

Jewish Life

A PROGRESSIVE MONTHLY

JUNE, 1956

25¢

REVIEW AND REAPPRAISAL

*The Editors analyze their mistakes
regarding Soviet Jewish culture*

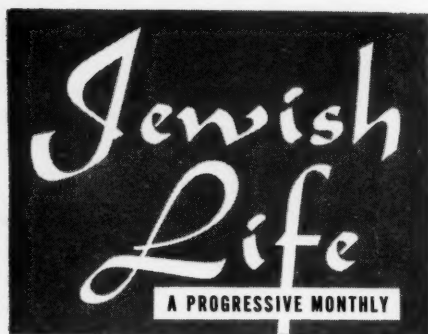
Rabbi Max Felshin:

**JUSTICE FOR SOBELL
IS OVERDUE**

William Bernstein:

**AJ CONGRESS
CONVENTION**

Louis Harap: **HOPE FOR MIDDLE EASTERN PEACE**



Vol. X, No. 8 (116) June, 1956

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JEWISH LIFE, June, 1956, Vol. X, No. 8 (116). Published monthly by Progressive Jewish Life, Inc., 22 East 17th Street, Room 601, New York 3, N. Y., WAtkins 4-5740-1. Single copies 25 cents. Subscription \$2.50 a year in U.S. and possessions. Canadian and foreign \$3.00 a year. Entered as second class matter October 15, 1946, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1956 by Progressive Jewish Life, Inc.

REVIEW AND REAPPRAISAL

Why did we fail to perceive and protest crimes against Jewish culture and leaders in the socialist countries?

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

THE wiping out of Soviet Jewish culture, confirmed in the past few months, horrified us. The revelations also impose obligations upon us. Why did this magazine in the past eight years fail to raise questions concerning the shutting down of Jewish cultural institutions in the Soviet Union? Why did we not suspect foul play in the disappearance of leading Soviet Yiddish writers? Why did we not detect the anti-Semitism injected in the Prague trial?

Answers to these questions constitute our form of apology to our readers for having failed them in these important respects.

We feel sorrow and resentment—but these are not enough. Understanding and perspective are just as necessary. What is the significance of the injustices against the Jews in the Soviet Union for the continuing fight for peace, which is central for all people? What are the prospects for a revival of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union?

To regard these anti-Semitic manifestations in isolation from the evil condition of which they were one expression would be a distortion. For not only were crimes committed against Jews. Other nations and nationalities also suffered from the one-man rule that afflicted the Soviet Union for some 20 years. These manifestations, so harmful to the East European countries, were profoundly anti-socialist in character, for they violated socialist principles of democracy and equality.

The leaders of the socialist countries are taking steps not only to repair whatever damage can be remedied, but also to avoid recurrence of these evils. Our anguish and anger do not blind us to the efforts made during the past three years to uncover the malignant growth on a state that is advancing the cause of peace and equality of peoples. The disclosures by the socialist countries themselves of anti-national and undemocratic practices

are signs of the determination to prevent a recurrence of the evils exposed.

But why were we so insensitive to anti-Semitism as to ignore or to deny outright the reports published in the press about measures taken against Jews and Jewish culture in the Soviet Union in the five years before 1953?

It is true that no authentic information from any original socialist source was forthcoming. We did know, however, that all Jewish cultural institutions in the Soviet Union outside of Birobidjan were closed down after 1948 and that the flow of literature from Soviet Yiddish writers ceased. This should have been enough to arouse insistent questions that should have been expressed and pressed. For such drastic cutting off of cultural expression could not be justified. If, as we privately speculated, some Jewish writers may have violated Soviet law, could this have justified the wiping out of a whole culture? The answer is obvious now. It should have been apparent then and expressed publicly. The reasons why this wasn't done will be discussed later.

Mistake on "Cosmopolitanism"

Again, why did we not perceive that the campaign against "cosmopolitanism," which was directed preponderantly against Jews, was a thinly disguised form of anti-Semitism? Most people suppose that the

idea of "cosmopolitanism" was thought up recently in the Soviet Union. But it was in fact a leading idea of the Russian revolutionary democratic literary critic V. G. Belinsky in the mid-nineteenth century. He polemized against Russian writers of his time who slavishly looked for inspiration to foreign literature as their model and held their own national literature in contempt. This concept was applied in the Soviet Union during the cold war to polemize against those who were according to the critics, in their writing expressing pro-imperialist attitudes in the cold war. Critics of "cosmopolitanism" maintained that such writing became an instrument in United States attempts at world economic and political domination.

Speaking for ourselves, we were not acquainted with the content of the writings against which this accusation in the Soviet Union was levelled. We could not therefore judge the validity of the charge. But it should have been clear that the predominance of Jewish names in this campaign and the use of Jewish-sounding names in parentheses were anti-Semitic in intent and effect. It is not a matter of pride to us that we did not share in protests but rather tried to explain away the practice.

Mistake on the Prague Trial

This magazine erred also in its treatment of the Prague trial of the

Slansky group in November 1952. We categorically denied that any anti-Semitism was involved. That we were mistaken has now been proved by the Czech government itself. While the Czech government in April confirmed the validity of the Prague trial, it pointed out several illegitimate aspects of it.

On May 12, the *N. Y. Times* reported a Czech radio broadcast by Premier Siroky stating that Slansky's chief crime was that he used the "cult of personality" to create a special police organization, independent of the Communist Party, for his own purposes and that Slansky had been guilty of "bourgeois nationalism."

Premier V. Siroky said on April 13 that in addition to the falsity of the charges concerning "Titoism," "certain manifestations of anti-Semitism" had been wrongly injected into the trial. Siroky maintained that the distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism was valid but he declared that the prosecutor in the case was wrong in bringing out that most defendants were Jewish (*N. Y. Times*, April 14).

Designating defendants as being "of Jewish origin" was undoubtedly an anti-Semitic device. In the interrogation of defendant Bedrich Geminder the charge of "cosmopolitanism" because he could not speak Czech without an accent was certainly an anti-Semitic thrust. Sidney Gruson reported (*N. Y. Times*, April 27) that an article in the Czech

trade union paper *Prace* admitted that, in Gruson's interpretation of the article, "a wave of officially inspired anti-Semitism swept Czechoslovakia" after the Prague trial. "We went so far," said the author of the *Prace* article, "as to blame people not only for their own sins but also for sins committed by someone belonging to a certain group"—that is, to the Jewish people.

From the Soviet Union, too, there have been intimations of criticism for the criminal treatment of Jews and other nationalities. The *N. Y. Times* reported from Moscow (April 14) that an article in the journal *Voprosi Historii* (Problems of History) recalled Lenin's condemnation of anti-Semitism as "alien to the spirit of the proletariat" and his campaign against "Great Russian chauvinism." The article pointed out that "serious errors in the leadership of the party and country in the post-war period" had resulted in deviations in carrying out "Leninist nationalities policy."

Why Did We Err?

These Soviet acknowledgements of anti-Semitism and of crimes committed against Jews and other peoples are highly significant. They indicate that these crimes were part of an effort to undermine and destroy socialism. They were in no way consonant with socialism. On the contrary, these crimes were contrary to socialist policy toward national-

ities and constituted a great danger to socialism itself.

We have sketched some of the grave delinquencies of this magazine. Why, then, did this happen?

Our disbelief of charges of anti-Semitism in socialist countries was based on our belief that the basic socialist policy of equality of nations made highly improbable the brazen violations charged. Like many others we knew that the tsarist "prison house of nations" had been dissolved in the Soviet Union, that formerly oppressed and backward nations had in an incredibly short time developed into modern states and had achieved equality.

We were by no means alone in recognition of this fact. One example will suffice.

In 1947, the independent liberal scholar, Prof. Frederick L. Schuman, wrote in his *Soviet Politics at Home and Abroad* (p. 304): "The greatest glory of the Soviet State is its achievements of effective equality in rights and opportunities for people of all races, languages and cultures."

More specifically, it was well known that all barriers to equality for the Jewish people had been demolished in the Soviet Union. Anti-Semitism itself was outlawed. Educational and vocational opportunity was opened to all Jews. Jews played an important role in Soviet life at all levels and in all fields. Yiddish culture itself flourished. Yiddish literature, theater, schools

and press blossomed in a land where Jews had been ghettoized and oppressed for centuries.

When all this was suddenly stopped in 1948—and this we, like everyone else, knew—it was hard for us to believe that this earlier policy had been discarded. But we had no authentic information beyond the bare fact that the institutions had been shut down. We should have suspected foul play and made a noise about it. Our confidence in the Soviet nationalities policy led us to disbelieve that charges of anti-Semitic intention had a valid basis.

There was another reason why we tended to disbelieve the press reports about anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. They seemed to us to be, and often were, used as a means of heating up the cold war and of intensifying the anti-communist, anti-democratic, anti-peace hysteria that flourished in our country in those bitter years.

Distortion and Cold War Tactics

We were fortified in this position by the baseless rumors and downright misrepresentation that accompanied these reports. One of the most brazen of these misrepresentations was the false charge that a cartoon in the Soviet satirical magazine *Krokodil* had in 1949 used the word "*Zhid*," Russian equivalent of our "kike." The truth was that this word in *Krokodil* was the Russian

transliteration of the name of Andre Gide, French writer, in a cartoon lampooning "cosmopolitanism." *Newsweek* actually shadowed over the "Andre" in its reproduction of the cartoon in order to bolster the charge that the epithet "*Zhid*" was used. Instances of misrepresentation could be multiplied from the files of our magazine, where we often exposed such crude falsifications.

The role of the Soviet Union in saving hundreds of thousands of Jews during the war by evacuating them to the East was scandalously misrepresented by professional anti-Soviet writers. The decisive part played by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in gaining passage of the UN resolution on the establishment of Israel and in arming Israel to defend itself against the Arab invasion was played down or misrepresented in the interests of the cold war.

Since expounders of the cold war were using reports of anti-Semitism to further their dangerous aims, we did not wish to do anything that could seem to range us on the side of the enemies of peace. We were not resourceful enough to develop means of inquiry and protest that would have clearly distinguished us from the enemies of peace. We misguidedly held the view that to question the policy of the Soviet Union or to protest its results would harm the cause of peace. We now realize that in fact the cause of peace would

have been strengthened, had we followed a more independent and courageous path.

We have stated the causes of our failure to perceive the anti-Semitism that occurred in socialist countries in recent years: we had no authoritative information; we had blind faith in the nationalities policies of the Soviet Union; the provable misrepresentations in some reports of anti-Semitism led us to the extreme of questioning the truth of all of them; and the cold war use to which these reports were put led us to reject them as part of the incitation of world war.

These reasons help to explain but not to excuse our failure to protest the anti-Semitism revealed in some reports and activities that should have been apparent to us.

Correction Is Under Way

Yet, the revelation of anti-Semitism and suppression of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union should not distort our understanding of the large degree of freedom gained by Jews under socialism. Jews did win the right to live where they pleased, to equal opportunity in jobs, education and religion. This freedom was gravely undermined by some anti-Semitic elements in the socialist countries and full recovery of these rights is still to be reached. For some years Jews in the Soviet Union suffered from intimidation and anti-

(Continued on page 30)

Civil Rights Laws This Year?

Election year activity in Congress and
what we can do about it

By **ARTHUR SCHUTZER**

THE civil rights legislation pending in Congress ought to contain a bold-print clause reading: "Whereas, this is 1956, an election year. . . ."

Such a clause would, for example, wondrously explain the sudden activity by Attorney General Herbert Brownell. Senator Thomas C. Hennings, Jr. (Dem., Missouri), chairman of the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights of the Senate Judiciary Committee, scorched Brownell with these facts in a Senate speech on April 12:

"I regret to say that in the work of this subcommittee, we received no help whatever from the Attorney General of the United States. We asked for it. We asked him for his recommendations in the matter of protecting the constitutional rights of our fellow citizens now deprived of them. We asked him specifically

for his views on legislation which we were considering. . . . To the subcommittee's request that he speak out on the desirability of a law to protect our fellow citizens' right to vote, Mr. Brownell did, indeed, make a brief reply. He said that this matter concerned a question of policy and therefore he preferred to make no recommendation. . . . In the view of . . . the chief of this administration's Department of Justice, the question of whether American citizens should be protected in their right to vote was a matter of policy, as yet undetermined."

Heightened activity on the civil rights issue by Democratic congressmen, including Emanuel Celler of New York and James Roosevelt of California, similarly reflect the effect of the needling numerals: 1956.

On April 9 the Eisenhower administration apparently "determined" that a bill to protect the right of citizens to vote was proper "policy." Whereupon, Brownell, with great fanfare, announced the administration's and his support of a

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civil rights bill. On April 25 the House Judiciary Committee approved this bill, which was substituted for a more comprehensive measure sponsored by Congressman Celler.

The bill approved by the House Judiciary Committee would:

1. Establish a bipartisan commission on civil rights.

2. Set up a new civil rights division in the Department of Justice under the supervision of an assistant attorney general.

3. Prohibit interference with a citizen's right to vote for candidates in a federal election, both primary and general.

4. Authorize the attorney general to bring injunctive or other civil action in behalf of an individual whose rights under the statute are violated.

5. End the present rule under which an aggrieved individual must first exhaust his remedies in state courts before invoking the aid of federal district courts.

Prospects for Civil Rights Bills

Approval of this measure by the House Judiciary Committee was welcomed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which declared that it was "a guarantee that civil rights legislation can pass if Republicans and Democrats give it determined and united support."

The "if" is timely and significant.

First, there is the House Rules



Senator Herbert Lehman, valiant champion of civil rights.

Committee which has thus far bottled up the bill and fails to permit it to be brought out on the floor for a vote. The chairman of this powerful committee is Cong. Howard W. Smith (Dem., Virginia), author of the Smith act and currently much occupied with legislative efforts to undo the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court which invalidated state sedition laws.

Second, even if the bill is forced out of the Rules Committee and wins on a floor vote in the House, there is the Senate Judiciary Committee, which can delay action indefinitely by lengthy hearings. The new chairman of this committee is Sen. James O. Eastland (Dem. Mississippi). On March 21 only Senator Herbert H. Lehman (Dem., NY) and Wayne



Courtesy of Gorelick (Detroit) and ACA (N.Y.) Galleries

The Klan in the South

Painting by William Gropper

Morse (Dem., Oregon) had the courage to stand up and oppose the resolution making Eastland chairman. Sen. Lehman said at that time:

"I believe that Senator Eastland is a symbol of racism in America. I believe that Senator Eastland is a symbol of defiance to the Constitution of the United States as interpreted by the Supreme Court. I believe that Senator Eastland is precluded by philosophy, conviction and activities from presiding over the Senate Judiciary Committee as chairman in an impartial way, and from discharging the agency of the Senate in that regard. I shall there-

fore vote against the pending resolution."

In the wings, too, of course, is the ancient device of a Senate filibuster by Senator James Eastland and his fellow Dixiecrats. A sample of the type of maneuvers that may be expected was given when Southern Democrats on April 24 made four quorum calls on the floor of the House in order to break up a meeting of the House Judiciary Committee which was then considering a general civil rights bill.

Finally, there is grave danger that a bipartisan deal may be engineered to pass only one section of the pend-

ing bill, namely, that section relating to the establishment of a commission to study the whole matter of civil rights. The strategy would be to bury any effective immediate legislation in the often-used coffin of "further study."

President Eisenhower seemed to hint at some such strategy by limiting himself in his State of the Union Message on January 5 to the single proposal for the creation of a commission of study. Subsequently, in reply to a request by Governor Le Roy Collins of Florida for a White House conference of Southern governors on racial problems, Eisenhower reiterated that he was awaiting congressional action on his proposal for a commission.

Sen. Hennings voiced awareness of this danger in his April 12th speech in the Senate: "I am perfectly willing to have a continuing commission of study and report, such as the Attorney General is advocating. But what this country

needs now is immediate action on what is now known, as well as further study on what may not be. Any dilatory, spurious, politically minded maneuvers which delay that action are reprehensible and unworthy of sincere public servants."

Moreover, the fact is that back in 1948 the President's Committee on Civil Rights issued a detailed report with specific recommendations for prompt federal legislation. It recommended, among other measures, federal laws to prohibit poll taxes and discrimination in primaries; lynching and police brutality; discrimination in the armed forces; and it urged enactment of a federal Fair Employment Practice Act.

Eight years have gone by without action.

Delay, parliamentary tricks, broken promises must end. Every member of Congress should be made to hear the determined and united voice of the people: *Pass the civil rights bill now.*

Soviet Yiddish Writers Greet Polish Jews

FOURTEEN Soviet Yiddish writers sent greetings to the third national conference of Polish Jews held in Warsaw just after the commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April. "With deepest feelings," they said, "we wish you success in your earnest endeavors to strengthen the creative talents of the people and the flourishing of socialist culture in People's Democratic Poland. We join with you in our common struggle for the triumph of the ideas of socialism, for world peace and for international friendship." The greeting was signed by Shmuel Halkin, Z. Vendrof, Moshe Broderzon, Yakov Shternberg, Yosef Robin, Aaron Vergelis, Rebecca Rubina, Ilya Gordon, Rokhel Boimvall, Zalman Teliezin, H. Dobin, Shmuel Gordon, Noah Lurye and Yozef Katnelenson.

Hope for Peace in the Middle East

**Unanimous UN action and Soviet
moves open up new prospects**

By LOUIS HARAP

THE world is breathing easier these days. As Joseph P. Lash wrote in the *N.Y. Post* (April 29), "Prospects for a Middle Eastern settlement seem to be brightening." For the time being, the war danger that gripped Israel has receded, thanks to the intervention of the UN Security Council. The skillful diplomacy of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold resulted in the firming up of the armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab states.

It was united action by the Big Four in the UN that brought into being the present more favorable situation. Such united action received a tremendous impetus on April 17 when the Soviet Union issued its State paper clarifying its basic position on the Middle Eastern crisis. The statement affirmed its "ardent support" of the striving of the Arab states and of Israel to establish and strengthen their independence. The Soviet Union "is unswervingly opposed to the violation of peace in the Middle East and any actions which might lead to armed

conflicts." The Soviet Union declared its support "to the United Nations measures directed toward the search for ways and means for strengthening peace in the area of Palestine and the implementation of the corresponding decisions of the Security Council." The statement called upon "the interested parties to refrain from any kind of action which may lead to an exacerbation of the situation on the existing demarcation line." Finally, the Soviet Union urged directing of "efforts toward a stable and peaceful settlement of the Palestine question on a mutually acceptable basis, taking due consideration of the just national interests of the interested parties."

Soviet Proposal on Arms Ban

The Soviet statement was welcomed in the capitals of the Western Big Three and contributed greatly to optimism for a peaceful settlement. This optimism was further encouraged by the statement of Soviet Communist Party head Nikita

Khrushchev in a press conference on the eve of the Soviet leaders' departure from the London meeting with British Prime Minister Eden. On April 27, Khrushchev expressed the willingness of the Soviet Union to join in any arms embargo to the Middle East to "help bring about peaceful conditions" there. But all others would have also to stop sending arms into the area, he added.

There are fears that one side or another might be the incidental loser by an arms embargo that would freeze present levels of armaments in the Middle East. Yet an arms embargo would not be the end of a process of establishing peace in the Middle East but the beginning. As negotiations for a peaceful solution of outstanding differences continue, the matter of relative armaments becomes less and less significant.

One would suppose, if the State Department were genuinely interested in peace, that it would welcome the prospect of an arms ban in a spot where war danger exists. Unfortunately, the State Department has other ideas. A Washington dispatch (*N.Y. Times*, April 28) noted that "The State Department took a jaundiced view" of this offer. For Dulles is desperately clinging to the Baghdad pact, which means continuing shipment of arms to Iraq and other states adhering to the pact.

The supposed purpose of this pact is defense against "Soviet aggression." But the fact that such a "menace" does not exist is so obvious

today that even Washington no longer believes it. "United States officials do not believe," said a Washington dispatch in the *N.Y. Times* (April 10), "the Soviet Union wants war in the Middle East." The real purpose of the Baghdad pact emerges: it is a means for suppressing popular discontent in the Middle East and also a cold war agency for clamping the oil monopolists' control over the Middle East. The pact does not help peace but puts it in jeopardy.

USSR as Middle East Power

But the will to peace of the peoples of the Middle East and of the Big Four is stronger than the best-laid plans of Dulles. For Dulles and Prime Minister Eden had resisted acceptance of a role for the Soviet Union in the settlement of Middle Eastern questions. The events of the past few months, however, have demonstrated that peace cannot be gained without this participation.

This magazine was one of the few organs of opinion in this country which for some time had projected the necessity for Big Four handling of the issue if war was to be avoided. To the extent that Arab trade relations, including arms purchases, with socialist states compelled the Big Three to recognize that no peaceful solution was possible without Soviet participation, the action of the socialist countries proved constructive for peace, despite misgivings that

arose among many Jewish people.

The new forces operating in the Middle East, buttressed by the demand for peace, have at last caused Dulles and Eden to acquiesce to a Soviet role in the area. Thomas J. Hamilton wrote in the *N.Y. Times* (April 29): "Whatever else the Bulganin-Khrushchev visit [to London] may have accomplished or failed to accomplish, it has resulted in British recognition of the Soviet Union as a Middle Eastern power. Recent statements by President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles, in which they indicated that United States action regarding the Middle East should be taken through the United Nations, implied the same thing."

Israel Foreign Policy

In Israel itself the new and favorable phase of the situation created by the Soviet statement of April 17 was welcomed, although in muted tones. "We sincerely hope," said Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, "that the new formulations herald a change for a better climate in the relations between ourselves and the Soviet." The Israeli people greeted the Soviet statement with manifest relief.

The Israel government's repeated demands for defensive arms is just. However, by limiting its policy to the demand for arms alone, the Israel government does not make stronger the pressure for the beginning of a permanent settlement. Such

a restricted policy is based on a supposition of the inevitability of war. But war is not inevitable in the Middle East and measures for negotiating the tough problems must be undertaken if that war is to be avoided.

A more peaceful perspective is held out by the powerful voice of Dr. Nahum Goldmann, head of the World Zionist Congress and also an unofficial spokesman of the Israel government. Speaking at a press conference in Jerusalem early in April, Dr. Goldmann said that a solution of the Middle Eastern crisis can be achieved by participation of the Soviet Union. "I have always maintained," he said, "that it will be impossible any longer to avoid participation of Russia in a solution for the Middle East. One can't tell Russia not to interfere. And the Western Powers are beginning to reckon with the fact of the existence of Russia."

Dr. Goldmann reiterated this view in his address to the World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem on May 4. "The foremost and obvious task," he said, "for those honestly concerned with solving the problem is to prevent war. . . . The alternatives of war and peace lie partly between Israel and the Arabs, but primarily with the Big Powers."

On the part of Israel, a spur would be given to peace by a change of foreign policy in the direction of neutralism, that is, of not being tied either to West or East. This view is gaining force in Israel because the realization is growing that exclusive

reliance on Washington has in fact yielded nothing to Israel, but on the contrary has isolated her. The countless pleas for arms from Washington have been ignored—under pressure from the oil lobby, as Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver noted in a sermon in Cleveland on April 8.

As a result of frustration of pleas for arms from the U.S., Israel opinion is disillusioned with its reliance on Washington and coming to see that the interests of Israel and of peace lie with a change toward a neutral foreign policy.

This is by no means restricted to left wing parties but is more and more including wide areas of opinion. An outstanding spokesman of this view, the veteran Zionist leader Yitzhok Greenbaum, pleaded for this position at the 24th World Zionist Congress. He stressed on April 27 that neutralism is the only policy that can save Israel in the present crisis. He urged that the Ben Gurion government should stop begging military aid from Washington. Only by adopting a neutralist policy, he said, would Israel protect her independence.

Negotiations Must Be Tried

The obstacles to peace in the Middle East are many and hard. The unfavorable reception accorded the Soviet statement of April 17 by the Arabs emphasizes the contradiction between adherence of the Arab states to the neutralist peace policy of the

Bandung declaration and anti-Israel aggressive tendencies. Some Arab states still act as if they refused to recognize the just UN decision providing for the establishment of the State of Israel. The most effective way of overcoming this contradiction in favor of peace is Four Power action to bring Israel and the Arab states around the negotiating table.

Sore problems confront such a conference. Not only the border and refugee questions must be settled. The eight year-old Arab economic embargo on Israel, the keeping of Israel ships from using the Suez Canal, resolution of disputes to allow essential water developments must also be ironed out.

The way has been shown by the encouraging recent events. *Congress Weekly*, organ of the American Jewish Congress, said editorially on April 30, "Suspensions of Russia, however grounded realistically on its past record, should not deter the West from seeking a solution in which the Soviet will acquiesce. . . . Sheer self-interest dictates that the Western powers and Russia adopt measures that will produce a firm Arab-Israel settlement." Whether one believes that the "suspensions" of the Soviet Union are "grounded realistically" or not, it is beyond doubt that the only hope for peace in the Middle East lies in such Big Four negotiations, together with Israel and the Arab states. There is no option in this matter: if we want peace, this course *must* be tried.



ISRAEL

A Detroit reader asks for a list of Yiddish periodicals in addition to *Letste Neies* and *Yiddishe Zeitung*, mentioned here in March as appearing three times weekly. The Israel Office of Information lists the following as appearing currently: weekly, *Neie Velt* (Ahdut Avodah), *Frei Yisroel* (Communist), *Oif der Vach* (Mapam); fortnightly, *Folk un Zion* (Jewish Agency); *Dos Idishe Licht* (Ministry of Religious Affairs); monthly, *Lebensfragen* (Bund); *Karnenu* (Keren Hakayemet); the literary quarterly, *Di Goldene Kait* (Histadruth). The following periodicals have recently folded up: the weeklies *Dos Vort* (Mapai), *Moment* (Herut), *Idishe Bilder*, pictorial, *Di Haim* (Pioneer Women) and *Unzer Heint* (General Zionists), which used to appear three times a week.

From a Jerusalem reader comes a correction of a detail in our article on Judah L. Magnes in November: the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus is not in Arab hands but "is in a demilitarized zone accessible only every fortnight, when a convoy takes supplies to the Jewish guards at the abandoned university there."

Rumanian emigration to Israel, suspended in 1952 after 122,000 Jews had left for Israel, is being resumed, according to Idov Cohen, chairman of the Rumanian emigrants' organization in Tel Aviv (*N. Y. Times*, 4/21). Families separated when emigration was halted will be permitted to reunite, 150 exit permits having already been issued. Mr. Cohen added that all Zionists imprisoned between 1949 and 1953, many of them sentenced to terms from 15 years to life, had already been released.

A health center was opened by Hadassah in the Arab village of Abu Ghosh (*N. Y. Times*, 4/20).

Hungary has contracted to import 7,000 tons of phosphates as part of its barter agreement with Israel, said the Israel Ministry of Development on April 10.

A Moscow chemist, Rabinovich, on a three-month visit in Israel, was particularly interested in the chemical riches of the Dead Sea. He told an interviewer that in Moscow he tunes in on Voice of Israel broadcasts. Rabinovitch, in his fifties, speaks Hebrew.

Anti-Soviet leaflets were again found in Israel orange-crates unpacked in Odessa (see our March column for the first instance). The leaflets were printed in West Germany for the Anti-Communist League in Israel, headed by Habib Schieber. After the first incident, Soviet Ambassador A. N. Abramov asked the Israel government to prevent a repetition. *Lamerhav*, commenting April 30 on the second incident, reports that Israeli officials are worried, regarding the leaflets as a provocation aimed at harming Israel-Soviet relations.

Israel law forbids capital punishment but a request for its restoration was sardonically made by the evening daily, *Maariv* (April 9), to punish Egyptian Fedayeen (Suicide Squads) raiding in Israel. There was no echo to this proposal.

Changes in school curriculum were proposed March 12 by Zalman Aranne, Minister of Education and Culture, in order to prepare more pupils for agriculture and trades. Two-thirds of the pupils would spend their seventh and eighth grades learning work skills, with the other third being prepared for high school. A ninth year of work skill training would be added for those not going on to secondary schooling. Mr. Aranne pointed out that at present 28 per cent of elementary school graduates start work without vocational preparation, thereby contributing to the majority not engaged in productive work. The educational budget of 48,500,000 Israel pounds (a pound is 55.5 cents) is second only to the defense budget and 18 per cent higher than last year's.

Histadruth, General Federation of Jewish Labor, announced on March 13 that it had 852,052 members (which includes the wives—or husbands—and children of the actual worker-member). This is 53.6 per cent of the total population. Over 12 per cent are native-born, European-born are 58 per cent. Only one per cent is from North and South America, Australia and South Africa.

Metal Workers Union demands for 10 to 23 per cent wage increases were rejected by the employers on March 31. The present monthly wages in this industry are from \$99.90 to \$122.10. The Histadruth Trade Union Department was trying to get negotiations resumed.

M. U. S.

Justice for Sobell is Overdue

**Demand for new Sobell trial gathers force
as the truth about the case spreads**

By RABBI MAX FELSHIN

DESPITE recent testimony before a senatorial committee by former David Greenglass that his mother refused to sit "*Shiva*" for her electrocuted daughter Ethel, the "*Yahrzeit*" of the Rosenbergs awakens memories of sorrow and remorse on the part of all those who strove for mercy and still feel that the execution of this couple is a blot upon our American escutcheon.

It is certainly more reasonable to believe the Rosenbergs' words "We are innocent," said in the knowledge of courting sure death by their steadfastness to this statement, than the uncorroborated testimony of Greenglass, who knew that what he said would save his life and let him off with a light sentence.

If the Rosenbergs had not been

Jews, or if their sentencing judge were not a Jew, they might still be alive today. Fear of anti-Semitism drove Justice Irving Kaufman to lean so far backwards as to mete out and insist upon the death sentence rather than apply the less drastic measure of 30 years imprisonment permitted by law.

In the case of the Rosenbergs no evidence has been produced to prove actual contact with a foreign power or established transference of information to an alien recipient. Moreover it is an unwritten law among nations to show forbearance and even amnesty to those guilty of political misdeeds where the perpetrators are moved or deluded by ideological considerations and not personal advantage.

Note how former President Truman commuted to life imprisonment the death sentence of Puerto Rican nationalists who tried to assassinate him. But President Eisenhower hardened his heart against all pleas for mercy for the Rosenbergs, personal

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Helen Sobell, wife of Morton Sobell, places a wreath at the grave of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg.

and written, that poured into Washington from all over the world, including an American petition signed by 2,300 prominent educators, clergymen and communal leaders.

Many of our greatest men question not only the gravity of the Rosenberg sentence but the feasibility of keeping atomic knowledge a secret altogether. It is a matter of debate among cultural leaders and men of science whether secrets can or should exist in the universal field of scientific information. On April 27th, the head of the American Federation of Scientists, Donald J.

Hughes, a top nuclear scientist, urged before the House Government Information subcommittee that the United States follow Russia's lead in uncovering its atomic secrets. Dr. Hughes, who is senior physicist at the government's Brookhaven Long Island National Laboratory, also observed in an address before the Washington chapter of the National Association of Science Writers that excessive secrecy "does not keep us ahead of Russia" and "our security lies in achievement" rather than in secrecy. He also reported that a "real change" is under way in Soviet pol-

icy on making scientific information more freely available to the world.

But Sobell is in Alcatraz!

All these future developments, however, will not and cannot help the Rosenbergs any more. The least we can and should do to retrieve some of the calm dispassion and sober judgment lost in our erstwhile national hysteria is to save the Rosenbergs' co-defendant, Morton Sobell, incarcerated in Alcatraz, from further imprisonment and excessive punishment.

A few months ago I officiated at the funeral services of Morton's father, Mr. Louis Sobell, who died a broken-hearted man grieving over his son's tragic fate. There are grave doubts in the minds of many noble people and illustrious scientists as to the guilt of Morton Sobell. Dr. Harold C. Urey, leading world scientist, said recently, Mr. Sobell was not properly tried and the verdict and sentence were not justified." Law Professor Stephen S. Love of Northwestern University echoes the sentiments in the words: "The 30-year sentence imposed upon Morton Sobell is a blight upon the reputation of American justice." Judge Patrick H. O'Brien of Detroit, Michigan, wrote: "In accordance with our inheritance as a liberty-loving nation, I urge the immediate release of Morton Sobell."

Recently the eminent British philosopher Bertrand Russell aroused

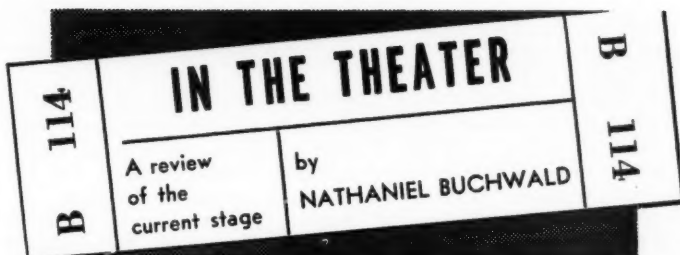
considerable discussion in England with his letter in the *Manchester Guardian* on March 26. After thorough examination of the documents in the case, Mr. Russell charged that Sobell was "an innocent man condemned as a result of political hysteria . . . I am also certain that the Rosenbergs were innocent and quite certain that the evidence against them would not have been considered adequate if prejudice had not been involved. . . . Sobell, however, is alive and it is not too late for the United States government to make some preparation for him."

Steps are being taken to get Morton Sobell freed. On May 8 his attorneys submitted a motion to the Federal District Court in New York City applying for his release or a new trial.

In conclusion I call upon all readers to take a personal interest in the efforts being made by men and women of good will everywhere to save Morton Sobell and the fair reputation of America for justice.

"Prisoner on our Conscience"

UNDER the above title, the Sobell Committee has issued a pamphlet by Emily and David Alman vividly stating the facts of the case of Morton Sobell and appealing for action to get a new trial. The 42-page booklet (20c) is available from the Sobell Committee, 940 Broadway, New York City.



Anne Frank's Diary As Drama

THE *Diary of Anne Frank* has deservedly won all the top theatrical honors this year: the Pulitzer Prize, the Drama Critics award and the Antoinette Perry award. It is not just a very good play but a unique example of a documentary drama rising to the level of creative art.

Much has been written about the authenticity of the characters, the events and the milieu of the play as they are revealed in Anne's diary. To achieve this authenticity, Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, who dramatized the diary, and Garson Kanin, who directed the play, went to Amsterdam and talked at great length with Otto Frank, Anne's father. This man is the lone survivor of the group of eight Jewish men and women who, hiding from the nazis, had lived for two years together in a garret atop a commercial building.

They visited the hiding place and met the surviving men—Jewish friends of the group who had helped them with food and care and came back with a detailed picture of the physical environment and the characters figuring in the diary. Armed with this background information, the director and the dramatizers apparently

"briefed" the selected cast about *re-producing* the authentic characters. Boris Aronson, the noted stage designer, was also "briefed" about the cramped quarters of the garret where the "action" had taken place. Thus, a faithful reproduction of the diary was achieved, giving the play the quality of an authentic human document.

Yet *The Diary of Anne Frank* at the Cort Theatre is an absorbing and quietly powerful play in its own right. It is a work of creative theater conceived in a spirit of reverence and dedication and carried out with much talent, skill and know-how in all of its phases—script, acting, stage-design and all-unifying direction.

At the core of the play is, of course, the diary itself, which is one of the great literary documents of our time. It is a miraculous literary product, considering its author—a girl in her early teens.

Though intensely personal and introspective, Anne's entries add up to an objectively true account of an epoch—the epoch of virulent nazism. Without actually describing the horrors of the nazi crimes against the Jewish people and humanity, this sensitive,

brooding, mischievous Jewish girl somehow managed to distill the full horror of nazism without making your flesh creep. What many a mature writer tried in vain—to portray the bestiality and moral monstrosity of Hitlerism by a frontal attack on the theme—this adolescent beginner achieved by indirection.

But Anne's diary is not a ready-to-play drama. It is only the raw material out of which the play at the Cort Theatre has been fashioned. In its fashioning the component elements are so marvelously blended that it is difficult to separate the script from the acting, the acting from the stage-design, and the stage-set from the regisseur's haunting *mis-en-scene*, timing and emphasis.

On the stage the play lives by virtue of artistic selection and dramatic emphasis. The action is centered mainly on Anne's own inner life. The description of the social and political atmosphere is treated as background material and projected as connecting narrative between scenes. Some may object that this gives undue weight to the anguished tenderness of Anne's adolescent love-stirrings and under-emphasizes the great social tragedy of rampant fascism. But the over-all effect is that of a social tragedy narrated in terms of personal and often trivial day-to-day experience. If there is no contrived plot or deliberately-built suspense, the passage of time is in itself suspenseful and the cumulative effect of the confined life of the group in itself builds to a dramatic climax.

The acting is uneven, ranging from great performances to routine craftsmanship, with Joseph Schildkraut and Susan Strasberg definitely in the first category. Honors are about even between the veteran "pro" and the teenage rookie-actress. There is muted

"Unacceptable"—to Whom?

THE *Diary of Anne Frank* is good enough to run away with all theatrical honors in today's USA but it is "unacceptable" for the State Department's overseas exchange program. The U.S. will be unrepresented at the international drama festival in Paris this summer because the State Department refuses to finance *Anne Frank* to appear at the festival. What price West German rearmament?

power in Mr. Schildkraut's portrayal of Anne's father—an embodiment of kindness, sympathetic understanding and homely wisdom and tact. Perhaps this is an authentic portrait of Otto Frank but at times one feels that Mr. Schildkraut's goodness rhymes with goo.

As to Miss Strasberg, she is a nugget. For her age and limited experience, she certainly got under the skin of the character of Anne Frank. In fact, one could almost accept her as the reincarnation of Anne Frank except that she is obviously preoccupied with her histrionic p's and q's. One is never completely unaware of her *acting* and in her most anguished moments she speaks beautifully, A-plus for elocution. But then again she is young.

The others in the cast are fair to middling, with the exception of Jack Gilford, whose selfish, cranky bachelor is both droll and pitiful.

In sum, *The Diary of Anne Frank* is a moving drama and a piece of great theater conceived in reverence and dedication. It is a highly talented stage rendition of Anne's diary.

FROM THE JEWISH PAST

Rashi: pioneer scholar and popular teacher

By ABRAHAM BICK

IN 1105, the most famous of all commentators on the Bible and Talmud Rabbi Shlomeh Itzhaki, better known as Rashi (from his initials), died. The 850th anniversary of his death is being commemorated this year.

Rashi was born at Troyes, France, in 1040. He has no equal as a builder of the old Jewish religious and Hebraic culture. In fact, Rashi's commentary was the first Hebrew book to be printed (1475). Without Rashi's commentaries the Bible would have remained far removed from the people and the Aramaic Talmud would have remained a sealed book and perhaps even forgotten entirely.

But Rashi was not only a pathfinder for the scholar. His work also represents a cultural milestone for the people. For he was a great popular teacher. His explanations of the most obscure and complicated passages of the Book of Books did much for the people of his own time, when there were no other mod-

ern books among the Jews. He made it possible for men of limited ability and knowledge to study the different books.

His moral influence on the people was, in a sense, a democratizing one. The Bible and the Talmud, once he had written his commentaries, were no longer the property of rare individuals, of a few intellectuals, but of the whole people. That is why the folk-saying, "Rashi says," became so popular. The phrase, "Rashi says," means that a key had been found to a difficulty, an explanation of the meaning of a problem.

The success of Rashi's commentary is based on sound pedagogy. He used a descriptive manner of explanation. His Hebrew style, sprinkled with the ancient "French-Yiddish" spoken by the Jews in medieval Germany and France, has flexibility and grace, elasticity and rhythm. The linguistic charm and caressing magic of Rashi's stories and parables can-

not be forgotten by those who studied in the old country *heder* as children. They absorbed the tones of the Rebbe's chant as they "learned" a "piece of Humesh with Rashi"—Bible and commentary—even if they later became far removed from the doctrine.

Rashi's magic, however, stems not only from his scholastic achievements but from his own radiantly popular nature. In history, as well as in the legend and consciousness of the people, he is not only the great scholar, but also the man of Morals and Ethics. In folk legend he is pictured as a humble man, modest and generous, tender and gentle in his dealings with people and in his attitude toward his students. Although Rashi was the rabbi of the French city of Troyes, he did not wish to "make use" of the Torah to live on community funds. He preferred to support himself by cultivating his own vineyard.

He created and distributed his works under difficult economic conditions and in times that were catastrophic for the Jews in the Roman Empire. This was the era of the first crusades, when the Christian robber-bands destroyed hundreds of Jewish communities.

The features of his moral character are clearly evident in his works. He counsels his students to conduct themselves ethically with their own people and with their Christian neighbors. In many instances he warns the leaders of the Jewish com-

munity to pacify their own ranks.

Rashi's influence on Jewish folk-literature can be exemplified by an illustration. A little story which Rashi introduced into his commentary served as a source of Goldfaden's drama *Shulamith*. It is a brief passage, but filled with much warmth and tenderness. The text says merely, "a story about a cat and a well." "Says Rashi": Once it happened that a young man promised a girl that he would marry her. She asked him: who is a witness to your promise? Nearby were a well and a cat. The young man said: the cat and the well are witnesses. The years passed and the man broke his promise and married another girl who bore him two sons. One son fell into a well and died and the other was bitten by a cat and died. His wife asked him: how is it that our sons died such unnatural deaths! And then he told her the whole story.

Many legends surround Rashi's birth. One story goes like this: when Rashi's mother was pregnant, she was once walking on a narrow street in Worms when suddenly a wagon drawn by two horses passed close to her and she was in danger of being crushed by the wheels. By a miracle a wall in back of her opened and she was saved. Until the nazi occupation the Jews of Worms used to point to the wall where the stones were said to have given way.

(Translated from the Yiddish)

The AJ Congress Convention

The democratic domestic program adopted
can spur action for human rights

By WILLIAM BERNSTEIN

ONE of the most important organizations in our Jewish community is the American Jewish Congress. It is reported to have 60,000 members and many organizations are affiliated with it. Most of its members come from the lower middle class—lawyers, doctors, teachers, civil service workers and small businessmen. It contains very few workers and almost none of its chapters are in working class neighborhoods. Hence the atmosphere of the AJ Congress is "intellectual" and its program is generally liberal and anti-fascist.

The influence of Congress in the Jewish community is deeply rooted. Congress is the "legal arm" of a large part of the Jewish community. It has submitted friend-of-the-court briefs in many cases involving civil rights and civil liberties such as the Supreme Court review of public school segregation and of the McCarran Internal Security law. Such legal action has earned for Congress an excellent national reputation as an active, fighting organization. Congress' interest in and struggle on

civil rights issues have resulted in a fine working relationship with the NAACP.

The strong attacks of AJ Congress on blue laws, deviations from the principle of separation of church and state and struggle against all forms of anti-Semitism have given the organization high prestige among the Jewish masses. As the initiator and largest component of the World Jewish Congress, it wields great influence in international Jewish affairs.

Fruitful Convention

The biennial convention of Congress was held from April 12-15 at the Hotel Biltmore in New York. The resolutions passed by this convention, particularly on domestic issues, in many ways reflect important currents in the U.S. today. As a convention of a liberal Jewish organization which is sensitive to the demands of an anti-fascist membership and community, its program took a strong democratic position on all internal questions.

Congress President Dr. Israel Goldstein opened the convention with a keynote address which emphasized and highlighted the points which were brought out further in the convention resolutions.

1. *Civil rights.* The Jewish community must give full and unequivocal support to the fight of the Negro people for full equality. The Jewish people, in their own interest, cannot stand outside of this struggle. Dr. Goldstein rejected any attempts to modify or delay the implementation of the Supreme Court decision on desegregation. This position was fully developed in the resolution on "Civil Rights and the Federal Government." Some Southern delegates attacked the forthright stand on full equality and civil rights for all. They tended to support the "gradualist" approach but were answered that any attempt to emasculate the full civil rights of *any* minority undermines the rights of *all*. The attempt to weaken or water down this resolution was overwhelmingly defeated.

The Congress position on civil rights should be brought to the attention of all legislators. Many other organizations can learn much from the Congress position and it can certainly form the basis of joint activity in behalf of the fight for Negro equality.

2. *Church and state.* The second point highlighted by Dr. Goldstein was defense of the traditional separation of church and state as guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. The

Enforcement of Civil Rights

Following is an excerpt from the resolution on civil rights passed by the AJ Congress at its biennial convention on April 15:

THIS convention urges:

1) Use of the full powers and influence of the federal government to obtain prompt and full compliance with the decisions of the United States Supreme Court condemning state-imposed racial segregation. . . .

4) Vigorous support by the President and adoption by the United States Congress of effective federal laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, giving greater protection to personal security and the right to vote and strengthening the civil rights activities of the Department of Justice. . . .

resolution on "Church and State" dealt with this problem. In fact, almost half the time allotted for discussion of all the resolutions was given over to this issue.

Congress completely identifies itself with the classic democratic tradition. It calls for strict separation and specifically and painstakingly enumerates the inroads that religion has made in public secular institutions in recent years. It cites examples such as released time, Bible readings, use of public buildings for religious purposes, etc., and calls for an end to such practices. The resolution sees through attempts to break down the separation by smuggling religious teachings into the school

in the guise of teaching "moral and spiritual" values.

Civil Liberties Position

3. *Civil Liberties.* Dr. Goldstein pointed out the early and vigorous stand of the AJ Congress against the McCarthyites, the Veldes and Jenners. He recalled the moral and practical leadership Congress provided in "going against the tide" in the heyday of McCarthy. The resolution on "Civil Liberties" is a strong statement against anti-democratic trends in the country.

However, the sharpest debate at the convention took place on the question of extending the scope of this resolution. The point at issue was that part calling for "reconsideration" of the Smith act, Internal Security act, Communist Control act, expatriation act of 1950 toward repeal or revision of these laws.

An amendment was proposed calling for *outright repeal* of this repressive legislation and for inclusion of the Immunity act of 1955 in the laws named. It also called for censure of the Treasury Department for the recent seizures of the *Daily Worker* and Communist Party offices in various states on the pretext of "tax delinquency." After some discussion these amendments lost by a small majority. The resolution passed, nevertheless, remains one of the most advanced proposed by any organization in America. The resolution's call to

urge reconsideration of repressive legislation can play a vital role in the struggle for full democracy.

The convention issued a "White Paper" which gives evidence of anti-Semitic activities of Arab countries in the U.S. The actuality of overt anti-Semitism is all too evident. Arab countries use and support local anti-Semitic hate groups. They demand that Jewish-owned business be boycotted, that Jewish Americans be denied visas to Arab countries and that Jews in the armed forces of the U.S. not be stationed in Arab countries. The compliance of the State Department with these basically anti-Semitic demands, motivated undoubtedly to assure enormous yearly profits of the giant oil industries in the Middle East, is disgraceful and demands immediate protests.

Foreign Policy Views

Dr. Goldstein devoted much of his keynote speech to the problems facing the young State of Israel and State Department policy on the Middle East. Unfortunately the resolution dealing with "American Policy in the Middle East" received almost no discussion. The one amendment proposed was in line with the ideas enunciated by such people as Walter Lippmann, Thomas J. Hamilton of the *N. Y. Times* and the British government, namely, that the Soviet Union be involved in any peace conference. This pro-

In Defense of Civil Liberties

Following is an excerpt from the resolution on civil liberties passed by the AJ Congress at its biennial convention on April 15:

THIS convention urges:

1) Reconsideration of the existing broad network of federal anti-subversive legislation—including the Smith act of 1940, the Internal Security and Nationality act of 1952, the Communist Control act of 1954 and the Expatriation act of 1954—leading to the repeal or revision of those laws, where necessary, so that the essential aim of protecting the government against subversion and espionage may be accomplished in a manner fully consistent with democratic principles, particularly freedom of expression and association, the requirement of proof of personal guilt rather than guilt by association and the requirement of proof of overt conduct.

2) Repeal of state anti-subversive and loyalty legislation on the ground that protection of the security of our government is the primary responsibility of the federal government and can be fully performed by it.

3) General revision of the federal government's security program for federal employees, the Armed Forces and workers in defense-connected industries—confining the program to sensitive areas, redefining the standard on which disqualification is based and mitigating, so far as possible, the hardships it places upon those it affects.

4) Enactment of a Code of Fair Congressional procedures to insure fairness in congressional investigations and limitation of such investigations to their proper sphere.

5) An end to governmental use of undisclosed secret evidence and recognition of the right to face and cross-examine one's accusers in deportation and all other proceedings that affect personal liberty, reputation or livelihood.

6) Enactment of federal and state legislation prohibiting wire-tapping and other secret listening and recording devices.

posals was quickly and sharply attacked from the dais. No further discussion was permitted and the amendment was voted down overwhelmingly. Although the resolution passed condemns State Department policy in the Middle East, it contradicts itself by placing its reliance

only on the U.S. government to solve the complex problems in this area. The resolution completely ignores the United Nations and the positive role it can play and has been playing.

During the convention an award was given to Dr. Frank Boehm of

West Germany for his "decisive role in negotiating Jewish material claims against Germany." This contrasted sharply with the absence of any expression against the renazification and remilitarization of Germany, which were opposed by Congress up to four years ago. The question of Germany was not discussed at all during the convention. The possibility of questioning this position existed under the resolution "Material Claims against Germany." However, this resolution, like many others, was referred back to the national committee for lack of discussion time. The chair did urge chapters to send in amendments to the unpassed resolutions and there is little doubt that many expressions on the question of Germany will be forthcoming.

Not Enough Discussion

The resolution on Germany shows the tight hold that the State Department exerts on the Jewish mass organizations in regard to foreign policy. This was seen also in the lack of any critical examination of the U.S. foreign program. No mention was made of any overall world settlement or peace conference or on any form of disarmament agreements. There was no expression of the deep desire for world peace felt by the Jewish people everywhere.

Lack of time for discussion of the resolutions and the fact that the resolutions were given to the delegates



Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, great liberal and founder of the American Jewish Congress.

only on the morning of discussion indicates a serious weakness in the democratic procedure within the Congress. In past years resolutions were discussed in panels and, after a thorough airing of amendments and changes, offered to the assembled delegates. The democratic advantages of this procedure are obvious.

On the whole this convention welcomed the changing atmosphere within the country. It offered a program designed to further and continue the struggle for full democratic rights. The enthusiastic approval and response of the great majority of the delegates to this program and the attempt in many cases to push it ahead reflects growing awareness in the Jewish community that a fighting stand fully corresponds to their needs.

REVIEW AND REAPPRAISAL

(Continued from page 7)

Semitism and Yiddish culture was all but obliterated in the Soviet Union. Yet equality of all nationalities is so basic to socialist principles that these crimes were finally admitted by the Soviet leadership itself, and correction undertaken.

It was because socialist theories of equality were basic, however, that anti-Semitism had to be practiced by innuendo and indirection and never directly and overtly. For even while Jews in the USSR were intimidated by the anti-Semitic acts, the socialist policy of equality continued to operate and to be enunciated.

Jack Raymond reported in the *N.Y. Times* (April 15) that 50,000 Jews live in Kishinev, the city of the frightful pogroms early in this century. "An important post-war change in the situation of the Jews," wrote Raymond, "stressed by city officials and confirmed by Jews here, was that they no longer live in a ghetto-like community but are scattered throughout the city. Jews are no longer limited to the old vocations of trade and tailoring. Now Jews can be found side by side with others doing construction and industrial labor."

In addition, information has reached us, which we have published in this magazine, that gives promise of a revival of Jewish cultural activity in the Soviet Union. We have

noted that numerous programs of Yiddish songs and writing have been performed in past months in all centers of Jewish population. Yiddish songs have been broadcast on the Moscow radio. About 60 Yiddish writers are active and preparing their work for publication. And for the first time in some years a greeting signed by 14 Soviet Yiddish writers was received in April by the third annual conference of the Jewish Social and Cultural Association of Poland in Warsaw.

Urgent Questions Remain

Despite these signs of recovery and the revelations gradually being unfolded about crimes against Jews and others in the socialist countries during the period when the security police were above the law, much still needs to be ascertained.

With respect to the Prague trial, the situation is not yet wholly clear. Even if the trial is valid, as Czech authorities maintain, precisely how does this case differ from those of Lazlo Rajk in Hungary and Traicho Kostov in Bulgaria, both of which have been declared as frame-ups by their own governments? The same type of confessions were presented at the Prague trial as in these cases. Further, which defendants in the Prague trial, most of whom were Jewish, were actually guilty and which innocent?

Does the reported release of the three Slansky co-defendants, Artur

London, Vavro Hajdu and Evzan Loeb, mean that they were innocent or not? Other witnesses at this trial who were themselves tried and imprisoned, such as Edward Goldstuecker, former Czech ambassador to Israel, have been released. Who was guilty and who was framed? What is the situation regarding Mordecai Oren, a leader of the Israel Mapam Party who was implicated in the Prague trial, and sentenced to 15 years, and was just released? To what extent have the charges against the Zionist movement made in the Prague trial been sustained by the recent review of the case? We believe that these questions should be answered by the Czech government.

The shocking information concerning the anti-Semitic closing down of Jewish cultural institutions in the Soviet Union and execution of leading Yiddish writers came in a statement from Poland (see our May issue). Why has no word on this terrible series of events come from the Soviet Union itself? We believe that it is incumbent upon the Soviet government to make known through its own channels the full truth about the crimes against the Jewish culture and the Jewish writers. The world is entitled to know just who was affected, what exactly did happen in this series of events, who was responsible and what punishment has been meted out to the perpetrators of these crimes. Even at this late date too much is obscure. And obscurity harms the cause of peace.

The Work Ahead

At the same time, we believe that the radical turn of events in the Soviet Union in the past three years and especially in the past few months indicate that the genuine socialist national policy will be resumed.

We expect to observe the resumption of Jewish cultural activity in the Soviet Union in accordance with the socialist principle of the rights of nationalities. We hope the government will actively encourage the Jews in re-establishing a Yiddish press and theater and any other forms of cultural expression the Soviet Jews themselves may desire. Whatever degree of integration Soviet Jews have reached up to now, numbers of them desire cultural expression in Yiddish. This is attested by reports of crowded and enthusiastic audiences for concerts of Yiddish song and poetry held in the past months in many Soviet Russian and Ukrainian cities. So long as such an audience exists, socialist policy requires satisfaction of this desire.

The correction of the violations of the rights of Soviet Jews is further demanded in the interests of peace. For with such remedial action the socialist countries not only fulfil the socialist policies that were permitted to be violated, but they also make a contribution to peace. The removal of this justifiable grievance will greatly facilitate the unification of all the forces laboring for peaceful co-existence.

INSIDE THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Rabbinical Assembly of America

Opening the 56th annual convention of the Rabbinical Assembly of America (Conservative) on April 22, its president, Rabbi Harry Halpern of Brooklyn, told the 500 rabbis present that the Negro people should be lauded for their dignity and "truly religious spirit" in their fight to win the "freedom guaranteed to them in the Constitution and reinforced by the Supreme Court decision." He told the rabbis that "we feel that no one can be true to the principles of the faith he professes unless he ranges himself on the side of those who are struggling for liberation from the Pharaohs of the twentieth century."

Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, the assembly's executive vice president, expressed "keen disappointment that the religious organizations in this country have not responded to the challenge of the Alabama bus boycott with the imagination and moral passion demonstrated by the Negro clergy of Montgomery."

Jewish War Veterans

A confirmation of reports that United States Air Force personnel are not "free U.S. citizens" at the Dahran Air Base in Saudi Arabia was issued by the Jewish War Veterans of the United States. The organization presented the following facts to justify its conclusion: 1. United States Air Force chaplains do not wear the insignia of their religious denomination; 2. A high official of the Catho-

lic Church on a mission to the base was obliged to divest himself of his clerical identification during his visit to the base; 3. The American Flag is not flying over the base; 4. Religious services on the base may be held only clandestinely and Jewish service personnel are not even allowed to enter the country.

The JWV urged that immediate steps be taken to correct these violations of American rights.

National Jewish Welfare Board

At its biennial convention held in New York City April 5-8, the National Jewish Welfare Board passed a civil liberties resolution which "clearly recognized the need to secure the nation in every manner possible against those who would overthrow our form of government," but which declared its belief "in protecting the constitutional rights of every American citizen, no matter how unpopular his expressed opinions may be."

Charles Aaron, president of the JWB, called for Jewish leaders who would work closely "with the non-Jewish neighbors and fellow citizens," since this would serve in "integrating the work of our American Jewish institutions into the general community." He stated that "Consideration must be given to the need for giving greater leadership responsibilities to women and to young people."

The convention reported Jewish community centers and Young Men's and Women's Hebrew Associations had

increased their membership by 120,000 since the end of World War II. These institutions now have 565,000 members, a 27 per cent increase over the figure reported in 1946.

Albert Einstein College

Senator Herbert H. Lehman told an audience commemorating the first anniversary of the death of Albert Einstein that McCarthyism remains a threat to civil liberties.

The occasion was a dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria on April 17 sponsored by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University. The senator described the present "climate of apprehension." "The teacher, the public figure or the government servant," he said, "must still think twice before he makes an appointment, writes a letter, buys a book, discusses an idea or makes a speech or statement. He must weigh and consider how this activity could be made to look in its worst light, how it could be made to sound in the mouth of a McCarthy or before a congressional investigating committee."

Although the civil rights issue is hottest in the South, Sen. Lehman said, the people in the North have their "own backyards to clean up." He urged the elimination of "prejudice in our own hearts and minds, whether the victims . . . are Negroes or Puerto Ricans or Jews or Catholics or just foreigners." He declared that the McCarran-Walter immigration act must be "expunged completely from the laws of our land."

Anti-Semitism and Civil Rights

Frederick F. Greenman, campaign chairman of the Joint Defense Appeal, told banquet guests at the Waldorf-Astoria on April 12 that there is in-

creasing evidence that desegregation tensions in the South are taking on anti-Semitic overtones. (*N. Y. Times*, 4/13)

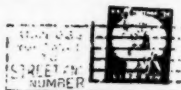
At a JDA dinner in Chicago, Mr. Henry E. Schultz, national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, said that the ADL had found "a blatant use of anti-Semitism as a political tool" among nationalist groups during the 1952 pre-convention presidential campaign. He asserted that a repeat performance in the 1956 campaign—financed with ample funds—is sure to come.

The National Community Relations Advisory Council, coordinating body of a number of Jewish groups, called upon President Eisenhower to exert "the full influence" of his office to assure prompt action in Congress on civil rights measures now pending there.

B'nai B'rith Sunrise Lodge

At an open meeting the B'nai B'rith Sunrise Lodge 2056 at Bayshore (L. I.) Jewish Center in April passed a resolution indicating that the attempts of the U.S., France and England to resolve the conflicts between Israel and the Arabs led to an arms race where the Arab countries are being provided with arms from the U.S., the Soviet Union and England. This, the Lodge declared, may lead to a large-scale war and it is up to the United Nations, with the special cooperation of the U.S. and Soviet Union, to assure peace in the Middle East. The Lodge called on the Grand Lodge of the order to petition Washington to take up cooperation of the four big powers to halt the arms race and work in the spirit of Geneva for Middle East peace, economic help and amity among nations.

letters



FROM READERS

A FRANK DISCUSSION

These letters give readers' opinions on the recent revelations concerning Jewish culture in the Soviet Union. Although we do not necessarily agree with all the views expressed, we are glad to open our columns to this discussion.

We urge our readers to send us their opinions on ideas touched on in these letters or any other aspect of the situation.—Editors.

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Two weeks after the *Folks-Shtimme* article, only one thing is clear to me: most of the thinking Jewish progressives with whom I have spoken are in a state of emotional shock. If they have recovered from the shock, have been left with a bitter emotional aftertaste and are in a state of consternation and confusion or both. The confusion arises mainly from an absence of facts and explanation from the Soviet Union. The shock is due to the crippling combination of naivete, priggery and unquestioning faith which many progressives have accumulated over the years in varying proportions.

(Since I make not the minutest claim to being a political analyst and have been prone to let the "experts" or "specialists" do my thinking for me on subjects concerning which I possessed no first-hand knowledge or which seemed discouragingly complex, I can speak from personal experience regarding the above-mentioned states of mind.)

I think it should be kept in view that even the most recent "crimes" and "distortions" which took place in the Soviet Union occurred at least a half-

dozen years ago and not this morning. Intimations of something wrong in the Jewish cultural front in the Soviet Union could be found any day of the week in a dozen publications, including the daily newspapers with their "cold war" diet. All of us read the newspapers and many of us read other left-of-center publications.

Why, then, the shock—as though we had had no inkling of what was going on—until the "authoritative" word came? It can be ascribed either to unquestioning faith in the impossibility of injustice in the Soviet Union; or to naivete—a refusal to recognize that wherever there's smoke there must be fire; or to priggery—that nobody else could possibly know something that we didn't.

All of this resulted in a certain type of dishonesty which led to a glossing over of those things which marred our pretty, schematic picture; to an over-emphasis of the positive and a neglect of the negative. Altogether, a distorted, mechanical, lifeless, unreal picture.

One example: JEWISH LIFE repeatedly listing the Jewish recipients of

prize-winners in the Soviet Union as proof that there was no anti-Semitism. This is like saying that since Joe Louis and Marian Anderson rose to heights of recognition in the U.S., this is proof that anti-Negro prejudices have been eradicated.

Another example: JEWISH LIFE omitting reference to the anti-Semitic propaganda being spread in the U.S. and other places from Arab sources (including the Syrian ambassador) on the thory, I suppose, that this is only a secondary manifestation, because the Arab states are following a generally anti-imperialist course. When I related this (about the anti-Semitic propaganda) to a group of otherwise well-informed people—many of whom are regular JEWISH LIFE readers—they were “surprised.” Surprised by this, shocked by that, when everybody else is aware of it!

I do not know who or what is to

blame for this state of affairs, or how or where it started. I feel just as guilty for having accepted this stuff as are those who dished it out. Just as I think that those in the Soviet Union who knowingly stood by while all the crimes were being committed are—to what extent, I don't know—also guilty of participating in a crime. Nor will we ever know who or what is to blame—even if we all live to be a hundred-and-twenty!—unless all the facts and all the answers are forthcoming.

That is why I think our first responsibility is to keep on asking questions and demanding answers. I will also hazard a prediction: if the present ideological leaders of the “Jewish left” in the U.S. do not conduct a real campaign to get the answers to these questions, or if they come forward with a stock of glib, ready-made answers which are not answers, but justifications—then they will soon have no one

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to lead. As it is, there is already a vacuum which, in the absence of understanding, is being filled by a painful cynicism. And this cynicism can be combated only by a continuing discussion and by clear evidence that these leaders are really trying to understand what happened, and not merely searching for the "right way" to handle the whole business.

Let me therefore ask a few questions which have arisen in my mind in the last months, both before and after the disclosures.

1) Is—or was—there a Russian-language Jewish culture in the Soviet Union? If yes, what did it accomplish? If not, what were the conditions in the Soviet Union which explain its non-appearance in that country as contrasted to the appearance of an English-Jewish culture in the U.S.? What sort of "Jewish continuity" was there among the non-Yiddish-speaking sons and daughters of Soviet Jews? Did they ever discuss the desirability of this continuity and how did they distinguish this from "nationalism"?

2) *To what extent* was the fight against Zionism used as an anti-Semitic weapon in the Soviet Union? Were errors made by the leaders of the Soviet Jewish community themselves in their fight against Zionism? Cosmo-

politanism? (What the hell is cosmopolitanism? Why is it such a foreign-sounding concept to an American?) Why was it necessary to outlaw the use or teaching of Hebrew in the struggle against Zionism? What effect did the arrest of "many, many" Jewish leaders have on the thinking of the ordinary Soviet Jew? What did they—the ordinary Jews—say or do about it? What are they saying—and doing—now? What was the position of the Yiddish publicists in Poland on the accusations against the Jewish doctors *before* their innocence was announced?

3) In the light of present disclosures, what are we to make of the following: "Yugoslav Vice-President Milovan Djilas, interviewed by a correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor* a few weeks before Stalin's death, went so far as to assert that the present Hungarian administration was 'the most anti-Semitic of all satellite governments.' Hungary's leaders he said, knew the Kremlin disliked having that country's government in the hands of Jews. Hence, they believed they had to indulge in anti-Semitic acts in order to prove to the Kremlin that they had freed themselves from 'cosmopolitan-Jewish' mentality." (*Congress Weekly*, July 20, 1953.)

If there was any truth in Djilas'

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charges, what do these men now have to say about it? And if Djilas was inventing all this out of animosity, what kind of irresponsible baiting is this from a man whom we are now asked to regard as a "friend"?

4) In 1950 a large number of Jewish leaders were jailed in Rumania in an anti-Zionist campaign. (Today's news says that they have now all been released.) What specific laws did they violate? Did we here in America know what these laws were? Would we approve of such laws in the U.S.? If not, why should we condone them anywhere else?

5) What were the laws under which the members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were executed? I know that this is now admitted to have been a frame-up. *But what were they accused of?* What judicial institutions should have prevented their illegal executions? Will the Soviet government allow inspection of the official documents which sent them to their deaths? In this connection I would ask those who point to the present disclosures as evidence that socialism is a self-correcting system: would it not be more to the point here to talk about the *judicial* system of the Soviet Union rather than socialism? What is self-correcting about a system that needs to wait until *one*

man dies before it can begin its self-correction?

6) The theory of Zionism may be a reactionary one, but the State of Israel is now a sovereign country. Isn't the right to emigrate—to give up your citizenship in one country and settle in another—an inalienable human right? Why should a socialist country deny this right to people who want to leave that country and go elsewhere?

My long list of "categories" reminds me of a Yiddish saying—"Oif itlekh terets ken men gefinen a naie kashe"—for every answer you can find a new question.

So let this be enough for a start.

MAX ROSENFELD

Philadelphia, April 23

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Before Hitler, I considered myself an American who simply happened to be of Jewish origin and was rather contemptuous of the physical and other fears of the European generation whose members, because of their bitter history, felt comfortable only in the presence of other Jews.

Hitler made me a Jew in the sense best expressed by Ehrenburg, who said that we are Jews not because of the blood that is in us, but because of that which has flowed out of us. This is clearly why the present generation of Jewish youth and young parents are so much more concerned with Jewish matters than was my generation. But because of my political views I felt until now that there was an absolute line of demarcation between Jews in the USSR and those in the rest of the world.

Now, with the *Folks-Shtimme* revelations that two generations of Jewish political and cultural leaders were wiped out in the Soviet Union, I un-

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derstand, for the first time, the Zionist sympathies of the mass of Jews: the belief that there can be safety from persecution as Jews only in a land of the Jews. I am sure that the USSR will eventually disprove that, but the Jews as a whole will not believe it until our generation is gone—we who saw a Communist government 35 years in power perpetrate the Doctors' Case.

I review my personal history in this regard because observation convinces me it is typical of the non-Yiddish speaking, "assimilated" Jew, except that non-progressives went through it much sooner than we who are friendly to the Soviet Union. If this is so, a review of the Jewish question is necessary just as, to draw a parallel that I believe is most striking for progressives, a review of attitudes on the Negro question is under way because the Negroes have made clear their insistence, South and North, upon equality as Americans and not upon any classic solution of the national question in the European, Asian or Soviet sense.

I think the trend among Jews is, in some respects, the opposite of that among Negroes. Time was when it was ridiculous to compare the position of the Jews to that of the Negroes, and represented a chauvinist disregard for the extent and depth of the oppression of the Negroes. But a generation of Jews that has seen a cultured land like Germany become a charnel house, and the leaders of the Jews, as Jews, in the Soviet Union, physically wiped out, now knows that it can happen anywhere, and feels each blow abroad as on its own skin.

I can best describe this—and again I consciously choose a parallel most striking to American progressives—by saying that the execution of people like Dimanshtein, Merezhin, Litvikov and Levitan, is comparable to the

killing, if it had occurred here, of Walter White, Thurgood Marshall, Adam Clayton Powell, and Benjamin J. Davis, Jr. The murder of Itzik Fefter, Bergelson, Markish, Kvitko and others is comparable to that of Dr. DuBois, Richard Wright, Shirley Graham and John Killens. Only if we on the left understand this, can we appreciate how deeply the Soviet revelations have separated us from the Jewish community, how long is the road back and how carefully we need examine it even before starting out.

In this situation I believe JEWISH LIFE has, for us who don't read Yiddish, a function of clarification, discussion, information and guidance to play, vastly more important than ever before, one for which there is no conceivable substitute.

WILLIAM MANDEL

New York City, May 3

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

You appeal to me for a contribution to JEWISH LIFE. So I write to you.

Left wing leaders, whether they published a magazine or held office in a political party, have had rough going of late. It took courage to stand up to McCarthy while living on short rations.

But that was done out of their own convictions. For that we honor them as we do the simple trade unionist who sacrificed his job and his community status rather than sell himself to Mr. Ellender.

Were this trade unionist to pull a boner, however, he would most likely abide by the quaint custom we have in

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America of apologizing for it. He would even try to make amends for the damage done.

Yet when certain leaders make the most monstrous errors time after time for more than ten years, they publicly forgive each other and then "participate in searching discussions" (a la Harap in his letter).

Doesn't elementary decency require the editors of JEWISH LIFE to stand up and say, "We failed you. What do you, our readers, think we should do now?" Perhaps they are afraid the answer will not be, "Let's participate in searching discussions."

If the editors knew what was going on and withheld that knowledge from us, then we were deceived. If they did not know, then they have masqueraded as interpreters of current events. I work hard for my living, too. Nevertheless, were I to dispense to my clients a comparable quality of service, I would have lost them long ago.

They are still aping the Russians. Yesterday it was the cult of the individual. Today it is silence or the belaboring of men who are dead.

No, I will not "help assure unbroken issuance of the magazine" as presently constituted. But I cannot deny my obligation. Mine was no trial subscription of a few months. A constant reader becomes a kind of stockholder with responsibilities. If there is need for funds to pay back salaries of the present editorial board so they can make way for their replacements; if money is required to pay the debts of the magazine so it can fold gracefully.

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then I expect to pay my fair share of the burden.

Should either event occur, I will honor promptly the draft made upon me at that time.

New York City, April 27 B. KLEIN

Letter from Steve Nelson

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

My deepest thanks to you for everything that you have done to help defeat the State sedition laws in this country and to reverse my 20-year conviction.

I feel that this fight was largely won because many people who did not necessarily share the political views of the victims fought because of what this means to American civil liberties.

I hope that this victory will signify that other vicious laws now on the statute books can likewise be nullified. Of course I am thinking of the Smith act, the McCarran law and other such legislation.

Pittsburgh

STEVE NELSON

"Haymarket and the Jews"

WE regret that extreme pressure of space makes necessary further postponement of Morris U. Schappes' article on "Haymarket and the Jews." It will appear in a future issue.

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Premiere of Shostakovich's Jewish Song Cycle

By SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

THE Thirty-Fourth Anniversary Concert of the *Morning Freiheit* at Carnegie Hall on May 5th, was not only the occasion of a public tribute to this great newspaper, but also a musical event of exceptional importance. It offered the first American performance of a major work by Dmitri Shostakovich: *From Jewish Folklore*, a cycle of songs for soprano, contralto and tenor, who perform in various combinations, with piano accompaniment.

The cycle is a completely original composition by Shostakovich, showing the consummate mastery of his recent works. The music is troubled, brooding and introspective in some songs, joyous and humorous in others. What Shostakovich has done is to take the texts of 11 Jewish folk songs and set them as "art songs." Many in the audience, however, knowing the old songs intimately, were disappointed in not finding what they could readily recognize as a Jewish folk element in the music.

Nevertheless, Shostakovich's music does have turns of melodic phrase typical of Jewish folk music. The style, however, is not that of rounded, "tuneful" songs but of a continuously evolving melodic line, combining speech accents with touching melodic phrases. They are a deeply personal statement of respect and love for the Jewish people by one who is not himself Jewish. It is deep music requiring more than one hearing for proper appreciation.

Remarkable is the variety of mood and of tone color. "*Schlof, Schlof*,

Schlof" (Sleep, Sleep, Sleep), for two women's voices, was light and entrancing; "*Vig Lid*" was a moving extended cradle song, for contralto solo; "*Her Nor, Hasie*" (Listen, Hasie), for soprano, made a fine use of Hasidic dance motifs; "*Vinter*" (Winter) made a stunning effect with its tenor solo against a background of wordless women's voices, suggesting icy winds; "*A gut Lebn*" (A Good Life), for tenor solo, had a lovely, sweet, sad lyricism, like Schubert in a Jewish vein.

The performers, Howard Fried, Iona Noble and Lucille Blackton, with Eugene Kusmiak at the piano, were excellent.

This is not the first time Shostakovich has used Jewish music. His *Trio in E Minor*, Op. 67, composed during the war years in memory of his friend, Ivan Sollertinsky, used Jewish folk-dance motifs in its last movement with heartrending effect. Shostakovich is emerging, I think, as one of the very great figures: an artist passionately devoted to his land and people, listening carefully to all criticism and at the same time approaching each work with the utmost artistic integrity, writing always from the heart. And with the sad recent disclosures of the frightful devastation that occurred with respect to Jewish life and culture in the Soviet Union, these "Jewish" works of his take on a new and special significance.

The program included Jacob Schaefer's poignant oratorio, *Tzvei Brider* (Two Brothers), expressively sung by The Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus, conducted by Eugene Malek.

BOOK REVIEWS

PORTRAIT OF KING OIL

By A. B. MAGIL

The Empire of Oil, By Harvey O'Connor, Monthly Review Press, New York. \$5.

Harvey O'Connor has written a brilliant, incisive book on the biggest, most profitable, most ruthless and predatory group of financiers in the world. *The Empire of Oil* is, as Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy put it in their publisher's foreword, "a masterpiece of condensation and exposition." It is authoritative and scholarly, yet written with such fire and gusto that almost every page is a delight. This portrait of King Oil, etched in verbal acid, is devastating because it is true. It sheds much light on the Middle Eastern crisis.

O'Connor himself belongs in the line of the great crusading truth-seekers—those who won the honorable name "muckrakers" and enriched our democratic heritage with a formidable social critique of monopoly. And O'Connor has the advantage of having roots in the labor movement—among the very workers whose industry his book describes: he was for several

years editor and publicity director of the Oil Workers International Union (CIO).

The book is concerned not so much with a history of the United States oil industry—though it brings together valuable historical material—as with its more recent depredations and tyrannies. The author shows how the oil trusts, headed by the Rockefeller Standard companies, used jungle law to seize this enormously valuable and irreplaceable natural resource; how control of production, transportation refining and marketing—not to mention political manipulation and skulduggery—was transmuted into overwhelming power, nationwide and worldwide.

O'Connor reveals both the mask and the reality—the "competitive" exterior and the monopolistic core. He pours sardonic light into the dark corners of the relations between the oil moguls and the small fry—the hapless jobbers and dealers caught in the gears of the vast machine that sucks nearly all the profits to the top.

But the United States is only one pearl—and perhaps not the most precious—in the world oyster which King Oil regards as his own. The proved oil reserves of the Middle East were about twice those of our own country

A. B. MAGIL is a journalist who was a correspondent in Israel during the war of independence in 1948. He is the author of *Israel in Crisis*.

at the time this book was written; recent estimates give the Middle East even larger reserves, with about 75 per cent of the capitalist world total in that area.

Moreover, the profits on Venezuelan and Middle Eastern oil are far greater than those at home. Few Americans realize that of Standard of New Jersey's net profits of \$585 million in 1954, only a third, as O'Connor points out, came from U. S. subsidiaries.¹ The bulk of the profits of Standard of California, the Texas Company and Gulf Oil also flows from foreign gushers.

With the Middle East today one of the explosive areas in world affairs. O'Connor's account of the operations of the U.S. and British oil monopolies

¹In 1955 net profits were \$709,410,000 of which 75 per cent were accounted for by foreign operations (*New York Times*, April 10, 1956).

helps illuminate the problems of that region. "The rise of the petroleum corporations to head the ranks of organized wealth," he writes, "was based on the phenomenal resources of the Middle East. Royal Dutch Shell within 60 years became the greatest industrial corporation of all western Europe; Standard of New Jersey rose to equal position in the New World. Other companies—Anglo-Iranian, Socony-Vacuum, Gulf, Texaco, and Standard of California—were similarly catapulted into prodigious size by their successes in the application of *res jerae naturae* [the law of wild animals, that is, the rule of capture].

The book devotes a revealing chapter to Arabia—"a U.S. corporation holds the only tangible wealth of two-thirds of Arabia"—and Kuwait—a joint fief of Anglo-Iranian and Gulf Oil—and another chapter to "The

*We will never forget and never forgive
the suffering of our people.
We send these greetings in memory
of the martyrdom of the Warsaw Ghetto
fighters, who gave their lives
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Threat from Iran." The threat consisted of the effort of the government of Iran under Premier Mossadegh to take possession of that country's oil. This challenge to King Oil, actively supported by the Iranian people, was finally suppressed through a providential coup manufactured abroad. The *Empire of Oil* pays tribute to the labors of Herbert Hoover, Jr., thanks to whom the former Anglo-Iranian monopoly of Iran's oil was converted into a consortium (polite name for cartel) in which the U.S. Big Five hold 40 per cent.

Naturally the oil barons have more than a passing interest in policy. It is on this aspect of the policies of oil that the book is weak. O'Connor refers in general terms to the influence of the oil cabal on foreign affairs and mentions a few specific instances. On the whole, however, he treats this question peripherally. Missing is the organic connection between U.S. foreign policy in the postwar period and the worldwide power thrust of the oil titans and other big business combines.

The discussion of the politics of the Middle East also suffers from too exclusive a preoccupation with oil. The book overlooks the great strategic significance of this area and its conversion

into a gigantic U.S.-British military base, bordering on the southern flank of the Soviet Union. There is a disproportionate emphasis on the feudal potentates of the Arabian peninsula, whereas the national liberation movements of the Middle Eastern countries are virtually ignored.

It is unfortunate too that the Israel-Arab conflict, today the nodal point of Middle Eastern tensions, gets only a passing oblique reference. There is no mention of the efforts of the oil companies to prevent the birth of Israel or of their influence today on State Department policy, which seeks to use both Israel and the Arab states to serve the ends of corporate superprofits and imperialist cold war strategy.

Despite these shortcomings, *The Empire of Oil* provides invaluable factual material for all who seek to end Israel's jeopardy, encourage a peaceful settlement of differences with the Arab states and help align Israel's policy with the strivings of its own and other Middle Eastern peoples to free themselves from alien control and cold war pressures.

On the domestic scene the author necessarily gives special attention to Texas, the chief oil producing state and the one most completely under the thumb of the oil companies, which run the state government and the two major political parties. O'Connor indicates that oil money fuels the Dixiecrat machine not alone in Texas.

The book makes clear that one of the oil companies' most important pipelines is that to Washington. Through it pour both the "crude" financial lubricant and more refined forms of persuasion. The oil trusts did well under the Truman administration but are doing even better under Eisenhower. O'Connor tells the story of the offshore oil lands operation by which federal

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property containing billions of dollars in oil was given away to three or four states to give away to three or four or a half dozen billionaire corporations. After the book was completed, a new giveaway scandal, this time involving King Oil's offspring, the natural gas lobby, added new data to O'Connor's relentless exposure of this corporate octopus.

Having diagnosed and richly documented the evils of oil monopoly, what remedy does Harvey O'Connor propose? He does not so much prescribe as present a number of views. There is what he calls "the cooperative challenge." But since at the end of 1950 "co-op oil accounted for but 2.1 per cent of total domestic consumption," this isn't much of a challenge. It is clear the author's own preference is for nationalization of the oil industry a proposal which was backed at the founding convention of the Oil Workers International Union in 1918. He devotes a chapter to Mexico as the outstanding example of non-socialist nationalization of oil.

But O'Connor is realistic enough to know that nationalization is one thing in an underdeveloped country

and quite another thing in the most powerful monopoly capitalist land on earth. Today there is no substantial public demand for nationalization of the U.S. oil industry and no immediate prospect of developing a successful struggle toward that end. O'Connor therefore rightly speaks of nationalization as looming "on the far horizon."

The book also poses the problem of international control and cites the proposals made in 1947 to the United Nations Economic and Social Council by the International Cooperative Alliance. Perhaps *The Empire of Oil* might have emphasized more that while basic solutions lie in the future the people can use political and legislative action now to curb the oil and other trusts, preparing the ground for eventual public ownership and control.

The threat to democracy inherent in these vast aggregations of private pelf and power is illustrated by the fact that this splendid book, distinguished both in content and style, was unable to find a commercial publisher. Fortunately an impecunious magazine devoted to the propagation of socialist ideas decided to take the risk. Author and publishers have performed an outstanding public service. All honor to them both.

Trials of Zionists in Soviet Union Reported

IT was reported in the *Manchester Guardian* on April 20 that 20 Jews in the Soviet Union had been sentenced at a Moscow trial to three to ten years in prison "for possessing and distributing 'illegal' Zionist literature." The report stated that the trial was conducted in a manner which, "for the Soviet Union, must be regarded as a model of fairness." The defendants pleaded not guilty and "argued openly and forcefully that a verdict of guilty would be a gross miscarriage of justice." Most of those tried, said the report, were "elderly people."

So far as we know, there has been no confirmation of this report from a Soviet source and we have no information regarding the nature of the literature in question or the activity of those accused.

Observation post

By ANNE FRIEDLANDER

A Good Deed: When the Brooklyn Crown Heights Jewish Life Committee runs a party where 70 people get together and have a good time, and in addition raises \$178—that's a good deed, indeed. Our hat's off to a wonderful bunch for their devotion and loyalty to the magazine.

A Good Idea: That's when our Cleveland Committee comes up with a plan to get new readers for JEWISH LIFE. They're contacting every reader, first by letter and then by telephone, to ask each one to get one new subscriber. Simple, direct, and we are sure, effective. We'll tell you how it works out. In the meantime, how about you, dear reader, haven't you got a friend who'd like to read JEWISH LIFE?

Bouquets for us—Thanks to all who responded to our appeal for nosegays in our May column. While there were no orchids (\$20 and over) the \$1, \$2, \$3 and \$5 did help put us in a sunny frame of mind. Keep them coming—a new subscriber, a small contribution, and a large one makes us (and our bank balance) really enjoy the spring.

Discussion: At this writing your Editorial Board is planning a Readers' Conference on May 22nd to discuss the recent revelations of the destruction of Jewish cultural life and the execution of Soviet Jewish leaders. These events have caused deep pain and anguish in the Jewish community.

A report on the discussion will appear in our next issue. Suggestion to Jewish Life Committees in all parts of U.S.A.—how about such a conference in your city?

Camp Kinderland's 33rd season: This progressive Jewish Camp for children plans as its special project for 1956 the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the death of Sholom Aleichem. Fun, sports and outdoor living, combined with a rich cultural program contribute to make this a memorable camp experience. There's a place for adults too—in Camp Lakeland, which adjoins Kinderland, where comfort, good food and entertainment make for an enjoyable and relaxed vacation.

That Tenth Anniversary is beginning to take on form and substance, and soon we'll be able to tell you more about it. It will express, we hope, in music, dance and drama, the best expressions of progressive Jewish culture, in the same tradition that the magazine has endeavored to express them in the ten years of its existence.

Spring Album: A unique and exciting musical event took place on May 12th at the Emma Lazarus Public School in Brooklyn, when for the second time this year, the Jewish Young Folksingers were joined by the Young Peoples' Choir of St. Paul's Disciples Church of Christ, in a program of spirituals, gospel songs, Jewish folk songs, and folk songs of many lands.



AT HOME

Labor notes . . . "You (the Democratic Party) can't have Mr. Eastland and have us at the same time," warned Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers, on April 24 to the 3,000 UAW delegates to the union's Educational Conference. The gathering launched a strong attack against racism. The UAW's freedom award was given to Senator Herbert H. Lehman and NAACP Chief Counsel Thurgood Marshall at the conference. . . . The Amalgamated Clothing Workers announced on May 3 that pay raises of 12.5 cents an hour and other benefits had been won by 150,000 men's and boys' suits workers in contracts now being signed. . . . The 29th convention of the International Ladies Garment Workers was told on May 9 that 97 per cent of the union's members are now under contracts providing a 35-hour week. This was true of only 53 per cent of the union's membership in 1953. The union has also won the first contract in Puerto Rico for 3,000 workers in the corset and brassiere industry.

"Racial antagonisms within the U.S. are in the focus of Asian attention," wrote *N. Y. Times* correspondent Robert Alden from Singapore (April 20). Not only the cases of Nat (King) Cole, Autherine Lucy and Emmett Till, but "Even obscure incidents

of racial violence in the South are played up in the press here."

Senate hearings on the nomination of Solicitor General Simon E. Sobeloff to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and the Carolinas) on May 5 produced racist opposition. A real estate man from Richmond, Va., said: "Mr. Sobeloff doesn't show that he's proud of the white race." Another racist said: "Virginia says: 'Deliver us from a man with such foreign ideas.'" Opposition witnesses also mentioned that Sobeloff refused to sign the government's brief in the "loyalty" case of the late Dr. John F. Peters and was critical of the McCarran-Walter act. Southern senators have been obstructing confirmation for almost a year.

Louisiana officials banned the NAACP late in March on the ground that it violated a law requiring filing a list of the membership with the Louisiana secretary of state. This is similar to the registration provision of the McCarran act.

The Supreme Court continued its orders against segregation in all forms by ruling on April 23 that segregation on intra-state transportation is unconstitutional. Although the Montgomery (Ala.) City Lines promptly ordered an end to segregation on its buses,

local officials have enjoined the bus company from implementing the order. The bus boycott by Negroes continues.

Attempts of West Hooker, of New York, to sell stock for a proposed "Christian Television Network" were stopped by an injunction issued early in March by N. Y. Supreme Court Judge Aaron Steuer. Hooker contended that existing networks are "Jewish owned and controlled." "I am not an anti-Semite," he said, "but I am anti-Jewish, a creed term, to the extent that Judaism is anti-Christian."

ABROAD

Francis Caillet, secretary of the group of Poujadist deputies in the French National Assembly, resigned from the Poujade movement on April 17 on the ground that anti-Semitism existed among the 49 Poujadist deputies. . . . It is claimed that nazi collaborators are on the staff of the Poujadist paper, *Fraternite Francaise*. . . . French Premier Guy Mollet said in an interview published in *U.S. News and World Report* early in March that the people who voted for Poujadism in the recent election were not fascists but that "the methods employed by their leaders—anti-Semitism, racism, anti-parliamentarism"—are typical fascist methods.

A forum on "Britain's Growing Color Problem and the Jewish Community" in London heard the speakers criticize South African Jews "for not being more outspoken in opposing repressive measures against the local colored population." One speaker called the attitude of South African Jews "ostrich-like." (*London Jewish Chronicle*, April 13)

Recent reports indicate that the Rumanian government has freed the last of 200 Jews jailed for Zionist activities. . . . The Jewish community of Bucharest is preparing to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Jewish theater in Rumania. Recent research has revealed that the first Yiddish play was performed on August 22, 1876. A number of historical works on the history of the Yiddish theater in Rumania are planned.

Over 400 delegates representing Jewish communities in about 50 Polish towns attended a meeting of the Social and Cultural Society of Polish Jews late in April. Representatives from the U.S. and Canada were present. In referring to the Middle East in his report, Society secretary Dr. David Schwartz said: "It is not hatred of Israel which dictates our present policy towards the government of Israel but love of the people of Israel and true solicitude for their security and growth." . . . The Polish government issued a new stamp in April containing a picture of the statue, "Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto," to commemorate the uprising.

News about Soviet Jews . . . Moscow radio broadcast Yiddish folk songs in mid-March. Among the songs were "*Achzig Yor*" (Eighty Years) and "*Itzikel Hut Hasana Gehat*" (Itzikel Got Married). Moscow radio plans to broadcast some works by Sholem Aleichem and the 40th anniversary of his death is to be commemorated with radio talks and articles in the press. . . . Jewish programs were performed in Vilna and Kovno in March and April including works of Shmuel Halkin, Sholem Aleichem, Mendele Mocher Sforim and others.

L. H.

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