

Jewish **L**ife

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JANUARY, 1957

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What Next for Middle East Peace?

by Louis Harap

CAREER OF THEODOR HERZL

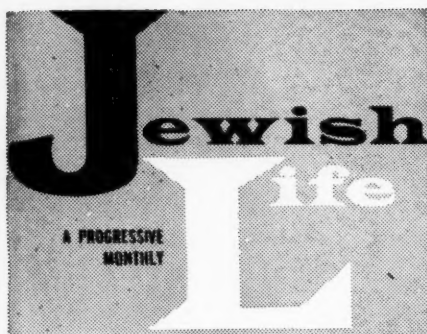
by A. B. Magil

THREAT TO CHURCH- STATE SEPARATION

AJ Congress view

Russian Leaders' Approach to the Jews

a letter by Sid Resnick



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A CALL TO SAVE "JEWISH LIFE"

OUR MAGAZINE IS THREATENED
YOUR HELP IS IMPERATIVELY NEEDED

JEWISH LIFE has just celebrated its 10th Anniversary. These were hard years in which you, our readers and friends, contributed so much toward survival of the magazine.

In these cold war years, JEWISH LIFE has played a significant role in the American Jewish community. It has endeavored to stiffen resistance to war and to defend the democratic process; it has tried to guide its readers through the complexities of international politics; it has stressed progressive Jewish culture and its continuity with an inspiring democratic past. Witness the newly published "*Jewish Life*" Anthology, 1946-1956, an important addition to American Jewish literature.

Now—in the midst of world crisis that affects all humanity and strikingly the Jewish people—when the need for the magazine is greater than ever—we are faced with the stark reality that our voice may be silenced.

We call on you to participate in the campaign to save JEWISH LIFE. Contribute to the Fund Drive NOW. Organize parties and affairs. Get your organizations to act. The Drive runs from December 15, 1956 to April 1, 1957. But don't delay. Send in your contributions right away!

What Next for Middle East Peace?

Some keys to unlocking doors to
a permanent settlement

By LOUIS HARAP

ABATEMENT of the Middle Eastern crisis is a primary achievement for world peace. The fact that Britain, France and Israel had to agree to withdraw their troops from Egypt is added proof that the anti-colonial and peace forces in the world offer insuperable obstacles to old-style colonialist aggression.

But peace has yet to be made. The tensions which led to the crisis still exist. The status of the Suez Canal remains to be determined and a peaceful settlement between Israel and the Arab states must be undertaken. We believe that out of such a peace should come Egyptian control of the Suez Canal together with the right of all states, including Israel, to use the canal. The economic boycott of Israel and maritime blockade imposed by the Arab states needs to be ended, permanent borders need to be defined and the refugee question solved.

A timely and important proposal was made by Israeli Foreign Minister Mrs. Golda Meir on Dec. 11. She said that the UN should now apply itself to Middle Eastern ques-

tions and "call Israel and her neighbors to direct negotiations for peace." And our own government should, as Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Zionist Congress and of the World Jewish Congress, said in New York on Nov. 26, "invest its enormous weight and prestige to bring about peace between Israel and the Arab states." If our government, together with the USSR, presses this question through the UN, prospects for peace open up. All evidence points to Israel's willingness to talk peace with the Arabs.

But this will be hard. The Israel invasion of Egypt, no matter what the provocation, provided a pretext for British-French aggression and consequently has intensified hatred of Israel in the Arab world. The Tel Aviv General Zionist daily, *Haboker*, on Nov. 30 revealed that sharp differences on Israel's foreign policy exist between Dr. Nahum Goldmann and Premier David Ben Gurion. The attack on Egypt, *Haboker* reported Dr. Goldmann as saying, destroyed bridges he was building to bring



Israeli Foreign Minister Mrs. Golda Meir

Israel and the Arabs together through the mediation of Yugoslavia's Marshal Tito.

U. S. Role

In view of recent events, it is up to the Big Two—the United States and the USSR—to bring about peace. The example set by their parallel action on the current crisis shows the way for a permanent solution.

U.S. pressures, combined with the solemn warning given by the Soviet Union that continued aggression against Egypt would be met with the sending of large numbers of "volunteers" to Egypt, forced the withdrawals. Much as one may wish that United States policy was dictated by anti-colonialism, one is forced to conclude that Washington has other fish to fry. The real motives are better revealed by such a headline as this from the *N. Y. Times* (Nov. 27): "North Africa Leans to U.S. as French Influence Fades."

Washington's policy reduces to receivership for the positions being lost by the British and French. Oil and anti-Soviet strategy still dominate that policy. The agitation about the danger that the Arabs might cut off oil from the West is a diversion. The real fear is of nationalization of oil in the Arab states and it is to prevent this eventuality, as well as for its anti-Soviet military strategy, that the United States is so concerned to fill the Middle Eastern "vacuum." If the Western powers were to abandon their lust for vast profits from Middle Eastern oil, they could readily ensure the flow of oil by purchasing it from the producing countries.

Baghdad Pact Breeds War

Nor does the continuing anti-Soviet military policy bode well for peace or for Israel. An editorial in *Davar*, Tel Aviv Histadrut organ, on Nov. 26 put the situation bluntly: the big Western powers are ready to liquidate the state of Israel in order to set up an anti-Soviet bloc. They aim to make Arab enmity to Israel "the cement for a new combination of an Arab bloc." Washington's support of the Baghdad Pact poses great dangers. The most intense and persistent threats for the elimination of Israel come from the government of Iraq, sole Arab member of the Baghdad Pact. On Nov. 13, the Iraqi government stated that it "is fully convinced that the uprooting of Israel is the only prac-

ticable method to secure peace in the Middle East" (*N. Y. Times*, Nov. 14). And on Dec. 12, the Iraqi foreign minister actually called for the abolition of the state of Israel and the dispersal of the Jews of Israel (*N. Y. Times*, Dec. 13).

Yet this most threatening enemy of Israel and lone Arab prop of oil diplomacy is being given arms by Washington through the Baghdad Pact. That the pact is not popular with the Iraqi people is evident from the repression of demonstrations against the pact. Kennett Love reported from Baghdad (*N. Y. Times*, Nov. 23) that that city "is racked by violent demonstrations against the pro-British government of Nuri as Said."

Another Baghdad Pact member, Pakistan, also threatens Israel. On Nov. 29, anniversary of the 1947 UN decision sanctioning setting up of Israel, the Pakistani UN delegate challenged that decision and called for its reversal. And no big power rose to defend the UN decision. Abandonment of the Baghdad Pact or any attempts by Washington to create a bloc that is detested by the Arab people as colonialist is essential to Middle Eastern peace.

But apprehensions for peace are also aroused by the Arab leaders' failure up to now to grasp opportunities for peace negotiations and by their hostility towards the existence of Israel. We are hardly reassured by the documented news that Egyptian officers in the Sinai possessed Arabic translations of Hit-

ler's *Mein Kampf*. The wholesale expropriation and deportations of Jews from Egypt, also, are shocking. Reports indicate that Jews, in addition to British and French citizens, are being expelled as Jews. These actions are to be condemned for their inhumanity. Egypt is harming its own cause and Middle Eastern peace by this policy.

Soviet Role

The Soviet Union has been playing a progressive role in the Middle East. The most important aspect of that policy is its support of the anti-colonial movement which enormously strengthens the cause of world peace. The Soviet Union made unmistakably clear during the Suez crisis that it was determined that the brutal aggression against Egypt be stopped, by arms if necessary. When the withdrawal of the aggressors was assured, the warning of dispatch of "volunteers" was removed.

There is, it seems to us, an inconsistency in Soviet policy in the Middle East in the approach to Israel. While we do not condone Israel's attack on Egypt and have pointed out that it was inimical to Israel's own interests, we recognize that the people of the new state have been under daily threat of murder and sabotage from the Egyptian Fedayeen and have been subjected to economic boycott and maritime blockade for eight years. Soviet
(Continued on page 18)

Leaves from "Jewish Life"

A review of our Tenth Anniversary
book of stories, poems, essays

By ANNETTE T. RUBINSTEIN

THE more than 50 short stories, essays and poems in the ten-year collection just published by JEWISH LIFE¹ achieve in very different ways, an almost uniformly high level of interest. Even more impressive than their individual distinction is the curiously harmonious effect created by the contributions of some 40 men and women, writing independently over a period of three-quarters of a century, in six countries and two different languages.

It is difficult to describe this essential unity which persists through the widest diversity of subject matter without in any way blurring the personal impression made by each individual writer. It is, however, so unmistakable that the only two pieces written by valued friends rather than members of the family—two excellent essays on segregated schools and on brotherhood, contributed by Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and by Paul Robeson—stand out immediately as, not better or worse, but clearly different in tone.

The first and longest single selection in the book, a heretofore untranslated story by I. L. Peretz, sets the note for the entire volume. The story makes characteristically paradoxical use of a concrete, colloquial, emotional and yet profoundly logical style to express simultaneously the most immediate personal concern and a generalized intellectual understanding of life.

Almost all the other 12 stories, grim as their material sometimes is, also combine a certain wry humor with the compassionate warmth and sharp anger aroused even by such subjects as the lives of sweat shop workers or the deaths of Warsaw Ghetto fighters. And similarly even those stories which end happily have a somber undertone of respectful sympathy for human pain and human endurance.

The poetry too, although largely in a minor key, with only rare flashes of pure gaiety or satire like Walter Lowenfels' "Is there not a Cause?" and Eve Merriam's "Restricted," breathes throughout a certain tough humor; not so much optimism or

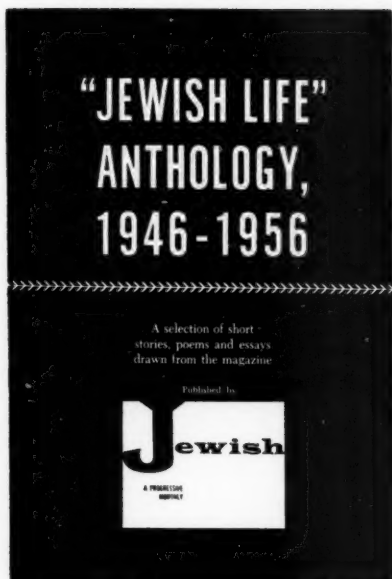
¹"Jewish Life" *Anthology*, 1946-1956, Published by JEWISH LIFE, New York. 224 pages. Cloth, \$2.50; paper, \$1.50.

determination as simple indestructibility. (Special mention must here be made of the highly skilled sensitive art of Aaron Kramer, Max Rosenfeld and the other poet-translators who have almost always succeeded in actually recreating the original work in another language. Eighteen of the 28 poems were originally written in Yiddish, including Yuri Suhl's powerful "The Earth Rebels."

Most of the poems are, like so much Yiddish poetry, exceptionally forthright and matter-of-fact in their expression. They achieve a lyrical effect largely through the use of repetition and of very simple familiar images for strong universal emotions. They often tell a rudimentary story of life in the slums, on strike, in prison or fighting for Israel, and are thus closely related to the fiction which, in turn, generally uses a far more picturesque, rhythmic language than contemporary English indulges us with.

The soil which nurtured much of this prose, as well as the poetry, is described in a compact essay on "Songs of the Jewish Labor Poets" by Ruth Rubin and, more generally, in Morris U. Schappes' account of the great preponderance of skilled labor in the mass immigrations of Jews to the United States during the 35 years before World War I.

These essays serve as a timely reminder of the truth, now long a truism even for tourists of any sophistication, that while the Ritz-Carlton in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, New



Cover of our Anthology

York and, no doubt, Tel Aviv, are always much alike, the indigenous culture of each people, its truly national flavor, are to be found only in peasant homes and the self-contained working class quarters of large cities.

So the essential voice of the Jewish people, revealed in the style no less than the content of this representative selection of writing, is that of a richly proletarian Jewish culture, formed by the bitter labor fights and splendid victories on the lower East Side of New York, as well as the anti-nazi struggles and terrible destruction in the concentration camps of Europe.

Two pieces of absorbing interest

emphasize how large a part this working class attitude plays in determining a people's over-all national consciousness.

One of these is an extraordinary article by the managing editor of JEWISH LIFE, Louis Harap, which reveals in shocking factual detail some of the incredible support which organizations of upper and middle class German Jews continued to give Hitler as late as 1934.

The other consists of a most moving series of excerpts (1941-2) from Emanuel Ringelblum's *Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto*. Here the role of the Kehilla, as well as that of many individual Jewish business leaders, is presented with appalling clarity. As Ringelblum himself wrote in January 1942, two years before he was murdered by the nazis, leaving his archives to bear eternal testimony:

"The beastly nature of the Jewish bourgeoisie, its cannibalistic quality, found unmistakable expression in the recent days of hunger. The entire activity of the Kehilla [Jewish community council] is a shocking wrong against the poor. And if there were a God in this world, He would have destroyed with great thunderings this nest of evil, hypocrisy and blackmail."

But the interpenetration of class and national character which shapes the unique form of Jewish culture—as it does that of every people's culture—is perhaps best understood through its unconscious presentation in the wide variety of fiction. It

would be impossible to mention all the memorable, typical figures in this small gallery and it seems unfair to single out a few. Yet a few force themselves forward as I write, though the front row may have offered me different faces yesterday and may do so again tomorrow. Today those who come irresistibly to mind are Yuri Suhl's fur market "boytchik"; Louis Lerman's harassed director of an old men's home; Tiba G. Willner's mother feeling that "to cry over children is natural, but it's a bad world when one must shed tears over a horse." Then there is Anne Saxe's inadvertent young strike leader who thought angrily as her eyes filled with tears, "Why did I have to put mascara on today?"; Ben Field's shoemaker. Above all, there is Abraham Reisn's Galician immigrant, working in a munitions factory here during the first World War, who "began to recognize every bullet that was meant for his brother" in the Austrian army and to slip them off the assembly line until "Gradually it became more and more difficult for him to distinguish with certainty which bullet was fated for his brother and which was not; he had to snatch them up by two's and three's."

All these speak with the intimately known accents of *landsleit*. Yet, as Leon Kobrin's night watchman says: "On the way to the trolley I ran into the Italian with his pushcart. He recognized me. I told him, in Yid-

(Continued on page 11)

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Anti-Defamation League

At the 43rd annual meeting of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League a resolution was passed declaring that the League possesses evidence that "a clear pattern of illegal and subversive activities" is indicated among some White Citizens Councils. It charged them with the "illegal purpose to deprive American citizens by force and violence of their constitutional rights to equal protection of the law." The meeting, held last November in Washington, asked the Justice Department to start action "against certain White Citizens Councils." The meeting heard Harry S. Ashmore, editor of the Little Rock *Arkansas Gazette*, declare that desegregation by law was bound to succeed in the South. Dr. Omer Carmichael, superintendent of schools in Louisville, Ky., and Dr. Alonzo G. Moron, president of Hampton Institute, a college for Negroes, also spoke on desegregation.

World Jewish Congress

Dr. Maurice L. Perlzweig, director of the Department of International Affairs of the World Jewish Congress, announced on November 27 that about 25,000 Egyptian Jews, or half of the total Jewish community in Egypt, are threatened with expulsion. He stated that "Hundreds have already been forced to flee and are arriving, or are en route, to Italy and Switzerland." He reported that the military authorities in Cairo issued an order Novem-

ber 22 expelling all stateless Jews and expropriating their property. The approximate number of stateless Jews in Egypt is 14,000. To these must be added 6,000 Jews of British or French nationality. He described the situation of the Jews as desperate. Thousands of Jews, according to Dr. Perlzweig, in Cairo and Alexandria find themselves at this moment without means to keep body and soul together and without the opportunity to leave the country. The great majority of them have lost their employment. Such funds as they have in banks have been frozen. "I hope it may still be possible for the civilized world to persuade the Egyptian government to halt a process which is transforming an old and honorable community, justly famous for its benevolence and public spirit, into a terrified mass of penniless refugees. These people are the defenseless and innocent victims of a situation for which they have not the remotest responsibility."

American Jewish Congress

The American Jewish Congress announced on November 8 that it has learned that the United States delegation attending the conference of UNESCO in New Delhi, India, has been instructed to express American opposition to the policy of the Arab States which excludes UNESCO personnel of the Jewish faith. A wire sent to AJ Congress by Francis O. Wilcox, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, prom-

ised U.S. opposition "to religious discrimination practices" as "in conflict with the purposes of the United Nations Charter."

On November 26 the AJ Congress called for the public repudiation of an anti-Semitic speech made by Edwin Wright, a high official in the State Department. It also demanded "the removal of Mr. Wright from any position of influence or authority within the State Department."

"Brotherhood Pledge"

From Chicago, where there have been repeated racist outbreaks in the high schools and colleges, comes a heartening development. Eight organizations are sponsoring a "brotherhood pledge" movement among students. Among the organizations are the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Negro and white student delegations have organized an exchange program. Students from 51 high schools met in an intergroup relations conference and are planning Brotherhood Week activities in February at their schools. The movement held another conference on November 12 around the theme, "Youth Unites to Build for Brotherhood."

Rabbis' Groups

The New York City Board of Education was advised by the N. Y. Board of Rabbis to be vigilant in the application of its statement on "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools." The rabbis wrote to Charles Silver, Board of Education president, that vigilance was necessary "lest the sensitivities of children of different faiths be violated or lest

there be breaches in the traditional separation of church and state. . . ."

The Rabbinical Association of America (Orthodox) voted opposition to the Board of Education proposals. It voted to "counsel against such implementation as an infringement and violation of our traditional American principle of separation of religion and State. It is our firm conviction that the domain of moral and spiritual teachings should remain the responsibility of the home, denominational center, and House of Worship."

ANTHOLOGY

(Continued from page 9)

dish, about my bad luck, and he repeated, in Italian, the tale of his troubles, and once more we understood each other perfectly."

With all this "infinite riches in a little room" there is, for me, just one striking and unfortunate omission in JEWISH LIFE's admirable sampling of Jewish tradition and culture. Except for three stanzas in memory of Albert Einstein, none of the short stories, poems, or essays in the anthology reflect, in their subject matter, the vital part intellectual interests and aspirations have played in forming Jewish life and character. It is, of course, exemplified by the scholars and critics whose work has already been referred to above, and by several others. But a volume of this sort seems markedly incomplete without some more explicit treatment of an attitude which has always been so peculiarly and consciously a part of the Jewish people's work and art.

Threat to Church-State Separation

Apprehension over moves to introduce
religion into the schools

*Statement of the American Jewish
Congress by Leo Pfeffer*

Defenders of the Constitutional principle of separation between church and state in New York have been very much concerned in the past few years over proposed plans to introduce religious instruction in the schools through the so-called "development of moral and spiritual ideals in the public schools." Following is part of a statement by Leo Pfeffer for the American Jewish Congress submitted to the New York City Board of Education on Sept. 17, 1956. The statement cogently marshals the arguments against the program. Over all objections, however, the plan was adopted unanimously by the Board on Oct. 4, 1956.
—Editors.

IN June 1955, the Board of Superintendents of the City of New York adopted a "Guiding Statement for Supervisors and Teachers," entitled, *Moral and Spiritual Values and the Schools*, and recommended to the Board of Education the adoption of the Statement and its implementation in the public schools of

this city. Publication of the statement aroused a spontaneous wave of vigorous protest from a wide variety of organizations and individuals concerned with our public schools and representing a broad cross section of our community.

These organizations and individuals pointed out many objections to and dangers inherent in the superintendents' proposals. They pointed out that in the minds of the superintendents, the term, "Moral and Spiritual" was synonymous with religious and that the proposed program would unconstitutionally infringe upon the principle of the separation of church and state. It would, moreover, encourage the introduction of religion into every phase of the school life, in effect making the teacher a full-time missionary, and could well lead to the imposition of a religious test for public school teachers in violation of the Constitution and laws of the State of New York.

It was also pointed out that the program lacked any standards and

guides and thus made it possible, if it did not actually invite, teachers to inculcate their pupils with their own religious beliefs. Other objections to the proposal were that by emphasizing the religious aspect of such subjects as literature, social studies and the arts the program would establish a new and narrow basis for the evaluation of the curriculum; that its adoption would lead to competing pressures upon the public school by rival sectarian groups, and that it was based on the erroneous and unfair assumption that the public school is not effectively fulfilling its responsibility in the field of character education, and that our churches, synagogues and religious schools were not effectively fulfilling their responsibilities in the field of religious education.

That the Board of Education recognized the validity of *these* objections was manifested by its withdrawal of the superintendents' proposals and its directive that the proposals be reconsidered. It is manifested even more by the new statement now proposed. The present proposal expressly recognizes that "Religious education and training are not functions of state-supported schools" but are "the exclusive responsibility of the home, church and synagogue." It asserts also that "the teacher may not use his position in the school to become a missionary for his own religious beliefs." It

recognizes that "there are some children in the public schools whose parents give their allegiance to no religion."

The Board of Education merits high commendation for recognition of the validity of the objections asserted against the original proposal and for its sincere effort to meet these objections in the present proposal. The present proposal undoubtedly represents a substantial improvement over the earlier one.

Nevertheless, we regret to state that notwithstanding this substantial improvement and notwithstanding the sincerity of the Board's efforts, we still find ourselves unable to accept the Board's proposal. We believe it remains a document whose inevitable effect is to impose upon the public schools responsibilities that are forbidden them by the Constitution of the United States and for the fulfillment of which the public schools are wholly unfitted. We believe, too, that in its present form the proposal carries with it many of the objections and dangers inherent in the first proposal.

The present proposal appears to us to be an attempt to reconcile what is unreconcilable and to achieve a compromise where principle is involved and where compromise is inappropriate and disingenuous. This is borne out by the great length of time and expenditure of effort that went into the Board's attempt to translate the recommendations of the Board of Regents into non-theo-

logical terms and within the constitutional framework of religious freedom and the separation of church and state. A reading of the present proposal indicates that the Board has not succeeded in its efforts.

Our inability to approve the present proposal arises from the fact that notwithstanding the undoubtedly sincere and commendatory efforts of the Board to achieve its purpose of training our children in the basic values of American citizenship within the framework of constitutional guarantees, the statement of the Board and the recommendations contained therein are based upon a premise inconsistent with the principle of separation of church and state and the non-sectarianism of the public educational system. The premise upon which the Board proceeds is that the public school system has a responsibility for "stimulating" or "intensifying" in children "a love of God." Once that principle is accepted, warnings, as those contained in the present statement, that "religious education and training are not functions of state-supported schools," become of little practical value and result only in a self-contradictory document.

We cannot see how love of God can be stimulated or intensified without at least some fundamental form of religious education. We cannot see how children can be taught to love God without being taught what is meant by God. Teaching

love of God is meaningless and stultifying without some teaching of the meaning of God, and such training is religious teaching which is the responsibility of the church, home and the synagogue and not the public schools.

Similarly, the use of religious sanctions in building good character, recommended in the Board's statement, must necessarily bring with it the discussion and teaching of the meanings of these religious sanctions. Teaching of religious sanction is a teaching of religion and again is not a proper function of the public school system.

The real danger in the present proposal lies in the fact that once we accept the principle that the public schools have an official responsibility to teach love of God and to encourage adherence to religion, it is only a matter of time before the inadequacy of the implementation of this principle will be proclaimed. Then, the only logical and, indeed, inevitable next step will be to make the implementation adequate and, thus, involve the public schools ever deeper in the area of religious education.

This is not a fancied or unreal fear, but is borne out by experience. Every step that has been taken towards bringing religion into the schools, no matter how slight and how minimal, has been utilized as a precedent justifying a further involvement. When it was first pro-

posed to introduce the released-time plan into the public schools of New York, the opponents warned then that the campaign would not end there and that the inadequacy of the released-time plan would bring with it demands for expansion of public school involvement in religious education. When the Board of Regents first recommended the daily recitation of a so-called "non-sectarian" prayer, a member of the Board stated to the press at that time that that would be but a step in the further introduction of religion into the public schools. In New York City, that fear was one of the reasons for the objection to the adoption of the prayer within the public schools of this city. At that time, too, a "compromise" was achieved, over the objections of the American Jewish Congress and the New York Board of Rabbis. The compromise was the recitation of the fourth stanza of "America" with its reference to God. That compromise is now cited by the Board of Education as a precedent to justifying the proposal it now makes for inculcating in public school children a love of God and adherence to religion.

"Many of the things that the schools have been doing for a long time," the present proposal says frankly and significantly "—the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag [with its reference to God], the singing of the fourth stanza of America [the earlier "compromise"], the reading of the Bible [a practice

of at least questionable legality] and the practice of beginning formal functions with an invocation and closing them with a benediction [a practice declared illegal by the New York State Commissioner of Education], are meaningless unless pupils are deeply conscious of the religious underpinning of our moral and spiritual ideals."

We are convinced that should the present statement be adopted, it will not mark the end of the efforts to those seeking to mingle religious and secular education in state schools. Experience has shown that, short of complete mingling of religious and secular education in the public schools, the charge that the schools are "Godless" will not abate, and that within a short time the demand will be made for further religious involvement in public education. When that demand is made, the present statement of the Board of Education will be cited as precedent justifying a next step. This has been the lesson of history and we would be deceiving ourselves if we assumed that this experience will not be repeated. . . .

Correction

IN the review by Herbert Aptheker of Guy Chapman's *The Dreyfus Case* in the November 1956 issue, the publisher was incorrectly named. The publisher is Reynal, New York. We regret the error.



ISRAEL

Soviet Academies of Science in Moscow and Leningrad requested the Hebrew Language Academy in Jerusalem to send them books and periodicals on the Hebrew language, Orientalia, and the history of Israel, and, upon receiving these works, reciprocated by sending the Jerusalem Academy the works it listed. (*Jewish Agency Digest*, Nov. 1, 1955.)

Trade agreements with Poland and Bulgaria were signed in October. With Poland there will be an exchange of \$2,600,000 worth of citrus, phosphates and other chemicals and industrial products in return for Polish electrical equipment, metals, chemicals and textile raw materials. Bulgaria will exchange \$2,000,000 worth of wheat, maize, tobacco, wood and iron ore for Israel tires, citrus, drugs, phosphates and industrial products. . . . A tour of Yugoslavia was made by three members of the Knesset (Parliament): Minister of Labor Mordecai Namir, Mapai leader Herzl Berger and General Zionist leader Zalman Suzayev.

Shortage of oil forced the government to order a cut in consumption of electricity on Nov. 23, 1956. Electricity is banned for advertising, street-lighting is cut in half, no more than a 60 watt bulb can be used in each room, no electric stoves and heaters are allowed. Gasoline consumption is restricted, motor vehicles being barred from the roads once a week since Nov. 29. Two tankers that went to the Soviet Union for oil according to the contract recently signed returned empty. The Soviet Union had suspended operation of the contract because of the Israel attack on Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Israel public opinion is asking why the Soviet Union continues to meet its contract obligations to send oil to France while suspending its contract with Israel.

Neutrality in the East-West conflict was called for by the Political Committee of Mapam (United Labor Party), part of the government coalition. Mapam members of the Cabinet had voted against the planned attack of October 29, but after that supported the government in the Knesset, the Communist Party thus being the only one to vote against the government action. At the Political Committee meeting early in

December, Mapam also passed resolutions calling for the neutralization of the Middle East by the Big Four powers, for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Middle East, for the elimination of all military pacts in the Middle East, including the Baghdad Pact and the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi-Arabian Pact, for immediate peace negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, for full equality for the Arab minority in Israel and for free passage of Israel ships through the Suez Canal.

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Bhagavad Gita, Hindu sacred classic in which the divine Krishna defines the duties of the caste system and of devotion to God, was translated from Sanskrit into Hebrew by Dr. Immanuel Olsvanger and published on Oct. 16. Dr. Olsvanger, philologist and folklorist, has also translated Dante's *Divine Comedy* into Hebrew.

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An attack on Yiddish literature, the Yiddish language and on Yiddish speaking Jews was made recently by A. Shamai in *Herut*, organ of the most reactionary political party in Israel. Shamai attributed the fact that three Yiddish actors left Israel soon after Israeli troops marched into Gaza and Sinai to their being Yiddish speaking Jews. Then Shamai denounced David Bergelson, Itsik Feffer, Sholem Asch and Dr. Haim Zhitlovsky, blaming their political and social views on the Yiddish language they all used. *Herut's* vaunted chauvinism is obviously not confined to the Arab peoples but extends to large sections of the Jewish people.

•
29 Jews expelled from Egypt arrived in Haifa on the *Israel* from Italy (*N. Y. Times*, Dec. 5). On the same ship came 96 Hungarian refugees, 132 immigrants from Central European socialist countries and 25 Jews from Rumania, seven of them Zionist leaders released from prison. One of the Egyptian deportees "said she and both her parents had been born in Egypt." She was given four days to leave Egypt. Unfortunately Premier David Ben Gurion's boast on Nov. 7 that all Jews throughout the world supported the Israel government attack of Oct. 29 tended to compromise and implicate all Jews. Nevertheless, the Egyptian government's claim that Jews expelled are suspected of pro-Israel or pro-Zionist sentiments or activities cannot justify the deportation of native-born Egyptian Jews in violation of the Human Rights charter of the UN.

•
A new port will be constructed on the coast near Ashdod, 25 miles south-west of Tel Aviv, by decision of the Israel government on Dec. 2 (*United Press* report). The project was proposed by a group of Americans headed by Philip Klutznick, president of B'nai B'rith.

M. U. S.

(Continued from page 6)

silence on this provocation, coupled with the extremely hostile tone of Soviet Premier Bulganin's notes to Israel in November as contrasted with the more conciliatory tone of notes to Britain and France, seem to us inappropriately severe against a small nation.

It is true that Israel has not manifested any special friendliness toward the USSR. But this does not justify the overtones of a threat to the existence of Israel. When Bulganin in his letter to Ben Gurion on Nov. 15 warned that Israel's foreign policy was not conducive to peace with the Arabs and that such a policy was "most perilous for Israel" (*N. Y. Times*, Nov. 16), he was stating a fact. In Israel itself *Haaretz*, Tel Aviv independent conservative organ, said in November that Israel's foreign policy was leading to "destruction." As events have shown, this policy has endangered peace and Israel would be devastated if full-scale war broke out.

What Israel Can Do

But one cannot escape the note of threat in Bulganin's letters which seem to us inconsistent with the socialist approach to small nations. More hopeful was the statement made on Dec. 6 by Soviet Foreign Minister Dmitri T. Shepilov welcoming the "good will shown by all peoples of the Middle East and their willingness to settle questions under dispute."

Israel can do much to facilitate negotiations with the Arabs, who have thus far refused to negotiate. As *Ner*, organ of Ihud, Israel organization founded by Judah Magnes to further Jewish-Arab unity, said in an editorial in November, "Israel is taking a dangerous path" in joining with forces—meaning Britain and France—whose aims are antagonistic to Israel. The path for Israel, as we have affirmed for some time, is rather that of neutralism, which will remove Israel from big power conflicts in the Middle East. As the Political Committee of Mapam, a member of the government coalition, proposed at its meeting late in November, the entire Middle East should be neutralized by the Big Four. For, so long as Israel allies herself with the colonial powers, who are enemies of the Arab peoples, it will not be able to live in harmony with its Arab neighbors and peace will be threatened.

Such a neutralization can be brought out primarily by United States-USSR joint action, either inside or outside the UN. The preoccupation of the UN with the issue affords an opportunity to get at the roots of the problem and to take the first steps toward an overall settlement which can gain assurance of durability by U.S.-USSR action. Americans can aid in such a start by urging that our UN delegation press for negotiations of all issues that breed tension in the Middle East.

To Commemorate the 20th Anniversary of Schaefer's Death, Dec. 1, 1936:

IN US LIVES THE MUSIC

By AARON KRAMER

When a heart, that has stopped, still hammers;
when lips, that are locked, still sing—
the tribe then meets and murmurs:
what we are witnessing
is a rare, miraculous thing. . . .

Schaefer's been sleeping for twenty Decembers
while good dreams, bad dreams have blossomed and died;
but something of Schaefer refuses to slumber:
lips open, eyes open, arms open wide,
it leaps across continents, mighty of stride.

Streets that were dead
wake at his tread.
Rooms that were tombs
burst into bloom.
Hearts that were cold
throb as of old.
Tongues that were mute
join a salute.

He brought us a word, and we never shall lose it;
beat out a word with his stubborn baton:
"In music we live, and in us lives the music. . . ."
Zwei Brider, Martyrer Blut, Biro-Bidjan—
in Schaefer we lived, and in us he lives on!

What we are witnessing
is a rare, miraculous thing—
a thing for hushed hosannas;
when a heart, that has stopped, still hammers. . . .

*The above is the opening section of a narration especially written for
the Schaefer Memorial Concert at Carnegie Hall on December 29.*

The Career of Theodor Herzl

An estimate of the man who founded
political Zionism

By A. B. MAGIL

ONE of the vivid memories of my childhood is of a large profile of a man with an imposing black beard that hung in a cheap gilt frame on the wall of our combination kitchen and dining room. To me he seemed like a presence from the past—a prophet out of a Bible story—and from the mysterious future: the legendary Messiah who would lead the Jewish people back to the Promised Land. In those days, only a few years after his death, that haunting profile of Theodor Herzl, with its somber, searching, regal eyes, adorned the homes of thousands of lower middle-class Jewish immigrant families, lighting candles of hope and pride amidst dreariness and frustration.

It is difficult to think of another modern Jew who has had so great an impact on his people. This despite the fact that during his lifetime his

cause was spurned by both Jewish workers and capitalists. And despite the fact that the nine tempestuous years of his Zionist work were a succession of grandiose failures, climaxed by his own tragic death at the age of 44.

Marvin Lowenthal, distinguished essayist, historian and scholar, now makes it possible to fill out the portrait of the founder of political Zionism and the world Zionist movement with the publication of *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (494 pages, Dial Press, New York, \$7.50), which he has edited and translated from the German. Previously there had been available in English only what Mr. Lowenthal calls "snippets" in a slim booklet, *Theodor Herzl: Excerpts from His Diaries*, published under Zionist auspices. However, this new bulky volume by no means contains all that Herzl recorded so indefatigably in his journal during the nine years of his Zionist mission. In a prefatory note Mr. Lowenthal states that his book "embraces a little less than one-third of the original

A. B. MAGIL was a correspondent in Israel during the War of Independence in 1948. He is the author of *Israel in Crisis*.

German edition," published in Berlin in 1922-23. He assures us he has omitted nothing essential and has restored passages that the German edition deleted. Mr. Lowenthal has contributed a sensitively written though over-adulatory introduction.

The Diaries make absorbing reading. Here is history in the flesh as well as the stormy thought and action of a remarkable historic personality. It is of course one-sided history, not only because it is seen through the eyes of a single individual, but also because the range of vision is limited to the upper echelons of European politics. Yet within these limitations, what drama and tragedy!—the tragedy of Herzl's own fruitless and literally heart-breaking quest and the massive invisible tragedy of the Jewish people hovering in the wings as scene after scene unfolds. There is a sweep to the book and Mr. Lowenthal rightly says it reads like a novel or a play. For apart from the intrinsic dramatic quality of the events it records, it is the work of a literary craftsman. There are keenly etched portraits of the "great men" whom Herzl conferred with and occasional nuggets of political insight.

Herzl's "Vision"

Yet for all the admiration and sympathy *The Diaries* evoke, and for all Mr. Lowenthal's efforts in the connecting passages he has written



Theodor Herzl

to shield Herzl against possible censure, there is much that is distasteful and shocking.

None of the fantastic encounters that Herzl so relentlessly sought out is half so improbable as the Herzl story itself. That this successful journalist and playwright, this half-assimilated Jew and sophisticated man of the world, should at the age of 35 have been seized by the vision of what seemed to him a sweeping solution of the problem of anti-Semitism; that he should have spent frenzied weeks putting his ideas on paper, during which, Mr. Lowenthal tells us, his mood at times "verged on paranoia" and he himself doubted his sanity; that he should have then transformed himself into a man of action and despite the jeers and threats of economic reprisal have proceeded to plan and organize the practical fulfilment of

his vision, cajoling and bribing his way into audiences with kings and prime ministers, intriguing in the dark alleys of politics with secret agents and adventurers, creating within two years a world organization—the first in Jewish history—moving heaven and earth and pouring out his life-blood in pursuit of his goal—surely this is one of the most extraordinary true legends of modern history.

Yet there is an inner logic to the Herzl story. He was the product of a *fin de siècle* social milieu and a dying empire, Austria-Hungary. Driven to seek a new spiritual home, this worldly Jew without strong ties to the Jewish community was nevertheless deeply disturbed by rising anti-Semitism in his own country as well as in France, where he had become the Paris correspondent of Vienna's leading newspaper, and by the bestial pogroms in tsarist Russia. At first he turned to the Jewish question as a literary theme, projecting but leaving unwritten a novel and then writing a play, *The New Ghetto*, at white heat in three weeks. But he found no peace in literature. The problem of anti-Semitism, he tells us, "gnawed and tugged" at him, and the gnawing became imperious as a result of the Dreyfus case (he covered the trial for his paper). In an agony of creation he began to set down headlong notes on his "mighty dream." These were later embodied in his *Address to the Rothschilds* and shortly thereafter

given final form in *The Jewish State*, published in 1896.

Herzl's Plan

Herzl's political conservatism and social pessimism caused him to reject any public struggle against anti-Semitism. "Above all," he wrote in the early pages of *The Diaries*, "I recognized the emptiness and futility of trying to 'combat' anti-Semitism. Nothing whatever is gained by declamations consigned to paper or confided in closed circles." He added: "It is exactly the same case with the peace societies." Instead, Herzl proposed the removal of all Jews who were not assimilated from the countries that persecuted them and their transportation to another land—at first he was uncertain which—where they could develop a dignified and productive autonomous life of their own. He asserted that this would at one stroke put an end to anti-Semitism.

Though Herzl believed his plan was original, similar proposals had been made before him, notably by Dr. Leo Pinsker, a Russian Jewish physician, whose pamphlet, *Auto-Emancipation*, was written in response to the pogroms of 1881. Moreover, a Zionist movement called *Chovevei Tsion* (Lovers of Zion) had come into being in Russia and spread to other European countries and the United States. And even a world Zionist congress had been discussed prior to Herzl's entrance up-

on the scene. Of all this he was ignorant.

Yet Herzl contributed something qualitatively and decisively new. His very remoteness from Jewish life and the fact that he was a product of western European culture, an experienced observer of international affairs, gave him the audacity to break new ground. Herzl converted anti-Semitism from a Jewish question into an international question. And he transformed Zionism from a faction in Jewish politics into a factor in world politics.

Zionism was a product of the interaction of two forces: anti-Semitism, which capitalism had inherited from the feudal era, and the bourgeois national movement in 19th

century Europe that had forged a unified Italy and Germany and stimulated national revolutionary struggles in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, etc. The goad of Jew-hatred and the beacon of the battle for European freedom stirred among a section of the Jews—who were one people but not a nation anywhere—nostalgic, quasi-national moods that took the form of a movement for a return to Palestine. Thus Zionism sprang from positive motivations and aspirations toward freedom. However, its specific proposals and particularly the means employed to realize them were of a different order. Born of middle class despair, Zionism advocated escape
(Continued on page 43)

"Deportation" Rumors About Soviet Jews Are Exploded

IN mid-November, *N. Y. Times* Warsaw correspondent Sidney Gruson reported rumors that hundreds of Jews in border cities of Vilna and Lodz were being deported to Siberia or Birobidjan. A United Press dispatch of November 21 repeated the rumor. Meantime, it was picked up by the press here and abroad. The Yiddish press in New York carried eight-column scare headlines about the rumors. The *Morning Freiheit* made immediate inquiries about these rumors. Information came from the Warsaw Yiddish paper, *Folks-Shtimme*, of November 17 that the story was a total fabrication. The paper had telephoned to Jews in Vilna and Lemberg and received denials "with amazement and indignation" at these baseless reports.

Finally one source of these rumors, Sidney Gruson, reported in the *N. Y. Times* from Warsaw on December 6 that his earlier report about deportations was not true. This denial was buried at the end of a story on the repatriation of Poles from the Soviet Union. "These reports of deportations of Jews," wrote Gruson, "appear to have been incorrect. They began apparently when Soviet authorities started to register Poles who had previously been in labor camps." Thus far we are not aware that the Yiddish press has published this correction.

BEHOLD THE SEA

By AARON KURTZ

You were pinched
last night.
I saw you clubbed.
I recognized the nightsticks: they were thorny twigs
of the tree from which I saw
your brother lynched. I know:
they felt the same as those they used
on my old man in Maidanek.

I saw a boot step on your throat last night:
it was the same boot that stepped on my young sister's throat.

I saw you shot last night.
I saw the gun: it was the gun they used
on my brother in Dachau.

It wasn't a drink—
not even the slightest whiff of it—
not even a song that got them: mere sensitivity to color: white,
only white
their pallid sight can take. White,
only white—
for everything that's clean, for everything that's bright—
clear white, pure white—
from the Whitehouse to White Papers in the name of God's
white ruling race,
from the Ku Klux Klan's white robes
to the white gardenias in the lapels of justices,
murderers and crooks—
white, pure white gardenias before almighty God,
before almighty Justice, before almighty Genocide,
before almighty mighty Might—pure white.

White colleges of Alabama, clanning
white councils of pure

AARON KURTZ is a Yiddish poet. He has published many volumes of poetry. The poem above was written in English.

white terror running
white, dead-white busses, carrying
white vacuum—fearful emptiness of
white murder of
white worldwide televised noble battle for
white supremacy.
white guns booming in Mississippi courthouses,
white guns on campuses proclaiming the law of
white lore of love and brotherhood.

White thievery bursts through our white gilded domes.
Confess
black bastard. Die
for justice. Pray,
admit—Christ is white. Die
for Christ. Die a clean white death to cleanse
your black soul.
Die.

I saw Christ flog you on the chain gang.
I saw Christ put the torch to your brother on a heartbroken tree.
I saw Christ torture you on Times Square.
(That wasn't Christ at all, of course—it was Judas raving he was
Christ, with thumb on trigger).
I saw your children chased from a white open hydrant on a hot day
in Alexandria. I wanted to

cry,
but would not dare
after I heard your mothers crying from a million
smoke holes in the black belt.
I heard the wise old trees of Georgia cry the cry of your lynched
sons.

I saw the scabrous,
filthy walls of Harlem cry the cry of your clean heart.

Great, big black brother—I too
am black
like Patterson, like you—Eastland knows.
I go to jail with you,
I am lynched with you
and I go
yes, I too go the long
bloody and beautiful Freedom Road with you!
One day at dawn I saw Paul

standing on the beach—singing
across the sea.

And when I heard his mighty voice, tragic thunder of
man's heart, roaring through the waves I thought it was
the roaring sea singing
to our brother, singing to
our might.

I saw the toppled tombstones of your great
rise and grow
taller than
the tallest lynch trees of your land.

Brother, behold
Paul's voice rolling through
the waves, behold
the sea
singing to our brother,
singing to our might.

News About Jews in the Hungarian Situation

REPORTS of anti-Semitism in the tragic Hungarian situation are conflicting. There were a number of reports of anti-Semitic threats and violence before the second Soviet intervention on Nov. 4. However, late in Nov., Zachariah Schuster, European director of the American Jewish Committee, called these reports a "complete fabrication" and said that anti-Semitism was limited to some anti-Jewish remarks. A. L. Easterman, political director of the World Jewish Congress, also reported from Vienna that neither side manifested anti-Semitism. It is clear, however, from remarks of Jewish refugees reported in the *London Jewish Chronicle* (Nov. 23) that fear of the outbreak of anti-Semitism did contribute to the decision of many Jews to flee Hungary. One said, "It was not only Communism which made life in Hungary difficult for us, but we were no less afraid of the 'White Terror,' with the danger of anti-Semitism."

By Nov. 30, it was reported that about 3,200 Jews had arrived in Vienna refugee centers (there are 120,000 Jews in Hungary). The *London Jewish Chronicle* reported (Nov. 30): "Most of the Jewish refugees in Austria . . . intend to start their life away from troubled Europe. Fear of trouble is also the main reason why so few have so far opted for Israel. Figures released by HIAS show that about 70 per cent wish to go to the United States and about 20 per cent to Australia and that the remainder is divided between Canada and several European countries."

FROM THE JEWISH PAST

I. M. Weissenberg: Workers' Writer

By **BER GREEN**

IN August 1956, many Jews commemorated the 18th anniversary of the death in Warsaw of Isaac Meir Weissenberg—the great Yiddish realist, master storyteller and creator of the classic, *A Shtetl* (Jewish small town in the Pale of Old Russia). This brilliant, talented son of the common people stormed into Yiddish literature as a representative of the “second generation,” together with Sholem Asch, Abraham Reisin and H. D. Naumberg. From his earliest work he held an honored place in modern Yiddish literature. He brought with it a new tone, new motifs, new scenes, new characters.

Isaac Meir Weissenberg was the first *workingman* in Yiddish literature. He was also the first to introduce the militant worker in contrast

to “Bontsche Shweig,” I. L. Peretz’ beaten and cowed worker. He was the first to bring into Yiddish letters the themes, ideas and descriptions of the class struggle in the Jewish *shtetl*.

This son of poverty was born in 1881 in Zelekow, a small town in the Czedlik region, Poland. He studied in a *heder* and lived in want. His father was a leather worker and Isaac Meir became a worker as a boy. By the time he was 25, he had done all sorts of heavy work in Warsaw and Lodz. Most of his years were spent in dire poverty. Even after he became famous, he suffered hunger and eked out an existence by personally “peddling” his books.

His experience with want and his familiarity with the poor of Zelekow, similar to hundreds of other Jewish towns, was the material of his many stories and novels, sketches, dramatic works. With the simplicity of a true artist, he gave us a masterful picture of the rising, protesting, fighting worker, before, during and

BER GREEN is a Yiddish poet, literary critic and journalist. He has published a volume of verse and many poems and critical essays in the Yiddish press here and abroad. Weissenberg's short story, "Story of the Goat," was published in English translation in JEWISH LIFE, Aug. 1951.

after 1905. However, his understanding of the struggle for socialism was primitive.

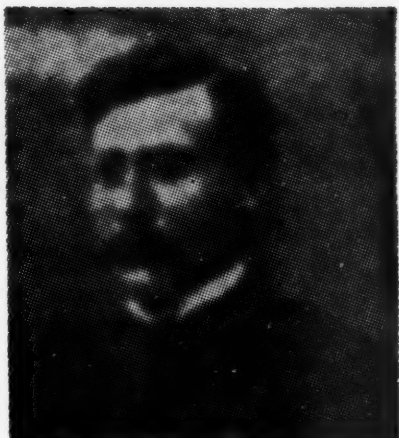
In his masterpiece, *A Shtetl*, and in many other stories he recorded the spirit of revolutionary awakening and battles of the young Jewish revolutionary labor movement in the Polish Jewish towns.

His Masterpiece

I. L. Peretz introduced Weissenberg to the Yiddish public in 1904 by publishing his first stories, "A Generation Goes and A Generation Comes" and "Der Kittl" (The Frock), in *Yiddishe Bibliotek*. These won an immediate acclaim by their freshness and realism. Two years later Weissenberg took a leading place in Yiddish literature with *A Shtetl*, a milestone in his own work and in that literature.

This *shtetl* was quite different from Mendele's "Tunyedevka" and "Kabtsansk," from Sholem Aleichem's "Kasrievka," from Peretz' "Cities and Towns," and even from Sholem Asch's *shtetl*. Weissenberg's *shtetl* vibrated with rebellion and courage in contrast to the stillness and idyllic harmony of Sholem Asch's *shtetl*. In contrast to Asch's idyllic picture and veneration of the rich, Weissenberg's *shtetl*, true to the reality of the eve of 1905, raged with the battles of the oppressed, with struggles against tsarism as well as the Jewish wealthy class.

Weissenberg described that



I. M. Weissenberg

period, when "things were coming to a showdown," with honesty and courage and artistry. His work quickly won him fame as a master of Yiddish literature. The number of his followers and disciples grew.

Over Weissenberg's work hovers a warm, subtle humor; *through* his work are pictures of want, of loneliness, of bitter struggle for existence. All his stories and novels are permeated with the author's humanism, his love for the common man, his fervent lyrical emotion. His style has strength, restlessness, dynamism, descriptiveness, plasticity; artistry plus movement, sculpture plus drama. His language is the rich, full-blooded, multi-colored, simple speech of the workers. His portrayals are concise, as though chiseled from stone, marble or bronze. Noah Prilutsky, a noted student of the Yiddish language, aptly charac-

terized Weissenberg as the sculptor of Yiddish literature. In 1909, five years after Weissenberg's first story appeared, the critic Baal Machshoves declared that Weissenberg was probably "our greatest hope" because of Weissenberg's "originality of theme," "freshness of color," "liveliness of dialogue," "deep passion of tone," "his feeling for beautiful, voiceless nature."

A second period of Weissenberg's creativity began after Peretz's death (1916). Despite his difficult economic straits and his sense of having been insulted and dishonored, he continued to produce many worthwhile works. Weissenberg continued to write until the very end of his tormented 57 years. He published magazines—*Jewish Anthology*, *The Stream*, *Our Hope*—that were outlets for talented young writers.

In the last, tragic years of his creative work, Weissenberg finished a 10-volume work. *In der Tiefe Aibigkkeit* (In the Deep Eternity), of which two volumes have been published, several novels and dramas, a philosophical work, and many short stories, critical essays and pamphlets. In 1939, one year after his death, many of his unpublished works were destroyed in Warsaw by Nazi bombing.

In many works of this second period, Weissenberg the rebel, the critical realist, the poet of class struggle is absent. Several are psychological studies, original and valuable. But they do not have the

elemental strength of the early Weissenberg. The early dynamism, the impulsiveness, the storminess of the early Weissenberg is missing. The embittered Weissenberg of that period seems to have torn himself loose from his roots, from the masses of the people.

The honest, uncompromising Weissenberg fought for the honor and importance of Yiddish literature against the tendency to cheapen and degrade it. In his polemics he was not judicious in his language. His insults caused much bad blood and made many enemies. Attempts were made to "ignore" him. But his works—gems of our literature—could not be disregarded.

Weissenberg was an original artist of the front rank. In some of his work the influence of Peretz and Mendele and (rarely) of Sholem Aleichem, is discernible. For some years he was an ardent disciple of Peretz. Later he became angry with Peretz and found fault with him. After Peretz' death he again demonstrated a profound reverence for his first editor.

Weissenberg was constantly plagued by the worry of providing for his family. His health broken, his life shortened by tuberculosis, he died on August 13, 1938. He is buried in Warsaw near the fiction writer Naumberg and Peretz. Recently the Polish government erected a monument on his grave.

(Translated from the Yiddish

by Max Rosenfeld)

letters



FROM READERS

About Russian Leaders' Approach to the Jews

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

THE fate of the Yiddish language and culture in the Soviet Union and the causes for the apparent and long-standing indifference or hostility towards both by the Soviet leaders will long continue to occupy our attention.

For this reason all news and comment by JEWISH LIFE on this subject is a welcome and necessary service. If there is anything that I, for one, could object to in your recent editorials, it would be their over-cautious and restrained tone when directed to the Russian leaders, as well as your lack of search for additional explanations of the tragic events surrounding Yiddish culture in the USSR.

The never-to-be-forgotten Warsaw *Folks-Shtimme* article of April 4, 1956, which confirmed the persecution of Yiddish culture and the execution of its foremost representatives by the Soviet authorities, coinciding with the revelations of the 20th Congress, must of necessity completely change many long held views about the Soviet Union and its leaders.

If it appears necessary to restate what is now seemingly an axiom, it is because in many discussions on these events we continue to accept and argue from premises offered by the Russian leaders and all too rarely do we question these premises or the ones who

advance them.

The forced extinction of all Yiddish cultural expression in the Soviet Union in late 1948 must have been an event of great importance in Soviet society and every Soviet leader at the time was no doubt fully aware of it.

It is inconceivable that these Soviet leaders did not know that under their noses all the prominent Yiddish writers, who were also Soviet literary figures of consequence, had disappeared from sight. It is unthinkable that these same leaders didn't know that book and newspaper publishing in the Yiddish language—a government responsibility since the October Revolution—had completely ceased.

The only reasonable assumption can be that they were fully aware of that situation at the time and either felt helpless to correct it or they approved of it. That a goodly number must have approved seems evident today by the fact that Soviet Yiddish culture, despite all plans and promises to the contrary, has not yet gained back the position it was robbed of in 1948, let alone the freer, more recognized position it achieved in the 20's and 30's.

It is obvious that in addition to the much offered explanation of Beria and his secret police distorting Leninist national policies, there must also have been other reasons which won ac-

ceptance among the Russian leaders then and still maintain acceptance among many of them now, so far as the Yiddish language and culture are concerned.

I have reluctantly joined with others in the belief that these events relating to the Jewish people and other situations relating to other non-Russian people, can only be explained by the fact that *sentiments of Great Russian nationalism or chauvinism have come to exercise a powerful influence on the Soviet government.*

Sooner or later, and better sooner, it may be necessary to face up to the fact that not only did Stalin and Beria depart from Leninist principles, as it is said, but that all the Soviet leaders have departed from the Marxist principles of proletarian internationalism and equality among peoples. I don't think there is the slightest doubt that hard-bitten and aggressive Great Russian chauvinists, including anti-Semites, have some say in the present Soviet government. That they are supposedly concealed or may deny being chauvinists, is quite beside the point. They infest the Soviet government and we are aware of their presence in it by the rotten fruits of their work.

How else can one explain the heavy emphasis and glorification of every-

thing Russian which has been in progress there for at least two decades? This persisting campaign couldn't help but result in raising the Russian people to a preferred place in Soviet society, to the detriment of other non-Russian peoples and cultures.

It is this activity, the glorifying of all things Russian, which represents the break with the Leninist national policy. Stalin and Beria took criminal advantage of a policy which all the Soviet leaders promoted and which has not been specifically repudiated by them as of now.

Not a week passes by in which the press doesn't report some new instances of Great Russian chauvinism in the Soviet Union. On October 9, 1956, *The New York Times* carried two dispatches which are more recent examples of the continuity of these chauvinist actions.

One of these stories dealt with the effort of the Russian Communists to "revive the national consciousness" of a small, obscure Slavic racial minority living in East Germany known variously as the Serbs, Sorbs or Wends.

At the end of World War II the Soviet Army encountered this Slavic minority people, who were well on their way to becoming totally assimilated into the surrounding German nation. The Russians then proceeded to actively revive the Slavic language of these people through the opening of schools and other institutions and by publishing books and newspapers in that language.

These efforts were occasionally reported abroad as a commendable example of Soviet policy towards minority groups. As it turned out, the attempt to halt the Germanization of this Slavic minority was not a smashing success and this was the gist of the *New York Times* article cited.

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Reading this item, one can't help compare the solicitude and concern shown by the Russian Communists for their Slavic racial brothers in East Germany and the harsh, yes, brutal treatment accorded our Yiddish language and its eminent writers inside the Soviet Union.

No one would object to their concern for a Slavic minority anywhere, if the Russian Communists also gave an equal break to non-Slavic minorities within their borders. To prefer their own kind, to the disadvantage of others, is the crassest kind of chauvinism.

Another outrageous example of the way Russian Communists treat minority groups was described in another *New York Times* story of the same day, October 9, 1956, dealing with a Soviet government decree on Gypsies. In a socialist country, a whole people is singled out by name and told to stop leading "a parasitic way of life." Again, in the typical heavy handed manner so characteristic of the Russian Communists, Soviet courts have been empowered to imprison Gypsies who "maliciously" evade "socially useful work."

Granting that the Gypsies everywhere, because of their peculiar background, present unusual social problems, is this the way a government which claims to be a Marxist-Leninist government should deal with this question? No, only the most hardened type of chauvinist mentality could have thought up or justified such a decree.

I may be wrong but I'm not aware that JEWISH LIFE has challenged the absolutely reactionary views of a Soviet official in charge of religions, one Prychodkov. It was he who unveiled the theory that the Russian Soviet Republic couldn't permit "plural cultures" and this was the rea-

son he gave to the visiting American rabbis last spring as to why there was no Yiddish language newspaper in Moscow.

It seems that only Russian language newspapers may be printed in the Russian Republic of the Soviet Union. But here's the catch—Russian language papers, as it is well known, are also published in the non-Russian republics of the Soviet Union. As long as it's in Russian, it's allowed!

Unfortunately, one can go on and on citing examples of the preference shown by the Soviet authorities for all things Russian and the contrary deprecating, even hostile attitude to non-Russian cultures and minorities.

It would be pleasant to say that the admission of past mistakes and crimes by the present Soviet leaders offers the guarantee that such a reactionary relapse will never recur and that amends will be made where Yiddish and other restricted or suppressed non-Russian languages and cultures are concerned.

This may happen of course, but there can be no certainty about it, particularly if there is no sharp prodding from abroad. All the Soviet leaders who come within our view fairly reek with Great Russian chauvinist ideas. This includes the lone Jewish Russophile in the top Soviet leadership, Kaganovich. I have no doubt that Kaganovich is now where he is because he is such an implacable Russophile. On his head and on Russophile Ilya Ehrenburg's too, must rest a particular responsibility for the gross crimes committed against the Yiddish writers.

Let's also recognize this. There is not a single Russian leader today who, when pressed to discuss the Soviet Jewish question, is capable of speaking in the generous considerate and humanist terms which were once uttered on this subject by Mikhail Kalinin,

the former Soviet president who died after the Second World War, or by Lenin before him.

Many of those who occupy high places in the Soviet Union today are actually men of limited vision, phrasemongers and otherwise compromised people. They bluffed before about Stalin and they bluff today about other things. Such bureaucrats as Furtseva, Ilyichev and Prychodkov are so ignorant, so parochial in their outlook, that it is impossible not to think of them as living proof of "the degeneration of Soviet society," to borrow a phrase from Togliatti.

The revelations this year of the status of the Jewish people and Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union and of some persisting anti-Semitic practices in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, must also throw new light on the old, almost forgotten polemics concerning the Marxist position on the Jewish question.

From the vantage point of today, can one still completely disagree with the old Bundist principle that the Jewish working class required its own socialist party to protect its interests as a national minority and its right for cultural expression? Assuming that Lenin was right at the time when he opposed the separatism of the Bund and its contention that it was "the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat," in the light of today was the Bundist position completely without merit?

Perhaps if a recognized political or-

ganization or even party representing this Bundist principle had functioned on a governmental level in some of the now Socialist countries, would it not have been more difficult to deprive the Jewish people of their cultural rights? Could not such a movement have sharpened up the neglected struggle against anti-Semitism?

Was Martov (Cederbaum) completely wrong when in a famous speech, "The New Epoch in the Jewish Labor Movement," which he delivered in Vilna in 1895, he asserted that a specific Jewish labor party was needed because a general, national labor party might in the course of its development "sacrifice" or "surrender" those demands which are not of prime importance to it, but are definitely important to national minorities, that is, iron-clad guarantees for their language and culture?

The later Bundist theoreticians and leaders, Vladimir Medem and "John" Mill, continually reiterated this view and were charged by the Bolsheviks with a lack of confidence in the Russian working class. Unfortunately, the Bundists had a point.

Can one also argue now with the old time assurance that emigration to Israel is not a valid solution for many Jewish people? We know that Marxists always maintained that all discrimination against the Jewish people would disappear in their home countries as the general progressive forces advanced to political power and introduced socialism.

Theoretically this should still be true. However, the realization of this theory has even in the Socialist countries received so many setbacks, that I think all these countries are now morally obligated to permit as many of their Jewish citizens who want to go to Israel to do so without delay.

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in a new world situation and we are aware of the many new questions and problems we are faced with. On many theoretical questions as well as the Jewish question, we have reposed a confidence in the Russian leaders which for some years has been without foundation and which they have proved to be unworthy of having received in the first place because they so grossly abused this confidence. As the heavy hand of the Russians is now being unloosened and cast aside by

Marxists and progressives everywhere, all kinds of questions are up for review and new answers must be sought.

This situation offers the opportunity that also on the Jewish question we will free ourselves of unnecessary and self imposed restrictions which will consequently enable us to view events realistically and serve the Jewish community in a more effective manner.

New Haven, Conn.

SID RESNICK,

Conn. Smith Act defendant

The Editors invite comment on Mr. Resnick's letter.

Readers Write on Jewish Education

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

I am writing you primarily about the paragraph in your article, "A Ten Year Look" [Nov. 1956], page 24, beginning "we shall continue . . . progressive Jewish culture . . . problems of Jewish parent-children relations."

It struck me very forcibly that in your ten year existence you have entirely omitted the important factor of Jewish education for children except to occasionally print something about it at the beginning of the school year. This, in my opinion, showed little creative thought of your own on the matter (perhaps you were under the impression that other groups were taking care of it). You merely repeated the vague terms "progressive Jewish education" without fully defining how this is to be achieved in these our times and not as it was achieved in the era of our grandparents.

This makes your statement of Jewish-parent relations another vague term, for I do not see how you can give it any treatment whatsoever, let alone extended treatment, without first

getting some definite convictions concerning the matter in the first place. This means a most thorough examination of the Shule movement as it was inspired many years ago and discarding that which may not apply now. For instance, it was progressive to have instituted a secular Jewish school, to have insisted upon the learning of the Yiddish language as opposed to the Hebrew 30 years ago. How much of that is true today?

For those of us who have remained and wish to remain non-congregationalist, the secular Jewish school is a necessity. As for the language (Yiddish), it also has place in the immediate moment. But when we educate and raise children, we must, so to speak, look into the future. The future *appears* to hold that Israel Hebrew is the order of the day. If upon this deeper examination—taking the live fact (and with the present situation I must add—may it live) of Israel and its educational aims—and the many Jewish people throughout the world who do look towards Israel

as their educational guide—Hebrew may very likely turn out to be the progressive position.

We progressives certainly do not wish to end up "reactionary" where the relations of our children are concerned. Few of their own parents know the Yiddish language (due to earlier mistakes which I will not go into here) and their grandparents may no longer be around when they are adults. So all I am saying is that the language question must be re-examined, for it is a more complex question in a more complex society than years ago. Who knows—maybe our children will have to be trilingual?

I am not formulating the answer but I do think that you should give it thought and not merely accept the beliefs, however sincere, of those of yesteryear, who may appear to be experts to you. If we iron out a conviction (and for this I recommend Sean O'Casey and his passion and love of his Ireland, his Gaelic and his people), we can revive the schools in a new form and have more than a one day concession and be done with it.

With due respect to the learning of the teachers of the past, we might be able to inspire the young to the eminent profession of Jewish teacher in its deeper sense of guide and leader for youth. You can not have Jewish life without its children and its young people. In order to have them we must have a concretized program and for too long a moment we have been diffused, disorganized and programless. This can only lead to dissolution, non-existence of any forward looking Jewish life for us and for our children of non-religious practices or leanings. "Let us plant for those who will come after us!"

Why don't we just promote Jewish culture (without a preceding adjective) with proper analysis and criti-

cism and leave off straitjacket words and terminology? Give yourselves *Lebensraum* in this broad world and there will be less need for apologies because your vision will be greater and so your sympathies and understanding, you will then be closer to the heartbeat of our people. Yes, let us have "all the music" profoundly evaluated—"without which men grow hollow."

Where are the jokes, incidents, happenings as they happen to individuals—from Israel? Where are they about other Jewish people throughout the world? Or, because of your limited space and funds, are you primarily confining yourself to American Jewish life? If so, can you conduct a survey of Jewish culture throughout the American communities. (I was surprised to learn that the Educational Alliance has two plays in Yiddish. What are they like? Who goes to them? Are there others of its kind in other centers? If not, what is there?)

Is it possible to have a page for Youth (since there is no publication to my knowledge that is not issued by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations).

Can we have a little more "Jewish salt"—anecdotes from American Jew-

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ish life, rather than the not fully realized short stories (of course that is only my opinion—I'm not saying they are bad—they miss somehow for me).

Well, I have spoken and I will not be there to expand and explain my meaning but it does come from one who wishes your growth sincerely or I wouldn't have taken the trouble to speak at all.

Maplewood, N. J.

I. P.

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

I feel myself particularly qualified to know the value of our Jewish schools, since I attended them in Chicago when I was a child. I remember looking eagerly forward to Shule days. It made me feel proud to learn the language of my parents, to decipher the mysteries of the strange-looking, backward written words. And it made me feel closer to my people.

But most of all I enjoyed the fascinating stories that I heard there. The wonderful tales of the Jewish writers; about the old country from which my parents came; and most interesting of all, the stories out of ancient, medieval and modern history which traced the development of mankind. The tremendous scope of history which was touched upon in Shule was of course absent from the elementary school curriculum and it was as though doors and vistas were opened to me which were locked to my public school mates.

Whereas history in public school was regarded as a dry, boring subject with hundreds of meaningless names

and dates to memorize, here in Shule history became living reality. For here history became the story of how man lived in his society; how he earned his bread; how he was governed; how he was oppressed through the ages; how he longed for and gradually strived for a better, a freer, a more abundant life.

Coming from a working class family where struggle for a living was commonplace, this struggle of peoples in ages gone by was very real to me. As I listened to the stories of injustice perpetrated against the Jewish people throughout the centuries, my understanding of justice and freedom was sharpened, not only as it related to the Jews, but to all peoples. Recognizing my heritage of discrimination, my sympathies were made forever attuned to the sufferings of all minorities.

Drinking in the tales of heroic fighters for freedom and the better life, I became imbued with the desire to carry on in their honorable paths. Thus a social consciousness was developed, a sense of responsibility to my fellow Jews and to good people everywhere.

Thus it was that what I learned in Shule conditioned and molded me into the kind of human being who responds to the sufferings of others and desires to do something about it. I'm glad that I can cry when I hear today that a Negro child has to be escorted into his classroom by a cordon of State Troopers. And when in the next moment the pain in my heart turns to hot anger, I'm glad of that too. For sympathy is a useless emotion if it is not accompanied by the righteous indignation which turns impulse into action—*constructive* action.

Of course we are of the warp and woof of our total environment, of all the forces and conditions to which we have been exposed, the people we have known, the books we have read, the experiences we have had. But I can-

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not help feeling that the most significant factor in the shaping of my character—of the traits which make me feel respect for myself—was my having been exposed to the high-minded people who were my teachers in shule—and the ennobling, humanistic ideas in me.

It is my most ardent desire that my son, through the guidance he is now getting in Shule, will some day feel as I do; will some day express gratitude that he was given the opportunity to go to Shule and to become not merely a Jew who is proud of his heritage, but more: a human being with a measure of clarity about the forces at work in the world. Thanks to Shule, I am confident that he will never despair of humanity's future and will walk, side by side with me and his father to that brighter tomorrow.

Los Angeles

RUTH EHRLICH

President, Hollywood
Kinder Shule

Appreciation

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Looking back on some old magazines, we came across the Dec. 1955 issue of JEWISH LIFE with the article, "The Israel-Arab Crisis: The Way Out," which in the light of present day events in Egypt, is of the utmost significance. We wish to extend our congratulations to the author of this splendid article. We hope you will give us permission to reprint it locally. We are planning to issue a booklet with this reprint and Prime Minister Nehru's message to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

On the personal side, as a Jewish woman removed from my family and friends for 13 years and living in a country where there is no Jewish problem (but plenty of other prob-

lems), it gives me a great deal of pride to read such articles as I see published in JEWISH LIFE, which comes my way only now and again.

Georgetown
British Guiana

JANET JAGAN
General Secretary
People's Progressive Party

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

It is impossible for me to let a letter like "I. C.'s" [Nov. 1956] to go unchallenged. He tells us to drop outworn ideologies, to begin talking to the Petes and Marys, (meaning, I take it, to talk to others than progressives) about daily problems. But exactly what ideology of ours prevented our talking to the Petes or Marys? Or to the Davids and Sarahs? If we didn't, it certainly was not the fault of our ideologies!

The magazine makes dull reading? This is of course a matter of one's taste. I, for example, never found reading Louis Harap, Morris Schappes, Aaron Kramer (to mention a few contributors) dull. On the contrary, I found them very interesting and stimulating.

No, it seems that "I.C." is trying to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Sure, there is a lot that needs changing and improving. But our basic ideology, that of a better social order of true brotherhood, true equality in every phase of life, true benefiting by everybody from everybody's work, that ideology needs implementing more than ever before.

San Francisco ZENA DRUCKMAN

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BOOK REVIEWS



PROFESSOR SHARP ON THE ROSENBERG-SOBELL CASE

By **MORTON FRIEDMAN**

Was Justice Done? The Rosenberg-Sobell Case, by Malcolm P. Sharp, with an introduction by Harold C. Urey. Monthly Review Press, New York. 216 pages. \$3.50.

ON Monday, June 8, 1953, a rather short, mild-mannered man, Professor Malcolm Sharp, stood before Judge Irving Kaufman in the District Court for the Southern District of New York and argued a motion asking that a new trial be granted for Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. I remember very vividly, as I sat in the courtroom that day, my impressions of Professor Sharp.

But most of all, I came away with a deep conviction of this man's honesty, sincerity and courage in not only seeking for the truth, but also in fighting to vindicate the truth and doing what he could to preserve the best traditions of American justice.

In some respects Professor Sharp's book is a history of a struggle of a man with himself. For Professor Sharp was not at first convinced that the Rosenbergs were innocent of the crime with

which they were charged. Even after he read the record in the case, Dr. Sharp was not so convinced and Harold Urey, the atomic physicist, and Stephen Love, of the Chicago Bar, could not convince him that the verdict in the case was unjustified.

Dr. Urey's position on the case, as set forth succinctly in the introduction, can best be summarized in his own words: "I doubted the testimony of the Greenglasses as soon as I read the transcript. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle might have been fooled by the evidence. Sherlock Holmes would not."

So it happened that some time about the middle of May in 1953, Dr. Sharp, influenced by new evidence appearing and mindful of the opinions of some of his close friends, changed his position on the case. Then he could not stand on the sidelines while a battle was going on; he came to New York and started to work with the defense.

What made Professor Sharp change his mind? He views the case's significance as "a social phenomenon, and as a puzzle in proof. Unless a member of the general public has some acquaintance with the problem of proof in the case, he cannot fully appreciate its other aspects."

Professor Sharp then goes on to dissect the record and raise the questions which bothered him and which ultimately brought him into the case. Chapter by chapter, carefully and considered in a calm, judicious manner, he drives his points home.

MORTON FRIEDMAN is a New York attorney. He shared a law office for ten years with the late Emanuel Bloch, heroic lawyer for Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

I think a reader who had not made up his mind and remained neutral as to the whole conduct of the case as well as the question of the guilt or innocence of the Rosenbergs would come away from this book convinced that something was wrong, that justice was not done. Those who believe in the innocence of the Rosenbergs would find their ideas and convictions reinforced.

How would someone who believed in the guilt of the Rosenbergs take the book? If such a person were to read the book with a fair degree of objectivity, he could not fail to be shaken and have doubts about the verdict in the case.

For, laid out before one are all of the weaknesses in the case against the Rosenbergs. The implausibility of the Greenglass' testimony, the undependability of David Greenglass as a witness (attested to by his wife as well as by himself); the inconsistencies in their story, the fact that there were business disagreements between David Greenglass and Julius Rosenberg, the fact that Greenglass was probably in serious trouble with the government are all brought sharply into focus by Professor Sharp.

Then there is the now well-known history of the console table. Was it a special kind of table with a place hollowed out for microfilming given to the Rosenbergs by the Russians? Or was it a cheap piece of furniture, as explained by the Rosenbergs, purchased for about \$21.00? Professor Sharp saw the table. Judge Kaufman would not permit it to be brought into the courtroom on the motion for a new trial that was argued by Professor Sharp, nor would Judge Kaufman hear the witnesses offered by the defense who would identify it as one sold by Macy's for about \$21.

One aspect of the case which has

always intrigued me personally has been the whole question of accomplice testimony. Professor Sharp goes into great detail on this question and to any student of the law, the point he makes is extremely important and terribly illuminating.

Under the Code of Criminal Procedure of the State of New York, a person cannot be convicted of any crime unless there be independent evidence other than that of an accomplice witness, which would tend to connect the defendant in a trial with the commission of the crime charged. As Professor Sharp points out, the Federal Rule is different. If the Rosenbergs and their co-defendant, Morton Sobell, had been tried under the laws of the State of New York rather than under the Federal Rules and the Federal Criminal Code, they would have been acquitted as a matter of law.

If the case against the Rosenbergs was weak; if their convictions were unjustified, so was the conviction of Morton Sobell, against whom there was far less evidence. Sobell fortunately is still alive. Professor Sharp says, "The most serious remediable result of the case today is the imprisonment of Morton Sobell in Alcatraz under a 30 year sentence."

The book does not conclude with a call for all to rally to correct this "remediable" injustice. This is left to others. Perhaps this is a serious shortcoming. I am not sure.

For Professor Sharp, as a student and as a lawyer, set out only to put down in logical sequence and sensible form a history of the Rosenberg case—one which would help establish the truth. I think he has achieved this aim. For *Was Justice Done?* is a fine contribution to American thought. Its publication and wide dissemination in itself can help prevent further and future injustices.

MENDELE'S FIRST NOVEL IN YIDDISH

By BEN FIELD

The Parasite, by Mendele Mocher Seforim, translated from the Yiddish by Gerald Stillman. Illustrated by Forrest Jacobs. Thomas Yoseloff, New York. 174 pages. \$3.50.

TWO pictures, bright as crystals, are associated in this reviewer's mind with the old house in Brooklyn where he spent some of the happiest days of his boyhood. The first was of the prophets. The other picture was a portrait of Mendele, bespectacled, kindly, more earth-bound and human, and yet a prophet in his own right. When this boy's father and the father's friends met for their literary evenings, these men read their own work (they all rode the pen) and the work of Peretz and Sholem Aleichem and Bialik, disciples of Mendele, who glowed down upon them from the portrait on the wall.

Yet though Mendele was a household name to this boy, who knew of him in the Yiddish and Hebrew, it was only years after he had left the tight little ark of his father's house that he came to understand the writer. The shock of recognition followed, that flash and illumination which come about only after repeated knocking at the door. Then Mendele with his humor and humanity, his shrewd, penetrating, bitter and heartbreaking observations of Jewish life in the Russian Pale also threw light on this boy's father and the father's friends who met in the old house in Brooklyn.

BEN FIELD is a fiction writer. He has published four novels and many short stories.

Sholem Jacob Abramovitz, Mendele, is the father of Yiddish literature. In addition, he had his hand in the shaping and modernizing of Hebrew, making it a richer and more useful instrument, grafting on the Biblical prose the diction of the Talmud and the Midrash.

Born in Lithuania in 1836, the son of a rabbi, he was sent to the Yeshiva at the ripe age of three. Mendele came to know Jewish life from the heart out. The house of study, the tiny village, the Pale from one end to the other, all the dark corners were penetrated by Mendele. After his father's death, he wandered about the countryside with a character called Fishke the lame. He became familiar with all levels of Jewish society from the wealthy Kahal (community council), squatting on the lid, to the masses steeped in poverty and superstition.

Mendele taught school and started writing in Hebrew. He was a member of the Haskalah [enlightenment] movement. Stirred by the events taking place as a result of the freeing of the serfs, influenced by the great Russian writers, particularly the satirists, Mendele made an eventful decision. He must write in the language of the people to make them conscious of their desires, to help them shatter their shackles. He must use Yiddish, "that cast-off daughter," that "kitchen-tongue." The first result of that decision was *The Parasite* (*Dos Klayneh Mentshele*).

The Narrator of this masterpiece is Mendele the bookseller. The year 5615 [1864], the season fall. Mendele with his wagon loaded with books, brassware, amulets, wolves' teeth, *Tehin-nahs* (special prayers for women) perched behind the *shlimazel* his horse (also a character), arrives in Glusk

town. No sooner is he settled in the courtyard of the synagogue than a messenger arrives inviting him to the rabbi's house. When he arrives there, he finds officers of the synagogue and a number of the wealthy business men of the town, the Kahal. The rabbi has called them in to read to them the confessions, the last will and testament of Itzhok Avrom, recently deceased, who is the "hero" of *The Parasite*.

Itzhok Avrom was born into a poor family in the town of Beziudeff, signifying in Russian a town devoid of people with human traits. His father had died when he was very young. And here the story funnels out as it describes the bitter poverty of the town and the misery of this youngster, his character.

He is sent to the Talmud Torah. "Everyone knows what a Talmud Torah is. . . . It is a grave in which poor Jewish children are buried, where their minds are mutilated and where they are removed from all contact with the world in which they live. It is a factory that manufactures good-for-nothings, ne'er-do-wells, and spineless, unfortunate creatures. It is a vast pit, an abyss, an unclean hovel standing on wobbly leg supports."

His father's "estate" in the meantime had "dwindled very noticeably: two girls and a boy had died, simply from hunger." The mother darned socks, plucked chickens, helped other women during childbirth, and when Passover came, rolled dough for *matzoth*. Itzhok, who had to leave school because of the merciless beatings of the rabbi, was apprenticed to a merchant.

Here the boy starts a passage through the furnace which was enough to have shriveled an iron soul. He acts as a puller-in standing at the door of the store, nailing prospective customers, always hungry, wolfishly fasten-

ing his hands on a Polish landowner. Discharged because he had picked up a button to present to his sickly sister, he is hired out again, this time to a *melamid* [teacher]. When the *melamid* whips the son of the richest man in town so badly that he is confined to bed, the *melamid* makes Itzhok the scapegoat and he is fired.

The boy is tossed from hand to hand, beaten, starved, worked to the bone. Itzhok is finally apprenticed to a man who teaches him what it is to be a parasite, a leech, a louse. His employer had the richest man of the town in the palm of his hand. Itzhok acquires the one-two which helps him suck the rich and grind the poor. He operates without heart, sends a young man off into the army through trickery so as to grab his sweetheart, gets her with child and then abandons her to marry an heirless.

The novel is an exposé of the Kahal. *The Parasite* created a storm because of the sharpness of its satire, the honesty of its characterization. It was a picture of life in the Pale which seemed to be hammered out in a drop forge or power press. It was received with acclaim by the intellectuals and by the people.

Translated by Gerald Stillman, who retains the spirit of the original, *The Parasite* is, in this reviewer's opinion, the best of the three major works by Mendele which are available in English. There are a number of his short stories in anthologies and collections. In order that the general reader get the full flavor of Mendele, a job similar to one done for Sholem Aleichem is required. After all, Sholem Aleichem called Mendele master. And Mendele was not only an original and highly important writer; he was also a father to his people.

Observation post

By ANNE FRIEDLANDER

"It was such a wonderful evening," said Anna P. "To see a book come to life—to meet and speak to the authors, to hear them read their poems—I'll remember it for a long time." Anna was talking about the "Coming Out Party" of *"Jewish Life" Anthology*, 1946-1956, held in New York on December 1st. We all felt a sense of achievement that evening—authors, readers and editors—when we saw our book that reflected so beautifully the contributions that our Yiddish and English writers had made to American Jewish literature. It was worth the ten hard, difficult years to maintain the magazine to see in one book some of the wealth that had appeared in the pages of JEWISH LIFE during that period.

Telephone Conversation: "Hello. JEWISH LIFE? Will you send four copies of the *Anthology* to . . . I'm so glad you included Peretz's 'Weaver's Love.' I just finished reading it in Yiddish and was delighted to see it in translation."

The Best Gift You Can Give: A *"Jewish Life" Anthology*, 1946-1956.

Our Eleventh Year: We have such a vast store of wealth—a bank full of exciting material about Jewish life the world over. Poems, stories, essays—about the U.S.A., Israel, the Soviet Union. Yet this wealth will never reach our readers unless we get the medium of exchange that will carry it on to the printer, on to the printed page and

then to you. Yes, dear reader, we are appealing to make your contribution to insure the continued publication of JEWISH LIFE. A good investment—and a sound one—for world peace, and security.

Emma Lazarus: Woman With a Torch, by Eve Merriam made its first public appearance at an inspiring "Meet the Author" meeting last month. A responsive audience acclaimed this important contribution to Jewish Book Month by purchasing hundreds of copies of the book. The Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's Clubs may feel justified pride in bringing to light the life of this unusual woman, who made contributions to American democracy in her day.

Have You Spoken to your friend, your neighbor? About what? About JEWISH LIFE, of course. Just take a look at this issue—there must be some article that you can bring to his attention that will interest him. That article on Israel, or A. B. Magil's review, or the poems—tell that family next door about them. Don't be a hoarder and just read your copy of the magazine yourself. Share your wealth, discuss the magazine with others, then make them subscribers who will then do the same by their neighbors. Do your bit to build the circulation of this progressive American Jewish magazine.

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THEODOR HERZL

(Continued from page 23)

instead of resistance and turned its back on the forces of social progress.

The Tragedy of Herzl

The real tragedy of Theodor Herzl is that he sought to solve the Jewish problem with the aid and by dispensation of the forces responsible for creating and nourishing it. *The Diaries* leave no doubt that he was actuated by the noblest, most unselfish motives. And into the task of rescuing the Jewish people he poured boundless energy, faith, courage and organizational skill, sacrificing health, family and fortune with prodigious labor.

Yet this man of vision was socially stone-blind. Class prejudice bound him umbilically to the enemies of human and Jewish freedom. From the outset he hinged his project for large-scale emigration to Palestine on the good will and support of the reactionary great powers. He set out to win this support with remarkable boldness, enterprise and diplomatic skill—and with a capacity for self-deception that gives his narrative a pervasive overtone of pathos. The Grand Duke of Baden, Kaiser Wilhelm II, the Sultan of Turkey, Pope Pius X, the King of Italy, the Paris and London Rothschilds, Baron de Hirsch, prime ministers, foreign ministers, assorted cabinet members and ambassadors troop through the

pages of the diaries in a vast and futile pageantry. Interwoven are meetings and dickerings with various go-betweens, international adventurers and knaves on whom Herzl squandered fabulous sums.

Throughout *The Diaries* there is no slightest inkling that this world of imperialism with its reactionary kings and princes was anything but the best of all possible worlds, destined to endure forever.

"Our movement exists," he told Count Philipp zu Eulenberg, German ambassador to Austria. "I anticipate that one or another of the Great Powers will espouse it. Originally I had thought that this power would be England. . . . But I would be even better pleased if it were Germany."

And when Eulenberg informed him that the Kaiser "had given himself completely over to the idea of a protectorate" over Palestine, Herzl was overjoyed. "The Protectorate!" he wrote on Oct. 8, 1898. "Many will shake their heads over it. But I believe the only right course is to accept it gratefully, now that it has been offered. . . . To live under the protection of strong, great, moral, splendidly organized Germany is

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certain to have the most salutary effects upon the national character of the Jews."

The subsequent effects on the German and other European Jews of the "protection" offered by this imperialist Germany that spawned Hitlerism are sufficient comment on Herzl's social perceptions.

Alliance With Reaction

Herzl and his colleagues were aware that the only reason the kings and diplomats promised or half-promised support for the Zionist project was that they saw in it the possibility of advancing their own imperialist interests in the Middle Eastern power struggle. Herzl in fact couched his appeals, whether directed to Germany, England, Turkey or Russia, in terms of such self-interest.

Recognition of the imperatives of *Realpolitik* necessarily affected the conception of the future Jewish state. Apart from Herzl's enthusiasm for a German protectorate, there are a number of entries which make clear that what he had in mind was, as he put it in one letter, "a vassal state (perhaps like Egypt)." Moreover, as he had pointed out in *The Jewish State*, Palestine would "form a portion of a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism." Change "Europe" to "the West" and "Asia" to "Communism," and we

have the state of Israel as conceived by certain present-day political leaders, Jewish and non-Jewish.

In seeking the favor of reactionary rulers Herzl thought it a good idea to do favors in turn. Thus, for an alleged promise from the Sultan to receive him (a promise not kept till five years later) Herzl undertook to "do what I can toward getting the European press (in London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna) to deal with the Armenian question in a spirit more friendly to the Turks," and to "directly influence the Armenian leaders to submit to him (the Sultan), where he would accord them every possible concession." It never occurred to this spokesman of a persecuted people that he had no obligation to help cut the throat of another victim of inhuman oppression.

This obtuseness toward such elementary moral questions—the obtuseness of an imperialist-minded bourgeois—even extended to his own people. Thus Herzl chose the period immediately after the Kishinev pogrom of April 1903, which horrified the world, to initiate efforts to obtain an interview with von Plehve, the tsar's Minister of the Interior who had inspired the massacre. He wanted to enlist Russia's aid and found von Plehve more than willing to support any scheme which would get rid of the Jews. ("You are preaching to a convert," the tsar's minister told Herzl.)

The interview proved to be one of Herzl's greatest "successes." Von Plehve agreed to all his proposals, including intervention with the Sultan to secure a charter for colonization in Palestine and facilitation of Russian Zionist organizational work. But there was a *quid pro quo* that Herzl apparently had no compunctions in giving. "For I had understood all along," he wrote in his account of the interview, "that he [von Plehve] attached much importance to the Zionist Congress, obviously because he saw that the Kishinev business was bound to come up there for a frank airing. When that happens, *I could be in the position of doing him a service by cutting the thing short.*" (Emphasis mine—A. B. M.)

Herzl indeed did the tsar's *pogromchik*-in-chief a service. In his book, *The History of Zionism*, the noted Israeli Zionist leader, Yitzhok Greenbaum, relates that at the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903, held shortly after Herzl's return from Russia, his opening address, while expressing sorrow for the Kishinev pogrom, "contained no word of protest against the Russian government, which had been responsible for the outrages." Nor did the Congress, dominated by Herzl, adopt a protest resolution.

Yet with it all, there is page after page that shows how deeply Herzl felt the Jewish tragedy and how genuine was his devotion to what he regarded as the best interests of

his people. This ambivalence is more than a personal trait; it is a political characteristic of Zionism. For whatever modifications Herzl's successors may have introduced into his methods, they retained the essence. And for many years a laudable objective—a homeland for victims of anti-Semitic persecution—was pursued by reactionary means: collaboration with imperialism and chauvinist hostility toward the Palestine Arabs, which made of the entire venture a pawn of British ambitions.

To crown the paradox of Herzl's life it remains only to add that the fulfilment of his dream of a Jewish state was made possible by the greatest anti-Semite of them all, Hitler, who drove to Palestine Jewish survivors of his blood-orgies whom Zionism could not attract there. Thus, not as the promised land, but as a land of desperate refuge; not with the aid of the crowned heads of European reaction whom Herzl courted but of socialist Russia, product of that working class movement which Herzl detested, and through the heroic efforts of the Jewish masses whom Herzl feared, were the long years of Zionist failure converted into success with the birth of Israel.

It was thanks to this historic reversal that Theodor Herzl became the founding father of the Jewish state. But the eradication of anti-Semitism—this remains the unfinished business of democrats, Jewish and non-Jewish, everywhere.



AT HOME

An intense campaign to end segregation in New York City schools is going on currently. It is maintained that there are more segregated schools in New York than in Louisville, Ky. A Public Education Association survey shows that "of the city's 639 elementary and junior high schools, . . . 71 per cent enroll 90 per cent or more Negro or Puerto Rican children or 90 per cent or more children of other ethnic origins." The report finds that 117 of the city's schools have no Negro and Puerto Rican children altogether. Nearly 40 Brooklyn associations, including the NAACP and AJ Congress, are conferring to propose a plan to locate schools where integration will be furthered.

Racists distributed their material in the hearing room in Chicago late in Nov. where the Un-American Activities Committee was witch-hunting the American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born for its opposition to the racist McCarran-Walter act. These tracts were anti-Negro and anti-Semitic. About 40 members of fascist groups attended the hearings one day. . . . The National Community Relations Advisory Council, coordinating agency for major Jewish defense organizations, wrote a letter to President Eisenhower late in November protesting the hearings, which have been conducted in many cities over the country, as an "apparent attempt to

brand all those who urge constructive immigration reform as Communist-dominated."

During pre-trial proceedings against the 16 racial segregationists in Clinton, Tenn., on Dec. 6, a man was arrested and sentenced to 30 days for distributing "inflammatory literature" in the federal courtroom. John N. Popham reported in the *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 7) that this material contained "50 photographs of prominent Jewish public officials and community leaders. Headlines on the handbills charged that 'Asiatic Marxist Jews Control Gentile World' and warned of 'The Coming Red Dictatorship.' . . . A noticeable theme of the White Citizens Council followers in Clinton throughout the turmoil has been anti-Semitic."

A white librarian in Arlington, Va., was fined \$15 on Nov. 15 for violating the state segregation law because she sat next to a Negro at a public political meeting.

The 42nd consecutive season of the Yiddish Folksbiene, dramatic group of the Workmen's Circle, opened in New York on Dec. 5 with a production of *The Lonesome Ship*, by Moishe Dluznowsky, a play about Jews on a ship fleeing from Hitlerism.

The Negro, Jewish and Spanish Affairs Committees of District 65 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (AFL-CIO) on Dec. 1

held a joint dance in New York. President David Livingston said that such affairs set "an example of healthy race relations."

ABROAD

News of Soviet Jews . . . The first Orthodox *Siddur* (prayer book) published in the Soviet Union has appeared. The new 479-page book was received in Nov. by Rabbi David B. Hollander, president of the Rabbinical Council of America (Orthodox) and leader of the Orthodox rabbis who visited the Soviet Union last summer. The book is called *Siddur Hasholom* (Prayer Book of Peace). . . . Plans for locating a Jewish library in the state library in Vilna are going forward. Plans for the library include conferences of Jewish readers and lectures and a Jewish school is being organized to meet there, as well as a Jewish chorus and dance group. Two Yiddish concert groups are active in Vilna. . . . A literary evening of Yiddish poetry, read by Yiddish poets, was held in Biro-Bidjan's Sholem Aleichem Library recently. Among the poetic work read were poems by Markish, Kvitko and Feffer.

The only Jew in the Moroccan cabinet, Dr. Leon Benzaquem, was retained in the new government formed early in Nov. He is Minister of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones. The cabinet was reorganized after the arrest of five Algerian leaders, who were brought to France for imprisonment.

The Jewish cemetery at Koeln-Muelheim, a suburb of Cologne, in West Germany, was desecrated late in Nov. A number of tombstones were overturned or damaged. . . . A synagogue in West Berlin was desecrated

early in Nov. Walls of the building were marked with swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans and threats.

A census of Yugoslav Jews designed to gather accurate information on the country's Jews is planned by the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia. A 400-page volume has been published on the history of Yugoslav Jewry and stories and articles by about 20 Jewish Yugoslav writers were also included.

"Diary of Anne Frank" opened in Amsterdam on Nov. 28. The audience audibly sobbed as the play proceeded. The audience refrains from applauding. This city is the locale of the play, for it was here that Anne Frank and her family hid out from the nazis. The play has had tremendous success also in six German (West and East) productions, where audiences leave the theater without applauding, so deeply moved and shocked are they by the play. The play is also playing in Sweden and Greece.

Special commemorative evenings on the 61st birthday of Soviet Yiddish poet Peretz Markish, who died in 1952 while unjustly imprisoned, were held under the auspices of the Cultural-Social Union of Polish Jews on Dec. 7. Yiddish libraries were asked to arrange readings of the great poet's works on that occasion.

L. H.

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