

Mandela, Jews, the Continuing Struggle

An EDITORIAL

Jewish Currents

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Paul Robeson from the Outside

By JOEL SHATZKY

Japanese-
Americans
at Dachau

By
S. DON SHIMAZU

The Goat in
the Hagada

By
MAX ROSENFELD

Writing the
Holocaust

Review by
SELMA MEYEROWITZ



"The Child at Your Door"

Discussing Anti-Semitism in the USSR

By WILLIAM SHNEYER and THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and Resistance Issue

Jewish Currents

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Our Cover: This drawing (artist unknown) appeared on one of a series of posters distributed in 1918 by the American Committee for Relief in the Near East to raise money for Armenian and other survivors of Ottoman persecution during World War I. Reproduced from *Armenian Genocide Resource Guide*, Armenian Assembly of America, Washington, DC (see p. 7).

HAVE YOU MOVED?

To be sure you do not miss an issue, your change of address must be received by us no later than the 10th of the month. Changes received after that will not take effect for another month.

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Mandela, Jews, the Continuing Struggle

An EDITORIAL

March 8
THEY were 10 days that shook the racist world, and not only in South Africa. On Feb. 2 Pres. F. W. de Klerk ended the 30-year ban on the African National Congress (and on the Communist Party, the Congress of Trade Unions and the National Students Congress); on Feb. 11 he freed Nelson Mandela, 71, after 27 years in prison. Denis Goldberg, Mandela's comrade, had been freed after 22 years in 1985 (Tom Mooney, "martyr of the American left," served 23 years, 1916-1939). These 10 days of jubilation fired new energies for hot pursuit of the dismantling of apartheid.

How suitable a theme to add to the Passover Hagada April 9! The struggle to end apartheid will mesh well with Holocaust commemorations now common at the Seder. The liberation of South African Blacks, the oppressed 75% of the population of 38.5 million, is still high on any human agenda, particularly a Jewish agenda, for the militant rightwing Afrikaners are flauntingly anti-Semitic. In Pretoria Feb. 10, thousands of armed demonstrators against de Klerk's policy burned an Israeli flag and carried banners with swastikas and placards reading, "Jews are sucking the country dry," "Hitler was right" and "Communism is Jewish." On Feb. 15 in Pretoria (which has 7,000 Jews) another demonstration of Afrikaners in khaki shorts and shirts, revolvers at their waists, carried swastika flags and anti-Semitic placards. The South African Board of (Jewish) Deputies welcomed the freeing of Mandela and Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris said he would "encourage the strongest possible links" between Jews and other "minorities." There are over 100,000 Jews still

in South Africa, after considerable emigration in the past decade (the USA alone now has some 20,000 white South Africans).

American Jewish reaction was prompt and perceptive. The National Council of Jewish Women (100,000 members) on Feb. 12 hailed Mandela, praised de Klerk, but noted, "apartheid still oppresses the people of South Africa and must be dismantled"; U.S. "sanctions are effective. . . (and) must be continued until apartheid is abolished."

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations' Vice-President Albert Vorspan on Feb. 14 also urged continuing sanctions until apartheid has been "fully dismantled," for "It is a system that affronts the most profound values of humanity and democracy and violates the teachings of Judaism."

The American Jewish Congress in convention Feb. 18 also urged the Bush Administration "to continue to enforce economic sanctions until South Africa . . . has abolished apartheid and secured racial equality." The Labor Zionist women in Na'amat USA on Feb. 28 saluted Mandela and hoped for "the dawn of a new South Africa, with social justice and freedom for all."

A diversionary note was struck by the UAHC and B'nai B'rith in their misinterpretation of Mandela's exchange of embraces with Yasir Arafat on Feb. 27. Mandela's view that Palestinians and South Africans both live under "unique colonial conditions" was stretched by UAHC head Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler to imputing to Mandela a belief "in the liquidation of the State of Israel." Apartheid is the issue here; confusing it will help no one, least of all Israel or Jews. ■

THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING, APRIL 19, 1943

EARLY in 1942 the crematoria in Nazi death camps smoked continuously with burning bodies. Many groups in the Warsaw Ghetto became convinced the time was ripe for active resistance. But first the *Judenrat*, Jewish administrators for the Nazis, and the notorious Jewish police had to be discredited and "The 13," a gang of Jewish blackmailers and informers, had to be destroyed.

No semblance of unified resistance existed yet. Early in 1942, conferences took place among the resisting groups — the PPR (Polish Workers-Communist Party), Right and Left Labor Zionists, Hashomer Hatzair (Socialist Zionists) and Hehalutz (Pioneers) —under the stimulus of Joseph Levartovski and Andzhei Schmidt (Pinye Kartin) of the PPR. The Bund and the Zionist Revisionists refused to join.

Levartovski advanced the basis for battle unity: "We are all brothers and children of one family." Schmidt, formerly an officer in the International Brigades that fought Franco fascism in the Spanish Civil War, was the military leader. In Feb., 1942, the Anti-Fascist Bloc was formed; Schmidt, betrayed to the Nazis in May, was killed.

When the Nazis launched their total extermination program in Warsaw in July, 1942, the Anti-Fascist Bloc broke down and the groups formed their own separate self-defense units. By Oct., 1942, however, unity was again achieved, this time including the Bund but not the Zionist Revisionists, who had their own armed unit. The staff of the new Fighting Jewish Organization contained representatives of Hashomer Hatzair, PPR, "Halutz," Left Labor Zionists and the Bund, with Mordecai Anielevich, the Socialist Zionist, as commander.

The Fighting Jewish Organization had its baptism of fire in the brief armed uprising Jan. 18-21, 1943, resisting the attempts of the SS to round up Jews for annihilation. Non-Jewish forces outside the Ghetto helped to gather arms, one by one. The London Polish emigré government refused to give any substantial aid from its store of arms. The PPR and some of its non-Jewish members gave some arms.

By April, 1943, there were about 70,000 left in the Ghetto. Zero hour was April 19, day of the First Seder of Passover. At 6 A.M. German troops entered the Ghetto in force. Fighting broke out. The Germans retreated, beaten by the first surprise attack. The Jews fought with hand grenades, bottles filled with gasoline (Molotov cocktails) and carbines. But the Germans returned with tanks, artillery and planes.

By April 23, the Jewish fighters had to abandon open warfare and turn to partisan fighting. On May 8 the central command post was attacked by the Nazis and most of the leaders, including Anielevich, committed suicide. Fighting went on. On May 16 the Nazis' commanding General Jurgen Stroop reported to his superiors that "the Jewish section of Warsaw no longer exists." But partisan skirmishes continued until mid-July. Some survivors continued to fight the Nazis in the woods.

The Uprising was a heroic chapter in the history of the Jews and an immortal page in the history of World War II.

"Never to forget; never to forgive!"

Nisei Too Liberated Dachau

By S. DON SHIMAZU

CHAPLAIN Thompson, Members of our Armed Forces, Veterans, Honored Guests, Fellow Americans:

Today we are gathered here to remember the Holocaust, the particular Holocaust perpetrated on the Jewish people by Adolf Hitler in World War II.

To those who know, it is one of the blackest chapters in the annals of "man's inhumanity to man." I said, "to those who know," because there are many who don't know; and there are some who vocally, purposely and stridently say that it never happened. The first-hand experiences of members of the 522 Field Artillery Battalion of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team at Dachau are part of the proof that says: "Oh, yes, it did happen!"

Briefly, our time before the Dachau encounter was mostly in joint actions with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team which was an all-volunteer, all-Nisei outfit except for its Caucasian officers. There is much I can say about the many exploits of the 442nd Combat Team, but my allotted speaking time does not allow it.

Just before the Rhine River crossing into Germany, the 442nd was split into two parts. The regiment of infantry and

the company of engineers were sent back to Italy, while the artillery battalion was assigned to elements of the 7th Army to help with the Rhine River crossing. That was in early March of 1945. Once the Rhine River was crossed and the Siegfried Line was breached the front became very fluid. Artillery targets became scarcer and scarcer, firepower become more and more concentrated and the rate of advance became a rat race. The situation was such that the artillery was often in front of the infantry. I remember our outfit traveling many times right on the autobahn, and in broad daylight, with impunity. In the forest alongside the superhighways were Germany's latest aircraft, the brand-new jet fighters, parked for want of fuel, ammunition and pilots. Some were still in packing crates.

We were about 10 miles northwest of Munich and close to Dachau when we began to see people in prison garb all over the place. They were gaunt skeletons with only the skin over the bones and with eyes sunk deep in their sockets. Looking at them, one had to wonder how they were still alive. I was told that it was one of our 522nd's scout teams who were ahead of our main body who shot off the locks of the main gate to free the prisoners. By the time we got there, it must have been in the late afternoon and probably on April 29, 1945. After making our own camp, some of us entered the Dachau compound, which was surrounded by a high barbed-wire fence, with prisoners still milling around everywhere and asking for food. Some of our men I was told took the time to look around at the crematoria and the living quarters; others saw store rooms full of civilian

S. DON SHIMAZU, as president of the 552-B Chapter of the 442nd Veterans Club, delivered this address on May 5, 1989 at a Holocaust Day of Remembrance assembly at the Pearl Harbor Navy Chapel in Hawaii. For another, but similar, account of the Dachau liberation, see the reference to Paul Parks and Black Soldiers in "On Black-Jewish Relations," by the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, in our Feb., 1988 issue and the accompanying interview with Mr. Parks in Boston.

shoes, clothes, etc.; and still others saw rail cars full of dead bodies. I can still smell the pervasive odors of death.

When I entered the Dachau compound myself, I recall going to the command building and there I remember seeing the Rev. Martin Niemöller dressed in the same prison garb of blue and gray stripes seated on a couch and apparently waiting for something. I recognized him immediately from pictures I had seen in my high school social studies classes. I was impressed on that occasion with the air of serenity about him.

In the course of that afternoon, I recall that we were given strict orders not to give them any food. For one thing, there were so many of them; second, the battalion's resources at the moment were limited; and third, we were told that in their condition, they could not handle ordinary food. We were told that more appropriate food would be prepared for them by our mess crews, and I believe that those orders were carried out.

When we sat down for chow that evening, we ate in our own Hq Battery area, which was off-limits to the prisoners. Our food-scrap disposal sump, however, was at our camp perimeter, and we saw many of them standing around watching each person scrape off the scraps into the sump. I did it too, and I still remember them saying: "*Varum? Why? Why are you throwing that food away?*" It was hard, but military discipline, as you know, is very strict and hard, too. In spite of the orders, I found out later that some had secretly fed some of the prisoners with improper food, and also that some prisoners had died. I learned too that some of our people saw prisoners stripping and eating meat from dead horses along the road.

More recently in 1984, a large group of 442nd veterans visited Europe to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of Bruyeres with the people of Bru-

yerer. Those of us who were in the 522 Field Artillery Battalion of the 442nd made time also to visit Dachau in Germany. I think most of us, myself included, found that the Dachau Camp, preserved as a museum for posterity, was different from the one we liberated back in 1945. The layout was very different. It turned out that there were actually several separate prison compounds in the area all known collectively as Dachau. The publicity which followed our visit and the meetings we had with Jewish officials and survivors there and in Munich triggered a lot of interest of all kinds — especially because the news stories mentioned that we were the liberators. Since that time, there have been claims and counter-claims by many American Army units saying that they were the ones who opened the gates, or that they were the first to reach Dachau, etc. They may all be right, but could be speaking of different Dachau camps. In the case of the 522nd's Dachau encounter we would not be able to say which camp, too, if it weren't for my remembrance of my encounter with the Rev. Martin Niemöller. That encounter, I believe, has made possible the pinpointing of the particular camp we were connected with because other records have also placed the Rev. Niemöller in a particular Dachau compound from where he was transferred to another location at a particular time on a particular date.

In Hawaii today there is a "Hawaii Holocaust Project," which is trying to record for posterity as much of the firsthand accounts as possible. You may contact Ms Judy Weightman, a University of Hawaii law professor and volunteer leader, for further information.

In conclusion, let us all hope that mankind will never again see another Hitler, another Holocaust, and another 6,000,000 people processed through extermination camps like the Dachau we saw. ■

REMEMBERING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE, 1915-1923

APRIL 24, 1915 the Turkish government deported 254 Armenian intellectuals from Istanbul; nearly all of them were murdered. This year, the 75th anniversary of that event, which began a systematic slaughter by murder, starvation, deportation into destructive desert areas and other forms of wholesale bestiality that resulted in the elimination of two-thirds of the Armenian population from Turkish soil, is being commemorated.

Henry Morgenthau (1856-1946), U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, wrote home to the State Department on July 15, 1915 that "a campaign of race extermination is in progress under a pretext of reprisal against rebellion." Hitler, on Aug. 22, 1939, the eve of the Nazi drive into Poland, instructing his commanding generals that "our war aim. . . is the physical destruction of the enemy," jeered, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council on Aug. 4, 1983 approved the inclusion of the "Armenian genocide" in the scope of the Memorial and reaffirmed that decision on Nov. 25, 1987. Although the word "genocide" was not coined until after World War II, historians agree on applying the term to the Armenian victims of Turkish violence. Thus Howard M. Sachar, in *The Emergence of the Middle East: 1914-1924* (Knopf, 1969), surveying the record in his chapter, "The Armenian Genocide," concludes that "By any standards this was surely the most unprecedented, indeed the most unimaginable racial annihilation, until then, in modern history." Yet to this day the Turkish government insists there was no "genocide" and protests the commemoration of this genocide.

Therefore at this writing, March 20, a filibuster in the U.S. Senate has prevented a vote on a Joint Resolution of the Senate and House, designating April 24, 1990 as "National Day of Remembrance of the 75th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923." The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform) at its New Orleans convention in Nov., 1989 endorsed this resolution and six of the eight Jewish Senators favor it. A majority of the Senate is known to support the resolution. But fear of offending our Turkish ally in NATO is proving a major obstacle. (The Israeli government is also understood to oppose such a commemoration for fear of offending the only Muslim state besides Egypt that recognizes Israel; attempts to influence American Jewish leadership have not caught on.)

Despite the thwarting of the Congressional resolution, the Armenian community in the USA (numbering about one million) will be staging commemorations. In New York, the Knights of Vartan has arranged for a demonstration on April 22 at 2 P.M. in Times Square. Among the speakers will be Elie Wiesel, who played an important role, when he was on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, in approving the inclusion of the Armenian genocide as part of the Holocaust Memorial work. Other Jewish speakers will be Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), who were among the original sponsors of the Senate Resolution, and Queens Borough Pres. Claire Shulman (Queens has a large Armenian population). For commemorations in other cities, inquire at your local Armenian church or other institution.

The Jewish Cemetery in Krakow

By L. L. LEE

I

STOP here. The green light
falls from the trees; we
peer through bars:

gray stones in crazy attitudes,
nettles, the vine climbs
the iron fence we cannot pass, and

there lie the dead.

(History
is nettle, leaf, and broken stone,
mosaic of names in a mad wall; history
is awry.)

Turn here. A swept walk,
a tulip on a plinth; we
halt astonished—

 a blackbird
whistles in the summer air. . .

 ah, here
history hangs suspended but
cannot finish—

 and abstract beauty
is a crumbling name.

II

WE came here first in brilliant
summer,
the trees dripping leaves, the air
dancing, a fury of passionate lives
crawling over the stones.

But you must say it simply:

L. L. LEE of Bellingham, WA, is a new contributor. He teaches in the English Department of Western Washington University.

the ice lies under a gray tree;
around the gray stones
a vine winds like a
heavy chain. The wind blows
the gray snow.

One must say it simply.
There is no way to say it.

Soap

By BERTHA CHESTER HELD
Tr. from the Yiddish
by Bert Held

MY child,
who leisurely washed his small
hands,
rubbing them over and over together
with soap,
became suddenly still,
thoughtful,
asking—
"Mommy, what is soap made from?"
I heard and did not answer,
my heart beating faster
and like clams,
my lips closed tight together.
I stood before my child ashamed. . .
"I don't know
Long ago—
They made it from fats, from. . . from
what not?"
"And now?"
"And now —
now from Jews!"
Instantly I regretted my words,
longing to pull them back,
but too late,
My child, now grinning, responded,
"You don't know what you are talking
about!"

BERTHA CHESTER HELD of Manhattan Beach, CA is a new contributor. Some of her poems have been translated into Hebrew in Israel and set to music.

Discussing Anti-Semitism in the USSR

By WILLIAM SHNEYER and the EDITORIAL BOARD

I just received a letter from a friend of mine whom I rediscovered after 41 years. He was responsible for my getting involved in the Latvian youth underground movement in 1935 and now lives in France. He is a Red Army veteran. He was recently featured on the front page of *Alef*, a Russian language publication in Israel published by Soviet emigrants, for donating a minerology exhibit to Bar Ilan University.

In his letter of Dec. 21, 1989 he enclosed photocopies of two letters from his relatives in the Soviet Union which are a cry for help in emigration. I am translating here from a letter dated Nov. 23, 1989:

"We would not be leaving because of absence of groceries or goods; all that can be tolerated. The matter involves the health, maybe life, of Sasha [their grandson], and there it is not possible to think of anything else. We have placed high hopes on *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Truly, some things have changed for the better: books that were not available are being issued; previously banned films are being shown.

"But, if previously anti-Semites could quietly refuse to hire us or admit us into good institutes, but could not speak out openly, now there is such a violent wave of anti-Semitism that we have to fear for our lives. *Pamyat* operates legally and many others have spread out worse than the Black Hundreds of Tsarist times.

"You can't imagine how our Sasha is being bullied in his school — he is of small stature, an intelligent boy, a good student, on whose face it is written that he is a Jew. Sasha kept quiet for a long time in order not to worry us, but recently he came home with a big black eye and broke down and told us about

how he was hung up with hands tied like crucified Christ, etc. I don't have the strength to write about all the humiliations.

"A son and a nephew of our acquaintance entered the army; one hanged himself, the other had a mental breakdown. In Leningrad windows were broken in a synagogue. . . ."

The second letter is from Sasha's mother. It basically repeats the above but is even more panic-stricken. "I have one son and I fear for him every minute." They are ready to face any and all difficulties and problems, but not humiliation. Anti-Semitism is "a general mood, general tendency, approved at the top and received with satisfaction below."

Incidentally, I met my friend in 1948 in Paris. At that time I did not believe what he told me about anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and the Red Army. Since reestablishing contact I have apologized to him for my disbelief.

WILLIAM SHNEYER

Delray Beach, FL, Jan. 8

The Editorial Board comments:

We too feel horror at this account and are mindful too that we, like Shneyer, years ago failed to perceive the dangers of anti-Semitism in the USSR when it was reported. Therefore we reaffirm our stress on the right to emigrate (and return) as inalienable. At the same time, it seems to us that the difficulties of evaluating the situation, or the plight, of Soviet Jews are complicated by the fact that there are forces inside the USSR and inside the USA who seek to spread panic as a way of undermining the Gorbachev program and leadership. Therefore, listening to *all*

voices, we hear both the deep fears of those who wrote the despairing letters quoted above *and* the words also of those who surely have no interest in minimizing real fears or real dangers but who reach different conclusions:

- In the *Jerusalem Post* Sept. 16, 1989, Michael Chlenov, a professed Soviet Zionist, Hebrew teacher, and head of both the Jewish Cultural Association of Moscow and the new nationwide Jewish Cultural Society born in a Congress Dec. 18-22, stated: "It's true that anti-Semitism is increasing, and it is true that many Jews are in a state of panic. . . the influence of the anti-Semitic groups on Soviet society is not very great now. Public opinion polls published recently showed that the new extreme right groups might get between 10 and 15% of the vote if there were open elections. That is similar to the support that exists in France for Le Pen's National Front, and for the Republicans and other neo-Nazis in Germany. . . ."

- Sept. 19, 1989, the Constituent Congress of the People's Movement of the Ukraine called on all "thinking citizens to raise their voice against any form of anti-Semitism, and to defend their own dignity and the dignity of the Jewish people, its culture, science, religion, right to be represented in any elected body, and the inviolable right to speak, create and teach children in Yiddish or Hebrew."

- In the *Jerusalem Post* Dec. 12, 1989, Isi Leibler, vice-president of the World Jewish Congress who has been outstanding in helping Soviet Jews organize themselves, wrote, after his last visit: ". . . the main organs of the government-sponsored media are actively condemning anti-Semitism, as are most parliamentary and political personalities within the Gorbachev entourage, [but Jews] want to leave before the last train departs. The reality is that unless there is a total breakdown in law and order,

Soviet Jews are more secure today with a government that condemns anti-Semitism than they were with the former regime, which sponsored anti-Semitic campaigns at government level. . . . Anti-Semitic discrimination is being systematically eliminated in the universities and professions, and in job-placement. . . . in some universities there is even a form of inverse discrimination in favor of Jews, to demonstrate the contrast with the bad old days. . . ."

- In the Zionist *Midstream* Jan., 1990, Michael Chlenov writes: "Almost every Jew who comes off the plane in Vienna starts talking about pogroms and his personal fears. This is heard by those who meet them who in turn deliver the messages to their friends and relatives in Russia. This in its turn influences the anti-Semites, instigating them to more action. . . . Within the majority of Jews who do not wish to emigrate, there are some who are trying to create something positive under the new conditions. Thus there are two developments among Soviet Jews at one and the same time, fear and organizing. . . . The process can continue for several generations. Jewish children born today in the Soviet Union will probably grow up and die there as Jews. We have to protect them against anti-Semitism, create appropriate cultural and spiritual conditions, and establish an independent organization so that anyone who does not emigrate from the USSR and wants to live here as a Jew will be able to do so."

- Jan. 31, 1990 in Moscow, NYC Councilman Noach Dear of Brooklyn was told at the Foreign Ministry, "We will do everything in our power to protect the Jewish community." The *Forward* Feb. 16 reported, "Dear said Shevardnadze gave him his word that the Soviet government would apply existing legislation to protect Jews." Whether Shevardnadze's statement was published also in the USSR, where it could act as

a deterrent, has not been ascertained.

- The *Forward* Feb. 16 also reported that Tass published a statement by the KGB saying, "Rumors about pogroms rouse people and exacerbate the situation. The only information that the state security bodies have been receiving are the rumors themselves, reports of them by the mass media and requests by individual citizens for explanation about one rumor or another." The KGB said it was "monitoring the situation" and pledged to "take the necessary measures if the tension escalates."

- The *N. Y. Times* Feb. 18, in an AP dispatch headlined, "Report of Riots in Soviet Republic Is Denied," practically buried the news that *Pravda* "warned that ethnic strife threatens the revisions of Pres. Mikhail S. Gorbachev, and thousands of people in Leningrad demonstrated against civil violence, particularly anti-Semitism."

- The *N. Y. Times* Feb. 22 reports that *Literaturnaya Gazeta* Feb. 21 and Tass revealed that Moscow prosecutors are conducting a criminal investigation into *Pamyat*, the Russian chauvinist and anti-Semitic organization. Distinguishing between freedom of speech and the right to incite "national and racial hatred and strife," the prosecutors are examining an article in *Energika*, organ of the Moscow Energy Institute, in which *Pamyat* calls for a program to "de-Zionize" the country and "to prohibit Jews and their ilk from defending dissertations, getting academic titles and degrees, or joining the Communist Party" or being "elected to government councils or leading party, government or other posts."

It is in this context that we believe U. S. Jews should act to assist Soviet Jews 1) to emigrate if they wish; 2) to fight anti-Semitism in their own domain as part of the democratic process; 3) to build Jewish cultural and communal institutions as part of their own self-defense. ■

SUPPLEMENTARY

- The *Washington Post* Feb. 26 published "Soviet Monarcho-Nazis and the Specter of Anti-Semitism," by Vitalii I. Goldanskii, director of the Semenov Institute of Chemical Physics of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and a member of the Council of People's Deputies and the foreign relations committee of the Supreme Soviet. Brief excerpts:

"The extremist groups. . . of which the best known. . . is the 'National Patriotic Front *Pamyat*' (memory). . . recently entered into a confederation. . . (as the) 'Bloc of Social-Patriotic Movements of Russia.' I prefer to call them monarcho-Nazis. . . to reflect their combination of deep reverence for the autocratic Tsarist Russian empire and ferocious hatred of Jews.

"Incredibly, the Russian monarcho-Nazis openly and widely condemn the Jews as the main culprits in all of the troubles of Russia from the October Revolution. . . until the present — including genocide against the Russian people with the millions of Russian deaths in civil war, collectivization and purges; destruction of tens of thousands of Russian churches and historical monuments; and spiritual poisoning of the people through the introduction of decadent. . . Western culture alien to Russian tradition. They even accuse the Jews of ritual murders and a world-wide conspiracy against humankind, making reference to the disgraceful hoax, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*."

- Martin A. Wenick, executive director, National Conference on Soviet Jewry, said Feb. 28: among Soviet Jews "a sense of panic has set in, and it is very difficult for them to look at the issues with a sense of realism."

it
happened
in

ISRAEL

Trade Minister Ariel Sharon's surprise resignation from the Cabinet Feb. 13 was interpreted by some as a victory by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir over hard-line extremists in the Likud Party and an indication that the Middle East peace process would now go forward. Sharon's eventual goal was to take over as prime minister. The Labor Party threatened to withdraw from the government unless Shamir started negotiations with the Palestinians early in March. . . . When Shamir told a group of Likud veterans Jan. 14 that the "big immigration" of Soviet Jews required "a big and strong state," apparently implying that many of the immigrants would be settled in the occupied territories, there were protests from many governments including the U.S., the USSR, China and some Arab states. Less than 1% of Soviet immigrants have so far settled beyond the Green Line. . . . By Jan., 1990 Israeli Defense Forces demolished or sealed 432 homes of families of Palestinians accused of anti-occupation acts; in mid-February the IDF began sealing the homes of Palestinians arrested on suspicion of rock-throwing and causing injuries. Knesset member Dedi Zucker of the Citizens Rights Movement called this an extension of collective punishment without trial which would harm many innocent people. The IDF also raised to \$2,500 the bail that parents must guarantee to free youngsters under 14 arrested for hurling stones. A new response to stone-throwing being tested by the IDF is a jeep-mounted gravel-thrower.

Government estimates show that about 15,000 Israelis emigrated in 1989. Unknown numbers of others who left on tourist visas are not expected to return. The Society to Stop Emigration from Israel estimates that 650,000 have departed since the state was founded in 1948, but the Absorption Ministry insists the number is no higher than about 350,000. Most of the *yordim* (emigrants) are younger *sabras*. . . . The costs of absorbing the mass of immigrants from the Soviet Union, currently flooding in at a rate of 10,000 a month, are expected to amount to billions of dollars over the next few years. The tabloid *Chadashot* said the Ministry of Finance is planning a 10% hike in the income tax — already among the world's highest — to pay for it, but officials denied this. Severe budget cuts and reductions of public services are also under study. . . . The Absorption Ministry and Interior Ministry have been denounced for impeding Soviet Jewish immigration by requiring the newcomers to prove they are Jews, and for refusing to register some who did not bring Soviet documents with them. Both ministries are run by leaders of the Shas Party of ultra-Orthodox Sephardim.

B'tseshem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights, reported that 11 Palestinians were shot and killed by security forces in the territories

in January, the lowest monthly figure since Nov., 1988. The total since the *intifada* began was placed at 618. Nine alleged collaborators were slain by Palestinians, bringing the total to 175. . . . Bank Hapoalim estimated the two-year cost of the *intifada* at between \$800 million and \$1 billion. . . . Nine or 10 Israeli tourists were killed and wounded in an attack on a tour bus near Cairo Feb. 3. An Islamic fundamentalist group in Lebanon took responsibility. The PLO denounced it. Egyptians and Israelis expressed hope the attack would not block movement toward peace talks. . . . Archeologists working with Dan Bahat in a tunnel under the Temple Mount have revealed surprising new details about ancient Jerusalem. Most notable is the finding that the Second Temple complex built by Herod was the fourth such complex, not the second. . . . The famous caves of Nahal Meaorot, just south of Haifa, inhabited continuously for over 200,000 years, were recently opened to local visitors and tourists. *Homo erectus*, the hominid precursor of modern man, as well as Neanderthals, lived in the caves.

Concern is rising over the escalating suicide rate in the armed forces. Unofficial figures put the number at 25 (19 were draftees) in the past six months, compared to 11 in the same period in 1988. The number is low compared to the rate among youth of the same age in modern Western countries. Most were reportedly cases of mental aberration. In one case, the commander of a tough combat unit was dismissed for allowing a kangaroo court of enlisted men to humiliate and torture a sergeant to the point that he took his own life. . . . The number of Palestinians moving to Jordan from the West Bank has quintupled since the *intifada* began, according to a Jordanian Interior Ministry official. An estimated 45,594 have moved since 1983, of whom 34,351 left in the past two years. . . . 100 Israelis developed AIDS in the 1980s, and 57 of them have died. The number rose from four in 1984 to 23 last year. But the Health Ministry reports that the incidence of AIDS in Israel is below world rates. The number of people taking voluntary free blood tests has dropped sharply.

The Jewish National Fund has created forests in the northern Negev, where the average annual rainfall of 280 mm. would normally not support them. Various types of pines were used primarily, as they can survive with a minimum of water. Farther south, in the desert west of Beersheba, the JNF plans to create a savannah, with trees every 10 meters or so. Dr. Menachem Sachs, JNF afforestation director for the southern region, predicts that within five years there will be controlled sheep grazing on the new savannah, land almost entirely bare until now. . . . Completion of a 7¹/₂-mile rapid transit system to connect the suburb Herzlia with Tel Aviv is expected in 12 to 18 months. It will relieve the city's 350,000-vehicle-a-day traffic problem. It will relieve the city's 350,000-vehicle-a-day traffic problem. . . . March 5 Israel cut the value of the shekel against the dollar by 1.6%. (The shekel had been devalued by 4.2% against the dollar since Feb. 28.) The rate of exchange is now 2.0431 shekels to the dollar, and 2.1779 shekels to one unit of each of a selection of foreign currencies which are dominated by the dollar.

JONATHAN HARRIS

Paul Robeson from the Outside

By JOEL SHATZKY

Paul Robeson: A Biography, by Martin Bauml Duberman. Knopf, N.Y., 1989, 784 pages, indexed, \$24.45 cloth, \$14.95 paperback.

AS Jews from progressive households of my generation were growing up, the name "Paul Robeson" was intoned in their homes with some of the awe reserved in other households for more conventionally reverent matters like "God" or "Roosevelt." We knew Robeson as a booming, wonderfully vibrant voice on records, "Ballad for Americans" being one of the favorites. But Robeson was also unique in his many connections to the progressive Jewish community: a Black man who sang Yiddish songs with a zest and understanding that could be imagined coming only from Jewish folksingers for whom Yiddish was *mama loshen*. This trait, his ability to empathize so wholeheartedly with a culture that was foreign to him, endeared him to progressive American Jews as much as his commitment to the causes we shared: against racism and anti-Semitism and for social and economic equality. As he himself once wrote in linking the fate of Blacks and Jews: ". . . In all the diverse strands which make up the web of American history for the past three centuries, there are direct threads which link the interests of the Negro and Jewish people from the earliest days." ("Bonds of Brotherhood," *Jewish Life*, Nov., 1954.)

Unfortunately, many of the War Baby generation lost track of Robeson

JOEL SHATZKY, *professor of English at the State University of New York at Cortland, last appeared here in Sept., 1988, with an article, "Holocaust Fiction in America."*

in the '60s and '70s and assumed that he had settled in the Soviet Union. We were probably even surprised to discover that he had still been alive when his obituary appeared in the *N. Y. Times* in 1976. He had ceased to exist as an active force during the Civil Rights Movement, and it was never quite clear why such eloquence had been silent in the most turbulent and exciting period of positive change in race relations this country had had since the Civil War.

Martin Duberman, whose documentary play, *In White America* (1964), served as an eloquent historical expression of Black anger and persuaded Paul Robeson Jr. to entrust him with writing this book, has attempted, in his extensive study of Robeson, to solve some of the enigmas of this heroic figure's life. The volume contains over 500 pages of text, 200 of footnotes, with 135 interviews and hundreds of references including, among the most fascinating, the FBI reports on Robeson over a 30-year period, some of which Duberman obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (Paul Robeson Jr. gave Duberman access to 5,000 pages of FBI, CIA and State Department documents which he had obtained on Paul, his wife Eslanda, and Paul Jr.). Duberman makes a serious attempt to explain who this extraordinary individual was and what he believed.

The son of a slave who escaped from the South and who later became a clergyman, Robeson was born in 1898 in Princeton, NJ. His achievements read like something out of a Horatio Alger novel: All-American in football and valedictorian at Rutgers; a brilliant linguist; an actor who came to the public's attention in the revival of Eugene

O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* (1925) and who later became the first American "Black" Othello (1944) since the legendary Ira Aldridge (1804-1867) had performed the work more than 100 years before; a singer of such magnificent voice and presence that even when he was in disfavor in the United States he could still "pack them in" whenever he was given the opportunity; a man of immense personal courage in his outspoken opposition to American racism at a time when he was among the very few prominent Blacks, in the '30s and '40s, willing to speak out; a thinker who foresaw the dilemmas of the Third World long before most progressives seriously considered the problems of colonial peoples; all this and more exemplified this great man.

Although something of Robeson's character can be divined from the fact that he fearlessly lived a life which would have led most other Black men into the hands of a lynch mob, perhaps too much of the biography derives from what others — especially his wife, Essie — had to say about him, and relatively little from his own words. The overall impression given, despite the monumental evidence of his life, is that Robeson was very much a man unto himself, not in what he did, but in what he really thought and felt. That he was an artist both as musician and actor, as well as an intellectual, however, does not come out clearly at all, but more of that later. What does come across are the facts of his life: that Robeson grew up and initially thrived in a society that was so profoundly racist that even someone with his enormous talents, personal charm and emotional fortitude could not ultimately overcome its malevolence.

Even at the beginning of his fame, when he was performing in *The Emperor Jones* in the 1920s, Robeson couldn't find a restaurant to serve him a meal in "open-minded" Greenwich Village (p. 87). And throughout his life

Robeson was pursued by the countless petty indignities of being a Black man in a racist country, although he enjoyed temporary respite when he lived in Europe and a sense of complete equality in the USSR. If the roots of his seemingly unshakable belief in communism and the Soviet Union sprang from anywhere, it was from his experience of being born and raised Black in America. For despite his fame and enormous success — he often earned the then impressive fee of \$2,000 for a single concert performance — he was never allowed to forget that he could be treated "differently" at the whim of a waitress as well as a millionaire.

Of special interest is Robeson's affinity for Jews and the Jewish people. His willingness to make common cause with them in social and political issues should remind all of us how much closer the Black-Jewish alliance could be than it is today. Robeson counted among his Jewish friends and confidantes such notable figures as Sergei Eisenstein, Itzik Feffer and Emma Goldman as well as less-known close personal friends: Freda Diamond, and Sam and Helen Rosen. Eslanda Goode Robeson, in fact, was the great-granddaughter of one Isaac Nuñez Cardozo, a Sephardic Jew; and Paul's only child, Paul Jr., married Marilyn Paula Greenberg. From his childhood, he "first heard about the Children of Israel — the epics of Moses and Joshua and Gideon and the fiery Hebrew prophets — the Bible stories that gave imagery to the freedom songs of my people" ("Bonds of Brotherhood"). And later, in the early days of his singing career, "Jewish artists I came to know. . . introduced me to the world of Sholem Aleichem" (p. 199).

Although taken to task in later years for not denouncing Stalin for the murder of Jewish artists and intellectuals, including his close friend, Itzik Feffer, Robeson did have the courage to

conclude his last concert in Moscow in 1949 (as told dramatically in Paul Robeson Jr.'s "How My Father Last Met Itzik Feffer," JEWISH CURRENTS, Nov., 1981), when Feffer was still alive, by referring to his friendship with this great Jewish writer and singing "*Zog Nit Kayn mol*," the Warsaw Ghetto resistance song, to a hushed and excited audience (p. 353). (Privately, however, according to his son, Robeson wrote, along with Frederich Joliot-Curie and Howard Fast, to Stalin pleading with him to spare the Jewish intellectuals who were subsequently murdered.) And in that same year, one of the most traumatic for Robeson, when a group of thugs set upon his audience after his performance in Peekskill, NY, they taunted the "red bastard. . . Jews" (p. 369) who had made common cause with Blacks in supporting Robeson's right to perform freely in a country in which bigotry and anti-communism were, at that time, inextricably mixed.

Unfortunately, Duberman too often mentions Robeson's connection with progressive Jews and their causes only in passing, as incidental to his subject's life. The remarkable emotional alliance, unique in his time, between Robeson and the Jewish community that shared and suffered and fought with him against the bigotry that flowered from the '20s through the '50s is given little more emphasis than his social visits to famous artists or a casual love affair.

This tendency to "chronicle" rather than "focus" is a definite weakness in the book since it is reflected not only in Duberman's treatment of Robeson's connection with Jews but with the Black community as well. Although the biographer makes clear that even in his worst sufferings during the black-listing period Robeson was generally welcomed in the Black churches by the "community," Duberman expends little space on the particulars of Robeson's involvement with the everyday work-

ing-class Blacks who gave him unfailing support. It was Robeson's example, as much as that of Jesse Owens and Joe Louis, which gave courage to Black people during the worst days of the Depression. Although Robeson knew literally everybody who was anybody in the United States and Europe during the height of his fame, Duberman's "great names" approach to Robeson's life runs counter to much of what he stood for and most fervently believed in: the importance of the "little people" in creating a great society.

What Duberman presents, however, is fundamentally a record of events: Robeson's triumphs and his most abject failures. Especially when relating his earlier life, the biographer gives undue emphasis to Robeson's many liaisons with women, both Black and white. (Despite this, he and Essie remained married for 44 years until her death in 1965.)

Duberman does give credit to the role that Essie played in her husband's life, her own abilities as a writer, lecturer and spokesperson for progressive causes often independent of her husband. And certainly, Duberman's biography is filled with countless other important details of Robeson's life. Perhaps, painfully, he lingers too long upon the last years in which Robeson, afflicted with mental illness, attempted suicide and was continually in and out of clinics, where he suffered from excessive shock treatments or over-medication. (Paul Robeson Jr. feels there is some reason to consider the possibility that the CIA might have given his father hallucinatory drugs.) These last horrifying years of illness, caused in no small part by the efforts of the FBI and State Department to isolate Robeson by denying him a passport while helping to block any access to public performances in the States, reveal, perhaps most clearly, the real fears that Robeson aroused in

reactionaries in this country who loathed his outspokenness on racism as much, if not more, than his refusal to denounce communism and the Soviet Union.

Robeson's activities had long been followed by the FBI, which revealed its own racism by regarding his involvement with such organizations as the Council of African Affairs as dangerous because such groups fomented "unrest among the negroes (sic) by stressing racial discrimination" (p. 258). But ironically, the most damaging statement to his career Robeson made was when he was *misquoted* at the World Peace Conference in Paris in 1949.

What he actually said was: "We shall not put up with any hysterical raving that urges us to make war on anyone. Our will to fight for peace is strong. We shall not make war on anyone. We shall not make war on the Soviet Union." What the Associated Press misquoted him as saying was: "It is unthinkable that American Negroes would go to war on behalf of those who have oppressed us for generations against a country (the Soviet Union) which in one generation has raised our people to the full dignity of mankind" (p. 342).

As a result of that one misquotation, he was not only denounced by the white press but the Black one as well. Black leaders with whom he had worked, such as Roy Wilkins and Adam Clayton Powell Jr., vilified him. Many performance opportunities were blocked when officials and veterans groups protested his use of local facilities. And in an inadvertent parody of Orwell's *1984*, Robeson's name was even deleted from the 1919 All-American Football Team when the list was reprinted in the 1950 edition of *College Football* so that only 10 men were listed (p. 760).

Despite this — the FBI harassment, the denial of his passport for eight years during the '50s, the continued misrepresentation of his views in the press —

Robeson maintained many of his closest ties and was still loved and admired by the Black people as well as progressive whites. Ironically, however, by the time the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing in the early '60s, Robeson had become incapacitated by his illness and during a period of militance which his courageous example had pioneered, he was an almost forgotten figure.

Duberman, as well as many reviewers of his book, ponder why Robeson, even after having read Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin in 1956, refused to make any public statement critical of the Soviet Union. But had Duberman understood Robeson's cultural attitudes more clearly as a Black man growing up in an intensely racist country, Robeson's politics would not have been too difficult for him to see. Although in many ways apparently idealistic, Robeson was basically pragmatic in regarding the interests of the colored peoples of the world as of greater importance than the particular domestic policies, abhorrent as they were, of the Stalin period. As a counterweight to Western imperialism, the Soviet Union represented to Robeson a hope for Third World people as a defender against post-colonial exploitation. (Several articles in *JEWISH CURRENTS* by Paul Robeson Jr. and Morris U. Schappes about Robeson's meeting with Feffer confirm my conjecture: Nov., 1981, Feb., 1982, April, 1983.)

Duberman's own cultural attitudes are revealed, moreover, in the way in which he deals with Robeson as an actor and musician. Little more than generalities in reviews are given of Robeson as either a singer or actor. While Duberman indicates that Robeson had some interesting theories about music, Robeson's own ideas and extensive writings on the subject (hundreds of

(Continued on page 33)

● The
● Editor's
● Diary

• “The Minsk Ghetto” — *Uncensored*

At last we have this unique, indispensable account of massive and effective Jewish resistance to the Nazi occupation of Minsk and the nearby forests: *The Minsk Ghetto: Soviet-Jewish Partisans against the Nazis*, by Hersh Smolar, translated from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld (Holocaust Library, N.Y., 1990, 175 pages, not indexed, \$16.95, \$10.95 paperback). The Yiddish original was published in Tel Aviv in 1985 as *Sovetishe Yidn Hinter Geto Tsoimen* — Soviet Jews under Ghetto Barriers — and is accurately, idiomatically and fluently translated by Max Rosenfeld.

A little pre-history is relevant. In April, 1948 our magazine (then named *Jewish Life*) printed “How the Minsk Ghetto Resisted the Nazis,” by H. Smoliar, translated by the dentist, Dr. Hyman J. Lewbin, as an excerpt from Smoliar’s first book on the subject, published in Moscow in 1946 in 10,000 Yiddish and 50,000 Russian copies by “Emes,” the publication apparatus of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Smoliar was “secretary of the original group of three who organized the ghetto resistance.” (The same issue carried my article, “Resistance Is the Lesson,” on the fifth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising — available in pamphlet reprint for the asking.)

Then in April, 1959, we published Smoliar’s “The Lambs Were Legend — the Wolves Were Real,” translated by Hersh Harris (Hartman) from the Warsaw *Yiddishe Folk-Shtimme*, of which Smoliar was then the editor (reprinted in our *Second Jewish Currents Reader*, available for \$2 postpaid). In 1966 the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum in Oakland, CA published Lewbin’s translation of Smoliar’s 1946 volume as *Resistance in Minsk*. (In my review here in Oct., 1966 I noted that the book inexplicably omitted statements that had appeared in Lewbin’s excerpt in our April, 1948 issue.) And now we have the uncensored book, rewritten, restructured and expanded to include Smolar’s work among the partisans in the forest as well as his researches in Russian and German archives. (Smoliar now spells his name in English as Smolar, a change not noted in this edition and therefore liable to bedevil librarians and bibliographers.)

Most important is the fact that Smolar now feels free to report what he had in 1946/1966 been able to record only in his notes and papers. He explains that he returned to the subject after almost 40 years because of “the general reluctance of leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government to acknowledge anything that had to do with the Jews under German occupation, plus the unconcealed hatred of those who spread the anti-Semitic libel that the Jews had evaded military service in the war. . . that Jews had simply gone out and bought the awards and medals they had supposedly earned in action on the war fronts. . . The conditions prevailing at that time, however, did not permit me to tell the whole truth, either about the anti-Semitism displayed by the general resistance movement toward the ghetto combat organization,

or about the anti-Semitism in the Partisan ranks. . . . Soviet historians. . . noted the existence of the combat organization. . . in a truncated, fragmentary way. . ." (pages 1-3). Smolar's revelations are instructive and point up the need for and value of the *glasnost* precipitated by Gorbachev.

The Minsk ghetto resistance movement preceded and outlasted the Warsaw ghetto resistance and uprising, and did vastly more damage to the Nazis. The Nazis created the ghetto in Minsk on July 20, 1941. The resistance began to organize itself on Aug. 17. Smolar and his few associates had to combat a passivity based on the illusion that one could survive by doing good work in the Nazi shops and industries feeding the war machine. By 1943, there were 130 underground combat groups of three to five members each. The underground taught Jewish workers how to sabotage production. The Nazi terror was genocidal. On Nov. 7, 1941, 12,000 Jews were slaughtered. There were extensive massacres on March 3, April 2 and July 28-31, 1942. In May, 1942, 28 Jewish leaders were hanged and their bodies left hanging in public. On Feb. 1, 1943, 500 Jews were gassed to death in vans.

The Judenrat in Minsk cooperated with the underground, but there were informers, collaborators with the Nazis and the vicious Jewish Police. So "there were mornings when informers were found on the ground strangled to death" (p. 15). Many were sentenced to death; executions were common. (Such actions are inevitable in such situations; Palestinians in the West Bank are now doing what Jews did to their collaborators.) Jewish sabotage was widespread. Poison was injected into an entire shipment of whiskey sent to the Eastern front. An overshoe factory was sent up in smoke. Perhaps the most important achievement of the resistance was their leading 10,000 out of 100,000 Jews in Minsk (including old men, women and children) into the forests, where seven powerful Partisan detachments were formed. In Minsk itself, 1,600 Nazi soldiers were killed and "are buried in a German military cemetery" (p. 111). In the forests, avoiding confrontational battles, the Partisans took their toll, with Jewish children among the most effective: Vilik Rubishin, 12, blew up seven Nazi troop trains; Fimka Pressman, 15, derailed 11 troop trains. For retailing such data to the Byelorussian Communist leaders, Smolar was branded a "narrow nationalist" and attempts were made to kill him but were frustrated. He was the sole survivor of the original organizers of the resistance.

There were only 2,000 Jews left in Minsk when, on Oct. 21, 1943, the Germans burnt the ghetto down; only 90 escaped from the city; another 10 or 12 survived in underground hiding places. When the Germans were finally driven out, 5,000 Jews returned to Minsk from the Partisan detachments. This barebones outline can only hint at the riches of fact and analysis in this outstanding book.

• *The "Intifada" again on TV*

January 16

Having on Sept. 6, 1989 seen the Public Broadcasting System's Arab-oriented documentary, *Days of Rage: The Young Palestinians*, presented together with balancing documentaries as *Intifada: The Palestinians and Israel* (see this "Diary" for Dec., 1989), I watched with special interest the rebutting documentary, *The Intifada through Israeli Eyes*, shown as a package, including a 30-minute discussion after the film, entitled *A Search for Common Ground*.

First you hear shots — then you see kids throwing stones. . . . An Israeli says, "They found a way to drag us into a situation we don't know how to deal with". . . . Another Israeli explains that these are "territories won by Israel in the 1967 war". . . . A third laments the "moral cost of occupying 1,500,000 Palestinians". . . . An Israeli commanding officer complains, "This is not a military mission; it is a police action." . . . "Outside the territories," the narrator assures us, "Israel is not a battleground," and we are shown sunny beaches, tennis, cafes — "but there is an undercurrent of fear that can be sensed". . . . An Israeli insists, "Security — the first thing is security". . . . Another declares there is "no way for compromise". . . . *Jerusalem Post* writer Hirsh Goodman demands, "Don't you judge me," you who are safe in the USA, and explains that Israel is a democratic country, where you wear a uniform one day and next day you protest against the army and government. . . . We are informed that since 1948 Israel has fought six "wars for survival" (included is the questionable 1956 war and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon). . . . We are shown Begin, Carter and Sadat at Camp David reaching an agreement (which for all these years Israel has refused to implement regarding the Palestinians). . . . and we are told, "For 20 years the Palestinians have refused to negotiate land for peace." . . . We are informed there are 78,000 Israeli settlers on the West Bank. . . . Yossi Klein-Halevi, a journalist, admits, "Yes, we are oppressing them. There's no getting away from that." . . . Arafat at Geneva is shown accepting Israel's right to exist, but then the U.S. Baker plan is advanced, aiming at a kind of "autonomy". . . . We are given the casualty score: 500 Palestinians killed by Israelis; 40 Israelis killed by Palestinians; 100 Palestinians killed as collaborators by Palestinians. . . . A group of Israeli youth is asked, "How many are willing to give up the West Bank?," all raise their hands; "How many are willing to give up Jerusalem?," only one hand is raised. . . . Israel has many Holocaust survivors. One says, "I love this land. Holocaust taught us never to be an oppressor. And always to take your enemy at his word" when he says he wants to destroy you. . . .

Missing from this "mainstream" presentation were the two Israeli retired generals who, in *Days of Rage*, declared that Israel's security would be better served by a negotiated two-state solution than by perpetuating oppression of Palestinians by an increasingly demoralized army of occupation. Nor could this program eliminate the image from *Days of Rage* of a West Bank family of 21 standing around the rubble of their house, demolished by Israeli soldiers, explaining how all 21 were now trying to "live" in a single room. In the discussion moderated by Hodding Carter (who did the same stunt with *Days of Rage*), Daniel Pipes found the present film "full of anguish" while *Days of Rage* was "full of rage," and preferred the Israeli film; for him "there is no solution to *intifada*." The Palestinian-American Edward W. Said affirmed the two-state solution, and was effectively supported by Helena Cobban. With negotiation the only way.

• *Our Jewish Currents Forum on Perestroika*

January 28

Despite competition from the Superbowl, about 125 people, including many new faces, came to the Community Church at 2 P.M. to hear Paul Robeson Jr. on the general situation and Sid Resnick on its Jewish dimension. The entire proceedings were taped (courtesy of Lyber Katz and Morris Willdorf) and

transcribed by Max Rosenfeld. Articles based upon the presentations by Roberson Jr. and Resnick, incorporating their answers to questions and comments on the discussion, will be published as soon as the writers produce them, in time, we hope, for the June issue. The questions were put by Dr. Annette T. Rubinstein, Steve Strum, Robert McGuire (National Lawyers Guild), Tom Porper, Dr. Nathaniel S. Lehrman, Si Sperber, Sol Moser, Isabel Pearlman, Mike Hirsch, Tillie Pevzner (Sam's sister), and David Kaplan. Discussants included Strum, Hirsch, David Hacker and McGuire. Having acted as Moderator of the afternoon, I grabbed the last three minutes.

◦ *“Talking to the Enemy” via TV*

January 30

Regrettably, this constructive one-hour film produced for British TV does not have the resonance of *Days of Rage* or *Intifada through Israeli Eyes*, but does make a triad with these two. Shown on the Public Broadcasting System at midnight, *Talking to the Enemy* is an enriched and elaborated dialogue between Haim Shur, editor of the Tel Aviv monthly *New Outlook*, and Muna Hamzeh, a Palestinian journalist, born in East Jerusalem and now working in Washington, D.C., where they met. Her favorite song, “We Shall Return” (to Haifa, Jaffa, etc.) contains the line, “Give us the blood of the Zionists” (not the Jews, not Israelis, only Zionists, Muna assures Haim at an early meeting). The encounter develops when she accepts his invitation to come to his kibbutz, to meet his family. Shur begins to understand that the Palestinians’ struggle is as much one for survival as is the Israelis’. The obstacle to a just peace is that each side demonizes the other. Muna says the biggest problem is to see the other as human, to de-demonize the stereotypes. One is moved as one sees each moving the other. At the end, both Muna and Mrs. Shur are seen crying, as each in her pain senses the other’s pain. (The film is available for rental from the Filmmakers Library, 212-808-4980.)

◦ *“Murder in Mississippi” on TV*

February 5

Having missed the film *Mississippi Burning* (and not having had time to read the copy I have of the novel by Joel Norst based on the film — Signet/New American Library, N.Y., 1988, 255 pages, \$3.95 paperback), I turned eagerly to the two-hour TV docudrama by Stanley Weiser on NBC-Ch. 4 — and was much rewarded. Mickey Schwerner, bearded from Brooklyn, and his wife Rita get an education in Mississippi bigotry and brutality, while James Chaney begins to grasp the dedication of a Schwerner and an Andy Goodman (who is oddly presented as weak and ineffectual. Schwerner is shown as advising Goodman to go home because it’s too tough down in Mississippi. However, when Chaney and Schwerner drive out to the burned-down Mt. Zion Church, Goodman is allowed to along. The Goodman family, it is reported, has declined to endorse the film). Striking is a scene of a white preacher addressing the KKK, urging it to get rid of those “Jew-Communists in the name of Jesus.” Memorable are Chaney’s last words to white killers, “I’m not running,” and Goodman’s final defiance. At the funeral 44 days later, after the bodies have been discovered, “We Shall Overcome” is sung by Black and white, linked. Rita Schwerner is seen crying — and singing.

M.U.S.

JEWISH WOMEN NOW

Israeli and Palestinian Women: "No More!"

Guest Column by JANET F. GOLLER

LAST May, 50 women — Israeli and Palestinian — convened in Brussels for an international conference, "Give Peace a Chance — Women Speak Out." Two months earlier, five women — Palestinian and Israeli — participated in a workshop, "Women and Peace," at the *New Outlook-Al Fajr* Road to Peace Conference. On Dec. 29, 1989, a Women's Day for Peace was held as part of the Time for Peace Conference in Jerusalem, sponsored by a coalition of women from Israel and other countries. In the Middle East, women from Israel and the occupied territories meet and visit periodically, renewing their ongoing commitment to each other and to a peaceful solution of the conflict which exists between their peoples, their nations.

Wherever peace movements have existed in the world, women have often been in the forefront. They have perhaps never played a greater role than they do now in the Middle East in what may be one of the thorniest, most extended conflicts in history.

When this writer made her first visit to Israel some 30 years ago — young, naive, idealistic — it was not to be imagined that in the future there would be two "Israels" to visit — one within and one without its borders, one Jewish and one Arab, one Israeli and one Palestinian, one free and one occupied.

JANET F. GOLLER last appeared here in Nov., 1989 with "Women in Chains."

Determined to see the "other" Israel for myself, I arranged to accompany some Israeli and Palestinian women on a one-day visit to the Gaza Strip Dec. 1, 1989. Our rendezvous was at the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem.

Among the people waiting were three French-speaking women whom I judged to be in their early 70's — all very closely connected, and very clearly religious. Their heads were covered, and one wore a sheitel. It never occurred to me that they were part of our group. They were not young, they were not secular — they did not fit the image I had conjured, or had known, of women in the Israeli peace movement. But I was wrong. The movement has grown, and does now include women of all ages, of all religious and of many political persuasions.

Our trip was to be short: the ride takes nearly two hours each way, and our driver had to get us back to Jerusalem in time to return himself to Gaza before dark, before curfew. From the moment we entered Gaza, there was a marked difference in topography, landscape, people, conditions. We had entered a time warp where progress seemed to have been arrested. Most vehicles on the road were mule-drawn wooden wagons; most of the non-military persons we saw could be described as shepherds or shepherdesses, leading small flocks of sheep or goats. A few elderly Arab men in traditional dress and the occasional camel completed the

landscape. As we drove deeper into Gaza, we were confronted by poverty, destruction, a total lack of the amenities we associate with modern society — at once the ugliest and saddest place that I have ever seen. The cities we visited — Rafiah and Khan Yunis — are barely distinguishable in my mind now. Except for the main road, which seemed to run the length of the strip, there was not a paved street, not a sidewalk, not a place to step where one did not have to skirt mud puddles or rocks or open streams which carried away sewage.

For me, a woman and a feminist, it was heartening to see what the Palestinian women were doing in the face of their adversity. They have formed the Union of Palestinian Working Women's Committee to organize day care, to teach trades, to meet the needs of working mothers and their children. They try to compensate for services whose funds have been diverted to deal with the aftermath of mass arrests, loss of life, of livelihood, and unemployment. They attempt to provide basic necessities to children and young people whose breadwinner no longer can. Cooperative industries have been formed, like the one we saw — a tiny one-room factory with four sewing machines, where women are taught a skill and where they produce goods to make money.

The women were by turns warm, excited by our visit, angry at the injustice visited upon them. One of them spoke repeatedly of the violence leveled at children; we met a 14-year-old boy who showed us a bandaged gunshot wound on his leg. He had received it while out shopping for his mother. When he refused to obey an order to return home before his errand was complete, he was fired upon by the soldier issuing the order.

The distressing problem of Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories is too complex to go into here, but having

spoken to a number of soldiers I can say that, unlike the image of monolithic brutality advanced in some sections of the press here, many have serious and painful conflicts about the role forced upon them, sometimes to the point of refusing to obey orders. Discussion on this point rages in Israel.

Who are these Palestinian women who have become politicized, who are managing schools and industries, who spend days with *Jewish* women out of range of their husbands' or fathers' shadows? For one thing, they are growing in number; they have learned that they are more than "baby machines" (of the women we saw in the dusty streets of Gaza, hardly one under 50 was not pregnant); they have found that they, like their Israeli sisters, have an important role — even a leading role — to play in the peace process.

We visited the home of one of the women who accompanied us. She, her husband and those of her children who were at home were most hospitable; all treated her with great respect, and her husband actually carried a tray of drinks from the kitchen to the living room, when asked to do so. This woman, Leila, was quite young and very beautiful. Her long hair, uncovered by any veil, was fashionably styled, and her makeup (yes, makeup!) expertly applied. Before the *intifada* began, before her consciousness was raised, she had borne seven children. Now when she spoke of her children, of whom she was very proud, she patted her belly and said, "No more!"

It seems that "No more" is what all of these women are saying: No more injustice, no more occupation, no more war, no more intolerance, and, yes, no more terrorism. Their voices are louder and stronger because they belong *both* to Arab and Jew, *both* Palestinian and Israeli. Their admonitions bear a positive message that must be heard and heeded: Peace. ■

The Goat in the Hagada

By MAX ROSENFELD

EXODUS 13:8 contains an instruction: "And you shall tell your son" the story of the liberation from slavery in Egypt. This "telling," which thus goes all the way back to Biblical times, accompanied the meal of the paschal lamb. When animal sacrifices ceased to be part of the Hebrew ritual in the Temple, the eating of unleavened bread and bitter herbs became the characteristic of the meal, which the early Talmudic scholars defined as "festive," requiring the drinking of four cups of wine. They also introduced the reading of *Deuteronomy* 26:5-9, a capsule account of how the Hebrews got to Egypt, what happened to them there and how they reached the Promised Land. To this text were added explanations and interpretations of those five verses, phrase by phrase. Other additions were the Four Questions and a commentary on the various foods eaten at the meal.

The order (*seder*) of the ritual meal gradually developed into established custom. By the second century of the Common Era the Hagada already approximated its present form. At first it was included in the prayerbook. By the 12th century it began to appear in a separate booklet and then, with the introduction of the printing press, separate editions proliferated, including illuminated texts that are now priceless works of art.

In 1590 the *khad gadyo* song "suddenly" appeared in a Hagada printed in Prague and the young goat soon became a favorite part of the Ashkenazi seder ritual, but as a song, not a sacrifice. (*Khad* is Aramaic for "one"; *gadyo* is a young goat, usually translated as "kid.") What is this nursery rhyme doing in a

serious, reverential text that contains Biblical excerpts, Talmudic discussions, Midrashic explications, hymns, psalms and prayers? The answer to that question is: nobody really knows. It's an enigma.

The *khad gadyo* is sung at the very end of the seder to a rousing tune, so one obvious answer is that it was put into the text to wake up the participants, especially the youngsters, since it's a cumulative song that's fun to sing, like "The House that Jack Built," with which it is most often compared. But since no one really knows who put it in the service and no documentary evidence exists to explain how that decision was made, scholars keep trying to shed light on the mystery.

The words of *khad gadyo* do tell a kind of story — it's not like "99 bottles of beer on the wall." For two *zuzim* (small silver coins) my father bought a little goat. Then came a cat and ate the kid that my father bought, etc. So: the dog comes and bites the cat, a stick beats the dog, a fire burns the stick, water quenches the fire, an ox drinks the water, a slaughterer kills the ox, the Angel of Death does the same with the slaughterer, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, liquidates the Angel of Death. The song is in Aramaic (a Semitic language similar to Hebrew) and has an eminently singable cadence, especially after four cups of wine (*minim*).

Then the allegorists come and explain that the kid, the little goat, symbolizes the Jewish people. The father who bought the kid is God; the two coins are Moses and Aaron; the cat is As-

syria; the dog is Babylonia; the stick is Persia; the fire is Macedonia; the water is Rome; the ox is the Saracens; the slaughterer is the Crusaders; the Angel of Death is Turkey (when the Ottomans ruled Palestine) and God puts a finishing touch on the whole thing. The song thus becomes an expression of the eternal hope for ultimate redemption.

That's not the only way it has been interpreted, of course. There are at least a half-dozen other ways, but the one outlined above is the favorite. Most modern scholars believe that the song was adapted from a 15th-century German folksong, which in turn is based on an even older French nursery song, *Le Chanson du Chevreau* (Song of the Little Goat). The *khad gadyo* has also been compared to Persian, Indian and African poems. Some scholars have seen in it an allegory of the "eye for an eye" law.

In short, an extensive literature has grown up around this "curious droll," as one researcher put it. In 1731 a baptized Jew named Philip Nicodemus Lebrecht wrote an analysis of *khad gadyo* which he called, in German, "A Little Goat, which is Remarkable Riddle in the Jewish Passover Liturgy, that Includes the Fate of the Jewish People, as They Understood it, from the Exodus from Egypt to the Future of that People, as It Daily Awaits the Messiah." And that's only the title!

Similar treatises have continued to appear over the years, including one in the *N. Y. Times Saturday Review* in 1901, all of which approached the *khad gadyo* as though it were a profound philosophical poem. That is, until a modern Yiddish poet named Itsik Manger (1901-1969) looked at this enigma and asked himself a completely different sort of question, namely, where is the justice in keeping an innocent little goat locked up inside the Hagada from one Passover to the next? I don't think

the idea came to him like a bolt from the blue. He had a clue in the language itself. *Khad gadyo* is also Yiddish slang for "hoosegow." How it came to mean that is itself a riddle, but Yiddish etymology suggests a possible explanation. The Polish word for goat is *koza*, which in Yiddish means "prison"!

So, in a deceptively playful way Itsik Manger wrote a Yiddish poem in which he and his brother Nota — but let him tell it. I'll give you only the first and last stanzas in Yiddish so you can feel the spirit in which it is written. Manger called his poem *Dos Lid funem Tsigele* (Song of the Little Goat), an animal, by the way, that is no stranger to Jewish folklore and folksong.

*Der tatte hot gekoyft a tsigele,
Mit yorn lang tsurik,
In khad-gadyo es far-shpart,
Gebundn of a shtrik. . .*

"Papa bought a little goat, many years ago; locked it up in the *khad-gadyo* and tied it with a rope. The little goat is sorrowful, it's hurt and full of woe; summertime it sees no grass, wintertime no snow. One day my brother says: 'Itsik, why does God permit it? Doesn't he feel sorry for that little white goat?' And I say: 'Nota, you're absolutely right!' And without another word, it's done. I remember it was a fine spring night.

"Papa's asleep and Mama's asleep, the whole family's fast asleep; we go in and rescue the goat, and it thanks us with a bleat. Then we led it out into the world, and bid it a fond farewell, but where we let it go, that we'll never tell.

"*Pesakh*. The first seder, and the little goat's not there! Papa asks: Itsik — you? 'Me, I know not where.' Papa asks: Nota, you? Nota says: 'Who, me? Since a year ago *Pesakh*, didn't hear, didn't see.' Papa thinks, Mama blinks, no one knows a thing; so we sing the *khad-gadyo*, but it's not the same."

To vu-zhe iz dos tsigele?

(Continued on page 32)



THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Restructuring: American Jewish Style

The American Jewish Committee, billing itself as the nation's senior human relations agency, announced Feb. 7 a "restructuring" plan aimed at consolidation of activities and reduction of costs. About 40 of its 275 employees will be laid off and some existing departments eliminated but the most visible impact will be ending subsidization and publication of the liberal magazine *Present Tense*. The conservative journal *Commentary* will continue but, apparently able to raise other funds, without subsidies from AJC. It will continue to use rent-free space at AJC offices. *Present Tense* editor Murray Polner said, "organized and established Jewish life will no longer have a serious journal of dissent" and "serious writers who question existing policies no longer have any forum but the non-Jewish mainstream press."

AJC Pres. Sholom D. Comay reaffirmed AJC goals as including: "safeguarding and nurturing pluralism by combatting bigotry and discrimination and advancing civil rights. . . by strengthening mutual understanding among diverse religious, racial and ethnic groups. . ." How this will be done when the restructuring completely eliminates the departments of education and urban affairs and dismantles the apparatus for pluralism led by outstanding staffers like Irving M. Levine and Joseph Giordano is unclear. Comay's assurance that AJC "will streamline its programs to focus on Intergroup Relations, Eradicating Bigotry, Israel, Jewish Communal Affairs, Public Policy and International Relations" left some observers with the suspicion that do-

mestic liberal programs may be sacrificed for other concerns.

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, columnist for *Present Tense*, said the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the Simon Wiesenthal Center have been more aggressive in combatting anti-Semitism and the American Jewish Congress has attracted more liberals with its greater willingness to criticize Israeli government policy.

Also sending out a shock wave, Hadassah, the largest Zionist organization in America, announced Jan. 29 that it will no longer participate in elections to the World Zionist Congress. Among reasons cited were the great expense and "acrimony" of past campaigns and other "pressing needs." The World Zionist Organization spent about \$1.5 million on the 1987 elections amid charges of ballot stuffing, padding of membership lists and other irregularities. Carmela Kalmanson, Hadassah president, called for scrapping elections in favor of representation by membership rolls.

Other groups expressed dismay over the loss to the "democratic process." Hadassah lost 21 seats in the 1987 election while Mercaz, the Conservative Zionist movement, running for the first time, picked up 20 and the Association of Reform Zionists of America gained 19 over its previous total. Kalmanson rejected the suggestion that the loss of its electoral dominance was at the base of Hadassah's surprising decision.

Split on Civil Rights

A debate has broken out between major Jewish groups over wording of civil rights legislation proposed to the

current session of Congress. The AJCongress seeks to add "religious accommodation" language to the bill for workers who desire special arrangements if they have religious objections to working on certain days. But the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights is opposed to late changes in a carefully crafted bill. Some activists fear an aggravation of Black-Jewish relations. AJCongress accuses the others of insufficient concern for the civil rights of Jews. The AJCommittee is pressing for a separate religious accommodation bill. AJCongress, however, is supporting the main civil rights package.

Aiding the Needy

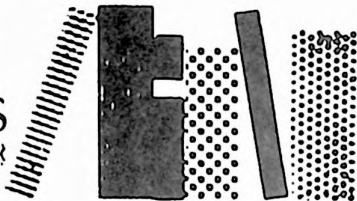
- The Jewish Association for Services for the Aged attracted 600 seniors and others concerned to a New York meeting Jan. 5 to hear responses from a panel to questions about health care in the wake of the repeal of the Medicare Catastrophic Care Act of 1989. Jewish retirees as well as others on fixed incomes are loudly protesting the escalating cost of health care and insurance.
- In Detroit Jan. 5 concerned workers at Jewish Family Service and others organized Yad Ezra, Feeding the Jewish Hungry, to distribute kosher food to Jewish families and give information on food stamps and other services. Though many people believe hunger is not a problem in the Jewish community, activists say they are shocked at the numbers. A JFS supervisor points out that an income of \$30,000 or more may not be enough for a family of 11 or more.
- Feb. 14 Na'amat USA announced it is working for passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act, which would guarantee job security for those needing leave to care for children or parents or to recover from a serious illness.
- The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee established an "open

mail box" Jan. 5 for humanitarian aid to Romania to be disbursed on a non-sectarian basis. B'nai B'rith launched a Panama disaster relief drive to aid the nation devastated by the U.S. invasion.

Also

- The Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza published its 5th Peace Bulletin (Feb.), which gives a rundown of women's peace actions in Israel, the U.S. and Canada. JWCEO, which has organized occasional vigils to demonstrate its concerns, is located in Suite 1178, 163 Joralemon St., Brooklyn, NY 11201.
- Jan. 15 The Generation After, consisting of Holocaust survivors, children of survivors and others committed to remembering the Holocaust, called on the government of Israel to move toward negotiating with the PLO.
- Feb. 8 the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, founded in 1965 with reparation funds from West Germany, called for Jewish participation in any deliberations on German reunification. Feb. 15 another statement from the Foundation welcomed the decision of the East German government to accept responsibility for Nazi crimes and to pay compensation to Jewish victims.
- Jan. 25, after a briefing with U.S. Army officials, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith made public a letter stating, "Based on all of the evidence presented to us, we are convinced beyond any reasonable doubt that [David] Rubitsky's account of his actions at Buna and allegations that anti-Semitism prevented him from receiving a Congressional Medal of Honor are unfounded and we concur with the Army Award Branch's dismissal of his claims." The statement did not disclose the Army's evidence in the case, which attracted national attention when first publicized last year. JOSEPH DIMOW

BOOK REVIEWS



Holocaust Literature Examined

By SELMA MEYEROWITZ

A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature, by Alvin H. Rosenfeld. Indiana University Press, 1980, 210 pages, no index, \$17.50.

Immigrant-Survivors: Post-Holocaust Consciousness in Recent Jewish American Fiction, by Dorothy Seidman Bilik. Wesleyan University Press, 1981, 216 pages, indexed, \$15.95.

TO the growing body of literature produced by those who experienced the Holocaust and by those who attempt to understand it, Alvin H. Rosenfeld's and Dorothy Seidman Bilik's studies of Holocaust and recent American Jewish fiction are significant contributions. Both works first identify key studies on the Holocaust, and then emphasize the need to record Holocaust and post-Holocaust consciousness and experience, but they cover different areas.

Rosenfeld, a professor of English and director of Jewish Studies at Indiana University, is concerned with the function of Holocaust literature and the criteria for judging which European and American writers meaningfully present the historic experience of the Holo-

caust. In contrast, Bilik, an assistant professor of German and Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of Maryland, discusses several works of recent American Jewish fiction, identifying a post-Holocaust consciousness which is created through a Jewish immigrant figure who is also a survivor of the Holocaust.

Rosenfeld first asserts that during the Holocaust, order and meaning — the bases of literature, indeed of all art — were destroyed. Moreover, he states that the experiences of the Holocaust "do not lend themselves to metaphor, simile or symbol. . . They can only 'be' or 'mean' what they in fact were: the death of the Jews." Nevertheless, the Holocaust has given rise to a vast body of literature because of a need to remind us of the possibility of destruction by surviving it. Thus, Holocaust literature records man's ability to survive despite the extremes of human loss and degradation.

One of Rosenfeld's main objectives is to distinguish those works which record the individual experience of victims of the Holocaust but which also represent the collective fate of the Jews, from those works whose writers did not experience the Holocaust but have used it to express their own social and psychological experiences, thereby distorting both historical events and the meaning of the Holocaust. He begins his discussion with diaries, journals and

SELMA MEYEROWITZ of Palo Alto, CA, has taught literature at Wayne State, San Jose State and Stanford Universities. She last appeared here in Nov., 1980 with an article, "Leonard Woolf, Socialist Writer."

memoirs by writers who lived through personal and collective terror, suffering and destruction. Such diaries chronicle daily experiences and were written as part of the "spiritual resistance" of the Jews. Although some of these works also deal with a crisis of faith — how the promise of divine justice is challenged by the extremes of human cruelty and suffering — Rosenfeld argues that they nevertheless reveal both a commitment to art as a means of survival, and an obligation to record history.

In addition to documentaries and chronicles of the Holocaust, Rosenfeld analyzes poetry. He points out that poetry has always been an act of inspiration and creation, but in the Holocaust, poetry had to express "death as a willed de-creation." For Rosenfeld, the poetry of Paul Célan and Nelly Sachs captures this contradiction in both subject matter and form, emphasizing a lament for suffering and a yearning for faith. An inability to express the horrors of the Holocaust leads to a "tendency toward the wordless"; hence, Rosenfeld calls this poetry "the poetics of expiration."

In a particularly interesting section on "poetry of survival," Rosenfeld discusses how, after the Holocaust, Jewish poets were especially concerned with the destruction of the Yiddish language, recognizing that the preservation of their language was central to their personal and cultural survival. Here, Rosenfeld points to Jacob Glatstein and other poets of the Introspectivist Movement, whose poetry expressed their commitment to using Yiddish, finding its natural rhythms, and developing a language which rejected old forms and created new ones appropriate for expressing radical changes in human consciousness and experience which had occurred because of the Holocaust.

Perhaps the most problematic sec-

tions of Rosenfeld's study are his discussions of those works of literature which he feels exploit the atrocities of the Holocaust by falsifying history or universalizing the Holocaust so that it becomes part of a generalization about evil. In this category, he first considers Peter Weiss's play *The Investigation*, claiming that Weiss has abstracted characters and events, depersonalizing them to the extent that the word "Jew" does not appear in the play, so that important aspects of specific historical experience are lost. This approach, Rosenfeld writes, constitutes a "failure of both artistic and moral vision." [See our Dec., 1966 issue for Morris U. Schappes' article on this play.]

Similar criticism is directed at William Styron's novel, *Sophie's Choice*, about a Polish non-Jewish woman imprisoned in Auschwitz. Rosenfeld is particularly troubled by what he considers Styron's portrayal of Jews and non-Jews as suffering the same fate, and he comments that this allows readers to avoid making the necessary moral judgments on the Holocaust. Moreover, he believes that Styron's portrayal of Sophie as a sex object is perverse in that it reduces "the war against the Jews to sexual combat." He similarly criticizes Lina Wertmüller's film *Seven Beauties* for using the camps as a background for political and sexual exploitation. Finally, in his discussion of Sylvia Plath's poetry, he attacks her use of personal suffering as a parallel to Jewish suffering, claiming that it is "an exploitation of others' pain."

These criticisms seem somewhat limited in perspective. Rosenfeld's assertion that "the Holocaust was something new in the world, without likeness or kind" leads him to reject the important functions of works which connect the historical experiences of Jews in the Holocaust to other concerns. Specifically, the portrayal of man's inclination toward destructiveness or

evil, which he sees as emphasized in Weiss's play, comments insightfully, though only partially, on the animus behind the long history of anti-Semitism which reaches its zenith in the Holocaust. Moreover, the political and sexual exploitation of and by Jews and non-Jews in both Styron's and Wertmüller's works comments on social and historical conditions, both in Germany and elsewhere, which gave rise to certain Nazi practices. Thus, these writers do not reduce or distort, but rather enlarge the reader's understanding of the world in which the Holocaust was able to occur. Similarly, Rosenfeld overlooks the possibility that Plath's personal identification with Jewish persecution, although she was not Jewish, represents an historical consciousness which in turn may allow the reader who has no identification with Jewish suffering to become aware that the Holocaust is not an isolated historical experience without particular relevance for non-Jews, but an integral part of mankind's history — and that the responsibility for Jewish suffering and destruction must be shared.

In his analysis, Rosenfeld comments that "all novels about Jewish suffering in the post-Holocaust period must implicate the Holocaust." This is the basic argument of Dorothy Seidman Bilik's study of recent American Jewish fiction. Bilik maintains that there is a new sub-genre of American Jewish literature, a "new immigrant novel." Unlike Jewish immigrant fiction of the past, which emphasized assimilation, the new immigrant novel embodies a post-Holocaust consciousness, which expresses the problem of survival for both the individual and Jewish culture. As Bilik carefully analyzes selected works of Bernard Malamud, Edward Wallant, Susan Fromberg Schaeffer, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Saul Bellow and Arthur Cohen,

she argues that because these writers are concerned with the preservation and transmission of the past, their portrayal of the particular experience of Jews constitutes a response to the destruction of the Holocaust.

In the new immigrant novel, writers present main characters who are Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. Although they have lived in America for many years, they have resisted the pressures for economic and social success. Indeed, these fictional immigrants are isolated from contemporary American society, and their search for meaning focuses on preserving the experience of the Jewish historical past and the Yiddish language. Some of these works present a modern version of the traditional *tsadik* figure who acts as a teacher, or transmitter of the past, while others involve theological and philosophical discussion, thus creating a type of literature which has been called "anatomy" and which resembles the *agada* (writings on religious belief). Since Bilik is also concerned with the relationship of language to Jewish history, her analysis focuses on the way writers portray through their characters how the Holocaust created a "linguistic dislocation" because of the loss of the mother tongue.

Bilik's discussion begins with Bernard Malamud and focuses on his portrayal of *tsadik* figures, pervasive anti-Semitism, isolation of Jewish characters, and imminence of war — all aspects typical of post-Holocaust American Jewish fiction. Moreover, she analyzes Malamud's use of idiomatic Yiddish speech as a means of preserving, through art, "the vanished world" of East European Jews. Then, in her discussion of Edward Wallant's novels *The Human Season* and *The Pawnbroker*, Bilik points out that the former portrays everyday anti-Semitism while the latter portrays an immigrant death-camp survivor, Sol Nazerman, who rep-

resents how the Holocaust survivor has been physically and mentally maimed by the camps.

In her discussion of Susan Schaeffer's novel *Anya*, Bilik comments that this work differs from other immigrant-survivor novels because it is placed in Europe before, during and after the war. In addition to portraying how Anya's world has been destroyed by the Holocaust, Schaeffer emphasizes that Anya's main commitment is to survival and maintaining her attachment to her European past.

Like Schaeffer, Isaac Bashevis Singer creates a European setting in his works. Bilik claims that in *Enemies*, as in his other fiction, Singer portrays "a world in which evil is constant and history is cyclical"; thus, he incorporates the continuing persecutions and catastrophes of Jewish history. Moreover, Singer's decision to write in Yiddish and his use of Talmudic commentary and traditional Jewish folklore constitute an attempt to preserve the past and to emphasize a sense of community.

Like Singer, Saul Bellow uses philosophical and theological discussion as a means for his characters to confront their complex experiences. Bilik considers Bellow's novel, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, to be the most challenging of the survivor novels because of its complexity of form and content. Sammler, a European intellectual, has survived the Holocaust. In the camps, he experienced death, rebirth and the power and necessity of violence. Thus he differs from those around him, seeing the world from an historical perspective and attempting to determine what constitutes meaning where collective life and death are involved.

Discussion of Arthur Cohen's novel, *In the Days Of Simon Stern*, concludes this study. Bilik is impressed by Cohen's use of scholarly material, which includes "the particulars of orthodoxy, traditional Judaism, and Jewish

DARE WE FORGET?

Commemorate THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

Sunday, April 15 at 1:00 P.M.

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*The Committee to Commemorate the
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history," although she does comment that there is so much of this material that the work suffers from abstractions. Yet like the other novelists discussed, Cohen portrays Jewish difference and alienation. While the main character achieves financial success, he does not assimilate into American society; thus, Cohen emphasizes the preservation of Jewish history and language.

Despite the shortcomings of these works, both Alvin H. Rosenfeld and Dorothy Seidman Bilik attempt to develop a means of understanding the role of Holocaust literature and its relationship to literature in general. Their studies balance theoretical discussion with detailed analysis of specific works. Although they acknowledge the problems of expressing a post-Holocaust consciousness, both writers consider such literature — whether European or American, whether written during or after the Holocaust — as an important creative act which attempts to record and comprehend a key event in the history of mankind. ■

Passover Goat

(Continued from page 25)

*S' shpringt arum in feld
Un hot hance hanoe fun der zun
Un fun der gantser velt.*

"And the little goat? It could be anywhere, enjoying sun and sky and the whole big world out there. . ."

Which is more in the true spirit of the holiday, don't you agree? ■

The 47th Commemoration of the
WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING
Sunday, April 29, 1990, 1:00 P.M.

Mather High School,
Lincoln & Peterson,
Chicago, IL

Main Speaker: Dr. Quentin Young,
nationally known physician.
Candlelighting ceremony

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SORELL SKOLNIK
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of
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In commemoration of
the seventh yortseit
of

my beloved wife
and our aunt

BESSIE S. GREEN

A lifelong progressive person
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Chorus for many years

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March 14, 1983

Always in our hearts

We honor her memory

She is very much missed

Her loving husband, Al
Her nieces and nephews
Los Angeles

ATTENTION JEWISH VEGETARIANS

For a book about the Yiddish vegetarian movement between the two world wars I would be interested in any reminiscences, documents or other materials concerning this period. Also if you just want to call and chat. Eve Jochnowitz, 205 E. 14 St., Apt. 3C, NYC 10003. Tel. (212) 260-1646.

In loving memory of
ABRAHAM EHRICKMAN
(1897—1986)

Progressive fighter for peace,
justice and Jewish culture

Wife *Bella*
Howard, Sholem
Cindy, Mike and Marty
New York

FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE TRIBUTE — AND DAVID PLATT

WHO says there is no more interest in history in this country? An audience of some 350 filling the large theater at the Museum of Modern Art in New York Feb. 1 enthusiastically applauded six short documentaries produced by the Film & Photo League during the Great Depression.

The mix of old timers and younger film students and *aficionados*, many with note pads in hand, saw in silent black-and-white film stirring scenes of the huge unemployment demonstrations of 1931 organized by the radical left, the Hunger Marches of '31 and '32, the Bonus March of World War I vets in '32, and the massacre of militant auto workers by Ford goons. These events were historic precursors to the reforms of "home relief," unemployment insurance, social security and industrial unionism.

Inevitably, the scenes of homeless unemployed living in "Hoovervilles" brought reminders of today's growing homeless population living in what should be called "Reaganvilles." Is it time for another Hunger March on Washington?

Three veterans of the Film & Photo League shared reminiscences of 60 years ago. They were David Platt (originator of the program), who edited the League's publication, was co-founder of *Experimental Cinema* magazine and film critic for the *Daily Worker*, who now teaches music appreciation at the Jewish Association for Services for the Aged on Long Island and recently edited an anthology of sociological film criticism to be published this fall; Leo Seltzer, who supervised the Film Production Unit of the Federal Art Project, has taught film in several colleges and recently led the restoration work on five of the FPL documentaries; and Leo Hurwitz, founding member of Frontier Films, who was editor of *Creative Art* and *New Theater* and head of the Graduate Program in Film and Television at New York University.

Referring to current events, Platt noted that "the [*Morgn*] *Freiheit* and JEWISH CURRENTS preached *glasnost* 30 years ago." He looked to an upsurge in creative films from the Eastern European countries.

LESTER RODNEY

Paul Robeson. . .

(Continued from page 17)

pages, according to his son) are barely hinted at. It seems that in this biography, as reflected in the treatment of other figures in the arts, whereas some white entertainers are dealt with as if they are artists, too often Black artists have been regarded as entertainers.

Moreover, what was going on in the mind of this great man throughout all the days of his triumphs and defeats is never made clear by Duberman. Although he asserts that Robeson, "to a . . . disheartening degree. . . avoided putting pen to paper" (p. 558), there is ma-

terial — over 50 letters according to Paul Robeson Jr. — that the biographer might have consulted. In general, most of what Duberman writes about Robeson is seen from the outside and there is about the biography too much emphasis on what Robeson accomplished as a star and a controversial celebrity; not enough about who he really was in terms of his artistic achievements and his commitment to the common people of all races.

Duberman has done a scholarly job of showing what one could see of Paul Robeson externally. But what really lay within, that remains, at least in this biography, unfathomed. ■

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.

Jews in Arab Lands

I have to wonder why a Jewish liberal magazine would publish an article by Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz on "[Palestinian] Women and the Intifada" (May, 1989 issue) but completely ignores the oppression of all Jews and especially Jewish women in Arab countries. Jews in Syria, Iraq and North Yemen cannot demonstrate or throw

stones. They don't have the option of resorting to terrorism. They are far too oppressed and isolated and it would be much too dangerous.

I don't understand why the Jewish left actively supports so many causes but is so callously indifferent to the plight of Jews in Arab countries who have no one else to turn to. This issue makes the left extremely uncomfortable. One does not promote peace or understanding by ignoring the truth.

More than half of Israeli Jews are of North African or Middle Eastern descent. It's not surprising that most Sephardim vote for the Likud. The Israeli left has been equally indifferent to the persecution of Jews in Arab countries. They've handed this issue to the Likud. This issue is too important to the survival of the Jewish people for the left to ignore. The Israeli left

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I don't cry easily, but I find myself crying as I make out this check for \$300 for a Life Sub.

Goddamn! We old liberals have got to stick together. I feel deeply for all of you, especially MUS. *I don't want* to miss his scholarly, crafted editorials.

As of last August (strange world), I learned that I am unequivocally a minority citizen, too: half Iroquois Indian.

Amherst, MA, Feb. 5

EARL MORGAN

Here at last is my \$300 for a Life Sub. Of course I should have done it years ago, and my first thought after writing it was, "Look at all the money I could have saved!"

What finally pushed the button was your use of the words *spurlos versenkt* in your fund appeal letter, a phrase much in vogue among my father and his brothers whose meaning in your fund appeal letter I understood completely, but whose provenance until now was unknown to me. Let me say, however, that while it is conceivable (though unacceptable) that JEWISH CURRENTS might be *versenkt*, it could under no circumstances remain *spurlos*.

Berkeley, CA, Feb. 7

ELI KATZ

Enclosed is \$300 for a Life Subscription for the two of us. Your letter was so convincing we couldn't resist your appeal. (We'd have sent money anyway.)

Los Angeles, CA, Feb. 8

SHERRY and LARRY SCHNALL

(Meanwhile, Harold Leventhal of New York, Sylvia Rymer of Great Neck, NY, Sam and Josephine Bader of Boca Raton, FL and Ursula Sherman of Berkeley, CA, have become the latest to up their original \$200 Life Subscriptions to the present price of \$300 by sending in \$100. May their tribe increase!)

ignores religion and we've seen the results in the recent elections. The *intifada* looks very different to someone who spent his Iraqi childhood dodging stones thrown by Arabs who hated Jews. Yet the Israeli left prefers to believe that Sephardim vote for Likud because they lack a tradition of democracy.

We tend to create high expectations of Israeli conduct, but this is a poor excuse for indifference to the persecution of Jews in Arab countries. Arab leaders count on the world's indifference. They know the world will not be outraged when Jews are jailed or murdered for trying to escape from an Arab country. I can only ask again: why does the Jewish left remain silent while Jews are being persecuted?

SANDRA STEIN

Philadelphia, PA, June 25, 1989

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz comments:

Whenever I give a reading of my work, or speak on Jewish themes — from anti-Semitism to assimilation to Jewish feminist identity — I've learned to expect that someone, often the first question of the evening, insists I talk about Israel or Zionism or the Palestinians. Sandra Stein's letter reminds me, conversely, of this experience. Why can't I offer information and express concern about the Palestinian people, and the increasing toll of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, without mentioning the suffering of Jews in Arab lands (in a 2-page article, nearly half of which is about Israeli women peace activists!)?

I want to address some inaccuracies. Many Israelis who immigrated from

Arab lands experienced persecution, usually far milder than anything Europe cooked up, even pre-Hitler. But many experienced polite or even friendly relations. Often Jews and Arabs spoke a common language — Arabic — and shared some common culture. There are Sephardim in Israel today who believe that they are the key to eventual decent relations with the Palestinians because of this common cultural experience.

There are also Sephardim who emphasize their difference from Arabs to identify themselves with the dominant Ashkenazim, and to channel their anger at the discrimination they suffer in Israeli society. Rage at the ruling class is dangerous; it's safer to hate Arabs. But no one should imagine that the Sephardim are alone in their prejudice. Hatred against Arabs, including against

Israeli Arab citizens, is a serious national problem.

The rise to power of Likud has at least as much to do with the corruption and inefficiency of Labor, and with anti-Ashkenazi feeling, as with the causes cited by Ms Stein. It's a common mistake to blame the Sephardim's anti-Arab feelings for the strength of the Israeli right.

Finally, that most Arab countries have human rights records that make Israel look benevolent does not answer adequately the fact of human rights abuses in Israel. Since when do two wrongs make a right?

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I want also to address the underpinnings of Ms Stein's letter. I don't feel indifferent to the plight of Jews anywhere. Like most people, I am most passionate where I am most connected, and my concern is especially acute for my Israeli friends working night and day in the peace movement. They are being harassed, beaten up, spat upon, arrested, and some are serving time in prison. Even for non-activist Israelis, the cost of occupation is tremendous. The economy is in shambles, women are devalued by the pervasive militarism, and every family has experienced loss, disruption and damage. I care about these Jews. I also care deeply about the Palestinians, some of whom I have also met and whose stories are vivid in my mind. What is happening to the Palestinians is wrong and must stop.

I have to say, I sympathize with Ms Stein's suspicion of some Jewish leftists who seem to care about everyone's welfare except other Jews'. I ask her to exercise judgment. JEWISH CURRENTS has been determinedly pro-Jewish, pro-Israeli security, pro-Palestinian rights. I believe she is assuming that you can't care about Israelis and Palestinians both; that you can't support the rights of both; that, in the end, you can't work for the survival of both. This is a dangerous position; it is the position of right-wing Likud and of left-wing PLO. At this historical moment, when the moderate PLO is still fairly strong (though not so strong as at the end of 1988), Jews who love Israel should work to strengthen the Israeli left, so that Israelis and Palestinians can talk, find solutions, and get on with their lives.

Montpelier, VT, Nov. 15

From Minnesota

Enclosed are pre-Hanuka contributions for JEWISH CURRENTS. We had a nice affair at Mike and Roz

Baker's. University of Minnesota Prof. Hyman Berman's review of Duberman's biography of Paul Robeson was very positive. He read a passage from a book by a former Israeli consul in Russia, *From Hammer to Sickle* (Jewish Publication Society, ca. 1960), detailing Robeson's last Russian tour, on which he insisted on singing Yiddish songs despite disdain from his tour managers. Interested discussants from the floor included Nellie Stone Johnson, active in the Negro Labor Council in the 1930s, and Alma Foley, who worked with Irene Paull in the Civil Rights Congress in the late 1940s and made the difficult arrangements for a Robeson concert. Mike Baker told about a reception for Robeson in his living room.

Yiddish classes in both St. Paul and Minneapolis are for the first time in years becoming very popular. Shouldn't poetry translated from the Yiddish also include the original as a matter of principal?

LIONEL DAVIS

Minneapolis, MN, Nov. 18

[Printing a Yiddish poetry text alongside a translation requires facilities we do not have (Yiddish typewriter, Yiddish type). However, printing a Yiddish transliteration may be practicable, if the space is available. What percentage of our readers would be served by the use of such space? —Ed.]

In memory of my
beloved husband
RUBIN GROSSMAN
who passed away March 12, 1981
He was a reader and supporter of
The Morning Freiheit
and an active union member.
We will always
cherish his memory.

Wife Vera
Daughters Susan and Nora
Grandchildren Pam, Debbie
and Lauren

**ABRAHAM (GOODY)
GOODMAN
(1904-1990)**

**Friend,
Fighter for and
Lover of all peoples**

J. Peter Goodman
and
Curtis A. Miller

New Haven, CT

**In memory
MAX GORDON
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Trade Union Organizer
and long-time fighter
for Workers' Rights**

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In
Memory
of
the sister
of
Rose Noon
LILY MILLER
who died April 23, 1966

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to
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Max Noon

Brooklyn

With great pain
in our hearts
we mourn
the untimely death of
our beloved niece
DINA
(1926-1989)

•

We mourn together
with her husband
Sam Tuchman
her two daughters
Arline and *Sheindl*
and her son-in-law,
Sheindl's husband *Frank*

•

Fannie and Sam Borun
W. Palm Beach, FL

In memory
of our
good friend
RUBE DIAMOND

o

Nina and Isi Raponi
Lisa and Jon Webster
Alex and Sylvia Edelstein

o

Los Angeles—
N. Hollywood,
CA

In memory
of
LENA POTEHAL

A woman of warmth
and strength
She fought all her life
for peace and justice

She died
on January 28, 1990
after a courageous
struggle

Mother, sister, artist

She will be remembered

Mike Potegal
Bob Potegal
Sadie Rosenberg

In memory of
our dear friend and co-worker
RUBE DIAMOND
October 6, 1923—February 6, 1990
A lifelong peace activist
Supporter of JEWISH CURRENTS
President of the Secular Club of the
Valley Cities Jewish Community Center,
1977—1982

Credo

I believe in friendship
And in one I still believe—
One whose heart shall beat with my heart
And with mine rejoice and grieve.

Our heartfelt condolences to
his wife *Marion Diamond*
his daughters *Wendy and Abby*
his sister *Gloria Applegate*

*The Thursday Night Men's Friendship
and Support Group*

*Harriet and Bernie Bellinson
Julia and Lou Biderman
Sylvia and Murray Brown
Nancy and Victor Chesler
Marian and Irv Eichner
Gloria and Marc Kalb
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TOTALS	\$13,493.00	29

Our Goals

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New Subs Drive	700
New Subs to date	29

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(Incomplete, to be continued)

AROUND THE WORLD

AT HOME

Federal District Court Judge Barbara Rothstein in Seattle Feb. 21 dismissed charges against four persons in Seattle who had burned an American flag to challenge a law passed last year against desecration of the flag. She ruled that the right to destroy the flag was as protected by the Constitution as the right to wave the flag. March 5 Judge June L. Green upheld the ruling against a Justice Dept. appeal. . . . The U.S. Supreme Court Feb. 26 refused to consider a constitutional challenge to the military's traditional policy of barring homosexuals from the armed forces in the case of Army Sgt. Miriam Benjamin Shalom of Milwaukee. She was a local activist for gay rights when she joined the Army Reserve in 1975. Her dismissal in 1976 was overturned by Federal District court in Wisconsin, but was reaffirmed by the U. S. Court of Appeals in Chicago in Aug., 1989. In 1988, while her case was pending, she was given a conditional reenlistment contract that expires with the Supreme Court refusal to entertain her appeal. The Supreme Court simultaneously refused to hear a similar appeal by a naval officer, James M. Woodward.

When Ohio State Sen. Michael White was unexpectedly elected the first Black mayor of Cleveland, he attributed a good part of his victory to the skilful campaigning of seven Oberlin College students, three of them Jewish: Jonathan Silverman of Baltimore, MD, Bruce Diamond of Johnstown, PA and Tammy Cofman of Ann Arbor, MI. White enlisted their support at a lecture at Oberlin in the spring of 1989 on widespread civic corruption and his call for conciliation and cooperation be-

tween the Black East Side and white West Side of Cleveland. Since both White and his opponent George Forbes were Black, victory turned on issues and on effective outreach, at which the Oberlin students excelled. When the three kashrut-observant Jews declined to campaign during Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur, the non-Jews on staff also stopped work out of respect. Cleveland staffer Denise McCray says that shutting down the campaign was enriching for the non-Jews as well as necessary for the Jews. The three Oberlin Jews report encountering more anti-Semitism in white ethnic wards than in Black neighborhoods. They told reporter Alan Sege (B'nai B'rith *Jewish Monthly*, Feb., 1990) that they "have come to view Black anti-Semitism as a product of poverty and economic inequality." Silverman summed up: "The bottom line is that the worse things get for non-Jews in Glenville, the worse they get for the Jews. The poorer the people get here, the more susceptible they are to anti-Semitic propaganda and misinformation. That means that the Jewish political agenda has to be involved with these conditions that breed hatred. . . ." Recognizing that economic issues now have a higher priority among Blacks than the continuing civil rights issues can be a key factor in improving Black-Jewish relations.

The Columbia University Engineering Student Council Feb. 6 passed a resolution by 9 to 2 criticizing the Black Student Organization for including in its Black History Month program a lecture by Richard Griffin, known as Prof. Griff of the popular Black rap group, Public Enemy, which for the past half year has been widely criticized for anti-

Semitic statements by Griffin and for anti-Semitic lyrics in its latest record (see our issues of Sept., 1989, pages 45-46 and March, 1990, p. 11). The engineering students also voted to support a protest rally called by the Council of Jewish Organizations at the time of the lecture but elsewhere on the campus on the steps of the Low Library Feb. 11. Griffin's right to speak was not questioned and there was no attempt to interfere with the lecture. At the Low Library Sunday evening for 90 minutes 18 speakers (students, teachers, administrators) before an audience of over 500 discussed the Black students' selection of Griffin as lecturer. Rabbi Charles Sheer, Columbia chaplain, "extend(ed) an invitation to the Black Student Organization, with the good help of the various student governments of this University, to join with the CJO to build and nurture" the struggle to abolish racism and bigotry on campus. Especially significant was the speech of Miriam Abu Kadir of the Student Committee for Palestinian Human Rights: "Just as statements like 'The Jews are wicked' are divisive and hateful, so is the often-heard characterization that Arabs are terrorists. The Student Committee for Palestinian Human Rights joins the Columbia community in uniting against intolerance on this campus. We have learned from this experience how harmful stereotyping is. . ." At the Griffin lecture, about 400 paid admission and passed elaborate security checks to hear Griffin discourse on "Education for Blacks in the year 2000." He announced he would not address charges of anti-Semitism, but would answer questions about them if they came; none did. His advocacy of a separate educational, economic and social system for Blacks met with the declaration by a BSO leader that Griffin's opinions were not necessarily those of BSO. The *Columbia Daily Spectator* Feb. 12, 13 and 14 was full of letters on the event.

ABROAD

Poland: *Poland resumed full diplomatic relations with Israel, broken by Poland in 1967, on Feb. 27.* (Hungary had restored such relations in Sept., 1989 and Czechoslovakia on Feb. 9.). . . In mid-February, Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki publicly condemned anti-Semitism, as did Lech Walesa and the Foreign Ministry, which also announced that (the 30,000) Jews who had fled Poland in 1968 because of anti-Semitism could return and claim Polish citizenship. . . . Late in January, Mr. Mazowiecki helped create a committee to reorganize the museum at the Auschwitz death camp to make clear that Jews were the majority of those killed at Auschwitz. Two Warsaw Jews are on the committee, which will function in the Ministry of Culture. . . . On Jan. 12 the Communist Party, by a vote of 1,228 to 32, with 37 abstentions, dissolved itself "because of the impossibility of the party's regaining the public's confidence." In its place emerged a new party, Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (Social Democratic Party).

Spain: *Feb. 21 the government agreed to put the Jewish and Protestant religions on a par with Catholicism, affecting 15,000 Jews and 60,000 Protestants. The accord cancels the 1492 expulsion of Jews from Spain by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Speaking for the Jewish community, Samuel Tolledano said, "The agreement ends a period of 498 years and signals the close of a regime marked by rigid intolerance." Jews will now be able to observe *kashrut*, have civil marriages, religious instruction in schools and the armed forces, and access to the social security system.*

East Germany: *In Berlin Jan. 22, Dr. Josef Burg, vice-chair of Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust documentation*

center, presented awards to Gisela Reisenberger, Margarete and Arno Bach, Louise Griesman, Frieda Lissack and Vera Lagrange, designating them as "righteous among the nations" for help they had given to prevent transport of German Jews to concentration camps during World War II. . . . Feb. 5 in Leipzig the weekly mass demonstration for German unification was disrupted by hundreds of goose-stepping skinheads, smashing windows and shouting "Sieg Heil," "to hell with the Jews" and other Nazi chants. . . . Feb. 7 Prime Minister Hans Modrow agreed to pay reparations to Jewish victims of Nazism. Dr. Peter Kirchner, head of the Jewish Community of East Berlin, stated, "The most important thing is that it's final, that it says, yes, the GDR fully recognizes its share of guilt, and also that the GDR feels itself bound by this responsibility." This agreement also spurred negotiations between East Germany and Israel for diplomatic recognition.

USSR: Jewish emigration in February was 5,788, compared with 2,425 in Feb., 1989; 5,749 went to Israel. The total for 1990 through February is 10,501, compared with 5,221 in 1989 for these two months. The embargo placed by Israeli army censors on data on Soviet Jewish immigration was broken by March 7. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's comment early in January that such big immigration of Soviet Jews required a "big Israel" stirred a storm of protest. So far the percentage of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories is 1%, in East Jerusalem 10%. . . . Soviet authorities suspended the Moscow Dec. 6, 1989 agreement between Aeroflot and El Al to start two or more flights daily directly to Israel, lest the immigrants be routed to settle in occupied territory. . . . In Moscow Feb. 4 over 100,000 turned out to a massive pro-democracy demonstration, which included posters pro-

claiming, "Russian People against Fascism, Racism and Anti-Semitism." . . . In Minsk, Byelorussia, when Pamyat early in February was given official recognition, Jewish Cultural Association activist Yakov Bason began forming a self-defense group. . . . In Khar'kov, Ukraine, after 20 Jews were beaten in their homes by anti-Semites, the mayor and chief of internal affairs appeared at a great meeting Feb. 11 to promise "that they will stop the activities of all nationalistic and anti-Semitic organizations, like Pamyat, and all incidents will be investigated." . . . *Pravda* Feb. 10 the KGB scored "rumors being widely disseminated about pogroms allegedly being prepared against Jews, Azerbaijanis and Armenians" and promised to "institute suitable measures if the situation becomes more acute." . . . In Bobruisk, the Jewish community was given permission in mid-January to establish a school. . . . In Chernigov, the Jewish Cultural Center (membership 300) has established an evening school for both adults and children, a folklore ensemble, a dramatic studio, a poetry theater, a youth group (60 members), an historico-philosophical seminar, a library and a philanthropic group. . . . In Moscow Jan. 24 a Union of Soviet Jewish Congregations (60 affiliates) was established for the first time in 70 years. A presidium of 17 was elected. First Deputy Minister Ivolgin of the Soviet Council on Religious Affairs declared the Union had been made possible by *perestroika*. . . . In Moscow Feb. 14 the Academy of Jewish Music was inaugurated, sponsored by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The Dean is Cantor Joseph Malovany of the N. Y. Fifth Ave. Synagogue, with Cantor Vladimir Pliss of the Moscow Choral Synagogue as Director. Students from Moscow, Leningrad, Tashkent, Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk and Petrozavodsk will meet for 2-week sessions four times a year. M.U.S.

*Abigail Adams wrote to her husband John:
"Remember the Ladies"*

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at the annual
JEWISH CURRENTS LUNCHEON**



Ruth Messinger

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to
RUTH RUBIN



Ruth Rubin

**Musical Program by PETER SCHLOSSER
MORRIS U. SCHAPPES, M.C.**

**Sunday, May 6, 1990 at 1:00 P.M.
Henry Lindenbaum Jewish Community Center
Abraham Joshua Heschel School
270 West 89th Street, New York
(between Broadway and West End Avenue)**

**Reserve now: \$30 per plate. Tables seat 10.
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