

JEWISH PRESS PROFILE

DR. ISRAEL ELADAD

By CHAIM YERUSHALMI



On my recent visit to Israel, I had the privilege of meeting for the first time Dr. Israel Eldad, one of Israel's most brilliant publicists.

In the days of the underground struggle against the British, Eldad was one of the leaders of the Lohame Herut Yisrael (Stern Group). Since the establishment of the State of Israel his powerful pen has been lashing out against certain government policies and against unhealthy phenomena in Israeli so-

ciety.

Eldad, whose original name was Schelb, was born in Podvolochisk, Galicia, in 1910. He studied at the Rabbinical Seminary in Vienna and at the city's university. After obtaining a doctorate in philosophy, he returned to Poland to teach Jewish studies at a Jewish Teachers Seminary in Vilna. He was a leader in Brith Trumpeldor and contributed philosophical, literary and political articles to the Hebrew and Yiddish press in Poland.

Arriving in Palestine during World War II, he joined Lohame Herut Yisrael. He was the movement's foremost intellectual leader and edited its underground publications. His fiery articles were widely read and discussed.

In 1944, while attempting to escape arrest by the British police, he suffered a serious back injury. Encased in a cast he was held at the prison of Jerusalem and at the Latrun deten-

giant of a man and one posses

tion camp. In 1948, while he was brought to a Jerusalem hospital to have his cast removed, he was dramatically freed by his comrades.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, Eldad launched the monthly "Sulam" (Ladder), in which he sharply criticized Israeli government policies and various facets of Israel life and culture and advocated the establishment of a new "Malkhut Yisrael" (Kingdom of Israel) — through the liberation of the entire Land of Israel as defined in the Bible.

His articles criticizing the government angered Ben Gurion so much that he ordered the Ministry of Education and Culture to fire Eldad from his post as a high school teacher. Eldad wasn't the man to take his dismissal lying down, even if it came from the Prime Minister. He took his case to Israel's Supreme Court, and won.

While he edited "Sulam", he served as editor of "Chronicles — News of the Past," which described events of Jewish history in the form of "contemporary newspaper reports." The idea of the publication was conceived by Mrs. Van Leer, a Dutch-Jewish woman. She asked the late Dr. Joseph Klausner to recommend to her an editor. Dr. Klausner suggested Eldad. The "Chronicles — News of the Past" has become a great instrument for the teaching of Jewish his-

tory. The "articles" and "news items" are based on sound historical research, though they, naturally reflect Eldad's thinking and understanding of Jewish history and historical factors. The volumes which have appeared so far cover Jewish history from Abraham until Shmuel HaNagid of Spain. A new volume describing the period from then until now is at present in print. According to C. Zenziper, the American distributor, the publication was well received in this country.

Eldad contributes to a variety of newspapers and periodicals, Eldad, who is also a great orator, is active in the "Movement for the Entire Land of Israel," which opposes any retreat of the Israel Defense Force from the liberated territories. He is one of the movement's most dynamic spokesmen.