

# 'WE HAVE A STATE'

Early pioneers can be proud of what their dream has become

BY RACHEL KAPEN

It was the evening of Nov. 29, 1947. I knew that something big was going to take place. Only in years to come, however, did I realize the full significance of the moment.

Almost all of our neighbors were gathered in our apartment house on Herzl Street at the southern end of Tel Aviv — the house that my father, Yosef Garber, built.



Rachel Kapen  
of West  
Bloomfield

All ears were glued to the radio, pencils in hand, trying to guess the possible outcome of the fateful vote which was to take place in the United Nations General Assembly on the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state.

Because of the time difference, it was already midnight. As I drifted off to sleep, I was awakened by thunderous applause and shouts of "mazel tov."

My father leaned toward me with tears in his eyes and said, "We have a state." I'll never forget that moment or his words, even though at the time I was not aware that history was unfolding in front of my eyes.

And then followed that unforgettable Friday, May 14, 1948, when our esteemed "old man," David Ben-Gurion, read the famous words of the Declaration of the Independence of the State of Israel in the old Tel Aviv museum. The following day the rule of the British Mandate finally ended, and the State of Israel was reborn after 2,000 years. There was much rejoicing in the streets of Tel Aviv. Throngs of men, women and children were singing and dancing in the kind of spontaneity which may occur only once in the life of a person or in the life of a nation.

For my family, however, the general happiness was dampened by deep concern for my father. Stubborn as he was, he refused everyone's advice and my mother's pleadings, and he went to his factory in the heart of Arab Jaffa (Jaffa). As predicted, there was rioting in protest of the Jewish state. My father's factory was burned to the ground. He, wounded and in a state of shock, was saved by a loyal and kind-hearted Arab employee. He took him home and tended to his wounds as best he could. Early the next morning, the employee managed to smuggle my father back to safety dressed as an Arab. My parents never forgot this act of kindness.

My father's factory was never rebuilt, and he refused to ask for compensation from the government. He regarded his financial losses, as devastating as they were, as his little sacrifice for the Jewish state.

The just-born State of Israel was already engulfed in a struggle for its life. Since our street bordered Jaffa, it became a convenient target for the snipers who were situated on top of the mosque nearby. Crossing the street became a life-and-death situation. My father decided that we should leave our



Photo courtesy of Rachel Kapen

Laborer Yosef Garber, 3rd from left, is off to work with other pioneers to build Tel Aviv in 1925. At the time, what would become the second-largest city in the State of Israel was mostly sand.

home for the duration of the war. We found temporary shelter in a small wooden shack in the small town of Even-Yehuda.

My father didn't come along with us. He was named area commander by the Civil Defense. His job was to make sure all windows were blacked out, all lights were out and all residents found shelter as soon as the all-too-familiar siren sounded.

At the end of the War of Independence, or War of Liberation as it was called, we returned to our bullet-riddled home in Tel Aviv. Not long after, we were proud to attend a ceremony at the Tel Aviv City Hall where my father, together with some comrades, received a special commendation for dedicated service during the war.

Almost overnight the Jewish Yishuv of Eretz-Israel, as our Jewish community was called in pre-state days, with a population of no more than 600,000, became the State of Israel, which by the end of 1951 added 700,000 to its population, more than doubling it. The olim, or new immigrants, had to live in temporary housing. They were shanty towns made up of tents, or little dwellings made of tin or wood. They became part of the landscape of the newly established state.

The new state also had to share its food supplies with thousands from Europe, Yemen, Iraq and other

Arab lands that drove them out after Israel's independence. Food rationing was enacted by the government in 1949. Most staples such as sugar, flour, rice, eggs and chicken were rationed. We were allowed nine eggs per month; however, in 1956 there was a bit of good news. One more egg! Meat was a real luxury — only 75 grams per month. This had a lifelong effect on me. For the life of me, I can't see good food going to waste.

Israel underwent huge changes in the 50 years of its existence. In some respects it could be called Little America. The more recent immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union have done a great deal to change its human landscape and culture. Most of all, instead of the 600,000 Jews at the time of independence, Israel now numbers close to 6,000,000, including Arab minorities.

Whenever I go back and see all the changes, not all to my liking, I feel nostalgic about the Israel of my parents and their generation of founding fathers and mothers. But I try to remind myself that they intended Israel to be a normal state among other states in the world, with the good and bad. Israel certainly qualifies in both categories. They also wanted it to be a haven for all Jews, not only Jews from Eastern Europe like themselves. That is why I am sure, in spite of all that has happened, they would be proud of Israel's incredible achievements in the 50 years since independence. I know I am proud.

Rachel Kapen came to the United States with her American husband in 1963.

## How could anyone think India would shun nukes?

So, India has conducted its second test of a nuclear weapon, and its third, fourth, fifth and sixth, in the past few days. That puts it 1,026 tests behind the United States. And we are shocked.

What now comes from Washington is sanctimony of the on-the-other-hand variety.

On the one hand, the U.S. government proclaims the most cynical and hypocritical nonsense about our stewardship — God-given, we think — of the right to destroy any other nation that does not meet our own unquestioned standards of morality and good manners.

On the other hand, we project truly charming self-delusion about our role and image in what we like to see as the global yearning for the benefits of American consumer democracy.

Unfortunately there is some truth to "on the other hand." Most nations, at least the big ones, do want at least one of the things the United States has: the official symbol and reality of modern national adulthood, nuclear weapons.

Can there really be anyone in the United States, including the entire State Department and our comic Central Intelligence Agency, who is surprised by this big bang? Well, perhaps our ambassador, a former governor of Ohio, was a bit taken aback. Or, maybe he actually did know something. What better place to be than vacationing in Hawaii when India blew off a big one just 70 miles from the border of its ever-adversary, Pakistan?

By the way, isn't that 20 miles closer than the Soviets got with medium-range missiles in Cuba when we were ready to go to war over the possibility that those wobbly rockets could accommodate nuclear warheads?

This has been coming for a long, long time — and we have been foolishly or deliberately looking the wrong way for decades. Fifteen years ago, in 1983, we, the Reeves family, were living in the best neighborhood in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. (My wife was doing work with refugee camps just across the border from the Afghan-Soviet war.)

Like everyone else around there, in-

cluding American diplomats, we knew why military cars arrived each morning to take the fellow around the corner, Abdul Qadeer Khan, to his office — or laboratory. Khan was in charge of building an atomic bomb out in the Pakistani desert at a place called Kahuta. This was the so-called Islamic bomb, ready for use against India, which had conducted its first test in 1974. Whatever we thought, Pakistanis believed nuclear weapons were essential to checkmate the chance of being overwhelmed by India, their 10-times-as-big neighbor.

Whether Pakistan has actually bolted together its bomb, I do not know. But on Tuesday, Abdul Qadeer Khan said: "We are like a cook waiting for the orders." In other words, he assured Pakistanis, they can match India.

Actually, they can't, but such are the misperceptions that lead to wars. India is emphasizing that it is concerned about Pakistan obtaining missiles from China. And at this point in history, after three India-Pakistan wars, it is arguable that the Indians are indeed more anxious to prepare for conflict with China, or with both China and Pakistan, than with Pakistan alone.

So now it is time for American preaching about hellfire to come. But only Americans will listen to such bluster from the bully's pulpit. The rest of the world has heard it all before. They are laughing at it again in India as they celebrate their own advances; the Indians, too, are accomplished at preaching one thing and doing another.

From the very beginning, back in 1945, U.S. nuclear policy has had a single goal: nonproliferation. Non-proliferation — think about it — meant monopoly. It meant then that only America would have the bomb. It means now that the nuclear club, headed by the United States, wants the bomb only for those who already have one. We and the other acknowledged nuclear powers advocate nonproliferation but always vote in the United Nations against elimination of the weapons.

Our policy is not stupid. It's hypocritical and delusory, but not stupid. What was stupid was to actually believe that countries such as India, Pakistan, China, and Iran and Israel, too, would act on American words and illusions rather than on their own national interests and fears. This American blunder of intelligence and intellect is not another inside-the-Beltway joke. This is an affair of state, a failure of state. Officials should not be subpoenaed or mocked; they should resign or be fired.

RICHARD REEVES



## This merger must be stopped

BY JOEL D. JOSEPH

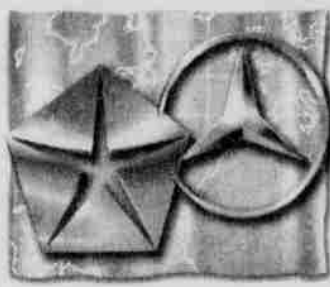
Mercedes gobbled up Chrysler almost as quickly as Adolf Hitler's troops conquered Poland. We must stop Daimler-Benz in its tracks, because its actions are anticompetitive, and its power could ultimately be used to the detriment of workers in the United States. Further, Mercedes has received Chrysler for a fraction of what it is really worth.

Most observers have found overall benefit to the merger. It will help Chrysler gain a foothold in Europe, we are told. But to gain this marketing benefit in Europe, the two huge auto companies did not have to merge — they could enter into a joint marketing agreement like many airlines have. Under such an agreement, Chrysler vehicles could be sold in Mercedes dealerships. This type of agreement would have the benefits without the downside of the proposed merger.

One day after signing the takeover papers, Mercedes officials announced intentions to call off its plans for a Mercedes minivan. This action demonstrates that a Mercedes takeover of Chrysler will lessen competition in the auto industry, as Chrysler is the dominant manufacturer of minivans. This megamerger apparently violates the antitrust laws of the United States because of this reduction in competition. Mercedes already directly competes with Chrysler in the sale of sport utility vehicles. Mercedes produces the M-class in Alabama while Chrysler manufactures the Dodge Durango in Delaware and the Jeep Grand Cherokee in Michigan.

This merger will reduce competition and should be opposed by the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department. Historically, mergers of this type have resulted in increased prices and worker layoffs. Several years from now, we may regret that decisions on American plant closings are made in Stuttgart, not in Detroit.

The victorious corporation is Daimler-Benz. Its shareholders will own 57



We may regret that decisions on plant closings are made in Stuttgart, not in Detroit.

percent of the new corporation. But is this domination fair? Chrysler earned substantially more profits than Mercedes last year. Chrysler earned \$2.8 billion while Mercedes earned only \$1.76 billion after taxes. Mercedes has been misleading the press by releasing its pre-tax profits of \$2.4 billion, while disclosing Chrysler's after-tax profits.

It has been Mercedes Benz that has had a rocky few years, not Chrysler. As recently as 1995, Mercedes suffered an annual loss of 7 billion Deutsch marks (about \$5 billion). Yet it is Mercedes that will receive the majority of the new corporation.

Based on profits, and that is what capitalism is all about, Chrysler should have bought Mercedes. The price-earnings ratio for Chrysler at the merger price is less than half of the same ratio for Mercedes. In other words, Mercedes got Chrysler at a bargain-basement price.

Insiders at Chrysler are all too excited about the prospect of being able to drive a Mercedes to work. These executives at Chrysler were apparently jealous of the Jaguars driven by Ford executives and the Saabs driven by General Motors brass. Several years

ago Ford bought the failing Jaguar motor car company, and General Motors eagerly gobbled up Saab, the money-losing Swedish car maker. These two purchases have cost Ford and General Motors billions of dollars, with no likelihood of receiving their investments back.

From Mercedes' standpoint, the acquisition of Chrysler makes good sense. It increases the overall price-earnings ratio, because Chrysler is making much more money than Mercedes. It allows Mercedes to save billions of dollars in development costs for its now-canceled minivan.

In the long run, thousands of workers on both sides of the Atlantic will be fired. That is how these mergers save money, by getting rid of highly paid workers. What happens three years from now when the U.S. dollar is strong and the Euro becomes weak? American autoworkers are likely to be fired.

Several years back Thomson Electronics, a French company, bought RCA, the American television manufacturer. The same people cheering on the Mercedes acquisition of Chrysler thought that RCA would become stronger and more competitive with a European parent. But just two months ago, Thomson moved RCA from Indiana to Mexico, firing thousands of well-paid American workers. Chrysler could suffer the same fate. Why make Chryslers in Michigan when Mexican workers are willing to put the vehicles together for \$1 an hour?

If Chrysler had bought Mercedes, the European Union would turn down the merger as anti-competitive. The United States should oppose the merger as a violation of our antitrust laws. The Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission should proceed immediately to investigate the acquisition and prepare to stop it in court.

Joel D. Joseph is chairman of the Made in the USA Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting American products in the United States and overseas.

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