



Photo courtesy of Lisa Lipkin

Pierre Rehov

by Aliza Davidovitz

Vive la France is not a choice chant for most Jews who have sadly witnessed that country's recurrent and blatant antisemitism. Still, it is hard not to love the seductive France that intoxicates the heart and mind with fantasies of romance—it is harder yet if you're a woman with an affinity for men who hold the door open, who rise when you excuse yourself from the table, who make you feel like you're the most beautiful woman in the room, and who, in an age of feminism, still appreciate the feminine. Pierre Rehov is one such Frenchman. But his intrigue goes beyond the stereotypical charms. For although there are many who would love to love him, there are even more who would love to kill him.

For Pierre Rehov, life only took on true meaning when he began putting it at risk. He had been a movie producer, a novelist, a journalist and a lawyer. But none of those professions satisfied his searching soul. In moments of deep personal introspection he questioned himself, "Who and what am I really?" For him, the answer came when he turned on the news on October 6, 2000, and saw the images of the shooting of Mohammed al-Dura, the 12 year-old Palestinian boy, whom Israel was summarily accused of targeting. "I was in shock," says Rehov, who rarely watches the pro-Arab French broadcasts. "In this case, I knew as a producer that there was something very fishy about the images. The angles just weren't right."

double
identity

The day after al-Dura was shot, there was a pro-Palestinian rally in the streets of Paris, where the participants screamed, “Death to the Jews.” Rehov was reminded of one century ago when the exact same antisemitic scene played itself out on the streets of Paris prompted by the Alfred Dreyfus trial. Rehov’s instincts told him that the death of Mohammed al-Dura was another blood libel against the Jews. “I knew that I was no Herzl, but I had to do something,” Rehov says.

It was then that all his life’s experiences coalesced into one joint mission: to expose the truth and shed light on a region that is laden with lies and molded by myths. And so he decided that he would sneak into the “terror-tories” and uncover what was really going on there. At that moment Rehov new first and foremost exactly what he was: a Jew.

Pierre Rehov was born in Algeria where his ancestors had lived for almost 500 years. He and his family left for France in 1961 with 250,000 other Jewish refugees who were expelled from the newly Muslim-ruled territory. Rehov was 6 years old when he found out that he was Jewish—after seeing graffiti on the wall of his building where he and his family lived. The graffiti read, “The French in the boat; the Arabs in a castle; and the Jews to be exterminated.”

Living in Algeria, the young boy knew very well what “French” and “Arab” meant, but the other word was new to him. Turning to his father, who was a well liked and respected dentist, he asked, “What is a Jew?” His father explained that Jews were a very different group of people who were always treated badly by the rest of the population and a people who would always have troubles. He then told little Pierre that he was a Jew. It was not long after Rehov told his classmates that he was Jewish that they began to call him *un sale juif*—a dirty Jew. Other kids would also praise the works of Hitler.

If only words were the worst type of hate that Rehov experienced, he would



On an Israeli tour.

have gotten over it. But as a child, in Algeria, he observed hatred in its most evil manifestation—terrorism. He’ll never forget the day he and his father were about to enter a café when a grenade, tossed by Muslim extremists rebelling against French rule, exploded. He saw people exiting drenched in blood and without limbs; some people didn’t exit at all. His father grabbed him in his arms and they ran. Another explosive incident happened at his own school where 11 of his classmates were killed. “I saw the worst images of my life as a child,” Rehov says.

So at 9 years old, Rehov, his mother, and younger brother left Algeria to join his father already in France, all hoping for a better and calmer life. But the French refugees were hardly met with open arms by the native French who displayed great antipathy toward the influx of Algerian immigrants. “It was ironic that we were kicked out of Algeria by the Muslims because we were French, yet we were treated so poorly by the French themselves.” Rehov really felt like someone without an identity. And so, in the crowded two bedroom apartment that became his new home and his father’s medical office, Rehov became an avid reader and began to learn more about his other identity—his Jewish one. He read about the Holocaust and the history of the Jews, and watched the movie *Exodus* many, many times. By 1967, the Israeli army had become Rehov’s hero.

With a passion for learning, the young man excelled at all his studies and had little time for socializing. His academic achievements landed him in France’s

number one law school, Université Panthéon-Assas. However, upon graduation, he decided that he didn’t like the practice of law after all and he began working as a reporter for numerous magazines. Rehov eventually became a ghost writer for over 27 novels. He also became a film producer. One of his novels, about a kibbutz during the ’67 War, was turned into a movie entitled *For Sacha*. Yet, despite all his accomplishments, to this day he still remains proud of a presentation he gave at high school about Israel and the Arabs and Jews.

“In those days nobody said ‘Palestinians,’” Rehov recalls. “They were called ‘Arabs.’ They only later became ‘Palestinians’ as a political ploy against Israel.”

He remembers telling the story of Napoleon who, upon passing a synagogue during the Ninth of Av (a day of mourning), looked inside and saw Jews sitting on the floor and weeping. When he inquired further, he was told the Jews were mourning over the destruction of their Holy Temple. “How long ago did this occur?” Napoleon asked. “About 1,500 years ago,” he was told. “In that case there is no doubt that their Temple will be rebuilt,” Napoleon said. “A people capable of crying for so long over its destroyed temple and land will eventually find its way home.”

Rehov feels that Jews have cried long enough, and now that they have their homeland once again they must do whatever it takes to protect it. “I believe that Israel is the miracle of the 20th century,” Rehov says. “It is also the result of the worse injustice that has ever been visited upon a people. No other people but the Jews have been exterminated, non-stop, for 20 centuries.” He cautions fellow Jews by reminding them how 470,000 Jews were deported from the Warsaw Ghetto before the remaining the 30,000 realized what was happening and decided to put up a resistance.

“How many Jews are going to be killed before we wake up and decide to fight back?” Rehov questions passionately. “I don’t want to be among the last 30,000 to start fighting. I’m starting to fight right now.”

And so after the shooting of Mohamed al-Dura and the antisemitic rallies that

Photo courtesy of Pierre Rehov

“I grew up in Algeria with Arabs; I know their mentality. They lie about the Holocaust, they lie about Israel, they lie, they lie, they lie.”

ensued, Pierre Rehov took his fight off the streets of Paris to the courts of France. He rallied Jewish organizations in France to join him in a lawsuit against the French government for its defamation of the State of Israel.

Rehov, who also holds an Israeli passport, was then off to the Holy Land to investigate the circumstance surrounding the tragic, yet suspicious death of al-Dura. His own research, an IDF investigation, and the sources he interviewed, revealed that the trajectory of Israeli gunfire and the position of the bullet holes were inconsistent. Other inconsistencies were enumerated as well. Al-Dura was buried before any autopsy could be performed. Rehov's investigations, however, had satisfied his suspicion that it was the Palestinians themselves who killed al-Dura for propaganda purposes.

“It is not so hard to believe from a people who indoctrinate their children to be martyrs and suicide bombers,” he says. “I grew up in Algeria with Arabs; I know their mentality. They lie about the Holocaust, they lie about Israel, they lie, they lie, they lie.”

When Rehov returned to France, he found out that the defamation case had been dismissed after only six weeks, with no explanation. Rehov says it usually takes two years for a case to be dismissed in France.

But Rehov's resolve could not be dismissed. With his French passport, Arabic features, a digital recorder and the nerve of Robo-Cop, he went into the territories (which are forbidden to Israeli citizens) posing as a French tourist and began an undercover investigation of what is really going on behind the scenes. He has thus far produced three documentaries from the “tourist attractions” he visited in the territories: *A War of Images*, which reveals shocking images of incitement displayed on Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Television network; *The Trojan Horse*, which betrays Arafat's true intentions and shows rare footage of Palestinian leaders advocating

the eradication of the Jewish state and the extermination of the Jewish people, and his most recent film, *The Holy Land: Christians in Peril*, which exposes the true story behind the Church of Nativity confrontation and reveals the dangers for Christians living under Islamic rule.

Nonetheless, it was Rehov who found himself in peril in the Palestinian-controlled Bethlehem. The Palestinian police had stopped him and asked him why he was filming. As always, he told them he was a very interested French tourist, knowing that his French citizenship and France's allegiance to the Palestinian cause would pacify them. They were very friendly to him at first Rehov recounts—until they asked him for cigarettes. “I don't smoke,” he told them. “They couldn't believe that a Frenchman doesn't smoke.” With reverse logic, the Palestinian police figured that where there was NO smoke, there was fire, and thus they seized Rehov's passport. “I was very scared,” Rehov admits. After intensive questioning, they returned his passport to him and let him go.

But Rehov says that the episode was nothing compared to the grief the Israelis gave him when he crossed the border. Rehov's momentary relief at seeing the Israeli soldiers was quashed by their anger at him for going into the forbidden territories and risking his life. They almost sent him to jail. “It was funny that I was doing something to help Israel and they were the ones who were the most peeved at me,” he recalls with a laugh. “But I know it was because they were concerned about my life.”

Pierre Rehov is also concerned about his own life and that is why he uses the surname “Rehov,” which is not his real name. When Rehov returned to France, he began to engage in activities that put him in the spotlight and could potentially expose him to harm's way. His first efforts were to dis-

tribute his documentaries, for free, to French news channels to provide them with an alternative side to the Palestinian-Israeli story. But, in France, the country that prides itself on the tripartite philosophy *Liberté* (liberty), *Egalité* (equality), *et Fraternité* (brotherhood), not one news channel agreed to air them. So he contrived another way to get his tapes seen. Because of France's freedom of expression laws, newsstands have to carry publications no matter what their point of view. So Rehov created a political magazine entitled *Contre Champs*, and affixed a VHS copy of his documentary to each magazine. 50,000 copies have been sold. They sell for 59 francs which is equivalent to \$9. But just as the magazines were about to hit the press, friends begged Rehov not to use his real name. His eyes chanced to fall upon an Israeli magazine on his desk and he spotted the word *rehov*, which means street in Hebrew and thus his alias was born. Only later did he realize that his first name, “Pierre,” which means a stone in French, coupled with “Rehov,” was a symbol for the emergence of the *intifada*—the uprising of stones.

Indeed Pierre Rehov will leave no stone unturned when it comes to exposing Arafat and his cohorts. B'nai B'rith purchased 2,000 copies of his documentaries and dispatched them to every French parliamentarian and many European officials as well. Rehov grants many interviews to American news organizations and works tirelessly to make sure his documentaries have an audience. His tapes are also available for purchase through worldnetdaily.com. Rehov feels that by making these tapes he has given weapons to the Jews who are now able to “fight” for their cause with proof. Rehov's documentaries and the numerous articles he writes on the subject, including one that appeared in *Le Figaro* on the “double face” of Arafat, has earned Rehov countless death threats. Nonetheless, Rehov says that he has never felt more comfortable with himself and with his destiny. lifestyles