeli-Palestinian conflict” – that he saw as incorrect or misleading. Shmuel would sometimes be told that his persnickety approach to terminology grated on his interlocutors; people can get irritated, after all, when their conventional phrases are challenged. But for Shmuel, the issue was truthfulness and accuracy, not sparing the sensibilities of the wayward.

Despite his prophet-like intensity and doggedness, Shmuel had a boisterous sense of humor. He commanded a vast store of funny Jewish stories. (The old Jew, newly arrived in Palestine, walks in a gorgeous grove and comes upon Rothschild's impressive tomb. “That's living!” he proclaims.) He deployed them aptly and laughed at them himself with infectious heartiness.

Shmuel liked to highlight Jabotinsky's sense of humor, especially when he talked about his personal contacts with his hero. Shmuel conveyed a vivid picture of a well-rounded Jabotinsky, a humane renaissance man of action and affairs. Jabotinsky had many brilliant facets – as a journalist, orator, political organ-

izer, philosopher, visionary, linguist, translator of Poe and Dante – and Shmuel reveled in all of them.

Shmuel's two-volume work on Jabotinsky's life, *Lone Wolf*, is a masterpiece of biography and an invaluable contribution to the history of Zionism. On a somewhat smaller scale, so too is Shmuel's biography of Aharon Aaronsohn. It was the last of Shmuel's books, the full set of which are a monument to Zionist inspiration, energy and idealism.

Special praise is due his best-selling *Battleground*, a handbook for Israel-lovers who want to counter the standard falsehoods by which Israel's enemies have impugned the Jewish state's legitimacy and reputation.

Shmuel was a rock. He was principled and reliable. His convictions were deeply rooted in his immense learning and he upheld them fiercely. As befits a prophet, there was nothing soft, apologetic or trendy about Shmuel, but there was much about him that was lovable as well as admirable.

My family and I spent a great deal of time with him over many years. We saw him last a few months ago in Israel. He had a terrible problem with his lower legs. When I called him to arrange a get together, I asked how he was doing. “Beseder gamoor,” he replied, laughing: “Down to my knees, I'm beseder; below that, I'm gamoor.” We loved him and we miss him. We're happy we have his books.

Douglas J. Feith, a friend of Shmuel Katz for thirty years, served as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the George W. Bush administration.

Despite his prophet-like intensity and doggedness, Shmuel had a boisterous sense of humor.



With Jewish leaders in NY, Seated L to R: Rabbi Alexander Schindler, Ambassador Simcha Dinitz, Menachem Begin, Katz, and Consul General Ben Ari, July 1977.

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Americans For a Safe Israel

1751 Second Ave. (at 91st St.)
New York, NY 10128

tel (212) 828-2424 / fax (212) 828-1717

E-mail: afsi@rcn.com web site: <http://www.afsi.org>

Mr. Prime Minister, Do Not Abandon The Golan

Shmuel Katz

Editors Note: This article, which appeared in The Jerusalem Post of August 8, 2007, is particularly salient today, as Prime Minister Olmert seems prepared to further eviscerate his country.

Whatever one may say about the Syrian President Bashar Assad he does not beat about the bush. In his recent speech in parliament he made it clear that peace with Israel is not his immediate concern. In evident response to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's offer to give him the Golan in exchange for peace, his haughty reply was that the Golan must be returned to Syria free, gratis and for nothing.

Then, with that achieved, he might, or he might not, be prepared to talk. This of course is in tune with the Pan-Arab policy of "phases" in the projected destruction of Israel. It was first propounded by president Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia in the 1950s, well before the Six Day War when Israel was locked into the 9-mile wide boundary of the 1949 Armistice Agreement. In more recent years, it became the mantra of the moderate Arab who will tell you gently over a cup of coffee, that a Palestinian state in the "occupied" territories will of course be only an interim step before they take the rest of the land.

Arafat consecrated this idea as the core of Arab strategy: take what you can, by diplomacy, by war, by whatever, and that will serve as a base for the next phase.

Assad is doing no more than recalling this principle and reminding us once more that handing over territory to the Arabs has never brought and will never bring peace. It would only accelerate and facilitate the coming of the final assault on the Jewish state.

In announcing his willingness to hand over the Golan to Syria, Olmert defies the national interest. It was only after Syria had launched three wars and one terror campaign against Israel that the Israeli government decided to incorporate the Golan into the state. Implementation of Olmert's proposal would not only be a severe blow to Israeli security, but would undermine Israel's right, as a victim of that repeated aggression, to take and keep the Golan. Here is a most relevant precedent: In World War II Nazi Germany's armies had penetrated deep into Soviet Russia as far as Stalingrad; and there began their long retreat.

The Soviets re-conquered the ravaged territory, and in the British House of Commons in February 1944 Prime Minister Winston Churchill, when asked what would be the future of the territories now in the hands of Britain's Soviet allies, he replied: "Twice in

our lifetime Russia has been violently assaulted. Many millions of Russians have been slain and vast tracts of Russian soil devastated as a result of repeated German aggression. Russia has the right of reassurance against future attacks from the West, and we are going all the way with her to see that she gets it." (The Soviets retained the territory. A part of it was originally Poland, and for that the Poles were subsequently compensated by territory from Germany).

What more precise historic parallel for Israel could Olmert need? Should he need parallels at all?

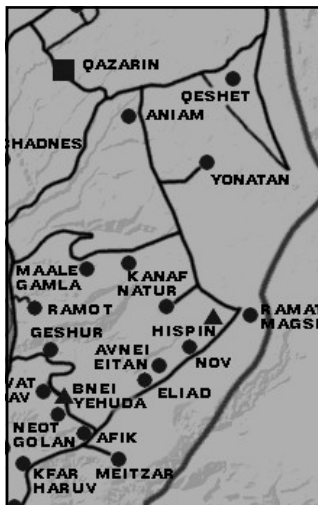
Here is a record of Syria's three aggressions. No more than three years after the Syrians gained their own independence from French trusteeship, Syria in 1948 freely entered into the alliance with six other members of the Arab League to prevent by force of war the birth of the State of Israel. The towering Golan Heights were a first-class natural base for Syria's onslaught. This was in 1948.

Miraculously, Israel survived against tremendous odds and suffering heavy casualties, but Syria retained the Golan; and then during the following 19 years, despite the armistice of 1949, playfully used the Heights as a launching-pad for lobbing shells down onto the Galilee.

It is a part of Israeli folklore that in those 19 years children in Galilee did much of their schooling in underground bunkers for protection from those shells. Partaking as targets for those attacks were also the fishermen of the Lake of Galilee.

Then in 1967, in company with Egypt and Jordan, Syria joined in a new assault on Israel. This was advertised well in advance, by Egyptian president Nasser, to be a "war of annihilation." Heavily buttressed, the Golan naturally played its part in the attack. This time however, Israel decisively won the war and was able to say "enough is enough." This time the Israeli Defense Force climbed and captured the Heights.

Israel, however, was given little respite. Six years later, and that on Yom Kippur, Syria, again in company with Egypt, made war on Israel. In hard fighting Syria failed to win back the Golan Heights and, indeed, lost an additional slice of territory to the east. Negotiations followed and, under pressure from U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Israel returned that slice, and a border was delineated between Israel



Jewish communities in the central Golan

and Syria.

That border, incidentally with Damascus in its sights, has ever since 1974 assured Israel of peaceful relations, such as they are, with Syria.

That border emphasizes the truth, for which a heavy price in blood has been paid, that only with the Golan in Israel's hands can peace be maintained. (In Europe, 60 years after Germany was defeated, has anybody dared, would anybody dare, to suggest that Polish territory be returned to Germany?)

It is not irrelevant to add that the Golan was never before a "Syrian" territory. It was historically Jewish, northern Galilee. It has a special history. It housed a thriving Jewish community for perhaps three centuries after the destruction of the Temple and contains many Talmudic memories.

It was naturally originally included in the territory of the British Mandate of 1922 for establishing the Jewish National Home in Palestine. In a very dubious "deal" with France in 1923, Britain was given lands from the Mosul area in France's mandated territory of Syria. These lands were "moved" on the map into the British mandated territory of Iraq. In return Britain rewarded France with 25% of her oil interests in Iraq—with the Jewish Golan as a bonus.

But beyond those external implications however far-reaching, Olmert's irresponsible proposal to reward Syria by giving it the Golan must be placed in a yet wider context, high in the scale of blunders committed and disasters generated by the prime minister in the past two years—first as adjunct to his mentor Ariel Sharon and then on his own account.

They are inexplicably linked one to the other, from the Gaza "disengagement" which was about to usher in the age of peace (remember Olmert's messianic promise of such a "new morning" to a New York audience) down to the relaxed unpreparedness and

then the amateurish handling of the Second Lebanon War.

Thus one is able to reach an understanding of the state of disorientation in the nation. That is where Israel is today.

Immediately striking in this latest stage is the fact that neither in Olmert's Golan proposal, nor in the supporting acclaim of his supporters in the media, has there been mention, not a hint, that giving up the Golan to Syria would involve the expulsion from their homes of some 20,000 men, women and children.

One must assume from Olmert's callous behavior toward the expellees of Gush Katif, and since their expulsion, that he believes that the success of the operation at Gush Katif would be repeated on the Golan, that he will give the order to the army, and they will do the job. A few protests, a little violence here and there and nothing more.

He should be warned. He is dead wrong. The 20,000 will not "go quietly." There will be many more "Ya'alons" in the army to oppose such an evil move. Many, many more soldiers will refuse to accept the role of bullying the people into the victimhood of expulsion. Too many of the people bulldozed into supporting the Gaza adventure have realized how mistaken they were.

It is most unlikely that Olmert will succeed. Even the financial cost of such an operation, which must amount to tens of billions would be prohibitive. Who would pay the cost? The Israeli taxpayer? The US? Not a chance.

Nevertheless, even if only as a protection of Israel's self-respect as a sane nation, Olmert should be pressed, especially by the people who cheered him on in Gaza, not to try again. It is they who should be the first to tell him "hands off the Golan!" •

Days of Fire

Samuel Katz

Editors Note: This is excerpted from Days Of Fire: The Secret Story of the Making of Israel, published in 1968 by W. H. Allen, London (pp 109-111). It had been published in Hebrew in Israel two years earlier.

I spent many hours with Begin in the little room in the Oppenheimer apartment [where Begin lived concealed from the British authorities hunting him down]. I told him of what I had seen and heard and done in Europe, of the repercussions and undertones in London after the Rome attack [on the British embassy in Rome, a blow against the center of British operations against immigration].

Together we examined and analyzed the show of British power and its weaknesses. These were becoming more sharply defined. Our task was clear: to intensify the struggle, increase its scope. It

was essential to bring home to the British people the strength of our purpose, to expose the growing and ultimately crippling price they would have to pay, in prestige, in material, and in human resources for their continued alien presence in Palestine. The struggle for them was senseless. The fiercer our onslaught, the faster would this understanding be achieved.

To the threats of martial law we published and broadcast a laconic response:

"We have a simple reply to the threats of the British terrorists. You will not frighten us...Even in the most difficult circumstances we shall find ways of hitting at the enemy."

These words were backed by the knowledge of the plans even then being made to broaden the immediate scope of operations. They sprang from the constant weighing of the contending forces in the struggle and from the concepts central to the Irgun's strategy from the outset: that the ending of British rule was within our power, that the British could be forced to leave Palestine.

Of course the British could physically crush the Jewish population of Palestine. But we knew something far more important: that there were limits of oppression beyond which the British government dared not go. She could not apply the full force of her power against us. Palestine was not a remote hill village in Afghanistan which could be bombed into submission. Palestine was a glass house watched with intent interest by the rest of the world. The British Government had discovered in 1945 that their behavior toward the Jews was an important factor in American attitudes and policies. American good will and American economic aid were vital to Britain's hopes and plans for revival from the ravages of the war and for the social reforms of the Labor Government.

The countries of Europe, still reeking of the gas chambers, were also a potential restraining influence. Europe, beginning to recover from the nightmare of German Occupation, would see excesses against the Jews as a British resumption of Hitler's work. Such a hostility might be of little practical significance; but it could not be disregarded by the British Government.

Less obvious but of a certain and, as we saw it, ultimately decisive force, was the climate of opinion in Britain itself. Only a deep and violent hatred could tolerate the kind of war their government would have to wage in order to crush the Jews. No such hatred existed.

The British had not been outraged by their government's efforts to liquidate Zionism and to subject the Jews of Palestine to its will. Foreign policy altogether was an area in which it was generally as-

sumed that the government of the day knew best what it was about. If they had been convinced that it was a vital national interest they might even have tolerated and accepted, with distaste and some protest, severe military measures in Palestine. But they had no such conviction. On the contrary: for a generation they had been told that Britain's task in Palestine was one of mediation and supervision, that she was fulfilling an altruistic role: ensuring justice, holding the peace, keeping Jews and Arabs from each other's throats. The elimination of the Jews "for the benefit of the Arabs," in a military campaign which could not be brief and which no censorship could conceal, was not a policy which could appeal to the British people.



Shmuel on an Irgun mission in France, 1946.

The Irgun was now concentrating on attacking British military transport. It forced the suspension of railway traffic. Day after day roads were mined; jeeps, trucks and armored cars were blown up. A new type of mine and a flame-thrower, both the products of the ingenious brain of the Chief of Operations, Amihai Paglin ("Giddy"), were used with great effect.

In those January days the difference between our outlook and that of the Jewish Agency was clear. The Weizmann school of frank defeatism had indeed been rejected at the Zionist Congress, and Dr. Weizmann had been forced into retirement. Weizmann honestly believed that to fight Britain was inconceivable; Ben-Gurion spoke of "resistance" but believed it was impossible, we were too weak, the British too strong. His view, expressed at the Zionist Congress in December, was that "we must not overestimate our strength."

Battleground

Samuel Katz

Editors note: this is excerpted from Chapter 4 of Battleground: Fact and Fantasy in Palestine published by Bantam Books, 1973.

The emergence and the progressive intensification of Jewish national identification in the Soviet Union has seemed miraculous even to many historically minded people. It is, in fact, merely an expression sharpened, deepened, and concentrated by the circumstances of the central fact of 3,500 years of Jewish history: the passion of the Jewish people for the land of Israel. The circumstances in which the Jewish people, its independence crushed nineteen centuries ago and large numbers of its sons driven into exile,

maintained and preserved its connection with the land are among the most remarkable facts in the story of mankind. For eighteen centuries the Zionist passion—the longing for Zion, the dream of the restoration, and the ordering of Jewish life and thought to prepare for the return—pulsed in the Jewish people. The passion finally gave birth to the practical and political organizations which, amid the storms of the twentieth century, launched the mass movement for the return to Zion and for restored Jewish national independence.

The Jews were never a people without a homeland. Having been robbed of their land, Jews never ceased to give expression to their anguish at their deprivation and to pray for and demand its return. Throughout the nearly two millennia of dispersion, Palestine remained the focus of the national culture. Every single day in all those seventy generations, devout Jews gave voice to their attachment to Zion.

The consciousness of the Jew that Palestine was his country was not a theoretical exercise or an article of theology or a sophisticated political outlook. It was in a sense all of these -- and it was a pervasive and inextricable element in the very warp and woof of his daily life. Jewish prayers, Jewish literature, are saturated with the love and the longing for and the sense of belonging to Palestine. Except for religion and the love between the sexes, there is no theme so pervasive in the literature of any other nation, no theme has yielded so much thought and feeling and expression, as the relationship of the Jew to Palestine in Jewish literature and philosophy. And in his home on family occasions, in his daily customs on weekdays and Shabbat, when he said grace over meals, when he got married, when he built his house, when he said words of comfort to mourners, the context was always his exile, his hope and belief in the return to Zion, and the reconstruction of his homeland. So intense was this sense of affinity that, if in the vicissitudes of exile he could not envisage that restoration during his lifetime, it was a matter of faith that with the coming of the Messiah and the Resurrection he would be brought back to the land after his death.

Over the centuries, through the pressures of Persecution—of social and economic discrimination, of periodic death and destruction—the area of exile widened. Hounded and oppressed, the Jews moved from country to country. They carried Eretz Israel with them wherever they went. Jewish festivals remained tuned to the circumstances and conditions of the Jewish homeland. Whether they remained in warm Italy or Spain, whether they found homes in cold Eastern Europe, whether they found their way to North America or came to live in the southern hemisphere where the seasons are reversed, the Jews celebrated the Palestinian spring and its autumn and winter. They prayed for dew in May and for rain in October. On Passover they ceremonially celebrated the liberation from Egyptian bondage, the original national establishment in the Promised Land—and they conjured up the



vision of a new liberation.

Never in the periods of greatest persecution did the Jews as a people renounce that faith. Never in the periods of greatest peril to their very existence physically, and the seeming impossibility of their ever regaining the land of Israel, did they seek a substitute for the homeland. Time after time throughout the centuries, there arose bold spirits who believed, or claimed, they had a plan, or a divine vision, for the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine. Time after time a wave of hope surged through the ghettos of Europe at the news of some new would-be Messiah. The Jews' hopes were dashed and the dream faded, but never for a day did they relinquish their bond with their country.

There were Jews who fell by the wayside. Given a choice under torture, or during periods of civic equality and material prosperity, they forsook their religion or turned their backs on their historic country. But the people, the Land—as it was called for all those centuries: simply Ha'aretz, the Land -- remained the one and only homeland, unchanging and irreplaceable. If ever a right has been maintained by unrelenting insistence on the claim, it was the Jewish right to Palestine.

Widely unknown, its significance certainly long ungrasped, is the no less awesome fact that throughout the eighteen centuries between the fall of the Second Jewish Commonwealth and the beginnings of the Third, in our time, the tenacity of Jewish attachment to the land of Israel found continuous expression in the country itself. It was long believed -- and still is -- even in some presumably knowledgeable quarters, that throughout those centuries there were no Jews in Palestine. The popular conception has been that all the Jews who survived the Destruction of 70 C.E. went into exile and that their descendants began coming back only 1,800 years later. This is not a fact. One of the most astonishing elements in the history of the Jewish people—and of Palestine—is the continuity, in the face of the circumstances, of Jewish life in the country. •

A Zionist Icon

William Van Cleave

It is very difficult to write a few hundred words about such a great and multifaceted man, Shmuel Katz, whom I have long admired and loved. I am not going to try to summarize his lifetime of activity and accomplishment. I only wish to give a partial feeling for the kind of man he was. He was a man of principle, one of fierce integrity, of selfless dedication -- a leader and a fighter. Jabotinsky once exclaimed tongue in cheek to him, "Katz, why is it that you can never stay out of trouble?" He was a teacher, mentor, historian, keen analyst of political realities, and unsur-

passed writer. His books are timeless and should inform generations. His writings covered a broad range. The man who could conduct meticulous research to produce the scholarly, two volume *Lone Wolf*, could also write a short piece entitled "Middle East History for Dummies."

Shmuel Katz was first and foremost a Zionist—perhaps the last of the great ones—going back to the age of 15 at least. *The Jerusalem Post* recently called him a "Zionist icon." He not only believed strongly in the justice of a State of Israel, he also believed—along with Jabotinsky—in an unpartitioned and strong Eretz Yisrael. The opening lines of Jabotinsky's poem, "The Song of Betar," read : "From

the pit of rot and dust, A nation shall arise, Proud and generous and hard."

All the same, the attributes that have greatly impressed me about Shmuel, but are not sufficiently mentioned, were his modesty, his generosity, his capacity for love and friendship, and his constant sense of humor. A few examples and anecdotes:

In all of the many photos in the two volume *Lone Wolf*, Shmuel included only one of himself, and that with his back to the camera.

His possessions were never too precious to share with or give to friends, as when he gave me his own—and only—original copy of *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, nearly falling apart with age.

A few years ago I married a German Professor. For a honeymoon I took her to Israel, as much to meet Shmuel as to sightsee. Shmuel came shuffling into the lobby of

the Wizo Parents Home with a smile. I said, "Shmuel I would like you to meet my wife." As he extended his hand, his first words were, "Tell me, my dear, how does it feel to be married to a Zionist?" They spent the next couple of days in deep conversation.

And when occasionally speaking about money, which Shmuel really did not care about, his favorite line was: "There is no shame in being poor. Of course, it is no great honor either."

I will miss this unique man terribly. I apply to Katz what he once said in an interview about Jabotinsky: "I tried to look for major faults. I really did. The problem was that I couldn't find any."



Katz with Israeli students at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (October 1977).

Dr. William R. Van Cleave is Professor Emeritus at the Department of Defense & Strategic Studies at Missouri State University.

Shmuel: His Very Self and Voice

Edward Alexander

The loss of Shmuel Katz, whose forceful, articulate, and witty voice remained powerful up until the end, is irreparable. Few such voices as Shmuel's are sounding today, either in Israel or the Diaspora. He was that rare example of a learned polemicist, one who did not dilute what he knew in order to make it easily swallowable by people too lazy to think or to read. He was as much at home in the archives of research libraries and public record offices as in the combat arena of journalism.

I was privileged to know Shmuel from 1977 onwards, and especially during the eighties when I taught at Tel-Aviv University and Leah and I lived in Jerusalem, where he would visit us whenever he came to town. He was, as everyone knows, a great raconteur, who could regale you with anecdotes for as long as you were willing to listen. And you always felt that here was a man who not only knew things and people that nobody else did but also epitomized a time when Jews had a culture and an inner world of their own.

Here is an excerpt from an interview with Hillel Halkin that appeared in *The Forward* (under the editorship of Lipsky, of course) in March 1996: "I was sent [in autumn 1937] from Palestine by the Irgun to speak to Jabotinsky about problems in the organization's leadership. I found him in a Warsaw hotel room, sitting next to a Polish count...who was throwing Jabo's socks into a valise. It seemed he had to catch a train to Lodz, where he was supposed to speak. 'Are you doing anything special in the next few days?' he asked me. 'No,' I answered. 'Then come with me,' he said. We took the

train together to Lodz, and that night he spoke at a local cinema. Jabotinsky had only one message in those days for the Jews of Europe--'Get out any way you can, because there is a catastrophe coming.' On the way into the cinema, he was greeted by a crowd of howling hecklers, Communists, Bundists, and left-wing Zionists. The police escorted him in but left me behind, and when I tried to follow, a Polish policeman punched me in the chest and sent me flying. ...Jabo stood on a stool to see over the crowd and when he spotted me still sitting in a daze on the sidewalk, he walked over with a big grin and said, 'Katz, why is it that you can never stay out of trouble?'"

We would occasionally visit Shmuel in his Dizingoff apartment. Such visits were experienced on the pulse as well as in the mind because of the physical effort involved: climbing up five flights of stairs and then not being able to sit down until Shmuel had cleared away the piles of books and magazines that concealed most of his furniture. He lived simply, if not quite ascetically. On more than one occasion, when he was at work on his Jabotinsky biography, I left his apartment carrying not only my briefcase but terrifically heavy shopping bags filled with hundreds of manuscript pages of the book in progress.

I would also from time to time bump into Shmuel on the non-stop Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem bus, and the 50-minute trip changed from an ordeal into a pleasure. Unlike other Israeli "eminentoes," I should add, he stood his place in the queue and did not claim special privileges as a former Knesset member.

He was the most loyal of friends. If you were sick, you could be certain that Shmuel would call nearly every night to see how you were doing; he checked on you more frequently than a nurse in a hospital.

It was said of Voltaire, whose letters alone now fill about forty volumes, that nobody ever discarded a letter from him. I think the same might be said of Shmuel, and I should like to offer some representative excerpts.

He could spot journalistic fraud at a distance of fifty miles, as in this instance from November 1986: "A characteristic [David Shipler] item in the NYT was the description of an Arab civilian addressing a Jewish soldier as *adoni* which, Shipler explained, means 'my lord'--demonstrating how Israelis demand groveling and subservience from the oppressed Arabs. Shipler was here for several years and knew that *adoni* is used a hundred times a day for 'mister,' 'hey you there,' or for 'waiter'....In short, Shipler is a deliberate malicious faker."

Many of Shmuel's letters convey the intellectual excitement and emotional immediacy of his great study of Jabotinsky. Again from November 1986: "...I'm dealing with a not unexpectedly complicated year--1919, at first glance triumphant, and so regarded for a long time...but in fact a tragic year, seminally disastrous. Many things were happening simultaneously, including already the retreat from the Balfour Declara-



Jabotinsky welcomed by Jewish Legion veterans in London, Summer 1920

tion; and I have moral and structural problems because I am not dealing with a single-dimensional Jabotinsky. I intended putting him in the framework of his time and circumstances (British treachery, Weizmann's weakness much earlier than was thought)...When you come I'll be happy to tell you more." "I am still in thrall to Jabotinsky," he wrote me in October 1990, "but have to complete the writing more or less on time....By dint of working on the book every day I have reached 1937. You know what those three last years of his life meant--and did--to Jabo and to the Jewish people--and I have to relive them."

For those who had no personal experience of Shmuel's ineffable charm, his reputation will rest on the decades-long tenacity with which he demonstrated that the Diaspora strategy of accommodation had taken its deadliest form in Zion itself, in the Chelm-like policy of yielding contiguous territory to enemies dedicated to Israel's destruction--in hopes of placating them.

Edward Alexander is professor emeritus of English at the University of Washington.

My Friendship With Shmuel

Yisrael Medad

Probably like most people, I "met" Shmuel Katz for the first time through one of his books. I was on a year's program in Israel in 1966 when *Days of Fire* was published in its original Hebrew edition. Unlike some other Irgun memoirs, this book offered much more than a personal perspective on historic events. While gripping reading, *Days of Fire* was on an additional level entirely--history written in the fashion of the best academics, with a broad perspective and meticulous attention to detail.

Dr. Rafael Medoff of the Wyman Institute has noted that *Days of Fire* was the first book to expose the Allies' failure to bomb the Auschwitz death camp. Using documents from British and Zionist archives and a map, Katz recounted how Jewish Agency leaders were rebuffed by British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden in July 1944 when they requested an Allied air attack on Auschwitz and its rail lines. "It was fifty-seven days, September 1, before the British Foreign Office sent its reply, a period during which the majority of the Jews of Hungary were exterminated," Katz wrote. At that same time, air drops to the Polish Home Army forces were undertaken by British planes, flying from the Foggia air base in Allied-occupied Italy. "The death camp at Auschwitz was 200 miles nearer than

Warsaw to the base at Foggia," Katz pointed out.

With the publication of *Battleground* in 1973, "Moekie" Katz's position as the foremost disciple of Ze'ev Jabotinsky was cemented. Shortly thereafter, I made contact with him. Upon my return from a two-year stint working with Betar in England, we discussed my working with him. (During those two years in England I had traveled to Paris with Barbara Oberman to join Moekie for the launching of the French edition of *Battleground*--my first meeting with Michel Gurfinkiel, who organized the book launch off the Champs Elysee.) At this time Moekie was expecting that Menachem Begin, newly elected as Prime Minister, would appoint him Minister for Public Diplomacy and that we would set aright the chronic failings of Israel's *Hasbara* (information services). But it was not to be. Moshe Dayan, whom Begin took from the Labor Party to be his Foreign Minister, sabotaged the project.

I had been working for Geula Cohen at her Academy for National Studies in Tel Aviv and returned there when employment with Moekie failed to pan out. When I found myself occasionally stranded in Tel Aviv, Moekie offered me the couch at his Dizengoff apartment. Until he moved to the WIZO home for seniors a few years ago, I estimate I had made use of that couch hundreds of times. And every time, before going to bed and just before leaving, Moekie and I would discuss the political events of the day.

Moekie was invited to family events which he

attended with relish. He always made a point to inquire how I was doing. He found ways to supplement my salary for which I was grateful despite my protestations that doing work for him was payment enough for me.

After leaving his position as Begin's advisor in early 1978, Moekie began publishing op-eds in *Ma'ariv* and *The Jerusalem Post*. In 1981, he asked me to edit what became *Battletruth*, which appeared in 1983. *Battletruth* collected just over 100 of Katz's op-eds spanning two and a half years. Divided into 15 sections, the articles showed chronologically how the developments Moekie foresaw, with almost prophetic vision, came about. The book highlighted his irrefutable logic, political erudition, political grasp and sense of history.

After *Battletruth* came *Lone Wolf*, his monumental biography of Jabotinsky, for which he turned me into a research assistant. During that period I would never ask him how he was feeling (he always suffered from a circulatory problem in his feet) but would ask "What year are you in?" referring to his progress in the book.

From then on, several times a year, either for a book, an article or some

other project, a call would come from Moekie and I'd be off to the Zionist Archives, Knesset newspaper archives or another library. For example, last year I was engaged in seeking out documents on the French-British arrangement which lost Israel the Golan in 1923 when the British traded the region for Mosul. Moekie was following up on another British betrayal.

These last few years, I can attest, sorely tried Moekie's natural optimism. Whereas he criticized the entire Oslo process for being built upon false expectations, he viewed the last half-dozen years of Sharon and Olmert as grounded in simple corruption and betrayal of national goals for personal advantage. He told me that beyond the political stupidity of our leaders, especially in their relations with the United States, and their ineptitude in conducting negotiations with Israel's Arab enemies, was a failure of personal character--both on the Left and Right. The country, he believed, was being sacrificed for private objectives. The Zionist vision was being left in the lurch.

Over the last few months I was attempting to collect his articles for a sequel to *Battletruth*, which he was eager to see published. He also felt it important that Chapter Four of *Battleground* be reprinted for mass distribution among students. He was concerned that he would not be leaving behind a body of thought that represented his last 30 years of political analysis.

We agreed that the anthology would follow the pattern I had proposed 25 years earlier: the articles on a specific subject would follow in a chronological pattern to show how Moekie had been correct in his analysis. I supplemented my own files with archive material made available through Elliot Jager from *The Jerusalem Post*. The total number of articles from which we were to make our selection grew to be over 400. But I succeeded in transferring to him only the titles and my idea that the section headings should be more generalized. I had come up with a name, *Battle-sense*, but that, too, came too late. My hope is that the book will yet be published.

I was especially proud to be part of the tribute paid to Moekie on the occasion of his 90th birthday which we celebrated at the Begin Center. The last great occasion was the launching of Moekie's last book *The Aaronsohn Saga*, on the NILL spy ring during World War I, held on February 29th of this year. Sir Martin Gilbert spoke and praised Moekie and Moekie, in his wheelchair and despite his frailty, responded for some 20 minutes. His last public appearance

was a fortnight later, at a gathering of the South African Zionist Federation in Israel when he was honored once more.

My last visit to Moekie was two weeks or so before Passover. He had just come out of the hospital where they had amputated his lower left leg. He repeated what he had been saying for a few years, that he was satisfied that, at the least, everything above his neck was in perfect condition. And that was true. Until his last hospital stay, he read two newspapers daily and we talked once a week or so. There was always the complete grasp of events--and jokes--along with a withering critique of Israel's leadership. What was obvious to us both was that it pained him to be as pessimistic as he was and I am sure that contributed to the final physical breakdown of his body.

There is the public persona and in that role, Moekie was towering. As an unofficial diplomat, as a participant in academic colloquia, an advisor, commentator and author, he was undefeatable in argument and indefatigable. Rarely did I observe him become angry but he could do that, too, and his words and tone would become slashing. But he was kind, gentle and considerate and, as he sometimes admitted to me, all he wanted to be was a *Yiddishe mensch*, a good Jewish person.

Yisrael Medad directs Educational Programming and Information Resources at the Begin Heritage Center.



With Yisrael Medad in March 2008 at the South African Zionist Federation.



With Senator Henry Jackson

The Essential Shmuel

William Mehlman

The "two-state solution" to the Arab-Israeli conflict is old snake oil in a new bottle. As Shmuel Katz, then media advisor to newly minted prime minister Menachem Begin made clear in an illuminating exchange with Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter's foreign policy guru, at a 1977 White House luncheon, it was no more palatable than it is now.

"Why shouldn't you agree to a plan [for a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria] that will guarantee your security without the Arab problem?" Katz reported Brzezinski as remarking (*The Hollow Peace*, 1981, p. 124): "The Jordan River can serve as a security border and your army will be positioned there and the zone will be demilitarized."

Katz: "First of all, I do not believe the Arabs would concur in any arrangement of that kind. From their point of view, it is 'without honor...' If they do agree, it would be with the intention of reversing the situation within a year or two. And, of course, arms would be brought into the region from the very first moment...."

Brzezinski: "But you would always be able to go back in."

Katz: "And you would be the first to demand our withdrawal from the 'Arab sovereign territory.' You would give us 24 hours to get out. You or whoever replaces you... And the whole world would side with you..."

It is this remarkable clarity of vision that will be most sorely missed with the passing of Shmuel Katz. While he proved overly optimistic in believing the arming of Israel's implacable enemies would at least have to wait upon their acquisition of statehood, who in 1977 could have foreseen an Israeli political leadership standing in silent witness to and in some cases outright complicity with this process?

In respect to that leadership, Katz minced no words. He regarded Ehud Olmert as "totally unprincipled" and challenged the prime minister, President Bush and their respective foreign ministers to "provide a smidgen of evidence to suggest that a Palestinian state will not be a terror state." Evidential truth was the hallmark of all his writings. Nothing before or since his classic *Battleground: Fact & Fantasy in Palestine* has come near matching the effectiveness of his assault on "the fog of fantasy and dissimulation" surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict—not least the hoax of forced Arab displacement in 1948 at the hands of the fledgling Jewish state. It is with no small sense of pride that AFSI's representatives in Israel have seen to it that every new media correspondent arriving in the country is furnished with a copy of this landmark work. While its influence may be only rarely detectable in

their reporting, it is difficult to imagine any new journalist trying to make sense of events in Israel without *Battleground* as context.

Unlike some historians, Shmuel Katz never cushioned the truth, even when the truth hurt. For all his devotion to his leader and mentor Ze'ev Jabotinsky, there is not a hagiographic note intruding on the 1,800 pages of *Lone Wolf*, his definitive two-volume account of the life and times of Zionism's towering visionary. He resisted what must surely have been the

temptation to marginalize the ramifications of Jabotinsky's inexplicable rejection of the presidency of the World Zionist Organization when it was literally handed to him by Chaim Weizmann, following the latter's defeat in a no-confidence vote by delegates to the 17th Zionist Congress in 1931. Katz spared himself an editorial verdict on Jabo's fateful decision, but his wonderment at the course Zionism and the history of Israel might have taken had Jabotinsky grasped the challenge can hardly be doubted.

Shmuel Katz never lost the philosophical twinkle in his eye or his fascination with the bizarre turns history can take, even in the final months of his growing physical infirmity. Among the most amazing of these reminiscences was his account of a confrontation with Henry Kissinger sometime after the Yom Kippur War. Katz had only a nodding acquaintanceship with Richard Nixon's and Gerald Ford's secretary of state, but Kissinger was apparently well aware of Katz's underground activities in behalf of the pre-Israel Irgun Zvai Leumi. He must also have been sensitive to allegations that he had deliberately delayed American resupply of munitions and military spare parts to Israel during the first critical week of the war. When a rumor -- totally unfounded -- began circulating that Shmuel had put out a contract on his life, Kissinger reportedly went into a frenzy.

Shmuel, informed of what had transpired and anxious to put the rumor to rest, arranged a face-to-face meeting with Kissinger at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York. "From the moment I entered his suite until I left three minutes later," Katz related to a small circle of friends in Tel Aviv, "he did not stop shouting at me. He never gave me a chance to refute the rumor. In fact I never got a chance to say a word. Finally, I just turned around and walked out."

Whatever debt Henry Kissinger may or may not have felt he owed his conscience, he must surely have learned by now that it wasn't Shmuel Katz who had come to collect.

William Mehlman represents AFSI in Israel and is co-editor of the Internet magazine Zionnet.net.



Shmuel shaking hands with President Carter. National Security advisor Brzezinski is at left.

Shmuel Katz: Israel's Winston Churchill

Joel Gilbert

In the history of modern Zionism, Shmuel Katz was a giant.

I met Shmuel when I was a student in Israel at the age of 18. Only a year later, I began studying at the University of London. I was honored when Shmuel asked me to be his London researcher for his planned two volume work on Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky, *Lone Wolf* (or just *Jabo* in Hebrew).

Shmuel had told me many stories of his affection for Zeev Jabotinsky, and the time he spent with him in Europe prior to World War II as his traveling secretary. Shmuel attended speech after speech, as Jabotinsky encouraged Jewish immigration to Palestine, while warning of impending disaster for European Jewry. Shmuel also told me of his time in London, as editor and publisher of the Revisionist Zionist weekly in the late 1930's (at Jabotinsky's request), and of observing Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler.

Over the next three years, I dug deep into the files of the British Mandatory authority in Palestine which were housed at the British Public Record Office in Kew Gardens. Many of the files I examined had only recently been released by the British government, after being sealed for 40 years. I extracted for Shmuel a number of letters between Jabotinsky and the British authorities, as well as numerous documents illustrating British policy to suppress Jewish immigration during Hitler's romp through Europe. Hand-written notes by British officials on the margins of documents revealed anti-Semitic attitudes as a force in British thinking. Shmuel worked on *Jabo* for seven years—an epic 2 volume, 1,000 page work.

After Begin's death, I recall in 1983 asking Tzachi Hanegbi, then foreign policy advisor to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, "Why doesn't the Likud turn to Shmuel Katz for leadership?" Hanegbi, later the subject of several ethical probes, answered, "Shmuel Katz could never be Prime Minister because he would never compromise on his principles."

Indeed, Shmuel had resigned from the Herut Knesset list in the early 1950's, then once again as Begin's advisor in 1977 in protest at abandonment of principle. Shmuel often reminded me that Jabotinsky

did not like Menachem Begin, and didn't think he would make a good leader. Jabotinsky likened Begin's speeches to the sound of a creaking old door.

Central to Shmuel's writings over the past 30 years was what he described as the tragic void of leadership in Israeli politics and a political system which recycled failed leaders over and over. Moshe Dayan, Shmuel wrote, was a total failure. As chief of staff of the IDF, Dayan had opposed pre-empting the war in 1967 against Egypt and Syria, and along with Golda Meir had acquiesced to Henry Kissinger's demand that Israel not pre-empt the 1973 attack by Egypt and Syria, despite their fore-knowledge. The latter episode so unnerved Dayan, Shmuel wrote, that he broke down and cried, and called for Israel to surrender to Egypt! When Begin pulled Dayan from these depths to appoint him as his foreign minister, Katz knew great things were not in the offing. Meanwhile, Begin's Defense Minister, Ezer Weizmann, Shmuel told me, acted in effect as a spy for Egypt. Weizmann would meet with the Egyptian delegation and tell them how to deal with each person in the Israeli negotiating teams, and how to overcome their positions.

As with Moshe Dayan, Shmuel pointed out, Israel's recycling of failed leadership continued. Rabin was reelected as Prime Minister after a previous failure, only to rescue the exiled and defeated PLO as Israel's "partners for peace." Prime Minister Ehud Barak implemented the unilateral withdrawal from Southern Lebanon leading to the Hizbullah takeover of the area. Today Ehud Barak is the Israeli Defense Minister. Shimon Peres engineered the disastrous Oslo Accords—yet Peres was elevated to President

Like Winston Churchill prior to World War II, Shmuel Katz was Israel's unheeded voice of clarity: he had the charisma, integrity, and vision to be Israel's greatest leader.

I once paid Shmuel what he said was the biggest compliment he ever got, "Shmuel, I used to think you were a genius, but now I realize that all you write is really just common sense."

Joel Gilbert is the writer and director of Farewell Israel: Bush, Iran and The Revolt of Islam

Jabotinsky's Heir

Ruth King

The first book I read when I found my Zionist home in AFSI was Katz's *Battleground*. It was and remains the definitive text on the history and context of the Arab/Israel wars.

In 1977, shortly after the election of Menachem Begin, David Bar Illan, the late journalist and world class pianist, and his wife Beverly invited me to their home to meet Katz, who had accompanied Begin

as adviser on his first state visit to the United States. Thanks to the unequalled kindness, devotion to AFSI, and hospitality of Beverly Bar-Illan, Shmuel became a frequent and favored lodger there.

I appreciated Shmuel's association with Zeev Jabotinsky, the Zionist prophet who persuaded my parents to immigrate to Bolivia. Because of my father's predilection for the legacy of Betar and the Irgun I was also familiar with the struggle to liberate Palestine.

Shmuel was in many ways the natural heir to Jabotinsky. In some ways he surpassed Jabotinsky

who had a rather rosy view of a future reconciliation between Jews and Arabs.

Katz understood the faith-driven historic hatred of Islam for Jews and its unalterable determination to extirpate the Jewish state from the hoped-for Middle East Caliphate. When I once remarked that I was pleasantly startled by seeing Sadat emerge from a plane and shake hands with assembled Israeli leaders, Shmuel exploded and explained that a “hudna”—Arabic for a temporary, strategic and non binding truce—was all that was achieved. He reminded me of the *jihadi* calls to war against Israel by so called secularists such as Assad and Nasser and the long and painful legacy of Arab/Moslem anti-Semitism.

Shmuel was outraged that Israelis and their American supporters did not denounce Sadat, an aggressor in the surprise attack on Israel in 1973, that he issued ultimatums to the Knesset, especially on matters such as Judea and Samaria which had absolutely no connection to Egypt. Shmuel warned that the “autonomy” Begin promised would lead to statehood.

Shmuel broke with Menachem Begin when he accepted the outlines of the Camp David Accords and refused a plum appointment as Ambassador to the United Nations. These were acts of principle unfamiliar in Israeli politics.

Although unbending in his lifelong dedication to the Land of Israel, Shmuel could also be light-hearted, cheerful and occasionally naïve. He liked Jimmy Carter when he first met him. He was dazzled by Ms. Lillian, the President’s mother, who spoke movingly about Israel and the Holocaust. He was also taken by the President’s sister, the late Ruth Carpenter, who had an Evangelical’s love for Zion.

Many years later, when I teasingly reminded

him how much mischief Carter did and how many harmful policies against Israel were promoted by Schindler (whom Katz liked because as president of the President’s Conference in 1977 he had squired Begin and Katz through congress and various Jewish organizations in shock that a right wing government had been elected), Katz told me to “close the book of grievances,” as he called it, and concentrate on the present danger. He never did like to admit an error, and, in fact, there were few errors made by this remarkable guardian of Israel.

In one of our last conversations, conducted by phone after he became too feeble to travel, I asked how he kept himself busy after having completed his last book on Aharon Aaronsohn and the Nili group. He responded that he read, wrote an occasional column, and read the newspapers, including *Ha’aretz*.

I was astonished that he read *Ha’aretz*, which had become so inimical to Katz’s principles. His response was that he skipped the political articles but that the paper often had interesting columns on unsung Jewish heroes and the role they played in the history of Israel and the defense of Jews. No one deserves such a tribute as much as Katz, underground leader, prophet, hero and defender of Zion.

I have never known anyone quite like Shmuel; gadfly, scold, flirt, brilliant, determined, impatient, witty, charming and combative. Above all he was unflinching in his love for the Land of Israel.

When I spoke at a tribute to Shmuel on his eightieth birthday, I remarked that he had a congenital abnormality of the knees because he could not bend or kneel or crawl. He was proud of his heritage and when I spoke to him, always hopeful for the future.

His memory is a blessing. •

Americans For A Safe Israel
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