

THE GUARDIAN DEC '93

cord, to ensure they were "properly paid". This was a calculated signal. It was a precaution against any police force

from the Secretary deems essential to be written into law. Political control of chief constables and their forces, the hate-

minister unless they are satisfied factory conduits for the policing policy he wishes to see carried out.

of another of the... who pass for ministers in the House of Lords, in this case Lord Rodger of Earlsferry, the

formance: clear of any... time, and everything else that can be universally measured,

police, is ready to make the police the enemies of the people.

Two major issues are dividing British Jewry: the Israel-PLO peace initiative and north London's first eruv

Yasser, no sir

Ned Temko

OF ALL the controversies which have erupted over the Israel-PLO deal — at PLO headquarters in Tunis, in the forlorn back streets of the Gaza Strip, in the Israeli Knesset, or on Jewish settlements of the West Bank — one of the most surprising has unfolded here, within the Jewish community of Britain.

That British Jews — like Jews, or indeed Arabs and others, elsewhere — are divided over the prerequisites and prospects for peace is not, in itself, startling. Nor are the issues that have dominated the Anglo-Jewish debate: the spectre of terrorist violence, past and present; the implications for Jewish settlements; and perhaps above all, the question of whether Yasser Arafat has the resolve, or ability, to move against those who would murder their way back to the pre-White House status quo.

What is remarkable is that — spurred in part by a decision by the Board of Deputies of British Jews to meet Arafat during his official visit to London — a number of leading communal figures, lay and rabbinic, have openly been voicing doubts about the Israeli-PLO deal, and opposition to any meeting with Arafat. For many years, such differences would have been kept largely under wraps, in deference to a virtual taboo among communal leaders and

institutions on public differences of opinion regarding Israeli government policy.

The reasons for this were many. Perhaps the most complex has been a continuing ambiguity in the relationship between the diaspora Jewish communities and the Jewish state — a state which itself continues to grapple with questions of religious and national identity. Closer to home, there has also been an unspoken fear among many British Jews that any open discord on issues relating to Israel might weaken and even imperil the Jewish community.

In a sense the public campaign by British Jews opposed to the accord represents an important coming-of-age for the community. This is not without irony, since many of those now speaking out against the agreement contrived to isolate as treachery the relatively few major Anglo-Jewish voices which were raised from the political left against Israeli policies during the Lebanon war and, more recently, the Palestinian Intifada. But it is, nonetheless, a healthy and important advance.

It may also prove a timely one. If the still perilously poised Arab-Israeli peace process does take hold, a wider reassessment of the ties between Israel and Jews outside Israel is inevitable. At issue is not whether a close and special relationship will remain, but how it will be defined. Significantly, Israeli President Weizman has con-

vened a conference in Jerusalem early next year of representatives from Jewish communities worldwide to begin discussing that issue. Traditionally, the Israeli-diaspora relationship has had two major elements.

The first has been, for lack of a better word, familial — specifically, the notion, as advanced by many Israelis, that the existence of a Jewish state would ultimately lead to an "ingathering of exiles" as diaspora communities gradually transferred themselves to their ancient homeland. That, of course, has not happened. Given the trauma and tragedy of the Holocaust — and the signs of resurgent neo-Nazism in Europe — many Jews still instinctively see Israel not only as a homeland but as a haven. They will no doubt continue to do so, particularly in response to specific political shifts such as that emerging from Russia's elections. But millions of other diaspora Jews — in the US, Britain, other west European states and elsewhere — have continued to thrive in, and make major contributions to, societies in the diaspora. These communities are not going to disappear.

Another pillar of the Israeli-diaspora relationship has been financial. Millions of dollars in charitable donations have been raised to help Israel survive and develop in a Middle East which has been largely pledged to its destruction. Here again, circumstances may dictate a need to reassess. Israel has survived. Its economy has notched up a growth rate higher than all but a handful of countries in a world battered by continuing recession. Progress towards peace could, at a minimum, imply a shift from donations to investment — by Jews and non-Jews. For British Jewry and other diaspora communities, it would also seem likely to spur intensified debate on another question often shunned in the past: that of whether a greater proportion of communal resources should be directed towards Jewish education, youth programmes, and social services here at home.

The crucial fact, of course, is that the dynamic for change in the Anglo-Jewish community, like the Israel-PLO process, remains in delicate and vulnerable infancy.

Ned Temko is the editor of the Jewish Chronicle



Going to the wire

Madeleine Bunting

A BIZARRE madness seems to have taken hold of a north London suburb, with predictions of pitched battles on Hampstead Heath and warnings of Bosnian style ethnic disintegration. The fuss is over proposals to build Britain's first eruv; a six square-mile area bounded by roads, railway lines, a kilometre of fishing line and 85 poles.

Within this area the sabbath strictures against carrying or pushing can be relaxed, benefiting young parents with prams and the wheelchair-bound. Most major American cities now have eruvim — the White House is even in Washington's. The United Synagogue backers of the eruv claim it is similar to a parish boundary and will have no effect on anyone except Orthodox Jews.

Yesterday was the last day in a seven day public inquiry after Barnet Council twice rejected the planning application. The eruv has provoked an extraordinary coalition of objectors. Some of the most vociferous criticism has come from Jews; the Ultra Orthodox have joined forces with Reform and Liberal Jews to turn on the Orthodox. The former believe the eruv is a misinterpretation of rabbinic law; the latter claim it is a ghetto, it is divisive and will destroy forever harmonious ethnic relations in the area. Alongside the Jews, are a whole gaggle of gentiles — some of whose anti-semitism has been

blatant — who wail about hordes of Jews moving into the area and about the sinister ulterior motive of a "sect staking out its territory."

At the centre of the furore are two quite distinct issues. First, it is an internal battle in the Jewish community about how Jewish identity should be asserted. The most active Jewish objectors are in their sixties and seventies; some of them came to Britain as refugees from the Holocaust and some of them grew up in the anti-semitic East End of the thirties. They believe that the way to preserve their ethnic identity and ensure British toleration is not to emphasise their difference but to keep a low profile and maintain good relations with gentile neighbours.

The eruv supporters are often 20 to 30 years younger; British-born, they take its tolerance for granted, according to Edward Black, their press spokesman.

Over the last two decades, as minority rights became a yardstick by which to measure every social policy from housing to schooling, the Jewish community took on that ethos. As Lord Jakobovits, the former chief rabbi, observed in his evidence: "The increasingly-pluralistic character of our city environment has emboldened Jews to seek facilities... These days religious minorities proudly affirm their customs and beliefs where formerly they often used to be very discreet."

Put crudely, old Jews fear such assertion of ethnic identity will provoke anti-semitism and provide opportunities for

extreme rightwing political groups such as the British National Party, while young Jews retort that their opponents have internalised the prejudices of anti-semitic England.

The second issue in this battle revolves around the allegedly delicate nature of harmonious race relations in the area which are going to be radically and permanently altered by the nylon fishing line. Analogies to Bosnia seem hysterical coming from residents of prosperous Hampstead Garden Suburb, but amongst the hyperbole there is a grain of truth.

Objectors claim the area was unique; blacks, Orientals, Asians, Jews and ethnic English lived side by side without any interest in each other's ethnic or religious affiliation. No doubt money has been a good lubricant — there is little shortage of it in NW11. But without a single post going up, the eruv has destroyed that characteristic and there are many who will never forgive United Synagogue and its allies for it.

The protracted controversy has triggered a process of identification in which it is suddenly important whether or not your neighbour is Jewish or gentile. Suspicion has crept in; people are frightened of speaking out on the issue as allegations of anti-semitism and arrogant ethnocentricity are bandied about. Community organisations have fragmented over the eruv.

From being a silly storm in a teacup, it has become a serious matter. This is a battle which will not lead to guns and sandbags. But these Londoners see the parallel with Bosnia because they have experienced a form of communal breakdown where common interests have weakened and in their place other long-buried identities reassert themselves, capable of irreparable damage.

is a rightwing populist, who has won support by a combination of easy promises and tapping into the well of economic and psychological resentment among many Russians over the shocks of the last five years. His supporters on Sunday were rebelling against ex-President Gorbachev as well as President Yeltsin.

A huge mountain of bitterness built up during the last three years of perestroika over the loss of Russia's status as a superpower. Although most Russians accepted the retreat from the "outer empire" in eastern Europe at the time, it has lingered under the surface as one factor in a wider feeling of a world turned upside down.

For many Russians the collapse of the Soviet Union and the loss of the "inner empire" in the Baltics, the Transcaucasus and Central Asia was a shock. Russians who used to have their holidays in the Baltics now dare not go there. Those who lived there permanently are treated as second-class citizens. In Central Asia the position is worse: hundreds of thousands of Russians have been driven out or are hastily emigrating. They have become refugees in their own country.

Zhirinovsky has tapped into this anger more effectively than any other politician. It does not mean he has serious intentions to restore the Russian empire, or that he would be supported by Sunday's voters if he tried. Comparisons between him and Hitler are misleading if they imply Zhirinovsky's nationalism is aggressive or expansionist. He is articulating nostalgia, anger, and a sense of loss rather than a programme of action.

The second element of the Zhirinovsky protest is more important because it is more contemporary, directed at Yeltsin rather than Gorbachev. It is a revolt against economic shock therapy. After two years of pain, and with the threat of more to come if hundreds of large enterprises are to be forced to close, millions of Russians are saying no.

It is not the first time they have said so. Some 44 per cent of voters rejected Yeltsin's economic programme in the referendum last April. If one adds together the communist vote and the Zhirinovsky vote this time, it may not exceed the anti-shock therapy vote of April. But if Yeltsin and his western backers were to take this as a comforting statistic, they would be mistaken.

The error in April was to see the result as a Yeltsin triumph. Instead of realising that the country was split down the middle, it fell for the old Russian habit, enhanced by the Bolsheviks, of crowing that the winner takes all. The parliamentary opponents of shock therapy were told they had lost their legitimacy and should move over.

Yeltsin must avoid making the same mistake again. One remarkable factor of this

Yeltsin to drop him, and for western governments to stop demanding that Gaidar be kept in power as the touchstone of reform. Otherwise, when the next parliamentary elections are held in two years' time, the voters' revolt may be even more fierce.

In the pro-government camp recriminations are already raging over yesterday's miserable results. Gennady Burbulis, until recently one of Yeltsin's closest aides, was right when he blamed the president for helping to create Zhirinovsky. The mistake, he said, was that Yeltsin failed to identify himself with Russia's Choice. Burbulis has made a similar point before. After the August 1991 coup he was one of those who urged the president to set up his own party, as leaders in democratic countries do. Yeltsin preferred the notion that he was somehow above politics and therefore did not need to have a party. He took the same line during these elections, refusing to endorse Russia's Choice directly. The error has been strategic as well as tactical. It has impeded the formation of a multi-party system in Russia.

YELTSIN'S other mistake was not to try to work with the centrist groups over the past two years. Here Burbulis must share the blame. He was the architect of confrontation, always arguing in favour of polarisation, and claiming that the so-called centrists in the last parliament were really secret anti-reformers. To Burbulis, the struggle in Russia was between a new generation of democrats and budding private entrepreneurs on the one hand and a dangerous force of revenge-seeking apparatchiks and communist industrial managers on the other. There could be no compromise.

The election campaign was run on this basis. The state television news broadcasts tended to ignore the centre parties, even those like Grigory Yavlinsky's block which is a natural ally of the president. The aim seemed to be to imply to voters that they had no choice other than the democrats and the so-called "Red-Brown alliance" which Burbulis invented. The tactic back-fired on Sunday.

The picture is not all gloom. Yeltsin still has a chance to run a government which will maintain a broadly reformist course and gradually reduce Zhirinovsky's strength before 1996. But he will have to accept a different type of economic reform, and accept new rules of the political game. Russia's industrial managers, and the political forces which seek to represent them, are not all die-hards. They may have a better understanding of provincial Russia than the men in the Kremlin. If Yeltsin's strategy of confrontation is recognised to have been the main loser on Sunday, the poll results may not be as grim as they seem today.

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For hundreds of homeless teenagers on London streets

Prison goalkeeper's fear of

his unshakeable impression of having encountered whale-bone corsetry.

attend his own tearful and prolonged wake, when he popped into Scribes and found

RIGHT, good news or bad news? Good news, for residents of Whitefield, north of

22 COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

Howard has the power and wants the Force

Commentary



Hugo Young

THE first decision the Conservative government ever took, in 1979, was to give the police a massively inflationary pay rise: as the Thatcher memoirs re-

doubting whose side they were on in the civic struggles to come. These struggles were numerous, and propelled by another, non-pecuniary impulse with a large place in Tory rhetoric: the pious insistence that the police must never be politicised. From Toxteth to Orgreave, the independent constabulary kept the apolitical peace.

Since that time, as we are about to discover, these two commitments have suffered rather different fates. The police have continued to be exceedingly well paid. But their political independence is on the verge of being destroyed. This is, from a large field of contenders, the finest modern example of what hubris does to politicians, and what politicians under its influence can do to the principles their rhetoric has always parroted. The crime for which Merseyside was pilloried, and in fact eventually abolished, has been transformed into a virtue which the

object of every Tory party conference when demanded by elected Labour councillors, is now to be assumed, without significant democratic intervention, by one man, the Home Secretary himself.

The Police & Magistrates Courts Bill, due out this week, will be a constitutional measure of the first importance. It abolishes the local police authorities to whom chief constables are now accountable, which have a majority of locally elected politicians reinforced by a minority of magistrates. The new authorities will draw only half their number from local politicians. Beside them will be three JPs — and five appointees of the Home Secretary. They will not, as now, elect their own chairman but have this figure imposed on them by the Home Secretary. So if the bill passes unamended, there will soon be 43 new Tory placemen, paid from the public purse, and dismissable by the

Policing is not exactly local now. True local power has gone the way of the Watch Committee, and Home Office control over budgets has steadily grown. We're not talking sheriff's rights here. But since these plans were published nine months ago, I've been unable to trace a single considered defence of them by either an organisation or a politician. Local authorities and the police themselves at every level are universally opposed. They see one more drawing of power to the centre, one more dismissal of local politics and accountability, one more pretence that all localities are the same: each, in this case, to have the same-sized police authority however different their circumstances, each to be judged by the same league tables whether they cover Brixton or the Welsh valleys, each to be monopolised by the all-seeing wisdom of the Home Secretary.

There is, of course, a case for a national police force. But the Government is not making it. Now that Mr Clarke's pathological hatred of local authorities is being vented elsewhere, even that bent rationale has gone missing. The official pretence is that this is still local, indeed that localness will actually be enhanced by the preferment of those who are simultaneously "acceptable to the local community" and persons "in whom the Secretary of State has confidence": words taken from the sublime yet faithful double-talk

Lord Advocate, when replying to the debate on the Queen's Speech.

Lord Rodger whimpered at his critics for "tilting at hypothetical situations". How scandalously presumptuous can a legislator get? But let me try one out. Take a chief constable, who in another part of the Police Bill is going to be put on a short-term contract. The end of his contract looms, and his thoughts turn to the chairman of his authority, who will have a large hand in deciding whether to renew it. The chairman, in turn, must consider his own future as a paid quango, in which post his life depends on the Home Secretary alone. Meanwhile, a delicate policing situation has arisen: how to handle a political strike, perhaps, or a simmering racial crisis, or even a simple question of priorities between traffic control and the burglary clear-up rate. From where will pressure bear heaviest on the police chief? From local people and their needs? Or the mighty hand of Whitehall, with the tabloid headlines never far behind?

The drive behind this, insofar as it is separable from straightforward power-hunger, is managerial. It speaks to one prevailing ethic of contemporary Conservatism, the need to replicate a private market in even the most unyieldingly public of services. The bill gives the Home Secretary not only power of appointment but the duty to

however separate and disaggregated its relevance. An excellent study by the IPPR, Accountable Policing, called it "the technocratic fallacy". Pretending that the only need is for the police to become more "businesslike", ministers hope to blur the fact that police policy and accountability are intensely political questions.

Yet this does not merely write Merseyside out of the script, along with the extreme politicised local control of which policemen were naturally wary. It conflicts with a parallel aspiration of Conservatives themselves. Desperate to lower the crime rate, they are now trying to find language to promote crime prevention as a populist cause. Working with the police is supposed to be the new test of the active citizen, police-work itself a new consensual process mobilising the lawful majority against the thieves and thugs.

This is a disabling mismatch. If I were charitable, I would offer it in all fraternal sympathy as an overlooked detail for ministers to correct in the interests of the crime prevention we'd all like to see. But my cynicism is a little more gnarled. What we have here is a government for which constitutional principle has become a matter of such ingrained contempt that it doesn't even see the problem. Its instinct to seize power is inextinguishable, even when the effect entirely undermines its policy objectives. Treating the

The bitter end of empire

The surge of support for Russia's right is a rebellion against both Gorbachev and Yeltsin

Jonathan Steele

THE stunning vote for Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's ill-named Liberal Democratic Party is a blow to President Yeltsin as well as his economic overlord, Yegor Gaidar. Although the president has triumphed narrowly in getting his draft constitution past the electorate, the grim results of the parliamentary poll outweigh everything else. The new parliament will be polarised and, on paper at least, harder for Yeltsin to work with.

Zhirinovskiy's strength comes from a massive protest vote. To describe him as a fascist or even an extreme nationalist

month's election campaign was the way that, except for Gaidar's Russia's Choice, every reform faction called for a softer economic line. This included the Party of Russian Unity and Consensus, which is led by government ministers. The strong showing by Zhirinovskiy and the communists reinforces the need for a change of course.

If Yeltsin is to heed the voters' message he must give up the chimera of early macro-economic stabilisation and make more effort to restructure Russian industry rather than closing it down or forcing it to compete on unequal terms with foreign firms. In the absence of a Russian capital market, let alone foreign investment on a significant scale, that means the state must retain a financing role.

Politically, Yeltsin is in a bind. Gaidar leads the largest reformist party, and may insist on retaining his economic posi-

Climber dies after night on Scottish mountain

Paul Myers

MR EDWARDS, of Lumbury, Luton, denies murdering Mrs Turvey and Charlene on April 30 but admits manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. He also denies attempting to murder Mr Turvey, aged 24.

Michael Pert, QC, prosecuting, said Marina had been Mr Edwards's girlfriend and they lived together while Mr Turvey was serving a two-year jail sentence for burglary. His release from prison appeared to have

Activist 'admitted bomb'

Ernest Clouston

Six weeks ago Mr Astbury set up the Thaldomide Action Group, which has attracted support from 19 victims. He said: "We are seeking a public inquiry to make sure that this does not happen again. We also think the Government should pay compensation."

Mr Astbury is cared for by his wife, Susan. They have a two-year-old son and three children from her previous marriage. They receive welfare benefits totalling £120 a week. In 1976 Mr Astbury was awarded £33,000 from the Thaldomide Trust but he says a lot went on adaptations to the house where he then lived. Income from the rest is taxed, and he hopes to persuade Distillers, the company marketing

Mr McIntosh denies conspiring "to further by criminal means the purposes of the Scottish National Liberation Army... with the intention of overthrowing Her Majesty's Government in Scotland, or with the intent of coercing Her Majesty's Government in Great Britain into the setting up of a separate government in Scotland."

Mr McIntosh is also accused of sending letter bombs to the Scottish Office, Dounreay Atomic Station and Aberdeen Sheriff's Court. Dounreay had heard that a raid on the

SCOTTISH nationalist who faces 18 charges, including planting four improvised mortars outside oil company premises, admitted sending a letter bomb to the Scottish Office, the High Court in Aberdeen heard yesterday.

Gordon Cantlay, a documents supervisor, said Andrew McIntosh reassured him the package had contained "only a harmless flash device".

Mr McIntosh, formerly a co-attendant at hospital in Inverness.

Mr Cantlay died yesterday after being rescued from the Scottish mountain where she had spent the night in sub-zero temperatures.

Jane Thomas, aged 33, from Penrith, Cumbria, an experienced climber, was airlifted to hospital from Colre an

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