

MIDEAST TRAGIC CYCLE

An EDITORIAL

Jewish Currents

\$1.00

**JULY-
AUGUST
1982**

WHY SOCIALISM?

A Symposium

By

EDWARD I. LENDING

ITCHE GOLDBERG

JOSEPH DIMOW

MAX GORDON

LOUIS HARAP

HERSHL HARTMAN

A.B. MAGIL

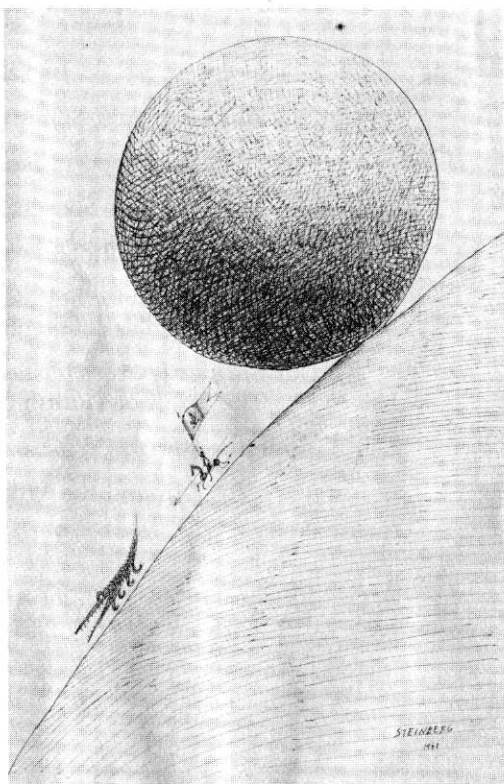
SAM PEVZNER

ALBERT PRAGO

ANNETTE T. RUBINSTEIN

WILLIAM and HEDY SHNEYER

JACK WEINMAN



"Dragon, Hero and Ball" by Saul Steinberg.

POLLING AMERICAN ANTI-SEMITISM

By GERALD STILLMAN

THE DEVIL'S THEORY OF ZIONISM IN THE USSR

By SID RESNICK

NOTE THE DATE!

NOTE THE DATE!

Remembering August 12, 1952 —
The Martyred Soviet Yiddish Writers

Sponsored by:

**JEWISH CURRENTS, YIDDISHE KULTUR
and MORGN FREIHEIT**

Thursday evening, August 12, 1982

from 6 to 8 P.M.

at the

Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religion

Brookdale Center

1 West 4th St., corner Broadway

Program:

MORRIS U. SCHAPPES, Chair

ITCHE GOLDBERG

MAX ROSENFELD

PAUL NOVICK

Readings in Yiddish by JOSEPH LILIEN

Readings in English

Admission: \$2.

Students: .50

COME: To Honor Their Memory

To Affirm Your Dedication to Progressive Jewish Culture

To Support the Struggle for Soviet Jewish Culture

NOTE THE DATE!

AUGUST 12

NOTE THE DATE!

AUGUST 12

Jewish Currents

Vol. 36, No. 7 (398)
July-August, 1982

EDITORIAL BOARD

LOUIS HARAP
REGINA P. KRUMMEL
SAM PEVZNER
DAVID PLATT
MAX ROSENFELD
MORRIS U. SCHAPPES, *Editor*
LAWRENCE BUSH, *Assistant Editor*

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL: Charles R. Allen Jr., Max Gordon, A.B. Magil, Paul Novick, Isabel Pearlman, Billie Portnow, Dr. Albert Prago, Sid Resnick, Dr. Annette T. Rubinstein, Dr. Jay Schulman, Hedy Shneyer, Yuri Suhl.

CONTENTS

Mideast Tragic Cycle	<i>An Editorial</i>	3
The Devil's Theory of Zionism in the USSR	<i>Sid Resnick</i>	4
In Yalta	Poem by <i>I.E. Ronch</i>	8
Polling American Anti-Semitism	<i>Gerald Stillman</i>	9
It Happened in Israel	<i>L.H.</i>	16
Why Socialism?	A Symposium	18
The Editor's Diary	<i>M.U.S.</i>	24
Robeson Jr. Attacked for Selecting Duberman as Biographer	<i>M.U.S.</i>	28
Our Secular Jewish Heritage: The Spirit of Yiddish (II)	<i>Max Rosenfeld</i>	29
Inside the Jewish Community	<i>S.P.</i>	41
Around the World	<i>M.U.S.</i>	46

Our Cover: "Dragon, Hero and Ball," 1968, by Saul Steinberg, from *Saul Steinberg*, text by Harold Rosenberg, 1978, Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y., 256 pages with appendices, \$12.95. "Perceiving reality as the art in things," writes Rosenberg, "is the root principle of Steinberg's aesthetics. . . . But Steinberg has no use for aestheticism. 'To be involved in aesthetics only . . .,' he has said, 'that for me is worthless. I want to say something.'"

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.

JEWISH CURRENTS, July-August, 1982, Vol. 36 No. 7 (398). Published monthly except July and August when bi-monthly by Jewish Currents, Inc. Room 601, 22 East 17 St., New York, N.Y. 10003-3272. (212) WAtkins 4-5740. Single copies \$1.00. Subscription \$10 a year in U.S. (\$18 for two years), Canada, Latin America, \$11 per year; elsewhere, \$12. Second class postage paid at the post office in New York. ISSN #US-ISSN-0021-6399. Copyright © 1982 by Jewish Currents, Inc.

MIDEAST TRAGIC CYCLE

An EDITORIAL

June 14

Today, eight days after Sharon plunged into PLO-occupied territory in Lebanon to search out and destroy PLO military forces and "infrastructure," Anthony Lewis in the N.Y. *Times* expresses the feelings of millions of Americans, including Jews, when he writes that "what the operation cost in human terms . . . is sickening." He points out that "the PLO has been responsible for fearful acts of terrorism, inside Israel and abroad," that "Arafat has never been willing to renounce terrorism as a tactic," and that the shooting of Israel Ambassador Shlomo Argov was disclaimed but "not directly condemn[ed]" by the PLO. Yet Lewis again expresses widespread sentiment when he speaks of "the grotesquely disproportionate assault on Lebanon."

Today the *Times* also reported from Israel that Israelis themselves are beginning to cry out against this disproportion and the sickening devastation Israel is wreaking not only among PLO and Palestinians but among Lebanese civilians, since the PLO, with cunning aforethought, placed its military headquarters and arsenals deep in Lebanese civilian areas. Thus we learn that June 12 "A group of left-wing professors held a news conference . . . denouncing the invasion, and about 200 protesters, chanting 'No more war!' demonstrated outside the office of . . . Begin. The national consensus that supported the invasion in its initial stages has started to erode as the fighting has dragged on."

Late the same day, MK Amnon Rubinstein, in a radio interview "said that for humanitarian, moral and political reasons, the Israeli Government

should take the lead in organizing an international campaign to help Lebanese who had lost their homes in the war. 'They too are victims of terrorism,' he said, 'not less than Israelis.'" Promptly dozens of Israelis phoned the state radio, offering to go to Lebanon to rebuild homes.

On June 6, the day that Sharon thrust Israeli armor on land, sea and air into PLO territory, the *Jerusalem Post* warned editorially that "one must bear in mind that the answer to the problem must be political" and that "a war in the north . . . would not bring a solution to the intricate problems of the Palestinians any nearer."

Here in the USA, major Jewish organizational leaders are still in public busily trying to protect Israel from possible sanctions against it even from friendly forces. The "thin small voice" of Jewish moral and political conscience was expressed June 10 only by New Jewish Agenda, in which religionists and Zionists have a strong input. Expressing its "great pain and concern" over "the current fighting between Israelis and the Palestinians and Syrians," Agenda went on to "explore the leaders of all sides to stop the bloodshed and hope that, having recognized each other as enemies on the battlefield, they will recognize each other at the negotiating table. We believe that the current conflict cannot guarantee security for Israel. That security can only be achieved through negotiations based on the principles of mutual recognition of the right to national self-determination and a commitment by all parties to peaceful coexistence."

For Israel, neither security nor peace lie at the end of a gun.

The Devil's Theory of Zionism in the USSR

By SID RESNICK

[Address to the New York memorial meeting for the martyred Soviet Yiddish writers, Aug. 12, 1981 at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion — sponsored by JEWISH CURRENTS, Yiddishe Kultur and the Morgn Freiheit. See back cover for announcement of this year's memorial gathering.]

Today is the 29th anniversary of that terrible day in 1952 when 24 of the most distinguished Jews in the Soviet Union, the majority of whom constituted the pride and glory of the Yiddish literature and culture in that country, were secretly done to death. The trial which preceded their executions was also held in secret and to this day we do not know from any authoritative source what the precise charges against them were or who their prosecutors were or who their judges were. In 1955 and 1956, that is, three and four years after their executions, word was let out, first to their widows, that these Jewish writers were "rehabilitated," that they had been wrongly charged — in short, that they had been victims of a frame-up.

SID RESNICK was awarded our Seventh Annual Joseph Shachnow Award for distinguished contributions to the magazine at our May 2, 1982 Dinner. He last appeared here in Dec., 1981 with "Polish Jewry and Socialist 'Renewal.'" He also writes and translates for the English pages of the Morgn Freiheit.

After the Yiddish magazine *Sovetish Heimland* began publication in Moscow in 1961, it was the practice for some years to announce, whenever the works of one of the victims was printed, that the author had "perished in tragic circumstances" during the period of the cult of personality. That is all. In all the 29 years since their executions there has never been a public memorial meeting in the Soviet Union for the 24 innocent and honorable men killed that day.

This is disgraceful! Yet even more disgraceful are the stubborn attitudes of some who claim to be progressive but want us to sweep this entire matter under the carpet and who would deny us, if they had the power, the right to meet here today to do homage to our fallen comrades. For such people it is only the crimes of capitalist America or other capitalist countries that ought to be publicly commemorated, never the crimes that occur in a socialist country. Commemorate the deaths of the Rosenbergs by all means, but the deaths of the martyred Soviet Yiddish writers and poets — why? They come forth with all sorts of dialectically clever arguments why this shouldn't be done. What their arguments amount to is that we should become faceless and without memory, devoid of all attachment and respect for our people's culture, so as to comply with political purposes they consider more important. We reject their advice!

Ever since we became aware of the torment and execution of these 24

men many of us have wondered about the reasons the Stalin regime might have had for arresting them at all. These were mostly literary people; Lozovsky was a long time political worker for the regime; Lina Shtern, who alone survived, was a scientist; Zuskin was an actor. All of them, from what we know, were completely absorbed in their professional work. In what possible plots and conspiracies could they have been involved? What crimes could they possibly have committed that in the eyes of the Stalin regime warranted a death penalty?

We have good reason to believe now that the Soviet government's attitude toward Zionism played a key role in their arrest, their secret trial and their execution. When the 24 men we honor today were arrested in late 1948 and early 1949, the entire propaganda machine in the Soviet Union was engaged in a harsh campaign against what were called "the rootless cosmopolitans" and "Zionists." In both cases the target of this propaganda was Jews, and in time it came to affect and appeared to mean all Jews.

There is a critique of Zionism that Jewish Marxists and socialists began to develop almost a century ago which was reasoned and factual and tried to be scientific even if at times it had its excesses. This was the critique of Morris Winchevsky, of Vladimir Medem, of Moïshe Olgin, of the Bundists in Old Russia, and of the Jewish socialists and communists in this and other countries. Their critique treated the Jewish people with respect and their problems with sympathy. Briefly, they held that Zionism was an inadequate and misleading solution to the problems of the Jewish people, that the ingathering of all the Jews in Palestine was impracticable and would not cause the problem of anti-Semitism to disappear, that the pre-

occupation with the Jewish settlement of Palestine would detract Jewish workers from the class struggle in the countries in which they lived and that universal socialism rather than separatist Zionism would assure the Jewish people equality and a happier life. This was a critique of Zionism.

However, the kind of anti-Zionist "criticism" which took shape in the Soviet Union when Bergelson, Feffer and Markish and their comrades were arrested was of an entirely different category. This was and is a propaganda filled with distrust of everything Jewish. It views Zionism as the most sinister of all political ideologies, as the greatest danger to world peace and socialism. It regards Israel as the very center of iniquity on this planet. It considers Zionist organizations to be the directing center of the Jewish capitalists, who already control most of the world's economy and arms industries and who plan, through plots and conspiracies, to dominate the entire world. This view of Zionism and Israel has as much relation to reality as did Sen. Joe McCarthy's view of communism. Anyone who actually takes the trouble to read the writings of the anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist propagandists in the Soviet Union cannot help but be shocked at their unhistoric and unscientific character and at their venomous attitude to the Jewish people. It was this kind of anti-Zionism, this Devil's theory of Zionism, that guided the prosecution of the 24 men we honor today.

It is hardly surprising that this Devil's theory of Zionism also has its followers among the fascist generals who now run Argentina. It played an important role in the arrest in 1976 of that great Jew and anti-fascist, Jacobo Timerman. In his book, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, Timerman relates that at every interrogation session he was asked

over and over again, "Are you a Jew? Are you a Zionist?" The fascist generals actually believed there was a Jewish Zionist plot to seize control of Patagonia, the huge southern province of Argentina, and turn it into a Jewish state under the control of Israel. Timerman was aghast at the monstrosity of this charge and would plead with his jailors that it was a fantasy, that it was utterly impossible, but he wasn't believed and was subjected to still more torture to admit that this Zionist plot to take over Patagonia was real.

Can we forget that the 24 men we honor today were charged with a crime of treason similar to Timerman's? Incredibly, Bergelson, Feffer, Markish and their colleagues were charged, according to unofficial "leaks," with plotting to take the Crimea away from the Soviet Union, to establish there a Jewish republic, which they would then turn over to the United States.

Nor were they the only group of Jews against whom such a charge was made. In Feb., 1952 there took place in Moscow a trial of eight Jewish leaders of Birobidjan who were charged with plotting to establish a Jewish republic in Birobidjan which they would then turn over to the U.S. or Japan. This we learned from one of the survivors of that trial, the Yiddish poet Chaim Maltinsky, whose harrowing reminiscences were published in *Yiddische Kultur* last year. The defendants at the trial were humiliated, degraded, forced to confess to the charges of Jewish nationalism and Zionism, but fortunately they were not executed.

This is what this irrational and anti-Semitic campaign against Zionism accomplished for the Soviet Union a generation ago. One has to wonder why such a great world power

as the Soviet Union, which has accomplished so much in science, culture and social betterment for its people, which has supported Third World peoples in their struggles against colonialism, which plays such an important role in the struggle to end the arms race — why must such an advanced country rely on this specious and racist Devil's theory of Zionism to gain popular domestic support for its foreign policy? Why must the Soviet Union, which today has so many educated people, rely on such crude poison pens and pathological anti-Semites as Kichko, Ivanov, Yevseyev, Skurlatov, Modzhorian, Begun and the now-convicted wife-murderer Yemelyanov to explain to the Soviet public what Zionism is all about? How can it be explained that such anti-Semites as Modzhorian and Begun are allowed to defy Lenin on the subject of the anti-Jewish pogroms in Tsarist Russia by making the claim in their published works that those pogroms were a form of class struggle, the elemental revolt of the exploited non-Jews against their Jewish exploiters? This is a travesty of Lenin's views of the pogroms in Tsarist Russia! Those who propagate this "theory" today disgrace the Soviet Union and undermine its society.

Worst of all, this reckless and fevered campaign against what is a caricature of Zionism and Israel has greatly increased anti-Semitic sentiment among ordinary Soviet people. That fine Soviet scholar and enemy of the Jew-baiters, Ruth Okuneva, in her much quoted letter to Chairman Leonid Brezhnev, declared that if the average Soviet person will find "only literature in which the very name of the Jew is reviled, what concept will the Soviet citizen have of the Jewish people? . . . the negative information that fills the 'anti-Zionist' books, articles and pamphlets, which are pub-

lished in vast editions, falls on fresh and consequently rich soil, kindling widespread hatred toward the Jews."

One can cite all sorts of evidence to illustrate her contention, but for our purposes today it is enough to cite a fragment of a poem, "Zog Mir Farvos" ("Tell Me Why"), by the Soviet Yiddish poet Yossel Buchbinder of Moscow. The poem was published Sept. 20, 1975 in the Warsaw *Folks-Shtimme*. Its opening lines read:

"Tell me why you dislike me?
Have I ever sinned against you?
Have I ever insulted you,
Caused you unnecessary distress,
That only because of me has your
heart been tormented?
Tell it to me openly, don't be
two-faced,
Because who but you knows the truth
so well,
That I am guilty of nothing,
That I never sinned against you.
Why then when the slightest
misfortune occurs to you,
Do you always point your finger at me
— only I am to blame? . . .

Aside from the troubling problem of the official anti-Zionist propaganda and the growth of an anti-Semitic sentiment in the Soviet Union, the question of restrictions on the Yiddish language and Yiddish cultural institutions still continues. For more than 30 years the official Soviet government policy in respect to the Jewish nationality has been one of assimilation, of government-encouraged and government-directed assimilation. What ought to be a personal and private option of the individual is determined by government policy.

Some of the results of this policy are evident especially among younger Soviet Jews. Among younger Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union in

the U.S., many are absolutely ignorant of Russian Jewish history, of the social and political movements among the Russian Jews, of the role of Jews in the Russian revolutionary movement in the Tsarist times or the contributions which Jews made to the Soviet Union. These are people who are divested of knowledge of their own people's culture and history.

Such was not always the case in the Soviet Union. In earlier times, when Lenin's viewpoint on the national question prevailed, Yiddish culture and Yiddish institutions flourished in the Soviet Union as never before in the history of the Jewish people. At this memorial meeting we call upon the Soviet authorities to restore the cultural and communal rights that the Jewish people enjoyed in the Soviet Union until 1937-38 when the first restrictions and crimes were committed against the Yiddish cultural movement.

Those rights were thereafter whittled away until they almost entirely disappeared between 1949 and 1957. Today in the large centers of Jewish population in the USSR there are no Jewish institutions or organizations, no schools to teach Yiddish or Jewish history and Jewish literature in Yiddish or Russian, and no schools to train new cadres to serve the Jewish population — though most Jews in the Soviet Union know they are Jewish and even show a strong interest in Jewish culture when given the opportunity to do so.

We once again call on the Soviet government to right this wrong against the Jewish population in the Soviet Union. This would be good for the Jews and it would also be good for the Soviet Union itself since it would signify an important contribution of its own to the struggle for world peace and peaceful coexistence. ■

In Yalta

By I.E. RONCH

Tr. from Yiddish
by HAROLD ASPIZ

New York, back in 1943,
and Itzik Feffer was bidding me good-bye,
and smilingly he slapped me on the back,
— *Nu*, you'll come see us once again in Kiev,
and we'll ride down to Yalta
and bathe in the fondling Black Sea waters.

Now I sit here in Yalta
and from my balcony on the sixth floor
of the deluxe Yalta Hotel
I hear the swishing of the waves
of the dark blue-green Black Sea.
They chant a hymn to the encircling hills,
to the beauty of Massandra Park,
and a choir of birds erupts in serenade.
And people point out that over there
in that white house Chekhov once lived,
for the last time gazed upon his seagulls.
And Lev Tolstoy came here to take a cure
(not far from here a street is named for him),
and Pushkin, Gorky, Nekrassov, and Mayakovsky
sang out here, together with the birds,
the song of freedom and peace.

And I wander about alone, alone,
longing for Itzik Feffer,
and the aroma of lilac, jasmine
cannot pacify me,
and I know I have come to pay homage to the dead,
to Feffer, Markish, Bergelson, and Shlomo Mikhoels,
in beautiful Massandra Park, by the Black Sea.

ISAAC ELHANAN RONCH *last appeared here in Dec., 1981 with a poem, "Moses' Kiss."* He is author most recently of *A Loib un a Dank*, a book of Yiddish poems with some English translations.

HAROLD ASPIZ is Professor of English at California State University, Long Beach. He is an authority on 19th-century American literature.

Polling American Anti-Semitism

By GERALD STILLMAN

A joke has been making the rounds about two Jews in a library. One is reading a Yiddish newspaper and groaning. The other is reading an anti-Semitic sheet and grinning from time to time.

"Why are you groaning?" the second one asks.

"Why shouldn't I?" He points to the Yiddish paper. "All I read is about swastikas painted on synagogues, overturned gravestones, increased activity by the American Nazis and the Klan. . . . And what's there to grin about in the sheet you're reading?"

"Plenty! Listen to this: Jews control the banks, the press, industry, the government. Jews are out to take over the world! If they're kidding, I'm grinning. And if what they say is true, why should I be unhappy?"

During the last couple of years, the assessment of anti-Semitism in the U.S. has become a major preoccupation of many Jewish periodicals and major organizations. Small wonder! Jews across the country become fearful when they read articles about broken windows, fires, cemetery vandalism and the like. Incidents of vandalism against homes or synagogues have a devastating impact, despite claims that they are committed merely by misguided teenagers. The feeling of devastation is aggravated

GERALD STILLMAN last appeared here with his Aug. 12, 1980 commemorative address for the martyred Soviet Yiddish writers, "The Yiddish Culture that Was Destroyed," published in June, 1981. He is the translator of two works by Mendele Mokher Sforim.

during such periods as last autumn's debate about the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia, when, from the thicket of statements, it became clear that anti-Semitic (not merely anti-Zionist) sentiments are to be found among government officials at the highest levels.

Jewish organizations, reacting to these perceptions, have over the last couple of decades commissioned studies — usually involving polls, statistics and analyses — of the "status" of anti-Semitism. Early in Jan., 1982, for example, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith released the results of its 21st annual survey of anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. It reported "974 episodes of vandalism against private and public property and 350 bodily assaults or harassments against individual Jews and Jewish institutions" in 1981.

These figures represented a nearly threefold increase over 1980 (377 and 112, respectively), while the 1980 figures, in turn, represented a nearly threefold increase over 1979 (120 and 49, respectively). Disturbing? Yes. An indication of hostility to Jews just below the surface of American life? Also yes. But "the real significance of the phenomenon should not be reduced to a ratio," said ADL national director Nathan Perlmutter. And Justin Finger, ADL civil rights director, noted that the vast majority of incidents involved swastika graffiti rather than arson and violence, and that 974 episodes were a 1981 total for a country of 220 million people.

Perlmutter's and Finger's reluc-

tance to exaggerate the significance of the rising incidence of vandalism is not unique. Leaders of most national Jewish organizations, while stressing the seriousness of such incidents, note that we have come a long way from the situation in the 1920s and 1930s when open anti-Semitism was preached on nationwide radio hookups by such agitators as Gerald L.K. Smith and Father Coughlin; when advertisements for employment or apartments frequently ended with "only Christians need apply"; when quotas were set for Jews in medical and law schools; when Jews had difficulty obtaining academic appointments or gaining entry into fields like engineering, finance and banking; when the election or selection of a Jew for high governmental office was a rarity.

Jewish leaders base such distinctions not on their individual perceptions but on analyses of public opinion, the most recent of which include "Anti-Semitism in the United States" by Yankelovitch, Skelly and White (conducted in 1980/81, summary results released in July, 1981), and "Attitudes Concerning the American Jewish Community" by the Gallup Poll (conducted in Nov. 1981, results released in Dec.) Both studies were commissioned by the American Jewish Committee, the latter to verify whether there were significant changes in the results of the former following the intense propaganda, some of it heavy with anti-Semitic overtones, of the AWACS debate.

Before examining the results of these recent surveys, it is instructive to look at the first such extensive survey of American public opinion, conceived by the ADL in 1960 when millions of Americans were shocked by the reappearance of anti-Semitic violence. "On Christmas Eve, 1959, a gang of German youths desecrated a

Jewish synagogue in Cologne. Within days, the Cologne incident was repeated in many other German cities . . . The waves spread beyond Germany, and then beyond Europe to the U.S. By March 1960, barely two months after the first German incident, at least 643 similar incidents had occurred in the U.S. alone. Synagogues across the country suddenly bore the crude epithets of bigotry and the ubiquitous swastika . . . Jewish cemeteries, stores and homes were smeared and shattered . . . On occasion, Jews were personally tormented and beaten. . . . Public shock increased as it became known that these acts were not a final spasm on the part of aged Nazis but were committed by youngsters reared and educated in supposedly enlightened postwar America" (*Anti-Semitism in America*, by Harold E. Quinley and Charles Y. Glock, New York, 1979, p. xi). ADL decided to commission studies which would contribute to "knowledge about the extent, location, and character of contemporary anti-Semitism. But they also wanted to learn as much as possible about the root causes of anti-Jewish prejudice in order to find more effective ways to combat it" (p. xii).

The Survey Research Center of the University of California at Berkeley was selected to develop the methodology and conduct the work effort. Between 1966 and 1979, 10 volumes were published which can be said to constitute the main body of recent sociological research on the entire question. The tenth was a summary by Harold Quinley and Charles Glock. Among the specific studies undertaken were: an investigation of links between anti-Semitism and political extremism; examination of the roles of churches and schools and mass media in combatting anti-

Semitism; and a public opinion survey to systematically measure the amount and character of anti-Semitism in the U.S. This "measurement" used an "anti-Semitism index," developed in 1964 by Gertrude J. Selznick and Stephen Steinberg of the University of California, consisting of the first eleven questions in the *Table* shown on page 12. The "index" has become the reference used by all later polls in determining *trends* of anti-Semitism.

Quinley and Glock summarize the analyses of the 1964 survey and conclude that:

- the anti-Semitism that persists here is not, for the most part, the virulent, hate-inspired variety of the '20's and '30's;
- more than 1/3 of non-Jews stereotypically think of Jews as unethical, dishonest, aggressive, pushy, clannish and conceited — a decrease in numbers since the '30's and '40's;
- very few non-Jews favor discriminating against Jews in employment, housing and use of public facilities; few would vote against a presidential candidate simply because he is Jewish — all major improvements since the '30's and '40's;
- many non-Jews have positive attitudes towards Jews, regarding them as friendly, religious, generous, family-oriented;
- anti-Semitism is more prevalent among the elderly (over 55) and manual laborers than among younger people (below 35) and the middle class;
- lack of education is the *most important* predictor of anti-Semitism.

The responses to the 11-question "index" in 1964 break down as follows: 16% of respondents rejected all the statements; another 15% accepted only one. These 31% are regarded as the "least anti-Semitic third." Another 32% agreed with two to four of the statements. The remaining 37% ac-

cepted five or more of the statements — the "most anti-Semitism third." There were a total of 1,913 respondents.

The 1980/81 Yankelovitch study, "Anti-Semitism in the US," was commissioned by the American Jewish Committee under conditions not unlike those which led the ADL to commission the 1964 studies — the bombing of the synagogue on the Rue Copernic in Paris and the ensuing wave of anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. and in many parts of the world. Was anti-Semitism again on the rise? Many observers felt that factors associated with the rise of fascism and violent anti-Semitism in Europe in the early '30's were re-emerging in the U.S.: the worst inflation in over a generation; the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression; increase in political conservatism in the U.S. and in a number of European countries. To these must be added a newer factor: instability in the Middle East, where the current direction of U.S. policy — to establish an anti-Soviet base to replace Iran in safeguarding Middle East oil — may conflict with Israeli security interests. Presumably many non-Jews closely identify American Jews with the Israeli government's actions.

The Yankelovitch survey sample consisted of 1,041 non-Jews, plus 127 Blacks and 174 Jews. The Jews were asked questions about their perceptions of anti-Semitism. The 11 statements comprising the "index" are given below, together with the percents of those who agreed with them in 1964 and in 1981.

A word of caution is in order here: the percentages are based only on those interviewees who expressed an opinion. Those who answered "I don't know" are excluded. To illustrate the potential fallacy here, suppose 16 people are asked whether Jews con-

TRENDS IN NEGATIVE BELIEFS ABOUT JEWS
(from Yankelovitch, Skelly and White,
"Anti-Semitism in the United States," July, 1981)

I. "Index" Item Statements	<i>Percent in agreement</i>	
	1964	1981
1. Jews stick together too much	58	53
2. Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind	30	22
3. Jews always like to be at the head of things	63	52
4. International banking is pretty much controlled by Jews	55	43
5. Jews are (not) just as honest as other businessmen	34	22
6. The trouble with Jewish businessmen is that they are so shrewd and tricky that other people don't have a fair chance in competition	40	27
7. Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want	48	33
8. Jews have a lot of irritating faults	48	29
9. Jews have too much power in the United States	13	23
10. Jews are more loyal to Israel than to America	39	48
11. Jews have too much power in the business world	33	37
II. Other "Negative Belief" Statements		
a) The movie and television industries are pretty much controlled by Jews	70	46
b) Jews should stop complaining about what happened to them in Nazi Germany	51	40
c) Jews are always stirring up trouble with their ideas	13	14

Note: Respondents were asked to "agree," "disagree" or "have no opinion." Percentages given are based only on those expressing an opinion.

trol the media; three say "no," three say "yes" and 10 say "I don't know." If the "don't know" are excluded, it could be said that 50% of the respondents believe that Jews control the media. Reporting statistics in such manner is troublesome. Still, these are the only statistics available. They show that for the first eight "index" items there have been decreases in negative beliefs about Jews.

To verify the significance of this decrease, additional questions were asked dealing with *positive* attitudes toward Jews. Of those who had opinions, 93% believed that Jews are

hard-working people, 90% that Jews have a strong faith in God, 86% that Jews are warm and friendly people, and 79% that Jews have contributed much to the cultural life of America. Clearly, such high percentages could not have been obtained without positive responses by many of the very same people who scored high in anti-Semitism on the above table! It is known that positive stereotypes can exist alongside negative ones in the same individuals ("Blacks are good athletes," "some of my best friends are Jews" . . .). Yet the poll-takers' interpretation of the preceding results

is that there is a reservoir of good will towards Jews in the U.S.

On the other hand, the number of non-Jews who believe that Jews have too much power in the U.S. (item 9) almost doubled, from 13% in 1964 to 23% in 1981. Items 10 (Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the U.S.) and 11 (Jews have too much power in the business world) also showed increases in negative images. It is especially troubling that these increases are for "power" items and that, despite decreases, some half of the respondents still believe that Jews control international banking (Item 4 — 43%) and "always like to be at the head of things" (item 3 — 52%).

These characterizations are strongly reminiscent of the forgeries known as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. These were concocted by Tsarist officials in the early 1890s and first widely publicized by Pavel Krushevan in his Kishinev (Bessarabia) newspaper *Znamya* in connection with a series of articles entitled, "The Program for the Conquest of the World by the Jews," published at the time of the bloody Kishinev pogrom of 1903. The *Protocols* have played a role in many anti-Semitic movements ranging from the White Guard Russian armies with their savage pogroms against the Jews of Byelorussia and the Ukraine after the 1917 Revolution, to Henry Ford's dissemination of them via his *Dearborn Independent* during most of the 1920s (which fed the ensuing lunatic-fringe denunciations of "Rabbi Roosevelt" in the '30's and '40's), to Hitler's murderous hordes and, most recently, to Soviet publications. The principal themes of the "Protocols" are: international Jewry aspires to world domination; this will be achieved through guile, cunning and conspiracy; a most important method of implementing domination is Jewish

control of international banking; equally important for achieving domination is control of the press (and the other media which have since arisen); the required deception will be maximized by infiltrating and manipulating Freemasonry lodges. (See for details William Korey's "The Soviet 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion'" in *Anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union*, Jerusalem, 1980, Vol. 2, p. 20.)

These staple themes of anti-Semites bear striking resemblance to just those "index" items which show increasing belief or have remained relatively unchanged over the last two decades. In a Sept. 11, 1981 letter to the *N.Y. Times*, Prof. Frederick Schweitzer, a teacher of history at Manhattan College (Catholic), perceives this problem and expresses his fear — as a teacher working toward reduction of anti-Semitism among Roman Catholics — of seeing his work undone: "The Yankelovitch report is ominous in the sharp increase of the number of those who assert that Jews are too powerful and more loyal to Israel than to America (two of the most venerable calumnies in the annals of anti-Semitism). Worse, one third of us are still anti-Semitic; that may translate as one third of us being blatantly anti-Semitic, two thirds latently so. The 'sleeping giant' can awaken. If domestic supply runs low, anti-Semitism can be imported; it is the most readily importable/exportable item in the international ideology market."

The "international ideology market" appeared to become more active in the fall of 1981 after the assassination of Sadat, the debate and ensuing decision to sell AWACS aircraft to the Saudis, and President Reagan's statement — referring to Menahem Begin's reaction to this sale — that no foreign government would set U.S.

policy. The American Jewish Committee commissioned the Gallup Organization to measure attitudes of the general public toward Israel and the Jews. The survey was conducted Nov. 20-30, 1981. The results, issued in Dec., were compared to a similar Gallup survey conducted in Oct., 1980. The comparison showed that over the 13-month period those who believed that Jews or Zionists exerted too much influence in the U.S. rose from 10% to 13% — not a statistically significant change, according to Gallup.* (In this same survey 70% of the interviewees believed that oil companies have too much influence, 46% believed that labor unions do, 30% that Arab interests do, 14% that Blacks do, and 10% that Born-Again Christians do.)

On the question: do you agree/disagree that most American Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the U.S., those who agreed rose from 29% in Oct., 1980 to 34% in Nov., 1981 — but this 34% was also the result obtained in an even earlier survey in April, 1980. (Some 50% of interviewees in all three surveys disagreed that American Jews are more loyal to Israel, and some 16-17% didn't know.)

The Gallup results, like the Yankelovitch results, have consistently found that anti-Jewish prejudice is more prevalent among people who are less educated; have lower incomes; are manual laborers; and are non-white. Yankelovitch finds there are twice as many "prejudiced" non-Jews (28%) with less than a high school diploma than with a college degree (15%); conversely, there are twice as many "unprejudiced" non-Jews (66%) with a college degree than with less than a high-school diploma (33%). Yankelovitch also finds that there are twice as many (31%) prejudiced non-Jews over 55 years old as among 18-29 year-olds (16%). Among Blacks, however, there appears to be little corre-

lation between age or education and anti-Semitism. Further, while there has been a 20% increase in the number of "unprejudiced" between 1964 and 1981 in the overall population, there has been little change during this time among Blacks, among whom there are half as many (22%) "unprejudiced" as among the overall population (45%) and 50% more "prejudiced" (37%) than among the overall population (23%).

Statistics and "numerical measures" notwithstanding, Jews in the U.S., private individuals as well as leaders of national organizations, are worried. They perceive the increase in overt anti-Semitic acts and in the growth of anti-Semitic organizations as posing a real threat to their security. These are not new fears for Jews, but have become more intense recently. Most observers agree that the reasons for this intensification derive from the worsening U.S. economic situation coupled with Reaganoid jingoism on the international scene. People perceive that the economic pie has not only ceased to grow but may actually shrink. Competition for each piece of pie will intensify. "Competition is supposedly a great American virtue,"

*Gallup numbers for 1980/81 (10%/13%) cannot be compared with Yankelovitch numbers for 1981 (23% in the Table above) because a) the Yankelovitch percentage excludes those with no opinion, b) the question is posed quite differently, c) the sampled population is different. The lack of comparability between different pollsters casts doubt on the validity of surveys. There should, however, be validity in the trends when comparing results taken by a given pollster at different times. Furthermore, there really is no other way to obtain a "numerical measure" of public opinion.

**The "unprejudiced" are defined as those who believe none or one of the 11 "index" items. Personally, I don't see how believing even one of these items as *characteristic of the Jewish people* (as opposed to applying to a particular individual) can entitle one to be called "unprejudiced."

said Rabbi Daniel Silver in a speech printed in the March 22, 1981 "Temple Bulletin" in Cleveland. "We are forced to stay in condition . . . When competition heats up, the rules of fairness begin to dissolve. Prejudice is an unfair but effective way of excluding through bitter historical experience that as economic conditions worsen, social and political conditions also worsen. The result can be internal conflict and hostility within the society. Such situations have frequently been breeding grounds for anti-Semitic discrimination and violence, manipulated by governments (as in Tsarist Russia and Hitler's Germany) or by "out groups" trying to get "in."

Professor Shmuel Ettinger, former head of the Jewish History Department at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, claims that anti-Semitism flourishes under "the combined influence of the three major elements that have sustained and nourished anti-Semitism in a variety of historical settings. The constant one of these elements is the negative image of the Jew, or the negative Jewish stereotype, which is rooted in a long and stable religious, cultural and social tradition. The dynamic elements are the political and social tensions that create the need to exhibit a villain — evil in intent and alien in demeanor — who is responsible for undermining stability. By manipulating these elements — rulers, demagogues and politicians have been able to seduce the masses into supporting them and the attainment of their goals" (*Anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union*, Vol. 2, p. 45, emphasis added).

The surveys discussed above deal primarily with the *constant* element — the negative image of the Jew. They describe in statistics and percentages the current level of anti-Semitism, whether various measures

of anti-Semitism are increasing or decreasing and in which segments of the population the changes are taking place. What these surveys do *not* deal with to any great extent are the *dynamic* elements — the political and social tensions and their confluence at a given time. Jews, both individuals and organization leaders, are feeling uneasy today because they believe that the state of the economy — the high inflation rate, the high levels of unemployment, the cutbacks in social programs for the poor and the elderly — has a strong bearing on the growth of anti-Semitism. If we want to be sure that the statistics continue to show improvements or at least no growth in levels of anti-Semitism, we will have to, as individuals and as organization leaders, exert pressure on our Senators and Congressmen and on the White House itself to restore the cutbacks to social programs, to devise means for creating jobs and to roll back inflation by rolling back the monstrous military outlays which threaten to bring the country to the brink of economic disaster. ■

CORRECTION

June issue, p. 47, col. 2, lines 41-43; The 271 books published in 18,000,000 copies from 1967 to 1981 were allegedly issued in Yiddish (not "in languages other than Yiddish"). The figure is incredible, especially because in the very same article the author, Ruvim Groyer, writes that "in the past 20 years [1962-1981] the publishers brought out 85 books in Yiddish." This latter figure conforms with the complete list of Yiddish titles, 98, given in *Sovetish Haimland* in May, 1980, as published since 1959.



ISRAEL

Prime Minister Menahem Begin's coalition barely defeated a no-confidence vote May 19 by 58-57, with 5 abstentions. Two Likud members, Amnon Linn and Yitzhak Peretz, had switched the day before to the Labor alignment, Linn because Likud had alienated the Arab population, and Peretz, a Moroccan Jew, because Begin had not kept his promises in the economic and social field.

On the Arab fronts . . . An Israeli reserve officer and a private early in May refused to serve on the West Bank and were jailed for 20 days. . . . By May 12, 15 Arabs had been killed by gunfire in clashes of soldiers in the three months past. . . . Demonstrations by Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza continued into May. . . . 26 mayors on the West Bank and Gaza, in a letter May 2 to Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, threatened to stop providing municipal services unless the four dismissed Arab mayors were reinstated. They demanded ending the Milson civilian administration and called for establishment of an Arab Palestinian state led by the PLO in the occupied areas. . . . The American-born Israeli conscript soldier, Alan H. Goodman, charged with the shootings at Temple Mount in Jerusalem April 11, dismissed his court-appointed lawyer May 7 and instead accepted the lawyer assigned to him by Meir Kahane's extremist right-wing group, Kach. . . . Ziad Abu Eian, 23, the Palestinian extradited from the United States for his alleged terrorist bombing which killed two and wounded 36 in May, 1979 in the Galilee, went on trial in Tel Aviv April 20. His trial was attended by representatives of the International Federation of Jurists, the Red Cross and by Ramsey Clark for Eian's defense committee. . . . A public opinion poll in mid-April showed that 76.8% of Israelis favored the crackdown in the occupied areas, 13.7% opposed.

On the economic front . . . The cost-of-living increase in April was 10.7% and in March, 5.1%. If the April rate continues, the annual inflation rate would climb to 136%, up from last year's 101% . . . The American Dun and Bradstreet house has issued a list of the top 100 Israeli industrial firms, *Dun's 100: Israel's Leading Industrial Enterprises*, containing detailed information on these businesses. . . . Gross income of Sephardi (Asian-African) wage earners is 40% lower per capita than that of salaried Ashkenazi (European and U.S. origin). . . . Percentage of workers in the service industries increased and became the majority of the Israeli work force between 1970 and 1980. In 1970, the total work force was 963,200 and grew to 1,254,400 by 1980.

On the Orthodoxy front . . . The Begin government May 2 delivered on its agreement with the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Israel to ban flights of El Al planes on the Sabbath and holidays when the Cabinet approved the ban. A ministerial committee was set to work out details within three months. However, second thoughts emerged when it was learned that the ban would double the deficit of the airline and might jeopardize its survival. The El Al staff strongly opposes the ban, as do the Histadrut and the Labor Party. The Agudat threatened to pull its four Knesset members from the government coalition unless the ban is agreed to. . . . Lack of the requisite votes in the Knesset caused the withdrawal of another Agudat demand, that Jews will be admitted to Israel under the Law of Return only if they meet the requirements of Halakhah, that is, are born of a Jewish mother or converted by an Orthodox rabbi.

●

News briefs . . . The Zaire press agency announced May 15 that Zaire planned to resume diplomatic relations with Israel, the first African state to do so since most African states broke off relations. Return of the Sinai to Egypt justified the resumption. . . . Volunteer British workers at Kibbutz Bror Chayil late in April raided the neighboring Kibbutz Or Haner, which has Argentinians, and pinned up Union Jacks and patriotic posters. . . . Dr. Yusuf Shawki, Egyptian Deputy Minister of Culture, has accepted an invitation to lecture at the Hebrew University on Egyptian and Arabic music. . . . Although Menahem Begin and Ariel Sharon lost ground in popularity polls for prime minister and defense minister, respectively, early in April, they were still far ahead of their Labor Party rivals. Only Abba Eban came quite near to Moshe Shamir in preference for foreign minister. . . . In a poll concerning a peace treaty with Jordan early in April, 54.5% disapproved if any concession were made on the West Bank, 27.1% were willing to concede certain areas except East Jerusalem, 10.3% were willing to give up all of the West Bank including East Jerusalem. . . . Polls in March and April show small parties continuing to lose adherents as Likud gained one seat to 54 over the previous month, while the Labor Party gained four seats to 44. . . . A local press is growing rapidly in Israel, from the first local paper in 1959 to the present 120. They are usually published on the weekends only. . . . A threat by the United States to withdraw from the World Health Organization if the threatened boycott of Israel by the WHO was carried through caused its sponsors to withdraw the proposal May 12. . . . The emigration trend from Israel has affected even the strongly Zionist Soviet Georgian community. Recently 120 Georgian families emigrated.

●

More on "censorship" . . . More information has become available since the widely publicized news that about 2,000 books have been banned in the occupied territories, which we reported in the May issue. Journalists were given a list of banned books, which turned out to have only 1,100 titles, not 2,000, and included books with inciting anti-Semitic material.

L. H.

Why Socialism?

A Symposium-in-Print

By EDWARD I. LENDING, ITCHE GOLDBERG, JOSEPH DIMOW,
MAX GORDON, LOUIS HARAP, HERSHL HARTMAN, A.B.
MAGIL, SAM PEVZNER, ALBERT PRAGO, ANNETTE T.
RUBINSTEIN, WILLIAM and HEDY SHNEYER,
and JACK WEINMAN.

In his address on "A Jewish Agenda for the '80's" at our May 4, 1980 Dinner (published in Sept., 1980), Prof. Itche Goldberg included among his priorities "securing the continuity of a progressive, socialist component within Jewish life . . ."

"There cannot be a future world without socialism," Prof. Goldberg said. ". . . I cannot visualize an American Jewish community without its left element, aware of its mistakes but also proud of its contribution. . . . But a Jewish Left, as I see it, must be totally free of any ties to anyone, with loyalties only to the Jewish people and to the ideals of a democratic humanist socialism . . ."

Among the many responses to Prof. Goldberg's address that the Editorial Board received, the one printed here from Edward I. Lending, a Spanish Vet, was most provoking, as he asked: "Ah, Socialism. What, Itche Goldberg, is so damn sacred about the incantation? . . . Why should we be anything but pragmatic humanists?"

The Editorial Board decided to broaden the discussion by soliciting responses to Mr. Lending's letter from all the members of our Editorial Advisory Council and a few other contributors to the magazine, as well as from Itche Goldberg. What follows, then, is a symposium-in-print, consisting of Mr. Lending's letter, Prof. Goldberg's response, comments from 11 other writers involved, for the most part, in our magazine's policy-making process, and further response by Prof. Goldberg to comments made by Max Gordon and Jack Weinman. Though publication of this symposium has been unavoidably delayed, we feel its publication now will contribute to the discussion - and sharp controversy - surrounding Susan Sontag's Feb. 6 speech at Town Hall in N.Y. to a progressive audience gathered to show support for Solidarity in Poland, in which Ms. Sontag charged that "Communism is fascism - successful fascism, if you will. . . . Fascism with a human face."

Reprints of Itche Goldberg's article are available for \$1.50, postage paid.

"Why Socialism?"

By EDWARD I. LENDING

Prof. Itche Goldberg's "Jewish Agenda for the '80's," like a

gedechte cholent, is a nourishing dish. It should slake some of the ideological hunger pangs of newly defrocked Jewish Communists, struggling away from the clutching shibboleths and illusions of the past.

Even the tough minded professor has a toe mired there. Ah, SOCIALISM. What, Itche Goldberg, is so damned sacred about the incantation? Socialism is no longer a visionary's dream of Utopia. We've watched it in action in a myriad of forms, now, for 60 years. Where are its successes? What is its promise? Who is its *meshiach*?

What brand of socialism should left Jews strive for? The Communist? Which — the Russo . . . the Sino . . . the Albano . . . the Jugo . . . the Euro? How about Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge? How about a lethal dose of anti-Semitism?

How about democratic socialism? Which of those nations does not clutch the PLO to its bosom, today, vote with it in the "Third World's" obscene cabal against beleaguered, largely socialist Israel? In which socialist country has the dream not foundered on the disillusionment of its constituents?

So what's the *gedillah* (big deal)? When does the dissenting Jewish left turn its back on the icon? (Or Baal?) Why should we be anything but pragmatic humanists? Why not stay free to cope with the issues confronting us without the inhibitions imposed by ideological preconceptions?

It is not overly dramatic to suggest that we Jews do not have the luxury of many more mistakes. . . .

Otherwise, Professor Goldberg, right on!

Singer Island, Fla., Oct. 1, 1980



"Although he may tarry . . ."

By ITCHE GOLDBERG

I could have spared myself, and the reader, a lengthy answer by merely interpreting Mr. Lending's objection as a case of simple semantics: what's

"pragmatic humanism" to him is *socialism* to me — and the controversy would be settled. However, this would be too glib and simplistic, if not a downright cop-out on my part for two reasons: I don't really know what "pragmatic humanism" is, nor am I ready to surrender the idea and ideal of socialism.

Mr. Lending, half-facetiously, offered me a choice of socialisms (plural). But by stressing, as I did in my article a *democratic* and *humanist* (both adjectives italicized) socialism, I automatically and a-priori eschewed any and all of the models Mr. Lending proffered.

However, the fact that the ideal of socialism has as yet not been realized anywhere in the world neither detracts from its potential as a vehicle of social transformation nor diminishes its attribute and vision as an ideal of human redemption. To me socialism is still the very essence and apotheosis of humanism, the old dream of *geula* (redemption) for man and the world.

Have we turned away from American democracy, because it was violated by McCarthy or Nixon or is being raped by a "moral majority" or seems to have a bleak future under Reagan today? Have those of us who believed, and do believe, that Menahem Begin set Israel on a suicidal course, turned away from our interest in, devotion to and involvement with Israel? Was McCarthy American democracy? Is Begin Israel? (I am not equating mechanically, merely citing examples.)

I am ready to agree with you, Mr. Lending, that each of the countries you mention has, to a greater or lesser degree, each in its own way, perverted and violated the ideal of socialism. None — and I say emphatically *none* — of those you mentioned measures up to my explicit precept of a socialism with a humanist face.

So what? Is this reason enough for me and you to give up our belief in socialism, for some ephemeral "pragmatic humanism"?

I cannot see a Jewish Left movement turn away from its belief in socialism — it has nothing else to turn to. And there is a tradition of socialism which has by now become an integral component of Jewish history, of our people's push toward freedom and justice.

Ideals have been defiled and violated before, but that did not doom them historically. The very violation and distortion, the very abuse of their appeal often attest to their power and promise. In retrospect, we may have evolved a simplistic formula for the attainment of and the road to socialism. We were so hungry for its realization! When the Russian Revolution, an event of great historic import and promise, occurred, we — and the "we" encompassed millions all over the world — saw in it the realization of the long deferred and hoped-for dream. The faith was so widespread that many were blinded to the mistakes and crimes committed, even overlooking the fact that nationalization of the means of production is not yet socialism.

Personally, I consider the period when the Jewish Left ceased equating the Soviet Union with socialism, freed itself from the dogmatic and slavish acceptance of Moscow's infallibility, as the high point in its process of maturity — a heady process, revelatory and liberating.

But, why involve the Soviet Union in this discussion? It's obvious. Most of the Jewish Left were shocked (shattered?) as Jews and as socialists by the crimes committed by the Soviet Union for the past 45 years (starting c. 1935) against the Jewish people (cultural genocide, killing of its creators,

discrimination and dissemination of anti-Semitic propaganda).

But — despite all the tragic developments — we still turn to socialism, not as an icon, but as a vision, Mr. Lending. Why the stubbornness? Because we still live in a world of immoral and tragic inequality, oppression and dehumanization; because there are still tens of millions of starving children in the world and the danger of nuclear devastation is still dangling over us. Tyrants — yes, some in the guise of socialists — are still threatening the race of man. After more than half a century of experience with "socialist-style" governments, we realize — I repeat — that nationalizing the means of production, distribution of land to the peasantry, important as these may be, do not spell socialism yet. For the vision of socialism to be realized, it must be *concerned with human beings*, it must have a humanist face, it must have a democratic base. A socialism that dehumanizes the individual or allows an individual tyrant or a collective party-tyrant to shape our life and fate is dangerous and a historic deception. The fact that all the existing models have distorted the vision does not really scare me away. To lose faith in it or to accept and defend counterfeit would be historic folly.

And there, Mr. Lending, I fall back upon good old Jewish tradition. One of the thirteen "articles of faith" ("an maamin") postulated by the Rambam (Maimonides, 1135-1204) expresses his unshaken belief in the coming of the Messiah. "Although he may tarry," says the Rambam, "I still believe." No matter how long it will take, the only hope of a suffering and benighted humanity is still a socialism which is moral, democratic and humanist.

New York, Feb. 10, 1981

“Other terms than ‘revolutionary’”

By **JOSEPH DIMOW**

[Joe Dimow, though not a writer, meets regularly with our Editorial Advisory Council and is co-chair of our New Haven support group.]

In response to your request for comment on my feeling about socialism I would make these points:

1. I believe that socialism is, or should be, a more efficient, fair and responsible way for society to organize production and distribution.

2. I am not sure, as I once was, that socialism would do away with some of the injustices that appear to be inherent in capitalism, such as exploitation and manipulation of people.

3. I do not believe, as I once did, that socialism will necessarily do away with certain evils that seemed to be an outgrowth of capitalism, such as religious obscurantism, racism, or the tendency towards war.

4. I am reluctant to use the word “socialism” to describe what exists in those countries which identify themselves as such without some qualification.

5. We need a vast increase in our theoretical understanding of such problems as human psychology, violence, greed, etc., as well as the causes of war. We also need to know much more about the role of religion, nationalism, ethnic identification, etc. to deal with these questions in a socialist society. Obviously they are far more important than previously acknowledged.

Flowing from this, it seems, would be a commitment by a humanist socialist movement to live up to the democratic principles and rights we know in America. It also seems to follow that there is no need for a militantly revolutionary party in America. Rather what is needed are sweeping

economic changes that could be described in other terms than “revolutionary.” This is because the “socialist” experience to date has been so flawed that it is questionable whether the tremendous sacrifices and costs required in a revolutionary struggle are worth the reward. I don’t want in America the type of socialism that exists in Eastern Europe. Nor do I want to make costly commitments of lives and energy for “possible” improvements that could be achieved by peaceful though more gradual means.
New Haven, CT, Nov. 17, 1980

“We need an open mind . . .”

By **LOUIS HARAP**

My age of socialist innocence ended, perhaps belatedly, in 1956. For many at the time, the conviction about the desirability and viability of socialism died with the Khrushchev report. Not for me. Instead, I discarded dogmatism, a priori conceptions, a mind encased in formulas. I experienced a restoration of my critical faculties. I became convinced that the most permanent and viable heritage of the bourgeois order was embodied in democracy and in the freedoms of the First Amendment. My socialist convictions were renewed because nothing had happened to change my view that a democratic socialism gave most promise of leading to the most humane society, offered the only alternative to the faltering, stagnant and declining capitalist order, and offered the only social arrangement that would allow a full and healthy development of a liberated Third World.

No one socialist country can serve as a “model” for another. Each must develop its own forms in accordance with its own history and traditions. This is not to say that basic socio-

economic principles do not lie at the base of all socialist societies. But I reject the Soviet view that the social and economic structures it has formed must serve as the "model" for others. On the contrary, the Soviet experience has only too painfully demonstrated what future socialist countries must avoid.

No presently existing "socialist" country can be said to be socialist in any full, unequivocal sense. None has yet worked out either the economic forms or the freedoms essential for a humanistic society. Nor do I have any illusions about the superhuman difficulty entailed in the realization of the kind of socialism worth the struggle.

What, then, must we do? First of all, declare unceasing war against those powerful forces in our society, primarily corporate power, which are threatening us with extinction in a nuclear holocaust, which are callously leading the world to a suffocation of the planet, corruption and adulteration of nature and exhaustion of resources that would leave coming generations irreparably impoverished. We need to work for the creation of a United States socialist party toward which the mass of the people will not feel alien. We need hard, competent socio-economic thinking. We need an open mind to examine all proposals, no matter what the sources or how heterodox they may sound. We need to work out positions on current problems and the means for exerting our influence within the perspective of aiding the approach to socialism. We need to participate fully in the struggle for equal rights for all citizens, Blacks, Hispanics, Indians, women.

As a Jewish socialist I feel the special obligation to defend the right of the Jewish people, like any other people, to have their own state in the existing State of Israel. This need is all the more urgent since the very exist-

ence of Israel as a state is under threat. At the same time, and by the same token, I also have the special obligation to work for the self-determination of the Palestinian Arab people, since the existence of Israel is presently a condition for the fact that this is an issue. Further, we need to work for the security and equality of all Jews everywhere as human beings, and for the abolition of anti-Semitism and the validation of a voluntary Jewish ethnicity.

Our oligopolitic, highly technological society is increasingly ramified and its complexity multiplies with every technological advance. Our job is not to allow ourselves to become submerged in this complexity to such an extent that the continuing validity of the basic principles of socialism becomes obscured.

Belmont, Vt., May 15, 1982

"Where has capitalism worked?"

By HERSHL HARTMAN

[Hershl Hartman of Los Angeles is a frequent contributor.]

I can empathize with Ed Lending's despair over socialism, given the evidence, but I have great difficulty accepting his alternatives, both those stated and those implied.

If the bankruptcy of socialism is demonstrated by its lack of admirable models and of "*moshiakhs*," where are the equivalents for Ed's "pragmatic humanism"? Which "pragmatic humanist" regime on the face of the earth would Ed have us emulate . . . and who is *its* messiah?

Others, I am sure, will point out that a genuine commitment to *democratic* socialism can function quite well without models or messiahs. I won't belabor that particular point. What bothers me is that a renuncia-

tion of socialism implies not a nebulous and undefined 'pragmatic humanism' as an alternative but rather an acceptance of semi-democratic capitalism as the only viable choice.

And what bothers me about that is precisely what seems to be eating Ed about socialism: where has capitalism worked to the benefit of the economically exploited and the racially, ethnically and "genderly" oppressed? Who is the *moshiakh* of egalitarian, democratic capitalism?

My own commitment to socialism is rooted in and informed by the ideas and ideals of the Yiddish proletarian poets (to say nothing of the Hebrew prophets) who, somehow, never seem to appear in "pragmatic" programs, humanist or other-ist. If Ed Lending doesn't mind, I'll stick with them for awhile longer. At least, until Ed or someone comes up with something better.

Los Angeles, Nov. 10, 1980

Some "historical perspective . . ."

By A.B. MAGIL

Mr. Lending is understandably disillusioned and bitter, as are many others who shared the great dream. And he is driven to certain rhetorical exaggerations which shed no light on the approach that progressive or left American Jews should adopt toward socialism.

The socialism we have watched in action has not been "in a myriad of forms." There have been only three forms: the dominant Soviet model and the Yugoslav and Chinese heresies. Perhaps one should also speak of a potentially fourth form of socialism, that of Cuba, which wears the skin of the Soviet model, but the flesh underneath is very different and very Cuban.

Of course, I believe that one ought

to see the Soviet model in historic perspective. It is unfortunate that the first socialist revolution took place not, as Marx had expected, in a country of advanced capitalist industry and culture, but in a backward land wracked by Tsarist despotism and imperialist war. That inevitably left a deep imprint on the new society and its state even though its friends and supporters tended to idealize the flawed Soviet system. So serious were the defects that Lenin became alarmed. In the early 1920s, paralyzed on a sickbed, he wrote letter after letter denouncing the great-Russian chauvinism of certain Bolshevik leaders, including Stalin, and warning that the Soviet state was riddled with bureaucratic Tsarist vestiges.

Yet despite these early aberrations, the first few years of Soviet power saw a surge of democratic activity, with opposition political parties and newspapers, a vital diversity in literature, art, music, theater and film, and encouragement of vigorous multinational, including Jewish, cultural expression.

It was perhaps inevitable that in the struggle to save the Soviet state from the onslaught of internal counter-revolution and external armed aggression a pluralistic approach and free debate should have suffered. What was not inevitable or inherent in socialism was the later Stalinist seizure of absolute power and the monstrous crimes against socialism and democracy that followed. Today, with authoritarian, anti-democratic practices institutionalized in party and government, the Soviet system remains basically Stalinist even though some of the worst excesses have been eliminated — except for the propaganda of anti-Semitism, which has become worse.

Mr. Lending asks: "What brand of

(Continued on page 32)

The Editor's Diary

• "The Birobidzhan Affair," by Israel Emiot

According to the introduction by Columbia University Prof. Michael Stanislawsky, Israel Emiot (1909-1978) was already at 17 "a well-known religious poet" in Poland, and had four volumes of poems issued by 1938. Therefore when he fled the Nazis in Sept., 1939 to Bialystok, "Soviet occupied . . . Poland," he was received warmly and a volume of his poems was published in Moscow in 1940. Persuaded to become the correspondent for the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Birobidzhan, he arrived there in July, 1944. In "1948, the activities of the Jewish cultural institutions were canceled abruptly" (p. 9) and he was among those arrested for a plot in which "Birobidzhan was to be . . . handed over to the United States!" (p. 13). This precious little book of Emiot's (*The Birobidzhan Affair, A Yiddish Writer in Siberia*, tr. from Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld, Jewish Publication Society, Phila., 1981, 222 pages, \$13.95) is a meaningful addition to the chronicle in English of Soviet Jewish martyrdom in Birobidzhan, and supplements the unfortunately still untranslated account of the Moscow trial by Haim Maltinski in *Yiddishe Kultur* of May-June and July-Aug., 1980. One reads with gritting teeth and anguished heart Emiot's depiction of the utter inhumanity and brutality measured out to political prisoners in the Soviet labor camps. Max Rosenfeld's admirably fluent, idiomatic and clean translation fully conveys the literary flavor of the original (which first appeared in the *Jewish Daily Forward*, Feb. 7-April 15, 1959). For Emiot eschews dramatics and prefers the cumulative power of understatement to allow the slow horror of the facts simply stated to swell to repulsive proportions.

Emiot was charged with "crimes against the state . . . bourgeois nationalist activity . . . [and] disseminat(ing) insulting fabrications about alleged anti-Semitism in the Ukraine" (p. 18). He was sentenced to "10 years at hard labor" after being "tried" *in absentia* by a special military court in — Moscow (p. 54)! Reduced to being Number Y-265 (which he had to wear on his outer clothing), Emiot endured more than seven years of callousness, cruelty and anti-Semitism before he was, after Stalin's death, released (but not rehabilitated) in Feb., 1956 (Stanislawsky, p. xvii, mistakenly gives the date as 1953).

There were 19 Soviet nationalities represented among the prisoners in the labor camps, and Emiot, his faculties of literary observation undulled by his harsh experience, offers us many a vignette of both Jewish and non-Jewish suffering, endurance, heroism and humanity. Of special interest is his portrayal of another Polish Yiddish writer, Moische Broderson (1890-1956), who arrived on a transport from another camp, "his remarkable eyes . . . veiled with a film of fear" (p. 94).

There is Pinke, former concertmaster of the Moscow Opera orchestra (sentenced to eight years at hard labor for "Jewish nationalism"), who insists on playing Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* on the Stradivarius he had brought with him to the camp but refuses to play Mozart's *Turkish March* with the prisoners' band as the prisoners march out to work.

And, shining through the murk and muck, Emiot finds "evidence of the deep humanity that lay right under the thick skin of the prisoners" (p. 99), in bitter contrast to those who imprisoned them.

● *That 75th Birthday of Mine*

May 2

From the viewpoint of attendance, this Jewish Currents Dinner was the biggest event of the year for the progressive Jewish movement. For me, this great outpouring of appreciation and solidarity was alloyed only by Sonya's being in the hospital awaiting major surgery. And although I am not one to measure such zest and zeal in crude materialist terms, yet the financial returns for our magazine were unprecedented: a collection of \$10,016 from the 575 persons present (plus \$1,065 in pledges), including seven Life Subscriptions (plus 14 ordinary subscriptions).

And then that Dinner Journal, with the impressive list of 122 Sponsors selected and assiduously harvested by Jeanette Cohen for the Management Committee; and the 785 persons and institutions that paid for those birthday greetings! I am particularly grateful to the Management Committee for indulging me in my desire to print in the Journal a virtually complete bibliography of my signed writings in our magazine from 1946 to 1981. My insistence on this extravagance (only partially covered by an anonymous \$500 subsidy) stems from the refusal of the *Index to Jewish Periodicals* to include our work in this valuable reference tool, an act of political discrimination that not only reflects on the objectivity of that *Index* but constitutes a real hindrance to American Jewish scholarship. This seven-page bibliography in our Journal may help redress the imbalance.

The audience, as the trade union leader Moe Foner, M.C., pointed out, was "full of people of distinction in the arts, literature, science, academic life, trade unionism, and progressive political action — activists for peace, civil rights, women's rights, human rights." There was a table with my fellow-victims of the Rapp-Coudert Committee, and a few of the present City College activists, whose persistent and resourceful work brought about the apology to us from the CUNY Board of Trustees. There were old friends and new friends, readers I knew and many I didn't. The biggest (and most welcome) *surprise* was the donation by my colleague Frederic Ewen and his wife, the composer Miriam Gideon, of \$1,000, following a similar donation by my old political associate Nat Cohen and his wife Mary. And then, those generous and overgenerous greetings and salutations by my former student Judy Rosenbaum, Frederic Ewen, Jack Nusan Porter, Paul Robeson Jr. per his wife Marilyn, Rabbi Robert E. Goldberg, Pete Seeger (whose birthday is same as mine, May 3!), Larry Bush, Bella Abzug and Paul Novick — why, if I were smart, I'd die right now so nothing I did or didn't do hereafter could cause any of them to want to

unsay what they said. But I guess I am committed to the Deuteronomist's commandment to "Choose life!" and I — and they — will have to take our chances.

WBAI, which had taped it all, presented a good part of it May 20 from 2:00 to 3:30 P.M. on Richard Barr's program, and then WNYC, on June 1, had a 20-minute recap by Barr on its Senior Edition program. Well — to *all*, thanks again — and see you-all in 1992?

- *Jewish Historical Society of New York* May 5
Was able to attend (but only for an hour, so I could go on to visit Sonya at the hospital), the Board of Directors meeting of the JHSNY at the offices of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. It was good to learn that a semi-annual publication, *New York Jewish History*, is in an advanced stage of preparation. I proposed a centennial reprint of Emma Lazarus' *An Epistle to the Hebrews* of 1882-1883. This and my proposal that a plaque be placed at 18 W. 10 St., where she once lived, were referred to committee.

- *The Jewish Cultural Clubs Luncheon* May 8
Was a grateful guest at this annual affair of the Jewish Cultural Clubs and Societies, and enjoyed a table with Alice and Dave Platt, Lester and Madeline Simon, Emma and Sam Davis of New Haven, Sidney Goldfarb and, especially, Isaac Rymer, whose enactment later of Sholem Aleichem's *Milhiks* (A Shevuos Dairy Meal) was superb. Miriam Gittelson and her accordion led us in group singing of Yiddish songs, Gedalia Sandler impressed us with his report of Club activities, and MC Itche Goldberg reminded us that so far back as 1933 Olgin had complained that not enough Yiddish was taught in our *shules*.

- *American Jewish Opera about Mikhoels* May 9
With Jack Nathan, heard, saw and tried to understand the words of a new Jewish Opera at the 92nd St. Y — *Mikhoels the Wise*, with Bruce Adolphe as composer and Mel Gordon as librettist. The production was fine, the 14-piece orchestra conducted by Amy Kaiser was very good, the singing as music was adequate and often eloquent, the set, costuming, lighting and choreography were adequate — but the text, the libretto by Mel Gordon, so far as I could make out from the inarticulate singing, was baffling, disappointing and often irritating. The printed synopsis was by itself of little help.

Now Solomon Mikhoels (1890-1948), the great Yiddish actor and director of the Moscow State Yiddish Theater, was a powerful force for progressive Jewish culture until he was done to death as part of the Stalin terror in 1948. He deserves to be better known to the general American public, as a heroic and ultimately tragic figure. But in *Mikhoels the Wise*, Mikhoels is anything but wise or in any sense admirable. The libretto and direction (and Mel Gordon was co-director) presented every thing in the two acts and seven scenes in the agit-prop style of gross ideological oversimplification that the work is presumably intended to deride. So a Bolshevik is a cartoon anti-Bolshevik stereotype; even Mikhoels is presented from the beginning

as an opportunist who will declaim the 21 points of the Comintern to get a job as an actor from the commissar in charge. (The fact is that the Yiddish State Theater in the 1920s presented plays by Asch, Maeterlink and Sholem Aleichem, hardly agit-prop stuff.) The Polo Grounds scene, played broadly, is a travesty of a memorable event; and Charlie Chaplin and Paul Robeson, as well as Ben Gold, are misrepresented. If this is a New Left approach to an Old Left theme, it is unfortunate.

● *With City College English Department* May 13

Having been apparently adopted by the City College English Department as a sort of superannuated scholar-out-of residence, I gladly accepted its invitation again to attend its annual Awards Ceremony. Again there were kind words said about me by Prof. Saul Brody, Department Chair, and also by Prof. Robert Ghiradella, Deputy Chair, and Prof. Leonard Kriegel. I was given the honor of presenting the Award for Excellence in Writing to David Jackson, Martha Larosiliere, Theodora Moorehead and Jeffrey Silverberg. Altogether, over \$10,000 in prizes were distributed.

● *Townsend Harris Alumni Luncheon* May 23

Townsend Harris Hall, an elite institution, served as a preparatory school for the City College from 1906 to 1924, when the LaGuardia Administration closed it down. Since I had skipped through eight years of elementary school in 5½, I was selected for THH, which covered the four-year curriculum in three. In 1980, Irving Gerber '43 conceived the idea of an Alumni Association and soon had 488 dues-paying members to list! To the Founding Luncheon at the Vista International Hotel in the Twin Towers came 380 alumni and spouses for a very jolly afternoon of nostalgia mixed with earnestness. With State Supreme Court Justice William Kapelman '33 opening and David Schoenbrun '30 as MC, the speakers were Jonas Salk '31, physicist William A. Nierenberg '35 (who remembered Iven Hurlinger and David Goldway as his THH teachers cut down by the Rapp-Coudert Committee) and I, who found an appreciative and enthusiastic audience. I closed my account of the culture-shock produced by my voyage from E. 10th to W. 138th Streets, which alienated me from my immigrant Jewish background and led me to flunk my way through THH in four years, with an appeal for support for the new A. Philip Randolph Campus High School at City College.

● *Haim Suller - 80 on May 15!* May 25

Many hundreds would have turned out to a public celebration of the 80th birthday of Haim Suller, co-editor of the *Morgn Freiheit*, for even to the semi-private luncheon arranged in the *Freiheit* offices about 100 admirers came out, I among them. Saluting him were Israel Freed as MC, Gedalia Sandler and Paul Novick, with Rokhl Raim singing to mandolin accompaniment by Irving Gansler. I worked with Haim when he was director of the School of Jewish Studies and found him modest, efficient and with a broad approach to curriculum content. *L'haim, Haim* — and on to 120! M.U.S.

ROBESON JR. ATTACKED FOR SELECTING DUBERMAN AS BIOGRAPHER

Unable to face the fact, revealed by Paul Robeson Jr. in "Robeson Meets Feffer, 1949" in our Nov., 1981 issue, that Paul Robeson, great as he was, unfortunately was self-inhibited from public protest against the anti-Semitism in the USSR of which he was aware, Lloyd L. Brown sought unsuccessfully to discredit Robeson Jr. (see "Paul Robeson Jr. Refutes Lloyd Brown" in our Feb., 1982 issue). Now the fray is joined in an article in *People's World* April 3 (*Daily World* April 10) by PW editor Carl Bloice, "Besmirching the Legacy of Paul Robeson."

Our magazine draws Bloice's first salvo: "Most reprehensible . . . has been the effort of such publications as JEWISH CURRENTS to portray Robeson as a spreader of slanderous allegations about 'anti-Semitism' in the Soviet Union." Bloice has the picture upside down, for Robeson is shown by his son to have refused to tell the *truth* he well knew about anti-Semitism in the USSR, as do Bloice, Aptheker and Brown to this day. Bloice wanders farther from reality when he declares, "The clear purpose of this is to enlist the name of this great progressive on the side of the apologists for Israeli expansionism," for our record of opposition to expansionism is clear, but Bloice injects an anti-Semitic sneer at what he calls "the Zionist land thieves," quite irrelevant to the Robeson issue.

Then Bloice garbles a "Memorandum on Paul Robeson Biography" sent out March 16, 1982 by Brown. Alfred A. Knopf Publishers had announced March 10 that in 1986 it would publish "the definitive, authorized biography of Paul Robeson" (1898-1976), to be written by the anti-slavery, anti-racist, distinguished historian Martin Duberman. Bloice asserts that the fact that Duberman "is not Black has quickly spread consternation in Black academic, literary and political circles"! Can only Blacks write Black history or biography? What about Aptheker, Philip S. and Jack Foner, James Allen, Herbert Morais, Herbert Gutman and others (all Jews incidentally) who have written invaluable works in this field? Is Bloice's racism showing? But not only is Duberman white, he is also Duberman — a "racist" because on Aug. 11, 1968 he reviewed critically a book by 10 Black writers attacking William Styron's novel, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. What Bloice and Brown do not know is that Duberman, in reprinting this review in his book, *The Uncompleted Past*, 1971, added, "not that I regret saying the things I did in this review . . . But I regret that I did not say other things as well, did not make clear that although I was disquieted as an historian, I did sympathize as a man" with "the natural resentment Black writers would feel . . . at the prospect of a white author's earning a million dollars from a book about a Black hero" (pages 205-6). And on p. 214 Duberman criticizes Styron's portrayal of Nat Turner.

Paul Robeson Jr., in a letter to us April 20, wrote, "I am fully confident that Martin Duberman is the right man to write the definitive, in-depth biography of my father, and he has already demonstrated his total commitment to revealing my father's true greatness, complexity and world stature." We eagerly await this book.

Our Secular Jewish Heritage

The Spirit of Yiddish (II)

By MAX ROSENFELD

Never Say Die: A Thousand Years of Yiddish in Jewish Life and Letters, ed. by Joshua A. Fishman. Mouton Publishers, Hawthorne, N.Y., 1981, 780 pages, indexed, \$47.50. (See part one of this review in May, 1982 issue)

It is significant that, whereas those essays in this collection that deal with the purely linguistic aspects of Yiddish were written in English, most of the essays on ideological problems were written in Yiddish. That being the case, one wonders why Haim Zhitlovsky is not present to argue for his view on the indispensability of Yiddish for Jewish peoplehood. While Leybush Lehrer is given 30 pages to rebut "The View that Yiddish is the Quintessence of Jewishness," Zhitlovsky, who propounded that thesis, is present only in a brief article by Emanuel S. Goldsmith (which does not even deal with the question). One would have taken for granted that in a volume devoted to a survey of seminal ideas about the role of Yiddish in modern Jewish survival, space would have been provided for Zhitlovsky, whose influence "on the immigrant intelligentsia and the working class was tremendous" (Goldsmith's adjective).

I may as well register another disappointment here. One has learned these days to expect "typos" even in a volume as painstakingly prepared as this one. But I was shocked by pages of misplaced type in the essay by

Yakev Glatshteyn (pp. 609-618). Entire paragraphs are repeated, lines are switched, bewildering the reader and creating the unfortunate impression that the Yiddish pageproofs were given only perfunctory attention. In a volume as serious and expensive as this one, this carelessness is unforgivable and disheartening. The concluding sentence of the essay is not even finished!

At least three of the Yiddish essays are concerned with the conflict between Yiddishists and Hebraists around the turn of the century, which actually assumed physical form in Palestine before the founding of the State. The lasting effects of this conflict are still obvious today in the deprecatory remarks about Yiddish heard among the younger people. Yet back in 1908, the sensation of the Tshernovitz Conference was a paper on the history of Yiddish, read by a speaker whose name was almost unknown in Yiddish literary circles. Still a young man of 23, Matesyohu Mizes was so convincing that I.L. Peretz proposed issuing it in a special brochure.

The brochure was never published, and no minutes of the conference are extant, but G. Kresel (in his essay in this volume) reviews Mizes' other writings that defended Yiddish from Hebraist attackers. In all these discussions it is worth keeping uppermost in mind one statistical truth that Mizes pointed out in a polemic with Nahum

Sokolov in the Hebrew periodical *Ha-Olam*:

"Of 11 million Jews in the world (in 1907), 8 million speak Yiddish. Of the remaining 3 million, 2 million . . . cannot speak either Hebrew or Yiddish, and the other million speak the foreign languages which Sokolov mentioned. What do such splinters mean against a solid national bloc of 8 million? They are hardly noticeable." (Kresel comments that Mizes was fully aware of Ladino, and discussed it.)

Insofar as Hebrew is concerned, Mizes admitted that if it were a choice between Yiddish and Hebrew, he would choose the latter, but such a choice did not exist. The choice was: Yiddish or the language of the country in which the Jews lived. That was the reality in 1907, when the expectation of ever having millions of Hebrew-speaking Jews in Palestine seemed to most people a fantasy.

In Palestine itself, however, the polemic went beyond the debating hall. The article by Zerubovl (Yankev Witkin), a leader of the left-wing Labor Zionists, accused Zionist leaders in Palestine of smashing Yiddish printing presses, vandalizing newspaper stands and otherwise using violence against Yiddish speakers and writers. (The article appeared originally in 1936 in *Yiddish in Eretz Yisroel*.)

The tone of Zerubovl's accusation reveals the feuding nature of this conflict: "We are not complaining to you about broken windows, or split heads, or ripped up Yiddish newspapers. The hoodlum attacks we can take care of ourselves. All we need do is give the bullies a taste of their own medicine once or twice and they'll soon give up their 'heroism.' No. What concerns us is the ideological and psychological pogrom atmosphere which is systematically created and which encourages these outbreaks of hooliganism. This is a matter that must concern you

too. It has nothing to do with individual hotheads. The responsibility for this rests with authoritative bodies and social forces in Eretz Yisroel. . . . Let us save the new generation growing up in Eretz Yisroel from snobism, from alienation from Jewish life, from contempt for its own roots." Unfortunately, the "authoritative bodies" paid no heed to Zerubovl's plea, and many of the "new generation" are only now catching up with the truth of his warning.

Leybush Lehrer's essay, first published in 1940, is entitled, "The View that Yiddish is the Quintessence of Jewishness: the Danger of the Formulation 'Linguistic-Secularistic.'" He grapples with two main issues that still trouble secular Jews today: the "content" of secular Jewishness and the role of language (particularly Yiddish) in maintaining secular Jewish identity.

Much has happened since 1940 that would have led both Zhitlovsky and Lehrer to modify their positions, but the issues themselves are still being debated in one form or another among Jews who concern themselves with Jewish continuity and survival. Lehrer did not foresee much of a future for a movement based on language alone, whether it was Yiddishism or Hebraism. He makes the point that among the classical peoples the only one which used a "foreign" language while it was still in its own land was the Jews. And that among the more than 2,000 sages mentioned in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, names like Abraham and Moses are non-existent, while he counted 150 Greek and Roman names. The same Jews who resisted so stubbornly any assault on the tenets of Judaism displayed a marked indifference when it came to language.

Why, then, in the 19th century did

language loom so large in solutions to Jewish identity? Lehrer's answer is that here the Jews imitated the Gentile world, but that language nationalism was particularly ill-suited to Jewish life, as was the idea of "secularism" itself. Among all the small, oppressed nationalities in Europe, language had become not only the symbol of peoplehood, but of its liberation. Lehrer argued that this idea was applied too mechanically to Jewish life, that the difference and the uniqueness of the Jewish experience was not taken into account — first and foremost that the Jewish religion developed as a "national" religion; secondly, that the Jews already had a millennial tradition based on *several* languages; thirdly, that the Jews are dispersed all over the world.

Lehrer's position does not seem to reckon with Mizes' statistical argument that in 1907 two-thirds of the world's Jews were Yiddish-speaking. Tragically, however, 35 years later that argument was no longer valid. The Nazis had "created a new fact" — of the 6,000,000 Jews they destroyed, 5,000,000 were men, women and children whose language was Yiddish.

Lehrer also assails the manner in which the concept of "secularism" was applied in Jewish life. Whereas secularism among the Gentiles merely declares religion to be a personal matter, among Jews it led to an eradication of Jewish history, Jewish ceremonies, festivals and memorial observances. (Zhitlovsky could certainly not be blamed for this; he was among the first to call for a secular adaptation of the Jewish "sanctities.") Lehrer himself was a champion of Yiddishism, but he wanted it to be an expression of a *Jewish way of life*. He insisted it was illusory to believe that the Yiddish language by itself could serve as a substitute for a way of life.

He maintained, moreover, that the

decline of Yiddish was itself a symptom of a decline in Jewish distinctiveness. "When we speak about the tasks of modernization, the goal should be not to strengthen the positions of an abstract secularism but of a concrete Jewishness."

Explicating this further, he says: "By secularism we should have in mind not an opposition to religion but an opposition to a kind of rigidification of tradition or to an obstinate orthodoxy that wants its theory to be blind to its own practice." To me this seems much too broad a definition to be useful, but undoubtedly secular Jews in the U.S. have moved away from the dogmatic "anti-tradition" positions of some of their predecessors. All one has to do is remember that at the time Lehrer wrote this essay, he could include a sentence like this: "Even as I write these words, reports reach me about heated arguments in certain local secular Jewish schools over the question of whether it is permissible to use a menorah at a Hanuka celebration . . ." ■

**In loving and cherished memory
of our dear
brother, brother-in-law and uncle,**

ELIAS PICHENY

**who dedicated his life to the
betterment of humankind
(died Aug. 23, 1981)**

**Molly and Morris Goldstein
Rose and Abraham Stein**

Why Socialism?

(Continued from page 23)

socialism should left Jews strive for?" He mentions in the form of rhetorical questions various foreign brands. Posing the issue in this way gives the impression that his disillusionment is the obverse of a former unquestioning faith. He is unable to rid himself of the idea that socialism can be only a copy of something that has developed abroad. And he embraces a new illusion: that Israel is "largely socialist." That would be a great curiosity indeed: a "largely socialist" country ruled by a rightwing, chauvinistic, anti-labor and pro-imperialist government! The fact is that capitalism and poverty are both growing in Israel, with 130% inflation, tax evasion by the rich and other "socialist" blessings. If Mr. Lending has in mind the kibbutzim, they comprise less than 4% of the population and are bound inextricably to the capitalist economy. Certainly the kibbutzim are a plus, though they themselves would not claim that their existence makes the country "largely socialist."

In my opinion left Jews, in common with left non-Jews, should strive for a socialism in the United States that grows out of the economic, social, political and cultural realities of our own country, including the democratic achievements, traditions and potentialities of the American people. In the struggle for that kind of socialism left Jews have a significant role to play.

New York, Nov. 4, 1980

"No easy or smooth development"

By **SAM PEVZNER**

With all due credit to Edward I. Lending for his bold and critical

thinking regarding socialism, it seems to me he fails to recognize that history and the process of social development never move smoothly or without the disabilities of human weaknesses, frailties and errors.

Lending asks Itche Goldberg, "What is so damned sacred" about the incantation (of socialism)? I can say what is "so damned sacred" about socialism to me: it offers the only hope for ultimately solving the economic, social and other fundamental problems faced by the majority of mankind, especially by the super-exploited, oppressed sections of mankind. That serious errors and even criminal deviations from the ideals and principles of socialism have occurred in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries doesn't alter the fact that socialism in essence offers the only hope for basic and significant advance over the human and class exploitation, the widespread starvation, poverty, the imperialist rivalries and wars, the racism and inequality that are integral characteristics of capitalism.

Lending justifiably points to the failures and weaknesses of some countries that have embraced the socialist system but he evidently fails to measure them against the colossal historic crimes, the centuries of destruction, misery and even genocide wrought by the wars and oppression under capitalism right into modern times.

Of course these historical facts don't justify by one jot the crimes or indignities, like the rampant anti-Semitism, wrought by countries that call themselves socialist, but they do indicate that evidently there is no easy or smooth historical development toward a just, humane society, even for a socialist system that theoretically embraces humanistic, non-exploitive, advanced human principles.

Incidentally, to call Israel a "largely

socialist" country is to stretch the imagination a bit. Of course, there are a number of socialist elements in Israel not found in the U.S. but Israel is a long way off from harboring a "largely socialist" economy or social system. However, the national existence of Israel is inviolate, as is that of any other country, no matter how objectionable its social system may or may not be. *New York, Dec. 2, 1980*

•

"No democracy — no socialism"

By **ALBERT PRAGO**

There is no question in my mind that the aims and principles of socialism are relevant to J.C. At issue, however, is what is meant by socialism. Are there varieties from which to choose? Are some acceptable and others not? Which? What criteria are to be applied?

While socialism undoubtedly will develop in diverse ways in different regions of the world, I take issue with those who argue that one form of socialism is a variant containing anti-democratic and anti-humanist features. The non-democratic form is considered socialist because, it is argued, the economic base — nationalized means of production — exists.

Government or state ownership is not intrinsically tantamount to people's ownership. About 100 years ago Engels believed that state ownership of the productive forces "is not the solution to the conflict, but it contains within itself the formal means, the key to the solution." Today we might add that the key must be wielded by the working masses, not by an elite, if socialism is to be realized. For the working people to use the key they must have democratic control.

No social scientist expects that a full-fledged democracy can or will come into being the moment that a socialist-oriented regime appears. When the Soviet Red Army helped install new regimes in Eastern Europe, socialism was not simultaneously created. My emphasis is that there must be fundamental beginnings of economic and political democracy from which a process of enlarging the quantity and quality of democracy is feasible. The democratic character of socialism must be incorporated from the outset in the economic base. Its absence there explains in large part its absence in other principal features of Soviet society. The absence of humanist values in the Soviet orbit is understandable given the lack of democratic structure at the economic level. No democracy — no socialism.

A definition, a handy tool, must not provide infinite detail. The following definition, to serve as a base for discussion, is limited in that it refers to only one of the key features of any socialist society, namely its economic base.

The basic means of production and exchange will be socially owned — via national, regional and local social institutions. The managers of economic enterprises at all levels are to be accountable to the working people. Control will be in the hands of the working people — manual and white collar, intellectuals, farmers, and self-employed. Such democratic control will be exercised through independent trade unions and by other organizations — such as cooperatives — of the working people. All such organizations will be democratically structured and operated. From the nature of such production relations the exploitation of human by human will be precluded; the aim of production will be use, that is, production

solely for the satisfaction of human needs — spiritual and material.

Each sector of oppressed humanity — and we Jews are one very small but significant example — has specific hopes and needs for itself that are not at all antagonistic to the hopes and needs of all oppressed people. Those specific and general humanist aims are attainable only in a rational, humanist society — socialism.

Flushing, N.Y., Nov. 20, 1980

●
“Prerequisite for a decent world”

By **ANNETTE T. RUBINSTEIN**

When the radical young author of *USA*, then an ardent supporter of Sacco and Vanzetti, had completed his metamorphosis into the reactionary elderly supporter of McCarthy, Goldwater, *et al*, the English *Manchester Guardian* commented:

“John Dos Passos

No longer writes for the masses;
Because of his disgust with Soviet
knavery

He favors restoration of slavery.”

While Chaver Lending has certainly not followed Dos Passos' path his letter does seem to me to endorse a similar *non sequitur*. The late Leo Huberman, founder of the *Monthly Review*, once said: “When we were young we thought the ownership of the tools of production meant socialism. Today we know it means only the possibility of socialism.”

I don't want to engage in semantic argument as to whether the politico-economic system which today governs half the world is “socialism” or “deformed socialism” or “state capitalism,” and would be glad to paraphrase Huberman and say: “When we were young we thought that capturing the tools of production would mean the establishment of democratic socialism but now we know it means

only the possibility of such a society.” But, and this is most important, with all our sad experience and sadly enlightened skepticism we must still recognize that a socialist revolution is the necessary prerequisite for a decent world. If, unfortunately, we have learned that it is possible to make such a revolution without achieving democracy, it is nevertheless still true that no real democracy is possible without socialism.

Brother Lending is correct in saying that such democracy — a socialist democracy — exists nowhere in the world today. So what? Did even the limited benefits of a bourgeois quasi-democracy exist anywhere in the time of feudalism? Did the most remote possibility of adequately feeding the world exist before the industrial revolution? Does it mean nothing that girl babies need no longer be destroyed in China? Is it irrelevant that, with all its severe problems and shortages, nowhere in Cuba do we find the unspeakable slums prevalent in the richest of Latin American countries?

Does Brother Lending think it possible for our boom-bust system with its unprecedented combination of unemployment and inflation, its increasingly desperate ghettos and unimaginable super-profits, its insane astronomical growing armaments budgets, its profit-seeking atomic recklessness and election by disgust, to continue indefinitely with even a semblance of popular consent? And if not, what then? If not socialism what is a possible next stage? Chile?

No, the socialism he and I and Itche Goldberg and innumerable others want to see is not yet a reality anywhere. And I feel far more respect for Brother Lending than for those who, ostrich-like, still believe it is only a matter of time — that the societies in which capitalism has been overthrown need only continue far enough on

their present path to reach a democratic socialism and, finally, communism. I would certainly agree with him that many, perhaps all, of these societies have developed abuses so fundamental that a sharp change of direction, not simply an accelerated pace, is necessary for them to approach their avowed goals.

Anti-semitism, racism, official illegality, thought control, invasion — these are not simply errors. They are crimes. They are not simply obstacles on the road to real socialism, delaying its achievement; they are unmistakable indications that those who commit them have swerved from the true course and that they must correct their compasses. Yet, as Joe Louis said during World War II: "There are many things wrong with America but Hitler can't fix a-one of them." Similarly we must say: "There are many things wrong with today's socialism, but capitalism couldn't fix one of them."

Yours for the revolution and democratic socialism — socialism with a human face.

P.S. Brother Lending's conversion is perhaps not as complete as he thinks. I note that he remarks, with lingering pride, on the "largely socialist" nature of the state of Israel.

New York, Nov. 5, 1980

"Principles of U.S. democracy"

By **WILLIAM and HEDY SHNEYER**

None of the existing "socialist" regimes can serve as models for the U.S. or other advanced industrial countries. Therefore Jewish socialists should not identify themselves with any of them. Disillusionment with the performance of existing "socialist" regimes does not make capitalism any more attractive or acceptable.

Our vision of a humanistic democratic socialism should include some principles of U.S. political democracy (as distinguished from its economic system), such as checks and balances and separation of powers, as well as the right of all ethnic groups, including Jews, to study and develop their cultures.

Flushing, N.Y., Nov. 17, 1982

Disagreeing with Itche

By **MAX GORDON**

I differ with Lending in two respects. He objects to Itche Goldberg's espousal of socialism but endorses all else in Itche's article. I endorse the espousal of socialism but differ with other aspects of the article, notably its characterization of the choice of assimilation as "misbegotten cosmopolitanism" which deserves to be "driven out." I disagree with Itche's statement that a Jewish left "must be totally freed of any ties to anyone, with loyalties only to the Jewish people . . ." and that this Jewish left must work "in unity with all elements which are progressive and democratic in Jewish life . . ."

Loyalty only to the Jewish people? Unity with all progressive elements only in Jewish life? Do not American socialists and progressives, Jewish or not, have a loyalty to the working-class and people? Do they not need, in the first place and in the interests of the Jewish people, to seek unity — promote coalition — with all democratic, progressive working-class forces in America, regardless of race, religion or ethnicity, a need underscored by the Reagan ascendancy? Itche writes that he is not looking for isolation. But what else does he mean by his admonition to Jewish socialists to steer clear of responsibility or loyalty to any but the Jewish people?

Those of us concerned for the preservation of Jewish life and culture, secular or religious, have a perfect right to proselytize for this, without necessarily advocating isolation. But those who choose assimilation into the American culture have an equal right to do so, without the opprobrium Itche attaches to this. The choice is one of personal self-determination and should not divide progressives and socialists, as does Itche's position.

As regards the espousal of socialism by Jews, Lending properly wants to shed the "shibboleths and illusions of the past" — notably, in my view, the elements of the Comintern (Communist International) culture associated with the concepts of a monolithic world communist movement headed by the Soviet party, the Bolshevik revolutionary model, the sacrosanct character of Soviet society and of Soviet actions, etc. Lending appears to recognize that societies calling themselves socialist can assume varied political shapes (just as capitalist societies can be democratic, fascist, republican or monarchist). But he fails to note that all such societies to date have risen out of, or still are, underdeveloped countries, except where the Red Army had a hand in determining their shape. No industrially developed nation has as yet gone socialist on its own steam.

In response to a similar, more general, question concerning socialism (JEWISH CURRENTS, June, 1980), I noted the significance of this fact. Without going further into detail here, it means simply that socialism as envisioned in the Marxian analysis has not yet been experienced. What has been experienced to date cannot be taken as model for socialism, though of course it has been so taken with terrible consequences for socialist credibility in developed capitalist countries.

In the face of current world instability, the perpetual economic and political crises, the vast new problems periling human existence, the current rapid promotion of robot technology, it appears unnecessary to argue that transformation to a more rational social order will eventually be essential to all human existence. One might agree with Eduard Bernstein, and presumably Lending, that this could come about by endless incremental pragmatic reforms, without explicit socialist consciousness. For reasons too complex to argue in this brief space, I believe the conscious advocacy of socialism, and the conscious strategies and tactics of a genuine Marxist socialist movement (not the sectarian caricatures) designed to achieve it in time, will be more effective in developed capitalist nations.
New York, Dec., 1980

Goldberg's "glaring weakness"

By JACK WEINMAN

The letter from Edward Lending is a cry of frustration and despair. His bitterness against socialism shows lack of understanding of its history. He writes, "Socialism is no longer a visionary's dream of Utopia." He is not "discovering America" with that observation; Frederick Engels a century ago proved that — but scientifically.

I don't blame Mr. Lending for being so confused. If he based his reasoning on Itche Goldberg's article on the Jewish Agerda for the 80's, he has a right to be mixed up and bereft of any ideological or philosophical roots. If Itche Goldberg's views are a call to socialism, "*och un vai*" (too damn bad) to such socialism. Luckily for history, it is not. It is just another petty-bourgeois call to find some intellectual corner (*vinkele*) where the partici-

pants can talk Yiddish to each other. Of course they will talk about the need for socialism with fresh make-up for its human face.

Since I was asked to submit only up to 500 words, I cannot go into details about the flaws in I. Goldberg's "Agenda." However, the most glaring weakness in the Agenda is the call for a Jewish left that "must be totally freed of any ties to anyone, with loyalties only to the Jewish people." If any Jewish people could be found to subscribe to that view, they would not be in the left of the political spectrum but in the far right, among the chauvinist, nationalist elements. Indeed, the "Agenda" is a mish-mash of shallow, emotional, contradictory thinking with a touch of mystical bravado: "It (Yiddish) will survive even without us." To ask for socialism and not speak of classes and the revolutionary role of the working class, and not to include the inspiring history of the socialist world since 1917, is a *reductio ad absurdum*.

A Jewish Agenda for the 80's should base itself on the classic ideology of Marxism-Leninism which will lead Jewish class-conscious people to work in harmony with the American working class, with the Black people, the Latin American, the Asian and African people in their struggles for national liberation and, of course, with the socialist world. It is an insult to socialism to claim that participation in the socialist struggle requires in any way that the Jewish people pay a "price of self-liquidation." Indeed, what we need is dialectical thinking on the Jewish question, not the superficial formulations expressed in the Goldberg article.

Chicago, Nov. 19, 1980

Have you renewed your sub?

Comment

By **ITCHE GOLDBERG**

Max Gordon raises two objections to my article. I should like to address myself directly to them:

a) Max quotes the *first half* of my assertion that a Jewish left "must be totally freed of any ties to anyone, with loyalties only to the Jewish people . . ." and stops. However, there is a *second half* to the *same* sentence, linked by the simple conjunction "and," thus implying a certain equivalence between the two halves: "and to the ideals of a democratic humanist socialism." Half a quote is no quote, Mac. Read, as they should be read, both segments of my sentence as a whole, any implication that I preach isolation disappears. Add the fact that I stress the struggle for peace, "against anti-Semitism and neo-fascism and the Ku Klux Klan," and I'm *essentially* saying (in *my own* way) what you imply, Max, I did *not* say. And lest you think this is merely a *post-facto* exegesis, please continue reading in the same paragraph: "I am not looking for isolation . . . rather for the fusion of Jewishness with social progress, participation in the struggle to safeguard the world . . ." Is this, as you suggest, steering "clear of responsibility or loyalty to any but the Jewish people"? (By the way, I *distinctly* spoke of "*loyalties*," in the plural).

I repeat and stand firmly by my statement in the same paragraph: ". . . eschewing any ideologies which it (the Jewish left) finds inimical to Jewish life . . ." and "*totally freed of any ties to anyone*" (italicized in the original). Considering the past of the American Jewish left — its ties with the American leftists, its misguided tendency to defend the indefensible in the Soviet Union — I consider my

statement not as a call to isolationism, but rather as a declaration of total *independence* in thinking and acting. I am not looking for a political party — rather for a certain ideological and moral attitude and stance against encroachment of any type on the life and rights of the people.

b) On assimilation: Your paragraph three seems to imply that “assimilation into the American culture” and “preservation of Jewish life and culture” are mutually exclusive historical categories. You divide us into two groups of “those who” (preserve) and “those who” (assimilate). No, this is *not* — historically or sociologically — my view of American life, of cultural pluralism and/or the U.S. as a “multi-ethnic national entity.” I am all for acculturation and *integration* (not assimilation) into American life, *balanced by a preservation and fostering of ethnic (or racial) ties, history and culture.* Any obliteration of the immigrants’ background and national fibres I would consider reactionary and un-American. Neither Anglo-Saxon supremacy over the “immigrant-hordes,” nor the Melting-Pot conformism, is, in my thinking, progressive. There was a definite race- and class-angle in the attempt to foist these concepts on the immigrants. (The national-origins formula for the immigrant quotas of the 1920’s, reaffirmed by the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, present clear proof that Anglo-conformity is not merely a theory or a danger that belongs to the distant past in American life.)

I reject the term assimilation (and/or assimilationism) primarily because it implies a negation of ethnic (and racial) history and culture and, at best, relegates them to secondary status. No opprobrium implied. I admit, it’s one’s right to assimilate. I merely maintain that the act of assimilation automatically excludes one from par-

ticipating in the process of influencing and shaping Jewish life. To me: dissolution is no solution to the perennial — and painful — Jewish Problem.

The second letter, by Jack Weinman, is in another category. The endless reiteration of worn-out slogans shackles thought, although they do help bolster self-deception and self-righteousness. All these are the common traits of sectarian thinking, which allows no light or doubt to penetrate and brooks no critique, since all ideas are static and sacred, and all dissenters, as a result, are renegades. Yet, for the reader’s sake, I shall — with the utmost brevity — touch upon some of the points raised.

a) Weinman uses the same quotation from my article as did Max Gordon, but, taken, in the context of the *full* letter, the purpose here is quite different: Weinman is deathly scared, or intellectually incapable, of linking the adjectives “democratic” and “humanist” with socialism. (He ridicules the need for a “humanist face” for socialism.) How can one equate the two without disturbing the holy dust of Dzugashvili!

b) Weinman expresses consternation at my “mystical bravado” in saying that “Yiddish will survive even without us.” This must also be taken on two levels: 1) a willful ignoring of the stirrings which are manifest in Jewish life all over the world, and even covertly in the Soviet Union, in regard to Yiddish — scores of translations from Yiddish, growing interest among the young, 35-40 universities in the U.S. and Canada which teach Yiddish, universities with Yiddish-faculties in Brussels, Paris, London, Amsterdam, Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and some others (a total of about 48 institutions of higher learning). 2) There is, however, another — and quite obvious —

purpose in his snide remark: by denying that there is any hope for Yiddish in the United States, you accent the *universal* moribundity and doom of the language and thus cover-up the state of Yiddish in the Soviet Union. Only petty-bourgeois and counter-revolutionary enemies of socialism, eager to malign the Soviet Union, can spawn the perfidy that Yiddish is not dying a "natural death" in the USSR, but is being murdered for the past two generations, decade by decade, since the '30's (with the exception of the few war years, when keeping it alive served a political purpose).

c) Weinman finds abhorrent the "insult to socialism" in my alleged statement that "participation in the socialist struggle requires in any way that the Jewish people pay the price of self-liquidation." Again the immoral whitewash and cover-up of facts. I merely stated, as I repeat now, that I am looking "for the fusion of Jewishness with social progress, participa-

tion in the struggle to safeguard the world without paying the price of self-liquidation . . ." (True, I should have said: "the price of being liquidated.")

Weinman's reaction is fascinating, his unsheathing of the rusty knife to defend socialism from its maligners, comical. I did not say anything about socialism in this context. But, there is method here and Weinman is crudely transparent. He, as did all the readers of my article, knew the *exact* implication of my words and the very *specific* frame of their reference, i.e., the Soviet Union, where our national life is being liquidated.

Well, is Jewish life in the Soviet Union being liquidated or is it not? As early as the mid-'30's the Yiddish schools in the Ukraine with *scores* of thousands of students were liquidated. In the second half of that decade, Yiddish writers were arrested, never to come back (Moishe Kulbak, Izzy Kharik, Khatskl Dunets,

Congratulations to

ESTHER ROSENBERG

on her 85th Birthday

**A staunch fighter for Peace and Human Rights
for over seven decades.**

SHALOM and L'CHAYIM



from her loving friends . . .

**Nahoma and Abe Boxerman
Marion and Rube Diamond
Sylvia and Alex Edelstein
Vicki and Milt Feldon
Sussie Feldon
Goldie Greenberg**

**Millie and Sy Kaplan
Rita and Lenny Leader
Shirley Light
Sylvia and Les Paley
Ruth and Milt Silver
Roberta and Paul Ziegler**

Los Angeles

Max Erik and many others); Birobidjan, the Jewish "state," became a fiasco and a tragedy — its leadership killed off. In the latter '40's the Yiddish newspaper "Eynikayt" was closed, the Moscow Yiddish Art Theatre, suspended. Then came the massacre of Aug. 12, 1952. During the last 15 years (it started in '67), the Soviet Union became one of the world's main publishers of anti-Semitism. (Do the names Trofim Kichko, Yuri Ivanov, Vladimir Begun, Vladimir Bolshakov, Yevgenii Yevseyev, Valery Yemelyanov, Lev Korneyev — all of them producing modern versions of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and all published in the Soviet Union — mean anything to Weinman?)

Does all this spell the liquidation of Jewish national life in the Soviet Union or does it not? Is there a single university in the USSR where Yiddish and Yiddish literature are being taught? Are the tens of thousands of Jews — the majority of them born after 1917 — emigrating from the Soviet Union (with many more eager to emigrate) indicative of anything, or are all of them counter-revolutionary Zionists?

Is Jewish life in the Soviet Union being extinguished or not? Of course, these are rhetorical questions. I don't expect an answer. It would take courage and a degree of morality and the ability to face the truth to answer them.

Yes, even reaching the simple conclusion that critique of the Soviet Union is *in no way* the criterion of one's belief in and devotion to socialism is too much to expect.

After my initial shock at the vulgarity of the crack about creating little petty-bourgeois Yiddish-speaking "vinkelekh," I decided that there is no ill wind . . ." etc. *Why not* create a *vinkele*? (At least I felt safe trying it in

capitalist, even Reaganized, America. I wouldn't wish it upon Weinman to attempt such an experiment in socialist Moscow or Leningrad.) However, I gave my *vinkele* an international flavor. I invited Itsik Feffer, Peretz Markish, Dovid Hofshtein, Leib Kvitko, Dovid Bergelson (all mowed down by "socialist" bullets in the Lubyanka prison — in Moscow — in the bleak light of daybreak on Aug. 12, 1952), and then, so that the Yiddish theatre not be without a representative, I invited Shloyme Mikhoels (whose brain was splattered on the streets of Minsk by a "socialist" truck in 1948), and reaching further back I added to my list of guests some of the younger ones, "liquidated" at the end of the '30's, and so many others. And when we got together, we all spoke Yiddish — yes, and we did discuss the vital problem of a *humanist* face for socialism.

New York, March 26, 1981

**The Miami Beach Committee
wishes
WILLIAM TATELBAUM
a speedy recovery**

Nina Rosenberg-Yardeini, Pres.

**Our heartfelt condolences to the
Rosenblatt Family
and the numerous friends of our
life-long friend, comrade and
colleague,
DORA RABINOFF
(died April, 1982)**

**Her entire life was dedicated to the
struggle in support of the
oppressed, the needy and for world
peace.**

**Joe and Shaiva Rapoport
Petaluma, Cal.**



THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

AJCongress Convention

Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, a former president of AJCongress, told the 300 delegates to the national convention April 25 that current White House policies were characterized by "rugged selfishness" and "meanness." He called the approach "antithetical to our founding vision and our basic Jewish values."

In his keynote address Rabbi Lelyveld charged that the President sought to "gut" the civil rights program, "pillage" natural resources and "subvert" existing environmental agencies by staffing them with appointees whose goal has been to oppose the principles and purposes of the agencies they head.

Rabbi Lelyveld also said the Administration was "chipping away" at the wall of separation between church and state through such proposals as tuition tax credit to benefit private and parochial schools and the amendment to permit so-called "voluntary" prayer in public schools. He continued:

"America is bold too in the amoral pragmatism of its foreign policy. Designed to protect the interests of great corporations, it is a policy that offers assistance to nations blatantly violating the human rights we pretend to cherish. Where the previous administration frequently betrayed in decision, founded on moral inhibitions and intellectual hesitancy, the present administration is frequently decisive — its decisions based on immoral judgments and ignorance. . . .

"How else explain our confused and ineffective role in El Salvador? What are the motivations for ignoring Argentina's torture, repression and innumerable 'disappearances' as we prepared to certify Argentina's eligibility on human rights grounds to receive United States arms sales — a policy that has borne bitter fruit in the current crisis over the Falkland Islands?"

"Meanwhile, in the most crucial area of decision-making — that concerned with our relationship to the Soviet Union — under the threat of reciprocal nuclear omnicide, our spokesmen swing between bluster and reconsideration, backing and filling, recklessly proclaiming our nuclear vulnerability, failing to appreciate fully the fact that nuclear missiles are not swords, spears or guns but weapons that have introduced a new and unprecedented doomsday factor into human history."

• *Do Not Be Silent:* One of the convention resolutions declared that U.S. Jews should not be silent on American foreign policy for fear of arousing anti-Semitism. This was a reference to the AWACS debate last year, in which Jews were criticized for challenging the Reagan administration on the sale of sophisticated military equipment to Saudi Arabia.

The resolution states: "We deplore the fact that Jews are singled out for disparagement as a community whose attachment to America is to be held under constant scrutiny. Other ethnic and nationality groups in this country — such as Greek Americans opposed

to arms for Turkey — correctly and freely exercise their right to criticize aspects of U.S. foreign policy, with no one presuming to impugn their standing as Americans.”

Other important resolutions adopted were:

- That “the foremost priority of the U.S. be to achieve an agreement with the USSR on the control, limitation and destruction of nuclear weapons.”

- “We call on the Administration and the Congress to resist further erosion of Federal responsibility for programs for the poor and the elderly.”

- “Affirms its support for continuation of the national commitment to enable all women the right and ability to decide voluntarily if and when to have children through access to the federally subsidized national family planning program.”

- Other important resolutions were passed on Israel and the Middle East, the Camp David process, Soviet Jewry, and accreditation of law schools that discriminate on the basis of religion.

- *Danger to Democracy*: Paul Berger, a Washington, D.C. attorney, told the convention that legislation that would bar the federal courts from hearing cases on busing, abortion, school prayer and other controversial issues could, if passed, destroy the system of checks and balances that has preserved American democracy for nearly 200 years.

Riding the Circuit

- *American Jewish Committee* testified April 22 before the House Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation urging Congress to pass legislation permitting states to pay partial unemployment compensation to employees whose work weeks have been reduced because of economic downturns. Such

legislation, AJCommittee argued, would be particularly beneficial to minority group members and women and would lessen the likelihood of intergroup tensions. Ms Evan Bayer, AJCommittee’s Urban Affairs Specialist, stated: “Instead of laying off 10 of its 50 weekly workers because of a temporary slump in the market, a company could put all 50 on a four-day week, with each worker eligible to claim one day of unemployment compensation.”

- *Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith* asked the United Nations April 27 to investigate whether the World Muslim Congress qualifies for continued membership as a UN non-governmental organization (NGO).

ADL disclosed evidence that the World Muslim Congress has been disseminating anti-Jewish books written by an American neo-Nazi, William N. Grimstad, who has been managing editor of *White Power*, a swastika-inscribed Nazi publication, and the *White Patriot*, a Ku Klux Klan mouthpiece.

- *New Jewish Agenda*: Philip Klutznick, president emeritus of the World Jewish Congress, told 200 people at a meeting sponsored by New Jewish Agenda last April at Temple Sinai, Washington, D.C., that Jews were losing “credibility” and “fooling ourselves” in believing they were “fooling others” into thinking that Jews in the U.S. and elsewhere were united behind every act of the Israeli government. S.P.

In loving memory of
WILLIAM WELTMAN

2-5-72

ROSE WELTMAN

8-3-72

●
**Children, Grandchildren and
Great-Grandchildren**

276-277th LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS TO JEWISH CURRENTS

To honor the memory of our Parents, Eva and Abraham Brezenoff, who devoted their lives to the perpetuation of our secular Jewish heritage, we hereby take out a Life Subscription for \$200.

Malverne, N.Y., May 2

SAM AND SHIRLEY BREZENOFF

Taking out a Life Subscription to JEWISH CURRENTS is one small effort on my part to continue one of the Jewish progressive publications in the United States.

Freeport, N.Y., May 2

ALVIN DORFMAN

Coming in September:

Morris U. Schappes' "Personal and Political (Cont.)," his address to the May 2, 1982 testimonial dinner. Advance orders (6 copies for \$5) urged.

Jewish Currents Annual Picnic July 18 — Call the office, 924-5740, for details. Sid Resnick will speak on the New Mideast Crisis. Save the date!

JEWISH CURRENTS

EXCLUSIVE SPECIAL FEATURES.
ARTICLES FROM ABROAD,
NEWS OF AMERICAN,
ISRAEL, WORLD JEWRY

1 Year • \$10.00
2 Years • \$18.00
3 Years • \$25.00

For students or retirees, 1 Year • \$8.00
Canada, \$11.00, elsewhere, \$12.00
(U.S. dollars on foreign subs)

JEWISH CURRENTS

22 E. 17 St., Suite 601
New York, N. Y. 10003-3272

Enclosed find \$ _____ in check, money order or cash. Send 1-2-3 Year Sub to:
(Your canceled check is your receipt.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

School, if Student _____

In Memory of

ELI PICHENY

(April 5, 1905-Aug. 23, 1981)

and

LIONEL PICHENY

(Feb. 4, 1940-May 24, 1959)

**Jacob Picheny
Dora Picheny**

Berkeley, Cal.

**Happy 5th Birthday
to our grandson,
HERSCHEL**

●
**Gerry and George Revzin
Chicago**

ISRAEL PROPERTY WANTED

**We Pay top U.S. dollars for
STATE OF ISRAEL BONDS
BEFORE MATURITY**

●
**REAL ESTATE, LAND, HOUSES
APARTMENTS and CITRUS
GROVES
anywhere in ISRAEL**

●
H. L. WOLF & CO.
Investment Bankers
80 Wall Street 614
New York, New York 10005
(212) 422-5186 or 473-3504
Telex 425660

To honor a great lady —

ISABELLE BOCKALL
(May 14, 1894-April 22, 1982)

**Fighter for human rights,
Source of strength, courage
and wisdom
to all who knew her.**

**Beloved mother, grandmother,
great-grandmother.**

●
**Shirley, Morry, Steven and Dan
Klass**
Reva and Walter Dozier
**Albert, Alan, Cynthia, Michelle
and Kathryn Glassman**

JERRY TRAUBER

Monument Designer & Builder

●
142 Langham St.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11235
Tel.: (212) 743-9218

●
Memorial work in all cemeteries

Notice to Former Members of the Cemetery Department
Funeral services can be arranged at any chapel the family desires
in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, Long Island or Westchester.
For information, phone Area Code: 212-377-8610

I. J. MORRIS, INC.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

1895 Flatbush Ave. near Kings Highway
212-377-8610

Suffolk • 21 E. Deer Park Road (near Jericho Tpke.) • Dix Hills 516/6060
Nassau • 46 Greenwich St. (near Peninsula Blvd.) • Hempstead 516/486-2500
Brooklyn • 1895 Flatbush Ave. (near Kings Highway) • 212/377-8610
Greater Miami • Ft. Lauderdale W. Palm Beach • 305/858-6763

HONOR ROLL

of those who have given us \$25 or more for our 1982 Fund Drive

No. 4 - through April 17

Haver Paver Reading Circle, M.B.
 Anna Richlin, Miami Beach
 Bella Goldworth, Miami Beach
 Ben and Sadie Blecher, Miami Beach
 Ben and Jennie Kliger, Miami Beach
 Dora Kazahn, Miami Beach
 Ruth Holtman, Miami Beach
 James and Roberts Dreyfuss, LaHabra, Cal.
 Rudolph M. Lapp, San Mateo, Cal.
 Richard and Sandy Malkin, Phila.
 Laurie J. Aron, New York
 Elsie Levitan, Philadelphia
 Esther Weinzimer, San Francisco (\$100)
 Howard D. Goldick, Manchester, Ct.
 Frank Hashmall, Rockville Ctr. N.Y. (\$100)
 Helen and Harry Staley, Albany, N.Y. (\$50)
 Elliot Cades, Wyndmor, Pa.
 Miriam Bloomfield, Cotati, Cal. (100)
 "To honorary memory of Mania Vast"
 Brownsville-E. N.Y. Benevolent Soc. (\$100)
 Karen Burstein, Woodmere, N.Y.
 Jacob Fishman, Bronx (\$500), "In honor of Morris Schappes' 75th birthday"
 Harold Cammer, Mamaroneck, N.Y. (\$30)
 Shirley and Morris Diamond, Valley Stream, N.Y.
 David Abrams, Downsview, Ont. Canada (\$39)
 Morris Smith, Long Beach, Cal.
 Sam and Lucille Perlman, N.Y. (\$50)
 Bea Loren, Ardsley, N.Y.
 Ralph Shapiro, Wading River, N.Y.
 Vivian Erdreich, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
 Robert and June Mendelkern, Teaneck, N.J.
 Ed Rosenberg, Amityville, N.Y. (\$45)
 Louis Brooks, Los Angeles
 Harold Hartman, Los Angeles (\$50)
 Morrie Zimmerman, Los Angeles (\$50)
 Sarah Jacobus, Eutaw, Ala.
 Dr. Eli Ross, Chapel Hill, N.C.

(Incomplete, to be continued)

*Please look at our Goals below.
 Have YOU contributed?*

We Report Jan. 1-June 3

	Donations	Subs
Greater New York	\$20,803.53	139
Los Angeles	7,317.85	42
Miami Beach	3,436.00	15
Phila. and Penna.	1,943.00	8
Upper Calif.	1,622.00	11
W. Palm Beach, Fla.	1,135.00	4
Great Neck, N.Y.	776.00	6
Upper New York	563.00	16
Connecticut	445.75	3
New Jersey	431.00	7
Washington State	371.00	7
Wash. D.C.-Md.	356.75	
Dearfield Beach, Fla.	344.00	9
Chicago and Ill.	285.00	6
Michigan	280.00	3
Canada	251.00	1
Massachusetts	215.00	5
Virgin Islands	200.00	
Wisconsin	115.00	4
Arizona	100.00	3
Minnesota	100.00	
Tennessee	100.00	
Ohio	90.00	1
Texas	85.00	1
Vermont	50.00	
North Carolina	42.00	
Georgia	25.00	1
Alabama	25.00	3
Oklahoma	25.00	
Missouri	20.00	
South Carolina	20.00	
Colorado	15.00	1
Oregon	14.50	3
New Mexico	10.00	1
Delaware	10.00	
Utah		1
Denmark	8.00	1
Israel	4.00	1
West Germany		1
Total	\$41,634.38	309

OUR GOALS

Fund Drive-----	\$70,000
Received to date-----	41,634
New Subs Drive-----	700
New Subs to date-----	309

AROUND THE WORLD

AT HOME

The anti-nuclear arms race movement continued to expand and deepen, with Jews and Jewish organizations becoming more active. In Chicago April 10 some 25,000 Chicagoans marched, with children carrying the slogan, "Stop the Arms Race, Save the Human Race." Said Pearl Hirshfield, one of the organizers of this Peace Walk, "We don't want to wait for Pres. Reagan to play catch-up with nuclear arms." The Chicago Board of Rabbis had asked congregations to devote sermons to peace to coincide with the Peace Walk. Board Pres. Rabbi Joseph Tabachnik, recently returned from a trip to Japan's Hiroshima's Memorial Park, said, "In the Peace Park we recited the kaddish before a mound where countless unidentified dead are buried. The human race must unite to outlaw nuclear armaments." In the Chicago Jewish weekly *Sentinel* April 22, Editor J.I. Fishbein's editorial, "Jewish mothers, defend your children!" lamented that Jewish participation in the Peace Walk did not match that of Catholics and Protestants because "Jews used the excuse that it took place on Saturday when ostensibly they were all in synagogue praying." He urged, "Jewish mothers: . . . Demand of your rabbi that he speak out clearly and unequivocally as have the spiritual leaders of other faiths. . . . Establish a peace committee in your sisterhood or group chapter." . . . In New York nine Reform congregations held a conference April 25 at the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue on "Disarmament, Judaism and the Jewish Community," with some 500 attending. Speaking on "The Nuclear Threat: a Judaic View" was Rabbi Leonard Beerman of the Leo Baeck Temple in L.A., co-chair of the Interfaith Center to Reverse the Arms Race. Rabbi Balfour Brickner, conference host, said that some Jews hesitated to call for nuclear disarmament because, with the birth of Israel in 1948, Jews have backed the right to a strong defense against aggression; but, he declared, "in the nuclear arms race we are not talking about a just war that can be won. We are talking about a war that is lost if it is fought." . . . At the Temple in Cleveland April 27, Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver, in a sermon on "The

Nuclear Freeze Movement," stated, "As an expression of that 'it's enough' philosophy, the nuclear freeze movement makes good sense and has already forced the Administration to make its first serious arms reductions proposals. It's important that we hold our officials hands to the fire until they find ways to negotiate with the other members of the nuclear club arrangements which will reduce the dangers of nuclear war. . . . We need to hammer out arms limitation treaties and arms reduction treaties. We need to have nuclear freeze [free?] zones. We need agreements that reduce the chance of a nuclear accident. . . . The Chicago Jewish *Sentinel* May 6 printed a letter by an Orthodox Jew, David Lee Blatt, headed "Where have all the Orthodox Jewish rabbis been during nuclear debate?" while he noted that "Recently we have also seen Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative Jewish leaders taking their place in this imperative crusade." . . . May 10 in Washington, D.C. Arthur Waskow of "Rainbow Sign," a Jewish project for preventing nuclear holocaust, announced that in the week to May 16 congregations in 17 cities will have special services dedicated to the anti-nuclear arms movement: Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Abington, Pa., New Brunswick, N.J., Brooklyn, Jericho and Manhattan, N.Y., Sudbury, Boston, Worcester and Northampton, Mass., Miami, Mobile, Ala., Evanston, Ill., Detroit, Minneapolis and Portland, Ore. . . . May 5-8 resolutions opposing the arms race were adopted at conventions of the American Jewish Congress, the Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative) and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia. . . . May 23 the Jewish Cultural Clubs and Societies of New York endorsed the June 12 rally to prevent nuclear war at the UN meeting on Disarmament; the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's Clubs and New Jewish Agenda also organized contingents for the demonstration. . . . May 25 the NYC Council passed by 31-10 Councilmember Miriam Friedlander's resolution declaring June 12 as Peace Day and calling for a nuclear arms freeze. . . . June 7-8 the Emet Foundation brought 100 leading Jews to the Cardozo Law School for "A Jewish Forum: Facing the Peril of Nuclear War."

ABROAD

Falkland-Malvinas Islands: When Argentinian naval forces seized and occupied these islands April 2, asserting Argentinian sovereignty as against British rule, Jews in both countries were placed in a conflicted position. The Argentinian tyrannical regime's appeal to national solidarity reached so deep that the "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" (women whose family members have "disappeared") issued a declaration backing Argentina's claim to the Malvinas, and refugees from Argentinian persecution are returning to Argentina. In such an atmosphere of passionate national solidarity that transcends class and ethnic lines and even issues of democratic and human rights, the Jewish population (300,000 out of 26,730,000 or 1.1%) felt it necessary to affirm its loyalty, declaring: "The country's Jewish community rejoices at this historic moment. The action of taking possession of a territory that is Argentina's own by historical right . . . is an act of justice. . . . DAIA, representing the Jewish community, joins the rest of the nation in applauding the act of April 2." In Buenos Aires Sephardic congregations held a service "to peace and Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas." A similar action was taken by the Latin American Section of the World Jewish Congress. May 14 the Argentine government gave unprecedented permission to three rabbis to visit the 150 Jewish soldiers in the Argentine forces in southern Argentina facing the British naval and air forces. . . . In London the Board of Deputies of British Jews (410,000 out of 55,820,000 or .7%) has issued no statement on the crisis. Grenville Janner, M.P. and president of the Board, explained that there was no unanimity among the Jews, any more than in Britain as a whole, about the Thatcher government handling of the crisis, but expressed concern for the safety of British forces in the Falklands. At the same time the London *Jewish Chronicle*, in a May 7 editorial, wrote: "The whole nation will mourn the tragic loss in action of members of the crew of HMS Sheffield and the pilot of the downed Harrier jet aircraft. There is also widespread sympathy with the families of the Argentinian soldiers whose lives were sacrificed by their Government in support of an act of aggression." Then the editorial sharply rebuked the Foreign Office for singling out Israel's arms trade with Argentina for special criticism, while ignoring arms trade by the USA, France, West Germany and Britain itself. . . . Israel, meanwhile, has declared "complete non-interference" in the conflict, and will honor existing arms contracts but make no new ones with Argentina.

USSR: In the important military monthly *Sovietskii Voin* (Soldier) in Feb., V. Pigalev, in "The Dark Paths of Reaction," denounced the "Masonic-Zionist strategy" whose most recent exploit is the Solidarity movement in Poland. Free Masonry (classically attacked by the Nazis as an instrument of the French Revolution and bourgeois democratic rights that was, next to "world Jewry," the main cause of Germany's plight) is in this Soviet publication described as an instrument of "international Zionism." . . . In May, only 205 Jews emigrated . . . Since 1958, 65 Jewish scientists have had doctoral degrees revoked by the Soviet Higher Attestation Commission (VAK), the all-Union Soviet agency that awards doctorates (in the USA and other countries, doctorates are awarded by individual universities, but not in the USSR). Withdrawal of doctorates can mean salary cuts, demotion, denial of access to laboratories, libraries, scientific meetings and professional publications, and even dismissal from academic posts. These Jews held doctorates in biological, physical, agricultural, economic, historical, geographic and mathematical sciences. Application for emigration is often considered sufficient cause for cancellation of advanced degrees. . . . When Yuri V. Andropov, head of the K.G.B. (Committee for State Security), moved up to a senior post on the Communist Party Central Committee Secretariat May 24, his successor May 26 was Vitali V. Fedorchuk, 64, head of the Ukrainian branch of the K.G.B. since 1970. He has recently distinguished himself by ideological attacks on "international Zionism." . . . For the first time since 1957, no Jew was admitted this year, in an entering class of 300, to the Mathematical Institute of Leningrad University. In Moscow only two Jews were admitted to the Department of Mechanics and Mathematics of the State University from five high schools specializing in physics and mathematics, while a large majority of non-Jews from these schools were accepted. (For the campaign to eliminate Jews from mathematics, in which they had preeminence, see this column for March, 1979.) . . . In Vinnitsa in the Ukraine, the old Jewish cemetery has been leveled by bulldozers. . . . When Yaacov Gorodetsky, Grigory Wasserman and Abram Yatskevich asked Leningrad authorities for official aid in their Hebrew studies and for facilities to produce plays on Jewish historical topics, they were informed by Gennady Barabanchikov, head of the Leningrad Communist Party Cultural Department, and his deputy Olga Selezniova, that Birobidzhan was the only region in which there was room for Jewish cultural expression! M.U.S.