

# **J**ewish **L**ife A PROGRESSIVE MONTHLY

AUGUST, 1957

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## *Fresh Impulse for Freedom*

*by Jeremiah Lesser*

## **THE POOR IN ISRAEL**

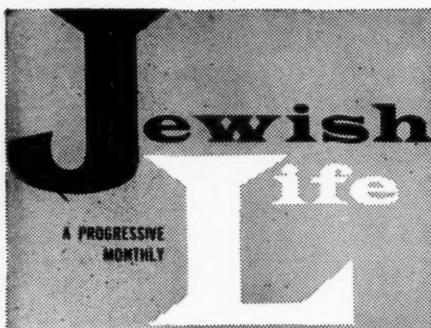
*by Dr. Ferdynand Zweig*

## **SOCRATES' LAST WORDS TO A FRIEND**

*poem by Shmuel Halkin*

## **SHYLOCK COMES TO STRATFORD**

*theater review by Louis Harap*



Vol. XI, No. 10(128) Aug., 1957

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JEWISH LIFE, August, 1957. Vol. XI, No. 10 (128). Published monthly by Progressive Jewish Life, Inc., 22 East 17th Street, Room 601, New York 3, N. Y., WAtkins 4-5740-1. Single copies 25 cents. Subscription \$2.50 a year in U.S. and possessions. Canadian and foreign \$3.00 a year. Entered as second class matter October 15, 1946, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1957 by Progressive Jewish Life, Inc.

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# FRESH IMPULSE FOR FREEDOM

Supreme Court decisions can lead to  
recovery of the Bill of Rights

By JEREMIAH LESSER

**I**N 1798, a wave of anti-foreign and anti-French feeling engulfed the country. Under Federalist influence Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts which virtually nullified the Bill of Rights. Many Americans were imprisoned on fantastic charges of "Paris-inspired conspiracies" against the government. But the impulse for freedom that only a few years before in 1791, had won the Bill of Rights, once again asserted itself. In 1800 an aroused populace turned the Federalists out of office, elected Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency and repealed the witch-hunting laws.

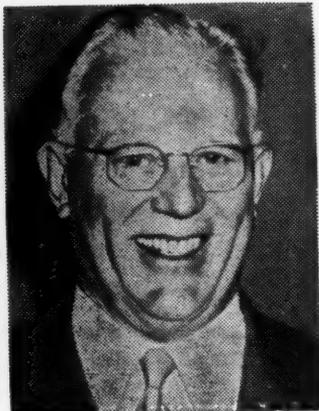
The roots of democratic rights run deep into the innermost character of our nation: our country was born in their very achievement. From time to time, as in 1798, reactionaries were able to deprive the people of some of these rights—but not for long.

Once again Constitutional liberties have supervened after a period of eclipse. On June 17, the Supreme Court reaffirmed basic liberties for our time. The cluster of civil liber-

ties decisions handed down on that date, centrally those in the Watkins and California Smith act cases, reincarnate the spirit that swept away the Alien and Sedition acts in 1800.

The post-World War II era was a dark period in which civil liberties were ruthlessly attacked and diminished. They were menaced by repressive laws and administrative orders from the White House, by Senate and House committees, by extra-legal and illegal measures of the Department of Justice and private witch-hunting groups, mixed with not a little venality in some of the witch-hunters. Employers and unions and other organizations inflicted their own penalties upon individuals marked for persecution by government agencies.

But already in 1953 the fear instilled by the witch-hunt began to wane. The process was gradual. Then, from the start of the Supreme Court session just passed, actions in defense of civil liberties came in a crescendo climaxed on June 17 with the Watkins, California Smith Act and Sweezy cases. On June 24 came



Chief Justice Earl Warren

the second group of decisions sending back the Michigan Smith act case to the lower courts and reversing a group of contempt convictions.

### ***Liberating Decisions***

The Watkins decision delivered a stunning blow at the depredations of individual rights by congressional committees. Labor official John T. Watkins refused to answer some questions before the Un-American Committee because he believed them "irrelevant to the work of this committee" and refused to inform on others. Chief Justice Earl Warren said in his majority decision upholding Watkins that "exposure for exposure's sake" was beyond the powers of such committees. Unlimited prying into personal opinions and actions by witch-hunting committees was impermissible. No ques-

tions could be asked outside of a specific definition of the committee's function. As for the House resolution authorizing the Committee on Un-American Activities, "it would be difficult to imagine," said Justice Warren, "a less explicit one" than this. Witnesses therefore are no longer compelled to answer any questions unless clearly pertinent to sharply defined area of congressional inquiry relating to legislation.

The California Smith Act decision so drastically limited the Smith act that conviction is now extremely difficult. For the majority decision ruled that *abstract* advocacy of violent overthrow of the government, that is, advocacy without measures to carry this out overtly, is protected by the First Amendment. Advocacy of ideas alone is not culpable. In other words, freedom of thought is protected by the Constitution and only *acts* toward execution of the doctrine in practice are punishable. The decision therefore powerfully buttressed the First Amendment guaranteeing freedom of advocating ideas.

Academic freedom was strengthened by the reversal of the conviction of Dr. Paul Sweezy for refusal to answer questions about his opinions before the New Hampshire attorney general. Justice Warren said in the majority opinion that "We believe that there unquestionably was an invasion of petitioner's liberties in the areas of academic freedom and political expression."

### **The Job Is Not Finished**

As the *N. Y. Post* said editorially (June 18), the Supreme Court "has breathed new life into our free institutions." A solid foundation has been laid for a recovery of civil liberties. The *N. Y. Times* (June 23) appropriately headed its editorial, "A New Birth of Freedom." But much remains to be done to gain full restoration. The witch-hunters have already indicated that they will try to circumvent the decisions. Already on June 28 the national administration indicated it would attempt to close "loopholes" in the decision requiring that the FBI disclose its files to defendants in criminal cases. Institutionalized forms of the witch-hunt such as the system of "security" regulations in public and private agencies continue and need to be combatted. Harassment by our political police, the FBI, has not ended. The fight is by no means over.

The cost of this fight has already been heavy in shattered careers, imprisonment and even in death. The suicide of career research scientist William Sherwood, ironically coming on the day of the Supreme Court decision, is only the latest instance. Many Americans have stood up to the witch-hunt at great personal risk and loss. As we of JEWISH LIFE look back on our years of resistance to the witch-hunt, we can in all modesty say that we played an honorable part in this resistance. Sometimes

we stood with very few in public opposition. Month after month, especially in the worst days, we called upon our readers to resist and warned the Jewish community of the special dangers to it in the repression. We articulated the anti-Jewish aspects of the witch-hunt as their manifestations appeared. Our articles exposing the anti-Semitic and anti-Negro phases of McCarthy's activities (especially in our July and November 1953 issues) were not without influence. And we persistently emphasized that civil liberties

### **Jews Greet Freedom Decisions**

THE air-clearing decisions of the Supreme Court on June 17 were hailed all over the country by Jewish organizations and press. Late in June the National Community Relations Advisory Council, co-ordinating group of major Jewish bodies, passed a resolution at its meeting in Cleveland greeting the decisions on the Smith Act and other cases. The *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger* on June 23 editorialized that "the spirit of American freedom has gained new life. . . . We are returning to political sanity—to our traditional guarantees of individual liberty." The *Intermountain Jewish News* (Denver) on June 21 editorially greeted the "momentous return in the traditional direction of constitutional guarantees of individual liberties." Editor Milton K. Susman of the *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh) on June 28 noted that "the bells of freedom pealed merrily this week."

for all Americans could be saved only if the rights of the Communists were preserved. The Supreme Court decisions derive their forces from the fact that the rights they reasserted are rights of *all* Americans without distinction, including the Communists.

The Jewish community has cause to greet the Supreme Court decisions. Throughout the post-war assault on civil liberties, the Jewish people were aware that their security, not only as Americans but as Jews also, was threatened, since Jewish welfare is closely tied with the preservation of democracy. De-

spite the fact that Jewish organized life in certain respects participated in the witch-hunt, some Jewish leaders were nevertheless among the vigorous voices in warning of the dangers. The residue of the witch-hunt remaining in the Jewish community, as in the country at large, should be uprooted. And the Jewish community needs to continue to do its part in assuring full return of civil liberties by working, as the American Jewish Congress has so effectively done in the past few years, to eliminate the remaining manifestations of the post-war drive to destroy democratic freedoms.

## WHY?

By REGINA BOELICKI

They took away my childhood friend  
Because he was a Jew—  
And where they took him, what they did  
To him—I never knew.

They took him on a night in May  
When we came from a walk.  
They marked my house door "Judenfreund"  
With yellow paint and chalk.

And when I screamed, they slapped my face.  
"Just wait! We'll get you too!"  
A kind old neighbor asked, "But *why?*"  
They said, "She slept with a Jew!"

---

*The author, Regina Boelicki, writes us: "I am not a Jew, just a 'Judenfreund,' as the nazis called me. I wrote this poem in Hitler Germany. I was a professional writer until Dr. Goebbels black-listed me as an 'Undesirable Author.'"*

## ***Voices Against Atom Tests – for Disarmament***

### ***In the United States***

**N**OTED Jews joined their voices to those of many non-Jewish Americans in calling on our government to work toward cessation of atomic tests and toward disarmament. On June 21, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, in a speech before of the national convention of news reporters on religious affairs in Cleveland, severely criticized the policy of an arms race and war preparations. He particularly opposed the policy of rearming Germany and thought it senseless to suppose that socialism in a third of the world could be overturned. He strongly urged a policy of co-existence and friendship of peoples. . . . In an address before the 21st annual convention of the Rabbinical Council of America (Orthodox) on June 26, Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, professor of political philosophy at Yeshiva University, appealed to President Eisenhower to call together a conference of leaders of all major faiths, together with leading scientists, to discuss nuclear energy and weapons. "Military men and scientists alone," he said, could not meet the moral issues connected with atomic energy. The convention unanimously approved his proposal. . . . And in Chicago late in June a group of trade unions leaders, scientists and spiritual leaders issued an appeal to President Eisenhower urging the national administration to take the initiative in reaching an international agreement for the banning of atomic tests. Among the signers were Frank Rosenblum, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Dr. William Davidoff, co-chairman of the Atomic Scientists in Chicago, and Rabbi Jacob Weinstein.

### ***In the Soviet Union***

**A** STATEMENT "on behalf of the religious Jews of the city of Moscow and Moscow Region, signed by Soviet Rabbis L. I. Levin, successor to the late Rabbi S. Shlifer as head of the Moscow religious community, R. V. Nikhenson, N. S. Olevsky and Z. A. Bruk, published in the Moscow *Izvestia* on June 11, urged immediate cessation of atomic tests. Said the statement, in part: "Today, when the world is entering a dangerous period of the atomic arms race, when the hearts of the people concerned over the destinies of the world beat with greater anxiety, we want to join our voice to the numerous protests by peace supporters in all the countries against atomic war preparations. We condemn the spreaders of the misanthropic idea of atomic war and demand prohibition of mass destruction weapons, discontinuance of their manufacture, destruction of all their stockpiles and, as an initial measure, termination of atomic and hydrogen bomb tests."

Reprinted from "Congress Weekly":

## A RABBI IN MONTGOMERY

A frank account of how some Southern Jews  
react to the desegregation struggle

By HARRY L. GOLDEN

*The following article was originally published in Congress Weekly for May 13 and is here reprinted with the kind permission of that magazine. The article has made a deep impression on the Jewish community, all the more since the writer, Harry L. Golden, is editor of the monthly Carolina Israelite, a Southerner of long standing and a frequent commentator on the problem of integration in the South and of Southern Jews in relation to this issue.*

*Some letters were printed in Congress Weekly of May 27 and June 17 challenging the accuracy of Mr. Golden's account. We have inserted in italics in brackets at the relevant points the differences in fact claimed in these letters. In his reply (June 13) Mr. Golden states that he gave the facts accurately from his sources but is prepared to acknowledge errors if they are established. However, he says significantly: "If you do not believe I have given a true picture of the general attitude toward this problem prevailing now in the Jewish communities of the deep South, then perhaps I have been living on the planet Mars these last few years."—Eds.*

**R**ABBI Seymour Atlas replaced the telephone and knew at once that the inevitable decision had been made for him. He had served the congregation Agudath Israel of Montgomery, Alabama, for close to ten years. His contract would not expire until September 1958, but this latest telephone call in a series

of many such communications convinced him that he could no longer serve as a rabbi in Montgomery.

Through the open door of the study the Negro janitor was watching the rabbi. He was keenly aware of what had been going on between the rabbi and his board of trustees, because of a special "interest" in the

matter; in his spare time he was one of the "directors of transportation" in the Montgomery bus strike against racial segregation. The janitor could now tell from the rabbi's expression that the distressing business had finally reached a climax. He put his broom aside, went into the study and told him: "Rabbi, when you leave, I leave."

It all began on the evening of Brotherhood Week, 1956. [Dr. Irving D. London, congregation president from July 1954 to June 1955, writes (Congress Weekly, June 17) that the board of trustees had voted unanimously in Nov. 1955 to terminate Rabbi Atlas' contract, that the general meeting of the congregation on Dec. 8 ratified the action and that Rabbi Atlas was duly informed. Dr. London also adds that "the action was taken without regard to Rabbi Atlas' views on the segregation problem."—Eds.] The Negro radio station in Montgomery had arranged for a special program: "an interfaith trio" which included a Roman Catholic priest, Rabbi Atlas, and a Protestant, the Negro clergyman Rev. Ralph Abernathy. But that very morning Abernathy, along with 25 others, had been arrested on an old "inciting to boycott" statute because of their leadership in the bus strike. The interfaith program was saved, however, when one of the national news services bailed out Rev. Abernathy and drove him direct from the jail to the broadcasting studio with not a moment to spare to give

his talk on "Brotherhood." *Life* magazine wrote up the story with a photo of the three clergymen, reviewing as well the progress of the bus strike.

The board of trustees of the synagogue were chagrined at this publicity. They were angry at *Life*, at Rev. Abernathy, at the bus strike; but they were particularly angry at their Rabbi Atlas. They ordered him to demand a "retraction" from *Life*. He was to explain that the Brotherhood Week had been purely coincidental; that it had nothing to do with Negroes, Rev. Abernathy, Supreme Court decisions, or with the Montgomery bus strike. The rabbi of course refused to be a party to any such nonsense; and the trustees were in for yet another shock at the very next Sabbath service during which Rabbi Atlas offered up a prayer for the success of the bus strike against racial segregation. The trustees realized now that they had a serious matter on their hands and decided to meet as often as possible in order "to keep the situation under control."

One of the important trustees happened also to be the membership chairman of the Montgomery White Citizens Council, and he came to offer "some sound advice." [Dr. London writes: "No trustee of this congregation is the membership chairman of the White Citizens Council."—Eds.] He recalled to Rabbi Atlas the incident of some years before when "Rabbi Gold-

stein was given 24 hours to get out of town" because of a sermon condemning the conviction of the Scottsboro boys. The trustee further urged the rabbi to join the White Citizens Council—"and you can remain in Montgomery as long as you care to stay here." Rabbi Atlas told the trustee that he had made an evil proposal that violated every tenet of the Jewish faith. The issue was joined. From now on it was to be a "war of attrition" between the rabbi and the trustees of Agudath Israel, who immediately ordered the rabbi to "make no further speeches or statements outside the synagogue" and to give up inviting Negro clergymen to the weekly Hebrew class: "We want you to disassociate yourself from the Negroes completely while you are the rabbi here." [Dr. London states that so far as he knew, "no Negro clergyman ever appeared at any of these meetings. . . . In any case, no trustee ever issued any order such as you mentioned."—Eds.]

**Of the 27 trustees,** the rabbi had only one supporter, who of course was completely overwhelmed at every meeting. [Dr. London states: "I think that this reference was to me, although I don't remember being 'completely overwhelmed' at the meetings as he had other supporters."—Eds.] In the meantime the rabbi was being subjected to the "silent treatment." Except for necessary communication during the con-

duct of the services or the business of the synagogue, no one spoke to him; they literally turned their backs as he passed them in the synagogue or on the street. No one visited his home; he felt himself completely alone. Four years earlier he had brought a refugee from Poland and installed him as the *shochet*, and now even the refugee severed all personal relations; he, too, thought that the trustees were right.

Less than half of the trustees were Southern-born, to say nothing of the refugee *shochet*; and so the humor of the situation was not lost on the beleaguered Rabbi Seymour Atlas, who was born, raised, and educated in the Faulkner country way down around Greenville, Mississippi. A Southern boy, he had never been in any other part of the country except Mississippi and Louisiana until he went off to Brooklyn, New York—first to the Mesifita Torah Vodaath and then to the Rabbinical Seminary for his ordination as an orthodox rabbi. The rabbi's father had been cantor and *shochet* in three or four Southern cities and was now living in retirement in Shreveport, Louisiana.

At this stage of the controversy Rabbi Atlas urged the trustees to put the issue before a full congregational meeting. For nine and a half years the rabbi had taught their children in his Hebrew School, arranged the bar-mitzvahs and the

(Continued on page 40)

## Bill Against Housing Bias Advances

By A. FEIN

ADVOCATES of the Sharkey-Brown-Isaacs bill in the New York City Council to outlaw discrimination in 1,787,182 private housing units in the city were stunned on June 18. They confidently expected the bill to sail through the Council's General Welfare Committee. But between the hearing of the bill on June 7, reported in our last issue, and the committee meeting to vote on its on June 18, the real estate and financial interests put on a terrific pressure campaign against the bill. Councilmen reported that their mail ran four to one against the bill. And the real estate interests no doubt got busy on the politicians themselves, from Mayor Robert F. Wagner down. On June 18, the committee postponed the bill, indefinitely, it was thought.

But fighters for the bill quickly recovered and were stung to action. Something very important was involved here—the first bill of its kind and destined to spur the whole fight against discrimination nationally. Quickly the wheels of the anti-discrimination organizations began to whirr. Algernon D. Black, chairman of the Committee on Discrimination in Housing, issued a statement—printed as a leaflet in 100,000 copies—condemning the “vicious and deliberate” attempt of the real estate interests opposing the bill to use “the landlord's position to prey on the meanest fears and prejudices of what is in effect a captive audience.” On June 20, representatives of more than 30 Negro, Jewish, Protestant, labor and civic groups met to put on steam for a campaign of letters, wires and delegations to councilmen. The New York State and City CIO got into the fight and met with Mayor Wagner on the bill. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and other civic leaders, ministers and rabbis joined in. A mass rally was held in Harlem on July 1.

So, when the General Welfare Committee met again on July 9, the bill was very much alive. With the approval of the forces fighting for the measure, Councilman Joseph T. Sharkey offered two amendments: one that would drop the punitive fine of \$500 for violators; and another that would assign enforcement to the Mayor's Commission on Intergroup Relations. But another amendment, offered by Queens Councilman Eric J. Treulich, would exempt cooperative housing from the bill. This has met with strong opposition, for it is seen as a device for evading the law. France Levenson, executive director of the New York State Commission Against Discrimination in Housing, suggested that “the exemption would particularly affect Jews. One area in which co-operatives are already being used for large-scale discrimination is the East Side of Manhattan.”

The fate of the bill is up to the people. If they put up a vigorous fight, it will be enacted in the near future.

# Thoughts Toward Middle East Peace

## Meaning of sale of Soviet submarines to Egypt and of refugee negotiations

By **WILLIAM LEVINE**

**O**NE condition for the stabilization of peace in the Middle East is an arms embargo on the area. But Washington has persistently rejected offers by the Soviet Union to discuss this question in connection with an overall settlement of the area's problems. In the light of this refusal even to discuss the question, in addition to the ominous presence of the powerful U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, it is hardly surprising that the Soviet Union resorted to the countermeasure of selling three submarines to Egypt. This immense show of U.S. naval strength close to the borders of the USSR is in implementation of the Eisenhower Doctrine. Could the Soviet Union, in self-defense, do other than to meet this threat? Suppose a Soviet fleet were stationed in the Caribbean Sea, would Washington accept it supinely?

Of course, this piling up of armaments is no solution—far from it. But we cannot deny the Soviet Union the right to self-defense. This new development only accentuates the necessity for Washington to discuss an arms ban in the Middle East with

the Soviet Union. Such a step would greatly facilitate progress toward a solution of the differences between Israel and the Arab states.

In recent weeks some hopeful signs toward improvement have appeared. **Informal talks** were held late in June and early in July in Rome between Arabs and Israelis on the refugee question. "It was believed," said the *N. Y. Times* (July 10), "that the Rome talks covered possible Israel contributions to the cost of resettling families who had owned land in what is now Israel and who would have a claim of payment for it."

On his return from a trip to the Middle East, Senator Hubert Humphrey, who is chairman of the sub-committee on Middle Eastern affairs of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, made a proposal that could help toward a solution. The UN should set up a good offices committee, he said on July 9, which would help the Israelis and Arabs solve the refugee question. In his talks with Israeli Premier Ben Gurion and Egyptian President Gamal

Amdel Nasser, Humphrey was encouraged by their willingness to discuss the issue. As the *N. Y. Post* commented editorially on July 9 on the Humphrey statement, "What is required is the dampening influence of international statesmanship, not the incendiary tactics of nationalism, either from Arab or from Israeli leaders."

There is growing realization on this score in both Egypt and Israel. For his part, President Nasser made an important and hopeful statement in an interview with *Look* reporter William Attwood (June 25). "I have never called for the destruction of Israel," said Nasser. "... As to peace, an overall settlement would have to take into consideration the right of refugees to return to their land and the frontier problem. On the Israeli side, it would have to take into consideration their right to use the [Suez] Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba." Nasser's recognition of the problems here is a mark of progress.

Despite the persistence of adventurist tendencies in the Ben Gurion regime, especially in relations with France, the forces for a neutralist policy of non-commitment to any bloc are articulate in Israel. In a talk in London in May, Meir Grossman, head of the External Affairs Department of the Jewish Agency, said: "The tendency in Israel is today towards neutrality, not only because what we have done up to now does not pay, but because it is the only position which we can adopt. . . .

Some of us now think more and more that we should avoid any connection with any bloc" (London *Jewish Chronicle*, May 31).

Since the adherence of the Ben Gurion government to the Eisenhower Doctrine, which ties Israel more closely to Washington, questioning voices have been raised even within Ben Gurion's own Mapai Party concerning it. Eliezer Livneh said in a Tel Aviv speech recently that the main source of danger to Israel no longer comes from Egypt but from the Jordan-Saudi-Arabian bloc that has arisen since the promulgation of the Eisenhower Doctrine. Articles in the Mapai Party's *Davar* and in the conservative *Haaretz* in June point out that Washington's policy in the Middle East is strengthening the anti-Israel phase of the Washington-supported Bagdad Pact.

Progress toward a stable Middle Eastern peace requires a stern facing of facts. Dr. Nahum Goldmann, head of the World Zionist Congress and the World Jewish Congress, has seen one of the most important of these, namely, that the participation of the Soviet Union is imperative for settling outstanding Middle Eastern problems, as he said in Paris early in July to a conference of the French Section of the World Jewish Congress. With the traces of hope in recent developments on the refugee question, attempts to get Washington to initiate negotiations on the Middle East would help progress toward peace.



## SOCRATES' LAST WORDS TO A FRIEND

By *SHMUEL HALKIN*

*Shmuel Halkin*

Calm yourself, my friend.  
I will not shudder even once  
when I fulfill the judgment of the court.  
I have expected it; prepared myself.  
Not everyone, my friend, has this resort:  
to choose the time and manner of his death.

And really, they were generous,  
even if the reason be their weakness,  
not their strength. It's all the same.  
You see how quietly I come to grips with death.  
Then why the human-oath upon your lips,  
the imprecation in your breath?

So many years, day-in day-out, I've taught you  
that the highest value man has made  
is . . . Logic. All else is trivial and paltry.  
Banish anger from your heart; be unafraid.

---

*SHMUEL HALKIN is an outstanding Soviet Yiddish poet. He was released from unjust imprisonment in the Soviet Union several years ago.*

You heard my closing words.  
I hope you listened well for contradictions.  
It would be good, I think, if my opponents, too,  
would search for weaknesses in my position.

I unified my thoughts,  
then set them one against the other;  
cut through oceans danger-fraught,  
then anchored safely in a harbor;  
as though my words had journeyed all the universe,  
creating, tearing-up, reparative,  
shaping out a world where I will live,  
where you and Plato may recall a friend  
upon a rest-day now and then.

For what real meaning can this poison-grass,  
this hemlock, have for me?  
I'm not a youth; a long road tires me.  
Shall I become a stubborn ancient, bent on living long?  
The Spartans used to drown their old  
that they might not be burdens to the strong.

I've often thought, as I grew older:  
I might never have been born at all.  
Never to have seen you, heard your words,  
this I find incredible.

I thought my thoughts,  
then heard them echoed in your arguments;  
completed, rounded-out, precise,  
and saw them proven in the conduct of your life.  
This, for me, is more important than the rest—  
to make of word and deed a fruitful unity.  
In this I see life's bed-rock meaning manifest.  
And here there is no place for death.

Now you are again impelled by disputation,  
and the wrinkles deepen on my bald, bare skull.  
Until you consummate your thought, I cannot die—  
I have no right to break your conversation!

How can this splintered stick, this Death,  
affright me, when I lean upon your solid staff?  
They thought to scare a lion while his tail still thumps  
and teeth still bare in wrath!

They say I lied. They drive the youth away from me  
by flapping ominous wings of doom.  
I say that good has fled the earth if this is justice.  
Faith has fled, if I am faithless.

If I ever cut down budding saplings,  
chop these old and bony fingers off!  
Even in the days when Socrates was young  
he never dared corrupt their growth.

You too were once a fresh, green plant.  
Your soul was pliable and blemishless.  
Did I not even then direct your being  
to the goddess Wisdom as the purest godliness?  
Did ever I inject a poison into heart or mind?  
Did I not rather show you with a thousand signs  
that even clearer than your eye must be your conscience?  
Perhaps it's this that's deadlier for them than deadly poison.

What a simple thought this is to grasp:  
a blade of grass is not a lowly thing because it's small.  
Olympus isn't high, not higher than the heart at all.  
For them it's just a footstool, nothing more.

Why did they punish me when they could not persuade?  
Time was when they would never pass my door  
without a talk. Often they would stay  
to drink with pleasure at my spring.  
Now I see they did not come to slake their thirst,  
but to contaminate the flow; with filthy steps pollute  
the source. Their covering is of spun-gold words.  
I failed to mark its substance; now I reap the fruit.

My gaze was always upward, toward the crown,  
but did not see the branches at the ground

whose shade is only for the moss and worms.  
They suckled at my roots, defiled them;  
I did not forbid or turn aside,  
therefore must I now be silent.

But then, in retrospect,  
shall we accuse the tree of harboring  
What is the tree to do?—  
not only nightingales, but raven's nests?  
bury birds of blackness in its foliage,  
or not grow green, because of them, in spring?

Now they've brought me to the door of death.  
But life is not a worn-out syllogism  
to be cast into the dust.  
I have succeeded, friend, in showing this:  
What *not* to do, and what I must.  
For what, besides our deeds, stays after us?—  
us mortals, who always seem to stand between  
the ones who know and those who know not yet;  
from the former not freed; to the latter enchained.

Between "I shall" and "I did,"  
aside from fear of an imaginary depth,  
there is nothing. But I have overcome this fear  
which like a shadow dogged my every step.  
On this my thoughts will dwell,  
and keep the bitter from my taste.  
I've spent my life in studying the grasses;  
let this investigation be my last.

And yet you still lament, you rage in anger, overwrought  
that Socrates is judged, condemned for naught.  
You rail, impatient, at his judges.  
Tell me, then, my friend,  
would you feel comforted, or less abused,  
if Socrates were guilty as accused?

*(Translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld)*

# THE POOR IN ISRAEL

## Facts about the unemployed and relief in the Jewish state

By DR. FERDYNAND ZWEIG

AS IN all undeveloped countries, unemployment is the great scourge of Israel. Even more so, since the immigration of recent years brought a mass of people without skill or education and out of harmony with existing requirements of Israel's economy. The extent of the problem can be seen from the figures published by the Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics on the basis of a Manpower Survey for November 1955.

Total unemployment numbered 45,500. Of these, 41,400 were Jews (29,400 men and 12,000 women).

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The number of men partially employed was 109,700 (92,900 Jews: 46,800 men and 46,100 women). These two groups make up a high percentage of the total manpower engaged in the Israel economy. The grand total of manpower, including self-employed, at that time was 631,700, of whom only 451,200 were fully employed. Wage- and salary-earners were estimated to be from 340,000 to 350,000.

This wastage of the most precious economic resource, manpower, is a very great drag on Israel economy. It presents a major social problem which may become dangerous for Israel's stability. The strains and stresses it produces are even greater, as there is no unemployment insurance and the unemployed receive no unemployment benefits from any source. Even the unemployment benefits of the Histadrut, at first given out of a special work fund, have been cancelled and replaced by Histadrut credits to enterprises for increase of staff.

Labor Exchanges are trying to provide the unemployed with a quota of 12 days' work in a month, mostly in temporary or relief or development work by budgeting employment opportunities.

### ***The "Special Employment Program"***

At the beginning of each fiscal year a special employment program is adopted that would provide enough work days to supply the number of breadwinners expected to be workless. This is actually Israel's substitute for unemployment benefits by providing the unemployed with a minimum of subsistence. If the program were fulfilled 100 per cent, that is, if every unemployed person were actually provided with a monthly quota of 12 days' work, he would receive about 57 Israel pounds for relief work or about 65 Israel pounds for development work. (An Israel pound equals 55.5 cents.)

The wage rate for relief work is about 20 per cent lower than the standard wage in agriculture, which is low enough. Since a man on relief work is employed only half-time, he earns about 40 per cent of what the full time employed agricultural wage earner would get.

The idea behind the lower rate for relief work was to make the small sum set aside in the budget for this purpose go farther. Unfortunately this principle does not ap-

ply to all wages in the country. Since about 47 per cent of wage and salary earners are employed by the public sector and the Histadrut, the higher the wage rate, the smaller the number employable by the available wage fund.

### ***Why No Unemployment Insurance***

The motives behind rejection of unemployment insurance are based on the fact that there is no lack of work in Israel, in the Negev, the Galilee or border settlements. Anyone able and willing to work need not starve and can count on support and all possible help from all the respective authorities in Israel. The "*Lumpen-proletariat*" and parasitic sector of the population, the unproductive classes in Israel, are large and the tendency to sit under a palm tree and watch the clear, azure skies is quite real. Any encouragement of this tendency through unemployment benefits may be dangerous to Israel's future. It is emphasized that productivization of the masses is highly important. But this involves individual hardships. Only hardships, it is assumed, can produce mobility into the required trades, regions and localities.

### ***How Labor Exchanges Were Used***

Let us look more closely at the last complete figures of the Labor Exchange for 1954, a good year compared with 1950-53. These registra-

tion figures have limitations. Men are registered from 18 up to about 55. Older men are registered only if they have a trade skill and if there is a prospect of placing them. Arab workers, who are registered in their own Labor Exchanges, and all those who are not members of one of the four main Jewish labor movements are usually excluded from registration. New settlers from new farming settlements are also excluded because they are served by their own Employment Center, set up in January in their own exchanges.

In the 56 Labor Exchanges in the country about 100,000 people registered during 1954 as looking for a job. Of these, 77 per cent were men and 23 per cent women. Of the men, about 24,000 were single and 13,000 had one dependent. The remainder had more than one dependent and 10,000 men had more than six dependents. The men registered during 1954 represented about 235,000 persons together with their families, except for 23,000 women and their dependents.

The country of origin of this group is interesting. From Asia or North Africa came 55.4 per cent; only 6.9 per cent were native born (Sabras); the remaining 37.7 per cent came from Europe, America, etc. But the American and Anglo-Saxon immigrants formed only 0.3 per cent registered in the Labor Exchange. Asian or African born immigrants comprised 66.5 per cent of unskilled workers.

### *Victims of Unemployment*

The new immigrants are obviously the main victims of unemployment. Of the men on the Labor Exchange, 77.1 per cent were new immigrants who came to Israel in 1948-1953. An additional 1.2 per cent arrived in 1954.

Unskilled workers—60 per cent of men and 79 per cent of women on the Labor Exchange—were the main victims of unemployment. Highest unemployment is in building and among agricultural wage earners, where work is casual.

The age groups at both ends of the scale suffer most. They are the very young, who enter the labor market after their military service, and those above the age of 55. The 20-34 age group made up 53.5 per cent of all men on the Labor Exchange, while the age group 35-49 were only 20.5 per cent. Since the Labor Exchange rarely registers those above 55, the age group of 55-65 made up only 3.9 per cent of all men on Labor Exchange. The 50-55 age group made up 8.3 per cent. The problem of older workers—men above 55—is very acute in Israel and becoming worse every year.

Most men on the Labor Exchange were unemployed for a short time at a stretch. The difficulty is that they are so often obliged to call upon the Labor Exchanges. In the three years 1952-1954 those who returned from year to year made up

about 56 per cent of all registrations. Of the 100,000 who used the Labor Exchange in 1954, only about 18,000 received stable, permanent employment. The Labor Exchanges offer mostly temporary jobs.

However, the principle of providing 12 days employment a month did not work out too badly, although not without individual hardships. In about 33 per cent of the cases were the people unemployed more than 13 days. Of these 65 per cent were unemployed more than 19 days.

### *Public Relief*

Let us turn to men on public relief. All those registered by the Labor Exchange are willing and able to work and have a reasonable prospect of getting a job. They are excluded from relief granted by the Public Assistance Boards, which are administered by local authorities.

The extent of the relief problem can be gathered from figures of the Ministry of Social Welfare. In 1952 about 73,000 families received relief in some form from Assistance Boards. This figure fell from 1952 to 1954 to 61,000 families, about 55,000 of them Jewish. The average size of the family helped by Assistance Boards is higher (about 4.2) than the average size for the country (3.4). Thus, the total number on relief or in need of relief would be about 250,000—about 15 per cent of the population.

However, the situation is improving. As the mass immigration subsided, the total number of cases on relief came down by about 16 per cent in the last two years.

But the number of hard core cases is formidable. These include about 13,000 older persons. Beginning July 1957 a majority of these cases will be transferred to the Institute of National Insurance, which will pay old age pensions to men over 65 and women over 60, to about 5,500 widows without means, about 4,000 invalids, about 11,000 chronically ill, about 7,700 over-large families, about 1,000 deaf and blind, about 3,000 problem families, about 3,000 persons handicapped in one way or the other and 7,500 otherwise unemployable.

In some Maabarot (immigration settlements), 40-50 per cent of the settlers are on relief. In some immigrant villages the figure is 20-25 per cent.

There are other groups who live in the utmost poverty but get no relief from Public Assistance, such as beggars and vagrants, some of them in an appalling state. There are also many hawkers and peddlers, hucksters, shoe-shiners who earn no more than a beggar and do not get relief.

The Ministry of Social Welfare offers public relief at starvation rates. Families can not survive physically at those rates unless they find other sources of income.

*(Continued on page 44)*



# ISRAEL

**Tourism was badly affected** by international tensions in the Middle East, but Israel reported 7,500 tourists in May, an increase of 3,300 over last year. "Israel is an expensive place," said the *N. Y. Times* on June 23, "in which to live or travel. During the past year, the cost of living has risen almost five per cent and is expected to go up another five per cent in the coming year."

**Premier David Ben-Gurion** assured a delegation from the American Jewish Committee that "Israel in no way represents or speaks on behalf of Jews of any other country." (*N. Y. Times*, June 26.)

**Zvi Izakson**, president of the Farmers Federation, reported that "Israel has achieved about 75 per cent of agricultural self-sufficiency. Those who believe that socialistic kibbutzim are the characteristic form of Israel agricultural life should ponder Izakson's data that "individual farmers owned 50 per cent of the orange groves in Israel, 80 per cent of the vineyards, 40 per cent of the area planted in cotton, 30 per cent of the poultry industry and 25 per cent of the cattle industry." (*Chicago Sentinel*, June 13.)

**The Communist Party of Israel** (Maki) held its 13th convention in Tel Aviv, May 29-June 1, with 315 delegates. Of these 154 were workers, 45 white-collar workers, 40 professionals; 51 were attending their first communist convention. In age level, 85 were between 20 and 30 years old, and 107 between 30 and 40. One of the many problems discussed was the settling of all differences with the Arab States "by agreement acceptable to all sides" on frontiers, refugees and Israel's shipping rights in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba. The main resolution stressed the Eisenhower Doctrine as the chief source of tensions in the Middle East.

**Immigration** in the first five months of 1957 totaled 42,500, of whom 63 per cent, or 26,775, came from Eastern Europe, mostly from Poland. (*N. Y. Times*, June 25.)

**Israeli Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog** cabled greetings at the end of May to Rabbi M. Levin, newly named Chief Rabbi of Moscow who succeeds the recently deceased Rabbi Solomon Shliifer.

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“**After eight years,**” the *N. Y. Times* correspondent, Seth S. King, reported from Nazareth, “Israel’s Arabs still consider themselves second-class citizens.” Although “these Arabs are physically far better off now than in the days of the British mandate over Palestine,” King notes that “many of them admittedly still are waiting for a second round, when they hope the armies of the Arab states will come back and push the Jews into the sea.” Of the 120 members of the Knesset, eight are Arabs.

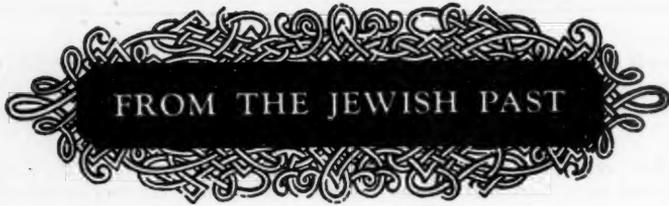
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**Burma signed an economic** agreement with Israel on June 11, to set up joint ventures in the manufacture of rubber tires, ceramics, glassware, paint and varnish.

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**A new oil field** was discovered June 8 in the Negev, 21 miles south of Beersheba, just south of the existing Heletz oil field. In the Heletz field, 12 wells are producing about 5 per cent of the 10,000,000 barrels a year Israel needs.

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**The Port of Elath** is increasing in importance as new routes are opened to new markets. Four ships now carry goods from Elath to Burma, Ceylon, Malaya and Japan. Chief exports are potash and phosphates. Israel is buying 1,000,000 citrus crates from Japan, Cocoa and coffee, until now purchased mainly in the European market, will now be bought partly from Kenya and Ghana. Indispensable to the continuation of such trade is the lessening of tensions with Arab States bordering on the Gulf of Aqaba.

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**The Norwegian tanker,** Vestvard, on her way from Tel Aviv to the Persian Gulf, was allowed to pass through the Suez Canal on June 5 after being held up for a day at the canal entrance.

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**Jean Perrot,** French archaeologist, found an ivory art collection in the Negev that is about 6,000 years old. “M. Perrot’s findings indicate a race talented in husbandry, agriculture and water conservation, familiar with copper refining and gifted in the arts” (*N. Y. Times*, June 14). This is only one of innumerable antiquities excavated in Israel in recent years that have added immeasurably to man’s scientific knowledge of the past. Israeli scholars themselves have made immense contributions in this respect. M. U. S.



## The Career of Joseph Barondess

By I. B. BAILIN

**J**OSEPH Barondess was a magnetic personality; there can be no doubt of that, at least in his outward, imposing appearance. He was tall, with a pair of broad, strong shoulders, and possessed of an energy which was engraved in every line of his face. He was known in every section of New York Jewry; there was never any doubt that here was an extraordinary man. Certain it is, too, that in his later years he was very much like that type of Democratic politician who will go out of his way to "do you a favor," as long as he is sure that it will not remain a secret. "Self-publicity" was one of his weak points.

He lived in a time when pretentiousness and braggadocio were a "best-seller" in uneducated work-

ing-class circles. He was, among them, like the stalk which towers highest in the cornfield. But his prominence was reflected also in his style of speaking. He doled out his words in the manner of a miser who counts out silver coins. When he spoke, he did not spout thunder and lightning. This style was characteristic of too many others. But he wanted to be different—different in every respect, to the point where he once harnessed himself to a wagon and dragged it to Rutgers Square. Here he was acclaimed as a hero by the crowd which looked on amazed and applauded him unceasingly.

Joseph Barondess, who was twice New York Commissioner of Education, was born in Kamenetz-Podolsk, in the Ukraine, in 1867. We know very little about his early years. He was certainly not a brilliant student. When he fled the tsarist draft and came to America in 1888, like

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thousands of other young immigrants, he landed in the sweatshops and labored 13 hours a day for meager pay. This he never forgot, even 40 years later. And this shameful exploitation so revolted him that he became its everlasting enemy.

Barondess had not a little ambition. After working hours he drew upon his resources of energy and studied four or five hours, preparing himself for the university. Someone had assured him that with his talent for public speaking, his ambition and his rare poise, he could become a famous lawyer. So he resolved to attain this goal.

When the workers in his shop heard him arguing with the boss and when they saw his courage and dignified bearing and discovered that he was studying to become a lawyer, they saw no further reason why he should not become *their* lawyer first. And that is what he became!

Barondess was one of the most successful agitators and organizers of the 1890's and at the turn of the century. There were pioneers among the cloakmakers before him. But no one commanded a like authority among the workers. Quickly he became a well-known figure in the Jewish labor movement. He organized the tailors' unions, the actors' union, the printing workers. He was listened to and was trusted, even when he did not beat his breast and bang the table—although at times he did this too.



Joseph Barondess

### **His Political Position**

What was he *politically*? Politically he was not cut out of one piece, as he was in union matters. In politics one could see his vacillating tendencies. Now he was an anarchist, and like all the anarchists called for the social revolution and berated the social democrats, who put their faith in the ballot box. But then a short time later one might have been surprised to see him as a social democrat, calling upon the workers not to throw away their votes but to make them count.

It is no wonder, then, that it was this vacillation between anarchism and social democracy that made him an important labor figure; all of the

anarchist and socialist leaders quarreled over him, but in the process he himself was never attacked. On the contrary, both groups valued him and respected him as an unusual leader.

But then came the spring of 1903 with the blood-curdling news of the Kishinev pogrom. Both sides lost Barondess—to the Zionists. It is true that he still served the labor movement in various ways. But his approach was different. The greatest part of his energy was devoted to Zionist activity. He soon became one of the leading Zionist propagandists among the Yiddish-speaking masses.

As soon as he savored the taste of community activity and fame in select middle class circles, he found his way to the politicians of the Democratic Party. Here a new door opened for him, which led to greater fame—and that door was marked "favors." For this person he brought relatives from Europe, for another he found a job in a city department. People began running to Barondess, not only as a great lawyer, but as though he were already an assistant to the President of the United States! In a short time he became a famous Jewish leader: one of the founders of the American Jewish Congress; a fighter against the restrictive immigration bills proposed in Congress. He appeared before all sorts of Congressional committees; he helped to secure individual entry permits for hundreds of Jewish immigrants into Canada.

In 1910 he was appointed by Mayor William Gaynor as Commissioner of the New York Board of Education. Four years later Mayor John Purroy Mitchell re-appointed him to the post. Here he campaigned to permit women teachers to continue in their jobs after marriage. After the first World War, the former sweatshop worker Joseph Barondess was elected to the Jewish delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference, with the task of incorporating the minority rights of the Jews in the peace treaties that were being written. He was one of the most prominent of all the East European Jews who had come to the United States in the preceding 40 years. Nor did he lack other honors. He was elected president of the National Fraternal Order of B'nai Zion, director of the Hebrew Herzlia Academy, director of HIAS and chairman of the Board of Deborah Sanatorium.

He attained all these high positions, it is true, partly because of his dignified and inspiring personality, but no less because of the Jewish workers, who extolled him to the heavens and believed in him as in a god. Insofar as knowledge was concerned, many Jewish immigrants were head and shoulders above him, and certainly no less in loyalty and devotion. Yet he was always the fair-haired boy in all working class celebrations and was always regarded in middle class circles as a

man who could "deliver" the votes of the Jewish workers.

Leon Kobrin, in his book *Fifty Years in America*, tells of Barondess' speeches during those days. He called the workers all sorts of insulting names: "jackasses, oxen, cattle." "You are now in America, not in Shnippeshuk, not in Yadovka and not in Blotovka [disparaging names for the East European Jewish town]! Here you can *live* like human beings, *eat* like human beings, *dress* like human beings and *look* like human beings—if you would only stop being such cattle, such oxen, such jackasses!" And he proceeded to show them that they could achieve all this if they would only join the union!

Then suddenly he would begin to cry: "I work and toil for you 20 hours a day—you hear me, 20 hours every single day! I, Joseph Barondess, work for you! Why do I do it? In order that you may become real union men and earn more money and live better and stop being such jackasses! Workers, Jewish brothers, help me fight for you! Don't leave me to fight alone! Stand by me in the fight against your bosses, against those cockroaches! Jackasses, cattle, I am fighting for you—don't you understand!"

One does not know which to marvel at first—Barondess' "tremendous modesty" or the workers of the time, who responded to these speeches of his with tremendous applause!

When in 1926 Barondess was hon-

ored by a gigantic meeting in the New York Metropolitan Opera House, there were plenty of those "jackasses" in the audience. But they were no longer "jackasses." They were now the kind of contractors who had "jackasses" and "cattle" working for them.

Joseph Barondess died in 1928. He was not a "great writer." His speech and writing were poor and bloodless. This can be seen in the many translations which he wrote and for which he received no honors at all.

#### *News about Soviet Jews*

**T**HERE are six rabbis in Leningrad, reported a London *Jewish Chronicle* correspondent from Moscow in June. "The Leningrad Jewish community," he writes, "is now preparing to publish a prayer-book of its own. The 10,000 copies of the Moscow *Siddur* (prayer-book), published a few months ago, have all been sold. . . . Together with the new chief rabbi of Moscow, Yehuda Levin, Rabbi Treibner (new head of the Moscow Rabbinical College) is hoping to open a branch of the Moscow Yeshiva in Georgia, where there are large Jewish communities."

Well-attended Jewish concerts were held in June in the House of Columns of the Trade Unions in Moscow, at the Park of Culture in Moscow, in Baku and a series of concerts in Leningrad in April.

# THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

## *American Jewish Congress*

Taking a cue from the complications in the Hildy McCoy case in Massachusetts, the American Jewish Congress and the New York Board of Rabbis have proposed an amendment to the New York State Constitution that would permit inter-religious adoptions when the child's parents consent and when the welfare of the child is at stake. The brief submitted to the hearing on Constitutional changes contended that the rule used by Massachusetts, where a child born in one faith may not be given into the custody of a couple of a different faith, violates the guarantee in the U.S. Constitution of freedom of religion and the separation of church and state.

The Administrative Committee of the Chicago Council of AJ Congress recently recommended immediate action by the U.S. Congress to revise the McCarran-Walter law. Among the recommendations: elimination of the national origins quota system and other racist provisions; abolishment of deportation as a means of punishment; elimination of all distinctions between native-born and naturalized citizens; guarantees for fair procedures and due process in all proceedings; provisions for emergency refugee entry into the U.S. to be expanded to include any victims of religious, racial or political persecution and tyranny.

An appeal made to N. Y. State Education Commissioner Dr. James E. Allen, Jr. by four residents of the New

Hyde Park, Long Island, school district, to bar the display of an "inter-denominational" version of the Ten Commandments in its classrooms, met success on June 12. Dr. Allen decided against the display. The appeal was supported by the AJ Congress and the New York Board of Rabbis, who pointed out that the display involved teaching religion in schools in violation of the American principle of separation of church and state.

## *Emma Lazarus Federation*

The seventieth anniversary of the death of Emma Lazarus was marked by an impressive ceremony conducted June 11 at the Statue of Liberty, upon the base of which are inscribed the Jewish American poet's lines. The ceremony was sponsored by the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's Clubs, which has conducted anniversary pilgrimages to the Statue of Liberty for many years. The 300 women assembled before the Statue heard Mrs. Max Lazare, chairman of the New York Women's Division of the proposed American Museum of Immigration, describe the projected museum as one which "will tell the story of immigration of people from 77 countries who came here on one-way tickets." The cultural and historical records of immigrants will find a home in the museum. Miss Dora Teitelbaum, well-known Yiddish poet, spoke of Emma Lazarus and immigrants today.

## **Zionist Organization of America**

Last month this column reported the organization of the American Jewish League for Israel, a result of a split from the Zionist Organization of America engineered by Louis Lipsky and Judge Louis E. Levinthal. That the argument of the new League to the effect that the Z.O.A. acts like an affiliate of the General Zionist Party of Israel, can not be ignored, was made evident by the action of the national executive council of the Z.O.A. on June 19. In a resolution the council instructed its representatives on the World Zionist Actions Committee to work for such reforms that "the central activities of the movement as a whole shall be conducted on a non-partisan basis." The report of the council meeting (*N. Y. Times*, June 20) interprets the resolution thus: "In essence, the American group demanded drastic changes in the methods of selecting representatives who visit Jewish communities outside Israel to conduct Zionist activities and who also are involved in the work of colonization in Israel."

## **Hadassah**

Senator Estes Kefauver (D., Tenn.) received a Hadassah man-of-the-year award in Belle Harbor, N. Y., on June 12. Kefauver told his audience that "It amazes me when it is said that Americans cannot talk with Russians without being contaminated or getting the worst of the bargain." He recommended an educational exchange program where American students could study the Communist system. He told the Hadassah group that "If we ever reach the point where we fear negotiations because we believe we are less

capable, less competent or more subject to contamination than others, or because we regard ourselves as less able to distinguish what is good or bad for this nation, then we shall indeed have reached a sorry state." He criticized the ban on visits to China by U.S. newsmen.

## **American Jewish Committee**

A delegation of the American Jewish Committee, headed by its president, Irving M. Engel, urged Premier Ben Gurion to change the present policy in regard to Israel nationality. The delegation called for an end to favoritism for Jews in acquiring Israel citizenship. The Nationality Act automatically grants Israel citizenship to Jewish immigrants, unless they wish to retain their former citizenship. Non-Jews, however, must clear a number of formalities and meet certain requirements. Mr. Engel stated that his organization, which insists on equal treatment of Jews throughout the world, is embarrassed by the fact that when Jews have their own State, they discriminate between Jews and non-Jews. It is reported that Ben Gurion did not see it that way, and rejected the advice of the American Jewish Committee. The delegation also expressed its concern over the lack of freedom of religious expression in Israel, citing the fact that Orthodox rabbis have exclusive jurisdiction in certain matters. For example, Reform or Conservative rabbis are prevented from performing marriages.

Mr. Engel pointed out that in regard to the Arab minority in Israel, the impression was favorable, but that there is room for improvement in the treatment of Arabs.

S. P.

# The "Soviet Encyclopedia" Article on "Jews": II

## Second part of a critical look into its accuracy

By M. MIRSKI

THE "Bund" is characterized by the authors of the article on "Jews" in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, on page 378 of Volume 15 (which appeared in 1952), as follows: "A nationalist organization among the Jews in Russia. A petit-bourgeois, opportunist party, which stood for the separation of the Jewish Social Democrats from the general Social Democratic movement in Russia. V. I. Lenin and J. Stalin, leading a fight against the nationalist position of the leaders of the Bund, pointed out that for the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia, the complete unity of the proletariat was necessary, the union of all the nationalities, the unification of the working people of all countries against their class enemies. 'Jewish national culture' is the slogan of the rabbis and the bourgeoisie, the slogan of our enemies," wrote Lenin in 1913."

On reading this characterization everything seems to fall into place: the

characterization of the Bund and the reference to Lenin's struggle against Bundist nationalism and separatism—everything checks. And yet the question arises:

How could the writers of the article accompany Lenin's statement about Bundist nationalism, about the necessity for unity of the proletarians of all nationalities against a common class enemy—how could they accompany this with a quotation out of context about Jewish national culture as a slogan of the rabbis and the bourgeoisie?

I would not bring this question up—because, after all, everyone cites texts according to his own understanding—were it not for the fact that the authors committed a great sin against Lenin. What did they do?

They tore the above question out of its original context of problems of national culture in general, which Lenin dealt with in the above article, and thereby they distorted Lenin's thought on Jewish national culture. What conception of Jewish national culture can the reader of the *Encyclopedia* obtain on the basis of the sentence they quote? Only that Jewish national culture is a reactionary phenomenon, because it is the slogan of the rabbis and the bourgeoisie, of our enemies.

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M. MIRSKI is a prominent Jewish leader and writer in present-day Poland. The above is the second and concluding part of an article originally published in the Warsaw Yiddish *Folks-Shtimme* and is here translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld.

### The "Two National Cultures"

But what did Lenin really say? In the same article from which the authors quote ["Critical Remarks on the National Question," published in 1913 and available in English in a pamphlet published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow—*Eds.*], Lenin said: "There are two nations in every modern nation—we will say to the social-nationalists. There are two national cultures in every national culture. There is the Great-Russian culture of the Purishkeviches, Guchovs and Struves—but there is also the Great-Russian culture that is characterized by the names of Chernyshevsky and Plekhanov. There are the *same two* cultures among the Ukrainians, as well as in Germany, France, England, among the Jews, etc."

It is evident from this quotation that Lenin did not have a concept of one, undifferentiated Russian, Ukrainian or Jewish national culture. He conceived of national culture as being socially differentiated. In another place in this same article, Lenin writes:

"Take a concrete example. Can a Great-Russian Marxist accept the slogan Great-Russian national culture? No. Such a man should be placed among the nationalists and not among the Marxists. Our task is to fight the dominant, Black-Hundred and bourgeois national culture of the Great-Russians and to develop, exclusively in the international spirit, and in the closest alliance with the workers of other countries, those rudiments that exist also in our history of the democratic and working-class movement. To fight your own Great-Russian landlords and bourgeoisie, to fight their 'culture' in the name of internationalism, and while fighting, to 'adapt' yourself to the peculiar characteristics of the Purishkeviches and Struves—such is your

task, and not to advocate, not to tolerate the slogan national culture.

"The same applies to the most oppressed and persecuted nation, the Jewish. Jewish national culture is the slogan of the rabbis and the bourgeois, the slogan of our enemies. But there are other elements in Jewish culture and the entire history of the Jews. Of the ten and a half million Jews throughout the world, a little over half live in Galicia and Russia, backward and semi-barbarous countries, which forcibly keep the Jews in position of a caste. The other half live in the civilized world and there the Jews are not segregated in a caste. There, the great, world-progressive features of Jewish culture have clearly made themselves felt: its internationalism, its responsiveness to the advanced movement of the epoch (the percentage of Jews in the democratic and proletarian movements is everywhere higher than the percentage of Jews in the population as a whole)."

As we see, Lenin's concept of national culture is profound and many-sided. He saw it as socially differentiated. He saw its reactionary content and its progressive content. He saw these *two* aspects also in Jewish national culture. He saw its reactionary side—the culture of the rabbis and the bourgeoisie. But he saw its second side, the progressive, the internationalist, its response to the democratic and socialist ideas of the age.

What sense, therefore, was there in taking one aspect of Lenin's concept of national culture—the reactionary aspect—and thus leave the reader of the *Encyclopedia* under the impression that this was Lenin's evaluation of Jewish national culture as a whole? Is this not a distortion of Lenin's profound and widely encompassing idea of national culture? What would happen, for instance, if one took the



At a meeting of the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in 1941: left to right, Peretz Markish, David Bergelson, Solomon Mikhoels.

liberty of presenting from Lenin's many-sided evaluation of *Russian* national culture only one sentence which deals with its reactionary content? Would this not be the most terrible distortion of Lenin's thoughts on Russian national culture? Would this not be an insult to that Great-Russian national culture which is represented by Chernyshevsky and Plekhanov? What connection would this kind of interpretation have with encyclopedic information and interpretation?

The authors and editors of the *Encyclopedia* article know Lenin's theory of national culture, they know its social aspects. They know Lenin's writings on this question. Yet they irresponsibly tore the above sentence out of context and thereby terribly distorted it, especially since the quoted

sentence brings no clarity whatsoever to the question of Lenin's struggle against Bundist separatism.

Why did they do it? What impelled them to do it?

### ***The Meaning of Full Equality***

No matter what the answer to this question may be, one thing is certain. This kind of encyclopedic information, such a manner of quoting and interpreting, is a far cry from that scientific conscientiousness which should animate people who have undertaken to provide encyclopedic information. This methodology is far from scientific objectivity in the Marxist sense of the word. It is rather an attempt to fit a subject matter to political expediency, whose purpose was to establish that

Jewish national culture is a reactionary phenomenon.

In another place, the *Encyclopedia* writers say: "After the Socialist October Revolution, the restrictions on Jews were liquidated, as they were on other oppressed national minorities. In 1934 the Jewish Autonomous Region was established. The working-class Jews were given access to trades and professions; they actively participated in the building of Communism. In this way the Leninist-Stalinist national policy of equal rights and friendship among peoples resulted in the fact that there is no 'Jewish Question' in the Soviet Union."

The authors point out that after the October Revolution all restrictions on Jews were abolished; that the Jews had access to all trades and professions. But can we reduce the accomplishments of the October Revolution in regard to national minorities merely to the equalization of rights? The abolition of the restrictions on Jews, giving them entry into economic life, had already been proclaimed by the French bourgeois revolution. And these rights are enjoyed, more or less, by the Jews in all the bourgeois states of the West.

Of course, the October Revolution abolished all tsarist restrictions on Jews, as well as on other national minorities. Certainly the civil equality in the Soviet Union is incomparably broader and more fundamental than in most advanced bourgeois states. But the October Revolution was not content with this. The October Revolution went much further than the most consistent and fully realized bourgeois democratic revolution. The October Revolution did not stop at civil equality, as the authors of the article would have us believe. The basic characteristic of the Leninist nationality policy, which distinguishes it from bourgeois

equality, which was proclaimed by the October Revolution and was put into the foundation of the practical activity of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet government, and which was distorted by the Stalinist practice—this characteristic is the full national equality of all the peoples who inhabit the Soviet Union.

Not only the abolition of the tsarist restrictions, not only free access to all pursuits and professions did the Jewish population of Russia receive from the October Revolution. This revolution and the Soviet government, putting into practice the Leninist national policy, gave the Jewish population full national equality.

Full national equality meant not only the absolute equalization of the rights of every national minority or group, regardless of size, with all nations, larger or smaller, who inhabited Russia, in the sense of creating for them all political, moral and financial possibilities and conditions, at the expense of the government, so that they might, like all other nations, fulfill their national needs; that they might create a national culture of progressive content; that they might, as far as possible, develop and contribute to the building of the socialist culture in the Soviet Union.

Lenin used to emphasize that national equality should even be interpreted in the sense of a certain privilege for some national minorities in order to compensate for the crimes which tsarist rule had committed against them.

Until the October Revolution, such rights had not been proclaimed or granted by any revolution. No government except the Soviet government gave, or could give, such rights. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat could do this.

Did the Jewish population in the

Soviet Union achieve national equality? Yes! In the greatest measure and with the broadest scope! Did this find expression in the *Encyclopedia* article? No! Unfortunately, this aspect, the basic aspect, of the achievement of equal status for the Jewish national minority did not find expression.

### *The Large Gap*

In the excerpt just cited from the *Encyclopedia*, one observes a large gap. The authors tell us what the October Revolution gave the Jewish population. Suddenly they skip to the year 1934 and the establishment of Biro-Bidjan. But the question arises: well, what happened to the Jewish national minority in the Soviet Union during those 17 years from 1917 to 1934? What happened to the more than three million Jews who lived throughout the length and breadth of the Soviet Union during those 17 years of Soviet life? How did the national equality which the October Revolution gave to the Jews for the first time in history find expression? What did the Jewish population achieve and create during that time? What is its national contribution to the rise and development of the multi-national Soviet socialist culture?

Why did the authors and editors of the *Encyclopedia* not tell us about this? Why did they not inform the reader about the hundreds of Jewish schools, pedagogical institutes, newspapers, magazines; about the thriving Yiddish literature and its creators, about the serious works of literature and criticism? Why isn't there even a short review, if not of the history of Jewish literature in various countries, then at least of the history of Jewish literature in Russia, the Ukraine, White Russia, Lithuania, where during the 19th century scores of Jewish writers

—Maskilim [Enlighteners], democrats, socialists—worked and were listened to? Perhaps all this was a national culture of the rabbis and the bourgeoisie? Or didn't they have anything to write about?

They failed to write about this, not because they had *nothing* to write about, but because they had a *great deal*. There was and there still is a good deal to tell about a great body of democratic and socialist culture which was destroyed. The authors of the *Encyclopedia* article sensed this and wanted to make it more palatable by pointing to Biro-Bidjan. But in the atmosphere of distorted policy toward the Soviet Jewish national culture there could be no talk about a proper development of Biro-Bidjan either. The Jewish Autonomous Region therefore shared the fate of the Soviet Jewish national culture and remained only a name.

### *A "Jewish Question" in the USSR?*

One final point: the reader will remember that the *Encyclopedia* writers say that as a result of the October Revolution all tsarist restrictions relating to Jews were abolished and that the Jews were given access to all economic pursuits and that they are participating in the socialist construction of the country. And they conclude that in the Soviet Union there is no "Jewish Question." This conclusion is only a half-truth. Insofar as the Jewish population in Russia was granted equal civil rights with all other citizens, there is no "Jewish Question" in the Soviet Union.

But, as stated above, Lenin's policy can not be reduced to civil equality and nothing more, as the authors try to make out. Correctly understood, Leninist national policy is a higher

level of equality (proletarian and international) which is expressed in national equality. But to the extent that the correct policy was distorted, to the extent that the Jewish population of the Soviet Union remained without a means to fulfill its national needs, to that extent I tend to accept the opinion that an unsolved question exists in that area.

I believe, however, that the *Encyclopedia* article belongs to a period that is past. The 20th Congress, on the basis of a criticism of the past, has indicated the measures which should be taken to re-establish the Leninist criteria. The resolution of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party

says: "In its national policy, the Party has always proceeded from the Leninist principle that socialism, far from removing national distinctions and specific features, ensures the all-round development and efflorescence of the economies and cultures of all nations and nationalities. In future, too, the Party must attentively heed these specific features in all its practical activities."

We hope and believe that the editors of the *Encyclopedia* will take into account the observations of the 20th Congress and will introduce the necessary changes in the articles on "Jews" in order to raise them to the proper level of scientific accuracy.

## REBECCA TRIED AS A WITCH

(On Rereading Scott's *Ivanhoe*)

By MARTHA MILLET

Not in her beauty or her station proud,  
But in her people—in their centuries  
Of ghettos, exodus, of wrongs withstood—  
Rebecca stands before the Templars' fire.  
Her crime, her people! Isaac of York, her sire!—  
Marked out as sport of sadists, spoil of lords—  
She casts her scorn upon the slaving crowd;  
Speaks, like that stern and desert god  
Of early, arduous days, shepherd of flocks . . .  
And back they fall, the hungry pack, before  
The flashing maiden's word. Rebecca stands,  
A Maccabeus, with a sword in hand.

Here was a woman!—sound her praise anew—  
Who schooled the Gentile, and upraised the Jew!

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MARTHA MILLET has published several volumes of poetry. She is the editor of an anthology, *The Rosenbergs: Poems of the United States*.

### *A Reader's Question About Hungary*

**I**N A letter to the editors dated June 3, reader S. G., of Chicago, quotes a paragraph from an editorial in *Congress Weekly* (May 20), organ of the AJ Congress, and asks, "Would it be possible to get you to reply to this in JL?"

The paragraph in question reads as follows: "The convulsion in Hungary has placed the Jews in the crossfire of the contending groups. Most recently, all the blandishments having failed to enlist the support of the populace, the Kadar regime has turned to the old and tried weapon employed by all despotisms. The revolution is now portrayed as the 'sinister machination of the Jews' and the resentments of the masses are being sedulously channeled against the 'Jewish powers of darkness.' For the present, writes a *N. Y. Post* correspondent, 'the regime's public enemy No. 1 are the Jews.' The tragedy for the Jews in Hungary is that, unlike Poland, the Hungarian regime not only fosters anti-Semitism but refuses to let its victims leave."

So far as we can ascertain, there is one and only one source for these serious charges—a column from Vienna by *N. Y. Post* correspondent Seymour Frieden in the May 7 issue. Frieden charges, with alleged quotations, that Hungarian Minister of State Georgy Marosan is going about the country accusing the Jews of responsibility for his country's troubles.

All the evidence we have at hand indicates not only that Frieden's charge is baseless, but that the opposite is true.

The facts are that the intense anti-Semitism loosed by the uprising was incited by the rebels, who railed against "Communists and Jews" as responsible for the condition of Hungary.

All the information we have received in the past few months indicates that the attitude of the Kadar government toward the Jews is sympathetic.

In April, *Uj Elet*, organ of Hungarian Jewry, reappeared after an interruption of five months. The London *Jewish Chronicle* (May 10) reports the following about the first issue of the revived *Uj Elet*:

"A careful scrutiny of the paper's leading article . . . indicates a significant change of attitude toward Hungarian Jewry on behalf of the authorities. It reveals with surprising sincerity and frankness the real situation of the Jews of Hungary and even deals with the problem of emigration, which was never mentioned openly in the days of the pre-Kadar epoch. . . . The article goes on to attack the former Stalinist regime of Rakosi. . . . The new rulers of Hungary . . . intend to facilitate the procedure of obtaining necessary documents to enable persons whose families are in Israel to join their relatives in the Jewish state." Hardly the attitude of a regime which is exploiting anti-Semitism "or refuses to let its victims leave," as the *Congress Weekly* editorial has it.

# Shylock Comes to Stratford

Comments on the latest interpretation  
off "The Merchant of Venice"

By LOUIS HARAP

WITH some trepidation we journeyed to Stratford, Conn., to see the American Shakespeare Festival Theater production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Was it possible to produce this play without anti-Semitic effect? This problem had been discussed in several articles in this magazine in 1955 (March, May, Sept.) in connection with two off-Broadway productions of the play in New York and the Canadian Stratford version that summer. Our late theater critic, Nathaniel Buchwald, had concluded after a carefully reasoned examination that "the plain fact is that the impact of *The Merchant of Venice*, on stage or in the classroom, is definitely anti-Semitic" (May 1955). The anti-Semitism was inexorably written into the play, he contended, not only in the character of Shylock, but especially in the crude Jew-baiting attitudes and expressions in the other characters.

The American Festival Theater's interpretation seems to us to challenge our late respected friend's conclusion. For their conception, centering around the breath-taking performance of Morris Carnovsky as Shylock, persuaded us that it is pos-

sible to present this play as a humane study of anti-Semitism rather than an anti-Semitic romp.

Did Shakespeare intend the drama to ridicule the Jew? We prefer not to argue this point. It is more fruitful, we think, to look at the play, apart from purported prejudices of the dramatist, and derive our conclusions from the lines themselves. What is definitely known, however, is that the play was done as broad anti-Semitic farce for more than a century after it first appeared. The question is, then, how can the play be conceived without anti-Semitic intent or effect and avoid distortion of the dramatist's work?

A careful scrutiny of the play will show, it seems to us, that Shakespeare delineated Shylock as a genuine human being and definitely not as an anti-Semitic stereotype of the stage Jew. His motivation in demanding a pound of his Christian adversary's flesh is shown to be the anti-Semitic degradation he had suffered at the hands of Antonio, the desertion by his daughter to a Christian and her theft of money and jewels. The lines given to him by Shakespeare are spoken by a real human

being, not a figment of the anti-Semitic imagination. And his main antagonist, the merchant Antonio, who borrows money from Shylock for his friend Bassanio, is clearly shown to be an obsessive anti-Semite. Given an audience relatively free of prejudice, this emerges clearly.

How does the Stratford company—primarily the pivotal figure, Shylock, as played by Morris Carnovsky—achieve a deeply human interpretation? By playing the Jew-baiting scenes not as comedy, as was done for a long time, but as a deadly serious confrontation of Shylock, a dignified and shrewd person with human frailties, being baited by the anti-Semites as the irrationally prejudiced persons that they are. These scenes are so played that the audience, except for those in it who are hard-bitten anti-Semites already, recognizes them as such and not as members of a superior race. The Jew-baiters are so played that the audience cannot help but identify them with anti-Semitic manifestations.

### *A Great Shylock*

This comes out with especial clarity in the first act, when Shylock concludes the bargain with Antonio and Bassanio. This confrontation scene, in which the pathological anti-Semitism of Antonio comes out unmistakably, generates an almost unbearable tension. The same is true of the other Jew-baiting scenes, like that in the court room, where Antonio's friends and a crowd heard off-

stage act like anti-Semitic hoodlums.

But most important of all is the interpretation of Shylock. Morris Carnovsky's profound rendering of the character seems to us a great achievement. It is evident that he had studied the role with the greatest thoroughness and with a sense of responsibility both to the play and to the Jewish people. What emerges is a three-dimensional human being, wronged and reacting with extreme hatred to the wrongs done him. Carnovsky does not extenuate the monstrous proportions of Shylock's passion for revenge in demanding his pound of flesh.

Carnovsky gives the role a conscientious and honest interpretation. While the audience is shocked at Shylock's unyielding passion for his pound of flesh, Carnovsky makes them understand that this is no unmotivated evil but a human being driven to extremity by cruelty and intolerance. The actor carries through this conception with remarkable rightness in a part which requires the utmost control at every moment. This portrayal is the high point of Carnovsky's career so far.

We talked with Morris Carnovsky after the play. We told him how we understood the performance as a depiction of anti-Semitism in its actuality. His own view was different. He had been greatly helped, he said, by the interpretation of the play by the late Prof. Harold C. Goddard's *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. The real villain of the play, thought Goddard, was not Shylock or anti-Sem-



*Morris Carnovsky as Shylock*

itism but money and its distorting effect on human character as manifested in both Shylock and Antonio. Money had diminished the humanity of both. This is an interesting view but it seemed to us over-subtle.

The essence of the Stratford Festival version, however, is that Shylock comes through as a rounded, humanly understandable person. The anti-Semitism of the other characters is made hateful so as to elicit repulsion from the audience. This is in fact inherent in Shakespeare's penetrating lines and not imported from without. It is the real meaning of the play as Shakespeare wrote it.

AUGUST, 1957

### *A Beautiful Production*

Although we were primarily interested in the question of anti-Semitism, there is, of course, much, much more to the play—the love affairs, the brilliant wit, the beautiful poetry. While Carnovsky's performance seemed to us to tower above the others, there were other excellent ones. Richard Waring gives a convincing performance of the dour anti-Semitic Antonio; John Colicos' Gratiano is vitally gay; Richard Easton gives a rarely comic rendering of Lancelot Gobbo; Stanley Bell is very funny as the fatuous Prince of Aragon; Jack Bittner gives an intelligent, restrained performance as Tubal, and Larry Gates is a properly dignified Duke of Venice. Although Katherine Hepburn was effective at moments, she seemed to us not always to grasp the full compass of Portia. Special mention should be made of Earle Hyman's fine Shakespearean sense in his short scene as the Prince of Morocco. (He plays Othello in the company's repertory this summer.)

The production as a whole is a delight to the eye. Jack Landau staged the play with imagination and effectiveness; Rouben Ter-Arutunian's sets are flexible and ingenious and Jean Rosenthal's lighting works into the action like hand-in-glove. The rich vari-colored costumes are by Motley. Virgil Thomson's incidental music is a pleasant and an enhancing accompaniment to the piece.

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## MONTGOMERY RABBI

(Continued from page 10)

educational and recreational programs. He had ample reason to feel that he had made many friends among the 225 families of Agudath Israel. But the trustees refused to call such a meeting, explaining that "it would excite the people too much and make matters much worse."

At this point in the story it is well to let Rabbi Atlas make an observation in answer to one of my questions: "Rabbi, you went through all of this; what was it that made these people so frightened?" To this he replied:

"I searched long and thoroughly. I did not see or hear of a single event or act which could have been construed as being a threat to the Jewish community or to any individual among us. For instance, I was Master of the Montgomery Scottish Rite lodge, and in my continued activities in Masonry I did not detect the slightest change in the kindly and respectful attitude toward me from my fellow Masons, all 'white' upper middle class Gentiles; and this at a time when my own trustees refused to speak to me."

I would like to supplement the rabbi's statement with an observation of my own based on years of study of the Jews of the South. I believe the fear which exists in some of the Jewish communities of the deep South is part of an overall (and

wholly unwarranted) "sense of insecurity" and is not particularly related to the Negro problem. Rather it is the "constant" fear of Gentile "anger," irrespective of the "object" of that anger. The Jew feels himself helpless when the "anger" is the result of the failure of the cotton crop, for instance, or because of an economic depression; but in this case he feels that he can finally do something about it. He can join the White Citizens Council and pretend that he's angry too.

*And now the drama* was drawing to it close. In accordance with his usual procedure the rabbi published the title of his weekly sermon in the daily press. And the forthcoming sermon was to be on "Social Integration." The trustees were besides themselves with rage, but they knew that they could say nothing that would make the rabbi change his mind on any of these matters. The synagogue was filled to overflowing. Fear was clearly evident on the faces of most of the congregation, especially the members of the White Citizens Council. A trustee told the rabbi that members of the Ku Klux Klan were in the audience as the rabbi went into his sermon on "the successful integration of the Arab minority with the Jews in Israel." The audience was taken aback.

By this time the trustees had had enough. Their nerves were worn to a frazzle and the following day came that final telephone call from the

chairman: "Rabbi, you are hereby ordered to submit all sermons to the trustees two or three days before printing or making delivery of same." [Dr. London states: "No request for 'submission of sermons before publication or delivery' was ever made of Rabbi Atlas."—Eds.] Of course the rabbi knew that he could no longer serve the congregation Agudath Israel of Montgomery. The trustees accepted his resignation [Dr. London states: "Rabbi Atlas did not resign. The board bought up his contract for \$5,100.00."—Eds.] and voted unanimously that the next rabbi must sign a pledge not to discuss Negroes or the segregation issue "in any manner, shape or form whatsoever."

[Rabbi Atlas' successor, Rabbi Joseph M. Reich, wrote in a letter to Congress Weekly (May 27), saying, among other things: "I want to state that I have never been asked by my trustees to sign any form of pledge concerning any matter, let alone the integration-segregation issue. . . . I insisted on stating my strong attitude of pro-integration and on informing them that, just as I would expect them to respect my view, so I would not force my position on them through the pulpit and in speeches in the community. Nevertheless, I have always felt free to discuss the issue personally with Montgomerians, be they Jews or non-Jews." Dr. London also stated that no pledge was demanded from Rabbi Reich.—Eds.]

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Rabbi Atlas went on to the B'nai Sholom Congregation of Bristol, Va.-Tenn. The congregation includes the small Jewish communities of Johnson City, Kingsport, and Elizabeth, in Tennessee; and Gate City, Pennington Gap, Abingdon, Marion, and Pulaski in Virginia; in addition to Bristol, which is both in Virginia and Tennessee. He conducts Hebrew adult study class in each of these towns, in addition to the other duties of a spiritual leader. Rabbi Atlas is thirty-five years old, and married to a girl who had come from Lithuania in recent years. They have three children, two daughters, seven and five, and a son, two years old.

## WILLIAM NEWMAN POETRY AWARDS

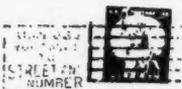
1st prize—\$50; 2nd—\$25;  
3rd—\$10

for the three best poems, in original English or in translation, submitted to and published in JEWISH LIFE in the course of the year.

Closing date for 1957:  
SEPTEMBER 30, 1957

Judges: Frederick Ewen, Louis Harap, Annette T. Rubinstein, Yuri Suhl.

# letters



## FROM READERS

*Opinions expressed in letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Letters will not be published unless accompanied by the name and address of the writer. Names will be withheld from publication on request.—Eds.*

### **On Salsberg, etc., Continued**

*Editors, JEWISH LIFE:*

I was rather amused by Claire O's letter in the June issue. To me she is guilty of the very things she accuses George L. [letter in April issue]—namely twisting facts to suit her own ideas. . . .

In a country like the Soviet Union which has definite laws against anti-Semitism and in which the leaders of the Communist Party run the state, isn't it double talk to accuse the "upper echelons of the leadership" of being guilty of anti-Semitism, without the implication that this is government policy? True, Miss Claire is quite right that a discussion about Jews does not mean that anti-Semitism does not exist. But let her name one anti-Semitic country, or even one so-called "liberal" country where the head of the government devoted two days to even discussing the subject!

As for the establishment of a single Yeshiva and dancing groups in Vilna, this neither proves nor disproves anything in George's letter.

I would say—gently—that Miss Claire's letter smacks a little of the type that takes refuge in the almost wanting things to be clear-cut on the level of either there is or there isn't anti-Semitism. Things are never that

simple, even in our own country.

Perhaps Mr. George also oversimplified things in his letter. But it seems to me that he picked out, or pointed out, several flaws in the Salsberg article. As for Miss Claire, this is not a world of absolutes, if she will study anything for just a little, I am sure she will see that all things are composed of many shadings. And I for one, am very glad they are.

Mrs. P. D.

*New York City*

*Editors, JEWISH LIFE:*

Why can't we have a difference of opinion expressed without ranting and raving? The letter by Claire O. (which should be Claire, O!) in the June issue is an example of this. Come, Claire,

#### NOTICE TO FORMER MEMBERS OF THE IWO CEMETERY DEPARTMENT

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relax. For your letter is as distorted as you claim George's is!

Yours for calm discussions.

MAXWELL K.

Newark, N. J.

### **About the Late Morris Seder**

*Editors, JEWISH LIFE:*

Morris Seder died in Pittsburgh on Sept. 4, 1954 at the age of 54. For 38 years he devoted his time to progressive Jewish culture. He was a fine reciter of poems from the Jewish poets Edelshtadt and Bovshover; his readings of the works of Peretz, Sholem Aleichem and Mendele made him famous in all walks of Jewish life in the city of Pittsburgh where he lived since

1916. He was active in his union, Local 86 of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, was a delegate to the CIO Council and was well known to Philip Murray, Dave McDonald and other labor leaders in the city of Pittsburgh. In his last few years he was sick and was persecuted by the Immigration Department, with the help of stool-pigeons.

He died suddenly. His will designated attorney Hyman Schlesinger and Max Jenkins of Brooklyn to distribute his few hard-earned dollars, of which you will find \$100 for JEWISH LIFE.

*Ehre sein andaink*, honor to his memory.

MAX JENKINS

Brooklyn

### **Anti-Semitic Hoax in the Congressional Record**

**R**EP. Thomas G. Abernethy won his congressional seat from the late Rep. John Rankin but up to now did not indulge in the scurrilous anti-Semitism of his predecessor. However, in June, the representative from Mississippi carried on his battle against desegregation with a speech before the House, saying that "this civil rights business is according to a studied and well defined plan. The course of the advocates of this legislation was carefully planned and outlined more than 45 years ago. Israel Cohen, a leading Communist in England, in his *A Radical Program for the 20th Century*," written in 1912. This material was printed in the *Congressional Record* on June 7.

The crudity of this forgery is obvious. There was no communist party in England in 1912. Herman Edelsberg, Washington representative of the Anti-Defamation League, reports that research in the Library of Congress and in the British Museum showed that there was no such pamphlet as that "cited" by Abernethy. Nor is there any record of "a leading Communist in England" named "Israel Cohen."

When Mr. Edelsberg called this hoax to the attention of Rep. Abernethy, the latter was disturbed but refused to give the origin of the material. It is thought that it came to him from White Citizens Council sources. It is known that these "quotations" from "Israel Cohen" have appeared in letters-to-the-editor columns of Southern papers.

## POOR IN ISRAEL

(Continued from page 21)

### *The Extent of Poverty*

So far as I know, no studies show the extent of poverty in Israel based on a scientific, objective poverty standard like studies done by Seebohm Rowntree, or Charles Booth, or Bowley and Hogg in England. There are only guesses on the extent of distress caused by lack of bare necessities of life. While it is true that no one in Israel can really starve, there is much hardship, practically unknown before the wave of immigration.

The standard family budget assumed by the Central Office of Statistics for consumers' goods for an average worker's family of four (more accurately 3.9 persons) is at present about 200 Israel pounds per month. If we accept half of this as covering bare necessities—and thus as a measuring rod of poverty in Israel—my personal guess is that about one-third of the population does not reach this minimum. About one-third of the population would then find itself below the poverty line.

My guess is based on a careful study of all available figures, after eliminating duplication in figures for the unemployed, the under-employed and the under-paid in agriculture, building and public works, and for those on relief, but taking

into account the impact of oversized families on the family budget.

This means that poverty in Israel resembles more or less that of England at the end of the nineteenth century, as presented in Charles Booth's studies for London workers from 1886 to 1888 (about 33 per cent was then classed below the poverty line) or in studies of B. Seebohm Rowntree for the urban community of York for 1889-1902 (about 33.39 per cent). And Israel is certainly not more developed than England 50 years ago; in fact, it is far below this level. The enormous drain of armaments, land and industrial development and the settlement of property-less immigrants from backward countries adds to the strains and stresses of this undeveloped economy.

### *Anti-Semitism and the Hungary Report*

IS the UN report on Hungary a wholly "objective" document? The following observation in the London *Jewish Chronicle* (June 21) gives us a clue: "Although Jews were among those who gave evidence to the committee, the 220-page report makes no reference to anti-Semitism during or after the Hungarian rising which is alleged to have been manifested."

# Observation post

By ANNE FRIEDLANDER

**"The high court,"** wrote James Reston (*N. Y. Times*, June 23), "has simple been serving once more as the moral conscience of a people drugged by uncertainty, perplexities, prosperity and diversions of the past two decades." Yes, it was a new birth of freedom when the Supreme Court ruled that Congress must not "unjustifiably encroach upon an individual's right to privacy nor abridge his liberty of speech, press, religion or assembly." . . . JEWISH LIFE cannot be accused of having been "drugged" during the past decade. For it has carried on a consistent struggle during this period of fear and terror to defend these basic, democratic rights. The Supreme Court has reaffirmed these rights, sharply and clearly. And this reaffirmation means that you and I can read what we choose without fear, speak the truth as we see it and choose our friends without having to account to Mr. Eastland or Mr. Jenner for our choice.

**Coming soon**—that is as soon as Morris U. Schappes sweats out the final page proofs—*A Pictorial History of the Jews in the U.S.A.* The Tercentenary Celebration in 1954 was the inspiration for this book and Morris has been working untiringly to incorporate within its pages the many contributions the Jewish people have made to American democracy, its economy and to concepts of social justice. (Publication date will be announced in the very near future.)

AUGUST, 1957

**"That was** a very nice week-end," reminisced Ted, as he checked our bank balance (which was and is still very low—that's an aside for all our good friends who may want to change this situation by sending a small or large contribution). "The weather was just right, all the sports fans had their fill of tennis, handball, swimming. The Saturday night program was lots of fun. Morris' lecture on Sunday morning was thought-provoking and stimulating. And the people were so relaxed and friendly. Yes, it was a perfect week-end."

**The organized** Jewish community in New York City is playing a very active role in the fight to pass the Brown-Sharkey-Isaacs Bill to ban discrimination in private housing. The American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Labor Committee, the Emma Lazarus Federation of Women's Clubs, and many others are calling upon their members to remove the roadblock that the real estate interests have set up to prevent the passage of the law. They are calling upon their members to let the Mayor and the City Council know their sentiments for the passage of this important bill.

**Our heartfelt thanks** to the group of Bronx women who contributed \$50 to the magazine. It is always so good to hear from friends.



## FROM THE FOUR CORNERS

### AT HOME

**For his determined,** public fight against segregation and anti-Semitism, James Ord, of Florida, was awarded a medal by the Anti-Defamation League in Miami. Ord cast the sole publicly known vote in the Florida legislature against maintaining segregation. In his acceptance speech Ord called segregation and anti-Semitism twins and said that the same forces are against the Negroes and Jews. He revealed that in West Palm Beach a real estate broker was excluded from the Realty Board for selling a house to a Jew.

**Shad Polier,** vice president of the AJ Congress, greeted the 48th annual NAACP convention in Detroit on June 27. He especially recalled the historical significance of the Montgomery bus boycott. The second session of the convention was opened with a prayer by Rabbi Morris Adler, vice president of the Detroit Jewish Community Council, in which he greeted the fight against fascism and racism by the Negro and Jewish peoples and for full equality for the Negro people.

**The "exclusive club"** device is being used to exclude Jews by the Lido-Biltmore Hotel, Sarasota, Fla., the American Jewish Committee charged in June. The committee has filed suit against the New York representative of the hotel with the New York State Commission Against Discrimination

(SCAD). The hotel accepted Jews until 1956, when it changed hands and became a "private club." However, the committee charged that reservations were being publicly solicited.

**"The Riverton Study,"** a survey of Jewish life and attitudes in a city of 130,000 with seven per cent Jews, was released by the American Jewish Committee in May. Among the interesting facts revealed by the study, the following indicate attitudes toward intermarriage: among the Jewish adolescents, 70 per cent would not like to intermarry, 40 per cent of whom disapproved completely, and 30 per cent were uncertain; among the Jewish parents, most thought it likely that their children would not marry non-Jews, almost all opined it and would try to prevent it, the majority would accept it if it happened, 57 per cent thought intermarriage worked out badly (42 per cent of the adolescents thought so too). 75 per cent of the adolescents would chose a non-Jew for love, while 40 per cent of the parents approved of a marriage for love with a non-Jew.

**Registration** in Jewish Sunday schools in Miami has increased 500 per cent in the past nine years and almost 350 per cent in the afternoon schools. In these nine years the number of schools in Miami has increased over 330 per cent and the number of teachers over 430 per cent.

## ABROAD

**A storm of protest** erupted in England during June against the appointment of nazi Gen. Hans Speidel as commander of NATO ground forces in Central Europe. The campaign was sparked by publication in the London *Daily Express* of documents by Lord Russell of Liverpool, British advisor at the Nuremberg war crimes trials, showing that Speidel had sent many Jews and resisters to death in France [see JEWISH LIFE, April, p. 10]. Lord Russell called the appointment "an offense against the living and an insult to the dead." Although Speidel now holds this position, said Lord Russell, protests might make his position so uncomfortable that he might be forced to resign.

**Of the 156 persons** accused of "treason" in Johannesburg because of anti-Apartheid activity, 23 are Europeans. Of the latter between 15 and 18 are Jews. None of the Jews is known to have been associated with Jewish communal activity. They are mostly professionals and trade unionists.

**A treaty against** discrimination was debated by the International Labor Organization, meeting in mid-June. On June 13 the annual ILO conference of 78 countries considered a proposal sponsored by the United States delegation that the ILO recommend that discriminatory practices be dealt with by each country rather than by an international treaty binding on all. The U.S. proposal was supported by Britain, Australia and Canada and by the socialist, Latin American and Middle Eastern countries and many workers' delegations. The U.S. proposal was finally defeated 230 to 172. Some employer delegations and opposed

Preliminary approval was given on June 25 to a treaty ban on job discrimination.

**A French documentary** film, *Night and Fog*, on nazi concentration camps and an Israel documentary, *Israel—Land of Hope*, were banned from the schools by the Baden-Wuerttemberg State Motion Picture Censorship Board late in May.

**Dr. David Moses Rosen**, chief rabbi of Rumania, was welcomed on a visit in England in May. He was given a reception by British Chief Rabbi Dr. Israel Brodie. In his talk Rabbi Rosen said that many thousands of Jewish children in Rumania went to Talmud Torahs and that the country's 500 synagogues were crowded on high holidays. He said that the Jewish community in Rumania did not want to be separated from other Jewish communities.

**"The exodus** [of Jews from Poland] to Israel continues," wrote Sydney Gruson in the *N. Y. Times* (June 19). "It has slowed down in recent weeks" from 3,000 to 1,500. "The party's campaign against anti-Semitism has succeeded in halting the overt abusing of Jews that was common in Poland only a few months ago." Gruson reports that Edward Ochab, a foremost party leader, retorted to a "Stalinist" party leader, M. Mijal, who charged that Israel was trying to undermine "the Communist regime": "Comrades, enough of this nonsense about Zionist agents and about Israel. Don't you realize that nothing harmed the good name of the Soviet Union and of the entire Communist movement as did the follies about the Jewish doctors and the anti-Zionist campaign?"

L. H.

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*(we're in that August mood)*

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