

DECEMBER 1949 • 20¢

Jewish Life

ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE MORNING FREIHEIT ASSOCIATION

LESSONS IN RESISTANCE

I: GERMAN JEWRY UNDER HITLER *by Louis Harap*

ORGANIZING AMERICAN JEWISH YOUTH: I ◀ *by David Abrams*

THE NEW YOUTH IN POLAND ◀ *by Hershl Hartman*

THE JEWISH FARMER ◀ *by Ben Field*

YIDDISH GRAMMAR IN ENGLISH ◀ *by Morris U. Schappes*

From the Four Corners

Edited by Louis Harap

AT HOME

WARNING THAT the Westchester Grand Jury "investigating" the Peekskill riots plans to bring in indictments against victims of fascist attacks, have appeared. Drew Pearson predicted in his October 30th broadcast that novelist Howard Fast would be indicted. Fast has not been called as a witness. Word has trickled through that questions asked of witnesses try to incriminate the concert-goers. Witnesses have been shown pictures of the people's guards but none of the rock-throwers and have been asked if they were members of progressive organizations. "The 'inquiry' now taking place in Peekskill," said a statement of the Civil Rights Congress on October 4, "has no more intention of finding the real culprits in Peekskill than a Southern judge has of giving a Negro a fair trial." . . . A public statement by James H. Madole, of Beacon, N. Y., and a leader of a nazi-type "National Renaissance Party," boasted on October 30 in Philadelphia that he had "helped organize" the Peekskill attack. "I was very proud to have had a part in organizing it," he said at a hate-rally in Philadelphia. "It was 3,000 veterans against 12,000 Jews . . . and 3,000 veterans against 12,000 Jews is enough." . . . Following city-wide protests, the Philadelphia chairman of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on October 13 publicly rescinded an order to picket a Paul Robeson concert in the city. A citizen's committee of 1,000 had been formed to co-sponsor the concert along with the Council on African Affairs.

EIGHT NEGROES joined the Hendrix family as guests for brief periods of residents of Stuyvesant Town in October. The Committee to End Discrimination at Stuyvesant Town plans to continue indefinitely this plan of entertaining Negro guests for brief periods.

THE POLICE DEPARTMENT of St. Louis has ordered eliminated all nationality and religious designation from its criminal identification records, it was learned in October. Jews and Italians, among others, had been listed separately from "white Americans." Revision of the system followed widespread protests. No change in separate identification of Negroes and whites has been made.

"LITTLE BLACK SAMBO," a white chauvinistic juvenile story, has been removed from the approved lists of textbooks in the New York City schools, it was discovered in late October. However, other books containing offensive material remain on the approved list.

REV. CHARLES E. COUGHLIN, fascist radio priest of the thirties, popped up in the news on November 2. Dr. Bernard F. Garipey, of Royal Oak, Mich., who was on trial for income tax evasion, stated that Coughlin has given him \$50,000 in 1942, \$9,000 in 1943 and \$9,000 in 1944 "to encourage him to go back to his wife." On the witness stand Coughlin denied having given any money to Dr. Garipey.

MILLIONAIRE PLANTER AND OILMAN Judge George W. Armstrong offered Jefferson Military College near Natchez, Miss., a \$50,000,000 endowment in October on condition that the school "teach and disseminate through every medium possible the true principles of Jeffersonian democracy and the Constitution, Christianity and the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin American races." Another condition was the reduction of the school's board of trustees from 12 to five, three to be named by Armstrong

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JEWISH LIFE is devoted to the scientific study of the political, economic, cultural and social development of the Jewish people, and to the militant struggle for equality and democracy. It carries on a consistent struggle against anti-Semitism and all other forms of discrimination in the United States. It fights for the building up of a progressive Jewish life in our country and throughout the world. It gives maximum support to the development of Jewish communities where they exist. It recognizes that the chief strength of the Jewish people lies in an alliance with the progressive forces of the world, particularly labor, and with the masses of the oppressed peoples.

THE EDITORS.

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and two by the retiring trustees. The trustees named by him are his son, A. J. Armstrong, Gen. George Van Horn Mosely (forced to retire from the army in 1938 because of his fascist views) and United States Attorney Joseph E. Brown. Two Natchez men were named by the outgoing board. Another condition of acceptance was that the school change its charter to exclude as instructors and employees "communists or persons with communist connections and any person of African or Asiatic origin." Further, the "faculty and student body will be primarily constituted of persons of Anglo-Saxon or Latin American origin and of the Christian faith" and "advocates of free enterprise." Armstrong has been helping to finance Gerald L. K. Smith for some time and published anti-Semitic pamphlets. On October 27,

three trustees announced that they would not change the charter to require teaching of racial superiority, although they reaffirmed the policy of excluding Negroes. It was reported that Southern Methodist University had a few months earlier rejected an offer of \$5,000,000 from Armstrong to bar Jewish students.

"LIBERAL" SENATOR Paul H. Douglas of Illinois, who has a large German constituency, prepared some amendments to the DP Act before the Senate adjourned, which, while they liberalized the act, nevertheless retained the provisions for admitting "Volksdeutsche," non-German citizens of German origin who were part of Hitler's fifth column in Europe.

(Continued on page 32)

FROM MONTH TO MONTH

VERDICT AND VICTORY

THE conviction of the 11 communist leaders for advocacy of Marxism-Leninism raises the struggle for the preservation of American democracy—and we mean this in the literal sense—into a new and more dangerous phase. The perfunctory nature of the jury's disposition of the case was itself a danger signal. But the outcome was hardly surprising, in view of the pitch of public hysteria and the outrageously biased conduct of the trial by Judge Harold Medina. Nor was the savage vindictiveness of this judge's sentence of the defendants, the unprecedented "contempt" judgments on the defense attorneys or refusal of bail unexpected. More than all this was Medina's cavalier dismissal of the "clear and present danger" doctrine and his extension of it to the police state doctrine of the criminality of advocating anything that "ultimately" might prove dangerous, a damaging blow at constitutional guarantees. If these profoundly anti-democratic acts of Medina are allowed to stand, the slide into fascism will be accelerated, perhaps beyond the point where the brakes can be applied.

But Medina and the Department of Justice promptly discovered that there's a lot of life left in American democracy. The verdict and its accompaniments were greeted on all sides with shamefaced mutterings of the doubtful constitutionality of the conviction and of the Smith Act. Leading newspapers all over the country have editorialized on the dubious constitutionality of the Smith Act. So insistent were these doubts, that Attorney General Howard McGrath was forced to make an admission that the government had never before made. He was forced to instruct the prosecution to grant that doubt existed as to the constitutionality of the act. This occurred when the defense appealed the denial of bail to the Circuit Court of Appeals on November 1. The granting of bail was therefore mandatory and the 11 are now free to work on their appeal. In addition the contempt sentences of the defense attorneys were stayed until December 12, when the appeal will be considered.

The granting of bail to the 11 was an important victory for democratic America. Many courageous Americans in all walks of life and of many political persuasions spoke up firmly in those few crucial days during which the fascist-like denial of bail threatened to carry the disintegration of the democratic process to the lowest point in our history.

The threat to democracy was grave. How grave, Jews especially should be aware. It should not now be necessary—but unfortunately it remains so in too many quarters—to remind Jews that their destiny is immediately tied to

that of democracy. Where democracy disintegrates, there the Jewish people in our time suffer as severely as any group. It was therefore a welcome and refreshing fact that a number of Jewish leaders spoke out in no uncertain terms against the denial of bail and against the conviction itself. From Los Angeles, where 500 delegates to the Pacific Coast Conference of the American Jewish Congress demanded bail for the 11, to Rabbis Jacob Weinstein and David Graubart of Chicago, to Rabbi Nathan Colish of Houston, Texas, to several New York and New Jersey rabbis, to the annual convention of the New England Region of the Labor Zionist organization, the outrageous flouting of elementary justice involved in the denial of bail, was protested. The Jewish and non-Jewish groundswell of protest was echoed by the fine and unanimous decision of the Circuit Court justices to grant bail and thus, at least temporarily, to check the precipitous descent into the police state.

But one cannot fail to be deeply disturbed by the gaping omissions in the roster of Jews who protested. None of the large, influential Jewish organizations stirred. Where were the national office of the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish War Veterans, to name only those organizations whose purpose is "defense" of the Jewish people? The truth must be stated clearly and candidly: their silence can only help those who are in the final analysis enemies of the Jewish people. Resort must in this case be made to the Jewish masses. If Jewish "leaders" do not respond to the dangers that confront democracy and therefore the Jewish people, the masses must force action from below. Everywhere the Jewish people should be organized to compel their so-called leaders to lend their voice to the chorus of protest against the attempt to foist fascism on America.

The tremendous victory won by the granting of bail, however, should lead no one into complacency. On the contrary, it should be the signal for intensified efforts to awaken the slumbering American people to the precarious state of our democratic form of government. For only the people can save it. Reliance on the courts alone is a dangerous delusion. There is one—and only one—assurance that the bi-partisan attempt to undermine the constitution will be stopped. That is an aroused American people. From every corner of the country the masses of America must call a halt to the drive to destroy freedom of thought and assembly and constitutional guarantees by a final dismissal of the indictment and the conviction of the 11.

MEANING OF THE ELECTION

THE recently concluded elections in New York have once again given clear indication that the overwhelming majority of the electorate have a deep concern for the future of democracy and are fearful of and will express themselves in categorical fashion against any individual or party that seeks to win power on the basis of an outspoken reactionary program.

The results of the elections speak for themselves. Just as the people were frightened at the threat of the ultra-reactionary trend represented by Thomas E. Dewey in the 1948 presidential election and voted to keep Harry Truman, so they rejected the anti-Semitic and "anti-welfare state" platform of John Foster Dulles and voted in Herbert H. Lehman as senator for New York. In voting for Lehman, the people felt that they were voting for a Roosevelt candidate, for a man who they believed to be still identified with the New Deal. The electorate had not yet realized that Lehman's identical position with Dulles on foreign policy in fact made it impossible for Lehman to be considered as an alternative to, or as a candidate who would fight against the essential policies from which flow the racism and bigotry of a Dulles.

It is obvious that the essentially healthy and progressive outlook of large masses of people comes up against a dead end constantly because it is predicated upon the belief that progress can be won and peace can be achieved within the framework of the two-party system, while both parties are essentially in conflict and in opposition to every major interest of the people.

The vote of 356,000 for Rep. Vito Marcantonio for mayor on the American Labor Party ticket was most significant. While the ALP forces may have overestimated their potential in the election, a sober evaluation of this vote indicates that the ALP is holding its lines under the most adverse circumstances. For, if one considers that the ALP was running its independent mayoralty candidate for the first time, that the conviction of the 11 communist leaders three weeks before election spread more fear and confusion and intensified the red-baiting, and that the Liberal Party capitalized on this situation to draw many votes from the ALP, the Marcantonio figure remains an encouraging sign in a most difficult situation. The ALP vote was slightly higher in percentage than ever before. The red-baiters and reactionaries who are wishfully making funeral orations over the ALP, will find that their joy is unfounded. For the fear of a Dulles victory that drew so many votes into the Liberal line, was not a Liberal Party vote so much as a pro-Lehman vote. The bulk of this Liberal vote was the independent sector of the New York electorate and is certainly not committed to that party. The large O'Dwyer vote was in great part drawn in the train of pro-Lehman sentiment.

An analysis of the ALP and Liberal votes reveals a strong trend towards class divisions. Marcantonio's major strength was drawn from the most oppressed sections of New York, the Negroes and the Puerto-Ricans. He also ran strongly in

the working class Italian districts and in the Jewish working class districts. On the other hand, the Liberal Party did gain strength in the working class and even more in the middle class Jewish districts.

Finally, the most important consequence of the vote for Councilman Benjamin Davis for the City Council, was his strength in the solidly Negro 11th Assembly District, where the ALP emerged as the leading party for the first time in Harlem. It is true that the progressive forces underestimated the tremendous obstacles under which Davis was running. He was convicted as one of the 11 communist leaders three weeks before election. A wildly irresponsible red-baiting campaign full of lies and totally lacking in any discussion of issues did much to confuse the people. Further, he was running against the combined opposition of the Democratic, Republican and Liberal Parties. The effort to remove him from the City Council after his conviction, the lawsuit to take him off the ballot and the effort to discredit him by removing his name from the election lists because he was a convicted "felon," all had their effect. Despite these harassing actions, Davis succeeded in doubling the percentage of ALP votes in the Negro areas and holding the proportion in middle class white areas. Ben Davis emerges from the election as a strong force in Harlem.

The election showed, in sum, that the Roosevelt tradition still retains its hold on the people. Further, it revealed that, although the clearest progressive forces did not gain as much as was hoped, they had actually increased their numbers under the most trying circumstances with which they were ever faced in America. This performance provides the basis for further advance.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN GERMANY

WITHIN a few days of each other two significant items appeared with regard to the Western and Eastern states in Germany. One was a dispatch from western Germany to the effect that, since the creation of the Bonn regime, Jewish leaders in that zone began to receive a sudden flood of reports on discrimination against Jews in both private industry and government service, of abuse and even physical attacks upon Jews in the western zones. The other was a dispatch from the German Democratic Republic in the eastern zone that the new constitution contains an article (number 6) which makes dissemination of propaganda of race hatred a punishable offense. A clause of this article provides that persons convicted under it will be disqualified from holding government office, will be disenfranchised and barred from holding any leading post in the economic and cultural life of the country. To this must be added the statement of Wilhelm Pieck, president of the East German Republic, to the Israeli Communist Party in October that "The German people acknowledges its guilt and crime against the Jews."

It is a bitter pill for Americans that in the region where our government holds sway, Germany is travelling with

terrifying rapidity back to the path on which Hitler led the German people and to policies that we fought the war to eradicate. Is our government the friend of democracy and of the Jewish people? Are we not obliged to acknowledge that that part of Germany under Soviet control is carrying that country forward on the path that the anti-fascist war indicated? In western Germany we see renazification and the rapid rise of anti-Semitism; in eastern Germany we see stern dealing with nazi tendencies and anti-Semitism. As Americans, we can do no other than to impress upon our government that we will not tolerate the return of fascists to power and the coddling of anti-Semitism.

IRAQI POGROM

THE Iraqi government added another chapter to the infamous anti-Semitic tradition of launching pogroms against the Jews on Yom Kippur. On October 3, Iraqi police invaded a synagogue near Baghdad and arrested 10 worshippers without informing them of the charges. This proved to be the opening gun of a series of arrests, beatings, torture and concentration camp imprisonment of hundreds of Iraqi Jews. Sympathy for Israel and attempts to go there were the alleged reasons for the persecution. The entire community of 150,000 Iraqi Jews is now in danger. Informed sources believe that this pogrom may be the harbinger of renewal of Arab hostilities against Israel, as well as an attempt to divert the Iraqi people from internal troubles.

Leaders of the biggest Jewish American organizations, instead of arousing the people of America against this new pogrom, merely called upon the State Department to take measures to help the Iraqi Jews. Mr. Frank Goldman, B'nai B'rith president who spoke for the delegation, according to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency report of November 4, "came away satisfied that the matter will receive the appropriate attention of the [State] Department." The "appropriate attention" was soon manifested. The State Department issued a statement in which it disputed the number of Jews alleged to have been arrested and added that "the Iraqi government has assured the leaders of the Jewish community that no Jews will be molested who do not participate in activities prohibited by Iraqi laws." To put it in less diplomatic, but more direct terms, the State Department said to the Jewish leaders, "Nothing doing."

The State Department is so eager to discover anti-Semitism and Jewish persecution in the Soviet Union and the new democracies where in fact none exists and where the governments have outlawed racism and anti-Semitism and have undertaken concrete steps to assure equality. But when a real case of persecution turns up, as in this case in Iraq, the State Department not only refuses to act, but even condones the affair. It is time that Jewish leadership stopped appeasing and apologizing for this State Department policy in the Middle East. Instead, they should mobilize the Jewish people and join with all democratic forces to press our State Department into a reversal of

policies that on every front are supporting reaction and endangering Jewish survival.

RACISM AND THE CIO RIGHT

THE labor movement is no exception to the principle so frequently exemplified in the past few years, that where you have red-baiting, racism, anti-Semitism and anti-Negroism are not far behind. This was unhappily once more demonstrated at the recent CIO convention, which was an orgy of red-baiting. In the first place, as the *Pittsburgh Courier* reporter observed, none of the right wing unions (except for the redcaps) sent any Negro delegates to the convention, despite large Negro membership, especially in auto and steel. Secondly, one of the right wing delegates actually indulged in anti-Negro and anti-Semitic statements on the floor. A Negro woman delegate of the United Office and Professional Workers Union chided the Textile Workers Union for not meeting the problem of discrimination in that union. George Baldanzi, an official of that union, then made a slurring remark against this Negro woman, for which he was obliged to apologize publicly. Further, this same Mr. Baldanzi concluded his pro-Marshall Plan speech with a call for a world in which "we can live in peace, security and happiness as Christian people in this Christian world were intended to live." These incidents are not accidental. They are inevitable accompaniments of a red-baiting policy, whether it happens in the labor movement or out of it.

Under these circumstances, it is deplorable that influential Jewish trade union leaders should also be party to the trends which make these racist attacks inevitable. Morris Potofsky of the Amalgamated was chairman of the session that passed the provisions excluding communists from leadership in the CIO and Frank Rosenblum of the same union was chairman of the constitution committee that drafted the amendments. Is it not time that these Jews in positions of responsibility in the labor movement woke up to the dangers to the labor movement, to America and to the Jewish people of the red-baiting hysteria? For such labor leaders are helping to prepare the grave for democracy, as well as heavy oppression of the Negro and Jewish peoples and of all minorities.

AJ CONGRESS CONVENTION

THE annual convention of the American Jewish Congress ended as we went to press. The convention will receive thorough analysis in the next issue. The most encouraging aspect of the convention was that in the face of flagrant violations of democratic procedure and a rigged agenda to cut down discussion, many delegates did speak and make known their desire for a democratic Congress that would fight for Jewish rights and democracy. A large group (their vote reached 185 at times) emerged to represent the interests of the mass of Congress membership.

LESSONS IN RESISTANCE

I: GERMAN JEWRY UNDER HITLER

by Louis Harap

FIFTEEN German jurists, on invitation from Prosecutor Francis X. McGohey, sat among the spectators in the Foley Square courtroom while the 11 communist leaders received sentence from Judge Harold Medina. How familiar this sight must have been to these Germans. Shades of the Reichstag trial, of the legal lynching of communists by the nazis! Nor do we think that these Germans would be particularly surprised at one-time liberal Herbert H. Lehman's message to McGohey that the verdict was "a mighty victory for the cause of freedom and liberty." For these jurists knew that the Jews of Germany, too, had tried to appease fascism.

But the Jews of America had better think hard and deep, while there is still time. Twenty years of experience with nazism lie behind and we would be worse than fools if we allowed ourselves to act as if Hitler had never lived or Hitlerism was dead. Will the Jews of America learn the lessons to be drawn from the horror and terror and cruelty of one of the most tragic decades in history? It is time to take stock, to examine whether American Jews are ready to meet the difficult time ahead. And there is perhaps no better way than to recall how German Jewry acted in the Gehenna of the thirties, and to assess our own actions accordingly.

Any attempt to correlate German Jewish experience with our own must take account of some important differences between the two Jewish communities. Perhaps the outstanding difference is that, while American Jewry has a large working class element and tradition, workers formed a small minority of German Jews. Decisive figures are available on the occupational distribution and class composition of German Jews.¹ Of about 510,000 Jews living in Germany in 1933, about half followed some occupation. Of these, about 60 per cent were engaged in trade, and of these more than half were employers, the rest were employees. Of about 70,000 Jews in industry and manual occupations, about half were employers and half employees. The workers were mostly employed in the clothing, food and fur industries. About 5,000 (about two per cent) were engaged in agriculture. About 25,000 (around 10 per cent) were intellectuals and professionals. Thus nearly all employees were in the light industries, large and small stores and in white collar work. A very small minority of German Jews

belonged to the working class. The social status of German Jewry can be judged from the fact that about 60,000, fully 16 per cent of the adults, were pensioners and without occupation but with independent means.

Middle Class Ideology

The psychology of the German Jews was thus overwhelmingly middle class. "The fabric of German Jewry was created for a wealthy community, mainly professional and commercial," said an authoritative British journal.² Community leadership was in the hands of the wealthy elements; they set the pattern of life and ideas. The majority, who were in the lower middle class income brackets, patterned themselves after their wealthier brethren, "always endeavoring to raise itself to the circle of the capitalists."³ This ideological condition of German Jewry is essential to an understanding of its response to the nazi actuality. In addition, it must be noted that the community was fairly homogeneous. Only about one-seventh of the Jews of Germany were immigrants from eastern Europe, who were fiercely discriminated against by the native Jews. The latter clung with desperate pride to their six hundred year residence in Germany. They regarded the eastern immigrants as aliens and intruders. This was essentially a class prejudice, for the eastern Jews, who spoke Yiddish and were largely working class, were regarded as social inferiors and were witheringly snubbed by the German Jews. The latter were intense German nationalists and, like the convert, were more German than the Germans. In politics the German Jews were conservative, but could not adhere to the conservative parties, which were anti-Semitic. Most Jews found their home in the "Democratic Party," roughly like the British Liberal Party.

Many Jews also voted with the Social-Democratic Party. In 1929 and 1930 the Central Union of German Citizens of Jewish Faith had advised German Jews to vote for the Catholic Centrist Party.

With this background in view, it is not unexpected that the German Jews were completely taken by surprise by the ferocity of nazi anti-Semitism, for the middle class outlook in the period of decline of capitalism is not noted for its sense of reality. German Jews were militantly assimilationist. "We regard ourselves, along with the overwhelming majority of German Jews, as members of the German, not of the Jewish, 'people,'" declared several hundred noted

¹ Figures cited here are drawn from "Occupational Distribution of the German Jews," *Jewish Review* (London), September-December 1933, pp. 38-43. Additional data on this subject can be found in *The Economic Destruction of German Jewry*, a study by the World Jewish Congress published by the American Jewish Congress, New York, 1937; see also *The Rise and Destruction of the German Jews*, by Jacob R. Marcus, Cincinnati, 1934, pp. 119-123.

² *Jewish Review* (London), September-December 1933, p. 10.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Berlin Jews in a statement issued in 1930.⁴ The most influential Jewish organization, to which about 60,000, or about one-sixth of all grown German Jews, belonged, was the Central Union of German Citizens of Jewish Faith (*Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischer Glaubens*), whose name itself symbolizes their assimilationist convictions. Throughout the fatal years the Central Union kept up its pathetic appeals to the German people protesting the anti-Jewish measures on the ground that German Jews were devoted to Germany.

Uncritical Adoration of Germany

In 1932 the Central Union published a pamphlet in answer to the Nazi slanders. In conclusion, the pamphlet says: "We feel and know, however, that this ardent love we Jews bear toward Germany, we Jews whose fathers and grandfathers settled on German soil, has the same mystical power as that of non-Jewish Germans. . . . We appeal to our readers and our opponents: if all our factual proof cannot convince you, we ask you to believe us, when we say that we feel that there is only one Fatherland for us Jews, and that is Germany! And because we love Germany as our Fatherland, we shall not put up with insults and deprivation of rights but defend to the last our right to a home on German soil."⁵ It does not seem to have occurred to them to ask to what Germany they gave their loyalty. For this undifferentiated affirmation includes the Germany of Hitler and the cartelists, as well as the Germany of Goethe and Marx, of Thomas Mann, Clara Zetkin and Karl Liebknecht.

It is consistent with their thoroughly bourgeois ideology and abject, uncritical adoration of "Germany," and therefore not surprising that the German Jews showed no backbone or fight whatever against the Nazis. They appealed the Nazis no less than the bourgeois democratic governments, despite the fact that the Nazis were depriving them of their rights and of life itself. It is astonishing to discover the degree to which so many Jews abased themselves in the face of Nazi attacks. When the world was reacting with horror and shock at Nazi anti-Jewish measures, the Central Union issued a statement in March 1933 denying reports of Nazi atrocities in the foreign press. "There have been acts of political revenge, also reprisals against Jews," the statement said. "The Reich government states that it has successfully striven to restore order as quickly as possible. . . . The anti-Semitic aims in the various domains of life and business which are manifesting themselves fill us, indeed with great concern. While opposing them, the Central Union regards them now, as before, as a German domestic affair. We are convinced, however, that equality of rights for German Jews, which they earned in war and peace alike by their sacrifices of life and property, will not be abrogated, and that German Jews will remain inseparably united with the

German Fatherland and, together with all other Germans, of good will, will be able to work for the resurgence of the Fatherland."⁶

Discouragement of World Protest

In the spring of 1933, when American Jews, led by the American Jewish Congress and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, carried through one of the most militant campaigns of protest against Nazism involving millions of Jews and non-Jews throughout the country, the Central Union sent many messages urging that the campaign be stopped. This was particularly true of the anti-Nazi boycott that was carried through on a world scale. "We can assure them [the protesters]," cabled Dr. Julius Brodnitz, head of the Central Union, on March 26, 1933, "that the German government is permanently and successfully engaged in assuring peace and order to all citizens without discrimination."⁷ A boycott congress was scheduled to be held in London in October 1933. The Reich Representation of German Jews, a new overall German organization, urged that the congress be called off, or if not, "that demands and resolutions which damage Germany be eliminated."⁸ In September, Rabbi Hildesheimer, the leader of the German Agudath Israel (orthodox Jewish organization), went to Warsaw to urge Polish Jews to abandon their boycott of German goods.

The climax of the appeasement policy, however, came in November 1933. A referendum on Hitler's domestic and foreign policy was to take place. The Central Union on October 31 urged all Jews to vote in favor of Hitler's foreign policy. "In spite of all that we have experienced," said the statement, "the vote of every German Jew can only be a hearty 'Yes' in favor of the government."⁹ A new overall organization of German Jews, the Reich Representation of German Jews also urged Jews to vote for Hitler.¹⁰ It is astounding that appeasement was not finished even in 1934 and 1935. On February 6, 1934, the organ of the Central Union published an article by the head of the new anti-Zionist youth organization which affirmed: "We cannot and do not surrender the values which German culture and nature have given us. . . . But we recognize the claim of the German nation to decide, in conjunction with us, the group of German Jews, the limits and extent of our scope of activity, the form and contents of our cooperation."¹¹

The German Zionists, despite all their differences with the assimilationist and German-nationalistic Jews, were hardly less appeasing of the Nazis. A German Zionist delegation, which was considering a request for permission to attend the World Zionist Congress at Lucerne in 1935, agreed that they would walk out of the Congress in a body if the German government were attacked. And the Revisionist leader, Georg Kareski, who was appointed by the Nazis in December 1935 to head up cultural activities of the Jews, gave an interview to *Der Angriff* on December 23

⁴ *American Jewish Yearbook*, vol. 32, 1930-31, p. 99.

⁵ *Wir Deutschen Juden, Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischer Glaubens*, Berlin, 1932, p. 46.

⁶ *New York Times*, March 25, 1933.

⁷ *New York Times*, March 27, 1933.

⁸ *New York Times*, July 15, 1933.

⁹ *New York Times*, November 4, 1933.

¹⁰ *American Jewish Yearbook*, vol. 36, 1934-35, p. 166.

¹¹ *American Jewish Yearbook*, vol. 36, 1934-35, p. 177.

in which he tried to justify many nazi policies towards the Jews.

Jewish Fascist Bankers

There were, of course, certain differences in attitude toward the nazis among the German Jews. But these differences should not obscure the almost universal appeasing attitude of German Jewish organized life. At the extreme right of German Jewry were the bankers and most wealthy Jews. It is well known that many of them supported Hitler financially. In his diary Ambassador William E. Dodd notes under the date of January 19, 1934, that he attended a party at the home of the wealthy German Jew Baron Eberhard von Oppenheim at which many nazis were present. "It is reported," wrote Mr. Dodd, "that Oppenheim has given the Nazi Party 200,000 marks and has been given a special party dispensation which declared him an Aryan." On March 31, 1935, Mr. Dodd notes that an American rabbi in Germany "revealed great concern because so many wealthy Jews have surrendered to the nazi leadership and are influential financial aids to Dr. Schacht, who thinks this assistance is very important in the present economic situation."

The attitude of many German Jewish bankers was epitomized by Paul Einzig, a writer on finance, whose statement has to be read to be believed. Einzig writes that, far from having hostility towards Germany, he was criticized after World War I as being too anti-French. Speaking of himself, Einzig wrote: "Nor is he [Einzig] hostile to the principles of Fascism, as applied in Italy. . . . He pronounces himself decidedly in favor of the Corporate State. Thus his criticism of the attitude of the present regime in Germany towards the Jews cannot be accused of being inspired either by anti-German or anti-Fascist feelings. He condemns the system of persecution and discrimination against the German Jews by the National Socialist Government, because—humane considerations apart—it is against the interest of Germany and inimical to the cause of Fascism."

"The accusation that Jews in Germany supported Communism can hardly be applied to the German bankers, who like the overwhelming majority of German Jews, are hostile to Communism and Socialism. They should be, therefore, natural allies of a political party [i.e., the Nazi Party] whose aim is to save Germany from the danger of Communism. . . . If, instead of persecuting them [the Jews], Herr Hitler and his followers were to make use of them in their task of grappling with economic difficulties, Germany and Fascism would only gain by such a policy."¹²

The closest to an organized expression of this viewpoint was found in the incredible Union of German National Jews (*Verband der deutschnationalen Juden*). This chauvinistic German group was organized in 1921 by war veteran and lawyer Dr. Max Naumann, who served thereafter as spokesman for the group. "At a meeting of the

Union of German National Jews," reported the *New York Times* on June 23, 1933, "its leader, Dr. Max Naumann, professed allegiance to the national resurgence for which, he said, the organization had stood for 12 years 'against all opposition from certain Jews and Left quarters.' . . . The speaker urged the organization not to allow present misconstructions and slights to shake Jews in their feeling of identity with Germany." By 1933 the organization claimed 5,000 members, among whom were public officials, lawyers and intellectuals.

Supporters of "National Resurgence"

On July 25, 1933, the Union issued a statement condemning some German Jewish writers who planned to issue an anti-nazi journal from Holland. And in a statement issued to German Jews on August 16, 1934, the Union urged "all Jews who feel themselves Germans to vote 'Yes' on August 19." The statement affirmed that "we have always in war and peace placed the good of the German people and the German Fatherland above our own good. Accordingly, we greeted the national uprising of January 1933, although it brought rigors for us, for we saw it as the only means to clear away the damage done in 14 unhappy years by un-German elements."¹³ The Union also, of course, objected to the world-wide protest and boycott movement in 1933. "If," said the Union in a circular to its members, "attempts are made by Jewish and non-Jewish circles to coerce the national government of Germany into any course of action or any omission, we, as Germans, must oppose such blackmail attempts with the same decisiveness and intensity as any of our fellow non-Jewish countrymen."¹⁴

The Union had since its founding carried on a campaign against the eastern European Jews as aliens who were not entitled to membership in the German community. In the usual manner of fascists, Naumann found a scapegoat for Jewish fascists in eastern Jews and Zionists. Both of these groups, he said, were responsible for anti-Semitism and all the troubles of Jews in Germany. He fervently petitioned the nazis to recognize his "national German" Jews as Germans and deplored the fact that the nazis lumped these indiscriminately with the eastern Jews and Zionists, "whom our Union has always regarded as aliens." In April 1934, the Union issued a statement that "This association regards itself as a storm troop for Germanism among Jews living in Germany."¹⁵ It appears, however, that Naumann and his kind were unable to convince the nazis. In November 1935 the Union was dissolved by the Secret State Police on the ground that its program violated nazi principles. Naumann himself was arrested. Ironically enough, the reasons given for the dissolution were, first, the Union refused to show the Zionist flag, which the nazis had reserved for all Jews, because they insisted that they differed from other Germans

¹² "The Jew and German Finance," by Paul Einzig, *Jewish Review* (London), June-September, 1933, pp. 78, 82.

¹³ *New York Times*, August 18, 1934.

¹⁴ *New York Times*, March 25, 1933.

¹⁵ *New York Times*, April 8, 1934.



Hundreds of thousands of Jews and non-Jews registered their protest against nazi persecution of German Jewry in 1933. Above is pictured part of the vast crowd which demonstrated against the Hitler government before the German consulate in New York on March 25, 1933.

only in religion; and secondly, the violation of the nazi racist principle involved in the Union's assimilationist attitude and insistence that they were Germans.

The German Jewish war veterans also capitulated to the nazis. In April 1933, the entire board of the Union of German Jewish Ex-Soldiers resigned, apparently in the face of a move to fascize the organization. The name of the organization was then changed to the Union of National Jewish Soldiers, "whose program and ideology," the *New York Times* reported on April 5, 1933, "are regarded as more in keeping with the present regime."

No Organized Resistance

Our brief survey thus shows that organized Jewish life in Germany offered no resistance to the nazi attack on their humanity and their very lives. On the contrary, they consistently capitulated before the savage nazi attack and played an abject role until the very end. There were undoubtedly many individual German Jews who preserved their dignity and refused to cower, like some communist Jews who ended up either in death or concentration camps. But the record of organized groups shows a uniform surrender and

pathetic clinging to illusions about loyalty to the Fatherland, even a nazi Fatherland.

Why was this? Several interweaving causes can be offered. Basic was the overwhelming and ingrown middle class character of German Jewry. Their ideological bias predisposed them, to shrink from militant action against a capitalist government and even made "non-Aryan" nazis of some Jews, as we have seen. Further, the Jews as a whole were no more disposed to put up decisive resistance to the nazis than the German people as a whole, (except for thousands of communists and other militant anti-fascists) and in this sense they were really Germans of their time. The Jews' refusal to cooperate in an anti-nazi people's front, again like the German people as a whole, helped to make nazism almost inevitable. Marvin Lowenthal, a liberal Zionist historian of the German Jews, writes on this failure as follows:

"In any one of the elections under the German Republic—except the last—a united front of liberals, Socialists and Communists would have carried the day. The French, with their political realism, have now [1936] learned to band together: middle-classes and workers, liberals and the Left, in one body against monopoly capitalism and monarchism,

militarists and the Right. What if the Jews, who stood to gain most, as we shall discover, by such a union, had used their energies and resources to bring it about in Germany while there was still time? It is more than possible that, in view of the intransigence of Communists and Socialists and the prejudices of liberals, such an effort would have failed; but, even so, it would have been an intelligent effort. For not having made it, the handful of Jews can of course console themselves that they acted no more blindly than 16,000,000 German Communists, Socialists, Liberals and and Centrists."¹⁶ Although we disagree with Mr. Lowenthal as to responsibility for failure of the German working class to unite, his central point is valid.

The evidence offered here demonstrates, I think that there was no essential difference with respect to the lack of resistance offered by the various German Jewish organizations, whether it be the Central Union, Naumann's fascists, assorted bankers, Orthodox Jewry, World War I veterans or the Zionists. These groups protested against the world-wide movement to mobilize sentiment against the nazis by demonstrations and boycotts. Several of them urged a "Ja" vote for Hitler. It seems to us illusory to insist, as some have done, that the Union of National German Jews was essentially different from the Central Union with respect to their behavior toward the nazis. The Central Union, wrote Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, an outstanding Zionist editor and theoretician, "conducted itself with decency and dignity, which can [not] be said of the *Verband National-Deutscher* [Naumann's Union]."¹⁷ But since any form of resistance was absent among any of these organizations or any others, it is hard to see how any of them could be said to have conducted themselves with "dignity."

No Jewish Unity

Not only did they fail to offer resistance. They could not even unite among themselves. On the whole, communal strife among German Jewish organizations was conducted along two lines: liberalism versus orthodoxy in religion and German nationalism versus Zionist nationalism in politics. There was no organized working class group of German Jews and a labor viewpoint was simply not organizationally represented in German Jewish life, so far as I can discover. And it can be said that genuine overall unity was never achieved. In 1933, a delegated convention of provincial community federations met in Frankfurt to organize one big association for all Germany, but could not reach an agreement. Later in the year, however, a Central Committee of German Jews for Aid and Rehabilitation was formed, including all Zionist and anti-Zionist organizations. On February 28, 1934, it was also possible for the Jews to unite to

protect and promote the commercial interests of the Jews. In 1933, a temporary unity was achieved on general matters by the formation of the Reich Representation of German Jews (*Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden*), with the plea to all German Jews to "bury internal dissensions and unite." But the general unity was short-lived. In March, 1934, the Agudah (the orthodox organization) set up a body of its own because agreement could not be reached on education of children in Jewish schools.

As the oppression of the nazis increased, Zionism and the program of emigration gained strength among the Germans, and this was another cause for disunity. In fact, "there was a growing sympathy between the Zionist German Federation and the Hitler program for expelling the Jews"¹⁸ because this forced the Jews to look to emigration to Palestine. And on January 15, 1936, the executive of the German Zionist Federation issued a manifesto demanding, among other things, to act "as the only instrument to conduct exclusively the work of nationalization of German Jewry."¹⁹ This evoked an attack on the Federation in the next month by *Der Israelit*, organ of the Orthodox Jews of Germany. "The Zionists," remarked Marvin Lowenthal, "were less concerned with fighting what they thought was a lost battle than with preparing a refuge in the new-old homeland."²⁰

This failure even to unite was one of the most tragic failures of German Jewry. Marvin Lowenthal makes this interesting estimate of the problem: "Nor could the Jews, as we have seen, unite. . . . There was no common forum or assembly where these disparate classes could meet and in some measure compose their differences in the face of common danger. Such representative bodies as did exist worked, till the last available moment, for their own constituents and, whatever their claims or intentions, not for the whole. . . . Still further, the best disciplined, most articulate and most capable organizations were dominated by wealthy Jews or their associates. It was therefore natural and inevitable that the welfare of Jewry should be viewed, by these comparatively effective organizations, in terms of the welfare of the rich. And taking into account the sycophancy of the not-so-rich, and the snobbery of the altogether poor tradesmen, clerks and petty professional men who made up the bulk of Jewry, it can be said that the interests of the rich were generally accepted and believed to be the interests of the whole."²¹

Only a few years after this devastating German experience, the Jews of America are faced with an imminent danger of fascism once again. The signs are only too abundant. Where then do the Jews of America stand in relation to this threat to themselves as Americans and Jews? Have they learned the fatal lessons of German Jewry? Are they ready to throw their full weight against this danger by cooperation with all anti-fascist, working class democratic forces in America to prevent a repetition of the horror of the thirties? To this all-important and complex problem we shall turn in the next article.

(To be continued.)

¹⁶ *The Jews of Germany*, by Marvin Lowenthal, New York, 1936, pp. 388-9.

¹⁷ "It Was Thus in Germany, Too," by Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, *Congress Weekly*, December 21, 1945, p. 8.

¹⁸ *American Jewish Yearbook*, vol. 37, 1935-36, p. 184.

¹⁹ *American Jewish Yearbook*, vol. 38, 1936-37, p. 326.

²⁰ Marvin Lowenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 385-6.

TWO ESSAYS

By Moissaye J. Olgin

I: HEROISM

In memory of the tenth anniversary of the death of the late editor of the Morning Freiheit on November 22, 1939, we reprint the following two little essays published in 1938 by this distinguished writer and fighter for the Jewish people.—Eds.

WHEN we think of heroism, we think of glamor. The hero concept is inseparable in our minds from broad public recognition, public acclaim, public worship. The truth is that only on rare occasions is the hero brought to the attention of the people. In most cases he is unknown, unheralded, unsung.

The army is of course the outstanding example. Those recognized as war heroes, the marshals, the generals, the commanders, may not be brave people at all. The private who went "over the top" and may have turned the tide of a battle, is often unrecognized and unrewarded. The plain soldier who receives a medal for special valor, may not be the real hero deserving public acclaim.

Revolutionary fighters differ from an army in that the leader is usually a hero in his own right. The praise he receives is justly earned. Yet even in a revolutionary fighting group the rank-and-file often performs heroic deeds in themselves beautiful and inspiring, but remaining unknown to the rest of the world.

Not only in revolutionary situations and not only in extraordinary times do we find heroism widespread. As a matter of fact, heroism is as much an everyday phenomenon as life itself. In extraordinary times and under special conditions heroism assumes a mass character. It becomes contagious. Those confronted with it become so accustomed to its manifestations that they no longer consider them extraordinary. One handles heroism in the very same way as one handles routine matters.

This was forcibly impressed upon me when I last visited the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. It was a lively place, with many typewriters going at a rapid pace, with many executives receiving visitors, everything buzzing with activity—in the very same way as you can find it in thousands of other offices in the city of New York. But that particular office was dealing with mass heroism. Thousands upon thousands of Americans volunteered to fight fascism in Spain. Each one of them was a hero.

We saw them in our midst upon their return, during and after the fighting. We see them now. They are no different from other human beings. The overwhelming



majority of them did not receive any public recognition. They did receive recognition as a group, as a battalion, as a force fighting for democracy; individually, however, most of them remained unknown, except to narrow circles of relatives and friends.

Our movement in the United States is full of unnamed heroes. Heroism has become so much matter of fact that we often pay it scant attention. We seldom undertake to honor the heroes, except, again, in the narrow circle of their society or branch.

I write this because I think that we are too callous in this respect. We take too much of nobility, self-sacrifice, self-denial of the working people for granted. We do not stress enough the value of heroic deeds performed. Were we to do so, it would enhance the beauty of our movement, it would accentuate the spirit that gives it vitality.

The other day I received a visit from a friend. Years ago he was a custom tailor of high quality earning as much as \$85 a week in one of the biggest department stores of New York. He was a party member, and when the party called for a street demonstration, he went. He was beaten up by the police under "ice-cream" Jimmie Walker. When he left the hospital, his shoulder and right arm were permanently crippled. He could not continue at his craft. He had to look for a job requiring little physical power and skill. He found one, with a wage about one-fourth of his former earnings. He did not become discouraged. He devoted him-

self to party activity with more abandon than ever. He became a real Stakhanovite of the movement, in spite of being neither a good speaker nor a well educated man. Few in the party can equal him in the work of getting new members or collecting funds. A Jew with a pronounced foreign accent and an incorrect English, he works very successfully also among native Americans.

On his day of rest he sells party literature. The other day he happened to knock at the door of a white-guard

Russian. He met with abuse, fury and physical assault. I do not know how much resistance he could offer; he is not strong. Out of the white-guard nest he came out with a swollen neck and scratched hands. I expressed by indignation at the assault, but my friend only smiled with his resigned smile.

"It's all in a day's work."

There are thousands upon thousands in our movement who have this attitude to their everyday heroic deeds.

II: AN OLD-TIME REBEL

I HAVE told this story to a number of people orally. I think it is worth while putting it into print. It is the description of a Jewish rebel whom I knew in my childhood and youth.

In his appearance he did not differ from any old-time Jew. He wore a beard and sidelocks and a skull cap; his clothes were old-fashioned, with a long coat reaching nearly to the ground. He prayed three times a day and, although at one period in his life he was influenced by the free-thinking *maskilim* ("advocates of enlightenment" who preached modernization of Jewish life and habits), he remained fundamentally religious all his life. What he took from the *maskilim* was a critical attitude towards exaggerated piety and a dislike for the clergy.

He was a Jew like all the old-line Jews of the small towns of half a century ago in Russia. He celebrated all holidays and had great respect for such religious thinkers as the *Gaon* of Vilna. Every Friday he read and made his children read the chapter of the bible that was designated for that week. Also he explained to his children the meaning of the religious ceremonies connected with certain periods. As he grew older, he became more religious and less tolerant to free thinkers. Yet, with years, his rebellious spirit did not calm down but became more pronounced.

His rebellion was directed against his employers and, through them, against the entire class of employers. He had no name for his class hatred and class protest. He did not even know the word "exploiters"; he used "leeches" and "blood-suckers" instead. But the feeling was just the same—a feeling of class consciousness and class protest.

He hated being exploited. He thought exploitation to be the greatest injustice in the world.

He was a forest employee, to be exact—a lumber camp employee. The rich lumber dealer would buy a stretch of woods from the noble landowner and entrust it to Chaim (let's call the man by this name). The latter would have to cut down the trees, sell some of them outright to the peasants of the surrounding villages, work others into timber which went to the big cities, sell the wood that was good for fuel to a number of factories in the vicinity, etc. Chaim was manager and clerk and bookkeeper and supervisor in one person. He would have never been able to do justice to his manifold jobs if it were not for the aid of his

wife and several children. For the work of the whole family he received the munificent salary of 25 rubles a month, equivalent to \$3.00 a week. No wonder the children seldom wore a new suit of clothes.

The man liked his job but was in a state of continuous irritation against his employers. Why should he, a man versed in ancient and modern Hebrew literature, have to slave for somebody far inferior in mentality but possessing a heap of money? He knew the origin of that money. It came from robbing such people as him and his family. It came from usury. It came from swindle. Chaim was never tired of telling the story how his employer had grown from a man of moderate means to become very rich. He had utilized people's misery, people's distress to make his money bring a tenfold harvest. His hands were literally covered with the blood of unfortunates. Now he, Chaim, has to serve this man and even thank him for the job.

No, he was not thankful. He was resentful. He never smiled at his boss. He never came to congratulate him on the occasion of a wedding or another celebration in the rich man's family, as did other employees.

He was alone, one man against the omnipotence of money and power. He could do very little to defend his human rights. Instinctively he grasped at the only defense left at his disposal. He was unusually meticulous in carrying out his work. His excellence was his defense. His honesty was his weapon. He knew and he made the boss know that he was a rare worker, that the like of him could not be found in the trade.

That was his strength and that was his pride. Time and again he would pick a quarrel with the boss, that is to say, he would point out to the boss that he treated him unjustly. He never raised his voice, but he declared with great dignity that, if so treated he could not continue. He would then ride home. The employer's residence was in town 15 miles away from the forest (Chaim's house was in the forest). Chaim would gather his books and bills and letters and bring them over to the boss. He would dump everything on the table, declare, "I am through," and leave.

In all the cases that I know, the boss either personally or through a messenger appeased him declaring that he had no evil intentions. Chaim triumphed. His one-man strike was won.

ORGANIZING AMERICAN JEWISH YOUTH: I

By David Abrams

THE Annual Assembly of the National Jewish Youth Conference held in September is the latest expression of a nationwide development toward unity among organized Jewish youth. Although there have been several such efforts at unity in the past among American youth organizations, Jewish youth actually reached this stage only recently. Jewish youth has the increased social awareness of the war generation. Immediately after the war, Jewish youth organizations were spurred by the healthy optimism that followed the military victory over fascism and, it seemed, over anti-Semitism. The organizations aroused interest among youth with a program of securing the peace, rehabilitating veterans and carrying out the high ideals of the united allies. Among Jewish youth there was increased though still vague, consciousness of their Jewish identity, fostered by the annihilation of six million Jews and by the anti-Semitism experienced in the armed forces.

This vague, unformed consciousness came to sharpest expression on the creation of the state of Israel. Jewish youth, both organized and unorganized, responded to the flaming headlines, felt somehow identified with the anti-imperialist struggle of the Jews of Israel. This enthusiasm resulted in several unity movements, in the main among the Zionist youth groups, as in the Young Zionist Action Committee, which most of the Zionist-led Jewish youth organizations joined.

On a broader scale a unity movement began to develop even during the war parallel with unity in the adult community. The American Jewish Conference, the broadest overall movement for unity that grew out of the war, gathered in almost every national Jewish organization. It served as an instrument for rallying the Jewish community behind the war effort and aid to the Jews in Europe. Out of that conference grew a youth committee, called the Council of National Jewish Youth Organizations, to which many major youth groups adhered. The youth group struggled along for several years, stymied very often by the fear, especially among the larger organizations, of "another" organization that might compete with them for leadership and control of their membership. Seventeen youth groups affiliated to the Council. With all its shortcomings and lack of action, the Council became a representative of national organizations, which are the most tightly organized sector of Jewish youth. These were mostly youth sections of adult Jewish organizations. Like the adult community out of which they sprang, they were for the most part Zionist and religious synagogue organizations. Only one non-Zionist secular organization was included. These groups had cultural and ideological programs, derived from their adult sponsors and represented more than a half of the esti-

mated 500,000 Jewish youth in various organizations.

Zionist Youth Groups

Among these organizations the Zionist groups were preponderant. The Zionists would take no action on any issues in American life unless Israel was directly involved. Their activity centered about education on and aid campaigns for Israel. All their cultural activity was of a strictly Israeli Hebraic character. Their ideology was largely based on the Zionist theory that Israel is the only homeland of the Jews, and that otherwise the Jews are still in exile and without roots or future anywhere else in the world. The large Zionist groups, such as Junior Hadassah, oriented their programs mainly upon aiding emigration projects for European youth and education concerning Israel. They also have an extensive program of social activities.

Smaller Zionist groups like Hashomer Hatzair represented a more progressive orientation to general problems and even insisted that they had synthesized Marxism and Zionism. It is of interest to note that this grouping, which supported the Progressive Party and Henry Wallace in 1948, is no less nationalistic on Zionist issues than the other Zionist groups. In fact, on certain questions such as the issue of survival of Jewish communities outside of Israel, the Hashomer Hatzair is more voluble and extreme than practically any other Zionist group. On the other hand, on such issues as the foreign policy of Israel, Hashomer Hatzair has taken a progressive approach.

There were other Zionist groups. Masada represented the General Zionist position, conservative in politics. Junior Mizrahi Young Women was composed of orthodox Jews. The Intercollegiate Zionist Federation of America (IZFA) was an overall student Zionist organization. The B'nai B'rith Youth Organization with its four parts (Young Men, Young Women, Girls and AZA) was rooted in America and its Zionist activity was limited to aid for Israel. They felt quite secure in their upper middle class American existence and emphasized a social program of dances and social affairs. Other Zionist groups were the labor-socialist Zionist, religious Zionist, and upper middle class Zionist groupings, all of which avoided social issues of any non-Zionist nature.

The second largest grouping in the Council was the synagogue group, including such organizations as the National Federation of Temple Youth of the Reform Synagogue. This represented the very comfortable business and suburban set and limited its program almost exclusively to religion and social activities. Its approach to Israel and other issues of general interest was assimilationist. A simi-

lar group was the Young People's League of the United Synagogue, which eventually dropped out of the Council, and Young Israel, the organization of orthodox Jewish youth, including many *Yeshiva* youth.

The only secular, non-Zionist group in the Council was the Jewish Young Fraternalists (JYF), the youth division of the Jewish People's Fraternal Order, which urged social action by the Council on *all* issues affecting Jewish youth. This group was labor-progressive in outlook, and favored the development of a democratic Jewish life and culture in the United States. The JYF opposed the separatism of many of the groups, urging an alliance with non-Jewish youth and the American labor movement.

JWB Youth Groups

The remainder of organized Jewish youth was loosely-knit around the community centers and YMHA's. They included the most diverse local groups, ranging from girls' social clubs to sports groups, from local discussion to fund-raising groups. Their ideologies were less clearly defined than those of the national organizations, but they operated under supervision of the Jewish Welfare Board, which is the service agency that sponsors the Y's and community centers. The ideology of the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) had been mostly an assimilationist "swimming-pool Judaism" with little Jewish content. The leadership of the JWB were the big business elements in Jewish life. JWB practice was dominated by contemporary social-work theories based on melting-pot ideas and "integration" of the Jewish community into American life by aping the Anglo-Saxon model set by the American *Herrenvolk*. The upsurge of Jewish awareness that grew out of the war and the creation of the state of Israel precipitated a crisis in JWB when the empty assimilationist content was questioned by a more Jewish-conscious community. A study of JWB center program was made by Professors Oscar Janowsky and Salo W. Baron, who found an almost complete lack of Jewish content. The study urged a reorientation of the program to include a greater concern for greater Jewish cultural and social content.

Throughout this period the JWB tried to dominate organized Jewish youth. When the demand for unity welled up from the grass roots of the youth community, JWB tried to control the movement. At first they sponsored the formation of local councils in the centers and Y's, taking in all the various groups that met there. Then, several leadership institutes were organized to develop leaders for national and regional unity developments under JWB auspices. The National Jewish Youth Planning Commission of the JWB grew out of these institutes. The JWB thus gained an instrument for dominating and directing Jewish youth development toward national unity.

Throughout this period the JWB made overtures to the Council of National Jewish Youth Organizations of the American Jewish Conference, offering the Council terms for inclusion in JWB's unity movement which guaranteed

dominance by the JWB. The Council rejected these approaches time and time again since it preferred the broader, more democratic unity within the American Jewish Conference. When powerful reactionary Jewish forces succeeded in forcing the dissolution of the American Jewish Conference in 1947, the position of the Council of National Jewish Youth Organizations became precarious. The Youth Council no longer had an adult sponsor, and had not sufficiently consolidated or clarified its program to withstand the shock of an adult vacuum. However, the youth groups in the Council reasserted their desire for continued unity.

JWB and Adult Sponsorship

Weakening of democratic unity in Jewish life during this period laid the groundwork for a "unity" on the terms of the big business and social democratic alliance that had been developing. The JWB filled the vacuum. However, the national organizations were not yet willing to accept JWB dominance. Although the nationalist orientation of the major Zionist organizations created differences with the JWB and its assimilationist viewpoint, their resistance to JWB dominance was not essentially ideological. Both the big business-led Zionist groups and the big business-led JWB had declared their subservience to the cold war policy. But the Zionist leadership feared competition offered by the JWB in the youth field. Furthermore, the Zionists' one-way concentration on Israel was threatened by the persistently assimilationist character of the JWB.

Zionist rank and file sentiment, too, created resistance to JWB efforts at dominance. Zionist youth felt that the JWB and the "rich Jews" hadn't taken a militant stand on Israel and that a stand was finally taken only after the crisis had passed. Zionist youth felt that JWB had no real Jewish content in its program, and resented adult control and bureaucratic methods in JWB's youth set-up. The Zionist leadership gave lip-service to these rank and file sentiments and used these sentiments against JWB bureaucracy and lack of Jewish content to cover up their own bureaucratic fears of competition. The basic ideological similarity with respect to the cold war created common ground for the adult leaderships of both the JWB and of the Zionist organizations. But the JWB, with its direct State Department ties and unhampered by the separatism of the Zionist groups, was better suited to tie Jewish youth to the war chariot of the State Department.

At this time the National Jewish Youth Planning Commission of the JWB proposed a conference to set up a national body of organized Jewish youth. Since the Council of National Jewish Youth Organizations lacked adult sponsorship and had a strong desire to maintain some form of Jewish youth unity, it agreed to participate in the conference. It was at this conference, held in September 1948, that the National Jewish Youth Conference (NJYC) was founded.

At the 1948 conference, representation came almost entirely from the local young adult councils in the JWB-

sponsored community centers and Y's. Very few national organizations were represented. Distrust of the JWB was strong for the reasons given above and deepened by the obvious attempt by the JWB youth leadership to cut down the size of any national organization delegation.

1948 Conference

Some outspoken JWB youth leaders felt that the national organizations should be excluded altogether from the conference. Much of this feeling was caused by the opposition of local councils to top-heavy national control existing in the national organizations. JWB wished to lend its youth set-up the appearance of a locally-based, grass roots community federation, to cover up its own bureaucratic adult control of the conference. At the same time JWB wanted to dominate sentiment for unity in the national organizations. The far-sighted JWB youth leadership therefore permitted the "grass roots" opposition to the national organizations a certain leeway without excluding the national organizations altogether. The terms of participation in the NJYC by the national organizations were left to be discussed with representatives of the national organizations by the executive board of the NJYC. At a meeting held later, parity of the national and local organizations on the executive board was established under pressure from the national organizations. Nevertheless, when the number of delegates for the 1949 Assembly were discussed, representation from the national organizations was drastically cut and the JWB youth leadership disclaimed having agreed to parity.

Most of the Jewish communities in the United States were represented at the 1948 conference. The issue of founding a National Jewish Youth Conference was discussed under the watchful eye of adult JWB advisors. The NJYC was to be an autonomous body in name, but was to be sponsored by the JWB. The adult JWB supervisors went to great lengths to disclaim any intention by JWB to control the NJYC ideologically or financially. They just wanted to sponsor it, that's all. The resolution passed by the delegates accepting JWB sponsorship indicated that an attempt should be made to obtain additional sponsors.

At the 1948 conference, JWB's attempt to tie Jewish youth to a cold war program began to appear at a crucial point. The JWB youth leadership tried to attach Jewish youth to an international youth organization that had been just set up in accordance with American foreign policy of splitting the international youth unity that had developed since the end of the war.

This international youth organization was the so-called World Assembly of Youth (WAY). The facts about the WAY are needed to understand the significance of this step. The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), formed in London in 1945 by representatives of the youth of the world, was already functioning and was the voice of militant unity of the fighting youth. The WFDY was grounded in East-West unity and full and

equal participation by youth of the colonial countries, which were awakening to liberation.

With the outbreak of the cold war and the policy of East-West conflict initiated by American foreign policy, a counter organization to the WFDY was formed, based on the Western Federation countries and completely dominated by the adult representatives of the governments involved. This counter organization, calling itself the World Assembly of Youth, piously affirmed that it was not set up to displace the WFDY and even invited (!) the WFDY to attend its conference. This conference was notable for several things: the above-mentioned adult control; the absence of the East European countries; and the presence of representatives from the fascist regime in Greece, from Kuomintang China, from Turkey and from the colonial groups that were fighting against the colonial liberation movements. Israel was not even invited, but representatives from the Arab League governments were present! In the American delegation there was not a single Negro youth! The conference featured attacks on the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, attempts to invite Franco Spain into the set-up, the degraded seating of colonial delegates under the wings of the "mother" countries and mystical discussions of youth's needs to integrate personality and work. Not a word was said about unemployment, although the theme of the conference was "Work and Leisure."

The key American representative to this conference was none other than the chairman of the National Jewish Youth Conference. He was sent by the Young Adult Council of the National Social Welfare Assembly.

The chairman's report to the 1948 conference of the NJYC included a report on WAY, as an opening wedge to try to affiliate the NJYC to WAY. The delegates were not informed about the issues, about the proposed splitting of the international youth movement, or even about the existence of the WFDY. The JWB youth leadership exploited the sentiment in support of the United Nations and of international youth cooperation to slip over an endorsement of WAY by the conference. This was done by a resolution which urged international youth cooperation and endorsed the "efforts" of WAY toward this goal. The resolution didn't go so far as to affiliate the NJYC to WAY. By approving continued affiliation with the Young Adult Council of the Social Welfare Assembly, which is the American affiliate of WAY, a loophole was available to make the WAY program part of the NJYC program.

Conference Workshops

The rest of this founding conference consisted of workshops on issues facing Jewish youth. These were defined in vague terms in the context of contemporary bourgeois social work. The concepts and language used, touched only the surface manifestations of social issues, and referred to "insecurity," "integration," "status," "belonging," instead of hitting directly at social issues like anti-Semitism, peace,

civil rights, jobs and unemployment. Where it was impossible to avoid these issues, they were dealt with in a social-work context of "group-integration" and in the tradition of certain Jewish vocational guidance and social welfare organizations. Talk about "living equality" was the closest the conference got to the issue of discrimination, and "interpreting meaningfully" was the nearest approximation to action. These terms and concepts reflected the watery approach to issues that the JWB intended for the NJYC.

The workshops debated whether "extreme leftwing and rightwing groups should be permitted to participate in a young adult council," thus lumping in their distorted presentation the Jewish Young Fraternalists with the Irgunist Betar. The delegates were given the choice of accepting both or neither. It is to the credit of the delegates that they decided by a clear majority that they would not exclude groups for ideological reasons. But the harm had already been done: the either-or formulation had created a false framework.

Another characteristic of this first conference was the fact that it was vague whether conclusions of the conference were binding policy decisions or simply discussions and expressions of opinion. A well-controlled executive board was left to use the results however these might suit JWB policy.

• During the past year the NJYC worked on a committee basis. A Council Services Committee gave program guidance to the Young Adult councils; a Constitutional Committee drew up a draft constitution for the NJYC; a Committee on National Organizations, which was the group

that had formerly constituted the Council of National Jewish Youth Organizations, was given only a formal committee function, and did not sufficiently assert its position and independent program as the representative body of thousands of youth in the national organizations.

The executive board, consisting of the council delegates elected at large at the 1948 conference, and the representatives of the few national organizations active in the conference and affiliated to the NJYC, met four times during the year. At these meetings, JWB attempts to dominate organized Jewish youth became clearer. At these meetings attempts were made to tie the NJYC more securely to WAY and to prepare for eventual affiliation. At this point, the opposition of the one progressive organization in the NJYC to the JWB line began to be felt. The Jewish Young Fraternalists, although they had played no significant part at the 1948 conference, began to play an increasingly active role during the year. In the executive board they challenged the railroading procedures of the leadership on WAY and other issues. They caused many executive board members to realize for the first time that an issue was involved and that some critical discussion was necessary. In the face of this small opposition, the leadership became more undemocratic than before in its attempts to push through its program. They used all sorts of devices, such as mis-editing minutes of executive meetings, and taking action not warranted by the conference as a whole to keep a curtain of silence around the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and to make it appear that unanimous support was being given to all the leadership's actions.

(To be continued)

THE NEW YOUTH IN POLAND

By Hershl Hartman

I'M a pretty poor ping-pong player, and it was pure courtesy that allowed me to win, 22-20, the opening game of the semi-finals in the ping-pong tournament of the "Solidarnosc" Sport Club in Lodz, Poland. *Solidarnosc* is a new club, and, its leader told me apologetically, it has "only" a thousand members to date. He was confident about its growth, though.

He had good reason to be. Lying on his desk in the large office off the still larger room where the tournament was on full-swing, was the latest communication from the Sport Ministry of the Polish Government, dated August 27th. This bulletin, sent out to every sport group in Poland, pointed out the particular importance of the development of Jewish Sport Clubs, and instructed every group

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to give all possible aid and cooperation to Jewish youth in developing a sports program.

This, mind you, at the exact time that the *Jewish Morning Journal* and the Jewish daily *Forward* were ranting about a "revival of anti-Semitism in Poland."

"Twice a week our swimming team and our boxing team practice in a local gym," the *Solidarnosc* leader said. Swimming has been a late addition to the program, and for a very revealing reason. Until about eight months ago, the swimming pool now being used was unavailable to members of *Solidarnosc* or to any other Jewish young people in Lodz. The pool was in the local YMCA (pronounced phonetically *Yimka* in Poland) and that organization was behaving very much like its Jimcrow American counterpart. The gym is now run by the Textile Workers Union in Lodz and another remnant of feudal, hate-ridden pre-war Poland is gone.

This was just one facet of the new life I saw Polish Jewish youth building. There are many more.

There is, for instance, in Warsaw (a city of amazing reconstruction) a 26-year-old student named Moshe Grundwald. Moshe and his elder brother David remained alive during the war, as did most of the Jews now in Poland, by fleeing to the Soviet Union. Both Grundwald boys were in the Red Army and were part of the force that liberated Warsaw in July 1944. Now Moshe, who was my guide in Warsaw, studies engineering in Warsaw University—not an easy task when one hasn't sat at a desk for almost ten years.

But this was a widespread problem in Poland after the war. So Moshe was one of thousands of Polish youths who received an accelerated high school education, enabling them to begin immediately to learn the technical skills so badly needed in a ravaged country anxious to clear the rubble and get on with the building of socialism.

As an engineering student, Moshe receives a monthly stipend from the government. He could, if he liked, live in the Warsaw *boursa*, the youth home maintained by the Central Committee of Jews in Poland. He prefers, however, to live with his brother in a room in the *Praga* section of Warsaw. The room, by the way, costs them 100 *zlotys* per month, or the price of one pack of cigarettes. Rents are not a problem in Poland, though housing still is.

New Jewish Youth

Moshe had literally forgotten the meaning of *numerus clausus* and I had to explain it to him. Anyone acquainted with the pre-war life of Jewish students in Poland will appreciate Moshe's vocabulary gap as an excellent rebuttal to the *Morning Journal-Forward* fantasies.

Moshe also had difficulty understanding why I asked him what he would do on graduation from school. After he explained it, I understood his difficulty. Moshe could have signed up that day for a job, *in advance*, with one of the state engineering enterprises. He would then receive a stipend from them for the remainder of his studies, and would go to work for them as soon as he had completed the course. Even without this arrangement, Moshe's only post-graduation problem will be to decide which enterprise he would like to work in.

While I mulled that one over, thinking of all my bewildered friends at home who haven't the slightest idea what comes after graduation, and the ones who have found out that it's usually an office or a stock-clerk's job, if that, Moshe knocked the *Morning Journal* and the *Forward* into another cocked hat.

He was talking about how he had spent his summer. Like most Polish youths, he was at a summer camp. He had been sent there, in fact, to help in educational work. "I myself was amazed," he said. "Most of the kids were from the villages, and had just begun to develop politically. I was prepared to encounter some traces of anti-Semitism, being the only Jew there. But I underestimated the job that is being done in the villages. Not a single trace. You've got to hand it to ZMP."

ZMP (Polish Youth League), I knew, was the united organization of Polish youth, formed at the same time as the unification of Poland's worker's parties into the PZPR (United Polish Workers Party). Over one million young people are members now, and thousands more are following the leadership of ZMP'ers. Everywhere one goes in Poland, the ZMP lapel button is in evidence. And the same symbol hangs on factory walls, usually over the area where the Youth Brigade works.

I saw that symbol in every Jewish cooperative I visited. In textile, garment, leather, machine shops, carpentry workshops, in Lower Silesia's collective farms—wherever there were youth. Well over half of all Jewish youth in Poland belong to ZMP, and recently there has begun the development of a trend among young people in the Zionist organizations to leave those groups and join ZMP.

That the great strides being made in the eradication of anti-Semitism among the youth plays a great role in this, is unquestionable. In Lodz I met a Soviet-born Polish girl who had just received a highly cherished gift: a Yiddish-Russian dictionary, rescued somehow from Nazi destruction. She was bent on learning Yiddish; she had, in fact, already mastered the alphabet and an impressive vocabulary. The dictionary had been dug up for her by the director of the Lodz Jewish youth home.

Why Yiddish? She put it to me very simply. "I work in a Jewish cooperative. Most of my time is spent among people who speak and read and sing in Yiddish. I must understand the culture of my environment."

Though this is, admittedly, an unusual case, this is nevertheless significant. Lectures on Jewish culture in Polish draw large numbers of non-Jewish youth. My own talks on Jewish youth in the United States were all attended by non-Jewish youth, whose Yiddish-speaking comrades translated for them.

Interest in Outside World

The reception these talks received was also very revealing in terms of what most interests Polish youth about our country, as well as the breadth of their knowledge of our life and problems. The most frequent questions were about the life of the Negro people, and particularly of Negro youth. They knew about Harlem and wanted to know how the people there lived. Were the Negro people in the South actively building a national liberation movement? How great was the influence of the Progressive Party among the Negro people? What were the relations between Negroes and Jews? What about anti-Semitism among the Negro people? What about chauvinism among Jews?

They were anxious to know about Peekskill. Everyone knew of Paul Robeson. Everyone had heard his records on the radio. And in Lower Silesia, almost everyone I met told me, "I heard Robeson in Wroclaw." Concern about Peekskill was natural because it is easy for the former inmates of ghettos and murder camps to recognize the deadly parallel. And when I told them of the Jewish War Veterans, who took part in the affair, the answer came in one



Jewish youths learning mechanics at the Bytom ORT school.

word: "Judenrat" (the quisling "councils" which administered the ghettos for the nazis).

I came out of my two-week tour of Poland with a smattering of the most diverse trades and a healthy respect for the accomplishments of socialist planning and achievements. After visits to various cooperatives in many cities, I began to understand the full meaning of industrial growth in Poland. One great problem faces most cooperatives today, lack of space in which to expand.

In the Cooperatives

Time after time I heard the same story: "When we started four years ago, we had 30 workers in one or two small rooms. Now we have 400 workers, and though we occupy two buildings, we're being choked for lack of space." In almost every cooperative, carpenters and plasterers were at work; breaking and building walls, remodeling, making possible the most efficient utilization of space. Many times the lathes and machines drowned out the hammers and saws—work was proceeding right through the alterations.

The Warinsky and Botwin Cooperatives in Walbrzych, Lower Silesia, are a good case in point. Both started out together in a small workroom. Now the Warinsky Garment Cooperative occupies three large buildings, and is planning extensive expansion. The Botwin Leather Cooperative has had a similar growth. The original workroom is now used as a storeroom in the Botwin co-op.

Also in Walbrzych, I visited the Knitgoods Cooperative named after Gershon Dua, leader of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, who was killed over a year ago in an auto accident. This cooperative had been formed originally by seven partially disabled Jewish war veterans, who had contributed their pensions toward the setting-up of a few looms and other machines. Now, less than one year later, there are 150 workers there, 50 per cent non-Jews, and one-third youth. The co-op could be twice the size, were it not for the shortage of machines and space.

In every one of these phenomenally growing cooperatives, there are large youth brigades, in many cases setting an example for the older workers. Every factory was far out-

stripping its quota, and most youth brigades were working at anywhere from 110 to 160 per cent of the plan.

I visited one of these cooperatives at a very opportune moment. Work was just over, but the youth were still at their benches (it was a shoe factory) though the machines were still. At a table piled high with the felt tops of children's boots, the leadership of the youth brigade was sitting, visibly agitated.

The brigade had fallen behind that day, due to the prolonged absence of one of its members. He had been sent out on some assignment, had dawdled, and returned a half-hour late. To further compound matters, he had gotten into a huff when reprimanded, and had started a fight, thereby causing a still greater lag in production.

A Special Meeting

I was witnessing the special meeting called to discuss this matter. One after another, young people took the floor to express their feelings. Some were harsh in their criticism. The person in question was a member of ZMP and should have known better. Others felt he had not fully understood the consequences of his actions, and explained it to him on the spot what he had done. "Whom are you hurting?" a pretty dark-haired girl asked him. "Only yourself? No—you harmed all of us. We will have to work doubly hard now to catch up. And not only us—what about the children who need these boots?"

For three-quarters of an hour the discussion went on. Finally a vote was taken. The majority, including the person himself, agreed that he was to contribute 5,000 *zlotys* to the "Rebuild Warsaw" fund, and that he write a public apology to be printed in the Polish and Yiddish press.

The earnestness of the discussion had been infectious. I, too, became worried over the lost production. I sought out the brigade leader after the meeting adjourned, and asked how the quota would be made up. He smiled. "Don't worry," he said. "That one (pointing to the cause of all the commotion) will set us a pace that'll have us over the top in no time. It's happened before."

A great deal of the preparation for this development takes place in the ORT schools—the trade schools for Jewish youth, affiliated to the World ORT (Organization for Rehabilitation through Training). Though fully autonomous, these schools are included in the state economic plan, and teach those trades which are most needed. In many cases, they receive direct aid from the government, as in the Textile School in Bielsko, Upper Silesia, where a complete workshop was set up by the government to enable the students to receive the best possible instruction. These schools are, of course, completely free to the student, who receives a stipend during his training period.

Courses in the ORT schools vary with the particular trade. The electro-technical course, for instance, is three years. Future locksmiths receive two years training, while watchmaking is a one-year course. ORT-trained workers have won distinction in cooperatives and in state-owned in-

dustry. Almost every school proudly displays pictures of its graduates receiving rewards for outstanding labor.

With the tremendous strides being made in the economic life of the country, cultural development is receiving more and more emphasis throughout Poland and in the Jewish community as well. Among the youth, this emphasis is particularly felt. At the recent Jewish Cultural Conference, steps were taken to organize a youth section of the Cultural Society to replace the youth division of Central Committee of Jews in Poland, which has till now been coordinating all youth work.

Youth has taken a significant part in the Jewish choruses organized in Lower Silesia. My visit to the Walbrzych youth came one week after the first rehearsal, and already the recreation room and the streets outside were echoing with the lusty, if not musically perfect, voices of the young people. That evening, some of the members of the youth dramatic group gave an impromptu performance of some monologues in Yiddish, Polish and Russian. The performances were extremely good.

Cultural Life

Indicative of the level of cultural development were the requests I received in almost every youth home. In addition to the need for sport materials, which the Jewish Young Fraternalists (youth division of the Jewish People's Fraternal Order) has already begun to supply, I was asked to convey the need for Yiddish books. Very few books, particularly in Yiddish, remained in Poland after the war. The nazis took care to destroy cultural treasures as methodically as they fed the crematoria. As a result, there is an acute shortage of Yiddish books, particularly in view of the broad cultural activities. The youth home in Dzierzonow, for instance, is named after the American Jewish proletarian poet David Edelshtadt, but has none of his books. Similar situations exist elsewhere.

Needless to say, this appeal of Polish Jewish youth will not be ignored by the Jewish Young Fraternalists. As part of the celebration of Jewish Book Month, our clubs will conduct a campaign to collect Yiddish books and money to buy them. This campaign will also help refute some of the more subtle slanders against the Jewish community in Poland, which go something like this: "Sure, the Jews in Poland enjoy full equality. And because of that, they no longer develop Jewish culture. Yiddish is dying out, etc., etc." These slanders are particularly insidious, since they start with a "progressive" tone. People who reject the crude lies of the *Forward* and *Morning Journal* and the *New York Post-Home News* permit themselves too often to be roped in by the subtler approach.

I was fortunate enough to see two Jewish theater groups in Poland. The Lower Silesia Theater put on a performance of *Haman's Mapoleh* (The Downfall of Haman) by Dr. Chaim Sloves which far outstripped in richness of settings and costumes and size of audience the performance of the same play in New York a few seasons ago.

I saw the play on tour, in a jam-packed hall. I was told that this performance, which impressed me so greatly, didn't compare with the premiers in the newly-built theater in Wroclaw. The night I saw the play, easily half the audience was made up of young people, as was the case in the Lodz Jewish Theater, where the Soviet play *Taimir Calling* was being offered. Both these theaters are now state theaters, receiving full subsidization. In Lodz, a magnificent new building is being completed, where the theater will be permanently housed.

Jewish Schools

Not only the theaters, but the Jewish children's schools are now fully supported by the state, and enjoy equal rights as educational institutions. The Jewish schools are given special aid and consideration to compensate for their numerical weakness in relation to all the schools in Poland.

For instance, the law requires that there be at least 35 children in grades eight through 11. However, in Bulletin Number Nine of the Ministry of Education, dated June 17, 1949, special consideration is given to the Jewish schools, where the minimum number of pupils may be 15. Because of the shortage of fully qualified Jewish teachers, Jewish schools may hire teachers who do not yet have all the required degrees.

This information was given to me by the principal of the I. L. Peretz School in Lodz, where 400 children study in a large, comfortable building. After my talk with him, I sat in on a class in Yiddish literature. The 30 or so students were all about 13 years old, and displayed a very thorough knowledge of Yiddish literature. I couldn't help thinking back to my Yiddish education in the JPFO Children's Schools—in rented stores, lofts and meeting rooms.

All through Poland I became convinced that above all else it was the children's country. For them the feverish work in rebuilding Warsaw and the other cities; for them the ever-growing industrial expansion and the planning and building of a real people's culture. Polish Jewish youth and their younger brothers and sisters are marching to a new life. Nothing will stop them.

Birobidjan Sends a Telegram

IN the light of the persistent campaign about "anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union," a telegram printed prominently on the front page of *Pravda* of October 1, 1949, announcing that Birobidjan has completed the plan for the grain harvest ahead of time, is significant. The telegram, addressed to Premier Joseph Stalin, read as follows:

"We report to you, dear Joseph Vissaronovitch, that the *kolkhosi* [collective farms] and *sovkhozi* [state farms] of the Jewish Autonomous Region, Province of Kharbovsk, have completed the plan for the for the grain harvest ahead of schedule. The work of delivering grain to the state continues. (Signed) P. Simonov, L. Berkovitch, A. Smoliar, A. Mamikin."

BONTSHE SILENT

A Short Story
By I. L. Peretz

HERE, on earth, Bontshe Silent's death produced no impression whatever. Nobody could tell you who Bontshe was, how he lived, what was the cause of his death: whether his heart failed, or his strength was sapped, or his spine snapped under a heavy load. . . . Who knows—perhaps he starved to death. . . .

If a tram horse were to fall in its traces, that would create much more of a stir. Papers would write about it, hundreds of people would come running to look at the carcass, to scrutinize even the place where the accident occurred.

But that tram horse would not have received all that attention if horses were as many as people—thousands of millions of them!

Bontshe lived quietly and quietly he died. Like a shadow he passed through our world.

At the ceremony of his circumcision there was no wine to drink, no glasses clinked. When he reached 13 and maturity, nobody celebrated the event, and Bontshe delivered no brilliant speech on the occasion. . . . He was like a tiny grain of gray sand on the sea-shore. Thus he lived amid millions of similar grains of sand; and when the wind lifted him up in the air and carried him across the sea, nobody noticed it!

When he was alive, the wet mud retained no mark of his foot; when he was dead, the wind tore out the little board that marked his grave—the grave-digger's wife found it and used it to boil a potful of potatoes. . . . Three days after Bontshe's death the grave-digger could not tell where he had buried him.

If Bontshe had a tombstone over his grave, it might perhaps be found by an archeologist some hundred years hence, and the name of "Bontshe Silent" would perhaps once more reverberate through our air.

A shadow—he left no impression of himself in anyone's brain, or in anyone's heart. He left not a trace behind him.

"No kith, nor kin"; lonely he lived and lonely he died.

Perhaps, if it were not for the bustle of human life, somebody might have heard occasionally the cracking of the bones of his spinal column under the weight of his burden; if people had more time to spare, somebody might have noticed occasionally that Bontshe (also a human being!) had lack-luster eyes and terribly sunken cheeks; that even when he carried no burden on his back, his head was bent low, as if he were searching for his grave. Were people as few as horses pulling tram-cars, somebody might

perhaps have asked now and then, "Why don't we see Bontshe any more? What has happened to him?"

When Bontshe was taken to the hospital, the corner he had in a basement did not remain unoccupied a minute—a dozen men like himself had been waiting for it, and now they drew lots for it. When his body was removed from the hospital and taken to the morgue, dozens of poor sick people claimed the bed on which he lay. And when he was removed from the morgue, 20 corpses, extricated from the ruins of a house that had collapsed, were brought there. And who knows how long he is going to lie peacefully in his grave? Who knows how many people are already waiting to claim the few square feet of ground?

He was born quietly, lived quietly, died quietly, and was buried still more quietly.

NOT SO IN THE OTHER WORLD. THERE, IN HEAVEN, BONTSHE'S death created a great stir.

The big horn of the times of Messiah resounded through all the seven circles of heaven: "Bontshe Silent has passed away!" The biggest angels, with the widest wings, flew around excitedly and spread the news: "Bontshe Silent has been invited to the Domains of Heaven!" There was a great bustle and rejoicing in Paradise: "Why, it is Bontshe Silent coming! Bontshe Silent himself!!!"

Young little angels, with diamond eyes, golden wire-wrought wings and silver slippers, flew gaily to meet Bontshe. The noise of the wings, the tapping of the slippers, and the gay laughter of the young, fresh, rose-lipped angels filled the heavens and reached the Throne of Glory, and God himself now knew that it was Bontshe coming.

Father Abraham came to the gate of heaven, stretched out his right hand to welcome the arrival, a sweet smile lighting up his old features.

Whence that clatter of wheels up in heaven?

It is two angels rolling a golden easy chair on wheels for Bontshe to sit on in Paradise.

What is that scintillating thing some angels have just carried away?

It is a golden crown studded with precious stones—also for Bontshe.

"Even before the Heavenly Court has passed judgment?" the saints ask astonished. There is a note of envy in their question.

"Why," the angels reply, "the trial will be a mere formality. Even the Angel Accuser will have nothing to say. It won't last more than five minutes. It's not just anybody—it is Bontshe!"

When the little angels lifted Bontshe on their wings

I. L. PERETZ is the classic Yiddish writer. This story has evoked a large body of critical writing.

and sang in his praise; when Father Abraham shook his hand warmly as if he were an old friend; when he heard that a chair had been prepared for him in Paradise; that a crown would grace his head; that nothing would be said against him in the Heavenly Court—Bontshe, just as had been his wont on earth, kept silent. His heart sank with fear. He was sure it was nothing but a dream or, perhaps, just a mistake.

Such things had happened to him down below, too. Many a time it had happened that someone would smile to him by mistake or say something pleasant—only to turn away immediately and swear in disgust.

"That's the kind of luck I have," he thought.

And he kept his eyes closed, afraid the dream might vanish, and he might wake up in some cave amid snakes and scorpions. He was afraid to utter a sound, move a limb, lest he be recognized and cast into a bottomless pit.

He trembled all over. He did not hear the compliments of the angels, did not see them dance in his honor. He made no reply to Father Abraham's hearty welcome, and when he was led to the Heavenly Court he failed to greet the judges or to say "good morning."

He was overpowered by fear.

His misgivings became even worse when he noticed the floor of the heavenly courtroom—pure alabaster, studded with diamonds. "My feet treading on such a floor?" He was paralyzed with fear. "It must be some rich man, or rabbi, or a saint they are expecting," he thought. "He will come, and then it will be all over with me!"

THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED DISTINCTLY: "THE CASE OF BONTSHE Silent!" and handed the documents to the Angel Defender, saying: "Read, but make it short!"

But Bontshe did not hear the President's words. Everything swam before his eyes; his ears rang. But through this ringing he heard the sweet voice of the Angel Defender ever more distinctly. It sang like a violin:

"His name fitted him as an artistically tailored suit fits a graceful body."

"What can he mean?" Bontshe asked himself. He heard a voice interrupt impatiently: "No similes, please."

"In all his life," the Angel Defender continued, "he never complained—neither against God nor against men did he complain; his eyes never flashed hatred, he never raised them accusingly towards heaven."

Bontshe still did not understand a word. The impatient voice interrupted again.

"Without rhetoric, please!"

"Job revolted, yet Bontshe was unhappier than he—"

"Facts, just facts, please!" the President interrupted still more impatiently.

"When he was eight days old, he was circumcised. . . ."

"Leave out the realistic details!"

"The *mohel* did a bad job, he failed to stop the blood."

"Go ahead!"

"He was always silent," the Angel Defender continued.

"Even when his mother died and a stepmother took her place when he was 13. She was a snake, an evil witch."

"Perhaps, after all, it is me he's talking about," thought Bontshe.

"No insinuations against third persons, please," the President interrupted gruffly.

"She grudged him every crust, she gave him mildewed bread, and bast instead of meat . . . while she herself drank coffee with cream."

"Get to the point!" the President insisted.

"But she used her sharp nails freely, and the scratches and bruises showed through his torn rags. . . . Winter, during the worst frosts, he was sent outside barefoot to chop wood for her. His hands were young and weak, the logs too thick, the axe too blunt. . . . Often he sprained his arm, froze his feet. Yet he was silent; not even to his father—"

"That drunkard!" the Angel Accuser laughed decisively, and Bontshe felt a chill pass through his frame.

"—did not complain!" the Angel Defender concluded the sentence. "And all the time he was lonely," he continued. "No pal, no school . . . always in rags, never a free minute. . . ."

"Facts!" the President demanded again.

"He was silent even when his father seized him by the hair and threw him out of the house on a snowy winter night. Slowly he rose to his feet and ran for his life. . . ."

"He was silent all the way. . . . When the hunger was most unbearable, he begged for bread with his eyes alone."

"It was a wet and murky evening in the spring when he came to the big city at last. He entered it as a drop falls into the ocean. He was thrown into prison the very same night. But he was silent; he never asked why he was arrested. When he came out of prison he looked for work. That was the hardest. But he kept silent. . . ."

"To find work was harder than the work itself—he kept silent."

"Bathed in cold sweat, bent under the weight of heavy loads, his belly convulsed with pangs of hunger—he was silent."

"Bespattered with mud, spat on, pushed off the sidewalk with a heavy load on his back, and forced to walk amid the rushing *droschkies*, carriages and tram-cars, with death staring him always in the face—he kept silent."

"He never figured how many *poods* he carried for a penny; how many times he fell during an errand, how often he nearly dropped in a faint while waiting for his hard-earned pennies. He never drew comparison be-



tween his fate and that of others. He just kept silent.

"He never asked loudly even for the money he had earned. Like a beggar he would stand in the doorway, and his eyes would reflect the look of a hungry dog. 'Come later!' and he would disappear like a shadow, to come later and beg for his earnings even more silently. He was silent even when cheated of part of his pay by being given a counterfeit coin!

"He just kept silent. . . ."

"So he does mean me, after all!" Bontshe consoled himself.

THE ANGEL DEFENDER DRANK SOME WATER AND CONTINUED:

"Once a change occurred in his life. . . . A coach on rubber wheels was rushing past, carried by runaway horses. . . . The coachman had been thrown off his seat and lay with a broken head on the pavement. The frightened horses frothed, sparks flashed under their hoofs, their eyes burned like torches in a dark night—and inside the coach a man sat more dead than alive.

"And Bontshe stopped the horses.

"The man he saved was a philanthropist, and he did not forget to repay Bontshe for his service. He handed him the killed man's whip, and thus Bontshe became a coachman. Nor did the philanthropist stop there; he provided Bontshe with a wife. More—he provided him with a child, too.

"And Bontshe still kept silent!"

"Sure, it's me he means!" Bontshe was now almost convinced. Yet, he could not muster the courage to raise his eyes or cast a glance at the heavenly judges.

The Angel Defender went on:

"He kept silent even when his benefactor went bankrupt soon and failed to pay his wages. . . .

"He kept silent even when his wife deserted him and left an infant on his hands. . . .

"He kept silent 15 years later, when the infant, now grown big and strong, threw him out of the house. . . .

"Sure, that's me!" Bontshe rejoiced inwardly.

"He kept silent," the Angel Defender resumed in a sad and tender voice, "even when that same benefactor settled with all his creditors, but did not pay Bontshe a kopek of his defaulted wages; and even when (riding again in a coach on rubber wheels, drawn by a pair of thoroughbred horses), that same man ran over Bontshe. . . .

"He just kept silent! He did not even tell the police who was the man that had knocked him down. . . .

"He kept silent even in the hospital where one is expected to cry out!

"He kept silent when the doctor refused to attend him unless he was paid a fee, and when the nurse refused to change his linen unless given a tip in advance!

"He kept silent during his agony, and silently he died.

"Not a word did he utter against God, not a word against men!

"I have finished!"

BONTSHE BEGAN TO SHIVER ALL OVER AGAIN. HE KNEW THAT

the Angel Defender would be followed by the Angel Accuser. He wondered what *that* Angel was going to say. Bontshe himself remembered little of his life. Even when he was alive on the earth, the minutes that had passed were immediately forgotten. . . . The Angel Defender had reminded him of many things in his speech. . . . And he wondered what the Angel Accuser might bring up against him.

"My lords!" The Accuser began in a harsh and sarcastic tone, and stopped short.

"My lords," he began again, in a somewhat softer tone, but stopped short again.

Finally that same voice said almost softly:

"My lords! He kept silent—and so will I!"

A hush fell over the court. Then a new voice was heard—tender and tremulous, like a harp: "Bontshe, oh Bontshe, my child, My dear and beloved child, Bontshel!"

Bontshe's heart seemed to melt. He was ready to open his eyes now, but they were filled with tears. . . . He had never felt such a sweet sadness. . . . "My child, my Bontshel!"—since his mother's death he had never heard such a voice nor such words. . . .

"My child!" the President of the Court continued. "You suffered every kind of pain, and you kept silent. Your limbs are broken, your whole body is in wounds, and all the recesses of your soul are bleeding—and you have always kept silent. . . .

"Down there they did not appreciate your silence! Perhaps you did not know yourself that you could cry, and that your cry would bring down the walls of Jericho! You were never aware of the great power that lay dormant in you. . . .

"Below on earth, your silence was not rewarded; but the earth is the Kingdom of Falsehood. Here, in the Kingdom of Truth, you shall get your reward!

"The Heavenly Court will not try you, nor will it pronounce sentence on you. It will not specify what is to be your share in heaven—take whatever you desire, for everything is yours!"

Now Bontshe raised his eyes for the first time. He blinked, for the brilliant light almost blinded him. Everything was so bright, everything sparkled, everything sent off rays of light: the walls, the furniture, the angels, the judges. He lowered his tired eyes:

"Do you really mean it?" he asked uncertainly and timidly.

"Of course," the President of the Court reassured him. "Of course. I am telling you: everything is yours. Choose and take whatever you please. For you will be taking what is your own."

"You really mean it?" Bontshe repeated his question, but somewhat more at ease.

"Of course, of course, of course!" they assured him on all sides.

"Well," Bontshe smiled, "if that is the case, I want a hot roll with fresh butter on it every morning!"

Judges and angels hung their heads in shame and embarrassment. The Angel Accuser roared with laughter.

THE JEWISH FARMER

By Ben Field

IT WAS with the help of an editor of the first journal of its kind, *The Jewish Farmer*, that I hired out as a hand and came face to face with the American Jewish farmer. The farms that I worked on were in New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey, where at least half the Jewish farmers are settled. My employers were immigrants, and each of the three represented a different segment and class and there was much in their background and temperaments which quartered and diced and made them go to pot. The most prosperous, a social democrat who was proud of the portrait of Ferdinand Lasalle in his library, lost his shirt with the catastrophic drop in farm prices after World War I: he was a driver, an exploiter of his help, and few in the neighborhood shed tears to see him uprooted. The New Jersey man, a scholarly patriarchal Isaac, fought it out by going into the rooming house business but was smashed. Only one of the three was able to take it, and he by devious means, becoming finally a raiser of game fowl and a politician in a one-horse town in Rensselaer county on the left bank of the Hudson. Not until the 1930's during the depression did I get to know the small working farmer who has become integrated into the American community, and who celebrates in all his activities the true marriage of the best qualities of the Jew and the Yankee.

One cannot understand the dynamics of the American Jewish farm movement unless one keeps in mind the gnawing land-hunger of the masses of the immigrants of eastern Europe and their dreams of a liberating, new and green Jerusalem. Out of the tight arks and boardings of centuries they burst, flooded the cities on the Atlantic seaboard and trickled out into the rural areas, ill-equipped to break the edge of their chief problems simultaneously—to become "Americanized" and to make a living on the land.

In very few instances did their "double jeopardy" give them the double-bitted tool to hack out a new and fruitful life. For their history, as well as the history of their brothers in the urban areas, with all its richness and dimensions, the hardships, heroism, success, failures, is yet to be written; and often where such an attempt has been made, it is a thin soup, dishwater which we are fed to minimize the hostility and anti-Semitism which threatened the early immigrants. Witness Gabriel Davidson's *Our Jewish Farmers*, which plays down the anti-Semitic antagonism that so often ringed the founders of the first Jewish settlements. Often it must be said that the natives were extremely friendly until outside forces turned them against the "Hebrews": the Tennens of Uhlerstown were on the best of terms with

their Pennsylvania Dutch neighbors until Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent* began to circulate among them. One is filled with admiration for men and women who with one fist tore their bread from the soil and with the other were ready to meet threats and boycotts and machinations in communities where anti-Semitic prejudice stirs boldly anew.

Among the frontiersmen and colonists there were few Jewish farmers. There is a record of the Campanels, a family of Portuguese Jews, who married Yankee women, served in the Revolutionary War, worked the land and were also weavers. There were Jewish planters in the South. A fuller picture pans out in the next century. Now and then one comes across the tracks of an heroic individual like Emanuel Woodic, who arrived in this country in 1854, became a seaman, served in the bloodiest battles of the Civil War and then settled in Michigan, where he became a leading citizen and a foremost farmer. Or there is the majestic figure of August Bondi, who fought with John Brown and farmed in Kansas, so graphically described by Morris U. Schappes in the November issue of *JEWISH LIFE*.

In general, however, the Jews did not venture out beyond the seaboard except in groups and colonies. Some of these groups like the *Am Olem Hevra* have a fascinating history. A noble project, a sort of Jewish Brook Farm Commune, its members were idealists who lit a flare out in Douglas County, Oregon, in 1882, and broke up only because among its leaders were utopians with their roots in the sky. Other settlements were made in South Dakota by immigrants who crossed the plains in covered wagons, in Arkansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Wyoming. All of these colonists were routed by adverse physical conditions and by insufficient capital and lack of experience and had to return to the East.

The Last 50 Years

The second leaf and the brighter and the more telling one in the history of the Jew as farmers covers the last 50 years. The character of the immigrants had changed. They were a sturdier lot, drawn in larger numbers from the working class, and often they remained in the cities becoming acclimated to the new land, using their experiences as a sort of hardening room, and only then going out to break their ground. Organizations sprang up to give them a none too generous hand, among them the Baron de Hirsch foundation and later the Jewish Agricultural Society. There were failures among them, but within several decades a handful has grown until at present there are about 150,000

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Jews settled on farms, only as yet a thin scattering in our rural population which exceeds 30,000,000.

The success of some would make texts for sermons for Horatio Alger and Dale Carnegie: the peddler who became the Rice King of America; the immigrant who with his boys runs one of the finest farms in the wheat belt; the biggest seed potato grower in Aroostook county, Maine, etc. There is no branch of agriculture into which a few have not penetrated, whether it is mushroom growing or the nursing of flowers.

These stories of personal success are dwarfed by contributions to agriculture which are for the general good. David Lubin founded the International Institute of Agriculture; Selman Waksman, the discoverer of streptomycin, has through other discoveries bolstered the health of farm stock; Jacob Lipman, dean of the School of Agriculture at Rutgers, a foremost soil expert, showed American farmers how to wring the utmost out of the soil, and Joseph Rosen discovered a new hardy rye. Jews helped shape the Agricultural Adjustment Administration under Roosevelt, and they were among Henry Wallace's closest associates during the New Deal days. Jews were the first to establish credit unions in 1910, cooperatives where the control was vested entirely in the membership and the little man with the single ewe carried as much weight as the owner of the flock. They were in part responsible for the Federal Farm Loan Act, the Federal Land Bank, Land Bank Commissioner Loans, etc. Indeed, the progressive features of much of the New Deal farm owes much to them.

A Progressive Wedge

What brought to birth the New Deal in the countryside and shot blood and milk into its veins were the struggles of the dirt farmers to hold on to their farms, fight off banks, insurance companies and the dealers who controlled the market. Jews played an honorable part in those battles. They were among the organizers of the first national farm conference of rank and file farmers to be held in our country which helped rivet attention on what was going on between the fences. This conference was followed by others which created turnbuckles between farmer and worker; they were shops and seminars in which Jew and non-Jew met to work together and so help ride down the prejudices which have such thick cover in our rural areas. It was during this period that I recall meeting a father and son in Iowa, farmers who had been arrested by the national guard and locked up in a stockade for standing up for their rights, both of them full of the pus of anti-Semitism because the only Jews they had met were avaricious merchants in town and the grim portraits of the "Jew banker" drawn for them by Father Coughlin over the radio.

At this critical and exciting time in our history dozens of farm and union organizers, many of them students, spread the antibodies which helped counteract the deadly poison of bigotry. They were a wonderful group of high-spirited young people with hearts of oak and boundless energy. Some were graduates of the National Farm School in

Doylestown, Pennsylvania, where they had led strikes against the reactionary policy of a school supported by Jewish philanthropists, whose class interests were not in harmony with the interests of the mass of our people. These boys and girls hitchhiked from village to village, often living on the meagerest of meals, giving a hand with the field and the house work, bringing out groups of farmers to join workers on the picket lines strung around scores of plants which led to the triumphant unionization of millions of workers, to the birth of the C.I.O. and the growth of the A.F.L. These boys and girls were the seeddrills of the future.

Unfortunately this militancy characterized only a wedge of the Jewish farm population. The older generation and the middle farmers pulled back from action. They were the ones who behaved as if they were not at home in America, as if they were fearful drops in the ocean of its life, and they were always concerned about the opinions of the non-Jewish neighbor. Petty bourgeois in their outlook, they were gummed by the philosophy of the Jewish Agricultural Society: one should be neutral in labor struggles, should put forward one's best foot delicately in dealing with one's non-Jewish neighbors, and should keep at all costs from being tarred by unseemly and precipitous reaction to bankers, mortgage companies, middlemen, all the forces which have a stranglehold on the farmer. It was the kind of topsy turvy philosophy which stands a man on his head, empties his pockets and has him "follow the master" after those in the Jewish community who play the sedulous ape to the most unsavory characters in American business. It exemplifies the pragmatism of a "good" Jew like the late Congressman Sol Bloom, who declared that there was no Jewish problem, that anti-Semitism concerned the Gentiles because they were in the majority and thus could do something about it! I remember how, as a member of a farm organization, the United Farmers League, I visited a synagogue in the Connecticut Valley, stayed for Sabbath services and after *kiddish* made an appeal for support of a conference which eventually proved to have been worthwhile. Our friends were cordial but uncooperative.

History shows the Israelite to have been a first-rate fighter and farmer. He had to be, for on the strip of land called Judea he was surrounded by the most powerful nations of ancient times, always in danger of being cracked in that iron vise. So long as there was unity and political wisdom and favorable divisions among the big states, the Jew was able to hold his own. This unity is the lesson for the Jew, fighter and farmer on his strip of land today. This lesson has been learned well by farmers who live in central Jersey, which has been called the cradle of the Jewish farm movement, the Jersey which also cradled the Revolution.

The New Farmer

Recently I visited some Jersey farms in the company of a sodbuster who has raised wheat and flax and beef cattle out West. We cut across country where important battles of the Revolutionary War were fought: here Washington

had his headquarters and there Tom Paine had written his glorious words on a drum that called the people to action. In this country there are hundreds of poultry farms separated by woodland of oak and pine and lakes scattered like silver, like small change. The roads gleam yellow as maize, as scratch corn, and the houses have the fragrance of well-stocked corncribs. The farmers are former garment workers, painters, furriers, mechanics, storekeepers, veterans of both world wars. They are active in the Farmers Union and in cooperatives like the New Jersey Federated Egg Producers Association and the Farmingdale Lakewood Freehold cooperative, backing the Progressive Party, fighting bigotry, rooted deep in their communities. Many of them took over ramshackle farms and transformed them into well-run, compact plants, a delight to the eye.

Here the older generation, the immigrant father and mother, work with their children. The Jew being born here

is as knowing as Jacob and at the same time as tough as Esau, the man of the field, the expert handler of tools, the hunter after a better life, the fighter who is in the American grain. He and his stand at the opposite pole from the Morgenthau and the Sulzbergers and the Lehman, who have influenced the American Jewish farm movement too long and who by their support of our present foreign policy are threatening to turn our people into a rooster crowing in a slaughter house. These new farmers are a sturdy, dogged, practical lot. Though they have done fairly well during the war and since, they see the dangers ahead. The dark clouds of an economic crisis gather on the horizon. They know who the warmongers are and they are aroused over the growing attacks on our civil liberties. They are not putting up their doublewindows and hunting for storm cellars. They are men and women who sally forth to meet their problems.

YIDDISH GRAMMAR IN ENGLISH

By Morris U. Schappes

SEVERAL years ago, in a lecture at the School of Jewish Studies, I had occasion to quote a Yiddish poem. Since I assumed that most of my audience would not understand Yiddish, I had prepared a verse translation of the poem. Reading the translation, however, seemed to me to be an inadequate way of conveying some if not the full flavor of the poem. I therefore tried to achieve my purpose in this roundabout way: first I read my translation, then the original Yiddish text, then the translation again.

In the discussion, the first to take the floor introduced himself with the information that he was over 30, did not know Yiddish but was Jewish, and had lived in New York all his life; and then he went on to express his gratification at learning that Yiddish was a language in which *poetry* could be written! Now what startled the audience and me was not that this man did not know Yiddish. The majority of American Jews do not know Yiddish. But there were many languages this man did not know. Yet I am certain that although he did not know French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Bulgarian, Italian, Turkish, and a score of other tongues, he had taken it for granted that in these languages one could, of course, write poetry. Since he was a progressive person, his ignorance of these languages was not mixed with contempt. Yet for Yiddish he had a special place in some linguistic sub-cellar for sub-languages. Here ignorance *had* been mixed with contempt, *had* been soiled with scorn.

His attitude was neither unique nor accidental, although one hated to find it expressed in a progressive group. For the status of a language is generally determined by the status of the people that gave it birth and keep it living.

The social standing of Yiddish in the cultural world is a reflection of the status and level of equality of the Jewish people in those countries in which Yiddish is a language of the Jews. The intensity of anti-Semitism is generally an index to the attitude to Yiddish. Where the ruling classes hate, despise, discriminate against and persecute the Jews, the Yiddish language, as well as everything else Jewish, is mocked and attacked. It was not so long ago that the Yiddish theater was outlawed in all the countries that are now the East European people's democracies.

Yiddish as "Jargon"

The anti-Semites continually heaped their scorn upon the Yiddish language. They even denied it was a language by calling it a "jargon." Here is the *American College Dictionary* definition of "jargon": "1. unintelligible or meaningless talk or writing; gibberish. 2. (in contempt) any talk or writing which one does not understand. 3. the language peculiar to a trade, profession, or other group: *medical jargon*. 4. a conventional form of a language which has been greatly simplified by its speakers to make it more intelligible to foreigners, especially servants or employees, as Pidgin English. 5. a kind of speech abounding in uncommon or unfamiliar words." Yet the false and insulting characterization of "jargon" was pinned on the Yiddish language, and even penetrated into the ranks of the Jews themselves.

In this penetration the Jewish bourgeoisie was chiefly instrumental. Both the assimilationist and nationalist Jewish bourgeoisie, as part of their practice of following the

prejudices of the dominant non-Jewish bourgeoisie in hostility to the Jewish masses as in other respects, combined to mock Yiddish. The assimilationist bourgeoisie abused Yiddish as a "jargon" and insisted that Jews should learn and speak only the language of the country — Russian, Polish, German, English, or whatever the case may have been. The nationalist bourgeoisie, especially the Zionist and religious sections, abused Yiddish in favor of Hebrew, the "holy tongue." (In Eastern Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century, some of the assimilationist bourgeoisie stressed both Hebrew and the language of the land as instruments of their "enlightenment," and later there were some Zionists who, while scorning it, used Yiddish as a propaganda medium for the aggrandizement of Hebrew, but these and similar qualifications do not change the basic pattern.) In the United States, for instance, since the 1870s, the Jewish bourgeoisie has been hostile to and contemptuous of Yiddish, and condescended to use it only when it was found impossible to convey bourgeois ideas into the ranks of the masses in any other language.

In relation to the stigma of "jargon," another point is worth noting. The word "jargon" is found both in English and in Yiddish (in the latter the accent is on the last syllable), but the word literally means two different things in these two languages. The English definition has been given above. In Yiddish, however, "jargon" was used originally to distinguish the language from Hebrew; Yiddish was "*mame loshen*" (the mother tongue) as contrasted with Hebrew, "*loshen Kodesh*" (the holy tongue). In exactly the same way had Spanish, French, and Portuguese at one time been called "mother tongues" in contrast to Latin, the language of the Catholic Church. The equivalent for "mother tongue" in English is the word "vernacular." Thus Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary*, Fifth Edition, defines "vernacular" as "one's mother tongue." Therefore the accurate and proper translation of the Yiddish word "jargon" would be the English word "vernacular." When Sholom Aleichem called his beloved Yiddish a "jargon," he was no more contemptuous of it than was Dante of Italian when he wrote his epics in the vernacular or than was Bacon when, having written his scientific treatises in Latin, he wrote his famous *Essays* in the vernacular English. But when Jacob Schiff used to thunder against Yiddish as a jargon, he was despising it as gibberish.

Struggle for Respect

Now of course Yiddish is a language, and the fight for respect for that language is part of the struggle for the equality of the Jewish people, and therefore is part of the class struggle. In our country, the myth of Anglo-Saxon cultural supremacy weighs heavily upon all foreign languages, but, in a rising tide of anti-Semitism, particularly upon Yiddish. Yet the pressure of the democratic forces here has won a few victories with regard to the social status of Yiddish. The publication and wide sale within the past

few years of three volumes of translations from Sholom Aleichem into English are one indication. One cannot admire Sholom Aleichem and despise the language in which he wrote.

Another straw in the wind is the obtaining of an unstable foothold for Yiddish in a few colleges and universities, where Yiddish is now being offered as a foreign language. Two years ago, when the excellent new *American College Dictionary* was published, I noted that while Dutch was defined as "a Germanic language," Yiddish was described as "a group of closely similar High German dialects. . . ." In a letter to Dr. Clarence L. Barnhart, editor of the *Dictionary*, I asked: "Is it characteristic of a 'dialect' to have so long a history as Yiddish has, to include as diversified a literature, to have its literature translated into so very many languages, to have so many widely dispersed people continue to use it, and even to be, as your own definition notes, the 'official language' in Birobidjan?" I explained the social implications of the derogatory opinions of Yiddish as a "jargon" or a "mongrel dialect" and inquired whether there was any scientific linguistic reason why Yiddish should not be defined as a language. In his interesting reply, Dr. Barnhart expressed his willingness to change the definition in this direction.

New Interest in Yiddish

Now inevitably an increased general respect for a language will lead some persons to wish to study it. In the past few years, a very small trend towards the study of Yiddish by young people and adults has begun to manifest itself, in the colleges already mentioned and in certain adult educational institutions. One product of this trend which can at the same time be a strong impetus to it, is an important book that appeared this summer, the first of its kind, I understand, to be issued anywhere. The title is *Yiddish for Adults, A Textbook for Beginners*, the author to be congratulated is Nathaniel Buchwald, the publisher is The Book League of the Jewish People's Fraternal Order, the price, \$3. Its novelty consists not in the fact that it is an elementary textbook, but that it is written in English and is designed for adults whose primary education has been in English and who know no Yiddish. There is a fundamental difference between formal study of a language one already speaks habitually (as when American-born children study English in their public schools or when Polish-born Jewish children study Yiddish in their public schools in Lower Silesia) and study of a language that is linguistically "foreign." It is for adult Jews, to whom Yiddish is in this sense "foreign," that this book is excellently designed.

Mr. Buchwald brings special qualifications and an unusual experience to his task. Several decades ago, Mr. Buchwald, then a Russian-speaking young immigrant intellectual, himself learned Yiddish as a "foreign" language at the suggestion, I believe, of Moissaye Olgin, then editor of the *Freiheit*. Mr. Buchwald not only mastered Yiddish, but became a superlative Yiddish stylist, dramatic critic

and journalist, one of the mainstays of the *Morning Freiheit*. The unusual experience came when he agreed to teach an elementary Yiddish class at the School of Jewish Studies a couple of years ago, and found there was no available textbook! There were English-speaking young men and women eager to learn Yiddish—but no texts! They had come to add a cultural tool to their equipment. Some students wanted to use Yiddish as key to the cultural treasures of the Yiddish classic prose writers or the American Yiddish proletarian poets. Some wanted it as an indispensable means of obtaining voluminous current information on Jewish affairs in our and other countries, for which purpose reading the Yiddish press is a necessity. Some wished to use it to enrich relations with their parents and some to help enlarge the horizons of their children. Every term of the past five years of the School of Jewish Studies has found these courses in Yiddish for English-speaking adults well-attended, even when other courses, with a vital social, cultural, historical and theoretical content were going a-begging. Mr. Buchwald, however, solved his pedagogic problem in a particularly successful and enduring way. He devised this textbook. "*Yiddish for Adults*," he explains in his Preface, "is not designed for the purpose of quickly teaching the student pidgin Yiddish. Rather, it aims at a systematic presentation of the fundamentals of Yiddish grammar and idiomatic constructions. . . ."

Now if anyone wants printed evidence of the fact that Yiddish is a language, he can find it in this textbook. Here he will find in all its impressiveness the rules of grammar, regularities, irregularities, idioms, conjugations, declensions, active and passive voices, imperative and subjunctive moods, directional prefixes and reflexive verbs—all this and lots more—nothing, surely, to be either sneezed or sneered at—and certainly nothing to be frightened away from. For Mr. Buchwald, fresh from his experience of teaching the living students who today wish to learn Yiddish, has seen this material forth with clarity and simplicity.

Uses of the Book

The book is also obviously designed for a dual purpose: for use in the classroom, under the guidance of an instructor, and for those who wish to study the lessons by themselves rather than in a class. As an aid to such self-study, the 138 written exercises in the volume have the answers conveniently supplied in the back of the book, together with vocabulary lists in both English and Yiddish of about 1,000 words. For the absolute beginner who knows not a word of Yiddish but who has had at least a grammar school education in English, this volume can be of distinct service.

But I would commend it to another type of possible user. There are many Jews who are primarily English-speaking, but who know some Yiddish, even speak it after a fashion, and read at least the Yiddish press and even some Yiddish literature, yet who do all this more or less fluently but without any formal knowledge of the language. Being myself

somewhat in this category, I can testify that I went through this volume page by page, doing every one of the exercises and carefully checking my answers. The consequences may be that I shall hereafter be a little less trying of the patience, indulgence, and good-humor of my cultured Yiddish-speaking acquaintances who have tolerantly put up with my homespun and untutored Yiddish.

Repeated use in the classroom will undoubtedly itself suggest to the author various improvements in format and arrangement, as well as the elimination in future editions of minor slips born of haste and carelessness. One revision, however, I should like to suggest: the increased use in the vocabulary and the written exercises of sentences and words based upon the life and struggles of the working class, a field of reference which I found surprisingly neglected.

Yiddish for Adults is another instrument by which we can combat the contempt for the Yiddish language that is part of the anti-Semitic ideological arsenal. The effectiveness of an instrument lies in its use.

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Letters from Abroad

LONDON POLICE PRO-FASCISM

London

It is common knowledge that the London police do not hide their bias against workers or anti-fascists—and show evidence of this on any occasion that arises.

Since the end of the war, and under the protection of the Labor government, the British fascists have been active under different names in various parts of the country, but particularly in London. The police have had to deal with the resistance to these activities by the people of London. In the opinion of some observers who have made their views public, the police use their batons and authority mainly against the anti-fascists and Jews. From time to time letters in the press have accused the police authorities of bias. On September 23, a letter was published in *New Statesman* accusing the London police of excessive zeal in dealing with anti-fascists and Jews. The letter has created a furore and is certain to have repercussions when Parliament reassembles. The writer of the letter, a press reporter, gives the following evidence for his statement:

"As a reporter on a national daily newspaper, who has covered some 30 of the Hackney and Dalston battles in the last two years, I can say quite coldly that the behavior of police attending fascist meetings is openly pro-fascist and anti-Semitic. This is, maybe, a 'grave allegation' and a 'serious charge against our Metropolitan Police Force.' . . . But consider this. In Dalston Lane, Hackney, one recent Sunday, I watched the beginning of counter marches by 'Union Movement' members and anti-fascists. A youth appeared, running for his life, pursued by about 20 men. One of the pursuers was swinging a car starting-handle, and two more had knuckle dusters.

"There were 32 policemen (I checked the figure with a senior local police officer) standing within 30 feet. They watched this youth being tripped, beaten with the starting-handle and kicked in the ribs. His glasses were smashed, one eye closed, and his forehead cut, as far as I could see, in about three places. Those who attacked him ran off down the street without one police hand raised to stop them. But the man on the road was picked up bodily, slung into the police van, and threatened with a truncheon. A policeman shouted 'Get in, you Yiddish bastard.' It's

hard to believe also, that this man, set upon by thugs, was later charged with creating a disturbance. It was quite clear to me, and to several other experienced observers from other London papers, that in the first instance, the police deliberately held off until the man had a severe beating. I put the matter to an inspector at the fascist meeting in Ridley Road, E., half an hour later. 'If a few more of the bleeders got that treatment, we'd be freer of Jews along here,' he said."

So far there has been no disclaimer to these charges by the London Metropolitan Police Force or the Home Office, which is the authority to whom the London police are responsible. Meanwhile events are piling on which make any such disclaimers practically impossible.

For instance, recently a meeting was called by the League for Democracy in Greece in the Shoreditch Town Hall, which is in the vicinity where the fascists are active. Before the meeting a number of people were beaten up on the way to the Town Hall. The police were informed of these incidents. Later, the meeting itself was disrupted by fascist hooligans, windows of the Town Hall were broken and many people injured. Police protection was called for, but was some time in appearing. This case is serious because the police station is across the road from the Town Hall. Why were the police so slow in arriving or ineffective in their protection? Why was only one person arrested throughout the evening while so many people were beaten and assaulted?

This incident has been followed by many more. A Hackney local newspaper reports the following incidents during one day:

"Mr. and Mrs. A. Ottolangui say they were attacked near their home in Old Nichol Street, Shoreditch, by a gang of

men who drove up in a van. Mrs. Ottolangui was taken to a hospital, but was not detained.

"Two Stoke Newington men were slightly injured in a fracas, which started on a bus in Kingsland High Street.

"A trader in Kingsland High Street, Dalston, Mr. Jack Barden, said he was locking his shop when he was 'hustled' by a group of youths, one of whom broke a window of the shop. A Highbury man said he was assaulted nearby by a gang of youths, who broke his spectacles."

Where were the police? The answer is not forthcoming. It may very well be that the attitude of the London police has been influenced by the many Palestinian police who had been drafted into the London police force after they were withdrawn from Palestine. It is well known that many fascists joined that force and that many others have become rabid anti-Semites as a result of their experiences in Palestine.

However, it is the responsibility of the government to tackle these questions in drastic fashion. Will, however, the Labor government undertake the necessary remedial measures? Will it root out these reactionary elements? Judging from its treatment of the magistrate who administers justice in this same area, one cannot be too optimistic. This magistrate has shown a bias not usually associated with the British magistrature, which tries to maintain a certain decorum. He has been guilty of obvious offensive remarks towards Jews. In a recent case he drew the attention of an accused to the fact that he, the magistrate, was administering British law not "Jewish law!"

A letter, published also in the *New Statesman*, gives facts showing this bias. Here are a few of these facts:

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"In October, 1948, Franklin, who was one of a large group trying to assault people leaving an anti-fascist meeting, pleaded guilty to using insulting words and behavior and to having in his possession offensive weapons, namely an empty bottle and an imitation firearm. He was also seen to throw a stone. Mr. Malone, discharging him, said: 'You are entitled to hold your views and express them in public. Anybody who tries to stop you . . . will be punished.'

"Last week, two anti-fascists also pleaded guilty to possessing offensive weapons (three pebbles) and threatening behavior (throwing a piece of wood), respectively, and were sentenced to one and two months imprisonment. In October 1948, a man called Doyle was arrested by a detective whom he had unfortunately mistaken for what the police evidence reported him as calling 'the dirty b—s of the 43 Group.' [An anti-fascist Jewish veterans organization.—*Eds.*] He too pleaded guilty to using insulting words and behavior. Mr. Malone discharged him with the words: 'You are entitled to express your opinions about this meeting or any other meeting.'

"Last week, an anti-fascist, who pleaded not guilty to the same charge and who was only expressing his opinions, was sentenced to imprisonment for six weeks."

What is the attitude toward this situation within the Jewish community? Except for a few protests from Jewish organizations, very little has been heard. The Board of Deputies, the British Section of the World Jewish Congress, the Anglo-Jewish Association, etc., usually maintain silence. If they have done anything, it is so secret that no one has yet heard of it. This is the usual way for leaders of British Jewry to carry out their responsibilities. Meanwhile, the fears of London Jews are growing. They dare not go out at night unaccompanied. This is no exaggeration. In the areas badly affected, this is the case, notwithstanding statements to the contrary. For the present the danger is still limited to a few areas and to small groups of fascist hooligans, but there can be no doubt that as the economic conditions become worse, these anti-Jewish excesses will grow.

British public opinion, preoccupied with its economic and social problems, will not permit the attitude of the London police to go unchallenged. One can rest assured that as soon as Parliament reassembles, the matter will be raised. It is to be hoped that the Jewish community will not lag and will play its part in the fight required to put an end to these dangerous developments.

L. ZAIDMAN

Book Reviews

HOWARD FAST'S STORIES

By David Alman

Departure and Other Stories, by Howard Fast. Little, Brown & Co., Boston. \$3.

Not many writers are dedicating either their words or their deeds to the honored Abraham Lincoln Brigade today. Howard Fast, in his *Departure and Other Stories*, does just that.

It is difficult to read these stories without being recalled to his dedication, for these stories reflect faith in human beings, in all those known and obscure, who have made freedom their business.

"Departure," the title story, is the tale of a young man who receives his baptism in life itself in Spain. His fate as a human being is inexorably committed to Spain's fight for freedom, and it is there that his first victories and disappointments, his maturest yearnings and anger become known to him. Fast invokes the image of a young Spanish girl as the symbol for this young man of all that is vibrant and quickening in the fight for freedom. That she is unknown to the hero and only seen by him for an instant, enables Fast to compress into the briefest space a genuinely human story whose tragedies and hopes are not lost in a welter of complexity.

This same simplicity of treatment occurs in "An Epitaph For Sidney," the tale of a young Jewish boy who is driven by life to the Communist Party, to Spain, to the South and finally to his death in Italy in 1944. The story reveals no "hero" in the romantic sense of the term, but an

"everyday man who responds to history with dignity, grace and, above all, understanding.

It is inevitable that, in a collection of stories written over a span of 11 years, some fail to move us as deeply as others, but such stories number only a few of the 19 in this collection. But this range has its merits, for it reveals Fast's versatility of interests. Nothing is alien to him. In "The Old Wagon," he gives us a picture of the old West; in "Onion Soup" and "The Gray Ship," he takes us among the lonely seamen; in "Where Are Your Guns" he deals with the first Jewish settlers and fur traders in America. India is his locale in "The Little Folk From The Hills," "The Rickshaw" and "The Police Spy." The last, incidentally, is rich in quiet and ironic humor. In "Dumb Swede" he achieves a piece of true Americana, and in "The First Rose of Summer" he tells us of adolescent love.

Those blinded by worship of "form" or "technique" will find, as they can in all of Fast's works, room for quarrel. They will carp at some characterizations, or bemoan plot structure and the absence of "niceties" so overwhelmingly present in the empty, useless tales of many writers. Others can honestly wish for more deeply revealing insights into the past and present of which Fast writes. But one could not ask for greater warmth, for a clearer attachment to people, to their problems, to their history.

The bulk of Fast's novels are laid in the past, and it is one of the merits of this book of short stories that most of them deal with recent times, as does "The Suckling Pig," a comment on middle-class life, and "Wake Up, Glad," an insight into the defensive humor of a worker embittered by his labor. One cannot help but hope that Fast will more and more turn his vast talents to light up the future, just as his past works have helped to light up the present.

One such story dealing with the present is his "Three Beautiful Things," a record of a conversation between a typical big-money movie producer and a writer of honest historical fiction. With his customary flair for showing up the stupidities of those who command time to stand still, Fast enmeshes the producer in the confusion that is logic to Hollywood. But there is a logic, of course, and the producer, speaking of making a film about Thomas Jefferson, reveals it this way:

"Jefferson is immortality. But there are three beautiful things that are immortal-

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ity in the box office. There is beautiful love. There is beautiful music. There is beautiful laughter. . . . If you make a picture without them, even about Thomas Jefferson, what have you got?"

Fortunately, the truly beautiful love, music and laughter can still find their way between the covers of Fast's books. There is nothing in these stories to please the Un-American Committee and the Department of Justice, both of which have been conspiring to send Fast to prison.

Those for whom these stories were written, the people, cannot afford to lose Howard Fast for even the shortest time.

MARXISM AND THE ARTS

By Margaret Schlauch

Social Roots of the Arts, by Louis Harap. International Publishers, New York. \$2.25.

It would be difficult to imagine a better first book than this to put into the hands of anyone beginning to explore his way into Marxist criticism as applied to the arts. Louis Harap employs as his point of departure the broadly illuminating statements made by Marx and Engels and amplifies them by original insights and new applications, so that a whole system of implied esthetics becomes explicit. While an engagingly simple style commends the book for hitherto inexperienced readers, a variety of fresh materials will reward the more learned. Not too often can we hear reaffirmed the Marxist principles concerning culture and ideology as related to the underlying conditions which produce and shape them: that is, the changing modes of production by means of which socially organized human beings have wrested from nature the goods enabling them to live humanly. These principles have so often been vulgarized, over-simplified, distorted and misunderstood that they require restatement initially in any Marxist esthetic document.

"Only the historical materialists," says Harap, "have grasped the crucial significance of the artist's participation in production and of the status of his product as a commodity" (p. 17). Other schools of thinkers have contributed significantly, indeed, to the knowledge of art's relation to technology, social movement and economic institutions. But dialectical materialists can offer a peculiarly cogent analysis, recognizing at once the ultimate causal validity of objective material factors, and their transmitting,

transmuted function in the hands of creative human beings.

Having laid down the fundamental correlation, then, between modes of economic production and manifestations of the creative arts, Harap proceeds to discuss such specific matters as form, tradition, taste and audiences. He shows repeatedly how the sum total of other factors in society bears upon the ways in which people sing and dance, write poetry and mold plastic materials; even, indeed, how they design dresses and furnish houses and divert themselves on the most elementary level. Nor is the exposition statically presented. There is constant reference to the movement of art in a moving society.

The author touches on some intricate and fascinating problems, such as the discrepancy often noticeable between the level of production and the level of artistic achievement. Either one may be low, he reminds us, while the other is high. Another problem is the conspicuous lag which the arts sometimes show when they trail slowly behind political and social advance in eras of rapid historical movement. It has often been noted, but still awaits exhaustive special study.

Such matters could not be elaborately treated by Harap in a book of this scope, but I for one should have welcomed a slightly more extended discussion of a few of them. The discrepancies in social and artistic development are among the first phenomena cited by those eager to refute Marxist art criticism. The interrelations usually become quite clear with a slightly more ambitious documentation and a more detailed analysis. It would be useful to have refutations of typical instances that have been adduced with an air of triumph by anti-Marxists. I have in mind, for instance, the ready borrowing of forms and themes from social classes which created them (demonstrably in some sort of relationship to the mode of production) into quite different ones with different economic bases.

Among the most arresting features of

this book is the unhackneyed use of evidence and illustration. In the best Marxist tradition, Harap has made use of conventional scholarship and technical research for the informational groundwork on which he builds. So it is with literary criticism, the history of musical instruments and instrumentation, the changing fashions in women's clothes, and many other topics. As Marx and Engels themselves so often demonstrated, the implications of thorough and responsible bourgeois scholarship are almost patently dialectical-materialist: all that is needed is a bringing to the surface and a meaningful restatement of the evidence already at hand.

One might wish that a few additional topics had been included. There is a survey of more or less familiar information about art under German fascism, which might have been diversified by accounts of analogous situations in Spain, Italy and certain Latin-American countries with quasi-fascist regimes. The problem of relativism versus objective standards in music emerges but is not resolved, at least for me (p. 95). Here Dr. Harap is speaking of the inability of Westerners to listen comprehendingly to Chinese or Hindu of South Sea music. I should like to have him explain to me, a non-specialist, how this accords with statements in the Soviet document on music (1947) on the needs and requirements of "the human ear" in general. I like what is said about folk music and the likelihood that its cultivation, while desirably tonic today, is "a phase of popular culture [that] is likely to pass" (p. 134).

These are suggestions for supplementation rather than differences of opinion about what is said. The lucid exposition and the excellently chosen references in the notes to *Social Roots of the Arts* will provide its readers with a departure into exciting experiences among books and art forms. The special problems here indicated may invite its author, as I hope, to further publication in the chosen field where he is so obviously at home.

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Letters from Readers

A Dissenting Opinion

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Ben Field's review of Robert Mende's *Spit and the Stars* in your July issue did a disservice to a rising young Jewish American author, and to the magazine's aim of building up a progressive Jewish life in America.

What Field did was to write a typical "profit and loss" review, of the kind we might expect in the commercial press. First, he totted up the favorable side of Mende's book: "Here are the typical Jewish American working class families"; "Robert Mende has an ear for dialect"; "The Habers are the family next door," etc.; and then the other: "He [Mende] does not however seem to take his talent seriously"; "He does not know what details to exclude . . ."; "He oversimplifies and vulgarizes his Jews," etc. Next Field calls the author's attention to other novels dealing with similar subject matter and comes to the conclusion: "As soon as he [Mende] learns better control, he will be a more effective writer."

Now, I submit there is little of value in such a review for the author, the reader or the publication. The reviewer has simply noted his reactions, drawn on his store of familiarity with novels of similar thematic approach and made phrases. What kind of review is it to say, as Field did: "Unfortunately, Mende is still like a young boy who seems to have become conscious overnight of certain organs"? Is this supposed to give the writer an understanding of what kind of weaknesses to try to overcome in his next work? Or is it supposed to give the reader a capsule summary of the book in review? It is simply a kind of phrase-making which is glib, offhand and unjustified.

The aim of a review must be to give insight and clarification, not to draw up a literary bank statement. A reviewer in JEWISH LIFE, it seems to me, must ask of a book: "Does this reflect life; does it express the truth; does it show the reality of Jewish life—or does it not?" When the reviewer does not implicitly ask these questions, he exhibits the confusion of his own critical standards and gives no aid to writers and readers who, together, must help build up progressive Jewish life in our country.

Yet the progressive movement and especially its Marxist component has a guide

to literature offered many years ago by Engels and still valid today. It is the demand for realism in art. "Realism, to my mind," Engels says, "implied, beside truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances." Here is the yardstick for criticism as well as a guide to writers. From such a vantage point, Field might readily have noted the important thing about Mende's *Spit and the Stars*—that here is an author who looks life in the face, who revels in it and is filled with an uncontrollable exuberance which is more than simply a mark of youth. Mende is a partisan writer in the most important sense of one who takes the side of life, of progress, and who focuses his attention on what is new and coming into existence. When so much of contemporary fiction is filled with the musings of the death addicts, a young writer like Mende, full of gusto and good and bad philosophy, is a new champion on the side of progressive Jewish life.

Mende's exuberance and humor, his poetry and vitality are diminished and sometimes marred by his failure to plumb into the complexity of characters, to give the complexity of truth. Mende has recreated what he has known and experienced, but this is not enough for one who would create "typical characters in typical circumstances." The surface reflection of life, however exact and painstaking, cannot reveal the fundamental truth about characters or about society. Mende's basic ideological flaw is that of naturalism. His basic political flaw is his failure to understand and reveal the truth that Jews in America live a life of an oppressed national group. It is not, as Field claims, that he "seems to have become conscious overnight of certain organs"; it is rather that he is not yet conscious of the basic political facts of life. But that he is a writer to be welcomed by all sections of progressive Jewish life is proven by his instinctive turn to the working class for his Jewish heroes, and to the progressive movement and labor struggles for the source of the growth of his characters.

MILTON S. OST

New York City

Ben Field Replies

Mende's chief weaknesses as a writer are neither naturalism nor his failure to understand and reveal the truth that Jews

in America live the life of an oppressed national group. For a piece of naturalistic writing may be gripping, and it is possible for a writer who is politically unclear to produce competent work deserving of respect. What makes it difficult to read Mende is his flippancy and sophomoric attitude toward his work. The gaiety and vitality that Ost sees often burlesque and stereotype Mende's characters and there is a vulgarity which comes perilously close to *Abie's Irish Rose*. Mende makes mudpies of the Habers and their neighbors and flattens them without being conscious of what he is about. The confusion dwells in him and not in the reviewer, who seriously examined the book and talked about certain novels to point out how Schneider, Roth and others solved problems Mende made a botch of. Mende should take his craft and himself a little more seriously. An integration in literature and in politics, too, and fewer of his handstands would go a long way, I believe, toward giving him the control he needs to become a "rising young Jewish American writer."

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FROM THE FOUR CORNERS

(Continued from page 2)

REP. JAMES J. MURPHY, of Staten Island, N. Y., announced on his return from a junket to Franco Spain that "Mr. Franco speaks our language. He understands our way of life." Murphy favors an exchange of ambassadors with Spain and a \$400,000,000 loan. The Liberal Party shares with the Democratic Party the party designation of Murphy.

MILITARY AUTHORITIES have definitely decided not to release the anti-Nazi film, *Nuremberg—Its Lesson for Today*, for exhibition in American theaters. Produced by the army, the film gives the story of Nazi crimes against humanity and is considered a powerful indictment of anti-Semitism. It is charged that the reason for suppression of the film is fear of arousing public sentiment against failure of denazification and army plans for the new West German state.

JEWISH WAR VETERANS held their 54th annual convention at Miami Beach in October. Among the resolutions passed were those opposing the internationalization of Jerusalem and urging drastic checks on Nazi return to power in Germany. Jackson J. Holtz, of Boston, was elected national commander.

EUROPE

AUSTRIAN JEWS are worried over the rightist victory in the elections in October. The neo-Nazi League of Independent Voters obtained 11.7 per cent of the vote and won 16 seats in parliament. Following the election the neo-Nazis celebrated by shouting the Nazi "Horst Wessel" song and scattering paper swastikas in the streets. The largest party, the *Volkspartei*, won 44 per cent of the total vote (a loss of 5.6 per cent over 1945). This party had been charged with trying to reach a pre-election agreement with the neo-Nazi League, is extremely reactionary and has been negotiating with former high Nazis for support. The *Volkspartei* has formed a coalition government with the Socialists, who lost 5.9 per cent of their 1945 figure. The Communist vote remained about the same as 1945. . . . One result of the election is seen in the release of Nazi films that had been previously banned by the Military Government because of "heavily politically tainted casts." AMG has refused to interfere with showing of the films.

LAMP-SHADE FANCIER Ilse Koch, one-time mistress of Buchenwald, whose war crimes life sentence was commuted by Gen. Lucius D. Clay to four years last year, was released from the U.S. Army prison at Augsburg on October 17. She was immediately arrested by the German authorities, who will try her for crimes against German camp inmates, and transported to Aichbach prison to await trial. By U.S. Army orders she was moved with the utmost secrecy, no reporters or photographers being allowed to witness the transfer. She will probably come up for trial in February.

A NEW MASS GRAVE thought to hold the remains of 300,000 concentration camp victims was recently discovered at Dachau. The grave is reported to be about 360 feet long, 60 feet wide and 18 feet deep. The Allied Commissioners have tried to keep the news from the public for fear of "inflaming" public opinion.

A "RENAZIFICATION" REPORT has been prepared by Max Kopstein of the Chicago American Jewish Congress which reveals, among other things, the following facts: of 1,416 sentences imposed in war crimes cases, 23 per cent, or 324, were changed or nullified by the U.S. reviewing authorities; in one month in 1948, administrative decisions reduced the number of German "major offenders" from 403,000 to 28,000; as of February 1948, or 11,357 charged with being "major offenders" or "offenders" under Nazi rule, all but 968 were acquitted, and of 163,797 charged with being "lesser offenders," all but 11,782 were acquitted; Dr. Gerhardt Peters, director of a German chemical factory, who supplied poison gas for the extermination of 300,000 concentration camp prisoners, was sentenced to five years in prison, while his fellow directors were acquitted; the publisher of Streicher's *Der Stürmer* was fined 5,000 marks.

THE ROME JEWISH WEEKLY *Israel* called the attention of the Italian authorities and Catholic Church leaders in late October to the growing number of anti-Semitic articles in the Italian press. A recent article in *L'Asione*, Catholic weekly, charged the Jews with "hostility toward the cross of Christ" and said that "Jews are always Jews" and referred to the "two thousand year-old shadow of blood" cast by the Jews.*

A MOSLEYITE FASCIST was fined one pound (\$2.80) and paroled for one year in October for using insulting language at a group of Jews leaving an East End of London meeting. . . . F. W. Skinnard, Labor M.P., revealed in a letter to the *New Statesman and Nation* in October that 27 of the 168 former Palestine policemen now serving in the London police force were assigned to the Jewish areas of London, particularly the East End. Skinnard thought that this was "not an undue proportion." . . . The Board of Deputies of British Jews, the National Council for Civil Liberties, local trades councils and the London Schoolmasters Association were among the organizations that demanded denial to Mosley fascists of permission to meet in city school buildings. The London school committee refused to deny the permission.*

THE BUCHAREST JEWISH STATE THEATER opened its current season in October with a play about a revolt by Auschwitz camp inmates. The play was written by Ludovic Bruckstein, 29-year old former camp inmate.*

A ONE MILLION DOLLAR export arrangement was concluded between Rumania and Israel in October. Rumania agreed to sell livestock, timber, maize, newsprint, chemicals and other products to Israel in exchange for oils, drugs, cordage and artificial teeth and the balance in currency.*

NEWS FROM POLAND . . . Israel-bound Polish immigrants will be allowed to take with them all of their personal property. Of the \$12,000,000 trade agreement between the two countries, \$700,000 will be paid in slots to Poland by Israel, collected in Poland from Polish citizens who wish to transfer part of their capital to the Jewish state on leaving Poland. . . . The Liquidation office of the Warsaw District has decided to return to the Jewish bodies in the city, the Religious Congregation and the Warsaw Jewish Committee, all 26 buildings, courts and

cemeteries which belonged to the Jewish Religious Community of Warsaw before the war. . . . The Jewish Association for Culture (Ykuf) held a nationwide conference in October to promote the spread of Jewish culture among the Jews of Poland. The Association has grown to a membership of 14,000, which is one-quarter of the adult population, and has established 50 local branches, 43 libraries, 17 amateur groups six orchestras and 10 choirs.

ISRAEL

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ISRAEL held its 11th congress in late October. More than 4,000 Jews and Arabs attended the opening meeting on October 24, at which those present gave the 12 U.S. communist leaders a five minute ovation. The Party is the only one in Israel which unites Arabs and Jews. Opening speeches by party secretaries Shmuel Mikunis, Meyer Vilner and Esther Valenska indicated a significant growth in membership, political clarity and in prestige. Greetings were received from Communist Parties all over the world. The message from Wilhelm Pieck, president of the new East German Republic, affirmed that "The German people acknowledges its guilt and crime against the Jews."

THE HISTADRUT EXECUTIVE voted 43-15 in October to cut monthly wages by over two pounds because of the alleged drop in the cost-of-living index. Mapam delegates vigorously opposed the wage cut. On October 26, several thousand workers demonstrated in Tel Aviv under the auspices of Mapam and the Communist Party in protest against the wage cut. The two parties are also setting up local workers' committees to fight the cut in the living standard. The Histadrut denounced the demonstration and threatened to expel all affiliated members responsible for organizing the protest.*

A REPORT OF an investigation into the death of communist Mironianski while he had been held prisoner under the Mandate, showed that he had died as a result of a beating during interrogation in which both British and Jewish police took part.

INCLUSION OF MAPAM in the Israeli cabinet was the subject of discussions between the Mapai and Mapam in October, after the Mapam national council agreed to accept Mapai's invitation to join the government, if a common program can be worked out. In the meantime Mapam rejected a Mapai proposal for a combined slate in the forthcoming municipal election.*

THE PALESTINE LABOR LEAGUE, jimmied Arab workers' organization affiliated with the Histadrut, has 8,000 members in 28 branches.

THE AMERICAN EXPORT-IMPORT BANK announced in late October that it had released a credit of \$20,000,000 to Israel for purchase of machinery and materials in the United States for "industrial development." The colonial nature of the loan is emphasized by the fact that only light industry is involved: textiles, food, processing chemicals, pharmaceutical products, work and building materials, glass and cotton weaving materials. Of the \$75,000,000 already allocated, 28 millions were for agriculture, 20 million for building and loans to local authorities, 15 million for industry, 12 million for transportation.

DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS of 1949, a total of 147,848 immigrants had entered Israel. During July 16,819 immigrants entered Israel.

(Items marked with an asterisk (*) were drawn from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency news service.)

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