

# Jewish Life

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## HOW SHALL SOUTHERN JEWS FIGHT JIMCROW?

*by a Florida Reader*

## WORLD ZIONISM IN CRISIS

*by Jeremiah Lesser*

## TOWARD REVIVAL OF SOVIET JEWISH CULTURE

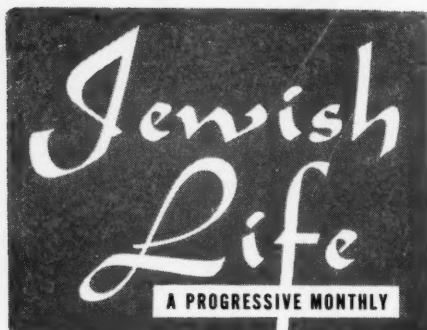
*by The Editors*

## WHO IMPEDES MIDDLE EASTERN PEACE?

*by Louis Harap*

## PATTERN OF REPRESSION IN THE U. S.

*by Celia Lewis Zitron*



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## How shall Southern Jews fight Jimcrow?

*The following letter from "A Florida Reader" concerning the relation of Jews in the South to the segregation question raises extremely important considerations. We urgently request readers in the South to send us the kind of data of which our Florida correspondent writes.—Eds.*

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Greetings, and congratulations on the two items in your May issue dealing with the South ["Southern Jews and Segregation" and "The Jewish Tree'"].

The conviction has been growing among some of us that the question of the Jews in the South cannot be dealt with merely as an American Jewish question in general. The South is different and the position and problems of the Jews here are different. Therefore a special study and a special approach is required if the Jewish population is to play its full part in democratic developments in general and in the fight against segregation in particular.

The Jewish people in the South, I believe, more than any other single group of the white population here (with the possible exception of the Latin Americans and Mexican Americans) are sympathetic with the Supreme Court decision, despite the failure of their top leaders to give them leadership on this question. An energetic effort to point a for-

ward direction would, I believe, meet with an amazing response. But such an effort should take into account the special history and conditions of the Southern Jewish community.

In a modest effort to be helpful, I submit the following points to be considered in such an approach.

### **Social Composition**

1. The social composition of Southern Jewry. In most Southern Jewish communities, there are proportionately many more middle class people and fewer workers than up North. A number of Jewish shop workers who recently came to work in Southern cities found that in each instance they were the first Jewish workers their shopmates had ever met, that their co-workers never knew Jews to be anything but storekeepers, property owners and manufacturers. These instances are not exceptional, they are typical, and would probably be borne out by a statistical study of the economic

status of Southern Jews. This fact undoubtedly influences the Jewish community to refrain from any vigorous action.

2. Among Southern Jews there is a much higher percentage of second and third generation Americans, relatively few immigrants. (It is said that in most towns of any size in Georgia, there are a few Jewish families whose ancestors have been closely identified with the growth and development of their respective communities. There is need for a good research job on this, especially since this is the state where the notorious Frank case took place). There is a greater integration of the Jewish population in the economic and social life of the South. At the same time, the Jewish people have been longer exposed to the poison of deep-South white supremacy.

3. The Southern Jewish community is much more an English speaking community. The influence of the Yiddish *Forward* is therefore not so powerful. But at the same time, the sphere of influence of the most widely disseminated progressive Jewish paper, the *Morning Freiheit*, is also narrowed. (There is a real field here for JEWISH LIFE).

4. The KKK, hate-mongering instrument of violence of Southern white supremacists, directs its terror against Jews and Catholics as secondary targets. In the absence of a fighting leadership, the tendency among Southern Jews is to permit themselves to be intimidated into

silent evasion of controversial issues.

### ***Renewed Jewish Consciousness***

5. In spite of the retarding influences mentioned above, there is a deep stirring among the Jewish people in the South today. There is a vigorous striving among Jews to reaffirm and reinforce their identity as Jews. Among some it takes the form of revival of Jewish religious ritual, hot discussions about the importance of *kashruth* among people who were brought up with no concern for dietary laws. Among others it takes the form of building temples, semi-religious community centers, with Sunday schools to teach the youngsters Jewish history and culture. Among others there is a new alertness to anti-Semitism, especially its rebirth in Germany. And among all—what with the unremitting campaigns of the Zionist organizations—tremendous fund-raising activities for Israel.

This wave of renewed Jewish-consciousness contains, I believe, some very positive elements and should be analyzed especially in the South because here the trend toward assimilation has gone further than elsewhere in the country. This surge toward Jewish self-assertion is a reaction to Hitler's destruction of six million Jews beginning in Germany, an area where the Jews had moved furthest toward assimilation. It is as though the Jewish community here, based on the lesson of Germany, had

decided that any new Hitlerism must be prevented not by self-effacement but by national self-assertion.

This trend has a healthy, constructive anti-fascist component. But this is limited and hedged in by Jewish separatism. The anti-fascist sentiment is not translated into the language of struggle for the democratic rights of the Negro people. The Jewish community is not yet applying the lesson of its experience with Hitler to the Negroes' struggle against Eastland and the whole tribe of Dixiecrats and northern monopolists. They don't yet see that the Negroes in the South today are reaction's favorite target just as the Jewish minority, for even less basic reasons, was Hitler's first target. Nor do they see, therefore, that reaction's venom, directed primarily against the Negro people, must inevitably spill over to poison other national groups and minorities, including the Jews.

### ***Need for Leadership***

A systematic clarification of this question would help break down the nationalist barriers that prevent the Jewish people, especially in the South, from putting the weight of their world and local experience in the service of the movement against segregation here.

The report from *Congress Weekly* reprinted in your May issue is interesting, but it is negative and gives no direction. It accepts the voice of the top leadership of the Jewish

community as the true representative of the sentiments of the Jewish people and does not explore the potential of Southern Jewry's readiness to struggle against segregation.

Even a superficial observer can note a number of signs of Jewish readiness to act in behalf of smashing Jimcrow; joining small interracial groups in various cities; welcoming the Negro delegates to the recent AME convention into the small hotels in Miami Beach; financial aid to various Negro freedom struggles; the large Jewish vote for a local candidate in Florida who took an outright position of support for the Supreme Court decision.

These are but straws in the wind. But with clear-minded leadership and well-documented reasons why they as Southern Jews have a stake in the struggle for Negro rights, the Jewish community in the South would make a tremendous contribution to this struggle in keeping with their tradition of courage through all the ages of their existence in every corner of the world.

We must admit, in this connection, that the liberal and progressive groups and publications in the Jewish field, nationally and locally, have not yet contributed any creative thinking or activity in the field of Southern Jewish problems. That is one reason we hail the two articles in the May issue as the beginning of a new trend, we hope. There is a real vacuum on this question. There are a number of English language

Jewish publications in the South like the *Jewish Floridian*, published in Miami, and the monthly *Jewish Digest*, published in Texas. But they don't attempt to deal with the South specifically.

The extent of this vacuum can be indicated by this incident: A couple of years ago during the observance of the 300 years' anniversary of the Jews in the U.S., a conference of teachers of Jewish Sunday schools was lectured on the proud traditions of Jews in the South. And who were the outstanding figures selected as typical examples of Jewish leadership? None other than Judah Benjamin, the treasurer of the Confederacy, and Samuel Gompers, cigar-maker who was head of the union which organized cigar-makers in Tampa, who rose (or sank) to the position of labor misleader.

### ***Need for More Facts***

There is a crying need for progressive leadership. There is need for the Aptheker and Schappes-type research on the Southern Jewish question;

there is need for the numerous cultural leaders who take periodic trips through the South to study and know the South for what it is and not to regard it as an annex to New York; there is need for national liberal and progressive leaders to help define the specific approaches and tasks of Southern Jews today; there is need for local Southern groups of Jewish people to break out of their sectarian bonds and analyze the lessons of their daily experiences in the growing and seething Jewish communities that dot the South.

If JEWISH LIFE would follow a policy of publishing items dealing with the South in each issue, it would not only equip its present readers, but would win new readers. And your readers, in turn, would help supply you with material, clippings, their own ideas and stories, etc. With a combined effort at your end and ours, your readership could be greatly expanded and your influence would fill a great need.

With heartfelt wishes for your continued success.

A FLORIDA READER

### ***Miami Hebrew Butchers Union Fights Segregation***

**G**EORGE Pfaffendorf, business agent of Local 643 of the Hebrew Union, recently attempted to get a Negro member of his union seated on the Dade County (Florida) Central Labor Union. The CLU decided to hold up the case pending an AFL-CIO investigation. Pfaffendorf then resigned from two committee chairmanships he held in the CLU. Although he will not press the effort to seat his Negro union brother now, he is confident that his local's Negro delegate "will be seated without the screening process."

# WORLD ZIONISM IN CRISIS

## An interpretation of the World Zionist Congress meeting

By JEREMIAH LESSER

A DUAL crisis faced the 500 delegates from over 50 countries at the 24th Congress of the World Zionist Organization meeting in Jerusalem from April 24 to May 6. First, there was the war danger to Israel and second, the disintegration of the World Zionist movement. In addition, a third main theme of the Congress was immigration to Israel.

Originally planned for the summer, the Congress date was advanced to the spring in order to mobilize world Jewry for defense of Israel. But as the Congress was meeting that danger was mitigated, thanks to the action of the UN Security Council in sending UN Secretary General Dag Hammerskjold to strengthen the Middle Eastern armistice. The successful outcome of this mission was already apparent before the Congress ended.

Rejection of "preventive war" by the government of Israel in recent months was confirmed at the Congress. This was dramatized after a speech by Menachem Beigin, leader of the extreme right wing Herut

Party, second largest in Israel, calling for immediate war. He was followed by Yaakov Hazan, Israeli delegate from Mapam, left wing Zionist party, who directly charged that "any incitement to war is a crime against the people of Israel." Herut delegates then created such a disturbance that the chairman was forced to suspend the session. However, the incident strengthened labor and liberal opposition to Herut. The Congress refused to elect a Herut representative to the WZO executive.

### *Advocacy of Neutralism*

The political debate with which the Congress began, heard some appeals that Israel follow a neutralist policy. The dean of Israeli Zionists and honorary president of the Congress, Yitzhok Greenbaum, said that "the United States [government] is pro-Arab . . . Yet . . . we keep on demanding, begging for arms, although we are pushed and thrown aside. The Soviet Union . . . is trying



to find the road to a new solution. Yet we are not joining in the self-same spirit. There is only one way open to us. . . . We cannot rely on either one of the big powers. We cannot associate with any blocs. We cannot have connections with any blocs. . . . There is only one solution, an independent, free, neutral policy."

Mapam delegates from Israel also called for a neutral foreign policy. Mapam delegate Yaakov Hazan affirmed that the big four powers should back up peace moves. "To achieve our aims," he said, "the State of Israel must adopt a policy of non-identification and a complete independence. We must press for the cessation of the armaments race in this part of the world and must demand that the four great powers accept responsibility for the maintenance of peace in the area."

The necessity for four power agreement toward peace was also expressed by Dr. Nahum Goldmann, who was elected president of the World Zionist Organization and is hence a powerful influence in Zionism today. "The alternatives of war and peace lie partly between Israel and the Arabs but primarily with the Big Powers," he said. Dr. Goldmann greeted the statement of policy on the Middle East issued by the Soviet Union on April 17 as "constructive." He deflated the propaganda position that the Czech arms sale to Egypt created the current crisis. "The Egyptian-Czech-

slovak arms deal," he said, "gave an extra dimension, a razor edge, or urgency and the flavor of intensity to a crisis already in the making." He also appealed for "fraternal cooperation" between Israel and the Arab countries.

Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett summed up the political debate with a picture of the war danger. He criticized the U.S. for arming the Arabs while withholding arms from Israel and welcomed the Soviet statement but rebuked the Soviet Union for endorsing Czech shipment of arms to Egypt and "not committing itself to discontinue the one-sided policy of arming the Arabs." Since Israel had not asked the Soviet Union for arms but had on Oct. 14, 1955 indicated rejection even if arms were offered, one wonders if the one-sidedness does not lie with the Israel government.

The political resolution passed by the Congress asked that the "arms imbalance" be redressed and held out belief in and necessity for peace. However, as the London *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review* noted editorially (May 11), "neither the consequences of the Hamerskjold mission nor of the changes taking place in Great Powers relations to the Middle East appear to receive adequate mention in the resolutions voted by Congress. Yet the new president [Dr. Goldmann] dwelt particularly on these issues as vital in the shaping of future Zionist policy." The realism of Zion-





*Dr. Nahum Goldman, newly-elected president of the World Zionist Organization.*

ist leaders needs to get beyond the acknowledged necessity for arms, if Israel's future is to be secured.

### ***Pessimism about the Future***

The second main problem that occupied the Congress, the condition of the Zionist movement and of the Jewish community outside of Israel, received absorbed attention. The Zionist leadership is very much worried about the crisis of Zionism that has been growing more acute with every passing year of existence of the State of Israel. For the overwhelming majority of Jews of the world—except many in Middle Eastern and African countries—have neither the desire nor the intention of migrating to Israel. This is espe-

cially true of Jews in the U.S.

The most ardent Zionist leaders are now beginning to acknowledge the unreality of this objective of "the ingathering." So much so that the Congress Resolution on Education and Culture recognized that intensification of the Jewish educational program in the "Diaspora" and the tightening of ties with Israel were the "paramount function of the World Zionist Organization at the present time."

The *Jerusalem Post* a few days after the closing of the Congress made the dour editorial observation that "the Zionist movement is going back at once into its old rut of organizational and spiritual stagnation." Pessimism over the future of the World Zionist movement runs deep. The delegates at the Congress expressed this in their private, if not public, statements. Richard Yaffe reported from the Congress (London *Jewish Chronicle*, May 11) that "some of the more pessimistic delegates expressed the belief that this would be the last Zionist Congress. Others, slightly less gloomy in their prognostications, considered that the next Congress—its silver jubilee—would be the final one."

Dr. Nahum Goldman was perhaps the only one at the Congress who voiced the fact that objective social processes were at work in the situation. "Assimilation of today," he said, "is not ideological nor is it in response to a slogan or appeal.

*(Continued on page 40)*



# ISRAEL

**22 Arab and Druse** teen-age boys finished a six-week course in irrigated farming at the rural vocational center at Boys' Town in Kfar Vitkin (*N. Y. Times*, June 3). Boys' Town is operated by the Hadassah and the Zionist Organization of America.

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**Emigration to Israel** from Poland has been resumed, with 50-60 Jews departing monthly, usually to be reunited with relatives in Israel. "Visas are being granted equally to young and old, professionals and unskilled workers (*N. Y. Times*, May 17). . . . thirteen elderly Soviet Jews emigrated to Israel in May, traveling by way of Switzerland.

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**A Yugoslav Parliamentary** delegation of seven visited Israel for a week as guests of the Knesset late in May. The group was headed by Lazar Kulishevsky, chairman of the Macedonian Parliament.

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**The Fourth International Conference** of Citrus Planters opened in Tel Aviv May 20, with 300 delegates from 28 countries, including the Soviet Union, which sent three delegates and a translator. The conference was called by the Society of Citrus Planters in the Mediterranean, members of which are Spain, Italy, France, Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Lybia, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Cyprus, Turkey, Greece and Portugal. Decision to hold the Conference in Israel was made at the last conference in 1954 in Algiers. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Lybia refused to attend, but Algeria, Tunis and Morocco sent delegates.

•

**Locusts are endangering** the crops in Israel, Jordan and Egypt. The Israel Plant Protection Service destroyed more than 50 locust swarms in May, but is hampered because they cannot get at the area where the eggs are laid, which is close to the Egyptian border. "There is no cooperation between Israel and her Arab neighbors in the anti-locust campaign, such as exists with Jordan for mosquito and rabies control" (*N.Y. Times*, May 27). Thus do locusts divide and conquer. . . .

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**Population in Israel** increased in 1955 by four per cent over 1954;

the total is now 1,789,075, of which two-thirds live in cities with over 10,000. In 1955, the population in the kibbutzim grew by 2.2 per cent. In the South and the Negev, which had only 6,000 in 1948, there now live 75,000 Jews. In age levels, 40 per cent of the total population is below 19, making Israel younger than any state in Europe or North America.

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**School children** in primary grades increased from 91,000 in 1948-49 to 232,000 in 1954-55, which include 80 per cent of all children between 6 and 15 years, while a Unesco report showed that in Asian and African countries the average was about 20 per cent. The report indicates that the number of teachers per 1,000 children are 28 in France, 32 in Sweden, 31 in Israel, 26 in U.S.A., 20 in Czechoslovakia, seven in Turkey, six in India, five in Iraq.

•  
**Total school population** at the end of 1955 was 308,333, eight per cent more than in 1954 (excluding higher educational institutions). Arab schools have 25,000 pupils, and 7,000 are in Christian schools. Eighty-eight per cent of the students are in elementary schools, seven in high schools, four in agricultural and trade schools and one in teachers' seminaries. The Ministry of Education is worried by the low percentage of students in high schools and trade schools.

•  
**The Metal Workers Union** finally won a wage increase for 25,000 workers of from 3.7 to 10 per cent. The Manufacturers Association had on March 31 turned down flatly the union demands for a 10 to 23 per cent increase of wages that range from \$99.90 to \$122.10 per month, but on May 5 the association yielded to a compromise settlement. Unskilled workers will get the lowest increase.

•  
**Lionel Hampton**, jazz band leader, arrived in Israel on May 8 for his second visit. He will spend several weeks playing in various parts of the country, including a special concert for the armed forces.

•  
**Sabbath observers** compelled the Industrial Exhibition in Haifa to close on Saturdays after tens of thousands of religious Jews demonstrated on April 28 and clashed with police; six demonstrators and 22 policemen were injured. After the deputy mayor of Haifa resigned, Mayor Abba Khoushy announced the Sabbath ban on May 12.

•  
**The Chamber Theater** produced Gogol's *The Overcoat*, in an adaptation by the Polish Jewish poet, Julian Tuwim, translated into Hebrew by the progressive Israeli man of letters, Abraham Shlonsky. The Soviet film of this repertory classic was recently shown in the U.S., as was an Italian film version.  
M. U. S.

# Who impedes Middle East peace?

## Round-up of recent developments in the Arab-Israel crisis

By LOUIS HARAP

**T**HE relaxation of tension in the Middle East resulting from unanimous UN Security Council action continues. Minor border conflicts have taken their bloody toll of dead and wounded numbering more than 20. No grave infractions of the armistice between Israel and the Arab states have occurred since UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld gained agreement on his successful truce-enforcement mission. But tough problems remain to be settled on a permanent basis.

### *Again—Arms for Israel*

Since the danger of war is far from past, Israeli UN Delegate Abba Eban has once again appealed to the State Department for arms. A favorable response to this request—without political strings—should be demanded in accordance with Israel's sovereign right to defensive arms. The oil interests which have thus far dictated refusal to sell arms to Israel need to be overcome by democratic public opinion in our country.

The question also recurs insistent-ly, why does not Israel apply to socialist countries for arms? Perhaps the Israel regime fears the reaction

of some influential U.S. Jewish groups to such a request. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver said in Tel Aviv on April 4 that, "After the preliminary shock, American Jewry will reconcile itself to the fact that any country's first duty is to defend itself and will eventually condone Israel's obtaining defensive arms from the Eastern bloc if the Western world declines arms shipments" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 5).

But the piling up of arms on both sides will not bring peace. That is why the UN consideration of the problem is of such overwhelming importance. But the U.S. veto on Four Power discussion before bringing in the recent resolution hindered the development toward peace.

Joseph P. Lash reported (*N.Y. Post*, May 18) that U.S. representatives at the UN "still oppose dealing the Russians in on the advance consultations and planning." The results show that the outcome of the UN meetings did not achieve the maximum effectiveness, thus confirming the "Soviet view," reported by Lash on May 27, "that a resolution jointly sponsored by the Big Four would carry greater authority and be more effective in encourag-

ing trends toward the stability and peace in the Middle East."

### ***Leeway for Arab Rigidity***

Since the resolution was sponsored by Britain alone rather than the Big Four, the Arab states felt they had more leeway in adopting an intransigent position. The Arabs objected to the inclusion in the resolution of the paragraph calling for settlement of the Palestine question "on a mutually acceptable basis." This was the phrase used in the British-Soviet communique issued after the London talks in April and the May discussions between the Soviet Union and France in Moscow. Had the State Department consented to join in a Four Power joint resolution containing this formulation, the Arab states might have been confronted with a unity that might have tamed the intransigents.

However, the Arab states maintained that this phrase in the resolution would weaken their position on enforcement of the UN resolutions on the borders set in 1947 and on repatriation of refugees. The Soviet delegate supported the elimination of this phrase in order, as the *N.Y. Times* reported (June 2), "to obtain essential cooperation among the disputing parties." Even Abba Eban, Israeli UN delegate, "conceded . . . that he had no objection to the actual terms of the resolution" (*N.Y. Times*, June 5). Even if the Arabs refused to accept this phrase in the context of this particular resolution,

the fact remains that no overall solution is possible other than on a "mutually acceptable basis."

Absence of prior Big Four consultation and a united resolution also made it easier for the Syrian delegate to assert maximum claims on the issue. For on May 31, Syrian UN Delegate Ahmed El-Shukairy asserted that Palestine "is nothing but southern Syria." Thus he reasserted denial of Israel's right to exist.

The difficulties in reaching a final settlement are thrown into relief by this claim. At the same time, such difficulties made more imperative than ever united Four Power assertion that Israel is here to stay.

### ***The Arabs and Anti-Semitism***

The State Department's refusal to permit Big Four consultation—even though Britain did consult with the Soviet Union on the resolution—reveals that the greatest obstacle to the beginnings of a final solution rests with the oil moguls' domination of State Department policy. This position has been brought home to the American people by the callous acquiescence of the Eisenhower administration in the anti-Jewish discrimination enforced by the Saudi Arabian and other Arab rulers. It is by now well known that the administration is kow-towing to this discrimination enforced by the Saudi assignment to bases in Saudi Arabia. Nor is President Eisenhower's attempted justification of this policy

at a press conference early in May any more creditable. The President then stated that Saudi Arabia does have "some rights" in the matter, thus impugning the traditional American principle that our government does not undertake to practice discrimination against American citizens because of the will of any foreign power.

The revelation that the State Department is still sending arms to Saudi Arabia, exposed on May 16, is cut out of the same cloth. This is "shabby hypocrisy," as the N. Y. *Post* said editorially on May 16. "For many months," the editorial went on, "the administration has taken the position that it will not sell arms to Israel because it is unwilling to intensify the arms race in the Middle East. . . . Yet . . . we are again shipping arms to Saudi Arabia even while we deny Israel the weapons of self-defense."

Further, the administration has thus far refused to do anything about the cooperation of some Arab representatives in this country with anti-Semites. In recent months Jewish defense organizations have published documented studies showing beyond question that such cooperation is occurring. (For instance, the Anti-Defamation League's book, *Cross-Currents*, and the American Jewish Congress' documented study, *The Arab Campaign Against American Jews*.) Although these organizations tend to confuse opposition to Zionism with anti-Semitism, the

Arabs for their part have mixed legitimate opposition to political Zionism with anti-Semitism.

At the same time, most Zionist leaders still refuse to recognize that new trends have arisen in the Arab states as a consequence of their adherence to the world anti-colonialist, pro-peace movement crystallized in the Bandung conference of April 1955. The position taken by these Asian-African forces is based on settlement of outstanding questions by negotiation.

### **Road to Peace**

While many Arab voices reacted unfavorably to the Soviet statement of April 17 on the Middle East, in which a peaceful solution of the problem through the UN was advocated, the important voice of Colonel Anwar El-Sadat, Egyptian minister of state and member of the Revolutionary Council, represented the more hopeful trend. "The Soviet Union," he said in the Cairo *Al Goumhouria* after the statement was issued, "wants to establish peace in the Middle East and to fortify the independence of all the nations in the area, Israel included. It stands for settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict with the agreement of both sides." And he added that there was nothing in this view that was not consistent with Arab interests.

"The danger of a major clash between Israel and her Arab neighbors has lately become very real indeed," wrote the Soviet weekly,

*News*, on May 10. The top Soviet leaders have expressed their desire to further this peace objective by the April 17 statement and in subsequent statements. On May 18 Soviet Premier Bulganin spoke to Israeli Ambassador to the USSR Joseph Avidar at a reception at the French Embassy in Moscow. When Avidar told Bulganin that Israel wanted to negotiate peace, the latter replied, "We believe you want peace" (*N.Y. Post*, May 19). And on June 5, Soviet Communist Party head Nikita Khrushchev told a French delegation visiting Moscow that there is "still a cold war between us and Israel but we expect to get over it quickly" (*N.Y. Times*, June 6).

The desire of Israel itself for peace has been strongly affirmed in recent weeks, a far cry from the "preventive war" sentiment that prevailed some months ago. Neutralist sentiment is growing there. Homer Bigart re-

ported from Jerusalem (*N.Y. Times*, May 22) that Premier Ben Gurion remarked that if Egypt were to invite him for peace talks, "I would go to Cairo like a shot." On June 1, Ben Gurion wrote in *Davar*, organ of his Mapai Party, that "Israel must refrain from initiating war even if provocation by Arab rulers is intensified."

But realization of peace demands unremitting efforts, to build on the favorable situation created by united UN activity. Americans can further the cause of Middle Eastern peace by urging upon the State Department full cooperation in Big Four efforts towards initiating negotiations. The policies of the State Department dominated by oil interests need to be combatted by U.S. public opinion and channeled in the direction of bona fide negotiations between Israel and the Arab states backed by unanimous Big Four action.

### ***Polish Jews and Saudi Arabian Bans***

*The following dispatch dated June 1 from Cairo by New York Daily News correspondent Issa el Korashi tells a revealing story.—Eds.*

**S**AUDI ARABIA has abruptly canceled a multi-million-dollar contract under which Poland was to build a 1,000-mile-long railroad because most of the engineers sent to start work were Jews, *The News* was informed today.

A Polish embassy source here confirmed that Saudi Arabia had refused to allow the Polish Jews to enter the country.

But this source blamed the United States for Saudi Arabia's tearing up of the construction contract. The Pole asserted that the U.S. promised Saudi Arabia support in her dispute with Britain over the oil-rich oasis Buraimi if the Polish contracts were cancelled. . . .



# Toward Revival of Soviet Jewish Culture

**While the Soviet Union maintains silence,  
there are encouraging developments**

**By THE EDITORS**

**A**BOUT 100 of our subscribers in the New York area accepted the invitation of the Editorial Board to meet on May 22 to talk over the recent revelations about Soviet Jewish culture. It was an evening of frank discussion opened by a reading of the Editorial Board statement published in our June issue. After an hour of comment and questions from the audience, the evening ended with remarks by each member of the Board.

The discussion showed our readers to be deeply disquieted by the revelations. Nor could all the questions be answered, since we do not as yet have full information on what happened. However, the U.S. government release on June 4 of a copy of the Khrushchev report on Stalin at the Twentieth Soviet Party Congress does give us wider basis for grasping the events.

Among the numerous and shocking crimes detailed by Khrushchev, his speech corroborated reports that several small peoples were entirely uprooted by Stalin's criminal de-

parture from socialist policy on the national question. Khrushchev referred to the mass deportation of the Karachi and Kalmyk peoples from their ancestral territories and the brutal dissolution of the Chechen-Ingush and Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Republics. The crimes against Jewish culture and Jewish leaders and writers were one phase of this violation of nationality rights.

## ***Why no Reference to Jews?***

The Khrushchev speech makes clear that Stalin was personally responsible for the extortions of false confessions in the Moscow doctors' case. It is hard to understand why Khrushchev did not mention anti-Semitism in his allusion to the case. The *Pravda* editorial of April 6, 1953 had made it plain that the perpetrators of this frame-up "attempted to inflame . . . feelings of national antagonism which are profoundly alien to the socialist ideology," that is, tried to incite anti-Semitism in violation of socialist principles.

Furthermore, why did not Khrushchev even refer to the execution of Jewish leaders and writers and the snuffing out of Soviet Jewish culture when he discussed Stalin's perversion of the national policy mentioned above? It may be, as Harrison Salisbury writes (*N.Y. Times*, June 6), that this subject "is apparently scheduled for treatment only later in the Soviet Union."

But why the delay? If the full text of the speech contains material on the Soviet Jews, it is time that the authentic text be published in its entirety. If not, a declaration by the Soviet government on this subject is not only long overdue to the Jewish people throughout the world but to all democratic opinion, which is rightly concerned with this matter.

The cause of peaceful co-existence also requires Soviet official clarification of the facts and of its plans to reconstruct Jewish culture in the Soviet Union.

### **Moves Toward Greater Liberty**

Meanwhile, reports are received almost every day of steps toward greater liberty for the people in the socialist states. On April 23, for instance, the Supreme Soviet decreed the rescinding of wartime rules providing imprisonment for workers for changing jobs. Factory and office workers may now quit their jobs on two weeks' notice.

The whole Soviet criminal code is up for revision. On April 19 a decree was issued forbidding speedy trial and immediate execution of persons



*Part of an audience in a Moscow concert hall obviously enjoying a recent concert of Jewish folk song and readings from Yiddish classics.*

accused of counter-revolutionary acts. Accused persons will have the right to counsel during the pre-trial investigation, instead of only at the trial itself. And a recent issue of the Soviet party theoretical organ, *Kommunist*, states that the Soviet legal code will incorporate the principle that a person is innocent until proven guilty. Further, a French delegation to the Soviet Union was told in May that all internment camps would be closed within 18 months.

Especially important is the law with regard to confessions. For the Khrushchev report makes clear that one of the main weapons of repression in the Soviet Union had been the use of forced confessions to obtain convictions. A recent article in the authoritative journal *Soviet State and Law* rejected as a "glaring violation of the principle of Soviet legality" the doctrine developed by the late Andrei Vyshinsky that a person could be convicted solely on the basis of his own "confession."

Among further steps toward insuring strict observance of Soviet law is the setting up of a new group empowered to inspect and oversee all the work of security organs, from the prosecutor's office to the prisons. On June 4, the *N.Y. Times* reported from Moscow that Soviet State Prosecutor R. A. Rudenko criticized the Ministry of Justice for its failure to carry out plans for codification of the law. The Ministry of Justice has been abolished and its functions given to Republic ministries.

## Jewish Delegations Going to USSR

It is heartening to learn that rabbis have been given permission to send delegations to the Soviet Union to study Jewish religious life there.



Max Resnik-Martov, Soviet Yiddish monologist, reciting from *Tevye the Milkman*, by Sholem Aleichem, in a Moscow hall recently.

Five members of the Rabbinical Council of America (Orthodox) will make up the delegation led by Rabbi David B. Hollander (New York), council president, and including Rabbis Samuel Adelman (Newport News, Va.), Gilbert Klapperman (Lawrence, L. I.), Emanuel Rackman (Far Rockaway, Queens, N. Y.) and Herschel Schachter (Bronx). (*N. Y. Times*, May 14.)

On May 28 it was announced that a group of six Reform and Conser-

vative members of the New York Board of Rabbis led by Rabbi Morris Kertzer will visit the Soviet Union this summer for the same purpose. In a letter received by the Board recently, Rabbi Solomon Shlifer of Moscow wrote: "We, the leaders of the religious community of Moscow, will receive with honor and great love the declaration of the New York Board of Rabbis which intends to visit our country and see with their own eyes our spiritual condition."

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress and also the newly-elected president of the World Zionist Organization, has by now arranged to visit the Soviet Union to discuss with the high Soviet officials Jewish life there and the possibility of emigration to Israel.

In the meantime, Rabbi Shlifer announced to his congregation at the Shevuoth service on May 17 that a new theological seminary would be opened, that government shops in Jewish neighborhoods will sell kosher meat and that the government would open kosher restaurants (*N.Y. Times*, May 20.)

### ***Sholem Aleichem Commemoration***

There have been developments also in the area of Soviet Yiddish culture. Reporting a Yiddish cultural event in Moscow, I. Katznelsen, Moscow correspondent of the Polish Yiddish paper *Folks-Shtimme*, said

in mid-May that the Jews of Moscow are insistently asking when a Yiddish theater and newspaper will appear.

In concluding his article, Katznelsen, himself a Soviet Yiddish writer, conveys his sense of the present feelings of Soviet Jews.

"I recall the few warm-hearted words spoken by David Bergelson at the grave of the Soviet Yiddish writer, Ezra Finenberg, who died prematurely," wrote Katznelsen. "For us in the Soviet Union, the wish



*Clara Vaga, Soviet Yiddish folk singer, performing at a recent Moscow concert.*

is fully realized that the work of those who have died will be carried on by the living. Let us carry on Ezra's love for the people.

"The best remembrance of our  
(Continued on page 36)

## WE'LL GO ON LIVING!

By BINEM HELLER

The old wound's not yet healed,  
and now I bleed anew in anguished pain.  
Why must it always be my fate  
to be put closest to the rampant flame?  
Yet will I pass the test again,  
and not give way to grieving,  
but boldly overcome it with my cry:  
"We'll go on living!"

The selfsame foe who crushed me  
in the ghetto, now has strangled me again.  
Secretly he stole into my ranks,  
concealing well his perfidy from them.  
Trustingly I handed him my weapons,  
which he turned on me with deadly aim.  
He deafened me, and numbed my senses,  
in my faith's own name.

He pilloried me with trumped-up accusations,  
and waited for my sanity to flee.  
He used the law, *my* law,  
to weave a hangman's noose for me.  
He'd lose the battle in the open,  
no one there would shield his infamy.  
So pointing traitorously at me,  
he branded me the enemy.

He spread his poison everywhere,  
and drove the loyal and the brave away.  
Always, when he filled a post,  
he chose a coward as his protege.  
His words were patterned into phrases  
meant to hide his evils and deny them;  
words designed to break the man  
who dared defy him.

But this time, too, I pierced his masquerade,  
and cut him out like morbid, rotten flesh.  
My pain is fresh, and raw, and sharp—  
So be it! But let my conscience never rest,  
and let my sorrow always stay,  
so long as this disease does not arise  
again, in new disguise,  
on Communism's way.

January, 1956

(Translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld)

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BINEM HELLER is one of the leading Yiddish poets of Poland. His work has appeared previously in this magazine.

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## A Soviet Yiddish writer visits his publisher

**Creative activity goes on and publication  
of new and old works is planned**

**By ARON VERGELIS**

AS a Jewish poet I was invited to the publishing house "Sovietsky Pisatel" (Soviet Writer) in the center of Moscow at the end of last year to discuss questions relating to the publication of my verse. A few months later I was summoned again to see the proofs of my future book.

Sergei Kiryanov, managing editor, sat at the desk next to me, talking over the telephone to a leading member of the Writers' Union. From

what he said I guessed that they were talking about the meeting of the editorial board held a day earlier:

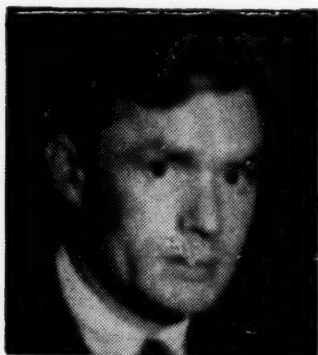
"We discussed the prose writings of Venclova (Lithuanian author) and the selected poems of Perets Markish. . . ."

The speaker at the other end of the wire had apparently remarked that Perets Markish was a highly prolific poet and that the new volume should include productions from all the periods of his work. Kiryanov reassured the speaker:

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ARON VERGELIS is one of the younger contemporary Soviet Yiddish poets.

JULY, 1956



Aron Vergelis

"Our volume includes about 10,000 lines of poetry. . . . We are including Markish's poem *Volhynia*, written in his youth, as well as chapters from his epic about the civil war, *Brothers*, and lyrical verse. You know, furthermore, that *Goslitizdat* (State Literary Publishers) is issuing a two-volume edition of Markish's works, and *Detgiz* (publishers of books for children) is issuing a volume of his ballads. All these will be issued this year."

Ten books were issued by Moscow publishers during the poet's lifetime. His latest volume was published by *Goslitizdat* in an edition of 10,000. But there is a great demand for Markish's poetry on the book market. The Soviet Writers' Union of the USSR has therefore set up a special commission for the publication of the literary heritage of Markish.

The commission has made extensive plans for publication of his poetry. The volume will include, in addition to the books mentioned by

Kiryanov, a complete collection of his works in Yiddish and Russian. A monograph on the life and work of Perets Markish in English is being prepared by the Foreign Languages Publishing House.

### Other Publications Planned

David Bergelson, Lev Kvitko, Aron Kushnirov and Ezra Fininberg are some of the Soviet Jewish authors whose works are being prepared for the press. New editions will be issued of Bergelson's novels *By the Dnieper* and *Mirele* and of his stories, "The Deaf Man," "Giro-Giro," "In the Glow of Bonfires," "Birobidjan Motifs" and others by *Sovietsky Pisatel*.

Lev Kvitko's books are general favorites, especially with Soviet children. His books are available in translation in the languages of 33 peoples of the USSR. A large volume of Lev Kvitko's work is now being prepared for the press.

At the publishing house I learned that a volume of Aron Kushnirov's selected verse is being prepared for the press. Speaking of Aron Kushnirov (who died of cancer of the stomach in 1949), Sergei Kiryanov told me: "I served together with Aron in the people's guard during the first months of the Patriotic War. He was loved by all the soldiers. We knew that 'the old man,' as we called him, could be well relied upon in a bayonet charge and that he was one of the best poets."



Our conversation was interrupted by one of the make-up men, who brought in a batch of designs for book covers. Some bore the names of my colleagues in Yiddish literature, Gersh Dobin and Joseph Rabin. Recently returned from long trips with a fresh store of impres-



Samuil Halkin, Soviet Yiddish writer of Moscow, whose latest poetry is soon to be published.

sions, they have written new stories. G. Dobin is again packing his suitcases: he is getting ready for a trip to see the work on the construction of the Bratsk Hydro-Electric Station on the Irtysh, in Siberia, hoping to collect interesting materials for a new book.

Rabin dropped in to see the editor while I was in the office. After exchanging a few remarks with me, he got down to business. Producing a review of the book of Rakhil Boynmvol, (a woman poet), he said that he had received a telephone call

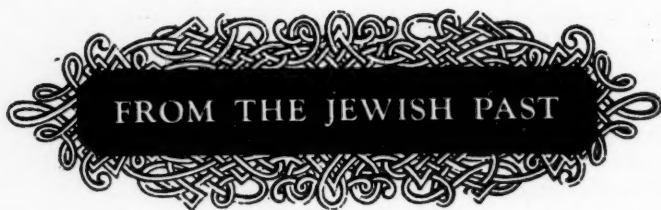
from the publishers advising that Boynmvol asked him to rush his review

### **Jewish Literary Activity**

Rabin is often asked by the publishers to write reviews of books of Yiddish authors for the benefit of Russian readers. On the recommendation of Rabin and other authors, *Sovietsky Pisatel* has undertaken to publish in Russian translation Eli Gordon's stories about collective farm life, a documentary story of the young Yiddish writer, a former partisan Mikhail Lev, a book of selected verse by the talented poet Matvei Gartsman, who died a hero's death in the Patriotic War, and a volume of new poems by Mendel Livshits. Another visitor came in: Noah Lurie, one of the oldest Yiddish writers. His novel *In the Quiet of the Woods* was highly valued by the publishers and accepted for publication. He called to sign a contract.

That evening I went to see Samuil Halkin (poet) at his home and found him discussing forthcoming publications with some of his colleagues. Riva Rubin, critic and literary scholar, told us about the progress of her work on the compilation of a big volume of Sholom Aleichem's stories, to be published by *Goslitizdat*. *Detizdat* is publishing Sholem Aleichem's *Motel*.

Samuil Halkin read to us the new translations of poems from his book, *The Tree of Life*, which he is now preparing for publication.



## Jewish Fishermen in the Ukraine

By LEON KOBRIN

**T**HAT morning I was seized by a fierce homesickness. I sat at my machine in the shop and worked mechanically, as usual, but before my eyes swam scenes and people of my old home town, scenes and people that were bound up with the best and happiest hours of my youth.

I saw the village of Novoselsky, in the Ukraine, where I spent the summers among the fishermen who worked for my father on the lakes. I saw the village houses with their straw roofs, the big lake at the foot of the hill. I saw the Jewish fishermen in their huts, sitting on the white floors repairing their nets with long wooden needles.

How happy I was among them, these sun-baked Jews with the

tangled beards! Some of those beards were white, but their owners were still strong; the sap still flowed in their bones, like ancient oaks.

They could drink for ten and never get drunk. They could eat for ten and never get a stomach-ache. They laughed heartily, swore heartily, joked heartily, and "where they slapped the earth, there the grass no longer grew." I could see them sitting around a long table which was hammered together out of ordinary, unpolished boards. They ladled the food out of large wooden dishes with big wooden spoons. With bronzed fingers they tore the fish which they had baked on straw in a hot oven, and with their fingers they popped the fish into their mouths to the accompaniment of a glass of whiskey, and another glass and still another.

The glasses are kept filled by the oldest fisherman, Zelik-Itse, an ancient Jew with a broad, white beard which always reeks of smelling-snuff and hundred-proof spirits; the

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LEON KOBRIN was a leading Yiddish fiction writer in this country. He died ten years ago—on March 31, 1946—at the age of 74. The above is excerpted from his autobiography, *My Fifty Years in America*, published in Buenos Aires in 1955.

merriest one, a great jokester and a Samson, despite his 70-odd years.

**I sit** at the table with them and eat. And how good the food tastes! And how heartily I eat—as though I were competing with them to see who could eat the most. Through the open window I can see the lake.

The meal finished, we wash it down with sour milk. The men wipe their beards, which are wet with milk. They wipe moustaches and lips with their hands. Here and there, someone belches.

"Hey you! devil-take-your-mother! where's my tobacco-box?" This is a favorite Ukrainian swearword of old Zelik-Itse, who is thumping all his pockets. When he finally finds his box, he pats the tobacco down with his thumb and takes a pinch. Then the "youngster" feels like clowning.

"Hey you, pup!" he calls out to me, "come on, Laybele, show us your paw, devil-take-your-mother!"

I give him my hand. It seems to me I too have a powerful grip and can match his strength. But in a moment—"Oh! Reb Zelik-Itse, please, let go my hand!"

Zelik-Itse laughs and says good-naturedly: "You pup, devil-take-your-mother! What do you care if you leave your paw in my hand!" Then he turns to the others. "Well, what are you waiting for, you mongrels! Carry the fish into the ice-house!" . . .

**How I loved** on summer nights to go out in the boats with these Jew-

ish fishermen! Often, when I was 18, I would put on the fishermen's leather apron and big hip boots and go out on the lake with them "to work the nets." We would go out at dusk. Hill and wood floated by us like pieces of cloud. It grew darker and darker. Sky, hill, wood and lake—a black void. The water underneath us slumbered. Occasionally, when the oars struck the water too hard, the lake would emit a sleepy murmur like a man awakened from a sound sleep.

The sudden, raucous cry of a crow echoes angrily through the blackness. One of the fishermen curses the crow because it is a bad omen. Old Zelik-Itse laughs. Of all the fishermen, he is the only one who doesn't believe in these superstitions.

"Eh, devil-take-your-mother!" he mocks. "If the fish had *your* sense they would be scared by the crow and swim away; but since they have *more* sense than you, they're not scared, and they won't run away, and we'll catch them."

He orders the men to set fire to the heaps of straw which we carry with us on the two boats and the lake is soon lit up. The fire attracts the fish. We cast out the nets. Then we begin to turn the pulley which drags the nets from the water. Here is a glistening fish in the net, and another and another. Aha! This one has a bright sheen—a sure sign of a good catch!

(Translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld)

# The Pattern of Repression in the U. S.

A new book surveying the state of  
civil liberties at home

By CELIA LEWIS ZITRON

**E**VEN if the new book by Corliss Lamont<sup>1</sup> did no more than present many aspects of the attacks on civil liberties through which our nation has lived in the last decade, it would be of tremendous value. As Mr. Lamont points out in his preface, there have been studies of various phases of the civil liberties crisis, but no volume has adequately presented a documented over-all survey of the drive against freedom in the United States since Osmond K. Frankel's *Our Civil Liberties* in 1944.

This gap Mr. Lamont's book fills admirably. And, written as it is, with the deep feeling and sense of urgency of one who is himself in the thick of the battle for civil liberties, it has a powerful impact on the reader. At this time, when we are

beginning to emerge from the cold war and when the road to recovery of freedom opens up before us, Mr. Lamont's book can serve as a source of necessary information and as a powerful spur to action.

But the book is more than a much-needed compilation of facts. From the study and sifting of what he describes as "the all-but-numberless violations of civil liberties" that have occurred in the last decade, Mr. Lamont has sought to present those which "illustrate the general pattern of repression." This he has done brilliantly: a scathing indictment of investigating committees and their illegal assumptions of power; penetrating analysis of the Smith act and the trials conducted under that act; other unconstitutional laws following in the wake of the Smith act; the loyalty-security program with its toll of individual suffering and the accompanying loss to the nation of scientists and other experts; the manner in which the Justice Depart-

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CELIA LEWIS ZITRON was in the first group of teachers dismissed from the New York City school system for refusing on the basis of the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to answer questions on political opinions and affiliations.

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<sup>1</sup> *Freedom is as Freedom Does*, by Corliss Lamont. Horizon Press, New York, 322 pages. \$3.95.

ment helps to destroy those very rights it exists to protect; growth of the FBI and the menace of a police state.

He describes as "official lawlessness" these manifestations of a planned government assault on the rights of the people. He discusses the destruction of academic freedom and its pernicious effect on scholarship and on the intellectual development of several generations of students. There is also a telling account of the blacklists in various professions with the accompanying impoverishment of our cultural life.

### ***Civil Liberties Are Indivisible***

The clarity and incisiveness with which Mr. Lamont analyzes these phenomena stem from a basic and consistent philosophy—that civil liberties are indivisible. For him, "complete civil liberties and freedom of expression for all persons everywhere" is a "universally valid ideal." And this is so because "it is constant and meaningful communication between individuals and groups that makes possible the advance of civilization, the flowering of democracy, the creation of human culture."

Mr. Lamont makes no exceptions to the universal applicability of the Bill of Rights. He is not one of those who accepts the "Communist menace" theory on which the structure of present day repression rests. "In all the anti-Communist furor of the past decade," he points out, "no

member of the Communist Party has ever been indicted or convicted for an overt act of violence against the government or even for advocating such an act. . . . The notion of an over-riding Communist menace in America has all along been a hoax, played up by the fascist elements to camouflage their anti-democratic aims."

Nor does he defend the civil rights of Communists in an apologetic manner, as others have done, on the basis that they are too few in number and too ineffectual to be a menace. He rather quotes the late Justice Jackson: "Freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter. . . . The test of its substance is the right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order." And he reminds us that the right to advocacy even of revolution is inherent in our tradition.

It is from the basic premise that civil liberties are indivisible that Mr. Lamont criticizes the Communist Party for its failure to support the Trotskyites who were the first victims of the Smith Act in 1941. (The Communist Party has itself acknowledged recently that it was mistaken on this score.)

Mr. Lamont lays the deterioration of the American Civil Liberties Union and departure from its original aims to the violation of the principle of civil liberties for everyone. Having adopted as its own the official government line of the "Communist menace," the ACLU could

no longer be effective in defense of individuals or organizations attacked as "Communist" or Communist-front."

### ***Defenders of Freedom***

Mr. Lamont's readiness to risk imprisonment in his defense of the First Amendment before the McCarthy Committee, his long years of leadership in the American Civil Liberties Union and now in the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, his lectures and pamphlets in defense of freedom, should make it clear that he is not a pessimist in regard to the struggle for civil liberties. Yet, if one were to pick anything to criticize in his book, it is an underestimation of past resistance to the destruction of our basic rights and present possibilities for regaining them.

Mr. Lamont does not sufficiently underscore the contribution of all those who chose to go to prison rather than help the government destroy the Bill of Rights. In addition if there are thousands of blacklisted artists and hundreds of dismissed teachers, this too bears witness to the will to resist, for every one of these men and women could have held on to jobs at the expense of integrity. At the very height of the hysteria more than 1,000 educators, scholars, ministers, at various times openly appealed for amnesty for Smith act prisoners—and this on the basis of the right of everyone to conscientious advocacy. Even in the



*Corliss Lamont*

superheated spy scare atmosphere surrounding the Rosenberg case there were eminent scientists as well as tens of thousands of more humble people who dared to explode publicly the theory of "atomic secrets" on which the case was built.

Mr. Lamont does point out that the situation is changing. "The year 1955," he says, "saw decided improvement in the civil liberties situation. Court decisions in a number of important cases exhibited a new concern for the Bill of Rights on the part of the judiciary. The State Department eased up on the granting of passports; the administration's wire-tapping bill, which the House of Representatives had passed in the previous Congress, could not even get reported out of committee; and the Justice Department's whole system of subsidized informers became widely discredited when Harvey

Matusow and other government witnesses revealed that they had been making lucrative careers out of lying."

He quotes Walter Lippmann: "We are in the early stages of a great popular reaction against the hysteria and the demagoguery, the lawlessness and the cruel injustices which we quite rightly call the era of McCarthyism. . . ." Mr. Lamont adds, "Undoubtedly the relaxation of international tensions, through the Summit Conference at Geneva and better relations between America and the Communist bloc, has helped greatly in creating a more calm and more tolerant atmosphere within the United States."

### ***The Tide Is Turning***

It is, of course, not possible to be all-inclusive in a book of not quite 300 pages. Yet the chapter "Is the Tide Turning?" seems all too brief. One wishes Mr. Lamont had gone into greater detail in describing the signs of a changing atmosphere.

Developments subsequent to the publication of Mr. Lamont's book bolster the case for greater optimism. The Supreme Court has dealt a blow against state sedition laws by its reversal of the Nelson conviction and has set back the indefensible use of obviously lying informers by sending back to the Subversive Activities Control Board the Communist Party conviction under the Internal Security act. There are also the Supreme Court decision in the case of Profes-

sor Slochower reversing a dismissal for use of the Fifth Amendment; the forthright stand on academic freedom adopted by the American Association of University Professors and its censure of several universities for violations of academic freedom; the strong resolution on civil liberties calling for repeal of repressive legislation adopted at the recent convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, and the resolution passed by the American Jewish Congress convention in April calling for "reconsideration . . . leading to revision or repeal" of repressive laws.

Yet it would be folly to disregard Mr. Lamont's warning that we are only at the *beginning* of the road back. A great deal remains to be done. He reminds us: "None of the repressive laws which Congress has passed has been declared invalid by the U.S. Supreme Court; and the government is still bringing prosecutions under the Smith act, the Internal Security act, the Communist Control act, the Immunity act, and the Walter-McCarran Immigration act."

And certainly we can agree with his conclusion that "there will never come a time, in my opinion, when the American people can afford to look upon their liberty as permanently established and automatically functioning. Eternal vigilance is the price of transforming an ideal—into this case the Bill of Rights—into a continuing reality."



INSIDE

# THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

## *Jewish War Veterans*

The Jewish War Veterans of the U.S. refused a request from a German veterans' group to use their "influence with Congress, the American government and people to find a charitable solution" to the problem of 21 soldiers detained in the U.S. Army's Landsberg Prison. The JWV letter to the German organization declined to take favorable action because "these men are responsible for the death and destruction of millions of innocent humans. . . . The Jewish War Veterans has been searching for 23 years for something which could in some way absolve the German people of responsibility for what was done in their name to men, women and children whose only crime was to have been born of Jewish parents. . . . The German people, who are severely trying to atone, deserve forgiveness, but those directly responsible for the insanity and acts of bestiality beyond description should not be set free."

## *Anti-Defamation League*

Charges made by ADL head Henry E. Schultz that the suspension of many government employees was "animated by elements of anti-Semitism" were responded to by Lloyd Wright, chairman of the Commission on Government Security with a request for further details of the charges and "names of individuals involved."

A Chicago press conference heard Benjamin R. Epstein, national director of the ADL, charge Arab propagandists in the U.S. with a campaign to spread anti-Semitism and to encourage American bigots and hate-mongers. He called for a State Dept. curb on this anti-Jewish propaganda.

## *B'nai B'rith*

The 113 year old B'nai B'rith held its triennial convention last May in Washington. This is the giant of American Jewish organizations, with great prestige and influence. The body was reported to have 400,000 members in 1750 chapters in USA and Canada, plus groups in 30 nations. The five-day convention was attended by 1000 delegates, including representatives from Israel, Europe and South America.

Quotes from the convention:

*Senator Herbert H. Lehman:* "For many years we have lived in a fog of synthetically manufactured fear. . . . We have seen Congress permit its chambers to be used as a privileged sanctuary for the launching of irresponsible assaults against the good name of perfectly loyal individuals and institutions."

*Philip M. Klutznick* (B.B. president in his report): On the Mid-East, he urged "initiating honest industrious negotiations that can promote mutual-ity and provide a basis of settlement for the refugee problem, the question

of Jordan water rights and similar fundamental issues that are the core of friction in the Middle East." He also called for a "balance of military power" in the area by U.S. arms shipment to Israel.

On the Soviet Union, Klutznick said that he would "accept the premise that the new Soviet regime is truly opposed to anti-Semitism the same day that I recognized the existence of conditions which would make possible a B'nai B'rith movement in Moscow or Kishinev free to pursue its purposes as are the Jews of B'nai B'rith in such places as Rome and Dublin."

On the U.S., Klutznick criticized some Jewish leaders for "an excessive nostalgia to superimpose upon Jewish life in America some of the methods, ideas, programs and customs of the Jewish communities of yesterday."

An important development was the unanimous endorsement by the delegates of a proposal to form an international federation of Jewish organizations that would act "consultatively" on world problems. Mr. Klutznick declared that the success of the "experiment" would depend on the participation of other major Jewish organizations throughout the world.

### ***Jewish Labor Committee***

Sharp warnings that the White Citizens' Councils menace the existence of trade unionism in the South were issued by H. L. Mitchell, president of the National Agricultural Workers Union, and Boris Shishkin, director of the Civil Rights Dept. of the AFL-CIO, at a three-day conference on civil rights called by the Jewish Labor Committee in May. The session organized the National Trade Union Council and elected the leaders of 22 unions to its executive board.

The conference heard Harry P. Cain, a member of the Subversive Activities Control Board, call the internal security system a "Twentieth Century American Tragedy." He declared the attorney general's list of over 300 so-called subversive organizations "is being used to further the nefarious and harmful causes of libel and slander."

Another speaker, Charles Abrams, chairman of the State Commission Against Discrimination, hit tenement housing in New York City as "probably the worst in the world after the mud huts of the African Gold Coast." He called for a halt to all slum clearance projects until new housing is erected on now-vacant land.

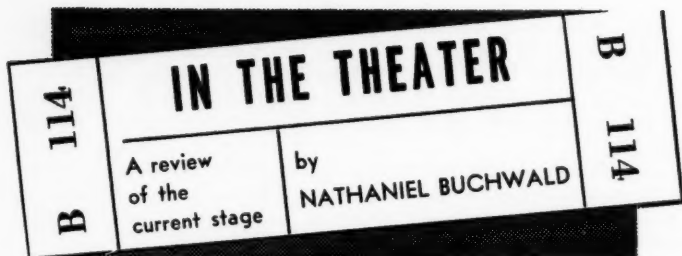
### ***Union of Amer. Hebrew Congs.***

Local zoning restrictions against churches and synagogues were attacked as "Un-American" by Sydney W. Roos, president of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues on May 23. Mr. Roos cited moves against a Catholic Church in Rochester and against synagogues in Sands Point and Garden City, New York. He called for the banning of such "infringement on the liberty of worship" by state law.

### ***Fight Segregation as Jews***

Rabbi Israel Goldstein told his B'nai Jeshurun congregation on June 2 that "as American Jews we must defend the rights of the Negroes as zealously as we would defend our rights as Jews whenever and wherever these might be threatened." He urged use of the "full powers" of the federal government to enforce desegregation and more vigorous federal action to protect the right to vote.

S. P.



## Are Yiddish playgoers "extinct"?

**T**HE Yiddish theater in this country has shrunk almost to the vanishing point. In New York, with its two and a half million Jews, only two Yiddish playhouses are scheduled to open next fall when the new season begins. And the Yiddish theatrical season has been reduced to some ten or 12 weeks.

There is a ready explanation for the virtual disappearance of Yiddish stage activity, in New York and throughout the country. With two-thirds of the Jewish population American born and the remainder knowing enough English to enjoy stage entertainment in the language of the land, who is there left to patronize the Yiddish theater? The influx of new Yiddish-speaking immigrants under the McCarran quotas amounts to a mere trickle. The graduates of Jewish schools where Yiddish is taught do not make up, except in an infinitesimal measure, for the inevitable losses due to death and assimilation. In a word, Yiddish audiences have all but disappeared—and with them the Yiddish playhouses.

But this "simple" explanation does not explain the fact that in other cultural media Yiddish is still very much alive and has a wide, even if shrinking, mass base. There are still three Yiddish dailies in New York with a coun-

try-wide circulation, in addition to a number of weeklies and monthlies. Numerous books of all kinds are still published in Yiddish even though there is no normal market of channels of distribution for such books. Yiddish singing societies still attract audiences large enough to fill Carnegie Hall and comparable concert houses elsewhere. Yiddish radio programs and newscasts are still given regularly on a commercially-sponsored basis. Hundreds of lectures are still delivered in Yiddish on various subjects and dozens of women's reading circles gather weekly to read and discuss literary works in Yiddish.

The disproportion between Yiddish

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theater audiences and those in other fields of cultural activity is so pronounced that one inevitably comes to the conclusion that something is specifically wrong with the Yiddish stage. What?

**To diagnose** the malady is not an easy matter because the ills of the Yiddish stage are many and complicated. Some of them are chronic, others are a by-product of the very decline and shrinkage of the Yiddish theater. The remedies administered to the patient over the years have had the effect of worsening his condition.

By and large, the commercial exploitation of the Yiddish theater has brought about its steady and quickening decline.

In its 50th anniversary issue (January 4, 1956) *Variety* saw fit to reprint its warning of 25 years ago about the dangers confronting the Yiddish theater at a time (1929) when there were "over 40 Yiddish theaters in the country with 1,600 Yiddish actors" and 10 Yiddish playhouses in Greater New York. Predicting that "unless conditions alter radically, there will be no Yiddish theater within five or ten years," this trade journal of "show business" ascribed the plight of the Yiddish stage to "many causes," among

which were listed "mismanagement" and "the irresistible drawing power of Broadway attractions which the Yiddish theatergoer in New York has come to appreciate." Elaborating on this point, *Variety* wrote in 1929:

"The Yiddish theater-goer is fully educated in entertainment values and has been for years. Primitive production methods, unpopular stars, re-hashed play material will not draw."

This picture, essentially true, applies also to the present-day remnants of Yiddish "show business." And it is true now, as it was a quarter of a century ago, that the diminished use of Yiddish generally does not fully account for the sad and ever worsening state of the Yiddish theater. *Variety* was right in speaking of the Yiddish playgoer who was turning his back to the Yiddish stage. It was not the language that lured him to Broadway and drove him from Second Avenue, and it is not the decreased use of Yiddish that has rendered Yiddish theater audiences "virtually extinct," as *Variety* puts it.

**Among the two and a half million** Jews in New York and about an equal number in the rest of the country there are still many hundreds of thousands of *potential* Yiddish playgoers

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who either *live* the Yiddish language as their mother tongue or understand it and are alive to its special appeal as the connecting cultural link with their parents, not to speak of the Jewish cultural past. Were it not for the fact that Yiddish playgoers, actual and potential, are and have been for years disgusted with the cheap and shoddy "entertainment" in the Yiddish theater, there would now still be Yiddish audiences large enough to sustain a number of Yiddish theaters. But it is undeniably true that for the kind of "Yiddishe shows" that have been produced in the past two decades Yiddish audiences are "virtually extinct" and getting extincter.

The practitioners of Yiddish "show business" embarked on a suicidal course when they began introducing, some 30 years ago, the "fifty-fifty" lingo on the Yiddish stage—a vulgar mixture of uncouth and uncultured Yiddish combined with equally cheap English. In this manner they sought to "solve" the language question and attract the Jewish youth to the Yiddish theater. While they failed in the latter, they succeeded in entrenching on the Yiddish stage the type of offensive entertainment that scandalized cultured audiences and turned them away in disgust from the Yiddish stage.

The tastes of the uncritical playgoers who started with such "Yiddishe shows" became progressively more and more corrupted. The Yiddish language itself began to be regarded and treated as "funny." Hence, the vile "Yiddishe jokes" and "comedy" of *Bagels and Yox*, *Blintzes and Screams*, *Borshtcapade* and—Mickey Katz, who merely picked up where Menasha Skulnik left off.

**This writer** fully joins in Jacob Ben-Ami's appraisal of this sort of "Jewish humor." The noted Yiddish actor, as

quoted in *Intro Bulletin* of May, 1956, said:

"The bagel and lox and borscht-capade program appeals mostly to minority-minded Jews who think poking fun at themselves in public will make Gentiles like them better. Underneath it is self-mockery, the minority complex. All minorities get that way when they lose their own culture and haven't acquired anything else to replace it. You have the same thing in other minority programs. Italian, for instance. It's a corrupt thing."

But what about cultured Yiddish audiences? We know that they are not "extinct." Then why is there not a single Yiddish theater to meet their tastes and cultural needs?

This will be the subject of our next article.

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# Observation post

By ANNE FRIEDLANDER

**Mild Business Dip Seen for Summer:** says N. Y. Times. Lucky business—only a mild dip for them. For JEWISH LIFE it looks like it might be a *big dip*. Notice, we say “might be” because we feel sure, dear reader, that you’ll be ready to buoy us up during the rough weather ahead. We’re asking for Life-savers in the form of \$1, \$2, \$5 and \$10 contributions—that’ll help build a raft to keep us afloat until the calmer fall days are here.

**Statistics:** We’ve got a circulation chart in the office and any doctor looking at it would shake his head sadly and say—“It’s just got to go up if the American-Jewish community is to be strengthened through its understanding of the problems it faces.” So, in order to bring a smile to our doctor’s face, we are calling on every reader to introduce JEWISH LIFE to friends and neighbors. Our slogan for the month —*from every old friend a new reader*. And—presto—our circulation is doubled.

**We Heard the Jewish People Singing:** May was a big month for concerts in New York and we were lucky enough to get to two of them. The May 12th concert of the Jewish Young Folksingers, who were joined by the Young People’s Choir of the St. Paul’s Disciples Church, was one of the most joyous and charming concerts we have attended. And when the two choruses sang “Jericho” together, one could literally feel the “walls” of discrimi-

nation, anti-Semitism and Jimcrow “come tumbling down.”

On May 26th, the Jewish People’s Philharmonic Chorus gave an outstanding and exciting concert. Their rendition of Handel’s *Joshua* was so beautiful and moving that it received a standing ovation from the audience. The attendance at both concerts revealed the love for Jewish cultural expression so prevalent in the American Jewish community. Both of the choruses—the young and the old—are to be congratulated for keeping alive this rich cultural heritage.

**Mike Gold Goes Touring:** By the time this reaches you, Mike will have visited Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago. Our Jewish Life Committees were so enthusiastic at the prospect of a visit with Mike, that we are sure the tour will be a very successful one. His topic—a very timely one—(and a tough one) is on Jewish culture in the socialist countries. Denver and San Francisco are also on the itinerary—but that’s in July. Good luck, Mike. We know you’ll see many old friends and make many new ones.

**Reminder:** Just in case you’ve forgotten what we said at the beginning of this column—we need life-savers to help us through the next few months—a dollar from every reader would do the trick, but there are always those who never get round to tucking that dollar into an envelope—if you’ve got a little more to spare, you can make up for the lazy ones.

## SOVIET JEWISH CULTURE

(Continued from page 19)

dead is to carry on their creative work for the people to whom they were so closely bound. We are not sitting *Shiva* (mourning); we do not rend our clothes; we do not harbor thoughts of despair. We are carrying forward our work of advancing our socialist land, building our culture of brotherhood and peace."

A significant observance of the 40th anniversary of the death of Sholem Aleichem was held at the Central House of the Soviet Writers Union in Moscow on May 13. An extended account of the affair was published in the Soviet *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Literary Gazette) on May 15. Leading writers, actors and musicians, both Jewish and non-Jewish, attended.

### **Yiddish Cultural Activities**

Chairman of the evening, Soviet writer Vsevolod Ivanov, made opening remarks in tribute to the great classic Yiddish writer. He announced that an edition of one million copies of a Russian translation of Sholem Aleichem's stories for children will soon appear. The Yiddish scholar, Riva Rubin, spoke about Sholem Aleichem as man and writer, memorial poems by S. Halkin and S. Marshak were recited, excerpts from his works were read and a scene from *Tevye the Milkman* was presented in Yiddish. A few days later com-

memorative meetings attended by distinguished audiences were held at the Moscow Institute of Science and at the Moscow Philharmonic Hall.

An article by Mikhail Levin sent out on May 28 by the Press Department of the Soviet Embassy in Washington reports numerous concerts of Yiddish song and literature by two seasoned Soviet Jewish performers, Clara Vaga, singer, and Max Reznik-Martov, monologuist. The latter studied under Solomon Mikhoels and his style is reminiscent of the late great Jewish master and director of the Moscow Yiddish Art Theater.

The pair performed a series of concerts to full houses in Moscow recently. Both have been touring throughout the Soviet Union with their programs of Yiddish folk song and literature, giving as many as 20 concerts a month. Clara Vaga has recently performed in Leningrad, Sverdlosk and other towns in the Urals, in Central Asia and Siberia. She plans to give concerts soon in Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa and other cities.

Following one concert, Levin reports, a Dr. Isaak Altschuler of Moscow remarked: "Like most people who read Yiddish, I have known *Tevye the Milkman* from childhood. Reznik-Martov conveys the charm of this wonderful Jewish classic beautifully." The popularity of these occasional concerts indicates the existence of an audience for the



## AFTERMATH OF THE PRAGUE TRIAL

ON MAY 13, Mordecai Oren, a leader of the left wing Zionist Mapam Party, was released from a Czech jail after having served four and a half years of a 15-year term for "espionage." Oren testified at the Prague trial of the Slansky group. After his release Oren said that there are people still imprisoned in Czechoslovakia "whose only crime is love of Zion." Back in Israel, Oren related details of his great ordeal—endless interrogation with hardly any food, water or sleep. He said that he had been forced "by means foreign to fundamental and socialist practices to confess to what never happened." "In all the charges and confessions I signed," he said "there was only one true thing, and that was my name. All the other things were lies, fabricated by those who desecrate socialist ideals and socialist regimes." He said that he had been a victim not of a socialist regime but of those who had brought down its moral tone.

Artur London, a defendant in the Slansky trial itself, who had been sentenced to life imprisonment, has also been released. In an interview at his home in Prague in May, London said that "methods of violence" had been used to make him confess to crimes of high treason and espionage of which he was innocent. He said that a court had completely exonerated him on Feb. 2. London added that he had never lost faith in socialism and he has become a Communist Party member since his release.

The Prague *Rude Pravo* reported on April 12 that some police officials had been discharged after an investigation and that some would be punished for having used "inadmissible methods."

revival of a Yiddish theater and press.

### ***A Soviet Statement Still Needed***

So long as such an audience exists—even if it is diminishing—nationality rights under socialism require that cultural provision for this audience be made. Violation of this principle with respect to Soviet Jews did great harm to the Soviet Union and the cause of peace in the post-war period. Khrushchev is reported to have told a French delegation (*N. Y. Times*, June 6) that the topic

of Jews in the Soviet Union was "of small general interest." It was only, according to the report, on the delegation's insistence that Khrushchev went on to discuss the question at greater length. Post-war actualities have demonstrated, however, that the question has deeply concerned not only Jews but democratic-minded people all over the world. No statement on the matter has yet come from the Soviet Union. We believe that such a statement should be forthcoming, if for no other reason, because the interests of peace require it.

## "The Subject Is Accidental"

By STELLA BUCHWALD

**A**MONG the 28 paintings by Marc Chagall shown at the Perls galleries in New York during April there were examples from 1910 to 1953. Chagall is now living in France, where he went to study after leaving his boyhood home in the Russian town of Vitebsk. The work of this artist, however, is to be found in the museums and private collections the world over.

Chagall is well known to us in New York, where he lived for a while during the second World War and where he has been exhibiting for many years. Besides, now that the art market is centered in the United States, many of his paintings have remained in this country.

For the Jewish people Marc Chagall has particular interest. They feel a nostalgic sympathy with the little houses in the streets of the village, the little Jews who wander in and out of them, the lighted candles, the brides, the milk pails and all the other old-home scenes that he puts into his paintings. People read sentimental and idyllic Jewishness into these pictures and see a special message in the use that the artist has made of these familiar subjects.

Many essays, books and treatises have been written on what Chagall meant by the Jews in his paintings who perch on the roof of a house, or those who fly over the roof, or by the dead Jews who lie in the muddy

streets of the village, or by the green violinist, or the swinging clocks or the headless sows with their heads appearing elsewhere on the canvas.

**Let us hear** in Chagall's own words what he has to say about the "meanings" of his work. "I do not like literature. I follow only a psychic formalism. Thus in a picture, if I cut off the head of a cow, if I put the head on backwards, even if I have worked on my paintings upside down, this is not to tell a story. It is to introduce into my picture a psychic shock, which is always used for plastic reasons. . . subject is always accidental."

The story that is being read into these paintings, therefore, is not intended by Chagall but is found there by others.

Let us look at one of the paintings, "The Accordionist." Here we find a Russian-looking young man, half lying across a large shape with a big eye in the middle, playing an accordion, and a chicken peering at the instrument from behind his head, a girl with a milk pail, a cow's head, a snowy background with little huts. We may read something into these shapes, which seem to resemble familiar objects. Obviously Chagall used these objects only for "psychic shock" and the familiar subject-matter is only accidental.

**It should be** remembered that this artist is a product of the modern period in art history. Chagall was working during the early years of this century, when capitalism was entering its imperialist phase. In art abstract formalism and a movement away from reality was becoming stronger. Actually this movement stood for a *denial of life* and made use of the human being only for plastic reasons, or "psychic shock." By so doing this movement violated the basic tenet of art tradition, which is to *illumine* life. Thus we find that Chagall was painting and thinking like all the other artists of his time.

I have heard a woman standing in front of a painting by Chagall say, "He is crazy," after looking at the flying figures, swinging pendulums and green fish swimming all over the canvas. The approach of this woman is as incorrect as is the reading of all kinds of meanings into the plastic forms that Marc Chagall used. We owe it to the artist to try to understand what he is doing and to bring humility and knowledge in making our judgment of a work of art.

During this period of modern art in which Chagall was developing, great attention was given to original innovation. It was a kind of free-for-all search that Matisse, Braque, Picasso and others were making into formalism that grew out of the findings of Cezanne. The work of Marc Chagall was so very personal and so completely original that it received recognition even among these very original artists. Certainly there is great beauty to be found and a hedonist pleasure to be derived from his work. The color of Chagall is pure sensual delight, it is really "out of this world."

Look at the painting in the exhibition called "La Sainte Chapelle," with

the startling yellow, the misty blue, the lustrous white, the strong red. Everywhere, in every part of the work, the bold, unconventional color attracts you. The texture of the paint itself, in its imaginative variations, makes the picture alive and exciting. One could wish, however, that the drawing and composition were not so careless and were more disciplined.

**In recent years** Chagall has begun to repeat himself. What was once original becomes a stencil through repetition and there is no more of that "psychic shock" which Chagall says he wants in his work.

There is no question that Marc Chagall has made a contribution to modern painting. Drawing upon his early life and making imaginative use of the freedom that modern art permits, he has evolved a set of symbols entirely unlike any others of the period and entirely his own. He used these symbols—the fish, the clock, the violin, the bride and so on in an original way, in a style completely and intensely personal. His work provoked much discussion as to meanings and intent. This artist holds an important place in the world of art.

Yet, one may question whether the contribution of Chagall is important and whether it will live in the great art tradition. Can the work of an artist live if his subject matter is "accidental" and if he uses his great talent to knock you over by "psychic shock," thus denying the fundamental basis of great art, which establishes a simple relationship between the artist, his subject and life? Only time can tell what contribution this whole period of art will leave for the future. It is possible that the originality of Marc Chagall will not outlive the epoch.

## WORLD ZIONISM IN CRISIS

(Continued from page 9)

It is a quiet, natural, spontaneous process of which those experiencing it are not even aware." He noted that in addition to the "demand for a Jewish homeland," anti-Semitism had "performed a great function in Jewish life." Since the Jewish state is now a reality, it seems that the only hope for survival of the kind of Jewish life desired by the Zionists depends on the persistence of anti-Semitism. But is there not something wrong in the conception of Jewish life that requires a motivation based on survival of racist sentiment among non-Jews?

### *"Beautiful Facade"?*

Dr. Goldmann was not impressed with the opulent development of Jewish organized life in the U.S. "Jewish life in America," he said, "is a beautiful facade. In content and depth its spiritual values are ultimately not equal to the beautiful facade." His answer to this problem is greater intimacy between Israel and the "Diaspora." He also presented the opposite side of the coin, namely, that Israelis are showing decreasing interest in their ties with world Jewry except, we may add, as a source for money. For the natural tendency is for the Israel nation to focus its attention and energies on its own country as an independent and growing nation.

One can agree with Dr. Goldmann

and other voices at the Congress about disintegration of Jewish life, at least in its traditional aspects. Dr. Goldmann himself accounted for this in terms of an objective social process. But he overstated the case, for he did not take account of the expansion of Jewish education and various forms of Jewish life adapted to the new conditions in which Jews are living today. When Dr. Goldmann scorns American Jewish organized life as a "facade," he is rejecting valid products of this social process because of his belief—and the belief of Zionist leaders generally—that Jewish life outside Israel must orient itself on Israel.

Yet a valid and enduring culture cannot be built in dependence on a foreign country—Israel. Such a culture must be rooted in the life of people in their home country. And here is revealed perhaps the most important weakness of Dr. Goldmann's position. For he was ignoring one of the most important aspects of American Jewish organized life—its role in general American life in connection with the intense struggle for civil rights, defense of democratic liberties and democracy in general. These form a part of what Dr. Goldmann sweeps aside as a "facade." Why? Because he erroneously regards concentration on a Jewish culture based on Israel as the salvation of Jewish life outside Israel.

Paradoxically enough, Dr. Goldmann is president of the World Jew-

ish Congress, one of the many organizations which attempt to answer the real needs of the Jewish people today. For these groups attempt to fight for the security of the Jewish people by participation in the defense of democracy on a world scale. The same could be said of many Jewish organizations in this country and elsewhere which are responding to the changes and needs brought on by the development of modern society as a whole. Whatever agreement or disagreement one may have with aspects of the programs of American Jewish organized life, it is not a "facade" but an adjustment, in many instances progressive, to modern life. In its indiscriminate lament over the "decline" of contemporary Jewish life, it seems to me the Congress was thereby not contributing to the genuine needs of the Jews today.

### ***Question of Immigration***

As might be expected, the question of immigration of Jews to Israel occupied much of the attention of the Congress. In his report on immigration, Jewish Agency Treasurer Dr. Giora Josephthal stated that since the last Congress in 1951, over 80 per cent of the 132,000 immigrants came from Asia and Africa and 6,000—4.5 per cent—came from socialist countries. A four-year plan for immigration of 250,000-300,000 in the next four years, the greatest part from North Africa, was projected. Dr. Josephthal gave striking figures

regarding settlement of immigrants on the land: while 70 per cent of Israelis lived in three cities in 1948, the figure today is 50 per cent. In this period the population of the Negev has increased from 6,000 to 75,000 and of Galilee from 60,000 to 180,000. Only 50,000 persons remain in the Maabarothe (camps for immigrants) today.

The question of immigration to Israel of Jews from the USSR got considerable attention. A Congress resolution called upon the Soviet Union to "restore to its Jewish citizens their full rights to live a normal Jewish life" and also to permit emigration to Israel.

An acute comment on this point was made by Sidney Silverman, Labor M.P., who was a delegate from Mapam. "We can go to the Soviet government and ask them to allow Jews to be Jews. But what can we do for American Jewry? We cannot go to the American government. Can American Zionists then go to the Soviet regime and ask it to allow Russian Jews to do that which American Jews themselves have no wish to do?"

Whatever disagreements one may have with the conclusions of the Congress, one can join with the millions of Jews represented there in helping to assure the security and independence of the young state of Israel. Cooperation on steps to secure peace in the Middle East is the common ground on which all Jews and non-Jews as well can unite.

# letters



FROM READERS

## *A Reader's Questions*

*Editors, JEWISH LIFE:*

Soviet wisdom and morality having been tested and proved wanting in a number of instances, one now asks the questions:

a) What wisdom, and above all, what morality has dictated the current Middle East policy of the Soviet Union?

b) Is not the callousness of the alliance with the feudal despoilers of the Arab masses (an alliance neither more or less moral than Dulles' alliance with Franco, Chiang et al.) merely an extension of the same obscenity that prompted Stalin-Beria to seek safety from some imagined chimera by criminal acts against Jews and Jewish culture in the Soviet Union?

c) Would you pledge your honor that two or three years from now some change in outlook will not cause the Soviet Union to change its position and condemn the unfeeling attitude of the present leaders towards the remnant of Europe's, Africa's and Asia Minor's Jews who have gathered into a haven of safety in Israel. (Only such a re-antation could very well be by way of a post-mortem.)

My adherence to the cause of socialism was prompted by an abhorrence of fascism with its anti-Jewish genocidal overtones. In my repeated condemnation of fascism on the racist score I often encountered among my friends a derisive appellation of "Zion-

ist." Now my objection to Zionism was its contamination with big power imperialism. My discovery of the socialist movement with its Leninist viewpoint on nationalities seemed to solve my problem of finding a non-imperialist movement that could solve the Jewish problem.

But revelation of the impotence of the Soviet Communist Party in the face of a dotard and his criminal coterie make me wonder whether Zionism is not after all a safer theory, since, no matter what other faults it may have, it cannot blunder into genocidal anti-Semitism, a very important consideration for a Jew, for of what value can a bright new tomorrow be to an annihilated Jewish people, no matter whether the annihilation is accomplished by a Hitler gas chamber or by Arab bombardiers instructed in annihilation by teachers of the people's democracies.

While it is true that the Soviet Union must fight METO and other imperialist alliances against itself, surely, it is a childishly oversimplified solution to seek safety in an alliance with the feudal and slaveholding kings, satraps and dictators (not the people) of the benighted lands that still live in the Arabian Nights, and thus endanger the lives of Israel's men, women and children. It is the height of folly to give these people Mics and to teach them to fly them. Their unreliability as friends is proverbial and the current Soviet alliance with them can be a boomerang that will strike the Soviet

Union itself when they made use of Soviet assistance.

S. MURRAY

New York City, May 1

### The Editors Reply

**W**E disagree with S. Murray at many points.

a. Our intention is not to defend Soviet Middle Eastern policy but to evaluate its contribution (or not) to peace for our country, Israel, the whole Middle East and the world as a whole. Soviet policy has been directed towards nullifying the oil-and-pacts-and-war-breeding policy of the State Department. As *Haboker*, daily organ of the General Zionist Party in Israel, wrote on Sept. 30, 1955, after the announcement of the Czech sale of arms to Egypt: "As for Israel, Moscow intends her no harm. The Soviet Union sends arms not to Israel's enemy but to the state which carries forward a struggle against the Baghdad pact."

Moreover, by its trade and generally friendly relations with Arab states, the Soviet Union has placed herself in a position where Washington and London can no longer ignore her in Middle Eastern questions. London has in fact already reached a common ap-

proach with Moscow, while Washington still pursues its old policy.

Great power unity is necessary if peace, in the Middle East or anywhere, is to be preserved. Only through US-USSR joint participation in negotiations can Israel and the Arab states be brought around the conference table. And Soviet policy in the past months has opened up this possibility.

b. The Soviet Union has no "alliance with the Arab states, which are neutral and not tied to either bloc."

S. Murray's indiscriminate characterization of the leaders of "the benighted lands that still live in the Arabian Nights" is not true to the facts. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and other states are slowly and painfully and at different tempos moving to throw off the heritage of feudalism and colonialist oppression. The Arab peoples are intensely anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist. Without attempting any full characterization of present Arab leaders, it is a fact that these leaders have been compelled by mass anti-imperialist sentiment to adopt a neutralist, anti-colonialist, pro-peace position in general international affairs (for instance, Jordan's refusal to join the Baghdad pact).

This position is in contradiction with the aggressive attitude Arab states sometimes display toward Israel. What is needed is to get the Arab states to extend their pro-peace positions to include their relations with Israel. If some Arab leaders believe that they are going to be allowed to use the arms they have bought from the USA, England, France, Canada and Czechoslovakia to wipe out Israel, there is only one force that can demonstrate to them that they will have to abandon such ideas, the force of Four Power unity. Some Arab states did not like the Soviet Union's statement of April 17. But Soviet policy is becoming ever

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firmer on the need for *peace* in the Middle East.

c. We make one pledge now and for the future: to advocate a policy that seems to us best to further peace for our own country, for Israel and the world. We are always ready to reconsider the policies we favor if we are convinced that peace is not furthered by them.

S. Murray is entitled to hold any view he likes of the Soviet Union. But whatever that opinion, it does not change the fact that Zionism, as he says, is "contaminated with big power imperialism." We agree with S. Murray that Zionism is thus contaminated, as is shown by its current efforts to get a military pact between Israel and the United States. A peaceful and secure future for Israel will not be assured in the oil-drenched imperialism of the Middle East by following Zionist policies.

THE EDITORS

### **Why Were They Silent?**

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Now that all the peace-loving people are seriously doing their spring house cleaning, opening wide the doors and windows, welcoming the inrush of fresh air and sparkling sunshine—after the 20th Congress report—let us now unequivocally call a spade a spade.

One of the key paragraphs in "What Happened to Soviet Jewish Culture" [article from Warsaw Yiddish paper *Folks-Shtimme* in our May issue] made me physically sick and my gorge rise to the bursting point.

"Yes, certainly, we were *silent*, despite the fact that we saw and painfully felt the tragic results of the Beria gang. We were *silent* because we believed that not only the party of Lenin

could—and finally would—untangle the tragic knot. We were convinced that the party of Lenin would find the whole truth and *boldly* (!?) and determinedly reveal it to all people. Our faith and conviction has been fully justified." (Italics mine—M.K.)

This will someday be considered the most shameful contradictory mouthing in all progressive political writing.

Supposing the Warsaw ghetto Jews remained silent to the last one? Supposing the American progressive leaders had remained silent in the face of the worst cold war terror ever loosed in the country's history, would the American people "finally learn the whole truth"?

Supposing we had kept stone silent about the Rosenberg case, would the world ever have known about this monstrous governmental frame-up? Supposing we kept silent about the long-suffering Negro people?

You leaders kept silent in the land of socialism when the flower of Jewish culture was cut down.

For shame!

Let us set your record straight. Silence was the abandonment of Leninism, not faith in it! More damnably so because those frightful crimes took place several years after World War II. Therefore, if your tongues were active and not your fears, you could not have been accused of treason for speaking against the policy of the gangsters who gnawed their way into the heart of the party.

What a world catastrophe may have happened if all had been silent.

We have no illusion about the cult of the individual being a sociological trait whose origin goes back thousands of years in slavery, through feudalism, with its vilest, most insidious form under capitalism, drowning the world

in it through its powerful media of propaganda: radio, TV, movies, publishing and press industries, the educational system. The cult of the individual will not fade from man's ego until the last remnants of the capitalist mode of economy are on the road to oblivion.

But to those of us who know better, let not the words drop from our lips, with the greatest of ease, balancing the right emotional expression like a juggler, and not like a human being. Once and for all let us be honest with ourselves and our fellow men.

We have no doubt about the future. It belongs to the people, all the people.

M. K.

Los Angeles, May 12

*Editors' note:* Letters to the same effect were received from Mike Hecht of Chicago and an anonymous reader from New York City.

### **Our New Format**

*Editors, JEWISH LIFE:*

I have been a subscriber to JEWISH LIFE for a number of years and have found it a valuable source of information and inspiration.

Since the change in size and format of the magazine I find something missing. The articles are shorter—more sketchy—not as satisfactory or instructive as they previously were—not to me, anyway.

I don't know if it is the curtailed space that requires shorter articles or a desire to simplify your approach to the reader. Or it may be your desire to spread out your approach to news more broadly than space allows.

I would prefer fewer articles and more complete ones. I personally get my news pretty completely from reading *The Times*, *The Worker*, *National*

*Guardian*, *New York Post*, *New World Review*, *AFL-CIO News* and several other periodicals. Therefore JEWISH LIFE cannot give me as much news as it can interpretation.

My problems may be of minor interest to you in your desire to acquire a broad appeal—but they are my own problems. I do enjoy and profit from many of the articles in JEWISH LIFE and I support your efforts to expand your influence. I'm just expressing my opinions in the spirit of the times.

L. D.

Brooklyn

### **From Rebecca Mindel**

*Editors, JEWISH LIFE:*

I wish to thank you and your readers for your help in winning restoration of our old-age pension payments. The many protests of your readers were of great assistance in winning this victory, though as yet not complete.

Even though the basic issue of social security rights for Communists has not yet been decided, I feel the groundwork has been laid to ensure the benefits of the social security law for all Americans, regardless of their political beliefs.

Bronx

REBECCA MINDEL

### **Max Weber Writes**

*Editors, JEWISH LIFE:*

I want to treat a very good friend of mine with an annual subscription of one of the best—if not the best—and most informing publication concerning Jewish life.

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Enclosed please find check for \$2.50.  
Great Neck, L. I.

MAX WEBER

# FROM THE FOUR CORNERS

## AT HOME

**An increase** of 300-400 per cent of Jewish students in private and public medical schools in New York State since 1940 was reported in May by an Anti-Defamation League survey. Almost 50 per cent of the graduating students in the 1956, '57 and '58 classes are Jewish. It is believed that one reason for the increase was the threat that discriminating medical schools would be investigated. One-eighth of all the nation's medical schools are in New York State.

**About 500 delegates** from more than 70 organizations from 25 states met in a National Immigration Convocation in Washington on May 20-21 to urge revision of the McCarran-Walter act. They "knocked on the doors" of congressmen to urge change in the "unfair and un-American act," especially its racist quota system on the basis of national origin.

**Gen. Wladyslaw Anders**, Polish emigre, was recently received at the White House by President Eisenhower. Milton Friedman, Jewish Telegraphic Agency Washington correspondent, in his syndicated column of the week-end of May 25, described Anders as having been "accused during the 1930's of attempting to unite Polish anti-Semitic elements in a fascist-type political party." During the war, at "Anders' camp in Teheran the Jews were separated into a ghetto."

**Organized hatemongers** have shifted their activity to ultra-conservatives in the election period in an attempt to inject bigotry into the election campaign. Concentration is on the attempt to form the ultra-conservatives into an extreme right wing third party. This was exposed in a report issued by the American Jewish Committee based on a survey conducted by the committee's 16 area offices over the country during the past six months. Said the report: "Because the hatemonger has suffered defeat at the hands of average American citizens—most of whom vigorously reject and condemn bigotry in any form—the bigoted agitator has been compelled to change his tactics and attempt to recruit as fronts sincere ultra-conservative elements by exploiting the latter's political grievances." The desegregation issue is being especially exploited by the bigots.

**"The single** most underdeveloped human resource in the country" today are the 15,000,000 U.S. Negroes, says a report just completed by the Human Resources project of Columbia University. The report estimates that Negro high school graduates could be doubled to the number of 158,000 and college graduates could be increased from 9,000 to 23,000 annually. Today only three of every hundred Negroes are college graduates. The study cites the immense benefits that would accrue if Negroes were fully integrated into American life.

The study has been published in a book, *The Negro Potential*, written by Dr. Eli Ginzberg, director of the Human Resources project and professor of economics of Columbia Graduate School of Business.

**Nearly 50 legal** actions have been begun in 14 Southern and border states (except Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi) by Negro groups to end segregation in elementary and high schools (*N. Y. Times*, May 31).

## ABROAD

**Intermarriage** between Jews and non-Jews in Canada as a whole has been tripled in the past 30 years, the Canadian Jewish Congress reported in May. The rate of increase ranges from six per cent in Quebec to 51 per cent in British Columbia.

**A French film**, *Nuit et Bruillards* (Night and Fog), about nazi concentration camps was withdrawn from the Cannes film festival at the request of the West German Embassy in Paris, *Variety* reported early in May.

**Australia's Jewish** population has increased 50 per cent in the past seven years by immigration.

**Stormy applause** greeted U. S. Metropolitan tenor Jan Peerce's singing of a Yiddish song as an encore at a Moscow concert. Mr. Peerce is the first American singer to perform in the Soviet Union after World War II. He will tour Soviet cities.

**The Yiddish** State Theater of Poland has been invited by the City of Leipzig to give performances in East Germany.

**Representatives** of the Soviet, Israel and East German embassies in Warsaw and Poland's minister of culture and art attended the new production by the Yiddish State Theater of Poland of *Tevey the Milkman*.

**"The Fear,"** a play based on the lives of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg by the French dramatist Georges Soriault, opened in the Yiddish State Theater of Rumania in Yassi in May.

**The Yiddish** language broadcast from Bucharest in mid-May by Yiddish writer Hersh Stolper stated that "all Rumanian Yiddish writers are creatively active, beginning with our oldest, talented and still active writers, Gideon Weidenfeld and Jancu Grop-per, and including myself and Alexander Spiegelbaum, who are among the youngest. We live, and live well and we have a public."

**In West Germany . . .** The Federal Parliament in Bonn in May abrogated all Allied Occupation legislation relating to denazification. The law also enables those who wish to have their cases reconsidered, to be retried in West German courts. . . . Eleven tombstones in a Jewish cemetery outside of Preussich-Oldendorf in Western Westphalia were overturned and desecrated in May. Police are investigating. . . . The Kiel District Court rejected the plea of Dr. Carl Clauberg, perpetrator of cruel sterilization experiments on thousands of Jewish women at Aushwitz death camp, to be released from prison while investigations are proceeding. He was arrested on the complaint of the Central Council of Jews in Germany after he returned late last year from a Soviet prison.

L. H.

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