



Photo by Gideon Lewin

DAVID BOROWICH

re-generation

BY ALIZA DAVIDOVIT

As the popular hip-hop song “Drop It Like Its Hot” began to play, more people squeezed their way on to the already crowded dance floor. The club was bubbling in celebration as bartenders were busy pouring slushy drinks for the overheated pack. Both floors of New York’s massive West Chelsea nightspot were dense with people coming and going through the maze-like rooms that kept leading to further antechambers of fun.

Pushing one’s way through the attractive stylish crowd, bits of conversation, half in Hebrew and half in English, could be heard as people talked loudly to compete with the reverberating music. What brought these celebrants together was not the DJ’s repertoire, nor the fine blends of icy Cosmos, but rather the 57th birthday of the State of Israel, a community-wide celebration that brought together over 4,000 individuals and over 80 Jewish organizations in solidarity with the Jewish state. And though the mood of the night crescendoed to a boisterous celebration, it began, as did the history of the Jewish state, with tears and introspection.

The mixed crowd of Israeli and American Jews, which included New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, began the evening by watching a video tribute to Israeli soldiers who fought and died for the tiny Jewish state and for Jews throughout the world. And as the diverse crowd rose in unison to sing “Hatikva,” Israel’s national anthem, there were no Israeli Jews or American Jews, mayoral Jews or constituents, but simply Jews, a scattered nation united by tears of solidarity.

Yet even solidarity can’t be taken for granted. That concern was the impetus for David Borowich to found Dor Chadash, the Zionist organization that aims through such events to promote greater connectivity and understanding between Israeli and American Jews. “A people who forget their past, have no future,” says Borowich, who is also chairman of the organization he created in 2003. He con-

intifada; they see Israel as the Goliath, not the David,” Borowich notes. “If you overlay traditional Jewish liberal values, the distance continues to widen between this generation and Israel.” Quoting Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Borowich says, “We were once brothers and sisters, now we are distant cousins.”

Borowich was becoming increasingly concerned with the many studies that kept pointing to the



Borowich with Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

reflected the worlds that could indeed come together to serve a common goal. After considering many names, including Israelism, they decided on Dor Chadash, which means “new generation” in Hebrew, aptly named after its target audience.

Dor Chadash launched with an outdoor barbecue on October 2003. It was literally trial by fire; no one knew what to expect or what the turnout would be. But, it was an

emboldening surprise for Borowich and the core team when over 200 Israeli and American Jews attended. In just two years, Dor Chadash has evolved to become a grassroots effort, uniting more than 5,000 young professionals. Through social, cultural, and educational events, they have created a virtual environment where Israeli and American Jews living in New York can come

Photo courtesy of David Borowich

“In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man.”

ceived and developed New York’s largest memorial for Memorial Day and the largest celebration of the Israel independence event only three years ago. “Through such events we celebrate and preserve our common history so that we can move forward to share in our common destiny.”



Borowich, 36, is worried about the new generation of American Jews who are becoming ever more distant from their attachment to Israel and the fatal labor pains by which the state was born. “A new generation has grown up on the images of the

growing gaps between young Israeli and American Jews and the little that was being done about it. “How many studies does one need?” he questions. He calls the stagnant efforts to deal with the issue “analysis paralysis.” Always inspired by his father’s Mishnaic teaching, “In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man,” Borowich strove to be that man.

He assembled a think tank of 20 people living in New York—half American Jews, half Israeli—to conceptualize a new environment and organization that would be effective in meeting their objective of bridging the two worlds. The think tank itself was an optimistic microcosm that

together.

Today, when major Israeli cultural icons come to New York, they contact Dor Chadash. The group has sponsored the premieres of such award-winning Israeli films as *Broken Wings*, *Walk on Water*, *Joy*, and others and has been at the forefront in bringing audiences to major Israeli pop sensations Mashina and Rita, and a recent concert with Shlomo Artzi and Shalom Chanoch. Dor Chadash hopes to employ Israeli culture as a powerful tool to bridge the communities. Similarly, the group has hosted notables, such as Ami Ayalon, Martin Indyk, and others to share insights on the changing dynamics in Israel. In a

recent event, Dor Chadash was formally invited by the Knesset, Israel's parliament, to arrange a series of focus groups on younger generation Jews, Israeli and American, who would share their input on the development of Israel's constitution.

From hopping holiday parties to open-mike discussions about serious issues facing the Jewish state, many of Dor Chadash's events sell out days before they take place. Word of mouth on the Jewish New York scene is that Dor Chadash events are not to be missed, so much so that the fledgling organization has just hired its first executive director and plans on expanding to other North American cities with significant populations of Israelis.

But even as Borowich focuses on the future of Jews, he knows his mission is fortified by a trip to the past. Last year, Dor Chadash traveled to Poland for the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Over 125 young Israeli and American Jews accompanied by three survivors and Israel's consul general, Aryeh Mekel, traveled to Poland to visit places like Lublin and Warsaw. They walked the very streets where Jewish life had once thrived until it fell victim to a fallen humanity that permitted Jews to be turned into bars of soap and watched as shivering human beings walked one by one into gas chambers and exited as piles of ash and smoke.

"Following the Holocaust, it was a simple twist of fate that sent some survivors to what was then Palestine and others to the United States," Borowich reflects. "Now more than 60 years after the Holocaust, we went back to Poland to see where Jewish life once flourished and to learn how our ancestors were first separated. We were no longer distant cousins but were once

again one family, one people, with one common bond, and one history "

The trip was very moving for Borowich himself, whose own ancestors were killed during the Holocaust. He captured the trip on 100 hours of video and enlisted a CNN producer to direct it into a very compelling film that he executive produced. He put his heart and soul into this chronicling of history and was intimately involved in each detail of the production,



Borowich with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

including the creation of the soundtrack. The film, *Passing the Torch*, is not only an homage to those Jews who died, but also to the miracle of those Jews yet to be born. It reinforces the collective responsibility upon a new generation of Jews. "In a few years' time, there will be no survivors left to hear from. Our generation bears an urgent responsibility to pass their eyewitness accounts to the next generation and bear witness to what happened to our people," declares Borowich. He also believes that this journey is a vital tool in building bridges and understanding between Israeli and American Jews, both here in New York and around the world.

But who passed the torch to David Borowich?

David Borowich, born in Lexington, Kentucky, was raised in Westchester, New York, and grew up in a Zionist Modern Orthodox home. His father is a noted psychiatrist and his mother is a math professor, also trained in psychotherapy. Thus, Borowich says, he grew up being extremely introspective. Perhaps that introspection helped him find the resources within to make a difference even at a young age and not to always follow the beaten path.

His first departure from the road most traveled occurred when he decided to postpone college for a year to go to Israel to work on a kibbutz. Always in his mind was a picture he had of his grandfather standing in a field in Bialystok, Poland, teaching agriculture to Jews who wanted to emigrate to the Promised Land even before Israel was born. Far from the comforts of

Westchester, Borowich soon found himself waking at 4 A.M., feeding chickens, manning a tractor, and picking cotton in Kibbutz Be'erot Yitzchak. He vividly recreates his experience with such infectious enthusiasm that one can almost hear the chicks cackling and imagine the always elegantly dressed Borowich in a pair of overalls, with sweat dripping off his forehead as the hot Mediterranean sun beats down upon the field.

But Borowich's commitment to Israel took a more serious turn when one of the young boys from the kibbutz lost his leg during his army service. It made him wonder why only Israelis paid the price and made such sacrifices for Jews everywhere. "Just because they were born there was not reason enough for me," he says. "These soldiers fought for all Jews, not just Israelis. In Entebbe, it wasn't even an El Al plane carrying the besieged

Photo courtesy of David Borowich

passengers of many nationalities; it was an Air France plane. The French government should have come in. But instead the Israeli Army came to rescue these Jews." With his typical introspection Borowich could find no justification why Israeli boys his age should be in uniform and not him. But after his post-high-school year the time had come for him to return to America.

Borowich passed on attending Johns Hopkins to instead attend Yeshiva University, where he was premed and graduated in three years with a degree in political science. As if studying politics wasn't enough, he decided to run for student government. "I felt that I had some good ideas, a clear vision on how to make things happen, and also the ability to mobilize people."



Borowich with Senator Hillary Clinton.

Photo courtesy of David Borowich

American Jewish students to Israel during the first Gulf War and Operation Desert Shield. "While everyone was running away from Israel [and Scuds were falling], we brought people to Israel with clothes and supplies and went around to different yeshivas to study with and show support to the students and to Israel," Borowich recounts. Their mission, known as Operation Torah

Borowich realize that he could handle just about anything—for a limited amount of time. It also gave him a much deeper understanding and appreciation for Israel and Israelis. "It made me realize that my future is in Israel."

His own "multicultural" military tank crew was a symbol for the Jewish state itself. The tank driver was Russian, the commander was from Baghdad, the loader was half-Persian half-Moroccan, and the tank gunner, Borowich, was from Westchester, New York. Each was joined by a single purpose: the survival of Jews and a strong Jewish state. "The army was the ultimate equalizer," Borowich says. "People of all backgrounds and from everywhere are thrown in together."

Following his army service, Borowich returned to the U.S.

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Apparently others felt the same way; he won three years in a row, eventually serving as vice president of the entire school. He also gleaned some political skills by working on Capital Hill for Senator Dan Coats from Indiana in a summer fellowship in Washington, D.C., and later in New York for Prime Minister Yitzchak Shamir, representing the Likud party in the United States.

While involved in student government, Borowich led a rally at the United Nations to repeal the Zionism Is Racism resolution and also helped organize huge rallies in D.C. in support of Israel and Soviet Jewry. In one of the more historic events of the time, he was responsible for chartering a plane and flying 400

Shield, was covered widely by the media and the brave American students were greeted by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others upon their arrival.

Upon graduation, while most students were already searching for jobs, Borowich had still not forgotten Azzarya, the young boy who had lost his leg while serving his country, nor did Borowich forget his promise to himself. At the age of 22, Borowich returned to Israel to join the Israeli Army, where he served as a tank gunner. Many people were surprised that Borowich returned to serve in the army, but he says he was always guided by the principle "Say little and do much."

Serving in the army made

and took a job with leading international advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather. After working for several years on the American Express account, he was recruited by his client to help negotiate and manage American Express's company-wide promotions and events. While working parttime at American Express, he pursued an M.B.A. in finance and marketing at New York University's Stern School of Business. While working and attending Business School fulltime, Borowich ran and won a student government position, serving as vice president of the school. During his time at Stern, Borowich received the President's Leadership Award and the prestigious Joseph Taggart Award for outstanding

leadership and dedication to the NYU community.

As a newly minted M.B.A., he entered the corporate world as a strategy consultant with Cap Gemini/Ernst & Young's Management Consulting Strategic Advisory Services practice specializing in e-commerce and financial services industries. He immersed himself in his clients and in only a few years worked his way to become Vice President of Business Development and Marketing at Tantian Corporation, an Israeli-based enterprise software company.

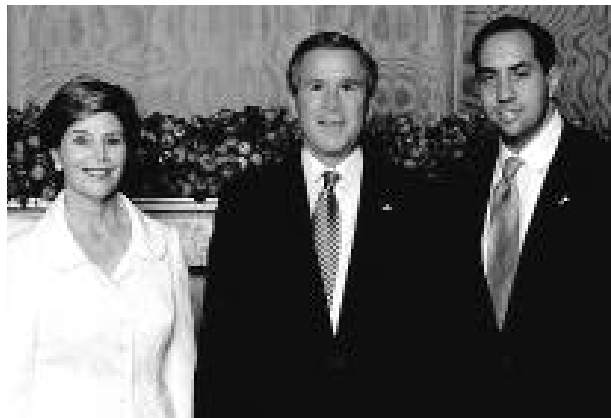
Even as he fully engaged in corporate pursuits, those closest to him would always tell him that he should direct his talents to his great love for Jews, Judaism, and Israel. But it was not the bursting dot.com bubble that resounded those thoughts and rerouted his efforts, but a much more deafening, devastating crash: 9/11 and the collapse of the World Trade Center towers.

On September 11, 2001, David Borowich was supposed to meet his dear friend, Margaret, for afternoon coffee. But that day, as smoke filled the sky, chaos filled the streets, and ash filled the air, lives were blotted out. He never saw his beautiful, bubbly friend again. Today, amidst the pictures in his office of him with Israeli prime ministers and American presidents, is a flyer with her picture. "It's ironic to me that with all the people I know in Israel, that someone I cared so deeply for dies in a terrorist attack right here in America."

Borowich says that 9/11 caused him to reevaluate a lot of things. "It was at that point when I started to change the focus of my energies and shift gears." He felt that even though most people wait until they're much older to give back to society, he felt

that he had the energy and ideas today that could make a difference. "I view myself as a social entrepreneur," he says. "There are many new entrepreneurial ideas in the nonprofit world that deserve funding and while the financial return on investment (ROI) may not be as high, the spiritual ROI makes it worth it. In the business world, good ideas consistently require capital to grow but in communal work, it is Jewish souls and Jewish continuity that are worth investing in."

He has since invested himself in



Borowich with Laura and President George Bush.

the things he believes in most. In addition to founding and chairing Dor Chadash, he serves as the chairman of the J2J Network, an international nonprofit business network for Jewish professionals that he co-founded. And in 2004, he codeveloped Parallel Lives, a dynamic program that brings together Israeli soldiers with American college students to mutually discover and more fully understand their shared bonds and Jewish identity. Beyond his own initiatives, he currently serves on the boards of directors of the New York University Alumni Board, the JCRC (Jewish Community Relations Council) of New York, and the American Zionist Movement (AZM).

In recognition of his tireless efforts on behalf of the community, Borowich was a recipient of the first annual Herzl

Prize and recently received a prestigious community leadership award from the mayor of New York. Referring to Borowich at the Gracie Mansion ceremony, Mayor Michael Bloomberg smiled and said, "It is a pleasure to honor such an energetic leader far beyond his years."

But one of the most meaningful and often unspoken areas for Borowich has been his involvement as a mentor in the Bronx as part of the New York City mentoring program. Borowich has been a mentor since

1999 and he beams with pride when talking about his mentee, who was the first in his family to finish high school and who is currently serving with distinction in the United States Navy.

As a mentor, Borowich advises young people to follow their dreams and not to be afraid to do what they really want to do. He believes that fear is the greatest inhibitor and believes in staring it down. He stands behind his words. Borowich himself has jumped out of airplanes, hang glided in Rio, climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro, and scuba dived with sharks. And after a terrible motorcycle accident in Cambodia that landed him in a hospital in Thailand, he got back on the bike. "Everyone is afraid to fail," Borowich reflects, "but don't be afraid to try."

It is with that mantra that Borowich has taken up the cause of the next generation of Jews. But when Jewish souls are on the line, failure is not an option. "I hope to be part of building a very strong Jewish future and great Jewish life in this country and in Israel," Borowich says. And as the lines get longer and longer at each Dor Chadash event, it is not hard to believe David Borowich will make his mark once again. lifestyles