

# Jewish Life

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JULY 1949

**OUR HERITAGE AND FOLEY SQUARE** —————▶

*an editorial*

**AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS VEERS RIGHT** —————▶

*by Louis Harap*

**THE LIE GETS BIGGER** —————▶

*an editorial article*

**ZIONISM AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL: III** —————▶

*by Moses Miller*

**A HYACINTH FOR YOUR SOUL** —————▶

*a review by Carey McWilliams*

**EMMA LAZARUS CENTENARY** —————▶

*by Morris U. Schappes*

# From the Four Corners

Edited by Louis Harap

AT HOME

A PATTERN of American influence on Israel began to take shape through statements made in May. Jacob Purofsky, head of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, visited Israel as a representative of the CIO, and correspondents from Tel Aviv reported "it was understood" that the floating of a loan to Israel by American labor organizations was designed to bring the Histadruth closer to the western bloc. At the annual convention of ORT on May 21, Rep. Jacob K. Javits said that "Israel must become . . . the bridgehead of democracy in the Near East" in opposition to communism.

DUPLICATION OF ACTIVITIES among so-called Jewish "defense" organizations was the storm center of discussion at the seventh plenary session of the National Community Relations Advisory Council, coordinating organization of the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League, Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish War Veterans, and 24 Jewish community relations councils. Proposals adopted provided for clearance with the NCRC of projects undertaken by individual agencies but no punitive action was provided in case of failure to clear. Nor were agencies constrained from undertaking similar projects. A committee was assigned to "study" the problem of allocation of functions and to report at the next plenary session.

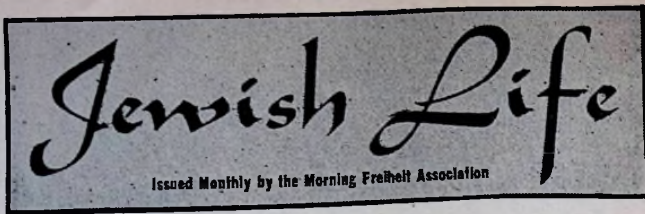
JEWISH SOCIAL WORKERS, members of Local 83, UOPWA-CIO, staged the first protest demonstrations in the history of St. Louis philanthropies in early May against the administrations of the Child Welfare Agency and the Jewish Family Service. The union, which is pressing for recognition and higher wages for Jewish social service workers, is trying to bring about a meeting with the executives of these agencies to negotiate these issues. Red herrings are being thrown by the agencies in their refusal to meet with the union.

JEWISH EMPLOYERS in Miami are the worst discriminators against Jewish workers, according to a survey by Louis Aronovitz, staff writer of the Miami Jewish *Floridian*. Among the guilty employers are top figures in the Miami Jewish Federation, active participants in Brotherhood week and good synagogue members. Even some kosher hotels practice a no-Jewish employment policy.

A DETROIT GOLF CLUB with a single Jewish member signed up two outstanding local Jewish golfers last July. The club manager, who held a lease on the golf course, then signed up 26 more Jews over the protest of the board of directors, who then resigned. By the end of the 1948 season half the club was Jewish. At the beginning of the 1949 season, however, only a few non-Jewish members rejoined the club.

RABBI JACOB A. HONIG of Huntington Station, N. Y., charged shortly after Passover that many Jewish merchants in the town shut their stores on Good Friday under pressure from local Catholic Church leaders. He accused these leaders of "un-American conduct . . . to request observance of Good Friday by members of other religions." All but a few Jewish merchants acquiesced and closed their stores for a few hours.

THE KU KLUX KLAN has re-established itself in "at least 20 states, including some in the north" said Stetson Kennedy, a writer who joined



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JEWISH LIFE is devoted to the scientific study of the political, economic, cultural and social development of the Jewish people, and to the militant struggle for equality and democracy in the United States. It fights the building up of a progressive Jewish life in communities where they exist. It recognizes that the maximum support to the development of Jewish communities where they exist. It recognizes that the chief strength of the Jewish people lies in an alliance with the progressive forces of the world, particularly labor, and with the masses of the oppressed peoples.

THE EDITORS.

## CONTENTS

FROM MONTH TO MONTH	3
OUR HERITAGE AND FOLEY SQUARE	4
THE TERMINIELLO DECISION	4
THE ZOA CONVENTION	5
CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN AMERICA?	5
THE LIE GETS BIGGER, an editorial article	5
AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS VEERS RIGHT by Louis Harap	9
AMERICAN JEWISH CENTENARY by Morris U. Schappes	13
ENMA LAZARUS by Emma Lazarus	14
LITTLE ESSAYS by Emma Lazarus	15
IMMIGRATION CRISIS IN ISRAEL by A. B. Magill	17
POD'S "BEST FRIEND," a short story by Leo Bilander	21
ZIONISM AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL: III by Moses Marmor	25
THE FIRST JEWISH TRADE UNION by Kalman Marmer	25
BOOK REVIEWS	27
A HYACINTH FOR YOUR SOUL by Carey McWilliams	28
STREETS OF WILLIAMSBURG by Ben Field	28
LETTERS FROM ABROAD	29
WORLD JEWRY AND PEACE by B. Adam (Paris)	29
DOCUMENT	30
ANGLO-AMERICAN RIVALRY IN THE MIDDLE EAST by H. Salimjanov	30
FROM THE FOUR CORNERS, edited by Louis Harap	2, 32
DRAWINGS by "Chips" Wilson	27, 30

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the Klan to learn its conspiracies, before a House Labor subcommittee hearing on FEPC on May 20. He also stated that he had seen checks from ill "hate sheets."

EDWARD LE ROY VAN RODEN, a Media, Penna., judge who served as an "investigator" of charges of alleged "brutality" and third degree methods used against nazi soldiers accused of having massacred American prisoners at Malmedy, was revealed in the *New York Post* on May 31 as having endorsed a pro-nazi and anti-Semitic book. Van Roden is widely used by fascists and has recommended that the Malmedy trial prosecutors be placed on trial.

THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE released for floor discussion a revised DP bill in May. Interesting features of the new bill: it would admit 339,000 DP's; DP's who entered the DP areas before Jan. 1, 1949 would be admitted; racist language of the present *Volksdeutsche* provision specifying immigrants of German ethnic origin is retained; it provides visas for 18,000 veterans of Gen. Wladislaw Anders' Polish army, who are regarded as anti-Semitic.

A TOTAL OF 62,600 Jewish immigrants, the majority of whom are DP's, entered this country between May 1946 and April 1949. Of these 6,245 entered under the DP Act of 1949.

(Continued on page 32)

# FROM MONTH TO MONTH

## OUR HERITAGE AND FOLEY SQUARE

EUROPE'S emergence from the Middle Ages became evident with the fresh intellectual winds that began to blow. Taking hold of the new material conditions that opened up new promise, men began to question the ideas that chained them to the past, that made them slaves to bigotry and superstition. Nothing in the past was too sacred to examine, too holy to reject. Those were times of great change and courageous men did not hesitate to hasten that change.

The road was not easy. The feudal lords were not ready voluntarily to retire and relinquish their power. New thoughts were met with persecution, inquisition, with the torture rack.

A famous incident took place in this period. In 1509, the church, seeking to distract attention from its own iniquities, requested of Maximilian, Emperor of Austria, that the Talmud be burned, because it taught hostility and enmity to Christianity. A trial was arranged. Lines were drawn. People took sides. The prosecution stated that nothing was at stake but the Talmud and that no one but the Jews were on trial. But many saw through this device and recognized that it was not the Talmud and the Jews alone whose future was at stake, but all peoples and their right to advance to new ideas and a new life.

It was because of that trial that the name of Johann Reuchlin became famous. He was a Christian scholar of repute. But he was also a member of that group that recognized the need of tearing down the curtain of medievalism that was obscuring men's vision and leading to stagnation and decay. He appeared at the trial for the defense. He staunchly defended the Talmud and accused the prosecution of seeking to destroy the right of men to hold to their own beliefs. He was abused and his name was dragged through the mire. But he stood firm and undaunted.

Historical parallels are, of course, never completely accurate because history never repeats itself in exactly the same way. Yet historical parallels have their value for men of vision who can, by reading history, draw proper lessons for their own time.

The trial in Foley Square is certainly quite different from the trial of the Talmud in 1509. The times are different. Conditions are different. The place is different. And yet there is an essential parallel. The attempt to hold back the progress of man, to destroy progressive and revolutionary movements by attempting to outlaw ideas, follows the same pattern. In the sixteenth century it was the Jew and

in our own day it is the communist. Those who find it too difficult to perceive the parallel between the two, should turn the pages of history to 1933 and to Germany, to learn how a plan of destruction evolved and how the clock of history was turned back by merging two minorities, the Jews and the communists, into a scapegoat.

The common people of our country have many proud traditions and a noble and honorable heritage. But the trial on Foley Square is destroying that heritage, is contaminating and dragging into the mire our precious American tradition of the fight for independence, the fight against slavery, the struggle of the American workers for an eight-hour day and for the building of a great trade union movement. McGohey's conception of America is not that of a Thomas Paine, or Lincoln or Walt Whitman; of Tom Mooney or William Z. Foster. His is rather the conception of a man who loves not the country and its masses but a handful of rapacious and profit-crazed individuals who place their own interests above that of the mass of the people and would halt progress if it interferes with their plans.

What degeneracy is apparent in the parade of the stool-pigeons and the informers. Are these the guardians of our future? Are these the spokesmen of tomorrow? Did these men fight for the working people of America in those days when men walked about jobless and their families hungry? Or did Foster and Dennis, Williamson and Gates, Winston and Potash, Gus Hall, Jack Stachel, Ben Davis, Gil Green and Carl Winter, who organized Americans to struggle for their security and to achieve the rights that belonged to them? Many of these men landed in jail for organizing workers, for building unions, for fighting for social security. But that was no disgrace but rather an honor, an honor which is always bestowed by the ruling class upon those who lead the masses to fight for dignity and for a better future.

Do these informers and stoolpigeons raise a finger when a Negro is lynched in the south or deprived of his job in the east, when a man's color is sufficient to bar him from the right to live among other men or to ride in the same car or to walk down the same side of the street? Stoolpigeons and informers come out of their holes only to betray people and to serve their masters. Again, it was the men who sit in the defendants' box in Foley Square that led the great struggles around Angelo Herndon, the Scottboro Boys, the Freeport case, William Milton and many other struggles for Negro rights that have become part of the glorious tradition of the American Commu-

Party and American working class struggling for freedom.

One cannot find nobler words in the history books of the American people than those uttered in Foley Square by John Gates. In reply to the demand of the prosecutor that he identify comrades and workers, he declared that he would not be worthy of the trust that had been placed in him by American working men and women, if he were to divulge their identity and thus lay them open to persecution. But he was sentenced for contempt for these honorable words. And because they defended this sacred right and protested against indignity, two of his comrades, Winston and Hall, had their bail lifted and were remanded to jail for the rest of the trial.

Throughout the ages, the Jewish people have learned to despise and to reject the *moser*, the informer. And rightly so. Throughout the ages Jews have suffered bitterly and lost millions of their brothers and sisters because of *mosim*, stoolpigeons and informers. Not a single age has passed but the Jewish people were not faced with indignity and persecution because of informers, for blood libel, a Talmud libel or the like. Some people may consider it trite to recall that, where communists are attacked, the persecution of others inevitably follows. But it is a truth attested by oceans of blood. We still have to heed the inexorable lesson of history that where one minority has been attacked, an attack upon the rights and the lives of all men must follow.

One of the most moving speeches that we have ever had occasion to read was delivered recently in Paris at the Peace Conference by a Soviet mother, L. T. Kosmodemyanskaya, whose son and daughter had been killed while fighting the Nazi invader. She tells how her daughter, Zoya, who was 18, and her son, Alexander, who was 17, went to the front to defend their homeland. Both were killed. This Soviet mother brought both bodies back and buried them in Moscow. Over their common grave, she said, "there is a black, marble memorial, bearing these words: 'Man's most precious possession is life. It is given to him only once, and it must be lived so that dying one can say: I gave all my life and all my strength to the most splendid thing in the world—the struggle for the liberation of mankind.'"

In each age, in each land, men face their own struggle for liberation. And in every age and in every land, they must resist those who would deny men the right to be free. Thus it was in 1509. Thus it was with Zoya and Alexander in 1941. Thus it is in Foley Square.

## THE TERMINIELLO DECISION

**T**HE reversal by the United States Supreme Court of the conviction of the anti-Semitic, fascist priest Arthur W. Terminiello for breaching the peace by using inciting language at a fascist meeting, has raised basic questions for the future of defense against anti-Semitism and fascist agitation. The several decisions, majority and minority, have avoided the real issue in the case, namely, that racist and

fascist agitation is excluded from the realm of free speech. Although the majority decision was based on a narrow technical point of law, it made clear that it construed fascist agitation as included in the province of free speech. It thus left the road open to unrestrained fascist propaganda without threat of penalty under the law. This "liberal" construction of the Bill of Rights is familiar enough. Opponents of attempts to outlaw anti-Semitism anti-Negroism and fascist propaganda have regularly used this argument. There is no substantial difference between incitement to murder and the various forms of racist and fascist agitation. By its failure to affirm this principle, the Supreme Court majority has placed an obstacle in the way of cleansing our country of the dangerous pests of racism and fascism. For the majority appears to see no way to bar incitement to exterminate people because of their color, national origin or political beliefs.

The main dissenting opinion, made by Justice Robert H. Jackson, also holds great dangers. Like the majority opinion, it does not exclude racist or fascist agitation from the province of free speech. The minority grants freedom of speech to fascists, as well as others, only to the point where danger to the community may arise from the "battle for the streets." Recent experience has conclusively shown that such a ruling would in practice be used against communists and progressives, rather than fascists, even though every instance of such disturbance is initiated by reactionaries who assault progressives engaged in peaceful expression of grievances. Under pretext of concern for the law enforcement problems of municipalities, the Jackson opinion actually urges measures that would rob communists of the right to the streets and propagation of their viewpoint.

Lawyers and others will no doubt debate loud and long over the technical niceties of the points made in the various opinions on this case. However, the Negro people, the Jewish people and all progressive Americans know that they are indeed faced with a clear and present danger *now* from racists and fascists who find the hysterical, reactionary atmosphere of the moment favorable for the propagation of menacing views—and the committing of acts that violate the Bill of Rights. Simply and basically the issue is: anti-Semitism, anti-Negroism and every form of fascism must be outlawed as a measure for preserving democracy.

## THE ZOA CONVENTION

**F**OR weeks the American Jewish press had been proclaiming that the convention of the Zionist Organization of America, to be held in May, would resolve many of the outstanding problems that had arisen as a result of the establishment of Israel. The leadership of the Zionist Organization promised that the commission it had established, headed by Judge Simon H. Rifkind, to present a report on all of these major questions, would adjust their program to the new situation.

The convention has come and gone and yet even the

staunchest advocates and devotees of the Zionist Organization will admit that all the problems still remain basically unclarified and still await adjustment. *JEWISH LIFE* plans to publish an analysis of the Rifkind report in a later issue, but for the present it is enough to point out that there is nothing in the report to indicate a reorientation on the fundamental question of relationships between the American Jewish community and Israel or on the equally vital issue of how to promote the struggle for the attainment of genuine independence for Israel.

Signs of growing uneasiness have been apparent even among those who have been content to accept Zionist leadership, ever since the creation of Israel. The majority of American Jewry looks with contempt upon the contortions of the Council for Judaism. They recognize however, that mere exhortation of all ideas which do not conform with the positions of the Zionist leadership will not resolve the many pressing issues. Growing numbers are becoming aware that the Zionist concept, which subordinates all Jewish communities to Israel, does harm alike to Jewish communities and to Israel. Furthermore, many Jews are beginning to think through the problem of Israel's future and to recognize that mere hallelujahs will not advance the welfare of the masses of Israel by one iota. There are too many political considerations involved which demand the earnest attention of men who are concerned with the future of the Jewish state. Independence cannot be achieved hand in hand with economic enslavement. Freedom cannot be won by subordinating Israel to the dictates of oil companies and of imperialist planners.

These, very briefly, are the urgent problems that face the Jewish people. The answers of the Zionist convention to date are a continuation of that kind of politics which, far

from resolving these issues, complicates them and makes them more difficult.

## AMERICAN CONCENTRATION CAMPS

**A**MONG the fascist measures that have been creeping through the legislative mill in the House is a little-noticed but highly dangerous bill submitted by Rep. Sam Hobbs of Alabama. This poll-taxer proposes that concentration camps be set up for non-citizens who are threatened with deportation. The bill would violate the American right to bail by authorizing the confinement of non-citizens in such camps while their cases were being considered. And in view of the fact that years are required for final decision on such cases, the implications of the bill become apparent. Furthermore, this bill would violate the American principle that there should be no imprisonment without a trial and a finding of guilty. This bill was defeated in 1941, but it has reappeared in this session as HR-10.

The injustice of this bill to non-citizens, whom it would deprive of the protection of the Bill of Rights, is serious enough. But the danger of the bill does not stop there. Once the traditional safeguards of American justice are broken down for anyone, they are endangered for all. Today it may be non-citizens, tomorrow it will be any citizen whom the ruling powers may want to put away. The fight against the Hobbs bill must therefore be waged not only as a defense of non-citizens, but as a threat to basic American principles. Congress should be told in no uncertain terms that the people will not tolerate this undermining of democracy.

## THE LIE GETS BIGGER

**T**HE slanderous press campaign against "Soviet anti-Semitism" took on momentum in the past month. In the June issue we exposed some of the crass deceptions practiced in this campaign. We carry the story further here.

It is obvious that the main purpose of this assault on the Soviet Union is to help prepare men's minds to accept the "cold war" and to add to the confusion, fear and distrust necessary to fan the flames of a talking war into the actual shooting war that Wall Street wants. To gain these ends, the Jewish masses, above all, must be lured away from the respect and sympathy they have come to feel for the Soviet Union because of its consistent struggle against racism and anti-Semitism over the years and, more recently, because of its magnificent role in the fight for the creation and maintenance of a free, independent Israel.

### *An Editorial Article*

This is not a new campaign. It has been used every time the world situation became critical, every time relations between the major powers became strained. That the large portion of the American press jumped wholeheartedly into the mess, distorting facts, lying about sources, reprinting fabrications in spite of and after being forced to print repudiations of their own stories, is not new either. More shocking, however, is the fact that a number of Jewish organizations, consciously aiding the press and even originating their own slanders, is also not new.

Who fired the opening gun in this campaign of slander? On April 1st, 1949, the Library of Jewish Information of the American Jewish Committee issued a document called *Jews Behind the Iron Curtain*. This document, produced by the organization of America's wealthiest Jews, was supposed to be the final word and up-to-the-minute proof that

anti-Semitism is now an official weapon of the Soviet Union and the new democracies. From the way in which the material in this document has been used, it is evident that if the American Jewish Committee did not actually help initiate this disgusting and dangerous campaign, it has certainly done all it can to keep it going. Frederick Woltman, starting a scurrilous series in the *World-Telegram* on May 16th, wrote, "This incredible development in a nation where discrimination is supposed to be a state crime—was established in a survey by the *World-Telegram*, based chiefly on Jewish sources. One of them, the American Jewish Committee, terms the campaign against Soviet Jews both 'violent' and 'official.'" Throughout his series, Woltman refers constantly to statements made by the American Jewish Committee, either in the document referred to above, or in the *Committee Reporter*.

The Jewish *Forward*, the Jewish *Morning Journal* and the Jewish *Day* leaped into the campaign, competing hysterically to see who could print more shrieking headlines and bigger and better fabrications. Nor did the right wing, conservative Yiddish press confine itself to reprinting what had appeared in the English press. They added their own concoctions. According to these newspapers, not only was there anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, but leading Jewish writers like Itzik Feffer, David Bergelson and a host of others had already been "purged," were either dead or dying, had been sent to Siberia, had disappeared and so on, *ad nauseam*.

### Back to Truth

So blatant was the note of glee in the Jewish press that one noted Jewish journalist, William Zuckerman, was led to comment on these antics in an article entitled "A Case for Psycho-Pathology," in which he pointed out that to "rush to reprint jubilantly such falsifications and rejoice in the discovery that another sixth of the world which has outlawed anti-Semitism has turned anti-Semitic, seems to be a case for psycho-pathology."

The deceptions of the campaign are exposed by an analysis of the April 9th and 10th *Pravda*, in which the Stalin prize winners are listed. People thoroughly familiar with Russian have gone over the lists carefully for us and have found over 120 obviously Jewish names. Here are only a few of the names that appear in the April 9th list:

Lev Benyaminovich Marmorshstein, chief engineer of the factory "Serp and Hammer"; Ephraim Feilolevich Schwartzberg, aeroplane engineer; Binyomin Bezalelevich Gurevich, engineer of the factory "Electro-Apparat"; Aharon Isakovich Liberman, engineer of Moscow instrument factory; Samuel Moiseyevich Silbergliet, engineer-Constructor of building construction; Yuri Aronovich Shapiro, engineer of the Yaroslav Auto factory; Shlomo Izakovich Amrom, chemist; Gershon Shimonovitz Brodsky and Abraham Samuelovich Feinstein, plastic engineers; Leib Davidovich Yaffe, radio constructor; Yisroel Pinyevitch Weiner, constructor of new military weapons.

Incidentally, let the honest reader ask himself how many

Jews in America with such distinctively and obviously Jewish names as most of those cited above would ever have the chance of getting jobs as chief engineers in such places as Ford, DuPont, U.S. Steel or Bethlehem Steel.

### "Newsweek" and Woltman

Faced with facts like these, what are the brilliant conclusions drawn by the great and free American press? Here's an example, taken from *Newsweek* on May 23rd, which purports to be based on a special report received from a "Western diplomat who returned from Moscow last week."

"However," says *Newsweek* on that date, "the drive to eliminate the Jews from literary, and artistic activities continues unabated—though without fanfare. The recently published list of Stalin prizewinners provides convincing evidence of the nature of the campaign. In literature and art, a field in which Russian Jews have been traditionally active, only nine of 241 awards were given to Jews. In the field of science, Jews were given six out of 36 awards. But the long list of 760 prizewinners in industrial and technical development contains as many as 83 obviously Jewish names.

"This breakdown, coupled with well substantiated reports that Jews are being gradually eliminated from party propaganda positions and especially from the so-called Agitprop units, led *Newsweek's* informant to conclude that, though Soviet Jews may enjoy opportunities in industrial and technical fields, they will be driven out of art and literature as ruthlessly as they have already been eliminated from positions of influence in national defense and foreign affairs."

Just to show the puerility of the arguments used by *Newsweek*, it must be remembered that the Jewish people in the Soviet Union constitute about one per cent of the population, which means they are exceptionally well represented in all the fields in which the Stalin prizes were awarded.

To show the depths to which these hate campaigners will stoop, it is necessary to show up their technique of distortion. Quotation out of context is one method. On May 20th, Freddie Woltman wrote for his bosses, "Probably no better authority could be found, attesting to the virtual disappearance of Jewish life itself in the USSR, than B. Z. Goldberg, columnist on *The Day*, New York Jewish daily. . . .

"Returning after a six months' tour of the USSR, Mr. Goldberg, as far back as August 14, 1946, wrote in *The Day*:

"There are no Jewish districts in the cities and towns. There are no specifically Jewish occupations, there are no Jewish hospitals, no Jewish old-folks' homes, no Jewish clubs, no Jewish parties, no Jewish philanthropies, no Jewish educational institutions."

But what did Mr. Goldberg really say? "There is no Jewish problem in Kiev," he wrote.

"We Jews always yearned for one thing; to be equal

with all other people and that there should be no exception made of Jews. This being made an exception was always like a hump on our back and we wanted to get rid of this. . . . Numbers of Jews who went to Palestine left not so much because of their love for Palestine, but because of their hatred of being different. They didn't want to be different from any other part of the population. . . .

"Well, here we have an example of an end to this being different, an example of equality. We have an example of where the hump has been taken off our shoulders. And so some feel that their backs are a little cold. . . .

"There are no special Jewish living quarters or areas. There are no specifically Jewish occupations. There are no Jewish hospitals, no Jewish old folks' homes, no Jewish clubs, no Jewish parties, no Jewish philanthropies. There are no special Jewish educational institutions—even where Jewish education exists, either for example in the 'Jewish cabinet' or in the Research Institute of the General Academy. In such cases, once again it is not something apart but an integral part of the general academy, under the direction of the general academy and subsidized by the general budget of the country. The only difference is that the language is Yiddish and the theme in Jewish. Other than that the technique and the mechanics—everything is a part of the general."

### *Fantasies Exploded*

It shouldn't be necessary to point out the difference between what B. Z. Goldberg said and what Freddie Woltman said he said. But distortion is by no means Mr. Woltman's only device. He shows especial genius in finding his "authorities." For his May 23rd article, which appeared under the blaring headline, "DOUBLE CROSSING RUSSIANS LEFT JEWS TO MERCY OF HITLER'S INVADING HORDES," he had two excellent sources. A Dr. Solomon M. Schwartz, who Woltman says, is "an authority on current economic and social problems in Russia and a researcher for leading Jewish organizations," supplied this tidbit: "The Russian people were never told Hitlerism signified the complete extermination of the Jews." Woltman's other authority was Gregor Aronson, a member of the editorial staff of *Novoye Russkoe Slovo*, a Russian language daily well known as a white-guard newspaper, which has been calling for the overthrow of the Soviet Union for years. Woltman quotes in his article from a "forthcoming documented pamphlet" written by Gregor Aronson, in which Aronson states: "Stalin and his officials did not worry about the fate of the Jews. They simply forgot about this problem."

It is hard to believe that anyone, whether he agrees with Soviet ideology or not, can have forgotten the glorious role the Soviet Union played in world events in the years since 1939. But, since filthy hands have been laid on the history of those years, maybe it must be recorded once again in black and white. The whole story cannot be told here, of course. But in telling some of the story again, it can be shown that this campaign of lies has been tried before.

On December 3, 1939, an article appeared in the *Nation* under the signature of Oswald Garrison Villard and written from the Hague. "One other piece of bad news I must give," wrote Villard. "It is widely believed in responsible circles in Germany that part of the bargain with Stalin calls for the application of the Nuremberg Laws to Russian Jews, and that this will be done within six months from the signing of the Pact. It is not thought that such laws will actually be put on the statute books. Stalin will simply give certain orders; that will be enough."

Immediately, the Jewish press took up the hue and cry, reprinting Villard's story in the Jewish daily *Forward* and the Jewish *Morning Journal*, which latter even added some choice details made up of fabrications about the spreading of Nazi literature in the Soviet Union.

### *Smirching the Record*

The news columns and editorials of the Jewish *Forward* in those days give a fine picture of mental gymnastics. For example, writing editorially on February 1, 1940, the *Forward* said: "There is nothing to envy about the Jews who were 'saved' in those parts of Poland which the Red Army has taken over." After publishing material in this vein, the *Forward*, like all of the other Jewish newspapers, was deluged with letters from hundreds and hundreds of Jews who had been saved by the Red Army, until it couldn't ignore them any longer. On February 4, the *Forward* again editorialized with: "Many American Jews have lately been receiving letters from their relatives in that part of Poland which has been taken by the Bolsheviks. The writers of these letters thank God that they have saved themselves from the Nazi hell and they express great satisfaction at the fact that they now find themselves in a country where they are sure of their lives and are no longer insulted or persecuted as Jews."

While the *Forward* was engaged in its contortions, reports of what was taking place were pouring in. On February 26, 1940, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency was reporting that "the Soviet government takes into consideration the tragic position of the refugees and gives them the opportunity to move deeper into Russia. Despite that, the number of refugees [in Western Ukraine] does not let up. Thousands of Jewish refugees from Nazi Poland continue to come into Russia. Their number is growing daily and among them are not only Polish Jews, but Austrian, German and Czechoslovak Jews as well, who are fleeing from Nazi terror."

There are many stories that could be told of those trying days for the Jews and of the scandalous slanders made by the American Jewish press against the Soviet Union. Toward the end of November 1940, Dr. Nover, a Polish refugee, grew so incensed by the lies printed in the *Forward* that he wrote a protesting letter to the *Forward* which that paper refused to print. Dr. Nover then sent to the *Morning Freiheit*, which reprinted it on December 12, 1948. *Jewish Life* published this letter in English in February 1949.

## Where Equality Is Real

There are few people who foam at the mouth every time they talk about the Soviet Union as does Jacob Lestchinsky, who is regarded in certain circles as a foremost Jewish economist. Yet, in a book of his published in Vilna in 1930, *Zvishn Lebn Un Toit* (Between Life and Death), even he was forced to report that, "Anyone who is acquainted with the pogroms in the entire Ukraine . . . must admit that the Red Army saved the Jews of the Ukraine from physical disappearance; that the Red Army did not permit the extermination of 2,500,000 Russian Jews. . . ."

"One of the most outstanding facts which anyone could observe was the following, Jews would evacuate scores of cities and towns together with the Red Army whenever the Bolsheviks had to leave a place, for a few days or even for a few hours. . . . The Jews always ran away and followed the Red Army. . . . When the Poles occupied Kiev the entire Jewish population of the right side of the Dnieper came from Kiev to Tcherkas. Entire families, including the elderly people, left their place of residence and all their possessions. People ran away without any idea of returning. . . . At that time one really could believe that the Bolshevik regime was a Jewish regime, so much time, attention and energy to the evacuation of Jewish population were given by the Red Army. . . ."

Soviet leaders from the beginning did not take the question of achieving equality for all peoples lightly. Again and again they stated that equality could not be achieved through formal declarations and pronouncements alone. Real equality could be won only by bringing all peoples up to the same economic level, through affording them equal opportunity. That is why one of the first steps undertaken by the Soviet Union was to afford the Jewish people the right to become productive workers, to become farmers, to take part in all the types of activity from which they had been excluded for centuries. That is why Birobidjan was created, so that those Jews who longed for complete national fulfillment would have the opportunity to find it. There was no compulsion involved. Those who wished to go were permitted to do so and were aided in every way in their efforts. Those who wished to stay behind, were given every opportunity to become completely free and equal citizens wherever they were.

Anyone who has been to the Soviet Union, as well as many here who keep up with Soviet Jewish affairs, can testify to the vast network of Jewish schools and institutions that were and are in existence in the Soviet Union. More Jewish literature and books were published in the Soviet Union than in the rest of the world put together.

At this point, some readers are probably saying to themselves, "All this may be true. But what about the reports that are appearing, particularly in the Yiddish press, that some of the leading Jewish Soviet writers, like Itzik Feffer and David Bergelson, are missing? Why, some of the newspapers have even stated that they have been arrested and sent to Siberia."

Frankly, we have no more knowledge of where these

gentlemen are than do the writers for the Yiddish press who concocted these stories. Neither they, nor we, have been to the Soviet Union lately.

Our memory, however, reminds us that hair-raising tales of this kind are by no means new. A number of years ago, we remember, Litvinov was purged and disappeared, not once, but four or five times—in the *Forward*, that is. We also remember a fabricated story of a disappearance which turned out to be quite embarrassing to its creators in the Yiddish press. In fact, the feeling was left that the Yiddish press would have been happier, on the whole, if the object of its story had really disappeared and stayed that way.

On August 29, 1945, the *Jewish Morning Journal* printed a cable from its correspondent in Jerusalem that Rabbi Dr. Mordecai Nurok had been "banished" and was in "dire need" in Tashkent. Rabbi Nurok was the chief rabbi of Riga and a former member of the parliament in Latvia.

As it turned out but a short while later, in October of 1945 to be exact, a cable came through from the Soviet Union with a New Year's greeting addressed to American Jewry by Dr. Nurok.

## Jews Against Jewish People

When confronted with such facts of slander against those who granted the Jews full equality, many people will shake their heads and argue that it is incredible. It is hard to believe that any Jew, regardless of his economic status, would do anything to harm the Jewish people. Yes, it is hard to believe. Yet, history, both past and present, is filled with instances and examples of the betrayal of the Jewish people, of the misleadership of the Jewish people and of the holding back of the people from struggle through demagoguery, confusion and even intimidation by bourgeois Jewish organizations and leaders. The "hush-hush" policy of the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Labor Committee with regard to the struggle against anti-Semitism; the notorious role of the American Jewish Committee in seeking to hold back the anti-Nazi boycott movement that had developed in the American Jewish community in the thirties, are characteristic attempts to silence militant Jewish action, particularly when it began to ally itself with the progressive labor forces of America. They are indicative of the tendency of those in the top economic brackets to subordinate the interests of the Jewish people to their own narrow and selfish class and economic interests.

No doubt many honest people have been taken in, confused and shocked by the hysterical campaign against the Soviet Union. But the leaders of the American Jewish Committee are not among them, nor those of the Jewish Labor Committee. They know the record of the Soviet Union. Their files are full of facts and documents on what the Soviet Union has done for the Jewish people. These gentlemen know where to find the truth—if they want it. No. These are no misinformed, misled souls. These are groups determined to distort the facts so as to mislead the Jewish masses and draw them into the hysterical preparations for an anti-Soviet war.



# AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS VEERS RIGHT

By Louis Harap

ON April 19, the founder and leader of the American Jewish Congress, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, died. On May 26, the executive committee of Congress expelled two of its affiliates, the Jewish People's Fraternal Order and the American Jewish Labor Council. This sequence of events has great significance, both symbolic and actual, for American Jewish life.

Congress was formed in 1918, when growing numbers of Jews were revolting against attempted domination by the American Jewish Committee oligarchy and its insistence that all Jewish affairs must be left in the hands of wise, prudent and statesmenlike leaders—that is, wealthy Jews. The men who founded Congress also rebelled against the "court Jew" attitude and "hush-hush" policies that prevailed in Jewish life. Men like Rabbi Wise resented oligarchical control and worked for more democratic organization. But this newer leadership, as is well known, was middle class and Zionist-minded. They saw in Congress an organization that would win the Jewish masses to Zionism, while it acted on every phase of Jewish problems as well.

Congress was set off from other bourgeois Jewish organizations by this early fight for democratization and by its subsequent struggles to rally large masses of the Jewish people in democratic actions. Yet Congress never achieved full democracy. At no period was it free from vacillation and even retreat issuing from inherent contradictions between the struggle against the ruling oligarchy in Jewish life and its own middle class and Zionist ideology.

The trend towards democratization reached its height during the war years. Thus in 1944, for example, under pressure of the broad anti-war sentiment, Congress stimulated democratization by its espousal of the acceptance of the Jewish People's Fraternal Order into the late lamented American Jewish Conference.

But what has happened to Congress in the past few years? As everyone knows, the end of the war saw the dissipation of anti-fascist unity achieved during the war under President Roosevelt's leadership. The Truman administration quickly veered to the right. The cold war policy as implemented by the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan became the dominant motifs in foreign policy. This reactionary policy was quickly joined with a domestic program of Taft-Hartley, witch-hunts, loyalty orders and persecution of progressive and communist forces. This trend, accentuated by a calculated hysteria, had its effect on liberals. Many of them felt into line, some because they agreed, others because they were intimidated despite their lack of full agreement with the cold war policy. Congress leadership was no exception. It succumbed more and more to the cold war hysteria. Congress leadership did not move to the right more quickly because it feared the membership, among whom disapproval of this course and pressure for

effective mass work was quite impressively evident.

An obvious sign that Congress was moving towards an abandonment of its mass character and the stifling of mass action came in 1947, when Congress entered upon secret negotiations with the United Jewish Appeal for a large allocation of funds from that agency. Previously Congress had collected money to some extent by mass fund raising activities which thereby kept it fairly free of the strangling influence of moneyed interests among the Jews.

The anti-democratic nature of the United Jewish Appeal is common knowledge and was highlighted in the past year by the widely publicized quarrel within that organization.<sup>1</sup> It was not therefore unexpected that the UJA imposed conditions on Congress in line with the reactionary practices of the money influence in Jewish life which dictated minimum mass participation and action. The negotiations were carried on in secret by the top Congress "steering committee" of about six members of the executive committee. On May 1, 1947, a joint meeting of the executive and administrative committees was presented with the *fait accompli* of a contract with the UJA. Neither membership, chapters nor divisions of Congress were kept informed of the negotiations or of the terms of the contract. It became known, in the course of preparations for a Warsaw Ghetto memorial meeting, that the contract bound Congress to hold no mass rallies, actions, meetings or demonstrations for the first eight months of the year. After some harassment to plans for the meeting, the UJA graciously gave Congress special dispensation to hold the meeting in April 1947.

## Bureaucracy Sets In

If the terms of the contract remained unknown, the devastating overt effects of its operation soon became evident. A newly trained and energetic Department of Organization was drastically cut. The pattern was to maintain a passive, docile membership—in other words, membership in a formal sense only. All plans for increasing membership and for setting up a minimum of new chapters were ruthlessly ditched. Numerous membership affairs were arbitrarily cancelled by the national office. The handwriting on the wall could be read: Congress was to become an American Jewish Committee type of organization with window dressing of membership that was to be repressed and deprived of democratic control of Congress. Like the American Jewish Committee, a small oligarchy was to rule the organization with a stern, unrelenting, bureaucratic hand.

At the top of this little oligarchy are Dr. David Petegorsky, Rabbi Irving Miller, chairman of the executive com-

<sup>1</sup> For a keen interpretation of that controversy, see Moses Miller's two articles, "Where Does our Money Go? The United Jewish Appeal," *JEWISH LIFE*, January-February 1949.

## *Convention Directives Flouted*

mittee, Vice President Shad Polier, his wife, Justice Justine Wise Polier, head of the Women's Division and daughter of Rabbi Wise, and a few others. The ruling group has discouraged and reduced the activities of non-paid workers for Congress, a sure sign of bureaucracy. It is building up a subservient group of paid staff professionals, who faithfully carry out its policy without reference to demands of the mass membership. It has laid down the ruling that chapters may not invite speakers or engage in any activity without clearance from the national office—that is, it has instituted a sweeping censorship of all local activities on penalty of expulsion. In one case, recently, expulsion has actually been carried out. The Metropolitan Chapter of Detroit invited as speaker to a conference an attorney with some connection with the Civil Rights Congress. The national office forbade use of this speaker and the chapter cancelled the conference in protest. For this attempt to carry out Congress' civil liberties program and for similar activities, the chapter was ordered dissolved on May 26, at the same meeting at which the JPFO and AJLC were also expelled.

The formal organization of Congress is democratic enough. Besides several organizational affiliates like the JPFO and AJLC, the mass membership is organized into chapters and divisions. The administrative committee, elected by the biennial convention, is the highest body in Congress. The executive committee of about 60 members is required by the constitution to meet each month to carry on Congress activity. Actually, however, the executive does not meet so often and in cold fact the small "officers' committee" (unauthorized by the constitution) dominated by Petegorsky, Miller and the Poliers, makes Congress policy behind closed doors. For the past two years the membership has had increasingly less part in policy making, which has been usurped by this "officers' committee."

But it would be a mistake to suppose that Congress is dead as a mass organization, much as the bureaucracy would like to have it so. The mass membership is struggling—not nearly as effectively as it should, one must note—to keep Congress progressive. A real fighting spirit was manifested at the biennial convention in April 1948. The top oligarchy came to the convention, at which 1200 delegates were present, prepared to dictate to the membership. But the delegates rebelled and insisted on full discussion of reports and policies and spoke their minds about the undemocratic trend in Congress and moves away from militant mass action. A number of fighting resolutions were submitted by the delegates and passed over the opposition of the leadership. Dr. Petegorsky insisted that he would not allow "anything, anything, anything" to deflect Congress from the new path his group had chosen for it. Nevertheless, among the resolutions passed were directives to initiate a mass membership drive, to resist "the increasing challenge to civil liberties in America," to work for the abolition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, to work for a meeting of Soviet and American leaders to avert war, to submit a group libel bill and to work for more effective implementation of the denazification program.

But the membership's convictions about Congress policy were largely ignored by the leadership. The membership drive was never undertaken and Congress membership has declined seriously. Mass meetings on a local scale to implement these policies have been restrained by the requirement that all plans be cleared with the national office. No campaign was conducted against the Un-American Committee nor on the resolution to further peace efforts. It is significant that Dr. Wise's last public statement, a fitting close to a generally progressive life, that he would fight for peace between the United States and the Soviet Union till his dying breath, was not made as president of Congress but as a private citizen. Congress has remained silent on this most momentous of all issues, especially vital to the Jewish people. Congress refused to have anything to do with the defense of the Trenton Six, the northern Scottsboro case, and did not even issue a statement on it. Yet the Long Island Division did take action on the case. And the Congress oligarchy has refused to be associated with the Town and Village Committee to End Jimcrow at Stuyvesant Town despite the fact that the NAACP, as well as many outstanding individuals, are associated with the committee.

The case of the denazification resolution is instructive. In instance after instance the national office tried to prevent and actually sabotaged action taken by the divisions to implement the resolution. When the German industrial fair, which reeked of nazi associations, was held in New York, Congress joined other conservative Jewish organizations in issuing a statement condemning the fair, but also expressly condemning picketing. When three New York divisions announced that they would picket the fair, the national office threatened to denounce the picketing publicly. But the divisions carried through a successful, effective picket line and the national office did not dare to make the denunciation.

## *Women's Division Is Weakened*

The flouting of the membership by the leadership has had a devastating effect on the strongest part of Congress, the Women's Division. Under the leadership of Mrs. Louise Waterman Wise, wife of Rabbi Wise and also a progressive leader in her own right, the Women's Division was more active and progressive than the rest of Congress and had the largest membership. After Mrs. Wise's death in December 1947, her daughter, Justice Justine Wise Polier, became president of the Women's Division and proceeded to destroy the mass character of the organization. The organizational staff of the flourishing division was sharply reduced while non-organizational and office personnel were increased. Regional offices were liquidated or weakened, activities were curtailed and Congress leadership made decisions on issues affecting the division without consultation. Whereas the Women's Division had been self-sufficient and financially solvent, the new regime imposed budget restrictions.

Thus the shadow of misleadership moved over to this most active and militant part of Congress and limited mass activity of Congress appreciably. Local autonomy was removed from the division. Thus when the Queens chapter took the initiative of demanding that New York's Mayor William O'Dwyer do something about the recrudescence of anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi groups in Yorkville, the executive board of the Women's Division passed a vote of censure against this "insubordination."

The upshot of the matter is that the gap between leadership and membership is widening. The leadership is trying to convert Congress into a "service" organization in which all activity goes on in the national office, as is the case with the American Jewish Committee. Sections of the membership, on the other hand, continue to carry on mass activity in their localities in the face of increasing censorship and restriction from the national office. The most active parts of the new set-up are the Commission on Law and Social Action and the Commission on Community Interrelations. These are largely concerned with surveys on anti-Semitism and discrimination and with legal action on these issues. This activity, of course, has its good points, but alone it is far from the program of Congress envisioned by its past leaders, and very far from the urgent needs of the Jewish people in this perilous time of fascist revival.

### *At the World Jewish Congress*

The anti-democratic tendencies of Congress are felt on the international, as well as the national scene. Congress is the dominant group in the World Jewish Congress. At the conference of the latter organization at Montreux in July 1948, representation not only from almost every country of the entire capitalist world was present, but also delegates from the surviving Jewries in the new democracies. A great opportunity was opened for the welding of a genuine democratic Jewish world unity. However, the dominating American Jewish Congress influence caused national and committee representation to be so gerrymandered that the progressive delegations did not have votes in proportion to their strength. Furthermore, the American delegation refused to seat even a single progressive American delegate on the world executive. As a result the delegates of the new democracies decided to boycott the executive until this undemocratic act was rescinded, which has not been done to this day. In terms of policy, too, the American Jewish Congress led the fight for a spurious "neutrality" in the struggle on alignment with the Anglo-American bloc or the democratic Soviet bloc. In actuality this policy of "neutrality" is an alignment with the pro-imperialists, who are those promoting the resurgence of fascism all over the world and consequently involving the Jewish people in the gravest danger to survival. How this "neutrality" operates can be seen from the refusal of the World Jewish Congress executive to send delegates to the Paris Peace Conference in April.

The refusal of the Congress-dominated American delegation to include a delegate from progressive American

Jewry, represented at the World Jewish Congress through the Jewish People's Fraternal Order, among others, was one aspect of Congress leadership's effort to drop progressive organizations from affiliation. The JPFO and the American Jewish Labor Council had been received into Congress as affiliates when anti-fascist militancy and unity were high during the war in 1944. Rabbi Wise had then strongly supported the unity move.

But the new Congress leadership capitulated to the cold war hysteria, although the effects of red-baiting and intimidation affected Congress later than other Jewish organizations. In addition, the democratic safeguards of the membership were sufficient to make it hard to sever progressives from Congress. It was not until the 1948 convention that the first attempts were made to ease the JPFO and AJLC out of Congress. This attempt was spearheaded by a reactionary Brooklyn delegation, whose position can be gauged from the fact that several of their leaders ostentatiously walked out when Rabbi Wise was denouncing the Un-American Committee. With the support of the Congress bureaucracy, the Brooklyn people first proposed in the constitutional panel to disaffiliate all national organizations. The proposal was decisively defeated in the panel. The reactionaries then took another line and proposed on the convention floor a constitutional amendment that would require national affiliates to pledge allegiance not only to the "general" Congress program, but also to "all specific aims and purposes" of Congress. The delegates quickly sensed the intent behind the amendment. The show of hands in opposition to it was so overwhelming, that chairman Irving Miller did not even trouble to count the vote.

But in April 1949 the oligarchy saw their chance again. On April 13 Congress leadership sent letters to the JPFO and AJLC calling them in for a hearing on April 24 on two main charges: these two affiliates had formed the Joint Committee to Combat Anti-Semitism, which Congress leadership regarded as duplication of Congress work and independent activity in this field; and second, the two affiliates had rejected and publicly criticized the Klein group libel bill sponsored by Congress and were supporting the Barrett group libel bill instead. The JPFO requested postponement of the hearing, which was granted. But several urgent matters had to be taken up at the JPFO national board meeting set to consider the charges and a second postponement until June was requested. Congress refused this postponement, held a hearing before the executive committee of Congress on May 26 without the presence of the JPFO and AJLC and decided to expel the two organizations.

### *Fake Charge*

The charge of "duplication" is hardly genuine. For the new Congress policy of abandonment of mass action obviously made it necessary that some organizations should undertake this essential work in the fight against anti-Semitism and fascist tendencies in our country. Certainly the mass action fostered by the Joint Committee was clo-

to Congress program and traditions than the new program imposed by the top leadership of Congress. And surely the Joint Committee's activities were closer to the directives of 1948 than the bureaucracy's plans.

Not only can Congress not afford to break unity with the important sections of organized Jewish life expelled by it; duplication of functions, against which Congress has been putting up some sort of fight in the National Community Research and Advisory Council (NCRAC), does not seem sufficient reason for Congress to disaffiliate with this body. It is therefore quite apparent that the bureaucracy is using this reason as an excuse for separating itself from the only Jewish working class representation in Congress.

The charge relating to the Klein group libel bill has a longer history. In the spring of 1947 the American Jewish Labor Council sponsored the Buckley group libel bill in the House of Representatives. The battery of AJ Congress lawyers got busy on the bill and decided to oppose it. They publicly condemned it and Shad Polier even went so far as to write every member of the New York City Council raising legalistic objections to the bill and urging them to vote against the Council resolution requesting that Congress enact the bill. The late Communist Councilman Peter V. Cacchione replied to Shad Polier expressing his "shock" that Congress should oppose the bill and suggesting that Congress should propose amendments, if it thought the bill defective, rather than "be in the forefront of opposition in company with those who object not to its deficiencies, but to its merits."<sup>2</sup>

Although the last two conventions of Congress had resolved that Congress should sponsor a bill to outlaw anti-Semitism, it was not until spring of 1949 that Congress sponsored a bill introduced by Congressman Arthur Klein. The cabal of lawyers at the top of Congress in the Commission on Law and Social Action labored over this bill in the greatest secrecy. Not only was the membership kept in ignorance of its nature; the bill was kept a dark secret from both the executive committee and the administrative committee. Requests for information about the bill were ignored. Reasons for secrecy became clear when the contents of the bill were available—after it had been dropped into the House hopper. Congressman Emmanuel Celler, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, had refused to introduce the bill and stated that it would not even be brought up before the committee. Briefly, the main criticisms of the bill by progressives were that it did not specify the intention to outlaw anti-Semitism and anti-Negroism by name; the bill implicitly accepted anti-Semitism as a form of expression entitled to protection of our laws; the bill exempted from penalties those who could "prove" that the statement under question "is true or honestly believed by him [the accused], upon reasonable grounds, to be true"; it defined "inter-group conflict" in such a way that labor unions or a defense of Negro rights might be construed as chargeable under the bill; and initiation of prosecution required approval of the Attorney General.<sup>3</sup>

In view of the dangerous character of the bill and the totally undemocratic nature of its introduction, the JPFO and AJLC felt obliged to oppose it. This opposition was expressed by many national and chapter leaders. Furthermore, they decided to support the House bill of Representative Barrett of Pennsylvania (HR-3908) which states its intention "to suppress the evil of anti-Semitism and anti-Negro propaganda" and concretely and explicitly provides penalties for these forms of anti-human activities. The second main reason given for the expulsion of the JPFO and AJLC was opposition to the Klein bill and support of the Barrett bill. The Long Island Division of Congress held a civil liberties conference this spring at which several chapters of Congress were joined by the National Association for Advancement of Colored Peoples and others in condemning the Klein bill—but no action has been taken against these chapters.

It is obvious that the charges against the JPFO and AJLC are excuses, not reasons, for the expulsion. The real issue involves the whole future of Congress. Will it join the oligarchs of the American Jewish Committee type in trying to repress participation of the Jewish masses in the fight against anti-Semitism, Jewish and all minority rights or oppose the advance of democracy in America and the cause of peace?

The attempt to make Congress a bureaucratic organization is a betrayal of the basic principles of Congress. It weakens the fight of the Jewish community against anti-Semitism, discrimination and fascist forces. Against the bureaucracy the JPFO and AJLC, aided by Congress progressives, are resisting the expulsion order. At the administrative meeting held on June 7, the appeal of the JPFO and AJLC was defeated by a vote of 39 to 98. The appeal will now be taken to the convention planned for this winter.

The expulsion is not the concern of these two organizations alone. The Jewish masses need a representative organization that will energetically fight for a progressive program. The masses therefore have a stake in bringing back and strengthening democratic participation in Congress. And the possibilities exist for such a reversal of the trend. The vote in the administrative committee opposing expulsion indicated the presence of a militant nucleus in Congress that expresses far more of the mass sentiment of Congress than its numbers indicated. This demands more strenuous work among the Congress membership than progressives have yet done, and a broader extension of mass activity. Such activity should be directed toward a replacement of the present bureaucratic leadership with one which is more responsive to the militant sentiments of the membership and which will carry out a program with mass participation. The moment is too grave for both the Jewish people and world peace for the Jewish masses, and particularly the active progressives among them, to shrink from the utmost effort to achieve these ends.

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of the Klein bill, see "Can We Outlaw Anti-Semitism?" by Moses Miller, JEWISH LIFE, April 1949.

<sup>2</sup> This exchange of letters was published in JEWISH LIFE, Sept. 1947.

# EMMA LAZARUS CENTENARY

By Morris U. Schappes

MILLIONS today know the name of Emma Lazarus as the author of the sonnet on the Statue of Liberty that gives that symbol its meaning as the "Mother of Exiles." Thousands of progressive and militant working-class and lower-middle-class women today belong to the Emma Lazarus Division of the Jewish People's Fraternal Order. Under the banner of Emma Lazarus they carry out a program to advance Jewish culture and provide a Jewish education for children. They work with progressives to circulate petitions to outlaw anti-Semitism in the United States, demonstrate against Wall Street's war program, fight Tom Clark's deportation drive, and oppose rent increases and the already too high cost of living.

To such persons, the commemoration on July 22, 1949 of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Emma Lazarus will not be, as some such celebrations are, a reaffirmation of deadness and a passing futile challenge to oblivion. It is because the words of Emma Lazarus still live, that this centennial witnesses the assertion of her vitality, of her continuing capacity to move, teach, and inspire.

There was much in the environment of her wealthy father, a retired sugar-merchant, that had to be overcome before Emma Lazarus could step into the mainstream of life and leave her imprint. Like her brother and five sisters she was educated by private tutors. Gentility, vagueness and what is strangely called "good-breeding," were the hallmarks of her early days and, if persisted in, would have kept her a nonentity. The Civil War, fought during her early teens, touched her somewhat, and stimulated a few poems on Union heroes and the plight of Union war veterans after the war. But she turned 20 without knowing social reality at better than second-hand. Even in 1872, when Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higgins met her at fashionable Newport, he wrote to his sisters: "It is curious to see how mentally famished a person may be in the very best society."

She derived a bit more nourishment from books, partially under the guidance of Emerson. Thoreau, Shakespeare, Heine, Hugo, Goethe, Whitman, Leopardi, John Burroughs, Turgenev, and Emerson himself gave her a varied and stimulating diet, but it was still lacking in the fresh, raw experience out of which enduring literature is wrought. That direct contact came late in her pathetically short life, closed by cancer.

Nor was it an abrupt turn to Jewish life that made the difference. In 1866, in her first books of poems, published when she was 16, there are items with Jewish content. During the next decade there was a slow and intermittent maturation of that Jewish element, until late in the 1870's she produced her vital five-act drama in verse, *The Dance to Death*, based on a historical incident of the persecution to the death of a Jewish community in Germany in the

fourteenth century. The change came when she turned from the Jewish past to the Jewish present. And that turn was forced upon her by the Russian Tsarist and East European pogroms against the Jews in the 1880's. These events transformed her into a champion of Jews streaming to the United States both as heaven and haven.

Thus Emma Lazarus discovered the Jewish masses, "yearning to breathe free." She visits them at Castle Garden and Ward's Island. She denounces their detractors among Jew and Gentile. She sees the values of the ghetto Jews while she fights to bring them out of the ghettos. The indifference of the Jewish bourgeoisie in America and of those only to the rise of anti-Semitism evokes her scorn and opposition. She discards the "hush-hush" policy and defends her people in the general press, while she tries to arouse the conscience and fighting spirit of the Jews themselves with her *Epistles* in the Jewish press. For the immigrants she advocates a program of industrial training that will productivize them and develop a Jewish working-class. For those who cannot come to America, she becomes an early advocate of Jewish colonization in Palestine.

Seeing the Jewish masses opened her eyes to much more. She became aware, partly by reading Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* in 1881, that there is rampant poverty among the masses generally. Thus she writes to Henry George that "no person who prizes justice or common honesty can dine or sleep or read or work in peace until the monstrous wrong in which we are all accomplices be done away with." George opened her eyes and stirred her passion for social justice. It remained for the Marxist, William Morris, whom she met in England, and with whom she corresponded, to sharpen her mind.

She became interested in Socialism, at least to the extent of corresponding with Morris about it and publishing an article in *The Century* defending him against criticism. Beyond that, however, she did not go, although she had not been afraid to exclaim that Moses and Marx were part of her Jewish and social heritage. Her whole life had been molded by her exclusive upper middle class environment; the effect of Henry George, William Morris, and her little contact with the poverty of Jewish immigrants was not strong enough to lead her out of that class position. Even her fight in behalf of the oppressed Jewish masses of Eastern Europe was limited and blunted by her nationalistic outlook, and her main practical contribution lay in aiding the Jewish immigrants who came to the United States, and in publicly challenging the anti-Semitic tendencies in our country.

In her fine poems and vigorous prose, therefore, we find the best expression in the nineteenth century of an American Jewish culture in English in which the notes of progress begin to sound.

# LITTLE ESSAYS

By Emma Lazarus

The excerpts printed below are taken from Emma Lazarus: Selections from her Poetry and Prose, edited with an introduction by Morris U. Schappes, revised and enlarged edition, Jewish People's Fraternal Order, 1947. Mr. Schappes has also edited The Letters of Emma Lazarus, to be published in the New York Public Library Bulletin in July and August.—Eds.

## ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE UNITED STATES

Even in America, presumably the refuge of the oppressed, public opinion has not yet reached that point where it absolves the race from the sin of the individual. Every Jew, however honorable or enlightened, has the humiliating knowledge that his security and reputation are, in a certain sense, bound up with those of the meanest rascal who belongs to his tribe, and who has it in his power to jeopardize the social status of his whole nation. It has been well said that the Jew must be of gold in order to pass for silver. . . .

And yet here, too, the everlasting prejudice is cropping out in various shapes. Within recent years, Jews have been "boycotted" at not a few places of public resort; in our schools and colleges, even in our scientific universities, Jewish scholars are frequently subjected to annoyance on account of their race. The word "Jew" is in constant use, even among so-called refined Christians, as a term of opprobrium, and is employed as a verb, to denote the meanest tricks. . . . (1883)

## MOSES TO SOCIALISM

The modern theory of socialism and humanitarianism, erroneously traced to the New Testament, has its root in the Mosaic Code. The Christian doctrine is the doctrine of consolation; the kingdom of heaven is held out as a glittering dream to suffering humanity. Poverty exalted into a mission, the vocation of the mystic, the spiritualist, the idealist, enjoined equally upon all, a vision and an ecstasy offered to the hungry and the needy; what provision is here made for the world as it is? On the other hand, the very latest reforms urged by political economists, in view of the misery of the lower classes, are established in the Mosaic Code, which formulated the principle of the rights of labor, denying the right of private property in land, asserting that the corners of the field, the gleanings of the harvest belonged in *justice*, not in *charity*, to the poor and the stranger; and that man owed a duty, not only to all humanity, but even to the beast of the field, and "the ox that treads the corn." In accordance with these principles we find the fathers of modern socialism to be three Jews—Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Marx, and Johann Jacoby. . . . (1883)



## PALESTINE AND U. S. A.

For the most ardent supporter of the scheme [of Jewish colonization in Palestine] does not urge the advisability of an emigration *en masse* of the whole Jewish people to any particular spot. There is not the slightest necessity for an American Jew, the free citizen of a republic, to rest his hopes upon the foundation of any other nationality soever, or to decide whether he individually would or would not be in favor of residing in Palestine. All that would be claimed from him would be a patriotic and unselfish interest in the sufferings of his oppressed brethren of less fortunate countries, sufficient to make him promote by every means in his power the establishment of a secure asylum. From those emancipated countries of Europe and America, where the Jews shares all the civil and religious privileges of his compatriots, only a small band of Israelites would be required to sacrifice themselves in order to serve as leaders and counselors. . . .

(1882)

# IMMIGRATION CRISIS IN ISRAEL

By A. B. Magil

**L**AST October, shortly before I left Israel, a spontaneous demonstration of new immigrants took place in Jaffa against the intolerable conditions under which they were living. The demonstration was broken up by the police. News of this incident was suppressed by censorship.

The warning signal went unheeded. Within a few months demonstrations on a much larger scale, some of them reminiscent of the hunger marches in our own country in the early thirties, became commonplace in Israel. Such protests have taken place not only in Jaffa and Tel Aviv, but in Haifa, Jerusalem, Safed, the former Arab towns of Ramleh and Lydda and many others. In the reception camp of Pardess-Chanah, 15,000 immigrants went on a 24-hour hunger strike—men, women and children—in protest at the poor and inadequate food. And in an article in the May 1 issue of the Jewish *Day*, Yitzchak Gruenbaum, who was minister of the interior in the provisional government, writes that “weaker elements among the immigrants are turning to the consuls of the countries from which they came with complaints that they were deceived with promises that are not being fulfilled. They are demanding that they be sent back to their former homes.”

All this is no longer being suppressed—it is in fact the main topic of discussion in Israel today. While hundreds of ex-servicemen and new immigrants demonstrated outside the Knesset (parliament) on April 26, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion told the Knesset that of the 210,000 immigrants who had entered Israel since the establishment of the Jewish state, 53,000—over a fourth—“are still living in conditions of frightful overcrowding in the immigrants’ reception camps.” And “apart from those who are still living at the expense of the Jewish Agency in the immigrants’ reception camps, there are several thousand immigrants who are already housed, but who are partly or entirely unemployed.” To these there should be added demobilized soldiers who have not found jobs and thousands of unemployed Arabs. Thus, after successfully repelling foreign military invasion, the young Jewish state is faced with a new crisis, economic and social, that threatens to overwhelm it. Who is to blame for this situation?

First, foreign imperialism. The years of British mandatory rule retarded Palestine’s economic development and placed its natural resources and key economic positions in the hands of foreign capital, thereby impeding its capacity to absorb immigration. Thanks to this oppressive alien regime, the rise in living costs over the 1939 level was by the end of the Mandate more than three times as great as that in the United States during the same period. More recently

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British and American sabotage of the United Nations partition decision and their encouragement of Arab aggression—which in Britain’s case included military and financial aid—forced the Jewish state to devote almost all its energies during its first months to the desperate struggle for survival. Pressure from Washington and from American Jewish capitalist circles, Zionist and non-Zionist, was also a major factor in preventing the adoption of the kind of policies that could successfully cope with the influx of immigrants and with the country’s serious economic problems.

Secondly, the foreign policy and the domestic economic policy of Israel’s government, led by the social democratic Labor Party (Mapai), have aggravated the country’s difficulties and prevented the mobilization of its economic resources for their solution.

## Is Restriction the Solution?

The Israeli bourgeoisie has a simple solution for the crisis: restrict immigration. This has been openly demanded by *Haboker* and *Haaretz*, daily organs respectively of the bourgeois Right and Center. (*Haboker* is the paper of the General Zionists, whose American counterparts control the Zionist Organization of America.) Among some members of the Jewish Agency and the government similar moods have developed.

Immigration is politically the hottest potato in Israel. Public opinion would regard any effort at total restriction of entry of the thousands of survivors of the nazi hell seeking a permanent home in Israel after years in concentration and DP camps, as a betrayal of the heroic struggle that established the Jewish state. It was chiefly on the right of Jews to enter Palestine that the *Yishuv* in 1939 took up the fight against Britain. After the people annulled the White Paper at such heavy cost, no government could last a day which attempted to enact a Jewish version of the White Paper.

At the same time the present crisis underlines the irresponsibility of Zionist propaganda about “exodus from Europe.” While failing to provide for the elementary needs of the immigrants, the Zionist leaders have been urging Jews in the people’s democracies, where they have homes, jobs and security, to grab bag and baggage and rush to Israel. And they have attacked Rumania and Hungary for curbing this harmful Zionist activity and refusing to agree that their countries should become *Judenrein*.

The fact is that the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency failed abysmally to plan for the large immigration that they themselves proclaimed as Israel’s central task. For months they coasted along. While the war against the Arab invaders was in progress, the crisis was temporarily concealed by the absorption of some of the immigrants

into the armed forces and of others into employment made possible by the shortage of labor during the fighting. The housing crisis was also temporarily covered up by an unexpected "godsend": the flight of 400,000 Arabs from the territory of the Jewish state. But anyone who visited the reception camps and the homes unfit for human habitation in which immigrants were lodged could have predicted that sooner or later there would be an explosion. In the abandoned Arab town of Salamch, for example, near Tel Aviv, 5,000 persons were quartered last year, without electricity, without a doctor, without direct means of transportation, without schools.

During the period of hostilities building activity was allowed to decline, and most of it was not for immigrants, but for established families with some means. The house I lived in during most of my six months in Israel was a good example. When I rented a room there, the building was still not fully completed. Adjoining it were two other buildings in varying stages of construction. All three consisted chiefly of apartments with expensive modern installations for middle-class families. During the next few months workers and materials were employed in completing this group of buildings—how much better if they had been utilized to provide homes for new immigrants.

### *Much Talk, Little Action*

In regard to the cost of living the government talked action and acted chiefly with talk. As a result, prices shot up till meat was the equivalent of \$2.20 a pound and eggs \$2.16 a dozen. Finally, last October the government appointed an economic coordinator, Sigfried Hoofien, chairman of the Anglo-Palestine Bank. This is virtually the national bank of Israel though most of its shares are owned in Britain by private individuals and companies, including

Lloyd's Bank, one of the British big four. Hoofien was hailed as a "strong man" who would break the back of inflation. Four months later the cost of living index had risen another 15 points.

Instead of a progressive tax system, which would provide substantial revenue while placing the main burden on those best able to pay, a tax system was introduced modeled largely after the one in force under the British: 65 per cent of the revenue is derived from indirect taxes which bear most heavily on the masses of the people, and only 25 per cent from individual income taxes. Corporation taxes are lower than in the United States and Britain, and there are no levies on excess profits, undivided profits, gifts and inheritances, though the government recently proposed an inheritance tax.

The absorption and healthful integration of the new immigrants is also being seriously hindered by the refusal of the capitalists to expand industry and agriculture. Citrus production, which before World War II accounted for three-fourths of the value of Palestine's exports, is being kept at a low level. Industry declined during 1948 and is continuing to lag, industrialists preferring to get easy profits through price increases and speculative deals rather than expand production which may involve certain financial risks. At the same time the capitalists attack as "socialistic" any move to aid cooperative or other forms of public enterprise.

What is the Israeli government's program to cope with this dangerous crisis? The program rests on two pillars: internal "austerity" and external aid. The first step taken in the austerity program announced at the end of April was to crack down not on the food black marketeers, but on the farmers, by reducing the prices paid them. All indications are that this program is largely one of further impoverishing the poor. And main reliance is on American aid. Certain it is that the young Jewish state needs all possible help from American Jews, as well as private investments to promote industrialization, and governmental loans. However, all three forms of financial aid are being extended under conditions that defeat their alleged purposes and serve to undermine Israel's independence. Of the \$100,000,000 American credit, only 20 per cent can be used for industrialization. All plans for the expenditure of the credit must be approved by the United States, and Washington is given wide powers to intervene in Israel's economic affairs.

Fund raising activities are largely controlled through the United Jewish Appeal by wealthy Jewish bankers and industrialists aligned with the reactionary American Jewish Committee. They use their positions to influence the way the funds are spent and to bind Israel more closely to American foreign policy. As for private American investors, to whom the government of Israel is offering inducements such as they get only in the weakest colonial countries, their primary interest is in guaranteed profits and not in the planned development of industry and agriculture. In its census of American-owned assets abroad for the year 1943 the United States Treasury Department found that



*Immigrants in the Shaar Haalyia reception center.*



in Palestine only five per cent of American assets were in manufacturing, while nearly half were in real estate.

### Plan for Action

What, then, can be done? Obviously, there is no simple solution. Even under the best circumstances the arrival in a small country of so large a number of immigrants would have created serious, though not insoluble, problems. These difficulties, however, have been greatly compounded by wrong policies. The progressive forces of Israel, represented by the Communist Party and the United Workers Party (Mapam), have indicated an approach which alone can grapple with these problems and master them. They are demanding a break with the policy of permitting the capitalists, local and foreign, to make their own selfish profit interests the criterion of action for immigrants. The Communist Party especially is pressing proposals as follows:

1. Nationalization of all foreign-owned concessions such as the Palestine Electric Corporation, Palestine Potash, and the Haifa refineries and their operation by the government in the interests of the people.
2. Genuine price control and rationing that will force a lowering of prices, wipe out the black market, and assure all citizens adequate distribution of essential commodities.
3. Large-scale public works to provide immediate employment for immigrants.
4. An overall government housing program instead of

the numerous fragments of programs put forward by various agencies. The present conflict of authority between the government and the Jewish Agency needs to be ended and central authority vested in the government. The lowering of prices will also make it possible to plan more housing than hitherto projected.

5. Nationalization of imports. This will make it possible to halt the practice of imported manufactured goods that could be produced in Israel. Instead, Israel's limited supply of hard currency should be used to import machinery and necessary raw materials.

6. Mobilization of financial aid from Jews of all countries and utilization of the funds to finance government industrial enterprises and the expansion of cooperative agriculture.

7. Development of closer economic and political relations with countries that will treat Israel as an equal, will be willing to buy from her as well as sell to her, and will not seek to dominate her. Trade agreements already negotiated with Hungary and Poland are of this character, but Israel's trade with the Soviet Union and her allies remains insignificant, and the political relations of her government with them are only formally friendly. Instead, there is a one-sided economic and political orientation toward the Anglo-American bloc. This weakens Israel and obstructs the solution of the problem of jobs and homes for the hopeful newcomers who are now pouring in at the rate of 25-30,000 a month.

## POP'S "BEST FRIEND"

A Short Story  
By Leo Bilander

IT happened quite a few years ago.

Pop had come home from a monthly meeting of his *landsmanshaft*, one of those affairs at which the rich "mingle" freely with the poor, both socially "equalized" by the precious memories of the "good old days" in the old country. Pop thrived on those meetings—at times it seemed he lived from one meeting to another. He would come home with wonderful stories of how Mr. Goldstein had bought a house in Long Island; how Mr. Bialik's son, the one who became a lawyer, was engaged to a rich and beautiful girl or how Mrs. Halpern's son had obtained a job in Washington. Pop's eyes would shine with happiness, genuinely thrilled at the success of his *landsmans'* children. He related these stories to my mother, his voice never betraying the slightest grain of envy. Yet a sigh, which would escape him timed with a glance in my direction, suggested some bitterness.

While my father had never voiced it (he was too gentle to be reproaching), I knew that inwardly he considered me a failure. I had been out of high school for two years with-

out any prospects for a professional career (not even an accountant, Pop would murmur sadly) and drifted aimlessly from summer hotels to candy stores to a plumber's joint in Miami.

Pop himself had been a canvas-maker but he wouldn't hear of his son becoming one too. Each time my job would run out, he would plead with me not to worry, that surely, something would come up and settle me in life.

Then something did come up.

As I said, Pop had come home from one of those buoyant society meetings. His eyes had an additional gleam in them. He had brought home wonderful news. This time it had nothing to do with a *bar-mitzvah*, engagement or purchase of a house. It was for his David! One of the society members, Mr. Reenman, for whom Pop cherished a singular friendship (they had been boyhood friends in Europe and crossed the ocean together), suddenly remembered that Pop had a growing son and wondered how he was doing. Pop, who would never admit his disappointment over his David, certainly not to the members of his society, sighed inadvertently. Surely it could have been nothing but "bad luck." Mr. Reenman nodded compassionately. A few

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months ago he had opened a fur shop and told Pop he would have a job for me if I were interested. He added he would take good care of me for old time's sake.

"I told him what a good boy you are, David!" Pop said to me, sitting on the edge of my bed. "I promised him you would never make him any trouble. I told him he won't be disappointed in you."

"How much will he pay me?" I asked, feeling uncomfortable at the thought of playing the role of an angel.

"Look at him!" my father jumped up angrily. "He wants to know how much he'll get and he didn't even start yet! Ach, those American boys! When I was your age—"

"O.K.," I said.

"Leave it to me," Pop said, somewhat placated. "Would I let you work there if I thought he would take advantage of you? Mr. Reenman is as good as they come. He was at your *bris*. He was our boarder then. Wonderful man—!"

MR. REENMAN TURNED OUT TO BE A TALL, GRAYING MAN WITH a well-shaven face and unpleasant piercing eyes. We met in the showroom, which had panels done in light-blue, a soft rug and oval tables flanked by easy chairs with tan leather.

Mr. Reenman nodded a silent greeting to my father's effusive "good morning," then swept me with his eyes in cursory scrutiny.

"Looks to be a strong boy, Sam. He'll do," he opined between cigar puffs.

"He's very bright, my David! is," Pop quickly injected. "You should have seen his school marks. I was going to send him to college. . . ."

"So you like to become a furrier?" Mr. Reenman was clearly not interested in my academic life.

Pop must have feared my reply, for he broke in hastily: "You should ask such a question, Reenman? Who doesn't like to be a furrier? Best thing in the world! David! draws well, he'll be good with chalking out patterns."

Mr. Reenman smiled blandly. "O.K., Sam! It's like I told you last night, if the boy'll be good by me I'll be good by him. Just leave him to me. I spoke to my partner last night and it's all fixed."

"You're doing me a big favor, Reenman," Pop said huskily, "I won't forget it." He waved his hand to me and left.

The factory with its sickly green walls and uneven wooden floor covered with dust and fur scraps was in sharp contrast with the showroom where bright colors carried an air of artificial splendor. A row of sewing machines running parallel with a stretch of cutting tables, partitioned the space provided for mechanics. A few yards away from the door leading into the hall stood a tin-covered wetting table, several pails with water and large boxes of skins.

Mr. Reenman broke a box open with his fist.

"Start wetting in skins. Here's a brush. Remember, the main thing is to do them fast. The main thing is to do *everything* fast. Get going!"

The door opened and two workers came in. They were about my age. They looked at me quizzically, obviously surprised at my presence. One of them came over.

"You're the new floorboy here?"

"Yes. My name's Dave."

"This is Phil. Mine's Aaron." He shook his head. "So Jimmy quit. I thought he would." Seeing my surprise, he added, "He had a fight with the boss. Asked him for a raise and Reenman offered him a dollar fifty. So Jimmy told him to go to hell." He lowered his voice. "That Reenman is crazy. But don't mind him. His partner is worse." The mechanics came in and filled the shop with talk and jokes. The whistle blew, machines began to purr, the nailers and pinchers began to bang away, sharp and distinct.

The day passed.

It was a few minutes after five. The mechanics had already left. I had just finished sweeping the floor. Aaron and Phil were shipping their last box of coney boats. I doffed my apron and hung it on a nail. Mr. Reenman came over.

"Where are you going?" he demanded.

I pointed to the clock.

"Time to quit," I said, "Phil and Aaron are going."

"That has nothing to do with you. There's a box of skins to wet in. 650 coneys. And, before I forget, take two boxes to the Railway Express. It's just around the corner. The boys won't be able to carry them."

"O.K. Mr. Reenman," I said, wishing he'd drop dead.

It was after seven o'clock when the Railway Express checked in the two boxes going to Elmira, New York.

AT HOME, I FOUND POP WAITING FOR ME ANXIOUSLY IN THE kitchen.

"Why did you come home so late?"

I shrugged my shoulders and went to wash up. Pop followed me into the bathroom.

"How did it go?"

"O.K., Pop. I'm just tired."

"You'll get used to that. Everybody does. The main thing is that Mr. Reenman will give you a break."

I laughed. I hung up the towel and said: "You know, Pop, you're thank God 53 years old but yet you haven't learned."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing, Pop. Nothing."

I walked into the kitchen. Pop remained in the hall shaking his head, wondering.

When Friday evening came, Mr. Reenman gave me my pay envelope. It contained nine dollars and ninety cents. I gasped.

"What's the matter? Did you expect more?"

"Well, sort of—"

"I'll give you a raise when it gets busy," he assured me solemnly. "I told your father."

"I work for you not my father," I said. "I thought you'd give me at least fifteen."

"Fifteen?" Mr. Reenman lost his dignified poise. "You're young and inexperienced! What will you do with so much money? I'm giving you a break. I'll make a mechanic out of you yet. You've got to cooperate. Those youngsters!" he added woefully.

"Is that all I get?"

"Talk it over with your father, Dave. He's a good man."

"Good night." I pocketed my money and left.

Downstairs I found Aaron waiting for me.

"What did he give you? Ten bucks?"

"How did you know?"

"I figured as much. I make 15 and been working for him for two years. Phil makes 18 because he's his nephew. But then, he sometimes works all hours. I suppose you want to quit."

"Bet your life! He's seen the last of me. Where the hell does he think he is? In China!"

Aaron regarded me steadily.

"I was afraid you'd quit, that's why I waited for you. Nothing wrong with this shop, or any shop, that more dough can't fix."

"I'm not going to break my back for that son-of-a-bitch! Pop's best friend! That's a laugh! I should wait till he gets a change of heart. This ain't no Hollywood show!"

"No. It isn't. But the union can revise the script. How about a cup of coffee? It isn't a good policy to hang around this building."

We walked into Kellogg's. Aaron brought over two cups of coffee.

"You see, Dave. The main thing is to stick it out. What would you say if I suggested that you and I both go up to the union? Local 125?" His face screwed up tensely.

"Did you speak to Phil?"

"Casually, yes. Can't trust him yet. His uncle slips him a ticket for a Brooklyn doubleheader and that's enough for him. His answer was that the union is a bunch of reds. Some are and some aren't. But that don't matter. It's what they can do that counts."

"O.K." I said, "I'll sign up any time you will."

"I already did." He winked at me with satisfaction.

"You son-of-a-bitch!" I cried feeling suddenly great.

I didn't tell Pop. When I came home he had already left for the *shul*. Mom was in the kitchen warming up the chicken soup. I sat at the table watching her fuss over the stove. She brought over a piece of *gefulte* fish and set it before me.

"You look a little excited, Davey." There was a knowing smile on her face.

I decided to tell her.

"Mom, darling, I joined the union tonight!"

She lay aside the knife with which she was cutting the *haluh*.

"You have always been a smart boy to me," she said softly, "Maybe . . . because you're the only child I have. . ."

I went up to her and kissed her.

THE FOLLOWING MONDAY MORNING I WENT INTO THE SHOP keyed up with excitement. The business agent had told us he would come up to ask for an increase in wages and union recognition. All that morning my ears were attuned to the sound of the door bell. Aaron and I were exchanging glances.

It was in the afternoon that the business agent came.

Aaron whispered to me that he saw him walk into the office with a briefcase under his arm. Mr. Reenman walked into the office. He reappeared quickly and motioned his partner to follow him. I couldn't make out what they were saying. The showroom door, for the first time, was shut tightly. Five minutes later both Mr. Reenman and his partner entered the factory. Mr. Reenman did not look in my direction. He walked past me, his face dark, his head erect. But his partner could not resist annihilating me with his eyes. He offered to say something but changed his mind and returned to his unsquared coat.

That evening Mr. Reenman came over and took the brush out of my hand.

"It's five o'clock, Dave. Time to quit." He sounded almost affable. I stared at him in amazement. "I won't need the skins tomorrow."

"Aren't the cutters coming in?"

"Yes, but . . . they won't cut so much. You see," the genial smile never left his face. "Some of the orders got cancelled. . . . It's a little slow. I don't see how I can use you tomorrow. Supposing I call up your father and let him know?"

I understood I was fired. I threw my apron upon the wetting table.

"We'll see about that!" I grabbed my jacket. His eyes followed me to the door.

Pop was pacing the floor taking long strides, his hands folded behind his back. Mom was watching him anxiously, sighing to herself. I pretended to be absorbed in my *New York Post* comics.

"A strike!! You can't do this, Dave! Impossible! I won't let you, do you hear me? I can imagine what they'll be saying. This is a scandal!"

"Sure it's a scandal!" I said, "To be pushed around and work for ten bucks a week. Why don't you listen to me, Pop! That friend of yours told you a lie! In the first place I didn't call the strike and secondly I didn't tell the other guy to go out, either. But I wouldn't be sorry if I did."

"You should be ashamed of yourself, Sam!" my mother said.

"I am ashamed, Celia!" he thundered. "I get my son a job and right away he becomes a commissar. How can I apologize to him for that?"

"Apologize?" I jumped to my feet. "To him?"

"You don't know him as well as I do, Dave," Pop said. "You think he's cheap. I should have the money he gave to the society."

"All I care is how much money he gave to me. And why the hell should he care if I want to join the union? I have a right, don't I? Or is it because he might have to pay me more?"

"I'll straighten it all out myself, Dave," my father said. "This thing can be settled between Reenman and myself. We are old friends. We sit at the same banquet table. You're young yet. You don't understand such things."

"All I understand is that he's my boss," I said. "And—"

"What do you know about bosses?" Pop interrupted me

wildly. "You look at me and I'll tell you I've worked for many of them." His voice rose to a shout; his hands were trembling. "I grew old years ago. I can't work so fast any more. My boss knows it, yet he stands over me and demands speed. Speed! That's all he knows. Twelve years I work there! You're no chicken, Sam, he says to me, why don't you retire? So he could bring in fresh blood. . . ."

"But what makes you think that Reenman is different from the rest of them?" I asked in a softer tone.

"Because he knows you're my son and that makes all the difference!" He said it in a tone of such conviction that I stared at him, perplexed. "You'll go in tomorrow like nothing happened. I'm sure he won't say anything. If you want me, I'll go with you."

I wanted to laugh but the sight of his pale face choked the laughter in my throat. Instead, I said:

"I'm going on the picket line tomorrow. If he wants me back he can call the union."

"You're not going to strike Reenman!" Pop said firmly.

"Why don't you leave the boy alone?" my mother cried.

"What's got into you?"

"I'm talking to your son," Pop cried. "Call off the strike!"

"I couldn't do that, Pop," I said quietly.

And then it happened. He raised his hand and struck me across the face. The blow was light. I was more dazed than hurt. I was scarcely aware he had slapped me. Pop turned around, his head hung low. I rose and headed for my bedroom. I knew his eyes were following me. Closing the door behind me, I heard my mother burst into tears.

AT A QUARTER TO EIGHT THE FOLLOWING MORNING I MET Aaron in front of the building. He had two picket signs ready. "Workers of R & M on Strike for Union Conditions," it said.

"Looks pretty sharp, don't it?" Aaron laughed.

"What about Phil? Still devoted to his uncle?"

He was going to answer me when we noticed Phil coming toward us. He was carrying a newspaper under his arm and a lunchbag in his other hand. He was walking slowly, he eyes scanning the sidewalk. Suddenly he saw us. His face colored, his eyes danced nervously.

"We fixed up a sign for you," Aaron said. "You heard the old saying two's company, three's a crowd. It's a crowd we're interested in right now."

"I never put those things on and never will, I guess. Not here, anyway." His eyes were fixed yearningly upon the front door through which he could see the elevator.

"You shouldn't go up, Phil. This fight means you, too," I said.

"Nobody's going to stop me! This a free country!" His arms swung around but he touched no one. Then he made a frantic dash for the door. He didn't wait for the elevator. He ambled up the stairs, dropping his newspaper.

"Son-of-a-bitch!" I cursed. Aaron said nothing. He adjusted his sign and began to picket.

Ten minutes later a police car drove into the block and stopped in front of us. A heavy-set sergeant jumped out of the car.

"What's going on here?"

"Nothing," Aaron said, "we're picketing."

"I just got a complaint that you were molesting somebody. Threatened to beat him up," the sergeant said. "Don't you guys know it's against the law? I ought to lock you both up."

"Bbbutt, officer. . . ." I began to stammer.

"Nobody threatened anybody," Aaron said quickly. "The boss is a goddamn liar."

"I'll soon find out." The sergeant walked briskly into the building. A small crowd gathered, attracted by the presence of the police car.

"David!" somebody shouted. I turned around and saw Pop. His eyes were blinking and he strove to be calm.

"I couldn't go to work today. I was worried about you. Why are the policemen here? What have you done?"

"Reenman called them. Told them we were threatening his nephew," I said, strangely happy to see the worried look on his face.

"Everything will be all right," he said. But he couldn't hide the pain in his voice.

The sergeant came down followed by Mr. Reenman and Phil. Phil looked white and seemed panicky. Mr. Reenman was talking to the sergeant:

"They're a bunch of gangsters! They won't let anybody into this building! They intimidated this boy! I pay my taxes and I have a right to protection!" He turned to us, waving his hand, "You hooligans, I'll show you! Run my business you want, you, you. . . ." He searched for an epithet but his anger confused him.

"Whom do you call a gangster?" Pop cried charging toward Mr. Reenman. I grabbed his arm but he wrenched himself free, "My boy is no gangster!"

"Who are you?" The sergeant wanted to know.

"He's my son, officer," Pop said, "I saw what happened. I was standing across the street. They didn't hit nobody."

"Officer," Aaron broke in firmly, "Go ahead, ask this guy if we laid any hands on him." He turned to Phil who sought refuge behind Mr. Reenman's back. "Speak up, Phil!"

Phil looked idiotic with fear.

"I don't know. . . . I don't want any trouble." He turned around and leaned against the wall.

"What the hell do you call this, a circus?" The sergeant said with disgust. He got into the car and drove away.

Pop walked over to Mr. Reenman and spat thickly on the sidewalk.

"You're some *landsmen*."

Mr. Reenman looked at him coldly.

"Come on, Phil. Get back to work."

Phil did not answer him. He remained leaning against the wall staring dully at our picket signs. Mr. Reenman shook his head and entered the hallway.

"Listen, David," Pop said, "Can I get you some coffee. . . ?"

# ZIONISM AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL: III

By Moses Miller

**A**N analysis of Jewish status from a Marxist standpoint demands that we first place the question in the framework of the tendencies now manifesting themselves in Jewish life. Otherwise we should be discussing the problem in a vacuum and our analysis might be interpreted as an abstract and dogmatic set of propositions, rather than the living and vital theory that the Marxist view of the Jews really is. Nor can the ideological scene today be grasped fully without a glimpse of several leading interpretations of Jewish history in which these ideologies are rooted.

Serious discussions are going on today within the American Jewish community as to the status and outlook of the Jewish people. These discussions are an outcome of the experiences of the Jewish people since the rise of Hitlerism and particularly of the emergence of the state of Israel. On the one hand, there is a growing uneasiness on the part of many Jews as to the validity of concepts which they had previously accepted unquestioningly. On the other hand, we are witnessing an attempt by certain bourgeois ideological and political leaders of the Jewish community to reinterpret Jewish history and status in such a way as to assure their own continued influence and hegemony over the Jewish masses.

Those who follow the Jewish press are aware that a controversy has been raging regarding the future of the Zionist movement in terms of the relationship of Jewish communities to the state of Israel. Some Jewish leaders, including some Zionists, insist that the Zionist movement has fulfilled its function and should now bow itself gracefully out of existence. However, the majority of Zionist leaders insist that the Zionist movement is needed now more than ever. The American Jewish community, they insist, must be "Zionised." Exactly what this implies, even the Zionists have found difficult to explain. Does it mean support of Israel? But most American Jews are doing that, whether they are Zionist or not.

## **Control Through Illusions**

Though the Zionist leadership is in a dilemma, one thing is clear. This leadership is fighting tenaciously for political control of the Jewish community. While the nature of Zionism as a political ideology was obscured to some people by its philanthropic and humanitarian appeal, its real political character emerges quite clearly now that Israel is a reality. Zionist leadership is not content to greet the creation of Israel, to mobilize support for it and to acknowledge that each Jewish community will still have to solve its own problems within the framework of the economic, political and social problems in its own country. Zionist leadership is insisting that Israel is the *center* around

which all Jewish communities must revolve; that Israel is the answer to Jewish problems everywhere.

The fantastic illusions that some Zionists are today to spread in order to bolster their own ideological position are evidenced in a recent article by Elijah ben Horin in the *New Palestine* (organ of the Zionist Organization of America) of May 12. In an article, "Israel: Remedy for Anti-Semitism," ben Horin writes: "Jewish minorities are no longer as defenseless as they were in the past. Whatever prestige and influence Israel will possess, would be available for the defense of Jewish rights. Anti-Semitic governments may be mindful of complications on the international scene if they allow Jew-hatred to blossom. . . ."

"The very fact of Israel's existence on God's earth is bound not only to discourage anti-Semites but also to encourage the Jews greatly. A Jew in Brooklyn or in Buenos Aires, reading at breakfast a dispatch about the session of the Israeli parliament instead of a gruesome story about the latest anti-Semitic outbreak, will find it a refreshing change. Reports about President Truman entertaining President Weizmann, or about the flag of Israel flying over Blair House or at Flushing Meadows are a new source of pride for the Jews everywhere. They give the Jews the feeling of normalcy and equality.

"Israel may yet do wonders for the Jew, for his sense of security and for his relations with the non-Jewish world. This, in turn, may prove to be the best psychological cure for anti-Semitism."

This is not only nonsense. It is dangerous nonsense. No one will deny that Jews take pride in seeing Israel become a full fledged member of the UN and that its flag flies over Flushing Meadows. But it is madness to disarm a people and fill it with illusions that the state of Israel can solve the problems of anti-Semitism and discrimination everywhere. Without making a lengthy analysis of the question at this point, it should suffice to ask oneself if the "independence" of India will solve the problems of the Indian minority in South Africa; if the existence of a Mexican nation solves the problems of the Mexican community in the United States; or if an independent Puerto Rico would solve the problems of Puerto Ricans in the United States. Ben Horin has reduced the problem of anti-Semitism to an absurdity; he has brushed aside the very real dangers of race-hatred and anti-Semitism growing out of basic economic, political and social problems in each country. His romanticism is as dangerous as it is foolhardy.

Other Zionist leaders offer different reasons for the continuation of the Zionist movement. Some for example, are aware that increasing numbers will question the need of a separate Zionist movement, if support of Israel is its only *raison d'etre*. They have therefore begun to propagate the

idea of *haluziut*, of the need for American Jewry to prepare for its own exodus to Israel. Even Ben Gurion, Prime Minister of Israel, has announced, though in guarded tones: "Our cultural forces have been destroyed; and there remains, in fact, only one Jewry intact in life and property—American Jewry, from Canada to Chile. But it is not to be expected that that Jewry will come to this country in masses during the next few years, *although I am sure that it will come eventually.*"<sup>1</sup>

### **Back to the Synagogue**

We shall return later in this series to this current in Jewish life. Here, however, we shall go into another new trend, which received representative expression in a series of articles published in the *Menorah Journal* during the past year. This is another type of attempt to resolve the problem of status of Jewish communities outside of Israel and of their relationship to Israel. The position can briefly be indicated by a quotation from an article, "Toward a Noble Community," by Henry Hurwitz, *Menorah Journal* editor. Says Hurwitz in the Autumn 1948 issue: "There are some extreme Zionists who look upon American Jews as 'expendable.' Though domiciled here, they neither see nor desire any future for Judaism in America. In their view, the only use of American Jews is to provide the financial resources to Israel—through the United Jewish Appeal, through loans and investments—and to exercise all possible political pressure upon the United States government, upon congressmen and voters, in behalf of Israel. As soon as Israel is strong enough to dispense with American funds and political influence, according to this belief, American Jews will no longer be necessary and need not survive. Such Zionists are, in effect, colonials of Israel.

"Most Zionists are far from taking this view. However, if the utterances of their political leaders and intellectuals are a true indication, they propose not to liquidate American Jewry, but to make it a permanent cultural dependency of Israel. What else can be the meaning of their talk about 'Zionizing' American Judaism, directing all Jewish education in America, and seizing control of the whole community, its agencies, organizations, institutions?

"From this program too, when its full implications are realized, the vast majority of American Jews will recoil. The vast majority include not only the anti-Zionists, many of whom are now giving their support to Israel for humanitarian motives. They include also most of the Zionists themselves who, however ardent their love for Zion and their desire to help Israel grow and flourish, will reject any move by Israel's government and the world Zionist leaders to control or improperly influence American Jewish life. . . .

"Level-headed Zionists who are concerned for their children's future in America—who in fact are first and last Americans, however fervid their hopes for the success of Israel—will realize that the center of their Jewish life must be, not in any land overseas however dear, but in America itself."

Hurwitz's article is an example of the type of thinking that is prevalent in far broader circles, including the Zionists, than some may at first blush imagine. But what answer do Hurwitz and practically all other *Menorah Journal* writers offer? They maintain that the Jews are not a nation or even a nationality but a *religious group* whose orientation and program must be directed toward the revitalization of religion as the center of Jewish life and activity. But these writers recognize that it is not enough merely to assert the primacy of religion in Jewish life. They must bolster up this thesis with an analysis of Jewish history proving that the Jewish people throughout the ages were basically a religious community, that religion acted as the unifying force of the people and that only thus can we account for the survival of the Jews. This view is shared by many writers.

The concept of the Jewish people as a religious group is not new. From ancient times down to the nineteenth century the religious or theistic concept of Jewish history reigned supreme. Despite modifications and variations and subtle theological differences introduced from age to age, all Jewish historians believed that a divine power guides the destinies of men, that God's will determined the course of human history. The task of the Jewish people was therefore to proclaim the glory of God. All Jewish history could be understood in terms of moral and religious behavior.

Many who reject the fundamental tenets of Zionism are turning to this concept of Jewish status. True, they use much sugar coating and modern sociological terms to make the concept more palatable. "Hence," says Hurwitz in the article cited above, "it is the religious sanction of Jewish life which is paramount; that is the common cause of all of us who want Judaism to flourish in America. . . . This way lies the true Jewish future in America—that all of us throughout the country who regard religion, broadly conceived in the comprehensive classic Jewish sense, as the sole justification of *organized* Jewish life in America should now withdraw from the secular bodies and concentrate on a religious reorientation and reorganization of all legitimate Jewish interests. This can be done only on the basis of the Synagogue."

### **Haskalah Historians**

This theistic interpretation of Jewish history and status now being revived, underwent some modification and even revision in the nineteenth century. The theories devised in the early part of the nineteenth century by a school of historiography known as *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (science of Judaism) was basically an extension of the idealistic interpretation. That is, these writers held that the ideas of men, whether supernatural or naturalistic in character, have an independent existence and do not depend upon the material conditions of social life. Associated with this school were such men as Leopold Zunz, Solomon Judah Rapoport, Nahman Krochmal, Samuel David Luzzatto and Heinrich Graetz. Representatives of this school

<sup>1</sup> Speech before the Israeli Labor Party, Feb. 1949. Emphasis mine.

were in the main German Jews, although a few Galician and Austrian Jews adhered to it.

This school is a product of the Haskalah (enlightenment) movement in Jewish life and is the counterpart of the general enlightenment movement that developed in Western Europe during the eighteenth century. (We shall discuss the Haskalah movement more fully in a future article.) But there was one important difference between the Jewish and general enlightenment movements. While the latter doubted religion itself, the Jewish enlighteners were much more conservative, for they never broke with religion itself, although they carried on a fight against mysticism, dogmatism and Hasidism. The rise of capitalism and its penetration into Jewish life made necessary a modification of ideologies previously held. When emancipation came to the Jewish people in western Europe in the nineteenth century, a new bourgeoisie had begun to arise in Jewish life. This development made it necessary for the Jews to adapt their ideological concepts to the new social and economic status. The problems of this rising bourgeoisie, emerging slowly out of the ghetto and confronted with the difficulties of integrating itself into the general bourgeoisie, gave rise to a rationalism which was at once more conservative and less willing to break with the past than the general European enlightenment.

Hence we find the Haskalah seeking to reformulate its concepts of Jewish life more in the spirit and philosophy of the age. The general enlightenment had engendered a critical approach to history, to Biblical criticism and to critiques of metaphysical concepts of religion. Reformulation of religious beliefs in Jewish life became inevitable. This new school developed the theory of the Jewish "mission." "God scattered us over the world . . . to be both pupil and teacher," writes Rapoport in a letter to Luzzatto. According to this concept, God was still very much present. But it is the "spirit of Judaism" rather than God that becomes the driving force of Jewish history. Jewish history was then interpreted as the gradual advance and development of the "spirit of Judaism" under differing conditions throughout the ages.

There were minor differences in the approach of the various members of this school, but basically their definition of the Jew was that of a *Volksstamm*. This meant that, while the Jewish people were an integral part of the nations in whose midst they lived in terms of language and culture, the Jewish people constituted an international entity bound together by religion and history.

### ***Nationalistic View of History***

It is not surprising, therefore, to find in the work of Heinrich Graetz, the great historian of the Jews, little treatment of the actual conditions, of the specific and concrete economic development of the Jewish people at each stage of history in each given country. Jewish history, for Graetz, is a record of Jewish martyrdom and an account of the making of spiritual weapons which, in his view, enabled the Jew to survive. History became a glorification

of the Jewish spirit, which flourished in all ages and had a special destiny to fulfill.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the nationalistic interpretation of Jewish history was advanced in the work of Simon Dubnow and Ahad Haam. We showed in our first article how this school maintained that the Jewish people constituted a nation bound together by a common culture and common historical destiny. This school broke with the religious interpretation of history, although it considered religion an important and integral part of Jewish development. For this school Jewish nationalism is a secular process. "I can adopt," says Ahad Haam, "even that scientific heresy which goes by the name of Darwin without any danger to my Judaism" (*Selected Essays*, p. 194).

Fundamentally, the interpretation of history of this school remains idealistic. Jewish history becomes for it a working out of the "national will" of the Jewish people throughout the ages, with little or no recognition of the relationship between the economic, social and political processes of the countries and the consciousness of the peoples in whose midst the Jews dwelt. Struggles within Jewish life are depicted either as conflicts of a religious character or as a struggle between national and assimilationist forces. Ahad Haam particularly stressed his theory of the "innate will to live" which led him to consider Jewish development in terms of the various spiritual weapons which Jews had forged in order to guard against assimilation. He held that the Jews had a special and unique character, culture and religion, which account for their survival. Dubnow, who was aware that his definition did not correspond to the attributes which are obviously present in other nations, proceeded to develop his own theory of Jewish exceptionalism by arguing that, while all other nations constitute political entities, the Jewish people constitute a nation by virtue of spiritual-cultural and historical, rather than political factors.

### ***A "Unique" People***

What emerges from even a superficial analysis of both the religious and the nationalistic interpretation of Jewish status and history is, that under these theories the laws which govern Jewish history are different from those general social laws by which all other peoples live. The Jews are conceived as a "chosen people" whose course of development is unlike that of any other people and not subject to a rational analysis.

To the advocates of "national will," as well as to the religious school, Jews erected a wall about themselves by creating the Torah, the commandments, the Talmud and the whole religio-cultural structure with which they fenced themselves off from the surrounding world. By the ensuing isolation the Jews helped to save themselves from extinction. But how does this theory jibe with practice? In the first place, it is a fact that many Jewish communities were *not* isolated. Many Jewish communities in ancient, medieval and modern times shared in the general cultural

developments of the countries in which they lived. This was the case in ancient times in Hellenistic Egypt, which was historically the most important Jewish community outside of Palestine up to a few centuries ago. According to the estimate of Philo this Egyptian Jewish community numbered approximately a quarter of a million. Nor did the Jewish communities of medieval Spain or southern France and Italy live an isolated life. There are many more such integrated Jewish communities in modern times.

It is particularly difficult for this school to explain the assimilation and disappearance of a number of Jewish communities from the face of the earth in every single period of human history. If the "spirit of Judaism" or the "national will" were responsible for Jewish survival, why did Jewish communities like those of Hellenistic Egypt, of Babylonia, of Southern Italy—all of them large and important Jewish communities—become assimilated and disappear? Or for that matter, how can we account for the rise of the Haskalah and of nationalism, which emerged with a secular outlook and thus helped to undermine the religious concept in Jewish life and began to establish the basis of Jewish existence on non-religious grounds?

### *Sachar's Defective Method*

One would imagine that all of these obvious contradictions would lead Jewish historians to seek answers in an analysis of the socio-economic conditions of Jews in each age. Yet such is not the case. Such historians do indeed pay much lip service to socio-economic conditions. Take for example, the *History of the Jews* by Abram Leon Sachar, a leading contemporary Jewish historian. In his introduction Sachar writes: "Too many scholars, strangely uninfluenced by the revolution wrought in modern historical writing . . . continue to grind out their tales almost exclusively in terms of religious and philosophical phenomena. I have not neglected these factors. . . . But I have not permitted them to crowd out the account of the life and labor of the multitude, the development of social institutions, the rise of modern capitalism, the impact of science and Darwinism upon the Jewish outlook, the creation of trade unions and their effect upon social life. . . ."

"The interpenetration of Jewish and European history also needs constant emphasis, else one's view of Jewish history is distorted."

This is indeed a promising note. Yet nowhere is it fulfilled. The role of the trade unions in recent Jewish history is limited to exactly one page and part of that is devoted to eulogizing Samuel Gompers as the exemplary trade union leader. Of the role of Jews in the great revolutionary movements in Russia there is not a single word. No mention is even made of the great school of progressive and proletarian Yiddish writers.

Sachar accounts for the persecution of the Jews during the 14th century and particularly during the period of the terror of the Black Death by "the rumor spread that the cursed Jews had done it all . . . by poisoning the wells, the food, the very air" (p. 201). The persecution stops be-

cause "at last pity came back to human hearts, and the orgy of bloodshed ended" (p. 201). The author concludes: "One wonders how flesh and blood could survive such trials; not years, not decades, but centuries of unremitting woe, and more to follow. *The Jew, however, seemed to have remarkable powers of adjustment*" (page 203, Emphasis mine—M.M.). No explanation of these "remarkable powers" is offered.

This sort of historical explanation, which in reality explains nothing, is particularly deficient when Sachar attempts to explain Jewish life in the eighteenth century, "the age of rationalism," in his chapter on "The End of the Jewish Middle Ages." After pointing out that in the Middle Ages "Jews were everywhere sunk in superstition; learning had decayed . . ." Sachar goes on: "Yet the spark of life had not been completely extinguished. It smoldered in the very heart of the dry-rot. And at last . . . three magnificent characters appeared to give it strength and to guide Judaism out of the cave of death. Israel of Moldavia (known as the Baal Shem, founder of Hassidism—M.M.) . . . created a warm, emotional faith which brought new life to thousands of neglected souls in eastern Europe. Elijah, the venerable sage of Vilna, revitalized Talmudic studies, destroying the old intolerable hair splitting which had reduced it to a gibberish. Moses Mendelssohn, one of the most lovable figures of the eighteenth century, restored self-respect to the Jews and ushered them into the intellectual and aesthetic life of the European world. The trio, each appealing to a different element, at length closed the dreary Jewish Middle Ages . . ." (p. 263).

Here is a perfect example of the blind alley into which the idealistic interpretation of history must lead. Since Sachar does not explain why rationalism emerged only in the eighteenth century, he blunders into presenting three figures of this era as a trinity, when in fact they constituted three conflicting viewpoints. For not all three were leading the Jews out of the Middle Ages. As a matter of fact, only Mendelssohn, representative of the new bourgeoisie arising in Jewish life, and the whole Haskalah (enlightenment) movement of which he was a part, helped to bring the Jews out of the ghetto. Having failed to probe the material conditions and the new relations into which men of the eighteenth century were entering upon, Sachar could hardly see, let alone explain, the ferment that these influences were creating in men's minds and the resultant revolution in men's outlooks and philosophy entailed thereby. Nor can Sachar explain why Mendelssohn, the enlightener, should arise in western Europe; or why Israel of Moldavia, the mystic, should arise in Eastern Europe.

From this analysis it should be clear that the idealistic interpretation, basing itself either on a "supernatural" will or a "national" will, cannot resolve the problems of Jewish history or help us to determine the status of Jews today. We can realize a sound approach only if we analyze the material conditions which determined the social movement of each Jewish community and the ideas arising out of those conditions.

*(To be continued.)*



# THE FIRST JEWISH TRADE UNION

By Kalman Marmor

**T**WO tasks faced the Jewish Socialist Society<sup>1</sup> of London soon after its formation in 1876: (1) to gather around itself all Jewish socialist elements in London; (2) to organize the London Jewish workers for the class struggle. The execution of both tasks met with difficulties.

The Jewish Socialist Society had decided that its membership was to be composed entirely of workers. But it soon became apparent that there were candidates also among poor peddlers, glaziers, clerks and even among small employers. At the meeting on June 24, 1876, the question was fully discussed, and the votes were almost equally divided. Finally it was decided to admit office workers, wage and piece workers, but no employers or peddlers.

A difficult problem was created by those workers who became bosses after joining the Society, but who were willing to continue to fight on the side of the working class. Citizen Lazar Goldenberg and a number of others were of the opinion that these bosses should retain their membership, but insisted that these bosses give preference to their comrades in the Society when they took on workers. But in the admission of new members, the Society remained strictly proletarian.

The main question to which the first Jewish socialist organization devoted itself at its very first meeting was the organization of the Jewish clothing workers. Only one member, Georg Saper, maintained that a socialist organization should concern itself preferably with self-study and with propaganda among the intelligentsia. He was also the only one to propose that the labor union should not be an industrial union, but a federation of independent unions of separate trades (craft unionism). The membership, however, was opposed to Saper's position and agreed overwhelmingly to organize a "mixed organization of all workers." Saper then asked whether the Society had any right to organize a trade union. It was a revolutionary and socialist organization. How could it organize a union, with sick benefit funds, which might not ever altogether agree with the program of the Society?

The secretary, Arnold Lieberman, replied that according to the first point of the Society's rules, "to unite the workers for struggle against their oppressors," the Society was obligated to organize the workers into unions. Trade unionism was therefore in harmony with the principles of socialism.

There ensued a debate whether to work for the building of the socialist organization or the trade union; whether to issue an agitational leaflet in which to inform the workers

of the policies of socialism and thereby build the Society, or print a call to the workers to unite in a union; or perhaps first of all to call the workers to a public meeting. It was suggested that the Society "could properly print two leaflets if the treasury would allow it."

A mass meeting was in preparation for several months. The members of the Society were well aware of the unsuccessful attempts at organizing a clothing workers union. They therefore approached this task very carefully. Every detail was thoroughly discussed in advance.

A proposal from Goldstein not to admit bosses to the meeting was defeated. It was pointed out that according to British law anyone had a right to come to any open meeting even if it had a special character. "That's why it is better that we don't set conditions that can't be carried out."

By secret vote, the Society selected Citizen Goldenberg as chairman and Citizen Saper as secretary of the meeting. Goldstein, Weiner, Rosenthal, Stone, Rabinowitch, Lieberman, Goldenberg and Saper volunteered as speakers. Goldstein withdrew a week later because he knew he had no influence on the London workers and therefore feared his appearance "may harm" the whole thing.

Saper proposed to invite the socialist organizations of London. Goldenberg and Lieberman spoke against it because at a public meeting where "anyone has a right to come, no one should be invited officially." Goldenberg agreed "the organization cannot invite, but every member can privately invite his acquaintances and friends." Saper also proposed to charge a small admission fee. Another member proposed a collection, leaving it to each to give as much as he wished. Lieberman was against both proposals, because the enemies would say the Society was making money out of the meeting. "We must show the world that we work only for our ideas and bear the costs ourselves." After a brief discussion, it was decided not to charge an admission fee. The small group of socialist workers themselves covered the costs (15 shillings, barely four dollars, for the hall, 12 shillings for printing 1,000 leaflets and an additional 18 pence, about 35 cents, for "incidentals").

On Saturday, August 19, a week before the meeting, members of the first Jewish socialist organization spent the day distributing the call. The minutes of the Jewish Socialist Society report that many workers did not want to take the leaflet at first. They were afraid it was published by missionaries. Everyone had to be told individually that "it was a Jewish paper, published by Jewish workers to their comrades, in order to find the means to improve conditions of the poor Jewish workers." Only after several hundred copies of the leaflet had been distributed did the workers

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<sup>1</sup> On the formation of the Jewish Socialist Society see "The First Jewish Socialist Organization," by Kalman Marmor, *JEWISH LIFE*, Nov. and Dec., 1946.

eagerly take them and even run after the distributors to get copies. "Several workers from the crowd" offered to distribute these statements among their friends. The bosses were "very angry," and "fought vigorously" against the establishment of a "labor organization." The report concludes with the observation that "the conflict between workers and bosses immediately expressed itself sharply."

That same evening, after the distribution, the Society devoted itself to last-minute preparations for the public meeting. Weiner undertook to count the "guests who entered" the hall. Stone wanted to know whether women could also come to the meeting. He was informed that "anyone who wants to can come."

### A Successful Meeting

According to the records of the Jewish Socialist Society, the meeting was a great success. An audience of "several hundred people" attended. The meeting began at 8:45 p.m. There were also present a representative of the English trade unions, several members of the London International Communist Educational Society (to which Karl Marx<sup>2</sup> and Friedrich Engels then belonged) and several members of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary paper, *Vperiod*, among them its editor, Peter Lavrov.

Lazar Goldenberg, the chairman, stated the socialists wanted to free the working class from the domination of capital, and that the Jewish Socialist Society had called this meeting in order to make clear to the Jewish workers how they could improve their conditions.

The first speaker, Isaac Stone, described the life of the Jewish workers in London. He showed that the division of labor had made the worker the smallest and cheapest part of the machine, to whom no attention was paid. Stone concluded that the words "all Jews are brothers" had become a rotten lie since class divisions had appeared among the Jews. He called upon the workers to unite, and to substitute for that lying slogan a new one, "All workers are brothers."

Morris Rosenthal presented a history of the clothing industry in Russia and England, specifically in London, and showed that unity was the only defense of the workers against the attack of capital.

Louis Weiner described the development of the guilds in the middle ages and their struggle against the nobility and the machines, the economic revolution resulting from the French Revolution and the rise of capitalist domination, the development of the trade unions, specifically in England and especially since 1851.

Georg Saper spoke in German about the struggle for a decent work-day, the legislation about this in the middle ages and in the nineteenth century. Saper concluded with a call to the workers to establish a society and among other things achieve a ten-hour day.

Arnold Lieberman based his speech on his famous mani-

festos, "To the Intellectual Jewish Youth," which he had published that month in Hebrew and Russian. He accused the "Jewish money aristocracy" of responsibility for the persecution of the Jews in East Europe. The full brotherhood of man could be achieved only under the flag of socialism. He also attacked sharply the religious institutions that were being used as a means (or "racket" as it would be known today) to drain the Jewish masses. The poorest bride and groom, for instance, had to pay the "synagogue" (meaning the rabbi) three pounds and ten shillings (close to \$18) for a wedding. His conclusion was that the workers should not permit themselves to be dominated by the rich Jewish community. They should govern themselves, and establish a "workers' republic" in their internal affairs and not permit themselves to be bossed by an "authority."

Lieberman's speech—the minutes inform us—was interrupted by a "bourgeois" who insisted the speaker had maligned the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Adler. The "bourgeois" demanded the right to speak, but the audience hooted him down, and this caused an uproar.

A disturbance was also caused by the speech of the representative of an English trade union, Mr. Goddard. The executive member of the English Bookbinders Union declared that the Jewish workers could improve their lot only through unity and that if they would unite the English trade unions would "support them to the utmost."

The attending "bourgeois" pushed to the front and demanded the right to speak. Different groups formed. The chairman called the meeting to order. "The audience was excited. The bourgeois said the socialists were missionaries. The workers disagreed."

Abraham Goldstein, who three weeks earlier withdrew as a speaker because he had no influence on the workers and his appearance might cause harm, jumped onto a table. With an excited voice he called on the workers to unite. He presented facts to prove how the "work-givers" drain the workers. The audience became quiet. From its midst a former clothing worker, Town, whom rheumatism had forced to change from needle work to peddling, stepped forth and told those present that when he became sick his boss had remarked: "When a horse drops you take another one. You do the same with a worker." Town called upon the workers to unite immediately and not to believe that the socialists were missionaries. He knew the organization, he stated, although as a peddler he was not eligible for membership.

The audience was enthusiastic. Eighty workers signed up immediately in the clothing workers union. The chairman's proposal to meet again between the first and last days of *Hanukkah* (five weeks later) was voted down by the workers. "The audience demands the following Saturday night. . . ." It was agreed that the first meeting of the clothing workers organization would take place in the headquarters of the Jewish Socialist Society in Whitechapel. The meeting adjourned at eleven o'clock. The audience dispersed in full agreement, with the cry: "Hurrah! Down with the bosses!"

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx was in Karlsbad at the time, taking the cures. He occasionally spent time there in the company of the Jewish historian, Prof. Heinrich Graetz.

# Book Reviews

## A HYACINTH FOR YOUR SOUL

By Carey McWilliams

*How Secure these Rights?* by Ruth G. Weintraub, Doubleday. \$2.00.

*Discrimination and National Welfare*, edited by R. M. MacIver, Harper & Brothers. \$2.00.

These are difficult books to review if only for the reason that it is well-nigh impossible to come to grips with their contents. The volume by Miss Weintraub is a summarization of information and factual data gleaned from the bulging files of the Anti-Defamation League. It is difficult, however, to appraise this information without knowing what materials were available and how the particular selection was made. The volume reads like an annual agency report and little effort is made, even in the most tentative terms, to interpret the data presented.

Although one can feel grateful to the ADL for making this material available to the general public, one would like to have the conclusions of this experienced agency as to the meaning of the material. The volume is organized on the principle of the "social audit," a principle long venerated in the field of social work. The idea, of course, is to draw up a list of "debit" and "credit" items such as a teacher would hand out F's and A's to her students. There may be some merit to this system of social reporting but isn't it the purpose of double-entry bookkeeping to enable the auditor to strike a balance? Miss Weintraub has dutifully made the entries, debit and credit, red and black, but where, oh! where! is the summing-up, the trial balance?

The failure to strike a balance is, of course, closely related to the fact that the materials in this volume are presented in much the manner that an official of the weather bureau would announce certain facts: cool here and warm there, clouds over New Mexico, showers in New England, and bright sunlight in Mobile. The only way materials of this sort could possibly have any meaning would be against some stated theoretical background; some statement, that is, of the nature of the problem. In the absence of such a statement, the constant alternation in tone between "we point with pride" and "we view with alarm" is not only senseless but extremely irritating.

I find it difficult to believe that the ADL is utterly without a point of view about the problem which is its sole reason

for being; but, if such a point of view exists, it is not apparent in this volume. To be told that "on the one hand" the American Automobile Association removed certain discriminatory phraseology from its 1948 directory but that, "on the other hand," there were increasing complaints from Jews of discrimination in housing and resorts for the same year, leaves one baffled as to the conclusion, if any, that the author, and those who reviewed the contents of this volume before publication, intended the reader to draw.

Where Miss Weintraub does venture an interpretation, moreover, it is far from satisfactory. For example, she raises the issue of whether social discrimination is really important, "worth bothering about." Her answer is "yes" and for these reasons: social discrimination is "frustrating"; it reinforces the Jewish stereotype; and it compels "Jews to withdraw and adopt a policy of social segregation." But are these the only—or the "real"—reasons why social discrimination is important? How does social discrimination against Jews relate to the existing social structure? In the absence of some such analysis, it is my candid opinion that the materials in this volume on social discrimination are both meaningless and frivolous. Again, the reader is told that anti-Semitism in 1948 placed more emphasis than ever on the propaganda theme that Judaism is tantamount to Marxism, that is, that the Jews are Communists. If this is true, what reasons underlie the shift in emphasis? Merely to state the fact itself is about as meaningless as to say, "It is cloudy today." In short, I am glad to have this volume for it does contain some useful and valuable information; but I am at a complete loss to understand the system of social bookkeeping upon which it is based.



Carey McWilliams

The volume edited by Dr. MacIver is made up of papers presented by Ira De A. Reid, Elmo Roper, Robert C. Weaver, Theodore Brameld, Milton R. Konvitz, Herbert R. Northrup, Father John LaFarge, Roger N. Baldwin, Adolf A. Berle, Jr., and Robert K. Merton at sessions of the Institute for Religious and Social Studies. As always happens, occasional papers of this sort seem to have little vitality when read in print. The idea of the sessions seems to have been to hammer home the not-too-startling proposition that discrimination has its "spiritual" and "social" costs; in other words, that it is expensive. But, with the exception of a first-rate paper by Dr. Robert K. Merton on "Discrimination and the American Creed," the various papers fail to rise above the level of social platitude. Obviously discrimination against Mexican-Americans in Texas will not endear us to the Spanish-speaking people of Mexico; nor will the people of the Far East applaud when we discriminate against resident Chinese, Japanese and Filipinos. But are these debatable points? Has even John Rankin asserted the contrary?

There is one paper in this collection, however, that requires special comment: "Discrimination and the Law" by Milton R. Konvitz. Elsewhere Konvitz has done some first-rate research on the legal aspects of discrimination, but I was shocked by the thinness of this analysis. The paper starts off with about as misleading a statement of the Marxist analysis as could well be imagined. The inference seems to be that Marx and Engels were wrong because *individuals* occasionally do things that are inconsistent with their selfish economic interests (no mention is made of the behavior of social classes). With ludicrous sentimentousness, Konvitz then announces that "man does not live by bread alone" and then follows this up with a magnificent piece of bathos, namely, "a man may sell a loaf of bread to buy a hyacinth for his soul." I had to read this paper twice to convince myself that Konvitz could be guilty of such abysmal silliness.

The introduction by Dr. MacIver also warrants brief comment. "We do not want to abandon differences," he writes. "That would be sterility. We do not want uniformity." With this preface, he then proceeds as follows: "In our time there are two spiritual faiths that are contending for the mastery of our world. The one faith rejects and would destroy difference. It would require that all men share the same ideal, speak the same opinions, and utter the same creeds." Unfortunately time has undermined this dichotomy. For what is the meaning and purpose of the current drive against civil rights in this country if it is not to force "men to share the same ideal, speak the same opinions, and utter the same creed?"

Anyone, it seems to me, should now be in a position to see that there was something monstrously ironic in the fact that the President's Committee on Civil Rights, in issuing its famous report in November 1947, blandly dismissed the question of freedom of speech, press, and assembly with the comment that these rights were "so well secured" as not to warrant attention. The painful fact is that the widespread interest aroused in racial discrimination in the period from 1940 to 1945 is now being used to divert attention from the brutal assault on civil rights in other fields. Again Dr. Maclver makes the significant observation that the American tradition of equal rights "suffered a decline" in the nineteenth century; but *why?* The failure to answer this crucial question is the fault which robs most of the papers in this volume of any real meaning.

The most pertinent statement to be found in the Maclver volume is the following comment from Dr. Robert K. Merton's closely-reasoned and wholly excellent paper: "If the assumption of ignorance

as the root-source of discrimination is put to one side, then we must be prepared to find that discrimination is in part sustained by a socialized reward-system. When a population is divided into sub-groups, some of which are set apart as inferior, even the lowliest member of the ostensibly superior group derives psychic gains from this institutionalized superiority of status. This system of discrimination also supplies preferential access to opportunity for the more favored groups. The taboos erect high tariff walls restricting the importation of talent from ethnic outgroups. . . . This suggests that discrimination is sustained not only by direct gains to those who discriminate, but also by cultural norms which legitimize discrimination." I would suggest that Mr. Konvitz sell his hyacinth and buy this loaf of good sense.

## STREETS OF WILLIAMSBURG

By Ben Field

*Spit and the Stars*, by Robert Mende, Rinehart, New York. \$3.50.

Like the hero of Robert Mende's first novel, *Spit and the Stars*, I was also brought up in Williamsburg. It was with considerable eagerness then that I plunged into the book to follow the story of the hero from the familiar street, through school and into the job which gives him his first strike experiences and the girl whom he finally marries. Here are the typical Jewish American workingclass families and their Irish and Italian neighbors with all their wit, warmth and heartiness, with their desperate struggle to put a whole loaf of bread on the table and to brace their children for the time that they will stand on their own feet. The Habers, on whom the author lavishes so much attention, is the family next door.

The novel, however, is disappointing. After its early chapters, its warmth and human concern are dissipated and the characters become stereotypes. Gregg Haber's growth into a young man who understands the plight of people and takes them into his embrace is unconvincing and a little repulsive. The boys and girls on the curb in the early part of the book are likeable and real, but the author muffs his grownups. This is particularly true of the way he handles Gregg's father and mother who degenerate into a couple of whining, cursing caricatures.

Now Robert Mende has an ear for dialect and an eye for the color and sweep of life in Williamsburg. He does not, however, seem to take his talent seriously. There is something smart-alecky about his writing, and his realism is shame-

faced. He does not know what details to exclude in building his story, and he oversimplifies and vulgarizes his Jews so that they are smeared carbon copies. In this connection it would do well to call to his attention other novels which give portraits of immigrant families, Isidor Schneider's *The Kingdom of Necessity*, and Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, where the characters are treated with dignity and the realism does not stick like a dirty finger into the face of the reader blinding him to what is essential about them. Surely Mark Twain and Sholem Aleichem, whom Mende calls his teachers, were masters of the art of keeping spit and slobber in their proper place.

The novel is a wonderful literary form, so elastic that great scenes can take place and masses of men can be quartered in it. The writer who works at it must be profoundly serious if he wishes his readers to take him seriously. That seriousness must embrace, first and foremost, the people about whom he is writing. Often the most commonplace details of living must be touched on to give heart and reality to character. A fine example is Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, where the servant brings the chamberpot to the dying man, an incident which frees the reader's emotions and is one of the most tragic scenes in literature. Unfortunately, Mende is still like a young boy who seems to have become conscious overnight of certain organs. As soon as he learns better control, he will be a more effective writer.

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# Letters from Abroad

## WORLD JEWRY AND PEACE

Paris

At Montreux in June 1948 the World Jewish Congress solemnly affirmed its determination to support the struggle against the resurgence of fascism and war. But when the world's democratic forces met in Paris in April 1949 at the World Conference for Peace, the World Jewish Congress was absent. Why?

In a public declaration Dr. Nahum Goldmann assures us that "no people in the world are so concerned with the maintenance of peace as the Jewish people," that the World Jewish Congress would "under normal circumstances be very happy to participate in all international conferences . . . whose purpose it is to safeguard the peace." And after wishing all those who fight for peace success in their undertaking, he assures us that in this spirit the World Jewish Congress "will also make its own contribution in the direction of mobilizing the resources of the Jewish people in order to fight all tendencies that help to provoke war."

Having given these assurances, the statement ends with the declaration that "the executive of the World Jewish Congress is unfortunately forced to withhold itself from participation in the Paris Conference for Peace." Why? Because "not all sections of world public opinion are represented in it," and because the World Jewish Congress must "refrain from participating in any international manifestation which represents only a fragment of the public opinion of the world."

The leaders of the World Jewish Congress are not so naive as to believe that it is possible to hold a conference aiming to mobilize the world against the warmongers in which "all sections of world public opinion are represented," as Dr. Goldmann demands. Millions of people are aware, that the world is divided into two camps, not on the basis of geographic blocs, but into a camp of reaction and a camp of peace and progress. Does the World Jewish Congress leadership wish to stand aside from the great historic struggle of these two camps and maintain a position of "neutrality" between democracy and reaction? Fundamentally, of course, the problem is quite different. The majority of the present leaders of the World Jewish Congress, as of a number of other Jewish institutions and organizations, are not in reality neutral at all. They

are very closely tied to the camp of political and social reaction throughout the world, particularly Jewish leaders in the United States. Such leaders would not feel very comfortable at a conference for peace because they would have to make excuses for their allies and inspirers—the American bourgeoisie.

Both the expressions of regret and the wishes for the success of the conference only mask the stark reality that the leadership of the World Jewish Congress did not want to participate in the conference and did not want to ally itself with thousands of delegates who represented hundreds of millions of the best fighters of mankind, the best and truest friends of our people.

Dr. Goldmann may think the matter satisfactorily explained if he points to the highly democratic procedure used in rejecting the invitation to participate in the World Conference for Peace. After all, was not the question discussed and voted upon in all three sections of the executive of the World Jewish Congress in America, Europe and Israel? According to the report, an overwhelming majority voted against participation. Of course what Dr. Goldmann forgot to say in his statement is how the executive is constituted. If he had, one could easily see the disparity between the decision of the executive and the will of the Jewish masses. A few examples will suffice. The Jewish community of Rumania has two votes in the executive while the English Jewish community, whose numbers are no greater than that

the Rumanian, has 10 votes. In France the progressive movement, which is dominant in Jewish life both in terms of influence and breadth of organization, received one vote on the executive, while the other organizations received five. The progressive movement in the United States and in Argentina, despite their role and influence, have no representation at all in the executive of the Congress.

Another little matter that Dr. Goldmann forgot to mention is that none of the progressive members of the executive participated in this decision because none of them have taken their seats in the executive. The progressive delegates declared at Montreux in June 1948 that they would not participate in the work of the executive until the Congress leadership proved that they desired a democratic Congress by accepting into the leadership a representative of the progressive Jewish forces of the United States. To date, however, this has not been done.

Meanwhile, Congress leadership continues to pretend that it represents the Jews of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and influential democratic Jewish organizations of other countries. Progressive and left-wing democratic Jewish organizations regarded World Jewish Congress policy on participation in the World Conference for Peace as extremely important. The Jewish masses judge the leaders of the World Jewish Congress according to their deeds and not by fine resolutions or beautiful phrases. The failure of the World Jewish Congress to participate in the Congress for Peace is a reactionary act.

The Jewish masses demand that the World Jewish Congress join the struggle for peace, if it intends to be known as an organization which defends the interests of the Jewish people. B. ADAM

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# Documents

## ANGLO-AMERICAN RIVALRY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By H. Salimjanov

**British and American** official circles are eager to create the impression that complete harmony on questions of colonial policy prevails between the United States and Great Britain, and that both are pursuing the supremely noble and lofty aim of assisting backward countries.

But the fact of the matter is that there are deep contradictions between the colonial interests of Great Britain and the U.S.A., and these contradictions, far from being smoothed out, are becoming more and more acute. There can be no doubt that the British and American imperialists are competing with one another in an effort to establish, extend and consolidate their economic and political domination over the backward countries, to subjugate them and convert them into their own, exclusive colonial domain.

True, on certain questions pertaining to the Middle East, Britain and America are at present seeking to act in concert. But these questions are confined to the establishment of strategic bases directed against the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, the suppression of the national-liberation movement of the subjugated nations that are rising against British and American colonial oppression. By intimidating the ruling classes of the backward and dependent countries with the fictitious "Communist danger" and by inciting them to reprisals against the democratic and anti-imperialist elements, the British and American authorities are trying to make it easier to carry out their own plans of expansion.

As a result of World War II, the British Empire was compelled to give up a

number of its positions to a stronger rival, American imperialism. But the British imperialists are bending every effort to prevent American influence from growing too strong.

This can be seen, for instance, in Ethiopia where after the war British capitalists were compelled to agree to an American oil company receiving a concession on British-occupied territory in the Ogaden. But no sooner did an American expedition set out to prospect for oil, than mysterious, "unknown" bands attacked the American geologists and engineers. Things reached a stage when the expedition temporarily ceased operations and demanded that the British military administration in the Ogaden take measures to secure the safety of the American personnel. Local circles are convinced that the acts of sabotage in the Ogaden were engineered by British agents in order to force the American company to abandon so "dangerous" a concession.

**The clash** of British and American interests, and the desire of British imperialism to retain its positions, find graphic illustration in Iran. Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony Vacuum Oil concluded an agreement in 1946 with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by which they were allocated 20 per cent of all oil extracted in Southern Iran. In the spring of 1948, the American companies tried to raise their share to 45-50 per cent, which would have meant in fact the establishment of American control over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and, consequently, a very considerable weakening of Britain's positions in Iran. The British government took steps to "buy off" these American demands by announcing that it was prepared to abandon its claim to the Bahrein Islands in favor of the U.S. and turn over part of its rights to work the Bahrein oil fields to American monopoly firms.

In making this counter-proposal Britain hoped that she could maintain intact the positions she had seized in Iran, where the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company is virtually a state within a state. But American monopolies continue to work for key positions in every branch of Iran's economic life, and in doing so, inflict many telling blows on British firms. Anglo-American rivalry in Iran is fully reflected in the corrupt government circles of that country. Pro-American and pro-British groups in the government and Mejlis are constantly fighting among themselves. Anglo-American contradictions are mirrored in the press of the ruling camp.

The struggle between British and American monopolies for oil and other strategic

materials is growing more acute also in Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and other countries. All means are fair means in this battle of imperialist plunderers. Cowardly murders, explosions, *coups d'etat*, cabinet changes—behind all these day-to-day political events in the Middle East one can discern the rivalry of the imperialist powers.

As a reward for the economic and strategic advantages enjoyed by American monopolies in Egypt, the United States promised to support the Cairo government against British interests.

When last year Yahya, the Imam of Yemen, seemed inclined to grant the American demands, British agents simply assassinated Yahya and tried to set up a government that would suit their purposes. The plan miscarried; their opponents were stronger, and the British agents were overthrown by the supporters of Yahya's policy. Ahmed, Yahya's oldest son, was proclaimed ruler.

**Syria is becoming** an apple of discord between American and British imperialists. There was a *coup d'etat* in that country in March; it is significant that it took place on the eve of the signing of the Franco-Syrian financial agreement, and just before the conclusion of an agreement with the American Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company for the construction of a pipeline from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean via Syria. Britain's puppets, King Abdullah of Transjordan and Prime Minister Nuri Said of Iraq, displayed great activity in connection with the events in Syria.

There were loud and insistent demands for the immediate establishment of a "greater Syria" patterned after the old British plan. This plan provided that Abdullah would unite under his rule Transjordan, Iraq, a country ruled by representatives of the Hashimite dynasty, Syria, Lebanon and the Arab portion of Palestine. However, in view of the opposition displayed by the Arab peoples to the "greater Syria" plan, British leaders have advanced a new version—the so-called "blessed crescent" plan, which provides for a union that would include Iraq, Transjordan, Syria and the Arab part of Palestine.

The activities displayed by British agents evoked an immediate rebuff from the American side. As a counter to the British plan of a Hashimite monarchy there appeared an American plan for setting up an anti-Hashimite bloc under the aegis of the kings of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The Israel *Hamishmar* [organ of the United Workers Party—Eds.] wrote on this score:

"The U.S. State Department wants to make this bloc the chief weapon of American policy in the Middle East. In this connection, the American Ambassador in Saudi Arabia, Childs, suggested that King



Ibn Saud conclude a secret military and political alliance with Egypt and Syria... In compensation, Ibn Saud was promised U.S. support for his claim to the area between Ma'an and Aqaba which at present forms part of Transjordan."

The Italian *Republica* regards these plans as a "warning to Transjordan and Iraq, which are working to build up a Hashimite State." The American plans exerted an instantaneous effect on Husni el Zayim. His attitude toward the plans for creating a greater Syria and a Hashimite monarchy changed to such a marked degree that King Abdullah thought it prudent to concentrate his troops on the Syrian frontier. In retaliation, Syrian troops were dispatched to the Transjordan frontier.

**Anglo-American rivalry** is also marked on the Palestine issue. Following the bankruptcy of British policy in Palestine, and in connection with the UN decision, the London government was compelled to renounce its mandate. Subsequent events, however, proved that this was simply a maneuver to retain control of the positions which Britain is losing in Palestine and to prevent their seizure by the American monopolies. The war in Palestine reflected the struggle between British and American imperialists for key positions in that country, for control over her economy, and the port of Haifa, the

terminal of the pipe line stretching from the Iraq oil fields.

Events in Palestine have shown that Britain has no intention of allowing the existence on Palestinian territory of independent Arab and Jewish states, but that she is merely out to consolidate her domination over that country. The American imperialists, who have agents in Tel-Aviv Zionist circles, are trying to gain control over the economic and political life of Israel with the help of a dollar loan and by other means. Britain, for her part, is taking advantage of her long-established contacts among the Jewish bourgeoisie. Through her placeman, King Abdullah of Transjordan, she is trying to seize areas designated for the independent Arab State in Palestine, which was to be set up under the United Nations decision.

A compact between the British and American imperialists is but a compact between two competing cliques of plunderers for the division of the booty. Unity of action in carrying out anti-democratic and reactionary measures does not signify any reconciliation of contradictions between the U.S.A. and Britain in the Middle East. In their efforts to secure the most advantageous positions, both powers are undoubtedly fighting hard to seize and redivide the colonial and dependent territories which are also sources of strategic raw materials, markets and military bases. The policy of both the American and

British imperialists is obviously directed against the vital interests of the peoples of the Middle East, it is a policy of plundering and subjugating them. The popular masses of the Middle East are now learning from bitter experience that their salvation lies in uniting all their forces to fight for national liberation, democracy and independence.

(From New Times, May 25, 1949.)

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# FROM THE FOUR CORNERS

(Continued from page 2)

ON THE ACADEMIC FRONT . . . Racial or religious discrimination by fraternities of the state University of Massachusetts at Amherst was prohibited on May 19 by President Ralph A. Van Meter Ames. Six of the university's ten fraternities have a specific ban on Jews, Negroes or orientals and one has a quota for Catholics. All were ordered to take immediate steps to remove the bars. . . . Four fraternities at Swarthmore College have reported to the college's Interfraternity Council that they would fight bias within their national organizations. . . . Students of Washington University in St. Louis on May 16 voted 1767 to 516 to admit Negroes to the undergraduate school despite opposition from *Student Life*, campus paper. The faculty voted 75 per cent in favor of admission of Negroes. . . . At the University of Missouri, 70 per cent of the students favored admission of Negroes.

"EDUCATION" IN NEW YORK . . . *The Nation* was banned on May 24 for a second year from high school libraries by the Board of Superintendents because of its publication in 1948 of a series of articles criticizing Catholic hierarchy political activity. By a two to two vote the Board refused to grant *Nation* editor Freda Kirshwey a hearing on the ban. State Commissioner of Education Francis T. Spaulding upheld the ban on May 27 on the ground that this action was within the city board's discretion and that he had no authority to rule on the matter. *The Nation* and the Ad Hoc Committee to Lift the Ban on *The Nation* have promised court action to fight the censorship move. . . . Two City College teachers were fired in May. Dr. Lee Lorch, who had been recommended for promotion by a 16-member committee of the Mathematics Department, was dismissed by a 4-2 vote of the committee on appointments without any reason given. Lorch is vice chairman of the Town and Village Tenants Committee to End Discrimination at Stuyvesant Town. On May 31 it was learned that a second teacher, Associate Professor of Sociology Morris Swadesh was fired for "disruptive activities." Dr. Swadesh was active in support of the recent City College student strike action against Knickerbocker and Davis. The latter professors, accused of bias, still remain on the college staff. . . . Miss Ethel Dammrich, school teacher for 23 years, member of the Evangelical Church and active on the supervisory staff of Youthbuilders, whose purpose is to promote democratic action among school children, announced her resignation from the New York schools on May 13. She charged that a Roman Catholic "religious group" was trying to control educational policy and that fear was rampant in the schools. The Youthbuilders program was being "decentralized" and was "disintegrating," she said, following a series of articles in October 1947 in *The Tablet*, official newspaper of Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, in which this youth organization was charged with being used to spread "communistic propaganda." Among the directors of Youthbuilders are Mrs. Otto Kahn, Major Alexander P. De Sevirsky, Herbert Bayard Swope and Justice Hubert T. Delany.

## EUROPE

VATICAN RADIO during May launched a series of attacks on Israel in connection with the meeting of the UN Conciliation Commission in Lausanne to settle the Palestine problem. The Vatican agitated for the internationalization of Jerusalem. The opening broadcast of the campaign charged

Zionism with being "the new nazism" and described Israeli nationalism as a "grave menace to Christianity."

POLAND AND ISRAEL signed their first trade agreement in late May for a \$20,000,000 exchange of goods in the coming year. Poland will send Israel coal, grain, chemicals, processed farm produce, metal goods, agricultural machinery, textiles, etc., and Israel will send in return citrus fruits, dental supplies and special chemicals.\*

NEARLY 50,000 POLISH JEWS attend the existing 105 synagogues in the country and are organized in 55 religious communities, according to a report of the Polish Federation of Religious Communities. Some 15 students are enrolled in a rabbinical school.\*

JEWS THEATERS in Lodz and Lower Silesia will be recognized as state institutions and will have their expenses covered by the government.\*

ALL BUT 1,000 JEWS will remain in Bulgaria when the last group of 3,000 leaves for Israel soon, it was reported in May. Since November 1948, about 31,000 Jews have left Bulgaria for Israel.

TWELVE ATTACKS were made upon Jews by fascists in one week in May in London, including an assault in the Dalston district by two men on two 16-year old boys and another upon two girls. A protest demonstration was held by Jewish women before Prime Minister Clement Attlee's residence and the Hackney Trades Council, representing the labor unions of the borough, voted to send a delegation to Home Minister Chuter Ede to protest the Mosleyite attacks. Late in May the 43 Group, a Jewish veterans organization, announced that they would establish regular patrols in the Dalston area if the attacks continue. Chuter Ede has refused to take action on the attacks, Jewish spokesmen said.

DR. HJALMAR SCHACHT, director of finances under Hitler, is coming to Chile ostensibly as "technical advisor" to the Yarus Textile Co., but actually as financial advisor to the Chilean government, according to a report from Santiago on May 24.

TWO OF HITLER'S air force generals, Karl Student and Field Marshall Stumpf have been commissioned by the Anglo-American military to establish a West German air force in the next two years. Student will go to England and Stumpf to America to study their respective air forces.

CHARLES H. COLLISON, deputy chief of the decartelization branch of American Military Government in Germany, received a dismissal notice in mid-May after he testified before a special army investigating committee about the failure of the authorities to break up Nazi cartels. Alexander Sacks, former member of the decartelization branch of AMG, who also testified to the same effect, also faces possible dismissal. The latter has been twice suspended and reinstated for criticism of the failure to decartelize.

A WARRANT FOR THE ARREST of Ilse Koch, due to be released from an American prison later this year, was issued by a Weimar court in the Soviet zone. The public prosecutor of Thuringia has formally filed a request with the American authorities for her extradition.

HISTADRUTH ADOPTED a "neutrality" policy towards the world labor split at its convention in late May. The Histadruth decided to withdraw from the World Federation of Trade Unions, but it decided also not to join the World Labor Federation being sponsored by the western bloc of trade union leaders who left the WFTU. The Mapai (Israeli Labor Party) majority in the Histadruth carried the decision, which was opposed by Mapam (United Workers Party) and communist delegates. Observers will be sent to both world labor groups.

MANY DEMONSTRATIONS by unemployed and badly housed Israelis have occurred in recent weeks in several Israeli cities.

SIX ARAB COMMUNIST leaders were arrested by Israeli authorities on May 22 in Acre for trying to organize a demonstration.

16 ISRAELI DELEGATES attended the Paris Peace Conference in April. Among the sponsors of the united front peace movement in Israel was Itzhak Gruenbaum, leader of the liberal wing of the General Zionists in Israel and a former member of the provisional government.

MAPAM ORGAN *Al Hamishmar* commented editorially on April 15 regarding the campaign to internationalize Jerusalem, as follows: "It seems obvious that whoever receives the custodianship of the Holy Places will ensure to himself a permanent opportunity of intervention in the affairs in this part of the world. Our experience has proved that each and every 'international' mission is in reality nothing but an American expansion movement."

THE KNESSET APPROVED the "austerity" program by a vote of 57 to 33 with many abstentions. The plan institutes rationing and control of food, clothing and furniture and reduction of imports. Luxury goods will be permitted for export only and completely barred from import. *Kol Haam*, communist newspaper, criticized the plan for not projecting a large-scale housing program and for failing to hit at the "main reason for the present high prices, namely private initiative for imports." The paper advocates nationalization of imports and charges that the necessary steps to bring down high prices have not been taken.

THE ISRAELI RABBINATE has complete jurisdiction over such matters as marriage and divorce of all Jews in Israel and such jurisdiction is backed by the state, according to Israeli Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac H. Herzog. However, enforcement has not yet been applied by the state.

SHORTLY AFTER his successful *coup d'etat* in Syria in March General Husni el Zaim, who dissolved parliament and called himself dictator, replied to a correspondent's question whether the dissolution of parliament was not a violation of the constitution, "When General Franco began to act, did he pay any attention to the clauses of the constitution?" Zaim declared in the Istanbul papers on April 4, "I was educated on Turkey and sincerely love the Turks. . . . In the event of war, Turkey will be in the front line, and therefore Syria and Iraq, which lie behind it, must also be strong. In any case, we are shutting up the Syrian communists in concentration camps." On May 30 Zaim formally announced that all political parties were abolished.

(Items marked with an asterisk (\*) were drawn from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency news service.)