

NOVEMBER 1954 • 25¢

## Special Tercentenary Issue

**300 YEARS—LEGACY AND PROSPECT**

*an editorial article*

**CLARA LEMLICH SHAVELSON**

*by Paula Scheier*

**BONDS OF BROTHERHOOD**

*by Paul Robeson*

**MASS JEWISH IMMIGRATION, 1881-1914**

*by Morris U. Schappes*

**LANDMARKS OF JEWISH PROGRESSIVISM**

*2-page drawing by Philip Reisman*

**JEWS AND THE CRY FOR JUSTICE**

*by Howard Fast*

**THE EAST SIDE I KNEW**

*by Michael Gold*

**HOW YIDDISH STAGE IN USA BEGAN**

*by Nathaniel Buchwald*

**WHO WERE THEY?**

*newly-discovered poem by Edelshtat*

**JEWISH MUSIC IN THE USA**

*by J. Nathan*

## From the Four Corners

Edited by Louis Harap

AT HOME

**Resistance notes** . . . Following the announcement that the Senate would take up the McCarthy censure report of the Watkins Committee on November 8, Senator Herbert H. Lehman commented on September 29 that: "It is now clear that Sen. McCarthy should not only be censured but removed immediately from his chairmanship of Senate committees." And Rep. Emanuel Celler called the postponement until after the election "ill advised" because the action would be taken by a "lame duck" Senate. . . . Although congratulating the Navy Department for the reinstatement of Abraham Chasanow, Navy employee suspended on false "loyalty" charges, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League requested that the Navy Department investigate the charge that anti-Semitism was at the bottom of the false accusations against Chasanow. . . . Refusal of the Franco government to allow non-Spanish Jews to hold Rosh Hashona services at a Madrid hotel brought forth a sharp condemnation from Rabbi Julius Mark, spiritual leader of New York's Temple Emanu-El, early in October.

**A cease-fire** in the Formosa area to be negotiated by the United Nations was called for the week-end of September 18 by the American Association for the United Nations. Among the 46 organizations affiliated with this group are the AJ Congress, Jewish War Veterans, B'nai B'rith, Hadassah, National Council of Jewish Women, AJ Committee. Observers pointed out, however, that the participating organizations generally follow Washington's aggressive policies against China.

(Continued on page 32)

### Panoramic Drawing

**T**HE panorama on pages 16-17 was drawn by Philip Reisman, noted American artist and frequent contributor of art work to this magazine. His work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Art Museum, the Print Department of the New York Public Library, the Trenton Museum, the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) and other collections.

# Jewish Life

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## Report to Our Readers

**F**OR some time we have been warning our readers of our critical financial condition and have been urging that they rally with funds to save the magazine. Last month we sent out a letter to all subscribers in which we set forth concretely, with facts and figures, the state of our finances.

We are happy to report that thus far about ten per cent of our readers responded generously. And those readers averaged about a five-dollar contribution each. This is good. We knew that you would come through. As a result, this Special Tercentenary Issue was assured.

But, dear readers, we have to be frank with you. We are not out of the woods—not by about \$4,000. Where are the other 90 per cent of our subscribers and the nearly 100 per cent of our non-subscribing readers? All of you, we are sure, are aware of the necessity and value of the magazine. We strongly urge all of you to send in your contribution straightaway. We need this money very badly to assure the future of the magazine.

Don't procrastinate! Let us hear from you promptly!

THE EDITORS

JEWISH LIFE

# IN THE 301st YEAR...

## THE BOMB CAN BE BANNED

**S**HALL the Jewish people or the bulk of the American people be around when the 310th anniversary of Jewish settlement in the United States turns up? They will, if the H-bomb is banned. The plan offered on September 25 by the Soviet Union to the UN for the banning of the bomb and for disarmament offers a basis for constructive discussion and solution. While the French and British UN delegates greeted the plan warmly, the United States delegate first admitted it as a basis of discussion and then poured as much cold water on it as he dared. The American people can make sure that negotiations for the banning go to a successful conclusion this time by pressing Washington to reciprocate the conciliatory approach evidenced by the Soviet Union. And the Jewish people must take on their share of this burden by discussing and acting on the question of the bomb ban. Last month our leading editorial urged that the initiative begun on this matter by *American Judaism*, organ of Reform Judaism, be taken up through the length and breadth of Jewish organized life. We have reprinted our editorial article in a four-page folder and urge our readers to order it in bulk (2c each) and circulate it in their communities.

## AGAIN—DANGER OF NAZI REARMAMENT

**T**HE nine-power agreement signed on October 3, sanctioning the rearmament of West Germany was correctly characterized by James P. Warburg on October 5: it "leads to war rather than peace." The reluctant vote of confidence on the issue given to Premier Pierre Mendès-France by the French Parliament on October 12 makes the danger very very real. Once before "controls" on Germany against aggressive rearmament failed and World War II was the result. There is every reason to believe that "controls" in the recent nine-power agreement are a slender reed on which to place hopes of peace from a renazified West Germany. Everywhere the workers fear nazi rearmament. In West Germany itself delegates of the 6,000,000-member trade union movement on October 9 nearly unanimously opposed rearmament "until all possibilities of negotiations [with the Soviet Union] on the reunification of Germany have been exhausted" (*New York Times*, October 10). The slim margin of approval of German rearmament at the British Labor Party conference on September 25, together with the fact that a national poll revealed that two-thirds of the British people fear the danger of nazi resurgence, show where the British workers stand on the issue. And 337,000 Israelis have already signed a new petition opposing German rearmament.

The brutal fact is that a rearmed renazified West Germany would drastically intensify the threat of World War III, as the experience of the last 40 years should have taught

us. And this time our own country would be on the front line of an atomic and guided missile war. The peril from a renazified West Germany with arms looms particularly large for the Jewish people of the world.

It is not too late to stop nazi rearmament. The American people—and the Jews of our own country—can be aroused to oppose this disastrous course of Washington and to stop this career into world destruction.

## ISRAEL AND PEACE

**N**O DOUBT the peace of Israel is threatened. But from whence does this danger stem? Neither the people of Israel nor the people of our own country can afford to misplace the source and thus confuse the means of meeting the danger. For Israel the war danger has a double aspect: a "second round" of war with the Arabs and world war. These are not separate. They are related because they originate from the same source, namely the war provoking policy of the Dulles State Department in all parts of the world. The policy of raising tensions in the Middle East by arming the Arab leaders is one aspect of an overall policy that is also responsible for the threat of war from a rearmed renazified West Germany and military support of the war-mongering Chiang Kai-shek regime on Formosa.

The solution does not lie, as Zionist leaders here are saying, in arms for Israel as well from Washington. On the contrary, this would make peace ever more precarious for Israel and the Arab countries, since it would aggravate the arms race and make the Middle East even more inflammable. According to the *Yiddisher Kemfer* (September 10), Premier Sharett shares the view that if Washington gives arms to Arab leaders, it should also supply Israel with arms. But this would deepen international tensions and thus facilitate world war. The way of peace for Israel is to throw off the shackles of dictation from Washington, on the one hand, and a shift of policy towards the democratic interests of both the Israeli and Arab peoples inside and outside of Israel, on the other. Some of Israel's recent concessions to the Arabs, like the unfreezing of Arab assets, are a step in this direction. But so long as Israel is hogtied to Washington and London policy, and does not negotiate directly with the Arab states *independently of these capitals*, the war danger will not be lessened.

American Jews and all Americans of good will who want peace for Israel and the world, have an important part to play. They can enforce on our State Department the reversal of the Dulles foreign policy that is threatening war not only in the Middle East but in many parts of the world. We need to press upon Dulles that arms should be sent neither to the Arab leaders nor to Israel; rather, that the State Department should stop churning up the troubled waters by the effort to create an anti-Soviet military alliance in the Middle East that is actually provocative of war. This Dulles policy is the real



source of the danger to Israel—and to ourselves as well, for peace is indivisible. We should say to Dulles, "Hands off the Middle East!"

## A SHAMEFUL SPECTACLE

**A** PROFOUND disservice to the Jewish and American masses was committed by the string of Jewish leaders who appeared before the Kersten Committee in New York on September 22-23, to testify on "anti-Semitism" in the socialist countries. Irving M. Engel, president of the American Jewish Committee; Henry Edward Schultz, national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League; Jacob T. Zuckerman, vice chairman of the Jewish Labor Committee; Rabbi Israel Goldstein, president of the American Jewish Congress, and others appeared before the committee with as fantastic a farrago of wild charges against the socialist countries as ever taxed the credulousness of a long-suffering America.

We have in this magazine often refuted the sort of fantasies so recklessly thrown off in these hearings. What is more serious is that Jewish leaders should have lent themselves to the sinister purposes of the Kersten Committee. Despite their anti-McCarthyite statements on other occasions, their action in this instance is collaboration with fascist, anti-Semitic forces in this country and the world. "The Kersten Committee," wrote Carey McWilliams in *The Nation* (September 4) "is in effect a McCarthy committee." Its purpose is to incite war against the Soviet Union. One of its main aims is to effect the overturn of the Eastern European governments and restore the reactionary, anti-Semitic, pogrom regimes that collaborated with Hitler. All this adds up to "preventive war." How else can one interpret the statement in the committee's second interim report that "Co-existence is a poisonous formula distilled by communism—it can only lead to our destruction." And it is before such a committee that the Jewish leadership unfolded its Judenrat spectacle. Members of their organizations should make known their resentment at this direct cooperation with the "Know-Nothing" elements that threaten American freedom and the peace.

## SEGREGATION AND ANTI-SEMITISM

**I**N VARIOUS parts of the country a great advance was achieved early in September, when the Supreme Court decision against school segregation was carried out. But it was to be expected that Klan forces would attempt to flout the decision. Among others, this occurred in Milford, Delaware, which has turned out to be a center of infection against the decision. There a certain Bryant W. Bowles, leader of the "National Association for Advancement of White People," has incited the violation of the desegregation decision. It soon became apparent that a conspiracy was afoot to nullify the decision. The conference of Southern governors held a few months ago, we recall, openly declared defiance of the decision. The National Association

for Advancement of Colored People has therefore called upon Attorney General Herbert Brownell to investigate this conspiracy against the Constitution. On October 5, the American Jewish Congress also urged Brownell to probe the matter and the Jewish War Veterans followed suit on October 8. Although the Delaware state authorities have arrested Bowles, the federal authorities have kept out of the affair. The Eisenhower administration hasn't lifted a finger to break racist violation of the law.

The common cause of the Negro and Jewish peoples on this issue, as on all questions of racism, indicated by the urgings for an investigation by the Jewish organizations mentioned, has once again turned out to be well-founded. Once again it has been demonstrated that, if you scratch a white supremacist, you find an anti-Semite. Bryant Bowles has given unmistakable evidence of anti-Semitism. In one of his racist tirades, he repeatedly referred to Delaware Attorney General H. Albert Young as "Youngevich." Young was born "Yanowitz" and has been a leader in local Jewish affairs.

The total implementation of the Supreme Court decision is of the most vital importance to the whole American people. They must see to it that the federal government prevents any infringements and punishes severely any that may be committed.

## FASCISM IN MIAMI

**A** NAZI-LIKE reign of terror is sweeping Miami. It is levelled almost exclusively against Jews. The local press, ambitious State Attorney General George Brautigam and other officials, with an assist from the Jenner Committee and the vile stool pigeon Paul Crouch, have combined to deprive over 30 Jewish citizens thus far of their elementary rights. The Velde Committee is also getting into the act. Men and women are dragged before a grand jury and, if they invoke the protection of the Fifth Amendment, are cited for "contempt." Storm trooper brutality and vindictiveness pervade the proceedings. One incident is typical—a subpoena to appear before the grand jury was served on a mother in the hospital four days after childbirth. The Jewish Cultural Center is one of the main targets of the witch-hunt. While an editorial in *The Nation* (August 24) referred to the "unmistakable overtones of anti-Semitism" in the affair, the Jewish defense organizations have remained silent.

It is heartening to report that not only are the victims putting up a courageous resistance to the would-be nazis in Miami, but also that a number of liberal and conservative elements in the community (not yet the local Jewish leadership, we regret to say) are fighting back. The spirit of the resistance can be gathered from the impassioned statement of Mrs. Augusta Birnberg, one of the victims, on page 27 of this issue. In the next issue we shall give our readers a detailed and documented account of this try-out of an American nazism. The whole country should protest to the Florida governor and the Miami mayor.



# 300 YEARS—LEGACY AND PROSPECT

*We introduce this issue with a critique of the official celebration and our view of the true meaning of our history*

## *An Editorial Article*

**D**URING this period of celebration of 300 years of Jewish settlement in the United States, we look back at our forbears with especial warmth. Most particularly we recall those who stubbornly fought for first class citizenship for Jews and those who allied themselves with non-Jewish Americans in the advanced movements of their time, the Jeffersonians, the Abolitionists, the labor pioneers. For these men and women were among the bearers of the best that our country has achieved for itself and for the world. But our celebration is not passive: it deepens our comprehension of this Jewish past so that we can act in unbroken continuity with the best in that past and thus the better meet the issues of our own day. To do this means to do our share in the defeat of McCarthyism, the American form of Hitlerism, and to help secure the common future by realization of peaceful co-existence with the socialist world.

In some 250 communities throughout the country the tercentenary is being celebrated until May 1955. The Yiddish and English-Jewish press is publishing numerous articles on these 300 years of Jewish history in our country. A number of historical and fictional works have already been published and others are planned. There will be many meetings, pageants, radio and TV shows on the tercentenary theme. JEWISH LIFE is making its contribution to the occasion primarily with the series of articles on American Jewish history by one of its editors, Morris U. Schappes, outstanding American Jewish historian.

We are publishing additional material to throw light on our history. The present issue is wholly devoted to the tercentenary. At the same time, this issue also marks the eighth anniversary of JEWISH LIFE. We have lived through a short but significant span in these three centuries of history, in which we have tried to establish identity with the progressive Jewish tradition by carrying it into the problems of our own day. It is in this spirit that we offer this special issue.

Our approach, however, differs in essential respects from that of the official celebration under the sponsorship of the official American Jewish Tercentenary Committee, the group totally dominated by wealthy Jews of the American Jewish Committee. This official group attempts so far as possible to bury the progressive tradition by diluting it with reactionary features and personalities of our history. But we view the 300 years as a continual struggle between those who would hold democracy back and those who would press it forward. We do not, therefore, hesitate to designate

those who serve reaction, whether Jew or non-Jew, as enemies of the people, just as we recognize those who represent human and democratic advance as the rich assets of our 300 years. But those who would indiscriminately hail as "contributions" Jewish actions and personalities regardless of their significance for democracy, perform a disservice to truth and clarity. We reject and dissociate ourselves from the reactionary features and personalities of our history. We believe that our perspective will strengthen our present-day fight for freedom and survival, to dispel the shadow of McCarthyite fascism and to win a peaceful future.

## *Taboos in the Official Celebration*

What we mean can be shown concretely by scrutinizing a "dramatic presentation," called *Faith and Freedom*, that is being made available by the official committee for use in local communities. While the script itself is of no importance whatever, it is most significant as a faithful reflection of the policies of the official committee. In the whole script—which purports to present the essence of American Jewish history—there is no mention whatsoever of anti-Semitism and discrimination, except for the hostility encountered by the first group of 23 in New Amsterdam. This is no accident. It is a deliberate omission in pursuance of the policy explicitly declared by the official committee that these aspects of American Jewish life are to be taboo in the celebration. One would therefore infer from the script that after the first group of 23 came, Jews have not had to fight against anti-Semitism and discrimination. This ostrich-like suppression is a poor service to American freedom, let alone the Jewish people. And it certainly isn't history. Nor does it help our own fight for freedom today.

The script also makes some strange allusions to the fight for "freedom." It says truly that after the Revolutionary War "the Jews of the United States joined in building and sustaining the republic." But the script has voices proclaim, as examples, "The Mexican War!"; "In the Union and Confederate Armies!" But freedom was *not* furthered by the Mexican War of 1846-48, which was an expansionist and predatory war against our weaker southern neighbor. And did the Confederate Army also "sustain and build the republic"? No, we deplore the sacrifice of Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers in such armies, which did not further free-

dom. Nor do we share the admiration current in official Jewish circles for Judah P. Benjamin, slave-owner, leader of the pro-slavery bloc in the Senate and holder of several leading positions in Jefferson Davis' Confederate cabinet.

It is no accident that some of the main elements of the progressive Jewish tradition—participation of our people in the Jeffersonian and Abolitionist movements and in labor struggles—do not come within the purview of the official script. How important for our own day, for instance, is the fact that Jews like Benjamin Nones and Mordecai Myers were Jeffersonian fighters against the Alien and Sedition laws, the witch-hunting legislation of their day. But such men are not mentioned in the script. Underlying such neglect by the official committee is inadequate grasp of the fact that the fight for civil liberties for all is central to the fight for the Jewish people, just as the fight against the Taft-Hartley, Smith, McCarran, McCarran-Walter and Communist Control acts today are vital to both American freedom and the Jewish people.

It cannot be said that the official script wholly ignores labor. But its mode of treatment of this aspect of American Jewish history must be read to be believed. There is no mention of the bitter, heroic strikes and labor struggles of Jewish workers. What is presented in one page is a picture of labor-management relations that falsifies the whole labor struggle for a decent livelihood. The scene is a negotiating table in the twenties with a Jewish worker, a Jewish boss and a lawyer. The boss and worker are represented as having no basic differences. Boss and worker are both immigrant Jews and *landsmen* and both alike are represented as learning their ethics from the Talmud; the boss certainly does not intend to fire his workers for union activities and regards the issue as "a question of justice." The narrator concludes: "They came to the kind of agreement between worker and manufacturer which could have come about only between men who shared the same democratic ideals . . . ideals as old as the Jewish tradition of social justice." Any worker would immediately recognize this as a hypocritical travesty on labor relations. The story of Clara Lemlich Shavelson in this issue, for example, exposes this hypocrisy. Or any day's news about runaway garment shops exposes the mendacity of the script. For the official committee the contribution of Jewish workers is not their militant labor struggles under desperate conditions and against ruthless, heartless employers, both Jewish and non-Jewish. The real contribution of Jewish workers to American life is truly shown in Morris U. Schappes' articles on Jewish labor in this magazine beginning with July—a story that the official committee would like the Jewish people to forget.

### ***Yiddish and the Jewish worker***

Linked with this attempt to suppress the real story of the Jewish worker is the effort to ignore the culture of the Yiddish speaking masses of the Eastern European immigration. Except where local pressure requires it, the Yiddish

element is virtually taboo. Even the conservative Yiddish speaking sector of Jewish life is at last awakening to this anti-democratic fact. The Yiddish journalist Jacob Glatstein wrote in the *Yiddish Day* on September 12, that "the whole Yiddish language stands abashed at a distance" from the official celebration. In the same paper on September 18, the Yiddish critic S. Niger wrote that in the celebration Yiddish speaking Jews "stand *kaoni hapesach*," that is, like the poor at the door. In the official script under scrutiny Yiddish is mentioned only once, in a brief allusion to "Our Yiddish and Hebrew literature." This repressive attitude toward Yiddish is nothing new, as we can gather from the attempt of wealthy German Jews to stop the first Yiddish theater presentation in New York (see Mr. Buchwald's article, page 23).

In his discussion of the virtual exclusion of Yiddish from the official celebration, Paul Novick, editor of the *Yiddish Morning Freiheit*, wrote on September 24, "The truth is that the 'official' committee wants to have nothing to do with Yiddish culture. But it is a mutilation and debilitation of Jewish life in the United States if the celebration fails to put forward the achievements of Jewish culture, whose most important expression is in Yiddish, if one does not recognize the role of Winchevsky, Edelshtat, Bovshover, Morris Rosenfeld, Yehoash, Liesin, Kobrin, Libin, Jacob Gordin." The basic reason for the suppression of Yiddish, Novick concludes, is that Yiddish culture "recalls the role of the Jews in the struggle against the sweatshop, of which the classic Yiddish poets sang, and the role of the Jews in helping to build up the workers' movement in the United States. These have no place in the celebration of the official committee . . . which cannot endure Yiddish culture because it became a mass culture when the Jewish worker became articulate and began to lead the struggle for social welfare. . . . A celebration of Jewish life in the United States is one that would truthfully reflect the life of the people."

The life of the Jewish *people*—this is indeed what we celebrate this year. We celebrate the Jewish masses and their heroic heritage of struggle for freedom in all its phases—down to our own fight against McCarthyism and for a peaceful world. We celebrate those who resisted reactionaries who would turn back the clock, just as we resist the McCarthyites today. We celebrate those like the Jewish protesters against the predatory Spanish-American War, just as we fight to prevent such wars today under the aegis of Washington. And at the center of this tradition is the labor movement and the fight for full equality of the Negro and Jewish peoples to which Paul Robeson gives inspiring expression in this issue.

On our eighth anniversary in this tercentenary period, we pledge ourselves to continuing struggle in the progressive Jewish tradition. Today this fight means the most militant resistance of Jews, together with all Americans of good will, against McCarthyism and for peaceful co-existence. Such a fight is our most sincere tribute to 300 years of Jewish history in our country.

# CLARA LEMLICH SHAVELSON:

## 50 YEARS IN LABOR'S FRONT LINE

By Paula Scheier

**I**T WAS not a usual union crowd that met at Cooper Union in New York the evening of November 22, 1909. It was large, but that the speakers on the stage had expected. It was tense, but they had seen tenseness before—eyes strained from watching stitches peering up at them, backs bent from years at cutting boards bending toward them. What was strange about this crowd was the women. Not even women, most of them . . . girls. How fresh their faces were, fresh from the small towns of the old country. How innocent they looked in those high starched shirt-waists and big picture hats. Did they realize what they were getting into?

One by one, they rose to speak, in English and in Yiddish—Goldstein of the Bakers Union, Weinstein of the United Hebrew Trades, Mary Dreier of the Women's Trade Union League, Meyer London of the Socialist Party. . . . The word "strike" was always greeted with applause. But, each one hastened to warn, a general strike in the industry was a serious affair. It might run into months . . . the manufacturers would not give in easily.

The crowd was growing restless. This was not what they had come to hear. They knew it would be hard. But what about the six-dollar salaries, the cheating on the piece-work? What about the foremen that yelled at you and the stinking toilets that overran into the workrooms? They had heard all about scabs and thugs and police. But would they ever have a union if they didn't strike now?

When Samuel Gompers, president of the AFL, got up, a new eddy of excitement ran through the hall. The waist-makers should not act too hastily, he said, but "if you can't get the manufacturers to give you what you want, then strike . . . and let the manufacturers know that you are on strike."

If they couldn't get the manufacturers . . . ? Suddenly, in the front of the hall, one of the girls jumped up. "I want to say a few words," she said.

The crowd buzzed. That was Clara Lemlich from Leiserson's—they were on strike already—for 11 weeks! "Get up on the platform," somebody shouted. "Yes, get up on the platform," other voices joined in.

They lifted her up: she was barely five feet tall; she was no more than 20. But they could also see the proud set of that head, the passion in those great, dark eyes. "I have listened to all the speakers," she cried in Yiddish, "and I have no further patience for talk. I am one who feels and

suffers for the things pictured. I move that we go on a general strike!"

Instantly they were on their feet, men, women and girls, cheering, stamping, crying approval. With one motion, Chairman Feigenbaum sprang to Clara Lemlich's side and thrust her right arm into the air. "Do you mean faith?" he cried. "Will you take the old Hebrew oath?"

For answer, two and a half thousand right arms shot up at him. Two and a half thousand voices repeated the Yiddish words: "If I turn traitor to the cause I now pledge, may this hand wither from the arm I now raise." By the morning, one of the garment industry's first great strikes was under way—and a new labor heroine had been born.

THE NEWSPAPERS CALLED IT THE "REVOLT OF THE GIRLS." Clara Lemlich, they said, was its Joan of Arc. She was "the soul of this young woman's revolution," wrote Mary Brown Sumner in *The Survey*, "a spirit of fire and tears, devoid of egotism, unable to tolerate the thought of human suffering." Clara Lemlich explained "Why the Waistmakers Strike" in her article in the *New York Evening Journal* on November 26, 1909.

At nine, on the morning of November 23rd, thousands of shirtwaist makers left their shops in Manhattan, Brooklyn's Brownsville and the Bronx to march to Clinton Hall, the union's headquarters at 151 Clinton Street. Four-fifths of them were women.

But the strike was as well organized as it was dramatic. Each shop formed a strike committee, which set up headquarters in some East Side hall. Every midnight, the committees reported to the general executive at Clinton Hall. There each day's campaign was mapped; pickets and speakers were assigned. Even a special Italian headquarters with Italian literature was set.

That winter, the strike was Clara's life. She was up at six for the picket line, out during the day to raise money and speak at meetings, working far into the morning as a member of the executive committee.

The manufacturers answered the workers' militancy with violence. A year before, the Triangle shop, destined for its place in labor infamy, had hit upon a novel method for dealing with women strikers. Since the usual male thugs seemed inappropriate, they hired their female counterparts—prostitutes—to taunt and start fights with pickets. In 1909, a number of their colleagues copied the fashion.



The police, too, could be called upon to break up picket lines. On one pretext or another, they would arrest whole bunches of girls and haul them off to stand trial in the lower East Side's Jefferson and Essex Market courts. On December 3rd, the union protested the continuing arrests with a march of 10,000 strikers on City Hall. The mayor offered no help but public sympathy was aroused. The Women's Trade Union League, an organization of middle class, suffragette sympathizers, with the aid of such society suffragettes as Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont and Ann Morgan, held a meeting at Carnegie Hall to protest police brutality. Across the wide stage sat a row of "convicts," the youngest 15 years old, wearing streamers over their shoulders reading, "I am a criminal."

A number of the manufacturers had signed with the union at the beginning of the strike. As the winter went on, the holdouts were faced with the gloomy prospect of losing a whole season's profits. In January 1910, when Leiserson's fell, it was the beginning of the end. By March, 354 of the 400 struck shops had signed contracts with the Ladies Waistmakers Union of New York. A closed shop, a 52-hour week, a substantial pay raise and abolition of many abuses had been won. And, not least, the union had grown from 800 to 20,000 members, its treasury from next to nothing to \$2400 a week. Only a few months later, the giant cloakmakers' strike was to settle on its feet once and for all the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

But perhaps the most important thing established by that strike was a fact. Not only the journalists, but sober Samuel Gompers himself had called it a "revolution." Until then, women had always been considered labor's weakest link, its most negligible and expendable part. The liberal weekly *Outlook* was echoing all the press when it said (July 2, 1910), "These young, inexperienced girls have proved that women can strike, and strike successfully."

"THAT IS WHAT YOU MUST WRITE ABOUT!" THE SMALL woman with the vivid eyes would still rather talk about the strike's meaning than her part in it. "They used to say that you couldn't even organize women. They wouldn't come to union meetings. They were 'temporary' workers; they would always undercut men. Well, we showed them!"

It takes a while before you get Clara Lemlich Shavelson to talk about herself. When I visited her one evening last March, the news from the Caracas conference was just coming over the radio. "Look—" her tongue still has fury, "who tries to talk for Latin America!" On her end table was a ticket for a meeting to protest intervention in Guatemala. The phone rang with a query from a friend in her shop. While she talked, you noticed that the room is filled with books. No matter how many newspapers she reads each day, she must have a book "for dessert."

Music has been vital to Clara Lemlich from the time she was a young girl in Gorodok, on the Austrian border of the Ukraine. The rebellious daughter of an orthodox Jewish scholar and grocery-storekeeper learned her songs from the children, frowned upon by the family, of non-



Clara Lemlich in 1909

Jewish shoemakers and peasants who lived, as the Lemlichs did, on the outskirts of the town. She then promptly compounded the heresy by using her singing to make friends with the daughters of wealthier Jewish families who subscribed to the city libraries and gave her Russian books. The two-grade village school did not admit Jews, and Clara's parents, protesting in the only way they knew, would have no Russian—either in speech or in print—in their home.

Not only learning, but the money for it had to be gotten by stealth. Though the family was poor, ownership of the little grocery store made them too proud to let her work. She used to steal time from the housework to go and make buttonholes in the tailor shops—the only places of employment open to Jews—for money to pay the students who taught her to read. A few more kopeks for books were made by writing letters from parents to children in America. The books had to be hidden. Once, when her father found their hiding place—under the pan where meat was made kosher—he threw the whole painfully accumulated lot into the fire.

She would read late at night, creeping out of bed after the family was asleep, or on the Sabbath, when she would climb up into the attic and perch herself on a bare beam to pore over Turgeniev, Gorky and Tolstoy. One Saturday

afternoon, when she was about ten, the neighbor who shared their semi-detached house stumbled upon her up there. He was so impressed by her passion for reading that he not only heeded her tearful pleas not to tell her parents, but brought her more books, among them her first revolutionary tracts.

BY THE TIME OF THE GREAT KISHINEV POGROM OF 1903, WHEN the Lemlichs, along with thousands of Jewish families, fled the Ukraine, Clara was singing revolutionary songs. In England, where they stayed for a few months, she was taken to Anarchist meetings. But her rebellion was still only personal.

In America, she was determined to become a doctor. But in America, as many an immigrant family was discovering, employers preferred to hire children rather than their parents. Within a week of her arrival, 15-year-old Clara was at work in a shop.

Almost immediately she started to study at night. One of her first great discoveries in America was the East Broadway branch of the New York Public Library, which had a great collection of literary classics in Russian. Oddly enough, she says, she learned more Russian from that library than she did in her years in the Ukraine. "I should have spent more time learning English correctly," she says, "but I was so eager to learn *things*." History and literature were her passions. After an 11-hour day in the shop, she would walk through half the East Side to the Gordon free school on Madison Street, stopping only for a penny or two's worth of milk. She ate her mother's dinner at 10 or 11 when she arrived home:

"All week long I wouldn't see the daylight. I remember once, when things were slow, they let us out in the middle of the day. 'What!' I said, 'are all the people on strike!' I had never realized that there were so many out during the daytime."

It was not at all strange that the first thing to come to her mind then was a strike. For not only at school was she learning new things. The older workers in the shops talked constantly about trade unions; in some shops there were even lunch-time discussion groups on trade union theory; small knots of workers, escaping the bosses' watchful eyes, would walk the streets, talking and arguing.

In the workers' constant struggles with the manufacturers, there were many individual shop stoppages, but none had the backing to succeed. The International Ladies Garment Workers Union was a weak six-year-old, consisting mostly of male cloakmakers, when, in 1906, Clara joined a delegation of waistmakers that went to the *Jewish Daily Forward* to ask how to go about forming a union. That spring, only two years after her arrival in America, she was one of the seven young girls and six men who founded the waistmakers' Local 25, I.L.G.W.U.

The organizing, at first, was slow, monotonous and discouraging. There were scores of shops and thousands of waistmakers. Clara, by then a skilled and relatively well-paid draper, was still hoarding money for medical school,

but she could not work in a shop without trying to organize it. She began to gravitate toward the smaller places where an individual organizer might exert more influence.

HER FIRST STRIKE CAME IN 1907, AT WEISEN AND GOLDSTEIN'S, an "uptown" shop in West 17th Street. It was new and considered a very desirable place to work, until the workers realized that the modern conveniences were being paid for out of a still greater speed-up. They held out for ten weeks, against every kind of attack.

One night during a meeting Clara heard a fierce argument break out over the general objectives of the union. When it was over, she went up to one of the cutters. What did he mean by attacking Samuel Gompers as a "pure and simple trade unionist?" she asked. The older man started to explain, then took another look at her eager face and asked if she would like to go for a walk.

"We walked 40 blocks," she says, "and he gave me my first lesson in Marxism. He started with a bottle of milk—how it was made, who made the money from it through every stage of its production. Not only did the boss take the profits, he said, but not a drop of that milk did you drink unless he allowed you to. It was funny, you know, because I'd been saying things like that to the girls before. But now I understood it better and I began to use it more often—only with shirtwaists." She also started to take classes in labor theory at the Rand School.

The great 1907 depression broke the Weisen and Goldstein strike, but others were still to come. In 1908, trade union consciousness among the waistmakers had reached such heights that the girls at the Gotham shop, where Clara was working, struck in protest against their boss' firing men to make room for cheaper women workers. And in the fall of 1909 the strike at Leiserson's broke out.

The union was then divided into crafts and the operators, who were men, went ahead with their plans without consulting the workers of other crafts, many of them women. They were more than a little surprised when, suddenly, at their strike meeting, there was Clara, asking for the floor. Didn't they know, the teen-age girl scolded them, that if they went out alone they would lose! The only thing to do was to take the whole shop with them. She managed to convince the operators and, with their help, the rest of the workers. Even Leiserson seemed impressed by her: in 11 weeks of picket line scuffles she was arrested 17 times and six of her ribs were broken.

"Ah—then I had fire in my mouth!"

Her hands fly to her head when she remembers the famous speeches. "I read about them now—all those important people and Clara Lemlich here, Clara Lemlich there! What did I know about trade unionism? Audacity—that was all I had—audacity!"

The union and the public at large, however, seemed to think otherwise. The Socialists, whose meetings she constantly attended, never asked her to join their party because they took it for granted that she was already a member. Professor Charles Beard, whose wife was an

active strike sympathizer, was so struck by her that he offered to get her into Barnard and help her through college. The great dark eyes grow a bit wistful when she thinks of the lost education. "But it was too late. I was swallowed up by the trade union movement."

THE STRIKE OVER, THE SLEEPLESS NIGHTS AND MONTHS OF inadequate food at last made themselves felt. Clara broke down completely and had to be taken to the country to recover. When she returned a few months later, it was to the blacklist. She was only one of the rank-and-file strike leaders, who for several years thereafter, could find work in the industry only under assumed names, constantly being fired when their identity was discovered.

However, her loyalty to the union remained undiminished. She kept up with all its activities, attended every convention. Late in 1910, it finally rewarded her with a job as factory inspector—to see that the reforms she had played such a large part in winning were being carried out. The union appointed its own inspectors, with official city sanction, because of the city inspectors' apparently strange lapses in observation when it came to factory working conditions.

At the same time she returned to her activities in the Women's Trade Union League, which she had joined during the strike, and to whose executive board she was soon elected. The League had close ties with the Woman's Suffrage Party. Even though most of its middle class ladies did not agree with Clara's outspoken socialist views, Mary Beard could not resist asking her to speak for them.

In the years before World War I, Clara spoke for woman's suffrage on Riverside Drive and, more frequently, outside the gates of factories that employed women. She remembers particularly the Butterick Pattern and Uneeda Biscuit plants in downtown Manhattan, where the men workers would come out and call: "Go home and wash your pants!"—often driving home their point with rotten tomatoes. The women would usually stay inside, peering out the windows, somewhat frightened and not too sure what was in it for them.

Their attitude soon changed, however, when Clara's ideas of what should go into a suffrage speech prevailed. Shortly after she became an active suffragette, Jessie Ashley, a prominent socialist, died and left the Suffrage Party a fund for the express purpose of bringing the fight for the vote to working women. Clara then became a paid organizer of labor groups within the party and special material was printed to show the relation of suffrage to child labor, sanitary conditions and other workers' problems. On the soap boxes and ladders outside plant gates now, she talked about women in the labor movement and women as the wives of workers. When she told her audiences about the families burned out of their tents after being evicted from company houses during the Colorado mine strike of 1914, she had no trouble getting rid of her leaflets. The men took them, as well as the women.

IN 1913, CLARA MARRIED JOSEPH SHAVELSON, A PRINTER AND

an old comrade from the strike days. "He was a fighter," she says. It is her highest praise. Her husband's family had taken part in the Russian revolution of 1905; Joe, then a gangling teen-ager, had been a member of the Social Democratic Underground, traveling from town to town with illegal leaflets hidden underneath his coat. "He was so thin that no one could tell." Clara would listen by the hour to the Shavelsons' stories, sometimes feeling that she almost wanted to go back to this revolutionary country of her birth.

But, even if it had been a serious thought, there were to be no wedding trips for the young Shavelsons. Joe, unable to get into the printers' union, was earning \$17 a week. They went to live on DeKalb Avenue in Brooklyn with one of his sisters and her two children. "I still hoped," says Clara, "that I could finish school." By then, without any grade schooling, she had managed, in ten years' time, to accumulate 48 out of 60 high school points, and she still had not given up her dreams about medical school. But in a year she had had her first baby and the family's finances were still lower.

When her son, Irving, was two-and-a-half, she went to work in a tie shop on the ground floor of the building where her sister lived. Her second child, a daughter, Martha, was just old enough to walk when Clara began taking the youngsters with her to Socialist meetings. Soon she was speaking for a Socialist women's group to protest profiteering on food prices. When the landlord who owned the two-family houses on the East New York block where they then lived tried to raise the rent, she organized a rent strike—which ended with the Shavelsons being evicted. They moved then to Grafton Street, in Brownsville, where Clara's second daughter, Rita, was born.

Clara reacted to these personal burdens characteristically: she became an organizer for the United Council of Working Class Women, a housewives' community organization that allied itself closely with the growing labor movement. Besides fighting on prices and rents, it set up kitchens and joined picket lines during many a strike of the late twenties, including the famous Passaic strike.

THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE DEPRESSION IN THE THIRTIES FOUND Clara in Brighton Beach organizing that working class community's first Unemployed Council. She went on both the 1930 and 1932 hunger marches.

Hardly a single one of the dramatic struggles of the thirties was not to become a part of her. In 1935, when the United Council had become the Progressive Women's Council, it followed up a successful 1932 bread strike with a great battle against the high cost of meat. Clara was among the leaders of both fights in Brighton Beach, organizing picket lines and mass meetings and making her fiery speeches as of old. The meat strike became so successful that it spread throughout the country.

Among the earliest active anti-fascists, in 1934 she attended the first International Women's Congress Against War and Fascism in Paris. She remembers that trip well





*Clara Lemlich Shavelson at her war work in 1944.*

not only for the conference but for her travels after it, which took her, for the first time since her childhood, to the country of her birth. "We went by train to Moscow," she says, "and there was a bus there to meet us. But I wouldn't get on it. I told the others to go ahead without me. This was the country where they wouldn't even let me go to school—where if I walked into a city they would have made me wear a prostitute's badge. And now—I wanted to stand there for a long time with my feet on the soil of a workers' country."

She returned to the United States to lecture and show slides of the USSR to some 30 clubs of the Progressive Women's Council. As educational director of the Council, she gave courses on fascism, war and peace. And soon she was a familiar figure at Brighton Beach street corner meetings, rallying the Jewish workers with her own passionate clarity against the Hitlerism that threatened them.

WHEN THE UNITED STATES ENTERED WORLD WAR II, MRS. Shavelson was back at it again with the old energy. The Progressive Women's Council had merged with the women's clubs of the International Workers Order. By then PWC president, Clara became New York City secretary of the IWO's Women's Division, working day and night to organize first aid classes, knitting circles, aluminum

campaigns, bond rallies. And in 1944, when she realized that her husband's strength was failing, she went back to the shop and was in the union again.

For nine years, until her retirement this past spring, she remained in the shop, a hand-finisher on cloaks and a rank-and-file union member. She still went to union meetings, fought with both boss and foreman, and found time for her many outside activities.

During the Stockholm Peace Petition campaign she got 500 signatures—93 of them the day after the Korean War started. She also collected 1200 signatures to the 1951 petition for a five-power peace pact.

In 1951 she made her second trip abroad, this time as a member of a trade union delegation. In France, Italy, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, she heard about wages and working conditions, housing and health problems, and always and foremost, about peace. "Peace was the most important issue to all those European workers," she says. "We heard that everywhere we went. It was on all the walls and all the banners. If any of us had thought that there was a danger of war from the Soviet Union or anywhere in Europe, we were convinced now we had been wrong. We were convinced that our job was to go back and tell American workers that if they too would struggle for peace, there could be no war."

When she returned home, Mrs. Shavelson gave the message of peace in countless speeches to countless meetings. She brought it back into the shop with her and to the women of the Emma Lazarus clubs with whom she now works.

It is not only the children and the six grandchildren (Joseph Shavelson died in 1951) that make Clara Shavelson say now, "I'm not a poor woman; I have dividends." First among them, she counts the union. (When the ILGWU broke a rule, requiring 15 consecutive years of work in the industry, to give her a pension last spring, she wrote to David Dubinsky—in a letter which was reprinted, in part, with a story about her in the union paper, *Justice*—"I feel that this is in some measure a tribute to the early band that struggled and fought to eliminate the sweatshop system and bring the benefits of unionism to thousands of workers.") Then, there is the growing respect for women as unionists, which she helped establish. There was that election day in 1921, when she cast the first precious vote she had helped win. There is the unemployment insurance that she helped fight for, the defeat of fascism that she helped bring about, the socialism she has always worked for triumphant in half the world. And she still may count.

If there is any further dividend still owing to Mrs. Shavelson, it is the recognition of Clara Shavelson, and not only of Clara Lemlich. Clara Lemlich was a brilliant youngster of whom she can rightfully be proud. But Clara Shavelson, she feels, has accomplished much more. Clara Shavelson is no Grand Old Lady of progressivism, no symbol of the past. She is as young as Mother Bloor was in her eighties, or Elizabeth Gurley Flynn is at 64, because she, too, will never stop fighting.

# WHO WERE THEY?

By David Edelshtat

Translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld

## INTRODUCTION

THIS poem on the Haymarket martyrs has until now escaped the notice of those who have compiled the collected works of David Edelshtat (1866-1892), one of the four American Yiddish proletarian classic poets, who contributed so much to the history of Jewish life in our country. I discovered it in a hitherto unnoted Yiddish pamphlet on the Haymarket case, "*Der Gesetzlicher Mord in Chicago fun 11 November 1887*" ("The Legal Murder in Chicago on 11 November 1887"), written by the anarchist editor, Roman Lewis, and published in New York in 1889.

This is not Edelshtat's only poem on the Haymarket frame-up; he has written five others, but this is especially interesting because it is his first and was composed more than a year before any of the others. He also translated into Yiddish, very shortly before his death, some of the verses of Albert Parsons, one of the four who was hanged.

Edelshtat was only 20 when the trial took place in 1886. He was then a Russian-speaking intellectual more inter-

ested in Russian events than in those about him. The Haymarket Affair "Americanized" Edelshtat, turning his heart and mind to the masses about him. Active in the amnesty campaign, he was arrested for his pains. When he began to write Yiddish poetry, it had the social content and ring of passion born of an experience that had moved him to the depths and transformed him.

Two references in the poem may need explanation. In stanza 5, "Liberty or Death" was the phrase with which Louis Lingg, one of the defendants, completed his final address to the Court; Lingg died in prison on the eve of his scheduled execution, probably a suicide. Secondly, in stanza 9, Waldheim is the name of the cemetery in which the five martyrs were buried after a mass public funeral.

Mr. Max Rosenfeld's admirable translation brings this poem to a new audience for the first time in any language since it was published 65 years ago. It appears at a time when loud voices against political persecution in the courts are more needed than ever before.

MORRIS U. SCHAPPES

They would not sleep in shame, like all the rest,  
Nor could they either slaves or swindlers be.  
They spoke the free and open truth. Till death  
They fought for human rights and liberty.

They carried in their breasts the scarlet flame  
Of Truth, sweet radiance that freedom casts.  
They bid us speak in Truth's unsullied name,  
And summoned us to man's unfinished tasks.

They never gave consent to those decrees  
Which only blind the people, and enslave.  
They ripped apart the laws of tyranny,  
To laws of nature recognition gave.

They broke a window through in mankind's hated  
Prison-house of black obscurity,  
And freely let the sunlight permeate  
The pallid world of human slavery.

Usurpers paled and tyrants shook in fright;  
The slave was waking, tearing at his chain,  
Had understood at last his human right,  
"Liberty or Death!" his fierce refrain.

But when the cruel, man-devouring class  
Had barely heard the Truth thus spoken free,  
It seized its bloodstained knife in deadly grasp

And plunged into this monstrous butchery.

Oh brothers! They have killed our champions, who  
Were leading us through strife to victory.  
Oh baseness vile! how brilliantly have you  
Prevailed, in this, the nineteenth century!

How powerless the people stood, and mute—  
So like a child! Not one bold hand to thwart  
The rope, to stop the tyrant's hangman-brute!  
Oh masses! Where your reason? Where your heart?

In Waldheim now, man's freedom-thinkers rest.  
And still are heard, from that eternal site,  
The savage hangman's roaring epithets,  
Which rouse the world of slaves to freedom's fight.

They ask no hymns of praise, no monument  
Of marble, bloodied by the slave's own hand,  
Their sole request is man's enlightenment,  
The fight for human rights their one demand.

Unite, oh people! Learn your strength! Awake!—  
And heed the wish that echoes from their graves.  
Throw off your yoke! And crush the vicious snakes  
Which poisoned you and turned you into slaves!

Cincinnati, O., 23 September 1889

# BONDS OF BROTHERHOOD

*The great American and Negro leader gives an inspiring statement of the common aims of the Negro and Jewish peoples and democracy*

*By Paul Robeson*

**M**Y HEARTFELT greetings to the Jewish people, who are now celebrating three centuries of life and work in this land. It is good for all Americans to be reminded once again that the "Anglo-Saxon" image of America is a false-face. Certainly no Negro can hear the declaration of the Committee for the 300th Anniversary of Jewish Settlement in the U.S.A.—"*We have always been part of America*"—without reflecting that such has been our own insistent claim: "*We too are America!*"

Self-evident since the days of Haym Salomon and Crispus Attucks, these claims have been denied by the racists and reactionaries of every generation; and never before have these foes been more powerful and arrogant than they are today. Not only is race, color and creed a continuing bar to a so-called "100 per cent American" status, but nowadays any person or organization can be officially branded "un-American" by a one-man ruling. The McCarran-Walter immigration act compares in foulness with the worst of nazi racism.

The significant relationship of the Jewish people's interests with those of the Negro people has been pointed out by the Anniversary Committee:

*"Let us make our anniversary a source of inspiration in the defense of our rights and liberties. . . . Let us act in unison with all groups in America and especially the Negro people—who suffer most from reaction and fascism—in order to defend our democratic rights."* (JEWISH LIFE, September 1954.)

Yes, the cause of democracy, the rights of all other minorities, are inseparably linked with the liberation struggles of the Negro people. From the "Know-Nothing" party of a century ago to the Ku Klux Klan and the McCarthys and McCarrans of today, history's handwriting on the wall has spelled out that lesson. He who would live must learn it well.

It is not likely that the first group of Jewish settlers who came to New Amsterdam in 1654 had heard about that first group of Negroes who were landed at Jamestown in 1619. The Jews came as pioneers, seeking freedom; the Negroes came as slaves, torn from their homeland.

So, from this beginning it was inevitable that the history of the descendants of these two groups (and of all their kin who came in later years by slave-ship from Africa and steerage-hold from Europe) would develop on different paths. And yet, in all the diverse strands which make up

the web of American history for the past three centuries, there are direct threads which link the interests of the Negro and Jewish people from the earliest days.

Peter Stuyvesant, governor for the Dutch West Indies, who wanted to drive out the first Jewish settlers, has long since turned to dust, as has the Dutch slaver which brought the captive Africans; but anti-Semitism still lives and is nurtured on our soil, and the shameful heritage of slavery—Negro oppression and exploitation—still has its grip.

Indeed, right here in New York the name of the man who first proclaimed anti-Semitism in the New World is known to us in connection with anti-Negro discrimination. We recall the long and bitter struggle against Jimcrow in the Stuyvesant Town houses. Here we saw progressive sections of the Jewish people united with the Negro people in a drive to make the racist walls come tumbling down.

We remember Ben Davis, our City Councilman, who led that memorable battle, and here the thread of history leads to Foley Square where a landlord judge sentences the heroic leader to prison. And in the courtroom we see Negro and Jewish workers standing together against the Peter Stuyvesants of our time: yes, here beside Ben Davis is Irving Potash; John Gates with Henry Winston, and all their courageous colleagues.

WHO CAN FORGET THE AWFUL LESSON OF HITLER GERMANY? How many of those who thought that the Reichstag Fire frame-up trial was aimed at only the Left—how many of the duped were to die?

And so we can all agree with the Anniversary Committee when it warns that "the McCarthyite attacks upon the American people bring the danger of fascism." With confidence, the Committee asserts: "In this critical moment . . . the Jewish workers and common people will find the necessary strength and wisdom to stand firm on the side of progress and peace, against McCarthyism, fascism and war."

Surely none of us who were at Peekskill can doubt that the Jewish workers will be second to none in standing firm against our common enemy. As for myself, I have always felt an especially close bond with the Jewish people; and to me, Peekskill, so terrible in its demonstration of reactionary barbarism, shall ever be a glowing symbol of the unity of Negro and Jewish workers against fascism.

Some day soon I shall write at length, in the context of my life story, about the meaningful experiences I have had





Paul Robeson

with the Jewish people. Much of this would deal with my early years as an artist, for here, in this field of music and the arts, all other Americans are deeply indebted to the creativity and cultural gifts of the Jewish people.

But the story would begin even earlier—in my boyhood, when I first heard about the Children of Israel—the epics of Moses and Joshua and Gideon and the fiery Hebrew prophets—the Bible stories that gave imagery to the freedom songs of my people. Recently I was told that our great Negro spiritual, “Go Down Moses,” has now been translated into Hebrew and has been sung to audiences in Israel—and one marvels again at the interweaving of people’s cultures: down through the centuries, moving from language to language, crossing seas and mountains, turning, doubling back ever renewed and enriched . . . imperishable in the common aspirations of mankind!

HERE IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THIS WONDER-WOVEN FABRIC OF human culture which unites us all: Not long ago I was asked to sing a song by Anton Dvorák to be used in a film about the life of the great composer which is now being made in his homeland, Czechoslovakia. The words of his song are from the well-known biblical psalm, “*By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept*”—the searing outcry of an enslaved people against their oppressors, against “*those that carried us away captive*.”

From ancient Judea these words of the 137th Psalm had crossed the vast reaches of time and distance to stir the hearts of the Negro slaves in our own Southland; and the downfall of slave-holding Babylon was cited by our Frederick Douglass in his famous address, “The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro” (1852). “I can today take up the plaintive lament of a peeled and woe-smitten people,” Douglass declared, and he went on to recite the moving lines of the psalm.

Half a century later the gifted Dvorák came to our country, studied the melodies and lyrics of Negro song, and drew upon its richness for his own creations—and so, in this way, the words of this very song must have traveled back across the ocean with him; and I am told the song was especially popular among the Czech people during their years of suffering under the terror of Nazi occupation.

But history moves on: Hitler is gone; Prague lives and builds in a new people’s democracy—and now I, an American Negro, sing for her this ancient Hebrew song in the language of the people of Huss and Dvorák, Fuchik and Gottwald:

*Pri rekách babylonckych,  
Tam jsme sedávali a plakávali . . .*

If it has been true that the Jewish people, like so many other national groups for whom I have sung, have warmly understood and loved the songs of my people, it has also been true that Negro audiences have been moved by songs of the Jewish people. The Hassidic Chant, for example, has a profound impact on the Negro listener not only for its content—a powerful protest against an age-old persecution—but also because of its form: the phrasing and rhythm have counterparts in traditional Negro sermon-song. And here, too, is a bond that can be traced back through the centuries to a common heritage.

In the early days of my singing career and in the theater, the Jewish artists I came to know not only introduced me to the world of Sholem Aleichem through the Yiddish language and folksong; but since many of these friends were Russian Jews, I also came to know the language of Pushkin and the songs of Moussorgsky. And so it happened that, before I had any knowledge of the economic or political nature of the Soviet Union, I developed an abiding love for the culture of the Russian people.

“Un-American!” say the Know-Nothing Knowlands of today—and indeed, the whole world which cries out for peaceful co-existence, cultural exchange and trade between nations, seems altogether “un-American” to those here who are driving hell-bent for fascism and war.

Well, there exists that evil tradition which stretches over the years from Peter Stuyvesant to Pat McCarran, from Jefferson Davis to James Byrnes. But there also exists the great tradition of democracy and of struggle to preserve and extend that democracy—in Jewish history from the resistance of the first settlers to anti-Semitism; in Negro history from the first slave revolt; in all of American history from the earliest struggle for man’s inalienable rights.

Hating and fearing the war-mad rulers of our country, the people of all lands look eagerly for signs of that “other America” they know exists—the America of the common people who also yearn for relief from the burdens of armaments, “spy”-scares and witchhunts, and for the banishment of that ultimate disaster—atomic war.

So let the Tercentenary celebration of the Jewish people serve as a fitting means to let the voice of that other America be heard: for democracy and progress, for freedom and peace—for our land and for all others!

# JEWISH MUSIC IN THE USA

By J. Nathan

**T**HERE is no doubt that many thousands of words will be said and written about Jewish music this year.

We make no attempt to compete with any of those thousands of words and we are sure that the occasion of the tercentenary celebrations will provide a good opportunity for composers, conductors and performers to express quite a bit of good Jewish music, new and old.

We would, however, like to look into the story of Jewish music in this country. Does it begin with the arrival of the first settlers in New Amsterdam? Do we find any influence in American music by these Jewish settlers of 1654 or by Jews of the next hundred years?

If there was any distinct Jewish music in the first Jewish settlements, it did not reach beyond these small groups or families. It did not leave an imprint on later American folksongs, like the folklore of the Dutch, German, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, French and Slavic nations which influenced much of early American music in the north; or the Latin and the later so important Negro music in the south.

The music in the homes and synagogues of the early Jewish settlers was closely linked to their Sephardic background. But, unlike the Spaniolish folklore of the Sephardic Jews in Turkey and other oriental countries, it did not become the folklore of the Jewish population in America and thus was not the source from which the distinct Jewish contribution to American music of later years sprang.

Music as an expression of a people must reflect the folkloric feeling of the people as a whole. Although the first group of Sephardic-Jewish settlers established the Jewish minority group in America as such by courageously fighting for their right to live here as Jews, it was not the folkloric background of these settlers that laid the foundation for our present musical expression as Jews. Jewish music as a folkloric influence on American music became important only after the first wave of mass immigration from Eastern Europe. These East European Jews at the end of the 19th and the beginning of this century brought with them a wealth of Yiddish folklore, the Hassidic music and the music of the Ashkenazic synagogue of Europe.

In other words, analyzing the distinct Jewish contribution to music in America, we cannot look back to the year 1654, merely because this marked the beginning of Jewish life in America. Jewish music as a characteristic influence on American cultural life is roughly only 75 years old.

It really came to life when the lullabies of Jewish mothers were brutally chased out of Eastern Europe by tsarist pogroms and settled somewhere in a crowded tenement

house of New York, Philadelphia, Boston or Chicago. It grew when the tunes of European Jews, sung in their struggles against reaction, were adopted and adapted by the Jewish immigrants struggling against sweatshops and for an eight-hour day. It thus became a part of the American labor movement. It also grew when Hassidic melodies and many sentimental Jewish-Slavic songs found their way into the American Yiddish theater and eventually were heard over old-fashioned phonographs and in the nickelodeons of American cities. Yossel Rosenblatt's "Sh'ma Kolenu" became just as American as the cry of "Go down, Moses," first sung by Negro slaves yearning for freedom. Jewish music was carried into American culture through Yiddish labor poets like Winchevsky, Rosenfeld, Edelshtat and Bovshover, who used many a Yiddish folktune as a melodic vehicle for their rousing verse. It was further enriched by Yiddish composers like Jacob Schaefer, Lazar Weiner, Max Helfman and many others, who took their themes and inspiration from the folkloric roots of this Jewish mass immigration from Europe and the growing Jewish participation in the struggle for a better life of America's working people.

With the establishment of a Jewish minority group numbering several millions, its influence on American music naturally became manifold, too. There is no doubt that quite a few American composers were strongly influenced by the new Jewish American folklore. George Gershwin is only one outstanding example. Some of these influences were for the good and some for the bad, as we can see in some degenerate products on the later commercial "popular" music market.

We can also see, however, that with the growing music education the American people began to discover the rich background of Jewish music through compositions by men like Ernest Bloch, Leonard Bernstein, David Diamond, Jacob Weinberg and a whole new generation of Jewish American composers. In their contribution to instrumental and vocal music of America, these composers have drawn from many cultural expressions of Jewish history: the ancient chant, the Yemenite and modern Israel song, the Yiddish folkmusic and the Hassidic "spiritual."

We are only beginning to be aware of the real richness of the Jewish people's musical heritage, which goes back 2000 years in a history of a struggling people. But it would be wise, instead of getting lost in the labyrinth of the many musical cultures which the Jews absorbed in their wanderings, first to digest our immediate Jewish American heritage: the songs our mothers taught us.



23 Jews arrive in New Amsterdam in 1654—they defeat Stuyvesant's attempt to exclude them



Abolitionist August Bondi was with John Brown in 1856—about 6,500 Jews fought in the Union Army



Congregation leaves British-occupied New York in 1776—Jews fought and died for American independence



**LANDMARKS OF PROGRESSIVISM IN**





# JEWISH MASS IMMIGRATION FROM EASTERN EUROPE, 1881-1914

By Morris U. Schappes

**B**EFORE outlining the main developments in the American Jewish labor movement in the first decade of the twentieth century, it is desirable to pause for an examination of the main features of the mass immigration of Jews into our country from 1881 to the First World War. The effect of this immigration upon the American Jewish community and upon relations between the Jews and the general population was vast. The sheer size of the incoming tide changed the quality of the Jewish population here. There was a conspicuous change in the social composition of the American Jewish population, for by the turn of the century the largest single class was proletarian, consisting of wage workers very largely in shops and factories. Accompanying this shift in class character was a deep-going change in cultural life and forms of expression: the main language spoken by Jews in our country during this period was now no longer German or English but Yiddish and the main religious trend swung away from Reform Judaism to Orthodoxy of the East European kind. And connected with these new millions of Jewish immigrants were new secular ideologies: for the workers, a mass movement to unionism, labor fraternalism and socialism, and for some elements the beginning of a Zionist orientation.

Just how big was this Jewish immigration stream? Government statistics from 1899 on, plus very carefully made estimates for the earlier years, show that in the closely studied years, 1881 to 1910, the Jewish immigration totaled 1,562,800.<sup>1</sup> To add the years to 1914 would bring the sum to 1,974,000. When one considers that these almost two million Jews came to a country which, before then, had had about a quarter of a million Jews, one can begin to perceive the kind of transformation that took place.

## *The Flood of East European Immigration*

The Jews, of course, were not the only immigrants that were flocking into the country. In fact, the Italians who came in from 1881 to 1910 were almost twice as numerous as the Jews, for a sum of 3,005,000. Altogether in those 30 years there landed in our ports 17,730,000 newcomers and of this huge number the Jews were only a small portion,

8.8 per cent. The fact that the Jewish stream was only a part of a general immigration tide fortunately makes it possible and easier for us to see both what the Jewish immigrants shared in common with all others and also how they differed in certain specific features.

First, then, where did this mass of Jews come from? The Eastern Europe that is referred to included the Tsarist Empire (with Latvia, Lithuania and part of Poland in it), the Austro-Hungarian Empire (including Galicia) and Rumania. It was from these states that there came in the years 1881 to 1910 the vast bulk of the Jewish immigrants, 93.8 per cent (1,467,266); the remaining six per cent were from all other countries of Europe and the Middle East. Of those who came from the three states of Eastern Europe, those arriving from the Russian Empire made up the huge majority of the total Jewish immigration: 71.6 per cent (1,119,059). From Austria-Hungary there were 281,150 (17.9 per cent) and from Rumania, 67,057 (4.3 per cent).

In space, these East European lands were thousands of miles from our coast. But more important than the physical was the "social distance" between the source of emigration and the country of immigration. The social system in Eastern Europe was in several major respects markedly different from ours and the contrasts were bold. In the Russian Empire (and the same is more or less true of the Austro-Hungarian and Rumania), there was still a semi-feudal absolutist autocracy, with the tsar as the absolute monarch, "the autocrat of all the Russias." The nobility and great landowners were the dominant classes, with capitalism developing late and slowly. There had been no bourgeois democratic revolutions, and the bourgeoisie, the capitalists, were just striving for some share of political power. The people were subjects of an autocrat, not citizens, and had no democratic rights. There was a fusion of church and state, a tight interlocking of the big landowners and nobility with the high clergy. There was an official state religion and all persons and groups not part of that religion were severely handicapped and penalized. Finally, although capitalism had begun to develop, the economy there was primarily that of peasant agriculture, with the technical level generally backward and sometimes primitive.

Those who came from these lands and from such social relations to the United States, and particularly to the areas

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, figures for these years will be taken from Samuel Joseph, *Jewish Immigration to the United States from 1881 to 1910*, New York, 1914.



in which they concentrated, found the contrast immense. In fact, these millions came exactly because they sought such a great economic, political and social change. They by-passed, for instance, Palestine which, although much nearer to them geographically, offered them no such social contrast. In the United States there was a more or less democratic republic, not an autocracy, achieved by 'the Revolution of 1776 and the Civil War. Capitalism was more highly developed than in any other country in the world and the ruling class was capitalist. There was a greater degree of separation of church and state than even in most West European capitalist states, and a formal equality of religions. White citizens had formal equality before the law and there was a tradition of militant struggle for democracy and the Bill of Rights, although, the immigrants were to learn soon and sadly enough, the Trusts that were coming to dominate the nation were to begin to try to undermine these rights. Finally, capitalism had transformed the agricultural economy too; machinery and capitalist relations on the land, plus the pull of factory wages in the cities, were drawing millions of farmers off the land into the cities, so that by the turn of the century the United States was the first and only country in the world to have more of its people living in towns and cities than on the land and in villages. Industrialization and urbanization were most conspicuous features. Together with the other new factors they spelled for the immigrants, in whatever language they could read the sky-high letters, the 'golden word, opportunity. They came to get it.

### ***Conditions of Jews in East Europe***

Now what were the specific conditions of life of the Jews of Eastern Europe? A sketch of the situation of the Jews in the Tsarist Empire, from which came almost three-fourths of the immigrants, will serve for the whole area. Rightlessness sums up the position of the Jews. They did not have the right to live and move where they pleased, nor the right to own plots of agricultural land, nor the right to choose an occupation freely, nor the right to education to the best of their ability, nor the right to equality of religious practice, nor the right to use Yiddish publicly and officially, nor the right to security of life, limb and property, for the pogrom was continually in the offing.

These compulsions and this rightlessness produced the following essential characteristics pertinent to our study of this area as a source of mass immigration. At the turn of the century, 94 per cent of the Jews in the Russian Empire lived in the area known as the Pale of Settlement, a huge belt of land, as large as our entire Mississippi Valley, stretching through Western and Southwestern Russia and the Ukraine from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Jews could live outside this Pale, or fence, of Settlement only by special permission. Yet it is important to note that it was precisely in this area, particularly in the northwestern part of it, that Russian capitalism, heavy industry and factory production expanded most rapidly from the 1870s on.

In the Pale, the Jews were only a small minority, about 12 per cent, of the population. But restrictions prevented them from spreading out more or less evenly throughout the territory. Expulsions from the land and restrictions on ownership of land concentrated the Jews in the towns and cities. While for the non-Jews in the Pale, only 7 per cent lived in towns and cities, for the Jews the figure was 95 per cent. In nine of the 15 provinces of the Pale the Jews formed the majority of the urban population.

The fact that the Jews were an urban population of course affected their occupations and economic pursuits. Contrary to popular misconception, the majority of the economically active Jews were not engaged in trade and commerce. The Russian census of 1897 shows that in the Pale there were 1,331,500 Jews with occupations. Of these, 426,628 were engaged in commerce and trade, *but* there were 504,844 in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits, and 44,177 in transportation, chiefly carters and draymen (teamsters). There were more workers, artisans, journeymen, apprentices and factory workers, than tradesmen. Moreover, "in the northwest, namely, Lithuania and in White Russia, the industrial occupations claim a much greater proportion of the employed than commerce (44.2 per cent against 23.8 per cent and 42.2 per cent against 27.4 per cent, respectively. . . . In these provinces there is a process of rapid shifting from the commercial pursuits to industrial work. . . . It is from these provinces that until very recently emigration to the United States was strongest."<sup>21</sup>

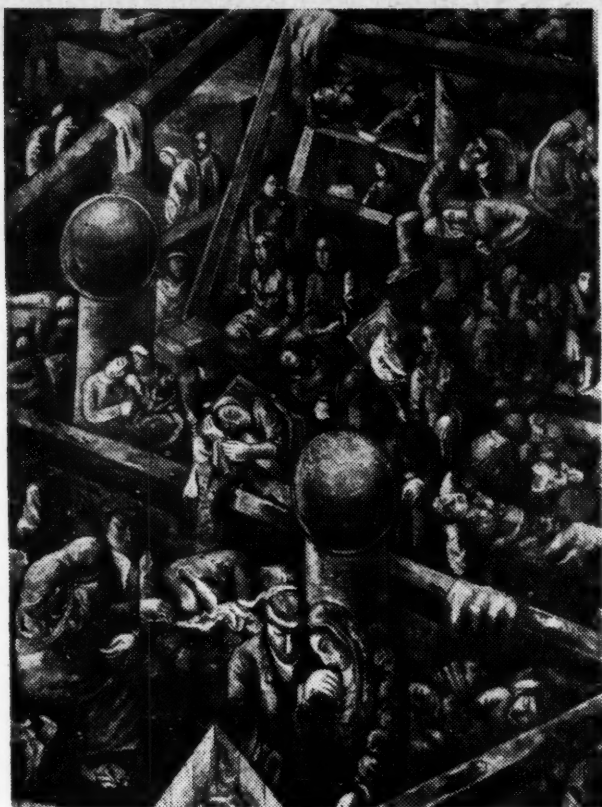
In 1898, the Jewish Colonization Society made a study that more than confirmed these figures, for it registered 500,986 artisans, of whom 15.3 per cent were women and girls. These artisans made up 44 per cent of the Jewish working population. In addition there were factory workers; it is a notable fact that in 1898 one third of all the factories in the Pale were owned by Jews and they employed many Jewish workers. Although there were Jews in some 60 different classes of occupations listed by the official census of 1897, there was a special concentration of workers in the following industries: clothing (254,384), metal-working (43,449), wood-working (42,525), building (39,019), textile (34,612) and tobacco (7,856). It was with this urban background and with such occupational characteristics that the East European mass immigration of Jews arrived on our shores.

### ***Jews Take Root in the U.S.***

Once in the United States, what happened to the Jews? To what extent, for instance, did they stay here, become permanent residents? It should not glibly be assumed that since immigrants had traveled thousands of miles to get here, they would of course stay put. The extent to which immigrants remained depended upon the extent to

<sup>21</sup> M. Rubinow, *Economic Condition of the Jews in Russia*, Washington, D. C., 1907, p. 302; the facts used in the next paragraph are also from the same source, p. 520, 524, 498-499. This study was issued by the U. S. Bureau of Labor.





Detail from "EMIGRANT SHIP" Painting by Lazar Segall

which they were able to take economic root here, that is, to make a living. Millions of immigrants went back where they came from, not having found here the glories they expected. Thus from 1908, when figures of immigrants returning home begin to be available, to 1914, the total immigration was 6,709,357; but the number of immigrants departing from the United States was 2,063,767, or 30.76 per cent! Three out of every ten who came here went back there! For the Jews, however, the percentage of return for these years was only 7.14 per cent; only seven out of every hundred Jews went back. In fact, the Jews were second in stability of all the immigrant groups, second only to—the Irish. In the years 1908 through 1910, for instance, eight out of every hundred immigrant Jews went back, but only six out of every hundred Irish returned. These two groups are exceptionally stable, when compared, in the same years, to the Hungarians, of whom 64 per cent went back, or the North Italians, of whom 62 per cent went back, or the South Italians, of whom 56 per cent returned, or the Croations and Slovenians, of whom 56 per cent returned. For varying reasons, the Jews and the Irish both made a go of it here, fitting themselves into the American economic requirements. Secondary, although noteworthy, is the fact that both the Irish and the Jews had come here not only to improve their economic situation but to escape persecution, one, of British landlordism, the other, of tsarism.

Connected with the factor of permanence of residence was the fact that the Jewish immigration was uniquely a family movement, with a very large number of women and children under 14 accompanying, or sometimes following, the men. Thus from 1899 to 1910, the percentage of women in the Jewish immigration was 43.4, and of children 24.9. The Jews had the highest percentage of children of any immigrant group; the percentage of Jewish women, however, was second to the Irish, with 52.1. With the Irish, though, the high percentage of women did not indicate a family migration; these were not so much wives and mothers coming over, as young girls, who were often saved from the famine of the Irish farm by being sent over to become servants in our country.

### *Where the Jews Settled*

In what parts of the country did the Jewish immigrants settle? In pretty much the same parts as all the other immigrants, but with a slight difference. First it should be understood, however, that where immigrants settle was not determined by any abstract desire of theirs for climate, scenery or geography. These immigrants were not tourists, out to see new territory. They had to make a living and where they settled was decided for them and by them by the opportunities for employment made available by the employers, the economic rulers, of the country. Having arrived in a port on the Atlantic seaboard, New York, Philadelphia, Boston or, for a time, Baltimore, the immigrants' first desire and need was not so much to begin to supplement his overseas voyage by inland travel as to find work. If they found it in the port of entry itself, they remained there—and for that reason our main seaports are to this day large centers of immigrant population of all nationalities. If they had to go away from the port of entry to find work, they did so, provided they could afford the trip, or get financial aid, from employers or philanthropic agencies, for the trip.

Where then did the immigrants settle? From 1899 to 1910, more than two-thirds (67.5 per cent) settled in the North Atlantic states, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New England, the states with the main ports of entry. Similarly the Jews settled overwhelmingly in these states, with a significantly higher percentage of 86, the reason for which we shall see later. Almost one quarter (22.4 per cent) of all the immigrants went westward from the seaboard and settled in the North Central states, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, Michigan, etc. Some Jews also went westward to these states, 10.3 per cent. Adding these figures, we find that 89.9 per cent of all immigrants in those years settled in the North Atlantic and North Central states, while for the Jews the sum is not much different, 96.3 per cent. As for all the other states in the Union, the South Atlantic, the South Central and the Western, employers did not make them attractive for the immigrants, and so they got only 10.1 per cent of all of them, and 3.7 per cent of the Jews.

Now we shall see later that the fact that the vast majority of Jews settled in the ports of entry, particularly the main one, New York, was a perfectly normal result of the requirements and opportunities of the American economy. But the older generation of Jews, who were on hand and in influential positions in Jewish communal life when the new wave of East European immigration began to roll in, tried hard but vainly to change this result. Pressed mainly by the fear of rising anti-Semitism, these Jewish leaders sought with enormous futility to check the general *American* economic trend to rapid urbanization in ever larger cities by trying to disperse the Jews away from New York. In 1882, 3,693 Jews arrived in the port of New York. The Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of New York sent 2,617 of them (71 per cent) to 165 cities in 32 states.<sup>3</sup>

In 1901, the Industrial Removal Office was established for the purpose of arranging for the removal of Jews from New York (and later for a time from Philadelphia and Boston) to the interior. From 1901 to 1911, the I. R. O. distributed 53,372 Jews throughout the United States, but they were only 5.3 per cent of the 850,470 Jews landing in New York in that period. By 1917, the I. R. O. had sent 72,483 Jews to 1,670 cities in all 48 states, but the effort was fruitless. For the overall figures show that, despite all this planning and organized dispersal, of the 1,334,627 Jews who arrived in New York from 1881 to 1911, 73.5 per cent stayed there, and some of the 26.5 per cent who went elsewhere drifted back. Even a project financed by the banker, Jacob H. Schiff (of Kuhn, Loeb and Co.), to have Jewish immigrants land in the port of Galveston, Texas, in order that they might from there be dispersed to western states, resulted only in some nine to ten thousand getting to Galveston from 1907 to 1914, when the project was abandoned.<sup>4</sup>

### **Why They Settled Where They Did**

The basic American economic trend could not be changed by subjective ideological considerations. The Jews, like all other immigrants, settled where they did because that was where, in the American economy, they could find work. Why, then, the significantly higher concentration of Jews in the North Atlantic states (86 per cent) as compared with that of the general immigration (67.5 per cent)? The answer is to be found in the *kind* of work the Jews were able to find employment in as compared with the work obtainable by the non-Jewish immigrants.

Decisive, of-course, in finding a job was not the wish or need of the immigrant but the need of the employer. The skills the immigrants brought with them from the country of origin were secondary factors in determining what they did here. The immigrant had no power to compel an employer to engage him to do the work the immigrant knew or liked; the employer and the employer alone de-

cided what skills he would hire on the expectation that he could make a profit from their use. Now the overwhelming majority of the almost 18 million immigrants who came in between 1881 and 1910 were of peasant stock, with peasant backgrounds and skills. Did they become farmers or agricultural workers here? Not at all. How could they, when the march of industry was sucking hundreds of thousands of American farmers from the land into the cities and factories? But if the American economy did not need immigrant farmers, it did need masses of what were called "unskilled" and semi-skilled workers in heavy industry, in construction work.

It was such work that the peasant brawn could find an employer for. Each immigrant group was herded into a special kind of occupational concentration. The Italians were concentrated in construction work, road-building, ditch-digging, not because the Italian farmer had crossed the Atlantic swelled with the dream of digging America's ditches but because if he did not take that kind of work he found it hard to get any other. Similarly the Slav peasants were drawn into the coal and steel areas, the Bohemians into the slaughter and packing houses of Chicago, and so forth. Obviously since many of the heavy industries that drew upon this mass of immigrant peasant labor were located in the North Central rather than the North Atlantic states, there was the westward movement of about one fourth of the immigrants into these states, as well as the movement of part of those that remained in the North Atlantic states into the western part of these states (Pittsburgh area, the Buffalo area).

### **Jews the Most Skilled Immigrant Group**

We have seen, however, that the Jews were unique in this vast immigration tide in being not of peasant but of urban origin (owing to tsarist restrictions in the countries of origin). The Jews came from urban centers and they had urban occupations and urban skills. Some of the trades in which large numbers of Jews had developed skills were also, at the time of the arrival of the Jewish masses, expanding here. Occupation restrictions in Eastern Europe had concentrated the Jews in light industry. In the United States, light industry was also expanding rapidly and geographically it expanded precisely in the large cities on the Atlantic seaboard, particularly the ports of entry. No more than any other immigrant could the Jews compel employers to hire them at the skills they brought with them. But since production in those crafts was being expanded, the immigrant Jewish workers' skill and need for a job merged with the employers' need for just such workers. This confluence, this flowing together of available skill with employers' needs, was unique. We have seen that in Eastern Europe, the Jewish workers were concentrated in clothing, metal-working, wood-working, the building, textile and tobacco industries. These available skills were much in demand by employers here. Therefore there developed a continuity of occupation. This was not because Jews for

<sup>3</sup> Zosa Szajkowski "The Attitude of American Jews to East European Jewish Immigration (1881-1893)," *American Jewish Historical Society Publications*, Vol. 40, 1951, p. 272-273.

<sup>4</sup> Rose Margolis, *History of the Industrial Removal Office*, typescript thesis, The Graduate School for Jewish Social Work, New York, 1936, p. 143, 42, 173.



some mystical reason prefer to be clothing workers rather than anything else, but because immigrant Jewish clothing workers looking for work will, of course, try to find work at what they can do rather than at something they might abstractly prefer to do but cannot. And if there are jobs open in your own trade of course you take them. And if you have no skill and can get a Jewish worker to help you learn *his* skill you do so, to get a job. Thus a pattern was set over which the Jews subjectively had little or no control.

It is necessary to take into account the little-known or disregarded fact that, from 1899 to 1910, the Jewish immigrants had the highest percentage of skilled workers of any immigrant group. The average of skilled workers in the total immigration was 20.2 per cent, but among the Jews 67.1 per cent were skilled workers! Since the average was lowered by the peasant masses, it is well to know that the Jewish skilled workers had a higher percentage than those immigrants who came even from industrially advanced countries like Scotland (57.9 per cent), or England (48.7 per cent), or Czechia and Moravia (40.8 per cent). It was the skilled worker who was the main figure in the Jewish immigration of that period.

It is possible that the Jewish immigration before 1899 from Eastern Europe did not have quite as high a percentage of skilled workers, but the figures of the 1890 survey of the occupations of East European Jews in New York (quoted in my article, *JEWISH LIFE*, October 1954, p. 18), reveal a high percentage of skilled workers even then. As for the suggestion made by some that the Jews deceived the immigration authorities by claiming to be skilled workers when they were not, there is no reason to assume that if they did so they did it to any greater extent than other immigrants. There are to the contrary the known facts about the occupational characteristics of the Jews in the countries of origin themselves, as given earlier in this article. Furthermore, a British census in 1901 of 29,522 East European Jewish immigrants revealed the fact that about 85 per cent were workers and only 7 per cent traders. In Canada, the figures indicate that from 1905 to 1914, of the economically active Jewish immigrants, 53 per cent were skilled workers. And in the United States again, from 1910 to 1914, the percentage of skilled Jewish workers rose from the 67.1 cited for the previous period to 68.19 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, these facts about the skilled occupations of the Jews when they arrived are corroborated even by the fragmentary data we have about the work they did after settling here. Thus a United States census study made in 1900 shows that in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston and Baltimore, about 60 per cent of the Russian Jews were factory workers (33 per cent of them in the needle trades). A study of the 36,231 Jews dispersed from New York by the Industrial Removal Office from 1902 to 1917 reveals that 61 per cent were skilled workers (23 per cent of them in the needle trades).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7, p. 547-549.  
<sup>6</sup> N. Goldberg in E. Tcherikower, ed., *Geshichte fun der Idisher Arbeiter Bewegung in di Foreinigte Shtaten*, New York, 1943, Vol. 1, p. 349-351; *American Jewish Year Book*, Vol. 51, 1950, p. 55-56; Rose Margolis, work cited, p. 153.

The main characteristic of the mass Jewish immigration before World War I was not that of the "*luftmensh*" who lived on air but that of the craftsman and skilled worker. Under conditions in our country during this period they developed a Jewish section of the American working class. They provided the proletarian emphasis that is outstanding for that period. Their union organization, strikes and political struggles dominate the Jewish life of the time. When their employers were German Jews, they differed from them in class, national origin, language and culture, and in religious background. When their employers became Russian Jews, the class conflict did not lessen, although it may have been conducted in the same language, Yiddish, and against a similar religious background. To the dismay of the upper and middle class Jews, this proletarian mass built their own labor, fraternal and political organizations in close cooperation with those of the American working class as a whole, they established their own cultural organs of press, literature, music and theater, and their own religious as well as secular institutions. By 1914 the new immigration had changed—much for the better—the face and the social composition of the American Jewish population, now numbering about three million.

## ***Jews and the Cry for Justice***

**By Howard Fast**

THREE hundred years ago, Asser Levy led the first group of Jews to settle in what is now the United States, ashore at old New Amsterdam. In the 300 years since then, the original handful have increased to over five million—and it may truthfully be said that their stamp, their mark, their speech, culture and work are everywhere in this enormous land of ours.

It is not my purpose to tell any part of that epic of 300 years; it will be done elsewhere and by those better qualified; but in this small greeting, I want to take note of one thing that should still make a measure of pride in the hearts of all Jews.

There was never a time in those 300 years when most Jews were not denounced by bigots, racists and reactionaries as advocates of change, as radicals of one sort or another, as restless souls who could not be content with the matter of fact of things as they are.

There were villains and scoundrels among these 300 years of Jews—and what people is without them?—but never in those 300 years did a cry for justice rise in the United States or in the colonies before there was a United States that Jews did not respond to.

Never was there a movement for the liberation of man, for social justice, for the advancement of the working class, whether it was the first splendid revolution, the march of old John Brown, or the building of the Knights of Labor, that did not have its Jewish volunteers.

And never did a cry of pain or agony go up, a cry of hunger or injury, that Jews did not respond to.

For other things too, the American Jew will be known and remembered; but remembered best of all, I think, and deepest in the heart of this nation, because in such great number he remembered his own oppression and was not indifferent to the oppression of others.



# THE FIRST YIDDISH THEATER PRODUCTION IN THE USA

By Nathaniel Buchwald

THE Yiddish theater in the United States began with a production presented in New York with the participation of a professional troupe (six men and two women) brought over from London. There is some question about the exact date of this important cultural and historical event. The well known actor Boris Thomashefsky—still an amateur at the time—himself took part in that production. In his memoirs, however, written many years later, he mentions the date, 1880, which is impossible, for he himself had not yet then arrived in the United States. Nor has the exact location of this event, the name of the producer or the name of the play itself been finally established.

According to B. Gorin, the historian of the Yiddish theater, in his *History of the Yiddish Theater* (1918), the production was staged at "Turn Hall on Fourth Street, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues"; the producer was "a certain butcher named Frank Wolf," and "the first piece which was played in New York, with chorus, music, settings, was *Koldunia*" (Goldfaden's *The Sorceress*).<sup>1</sup> Gorin adds that "the poster stated that the world-renowned singer-artist Boris Thomashefsky will sing 'The Bobkelech.'" Actually, at that time Thomashefsky had only dreamed of acting. He was a worker in a cigarette factory and on Fridays and Saturdays was a choir-singer in a synagogue. But he was given this extravagant billing as a reward "for his diligent work in connection with the production." Concerning the date Gorin writes that "it would seem that this presentation was given not earlier than July or later than August 1882."

But, if we have only a few inaccurate details about the production itself, the details are more complete, although inaccurate, about the attempt of the Jewish Immigrant Committee, led by prominent *Yahudim* [middle class German Jews] to stop the production altogether. According to a citation by Jacob Mestel, student of the Yiddish theater and a noted Yiddish actor, the committee warned the troupe that the "recognized and important Jews of New York would not permit themselves to be ridiculed and dis-

graced by a theater in which the actors employed the abominable jargon" [that is, Yiddish].

Gorin ascribes another motive to the attempt to stop the production: "The committee did not like the idea of a play in which there is a peddler named Hotzmach who cheats his customers in the market place, performs silly antics and makes fun of Jews; and a Jewish woman fortune teller who sets fire to a house and burns Jews to death. [These incidents occur in Goldfaden's *Koldunia*—N.B.] The committee, according to Boris Thomashefsky, considered it degrading to present such a play in a land where Jews want to make their home. Thomashefsky further reminisces that the president of the committee delivered a long, threatening lecture and then screamed at the representatives of the troupe: "It was not for nothing that they drove you out of Russia; they will drive you out of America too for such conduct. Here we do not ridicule Jews!"

## The "Yahudim" Try to Stop It

Whether Thomashefsky quoted the precise words of the president of the committee of *Yahudim* or not, the theme is familiar. In Russia, too, the "recognized and important Jews," that is, the representatives of the Jewish bourgeoisie, made similar attacks on the Goldfaden theater, both for its "abominable jargon" and because Hotzmach did not please them. They were shocked by the folk simplicity which they construed as "vulgarity" and by the literary "barbarism" of Goldfaden's plays and characters. They considered his entire "*jargonisch*" theater as a disgrace to the Jews—that is, of their class. They were in large measure responsible for the tsarist edict of 1883 which forbade theatrical performances in the Yiddish language.

It is not remarkable that the "recognized and important Jews" of Russia and the United States shared the same opinions and tried, almost at the same moment, to stifle the new-born Yiddish theater and for the same reasons! Nor is this "tradition" dead. The "recognized and important Jews" of our own day still look down upon both the Yiddish language and the "common" Jewish people, Hotzmach's *landsleit*, who contributed so much to Jewish life in America and to the building of their new homeland. If they only could, these "recognized important Jews" would

NATHANIEL BUCHWALD is an outstanding writer on the Yiddish drama and the author of *Theater* (in Yiddish), a comprehensive study of the art of the theater and of the Yiddish theater in the United States, published in 1943. He is a staff writer on the *Morning Freiheit*.

<sup>1</sup> B. Gorin. *Di Geshichte fun Yiddishe Theater*, New York, 1918, Vol. II, chapter 1.



Boris Thomashefsky

obliterate the masses of Jewish workers and other "common" Jews from the pages of American Jewish history and give place only to the Jewish bankers, merchants, statesmen and rabbis.

Who knows how long the establishment and development of the Yiddish theater in our country would have been postponed if the Jewish Immigrant Committee had succeeded in stopping that production? If they did not succeed, it was not because these "recognized and important Jews" spared any efforts or cash. Even if we discount Boris Thomashefsky's exaggerations and inventions and his penchant for the melodramatic, his reminiscences about the Jewish Immigrant Committee and the first production contain more suspense and "color" than the production itself.

This is the essence of the story as related by Gorin on the basis of Thomashefsky's reminiscences. The managers of the troupe and Thomashefsky as well were really frightened by the threat made by the committee president that they would be deported to Russia if they went ahead with the production. But the producer, a saloon-keeper from Essex Street and no longer a "greenhorn," said "that he would pay as much attention to the committee as to the snows of yesteryear," especially since the public showed such a great interest in the event.

Gorin writes: "Two hours before curtain time the streets around Turn Hall were black with people. The German owner of the hall was terrified by the great crowd and sent for the police. A squadron of police immediately arrived and started swinging their clubs . . . and the 'green' Jewish workers said the proper blessing over the American club and tasted its bitter flavor. But the clubs did not keep the crowd from pressing toward the Hall. The appeal of a theater performance in Yiddish was too powerful to be overcome by a blue uniform.

"Amidst the tumult several wagons appeared. Speakers mounted on the wagons told the crowd what a shame and a disgrace the production was for the Jewish people and

pleaded with the public to disperse peaceably and not pay the slightest attention to the actors and their play."

Nor was this all. The committee bribed the prima donna (with \$200, a lot of money in those days) to plead illness and stay away from the theater. The producer, relates Thomashefsky, then gave the prima donna \$100 more to appear and sing. By this time it was late, the singers and musicians had left, the audience was noisy, the actors behind the scenes were quarreling and the presentation "ended in a brawl and a scandal."

There is reason to believe that the whole story is greatly exaggerated, that the police did not come to drive away the tremendous crowds, since the crowds were not even there. It is certain, however, that the Jewish Immigrant Committee used every means, including threats and intrigues, to stop the performance.

### The Yiddish Theater Grows

Apparently the committee made no attempt to halt subsequent productions in Yiddish. After several weeks the same troupe with the addition of some amateur players renewed its work. The saloon-keeper from Essex Street was joined by two partners in the enterprise ("one of them was a butcher from Bayard Street") and "they made all the preparations for the holiday 'shows.' During Succoth week they played the old Goldfaden pieces, *Koldunia*, *Capricious Daughter*, *Grandmother* and *Grandson*."

Two months later M. Golubok, manager of the now reinforced London troupe, signed a contract for three years with the owner of the "Old Bowery Garden" to stage Yiddish plays every Friday evening and Saturday afternoon. This was the first "home" for the Yiddish theater in the United States.

In a few short years the Yiddish theater movement grew quickly, new personnel arrived and competing companies appeared. Competition and the practice of luring the public with new plays and "spectacles" immediately created a fertile field for the *shund*-makers. [Mr. Buchwald defined "*shund*" in an article in *JEWISH LIFE*, December 1950, thus: "Defying translation, *shund* stands for a combination of hokum, drivel, bad taste, cheap sentimentality, and—terrific mass appeal."—*Eds.*] When Jacob Gordin came to New York nine years later (1891) he already found a full-grown *shund* theater.

After his first visits to a Yiddish theater, Gordin wrote: "Everything I saw and heard was far removed from Jewish life, vulgar, inartistic, false, low and corrupt." But five or six years later the so-called Golden Epoch of Yiddish theater in the United States had already begun with Gordin as the standard-bearer of better plays and enlightened Jewish workers as the main base of the better theater. The cultural kernel which the pioneers of the London troupe had sown with the first Yiddish presentation in New York had produced both healthy shoots and poisonous weeds. But the pioneer work had not been in vain.

(Translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld)

# THE EAST SIDE I KNEW

*A backward look at the Jewish working class community with both its negative side and its unforgettable humanity*

**By Michael Gold**

**O**N THIS 300th anniversary of the settlement of the Jews in the United States, let's not forget to mention, amid the scrolls, speeches, conferences and other manifestations, that (in the words of Sholem Aleichem) it is still "hard to be a Jew."

Jewish students are still admitted on a quota basis in a number of American colleges, universities and medical schools; Jewish workers are widely discriminated against even in New York, one-third Jewish; Jews are still excluded from many hotels, communities and apartment houses.

The teachers at public school used to assure us that every child born in America had an equal chance to become President. Fifty years later, Jews have not been elected to the Presidency, nor has any other child of non-Protestant white Anglo-Saxons, the Negro, the Pole or Puerto Rican, the Greek, Armenian, Red Indian, Italian, or Irish Catholic.

As a boy on the old East Side I often suffered for being a Jew. I can remember a series of school teachers who persecuted us with nazi-like venom. Such specimens are still to be found in the public school system, sheltered under the wings of authority.

I encountered prejudice when I went to work at the age of 12 and discovered how many jobs in factories and offices were not for Jews. Often, the foreman or boss told you frankly that Jews were not wanted. I remember a brief period when I tried to pass as a Lutheran. They looked at my dark hair, my swarthy skin and waved me off like a leper. The hunt for a job is a big part of life in our capitalist hell. Job discrimination was always important, it kept you from your bread. But working for Jewish bosses offset the feeling I might have had against non-Jewish bosses who discriminated. It was hard to know which was worse—working or hunting for work.

I have since met Jewish bosses who were warm, decent people, but somehow, in my difficult youth, I never seemed to meet a decent Jewish boss. Was it because most of them

were cockroach capitalists, frantically on the make? They worked me such long hours and paid me so little, cursed and abused me, fired me so mercilessly.

I learned the hard way that the Jews are divided into classes like any other people. They are not a unified folk. In the garment district of New York one has seen the unholy spectacle of both Jewish and non-Jewish gangsters and cops beating up and even murdering Jewish workers on strike. The killers and maimers were hired and paid by Jewish bosses. Though they may deny that Jews are class-divided, pious, religious and Zionist Jews also have too often betrayed their own people in the battle of trade unionism versus "free enterprise." Let us not forget this simple historical fact, also on the 300th anniversary.

Despite the class conflict, however, I could never fall into the anti-Semitism one often finds among the "allrightniks," the complacent American Jews with money. A Jewish anti-Semite is usually a snob, a climber, a coward or a self-despising neurotic who not only hates Jews but fears and hates all humanity.

But I grew up with a deep love for the Jews, based on that teeming life I had known in my Jewish working class fatherland on the East Side.

My father and mother were so warm and good even in the hell of their poverty. The friends and relatives of our family were interesting, original and loyal folk. And how can I ever forget my "gang"—the group of vigorous East Side boys with whom I boxed and played basketball and baseball, with whom I discussed life and girls, went to burlesque shows and sang barbershop chords on the street corner every night?

I was brought up in the worst slum in America, yet my memories remain of a brave, neighborly, talented people who, though martyred by tragic poverty, yet knew how to laugh and sing and hope. They loved life, they tried to help each other. There was more neighborly love and mutual aid on a tenement block than in a world of Park Avenue apartments.

## *Culture on the East Side*

The European immigrants of 50 years ago brought a humanist Yiddish culture here that was rich, universal and classic, infinitely better than the degraded Philistine culture of today's Americanized "allrightniks."

MICHAEL GOLD is the dean of left wing writing and criticism in the United States. His novel of the East Side, *Jews Without Money*, was first published in 1930 and remains one of the most important creative works ever published on Jewish life in our country. An anthology of his writing, *Mike Gold Reader*, with an introduction by Samuel Sillen, was published this year by International Publishers.





*Hester Street market on a Friday in 1899.*

My father was a sick, harassed and overworked pauper, but he loved the theater. Every week, with his last pennies, he took me, his eldest son, to see a play. Before I was 12, I had seen the dramas of Gorki, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Schiller, Goethe, as well as the Yiddish classicists, Sholem Aleichem, I. L. Peretz, or the East Side's own Shakespeare, the prolific Jacob Gordin. I witnessed the classic art of magnificent tragedians like Jacob P. Adler, Zelig Mogulescu, David Kessler, Bertha Kalich and the others. In our dim, miserable basement on Chrystie Street I heard my father and his friends, semi-literate sweatshop slaves, argue with passion over the classic actors and plays. The East Side was crazy about the classic theater. My father could recite whole portions of *The Merchant of Venice* and Schiller's *The Robbers*, two favorites of the time.

Near us lay a tenement block called by sociologists the "Lung Block," for it contained the highest percentage of tuberculars of any similar area in the world. The people worked 12 and 16 hours a day in the Promised Land, lived on a diet of herring and bread and died at 30 and 40. Where did they find the extra energy to love Shakespeare and Sholem Aleichem? How did the flower of Jewish tenderness survive in such a grinding hell of slave labor; the dear, tender folk songs of my people that I heard at my cradle so deeply human and sad like the Negro spirituals?

The East Side of my boyhood was also a heroic battleground where the sweatshop slaves wrote poetry of protest and rose in a series of great, heroic strikes and political campaigns against their poverty. Against the cops, judges, goons, politicians, editors, clergymen and all the entrenched army of exploitation, they sacrificed and won victories.

The fervent East Side tailors and carpenters who debated

literature and the arts, and revered their actors, musicians and writers, also debated social problems. In crowded tea house and tenement flat, in the sweatshops at work, men and women fought over socialism, anarchism, single tax, Zionism and other proposed roads to freedom. The first Socialist congressman in America, Meyer London, was elected from the East Side. Emma Goldman, the anarchist, lectured in Yiddish to big audiences. Jack London, Mark Twain, Eugene V. Debs and other non-Jews who fought for humanity often visited the East Side and found many admirers and followers there.

### ***Debasement of Jewish Workers' Culture***

In their blood, sweat and tears the Jewish workers of the East Side formed the great garment workers' unions which eventually became the vanguard of labor progress in America. Today, David Dubinsky the slick opportunist dominates some once-Jewish trade unions with his philosophy of a businessman. And the classic stage of yesteryear has been turned into the vulgar musical comedy of Second Avenue, a cheap imitation of cheap "American" musical comedy. The language there has been "Americanized" into a jargon of bad half-Yiddish and worse half-English so that the theaters may catch a younger generation that no longer understands the "mother tongue."

It isn't Dubinsky's fault alone, or any other individual's, that Yiddish culture and the spiritual life of the Jew have become so vulgarized. It has happened with other national groups, too; it has happened to the whole nation. American capitalism has steadily undermined the humane values and aspirations of the fathers of American democracy—Jefferson, Lincoln, Emerson, Whitman and John Brown. Never was there such a cultural degradation. Despite a sprinkling of books, symphony orchestras and art galleries, the automobile and the frigidaire remain the chief gods of the cultural pantheon. The billion dollar corporations which grow bigger and bigger now put their commercial seal on everything America reads, thinks, hears or sees. An Emerson, Whitman or Mark Twain could not find a big publisher today—indeed, they have begun taking Mark Twain out of the libraries. It is the epoch of TV, the comic book and Walter Winchell, John Foster Dulles and Mickey Spillane.

And there has been an increase of the Jewish allrightniks. A certain number of these allrightniks are taking the next logical step for an opportunist in America—they have become appeasers of McCarthyism. It is no comfort to reflect that in every troubled epoch, the Jews, like other peoples, have had their own quota of traitors and renegades, that Hitler had a Judenrat of degenerate allrightniks who spied for him and betrayed Jews into the death camps and furnaces.

Yet I sometimes catch myself feeling that the Jews, above all others, should never develop such cancerous growths, which is silly, of course, since the Jews are not a chosen people. We must accept the fact that Jews are like other

peoples and fight our McCarthyite Jews without apologies. The McCarthyites among us are not many. Indeed, the vast majority of Jews, so experienced and sensitized by their long history of persecution, are anti-McCarthy today.

Jewish history is something I teach to my children to give them understanding and a just pride and to make them strong against McCarthyite intimidation.

### **Traditional Fight for Freedom**

Ours is a heritage of courage in the face of impossible odds. It is a history of battle for human freedom. This is probably why Jews feel so keenly the shame of having McCarthyites in our midst. It goes against the great tradition.

I, who am no longer a synagogue goer, join with all my heart those centuries of Jews who died for the synagogue. They really died for man's right to his own life, his own soul, culture, religion. When such freedom is denied the Jew, you can be sure it is being denied to all mankind. To fight for the rights of Jews is to fight for human advance, just as to fight for Negro rights in America is to fight for the equality and freedom of all Americans. When Jew and Negro are equal guests at the board, America will be free at last—and not till then.

Some of the youth born in America have been made ashamed of their European parents and the rich, humane Yiddish culture. How few novels and other books on Jewish themes have been written by Jewish authors of the second generation! There are many, many Jewish writers, but they seem to have run away from their people. One

doesn't ask them to give up the universality which is the right of every author, the freedom to follow one's own special creative star. But let every American Jew in his lifetime bring one little stone, at least, to the building of the temple of world brotherhood, the house of his people. Let him do it for the good of his own soul, for his own liberation from the neurotic twists and guilts that come with Jewish anti-Semitism, however disguised.

It is hard to be a Jew. But it is also hard to be a man today, not a grovelling opportunist, informer and fascist stooge. A Jew who loves his people today has to fight against fascism. The Jew can survive only under democracy. The history of the Jew is a continuous story of such struggle. From the time of Jeremiah to the Spanish civil war, where so many heroic young Jews filled the ranks of democracy, Jews have fought and died for the brotherhood of man, the scientific name of which today is socialism. That is the great tradition.

As an American Jew, I share the culture of the land where I was born, whose schools and literature formed my mind. I love also the poetry and brotherhood of the progressive Jewish tradition. Working class America is my father, working class Jewry is my mother. The best in both cultures is joined in man's universal struggle for equality, liberty, and fraternity. There is no conflict in my mind. I am a man and a Jew. As for the McCarthyites, Jewish or otherwise, like all fascists, they are fast losing the world. With them will go wage-slavery, racism and commercialized culture! *Lechaim*, Jews, it is grand to be a man and a Jew!

### **It's happening in the 301st year:**

## **A MIAMI MOTHER'S WARNING**

**By Mrs. Augusta Birnberg**

**T**O THE Jews of Miami: Make no mistake. An Anti-Semitic drive is strongly on its way. I know. I have taken an oath, therefore I cannot reveal how I know.

Damon Runyon, Jr., has accused me of being a card-carrying Communist. I want to state here and now, I am not and never have been a Communist. If he can lie about me, logic leads me to believe that he can lie about anyone. Hitler started by calling every self-respecting, liberal, intelligent person a Communist and wound up by spitting out those few Jews who took him to their bosoms.

The fear for my child mounts higher and higher with each sleepless night. They will take her away from me "legally," my heart tells me, or they will come in the middle of the night and break windows, as witness the organized telephone calls that come to me. The past weeks of emotional upheaval have resolved itself into waves of nausea with my child.

I would have been insulted had the Grand Jury not cited me for contempt. My soul is clean and I can look every man straight in the eye. Raised in a strictly Orthodox Jewish home, I have been taught by the Bible that a "muser" (informer) is the lowest form of human life.

According to Jewish law, a *muser* is not buried in the same cemetery with decent people. A good Jew is not a *muser*. They may cut you to ribbons, but the courageous person who feels that only God is his witness, stands squarely with his shoulders straight—and fights back at evil forces.

But the law has changed its fashion. Our Constitution says, "you are innocent until you are proven guilty." Today's fashion in law is: you are guilty and you must prove your own innocence. My message to the common man is: You haven't a chance—unless you support the Constitution as it was written by our revered forefathers, may they sleep in eternal peace!

The men of the bar are terrified. The few that you can count on the fingers of one hand, know they are jeopardizing their careers by defending you. To these few men: Courage! God will give you strength and we will not falter. To all attorneys who fear for their livelihood: Here is your challenge! Teach [Florida Attorney General] Brautigam the law, which you have pledged to uphold. He and his cohorts are making their own laws.

Make my home safe! Let me bring my child home. I am lost without her.

## Victory Forecast for IWO

**A**S we prepared for the press, it was learned that the Subversive Activities Control Board had made a move in the United States Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia to set aside the "Communist-front" registration of the liquidated International Workers Order. A statement of the IWO Policyholders Protective Committee on October 11 said that this is "an important victory for civil liberties. . . . Upon final action of the Court, this will mean that former members of the IWO cannot be hounded under the McCarran act for membership in the order."

### The Misha Yablon Cultural Center

wishes all our members and friends a happy and healthy New Year in a peaceful world  
N. A. GARFIELD, President  
Los Angeles, Cal.

We greet JEWISH LIFE on its 8th anniversary and on the 300th anniversary of Jewish settlement in the USA

**A Group of Members of  
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GREETINGS . . .

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GREETINGS . . .

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Los Angeles, Cal.

**O**WING to pressure of space, a number of greetings, especially from California, could not be included in this issue. They will be printed in the next (December) issue.

### THE EDITORS

GREETINGS . . .

300 years of struggle in the progressive tradition have enriched the democratic heritage of American Jewry. We pledge continued efforts to deepen that heritage—to build stronger bonds of brotherhood with all minorities—toward peace, security and dignity for all.

**A Group of Friends of  
Boyle Heights & City Terrace**  
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GREETINGS . . .

**ROSE and HARRY MARCUS**  
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GREETINGS . . .

**MINNIE PALLER**  
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**FOR A  
WORLD  
AT PEACE**

**WEST  
SIDE  
COMMITTEE  
for  
"JEWISH LIFE"**

Los Angeles, Cal.

### "Observation Post"

—has been omitted from this issue owing to the unusual pressure of material. Sam Pevzner will be back at the post next month.

### Correction

**A** typographical error crept into Abe Strauss' report on the Detroit election situation on page 22 of the October issue. Line 8 of the second column of his report should read, "This event created a . . ." We regret the error.

GREETINGS . . .

Through understanding of mutual cultures we can build the strong bonds of cooperation between the Negro and Jewish peoples which are vital in winning equality and democracy for ALL minorities.

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The members of Parkside  
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**IN MEMORY OF**  
 A GREAT PEOPLE'S ARTIST AND  
 FIGHTER FOR PEACE

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**GREETINGS . . .**  
**FRIENDS FROM**  
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### *Individual Greetings*

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H. Alpert	
J. Moosen	Syracuse, N. Y.
L. Brook	
B. Kalish	Lillian E. Reiner
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Sophia	Tom's River, N. J.
Ruth Farber	
Millie Alexander	Ida Podolsky
L. Holzman	Selma G. Chernoff
S. Siralnick	B. Zelnick
Sonya S. Cohen	Fannie Steinberg
	Fannie Millenky
<i>Newark, N. J.</i>	Yetta Berman
Bess and Leo Ritz..	Ray Birnbaum
Ida and Dave Vines	Pearl Zeitz
A Friend	Ida Dardick
Gladys and	Pearl Weinstock
Hy Mandel	

## GREETINGS

from

### Members of the Emma Lazarus Clubs of

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TOM'S RIVER, N. J.

GREETINGS . . .

### CURRENT EVENTS CLUB

Newark, N. J.

GREETINGS . . .

A GROUP

OF FRIENDS

OF "JEWISH LIFE"

from

Philadelphia and New Jersey

## Greetings from the "Morning Freiheit"

JEWISH LIFE is indeed the embodiment of the very best in Jewish life. Since its inception, and through the years of its publication, this magazine has been a tower of strength to the Jewish masses in their quest for peace, security and a progressive culture.

JEWISH LIFE has rendered invaluable service in stimulating every movement for unity against the war-makers, McCarthyite reaction and anti-Semitism, for the rights of the Jewish people, for a free and independent State of Israel. And JEWISH LIFE may well pride itself in its singular achievement in opening to non-Yiddish speaking Jews the vast riches of our people's culture in Yiddish and their helping to cement the bridge between the generations.

This dynamic magazine now celebrates its eighth anniversary under the banner of the tercentenary of the Jewish settlement in the United States. JEWISH LIFE is itself a highlight in the glorious history of these three hundred years.

Our warmest fraternal greetings and best wishes to JEWISH LIFE on this doubly significant and happy occasion.

Onward to ever greater achievements!

Long live JEWISH LIFE!

*The Morning Freiheit*

PAUL NOVICK, Editor-in-Chief

CHAIM SULLER, General Manager

5715

1954

*Best Wishes for a Healthy  
and Peaceful Year*

We send this greeting in  
loving memory of

**MORRIS SHAFRITZ**

who devoted his life to the  
building of Jewish culture  
and a secure future for  
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**October Issue**

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by Paul Robeson

CHEKHOV'S DRAMAS: CHALLENGE  
TO AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHTS  
by John Howard Lawson

IS FREEDOM AN ILLUSION?  
by Herbert Aptheker

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233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MAN-  
AGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF:  
JEWISH LIFE, published monthly at New  
York, N. Y., for October 1, 1954.

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

Publisher, Progressive Jewish Life, Inc., 22  
East 17th Street, Room 601, New York 3, N. Y.  
Editor, none.

Managing editor, Louis Harap, 22 East 17th  
St., Room 601, New York 3, N. Y.

Business manager, Lester Blickstein, 22 E. 17th  
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2. The owner is: (If owned by a corporation,  
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5. The average number of copies of each issue  
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was: (This information is required from daily,  
weekly, semiweekly, and triweekly newspapers  
only.)

LOUIS HARAP  
Secretary

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 10th  
day of September, 1954.

HARRY KEPECS

Notary Public for the State of New York  
(My commission expires March 30, 1954.)  
[SEAL]



# FROM THE FOUR CORNERS

(Continued from page 2)

**Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer** was named the recipient of the 1954 achievement award of the Pyramid Club, a Philadelphia group of Negro civil and business leaders. The presentation will be made on October 21. Dr. Albert Einstein told the group that "many decent people the United States over will be grateful to you for expressing also their own feelings. You will effectively contribute to a purification of the American political atmosphere."

**Rabbi Morris Adler**, of Detroit, a sponsor of the FEPC movement in that city and a worker for the Michigan Committee on Civil Rights, was given on October 21 the award of the Negro St. Cyprian Episcopal Church for his contributions to racial understanding in Detroit.

**Two weeks after** the synagogue congregation had purchased property on August 5 in Sands Point, L. I., for a new synagogue, the village Board of Trustees set up a zoning law that in effect barred the use of the property as a synagogue. The congregation is appealing to the State Supreme Court.

**Shipment of 20,000** new nazi daggers with swastikas on them for United States businessmen was reported by the *Machinist* on October 7, organ of the International Association of Machinists (AFL). The union is investigating the report after a request was made by a West German metal workers union.

**When a congressional** candidate in Georgia charged that his Jewish opponent represented the "Jewish minority," the League of Women Voters of Georgia early in September issued an appeal to "political leaders and candidates for public office to see that their political campaigns are free from racial or religious bias."

**Fifteen Negro** mechanics were accepted into membership in the previously all-white AFL Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers Union in Dade County, Florida, the Miami NAACP announced early in September. Similar action in relation to other craft unions is planned by the NAACP.

## EUROPE

**Despite a ban** by the Adenauer regime and protests from West German workers, about 1,000 Waffen-SS veterans, Hitler's Black Guard, held a reunion at Iserlohn, Westphalia, on September 30. Pro-nazi and Hitlerian sentiments were expressed by the celebrants. The SS-men placed a wreath

on a local war memorial inscribed: "To the memory of those who died in the first European army."

**The anti-Semitic forgery, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion***, and other anti-Semitic literature is now being distributed in West Germany by a postal book service near Munich.

**The first secretary** of the Israel legation in Bucharest, Daniel Laor, was asked to leave Rumania by the Rumanian government on September 11, because he was charged with having supplied a Rumanian member of the legation with a forged passport out of the country. The employee, Iancu Aron Grinberg, was caught on the border and arrested.

**The Central Committee** of the United Workers Party (Communist) of Poland greeted the Yiddish paper, *Folks-Shtimme* on the occasion of its 1000th number on September 1st.

**A monumental sculpture** in memory of the heroes of the uprising of the Bialystok ghetto in 1943 was made by the Czech sculptor Ludmila Stekhanova and has been purchased by the Ministry of Culture and Art of the Polish People's Republic.

**Of ten child** artists, whose work was chosen by the magazine *Soviet Women* (June 1954) for reproduction from the 8th USSR Children's Art Exhibition in Moscow, was one by 13-year-old Yelena Bernstein of Kiev. In a letter accompanying the picture, Yelena writes: "I am studying drawing in the art studio of the Kiev Palace of Pioneers. I like drawing people most of all. In 1952, one of my

drawings—an Ukrainian ornament—was sent to India. Now my drawing, 'Algebra Lesson,' has been shown at the USSR Children's Art Exhibition in Moscow. . . . My dream is to become an artist and in the USSR children's dreams always come true."

## ISRAEL

**At a press** conference in Tel Aviv during September, Esther Vilenska, Leah Goldman and Dr. Hannah Sneh, who visited the Soviet Union recently, told some new facts about Birobidjan, which they learned at the Birobidjan Pavilion at the Moscow Agricultural Exhibition. In Birobidjan, they said, there were 52 people's schools, two technical schools and 10 secondary schools, all with Yiddish as the language of instruction. At the Khabarovsk University there is a faculty which gives instruction in Yiddish. Scientific and literary works are translated into Yiddish.

**A strike** of ten days of some 300 workers at the Shell Oil Company oil plant in Haifa was settled in mid-September, after mediation efforts by Labor Minister Golda Myerson. The company conceded the demands of the workers in principle. Transport was seriously affected by the strike.

**Trade notes** . . . A \$2,500,000 trade agreement was signed in mid-September between Israel and Rumania. Israel pharmaceuticals, refrigerators, textiles and razor blades will be exchanged for Rumanian oil, timber and chemicals. . . . Bulgaria is understood to be arranging to negotiate a trade agreement with Israel in which she would offer to sell wheat. . . . An Israel government representative went to Moscow in September to confer with Soviet trade officials in connection with an offer by the Soviet Union to increase and broaden trade between the two countries.

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