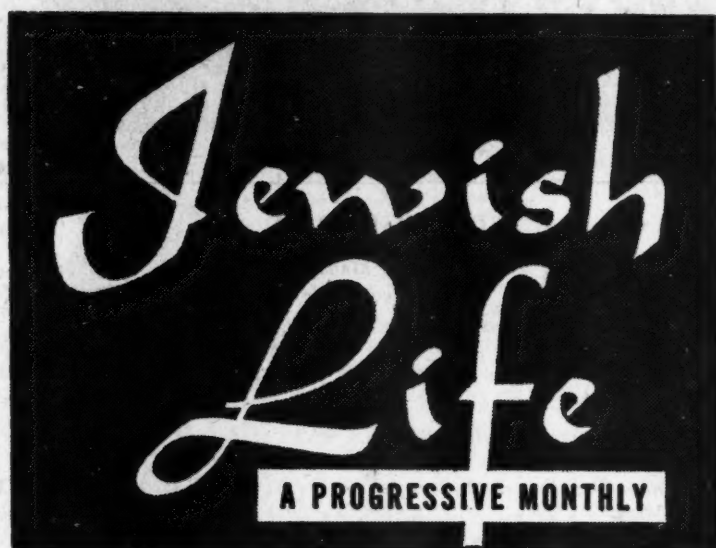


# Stories of Three Hundred Years: XII



**WORLD WAR I AND THE  
JEWISH MASSES (1914-1917)**

*By Morris U. Schappes*

**FEBRUARY 1955 • 25¢**

**GERMAN REARMING CAN BE BEATEN!** *by Jeremiah Lesser*

**McCARRAN-WALTER AND CONGRESS** *by Harriet Barron*

*Handlin's "Adventure in Freedom" reviewed by Morris U. Schappes •*

**Negro History Week:**

**200 YEARS OF SEGREGATED SCHOOLS** *by Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois*

**WHY JEWS FIGHT SEGREGATION** *by Louis Harap*

## From the Four Corners

Edited by Louis Harap

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# GERMAN REARMING CAN BE BEATEN!

*The Paris agreements have far to go before they can become a reality. Majority opposition of peoples of many countries can yet defeat them*

*By Jeremiah Lesser*

**T**HERE is a widespread view in this country that the rearmament of West Germany became a certainty with the approval of the Paris agreements by the French Assembly on December 30, 1954 by the slim margin of 287 to 260. As a matter of fact, this is far from true. The French Senate has not yet voted on the Paris agreements, which also have yet to go through the ratification procedure of the two legislative houses of West Germany, the Bundestag and Bundesrat. And our own Senate still must debate and vote on them. And even if all these hurdles are overcome, people's protest can still nullify the agreements in the year, or so before rearmament is implemented.

This possibility of defeating rearmament is based on the magnitude of resistance to the war-threatening agreements. In France the mass disapproval is so great that the *New York Times* Paris correspondent, Harold Callender, reported that the solid vote against the agreements by the Communist deputies "jibed not only with the views of the approximately one-fifth of the French voters who had elected them but with the views of something not far from five-fifths of the French voters as a whole" (January 2). In West Germany the six-million member trade union movement is conducting a militant campaign in opposition. *I. F. Stone's Weekly* reported (January 10) that the results of a West German poll on the issue conducted by the semi-official Allensbach Institute at Bonn made public on New Year's Day showed that "less than half the [West] Germans favor rearmament and nearly 40 per cent are violently opposed to it."

One can hardly wonder at the fact that the overwhelming popular sentiment in Europe should be opposed to the re-creation of a renazified army. A short decade earlier the Wehrmacht had devastated their lands and slaughtered their people, soldiers and non-combatants alike, in one of the most inhuman wars of all history. The deep-running fear is enhanced by a new element in the situation, the threat of total annihilation by atomic warfare. The Jews of Europe have especial reason for categorical opposition to the rearming of those same forces that murdered six million of their number. Jews from all Europe gathered in Paris on December 12, 1954 to give the strongest expression to their fears of a repeat performance and called on the Jews of the whole world to do likewise. [See article on

next page for a detailed account of this meeting.—Eds.]

The Jews of Israel, a large percentage of whom were the direct victims of Hitlerism in their native Europe, have also voiced their unremitting opposition. In recent months over 400,000 of them signed a petition against German rearmament. Throughout December demonstrations numbering thousands of participants have taken place in various cities of Israel against the Paris agreements. In one demonstration held in Haifa on December 12, the day on which the European Jews were meeting in Paris, former concentration camp inmates marched at the head of the demonstration with their tattooed camp numbers exposed and wearing yellow patches with the legend "Jude." Up and down Herzl Street were heard the slogans, "We will never be in the same camp with the accused nazis!" "The blood of our brothers cries from the earth: there must be no nazi army!"

In our own country the resistance to West German rearmament has not achieved large vocal proportions, except in progressive circles. That apprehension exists there can be no doubt. Milton Friedman reports from Washington in his Jewish Telegraphic Agency syndicated column of December 17, 1954, that "some Washington authorities have had second thoughts about a headlong rearmament program in West Germany. But these officials privately admit fear of questioning a step envisaged by the administration as a defense measure against communism." There is no doubt that McCarthyite intimidation, as Friedman indicates, has subdued the voice of protest in the United States. But the profound uneasiness at the prospect of a revived renazified Wehrmacht has broken out in some places. The *New York Post* has been returning again and again in its editorials to the theme. "As we have frequently remarked in recent days," says an editorial on December 29, 1954, "we are deeply skeptical about the prospective glories of German rearmament." This uneasiness has also appeared in the English-Jewish press. The *Jewish Ledger* (Rochester, N. Y.), for instance, in its December 17, 1954 issue, reprinted the editorial, "Reservations on Germany," from *Congress Weekly* (November 8, 1954) in which apprehension at rearmament is expressed in the phrase, "It is better to be careful than sorry." In its prefatory note the *Jewish Ledger* made the revealing comment that the editorial "dis-

cusses some of the instinctive fears in Jewish minds" over the Paris agreements.

These "fears" are well-founded—but it is of the utmost importance to the security of the Jewish people, as to the survival of the whole American people, that the danger of atomic war from a revived Wehrmacht be removed by the defeat of the Paris agreements. In the short time left for final decision of the Paris agreements, maximum exertions are demanded. *The issue must be discussed.* On his return from a trip to West Germany, Stanley H. Lowell, assistant to New York's Mayor Robert Wagner, expressed deep pessimism about a democratic future for West Germany. He urged that the issue of rearmament be given the fullest discussion when it comes up for Senate consideration. "German rearmament should not become 'an undiscussable is-

ues,' he declared" (Joseph P. Lash, *New York Post*, January 9). This certainly applies to the Jewish community.

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver has stated the problem. In a New Year's sermon at his Temple in Cleveland he affirmed that "only a democratic, disarmed, neutralized and united Germany, as envisaged in the Potsdam agreement, will keep peace." The discussion of this issue, of vital moment to the Jewish people as well as to all America, should take place in all Jewish organizations from the lowest to the highest levels. Above all, individuals and organizations should participate to the utmost in the debate that the Senate will conduct on the Paris agreements. Everyone should let the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and individual senators know that a rearmed West Germany increases the danger of a war which would devastate our country. Act now!

## EUROPE'S JEWS OPPOSE NAZI ARMY

*Jews of various persuasions from many European countries gathered in Paris to oppose remilitarization. They call on world Jewry to do so*

By G. Koenig

**H**ITLER "united" six million Jews from every corner of Europe in the gas chambers and crematoria. To help stop Hitler's heirs from completing this "uniting" action, the representatives of the surviving Jews of Europe met in an emergency conference in Paris on December 12, 1954. They were determined to do their utmost in unity with all decent, patriotic and peace-loving forces of all nations to halt plans to rearm the German Wehrmacht.

Initiative for the conference had come from the Jewish Action Committee Against German Rearmament. This body had been formed over a year ago in Paris. It includes many organizations, fraternal societies and eminent persons of widely different outlook, Zionists, socialists, Communists and religious and non-party Jews. The Action Committee played an important part in the struggle against German rearmament and particularly in the defeat of EDC. Head of the committee is André Blumel, general secretary of the Zionist Federation of France.

The new maneuvers around the Paris and London agreements, then being discussed by the French Assembly, necessitated quick and effective action. This was particularly true since the initiator of these agreements was Pierre Mendès-France, who is himself a Jew. This tended to create illusions among the Jewish people that "The agreements

can't be so bad if a Jew proposes them," and to give the impression among non-Jews that Mendès-France represents Jewish public opinion on the issue.

The aim of the conference called by the Action Committee was to make "the voice of the Jews of Europe ring out with especial power." The extraordinary response to the conference call from all over Europe showed how disturbed the Jewish masses were by these plans to rearm the nazis and how strongly they desired to make a united fight against the danger.

### *A Broad Movement*

More than 400 delegates came to the conference. From England came a delegation headed by Labor M. P. Sidney Silverman and Prof. Hyman Levy. Delegations came from Belgium and Italy. From West Germany came Dr. Max Michel, Social Democratic leader of Duesseldorf and of the "Union of the Victims of Hitlerism." Jewish communities and organizations of Holland, Sweden and Denmark sent delegates. From Israel came General Carmel, former head of the Palmach, Knesset deputy Ben Aron and Jacob Maius.

One can get an idea of the breadth of resistance by French Jews to German rearmament from the following partial list of French organizations represented at the conference: Union of Zionists in France (Sephardic); Zionist group of Former Resistance Fighters; Union of Resistance and Mutual Aid; Left Poale Zionist; Hashomer Hatzair; Union of French Landsmanshaften; Union of Former

G. KOENIG is the editor of the Yiddish *Neie Presse* of Paris.





**No more marching jackboots! Defeat West German rearmament!**

Jewish Concentration Camp Victims; League Against Anti-Semitism ("Lica"); Movement Against Racism, Anti-Semitism and For Peace; Jewish Inter-Union Commission (a trade union group); Union of Small Merchants; Union of Jewish Students. In addition, a very large number of distinguished French Jewish personalities of widely varying political outlook, rabbis, lawyers, teachers, doctors and engineers, attended.

André Blumel's opening words to the conference stressed that it had only one aim, to voice the opposition of the Jews of Europe to any form of German rearmament and their desire for a peaceful solution of the German problem by an agreement among the governments concerned that excluded the revival of Hitlerism. Labor M.P. Silverman discussed difficulties created by the Labor Party leadership comparable to the obstacles set up by some Zionist leaders against those who fight against German rearmament. He called upon the delegates to overcome all obstacles and to establish unity among all Jews against the menace of rearmament. Conference Chairman Chief Rabbi Schilli [of France] gave a moving address. Although, he said, he could not participate in the conference in his official capacity, he felt it his duty to attend as a Jew and join those present, who were people with "clean hands" and a "clear conscience."

The Belgian delegate, Mrs. Jaspa, moved the conference to tears by her description of what fascism and war mean

to a Jewish mother. Alex Moscovitch, a Gaullist councilman from Paris, said that although his sympathies were with Mendès-France, he would resist the policy of rearmament of nazis. A former inmate of a nazi concentration camp ended his speech with this stirring appeal: "Some of us were freed by the Soviet Army, others by the American Army. Let us not permit our hangmen to divide our liberators in order to continue their deeds of plunder and mass murder."

Amidst great enthusiasm the conference unanimously adopted a resolution calling on all Jews throughout Europe and the world to fight unitedly with all peoples against the Paris and London agreements. The conference also decided to call a conference of Jews from all over the world against German rearmament.

### ***Futile Cold War Interference***

The hand of the cold warriors also reached into the conference. The government of Mendès-France, which opens the gates wide for high nazi officers, refused visas to the delegations from Poland and Rumania. The Polish delegation was to consist of Prof. Ber Mark, the noted actress Ida Kaminska and Rabbi Abram Bankier; the Rumanian delegation of parliament deputy Bercu Feldman, Prof. Popper and Mr. Maksi. Their messages, as well as greetings from the Peace Committee of the Soviet Union, which were read at the conference, underscored the terrible sufferings of the Jews during the last war.

And there were Jews who tried to injure the conference. The French Zionist leader Marc Yarblum returned to Paris from Israel in great haste, arranged meetings and issued statements and did everything in his power to hamper the conference. Especially ugly was the attack on André Blumel. The Paris Mapai organ, *Unzer Wort*, baited the conference in a McCarthy-like way and called the participants "communists and fellow-travellers." During the conference itself several prominent Mapai leaders telegraphed Blumel from Israel urging him to desert it. The same game was tried on Silverman and other figures.

One can get an idea why these attempts were made to disrupt the conference from the fact that only a few days earlier some Jewish organizational "experts" had met to fight out the allocation of the tainted money which Adenauer is doling out in accordance with his disgraceful agreement with Dr. Nahum Goldmann. These "experts," of course, did not attend the conference. Instead, as payment for the monies received from Chancellor Adenauer, they tried to halt the united march of the Jews of Europe against resuscitation of an army led by those who murdered six million Jews.

How puny, how isolated and exposed did these Adenauer-Jews appear in the light of the mighty united front created by European Jewry. Those who have not forgotten the heritage of their heroes and martyrs are determined to fight against the rearmament of Germany with all their strength.

# NEGRO HISTORY WEEK

February 13-20

## 200 YEARS OF SEGREGATED SCHOOLS

*An historical account of the American Negroes' struggle for education in the face of a white supremacist system that kept them segregated*

**By Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois**

**T**HE African slave in America had tried physical force against oppression from the time of Columbus to the day of Nat Turner. In every island and every slave state, as Herbert Aptheker has shown us, there were hundreds of slave revolts which prove, as Haitian historians say, that the French Revolution did not spread from France to the West Indies but from the West Indies to France. Negro revolt under the Maroons culminated in Haiti where Britain, France and Spain were worsted and the United States was frightened into stopping the slave trade. The United States then got the territory west of the Mississippi as a gift.

Nevertheless, against force wielded by slaves, greater force brought to bear by organization and arms in white America kept the shackles riveted on many of the Negroes. These Negroes therefore became determined to achieve freedom by brain if not by muscle.

In the early 18th century two free Negroes of Massachusetts built schools and opened them to all who would attend. Then Negroes had schools furnished for them in New York, Philadelphia and Cincinnati. Teachers first were white and funds came from missionary organizations like the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and from individual philanthropists like Thomas Bray and Anthony Benezet. Sometimes Negroes took over the teaching, like Katy Ferguson, who established the Sunday

Schools in New York for white and colored; and John Chavis of North Carolina, who taught some of the most distinguished whites.

In the early 19th century free Negroes conducted schools in New York, Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans and elsewhere. As free public schools became common in the North, a few Negroes entered here and there, but the barriers closed against them and they began to fight. Alexander Crummel and two companions secured admission to a New Hampshire semi-private school but enraged whites dragged the schoolhouse into a swamp. Prudence Crandall received a colored girl into her seminary in New Haven and was crucified in spirit and property. By 1855, led by William C. Nell, the segregated school system of Massachusetts was abolished.

### ***The Negro Public School***

Then there grew up later in the century distinct Negro public school systems, supported by the state, usually with colored principals but not as well equipped as the white schools. These systems spread in Northern cities like New York, Philadelphia and Cincinnati. Private higher schools also were established for Negroes, especially by churches. Lincoln in Pennsylvania, run by white Presbyterians, and Wilberforce in Ohio, run by colored Methodists, gave secondary school instruction and some college work about 1854. In 1850 there were 4000 colored children in school in the South and 22,000 in the North.

After Emancipation there arose a complete Negro public school system in Washington and in several other cities; while in the South Negro voters demanded a public school system of the reluctant whites. The Civil War and Emancipation also brought Negro schools under the Freedmen's Bureau and Northern missions. This system, which covered much of the South, became the Southern system of free public education under the Reconstruction governments.

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**Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois**  
at the turn of the century.

As I have written elsewhere, "The first great mass movement for public education at the expense of the state in the South came from Negroes. Many white leaders before the war had advocated general education for white children but few had been listened to. Schools for indigents and pauper white children were supported here and there and more or less spasmodically. Some states had elaborate plans but they were not carried out. Public education for all at public expense was, in the South, a Negro idea."

### ***Development of Separate Schools***

The question of separating races in these schools was not at first regarded as important. Negroes wanted education on any terms. In theory of course they knew that the mixed school was the democratic ideal and they were sure that the cost of a double system would eventually force a mixed system. They accepted temporarily separate schools, therefore, without much objection.

The action of the states varied. With Reconstruction, public schools were opened in Charleston, South Carolina, without distinction of color. Twenty-five of the 42 teachers were colored. The South Carolina Act of 1870 for a system of free schools was the most complete legislation that the state had ever enacted. Textbooks were provided at cost or free to the poor but the schools were separated by race.

In Louisiana, by the Constitution of 1863 all children were admitted to schools regardless of color. That prevailed until 1877, although often by administrative action colored children were kept out of white schools. Finally segregated schools prevailed. In Mississippi, separate schools by race were demanded in 1875. In Florida, the colored superintendent, Jonathan E. Gibbs, established schools which at first were mixed but afterward they became by law separated by color.

The state system of schools for North Carolina in 1869 called for separation by race. In Virginia the constitution did not provide for separate schools but laws passed in 1869 separated the schools by color. In the District of Columbia, Negroes from 1807 ran self-supported schools. In 1864

public schools were provided with separate and poorer schools for Negroes. By 1867 the Negro schools began to receive a proportionate share of the funds and there came two separate systems, white and colored, each with its own superintendent. About 1890 the system became unified, with a colored assistant superintendent in charge of the schools for Negroes.

Gradually the South, backed by the dictates of the Supreme Court, settled down to a system of public education with separation of whites and Negroes. There were separate buildings and facilities. Teachers in colored schools were usually colored, although in Charleston and Richmond Southern white teachers were long retained, to the disgust of Negroes and retardation of Negro children. The superintendence of the colored systems was entirely in the hands of the whites, save in a few cases of powerless local colored trustees. The white school authorities could allocate the school funds as they pleased and often did not have to report even to the federal government on federal funds.

There came into use a custom, encouraged by the Southern Education Board and its successor, the General Education Board, where discrimination against Negroes was excused, with the dogma of "first educate the whites and later the Negroes." This changed soon to deliberately poorer and cheaper Negro schools. Then the South moved north and planted "Jimcrow" in schools in localities in 20 Northern states. This situation finally became so great a national disgrace that Negroes and many whites began systematically to complain.

It long seemed useless to bring the matter to the courts. When the Supreme Court declared in 1896 that separate but equal schools meant separate but not equal; and when later to the astonishment even of the white South decreed that the city of Augusta, Georgia, could provide an elaborate high school and night schools for whites and none for Negroes, the Negroes were in despair for years. They were reduced to begging local white school authorities for some pretense of decent treatment and only in case of federal appropriations to demand directly from Congress equal shares.

### ***Fight for Negro School Financing***

As Negro voting power increased, Congress got an improved sense of hearing. First, Negroes secured some increase of justice in the distribution and administration of federal funds. The shares of the Negro Land Grant colleges began slowly to increase and the crisis came in the matter of state-supported professional education. The prohibitive and impossible cost of a double system of public elementary schools had long been clear. Secondary public school education for Negroes was even more idiotic and professional education non-existent.

Then a Negro in Missouri in 1936 sued for a chance at training in law, and the Supreme Court, in an unexpected moment of sanity gave him a favorable verdict in 1938. The Bourbon South began to move. They increased the



inadequate scholarships for Negro professional students to study in states where the school systems were more civilized.

The National Association for Advancement of Colored People now began to take notice. For a time it confined its demands to equal school facilities and equal salaries. Then its work was divided in two parts, one of which, with a separate office, funds, and authority, addressed itself under Arthur Spingarn and Thurgood Marshall to the question of discrimination as such. The South rushed to reform its lines. Whites surrendered a large part of the federal funds which, with the connivance of Northern white philanthropy, they had stolen from Negroes for 25 years and more. They tried hard to induce Negroes to consent to "regional" instead of state professional schools; and they finally admitted a few Negro students to Southern white professional schools about which vast advertisement was spread abroad.

But the Spingarn-Marshall team proceeded to challenge the entire race segregation system on the grounds of unconstitutionality. Few dreamed that the Supreme Court, after recently curtailing freedom of speech and instituting thought control, dare give the Negro the justice denied him in education for 75 years!

Many Southern states had hurriedly begun to increase their appropriations for Negro public schools. The new Ford Foundation hired a Southern white newspaper man to write a book showing how marvellous the new Southern support of Negro public schools was becoming—indeed, he implied, it looked as though they would soon become equal to the white! Right on his head fell the decision of May 17, 1954, and to top all, it was unanimous; Race segregation in public schools was declared unconstitutional.

### *The Fight Ahead*

Of course it has not yet been implemented and South Carolina, Georgia and Mississippi, with the highest illiteracy in the nation, are ready to secede from the union when



*Emlen Institute, a secondary school for Negroes in Mercer County, Ohio, which was founded in 1842.*

it is. At best it will be a generation before the segregated Negro public school entirely disappears. But considering the world-wide advertisement that the United States has at last started to become a democracy without a color line, it is going to be difficult for the South and the Northern copperheads to treat the separate school decision as they have treated Negro disfranchisement since 1876.

Nevertheless this decision, even with its delayed implementation and in accordance with the widespread American contempt of law—the decision faces Negroes with a cruel dilemma. They want their children educated. That is a must, else they continue in semi-slavery. Not even the propaganda of Booker T. Washington with his backing from wealth and fame could bribe black America from this determination. Here they still stand; God helping them, they can do nothing else.

Yet with successfully mixed schools they know what their children must suffer for years from Southern white teachers, from white hoodlums who sit beside them and under school authorities from janitors to superintendents, who hate and despise them. They know, dear God, how they know! Yet they also know that they themselves must accept this verdict and even insist on it. They dare do nothing else, for equality is what they have demanded for 250 years and now that a further push has been achieved with dirty accompaniments, they must accept it in justice to generations to come, white and black. They must eventually surrender race "solidarity" and the idea of American Negro culture to the concept of world humanity, above race and nation. This is the price of Liberty. This is the cost of Oppression.

The best of the Negro teachers will largely go because they will not and cannot teach what many white folks will long want taught. Much teaching of Negro history will leave the school and with it that brave story of Negro resistance. This teaching will be taught more largely in the home or in the church where, under current Christian custom, segregation by race and class will remain until the last possible moment.

Despite all this we Negroes will stand fast and pull through. Some of our literature will for a season descend into the "white folks' n - - - -" type, with fulsome praise of what "good white folk" have done for us. Our leadership in social studies may well succumb to money which millionaires will drop into the laps of young white Southern "scholars" and subservient blacks to undertake the study of Negroes, which Negro scholars began.

Yet we will survive. The labor unions are open now for us as never before and beginning to receive us not with condescension but in brotherhood. Europe is listening to us and not so exclusively to the "profesional" whites to tell them about kind slave drivers and "black mammals." Asia has risen to her feet and taken her stand against White Supremacy; and finally Africa too, despite American dollars, artillery and atom bombs imported to back Malan. It's just one more long battle, but we are ready to fight it.

# WHY JEWS FIGHT SEGREGATION

*There are specific and concrete reasons to impel Jews to join the Negro people and all democratic elements to break down the walls of Jimcrow*

*By Louis Harap*

**I**N the chorus of welcome given by democratic America to the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954 outlawing segregation in public education, the voice of the Jewish people was particularly heard. Together with spokesmen for labor and liberal groups, practically all major Jewish organizations issued statements greeting the decision. The American Jewish Congress, for instance, noted that the decision "can open a new era in America democracy and reinvigorate the democratic concept everywhere."

The reason for the fervent greeting of the decision by the Jewish people is of course not far to seek. The various forms of discrimination that are imbedded in the country's economic and social structure are practiced not only against Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and other persecuted groups, but against Jews as well. It is true that the Jimcrow system against Negroes is so much more intense and pervasive than discrimination against Jews that it has a special quality. Nevertheless, the problem is common to both groups and hence calls for common action, together with labor and all democratic forces.

Perhaps the most basic form of discrimination is that in employment. Although, in comparison with Jimcrow against Negro workers, job discrimination against Jews is mild, it is greater than one might suppose. A study issued recently by the Bureau of Jewish Employment Problems of the situation in Chicago shows that of 3700 of the most important firms in that city, 1000, or 27 per cent, barred Jews from employment. So hard-bitten is this discrimination, that Jews were excluded from clerical work even though there was a shortage of workers in this field. In education, the Jews are subject to a quota system in many colleges and professional schools; in housing, Jews are excluded from many communities; and Jews are the targets of overt, violent racism, as we have shown in these pages month after month, with frequent anti-Semitic physical attacks and desecration of synagogues. These facts, known well enough, prove that the Jews have a definite stake in fighting against all racist discrimination, particularly against the persecution of the Negro people.

For racism knows no boundaries: it spills over from one vulnerable group to others, among whom the Jews have figured for many centuries.

Such facts in themselves provide a forceful enough reason for the interest of the masses of Jews in the Supreme Court decision and their full participation in the struggle

against Jimcrow. But the source of this common interest goes even deeper into the vitals of democracy itself. The Supreme Court decision, momentous and glorious as it is, will not be implemented and realized in practice unless the people thwart the unprecedented pro-fascist trend. Today the encroachment of McCarthyism with its thought control, intimidation and repressive legislation is threatening the whole democratic structure. What hope for a full national implementation of the Supreme Court decision exists if a full-blown McCarthyite fascism takes power in Washington? One look at Hitlerism provides the answer.

## *Desegregation and Democracy*

The linkage of the fight against discrimination with the defense of the basic democratic structure was demonstrated over again, if it needs proving, by the pro-fascist, racist spectacle that unfolded in some parts of the South last fall. In some places the white supremacist opposition that developed against implementation of the decision exhibited an overall anti-democratic nature. The specific symptoms were not only white supremacism, but also anti-Semitism and anti-communism. A survey by the 26 regional offices of the Anti-Defamation League released on October 26, 1954, showed that public school desegregation resulted in "a mushrooming of new racist groups, particularly in the South, all of them brandishing white supremacist doctrines." The racists are "linking the desegregation issue with anti-Semitic themes, blaming Jewish groups for having 'subverted' the Supreme Court" (*New York Times*, October 23, 1954). These hate groups also saturate their racism with anti-communism. One of the noisiest of these leaders of hate, Bryant W. Bowles, head of the so-called National Association for Advancement of White People, raised the slogan, "Practice Racial Self-Respect—Fight Communism."

Nor is this anti-democratic movement limited to fringe elements. Southern editor Hodding Carter, Pulitzer Prize winner, was reported from Shreveport, Louisiana, on November 17, 1954, as having said that anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish groups are converting the respectable Mississippi Citizens' Councils, formed to fight desegregation, into "uptown Ku Klux Klans" and were creating "a very dangerous situation." And the powerhouse of the outrageous conspiracy to defy federal law is a group of South-



ern governors. Seven of them signed on November 13, 1954 a declaration of war on the Supreme Court decision, although it is encouraging to note that five Southern governors refused to go along with this criminal conspiracy. Bryant W. Bowles told *Worker* reporter Virginia Gardner that "I received a letter from Gov. [James] Byrnes saying he hoped lots of people would become members [of the NAAWP] and one from Gov. [Herman] Talmadge saying he was glad NAAWP concurred in his sentiments" (*Worker*, October 10, 1954).

It is unfortunate that the Jewish organizations have not fully grasped the full implications of the anti-communist component in the whole anti-democratic movement of McCarthyism today, of which the anti-communism of the hate groups like that of Bowles is a part. The maintenance of the democratic and Constitutional rights of communists is basic to the preservation of the whole democratic structure and therefore should be part of the program of Jewish organizations. For not only continuing gains for Negroes like the desegregation decision but also the security of and lessening discrimination against the Jews, depend on the continuing existence of democracy itself. A reflection of the failure fully to grasp this and obsessive anti-communism can be seen in the statement by Herbert B. Ehrmann, chairman of the executive committee of the American Jewish Committee, in a report released on October 22, 1954. He looked on the decision of May 17 as "a most effective answer to Communist propaganda attacks against America for the handling of its intergroup relations problems." But the importance of the decision is not in some advantage in cold war propaganda but in its opening of the avenue to greater democracy for fifteen million Americans.

### Negro-Jewish Cooperation

The realities exposed by the efforts to flout the desegregation decision once again show how liberation of the Negro people, achievement of full equality of the Jewish people and the preservation of democracy itself are intertwined. It is not therefore remarkable that Jewish organizations have worked closely—according to their lights—with Negro organizations and leaders not only on the segregation issue, but on many aspects of the fight against discrimination. This organizational cooperation is of recent vintage. It took on its present proportions largely since World War II, when the demand of the masses of Negroes for equality became more insistent than at any time since Reconstruction days. This development also spurred the efforts of the Jewish people, heightened as a result of the anti-nazi struggle, to deal more vigorously with the problem of discrimination and anti-Semitism. The logic of the situation made cooperation of Negro and Jewish organizations imperative. Thus joint action of this kind is no altruistic act on the part of the Jewish people but mutual defense activity.

Only a few instances of this extensive cooperation need be given here. The American Jewish Congress, like the

CIO, entered a brief *amicus curiae* in the cases leading to the May 17 decision. Both the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee entered briefs *amicus curiae* in the important Swett case in which the Supreme Court ruled in 1950 that the State of Texas was obliged to admit a Negro into the Texas Law School, thus breaking the path for the May 17 decision. Both the AJ Congress and the AJ Committee entered briefs in the important case in which the Supreme Court ruled in 1948 that restricted covenants were unenforceable in the courts. The most inclusive cooperation of Jews and Negroes with labor and other democratic forces is the recently formed Leadership Council on Civil Rights, a permanent body including 52 national organizations like the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, the major Jewish organizations, the CIO, AFL, Americans for Democratic Action and many church and civic organizations.

Jewish organizations have been especially active in demanding full implementation of the anti-segregation decision by the federal government. The AJ Congress, for instance, on October 5, 1954, urged federal intervention in attempts to violate the decision. "The United States government," said the Congress, "cannot act on the assumption that the Supreme Court decision is self-enforcing" and "must view with profound concern the acts of persons who seek to prevent citizens from exercising their newly-declared right" (*New York Times*, October 6, 1954). And at the year's end the National Community Relations Advisory Council (NCRAC), coordinating agency of many major Jewish bodies, issued a report on the incidents arising out of attempts to implement desegregation in Baltimore, Washington and Delaware. The report stressed the need for firmness by federal authorities in enforcing desegregation and for grand jury inquiries into incitement to violate the law.

### Membership Involvement Needed

Good as these activities are, they fall short in one essential respect that in fact threatens the success of the whole fight. They systematically exclude participation of the masses of Jews from the fight and depend almost totally on legal and legislative action carried on by leaders and professional agency workers. They omit involvement of their membership, of the masses of Jews and hence leave unused the most powerful weapon in the arsenal of democratic struggle, the force of the masses of people themselves.

Where are the mass meetings, the petitions, congressional mass delegations, activity in the communities, especially close action with labor and the Negro people on a local scale, that will give irresistible impetus to the campaign to implement the decision? The way to implementation will not be easy. On the contrary, the Supreme Court action only started the toughest stage of the struggle for desegregation, execution of the law in the face of a highly organized opposition led by the governments of

(Continued on page 12)



# HOW ISRAEL VOTED IN THE UN

*Did the Israel delegation at the Ninth UN Assembly vote in harmony with the aspirations of the Israeli people for peace and for independence?*

*By David Matis*

**H**OW did the Israel delegation vote in the Ninth regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, which adjourned in mid-December 1954? Did the members of the Israel delegation vote for resolutions which would have helped solve such problems as the Egyptian blockade of the Suez Canal against Israel shipping, the state of war between Israel and her neighboring countries of the Arab League or the continuing danger on her borders?

The Palestine question was not one of the over 60 items on the agenda. The Assembly did adopt one resolution on the question of the Arab refugees. Almost every important problem taken up, however, had a bearing on the issues in the Palestine question.

The China question was central in the UN discussions and resolutions. Included were such items as admission to the UN of a nation of 600 million people, which had finally liberated itself from colonialism and from its own corrupt

rulers; frustration of plans for invasion by an illegal government being armed by foreign powers, and prohibition of a blockade of the Chinese shores. All these problems deeply affect Israel.

## *Votes on Chinese and Egyptian Blockades*

The question of China's admission to the UN was raised at the first plenary session on September 21, 1954. The United States delegation moved to recognize the delegation of Chiang Kai-shek. Eleven delegations—Burma, White Russia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, India, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union voted against this resolution. Voting in favor were 43 delegations, among them the delegation of Israel, whose government recognizes the government of People's China. And the fact is that the Chiang Kai-shek delegation is known in the

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*(Continued from page 11)*

Southern states and of widespread white supremacist attitudes not only in the South but in many places in the North. In the coming test of the campaign intense activity by the people themselves is essential. Members of Jewish organizations should press for this mass involvement and see to it that their leaders respond.

But there are also serious obstacles among the Jewish people themselves which hamper the full realization of the desegregation decision. We refer to the persistence of white supremacist attitudes among large numbers of Jews, even among those who are active in organizations which are working for desegregation. These attitudes often are manifested in an area which has a decisive effect on the success of desegregation, namely, Jimcrow in housing. It is evident that the public schools cannot be fully desegregated if the Negroes continue to be ghettoized in housing, thus making for all-Negro schools. Yet it is

quite usual—and far from unknown even among progressive Jews—that movement of Negroes into white neighborhoods is often followed by the exodus of white people, including Jews. Jewish organizations should carry on intensive educational programs among their own members to change such attitudes. The most effective method of dealing with white supremacism among Jews is to carry on militant campaigns against Jimcrow housing by Jewish organizations jointly with Negro and all democratic organizations. Central to the success of these campaigns is the fullest involvement of the membership of these Jewish organizations.

The security of the Jewish people is involved in the fight for the equality of the Negroes. This mutual dependence stems basically from the fact that Jewish security is conditioned on strengthening of democratic process. Maximum participation by the Jewish masses in the achievement of school desegregation will further this goal.

***"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."—Paul Robeson***

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UN as a bitter enemy of the state of Israel. The first vote of the Israel delegation on China aroused great uneasiness in Israel and protests were heard even in the ranks of the governing Mapai Party. *Hador*, official organ of Mapai in Tel Aviv, tried to quiet the storm of protest with the statement that this vote was due to a "misunderstanding." The implication was that the Israel delegation had "wanted" to vote *against* Chiang, but through a misunderstanding, voted *for* him. Was this really so?

A second resolution, presented by the Soviet Union, demanded that the United States stop arming Chiang Kai-shek on Formosa. The Israel delegation voted *no*. Seven nations abstained: Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, India, Syria, Yemen and Yugoslavia. Yet passage of this resolution might have served as a precedent for a demand by Israel to stop the arming of the Arab League.

While the session was in progress, the Security Council was discussing the Egyptian blockade against Israel shipping. Specifically the question concerned the Israel ship "Bat Galim," which had been seized by the Egyptian authorities at the entrance of the Suez Canal. The assembly itself was considering a resolution on Chiang Kai-shek's blockade of People's China, which had striking similarities with the Egyptian blockade of Israel. The resolution bore the title: "Charge concerning the violation of freedom of movement of ships in the area of the China Sea." This resolution, introduced by the Soviet delegate, could have been interpreted as a demand by the UN for a cessation of limitation on water transportation *everywhere*, including the Suez Canal. Yet the Israel delegation helped to kill this important resolution by abstaining on the issue.

Is it possible for governments to order their delegations in the UN to vote against the interests of their own countries and people? The record of the Israel delegation in this assembly on the problem of China shows that the answer can be "yes."

### *Voting on Independence of Colonies*

On the problem of peace the Ninth Assembly session made a positive contribution through the unanimous resolutions concerning the necessity of consultations on rearmament and on the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. However, the same cannot be said on questions dealing with aid in securing independence of colonial peoples and support of those peoples whose independence was being threatened. The peoples of Asia and Africa, including Tunisia, Morocco and Cyprus, this year again knocked at the doors of the UN with the justified demand for aid in their efforts to liberate themselves from colonial domination. The people of Indonesia, who won their independence a few years ago, demanded that Holland be

required to quit occupied Indonesian territory—West Irian and New Guinea.

The appeals of the colonial peoples recall the cry for independence that came to the UN in 1947 from the Jews in Palestine. At the Ninth Assembly, however, such appeals fell on the deaf ears of the Western bloc, which proclaimed from the tribune of the UN that in this period of NATO building and Dulles-Chiang Kai-shek agreements, the "Free World" cannot afford such luxuries as freedom and independence.

How did the Israel delegation vote on such questions?

The Political Committee of the Assembly voted 34 to 14, with 10 abstentions, to accept a resolution which in effect demanded that Holland negotiate with Indonesia the end of Dutch occupation of Indonesian territory. The Israel delegation abstained on this vote. But is the principle of territorial independence of no concern to Israel? When the above resolution was brought to the floor of the Assembly for a final vote, Holland's occupation of Indonesian territory was thus sanctioned.

The Political Committee adopted a resolution recommending negotiations between France and Morocco concerning the latter's independence by 39 to 15, with 4 abstentions. Israel voted *against* the resolution.

Thus the Israel delegation voted so as to isolate Israel from her natural friends—the people of Asia and Africa—and against her own interest.

The direct connection between the establishment of the State of Israel and the struggle of all other peoples in 1954 for freedom and independence was clearly brought out in the discussion and voting on the Korean question. In this discussion Soviet delegate Jacob Malik reminded the Assembly of the principle which the Soviet delegation fought through in the Spring of 1947 during the Palestine debate, namely, that both parties, Jews and Arabs, be invited to participate in the debate. Now he requested that the UN adhere to the same principle and invite both sides to the discussion on the Korean question—People's China, South Korea and North Korea. Malik's position was opposed by the "West," the same "West" which had fought against the Soviet demand in 1947 to invite the representatives of the Jewish community of Palestine. The protagonist for the Western position in 1954 was the Iraqi delegate, Mohammed Fadil El Jamali. In his speech he described himself as "insulted" by Jacob Malik's charges that he had called for violence against the State of Israel, although everyone still remember Jamali's calls at the UN for "blood and fire" against Israel. The Iraqi representative then introduced a resolution to give priority to a Thailand resolution which in effect clinched the invitation on Syngman Rhee's government to the discussion on Korea. The Israel delegation *abstained* on the Iraq proposal. On the later Soviet-Indian proposal to invite all sides of the Korean issue, Israel was not among the nine affirmative votes. Israel thus again showed her disregard for the wishes of her most sincere friends and for such Asian nations as India, Indonesia and Burma.

# A JEWISH WORKER REMEMBERS . . .

*Personal recollections of a needle trades worker of the sweatshop and of struggle for improved conditions, for unionization and for culture*

*By William Rosenblatt*

**I**T IS almost half a century since I came to America.

The sweatshop system still reigned, especially in the needle trades, where most of the Jewish immigrants worked for long hours and small pay. The shops were firetraps.

The first shop I worked in was on 13th Street and Fourth Avenue in New York. Several wooden steps led up to a stuffy, dingy, filthy shop, where some 16 operators sat and sewed at machines, pedalling with their feet. Several girls sat in a far corner, sewing hooks-and-eyes on the dresses. Three pressers with big irons heated by an oven in the middle of the shop pressed the dresses.

The shop was illuminated by large gas-burners, which burned day and night. The air was suffocating. The boss, an angry, nervous man, screamed at the workers all day. We worked from seven to six for small wages—three dollars a week was my pay. When I asked for 50 cents more a week, my boss told me to stay home.

A *landsman* of mine then took me to his shop to teach me how to press "cloaks" (ladies' coats). I paid five dollars, worked two weeks for nothing, learned how to press and became an assistant-presser of cloaks. My new shop was on Houston Street. A wooden staircase led up to the second floor shop. About 50 workers labored there from seven in the morning till seven in the evening; overtime lasted until ten. The machines were driven by an engine with many leather belts. Above the machines large gas-burners were lighted. The finishers, who sewed by hand, were older Jews with *yarmelkes* (skull caps) on their heads. Each had two or three girl assistants. At a long table stood the cutters with long, sword-like knives. The tables had clefts along which the workers cut the cloth for the cloaks. Twelve pressers with giant gas-irons pressed the cloaks. The noise of the machines, the smell of the gas and the banging of the irons made the air so thick it could be cut with a knife.

The boss, a small man with a beard and a *yarmelke*, was constantly "pushing" us to finish the work, urging that he had to "ship it out." At lunch-time the workers would bitterly discuss their long hours and low pay in this stifling shop.

NEEDLE-TRADES WORKERS USED TO GATHER AT RIVINGTON AND Ludlow Streets, called a "market." Here I was hired to work in a shop at 15th Street and Sixth Avenue. This was a "modern" shop employing about 100 workers. Twenty

cloak pressers worked at three tables. But there were also three hat-pressers paid on a piece-work basis. The other pressers worked by the week, from 7:30 A.M. to 6 P.M. My pay was nine dollars a week. The three hat-pressers set a pace that rushed the life out of us. We couldn't stop for breath. After three weeks I barely got out of there alive.

Most of the workers suffered on jobs with long hours and low wages in miserable firetraps. A rumbling began among them: how could they improve this terrible situation? How could they get rid of the "sweating" system and hunger wages? The more courageous of the workers called meetings to prepare for a strike.

In the winter of 1909 a strike of 20,000 ladies waist-makers was called. The strike was a long, bitter struggle and resulted in a partial victory. Local 25 of the "International" (the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union) was established. In later years this local played a major role in improving the conditions of the workers. The proletarian poet and journalist Morris Winchevsky was secretary-treasurer of this local.

At that time I was out of work and was at my wit's end. Finally I got a job sewing skirts for a contractor on Fourth Street and the Bowery. This shop consisted of two dark rooms. Its six operators, two pressers and a few finishers, worked on skirts by the piece, barely earning four dollars a week. We were paid every two weeks, sometimes three, by check; sometimes the checks bounced. We worked in this dreary shop until July 7, 1910, when the historic general strike of 60,000 cloak-and-skirt-makers was called. This strike undoubtedly marked the beginning of the end of the sweatshop system in the nation.

At 10 A.M. of the opening day of the great strike, the streets were filled with cloakmakers marching to the strike halls. The fighting spirit of the workers was wonderful. Daily mass-meetings, constant picket-lines working on two-hour shifts to guard the plants, fearlessness of the strike leaders brought victory to the workers. After ten weeks the workers won a preferential union shop, a 50-hour week, and ten paid legal holidays a year for workers by the week; wages were raised and a board was set up to enforce sanitary conditions in the shops.

I remember especially one episode that illustrates the militancy of the strikers. The office of the Cloakmakers' Union was on 10th Street and Fourth Avenue. One after-



noon I was in the office. Suddenly a crowd of cloakmakers arrived from the halls on their way to a march on the shop district. Goldofsky, one of the strike leaders, delivered a fiery speech. He asked the workers not to hold any demonstrations because special permission had to be obtained for this. It might lead to a provocation, he said. But his speech didn't help. The masses of workers *did* march, sang fighting songs and encouraged the pickets at the shops.

In the course of the strike a strike-breaker named Leibowitz was killed. The entire picket committee was arrested, among them Morris Zigman, Matz, Levin. They were charged with murder but were later freed by the court.

FIFTY YEARS AGO THE IMMIGRANTS ARRIVED IN TREMENDOUS numbers. Most of those who remained in New York settled on the East Side with its dirty, crowded streets. The old tenement houses in which they lived had small, dark rooms. In many places the toilets were in the yard, the washstands in the halls. There were no bathtubs. Gradually people began to move "uptown" to Harlem, where the houses had bathtubs and hot water and some even had steam heat.

Improvements in working conditions were the work of the newly established unions. The waistmakers, cloakmakers, skirtmakers, and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers fought great battles for better living conditions and more sanitary shops.

On the cultural and social life of Jewish immigrant life many books could be written. Four Yiddish dailies and a number of weekly and monthly journals were published in New York. Two of the daily papers, *The Tageblatt* and *The Morning Journal*, were Orthodox. The *Jewish Daily Forward* was socialist and the *Vahrheit* (Truth) was liberal.

Enlightening lectures were given by well-known figures like Dr. Haim Zhitlovsky, Morris Winchevsky, Benjamin Feigenbaum, Joel Entin. There were "Balls" arranged by the *landsmanshaften*. The labor movement enriched the social life of the immigrants. Yiddish literary "circles," drama groups, reading circles, buzzed with activity. Such a reading circle met in my own home with about 15 men and women who discussed national and world problems.

The Yiddish theater was then in full bloom. This was the epoch of Jacob Gordin. Four Yiddish theaters in the city had long sessions of good plays and played to packed houses. Jacob Adler, David Kessler, K. Lipzin, Boris Thomashefsky and other famous actors played in these theaters. There were two non-commercial theater groups: the Literary People's Theater (*Literarische Volks-Bühne*) and the Hebrew Dramatic League.

THE WORKERS WERE HIGHLY CLASS CONSCIOUS AT THAT TIME. My wife tells a story that illustrates this. She was working for Max Solomon, a large cloak-and-skirt manufacturer. While eating in the shop restaurant one day, the

workers discovered that they were being served non-union bread while bakery workers were on strike. The sandwiches began to fly out the windows. This was both a protest against the restaurant owner and an act of solidarity with the strikers.

In 1910, I joined the *Arbeter Ring* (Workmen's Circle), which then played a tremendous role in the cultural-social life of the immigrant workers: it was known as the "Red Cross" of the labor movement. Branches were organized on a *landsmanshaft* basis, so I joined Branch 277, which had recently been organized. When I was sworn in as a member, they demanded that at the next election I must vote for those candidates who promised to do away with the system of private enterprise. They also required that I belong to the union of my trade.

I will never forget my impression of the May First demonstrations and how great a part the *Arbeter Ring* branches played in them. I remember the lively discussions and differences of opinion between the "*alte*" (old ones) and the "*yunge*" (young ones). The battle of words was waged in the branches for a long time.

Like a sudden peal of thunder the news came one Saturday night in 1911 that a fire had burned 143 young girls at the Triangle Waist Company. The news saddened the country and the entire world. Because of the "economies" of two employers, who had kept the fire-escapes locked, 143 sacrifices were given up on the altar of Mammon. After this great tragedy, fire inspectors went through the shops, held drills and taught the workers how to leave the shops most quickly in case of fire.

(Translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld.)

## FOR THE FREEDOM OF MORTON SOBELL

By Walter Lowenfels

Mornings or evenings  
are very much the same,  
but prison walls give dawn  
two kinds of flame:

Outside the early light  
blossoms before our eyes,  
flowers, and then melts  
into morning skies;

In prison it's still dark;  
only the ceiling grows pale:  
Each dawn breaks twice now—  
for us—and Sobell in jail.

His prison chains make music  
on their iron rings  
and on our heart's guitar  
his freedom song sings.

# WORLD WAR I AND THE JEWISH MASSES (1914-1917)

By Morris U. Schappes

**W**HAT kind of war was it that exploded in Europe at the end of July 1914? For the Jews, the war was to be a major influence on their whole future history, both in Europe and in the United States. It was therefore particularly important for them to understand the kind of war it was. When the bleeding and dying were over, President Woodrow Wilson, in a rare flash of candor, told the truth. Master of the seductive liberal phrase, Wilson had been re-elected in 1916 on the slogan, "He kept us out of war," and had in April 1917 taken us into the war on the slogan that we should be fighting "to make the world safe for democracy." But in 1919, touring the country to rouse support for the League of Nations project, Wilson blurted out this "revelation" at the St. Louis Coliseum on September 5th: "This war was a commercial and industrial war. It was not a political war. . . . Under the League plan, the financial leadership will be ours, the industrial supremacy will be ours, the commercial advantage will be ours and the other countries of the world will look to us, and shall I say, are looking to us, for leadership and direction. . . ."<sup>1</sup> For uttering this truth before United States entry into the war in order to help keep us out of it, and during the war as part of the fight for peace, thousands had been arrested and imprisoned as subversive, foreign agents and unpatriotic. Nor did Wilson, even after publishing this truth, hurry to amnesty the political prisoners.

In our country, the Jewish workers were mainly socialist in their aspirations and led by socialists in their union, fraternal and political organizations. Therefore the workers were keenly interested in views of the developing war situation expressed by European socialists.

Since the war had been brewing from the beginning of the century, its character had been analyzed and predicted at several international socialist congresses. There it had been foretold that the big powers would come to blows in order to redive the colonial areas and reshuffle spheres of economic influence and penetration. As far back

as 1907 it had been resolved at such a congress in Stuttgart that if war did come, "the Socialists shall take measures to bring about its early termination and strive with all their power to use the economic and political crisis created by the war to arouse the masses politically and hasten the overthrow of capitalist class rule." Reaffirmed unanimously in 1912 at a conference in Basle, this policy was supposed to guide all the participating Socialist Parties, including that of the United States.

But when the fighting began, most of the leaderships of the European Socialist Parties in the warring countries ignored these resolutions and yielded conveniently to the pressure of their ruling classes and the propagandistic description of their war aims. Where before the Socialist leaders had seen predatory empires at home, they now recognized only homelands and fatherlands to be defended. The Kaiser's propagandists proclaimed this to be a war against the barbarism and tyranny of tsarism with the aim of liberating the oppressed masses thereof. The Allied propagandists, British, French and Russian, proclaimed theirs to be a war to liberate small nations like Belgium and Serbia from Prussian barbarism and all democracy from the threat of Kaiserism. Pliantly the majorities of the Socialist leaderships invented their own "socialist" versions of these slogans and ended by supporting their own ruling class in the war. The vaunted Social Democratic Party in Germany, the largest, the most influential and regarded generally as the most "advanced" in Europe, capitulated most supinely: of 110 Socialist members in the Reichstag, only Karl Liebknecht voted against the war and the war budget. In each belligerent country only minorities of the Socialist leaderships adhered to the socialist position, the largest and ultimately the most influential of these being the Bolsheviks in Russia.

## Relief for European Jews

In our country, at what was then a safe transatlantic distance, there was time to observe all these European

<sup>1</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *The Hope of the World*, New York and London, 1920, p. 101, 102-103.

developments and try to learn from them. Our ruling circles, caught in an economic depression, recovered by busily selling materials of war to both camps until they could determine in favor of which side they would be "neutral," with the Allies speedily winning out. For the three million Jews in the United States, however, the broad Atlantic was not so meaningful. Since almost two million Jews had recently crossed it in the East European immigration tide from 1880 on, there were innumerable close ties with families, relatives and friends remaining in the old countries—and the Eastern war front was exactly in the areas of heavy Jewish population. Thus while the attention and interest of most Americans were fixed on the Western Front and the German rape of Belgium, the Jews here were more concerned with the tsarist armies' threat to conquer Galicia and its large Jewish population on the Austro-Polish frontier.<sup>2</sup> Attitudes to the war and the contending camps were among the Jews shaped under stress of personal anxiety and, almost immediately, of providing active financial aid to hundreds of thousands of distressed Jews in the war-ravaged areas.

Divided along religious and class lines, overseas Jewish relief agencies began to appear within ten weeks after the war began. The first to emerge, on October 4, 1914, was the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering through the War, under the auspices of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, with Leon Kamaiky, editor of the Orthodox daily, *Yiddishes Tageblatt*, as chairman; by July 1917, it had raised \$1,500,000. On October 25, 1914, the Reform Jewish element founded the American Jewish Relief Committee with Louis Marshall, head of the American Jewish Committee, as chairman; by July 1917, the 39 participating national organizations of more affluent Jews had raised \$6,000,000. For coordination of distribution of funds these two groups on November 27, 1914 established the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee with the banker Felix M. Warburg as chairman. The working class and socialist Jews first conducted their relief activities through the Workmen's Circle but in August 1915, they formed the Jewish People's Relief Committee with the Socialist Congressman Meyer London, of New York's East Side, as chairman; by July 1917, it had collected \$800,000. It too affiliated with the J. D. C.<sup>3</sup>

### Anti-tsarist, "Pro-German" Sentiment

In describing the views and positions of the bulk of the American Jewish population with reference to the war and the relationship of the United States to it, it is necessary to make a division between the period before United States entry into the war on April 6, 1917 and the period after that entry. The pre-war period also needs to be subdivided into the part up to the Russian revolutionary overthrow of the tsarist government on March 12, 1917,

and the few weeks between that great change and April 6, 1917, during which the position of large numbers of Jews was swiftly transformed.

Like the American people as a whole, the Jews wanted our country to stay out of the war and to maintain neutrality. Within that framework, however, while maintaining a position of neutrality in deed, the Jewish population developed partisanship in thought, opinion and sympathy. The guiding principle that determined the sympathies of the great bulk of middle class and lower middle Jews, and even of sections of Jewish workers, was their deep hatred of Russian tsarism. Those whose attitude to the war was based simply and only on anti-tsarism became "pro-German." In a similar way large numbers of Irish-Americans expressed their hatred of British oppression of Ireland by being "pro-German."<sup>4</sup> To be against tsarism (and British oppression) and not pro-German required a consistent socialist understanding, a conscious anti-imperialist neutrality that was to be found only among the firm socialists in the Jewish working class.

Less consistent socialists, such as the *Jewish Daily Forward* and its editor, Abraham Cahan, were pro-German not only because they were anti-tsarist but because they had been brought up on veneration of the German Social-Democratic Party as the leading force in the Socialist International and could hardly believe its pro-war position was a betrayal of the German as well as the international working class. Thus even in October 1916, when disillusionment among the Jewish socialist workers with the opportunism of the German as well as other Socialist parties was widespread, Cahan still assured the convention of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union that "Germany has the greatest socialist movement in the world. They have outstripped England in trade unionism and have a greater movement and this all has been achieved in 25 years simply because they have learned the lesson of patience and practical result." In the same vein, bowing before German power and German culture, Cahan had on December 10, 1914 written in the *Forward* that he was "convinced that in the interests of general progress and for Jews specifically a Russian defeat would be fortunate . . . that it would be fortunate for all of Europe and for the whole Jewish population if Germany would take all of Poland and also Lithuania from Russia."<sup>5</sup>

This anti-tsarist "pro-German" sentiment was universal in the Yiddish press and almost as widespread in the Anglo-Jewish press. The other Allied powers, England and France, were, it would seem, indelibly stained with the pitch of the tsarist alliance. The Orthodox *Morgen Journal* on August 3, 1914 predicted that France would "get what she deserves" for this alliance and on September 9 it regretted that England might be defeated, but if it were "it will only be a sign that there is historical justice." And such sentiments were echoed in the *Yiddishes Tageblatt*, the *California Yiddische Shtimme* in San Francisco and the

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Rappaport, *Jewish Immigrants and World War I, A Study of American Yiddish Press Reactions*, unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1951, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Rappaport, work cited, p. 238.

<sup>4</sup> George M. Stephenson, *A History of American Immigration, 1820-1924*, Boston, 1926, p. 207.

<sup>5</sup> Rappaport, work cited, p. 192, 92.



*Tog and American Hebrew* in New York. So extensive was this anti-tsarist "pro-German" feeling that, when Louis Miller tried to make his newspaper, the *Vahrheit*, a pro-Ally journal, he lost circulation so rapidly that he was ousted from his paper in January 1915.<sup>6</sup>

The Zionist organizations were officially neutral, the Poale Zionists adopting that stand in December 1914 at a convention in Rochester, N. Y., and the Federation of American Zionists in June 1915 at a Boston convention. Nevertheless the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs, formed in August 1914 under the chairmanship of Louis D. Brandeis, was pro-Ally in orientation. Yet the majority were pro-German in their sympathies, counting on a victory by Germany and Turkey to advance Zionist ends: a German conquest of Poland and Rumania would liberate the Jews and a victorious Turkey would then agree to having Palestine become a Jewish province. Eager to hold on to Zionist support, the German government in November 1916 promised the Jews they would set up a Jewish democratic central council to govern the Jewish communities in conquered areas and the Zionists rejoiced. Aware of this pro-German orientation of American Zionists, the British took steps to woo the Zionists that finally led to the Balfour Declaration in November 1917. British motives in this respect were neatly stated in a Foreign Office memorandum sent to the Russian Foreign Minister on March 13, 1916: "It is clear that by utilizing the Zionist idea, important political results could be realized. One of the results would be the conversion of the Jewish elements in the East, the U.S.A., and other places, to the use of the Allies; elements whose attitude is at present rather antagonistic to the Allies."<sup>7</sup>

### Anti-war Sentiment

Whatever their views on the war, the organized Jewish workers, usually led by Socialists, took the path of anti-war activity as soon as the European fighting began. On August 8, 1914, Jewish trade unions in Chicago and New York staged meetings to protest "capitalist blood-letting." On August 13, the United Hebrew Trades of New York sent a peace memorial to Wilson, and on August 22 it organized a rally at Union Square under the slogan "Starve the war and feed America," demanding a halt to shipments of food abroad which were causing steep price rises at home. On August 29, New York Jewish working women marched in a peace parade down Fifth Avenue to a meeting in Union Square. On September 10, the Jewish Socialist Federation took part in a socialist conference "to keep our country from being dragged into war." The Jewish labor press vigorously condemned the preparedness propaganda and armament production program. A Cooper Union rally on April 15, 1915, organized by the A. F. of L. Central Federated Union of New York representing 300,000 workers for the purpose of protesting

arms production, was heavily supported by the United Hebrew Trades, the I. L. G. W. U. and particularly the Ladies' Waistmakers Union. At its convention in October 1915, the I. L. G. W. U. resolved to oppose shipping "life necessities" to Europe.

Outside the ranks of labor, resolutions for peace were passed at this time by such groups as the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform) in January 1915, the New York Kehilla (organized community) in May 1915, the Independent Order of Brith Abraham in June 1915, and the Federation of Galician and Bukowinian Jews and the General Conference of American Rabbis in the spring, 1916.

In the fall of 1915, Jewish socialist and labor peace forces were encouraged by a development that took place in the European socialist movement. On September 5 to 8, in Zimmerwald, Switzerland, a conference was held of 38 anti-war socialists from 11 countries; the Jewish Bund was among those represented. Condemning the pro-war socialists, the Conference raised the slogans of "no annexations" and "self-determination of peoples." Its most important effect was to stiffen opposition to the war among socialists in both camps. Thus on December 15, 1915 Karl Liebknecht led the Sparacus group, already grown to 20 Socialist Reichstag members, in voting against the fourth war budget and in calling for action to stop the war. In the United States, this conference gave added strength to those socialists who adhered to a position of anti-imperialist neutrality and the ending of the war. When on November 4, 1915, Wilson reversed himself and came out for "preparedness," he took with him on the road that led inexorably to war the conservative Yiddish press, rabbinical organizations and the Jewish fraternal orders (except for the Workmen's Circle); but the socialist and labor forces put increased energy into their fight against the trend to war. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers' convention in May 1916 resolved to oppose the preparedness and militarization program. In June the convention of the Workmen's Circle warned that "constant preparations for war must sooner or later lead to conflict." Yet, the *Jewish Daily Forward* despite all its clamorous denunciation of the war as caused by "capitalists" and "imperialists," still defended the pro-war socialists in Germany and sharply criticized the Zimmerwald Conference. Opposing the *Forward*, however, were groups like the Jewish Socialist Federation, elements in the trade unions and the Workmen's Circle, and the *Idische Arbeter Velt* in Chicago, edited by Kalman Marmor. This bolder anti-war tendency grew stronger during 1916 and 1917.<sup>8</sup>

### Two Meetings

As the danger of United States entry into the war increased, the socialist and labor forces among the Jews stepped up their anti-war campaign. When the German gov-

<sup>6</sup> Rappaport, work cited, p. 82, 80, 99.

<sup>7</sup> Rappaport, work cited, p. 122, 127, 133, 233.

<sup>8</sup> Rappaport, work cited, p. 83-86, 145, 177, 148, 150, 186, 189-190, 181-182, 192, 194-196.

ernment on January 31, 1917 announced the resumption of submarine warfare, the Executive Committee of the Workmen's Circle called on its 60,000 members to organize anti-war protests. On February 3, Wilson announced the severing of diplomatic relations with Germany. Protests mounted. The Jewish Socialist Federation and the Poale Zion published anti-war manifestoes calling on the workers to resist. On February 8, the Current Events Committee of the Ladies' Waistmakers Local 25 of the I. L. G. W. U., issued a leaflet with a resolution opposing entry into "this horrible war, begun and conducted only for imperialistic purposes and in the interest of big capital," and calling on the I. L. G. W. U. to urge its members not to join the army and to ask the A. F. of L. to call a general strike. On February 11, the convention of the National Workmen's Committee for Jewish Rights, representing 190 organizations with a half million members, passed an anti-war resolution and delegated Morris Winchevsky to represent it on a mass delegation to Washington.

Significant is the contrast between two labor conferences held within 24 hours of each other, one sponsored by the Jewish Socialist Federation on March 11, 1917, the other by the A. F. of L. on March 12. At the first there were representatives also from the Workmen's Circle, the United Hebrew Trades, the I. L. G. W. U., the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and other unions. A declaration was adopted calling on the workers to fight the impending war and our own ruling class. "If our efforts should not have the desired success and war does break out, we shall do everything possible to bring about an immediate peace, to oppose the war and the war policy of our government, to reduce and lighten the difficulties that a war brings down upon the worker, to maintain the labor movement, to fight against censorship of speech and press, against the chains that will be imposed on unions, meetings and strikes."<sup>9</sup>

The second conference, called by the A. F. of L., brought together 148 officers of 78 international unions, A. F. of L. departments and the railroad unions. Out of it came a pledge of unconditional support of the government's policy, coupled with pious "demands" that labor's gains be protected, that capital be asked to make equal sacrifices with labor, and that labor be represented on all national defense agencies. When Gompers reported on this conference to the Council of National Defense, on which he represented labor, he did not even bother to report these futile "demands." Refusing to attend this pro-war conference were the United Mine Workers, the Typographical Union, the Western Federation of Miners, the Journeymen Barbers and the I. L. G. W. U.

On the same day that this conference was held in Washington, there occurred the event that removed the last big obstacle to United States entry into the war and that

caused a tremendous change in the "pro-German" sentiments among the Jewish population. The American war propaganda machine, no matter how much it beat the hollow drum of a "war for democracy," could not be convincing so long as that dubious democrat, the tsar of all the Russias, was one of the Allies. Now on March 12, 1917, the world-shaking Russian Revolution began, and three days later the tsar abdicated. Diversely motivated/rejoicing swept our country, some of it undoubtedly due to the fact that the road to war was no longer obstructed by a possible alliance with hated tsarism. But the jubilation of the Jews, particularly those from Eastern Europe, was unbridled and unprecedented. Amid the dancing in the streets, the overflow meetings and the gay parades, all "pro-German" sentiment vanished, to be replaced overnight by a pro-Ally tide that engulfed the Jewish middle class, lower middle class and parts of the working class. This new pro-Ally zeal was easy prey for the pro-war steam-roller, now unbraked.

### *On the Eve of War*

Even before Wilson's war-message of April 2, 1917, there were Jewish circles that announced that American Jews were now ready to go to war. The *Tog*, the *Varheit*, the *Morgen Jurnal* and the *Tageblatt* in New York and the *Yiddisher Record* in Chicago were conspicuous in this respect. On March 25, 1917, the pro-war Jewish newspaper editors and publishers formed the Jewish League of American Patriots, with Samuel Untermeyer as president, to "undertake the systematic mobilization of the forces of the Jewish race with the view of placing them at the disposal of our country." Immediately after the declaration of war by Congress, the League launched a campaign to arouse Jews to enlist in the army and navy.<sup>10</sup>

Breasting the pro-Ally, pro-war tide, the anti-imperialist peace forces fought back. "We are pro-proletarian," declared a resolution of the Jewish branches of the Socialist Party of New York adopted towards the end of March, and they pledged themselves to work for an immediate negotiated peace if the United States were dragged into the war. Thus did the rank and file Jewish socialists answer in effect the statement made by Morris Hillquit, one of the main national leaders of the Socialist Party, in an interview in the *New York Times Magazine Section*, February 11, 1917. There he had declared that the S. P., in the event of war, would not hinder the government through strikes or by a fight against conscription. Following his leader, Congressman Meyer London had on March 10, 1917 stated in an interview in the *New York Tribune* that if the United States entered the war, American socialists would follow the lead of the European socialists and support their government. The breach between this leadership and the socialist membership was beginning to unfold.

<sup>9</sup> *Noie Vols*, New York, organ of the Jewish Socialist Federation, March 16, 1917; Rappaport, work cited, p. 260-262.

<sup>10</sup> Circular letter, Barondess Papers, New York Public Library, Carton 6; Rappaport, work cited, p. 270-272.



# McCARRAN-WALTER AND CONGRESS

*The racist immigration law continues to reveal its fangs as the people go on with plans to press for revision or repeal in the new Congress*

*By Harriet Barron*

"**A**RE aliens second-class human beings?" asked the *New York Times* editorially on December 6, 1954. The question was provoked by a series of letters and editorials set off by a communication from the noted writer and lecturer, Mrs. Pearl Buck. She protested the closing down of Ellis Island and other detention centers for so-called economy reasons and removal of detainees to county jails.

The American people were shocked that detainees, immigrants and those facing deportation, who were convicted of no crime, were being held in jails as though they were criminals. The exposure forced the Immigration and Naturalization Service to release those being held.

Potent voices were heard against the jailing of detainees. New York Governor Averell Harriman in a speech before several hundred Jewish leaders at the 40th annual dinner-meeting of the Joint Distribution Committee on December 9, 1954, exclaimed: "The oppressed, homeless and freedom-seeking peoples abroad must regard with cynicism an America which bars the door to all but a trickle of immigrants, which bases immigration on the discriminatory and racist concept of national origin and throws immigrants . . . in jail."

What is the basis of this barbaric policy of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which is an agency of the Justice Department? It is the McCarran-Walter law, which makes "second-class human beings" of non-citizens and immigrants. When President Truman vetoed the bill after it passed in 1952, he warned that it would "intensify the repressive and inhumane aspects of our immigration procedures." And his warning has turned out to be all-too-prophetic. As a consequence, the basically racist and discriminatory and anti-Semitic concept and application of this law have aroused many people and groups who have not been moved to protest other repressive legislation.

The overwhelming variety and spread of opposition became apparent from the very outset when President Truman set up a commission on September 4, 1952, following enactment of the McCarran-Walter law, "to study and evaluate the immigration and naturalization policies of the United States and to make recommendations for such legislative, administrative, and other action as in its

opinion may be desirable in the interest of economy, security, and responsibility of this country." After hearing testimony from over 600 individuals in 11 cities representing every phase of American life, the commission concluded "that our present immigration law should be completely rewritten."

Almost immediately and spontaneously groups of every kind throughout the country came into being to seek revision or repeal of the law. The leader of this movement was Senator Herbert H. Lehman. Together with 31 congressmen, he introduced into Congress in August 1953, a measure, known as the Lehman-Celler bill, which would have made drastic changes in the immigration code set up by the McCarran-Walter law. But a conspiracy of Republican and Democratic congressmen headed by the late Senator Pat McCarran kept the Lehman-Celler bill bottled up in committee. To head off McCarran-Walter revision, an Eisenhower administration-sponsored compromise bill (the Watkins bill) was passed which permitted 209,000 immigrants to be admitted within three years. But in the first 14 months after enactment the State Department had issued only 11,316 visas, about nine per cent of the number allowed by the law.

## *Resistance to McCarran-Walter Continues*

The congressional elections of 1954 produced additional evidence that the repeal movement, while sporadic, was still very much alive. Literally hundreds of organizations had passed resolutions against the McCarran-Walter law. And they keep coming. The CIO at its convention in December 1954 reaffirmed "its stand in favor of a liberal immigration policy for the United States and for revision of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 to that end." The Methodist Federation for Social Action in August adopted its 1954 Program, declaring, in part: "We deplore the injustices and cruelties of a law such as the Walter-McCarran act, which President Truman labeled in his veto message to Congress on June 25, 1952, as 'worse than the infamous Alien and Sedition Act of 1798.' We call for its repeal."

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, in August 1954, at its 40th annual convention, resolved to "exert every possible effort towards the passage of the proposed Immigration act as presented by Senator Herbert H. Lehman as a substitute for the McCarran-Walter Im-

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migration act." The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregation at its annual convention in mid-November 1954 urged the new Congress to revise the law, "which does violence to our American heritage and tradition."

There is considerable support for revision in Congress. Candidates for all offices polled on this question in California, New York, Oregon, Michigan, Illinois, Pennsylvania and elsewhere, were predominantly of the opinion that changes must be made in the law. Newly-elected Senators Richard Neuburger, of Oregon, and Patrick V. McNamara, of Michigan, are committed to support repeal. Also committed are newly elected Negro Representative Charles Diggs, of Michigan, and Rep. James Roosevelt, of California. At least 105 congressmen, including those who voted to uphold the Truman veto, are on record as opposed to the McCarran-Walter law.

### ***Dangers of the Law***

The movement for repeal and revision has been primarily based on dissatisfaction with immigration quotas and to some extent with the denaturalization phases of the McCarran-Walter law. Senator Lehman characterized the quota system in the McCarran-Walter law before the President's Commission in October 1952 as "based on the same discredited racial theories from which Adolf Hitler developed the infamous Nuremberg laws. The system is based on the hypothesis that persons of Anglo-Saxon birth are superior to other nationalities and therefore better qualified to be admitted into the United States and to become citizens." Innumerable organizations and individuals have since condemned the denaturalization provisions of the McCarran-Walter law because it creates two classes of citizenship, the native-born and the naturalized. Attorney General Herbert Brownell gave substance to this un-American distinction on St. Patrick's Day of 1953. He declared that he intended to deport 12,000 non-citizens and to denaturalize 10,000 on political grounds.

The plight of thousands of longtime residents of the United States who face deportation was brought to light by the current press stories and editorials that followed the closing of Ellis Island. Similarly, the round-up last summer of Mexicans in the Southwest, the setting up of a concentration camp in the center of Los Angeles and the mass deportation of people, presumably non-citizens, has awakened the people, at least of the West Coast, to the fact that the United States government under the McCarran-Walter law deports one million U.S. residents to Mexico yearly.

Certain menacing provisions of the McCarran-Walter law have not been widely publicized except by the American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born and committees cooperating with it. These features of the law present the threat of frame-up under which millions of non-citizens live in fear of imprisonment and deportation. During the month of January of each year the McCarran-Walter law requires three million non-citizens to go through the Hitler-like system of registration. Failure to register opens the possibility of indictment. But no receipt

of registration is given to the individual. He or she merely fills out a form which is left at the local postoffice. This opens the way to a possible frame-up. Michael Gates, of Philadelphia, registered but the Justice Department claims he didn't. He has been sentenced to six months imprisonment and fined \$2500. On the West Coast Walter Baer, an engineer with 50 years residence in the United States against whom deportation proceedings were dropped some 15 years ago, today faces deportation for alleged failure to notify the Immigration Service when he moved from Portland to Seattle.

Some 2500 non-citizens who are going through deportation proceedings live under McCarran-Walter law supervisory parole conditions. They are threatened with indictment for failure to report in person periodically (most of them once a month at this time), or wilful failure to "give information under oath as to his nationality, circumstances, habits, associations and activities and such other information, whether or not related to the foregoing, as the Attorney General may deem fit and proper."

Worst of all is the self-deportation provision. Under this provision Knut Heikkinen, an editor of the Finnish-American newspaper *Tyomies-Eteenpain*, of Superior, Wisconsin, has been sentenced to ten years imprisonment for alleged failure to apply for papers to deport himself. This is a virtual death sentence for this 64 year-old man.

### ***Act for Repeal***

The McCarran-Walter law can and must be repealed. This can be done if a grassroots movement called for by Senator Lehman is developed. One important recent development is the organization of the American Immigration Conference to promote cooperation among organizations interested in a humanitarian and non-discriminatory immigration policy. Former Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization Earl G. Harrison, of Philadelphia, was named president. Vice presidents include Walter Bieringer, Edward Corsi, Mrs. Mildred McAfee Horton, Dr. George N. Shuster and Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk.

Another opportunity for revision or repeal is now opened with the convening of the new Congress. The broad and wide resistance to the McCarran-Walter law should be mobilized. Since the Lehman-Celler bill died with the adjournment of the 83rd Congress, congressmen must now be queried as to whether they will introduce a revision or repeal and urged to support such bills.

The American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born, meeting in a National Conference to Defend the Rights of Foreign Born Americans, in New York, on December 11 and 12, 1954, adopted a program for repeal of the McCarran-Walter law and defense of its victims. One of the important actions on this program is the convening of a national legislative conference in Washington, D. C. on March 27 to further repeal. To erase the blot of the McCarran-Walter law from the statute books of our country, maximum action of every kind should be carried forward.

# JEWES OF HUNGARY IN 1954

*The post-war regime in Hungary abolished the age-old restrictions on the Jews, who now enjoy equality before the law and freedom of religion*

By Endre Sos

TEN years ago, in the summer of 1944, overcrowded cattle trains carrying Jewish deportees from all parts of Hungary started towards Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen and other extermination camps. Gestapo and SS men dragged many thousands of Hungarian Jews to the death chambers of these camps. If we add those Jews who perished in the so-called "labor service camps," the Jews forcibly deported and executed abroad and those murdered by the Arrow Cross fascists inside the country, the victims of German fascists and their Hungarian accomplices numbered 600,000.

Jews in Hungary had already been considered inferior citizens since the autumn of 1919. The progress of terrorist Horthy bands from the gang-leader's headquarters at Siofok to Budapest was accompanied by a series of anti-Semitic measures, legally and illegally introduced *numerus clausus* [quota system] and *numerus nullus* [total exclusion]. In the universities and schools of higher education the number of Jewish students admitted could not exceed six per cent of all the registered students. Jews were almost completely excluded from public office. They were not eligible for public appointments or government contracts except as "sleeping partners" of non-Jews.

Until the end of the thirties the successive "Jewish Laws" deprived the Hungarian Jews of every means of livelihood. These Hitlerite laws applied the *numerus clausus* to private employees and commercial clerks. Jews were almost completely excluded from the press, publishing firms and the stage.

The annual reports of the Jewish Religious Community of Pest issued in the late thirties and the early forties point out the ever-growing distress of Hungarian Jewry. Lawyers became casual workers, bank clerks worked as errand boys, primary and secondary school teachers as office attendants. The Jewish community itself was deprived of any legal status by this partial and then complete fascism.

Hence one can understand that the Hungarian Jews who escaped from the nazi hell hailed with enthusiasm the liberation of the country and the advent of a new era in which the principle and practice of equal rights for all citizens and religious denominations prevailed.

The Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic declares that all citizens enjoy equal rights and are equal before the law. It emphasizes that "discrimination of any kind against any citizen on grounds of sex, religion or nationality is a severely punishable offense." The Hungarian

penal code states that one who incites against any nationality, race or religion is punishable by long terms of imprisonment. Persons leading such incitement or insulting any one of the religious communities by injurious expressions are equally liable to punishment.

The Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic states: "The Hungarian People's Republic safeguards the liberty of conscience of all citizens and the freedom of religious worship. In order to ensure liberty of conscience, the Hungarian People's Republic separates the Church from the State." These constitutional measures ensure the implementation of the principle: "a free church in a free State." There is no "State church" as in former times; there are no "accepted," "recognized" or simply "tolerated" religions. For the first time in Hungarian history the Jewish community is granted rights equal to those enjoyed by the Catholic Church, which was formerly a "State church."

## A Free Religious Life

The 100,000 Jews who live in Hungary today enjoy complete equality before the law. They are in full possession of all human rights. The Hungarian People's Republic considers freedom of worship as one of the human rights.

Freedom of worship is ensured, among other measures, by the agreement reached between the State and the Jewish community. According to this agreement the Jewish religious community is entitled to hold religious services in synagogues and prayer houses. It has the right of imparting religious instruction, of maintaining a boys' and a girls' secondary school, a rabbinical college and two Yeshiva., of collecting voluntary contributions for community expenses, of collecting donations and sponsoring charitable institutions (social institutions) and of publishing a community press organ.

The united Hungarian Jewish community, which includes the former Orthodox and Neologue branches, merged in 1950. It has about 150 synagogues and prayer houses. In Budapest services are held in 21 synagogues and 25 prayer houses. Foreign visitors to Budapest can easily ascertain the great number of worshippers attending services in these synagogues not only on feast days but on Friday evenings too.

Mention should be made of the synagogue in Szeged, one of the world's most beautiful Jewish churches, which



is now being restored with government aid. The granting of State subsidies for the restoration of the Obuda synagogue—also a monument of art—is envisaged.

The united Jewish community has at present 89 rabbis. In accordance with an agreement, which will remain in force for the next 20 years, the rabbis of the community receive State subsidies. In addition, a State subsidy guarantees the undisturbed continuity of Jewish religious life.

Of the 89 rabbis enjoying State subsidies, three are granted subsidies equal to those received by the bishops of the Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran churches. Subsidies on the episcopal level are received by the two presidents of the Neologue and Orthodox Rabbinical Councils and by one of the Budapest chief rabbis.

The State not only ensures unhampered religious services but also strives to satisfy the ritual requirements of the community members, who are enabled to provide themselves with kosher meat, kosher poultry, ritual baths and many other requirements.

A State-owned factory supplies the necessary amount of unleavened bread [*matzos*]. The government of the Hungarian People's Republic approved the acceptance of *es-rog*s, sent from Antwerp, and of *matzos* given by Stockholm Jews.

The government of the Hungarian People's Republic makes it possible for Jewish artisans who wish to observe the Sabbath to establish several craft cooperatives whose members do not work Saturdays and work longer hours on other days.

The government of the Hungarian People's Republic permits Jewish pupils of State schools exemption on the Sabbath from activities forbidden by ritual laws. On request from parents, Jewish pupils are excused from school attendance on the two first and the two last days of the high holidays.

One of the strongholds of Jewish knowledge is the State-subsidized Hungarian College of Rabbinical Studies, which has world-famous scholars on its teaching staff. There are two Yeshivas, one at Paks and the other at Soltvadkert, for Orthodox rabbinical students.

The Boys' and Girls' Secondary School of the Budapest Jewish community, the students of which score remarkable successes at inter-school competitions, are highly praised by Hungarian educationists. Courses of study in the Talmud and Torah are organized by every large religious community.

### Cultural Activity

Hungarian Jews pride themselves on the National Jewish Library. It contains about 80,000 volumes, among others the world-famous Kaufman Genizahs, a scholarly evaluation of which is now being made by Dr. Sandor Schreiber, rector of the Hungarian Rabbinical College.

There is world-wide interest in the Hungarian Collection of Relics of the Jewish Religion and History, known as the "Jewish Museum," which is housed in a building

adjoining the synagogue in Dohany Street. In a house near this building was born Theodor Herzl, the first propagator of the idea of an independent Jewish state. Throughout the world keen interest is shown in the relics pertaining to Herzl exhibited in the Jewish Museum. A whole series of curios recalling the earlier and recent history of Hungarian Jewry and an abundance of ancient devotional objects and pictures of great value contribute to the significance of this museum, which is appreciated the world over.

The restoration of Goldmark Hall, damaged during the siege of the Hungarian capital, marked an important event in the life of Budapest Jewry. In the years of fascist persecution a special Jewish theater was set up in this hall. When the nazis debased Hungarian culture and expelled Jewish writers, musicians and actors from its ranks, Jewish artists raised the torch of Hungarian culture high. Many of the contributors of the former Jewish Theater rank now among the foremost writers, actors and musicians of the Hungarian People's Republic.

The *Uj Elet* (New Life), an organ of Hungarian Jewry, also fosters the religious culture of the community. It keeps up the noblest tradition of the Jewish-Hungarian press and, at the same time, links it up with the cause of progress.

The Jewish charitable institutions consider it their chief obligation to provide for the old parents, destitute widows and orphan sons and daughters of the Jews murdered during the fascist regime. The Hungarian People's Republic helps the Jewish community, among other ways, by maintaining several old age homes. In these State-subsidized old age homes ritual food is provided. Jews of Budapest maintain several public canteens catering to many thousands of old Jews. The Jewish hospital, which is now being reconstructed, has 50 beds. A 100-bed hospital provides ritual life for incurable patients and for people requiring ritual care until the end of their lives.

Religious, cultural and social institutions are controlled by an assembly of the Hungarian Jews, called the "National Council." This council appoints the executive committee of the Hungarian Israelites, the operative organ of which is the Hungarian Israelites' National Bureau.

Hungarian Jews, remembering their parents, spouses, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters killed in death chambers and extermination camps, are now resolutely working to share in the building of a new Hungary. In that country, where unemployment is unknown, every citizen of the Jewish religion can find adequate means of livelihood. Jewish writers, painters, composers, actors, physicians, engineers and teachers who have won Kossuth Prizes; Jews who have been awarded high distinctions; independent craftsmen producing excellent work; outstanding Jewish workers in socialist trade—all these assert that, although the transformation of the country's social structure necessitated a certain regrouping of Jewish manpower, Hungarian Jews have found their place in every field and occupation.



# IN THE THEATER

By Nathaniel Buchwald

## ODETS' FAMILY FABLE

"The Flowering Peach," by Clifford Odets, now playing at the Belasco, is based on the story of Noah. It is certainly no improvement on the original or on the imaginative *Noah* by André Obey which was presented on Broadway 20 years ago, precisely at the time, in February of 1935, when Odets became famous literally overnight as the author of *Waiting for Lefty*. He was then hailed as a much-promising dramatist of the working class. Now he likes to refer to himself as a "working dramatist" and as such he has come up in the world. His latest play is a vivid illustration both of his "knack" as a fabricator of marketable "entertainment" and his hollow pretense as a playwright of social significance.

There is no basic idea underlying *The Flowering Peach* even if there is in it enough verbal posturing to suggest a "message" of some kind. Nor has the play anything of the naive folklore of *Green Pastures*, which was—despite its offensive racist overtones—a poetic recreation of the Bible. Instead of dramatizing the Noah story Odets has merely exploited it as a "cute" vehicle for a commonplace family-drama loaded with laughs in dubious taste.

Much of the humor, if such it is, stems from the device, by now well-worn, of making the biblical characters talk in the modern vernacular. In addition, Odets derives laughs from Noah's mangled English. Since Menasha Skulnik, playing the part of Noah, is a past master of this kind of "dialect-humor," the result is offensively "terrific." Skulnik plays havoc with English grammar and idiom, pronounces "tiger" as "teeger," greets the parrot arriving at the Ark with "Polly wants a cracker" and—man of God that he portrays—says to his wife, who dons a bonnet of her younger days, "Sister, with such a hat you'll never go hungry." When informed that the snail is both male and female, he comments, "Lucky person!"

Together with his fine character-acting, Mr. Skulnik brings to his part in *The Flowering Peach* the familiar bag of tricks which brought him so much "success" and notoriety on the Yiddish stage as the purveyor of "Skulnikism"—a term that has come to mean a combination of smutty and corny gags, the portrayal of the "funny" *shlemiel* and a "funny" misuse of English mixed in "fifty-fifty" proportion with uncouth Yid-

dish. In the part of Noah he reveals himself once again as the serious and richly talented actor that he used to be, but the aroma of Skulnikism persists.

The family drama superimposed upon the biblical story is made of familiar ingredients. The dramatic conflicts in the Noah family are for the most part of a stock variety. There is the old-fashioned stubborn father who vetoes his son's decision to marry the woman he loves. There is bickering among Noah's sons—the greedy and grasping Shem, the dissolute Ham and the idealistic but temperamental and rebellious Japheth.<sup>1</sup> There are melodramatic complications when Japheth wants to marry Ham's estranged wife and Ham is bent on seducing the girl Noah has chosen as Japheth's wife-to-be. As in all stock melodrama, everything turns out well in the end and the lovers marry with the repentant father's blessing. But since this is a "serious" family drama, a tinge of tragedy is added: Noah's wife, whom God, according to the biblical legend, led out of the Ark together with the rest of the Noah family, is killed by Odets with heart-rending effect. This provides a good, satisfying cry for the audience and an opportunity to play the best scene of his career for Menasha Skulnik.

As to the message in this family drama, this reviewer has failed to find any. Here and there the idea is suggested that man again faces catastrophe which, like the Deluge, might destroy all life on the face of the earth. But in the end the rainbow appears, signifying the covenant God made with Noah never again to undertake the destruction of mankind. So, relax and forget about the H-Bomb. All will turn out well in the end. Remember the rainbow, the rainbow. A "message," indeed!

As "entertainment" it is an effective show. The play is certainly well acted. Bertha Gersten as Noah's wife is even better than Skulnik, displaying less showmanship and more sincerity and discernment, though she, too, succumbs—under Odets' direction—to the "Jewish"

<sup>1</sup> The reviewer of the *Yiddish Day*, Dr. N. Swerdlin, made a curious comment (December 31, 1954) on Odets' portrayal of Noah's sons. Shem, who is traditionally regarded in biblical genealogy as the forefather of the Jewish people (hence the term *Semites*), is depicted in the image of the anti-Semites' stock portrayal of the Jew as an unconscionable, rapacious, scheming, cheating businessman. By the same token, Japheth, the supposed forefather of the "Aryan" race, is idealized as an embodiment of all virtues. Dr. Swerdlin has a point there.

accent of the Molly Goldberg variety.

As a director, Odets is neither here nor there. Lacking serious thought, he also lacks scenic style. His *mis-en-scène* is composed in a vein of obvious "effects" whether they suit the occasion or not. The show is magnificently lighted by A. H. Feder against disappointingly pedestrian settings by Mordecai Gorelik.

This reviewer was not disappointed by *The Flowering Peach*, for Odets has always been a shallow poseur. After *Waiting for Lefty*, in which Odets gave dynamic expression to the social moods and thought-currents of the times, he has never written anything of significance. This goes also for *Awake and Sing* which—following close upon the heels of *Lefty*—was hailed as a masterpiece of social drama. A lone dissenter, this writer summed-up his review of *Awake and Sing* in a concluding sentence: "This domestic drama is an unimportant play, whichever way you look at it." That was 20 years ago. Since then Odets' course as a "working dramatist" has amply confirmed this judgment. His latest play, full of intellectual posturing and devoid of ideas, reveals fully his artistic bankruptcy, an inevitable result of his opportunism and moral bankruptcy, which reached its ultimate low when he appeared before the witch-hunters as a finger-man against the very people who started him on his career.

## A POWERFUL INDICTMENT

"The Troublemakers," by George Bellak, opened at the end of the year at the President Theater after a long run in London. We hope that by the time this review appears in print, the play will be playing to its potentially large audience.

Advertised frankly as a melodrama, *The Troublemakers* is that plus an indictment of the evil forces that have produced the climate of fear in this country. The play revolves around the murder of a student with "different" ideas by his drunken roommates in the dormitory of a respectable university in a very respectable community. Based on an actual event at Dartmouth some five years ago, the play is packed with excitement and makes no bones about taking sides in the conflict between the decent-minded people and those bent upon hushing up the murder of the student with a mind of his own. From the unbearably tense scene in the first act, when the murder is committed, the drama shifts to the con-

(Continued on page 25)

# Letters from Readers

## Controversy on Jewish Schools

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

"A Parent," writing in the December issue, believes that "the *shule* [progressive Jewish school] does an excellent job of giving the children the history and background of the Jewish people" but does not see the necessity of "teaching the children to read and write the Yiddish language." What a paradox: give children the background of centuries, nay, of thousands of years ago, but deprive them of the background of the recent past and present of their people, the Yiddish language. What inconsistency!

"A Parent" states further: "Without the home background of Yiddish customs (!) and language their study becomes an irksome chore." Is that so? What about the children studying Latin, Greek and other languages—is that less irksome or have more meaning or significance? Would "A Parent" have serious disagree-

ment with *this* curriculum?

The fact that one *shule* without Yiddish in Cleveland is more successful than the others indicates, in my opinion, that the thinking of other parents runs parallel with that of "A Parent" and is just as erroneous and ill-conceived. At the bottom of it is the good old idea of the Melting Pot, assimilation, supremacy of Anglo-Saxon culture.

"A Parent" and other progressive parents must re-examine and revise their thinking on this vital matter. Yiddish, the language of millions of Jews in the past and present, must be one of the mainstays of our *shules*; without Yiddish our *shules* will share the fate of the "Socialist Sunday Schools" of several decades ago: they just faded away.

Los Angeles

L. B.

Editors' note: *What do you think about this controversial issue? We urge you to write us your views.*

(Continued from page 24)

science-stricken student who witnessed the crime but did nothing to prevent it. Trapped in the hush-up conspiracy, he becomes part of it, only to be tortured the more by his lack of courage to reveal the truth. When he finally does so, it is of no avail, for all is set for the virtual acquittal of the murderers. However, he redeems his own soul and comes to realize that the prevailing intolerance and intellectual terror are the real cause of the murder and the cover-up.

The impact of the play upon the audience is shattering. But in his preoccupation with the mechanics of murder-melodrama, the author has subordinated the element of intellectual terror to the excitement of the plot. Surely, the suppression of ideas at the colleges and universities far transcends in importance the atypical case of violence dramatized so agonizingly in the play. Under the circumstances, what should properly be the main theme—the murder of academic freedom—is developed feebly and only by indication. Also, the student body, the chief victim of McCarthyism in education, is not brought into focus. The struggle and the protest against the suppression of academic freedom come from without and not from the students and the faculty themselves. The old Irish rebel, the grandfather of the murdered student, carries the ball as far as the social idea of the play is concerned and there is no

counterweight in the university to the timid and capitulating "liberal" professor who preaches the coward's gospel of lying low and waiting "till it blows over."

One may say that the very strength of the melodramatic plot is the main source of the weakness of the play in the sense of failing to project with needed clarity its vital idea. But it is a strong play—strong and overwhelming.

In a generally good cast, William Smithers stands out as the student with a harassed conscience. Ruth White is poignantly moving as the mother of the killed student. Curt Conway is excellent in the character role of the Irish rebel. Against a functional set by Ralph Alswang, the play has been directed by Michael Howard more for its excitement than character development.

Mr. Bellak's experience as a writer for radio and television has stood him in good stead. His situations are vivid, the dialogue is vigorous and the conflicts clearly developed and boldly projected.

*The Troublemakers*, for all its shortcomings, is a good and much-needed social drama.

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# Book Reviews

## HANDLIN REMAKES HISTORY

*A documented, probing critique of a new history of 300 years of Jewish life in the United States*

**By Morris U. Schappes**

*Adventure in Freedom, Three Hundred Years of Jewish Life in America*, by Oscar Handlin. McGraw-Hill, New York. \$3.75.

THIS book is worth extensive consideration only because it is highly touted by the influential propagandists of the American Jewish Committee and therefore of the self-styled official American Jewish Tercentenary, which is dominated by that committee. Since publication, which was timed to coincide with the formal opening of the Tercentenary celebration on September 12, 1954, there have been three kinds of reviews. The uninformed accept the book in good faith because the author is a professor of history at Harvard University and therefore is presumed to know what he is talking about. American Jewish historians who are also politicians in the field praise it with polite unenthusiasm because of the powerful backing the author has. Only those who are both versed in the subject and bold enough to fight the American Jewish Committee have been candid enough to expose the book as shoddy, superficial and uniformed. It is unfortunate that the public appetite, whetted by the Tercentenary, should be fed such unsubstantial fare.

### **Rise of a Jewish "Historian"**

Before we turn to the book itself, a few words about Dr. Handlin may be helpful. In 1941 the Harvard University Press published his doctoral dissertation, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1865*, a scholarly and useful book. In 1947 he appeared with another solid work, *Commonwealth: A Study of the Role of Government in the American Economy*. Shortly thereafter the American Jewish Committee, looking for a figure with general academic prestige as its spokesman in the arena of American Jewish history, selected Dr. Handlin, who proved to be ready, able and willing to serve. He was first introduced in his new role to the

general public in the magazine published by the committee, *Commentary*. But that publication arranged a more impressive debut for him in the profession in May 1948, when it had him preside at a two-day private conference on the writing of American Jewish history attended by 30 hand-picked guests. The main result of this conference was that Handlin was now fully launched.

Students in the field, however, were unfavorably impressed by the absence of scholarship in the cocky articles that soon rolled from his pen into various publications of the American Jewish Committee network. Yet early in 1951 his sponsors maneuvered him into a top spot on the program of the Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society. Although the office he had been promised was denied him, he was shoved into a conveniently vacant place on the executive council of that society.

Later that year there appeared the first major result of the impact upon an academic scholar of the orientation of the American Jewish Committee. *The Uprooted* set out to do a typical public relations job: to counter the reactionary stereotype that immigrants are radicals with the equally reactionary stereotype that immigrants are arch-conservatives. The intellectual politicians who make the Pulitzer Prize awards gave one to Dr. Handlin, but sober reviewers in the professional journals were less cordial. Dr. Vera Shlakman wrote a withering review in *The Journal of Economic History*, Spring 1953 (see also my critical review in *JEWISH LIFE*, December 1951). Dealing with the general immigration into our country, *The Uprooted* did not pay much attention to the Jews. But Dr. Handlin did reveal there the same process of historical distortion that prevails in the book now under review. It was Dr. Handlin's thesis then that the immigrants immediately upon arrival found full equality for themselves and he therefore played down the role of extensive anti-alien ideology and movements in the

nineteenth century. Applying his thesis now to the Jews, he seeks to force the same historical misrepresentation upon us in this book.

### **"History Without Tears"**

In a Rosh Hashona statement on the opening of the Tercentenary, Mr. Ralph E. Samuel, American Jewish Committee leader and chairman of the American Jewish Tercentenary, summed up his view of 300 years of Jewish experience here by calling it "a history without tears." This false glib phrase might well have been the sub-title of Dr. Handlin's book for it is cut from the same public relations cloth as his title, *Adventure in Freedom*. Dr. Handlin literally asserts, contrary to the evidence, that Jewish life here has been an adventure not even "in search of freedom" and surely not "in struggle to attain freedom," but simply and miraculously in freedom. This is history without tears, without struggle and therefore without reality.

*Adventure in Freedom* appears when our freedom or freedoms (four or any number up to the ten of the Bill of Rights) are in greater danger from domestic tyranny than ever in our history and when even a conservative senator like Flanders of Vermont needs to announce publicly that the Jewish people are very much alarmed by McCarthyism and the anti-Semitism embedded in it. But for such dangers and fears there will be found scant historical background in Dr. Handlin's book. In fact, Dr. Handlin declares that after the last world war, the Jews were "freed of the necessity of standing always on guard" (p. 211), that "the war and the consolidated gains of the New Deal had stifled anti-Semitism" and "there was no longer any overt challenge to the place of the Jews and other ethnic groups in America" (p. 255).

Of the McCarran-Walter act, which is directly felt as a menace by many thousands of Jewish naturalized citizens as well as non-citizens, Dr. Handlin can assert that "it does not directly affect American Jews as a group" and if Jews have widely opposed the act "it was not in the least self-interest that moved them" (p. 257) but only an altruistic concern for other "still underprivileged groups." This exaggeration of the equality and security of the Jews today Dr. Handlin projects backward into his history. While the longest chapter in this short volume deals with anti-Semitism from 1890 to 1941, Dr. Handlin is insensitive to, ignores, underestimates and denies the significance of anti-Semitism and its effect upon Jewish life before 1890.

Now it is true that anti-Semitism in the period of trustified capital in any country



will be qualitatively different from anti-Semitism in the earlier period of capitalism. Yet just as trustified capital grows out of capitalism itself, so the quality of the new anti-Semitism has historic connections with the previous quality, level and forms of anti-Semitism. Handlin here of course ignores such basic social facts as capitalism and trustification: Avoiding such reality, he talks only in terms of "freedom" and "democracy," taking the promise for the fact in a way that may seem merely unsophisticated but that is really designed to convey the idea that democracy and freedom are complete under capitalism.

It is also obvious that under colonial and then under United States economic and social relations, the situation of the Jews was and became better than it had been in the countries of origin, under feudalism or a more limited capitalist democracy than we had here. But Handlin presents this contrast crudely in terms of absolutes: anti-Semitism there, no anti-Semitism here. To achieve this effect he must suppress or distort readily available data which, although limited by the inadequacy of research in the field, are still extensive. There is ample evidence to show that it is simply not true that there was "total equality extended to them [the Jews] in the American colonies" (p. 21) or that "the Jew stood in society on a footing entirely equal with that of all other citizens" (p. 74).

To make this picture seem plausible, Dr. Handlin does strange things. In his preface he explains that his is "not a complete history" but "an effort at interpretation, based on materials commonly known to scholars, but perhaps not so well known to the general reader at whom it is directed." The scholars will not be deceived but the general reader needs to be warned.

### How "Welcome" Were the Jews?

Instead of seeing Jewish experience here as a process of struggle for that total equality which to this day they have not fully attained, Handlin presents a static picture void of that process. "After the initial unpleasantness with old Governor Stuyvesant," he writes sweetly, "the Jews found themselves welcome and quickly made at home" (p. 14), which is not true, for not only did Stuyvesant persist in trying to sabotage his instructions to let the Jews stay, but these instructions themselves contained discriminatory provisions. Handlin glibly assumes that where some friendliness is shown to Jews there can be no anti-Semitism from other sources. Yet friendliness and anti-Semitism are not mutually exclusive in any given community. Rev. Ezra Stiles of Newport was

very friendly to Jews but no Jew in colonial Rhode Island ever obtained the right to vote. Even when the colony had become a state, Moses M. Hays had to protest on July 11, 1776 "That I am an Israelite and am not allowed the liberty of a vote. . . ." Yet Handlin declares: "In some places they were actually treated with exceptional favor. In New England, for instance, they were highly regarded as a group" (p. 15). There was no Jewish community outside Rhode Island in New England in the 18th century exactly because the Jews were wary of hostility in that area.

Much of the evidence Handlin cites to support his thesis is garbled. We are told that "Judah Monis, in Cambridge, had had his Hebrew grammar published, and was appointed to teach at Harvard, where he became the recipient of an honorary degree" (p. 15). Actually Monis got his degree before he began to teach. But he was not appointed to teach until after his conversion to Christianity, a fact omitted by Handlin because it would cast doubt upon the "favors" shown to Monis.

Or take Handlin's account of the case of Dr. Jacob Lumbrozo of Maryland in 1658, introduced by him dramatically as "announcing he was a Jew and denying the divinity of Christ. The law was plain, and under it the doctor was accused of blasphemy and brought to trial. Here he openly refused to retract the offensive statements. Nevertheless the court was unwilling to condemn him to the punishment the law prescribed. The case was put off and the prosecution never re-

sumed. Lombrose [sic] lived on, a man of substance . . ." (p. 18). The facts are these: first, Lumbrozo was never "brought to trial"; he was merely charged and arraigned. At the arraignment Lumbrozo explained that he had "said not anything scoffingly, or in derogation of Him Christians acknowledged for their Messias." Since there was no trial, the court could not have been "unwilling to condemn him to the punishment the law prescribed," which, Handlin might well have mentioned, was death. Nor was the case "put off": Lumbrozo was to be imprisoned until he was brought to trial at the next court session. Shortly thereafter a general amnesty declared in England cancelled all prosecutions. As for Lumbrozo's living on, "a man of substance" and presumably a boldly professing Jew, the fact is that five years later Lumbrozo took the oath of denization (a limited form of citizenship) "on the true faith of a Christian" so that the following day he could acquire a 200-acre tract of land. Obviously there is good reason why there was no Jewish community in Maryland until the time of the Revolution.

It is only by such ludicrous juggling of facts that Handlin can reach conclu-

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sions such as that by 1770, "in effect, the Jews had attained complete religious freedom." What kind of religious freedom is it when there are still political and social disabilities connected with the exercise of the freedom to practice Judaism?

### **What Price Religious Freedom?**

Not only does Handlin overlook differences existing among the colonies but he ignores the fact that there were changes from time to time in each colony and they were not always for the better. Thus he generalizes that in colonial America "the Jews promptly secured the full political rights of citizens. . . . Early the Jews were allowed the right to vote and to hold elective office; in 1718 two were chosen constables in New York" (p. 20). Yet in New York in 1737 the following took place in the colonial Assembly: Jews were denied the right to testify in connection with a disputed election to the Assembly; in a fiery anti-Semitic speech the Christ-killing charge was made so eloquently that it reduced assemblymen to tears and stimulated a pogrom atmosphere among the people; finally the Assembly unanimously passed a resolution depriving Jews of the right to vote for assemblymen. It was some years, perhaps not until 1761, before this right was restored. Compare this process with Handlin's misleading portrayal and you will get the measure of the difference between the truth and Handlin's interpretation of it.

Many other errors could be noted in this first chapter, but there is room for only this one more, Handlin's assurance that the Jews were so favored that "indeed, during the Revolution, the serious suggestion was heard that Hebrew replace English as the official American language" (p. 16). Needless to say, there was no such "serious suggestion" and anyone who believes there was can hardly be taken seriously.

### **Distorting the Struggle Against Discrimination**

Handlin pursues the same method of ignoring or distorting facts and the process of struggle in his next chapter on "The Life of the Young Republic." Although he had falsely assured us that "by the time of the Revolution, the Jews shared without question the political privileges of other Americans" (p. 20), he now has to admit that "in a few states the older provisions lingered" (p. 28). But he brushes these off with the confident assertion "that they disappeared *as soon as* their invidious character was challenged. In 1809 North Carolina abolished the discriminatory clause in its constitution and 17 years later Maryland did the same" (p. 28, italics added).

The facts are otherwise. The discrim-

inatory clause in the North Carolina constitution was not abolished until 1868; what happened in 1809 was this: Jacob Henry won his right to his seat in the state House of Commons, but the House, in conceding that right, construed and affirmed the constitutional provision so as to exclude Jews from the right to hold executive, judicial or other office. Thus Henry's partial victory pointed up the persistence of the constitutional discrimination.

As for Maryland, Handlin's idea that it abolished such discrimination "as soon as" its "invidious character was challenged . . . 17 years later" is fantastic. It took 30 years of struggle, from 1797 to 1826, to abolish this constitutional discrimination, and in the last eight years it was a major issue presented to the electorate of Maryland in election after election. In one instance, 16 proponents of the "Jew Bill" were defeated for re-election, with the entire public press involved in the debate pro and con. But Handlin of course must suppress even a hint of this protracted conflict if his rosy picture is to seem even remotely plausible.

Suppression of evidence and chronological scrambling also characterize Handlin's paragraphs on Mordecai Manuel Noah, the most widely-known Jew in our country at the height of his career. Says Handlin: "A Democrat, the quirks of party maneuvering gave him the nomination for county sheriff [in New York]. Here and there qualms were expressed. . . . In any case Noah was elected and served his term" (p. 34). The fact is that what Handlin glossingly calls "qualms" were described by Noah's biographer, Isaac Goldberg, as "the latent anti-Semitism in the municipal life [which] came naturally to a head." Noah, who was appointed sheriff, not elected, in 1822, was denounced in open anti-Semitic terms during his term of office. During his term, the office was made elective. When Noah ran for this elective office, he was met,

writes Goldberg, with "a frank fire of anti-Semitism" and was defeated.

But Handlin blunders on. "In due course," he finds, "political service led Noah to the more lucrative rewards of office. In 1813 President Madison appointed him American consul at Tunis" (p. 34). Of course the "due course" had occurred ten years before the matter of the sheriff. More important is Handlin's statement that Noah, suddenly ordered home, had "the suspicion that he may have lost his post through the unwillingness of the Moslem ruler of Tunis to deal with a Jewish emissary" (p. 35). There was no such unwillingness, as Noah's dealings with the Bey of Tunis testify, and Noah's suspicion, in fact his conviction, was that it was discrimination against him at home because he was a Jew that had caused his recall. To build a case on such distortions—and many similar sins of commission and omission could be cited—is to build no case at all, except by deceiving readers who may be totally uninformed.

### **A Chapter on Anti-Semitism**

Knowing what we do about Handlin's methods, we might well stop here, were it not for the fact that his chapter, "Anti-Semitism; 1890-1941," has won some respectful comments even from those who dismiss the remainder of his work. Yet it differs only in one respect from his general shoddiness: here he has taken the pains to do some research of his own instead of relying altogether on hasty and careless reading of secondary sources.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Handlin explains, a certain stereotype of the Jew had "taken form." "Three elements had contributed to that view: the sense of mystery that traditionally surrounded the Jew, his character as an immigrant and his identification with the city, trade, and finance" (p. 174). It is a major weakness of Handlin's thesis that he has refused to examine how this stereotype was developed right during and through the first two and a half centuries of Jewish life here, so that in his presentation the emerging of the stereotype is all too sudden.

But here it is, the stereotype of the Jew "pack on back . . . or pushing a cart . . . garments . . . old and shiny . . . black derby hat, or . . . ludicrously new and flashy . . . hooked nose . . . accent . . . thick . . . invariably concerned with money . . . stingy, grasping temperament . . . just on the edge of dishonesty . . ." (p. 179). However, "these caricatures," we are told, "were not meant and not taken" as "anti-Semitic insults" at the time (p. 180). And as evidence that no offense was taken Handlin points out that "William Dean Howells planned to make one of the unpleasant characters in

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*The Rise of Silas Lapham* a Jew, but changed his mind when the implications were called to his attention" (p. 180), in other words, when offense was taken!

But Handlin is firm in his judgment that unlike "the Shylock image" (the persistence and propagation of which in our country he ignores or underestimates) "the American stereotype involved no hostility, no negative judgment" (p. 180). To prove that there was no hostility, Handlin blandly and blindly explains that other groups were also stereotyped, so that "in the comic magazines the Jew was joined by the drunken, shiftless Irishman, by the sinister Catholic priest, by the gaudy and ragged Negro, by the stupid, soggy German, and by the avaricious Yankees" (p. 181), all of which were intended to be merely funny but not "hostile." And to clinch his point that these were friendly stereotypes, Handlin, who can apparently see no difference between anti-Semitism and self-criticism, indicates that Yiddish comic magazines used the same caricature of the Jew and illustrates his claim with two pawnshop cartoons from *Puck* and *Der Yiddisher Puck*!

Then Handlin goes on to his next point, that in 1890 a new element was added to the stereotype, that the Jews "controlled the great fortunes of the world" and were "enmeshed in a great international conspiracy" (p. 181, 184). Avoiding any analysis that would show that such a theory would actually serve interests of those ruling classes that did control the fortunes of the world, Handlin tries to smuggle in a new feature much pushed recently in American Jewish Committee circles. To combat the spreading understanding that anti-Semitism aids reactionary ruling classes, the committee and some right wing social democrats have been asserting that anti-Semitism has roots in radical and socialist movements. In foreign affairs, this line spreads the canard about "Soviet anti-Semitism"; in American history, Handlin introduces the theme that "the lines of socialist thinking that connected capitalism with the Jews" (p. 182-183) strengthened the myth of a world Jewish conspiracy. Populists, socialists, money-reformers, radicals in general are woven by Handlin into the pattern of those who spread the new direful anti-Semitic stereotype.

As to those utopians who thought they could cure the ills of capitalism by manipulating currencies and money instead of basic relations, by printing "Greenbacks" or coining silver, Marx in 1870 expressed his opinion of this trend by describing it as "money-nonsense" in a letter to the American Marxist leader, Friedrich Sorge (Marx and Engels, *Letters to Americans*, 1848-1895, New York, p. 81). Later Bebel sagely called anti-Semitism "the socialism

of fools." If some such fools were attracted to socialism, and even got into a socialist party occasionally, their folly lay in allowing ideas helpful to the ruling classes to penetrate their minds. Mature socialist movements recognized that anti-Semitism was an aid to reaction and exposed it as such.

If you ignore class lines and seek to imply that socialists are anti-Semitic from way back, you will naturally tend to slight the dangerous anti-Semitic forces in the ruling class. Thus Henry Ford, who should loom large even in a sketch of anti-Semitism in this period, is politely passed over in one sentence: "Among the credulous [who swallowed *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*] was Henry Ford, who gave the support of his reputation and the columns of his *Dearborn Independent* to these slanders." Period! No need for Handlin to tell the reader for how many years Ford poisoned the minds of how many millions with his mass-circulation weekly and for how many years after that Ford continued to be a source of anti-Semitic propaganda and even of nazism. Similarly he is very delicate indeed in the way he barely refers to those who spewed forth anti-Semitism on the eve of Pearl Harbor as "many well-meaning people, committed to keeping the country neutral, succumbed to the temptation of ascribing to the Jews the responsibility for the nation's foreign policy."

#### Handlin vs. Handlin

In addition to omissions, distortions and misinterpretations, Handlin offers an "analysis" of anti-Semitism that boils down to this: there is "a sense of fear from which the idea of Jewish conspiracy grew" (p. 188) and there is a "literal fear of the city," and these combined with "the precipitant factor" of racism produce anti-Semitism. This is Handlin in 1954. Yet in 1948 Handlin had an article in *Commentary* (July), "Prejudice and Capitalist Exploitation," in which he recognized that "economic exploitation is somehow involved" in anti-Semitism. "There is evidence enough that, in some way, exploitation, an expression of economic ill-being, meshes in with prejudice, an expression of cultural ill-being. The difficulty is to define the relationship. A clue to the solution may lie in the fact that exploitation creates a sense of social uneasiness in which there is room for, and psychological and political utility in, prejudiced behavior. . . . It is very likely that this is the most fertile area for future study in this field. . . ." Behind this jargon one can perceive some sense in the thought that "exploitation is somehow involved." But the present Handlin has turned his back upon such thinking and has abandoned this "fertile area" for pastures

safer, if not for the people, at least for the plutocracy.

There are other matters in this volume that, if there were room, one could properly expose as misleading, ignorant, evasive, or ridiculously slipshod. There are innumerable errors, minor and major. Since he is so unreliable in simple matters of fact, and because he has arrogantly omitted all documentation, the scholar will be wary even in those places where Handlin seems plausible. Other reviewers, however, notably C. Bezael Sherman in *Congress Weekly* (December 6, 1954), have devastatingly pointed to many errors and follies, particularly in Handlin's comments on the Jewish labor movement, on the East European migration, on the culture developed here by this migration, on Israel, on Jewish culture, and so forth.

There is only one more observation that needs to be made. This volume is evidence of Handlin's and his sponsors' contempt for the American Jews and American Jewish history. For even a minimal respect for the subject and the audience would have deterred a Harvard professor from attempting, while working on several other serious books, to knock out a quickie for the Tercentenary on the basis of such hurried and pathetically inadequate mastery of the bare elements of the subject. This book is no credit to Handlin's early reputation, to Harvard with its standards of scholarly work, or to anyone except his sponsors, who deserve no better and are indeed much pleased with what they got.

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# OBSERVATION POST

By Sam Pevzner

## Welcome, Nathaniel

It is good news to the editorial board, and our readers as well, that Nathaniel Buchwald has joined the mag as theater critic and reviewer. He has been the critic and staff member of the *Morning Freiheit* for many years—and we of the editorial board join with thousands who consider Nathaniel Buchwald the leading theater critic in the nation. Buchwald, who writes English and Yiddish with equal facility, will hereafter be a regular feature of this magazine. It is this columnist's hope that Buchwald will occasionally make an excursion into the field of literary and movie criticism on his page—since his views and experience in these fields reflect the same brilliance of analysis shown by his theater commentary. Also, since Buchwald is an ardent Dodger fan, he might slip an argument in now and then on why this columnist should shift his allegiance from the Giants. Welcome, Nathaniel.

## Good Job, We Think

The "Fact Sheet on West German Rearmament" in our January issue was printed in a brochure—and it has already been distributed in 43,000 copies throughout the land. Many more orders have come in. The grave concern of the American people with the suicidal policy of rearming the German nazis is reflected in the fact that orders for copies of the brochure come in daily from small towns and hamlets throughout the land. Our readers and committees should continue expanding the distribution of the "Fact-Sheet." It should find its way into the hands of every community leader, trade unionist, legislator, clergy and organizational person in your community.

## Philly Weekend

Our committee in Philadelphia had an interesting JEWISH LIFE weekend on January 8-9 for which it deserves a "well done." On Saturday evening a reception to Morris U. Schappes was held. The guest of honor spoke and a rich cultural program was presented by the actress Edna Starr of New York and by local young people. Over \$200 was raised for the magazine. On Sunday afternoon a JEWISH LIFE readers' conference was held. Those in attendance discussed the magazine, pointing out its strengths and weaknesses. Many good suggestions came

out of the conference where every single person in the audience spoke. The weekend netted 17 new subscriptions, which is the most important result of the weekend. We would like to see readers' conferences in every city. This will help us make JEWISH LIFE a better magazine.

## Be Seeing You

The air is beginning to buzz with the excitement of the coming banquet in honor of Morris U. Schappes for his contributions to the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Jews in the United States. Every reader and friend of JEWISH LIFE should make this high point in the Tercentenary observance his own personal celebration. We call upon every trade union, club, society, women's organization to reserve tables and individual tickets at this banquet which will be held on March 6th at the Great Northern Hotel.

## Drive Climax

The Schappes testimonial banquet will be a high point in the present fund drive for the magazine. All committees and organizations throughout the land are urged to get to work now for an appropriate gift to Morris on this grand occasion. The gifts, of course, should be the largest possible sums raised up to that point for the drive. Set your quotas, plan your meetings and affairs, intensify your individual solicitation. Try new ideas and old ones as well. The banquet should herald the successful completion of the campaign in as many

communities as possible. One serious word, all you readers and Jewish Life Committees: your magazine might not survive the now-we-live-now-we-expire existence of last year because of the lack of a few thousand dollars. Everyone should make it his personal or organizational responsibility to assure the complete fulfillment of the \$15,000 goal necessary to keep the magazine alive.

## Brooklyn Constellation

It seems to us that only a flood or the birth of twins in the family should keep New Yorkers from attending the Grand Concert given by the Brooklyn Committee for Jewish Education at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on Saturday, February 5th. Such a galaxy of star features have not been seen under one roof for a long time. The great dancer Paul Draper, William Marshall, star of *In Splendid Error*, Celia Adler, renowned actress, Martha Schlamme, and the Youth Chorus of the I. L. Peretz Mittelshul under the baton of Maurice Rauch—this is a bill, as they say in show-biz, which should make the evening a memorable one. Don't miss it.

## The Golden Thread

A unique evening of concert and pagentry will be offered in the Bronx by the Emma Lazarus Clubs of that borough. This will be a Tercentenary presentation titled "The Golden Thread," with Karen Morley, Edna Starr, the Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus and the New Century Dance Group. The affair will be held at the New Terrace Garden in the Bronx on Saturday, February 26th. Inside story has it that the presentation will be novel, fresh and exciting. A high point in the tercentenary celebration for all New Yorkers.

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# FROM THE FOUR CORNERS

ISRAEL

(Continued from page 2)

against Senate Rule 22, which permits filibusters that have made it impossible thus far to pass federal anti-Jimcrow legislation. Other Senate "liberals" remained quiet on the issue because they did not want to disturb Democratic Party "unity" with the Dixiecrats. The NAACP chided the "liberals" for their "reluctance" to speak out on the issue.

**President Eisenhower** failed to mention the need for civil rights legislation in his State of the Union message on January 7 and he devoted a few vague sentences to the racist McCarran-Walter act without even mentioning it by name. . . . Brooklyn's Rep. Victor L. Aufuso has submitted a 200-page bill to replace the McCarran-Walter law (N.Y.T., 1/9). Details of the bill are not yet available.

**Hope that Morton Sobell** might be transferred out of Alcatraz was derived from a letter, dated January 3, received by Mrs. Helen Sobell from Federal Prison Director James V. Bennett. Bennett wrote Mrs. Sobell that "the President has asked me to acknowledge receipt of your letter" and that "we are giving considerable thought" to the question of the transfer.

**Elmo Roper**, public opinion analyst, asserted that discrimination costs industry and business 30 billion dollars a year. The statement was contained in an 18-page pamphlet written by Roper and published early this year by the Conference of Christians and Jews.

**The housing program** of the federal government "continues to be the greatest single force in the nation promoting residential segregation," said the 1954 annual report of the Washington Bureau of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People. "There is a continuing program of approving all-white housing projects and segregated public facilities on redeveloped land," adds the report.

## EUROPE

**Dr. Donald Soper**, British Methodist leader who was a member of the delegation of British churchmen who recently visited the Soviet Union, gave an interview to a London *Jewish Chronicle* reporter (December 10, 1954.) The delegation had a talk with a Moscow rabbi, from whom they "were particularly anxious to know whether there was religious freedom for the Jews. The rabbi, said Dr. Soper, replied that the Jews in the

Soviet Union were treated no better and no worse than members of other religions. . . . The rabbi assured the British delegation that the Jewish community were permitted by the government freely to conduct their services." Although Dr. Soper thought that an anti-religious campaign was continuing in the Soviet Union, "the people were, however, not afraid to worship in public and there was no persecution. . . . The members of the Jewish community . . . appeared genuine in professing complete allegiance to the Soviet regime and were anxious to point out that their sons were giving loyal and devoted service to the State."

**A recorded statement** in English by Rumanian Chief Rabbi Rosen was broadcast from Bucharest early in December. He affirmed that the state had abolished all national, religious, racial and religious persecution. "It is therefore easy to understand," he said, "why we are animated by such ardent patriotism, why we love those who have freed us and ensured us a free and Jewish life." He called on co-religionists to join the "army of peace" in fighting against revival of the Wehrmacht.

**Francois Mauriac**, Catholic writer and Nobel Prize winner, attacked anti-Semites "whose virulence has not diminished even after the nazi holocaust of Jewish masses." He made this statement in the course of a speech before the National Congress of the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism in Paris early in December. (London, *Jewish Chronicle*, 12/10.) He also scored the rearming of Germany in his speech.

**From Tel Aviv** comes the report that the illegal publication of the Communist Party of Jordan recently made a sharp attack on the Jordanian security minister and the commandant of the Arab Legion for the new order to mobilize government officials, students and civilians to participate in military maneuvers. The paper sees in this "a serious attack on the principles of peace."

**Women employees** in Tel Aviv early in December put on slacks at work in order to keep warm in unheated offices. They were then ordered by the mayor not to wear slacks because this violates the letter of Deuteronomy xxii, 5, that "the women shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man."

**Six immigrants** arrived in Haifa from the Soviet Union early in December in the largest single group since the establishment of the state of Israel. About a week later three more arrived and the next week another four. The immigrants range in age from the fifties to the seventies. They are joining their families in Israel. (London *Jewish Chronicle*, 12/10, 17, 24.)

**The new Polish** ambassador to Israel, Z. Wolniak, arrived in Israel late in December and submitted his credentials to President Ben-Zvi in Jerusalem.

**A trade agreement** between Israel and Bulgaria was signed in Jerusalem late in December, providing for a million and a half dollars of trade. Bulgaria will send agricultural products, timber, asbestos and chemicals. Israel will export citrus fruits, chemicals and other products.

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