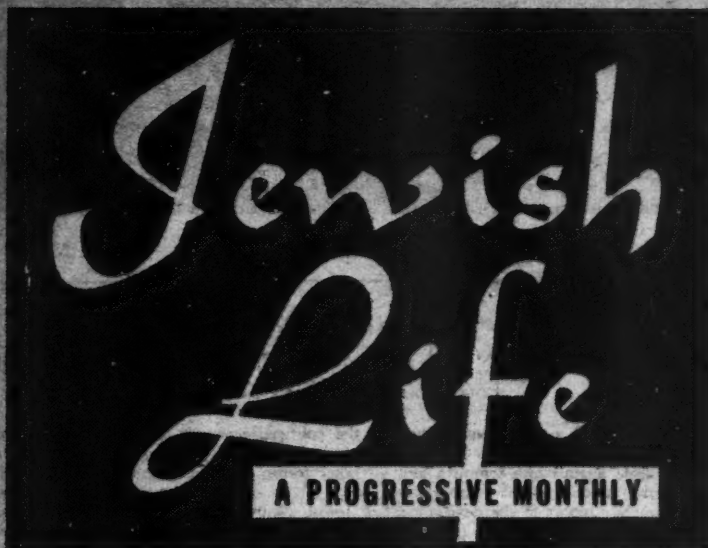




NOVEMBER 1950 • 20¢

BILLION DOLLAR CRISIS IN ISRAEL

by Benjamin Rubin

WHO IS GENERAL ANDERS?

by Will Hayett

WHAT EHRENBURG REALLY SAID

by Zalel Blitz

THE WORK OF SHOLOM ALEICHEM

by Aaron Curstein

NATIONAL JEWISH YOUTH MEET

by David Abrams

THE JOURNEY OF ISRAEL YEHUDIN

a short story by S. Godiner

From the Four Corners

Edited by Louis Harap

AT HOME

TWO THOUSAND NEW YORKERS responded to the call of the American Labor Party, the American Jewish Labor Council and other Jewish organizations to picket a banquet at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on October 1 at which Wladyslaw Anders, Polish anti-Semitic general, was honored. Demonstrators carried placards denouncing the general as a war criminal and pogromist and called for his ouster from this country. In a speech made at the banquet Anders called for a war of aggression beyond "the demarcation line fixed at Yalta for Europe and Asia." Earlier in the day on the reviewing stand of the Pulaski Day parade, Anders was flanked by New York senatorial candidates Herbert H. Lehman and Lt. Gov. Joe R. Hanley.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS CONGRESS of Detroit in September rebuked the local Jewish Community Council for its refusal to cooperate with CRC in the defense of civil liberties. In reply to the Council's red-baiting attack, the Civil Rights Congress declared that "it was precisely the failure of the people to refute this type of subversion of the German constitution and to unite to defeat such attacks which led to the slaughter of six million Jews."

MEXICAN-AMERICAN EX-GI's took to newspaper advertising in Los Angeles to combat Jimcrow real estate interests who are trying to segregate the veterans in ghettos. Said the advertisement: "The same firms who turned you down in their restricted tracts because of your 'Spanish-speaking ancestry' now let you buy where others won't so they can get your 'English-speaking cash.' Don't fall for this hoax."

AMONG 15 ORGANIZATIONS that called upon New York's Acting Mayor Vincent Impellitteri on September 28 to help prevent cancellation of leases of the 35 families active in fighting Jimcrow in Stuyvesant Town, were the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League. The 35 families had fought Jimcrow as members of the militant Town and Village Committee to End Discrimination in Stuyvesant Town. . . . New York City Councilmen Stanley M. Isaacs and Earl Brown reintroduced on September 23 their bill to bar discrimination in city-assisted housing because of "race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry."

UN EMPLOYEES finally won their battle with the American Red Cross in September to keep out of the record attached to donated blood the racial background of the donor. The Red Cross was compelled to agree that no such information would accompany the blood records.

DR. ROBERT MARCUS, political director of the World Jewish Congress, revealed in New York in late September that a "secret nest of Hungarian war criminals" has taken refuge in Argentina. A list of 15 such criminals was sent by Dr. Marcus to Argentina's ambassador to the United States with the request that his government investigate the matter, pointing out that asylum to war criminals is contrary to the rules of the International Refugee Organization, of which Argentina is a member.

Jewish Life

A PROGRESSIVE MONTHLY

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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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TWO EMINENT RABBIS, Rabbi Henry Cohen, of Galveston, Texas, and Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan, head of the Reconstructionist movement and professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary, signed the Stockholm peace appeal in September.

EDDIE CANTOR denounced the *Red Channels* hysteria in the entertainment world at a speech in Indianapolis in September. He declared "guilt by association" to be un-American. As a result of these developments, Cantor said, "For the first time I am afraid." He disclosed that during the war he had participated in an auction

for the Soviet-American Friendship Union at the request of the United States government.

SIX GERMANS TOURING the United States were told, according to Robert S. Allen's syndicated column on September 20, by Brig. Gen. Bonner F. Fellers, Republican national committee official, that "I believe that Hitler did Germany a world of good. Sure, he did a few bad things, but it was Hitler who rehabilitated the Germans. The only thing wrong with Hitler was that he went too far. He got the world involved in a war." Allen reported that Fellers confirmed this

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FROM MONTH TO MONTH

THE REAL ELECTION ISSUES

MILLIONS of Americans, like hundreds of millions of common folk throughout the world today, are anxiously asking, is a new world war inevitable? Is there no way of halting the headlong rush to war? What can we do to prevent World War III? That people should be asking these questions is not surprising. For the people do not want war. But powerful forces are planning such a war.

Who will be victorious, the people or the warmakers? The answer depends not on pious wishes but on what the people do. And on election day this year the American people can by the proper use of their ballot do much to advance the cause of peace and halt encroachments on the democratic liberties of the people. But in order to do so, the people must be able to distinguish between those political parties and candidates who are genuinely fighting for peace and those who pay lip service to peace while they push our country and our people each day further on the path to war. The American people must cut through the demagoguery and hysteria that has enveloped every phase of American life.

For we are witnessing an offensive by the advocates of the "American Century" (read, world domination by American imperialism) which proceeds along different tactical lines from those espoused by previous instigators of fascism and war. If the warmakers are to conquer the minds of the people in order to achieve their aims, they dare not openly justify the aggrandizement, exploitation and subjugation of peoples of which they are in fact guilty. On the contrary, they present every move intended to further these aims as part of a holy crusade to save "western civilization," to save the world from "Soviet aggression." The cry, "we are menaced," is daily chanted out to the accompaniment of the sentiment, "There must not be another Munich." The great menace of "Asiatic barbarism" is said to threaten the world.

There is little new in these refrains. Not so long ago Hitler tried to cover up every pogrom, every massacre, every expansionist move, every expedition for plunder with the cry that he was saving the world from Bolshevism. This was the theme song of the Anti-Comintern Axis; it has been the leit-motif of every fascist and anti-Semite.

"There must not be another Munich," our delegates say to the United Nations. They hope that the people will forget what the essence of Munichism was. The real meaning of Munich was betrayal of the people into the hands of Hitler. As symbolized by Chamberlain and Daladier, Munichism stood for the evil policy of the defenders of "western civilization" who were prepared to sacrifice the masses

of their own country and of all other countries to induce Hitler to march to the East. Who were the architects of Munich? Were they not those who opened the gates of Paris so that Hitler might trample on the lives and liberties of the French people, those in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania and other countries, who welcomed Hitler as a brother in arms and let him rape and destroy these lands, on condition that he attack the Soviet Union?

And now architects of a new Munich dare to pretend that they are the saviors of the world from a "new Munich." The new Munichers are those who have freed the murderers of millions of people in Germany; who have set up the Schachts and the men of I. G. Farben in business again; who have released the many nazis who once again sit in seats of power in Germany; who welcome an anti-Semitic, pro-fascist General Anders to our shores and proclaim him a "hero" of the Polish people; who bar the gates of America to anti-fascists while they eagerly prepare to admit 45,000 *Volksdeutsche*—these men dare to proclaim that they are averting a "new Munich."

The American people must realize that a Munich far greater and more dangerous than the older one is in the making. Can hysteria or red-baiting hide the fact that placards at the Pulaski Day parade on October 1 openly called for war with slogans greeting the great "democrat" Anders, slogans urging "On to Moscow After the 38th Parallel" and "Atom Bomb Stalin Before He Atom Bombs Us"? It is most significant that officials of the Republican and Democratic Parties alike flanked the "illustrious" anti-Semite and thereby gave official sanction to these slogans.

Certainly the Jewish people and democratic-minded people generally were dismayed to see Senator Herbert H. Lehman, who certainly knows the record of this general, not only stand at his side, but also pay homage to him. This spectacle of Lehman shows what inevitably happens once one accepts the major premise of the "need" for a total war drive and war preparations. Once this premise is accepted, the rebuilding of nazism and welcome to a pogromist become of secondary significance.

The people would do well to study these facts before they go to the polls. For these facts can be ignored only at the risk of the extinction of our democratic heritage.

A democratic foreign and domestic policy can lead only to peace. Political parties sincerely concerned with the extension of the rights and welfare of the people do not proceed systematically to destroy them. A government that desires to show the world how to establish the democratic way of life would not be financing Hitlerites and fascists

in Germany, Greece and Spain; would not send arms and men to uphold oppressors like Syngman Rhee and Bao Dai.

America needs a peace program. But Democratic and Republican Parties alike are dedicated to a program of war and cannot therefore bring peace to America. Only the American Labor Party in New York and the Progressive Party in other parts of the country offer the electorate an alternative to this self-destructive program. Further, the third parties stand on a platform of progressive action with regard to the great welfare measures that are being submerged by the major parties—housing, health, FEPC, civil liberties, shifting the burden of taxation from low income groups. The progressives are putting up Negro candidates in various parts of the country—for instance, Mrs. Charlotta A. Bass, editor-publisher of the *California Eagle*, is congressional candidate in California and the eminent Negro scholar and political scientist Dr. W. E. B. DuBois is the ALP senatorial candidate in New York.

Most important of all is the candidacy for re-election of Rep. Vito Marcantonio. The misleadership of labor and "liberal" figures, who joined the machine politicians of the major parties in ganging up on Marcantonio with the single candidate James G. Donovan, is apparent. For Donovan is a hack politician who once consorted with Christian Fronters, who favors the McCarran law, who urges our doing business with Franco, who wants the United States to take over Formosa, who calls the UN a "shibboleth."

The issues are drawn: on one side are the Democratic and Republican politicians, aided and abetted by all too many labor "leaders" and "liberals" who are at the least complacent in the face of the dangers of fascism and war and advocate a "guns, not butter" administration. On the other side are the American Labor and Progressive Party candidates who stand squarely on a program of saving American freedom and the peace of the world and promoting the welfare of the common people *now*. If progressives bring these issues clearly to the people, the outcome can be a victory for the forces of sanity, peace and democracy.

REPEAL THE MCCARRAN LAW!

SUBVERSION of the Constitution passed into a new and more dangerous phase on September 23, when the McCarran Law was passed. The Truman administration is not absolved of responsibility for the law. The presidential veto was not accompanied by any effort to bring administration legislators in line—in fact, Democratic Senate leader Scott Lucas voted to override the veto. Although the alignment of opinion against the law was immense, including the CIO, AFL, ADA, major Jewish organizations and innumerable labor and civic bodies, these organizations unfortunately limited their opposition to the issuing of statements and failed to mobilize the immense mass opinion that could have defeated the law.

Let there be no mistake about it, the evil forces of fascism have made an important break-through which, if not sealed

off, will spell the end of American freedom and revisitation in the United States of the nightmare through which the German people passed. The Jewish people know what this means. But it would be a fatal error to assume that the McCarran law automatically means that American democracy is a lost cause. For the people have not said the last word, and their word can still be decisive. This has been amply shown by American history. From the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798 to the Fugitive Slave Laws of the 1850's to the prohibition amendment of the twenties, the American people have nullified intolerable and anti-democratic legislation. They can and must do so again. To do otherwise would be to negate the great progressive tradition built up by the American masses by perpetual struggle since America became an independent nation.

Already we have some intimation of the sweeping effect of the McCarran law. The *National Jewish Post* of October 13 carried a story to the effect that United States internal revenue agents were investigating the activities of Jewish defense organizations, certainly far from "radical," to see whether some of the activities, particularly their campaign for FEPC, can be construed as "political." If so, tax exemption would be removed. This is only a foretaste of the restrictions on all progressive activity that a McCarran America will in one way or another try to impose. Defense of the Jewish people—let alone the fight against Jimcrow—would come under the category of forbidden thoughts in a McCarran America. The anti-Semites will be greatly encouraged. For it is true, as one Anglo-Jewish journalist put it, that "the elements within both parties most anxious to pass the concentration camp bills are also the very elements which are least friendly to the Jews."

Already the unconstitutionality of local "communist" registration laws has been challenged. In Jacksonville, Fla., on October 3, a circuit court judge ruled a local ordinance to jail communists for 90 days and fine them \$500 as unconstitutional and in violation of the Declaration of Rights of the State of Florida and of the 14th Amendment. On October 8, in Los Angeles, Judge Myer B. Marion declared the Los Angeles County "communist" registration law unconstitutional and a violation of the state and federal constitutions. Judge Marion also added his judgment that the McCarran law was unconstitutional. Two days later another Los Angeles judge dismissed a registration case, reiterating the unconstitutionality of the ordinance.

The potential anti-police state forces are immense. The large number of crucial labor and civic organizations which have already expressed their opposition to these police state measures represent the overwhelming majority of the American masses. The rank and file of these organizations, especially the millions of American trade unionists, have the obligation to resist the McCarran law and to insure its repeal. American democracy is at stake. A great united movement, which will organize the people themselves to this end, can and must wipe out the shame of the McCarran law from America.

SOVIET ANNIVERSARY

ON the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of the Soviet Revolution on November 7, one is led to reflect that peace or war for the world and the security of our country hinge upon our relations with that country. No one doubts that the most vital concern of the American people is to live in peaceful co-existence with the socialist world. For the alternative is the most destructive war the world has ever known and the devastation of our own country.

Why are relations between the two countries strained? Only five years ago we were joined with the Soviet Union in a war to annihilate the evil forces of fascism. The Soviet Union, enjoyed the prestige and love of all anti-fascist peoples because she was demonstrating with her life-blood and ultimate energies her single-minded devotion to defeating the enemy of mankind. What then has changed to warrant the hysterical calumny of the Soviet Union? Has the Soviet Union become more friendly to the forces of reaction and fascism? No, it is not the Soviet Union that has changed—it is our own governing powers at home. The American people cannot afford to be under any illusions on this point. The "economic royalists" have taken command. It is *they* who have become the props and supporters of reactionary and fascist forces all over the world, of the enemies of mankind whose antecedents we fought only five years ago. Is their course in the interests of the American people? Is their support of reaction and fascism in conformity with the welfare of the working class? Do their threats of atomic war and fascism at home further the survival of democracy? Does their refusal to negotiate differences with the Soviet Union give hope to the American people?

But the efforts of the votaries of the "American Century" are futile. Already almost half of the world is beyond their reach—the Soviet Union, the new democracies, the People's China, the liberating forces of the colonial world. The peace and future of the American people depend on achieving a *modus vivendi* with the socialist sector of the world, led by the Soviet Union. On the 32nd anniversary of the Soviet Union, we renew the realization that the future of America demands the settlement of differences with the Soviet Union by negotiation and peaceful methods.

SCHAPPES' IMPORTANT BOOK

READERS of JEWISH LIFE are familiar through its pages with many contributions that Morris U. Schappes, one of our editors, has made to American Jewish history. We are proud indeed to call attention to the important forthcoming contribution by Mr. Schappes, *Documentary History of the Jews of the United States*, which Citadel Press will publish in November. This work, writes Joshua Bloch, director of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library, in his generous preface to the book, "is a pioneer work which offers a wealth of trustworthy testi-

mony to Jewish pioneering in America. . . . In Mr. Schappes' book there is a wealth of basic material which may well serve as a foundation upon which to rear the structure of the history of the Jews of America." This outstanding work of original and richly informative scholarship records not only the activities of American Jewry but stresses the part that Jews, as an integral part of the American people, have played in the building of America. It is not too much to say that Mr. Schappes' book has the potentiality of steering the writing of American Jewish history into a more scientific, realistic path than heretofore.

OUR FOURTH BIRTHDAY

WITH this issue JEWISH LIFE enters upon its fifth year of publication. Since our first issue in October 1946, the Jewish people have undergone much. Deterioration of great power unity since the end of the anti-fascist war has had its repercussions on the welfare of the Jews of the capitalist world. The growth of fascism on a world scale, together with the imminent danger of a police state at home confronts the Jewish people once more with new perils. Although the masses of the Jewish people are apprehensive over these developments, the greatest part of the leadership of Jewish organized life have refused to learn or are indifferent to the lessons of fascism. They are contributing to the disunity of the masses of the people and of the Jews by following the anti-communist hysteria that once before heralded the murder of six millions Jews.

But the picture has not all been dark. Great new forces have emerged in this period that spell hope for the Jewish people and for those who are determined that democracy shall survive. When the possibility appeared for the establishment of the state of Israel, the progressive forces of the world, led by the Soviet Union, gave essential support to the infant state. On the other hand, the new state was hampered every inch of the way by the Anglo-American imperialist combination. The embattled progressive forces in Israel are still fighting to realize the independence and security of their country.

But the greatest hope for the Jewish people in this period lay in the monumental strengthening of the socialist and progressive forces in the world, of peace and democracy that are essential to Jewish survival.

In these four years of its existence JEWISH LIFE has tried to clear the atmosphere of the murky haze thrown up by nationalistic and reactionary elements within and outside of the Jewish community. We have tried to show the way to a progressive program in which the interlocking interests of the Jewish people and of the working masses of all nationalities are united. But our work has just begun. The need for a fighting progressive voice of the Jewish people was never more urgently needed. In the troubled days ahead we shall try to show the way to Jewish and all democratic-minded people with all the clarity and steadfastness that we can muster.

WHO IS GENERAL ANDERS?

By Will Hayett

GENERAL Wladyslaw Anders is in America.

The general, according to *Newsweek*, is "a topnotch athlete (he once owned one of the best racing stables in Poland) and a great bridge fan, he is fond of visitors, American cigarettes and French wine, but won't touch Scotch whiskey."

A right guy, the general! True, he reeks of anti-Semitism and his hands are stained with the blood of Jews; but Americans have short memories. So, strike up the band! Bring on the newsreel cameras! The general has a message for America.

"The world drama approaches its final scene," he wrote in 1949. "The last act is drawing nearer."¹ He was talking about war against Poland and the new democracies.

"Poland, we shall return as soldiers with arms in our hands!"² This was an early declaration of the now familiar theme of preventive war.

In a speech in Boston on August 25, Secretary of the Navy Francis P. Matthews hoisted a trial balloon. Let us become "the first aggressors for peace!" shouted Matthews. Let us "pay any price, even the price of instituting a war to compel cooperation for peace."

The reaction of peace-loving Americans came fast and strong. An embarrassed administration quickly pulled the balloon down, just as the now ancient Churchill Fulton, Missouri, trial balloon was once yanked down. But only temporarily. We have seen the Truman Doctrine, the renazification of Germany, the North Atlantic Military Pact, freedom for Ilse Koch and the war criminals, "total diplomacy," attempts to re-arm Western Germany, a UN rubber stamp for American intervention in Korea and the McCarran Act.

But the selling is no cinch. The people will not buy undisguised destruction and fascism. Still, the selling job goes on. Always new hucksters. Always new pimps.

I give you General Wladyslaw Anders!

Reluctant Ally

He took sides early in his career. "After serving as a cavalryman in the Russian tsarist army, he fought against the Bolsheviks in 1919 and 1920." (*Newsweek*, March 12, 1945.)

In the 30's he was part of the reactionary, anti-Semitic military clique that dominated and betrayed Poland.

When the Blitzkrieg struck, General Anders and his

troops retreated eastward. "In one day he was wounded fighting with German forces and wounded again fighting with Russian forces (my emphasis—W.H.) and finally was taken prisoner by the latter." (*Ill. London News*, March 9, 1946.)

When the nazis invaded Russia, the London Polish government-in-exile worked out an understanding with the Soviet Union for the formation of a Polish army on Russian soil. Anders was released from internment and made commander-in-chief. "He (Stalin) asked me what my plans were after the war was won. I replied, first, to get back 15 horses the Germans has taken from me and reopen my racing stables." (General Anders, quoted in *Newsweek*, March 25, 1946.)

If a stable symbolizes General Anders' motive in raising a Polish army, Stalin had no objections; the important thing was to fight the nazis. Stalin promised the newly forming Polish army, "the honor of being the first to set foot on Polish soil." (*Newsweek*, May 4, 1942.)

But Anders' love for his race horses and his Poland was not so strong that he was willing to lead his troops into combat against the nazis. "Let the Red Army get my horses for me," he declared in effect, after a fighting force of 100,000 Poles had been trained on Russian soil with Russian help. A month before the siege of Stalingrad, the Polish government-in-exile arranged for the evacuation of Anders and his army to Iran and Iraq.

Anders' Anti-Semites

While the Russians fought at Stalingrad, Anders sat on his hands and Aryanized his army. Polish Jews were purged from the ranks. Anti-Soviet, anti-Semitic indoctrination became the order of the day in Anders' army. James Aldridge, author of *The Diplomat*, who was a correspondent in the Near East at the time, wrote the following description (*New York Times*, March 19, 1944) of Anders' army: "The Polish camp was divided into classes. At the camp conditions got progressively worse as one's station was lower. The Jews were separated into a ghetto. The camp was run on totalitarian lines, and you did what you were told. A continuous campaign against Russia was conducted by the more reactionary groups. Everyone of them would talk about nothing else except the terrible time they had in Russia, particularly to Americans and English. . . . On one occasion the Poles took almost their entire elite corps 60 miles in busses to see the opening of a Polish cabaret outside of town. This occurred at a time when Teheran

WILL HAYETT is a New York writer. He was active in the successful campaign to stay execution of Willie McGee.

¹ *An Army in Exile*, by Gen. W. Anders, 1949, p. 305.
² *Time*, March 12, 1945, p. 40.

was starving because there was no transport available to bring wheat in from the fields to make bread. . . . The Poles had large stocks of goods sent from America. There were such diverse things as tons of powdered milk and 3,000 pairs of rubber gloves. The American representative tried to get some of the milk back from the Poles to help some of the destitute Iranian babies, but his request was rejected. Some of the foodstuffs were sold on the open market. . . . When more than 300 Jewish children had been fixed up to go to Palestine, the Polish elite, who were very anti-Semitic, put pressure on Iraqi authorities not to allow the Jewish children to pass through Iraq to get to their destination. The Poles were repulsed, but they so delayed the Iraqi decision that the Jewish children had to go by a long, difficult route through Basra to India. At Karachi they had to get a boat to Palestine. The trip took three months that way; through Iraq it would have taken three weeks."

Part of General Anders' army went on to Italy where, as the Second Polish Corps, they fought with the Allies, helping to capture Monte Cassino.

After Cassino began the strangest recruiting campaign for Anders' "Polish" Army. Prisoner of war camps were combed by Polish recruiting teams. Nazis by the thousands changed into Polish uniforms. "One estimate was that 30,000 former Wehrmacht men were added to the Polish Corps." (*New York Herald Tribune*, Oct. 24, 1946.) Among Anders' new recruits were Roch Mankowski, former head of the Nazi concentration camp at Krems; Henryk Gutman, former head of three Nazi concentration camps in Austria; Dr. Wladyslaw Dering, war criminal who performed surgical operations on victims at the Nazi camp at Auschwitz; and other select figures of this kind.

After the war, the bulk of Anders' army remained in Italy to plague the Italians. Their principal occupation was black marketeering. The resentment of the Italians grew. Herbert L. Matthews wrote in the *New York Times* on Feb. 5, 1946: "The full story of what the Polish Second Corps is doing in Italy is an ugly one. The Poles are not only armed but are trained to precision and are maneuvering constantly to be in prime condition to reconquer Poland or invade the Soviet Union. They terrify the Italians, impoverish the countryside, interfere in local politics when anything like Communism or even Socialism manifests itself, and requisition desperately needed homes, food, and other materials. In general, the Poles represent a genuine curse to the Italian government and to Italy."

The Italian government leaders pleaded and protested and appealed to their Anglo-American bosses to take the Polish mercenaries off their backs.

An Incubus in England

General Anders was called to Downing Street, "to hear what was supposed to be bad news. The British were reported telling Anders that the time had come to disband the 200,000 Polish troops in Italy, Britain and elsewhere.

Actually the Poles felt certain that, with Russia threatening Britain at numerous points, London would not hasten the disbandment of some of the toughest and most experienced military units in the world." (*Newsweek*, March 25, 1946.)

Anders was right. The army was not disbanded. Arrangements were made to transfer large numbers to England and—Palestine! Others were assigned as guards in D.P. camps in Germany and Austria. A friend of mine who was an officer in the army of occupation in Bavaria told me the following incident. A Jew at a D.P. camp came to him pleading for help. "The guard—the Polish guard you have given us! He was a guard at my concentration camp! Why have you done this to us?"

In England, the arrival of scores of thousands of Polish legionnaires was hardly greeted with cheers. The British people had had a taste of some of Anders' Polish troops during the war years when part of the corps had been quartered in England. The Poles and their black market operations, their anti-Semitism, their fascist arrogance, soon became a sharp embarrassment to the hard-to-embarrass Bevin-Attlee government.

There was a storm of protest against the Poles at the British Trades Union Congress in October 1946. "Trades Union Congress leaders saved the situation by combining conciliatory promises with the whip of discipline. Delegates from Scotland, where the Poles have been quartered, denounced them as fascists, accused them of breaking up Labor Party meetings, tearing down Socialist posters and fighting in the streets, and said *some of them openly wore Hitler medals*." (My emphasis—W.H.) (*New York Herald Tribune*, Oct. 24, 1946.)

Anders' Poles in Palestine

In Palestine, the Poles brazenly showed their anti-Semitic colors. In a dispatch to the *New York Post*, September 10, 1946, Oliver Pilat wrote: "Officers formerly with General Anders' 2nd Army Corps are adding fuel to the racial fires in Palestine, according to reports reaching the Washington headquarters of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Out of perhaps 10,000 officers and men of the Polish army group who have settled down in the Holy Land rather than return home, many have anti-Semitic feelings of the pre-war Polish vintage. *Eshnab*, newspaper of Haganah, Jewish Resistance Movement, says some of these Polish officers are negotiating with the Arabs to serve as military instructors in towns like Wilhelmina, where Nazi agents helped train the illegal Arab force called Kutawah before the war."

The anti-Semitic fuel flared into violence. Early in September, a Polish officer killed a Jewish soldier in Rehovoth. A day later another Polish soldier shot a Jewish woman. The Information Office of the Jewish Agency for Palestine on September 15, 1946 reported these killings by Anders' troops at Rehovoth. The aroused Jewish community of Rehovoth struck back. The *Palestine Post* of

September 9, 1946, reported: "Following attacks on Polish soldiers' flats last night, a number of Poles left Rehovoth today. . . . The immediate evacuation of Polish troops from the Rehovoth area following the two week-end shootings was urged by the head of the local council, Mr. B. Z. Hurwitz, when he saw the acting district commissioner this morning. Mr. Hurwitz explained that public feeling was running very high following the two crimes, and disclaimed responsibility for possible acts of retaliation."

Finally, all the Polish troops stationed in the Jewish settlement of Rehovoth were removed.

The Kielce "Operation"

By now Anders was more than a commander-in-chief of an army-in-exile. He was the leader abroad of the counter-revolutionary cabal determined to undermine the new democracy being forged in Poland. During the war, his chief-of-staff, General Leopold Bronislaw Okulicki, had been mysteriously flown into German-occupied Poland to direct underground anti-Soviet activities. (See *The Great Conspiracy Against Russia*, M. Sayers and A. E. Kahn, Chapter 24.) Gen. Okulicki was finally apprehended by Soviet authorities and, following the scandalous revelations at his trial of how the Poles had aided the nazis, the United States and Great Britain withdrew their recognition of the London government-in-exile. But, sup-

ported by the Anglo-Americans, the commander of the army-in-exile carried on "operations."

The Kielce pogrom was a sample of an Anders' "operation." Paul Novick, editor of the *Morning Freiheit*, who visited Poland in 1946, wrote: "Among the pogromists arrested for participation in the Kielce pogrom were many former Anders' army soldiers still wearing their British-issued uniforms with the word 'Poland' on their shoulder patches. Agents equipped with modern weapons and provided with large sums of money are secretly being parachuted into Poland to help the reactionary forces. . . . For instance, some of the eye-witnesses reported that at the very height of the pogrom, bandits were running around, shouting, 'Long live Anders!'" (JEWISH LIFE, January 1947.)

In 1947 and 1948, a series of public trials held in Poland exposed a spy and sabotage ring. Testimony revealed that through General Anders' "operations," arms, spies and anti-Semitic propaganda was smuggled into the country.

The spy ring was broken up, but General Anders still dreams of his race horses and the good, old Poland where anti-Semitism was rife. He would like nothing better than to stir up a war which would restore the old order.

No, thank you, general! Our president or Governor Dewey may shake your hand, but American workers who hate fascism and anti-Semitism won't touch you with a ten-foot pole!

NAZIS GOVERN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

Frankfurt

FORMER nazis, including two erstwhile officers in the ill-famed SS, have entirely taken over the government of Schleswig-Holstein, one of the 11 states in the American-dominated West German republic.

The chief executive is a former nazi and, with one possible exception, the entire cabinet is composed of men actively associated with Hitler's regime.

Dr. Bertram's deputy minister-president, Waldemar Kraft, was not only a nazi but held field grade officer's rank in the SS as early as 1939; Hermann Anderson, minister of reconstruction and economics, was also an SS officer.

Here is the slate:

Dr. Walter Bertram, minister-president, a nazi since 1937 and a member of Hitler's German Labor Front since 1933.

Waldemar Kraft, deputy minister-president, an SS Hauptsturmfuehrer since 1939 (a rank roughly equal to major) and a member of the Nazi Party since 1943.

Hans-Adolf Asbach, minister of labor, joined the Nazi Party in 1933, the SA (Hitler's storm troopers) in 1934,

and was a section leader in the Labor Front since 1934.

Hermann Anderson, minister of reconstruction and economics, joined the Nazi Party in 1937, became an SS-Scharfuehrer back in 1934 and a member of the SS in 1937. He was held in an internment camp until September 1946.

Otto Wittenburg, minister of justice, joined the Nazi Party in 1937.

Paul Pagel, minister of education, is reported to have been a nazi, but this remains to be confirmed.

United States officials have already announced that nothing can, or will, be done about the situation; and the British authorities, in whose zone Schleswig-Holstein lies, are quite satisfied with the situation.

One fact worthy of note is that Dr. Bertram belongs to the same political party as Dr. Konrad Adenauer, chancellor of the West German state, and also that the two recently held a very friendly political conference. Indeed, it is generally understood that Adenauer was instrumental in getting Dr. Bertram his position.

The cabinet of fascists was chosen from a coalition of the Christian Democratic Union, the German Party, the Free Democratic Party and the newly-emerged reactionary Refugee Union.

BILLION DOLLAR CRISIS IN ISRAEL

By Benjamin Rubin

THE recently announced project for a billion dollar bond drive among American Jews which, according to advance publicity, will help to bring Israel out of its economic crisis, raises many questions among those who are concerned with the welfare of Israel. The full significance of the bond drive, however, cannot be understood without some awareness of the present economic orientation of the Israeli government. One recent manifestation will help shed light on these questions.

On August 1, the Israeli government announced that rationing of clothing and shoes was to be introduced within a few days. According to Premier David Ben Gurion, this measure had become necessary because "the living standard of all classes of society had risen." His minister of supply, Dov Joseph, was in no mood, however, for high flown phrases. Rationing had been introduced, Joseph bluntly declared, because the country was on the "verge of bankruptcy." The measure, he said, would save \$25 billion in foreign currency now being expended on imports. These funds, according to Joseph, would be used to increase exports.

As a result of this decree, reported Gene Currivan in the *New York Times* on August 26, the Israelis, who have been tightening their belts ever since the austerity program was introduced, have now found that "the belts have been rationed." With the annual allocation of 45 points for leather goods, a man must put up 50 points for a pair of shoes or repair his old ones at the rate of seven points for soles and two points for heels. In other words, he will not see a new pair of shoes until 1951 is well under way. The Israeli has a yearly allotment of 85 points for clothing but if he wants a suit, he will start getting his ensemble together late next year because a jacket requires 103 points."

Public reaction to the decree was swift and vehement. On August 7, all stores, restaurants and cafes closed down in Tel Aviv in protest against the decree. The Tel Aviv Chamber of Commerce and other merchants' associations issued leaflets warning that the decree would force many shops to close down and would increase unemployment. *Kol Ha'am*, communist daily, declared that the decree had been instituted so as to reduce the living standards of the masses and would intensify still further black market operations that were rampant and ruinous to the economy of the country. Had imports been nationalized, declared the paper, and foreign currency wisely spent, rationing of this kind would not be necessary. In addition, had production been developed through the use of local capital,

the export drive could have been fostered without diminishing local consumption. These measures had not been adopted, said *Kol Ha'am*, because the rulers of Israel would do nothing to interfere with the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Resulting Unemployment

The rationing decree must inevitably speed up the ruination of the little industry that Israel has. Two branches of industry that will be affected most immediately are the leather and textile industries. And for both of these branches to be hit in a country which has as yet developed practically no basic industry, can prove disastrous.

Even *Haaretz*, organ of the Israel bourgeoisie, which is quite happy over the decree, reveals what the effects will be. "First of all," says *Haaretz*, "industry will be hit. . . . As a result of the rationing order, production of shoes will be cut by more than half in comparison with 1949. The same is true in the textile industry. . . . As a result of the rationing decree, textile production will be cut by half."

Al Hamishmar, organ of the United Workers Party (Mapam), declared that the only ones to profit from the decree would be the speculators and black marketeers. It then went on to add that the restrictions can only lead to greater unemployment. *Al Hamishmar* stated that it could not accept the assertion that the present state of affairs was inevitable, since foreign currency had been wasted on non-essential commodities.

The rationing decree will inevitably lead to the firing of thousands of workers, particularly as the government has created no new avenues of production. Even before the decree went into effect, many workers were deprived of their jobs as a result of import of goods from America that could easily have been produced in Israel. This ruinous policy has caused many business firms in Israel to close down. The rationing decree can only intensify this trend. And when one adds to this the fact that foreign investors are given all kinds of privileges and tax exemptions, none of which are afforded local businessmen and craftsmen, it becomes clear that Israel is headed for very grave economic dislocation.

One case will indicate the gravity of this situation. *Naaleh Artzenu* is a shoe cooperative which employed 80 workers. Shortly after rationing was introduced, this cooperative was forced to close down because of a leather

shortage. But at the very same time, a big shoe factory *T'dasiya Yerushalmit* was opened with American capital. The new factory produces 3,000 pairs of shoes in eight hours. This firm had no difficulty at all in getting special concessions on raw leather from the minister of supply.

Naaleh Artzenu is not the only cooperative that has been forced to close down or curtail production. Another shoe cooperative, *Natan*, which had previously employed 30 workers, now is able to use only eight workers. And there are many, many more such cases. The tragic fact is that an ever larger reserve army of unemployed is being created which can only tend to deepen the economic crisis. And the government has no solution because its pro-imperialist orientation prevents it from adopting the only type of program which could help resolve the crisis—the development of native Israeli industry and trade with those countries which do not impose such terms as make the economic development of a country impossible.

Israeli leaders attribute the economic crisis to a shortage of foreign exchange. But why is there such a shortage? The answer to this question is a key to an understanding of Israel's present situation. Statistics show that more than 55 per cent of Israel's imports come from America, 26 per cent from European countries which are recipients of Marshall Plan funds and only 6 per cent from the Soviet Union and the new democracies. Thus close to 90 per cent of Israel's imports come from America or from countries under Anglo-American control.

In analyzing the type of imports coming from America one finds that 60 per cent are finished goods which could easily be produced in Israel; 26 per cent are various types of beverages, tobacco and food and 14 per cent are raw materials. Anyone at all familiar with the operation of the Marshall Plan or with the methods by means of which colonial countries are economically and politically enslaved, will readily see the same principle in operation in relation to Israel. Finished goods are dumped in large quantities, goods which could easily be produced in Israel; while raw material and, what is even more important, machinery and capital goods are withheld.

Thus, it is clear that the absence of foreign exchange is no mystery but a logical consequence of the Israeli government's acceptance of a policy which necessarily subordinates it economically and politically to American imperialism. The consequences of such a policy must inevitably be to deepen the crisis of the country.

Meetings in Jerusalem

Obviously, rationing of shoes and clothing could hardly solve a situation which the minister of supply of the government had himself described as bordering on the "verge of bankruptcy." It was inevitable that much more drastic steps would follow. And only a short time later Premier David Ben Gurion issued an invitation to 44 American Zionist leaders and representatives of the major fund raising organizations to attend a conference in Jerusalem

on September 3 on the economic situation. Advance publicity, which heralded the conference "as the most important since the establishment of Israel," declared its purpose to be "to acquaint the representatives of American Jewry with the serious economic and financial problems which will confront the state of Israel during the next three years. . . . Definite action will be taken by the Israeli authorities only after they have had the opportunity of studying the recommendations of the USA delegation."

Simply put, the Ben Gurion government would institute no plans to meet the crisis without approval from American Jewish leadership. That such approval means subordination of Israeli economy and political orientation to the dictates of the American Jewish oligarchy is apparent from the fact that the invitation for this conference was issued by Ben Gurion only *after* previous consultations with Mr. Jacob Blaustein, oil magnate and president of the American Jewish Committee. It was at this meeting that Ben Gurion projected a three-year plan for a billion and a half dollar bond drive, from which one billion was to come from the United States. And it was only *after* clearance with Blaustein and the decisive financial circles he represents that the project was presented to the larger conference.

An Exchange of Commitments

Mr. Blaustein obviously made certain commitments to Ben Gurion with regard to the projected loan. But only after much graver and much more serious commitments were made by Ben Gurion. At a dinner to Blaustein after negotiations were concluded, Ben Gurion graciously exempted American Jewry from the Zionist doctrine of the "ingathering of the exiles." "The Jews of the United States," declared Ben Gurion, "as a community and as individuals, have only one political attachment and that is the United States of America. They owe no political allegiance to Israel. . . ." While this exemption was granted American Jewry, it apparently does not apply to Jews in socialist countries—witness the continuous attack upon the new democracies and the recent provocative memorandum to the Soviet government regarding Soviet Jewry.

But we may be sure that Ben Gurion made even greater concessions that were not publicized. On September 24, Blaustein met with President Truman and told him that "the people of Israel definitely want democracy and do not want any form of totalitarianism whether from within or without." What this amounts to, in fact, is an assurance to Truman that Israeli leadership may be relied upon to serve as spokesmen for American policies in the Middle East both in domestic and foreign policy. Phineas J. Biron, an Anglo-Jewish journalist, was obviously reporting accurately when he wrote on September 1, that "We have been informed from unimpeachable sources that our non-Zionist leadership demanded a number of conditions as a basis for this huge financial deal. . . . 1) An Israel foreign policy definitely oriented toward the West. In other words,

Israel must take over the responsibility of becoming the anti-Soviet bastion of the Middle East; 2) A pledge on the part of the government to oppose a large *Halutz* movement from the United States. . . . 3) A soft-peddling of socialist measures on the domestic front in Israel. Premier Ben Gurion has recently indicated that he is willing to accept these conditions."

It was only *after negotiations with Blaustein were concluded*, that the Zionist leadership was brought into the picture and invited to a conference in Israel. From the outset it was clear that, while the Zionist leadership was bitter over the fact that it no longer could claim hegemony over Israeli affairs, it had no quarrel with the American Jewish Committee oligarchy over essentials. In fact, Benjamin Browdy, president of the Zionist Organization of America, seems to be vying with Blaustein as to who can more readily insure total subordination of Israel to American imperialist dictates. "American public opinion," declared Browdy upon his arrival in Israel, "as a whole has come to the realization that Israel constitutes a strategic bulwark of democracy in the Middle East. I have reason to believe that this factor is fully realized in high government circles and in the major organs of public opinion."

This statement was particularly significant because of the fact that it came close on the heels of an interview with President Truman. And it indicated clearly that Mr. Browdy, at any rate, would use his position to insure that Israel become the type of "strategic bulwark" that Washington desires in the Middle East.

Thus, on essentials there is agreement between the Zionist leadership and the American Jewish Committee group. For both are determined to bring Israel completely and openly into the camp of imperialism and war preparations. *The ready acceptance of the billion dollar bond plan by Blaustein and the Zionist leadership is proof that their efforts have not been without success.*

Who Will Benefit?

The bond plan is to be taken to American Jewry through a conference scheduled for October 27 in Washington. There is no doubt that this conference will be given one of the biggest build-ups the American Jewish community has ever seen. Already evidence is at hand to indicate that this conference will be heralded as the greatest unifying force of American Jewry ever to take place. The best public relation forces of all of the major fund raising organizations will be put to work to put the bond drive over. And the Jewish community, quite accustomed by now to high powered drives, will undoubtedly witness one now which will put all previous ones into the shade. And many Jews will contribute in the belief that a successful drive will help to facilitate immigration for those who wish to go to Israel and will help to alleviate and perhaps even do away with the present crisis in Israel.

The bond drive poses a basic issue before the American

Jewish community. The sympathies of American Jews are overwhelmingly in favor of helping Israel to overcome its problems and to establish a healthy and independent state. American Jewry has responded to each call for aid with substantial contributions. True, recent fund drives have not come up to expectations. And while they may indicate a slackening of the intense concern which American Jewry evinced in the first post-war years, it is undeniable that most Jews continue to be concerned and will want to continue to aid Israel financially and politically.

Many Jews, when confronted with an appeal to participate in the bond drive, will do so because they feel that they are thus aiding Israel to resolve its economic crisis and to make possible the migration of Jews to Israel. But those who are *really* concerned with aiding Israel to resolve its problems owe it to themselves to study the problem a little more deeply and to go beyond the superficial pronouncements with which they are confronted. The decisive question that every friend of Israel must ask is—will this bond drive really bring benefits or will it do even greater harm to Israel? If the political, social and economic problems of a country could be resolved by means of bonds or loans or through a combination of both, Israel's problems would, of course, be easily solved. But unfortunately, history has proven time and again that what is decisive is not the granting of a loan or a bond, but rather the terms on which the loan is made. What strings are attached? What are the economic policies of the government that receives them and for what purpose and for whose benefit is the loan expended? What are the goods that a country can buy with such loans or bonds and what things is it prohibited from buying? What concessions must it make in order to receive the loan?

These are the decisive issues. Loans and bonds can be of great aid—but they can also guarantee complete loss of independence and insure bankruptcy. One need but consider the constantly deteriorating conditions of the working class and the mass of the people in such countries as England and France, as in all of the countries under the Marshall Plan, to recognize that the granting of loans is in itself no guarantee of a better life.

In addition to the facts already outlined in this article, it is important to note that this bond drive cannot get under way without permission from the United States Security Exchange Commission. In other words, no bond drive without the agreement of Washington. That Washington has already indicated what concessions it demands in return for permission to launch this bond drive, is already apparent from the statements of Blaustein and Browdy. And when one adds to this the facts already presented, which indicate that the Israeli government is increasingly subordinating Israeli economy and destroying its productive potential to please American imperialism, it is clear that this bond drive, far from aiding Israel to overcome its crisis, can only intensify the crisis and assure more effective control by American imperialism. The bond drive will not aid the development of native Israeli industry but, on

the contrary, insure its ever-greater subordination to American dictates. Such investments will not help build Israel but rather American control over Israel.

Only Solution—Policy Change

Israel's crisis cannot be overcome unless there is a radical change in the Israeli government's economic and foreign policy. The crisis is not insoluble. But a solution demands that the Israeli government increase the productive capacity of the country; that it undertakes a mobilization of all capital and directs it through planning into the most important branches of industry. A solution requires that all special privileges for foreign concessions be abolished; that tax exemptions for the monopolists and foreign investors be abolished and that a democratic tax system be introduced.

If the Israeli government would nationalize imports and insure that only such goods are imported as are in accord with the needs of the population, the problem of foreign exchange could gradually be resolved. If Israel increased

its trade with the socialist countries, it could eliminate its dependency upon trade with the Western imperialist powers and thus insure the entry into the country of capital goods and machinery, without which a sound economy can never be established.

This does not mean that American Jewry does not need to help Israel financially. But this does mean that financial aid can be of little value unless basic steps are taken in Israel itself to re-direct its economic outlook and practice. It means also that American Jewry could perform tremendous service to the cause of Israel, as to the cause of world peace generally, if it joined in the struggle to do away with the present imperialist policy of our own government, which leads it to attempt to subordinate to its own interest the political, social and economic life of all peoples.

American Jewry, and particularly its more progressive sections, would do well to think through the problem of Israel and all phases of the question of aid to Israel in a more thoroughgoing manner than hitherto. For what may seem a blessing, may in reality turn out to be a curse.

THE WORK OF SHOLOM ALEICHEM

By Aaron Gurstein

SHOLOM ALEICHEM, or Sholom Rabinovich, to give him his real name, had a difficult life. He was born in the Ukrainian town of Pereyaslav in 1859. His early years are described in his wonderful autobiography, *From the Fair*.

Sholom Aleichem's father, at one time a man of means, later became impoverished. The boy Sholom, who lost his mother early in life, had to help his father run the inn which he kept.

The earliest education of the future writer was, as customary in the old days, of a religious nature. His father, however, although a religious man, was no stranger to the secular sciences; he was influenced by the new ideas of the times and was well read in Jewish literature. The father sent Sholom to study in the district school, from which the boy was graduated with honors in 1876.

The tsarist school, while it insisted upon its students obeying the tsar and the "upper hundred thousand," nevertheless gave the young Sholom Rabinovich a knowledge of the Russian language and, thus, access to the treasure store of great Russian literature with its ideas of humanism and the struggle for liberation. Familiarity with the best works of Russian literature strengthened the influence upon the young man of the enlightened Jewish literature which was struggling against the stagnancy of Jewish life and proclaiming a new way of living for the Jews.

AARON GURSTEIN was a Soviet critic who died in the thirties.

Sholom Aleichem's interest in literature began at an early age. When he was 20, he wrote his first article for the newspaper *Hacafire*, issued in Hebrew, at that time the literary language of the Jewish intellectuals. In the eighties of the last century Sholom Aleichem began writing in the popular Yiddish dialect. He had found his true calling and his name became more and more popular.

On becoming a professional writer, Sholom Aleichem had his first taste of the hard life of the literary man of those days, dependent completely upon the whim of publishers and newspaper editors.

Travel in Europe and America

After experiencing the Jewish pogroms in Kiev in 1905, Sholom determined to emigrate to America. He visited various European countries and reached New York in the autumn of 1905. He did not stay there long. Home was calling him, his country, the common people of whom and for whom he had written.

In the summer of 1908 Sholom Aleichem made an extended trip through the Russian cities and towns with large Jewish populations. Everywhere he was greeted warmly: by this time he was already a famous writer and his name was popular among the Jews.

But the fame which had fallen to his share did not relieve Sholom Aleichem from constant need. To this was added an exhausting illness, tuberculosis, which sapped his vitality still further. In 1909 the committee organized

in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of Sholom Aleichem's birth raised a fund to "redeem" the works of the great writer from their private owners.

His illness forced Sholom Aleichem to seek a refuge in southern climates. In the spring of 1914 he made another tour of the cities of Russia.

The beginning of World War I found Sholom Aleichem at a German health resort and, along with numerous other citizens of tsarist Russia, he was sent to Berlin, whence, with his family, he succeeded in escaping to neutral Denmark. Ill and without the means of livelihood, he spent several difficult months there. At the end of 1914, Sholom Aleichem went to New York but his disease had already asserted itself and his days were numbered. The great writer died in New York on May 13, 1916, at the age of 57. There were thousands at his funeral.

In his will Sholom Aleichem wrote: "Wherever I may die, let me be buried not among aristocrats, people of fame or wealth, but among simple Jewish workers, so that the gravestone which is placed upon my grave will adorn the simple graves around me and the simple graves adorn my gravestone, just as the simple and honest people during my lifetime created the glory of their writer." This bit taken from the behest of the great writer is an excellent expression of his closeness to the people.

Jewish Reality of the Time

It is seldom that a writer finds himself at once. Sholom Aleichem tried his skill in poetry without particular success, although some of his verses have found their way into Jewish folklore and are sung as folk songs. Incomparably more significant are the critical articles written by Sholom Aleichem during the eighties in which he came out against the cheap thrillers with which Jewish literature of the period was inundated and which lowered the literary taste of the masses and blinded them to reality and their actual needs. In his critical articles Sholom Aleichem came forth as a champion of a truthful and realistic literature, upholding the interests of the people.

It was in the field of short stories and sketches, however, that Sholom Aleichem's talent came into full flower. The life of the Jewish people during this difficult time, when they suffered under the double burden of the tsarist autocracy and capitalist exploitation, is his theme.

The writer's pseudonym, "Sholom Aleichem," is a customary Jewish greeting. And indeed, the Jewish masses greeted Sholom Aleichem as one of themselves, with whom they could share their joys and sorrows.

Sholom Aleichem's reputation as an author dates back to the eighties of the last century, the years of fierce political reaction in Russia which followed the notorious Jewish pogroms. Important social changes were taking place among the Jewish masses, who were persecuted by the tsarist autocracy and forced to live in the so-called "pale of settlement," which they were not permitted to transgress. Sholom Aleichem's predecessor, Mendele

Moicher-Sforim, the first of the classical Jewish writers, gave a remarkable portrayal of the old Jewish life during the first half of the nineteenth century, when the feudal and the medieval still held sway.

Under the pressure of growing capitalism, the feudal and the medieval crumbled. The new capitalist relations spread to the Jewish ghetto. The old Jewish settlements were shaken from their lethargy and their inhabitants began to seek a peace for themselves in the new system of economic relations. This painful process destroyed the old tenor of life, necessitated adjustments to the new capitalist relations, and exerted a tremendous influence upon Sholom Aleichem.

Sholom Aleichem's best works are his cycles of short stories devoted to Menachem Mendel and to Tevye the milkman. The writer began to work upon them in the nineties and returned to them frequently throughout his entire life.

Menachem Mendel and Tevye

From a tiny Jewish village, which lived the restricted life of a miserable little ant-hill, Menachem Mendel lands in the big world of capitalism. With feverish excitement he attempts to adapt himself to the new relations and the new mode of life. But he is neither accustomed to working nor does he have a feeling of firm ground under his feet. He makes endless plans, one more fantastic than the other, flits from one profession to another but always and everywhere he meets with failure. Even when he goes into the business of marriage-broker, he tries to marry off two girls to each other!

In essence, Menachem Mendel understands nothing of the tremendous capitalist world in which he finds himself, he merely catches the outward movement and bustle. It seems to him that together with everyone else he is moving toward some new life. But he is only deceiving himself. Menachem Mendel is a typical *lustmensch*, a dreamer, such as were to be found without end among the Russian Jews during the old, accursed days of poverty and oppression.

Of course Sholom Aleichem does not see only the humorous side of his Menachem Mendel. He recognizes the tragedy of his hero's spasmodic search for an elusive happiness within the limits of capitalist reality. In Sholom Aleichem's relation to Menachem Mendel, there is something reminiscent of Cervantes' treatment of his "knight of the doleful countenance": humor and tragedy are joined in a knot which cannot be untied.

But alongside the feeling of sympathy and compassion, the author evinces a definitely negative attitude toward his hero. He himself condemns the category of dreamer as something unhealthy and contrasts the dreamer with a positive type, Tevye the milkman, who, despite all his shortcomings, is bound with firm ties to the people.

He has known hard work all his life. True, his conception of life is deeply patriarchal, rooted in the old ways. He has been put to the test by life again and again. His



Sholom Aleichem

daughters are whirled around in the vortex of the new life, which he does not always comprehend. But though he may not understand some new phenomenon that takes place before his eyes, he can yet accept it, if not consciously, then at any rate instinctively.

Although he has grown up in the old life and is bound by its prejudices, Tevye nevertheless takes the side of his daughter when she follows her revolutionary husband into exile in far-away Siberia. This was Tevye's way of protesting against social injustice. The reader feels that Tevye will find the truth, will come to realize who his enemies are and how they must be dealt with, if life is to become better and more just.

Sholom Aleichem in a number of his writings has stressed his own love for Tevye the milkman, as the bearer of the idealistic aspirations of the author himself.

His Humor and Sympathy

In drawing his little world, Sholom Aleichem turned to an old and tried method, that of humor. Humor gave the writer the opportunity of revealing all the ludicrous aspects of the life he was describing, but in the humor of Sholom Aleichem is felt a great sadness and sympathy for people. The great writer knew that the people he was laughing at were often "more sinned against than sinning." The squalor and injustice of their lives had made them ridiculous.

The poverty of the Jewish masses in tsarist Russia was extreme. In a number of his stories, Sholom Aleichem gives a picture of this poverty, aggravated by the fierce competition then existing. His story, *Competitors*, whose main characters are a husband and wife, is genuinely grotesque. In the hunt for customers, they shadow each other's footsteps.

The Jewish masses in Russia, finding no outlet for their abilities in their native country, often sought an escape through emigrating to America. America, that distant dream country which from far away promised the poor a share of its gold-paved streets, turned to dust and ashes at closer inspection. In many of his works Sholom Aleichem described the trials of the Jewish emigrants whom poverty and the arbitrary tsarist regime had driven from their native land.

Sholom Aleichem himself was not a revolutionary in the true sense of the word: he had not found the way to make happy the miserable existence of his characters. But in his wonderful stories he set down for eternity the squalid and sorry life of the "little man" and showed the crime of a society which drives many of its members into such an existence.

Both the squalor of Kasrilevka—musty, narrow, antiquated and poverty-stricken Kasrilevka, as he called the village where his "small people" lived, and the sorrowful dreamer, Menachem Mendel, were generated by the hateful old social system, based on the exploitation of man by man. Behind Sholom Aleichem's laughter there lay tears, and in them sounds a bitter judgment of this system which so mutilated the lives of men.

Like other great humorists, Sholom Aleichem wrote much about children, their joys and sorrows. The childish mind is not yet warped by capitalist society. The child's soul opens wide to greet the beauty of life, the sun, the joy of spring. It was in his children's stories that Sholom Aleichem's lyricism came into its own.

A Boy's Diary belongs among his outstanding works; in it he drew an unforgettable picture of the life of need and privation, the pogroms against the Jews, and the search for happiness in strange lands, all told through the prism of child perceptions. The boy Motl declares: "I have it easy, I'm an orphan," and through the lips of this boy speaks the great humorist, who was himself forced to laugh at this life of sorrow and suffering.

Sholom Aleichem's favorite form for his stories is the monologue. His heroes were not men of action and all their energy went into words. Through an endless stream of words they tried, as it were, to talk their unfortunate life out of existence.

Behind the Laughter

In reading the humorous writings of Sholom Aleichem, one is inclined first of all to laugh with the author. The tremendous social significance behind them is not immediately apparent, one must delve deeper. This is the more true in that Sholom Aleichem belongs to that group of writers, like Balzac and Gogol, in whom the significance of the characters they created went far beyond the author's own social and political outlook. The great service of Soviet Jewish criticism is that behind the humorous stories of Sholom Aleichem it has been able to reveal the profound social significance of the writer's works.

The State Jewish Theater in Moscow has done much toward bringing out this social significance by its interpretation of Sholom Aleichem's works on the stage. An outstanding actor of this theater, People's Artist S. Mikhoeles, reached the heights of artistic mastery and penetration in his portrayal of Tevye the milkman. Helped by the new consciousness to which the great October Socialist Revolution gave birth, Mikhoeles found in Sholom Aleichem's work a picture of the evil of the doomed tsarist order and the immortality of the people embodied in Sholom Aleichem's sparkling words.

Sholom Aleichem cannot be called a satirist in the genuine sense of the word. He is a humorist, one of the greatest humorists known to world literature. A truly brilliant writer, a man of the people, his works reflect the age-old tribulations of his people, and in them his sympathies and antipathies are clearly expressed.

He is always on the side of the people, on the side of the masses. Laughter turns to sadness because Sholom Aleichem sees the tragedies of the masses, oppressed and exploited.

But it is not only sadness—Sholom Aleichem found scathing words when it came to branding that “upper ten thousand,” which suffered from obesity, which had grown fat at the expense of the people. Sholom Aleichem never lost a feeling of loathing toward the upper bourgeoisie, the plutocrats.

Even in the eighties of the last century, at the very outset of his literary career, Sholom Aleichem wrote a satirical novel, *Sender Blank*, criticizing the wealthy Jewish family. During the next decade he wrote the comedy *Yaknehoz*, unmasking stockbrokers. There is an instinctive disdain for the rich in the words of Sholom Aleichem's hero, Tevye the milkman, and those of another Sholom Aleichem hero, Shimele Soroker, the tailor in the comedy, *The Great Winning*, as well as of many other characters in his works. Sholom Aleichem saw through the repulsive man from Buenos Aires who traded in human lives. More than once the author's satirical sketches are directed against the tsarist regime.

Sholom Aleichem's perception of the great social processes going on around him was keenest of all when the writer came into contact with the dregs of life. Not a single Jewish writer has ever been as sensitive to all the twistings and turnings of the life of the masses as was Sholom Aleichem.

In the characters and the inimitable language of Sholom Aleichem are to be seen not only the variegated national characteristics of the Jewish people. Tevye takes his place in the gallery of literary characters from the ranks of the people, alongside such heroes as Romain Rolland's Colas Breugnon. Sholom Aleichem's children will remain in the memory of mankind together with the children of Dickens, Mark Twain and Chekhov. The remarkable skill of Sholom Aleichem's realistic art is seen in the character of Menachem Mendel, who with all his typical “Jewishness,” is nevertheless something more than just a Jewish type. In

this character Sholom Aleichem presents the entire social tragedy of the great mass of the petty bourgeoisie, vainly seeking a place for themselves in the capitalist world, striving to adapt themselves to capitalism, which is mercilessly grinding them under heel. Just as Balzac's Gobsec is a synonym for the power of money, so Sholom Aleichem's Menachem Mendel is a confirmation of the Marxist thesis on the tragic doom of the petty bourgeoisie under capitalism.

A Letter from Gorky

It is no less difficult to translate Sholom Aleichem into other languages than to translate Dickens, Gogol or other humorists, since humor to such a large extent is based on the play of words, on the specific character of native dialect, which is lost in translation. Nevertheless, the work of Sholom Aleichem has earned universal recognition.

The great socialist writer, Maxim Gorky, always spoke with great warmth of Sholom Aleichem. In 1910, soon after the appearance of the Russian translation of *A Boy's Diary*, Gorky sent the following letter to the Jewish writer:

“Most respected colleague:

“Your book has been received, read, laughed and cried over—a wonderful book! It seems to me that the translation has been done skillfully and with love for the author, although in spots one feels that it was difficult to convey in the Russian the sad and warm humor of the original. I repeat—one feels this.

“The book pleases me exceedingly, and let me say, once again that it is a capital book!

“The entire thing scintillates with tender, benign and wise love for the people, and this feeling is so rare in our day:

“I am yours most cordially,

M. Gorky

“Capri, March 21, 1910.”

Gorky was correct when he wrote of the “wise love for the people” which permeated all the writings of Sholom Aleichem, this genuine people's writer; when he described the pathetic life of the Jewish masses, who, in the words of one of his characters, the “happiest man in Kodnya,” had even been deprived by the good Lord of a crust of bread to eat and free air to breathe. Sholom Aleichem had unswerving faith in the triumph of the people's cause. He could never get around anything without jokes intermingled with bitterness. The same bitter jokes are used by Sholom Aleichem in describing his characters, artisans forced to “stand on their feet from dawn until late at night” and who will lead a miserable existence “until the happy time comes of which Karl Marx, August Bebel and all good and wise people tell us.” Faith in this happy future and unchanging optimism, which always has its roots in the common people, penetrate and animate the works of this great Jewish writer.

WHAT EHRENBURG REALLY SAID

By Zalel Blitz

THANKS to the ease of modern communications, lies often get around the world at top speed. Unfortunately, the same means of communication are not always at the disposal of truth, which must then go afoot and take much longer to reach the ears of the people. The lies we wish to nail here were cabled from London. But the truth had first appeared in a Tel Aviv paper and took much longer to get here by the slower route of the mails.

Some time ago, the *Morning Journal*, a New York Yiddish daily, published a distorted version of the press conference which Ilya Ehrenburg held in London. The article was written by the paper's London correspondent, S. Dorfson, who is well known for his sensationalism and pathological hatred of the Soviet Union. He is the kind of journalist who writes: "From reliable sources I have learned today . . ." or "I have it from people who should know that. . . ."

Only recently the *Morning Freiheit* exposed Dorfson. The paper showed how he had falsified a piece of news from *Pravda*, whose Kovno correspondent had sent in a story on the exposure and arrest of certain local speculators. In order to bring the readers of the *Morning Journal* a scoop on "anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union," Dorfson introduced a few Jewish names into his account. Despite the fact that the *Morning Freiheit* printed a photostatic copy of the original *Pravda* article, which showed that his story of Jewish involvement was sheer fabrication, the *Morning Journal* did not repudiate Dorfson. Subsequently, some of his colleagues repeated the lie in other papers.

Dorfson's report on the Ehrenburg interview in London is no more reliable than his previous stories. What Dorfson wrote bore little resemblance to what Ehrenburg actually said, as we learned weeks later on receiving the newspaper *Al Hamishmar*, issued by the Mapam (United Workers Party) in Tel Aviv. Probably Dorfson never dreamed that among the red-baiters present at the interview, there was also an honest individual, Jacob Leon, London correspondent of *Al Hamishmar*.

The Lie and the Truth

First let us review Dorfson's account of the conference. According to him, Ehrenburg sweated like a beaver. "His nervousness rose from minute to minute." He was appar-

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Ilya Ehrenburg

ently cowed by the great journalists. With an unfailing nose for news, Dorfson even peeked under the table and discovered that "his [Ehrenburg's] knees were trembling." Thus Ehrenburg is put down as a sorry, ridiculous figure, a "nebechl."

Dorfson reports further that when the correspondents began to raise questions about Jewish issues—something Ehrenburg never in his life expected—the Soviet writer went to pieces. Asked about Peretz Markish, Ehrenburg stammered and stuttered incoherently. Finding his tongue at last, he disclaimed knowledge of Markish or any of the other Jewish writers. Since there were few Jews remaining in the Soviet Union who read Yiddish (Dorfson quoting Ehrenburg) "why waste money for such purposes?" (That is, to print Jewish books and newspapers, etc.)

The entire conference, Dorfson comments, was "a moral and political failure" for Ehrenburg. "This time his Jewish head failed him." However, Dorfson does not deny that Ehrenburg smiled during the "cross-examination," and explains: "He smiled out of deep chagrin (*tsores*) and one felt the ground collapsing under him."

We know now that this report is a phony from beginning

to end, consistent with the type of journalism we have come to expect from Dorfson.

And now, the truth! Jacob Leon writes in *Al Hamishmar* that the conference took place in "an atmosphere of tenseness and hostility." Surrounded by more than 100 enemies, Ehrenburg retained his self-possession throughout. Despite the unconcealed viciousness of the questions of reporters, who tried to rattle him with anti-Soviet arguments, Ehrenburg's manner was calm and good-natured. He spoke quietly and with much humor. Perhaps Leon lacks Dorfson's reportorial ability, for he did not note any weakness in Ehrenburg's knees.

According to Dorfson, Ehrenburg wanted desperately to avoid all questions about Soviet Jewry. Leon, however, states plainly: "Ehrenburg declared that he would very much like to talk about Soviet Jewry."

To the question about Itzik Feffer, Ehrenburg replied: "If anything happened to Feffer, I certainly would have known about it." Asked why no Jewish delegates had participated at the last conference of Soviet writers, Ehrenburg said that "he was at the conference and personally heard delegates speaking in Yiddish." He added that "he heard preparations are being made to issue a new Yiddish paper in the Soviet Union."

Perhaps Dorfson, who can see the trembling of a knee under a table, does not hear so well. Many things which Ehrenburg said would constitute important news to Jewry, but Dorfson did not mention them.

Ehrenburg explained that since the destruction of the big Jewish centers of the Soviet Union by the nazis, a great part of the Jewish youth, scattered throughout the Soviet Union, has changed in character. This change, which occurred entirely by a social process without any outside force or imposition, consists of linguistic and cultural integration in the general national life. But in those places where large Jewish communities remain, as in Chernovitz, an energetic Jewish cultural life continues. Yiddish is spoken, Yiddish theaters are thriving, etc.

As to the insinuation that the charge of cosmopolitanism is an expression of hidden anti-Semitism, Ehrenburg declared that such criticism has nothing whatever to do with the Jewishness of the individual concerned. "Take me—I am an example of cosmopolitanism. I was born in the Ukraine, I speak to you in French, I represent the city of Riga in the Supreme Soviet, and at the same time I am a Jew."

The "Liquidation" Fable

This is what Ehrenburg said at London. He probably did not realize how well he had characterized Dorfson when he remarked: "In our country, foreign journalists who come to our press conference are treated to caviar and vodka; but later these same journalists tell the exact opposite of what they have heard."

On the basis of Dorfson's "revelations," the Jewish bour-

geois press went to town. Ehrenburg's interview was taken to confirm the "liquidation" of the Jewish writers in Russia. It is interesting to note, however, that a journalist like Aryeh Leneman of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency—also an anti-Soviet specialist—included some remarks which cast further doubt on his colleague Dorfson's veracity. On the eve of the Jewish New Year, Leneman wrote: "In the second half of this year, it was heard in Poland that certain members of the Central Committee of the Polish Jews received letters from a number of the banished writers, with requests for food packages. And it seems that such packages were sent from Warsaw to . . . who knows where? In any case, certainly not to homes of rest or to places where one can be creative."

Mazl tov! It appears that the writers who, according to the bourgeois Jewish press, have been liquidated, driven insane and shot and whose bones have been rotting in Siberia more than a year, are now alive and even able to write letters and to send them off to places outside the country. How kind of Leneman to inform us of these facts. But even his report raises questions. If he does not know where the packages are being sent, how is he certain that these are not "places where one can be creative?" How can he know and not know at the same time?

Leneman also brings us another piece of news, that the "deportations" of Jews, particularly from the Baltic countries, the Ukraine and Slovakia, have been halted as a result of world protests. If we are to accept the "deportation" stories, there should be very few Jews remaining in those areas. But according to Ehrenburg's account at the same press conference, there are in Riga at the present time some 50,000 Jews—40,000 more than in 1944, the year Kiev was liberated. So great was the "deportation" of Jews from Latvia, that in Riga alone their number was increased by 400 percent. Perhaps Leneman ought to investigate whether they were "deported" from Riga or to Riga.

This is the type of honest, objective journalism which these gentlemen of the press give to the Jewish masses. Jewish writers in the Soviet Union are "liquidated" and then allowed to send letters to other countries. Jews are "deported" from the Baltic countries; then it develops that Riga has a tremendous Jewish population and in the not too distant future this Jewish community will reach its pre-war total of 70,000. They report that Ehrenburg confirmed "the liquidation of the *alef-baze*" (alphabet); then one hears that he spoke of preparations to issue a new Yiddish paper.

This is the way the Dorfsons and the Lenemans work; this is how they serve the clerical *Morning Journal*. If they really observed the dictum of Orthodoxy, which they claim to guard so zealously, they would spend some time beating their breasts in the traditional *Yom Kippur* fashion, and repeat out loud several hundred times the traditional prayer: "For the sin that I have sinned, for lying both knowingly and unknowingly." And then they might add penance for many other sins committed in the process of deceiving the Jewish masses throughout the world.

NATIONAL JEWISH YOUTH MEET

By David Abrams

THE ANNUAL assembly of the National Jewish Youth Conference held at Narrowsburg, N. Y., August 31 to September 8, attended by about 200 delegates, was an encouraging event in recent Jewish life. Despite shortcomings, the conference once more yielded evidence of the basically democratic spirit and potential of Jewish youth of America.

In previous articles (*JEWISH LIFE*, December 1949; January 1950) we outlined the development of the National Jewish Youth Conference (NJYC). This is the only body in the American Jewish community today in which nearly all divergent views are represented. At the assembly the NJYC began, however haltingly and timidly, to move toward a program of *action* on the social issues affecting Jewish youth. The assembly manifested an increased awareness of the need for "unity without uniformity."

The annual meeting of representative young people from all parts of the country affords an opportunity to gauge the thinking and trends among Jewish youth and to influence such trends through the interchange and competition of ideas. This year's assembly revealed that many leaders of Jewish youth have *not* been stampeded into war hysteria or frenzied red-baiting.

While there was no extended debate on the war in Korea, every mention of the United Nations was significantly accompanied by expressions characterizing that body as the best means for the *peaceful* solution of international problems. In one workshop (discussion group) discussing war and peace, the International Red Cross appeal for the banning of atomic and bacteriological weapons of mass destruction was strongly supported.

That the overwhelming majority of the delegates were sorely troubled by the mounting threat of a new war was quite evident at the assembly, both in formal and informal discussions. Equally evident, however, was a great degree of confusion as to where the responsibility for the present world crisis rests and therefore as to how to meet it. Similarly, there was a serious lack of understanding of the connection between the war danger and other problems. It is clear that the speed and effectiveness with which Jewish youth can be won to a clear-cut understanding of the issue of peace and all its ramifications will in the long run determine their ability to move forward as a militant grouping and will determine their stand on all other issues. As the war drive becomes more sharp and intensified, this weak link of confusion around the issue of peace will become an ever more serious danger to the understanding and action of Jewish youth.

Much greater clarity was evident on the menace of thought control. The delegates saw in the limitation and destruction of civil liberties a direct threat to the Jewish community. But they were obviously not aware of the close connection between the drive toward war and the assault upon democratic rights.

The preservation of democracy loomed as a major problem in a number of ways at the assembly. The delegates soon came to realize that attacks on freedom of opinion and association were in part responsible for the current decline in membership in Jewish youth organizations, which had not counterattacked so as to draw the youth closer to them. This point was hammered home in the keynote address on "The Need for a Vital Jewish Youth Movement" by Mr. Sanford Solender, director of the Jewish Center Division of the National Jewish Welfare Board, which sponsors the NJYC. He emphasized that Jewish youth must actively combat the fear in American life which was causing Jewish youth to stay away from even the most "non-political" organizations.

McCarran Bill Opposed

The danger of the McCarran bill, at that time under discussion in the Senate, was brought out in several workshops. The consequence was that three workshops requested the steering committee to convene the resolutions committee in order to take immediate action. Unlike last year's assembly, at which the hush-hush policy ruthlessly blocked official consideration of the Peekskill pogrom (see *JEWISH LIFE*, January 1950), the steering committee—more broadly representative this year than last—promptly acquiesced and an incisive resolution was quickly reported out to the plenary session. The resolution called upon the Senate to defeat the McCarran bill and the president to veto.

The discussion revealed a certain confusion among Jewish youth even on this basic question. Doubts were expressed as to whether the assembly should act on specific legislation or whether the McCarran bill was a "Jewish concern." A number of delegates were not aware of the provisions of the bill. Significantly, however, the resolution was vigorously supported not only by consistently progressive delegates, but by young people who represented General Zionist and other viewpoints. No votes were cast in opposition to the resolution and only a handful abstained. Then, in enthusiastic haste to give meaning to their action, the delegates raised about \$70 in a few minutes for a "war fund" to send telegrams on the bill.

Even this forthright action was seized upon by social democratic forces to sow confusion among Jewish youth. The very hysteria which the delegates had condemned was injected into the resolution by a representative of the Young Circle League of the Workmen's Circle (unaffiliated with the conference)—official membership, 650—who attended the assembly as an observer. She proposed an amendment to the resolution expressing opposition to "all forms of totalitarianism, including communism." The proposal was quickly moved by the foremost exponent of Orthodoxy at the assembly. The ensuing discussion gave indications of a healthy suspicion of this kind of demagoguery, accompanied, however, with unclarity as to how to deal with it. Although the amendment was carried, over 30 votes were recorded in opposition.

Private discussions after adjournment revealed that the vote was not fully indicative of the sentiment of the delegates. The majority felt that they had been stampeded and resented being placed in the position of having to vote "for or against communism." If the progressives had vigorously opposed the amendment by pointing out that it played into the hands of the forces of thought control, the proposal would have been voted down. Unfortunately the progressives underestimated the capacity of the delegates to understand the issue and their own power to win support for their position. Nevertheless, the attempt of the social democratic maneuver to isolate the progressives, was not successful since many of the delegates saw through the maneuver and voted against the amendment.

No "Escape" to Israel

One highly significant trend revealed by the discussions and decisions was a movement away from the Zionist-dominated attitudes that had prevailed at previous assemblies. The latest Zionist argument, that Israel offers a haven of "escape" from the danger of war and fascism in America, was firmly rejected. It was Hashomer Hatzair, the left wing Zionist youth group, that hammered away at the "negation of the diaspora" and the "ingathering of the exiles" (the theory that all Jews must emigrate to Israel), while an official representative of the Jewish Agency maintained a neutral position on *Halutzit*, emigration of American youth to Israel. The prevailing Zionist approach was the typical General Zionist view that Israel is the center from which Jewish culture in America will be "revitalized" and toward which American Jewish youth has the responsibility of financial aid. Hashomer Hatzair hit out at this approach, calling for a full-blown program of *Halutzit*, based partially on Israel's need, but more emphatically on the "haven" which Israel offers from the danger of war and fascism, as well as the opportunity it offers to "proletarianize Jews," which "cannot happen in America."

This position was conclusively rejected. It was effectively argued that, if the present drive toward fascism and war in the United States is not checked, Israel will be no safer for Jewish youth than New York, and that the only pro-

tection for Jews in or out of Israel lies in resisting the pro-war, pro-fascist campaign of reaction in America. The final report from the workshops stated: "Almost all agreed that regardless of the stand on *Halutzit* there was a real need for the American Jewish community to look toward its own resources for building American Jewish life." The assembly accepted a plan proposed by the Jewish Agency representative for the "adoption" of Israeli youth *kibbutzim* by American Jewish youth groups. According to the plan, the Agency will put the two groups in contact with each other while correspondence, aid and cultural interchange will be worked out by the two groups independently of the Agency. This plan was broadly supported but it was evident that Jewish youth—while maintaining strong interest in Israel—was much more deeply concerned with the ever growing problems facing it at home.

Accent on Action

The action on the McCarran bill was a concrete expression of a broader outlook that took firm root at this assembly, which held that the responsibility of organized Jewish youth was actively to concern itself with social, economic and political issues. While many expressions of the assembly, as in the past, were couched in polite social-work terminology, a much more direct approach to these questions was apparent. For instance, whereas anti-Semitism had been a "dirty word" at previous assemblies, the burden of Mr. Solender's keynote address was social action. He pointed to the mass movements of youth in the 30's as an example of such action. Mr. Solender called upon the delegates to fight for the creation of an atmosphere that would lead to a new "revolt on the campus," to which he referred as inspiration for a "vital youth movement."

Mr. Solender's address struck a responsive chord among



Ernest Rymer, national director of the Jewish Young Fraternalists, presents the JYF Negro-Jewish Unity award to Mrs. Hardine Hendrix and Mrs. Jesse Kessler for their fight against Jimcrow in Stuyvesant Town.

the delegates that was echoed in the workshops, among whose "findings" were the following:

"Because of the impact of world and domestic issues on the life of every individual, social action was a topic of major concern in the workshops.

"It was pointed out that the increasing curbs on individual freedom evidenced by infringements upon civil liberties, loyalty checks, injurious attacks upon the character of individuals before guilt is proved, the Wood bill passed by the House and the pending McCarran bill in the Senate, have created fear and hysteria in the country, not only in the general community but in the Jewish community as well.

"In the light of this, many felt that Jewish youth, as sincere American citizens, are obligated to take action which would contribute to the security of all groups and the preservation of the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution."

Among other common interests of Jewish youth listed in the workshop reports were "peace, physical security, economic security, education." The growing conflict between the healthy approach of the youth and the attempt of reactionary adult leadership to stifle mass action was expressed thus:

"Dissatisfaction was expressed by several workshops with the fact that many times the adult community fails to take a stand on crucial social issues. When such a situation occurs and youth feels that positive action is essential, it should urge adult consideration and action on such issues.

"Failing in this effort, several workshops recommended, youth should then be free to take independent action, attempting to enlist community support."

These are sharp words and they reflect the impatience of young people with the policy of hush-hush, behind which reaction seeks to immobilize the Jewish community. This impatience was manifested as well by adult-dominated youth groups, primarily Zionist, which have been prevented from taking action because their adult sponsoring bodies do not allow vigorous action on "non-Israel" issues. The workshop report included a recommendation from one discussion group that local youth councils eliminate constitutional provisions requiring unanimous agreement before action can be taken in favor of majority rule.

It is interesting, too, that while National Jewish Youth Conference action was limited by the delegates to disseminating information to its member bodies on issues and techniques of social action, they imposed no such restrictions on themselves in their local organizations. While in session the assembly was empowered to take any type of action decided upon by the delegates at any time. Since proposals for NJYC action for the coming year included recommendations to participate in and initiate mass demonstrations, it is clear that the delegates manifested a desire to break out of the narrow confines which have choked off mass action by organized Jewish youth for years.

The concern of the delegates over the threat to democracy in America was also reflected in their unequivocal and immediate response to a threat to democracy within the NJYC

and to the very existence of the conference. It was to be expected that unity and opportunity for democratic expression within the NJYC would arouse the ire of those Jewish circles to whom unity is anathema. Any knowledge of the Jewish community and its class structure indicates that the danger to unity stems from big business representatives and their faithful social democratic allies. Recent history has taught that the attack is first aimed at the more progressive sections of the Jewish community and then at any group which refuses to knuckle under. Hence the anti-unity group have muttered and growled at the NJYC for its democratic policy.

Defeat of Red-Baiting

The target of their attack was the Jewish Young Fraternalists (affiliated to the Jewish People's Fraternal Order of the IWO), an organization which had helped build the NJYC from the start and which had gained respect and prestige through its positive contributions. It was no secret to the delegates that some of their number were out to "get" the Jewish Young Fraternalists. Some delegates had been approached by certain local and national leaders of the Jewish Welfare Board, sponsor of the NJYC, for support in such a venture. Others guessed that something was afoot when the unaffiliated Young Circle League, which had heretofore been indifferent to the conference, took a sudden interest in the NJYC and sent three observers.

From the very first day of the assembly this group began to lobby to gain support for an eventual move to expel the JYF. But the plotters hastily drew in their horns. For it was obvious from the start that the delegates nearly unanimously rejected this idea. Many young people, who were approached with the proposal for expulsion, immediately sought out the JYF delegates to assure them that, though not in full agreement with the whole of JYF's program, "we'll fight for you all down the line."

One of the delegates became so obsessed by the backroom plotting that she could think of nothing else. She even resented any discussion which would not lead to the proposal to expel JYF. Finally, on the sixth day of the assembly, in the midst of the plenary discussion, she rose to move the expulsion of the "subversive 'Young Federalists' group because they're communists." The amazed silence that followed was punctuated with titters, as the delegates realized that the young lady in her zeal had neglected even to note the name of the organization with whose political affiliations she professed to be so deeply acquainted. As the titters turned to derisive laughter, the chair asked for a second to the motion; hearing none, the previous discussion went on, leaving the zealous young lady extremely befuddled. Those who had incited her were less confused but no happier. The Young Circle League delegation—two of whose members could hardly be considered young—left later that afternoon, after a desperate effort to rally some last minute support for another try, which was never made. No doubt

further efforts *will* be made to smash the unity of the NJYC. But all indications point to their defeat.

The Way Out—Real Democracy

Discussion in the workshops spelled out the determination of the young people not only to shun the growing witch-hunt in Jewish life, but to extend and strengthen democracy in the community. In one workshop an entire session was centered around the question of eligibility of organizations to participate in local Jewish youth and young adult councils. Despite the attempt of an adult "advisor" to steer and later to bludgeon the workshop participants into placing the "red" label on the Jewish People's Fraternal Order, the workshop, and later the assembly as a whole, confirmed the position that "any group is eligible which subscribes to the purposes of the council." A proposal to use the attorney general's "subversive list" as a criterion, disguised as a "minority opinion," was stricken from the workshop report by the assembly.

The trend toward greater emphasis on the real problems of American Jewish youth and the search for an effective program to meet them also appeared in the cultural activities and planning at the assembly. The workshop report pointed out that one basis for a vital program of unity among Jewish youth "would be a creative American Jewish program emphasizing the contribution of the Jewish people to the development of American democratic tradition." A concrete step in that direction was the enthusiastic adoption of a proposal introduced by the Jewish Young Fraternalists

that the 1954 celebration of the tercentenary of the American Jewish community should be centered about such an emphasis.

Greater attention was paid to the cultural heritage of the Jewish working class in America. Much of this was new to the delegates, who responded favorably to the songs of the Yiddish proletarian poets, as well as to the songs and dances of Eastern Europe. Yiddish occupied a more important position in the cultural activities of the assembly than ever before, owing mainly to the active leadership given by JYF'ers in the dance, music and dramatic groups which prepared the cultural programs.

At a post-midnight "bull session" someone said that the coming year would be crucial to the survival of the Jewish people. That remark touched off a discussion that revealed a hunger among Jewish youth for a clear program which would answer their deep-rooted fears for the future. In the warm and friendly atmosphere of informal discussion the young people responded enthusiastically to the ideas brought forth by the progressives in the group. About 3:00 A.M. the group broke up and one of them said, "I feel better now."

Perhaps more than anything else, that remark proved the validity of what has been often repeated, but too rarely acted upon. It proved, as the entire assembly did, that Jewish youth *can* be won for militant anti-fascist activity if progressives establish daily grass-roots contact with the Jewish youth community. Eight days of discussion at an annual assembly brought results. How much more can be accomplished in 365 days of the year by consistent contact, discussion and action!

THE JOURNEY OF ISRAEL YEHUDIN

A Short Story

By S. Godiner

S. Godiner was an outstanding Yiddish novelist of the Soviet Union who was killed in 1941 while fighting at the front in defense of Moscow. The following is the concluding section of his story, "The Sun Rises in the East," which he wrote after his visit to Birobidjan in 1938. The opening part of the story, which takes place in 1928 at the very beginning of the movement to settle Birobidjan, describes the impact of this movement on a little town (shtetl) in White Russia. The section of the story translated below from the Yiddish describes the journey to Birobidjan.—Editors.

FOR A good part of his journey to Birobidjan, Israel Yehudin hardly felt conscious of traveling. His thoughts were still at home; there was so much to remember. This preoccupation did not arise from conversations with his wife Alte or his fellow passengers on the train, but from his own inner life.

The books he had read throughout his life were in his mind's eye, as in a clean little bookcase, not covered by any dust of neglect. They stood there, vivid and substantial, cover to cover, with the titles facing him. Whenever he felt like it, he was able to take out any book and peruse it anew. He used to do just that at every critical turn in his life—when he undertook a trip into the big city to look for work and during the weeks he was laid up with sickness. He did it now again. It was not just to pass the time, no! He did it to compare what he had read in books with his own knowledge of life and to search for the truth.

He followed the same course on this present trip. Wishing to discover the whole truth about Birobidjan, the East, Manchuria and Japan, he got off at a railroad station to look for books on these subjects. But besides a few pamphlets on the battles of the partisans in the Far East he found nothing in the well stocked newsstand of the big station. He was attracted, however, by a little book in a



In a Birobidjan grain field

faded cover with the intriguing title, *World Stories*. He was not certain what the title meant—whether the book was about creation, the physical world at the present time or social customs and manners. In any case, all these questions interested him. To be sure, he had a definite and firm opinion about the way the people of the world live. He had even formed a maxim on the subject: "I am a toiler, I am the pillar of the world." And he was not concerned when the carpenters and plasterers, his own comrades, had poked fun at him, saying, "Don't touch Israel—he is the pillar of the world." Let them have their fun; he had discovered the fundamental truth of the world.

He bought the book, *World Stories*.

MOST OF THE DAY, HE BEHAVED LIKE THE AVERAGE PASSENGER on a long trip with his family. At train stops he would run with his teapot to get boiling water at the station. He would take the children to the washroom. He would watch the family suitcases. He would take care of Alte. He would discuss home and world problems with his neighbors. He would look out of the windows and judge the condition of the crops, the woods, the mills as they flitted by. He counted the miles covered since he had left home and asked local passengers what tasteful food could be bought cheaply at the nearest station. Only when his neighbors sat down to play checkers or cards, would he stretch out on the upper berth to read his book.

In this manner he traveled a great deal of the way, almost up to the Urals. Passing through the Urals he finished the last pages of *World Stories*. He was delighted. The book was a popular description of the origin of the world. In reading it he formed a new concept of creation. This was how everything started: a fragment of fire broke away from the sun and began to revolve in a circle of its own; gradually it was transformed into a ball and covered with a hard crust, out of which vegetation and animals burst forth.

Having created this new image, he became a faithful believer in it and started to feel entirely different. He still acted as before, running for tea at the stations, taking the children to the washroom, buying food and bargaining so as not to overpay, tucking the warm covers around Alte if

she fell asleep when the railroad cars were being ventilated. But inwardly, he felt bigger and more important than the other passengers for he was no longer just an individual traveling from one place to another, but a fragment of fire that had broken away from the sun and was starting out alone to create a new world. However, Israel was not to bring this image with him to Birobidjan.

ON THE TRAIN HE BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH FIVE OTHER PEOPLE who were no less privileged characters than himself. They were also going to Birobidjan and they too went there not because of any distress. None of them was lame or dumb or crippled, Heaven forbid! Each one had some trade or skill; and one of them was taking not only his wife and child, but his mother-in-law and niece. Still, Israel was different. None of his fellow passengers could understand the deep meaning of the expression, "Everywhere and nowhere." They barely listened to such expressions, which they received with impatience and displeasure, saying, "Tell us something clear and simple. We don't understand you." This reply hurt Israel and he fell silent.

The Jew who was going to Birobidjan with his mother-in-law said, "I am a family man and I love my family. Once I had a very large family, but Petlura—may his name and memory be wiped out!—slaughtered them, so now I have only these left." He pointed to his wife, child, mother-in-law and niece. "She is one of my brother's children. She alone survived out of 13.

"So I told my family that Jews are invited to go to Birobidjan and build a land of their own. That suits me. Judging from what I have seen with my own eyes, from what the tsarist authorities did to the Jews, I am very eager to try. I'll tell you something else. I'm ready to go through fire and water for our government. Without getting into a lengthy discussion, I tell you I mean this quite simply, not as an expression but the literal truth. Especially since we are not concerned with passing through fire and water, but with the construction of a land. Some wisecracks are asking, 'How come we are trusted at a frontier?' I'll tell you something more. I consider it quite an honor that we are included among the strong and loyal.

"So I say to my family, 'Going means going!' We shall not get lost. To take care of five mouths, we have four pairs of hands that can work quite well. What else do we need? What then? To go is to go all together. I love my family and I hate philosophy. So we are going. And believe me, the further we travel, the more I wish we were there already. My hands are itching. I myself am a carpenter, but in a pinch I can also be a woodworker or a lumberjack. And if it should be necessary to start by digging the earth, I can do that too, as I am telling you in plain language."

The plain-spoken Jew at first made a strongly unfavorable impression on Israel. Instinctively, Israel felt that if he were to relate how he, Israel, went to Birobidjan, and what kind of image he had formed on this trip, this man would have thought him crazy. Israel therefore stayed with him a short while only and started to leave, but the man followed.

"There are several other people going to Birobidjan," he called after Israel. "Abraham, Leibe, Umanier!" He called so loudly that he could be heard at the topmost berths. "Why go to sleep in broad daylight? I understand the man of Malin—he doesn't sleep nights—but you! You may miss Birobidjan while you're sleeping."

Unkempt heads, sleepy faces, leaden eyes stared down from the upper berths. "What's that? Ha! Where are we?"

Israel nodded and left. He made up his mind that he would not come to them again. There was nothing he would care to discuss with them.

At the railroad stops, when going for boiling water, he would meet them time and again and they would stare at one another.

"Why don't you come around?" asked the plain-spoken Jew. "Did you forget where our car is? Here it is!"

MEANWHILE, SOMETHING STRANGE WAS HAPPENING TO ISRAEL.

With every new day, the past seemed to be fading. The image he had formed while reading *World Stories* grew silly and lifeless. At the same time, his hankering to meet with the plain-spoken Jew grew stronger. Israel apologized to himself. "I am simply curious to know why they are going to Birobidjan. Did they have homes of their own? What did they do with their homes? How did they take leave of their town and how did the people bid them farewell?"

Israel went to visit the Jews and started a far-fetched discussion; but the others quickly understood what he was after and interrupted eagerly with their stories.

"It's quite simple," said the plain-spoken Jew. "My house, for instance, would have collapsed over my head if I had stayed on."

"What do you mean—over your head?" Israel wondered.

"It's quite simple. The house was ready to collapse last year. The police were getting ready to condemn it. It was really dangerous to live in such ruins."

"Well?"

"What do you mean, well? As soon as I took everything out of the house, I went up to the roof and in one-half hour..."

"You tore it down?" asked Israel.

"I threw down the straw. What a pity, fresh straw! I had covered the roof with it only two years ago, so I took it down. Then I climbed down from the roof, took out the props, and the house collapsed by itself."

Israel contrasted the story of the hut standing and waiting for someone to remove the props so it would collapse with his own experience of departure—the postcard from his brother, the farewell to past generations, his grandfather's hair that he had found in the Talmud, the little bag filled with Eretz Israel earth that lay there for hundreds of years. The contrast was not a happy one of Israel. He realized that these people lived a simpler, easier life.

With growing interest, he followed the stories of the others. The other four Jews didn't have any houses of their own; they lived in holes rented from landlords. The landlords were happy when they left. And they too, on going,

breathed more freely. But the actual departure proved no easier for them than for Israel.

The man from Uman told how his mother had laid herself down in the doorway, crying, "First strangle me and then go wherever you like."

"Why?" asked Israel.

"For no good reason," replied the man from Uman, a husky man with a broad chest and reddish face. "She was afraid that the animals and mosquitoes would eat me alive. But I, on the contrary, like distant lands." He beamed.

"What did you do then?" asked Israel with great curiosity.

"Nothing. I said, 'Mother, let me alone!' and I left."

The man from Malin commented sadly that he envied Israel and Ber (that is, the plain-spoken Jew) because they were going with their families.

"And who stopped you from doing the same?" asked Israel.

"It's this way," he began, in a preoccupied manner. (One could see his heart was aching, he didn't sleep nights and spent the days lying on his berth.) "It's this way. I'm not the only one. In our town of Malin, there is a whole group of people who wish to settle in Birobidjan. They considered the problem and decided to send a delegate, but no one wanted to be the first to go. On that occasion, it slipped off my tongue that I was ready to be the delegate. People told my wife that I wanted to run away from her; so I refused to go."

"Another meeting was held. It was decided to draw lots. I drew the lucky number. Again, she was told I had fixed it that way. But this is nothing," he continued in a more cheerful tone. "I know that when she will find I am not interested in anyone else, she will make up with me. She is a very jealous woman."

There was an outburst of loud laughter from the listeners.

The man from Malin recovered his spirits fully. He held up a sheet of paper and said, "I am writing her a letter, telling her I am not going alone." He blinked his eyes and suddenly requested, "Please add a few words, I beg you. Let her see..."

Everyone wrote a few cheerful words of greeting.

"Come, come, don't sulk," wrote Ber. "In Birobidjan a woman is worth her weight in gold."

ISRAEL WROTE TWO WORDS, BUT HE REALIZED THAT BER HAD sent the best message. Not wishing to lag behind, he asked the Jew from Malin for his address, promising to write a special letter to his wife. "What's her name?" he asked.

"Rose."

"Rose Yehudin?" said Israel, recalling a distant relative by that name in Malin.

"Yehudin? No! ... That is, her father's name was Yehudin. And you, who are you? Are you one of the Yehudins?"

"And who are you?" countered Israel excitedly. "You must be Mendel Podkhotker, the knitter. But where is your beard?"

"I shaved it off six years ago."

"Yes," Israel said, in reply to the previous question. "I am Israel Yehudin. You don't know me. I still remember your wife, but very vaguely. It is 15 years since I last saw her. At that time she was a beauty."

"Well, this is a real story," blurted the man from Malin, blushing violently.

"*Mazl tov!*" Laughingly, the Jews offered their congratulations. "Your troubles are all over, Mendel. She is all yours again, as long as Israel Yehudin will take a hand."

"Certainly, I'll write her. What else is there to do? She will surely come. The Yehudins. . ."

Thus the days passed.

THE TRAIN SPED ON FROM WEST TO EAST, CARRYING THEM away from their old homes and nearer to their new ones. The passengers exhausted their repertory of stories. There were, on the train going to the Far East, other people—not Jews. They, too, came from the West. Their parents and ancestors had lived for hundreds of years in the regions of Podol, Volin, and Polesie and now they were going to the Far East. They also had stories which they eagerly exchanged. Israel noted that many carried their own saws and axes, but no cases of personal goods, and everything was a great deal simpler with them than with the Jews. All the drama preceding their departure—the mother lying down in the doorway, the wife refusing to accompany her husband, and in his own case, living for months in a kind of travel-stupor—all these had made the trip difficult and burdensome, like passing from one world into another.

He began to visit the other Jews more often to observe them closely and learn from them how to get along in the world.

The natural beauty of the country they were passing through at first drew little attention from the Jews. Something happened when they reached Lake Baikal. It was early dawn. Ber, the plain-spoken Jew, was standing between Israel and Mendel at the shore of the lake. Through the transparent waters, one could see every grain of sand at the bottom. Ber spoke out. "You know, Jews, even in her dreams my great-grandmother never saw such beauty."

From that moment, they became more observant of their surroundings.

At the River Shilka which glistened in the sun, its waters bright red and green, the Jews went up to the embankments to get a better view of this curious natural phenomenon. The nearby hilltop was grown over with silver birches and emerald pines, making a scene of great beauty.

While passing through the tunnels, the Jews would sit with Israel in his car. As they spoke of events at home and plans for the future, they thought of the Mountains of Darkness. They felt as if they were creeping into a bottle and God only knew how they would get out of it.

But when the train would break out into bright daylight and their eyes would be dazzled by the wonderful panorama of mountains blossoming out into rainbow colors, merged with the blue of the horizon, when they looked at the trans-

parent rivers in which one could see fish swimming, the Jews turned to each other, full of enthusiasm. "Will Birobidjan be like this?"

Israel patiently explained that the scene does not change with every mile, that each region has its own character, and since they were only one and a half days from Birobidjan, they would probably find similar country there.

THE NEXT MORNING, THEY ARRIVED IN BIROBIDJAN AT THE small station Tikhankaia. Every one felt depressed. It was dark, and no matter how you strained your eyes, you could see nothing. Also it was raining cats and dogs and it seemed as though the downpour would never stop. The whole place appeared forsaken.

The plain-spoken Jew went immediately to the station master, demanding that the women and children be permitted to stay at the station overnight.

The young man who loved distant lands discovered a little tent some distance from the station. Together with the others, he carried everyone's baggage there. Then they started out through the darkness in search of driftwood to make a fire.

As it happened, luck was with them. The rain eased up and it looked as if it would stop soon. They gathered around the fire, put down a mat, covered it with a tablecloth—Israel's tablecloth—and spread out some odds and ends of food left over from the trip.

Having dined lightly, they started talking, recalling when and where they had eaten before under the open skies in such a desolate place. It developed that three of them had frequently been soaked to the bone in similar circumstances. One had had to trudge around for half a year in the Masur marshes, another in the Carpathian Mountains, and the third in the Marshes around Pinsk. But somehow they had managed and survived without losing their courage. And now, having lived to come to Birobidjan to build a state, was there any reason to be afraid?

So they talked until dawn, when Israel rose. "Good morning, Jews! What are you looking at? Look there, look to the East, Jews! The sun rises in the East!"

On the bank of the Amur River, the skies were blushing a delicate pink—the beginning of a bright day in the East.

(Translated from the Yiddish by J. M. Budish.)

Birobidjan Farmers Top Quotas

Jewish workers at the collective farms, tractor stations and state farms in the Autonomous Territory of Birobidjan informed Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin in September that they have completed and overfulfilled their quotas. The communication was signed by P. Simonoff, secretary of the regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Jewish Autonomous Territory; L. Benkovich, chairman of the executive committee of the Soviet of Workers-Deputies of the Territory; and P. Kashevsky, supervisor of the Territory's supply ministry.

Letters from Abroad

LABOR LAWS IN ISRAEL?

Tel Aviv

Despite the fact that the Ben Gurion government has held office for more than two years, there are as yet no labor laws on the books. The employers for their part know how to exploit this state of affairs. Workers on many jobs work 10 or 12 hours a day under the worst conditions. Workers are fired arbitrarily, without notice or severance pay. Friction between worker and employer is frequent. Negotiations drag for weeks and in most cases the workers lose out.

While the absence of labor laws is exploited generally by Israeli capitalists, foreign oil companies especially take advantage of this, for their attitude towards the workers has not changed since the era of the British mandate. In labor disputes the oil company directors argue that, since there are no labor laws in Israel, they can deal with the workers as they please and that no one can tell them what to do or "mix in their internal affairs."

Especially bad are the working conditions of the diamond cutters, who are unable to feed their families on their meager wages. This sad state of affairs also exists in other branches of industry, not to mention small shops, where the degree of exploitation is incredible.

The labor situation of the Arab workers forms a separate chapter of this problem. Arab peasants and workers receive starvation wages. In a number of cases where Arabs and Jews do the same work, the Arabs receive a lower wage. This consequently affects adversely the wages of Jewish workers, too.

For the past few months negotiations have been dragging along between the directors of the British Shell Oil Company and the workers' council for the Shell employees. The oil workers of Haifa are demanding that decisive steps be taken to get this foreign company to raise wages and grant a minimum of social security. But the Haifa Labor Council is dominated by the "socialists" of Mapai, who have conducted themselves in a most gentlemanly manner in their dealings with Shell. After all, one has to behave correctly in dealing with a foreign capitalist company.

As negotiations dragged out, the Shell employees lost patience and threatened to

call a warning strike if their just demands were not met. As a last resort Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan himself had to step in as a representative of Labor Minister Golda Meyerson.

The English director of Shell agreed to reopen negotiations. But at the eleventh hour he reneged and broke off negotiations with the Histadrut representatives. How did this happen? It appears that the Shell director had held a conference with the Haifa city officials at which it was unanimously decided that Shell should not acquiesce to the just demands of the workers. They all agreed that otherwise the workers of all other oil companies might be encouraged to demand higher wages and better working conditions. Since Israel has no labor laws, argued the Shell directors, no one has any right to dictate terms.

Under pressure from the workers the Mapai leaders of the Haifa Labor Council were compelled to yield to the demand to declare a warning strike.

The passage of labor laws for the protection of workers against both foreign and domestic exploiters has become a critical issue in Israel.

BEN DAVID

THE "KING'S" RABBI

London

Speaking at a reception of the Anglo-Jewish Association on July 28, Chief Rabbi Brodie of Britain warned Jews against communists and "fellow-travellers." "Their organizations," said the rabbi, "try to induce people to sign documents and petitions of one kind or another in the interest of world peace, when in actual fact it has been suggested by other forces which are

repugnant to Judaism. I want to warn the members of the community against this insidious influence."

The attack on the peace petition and on the communists no doubt pleased his hosts, for the Anglo-Jewish Association is dominated by oil magnates, bankers, lawyers, and the like. Chief Rabbi Brodie is one of its vice-presidents. So is Sir Robert Waley Cohen, whom the Association journal once described as "the uncrowned King of Anglo-Jewry." In the *Directory of Directors*, Sir Robert is listed as a director of 17 companies, mainly in the Shell oil empire; he is also chairman of the Palestine Corporation.

In the international field, the Anglo-Jewish Association is associated with the American Jewish Committee, which once described itself as "the unofficial Jewish division of the United States State Department." Thus, the chief rabbi had an appropriate setting for his speech.

Following the speech, the chief rabbi sent all rabbis a letter warning against the use of synagogue premises for support of the World Peace Appeal. Those behind the appeal, he wrote on August 25, "are interested in purposes which can have only one culmination—the end of freedom and the peace of death."

It will interest our readers to know that the financial upkeep of the chief rabbinate rests mainly on the United Synagogue, whose president is none other than the Sir Robert Waley Cohen whom we have already met.

Many Jews may be perplexed by Rabbi Brodie's attack on the peace petition as inspired by "forces repugnant to Judaism." For it is known that the French rabbinate, headed by the chief rabbi of France, issued an appeal on July 7 for the prohibition of atomic warfare. Leading French Jews, including the chief rabbi of Colmar and two other rabbis, also issued a statement describing the World Peace Appeal as "the expression of the most noble aspirations, in strictest conformity with the laws of God."

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countries, well-known rabbis have supported the peace petition. The chief rabbi of Poland called on religious Jews throughout the world to sign it. Such Jewish religious leaders are not deterred by charges of "flirting with communism" or of being "fellow-travellers." Their consciences are not cowed.

The late Stephen S. Wise, condemned from his New York pulpit in November 1947 those Jewish leaders who feared to take a stand against the cold war. He refused to be quiet, "when every day that passes brings closer the possibility of war between our country and the Soviet Union."

On another occasion Rabbi Wise had said: "My soul revolts when communism and fascism are mixed up as though they are one and the same thing. Fascism purposely turns its back on freedom and democracy, while communism is aimed both in the direction of freedom as well as democracy."

Before lending his voice to the anti-Soviet propaganda barrage, the chief rabbi of Britain should remember that his predecessor had said (November 17, 1943) that the Soviet Union "has rendered the utmost service to humanity—and has saved the men, women and children of Palestine.

If Russia had not made her immortal stand, Jews in this country would by now have been led off in 'death trains.'"

Those responsible for the death trains and gas chambers are marching once more. Does the chief rabbi believe that Jews can appease their enemies by falling in behind the anti-communist banner? This is not a new idea. In Germany, Dr. Max Neumann sought to organize a "Jewish nazi movement" and offered its services to Hitler. Did this save him or the German Jews?

S. ALEXANDER

"JOINT" AND ORPHANS

Paris

After the war ended, homes were set up in France for the orphaned children of Jewish men and women murdered by the nazis. The Joint Distribution Committee gave considerable financial aid toward the maintenance of these homes. But as the cold war became warmer, the "Joint" first reduced its monetary help and re-

cently stopped giving money altogether. This has aroused indignation not only in France but in many other Jewish communities. Now the eight children's homes in France are threatened with shutdown for lack of the funds until recently made available by "Joint."

The Yiddish daily *Haint* (Today) of Buenos Aires on July 22 published a moving article on this situation. "The appeal of the [French] Union of Resistance and Mutual Aid [called *Union*]," said the article, "which reveals the gruesome attempts of the 'Joint' to discriminate against the children of France, has provoked anger and protest by Jewish public opinion all over the world. The Jewish aid organization has by its stoppage of funds threatened with hardship the children of heroic deported men and women who gave their lives in the struggle against our bloodiest enemies.

"It was not easy to return these children to normal living. The task required stubborn, consuming effort under severe economic handicaps on the part of many women and men who had themselves lost their entire families and had undertaken the responsibility of bringing together the surviving Jewish children, these hungry, barefoot orphans, many of them mentally and physically sick.

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"Splendid results in rehabilitation were achieved. It was touching to see the children surrounded with love and tenderness, to watch them learn to play and gradually to forget the nightmare of their brief lives. The *Union* treasures every surviving child, for to do otherwise would be to desecrate the memory of the heroes who died in the frightful struggle. We must bestow the greatest care on these children whether they are in Israel or in France. That is why the news of the cut in aid to the Jewish children of France has caused us such pain.

"Conscious of our role as Jewish women, we give full recognition to the *Union* for its activities on behalf of the orphaned children. We protest most vigorously against those who use reactionary and discriminatory tactics. We urge all Jewish women's aid societies to do everything in their power to urge 'Joint' to reverse its decision to cut off funds from the orphan homes."

ROSA KAPLAN

THE FREE RUMANIAN JEWRY

London

In the six years since the peoples of Rumania established a democratic republic, they have made considerable advances in the political, social and cultural spheres, despite the backwardness, prejudice and misery inherited from the past. The change is as apparent in Jewish life in Rumania as it is in all other aspects of Rumanian life.

Rumania was one of the sources of anti-Semitism in the 18th and early 20th century Europe. Today, all such bigotry and evil are things of the past in Rumania. Jewish citizens enjoy the equality of opportunity which the People's Democratic Republic extends to all inhabitants, regardless of national, racial or religious background. No difficulty is put in the way of anyone wishing to play his fullest part in the new life, provided he accepts the social and political changes which have resulted in the elimination of the landlord and property-owning classes, among whom were a considerable number of Jews.

The elimination of the former social relations based on private ownership and labor exploitation, together with the new emphasis placed on productive labor, has created many new problems for the Jewish community. But the Rumanian state offers every opportunity and inducement to Jews prepared to integrate themselves into the productive sphere of society.

Thus, technical schools and factories help Jewish men and women to get the

necessary training. The Jewish Democratic Committee is the spearhead of this movement and has organized schools and factories for this purpose. As a result, Jews are now engaged in every form of productive work and several have distinguished themselves as heroes of labor.

In 1948, when this productivization policy began, nearly 9,000 Jewish men and women were drawn into production. In 1949, an additional 10,000 received training, and the number is much larger this year, so much larger that the social composition of the Jewish population has completely changed in many localities. For example, Galati, with approximately 13,000 Jews in 1947, drew 2,500 into production, and Jassy, a well-known Jewish center, productivized more than 800 during the first half of 1950.

The Rumanian press frequently cites the special contributions Jewish workers are making toward the country's socialization. Mention has been made of Isidor Leibovici, textile worker; Brecholtz Solomon, who exceeded his quota by 92 per cent; Maurici Nurenberg, who, together with a co-worker, fulfilled his job 14 days ahead of time; and Adam Schneider, who introduced production devices that cut down the time required for a job by 30 per cent.

Just as some vestiges of the past still remain in Rumania, so the problem of productivizing Rumanian Jewry is not yet entirely solved.

But steadily fewer Jews are engaged in unproductive occupations, fewer are engaged in private trade and a decreasing number are unwilling to accept the new opportunities for life offered them by the People's Democratic Republic.

The advance in the cultural sphere tells an inspiring story. Two Jewish state theaters, one in Bucharest, the other in Jassy, play nightly to capacity crowds. When the Bucharest Jewish state theater company visited provincial towns, over 19,000 people saw a play by Bruckstein and over 17,000 a play by Sholom Aleichem. Scheduled to give 35 performances in Moldavia, the company instead gave 43. The run in Ardeal was extended from 28 to 35 performances. This artistic activity is accompanied by hundreds of other functions in which artists, writers, etc., participate. Galati reports 164 Jewish artistic evenings, Braila 92, Brasov 12.

An extensive drive for Jewish education is taking place. Yiddish state schools have been instituted for the first time. Seven-year schools have been founded in Bucharest, Jassy and Timisoara. Forty Yiddish textbooks have been published. Courses in Yiddish are given in at least another 40 schools, attended by some 7,200 pupils. In addition there are five Jewish kinder-

gartens, one in Bucharest, two in Jassy, and two in Timisoara.

Every Saturday night, a Yiddish program is broadcast over the Rumanian radio.

These achievements, added to freedom from anti-Semitic propaganda and to severe punishments for any manifestation of racism, plus the financial support the state has given to all Jewish institutions, including hospitals, old-age homes, orphanages, etc., have helped considerably to raise Jewish life in Rumania to a higher, more positive plane of expression.

The campaign to make Rumanian Jewry a component part of the laboring people of Rumania has met with some resistance by Jewish elements more concerned with the restitution of their former status in the bourgeois, capitalist Rumania than with the welfare of their fellow-Jews. These elements refuse to play a constructive part in building the new social order, and propagandize for emigration to Israel.

Not only do such tactics prevent Rumanian Jews from adopting occupations which would integrate them into the social pattern, but they disturb the country's economic life, because the refusal of certain Jews to give up their unproductive occupations deprives the state of valuable productive forces. This refusal also lends support to oppositionist elements that aim to destroy the People's Democratic Republic.

Although Zionist activities are heavily financed and supported by reactionary capitalist governments, they are steadily declining. The number of people wishing to emigrate to Israel or elsewhere has considerably diminished. All over the country, hundreds of Jews, who had at first succumbed to Zionist pressures and fear-agitation, are now returning their emigration certificates. They choose to remain in Rumania where, as they now realize, tremendous opportunities are open to them.

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Book Reviews

HUMORIST OF THE PEOPLE

By Louis Harap

One Foot in America, by Yuri Suhl. Macmillan, New York. \$2.75.

There may be an inclination in some quarters to regard this book as simply one more story of Jewish immigrant life. Yuri Suhl here tells the story in a tender, sensitive way of the first few years of an immigrant in this country.

The teen-age hero, Sol Kenner, comes from Poland, is soon joined by his widower-father, plots to marry his father off to a kindly pushcart peddler, has amusing adventures as a butcher boy, discovers that he has not left anti-Semitism behind in Poland, learns that society looks down upon the worker, and has several adolescent love affairs. The narrative flows easily and induces one to finish the book at one sitting.

Is this book, then, an arithmetical addition to the already long list of immigrant novels? We do not think so. The distinctive feature of this book is not that it deals with immigrant life, but rather that it introduces into the American literary scene a highly talented humorist, a rare enough phenomena. Suhl's humor is neither boisterous nor biting, but warm and gentle. For the most part, it is a mode of defining character. This can be seen from the incident in which Sol the butcher boy, an aspiring prize fighter, spars with two chickens hanging in the store window of the shop where Sol worked.

"I walked up to the window," writes Suhl, "and instinctively my right arm



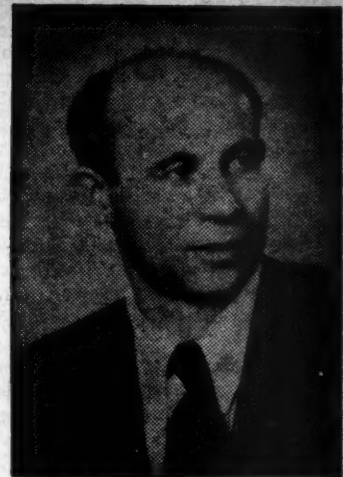
Sol practices his boxing

swung out at one of them, as though it were a punching bag. The chicken swung right back at me, scratching my face with its dead claws. I stepped back a little and waited for it to come into position. Then I let go with another jab. Still the fowl came back for more. I punched the other one and it, too, began swinging as though it had come to life again. Now both of them were flying back and forth, and I stood there, slightly hunched, fists ready, punching now one, now the other, unaware that I had already attracted a half-dozen spectators, who stood watching with very curious expressions on their faces."

More than anything, this type of humor is a shaft of insight into character. Further, it is free from malice but is animated by a sympathetic feeling for ordinary people. The book is pervaded by an undertone of this light-handed depiction of character. In the process one gets an illuminating picture of immigrant Jewish life in the twenties.

Nor is Yuri Suhl's humor a random expression of his approach to people. It is integrated with Suhl's personal identification with ordinary working people. He is never patronizing. His treatment of the characters has no suggestion of superiority but is everywhere immersed in an understanding of them. Never does one feel anything strained or unnatural in his relationship with them, for the fact is that Suhl completely feels himself to be one of them. This is a rare quality in the approach to the life of immigrants or workers today among the second generation, many of whom have, for a complex set of reasons, tended to think and feel at a distance from the working people. Suhl has never lost touch with the masses of his people. His submersion in the people is even more explicitly evident in his Yiddish poetry, of which he has published several volumes.

These qualities, then, of a humor grounded in an understanding of and deeply rooted identification with the masses of people, raises this book above the general level of immigrant novels. But a further question arises, in evaluating a book appearing in these troubled days. Does the book help to heighten the consciousness of the people of the tasks



Yuri Suhl

before us and does it shed light on them? The answer is not simple. The few years of the life of Sol Kenner covered by the book disclose a slow awakening to the realities of life in America and indeed of life in general. The scope of experience is accordingly limited.

There is little in the book to suggest that the period was one of massive labor struggles among the first generation of immigrants. The labor movement enters the book is only a secondary way through the characters of Sol's butcher boy friend Max and of Sol's "kaminist" uncle Philip. The world of the labor movement is barely opened to Sol through these characters, and no advance into this world is recorded in the book. The book would have been stronger, in our opinion, if Suhl had explored this aspect of immigrant life more deeply and extensively. Certainly his Yiddish poetry is not lacking in this element. His poems have been an inspiration to Jewish workers in this country and abroad both as poetry and as texts which have been set to music.

The book does not therefore fulfill the most urgent requirements of progressive writing today, does not plunge the reader into the conflicts of the day and point a way out. But in its basic attitudes towards working people, in its sympathetic treatment of human beings, in its naturally expressed identification with the common people, this book is in the great progressive tradition. It does not partake of the moods of cynicism and defeatism that pervade contemporary American writing. Instead, Suhl's book renews confidence in essential human decency. It is in the tradition of Sholem Aleichem and of Maxim Gorky whose salient trait is love of people and confidence in their future.

As a first novel in English of a Yiddish poet who began to write in English less than ten years ago—with an interlude in the army during World War II—this book lends promise of finer and more

weighty works to come. But already this novel gives a warm and satisfying experience in the reading and is a source of light-hearted enjoyment. This is no small achievement today.

WAGNER'S RACISM

By Lucy Brown

The Racial Thinking of Richard Wagner, by Leon Stein. Philosophical Library, New York. \$4.75.

To millions of people in many parts of the world, the name of Richard Wagner arouses strong feelings. He was a composer of original and compelling music, an ardent philosopher in the theoretical arena of music, a central figure in an historic musical controversy, and a political figure during the turbulent middle nineteenth century. Few creative artists present as complex and controversial a personality. Wagner was notoriously unscrupulous in his personal and professional life. The reactionary legend of the morbid and temperamental genius found its fitting symbol in Wagner and culminated in his investiture by the nazis as the shining knight of nazi Kultur. Many who know the name of Wagner know also that he was anti-Semitic, among other unpleasant characteristics. But, in the words of Dr. Stein, "few outside Germany have any notion of the scope, virulence, and intensity of Wagner's social and racial tenets. Had these tenets remained the peculiar property of Wagner and his time alone, this study would not have the meaningful significance it has for us of the present."

There are hundreds of books in many languages about Wagner. They analyze in detail his music, his theories, his place in history. But none, notes Dr. Stein, has dealt with the destructive influence of his philosophy on the ideological conflicts of the recent period. It is to this task that Dr. Stein addressed himself. He has produced a work admirable in its scholarship and deeply convincing in its thesis.

The main purpose of the book is to prove that "Wagner's racial thinking culminated and reached its apogee in Hitler, Goebbels, Rosenberg and the Third Reich." The book begins with the sources of Wagner's philosophic thinking in the works of 19th century writers and philosophers. These include some thinkers whose contributions were positive in their time,

but whose work was later distorted and sometimes even reversed in meaning. For example, the concepts of patriotism and language advanced by Rousseau in the 18th century are transformed by Wagner and others into a chauvinistic concept of the superiority of the German people over all others from time immemorial.

Dr. Stein traces Wagner's concepts of "Volk," "Kultur," language and music from their earliest formulations (which in some cases appeared in anti-capitalist guise, thus leading many mistakenly to believe that Wagner was a revolutionary), to their full-blown racist, reactionary conclusions. For the most part, these ideas are discussed in relation to general nationalist chauvinist trends in Europe, particularly in Germany, and their influence on society.

It is a shock to read many of Wagner's statements, quoted by Dr. Stein, that might have come straight out of Streicher. For example, Wagner wrote in his *Judaism in Music* as follows: "It is necessary to explain the unconscious feeling of aversion toward the Jewish nature on the part of the Volk. . . . The German feeling for emancipation of the Jews was an outgrowth not of any real sympathy but of an abstract idea. . . . The Jew speaks the language of the land in which he lives as a foreigner. . . . He is outside the community of interests. He therefore can only imitate, and never truly create. . . . Nevertheless they [the Jews] dominate modern music. Why is this so? The answer lies in the field of economic determinism. Higher education has become a kind of purchasable luxury and the wealthy Jew has the money to buy it." Wagner concludes: "But, think ye, that one thing only can redeem you from the burden of your curse: the redemption of Ahasuerus—annihilation."

Finally, Dr. Stein evaluates Wagner's theories from the viewpoint of the scientific concepts of "race." He exposes the destructive effects of such thinking. In particular, he shows the contradictions, fallacies and rationalizations which characterized the development of Wagner's racism in relation to his long term attacks on Mendelssohn. The volume ends by posing the question whether Wagner's ideal-

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ogy can be dissociated from his music. Dr. Stein's answer is a qualified no. In this difficult area Dr. Stein must at least be given credit for facing up to the problem and searching for criteria, if not for a complete answer.

In summary Dr. Stein says: "In his writings, Wagner's demagogic vilification, his malevolence, his incredible malice and disregard for fact and truth, his distorted anti-Christian thinking and his virulent anti-Semitism convict him of the grossest social immorality. There can be no difference of opinion as to his guilt on these counts—his misleading of the German people, the part he played in contributing to the degradations of Germans as well as non-Germans. . . . Unquestionably the revelation of the content of Wagner's writings may cause a revulsion of feeling and a change of attitude towards his music. The fact that one's liking for Wagner's music may suffer is a small penance compared to the evil wrought by his ideas in his time and in the world of today."

A word on a few weaknesses of the book. Dr. Stein relegates political and economic sources for Wagner's theories to a secondary place or as inoperative altogether. This, in our opinion, leaves the origin of these ideas in the air. While Dr. Stein believes that Wagner's racist ideas were not self-generated, he gives great weight to the view that "a predisposition, an inherent inclination will usually incline a person in a particular direction." (Italics mine.—L.B.) But he doesn't say where these predispositions reside or where they come from. Nor does Dr. Stein suggest that Wagner's musical and general theories had much to do with the abysmal degeneration of German music through Richard Strauss and Arnold Schoenberg, culminating in the cult of incomprehensibility.

Despite these limitations the book as a whole is a welcome contribution to the anti-fascist struggle. Dr. Stein's scholarship does not operate in a vacuum. He unequivocally relates it to present needs, thereby arming the people in the fight for the dignity and equality of peoples.

Movie Review:

PICTURE OF A GHETTO

By Warren Miller

Since the nationalization of the Czech film industry, it has become one of the most productive film centers in Europe; yet, except for several of its famous puppet films, we have been given little opportunity to see any of its work. *Distant Journey*¹ is the first feature-length Czech film to be seen here since the war.

It is the story of a middle-class Jewish family, living in Prague, and what happens to it when the nazis arrive. In a sense, there is no story at all, but rather a series of episodes that illuminate various aspects of their fear, hopes, hopelessness, their transportation to the concentration

¹ *Distant Journey*. Produced by Czechoslovak State Film Studios. Directed by A. Radok. Screenplay by M. Drvota. Cameraman: J. Strecha. With Blanka Waleska, Otomar Krejca, Viktor Ocasek, Eduard Kohout.

Masses & Mainstream

"AMERICA'S LEADING CULTURAL MONTHLY"

NOVEMBER CONTENTS

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NEW CENTURY PUBLISHERS
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camp, and what happens to them there. Between these episodes are newsreel shots of the nazis—the leaders, the armies, the speeches.

Radok, the director, has obviously learned a great deal from Eisenstein; yet, the film as a whole is reminiscent of the kind of talent displayed by Orson Welles in *Citizen Kane*. It is evidently the work of a man of the theater who has, at the same time, a fine sensitivity to the subtleties of expression that the camera and soundtrack have made possible; and he exploits these possibilities in an imaginative and brilliant manner.

Unfortunately, his preoccupation with technique dominates his interest in content. This formalism has serious consequences. It is first apparent in the scene in the second-hand furniture store. The point of this sequence is that Jewish shopkeepers have been made to sell the cloth with the Star of David and that all Jews must wear it sewed to their clothing. But the director is so entranced by the cinematic possibilities of a dozen crystal chandeliers, long aisles of stacked chairs, the musical instruments, and all the interesting visual and aural details, that the information he wants to convey is almost lost. And, certainly, in the confusion, any sense of the dramatic is sacrificed to the brilliant virtuoso display.

But, more important, the concentration

camp episodes are done in the same manner. The results are disastrous. For what we get is the feeling that all struggle ended when the gates closed. From the Polish film, *The Last Stop*, and from every written account of life in the concentration camps, we know this to be untrue. The underground continued into the camps; the struggle against fascism never ceased. We see none of this in *Distant Journey*: it is the great weakness of the film. Radok has been seduced by the very richness of his medium, the motion picture; in a way, he has been victimized by his own great talents.

His picture of concentration camp life is that of a madhouse; it is an affected use of the bizarre and surrealist. Its effect on the audience is one only of horror and depression. It offers nothing like the inspiration of such unforgettable scenes as the young women's dance in *Last Stop*, when they hear the news of Stalingrad and begin to dance, the old woman clapping time. Surely, it is true that there were those who went mad, those who betrayed in order to live. But there were those who resisted, and they are not shown to us. We are left with the impression that all those who survived were mad or depraved.

Radok uses a cinematic device that has been noted by all the reviewers; it is a form of what is called split-screen. That

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) of JEWISH LIFE, published monthly at GPO, 33rd Street, New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1950:

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:

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Editor, none.

Managing Editor, Louis Harap, 35 East 12th St., New York 3, N. Y.

Business Manager, I. Wofsy, 35 East 12th St., New York 3, N. Y.

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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semiweekly and triweekly newspapers only.)

I. WOFSY,
Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of September, 1950.

CARL BRODSKY,

Notary Public, State of New York, No. 35-0428950. Qualified in New York County.

[Seal] (My commission expires March 30, 1951.)

is, two incidents appear at the same time on the screen. Radok varies the usual way of doing this by making one of the scenes a small square, like a postage stamp on an envelope. Thus, while we see, for example, the candelabra of the Jewish family in its tiny square in one corner of the screen, the rest of the screen is filled with marching nazi soldiers. Basically, there is nothing new in this method; it is, in fact, one of the oldest devices of the film medium. It is interesting to note how formalism, almost invariably, in its search for the technically new, ends up in a kind of arch primitivism. Radok refuses to be simple, as if it were somehow shameful.

There are, however, sequences that are nearly perfect. Perhaps the best of these is the wedding of the daughter to the non-Jewish doctor. After the ceremony, the family and the guests know that they must all leave for the concentration camp. When the bridegroom breaks the cup, it has a more traditional symbolic value; now it becomes a symbol of the shattering of their lives and the breakup of the family. This is followed by the suicide of one of the guests. Not a word is spoken; everything is told by the camera's movement, by sound effects, by the very quality of the light itself.

But formalism mars too much of the film. One serious instance is the scene of the freeing of the concentration camp by the Red Army. We are permitted to see, in the distance, two Red Army soldiers in a motorcycle. The young woman who sees them runs through the deserted squares of the camp, under arches, down empty streets; the joy of freedom is told to us simply by movement. Then, where there had been only depravity and madness, there is now merely a surrealist hysteria; the girl pounds on a battered old piano that, for some reason, hangs suspended from a building. To the sound of this weird music, the prisoners celebrate their liberation. It has no meaning.

At the beginning of the film, a nazi party leader, Otto Dietrich, makes a speech. He says that he wants the truth about Germany and nazism to be made known: it will reveal to the world how happy are people under nazism, the good life they are leading. The film, in effect, is an ironical response to this plea. There is a further irony: a few days before *Distant Journey* opened in New York City, 19 nazi war criminals were released from jail by United States Army authorities in Germany. The army announced that their sentences were commuted for "good behavior." One of the men released was Otto Dietrich.

Letters from Readers

Good Will in Action

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

The article in the September issue entitled "Good Will For Reaction: III" by Joseph Brainin is an excellent one. It proves that any organization supported by reaction, no matter what the intentions of that particular organization may be, will do nothing to further democracy in the United States.

I should like to add some incidents which happened in Washington, D. C., to further prove this point. During February 1949, the Young Progressives of Washington were actively engaged in fighting discrimination against Negroes in the large movie houses. During this period these same theaters celebrated Brotherhood Week. Most of these theaters are owned by people who are members of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. They refused to admit Negroes then and still do.

Just recently I lost my job for being on a picket line in front of the White House for FEPC, by my boss who is a member of the NCCJ. He tried to point out to me that he did not discriminate against Negroes in the salaries he paid them. He only employed Negro drivers and stock clerks, and paid them the same

salaries as the white ones. He never hired a Negro office worker or salesman.

The right wing Jewish organizations also succeeded in letting Gerald L. K. Smith speak in Washington by bringing up the red scare when the left wing organizations asked these organizations to participate in a joint demonstration against this well known fascist.

I wish these organizations would wake up before it is too late. They're not going to escape fascism by out-red-baiting the red-baiters.

A. C.

Washington, D. C.

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FROM THE FOUR CORNERS

(Continued from page 2)

statement, but a few days later Fellers charged that he had been "viciously misquoted" and threatened to file suit for damages.

RADIO STATION WOL in Washington, D. C., was told by listeners to cut off the air the current Israeli song hit *Tzema, Tzema*, because it was a "subversive communist" melody. The station ignored the demand.

FOUL ANTI-SEMITIC inscriptions continued to appear regularly on the walls of Independence Hall in Philadelphia in September.

FIVE JEWISH REFUGEE youths aged 17 to 19, were beaten up by a gang of about 35 Christian Front hoodlums in the Brownsville area in Brooklyn in September. The boys were peacefully talking in Yiddish on the street when the hoodlums charged into them with the epithet, "Dirty Jews" and similar names. One had to receive hospital care. The local American Labor Party is demanding police action in the case.

THE TORONTO LABOR COUNCIL unanimously passed a resolution in early September asking the Canadian government to prevent the admission to Canada as immigrants of 20,000 members of the Ukrainian Halchynia division, which fought in the Nazi army during World War II.*

ENTRY OF 45,000 Nazi refugees from eastern Europe into the United States under the DP law was arranged in September by the International Refugee Organization at the request of the United States Displaced Persons Commission. Selection of the "Volksdeutsche" to be admitted will be made by the German and Austrian governments. The announcement was made public four days after the Polish anti-Semitic General Wladyslaw Anders had conferred in Washington at a secret luncheon with three members of Truman's cabinet and several Congressional leaders.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES' old law firm and the Swedish front for the Nazi Robert Bosch Company of Stuttgart, Germany, received \$2,600,000 as part of an out-of-court settlement with the United States that ended litigation begun by the Alien Property Custodian. The American subsidiary of the Nazi chemical firm had been sold in a phony deal in 1940 and had refused to give patents to the navy. Dulles was personally involved in the deal.

EUROPE

KOREAN WAR HYSTERIA has caused American immigration authorities in Germany, according to September reports from Munich, practically to discontinue issuing visas to Jewish DP's eligible for them because of suspicion that all Jewish DP's are communists. The Counter Intelligence Service is quizzing applicants as to why they don't go to Israel instead of the United States, what they would do in case of war between the United States and Israel, and if they consider Stalin or Truman the greater statesman. CIS has demoralized the camps by wholesale placing of Jewish spies among the DP's.

DR. HANS GLOBKE, who was recently appointed chief of German federal personnel in the

Adenauer government, was a high official of Hitler's ministry of justice and was co-author of the official commentary of the infamous Nazi Nuremberg racial laws. Protests both to Chancellor Karl Adenauer and to High Commissioner John J. McCloy have met with no response.

RENAZIFICATION NEWS . . . *Diplomatic Bulletin*; important German monthly published at Bonn, is demanding revision of the Nuremberg trial verdicts. . . . On the staff of the West German daily *Die Welt* are Hans Haberfeld as Paris correspondent, formerly editor of the Nazi Transocean Agency, and Winifried Martini as a leading columnist, formerly a specialist on the Jewish question for the *Voelkischer Beobachter*. . . . Reports from Bonn state that Lt. Gen. Count Gerhard Schwerin, a Nazi tank commander in Africa and Russia, has been appointed military advisor to the West German regime at Bonn. His job is said to be examination of remilitarization plans submitted by former Nazi generals, work with personnel files of available German officers and liaison with Anglo-American headquarters. . . . Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's financial wizard, was acquitted for the fifth time of charges of being a Nazi in Luenenburger on September 13. After his acquittal the former head of the Reichsbank said, "From judges who have common sense you could not expect any other verdict." . . . The French government in September instructed the French High Commissioner for Germany to reprieve all Nazi war criminals presently under sentence of death in the French zone. Twelve prisoners are believed to be affected. . . . Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and books by other Nazi leaders are again available in Austria's public libraries.

OPEN AIR ANTI-SEMITIC meetings in the London area are increasing in number and size, it was reported at a meeting of the North London branch of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women.*

TWO YIDDISH WRITERS in Poland, Binem Heller and Ber Mark, have been elected to be members of the Polish delegation to the Second World Peace Congress in England in November. Ber Mark was elected a member of the Polish Committee of the Defenders of Peace.

DEATH SENTENCE was passed in September by the Polish Supreme Court upon Stefan Wierzbica, wartime commandant of the Oswiecim concentration camp.*

A NUMBER OF VALUABLE historical books, articles and documents relating to Jewish life were presented to the Municipal Archive of Sofia recently by the Jewish Scientific Institute of Sofia and the Bulgarian Central Consistory of Jews. The gifts were made "so that the existing friendship between the Bulgarian people and the Jewish minority may be preserved throughout the centuries."

THE 150-YEAR OLD Jewish community of Pest, in Hungary, decided in early September to disband and join forces with the newly founded Budapest Israelite Community, which includes all former autonomous Jewish communities.

ISRAEL

MASS DEMONSTRATIONS were held in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Nazareth to protest an

Israeli army decree forbidding the holding of the Arab Workers Congress, scheduled to have met in Nazareth on September 23-24. Toufik Toubi, Arab communist member of the Israeli parliament, declared at a press interview that the decree was inimical to the interests of Jewish as well as Arab workers.

OVER 33,500 MEN AND WOMEN had signed the Stockholm peace pledge in Jerusalem up to September. This is about half the population of the city. The campaign was carried on despite attempts of Mapai, Herut and the police to prevent the gathering of signatures. In working class areas as many as 90 per cent of the people signed.

THE HISTADRUT at a meeting of its national council in early September decided to withdraw from the World Federation of Trade Unions by a vote of 109 to 74. I. Riffin, Mapam delegate, argued against withdrawal by pointing out that in the split between capitalism and the world of workers who had broken the bonds of imperialism and exploitation, the Histadrut could not remain neutral. Both the communist and Mapam delegates offered resolutions that the question be submitted for referendum to the membership, but the resolutions were defeated. . . . A resolution supporting the government's policy on rationing and wages was approved by a vote of 111 to 71. . . . A resolution introduced by Mapam delegates calling for Histadrut approval of the Stockholm peace appeal and abolition of atomic weapons was defeated. Mapam was split on the issue. . . . In the course of the debate communist delegate Esther Vilenska charged that the Mapai party, which dominates the government, has "surrendered to the bourgeois control system and allows unlimited profits for exploiters." . . . The Histadrut now has 311,000 members, as compared with 280,000 in June 1949, and thus includes about 40 per cent of Israel's adult population.*

ZVI ALNER, 16-year-old boy, died in September as a result of injuries he received following an attack on a Communist Party meeting in Rishon LeZion on July 28. The boy was waylaid after the meeting and severely beaten. Police have thus far failed to investigate.

AS A RESULT of agreements reached with British and American companies, one of three refineries of the Consolidated Refineries, Ltd., in the Haifa Bay area resumed operation on August 8. *Kol Haam*, communist daily, described the reopening as a pyrrhic victory because the terms of the new concession are the same as those operative under the British mandate. If the government had cancelled the concession and nationalized the plant, the paper pointed out, 8,000,000 Israeli pounds would have been saved annually, instead of only 1,300,000 Israeli pounds.

MERGER OF BANKING INTERESTS of the British and Americans is now being completed. The American-financed Palestine Economic Corporation and the British-financed Palestine Corporation, Ltd., will be merged in a new firm called Palestine Corporation, Ltd. Chairman of the new firm will be Sir Robert Waley-Cohen and the American Robert Szold will be vice chairman.*

THE REHOVOTH COLONY celebrated its 60th anniversary in September. To commemorate the event a book under the editorship of Moshe Smilansky will be published giving a graphic story of the colony.

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

