

# **Jewish** **Life**

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## **TOLEDO ANSWERS RACISM**

*by Abe Strauss*

## **RABBI YEROCHEM-BER**

*story by S. I. Kozinitz*

## **SHOLEM ASCH, 1880-1957**

*by Moishe Katz*

## ***Soviet-Australian Letters on Jews in the USSR***



Vol. XI, No. 11(129) Sept., 1957

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# SHOLEM ASCH, 1880-1957

A commemorative article  
on his death

By MOISHE KATZ

THE death of Sholem Asch on July 10 in London, England, deprived the world of an original, great writer. But even greater was the loss suffered by Yiddish literature. For Asch was not only the greatest, but the most widely recognized—on a world scale—Yiddish writer of this century.

Sholem Asch was born on Jan. 1, 1880 in the small town of Kutno, formerly Russian Poland. He died at the age of 77 "rich and satiated with years." But to the very end he never seemed to be satiated with work.

He began writing very early, at 17. His first two stories in Yiddish, "Moshele" and "Motele," written under the influence of the great I. L. Peretz, were published 60 years ago, in 1897. Five years later, as the author of a number of small town stories, *In a Shlechter Tsait* (Bad Times), he moved into the front rank of the young Yiddish literature. Two years later, in 1904, he won fame as the author of *Di Shtetl* (The Small Town), a classic of Yiddish literature.

Another three years and the young Sholem Asch stepped beyond

the borders of Yiddish literature with his first three plays, *On the Stream*, *Times of the Messiah* and *The God of Vengeance*, which were almost immediately accepted and performed not only in Yiddish but also on the Polish, Russian and German stages.

## Tragedy of His Life

He devoted the last 15 years of his life mainly to Bible subjects and the life and times of Christ. His novels were translated into English and became best sellers. (*Three Cities* in 1933, *The Nazarene* in 1939, *The Apostle* in 1943, *East River* in 1945 and *Mary* in 1949.) These last 15 years were also the time of greatest tragedy in his life, when he was constantly abused, smeared and almost ostracized by a kind of "united front" of Jewish reactionaries, who accused him of apostasy and designs to convert the Jewish people to Christianity. Matters came to the point where he was physically attacked a few years ago by his persecutors. In 1953, broken-hearted and desper-

ate, he left the United States, the land he loved, where he had settled in 1914 and had become a naturalized citizen in 1920. In 1956 he finally settled in Israel in hopes of finding peace of mind and of life. But the smear and hatred followed him even there. About three weeks before his death he left Israel to visit his daughter in London.

Why was this great Jewish writer rejected and even hated by many Jewish people in the United States and abroad just when he reached the pinnacle of his fame in the English-speaking world and in world literature? Was it true that he had ulterior motives in selecting great religious figures and legends as subjects for the great novels of his later years, as some of his detractors maintained? Was it true that he had become converted and strove to convert his Jewish readers to Christianity through his works, as many unscrupulous accusers loudly proclaimed?

### ***The Persistent Religious Theme***

Nothing of the kind, of course. The fact is that, except for the first few years of his literary career after he broke with the traditionally religious small town environment, he was always interested in religion. Not in a formal sense, of course, but in a religious quest after the truth.

In 1908 he created his drama, *Sabathai Zvi*, the tragedy of bankrupt faith. In 1920 he wrote *Mar-*



*Sholem Asch*

*rannen* (Marranos), those who are forced to lead a double life, practising what they abhor and hiding what they believe. After 1921 he created a series of novels like *Kiddush Hashem* (In the Name of God), *Di Kishefmacherin fun Kastilie* (The Witch of Castille), *Der Tillim Yid* (The Psalm-Jew) and many others, all of them with a religious background.

When Asch published *The Nazarene* at the start of World War II and at the height of the Nazi extermination of millions of Jews, followed by *The Apostle* and *Mary*, he gave as his reason for these subjects his desire and hope of reconciling Christianity and Judaism by showing their intimate relationship and thus helping to combat anti-Semitism and promote brotherly



mutual acceptance of Jew and Christian.

It seems to me that it was a tragic mistake to look for causes of modern anti-Semitism in the religious differences between Judaism and Christianity. Of course, Asch's series of novels could do little, if anything, to uproot the real causes of modern anti-Semitism.

Asch's ideological mistake and wrong approach to the solution of grave social problems of our time deeply undermined the structure and artistic result of his latest novels. But the great writer was not thereby prevented from presenting many exquisite pages of artistic penetration and value, especially in his mass scenes, of which he was a past master. Nor did it prevent the artist from painting with deep sympathy the poverty and suffering of the masses, be it in ancient Israel, in Babylon, in Rome or in Sidon—even though he had no solution to the problems he posed.

But his reactionary critics were not really interested in the deep humanism of his work nor in their great artistic values. They seized on his ideological shortcomings to abuse him and accuse him of choosing the Christ-subject for malicious and nefarious "missionary" purposes and of trying to convert the surviving Jews after millions had been exterminated. Thus the case against Sholem Asch was not one of harsh, malicious *literary* criticism but of

poisoned *religious* persecution of the greatest living Jewish writer. Asch helplessly tried to defend himself first by protesting that he was a devoted religious Jew and then running from his persecutors.

It should be added with humble pride that the progressive Yiddish press and critics did not join the hue and cry of Asch's persecutors. Marxist criticism never accepted Asch's religious solution of social problems and did not hesitate to show that Asch's main weakness was the fact that he was essentially a *bourgeois* writer who misunderstood or misjudged the burning social problems of our times.

In the fateful years of 1943 to 1948 Asch was a regular contributor to the *Morning Freiheit*, writing as he pleased. His literary work there helped in the struggle against nazi Germany, against anti-Semitism and reaction, for American-Soviet freindship.

Sholem Asch died far from the Jewish masses, far from the masses of his readers. A London news report indicates that a handful of people came to his funeral, conducted by an English rabbi. His body was buried wrapped in a *Tallis* (prayer-shawl). A small sack of ashes from the Treblinka extermination camp, which he always carried with him, was buried with him under his head—his last most pathetic and most intimate connection with his people.

# New York Anti-Bias Bill Stalled

By A. FEIN

NEW YORK City landlords are giving the bill to ban private housing bias the full treatment reserved by the Dixiecrats for national civil rights legislation. The technique includes both amending the bill to death or pressuring for delays in passage with the hope of scaring the politicians into abandoning it altogether.

So far it seems that landlord pressure has netted results. On August 13 the Democratic majority of the City Council's Welfare Committee suggested that the bill be sent to referendum, which would stall the question until the 1958 elections. Councilman Stanley M. Isaacs, one of the bill's sponsors, accused the Mayor and the democratic majority with "stalling, nothing but stalling" on the bill.

Councilman Earl Brown, one of the co-sponsors of the bill, attacked the referendum proposal with "The New York Real Estate Board, by its vicious and hypocritical attack on the bill, has made the climate in New York City so bad that it would be impossible to get an honest expression of opinion from the voters in a referendum."

Another move to emasculate the

anti-bias bill is the amendment to exempt cooperative apartments from its jurisdiction. On July 26 spokesmen for five major Jewish organizations expressed their opposition to the amendment: American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, Jewish Labor Committee and Jewish War Veterans. Their joint statement declared that "such an amendment would perpetuate and vastly enlarge the pattern of anti-minority discrimination in housing, particularly against Jews."

The depths plumbed by the landlord interests opposing the bill were graphically illustrated at the hearings on the bill held on July 30. This anti-bias bill, which simply prohibits racial discrimination in rental housing (of units of 10 or more) caused the following frenetic peroration in the speech of James Andrews of the Real Estate Board of New York: "Tyranny and communism, you are the life, the fabric, the warp and woof of this bill. Twin prophets of iniquity, we reject you." (N. Y. Times, July 31.)

At first proponents of the bill thought it would have relatively easy sledding. It is clear now that this

is not the case. The maneuvers of the landlords must be met with action calling for speedy passage of the bill by all the organizations and individuals that want to see democracy grow in New York City.

### ***Cooperatives, Anti-Semitism and the Housing Bill***

*The specific effect on Jews of the amendment exempting cooperative housing from the proposed anti-bias housing bill in New York is made clear in the following excerpts from an American Jewish Committee memorandum:*

**I**N the geographical area bounded roughly by 59th Street on the South, Fifth Avenue on the West, 72nd Street on the North and Park Avenue on the East, cooperatively-owned apartment buildings are the principal type of housing. There are also some smaller areas of this type in Jackson Heights and in Forest Hills, Queens.

With exception of about six or seven buildings, cooperative housing in this geographical area of New York City is restricted. It is not possible for a Jew to purchase a cooperatively-owned apartment in dozens of houses within these boundaries. This information has been obtained and furnished to the American Jewish Committee by prospective Jewish purchasers of such apartments who have been told by their managing agents that necessary approval of the cooperative owners, for the sale of an apartment, is not obtainable for a prospective Jewish purchaser. Real estate agents who are familiar with this area confirm and support these facts. Sample studies have been conducted by the American Jewish Committee of the residents of these various houses and aside from rentals of apartments to Jewish doctors, no Jews live in these buildings except the few previously noted.

Accordingly the provision in the proposed legislation which would subject the sale of cooperative apartments to the provisions in the bill is a highly important one to safeguard Jews in New York City against discriminatory practices in housing. In fact this is the only significant feature of discrimination in residential housing against Jews in New York.

### **Correction**

We regret that printer's transposition of two lines in the poem "Socrates' Last Words to a Friend" by Shmuel Halkin, appeared on page 17 of the August issue. The stanza should read:

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

# Toledo Answers Racism

**Prompt, vigorous, united action  
scores a victory over Jimcrow**

*By ABE STRAUSS*

**T**HE neighborhood around 1038 Harding Avenue in Toledo, Ohio, had been all-white until July, when Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Lott and their nine-year-old daughter moved in. Mr. Lott, who is a garageman in downtown Toledo and an active NAACP member, bought the old house for \$6500 though he had to pay more for repairs. We visited the house several days after racist hooligans had broken the windows and the fence.

When it became known that Mr. Lott had bought the house, the racists incited some young people to prevent him from moving in. They stoned and damaged the house. They threatened to attack the family and set fire to the house. The first attacks were made in the presence of the police who had come to preserve order. The police arrested no one but they did "advise" Mr. Lott to sell his house.

The Negro family rejected this "advice." Mr. Lott stated that he would not give up his right to live in the house. His white employers

immediately fired him. The Toledo Board of Community Relations and the NAACP came to the aid of the Negro family. The former is an agency of the city administration responsible for the enforcement of the city's anti-discrimination law. The two organizations held meetings with the mayor and the chief of police and with neighbors in the community.

In a resolution adopted at a meeting of the board with the city officials, the police were criticized for their handling of the situation. The resolution makes clear that the demonstrations against the Negro family were illegal, racist and discriminatory; that the Negro family had bought the house in a legal manner and that it was the duty of the city administration to secure the peace of the Negro family in its new home. The resolution also demanded that Mr. Lott be given back his job.

As soon as this resolution was made public in the press and radio, the situation changed for the bet-

ter. Mr. Lott was rehired and the demonstrations ceased. About 25 workers, white and Negro, voluntarily offered their help to repair the damage done to the house. It was very clear that the united action of the democratic forces, led by the Board of Community Relations, the pressure of Negro and white people and the resolute determination of the Negro family had demonstrated the possibility of an important victory for the democratic principles of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the great industrial center of Toledo.

*During this episode,* this writer had several conversations with the Lott family, some of the neighbors on Harding Street, leaders of the Jewish Community Council and the NAACP, leaders of the Young Mens Colored Ass'n and several unions and the three officials of the Board of Community Relations.

The director of the Jewish Community Council emphasized the democratic character of the organized Jewish community in Toledo. This was vigorously confirmed by two Negro leaders who underscored the splendid cooperation which they get from the council and its energetic Director Albert Bronstein. "Thanks to this cooperation, we were enabled to reach other nationalities and church groups with our program for social and economic equality."

One of the leaders of the Board of Community Relations, who is chairman of the Committee against Discrimination in Housing, is King Baer. He is a leader of B'nai B'rith and a long-time resident of Toledo whose name is widely known in democratic circles.

To my question whether the board deals with acts of anti-Semitic discrimination, the answer was that the Board is no less sensitive to this type of discrimination. But his main responsibility," said Mr. Baer, "is to work for friendship and close cooperation between all religions, races and national groups; to show the positive values of such cooperation, and never to forget the principles of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights."

**Happy New Year!**

**ROSH  
HASHONAH**

**September 26-27**

# RABBI YEROCHEM-BER

A Story by S. I. KOZINITZ

Illustrations by HUGO GELLERT

*The story below is a chapter from the Yiddish novel, Bei der Dvina (At the Dvina), published this year by Ykuf, New York. Prior to publication in book form, several chapters appeared in the Yiddish literary quarterly Zamlungen (Miscellany), from which the translation below was made by Max Rosenfeld. The author, who died in March 1956 at the age of 66, was born in Tshashnik, Lithuania, and came to this country in 1922. He published several volumes of plays and one of them was performed in the twenties in Riga and in Argentina. We are happy to make this unusual story available in English. The author scrutinized the translation before his death, was well-satisfied with it and granted us permission to publish it.—Eds.*

**Y**EROCHEM-BER was the Rebbe of Zvirnholm, an island on the Dvina River near Riga. He was tall and thin and limped on his right leg. Although he was close to 70, he was still quite strong. His white beard was short and sparse and his thick white brows hung down over a pair of piercing eyes which made you feel that he was seeing right through you.

The Rebbe lived in his own little house, which was beginning to lean under the weight of its years. Here he conducted the *heder* of Zvirnholm. The Rebbe lived on the income he received from teaching *heder*; all the children on the island attended his school but the money was not enough to provide a living and he was hard pressed.

Leah was his second wife. She was shorter and much younger than the Rebbe, but her hair was completely white. The vestiges of her one-time beauty gave her a special charm. Despite her heavy burden of toil she was still possessed of a lively inclination to-

ward tidiness and dressing-up. She always wore high shoes with black buttons to fasten the leggings and her hair was always combed in an upsweep to make her look taller. And it did make her appear almost as tall as Yerochem-Ber.

When Shamira's rafts began to float down from the forests and the island was filled with the buzz of saws and the clang of axes, Leah would bake bread and sell it to the loggers and woodcutters and to the "illegal" Jewish workers who lived on the island without residence permission. With this money she was able to patch up some of the holes left by the Rebbe's meager income. In the winter she peddled ink in a nearby suburb because the Rebbe had obtained his residence permit as an ink-maker, and you had to show that you were able, thank God, to earn a living at your registered trade. Leah had had two sons by her first husband and both of them were already heads of families. They were now in America but their letters home





never contained any money because they barely made a living themselves.

Rebbe Yerochem-Ber and Leah had one son—Hayimke, they called him. He was tall, like his father, with flaxen hair and sharp, serious eyes. He had a good head on his shoulders and had been a proficient student at his father's *heder*. But Hayimke interpreted what he learned in his own way and drew his own conclusions. He had worked at a large lumber yard but had become involved with the Letts in "illegal work" against the tsar. Five years ago, the summer before he was to be drafted into the tsar's army, the police began to show an interest in him. He could no longer stay in Riga so he married Perletchke, Yisroel the logger's oldest daughter—they had both grown up on the island, devoted to each other, and she was just as involved as he in his "illegal politics"—and they fled to America straight from the wedding canopy.

Everyone on this land loved the Rebbe and held him in great esteem. They came to him with their questions about religious behavior: questions about unclean fowl and pots and pans and *fleishigs* and *milchigs* and even with *shailath noshim*—"female problems." He did not profess to be a rabbi on the island, but he answered their questions and whatever he told them to do, they did.

They were all aware that the Rebbe would talk about anything in the world—except one thing! How he came to the island, and how he came to be a *melamed*—religious teacher. Those who knew the story never spoke of it, and those who didn't know, never asked about it. But even those who did know were not certain of the real reasons for his coming on the Dvina and to this island.

**Abraham Lopata loved** the Rebbe dearly. He could stay up all night listening to the Rebbe's tales from the Torah. He would sit opposite him with a twig in the right corner of his mouth, the peak of his cap twisted to one side, and listen to Rebbe Yerochem-Ber "study." The Rebbe "studied" every Sabbath between *Mincha* (afternoon prayers) and *Maariv* (evening prayers). He "studied" more for the sake of teaching those around him than for the sake of the "studying" itself. His method was his own: his "lectures" consisted of a series of little stories strung into a chain, one story connected to the other, each one of them understandable and familiar to his listeners, although none of the loggers caught all the profundities in the stories.

Abraham Lopata was a man of medium height, about 60 years old, with broad, spreading shoulders and powerful legs. His head was large and round, his face red, scorched by the sun and wind. His eyes were small, green and very shrewd, although they were often dreamy. His head was bald in spots and his beard enveloped his face like a thin, white wrapper. Pictures of anchors in bright hues of red, green and blue, were tattooed on his arms and his broad chest. The tattoos were always visible on hot summer days when he worked with his

"log-wrench" on the river, his shirt off, and his trousers fastened with a belt around his bare middle. In his high hip-boots he looked like an old fisherman battered by the storms.

Lopata was a Kurlander, worked with the Letts on the river, and spoke Latvian fluently. His wife Raisha, who came from the port city of Libava, was a tall, strong woman, somewhat younger than Abraham. They lived in their own frame-house at the tip of the island, had their own goat and a dog who barked his head off whenever he heard anyone approaching. Abraham was one of the first Jews on the island. As soon as Elya Magnus, manager at Shamira's large lumber yard, had built his house (the first one on the island), Abraham came in a boat with Raisha and put up a straw hut at the tip of Zvirnholm. During the day they both worked on the river and in the evenings they cooked and ate at a campfire near the hut, went to sleep and at dawn were back on the river. But every evening they dragged ashore a number of boards and logs which they had picked up or bought on the Dvina. Then, when Raisha became pregnant, they built their own little house.

Abraham Lopata could neither read nor write, but had learned just enough to read his Hebrew prayers. He used to say that he couldn't remember his mother and father. From childhood he had earned his own keep, working on freighters in the Libava harbor. He had sailed the seven seas, scrubbing decks, clambering like a monkey up and down ropes, rolling and unrolling sails. Most of the time he had worked on fishing boats.

Abraham Lopata knew when the Rebbe had come to Zvirnholm and knew also that he had once worked on the river as a logger. But he could not understand how such a scholar

became a logger and he kept on asking "innocent" questions about it. On a Sabbath between *Mincha* and *Maariv*, Rebbe Yerochem-Ber sat at the table in the synagogue. Around him sat a group of loggers and, as was his custom, he interpreted the chapter of the week for them by telling them little stories. Abraham Lopata, as always, sat with a twig in the corner of his mouth, the peak of his cap turned to one side, and listened.

In the interval between one story and the next, Abraham Lopata trotted out his old question, which Yerochem-Ber always evaded. The question made its appearance as an aside, which Abraham directed to one of the other loggers; he did it quietly, so that the Rebbe "wouldn't hear." "How had such a scholar become a logger?"

Rebbe Yerochem-Ber, of course, heard the question quite plainly, but instead of beginning a new story, as he always did, he looked at Abraham Lopata very seriously, thought for a moment and seemed to have decided that this time he would disclose how it happened. The loggers waited—silently and expectantly. The Rebbe, however, thought about it a while longer and as though justifying his refusal to divulge his secret, he said: "That is a matter between Man and God—a corner where a man sometimes reckons up his accounts with the Almighty; it is a very painful matter, hard to understand and still harder to talk about. . . ." With this he brought the interruption to an end, and returned to his tale.

**Hayim Leyb, the Rebbe's nephew** on his sister's side, a clerk at a lumber yard, with his family on the island, was one man who did know how his uncle had become a logger and how the logger had become a *melamed* (teacher). He had heard the story from his

father when he was still a *heder-boy* in Tshashnik. The story had etched itself into his brain and evoked great respect for his uncle, who was then already in Riga.

Hayim Leyb's father, Maier, son of David Zalman, and Hayim's Uncle Yerochem-Ber grew up together in Tshashnik; both went to the same *heder* and then studied at the same *Yeshiva*. His uncle, however, had a better head and at the age of 19 already had *Smicho oif Robones* (the degree of rabbi). That same year, Yerochem-Ber's father, Reb Shmuel Hasid, had betrothed him to the daughter of a scholar who came from a family famous for its learning. After the wedding his father-in-law had taken him into his home to live with him and continue his studies. His father-in-law had discerned a future of great scholarship for Yerochem-Ber.

Yerochem-Ber, however, was not of that class of scholars who see nothing around them but the Book and who are prepared to walk blindly along well-marked paths. He saw the intense poverty of his fellow Jews and sought an answer to this in the Torah. Why and for what? He did not find the answer and came to a conclusion which itself branched out into a whole series of other questions even more difficult to answer.

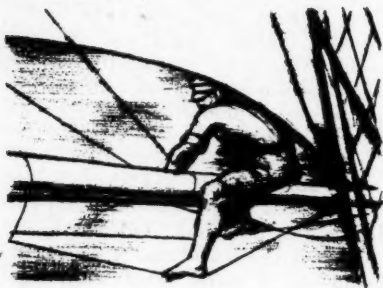
He refused to accept it as a fact that *this* world is merely a passage to the *other* world. Was it likely that pure and holy souls were released from the Almighty's Throne only to pass through a sea of torture and tears before they reached the other world? Where is God's justice and God's wisdom? Either the Divine threads had accidentally become entangled or we did not even begin to understand the ways of the Holy One!

Yerochem-Ber's conclusion was that this belief in two separate worlds was

in absolute contradiction to the wisdom, fairness and justice of God's Creation. There could not be two worlds! One is the continuation of the other and it is actually only *one* world! No; we do not understand the ways of the Lord, Blessed be His Name. The world, *our* world below, is just as holy as the world above and there is no place—it is impermissible!—for a Hell, not in this world and not in the next! It is one world and it can—and should—be a world filled with Gardens of Eden! In such a world there would be no place for sin, and naturally—no place for punishment! And such a world could come about only through the labor of Man himself. When God wanted a world, He—even He, the Omnipotent One—had to *create* it! Nothing comes out of nothing! Everything must be created—by work!

These were heretical thoughts and they led to a long and deep-going dispute between Yerochem-Ber and his father-in-law. The town was turned upside down. On his father-in-law's side, arrayed against Yerochem-Ber, were all the clever Torah-minds. Things went so far that his father-in-law finally told him he refused to live under the same roof with a *koifer b'ikor*—a heretic.

Thus Yerochem-Ber, without a groshen to his soul, went away, leaving his wife and three children behind. Being without a trade, he found work in the lumber camps. At first, it was very difficult; he was not used to the hard physical labor. But since he was sturdily built, he was able to master the work and the work made him so strong and healthy that he became a new man. He gave up his studies completely and threw himself body and soul into his new duties. He worked along the banks of rivers tying the logs into rafts and floating them down the Dvina; he made the long voyages



on the Ulla River and through the Dvina-rapids with cargoes of corn and wheat for Riga; he worked in the forests along the nearby rivers which empty into the Dvina. He was hammered into a man of iron. His wages were small but he was satisfied. The work brought him a spiritual wholeness and tranquility which was its own reward.

At regular intervals he sent letters home to his wife and small sums of money. But her letters to him were full of misery and each one was worse than the last. First one child was taken ill and died, then another and finally, the third. Three were no more letters and after a while he learned that his wife, too, had gone. . . . She could not endure it. . . .

**These were blows** that shattered his thoughts completely. He saw the Hand of God in these disasters. But why? Where had he transgressed so flagrantly that the punishment struck at his very roots? His children taken away—this was *Koras Yomin*—a cutting down of his days—in the most severe sense; this was extirpation, root and branch! Why was he himself not struck down?

"What does He want of me? If He is so vengeful and vindictive, why doesn't He settle his accounts with

me? Why did He have to take it out of my children? Why did my children deserve to be cut down for *my* sins? And how did Hannah, the mother of the children, sin? And why should He be a vengeful and vindictive God? If Man is the image of his Creator—what can He expect of Man?"

With these thoughts weighing heavily upon him he went one day to look for work. He was then in Riga. It had been a bad year for everyone; he had not worked for a long time and had often gone hungry. He was living in a shanty on a raft near the Zvirnholm. There was nothing for him to do at Shamira's lumber yard and he had rowed over to Michaelson's sawmill. There he found a few days work. They were cutting last year's logs and his job was to feed the logs to the saws. When they had finished one pile of logs, he and several other laborers were taken to a second one. Here, several thousand logs lay in a tremendous pile, tacked in rows, with thin planks between each row. The laborers had to climb to the top of the pile and dislodge the logs one at a time with a long pole; the logs were then placed on chains and dragged to the saws by horses. Yerochem-Ber climbed to the top of the pile, but as soon as his pole touched the first log, a whole section of the pile gave way and a hundred logs crashed to the ground, taking Yerochem-Ber with them.

When they freed Yerochem-Ber from the weight of the fallen logs, there was no sign of life in his body. The doctor, however, who had been brought from a nearby rescue-station, said he was still alive. They removed him to the city hospital, where he hovered between life and death for many days. His right leg was broken below the knee, five ribs were smashed, and the

(Continued on page 38)

# "Anne Frank" in Central Europe

The impact on those who knew

Hitlerism at first hand

By ELEANOR WHEELER

Prague

THE premiere of *The Diary of Anne Frank* moved and impressed the first-night audience in Prague's Czechoslovak Army Theater on June 21. A young Czech girl, non-Jewish, who could not have been more than four when the action of the play took place, was leaving the theater wiping her eyes, while an elderly Jewish teacher (who had lost his wife and nearly lost his sons in concentration camp) told us he was especially touched by the faithful reproduction of Jewish holiday rites and the great dignity of the performance.

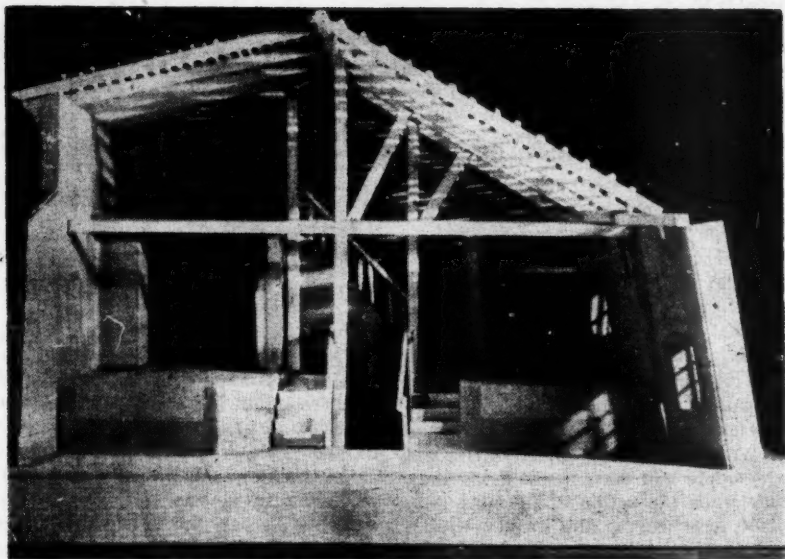
The house was packed and breathless in the non-air-conditioned theater on a sultry June night. Applause was subdued and respectful, but prolonged and intense.

The actor playing the part of Otto Frank, Otomar Korbela, is one of the finest in Czechoslovakia, and an active and patriotic citizen as well. The part of Anne, on the other hand, gave young Jirina Jiraskova a chance to win early laurels for her fine, sensitive acting—particularly moving in her "play-acting" party with young Peter van Daan just before the nazis take all the Jews hidden in the garret off in a transport.

The theater program carries a photograph of the barbed-wire-topped fence around Mauthausen where so

many Czechs and Slovaks, mostly Jewish, lost their loved ones. On the back cover of the program is a model of the set showing the attic where the Franks and other Jewish victims were hidden. This is also something close and understandable to the Czech people, because among them are many nameless heroes who risked their lives to hide Jews. Our former cleaning woman, for instance, had kept a Jewish couple in her bedroom for two years, feeding them with food she had stolen from the German officers for whom she worked. "I could have lost my head every day in the week," she once chortled to us cheerfully.

For Czechoslovakia, with its Lidice and its Lezaky, razed by the nazis, with its young people carried off to forced labor and the daily announcements by radio of executions of Czechs and Slovaks for "activities against the Reich," the theme of the play is familiar and harrowing. The program commentator, Dr. Horacek, writes, "What is it that excites us in this simple diary of a Jewish girl who vanished forever in a nazi concentration camp, together with millions and millions—before she had gone through her dawning from child to maiden? Why is it that, since the first edition of the book in Amsterdam, there have been larger and larger editions, until today the notes of Anne



*Model of the set for The Diary of Anne Frank  
at the Czechoslovak Army Theater in Prague.*

Frank hold a foremost place in world readers' interest?

"There are some, especially western literateurs and critics, who believe that the surprising furore around the *Diary* was caused to a considerable, if not decisive, degree by the fact that the work was written by such a young author (13-15 years), so that a sensational atmosphere was formed around the book; some even assert that the work is the hoax of a clever writer. Others are of the opinion that the basis for the success is the very authenticity and simplicity of the diary. Still others see the effectiveness of Anne's diary in the objective tragedy of her life, rushing towards death, in the dramatic contrapuntal quality of the situation: the life of Jewish refugees, not yet imprisoned, but already torn from the

wholeness of life—and on the other side the ever closer pressure of the specter of the SS-men. That is to say, merciless succession of historic time in the powerless race of hope with the merciless succession of historic time. . . .

"Superficial judgments that 'the occupation as a topic' is outdated (for this is how the *Diary* would be classified by pedantic bibliography), were torn up by the roots by the increase in publication and the growing and active effect of this work."

The Czechoslovak teachers' organ, *Teachers' News*, (Jan. 24) found also that the psychology of Anne Frank's diary had much to make them reflect. "The adolescent sees the essence of people, sees shallowness, pettiness and the inner coarseness of the adults. She sees this and understands the rea-



sons. But in cruel isolation she wages a struggle with herself—not to succumb to this atmosphere. . . . (then comparing it with a Czech play *Vera Lukasova* by Bozena Benesova) Let us reflect on these young girls more profoundly. And let us look more carefully at the countenance of our pupils.”

*Anne Frank* was published (by Melantrich Publishers) before it was seen on a stage here. It was played in a provincial theater in North Bohemia before it was seen in the capital. It has now won its place in the Prague repertory, not only for its cry against fascism and for its emotional impact, not only for its value as a psychological study, but also because it is good theater, competently and carefully performed.

## IN RUMANIA

By A. SHPICHLAT

Bucharest

THE Jewish State Theater in Bucharest last spring scored one of its greatest successes with its performance of the *Diary of Anne Frank*. This was the first time the play had been staged in the Yiddish language.

Odd! Many of us lived through the terrible experiences so vividly described in the play. Yet we were deeply moved. We felt the tragedy of the Jewish people embodied in the simple lines of the 13-year old Jewish girl, in the experiences of the two Jewish families, who hid for two years in the attic of an Amsterdam home and finally fell into the hands of Hitler murderers.

The play has a profound and at the same time universal human quality. It mirrors the tragedy of a people and

at the same time the tragedy of humanity. This is the virtue of a truly great work of art which will withstand the test of time and transmit from one generation to the next the idea of protest against cruelty and oppression.

The world's greatest treasure is doubtless its children. Anne Frank is a symbol of the hundreds of thousands of children murdered by the Hitlerite beasts, a symbol of the hope that was buried wherever the nazi boots sullied the earth. A symbol not only for Jews, but for Frenchmen and Poles, for Rumanians and Russians, for all who strive to keep the dark yesterdays from returning.

This is the universal character of *Anne Frank's Diary*. But Anne Frank is a daughter of the Jewish people. Her fate is the fate of six million Jews who perished under the nazi occupation. The Hanukah evening is beautifully woven into the play. The Hanukah candle in the dark attic awakens feelings of pride, brings out of the distant past a trembling ray of light which once endured in a struggle for freedom and independence. Perhaps Anne did not know the story of the Maccabees, but it is an organic part of her people's tradition. Anne Frank's happiness is Jewish and her tragedy and sorrow are the tragedy and sorrow of the Jewish people.

No other play has been presented by the Jewish State Theater with so much excitement, so much inner fire. Leah Kenig Stalper has created a fine characterization and catches the struggles of the impetuous Anne. The unity and high artistic level of the production are in great measure due to the talented director G. Theodorescu. The sets are by A. Reich and D. Nemtesonu.

# Appeal for Morton Sobell

*The following appeal to President Eisenhower for a new trial or commutation of sentence of Morton Sobell, co-defendant of the Rosenbergs, was released by Mrs. Helen Sobell. It has thus far been signed by 43 ministers, 17 judges and lawyers, 37 educators, 13 writers, 15 other eminent persons and 53 rabbis. The text of the appeal and the list of rabbis signing it follows:*

**D**EAR Mr. President:

It is because we share your deep concern for the spiritual health of our nation and for the principles of justice upon which it is founded that we address ourselves to you concerning the case of Morton Sobell.

Morton Sobell, now in his seventh year of imprisonment and confined in Alcatraz, is seeking a new trial to reverse his 30-year sentence on a charge of "conspiracy to commit espionage." Both he and his defenders maintain that he is innocent. Moreover, the trial record shows that the judge in passing sentence stated: "The evidence in the case did not point to any activity on your (Morton Sobell's) part in connection with the atomic bomb project."

We do not press upon you, Mr. President, the question of Morton Sobell's innocence or guilt—for we ourselves are not of one mind on that issue. Our faith in our democratic system of justice assures us that the truth will ultimately be established.

We believe it is vital that our nation safeguard its security, but it is important that we do not permit this concern to lead us astray from our traditions of justice and humanity. In this light, we further believe that Morton Sobell's continued imprisonment does not serve our nation's interest or security.

Therefore, most respectfully and earnestly, Mr. President, we look to you to exercise your executive authority either by asking the Attorney General to consent to a new trial for Morton Sobell or by granting of Executive Pardon or commutation. We take the liberty of urging your personal attention to this matter.

Rabbi J. S. Abels, former President,  
Brooklyn Board of Rabbis.

Rabbi Zwi Anderman, N. Y.

Rabbi Sidney Ballon, Nassau Commu-  
nity Temple, West Hempstead, N. Y.

Rabbi Jerome S. Bass, Philadelphia,  
Pa.

Rabbi Ben Zion Bergman, Burbank,  
Cal.

Rabbi Samuel Bernstein, N. Y.

Rabbi M. D. Bial, Temple Sinai, Sum-  
mit, N. J.

Rabbi Jerome B. Cohen, Englewood,  
N. J.

Dr. Franklin Cohn, Los Angeles, Cal.

Rabbi Benjamin Englander, Cong.  
B'nai Israel, Irvington, N. J.

Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein, Syracuse,  
N. Y.

Rabbi Julian B. Feibelman, New Or-  
leans, La.

Rabbi Morris Fishman, Community  
Synagogue, Atlantic City, N. J.

Rabbi Oscar Fleishbaker, Ahavas Israel  
Synagogue, Grand Rapids, Mich.  
Rabbi Seymour Freedman, Buffalo,  
N. Y.  
Rabbi Alfred L. Friedman, Brooklyn.  
Rabbi Ephraim Frisch, N. Y.  
Dr. Emanuel Gamoran, N. Y.  
Rabbi Daniel Goldberg, N. Y.  
Rabbi Jacob Goldberg, N. Y.  
Rabbi Sidney Greenberg, Philadel-  
phia, Pa.  
Rabbi Louis D. Gross, N. Y.  
Rabbi Avery J. Grossfield, Florence,  
S. C.  
Rabbi Z. Harry Gutstein, Sons of Is-  
rael, Willimantic, Conn.  
Rabbi Harry Halpern, East Midwood  
Jewish Center, Brooklyn.  
Rabbi Samuel Horowitz, Cong. Beth  
Aaron, Billings, Mont.  
Rabbi Wolli Kaelter, Temple Israel,  
Long Beach, Cal.  
Rabbi Jerome Kestenbaum, Tampa,  
Fla.  
Rabbi Aaron Kirschenbaum, N. Y.  
Rabbi Raymond Leiman, Cong. B'nai  
Israel, Steubenville, Ohio.  
Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, N. Y.  
Rabbi Eugene J. Lipman, N. Y.  
Rabbi Herschel Lyman, Los Angeles,  
Cal.  
Rabbi Daniel Manies, Brooklyn.  
Rabbi Israel Raphael Margolies, Cong.  
Beth Am, West Englewood, N. J.  
Rabbi Carl I. Miller, Gary, Ind.  
Dr. Uri Miller, Baltimore, Md.  
Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, N. Y.  
Rabbi Dr. Philip Rosenberg, Temple  
Beth Shalom, Santa Ana, Cal.  
Moses Rosenthal, Rabbi Emeritus,  
Cong. Sons of Israel, Suffern, N. Y.  
Rabbi Samuel Rosinger, Temple  
Emanuel, Beaumont, Texas.  
Rabbi Edwin Ruch, Brooklyn.  
Rabbi Stephen A. Schafer, Toledo, O.  
Rabbi Solomon Segal, Beth Israel  
Cong., Moose Jaw, Sask., Canada.  
Rabbi Sanford M. Shapero, Elmira,  
N. Y.

Rabbi David S. Shapiro, Milwaukee,  
Wis.  
Rabbi Solomon Shapiro, Brooklyn.  
Rabbi David Wolf Silverman, YMHA  
Temple, Aurora, Ill.  
Rabbi Jacob Singer, Chicago, Ill.  
Rabbi Alan Mayor Sokobin, Temple  
Beth El, Laurelton, N. Y.  
Dr. Joshua Trachtenberg, Teaneck,  
N. J.  
Rabbi Jacob J. Weinstein, KAM  
Temple, Chicago, Ill.  
Rabbi Samuel Yalow, Syracuse, N. Y.

*(Associations listed for identification  
only and do not imply sponsorship by  
the organizations of the appeal.)*

### SCAD Activity Rises

THE lively New York State Com-  
mission Against Discrimina-  
tion (SCAD) revealed in its report  
for the first six months of this year  
that it has received more complaints  
in this period than in any full year  
except 1956. The 502 complaints  
received from Jan. 1 to June 30,  
1957 compares with 332 for the  
corresponding period in 1956, 239  
in 1955 and 174 in 1954. In alleged  
housing discrimination in the first  
six months of this year, 33 com-  
plaints were on account or color,  
one because of creed and four be-  
cause of national origin. Of the to-  
tal complaints, 430 were on account  
of color, 30 because of creed and  
34 because of national origin.  
Highest number of complaints, 502,  
were against job discrimination in-  
volving 249 firms. As of June 30,  
211 of the 502 complaints had been  
settled.

# Hard Realities in Middle East

## Opportunities for peace and the Ben Gurion-Goldmann debate

By SAM PEVZNER

**A**LTHOUGH the situation on the Israel Syrian border remains difficult, UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold expressed his belief at a news conference on August 8 that the "psychological" climate in the Middle East has improved. This, he felt, may lead to negotiations. He criticized the economic boycott conducted by the Arabs against Israel as a serious "deadweight hampering UN efforts to establish peace in the area."

One of the breezes contributing to an improvement of the "psychological" climate may have been the statement of Pakistan's Prime Minister H. S. Suhrawardy, who told a U.S. national television audience on July 14 that there is "no other alternative" but for the Moslem to accept Israel's existence as a fact and that in order to have peace in the Middle East "there must be an agreement between the Arab world . . . and Israel itself."

This statement by a Moslem leader is significant for the sooner the Arab countries recognize that Israel is here to stay the better it will be for the settlement of all outstand-

ing problems which keep the Middle East in turmoil.

And one of the factors which raises the dust in the Middle East is the operation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, under which \$51,000,000 worth of military aid has been pledged to the countries adhering to the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower doctrine. In light of this new military buildup and the fact that United States has been providing mases of arms to Iraq for a number of years, the protests of Eisenhower and others against the sale of arms to Arab countries by socialist countries sound hollow indeed. As far as the Middle East and world peace is concerned, neither will benefit now from recriminations hurled back and forth that the other camp is sending arms to Middle East countries. As JEWISH LIFE has advocated for more than a year, what is needed is agreement by both sides to halt the sending of arms and interference in Middle East affairs.

On August 8 the Presidium of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union repeated the Soviet proposal made last January for a "world-wide

pledge against the use of force and non-intervention in the Middle East" (N. Y. Times, August 9). Unfortunately, the State Department, which has scornfully rejected the January overture, ignored the new one. Yet agreement to neutralize the Middle East, as JEWISH LIFE has proposed, plus intensified efforts on the part of the UN to bring about negotiations on the issues which block Arab-Israel settlement: It is hard to see any other way under present day conditions and realities.

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, has a firmer grasp of these international realities than does Premier Ben Gurion. The differences between these two, which have recently been expressed with increased sharpness, are by no means mere personality clashes but basic policy differences.

Ben Gurion's policy, which ties Israel to the western star, and in particular the American oil interests' star, has been a prime factor in the isolation of Israel in the Middle East and an impediment in the way of securing Arab-Israel negotiations. How treacherous are the sands upon which Ben Gurion bases the national interests of Israel was amply demonstrated by the action of British oil companies (one of which, the British Petroleum Company, is controlled by the British government, Israel's western "ally") who are discontinuing their operations in Israel and joining the Arab boycott against Israel. But Ben Gurion is going

"west" no matter what the consequences.

Nahum Goldmann, on the other hand, has recognized the simple fact that Israel is part of the Middle East and must learn to live with its neighbors if it is to survive. According to Seth S. King in the N. Y. Times (July 29), Dr. Goldmann "has been advocating new efforts to open talks with the Arabs, saying that the prospects for a settlement are better today than at any previous time." At a meeting of journalists in Jerusalem Dr. Goldmann spoke against Israeli adherence to the Eisenhower Doctrine and criticized Premier Ben Gurion for his opposition to a policy of neutrality.

There are signs of growing resentment and disagreement with the methods and policies of Ben Gurion in Israel. Opposition is expressed even among the leadership of Mapai, Ben Gurion's party.

These may be signs of a developing opposition to policies which have not helped to solve the crisis faced by Israel and the entire Middle East. The crystallization of a movement to change the government policies in the direction of neutrality and a firmer determination to live at peace with the Arab neighbors can help solve the complex refugee and border problems and bring peace to the Middle East, although there are other important factors which play a decisive role. The change of policy by our government is one of them.



# ISRAEL

**Some restrictions** on the rights of Israeli Arabs to travel were lifted after Premier David Ben-Gurion conferred with five Arab members of the Knesset who vote with the Mapai Party. In the Galilee military district, Arabs will be able to go to Nazareth, Acre and Afula without securing special permits; in the Little Triangle district along the Jordanian border, the dark-to-dawn curfew will be eased and a road hitherto closed to civilian traffic will be opened so that Arabs may have a direct route to markets along the coast. (*N. Y. Times*, July 8.)

**The Land Identification Office** of the UN Palestine Conciliation Commission is completing a study of lands owned by Arab refugees from Israel. It estimates that 160,000 families, averaging five and a half members per family, actually left Israel during the War of Independence. Two-thirds of the families owned some property, the others being renters of homes or land. (*N. Y. Times*, July 14.) The problem of compensation is up for consideration in international public opinion and should be a subject for negotiation between Israel and the Arab states.

**The publishing house** of Hashomer Hatzair has just issued an anthology of Soviet Yiddish writings, containing 24 stories in Hebrew translation. The authors included are Peretz Markish, David Nister, David Bergelson, Moishe Teitsh, Elihu Gordon, Itzik Kipnis, B. Alievski, S. Persov, H. Orland, Moishe Kulbak, Noah Lurie, M. Alberton, S. Abtshuk, S. Gordon, S. Godiner, J. Robin, Anna Stelmach and Tovie Genn. The Israeli critic David Canani supplied an introduction.

**Moshe Sneh** is now the editor of the Communist newspaper, *Kol Ha'am*; he was elected to the Political Bureau of the Communist Party at its recent convention. He is also in the Knesset.

**A Polish group** has just finished a 90 minute documentary film, "Israel in 1957," to be exhibited in Poland (*Jewish Agency Digest*, June 27).

**Professor Hyman Levy**, British Communist, visited Israel for three weeks in June as guest of Givat Haviva, adult education center of Kibbutz Artzi of Hashomer Hatzair. In his lecture at Givat Haviva, Prof.



Levy said he intended to work for a "true Marxist analysis" of the Jewish question by the British Communist Party and suggested that a world congress of Marxists be held to discuss theoretical problems, including the Jewish question. (*Labour Israel*, London, June 1957.)

**Doctors in Israel** number 3,874, according to a Health Department survey, of whom 21 per cent are women (compared to four or five per cent women doctors in the U.S.A.). Only 104 of the doctors were born in Israel; 1,968 were born in Eastern Europe, 1,227 in Central Europe; about 100 in Iraq. In private practice there are 1,079; the others are in public medical institutions (35 per cent in the employ of Kupat Holim, the workers' sick fund of the Histadrut, 12 per cent in government employ, 6 per cent in local government employment). There is a shortage of doctors in the villages and kibbutzim, in which only 12 per cent of the doctors practice, although 30 per cent of the total population live in such areas. There is one doctor for every 560 persons in the towns and only one for every 1,800 persons in the villages and settlements.

**The birth-rate** in 1954 was higher in Israel (27.3 per thousand) than in India (24.8) or in Japan (20.1). (*N. Y. Times*, July 18.) In 1956, the Jewish birth-rate in Israel was 26.7 per thousand, while the Arab and Druze birth-rate in Israel was 47.2; the death-rate is among the lowest in the world, 6.3 per thousand for the Jews, 9.2 for the non-Jewish population. (*J. A. Digest*, May 23.)

**Juvenile delinquency** is being studied jointly by a special Knesset committee and the Department of Social Welfare. Most juvenile crimes are against property, not persons. Recently more than 100 were caught falsifying draft papers. Children of older European immigrants as well as of more recent Oriental Jewish immigration are involved. Since 1953, juvenile delinquency has been steadily increasing.

**Mapai regulations** for membership strictly exclude employers of labor, Moshe Sharett explained to a Labor Party audience in Brisbane, Australia. He pointed out that immigrants who have been socialists in their countries of origin cannot join Mapai if they employ labor in Israel. (*The Worker*, Brisbane, May 20.)

**"Hapoel Hatzair"** (Labor Youth), a weekly, marked its fiftieth anniversary in May. It is the oldest active Hebrew periodical in the country.

**State Arab schools** and kindergartens were attended by about 25,500 pupils this past year; only 30 per cent were girls, owing to Moslem hesitation to permit female education. (*J. A. Digest*, June 13.)

M. U. S.

# Soviet-Australian Letters on Jews of the USSR

## An exchange of opinions on current Soviet policy

*Below is an exchange of letters between Mme. Inna Koulakovskaya, deputy chief of the British department of VOKS, the Soviet agency for foreign cultural relations, and the officers of the Jewish Progressive Centre of Melbourne, Australia, concerning the question of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union.*

*The Editors of JEWISH LIFE share with the Australian correspondents the disquiet over the position on Soviet Jewish culture in Mme. Koulakovskaya's letter. There are many observations of Mme. Koulakovskaya that are open to discussion. In addition to the areas discussed by the Australian correspondents, we believe there is the large question of Jewish culture in languages other than Yiddish and Hebrew. It seems to us that Mme. Koulakovskaya evades the central issue, namely, that so long as there are Jews in the Soviet Union who desire Jewish cultural activity and creativity, the socialist approach to the nationality question requires that this desire be given the means to be fulfilled. All the evidence available to us indicates that there are Soviet Jews who do want Jewish cultural activity. Nor do we agree with her that Jewish culture in Yiddish or any other language is necessarily separatistic. The great works of Soviet Yiddish writers like Peretz Markish, Itzik Feffer and David Bergelson are a living refutation of her view.—Eds.*

### THE MOSCOW LETTER

Moscow, December 20, 1956

Mr. J. Semel, President  
Mr. M. Frydman, Hon. Secretary  
Jewish Progressive Centre  
[Melbourne, Australia]  
Gentlemen:

We are in receipt of the resolution adopted at a meeting of your Centre and regret to say that it seems to have resulted from your inadequate knowl-

edge of life and culture of the Soviet people.

You stand up to defend Jewish culture allegedly suppressed in our country. But is it not necessary first to consider the real connotation of this conception of "Jewish Culture."

Jews live in many countries of the world but nowhere—except Israel—do they form a majority or a compact group. It is but natural therefore that in all countries they undergo a process of assimilation: Jews—especially their young people—adopt the language of

the country where they live, study at its schools and universities, participate in creating its culture: Disraeli was Jewish, but the British regard him as one of the wisest statesmen of Britain.

Menuhin is a Jew, but the world knows him as one of the greatest violinists of America.

Ehrenburg also comes of a Jewish family, but in his works he expresses the sentiments of, and discusses the problems of vital interest to all the Soviet people.

Heine is known to all as a great German poet. Who ever thought of whether he was a Jew until the nazis yelled about it, making bon-fires of his books.

Who ever thinks of Chaplin as a Jew, though he is certainly Jewish, but are not his films admired and highly praised in all civilized countries as something of universal value? This results from the same process of assimilation of Jews which, historically speaking, is of course in the order of things.

Several decades ago in tsarist Russia with its artificial segregation of Jews and its ghettos, the Jewish people could not partake in the creation of all-national culture; their spiritual life was limited to problems and matters of purely Jewish interest. You must agree that it would be ridiculous to try to artificially impose the same isolation of Jewish spiritual values now.

And it should be also said that best works of Jewish authors written in the pre-revolutionary period and having an universal appeal and message have been published in the USSR both in originals and in translations. Soviet multi-national reading public has free access to translations of best works written in Yiddish in the Soviet period by such poets as Feffer, Markish, Kvitko and others.

In the course of 40 years which have elapsed since the day when in the USSR any national discrimination has become punishable by law. Soviet Jews have joined the multi-million family of Soviet peoples working in all spheres of national economy and culture. Many Soviet Jews have won world prestige as eminent scientists, musicians, writers, artists: they contribute to creating artistic and scientific values necessary to and appreciated by the Soviet people of all nationalities.

In 40 years of the Soviet regime another change has taken place which should be borne in mind when discussing the position of Jews in the USSR: in the course of these years a whole generation of Soviet Jews has grown up which has never experienced the humiliation of ghettos and knew nothing of segregation of Jewish culture: all the accumulated treasures of multi-national Soviet culture belong to them. but they feel they are first of all part and parcel of the cultural traditions of the republic in which they live.

There is no "Jewish problem" in the USSR. For the overwhelming majority of Soviet Jews their national tongue is either Russian or the language of the Republic where they live. But, of course in Biro-Bidjan, which is the Jewish Autonomous Region within the Russian Federated Republic, the language of instruction is Yiddish. It is also the language of books and local periodicals, radio-broadcasts and theater productions.

At the same time, both in Moscow and in the provinces, recitals of Jewish music are held and gramophone records of Jewish songs and poetry are widely sold mainly to meet the requests of Jews of the older generation who feel sentimentally attached to the pre-revolutionary (ghetto) tradition of Jewish culture.

Judging by your resolution you act

upon a strong assumption that there was some special "persecutions of Jews" in the USSR. But this is in utter contradiction with the facts of real life.

Soviet people do not conceal that for some time there occurred in the USSR certain violations of Soviet legality. Soviet Jews have been affected by them to the same extent as other Soviet citizens irrespective of their nationality.

Innocent people who have suffered because of such violations—Jews or non-Jews, as the case may be—are rehabilitated and fully restored in their rights.

May we ask you to make this letter known to the members of your centre who participated in discussing and adopting the resolution you have sent us.

We hope that upon further consideration they will arrive at more correct conclusions concerning the position of Jews in the USSR.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) INNA KOULAKOVSKAYA  
*Deputy Chief, British Department, VOKS*

## REPLY FROM AUSTRALIA

Melbourne, 27 March, 1957

Mrs. Inna Koulakovskaya,  
Deputy Chief, British Department,  
VOKS, USSR

Dear Mrs. Koulakovskaya,

We thank you for your answer to our resolution in connection with the rehabilitation of Jewish culture and Jewish writers.

We have carefully examined your answer, which we discussed fully with our members. After a broad discussion we formed the opinion that, notwithstanding your exposition of the issues, we cannot accept a number of your

underlying premises which in our view lead you to arrive at some incorrect conclusions.

You base your standpoint mainly on the assumption that, where Jews form a minority, there occurs a "process of assimilation." With your examples of Disraeli, Heine, Menuhin and others you wish to show the general positive contribution Jews have made to the culture of the countries in which they have lived, through integration and assimilation with the dominant culture. From this you conclude that a separate Jewish culture is unnecessary.

In this regard you express a view which is not entirely new. On this question there have been great discussions for a very long time. The accumulated experience of the past and the present has convincingly shown that assimilation is far from being the only tendency in Jewish life, and full integration in the dominant culture is not necessarily the only way for a Jew to be creative. It is evident that at the same time as the process of assimilation goes on, which no one denies, alongside it there takes place another process—that of national self-preservation, which has a positive and creative influence on the lives of Jewish people. The form taken by the process of national self-preservation naturally varies according to time and place.

Life has shown that together with the Heines, Menuhins and Ehrenburgs, there also emerge creative figures of great stature like Sholem Aleichem, Bialik, Bergelson and Mikhoels. They stem from the people and, retaining their close ties with them, move them in a progressive direction.

We also cannot fully accept your view that the Jewish national cultural values which developed through the centuries were solely the result of anti-Semitic persecution and enforced ghet-

to life. Although we do not deny that this was an important factor, we cannot agree that it was the only deciding cause. There are many instances in Jewish history which show the opposite. For instance, the Golden Age of Jewish creative activity in Moorish Spain when Jehuda Halevy lived. There was no persecution then and Jews enjoyed equality. In our time, there is the example of the growth and development of Jewish cultural life in the Soviet Union, which came to its peak after the revolution had liberated the Jewish people from the tsarist prison of peoples.

This period in the cultural history of the Jewish people in the Soviet Union is well-known. It produced a new and talented generation of writers and many great achievements in literature, the theater, schools and newspapers. Great hopes were raised for the future of Jewish culture, of the socially and nationally liberated Jewish masses. For that reason we always gloried in these achievements and emphasized with satisfaction the great vistas which the October Revolution opened up for the Jewish people, together with all other oppressed peoples.

**The beginning** of the decline of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union coincided with the opening of the Beria epoch in the years 1936-37, when many of the most prominent figures in Jewish social life and so many talented writers and artists were removed and liquidated. When the destructive cloud descended on so many of the flourishing cultural, educational and social institutions, they began from that time to wither away.

We also cannot agree with your contention that Jewish creative activity is limited solely to "problems and matters of purely Jewish interest."

On the contrary, the truth is that

the Jewish literature expressed the healthy and genuine strivings of the Jewish masses. It was imbued with a love of the people and particularly of the working people to whom it was very close. It expressed the protest and struggle against backwardness and oppression and it affirmed a belief in progress and the highest humanistic ideals. And how else could all this be expressed if not through the only possible means open to a writer—the intimate national language of his environment, the language that was part of his people?

We maintain, however, that while the form of the writer, the idiom of the poet, were specifically Jewish, they were nevertheless at the same time universal. If the works of the Jewish writers had not this universal appeal, how would it be possible for Sholem Aleichem, the most specifically Yiddish of them all, to be published in big editions in many languages for non-Jewish readers? What purpose would it serve the Soviet Writers Union to translate and publish the work of Markish, Kvitko, Feffer, Bergelson and others?

We are convinced that the Jewish literature in the Soviet Union did not have for its aim the continuance of Jewish isolation in the negative sense. On the contrary, its aim was to have a part in the choir of the multinational cultures, to add a Jewish melody. Such works as Bergelson's *By the Dnieper* and Markish's *War* are only examples of the Jewish contribution to the socialist content of Soviet literary creation. Just as they are also a contribution to general world literature. Whether this contribution is bigger or smaller than the contribution of the Jewish writers in the Russian language is a matter of argument. But we think it is not a matter of bigger or smaller, but a matter of principle,

that writing in Yiddish can also, just as with other nationalities, be a valuable and positive contribution on a high artistic level.

A further point. You indicate in your answer that in the period of 40 years "since any national discrimination has become punishable by law," Jews, like other citizens, have been able to take part in all spheres of national economy and culture. Naturally we are very pleased at this. We have always appreciated the improvement in the legal position of the Jews that was brought about by the Soviet system. But that is not all. We Jews in Australia enjoy full civic rights, just as Jews do in many other democratic countries. But we do not make a fuss about it. Jews here too are free to occupy positions in all spheres of the national economy and culture and government. At one time here in Australia, a Jew, Sir Isaac Isaacs, held the highest position in the country—he was Governor-General, the King's representative in Australia. And another Jew, Sir John Monash, was the head of the Australian army in the First World War.

What is more important, and what we always regarded as the special manifestation of the Soviet system, was the fact that the Jews, thanks to the Revolution, had won equal rights, not merely as individuals, but as a national group, that Yiddish culture had won an equal place with all other national cultures. That Yiddish schools, theaters, publishing houses, were financed and supported and for the Jewish people, not as a favor but as a well-earned and recognized right. That this was done as the obvious duty of a socialist state.

That is why we were so hard hit, so bitterly disillusioned, when all this, every expression of Jewish national life and creativeness that existed up till

1948, suddenly then stopped and was liquidated.

*From your answer* it would seem that you were finding excuses for the disappearance of Jewish culture in the "process of integration" that is affecting the Jews in the Soviet Union. You point out that since national discrimination had been abolished the Jewish people, particularly the youth, were growing into the general cultural environment of the republics in which they lived. This is true and we accept it as welcome and progressive. We are not interested in maintaining a parochial, restrictive ghetto life. But we maintain that at the same time, together with the normal and positive process of integration, there exists amongst the Jewish people a cultural need and a social interest that is specifically Jewish, a cultural-social characteristic that is the product of past and present conditions.

The process of integration in the cultural life of the republic in which they live should not be used as an excuse to compel the Jewish people to renounce their Jewish culture. We cannot see any reason why the development of Jewish cultural activity should conflict with the general cultural activities of the republics. On the contrary, we have always understood that under the greater freedom of Socialism there can exist harmony and mutual enrichment between the different national cultures, the Jewish culture included. We were always convinced that just this freedom and brotherly cooperation between different national cultures, big and small, was one of the noblest achievements of socialist culture and justice.

We do not deny that Jewish culture, because it is not based territorially, tends to weaken in democratic countries. We have the same experience in



our own country. But precisely because of this similarity we understand that the resulting changes can not happen suddenly. A national culture does not disappear overnight, not even in one generation. Precisely because of our own experience, we are convinced that the problems arising from these changes must not be solved mechanically and by administrative measures. But they must be handled carefully, with understanding and without haste. We have no hesitation in saying that to forcibly hasten the end of a people's culture, even a weakening one, is not just, not humane, and not permissible.

This is what moved us to write to you when it became clear to us that it was not only "certain violations of legality" in which the victims were Jews as well as non-Jews. That is another question. But we are concerned with something that is without parallel, namely the complete and total liquidation of every sign and manifestation of the, up till 1948 still existing, Jewish culture.

We are convinced, from what we know about the conditions that prevail in the Soviet Union today, from reports that reach us from Soviet sources and other friendly foreign visitors, that there is still a need and a desire for Yiddish culture by a part of

the Jewish population, namely, in those areas where Jews live in great numbers and particularly where there is still from the past a tradition of Jewish cultural life.

We express the hope that today, when there is a big effort being made to rectify past mistakes and to repair injustices, you will also find a way, in accordance with Socialist principles and in as far as it is practically possible, to rehabilitate the Jewish culture that was tragically and suddenly extinguished.

All that we wish to see is a just handling of this problem, that will once again serve as an inspiration to all those who strive for a world of freedom, progress and brotherly relations between peoples.

Reports in the Jewish press of various countries seem to indicate that some measures to this effect are being taken in the USSR. We hope wholeheartedly that these will materialize and we shall greatly appreciate any further information regarding this matter.

Yours with fraternal greetings,

J. SEMEL, *President*  
M. FRYDMAN, *Hon. Secretary*  
[Jewish Progressive Centre,  
Melbourne, Australia.]

### **Report Yiddish Paper to be Issued in USSR**

**A** London *Jewish Chronicle* correspondent reported to his paper in July that he had been told by Moscow Chief Rabbi J. L. Levin that plans are in the works for publication of a Yiddish newspaper in the Soviet Union. He reported from Moscow that conferences are now being held by Soviet Jews to discuss the project. The paper is being planned to appear weekly at first and later as a daily. Rabbi Levine also told the correspondent that 10,000 copies of a *Siddur* (Hebrew prayer-book) has been published in the Soviet Union and that Lenin-grad Jews were planning to bring out their own *Siddur*.

INSIDE

# THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

## ***Rabbinical Assn. of America***

Two resolutions passed by the Rabbinical Association of America (Orthodox) at its 2nd Annual Convention at the Waldorf Astoria on July 17 deserve the attention of the entire Jewish community. One called for the banning of nuclear weapons and the other for U.S. recognition of China. The first follows in full:

"We call upon America to lead the world in our disavowal of nuclear weapons as an instrumentality of human warfare. It is not only the testing of these dreadful atomic bombs with their radioactive fallout which endangers humanity's future that we deprecate. It is the very bomb itself that must be banned from military use just as poison gas and biological warfare have been banned by civilized nations. We of America have a special stake in seeking the elimination of this monstrous destroyer, since we were the discoverers of it and we were the first actual users of its ferocious destructibility in the annihilation of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Let us wipe out that shame by urging upon the world its discontinuance and disuse except for peaceful purposes."

The second resolution called "upon America to extend recognition to China. . . . After all, the question of co-existence is not a moot, theoretical proposition to be discussed pro and con. Whether we like it or not, we are already co-existing now with the Communist half of our one world. . . .

We must continue to hold up as a mirror the lamp and blessings of liberty before the eyes of the oppressed and enslaved of mankind. . . . In the meantime cordial relations with China and endeavors to raise her economic level may mean national productivity and prosperity of unprecedented proportions for the American people."

## ***American Jewish Congress***

The Supreme Court civil liberties decisions of June 17 "constitute a devastating indictment of those acts which warped our highest traditions of freedom," editorializes *Congress Weekly* in its July 22nd issue. The decision on the Smith act case of the California Communist leaders buttresses "the traditional right of free speech . . . safeguards the freedom of individuals to voice dissident opinions, no matter how odious, if they are divorced from direct instigation to illegal acts. . . . The significance of these dramatic decisions cannot be overestimated."

On July 17 AJ Congress urged the House Civil Service Committee to oppose efforts to create a permanent statutory federal employees security program, the principal recommendation of the Commission on Government Security. Will Maslow, general counsel of the AJ Congress, testified that "the Commission—without holding public hearings or reporting on the actual administration of the security program—now proposes a perma-

nent statutory program that will freeze existing evils, facilitate new abuses and saddle us permanently with a vast, expensive and wasteful apparatus. . . . It would expand the present operation of the program, now applicable to sensitive positions only, to cover every single position in the federal establishment; it would for the first time include employees of the legislative and judicial branches; it would give statutory sanction to the attorney general's list of subversive organizations; it would legalize wiretapping; punish newspaper men for disclosing classified material; restrict the use of the parole provision under which 30,000 Hungarian refugees were admitted to this country; and allow the attorney general to imprison indefinitely any alien ordered deported if the attorney general believed it necessary to protect national security." Mr. Maslow concluded that the AJ Congress "opposes the establishment of new, permanent, gigantic programs affecting every civilian employee, and proposes instead a sober revaluation of the necessity of any security program, even one limited to sensitive positions alone."

In a 24-page report on the Dhahran Airfield in Saudi Arabia, issued July 1, AJ Congress charged that the base is not of great military value and that Aramco—the Arabian American Oil Company—"is the principal beneficiary of this field." In his foreword to the report, entitled "What Price Bias: the Dhahran Airfield," Thomas K. Finletter, who was U.S. secretary of the air force in 1951, wrote he does not agree the base is "vital" nor that its need "in any way requires us to sacrifice the principles in which the American people believe." In a letter accompanying the report, Dr. Israel Goldstein, AJ Congress president,

called upon Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee, to investigate our government's "policy of acquiescence in discriminatory Saudi Arabian policies," which excludes American Jews, members of the U.S. armed forces, from the Dhahran Airfield and refuses to allow public Christian religious services for American personnel serving at the field.

### ***Central Conf. of American Rabbis***

The 68th convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform) held in June heard a warning that the wall of separation between church and state "is becoming increasingly porous." Dr. Edgar E. Siskin, chairman of the commission on church and state, reported that the most pressing problem is the question of religion in the public schools.

Examples of some challenges to the separation of church and state reported were: the design of the Minnesota centennial emblem included a cross. There is a growing practice of erecting religious statues and sectarian symbols on public property. In Augusta, Me., "parents of parochial school children declared their intention of enrolling their children in the already overcrowded public schools unless their demands (for school buses at public expense) were met."

The commission issued a warning that there would be an intensified "assault upon the wall of separation."

The 400 rabbis at the convention also heard a proposal for a program of cooperation with other major rabbinical bodies to develop a greater sense of unity in the Jewish community.

S. P.

## A HAUNTING FANTASY

By B. YAGIEL

SOME months ago a little film from Britain made an unobtrusive entrance upon the Canadian screen. Readers of continental film journals had been awaiting it eagerly and rushed to see it. Others saw it by chance since it played as second feature to an average romantic comedy. After a few weeks, and before the word had spread around sufficiently, it quietly departed. Yet people are still talking about it, and to the highest awards which the Edinburgh and Venice Festivals had already bestowed upon it were added an Oscar and the top prize of the Jewish Audio-Visual Educational Society.

Wolf Mankowitz's one-act play, *The Bespoke Overcoat*, is one of the most beautiful Jewish theatrical creations of recent years. [The American equivalent of "bespoke" is tailor-made.] In addition, its precise folk idiom and its class-consciousness place it in the company of a noble literary tradition. Its film version, directed by Jack Clayton, is sheer perfection.

The story was suggested by Gogol's well-known tale, *The Cloak*, in which a poor government clerk, after going around for years in a shabby coat, which gave him but little protection against the icy Petersburg winds, finally saved enough to get a new one made, only to find himself beaten and robbed on the first night he wore it. His ghost, however, goes on haunting high government officials and stealing their magnificent cloaks, until the out-

rage is finally revenged to some extent.

A comparative study of Gogol's tale and its modern Jewish version by Mankowitz could make a fascinating literary essay. Suffice it to say here that *The Bespoke Overcoat* is quite different in character as well as setting.

Fender, an old shipping-clerk, has worked 40 years in a cloak-shop in London, England, and finds himself in a predicament similar to that of his Petersburg predecessor. His boss won't even consider selling him a good coat on credit, because Fender's wages would never stretch that far. An old-time friend, a tailor, promises to make him a new coat on a "whenever you have a few shillings" payment basis. But Fender has been getting old and slow. His boss fires him, his health gets worse and before the coat is even finished, he dies.

From here, Mankowitz unravels a tale of fantasy, of haunting and revenge as beautiful as any such tale ever written. It is different from that part in *The Cloak* in that it takes up a good portion of the 35-minute film, and it is not an allegory of the writer's thoughts, but rather a reflection of those of his characters. The eternal worry over making a living, for example, has never been more concisely dramatized than in the words of Fender, when he returns from the yonder to see his friends:

"You know who I saw down there?"

... Lenny!

"Lenny! ... what's he doing?"

"Selling herrings of course, what else? ..."

The tailor, Morry, is played by David Kosoff, an old veteran of the Jewish stage. It is difficult to describe his performance except to say that it is perfect. His deep voice, his sturdy bearing, the organic rhythm and intonation of his language are a noble treat.

Alfie Bass lends a rare distinction to the role of Fender, a role all the more difficult because it combines that of an old, quiet shipping-clerk, and a determined philosophical ghost. His final scene, when he slowly walks away into the dark is unforgettable.

Allen Tilvern plays Mr. Ranting, the brash young boss and Alf Dean appears as a gravedigger.

The photography of Wolfgang Suschitzky makes excellent use of the sets in relation to the people and has a meditative quality like the story itself. The music by the well-known French composer Georges Auric could not be finer.

The language of the film is not a vague pseudo-folksy rambling which writers have indulged in at times. Whether their talk is quiet or angry, plain or sprinkled with brilliant metaphors or soaring into poetic flights, it clearly arises out of the life and background of Morry and Fender. As such it may be incomprehensible and even uncomfortable for some people, just as "this story about a tailor by some fellow called Sholem Aleichem" was to Semyon Makarevitch in the play *Dos Groise Gevins* ("Two Hundred Thousand").

We should truly rejoice to have a Wolf Mankowitz in Britain and hope that he will give us many more plays and novels, and perhaps even some more films.

## FOR MRS. ROSA LEE INGRAM

By HENRI PERCIKOW

No more will he defile  
A mother's virtue  
No more will he crush her limbs  
Or dig into her dark breasts,  
    hands  
That lashed her flesh  
For lust, has filled his tomb.

A pariah in her land  
With constant warnings  
Where to walk, where to sit,  
Where to live, where to pray,  
Tilling the soil  
With rags and hunger for pay.

America—  
Too long have your scales  
Weighed her down.  
Too long has her life been held  
    cheap,  
Her womanhood stained.  
Too long have the prison walls  
    entombed her  
Casting their shadow  
Upon your freedom, oh America!

*(Mrs. Rosa Lee Ingram is the Negro mother who has been imprisoned for some years after a white man was killed while she and her sons were defending her from his attack.—Eds.)*

# BOOK REVIEWS



## CONVERSION NOVEL

By **BEN FIELD**

*The Assistant*, by Bernard Malamud.  
Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, New York.  
\$3.50.

"**T**HE ASSISTANT" tells the story of how a Jewish storekeeper, Morris Bober, befriends a derelict, an Italian youth, and is helped in turn by him. This leads the youth eventually to become a Jew.

The novel obviously is a serious one. The narrative in the serious novel is the threshold to its real content. What sheaf or bundle of truth does the author thresh at the door? To answer that we must become acquainted with the story.

Morris Bober runs a small delicatessen-grocery in an old section of Brooklyn. His life is bitter as warm cabbage. He cannot forget his son, Ephraim, who died because of an ear disease, cannot forget that his daughter Helen is unable to go to college because she has to work to help him out, cannot forget his Ida, who labors with him in the iron yoke of poverty. He rots away in a dump hole of a store, where the trickle of customers grows thinner and Morris no longer dreams of the buyer who will rescue him from the slow death which is his portion.

After a holdup in which Bober is brutally beaten, a stranger appears in

the neighborhood. He is a tall, seedy, needy youth with a broken nose. One morning as Morris, enfeebled by the beating, strains to pull his milk crates into the store, this youth appears out of nowhere to give him a hand. Thereafter he reappears mornings to help Morris, who feeds him.

The sorrowful-looking youth, whose name is Frank Alpine, gives various accounts of himself. He inquires about the holdup, declares that the gangsters deserve nothing short of death, and then out of gratitude, washes the windows of the store. Morris and Ida are frightened: they've never had their windows washed because they can not afford to pay a window-washer; they are further disturbed when Frank volunteers to work in the store for nothing, explaining that he is eager to get the experience of clerking. When he puts on an apron, he is told curtly by Morris to take it off. He leaves.

Morris misses milk and rolls from the orders left by milkman and baker. When he finds Frank asleep in the cellar, the young man confesses that hunger has driven him to the theft. Out of pity, Morris feeds him; and then, when Morris' wound opens and the storekeeper has to take to bed, Frank Alpine puts on the apron. He becomes the Assistant.

The store comes to life; business improves. After his recovery, Morris hires him to stay on at a pitifully low salary, which is all he can afford. The youth, who looked like a herring with its roe ripped out, seems to find him-



self now in healing water. He takes care of his appearance, hits it up with the customers, is invited to dinner by the Fusos, Morris Bober's tenants. Frank even shows an interest in Helen Bober.

In spite of the mother's suspicions and the coolness of the girl, Frank continues his pursuit. The girl, who is as lonely as he, meets him in the library, the movies; they go out for walks together. On the night that Helen is ready to give herself to him, Frank is caught stealing from the cash register; he breaks down before Morris, admits that he was one of the holdup men but denies that he had done the beating. Morris fires him.

The rejected and conscience-stricken young man continues to figure in the lives of the Bobers. Later that night he saves Helen from his partner in the holdup when that hoodlum tries to rape her. He is on hand to help save Morris, who is overcome by gas from a leaking radiator. Though he has found a job as a counterman working nights, he takes charge of the store during Morris' illness. After Morris' death, he hangs on in the store to help out the widow and her daughter.

The novel ends: "One day in April Frank went to the hospital and had himself circumcised. For a couple of

days he dragged himself around with a pain between his legs. The pain enraged and inspired him. After Pass-over he became a Jew."

**This story** of Frank Alpine—notice the symbolism in the name—is the story of a man's transformation and regeneration. The moral hulk, who had allowed himself to be drawn into a holdup in which Bober was beaten unconscious and who had found it easier to do so because Morris is a Jew, struggles to regain his self-respect, to get himself a job and become a useful, decent human being; he digs away to try to understand and kill the roots of his anti-Semitism. He endures, persists, suffers to win a place for himself in the store and in the hearts of Helen and her parents. Does he, however, succeed in winning the hearts of his readers?

Meyer Levin, the novelist, in the *Saturday Review* of June 15, praised *The Assistant* as a successful novel and a genuinely moving parable. But the moral and spiritual truth of the parable in this context can have meaning for us only if the experiences of the character are generalized so that they wake a responsive chord in us, and if the character is real enough to carry the burden of the message. Frank Alpine has eaten husks and lived with the swine, true; however, where the Prodigal Son, drawn simply and starkly and unerringly in a few lines, lives for us, his experience catching us like a fist under the heart, the hero of this novel is insubstantial and unconvincing, bookish and contrived—in one word, we don't believe in him and in his doings in spite of his creator's painstaking efforts.

This is not so because of Malamud's weaknesses as a depicter of character. All that one has to do is to contrast Morris with Frank to see what is

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wrong. From the first stroke to the last, there is nothing smeared, uncertain, ambiguous about the figure of the storekeeper: we recognize without hesitancy the cornered, hard-working, honest, gentle and weak Jew. As Meyer Levin points out, he reminds us of Albert Halper's father, the immigrant Jewish storekeeper of Chicago, one of the most heartily created of American Jewish characters to emerge in the mainstream of the American Jewish novel.

Moreover, it must be added that it is not only Bober who is vividly and brilliantly drawn for us, the minor characters are also real—Marcus, the salesman, who is dying of cancer; Karp, the liquor dealer; Breitbart, the bulb peddler who goes from store to store lugging two large carfons tied together with clothesline.

Can it be then that Malamud is successful with his Jewish characters and less so with his non-Jews? In his first novel, *The Natural*, a savagely satirical story of baseball in the tradition of Ring Lardner, alive at the same time with an original fantasy and poetry, Malamud does not muff Roy Hobbs or any other character the way he does Frank Alpine.

**National Committee, CPUSA,  
Passes Resolution on USSR  
Jews**

**T**HE 60-member National Committee of the Communist Party on June 20 passed a resolution on the Jews of the USSR which is substantially the same as that passed by the New York State convention of the party (text in JEWISH LIFE, May).

*If we are* to have a believable regeneration and conversion, we must have an authentic Frank, a strong one eventually, not a man who sticks to us like a bean to a wall. There is persistence and doggedness in Frank, like that of the horseleech, but persistence and doggedness are not necessarily strength. In his repeated declarations that he is a good man who needs only the right spin of the coin of his destiny, there is something sniveling and jellylike. We wonder about his part in the hold-up and the shaking of his hands while his accomplice beats Morris unconscious. We may be willing to overlook his climbing up the shaftway to see Helen Bober take a bath; after all, many men in contemporary fiction are born with keyholes in their eyes in place of pupils. But what are we to think of his behavior in the park where, having beaten off the attempted rape by his former partner, he takes the girl with whom he is supposed to be in love, her clothes torn and she in a state of shock, and violates her?

This inconsistency in Frank springs from the novel's aim, which is to show his conversion to Judaism willy nilly. Without his forcing of Helen, she would not have cried out in her revulsion, "Dog, uncircumcised Dog!" And this, by the way, is no more in keeping with her character than her remark to Frank when they are on their way to the movies, "Don't forget I am a Jew." "So what?" asks Frank, and yet it does mean something to him because he does undergo circumcision.

What makes it even more difficult to swallow Frank is that on his way to conversion he lugs along St. Francis and the theme of suffering. In other words, we have here a Judeo-Christian mishmash, a marriage performed by book in which irreconcilable elements in both religions are flung together.

What Frank seems to remember most fondly of his Catholic upbringing is the figure of St. Francis of Assisi. One of his first acts when he appears in Brooklyn is his discovery of a picture of St. Francis in a magazine in the neighborhood candy store. He speaks of St. Francis with breathless adoration. He goes to the library to draw out a book about St. Francis. And just before the end of the novel he has a "pleasant thought" seeing St. Francis come out of the woods in his brown rags, scrawny birds flying around his head, to get Helen to take a wooden rose which Frank has carved for her and which she has spurned; the saint turning the wooden rose into a flower and addressing Helen, "Little sister, here is your little sister the rose."

**The theme** of suffering is repeated an insufferable number of times in the novel. A conversation between Morris and Frank, when they are skinning potatoes for salad, begins with an attempt by Frank to get Morris to explain what a Jew is, and it ends with Frank asking why Jews "suffer so damn much." Morris answers they suffer because they are Jews, they suffer for the law. "I suffer for you," he says to Frank, "and you suffer for me." This theme of suffering is also taken up by the rabbi at the funeral services during his eulogy of Morris whom he speaks of as if Morris were another spineless Bontche Shweig. "He suffered, he endured, but with hope." And Frank, who is present at the services, is led to reflect as the mourners file out of the chapel that "suffering is like a piece of goods. I bet the Jews could make a suit of clothes out of it."

This theme of suffering has the nails of the cross in it. It takes the rose and turns it into something wooden, contrived. It gives us a one-sided, distorted, untrue picture of the Jew. Fur-

thermore, it has the element of anti-Semitism, of repugnance to the Jew, which Frank apparently never entirely overcomes, for he is constantly harping on it. What understanding of the Jew is Frank left with? But the author does get him circumcised. In such a case, if the skin had been removed from another part of the body, it would have meant as much.

No, Bernard Malamud has not threshed his little bundle or sheaf successfully. Far from it. There is straw, there is dust and there is little grain.

Let Frank Alpine have the last word. One evening as he and Helen leave the library together, he asks her what book she has in her hand.

"*The Idiot*. Do you know it?"

"No, what is it about?"

"It is a novel."

"I'd rather read the truth," he says.

### *Anne Friedlander Resigns*

**WE** regret to report that our manager, Anne Friedlander, has resigned from *JEWISH LIFE* to take a job in private industry. The magazine will miss her sorely and the Editorial Board expresses its great appreciation of her able, devoted services. However, she will continue as one of the magazine's advocates.

Miss Friedlander's column, "Observation Post," will be resumed shortly.

Good luck, Anne!

## RABBI YEROCHEM-BER

(Continued from page 14)

rest of his body was badly bruised.

Suspended between life and death, he saw the pages of his life turn before his eyes, from his first childish gaze out of the cradle to the last moment before his consciousness was extinguished. A thousand times his life passed in review. As he lay in wracking pain, he sought in a thousand ways to understand the Hand of God.

If he were really a heretic then what purpose would be served by *Koras Yomim*—by the cutting down of his days? If Fear and Submission—and Subjugation—were forced upon him by Divine vengeance and vindictiveness, what would be the worth of such Faith? If Faith does not flow out of itself like a clear stream, out of his own deep-rooted belief that the Almighty's Creation is founded on the deepest wisdom and the highest Justice—then this is no Faith at all!

These were questions not easily answered. Once, when his pain was beyond human endurance, he felt that the time had come for *vidui*, for last confession. But to what should he confess?

He had nothing to confess—nothing to retreat from. In all his pain he maintained his position. It was a unique confession. With deep reverence for each word, his lips weakly murmured each syllable, and his heart wept. . . .

"Lord of the Universe, after all the ways in which I have tried to understand You, I cannot beat my breast in guilt. . . . I cannot recant one thought. One more step backward and in my last moments I will become a *Koifer B'ikor*. In my last moments I stand before You with my soul revealed.

In my last confession I cannot beg forgiveness . . . or mercy. To die this way will be . . . easier. . . ."

Then he lost consciousness.

**A miracle occurred.** Contrary to everyone's expectation, Yerochem-Ber's heart pulled through. After days of hanging between life and death, he began to improve. His ribs mended, his injuries healed, the bones in his leg grew together. He left the hospital on crutches, pale, emaciated, feeble, but with strength enough to live. There could be no thought, for a long time, of going back to work on the river.

When he returned to the island and could find nothing to do, Elya Magnus, Shamira's manager, took him into his home and gave him the same room which had housed the Holy Ark and served as the first synagogue on the island. It was not easy for Yerochem-Ber to stay at Elya's while doing nothing to earn his keep. Hobbling around on his crutches, unable to work and without a residence certificate, he began to think of going back to Tshashnik. But there was no *melamed* on Zvirnholm at that time and no one to turn to for guidance in religious matters. Elya knew that Yerochem-Ber had a rabbi's degree and fitted the needs of the Jews on the island. Therefore he suggested that Yerochem-Ber stay on with them—as *melamed*—to teach the children.

Yerochem-Ber could not make up his mind. What did he know about teaching children? He had never done it. But thinking it through, he realized that teaching children was creative work of a high degree. He decided to stay.

**Zalman Sosna** was one of Shamira's clerks. During the summer he worked at the lumber yard on the island, and

wintertime, when they were felling the trees, he worked in the forests. He was a relative of Shamira's. He was in his forties, around the same age as Yerochem-Ber. He and his wife Leah had two children, both of whom were pupils at Rebbe Yerochem-Ber's *heder*. Leah was much younger than Zalman and very pretty. Whenever she came to pay the *heder* fees, Yerochem-Ber could not take his eyes off her. There was something about her that reminded him of his Hannah.

Zalman Sosna was tall and strong as a lion. His strength was like an aura about him and he was a dangerous man to cross. He had a good head and knew Torah but he didn't hold with it. It was the forest that drew him, the timber and the Dvina. There was no one better than he at figures. He did all his sums in his head and never made a mistake.

On the Sabbath when Zalman's oldest son was *Bar-Mitzvah* (the boy read his *maftir* outstandingly), Zalman invited everyone to his home for *lakekh un bramfn* (whiskey and cake). He seated Yerochem-Ber opposite him at the table. Yerochem-Ber now walked without crutches but the limp in his right leg stayed with him as a reminder of the accident.

They drank and ate and drank again. Leah, Zalman's wife, never stopped bringing things to the table: cake and whiskey and cookies and preserves which she herself had prepared. When Zalman Sosna after a dozen *l'chayims* became somewhat mellow, he arose with a goblet in his hand and spoke directly to Yerochem-Ber.

"Yerochem-Ber! These two kids here"—and he waved his big hand at his two sons—"they're all I have! Three others refused to stay! They were like all the rest of the Shamiras—high and mighty! They came into our little world, took one look and didn't



like what they saw! Yerochem-Ber, you know that I am not a bad scholar myself; I, too, have read the tiny letters at the bottom of the page! But I had no love for that kind of learning, until—until I heard you teaching the children. Elya was a wise man when he kept you from going back to Tshashnik! *Your* way is the right way to teach children! Grass and trees, river and forest, bread and work! Human creation! Labor, work—everything is created by man's two hands! Man is created in the image of God, so he should always hold his head high! And only by his labor can he hold his head high! *L'chayim*, Yerochem-Ber, *l'chayim*, everybody!"

His Leah, shorter than he, but sturdy, was dressed in her best. Her black dress, draped around her body, reached down to her high-heeled shoes which buttoned on the side. A red blouse covered her high, full bosom and ended in a little collar which nestled around her white throat. Her black hair was combed upward to make her look taller, as though she wanted to raise herself up to her Zalman. In a little white apron, small enough so that it did not cover her holiday attire, she served her guests pleasantly, her eyes and dimples laughing as she tossed a cheerful word to everyone; but always her eyes came back to her tall, broad Zalman and

his shock of blond hair which stuck up on his hatless head. She glowed at his words and even at his drinking, because in his festive mellowness she saw the Zalman whom she had loved and who was so close and dear to her. . . .

Zalman Sosna kept on talking and pouring fresh drinks and drinking *Pchayim* with all the guests. When they had had more than enough, Zalman again lifted his cup to Yerochem-Ber:

"Yerochem-Ber! The holidays are over. The island and the river are bare of lumber and like an animal I am going back into the woods! We need new rafts, fresh timber! The saws need logs to saw and the axes need wood to chop! We need bread—provisions for the entire year, for ourselves, for everybody! I leave my two kids with you—make *men* out of them—people with something to them, *our* kind of people!"

Yerochem-Ber had drunk very little. He stared at Zalman and with every word he saw deeper and deeper into Zalman's heart. During the years that Yerochem-Ber had worked around the lumber industry he had seen Zalman in the woods, on the shore, on the river, but he had never seen him as clearly as he was seeing him now. He had heard that Zalman was an astute scholar but he had not known that Zalman's knowledge paralleled his own. But the words, "I leave you my two kids—make something of them!" lay heavy on his heart. In those words of Zalman's there was a lack of confidence in himself in relation to his children. And in his words "Make real people of them—*our* kind of people," there was something even more distressing.

He was in a very depressed mood when he left the *Bar Mitzvah* party.

**Zalman Sosna rode off** to the forest in the midst of the torrential autumn rains. But he did not return. During the first snowstorm he was struck by a falling tree and killed. He was buried in a town 25 versts from the forest in which he died.

The grim news came in a letter from one of the other clerks in the woods: that Zalman Sosna was buried according to the religion of Israel—by the rabbi of the town, that the children should be informed to say *Kaddish* and his wife—that she was a widow.

The news was a blow for everyone on the island, but the shock was greatest for Leah. She did not hear or understand what was being said to her. She seemed to have gone out of her mind. She sat in one place and stared petrified into space. The women of the island tried to console her but could not penetrate her consciousness with words. She was not aware even of her children, who wandered about listlessly. For days she did not touch a morsel of food. Her face became gray, tight, blank, impossible to recognize. She was no longer a human being, but a lifeless shadow. . . .

Yerochem-Ber understood now why Zalman's words had weighed so heavily upon him: "I leave you my two kids—make something of them!" Zalman himself had not known what lay in his words. Yerochem-Ber felt that Zalman had placed a grave responsibility upon him for his children.

But more than anything else, the children now needed a mother. There was nothing left to do but to pull Leah out of her stupor. Every day after *heder* he took the two boys home. The neighbors prepared meals for the children and tried to get her to eat something. Yerochem-Ber sat at the table opposite her and tried to console her. He saw that she did not even hear him, but he continued. With examples



from life and with stories he tried to convince her that nothing in the world ceases completely after death, that there was no such thing as total death. Once a man has lived, he can never die, because living is creation. Zalman lived on in everything which his work had created, and in the future labors of his sons. Someone's eternal light lives on in everything and everybody. . . . She was worlds away, staring with glazed eyes at a point in space, but he went on as though she were listening to every word. He strung together his little tales which began at unrelated points and always ended in the same place: that one had to live, to find the strength to go on living, because no one lived for himself alone. Living means responsibility to others, just as everyone around us is responsible to us, whether they know it or not.

Week after week he sat and talked to her, and she did not hear him. But gradually his words began to penetrate and slowly she came to her senses.

The moment she was released from her shock, she became so seriously ill that they gave up hope for her. Slowly, however, she recovered from this affliction, too, and finally became a mother to her children again.

Once, when she came to his *heder* to pay him, Yerochem-Ber asked her to sit down and rest. It was after Shavuoth and the children, between classes, were playing outdoors. Yerochem-Ber told her what he had lived through when his wife and children died. She was the only one to whom he had ever confided these difficult and indelible experiences. He felt a peculiar need to pour out what was stored up in his heart and he felt that in her he had found the person who would understand. She did not understand everything; much of what he

told her was too complicated for her to comprehend. But his experience was so like hers, that she felt he was the only one who really understood her tragedy. Each of them had reacted to tragedy in a different way but their lives had foundered on the same submerged rocks.

And so, when Elya's wife tried—a year after Zalman's death—to bring Leah and Yerochem-Ber together, it seemed a natural thing and they were married. After the wedding, Yerochem-Ber moved the *heder* to Zalman Sosna's home.

With a wife and two children, he found his earning skimpy indeed and Yerochem-Ber wanted to give up the *heder* and go back to the river. He limped slightly but felt that he was strong enough for the log-driving and the river-boats and the rafts. But no one wanted to hire a lame worker. Thus he was forced to submit, against his wishes, and stay on as a *melamed* in the *heder* for the rest of his days.

By the time their Hayimke was born, Yerochem-Ber and Leah had grown deeply attached to each other. The second marriage served as a profound healer for the wounds and wreckage of their lives.

**When his teaching hours** were over, Yerochem-Ber, his hands behind his back, used to limp through Shamira's lumber yard. The work would be in full swing. Horses dragged the logs on skid-chains out of the river onto wooden rails; then they were stacked row on row onto huge piles; woodcutters were cutting and shaping the logs into ships-masts, telegraph poles, rafters and sleepers (for railways). In other corners they were packing cordwood and loading it onto barges that stood along the water's edge. The river was full of loggers and tug-boats hauling barges and rafts to the ships

in the harbor.

Yerochem-Ber would walk through all the bustle, looking at everything seriously and intently. Even now he was still seeking the answer to the question of Labor and Creation. If Creation was God's image in Man, then everything around was Creation, Creation of every kind! Creation from early dawn to the setting of the sun! Why, then, all the accompanying poverty? Why was all this Creation without blessing and without reward? Empty boats docked, were loaded up and sailed away. But for the creators there was not even enough left to hammer up a stall, let alone something more. Creation here was transformed into a curse!

Looking intently at everything about him and thinking the whole thing through, he came to a very painful conclusion: the individual, by his individual creation, would not only never create a paradise here on earth, but not even a little world for himself! This realization, however, brought him by degrees to a second conclusion: that creation would bring both blessing and reward only at such a time that the individual would contribute his creation to the common good of society and society—and only society—would be able, by using the creation of every individual, to create the Paradise on earth and join both worlds together. This was now remarkably clear to him.

But how to bring this about, that the individual would voluntarily give his creation to society; and how and from where such a society would arise, which would be willing and prepared to assemble the creation of all the individuals and from it build a Paradise on earth—that he could not see. Here his thoughts were cut short and could go no further. Here the heavens came down like the lowering of a curtain

toward earth, and refused to go up again. He could not discover how to spin his thoughts further. But one thing was clear to him and of this he was certain: that all this could be accomplished only "*Im Kol Hoamim*"—"with all the nations"—and on the broad foundations of "*Veohavto L'ri-amo Comaicho*"—"thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

In tales and parables he tried to tell this story in the synagogue between *Mincha* and *Maariv*. The tales were well received but they were not understood. He did not wonder at this. Actually they were unfinished. How could people understand them when their inner structure was not clear to him either and he did not know himself how to finish them?

He could not find the means within his own powers to bring clarity into this matter, and this depressed him. But he hoped and believed that sooner or later someone would come along who would know much more than he and see further than he and be able to light up what had remained dark and obscure for him.

In order to pave the way for this person who would come in the future, he directed all his stories to one logical conclusion: that Creation must be understood in the plural sense and for the common welfare. Only in that kind of Creation lies God's blessing and God's reward in this world.

When the individual would place his creation in the domain of "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," only then will the image of the Lord disclose itself in him and he will receive the full reward for his creation.

And from the moment that Yerochem-Ber realized all this so clearly, he began to teach the children of his *heder* along that very path.

(Translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld.)

# 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.*

## Language and Jewish Culture

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Thanks are due Eve Merriam (and JL) for her poem, "The Words and Music of My Mother" [July issue]. Miss Merriam has captured what many of our generation have come to feel about our parents. Out of fear of getting maudlin some of us often hesitate to express our thoughts about the human heroism of our immigrant mothers and fathers, their selflessness in favor of their children (us)—"leisure was her secret lover; she enjoyed their quick trysts to the full, unbegrudged his many other obligations." Yes, we have come to expect as matter-of-course, things which they knew only as luxuries.

I believe credit is due JEWISH LIFE on another score too. The debate around Jewish culture in the Soviet Union is far from finished; it is just getting started, and in my opinion, the reason it took so long to get off the ground was the failure of the disputants to grapple with the main point: Is it possible—or likely—that the Jewish group (outside of Israel) will continue as a distinct group under Socialism *after its linguistic identifying marks have disappeared*. I see that this issue is now being gingerly raised in various places. In this respect, I be-

lieve that the Mirski article [July and August issues] and the observations of Morris Schappes [June issue] are complementary.

Over a year ago in a letter to your magazine I asked the question: how explain the absence of a Russian-Jewish culture in the Soviet Union as contrasted to the appearance of an English-Jewish culture in the U.S.? It was suggested by some people that this was a mechanical application of one set of conditions in one country to another country with entirely different conditions. But I asked this question because I thought that a sincere attempt to answer it would come face to face with the matter of the "official" Soviet attitude to the phenomenon of Jewish "peoplehood"—the conscious desire of Jews for continued identity with a Jewish group, no matter by what name you called it. (The language spoken by Jews is only one aspect of this question.)

Now I see that Mr. Schappes has noted the American aspect of this phenomenon. "But it is noteworthy that this 'integration' of Jews in American life has *not* led to the disintegration of the Jewish community or of Jewish organized life, has not led to a lack of interest in Jewish affairs, problems or culture. On the contrary. . . ." In looking for reasons for this phenomenon,

would like to hear, for instance, what Mr. Schappes suggests, among other things, "the American democratic tradition . . . (which) encourages voluntary organization along national group lines. . . ." Wherein does this differ from the Russian experience, which once gave generous government support to this "organization along national group lines"?

Is the difference *all* due to the "administrative pressure on the Jewish people," as Mr. Mirski suggests? As he puts it: "A feeling arose among the Jewish population to stay away—the further the better—from this (Jewish cultural and social) activity, from Jewish communal leaders, Jewish teachers, etc." Whence arose this "administrative pressure?" Was *this* all due to someone's "vindictiveness," "backward prejudices" and similar highly personal reasons, or did it stem from a basic conception which had had currency among Russian Marxists—including Russian Jewish Marxists—for a long time, even during the period of the flowering of Yiddish-Jewish culture in the Soviet Union?

I note too that a *Morning Freiheit* editorial of July 21 also tries to get to the root of the matter. "In our opinion one of the main sources of the errors (of various Soviet leaders) is that they do not meet the question of the *Jewish people*. . . . One other aspect must be pointed out: *language assimilation does not yet signify assimilation*. American Jews, who do not speak Yiddish, are greatly interested in Jewish problems, which should be and are dealt with in the language which they understand."

Was this true of the younger, non-Yiddish speaking Jews in the Soviet Union or are we to believe that such an interest disappeared immediately after the Soviet revolution? This question is still unanswered for me and I

would like to hear, for instance, what is happening to the younger Jews in Rumania or Yugoslavia.

I believe that these, too, are subjects which "need extensive study" by progressive American Jews.

MAX ROSENFELD

Philadelphia

**Viva Eve Merriam!**

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Please tear out the sheets of Eve Merriam's poem in the July issue, "The Words and Music of My Mother" and send them to me. I want to send the poem for publication in China. It is a fine piece.

WALTER LOWENFELS

Mays Landing, N. J.

**Stratford "Merchant of Venice"**

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Here are my reactions to *The Merchant of Venice* performed at Stratford (Conn.).

I feel that regardless of how brilliant the performance may be, how free from caricature the role of Shylock be portrayed, in my opinion, *The Merchant of Venice* should not be presented in the theater today. It feeds anti-Semitism where it exists and arouses it where it does not.

The court scene left me so choked up with emotion that the last act seemed trite and offensive. As if, now that the despised, dehumanized Jew had been disposed of, amid the jeers of both the court and spectators and sections of the Stratford audience, the business of comedy could be resumed. It was like dancing on a person's grave.

It could be argued that in the previous scenes Shakespeare had shown Shylock as a human being, defiled, driven to seek revenge as any wronged person might. This does not lessen the

devastating contrast between the generous Antonio, willing to give his life for payment of his friend's debt, and the greedy, grasping Jew, despised not only by the Christians but by his own daughter and his own servant—willing to embrace the religion of his hated persecutors to save his own life.

Not for a moment are we permitted to forget that this hated man is a Jew.

In a future world free from the poison of anti-Semitism, the play can serve as a clinical study of a diseased society. It has no place in today's theater.

New York City

S.C.

### **Ideas for Jewish Journalism**

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

I feel there is no *continuous* system of educating and getting things done

by American-born Jews. Not enough about Jewish people's struggle for progress in the USA, past and present.

Example—Dr. Jonas Salk's background, family life, education, etc., and how he helped all humanity. There are hundreds of such people, past and present, that made and make life better, in the arts, sciences, music, etc. Please don't forget the women. Israel *must* be the project of people of other lands.

The organizations of Christian-Jewish brotherhood should be asked to give special recognition for the best program. We should try to get parochial schools to adopt the same.

Stage programs should be asked to include Israel on the program (Radio City, etc.). We should sponsor a picture-taking project of Jewish life past and present. (Prizes should be given—I will contribute toward this.) Have a Jew-of-the-month column about someone who came into the news with something special beyond the call of duty.

Brooklyn

M. M.

### ***Appreciation***

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Enclosed is my check for \$36 for my year's sustaining contribution.

I admire your paper—or magazine—very much; it adds to the hopes for peace in the world and surely Israel could do much to relieve tensions and aid peace if she followed some of your analyses and reasoning.

If one only had the money to support such papers as one would like—but now there are many other causes such as disarmament and others.

E. B.

Chicago

**To Our Beloved**  
**Husband and Father**  
**WILLIAM**  
**NEWMAN**  
**1899 - 1956**  
**You are always with**  
**us, Willie dear**  
**ANNA and the CHILDREN**

SEPTEMBER, 1957

## FROM THE FOUR CORNERS

### AT HOME

**Rabbi G. George Fox**, columnist for the Chicago *Sentinel*, called attention (June 27) to the campaign of the British press against Gen. Hans Speidel as a NATO commander because of his nazi record. "I wonder," adds Rabbi Fox, "whether the United States will join it (the campaign). Together they could probably eject him (Speidel) from office."

**81 outstanding** labor leaders, scientists, churchmen and others joined in a telegram in June to President Eisenhower urging an atom testing ban. Labor leaders Walter Reuther, James Carey and Joseph E. Beirne were among the signers, as were Philip Schiff, Washington representative of the Jewish Welfare Board, and Rabbi Manfred Swarensky, of Madison, Wis.

**An agreement** was signed by the United Automobile Workers and the National Urban League to provide machinery to deal with complaints of discrimination in all plants in which the UAW has collective bargaining agreements, it was announced on July 10. About 200,000 Negro workers are affected by the agreement.

**San Francisco** will probably be the first major city in California to ban racial and religious discrimination. After an expected approval of the bill by the mayor, the city's Board of Su-

pervisors will appoint a seven-member commission to execute the law. The law would have no penalty but provides injunctive relief against alleged discrimination.

**Segregationist** shenanigans . . . Rabbi Yaakov Rosenberg, spiritual leader of a Miami Conservative synagogue, one of the largest in the South, was refused accommodation early in July at two motels in Pompano Beach, Fla., and was told at a third that no facilities would be available until Sept. (*Jewish Floridian*, July 12). . . . Segregationist John Kasper told newsmen during the jury selection for his trial in Knoxville, Tenn., for obstructing desegregation, that he had instructed his lawyer not to accept Jews on the jury. "I'd have a better chance," said Kasper, "with a Negro than a Jew." . . . A minister identified as being from central Florida, at a march of 300 robed Klansmen, in Lakeland, Fla., at the end of June, attacked the Supreme Court, Negroes and Jews. Said he: "I have no war with the Jews—but they too should be segregated."

**Alex Miller**, national Anti-Defamation League community services director, told Denver ADL leaders in mid-July that they should "work patiently with our own Jewish people to fight prejudice among ourselves." He had in mind not only the need for Southern Jews, but also Northern Jews, to combat segregation.



## ABROAD

**Pope Pius XII** condemned anti-Semitism as a "violation of fundamental rights inherent in a human person" in a speech to representatives of the American Jewish Committee in the Vatican on June 28.

**An attack** in the Jewish press following a N. Y. *Times* article on July 4 by Will Lissner on newly-elected Soviet Communist Party Presidium member Frol R. Kozlov was exposed as without foundation. Lissner charged that Kozlov had played "an appreciable role in the setting of the 'doctors plot'" in 1953 because of an article about "Jewish bourgeois nationalists." The *Morning Freiheit* revealed (July 11) that the article in question does not mention the words Jew, Zionist or bourgeois. In a telephone conversation with *Daily Worker* Foreign Editor Joseph Clark, Lissner admitted that "his article must have confused two Koslovs" and that furthermore, the paragraph containing the charge had not been written by him but was inserted by another (*Daily Worker*, July 11).

**Prof. M. S. Vovsi**, one of the doctors accused in the fake Moscow "doctors plot," was awarded the Order of Lenin on July 11 on his 60th birthday for his work in medicine, science and education.

**News from Poland.** . . . 5,000 more Jews are expected to be repatriated from the Soviet Union to Poland, which will bring the total to 11,000. . . . The Warsaw Yiddish *Folksh-Tsimme* now publishes a supplement

in Polish once a week. The first issue of the supplement reports that of the 70,000 Jews in Poland in 1956, 52 per cent were engaged in heavy industry and 12 per cent were individual craftsmen. . . . 890,000 zlotys were allocated in July by the Polish government for the renovation of the Warsaw Ghetto Monument, which was unveiled in 1948. . . . An extension of the Jewish school system in Poland was announced early in July. Jewish boarding schools are to be set up for the first time, new Jewish schools are to be opened in several localities and more Jewish textbooks are to be published.

**British Labor** MP Maurice Ohrbach reported in July that he had received a threatening letter on Ku Klux Klan stationery postmarked Waco, Texas, because of his denunciation of racial discrimination in industry. British police are investigating.

**A film** about anti-Semitism in West Germany is being produced in East Germany, reported *Variety*, U.S. entertainment industry magazine, in its July 17 issue.

**Resurgent neo-nazi** activity in West Germany is reported in a feature article in the London *Jewish Chronicle* (July 5). The article concludes, "Truly the world should take heed. The nazi fanfares are again blaring."

**The Jewish** population of Canada is now 241,000, of whom 100,000 are in metropolitan Montreal, reported the Canadian Jewish Congress early in July.

L. H.

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