

In late June, five months after his last visit to Israel during the Gulf war, Bernard-Henri Levy came to Jerusalem as the guest of the B'nai B'rith World Center. His visit was a major event, not only for the French-speaking community, but also for many in the Israeli literary and political strata. During his stay he gave the B'nai B'rith sixth annual address on "The Intellectual and the Struggle for Freedom," and also met with several prominent politicians and writers.

In France, where intellectuals who play their cards right often enjoy the same prominence and glamor as movie stars and politicians, it is not a contradiction in terms to be an intellectual superstar. Such is the standing that French philosopher, writer, journalist and professor Bernard-Henri Levy has attained over the past 15 years.

Levy comes across as anything but the traditional scholarly, soft-spoken, pipe-smoking figure most often associated with intellectuals. Photogenic, animated and style-conscious, he seems the perfect incarnation of the modern intellectual cut out for the media age. In Paris, he is certainly one of the most prolific.

Born in 1948 in Algiers, he moved with his family to France when he was a child. He grew up in Paris, where he completed his studies at the Ecole Normale Supérieure as an exemplary student. He was awarded an *Agregation de Philosophie* (highest teaching diploma in philosophy).

A spiritual offspring of the May 1968 students' uprising in Paris, he burst on the public scene in 1976 as one of the so-called *Nouveaux Philosophes* (New Philosophers), a handful of young intellectuals nurtured by Marxist ideology, who created a furor primarily by denouncing the dogmas of Communism.

Since 1973, he has written 11 books, both collections of essays and novels. Among them, *Le Diable en Tête* (The Devil in Mind) was awarded the Medecis Literary Prize in 1984, and *Les Derniers Jours de Baudelaire* (The Last Days of Baudelaire) the Interrallié Prize in 1988. In addition, he is a regular contributor to French magazines and newspapers, and is the literary editor of the *Figures* collection of Grasset, a distinguished French publishing house. He also publishes his own review, *La Regle du Jeu* (The Rule of the Game).

Levy is one of the most committed intellectuals in France, as frequently involved in militant actions for the defense of human rights as in issues related to Israel or the Jewish community.

Given his flamboyant nature, it is not sur-