

Jewish Life

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ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE MORNING FREIHEIT ASSOCIATION

FEPC CRUSADERS IN WASHINGTON

by Hershl Hartman

GERMAN JOURNEY

by Jean and Louis David

STEPHEN WISE: AMERICAN AND JEW

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WE DISCOVER THE TENANTS

by Phil Piratin, M.P.

FRIDAY HE WAS A NEW MAN

a short story by Yuri Suhl

PROGRAM ON THE LEFT

by Louis Harap

From the Four Corners

Edited by Louis Harap

AT HOME

BRITISH ARMS SHIPMENTS to Arab countries will not be protested by the United States, Secretary of State Dean Acheson twice affirmed in January after several protests by Rep. Jacob Javits and others that Britain was rearming Arab countries and thus increasing danger of a "second round" of hostilities with Israel. Acheson maintained that it was "desirable" for Arab countries to get arms for "security" purposes, and he did not believe that war was being prepared. "With regard to the shipment of planes and light naval vessels to Egypt," he said, "it should be recalled that Egypt is an important and strategically located nation of 20,000,000 people." An Israeli spokesman pointed out in late January that "It is difficult to assert that for the purpose of maintaining internal law and order the Egyptian government requires destroyers, submarines, dozens of Vampire and Meteor jet planes, large quantities of the heaviest types of tanks and artillery as well as tens of thousands of automatic rifles, much of this from American war surplus in Europe."

THE WHITE CIRCLE LEAGUE, Chicago's unhooded Klan outfit, openly circulated racist propaganda under the eyes of the police in the heart of the city in January and collected signatures for a petition addressed to Mayor Martin H. Kenney and the City Council urging that they "halt the further encroachment, harassment and invasion of white people, their property, neighborhoods and persons by the Negro—through the exercise of Police Power." Civic leaders are condemning the hate outfit. On January 7th the Conference to End Mob Violence in Chicago met for the third time. More than 200 representatives of church, labor, civic and business groups attended. They demanded that state and local officials take action against the League. St. Clair Drake, chairman of the conference Research Committee, criticized newspaper silence on the League and said, "How is it that the Chicago papers have permitted themselves to be 'scooped' by the *Illinois Worker* in exposing this organization, which threatens the security of our citizens?" Meantime Boris Joffe, executive director of the Jewish Community Council, which represents 261 member organizations in the Jewish community, reported that "there has been an increase in anti-Semitic discrimination in employment in recent months."

AN "INVESTIGATION" of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations was demanded by Alfred Kohlberg, president of the American Jewish League Against Communism. Kohlberg based his demand on the facts that the Brooklyn College Chapter of Hillel, which had joined 10 other campus groups in a class stoppage to protest barring of one of the 11 communist leaders from speaking on the campus, was suspended with the others for this action; that Rabbi Herman I. Pollack, the chapter director, had then been invited to speak at Brandeis College; and that Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld, national director of the Hillel Foundation, had made no secret of his support for Wallace in 1948. Rabbi Lelyveld refused to comment on these "scurrilities."

THREE KLAN GROUPS, the Federated Klans of Alabama, the Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and the Association of Carolina Klans, merged into a united body in Jacksonville, Fla., in late January. The merger declared "war" against the B'nai B'rith, the Federal Council of

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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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Churches of Christ in America and the National Association for Advancement of Colored People. The only Klan groups still outside the united body is the Klavern of Atlanta.*

A JEWISH BOY'S PUPPY was poisoned in Brooklyn because its owner was Jewish, according to a letter by Mrs. Sadie Handley, Catholic neighbor of the boy's family, published in the *Brooklyn Eagle* on January 5. She wrote of the "pranksters" that "They've opened the door before and yelled threats and insults. This is the way they thought they'd celebrate New Year's—pick on the Jews."

A BOOKSHOP in Los Angeles that sold tickets to the Gerald L. K. Smith meetings held there in January, is selling *The Protocols of Zion*, infamous anti-Semite forgery.

FIVE JEWISH UNITED NATIONS employees who charge that they were dismissed over a year ago because of anti-Semitism were reinstated, UN Secretary General Trygve Lie announced on January 17. An extended investigation of the charges was made. The three supervisors involved would no longer be connected with the UN, according to reliable sources.

(Continued on page 32)

FROM MONTH TO MONTH

DANGEROUS CONFERENCE

INSPIRED by the most fascist-minded elements in America and piloted by the American Legion and the National Association of Manufacturers, delegates from about 58 national organizations met in New York on January 28-29 in an "All-American Conference to Combat Communism." The conference's long-range perspective was to lay the groundwork for a mass fascist movement and to step up war preparations. The immediate aim was to create a "proper" atmosphere for the hurried passage of repressive measures like the Mundt-Ferguson bill.

Present at this conference were notorious hysteria-mongers like William Randolph Hearst, Jr., California's witch-hunter Jack B. Tenney, Senator Karl Mundt, George Sokolsky and a representative of Merwin K. Hart's pro-Franco and anti-Semitic National Economic Council. Rubbing shoulders with these labor baiters were labor "leaders" like CIO's James B. Carey and Harry Read and AFL's Matthew Woll and Lewis G. Hines. James Carey was eager to show that he had "arrived" and that he would not let down these enemies of labor who had invited him into their counsels. Carey delivered himself of the shocking statement that: "In the last war we joined with the communists to fight the fascists. In another war we will join with the fascists to defeat communism." Here was the "third force" revealing its true colors with a vengeance, betraying the bankruptcy of its program and its sellout of the American people.

As shocking as the participation of labor "leaders" in this conference was the presence of Jewish organizations, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith and the Jewish War Veterans. Have these organizations too decided that it is now permissible to join hands with the anti-Semites, with the Ilse Kochs and the Julius Streichers? Have the leaders of these organizations learned nothing from the tragedy of our people?

The editorial statement of the American Jewish Congress in *Congress Weekly* for February 6th pointing to the dangers inherent in this meeting and rebuking the AFL, CIO and Jewish organizations for participating, was a service to the cause of democracy and the Jewish people. But one must point out that Congress' own exclusionary activities, which Congress tried to justify in the same editorial, can only help to further the attack upon civil liberties and thus undermine the democratic cause.

Expressions of alarm over this conference have been heard throughout the country. However, they have been far from sufficient or organized enough to meet the threat embodied in the conference. Certainly the rank and file

of the CIO, the AFL and the Jewish organizations must make known their opposition in unequivocal terms.

MORGENTHAU PROPOSES

WHILE Henry Morgenthau was in Israel during January on a mission for the United Jewish Appeal, of which he is chairman, he urged in a press interview the conclusion of a Middle Eastern Pact similar to the North Atlantic Pact. Such a move, he said, would be "a coalition against aggression by Russia." When Israeli workers in Tel Aviv, led by the communists, demonstrated against this war-inciting statement, the police swung their clubs against the demonstrators, injured two and arrested six. And in the Knesset, Communist member Meyer Vilner called this statement by its right name, a "war-mongering" manifestation. United Workers Party (Mapam) member Bar Yehuda stated in the Knesset that the government's failure to repudiate this statement was serious.

To those in Israel who are aware of the sinister role that the United States and Britain are playing in the Middle East, this proposal to bring Israel under the military thumb of the United States—for this is what a Middle Eastern Pact means—has bitter irony. Who was it that fought every effort to establish an independent Israel? Who proposed and plumped for sanctioned installment of Abdullah-Bevin at the gates of Israel? Who encouraged the Arab invasion of the infant state in 1947 and 1948? Who is now encouraging a "second round" of war in the Middle East by arming the Arabs to the teeth with tanks, heavy arms and even destroyers? Obviously, the Anglo-American combination has done this and by that token is the "aggressor" threatening Israel.

On the other hand, who fought tooth and nail for the establishment of the state of Israel? Who frustrated the many-formed attempts to rob Israel of its modicum of independence? Who actually helped supply Israel with the arms to resist the Arab-Bevin attack at the darkest hour? And who is fighting to prevent the predacious Abdullah-Bevin from taking over the Arab portion of Palestine and thus presenting an ever-present threat to Israel? Equally obvious, the Soviet Union and the new democracies.

Thus Morgenthau has dared to advocate a war-mongering anti-Soviet commitment for Israel that even the Israeli government, not unfriendly to the Anglo-American bloc, would not have the temerity to suggest.

The American Jewish community, a great part of which are contributors to the UJA, should let Mr. Morgenthau know that they will not tolerate conversion of Israel into a military puppet of Anglo-American imperialism.

COLD WAR FANTASY

THE executive of the AFL, meeting in Miami Beach on February 4, delivered itself of a wild and fantastic charge that could have been uttered only under hysteria bordering on hallucination. The Soviet Union, it appears, is guilty of genocide—of the Jews! A “fiendish plan” is under way in the Soviet Union “to make impossible the continued existence of Jews in Russia and its satellite areas . . . under the flag of a savage war against so-called cosmopolitanism.” The AFL executive seems unmoved by the fact that anti-Semitism and racism of every kind are not only under severe legal prohibition in the socialist countries, but are rapidly being wiped out in actuality. Nor does the executive think it worth notice that the Jews in these countries are undergoing an integration into the economic, social and political life of these countries. We did not see any indignant statement issuing from the executive when the UN Social and Economic Council scotched a proposal made by the World Federation of Trade Unions to look into discrimination against workers all over the world on account of race or color.

For the truth is that the AFL executive's extravaganza is really a piece of hysterical cold war propaganda. It is an effort to revive the flagging and discredited big lie about “Soviet anti-Semitism” that was noised about so much last year. At that time we dealt with the problem at length (see *JEWISH LIFE*, June-July 1949) and we do not need to go over the ground again here. The real meaning of this new AFL canard is that it is making its small contribution to the sustaining of a hysterical anti-Soviet atmosphere that is discouraging agreement with the socialist world and hence leading us toward war. The utter hypocrisy of this AFL statement, which purports to register concern for the Jews by an appeal to the UN to amend the genocide pact to include anything that the rabid anti-Sovieteers choose to accuse the Soviet Union of, is clear from the AFL executive's failure to do anything about Jimcrow in its own midst. The executive has never proposed that the UN do anything about racial discrimination in the United States or anywhere else in the world—except in those countries where it does not exist—the Soviet Union and the new democracies.

AFL: PLEASE NOTE

IN *Pravda* of February 3rd, there appeared a bit of news that the capitalist press did not pick up. But this item would throw cold water on the campaign to persuade people that the Soviet Union was excluding Jews from cultural life. *Pravda* reported the conclusion of the plenum of the Union of Soviet Writers, and noted the names of the newly-elected administrative board of 15. Of these 15, the names of two Jews appear, Boris Polevoy and Emanuel Kazakevich, both of whom are Stalin prize winners in literature. The latter is an eminent Yiddish poet who turned to writing in Russian during the war. The election of two Jews to these important posts hardly gives comfort to those who

would spread the lie that the Soviet Union has gone in for anti-Semitism.

FOR DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

IF Superintendent William Jansen of the New York schools is under the illusion that the case of May Quinn is closed, he will find himself mistaken. Miss Quinn, we recall, has twice been let off with mild reprimand after being charged with bias, once in 1946 when she was accused of anti-Semitism, and again in December 1949, of anti-Negroism. But this time the people of New York are determined not to let the case rest. Plans for arousing the people and maintaining the pressure on the Board of Education to dismiss this biased teacher, who is unfit to teach the children in democratic schools, are gathering momentum.

Nor can we separate the issues in the Quinn case from the inquisition of leaders of the Teachers Union (CIO) and the prospects of a resumption of the witch-hunt in the schools. Although the Feinberg witch-hunt law against teachers has been declared unconstitutional in the lower courts and is at present being appealed, constant vigilance is needed against the attempts to achieve the same objective by other laws that attempt to “avoid” unconstitutionality, or by administrative harassment of progressive teachers. The Quinn case and the witch-hunt are opposite sides of the same coin of anti-democracy in the schools.

The people should be alert to the developments in this situation, should support the growing movement to oust May Quinn and to turn the back the witch-hunt against teachers.

YKUF CONFERENCE

BROAD and deep concern with progressive Jewish culture was evident from the successful Ykuf (*Yiddisher Kultur Farband*) conference held in New York on January 27-29. About 460 delegates from all over the United States and Canada and many more guests attended the meeting. Greetings were received from many Jewish communities in Europe and elsewhere. A number of papers were read and several panels in the separate arts were held. The crowded meeting halls and the overflow panels attested to the continuing vitality of progressive Jewish culture in Yiddish. The delegates placed the greatest importance on the problem of Yiddish creative activity as a means of fighting against the danger of war and the heightened threat to the Jewish people from resurgent fascist activity here and abroad.

It was unfortunate that no panel was held on progressive Jewish culture in English. Various speakers discussed this lack and the conference's realization of it was expressed in a resolution stressing the importance of Jewish culture in English, especially among the youth. At its first meeting the newly-elected national committee of Ykuf designated a special commission on Jewish culture in English under the leadership of Morris U. Schappes and George Starr. The work of this commission will be followed with interest.

FEPC CRUSADERS IN WASHINGTON

By Hersh Hartman

IT WAS to have been a "polite" gathering, a fitting background for high-sounding Truman administration speeches. But the Civil Rights Mobilization in Washington, D.C., Jan. 15-17, turned out to be a powerful outpouring of the determination of the Negro people to win civil rights despite possible embarrassment to either the Truman administration or the bourgeois and social democratic leaders of the over 50 "non-communist" organizations which reluctantly called the Mobilization.

The official press releases prior to January 15 predicted "close to 2,000" participants, and amazement on the faces of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People publicity staff in handing out the final official figure—4,037—was in itself eloquent testimony to the woefully inadequate preparations on the part of the leadership and to the increasing militancy of the Negro people.

Even that figure was, of course, far from the truth. Some 800 other delegates had been "purged" by the Credentials Committee. Many others had not even bothered to duel with the finger-men charged with preserving the political "purity" of the Mobilization. They had come "to secure these rights" so solemnly pledged by both major parties, and were not to be dissuaded by Truman apologists.

Excluding Allies

The determination and militancy of the thousands who came to Washington from 33 states, became evident at the very start of the Mobilization—and even before that. The leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had never wanted to call such a demonstration. It did so only because of a direct order from last year's NAACP convention in Los Angeles. From the very beginning all the communications and statements from the office of Roy Wilkins, acting secretary of the NAACP, dealt more with excluding "communist" organizations and left wing CIO unions than guaranteeing the success of the Mobilization itself. First, the offered cooperation of the militant Civil Rights Congress was rejected in the typical red-baiting phrases of social democracy. Then, when it had been announced that Democratic and GOP bigwigs would completely dominate every public session of the Mobilization, Wilkins rejected the demand that Congressman Vito Marcantonio, the most consistent fighter for civil rights legislation in the House, be allowed to speak as representative of the Progressive Party. Under CIO orders, delegates from the independent United Electrical Workers Union and the ten CIO unions under Rankin-like "investigation"

HERSHL HARTMAN is a young reporter on the *Morning Freiheit*.

were ordered barred. Solemn warnings were issued to the New York branch of the NAACP, which had publicly announced that every member of NAACP, regardless of political or trade union affiliation, would be accredited as a delegate.

As Wilkins, CIO leaders and other participating groups planned it, it was to have been an Anti-Communist (civil rights) Mobilization.

They failed in those plans. This was evident from the moment one walked into the Jimcrow YMCA, where the delegates were registered (or rejected) on Sunday. The scene was one of utter confusion. Angry groups gathered in the jammed lobby, infuriated at the gestapo tactics of the Credentials Committee, headed by Willard Townsend of CIO brass. Chosen finger-men, supplied by Americans for Democratic Action and its adjunct Students for Democratic Action, the CIO, American Jewish Committee and others of that ilk, circulated among the groups, carefully picking out the "commies" for rejection.

Not that they were very efficient, though. The official excuse in the majority of cases was that delegates lacked the proper letterhead on their letters of accreditation. In the case of New York delegates, the mimeographed signature of Lindsay White, president of the branch, was rejected. (New York had close to 2,000 delegates officially recorded, and many more in actuality, so that mimeographing was the only practical device.) Significantly, delegates of the militant Long Island Division of the American Jewish Congress were also excluded at the first screening, though later accredited. The delegates of Sarah Lawrence College had no letterhead—but were accredited. The representatives of Brooklyn College and Chicago University were rejected on the same grounds. The Kessler family of New York's Stuyvesant Town, who made the headlines this summer by successfully entertaining a Negro family in their apartment in the Jimcrow project, had the unique experience of seeing Mrs. Jesse Kessler accredited, while Mr. Jesse Kessler, a militant trade unionist of Local 65, Warehouse Workers Union, was rejected. Similar inanities occurred all afternoon to the distraction of the thought police and sharp annoyance of the delegates, who wanted to know "when they're going to stop this damned farce and get down to civil rights."

The same question was to be asked, and answered, by the delegates themselves many times.

The general feeling of the gestapo-like "screening process" was well summed up by a Negro trade unionist from Chicago, who told the Credentials Committee, made up almost entirely of whites: "You people can afford to pick and choose who's going to fight for civil rights. The fight

is too tough for the Negro people for us to be so choosy."

Cold War vs. Civil Rights

The Mobilization opened officially Sunday night at the All Souls Unitarian Church, whose seating capacity—very inadequate—was unknown to the Mobilization "organizers." The speakers were Wilkins, and Senators Wayne Morse, Republican of Oregon, and Hubert Humphrey, Democrat, of Minnesota, who is national chairman of Americans for Democratic Action.

The social democrats' "line" for the Mobilization was laid down by Humphrey in the most demagogic speech this reporter has ever marveled at. The main point in this line was—defense of the bi-partisan cold war policy! Not FEPC (though it was mentioned, of course), not anti-lynch or anti-poll-tax legislation as the crying need of 14 million Americans who every day face the hot war of murder and oppression—but the need of the bi-partisans to cover up their hypocrisy about "fair deals" and "democracy" by eliminating some of the most blatant evidences of racism in the United States. This "line" was in direct contradiction to a statement issued a few days before by Roy Wilkins in rejecting Vito Marcantonio as a speaker. Wilkins had said: "The Mobilization has as its primary objective the enactment into law of the FEPC Bill . . . *it is not concerned with foreign policy* [or] with promoting the fortunes of any political party. . . ." (Italics mine—H.H.)

After much despicable red-baiting, Humphrey told the delegates that there was a "new orientation in foreign policy." Speaking of the "facts of international politics," he said: "The issue of civil rights penetrates our foreign policy . . . because by our failure to guarantee basic civil rights to all peoples . . . we are denying acceptance of the principles of human equality."

"The underprivileged, long-exploited peoples of Asia and Africa wish to be accepted as free and equal members of the human society. They will place their faith in the nation and the people who accept them and works (sic) with them as free peoples. A foreign policy that does not include the issue of human dignity and human equality is one that is doomed to failure. . . . Respect, understanding and affection cannot be purchased by loans, gifts or grants. . . . Our moral standing in the eyes of the world hinges on whether we pass civil rights legislation. . . ."

Stripped of all its verbiage, Humphrey's appeal was to strengthen the cold war program by improving Washington's international public relations program—nothing more. The delegates from Mississippi, in whose minds was the recent murder of three Negro children, applauded politely and sparsely, as did most of the audience. Not once did Humphrey, or other Truman politicians in three days of speech making, mention the plight of the Negro people.

Roy Wilkins came close. As a Negro he could not gloss over what Humphrey had ignored. So Wilkins concentrated mainly on the problems of the Negro people, with only a token nod to the cold war program, despite his own disclaimer on foreign policy (above). Of course, even then he

took the Uncle Tom tack of praising to the skies the pitiful "advances" of civil rights, reaching 'way back to the 20's to get enough material. He was more outspoken about the betrayals of the Negro people by the government, though he carefully avoided the slightest criticism of the biggest betrayal—Truman's. "We are not here for malicious heckling and embarrassment," he promised the administration.

The next innings were the delegates', who used them to much greater advantage than the leaders did theirs. Monday morning saw thousands on Capitol Hill, roughly herded into groups of five by the Capitol cops, undauntedly pinning down their congressmen on questions of support for the Fair Employment Practices Commission Bill, HR 4453, introduced by Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, of Harlem, and its companion bill in the Senate, S. 1728.

Powell himself played an important and commendable role in the day's proceedings. Largely through his awareness of the mood of the delegates and the expression he gave to that mood, the undefined dissatisfaction at the leaders' tactics and the desire for a really militant Mobilization forced the important gains that were finally made.

Militant New York Delegation

The great bulk of the New York delegation arrived that morning on a special train, armed with the complete membership files of the New York branch. Lindsay White had earlier forced from the retreating gestapo Credentials Committee the promise to accredit every bona fide NAACP member for at least 30 days.

The entire delegation trooped up to the Library of Congress auditorium, which Powell had obtained because almost all New York congressmen are absent from Washington on Mondays. There Powell outlined his program for real action to guarantee the passage of his bill—the program which later electrified the entire Mobilization and sent the leadership scurrying for cover.

Both New York Senators, Republican Irving Ives and Democrat Herbert Lehman, were in Washington and both spoke to the delegates. The report on this meeting to the Mobilization was so sharp and succinct, that the social democrats in the New York delegation were forced to give a cover-up "minority report." The majority had this to say:

"Both our senators are for FEPC and civil rights—but their support is so lukewarm, that we feel they will have to be warmed up a bit by some heat from home."

Most of the reports from lobbying delegations to the Mobilization's afternoon session in the still-too-small—Department of Labor Interdepartmental auditorium struck the same note. The rank and file was not accepting pious phrases at face value when they had the opportunity to express themselves.

After that long-awaited crack at the carefully guarded microphones, the delegates sat in stony silence while first A. Philip Randolph, president of the Sleeping Car Porters Union, and then Rep. Jacob Javits, Republican-Liberal of New York, demonstrated the unity of Trotskyites and social democrats on the "cold war ueber alles" line. It was

left to Randolph to prove that being a Negro did not necessarily, as in Wilkin's case, keep one from completely betraying his people in pursuit of the cold war. Javits, equally facile at demagoguery whether speaking on Negro or Jewish questions, rejected the fight for civil rights legislation "on the basis of its validation of our constitutional safeguards for minorities and the recognition inherent in our Constitution that all citizens are citizens of the first class." The present fight is being made only because the "pressure of events abroad" makes "equality of economic opportunity" important to America, Javits said, in what was perhaps the most insulting speech to the Negro people at the Mobilization.

Squirming under the amply proven charge of progressives the world over that Wall Street's imperialist policy means subjugation for colonial peoples, Javits could do no more than weakly point to "our national actions in the Philippines, in Hawaii, in Puerto Rico and in the Virgin Islands and our open door policy in China" to refute (!) what he illogically called the "blatant propaganda lie."

This ADA stalwart and Zionist leader dared not mention State Department policy in Israel as a further "refutation." He himself has been forced to challenge that policy. But in a hateful white supremacist way he felt perfectly free to support that same policy before the Negro people!

The Powell Bombshell

When Adam Clayton Powell strode to the platform, the mood of the delegates visibly changed. Most had heard of his speech to the New York delegation earlier and eagerly waited to hear what they themselves had been thinking. When he left the platform the dam burst; for the first time, really enthusiastic applause swept the hall, and the final ovation was ear splitting in comparison with previous polite hand-clapping.

Powell had told the delegates the truth, a rare commodity on the speakers platform at the Mobilization. In no uncertain terms he warned them that FEPC would be sold down the river by both the Truman administration and the "liberal" Republicans, unless *united mass action* of the Negro people and its allies stopped the planned betrayal. As Rep. Vito Marcantonio had done that day in an article in the New York *Daily Compass* distributed to all the delegates, Powell warned of the imminent sell-out on the 21-day rule vote, which would put an end to all hopes for civil rights legislation, particularly FEPC, which was scheduled to come up one week later, Jan. 21.

Calling for united struggle, he said it was time all minority groups told the Truman Administration and the Republicans to "put up or shut up," and that Negroes, Jews and other oppressed minorities defeat for reelection any congressman who dared vote for the Rules change. The enthusiastic reaction to Powell's words as he said them and in the next day's lobbying, provided the base on which Powell and Marcantonio were able to swing enough votes four days later to stop the administration's planned sell-out.



Representative Adam Clayton Powell

Then Powell exploded his bombshell.

"I demand that a delegation from this Mobilization force an audience with the White House. . . . If the president doesn't call in House Speaker Rayburn, Majority Leader McCormack, Majority Whip Percy Priest and John Lesinski, chairman of the Labor and Education Committee, to make them see to it that FEPC comes up under the 21-day rule and is passed—then Truman hasn't kept his promise to the American people."

The leadership was horrified. The delegates were overjoyed. Though the session was immediately adjourned, the Illinois delegation and all youth delegates immediately caucused to implement Powell's suggestions for action.

That night, after Senators Ives and Scott Lucas, Senate majority leader, had finished speeches that were heckled throughout—particularly in the case of Lucas' violently partisan attempt to apologize for a Truman betrayal in advance—the unabated will for action on the part of the delegates came to expression. Clarence Nelson, rank and file NAACP leader from Indianapolis, seized the microphone to demand that Roy Wilkins answer the insistent question everyone was asking: "What is going to be done about Congressman Powell's demands that we see the President, Rayburn, McCormack, Priest and Lesinski?"

Wilkins stood behind the press tables, studiously ignoring the unscheduled speaker. A few moments later, an emergency meeting of the white-dominated steering committee was held, and a top brass delegation was elected to see the president the next day, Tuesday. At that meeting also the demand of the youth caucus for a youth speaker at one of the sessions was grudgingly granted after Wilkins had physically pushed the youth committee from the door of the meeting room, growling, "Get out of here." The bland composure of the leadership was cracking under rank and file pressure, as the composure of oily Senator Lucas had

cracked a few minutes earlier. The White House and Capitol Hill, to say nothing of the CIO, ADA and NAACP brass, had not counted on something like this.

Youth Must Be Heard

The next morning saw hundreds in the Senate and House Office Buildings button-holing legislators with sharp and direct questions about their voting plans on the 21-day rule. The solons, who had felt comfortably assured after reading the pre-Mobilization handouts of the NAACP and CIO national offices, began to worry.

After lobbying, most delegates returned to the Department of Labor Building, where a number of important and far-reaching caucuses took place. The youth delegates gathered in the back of the large hall to elect a speaker for the closing session and to evaluate the conference, as well as draw up plans for further action on civil rights. The overwhelming majority of speakers spoke in terms of the broadest unity. The few attempts at splitting tactics were angrily rejected. The most virulent red-baiting speech came from a young gentleman named Lautermer, one of the Students for Democratic Action finger-men, who claimed to represent the NAACP chapter at Chicago University. He was promptly exposed as an imposter who had been rejected by the chapter and therefore present at the Mobilization under false pretences, much to the chagrin of Seymour Reisin, SDA's new executive secretary, whose little clique was forced to applaud calls for unity, so as not to be completely isolated.

Typical was the expression of a young girl, a YWCA member who said that she would now join NAACP to "try and do something about the [anti-communist] phobia" she had seen. "If we believe in the right and truth of what we are doing, we have no need to arbitrarily screen out people who agree with us," she said.

Important also was the suggestion of Dan Fox, representing the B'nai B'rith Hillel Society of Chicago University, that the youth speaker include in his talk a call for unity between Negro and white youth. Doug Glasgow, inter-collegiate NAACP leader from Brooklyn College, was unanimously elected to speak and delivered a rousing, unequivocal call for unity in the fight for civil rights.

While the youth met, the Pennsylvania delegation was holding its caucus. Though the spirit of unity was not as pronounced there, it received the backing of the majority of delegates in two votes. The delegation passed a resolution criticizing the exclusion of the ten CIO unions, and one calling on the State Mobilization Committees to continue their work beyond the mobilization for the winning of civil rights legislation in Pennsylvania.

At the same time, Roy Wilkins was leading a carefully selected delegation of top officials (well over 60 per cent white) to meet with President Truman in the White House.

At the press conference called immediately after the delegation returned from the White House, Wilkins reported, apparently contentedly, that Truman had pledged

to get civil rights legislation to the Senate floor "if it takes all summer." Recalling that the delegation had been sent as a result of pressure after Powell's speech, this reporter asked Mr. Wilkins whether the president had made any specific commitments on calling in Rayburn and McCormack to guarantee a clear road for FEPC the following Monday. "The president was not asked that question," Wilkins replied. Yet the text of Wilkins' statement to Truman, distributed at the press conference, read: "In the House we urge that you call upon Rep. John Lesinski to call up HR 4453, the FEPC bill, on January 23, and upon *Speaker Rayburn to recognize him for that purpose.*" (Italics mine.—H.H.)

On the evening of January 23, after Rayburn had refused to recognize Lesinski, saying that Truman hadn't ordered him to do so, Roy Wilkins and Henry Lee Moon, NAACP press relations officer, were both "unavailable for comment."

Top Brass Feels Pressure

But it was not Wilkins' comment that was important that day. The Negro people, reading the headlines, knew that they had been double-crossed again, not by Dixiecrats, nor even reactionary Republicans, but by administration stalwarts in the House. For many it was a revelation—for others it was new proof, while for some, it still didn't prove anything. The last group is rapidly decreasing as the betrayals pile up. Certainly little Franklin Roosevelt Jr. fooled nobody by dashing in on an opportunistic white charger to gain glory for himself and Dubinsky's Liberal Party, while deftly upsetting the carefully planned strategy of FEPC's true friends.

The reactions of the Negro press to the Mobilization have shown that Truman's Negro apologists will have much tougher sledding from here on in. Despite the defeatist tone of some who pass off the Mobilization as a "failure" because of the splitting tactics of the Negro and white red-baiters, one cardinal fact remains: the Negro people mobilized militantly for civil rights. In this they were joined by hundreds of whites, including over 600 representatives of Jewish organizations—for the most part, rank and file delegates of the American Jewish Congress (over 500), Jewish War Veterans and B'nai B'rith. The handful of Jewish leaders from the American Jewish Committee, the National Community Relations Advisory Council, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Jewish Labor Committee and the Workmen's Circle were there "for show," with one or two exceptions.

Nevertheless, by their token attendance, they have committed those organizations to *action* on FEPC and civil rights. Though they take this commitment lightly, the rank and file does not—else why would the leadership have made the gesture of attendance? The membership of all these organizations might well ask, as the Negro people are doing: "What now? When does the action begin?" And they might, together with the Negro people, see to it that action is initiated and carried to victory.

GERMAN JOURNEY

By Jean and Louis David

WE were in Berlin, capital of the New German Republic, for two weeks. But even in this short period we became aware of the sharp contrasts between East and West Germany.

On our way here we traveled slowly through West Germany, through its major cities like Frankfurt, Munich, Karlsruhe, Brunswick. We stayed for a short time in the Bavarian countryside. Western Germany, after five years of occupation and control by the United States, Britain and France, is like a nightmare.

In these gutted cities there is little evidence of reconstruction save for churches and one-story wood or concrete luxury stores. The gray, grim people you meet in the street, on streetcars or in restaurants are victims of fast-mounting unemployment and a cynical renazification policy which has punished the little nazis and shown them no new path, while allowing the big nazis to retain their places in the economy and in politics.

One of the first things we learned in Western Germany is that anti-Semitism is still imbedded in German life. We arrived in Munich shortly after the pogrom that had occurred there in August 1947. The city was still stirred up over the event. We went to see Erich Brightfelder, a peasant Communist Party leader in Munich. This man, who had spent his youth in a concentration camp and then had the courage to come back to work in Germany—even he was shocked and frightened by this outburst that involved thousands of the Munich people.

"This pogrom," Brightfelder told us, "I guess is a natural result of 12 years of Hitler and four years of occupation. Here in Munich there is nothing but misery—no homes, no jobs, political terror against all leftists and toleration of the disguised fascist parties. Once again the Jews are being singled out as responsible for this misery."

We saw for ourselves that nazi anti-Semitism is still rampant. A 17-year-old boy, in whose mother's house we stayed in Munich, regarded Hitler as a leader who had done much for Germany, but who had made severe military mistakes. The boy quite candidly told us that the Germans had done "nothing bad" to the Jews, that he didn't believe what he had heard or seen about the concentration camps (Dachau is less than 20 miles from Munich). "After all," said he, "Jews were not Germans."

In every conversation we had in Western Germany, anti-Semitism always cropped up, sometimes veiled and backhanded, more often openly and frankly. American soldiers seemed to us to reflect all the racism of the German people.

JEAN and LOUIS DAVID have just returned from Europe.

They echoed the same phrases as the Germans—"It wasn't so bad, what happened to the Jews here—they deserved it!" A variation: "Things wouldn't be so bad here now if it wasn't for the Jews."

Reconstructing a New Germany

So when we came to Eastern Germany, we hardly knew what to expect. We were fearful and confused. But in short order our fears vanished and confusion melted. In marked contrast to the Western zone of Berlin, the Eastern sector has all the aspects of a boom town. In the old business and governmental area you must walk in the middle of the streets to avoid being hit by the rubble that workers are shovelling out of the ruins to make way for the new buildings. Little railroad cars speed through the city streets carting away the rubble of Berlin. Concrete mixers, shovels, building machinery of all types make a symphony of clanging and banging. There is work here—in fact, there is a labor shortage. Home and factories are going up; childrens' palaces and theaters, parks and nurseries and schools.

In a few days we learned that the Eastern economy was operating at 75 per cent of the 1936 level. The famed Zeiss optical works at Jena, though completely dismantled after the war, are today producing more than ever before in German history. Other industries such as coal and electric power were already exceeding the 1936 index.

Everywhere it was apparent that East Germany was immersed in reconstruction. But we wondered about the minds of the people we saw. What about the fascism, anti-Semitism and racism that had disheartened us so much in Western Germany?

We went to see Heinz Geller, cultural director of the Berlin organization of the two million-strong Free German Youth (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*). Geller is a 27-year-old Jewish boy who had come back to Germany after the war. He started right off by telling us that "Fascism and anti-Semitism are dying in East Germany. We have waged a two-fold fight against fascism here, and among the youth, I believe, it has been a complete success. We have created a very positive economic situation here and in the process we have given the youth a real sense of identification with the future of a new democratic Germany. On every machine there is a youth apprentice, in every government bureau there are young people learning its tasks; young peasant couples are given every kind of help after the great division of the Junker estates; the youth have been rapidly advanced in cultural work."

Anti-Semitism Is Dying

The fact that the Eastern German government gave the Jews decisive legal protection against anti-Semitism, the fact that racial propaganda is a crime punishable by law are only small parts of the reason why anti-Semitism has practically disappeared among the young people. Article six of the new constitution makes dissemination of hate propaganda a punishable offense and provides that persons convicted under it will be disqualified from holding government office and will be disenfranchised and barred from holding any leading post in the economic and cultural life of the country. "The disappearance of anti-Semitism," Geller told us, "is also a result of a tremendous educational campaign that has been carried on among the youth. We had to throw out all our textbooks and write new ones; we had to print great numbers of books written by Jews and Gentiles alike, books which a whole generation of German people didn't even know existed. And we had to get these books into the hands of the young. We had to emphasize the great contribution of German Jews to our culture—from Heine to Einstein. A whole generation had grown up without hearing Mendelssohn and we explained why over the radio, in the papers and in the movies.

"At first we did not have films of our own that could tackle this job. We had to rely on Russian films like *Professor Mamlock*. But as soon as we could get the equipment together, we made *Marriage in the Shadows* and *The Affair Blum*—pictures dealing directly with anti-Semitism. These pictures were shown at our clubs along with plays dealing with similar themes." Geller went on to describe how the 10,000 surviving concentration camp victims and

anti-fascists who had returned from exile worked day and night to train new teachers and to prepare new material for the re-education of the German youth.

Geller took us around to see German youth. We learned that they have a real understanding of Germany's guilt in the war. They regard this guilt as something for which they must work to clear themselves. For them, anti-Semitism was part of that total crime of the war. They have learned to despise fascism and anti-Semitism, too.

One night we visited a group of Berlin students. These students attended the new School for Workers and Peasants, which prepares talented young workers and peasants for entrance examination for the university. Among the students was a young Jewish student of agronomy. Like all young people who had been victims of political and racial discrimination under the nazis, he was eligible for the three year course in the preparatory school at no cost.

What interested these Berlin students most about America was the state of civil liberties. Question after question about the trial of the communist leaders, about the plight of the Negro in America—and about anti-Semitism. So thorough has been their anti-nazi education that, five years after the defeat of Hitler, we found these German youth shocked to learn that a quota system for Jewish students exists in American universities.

A Young Jew Returns

One of our most heart-warming experiences was meeting the 23-year-old Jewish boy, Felix Eliashevitz. Felix had fled nazi Germany in the thirties with his family. They went to South America. After the war Felix returned to



At the Youth Festival held in Leipzig, summer 1949

Germany. We asked him why he had come back. "My job was in Germany," he answered. "They need me. I am a good carpenter." We first met Felix on our visit to a huge turbine factory in the Soviet zone of Berlin. Felix is the chairman of the Free German Youth in the factory. As he showed us through the factory, we could see the affection the young workers felt for him. "*Freundschaft!*" (friendship), the greeting of the Free German Youth, they called out to him as we passed through the factory. We asked Felix if he felt any anti-Semitism in the factory. He answered the question carefully, "These workers know that I am Jewish. I think they are glad that I as a Jew chose to come back to work in Germany."

Felix told us that in a few weeks he would be sent to a six-months trade union school. After that he will become a staff member of the German trade union organization. "It is a great privilege," Felix confided. "But I would almost rather stay and work in the factory. It is here in the shops that the most exciting and important work is being done. Here you can see more clearly the new Germany emerging."

Our impression of the lack of anti-Semitism among the young people of Eastern Germany was confirmed in our talk with Gerhardt Eisler, now press chief of the new German Republic. "It was the youth that impressed me most on my return to Germany," he told us, "their desire for a democratic Germany, their eagerness to work towards that goal and their complete lack of racial prejudice."

Eisler indicated to us that there is no more telling sign of the difference between Eastern and Western Germany than the way denazification was handled. "We don't put top nazis in parliament, as they do in Bonn," said Eisler. "We put them out of circulation and into re-education camps. Of course we have our backward people—like in America. But we have been able to give full civil liberties to former small nazis. They can hold any job except in the police. Our police are made up of our youth."

We asked Maximilian Sheer, German anti-fascist who was in America during the war and is now cultural director of Radio Berlin, to explain the policy of placing former nazis in jobs in the government. "Yes," he said, "there are nazis in the government. They were opportunists under Hitler and are opportunists in our government. But we have them under our control. You see, fascism is dead in our zone so these men have no base from which to operate. Fascists are cowards when they are not in power."

In this new German Republic there is in fact no base for a revived nazism and militarism. This is the result above all of the *total* removal from power of the cartelists and Junkers. For these were the men who brought nazism to power and financed it, the men who directed and profited from the mass murder and aggression they had unleashed. Basic industry in the Republic has been nationalized. The huge estates of the Junkers have been redistributed among the bulk of the peasants. These two measures have destroyed the power of the German monopolists and feudalists. They have created for the first time in Germany the conditions for a really democratic development.

The story of Kurt Eberhardt is an example of what has happened to thousands of former nazi party members in East Germany. We met Kurt the night we visited the "People's College." These colleges are night schools attended mostly by workers. We were introduced to Kurt, who was the president of the student body. He is a young man in his early thirties with a wife and two children. He had been a member of the nazi youth and then had joined the Nazi Party. During the war he had been a soldier and was taken prisoner by the Americans. He explained to us that after the war he was left completely demoralized and empty. At that time he was 25. He began to work in a factory and had been encouraged to go to the People's College. He had gone because he had nothing else to do, he said frankly.

"I believed in nothing," he said. "At the People's College I began to study history and philosophy. I had long talks with the other students and with my professors. I saw how my factory was being run and began to see that things were getting better. Then I suddenly realized I was helping it get better. I suppose I slowly acquired a new set of ideas, a new way of thinking and living. Then six months ago I was elected chairman of the student body and that is a great responsibility. We have over 3,000 students in this school. Seventy-five per cent are workers. I see now that during the last two years, studying each night and working in the factory, I have become a different person. Last week I became a candidate for the SED (Socialist Unity Party). After another year of study I will be qualified to apply for a job as a trade union teacher."

What makes Kurt an anti-fascist? Very practical reasons. He has a future in the new German Republic—the promise of a good job, respect of his fellow-workers, a decent life. Whereas five years ago he faced hopelessness, now he makes plans for the future.

I remember another German we met, also in his thirties, also a former nazi. This was in the bombed city of Karlsruhe, in the American zone near the French border. This boy said almost the same things as Kurt—up to a certain point.

"After the war," he said, "I believed in nothing. I suppose most people felt nothingness. Maybe we were waiting for something. Don't ask me what. But nothing happened. That's the funny thing. Nothing happened. So most of us stopped looking to the future. We began to think of the past. It was easier. What else makes sense in this rotten mess?"

We remembered what Gerhardt Eisler told us. "The American government is imposing a regime of Medinas in Western Germany and every reactionary prejudice has been revived. In this unholy alliance between old German nazis and American imperialism there is nothing foul enough that is not encouraged. Tammany Hall plus nazism is terrible poison gas for the redevelopment of a people."

The difference between Western and Eastern Germany is like that between a frightful past and a bright future.

HOW RENAZIFICATION WAS BORN

That the renazification and recartelization of Germany, now so near completion, were begun practically the day after F. D. Roosevelt died in 1945, is obvious from the revealing columns written by Drew Pearson in 1945 and suppressed at the suggestion of Bell syndicate and "at the insistence of J. P. Morgan & Co. and the Chase National Bank," as Rep. Helen Gahagan Douglas said. Rep. Douglas inserted these columns in the Congressional Record of May 5, 1945, from which excerpts are reproduced below.—Eds.

San Francisco, April 26, [1945]—

For a long time it has been no secret that a group inside the State Department favored a soft peace for Germany with a view to making her a bulwark against Russia after the war. But as long as Roosevelt was in the White House, the State Department appeasers kept quiet.

However, on the day after his body was buried, a meeting of the German Reparations Committee was held in the office of Assistant Secretary Will Clayton at which both the State and War Departments suddenly reversed Roosevelt's policy of a hard peace.

Specifically, they argued against the removal of nazi factories, machine tools, plant equipment or goods out of Germany. The Russians had proposed the removal of German war plants to build up the hundreds of Russian factories destroyed by Germany. . . . Clayton argued that American policy should favor leaving factory equipment and machinery in Germany so she can get back on a sound economic basis. He even mentioned the fact that Germany would need to import cotton to manufacture clothes. . . . Clayton is the biggest cotton exporter in the world and did a heavy business with the nazis before the war.

Unfortunately, the Russians are all too familiar with the attitude of the State and War Departments toward them. . . . The Russians knew in advance, for instance, that the Douglas Aircraft Co. had sold the plans for its DC-4 to Japan for \$1,000,000 before Pearl Harbor.

And they have been especially interested in the War Department survey of the damage done to German war plants by U.S. planes, a survey to be undertaken by a group of bankers and top insurance executives, including Henry C. Alexander, vice-president of J. P. Morgan; Fred Searles, Jr., president of several J. P. Morgan mine companies; Franklin D'Olier, president of

the Prudential Life Insurance Co. (one of the corporation heads who founded and subsidized the American Legion in 1919); and Robert P. Russell, president of Standard Oil Development Co. . . .

Already the State Department is being bombarded by American industrialists who owned factories in Germany before the war and want to go back and start operating them. Among the leading pressure boys is Graeme Howard, vice-president of General Motors in charge of operations in Europe (Germany). Howard helped organize Franco's truck transport service during the Spanish Civil War, has a personal interest in the Opel Auto Works in Germany and has been busy as a hound dog around the State Department wanting to get back to Germany.

Naturally, they can't have a hard peace if they are to build up Germany, so they don't want German factories and machine tools carted off to Russia.

Another factor making the Russians suspicious is the British demand that food which the Russian Army finds in Germany be used to feed the German people rather than to feed the starving Poles and Russian slave laborers. Shortly before he left London, both Foreign Minister Eden and Sir James Grigg, British War Minister, took the position, in secret talks with United States officials, that food found in Germany must be used to feed the German, not Polish and Russian civilians. The British argument is that if German food is diverted to the Poles and Russians, the Allies will have to import more to feed the Germans.

Finally, the Russians are probably most suspicious of the mysterious U.S. espionage organization called OSS. The OSS or Office of Strategic Services has, strangely, distributed some of the most powerful bankers' representatives in the United States of America at key points where they can influence U.S. policy in occupied Germany. . . .

San Francisco, April 27—When the American Army swept into Germany, it was fortunate enough to capture an interesting figure in Dr. H. J. Caesar, the counterpart of our Alien Property Custodian, who had charge of all American banks and alien property seized in France.

Dr. Caesar was cross-examined at length. From him came highly enlightening and hitherto secret information about the manner in which certain British and American branch banks in Paris collaborated with the Germans after the fall of France. His testimony highlights the main issue un-

derlying the problem of future peace—namely, whether, despite all the plans worked out at San Francisco, certain Allied business firms together with their friends in the State Department, the Army and the British Foreign Office are going to maneuver behind the scenes to strengthen Germany once again as a bulwark against Russia. . . .

Finally, it was American and British banks which poured money into Germany for years before the war and then maneuvered to have reparations and war debts cancelled in order to protect their own loans. The Chase National Bank was one of the worst offenders. That is why a lot of people in Washington, Moscow and the world at large are watching to see whether history will repeat. That is why the evidence unearthed from the secret files of German Alien Property Custodian Caesar is so significant. It indicates that even during the present war, the Paris branches of Chase and J. P. Morgan were quite willing and anxious to do business with the Germans—though British banks were more so.

Dr. Caesar testified that "the protection afforded to Chase was justified on the ground that it had been active on behalf of Germany before the war in such matters as the German stand-still credit negotiations."

"The British banks," he said, "were even more preferred by the Germans than the branches of Chase and Morgans. The German occupying authorities decreed that British and Canadian banks in the occupied zone of France 'shall no longer be considered as enemy banks.' These branches provided long term credits to assist the German war machine. . . ."

But especially significant were some of the letters found in Dr. Caesar's files. One indicated that the J. P. Morgan Co. had gone out of its way to curry favor with the nazis by showing that the Morgans had nothing to do with Jews. One memo sent to German banking tsar Caesar by Mr. Lecestre, a high official of the Morgan firm, read: "On the attached sheet there is represented some information relative to the predecessors of Mr. J. P. Morgan, actual head of J. P. Morgan & Co., Inc., New York. Following the tradition of his father, Mr. Morgan never admitted Jews as associates or fellow workers."

"The Morgan House has been frequently found in its business in opposition to the great Jewish banking houses in the United States such as Kuhn, Loeb & Co. As to *Morgan et Cie.*, Paris, the personnel, since the foundation of the bank in 1868, has never included a Jew."

This memo is dated January 15, 1943, more than a year after Germany declared war on the U.S. . . .

STEPNEY FIGHTS BACK

III: WE DISCOVER THE TENANTS

by Phil Piratin, M.P.

AT the time I joined the Communist Party in 1934 its activities were mainly of a propagandist character. In the factories communists were prominent amongst trade unionists and shop stewards in organizing their fellow workers for better wages and conditions. The same attention, however, was not paid to the conditions in the homes and to the struggles against the landlords.

At the end of September 1934, a new group was formed, of which I was elected leader. I suggested that we ought to be taking up the issues of the people in the locality where we were active, in the Fieldgate Street area. There was general agreement. But we were not yet clear how to develop the people's struggles. Each week end we would canvass. We would do fairly well. We sold the *Daily Worker* and literature. Many of the people were friendly. But there were no "issues." Our canvassers would ask the people, "Have you any problems?" and they would say "No!" But there were problems—what were they? And why did the people say there were no problems, when the places they were living in were so bad? Was it because they were so inured to these conditions? This indeed is one of the most serious features that one discovers in working in the movement. Was it because they were defeatist and felt that it was a waste of time to do anything, and so passed these things off with a shrug of the shoulders?

The main center of our activities was Fieldgate Mansions—several blocks of some 270 flats. It occurred to me that if the people did not know or wouldn't talk of their problems, we ought to suggest them. But what to suggest? One Sunday morning we were canvassing and when we had finished, I walked around the buildings, looking for something. I walked around, and up and down several flights of stairs but I couldn't get a hint of a thing. I went home—it was very perplexing. I know that all this sounds almost funny. I have a good laugh over it myself, but this was in 1934, when no one had done anything of this kind in Stepney. Now we know "the score." We know what the problems are and if some one with Stepney experience goes elsewhere, he knows how to begin on the ground floor. In those days we were feeling our way. There was a difference between helping some one who approached you with a problem and trying to get people to begin in an elementary fashion to organize to improve their conditions for themselves. We had no party members actually living in those blocks of flats. Later we made members.

PHIL PIRATIN has been Communist M. P. from Stepney in London's East End since the 1945 general elections. This is the final installment of excerpts from his book, published last year in London under the title, *The Flag Stays Red*.

That same evening I was restless and felt irritated that somehow we couldn't get beneath this. I decided to walk over to Fieldgate Mansions only a hundred yards away and look around a bit to see if I could get an idea. I walked up a flight of stairs flashing my torch; as I walked down, I saw a flame flickering on a landing and suddenly noticed something which I hadn't done all those weeks previously, nor the same day *during the daytime*—namely, that the stairs were lighted with open gas jet flares. I knocked at the first door; introducing myself, I asked the woman who opened the door whether or not these things were a danger, and immediately I received a torrent of information and a cursing of the landlord. *I had found an "issue!"*

I asked the woman whether all the neighbors thought like that about this arrangement. She said, "Yes." I asked: "Can you get some together?" and within 10 minutes I was sitting around the table with half-a-dozen women, drinking a cup of tea and listening to their stories about the gas lighting. How the wind blew it out and the escaping gas could be smelt throughout the whole block. How the children would climb on each other's shoulders and light bits of paper from the flares and all kinds of other very serious allegations about these conditions. The rest was simple. A letter to the landlord demanding electric lighting; a letter to the electricity undertaking, calling for their assistance. A letter in the press in order that other people in such circumstances should know what was happening in Fieldgate Mansions. This letter brought down the wrath of the gas company, who tried a little intimidation. The letter to the landlord proved quite effective. He had been warned in the letter that if there were any casualties arising from this state of affairs, he would be held responsible. We already had one or two instances of casualties we could lay at his door. Within a very short period there was electric lighting on the stairs.

THIS WAS THE FIRST "ISSUE"—BUT WE MADE MANY MISTAKES. We never organized one full meeting of all the tenants. We never set up a proper representative tenants' committee. We never got the tenants to feel they were doing it for themselves. We never held one public meeting among the tenants to explain the political lessons of the whole campaign—though we did issue a leaflet to this effect. I myself did not involve others in responsibility. I could claim that the whole thing went so smoothly on the lines I have mentioned, that there was no need to do so. But the truth is I never even thought of doing so. Maybe because I was keen to get on with the work now at last we had something concrete to grasp. If that were the case, it was "losing sight

of the wood for the trees," for the purpose of our work was not merely to get small improvements in the living conditions of the people, but to lead and organize them so that they themselves should take the initiative.

I did not realize these things then. When I realized them later, I asked myself, was that particular activity valueless? I could answer "No!" Our propaganda and canvassing went on, and was now much more effective in view of the goodwill extended towards the party. Further, the tenants in these buildings now began to find issues which were all there previously, but which they hadn't seemed to notice.

There should have been an extension of such activity, both in Fieldgate Mansions on other issues, and in other areas. This, however, was not done. Vital national and international issues took the headlines, and called for the consideration of persistent activity by the Communist Party. Italy's rape of Abyssinia, the fascist revolt in Spain, the rise of fascism in Britain. These issues demanded the attention and response of the Communist Party, and detracted from the work that had been begun in organizing the people in their homes on their day-to-day issues. While we recognize the principle of "first things first," and the fact that an organization can only carry out activity according to its forces in number and quality, and while at that period the Communist Party was doing excellent propaganda work in the fight against war and fascism, I feel it was a mistake that this work was neglected. . . .

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1937 THE STEPNEY TENANTS' DEFENSE League was established, with Michael Shapiro as its first secretary, and began to deal with the individual rent and repair problems of hundreds of tenants. Our main point of concentration was the area where the fascists had support, the hardest area. It was later that the work spread to other areas, where such activities were "jam." As this work developed, and we began to know the problems and how to handle them, a new qualitative change was called for. Instead of dealing with the individual problems within the narrow confines of the landlord-favoring law, it was necessary now for the tenants to organize themselves in a disciplined way and to fight their landlords, even for demands which were beyond their legal rights; for rent reductions, for which there was no *legal* justification; for repairs and decorations which the landlord was not, by law, bound to carry out. We were going to take the fight now into the landlords' camp, to take the offensive. . . .

The mass organization of tenants continued. Tenants' committees were set up in blocks of building and streets. The individual issues of the tenants were dealt with by the tenants' committee, acting as a kind of shop stewards' committee and dealing direct with the landlord. The tenants were gradually gaining confidence and organizational ability ready for the big struggles ahead.

AT THE SAME TIME A NEW FEATURE OF THE STRUGGLE WAS developing with rapid tempo—the fight against the building societies. Here was revealed one of the greatest rackets operating between the wars. The Conservative govern-

ments were not prepared to grant assistance to the local authorities in order that they could build houses for the working class to be let at reasonable rents. In fact, they deliberately cut down grants for slum clearance, slashed the housing programs and consciously encouraged building societies. There was therefore no competition, or very little, with the jerry-builders.

What was their racket? Had they built houses to let, within a few years those houses, as the slums which many of them became, would never have been "let-able" at the rents which the owners expected to receive in order to make them a profitable proposition. So developed the greatest racket of the time: "Own your own Homes"; "The Briton is an individualist." Wonderful pictures were drawn and millions spent on advertising to show how glorious it was to be the complete master in your own home. Hundreds of thousands, even millions, lapped this up, bought their homes on "the never-never," £50 [about \$200] down, 17s. 6d. [about \$3.50] a week. After a few years not only normal decorations but serious repairs were urgently needed, for these houses were falling to pieces. The working class



folk who proudly inhabited these homes in the suburbs of London and other cities, and who could only make ends meet by accounting for every penny, found themselves faced with the alternative of dilapidation, or of paying heavy repair costs. Meanwhile the payments to the building society had to continue, or else. . . .

The fight was begun in Kent by Elsie and Jim Borders, who organized the Coney Hall District Residents' Association against the building societies in their area. The Borders themselves took action against the building society in one of the most famous test cases of all legal history. Mrs.

Elsie Borders, a working class housewife, fought the case in Chancery Court against the most learned counsel. The legal arguments went on for weeks and months. She conducted the case as capably as any top line, highly paid lawyer. She argued, she examined, she cross examined; on one occasion she spoke for eight hours in submitting her arguments. Elsie Borders became known as "the modern Portia." While they did not win their case, they exposed the tie-up between the building societies and the builders.

A million jerry-built house dwellers were agog. They had been "had"; the courts admitted it. But the building societies' friend, the Chamberlain government, introduced a law to safeguard them. This fight, however, which went on for months, roused suburban dwellers throughout the country. These were not slum dwellers, not laborers—these were people with social "aspirations" and they went into battle under the leadership of communists like the Borders in all parts of the country, in many suburbs of London, such as Hayes, Felton, Earlswood, Queensbury, Whitton, Twickenham and in scores of other places.

THE ACTIONS IN STEPNEY GAVE RISE TO MILITANCY IN OTHER areas where such a feature showed even greater advance in the understanding of the people than in East London. In turn, the spirit of the 50,000 Birmingham municipal tenants, and of the resident owners, gave greater power and morale to the working class women of Stepney, who in the main conducted these great battles. For battles they were, and all honor to the women. It was they who had to be in the homes when the bailiffs called. It was they who had to take responsibility for picketing every hour. . . .

These struggles became front-page news. In March a conference had been held in Stepney of representatives of London organizations and delegates from the Labor movement to decide on the coordination of the London tenants' struggles. Now the National Tenants' Federation began to organize a nation-wide convention. It was to be held in Birmingham in July, when representatives of every town and city in the country were to demand a new code for tenants and residents, a new rent act, and new standards of conditions to be provided by the landlords. A "Housing Charter" was drawn up, and a campaign begun. Labor leaders were drawn into the struggle. At the great demonstration held in Hyde Park late in July, the speakers included Aneurin Bevan and Ellen Wilkinson of the Labor Party, and Elsie Borders, Michael Shapiro, and Tubby Rosen of the Communist Party. It was the latter who had done the work and the organization, who had faced the bailiffs and the batons. Bevan and Wilkinson, as usual, were responding to the mood of the masses. The campaign was reaching its height, even during these menacing pre-war days and weeks, but then came the war and new problems had to be faced. . . .

LOOKING BACK, ONE CAN TRULY SAY THAT THE TENANTS' AND residents' struggles of those days were among the finest in our history. While they did not tear at the roots of capitalist

economy, as did, for example, the General Strike, they immediately put the landlords into a panic; and began to focus the attention of millions of people for the first time on the housing scandal. The slum landlords and the build-



ing societies were very easily exposed, but, even more important, in the demands for lower rents hundreds of thousands of people learned to understand, through their own experience, the nature of capitalism itself. How could rents be reduced, argued the landlord, when everything costs so much? Look at the price of land in Stepney: £20,000, even £30,000 an acre. Look at the cost of building, and there you come up against further capitalist rackets, the cement ring, the steel ring, the timber ring. Would you like more facilities and amenities? Several landlords would say: "I would like to provide them, but all these modern labor saving devices are very expensive. I cannot afford them." But then you discovered that they needn't have been so expensive; that the refrigerator which you could buy on "the never-never" for a total sum of £25 cost less than £5 to produce; that the electric cleaner which cost you £15 cost less than £2 to produce. And so in the course of those months hundreds of thousands of folk, who had mildly carried the burden placed on them, not only rebelled, but began to see who were the exploiters and their real enemies.

This growing political awareness was reflected in Labor's victory in the 1945 general election. Many of the voters—stirred by the tenants' struggles, by the great epic of the Borders' fight against the building societies and by the exposure of the National Government in its support of the building societies—turned with disgust away from toriyism to Labor.

One thing was in no doubt. Tens of thousands of working class men and women had organized themselves for common struggle. There was a common bond between

them, and in some areas, such as certain suburbs—where, as suburbanites know only too well, you could be living in a road for 10 or 15 years and not even speak to your next door neighbor—this was indeed an achievement. All these people came together. Committees were formed and hundreds of people who had never been on a committee and had no experience of organization or politics learned these things and learned them well. Outstanding were the women. Every feminist claim was proved. There was nothing that the men could do that could not be equalled by the women and, in fact, they were mostly more enthusiastic and hence more reliable. . . .

As each day and week brought news of further battles in some new town or borough, one could almost anticipate the nationwide rent strike which on one occasion Michael Shapiro forecast. Yet there were many places where no such actions were initiated. This was surprising because public sympathy was widespread. Why, therefore, did not more people follow the example of the militant areas? In places like Stepney we could have done so much more to bring in the whole Labor movement behind the tenants' actions. The Stepney Trades Council gave full support, but the Labor Party and a number of the trade unions did not respond in any way. Were we too busy? However busy, we neglected a great opportunity of developing that unity in action whose lessons could never be eradicated.

It is not uncommon for communists to become so submerged in the work of tenants' associations that they lose their identity. This was not the case in Stepney. The Stepney party in 1939, 500 strong, was carrying on activities not only in direct support of the tenants, but as an independent organization in many other spheres, with a vigor equalling that of the tenants' fight itself.

OF DOGS AND OSTRICHES

By Eve Merriam

Speaking as one Jew to another:
Trouble is trouble.
Need a place be set for it?

Hitler is final and flat.

Let us chat of more pastel happenings than Peckskill
and Chicago pogroms.

Why bring the gun-butt down again upon your head
By stretching up too tall,
By standing straight?

A mere suggestion; bow low, go by the back door,
Glide down the side street quietly.
Agreed, it is narrower here, you can stumble and fall,
And if it becomes a creeping habit to walk on all fours—
Well, it's a dog's life anyway;
Roll over and play dead.

If it makes you feel any better, spit three times inside.

Your pride?
But mine fits easily into the pocket of my skin.

Understand,
There are culture patterns, tensions, balances and checks;
All can be explained
Without a sticking-out of necks.

Graceful does it.
Consider the elegant ostrich deep in the furry sand,
The most refined of burials.

STEPHEN WISE: AMERICAN AND JEW

By Joseph Starobin

RABBI STEPHEN S. WISE was one of the most commanding figures of American Jewish life in the first half of the 20th century. If contrasts must be made, other great men come to mind, such as Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis. But there has not been any leader who had the fervor, energy and many-sidedness of Wise. Certainly, the young rabbi who came out of Portland, Oregon when the century was young to light a torch that burned fiercely for five decades and lit up almost every corner of American Jewish life, had no rival. In the year since his passing on April 19, 1949, there have been memorials for Wise in large numbers. However, it is with the publication of the rough hewn and unfinished autobiography, *Challenging Years*,¹ that it is now easier to gain perspective.

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It does not say enough about Stephen Wise to place him in the front ranks of America's greatest bourgeois liberals; or even to add that he was one of those men, like Franklin D. Roosevelt who stretched to the utmost those limitations which his origins and life as a member of the liberal bourgeoisie inevitably placed upon him. This is quite true. Except for a passage in which he calls upon Jewish and Christian religious leaders to fight the idea of inevitable American-Soviet war, there is almost no evidence that Wise grasped what might lie beyond the disintegrating capitalist social order.

As a world Jewish leader, he made a magnificent battle to save his people from the holocaust of Hitlerism, in some ways anticipating earlier and more acutely than others what

¹ *Challenging Years: The Autobiography of Stephen Wise*, Putnam, New York, 1949. \$4.

the Hitlerites had in store for the European Jews. Yet he drew no fundamental conclusions from the fact that capitalism in its decline raises up the monstrous frankenstein of fascism. Why this was, and why the tearing up of racism by its roots requires consistent fight to replace capitalism, were questions that he did not pose, nor try to answer.

As an American, Stephen Wise was built in the attractive dimensions of a courageous social reformer. He fought hard against the Croker gang in New York in 1906, against Elbert Gary's defense of the Steel Trust in 1919. He was enrolled in almost every good fight, whether for his right to preach without dictation at the Free Synagogue, or for Tom Mooney's freedom, the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti, or friendship with the Soviet armies in the war. Yet all this rich experience of the great-hearted rebel never added up to something more: a view of the need for a basic reconstruction of American life on the foundation of a new relationship between the working people and the fabulous means of production which their toil and genius had created.

But to say that Wise, standing head and shoulders above his time, never grasped its character as an age of transition from one society to another, does not do him full justice.

For we should not oversimplify the role of a bourgeois democratic figure who makes an appeal for American-Soviet peace at the peak of the cold war, and says: "The world of nations and peoples and races is in danger of war. How grave and destructive such a war, an atomic war, might be, it is not needful to tell . . . at such times, have not men the right to expect that Christianity, the greatest religious force in the western world, should make itself deeply, even decisively, felt? . . . The world is or appears to be divided into two camps of economic theory and practice. It is an oversimplification and not too honest to hold that the division is between democracy and dictatorship, for much calls itself or is named democracy that is not democracy, and much as is described as dictatorship that is not dictatorship. The contest is far from being undefiled democracy versus pure dictatorship. The real dichotomy is between capitalist democracy, and communist dictatorship—the question being whether capitalism can permanently endure as democratic and whether communism is bound to be permanently dictatorial. These are politico-economic problems that need not, cannot, be resolved by war."

The weaknesses in the above statement are obvious to Marxists. That it is the statement of a big man who certainly stretches the bounds of his class, his training and interests cannot be denied.

Changing With the Times

The most impressive thing about Wise was his capacity to keep pace with the rapid changes of his time, and even to anticipate those changes. The years were challenging, says the title of his memoirs; he kept pace with the challenge. For example, as the son of a family of Hungarian rabbis, he had all the advantages of becoming part of American



Rabbi Stephen S. Wise

life when the German Jewish and Sephardic groups were in the ascendancy; one might have expected such a man to make his mark among the *Yahudim* (upper class assimilationist Jews), to become the spokesman for the parishioners of the Temple Emanuel. Yet Wise did the unexpected and sought a different base for himself. He realized that the character of the American Jewish population was changing, and he consciously sought bonds with the new immigrants who came in the hundreds of thousands after Wise had already established himself in New York, in Portland and again in New York. He accepted the challenge of the new East Side, and mastered the controversial platform of Clinton Hall.

Objectively speaking, this entry of Wise into the new and living arena of Jewish life was probably one of the factors which helped to weaken the powerful socialist currents among the new immigration; it helped to deflect Jewish life toward Zionism. It represented the activity of an upper-class leader who realizes that to maintain leadership it is necessary to go to the masses and in the process gives them a leadership which inhibits them from raising their own.

Yet even in this, some distinctions are in order. Wise was one of the first American Zionists; he writes with passion of his meeting with Theodore Herzl at the second Zionist Congress in 1898 at Basle, and the pages of his memoirs are infused with the deepest loyalties to a cause that was at first alien not only to the masses but to the dominant groups of Jewish life, especially in this country.

But his was a strange struggle, and for all our principled differences with Zionism, we can appreciate it. He waged a stiff battle against both the Orthodox community and the assimilationists to assert his Zionism, and to infuse all phases of Jewish life with the perspective of a Jewish national home; he took bitter abuse and boycott for some of his activities which ranged from the pulpit to the presi-

dential suites where the Balfour Declaration was formulated. When other issues arose, his Zionism was his limitation, but it did not keep him, unlike many other Zionist leaders, from leading struggles which went far beyond the issue of Israel.

With the rise of fascism in eastern Europe and particularly with Hitler's coming to power, Wise was again abreast of that which was new in Jewish life, and which transcended all groups, parties, factions, dreams and illusions. Thus he is the organizer of the second World Jewish Congress, and of the American Jewish Congress. He leads the first great mass actions of anti-Hitler protest, as in the famous New York parade of 1933. He had no patience with all those who counselled that struggle was unwise, or that the danger was exaggerated. He fought his way to the State Department and the White House and grasped that the issue was one of survival for a whole, living segment of his people, bigger than any other issue.

This same sensitivity to the changing currents and conditions of life featured Wise's behavior on questions which were not purely of Jewish interest. Wise himself devotes a separate chapter to his work as a champion of labor's right to organize; he sensed that something new had come to stay in this country: the organized labor movement. The philosophy of Wise with respect to labor's rights does not go beyond the realm of liberal reform. "I had seen during the years," he writes, "the development of the corporate control of industry, with its substitution of directors, representing the scattered, absentee shareholders, for the personal employer of by-gone days. I had come to realize fully that confronted with an organization on the side of the employer, like the ten-billion dollar steel trust, the individual worker was indeed helpless. I had seen that legislation forbidding employers to discharge employees on the ground of their membership in labor unions had been repeatedly held unconstitutional by the courts, and that unless America expressed itself through support of labor's struggles to organize, we would have increasing violence as well as the continuation of intolerable industrial conditions."

Thus, what he strove for was no more than the Wagner Act. What took him from outrage over the Triangle Fire,² to support of the McNamaras, to backing of the steel strikers in 1919, and solidarity with the CIO was thus a desire to "right the balance." Yet Wise did all these things with a burning passion, with emphasis an *rallying people*—and this brought him into conflict with the most powerful forces of American society while making him the butt of attack from the weaklings and cowards. This was no small thing. Occasionally, in the course of these battles, there is a flash of a deeper insight, never consistently explored. When Judge Elbert Gary, representing the Steel Trust, trotted out the old argument that the "freedom" of the "majority" was being violated by the organizing activities of the "minority," Wise replied: "Well, the fact is that a minority always leads, precedes, and liberates a majority."

² In 1911, writes Wise, "a terrible fire, commonly known as the Triangle Fire, occurred in a factory in New York City. Many girls were burned to death because the doors had been locked so that no goods would be removed by any of the employees, and when the fire broke out, they were unable to escape."

Synthesis of the Jewish and American

What was it that gave Wise his extraordinary mobility in the changing currents of Jewish and American life? Why is it that he fought for the synthesis of what is Jewish and what is American—and broke the back of the old tradition of *stadlonith* ("court Jewry") and championed what was then the new idea that Jews were not members of a faith, but of a people, that to be the best kind of Americans, they had to fight for their rights as a people, and claim their own defense in terms of the ideals of the American democratic tradition?

Rabbi Wise had an acute awareness of the changes that were being wrought, both as regards Jewish life here and abroad, and as regards American life itself. He synthesized his functions as a religious leader and a political leader. For he recognized that unless the religious leader entered the market-place, religion itself would suffer, and prove inadequate to the challenge of the congregation. He entered political life—interestingly enough by changing his affiliations from Republican to Democratic prior to the first Wilson campaign, and remained a broad-gauged Democrat of the Roosevelt tradition—but added a deep spiritual-ity to his political operations.

The record of Wise with respect to the Soviet Union was as varied and inconsistent as we should have expected. And the same can be said of his relations with the American communist movement, as well as with American Jewish communists. He fell prey to many of the anti-Soviet campaigns of his time and joined with the attack on the USSR in the very early thirties, allegedly because of its freedom to anti-religious propaganda. Yet he was one of its most fervent supporters before the war in the common battle against fascism, and second to none in his wartime efforts to aid the Red Army.

He championed unity of all trends in Jewish life in the formation of the American Jewish Congress, and speaks with understanding of the role of the Jewish delegations from the peoples' democracies at the World Jewish Congress gathering in the summer of 1948.

Yet he could not understand their proposal that American left wing Jewish groups be represented fully in the American section of the world executive. He tolerated the exclusion of these same segments of American Jewish life in what was after all a concession to red-baiting and preparations for war. But he cites approvingly the different stand of his own wife, Mrs. Louise Waterman Wise, who made the "simple but significant statement—'I cannot bear to see any Jews shut out of a Jewish Congress'—a token of intense and catholic Jewish feeling, unspoiled by fear of misunderstanding."

Stephen Wise was one of the last of the Mohicans of American bourgeois democracy and at the same time one of its most effective champions. He was in the mold of the Prophets, who could not enter the Promised Land although he helped to prepare for it, because deeper changes were to come and make it quite different from what he anticipated.

FRIDAY HE WAS A NEW MAN

A Short Story
By Yuri Suhl

HYMIE Litkin brushed the black and white cotton threads off his trousers and the few stubborn strands that defied even the hard bristles of his whisk broom he picked off with his fingers. He was very meticulous about it. "I don't like to take the shop with me into the house," he would say. "When I go home I like to leave the shop behind me." Then he put the gage, the binder and the scissors into the top drawer and checked the shuttle. If it needed a new bobbin he put one in before he went home. He liked to come in in the morning and find his machine ready for threading. Just step on the pedal and go.

That was a daily routine five times a week. But on Fridays it was different. The routine was still the same but the tempo of his motions was accelerated. He wanted to get it over with and go home as quickly as possible. The next day was Saturday and after that came Sunday. Two days out of the week that were completely his own and he knew what to do with them.

"On Friday I am a new man," he said to Yankel, as they were leaving the shop together. Yankel was the new operator who had just finished his third week in the shop. When they discovered that they were taking the same subway home, they waited for one another. "The bones ache, the feet hurt and the whole machinery inside is ready for the junk pile, but comes Friday and I get a new shot in the arm," Hymie continued. "Monday it's the same thing all over again. Take today, for instance. I am plenty tired and all I have to do after supper is open up the newspaper and I fall asleep. But today, after supper, I'll go to the candy store on the corner and spend maybe a whole hour there. Every Friday I do the same thing. The candy store keeper says I am his best customer."

"So much candy you buy?" Yankel asked.

"Who buys candy? Of course, I buy a piece of candy too. No matter what you bring a child a present you should always have a piece of candy to sweeten it. That goes without saying. But the main thing is the toys. How can a grandfather come to see his grandchildren with empty hands? I got three of them, may they all be healthy, and every time I bring them something new."

"It must be some expense every week to buy new presents," Yankel said.

"I should only have such expenses all my life, I would be satisfied, believe me. What other pleasures have I got? Cards I don't play. Whiskey I don't drink. So I got my grandchildren. Saturday I go to the Bronx and take Bobby—he is six already—to Crotona Park. Sometimes I am a

sitter, too. I give my daughter and son-in-law a chance to see a moving picture. Why should they pay a stranger money when I do it for pleasure? And Sunday I go to Brooklyn to my son's children. He has two, may they be healthy. Girls. Regular dolls. All week they wait for me and all week I wait for them. That's why I say, I can hardly wait till Friday."

"I ENVY YOU, HYMIE," YANKEL SAID. "I ALSO GOT TWO CHILDREN. And nice children too. But much *naches* from them I haven't got. One is 35 already and not even married yet. He keeps travelling around. Today he is here, tomorrow he is there. Right now I think he is in Mexico. All I get from him is postal cards. Hello, Pop. Hello, Mom. Feeling fine. Having a nice time. Hope you are awright. Love, Bernie. I know them by heart already. What are you doing? What are you making a living from? When are you coming home? Go, talk to a postal card. And you think he is an ignorant boy? God forbid! In school he got the best marks. And good looking he is that the girls are crazy about him. And for all I know he probably got a few dollars too. After all, you don't live in Mexico for nothing. But the most important thing he hasn't got—*mahzl*."

Hymie nodded his head thoughtfully and shrugged. It was hard to say whether these gestures were expressions of sympathy or of bafflement. Finally he said: "If he is smart, and good looking, and has a few dollars in his pocket, so what more do you want?"

"Yes, but what kind of a life is it wandering around like a gypsy? A boy his age should be settled already long ago. After all, he's not a *boytschik* any more."

There was a pained look in Yankel's eyes and Hymie, wanting to console him and not finding the proper words, merely nodded understandingly. He was curious to know how it was with the second son but hesitated to ask. What if it was the same, or even worse? So he drummed his fingers on his knees and fixed his glance on a subway ad. But soon his curiosity got the better of his caution and he blurted out: "*Nu*, and what about the second one?"

"With the second one it could also be better," Yankel said, in a tone of resignation. The difference between him and the other one is like from day to night. He's a settled boy. Has a steady job and two children, thank God. Everything would be nice. So his wife and my wife don't get along together. You know, the old trouble. And who suffers from it? The children. And don't think they don't understand. They understand plenty. Last week one of them asked me: 'Grandpa, why mother don't like grandma?' I'm telling you, he tore a piece of my heart out."

Hymie gave a deep sigh but felt that as an expression of

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sympathy it was now far from adequate. "And by me," he said, "there is also room for improvement. My wife and my daughter-in-law are getting along awright, thank God, so there is trouble from a different side. My wife is a busy lady. Always going to meetings and joining committees. And she hasn't even got time for her own grandchildren."

"You mean she doesn't even see them?"

"God forbid. Don't get me wrong. She sees them. But when? Once in two weeks. And the children complain. Go explain to a grandchild that his grandmother is busy with a tenant committee, or some other committee. She has so many I don't even know their names. What do you need more? Sometimes I come home from work and instead of finding a wife I find a note on the table. 'The soup is here, and the meat is there and I am going to a meeting.' *Nu*, what do you say to that?"

"And with my wife it's just the opposite," Yankel said. "You can't get her out of the house even if you drive her with sticks. 'Bertha,' I say to her, 'don't you get tired of the same four walls?' 'I got plenty of work to do,' she says, 'and don't bother me.' The truth is she works all the time. Always busy. If she isn't cleaning the house, she is washing, and if she isn't washing, she is ironing. Always busy."

"It's not good this way, and it's not good the other way," Hymie said, with a tone of finality. "A woman should go with her husband."

"I say the same thing to my Bertha."

"The other day I read an article in the paper that Roosevelt had the same trouble with his wife. She was always travelling around and making speeches in different places, and he had to make an appointment with his own wife. Awright, so he at least was President, and she was Mrs. President. But I am only Hymie Litkin and she is Sadie Litkin. You think I didn't tell her that?"

"So what did she say?"

Hymie started to say something but just then the train had come into his station. He rose with a start and said: "I'll see you on Monday," and began to push his way toward the door. Out on the platform he bent down to catch Yankel's eye through the window. For a split second their glances met just as the train was pulling out of the station.

THE SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE STATION TO HIS HOME BECAME even shorter when he had something to think about on the way. This time he was thinking about Yankel. They were getting to know each other on these daily trips home. Today, for the first time, they had both struck up an intimate tone about their respective families and, by comparison, he now realized how much he had to be grateful for. Both children happily married. Three beautiful grandchildren. His health could be a lot better but, after all, one doesn't get younger. One gets older. If Sadie would only stop being such a busy lady; stop running around to all those meetings and spend the weekday evenings with him at home and the weekend with the grandchildren, he would have no complaints at all. He would be satisfied. After all, what has a man got in his old age if not the *naches* of his children and the joy of his grandchildren? A man like Yankel. Such

a nice man. So he gets postal cards from one son and daughter-in-law trouble from the other.

He decided that tonight, at the supper table, he would strike up a heart-to-heart talk with Sadie about themselves. Show her what others have and what they have. Sometimes other peoples' troubles help draw a wife and a husband closer to one another. Yes, they would eat leisurely and somewhere, in the middle of the meal, he would start telling her about Yankel.

Midway on his block a thought crossed his mind, a thought that never failed to produce a sense of anxiety in him. What if he comes home and doesn't even find her in the house? Just another note: "The meat is here, the soup is there. . . ." Ascending the front steps he saw the light through the window and was vastly relieved.

He said, "hello," and gave his customary sigh. Lately sighing had become part of Hymie's vocabulary and this was his coming-home-from-work sigh. Whatever the meaning it held for him, it was primarily a plea to Sadie. Look, it said, I just got through with a day's work. I'm tired. All I want is a nice warm meal and after that the newspaper. And you, as my wife, should keep me company.

In Sadie the sigh evoked a different response: he's starting in awready. He didn't even take his coat off and he's sighing awready. A nice warm meal? Sure. She liked one herself and cooked it, too. Stay home in the evening? Once in a while, yes. But staying home every evening and vegetating a whole week, waiting for the weekend when you can go to Brooklyn or the Bronx and be a sitter. Not Sadie Litkin! Not in these days when there is so much work to be done. And don't let anyone dare tell her that she doesn't love her grandchildren because she'll scratch his eyes out. If she's too busy to see them every weekend she sees them every other weekend, brings them presents, kisses them from head to foot and fills herself with enough joy to last her till the next visit. And, besides, why is she so busy? For herself? She is 59 already and full of aches and pains. And how many years does one have? It's for the children and the grandchildren that she is so busy. They have a whole life yet before them. They could really enjoy from a better world. Before you turn around they grow up and all of a sudden they are put into a uniform and off they go. Fortunately her Solly came back. But what about the mothers whose sons didn't come back? And now they are talking about a new war again!

"Hello, hello," she said, as though trying to drown out his sigh with the second hello.

The table had been set and ready for him to sit down and eat. He had hardly put his hat away when Sadie began pouring the soup into the white plates. She had never been in such a hurry before. And if his suspicions needed confirmation he found it in the hat she had on, the make-up on her face and the general sense of urgency that accompanied her motions. He remained standing at the table wondering what comment to make.

"YOU THINK I HAVE TIME YET TO TAKE OFF MY COAT, OR SHALL I sit down like this?" he finally said. He was surprised at

the equanimity of his tone of voice. Sadie smiled spontaneously, glanced up to appraise the expression on his face and quickly lowered her head again, busying herself with the pouring of the soup. "You can take it off," she said with deliberate slowness, trying to match her husband's unexpected composure, "only don't hang it up in the closet because you'll soon have to put it on again."

"You are treating me to a show, maybe?"

"In America the man treats the woman. Don't you know yet?"

He strained for a quick retort but failed to find one and fell silent. In their seemingly casual verbal encounter this was clearly Sadie's round.

"The soup will get cold," she said, and they sat down.

With each spoonful that Hymie brought to his mouth he became more and more convinced that this was not the time for the heart-to-heart talk he had planned to have with his wife. They barricaded themselves behind their plates and each one waited for the other to break the silence. Sadie finally said, as she rose to get the meat from the stove, "Where I'm taking you tonight admission is free."

"Thanks for the information," he said, pushing the empty soup plate away from him, "but what makes you so sure that I want to go?"

"Whether you want to or not, you will go. Tonight I'll insist on it."

"Why is tonight different from all the nights of a whole year? I thought we settled that a long time awready. You want to go? Go. But what do you want from me?"

"So if I ask you once in a year to come along with me the world is turning topsy-turvy! A terrible tragedy would befall you if you accompanied your wife to a meeting!" she addressed herself to the plates in front of her as she was dishing out the meat.

"What is so important tonight that you have to drag me along?" he said in a subdued tone of voice calculated to lower hers.

"Tonight is a special meeting of the Women's Tenants League from the whole neighborhood. Every woman pledged to bring her husband along and I don't want to be an exception."

"And what shall I do with my tired feet, pickle them?"

"Add them to my back so they'll have company. My back hurts me plenty but I ignore it." She talked and cleared away the dishes at the same time. When she brushed the crumbs off the tablecloth he was still sitting at the table, his glum face buried in the palms of his hands, propped up on his elbows.

"The way you look one would think you are either going to a funeral, or coming back from one," she said, moving briskly about and creating an atmosphere of hurriedness.

"What will I do there, tell me?" he said pleadingly, and turned his head to arrest her attention.

SHE DID NOT STOP TO FACE HIM BUT MOVED ABOUT IN THE same hurried manner, putting away things and straightening up the house, as she always did before leaving it. The

only concession to untidiness she was willing to make tonight was to stack the dishes in the sink to wash them when she came home from the meeting. "You'll do what everybody else will do," she said in an even tone of voice. "You'll sit and listen. And if you'll have something to say you'll take the floor and say it. Nobody is pulling you by the tongue to talk and nobody is putting a lock on your mouth to keep quiet. The main thing is that tomorrow should be a big delegation to City Hall to see the Mayor. That's why we want all the men down tonight, because most of them don't work on Saturday."

"*Mahzl-tov!*" he turned around, vehemently. "Now she is coming out with the goods. The Mayor! No more and no less! I never saw the man in my life and never spoke two words to him, so all of a sudden I'll walk into City Hall and say, 'Hymie Litkin, the cloaks operator, wants to see the Mayor,' and right way all the doors will open up for me. No! after 30 years in America I am not going to make a damn fool out of myself!"

"If that's what worries you, I can assure you the Mayor won't see you. He'll be too busy for that."

"Then why should you bother? Just to waste time? I wouldn't give him the satisfaction."

"That's another worry you can save yourself. The Mayor has an assistant, and the assistant has an assistant. There is always somebody in City Hall to take a message to the Mayor. Besides, the parade is also important."

"*Mahzl-tov!* Little by little she spills the beans. First it's the Mayor, then the parade. Maybe you should go straight to Washington and see the President, if that's the case?" He followed her with his eyes around the room hoping to pin her down to one place long enough for a face-to-face showdown. But she was now carrying his coat to him, indicating that as far as she was concerned, the issue was closed. "Don't forget the Governor, he might feel insulted," she said, calmly, as she stood behind him, holding up the coat. He sighed resignedly and slipped both arms through the sleeves of his coat.

Out on the street Sadie made small but hurried steps. Hymie lagged, shuffling his feet wearily behind her, as though he were dragging a heavy load.

"Sadie, what's the rush?" he said with annoyance. "I am not on a bicycle. I am on my own feet."

She stopped to take him by the arm, but rather than slacken her pace she eased him along in step with hers.

When they came to the corner, the candy-store keeper was standing in the doorway. "Hello, Mr. Litkin!"

"Hello, hello," Hymie shouted back, "I am going someplace with my wife. I'll see you later. Positively."

"Awright, Mr. Litkin, I'm open till 12 o'clock."

When they had crossed the street, Hymie said, "Sadie, did you hear what I told him?"

"Of course I heard, what then, I'm deaf?"

"Positively," I told him.

"I heard, I heard. Why are you telling it to me now?"

"I just want to remind you that we can't stay too late there, that's all."

"You're not even there yet and you worry awready about

coming back."

"Are you taking the bus, or you want to walk?"

"For eight short blocks it doesn't pay to ride. Before you turn around, you're there."

"Awright," he acquiesced, and accelerated his pace.

IT WAS A LITTLE AFTER TEN O'CLOCK WHEN THEY LEFT THE meeting hall and this time it was Hymie who suggested that they walk home rather than take the bus.

"Nu, how did you like it?" Sadie asked, taking him by the arm.

What he wanted to say was, "I didn't know you were such a big shot. Mrs. Litkin this, and Mrs. Litkin that, and when it came to electing the small committee to see the Mayor they right away nominated Mrs. Litkin." But he decided that with his Sadie it would be wiser to play safe. "What's there to like or not to like?" he said haltingly, as though he were choosing his words. "A meeting like all other meetings."

"Well, I'm glad you enjoyed yourself. At least they didn't bite you and you came out alive, thank God," she said in a voice that clearly indicated her displeasure at his remarks.

"Right away she gives me an argument! Awright. Excuse me. I didn't mean it. Good?" He looked at her but she turned her face away from him.

They walked in silence. He wanted to say something that would be both safe and conciliatory. "Sadie," he said.

"What?"

"Tomorrow, please do me a favor and be careful."

"What? Where? When? What are you talking about?"

"I mean in City Hall. When you talk to the Mayor be careful with what you say. After all, he's not just anybody." Even now, as he was saying these words the whole thing seemed preposterous to him. . . . Sadie Litkin to see the Mayor! He wondered whether he should be proud of this incredible fact or unhappy about it. What if it got into the newspapers and the workers in his shop noticed it. They'd certainly kid the life out of him. . . . "Ha, there goes Mr. Litkin! . . . What's new in City Hall, Mr. Litkin? . . . How's the Mayor's health, Mr. Litkin? . . . We didn't know we had such a big shot in our midst!" Yes, he'd never hear the end of it. He knew of one, at least, who won't join the kibbitzers—Yankel. He could depend on him. He was glad he had spoken to him earlier in the evening on the train. "My wife is a busy lady. Always going to meetings and joining committees." To Yankel it will not be a surprise.

"I never saw a man should worry so much about nothing," Sadie said. What's there to be afraid of? Mrs. Kellerman, the lawyer's wife, is the chairman of the delegation. She'll do all the talking. And if I'll have a chance to put in my two cents, I'll put 'em in, don't worry. Maybe my English is not so perfect, that's a difference matter. For that the Mayor will have to excuse me. I'm not going to him to take a test in English. I'm going to remind him that only last week was a fire two blocks from us and that half the houses in our neighborhood are firetraps. For that you

don't need a perfect English."

"You think he doesn't read the papers? He has to wait till you'll remind him about the fire?"

"I'm standing over his shoulder to watch whether he reads or doesn't read? I am talking about doing something. Reading is one thing and doing is something else."

"It's no use," Hymie thought to himself. "A regular Einstein. For everything she got an answer." He fell silent again, recalling the conversation he had had with Yankel on the way home, and wondering whether now was the proper time to tell Sadie about it. "What can I lose?" he thought to himself. "If it doesn't accomplish what I hoped it would, it will at least change the subject of our conversation."

"Sadie," he said cautiously.

"What?"

"You remember a few weeks ago I told you about the new man in my shop?"

"You mean the new operator?"

"Yankel is his name. A nice man. I'm getting to know him a little better. We ride home together from work. He lives only one station from us. So he told me about his two sons. Much *naches* he hasn't got from them. One is 35 awready and still not married; and the other is married and has children, so he got other troubles. His wife don't get along with his daughter-in-law."

"Nu," Sadie gave a sympathetic sigh, "everybody has his little bundle of troubles."

"His wife's name is Bertha and he says she stays home all the time."

"Whatsematter, she is sick, God forbid?"

"No. She just likes to stay home all the time. Cleaning, washing, cooking."

"That's a shame. A woman with no small children in the house chaining herself down to the kitchen. Where do they live? You got the address?"

"What do you want the address for, you wannar pay her a visit awready?"

"Why not? If she lives only one station from us it's not so far. It's in the neighborhood. When you'll see Yankel in the shop Monday, ask him for the address."

"I know what you are up to, Sadie, and I'm not bringing you the address." He was now sorry that he had started the whole thing.

"Awright, so I'll get it myself," she said with mock defiance.

"How will you get it yourself?" He looked at her to see whether she was serious or not.

"Whatsematter," she said, challengingly, "I don't know maybe the address of your shop?"

"I forbid you to come up to my shop!" he shouted.

"Awright," she replied, calmly, "you can save me the trouble. Bring the address so I won't come to the shop."

"With my Sadie it's better not to take any chances," he thought to himself, and decided that rather than have her barge into the shop he'd bring her the address.

"Awright, awright," he muttered, as though to himself, "I can see awready that Yankel's wife will be a busy lady."

LESSONS IN RESISTANCE

IV: PROGRAM ON THE LEFT

By Louis Harap

IN the final article in this series on the preparedness of American Jewry to do its part in meeting the threat of fascism right here in our own country, we shall examine the situation in the liberal, pseudo-liberal, trade union and left wing sectors of the Jewish community.

Since the end of the war a great part of the liberal and trade union leadership has played a crucial role in putting over the cold war hysteria. The wave of progressivism generated among the American masses during the Roosevelt era and the anti-fascist war could not be channelled into red-baiting hysteria by the openly identified reactionaries alone. These big money men needed the inside experience and knowledge about people's movements and the approach to the masses that only social democrats, trade union leaders and so-called liberals could provide. In other words, the financial barons needed skilled demagogues to agitate the people and to neutralize resistance to the hysterical red-baiting that monopoly-controlled avenues of communication were propagating. Many of these erstwhile liberal elements were organized into the Americans for Democratic Action, which acted as the demagogic "liberal" wing of the Democratic Party. The "liberal" sector of Jewish life has, like so much of the general liberal segment of American life, particularly the A.D.A., obligingly served the demagogic needs of the cold war. They have deepened the hysteria in their own circles, have provided much of the ideology and demagoguery for the reactionaries and have considerably weakened the unity built up during the anti-fascist war.

One of the progressive forces during the war and the first post-war months had been the American Jewish Congress. This organization had been, since its founding in 1916, under the guidance of the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, the closest approach to a militant mass organization outside of the Jewish left.

AJ Congress Possibilities

Unfortunately, however, the "liberal" Congress leadership has in the past few years willingly lent itself to the red-baiting and cold war hysteria and has taken measures to disintegrate Jewish unity. We have told the story of the degeneration of Congress leadership in a series of articles (JEWISH LIFE, July-November 1949). We there warned that Congress was destroying its essential function as a mass organization and breaking the unity of center and left in Jewish life in defiance of the experience of German Jewry. This leadership, we showed, was exploiting "liberal" demagoguery to confuse the Jewish people on critical issues.

Anyone who attended the biennial convention of Congress in November 1949, as did this writer, knows that the Congress leadership has mastered the art of combining lip service to the struggle for Jewish rights and against fascism with consistent efforts to isolate and paralyze any individual or group which dared take the Congress program seriously. Yet potentialities for genuine resistance against the onrush of fascism and for mass democratic action in Congress still remain. For Congress leadership was forced to take cognizance of the militant mood of the membership by allowing the several resolutions relating to denazification and defense of civil liberties at home. The convention reiterated its stand against the Un-American Committee, the "loyalty" order, the threatening Mundt-Ferguson bill, the threats of new Peekskills and Chicago riots and resolved that a possible *amicus curiae* brief be presented in the court appeal of the 11 communist leaders. The convention reaffirmed its determination to help in the struggle for Israeli independence. While the national Congress leadership hopes to stifle any mass action and to limit activities on these objectives to legislative and court action, the resolutions open the possibility of local and rank and file action in implementation of these resolutions.

Whether Congress makes any contribution to the desperately needed mass movements for civil liberties, denazification and the independence of Israel, thus rests with the rank and file and the local leaderships. A militant progressive leadership on a local scale, sensitive to issues as they hit the community consciousness, will draw the membership into a cohesive force that will overcome any reluctance of the national leadership to engage in militant, united mass action.

The "Post" Aids Reaction

In New York City the journalistic voice of red-baiting "liberalism" into which the Congress leadership has fallen, is the *New York Post*. We must face the fact that the *Post* is owned and largely edited by Jewish "liberals" who have in the past year dedicated themselves wholly to fighting the "red menace." Although the paper has assumed some pro-democratic positions as in the cases of the Peekskill riots and the trial of the communist leaders, the paper never fails to confuse these issues by red-baiting that helps to demobilize the forces opposing fascist tendencies. One example is the editorial of December 14, 1949, in which the *Post* condemns the wire-tapping practices of the FBI. With an attempt at macabre humor the *Post* asks, "Will the FBI stop treating all phones as though they were

(Communist) Party lines?" In other words, the *Post* is demagogically weakening the fight by telling the FBI that it's not so bad to tap the phones of communists. Within its field of operation among middle class and petty bourgeois liberals, many of them Jewish, who are its readers, the *Post* never fails to incite them against progressives in the midst of a purported defense of civil liberties.

In its effort to abuse communists and non-communist progressives the *Post* resorts to tactics that should win the utmost gratitude from reaction and which lend invaluable demagogic help to the police state conspiracy. For the effect of the *Post's* demagoguery is to introduce a paralyzing confusion into the liberal elements, in large part Jewish, who are its major audience.

The Obsessive Anti-Sovieteers

While the *Post* has only recently adopted an obsessive anti-Soviet position hardly distinguishable from the Hearst and Scripps-Howard press, there are older and more case-hardened hands at this game in Jewish life. For many years the cabal of Jewish social democrats clustered about the Yiddish daily *Forward* and the Jewish Labor Committee have devoted themselves wholly to the anti-communist crusade. This group anticipated the cold war tactic in many respects in the very midst of the anti-fascist war.

Just who are the *Forward*-Jewish Labor Committee group? Most of them were immigrant radical leaders who came to this country during the Eastern European immigration from the revolutionary underground. Their immediate influence, mostly among Yiddish speaking workers, was exercised through the needle trade unions, the Workmen's Circle (a fraternal order) and the Yiddish daily *Forward*. But the militant socialism with which they started gradually corroded as the immigrant Jewish community participated in American economic expansion and tended to become more petty bourgeois and middle class. The ideology of class struggle with which they began was abandoned. In the meantime the Bolshevik revolution occurred and these erstwhile radicals pitted their main strength against the communists and progressive movement in our own country. This social democratic group became the spearhead of anti-Sovietism in the United States. Among the leading figures are Adolph Held, Nathan Chanan, Abe Cahan, Jacob Pat, Joseph Baskin and David Dubinsky. Except for Dubinsky, these men are hardly known to English speaking Jews because they operate mostly in the Yiddish speaking community. But they influence important sectors of American life through the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the AFL executive through Dubinsky and through their English organ, the *New Leader*, and their voice in general "liberal" and trade union circles. In 1942, they were reinforced by Raphael Abramovitch, Polish Bundist leader whose life since the Russian Revolution has been consecrated to the destruction of the Soviet Union.

Anticipations of the Cold War

As might be expected, the *Forward*-Jewish Labor Committee group anticipated the whole cold war strategy while the war against Hitlerism was going on. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, Chanan wrote: "The last shot has not yet been fired from free America—and from that shot the Stalin regime, too, will be shot to pieces." So virulent was Abramovitch's anti-Soviet hatred, that he wrote this in the *Forward* on July 16, 1942: "The only chance for the democracies to win this war and not to be defeated is to struggle that the war should be a long one"—in other words, the Munich line that the Soviet Union should fight to exhaustion. On the trade union front, Dubinsky anticipated the cold war split away from the World Federation of Trade Unions. The *New York Times* of December 29, 1943, reported that the Soviet magazine, *War and the Working Class*, had attacked Dubinsky for opposing the AFL joining the Anglo-Soviet trade union committee. Dubinsky even anticipated Taft-Hartley by his demand during the ILGWU election in January 1945 that a rank and file ILGWU leader, Sylvestro Ozzi, sign an anti-communist affidavit. "I was asked," said Ozzi, "to sign a statement repudiating the Communist Party, of which I was never a member."

The *Forward*-Jewish Labor Committee group was also a bitter enemy of Jewish unity. When the American Jewish Conference, probably the most inclusive and representative organization ever to be set up in the United States, was formed in 1943 in order to mobilize full Jewish support for the war, the Jewish Labor Committee half-heartedly joined and actually did its utmost to sabotage the conference. But when the conference admitted the Jewish People's Fraternal Order in December 1944, the Committee withdrew from the conference because of the admission of a "communist-dominated" group.

Who Are Dubinsky's Friends?

It is thus evident that these "labor" leaders were animated by one all-absorbing motive, anti-communism, and were ready to sacrifice everything, including the welfare of the Jewish people, to this purpose. They gave indispensable aid to reaction by providing the demagoguery with which the Jews and the whole American people could be led into fascism. In essential respects the policy of the *Forward*-Jewish Labor Committee group coincides with that of the most reactionary and even pro-fascist American elements, since anti-communism is the prime weapon of fascism, as we should have learned by this time. The position of these men is not far from that of the fascist German Jewish banker whom we quoted in the first article: the Jews, said Paul Einzig, "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."

A few facts about David Dubinsky, one of the most important members of this anti-Soviet clique, should demon-

strate their function clearly. In 1944, Dubinsky spearheaded the split of the Liberal Party from the American Labor Party, and thus dealt a serious blow to progressive unity in New York. Because Dubinsky based this activity on anti-communist grounds, he received high praise in June 1944 from Tom Girdler, one of America's worst union-busters, at the same time that Girdler attacked Sidney Hillman and Phillip Murray, who defended unity at the time. In April 1946, David Dubinsky and a few of his fellow ILGWU leaders crossed a CIO picket line at the Waldorf-Astoria to attend a dinner honoring Winston Churchill after the sinister Fulton, Missouri, speech. They were the only union group represented at the dinner. In October 1946, Dubinsky accepted a medal from King George, despite resentment in his union, at a time when the British were oppressing the Jews of Palestine. At that time, Mrs. Louise Waterman Wise, wife of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, had refused a British medal. In December 1948, Dubinsky proposed a "substitute" for the Taft-Hartley law which was in some respects worse than the original law. The New York *Daily News* thought this proposal a "constructive suggestion from Labor" (December 28, 1948). The whole story of Dubinsky's leading role in the formation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in November 1949, with its appeasement of clerical reaction, was told by George Morris in this magazine last month.

When one places beside the facts above the fact that Dubinsky said not a single word in protest against the Peekskill outrages, the quarters in which Dubinsky is praised and well-treated, place him and his clique unmistakably among the most sinister forces in the country. Before the war, the Hearst New York *Journal-American* devoted a two-week long laudatory series on Dubinsky, while Hearst's New York *Mirror* (September 3, 1946) paid tribute to Dubinsky as "one of the most valiant opponents of communism in the American labor movement." Such praise must be deserved. Reactionary and pro-fascist elements recognize Dubinsky and his social democratic group as allies. By the same sign these right wing social democrats cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered friends of the Jewish people.

Anyone who is inclined to question this statement should study the following blatant demonstration of its truth in the response of J. C. Rich, columnist of the *Hat Worker* (September 15, 1949), organ of the Hat, Cap and Millinery Workers (AFL), to the Peekskill riots. This union is controlled by social democrats and led by men like Max Zaritsky and Alex Rose, who played a part in splitting the Liberal Party off from the American Labor Party. Rich commented that the Peekskill rioters "did what most of us are too lazy and reluctant to do." He denied that the violence was "a calculated outburst of racial and religious bias" and concludes that we "ought to cheer for the servicemen who had the gumption in standing up against the Stalin Bundists."

The social democratic trade union leaders of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers (CIO), headed for many years by the late Sidney Hillman, are more recent converts to the



David Dubinsky

anti-Soviet obsession. Hillman's successors, men like Jacob S. Potofsky and Frank Rosenblum, were apparently reluctant collaborators in the red-baiting rampage at the 1949 Cleveland convention of the CIO. "God knows I am no red-baiter," exclaimed Potofsky at the convention, yet he did nothing to head off the suicidal splitting policy of the CIO. And more, he presided in January over the national CIO "trial" of the Food, Tobacco and Agricultural Workers for "violating CIO policy." When the FTA officials tried to show the accomplishments of this union of hideously exploited workers, mostly Negroes, Potofsky snapped back: "The CIO charges are not that you have failed to do a job for the workers, but that you have adhered to communist rather than CIO policies." In other words, Potofsky was cooperating in a program of political persecution of union leaders who had fought for workers' rights.

The Amalgamated Joins the Cold War

Another Amalgamated leader, Louis Hollander, who is also head of the New York State CIO, has wholeheartedly joined in the red-baiting hysteria. Like most of the social democrats, Hollander is deeply involved in defense of the policies of the Truman administration. When Hollander returned from a visit to Israel in June 1949, he urged that Marshall Plan aid be extended to Israel. The next month Adolph Held led a delegation from the Jewish Labor Committee, which had also just returned from Israel, in a con-

ference with the State Department to urge extension of the Marshall Plan to Israel. Yet these labor leaders dared to propose what Moshe Sharett, Labor Party foreign minister of Israel, was forced, at least temporarily, to reject. For the Israeli people know that the Soviet Union was and is the staunchest protagonist of their independence, and would not tolerate such an obvious attempt to line up Israel with the anti-Soviet bloc and the political and economic control to which the Marshall Plan commits the country. Although these dangers are plain to a great part of the Israeli people, these American Jewish labor leaders are devoted followers of American foreign policy, which poses a fatal danger to Israeli independence and which supports feudal Arab puppets of British and American imperialism in the Middle East. This policy is not calculated to secure the future of Israel or the Jewish people as a whole, whose destiny is tied to the defense of democracy everywhere. The ominous rise of anti-Semitism and neo-nazism in Germany is only a more obvious manifestation of this foreign policy.

It is necessary that the rank and file of all the organizations influenced by these misleaders of labor come to understand that the cause of democracy and the security of the Jewish people are being traduced by such policies. On the one hand, the ominous parallels of the attitude of these leaders with those of German Jewry must be drawn and the practical conclusions reached. Recognition of these parallels should emerge as the result of obsessive anti-communist policies become apparent in the increase in anti-Semitism in this country and abroad, especially in Germany, in the weakening of bargaining power of the trade unions, the worsening of economic conditions of the workers and the rapid deterioration of civil liberties.

In unifying and mobilizing the Jewish masses and joining these forces with the non-Jewish anti-fascist elements, the Jewish left has a grave responsibility. For the left has the liveliest awareness of the sources of greatest danger, of the tactics that must be used to counter this danger and of the necessity of placing the whole anti-fascist movement under the leadership of the working class. Because the communists see this necessity with the greatest clarity, they have the obligation to work for the realization of such a broad anti-fascist movement led by the working class.

Responsibility of Jewish Left

The Jewish left consists of organizations in which Jews are organized under left wing and progressive sponsorship such as the Jewish People's Fraternal Order and the American Jewish Labor Council. It also includes the Jewish leadership and membership of left wing labor unions such as the Fur and Leather Workers Union, the United Office and Professional Workers Union and other unions, as well as the progressive rank and file of a number of unions under right wing leadership such as the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. In addition, it includes many Jewish communists and non-communist progressives who are active members of Jewish organizations.

What is the responsibility of these left forces? In the first place, the times demand that they rouse the rank and file to the dangers confronting the Jews and all democratic-minded people. But before this can be achieved, the left forces must establish an intimacy with the thoughts and feelings of the rank and file so that they can react together with the rank and file as issues arise and then provide leadership. The Jewish left must work for the achievement of unity of Jewish forces with the trade union movement. Although there would certainly be no disagreement on the left with this approach, far too large a gap yet exists between this accepted tactic and its practice. One way of correcting this situation is well-directed *activity* in which the Jewish masses are involved. Further, this activity must be informed by a principled and unwavering adherence to a progressive position on issues. This obligates the left forces to carry on a continuous process of keeping the air clear of the fog thrown up by the social democrats and reactionary Jewish leaders. We have given numerous examples in these articles of the confusions introduced by reactionary and obsessive anti-Soviet forces among the Jewish people. The left can help to dispel these confusions by militant arousal to activity of the Jewish masses, for only by activity can the Jewish masses discern the misleadership of which so many of their so-called leaders are guilty, especially in this time of greatest danger to the Jews.

The position of the left has been continuously presented in the pages of this magazine. The platform of the left is basically to unite the broadest masses of the Jewish people under the leadership of labor against those forces that are driving towards making this country into a police state and towards precipitating a war in which the Jewish people will be especial sufferers. The reactionary policy of the Truman administration is trying to reduce Israel to a semi-colony of the United States and into a war base against the Soviet Union. The Jewish masses in cooperation with non-Jewish progressive forces can avert these dangers by forging unity in defense of their liberties.

There is still time to break up the fascist glacier that is descending upon us. But time is short. We must do our utmost to alert the Jewish people to the lesson that the fate of German Jewry under fascism teaches us—that an anti-communist and reactionary program in these times means death to the Jewish people and democracy. Jews would do well to remember what the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise described in his autobiography as “classic as an exhibit of unwisdom and lack of prescience on the eve of tragic events.” He relates that about 10 days before Hitler came to power, he and President Deutsch of the American Jewish Congress went to Dr. Cyrus Adler, president of the American Jewish Committee, to prepare a program in case of Hitler's ascent to power. “President Deutsch,” replied Dr. Adler, “we will cross that bridge when we come to it, not before.” Shall we, too, learn how fascism is to be resisted after it is too late? Jews must not permit differences in ideology to prevent their united action in the face of the common enemy. Only thus can we assure survival of the Jewish people.

SOCIAL WORKERS STRIKE

The longest strike in social work history has been going on in Los Angeles since December 5, 1949, when about 150 employees of four Jewish community centers, the Jewish Free Loan, a day nursery, a child care institution, Jewish Family Service and five other institutions financed by the Los Angeles Jewish Welfare Federation walked out. Among the demands were a \$45 minimum for clerical and maintenance workers and \$65 minimum for professional staff.

The Social Service Employees Union, Local 95 (UOPWA), called out the workers after nine months of fruitless negotiations and the Federation's refusal to bargain in good faith. During these negotiations the Federation imposed a unilateral pay plan affecting only 11 employees which in effect destroyed collective bargaining. Offers by the Board of Rabbis of Southern California, the American Group Workers Association and a citizens committee to mediate the strike were refused by the Federation. Prior to December 5, permission for members of the board of the Beverly-Fairfax Jewish Community Center, one of the 13 agencies on strike, to have a union spokesman present at a meeting on the problem was refused by the Federation. Attempts were made to coerce clients into signing affidavits against strike pickets. Scabs were used to operate Camp Max Straus during the Christmas holidays. This is a camp for emotionally disturbed children, who were exposed during this period to wrangles of many parents, management, and dozens of policemen on the spot.

Many organizations have rallied to support the strike. In addition to the Board of Rabbis of Southern California, they include the American Jewish Congress, Southland Jewish Organization, Jewish People's Fraternal Order, Labor Zionist Organization, Workmen's Circle, Pioneer Women Los Angeles Council, the American Newspaper Guild and SSEU locals throughout the country. The local Anglo-Jewish weekly, *B'nai B'rith Messenger and Voice*, has urged management to submit the dispute to arbitration, but management has thus far refused.

On January 4 Rabbi Jacob Kohn, representing the Board of Rabbis of Southern California, appeared before the executive board of the Los Angeles Jewish Welfare Federation to discuss the Federation's refusal to take up the rabbis' offer, made on December 20, to mediate the strike. At

the same time, Rabbi Franklin Cohn and members of his congregation joined the picket line in front of the Federation's offices. "I am joining the picket line," said Rabbi Cohn, "in order to demonstrate full endorsement of the workers' rights for decent wages and full union recognition."

On the same day, union officers were served with an injunction against mass picketing. The Jewish community was shocked. The injunction was followed by attempts by the Federation to hire scabs from local colleges.

How to explain this anti-union behavior of the Federation? A look at the membership of the Federation board makes this clear. The board is a self-perpetuating body that represents neither a cross-section of the 250,000 Jews in Los Angeles or of the contributors to the Jewish Welfare Fund, which provides 70 per cent of the Federation's \$1,500,000 budget (the remainder is provided by the Community Chest). Not one of the board's 47 members represents an AFL or CIO union. But anti-union bankers, insurance executives and corporation lawyers are plentiful on the board.

Here are a few. Federation president is Leonard A. Chudacoff, owner of Associated Brewery Distributors, which is on the CIO unfair list. M. F. Berg is president of the Berg Metals and California Mill Supply Company, which had strikes in 1940, 1941, 1947 and 1949 and which has not signed a contract without a strike or work stoppage. Lawrence Frank is the owner of six unorganized restaurants in Los Angeles; he is also the owner of Van de Kamp's Bakeries, which has been on the AFL Central Labor Council unfair list for years. Walter Hilborn, corporation lawyer, head of the Federation's nego-

tiating committee, told the union membership a few days before the strike that "there are two areas in which it has been found impossible to negotiate—labor relations and international relations."

As the union goes into the sixth week of the strike, it is more determined and united than it was at the start. The Jewish community is learning something about its Federation board in the process and is behind the strikers.

MILTON E. LEVISON

Editors' Postscript: In the eighth week of the strike, on January 25, a settlement was reached between the SSEU and the Los Angeles Jewish Welfare Federation which was a complete victory for the strikers. All strikers were to return to work and all the scabs hired during the strike were to be discharged. Other terms of the agreement: wage increases to be arbitrated (union leaders are confident of success here) and if granted, new wage scale to be retroactive to three months prior to strike; employers to pay full cost of hospitalization, whereas they paid only one-third under the old contract; improved procedures on grievances, severance pay and seniority.

The decisiveness of the victory can be judged from the fact that the employers had refused to submit to arbitration altogether and that the employers' position that they could not pay an increase, even if they had wanted to, was overturned. The victory was made possible by solid support from rank and filers of many unions (a collection at one plant gate in Los Angeles netted \$176, for instance), which forced the right wing Los Angeles CIO Council to support the strike; and tremendous solidarity of the Jewish community with the strikers. Many Jewish organizations sent delegations to the Federation. The shocked protest against the Federation's injunction against mass picketing obliged the Federation to apply to the court for a dissolution of the injunction.

**Picket line
in Los
Angeles**



STORY OF THE WITTENBERGS

Nearly 17 years ago I was standing on a street corner of my small German home town. I saw a bus passing with nazi stormtroopers, who were picking up communist workers, Social Democratic Party officials, leading trade unionists and Jewish businessmen and taking them to jail. Some of those arrested returned after a few days, some were in prison for years and others never returned. The Reichstag fire had set off the political and anti-Semitic terror, which had arrived in our town as I mentioned.

About 16½ years later my wife Steffi and I were living in Houston, Texas. After the East German Republic was formed, we decided to go back to our native land and applied for permits to return. Three months later the Immigration and Naturalization Service began to investigate our right to reside in the United States and subjected us to several hearings in which our political views were examined.

Now I see that my experience in Germany in 1933 was only the beginning for us. In 1935, nazi stormtroopers in front of Jewish stores took pictures of customers and then publicly posted these pictures and the people were denounced as "bad Germans." In that same year when a little boy insulted my father in our store, my father threw out the boy. The boy

returned with a group from the Hitler Youth, who invaded the store and put a sign around my father's neck reading, "This dirty Jew hit an Aryan child," and led him through the town.

Persecution of my whole family continued through 1936 and 1937. In 1938, the nazis arrested my father without any reason, set him free after a week and ordered him to report to the police station three times daily. We left Germany on November 14, 1938.

After spending eight years in Uruguay, I came to the United States, arriving at Miami, and then went to New Orleans. I was impressed with the industrial development of this country, but I also saw

the other side of American life when a Puerto Rican was not allowed to ride in the same car with me in New Orleans. After that I experienced the shame of segregation and discrimination against the Negro people in its worst form in the South.

My wife came from a different part of Germany, which she had left after the war started. We were very much hurt to see the racial persecution in this country. Whenever we saw a "White Only" sign, we remembered the "*Juden Unerwünscht*" (Jews Not Wanted) signs in Germany. Every time we saw a segregated school, we remembered the segregated schools we had to go to. And we were also reminded of Germany by the Hearst press, by reactionary commentators on the radio and by warmongering speeches of certain politicians.

Our experiences in Germany and the United States necessarily had an effect on us. We sought contact with those forces here that were fighting against discrimination and warmongering and for peace and progress. We subscribed to progressive magazines and bought progressive literature. We expressed our sympathy for Henry Wallace and his program in the election of 1948. On the grounds of such "dangerous and subversive activity" the immigration officials began to investigate us. We informed them that we had applied for visas for Germany and that we did not belong to any political party in this country. On the other hand, we told them that we admired the fine job that the Communist Party was doing for peace and progress and that we whole-heartedly supported the party's fight for better living conditions for the American working class.

The Department of Justice started the Witch-hunt of Houston. Members of the Progressive Party, the Young Progressives of America, the Civil Rights Congress, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People were called to testify about us in connection with our right to remain in this country after we had applied for visas to return to Germany. We even testified in court that we were willing to accept deportation. Judge J. M. Kennelly ordered James J. Green, secretary of the Communist Party of Texas, to jail after he refused to be a stoolpigeon against us. We were being used as an instrument for the persecution of representatives of progressive organizations.

On January 12, we were arrested and released on \$2,000 bail. The government is making it difficult for us to leave for Germany in February as we planned. But we are confident that support of progressive Americans will make it possible for us to return home.

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OIL AND POLITICS

After many months of protracted negotiations between the oil companies and Israel's government, a very short-term and tentative arrangement has been reached, by which Israel is assured of oil supplies from the Haifa Refinery for one month only (January), while the second stage of the negotiations is transferred to London. Unless a satisfactory agreement is then reached, the supply of crude oil will be stopped and refineries closed down completely.

Through the fog of conflicting reports it now appears certain that the major point of controversy is the renewal of the concessions and its terms. These concessions were generously given by the British administration in Palestine, at the expense of the local population.

It would be wrong to think that the real reason for closing down the refineries is the refusal of Iraq to open the pipe-line or the refusal of Egypt to allow the passage of oil tankers through the Suez Canal—a few months ago when Israel threatened the British that it would operate the refineries with or without the consent of companies, these managed to secure the crude oil needed to run the plant.

The policy of the Israel government in the existing circumstances is most surprising. Eighteen months of juggling has already greatly handicapped Israel economy; many industrial development schemes are delayed because of the insecurity in fuel supplies. Moreover, Britain is also using the sterling balances frozen in London as additional pressure to secure renewal of the oil concessions under the most favorable conditions to the companies.

The trump card is in the hands of Israel—the works are in her territory, and she has the ability to operate them even without the technical help of foreign experts. Crude oil can be supplied by Rumanian or Mexican oil companies, and even American oil for the Persian Gulf owing to the open conflict between American and British oil companies.

But the government seems reluctant to take a bold policy and is likely to surrender to pressure which will be to the detriment of the independence and prosperity of the country.

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Documents

POLISH POLICY ON JEWS

Following are excerpts from a speech made by Mr. Szlapeczynski, governor of Lower Silesia, at a conference preliminary to the First National Congress of the Jewish Cultural Society, held in Wroclaw on October 14-16, 1949:

It is necessary for the Jewish people to know that all who interpret the government's help in facilitating the emigration of Jews as a desire to get rid of Jews are indulging in harmful and hostile propaganda against the People's Democracy.

In Poland today there is no room for chauvinism and racial discrimination. In our country, which moves toward the lofty idea of socialism, patriotism is measured by the attitude towards the great efforts of the workers. The government appreciates the part played by the Jewish worker in all phases of reconstruction. While making it possible for Jews to emigrate, the government is at the same time most emphatically interested that the Jewish workers and intellectuals remain at their posts and continue to rebuild Poland. To suggest anything to the contrary is criminal.

The Jewish worker is a priceless asset. Valuable also are all constructive forces of Jewish society—forces that work shoulder to shoulder with other Polish workers to make Poland rich and strong.

This Congress will provide a clear picture of the government's interest in a progressive, rich and powerful Jewish culture. And because the work of the Jewish labor champion and the Jewish cultural producer is gratefully appreciated by Poland, it will continue to organize the best working conditions and a realistic base for the growth, enrichment and deepening of Jewish culture imbued with the ideals of the working masses. Conscious of his responsibility toward the realization of these lofty ideals in this exceptional period of history, the Jewish worker will not desire to leave his post or his motherland.

Following is a recent statement made by the Polish Ministry of Public Administration:

The Polish government has consented that those Polish citizens of Jewish nationality who wish to leave for Israel may do so. The government is facilitating their departure by simplifying and speeding up formalities, and by organizing transportation through the travel office, "Orbis."

It is clear that those applying and leaving for Israel are mostly persons ideologically connected with the Zionist movement.

The above facts have had a direct influence upon the activities of Jewish political groups and Zionist organizations. It is mostly their active members who are leaving and as a result their organizations are in the process of liquidating and dissolving their activities.

The large majority of Polish citizens of Jewish nationality appreciate that full equality of rights is being realized in Poland and they do not intend to leave for Israel. Therefore, the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, the OZE [Jewish health organization], the Jewish Historical Institute, the Jewish Cultural Society, and other organizations continue to carry on their activities. The existing Jewish religious congregations were amalgamated at their convention of August 1949, into the Religious Alliance of Jews in Poland and it enjoys all the rights of a legally recognized religious union.

Masses & Mainstream

America's Leading Cultural Progressive
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Book Reviews

JEWS OF MINNEAPOLIS

By Morris U. Schappes

Jews in Transition, by Rabbi Albert I. Gordon. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. \$4.

In the study of contemporary American Jewish life, much attention is properly given to the largest Jewish communities containing the overwhelming majority of the Jewish population. It has been recently estimated that three-quarters of all the Jews in the United States live in the following 13 cities, each containing 40,000 Jews or more, here listed in order of size of the Jewish population: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Boston, Detroit, Cleveland, Baltimore, Newark, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, St. Louis, Miami. There are, however, almost one and a quarter million Jews living in smaller Jewish communities, from the tiny to the substantial. Of one of the latter, this very informative but far from complete sociological analysis of Minneapolis has just been published by Rabbi Albert I. Gordon, who was for 16 years the rabbi of the Conservative Congregation Adath Jeshurun in that city. Minneapolis has a population of 500,000 and is the 16th largest city in the United States. Its Jewish population of 6,100 families with about 20,000-21,000 Jews makes it one of nine Jewish communities with populations from 20,000 to 26,000.

Minneapolis is "an important industrial center," with many ethnic groups in its population: Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, Irish, Russians, Poles, Czechs, Romanians, Greeks, English and Negroes, as well as Jews. The Jews themselves are also of multinational origin. The first Jewish settlers in Minneapolis from 1866 on came from Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bohemia, and the later immigration from 1880 on came from Russia, Poland, Lithuania and Romania.

Economically the Jews in Minneapolis are not even a minor part of the capitalist ruling circles of the city. The Jews are not represented in the big business of Minneapolis, that is, in milling and lumbering, utilities and transportation, banking and insurance or the large department stores. Rabbi Gordon reports the fact, but does not investigate the reason. Yet why is it that in comparable Cincinnati (with 22,000 Jews in a population of 460,000), the Jews

are a minor part of the dominant class and in Minneapolis they are not? The Jews of Cincinnati began to settle there in 1819, when class relations were more fluid and a small amount of capital meant something. In Cincinnati the Jews consolidated their position before the Civil War and, sharing the capitalist prosperity of that War, emerged from it with a substantial Jewish middle class, a part of which moved up into the ranks of big capital.

But in Minneapolis the Jews arrived after the Civil War, when the local capitalist interests were already entrenched, when the victorious industrial bourgeoisie was ready to expand rapidly into big business, when capitalist competition became sharper, and when one needed substantial capital investment in order to survive the competition and rise into the dominant economic spheres.

In passing, and without making any use of them in the main body of his work, Rabbi Gordon also cites useful figures on occupational distribution. Thus in 1946 there were some 415 Jewish pharmacists, lawyers, doctors, dentists, accountants, teachers, newspapermen, and architects, ranging from 173 pharmacists to two architects. In 1947, these Jewish professionals and semi-professionals made up only 1.53 per cent of employed Jews; among the white Gentiles, this group made up 2.75 per cent, indicating that at least in Minneapolis the Jews are not "over-represented" in the professions. Among proprietors and hired managers, however, the figures for that year tend in the other direction: they constitute 1.83 per cent of the white Gentiles and 6.06 per cent of the Jews.

Of wage and salaried workers, we get the following comparative picture. First, they constitute 94.5 per cent of the white Gentiles (except for self-employed persons and domestic workers in homes), 92.41 per cent of the Jews, and 93.22 per cent of the Negroes. Obviously these gross figures hide important differences such as the following: the Jews are heavily weighted among "clerical, sales, and kindred workers," thus: 43.95 per cent of Jewish employees are in this category, compared to 26.61 per cent of white Gentiles and 10.11 per cent of Negroes. Among "craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers," the figures are these: 21.10 per cent of the white Gentiles, 9.01 per cent of the Jews, and 5.62 per cent of the Negroes. For "operatives and kindred workers," the comparison is as follows: 31.83 per cent of the Jews, 26.60 per cent of the white Gentiles, and

16.85 per cent of the Negroes. In the realm of service workers (outside private homes), the data show this: 49.4 per cent of the Negroes, 11.93 per cent of the white Gentiles, and 6.09 per cent of the Jews. As for laborers (presumably unskilled), 11.24 per cent of the Negroes are in that classification, 8.26 per cent of the white Gentiles, and 1.53 per cent of the Jews.

Summarizing, these statistics show that the Jews have a large white-collar wage-working group, and a craftsman and operatives group proportionately equal to that of the white Gentiles. Unfortunately, Rabbi Gordon omitted data about the self-employed lower middle class, which he generally considers to be large. It is also regrettable that Rabbi Gordon did not provide the occupational figures in absolute numbers in addition to percentages, so that we could ascertain exactly how large the wage-working class is among Minneapolis Jews.

One index, however, is the stated fact that there are about 1,000 Jews who are members of trade unions there. Thus 60 of the 75 members of the cap makers' union are Jewish, there are Jewish women members of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies' Garment Workers and Jews are members in practically all other unions." There are even three Jewish business agents. Now assuming that not all Jewish wage-workers belong to unions (Minneapolis is after all not a 100 per cent union city), and in view of the fact that there are only 6,100 Jewish families, the guess may be made that about 20 to 25 per cent of the Jewish families in Minneapolis derive their income from wage-workers.

Those who have been superficially comparing this book with the two studies of "Middletown" by Professors Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd overlook the central virtue of the Lynds' work: that they made the class differences between the "business class" and working class the key to their description of "Middletown." Rabbi Gordon's failure to use this key leads not to a "classless" picture of the Jews of Minneapolis, but to a picture of the middle class Jews primarily, with the unexpressed assumption that they make up the entire Jewish community. By its essential incompleteness such a picture can be misleading. Take for example the judgment that "religious interests occupy a dominant position in the organized life of Minneapolis Jewry." This judgment is based upon congregational affiliation, which Rabbi Gordon reports as follows for 1948: 949 families were members of three Conservative congregations, 770 of seven Orthodox congregations, and 450 of the one Reform group, making a total of 2,169 out of the 6,100 Jewish families. "An equal number,"

we are told, also "avail themselves of any or all of the facilities of the congregations." But that leaves about one-third without any ties with the synagogues at all. It would certainly be valuable to know to what extent that one third consists of the wage-working group.

A chapter that is particularly interesting despite its unclarity and indecisiveness is that dealing with anti-Semitism in Minneapolis, a subject which attained national publicity when Carey McWilliams and Selden Menefee called attention to it a few years ago. Anti-Semitism in that city has been manifesting itself in a variety of ways, from the rigid exclusion of Jews from such organizations as Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions and even the Automobile Club to serious housing restrictions (with stone-throwing and even shot-gun-shelling visited upon Jews who buy homes in restricted areas), to the use of anti-Semitic propaganda as a strike-breaking and union-smashing tool, to its direct use in political campaigns.

Especially revealing are Rabbi Gordon's reports of the attempt to break the truck-drivers strike of 1934 by the spreading of rumors that "the Jews had taken over Minneapolis," and of the use of anti-Semitism in the 1938 gubernatorial campaign in which Harold Stassen and his Republican party ousted the Farmer-Labor administration. Through a whispering campaign, an anti-Semitic pamphlet, and the press, the Republicans conducted a vicious campaign, and it was not until the night before election day that Stassen, obviously for the record only, and under the pressure of Jewish Republicans, "declared that he did not wish to identify himself with those responsible for the attack."

But when it comes to assigning the cause of this anti-Semitism, Rabbi Gordon is unclear, inconsistent, and perhaps even evasive. He finds anti-Semitic attitudes, for example, both in employers and workers, and slights the fact that anti-Semitism is dangerous to workers and profitable to employers. Answering his own question, "who is responsible," he lists three forces in the following order: 1) "the world Fundamentalist movement has its headquarters in Minneapolis"; 2) "the large Scandinavian population," which knew few Jews in the home countries and therefore (1) is anti-Semitic here; 3) "The dominant economic activities of Minneapolis were developed and controlled by New Englanders" in the 1870s, and their children still control "the major industries." But is this order meaningful? Are the fundamentalists and Scandinavians a decisive force? Or is the key cause the ruling capitalist class in the city, operating as a part of American monopoly capital?

Rabbi Gordon, however, says nothing of the struggle against anti-Semitism in

Minneapolis, past or present. Yet the Jews there are worried and rattled by the anti-Semitism, and have no clear idea of what to do. Are they to fight the Fundamentalists, the Scandinavians, and the major industrialists?

But the struggle against anti-Semitism can succeed only to the extent that it is based upon progressive working-class forces and their allies in the battle against monopoly capital and all its forms of reaction. Foremost among these allies would be the Negro community in Minneapolis, which lives adjoining the large Jewish residential area on the North Side, Negroes having moved into sections vacated by Jews. Yet we learn only that there is "little contact" between Jews and Negroes, that proximity on the North Side has not led to ill feeling, that Negroes and Jews live in a local housing project without "ill will," that one rabbi serves on the board of the Urban League, that sometimes Negroes have complained of their treatment by Jewish landlords but that the Negroes have turned to Jewish leaders to help settle these problems, and that "the leaders of the Negro community feel that even though Jewish individuals or families may at times show a spirit of intolerance, this does not represent the attitude of most Jews."

The largest single section of Rabbi Gordon's work is that which is devoted to showing the changes of "Jews in Transition." In point of fact, his emphasis is rather on "Judaism in Transition." Of course, there is no Judaism without Jews, but there are Jews, and in increasing numbers, without Judaism. Towards the end of his study, Rabbi Gordon generalizes that "if there has been a lessening of the ties of formal religion, there has also been a stronger tie with the Jewish people," but he seems to make that tie center only in Palestine rather than in the conditions of American life and class relations.

"Primarily," he writes, "economic factors tended to alter their traditional behavior." As children began to earn money at an early age, parental authority waned. Businesses had to be kept open on Saturdays to meet competition, and workers had to work on Saturday to get jobs. The majority ignore the dietary laws, with at most 20 per cent buying kosher meat for home use, even fewer separating meat from dairy products and dishware, and practically no adherence to *kashrut* outside the home, for there is no kosher restaurant in the city.

Rosh Hashonah still commands a high degree of synagogue attendance, with Yom Kippur attendance even higher, and the number who fast "still surprisingly great," but the sacrifice of a fowl as a scapegoat before Yom Kippur shows "a marked fall-

ing off" and more and more Jewish business enterprises are remaining open on these high holidays. Since Passover is built around the family, Rabbi Gordon reports that "the traditional Seder service is still observed to a very large degree," but only for the first of the Seders. Matzos are eaten, but not to the exclusion of bread. Hanukkah, however, has been consciously and systematically built up as a holiday, chiefly as a rival, it would seem, to Christmas.

Less than 5 per cent of the marriage ceremonies follow the Orthodox requirements of the confessional, ritual bath, fasting on the marriage day, the *minyan* in the home, and the canopy. Inter-marriage is "ever-increasing," but apparently not as a means of social-climbing or of escaping, for "practically all those who intermarry remain within the Jewish fold. They join synagogues and temples, the golf club and other organizations."

The size of the Jewish family is decreasing, although it "varies with the economic status of the particular family." The divorce rate among Jews is increasing, but is still below the Minneapolis average.

Nowhere does Rabbi Gordon reveal his preoccupation with the middle-class so much as in his silhouette of the Jewish woman, whose devotion "to club and organizational life" has won her "a greater degree of equality within the Jewish community." Women are "on the boards of directors of practically all Jewish organizations, including the synagogues," they flock to study and lecture courses, especially book and play reviews, and they "like to give luncheon parties in great profusion." We learn nothing about working class women, but we are assured that "the middle class Jewish woman dresses well" and that it is "generally believed that in proportion to the family income the Jewish woman spends more on her own clothes and her children's clothes than any other group of women in Minneapolis except the very wealthiest."

Rabbi Gordon declares that "the ideals of democracy and freedom appeal strongly to the Jewish community." The Jew, he maintains, "may make his greatest contribution to America by helping to infuse the prophetic ideals of justice, morality, and ethics into the warp and woof of American life and culture." But we learn nothing from him about how the Jews in Minneapolis are participating in the active fight for democracy, freedom and justice. There is just one glimpse of the fact that the Farmer-Labor administrations were supported by some sections of the Jewish population, undoubtedly, the new progressive Jews in Minneapolis. It is upon such movements that the future of the Jews, in Minneapolis and the country, depends.

(Continued from page 2)

WILLIAM E. SECOR, rioter at the August 29 Peckskill Robeson affair who was stabbed by a fellow-rioter (it is said), has been appointed a police officer in Yorktown Heights, effective January 16. The American Civil Liberties Union report on the riots stated that Secor had been stabbed "while assisting in the commission of a crime." . . . About the same time it was learned that Leon Straus, executive secretary of the Joint Board of Fur Dressers and Dyers, who had been one of the leaders of the people's guards protecting the concert-goers at the second Robeson Peckskill concert on September 4, had been summarily discharged as second lieutenant in the army reserve. No reason for the discharge under "other than honorable conditions" was given. Straus had been commissioned on the field during the war.

ANTI-SEMITISM in "House for Sale" ads appear almost daily in the classified sections of the *Brooklyn Eagle*. Technique is to use Catholic parish names in connection with real estate ads of brokerage firms located primarily in Flatbush and Bay Ridge. The *New York Times* refused to carry ads of this kind.

CLEVELAND PASSED a Fair Employment Practices Ordinance in January, thus becoming the third city to pass such an ordinance. Minneapolis and Philadelphia are the others. The ordinance is judged a great victory for mass pressure, since a "voluntary" measure was abandoned in favor of a compromise which emphasizes "education, persuasion, conciliation and conference," but calls for a fine of \$100 for violation and jail if the fine is not paid after 10 days.

WILLIAM JANSEN, New York City's Superintendent of Schools, was discovered to be the author of 13 school texts for classes from the 4th to the 8th grade which spread imperialist propaganda and the myth of "inferior peoples," chiefly about colonial groups. These were among the texts now in use that a survey by the Teachers Union (CIO) showed as containing biased statements about racial and religious groups.

THE BAN AGAINST NEGRO participation in tournaments and other activities of the American Bowling Congress was attacked in several parts of the country recently. In New York State, Attorney General Nathaniel Goldstein on January 14 sought an injunction against the congress authorities' "white only" rule. An injunction was also applied for by Attorney General Thomas Fairchild of Wisconsin. The New York State Jewish War Veterans supported the move.

THE SIXTH ANNUAL Jewish Music Festival, sponsored by the National Jewish Music Council of the National Jewish Welfare Board, was held from February 3 to March 3. Many programs of Jewish music were heard all over the country.

EUROPE

REGISTRATION FOR EMIGRATION from Poland to Israel has practically stopped since December, the Central Committee of the Jews of Poland reported in late January. Local Jewish committees have informed the Central Committee to this effect, and that dozens of requests have been received for cancellation of applications for emigra-

tion because these people wished to remain in Poland. Some of those registered stated that they had done so because of pressure from their family or Zionist agitation.

VICHY ANTI-SEMITIC NUMBER ONE, Xavier Vallat, who had served five years of his 10-year term for his heading up of Vichy's anti-Jewish program, was released from jail on December 27. Vallat is said to have been responsible for the death of 100,000 French men and women.

MOSLEY HAS ADVISED his followers to vote Tory in any constituency where there is no Union Movement candidate.

A LETTER RECOMMENDING the *Protocols of Zion*, infamous anti-Semitic forgery, was published in the *Derbyshire Advertiser* (England).

A LONDON FASCIST was fined three pounds in magistrate's court in late January for insulting Jews in a speech delivered in the north London Dalston district. The fine was imposed under a public order act prohibiting the use of insulting words whereby a breach of the peace is likely to be caused.*

ACTIVITIES IN HUNGARY of the Joint Distribution Committee are continuing following the deportation of the previous director, Israel Jacobson. The JDC is helping the "economically displaced" Jews such as small merchants thrown out of work by nationalization and is helping to form 50 work cooperatives employing 2,000.*

A SECOND JEWISH STATE THEATER has been established in Jassy, Rumania. The first is in Bucharest. The new theater was set up in conformity with the government program of cultural advancement of the working people irrespective of nationality.

ILSE KOCH was transferred from her prison cell to a hospital in January to undergo mental observation. The move was ordered by the court which will begin to try her at Augsburg in March.*

RENAZIFICATION NEWS . . . Denazification proceedings against Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's financial wizard, were dropped in Stuttgart as the result of a deal between the former Reichsbank president and Karl Stroepfle, minister without portfolio in charge of denazification, according to a dispatch by Jack Raymond in the *New York Times*, January 3. Widespread bribery and favoritism in denazification courts around Stuttgart have been charged. . . . The German Right Party and the National Democratic Party, both rightist groups, have merged in Kassel (British zone), reported Drew Middleton in the *New York Times* on January 23. He also reported in January that Bonn Chancellor Karl Adenauer had been holding discussions with an agent of the *Bruderschaft* (Brotherhood), organization of German generals and staff officers formed after the war whose real purpose is to keep them organized until they could step out into the open. . . . A recent appointment of U.S. High Commissioner to Germany John J. McCloy is Wilhelm Mann as director of pharmaceutical sales for I. G. Farben's Bayer & Co. Mann was involved in experiments with Farben drugs in which unwilling victims were murdered. He had been acquitted by American war crimes judges at Nuremberg.

DR. MOSHE SNEH, Mapam delegate in the Knesset, asked Prime Minister Ben Gurion in the Knesset if it was true that the government had agreed to build the Israeli section of an international highway connecting Istanbul and Cairo. "Does not the premier consider," asked Sneh, "the highway to be a danger to Israel's independence in view of American imperialistic designs to establish strategic bases against Russia, and the fact that such a road would affect Israel's adherence to world peace?" The question was tabled.

HARASSMENT of and discriminatory acts against the Israeli communists were stepped up by the Ben Gurion government in January. The communist daily, *Kol Haam*, was scheduled for trial on the charge that its October 14 issue libelled Ben Gurion when it termed his anti-communist speech "treason against the nation and the working class." . . . Meyer Vilner, party secretary, was to stand trial before a parliamentary committee for having called "a lie" a statement of Ben Gurion during debate. . . . Six demonstrators were arrested and two were injured by Tel Aviv police during a communist-led demonstration on January 25 against UJA President Henry Morgenthau's call to Israel to join a Middle Eastern pact as a counterpart to the Atlantic Pact. . . . Five Israeli communists were injured and 10 arrested during a demonstration protesting discrimination against communists in distribution of seed to their cooperative settlement.*

TWO FRATERNAL DELEGATES were sent by the Histadrut to the Czechoslovak Trade Union Congress in Prague in mid-January. The delegates thanked Czechoslovakia for the aid given by that country to Israel during the Arab invasion.

THE ISRAEL TEACHERS FEDERATION meeting in mid-January voted 75-32 to join the Histadrut. Following the decision, the 20 Mizrahi (Orthodox) delegates and the 12 Hapoel Hamizrachi (Orthodox Labor) delegates walked out of the conference and will probably form a separate federation. The Federation originally had 7,127 members.

THE SUM OF \$600,000 out of the American loan has been allocated for the establishment of a sugar factory in the south of Israel.

HAIFA OIL REFINERIES workers struck in January because of management's rejection of government arbitration of a dispute on seniority. The Haifa Labor Council approved a general strike decision by all workers in the oil industry over the dispute.*

THE RUMANIAN AMBASSADOR suddenly left Israel on January 17 without notice. Observers believed this was caused by Premier Ben Gurion's reference to Rumanian Foreign Secretary Anna Pauker as "the daughter of a rabbi (who) is preventing her brethren from returning to the Promised Land." The Mapam newspaper, *Al Hamishmar*, blamed the government for "deterioration of Israel-Rumanian relations."

NEW IMMIGRANTS from Poland, Rumania and France, professional Jewish actors in their home countries, have formed a new "Folk Theater" which has presented its first production, *I Live*, a play by the Soviet writer Moshe Pinchevsky. This play, performed in Hebrew and concerned with a concentration camp topic, was warmly received by most of the press.

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

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