

Jewish Currents

60¢

MARCH, 1976



Simon Nathan (1746-1822), from a miniature, 3 1/16" x 3 1/2", by Henry Inman (1801-1846), now owned, as is the miniature within of his wife by the same artist, by the American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass. (See p. 9.)

JEWISH FOREMOTHERS OF '76 By MORRIS U. SCHAPPES

A SURPRISE OF LEGENDS

By ELSIE LEVITAN

AMERICAN JEWISH MUSIC TO 1800 By LIONEL B. DAVIS

GERALD HOOVER FORD

An EDITORIAL

Jewish Currents

Vol. 30, No. 3 (328) March, 1976

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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Gerald Hoover Ford

An EDITORIAL

Feb. 23

NOT since Herbert Hoover has the White House been so calmly callous about the plight of the unemployed as Pres. Gerald R. Ford. This is a Ford with a Hoover in his tank. Having informed the people that by 1980 we shall still have an unemployment rate of 7% (about 8,000,000 human beings and their dependents), he manages a good-guy grin over every bit of news that may be good for some business interests but that bodes nothing but ill for the mass of the people.

If the rate of inflation for 1975 is "only" 6.8%, *on top of* 13% in 1974, Pres. Ford sees it as a victory for his policy, while the workers, the unemployed, and consumers in general see it as a 20% inflation in two years, with no reversal in sight.

When trading on the N.Y. Stock Exchange Feb. 20 sets a record of 44.51 million shares, Ford, on a jaunt to hand-shake, baby-kiss and soft-mouth the New Hampshire primary voters, hails the news, while a few more thousand workers exhaust even their 65-week unemployment insurance and despairingly head for the welfare rolls.

To signalize his unbenign neglect—nay, his malign neglect—Pres. Ford Feb. 14 vetoed the \$6.2 billion public works bill that could have put 600,000 to 800,000 back to work within a few months. Even AFL-CIO Pres. George Meany, who has signally failed to mount a militant campaign to meet the needs of both the unemployed and the employed, scolded Pres. Ford Feb. 16: "I think he's completely without compassion as far as the little people are concerned. He's concerned with the big corporations. . . ."

And where are the little people? A

National Urban League study shows at least 7,700,000 officially unemployed and looking for work. Another 5,300,000 have even stopped looking for work. Then 3,600,000 more are working part-time. As for black unemployment, it is almost twice (13.2%) the general rate of 7.8%. Teen-age unemployment is at 19.9%, while for black teen-agers the rate is about 40%; 25% of *employed* blacks work for poverty-level wages.

The Jewish workers, professionals and civil servants share the bleakness. City and state budget-slashing has heavily affected teachers and allied professionals. The slow-down in construction has shelved many Jewish workers as well as engineers and related crafts and professions. The hundreds of thousands of Jewish elderly poor face the 20% inflation of the past two years grimly while they watch public services to them decline. Jewish youth, 80% of which heads for college training, feels the pinch of cut-backs in higher education and faces a graduation into the harrowing uncertainty of the "over-educated" unemployed.

Needed is a trade union and political leadership to move the distressed masses into action. Wanted is a drive for a full-employment bill, now before Congress, to get unemployment down from 8,000,000 to 3,000,000 in a couple of years. Decisive would be a coalition of the discontented—the unemployed, part-employed, women, the blacks and other minorities that, amid an unbending seniority system, are the first fired because, owing to discrimination, they were the last hired, the lower middle class suffering from mounting bankruptcies, the professionals affected by government budget-axing.

Jackson, Jews and Detente

By G.S.

“FOR both 1972 and 1975, Henry Jackson’s contribution lists are studded with the names of Jewish contributors in New York, Miami and California,” writes R.W. Apple in the *N.Y. Times* of Nov. 23, 1975. The article goes on to say that “perhaps as much as 80% of the money he raised last year for his 1976 effort came from Jews.”

Why is this so?

The answer clearly lies in Jackson’s position of military support for Israel and, interlinked with this support, his efforts to promote the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union.

This answer raises further questions. Why does Jackson support military aid to Israel? Does this support fit into Jackson’s other policies? Is it in the best interests of American Jews to support Jackson’s attempts to become the Democratic standard bearer in the 1976 presidential race?

Leon Uris, author of *Exodus* and an ardent Jackson booster, says that Jackson became interested in Israel as a result of his “traumatic involvement with the holocaust when he visited Buchenwald three days after his liberation as a young Congressman.” But Jackson, who has been in Congress and the Senate since 1941, has taken an outspoken position on Israel only in

the last half decade or so. In his report to the Senate Armed Services Committee (1970), entitled *The Middle East and American Security Policy*, Jackson writes:

“For some time, I have been warning that as the Soviet Union approached parity with the United States in strategic arms, its leaders would be likely to become more energetic in trying to spread Soviet influence and more willing to run dangerous risks in the international arena. That this prospect was not groundless is indicated by the deepening Soviet penetration of the Middle East we have witnessed in recent years.”

Pointing to *oil* as the real basis for instability in the Middle East, Jackson continues:

“Soviet hegemony in the Middle East would gravely imperil the vital flow of oil, essential for industry and defense, from the Middle East to Europe and Japan. 70% of Europe’s oil now comes from that region; for Japan the figure is 80% and there are no near term prospects for the development of adequate and economic alternative sources of supply. The capacity of our NATO allies to resist Soviet pressure over a prolonged crisis would be drastically impaired if the petroleum pipeline could be shut down by Moscow.”

Jackson then ties the concern for oil to NATO, a familiar instrument of the Cold War: “My concern for the consequences for NATO and the West of the accelerated Soviet penetration of the Middle East was the key reason for my participation in the meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly in Europe in November, and for my visit to Israel which followed.”

The context of seeing the world in terms of confrontation between the USA and the USSR is an old one for Jackson. It goes back over a quarter century, to the beginning of the Cold

War. In 1949, he concluded that the US must "sustain the Berlin airlift with determination" (quoted from *A Certain Democrat—Senator Henry M. Jackson* by William Prochnau and Richard Larsen, a political biography written in conjunction with Jackson's 1972 campaign).

His 1950 campaign speeches for reelection to the Senate sound like his 1970 report on the Middle East: "The greatest issue facing America today is the struggle against world Communism . . . Our most immediate job is to mobilize the full military and economic strength of the free world so that the men in the Kremlin will not start a World War III. This means continuing our programs of military aid to Greece and Turkey, the North Atlantic Pact . . ." (quoted in Prochnau and Larsen).

Perhaps it is superfluous to note that, although oil is not mentioned in this quotation, this speech was made in the aftermath of the collapse of the British oil empire in this region and when US oil companies were invading the region to pick up the pieces. Only three years later, the CIA engineered the overthrow of Mossadegh, the Iranian prime minister who had the Iranian Parliament nationalize Iran's oil.

In 1968, when North Korea captured the US spy-ship *Pueblo*, Jackson immediately reacted with a statement that there was a good chance that "we will be getting into the use of nuclear weapons." Obsessed with nuclear weapons (Jackson had been appointed to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy in 1949) and their missile delivery systems, he developed the concept of "missile gap" between the USA and the USSR, which played such a big role in the Kennedy-Nixon campaign of 1960. Say Prochnau and Larsen: "Kennedy would come to Jackson for advice on campaign strategy in-

volving defense issues. And Jackson's advice was pointedly repetitious: *missile gap, missile gap, missile gap* [emphasis theirs]. The Russians, he told Kennedy, would use their advantage to engage in nuclear blackmail . . . John Kennedy, picking up the cue, began lashing the Eisenhower-Nixon administration with charges about a missile gap." Eisenhower protested that there was no missile gap. Later, Jackson blamed faulty CIA information for leading him into the missile gap hoax.

Today, Jackson opposes Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT negotiations), until the US places multiple warheads (MIRVs) on its nuclear missiles, because, he claims, the Russians could be arming themselves for an intended superior first strike capability against the US. Again, Jackson's old cry of Russian nuclear blackmail. Never mind that there are protests even from a Pentagon source like *Air Force Magazine* which states that even if the Russians MIRV their warheads, it "will make some, but not a great deal of, difference so far as the survivability of our ICBM force is concerned" (quoted by Robert Sherrill in "Senator Jackson Enters Right," *The Nation*, Feb. 1, 1975).

Jackson, a Senator from Washington who has all along enjoyed the financial backing of the Boeing Co., has been a vociferous supporter of the C-5A troop-carrier airplane, the B-52 bomber, the Minuteman ballistic missile program, the \$5.5 billion anti-ballistic missile program (which is being scrapped today as useless, six years after he sired it and the monies were spent), and other multibillion dollar aircraft and rocket programs. All of these were actual or potential business for the Boeing Co. of Seattle, and earned him first the soubriquet "The Senator from Boeing" and later "The Senator from Outer Space."

Jackson had been an enthusiastic supporter of American involvement in Vietnam ever since the French withdrawal in 1951. While his support of the war did not make him unique in the Senate in 1965, his continued support until American troops were withdrawn in 1973 was unique among Senate Democrats as well as Republicans. His support was so wholehearted that when Nixon was elected in 1968, he requested Jackson to be his Secretary of Defense. Several days later Nixon broadened the offer—Jackson could be either Secretary of Defense or of State.

Where does Jackson's position on Israel and emigration of Soviet Jews fit into the picture? Israel and Jewish emigration would appear to be the current issues that Jackson is using for continued confrontation with the USSR. Not for nothing do Prochnau and Larsen entitle the first chapter of their biography of Jackson, "The Last of the Cold War Liberals," and more will be said about the *Liberals* part of that title later.

Is it healthy for Israel, and for American Jews who fervently support its right to exist, to rely on the support of a Jackson who is rigidly frozen in the Cold War stances of a generation ago? If Israel is to live in peace in the Middle East, she will have to reach an eventual accommodation with the USSR as well as the USA. The Russians, having rearmed the Egyptians and Syrians to the levels existing before the Yom Kippur War in 1973, have been reluctant in the last two years to arm these two Arab neighbors beyond this level, presumably because the Russians are looking for a political rather than a military solution in the Middle East crisis. This trend has unquestionably developed as a result of the attempts at *détente* between the USA and USSR.

This trend must be accelerated, but this will have to involve modification of Soviet, American, Arab and Israeli foreign policies. Israeli foreign policy, in particular, can best be modified without the militant urgings of American politicians like Jackson, who see international relations only in Cold War terms and who may be prone to use Israel as a pawn in a prolongation of the Cold War.

Détente also offers the best conditions for modification of the USSR's attitude toward the emigration of its Jewish citizens. Emigration from Russia dropped from 32,500 in 1973 to 21,000 in 1974, the year that Jackson tried to scuttle *détente* with the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which tied trade with the Russians to their emigration policies, to 11,700 in 1975. The subsequent rejection of this entire package by the Soviet Union is too well known to be dwelt on further here.

Suffice it to say that significant sections of the Jewish community were aware of the potential harm of the Jackson Amendment. Thus, for instance, the Chicago Jewish weekly *Sentinel*, in a signed editorial by its editor, J. I. Fishbein Jan. 9, 1975, "Whom Have We Saved?", scored "our hotheads and publicity seekers who, from their safe rostrums 7,000 miles from Moscow, wept for the Soviet Jews. . ." Calling attention to the fact that Dr. Nahum Goldmann had been warning against such Cold War approaches as embodied in the Jackson Amendment, Mr. Fishbein reported that "when we were in the Soviet Union this summer, many Jews with whom we spoke told us quite bluntly that we were not making their life easier by putting them in the position of being a fifth column, unhappy with their country. . ."

American Jews who support Jackson because they regard him as a friend of Israel would be wise to consider

Jackson's foreign policy record over the last 30 years and the consequent implications of his friendship.

Jackson's public relations people like to say that another reason for his friendship for Israel is a lecture that his mother gave him as a youngster about the ugly nature of the word "kike." This lecture, they say, developed his sympathy for the underdog. It is instructive to examine this sympathy in the case of a couple of other underdogs.

Robert Sherrill, in the previously cited article in *The Nation*, quotes an article by Joel Connelly in *The Nation* of Nov. 15, 1971 describing the 31-year old Congressman's attitude toward Japanese-Americans in 1943:

"Jackson's first issue was the Yellow Peril. In the spring of 1943, a year after Japanese-Americans had been herded into detention camps throughout the West, he declared that 'Pro-Japanese influence still exists in the United States, having gone underground temporarily.' Jackson introduced a resolution to create a standing Congressional committee whose task would be to investigate 'Japanese infiltration' into American economic, political and social life. Said Jackson: 'The disciples of Bushido, by insidious and indirect means, inserted themselves in a great many organizations in much the same fashion as the Nazis have used their front organizations.' On the Pacific Coast, the Congressman contended, Japanese agents controlled much of the hotel and restaurant business. . .

"When these mythical Japanese agents got back from the government concentration camps, they found that the freedom-loving citizens of Washington and Oregon and California had, in some cases, taken over their property."

Thus, the Japanese-American under-

dog was sacrificed then in an appeal to the worst aspects of "patriotism."

Another example is Jackson's approach to the improvement of Black education. In the 1972 Florida primaries, he described the difference between himself and George Wallace: "Wallace would remove the school bus batteries, while I would offer a constitutional amendment guaranteeing freedom of choice." In a column, "The Democrat's Spoiler," in the *N.Y. Post* Nov. 28, 1975, Carl Rowan writes:

"Credit Scoop Jackson with succumbing to the clamor of the mob, because he deems it smart politics to support a constitutional amendment forbidding busing to erase racial segregation.

"Jackson makes the easy argument that 'busing is failing to achieve its objectives of quality education and integration.' But Jackson doesn't tell us what remedy judges can offer children who are the victims of Jim Crow. . .

"There is no way I would vote for Jackson for the nomination or for any other candidate who wants to bar the courts from dispensing justice, and I will wager that 95% of the minority delegates at the Democratic convention will share my view."

Thus the Black underdog is sacrificed today to gain right-wing votes. This is not a new approach for Jackson. Prochnau and Larsen write in their biography of Jackson:

"Unlike most Northerners who entered the Senate in the 1950s, Jackson did not wear his liberalism on his sleeve. . . In the great civil-rights debate of the 1950s, Jackson committed his vote but not his rhetoric. That digested well with the Southerners—and it was the Southerners who doled out the Senate's favors, dispensed the system's rewards. Jackson came to the Senate from the distant Pacific Northwest, but some of his characteristics

were decidedly Southern. He lived by an implacable code of honor, one that was as strong as that of the most courtly Mississippian. Like any good politician, Jackson could occasionally stuff his ideals in his back pocket."

What does this have to do with Jews? Jews have learned during their long history that persecution of any minority, or depriving it of its rights, can, and usually will, result in deprivation of Jewish rights as well. Are those Jews wise who support the nomination of a presidential candidate who has stuffed his civil-rights ideals so deeply into his back pocket that, in 34 years of membership in the House and Senate, he has never made a speech on the floor of either body promoting legislation aimed at guaranteeing civil rights or racial justice? Jackson is not your inarticulate Senator. During this same period, the *Congressional Record* documents many of his speeches in favor of nuclear weaponry, missile and anti-missile programs, military aircraft programs, support of the Vietnam War, and so on and on.

Small wonder then that Jackson sat well with the Southern senators. Nor did they sit too badly with him. The *Seattle Post Intelligencer* of Feb. 21, 1975 (in a review by Americans for Democratic Action entitled "Senator Henry Jackson—Liberal?") quotes him as saying that he "would welcome" Gov. George Wallace as a running mate in 1976.

Can Jews feel comfortable supporting Jackson? Consider Richard Nixon, an admirer of Jackson's. He received no more than one-third of Jewish votes in 1972 (only the Black voters were more solidly anti-Nixon than the Jews). An important, if not the most important, reason for these Jewish voters turning to a reactionary candidate was Nixon's military support of

Israel. Yet, as the Watergate tape recordings showed, Nixon expressed clearly anti-Semitic sentiments to his advisers. Fortunately, they remained in his back pocket and were not translated into action. But their disclosure made Jews worry. When Jackson uses words like "the disciples of Bushido" to refer to Japanese-Americans, and codewords like "freedom of choice" and "welfare cheats" to refer to the Black community, Jews also have cause for worry, because he is a Democrat.

Richard Wilson described Jackson's 1972 campaign in the Washington *Evening Star* (quoted in Prochnau and Larsen):

"It's a hard-hat kind of appeal to the 'real majority' of Middle Americans . . . the un-young, un-poor and un-black who account for 70% of the vote in Presidential elections. Thus Jackson can say that he has . . . no sympathy for colleagues who scoff at law and order as merely a ruse for racism."

In the *N.Y. Post* Nov. 13, 1975, Evans and Novak assess Jackson's 1976 candidacy: "Having failed over three years to make himself acceptable to the party's dominant liberal wing, Jackson will now reemphasize his essentially conservative positions on many social questions.

"Jackson's uniqueness as a respectable alternative to Wallace for conservative Democrats extends beyond busing to abortion, defense, détente and general attitudes about welfare, crime and permissiveness."

The great majority of Jewish voters did not, of course, vote for Nixon in 1972. But the temptation may be greater to vote for Jackson as "a respectable alternative to Wallace" on the Democratic line in 1976 than it was for Nixon on the Republican line.

Jews who support Jackson owe it to themselves to reevaluate whether they are being responsible to the

SIMON NATHAN (1746—Sept. 8, 1822)

SIMON NATHAN claims our attention as a prominent and patriotic merchant, an active communal leader and a progenitor of a distinguished line of writers, jurists and other public figures. Born in Frome, England, he was a trader in Spanish Havana before coming to New York in 1773. In 1776-1777 he was a merchant in Jamaica, British West Indies. When the British found out he had been shipping canvas, cordage and powder to the American rebels, he fled, abandoning his property. First he went to the French colony of New Orleans but by 1779 he was in Williamsburg, Va. In March, 1780, he was thanked by Gov. Thomas Jefferson and the Council of Virginia for advancing \$52,000 in specie to that state. In June, 1780, when Jefferson announced that 500 men at Fort Pitt needed clothing, Nathan provided another \$5,000 in specie. Going to Philadelphia, Nathan was enrolled in Capt. Andrew Geyer's 3rd Co. of Pennsylvania Militia.



Aug. 29, 1780 Simon Nathan married Grace Seixas (1752-1831), sister of the Rev. Gershom Mendes Seixas. They had only one child, Isaac Mendes Seixas Nathan (1785-1852), a banker and one of the first members of the N. Y. Stock Exchange. Grace Nathan is described as "a woman of marked intellectual gifts" who left "a few unpublished poems and intimate family letters." A patriot in '76, she could write about the War of 1812, ". . . I am so true an American—so warm a

patriot that I hold these mighty Armies—and their proud-arrogant-presumptuous and over-powering Nation as beings that *we* have conquered and *shall* conquer again. . . ."

In 1782, Simon Nathan was the first president of the reorganized Congregation Mikveh Israel. When he moved to New York, he was president of Shearith Israel in 1785, 1786, 1794 and 1796. By 1781, incidentally, he was a Mason, no less than Deputy Grand Inspector General for North Carolina. Although living in affluence in Philadelphia, he had difficulty collecting the debts due him by Virginia. He sued twice; even though the later jurist John Marshall as arbitrator ruled in Nathan's favor, he still had not collected by 1791. In 1787, Nathan had to announce his bankruptcy; he continued as an auctioneer in New York.

Simon and Grace Nathan are the great-grandparents of Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), Josephine Lazarus (1846-1910), Maud Nathan (1862-1946), Annie Nathan Meyer (1867-1951), U.S. Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Nathan Cardozo (1870-1938), Robert Nathan and N.Y. State Supreme Court Justice Edgar J. Nathan Jr.

Israeli community by considering Robert Sherrill's summary of how Jackson's appeal has changed from 1972 to today:

"Nothing has changed, except that

today a small segment of the liberal wing of the [Democratic] Party which is more pro-Israel than anti-reactionary has come around to Jackson's side for the duration of the Mideast hos-

PAUL ROBESON

April 9, 1898—Jan. 23, 1976

EVEN those who scorned and slighted him when he was alive joined in the eulogies when Paul Robeson, great athlete, great singer, great actor, great tribune of his people and of the oppressed the world over, died after a disabling illness of 10 years. At the funeral service in Harlem Jan. 27 at the Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, the 2,500 who overflowed the sanctuary and the auditorium below were "almost evenly Black and white," according to the *N. Y. Amsterdam News* Jan. 31. Amongst the white, large numbers were Jewish.



By Hugo Gellert

Both as artist and as activist, Robeson had no more ardent supporters than progressive American Jews. They regarded him as the champion of their own rights as well as of the rights of the Black people. He honored them by learning Yiddish and singing Yiddish songs with a comprehension, tenderness and power uniquely his. On his last concert tour of the USSR, Robeson designedly sang in Yiddish as well as other Soviet languages. His rendition of Rabbi Levi Yitzhok's disputation with God, with his outcry, "What have you got against the people of Israel?," and his demand on God, "Put an end [to the persecution] at once!," had a multiple meaning wherever he sang it.

In Aug., 1949, to enforce Robeson's right to sing at Peekskill after a hoodlum element had prevented one such concert, progressive Jews were the bulk of the mass that turned out to protect him, Robeson alluded to this in an article he wrote for us, "Bonds of Brotherhood," on the occasion of the Tercentenary of Jewish life in the USA (published in our Nov., 1954, issue, reprinted in our 1970 Dinner Journal). He wrote, "Surely none of us who were at Peekskill can doubt that the Jewish workers will be second to none in standing firm against our common enemy . . . to me, Peekskill . . . shall ever be a glowing symbol of the unity of Negro and Jewish workers against fascism." In Paul Robeson's memory, we shall tighten these bonds.

American Jewish community or to theilities. But for other liberals, and most moderates, Jackson offers nothing

but the lingering fear that he may indeed mean some of those things he says." ■

Recorded Jewish Music: A Selection

Jewish Folk Songs, sung by Ruth Rubin in Yiddish and Hebrew. Folkways, \$4.79.

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Emil Gorovets Sings His First Concert in the U.S. In Yiddish. Workmen's Circle, \$5.

Yemenite and Other Israel Folk Songs, sung in Hebrew by Geula Gill. Folkways, \$5.79.

The Selected Songs of Eliakum Zuser, sung in Yiddish by Nathaniel A. Entin. Folkways, \$5.79.

Yiddish Songs of Work and Struggle. 18 songs by Yiddish Youth Ensemble, Jewish Students Bund, \$5.

Songs of the Ghetto, sung in Yiddish by Cantor Abraham Brun, concentration camp survivor. Folkways, \$4.79.

Paul Robeson—Carnegie Hall Concert, May 23, 1958—Vol. 2. Includes "Plea to God," chant of Rabbi Levi Yitzhok of Berdichev. Vanguard, \$4.79.

Jewish Children's Songs and Games, sung by Ruth Rubin in Yiddish. Folkways, \$4.25.

Mordecai Hershmann Sings Folksongs of the Shtetl. Collectors Guild, \$4.79.

Jacob Schaefer—I.L. Peretz Oratorio, Tsvai Brides. Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus, conducted by Maurice Rauch. Jewish Music Alliance, \$5.

Nehama Lifshits Sings Songs of the Jewish People. Collectors Guild, \$4.79.

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Israel Sings—Selections from the Birnbaum Collection of Jewish Liturgical Music, chosen and directed by Dr. Eric Werner. Collectors Guild, \$4.79.

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A Survivor from Warsaw, by Arnold Schoenberg. Cantata in English and Hebrew for speaker, male chorus and orchestra. Also includes Schoenberg's *Kol Nidre* for speaker, Mixed Chorus and orchestra. Columbia, \$3.98.

Sacred Service (Avodath Hakodesh) by Ernest Bloch. Robert Merrill, Cantor. Orchestra conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Columbia, \$6.98.

Shostakovich's 13th (Babi Yar) Symphony. Eugene Ormandy conducting Philadelphia Orchestra. RCA, \$5.98.

Vitebsk: A Study on a Jewish Theme by Aaron Copland. Earl Carlyss, violin, Claud Adam, cello, Copland at the piano. Also contains a *Piano Quartet* and a *Sextet*. Columbia, \$5.98.

Kaddish-Requiem (A Secular Service for the Victims of Indochina) by Richard Wernick, with Cantor Ramon Gilbert. Also includes works by Milton Babbitt and T. J. Anderson. Nonesuch Records, \$4.79.

Great Voices of the Synagogue: Chagy, Hershmann, Kwartin, Roitman, Rosenblatt, Shlisky, Sirota. Collectors Guild, \$4.79.

D.P.

For Jewish Music Month

Feb. 25-March 26

Jewish Music In America Before 1800

By **LIONEL B. DAVIS**

STUDIES of Jewish music in America have concentrated on the period of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, the 20th century and the final decades of the 19th century. This emphasis on a time span of less than a hundred years has ignored the fact that Jewish music has been present in America from the earliest Sephardic settlements in the colonies. This sketch, then, covers a period of some 140 years, concentrating on the 18th century.

Although individual Jews had occasionally appeared earlier, Jews began arriving in groups in 1654, when Marranos who had fled the Spanish Inquisition to Holland and then settled in Recife, Brazil, fled Recife's Portuguese conquerors and came to New Amsterdam. The 18th century saw the

LIONEL B. DAVIS of Minneapolis is a new contributor. This article was published in an earlier version in *Identity*, a semi-annual cultural magazine issued by the Jewish Community Center of Greater Minneapolis, in April, 1972.

establishment of Jewish communities in Newport, Savannah, Charleston, Philadelphia, Montreal.

In the South, Jews established themselves in the cities and as landowners. In the North, Sephardic Jews were especially active in foreign trade, utilizing their many contacts in the West Indies, London and Amsterdam. Ashkenazim arriving from Central Europe via Amsterdam or London, many of them very poor, by 1728 outnumbered the Jews of Sephardic origin. The two groups intermingled and formed basically one community until the next century, with the Ashkenazim bowing to the Sephardim in matters of religious ritual and, therefore, religious melody.

From 1750 to 1775 the Jewish community in Newport reached the zenith of Jewish life in colonial America. By 1775 there were about 150 Jews in Newport, almost 2% of the city's total population. Among the most prosperous of the Jewish merchants was Aaron Lopez (1731-1782), who had fled Portugal in 1752. Lopez was known as "a merchant of eminence," and was among several Jewish contributors to the founding of Redwood Library, which included Hebrew works. His interest in secular music is a matter of record, for in 1757 a New York friend sent him "some new songs for your violin," and in 1782 the inventory of his estate included a parcel of music books and a violin. One of Lopez' contemporaries was Isaac Touro (c.1737-1783), the first professional Jewish *hazzan* (cantor) in America. Touro came to Newport about 1760 in response to the congregation's plea to Amsterdam for a *hazzan*.

Meanwhile, Isaac d'Acosta (c. 1721-1783) had in 1750 come to Charleston, S.C. and became the *hazzan* of the congregation founded

in 1749. A business associate of Lopez, he visited Newport in 1774. D'Acosta was typical of the non-professional *hazzan* found in small Jewish communities at this period, described by one writer as "any Jew who had a good voice and knew the melodies of the service." No musical training was required, nor were the volunteer *hazzanim* ordained.

On Aug. 27, 1770, Dr. Ezra Stiles of Newport, a remarkable colonial intellectual and a Protestant clergyman who later became president of Yale College, heard Gershom Mendes Seixas (1745/46-1816), *hazzan* of Shearith Israel synagogue in New York, "perform prayers" at the Newport Synagogue. Mr. Seixas, then a young man, was the second Jewish *hazzan* of importance in 18th century America. As *hazzan*, Seixas prepared and delivered sermons on special occasions such as public holidays like Thanksgiving, officiated at marriages and funerals, served as mohel (circumciser), shochet (ritual butcher), teacher, collector of offerings, and combined the chanting and reading of the service with supervision of the children seated near him. The minutes of Shearith Israel congregation show that in 1805 a resolution was passed that "Every member of this congregation shall, previous to the singing of any psalm or prayer, remain silent until the *hazzan* shall signify the tone or key, then sing neither higher or louder than the *hazzan*."

The Jewish community of Philadelphia provides further glimpses of Jewish musical practice in 18th century America, particularly in the last quarter of the century, when the community flourished with the incoming of residents uprooted from other colonies during the Revolutionary War. On Sept. 13, 1782, the Cherry Street Synagogue of the already established Mikveh Israel Congregation

was dedicated in Philadelphia. Meeting at three o'clock at the "old shul," the Jews left their rented quarters, walked across Cherry Street, and "without any band of musick" approached the new building, being led by Gershom Mendes Seixas, the *hazzan* from New York, who on Aug. 22, 1776 had led the majority of that congregation to evacuate the city rather than stay and collaborate with the British occupation. After appropriate blessings, the line of congregants entered the building and made the first of six *hakafot*, or circuits, around the *hazzan's* reading desk with the honored members bearing the scrolls. They all chanted the *Baruch Haba* (Song of Praise for all special occasions), following it with the customary psalms, the members having been warned "to be careful not to raise their voices higher than the *hazzan's* who will endeavor to modulate his Voice to the proper Pitch so as only to fill the building." They were thus cautious about annoying or offending Gentile neighbors.

We know a little about Jewish participation in secular music in Philadelphia. A Maryland physician, Alexander Hamilton, observed one Jew "sitting with the coffee house crowd," and wrote in his diary that "one Levy played a very good violine at Philadelphia's music club." When Nathan Levy died in 1753 (born 1704) and his estate was registered, Levy, who has been described by the voluminous historian of colonial American Jews, Jacob Rader Marcus, as the "real founder of the Jewish community of Philadelphia," was noted as having in his library "25 books of musick, and a violin and case." Marcus is sure that Nathan Levy was the same Levy complimented by Dr. Hamilton.

In Philadelphia also Dr. Isaac Hays (1796-1879) was a member of the

executive board of the Musical Fund Society established in 1820, several other Jews being listed among the "amateur" members.

The musical and religious practice of the early Sephardic synagogue in America in general and of Shearith Israel Congregation in particular has come down to us in the oral tradition and written records of that synagogue. In his essay, "The World of the Sephardim, a personal survey," David de Sola Pool (1885-1970), the late rabbi of Shearith Israel, has summed up the chief characteristics of Sephardic practice in the synagogue as being "chaste liturgy, the classic pronunciation of Hebrew, tradition of preaching in the vernacular, simple chants, and congregational singing."

A companion article called "The Music of the Sephardim," by Abraham Lopes Cardozo, present-day *hazzan* of Shearith Israel, also describes the Sephardic musical tradition as being essentially conservative:

"The Sephardim have been, generally, faithful in preserving old melodies. It has been an inviolable rule in many a congregation that no traditional melody and no historical chant must be arbitrarily changed. . .

"Just as any Hasidic rabbi was likely to have a tune of his own, and each and every group of its own musical color, there are local variations in Sephardic music. However, the basic musical structure is unitary throughout all Sephardic communities. Sephardic music is neither sad nor plaintive. It reflects the joy and happiness from Temple times and from the glorious period of the sojourning on the Iberian peninsula. It is often repetitive. The characteristic musical theme of a certain holiday is often adapted to a number of texts. . .

"The *hazzan*, when called up for a reading of the Torah, is given the

title "*N'im Zmirot Yisrael*," a "sweet singer of Israel" . . .

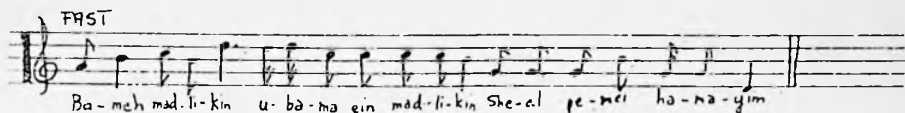
"The essence of the Sephardic *hazanut* is meticulous correctness with no improvisation . . . the test in choosing a *hazzan* used to consist of having the candidate officiate in the synagogue . . . the congregation would watch out particularly not for his elaborate chanting of an outstanding prayer but for his pronunciation and intonation in reading the Mishnah passage "*Bame madlikin*" which deals with the laws of the Sabbath lights. The chanting of this part of the service is a really taxing exercise in enunciation and articulation.

"Because of its simplicity and its limited range, the Sephardic chant facilitates and invites congregational participation. . . There has, of course, been a measure of assimilation to the musical standards of the non-Jewish environment. Many a popular folksong theme has found its way into the synagogue music of the Sephardim."

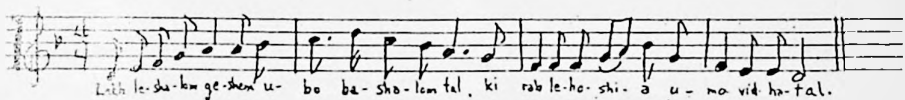
From this survey of what we know about Jewish music in America before 1800, it appears that the violin was at that time already the favored musical instrument of American Jews. We know that the synagogue music of Newport, as led by Isaac Touro, and of Shearith Israel of New York, as led by Gershom Mendes Seixas, was of a high quality in the 18th century and created a definite impact on the colonial intelligentsia. It is noteworthy that Peter Harrison, a very prominent architect, asked no fee for creating the designs for the Newport Synagogue (in 1946 it was designated a National Historic Site by the United States government and is visited annually by thousands of tourists). But of most concern, the Sephardic musical tradition of colonial America is of continuing importance because contemporary congregations of all Jewish backgrounds, interested in the classical

Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew, and in effective congregational singing, both in Hebrew and in the ver-

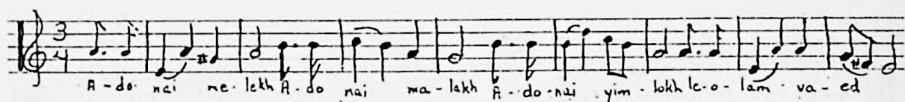
acular, are finding relevant points of contact with Jewish music in America before 1800.



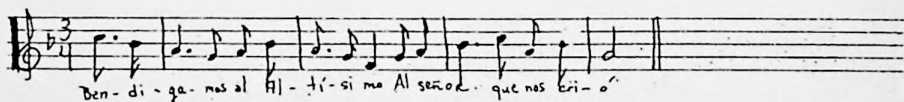
A Sephardic congregation would try out a prospective *hazzan* by noting his pronunciation and intonation in reading the Mishnah passage "Bame madlikin," which deals with the laws for kindling the Sabbath lights.



An old Sephardic melody is *Lekh lashalom geshem*, part of the traditional prayer for heavy dew in the dry summer season in Israel. The melody is none other than Hatikvah, proving that its ancestry goes much further back into history than Smetana's tone poem, "The Moldau."



Here is a Yom Kippur melody with forceful melodic lines that an Ashkenazic congregation might wish to use.



Spanish or Portuguese is still a ritual language in many Sephardic congregations. An example is the grace after meals.

Examples from *The World of The Sephardim*, Herzl Institute Pamphlet No. 15, New York, 1960.



ISRAEL

A group of prominent Israelis Jan. 12 called on their government to start negotiations with "a recognized and authoritative body of the Palestinian Arab people." Including writers, scholars, a former major general, among others, the left group formed in Dec. the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. Among the group's positions are establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, withdrawal to the 1967 borders except for agreed changes, joint Israeli-Arab administration of Jerusalem, non-refusal to negotiate with the Palestinian Liberation Organization if based on mutual recognition, a stop to setting up new settlements on occupied territory. Chairman is Matityahu Peled, and among the members are Arie L. Eliav, Moked leader, Meir Pail, Uri Avneri, Amos Kenan, and Sephardic community spokesman and chairman Eliahu Eliachar. Observers say that although not more than 10 or 15% of Israelis would subscribe to the total program, many more would agree with one point or other. The group plans to open overseas branches to promote Israeli-Palestinian contacts. . . . Because some Yaad leaders like Peled and Eliav have joined this new group, Civic Rights Movement leaders Shulamit Aloni and Boaz Moav have withdrawn from Yaad.

A nearly \$12 billion budget for the fiscal year beginning April 1 was proposed to the Knesset Dec. 15. It will severely reduce the Israeli standard of living for workers and raise unemployment from the 37,000 this year to about 60,000 next year. The budget provides for new taxes, higher prices for essentials, reduced social services. The Histadrut charged that it would put the heaviest burden on the workers. The budget would impose the long-planned added value tax. A 22% rise in the cost of living would result from the new budget, and private consumption would fall by 3%. Devaluation is continuing and the pound is expected by the end of 1976 to decline to 10 to the dollar. . . . Feb. 2 it was reported that in southern Israel the winter grain crop is a total loss because of drought. The cotton crop is also in danger and irrigation will be required to save it. . . . Budget problems have led Tel Aviv University to dismiss 120 members of the academic staff.

News briefs . . . With financial backing from the U.S. and Israel, Moshe Dayan is founding a newspaper to advance his political program and, possibly, to recover his prestige with the Israelis sufficiently to resume his career toward political leadership. Dayan is now con-

sidered an "arch-hawk" who opposed the recent Israeli-Egyptian interim agreement. . . . Following bombing of a Haifa market, charges were made in the Knesset that an extortion racket existed in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, in exchange for "protection" (*protektzia*). . . . Israel is now an arms exporter ranking with Italy, Sweden and Switzerland in sale of weapons to foreign countries. The Israeli arms industry employs tens of thousands of workers; its Uzi submachine gun is sold to more than 60 countries and its arms exports help to equip the armies of 19 countries. . . . Labor Minister Moshe Baram reported to the Knesset in mid-Dec. that the productivity of Israeli workers was half that of the U.S. workers, two-thirds of French, Swedish or Swiss workers. One way to improve productivity, said Moked's Meir Pail, was workers' participation in management. . . . Black Panthers aided by Moked members late in Dec. staged a Robin Hood raid on a Histadrut-owned cooking oil factory in Jerusalem which, they charged, had held out oil in anticipation of higher prices. The merry men left the oil on the steps of slum houses. Ten young men were arrested distributing leaflets saying, "He who steals from a thief is not guilty of theft."

Arab-Jewish relations . . . Arab students at the West Bank Bir Zeit College Jan. 13 boycotted classes in support of the Palestine Liberation Organization during the UN Security Council debate on the Middle East. The faculty backed the student move with a statement protesting Israeli occupation and demanding release of Arabs held without trial. Defense Minister Shimon Peres responded that there were now 46 held in detention, and nine would have trials soon. . . . Israeli observers report a growing body of opinion in favor of the so-called Yariv-Shemtov formula that Israel declare her willingness to negotiate with any Arab group granting Israel's right to exist and desisting from terrorism. This includes the PLO, although it is noted that if the PLO agreed to this formula, it would no longer be the PLO. . . . Givat Haviva held a "Speak to Me with Music" festival of some hundreds of Hashomer Hatzair youth and youth from some Arab villages, at which the young from both groups performed music and folk dances. Fifteen discussion groups were also held on ways to better relations between Jews and Arabs. . . . Toufiq Zayad, newly elected Communist (Rakah) mayor of Nazareth, pledged that he would work for development of Nazareth, to improve services and build new schools; he offered cooperation with the Israeli government and neighboring Jewish communities. An Arab correspondent believes that the doubling of the Rakah vote in the city is largely attributable to the 4,000 new voters who reached 18 since the last election. . . . Following the victory in Nazareth, the Palestine Liberation Organization planned to change its policy of boycotting West Bank elections, but instead supporting candidates sympathetic to it in the April municipal elections. However, Defense Minister Shimon Peres replied that Arab members of hostile organizations or the PLO would not be permitted to stand for election.

L.H.

Some Jewish Foremothers Of '76

By **MORRIS U. SCHAPPES**

Address at the 25th Anniversary Luncheon of the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's Clubs, Commodore Hotel, New York, Nov. 16, 1975.

EVEN in what is called this year the International Women's Year more bicentennial attention is being paid to our forefathers of '76 than to our foremothers of '76. Just as in 1943 I introduced to you the name, work and achievement of the all-but-forgotten Emma Lazarus, I now want to present to you, even if only in a few minutes, a few of our foremothers of '76. The state of research in the subject being what it is, with so very few women as American Jewish historians, I can give you only the tiniest miniature sketches, sometimes restricted only to a name and a date, but even these "short and simple annals" of some Jewish women of 1776 may arouse our interest and admiration.

I begin with one who never survived to become a foremother. Rachel Moses was the fifth and youngest daughter of Myer Moses (1735-1787) and his wife Rachel Andrews (1753-1835). She was still an infant in May, 1780 when, during the siege of Charleston, S.C., a British cannonball struck and killed her and her (black?) nurse instantly. Infant Rachel's four

sisters, aged 12, 9, 5 and 2, all survived, living into the ages of 70's, 80's and 90's, and her one-year-old brother Myer lived to be 54, but all we know of Rachel is her name and the cruel manner of her death—the only Jewish female to be killed in the war of the Revolution. After the capture of Charleston by the British, it is not irrelevant to note, Rachel's father, Myer Moses, made it his special duty to tend to the needs of American wounded and prisoners at his own considerable expense, so that an American general wrote of him that "his treatment to the American wounded and prisoners was such as to entitle him to the good wishes and gratitude of all those who had the success of the Revolution at heart." Thus did the father perhaps remember his infant Rachel.

From Charleston I turn to Montreal in Canada, that 14th colony that would not join our 13 in the Revolution. There we find a teen-ager named Elizabeth Judah (1763-1823), who was only 12 or 13 when her father, Samuel Judah (1725-1789), sympathetic to the American cause, sold supplies to invading American troops and accepted their Continental paper as payment. And when the Americans had to retreat from Canada, the paper money was just paper. Of teen-age Elizabeth we so far know only that she too sympathized with the American cause "and rendered it" what somebody calls "invaluable service." That is all there is to the record. One question, however, persists in my mind: what did young Elizabeth, a sympathizer of the American Revolution, think of the fact that her father, also a sympathizer, was involved in the slave trade? Perhaps, like so many others at the time, she thought nothing of it. The fact is that in 1787, four years after the death of her first husband, Elizabeth married Moses Myers (1752-1835) in Norfolk, Va. and

lived in that slavery environment for the remaining 36 years of her life.

Turning to New York, however, we find other dramas involving women. By this time, the name of the Rev. Gershom Mendes Seixas (1745/6-1816) is fairly well known as the spiritual leader of Congregation Shearith Israel who led the majority of the congregation to refuse to stay in the city of New York when the British were about to conquer it and preferred to go into voluntary exile in support of the Revolution. But what about his wife, Elkaleh Cohen (1749-1785)? Her husband has justly achieved fame. She achieved—obscure, from which for a moment I want to rescue her.

Consider: she had married Gershom on Sept. 6, 1775. She was soon pregnant. On July 4, 1776, she was in her eighth month. Their first son was born July 30, 1776 and named Isaac Mendes Seixas. In August, when the congregation was buzzing with discussion on what to do—stay and collaborate with the British or get up and leave New York—she was nursing a sickly infant. Isaac was also on his mind when Gershom was taking his stand for freedom in the congregation. Isaac was 23 days old when, having closed the synagogue and taken the Torah, Gershom and Elkaleh put their household movables into a wagon on Aug. 22, 1776, climbed into it, with Isaac on Elkaleh's lap, and started on the rough road to Stratford, Conn. Isaac apparently died on the way. Doesn't Elkaleh too belong in the annals of the Revolution?

Also in New York at the time there was another teen-age girl, Rachel Franks. On July 4, 1776, she was 14½ years old. When the patriotic Jews left the city, her father, a simple tailor, Moses Benjamin Franks (d. 1792) stayed behind, but he was not

one of the 15-16 Jews among 948 New Yorkers who signed a fawning loyalist oath Oct. 16, 1776 pledging allegiance to the "sacred person Crown and Dignity" of King George the Third. Moses may even have approved of his son Isaac's enlisting in the American army in 1776 although he was only 17 years. Maybe 14-year-old Rachel (1762-1818) was proud of her brother the soldier (1759-1822). But somehow Rachel made the acquaintance of a man more than twice her age, who had been briefly imprisoned by the British as a spy when they occupied New York but was soon released and assigned to provide supplies for the Hessian officers, whose language the Polish Jew Haym Salomon (1740-1785) was able to speak.

In this capacity, Salomon had the freedom of the city, even going into business for himself and prospering. But being a patriot he did more than prosper: he used his position to help some American and French prisoners to escape, and he talked some Hessian soldiers into deserting from the British in order to get the tracts of land the American government offered to such deserters. Somehow the adventurous Haym Salomon impressed 15-year-old Rachel Franks—or perhaps it was her father Moses that Salomon impressed. At any rate, on July 6, 1777 Rachel and Haym were married, with a proper *ketubah* and all that, from which we learn he was 37 and she was 15½. And of course she promptly became pregnant and on July 20, 1778 she gave birth to their first son, Ezekiel (1778-1821). And 22 days later her husband Haym got a hot tip that the British are on to his American tricks of helping prisoners escape and persuading Hessians to desert and all that and that he is about to be arrested. Haym didn't wait. Leaving Rachel, little Ezekiel and his property, Haym Salomon on Aug. 11 fled across the

Hudson and made his way to Philadelphia. There on Aug. 25, 1778 he told his story in a letter to the Continental Congress asking for some employment. He did not get it, and it took perhaps six months before the now 17-year-old Rachel and their son Ezekiel could join Haym Salomon in Philadelphia. Did not Rachel too make a contribution to the cause?

Now let me turn this transient historical spotlight on four women named Minis in Savannah, Ga. In 1776 there was, first, the 75-year-old matriarch, Abigail Minis (1701-1794), who signed her name as Faigele in Yiddish. On July 10, 1733, she had arrived among the first settlers in Savannah, with her husband Abraham (c. 1695-1757) and six-year-old daughter Leah (1726-1802)—and twins inside of her that were delivered immediately on landing, July 10 and 12. The son, perhaps the first white male child born in Georgia, was Philip (1733-1789). Philip's sister, Judith (1742-1826), is the second of our cast of four Minis women. Third is Philip's wife, Judith Pollock of Newport (1745-1819). Fourth is Sarah, called Sally, Minis, the 11th and last of Abigail's children. Comes the Revolution of '76 and the Minis family and these four Minis women are hot for the cause. In 1779 we find Abby, at 78, selling supplies to French and American troops trying to recapture Savannah from the British. She was an efficient woman executive, running a plantation with 17 slaves, a tavern, and other commercial ventures. When the British first captured Savannah in 1778, they put Judith Pollock Minis and her sister-in-law, Judith, under house arrest, and expelled them from town as "Great Whigs," that is, rebels. In Oct., 1779, Abby, 78, and her daughter Sally complain to the British governor that they are being persecuted and ask

for permission to go to Charleston. Permission is granted. Meanwhile, Philip Minis was also busy in the Revolution, guiding the French invaders of Savannah in 1779. After the war, the British governor in 1781 wrote of the Jews: ". . . these people . . . were found to a man to have been violent rebels and persecutors of the King's loyal subjects." If the Royal Governor had not been a male chauvinist, he would have written that the Jews "to a man and to a woman" have been violent rebels, as were these four Minis women.

To conclude I want to return to New York, specifically to the town of Bedford in Westchester County. On July 11, 1779, the Revolutionary War was going badly. In fact this war was one in which the American forces lost almost all the battles but managed to win the war—and independence. In Bedford we find David Hays (1732-1812) and his growing family. In 1764 he had married Esther Etting (d. 1793). By 1779 the family included Rachel, 14, Hannah, 11, Elinor, 9, Jacob, 7, Asher, 4, Yittah, 16 months old—and Esther was two months pregnant with Benjamin. Hays was known in the area as a supporter of the Revolution. The area was full of Tories, who were encouraged by the British and Hessian troops occupying New York City. On the night of July 11, David Hays was not at home. He had set out, with one of his children, on a strange, dangerous but necessary mission: to drive 72 head of cattle in the dark through the British lines to sell them to Washington's army.

Back in Bedford that night, Tories surrounded the Hays farm and house, demanding that David come out. When he didn't, the Tories broke into the home and tried to force Esther and the frightened children to tell them where their father was. When Esther

would not talk, the Tories threatened to burn the house down. And they did. Tradition has it that Esther and the baby Yittah were saved when they were carried out of the burning building by one of their slaves. We know the name of the black slave who rescued this Jewish family. The name is Darby. That is all we know. He had a slave wife, whose name we do not know. We know also that when David Hays died 33 years later, in 1812, his estate still included two female slaves, one a girl. The name of Esther Etting Hays is not unknown to American Jewish history. I propose equal billing for the slave, Darby.

If in this thumbnail account of some of our Jewish foremothers of '76, slaves have frequently gotten into the picture, it is because slavery was there in 1776. The Revolution freed our country from the British Empire but it did not free the slaves from their white owners. That was part of the unfinished business of this great and real revolution. Part of this unfinished business is still with us—in the struggle of the black people for full and real equality, which to us means affirmative action and even preferential treatment.

In the *N. Y. Times* Oct. 31, 1975 there was a letter by a Jewish man in Forest Hills in Queens. He refuses to accept any responsibility for the state of black inequality today on the ground that his ancestors were not in the USA during slavery. He writes, "The average American Caucasian's ancestors were peasants in Europe when slaves were brought to the colonies." And of course, we may add, the majority of Jews in the USA today are products of the post-Civil War mass immigration from the late 1870's on. But you can't have it both ways. You cannot celebrate the participation of the Jews, or any other group, in the American Revolution and over-

MOYNIHAN MISSION MUFFS

RESIGNING Feb. 2, Daniel Patrick Moynihan closed a spectacular but counter-productive stint as head of the U.S. mission to the U.N. His method was to stick a sassy tongue out at the Third World, and wag it. Attacking the right things in the wrong way, Moynihan made matters worse. *Item:* Oct. 17, 1975 the vote in Committee for the wretched resolution equating Zionism with racism got 70 votes; opposing, abstaining or absent were 72. After Moynihan's mouthings, the Nov. 10 vote was 72 for it, with 70 votes opposing, abstaining or absent.

look the fact that there were not only Tories among American Jews in 1776 but that even American Jewish revolutionaries, just as did Washington and Jefferson, sometimes owned slaves and imported slaves.

As progressive Jews, we see our history whole: we see the revolutionaries and the counterrevolutionaries, the slavers and those who sooner or later came to oppose slavery, came to abolish it, and now continue the more than century-old struggle to abolish the historical remnants of slavery that still bedevil our social order. Our Jew in Forest Hills owes something to Darby of Bedford, Westchester County, and to the descendants of the Darbys that are all about us. This Bicentennial celebration would be mere tinsel and sham if it were only a dusting off of the memories of Forefathers and Foremothers. We are the beneficiaries of 1776. But we all owe debts to 1776. The man in Forest Hills is bankrupt. We are not. We assume the burden of the unfinished business of the ideal that all men—and all women—are created equal, and we shall struggle to make them equal. ■

● The
● Editor's
● Diary

● *Hokum for Children about Haym Salomon*

Children are as much entitled to the truth as adults. To befuddle the young so as to clarify the mlater is an outmoded device we assumed had gone out of style with the much-ridiculed Parson Weems tale about George Washington and the cherry tree and George's solemn boast, "I cannot tell a lie." But for Jewish children Jewish writers still come up with "pride-raising" nonsense when the truth would be more effective. There is a difference between historical fiction and fictitious history. Historical fiction uses known facts and elaborates on them with connective fiction; fictitious history asserts falsehoods as facts, thereby abolishing the distinction between fact and fiction. These reflections are provoked by yet a third novel for youth about Haym Salomon (1740-1785).

In 1941 Howard Fast, who was just turning to historical fiction about the American revolution with his *Conceived in Liberty*, had a commercial publisher issue his *Haym Salomon, Son of Liberty* (243 pages). While it had the qualities of narrative style that won for Fast a large audience for his increasingly important historical novels, Fast swallowed Haym Salomon myths wholesale, despite the fact that they had been exposed as myths in 1931 by the historians Max Kohler and Samuel Oppenheim. In 1951, a Philadelphia lawyer, Leon S. Rosenthal, had a vanity-house, Dorrance Co. of Philadelphia, issue his *This Liberty, A Novel about Haym Salomon* (316 pages). In a literarily clumsy way, Rosenthal regurgitated the by then even more thoroughly discredited pap about Salomon. Reviewing this book in our magazine in July, 1952, I suggested that until a historically reliable biography of Salomon was published (and he merits a biography), fiction about Salomon would be misleading because neither the author nor the reader had a widely understood canon to distinguish fact from oft-repeated myths.

So now we have, for ages 10 and up, *Haym Salomon, Liberty's Son*, by Shirley Milgrim, illustrated with seven drawings by Richard Fish (Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1975, 120 pages, \$4.50). What surpasses understanding is why a Jewish communal publishing institution like the JPSA, which has issued authentic scholarly books, including at least one that has accurate information about Salomon, should print this book for unsuspecting Jewish children and their parents, who have a right to assume that a children's book put out by the JPSA will have editors that see to it that the history in a juvenile historical fiction will be sound. Even a listing of significant errors is more than we have room for here, but suffice it to say that Haym

Salomon was *not* a member of the Sons of Liberty, did *not* marry a rich girl but a poor tailor's daughter, was *not* sentenced to death by the British, did *not* escape twice, or at all, from prison, did *not* "produce the actual money which kept the Revolution going" (that Revolutionary War cost about \$20 million a year, while Salomon as a broker managed to sell about \$200,000 worth of bills of exchange), and so on. And Benjamin Nones was a private in the Revolutionary War (*not* a major), and Isaac Franks, beginning as private, rose to the lowest officer's rank of ensign (*not* lieutenant-colonel), and all that puffery.

Some of these errors are deliberate. In two cases, to add authenticity, documents are printed but tampered with. On p. 52, in Salomon's Aug. 25, 1778 memorial to the Continental Congress, Shirley Milgrim inserts her own word "rearrested" and omits what Salomon wrote, that he was tipped off and escaped rearrest! On p. 97, she quotes another document, the entry of June 8 in the diary of Robert Morris, Superintendent of the Office of Finance, with whom Salomon agreed to work as a broker, "His brokerage to be settled hereafter, but not to exceed a half per cent." But Milgrim puts a period after "hereafter" and, following Howard Fast perhaps, assures us that the commission agreed on then was "a quarter of one per cent." Needless to say, there is no evidence that the current commission was two per cent (p. 91). Incidentally, again perhaps following Fast, she declares that Salomon, "by putting his name on the note [the bill of exchange], made himself responsible for payment in case the original issuer refused to pay." That is not so, for on March 20, 1783 Morris wrote in his diary, ". . . I must here in justice to Haym Salomon declare that although he has indorsed the Note I consider him only as a Broker in this Business and not liable to pay as the Endorser thereof." Having referred to Milgrim's apparent use of Fast, I may say that I grew increasingly uncomfortable as I recognized 27 passages in the Milgrim text that were suspiciously like those in Fast's book.

Finally, a word about the foolish fable that Washington once came rapping at the Philadelphia synagogue door on Yom Kippur and that Salomon leaped into the breach and raised \$20,000 on the spot for GW and the Cause. Fast refined the fable: he has Robert Morris send his assistant to the synagogue, Salomon makes the fund appeal and checks for \$20,000 are signed pronto! Milgrim knows better: when Morris' man comes to the synagogue, the observant Jews there *pledge* \$20,000 on the spot and deliver it after sundown. That's verisimilitude for you! Is this supposed to provide the historical background and justification for UJA Yom Kippur appeals in the synagogue?

● *Ykuf Plenum*

January 17

Attended the first of two sessions of the annual plenary meeting of the Yiddisher Kultur Farband (Ykuf) at the Americana City Squire Inn, which brought out some 180 delegates and guests. With Ber Green presiding, Ruth Baharas, the new Executive Secretary, reported on the past year's work (there are over 60 Ykuf clubs and Reading Circles in

the U.S.A., while *Yiddische Kultur* has monthly subscribers in 30 countries). Paul Novick then presented a paper on the relation of the Bicentennial to progressive secular Jewish life, pointing out that the basis for pluralism and secularism was laid in the Revolution. Then Prof. Itche Goldberg discoursed on the status and fate of Yiddish today, describing the status of the language and production in it in the main centers of Jewish population, noting that Israel has become an important center of Yiddish creativity while in the USSR the future of the language is in question. Sometimes he overstated the case, as he opined that Yiddish is the greatest contribution of the Jewish people or that Jewish secularism is inseparable from Yiddish. In my brief comments in the discussion, I had time only to note the following: that in 1975 there were 483 books printed in the USA by Jews on Jewish subjects in English, Hebrew and Yiddish (compared to 424 in 1974); that in 1975, 113 Yiddish books were published all over the world (123 in 1974); that in the Bicentennial it should be stressed that Yiddish was more widely spoken in colonial America than has been assumed, since by 1728 most of the Jews in the colonies were Ashkenazim, not Sephardim; that the budget cuts in the City University threatened the existence of all the Jewish Studies Programs; and that the Conference of Secular Jewish Organizations to be held in the Philadelphia area this Memorial Day week end (see our Feb. issue, p. 32) was a promising development deserving encouragement and participation.

● *Breira Executive Board Meeting*

January 19

As a member of the National Advisory Committee, accepted an invitation to attend this enlarged meeting, at Temple Israel, which brought out 22 members of the Board (out of 38) from the West Coast, the Northeast, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. as well as New York, and a local representative from Chicago and three members of the National Advisory Committee. From 3 to 10 P.M. there was intensive discussion of problems of policy and organization. Because Breira is a coalition of Zionists and non-Zionists, religionists and secularists, flexibility and good will are required to achieve a concensus. Although I got no support for my own efforts to persuade the group to commit itself to Res. 242 as a major guideline for a peace settlement, or to stress Geneva as the forum for negotiations, I readily assented to the main areas of agreement on a political solution that would achieve security and peace for Israel and the right of self-determination for the Palestinians.

One of Breira's great accomplishments is the publication of a new pamphlet, *Israel and the Palestinians: A Different Israeli View* (56 pages, \$2, Breira, 299 Riverside Dr., N.Y. 10025). The text is a transcript of a round-table discussion by such Israeli fighters for peace as Uri Avneri, Simha Flapan, Amos Kenan, Maj. Gen. Mattityahu Peled (ret.) and David Shabam. They exhibit more sense and understanding of the Palestine issue and how Israel can deal with it to secure peace than anything else I have read of this brevity.

● *A Black "Shylock" Still "Shylock"*

January 25

With Jack Nathan, journeyed on an errand of wilful masochism out to St. Boniface Church in Brooklyn to see yet another production, this by the Big Apple Theater, a community enterprise. The producer-director, Paula Kay Pierce, was faithful to the text, which she headlined on the program as *The Excellent History of the Merchant of Venice, With the extreme cruelty of Shylocke the usurer towards the saide Merchant, in cutting a just pound of his flesh. And the obtaining of Portia, by the choyce of three Caskets*, as in the printed 1600 Quarto edition. Ms Pierce's innovation consisted in having Shylock played by an experienced black actor, Nerissa by a black actress, and Antonio's gentlemen friends become gentlewomen, one black, one white. The audience of about 100 consisted of local families as well as young off-off-Broadway sophisticates. Shylock of course was vicious, vengeful and venomous and the audience responded by bursts of laughter and applause, swallowing the anti-Semitism whole. Interestingly enough, there was one minor change in the play revealing that the production was not wholly insensitive to ethnic insults: thus when the Prince of Morocco chooses the wrong casket and takes his leave, Portia comments, "May all of his complexion choose me so," which was changed to "May all of his discretion choose me so." Would that similar sensitivity had been shown not only to the black people but also to the Jews. But then there would have been no production.

● *Three on Black-Jewish Relations*

"Brothers Across the Sea: Afro-Americans on the Persecution of Russian Jews, 1881-1917" by Prof. Arnold Shankman (*Jewish Social Studies*, Spring, 1975, pages 114-121) samples the black press in 21 cities and concludes that "American blacks were among the most vociferous critics of Tsarist anti-Semitism. In calling attention to the evils of religious bigotry, Negroes hoped also to focus the eyes of Americans on Dixie's shameful treatment of Afro-Americans. . . ."

"Black-Jewish Relations in the Opening Years of the 20th Century" by Prof. Philip S. Foner (*Phylon*, The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture, Winter, 1975, pages 359-367) examines other data, concluding that ". . . the opening years of the 20th century provided the first well-focused incidents of national importance in which blacks and Jews came into conflict." Apparently, Foner touched other parts of the elephant than Shankman . . .

"Black Anti-Semitism in 20th Century America: Historical Myth or Reality?" by Prof. Nicholas C. Polos, a Greek-American historian (*American Jewish Archives*, April, 1975, pages 8-31), concludes that "with the recent rise of the Black consciousness American Blacks strongly desire to direct their own movement toward freedom, and that some confusion does exist between the Jews and the Blacks about the methods for achieving this goal. . . ." He urges both "to see themselves not as antagonists, but as allies in a humanitarian struggle." He frequently cites JEWISH CURRENTS.

M. U. S.

A Surprise of Legends

By ELSIE LEVITAN

WOVEN throughout the story of the Exodus from Egypt is a golden thread that forms a surprise of legends concerning women. At the very outset of the story the Bible tells us that the new King over Egypt, who "knew not Joseph," called before him two Hebrew midwives, Shiprah and Puah, and he said, "When you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, ye shall look upon the birthstool: if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but, if it be a daughter, then she shall live."

The brave women defied Pharaoh, knowing full well what the consequences of their refusal would be. The concept of civil disobedience has an ancient lineage, indeed! By their daring, Shiprah and Puah "saved the men-children alive." Moreover, it is doubtful if in that theocratic world, defiance of an order by the Pharaoh could result in anything less than death.

Inevitably, Pharaoh called the midwives to account and said to them,

ELSIE LEVITAN of Philadelphia is a frequent contributor, appearing last in our Nov., 1975 issue with "The Cosmos of Isaac Bashevis Singer." For her 60th birthday April 29, 1976, the Editorial Board sends its congratulations, warmest regards and best wishes for her health.

"Why have you done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive?" When I read passages like that in the Bible, I stop to infuse the scene with some details deemed too unimportant to include. Yet these "absent" details can make the passage come to life for me. For example, this interview must have been held in the palace, an awesome setting for the two simple, Jewish midwives. Was the room crowded with other recreants? Did they wait a long time before their names were called? Shiprah and Puah must have been fearful for their lives. I wonder, did they conspire to invent a defense? Certainly, while they were waiting for Pharaoh, they must have whispered to each other, trying to anticipate what questions he might ask and how they would defend yourselves.

The Bible records that they invented a very ingenious answer: the two women replied, "Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women, for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwife come unto them." Now that was as pert and bold an explanation as was possible under those circumstances. Desperation, nimbleness and knowledge of their craft helped to formulate the answer.

In addition, there was a very subtle appeal to Pharaoh's racism: Hebrew women were different, inferior, hence it was quite possible that they dropped

their babies like animals, not like well-bred Egyptian princesses. Their answer still carries an aura of individuality and authenticity and sticks to the imagination like saliva on the tongue.

We can assume that they pleaded their case successfully because no mention is made of any punishment, although Pharaoh immediately took steps to further his program of a final solution even though the Hebrew women were "lively." Bravo, Shiprah, bravo, Puah. You refused to be martyrs; you meant to live and go on helping male children to live. Your daring and quickness of mind sound a lovely note with which to begin the long fight for liberation from Egyptian bondage. And let's face it, God's Plans might never have gotten off the drawing board, squashed by a genocidal Pharaoh, if it hadn't been for those two humble women. I hope the elders of the Hebrew tribes praised them.

Pharaoh took sterner measures to carry out his determination to cast all Hebrew male children into the water. A legend tells us that he sent spies into the homes where there was a pregnant woman and also decreed that only Egyptian women were to serve as midwives. If there were parents that contrived to evade the decree and kept a male infant unknown to the authorities, then the entire family was to be killed.

Can we imagine the consternation? There seemed no solution, no evasion, no escape. Of course, the leaders and rabbis met for many days to consider the possible alternatives. Even after the official meetings, conversations between husband and wife continued for hours, voices kept low, so that the children wouldn't awaken.

Finally, in sadness and defeat, Amram, the president of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body, decided that the only course was for husbands to

separate themselves from their wives. The legend goes on to relate that to encourage all of the men of Israel to do the same thing, Amram publicly divorced his wife and the men of Israel followed his example. Alas, what a tragic course to resolve upon.

Amram and Jochebed, his wife, were already the parents of two children, Miriam and Aaron. Miriam's name means bitterness because she was born when the Egyptians were beginning to make life harsh for the Jews, with all manner of onerous work. Yet what an irony, this name for this woman, because Miriam plays a remarkable role in the saga; always, always she is on the side of joy, and life and love.

When Miriam learned of Amram, her father's, decision to separate all the husbands of Israel from their wives, she was understandably deeply troubled, because she came to him and said, "Father, thy decree is worse than Pharaoh's decree. The Egyptian's aim to destroy only the male children, but thou includest the girls as well. Pharaoh deprives his victims of life in this world, but thou preventest children from being born. . . . He resolves destruction, but *who knows whether the intention of the wicked can persist?*"

I have added the italics, because I find Miriam's statement remarkable, particularly the last sentence, which could certainly qualify as the Mount Ararat for historical optimism for all time, since the elders of Israel had capitulated to Pharaoh's plan, nay, even more, had volunteered to carry out his plan; but a child, a girl child, had refused to submit to despair.

The very fact that Miriam could chide her father in the context of the sternly patriarchal family of Biblical time amazes me. Incidentally, it would be interesting to speculate how old Miriam was at that time. There are

no specific hints, but we do know that Jochebed, her mother, was still of child-bearing age, that Miriam was small enough to hide in the rushes of the Nile, that many years were to pass before the Hebrews left Egypt and that they were to wander about the desert for 40 years after that.

I opt for placing her at the time of her conversation with her father at between 10 and 12 years old. She had to be old enough to reject her father's plans, to know that abstinence meant genocide, and that the permissible birth of girls meant that some hope could persist no matter what other tragedies befell. Miriam, you must be the first recorded optimist and yea-sayer. I salute you!

But far beyond my felicitations, we must all acknowledge our debt to you. Because you persuaded your father, Amram, to rejoin his wife, and all the men of Israel followed suit, we are able to bear witness today. Women are the loom carrying the threads that weave the miracle of birth and growth. For them, optimism may have a biological dimension.

Very soon after Miriam's parents reunited, Jochebed conceived. That child was Moses.

For three months, the parents succeeded in concealing the infant from the Egyptian spies, but then Amram, with heavy heart, decided to expose the child because he feared he, and his older son, Aaron, might be put to death. He hoped divine providence would somehow take care of the baby. Yet so overwhelmed with anger was he when he was forced to abandon Moses that he struck Miriam on the head, because she had prophesized a redeemer for Israel. The same legend tells us that Amram had had the same vision. It must have been passing common for the Jews of that time to have this dream. Harsh social conditions

and feelings of political powerlessness engender visions of redeemers.

Jochebed placed her infant, Moses, in an ark, secured with pitch and shaded by a canopy, and then abandoned it on the shores of the Red Sea. Were the infant's clothes damp with the mother's tears? Were the garments new? But Miriam would not leave the baby unguarded. She hid among the rushes to see what would happen.

A little distance away, one of Pharaoh's daughters, Thermutis, was bathing in the Nile, when she saw the tiny ark floating on the water; she drew it to her, instantly recognized that the infant boy was circumcised and should be turned over to the authorities. But the Bible tells us that her womanly compassion was aroused at the sight of the crying infant.

What images crowd my mind! This woman, Thermutis, daughter of the gods, was prepared to risk her values and her privileges at the top of this rigidly hierarchical society, because she was moved to compassion! Through the centuries, in how many languages and climates were men and women, princesses and peasants, moved to compassion to help a Jewish child escape death at the hands of the authorities?

Again it was Miriam who, with infinite presence of mind and bearing, stepped forward and spoke to the princess, as though this Jewish child were long accustomed to speaking to royalty. Where did this parochial youngster find the wisdom to say just the right words to the haughty aristocrat? Miriam suggested that a Hebrew wet nurse be obtained for the crying infant. In reply, Thermutis told her to fetch such a wet nurse. That nurse, of course, was Moses' mother, Jochebed.

I wonder if Amram ever apologized to Miriam for striking her. I wonder if he ever praised her for her quickness and her courage and her ex-

quisite sense of responsibility to her baby brother. The legends never talk about such things.

It was Pharaoh's daughter who named the baby Moses, because she had drawn him out of the water. Moses stayed with his own family until he was three and then was returned to the princess. Thermutis, in another legend, pretended to be pregnant some months before Jochebed came to the palace with her child so that the child would be regarded as of royal blood and receive a princely education and acceptance.

Later, there were more legends regarding Thermutis; that she adopted Moses, married Caleb, a Hebrew, and joined the Jews in their flight from Egypt. Is it impossible to imagine that there were Egyptian women who abandoned the cruelties and despotism of Egyptian life for the simpler and more humane ways of the Hebrews? In any period of great social upheaval some members of the more privileged class always stand by the side of the oppressed.

After Moses killed the Egyptian overseer because of his cruelty to the Hebrews, he fled to Midian, where he met Zipporah and at once asked for her hand in marriage. But Jethro, Zipporah's father, according to legend, fearing that Moses was the man Egyptian magicians had foretold would destroy all the land and its inhabitants, had him thrown into a pit, hoping that Moses would die there. And, indeed, death would have been inevitable, if Zipporah had not come to his rescue. With great ingenuity she convinced her father that it would serve his fortune and his profit better, if he sent her six sisters away to tend his flocks, while she stayed home to take care of the house. Seeing that his scheme could only increase his flocks, Jethro commended Zipporah and did as she suggested.

Of course, Zipporah used this stratagem to care for Moses. For seven years, as he lay in the pit, she brought him food and drink and dainties. There must have also been whispered words of love and encouragement and belief that the wicked decisions would not prevail. Her steadfastness and cunning kept Moses alive through those dark years.

At the end of this period, she said to her father, "I recollect that once upon a time, thou didst cast into yonder pit, a man. . . . If it seemeth well to thee, uncover the pit and look into it. If the man is dead, throw his corpse away. But should he be alive, then thou oughtest to be convinced that he is pious, else he had died of hunger."

Jethro asked, "Dost thou remember his name?" And Zipporah said, "I remember he called himself Moses." The rest is history—Biblical history. They were married and lived—some-what happily—ever after. How clever and playful of Zipporah to rely on her father's cupidity and her own good cooking rather than angels to save the man she had fallen in love with.

There is still another story, an even more fabled one, where Zipporah again saved Moses' life. There are two versions of this story, one Biblical, the other legendary, although both partake of many similar elements. God finally persuaded a very reluctant Moses to return to Egypt and assume the leadership of the struggle to free the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery.

On the road to Egypt, God threatened to kill the first born son of Moses. (Apparently, threatening to kill the first born son was an entrenched attitude on everyone's part!) The Bible says, "Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at his feet and she said: 'Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me.' So, He let him alone."

Now the legend hastens to elaborate why Moses had not circumcised his son, performing the time out of memory function of legends—to explain or justify; Moses and Zipporah left Midian in such haste that there was no time for the ritual. But this oversight angered God and he sent a serpent on the road, who promptly swallowed Moses. Zipporah, grasping the reason for this occurrence, performed the circumcision herself. Immediately, the serpent spewed forth Moses. The young mother, surprised by the serpent, did not bewail her fate, did not rail against God, did not lie down to be devoured by hunger or cold or wild beasts. No, she sized up the situation uncannily, then with complete composure and in defiance of custom did what had to be done. God crowned her judgment by restoring Moses to her.

Shall I summarize? Moses was conceived because of Miriam's wisdom, after all the leaders had, in effect, agreed to carry out Pharaoh's plans for killing off the Hebrews. Moses was carried, nurtured and educated, by Jochebed, his mother, for the first three years of his life. He was drawn out of the water by Thermutis, Pharaoh's daughter, guarded by Miriam, nursed by Jochebed, royally educated by Bithiah, the Hebrew name later given to Thermutis, when she left her father to go with the Hebrews out of Egypt. Twice Moses was rescued by Zipporah, his wife. If Moses would have expressed one word of gratitude to these splendid women, matters might have developed more equitably.

After the Israelites, men, women, children and flocks, had passed over the dryland of the divided Red Sea, they wandered in the desert for 40 years. Yet they received sustenance. First came the manna in great abund-

ance to feed them. This was given for the merit of Aaron, Moses' brother; and then came the miracle of the well, and this was for the merits of Miriam, which followed them in all their wanderings throughout the 40 years. It was in the shape of a sieve-like rock, "out of which water gushed forth as from a spout." It was known as Miriam's well, and when she died, the well disappeared with her.

Perhaps the most remarkable segment of this saga is the story of the Golden Calf. Directly after the Biblical passage that completes the giving of the two stone tablets to Moses, the Bible goes on to say, "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount . . . they demanded of Aaron that he build them a god like the Egyptian gods and before whom they could sing and dance."

Then the legends begin to add the tracery that amplifies the outline of the story. Hur, the son of Miriam, had been appointed by Moses to be an equal leader with his uncle while Moses was absent on God's business getting the 10 commandments. When he heard the demand of the people, Hur said to them, "O, ye frivolous ones, you are no longer mindful of the many miracles."

So the people killed this good man, and then turned to Aaron and said, "If thou will make us a god, it is well, if not, we will dispose of thee as of him." And Aaron, rather than let the people sin by slaying him, granted their request, although some might say that this is a very neat but understandable bit of rationalization. Aaron demanded the ornaments of the people, including the wives, the sons and the daughters. *The women resolutely refused* to give their jewels for the making of a graven image.

Miriam is not directly mentioned in the legends clustering around this extraordinary episode. Yet how can

anyone read this legend without thinking of Miriam at the very center of that refusal. Miriam, the prophetess, Miriam, the resolute, Miriam, the noble daughter of a noble line. And if we read the text closely, we can find additional and compelling reasons for imagining that she may have organized the refusal.

Remember that Miriam was an outraged and grieving mother—the inconstant mob had murdered her son; remember, too, that for the exalted name of her brother, Moses, who was bringing down the tablets from Mt. Sinai, she could do no less. It must have been Miriam, dishevelled from grief and the urgency of the unbelievable events unfolding in the encampment, who stood before her tent exhorting the women to be steadfast. Who else had such gifts of leadership and persuasion? The other women heeded Miriam and vowed to wait for Moses, but the men took off their earrings, and gave them to Aaron to be melted down.

And as reward, God gave the women the new moon as holidays, and decreed that in the future world they, like the new moon, would be monthly rejuvenated. And that is a poetic but clear reference to menstruation, which must have been a totally unknowable mystery to the ancients. This is something I've wanted to talk to You about for a long time, so why don't we sit down and talk it over like reasonable people.

First, let me remind You of what You wrote in Leviticus. You abjured a man to bathe and wash his soiled garments after any issue "from his flesh," and though the instructions go on to become pretty petty (if another man touches the bed or chair where a man has had an emission, that first man and his garments also must be cleansed), still the basic thrust toward cleanliness is obvious and laudable.

But, "if a woman have an issue and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be in her impurity seven days; and whosoever touches her shall be unclean." The abjuration goes on to include bed and chair and clothes.

What a swarm of mischievous superstitions that gave rise to! For one week out of every month, one-fourth of her adult life, a woman became an untouchable and her power for mischief became immense. Somewhere at the frayed edges of my memory, I can recall stories about the *hallah* not rising if baked by a menstruating woman. And I have always remembered a certain bright afternoon when I was 10 years old and told my mother, thanks to Mediterranean precocity, that I had started to menstruate. *She slapped me in the face.* At the moment, I was too stunned to ask "Why?" but somewhere punishment was implicit. Was it for becoming "unclean"?

The promise to the righteous women of the legend seemed to be forgotten and buried under remote understandings. Yet, even the language of the legend bears such hope and joy: "reward, new, holiday, rejuvenation." Perhaps, it is long, long overdue to resurrect the legend of the new moon and to mark the onset of menstruation with a celebration at the entrance into womanhood. The inexhaustible storehouse of Jewish legend can serve as an example to all the nations to assist young women in becoming more secure and proud in their womanliness.

After Moses returned with the stone tablets and the Golden Calf had been smashed, there were mighty preparations for the revelation made on Mt. Sinai. Preparations were carefully elaborate and precise, but still God was reluctant and finally demanded bondsmen before He would give the Torah.

Twice bondsmen were refused; on

the third offer, the Israelites said, "We will give Thee our children as bondsmen." And God said, ". . . these are good bondsmen. . ." "So the women with babes at their breasts and babes in their wombs were brought together and asked, 'Behold, I will give your fathers the Torah. Will you be surety for them that they will observe it?' And they answered, 'Yea.'"

Then God said to Moses, "Go and acquaint the women of Israel with the principles of Judaism, and try with kindly words to persuade them to accept the Torah; but expound the full contents to the men." That women were less able than men to accept the word of God without special approaches to them was accepted as a judicial fact. Yet I would like us to consider why it was proposed to go first to the women. That passage must have puzzled the pious, and again legend enters to fill the empty spaces. Since God had omitted to warn Eve of the forbidden fruit and she tempted Adam, it was thought wiser to let the women hear the commandments first. Then the men would follow their counsel. Furthermore, it was known that women were more scrupulous in their religious observance. But most important of all, God knew it would fall to the women to instruct their children and so God sent his messenger first to them.

The next chapter in the story of the Exodus has to do with the erection of a Tabernacle and the selection of 70 elders to be Moses' helpers in teaching his people the new truths. When the 70 men were appointed, Zipporah, Moses' wife, asked Miriam to explain the great illumination of many lit candles that she observed. Miriam replied, "Blessed are the women who behold with their own eyes how their husbands are raised to dignity." Zipporah retorted, "It would be more

proper to say, 'Woe to the wives of those men who must abstain from all conjugal happiness.'" Zipporah continued, "I judge so from the conduct of thy brother, for ever since he was chosen to reveal Divine revelations, he no longer knows his wife."

Zipporah's answer seems to reveal a woman that steps out of the shadow of legend into the reality of anger. Her reply has the timbre of individuality, it seems to rip through the politeness and gentility of Miriam's comment. Poor Zipporah, to have to counter an innocent remark with sorrow and anger; how many cold, lonely desert nights there must have been! No one ever seemed concerned with Zipporah while Moses was going about his Divine Business.

The legend continues and tells us that Miriam talked to Aaron about Zipporah's lament, and they both agreed that Moses abstained from conjugal pleasures only out of pride. In reality, it was God Himself who had ordered Moses to abstain. It would seem that abstinence was deemed an integral aspect of true holiness; thus true holiness demanded abstinence; and the logical spin-offs, conclusions and innuendoes coupling sex with impiety continue to torment the flesh and mind of men and women in many cultures, down to the present.

God deemed it necessary to punish Miriam and Aaron for slandering Moses; both of them were made leperous. Aaron's disease lasted for only a moment, but Miriam's affliction was ordained to last a week. Moses interceded with God, recounting many of her contributions to her people. But God would not erase her punishment.

You know, I would like to talk to You about that, too. Not to recite Miriam's virtue; You know them better than I. But to point out to You that she "slandered" her brother because she was not told of Your in-

junction and thus, had no *intent* to slander. Moreover, is it not possible that she reacted sharply to Zipporah's unspoken pain at feeling rejected? Aaron was punished for only a moment, but Miriam had to endure the rotting disease for seven days and was sent outside the camp until God took the disease away.

Moreover all, of Israel had to wait in that spot until Miriam recovered, because with her illness, her well had disappeared. What a week that must have been! After a few scant hours, not a drop of water anywhere in the camp! Really, if You called the Israelites a stiff-necked people, it could only be that Someone had taught them to behave that way.

Before we leave this legend, there is one tantalizing sentence in the Bible that I want to add to the picture which gives another motive for the "slandering" of Moses. "And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Cushite woman." Although the polygamy of our founding fathers is well known as a kind of archeological shard, it was widely accepted and practiced in the ancient world. (See and compare the histories of David and Solomon, etc., etc.) Marrying women outside the tribes of Israel was also fully accepted. (See and compare *ibid.*)

But if the legends of Moses' abstinence and this single sentence are brought together, we can better sympathize with the layer of bitterness that Zipporah revealed when she answered Miriam's question on the blessed state of wives whose husbands are raised to dignity. Her answer has all the undercurrent of the discarded wife whose husband has gone on to glory, or the head of the firm. It cries out with authenticity. If we add our guess that at the very time Moses was abstaining from conjugal relations with

Zipporah, he was courting the Cushite woman—well!

In the next segment of the story, Moses chose 12 men, the leaders of their tribes, to spy out the new land that had been promised to them. No sooner had they been appointed to this crucial office than they plotted to submit a false report to dissuade the people from going on to the new land. Again, legend fills in the unanswered questions of the Bible. The motive for this has such a contemporary ring that I blinked when I read it. The new appointees thought that as long as the tribes remained in the wilderness they would retain their positions of leadership, but that their power might be taken from them in the strange, new country of Palestine. Perhaps they sensed that a new situation would call for new leaders. It is a sordid story.

Only two men, Joshua and Caleb, out of the 12, determined to be truthful; the others lied, cheated, deceived and, in final desperation, conspired to organize a *coup d'état* against Moses. Their lying reports fell on frightened and willing-to-accept ears. The scouts concocted stories about a land of giants and a disease that ate its inhabitants. They went so far as to add this to their scenarios, "Woe is ye, my daughter and daughters-in-law, that are doomed to be dishonored by the uncircumcised and be given as a prey to their lusts." The people lamented; the conspirators organized a junta and some even dared to throw stones at the cloud enveloping Moses, which they knew connoted the presence of God.

What turmoil in the encampment after the misleaders had given their reports! Did Miriam go from tent to tent calling the women out, babes in arms, pots in hand, to discuss the reports? Did they meet a little distance from the main encampment so the men would not interrupt them? After a thorough discussion, *the women re-*

used to be misled by the evil reports. How can we learn of this without seeing Miriam at the center of this significant decision? Miriam the steadfast, whose instincts were always on the side of her people. Right on, Miriam! You knew the old leadership was not to be trusted. What superb powers of persuasion it must have taken to convince the other women to take a stand against their fathers and husbands. I can feel Miriam's strong hand and optimism, those same qualities she had exhibited throughout her life.

Because the women had seen through the lies of the self-serving distortions, the legend says they were spared dying in the wilderness. But to the deceivers, "As I live, saith the Lord . . . your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you . . . ye that have murmured against Me; surely ye shall not come into the land."

When the time approached for the Hebrews to leave the desert, Miriam died. Since Aaron and Moses were not allowed to live to see the promised land, as a punishment for their sins, she had to share their fate. But she was the first to die, and it seems damned unfair; she had a smaller portion of glory; no sin is listed that merited her death. Did she have to die by association? With her death, her well disappeared, and the people immediately began to grumble, muttering that Moses had led them about the desert, only to have them and their beasts die of thirst.

At the very end of this epocal story, there is a sharp, ungracious note. As the grumbling swelled and the complainers became unruly, Moses hurried to the sanctuary, both to seek safety from the angry mob and to implore God's mercy for yet another miracle. God appeared at once and said, "Hasten from this place; my children die of thirst and ye have nothing better

We enjoy

our readers to have
good Jewish fun on

Purim

March 15, 1976.

The Editorial Bored
and

Msmangement Committee

to do than to mourn the death of an old woman."

This can perhaps be justified as showing the over-riding imperative for group survival. Nevertheless, I confess I was shocked at the level of unkindness and churlishness You displayed. You might have organized matters just a bit more thoughtfully; You might have understood that Moses might genuinely have wanted to mourn the death of his only sister, and such a sister! Also, You left no time for the people to mourn or eulogize. How unfortunate.

In the Talmud, that fascinating repository of Biblical commentary, human wisdom and folly, the rabbis state that the Jews were released from slavery in Egypt because of the righteous women of that generation. Some of those women have just passed before us; a huge cast of characters, who used their skills and ingenuity to overcome Pharaoh's plans for annihilation, help rescue and nurture the greatest leader of the Jews, and then repeatedly aided their people and were rewarded by being allowed to go on to the land of milk and honey.

How extraordinary that these extraordinary elements in the Exodus story are so little known, so little taught, and nowhere appear in the official telling of the story that celebrates the

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March 10, 1968

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In Memory Of

Our Beloved Brother
and Brother-in-Law

MARTIN YUDEL

March, 1970

Exodus. If we comb the Bible, the Talmud and legend, these women become flesh and blood and brave and righteous, and we begin to understand how profound is our debt to them. Perhaps in time, I might have to remove the word "Surprise" from the

title, "A Surprise of Legends," because these facets of the Jewish people's struggle for liberation and peoplehood, would, at long last become known to us all.

Do I violate any preconceived ideas? Let a hundred scholars contend! ■

INSIDE THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Combatting Israel Boycott

• The American Jewish Congress has undertaken action against 100 US corporations to compel them to end their cooperation with the Arab boycott of Israel. In addition, AJC Dec. 17, filed a suit against Sec. of State Henry A. Kissinger, Sec. of the Treasury William E. Simon, Sec. of Commerce Elliot L. Richardson, Sec. of the Interior Thomas S. Kleppe and Daniel Parker, Administrator of the Agency for International Development. The defendants are charged with violating the Constitutional rights of U.S. Jews by allowing them to be excluded from government-supported programs in Saudi Arabia. Professors Louis Kaplan of the University of Wisconsin and Martin A. Watkins of West Chester State College in Pennsylvania joined AJC as plaintiffs, contending that they were barred from employment in U.S. government-sponsored projects in Saudi Arabia only because they are Jews.

• The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith Jan. 16 hailed the Dec. 16 warning by the Federal Reserve Board to U.S. commercial banks that their distribution of letters of credit containing boycott provisions "may constitute a violation of Federal anti-trust laws or of applicable state anti-boycott laws." This action follows ADL disclosure in March, 1975 of the banking community's complicity in the Arab boycott.

Reacting to pressures generated by U.S. Jewish organizations Pres. Gerald R. Ford Nov. 20 announced anti-boy-

cott measures designed to protect U.S. firms and citizens from economic disadvantage because of boycott requests based on race, religion, sex or national origin. On Nov. 28, then Sec. of Commerce Rogers C. B. Morton announced that his department would no longer disseminate Arab business offers containing anti-Israel boycott provisions.

In January the Department of Justice announced an anti-trust action against the giant engineering and construction firm Bechtel, Inc. of San Francisco for alleged participation in the Arab boycott. Last July, ADL subpoenaed the Arab boycott.

Dr. Nahum Goldmann

Addressing the B'nai B'rith Board of Governors Jan. 17 in Washington, D.C., Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, urged Jewish leadership to reassess its present political methods, which imperil the survival of the world Jewish community by failing to cope with the new political realities emerging in the world. He said that there was a need to establish Jewish contact with Third World nations "that know little about and therefore have no real understanding of Jewish concerns and aspirations." The 80-year-old Dr. Goldmann advocated "efforts by the Jewish community to maintain a dialogue with the Soviets as the possible means for reaccelerating Jewish emigration." He warned that "the Jewish people cannot continue to secure its survival by means which were useful and effective in past generations but have to be

changed to meet a new world situation."

Black-Jewish Coalition

At the Jan. 22 meeting of the national fact finding committee of the ADL in New York, Bayard Rustin, founder of Black Americans to Support Israel Committee (BASIC), stated that a new coalition of Blacks and Jews "is absolutely essential for the well-being of both." With current developments at the United Nations, Rustin said, "Jews ought to realize that they profoundly need friends wherever they can find them." As far as Blacks are concerned, they "... are being tremendously hurt by the recession and now realize that if anything is to happen, there must be coalitions." Blacks, Rustin said, "have a spiritual connection to the Jewish people which is profound and deep." As a "people who love freedom," they saw in the Jewish Bible a "message of freedom" which they incorporated in spirituals. Blacks borrowed both aspects of Judaism—the religion and the experience of the people—as incentives "that we could be free," he declared.

He reiterated his well-known position that lumps preferential treatment with quotas in employment and education as "gimmicks" which cannot "... put the 60% of the black youth between the ages of 18 and 25 who are unemployed to work. . ." The fight really should be "to make the pie bigger, to fight for full employment, to fight for a guaranteed income," as well as for a federal takeover of costs of health and welfare. What should happen until the pie gets bigger he did not say. He repeated his earlier warnings that without remedial programs open enrollment in higher education would "destroy the New York City school system and give blacks a new failure." He asserted that Blacks who needed it never received the remedial

services required for them to succeed in higher education.

Nuclear Arms Race

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Jan. 21, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Inter-religious Director of the American Jewish Committee, warned that world peace has never "been more seriously threatened than by the current spiraling arms race and insane proliferation of nuclear weapons." He declared that "the very survival of the human family depends on a national approach to arms sales, as well as to the intensification of universal disarmament measures."

"Given the absolutely catastrophic nature of nuclear war," he said, "we must ask whether our government and its allies have done enough to restrict their sales of nuclear reactors to unstable countries and to countries of uncertain political persuasion."

Quoting the noted MIT political scientist George Rothjens, Rabbi Tanenbaum warned that "by the end of the century, there will be several thousand reactors around the world, each producing enough material to build a weapon a week." International trade in arms and nuclear installations has made it possible for nations around the world to engage in 60 military conflicts since the end of World War II, Rabbi Tanenbaum asserted, and added: "In each of these conflicts, imported weapons were used almost exclusively, and those arms have brought not only violence and destruction, but death to more than 10 million people." He cited figures on export sales by the world's four largest suppliers of military equipment: \$9.5 billion to 71 countries by the United States in fiscal 1975; \$5.5 billion by the Soviet Union in 1974; \$3 billion to 80 nations by France; \$1.5 billion by Great Britain.

W.S.

REACTIONS TO ALLEN'S "HITLER BOOM" SERIES:

- Enjoy reading *Die Welle* series . . . often wondered about it myself . . . much to ponder.—*Ralph Blumenthal*, reporter, *N. Y. Times*, 11/21/75.
- Everybody's reading *Die Hitlerwelle* series here in our library. It's hard to get the new copy when the magazine arrives. I am learning a lot about both the past and present. Thanks for all of us!—*Gilead Kapen*, The Ramaz School, NYC 12/15.
- Once again we are all in the debt of Charles R. Allen Jr. for his Hitler Boom series . . . I had not been aware that this was going on—frightening! I am referring to the articles henceforth in my own talks and lectures. We applaud both Charles and the magazine . . . *The Rev. Lee H. and Helen Ball*, Ardsley, N. Y., 12/18-23.
- Very illuminating, beautifully written. A powerful, disturbing argument. A brilliant, important piece of work.—*Rabbi Dr. Philip Hiat*, spiritual leader, Mt. Neboh Congregation, N. Y., 12/22.
- Your writings about the *Hitlerwelle* I consider especially important. What you are teaching . . . is that blood can also be swept under the rug. The *Welle* is certainly increasing. The latest example is Albert Speer's *Spandau Diary* . . . According to my studies, human violence is not instinctive but always due to negative factors in the personality or in society . . . psychoanalytic explanations of mass violence are for the most part misleading and, therefore, destructive. "Lust of death," as necrophilia is defined by [Erich] Fromm, cannot explain Auschwitz, Vietnam, Lt. Calley, Attica etc.—*Dr. Fredric Wertham*, Kempton, Pa., a psychoanalyst and writer, whose *A Sign for Cain* is cited in *Die Hitlerwelle* series, 11/18.
- Most interesting. I read the series with great care and instruction.—*Mme. Beate Klarsfeld*, Paris, author of *Wherever They May Be!* about the search for Nazi war criminals, 11/26.
- Your articles on "The Hitler Wave" are timely and illuminating. They should receive the widest circulation.—*Dr. Samuel H. Stein*, chairman, New Rochelle, N. Y. District, Zionist Organization of America, 11/25.
- Series most interesting. The issue of the [Leni] Riefenstahl films being shown [here] had little to do with any sympathy toward Nazis and more with an *insensitivity* to Jewish feelings. . . . We did believe that (1) these films should not be shown in a celebratory context, and (2) the City and State ought not to sponsor the showings. In the end, we won the first battle and lost the second.—*Stuart Lewengrub*, Director, Southern Regional Office, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Atlanta, Ga. 11/25.
- I have been reading the *Hitlerwelle* series with a great deal of interest and approbation . . . but I part company with [Allen] on the subject of Tucholsky. When Allen uses phrases like "erratic and obviously self-centered," "irresponsible hyperbole" . . . one wonders whether he isn't uncritically accepting Maltitz' and Laqueur's warped views after all.—*Dr. Harry Zohn*, Brandeis University, author of *The Tucholsky Reader*, 12/17.

BOOK REVIEWS



On Growing Older

Aging: An Album of People Growing Old. by Shura Saul. John Wiley Sons, N.Y., 1974. 174 pages, \$8.95.

WHO of us has not been the victim of inherited myths about the aging? The young as well as the old themselves. Nor are doctors, psychiatrists and social workers immune. Written as a doctoral thesis and a text for teachers, students and the helping professions, this book succeeds in its aim: to expose and rebut those myths and stereotypes that immobilize us and keep us from experiencing the reality of an aging person.

In spelling out these myths, Shura Saul proves that there is no universal accepted theory of aging; that there are as many different patterns of aging as there are individual life styles; that pain need not accompany aging; that brain damage and senility are not inevitable; and that the old too can respond to therapy and change.

Finally she punctures two opposing myths of old age: the tranquil "Golden

By **ESTHER P. SPITZER**

Years" and the second childhood dependency. Thus, her balanced view helps us see the old person not as a case in a separate category, but as a living individual, with the same needs as the young—to grow and lead a creative life.

Thus she makes us care. This is the main thing: to care enough to make us want to change the quality of the current, impersonal services to the aging, many of whom have become so invisible, one must reach out to find them.

The author divides her book into three parts. While each can be enjoyed separately, Part I, called "Picture Frames," makes the most valuable contribution to the field. It provides a solid theoretical and philosophical foundation, based on her 20 years of experience, mostly with Jewish homes for the aged. The author reveals her scholarship and research, buttressed by an extensive up-to-date bibliography. In expounding her main premises, Dr. Saul lists some of the myths under biological, psychological and psychiatric categories. Because families and society are unprepared for this growing population, too sudden interruptions in life-style often lead to an emotional identity crisis.

Part II, "An Album of Vignettes," consists of stories, poems and sketches culled by the author and her family, by

ESTHER P. SPITZER, a New York psychotherapist, last appeared here in May, 1972. She has published a short story in *Reconstructionist*, has appeared in several psychological journals and has contributed a chapter to *Techniques for Behavior Change*, a textbook.

students, young people or professionals. They cover a wide range of subjects: conflicts on the death of a spouse, on decisions to enter a home, experiences in a senior citizen group, exchange of letters, tape recordings of the therapy sessions, and remarriage of widowed old people. Interspersed are the author's original poems that reflect her warmth and dedication to the people she serves.

While these vignettes lack literary style or dramatic suspense, they have an immense advantage over the usual dry case-history approach. An old person's verbal expression of his feelings about his life situation enables the reader to "feel and experience without experiencing it." Thus, by Susanne Langer's definition, these vignettes may be considered miniature works of art.

Read out of context, they seem either morbid and depressing, or too sentimental and saccharine, especially since they are about people of the lower and middle working class, many of ethnic minority background.

However, Part III, "Background Discussion," compensates for this negative response by using the stories as springboards for discussion. In this way, Dr. Saul integrates the first two parts of the book into an organic whole.

Part III deals with the practical problems of teaching, such as how to give services with a dignity that respects the integrity of the old person. The value of involving a high school or college student in these discussions can hardly be overestimated. Perhaps for the first time, he is encouraged to examine his own feelings towards a grandparent, an aging relative or neighbor. It gives a needed balance to the students' other studies, to cultivate these feelings. The arts and the humanities often afford him the only

FROM ELSINORE, CALIF.

we learn that at the annual Jewish Currents Conference Jan. 11, the guest speaker was Dr. I. Ziferstein, professor of psychiatry at U.C.L.A. The chairman, Meyer Farber, reports that Dr. Ziferstein gave "a brilliant and clear analysis" of his subject, "Crime and Punishment." In response to Mr. Farber's appeal for funds, those present responded warmly with \$132.50, including Dr. Ziferstein's lecture fee, which he generously contributed. Sylvia Orman, press secretary, also obtained five renewals. To our Elsinore friends, the Management Committee extends its thanks and congratulations.

chance to develop and cultivate his feeling side.

At first glance, a book such as this may turn the reader off for two reasons: it touches an extremely sensitive area of our lives; and its form is that of a text book. But since you and I will surely grow old (so will our parents), and since we unwittingly pick up and identify with the myths of our age, it is good and right to read it. It becomes our responsibility to divest ourselves of fears and distortions that only compound the problem of aging. Knowledge of scientific facts helps clear the air so we can breathe more easily, and with hope.

In conclusion, this book fulfills a crying need of our times. For we live in an age of denial, first of death, then of aging. In view of the understandable resistance and apathy towards such a book, the author is to be doubly admired for her courage as well as for her competence. Her unpretentious style and clear, convincing exposition of facts make this a timely, enjoyable book.

letters



FROM READERS

Opinions expressed in letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Letters will not be published unless accompanied by the name and address of the writer. Names will be withheld from publication on request.—Ed.

Thoughtful Parents

For our daughter's 20th birthday, May 23, we decided to give her her own subscription to your wonderful magazine. We have been lending her our copies but they are too important to us to even lend out.

CAROLE KAPLAN

Los Angeles, May 3, 1975

With Love

This is all I can send (\$6) for a year's subscription. I am on "Disability" and cannot do more.

I love the magazine.

MRS. S. G. SEEMAN

Venice, Calif., May 15

Independent at Last

Please enter a new subscription for me. It's time I stopped mooching from my father, Max.

BOB ROSENFELD

Wantagh, N.Y., May 21

For Irene Paull

Today, JEWISH CURRENTS arrived in the mail, and with it Irene Paull's piece, "My Winter Lover." For many years I have admired and savored

her lovely and haunting style, grace and perspectives.

I have been moved by Gorky (*One Autumn Night*) and by *Seeds of Tomorrow* and the little-known pieces of Ravel and Schoenberg as I have by Irene Paull's power and humanity, for which I wanted to convey my profound appreciation and love. *L'chaim!*

CHARLES R. ALLEN JR.

New York, June 10

Your June issue is excellent—as usual—but I especially liked Irene Paull's "My Winter Lover."

If it is still in existence—how about recommending the story for the O. Henry prize?

Keep up the good work.

G. PERMAN

San Francisco, June 16

From a Soviet Citizen

Regarding the Soviet denial (your June issue, p. 47) of the Passover incident in the Moscow Central Synagogue, I have the following passage in a letter from there:

"Now there's that idiotic thing at the synagogue. You already know that I am even somewhat old-fashioned: a vogue has arisen among the intelligentsia (induced quite naturally, by the vacuum that has arisen)

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Reseda, Calif., Jan. 13

JACK and MARY YANOW

for some kind of God-seeking. Many are being baptized, others transferring to various faiths—strictly speaking, not transferring, of course, as the entire intelligentsia has long since become atheist. . . . They declare themselves Catholics or Buddhists or whatever. But to me religion is contraindicated, although it would be warmer to live on this earth with it for company.

"So. We are told that on Saturday, the first day of the Jewish Passover, the militia entered the prayer hall and prohibited the services. Why? Toward what end? I can't understand that and I cannot agree with it. Why do such absurd things have to be done?"

"I don't know. Of course, I understand perfectly that there are many injustices in other countries as well, one doesn't even have to talk about that! But when one encounters displays of such dumbness, such terrible ill will, such a destructively absurd use of power—one wants to vomit!"

"The churches are now jammed to bursting, the number who baptize their children and have church weddings has increased enormously, and they are no longer fighting this by naked prohibitions and dispersal. But that one little prayer house in Moscow is subjected on each holiday to organized humiliation."

My translation from Russian. The letter did not come by mail, of course.

WILLIAM MANDELL

Berkeley, Calif., June 12

[His latest book is *Soviet Women*, Anchor, N.Y., \$3.50 paperback.—Ed.]

In Praise of Eddie Kuntz

The copy of the June issue which came to the house has comments on Eddie Kuntz in "The Editor's Diary" and I'm glad he said it. Somebody had to. I knew him well in the ALP.

EVELYN HARAP

Belmont, Vt., June 12

I was very glad to read the tribute to Edward Kuntz in "The Editor's Diary" in June. I knew Edward Kuntz from the Furniture Workers from the early thirties. He took care of us in the courts and all over. He handled our cases very skilfully. He was a very good and a very honest man. He never asked for any money. He received little if any money. He was only interested in getting justice for the working people.

MAX NOON

Brooklyn, June 20

Morris U. Schappes' criticism of Morton Sobell's views of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg's attorneys are ones in which I wish to concur. During an era when the governmental powers repress, even "bourgeoise law" does not count, as a renowned attorney told me who had observed the court proceedings.

As one of the "first eight" public school teachers fired during this infamous period, I refer you to an article by Schappes, "Free Education on Trial" in the Dec., 1950 issue of *Jewish Life*. There he vividly describes the splendid defense put up by my attorneys, the magnificent sup-

port of the Harlem community, colleagues, supervisors, etc. It was to no avail, for all the militant teachers had to go! And the others were terrified.

And as a reminder, even though the world literally spoke for the doomed couple (the Pope intervened for clemency three times), no attorney could have saved them during the era of political wasps and boa constrictors.

ALICE CITRON

Edgemere, N.Y., July 7

CORRECTION

Feb. issue, p. 20, col. 1, line 5: read: "If we accept the principle that we *cannot* speak of Fascism without mentioning both capitalism and communism." Fest writes, "the historical links to both were snapped (in 1933)."

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IRVING ROSENBLATT

(July 15, 1898-May 5, 1975)

FROM the estate of Irving Rosenblatt, we received on Dec. 23, 1975 a bequest of \$1,500, transmitted with the good wishes of the bereaved widow, Sadie Rosenblatt. Other beneficiaries include the *Morgen Freiheit*, the Yiddisher Kultur Farband (YKUF), the Day Nursery in Tel Aviv sponsored by the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's Clubs (of which Sadie Rosenblatt is a member), the Reuben Brainin Clinic in Israel and the Salk Clinic for Cancer Research in La Jolla, Calif.

Born in Bialystok, then part of Poland, Irving Rosenblatt came to this country in 1913 at 15. After a stint in the post office on the night shift, he became an outdoor house painter. For schooling he went to the Eron Preparatory School. Impressed by a brief story of his life, Mrs. Eron submitted it to *Scribner's Magazine*, which published it and paid him \$50. Hoping to become a writer, he quit house-painting, but a pile of rejection slips drove him back to this work. In our April, 1975 issue, we published an anecdote of his, "The Uninvited Guests."

All honor to his memory!

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we wish her many years of good
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L. A. Jewish Currents Committee
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FROM NEW HAVEN AND HARTFORD

• The local Jewish Currents Forum brought out over 50 people to Dwight Hall Feb. 1 to hear Charles R. Allen Jr. speak on "The Hitler Boom in Literature, the New Obsession with Nazi Germany." Presiding was Irving Rosenthal of the Political Science department of South Central Connecticut College. The questions and discussion were lively.

• The Jewish Cultural Club of Hartford, through its secretary, Saul (Zalman) Sosland, sent in \$200 Jan. 30 in tribute to our Jan. Jewish Youth issue, which they found "most interesting . . . exciting, it makes you feel that you are not alone." Hear, hear!

TO MINNIE FRANKEL

dedicated Committee member
and to her Mishpoha
our heartiest Mazel Tov on the
marriage of her grand-daughter

Gale to Kim Turret

L. A. Jewish Currents Committee
Bernard Fields, Chairman

In Memory Of **ARCHIE COLEMAN**

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Billie's mother
Minnie Oshinsky
on the 35th year of her death

**JEWISH CURRENTS
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Subject: "Jews and the American Revolution"

Eligible: Any one regularly enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student in an accredited college or university in the USA.

Length: 2,500-3,000 words

Deadline for papers to be received: April 1.

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Second—\$75

The Prize money is being advanced by Mr. Joseph Shachnow of Los Angeles

Judges: The Editorial Board of Jewish Currents

Awards will be presented at the Jewish Currents Annual Dinner, May 16, 1976

The Editorial Board reserves the right to publish the prize essays. Essays should be submitted with a pen-name; the author's real name should be in a separate sealed envelope enclosed with the essay. The decision of the judges will be final.

In Loving Memory Of
my husband and our Dad
ALBERT WEISSMAN
(1913-1972)

You are always in our hearts.
*Sheila and the Children,
Mark, Judy and Mindy*
Compton, Calif.

In Memory Of Paul Robeson

who gave so much of himself
and through his voice
gave so much joy to others

Sarah Cashman
Long Beach, Calif.

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• **For 4 new subs**

—Autographed copy of Schappes' edition of *The Prose and Poetry of Emma Lazarus* (hard cover).

• **For 3 new subs**

—autographed copy of Schappes' edition of *Emma Lazarus*, paperback.

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AROUND THE WORLD

AT HOME

Anti-Semitism: *Christian Vanguard*, "official publication of the New Christian Crusade Church," is a 12-page tabloid published in Metairie, La. Its Issue #47, Nov., 1975, has a front-page story, headlined in red, "Beauty and the Beast," raking up in an anti-Semitic way the Leo Frank Case that led to the lynching of Leo Frank in 1915. One of the photographs accompanying the article shows Frank hanging from a tree, with the easily identifiable faces of eight of the lynchers—who were of course never prosecuted. Another article, "Famous Men on the Jews," revives the Benjamin Franklin forgery that we exposed in our June, 1973 issue. A large ad, including a photograph of Karl Marx, offers the "Original Edition of the 'Protocols' of Zion," by Victor E. Marsden, available from Sons of Liberty in Metairie, La. An article, "The High Price of 'Brotherhood,'" blames the Jews for the black people's movement for equality. There are plugs and ads for the Crusaders in San Diego, Calif., for a minister who is a contributing editor of *Christian Vanguard* and has daily week-day radio programs in San Diego and Los Angeles, another minister who broadcasts on Sundays in Marietta, Ga., the city in which Leo Frank was lynched, and other anti-Semitic, anti-black, anti-communist groups in Union, N.J., Twin Peaks, Calif., Ephrata, Pa., Orange, Mass., Walkill and Walden, N.Y., Trenton, N.J., Morrisville, Pa., Tifton, Ga. and NYC. Named as contributing editors of this hatesheet are four ministers and a Judge Raymond I. Drake. *Christian Vanguard* also has its cultural "Heroes of the White Race." The one saluted in this issue is Richard Strauss (1864-1949). While "the contrived and ugly dissonance of a Schoenberg or of a Bernstein illustrates the rootless bedlam of the cosmopolitan, reflecting the dead and corrupting hand of the soulless, international Jew," Strauss, when Hitler came to power in 1933, "led the movement to restore to German control the national culture . . . and gave his full support to the removal of Jews from sensitive musical positions. . . ."

From Farmingdale, N.Y. Dec. 3 several hundred cards were mailed to Jews in the New York Metropolitan Area bearing swastikas and the slogans, "Hitler Was Right" and "We Are Back." Similar cards, obtained from the National Socialist White People's Party of Arlington, Va. have been mailed from Lexington, Ky. and Fairfax, Va. . . . Jan. 9 in Albany, N.Y., State Supreme Court Judge George L. Cobb ruled that the Independent Northern Klans, Inc. did not have to reveal its membership list to Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz because the members take a pledge, not an oath. . . . In the *N.Y. Post* Nov. 28, 1975, the syndicated columnist Harriet Van Horne commented on the "stories of [J. Edgar] Hoover's psychopathic prejudices against blacks, Jews and intellectuals. . . . Hoover is now emerging as perhaps the meanest scoundrel, the slickest liar of them all." Hoover is the "ghosted" author of the best-seller, *Masters of Deceit*.

Nixon's name was removed from a high- way Jan. 14 by the California State Transportation Committee. . . . Jan. 9, on his 63rd birthday, Nixon's clown rabbi, Baruch Korff, reported Nixon "quite confident" of "a change in the assessment of the Nixon Administration in view of all the revelations" about the Kennedy Administration. Nov. 4, 1975 Rabbi Korff foresaw a "day of atonement" for the nation "to atone for its sins against Richard Nixon and his Administration." . . . Jan. 10 Nixon told Pres. Gerald R. Ford that he had postponed his projected TV interview and book until after the 1976 elections; for the book he has received a \$175,000 advance. Nixon's decision, however, "did not mean that he would forego an opportunity to play a behind-the-scenes role." A confidant of Nixon, the unindicted co-conspirator in the Watergate conspiracy, said "He is on the telephone daily talking to friends in Congress, governors and regional political leaders. . . ." (*N.Y. Times*, Jan. 11). . . . Nixon's designee, Pres. Ford, called him Jan. 9 to wish Nixon a "happy birthday."

ABROAD

England: The Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Immanuel Jakobovits, arrived in Moscow Dec. 15 for a nine-day visit at the invitation of Mikhail Tandetnik, head of the Moscow Congregation. On arrival, Dr. Jakobovits stated that the Soviet people had shared with the Jewish people "devastation and terrible sacrifices under the Nazi tyranny and we will never forget the debt we owe to Soviet heroism for our liberation from the threat of extinction." Dec. 16 he met with Viktor Titov, deputy chairman of the Soviet Council for Religious Affairs, where he raised the question of "cultural, religious and communal needs of the majority [of Jews] who will be remaining in the Soviet Union. . . . we put forward . . . practical suggestions, including assistance by our own community in the field of exchange programs, the training of rabbinical and religious officials and the provision of literature. We also pressed for the only official Jewish journal, *Sovietish Heimland*, to be published in Russian as well as Yiddish. . . . We also argued that Hebrew be accepted as an appropriate language for study. . . ." He also met with Col. Oshinkov, deputy head of Ovir (registration and visa office) and discussed emigration problems and procedures. After a visit to Leningrad, Dr. Jakobovits Dec. 20 addressed a crowded synagogue in Moscow in Yiddish. Dec. 21 he attended one of the weekly scientific seminars conducted by Jewish scientists who have lost their posts after applying to emigrate; over 40 scientists crowded a small flat. Returning to London, Dr. Jakobovits said, "The visit . . . gave me an entirely new perspective of the plight of the Jews in the USSR. . . . I found the situation of Soviet Jewry to be more complex and diversified than is commonly appreciated abroad and also much more urgent if assimilation is not to make further terrible inroads . . . our response requires constant re-appraisal in the light of existing conditions and the exploration of new avenues of approach . . . it would be as difficult to comprehend Soviet policies and attitudes without taking into account the colossal sufferings of the Russians themselves during the German invasion as it would be to understand Israeli and Jewish attitudes without reference to the Holocaust. The problem cannot be measured and gauged in purely Western terms. . . ." He added that if the doors of the USSR were completely open to emigration at most only about 500,000 Jews would go; some believed only 100,000 would leave; but the bulk of Soviet Jewry would remain.

USSR: In Moscow late in 1975 was published a collection of 114 poems in Yiddish by Dora Haikina, *Fun Alle Meine Vegn* (From All My Paths) in 1,400 copies, 178 pages, paperback. Born Oct. 8, 1963, Haikina had her first book of poems issued in Kiev in 1938, *Lieder* (Songs). Her second collection, *Lieder un Balades* (Songs and Ballads), was already printed in Lvov but was burned by the Nazis during the occupation. Her present volume also appeared in Ukrainian translation in Odessa in 3,000 copies, several months before the Yiddish book. The Ukrainian edition contains her long poem, "Song About Dr. [Waldemar] Haikine" (1860-1930), famous Odessa Jewish bacteriologist who developed the cholera anti-vaccine, not included in the Yiddish volume. . . . From the Information Department of the Soviet Embassy in Washington we received Jan. 22 an article issued by the Novosti Press Agency in Moscow by one Ruvim Groyer, "The October Revolution and the 'Jewish Question.'" To refute what he calls "the Zionist myth of Russian anti-Semitism," Groyer points out that, while Jews are less than one percent of the Soviet population, they "constitute 6.1% of the total scientific personnel and 3.4% of medical personnel. . . . In the 1974-75 academic year there were 350 Jewish students for every 10,000 of the Jewish population . . . considerably more than among other nationalities of the USSR. . . . For heroism and courage in the defense of the Motherland, for valiant labor, and successes in political, economic, scientific and cultural activity, 339,000 Soviet Jews have been awarded orders and medals." It is noteworthy that the high percentage of Jewish students going to college is no sign that anti-Semitism has been wiped out, since in the USA over 75% of all Jewish youth of college age go to college, while anti-Semitism is well-known to be present in U.S. life. . . . Jan. 21 it was reported that, according to Rabbi Arthur Schneier of New York, president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, an agreement had been reached in Moscow with Viktor Titov, deputy chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, that five Soviet Jews were to be sent to the USA to study at Yeshiva University, with the foundation bearing the cost of some \$10,000 for each student to cover tuition, fees and living expenses. . . . Jan. 21 in Moscow, the mathematician Alexander Lunts, 52, denied emigration for three years presumably for "state security" reasons, learned he would get a visa for himself, his wife and 18-year-old son to go to Israel. M.U.S.

Where Were You In 1946?

DEAR READER: Do you remember that year 1946, the year our magazine was born 30 years ago? What a time it was! Hitler had been crushed but the Holocaust almost overshadowed that great victory. Then came the Cold war. The birth of Israel. McCarthyism. The Khrushchev report. The June, 1967 War. Watergate. Victories. Defeats. Zigzags. And through it all we on the magazine, and you as readers if you were with us then, tried to understand, interpreted, made mistakes, recovered, pushed on to greater clarity and breadth—for 30 years, half a lifetime as lifetimes go. How many magazines, general, or progressive, or Jewish, went under in those 30 years! But we are here, because you and your support have been with us all this time. We love you for it.

But we dealt not only with issues, but also with people, events, values. We encouraged writers to express their complex American-Jewish-progressive identity in poems and fiction that have not been forgotten. Two years ago at New York University a Master's thesis was accepted that intensively surveyed only our first 12 years as a publication, when we were still called *Jewish Life*. This young graduate student, Edward S. Goldstein, although often critical of our positions, came away from his study of our pages with a respect he expressed in his title, "A Legacy Nonetheless: A History of *Jewish Life Magazine*, 1946-1957." In his closing pages, he writes: "When we look dispassionately beyond its politics, we see that *Jewish Life*, in its particular creative manner, joined as did others in experiencing Jewish life and dreaming Jewish dreams . . . much of *Jewish Life's* intellectual legacy is valuable as a bona fide contribution to Jewish culture and intellectual history. . . . The magazine's journalistic example in promoting Jewish-black understanding ought to be of obvious relevance today. . . ." So—we and you, have reported history, reflected history, and made history. Are you ready for the next 30? for the next year?

We are—if you continue to sustain us. For 1976, we need to raise \$50,000. In 1975, our Fund Drive netted \$42,199, and our new sub drive 399. This came from donations, bequests, Life Subscriptions (at \$200), one Angel (\$534), one Archangel (\$2,000), and proceeds from our Dinner, Town Hall Affair, and so on.

Can you do better than last year? We know it's hard for you—and it's hard for us. (Incidentally, the contributions you sent in earmarked for our Distress Fund have paid for the renewals of many a sub of an unemployed reader who otherwise would have had to give up the magazine.) Like us, you want our 30th year to be a banner year in terms of expanding our readership and influence. Will you pay for it? Can you strain and make it a \$30 contribution? You know your resources—and our need. Relate the two—and give. And ask your friends to give (and to subscribe). All we can do is wait—confident that you will be with us.

Sincerely yours,
Morris U. Schappes, *Editor*

Jewish Currents, 22 E. 17 St., New York, N.Y. 10003