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# JEWISH AFFAIRS

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Ethel and Julius Rosenberg

## IN THIS ISSUE

### The Rosenberg Case Reopened

Editorial

### Zionism and Racism

Victoria Missick

### Democratic Advances in Egypt and Syria

Danny Spector

### Egypt in the Fight for Mid-East Peace

Tom Foley

**HYMAN LUMER: THE CURRENT SITUATION  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

JEWISH AFFAIRS

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May-June, 1974

Editor: Hyman Lumer

Editorial Committee: David Fried, Jack Kling, Alex Kolkin

CONTENTS

Editorials

<u>The Rosenberg Case Reopened</u>	1
Hyman Lumer, <u>The Current Situation in the Middle East</u>	3
Victoria Missick, <u>Zionism and Racism</u>	8
Danny Spector, <u>Democratic Advances in Egypt and Syria</u>	13
Tom Foley, <u>Egypt's Role in the Fight for Mid-East Peace</u>	18
Sol Flapan, <u>An Interview with Shmuel Tenenblatt</u>	20

Communications

A. E. G., <u>What is "Jewish Culture"?</u>	26
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<u>Events and Views</u>	28
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## Editorial

# The Rosenberg Case Reopened

On June 19, 1953 one of the most monstrous of frameups in the history of this country was perpetrated--the murders of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. In the 21 years which have elapsed since then, its perpetrators had hoped that their crime would be laid to rest, that by now it would have been forgotten. But the Rosenberg case would not die; it has remained on the minds and consciences of millions of people here and abroad. So much has this been so that as late as 1973 Louis Nizer, a prominent--and reactionary--trial lawyer, was impelled to produce a book (The Implosion Conspiracy) in which he purports to show that on the basis of the evidence presented the Rosenbergs were guilty.

But to no avail. A new upsurge of interest in the Rosenberg case has developed, stimulated by the appearance on the scene of the Rosenbergs' sons, Michael and Robert Meeropol, who have undertaken a campaign to vindicate their martyred parents. A Committee to Reopen the Rosenberg Case has been established, with headquarters in New York. The campaign was kicked off with a mass meeting in Carnegie Hall, which dramatically demonstrated how widespread is the interest in the case. Not only was the meeting sold out well in advance but, according to its sponsors, the hall could have been filled twice over. And we may be sure that as the campaign gathers momentum the interest will mount.

The Rosenberg trial took place in the very depths of the period of the cold war and McCarthyism. It was this setting which made it possible to put over such a crude frameup and, in the face of massive worldwide appeals to spare the Rosenbergs' lives, including a plea from the Pope, to go through with their executions. Today, upon re-examining the record of the trial, one is shocked anew at how crude a frameup it actually was.

A reminder of the shabby character of a central aspect of the government's case, the testimony of one Harry Gold, is presented by Allen G. Schwartz in an op-ed article in the New York Times (June 19, 1974). Gold, whom the prosecutor called the "necessary link" in the government's case, had testified four months earlier in an espionage case against Abraham Brothman, a former employer of Gold. Schwartz continues:

At that trial it was disclosed that Mr. Gold, over a period of years, had told numerous persons what were purported to be elaborate details of his personal life--that he had married and had had children, that following his divorce he would travel to Philadelphia to watch his children play but that

he could not bring himself to speak to them. He had told people that he had a brother who died in the war.

Mr. Gold lived in a world of fantasy: He had never married, had no children, had never travelled to Philadelphia to watch children play, had no brother who died in the war.

More important, the judge and the prosecutors at the Brothman trial were the same judge and the same prosecutors in the Rosenberg case. Neither saw fit to bring the fact of Gold's appearance or testimony in the Brothman trial to the attention of the defense counsel for the Rosenbergs....

And the prosecution on summation argued that Mr. Gold, who was already under a thirty-year sentence for espionage, was a witness upon whose credibility the jury should rely.

Let us repeat: Gold was not just a government witness; he was a key government witness. And this illustration of the bizarre character of the prosecution can be multiplied a hundred times over.

The facts behind the Rosenberg prosecution, which have been almost entirely concealed from public view and today lie buried away in the FBI files, must be brought into the open. This is necessary not only to demonstrate the innocence of the Rosenbergs, but also to lay bare the anatomy of frameups in general, which have by no means ended with that of the Rosenbergs.

Accordingly the Meeropols have demanded access to the FBI files. But as might be expected, they have been turned down and are taking the matter to the courts. It is of the utmost importance that these files be opened up, not only to vindicate the Rosenbergs but also for the benefit of the victims of Attica, Wounded Knee and a host of other current frameup attempts. To compel their opening will take more than a court proceeding. It will require mass pressure on the government, a mass campaign of the greatest possible breadth.

The Committee to Reopen the Rosenberg Case should receive all possible support, and actions in support of the campaign should be organized in all parts of the country. The address of the Committee is 156 Fifth Avenue, Room 505, New York, N.Y. 10010.

The Rosenbergs can be vindicated. Their innocence can be proven. To do so will mark a most significant advance in the whole struggle against intimidation, repression and frameup, and in defense of basic democratic rights.

\* \* \*

## The Current Situation in the Middle East

By Hyman Lumer

(Note: This article and the three which follow it are based on papers presented at a Forum held in New York on Friday, June 7, by the Committee for a Just Peace in the Middle East.)

The October war has had a shattering effect on the status quo in the Middle East. It has laid bare the utter bankruptcy of the Israeli government policy, based on the racist concept of Arab inferiority, on a belief in eternal Israeli military supremacy, and on annexation of Arab territories as a means of providing secure borders. Within Israel it has created a crisis of unprecedented proportions. Masses of Israelis who had previously accepted blindly these policies of the Israeli ruling circles now question and reject them as illusory and as leading only to catastrophe. More, the very precepts of Zionism, in which these policies are rooted, are being increasingly placed in question. This mood has been expressed in growing numbers of demonstrations and other actions calling for a change in the government, protesting against skyrocketing prices, and so on. The Israeli people are becoming a potent force for a change of government policy and for achievement of a durable peace in the Middle East.

At the same time, the prospects for peace have been vastly enhanced by the acceptance by both sides of the UN cease-fire resolution of October 22, 1973 and by the achievement since then of a separation of troops both at the Suez Canal and in the Golan Heights. These are developments whose importance must not be minimized. They have cleared the way for negotiations based on implementation of Resolution 242--the very thing for which we have been fighting these past several years. Yet it must be recognized that these are only preliminaries, that the real battles lie ahead and that they will not be easily resolved.

A just and lasting peace is possible only on the basis of 1) withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and 2) assurance of the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including the right of self-determination. These are questions of basic principle and no partial solutions will do, as the Arab states have repeatedly made clear. The conquered territories do not belong to Israel and the Arab states have every right to demand their return. And further, peace is impossible without recognition of the national rights of all states and peoples, including both the Israeli and the Palestinian Arab peoples.

The chief roadblock to a peaceful solution has been the refusal of the Israeli government to accept these principles. The policies of the Meir regime have been based on a step-by-step annexation of the occupied territories (or creeping annexation, as it is called in Israel). They have been based also on the flat rejection of the right of the Palestinian Arabs to establish an independent

state and on attempting to dictate to them that they must subject themselves to the rule of Jordan's King Hussein.

The Meir clique, it is clear, learned nothing from the October war. The platform of the Labor Party in the December 31 elections clung to the old policies. It placed primary reliance for Israel's security on armed strength. It called for continued establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. And it flatly opposed the creation of an independent Palestinian Arab state. The result of the elections was to weaken materially the dominant position of the Labor Alignment. Golda Meir was able to patch together a shaky majority coalition, but the popular opposition and the opposition within the Labor Party itself, centering around demands for the resignation of Dayan, forced her own resignation and the setting up of a new government headed by Yitzhak Rabin.

This, too, is a significant development. Absent from the new cabinet are such diehard figures as Meir, Dayan and Eban. Former Finance Minister Sapir also declined reappointment. For the first time since the birth of the State of Israel, the government is not dominated by the older Zionist generation stemming from Eastern Europe. The new government can be expected to display a greater flexibility in the peace negotiations.

However, the extent of the change should not be overestimated. Fourteen of the 19 former cabinet members remain, among them Israel Galili, author of the notorious Galili Plan for annexation of the occupied territories. And Shimon Peres, who replaces Dayan as defense minister, is not noted for "dovishness." Furthermore, there is no basic departure from the Labor Party platform, and Rabin has stated he would not negotiate with representatives of the Palestinian Arab guerrilla forces, although he did say that he would negotiate with representatives of "moderate elements" (who remain unidentified).

In addition, the coalition set up by the Rabin government, with a bare majority of one vote in the Knesset is extremely shaky, especially in view of the intense annexationist pressures from the Right-wing Likud coalition and the National Religious Party. Nevertheless, its coming into being is a consequence of the growing mass pressures of the Israeli people, and continued mass pressure can compel it to shift its policies further in the direction required for the attainment of peace.

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The prospect of opening the Geneva peace negotiations also brings the Palestinian Arab question into the center of the stage. In this connection it is important to recognize the key role of the Palestine Liberation Organization, a coalition of a number of guerrilla organizations of which by far the largest is Al Fatah, headed by Yassir Arafat, who is also head of the PLO itself. The PLO of today is a far cry from that of some years ago. The leading organizations within it abandoned many adventurist ideas and their reliance solely on armed struggle. And while the PLO has not yet officially repudiated its call for a unitary Palestinian state into which the State of Israel would be absorbed, it is clear that the

consensus has shifted in the direction of the demand for a Palestinian Arab state consisting principally of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, coupled with the right of the refugees to return to their homeland.

This is reflected in the recent meeting in Cairo of the Palestine National Council, a body consisting of delegates from the component organizations of the PLO. The Conference adopted a proposal by the executive committee for participation in the Geneva negotiations if the agenda is changed to include the question of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arabs. Such willingness to participate in negotiations with Israel whose basis is implementation of Resolution 242, means acceptance of the existence of Israel as a state--an important departure from earlier positions.

The PLO has become in fact the accepted spokesman for the Palestinian Arab liberation movement. It has been recognized by the Arab League, the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, and other international gatherings, and by many individual states as the sole representative of this movement. In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip a Palestine National Front has recently been organized, which represents the overwhelming majority of the people in these areas, and which is affiliated with the PLO.

The PLO, therefore, is not a "gang of terrorists," as some wrongly maintain, but a responsible organization conducting a struggle on all fronts for Palestinian liberation. To be sure, there are many disagreements and contradictions in its ranks, as well as hangovers from the past, and there are some extremist elements which oppose negotiations, call for reliance solely on armed struggle and espouse individual acts of terror as a means of struggle.

We cannot, of course, condone acts of individual terror directed against innocent civilians, and especially against school children. Such acts only do damage to the very cause in whose name they are committed, and they must be unequivocally condemned, wherever the responsibility for them may lie. And such actions have in fact been repudiated by the Communist Parties of Israel and the Arab states, and by Arafat and other PLO spokesmen. Moreover, there is good reason to suspect that these have in more than one instance been provocations instigated by Israeli government circles in collusion with agencies of U.S. imperialism to discredit the liberation movement and to obstruct the achievement of a just peace.

At the same time, we must condemn even more strongly the so-called "retaliations" of the Israeli government, which carries out large-scale bombings of Lebanese villages with widespread destruction of property and the death and injury of considerable numbers of civilians, including women and children. These are not acts of isolated groups committed in the context of a struggle for liberation, but official acts of the Israeli government, whose real purpose is to destroy the Palestinian Arab liberation movement as a whole and to foster the aggressive plans of the Israeli ruling circles.

The attempt to brand the PLO leaders as "terrorists" serves this purpose. But a durable peace cannot be achieved without assuring the national rights of

the Palestinian Arabs, and this demands negotiations with their genuine spokesmen--the PLO and its leader, Arafat--and not with Quislings in the occupied territories who parade as "moderates" or with King Hussein.

Of key importance for the peace negotiations are the roles of the United States and the Soviet Union. The two governments are co-chairing the negotiations and will have much to do with their outcome.

In the recent developments Kissinger has emerged in the eyes of many as a worker of miracles, and it is widely proclaimed that the U.S. has greatly enhanced its influence in the Middle East at the expense of the Soviet Union. Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko is pictured as trying to "squeeze into the act" in order to rescue some small degree of prestige for the Soviet Union. But this is a false picture.

First of all, it must be understood that Kissinger's role is to advance the interests of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, which center on the interests of the oil monopolies. The U.S. policy has been, in Nixon's words, one of "maintaining the balance of power," by which is meant maintaining Israeli military superiority. This policy has not been abandoned. But the new balance of forces in the Middle East, including the strengthened position of the oil-producing countries, has led to a tactical shift.

Kissinger's role has become one of pressing the Israeli government into offering some substantial concessions and then peddling these to the Arab leaders, particularly to Sadat, in return for substantial concessions on their part--in short, to maneuver for some sort of partial solution. It is not Kissinger who will be the agent of full implementation of Resolution 242 or justice for the Palestinian Arabs. The achievement of these goals will require greatly increased mass pressure from the people of this country for a more basic change in U.S. policy.

Above all, Kissinger will be confronted with the pressures exerted by the Soviet Union. It is not true, as is being trumpeted by the communications media here, that the "Kissinger magic" has diminished the role of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. Indeed, as U.S. News and World Report states, in the case of the Syrian-Israeli disengagement, "observers consider it extremely doubtful if he [Kissinger] could have succeeded without the cooperation of the Russians." (June 10, 1974.) The Soviet government, which continues to maintain close ties with both the Egyptian and Syrian governments, has made it clear that in the Geneva negotiations it will insist on complete fulfillment of the terms of the cease-fire resolution. Thus, an article in Pravda, reporting on USSR Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko's visit to Syria toward the close of May, states:

The two sides held talks in the course of the visit, chiefly stressing efforts to achieve a just solution of the Middle East problem and the disengagement of troops on the Syrian front as a first and integral part of an all-encompassing solution of this problem.

Coincidence of positions which the two sides hold on all these problems was reaffirmed at the talks. The sides reaffirmed that a just settlement of



the Middle East problem can be reached only on the basis of the complete withdrawal of Israel from all the captured Arab territories and the assurance of the legitimate national rights of the Palestine Arabs.  
(May 30, 1974.)

A long, hard road lies ahead before peace can be realized. A basic turn in Israeli foreign policy still lies ahead. So, too, does a basic turn in U.S. policy. But the foundations of the present policies of the Israeli government and the U.S. are being increasingly eroded by the new turn of events. In the United States the voices of doubt and questioning within the Jewish community are growing, and with them demands for a change in policy. Our task is to mobilize them into a broad organized force for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. This is a fight which can and will be won.

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## Zionism and Racism

By Victoria Missick

Zionism is a reactionary bourgeois nationalist ideology based on two main premises. The first is that Jewish people, regardless of where they are in the world, constitute one nation. Disregarding the prerequisites of nationhood (a common territory, language, culture, history and economic life), the Zionist conception is based on a narrow biological view of the Jewish people as the descendants of the ancient Jews, and in a spiritual sense as possessing a common "historic" memory, a common religion and therefore a common culture. Directly related to this is the concept that Jews have a distinct destiny and historical role, that they are a special people. The second premise is that anti-Semitism is inherent among non-Jews, that it is incurable and therefore a permanent factor in the relations of Jews and non-Jews. These concepts are the root of Zionism's national chauvinism and racism. In them lies the foundation of the policies of the State of Israel.

Out of this Zionist ideology grows the racist oppression of the Israeli Arabs, who are reduced to second-class citizenship and subjected to all forms of racial oppression. Out of it grows, secondly, a chauvinist attitude toward the Arab peoples as a whole, of supremacy over them and a lack of respect for their particular features and their existence. Thirdly, it gives rise to Israel's growing ties to imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism, and to its shameful relationship with apartheid South Africa. And finally it leads to capitulation to racism in the United States, racism directed against Blacks in the first place but also against the Chicano, Puerto Rican, Indian and Asian peoples. It is this last that we propose to deal with in this paper.

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Organizations of the Jewish people devoted to the struggle against anti-Semitism have long been part of the progressive currents in the United States. The Jewish people have also made invaluable contributions to the people's movements for peace, democracy and equality, for the liberation of the Black and other oppressed peoples. However, the influence of reactionary bourgeois nationalism has increased within the Jewish community and Zionism as its organized expression is on the rise.

A recurring theme in the statements and literature of some leading Jewish organizations today is that of the "new anti-Semitism." This alleged new danger

is the supposed emergence of anti-Semitism in the Left and in the Black community. Led by the Zionist organizations and the Zionist leadership within the Jewish mass organizations generally, a mounting attack has been launched on the Left and in particular on the Black and Puerto Rican communities.

This "new anti-Semitism" is concocted by simply equating anti-Zionism or opposition to the policies of the Israeli government with anti-Semitism. Thus anyone in opposition becomes automatically an anti-Semite. The result is to divert the struggle against anti-Semitism from the real enemies of the Jewish people--capitalist reaction and the ultra-Right--and to turn it against those who should be its allies. It is to create a split between the Jewish people and the Black people and to pit them against each other.

No one would deny the influence of anti-Semitism within the Left or among the Black or other oppressed peoples. Anti-Semitism is on the rise in our country and is bound to have its effects within these groups. But to single them out as the primary sources of anti-Semitism and to fail to pinpoint monopoly capital as the main source is not consistent with reality. But this attack by the Zionist forces is consistent with their support for the aggressive policies of the Israeli leaders, for their racist anti-Arab policies and for their relations with South Africa. It conforms with the alliance of Zionism and imperialism against the national liberation movements and other forces of progress.

Among the factors involved in the Zionist attack on the Left, the growing sentiment for detente and the increasingly favorable attitude toward the USSR are important. Because of the positive role played by the USSR toward peace in the Middle East and its principled support for the rights of the Palestinian Arab people, the ruling circles of Israel see it as enemy number one. They do so especially because the Soviet Union supplied Egypt with the military equipment that enabled it to win victories in the October war. In addition, their hostility is connected with their anti-Soviet campaign to lure Soviet Jews to Israel.

Moreover, the Left and progressive forces are developing a deeper anti-imperialist consciousness and are becoming more and more critical of the racist, expansionist policies of the State of Israel. With this, support for the cause of Arab liberation has been constantly on the rise. And finally, it is within the Left that the fight against racism and for Black-white unity has attained the highest level. The preservation of Zionist ideology and support for the government of Israel rest heavily on discrediting the Left in the Jewish community so as to obstruct that unity and perpetuate the myth that anti-Semitism is undefeatable.

The same is true of the Black community, where unity with the Jewish people has been especially a feature of the civil rights struggle. Anti-Semitism in the Black community has never reached the proportions that exist within the white population. But the Zionists fear Black-white unity. They fear the achievement of real equality for Blacks and Jews alike. Further, the militant anti-imperialism of the Black community reflects itself in support of the just demands of the Arab peoples and opposition to the racist, expansionist policies of the Israeli government. It reflects itself in rising anger over the growing collaboration with South Africa against the national liberation movements.

Finally, the Zionist attack is designed to counter the growing militant reaction to the rising racism directed against Black people on the part of whites in general and Jewish people in particular. This is expressed by the extreme racist posture of some Jewish organizations on such vital issues as education, busing and quotas. The De Funis case is an example. De Funis, a Jewish student, has become notorious for his suit challenging the compensatory admissions policies (which are hardly adequate) at Washington State University Law School. It should be noted that there were over 1,000 applicants for only a few more than 100 openings, also that De Funis himself had been accepted at the time into several other law schools. What De Funis accomplished by his action was to pit Jewish and other white youth against Black and other nationally oppressed youth in defense of the status quo. The fact that more money and an end to budget cuts and retrenchments are needed to expand the educational facilities for all youth and especially those of oppressed minorities did not enter into the case. Nor did the question of the real discrimination practiced by higher educational institutions against Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Indian and Asian youth--and against Jewish youth.

Leading Jewish organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee supported De Funis, along with the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO. On the other hand, it should be noted, the National Council of Jewish Women and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations joined with organizations like the NAACP, the United Farm Workers and others in support of the University.

Another important factor in shaping the views of the Black community has been the Jewish Defense League and its racist, fascist attacks on the Black people, the progressive movements, the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. Many leading Jewish organizations have condemned the JDL. But these have repudiated only its methods, not its goals, and the JDL has received at least tacit support from sections of the Jewish community. Furthermore, JDL members have never received substantial terms of imprisonment for any of the crimes they have committed. Contrast this to the treatment of Angela Davis, the United Farm Workers strikers and many others. All this has produced a strong negative reaction in the Black community.

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But this is only one side of Zionism's role on the U.S. scene today. The other is its growing ties with reaction and its representatives. In many ways this alliance is expressed in the Zionist position on the issues of the day--busing, compensatory hiring, etc.--and especially in its opposition to detente. But it is characterized also by its growing affinity for such well-known reactionaries and racists as Senators Henry Jackson and William F. Buckley, who are frequent speakers at gatherings organized by the leading Jewish organizations. Buckley's campaign for Senator in New York in 1971 was steeped in anti-Semitism. And in 1971, at a dinner in Los Angeles, Abba Eban presented the Medallion of Valor of the State of Israel to none other than the old cold warrior Governor Ronald Reagan.

George Meany and the class-collaborationist top leadership of the AFL-CIO maintain close ties with the Israeli trade union organization, the Histadrut. The AFL-CIO's International Department has a long history of undermining the labor movement in Africa and has financed and used the Histadrut toward this end.

Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York, is well known for his consistent anti-Black and anti-Puerto Rican role. He is particularly notorious for his vehemently racist attacks on Black and Puerto Rican educators, students and communities alike, spanning a decade. His attack on decentralization and community control of schools goes back to the so-called teachers' strike called in 1967 for that purpose. Then as now he fanned racism within and outside of the union, using accusations of anti-Semitism as a cover for his racist attacks and policies.

Recently he has been engaged in a campaign to unseat Luis Fuentes, Puerto Rican school superintendent in District 1, embracing New York's Lower East Side. Fuentes was charged with being anti-Semitic. District 1 is an area in which the population is 40 per cent Black, Puerto Rican and Asian. The school population, however, is 14 per cent Black, 73 per cent Puerto Rican, 6 per cent Asian and 7 per cent white. The 60 per cent Jewish section of the population consists mainly of elderly Jewish people and has few children of school age. But in the face of efforts within the community to elect a school board representative of the parents of school children, Shanker and his supporters have made an all-out fight to elect a predominantly white, Jewish board. In the May 1974 elections the Shanker slate succeeded in winning 5 of the 9 board seats. The Shanker majority calls for dismantling programs essential to the Black, Puerto Rican and Asian children and, in fact, to all children. This is a good example of how Zionism, instead of striving to unite Jews with other peoples suffering most severely from discrimination and oppression, seeks to divide them.

Shanker is responsible for the most racist attacks on Black and Puerto Rican teachers and administrators in New York City and for the growth of racist policies within the New York school system. In addition, he led a racist attack on the New Jersey local of the AFT and its Black president Carol Graves at the time of their strike in 1972.

Shanker's reactionary record goes beyond this. His "no-stand" position on the Vietnam war and his "neutrality" in the 1972 elections reflect his support of the interests of big business and of Nixon. The fact that he remains silent on the fascist junta in Chile but finds it necessary to speak out in behalf of Solzhenitsyn further indicates in whose interests he speaks. And needless to say, he is a firm supporter of the Zionist position on the Middle East and its slanderous campaign for emigration of Soviet Jews.

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Zionists have characterized the Black community's opposition to Shanker as anti-Semitism, just as they label any criticism of the Israeli government's policies as anti-Semitism. But this is by no means the case.

The real source of anti-Semitism lies not among the Black or other oppressed peoples but in the nature and policies of monopoly capital. A close examination of monopoly practices reveals much discrimination against Jewish people today. A recent study of the Anti-Defamation League found considerable discrimination in housing, employment and education. Zionists would like us to believe that this is of less importance than the so-called "new anti-Semitism."

But monopoly is consistently racist and anti-Semitic. Its policies are designed to yield maximum profits at minimum cost. It is in the interest of the monopolies that the Jewish people be led to see the Black community as a main instigator of anti-Semitism. This takes the heat off them while they go on reaping huge superprofits through discrimination based on race, nationality or sex. They want to see the struggle for Black liberation held back by racism within the Jewish community on questions of social equality and community control. They want to keep the Jewish and Black peoples split in order to wield their two-edged sword against both.

What is needed is unity. This is the key. But unity is not something abstract; it is very concrete. It must be based on the self-interests of both peoples. It must in the first place, be principled and based on the concrete struggle against the racial and national oppression of the Black people first of all, but also of the Chicano, Puerto Rican, Indian and Asian peoples. It must be based on the recognition that both racism and anti-Semitism have their roots in the white supremacist policies of monopoly capital and imperialism. It must be based on the understanding that anti-Semitism cannot be successfully fought without struggling against racism in all its forms. And it must be based on the centrality of the struggle for Black liberation and on the fact that without combatting racism the unity of the working masses cannot be achieved.

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A just peace in the Middle East must be based on the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 242 and on recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people. It must be founded on the return of the conquered territories by Israel, on guaranteeing the rights of all states and peoples, including both Israel and the Palestinian Arabs, and on a just solution of the Arab refugee question.

A lasting peace requires a struggle against Zionism and ultimately the rejection of Zionism and its racist, aggressive, expansionist policies. It requires a policy based on relations of friendship and full equality between Jews and Arabs. Only such a policy will insure the rights of the whole of Israel's people and guarantee real security, peace and economic advance.

For us in the United States, the immediate tasks are threefold. First, it is necessary to fight against racism, for Black and white unity in struggle, and for rejection of racism within the Jewish community in particular. Second, the fight against anti-Semitism must be linked with this fight, and concrete steps must be taken to rid our institutions and minds of this pollution. The struggle against

(continued on p. 25)

## Democratic Advances in Egypt and Syria

By Danny Spector

I was recently on a trip to the Middle East. I was part of a journalists' delegation which was sponsored by the World Federation of Democratic Youth. We represented 13 youth organizations and their publications. I represented the Young Workers Liberation League and its paper, The Young Worker.

We visited Egypt and Syria, and were the guests of the General Union of Palestinian Students in Lebanon. Our host in Egypt was the Arab Socialist Youth Organization, while in Syria we were the guests of the Revolution's Youth Union.

We visited factories, schools and cities which had been bombed by the Israeli Air Force during the last war, and had many meetings with government officials, leaders of youth organizations, the Arab press, the Communist Party of Syria, and leaders of organizations such as the League of Arab States and the Egyptian National Peace Council.

We also visited Palestinian Arab refugee camps and had discussions with leaders of the Palestinian Arab movement.

The purpose of our trip was to learn about the developments in these countries since the last war, particularly in regard to Arab youth.

Our Arab hosts told us that the most important thing we could do when we returned to our respective countries was to tell people about what we saw and learned. There is a wide lack of knowledge here about what is really happening in the Arab countries.

With this in mind, I would like to speak briefly about some of the economic and political developments in Egypt and Syria.

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You will often hear statements made that "there is no freedom in Egypt and Syria. Communists are persecuted and jailed. President Sadat and President Assad are nothing but dictators who are not interested in the people's welfare, only in preserving their own feudal or bourgeois governments."

We have to say that these are nothing but lies and slanders, which are part of

the Zionist propaganda to perpetuate the racist stereotype of the "uncivilized and barbaric Arab hordes, bent on the destruction of Israel."

Egypt, which went through a revolution in 1952, and Syria, whose revolution took place in 1963, are countries of national liberation, part of the three arms of the world revolutionary movement--the socialist camp, the national liberation movements and the world working class movement. Egypt and Syria are following the path of non-capitalist development internally, and adhere to the policy of non-alignment in foreign affairs. They are part of the great world anti-imperialist movement.

The national liberation revolutions opened up tremendous possibilities for political development. For the first time in their history, the working people were able to have a say in the running of the government. There is tremendous active interest and participation in politics in Egypt and Syria. The national liberation revolutions returned the land and its resources to the people, and they take an active interest in defending and developing it, because it belongs to them, because it is in their self-interest to do so. When we were in Egypt and Syria, we could feel the pride and love that the people had for their country, and it was made very explicit to us time and again.

There is a broad range of classes and strata participating in the government, ranging from the national bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie to the rapidly expanding and developing working class, as well as intellectuals, professionals and youth. And for the first time, the possibility of the participation of women in the political and economic life of the country is opened up.

In Syria, the Communist Party is part of a broad National Progressive Front, a united front of the progressive patriotic parties which guides the political and economic policy of the country. The general secretary of the Communist Party of Syria, Comrade Khaled Bagdash, is himself on the leading body of the Front. There are two Communists in ministerial positions in the government, both of whom are members of the Central Committee of the Party. This is an unprecedented development and a qualitative step in the development of the national liberation revolutions.

To be sure, the picture is not just one of roses and daffodils. There are setbacks as well as victories. Comrade Bagdash made it very clear that the advance of the national liberation revolution requires a struggle--a class struggle. And as the working class grows in numbers and develops class consciousness, the struggle between the various forces in leadership intensifies.

In Syria, Communists have in some instances been denied certain rights.\*

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\*When we were in Syria, we met with the Democratic Youth League of Syria, which is the organization of young Communists. It is a semi-legal organization. The Arab Baath Socialist Party, which is the largest party within the National Front and has the most influence in controlling the government, does not want the young people to be influenced by the Communists, particularly the young Communists.



Some of the policies of the governments have not been in the best interests of the people. But it would be wrong, absolutely wrong, to characterize the whole revolution as despotic on the basis of individual negative aspects, because the whole thrust of Egypt and Syria's political development is toward broader democracy.

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As I said before, Egypt and Syria have taken the non-capitalist road of economic development. They refuse to rely on imperialism to help them develop their economies because they recognize that aid from the imperialist countries always comes with strings attached, and the country accepting such "aid" invariably winds up on the ends of those strings. This has meant that they have had to develop close relationships to the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries in order to get the aid they need.

The public sector; that is, the industry and land owned and run by the government, is the mainstay of the economy and of the revolution and now accounts for over half of the economy. This development has meant tremendous advances in the standard of living and welfare of the people.

When we were in Egypt we visited the iron and steel complex at Helwan, near Cairo. It is a symbol of Arab-Soviet friendship and a beacon of light to all developing countries. It is the largest basic industrial plant in all of the Middle East, producing more than a million tons of steel a year. It employs 30,000 workers, 80 per cent of whom are 25 years of age or under. The steel produced here will be used to build and develop other industries. Not only are tens of thousands of workers getting skilled training at this complex, but the complex will also be the basis of training tens of thousands more in related industries and in industries which depend on steel. Egypt, which now must import most of its heavy machinery, will be able to produce its own agricultural equipment, for instance, which will mean a rise in the level of food output for its people.

The main internal problem that Egypt faces is the amount of arable land available. About 95 per cent of its population of 36 million lives on 5 per cent of the land. That is like shoving 9-1/2 million of New York State's 10 million people into an area less than the size of New York City.

This is where the High Dam at Aswan in Upper Egypt comes in. While the government has nationalized much of the land and redistributed it to the peasants at low or no cost, the amount of cultivatable land has remained relatively fixed. The Aswan Dam is changing that. The dam, which is two miles long and 2/3 mile high, will increase the amount of cultivatable land by two million acres, or 30 per cent more than before. In addition, it will provide controlled irrigation of the Nile, which floods every year. The dam will also provide 10 billion kilowatts of electric power to industry, agriculture and homes. In terms of revenue, the dam is adding \$500 million to the Egyptian economy annually. In addition, tens of thousands of workers, a great percentage of whom are young, were employed to build the dam and to keep it functioning, getting training in engineering, hydrodynamics, technical and administrative functions, etc. Again, the Aswan High Dam stands as a shining symbol of the fruits of Arab-Soviet friendship.

In Syria, the course of the Euphrates River has been changed, after at least tens of thousands of years. With the constant aid of the Soviet Union, not only in terms of capital and machinery, but of engineers and technicians as well the Syrian government is building a dam across the Euphrates. When it is completed in 1975, it will eventually increase the area of irrigated land by 25 million acres, and generate over 1 million kilowatts of electricity. Some 12,000 workers, most of whom are young, are employed at the dam, learning skills in engineering, as laborers, technicians, etc.

I must add that the iron and steel complex at Helwan, the Aswan High Dam and the Euphrates Dam are all state-owned projects.

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Health care in Egypt and Syria has improved tremendously. It is now virtually free. Egypt has greatly increased the number of hospitals, to the point where there are now over 1200 hospitals with 57,000 beds. Syria, in 1963, had 78 hospitals with 5700 beds and 678 doctors. It now has 85 hospitals with 6500 beds and 1700 doctors.

Education in both Egypt and Syria is completely free from kindergarten through college, and is compulsory from 6 to 12 in Egypt and from 6 to 14 in Syria. Almost all schools are state-owned and run. In 1953, there were a little more than one million students in elementary schools in Egypt. That number has now increased to over 4 million. Egypt now has 8 universities compared with 1 in 1953. The university population has risen from 37,000 in 1960 to over 64,000 today.

The figures for Syria are equally as impressive. There are almost 1.5 million elementary school students now, compared to 400,000 in 1960. In 1963 there were 3900 elementary schools, while now there are over 5500. The number of university students has increased to 75,000 from 27,000 in 1963.

In addition, tens of thousands of Egyptian and Syrian students are studying abroad, most of them at state expense.

The status of women has changed considerably. There are still grave problems, results of the age-old traditions tied in with religion. But these problems are slowly being overcome. Lenin said that you can judge the level of advancement of a country by the level of advancement of the status of women in that society. And the leaders we met with in Egypt and Syria are quite aware that the position of women has to be improved if there is going to be any general improvement and advance.

But there are laws protecting the rights of women. Among them are laws which provide for two months' paid maternity leave with the job kept open, allotments above and beyond the regular salary for each child a woman worker has, and a law which requires all places of employment where there are at least 100 women workers to provide child-care facilities at state expense. We should do as well here.

At the plant at Helwan, and at an agricultural produce canning factory that we visited in Damascus, Syria, we learned that the unions to which the workers belong have representatives who sit on the boards of directors of the companies and have a say in the running of the factories. The union also provides educational programs and programs designed to raise the level of skilled workers. The Helwan plant also has a sports team and artistic and social functions for its younger workers. The union at the factory in Damascus has regular trips to the country for its members as well as artistic and social events. In addition, young workers are paid the same wages as older workers.

At the plant in Helwan, all medical care and costs are assumed by the government. If a worker falls sick, or is injured on the job, he receives sick pay in addition to his regular pay. If he has an illness which can't be cured at facilities in Egypt, he is sent abroad at state expense to any country which has the needed facilities. The agricultural factory in Damascus pays 50 per cent of all medical costs incurred by its workers, 90 per cent of whom are under 30 years of age.

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Again, I do not want to give the impression that all problems, social and economic, have been wiped out. Poverty, illiteracy, overcrowding and unemployment are still very serious problems, and will remain so for some time to come. Part of this is due to the fact that an enormous amount of time, manpower and resources has had to be diverted from social and economic needs to defending the country from Zionist aggression and imperialist maneuvers. This has been offset to a great extent by the massive amount of Soviet aid--both economic and military--which has been poured into Egypt and Syria. This aid totalled more than \$2.6 billion just during and after the October war.

Peace, a real and just peace, will allow the Egyptian and Syrian people to concentrate all their efforts on building the country, developing their economy, and consolidating and extending their social gains.

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## Egypt's Role in the Fight for Mid-East Peace

By Tom Foley

In judging the situation in Egypt and the rest of the Arab world, we must be guided by the real facts, not the interpretations we read here in the New York Times or see in the U.S. capitalist news media. Danny has given you a first-hand account of some of those real facts as he saw them.

The facts are that the Arabs, with Egypt in the lead, are moving towards a genuine overall Middle East peace settlement, a political settlement which will involve accepting the reality of the existence of the state of Israel within its 1967 borders. All the Arabs, including the Palestinians, are moving in this direction.

Egypt is following a long-term policy in this respect, a policy accepted in late 1967 by Nasser on Soviet urging. It is not a policy suddenly picked up by Sadat because of Henry Kissinger's influence.

Egypt under Nasser accepted UN resolution 242. Nasser said that he would sign an overall peace agreement between the Arabs and Israel. Nasser and the Egyptians took this step under strong Soviet influence, after a good deal of internal debate. Gradually, all the Arabs have accepted it. We know that Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, are willing to accept a political settlement. Earlier, Egypt was willing to go to Geneva even without Syria.

The Egyptian position is based on reality, not on goodwill or any such subjective feelings. Egypt faces great internal problems of population growth, etc., which require devoting all possible resources to peaceful development.

Secondly, Egypt is the only Arab state to have defeated the Israelis in battle, the only Arab state actually to have won land back from the Israelis. It did this almost entirely with Soviet equipment, Soviet training, using Soviet military tactics. No one in Egypt is unaware of these facts. This places Egypt in a strong political position in the Arab world. It can afford to take the lead.

The exchange of messages between Brezhnev and Sadat on May 25, the third anniversary of the Soviet-Egyptian treaty, shows that relations between the two continue to be normal. Egypt-USSR friendship is permanent, according to Brezhnev and Sadat, and Sadat in particular singled out the USSR's role as what he called "the main bulwark of peace," the chief source of support for the peoples fighting imperialism.

Many people seem to think that Henry Kissinger went to the Middle East and put Sadat and Egypt in his pocket. They should ask themselves if they are not being taken in by U.S. propaganda. If you believe this, you agree that Kissinger achieved another "miracle," won a tremendous victory over the USSR. Isn't this exactly what Kissinger wants you to believe? Isn't this exactly what the U.S. capitalist news media were playing up to the hilt while Kissinger was in the Middle East? You have to decide whether you are going to believe Kissinger and the capitalists or the facts. And this snow job is based on what they know very well, that people here are prejudiced against the Egyptians and willing to believe anything bad they are told about them, without asking for proof.

Thus, Sadat and Egypt are being slandered here, on the Left, and why? Because Egypt is following Nasser's long-term policy and because it is working for a peaceful political settlement, because it is showing the way for the rest of the Arabs to follow. This is incredible, but it is happening. It should be clear that only the Zionists can gain if people are won over to this point of view.

Sadat is a very intelligent Egyptian nationalist. He has always been that, and he is not going to change. Whatever he does, it will be because he believes it is in Egypt's long-term national interests. That is why he supports a policy of close friendship with the USSR. That is why he will work with Kissinger and the U.S. He will take anything that will benefit Egypt from the U.S. We should not be at all surprised by this. It is proof that Egypt remains a sovereign, independent state, not in anybody's pocket.

Syria, we know, is now following the same policy. It is willing to renew relations with the U.S., encourage U.S. trade and investment. Algeria in reality follows the same policy, and has enormous economic ties with the U.S. But Syria and Algeria are not being criticized for this, only Egypt is. The Guardian and other publications regard Syria and Algeria as being solid revolutionary bulwarks. But they say Egypt is selling out. Why?

The answer is that Egypt is the most powerful Arab state, the only one capable militarily of defeating Israel, and therefore it is the one big problem for the Zionists; they aren't worried about Syria or Algeria. The second reason is that Soviet-Egyptian ties are very strong; the Maoists, Trotskyites, Zionists and imperialists want to weaken them in any way possible. Therefore propaganda is being concentrated against Egypt.

Despite what Kissinger and the State Department and the New York Times say, Soviet influence is growing in the Arab world. A good example is Libyan Premier Jalloud's trip to the USSR recently and the signing of new Soviet-Libyan agreements on economic and political cooperation (plus the ouster of the anti-Soviet Colonel Qaddafi in Libya). The USSR also has growing influence on the Palestinian movement, Arab liberation movement and on Yasser Arafat, who are now apparently ready to go to Geneva and accept the reality of Israel.

In summary, the USSR's policy to strive for an overall political settlement in the interests of all Mid-East states and peoples has won over most of the Arab

## An Interview With Shmuel Tenenblatt

By Sol Flapan

WARSAW, June 14 - Best regards to all those in the New York City area who sent greetings to Jews in Poland.

That's from Shmuel Tenenblatt, editor of the Warsaw-based Yiddish language weekly Folks Shtimme (People's Voice). The Jewish newspaperman who visited relatives in New York City earlier this year was replying to an offer to transmit felicitations to U.S. comrades and friends.

While in Manhattan, Tenenblatt met and exchanged experiences with colleagues engaged in similar political, cultural and newspaper work as he is here. He recalled with warmth his meeting with Dr. Hyman Lumer, editor of Political Affairs and Jewish Affairs. He is pleased, too, with talks he had with Alex Kolkin, chairman of the Jewish Commission of the Communist Party, USA, and also a member of the editorial committee of Jewish Affairs.

The reception given him and the ensuing discussion at the McBurney YMCA were recounted with relish. Reporting back to comrades in Warsaw that the Folks Shtimme editor and his remarks were cordially received by the 60-odd Jewish activists at that gathering as well as by others he met during his several-week visit "was a very pleasant duty," said Tenenblatt.

Finally, special pride was reserved in recalling exchanges with Henry Winston and Gus Hall, the national chairman and the general secretary of the CPUSA, respectively.

This was Tenenblatt's second meeting with Winston. The first was in December 1971 here in Warsaw during the 6th Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP). On that occasion Winston and fellow CPUSA fraternal delegates in the persons of Fern Winston of the Women's Commission and Conrad Komorowski, Daily World staff writer, spent an evening with the leadership of the Social and Cultural Society of Jews in Poland just a few doors away from Tenenblatt's office.

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Folks Shtimme tenants most of the first floor of a three-year old white stone building which also houses the Society. An entire wing of this two-story structure is occupied by the 400-seat Jewish State Theater, and the Jewish Bomet

Cooperative which turns out household gadgets takes up the top floor.

Rounding out his message Tenenblatt sent "greetings to comrades in our ideological camp." He wished them "further successes in the common cause for socialism." Then, with a hearty across-the-ocean handshake to "colleagues in spreading the Yiddish word and Jewish culture" the conversation zeroed in on organized Jewish activities here.

These revolve around the Society, Folks Shtimme, the Ruth Kaminska Theater and the Jewish Historical Institute.

There is also a microscopic "Religious Union of the Faith of Moses." One of the 18 religious faiths in this country, it caters to a tiny fraction of Poland's Jewry through its 24 houses of worship.

The Society, which is generally known by its Polish acronym TESKAZET, the paper and the theater are mass-oriented by the nature of their work, while the Historical Institute is an academic center.

Nevertheless, the Institute and its museum and art gallery, located at a 34th-Street-and-Broadway-like intersection, also attract the general public. It figures daily in the "What's On" columns of Warsaw newspapers. This unpaid public service is currently announcing the permanently mounted exhibition on "The Martyrology and Struggle of the Warsaw Ghetto." There are also exhibitions of paintings, sculpture and metal-wrought art. Visitors are welcome from 9 to 3 daily and till noon on Saturdays.

These four institutions and the public commitment of their officials and their general membership and following are highly regarded by the PUWP and the people's government. In fact, Tenenblatt expects a number of Jewish activists to be decorated by the state in connection with the approaching 30th "jubilee" anniversary of the new Poland.

On the eve of every July 22nd, outstanding workers in all fields of endeavor are awarded titles, medals, bonuses and other marks of appreciation for their professional and public work.

In reply to a question on this, Tenenblatt confirmed that these activists will be decorated for their Jewish-oriented work. Indeed, the Polish authorities "encourage more cultural affairs in Yiddish," he added.

Nor will this be the first time Jews here are thus honored. This last May 1st, for example, Pawel Rubensztein was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Reborn Poland. Retiree Rubensztein, the present secretary of the TESKAZET branch in the textile-industrial city of Lodz in central Poland, has been involved in Jewish affairs since the country's liberation from nazi-German occupation by the Soviet Army and Polish units which fought at its side. Rubensztein himself is a former Red Army man and his suit lapel is also graced with several Soviet medals for combat duty at Stalingrad. Before the war he was active in Poland's Young Communist League.

A host of other examples can be cited, like the late actor-director Chewel Buzgan who was honored for his 50 years of service to Jewish culture at a gala evening in the Kaminska Theater in December 1970. Sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and the Mayor's office, it attracted the cream of the performing and other arts.

In his time Buzgan had been awarded the Officer's and the Knight's crosses of the Order of Reborn Poland as well as the Order of the Banner of Labor.

Or take the case of some Folks Shtimme people who were honored for their efforts in keeping alive the tradition of the printed Yiddish word. Public plaudits were accorded them at festivities marking the 25th anniversary of the paper in the summer of 1972.

There was Herman Brandys, a printer now at Warsaw's popular Express Wieczorny (Evening Express) who rescued Jewish type fonts left by the war and nearly six years of Nazi devastations. Thanks to his perseverance Dos Naye Leiben (The New Life) appeared in Lodz in April 1945 as the first Yiddish language paper in liberated People's Poland.

Brandys now also wears the Knight's Cross of the Order of Reborn Poland, one of the awards which grants recipients public honors and material privileges as augmentations to pensions.

Each of the above-cited medals comes in several classes but, in the main, the Order of Reborn Poland is the country's second-ranking award, while the Banner of Labor is the fifth.

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This country's respect for Jewish institutions is also reflected in daily life.

"Folks Shtimme," said its editor, "is an equal partner with the rest of the news media while TESKAZET is on a legal par with similar, sister organizations." The Theater, he added, enjoys an "honored place in the Polish theatrical world," and the Jewish Historical Institute is "an esteemed branch of the national Academy of Sciences."

Illustrating Folks Shtimme's status, Tenenblatt grinned that his paper "is treated just like Trybuna Ludu" (People's Tribune), the daily newspaper of the PUWP. "Regardless of its size," Folks Shtimme "is accorded the same rights and privileges" as all other printed media as relates to accreditation, invitations to official briefings, etc. Nor is this Yiddish-language paper subjected to any discrimination when it comes to newsprint supplies and printing house services. The paper is out every Friday like clockwork.

This slick-sheet weekly which appears in nine pages in Yiddish, three in Polish is also purchasable at the sales counters of the network of International Book and Press Clubs, and the cafe-reading rooms of these clubs carry the paper



on their public racks. Besides, anyone interested may subscribe to Folks Shtimme.

Last but not least, Folks Shtimme staff writers, office workers and other employees are full-fledged and equal members of the highly respected news media community and its industry-wide trade union.

This Jewish publication has a special task cut out for it. Formally, it is the official organ of TESKAZET. That and more. In Tenenblatt's words, "Folks Shtimme welds the Society's clubs across the land into a cohesive national organization." It is a public forum, a tribune and organizer, he added.

Besides its staff writers, the journal boasts a network of reader-correspondents who report "even the minutest details of club doings." These accounts "serve as an inspiration to other clubs."

The paper is also a "public lecturer." Its editorials, articles, features, stories and poetry are often prefaces to further discussions in the clubs.

While news per se is left for the daily news media to cover, this magazine-type publication does, however, carry such special news columns as "Jews Around the World" and "Jewish News." These columns feature events of interest for the Jewish reader here which are not newsworthy in the general press.

Yet, Folks Shtimme does highlight certain national developments even though they are covered extensively in the Polish media. Among other reasons that's because Tenenblatt has "the potential foreign reader in mind." It is with an eye on the subscriber abroad that Folks Shtimme devotes comprehensive coverage to the PUWP, the government and the parliament, the country's economic expansion and general growth, and reviews of the Polish press.

And "all this in rich East European Yiddish for which many U.S. Jews yearn," said editor-turning-salesman Tenenblatt. He raised his pet idea that U.S. and Canadian Jews get in touch with importers of foreign publications and request subscriptions to Folks Shtimme. He recalled the favorable response by Polish authorities whenever he broached this subject with them.

Hope was thus expressed that in the not too distant future those across the ocean interested in following Jewish affairs in People's Poland or in reading about national developments here in Yiddish will be able to do so through the columns of Folks Shtimme.

One of the current attractions of the paper is its year-long contributions in celebration of socialist Poland's 30th anniversary. Among other things, it is running a series of reminiscences by Jewish workers, office employees, artists and army people who describe what it was like starting from scratch in war-ruined Poland--but in a free Poland with Communists and Left-Socialists at the helm and actively supported by all democratic forces.

Through these columns it can be learned that Jewish-founded work cooperatives

were among the earliest in reborn Poland. Indeed, one of the first cooperative farms was set up by Jews. An historic breakthrough--Jewish farmers in this part of the world.

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The conversation then shifted to TESKAZET and the Kaminska Theater. The Society's clubs "are open and active all week long," said Tenenblatt. He went one further as he pointed out that TESKAZET clubs are no second fiddle to the popular International Book and Press Clubs when it comes to attracting audiences to public lectures or literary evenings.

Warsaw is the weakest link in the TESKAZET network, he conceded sadly though he perked up when relating the activeness of the smaller Jewish communities. Indeed, in a number of places, club doings often attract non-Jewish Poles, especially youth.

And it was with this youth in mind, said Tennenblatt, that the Jewish Theater prepared "Song of My People," a stage history of the Jews in Poland. This panorama covers the spectrum from the 19th century "shtetl" to the anti-Nazi struggle here during World War II and is performed in Yiddish and Polish (with simultaneous translations for the former through headphones). Written as a Ghetto Memorial, it concentrates mostly on the resistance of the Jews and the active assistance accorded them by the entire gamut of the Polish underground.

Warsaw public schools have entered "Song of My People" into their contemporary history programs and special shows are staged for the children at the Theater. These school youngsters are the most receptive and sensitive audiences, according to Tenenblatt. The Theater people have repeatedly told him that they enjoy the closest rapport with school pupils during performances and in after-show discussions.

The Ruth Kaminska Theater is a busy company as witness its full theatrical seasons year after year here in Warsaw and on the road, with occasional tours abroad. Besides, the company has its several-person "brigades" which visit the clubs where they perform skits and adapted fragments from the Theater's repertoire.

It is this repertoire which evoked Tenenblatt's only critical remarks. He believes it is much too narrow, with too much of either tear-jerking or vaudeville comedy versions of what existed many, many years ago. Like many others, he wants "our" theater to show "more of the Jewish worker and laborer"--the weavers in the textile mills, the locksmith-metalworkers in towns and the smithies and water carriers in the small "shtetls." It was precisely these types who developed historically into the Ghetto fighters of 1943, he argues.

Tenenblatt did suggest, however, that the Theater is beginning to experiment in broadening its repertoire. At any rate, it is expanding its personnel base by running a class for 20 apprentice actresses and actors in its own Yiddish-language and stage workshop. Half a dozen of these promising young people have already

received billboard and program credits for their supporting roles in "Song of My People."

"In general, we'd like to maintain our present level of activity" on all fronts, said Tenenblatt as a staff worker brought in fresh galleys of the next issue of Folks Shtimme. Concluding, Tenenblatt underscored these points:

- While the Jewish community here is small it is a viable one and "many a larger population elsewhere may very well envy our cultural, social and civic work."
- Every TESKAZET club was completely renovated over the past year.
- Every club has its TV and most of them some combination of snack bar, reading corner and room for table games.
- Folks Shtimme staffers and others are being mobilized so as to help further expand TESKAZET's club lecture program on current events, history, literature and poetry, and popular science.
- The Theater "brigades" are being scheduled to visit the grass roots oftener and more regularly.
- And, a collection of poems by Eliash Rajzman which had originally appeared over the years in Folks Shtimme is now being brought out by TESKAZET.

All of which is evidence that the Polish authorities' encouragement for "more cultural activities in Yiddish" is bearing fruit.

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(continued from p. 12)

anti-Semitism must be part of the fight against all racism.

And finally, we must all join in building a real anti-imperialist movement in this country--a movement that can challenge the myths that shroud the real issues in the Middle East. Such a movement can also more effectively challenge monopoly's role at home and particularly its organized racism and anti-Semitism.

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world since 1967, and it was a long, hard fight. But today we stand closer to this goal than ever before, and we must unite to get U.S. public opinion behind it to ensure its final success.

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## Communications

### What Is "Jewish Culture"?

By A. E. G.

I and a friend, a Sephardic Jew, attended a Yiddish cultural affair sponsored by some progressive Jewish organizations in New York. One speaker, who spoke in Yiddish, talked about the beauty and richness of Jewish culture and wound up by saying that we must take steps to maintain and continue this culture. A second speaker said basically the same thing in English. The speeches were followed by musical numbers and poetry readings, which neither of us understood, since our knowledge of Yiddish is almost zero.

My friend took serious exception to the term "Jewish culture." He contended that what is called "Jewish culture," based on the Yiddish language, is really only the culture of those Jews who come from Eastern Europe. He said:

"I am a Jew whose origin is Castilian Spain. My forefathers spoke Spanish which later evolved into Ladino, spoken by the Jews of Spain, Greece, Turkey, parts of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and North Africa. The Jews of Central Asia also have a language of their own which is an Iranian dialect and a very rich culture based on it, particularly the Jews of Bokhara in the Soviet Union. Then there is the distinct culture of the Jews of Yemen, Iraq, Syria and other Arab countries. If you tell the Falashas of Ethiopia, the Jews of Yemen, Georgia or Daghestan that this so-called 'Jewish culture' is theirs, they will laugh and say they never heard of it."

Personally I know little about Jewish culture--only that part of it which is translated into English or Russian. I am therefore not able to answer the question to the satisfaction of my friend, and hence this letter.

My own observations during my residence in this country indicate that Jewish culture is on the decline. When I first arrived in 1914, there were numerous Yiddish newspapers and journals. Now there are only two daily newspapers, which are read in the main by older people and some recently-arrived immigrants. So some of my friend's arguments sound logical.

I hope that you will find space in Jewish Affairs to give some thought to these questions.

Editorial Comment: It is quite true that there is no such thing as a single, universal Jewish culture. There are indeed, as the above communication indicates, a number of cultures based on a number of languages, among Jews in different parts of the world. In the United States the Yiddish-language culture has been predominant, since the overwhelming majority of Jewish immigrants to this country have come from Eastern Europe and this is the culture they brought with them. Yiddish was the language of masses of Jewish workers and the secular culture based on it was a cementing influence in their struggles for unionization, for better wages and working conditions, and for socialism.

The efforts to maintain this cultural tradition are legitimate, though it is true that the use of Yiddish is steadily declining and is today confined increasingly to the older generation. But it is wrong to identify the culture originating in Eastern Europe as the Jewish culture, to the exclusion of others. It is even more wrong to seek to impose it on others. Thus, with regard to Israel, where Sephardic Jews of Middle Eastern origin make up some 60 per cent of the population, the book Zionism: Its Role in World Politics by Hyman Lumer states:

The fact is that Israel has been ruled since its birth by a group of Zionists mainly of Eastern European origin, to whom a "Jewish State" and "Jewishness" mean a state based on the culture of Eastern European Jewry. Nissim Rejwan, a prominent Oriental Jewish writer, says:

"When Israel's East European Zionist Establishment and its spokesmen talk of the absolute necessity of preserving the country's Jewishness what they in fact have in mind is little more than their own brand of Jewish culture. For them, this now thoroughly secularized culture of the Jews of the Pale of Settlement represents 'Jewishness' pure and simple." ("Israel as an Open Society," The Jewish Spectator, December 1967.)

Correspondingly, the culture of the Middle Eastern Jews is rejected as not being "Jewish," and the dominant group of Western origin, though now decidedly in the minority, nevertheless seeks to impose its culture on a majority whose cultural traditions are quite different. (International Publishers, New York, 1973, pp. 22-23.)

Such a chauvinistic approach to the concept of Jewish culture must, of course, be rejected and combatted.

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## Events and Views

The following item appeared in the Jerusalem Post of April 17:

"Forty members of the 'Israel Committee for a Free Chile' held a protest vigil outside the President's residence yesterday morning, as the new ambassador presented his credentials to President Katzir.

"One of the demonstrators said that 'Chilean Ambassador Samuel Glazer represents the illegal and anti-democratic rule now prevailing in that country, and his appointment will greatly harm the democratic image of Israel.'

"Although the police asked the demonstrators to disperse, they did not end their vigil until the conclusion of the ceremony at the President's house. Then they walked to the ambassador's residence in Rehov Brenner, where they left their protest placards.

"The police removed the placards and arrested two of the demonstrators, who were later released on bail.

"Ambassador Glazer is a long-time Zionist and former president of the Chilean Zionist Federation."

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Of special interest as an indication of the changing attitude toward the question of Middle East peace is the formation of an organization called Breira (Alternative); A Project in Diaspora-Israel Relations.

Its declaration of aims states that the October War has shown that "the longest defense lines and the strongest armies will not prevent further tragic wars," that "without some modus vivendi with the Arab states there can be no real security." It states its support of territorial concessions for the sake of peace and adds: "In this context, is it not time to recognize the legitimacy of the national aspirations of the Palestinians, and to seek some way (possibly an independent demilitarized West Bank) to resolve this aspect of the conflict?"

The declaration says that "we have been troubled by the development of the socio-economic gap between a largely Ashkenazic middle-class and the Sephardic poor; by the schism between the religious and non-religious which is fostered by the politicization of religious life; and by the erosion of civil liberties, particularly, though not exclusively, of its Arab citizens." It goes on to say:

"As American Jews we are saddened by the extent to which American life has come to consist almost exclusively of vicarious participation in the life of the State of Israel....

"Specifically, we are uneasy because Israel relates to the Diaspora communities primarily as reservoirs of financial aid and immigration and particularly because American Jewish organizations have acquiesced to this trend...." And finally, "we deplore those pressures on American Jewish life which make open discussion of these and other vital issues virtually synonymous with heresy."

The advisory committee includes such prominent figures as Rabbi David Gordis, provost of the University of Judaism, Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, Chairman of the Governing Council of the World Jewish Congress, and Rabbi Max Ticktin, Assistant National Director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations.

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In a previous issue we wrote about the outright opposition to U.S.-Soviet detente expressed by the Zionist Organization of America. A reader calls our attention to the expression of similar views in an editorial in the Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger of February 8, 1974. The editorial states:

"[Andrei] Gromyko's task was ... to spread the Red hand of darkness over the Middle East, capitalizing on the detente delirium of Messrs. Kissinger and Nixon.

"Having already won the Yom Kippur War (the Suez Canal is theirs), the Russians will prod the United States into more arm twisting of Israel and by doing so inflict an even greater defeat on America....

"Our Defense Department supports the 1972 detente policy. How stupid!

"We are removing numerous once-strategic items from export embargo to Russia. How stupid!

"Technological know-how is being exported to the bolsheviks. How stupid!

"How much more, Mr. Nixon? How much more?"

We can only comment that this rabid cold-war line, presented as supposedly serving the interests of Israel and the United States, is in reality a gross dis-service to both and to the cause of world peace in general.

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An item in the Jerusalem Post of December 2, 1973 announced that the Israeli Sports Federation was sending a team to the International Gymnastics Competition for Champions in Johannesburg, South Africa. "The invitation to

the meet," the article says, "followed an exchange of visits during 1973 between the national gymnastic squads of Israel and South Africa, part of the stepped-up sporting contacts between the two countries in recent years--though racialism in South African sport has put some strain on these relations."

This says a great deal. At a time when other countries are refusing to participate in sports events in South Africa because of its barbaric apartheid policy, Israel is promoting "stepped-up sporting contacts between the two countries."

In view of the fact that all African countries which formerly had diplomatic ties with Israel have severed them, other than South Africa and its satellites, this emphasizes all the more the reactionary direction of the foreign policy of Israel's ruling circles.

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BIROBIDZHAN, USSR - "We are proud of our economic and cultural achievements, we are proud of our life," said Lev Shapiro, First Secretary of the Communist Party Committee of the Jewish Autonomous Region in the USSR's Far East, in an interview marking the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Autonomous Region.

"In May, 1934, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, taking into consideration the rapid economic development of Birobidzhan district, elevated it to the status of Jewish Autonomous Region," Shapiro said.

"Nowadays the region manufactures grain and ensilage harvesters, transformers, tin, cement, prefabricated houses, paper, furniture, footwear, sewn goods, and knitwear. It is in many republics of the country that one can come across these products.

"The state and collective farms of the region now possess almost 1,250,000 acres."

Lev Shapiro has said that Jews, Russians and Ukrainians who live in the region work together as members of the same big family.

"The residents of our region," he added, "are indignant at the malicious chorus of international Zionism which is trying to slander the friendship of the peoples of the USSR. There has been no and cannot be any 'Jewish question' in the Soviet Union. In this country the person is judged by these attributes: honest work, faithfulness and devotion to the motherland, to the people."

The Jewish Region, he noted, has been awarded the Order of Lenin and the Friendship of the Peoples Order.

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