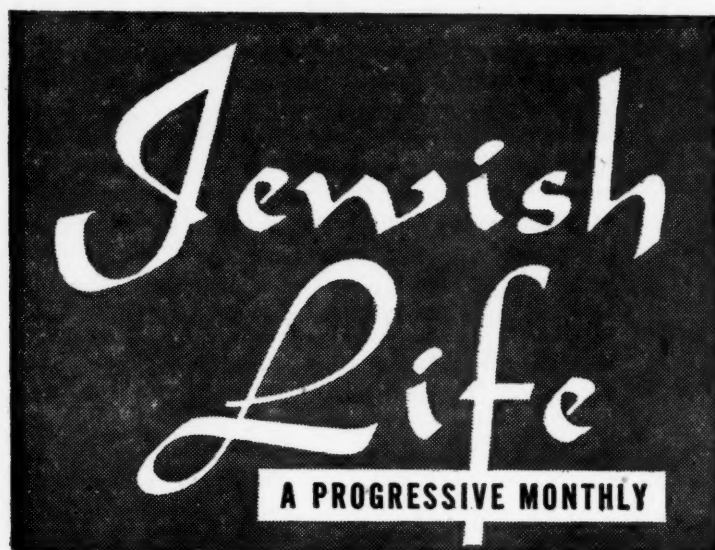


# Stories of Three Hundred Years: XIII



THE ATTITUDE OF JEWISH  
LABOR TO WORLD WAR I, 1917-1918

*By Morris U. Schappes*

MARCH 1955 • 25¢

**PROTEST AGAINST REARMING GROWS** *by Louis Harap*

**FIGHT AHEAD ON DESEGREGATION** *by Doxey A. Wilkerson*

**TURKEY-IRAQ PACT AND ISRAEL** *by Jeremiah Lesser*

**BEN HECHT AND MY UNCLE LAIBUSH** *by Louis Lerman*

**MOISHE LEIB HALPERN, REBEL POET** *by V. J. Jerome*

## From the Four Corners

Edited by Louis Harap

AT HOME

A "package" of 11 civil rights bills was introduced into the Senate on February 1. The bills would establish equal opportunity in employment, establish a commission of the government on civil rights, protect against lynching, outlaw the poll tax, protect against discrimination in interstate transportation, strengthen existing civil rights laws, outlaw violation of the right to vote, create a joint Congressional committee on civil rights, create a civil rights division under the attorney general, strengthen laws against peonage and involuntary servitude and create an omnibus civil rights measure to strengthen civil rights statutes. The 18 co-sponsors of one or more of the bills are: Lehman, Ives, Clifford P. Case, Douglas, Duff, Kennedy, Langer, Magnuson, Martin, McNamara, Purtell, Morse, Saltonstall, Murray, Smith, Neely, Neuberger, Jackson. (N. Y. T., 2/2)

**Resistance notes . . .** Senator Olin D. Johnston (D-NC) accused the national administration of using "fascist methods" in the federal security program in a letter to Dr. Israel Goldstein, president of the AJ Congress, made public on January 23. Johnston's letter said that "a sterile conformity is being imposed on the public service." (N. Y. T., 1/24) . . . In a speech before the 48th annual meeting of the AJ Committee on January 29, retired New York Supreme Court Judge Learned Hand defended the right of dissent. He deplored constant use of the word "subversive" "as a touchstone of impermissible deviations from accepted canons." (N. Y. T., 1/30) . . . The membership of the New York County Medical Society for the second time in two years rejected by a two to one vote the membership application of Dr. Godfrey Arnold, who was a former speech specialist in Vienna. Dr. Godfrey was charged with having been a Nazi Party member and with having lied about his membership. He was rejected in spite of the unanimous recommendation of the society's executive committee. (N. Y. T., 1/25) . . . In a letter to the *Intermountain Jewish News* (12/30/54), Harry Green, attorney for the "security" victims of anti-Semitism in the Fort Monmouth cases, charged that anti-Semitic suspensions for "security" reasons were occurring in many parts of the country. "From reports that we receive," wrote Green, "the same kind of suspensions of loyal government employees are taking place in other parts of

(Continued on page 31)

# Jewish Life

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## HONOR MORRIS U. SCHAPPES

by contributing to  
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Those who cannot attend the Banquet are asked to send their donations to the magazine (22 East 17 Street, New York 3, N. Y.) in his name with your greetings.

# FROM MONTH TO MONTH

## SHOULD WE DIE FOR CHIANG KAI-SHEK?

**T**HE intensified danger of war with China continues despite the evacuation of the Chinese off-shore Tachen Islands without incident. Source of the danger is the Dulles-Radford policy embodied in the resolution passed by Congress in January giving the President power to engage United States forces, up to action on the Chinese mainland, to deny to the Chinese not only Formosa and the Pescadores, but any of the off-shore islands. In his speech before the Senate on January 26 opposing the resolution, Senator Wayne Morse put the matter succinctly. "In my judgment," he said, "this resolution would legalize the position of the proponents of a preventive war, which has been advocated in this country for the past several years." That this is literally true can be seen from the provision in the resolution that the President may order bombing of the mainland if in his opinion a massing of troops there signalizes a prospective attack on the off-shore islands in Chiang Kai-shek's hands. In other words, the President can order action to *prevent* the Chinese from recovering their own territory from the corrupt, discredited Chiang.

Only cold war irrationality can deny the unchallengeable claim of China to Formosa. The Cairo Conference of 1943 pledged that "all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese such as Manchuria, Formosa and the Pescadores shall be restored to the Republic of China." And this pledge was reaffirmed by President Truman toward the end of the Chinese Civil War in January 1950: "The United States has no predatory designs on Formosa or any other Chinese territory. The United States has no desire to obtain special rights or privileges or to establish military bases on Formosa at this time. Nor does it have any intention of utilizing its armed forces to interfere in the present situation. The United States will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China. Similarly, the United States Government will not provide military aid or advice to Chinese (that is, Chiang's) forces on Formosa."

The status of Formosa and its relation to China has not changed since that time. What has changed is an intensified cold war policy of interfering in the internal affairs of China which the Chinese will not, as a self-respecting country, permit. Will the American people allow the Eisenhower administration to precipitate a major war with China that would in all probability lead to World War III in order to save Chiang Kai-shek from final defeat at the hands of the Chinese people? There can be no doubt that the American people want none of this. How little they want it was indicated by this sample: on February 4, Jim Crowley, CIO Auto Workers Union Washington correspondent, stated on the radio that mail to the senators was running 100 to one against the President's resolution on Formosa. The letters showed a powerful peace sentiment. The people, he said, "were appalled at the mere suggestion that we

might engage in an aggressive war of prevention."

How can peace be preserved? It has been proposed that a conference like that at Geneva, which succeeded in bringing peace in Indo-China, should be convened. State Department opposition to such a conference throws doubt on the earnestness with which it is seeking a peaceful outcome. How else can one construe the sour remark of a State department spokesman early in February, "I find it difficult to believe that anyone who participated in that experience (the Geneva conference) would be interested in repeat that experience" (*New York Times*, February 6). An experience that resulted in peace should be repeated as many times as necessary to achieve peace. And if the world ever needed that kind of experience, it is now. For lack of it we may be plunged into a war that would leave millions of our people killed and our country devastated. Is Chiang Kai-shek worth all that to us?

Since there is no doubt whatever that the people of our country want no war, the people need to impress Washington with this fact in an unmistakable way. In these critical days all the organized forces of the people, the trade unions and all organizations, can assure survival by letting the Eisenhower administration know that the present policy of preventive, aggressive war needs to be changed. The President and senators and congressmen should be bombarded with resolutions and messages from organizations and individuals demanding that our government participate in a conference to settle the question peacefully.

## SAVAGE JUDGMENT IN EGYPT

**T**WO Jewish young men in their twenties, one a French and the other an Egyptian national, were executed in Cairo on January 31 for alleged "sabotage and espionage" on behalf of Israel. One defendant committed suicide in jail and six others, including one woman, received prison terms of from seven years to life. An immense wave of protest arose all over the world at the vindictive death sentences. Roger Baldwin, American chairman of the International League for the Rights of Man, who was in Europe at the time and had an opportunity to study the case on a visit to Cairo, expressed his shock and added: "The conspiracy did not involve any serious acts of espionage or sabotage." Egypt, he said, will "suffer in world opinion for this vindictive judgment."

This savage judicial murder of the two Jews emanates from a reactionary regime which is attempting to inflame the Egyptian people against Israel as a method of strengthening its hold on them. This violation of the common sense of justice of mankind does not help either the cause of a genuinely independent Egypt or peace in the Middle East. It rather militates against the interests of the Egyptian people and feeds the danger of war in the Middle East.

# PROTEST AGAINST REARMING GROWS

*Fear of nazi rearmament among the Jewish masses is beginning to find voice despite the silence imposed by the Jewish leadership in the U.S.*

*By Louis Harap*

THE war crisis over Formosa is serious enough but the people would be ill-advised to allow it to blunt awareness of the parallel danger of a threatened West German rearmament. The peace of the world hinges on the ability of the people to affect State Department policy on both questions. Thus, while the Far Eastern crisis is the immediate peril, crucial decisions concerning West German rearmament will also be made in the coming few months. We dare not allow our concern over the former to divert us from acting also on the latter.

And action on West German rearmament is sorely needed. While there is an ominous silence in Jewish organized life on the rearmament issue, the fears of the American people and particularly the masses of Jews are beginning to find expression. One significant sign is the brief but laden comment of *New York Post* publisher Dorothy Schiff. "In this country," she wrote on January 30, "few voices have been raised against reviving the Wehrmacht. No protest meetings have been held at Madison Square Garden although the nazis are rising again in Germany." Miss Schiff has good reason to be worried at an apparent lack of awareness—or is it a lack of backbone?—on the part of leading spokesmen at the revival of the peril which in the thirties evoked widespread protest in the country at large and among the Jews in particular. One would suppose that, with the experience of Hitlerism behind us and the horror of hydrogen war before us, there would be a universal outcry against rearmament of a renazified West Germany.

The deep-seated fear among the Jewish masses is beginning to break through. After the Paris agreements were signed last October, the American Jewish Congress, following the lead of the World Jewish Congress, expressed its "misgivings" (*Congress Weekly*, November 8, 1954) but has not come out flatly in opposition to rearmament. More frequently now does one see editorial expressions of apprehension in the English-Jewish press. The *Inter-mountain Jewish News* (Denver, Colo.), for instance, concludes an editorial on January 6, thus: "To Jewry, who cannot erase the horrible memory of Hitler, German rearmament makes us shudder. We can only pray that [French ex-Premier] Mendes-France's victory [on ratification of the Paris agreements] is not a pyrrhic victory." Why we should not express our fears in protest as well as prayer, the paper does not suggest. But the New Jersey

Department of the Jewish War Veterans has passed over to protest. Early in the year its commander, Edward Nappen, issued a statement for his state organization warning of the threat of "creation of a Fourth Reich at least as powerful as Hitler's empire. . . . Behind the German anxiety to contribute military divisions to the European army lurks the specter of yet another German bid for control of the continent."

## *Why Are They Silent?*

Welcome as are these sporadic expressions of alarm and protest, the fact is that most of the leaders of Jewish organized life are silent as the grave on the question. It is true that, following the shocking outburst of virulent nazi anti-Semitism in West Germany last November, several Jewish leaders like Rabbi Norman Salit, president of the Synagogue Council of America, called for a "halt" in the plans for West German rearmament and Dr. Emanuel Neumann, chairman of the executive committee of the Zionist Council of America, warned that such demonstrations "threaten to disqualify the Bonn government as an ally of this country consecrated to the cause of democracy and human freedom." But nothing further has been heard from most Jewish organizations.

Why this blanket of silence on an issue which so vitally affects the whole future and survival of the Jewish people, let alone the American people as a whole? The basic reason is the adherence of most of the Jewish leadership to State Department foreign policy. The keystone of this policy in the West is the rearming of West Germany as a spearhead of a military alliance against the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that the renazified rulers of West Germany have made no secret either of their aggressive military intentions or of their anti-Semitism (see "The Fact-Sheet on West German Rearmament," in our January issue), the Jewish leaders have sat on the lid with respect to the problem.

When West German rearmament was formally introduced about four years ago, the State Department was confronted with the problem of neutralizing the antagonism of democratically-minded people and especially the masses of Jews toward rearming the same nazi elements that had only a short time ago plunged the world into war and perpetrated a ghastly genocide. The State De-

partment came up with the scheme of buying off the opposition of the Jewish masses by a deal with the leadership. With the State Department in the background, West German Chancellor Adenauer offered to pay "reparations" to the Jewish people. A "Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany" was set up composed of the leaders of major Jewish organizations in the non-socialist world. The effective leadership of the conference, however, lay with a handful of United States Jewish leaders, led by Dr. Nahum Goldmann as State Department agent extraordinary and battering ram of the whole deal. There was widespread opposition to the plan from the Jewish masses all over the world. They regarded the deal as a shameful bartering of Jewish honor for money. After months of negotiations, a pact was signed on September 10, 1952 by Adenauer and Dr. Goldmann providing that West Germany would pay the Israel government \$712,000,000 in goods over a period of 12 years and \$107,000,000 over the same period to Jewish organizations and projects outside of Israel. In March 1953 the deal was ratified by both the Israel and West German governments.

The disgrace of the whole deal is now compounded with the allocation of funds in the United States to organizations and individuals who are not victims of nazism. The affair has the look of a racket. Here are some of the allocations in the United States last year: \$310,000 to the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO); \$175,000 to the Jewish Labor Committee, and \$140,000 to 52 Jewish writers in the United States.

### ***Behind the Adenauer Deal***

Shortly after the deal was broached, this writer pointed out (*JEWISH LIFE*, December 1951, p. 3) that "the reality behind the conference was the attempt to strangle opposition to the rearmament of West Germany." The utter silence of the greatest part of the Jewish leadership in this country from that day to this on the danger of West German rearmament and their successful suppression of all discussion of the issue in Jewish organized life, confirms this analysis up to the hilt. At the Third Plenary Assembly of the World Jewish Congress in August 1953, Dr. Goldmann and the United States leaders actually succeeded in heading off action for which European Jewish leaders pressed on the dangers to the Jewish people of renazification and rearmament. Commenting on the Assembly, *Zionistische Bletter* (August 1953), organ of the General Zionist Federation of France, exclaimed in shocked indignation that at the meetings Dr. Goldmann was so anxious to suppress the whole question that he opposed even the mention of the six million Jewish dead. "It was not at all a question of accusing the German people," said the paper, "it was only a question of mentioning the martyrs, of mentioning them!"

The question of West German rearmament has not even been on the agenda of most Jewish organizations—at least, publicly. But there are signs of an awakening among the

### ***E. European Jews Against Rearmament***

**T**HE remnants of the Jews in Eastern Europe, who felt the full force of Hitler's fury, have in recent weeks strongly expressed their opposition to the rearmament of a renazified West Germany and the threat to peace and the entire Jewish people that it bears.

From Moscow came the appeal of Rabbi S. M. Schliefer, head of the city's Jewish religious community. It was originally published in *Izvestia* (January 6) together with those of Christian and Moslem leaders. "The Jewish people, together with other peoples, suffered enormous losses during the Second World War. German fascism, seeking to exterminate our people, murdered millions of defenseless persons of Jewish nationality. . . . Jewish believers! Remember and do not forget the fascist crimes! Fight for peace in conformity with the words of the Bible: 'Seek peace and strive for it' (Psalms 34, 15)."

A message by the Polish Jewish leaders Ber Mark, Ida Kaminska and Abraham Bankier in mid-December, said: "We protest the revival of German militarism, which again threatens the peace and independence of Europe and the existence of the Jewish people. Polish Jews, together with the entire Polish nation, will continue the struggle for collective security and against the arming of the nazi genocides."

The Rabbinical Council and the Council of Religious Jewish Communities in Czechoslovakia also in January sent an appeal to co-believers in France, Britain, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark and Norway not "to forget our six million dead brothers and sisters, victims of nazism. Do not allow new weapons, spattered with the blood of our parents and children, to be given into the hands of the German fascists!"

Jewish people of our country, as we indicated earlier. Thus, in the January issue of the *Bulletin* (in Yiddish), organ of the Free Jewish Club, an independent liberal group that includes some labor leaders, a page one editorial protesting silence of Jewish organized life on rearmament, comments that "One could have known that the acceptance of [reparations] money from [West] Germany would bring tragic results. But that it would come to the shame that Jews would remain silent in the face of giving all kinds of arms to the nazis—this the devil himself could not have foreseen." The *Bulletin* charges the Zionists and Israel with the whole responsibility for this state of affairs. Although Zionist leaders do bear a large share of the responsibility, it is the cold war leadership, both Zionist and non-Zionist, of Jewish organized life in this country under the thumb of the State Department that is basically responsible. For leaders of both persuasions negotiated and pushed through the deal, exploiting Israel's need for money and goods.

### ***European Jews Protest***

The survivors of Hitlerism themselves are crying out in shocked horror at the attempt of Jewish leadership to silence Jewish opposition with what they call "blood money" for their murdered relatives and their own sufferings. In

Canada, four survivors of Belsen, Auschwitz and Buchenwald appealed to the Canadian Jewish Congress in December 1954: "Can we keep silent today when many nazis are free again and are just waiting to put their hands on a gun again? No! Our silence would be a betrayal. . . . We appeal to you to use every ounce of your strength to prevent the rearmament of Germany. We must stop them from rearming Germany now—before it is too late."

In France the death camp survivors are even more vigorous in their demands. The 10th annual meeting in December 1954 in Paris of former concentration camp inmates and families of the martyred protested the return of the hangmen of Auschwitz and Maidanek. They resolved to mobilize the surviving victims of Hitlerism to fight against West German rearmament and the use of the Adenauer-Goldman "Maidanek-money" to help whitewash the crimes of nazism. In a recent issue of the *Bulletin of the Union* of former Jewish deportees of France, the organization's general secretary, H. Bulovko, passionately condemned the "scandal" of the affair of the "Maidanek-money." He scored the fact that United States Jewish leaders have taken it upon themselves in the name of the victims of nazism but without consulting them to accept "reparations" money. This money, he pointed out, is being used to stifle opposition in the Jewish community to German rearmament. The whole deal, he said, is a "Judenrat swindle." Bulovko gives voice to the sentiments of Jewish death camp survivors all over the world. In Israel these survivors of Hitlerism together with masses of Jews have repeatedly demonstrated in the past few months against

rearmament of a renazified West Germany. Over 400,000 Israelis, crossing all party lines, have signed a petition against German rearmament.

The imposition of silence on the American Jewish community has been so effective that Dr. Albert Einstein was moved to express his stand against West German rearmament by greeting opposition by Jews in Europe, not in this country. Andre Blumel, French Zionist leader who is head of the French Actions Committee Against German Rearmament, recently revealed in Paris that he was fortified by a personal message he received from Dr. Einstein on the work of his committee. In this letter Dr. Einstein supported the unity manifested in the Conference of European Jews Against German Rearmament held in Paris on December 12, 1954.

Meanwhile Jews in Europe continue to protest against German rearmament. On January 16 a delegation of the Board of Deputies of British Jews headed by its president, Dr. A. Cohen, called on British Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs R. H. Turton to warn against the increasing signs of renazification and to reaffirm their opposition to the prospective rearming of West Germany. And the French Section of the World Jewish Congress about the same time restated their opposition. It is only in this country that the Jewish organizations, which are under the domination of those responsible for the Adenauer deal, have not yet given organized expression to the fears of the Jewish people to the rearming of those who murdered one-third of our people.

### Opposition Is Growing

The Jews of Canada are aroused over the issue. Eminent Jews have protested and publicly dissociated themselves from the vote in favor of West German rearmament cast in the Canadian Parliament by two Jewish M.P.'s, Leon Crestohl and David Croll. The *Jewish Standard*, of Toronto, has taken an editorial stand against West German rearmament. "There will be those," said the magazine on January 15, "who say that the arming of Germany will go on despite our protests. . . . But our protests will at least draw the attention of those determined to put arms into the hands of the Germans to the terrible dangers involved."

There is in some quarters an unjustifiable sense of the futility of protest. The intensely anti-Soviet labor Zionist organ, *Jewish Frontier* (January), concludes a gloomy editorial with the statement that "It may be too late to protest the decision to rearm Germany but it is hard to escape the conclusion that a great blunder and a still greater wrong are being committed." But the *Jewish Frontier* and the other Jewish papers that recognize the need for protest but view this as hopeless, are giving up too easily. For West German rearmament is still far from assured. The fall of Mendes-France's government on February 5 has thrown French ratification of the Paris agreements in doubt once again.

### A Warning from WJ Congress

A dire warning of the danger in the rearmament of Germany was issued by the World Jewish Congress Executive on January 30 at the conclusion of a three day meeting on the issue. Following is the text of the resolution:

"The World Jewish Congress Executive, in plenary session assembled, recalling the resolutions and declarations of the World Jewish Congress adopted as early as 1944 and reiterated in 1948, 1951 and 1953, in opposition to the rearmament of Germany, both East and West, takes the occasion of its meeting at a time when the rearmament of Germany appears imminent to call attention to the dangers which this policy may generate and to the urgent necessity of seeking every possible safeguard against them.

"In the light of the terrible catastrophe suffered by the Jewish people and by the world at the hands of the nazi regime in Germany, in which militarism played so sinister a role, there is widespread concern over the threat of a renascent militarism in Germany. It is, therefore, our solemn duty to call the attention of the governments in both parts of Germany and of the great powers which are behind them, to the need for unremitting vigilance in preventing every attempt, overt or covert, to reinstate a militarism which may go hand in hand with the resurgence of Nazism, the fostering of anti-Semitism and the thwarting of the processes of democracy."



The extremely militant campaign against rearmament being conducted by the West German labor movement and Social Democratic Party has Adenauer and advocates of a new Wehrmacht worried. More than 800,000 West German coal and steel workers held a one day strike on January 22 in protest against threatened rearmament. The labor movement is carrying on an intense campaign to hold up ratification at least until the Soviet offers of negotiation for reunification are tried. Social Democratic leader Erich Ollenhauer said on January 25: "We will use all democratically permissible means to block ratification of the Paris treaties until the last possibilities have been exhausted for opening serious negotiations with the Soviet government on restoration of German unity. Never in its ten years of post-war history has the German people been faced with such a fateful issue."

In view of this powerful West German opposition, in addition to that of the French and British peoples, there is no justification for assuming that the issue has been decided. The all-too justified fears of the Jewish people at the prospect of a resuscitated nazi Wehrmacht can be mobilized to add considerable strength to the already strong opposition and thus contribute toward the defeat of the war-threatening Paris agreements.

### **Rearmament Is No "Lesser Evil"**

There is a widely held view that rearmament is a "lesser evil." Here is typical expression of this view: "I, for one, am deeply troubled by the prospect of a rearmed Germany and yet I am prepared to acquiesce in it as made necessary by Russian aggression" (Herman A. Gray, *Jewish Newsletter*, February 7). We can only briefly discuss this erroneous viewpoint. In the first place, the "threat of Soviet aggression" is a cold war propaganda myth which is not really believed to any extent anywhere in the world except in the United States. People recognize that the Soviet government does not want war any more than their own governments want it—all of them have had as much of war as they will take and do not relish the prospect of hydrogen bomb annihilation. The Soviet Union, moreover, has shown persistently that it wishes to negotiate all questions and to avoid war. In relation to Germany, it has made concessions, especially in recent months, on the issue of free German elections in order to reunify that country and thus avoid the threat of a new Korea-type war. More than this, the Soviet demand for a neutralized, democratic and unified Germany is a guar-

antee against war since the heart of the war danger is in an aggressive, remilitarized Germany.

But even if one does not accept this line of reasoning, one needs to face the cold fact that the most rabid expansionists in West Germany are bound to realize—as indeed Hitler did—especially after the debacle of the attempt to conquer the Soviet Union, that absorption of Western Europe is a much easier and more likely of success than an attack on the Soviet Union. What West German rearmament may very well mean is that the United States and West Europe will help build a new military machine which will promptly turn against the Western powers. As the Brooklyn *Jewish Examiner* expressed it (December 31, 1954), "When Germans march to war, they inevitably march west rather than east—at least in the beginning." West German rearmament thus is an invitation to suicide on the part of participants in the Paris pacts.

### **What To Do**

The fears of the Jewish people and of the peoples of the world have a real basis. It is therefore time that the Jewish people and their organizations heed the call of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, who is crying for peace like a prophet in the wilderness. In his year-end sermon in The Temple in Cleveland, Rabbi Silver once again affirmed that "Only a democratic, disarmed, neutralized and united Germany, as envisaged in the Potsdam agreement, will keep peace." Since the leadership of Jewish organized life has largely suppressed discussion of this vital issue, it is high time that the members of Jewish organizations have a say in the deciding policy on this all-important issue. The masses of Jews must have the opportunity to discuss the crucial question of West German rearmament and participate in decisions regarding it. The demand for discussion of the issue needs to be made throughout Jewish organized life.

The Jewish masses have the right to make their voice heard on this issue when the Senate considers ratification of the Paris agreements. To this end, both individuals and organizations can demand that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hold open hearings on the Paris agreements and that as many representatives of the people as possible be permitted to present their viewpoint at the hearings. The interests of the Jewish people as well as the American people as a whole dictate that the greatest number of such representatives speak for their organizations at these hearings.

# THE TURKEY-IRAQ PACT AND ISRAEL

by Jeremiah Lesser

**T**HE danger in which Israel has been placed by the State Department policy of arming the feudal Arab leaders and dragging the Arab countries into anti-Soviet military alliances has increased in recent months. That policy has been making headway. On January 12 the Turkish and Iraqi prime ministers announced from Baghdad the decision to form a military alliance for joint "defense." Dulles thereby got his first important break in linking the Arab countries in the chain of anti-Soviet military alliances. Through its alliance with Turkey, Iraq is now tied, on the one hand, to the anti-Soviet Middle Eastern military system through the Turkey-Pakistan pact, and to NATO, of which Turkey is a member, on the other.

Menderes' attempt to persuade other Arab regimes—Lebanon, Syria and Jordan—to enter into similar agreements with Turkey is still under way and may succeed. The Turkey-Iraq agreement has in fact precipitated a crisis in the Arab League (composed of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Lybia) since the eight countries were pledged not to make any defense pacts outside the League. Egypt, the strongest of the group and its leader, was especially dismayed by the pact, since this virtually spelled the end of the Arab League. Although it is true that the Egyptian rulers regard the Iraqi agreement as a threat to their leading position among the Arab countries, the basic reason for their opposition to any alliances with a Western power is, as *New York Times* correspondent Robert C. Doty quaintly put it (January 23), that "public opinion in Egypt, Syria and Jordan has long been conditioned to regard Western imperialism as the principal enemy." The Arab peoples see the hand of imperialism in the Iraqi pact.

These events of the past few months have also caused heightened activity on the part of the Israel government and Zionist spokesmen in our own country. New York Attorney General Jacob K. Javits, who has been for some time vocal in urging Washington to include Israel in the anti-Soviet military system, renewed his proposal at a meeting of the Zionist Organization of America on December 20, 1954. He urged that Israel be given military "aid" and invited to join NATO directly or through alliance with Turkey or Greece. And early in February it was reported that the Israeli government had appealed to Washington, London and Paris to guarantee Israeli's borders by a special agreement modeled on the "defense" agreement to "guarantee" the "security" of Formosa.

The danger to Israel from an attack by the reactionary Arab leaders is real and increasing with the arrival of arms

in Arab countries. But does Israel buttress her security by pleading to receive arms through Dulles' anti-Soviet military system? Such a policy is based on the "threat of Soviet aggression." It is revealing to observe how little substance there is in this fear of "Soviet aggression." This was exposed in the State Department statement on Middle Eastern policy issued just before Christmas. The statement complains that Israel and the Arab states are more afraid of each other than they are of "Communism." It then goes on to explain the "Communist threat" to the Middle East. No aggressive acts or threats of such acts are adduced. In fact, the statement says, "So far there has been little need for Moscow to send in special agents or provocateurs because there is tension in the area" (already aggravated, one should add, by the Dulles policy, not by Soviet policy). In other words, there is no evidence of aggressive intentions. Further, economic difficulties in the area "will provide the very conditions of poverty and unrest which invite Communist exploitation." Not a single "Communist" action is charged. Conditions with which the "Communists" have absolutely nothing to do are said to provide the conditions for some *unspecified, speculative* Communist "exploitation." The State Department can supply no evidence whatsoever for the "threat of Communist aggression" except their sheer assertion that it "exists."

On the contrary, the threat to the security, peace and economic well-being of the Middle East stems from the Dulles policy, which is responsible for the recent heightening of tensions in the area. The shipment of arms to Iraq, with promise of more to come, has set off an arms race which increases the chances of war. It is consequently suicidal for the Israel regime to invite a military agreement with Washington like that with Chiang Kai-shek, as the current Far Eastern crisis clearly indicates. Peace for Israel could be best assured by an aroused public opinion pressing on the Eisenhower Administration for a policy of *no arms* rather than an arms race in the Middle East. Peace can not come by rearmament but disarmament, and this applies to the Middle East no less than anywhere else. Cooperation with every force for disarmament and against interference with the internal affairs of any country is the only road to peace for Israel. Friends of Israel, Jewish and non-Jewish, will further the security of Israel—and our own country as well—by urging a policy of *no arms to the Middle East* while efforts continue for a long range solution of Middle Eastern problems in terms of a policy of peaceful co-existence between the "West" and the socialist world.

# A SOVIET EMIGRANT INTERVIEWED

*Mrs. Kirstman, who came from Czernowitz to Israel to join her husband, exposes some fables and says there is no anti-Semitism in the USSR*

By G. Rafaeli

## Tel Aviv

**T**HERE is not a grain of truth in what certain Israel newspapers are writing about the Jews in the Soviet Union. The Jews there live free and happy. These newspapers have been attributing things to me which I never said. This is indecent and I want to protest against it strongly."

I was greeted with these words by Mrs. Gitel Kirstman, who arrived on November 2, 1954 from Czernowitz, USSR, at the Israel immigrant camp Makneh David, where her husband has been living.

"You know," I told her with a smile, "a year or two ago these same newspapers had driven all the Jews in Czernowitz to Siberia."

She laughed and began to tell me about the Jews in Czernowitz.

In Czernowitz, Gitel Kirstman told me, thousands of Jews are living today. Like the other inhabitants of the city, they work, make a good living and live comfortably. Every one has the opportunity to advance according to his abilities. "There it could never happen that a person my husband's age, 57 years old, would not be able to find work. There are no unemployed. The Soviet people, including the Jews, do not know what it means to be afraid of tomorrow. Those Jews who observe religious customs can do so in Czernowitz without interference. There are rabbis, *shochtim* (ritual slaughterers), synagogues, matzos for Passover. Whoever wishes to speak Yiddish, does so.

"An ordinary worker earns 40-50 rubles a day and a skilled worker earns much more. The stores are filled with merchandise. The people dress tastefully. Food is plentiful."

"And what about 'anti-Semitism,' of which our newspapers here write?" I asked her.

"There is no anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union," she replied firmly. "The Czernowitz Jews who migrated deeper into Russia during the war are given every opportunity to return to their city."

Mrs. Kirstman learned about the "decency" of the reactionary press on the very first day of her arrival in Israel. When her plane landed, she was surrounded by newspapermen and bombarded with questions. And as happens to people who repeat the same lie so often that they begin to believe it themselves, they would not believe Mrs. Kirstman when she told them good-naturedly that

there was no Iron Curtain in the Soviet Union, that there was no anti-Semitism and that the Jews live in tranquility. They asked her whether she knew of any other Jews in Czernowitz who wanted to emigrate to Israel. She told them that there were several other families. (These families have since come to Israel.—G.R.)

The next day these facile journalists wrote that she had said that the majority of the Jews in Czernowitz wanted to emigrate!

Mrs. Kirstman relates further that the Soviet government treated her most courteously; until the last moment she worked at her job. She traveled at the expense of the Soviet government from Czernowitz to Odessa, from Odessa to Moscow and from there by airplane to Vienna.

But her reception in Israel was quite different. The Israeli authorities did not inform her husband about the date of her arrival. When she landed in Israel, no one of her family met her, whereas when she left Czernowitz 20 people accompanied her to the station. When she arrived, civil authorities began to badger her with all sorts of questions, such as what route the plane took, etc.

"I want to see my husband," she told them. "Why didn't you let him know?"

"We will take care of that tomorrow," they answered coldly.

Gitel Kirstman adds with sincerity, "You know, the next morning the waiter did not want to serve me a cup of tea. 'Who will pay for it?' he wanted to know. 'I heard that you have no money.' Not until three hours later did I finally get some breakfast. And I did not see my husband until I came here to the camp. And now," she said with a sigh, "I am here . . ." and she pointed to the hunched canvas tent.

Her husband joined the conversation. This is his fourth year in Israel, he said, and he still lived in the same tent. From time to time he used to get work on road construction. Then he hurt his hand in an accident. Now the hand is healed but he has not been able to find work for several months.

"And how do you live?" I asked him.

"I live by selling my few possessions and on the 15 pounds a month which I get from public relief."

As I said goodbye, Mrs. Kirstman said to me, "If you are an honest man, write the truth!"

I told her that I would and I am keeping my promise.

# FIGHT AHEAD ON DESEGREGATION

*A distinguished Negro educator outlines the next steps in the battle to implement the Supreme Court decision to desegregate the schools*

**By Doxey A. Wilkerson**

**T**HE Negro people have been fighting against gross discrimination in education for many decades—through petitions, delegations, protest meetings, legislative lobbies, and enormous fund-raising campaigns. In recent years, under the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, their emphasis has been on legal action to win “equality” of educational opportunity in the Negro separate school. Some important victories have been won—notably in increasing teachers’ salaries, lengthening school terms, extending school plant and equipment and winning admission to the graduate and professional departments of state universities.

The cases decided by the Supreme Court on May 17, 1954, mark a new high level of this struggle. Arising in black-belt counties of South Carolina and Virginia, and in Kansas, Delaware and Washington, D. C., they called, not for spurious “equality” between separate white and Negro schools, but for the complete abandonment of the Jimcrow school system—for the integration of white and Negro children in the same schools. . . .

Let there be no unclarity on this point: The decision outlawing segregated schools was wrested from the Supreme Court and the Eisenhower administration through powerful democratic struggles by the united Negro people and their allies. It was a great democratic victory of the people; and its social and political implications are far-reaching, indeed.

DOXEY A. WILKERSON is director of faculty and curriculum at the Jefferson School of Social Science. Before joining the staff of Jefferson School in 1948 he taught education at the Virginia State College (1927-35) and was associate professor of education at Howard University (1935-1943). In 1944 he became executive editor of the weekly *People's Voice* published in Harlem. He is the author of *Special Problems of Education*, a study published by the Government Printing Office in 1939.

The above article is an excerpt from his pamphlet, *The People versus Segregated Schools*, just published by New Century (832 Broadway, New York 3; price, 5c).

Think what full implementation of the Court's decision could mean. Some 9,000,000 white children and 2,600,000 Negro children now attending segregated elementary and secondary schools in the South would be brought together in the classroom and on the playground. This itself would be a telling blow against racism. Hundreds of thousands of white and Negro teachers would merge their professional associations for a common approach to common problems. White and Negro parents in thousands of communities would begin to work together in the P.T.A.'s. And this process of building Negro-white unity could be extended to scores of thousands of youths and their teachers in hundreds of Southern colleges and universities. The impact of this development could do much to undermine the whole structure of Jimcrow laws and practices in all fields.

## ***Plots to Defy the Court***

But this legal victory is still to be realized in practice. All the Supreme Court has done thus far is to *proclaim* that segregated schools are unconstitutional. Implementing decrees have yet to be won and even then the struggle actually to *abolish* segregated schools will be long and bitter. Moreover, that struggle cannot be confined to the educational front alone. There will have to be powerful and winning assaults against Jimcrow practices in the even more fundamental areas of job discrimination in industry, semi-feudal survivals on the plantations and ghetto housing in the cities. But struggles on these different fronts mutually support one another; and the recent decision of the Supreme Court enhances the effectiveness of them all.

If anyone thought last May that “it's all over but the shouting,” his illusion must have been thoroughly shattered by the Dixiecrat counter-offensive against the Supreme Court decision. The opposition is determined and sinister, and is now beginning to merge with the “cold war” McCarthyite-fascist attacks against all civil liberties.

When beginnings were made in the fall of 1954 to integrate the schools of Washington, D. C., Baltimore, Maryland, and Milford, Delaware, the white and Negro pupils and their parents accepted the change without incident. Desegregation was proceeding until Bryant Bowles and his so-called “National Association for the Advancement of

## Georgia Incident

**I** SPENT many years working in the schools of the South; and I know first-hand how segregated schools operate to worsen the conditions of *all* the people. Let me cite one little incident which vividly symbolizes the whole problem.

Driving across rural Georgia one rainy morning, I approached a group of Negro children trudging along to their ramshackle, one-room "school" on the countryside. They were forced to step off the highway into the mud in order to let a white school bus go by; and I heard the white youngsters jeer and hurl epithets at the Negro children as the bus sped along toward the well-equipped, consolidated white school in the nearby town.

Follow these youngsters into their respective schools, week after week, year after year. Note the distorted and divisive things they learn about race relations—not only from their lessons, but even more from spending a good part of their lives in a system which shunts Negro children aside, like pariahs, into impoverished caricatures of schools.

Is there any wonder that one group of children grows up saturated with the poisonous nonsense of "white superiority," and the other with bitter resentment over the insults and special handicaps imposed by the Jimcrow system?

How useful this system of dividing the southern white and Negro masses must be to those whose profits and political power are based on the oppression of both!

—D. A. W.

White People" intervened to organize mob violence in defiance of the law. Bowles appealed to hoodlum elements in the communities by shouting the slogans of Hitler—calling Negroes "dupes" of Communists and "leftwingers," charging that N.A.A.C.P. "bosses are Jews" and whipping up emotional fervor "to save the white race." And he succeeded, *temporarily*, in disrupting the process of school integration. . . .

Open defiance of the Supreme Court ruling is expressed by the governors of several Southern states. Governor Hugh White, of Mississippi, for example, told the *Pittsburgh Courier* (December 11, 1954): "We're not going to pay any attention to the Supreme Court's decision."

The political leaders of four states—South Carolina, Louisiana, Georgia and Mississippi—have put through laws which authorize them to turn public schools over to private agencies or local school boards or municipalities for continued operation on a segregated basis. Their fear and hatred of democracy is so intense that they would destroy *all* public schools in order to preserve their cherished and highly profitable system of racial segregation.

Plans are openly discussed in political and educational circles to gerrymander school district boundaries to conform to segregated white and Negro residential areas and to authorize school principals to give transfers-out to individual white pupils who happen to get caught in "Negro districts" and *vice versa*. This device supplements the

ghetto housing imposed upon Negroes by the banks and real estate corporations. It has long been used to circumvent laws "prohibiting" school segregation in the North—with the result that there are hundreds of Jimcrow schools in New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Los Angeles and other Northern cities with large Negro populations. The Dixiecrats are strengthened in their defiance of the Supreme Court decision when a bigot like New York City Superintendent of Schools William Jansen tries to rationalize this practice as "natural segregation. . . ."

Against this background of legislative skulduggery, racist persecution and mob violence, the attorneys for the Wall Street-Bourbon alliance proceed, with gentlemanly decorum, to petition the Supreme Court to allow them to handle this troublesome question of desegregation in their own way—and time!

## Where Does Eisenhower Stand?

Arguments were scheduled for December 6, 1954 on what decrees the Supreme Court should issue to implement its ruling against segregated schools; but they were postponed after Mississippi Senator Eastland blocked confirmation of Federal Judge John Marshall Harlan's appointment to the vacancy on the Court. Eastland's protracted tenure in the Senate is based on the Jimcrow disfranchisement of most of the citizens in his district; and he is understandably disturbed over this appointment of the grandson and namesake of the one Supreme Court justice who dissented in the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of 1896 (which gave legal sanction to the "separate but equal" doctrine). . . .

Although oral arguments were postponed, briefs were filed by all parties to the five desegregation cases involved; and "friend of the court" briefs were entered by the United States attorney general, the American Veterans Committee and at least five Southern states not directly involved in these cases. The N.A.A.C.P. brief urges the Supreme Court to order complete school integration by September 1955, with a leeway of one year provided in cases where special administrative difficulties are met. In general, the briefs by Southern states urge the Court to let the federal district courts (located in the South) handle all problems of implementation, with only general directions from the Supreme Court; and they call for a "gradual" approach to desegregation.

Attorney General Herbert R. Brownell's brief appears to support *both* these opposing positions. On the one hand, it includes many fine-sounding statements of principle, in seeming support of the N.A.A.C.P. On the other hand, the specific decrees which the attorney general's brief asks the Supreme Court to issue would leave things pretty much in the hands of the federal district courts, in obvious support of the basic position of the Southern states.

This looks like a clever bit of double-talk. Attorney

General Brownell is well aware of the historic white supremacist role of the Southern federal district courts to which he would give final authority to approve state plans for the integration of white and Negro schools. Why, then, did he fail to propose a definite time limit, like the N.A.A.C.P.'s September 1955? Are his fine statements of principle designed to serve as window-dressing while the Bourbon rulers of the South proceed, through the lower courts which they dominate, to sabotage the Supreme Court decision by means of endless litigation and "gradualism"?

These questions take on special significance in the light of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's statement on the school segregation cases just a few days before the attorney general's brief was filed. The President told a press conference that he was sure the Supreme Court in formulating its implementing decrees would take into account the emotional strains and practical problems growing out of this issue. Georgia's Negro-hating Herman Talmadge, then governor, promptly hailed the President's statement as evidence that the Eisenhower administration is moving toward his way of thinking on this issue—and there is substantial reason to fear that he is right.

Republican Party campaigners made full use of the Supreme Court decision in their quest for votes in the 1954 elections. But now that the elections are over, there are ominous signs that the Eisenhower administration is trying to make peace with the Dixiecrats—at the expense of the democratic rights of the Negro people. And the same thing is true of leaders of the Democratic Party, who began the current session of Congress by making a "gentleman's agreement" with their Dixiecrat colleagues not to "divide the party" by pressing for civil rights legislation.

### ***The People Will Uphold the Law***

The people of our country dare not rely on these Big Business politicians to integrate white and Negro schools. The actual abolition of segregated schools must be won in the same way the Court victory of last May was won—through even more powerful mass pressures by the Negro people and their allies.

The fight to abolish segregated schools should be waged with confidence that the Supreme Court decision can, indeed, be translated into practice. It is entirely possible for the democratic forces of the people to overcome the diehard opposition of the Dixiecrats and their agents.

There is a very broad coalition of organizations which are formally committed to support of the Court decision. Among them are many predominantly white organizations *within the South*—including the Texas C.I.O., the Georgia Federation of Labor (A.F.L.), the Southern Baptist Church Convention, other Protestant and Catholic church bodies, the Southern Regional Council, the Southern Conference Educational Fund, some newspapers, and many civic, professional, student and other groups. On the national front there is an even wider range of groups which have spoken up on this question—including the

A.F.L., C.I.O., the Communist Party, U.S.A., the National Council of Churches, and many, many more. Added to these are practically all the organizations of the Negro people, North and South—forthright and militant in their demand for "*Desegregation Now!*" even in the face of actual and threatened lynch-terror. And the democratic, peace-loving peoples abroad are watching carefully to see whether our government lives up to the Supreme Court pronouncement which the Voice of America was so quick to beam to all the world last May 17.

This broad popular support represents a formidable obstacle to those who want to sabotage the Court ruling.

That is why most Southern governors refused to go along with South Carolina's Byrnes, Georgia's Talmadge and Mississippi's White in their open defiance of the Supreme Court decision but *say* their states will obey the law. They knew that the people of the South cherish their public schools, want them improved, are hostile to proposals for turning them over to private agencies and are disposed to abide by the ruling of the Supreme Court.

That is why the Eisenhower-Brownell administration finds it necessary—even though with double-talk—to *say* they are for desegregation. They feel the pressure of the democratic people's forces of our country; and they are especially sensitive to criticisms on the Negro question from abroad.

It is relatively unimportant whether these Southern governors, the President and the attorney general are "sincere." But it is extremely important that they feel compelled to take a public position in support of the Supreme Court decision. The same democratic people's pressure which forces them into this official posture can also force them actually to abolish segregated schools.

Indeed, desegregation is already under way. As the N.A.A.C.P.'s public relations director, Henry Lee Moon, points out in *The Nation* (December 18, 1954), by last fall "four major cities and more than two-score smaller cities and towns in seven states had begun the process of integrating their formerly segregated school systems." White and Negro Catholic and other parochial schools are likewise being integrated in several Southern states.

The white supremacist opposition to placing Negro teachers in charge of classes which include white pupils is being overcome in some of these localities; and it can be overcome generally by the urgent needs of the schools and the pressure of the people. The schools of our country—already short some 150,000 teachers—simply cannot dispense with the services of the 113,000 Negro teachers now employed in segregated schools. Moreover, the democratic people's forces which are able to compel desegregation in the schools will also have the strength to assure the integration of white and Negro teaching personnel.

The fight to abolish segregated schools is a winning fight. What we need most at this time is *united and demonstrative action* by the broad coalition of people's organizations which support the ruling of the Supreme Court. . . .

# BEN HECHT AND MY UNCLE LAIBUSH

*A review of the bulky autobiography of the playwright, novelist and screen writer who exposes more of himself than truth about the world*

By Louis Lerman

**M**Y Uncle Laibish had a story about everything. By avocation he was a *badchen*, a master of ceremonies at weddings, *bar-mitsvohs* and similar festivities, so that there was a professional duty he had to be a wit and story-teller. By himself, Uncle Laibish was only a shadow: it was with an audience that he became a complete man.

It was a rare thing with Uncle Laibish present that a social evening, beginning with a promise of political debate, and every debate in those days was political—this was before the first World War and there was Herzl to conjure with and Debs and Meyer London and Marx—did not quickly enough become a stage for his virtuosity. It did not occur to me until much later that it may not have been altogether exhibitionism—it would be so catalogued in today's psychological dictionaries—but that perhaps deep in Uncle Laibish's thinking was the fear that if he paid his respects to these discussions, he might be seducing himself to a concession that there was a responsibility he had to other people than himself. He found it easier to dismiss them with his stories.

I kept remembering my Uncle Laibish while I was reading Ben Hecht's *Child of the Century*.<sup>1</sup> Granted the resemblance is a little distant, my Uncle Laibish, not having been a Hollywood movie writer who made \$125,000 for four weeks work—he was an operator on cloaks between weddings and *bar-mitsvohs*—Laibish had the same blithe unconcern for facts if doing without them made a better story, and he delivered himself, on small enough provocation, of similarly dogmatic, half-baked but sometimes amusing declarations on life, prostitution, marriage, politicians, America, the Jews, Russia, capitalism and the generally stupid way in which whoever it was ran the world ran it. There were vast areas about which Uncle Laibish knew very little, if anything at all, but that also I discovered only much later. There was, however, the important difference that Uncle Laibish never took himself or his declarations too seriously, nor did anyone else, and so he was saved from Mr. Ben Hecht's permanent adolescence and a 654-page autobiography, this including the index.

LOUIS LERMAN is a free lance writer of fiction and articles. His story, "The Executive Director and the Benches," was published in our July 1954 issue and we shall shortly print his story, "Good Boss."

Adolescence, the textbooks tell us, is an inevitable stage in growth; it has to be put up with. If you don't have to live with it, it may even have a kind of fetching quality; you can imagine the distant future, when it will happily be over. But adolescence at middle age is something else again. The juvenile self-assertiveness translates into opportunism and irresponsibility, the dogmatism into ignorance, the easy emotionalism into wearisome whining and the whole into a chronic clamor for attention—Look, mama, I'm riding my bicycle without hands.

Hecht, in a moment of insight, describes himself. He is talking about his friendship with Charles McArthur, with whom he wrote the highly successful play, *The Front Page*. "Our friendship was founded on a mutual obsession. We were both obsessed with our youthful years. For 25 years we assisted each other in behaving as if these pasts had never vanished. We remained newspaper reporters and continued to keep our hats on before the boss, drop ashes on the floor and disdain all practical people."

But that rare bit of wisdom does not make Hecht's lifetime of exhibitionist antics or his callow sentimentality any the less embarrassing reading. His "sickness called loneliness that was in me"; his lush despair, "so foul, man, so deep his pain, so miserable his efforts to live by reason"; his "nostalgia for poverty" and the menage of chauffeur, trainer, three domestics but "no butler," he explains, with which he travels; his "bits of history," the revolution in Bavaria which he reported, a comic opera of naked countesses, Hitchcock spies and ranting poets; his artistic revolts: "Experience has proved that the Hollywood artist is usually brought to heel by a raise in salary. My own discontent with what I was asked to do in Hollywood was so loud that I finally received a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars for four weeks of script writing."

Like a kind of brightly painted garbage can the book is overstuffed with half-digested scraps of anybody's meat—such profound economic observations as: "the most vital of units in the land—the capitalistic class—is being wiped out," an attack on Roosevelt for anti-Semitism, even a statement on McCarthyism for which one might give him some small credit if one were not aware of his careful silence when Hollywood writers were fired and jailed.

His adventure with Israel, to which a considerable portion of the book is devoted, is of a piece with the rest.

<sup>1</sup> *A Child of the Century*, by Ben Hecht. Simon and Schuster, New York. \$5.00.

That of all the groupings fighting for Israel, Hecht should have championed the Irgun Tsvai Leumi, is reasonable. The Irgun was a reflection of himself. Despite its much exaggerated contribution to the fight for independence, it was reactionary at its base, irresponsible in its chauvinism and perniciously immature, if one may use so gentle a word, in its doctrine of violence.

### ***His Adventure With Israel***

Hecht stepped "into history" when he finds himself buying drinks for a pair of Irgun agents at the 21 Club. One of them is a Peter Bergson, who tells him "of the fine Jewish renaissance begun by a man named Vladimir Jabotinsky, of whom I had never heard." Bergson soon enough fills in Hecht's ignorance of Jabotinsky's "fine Jewish renaissance," apparently omitting such irrelevant facts as Jabotinsky's concept of Israel as a vassal state for imperial interests which led Jabotinsky's Revisionists so logically to their technique of force, of repression of labor, of terror against the Jewish and Arab peoples of Palestine. It perhaps would have made no difference to Hecht had he been told that the youth groups of the Revisionists broke strikes, bombed worker's clubs and attacked meetings, or that Jabotinsky's renaissance was characterized by such statements as the following from his disciples: "Mussolini is the man who saved humanity from Communism. We are the pioneers in the struggle against socialism, Marxism and Communism. For ten years we have been seeking a Jewish Mussolini. Help us find him."

Hecht, converted overnight and a man with a mission, becomes propagandist and money-raiser for the Irgun. With the support of reactionary American politicians, and even of some misguided progressives, the Irgun committees of which he was co-chairman—the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation, the Emergency Committee to Save the Jews in Europe, the American League for a Free Palestine and a half dozen others—helped measurably to finance Revisionist activity under the Irgun label.

As by-product, Hecht became a historian. "As an historian," he writes in discussing the war period, "I must make an apology. I am going to omit something—the official army of the Haganah. . . . In the history books, the Haganah will have stood on the field of battle and valiantly fought for the establishment of a free Hebrew nation. Alas, they did nothing of the sort. The truth that must be buried, perhaps for ever in the past that knew it, is this. Without a Haganah army, with only the Irgun in the field, the war for Palestine might have taken a little longer, but it would have ended in victory instead of compromise and tomorrow's defeat. . . . With only an Irgun army to carry it to an Irgun victory, Israel would have emerged as a proud and healthy young democracy, instead of a harassed little beggar of a nation with its extended hat always in its hand."

Hecht's version of history is nonsense, but poisonous nonsense. Meyer Levin, the novelist, who has lived in Israel and written extensively about it, commenting on the

book in a letter to the *New York Times* (June 27, 1954), says, "If a pretended expert were to write of the American Revolution in such a way as to suggest that the troops of George Washington had nothing to do with the winning of our independence, the case would be similar to that of Ben Hecht . . . pretending that Israel was won by the terrorist Irgun, rather than by the regular army formed out of the Haganah. . . . Ben Hecht was never in Palestine. He took part in the rabid activities of a group of zealots and adventurers and managed to bring a good deal of confusion to the American mind in connection with the story of Israel. . . . It seems to me a gratuitous offense to the men and women of the Haganah and the regular army who died in this struggle. . . ."

As to "an Irgun victory"—a Jewish fascism might seem an anomaly, but fascism is not a national aberration of the Germans or the Italians or the Greeks. It has a socio-economic base and a class content. Its manifestations in our multi-national America are evident enough. It is late in world history for a fascist Irgun to have won an "Irgun victory" in Israel, even with Ben Hecht as co-chairman of its American committees. The exploits of Hecht's Irgun in the post-war period, when together with the Stern group, it massacred 250 men and women in the peaceful Arab village of Deir Yassen, is a sufficient sampling of an "Irgun victory." Nor does the activity of the Freedom (Herut) Movement, the political party formed in 1948 by the Irgun as successor to the Revisionist Party, and its ties with the more reactionary elements of Israel give any more comforting indication of its direction.

Hecht, the historian, says, "Writing history is almost as difficult, I find, as writing successful plays. No matter how much truth you put into a play, there is likely to come out of it only some big lie. The same seems to be true of history."

Poor Mr. Hecht stacked the cards against himself. He didn't put much truth into his play in the first place. He put in a lot of Mr. Hecht but the two aren't quite the same.

### ***Attack on Pittsburgh Jewish Center***

IN 1944 the Pittsburgh Jewish Cultural Center was founded in memory of the martyrs of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and was used by Jews of various viewpoints for cultural activity. But McCarthyism has laid its barbaric hands on the center. On January 26, after several years of ruthless harassment and court actions sparked by Judenrat and pro-fascist elements, the center was forced to surrender its charter. The trial was studded with the rankest anti-democratic incidents and even attempts to condone anti-Semitism. Basis for the "charges" against the center were the stool-pigeon fantasies of Joe Mazzei, who had been convicted of bastardy. But the case is far from closed. The Jewish community is aroused. The center has appealed to the State Supreme Court and continues to fight courageously against the pro-fascist frame-up. We shall print the full story next month.

# MOISHE LEIB HALPERN, REBEL POET

*Although this Yiddish poet wrote much poetry of despair and reaction, he did at times express spontaneous protest at the ills of our society*

By V. J. Jerome

*The above essay was prepared for delivery at a symposium on the Yiddish poet Moishe Leib Halpern held last fall under the auspices of the Yiddish literary quarterly Zamlungen, which has just completed its first year of publication. The essay appeared in a Yiddish translation in Zamlungen for October-December 1954.*

*We are glad to publish this Marxist essay as a measure of protest at the violation of the Bill of Rights in the jailing of V. J. Jerome, who is one of the Communist leaders imprisoned in January under the Smith act. Mr. Jerome is the author of A Lantern for Jeremy, the extremely significant novel of Jewish life in Poland of 1905. The recent confession of ex-Communist informer Harvey Matusow that he lied in his testimony against several of Mr. Jerome's co-defendants promises to bring to light the frame-up nature of the Smith act prosecutions. It is to be hoped that a new trial for Mr. Jerome and his co-defendants will result from the exposure of perjuries that led to their conviction.*

*The subject of this essay, Moishe Leib Halpern, was born in Russia in 1886 and came to this country in 1908. He wrote for the Freiheit from 1922 to 1925. He died in 1932.—Eds.*

I WISH to address myself to two interrelated themes, more correctly, two aspects of a single theme: the question of cultural heritage and the approach to the literary rebel, particularly as this question affects our attitude towards the Yiddish poet, Moishe Leib Halpern. The question of inheritance of culture needs to be examined in its manifold aspects, its fullness, if we are to avoid an oversimplified or one-sided approach.

The modern working class is the historically accredited heir to the cultural treasures of past epochs, as well as to the best creations and traditions of the epoch of capitalism. To inherit culture does not, however, mean to engross wholly, but rather to assimilate *critically*, to sift the important elements from the unimportant, the realistic from the anti-realistic, the progressive from the reactionary. Inheritance of culture is a selective, not a simple conservation. And the conserved culture itself involves analysis and revaluation by the criteria of the working class.

The acquisition of cultural heritage takes place through struggle—a two-fronted struggle: against the tendency, on the one hand, to take over uncritically, lock, stock and barrel, and, on the other, to close the door to all non-proletarian works or to open it only narrowly. If in these re-

marks the stress, of necessity, is on the sectarian danger, the rightist error is however to be remembered in the total view.

Consider a statement of Moishe Litvakov, at one time regarded as an important Soviet Yiddish literary critic, who, presuming to speak as a Marxist, wrote in his book *On Two Fronts*: "No, dear friends, literature is a reflection of existence. And if in the socio-political existence of the Jewish working class there has taken place such a profound break, if in this respect the working class renounces its past, so also in literature, which accompanied that past, it has nothing to inherit. . . . There will yet come a time when the new literature will have carried through its pioneer work, then it will be able to have a calmer and more fruitful relationship to the literary heritage" (p. 61).<sup>1</sup>

There is here a mechanical separation of historical development into two stages—the stage of rejecting past cultural contributions and the stage of acceptance. Such an approach to cultural heritage is in reality nihilistic. For, inheritance of culture has meaning only as a process in which the two opposites, adoption and rejection, interact upon each other dialectically. The working class, thus, cannot bolt its doors to earlier cultural values one day and decide to open them another day. It is a false assumption that the progress of the working class excludes historical continuity of progressive ideas.

Such ultra-leftist rejection of cultural heritage tends also to interpret the artist and his work by his class relation in an over-simplified and rigid fashion. Of course, we must evaluate the artist basically in connection with the ideology of his class; but we should not view this connection narrowly, by ignoring the wider social framework of his time, the environing thought processes, all the advancing and retarding influences upon his creativeness.

Indeed, were we to subject writers to such strait-laced measurements of vulgar sociology, then truly, to echo Shakespeare, the evil in what they did would live after them, while the good would forever be interred with their bones. We should end by renouncing and forfeiting all heritage in poets and authors like Goethe and Heine; like Pushkin and Tolstoy; like Emerson, Dreiser, and Sinclair Lewis; and, in Yiddish literature, like Peretz, Weissenberg, and Moishe Leib Halpern.

We can learn much from Friedrich Engels' approach to Goethe.

<sup>1</sup> Cited in *Shtern*, Minsk, 1932, No. 3, p. 74 (Yiddish).

Engels perceived a dualism in Goethe's attitude to the German society of his day. On the one hand, Goethe showed hostility toward that society; he sought to flee from it, in contempt and disgust for the life about him. Engels saw him as a rebel, a poet that shared the rebelliousness of his own artistic creations—Goetz von Berlichingen, Prometheus, Faust. He heard Goethe, like Mephistopheles, revile and mock the existing order of things, only soon thereafter to embrace that very status quo, to adjust himself to it and even to defend it, like a very philistine.

Yet how did Engels crown his estimation of Goethe? Did he, for his vacillation and succumbing, criticize him out of existence? Did he, in imperious disdain, forswear all heritage in the poet's bequest? Did he fail to value the highly positive qualities in Goethe's works? Let us see how Engels evaluated that complex master spirit of the age. He wrote: "... it is the persistent struggle in himself between the poet of genius, disgusted by the wretchedness of his surroundings, and the Frankfurt alderman's cautious child, the privy councilor of Weimar, who sees himself forced to make a truce with it and get used to it. Thus Goethe is now colossal, now petty; now a defiant, ironical, world-scorning genius, now a calculated, complacent, narrow philistine. Even Goethe was unable to overcome the wretchedness of German life; on the contrary, it overcame him, and this victory over the greatest German is the best proof that it cannot be conquered by the individual."<sup>2</sup>

And Engels follows this by saying: "We are not throwing it up to Goethe *à la* Boerne and Manzel, that he was not a liberal, but that he could even be a philistine at times; not that he was incapable of any enthusiasm for German freedom, but that he sacrificed his occasionally irrepresible, sounder aesthetic feeling to a small-town aversion to every great historical movement. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Herein lies the great lesson for our day. Not condemnation, overpowering everything: *Take back your songs of freedom, you who have at times weakened!*—but the largesse of discernment: *That you should have weakened, you who sang the songs of freedom!*

In this light let us turn to Moishe Leib Halpern.

### Halpern, Rebel Poet

I shall endeavor here to present certain social criteria by which Moishe Leib Halpern, that major American-Yiddish poet, who was for a brief space identified with the proletarian left, may, in this third decade after his death, stand out in a true light, in his true worth.

Halpern was a poet of major achievements, beset by soul-rending contradictions. Poet of loneliness, he huddled close to the working people. Prince of pessimism, he pined for life and yearned for a world fit to live in. Hurler

of oaths and bellow of coarseness, he sang of children and of woman's love with tender lyricism. Denizen of cafes where foregathered the petty-bourgeois Yiddish esthetes—*die Yunge*—smug revolvers against social ideas, he was among them, but not of them.

Halpern, by any objective analysis of his writings, must be considered as a poet with strong social orientation and attachment, albeit intermittent, to the working class. In many of his poems, notably during his association with the *Freiheit*, he spoke as a poet of protest, of social discontent, of searing hatred for bourgeois cant and sanctimonious clericalism, of scorn for kow-towing intellectuals.

Halpern possessed class feeling, with class awareness, which, however, failed to attain the level of distinct class consciousness. Spurts of that consciousness were present and his outstanding poems created in such moments revealed clearly the powerful potential within him. In the main, his poems of social protest were less defined along class lines, being rather the elemental hatred of the poor against the rich, of the insulted and injured against those who hold the whip-hand.

Characteristic in this connection is his poem "Zlotchov, My Home," in which delightful folk depiction and satire are penetrated with the poet's pain as he gazes at his Old World birth-town with blighting memories of evil practices and hypocrisy among the wealthy Jewish householders. In the opening stanza the home-sick poet speaks:

"Oh, Zlotchov, you, my home, my town,  
With your churchspire, synagogue, and bath,  
With your market-wives squatting in the square,  
And with your hucksters that, like dogs,  
Rush upon the peasant who comes down  
With his egg-basket from the Sassov hill—  
As the life of springtime wakes in me  
My poor, meager longing for you—  
My home, my Zlotchov."

In the second stanza, however, we hear:

"But when in my longing I recall  
Old moneybags Rappaport as he struts  
With bloated belly to synagogue,  
And Shayeh Hillel's the saint  
Who would even sell the sun in heaven  
With its rays like a pig in a poke—  
Then, this is enough for me, that, like a candle low  
Should burn out my longing for you,  
My home, my Zlotchov."

This poem, typical of Halpern's writings exposing social evils, embodies the quality of critical realism that brings out strongly his positive values. The critical-realist method, which flourished in capitalism's ascendant stage, attacks the corruption of class society and many of its oppressive features; in doing so, it brings realistic insight into the life, thoughts and sentiments of the common people.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Literature and Art*, New York 1947, pp. 81-82.

<sup>3</sup> Work cited, p. 82.

## Broadsword Against Social Evil

Of course, such criticism of social ills does not proceed from an essential questioning of the system itself and hence cannot portray life in its forward-course or guide to a basic solution. Thus in this poem the final stanza peters out into the conclusion—

"Be this at least my comforting,  
That I shall not be buried in you,  
My home, my Zlotchov."

One cannot touch upon the critical-realist aspect of Halpern without mentioning his stirring "Ballad of Avrom the Butcher." For profound humanism, for indictment of obscurantism and the tragedies it brings, for sheer masterly depiction of bigotry-venomous small-town life, etched in acid lines that eat into your consciousness until you cry out, *A halt to the infamy!*—this ballad alone establishes its creator as a poet of power.

In his critical poetry Halpern employs the keen weapon of satire, with a formidableness reminiscent of Heine and possibly unmatched in Yiddish poetry. One may be tempted to compare him to Moishe Nadir; but the satiric methods of the two poets bear no likeness. With Nadir satire was the deft thrust of a rapier; with Halpern it was the fearful hack of a broadsword. To read such poems as "Love of Zion," pointed at the smug bourgeois nationalist; "Damn His Hide—the Phrasemonger!" aimed at the pseudo-intellectual; "The Whore—Our Leadership," directed at corrupt Social-Democracy, is to hear a voice thunderous in wrath.

In the poem "Damn His Hide—the Phrasemonger!" Halpern says:

"The god-accursed intellectual  
Has a pair of rotten white hands  
That will not work; so he twists with them  
The endless thumb-turned phrasemongering."

He lashes into the false intellectual—

"... that word-and-flea musketeer ...  
Who, if he takes a bribe,  
Hand him honor, a whole spittoonful—  
Damn his hide!"

It has been said of Halpern that he was anti-intellectual; but this is a false assertion. Not the man of ideas as such, but the pretentious intellectual is the target of his shafts. Halpern's scorn does not express anti-intellectualism, typified in the cult of Makhayevism (defamation of revolutionary intellectuals in order to create enmity between them and the working class—*Eds.*) in pre-revolutionary Russia. He assails the distorter of culture who

"transforms the struggle into brother-hate,"  
who

"dresses up the murder of millions."

In his vision of the future social order he foresees an in-

tegrated intellectual contributing to the common weal, so that there will be effaced

"the hateful stigma *intellectual*."

At times he applies to himself this flagellation of the un-integrated intelligentsia. In a poem which, ironically, bears the name "Sunrise," he cries out:

"Oh, sun, forgive me for my hands,  
Forgive me for my white hands."

The Halpern who thus cries out castigates his own weakness, painfully conscious of the gap between the powerful poetic urge springing from his rebellious unrest and his recurring moods of diffidence and sickly introspection, in his state of half-grasped ideological understanding.

## Poet of Despair

Indeed, Halpern must not be glorified; a true estimate of his work must emphasize the decadent and downright reactionary poems written by him at various periods, poems that outweigh in number his positive writings. We read with shock and revulsion the bulk of his Zarkhi poems, with their broodings on despair, emptiness and negation; or the series "From My Slavic Motifs," with their hideous Jew-Gentile bigotry. These represent an aspect of Moishe Leib Halpern which we emphatically reject: the vacillations, the succumbing to reaction which in his deeper moments he hated in himself. These enter also into the death-motif in this poet who hungered so for life.

Yet the recurrence of Halpern's death-theme can only superficially be identified with the death-cult in the decadent poets of moribund capitalism. Halpern was no glorifier of death, no singer of swan songs. He loved life passionately, hating and scourging all who marred its beauty, who despoiled its riches, violated its peace, chained its freedom. His invokings of death were the pathos of a poet who lacked sustained and sustaining strength and so sank down in frustration.

Halpern's death-motif was the pessimism which Lenin, in discussing the contradictory aspects in Tolstoy, characterized as "the ideology that must manifest itself in an epoch when the entire old order is being overturned and when the mass of the people, which has been reared in that old order, which has sucked in with the mother's milk all the principles, habits, traditions and faiths of that social order, does not and cannot see what new order is being established, what social forces are establishing it and in what way and what social forces are capable of achieving emancipation."

## A Rounded Estimate

Halpern gravitated toward the working class; yet he did not fully find himself in its midst. In this lay his tragedy. In his revulsion to the hideousness of the bourgeois milieu, he came over to the working class, to its advanced sector; but he failed to understand the historical role of that class.

Thus, even while he brought his poet-voice to its cause, he lacked the basic faith in its capacities to advance in struggle and lead the people.

Yet in this contradictory process, markedly in the brief period of his association with the *Freiheit*, Halpern rose at times beyond the level of critical realist to that of revolutionary realist. We note elements of this transcendence in the cited poem, "Damn his Hide—the Phrasemonger!" but more strongly in "The Whore—our Leadership," which pillories Social Democracy. Perhaps his most revolutionary poem, less known, in which he stands forth as an ardent partisan of socialism, is the inspiring ode, "Hammer, Sickle and Star."

The paean opens with the lines:

"Praise to the power in the morning sun,  
The power—our brotherhood;  
Praise to the sea and the waves, the bears,  
The red glistening-giant bears,  
That dance to the ultimate, ultimate star,  
The morning star, the morning star,  
Praise, praise to the power"—

and ends exultant:

"Praise to the flag that roars our song  
Above devil, god, and throne;  
Praise to you, brother, our true-hearted,  
Who stride in the fore with the flag of truth,  
In the fore with the flag against foe and fire,  
Our blood in struggle, our heart in fire—  
The flag, the flag, the flag."

Significant for the fuller assessment of Halpern as social poet is the fact that this stirring socialist poem was published in 1926—considerably after he had severed his connections with the *Freiheit*.

The consideration of these last mentioned poems, which reflect a higher political level in Halpern's development, leads us to the important conclusion that artistic creation on the level of spontaneous protest, of elemental rebelliousness, is not to be spurned and rejected *as such*, but to be viewed developmentally. When Lenin struggled against the adherents of spontaneity in the working class movement, he fought not against the spontaneous element itself in the class struggle, but against those who opposed the infusion of the conscious, socialist element into the spontaneous movement, which, left to itself, was destined to remain on the level of bourgeois ideology. He fought against those who prated "non-interference" in the spontaneous movement, those who held to spontaneity in permanence, so to speak.

It is so in literature. If we reject out of hand the literary rebel, if we spurn a Halpern for being, among other things, a rebel, we approach the problem mechanically and with deadening dogmatism; we deny the writer growth and shut out understanding of his inner process as creative artist; we underestimate the capacity of the working class

to influence and develop writers *on all levels* who come toward it.

In these times when the advanced workers, Jewish and non-Jewish, must resist reaction's efforts to cut them off from the people and must link themselves widely with all democratic forces, we need more than ever to strive for such broadening in the cultural sphere. We struggle for our democratic heritage, for everything that is positive in the Jewish cultural creations and traditions. Let us not reject, but accept with humanist heart those writers who enrich us with such cultural values as shine forth from the poems of Moishe Leib Halpern. Let us all learn truly to treasure our poets—in their lifetime as well as after, when, in these harsh anti-cultural surroundings of capitalism, they stand in need of our understanding and our love.

## SHALOM

By Henri Percikow

When I hear the winds sweeping our land  
Laden with anger and grief of my people  
Echoing their yearning for peace  
My soul cries out for strength.

When I hear the wings of peace beating  
Over town and city, unable to rest,  
I feel the anguish of my people—  
Then my heart pounds with fury.

How much longer can golden walls  
Stand between peoples and nations  
With the sword of Goliath taunting the world  
Awakening the wrath of mankind.

We who have endured through the generations  
And can now reap the fruits of man's wisdom  
Know that I must span with you bridges across the  
continents  
To bring Shalom to the people.

Hands over oceans will be clasped  
From the anvils, hammers will shower golden sparks,  
And atoms will be harnessed to furrow the earth  
And my toiling brothers will reap a harvest of life.

Tomorrow the daybreak will be anticipated  
Tomorrow's bread will be plentiful  
Tomorrow's eternal peace will germinate freedom.

# UNWANTED HANDS

*A Short Story*

*By Z. Libin*

**N**OW, when you smoke the sweet, tasty cigarettes manufactured by S. L. & Co., you can feel at ease and untroubled in your mind. . . .

No more do human hands touch these cigarettes; the tobacco is no longer moistened by sweat and tears. . . . There, where the cigarettes are made, you can no longer hear the sighs of the "hands"; no one is exploited, nobody is driven by the foreman, no one is insulted by the boss. . . . Everything is quiet, fine, peaceful. Machines have taken the place of the hands!

You can smoke your cigarettes with an easy conscience. . . . But when you take your next puff of the fragrant smoke, it would not be amiss to ask yourself: "And what happened to the hands? . . . to the rejected and ejected hands?" Where are they? Where are the heads of families? Are they able to feed their children? Do they have any money to pay the everlasting, everlasting landlord?

And what has happened to those pale, consumptive cigarette-girls? A person without children has to live, too. And for a tiny room, or for a bed in somebody else's front room, you have to pay.

In New York you must have a job! Without a job you put fear into your friends . . . they begin to avoid you like the plague. You must have a job!

The boss has been saving to buy machines, but the hands have saved nothing. Long years they worked in his shop, grew older in his shop, weaker, their faces paler, their eyes dimmer . . . and now. . . .

Now, without ceremony, they have been told to go; the shop has been outfitted with electricity and they have installed two giant, fearsome machines.

Finished . . . the workers are no longer needed.

MALKE HER NAME IS, A CIGARETTE-MAKER, A FRIEND OF MINE. Still a child; she should be enjoying the springtime of her

Z. LIBIN is one of the pioneers of Yiddish proletarian fiction in the United States. He drew his subject matter from the life of the Jewish sweatshop workers. Libin was born in Russia in 1872 and came to this country in 1892. The above story was printed in a collections of his stories published in 1910 and is here translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld.

life . . . but for three years now she has been withering in a Jewish sweatshop. And when I found her at home one weekday, I asked:

"What's the matter?"

"Out of work!" Malke replied.

"Slack?"

"No—finished!"

"Fired?"

"Everybody!"

"How do you mean—everybody?"

And Malke told me. In her shop all the hands were fired and in their place they installed two big machines.

"Can you get work in another shop?" I asked.

"No, practically every shop has put in machines and most of the cigarette makers are looking for work."

"What do you expect to do?"

"I don't know," Malke said. "I don't know where to start."

I asked her to tell me how it happened and what took place when the workers were replaced by huge pieces of cold, dumb metal.

Malke told me. . . .

"Nothing. Nothing happened. We had been expecting it for two months. The shop has been gloomy, depressed, as though a corpse were lying there somewhere. But still, no one was sure up to the last minute; we didn't want to believe it and we hoped that things would stay as they were.

"That last day when we came to work we saw some big wooden cases in the shop—wheels, belts, chains—and we understood what it meant. They didn't give us any work to do that morning. The foreman came into the shop, told us to take our work-books and go to the office. We all knew what this means but nobody said a word.

"The boss explained that he was forced to buy these machines, because hands cost much more and he couldn't compete with the shops that were doing machine work. And when he told us that we wouldn't be needed any more his voice trembled and his face twitched.

"We kept quiet. The boss himself began to count out our wages and as he did so he looked each one in the eyes as though he wanted to find out how we felt. Now we began to see that he was really enjoying this. He was baiting us . . . getting his revenge. But we spoiled it, his day of revenge.

"I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY HOW IT HAPPENED. AS THOUGH OUR hearts had secretly conferred, all the hands suddenly became merry. No one left the boss's office. Each one waited so that we could all leave together. Some of us started to 'make jokes' and we all began to laugh. And when we left the office we were all singing.

"We began to put on our coats and gather up our tools. The girls kissed each other and the men teased us. We were all so happy . . . and all so pale. Terribly pale. You know how it is in a shop—there are always wranglings among the workers—and there were some workers who were not on good terms with each other, but now everybody became friends, one big family. Except one.

"Melech his name is, the oldest hand in the shop. More than 15 years he worked there, ever since the boss went into business. He was only a young man then, had just been married. Now he has four children, two others died. His wife is sick in the hospital, and he himself

looks like he has consumption.

"Melech didn't join us. All of us were laughing, singing, but he remained sitting at his table, motionless, as though he were dead. When he finally began to gather up his things his hands shook and his eyes filled with tears. At that moment the boss came into the shop, and several of us moved over in front of Melech so the boss wouldn't see him. We didn't want him to get his revenge through Melech.

"We left the shop as one. All the hands—60 of us—began to sing. Even Melech seemed more relaxed and happier."

Malke finished. Her simple story made me want to cry. My only thought was, "Where is Melech now, the 'oldest hand'—and where are the rest of them, the unwanted cigarette makers?"

*(Translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld)*

## FORMOSA AND PEACE

*Editors, JEWISH LIFE:*

Men who are willing to substitute common sense for power politics should sit down and scan maps of China and the United States. Suppose an island nearly the size of Holland lay a little more than a hundred miles off our eastern coast and was in possession of an enemy determined to use it for attack on us. This would be serious. But suppose that in addition, other small islands lay right on our coast and had been seized and fortified by our enemy, with Chinese military officers and equipment on these islands. Also, that these islands have repeatedly been used for armed attack on our mainland. No great nation today would for a moment endure such open aggression. These facts in themselves would have been in the past ample cause for war.

Add to this the fact that Formosa for nearly 300 years has been universally recognized as Chinese and in Chinese possession, save when it was forcibly seized by Japan in 1895 and held 50 years. After the Second World War the Allies deprived Japan of Formosa and declared that it belonged to China. The question certainly arose as to whether Chiang Kai-shek or the Communist regime was the real Chinese state. Most of the civilized world recognized the Chinese People's Republic as the real China. The fact that the United States insists that six million people on Formosa constitute China while 600 million on the mainland are not only to have no recognition, but not even to be treated as respectable, may be justifiable to some. But surely to add to that the threat of war unless this great Chinese Republic should acquiesce in allowing a discredited man like Chiang

Kai-shek to camp on their door step and bomb them at will—this no decent administration can ask.

By what far-fetched logic can Formosa, on the opposite side of the earth from us, be regarded as necessary for the protection of our western border? Does it protect our Philippines? But we just announced the independence of the Philippines. Does it protect *our* Japan or does Japan belong to the Japanese? Do we simply pretend to own the earth?

Instead of clinging to such an untenable position, why could not the President of the United States say clearly: "We ask that the island of Formosa remain undisturbed at present, eventually to be disposed of in accord with the decision of the International Court of Justice. All other islands, we agree, shall revert to the Chinese People's Republic. We recognize this republic as the government of China, entitled to a seat in the United Nations. We will neither aid nor abet war or hostilities between China and Formosa."

This would be the greatest step toward a peaceful world since Hitler's death. And what would we lose? To such an overture there can be no doubt but that China would assent. Of her legal right to Formosa there is no doubt. She will never surrender that right. But if without surrender she is asked to await peaceful processes and at the same time is treated in other and vital respects as a civilized nation, she will sacrifice immediate war for peace and work with the civilized world to maintain it.

W. E. B. Du Bois

*New York City, February 3, 1955.*

# THE ATTITUDE OF JEWISH LABOR TO WORLD WAR I, 1917-1918

by Morris U. Schappes

WHEN Congress declared war on April 6, 1917 (the vote was 82 to 6 in the Senate, 373 to 50 in the House), pledges of support were instantaneous in many Jewish circles. All the fraternal orders except the Workmen's Circle, all the rabbinical organizations and the Federation of American Zionists put themselves immediately on record. *Dos Yiddishe Folk*, Zionist organ, proclaimed on April 6: "We Jews of America stand by our land and our government, united and strong, and are happy in knowing that our victims shall serve the holy cause of justice all over the world." Rabbi Stephen S. Wise abandoned his pre-war active pacifism and literally draped his pulpit in the flag. On April 7, William Edlin, a socialist editing the *Tog*, a liberal daily, branded as a "traitor anyone who will try to avoid doing his duty because it is inconvenient or because of his previous sympathies."

On April 26 the Poale Zionists staged a rally of 3,000 at Cooper Union in New York, greeting the war as promoting "the principles of democracy and free nationality" and hoping these principles will be applied to Jewish claims to Palestine. On May 14, Seward Park on the East Side of New York was crowded with 20,000 at a rally organized by the League of Jewish Patriots to induce enlistments. Bedeviled by the fear of anti-Semitic misinterpretations of Jewish anti-war activities, pro-war Jewish circles exploited the threat of anti-Semitism to win loud support for the war from hesitant Jewish people. "Let us act as natives, not as foreigners," exhorted the pro-war Socialist, M. Baranov, in the *Forward* on June 12, and Louis E. Miller in his *Vochenshrift* echoed that view on June 22 when he argued that Jews and immigrants have "less right to engage" in anti-war activity "than the native-born."<sup>1</sup>

In response to such agitation and then through the operation of conscription, over 200,000 Jews served in the armed forces, 3,500 dying and 12,000 suffering wounds for ideals that Wilson later turned to dust and bitter ashes when he revealed it was a "commercial and industrial war" in which they had sacrificed life and limb for United States financial "leadership." There were more than 9,000 Jewish officers and 1,132 were awarded decora-

tions and citations, including three with the Congressional Medal of Honor and 147 with Distinguished Service Medals and Crosses. Anti-Semites jeered that Jews were mostly in the Quartermaster department, when as a matter of fact they were disproportionately crowded into the most dangerous service, the infantry and under-represented in the "safe" Quartermaster outfits. Jews indeed showed a higher percentage in the armed forces than the general population, primarily because as city residents working in light industries they had less claim to deferment than did farmers or those in essential industries.<sup>2</sup>

Yet there were those who did not have to wait for Wilson's belated confirmation to proclaim the nature of the war as reactionary. With superior wisdom and patriotism, the St. Louis convention of the Socialist Party, which opened the very day after the declaration of war, denounced it "as a crime against the people of the United States and against the nations of the world" and recorded "its unalterable opposition to the war just declared." There were only five pro-war delegates at that convention, with over 170 opposing the war. The membership referendum opposed the war by about 21,000 to 2,800 votes. From April to June 1917 the Socialist Party membership grew from 67,788 to 81,172 despite minor losses from pro-war elements.<sup>3</sup>

## Jewish Labor Opposes the War

For a time, the influence of this St. Louis anti-war resolution in Jewish labor organizations was extensive. The Workmen's Circle, the Jewish Socialist Federation, the Jewish unions and even large numbers of Labor Zionists supported this stand (most of the latter were finally won over to favoring the war by the Balfour Declaration while a minority ultimately split with the Zionists and became anti-war Socialists). The first convention to reflect this anti-war position was that of the Capmakers, May 1-10, 1917. On the opening day the Socialist lawyer, Jacob Panken, evoked enthusiasm with his eloquence: "Yes, the capitalist class has forced us into war with Germany,

<sup>2</sup> I. George Fredman and Louis A. Falk, *Jews in American Wars*, New York, 4th rev. ed., 1943, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928*, New York, 1928, p. 313, 310; Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, *History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932*, New York, 1935, p. 422.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Rappaport, *Jewish Immigration and World War I, A Study of American Yiddish Press Reactions*, unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1951, p. 279, 281, 294, 289, 295.

expecting that the workers will make peace with them during the war. But this day, the 1st of May, 1917 . . . I cry to you, comrades, 'No peace with capitalism.'" When the applause stopped, he went on to expose the huge profits made from the war by Standard Oil and other corporations. He closed on this note: "On with the fight against war; on with the fight for peace; on with the fight against an expeditionary force to Europe; on with the fight against conscription; on with the fight for liberty, for solidarity, for humanity." The record reads: "Long Applause."<sup>4</sup>

Both the I.L.G.W.U. and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers refused to follow the A. F. of L.'s example of pledging not to strike. In fact, the clothing workers in all crafts piled up one of the largest strike records in their militant history. In May 1917, the Workmen's Circle convention endorsed the St. Louis resolution with only four dissenting votes and William Edlin was shouted down as a "murder-patriot" when he tried to make a pro-war speech. In June 1917, preparing for a convention, the organ of the International Fur Workers' Union concluded its outline of the tasks facing the workers by emphasizing that all previous gains are endangered by the war, that courage is needed to speak up now in face of threats of imprisonment and that the delegates have a duty to protest and inspire other branches of labor to protest. "Now," it pointed out, "is the time to demonstrate that we are not only heroes at passing resolutions supporting industrial democracy in peaceful times . . . but that you have courage enough in a time of oppression and reaction to speak out against militarism, against the domination of those who would conquer the world, and to take a stand for full democracy in political and industrial life."<sup>5</sup>

Government repression—censorship, mass arrests and imprisonments—sought to stamp out the peace movement. Under the Espionage Act of June 15, 1917, second-class mailing privileges were denied several socialist periodicals, including the *New York Call* and the *Forward*. Cahan began to vacillate. When the Trading with the Enemy Act of October 1917 required foreign language newspapers to file translations of all material dealing with the war or foreign affairs, Cahan gave this as an excuse for abandoning the St. Louis resolution as a guiding line and began to agitate for a convention to revise that resolution. Out in Chicago, however, Kalman Marmor, editor of the *Yiddish Daily World*, resourcefully found ways of getting his point across to his alert readership. Thus on October 15, 1917, he took advantage of the fact that the *Chicago Tribune*, to whom *German* anti-war socialists were praiseworthy, had lauded Karl Liebknecht and Clara Zetkin for their "bold struggle against their government." Reprinting the *Tribune's* anti-imperialist excerpts from these leaders, Marmor editorially commented: "But the trouble with the *Tribune* and its like is that they always have two kinds of standards and two ways of evaluating truth and falsehood, patriotism and treason." Lamenting that

they regard socialists here who say the same thing about our government in an entirely different light, Marmor concluded that this "proves that the socialists are on the right track when they follow the path of the Liebknechts and unmask the capitalists of their own country."<sup>6</sup>

## Electoral Victories

The peace temper of the Jewish masses in New York can best be gauged from the results of the November 1917 elections. Heading the socialist ticket as candidate for mayor was Morris Hillquit, who was associated in the public mind with the St. Louis resolution. He was backed by the United Hebrew Trades, the Amalgamated and the I.L.G.W.U., the Workmen's Circle, the Poale Zion and the Jewish National Workers' Alliance, the Progressive Irish League and the Negro Independent Political Council of Harlem. His campaign was dynamic and was geared to local issues as well as to the overriding issue of the war. Frightened by the spreading idea that a vote for Hillquit was a vote for peace, the Jewish plutocracy and its supporters counter-attacked with the threat that a large Jewish vote for the socialists would provoke anti-Semitism. Jacob H. Schiff, Louis Marshall, Oscar S. Straus, Adolph Lewisoohn, Daniel Guggenheim and Henry Morgenthau were among those who signed paid advertisements in the *Yiddish press* warning the Jewish voter against Hillquit.

Yet even by a Tammany count Hillquit got 145,332 votes, almost nosing out John Purroy Mitchell (155,497) for second place, and carried 12 assembly districts with heavy Jewish populations (Tammany later reorganized these districts so as to avoid such popular disasters in the future). More important, ten socialists were elected to the State Assembly and seven to the New York City Board of Alderman. The then fiery anti-war orator, Jacob Panken, was elected a municipal judge. Incidentally, in Rochester, N. Y., three Jewish socialists were elected to office: an alderman, a supervisor, and a constable. And while Hillquit polled 22 per cent of the total vote in New York, in Chicago the Socialists attained one-third of the total vote. Considering the jingoistic flag-waving, the war hysteria and the repression, such voting is an index to the desire for the peace among the masses, especially among the Jewish workers.<sup>7</sup>

One form of expression of this desire for immediate peace was through the People's Council for Democracy and Terms of Peace, formed at the end of May 1917 by an organizing committee that included Benjamin Schlesinger, president of the I.L.G.W.U., Joseph Schlossberg, secretary of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, P. Geliebter of the Workman's Circle, Max Pine, secretary-treasurer of the United Hebrew Trades of New York, Rose Schneiderman, I.L.G.W.U. organizer, Jacob Panken, Morris Hill-

<sup>4</sup> *The Headgear Worker*, May-June 1917, p. 4-6, English section.

<sup>5</sup> *Der For-Arbeter*, June 1, 1917, p. 2-3; Rappaport, work cited, p. 286, 288.

<sup>6</sup> From Scrapbook in Marmor Collection.

<sup>7</sup> Rappaport, work cited, p. 318-321; Fine, work cited, p. 323; Stuart E. Rosenberg, *The Jewish Community in Rochester 1843-1925*, New York, 1954, p. 155.

quit, Alexander Trachtenberg and Rabbi Judah L. Magnes, chairman of the Jewish Kehillah of New York (which promptly removed him from office lest the Jews be tainted). Similar councils sprang up in Chicago, Philadelphia and Boston. The New York Council, headed by Panken, had 284 affiliates, including 93 unions. At a national convention in September more than 40 of 350 delegates represented Jewish organizations. "Peace now, and peace without victory" summed up its general program, although much emphasis was also placed on protecting the rights of labor against war-time repression.

To combat this broad peace movement, which was actively supported by the anti-war Socialists, the pro-war Socialists in August 1917 formed the Jewish Socialist League of America, affiliated with the Social Democratic League of pro-war elements who had walked out of the St. Louis Convention. Poale Zionists were conspicuously active in this new Jewish league although a speech by Dr. N. Syrkin denouncing Jewish opposition to the war as the work of German agents was condemned by the Executive Committee of the Poale Zion, from which Syrkin speedily withdrew.<sup>8</sup>

### Reactions to Bolshevik Revolution

The pressure of the government and of reactionary forces to stifle all opposition to the war from Americans intensified when the Bolshevik Revolution began on November 7, 1917. The universal acclaim that had greeted the March revolution was gone. It was one thing for the tsar to be overthrown; it was quite another thing to have the economic and political rule of landlords and capitalists replaced by the economic and political rule of the workers and peasants. The social instinct of American reaction led it to an immediate wholesale propaganda attack on the new Soviet government, with misinformation and misrepresentation as the main weapons of this propaganda.

How thorough this misinformation was, became a matter of public and scandalous record when Walter Lippmann, now the famous columnist, and Charles Merz, now editor of the *New York Times*, made a study of the way the *New York Times* had reported the news about the Bolshevik government in the first 1,000 days after November 7, 1917. Published as a special supplement to the *New Republic* on August 4, 1920, "A Test of the News" concluded that those Americans who relied upon the *Times* as their source of information had been totally misinformed about the facts of Soviet life for these crucial 1,000 days, when basic attitudes and opinions were being shaped. Innumerable falsehoods, big and little, had been put over on the American people by its most creditable source of news!

The heavy weight of this reactionary propaganda on the Jewish population was even greater than upon the American people as a whole because there was the ever-present fear of anti-Semitism acting as an additional spur

to conformity to reaction. Thus the orthodox *Morgen Journal* had no difficulty making up its mind about the new government. Two days after the Revolution began this newspaper declared authoritatively that the Bolsheviks "have brought Russia closer to slavery and barbarism than at any time since the Romanov dynasty was destroyed." It is no surprise therefore that as early as June 29, 1918, the liberal Yiddish daily, the *Tog*, was insisting that "once and for all an end must be made of the Bolsheviks." These were primarily echoes in Yiddish of the wild and fearful cries of the general reactionary and in some instances liberal press.

The American workers, and particularly the Jewish workers, were of a different mind about this great new development in Russia. It is true that there was much confusion as to just what was happening there and some misinformation stuck to even the most cautious reader of the "news." His close study of the Yiddish press, however, leads Joseph Rappaport to the conclusion that "the Leninists of Russia came to be looked upon in 1918 as the hope of the world for Socialism. . . . Sympathy for the Bolsheviks mounted in the succeeding months as Leninist efforts to stabilize conditions appeared to be the only alternative to chaos and a Rightist reaction. The Bolshevik reform program was attractive and their slogans and manifestoes carried great ideological appeal."<sup>9</sup>

The organ of the Capmakers' union, *The Headgear Worker*, carried an editorial by its editor, J. M. Budish, calling for aid to the Bolshevik government early in 1918, beset as it was by Germany from without and capitalist enemies within. "The real traitors of Russia," he wrote, "who for a pot of porridge sold their souls to the Kaiser, proved to be . . . not the villified Bolsheviks but those 'royal' Russian elements whom the entire capitalist press never ceased to eulogize and on whom they put their hopes of getting Russia into line. . . . While the Red Guard are fighting the enemies without, the rich bourgeoisie is joining hands with German imperialism to stamp out democracy and enforce slavery. This is what the patriotism of the Russian capitalists proved to be. They do not give a rap for the country."<sup>10</sup>

At its convention in May 1918, the I.L.G.W.U. General Executive Board declared that the membership "will follow the struggles of their brothers in Russia with intense interest and sympathy, not only because many are linked to them by ties of kinship and sentiment, but also because the fate of the first great working class republic in the world cannot be but a matter of prime concern to the organized and progressive workers of all countries." Amid all the confusion about tactics the organ of the Jewish Socialist Federation, *Neie Velt*, wrote on August 23, 1918: "The Bolsheviks are perhaps the only Socialists who have undertaken to live up to the letter of every word in the phrases we all have been preaching for many years. . . . If the dictatorship of the proletariat is the goal, why then not

<sup>8</sup> Rappaport, work cited, p. 299-302, 310, 314-315.

<sup>9</sup> Rappaport, work cited, p. 354, 355.

<sup>10</sup> *The Headgear Worker*, January-February, 1918, p. 3-6, English section.

approach that goal while the path is clear? . . . The Bolsheviks have acted logically, and there is no room for criticism except if we wish to criticize all the methods of our propaganda up to now." In socialist and labor circles the only anti-Bolshevik periodical was the *Neie Post*, organ of the New York Cloakmakers' union.

American reaction of course was worried by these and other signs among the American workers as a whole of curiosity and sympathy with the new Russian government. In addition to stepping up the propaganda campaign, it decided to take part in Allied military intervention against the Soviet government. When Wilson announced American military intervention on August 3, 1918, he was applauded as a "liberator" in the *Morgen Jurnal*, the *Tog*, the *Varheit*, the *Yiddishes Tageblatt* and in Anglo-Jewish periodicals like the *American Hebrew*. The press incitement against American opponents of this military adventure led to hoodlum attacks. In October 1918 the *Bulletin* of the New York Young Men's Hebrew Association called upon its young readers to "break up that street meeting where Bolshevik doctrine is preached. Squelch that misguided would-be martyr who weaves theories in idleness while the world burns."<sup>11</sup>

### Capitulation to Pro-War Pressure

In the ranks of Jewish labor, capitulation to reactionary pro-war pressure also took the form of an ever more rapid drifting of a majority of the Socialist leadership into the pro-war camp. Although they had voted for the St. Louis anti-war resolution, they soon began to abandon it, while Eugene V. Debs and Charles E. Ruthenberg and other Socialist leaders conducted active anti-war campaigns. For this work they were persecuted by the government, indicted and imprisoned and opportunist elements in the leadership caved in under the ideological and even more tangible blows. Signs of this trend to clamber onto the pro-war bandwagon became pronounced around the issue of the Third Liberty Loan drive of April 1918. The seven Socialist Aldermen in New York, elected less than a half year before because the voters thought they stood for peace, suddenly announced their support of this Loan. Despite immediate condemnation of this unauthorized reversal of socialist policy by the local leaders of the Bronx and Brooklyn Socialist parties, Congressman Meyer London published his endorsement of the Loan on April 11, and on April 19, the executive committee of the Jewish Socialist Federation appealed to the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party to reverse the St. Louis resolution, an appeal which was promptly rejected.

Seeking to justify his position, London in a speech in Congress on May 1, 1918 not only affirmed his support of the war, but rationalized his position by asserting that Wilson "has not only adopted the substance of the international Socialist program, but even the very formula of the

international Socialist movement for his expression of the aims and objects of the United States in this war." So dazzled were the Londoners by the glitter of Wilson's Fourteen Points of January 8, 1918 that they forgot the basic point that even Wilson was to admit in September 1919, that this was "a commercial and industrial war."

On May 10 to 12, 1918 the Jewish Socialist Federation had a national conference at which the majority, led by Louis B. Boudin, B. Charney Vladeck and J. B. Salutsky (now known as J. B. S. Hardman), repudiated the St. Louis resolution and took a pro-war stand by a vote of 25 to 19. This position was soon endorsed by the leadership of the Workmen's Circle, the United Hebrew Trades, the I.L.G.W.U., the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and other organizations. These unions bought Liberty Bonds with union funds. Together with the United Hebrew Trades and the Furriers' union these unions also conducted a popular Bond drive on the East Side that resulted in the sale of \$12,000,000 worth of bonds, in contrast to the \$200,000 in bonds bought in that area in the Second Liberty Loan. Elements in the membership and parts of the leadership fought against this and similar pro-war actions. The rift between the opportunist leadership and the still militant forces among the Jewish workers was widening.<sup>12</sup>

This division between right and left wing socialism was to become a major factor in the Jewish labor movement after the war. It is of prime importance to note that the central issue on which the cleavage was based had to do with what position workers in our own country were to take on the foreign policy of our own government, on the repression imposed by our government on all opponents of the war and on the need of the workers to fight back to prevent the rampant employers from using the war fervor for the purpose of reducing the living conditions and standards of the workers. Who were the patriots: those who beat the drums and gulped insatiate doses of noble words about making the world safe for democracy, or those who, seeing dimly or clearly that this was in fact "a commercial and industrial war . . . not a political war," refused to give their voluntary support to it?

Reaction, grown bloated with triumph and superprofits during the war, let loose a post-war wave of terror that, as we shall see, was to have profound effects upon the Jewish masses in our country.

### Arab Communists Urge: Recognize Israel

THE Communist Parties of Syria and Lebanon have come out with a call for recognition of the State of Israel by the Arab states, an Associated Press dispatch from Damascus reported on February 9. The news was based on a story in the Syrian journal *Al Nas*, which reported that this call resulted from a decision made at a joint session of the central committees of the two Communist Parties held in Lebanon in April 1954.

<sup>11</sup> Rappaport, work cited p. 355-356, 363.

<sup>12</sup> Rappaport, work cited, p. 348-351; *The Fur Worker*, Sept. 1918, p. 5.

## SHYLOCK WITHOUT ANTI-SEMITISM?

By Nathaniel Buchwald

According to advance publicity, the production of *The Merchant of Venice* by the Club Theater at the Finch playhouse was to be something entirely different, since the veteran Clarence Derwent would portray Shylock in a positive and sympathetic manner as a tragic figure, rather than as the traditional villain of the piece.

Sceptical, this reviewer went to see the play only to come away confirmed in his conviction that no interpretation of Shylock, however "sympathetic," can purge the comedy of its anti-Semitism.

One does not have to be a Shakespearean scholar to come to the conclusion that the anti-Semitic aspect of *The Merchant of Venice* manifests itself not so much in the stock caricature of the Jew, which Shakespeare accepted at its face value, as in the Jew-baiting by Antonio and his friends that pervades the play. A mere reading of the play is sufficient to establish that. Lorenzo calls Shylock a faithless Jew, "Salanio—the dog Jew," and Antonio ascribes Shylock's insistence on the pound of flesh to his "Jewish heart." Even Launcelot the clown shares their opinion that "the Jew is the very devil incarnal." Accordingly, Shylock hates Antonio not so much because "he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy," without interest, as because he is a Jew-baiter who "scorned my nation."

As regards interpretation, the problem, then, is not Shylock but Antonio. The most charitable and "sympathetic" portrayal of the money-lender will not lessen the anti-Semitic impact of the play, unless Antonio is pictured as a nazi and his friends as a gang of Jew-baiting hoodlums. But Antonio is portrayed by Shakespeare as the embodiment of all virtue and his friends are gentlemen beyond reproach. So there's the rub.

We are not raising the issue whether Shakespeare was anti-Semitic. The fact remains, however, that he accepted uncritically the vicious anti-Semitic notions current in his time and found nothing wrong in Jew-baiting. On the contrary, the abuse of the Jew by Antonio and his friends, including Portia, is presented as part of their noble demeanor.

It is argued that Shakespeare represented the Jews as a symbol of the capitalistic money-lender whose practices introduced a disturbing element of competition into the feudal social pattern. There

may be some validity in this, but Shylock remains nonetheless the "classical" symbol of the merciless "Jewish banker."

But what about Shakespeare's insight into Shylock's true character? What about the motivations for his insistence on the pound of flesh? Does not Shakespeare, in effect, plead the case of the Jew?

Yes, the dramatist in Shakespeare sought and found understandable human motivations that explain and, in a measure, even justify Shylock's cruelty. The key to Shylock's behavior is revenge for the wrongs he suffered at the hands of such good Christians as Antonio and his friends. But there is no plausibility, to begin with, in Shylock's suggesting the pound of flesh as forfeiture of the loan. It is absurd on the face of it that a hard realist like Shylock would lend Antonio a large sum of money without interest against the highly improbable chance that all of Antonio's ships on all the seven seas would founder before the loan fell due. Shakespeare employed this device as the "handle" of his plot to bring out the fiendishness of the Jew.

This piece makes no pretense at a comprehensive critique of *The Merchant of Venice* or its latest production in New York (which was no great shakes) but is prompted by the anxiety expressed by various Jewish groups in Canada about the decision of the Stratford Shakespearean Festival Committee to produce *The Merchant of Venice* as one of its plays during the Shakespearean Festival this season. Add to it the announced intention by the Shakespearewrights in New York, whose *Twelfth Night* won for them well-merited acclaim, to do *The Merchant* as their next play, and the subject becomes timely indeed.

One of the groups in Canada that voiced its misgivings about producing *The Merchant of Venice* was the Canadian Jewish Congress. The following is from a statement by Mr. J. Irving Oelbaum, president of the CJC's Central Region, as quoted in the progressive *Canadian Jewish Weekly* of December 30, 1954:

"Dr. Guthrie (the director of the Stratford Festival) informed us that the actor chosen to portray Shylock would be Frederick Valk, a Jewish actor from Czechoslovakia and Germany—a man who himself was a victim of Hitler persecution. He felt that Mr. Valk would not be guilty of characterization which would offend

his fellow Jews. Moreover, it was his intention as director, without doing any violence to the text, and in harmony with the artist's intention, to portray Shylock in a positive manner. Shylock, in his opinion, was far the strongest and most important character of the play and this would be an opportunity to dispel a popular misconception that the play was anti-Jewish (italics added). . . . While casting no reflection on the good faith of the Festival officials . . . we still expressed our regret they had chosen this work and strongly urged that they give thought to another choice for the Festival."

Mr. Sam Lipshitz of the *Canadian Jewish Weekly*, while objecting vigorously to the choice of the play, has joined in the tribute to Dr. Guthrie as a man of "good and honest intentions" who was "quite sincere" in stating that "the most sympathetic interpretations will be given to Shylock."

So there is no question of anti-Jewish bias on the part of the director of the Stratford Festival and his associates. But the fallacy persists that Shylock is the only character in the play responsible for the "misconception" of its being anti-Semitic and that a "positive" rendition of the part is sufficient to dispel the "misconception." If there is a misconception, it is precisely this notion that Shylock played by a Jewish actor in a "sympathetic" manner could save the day and eliminate the anti-Jewish aspect of the play. Again we ask: what about Antonio and his friends? What about the Jew-baiting in the text? What about the approval of the cruel penalty imposed upon Shylock by the noble Portia whose plea for mercy applies to everybody but the Jew?

It is cheering to learn that Jewish opinion in Canada has rejected the misconception about cleansing *The Merchant of Venice* of its organic anti-Semitism by the magic of histrionics in the portrayal of Shylock. Jewish groups of all shades of opinion, as we understand, continue to protest against the choice of this play for presentation by a reputable cultural group in Canada. And non-Jewish elements have apparently joined in the protest. Thus, Mr. Lipshitz quotes the following from a piece by Mr. Herbert Whittaker, drama critic of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*: "*The Merchant of Venice* will still seem unnecessarily rude to large segments of the Jewish audience, no matter how sympathetically Shylock is played by Mr. Valk, himself a Jew."

Mr. Whittaker must have read the play.

The question raised in Canada applies even more to the United States. It is more than regrettable that Jewish and non-Jewish opinion in this country remain indifferent in the face of recurring production (Continued on page 26)

# Letters from Abroad

## Comment on Lowenfels' Cantata

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

I cannot resist some comment on the cantata by Walter Lowenfels ["Earth Shall Smile"] in the December 1954 issue. I respect him highly for his political work and for his poetry and ardently desire confusion to his enemies. I like the cantata too, especially the last chorale part, but one part of the introductory sonnet makes me angry. I do not see how it is possible to refer to the Rosenbergs' faces in the electric chair having an "ultimate ecstasy." The only meanings I can ascribe to this rather meaningless phrase I do not like at all.

The Rosenbergs faced death out of honest and correct conviction, out of the determination not to betray their innocence or the forward march of mankind. They were not ecstatic but brave, honest and wise. The ringing quotations from their own words show the quality of these martyred heroes. To put "ultimate ecstasy" on their faces is to deny their strength and their stature. I can see how it happens—he wrote some pretty words about Carrara marble and Vermont granite and played the image out to its conclusion.

This is an example of "modern" poetry, the torturing of images to defeat sense. I do not oppose images when they're right but current poetic expression that seems to consider imagery as synonymous with poetry is, in my book, all wet. I do not accuse Lowenfels of this but consider the above wording to be a falling

into the trap of the "esthetes." I repeat, I admire a great deal of his work and certainly admire the man. But the use of the phrase made me so angry in its application to such heroic figures that I presume to criticize where I so much admire.

While I'm on the subject of poetry—and without intending any invidious comparison—the progressive poet I like whose songs are singularly free of this incorrect tendency in poetry is Aaron Kramer. I cannot speak too highly of his contribution: in my opinion, an exceptional talent whose prolific writings show how thoroughly a poet can reject bourgeois esthetic and root it out from his work and, in the process, produce beautiful and useful poetry. America will certainly remember his poetry.

SAM SWING

San Francisco

## Response from Lowenfels

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

Sam Swing's letter has made me re-examine the sonnet he mentions. I also find the phrase "ultimate ecstasy" inaccurate. In fact, the whole quatrain with its "Carrara" image strikes me as requiring re-writing.

It is inspiring to know that we have readers who pay such careful attention to what poets say. I only wish there were more of this give and take between readers and writers.

It's a side issue, but I don't want it

thought that I go along with Sam Swing's proposition that the quatrain in question is "an example of 'modern' poetry." I find it unacceptable because it is inaccurate. It violates an elementary law of poetry, old or new, that a poem must, among other things, be accurate reporting.

Philadelphia

WALTER LOWENFELS

## How To Double Our Circulation

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

I am sure that every single reader will agree that JEWISH LIFE is not only invaluable, but absolutely necessary these days.

I have a proposal (not exactly a new one) to increase, if not double, the circulation of our favorite publication. It's simply this: let every single reader take one extra subscription. The cost—only \$2.50—is nominal and no one will miss that small sum.

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Brooklyn

R. S.

Editors' note: We couldn't agree more with "R. S." Will you, all our readers, act on his most pertinent suggestion?

(Continued from page 25)

tions of *The Merchant of Venice*. No amount of sophistry or misreading of the play will lessen its anti-Semitic effect—whether the Bard of Avon intended it or not. A stage presentation of this misbegotten "comedy" is a public act that adds fuel to the flame of anti-Semitism and Jewish opinion cannot, must not remain indifferent.

This applies not only to producing the play on the stage but also to including it as a "must" in the curricula of the public schools where millions of unripe, impressionable minds absorb the vile Jew-baiting of the glorified Antonio and his pals.

Incidentally, a search of the records has failed to discover a single performance of *The Merchant of Venice* on the Moscow stage since the inauguration of the Soviet regime and this in the Soviet capital where

Shakespeare is never off the boards.

Unimpressed by the "raves"—the trade term for superlatives—that greeted *The Saint of Bleeker Street*, this reviewer found the latest "music drama" by Gian-Carlo Menotti much less than great theater. As opera it is derivative, sounding very much like Puccini. As drama it is pedestrian. As a piece of "social realism" it does not go beyond externals. The lurid melodrama involving "crime of passion," religious superstition and glorification of Catholic ritual is no more typical of the Italian quarter in New York than a gangster melodrama is of the Jewish East Side. Menotti is a very competent stage director but his scenic style is not original, being merely a version of pseudo-realism expertly integrated with conventional grand opera.

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# Book Reviews

## A NEW AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

By Morris U. Schappes

*The Jews in America: A History*, by Rufus Lears. World Publishing Co., Cleveland and New York. \$6.

This book is written from the point of view of a middle class intellectual whose outlook is a blend of Zionism, conservatism and a mild liberalism, unhistorically and illiberally spiced with the jargon of the "cold war." Mr. Lears is confident "that his general outlook is shared by the great majority of his fellow Jews in America." But even if it were, it would not necessarily produce sound history.

Compared with Oscar Handlin's shoddy *Adventure in Freedom*, as it inevitably has been, Lears's book has won exaggerated praise as comprehensive and objective. Its merits, however, are chiefly formal: there is skilful organization of complex material in the brief compass of some 350 pages, a clear structure and style and a quietly authoritative tone. Not a historian by craft, Lears's accomplishment is that of an experienced popularizer, as is indicated by his previous works, *Israel: A History of the Jewish People and Fulfillment: The Epic Story of Zionism*.

Yet it is exactly the popular reader that will be ill-served by Lears's errors of commission, his sins of omission and his general outlook, which obscures rather than clarifies many issues. At best, such a reader will find the book most serviceable as a well indexed reference work, where he may (or may not, owing to the brevity of the volume) locate the name, place or event for which he is looking. But should the reader be wanting the tool of history to help him solve the problems of Jews in a country beset by McCarthyism, the "cold war," the rearmament of a renazified West Germany and the Dulles policy in the Middle East, he will be frustrated rather than enlightened by this volume.

Lears planned to write the history of the Jews as "part and parcel of the American nation and at the same time an increasingly important segment of a worldwide people and faith." Furthermore, he has proportioned the work so that two-thirds of it deals with the period after 1881, when the Jewish population rapidly

grew to mass proportions through the East European immigration.

Unlike Handlin, Lears recognizes the pressure of anti-Semitism upon the American Jews. "At no time, of course," he writes, "were anti-Semitic manifestations absent in America." And he also notes what has usually been overlooked, that anti-Semitism in the Confederacy during the Civil War was greater than in the North. In a couple of places he shows awareness (p. 345, 355) of the effect of anti-Semitism as a cohesive force binding the Jews together, although he has made no effort to trace this relationship historically in his chronicle. His view of the nature of anti-Semitism, moreover, is unclear and vacillating. While on occasion he sees that "the tide of prejudice tends to rise in times of crisis and distress" (p. 100), and that anti-Semitism is "a lightning rod to divert their [the people's] wrath from their rulers" (p. 220, 103, 243), he also later throws up his hands at "the baffling phenomenon called anti-Semitism" made up of "the age-old religious antipathies, primitive passions and neurotic compensations" (p. 296).

Of Lears's accuracy as a recorder of fact it may be noted that there are scores of errors, but most are unimportant because, unlike Handlin, he builds no castles of misinterpretation on his mistakes. They are due to carelessness or to failure to keep up with current scholarship in the field. (He high-handedly cites virtually no sources and his bibliographical note, of eight apparently recommended titles contains at least one, by George Cohen, that is quite unreliable.)

Among the necessary corrections, the following are a sampling: Jews were not among the Directors of the Dutch West India Co. (p. 16, 26). There was no Jewish community in North Carolina in 1776 (p. 30). There was no Ashkenazi congregation in Charleston in the 1780s (p. 33). Benjamin Nones was a private, not a major, in the Revolutionary War and he did not carry General De Kalb off the battlefield at Camden (p. 44). Isaac Hart was not "mobbed to death for his Tory sympathies" but, as Lears's own probable source indicates, was killed in an attack by Continental troops on a fort in which Hart had taken refuge (p. 42). Haym Salomon was not "sentenced to death as a

spy," he did not escape from prison and he made no "loans" to the Revolutionary government (p. 45). David Emanuel, governor of Georgia in 1801 (p. 68), was not "even of Jewish stock," according to the latest finding in a book to which Lears expressly acknowledges his special indebtedness, Jacob R. Marcus, *Early American Jewry*. Nor is Nobel Prize winner Harold C. Urey a Jew (p. 331).

More noteworthy than such errors is Lears's treatment of several major themes. The Jewish workers and their labor movement, for instance, are dealt with not only scantily in a 20-page chapter, but there is a profound lack of understanding of the problems, aims and values of the working class. More space is given to the marginal and unsuccessful attempts to establish Jewish agricultural communities than to the great labor struggles, involving hundreds of thousands of Jewish families, that took place before the First World War.

What "afflicted the men's clothing industry" was not the awful conditions but the "numerous strikes" (p. 158). In the great cloakmakers' strike in New York in 1910 Lears sees primarily that it "in-

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flicted cruel suffering on the workers and severe losses on the manufacturers," but the "cruel suffering" of the workers that drove them to seek relief by striking is ignored. Similarly, all he can see of the movement for industrial unionism in the 1930s is that it "tore the entire American labor movement apart" (p. 159); the organization of new millions of workers is unmentioned.

For the socialist and revolutionary ideals that made the East Sides of many cities the seedbeds of the finest and noblest in recent American Jewish history, Lears has little more than contempt. Socialists are to him peddlers of "ready-made nostrums for all ailments" (p. 233). The immigrant Jews, we are told, "formed societies to promote the various social panaceas with which the hectic revolutionary atmosphere in Russia had inoculated them" (p. 207). The Workmen's Circle, founded to provide a dignified way for workers to relieve their suffering through mutual aid rather than by applying to the condescending and grudging "Hebrew charities," is introduced by Lears thus: "As early as 1900 the socialist guardians of the Jewish labor movement had adopted another means for maintaining their tutelage over it. They created the *Arbeiter Ring*, or Workmen's Circle . . ." (p. 162). A dastardly conspiracy, obviously!

It should be added that to Lears the "left" is summed up in the Jewish Labor Committee; nothing further left than this right wing Social Democratic co-ordinating committee is allowed into his scope. Therefore there is total obliteration of the left progressive Jewish movement in political, trade union, fraternal and even cultural life.

**Another theme** that suffers from Lears's manner of treatment is the relationship of the Jews to the wars our country has engaged in. Lears's premise is that

all these wars were just and worth supporting. It so happens, however, that there was no small opposition among Jews as among others to the Spanish-American War and considerably more opposition to the First World War, both of which deserve at least to be recorded in a history. But Lears brushes off the first opposition in one sentence as consisting of "idealists" who denounced the war as "imperialism" for "political or idealistic reasons" and he completely omits reference to the opponents of the First World War. By such a treatment, Lears has made it impossible for the reader to appreciate the significance of the fact that in the Second World War there was unanimity of support by all sections of the Jewish people exactly because it was an anti-fascist war. Perhaps Lears regarded it as "safer" these days to overlook opposition to unjust wars of the past lest reporting it help stimulate opposition in the future. Because it deals with truth, history is today perforce a dangerous pursuit. One remembers sadly Lears's fearful disclaimer of evil associations in this sentence on the slavery issue: "*Without worshiping at the shrine of historical materialism*, one may still admit the force of material advantage in shaping men's attitudes and judgments" (p. 91, italics added).

**When he gets** to the Roosevelt period, Lears forgets that he has undertaken to present the Jews as "part and parcel of the American nation" and he omits from consideration the relationship of the Jews to the winning of the domestic reforms of the New Deal, to the movement for a foreign policy of collective security, to the increasingly major issue of the fight of the Negro people for full equality. He pays attention only to the reaction to nazism abroad and the new militant anti-Semitism at home. In the anti-nazi struggle he not only ignores the left, but he is

unfair in his statement of the position of the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee. "The Congress," he writes, "was in favor of demonstrations and an organized boycott of German-made goods; the Committee and B'nai B'rith maintained such methods would do more harm than good, and urged that the struggle against nazism should become an all-American, nay an all-human, cause . . ." (p. 278). The implication is that Congress for some reason opposed making the anti-nazi struggle an all-American cause, which is nonsense. The issue was whether or not there should be mass public anti-nazi activity. The Committee preferred to concentrate its energies on fighting—Communism.

The rationale for this diversion from the anti-nazi struggle was supposed to be that since the anti-Semitism of the Coughlinites, the German-American (Nazi) Bund and the various "Shirt" movements was always fused with anti-communism and red-baiting, the best way to oppose this anti-Semitism was to fight communism! By overlooking this fusion of red-baiting and Jew-baiting, Lears blurs a chapter in our recent history.

This Roosevelt period was also the one in which there was extensive interrelation between American Jews and those of the Soviet Union. Had he followed his plan, Lears would have had to deal with that. Instead he contents himself with less than two pages that read more like a press release by the Jewish Labor Committee or the American Jewish Committee than a section of a history. The chill of the "cold war" and its headline mentality and stock phrases are all over these pages, what with "the Bolshevik juggernaut," "the iron curtain," the "suppression" of Yiddish, the "death" of Biro-Bidjan and even the plot against the doctors (although characteristically no mention is made of the fact that the Soviet government itself broke this plot). The same "cold war" headline mentality dictates the way he drags in the Rosenberg case without even stopping to ascertain the actual charge against them, which was not, as Lears parrots it (p. 332), "engaging in atomic espionage," but *conspiring* to engage in espionage (which relieves the prosecution of the burden of proving that there was actual espionage).

**Lears is** at his most skillful in his sections on the birth of Israel. But it is a big question whether the reader will learn from Lears anything that will help him understand the present perils that threaten the very existence of Israel, the source of these perils and the way out. The only novel feature in this account is the rather candid way in which the two-faced role of the Truman administration is men-

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tioned. But there is no clear picture of the forces that made possible the United Nations decision of November 1947 (the decision itself is never accurately summarized), the aims of United States foreign policy in the Middle East, the Anglo-American imperial rivalry and the role of the Soviet Union and other East European states. "The Russians, of course," Lears writes, "were not inspired by a passion for justice to the Jews" (p. 317). It is an index to the "cold war" temperature of 1954 as compared to that of 1951 that Lears did not find it necessary to make that gibe in 1951 in the comparable part of his book *Fulfillment: The Epic Story of Zionism*. Equally unilluminating is

Lears's statement that after July 9, 1948, "the Army of Israel, now much better equipped, took the offensive and won a series of victories. . . ." (p. 323). Why glibly omit the decisive fact that this heroic Army was now equipped with arms obtained from Czechoslovakia and other East European countries? Can it help American Jews effectively to oppose the Dulles policy if they are kept in ignorance of such facts as can reveal who are the friends and who are the enemies of the people of Israel?

From his point of view, Lears has done about as well as can be expected. The difficulty is that his point of view is neither broad enough nor deep enough.

book many times. It is good that the letters are issued as a testament because there is nothing of death in the letters. They breathe life.

In the *Testament* there are many letters which were not printed in the *Death House Letters*. There are the last letters they wrote in the closing hours of their lives. Ethel Rosenberg, the mother, wrote the last letter to their children. "Be comforted, then, that we were serene and understood with the deepest kind of understanding, that civilization had not as yet progressed to the point where life did not have to be lost for the sake of life; and that we were comforted in the sure knowledge that others would carry on after us."

The letters of both the Rosenbergs mirror people of courage and almost unbelievable stamina. It was Julius who wrote on the day before his execution, "My love of life has never been so strong because I have seen how beautiful the future can be." Ethel writes with beauty, sensitivity and love. Her letters are the letters of a loving mother facing death. You feel that her emotions are drawn up out of the innermost depths of a human being and find expression in exquisite words. For the first time in history a mother writes from a death house. She writes love letters to life.

To read the *Testament* is an intense personal experience. But it cannot remain an experience only for each person. This experience must become part of our social life. Morton Sobell, the co-defendant of the Rosenbergs sentenced to 30 years imprisonment, is still in Alcatraz. Ethel once wrote: "I am sealed in the grey walls of this prison as if in a tomb." The power to transform a vital human being into a caged animal is a power of coercion the equivalent of physical torture. We must release Morton Sobell from the living tomb of Alcatraz!

(Mrs. Regina Frankfeld is the first of the Smith act victims to be released from jail.)

## LETTERS THAT BREATHE LIFE

By Regina Frankfeld

*The Testament of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg*, Emanuel Bloch Memorial Edition. Cameron and Kahn, New York. \$1.50.

The spring before the Rosenbergs died was very beautiful. The days were soft and warm and achingly lovely. I remember them so well because during those days I was in prison living with the ever present fear of their death. I can understand so well what little Michael meant when he said to his father, "You must come home. Every day there is a lump in my stomach even when I go to bed." Every day during those last months there was a weight in my heart that grew heavier with the passing of the days. The only one I could think of was Ethel Rosenberg, a mother living each day in the shadow of the electric chair—facing eternal separation from her husband and her children.

I knew the pain of separation from her husband and her children.

I knew the pain of separation from my own two children—the loneliness—the heartache. I knew what it meant to have a family ruthlessly torn apart, to go to prison knowing your husband was in another prison and your children left alone without their mother and father. If it hurt me so much faced with only years of separation but living always with the bright hope of our reunion, how did she bear it? Again and again I asked myself "What does she do? How is she living through these days?" And Ethel Rosenberg herself answered me. Only she could have answered me.

Before I went to prison I had read some of her letters. And I remembered them. I remembered the creed by which the

Rosenbergs lived, "Courage, confidence and perspective." I remembered the letter Ethel had written after reading Shaw's *St. Joan*. I too read the play in prison. The newspapers printed the letter of the Rosenbergs in which they announced to the whole world that they would not barter their lives in exchange for a deal offered by the attorney general. "We solemnly declare, now and forever more, that we will not be coerced, even under pain of death, to bear false witness and to yield up to tyranny our rights as free Americans. Our respect for truth, conscience and human dignity is not for sale. Justice is not some bauble to be sold to the highest bidder."

I had just finished one of those endless days of prison work. It was early evening when I first saw that letter. I sat in that prison room hemmed in by the walls reading and rereading those proud words until the light was gone. Later, when I had to live through the hours of their death on that Friday night, again it was their words which sustained me.

The first book I read after my release was the *Death House Letters*. I wanted to learn everything I could about them. I wanted to learn the source of their courage—I wanted once again to hear them speak. When the letters were published in a new edition as the *Testament of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg*, I read the

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# OBSERVATION POST

By Sam Pevzner

## Don't Miss Item

Exciting and inspiring are the words to use in describing the Tercentenary Exhibition to be seen at 189 Second Avenue, New York. Priceless documents, pictures and historic materials are there on view—and one captures a living sense of the 300 years of struggle and accomplishment by the Jewish people of the United States. The Exhibition started on February 12 and will continue to March 12. Our readers and friends should not miss this opportunity. Organizations can arrange special evenings for themselves, with the committee providing speakers and guides if desired. Any organization, club, trade union local or cultural group that fails to take advantage of this Exhibition will be missing something. Tickets are only 49 cents and are good for any day or evening if the Exhibition. Reservations at the 300th Anniversary, 189 Second Avenue, New York 3.

## Event of Events

When the 300 years celebration this year will be appraised in retrospect, a central place will no doubt be given to the creative, thorough-going, accurate contribution of Morris U. Schappes in his JEWISH LIFE series of 15 articles. A stream of books by highly financed authors have rolled off the presses but none have brought the clear light of scientific analysis, painstaking scholarship and understanding of the underlying forces to play that Morris does in his work. With this in mind the testimonial banquet in honor of Schappes on March 6th will itself be a high point in the Tercentenary celebration. In plain words: one who misses the banquet will not have celebrated the Tercentenary properly. What would such a person tell his grandchildren years from now when a little piping voice asks "Were you at the wonderful banquet for Morris U. Schappes in that Tercentenary year?" Avoid future embarrassment and make your reservation immediately at the office of JEWISH LIFE.

## 300 for 300

The contribution made by Morris U. Schappes to the Tercentenary cannot be separated from the magazine of which he is a co-editor. He is the first to recognize this fact. Therefore, the banquet will also be a climax in the effort to keep JEWISH LIFE going. It will be high point in the present fund drive for the magazine. No greater gift or tribute can be

given to Morris than a contribution to the drive. We call upon all Jewish Life committees to do everything possible to bring substantial contributions as gifts to Morris at the banquet. This goes for committees and organizations throughout the land—not only in New York. The rather exciting suggestion has been made that committees should aim to present \$300 to Morris, one dollar for each year of Jewish settlement. Of course larger committees should increase that. Then we ask each individual reader and friend to present his gift to Morris by a maximum contribution. Let's get to work on Gifts for Morris with seriousness, organization and energy—that will assure the continued existence of the magazine. And while we don't want to dampen the holiday spirit around preparations for the banquet, let me advise you that JEWISH LIFE is on the brink of disaster financially. Only a mighty effort by our committees, organizations and individual readers can put it on its feet.

## Facts are Facts

The Fact-Sheet on West German Rearmament issued by your magazine has already been distributed in 55,000 copies. A great accomplishment. But much more must still be done for the good fight to keep arms out of the hands of the unreconstructed nazis for the sake of world peace and the security of the Jewish people. Wider circles are beginning to see what a catastrophe the implementation of the Paris agreements would be. Community meetings have been held in many cities, more are planned. But every group interested in maintaining peace should hold meetings on rearmament. A groundswell of protest from Jewish and other groups can alter the course of events.

## Los Angeles Note

Word comes from the West Coast metropolis that the Jewish Life Committee there will start its campaign on March first and continue to June first. The aim is \$3,000 to save the magazine. We trust that sure-fire plans and organizational preparations are being made to guarantee the success of the drive.

## Resistance Observance

Too many leaders of Jewish organizations have had their hearts sealed and their voices silenced by their craven sub-

servience to the Dulles foreign policy of rearmament of the nazis. Many of them vowed never to forgive or forget during the years of Jewish martyrdom before the genocidal onslaught of the nazis. They pledged always to remember the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—for in that pledge they recognized the deepest necessities for the survival of the Jewish people and of all humanity. Now, at this 12th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, they prefer to forget—and even to forgive. But not so the overwhelming mass of the Jewish people. The Warsaw Ghetto stands as a symbol of their pain and of their will to resist. They realize that in 1955, year of the Paris agreements and intensified war dangers in Europe and Asia, one must not forget—and certainly not forgive. This sentiment will be expressed in a great mass observance on Sunday afternoon, April 10th at Manhattan Center. New Yorkers should attend this commemoration in the thousands. It is sponsored by the United Committee to Commemorate the Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Tickets are \$1.25. Every organization should get tickets for sale to their members at the office of the committee, Room 732, 1133 Broadway, New York City.

## Columnist's Lament

The other day an irate individual accosted your columnist with the charge that he has for some diabolical reason failed to comment on an important event organized by the irate one's organization. Your columnist then mentioned with all the journalistic calm he could muster that he never heard of the affair and therefore could not comment on it. We are therefore now informing one and all that omniscience is not one of the virtues with which your columnist is endowed. If you have something for this page, it does not take too much energy to send a note to the office of JEWISH LIFE. And we urge that you think of the matter early in the game because our magazine is a monthly, deadline is the first of the month. For example, if an event takes place during April, the notice must be in by February first to make the March issue or March first to make the April issue. And get those notices in—this columnist hungers for them.

## Spread the FACT-SHEET ON WEST GERMAN REARMAMENT

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# FROM THE FOUR CORNERS

(Continued from page 2)

the country and in the various government services. The situation continues to be disturbing because the suspended employees of many years standing find difficulty in getting legal representation."

**The government** has entered harassing action against the Committee to Secure Justice in the Rosenberg Case by charging that the committee owes \$118,459 in back taxes. The committee is appealing the case, asserting that the government's claim is "arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable and without support in law or fact." The committee reported losses of over \$200,000 for 1952 and 1953.

**Despite the fact** that the Supreme Court ruled many months ago that Yugoslavia war criminal A. Artukovic, who was responsible for the murder of Croatia's Jews, is subject to extradition to Yugoslavia, federal authorities have taken no action to send him back to Yugoslavia to stand trial. (*Jewish Criterion*, 1/14)

**Mississippi leaders** of the NAACP charged in affidavits submitted to the White House in January that representatives of government financing agencies were collaborating in the movement by the so-called White Councils of Mississippi to exert economic pressure against Negroes active in the fight against school segregation.

**There has been** no improvement in the biased job attitude of employers in the Los Angeles area in the past seven years, a study of the regional Anti-Defamation League office in Los Angeles revealed late in January. (*Sentinel*, 1/27)

## EUROPE

**Three Jews** are members of the 44-member presidium of the Soviet Writers Union elected at the Second Congress in December: Boris Polevoy, Ilya Ehrenburg and Samuel Marshak. Polevoy is also a member of the 11-man secretariat... Clifton Daniel reported in the *N. Y. T.* (1/17) that in Leningrad there are "11 churches and two synagogues open for worship."

**An Israel Home Service** broadcast late in January reported that "There is no doubt that the Bulgarian government and people are treating the Jews decently.... The economic situation of Jews in Bulgaria is not bad."

**The Rumanian Jewish State Theater** celebrated its fifth anniversary in De-

cember with the 1,000th performance of the theater, which has produced 26 plays.

**A street meeting** was held in Bucharest on January 17 to celebrate the liberation of the ghetto from the nazis ten years ago. Main speaker was Bela Illes, Kossuth Prize winning writer who had been a major in the Soviet army that broke through the ghetto walls.

**The West German** foreign ministry in January restored to his position as "Ambassador with special duties" Dr. Werner von Bargen. Bargen had been suspended on full pay in 1952 because of his nazi past. Bargen had reported on November 11, 1942, from Brussels that "as a result of the steps taken against the Jews by the military commander, 15,000 men, women and children have been transported to the east.... Speedy individual actions have been taken to net the Jews."

**The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra**, it was announced in West Berlin on February 7, is coming to the United States for a concert tour of 19 cities beginning February 27. Conductor Herbert von Karajan and a number of the players were Nazi Party members.

## ISRAEL

**National election** for the third Knesset will take place on July 26, it was announced in Tel Aviv late in January. There are now 1,040,000 eligible voters of whom 60,000 are non-Jews. The grand

total is 200,000 above the 1952 election figure. The General Zionists and Mapai, the ruling coalition parties, have agreed that only parties receiving two per cent of the total vote will be permitted representation in the Knesset.

**Two of Israel's** four religious parties, the Mizrahi and the Hapoel Hamizrachi (Religious Workers), merged on January 17 into the single party, Mizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrachi.

**A total** of 17,520 immigrants entered Israel in 1954, of whom 10,859 came from North Africa and 158 from the United States.

**British Labor MP** Edith Summerskill said on January on her return from a trip to Israel that "equality (for women) exists more in theory than in practice."

**An American Negro** company of *Porgy and Bess* played eight performances in Tel Aviv to packed houses which were sold out before the opera opened on January 26. At the same time Lionel Hampton and his band played under the patronage of Health Minister Joseph Serlin for the benefit of the Mogen Dovid Adom, Israel Red Cross.

**Three Jewish** immigrants from the Soviet Union arrived in Tel Aviv in mid-January to join their families. About the same time ten Jews also entered from Hungary. At a meeting of the Israel-Polish Friendship Society in mid-January Polish Minister Z. Wolniak said that Poland would give favorable consideration to the request of Polish Jews to join their families or to satisfy spiritual needs.

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