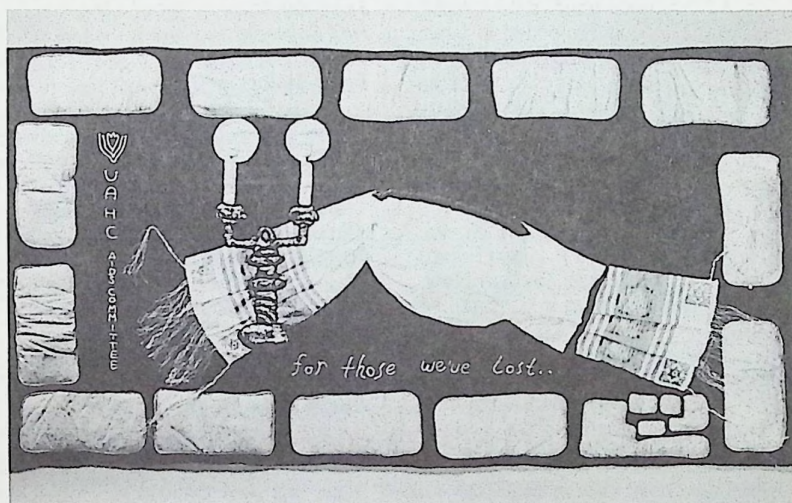


# Jewish Currents

\$2.00  
September  
1990

What about the Intifada?

By *JESSE ZEL LURIE*



Poster depicting "Tikvah" (Hope) Quilt sponsored by UAHC AIDS Committee

Women's Right to Choose

By *RUTH W. MESSINGER*

Honoring Ruth Rubin

By *PETER SCHLOSSER*

My Father, Pesach Novick (1891—1989)

By *ALLAN B. NOVICK*

# Jewish Currents

Vol. 44, No. 8 (485)  
September, 1990

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*Our Cover:* Poster showing the 16"x20" "Tikvah" (Hope) quilt panel sponsored by the Joint Committee on AIDS of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis to encourage education about AIDS. The lettering says "UAHC AIDS Committee" and "for those we've lost. . ." Poster available for \$18 from UAHC/CCAR Committee on AIDS, Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, UAHC, 1330 Beacon St., Suite 355, Brookline, MA 02146.

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# Iraq, USA — and Israel

An EDITORIAL

**BY** the time this is read, perhaps a month after it is written, there may be 100-150,000 U.S. ground troops in Saudi Arabia defending it against Iraq (*Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 10). Backed by the virtually global realignment revealed in the U.N. Security Council's unanimous resolutions urging economic sanctions against Iraq (13-0 with Cuba and Yemen abstaining, and then 15-0, with the USA, USSR and China unprecedentedly on the same post-cold-war side) and by support of 12 of the 23 Arab states, the Bush Administration refused to wait for a U.N. peacekeeping force to emerge and sent its troops virtually alone, hoping its allies would be swept along. U.S. public opinion after the U.N. resolutions, according to a *N.Y. Times* poll Aug. 9-10, showed 74% approving the Bush policy, but with 40% believing he was "too quick to send military," 59% saying U.S. action "likely will lead to a long war," 40% believing the Bush "intervention just helped protect profits of the big oil companies," and 70% sure that the oil price upsurge results from oil moguls being "basically greedy."

In the minds of American Jews, however, there was also acute concern for the impact on Israel's security of Iraq's Aug. 2 midnight drive to occupy Kuwait and install its own "government." The American Jewish Congress immediately announced Israel was "the only reliable bulwark" against Iraqi expansionism and stressed "Israeli military strength as a credible deterrent to assaults against the interests of the U.S." B'nai B'rith International Aug. 6 backed Pres. George Bush's "resolute stand" and trusted he would "find a steadfast ally in Israel." Echoes of these routine sentiments were printed in editorials in

the *National Jewish Post and Opinion* Aug. 8 and the *N. Y. Jewish Week* and *Jewish World* Aug. 10. Prevailing was old cold war thinking of Israel as the great "strategic ally" of the U.S. against the USSR.

That the end of the cold war had changed the character of this alliance was dramatized when U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d on Aug. 6 postponed for a month his scheduled meeting with Israel Foreign Minister David Levy because U.S. officials "said they were not particularly eager to see" him "at a time when the U.S. is trying to line up support in the Arab world" — which in a few days it succeeded in doing.

The Shamir officialdom, rigid in old thinking, was seeing the new situation as burying the very idea of any Israel peace process with the Palestinians. However, Peace Now forces in Israel had a more realistic perception of how Israel could best align itself with the new U.N. coalition and the 12 anti-Iraqi Arab states. This view hit the Op-Ed page of the *N. Y. Times* Aug. 9 in an article, "Iraq: Strategic Opening for Israel," by a Peace Now supporter, Prof. Moshe Ma'oz of the Hebrew University. He proposed the Israeli government enter into prompt negotiations with the PLO for a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that would meet Israeli security needs and Palestinian national rights — thus enabling "Israel to work together with pragmatic Arab nations and cooperate with the international community to contain the Iraqi threat and help topple the gangster of Baghdad."

When David Levy finally meets James Baker on Sept. 6, it is hoped this approach will be reflected in the proposals brought. ■

# What about the Intifada?

## A Review Article

By JESSE ZEL LURIE

*Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising — Israel's Third Front*, by Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari. Ed. and tr. by Ina Friedman. Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1990, 352 pages, indexed, \$22.95.

*Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising against Israeli Occupation*, by Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin. South End Press, Boston, 1989, 423 pages, \$35 hardcover, \$15 paper.

*The Slopes of Lebanon*, by Amos Oz. Tr. by Maurie Goldberg-Bartura. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, N.Y., 1989, 240 pages, \$18.95.

**I**NTIFADA is an Arabic word which has invaded our language without quotation marks or italics denoting a foreign word. It means "shaking off," like a wet dog shaking off water. This is the Palestinians' choice to describe their revolt against the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by the Israel Defense Forces, an occupation which is now in its 23rd year.

Here are two new books, both named *Intifada*. One was written by two veteran Israeli journalists who had collaborated on the definitive account of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The second is a collection of essays, previously published by the pro-Palestinian MERIP, Middle East Research and Information Project, based in Washington, D.C.

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JESSE ZEL LURIE last appeared here in Sept., 1983 with an article, "Camp David — Still an Open Path to Peace." He worked for the Palestine Post and Jerusalem Post for 33 years and more recently was editor of Hadasah Magazine.

The two intifada books are not two sides of the same coin. The Israeli journalists, who had access to confidential army documents and intelligence reports, provide a thorough, objective report, with many illuminating details of how the revolt was organized and why it continues to baffle the best army in the Middle East.

The pro-Palestinian MERIP book relies on eyewitness reports of the revolt by sympathetic foreigners, European and American. Eyewitness reports, like the snatches of violence we used to see every night for months on TV, often cannot discern the significance of the event seen.

An American woman, who works for the West Bank University at Bir Zeit, describes a confrontation she witnessed in the congested Balata refugee camp on the outskirts of Nablus. Heavily-laden Israeli young men with rifles were chasing lithe Arab youngsters with slingshots when they were confronted by a phalanx of screaming Arab women. The Israeli soldiers backed away. "After the Israelis left," concludes the eyewitness account, "they declared a curfew."

Schiff/Ya'ari discovered in Israeli army documents that the retreat from Balata about a month before the intifada broke out was ordered by the West Bank commander, Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna, to avoid a bloodbath. Gen. Mitzna's restraint had serious repercussions, according to Schiff/Ya'ari. On Dec. 7, 1987, one day before the intifada began, the Balata Shabiba, the underground youth organization that controlled the sprawling camp, circulated an exultant leaflet, which said: "We have set an example through the length and breadth of the land. . . The craven soldiers can

be hit from every rooftop. . . We alone, and not the enemy, are responsible for determining when and where the clashes will take place. . .”

*The intifada did not begin “as a national uprising to throw off the yoke of foreign domination,”* contend Schiff/Ya’ari. The PLO nationalist leaders were as surprised as the Israeli army. The military authorities thought they were dealing with another sporadic riot, which would fade away like those that preceded it for 20 years. Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin left on a planned trip to the United States on the third day of the intifada and kept to his 11-day schedule abroad while the Palestinian storm gathered force. The Israeli journalists call this a failure of intelligence worse than the Egyptian surprise attack in 1973 on Yom Kippur. The Egyptian preparations were carried on across the border while “in 1987, Israeli political leadership and the entire intelligence community were oblivious to what was cooking in their very own backyard.”

The authors are perhaps too severe. They say that at its inception the intifada was not a national uprising but a rebellion of “an enraged proletariat.” They claim that the anger, frustration and constant humiliation of underpaid and sometimes cheated Palestinian workers in Israel plus the despair of educated Arab youth, who could find no better jobs than washing dishes or collecting Israeli garbage, “built up to a critical mass” and erupted. An army officer compared it to a pot of boiling water on a fire. The cover has to blow. But who can predict when it will blow? It can simmer for a long time.

The simmering ended on Dec. 8, 1987 and the pot blew. Schiff/Ya’ari give a number of reasons, among them “a new sense of self-confidence, nourished by the derring-do of the Islamic Jihad, and the clout of youngsters of Balata.”

From the beginning of the intifada over two and a half years ago, the military authorities have stated publicly that no military solution is possible. The Israeli army will not move in with planes, tanks and artillery as the Syrian dictator did in quelling a riot in the city of Hama, killing tens of thousands. The solution must be political. Political progress so far can be likened to two footsteps in the sand and one step back with two miles of sand ahead.

Likud’s Yitzhak Shamir must bear primary responsibility for the lack of political progress. He was forced by the Bush Administration to present a peace plan, which he never intended to implement. Negotiations with Palestinians, Shamir fears, will lead to a compromise. The Likud Party and its right-wing supporters are adamant in maintaining Israeli sovereignty over all of the Land of Israel. (The boundaries of the Land of Israel have changed considerably from the time of King David to the 20th century. The current concept of the Land is the boundaries of the British Mandate of Palestine, which the British carved out of Ottoman provinces by agreement with the French, who occupied the Northern provinces of Lebanon and Syria.)

But Shimon Peres and his predecessors who headed the Labor governments in power from 1967 to 1977 must bear a major responsibility for the impasse in the territories and the outbreak of the intifada. Schiff/Ya’ari, who worked for the centrist media (*Haaretz* and Israeli TV, respectively), castigate the sorry record of Prime Minister Golda Meir and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, who headed the government from 1967 to 1973.

- Golda Meir denied the existence of a Palestinian people.
- Moshe Dayan suppressed any incipient political movement in the territories and deported hundreds of potential leaders to Jordan, the kind of leaders for

which his successors say they have been searching.

- One Labor leader, Yigal Allon, published a plan for territorial compromise, the only one ever disseminated publicly. Schiff/Ya'ari claim that Dayan "systematically undermined the Allon plan."

- As for the Jordanian option, which Labor has touted for a number of years, Schiff/Ya'ari show that Labor consistently rejected any approach by King Hussein. After listing a number of anti-Hussein actions by the Meir government, they write: "The last chance for direct Jordanian involvement in the West Bank came after the Yom Kippur War, when Israel withdrew from captured territory and signed interim agreements with Egypt and Syria. Dr. Henry Kissinger suggested a similar agreement be contracted with Jordan, giving Hussein control over Jericho and its environs. But the Labor Party rejected the idea, prompting Hussein to snap: 'Do I have to attack Israel to get what Syria and Egypt got?' A few months later the Rabat summit conference passed a resolution recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. . ."

"As if to complete the undoing of the Jordanian option," they continue, "after the Yom Kippur war, Prime Minister Rabin and Defense Minister Peres allowed Gush Emunim, the newly-formed Jewish settlers' movement, to create facts on the ground that contradicted Labor's political and strategic doctrine." But Hussein never gave up and his representatives continued to operate in the territories until 1982 "with the blessings of the United States, which was pumping considerable sums into Jordan's development program for the West Bank." Three Jordanian officials working on this development plan with the consent of Labor members of the Unity government were caught in the territories when the intifada broke out and had to hightail it home.

So the intifada was just as much a surprise to Jordan and its State Department supporters as to Israel and the PLO. Finally, in the summer of 1988, after a year of the intifada, Hussein renounced all ties with the West Bank.

*Revelations in the Schiff/Ya'ari book* are numerous and fascinating. We are given the names, dates and operating procedures of the young men who moved from town to town organizing the intifada. Although no source is given, the information obviously comes from the Shin Bet, which finally broke the network. They were replaced by a second generation of home-grown leaders, who were also eventually arrested, and then a third and a fourth. The intifada continues.

The organizers of the intifada were not PLO agitators sent in from Tunisia, as the Israeli experts foolishly claimed two and a half years ago, and their modus operandi contradicted the philosophy and methods of the PLO. In 1987, Yassir Arafat was still basing his program on his experience in the West Bank in 1967, 20 years before. A few months after Israel conquered the West Bank, Arafat infiltrated from Syria together with hundreds of saboteurs, trained by Abu Jihad. Arafat found that few Palestinians were prepared to offer cover and aid and he was forced to flee his hideout only a few hours before the arrival of the Shin Bet. Schiff/ Ya'ari conclude:

"The experience firmly set him against the strategy of making the occupied territories the base of anti-Israel activity." A serious underground would soon be broken by the Shin Bet, "while the notion of a mass unarmed struggle was never even considered." An unarmed mass revolt contradicted the basic policy of "armed struggle" on which the PLO had based all their activities for 20 years.

It took time for the leaders in Tunis

to understand the intifada and support it. Schiff/Ya'ari tell us that the intifada was six or seven weeks old before the "PLO recovered its balance and ability to lead." As the figurehead of the revolt, Arafat soon achieved hegemony over the indigenous leaders. It wasn't easy. The Unified National Command "challenged both Israel's control of the territories and the absolute authority of the PLO abroad. Deftly side-stepping the orders coming from Tunis, its members professed loyalty to the PLO but questioned the infallibility of its leaders."

Arafat did not tolerate bold initiative and independent action, the authors claim. But there was never any real revolt against the PLO leadership, only complaints that Tunis did not send sufficient funds to support the intifada and pay compensation to its victims. Despite the billions of dollars at his disposal, Arafat has been miserly in the amounts transferred to the "interior" by various underground routes.

One of the problems the PLO has yet to face head on is the growth of the fundamentalist Islamic Resistance movement as a rival to the PLO (and an even more menacing challenge to Israel). Schiff/Ya'ari devote a chapter to Hamas, the Islamic movement, which may gain a majority in Gaza if there ever is an election. Another chapter is devoted to the effect of the intifada on Israeli Palestinians, torn between their country and their people. Since 1948, Israeli Arabs have increased from 13% to 17% of the population. Schiff/Ya'ari's prediction that they will constitute 20% by the end of the millennium may be faulted by the mass immigration from the Soviet Union.

I did not find in this chapter an expression of the feeling of an Arab teacher in the Galilee who told me that a Palestinian state in the territories would ease his life considerably because he would not be looked upon as a potential terrorist carrying a bomb every time he

took a bus to Haifa. Nor was there any mention of the Israeli village of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, where a score of Israeli Palestinian and Jewish families live and work together in full equality and dignity, and where children grow up speaking each other's language and celebrating each other's holidays.

But there is much more in this book — everything you might want to know about the intifada. The authors believe that Israel has reached a crossroads, towards negotiations or away from them. They have written this book for Israelis to give them the full background for an intelligent decision, but Americans will find it valuable, too.

Their final word on Israel's security is worth quoting: "There is no longer any question that by their uprising the Palestinians have smashed the status quo beyond repair. Though unable to impose a new order on the territories they have opened up a third front against Israel, forcing it to be on the ready to fight regular armies and terrorist actions along its borders while contending with a mass civil uprising that shuns standard weapons but uses other forms of violence quite effectively. Thus not only has the Palestinian uprising gravely affected Israel's security, it has changed the country's very perception of what security means. The territories long viewed by Israelis as a defensive belt providing their country with strategic depth, have now become a woe to be reckoned with. . . Without doubt the territories are important to Israel's security, but they pose a threat as well. For the first time since 1967, the uprising has seriously forced Israel to consider the effect that the occupation has on the occupiers: their ethos, their image and their democratic way of life."

Israeli doves, who are admittedly a minority, have been considering the ethos and morality of the occupation for  
*(Continued on page 35)*



it  
happened  
in

# ISRAEL

*The Israeli human rights group Betsalem reported that June, 1990, with eight victims, marked the lowest monthly death toll of West Bank Palestinians killed by Israeli forces since the intifada began Dec. 9, 1987. For the first time since then, no Gaza Strip Palestinian was killed in a calendar month. Both Palestinian and Israeli officials attributed the tally in part to Defense Minister Moshe Arens' new policy of restraint which has sought to dispel the characterization of right-wing extremism attributed to Yitzhak Shamir's new government. It was also reported that 12 Palestinians alleged to have cooperated with Israel were killed by fellow Arabs, bringing the total to 228, compared with 676 killed by the Israeli security forces. July 16 Israeli troops shot and wounded 11 Palestinian protesters ordered out of their homes in Gaza to remove Palestinian flags and erase graffiti. . . . July 24 an 18-year-old Palestinian on the West Bank died after being shot in the neck July 14 by an Israeli soldier for stone-throwing. . . . Ron Kampeas, writing in Jerusalem for the London *Jewish Chronicle* July 6, reports that "about 10,400 Palestinians are being held in 23 Army detention centers." 416 first-time Arab offenders jailed for participating in disturbances, not terrorist acts, were released from prison near the end of their sentences on June 30, the eve of the Muslim feast of Aid el-Adha. During the holiday several thousand Palestinians marched in memory of their kinsmen who died in the intifada. In contrast to past years' intervention, Israeli security forces maintained a low profile. Kampeas also reported: "A group of some 40 Palestinian and Israeli teenagers, who will be spending a fortnight together at a holiday camp in Italy in July and August, met each other for the first time" in July. "The initiator of the project is Mr. Hanna Siniora, editor of the East Jerusalem Arabic-language daily, *Al Fajr*. The teenagers were invited to Italy by the Emilia-Romagna regional government. The Palestinians were recruited by the Swedish-based International Young Falcon youth movement, which has just opened an office in East Jerusalem. The Israeli group, which includes three Arabs, was organized by the left-wing Civil Rights Movement."*

*Prof. Joseph Dorfman of Tel Aviv University has discovered the lost manuscript of the symphonic cantata *Kaddish* by Soviet-Jewish composer Alexander Krein (1883-1951). The score is a musical setting of a Russian poem by Krein's friend Alex Orschanin, sent to a music publisher in Vienna in 1927. After the Nazi *anschluss* with Austria all Jewish music was destroyed and Krein's score was believed lost. Dorfman, himself a composer, found the score in the files of the Vienna publisher.*

*Mordechai Vanunu's appeal of his 1988 conviction and sentence to 18 years for spying and treason was denied by Israel's High Court of Justice*



June 3. The three-judge panel, in closed deliberations, allowed initial publication of only the final paragraph of its 89-page decision. Vanunu's attorney, Avigdor Feldman, may make another appeal before a seven-judge panel on the grounds that his client's revelations to the *London Sunday Times* could not be considered espionage and treason since he had not passed the information on Israel's Dimona nuclear facility "to the enemy."

*The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reports the findings of a Tel Aviv University educator that "Israel is 10 years behind the rest of the Western world in awareness of sex discrimination. 'Most people don't even know what sexism means, or are even aware that discrimination exists here,'" according to Judith Abrahami-Einat, coordinator of English-language courses at the university's Unit for Extramural Studies and author of *She and He in the Classroom*. She found that girls and boys are "steered into sex-typed occupations" which provide a wide range of opportunity for professional advancement for males and little for females.*

*Selahattin Ulkumen was honored by being placed on the rolls of the "Righteous Among the Nations" of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum and documentation center in Jerusalem, early in June. In 1943 Ulkumen was Turkish Consul on the island of Rhodes during the German occupation. When the Gestapo ordered all Jews to register for transportation and "relocation" in 1944, "I went to the German general," Ulkumen recalled, "and asked him to release 42 Jews who were Turkish citizens. He answered that under Nazi law, all Jews were Jews and had to go to the concentration camps. I objected, saying that under Turkish law, all citizens were equal. We didn't differentiate between citizens who were Jewish, Christian or Muslim. I said that I would advise my government if he didn't release the Turkish Jews, and told him it would cause an international incident. Then he agreed." Ulkumen, the first Turk to be honored among the 9,000 "Righteous Among the Nations," knew that some of the 42 were Italian nationals married to Turkish spouses. With these 42 and few other exceptions, the entire Jewish community of Rhodes perished at Auschwitz.*

*Ethiopian Jewish emigration to Israel has resumed after an interruption of two-three weeks, Israeli Embassy spokesperson in Washington, Ruth Yaron, stated July 26. Under a 1989 agreement when Israel and Ethiopia resumed diplomatic relations, about 500 Ethiopian Jews were to be allowed to emigrate each month. Ethiopian Foreign Minister Tesfaye Dinka said the flow of refugees had been slowed to keep Ethiopian non-Jews from sneaking into the emigration pipelines.*

*In the Jerusalem Post International Edition Aug. 4, an article by Avigail Gutman finds "the less successful immigrants of the 1950s are increasingly bitter over their limited prospects in contrast with those of the Jews coming from Russia." The earlier immigrants say, "We're black, they're white." They arrived from Arab countries. With rents rising steeply owing to the housing shortage, many are now in tent cities.* NEIL SALZMAN

## Women's Right to Choose

By *RUTH W. MESSINGER*

As you may gather, I was out of the country, in Israel, when the recent national anti-choice rally, addressed in person by Vice-Pres. Dan Quayle and via telephone by Pres. George Bush, took place in Washington, D.C. This support by the president and vice-president for the anti-choice movement represents a serious and continuing threat to the reproductive rights of Americans.

An interesting analogy was drawn in *Time* magazine's recent cover story on Vice-Pres. Quayle. The article suggested that Quayle provides Pres. Bush with the same sort of pipeline to the right wing of the Republican Party that Richard Nixon provided as vice-president to Dwight Eisenhower. This is an apt analogy — and a disturbing one. Just as Nixon's rise to national office lent powerful legitimacy and longevity to McCarthyism, so do Vice-Pres. Quayle's anti-choice pronouncements give legitimacy and succor to a movement that a majority of Americans finds extremist and distasteful.

Bear in mind that the Bush Administration displeases right-wing Republicans in a number of ways. For this reason, the president may be tempted to use such anti-choice pronouncements as a way to placate his conservative critics. This is how those of us who are pro-choice should understand and confront the anti-choice movement: as a narrow and essentially unpopular minority that, unfortunately, is a powerful piece on the national political chessboard.

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*RUTH W. MESSINGER is the president of the Borough of Manhattan in New York City, after serving for 12 years on the New York City Council.*



The essential question for those of us concerned with preserving reproductive rights, then, is: How do we neutralize that power of the anti-choice movement? The answer, I believe, must be to confront it directly in the political arena. The strategic value of the anti-choice movement to the president and his advisors will, I believe, diminish rapidly once that movement is revealed to be politically untenable.

*Let me suggest two strategies that can and must be pursued simultaneously. Let me suggest also that, for those of us who consider ourselves progressive Jews, both strategies address directly our historical, spiritual mandates to love mercy and to do justice.*

The first strategy is the full realization of political power for women. Clearly, the assault on reproductive freedom has energized women to fight for their rights — and the effects have been felt throughout the country over the last year, from the Potomac to Pocatello, Idaho. The willingness of the Bush Administration to continue to encourage the anti-choice movement, however, suggests that Bush, Quayle and their advisors still don't take the political power of the reproductive rights movement seriously. The best way to get their attention will be the election of far more women to state and local legislative bodies, where the fight for repro-

ductive rights will be focused in the coming years.

I base this on sound research as well as personal observation from my years of involvement with elected women officials around the country. Two years ago, the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University did a national survey of elected officials on a number of policy issues. The results found that, compared to their male counterparts, women are far more supportive of reproductive rights. Specifically, the survey found that while 40% of male legislators favored banning abortion, only 26% of women legislators took that stand. The survey also found that a clear majority — 57% — of women legislators favored a minor's access to abortion without parental consent, while only 33% of male legislators took that position.

The second strategy must be the development of a genuine pro-family agenda by progressives — one that encompasses daycare, national health care and the kind of rational childcare leaves and flexible work schedules enjoyed in every other industrial nation.

For too long we have permitted the right wing to appropriate for itself the title of being pro-family — and permitted the right wing then to equate being pro-family with being anti-choice. We need forcefully to call attention to the hypocrisy of a national administration that wears its "pro-family" credentials

on its sleeve — and stands prepared to veto the Hawkins-Dodd Bill that will provide \$1.1 billion in federal funds for desperately needed childcare — including \$51.6 million dollars for New York State.

We must ask how an administration that owes its very existence to "law and order" — remember Willie Horton? — can simply ignore the connections between unwanted births and the results of unwanted births in apathetic, inattentive child rearing, child neglect, child abuse and delinquency.

Ask this question: Just how mean are New York's meanest city streets because of our unwanted, unloved children? It is simply a fact that the highest rates of teenaged pregnancy occur among the poor, and simply a fact that such pregnancies arise from a lack of safe, effective and accessible birth control methods and a lack of adequate education about sex. We need, in short, to put the defense of reproductive rights into the context of the overall struggle for a just, humane society.

By doing so, we will harken to the ages-old instruction of the prophet Jeremiah: to seek the welfare of the city in which we live "for on its welfare will our welfare depend."

If there is one group that can be relied on to heed that instruction, it is the people in this room.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. ■

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## Honoring Ruth Rubin

By *PETER SCHLOSSER*

**A**BOUT a month ago, on my way to teach at City College, I noticed a young man sitting opposite me on the subway, nodding his head and "bopping" to some unheard melody. He was not wearing a headphone. Instead he was en-



grossed in a linen-bound book of music which looked curiously familiar. Just as I was leaving the train, the young man lifted the front of the book and I could read *A Treasury of Jewish Folk Song*. Of course, it was Ruth Rubin's book, a copy of which had been given to me by my parents when I was in *Mittlshul* (Yiddish secondary school). The man reading the book was easily 20 years my junior, and I admit I was tickled to see him obviously enjoying the same book I've been enjoying for some 30 years.

Just a few days before this subway "sighting," I had interviewed Ruth Rubin in order to gather information on her life and career for this M. S. Aronson Award presentation.

Born into a Yiddish-speaking family in Montreal in 1906, Ruth stayed in that city through her teenage years, studying in public schools and in a seven-day-a-week *shule*. The curriculum of the *shule* consisted of Yiddish, Hebrew, history, Bible studies, singing, and also weekend activities such as picnics and sleigh-rides, conducted in Yiddish.

Shortly after finishing high school, Ruth came to New York to further her studies in Yiddish, supporting herself by working as a stenographer. In 1929 she published her first book, a slim volume of poems — *Yiddishe Lider* (Yiddish Poems). In the preface, the literary critic Shmuel Niger hailed her book as "the first tender blossom of the Jewish Secular Movement in Canada."

The 1930s through the 1950s was a period of great activity in Ruth's life. She married, moved back to Canada, then moved back again to New York. She became active as a folklorist, a member of the board of the Canadian

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PETER SCHLOSSER has given two Town Hall recitals and appeared on and off Broadway. He is the conductor of the Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus.

Folk Music Society, then a member of the New York Folklore Society, publishing in the *Journal of the American Folklore Society*. Later, Ruth became the American national secretary of the International Folk Music Council, a position that enabled her to attend conferences in Czechoslovakia and Romania. It was Ruth Rubin who introduced Yiddish folksongs to these organizations, which had previously not been aware of that expression of the Jewish people. In 1950 *A Treasury of Jewish Folksong* was published.

During these years, Ruth had been studying anthropology, and in the 1950s and '60s she set about the task of recording Yiddish songs in the areas familiar to her: Toronto, Montreal and New York. The entire recorded collection, which amounts to over 2,000 entries, is now housed in the Museum Hatafutsoth in Tel Aviv and in the Library of Congress in Washington. The Canadian part of the collection is preserved in the National Museum of Man in Ottawa, and there are samplings of the collection at Wayne State University in Detroit, the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center and the YIVO Institute of Jewish Research.

Ruth's reputation as an expert in the Yiddish folk music field grew, as did demand for her recitals and lecture-demonstrations. In 1963 she came out with *Voices of a People*, originally published by Thomas Yoseloff, since republished by the Jewish Publication Society and McGraw Hill, and about to be republished by Puffin. Sholem Secunda, the composer and conductor, wrote in the *Congress Bi-Weekly* that this book "presents. . . an absorbing study of the historic and cultural Jewish context which gave rise to and influenced these songs," and Max Rosenfeld wrote in *JEWISH CURRENTS* that the book "will give you intimate insights into Jewish hearts, Jewish history, Jewish social  
(Continued on page 32)

# The Jewish Culture Society of Moldavia

By **BORIS SANDLER**

*Tr. from the Yiddish*

*by David Berger*

ONE year and a half ago the Jewish Culture Society was organized in the Republic of Moldavia, uniting under one roof the cultural organizations of Kishinev, Tiraspol, Belz, Bender, Uriev and Ribnitze. After decades of silence in the Soviet Union as to the role played by the Jewish population in general and suppression of national feelings in particular, there is, understandably, a hunger for every breath of fresh air that "perestroika" has generated.

This is a very brief period indeed for a social organization which, aside from the great will to reawaken among our ethnic brothers and sisters the dormant feelings of belonging to one people, and to free ourselves from the great fear which had become ingrained, at the outset had no funds and no home. The persons who undertook this great task had to overcome many obstacles, administrative, ideological and merely bureaucratic, before an advance could be recorded. Those whose attitude at first was one of an ironical smile, restraint or even suspicion, gradually responded and began to attend these events.

New activities and novel ideas came forth: Several musical ensembles have been created in Kishinev; the Jewish actress Anna Ginzburg and the "Vunder" group have a program of Yiddish music and poetry; Shimshon Kemlmakher offered a Jewish audience his original Yid-

dish songs in a modern version; the pianist Sergo Bengelsdorf and Irina Mishura, a soloist with the Moldavian Academic Opera Theater, have prepared a program entitled "*Nigun un Vort*" (Melody and Word); Nellie Kameneva, the ethnic Moldavian actress, sang in Russian *lieder* translated from Yiddish poetry; the composer Vladimir Bitkin created a Yiddish children's chorus, and in Belz the Yiddish poet, Mikhoel Felzenboim, organized the "Menorah," a people's theater.

Today it is no longer a novelty to see in Moldavian cities placards prominently displaying the emblem of the Jewish Culture Society, announcing a new concert or a lecture on Jewish history, an evening for Jewish youth, a meeting with Yiddish writers and so on. The Jews of Kishinev, for instance, are aware, without a special announcement, that at 2 P.M. every Sunday some event will take place at the Society and all week long they look forward to it.

The activists in the organization deem it necessary constantly to carry on a struggle against any manifestations of anti-Semitism, which have come to the fore now like an ugly sore, stifling the still weak shoots of a new, democratic life. It is difficult, it is impossible to live in a land where all have the same rights — but only on paper. Anti-Semitism has always been not so much a Jewish problem as a problem for non-Jews. It is no news that the quality of a civilization of a given social structure may be defined by its attitude toward Jews. And what's more: no national problem in a country can be solved unless it has first solved the problem of anti-Semitism.

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BORIS SANDLER of Kishinev is a Yiddish poet and co-chair of the Jewish Culture Society of Moldavia. This article is translated from the April-June issue of *Oifn Shvel* (*On the Threshold*), organ of the League for Yiddish, which invited Sandler to visit the USA.



# אונדזער קאל

№ 1  
דערשיינט  
פון  
1990  
/5750/

דערשיינט צו"ן מאל אין כוודעש

For many years there has been open propaganda against Zionism and against the state of Israel. Foaming at the mouth, the so-called theoreticians of "Zionology" have fanned the fires of inhumanity. For this reason the problems of anti-Semitism and Zionism are intimately linked. To unmask the distorted definition, the ugly libel of Zionism as "a conspiracy against the entire world," is one of the most important tasks the Jewish movement in the Soviet Union has undertaken. In various cities committees have been formed for friendly relations with Israel. Recently such a committee was formed also in Moldavia, in the city of Tiraspol.

The question of Jewish languages is more complicated, the assimilating process having first of all affected the language. The thread of speaking Yiddish has been cut. In Bessarabia the day-to-day mother-tongue has become transformed into "Grandma's language," which one can hear nowadays only at home or on park benches where old folk are taking in the sun. A knowledge of Hebrew is quite out of the question.

For several years now in Kishinev there have been courses for the study of Yiddish and a number of groups study Hebrew. Almost the same is true of other cities. Nevertheless, the approach to more interest in Jewish education is very inadequate and superficial.

After our own initiative, the govern-

ment of the Republic of Moldavia has met us halfway. At the plenary meeting of the Supreme Council devoted to the problem of developing the languages of the peoples living here (Ukrainian, Gagauzian, Bulgarian), a law and a program were likewise enacted to develop the study of Yiddish and Hebrew in all stages of the educational system: kindergarten, schools, a section for Yiddish and Hebrew at the Kishinev Pedagogical Institute, as well as a section for Jewish languages and ethnography at the Moldavian Academy of Science. In this governmental program there is also talk of the creation of continuous Yiddish translations of radio and TV programs as well as the issuance of a newspaper. It should be emphasized here that such legislation in Moldavia is the first and so far the only one in the entire Soviet Union.

Now, having such a wonderful law and such a program, it would seem that one could roll up one's sleeves and get to work. But wherever you turn there is a lack of methodological materials: no text books, no readers, and, most important, no professional teachers!

Last April, before Purim, there appeared the first issue of our independent newspaper, *Undzer Kol* (Our Voice). The editor is Alexander Brodsky. This periodical appears twice monthly: five pages in Russian and three in Yiddish. *Undzer Kol* will deal with various as-

**NASH GOLOS/UNDZER KOL  
(OUR VOICE)**

◦ No. 1, March 1-15, 1990 (5750), (8½" x 12"). P. 1: Editor: "The aim of the Jewish Culture Society of Moldavia is to help Jews live out their lives as Jews whether they stay in Moldavia or go to a hotter climate. . . ." p. 2: reprints from Moscow *Vestnik* (Herald of Jewish Soviet Culture) resolution adopted Sept. 10, 1989 at the founding convention of *Rukh* (Ukrainian People's Movement) supporting the rights of the Jewish nationality to cultural development and denouncing anti-Semitism. . . . p. 3: report of atrocities against Jews in Romania by Nazis and Romanian collaborators in Jan., 1941. . . . p. 4: Romanian Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen's book, *Lessons of the Bible*, excerpted for history of Purim. . . . p. 5: reprint from Israeli *New Panorama*, a woman's magazine. . . pages 6-7: lessons in Yiddish and Hebrew vocabulary and grammar. . . p. 8: appeal for financial support, announcements, etc.

◦ No. 2, March 16-31. P. 1: on the "burning question of emigration," time for the government to "take a clear stand against anti-Semitism." . . . p. 2: sharp criticism of Moscow conference, Jan. 24-26, of "patriotic" organizations, including *Pamyat* and other Russian chauvinist groups promoting anti-Semitism. . . continuation of account of massacre of Jews in Jassy in 1941, then in Romania, once in Moldavia. . . Society for Jewish Culture founded in Orkhey after vandalism in Jewish cemetery. . . . p. 4: L. Barzan writes of a Hebrew-Romanian-Yiddish 1930 pocket dictionary introduced by Bialik. (*Translations by Harry Mann.*)

pects of Jewish life inside and outside Moldavia and with relations with other

ethnic groups living there. The reader will become acquainted with the work of the Jewish Cultural Society. Articles will be published about scholars, writers, painters and musicians; political and social activists; Jews who have contributed greatly to Moldavian science, literature and art. Editorial plans include dissemination of the works of Yiddish writers, both classics and modern writers. To sum up, the plans of the editors, as well as of leaders of the Cultural Society, are extensive. We hope they will be realized.

Today it is no secret that the wave of emigration from the Soviet Union is expanding daily. One can hear people asking: "If this is so, what is the purpose of your organization? Is it for those who are leaving or for those who are remaining?" It seems to me that this is not a proper question. Our response is this: The Jewish Cultural Society in Moldavia, like similar organizations in other cities and republics, is a means, to the best of our efforts, of living one's life as a Jew, whether or not one plans to remain in Moldavia or to leave for Israel or the United States. In the final analysis, it is one's personal, one's universal right, to select the place on earth where one wishes to live and work. The Jewish Cultural Society is aiding those leaving and those who wish to remain and live a normal life.

We are aware that the Jews in the rest of the world are not mere onlookers and advisers. We have amicable relations with cultural and social organizations in Israel, in London and in the United States. We have close relations with the League for Yiddish, the Zhitlovsky Foundation, with *Yugntruf*. We are receiving regularly copies of *Oifn Shvel*, *Yugntruf* and *Yiddishe Kultur*; also articles and readers, for which we express our thanks. ■

(*Funds to aid this publication may be sent to League for Yiddish, 200 W. 72 St., Suite 40, New York, NY 10023.*)



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# The Editor's Diary

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## • *Arthur Hertzberg on American Jewish History*

As often as I can I read Arthur Hertzberg's frequent and welcome contributions to Jewish periodicals. Rabbi (Conservative), historian, academic, Zionist and Jewish communal leader, he has an independent, socially progressive mind. Even when I disagree with him, he has been informative and challenging. (See my comments in this "Diary" of Dec., 1979 on his 1979 collection of essays, *Being Jewish in America: The Modern Experience*.) I therefore turned eagerly to his new book, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter, A History* (Simon and Schuster, N. Y., 1989, 428 pages, indexed, \$22.95). Whatever its considerable merits, it is not a systematic history of American Jews from 1654 to the present but a chronologically arranged, brightly written series of historical essays worth the attention of both general readers and students of history.

Dr. Hertzberg begins promisingly with the keen observation that "Poverty and anti-Semitism pushed mostly the poor out of Europe. . . . This assertion about the class origins of Jewish migration is central to this book" (p. 13) but he is not systematic in developing that theme, nor consistent in outlining class relations among Jews and between Jews and other Americans. He makes a persuasive case for New England Puritan intolerance of religious difference or dissent and notes well that Jews were not the only or even the main target of hostility. He is sober enough to recognize that "The American Republic would have been founded as it was if there had not been a single Jew in the 13 colonies" (p. 62) but then flounders into minor follies (Haym Salomon fled from New York to Philadelphia, not from Philadelphia to New York, "to escape British occupation") and repeats the myth that Salomon lent "over \$200,000 in hard currency" to the Continental Congress (see my monograph on Salomon in the *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, Sept. and Dec., 1977).

His sections on slavery and the Civil War are marred by confusion and carelessness. Dr. Hertzberg's pages (124-126) on the debate about slavery precipitated by Orthodox New York Rabbi Morris Raphall's sermon on Jan. 4, 1861 defending slavery on Biblical grounds is a mess. Dr. Hertzberg confuses Rabbi Leo Merzbacher (1810-1856) and Rabbi Moses Mielziner (1828-1903), underestimates the prompt and widely-read rebuttal by Michael Heilprin published in the *N. Y. Tribune* Jan. 15, 1861 and commits other inaccuracies. The New York draft riots of 1863 are misrepresented as virtually an Irish ethnic uprising against Jews (p. 135). The account of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Order No. 11 of Dec. 17, 1862, expelling "Jews as a class" from the Department of the Tennessee for smuggling with Confederates, and rescinded by Lincoln on Jan. 4, 1863, is unclear.

More important than such blotches are Dr. Hertzberg's strengths. He traces carefully, if not systematically, Jewish self-definition in our country. "Reli-

gion," he observes, "was not a unifying force, because the new immigrants were generally unwelcome in the existing congregations. . . . the Jewish immigrants of the 1840s and 1850s banded together in 200 new synagogues — but this represented no religious revival. . . . There was no 'great awakening' of piety. . . . numerous immigrant Jews chose not to belong. . . . The most common sentiment was family feeling, the sense of belonging as Jews to each other" (pages 111, 113). "The sense of being one people. . . had always been central in Jewish consciousness" (p. 320). "Their Jewishness was essentially ethnic culture" (p. 14). Yet, while we live now obviously in what is a continuing burst of ethnicity in our multi-ethnic American population, Dr. Hertzberg perversely, it seems to me, believes "The era of ethnicity is ending."

In the more modern period, he has, however, other valuable perceptions and insights. His pages on Jacob Schiff, Louis Marshall, Stephen S. Wise and Louis Brandeis — and on the American Jewish Committee and American Jewish Congress — are instructive. Dr. Hertzberg is clear-sighted and vigorous in depicting Franklin D. Roosevelt's relation to the Jews and in describing American Jewish reactions to World War II and the Holocaust: "Though Roosevelt has been severely criticized in retrospect by many historians, it is hard to see what a specific statement [on the Jews] could have accomplished. . . . Millions were dying on all the battle fronts; it was difficult to cast the Jews as a special case. . ." (p. 298). Dr. Hertzberg is aware that, "if the war had been one year shorter," millions of Jews might have been saved — yet he, like too many others, does not mention the opening of the Second Front in Europe in 1942, which was thwarted by Churchill not for military but for geopolitical, anti-Soviet reasons, as Eisenhower recognized, and which was opposed by too many Jews because of anti-Soviet prejudice.

On the American Jewish response, Dr. Hertzberg writes: "The pained and elaborate discussions in recent years about whether the Jews of the United States did enough to save their brethren in Europe is therefore essentially unhistorical. Jews had no power to do more. . . . Jews had not been powerful enough among all the factions and fractions of America to make the President and Congress feel their Jewish pain" (pages 298, 300). And even if the pain had been felt, where could Jews get the allies for opening the doors wider to Jewish refugees in a period of massive unemployment and misery, when the labor movement, the veterans' organizations, the intensely suffering Black people were actively opposing immigration?

It is in dealing with the Black people and Black-Jewish relations that Dr. Hertzberg is at his best, with realistic perceptions and wise psychological understanding. His first notation (p. 30) is that in the 1650s in New Amsterdam, the Jew "Elias Silva was accused of having 'carnal relations' with the Negro slave of another man." But it is in the post-World War II period that Dr. Hertzberg is most enlightening: "The battle [then] was to make society live up to its rhetoric about equality. The battle was not for black culture; it was for jobs, education and an end to segregation" (p. 314). He cites the 1953 argument of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council "that it was to the advantage of Jews to fight side by side with blacks against discrimination in housing and in jobs. . . . but it was not true in fact. . . . Jews were troubled by still existing discrimination. . . in 'executive suites.' Blacks were fighting to leave the most menial jobs" (p. 334). He cites ap-

provingly Kenneth B. Clark's 1946 evidence "that blacks were more bitter toward Jews because they were more in contact with them — as merchants and landlords — than with any other element in the white community. When Jews called conferences about 'the Negro in the United States,' blacks felt patronized. . . . Jews seemed to have been largely unaware, then, of these angers" (pages 337-338). By the mid-1960s, "blacks were articulating a radical new program: not equality at the beginning but equality of result. . . some Jews and some blacks were on their way to open war. Jews could no longer assume that, having fought their way to the top of American society, they would not be attacked from below by blacks on the march into the middle class" (p. 336). Such understanding is rare among us.

My biggest beef with him is his insistence that, without religious revival, "American Jewish history will soon end," which he asserted as far back as 1963. However, he concedes that Jewish "Ethnicity will no doubt last for several more generations," which at current life spans connotes a century or so. He sees Jewish salvation only in extensive Jewish textual study (Talmud, etc.) and all-day Jewish parochial schools. There is more in ethnicity (including Jewish secularism) than meets his discerning eye and lofty vision.

## • *Hearing Young Yiddish Writers Read*

April 29

Hurried to the Roosevelt Hotel for the afternoon celebration by the League for Yiddish of the publication of the first volume of *Vidervuks* (Rebirth): *A New Generation of Yiddish Writers* (362 pages, 20 U.S. and Canadian writers under 40, \$25, soft-cover \$18). For me the magnet was the visit of Boris (Berl) Sandler of Kishinev (see his article, pages 11-14). The League's Executive Secretary, Dr. Mordkhe Schaechter, presented for readings of stories and poems: Dr. Hana-Feigl Abrahams (Chicago), Esther Meer and Leah Robinson (N. Y.), Sheva Zucker (Raleigh, NC), Zvi Kanar (Tel Aviv), Gil Schaechter-Viswanath (Teaneck, NJ) and, of course, Sandler, born in Belz and author of a volume, *Treplech oif a Nes* (Stairs to a Miracle), published in Russian translation in 1986. Prof. Itche Goldberg, evaluating the new publication, asked, "Is this a new Genesis?" and answered, "Perhaps only a beginning of recovery from a serious illness. Can we get young readers for *Vidervuks*?" . . . Among some 85 attending, I noted our associates, Ben Axelrod, Sid Resnick and Tess Swerdlow.

## • *Our Dinner with Two Ruths*

May 6

It was the Dinner Journal greeting of Harold Ticktin of Cleveland that sent congratulations to "both Ruths" — Messinger and Rubin — who formed the spine of our Annual Jewish Currents Dinner, this time at a new location, the Lindenbaum Jewish Community Center on the Upper West Side. (See pages 10-11 for our new Manhattan Borough President Ruth W. Messinger's strong address and pages 11-12 for Peter Schlosser's moving presentation of the Fifth Annual M. S. Arnoni Award to Ruth Rubin.) Ruth Rubin, continually creative in her 84th year as ethnomusicologist and composer, was gracious and wistful in her acceptance of the \$200 Award. Then she beamed

bemusedly when Peter Schlosser, with Edward Korfis at the piano, included in his cycle of Yiddish songs the first public performance of Ruth Rubin's own melody, with arrangement by Peter, to the poem of Itzik Manger, "*Shitler Ovnt Tunkl Gold*" (Quiet Evening Golden Twilight). There was warmth — and not only of temperature — in the atmosphere.

My Fund Appeal stressed our magazine's survival capacity — *vide* the lamented demise of *Present Tense*, *Genesis 2* and *Shmate* — based on reader generosity. Responding, the 170 present came through with \$3,748 (led by \$600 from West Palm Beach by Sam and Fannie Borun and \$500 from Sonya, too ill to come). So next year: May 5 — hold that date!

Reminder: the 20-page heavily illustrated Dinner Journal, with a full page about Ruth Rubin and a brief bibliography of her books, articles and audio-cassettes, is available from us for \$2 postpaid.

## ◦ *At CCNY English Department Awards*

May 10

Rushed from our office to get uptown to the City College for the mid-afternoon ceremonials attending the English Department Awards Convocation. Since my career in that department, 1928-1941, was interrupted by the Rapp-Coudert witch-hunt, I enjoy these annual invitations from the Department because it affords me an opportunity to renew new acquaintance, and to revel in the contrast between the current situation and the one I was in some 40-50 years ago. This year there were 35 prizes (in my student days there were three — and I copped them all). Women won 21 of them (there was no co-ed in my days). Five went to Black students, three to Hispanic, two to Asian and one to a South African white. And Hannah Rodgers, who won three awards last year, got four this year! From sample writings of winners distributed, I should say there is both promise and performance. And to close the exhilarating afternoon, Steve Leberstein, executive director of the Worker Education Center of City College, driving to his downtown office, gave me a lift home.

## ◦ *Marching in the Israel Day Parade*

May 13

At the invitation of Americans for Peace Now (27 W. 20 St., 9th fl., New York, NY 10011, 212-645-6262) our Editorial Board decided to march in this parade celebrating Israel's 42nd Independence Day. With only one announcement at our May 6 Dinner, we turned out a small contingent. With a broad and colorful streamer created by the artist Saul Lishinsky to identify us, we trudged and slushed in the rain through Fifth Ave. potholes from 54th St. and Madison to 86th and Fifth, carrying placards of Peace Now, and attracting attention from spectators for our peace position. A photo in *Jewish Week* May 18 showed posters reading: "Occupation — Just Say No," "2 Peoples — 2 States," with Israeli and Palestinian flags linked; "Support Israeli Peace Movements," and others. *Jewish Week* reported 55,000 marchers; the *N. Y. Times* May 14 gave a police estimate of 75,000 spectators. Peace Now marched in Section F, with yeshivas in front of us and a Hadassah contingent behind us. Spirits were high despite the rain.

M.U.S.

# Why Socialism Now?

## A Symposium, II

By IRVING WEISSMAN, JOSEPH DIMOW,  
SIDNEY J. GLUCK, LAWRENCE BUSH

*[In July-August, 1982, we published a symposium, "Why Socialism?" Participants were 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. Then in Jan., 1983, we published a Readers' Forum on "Why Socialism?" with comments by Edward I. Lending, Harry Bloch, Morton Gold, Joseph Gottfried, G. A. Kane, Sam Machlis and David Platt. (Copies of these issues are available at \$2 per issue, postpaid.)*

*Since then, developments in Eastern Europe have caused much new thinking and re-thinking on the meaning of socialism. To ascertain the state of consciousness about socialism in the JEWISH CURRENTS family, the Editorial Board invited 43 of its contributors to state briefly their current views in about 250 words by April 1. By June 7 we had received 26 replies; the first five were published in our June issue, and six more in the July-Aug. issue. We continue, now, to print them in the order received. After the series is completed, readers will be invited to comment. —Ed.]*

### IRVING WEISSMAN:

**S**OCIALISM is a movement, not a blueprint.

The moral dimension of this movement is its paramount feature.

This dimension receives its political expression in the form of the struggle for and practise of explicit democratic liberties. The fight cannot be for some abstract democracy, whether the latter calls itself bourgeois or proletarian.

The socialist must fight that his countrymen act as citizens; that is, that they become imbued with the determination and the energy to initiate and implement policies.

The contrary doctrines and practise of commandism, whether under capitalism or under regimes which espouse demo-

cratic centralism, have resulted in totalitarianism, in despotism.

Of course, in those societies where terror is the rule, socialist organization must be clandestine. Yet, even within the clandestine organization, some degree of democratic practise must obtain; and the perspective must be of a democratic civil society. Otherwise, the outcome is guaranteed beforehand: a bureaucratic despotism which entrenches itself more and more deeply.

Socialist movements must reaffirm internationalism. The goal of satisfying the material and spiritual needs of one's own country must be inseparable from the goal of a wholly healthy world.

A renewed humanism has arisen, the answer to the unprecedented dangers from pollution and weapons that life faces today. Traditionally, the socialist movement has concentrated on the industrial working class. This must not

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IRVING WEISSMAN, a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, is an occasional contributor to our pages.

degenerate into an archaic and crippling strategy. We must grasp the hands of all people of good will; they are to be found in all classes and strata.

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**JOSEPH DIMOW:**

**N**OTHING that has happened in the existing socialist world has invalidated the Marxist critique of capitalism shared by most advocates of socialism. The contradictions of capitalism still prevail. The tendency to greater concentration and centralization of capital and to a constant search for greater profits has been dramatically borne out this past year in our country with the merger mania, leveraged buyouts, etc. The gap between classes is growing, especially when one views capitalism as not just Wall St. but the Rust Belt, too, the homeless as well as the jet set, Bangladesh as well as Switzerland.

But if capitalism is still full of contradictions and inequities, what about socialism?

The experience of real existing socialism has been disappointing for its advocates. After 43 to 73 years of undemocratic and authoritarian rule, many people want to leave their socialist countries and when given an opportunity many vote against it. Nationalism, racism, anti-Semitism and sexism have not lessened under socialist "education" and have even become the slogans and framework for anti-socialist movements. Divisions between haves and have-nots still exist.

To complicate matters, some of the most pressing problems of the world today transcend either system and cannot be dealt with through theories of class conflict. Nuclear war and radiation, an escalating conventional war, environmental pollution, population growth, bear on all classes and systems, on the world as a unit.

So why still advocate socialism?

Because even the faulty efforts to date have shown a possibility of creating a more just society based on the needs of people rather than the profits of a few. Though the real existing socialist countries have not solved their economic problems, they have moved toward more equitable income levels and avoided the unjust disparities of capitalism. They have not been imperialistic and indications are that a more democratic socialism could work. Such a system could, in theory at least, provide a basis for tackling world problems described above.

To do so, it needs a recognition that democratic rights applied to both the economic and political spheres are indispensable. It means no one-party rule and no dictatorship. It means allowing people to adapt and adjust. It means acceptance that some things are best done on a small private scale and people need stimulation and competition rewarded by personal gain. Limits on such activities should be set by the culture and customs of each country.

Socialism has a bad name now because it became confused with a corrupt and arrogant political rule. Once again we see what can happen when power is unrestrained and unchecked. It is to be hoped this view will dissipate and socialism will come to be seen as a qualitative extension of democratic and human rights.

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JOSEPH DIMOW of *New Haven* conducts our monthly column, "Inside the Jewish Community," and is a member of our Editorial Advisory Council.

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**SIDNEY J. GLUCK:**

**T**HE crisis in communist theory and practice does not spell the end of the socialist ideal. Socialism was not conceived by Marx. It had religious and utopian roots. Nor was the notion

of class struggle a Marxian precept. It was born in bourgeois revolution.

When the *Manifesto* was written in 1847, the word "socialism" had been in such disrepute that the authors elected to use *Communist Manifesto* to protect the substance of its historic view: "The history of all existing societies has been a *history of class struggle*...." Today, "communism" is in such disrepute that it seeks refuge in "socialism" and "democratic socialism."

Marxism created a "scientific" approach to social change and, as with all uncharted courses and theories, it suffered from historically conditioned misconceptions and shortcomings. Nonetheless, Lenin was able to lead a successful revolution in a backward country based on these principles and world view. He died before the new system was structured. The forced march to industrialization and modern self-defense under Stalin did succeed in defeating fascism and the encirclement; but it did so at the expense of distorting socialist principles and negating its humanist and democratic premise. He combined Russian autocracy with Marxist misconceptions about the individual and the state and failed to heed Marx's own words about commodity production, market relations and "bourgeois right" in the development of socialism. Stalinism was foisted on subsequent revolutions. Communist China, too, made considerable progress, having started from a much more backward condition and national fragmentation than Tsarist Russia; but it is only since the late '70's that China, and later the Soviet Union, came to recognize the need for restructuring, introducing high tech and new economic relations together with planning and expanding participation in decision-making.

The world has welcomed the changes initiated under Gorbachev because they are bringing about an end to the cold war and we are witnessing their in-

evitable consequences in Eastern Europe; but IS SOCIALISM DEAD? The USSR remains a formidable power and China pursues its socialist goal while opening to the West. Socialist and Communist parties in the West still confront governments wracked with crises, competition and slow growth. The widening gulf between ultra-greed and slow degradation (Adam Smith's dilemma) demands social intervention. Has "class consciousness" evaporated?

It is necessary to review political and economic history and the theories of "scientific socialism" from today's perspective to ascertain what is alive, what is new and what is dead in the ineluctable march to a more humane society. A society that would afford its workers and "middle classes" of all races and both genders a just share in employment and the products of their labors as well as a truly democratic voice in directing the destiny of nations — this remains the vision of socialism.

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SIDNEY J. GLUCK is on the Social Science Faculty of the New School for Social Research; a former CEO of domestic and international corporations; a lecturer on Marxism for 50 years.

◦  
**LAWRENCE BUSH:**

"All the calculated dates of redemption have passed, and now the matter depends upon repentance and good deeds." (*Exodus Rabbah* 5:19 of the Talmud)

NINE years ago I wrote in *JEWISH CURRENTS* that "Our Jewish consciousness serves to keep our politics honest." By this I meant that if we bring to our political efforts certain Jewish perspectives — if the Jewish experience, and not only class analysis and other tools of "scientific socialism," serves as a source of motivation and vo-



cabulary — our politics would likely be more cautious, more morally and ethically grounded, and more creatively compassionate.

In light of the collapse of Communist parties during the past two years and the revealed suffering under socialist systems around the world, I believe this more deeply than I did nine years ago.

My growing awareness of Judaism and Jewish experience have made me skeptical and downright afraid of any sort of thinking about human beings that claims to be "scientific," for time and again such claims have proved to be excuses for reductionism, for systems of classification that reduce human complexity so that we can fit into cubbyholes — or gas chambers.

And while Judaism and Jewish experience draw me to utopian ideals (a "classless society" with a "withered state"), being Jewish also makes me leery of their implementation — for such implementation is almost always coercive. I am struck by the fact that Rabbi Hillel, in the famous Talmudic story in which he sums up Judaism while standing on one foot, says that the "whole Torah" boils down to "Do not do unto others what you would not want done unto you." His "golden rule" is one of restraint, unlike the Christian "Do unto others. . ."

"Repentance and good deeds," says the Talmud; *rakhmones* and *mentshlikhkeit*, say the Yiddish writers. Whichever source you prefer, Jewish tradition posits a philosophical approach to "healing the world" that is humbler, safer and, I believe, more effective than the notion of "building the new world upon the ashes of the old."

I am *not* at all saying that Judaism holds the key to my, our, or anybody's salvation. Granted, Judaism, like any ism, can provide ample excuse for hateful, exclusivist and destructive politics. On the other hand, the arrogance, blind faith, patriarchal domination and

moral relativism that have been communist hallmarks need rejection or sharp modification by other paradigms of thought and action, including Jewish ones, as we search for an ongoing commitment to social justice.

The "victory" of capitalism will be victory only if we despair of our belief that human beings, working together, can do better. Indeed, if we despair of that idea, we may be despairing of survival itself, for I *do* believe that unchecked monopoly capitalism will serve to increase suffering, especially in the Southern hemisphere, brutalize the planet, and smother the human experience with acute, degrading alienation.

But in scanning the horizon for the arrival of the messiah, we can no longer be at all confident that we know the direction from which the messiah is to come. Perhaps feminist thought and process, as yet untested on a societal scale, will prove more redemptive than Marxism. Perhaps questions about "the means of production" need to focus less on who owns them and more on limiting their growth altogether (regarding, for example, nuclear power, which is anti-human technology under *any* social system due to its polluting capacity). Perhaps a sense of ritualized reverence for the living world will prove more redemptive than scientific analysis. Perhaps a "therapeutic" rather than a "classless" society will be the best model.

For now, it seems to me, the job of radicals, as we weigh these and other "perhapses," is to cultivate our minds, personalities and souls, and to apply whatever healing skills we possess among our children, our friends, our families, our communities, our allies, our fellow suffering beings.

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LAWRENCE BUSH, *former assistant editor of our magazine, is author of Emma Ansky-Levine and Her Mitzvah Machine (forthcoming, UAHC Press), among other books.*

# My Father, Pesach Novick (1891—1989)

By ALLAN B. NOVICK

[Allan Novick gave this talk at the memorial service for his father, Paul Novick, on Aug. 25, 1989. We reprint it here, slightly abridged, to mark the first anniversary of Paul Novick's death on Aug. 21, 1989.—Ed.]

ACCORDING to Jewish tradition, when a person dies he is gathered into the company of his ancestors. Let me share with you the glimpse my father gave me of those who went before him—his parents. These are his own words, taken from taped conversations we had together, and from two letters he wrote to me at different times in his life.

My parents were born in Brisk, as were their parents. When I think of them I think of extremely honest and modest people leading a very hard life. They were devoted to each other, to their family of six children, to the business of eking out a living of scarcity.

My mother, Haya Esther, was a very kind woman. She was an optimist by nature, saying things like "God will help" and "Let's be grateful." My father's name was Alter Hayim. He was a good man, honest, struggling, depriving himself for our sake. He was a worrier, worrying over the pitiful business, over how to make a living.

In the morning while we children were still in bed, he would come from the synagogue, bringing us fresh *pletzl* (a round flat hard roll) except for himself, maybe also except for mother. He would never eat breakfast; at noon he would eat stale bread. It was cheaper and would not be consumed too quickly. Mother would tell father not to worry

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ALLAN B. NOVICK is a psychologist.

so much. She saw to it that we children had our meals. I was always hungry—but that was also the fault of my capacity to eat.

The first business I remember was a small grocery, the typical poor Jew's business in the Pale (of Settlement) of old Russia. There was more of this business than customers. The store had flour, salt, grain, dried beans and her-ring. We had three cows, which provided the store with the milk, sour milk and butter, which my father churned. Once one of the cows ran away. My father ran after it and I ran after my father until we caught up to her on the parade grounds. My father must have been around 50 at the time. I remember looking at him and seeing how tired he was. He seemed like an old man.

My father was a *baal tfilah*, a leader of prayers. He prayed with a full heart and great fervor. He would *daven* before the whole community on holidays, and the congregation loved to hear him. He also sometimes led in group singing of hasidic *nigunim*, songs without words. Actually the synagogue was a *shitbl*, a small room holding at most about 100 people. The rabbi was a Trisker hasid—a hasid from the small town of Trisk nearby.

I went to *heder* (Hebrew school) with about 15 other boys, and since I showed some abilities from the very start, all hopes were placed on me to become a rabbi, a learned religious person. I liked to sing and I was a favorite singer in the *shitbl*. The hasidim would ask me to sing the rabbi's song, a *nigun*, with its particular expressive style. They'd say, "Nu, Pesachke, sing the song of the Trisker rebbe." . . .

When I was about 13 I began reading the Yiddish press, a newspaper

from Petersburg. In the paper there were anti-government articles, and I soon became "contaminated" with revolutionary ideas. My parents were very much afraid that the revolutionaries would get the Jewish people into trouble. Pretty soon someone approached me and gave me some literature. I liked it, so he asked some of us to come to a discussion group. Of course it was illegal, hidden away in an attic or somewhere in the woods, near the river, and we'd put a sentry on guard. In this way we began to circulate illegal literature.

Pretty soon the police became suspicious of me. Once in the middle of the night there was a banging on our door.

"Who's there?"

"Police."

My father was pale and shaking. My mother didn't know what to do. They came in and said, "Let's see your literature — what do you have there?" They searched the house and knocked things over. It just so happened I didn't have anything that time, but they warned me, "You'd better be careful because we'll catch you."

Of course, as soon as they left my father would begin to. . . I wouldn't say scold — he wasn't the scolding type — he would say, "Look what you're doing to us, the trouble you're getting us into." This would hurt me more than if he would scold me.

They had been suspicious before this. I had stopped studying the Talmud. Quite often my father would say to me, "I just met your old rabbi, and he asked me, 'How's my rabbi doing?' Some rabbi he turned out to be!" With sarcasm and pain, you know. And at times he would cry because I stopped praying, stopped *davening*. The son who he hoped would become a rabbi — I had become wayward.

It pained me too. I said to myself, I have certain principles. In those days, you know, you're young, you don't want to give in. I'll give you an ex-

ample — it was in 1929, I think, when I went back to Brisk for a visit. Father asked me to go with him to the *shetle*. Here was his son, who'd come from America, and he wanted me to go with him on *shabbos*. I said, "No, I'm not going into the synagogue; I'm not religious." I remember he was in so much pain. "What do you want me to do?" he said. "I want them to see you, I want the town to see you." Later, I realized, so what if I would have gone into the synagogue? I was so — ah, how shall I say? — dogmatic. Holding on to my dogma, without making any compromises, from a human standpoint, in relation to my father.

So that is one example of how I pained them. Nonetheless, we had very warm relationships, despite all these things.

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*After sojourns in Warsaw and Switzerland, my father Pesach came to New York in 1913, at the age of 22. He continues:*

I had joined the Jewish Socialist Federation, a branch of the Socialist party, and became its secretary. I read a newspaper called *Der Yiddisher Sozialist*, later called *Die Neie Welt*. One day I wrote a letter to the editor taking issue with something they printed. Shortly afterward the general secretary of the Federation called me and said, "What the devil are you doing in that factory? You write so well, come up to the office." That was the beginning of my journalistic career. . . .

Well, it happened: the Tsar was overthrown and the old revolutionaries, those who belonged to the socialist parties that had been outlawed, were leaving for Russia, invited home at government expense. I joined a group of 20 others — Bundists, Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, Social Revolutionaries — and we boarded a train, occupying a car to ourselves. Since the Atlantic was unsafe because of the War, we had to go

the other way round, first to Seattle. We sang and drank our way across the continent. Then we boarded a Japanese ship for an 18-day voyage to Yokohama. And we did have a good time! Every evening we used to sit till midnight, drinking Benedictine, then onto the deck. . . I remember how the waves had a fiery glow for about two or three nights before we arrived in Japan. Then we went to Nagasaki, where we boarded a boat and sailed for Vladivostok. There we were joined by others who'd arrived before us. We traveled for two weeks by train. Everyone was young and happy, and we had continuous discussions and arguments. It was a period when you had to weigh in your mind the question of who was right, the Bolsheviks or the Mensheviks. In the Bund, which was held together as a Jewish organization, there were several trends. I remember how we walked around the streets of Moscow, asking ourselves, what if *they* are right? And what if the *others* are right? You wanted to take sides but you couldn't decide which side to take. You saw things happening all around you and you wanted to be a part of it.

Conditions in Moscow were getting impossible to live with. There was hunger, there was difficulty in getting bread and potatoes. I was working as a mechanic and once I got permission to get a 40-lb. sack of flour and one loaf of bread. I remember the scene as I got off the train in Moscow and walked along Gorky Street carrying them. People looked at me — I had my coat from America, all full of flour — a sack of flour on my shoulder and a big loaf of bread in my arm — and they looked at the flour and the bread, eating them up with their eyes.

*My father spent about two years making attempts at establishing himself with newspapers in Minsk, Vilna and Warsaw, continually undermined by the economic and political turmoil. In*

*1920, at age 29, he arrived once again in New York. He says of his life up to then:*

During this time, whatever I knew or was able to do I acquired by myself, partly beginning in the old country, partly in Switzerland, where I enrolled in some courses, partly in New York, getting a smattering of a journalism program at Columbia. It was all haphazard, not systematic, doing it on my own. By the skin of my teeth and with some inborn intelligence, I may say, studying mostly by myself and reading a lot, I got by.

*The following is from a letter my father wrote to me when he was 65:*

One who has lived honestly — was honest with himself and his fellow men — need not be afraid to face death. Whether I have lived the life of an honest man is for others to judge. I have lived according to my convictions, according to what I thought was right and just, and stood by them in spite of hardships and sacrifices. I do not think it could be said by anybody that I was motivated by selfish interests. I have lived according to the principles I was dominated by since my early youth. . . All my activity, my writing, from then on till the present has been in the service of but one aim — to bring about a society of justice. I saw in this aim the solution of the problems of my people, the Jewish people, and the security and the flourishing of my homeland, America, where I have lived practically all my adult life.

*Finally, this comes from another letter my father wrote to me when he was 93, shortly before his death:*

What else is there to say? You know something of my early days and I was happy when you took an interest. There is a lot that came after, happy and joyous days, and other times as well. People make mistakes and I was among

# Two Poems

By **RAJZEL ZYCHLINSKA**  
Tr. from the Yiddish  
by Aaron Kramer

## PERHAPS

**P**ERHAPS  
today I saw Dr. Mengele  
drinking a glass of beer  
in Tel-Aviv  
at the sea —  
a pair of blue, sharp eyes  
suddenly flashed at me  
a cold stare of knives.  
A chuckle, manufactured and fake,  
suddenly stirred the horror awake —  
left, right, left, right,  
left!  
To the gas! —  
Courteously he introduced himself  
to those at the next table:  
his ancestors were English, Scots,  
and on his mother's side  
he is "Deutsch."  
I fled the cool terrace  
and walked a long time in the heat  
at the sea  
and heard the billows mockingly repeat:  
"Deutsch, Deutsch, Deutsch" —

## FALL

**T**HE rainy days are coming now.  
The potatoes have already  
been dug up in the field.  
The final leaf is falling down.  
The tree stands naked  
and ready for the wind.  
Man! if you have a home,  
you'll seal up your windows  
with putty and loam  
and in the evenings you'll light a lamp.

And those who have no home  
will open their eyes wider,  
will wander with the clouds  
from land to land  
with turned-up collar  
and with bony hand —  
those who have no home.

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RAJZEL ZYCHLINSKA, born in Poland on July 27, 1910, had her first volume of poems published in 1936 in Warsaw, with an introduction by Itzik Manger. In 1975 she was awarded the prestigious Itzik Manger Prize in Israel. With her family slaughtered in the Holocaust, she settled in New York in 1951, and has issued three more volumes of poems. In 1981, a translation of her selected poems appeared in Leipzig, East Germany. Eight more of her poems have been translated by Aaron Kramer in his anthology, *A Century of Yiddish Poetry*, pages 338-343.

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them. . . Yes, you can be honest and sincere and offer your life for something which can turn out a disaster in many respects. I meant well, and many years were sacrificed.

So far, that is what I want to leave with you. I do not know how many

years I have left. I have done pretty good nearing 93. But it is getting harder. This is sunset. We might still witness many a beautiful sight in the short time left. When night falls, know that I loved you and that what counts is honesty, humanity, compassion. ■

# Jewish Women Now

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## Jewish Women in Storytelling

Guest column by ROSLYN BRESNICK-PERRY

ALL over the country, Jewish storytellers, mostly women, are building bridges of understanding between the generations. They are saying, "This is who we are; these are our stories."

A storyteller is a newsbearer, oral historian, troubadour, comic. The stories of a teller of tales are more vibrant than fiction, more plausible than historical data. When a storyteller's voice alternates with that of a social historian, it reminds the listeners that, despite distances that separate and conflicts of opinion that divide, they are still a community and share a tradition.

Storytelling is now being revived as an art form all over the world. Storytellers give concerts and perform in churches, schools, temples, libraries and museums; at fairs, organizational functions, private parties and anywhere people gather to listen. For Jews, especially, the revival of storytelling continues one of their oldest traditions, the oral transmission of their ethos. Throughout the ages Biblical stories, *midrashim* (Biblical elaborations), legends, Hasidic stories, folktales, jokes and anecdotes were constantly told to teach and entertain.

Our present-day Jewish women stor-

ytellers bring another level of insight to their telling through their commitment to a more affirmative Jewish feminist perspective. Their stories not only recall the active participation of women throughout Biblical times until today but also show the negative stereotypical use of women in many of the stories and legends of the past.

These women, most of them young, have embraced their Jewish roots with a fervor that was hard to imagine a few years ago. The involvement of many of our young educated women with religious Judaism cannot be denied. However, this acceptance is based on the proposition of full participation in religious practice and the right to question and ameliorate past injustices.

Lynn Gottlieb of Albuquerque, New Mexico, is a prime example of this new breed. One of the first women to become a rabbi, she draws on sign language, chanting, folklore and rabbinic and feminist scholarship in her storytelling. Her stories, called "Generations," are legends about Biblical women and their descendants from Lilith to Lily Montagu (1872-1963), a leader of Liberal (Reform) Judaism in England and the first Jewish woman preacher there at the turn of the century.

One cannot talk about Jewish storytelling without recognizing the debt owed to Peninnah Schram, not only for her narrative skill but also for her tireless efforts to perpetuate Jewish stories and the networks and learning centers

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ROSLYN BRESNICK-PERRY of the Bronx appeared here in July-Aug., 1980 with a poem, "Inheritance." Her storytelling cassette tape, "Holiday Memories of a Shtetl Childhood," has just been released (1990, Global Village).

she has helped to establish. Born in New London, CT, she is the daughter of a cantor. When she clasps her hands and raises her eyes to heaven, it would seem almost natural to hear her say as her father sang, "*Hineni* — here I am." Like the Eastern European *maggid*, an itinerant preacher who would wander from town to town, Peninnah is constantly traveling around the country connecting people to their Jewish traditions, ethics and morality. (See Zelda Yarmuk's review of Schram's *Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another* in our Dec., 1989 issue.)

Cherie Karo-Schwartz from Denver, CO writes modern folktales, curriculum guides, plays and new adaptations of ancient stories. One illustration of her technique is a program she arranged for a temple with a fellow storyteller, Gerald Fierst, of New Jersey. They created an original *midrash* based on the Torah portion of the week, that of Moses striking the rock. Gerald portrayed Moses and Cherie was Miriam telling of her well. "My name is Miriam," says Cherie. "I was born in Egypt just as my people became slaves. My name in Hebrew means 'bitter water,' for I came into a bitter world. But my name in Egyptian is 'water that is sweet.' And it is true that I watched and was part of seeing the bitter waters of slavery on the Nile turn into the sweet waters of freedom at the Sea of Reeds." And so it goes, the telling of our legends through new eyes in new ways.

In Chicago, Robin Goldberg tells stories that are told by Hasidic women on whom she is doing a doctorate. "What is it about these women that fascinates you?" I asked her. "I don't necessarily embrace their commitment," says Robin, "but I'm very interested in how and why tradition is such a primary factor in their lives."

"Give me an example of a Hasidic women's story," I ask. "Well," says Robin, "here's one about Abraham and

Sarah. Mother Sarah always lit the candles on Friday night, the beginning of *Shabbat*. The whole house was then filled with tranquility. A spirit of peace, light and joy hovered everywhere and remained until *Shabbat* ended. When mother Sarah died, Abraham lit the *Shabbat* candles himself. Then the candles only lit up the room for the duration of their burning. The spiritual light was gone. Men, say the Hasidic women, live in the time of darkness. The Messiah will come when the feminine mode prevails. For it is with the help of the women that the world will be made whole."

Judith Black of Marblehead, MA, on the other hand, tells gutsy, earthy stories describing the personal struggles and joys of the immigrant generation and their children. She tells her stories with wit, humor and energy, making her characters come alive in all their ethnic color. For several years she has told stories at the Amalgamated Textile Workers Union's annual New England conference.

Nina Jaffe, a young mother from Riverdale, NY, working on her doctorate, tells stories to children and adults while accompanying herself on the guitar. Through story and song, Nina evokes the softer, more gentle aspects of Jewish tradition.

I too am a storyteller, a traveler in time and geography. From the small Jewish *shtetl* where I was born to the modern American world in which we live, my stories are focused on building bridges of understanding to the Eastern European Jewish experience. Some stories are as recent as last week and some as old as the oral tradition itself.

Actually, we are all storytellers, for storytelling is a glimpse of who we are. To the many Jewish men and women, young and old, who have little or no knowledge of their people or their tradition, Jewish women storytellers open the door and say, "Welcome, come in."



## Bialik — and Jewish Self-Defense, 1904

By MOISHE KATZ  
Tr. from the Yiddish  
by Lyber Katz

[*Moishe Katz, one of the founders of the Morgn Freiheit in 1922, was one of the most popular left-wing Yiddish writers of his day. Born in Byelorussia in 1885, he was already an experienced editor when he came to New York in 1912. His extraordinary range is indicated by books he wrote on Rudyard Kipling, Herbert Spencer, Lenin, Peretz and Sholem Aleichem. He also had a large following as a lecturer. To our magazine he contributed 10 articles and reviews written in English between 1947 and 1957, when our name was Jewish Life. For the 30th anniversary of his death, we publish here a brief passage from his reminiscences, The Generation that Lost Its Fear (New York, 1956), translated by his son, Lyber Katz. —Ed.*]

H. N. Bialik's poem, "Shkhite Shtot" (The City of Slaughter)\* made a strong impression on the Jewish population. The bitter rage, the plaintive outcry that filled the poem, appealed to the aroused feelings of the Jewish masses — of the Jewish youth, in any case — and it was interpreted as a call to resistance. That was also the impression that Bialik's poem made on me — and the impression was such that I immediately started to translate it into Russian, the language used by the majority of Jewish students in Nikolayev as in most of the large cities of southern Russia. I did not translate it for publication — my literary ambitions in that respect were very weak — but simply because it appealed to me and, also, to enable me to read it to my comrades.

It so happened that a few days before the 1st of May, 1904, we decided to hold a meeting at which I would speak to the Self-Defense groups of the need to be in a constant state of preparedness. As a speaker, I must admit, I felt much to be desired. As a rule, it seems to me, I was never embarrassed to talk

and have discussions with people even older than I, people who certainly had more knowledge than I did. However, to "give a speech" to an audience — that I just couldn't do! Every time I had occasion to speak before a group, anxiety would grip me. I would be embarrassed to look at the audience, and I never knew how to finish the torture.

Since it was my fate to address the Self-Defense groups I decided, after long deliberation, to be "better safe than sorry" — rather than make a speech to my comrades, I would recite the "Shkhite Shtot" in its Russian translation and, should that provoke a discussion, it would be much better than making a speech.

On the day of the meeting I started to practice the reading of the poem, which but a few months earlier had made such

\* This most famous of the poems by Haim Nakhman Bialik (1873-July 4, 1934) was written in Yiddish in 272 lines immediately after the Kishinev pogrom at Easter, 1903; in three days 47 Jews were killed, 437 injured, and 1,500 homes and stores pillaged. Bialik himself later rewrote his poem in Hebrew when it became his main language of expression. —Ed.

a deep impression on me. I read it once, started reading again, and suddenly had a strange feeling: instead of my earlier admiration I was becoming ill at ease, even angry. I took the poem to my pal, Saul Bron, who had no stomach for poetry. I forced him to listen, and as I was reading aloud, things began to clear up — the poem was not what I had thought it to be and was not worth reading to my comrades. Rather than a rallying call, Bialik's poem began to sound to me like an undeserved slap in the face. I realized that instead of railing against the Tsar, against the police and against the pogrom-mongers, the anger was vented at the defenseless Jews, who themselves were the victims of the pogroms, and at those who survived. I asked myself and my friend whether we — the Jewish young people who with the aid of sympathetic adults organized for self-defense and were ready, if necessary, to lay down our lives fighting the pogromers — could accept such a spit in the face from Bialik's poem? I recalled the *kheder* lessons I thought I had long forgotten and asked myself whether the Prophet Jeremiah, following the great disaster that befell the Jews of his time, also spat in their faces and cried out at them, or whether instead he comforted them with hopes of a better future?

I could describe much of the soul-searching and the discussions I had that day with my close friend regarding "*Shkhite Shtot*," regarding Bialik and regarding Zionism. However, the result was that I began, for the first time, to feel a responsibility to my people.\*

*I did not, of course, read Bialik's poem at that evening's gathering. Instead I indeed made a speech. The meeting took place in a cellar. It was dark. I did not see faces and therefore was not embarrassed to speak.*

Furthermore, I was all worked up and that helped. Neither my audience nor I

found any great wisdom in my speech. I don't, of course, recall exactly what I said. But the main thought I remember: There is no point in merely sitting back in a Self-Defense organization and waiting for a pogrom. If we do not want to live under its constant threat, we must fight. We must fight against the entire Tsarist regime, against the autocracy that organizes the pogroms. We must establish relations with the Russian workers, who have been struggling against autocracy for a long time. And we must pay no attention to those who insult us, trying to convince us that we are cowards.

I ended with the slogan, "*Doloy Samoderzhavie!*" (Down with the Autocracy!) and was, to tell the truth, as surprised as my audience at my conclusions.

The outcome of the speech was that, in the next few weeks, under various pretexts, a number of young people leaning toward Zionism dropped out of the Self-Defense organization. On the other hand there were also those who, while previously perhaps no less Zionist-oriented, not only remained but drew closer and began showing a strong

\* Moishe Katz's estimate of Bialik's historic masterpiece is rather narrow and subjective. In fact, Jewish youth and the Jewish people did not feel insulted by Bialik's excoriation of passivity, but were moved by it to moods of resistance that expressed themselves in just such self-defense groups as are described by Katz. An English translation of Bialik's poem by Helena Frank with the Hebrew text on the facing pages is included in *Selected Poems of Chaim Nachman Bialik*, with English translations by Maurice Samuel, UAHC, N.Y., 1972, pages 101-126. For more mature estimates of Bialik's poem by left critics, see M. Olgin's *In der Velt fun Gezangen* (In the World of Song), 1919, excerpted in the *Morgen Freiheit*, June 3, 1973 (for the centennial of Bialik's birth); Ber Green, Sept. 15, 1974 (for the 40th anniversary of Bialik's death) and Sept. 20, 1979 (for the 45th anniversary), Avrom Trembovolski, Soviet critic, Sept. 26 and Oct. 7, 1984 (for the 50th anniversary), all in the *Morgen Freiheit*, which also published the poem in Yiddish (in whole or in part) in 1973 and 1978.—Ed.

interest in the political problems facing the country. In the fall of that year a number of people joined the local Social-Democratic group. Others — I among them — organized early in 1905 a "Zionist-Socialist" group that advocated both socialism and struggle against autocracy as well as advancement of the Jewish people. But that is a chapter unto itself. ■

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## Ruth Rubin. . .

*(Continued from page 12)*

movements — all the warmth and color and conditions of a living people."

In 1976, with the support of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, Ruth was able to earn her doctorate at the Union Graduate Institute in Cincinnati, writing her dissertation on "The Jewish Woman and Her Yiddish Song." In 1983, Dr. Rubin was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to prepare an anthology of selections from her field recordings.

Dr. Rubin is continually giving lecture-demonstrations and writing articles. She maintains her interest in the Yiddish art song, which was the type of song she grew up with, and composes music herself. She has been a member of ASCAP since 1964, and has received stipends from that organization for her work. She is looked up to by a whole new generation of people who are now interested in Yiddish folksong and realize that without Ruth Rubin's pioneering work, Yiddish folksong would not have been as accessible to them.

It is therefore eminently suitable that

### FROM THE ESTATE OF NINA ROSENBERG YARDEINI

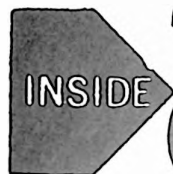
(Dec. 15, 1903—Nov. 28, 1989)

we received July 26 a bequest of \$10,000. Nina was a tirelessly energetic and generous supporter of JEWISH CURRENTS, president of our Miami Beach Committee, and was active in many other causes as well, among them the Concerned Democrats of Miami Beach, of which she was also president, and Israel Bonds. Among her other beneficiaries (after seven family members) are Hadassah, the Histadrut Foundation, the Reuben Brainin Clinic, the Yiddish Kultur Farband (YKUF), the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Jewish Cultural Clubs and Societies, the *People's Daily World* and the Miami Children's Hospital.

Born in Bershad, Ukraine, she immigrated first to Philadelphia and New York and then to Miami in 1946, where with her husband Ben Rosenberg she ran the Revere, Victor and Breakwater Hotels. After his death she married Cantor Mordecai Yardeini, who died in 1982. For a brief report of her funeral Dec. 3, 1989, see our March, 1990 issue, p. 40. All honor to her memory!

this year's M. S. Arnoni Award, presented by JEWISH CURRENTS, be given to Dr. Ruth Rubin. ■

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# THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

## *Talking with the PLO*

The pro-Israel lobby in May and June escalated the campaign to pressure the U.S. government to end its dialogue with the PLO. The Bush Administration ended the dialogue June 20 after the thwarted landing on an Israeli beach by an extremist group within the PLO May 30 which Chairman Yasser Arafat disclaimed specific responsibility for but declined to condemn.

The American Jewish Congress, which supported the dialogue when it was announced in Dec., 1988, fell into line with ADL, B'nai B'rith and others. The Zionist Organization of America was the most vociferous. In a June 1 statement ZOA criticized the Conference of Major American Jewish Organizations for requesting only a reassessment of U.S. policy. ZOA demanded termination of the dialogue, not re-examination or suspension.

June 20 they celebrated their "victory." B'nai B'rith "commended" the decision, AJCongress called it "necessary" while ADL "hailed" it. Only New Jewish Agenda, in a June 11 statement, had openly encouraged continuation of the dialogue. The Jewish Peace Lobby concentrated not on U.S./PLO talks but on urging direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO and called on U.S. Jews openly to express their disagreements with Israeli policy.

## *At the ADL*

The Anti-Defamation League, at its National Commission meeting June 13-16, heard Abraham H. Foxman, national director, warn that there is growing indifference and apathy to resurgent

anti-Semitism around the world. Foxman said, "Not only are fewer people raising their voices, but we have to work harder to plead, cajole and persuade those who finally do speak out." There is also, he added, "an escalating violence" which is racist as well as anti-Semitic.

June 16 Yitzhak Rabin, former prime minister of Israel, spoke to the meeting suggesting that a population of seven million Jews in Israel "would make the entire situation look different." Rabin still opposes PLO participation in the peace process.

A 17-minute film and accompanying discussion guide released by ADL June 25 is called "Hate Crime: A Training Video for Police Officers." Produced in cooperation with the New Jersey State Division of Criminal Justice, ADL says the film presents guidelines for "identifying bias crimes, dealing with victims and obtaining necessary information in a sensitive manner."

## *While at AJCongress*

The American Jewish Congress and B'nai B'rith International June 6 expressed "sorrow and shock" and "consternation" over a decision of the British House of Lords not to permit prosecution of Nazi war criminals. A bill to authorize such prosecutions had passed the House of Commons by a large majority.

June 8 AJC greeted a U.S. District Court decision in Missouri which denied permission for publicly funded mobile classrooms to be used on parochial school grounds. The court allowed use of the vans on public streets immediately adjacent to the schools.

AJCongress had filed an amicus brief in the case.

A three-year study of poverty, under the direction of Stuart Eizenstat, chair of AJCongress' Task Force on the Unmet Needs of Low Income Households, concluded that the most effective method to help the poor quickly was to enroll them in existing programs such as Head Start, Food Stamps and Medicaid.

June 21 AJCongress commended Congressman Ted Weiss (D-NY) for his bill to reform the Social Security Act to aid indigent Holocaust survivors who receive reparations. The bill would prohibit computing reparations from West Germany as income and therefore using them to deny benefits.

Robert K. Lifton, president of AJCongress, June 28 welcomed the U.S. Senate's approval of the National Affordable Housing Act. But July 2 "disappointment" was Lifton's response to Pres. George Bush's veto of the Family and Medical Leave Act. Lifton called on Congress to override the veto. A move to do so failed July 25. The act would have provided rights to return to a job for workers who must take time off to care for family members.

### *And at B'nai B'rith*

June 6 B'nai B'rith adopted resolutions calling on the Soviet government to issue an "unambiguous" statement condemning anti-Semitism and to enforce existing Soviet law regarding anti-Semitic acts. Similar calls were made on the new governments of Eastern Europe. (Ignored was Gorbachev's statement condemning anti-Semitism at the Komsomol Congress April 11, reprinted on p. 15 of our June, 1990 issue.)

The June-July issue of the organization's *Jewish Monthly* carries an article by Alan Sege, "Preying on the Exodus," concerning efforts by Christian evangelicals and "Hebrew Christians" to convert Soviet Jews in the U.S.

June 25 BBI delivered a check for \$1,000 to the Iran Earthquake Relief Fund and began soliciting more.

The Hillel Center for Campus Study, a BBI affiliate, June 14 held a symposium, "American Jewish Student: White or Ethnic," discussing campus issues such as free speech, the nature of today's Jewish student, campus relationships, etc.

*Also*

- The Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform) voted June 26 to admit acknowledged, sexually active homosexuals to its rabbinate. Until now, only the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism and the Unitarian/Universalist Church accepted gay clergy. The voice vote came after emotional debate among the rabbis representing the largest branch of American Judaism. The resolution stopped short of giving equal validity to gay and straight unions.

- A conference on "Judaism and the Environment," possibly the first of its kind, was held June 10 in Seattle and sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Seattle, Shomrei Adamah, the Stroum Jewish Community Center, the Western Washington Board of Rabbis and the Heart of America Fund.

- Racist Rabbi Meir Kahane was greeted by statements of rejection from the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven, the ADL (CT region) and a group of 12 area rabbis plus a picket line of about 50 protestors when he appeared at an Orthodox New Haven synagogue June 7. Picketers represented New Jewish Agenda, Friends of Peace Now, and the Middle East Crisis Committee, with Arab and Jewish members. A joint statement of the Federation and ADL found Kahane to be "antithetical to Jewish law and tradition" and rejected the "hatred promoted by Meir Kahane." His audience was estimated at less than 100 persons.

JOSEPH DIMOW

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*Peter*

*Sigal*

*Nina*

*Zachary*

**San Diego, CA and  
New York, NY**

## **Intifada. . .**

*(Continued from page 7)*

many years. Amos Oz, novelist and teacher who lived in Kibbutz Hulda for many years, is an impassioned spokesman for the doves. In this volume of essays written for Hebrew dailies he advises his fellow doves to consider, too, the "gut fear" of the Palestinians by the majority of Israelis.

Oz himself has no love for the PLO, which for many years "maintained a policy of genocide against Israeli Jews." He writes: "The issue is making peace with a deadly enemy, not because deep down under his wolf's clothing he is actually a lamb, but precisely because he is a deadly enemy, who now says he is ready to make peace."

For Schiff and Ya'ari, the PLO is the unavoidable partner to a settlement. For Oz, the PLO is the deadly enemy with whom peace must be negotiated. Both agree that a demilitarized Palestine state on the West Bank and Gaza should be Israel's objective in the peace negotia-

tions. Oz calls it by its right name: "the partition of the land between its two peoples," a policy first advanced by Ben Gurion at the World Zionist Congress in 1937 and adopted by the U.N. General Assembly 10 years later, to the acclaim of world Jewry.

Partition, which the Arabs fought from 1947 to 1968 (some are still fighting it), is now the official position of the PLO. The MERIP book publishes in the appendix the full text of the resolutions passed by the Palestine National Council in Nov., 1988 and an essay by Edward Said, who attended.

According to Said, the resolutions show "absolute clarity in speaking of a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Armed struggle does not appear in the binding resolutions. . . There are no disclaimers about the 'Zionist entity' or about the legitimacy of Israeli representatives." Said concludes: "All of the relevant passages about peace, partition and statehood in the 1964 Palestine National Covenant are flatly contradicted by the 1988 PNC resolutions." ■

In Memory  
of  
**JULIUS  
HARKAVY**

killed  
in  
World War II  
August 5, 1945

•  
**Max Noon**

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Our monthly column, "Jewish Women Now," was created by Prof. Regina P. Krummel of the Queens College Education Dept., who was a member of the **JEWISH CURRENTS** Editorial Board from May, 1981 through April, 1985. She conducted the column from its inception in March, 1984 until Jan., 1985.

The pamphlet contains 21 essays selected by the Editorial Board from 1984 through Dec., 1989. Selections include:

*My Mother—A Jewish Feminist View*  
*Economic Democracy Needed*  
*More on Abortion*  
*Feminist and Jewish*  
*Pesach in Baoding*  
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# letters



FROM READERS

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

## On Secularism and Intermarriage

I have not read the entire *Inter-marriage Handbook: A Guide for Jews and Christians*, but I must assume that the Judy Petsonk article in your Jan., 1990 issue covers her main points. If that is so, she's got lots more problems to face. It is upsetting to find someone still identifying Jewishness with food and *shabbos*.

Let me shout cheers to the response

by Katherine James (and Alan Blumenfeld). They should have written the *Handbook*. There is a much healthier approach and supports pride in the favorable aspects of a multiple background.

Your method of printing the article and four responses certainly showed the diversity of thinking in "intermarriage" households.

RUTH SINGER

New York, Jan. 21

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It was a wise decision to present *The Intermarriage Handbook* for open discussion.

Religion may be of no significance to the secular Christian and Jew in the rearing of their children. Tradition, culture, history would likely be of greater importance. Looking for "commonalities" and mutual "shaping" may be less important than examining differences. Reading the Bible and the Gospels as literature and history would allow essential differences to be acknowledged without emotional upheaval. For example, the Sabbath, Circumcision and Access to God could open fascinating discussion with mutual respect based on historical development. To choose one and eliminate (or tone down) the other is to plant seeds of dissent. Secularism deserves its place in the secular intermarried family.

LEO LANG

Blue Point, NY, Jan. 27

As a Jewish woman whose family includes four intermarriages I found your

**ISRAEL (SRULIK) FREED**  
(Oct. 24, 1908—July 21, 1990)

**A**N outstanding Yiddish editor and journalist, managing editor of the *Morgen Freiheit*, Srulik Freed died in New York after a visit to the Soviet Union. Born in Bershad, Ukraine, he came to the USA in 1921 and joined the *Freiheit* in 1927. He wrote also for *Signal*, *Yiddishe Kultur* and *Zamlungen*. For some years he was president of the Jewish Music Alliance and drama critic of the *Freiheit*. . . . July 23 he was buried in the IWO section of the Montefiore Cemetery in Farmingdale, NY, next to his wife, Anna, who died two years ago. Graveside speakers were Itche Goldberg, Jerry Trauber, grandson Daniel Matz, and Shifra Lehrer. We condole with his daughters, Nora Brooks and Alita Matz and their families. For details of the memorial meeting Oct. 17, call the Zhitlovsky Foundation, 212-243-1304. All honor to his memory!

**MAZEL TOV**  
to  
**PAULA and SYD FELDMAN**  
on their 50th  
wedding anniversary

•  
Best wishes for  
their good health in  
a world at peace

•  
*Bess and Marty Katz*  
*Rose and Max Rosenfeld*  
*Sylvia and Jack Rosenfeld*  
*Sari and Albert Weiss*  
Philadelphia

choice of the topic, "Raising a Child in an Intermarried Family," important. However, I would have preferred that the lead article present a secular view. First, all sets of roots should be equally respected. The choices presented, "half Jewish or both Christian and Jewish" in contrast to all Jewish, do not exhaust the possibilities. There are Black-Jewish, Hispanic-Jewish, Italian-Jewish and Scandinavian-Jewish, with no reference to religion.

I have heard non-Jews of mixed ancestry refer to their varied origins with pride. Why can't we do the same? Isn't there room in the family curriculum for more than one culture? To deny children part of their essence is to deliver a gaping wound. Some apologists for conversion state that mixed identity confuses and leads to mental illness. The contrary may be true: Denial, which is a lie about one's very origin and being, can undermine self-esteem with grave consequences.

The article is neither straightforward nor fair: it pretends to deal in a secular manner but winds up with conventional religious arguments for blotting out children's non-Jewish identities. It is unfair because it assigns an inferior position to the non-Jewish mate. This religio-ethnocentrism has no place in secularist thought.

The assumption that children "are more likely to be able to develop that clear sense of identity if they are brought up in one tradition rather than two" is not backed up by evidence. This impoverished thinking goes counter to the American experience. Where people commingle, especially in an urban environment with its many special interests, couples ignore ethnic/racial differences in favor of personal, social and political commonalities. The Jewish people itself is the result of many mixtures, as a nomadic group is bound to be. The high rate of adoption among Jewish couples increases genetic and cultural diversity.

### **431st-432nd LIFE SUBSCRIBERS TO JEWISH CURRENTS**

I enclose \$300 for a Life Subscription because I salute your wit, wisdom and humanity, and am proud to be part of the JEWISH CURRENTS community. *Zulst lang leben!* (Long life to you.)

Mount Vernon, NY, May 21

ANNE PHILLIPS

Why did I take a Life Sub *now*? You and JEWISH CURRENTS are committed to the traditions, the values and the ethics of Judaism which coincide with my beliefs. These beliefs are reinforced by your consistent application of these values to current history. If not *now*, when?

Mount Vernon, NY, May 24

EDITH BLUESTONE

(Carl Sugar, M.D. of Los Angeles and Dr. Saul Niedorf of Los Angeles have sent us \$100 to raise their \$200 Life Subs to the present price of \$300.)

Are we to deny it? Difference need not be threatening; on the contrary, it enriches experience. Otherwise why would we travel, study foreign languages and eat varied cuisines?

In fact, what is presented by Petsonk is an old religious taboo disguised imperfectly by rationalizations about what

is good for the child. Let's keep in mind that taboos are enacted to counter strong tendencies that threaten political dominance. If the outsider were as stupid and unattractive as folk humor asserts, there would be no need to invoke something as powerful as a taboo, which makes a violator into a criminal or social outcast.

Intermarriage, with or without Jews, is increasingly a fact of urban, international, intercultural life. Treating it as a problem or social disease will not make it vanish, and prescriptions are needed only by those who find it upsetting. The author speaks of the need for comfort; apparently she is extremely uncomfortable in the face of a phenomenon as old as the species.

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**HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY**

with love to

**MINNIE FRANKEL**

A lifelong progressive  
and special person

.

From sons and daughters

*Sol and Jo Frankel,*

*Carl and Rita Frankel*

and grandchildren

*Kim and Gail Turett,*

*Debra Frankel*

*Andrew, Judith and Ian Lamb*

*"biz a hundert un tsvontsik!"*

Los Angeles

This is not to deny the problem of Jewish survival. There are two dominant strands in Jewish life: one religious, the other assimilationist. Secularists represent a third strand that struggles to maintain Jewish culture. This effort is in part a response to the contradiction between growing national chauvinism and an ever more homogeneous world of international technology, trade and intermarriage. The problem is complex. The creativity and efforts for social justice by some Jews are worth preserving. We had better remember that we have no monopoly on these virtues and have our share of human failings. Efforts to preserve the culture(s) in which these traits flourish is hampered by a yearning for a mythical homogeneous *shtetl*. While the author looks with nostalgia on *Shabbos* candlelighting she forgets the inferior position of women in orthodox Jewish thought.

Finally, we Jews, whose wit has long been marked by irony, face the ultimate irony: extinction by tolerance. Without oppression the longing to maintain one's identity diminishes. However, anti-Semitism remains a powerful spur to Jewish secularism.

Perhaps it would be helpful to organize a conference on this subject, with representatives from anthropology, history, psychology, etc. No theology, please!

MARY COHEN, Ed.D.  
*Jamaica, NY, Jan. 30*

*Cancellation*

I have decided that I will not renew my subscription. Your editorial bias against Israel's efforts to obtain peace treaties with its Arab enemies was tolerable. Since it has affected the "factual" contents of the magazine, I can no longer continue to subscribe.

I part company more in disappointment than in anger.

Yours for peace,  
SIMON FELLNER  
*West Palm Beach, FL, Feb. 5*

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In loving memory  
of my husband  
**DAVE**  
who passed away on  
August 31, 1989

*Emma K. Price*  
Los Angeles

**CORRECTION**

• June issue, "It Happened in Is-  
rael": through editorial inadvertance,  
an item on p. 8 was repeated at the  
end of p. 9. Our apologies to author  
Jonathan Harris, who was not  
responsible.

In Memory  
of

**MORRIS  
SCHWARTZ**

(1900—Aug. 24, 1989)

A loving human being

A real mentsh  
in the true sense  
of the word

•

He left a  
tremendous void  
in the lives of his  
*Wife Goldie*  
*Daughter*  
Dorothy Sobelman  
and grandchildren

No. Hollywood, CA

Friends and Family  
will remember  
**HELEN WOLFSON**

Died May 9, 1990

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*Ruth Epstein*

Los Angeles  
(\$95 contributed)

**THE MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE**

mourns the death of  
Life Subscriber  
**HELEN WOLFSON**  
(Dec. 15, 1903—May 9, 1990)  
and condoles with her  
brother, *Israel Fabricant*  
and niece, *Saphora Miller*,  
both of Tel Aviv,  
and their families.

In memory of my sister  
**MINERVA GABOR**  
died May 30, 1990  
A regular reader of  
JEWISH CURRENTS  
and a lifetime fighter  
for all human rights

*Dorothy Elkind*  
Huntington, NY

In memory  
of  
my beloved  
husband

**HARRY  
OLIVENBAUM**

•  
*Florence Olivenbaum*

**Philadelphia**

In fond memory of  
**HARRY OLIVENBAUM**

*Don and Annette Golosman,*  
Wyncote, PA  
*Molly and Sam Shatavsky,*  
White Plains, NY  
*Dave and Beverly Sufian,*  
Houston, TX  
*Archie and Helen Mendick,*  
Philadelphia  
*Dan and Carolyn Berger,*  
Philadelphia

In loving memory  
of my dear departed wife  
**JUDITH**  
a valiant fighter  
for human rights and  
secular cultural freedom  
and a breath of fresh air

*Michael Brooks*  
San Francisco

Happy  
51st anniversary  
to  
**MINNIE and NORMAN**  
**MARKOWITZ**  
from  
*Marlene*

**JOHN KENNETH ACKLEY**  
(Oct. 21, 1905—July 5, 1990)  
*Life Subscriber*

Registrar of the City College, victim of the Rapp-Coudert Committee witchhunt into alleged "subversive activities" in the four municipal colleges, dismissed in 1941 by Board of Higher Education; apology issued to him and his fellow-victims on Oct. 26, 1981 by the Board of Trustees of the City University (successor to the Board of Higher Education).

Served in 1941-1942 as Michigan State Chairman of the International Workers Order (IWO), a working-class fraternal organization with 95 branches in that state. . . . On Oct. 31, 1942 (at 37), inducted into the U.S. Army; served in the Pacific as rifleman, clerk and message center clerk, often conducting orientation sessions, until honorably discharged as Technician 5th Grade (Corporal) on Nov. 15, 1945. In the 1970s, served as Registrar of the Metropolitan Music School in Manhattan.

Militant anti-fascist, trade unionist and fraternalist, John K. Ackley ("Ken" to friends and colleagues) fought the good fight against poverty, for equality of peoples, social security and social justice for all in a world at peace. All honor to his memory!

We condole with his half-brother, Charles C. Hoag and family of Berkeley Heights, NJ.

A memorial meeting will be held on Thursday, Oct. 25 at City College. Details in our October issue.

*Charles Eckstat,*  
Executor, Ackley Estate  
*Sonya and Morris U. Schappes*

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In Memory of my Beloved  
Beautiful Wife

#### SABINA EGELBERG

Who could forget her  
humanism and devotion to  
the cause of human rights?  
She gave each of us the gracious  
gift of her love and was loved by  
all who knew her.  
She is very much missed.

*Maurice and Children*  
New York

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<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$47,735.35</b>	<b>160</b>

#### Our Goals

<b>Fund Drive</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Received to date</b>	<b>\$47,735</b>
<b>New Subs Drive</b>	<b>700</b>
<b>New Subs to date</b>	<b>160</b>



# AROUND THE WORLD

## AT HOME

*Following up on our box in the July-Aug. issue, p. 43, "Jews Welcome Mandela to USA,"* we add this shortened chronicle: June 3 a new group, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (270 W. 89 St., N.Y. 10024, 212-727-1203), in cooperation with Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, announced a Sabbath service welcoming him for Friday evening, June 15. . . . June 12 Denis Goldberg, a South African Jew and leader of the African National Congress who had spent 23 years in prison with Mandela, issued a call from London, aired on Radio Pacific-WBAI and reported in the Harlem weekly *Amsterdam News* June 16 with the banner head: "Don't Picket Mandela, his cellmate tells Jews." . . . June 19 Rabbi Avraham Weiss of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale (Orthodox), who had aroused Jewish protest last year when he provocatively climbed over a convent wall in Auschwitz, denounced Mandela in a *N. Y. Post* article, "Why Mandela may be seeing blue ribbons amid all the ticker tape" (reprinted June 22 in the *Brooklyn Jewish Press*). The same evening, Rabbi Weiss staged a little vigil outside Gracie Mansion, Mayor David N. Dinkins' official residence, where Mandela was to stay. . . . June 20, when Mandela arrived at Kennedy International Airport, among those assembled to greet him were major Jewish leaders like Seymour Reich, Henry Siegman, Abraham Foxman and Albert Vorspan. . . . Early next morning, June 21, a dozen Jewish leaders joined religious leaders of other faiths in a meeting with Mandela before an ecumenical service in Riverside Church. At this session Jews for Racial and Economic Justice presented him with \$30,000 for use by the African Na-

tional Congress. . . . At the ecumenical service, an invocation was delivered by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president, Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform), and Cantor Ellen Stettner Math chanted a Hebrew psalm. . . . Half-page ads headed, "Welcome to New York, Nelson Mandela!" appeared in the *N. Y. Post* June 20, *Newsday* June 21, *Jewish Week* June 22 and the *Amsterdam News* June 23, signed by 306 Jewish activists, including 9 rabbis and the writer of this column. The ad said, "We applaud you as a moral voice for peace and self-determination for all peoples." . . . June 24 the *N. Y. Times* printed a letter dated June 18 by Abraham H. Foxman, ADL national director, headed, "Jewish Leaders Went Away Delighted With Mandela Meeting" in Geneva June 11: "Mr. Mandela understood far more than we anticipated about the Jewish experience, about the meaning of Israel, about its genesis. He talked. . . of his unequivocal support for Israel's right to exist and for security. . ." Foxman explained that the delegation went because Mandela had seemed "to be questioning the fundamental legitimacy of Israel by referring to Israel as a colonialist regime. . ." (Many Israelis recognize Israel to be a colonial power. In *Ha'Arezt* Dec. 8, 1989 Emmanuel Sivan had an article headed, "Is Israel a colonial power?" and answered, "Israel found itself [after 1967] in the situation of a classic colonial power." Israeli journalist and author Amos Elon in *New Yorker* April 23, 1990 wrote: "On the West Bank and in Gaza, Israel finds itself in the situation of a classic colonial power. . .")

*Brooklyn Jewish Press head June 22: "3 Blacks Save Hasid's 5 Children/*

From Burning Van." Mark Carpenter, 24, Tyrone Chung, 18 and Roger Robinson, 34, on June 17 saved the lives of five children of Abraham Chaim by pulling them from a burning van. Police have recommended the three for citations for bravery.

*Los Angeles: At one of the 29 workshops at the annual convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Legrand Clegg, president of the Coalition against Black Exploitation, on July 10 called for "a summit meeting with the Hollywood Jewish community" to "raise the issue of the century-old problem of Jewish racism in Hollywood."* Rabbi Gary Alexander of the L.A. chapter of the American Jewish Committee commented, "To suggest the entertainment industry is monolithic is wrong because it suggests a stranglehold that does not exist. . . ." The Beverly Hills-Hollywood chapter of the NAACP, in its survey of opportunities for Blacks in TV and film, did not single out Jews for criticism but stated: "African Americans and other minorities are continually ignored and overlooked when it comes to being hired as creative executives. . . it is extremely difficult to get African American stories made." . . . June 27 the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported that L.A. leaders of the American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Congress and the Federation's Jewish Community Relations Committee were ready to meet with "responsible" Black leaders (but not with Legrand Clegg) to assure that "L.A. does not become yet another center of dangerous tensions between Blacks and Jews." Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks, NAACP executive director, had said that "racism does exist in Hollywood, but we disavow the existence of Jewish racism." What will the L.A. Jewish groups do to help extend a Black presence in TV and film?

## ABROAD

*Italy: Meeting in Milan May 26-27, a conference organized by the Martin Buber Group in Rome, Jewish Studies Group in Turin, Nahum Goldmann Group and Left for Israel Group in Milan expressed its "deepest concern" that Israel's actions in the "occupied territories. . . point to a moral decay stemming from the continuing occupation and the rejection of negotiations towards a peaceful settlement based on the mutual recognition between Israelis and Palestinians"; and its "utmost concern for the proliferation in Eastern and Western Europe of acts and cultures of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism."* A Coordinating Committee will raise funds for the Israeli peace camp, join others in fighting racism and anti-Semitism and promote "Jewish studies in a pluralistic, non-sectarian context."

*The number of Jews killed by the Nazis at Auschwitz-Birkenau has been disputed. Polish governments have said there were 4,000,000 victims, of whom at least half were non-Jews (Poles). Now Poland concedes the total of victims was just over 1,000,000, the overwhelming majority of them Jews. Here in our Oct., 1989 issue (p. 46) we cited the *Encyclopedia Judaica* figure (III, p. 855) of 1,000,000.*

*Copenhagen: June 5-29 the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) for the first time concluded with an international legal agreement explicitly naming anti-Semitism as a danger and calling for action to fight it. With 35 nations participating, a Canadian draft co-sponsored by the USSR and other delegations was adopted "against incitement to violence. . . based on national, racial, ethnic or religious discrimination, hostility or hatred, including anti-Semitism. . ." At a hearing by the Danish Committee on Soviet Jewry on anti-Semitism in the*

Soviet Union there were presentations by Dr. Mikhail Chlenov of Moscow, head of the Va'ad that coordinates the work of Soviet Jewish cultural groups, and Grigory Krupnikov of Riga.

**England: Synagogue marriages in 1989** numbered 1,057; in 1988, 1,104; in 1987, 1,046. In the 1980s they averaged just over 1,100 a year, compared with over 1,800 for the late 1960s. Deaths rose from 4,428 in 1988 to 4,635 in 1989. Births in 1988 were 3,681; in 1989, 3,836. . . . In London May 31 (Shevuos), the Staines and District Synagogue (130 members) was daubed with "Jewish scum out," "Auschwitz," "Gas all Jews," and huge swastikas. . . . Late in June the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to act against the Gentile Self-Defense League, publishers of a blood-libel leaflet charging Jews kill Christians to use their blood in a Passover ritual.

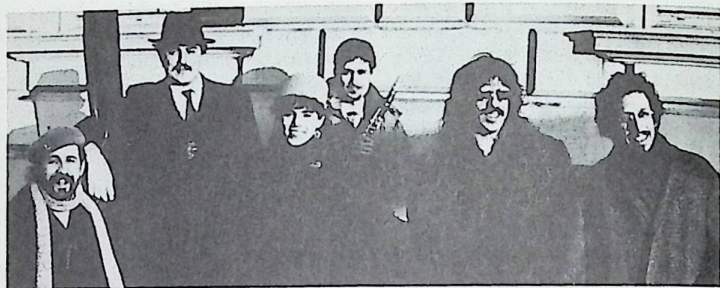
**USSR: Jewish emigration in June** was 11,197 (compared with 4,354 in June, 1989), of which 11,015 went to Israel and 182 to the USA. In July the total was 15,582 (compared with 4,537 in July, 1989) of whom 15,294 went to Israel and 270 to the USA. The total for 1989 through July was 26,688; for 1990 through July, 64,993. . . . The CP central organ, *Pravda*, July 22 published an article by Soviet historian S. Rogov denouncing anti-Semitism and demanding law enforcement against it. Rogov wrote: "This unprecedented anti-Semitism is of great concern because we face an attempt to disrupt the process of social consolidation. A law-based state must protect people of every nationality. . . . One cannot but see that the fear of pogroms is acquiring the scale of a panic. . . . The problem cannot and should not be solved through mass emigration. The Jewish question should be solved democratically in the Soviet Union. This

should not impede natural assimilation or threaten Jewish culture or prevent Jews from going to Israel or any other state. Jewish cultural institutions should meanwhile develop freely and democratically to satisfy the natural ethnic requirements of Soviet Jews. . . . There is a need to gather courage and figure out what the problem is and ways of resolving it. . . . Perhaps for the first time in our history, Judophobia has become popular in certain circles of the intelligentsia. And this unprecedented respectability of anti-Semitism is the most alarming thing of all. Certain literary publications are openly associated with anti-Semitic positions and in issue after issue print the most odious fabrications. . . . Pamyat and similar groups without any shyness are resurrecting anti-Semitic themes as a means of fighting *perestroika*. . . ." One of these publications, the monthly *Molodaya Gvardia* (the Young Guard), July 21 published an article, "Tsar Killers," arguing that Tsar Nicholas II had been killed in 1918 by Jews who left cabalist symbols on the wall! . . . The present editor of *Pravda*, Ivan T. Frolov, newly elected to the reconstructed Politburo of 24, was from 1987 to 1989 a personal assistant to Gorbachev, who designated him as editor in Oct., 1989. . . . July 24 it was reported that a trial had begun in Moscow of a man charged with taking part in an anti-Semitic raid in January on a group of writers in which anti-Semitic slurs were used. . . . The central government organ, *Izvestia*, reported May 26 that "for the first time since World War II there was an extensive official celebration in the Soviet Union of a major event in the life of Soviet Jews — the ceremonial carrying of a newly completed scroll of the sacred Torah. . . into the Moscow Choral Synagogue." Attending were 400 Skvirer Hasidim from USA and Europe — and school children from Kiev studying Hebrew. M.U.S.

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