

# JEWISH AFFAIRS

January/February 1989

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**To Make the World Anew**

*Herbert Aptheker*

**Their Commissars and Ours**

*Alfred J. Kutzik*

**WPC Delegation to Israel**

*Jon Weisberger*

**An Historic UN Resolution**

*J. Lipski*

**"Hate Groups in America":**

**An ADL Report**

**At the Blazing Bonfire (a poem)**

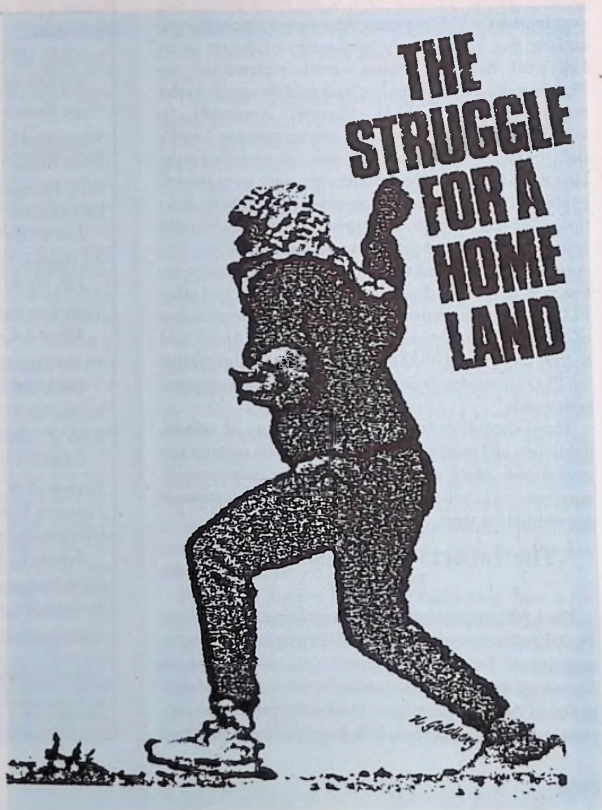
*David Seltzer*

**Document: GDR Parliament**

*Commemorates 1938 Pogrom*

**Book Reviews:**

*Gerald Horne, Ronald C. Kent*



## Editorials

### End Occupation; Begin Negotiation

The recently increased violence of Israeli state terrorism against Palestinians in the occupied territories, resulting in more deaths and injuries than any time during the year-long *intefadah*, is being protested in Israel. In the U.S., Jews and non-Jews should join in protest against this disgraceful, immoral, illegal policy and call upon the government of Israel to observe the Geneva conventions governing military occupation as a first step towards ending it and settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through negotiations at an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

One of the major obstacles to such negotiations is the Israeli government's refusal to acknowledge the P.L.O. as the Palestinians' designated negotiators. Although the rest of the world believes otherwise, the Israeli government and its party line supporters in the U.S. and elsewhere are still denying that the PLO has recognized the existence of Israel, arguing that this has only been stated by Arafat as an individual. However, Reuters recently reported that the PLO Executive Committee has "endorsed the speech Arafat made before the U.N. General Assembly in Geneva...condemning terrorism and recognizing Israel's right to exist." This still cannot be believed, according to the Israeli and U.S. Jewish establishments, since an expressed goal of the PLO's Covenant adopted in 1972 is the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state. However, the Zionist-funded Jewish Telegraphic Agency has quoted one of the five American Jewish leaders of the International Center for Peace in the Middle East who met with Arafat and other PLO officials, Menachem Rosensaft, who is also president of the Labor Zionist Alliance, as follows: "Arafat said several times (at the PLO Council meeting in Algiers) that the PLO charter has been abrogated or nullified—he used both words."

These should be brought to the attention of editors, politicians and others who shape U.S. public opinion and government policy, whose hitherto practically unquestioning support of Israeli government actions is in large measure responsible for them.

### The Liberal-Progressive Jewish Majority

The 1,500 progressive Jews who participated in the Dec. 18-20 conference sponsored by *Tikkun* magazine are representative of the liberal-progressive majority of Jewish Americans whose anti-Reagan/Bush vote was second only to that of African Americans. The continuing liberal-progressive orientation of most U.S. Jews has been confirmed

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by recent polls conducted for the *L.A. Times* and the American Jewish Committee. Ironically, it is the A.J. Committee's *Commentary* magazine that has played a leading role in propagating the fiction that Jewish Americans have become or are becoming conservative and it was opposition to *Commentary's* "neo-conservatism" that led to the founding of *Tikkun* in 1986. Knowing that they constitute the majority should motivate liberal and progressive Jews to find the ways to get their views heard and acted on.

At the conference *Tikkun* distributed a brochure calling for support for its newly-launched Committee for Judaism and Social Justice "to represent that very large group of Jews who are not currently spoken for" by the Jewish establishment. It conspicuously omitted mention of other anti-establishment groups ranging from Friends of Yesh G'vul to the New Jewish Agenda, not to mention the forces for whom this magazine speaks. *Jewish Affairs* welcomes the development and urges support of all progressive groups — the more the better. But none among them should ignore or downplay the others. In particular at this time, there is room for and need of greater collaboration among all Jews who understand that the Israeli government's policy of confrontation, of suppression, of chauvinism is a policy that dooms Israel and contradicts the finest in the Jewish tradition.

## More U.S. Government Antisemitism

With Reagan still refusing to accept criticism of his honoring the SS at Bitburg and Bush still refusing to criticize the Nazi-connected officials forced to resign from his campaign organization (see the latest on this in our story on the Wiesenthal Center on p. 6 ), U.S. Secretary of Education Lauro F. Cavazos, appointed by Reagan and reappointed by Bush, has reaffirmed the Department of Education's recent decision denying grant money for an educational program about the Holocaust. This decision was upheld despite a letter from 66 congressmen noting that the course in question had been highly rated by the department's own reviewers and that the review process had been "subverted by opponents of Holocaust education." Dr. Shirley Curry, the Education Department official who recommended that the course not be funded was, after complaints in and out of Congress, removed from being in charge of reviewing grant projects but retained on the staff as special assistant to the Deputy Under Secretary of Education for management. Secretary Cavazos informed Cong. Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.) leader of the effort to reverse this decision, that he had reviewed the decision-making process and found "no evidence of anti-Semitic bias." To which Cong. Weiss responded, "He's being very generous in his description of that situation if he does not think it's anti-Semitic. The whole thing...cries out for correction." Cong.

Weiss is planning to introduce legislation "urging the Department to provide financing for the program". We agree with his assessment of the antisemitic nature of the U.S. government action and ask our readers to let him and their own congressperson know how they feel about this.

## Our Associate Editor Responds

Questions have been raised concerning my letter to the *N.Y. Times* on the Nazi pogrom of November 9-10, 1938 which appeared in our last issue and, with some editing, in that newspaper on November 25.

The letter presented a number of historical facts that corrected misstatements made in several *N.Y. Times* articles and an editorial. Among these were the facts that the pogrom caused "revulsion throughout the world and in Germany" and that the Nazi leadership reacted with "annoyance and vexation" to the bad light this put them in. However, the letter can be read as saying that the Nazi leadership shared the revulsion of other Germans to the pogrom. Of course, this was not so. That the letter could lead anyone to think that an editor of *Jewish Affairs* in any way meant to lessen condemnation of the Nazi leadership is a matter of deep regret.

The letter advocates not using the euphemism *Kristallnacht*, "Crystal Night", but calling the pogrom a pogrom, which it notes is the practice of East Germans. I have since been informed that the term *Kristallnacht* is used by some East Germans, so I should have specified that it is not used by the leaders of the German Democratic Republic and the leaders of its Jewish community who invariably refer to the event as a "pogrom" (see the official statements on the G.D.R.'s commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the pogrom in our September/October issue and this one on p. 20).

It has been asked, What's the difference whether the pogrom is called *Kristallnacht* if it is universally understood to refer to the Nazi violence against Jews on November 9-10, 1938? Evidently the G.D.R.'s leaders believe there is an important difference. I have no way of knowing their reasoning, but I suspect it is similar to mine, i.e., that calling this "orgy of vandalism, burning, beating and killing" a Night of Crystal—which sounds like a night to be celebrated rather than condemned—minimizes these crimes and the criminality of the perpetrators and is insensitive to the feelings of the victims.

Further, asking this question is like asking what is the difference whether the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty is called the Nazi-Soviet Alliance (as most recently in the *N.Y. Times* of December 25) if it is universally understood to be the same treaty. Clearly, a non-aggression treaty to defend the Soviet Union against attack from Nazi Germany is very different than an alliance which implies

Soviet collaboration with Nazi Germany. Though less apparent in the case of *Kristallnacht*, bourgeois terms for historical events tend to obscure and distort the true nature of such events so as to defend capitalism, including its fascist version, and attack socialism. As a Marxist historian, I necessarily share in the task of rectifying such falsification.

This generally answers another question: What is the political intent of the letter? Specifically, the letter's main point is that the two-day pogrom in November 1938 was not the beginning of the Holocaust, as the *N.Y. Times* and other bourgeois media assert, but that "the mass murder of Jews did not become Nazi policy until mid-1941, when the Soviet Union was invaded." Establishing the actual time that the Nazi genocide of Jews began has important political implications. Perhaps most important is that, since the mass murder of Jews first got started in the summer of 1941 and did not get into high gear until 1943-44, the failure of the British and U.S. governments to live up to their commitment for an early second front in Western Europe facilitated and even encouraged the Nazi genocide of millions of Jews—and millions of non-Jewish civilian "subhumans". Once the let-the-Nazis-bleed-the-Soviets-white strategy behind the militarily-unwarranted delay of the second front are understood, one is inevitably led to understand the treacherous, murderous role of the ruling classes of the imperialist Western Democracies even during their people's finest hour as part of the World War II anti-fascist coalition.

While the letter did not spell out these implications, which the *N.Y. Times* would certainly not have printed, it should be evident that historical accuracy concerning these issues has considerable political significance.

A.J.K.

## Letters and Articles from Readers

*Jewish Affairs* welcomes and will print letters from readers with reactions to our articles or editorials as well as comments on issues of concern to Jews. We cannot guarantee that every letter received is printed, but each will be carefully read and taken into account. Letters longer than 150 words may have to be shortened by the editors. *Jewish Affairs* also invites readers to submit 500- to 2,000-word articles or book reviews on political, social and cultural subjects of concern to U.S. Jews. Enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope along with the typescript will enable us to return articles and reviews we cannot print.

## To Make the World Anew: Gorbachev's UN Address

by Herbert Aptheker

The renovations in the Soviet Union, begun over thirty years ago but stagnating for some time, have been resuscitated on a higher level under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev.

The termination of inner rigidity and severity is related to a new emphasis upon peaceful co-existence, a concept itself raised to even higher imperatives than was true some decades ago.

All these developments are related to the very significant changes inside the USSR and in the globe as a whole. The forced-drive character reflecting an isolated USSR, besieged on all sides and clearly facing attack, has given way to an Earth much of which has rid itself of capitalism and of the grosser forms of colonialism.

At the same time, this Earth faces the real prospect, for the first time, of self-destruction because of threats from annihilating weapons and from exploitative and anti-human use of the global resources, resulting in contamination and erosion reaching near-fatal proportions.

Inherent within the sources of both these mortal challenges are liberating capacities; in the first case, especially with new developments, sources of limitless energy, and in the second case, the rational development of the scientific and technological revolution to enormously enhance the possibilities of human betterment rather than human extermination.

These unprecedented challenges and capacities necessitate renovation of societies within and relationships among national entities. Both require and depend upon what are projected as "the primacy of universal human values," to quote from Gorbachev's historic UN address of December 7, 1988.

That is to say, such human values as life over death, peace over war, sufficiency over privation, literacy over illiteracy, health over disease, equality over elitism, racism, and chauvinism, such values must become universal if the Earth is to survive.

There have been classes and there are classes whose policies foster slavery rather than freedom, and create impoverishment, illiteracy and inequality; these have been—and are—the values of adherents of such classes. But—and this is the point—such values of such classes, while always foul and threatening, now are especially awful insofar as persistence in them not only violates the rights and dignities of masses of people, but now such values and the systems producing them, are intolerable in a new way—they literally challenge the globe's existence and therefore menace all human beings, whatever their nationality, their gender, their beliefs and their classes.

It must be added that such classes, with such abominable values, still directly dominate declining but nevertheless appreciable areas of the world; and through less obvious means help maintain in much of what is called the Third World conditions reflecting those values. In projecting policies appropriate to an altered globe, the peoples inhabiting those portions of the globe must not be neglected, let alone forgotten.

The momentous shifts indicated in Gorbachev's UN speech, and actions within the USSR prior to and since its delivery, mean for the USSR, as Gorbachev said, removing "from the agenda the problem of so-called refuseniks." In fact, he added, "there is no room for the view that some live on Earth by virtue of divine will while others are here quite by chance. It is time," he continued, "to discard such thinking and shape our policies accordingly."

Gorbachev, in the December speech, made clear that disarmament—involving all weapons—was a priority. Following up on the treaty already signed reducing existing nuclear missiles, he announced that the USSR had decided, unilaterally, to significantly reduce its conventional armed forces in both European and Asian areas. Other actions—further cutting back on missile deployment, and reductions by the German Democratic Republic—have since followed.

These actions flow logically from the analysis that has been sketched. Such qualitative changes in policy and outlook require heightened mass enlightenment, organization and activity. That they are needed does not mean that hostility to them ceases. On the contrary, the creation of a world where "universal human values" can become a reality, means no illusions about the foes of such values, and no lessening of the militancy that is required for their realization.

The revolution led by Lenin's Party, by the vision of Marxism-Leninism, remade and refreshed the globe; in the Second World War it defeated imperialism-gone-mad—that is, fascism. That same Marxism-Leninism, matured after decades of experience, now again offers a guide to the rejuvenation as well as salvation of the world.

## African American History

A lasting contribution to the celebration of African American History Month is two new books by our editor, Herbert Aptheker. In February when it occurs there appears *The Literary Legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois* published by Kraus International Publishers. Simultaneously with the hard-cover edition, this book of over 350 pages will come out in paper-back for \$12.50. In March, G.K. Hall (Boston) will publish *Abolitionism: A Revolutionary Movement*. Again a paper-back edition will be available at \$10.50. A.J.K.

## N.A.A.C.P. Reaffirms African American-Jewish American Ties

On October 20 the ashes of writer Dorothy Parker, who died at age 73 in 1967, were buried in a garden dedicated to her behind the NAACP's national headquarters in Baltimore, MD. Ms. Parker, who was Jewish, left her entire estate to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and, in the event of his death, to the NAACP.

At the ceremony, NAACP executive director Dr. Benjamin Hooks noted that Ms. Parker deserved to be honored because she fought for civil rights at a time when it was "socially unacceptable" but that in addition to honoring her the Dorothy Parker Memorial Garden was a symbol of his organization's dedication to strengthening ties between African Americans and Jews. "We know the alliance has been subjected to strains," Dr. Hooks stated, "and we get on each others nerves at times, but there are more points on which we do agree than we disagree."

In August, when the garden was dedicated, Dr. Hooks expressed this more formally and forcefully:

It is important to understand that the ceremonies have a much deeper meaning than the honoring of a single individual. Ms. Parker was Jewish, and through the ceremonies, we will be making a reaffirmation and a restatement of the traditional bonds of friendship and cooperation that have existed between the Black and Jewish communities for such a long time. In celebrating Ms. Parker, we proudly celebrate our relationship with the Jewish community, reaffirming and renewing our commitment to work hand-in-hand to erase the stain of all forms of social, religious, sexual and ethnic injustice and intolerance from our society.

## "Hate Groups in America": An ADL Report

The 1988 ADL publication, *Hate Groups in America: A Record of Bigotry and Violence* is a well-researched, objective report on the history and recent activities of the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi and other U.S. antisemitic and racist organizations.

Despite its general finding that there are at least 67 such organizations advocating or engaging in acts of violence which have made the last six years "one of the more violent periods in the history of American hate groups," the report notes that "membership in these groups generally has declined sharply." This apparent contradiction conforms to the well-established Marxist principle that terrorism increases to the degree that fringe groups can not muster popular support. It is also supported by the assessment of the Communist Party USA that the majority of the U.S. population is non-racist.

Among the report's specific findings is that Ku Klux

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## Wiesenthal Center Whitewashes Bush, Reagan and Kohl

When no less than six of his "ethnic coalition" campaign officials resigned after the press exposed their antisemitic Nazi-fascist connections, George Bush dismissed this as "politically inspired garbage". Similarly, the resignation of the even higher campaign official, member of the Republican National Committee and chair of the Republican convention, Frederick V. Malek, after the press exposed his role in identifying Jews on the staff of the Bureau of Labor Statistics for victimization by the Nixon administration also brought no criticism from Bush, who defended Malek as an honorable man without a trace of antisemitism.

There was considerable criticism of Bush's failure to criticize these antisemites expressed by the Jewish press and most Jewish organizations but not by the Simon Wiesenthal Center. On the contrary, during the campaign it provided Bush with a standing-room-only audience at its Los Angeles headquarters where, instead of being confronted with his failure to condemn the antisemitic and Nazi-fascist views of his subordinates, Bush was given the opportunity of publicly presenting himself as opposed to antisemitism and Nazism. Among the words his speechwriter put in his mouth were the following:

We have no room in our communities for hidden Nazi fugitives or war criminals. Every last one of them must be found, brought to justice.... As President, I will raise my voice and the full force of federal law, when it is violated, against every hate group, desecrator and demagogue, brown shirt, white sheet or bowtie in Skokie, Brooklyn, Chicago—wherever it is—the villain is the same.... What debt do we the living owe those who perished in Auschwitz, Belsen, Buchenwald?... We must see the poison of antisemitism for what it is. We must teach ourselves and our children, again and again, what the most insane and virulent of human passions looks like, how it sounds and where it leads when left unacknowledged or unchecked.

Fine words from a man who refuses to acknowledge and check the antisemitism and outright Nazism of his own subordinates:—but words that the American Jewish community should make President Bush live up to.

At about the same time, the Wiesenthal Center, which is primarily dedicated to Holocaust research and education, whitewashed the principal perpetrators of the honoring of SS war criminals at Bitburg. On the occasion of Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal's 80th birthday, October 29, President Ronald Reagan and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl gave the main addresses at the Center's west and east coast celebrations. Reagan's speech in Los Angeles saluted Wiesenthal for his "commitment to do honor to those who burned in the flames of the Holocaust by bringing their murderers and the accomplices of their murderers to justice" and denounced "those monsters who made the Holocaust" without noting that it was the SS who manned the

killing units and guarded the concentration and death camps. Instead of confronting Reagan on his honoring these monsters at Bitburg, the Wiesenthal Center presented him its "humanitarian award". In New York, Kohl stressed that there is no "collective guilt" for the Third Reich's persecution and murder of Jews since this "would blur the distinction between the just and the unjust, and the individual criminal would... be given the right to seek refuge in the anonymity of a group". But he did not remind his audience—nor was he reminded by anyone—that the SS as a group and each of its members had been adjudged to be guilty of war crimes at Nuremberg, particularly the genocide of the Jews.

Not only did Wiesenthal Center leaders not challenge Bush, Reagan and Kohl to justify their actions in light of their words but it sent without comment the speeches discussed above in the Center's publication, *Response*, to its 368,720 subscribers.

How can one explain these actions of the Wiesenthal Center, which has done much good work in helping combat antisemitism and track down Nazi war criminals here and abroad? The answer appears to be that the Center—with a staff of over two dozen, an ever-expanding program and a new, grandiose office-museum complex under construction—can not afford to offend its conservative major financial supporters or its equally conservative friends in government. However, the Wiesenthal Center will be criticized by *Jewish Affairs* whenever it offends and endangers the security of the Jewish people by whitewashing antisemites no matter how prominent or powerful.

## New Yiddish Cultural Club in Kiev

The existence of a newly formed Yiddish cultural club in Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, was revealed in an article entitled, "A Club of International Friendship," by I. Rizhovsky. The article was published in *Birobidzhaner Shtern* (Oct. 16, 1988).

Excerpts of Rizhovsky's article follow:

In Kiev, in this city of many nationalities, a library was established a few years ago devoted to the friendship of the peoples of the USSR. This library is one of the centers of the patriotic and internationalist education of the working people in the capital city of the Ukraine. At this library there operates successfully a club of devotees (*liebhaber*) of the Yiddish culture. The first session of the Club of Devotees of the Yiddish Culture was dedicated to the life and activity of the well known Soviet Yiddish poet, Leib Kvitko.

A scholar of the Soviet children's literature, Miron Semyonovich Petrovsky, spoke of the work and personality of the splendid poet, L. Kvitko, who tragically perished on August 12, 1952 together with other writers of Soviet Yiddish literature...

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## WPC Delegation to Israel and the Occupied Territories

By Jon Weisberger

*This article was originally written for the Peace Courier, a monthly newspaper of the World Peace Council.*

From November 28 to December 8, 1988, Daniel Kurz of Switzerland's Christian Movement for Peace and myself visited Israel and the Occupied West Bank. Our purpose was to prepare an up-to-date report on the situation for the World Peace Council leadership, and to develop ideas for ways in which the WPC and the national committees might contribute to bringing about a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In order to do this, we tried to divide our time evenly between meetings with peace and justice activists in Israel and encounters with Palestinians struggling against the Occupation.

We arrived at a critical time. On the one hand, the 19th Palestine National Council (PNC) had recently met, and had issued the historic Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine, as well as a Political Resolution that marked a significant step forward in the peace process. On the other hand, intense negotiations were under way to form a new government in Israel after November elections, while at the same time U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz had just taken a step backward by denying a visa to Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) chair Yasir Arafat to attend the U.N. meeting on Palestine.

These developments, and the year-long *intifadah* (uprising) of the Palestinian people, formed the framework in which our discussions took place. Subsequent events, such as the formation of a broad coalition Israeli government opposed to peace, and the decision of the U.S. to begin a dialogue with the PLO, have confirmed the substance of our meetings, and I think that the conclusions we have reached will continue to be valid for some time.

In the Occupied West Bank, we were deeply struck both by the brutality of the Occupation and by the spirit of resistance and political maturity demonstrated by the Palestinians with whom we spoke. They were virtually unanimous in their belief that the *intifadah* has created a permanent shift in the situation, and that there can never be a return to the status quo ante. It is clear to us, despite the all-encompassing repression inflicted by the Israeli military, that the Palestinians in the West Bank will continue to resist the Occupation; that they continue to uphold the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; that they are continuing to use a variety of creative means to develop institutions of unity in resistance that will form the basis of the infrastructure of the coming Palestinian state; and that they see the PNC decisions as the direct result of the

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## An Historic UN Resolution

By J. Lipski

UN resolution No. 181 of November 29, 1947 calling for the establishment of two states, a Jewish and a Palestinian state, in the territory of Mandatory Palestine, was a historic turning point in the life of the Jewish people, in the life of the Jewish community in Palestine and in the life of the Middle East. True, there were some people in the Jewish Yishuv who were not content with the resolution and who believed that both sides of the Jordan river are "ours," but the Jewish community in this country [i.e., Palestine] accepted the resolution with enormous joy, because it was intended to put an end to the bloody conflicts between Jews and Arabs that were instigated by agents of English and French imperialism and by reactionary Arab and Jewish circles. Attempts are made, however, to blur and distort the historical facts that were the motive for adopting the UN resolution for the establishment of a Jewish and an Arab state in Mandatory Palestine. Only a few years had passed since the horrible Nazi regime, that caused the death of 6 million Jews. Only a few years had passed since that sinister era, when Hitler proclaimed the establishment of his thousand years long Reich at the beginning of which he planned to wipe out the Jewish people from the earth. The same anti-Hitlerite coalition, that had crushed the Nazi hordes, caused the adoption of the UN resolution on the basis of a Jewish state alongside an Arab state. Thanks to the defeat of the Nazi beast and Soviet-American cooperation, this historic resolution was approved. It is necessary to remember this fact constantly.

Unfortunately, the Arab reactionary rulers, encouraged by western imperialist circles and with the help of Jewish reactionaries, have implemented only part of this UN resolution. A Jewish state was established, but at the same time the second part of the resolution, regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state, was not carried out. The abandonment of another fundamental element, of observing the neutrality between the two world blocs also has had an adverse effect on Israeli life until today. Instead of keeping neutral in the disputes between the two blocs, Israel joined the American global strategy against the Soviet Union and the Israeli government carried out the first Suez-Sinai war in cooperation with the British and French imperialists. At this point, instead of seeking cooperation with the Arab peoples, Israel cooperated with imperialism against the Arab peoples.

This fact caused great damage in the course of the 41 years existence of the State of Israel. The myth was created and promoted, that the Arab peoples do not want peace with Israel and therefore a strong military power was developed

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## Their Commissars and Ours

by Alfred J. Kutzik

Last June a sensation of sorts was caused by the showing in the U.S. of the Soviet film, *Commissar*, which had not been released since it was produced in 1967. The appearance of this interesting but flawed film set off a chorus of unwarranted acclaim and an orgy of Soviet-bashing since it dealt sympathetically with Jews and its "banning" was attributable—and without exception attributed by the critics—to official "Soviet anti-semitism."

Leading the pack before *Commissar* even opened was the *New York Times* whose June 12 Sunday edition devoted a full page to it. The article by the non-film critic specialist on Russian literature and anti-Soviet slander, Olga Carlisle, set the line that practically all the critics followed.

Reporting that *Commissar* had been awarded four prizes at "the recent International Berlin Festival," Carlisle unqualifiedly praised it to the skies as not just a good but a great film. She argued for its greatness by association, comparing the film's non-Jewish director, Alexander Askoldov, no less than three times to the great Russian-Jewish writer, Isaac Babel, and twice to the great Russian-Jewish poet, Osip Mandelstam, concluding that this film "places its director among his generation's most powerful film makers—with Andrey Tarkovsky, Sergey Paradjanov and Tengiz Aboladze."

Having established *Commissar* as a great film, Carlisle contended it could only have been banned because of its sympathetic treatment of Jews.

The film deals honestly and compassionately with the fate of the Jews in the Soviet Union... Surely it was Mr. Askoldov's visionary re-creation of the Holocaust... it explains why his film was threatened with destruction at the hands of irate Soviet officials. Anti-Semitism, always strong in Russia, grew steadily during the Brezhnev years...

Carlisle's contention was transformed into fact by the caption to the extraordinarily large 10 1/2 by 6 1/2 inch photo that accompanied her article. This scene from the film's Holocaust sequence was captioned, "Rolan Bykov, arms upraised, in the scene from 'Commissar' that explains why Alexander Askoldov's film was threatened with destruction."

While all the critics agreed that anti-semitism had been the reason for its banning and most agreed it was a great film — for example, the *N.Y. Daily News* gave it four stars, the *L.A. Times* described it as "dazzling" and *Film Comment Magazine* called it "a masterpiece"—there were a few dissenting views as regards its supposed superlative quality. Among them were the *N.Y. Times* own critic, Walter Goodman, who characterized *Commissar* as "brave, humane and powerful" and "large-hearted," but found the central role of Klavdia, the commissar, "never becomes a

full-bodied character" and wrote of the film's Holocaust sequence: "We are supposed to be witnessing (it)... through Klavdia's mind, and it is a weakness of 'Commissar' that nothing about the title character has readied us for (this)."

The sharpest dissent was that of David Denby in *New York* magazine:

Given the movie's troubled history... I wish I could say it's a great work. But *Commissar*, is a mess—a collection of jagged, overwrought fragments, some eloquent, some bombastic. During the Civil War, in 1922, a ruthless female commissar, humiliated at being pregnant, moves in with a Jewish family in the Ukraine and has her baby. The Jews are the salt of the earth—humane, life-loving, poetic. Included in the family, she melts—a little. This simple story is overburdened with huge dream episodes in a hyped-up, clangorous expressionist style—visions of riderless horses, a vision of the Holocaust itself.

Denby mercifully overlooked the lengthiest and most hyped-up of the dream episodes in which soldiers strenuously push a ponderous artillery-piece through almost impassable sand to symbolize Klavdia's difficult birth labor—using an artistic sledgehammer to make a minor point.

I will spare the reader a full-scale critique which could start with the very first scene asking why a knife-grinder sets up his equipment in the deserted square of a deserted town and disappears until we see him among a crowd of Jews in the much later Holocaust scene. I also will not ask why, Yefim, the Jewish husband-father, does a curtsy Menashe Skulnik-type dance routine on his way to work, why Klavdia carries her baby to the ruined synagogue, etc. But I must ask why the Red Army commanding officer decides to quarter the pregnant commissar with a Jewish family when the film (with historical accuracy) informs us that the counterrevolutionary troops that are expected to—and soon do—take over the town make a practice killing Jews. In fact, Yefim asks the commander why and gets no answer. Of course, the answer is that without this senseless decision we would not have had the basis for this film.

While the plot is contrived and much of the film is indeed a mess of overwrought bombastic scenes, it does have some eloquent and touching ones which, with the masterful camera work by Valeri Ginzberg and the exceptional musical score by Alfred Schnittke, move the viewer. What accounts for *Commissar* being such a mixed bag of good and bad film-making?

According to Carlisle, who heard him say so, "Askoldov refused to make changes or cut his film in any way." Carlisle and the *N.Y. Times* photo-caption editor relate these changes and cuts to scenes favorable to Jews and dealing with the Holocaust. But anyone who has suffered through *Commissar*'s interminable dream sequences and certain of its incomprehensible waking sequences knows where changes or cuts must have been advised by any experienced film producer to an inexperienced director. And, something that



explains much that is otherwise inexplicable about this film, Askoldov was completely inexperienced when he made it. In his words, after—or at—“graduate school in film... ‘Commissar’ was my first project.” So *Commissar* was either Askoldov’s film school “thesis project” or his first professional film. The refusal of this tyro to make any changes or cuts in the grotesquely hypertrophied artsy sequences and other cinematically questionable scenes is evidently not as Carlisle puts it, “refusal to compromise” but, as the “the studios” that she reports “fired him” put it, “professional incompetence.”

Askoldov has encouraged the view that the “banning” of *Commissar* was due to antisemitism and not incompetence. But how does he explain that his film is only one of 140 long-shelved films recently released for the first time by the Union of Soviet Film Makers and that none of the others deal with Jews? Still pushing the anti-semitism ploy, Askoldov and Carlisle portentously point out that *Commissar* was the last of these 140 films to be released by the union’s “conflict commission.” When asked about this the then-head of the union, Elem Klimov, let it be known that the commission considered the quality of this film to be substandard: “We do...have problems with one particular film. I consider it of little artistic value. There are bad or mediocre pictures now and again you have problems with.” In a recent interview, Askoldov singled out Klimov for opposing the release of *Commissar* and its being shown at the 1987 Moscow Film Festival. He recounted how Klimov had to be pressured by Yevtushenko and others to change his mind, with the unmistakable implication that not just bureaucracy but antisemitism was involved. The only problem with this view of the situation is that Klimov, who is one of the leading proponents of antibureaucratic *glasnost* in films, is Jewish and had several of his own films banned. These included his highly-acclaimed work on Nazi terror in Byelorussia, *Go and See*, which, as American viewers saw last year, contains a scene of a bearded Jew in a prayer-shawl being manhandled by German soldiers as he is forced to join a group of his townspeople with whom his is soon to be killed. Although he is Jewish, the outspoken Klimov has not charged that the shelving of his “thesis project” for six months, the permanent shelving of his first and third professional films and the suppression for seven years of *Go and See*, with its striking depiction of a Jewish victim of Nazi genocide, had anything to do with antisemitism. Like the other leading film makers on their union’s review commission and the directors of the other 139 formerly unreleased films, Klimov attributed their shelving to ideological rigidity or bureaucratic timidity on the part of the responsible officials. In addition, 40 or so other never-released films that the commission decided not to release were judged by them to lack sufficient cinematic merit. The commission

placed *Commissar* in this category until forced to release it by public pressure generated by Askoldov’s self-serving charges that it had been originally and was still being banned because of antisemitism.

As regards the alleged antisemitism of the officials recently opposed to its release, we have already noted that the ringleader of these “antisemites,” Elem Klimov, is Jewish and one of the most vocal proponents of *glasnost* in film and Soviet life. As regards the alleged antisemitism of the officials originally opposed to its release, Askoldov and others who have accepted this allegation have obviously not taken into account the fact that the officials who “banned” *Commissar* were or included the very same officials who approved its production and provided the substantial financial resources, personnel, equipment, etc. this required. And that this could have taken place only after these officials had approved a script or treatment based on the 1934 story by the Russian Jewish writer, Vasily Grossman, about a pregnant Russian female commissar quartered with a Ukrainian Jewish family during the civil war in 1922.

Given the endemic anti-Sovietism of U.S. intellectual life, including film criticism, the unchallenged charge that *Commissar* had been banned by Soviet officials for twenty years because of its favorable treatment of Jews and acknowledgement of the Holocaust unleashed a torrent of accusation and vilification of the Soviet Union on this score. It would take another lengthy article to deal with even a sampling of these, so our response will be limited to the three writers discussed above.

Our earlier quotation from Carlisle’s article that attributes the banning of *Commissar* to its positive depiction of Jews and acknowledgement of the Holocaust begins and ends with a false statement: “The film deals...with the fate of the Jews in the Soviet Union” and “Anti-Semitism, always strong in Russia, grew steadily during the Brezhnev years.” Actually, except for the brief Holocaust sequence flash-forward, the film deals with Ukrainian Jews in the exceptional circumstances of civil war in 1922. The assertion that antisemitism has always been strong in Russia, including Soviet Russia and particularly under Brezhnev, is unfounded. While true of czarist Russia, this generalization denies the decade of historically unprecedented governmental action against antisemitism following the Bolshevik Revolution—for several years under the country’s Jewish president, Jacob Sverdlov. It denies the absence of governmental antisemitism and the low level of non-governmental antisemitism until the late 1940’s. And it disregards the post-Stalin rectification of the anti-Jewish governmental measures of 1948-1953 that a non-Communist scholar recently characterized as “the philo-semitism of the 60’s” to which he likens the current situation in the 80’s (*New Politics*, Winter 1988, p. 90)

In addition to being unsupported by the facts, Carlisle's attack on the Soviet Union is impeached by her "liberal" revision of the history of the Holocaust. For she does not consider it to have been a crime of fascism, in the first place of Nazism, but of humanity—and faults the Soviets for not accepting this view which somehow she sees "suggested" by *Commissar*

Surely it was Mr. Askoldov's visionary re-creation of the Holocaust...along with his suggestion of universal shared guilt for the Holocaust, that explains why his film was threatened with destruction at the hands of irate Soviet officials...Mr. Askoldov's theme of shared guilt for what happened to the Jews in World War II became anathema after the fall of Krushchev.

Of course, such exonerations of fascism has always and will always be anathema in the Soviet Union. Need anything more be said concerning the validity of the interpretations and accusations of this expert on "Soviet anti-semitism" in the arts?

Walter Goodman also found things in *Commissar* that support his understanding of what he believes to be the plight of the oppressed Jews of the Soviet Union

"*Commissar*" is a requiem for Soviet Jewry, not a popular subject among officially approved Soviet movie makers, writers or scholars...When he [the character, Yefim] refers to Klavdia as "the Russian," this Jew defines his own position as an outsider in the country he happens to inhabit. He draws no distinctions between the Whites, though he knows they are anti-Semitic, and the Reds. "One group of rulers leaves," he says. "Another arrives." He cries, in words that were unutterable in the 1960's and still carry unhappy resonance: "Maybe someday Jews will live where they want." Yiddish is spoken here. Ideologically unacceptable.

To begin with, approximately two million Soviet Jews who now live and intend to go on living in the world's third largest Jewish community would be surprised to hear this requiem for Soviet Jewry. Their demise, of which Goodman appears to be the sole mourner, is understandably not a popular subject among "officially approved Soviet movie makers, writers and scholars." Perhaps Goodman means that Soviet Jewry is not a popular subject among them? This is also not true.

As already noted, there was a brief period four decades ago, in the last years of Stalin's rule and the first years of the State of Israel, when governmental suspicion of Jews as a potentially disloyal group, the closing down of Jewish presses and institutions in order to prevent the propagation of bourgeois Zionist-nationalism and the imprisonment and even execution of leading Jewish cultural, mainly literary figures, on trumped up charges of anti-Soviet activities did lead to a turning away from Jewish subjects by most Soviet writers and film makers. However, the exonerations of the mainly Jewish defendants in the "doctors plot" after Stalin's death in 1953 and the rehabilitation of the executed cultural figures not long thereafter improved the situation with

remarkable rapidity. Although the damage to Jewish cultural and educational institutions has even now not been fully repaired, by 1961 there was so much writing on and by Jews in Yiddish that a bi-monthly literary journal, *Sovetish Heimland*, was founded to publish the many short stories, novels, poems and critical works being produced by Yiddish writers throughout the Soviet Union. This journal was soon receiving so many contributions of high quality that since 1965 it has been issued monthly and has independently published novels and collections of short stories and poetry.

Although Yiddish has never, even in the last years of Stalin, been "ideologically acceptable" in the Soviet Union, like Jews everywhere each year a decreasing percentage of Soviet Jews use Yiddish. So it is of particular importance to this discussion that a large number of Yiddish books have been translated into Russian and other Soviet languages to reach the bigger non-Yiddish-reading Jewish public and the far bigger non-Jewish public. In the seven years 1956-1963 alone no less than 187 books by 80 Yiddish writers were published in 15 Soviet languages and 4 foreign languages in a total of 14 million copies. It is precisely at this time, in the middle of "the philo-semitism of the 60's," that Goodman, Askoldov, Carlisle, *et al.* want us to believe that *Commissar* was banned because it deals with Jews and one of its characters speaks Yiddish.

A more recent development even more sharply calls into question that this essentially Russian-language film was banned because it dared to deal with Jews. This is the increase in books on Jewish themes or with Jewish characters by Russian Jewish and non-Jewish writers. Outstanding among these have been Anatoli Ribakov's widely-read novels, *Heavy Sand* (1978) and *Children of the Arbat* (1987), dealing, respectively with Jewish suffering and resistance under Nazi occupation and Stalinist repression. Among the most recent Russian works dealing with Jews are Vladimir Dudentsev's novel, *White Coats*, in which the moral heroes are Jewish, Danil Granin's novel, *Buffalo-Head*, which focuses on and attacks anti-semitism, and Anatoli Zhigulin's poem, "Memories of Friends," which pays tribute to the framed-up "doctor-prisoner" Moses Borisovich Goldberg.

While less important, it must be noted that Goodman's reading Jewish marginality into the ethnic designation of Klavdia as "the Russian" by the Ukrainian Jew, Yefim, is unwarranted. This is nothing more than the normal non-invidious identification by nationality that prevails among the multi-national peoples of the Soviet Union and other peoples with different ethnic communities, including our own. But Goodman is on to something when he notes that Yefim does not distinguish between the Whites, who were murdering Jews, and the Reds, who were protecting them.

For in the Ukraine in 1922 there could have been very few mentally unimpaired Jews above the age of five who did not know friend from foe. Goodman seems to suggest that this was justifiable enmity towards the Reds on the part of Jews. The same is suggested by the one line of Yefim's he singles out: "Maybe some day Jews will live where they want." Goodman mistakenly relates this to the present-day desire of a minority of Soviet Jews to live outside the Soviet Union. In 1922 it could only have been a desire to live outside the czarist pale of settlement. But even this does not make sense. For even since the revolution in 1917 to the present, Jews have been free to live anywhere they wished in the Soviet Union. In fact, most of them have chose to leave rural towns like Yefim's to live in major cities like Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Odessa. Although Askoldov finds it convenient to be silent in this regard, such outrageous distortions made out of ignorance and/or "dissidence" may have been among the changes he refused to compromise on. So much for Walter Goodman's contribution to our understanding of the plight of Soviet Jews as reflected in *Commissar*.

Finally—and reluctantly—we come to David Denby, who had the acuity to see and the courage to say that *Commissar* had no clothes. For what we have quoted from him above concludes:

Presumably it was the sympathetic treatment of the Jews that got the film banned during the Brezhnev years. Yet *Commissar* doesn't say anything openly about Soviet complicity in the destruction of the Jews. In the Gorbachev era, Askoldov, free again to work, may be able to make his meaning plainer.

While we can forgive Denby's accepting Askoldov's self-serving testimony and Carlisle's "expert" opinion that *Commissar* was banned because of official "Soviet antisemitism," he makes a particularly stomach-turning contribution to this baseless charge by inventing "Soviet complicity in the destruction of the Jews." One can hardly respond to this monstrous falsehood, which is on a par with the belief of many U.S. high school students, according to a reliable poll, that in World War II the Soviet Union fought on the side of Nazi Germany. The facts are that, in addition to the few thousand concentration and death camp survivors the Red Army liberated, the Soviet Union saved at least 1,800,000 Polish and Soviet Jews—including the survivors of the present writer's family in Poland and Ukraine—by evacuating them from territory about to be occupied by the *Wehrmacht*. For behind the regular army *Wehrmacht* came the special SS *Einsatzgruppen*, the killing units that began the mass murder of Jews.

The standing order of the military high command that required and enabled these SS units to kill all Jewish men, women and children they could lay their hands on has a connection to the subject of this article. It was called the

*Kommissarbefehl*, the "Commissar Order." For the very same order that was the basis for the murder of all Jews also called for the immediate execution upon capture of all "political commissars," the Communist officers responsible for maintaining the fighting spirit of the Red Army's rank-and-file not just through education but example. In World War II, these dedicated Communists were the backbone of the Soviet military victory over Nazism, thereby playing a significant role in saving most of humanity from slavery and "sub-humans," particularly Jews, from death. As *Commissar* almost incidentally suggests, already after World War I in helping lead the Red Army against the virulently antisemitic counterrevolutionaries, political commissars played a similar role in liberating all the oppressed peoples of the czarist empire and saving the most oppressed, the Jews, from persecution and death. Klavdia is such a political commissar, although few non-Soviet viewers and reviewers of *Commissar* understand this. What a bitter irony that a film which should have given the world, particularly Jews, a chance to learn about and, yes, pay homage to the Soviet political commissar, one of the most heroic human types of our time, has been perverted by its critics into an attack on the country and the ideals they fought and died for.

From the fact that 140 of some 200 Soviet films shelved for decades have recently been released we can conclude that many of the commissars (i.e., committee heads or officials) in control of films until recently deserve the criticism they are currently receiving in the Soviet Union for their rigidity and timidity. But does not this article show that our own film commissars, who exercise their power of panning and puffing through the media, deserve criticism for being no less rigid and timid in following the long-standing U.S. establishment party line of criticizing Soviet films irrespective of merit so as to criticize the Soviet Union? Hopefully, now that Reagan and Bush and the forces behind them are beginning to change the overall anti-Soviet party line, our film commissars will adopt some of the *glasnost* that now characterizes theirs. □

### Kiev Yiddish Cultural Club (continued from p.6)

The audience at this session heard a musical composition based on Kvitko's works. This was performed by an amateur Yiddish folklore ensemble "*Nigunim*" (Melodies)...On that evening the ensemble was directed by the prominent composer, Yakov Tzegler, who noted that the establishment of the Club of Devotees of the Yiddish Culture is a significant event in the cultural life of the city...This collective ("*Nigunim*") includes up to 20 persons, but all are dedicated to mastering the musical art and to learning Yiddish.

The second session of the club had as its theme, the great fatherland war. The title of the evening was, Friendship Strengthened in Blood. The lecturer was the teacher, Ilya Mikhailovich Levitas...

Translation and explanatory note by S. Resnick

## U.N. Resolution (continued from p.7)

as the only means to safeguard Israel's security. The addition of territories in the Six Day War helped to strengthen the feeling that the conquered territories help to enhance Israel's security. On the one hand, the proponents of this approach argued that the Palestinians have the sole aim of destroying the State of Israel; on the other hand, that the inhabitants of occupied territories would, in due course, get reconciled with the situation of living under an Israeli regime. The Palestinian uprising, that has already lasted a year, has shattered the illusion that it is possible to keep under occupation one and a half million Palestinians. It is already clear that this is impossible, not to speak of the cruel means of oppression that are used by the Likud-Labor Alignment government.

On the agenda in Israel, in the Middle East and in the world, is the acute problem of an urgent changeover that must implement completely the historic resolution adopted November 29, 1947 that calls for establishment of a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel. The Palestinian National Council in Algiers has agreed to this principle of Resolution 181 on the establishment of two states, which means a withdrawal from its previous position regarding the non-recognition and destruction of Israel. It implies the recognition of the State of Israel, expressing at the same time preparedness to participate in an international conference to solve all other controversial problems.

This decision by the Palestinian National Council and its acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338 make it possible to take a new road to peace. This decision was, unfortunately, rejected by the Likud-Labor Alignment rulers. The peace resolution has been welcomed by the Palestinian inhabitants of the occupied territories and by the Israeli Arab population and has found a wide echo in broad Israeli circles and in the world. Dozens of states in the east and in the west have recognized the Palestinian state and welcome the decision by the Palestinian National Council. The resolution of November 29, 1947, has laid the foundation for establishing peace. Unfortunately, the Arab reactionary rulers made a fatal mistake when they rejected the resolution. Will the present Israeli rulers make a similar mistake and reject the possibility of safeguarding the State of Israel within the borders of June 1967, alongside a Palestinian state that has to be established in the occupied territories from which Israel will withdraw?

One of the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council in Algiers says that "the resolution of the UN session (181 in 1947) has recommended the partition of Palestine between two states, one Arab and one Jewish state." For the first time, this fact is recognized at the same time as the

recognition of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 that speak about an Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967.

The "Peace Now" movement, that has so far not expressly supported the necessity to negotiate with the PLO, and in which broad circles of the Israel Labor Party are represented, has welcomed the resolution of the Palestinian National Council as a positive step, and calls on the Israeli government to negotiate with the PLO. Reputable Israeli writers have declared their support of this approach, and so does not only the Communist Party and Haddash (the Jewish-Arab Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) but also well-known activists in the Labor Party, Mapam, Ratz, Shas and the Progressive List. High-ranking army officers have announced their support and said that the Algiers resolution is a positive step that opens broad possibilities to reach an Israeli-Arab peace.

Unfortunately, the present extremist right-wing, Khomeinist, transfer-minded government is presently busy with such questions as "Who is a Jew?" and rejects the extended hand for peace of the Palestinians. But it must be hoped, that a broad opposition will arise in Israel against this shortsighted, dangerous government policy and that the reality in the region, in the world and the pressure by reasonable Jewish circles in the diaspora will have their influence and that also in Israel reason will prevail and bring a change in policy that could lead to the yearned for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

The principle of the UN resolution of November 29, 1947, a result of Soviet-American cooperation, is still in force. The implementation of this historic resolution can make possible the peaceful existence of Israel. □

*J. Lipski is our Israeli correspondent.*

**JENNIE ROSEN**  
1890-1989  
In memory of  
her lifelong devotion  
to the cause  
of working people's rights.

In memory of  
**BOB LARGE**  
August 13, 1983  
Dora Z. Large

## ADL Report (continued from p.5)

Klan membership has declined by about 50 percent since 1982 and its leadership is "weakened and splintered". This has enabled "a relatively small number of violent racists" to come to the fore inciting action not only against African Americans but Jews, Hispanics, Asians and other minorities. The report notes that Justice Department records show that of the 150 persons prosecuted for "racially motivated violence" from 1979 to 1985 at least 84 have been members of the Klan.

While KKK membership numbers in the thousands, there are only several hundred members of neo-Nazi organizations in the U.S. They are mainly engaged in distributing antisemitic propaganda in the form of magazine, books, posters and even computer software. One of the most active such groups is the National Alliance located at Mill Point, West Virginia, which distributes propaganda about a worldwide Jewish conspiracy and denying there was a Holocaust. A recent development is "Skinhead" gangs who wear Nazi insignia and attack or vandalize the property of Jews, African Americans and other minorities. While they have very few members such gangs now operate in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Oklahoma City and Portland (Oregon). Despite the media attention the Skinheads have received and the existence of seventeen more traditional neo-Nazi organizations in cities ranging from Chicago to Metairie, Louisiana, the report concludes "The neo-Nazi movement is now at its 'lowest ebb' since George Lincoln Rockwell founded the American Nazi Party in the late 1950s."

Probably the most violent of U.S. hate groups are those that are part of the "Identity Church" movement. These pseudo-Christian groups generally preach and teach that Jews control the U.S. government, which they call the Zionist Occupation Government (Z.O.G.). They also believe that the biblical "chosen people" are not the Jews but Anglo-Saxons. The most active and violent of the 18 "churches" and organizations in this movement is The Order. Founded in 1983 it has engaged in numerous violent crimes, mainly in the West, as part of its "revolution" to overthrow the Z.O.G. including bank and armored car robberies, counterfeiting, arson, assassination and a synagogue-burning. Two dozen arrests in 13 states have resulted in lengthy prison sentences for its most violent members but The Order and similar groups continue to recruit small numbers of violence-prone antisemites.

All progressives can support the conclusions from the report of A.D.L.'s national director, Abraham H. Foxman: "If America is to continue to meet the challenge of hate and violence by organized bigots, government and law enforcement officials, community and religious leaders and educators must taken even more vigorous measures to combat them."

## At the Blazing Bonfire

by David Seltzer  
(trans. from the Yiddish by Aaron Kramer)

A twilight bonfire  
has lit up the Square.  
From circles of tinder  
a song finds the air:

"Friend! to the fire,  
and get your hands warm!  
Backs walled together,  
we're braced for a storm.

"Come to the great tongue  
that licks at the dark:  
we're warmer together  
than freezing apart.

"Feed it your anger;  
don't let it go tame;  
spark touched by spark  
shoots up into flame.

"Cold, are you? needy?  
come, brothers, come near!  
It's flame, it's storm  
we are gathering here."

*David Seltzer, editor of our Yiddish section,  
is the author of four books of poetry.*

Taking into account the small memberships of U.S. hate groups at this time, Foxman points out that, "Even a relative handful of racists who still engage in vandalism or terrorist acts can have a ripple effect and poison the atmosphere of a democratic society."

Jewish Affairs believes that, among the measures needed to combat the hate and violence of organized bigots, new legislation is needed. In New York State the Paterson Bill (S. 5831) to criminalize racist, antisemitic and other bias-related acts, threats or discrimination can serve as a model for such legislation elsewhere. It simply but effectively provides "that the Division of Human Rights shall have the power to investigate incidents apparently motivated by racial or other bias and, where appropriate, to recommend prosecution to the Attorney General or to the appropriate district attorney."

A.J.K.

## Delegation to Israel (continued from p.7)

*intifadah*, and the confirmation of the pace-setting character of the resistance in the Territories.

Much of our discussion focussed around the PNC's ratification, by democratic means, of a "two-state solution" as the framework for ending the Occupation and the creation of the Palestinian state, expressed in the Declaration of Independence's reference to the U.N.'s 1947 Partition Resolution (181) as the basis for the creation of the state. People with whom we spoke were frank about the pain this has caused them; for many it means forgoing Palestinian sovereignty over cities and villages in Israel that were family homes for generations. Yet we also had a sense that this decision was fundamentally connected with the political leadership role exercised by the Palestinians in the Territories through the *intifadah*, and that it was made from a position of strength and confidence, rather than a concession motivated by weakness. The same was true of the PNC's acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, within the context of other U.N. resolutions affirming the national rights of the Palestinian people.

In view of the likelihood (since confirmed) of a rejection of these new positions by the Israeli government, we asked in each meeting whether it was possible that the PNC decisions might be rescinded. The answer was invariably that the decisions were the result of a long, difficult, but thoroughly democratic process, and the people under Occupation were committed to this framework for struggle, within the context of ongoing, steadfast resistance to the Occupation.

We were highly impressed by the degree of optimism and self-confidence expressed by the Palestinians, especially in the face of continued murder, deportations, house demolitions and repression on every level waged by the Israeli military. This attitude, flexible yet principled, and determined to overcome every obstacle to independence, was perhaps best expressed by a headline we were shown at a newspaper office, just one in a file stuffed with material censored by the military: "The *intifadah*," it said, "is the Palestinian *perestroika*."

On the other side, in Israel, we met with representatives from a wide variety of peace organizations, each with their own program and point of view on how to create peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Estimates of the strength of the Israeli peace movement tend to be reflections of this variety; the broader the definition of what constitutes a legitimate solution, the stronger the peace movement appears to be. Cooperation between different forces proceeds only intermittently, and usually in informal ways, such as participation by more militant organizations in events sponsored by groups with less advanced programs. Nevertheless, certain points of analysis were shared by virtually everyone with whom we met.

We found a widespread pessimism about the results of the elections in terms of what they were likely to mean for a meaningful peace process. There was unanimity around the belief that the cause of peace could be greatly advanced through a decision by the Labor Party to go into opposition against the ultra-Right Likud Party, led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, combined with a well-justified (and subsequently realized) fear that Labor would prefer to join a coalition with Likud rather than lose control over government jobs and budgets. Some representatives believed that as many as half of the Labor Members of Parliament would support some kind of negotiated settlement with the Palestinians under the formula of "land for peace," but it seems likely that this proposition will remain untested.

At the same time, there have been important political advances for the peace forces. One of the most significant was the decision, taken just before we arrived, by the organization Peace Now to call for negotiations with the PLO. While some sectors of the peace movement have been calling for this for a long time, this marked a major step forward, for Peace Now has had much support from sectors of the Labor Party, including some military people who can effectively counter demagogic claims of "security needs" to justify the Occupation. More generally, there was a widespread appreciation of the PNC's decisions among the peace forces, and a belief that patient work to publicize them will have an important, long-term impact on Israeli public opinion.

For me, the visit with the Israeli peace forces was a revelation, for I felt in many ways that I was seeing a scene with many similarities to the U.S. movement against the Vietnam War in its early days. There is no doubt that the peace forces are far from commanding a majority; the parties which are generally agreed on as peace-oriented gained only about 16 seats in the new Parliament. At the same time, public opinion polls confirm that there is widespread unhappiness with the Occupation, and that large numbers of Israelis are prepared to negotiate with the PLO under certain circumstances. It is also true that a significant number, and perhaps a majority, of the leading artists and intellectuals have cast their lot with the peace forces. Finally, the Israelis with whom we spoke were in complete agreement with their Palestinian counterparts that the *intifadah* has created an irreversibly new situation, and has shattered the complacency about the Occupation felt by many Israelis as little as a year ago.

An ominous sign has been the growing harassment by the government of Israeli peace activists. Four of them, who met in 1987 with representatives of the PLO, have been prosecuted under a draconian law ("Against Terrorism") that makes criminal any such contacts. At the time of our

visit, their case was going through a lengthy appeal process, with the verdict of the court being reaffirmed at each level. Even more serious has been the detention and mistreatment of several journalists of the publication *Derekh HaNitzotz/Tariq Al-Sharara*, who are charged with aiding terrorist activity and who have been tortured by the security services. Their case is simply the most outrageous of a number of signs that Israeli democracy is of secondary concern to government leaders compared to continuing the Occupation. There is a disturbing rise of support within certain circles for the development of a "national security" kind of state, familiar in its echoes from other regions of the world.

An important component of the peace camp in Israel is its Palestinian national minority. Some 17 per cent of the population, the Israel Palestinians have been victims of two-fold discrimination; first, as Palestinians, they are viewed by the government as potential "security threats," and secondly, they suffer from a form of racial discrimination that can be distinguished from the "security" issue (in this regard, they are not alone, for there is also a problem of discrimination against Jews from Arab countries). Yet the Israeli Palestinians believe that they have made an important contribution to the peace process through their interchanges with the Palestinians in the Territories, and through their democratic struggle within Israel itself. Thus, they wage a struggle on two fronts—both for democratic rights as citizens of Israel, and for an end to the Occupation, in solidarity with their brothers and sisters (often literally) within the Territories.

Activists in both Israel and the Territories made clear to us the important role played by public opinion internationally in advancing the peace process. There was widespread belief that a peaceful resolution which will take into account the rights of both peoples can only be achieved through an international conference, and that joint action by the United States and the Soviet Union would be a critical factor in bringing about substantive negotiations within such a framework. The key role of the United States, which provides essential economic and military aid to Israel, was repeatedly stressed. What is needed is effective pressure on Israel to bring it to the negotiating table; in view of the Labor-Likud agreement to refuse recognition to the PLO and the Palestinian people, the United States must be a focal point of the international supporters of peace in the Middle East, for it can have dramatic power to bring about a change in Israeli policy. The decision of the U.S. to undertake a dialogue with the PLO is an important example of what such international pressure can achieve. □

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**Simha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities***  
New York: Pantheon, 1987, 277 pp., \$18.95

**By Gerald Horne**

The decision by Washington to enter into talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization has sparked disorientation in Zionist circles here and Israel. All this is part of an agonizing reappraisal of Zionist policies past and present. This book by the late Simha Flapan, long-time editor of *New Outlook* and leader of Israel's MAPAM party has caused quite a stir. This is partially because of its antecedents: the research was funded in part by the Ford Foundation and also backed by Harvard University. The fundamentally progressive and enlightening orientation of this work gives one optimism about the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Flapan's purpose is to expose certain "myths" about the founding of the Jewish state. These include notions that will come as no surprise to readers of this journal but have caused a rolling political temblor elsewhere. He suggests that Israeli leaders never intended to accept partition and a Palestinian state; that Palestinian Arabs did not totally reject partition; that Palestinian flight was not initiated by Arab leadership but forced by Israeli leaders; that the May 15, 1948 war was not a unified Arab effort to expel the Jewish inhabitants of Israel; that the newborn state of Israel was not inferior militarily to a supposed Arab Goliath; that it is mythological to suggest that Israel has extended the hand of peace to jingoistic Arabs and Palestinians who have rejected it.

As is apparent, much of this research concerns the origins of the state of Israel; what is new is that it is based on newly declassified documents, which lends a further air of authenticity. Moreover, Flapan is not hostile to the role of Communists, noting for example: "...the only consistent political struggle against the policy of expulsion came from the Communist Party..." (p. 109). But this is accompanied by something of an apology for MAPAM, which is not surprising given his long leadership of this party. He suggests that MAPAM "was among the most sensitive to the problems of Jewish-Arab relations" (p. 110). There are those who might suggest that this is inconsistent with his subsequent statement that "...MAPAM as a whole officially favored the settlement of Jews in Arab villages on the Lebanese border for military purposes, along with a number of other measures not in accord with the UN resolution, such as the annexation of the Gaza Strip and Rafiah, with their populations, to Israel, and the inclusion of Jerusalem in the state with only the holy places under international supervision" (p. 115). This virtually uniform Zionist position has been a major stumbling block to peace in the region.

Still, there is little doubt that Flapan is casting down the gauntlet before other Zionists. Not surprisingly, he focuses

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on Abdallah, emir of Transjordan, to illuminate his thesis. His view here is not inconsistent with recent research, e.g. Avi Shlaim's *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement and the Partition of Palestine*. Abdallah's role reveals the myth of a united Arab Goliath. "Ben-Gurion hoped that an alliance with Abdallah would facilitate the transfer of the Palestinian Arab population to Transjordan ... in return for Jewish investments and technological assistance" (p. 134). He avers further, "In essence, a tacit agreement stipulated that Abdallah would be allowed to control the part of Palestine intended for an Arab state and in return would not interfere with the establishment of the Jewish state" (p. 136). Thus, division marred the Arab cause: "They sent less than half their forces against the Israelis ... although Abdallah was overall commander, they never revealed to him the size, composition, or strategic plans of the invading armies ... they tried until the last moment to prevent the invasion. They knew they could not defeat the Jewish state" (p. 140). The "invasion of Palestine ... was not aimed at destroying the Jewish state. It was intended to prevent Abdallah from annexing the Arab part of Palestine as the first step in the implementation of his British-inspired Great Syria plan" (p. 151). This is heady stuff and the exclusion systematically of such a thesis from debate in the U.S. helps in part to explain the present crisis of Zionism and the abject failure of U.S. policy in the region.

Much has been made in the *New York Times* recently of claims about Arab leadership urging Palestinians to flee to neighboring Arab countries; even if this were true, it would not bar the return of Palestinians to their homeland but Flapan exposes this allegation as just another rank canard. "The recent publication of thousands of documents in the state and Zionist archives, as well as Ben-Gurion's war diaries, shows that there is no evidence to support the Israeli claims ... Palestinian sources offer further evidence that even earlier ... the Arab Higher Committee, broadcasting from Damascus, demanded that the population stay put and announced that Palestinians of military age must return from the Arab countries" (pp. 85-87). It was terror, viz. the Dir Yassin massacre, that convinced many Palestinians that the better part of wisdom meant fleeing.

Flapan is explicit about the future: "A choice will have to be made between pursuing the goal of a Greater Israel—which means the annexation of the territories occupied since 1967, continued rule over an unwilling subject population, and increased military activism—and meeting the basic economic social, and educational needs of the society and preserving its democratic character" (p. 233). The publication of this work signifies a healthy evolution in certain Zionist circles. Yet the fact that this work was put out by a major publisher and backed by leading U.S. entities and

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*Continued on p. 21*

public figures—e.g. Stanley Hoffman, Richard Falk, et al.—and still has not been reviewed extensively despite the explosive content, indicates the uphill climb that faces those sincerely interested in peace and justice in the region.

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## Jewish Youth and the Resistance in Nazi Germany

By Ronald C. Kent

Current histories deserve our attention for they not only reveal elements of the past but also trends in contemporary thinking. Two recently published studies, **Between Fear and Hope, Jewish Youth in the Third Reich** by Werner T. Angress (Columbia University Press, New York, 1988) and **The German Resistance**, by Peter Hoffmann (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1987) respectively attempt to treat aspects of the Jewish youth and the organized resistance inside Germany. Both authors address topics that demand critical attention by readers here and abroad who may benefit from the historical lessons left to us by Jewish youth and the resistance against German Fascism.

Werner T. Angress, Professor of History at the SUNY-Stony Brook, was born in Berlin in 1920, emigrated in 1939, served in the U.S. Army during World War II and received his Ph.D. from the University of California-Berkeley. He previously authored the book **Stillborn Revolution: The Communist Bid for Power in Germany, 1921-1933** (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963), a distorted psycho-history of the ultra-left period of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD).

In his latest book Angress gives a brief account of German Jewish youth during the Nazi era. The first of three chapters examines their general living conditions. Angress accurately recalls the gradual escalation of Nazi anti-Semitic tactics, the use of laws to deprive Jews of employment, schooling and human rights and the pogrom of November 1938. He elucidates the horrible role played by Great Britain and the United States in restricting the immigration of Jews to safe shores.

Angress does not, however, adequately convey the terroristic beatings, the daily atrocities and murders carried out by the SA and SS during the 1933-38 period against Jews and other Nazi targets. He overgeneralizes when he states that "...nobody at the time could have foreseen the actual course of the Final Solution..." (p. 35, emphasis added). The murders of Jews, labor leaders, KPD and SPD resisters and their incarceration in concentration camps in 1934 were already viewed by many on the left as a sign that the Nazis meant what they wrote about the removal of Jews from German life. The German writer Arnold Zweig, for example, who emigrated in 1934, noted in his memoirs that it was clear to him that the Nazis meant what they said and that the Jews and other "Untermenschen" would be eliminated in the Nazi state. Angress's study is further flawed by his slight attention to the Jewish youth active in the resistance. While he does mention the heroic Herbert Baum Group, there were other significant resistance groups involving

Jewish youth (see Yuri Suhl, **They Fought Back**, [New York, 1967] and Karl-Heinz Jahnke, **Jugend im Widerstand** [Frankfurt am Main, 1980]). Jewish youth participated as well in KPD, left-wing SPD and left-wing Zionist resistance efforts. The *Werkleute* Jewish youth groups were also engaged in anti-fascist activity. In his treatment of emigration Angress fails to discuss the emigration of some German Jews to Poland and the Soviet Union, concentrating instead on emigration to the west (England, Holland, South American and the United States), thus revealing an ideological bias.

In his second chapter Angress presents a case study of the Gross-Breesen Training Farm, which was a large emigration training center for non-Zionist Jewish youth. The farm was designed to train Jewish youth for occupations they could assume once they got out of Nazi Germany. Educators at the farm also actively organized the emigration of the youth. Angress reveals the routine of everyday activity at the camp and its intellectual climate that was informed by the philosophy of Martin Buber. Jewish and non-Jewish agencies that assisted the Jewish youth in their emigration struggles are enumerated. Angress documents the concerted emigration efforts of the youth, the conditions of terror and survival experienced by those briefly interned in concentration camps after the "crystal night" pogrom in 1938. He examines the deadly bureaucratic noose that slowly strangled and destroyed the existence of the training farm on August 31, 1941. The Jewish youth present on that day were used for forced labor at the farm and finally were deported in early 1943.

Yet Angress focuses mainly on the male Jewish teachers and students at the Gross-Greenen Training Farm. He mentions women only infrequently and briefly. The case study is further flawed by the author's lack of information about the political orientations of the three waves of Jewish youth. The Jewish youth appeared unconcerned about the Spanish Civil War, the fascist murders carried out in that war against progressives or the Mussolini fascist movement. Nor did they seem concerned about the imprisonment of trade unionists, left-wing socialists or communists. Nothing is said of the illegal Jewish underground organizations, illegal political organizations and organizations in the Soviet Union that were helping Jews to escape the Nazi terror. Only the "official" organizations of the Nazi state and their tolerated fronts are discussed. Glossed over as well are the treatment of the students by the SS and the contradictory attitudes of the peasantry living around the farm.

In the third and final chapter of the book Angress draws on entries from a youth's diary and correspondence between the Jewish youth and their teachers to illuminate further the perilous situations faced by Jewish youth striving to emigrate. Even though the United States, Britain and Holland

erected Herculean bureaucratic barriers to prevent immigration of Jews, these primary documents show that some of the students managed to survive. In the first two waves of Jewish students the majority, or 118, successfully emigrated to five continents. The third wave was not as fortunate; of the 114 students in the third wave, most did not survive World War II. Some German Jewish youth in Holland perished.

The letters of Jewish youth and the diary of Gunther Marcuse, who entered the training farm in February, 1939 and perished in Auschwitz in March, 1944, are valuable primary documents that Angress has made available to readers. They tell us little, however, of the political leanings of the Jewish youth, the influence of socialism, the thoughts and actions of Jewish women survivors who were living with similar pressures as their male counterparts. Racist and anti-worker attitudes exhibited by some Jewish youth are not adequately explained in terms of the class and societal influences upon the youth growing up in a hostile environment. The founders of the farm feared Jewish youth would fall prey to the "danger of proletarianization" (p. 47). This apparent class bias of the training farm leadership is never analyzed or explained by Angress.

Angress's book should be read because he presents new primary documents, compelling in their revelations, even though his material remains limited in its scope and breadth. Readers should further note that the research grants used by Angress for this study came from the Fritz-Thyssen Foundation and the Historical Commission of West Berlin. Fritz Thyssen, an early Nazi supporter, was one of several leading industrialists who helped to finance Hitler. Consequently, this reviewer would not recommend purchasing the book; interested readers may obtain this work through a local library or through inter-library loan. Angress ignores other works treating German Jews in the 1933-1945 period, including *Das dritte Reich und die Juden*, by Leon Poliakov and Josef Wulf (Berlin, 1955) and *Kennzeichen "J"*, ed. Helmut Eschwege (Berlin, 1966). Of the 94 studies cited in Angress's bibliography, only three are from the German Democratic Republic (GDR): two on the Buchenwald concentration camp and one on Jewish youth. Missing from his bibliography is the GDR study of Communist youth in the resistance, *Jungkommunisten im Widerstandskampf gegen den Hitler-faschismus* (Berlin, 1977).

Another current history treating the World War II era is Peter Hoffmann's book on the German resistance. Hoffmann is Professor of German History at McGill University in Canada. His volume on the German resistance is a compilation of cold-war distortions regarding the contributions, motivations and composition of the German anti-fascist resistance. The broad contours and the rich complexities of the German underground movement are not present in this

volume. Instead one finds a highly skewed reading of the resistance rendered from an anti-left point of view coupled with strong apologetics concerning big business and its nefarious relationship with Hitler.

To his credit Hoffmann describes in his introduction how West German youth of today know little of the contributions of the anti-fascist German resistance. In two surveys of German youth 16 to 19 years old, "...only 14 percent in this age group in 1970, and 7 percent in 1984, could refer correctly to clergymen, trade unionists, socialists and Communists in the resistance" (p. 2). Hoffmann also reveals that U.S. occupation authorities after World War II discouraged interest in the German resistance movements. Hoffmann cogently traces the use of terror and emergency powers under the flawed Weimar Constitution by Hindenburg and later by Hitler. He assesses the role of the military in the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944 and examines other assassination attempts on Hitler's life. Despite his preponderant and occasionally helpful treatment of conservative military officers in the resistance to the Hitler regime, Hoffmann obscures the anti-left, anti-Soviet and ultra-nationalist tendencies among some of them who were even then seeking an accommodation with western capitalist interests.

Unfortunately, Hoffmann is clearly in the same camp as other recent western historiographers, who ineptly treat the role of left-wing forces in the German and European anti-fascist resistance by engaging in cold-war stereotypes, historical concoctions and vile red-baiting (Lucy Davidowicz, Yehuda Bauer, Erich Kulka, Radomir Laza, et al.). Hoffmann evidences his historical hubris by stating, "...the role of big business in Hitler's rise of power was minimal, despite Marxist propaganda about the National Socialists as capitalist lackeys" (emphasis added, p. 13). Studies by GDR scholars, U. S. Marxist scholars, and recent left-wing socialist scholars have unequivocally demonstrated that Hitler was assisted by significant sections of big business, namely Thyssen, Voegler, Hugenberg, Siemens and others. The reader may consult the early works of Ernst Henri, R. Palme Dutt, and Jürgen Kuczynski, the study of James Pool and Suzanne Pool, *Who Financed Hitler* (New York, 1978) and the work of David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic* (New York 1986). The Marxist historian Dutt exposed the myth of non-capitalist support of Hitler as follows:

"Finance capital remains supreme, as was abundantly shown by the composition of Provisional Supreme Economic Council appointed under the aegis of the Nazi government. Its leading members included: Herr Krupp von Bohlen, armaments King...Herr F. C. von Siemens, electrical king...Herr F. Von Schroeder, banker...Herr A.

Von Finck, banker... Herr F. Reinhart, banker..." (**Fascism and Social Revolution**, Chicago, 1978, p.102.).

Dutt also gives the finance capital position of each big-business representative and leaves no doubt as to their role in the rise of Hitler. In his classic Marxist study, **Germany, Economic and Labor Conditions Under Fascism** (New York 1945), Jürgen Kuczynski elaborates the role of big business in Hitler's rise to power and how this sector of the ruling class masked its relationships with Hitler through intermediaries, retainers, relatives and hirelings and after 1933 participated directly in the Nazi state apparatus. Kuczynski also exposes the writers of the late 1930's, such as Peter F. Drucker, Georg Decker, Peter Anders, and others, who tried to ascribe to the Nazi state a non-capitalist character. The facts developed in Kuczynski's study reveal that the Hitlerian fascist state was indeed a capitalist state in its imperialist stage with immense capabilities for anti-Semitic terror, barbarism and cooptation. The sources above, then, easily refute the "minimal" thesis advanced by Hoffmann and his co-author Henry Turner in their **New German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler** (New York 1985). For a detailed critique of Turner's book, see Herbert Aptheker, "German Big Business and the Rise of Hitlerism," *Political Affairs* (September, 1985).

Hoffmann claims that Hitler's rise to power was related mainly "to personal interests" and the "...conspiracy and intrigue, not an overwhelming wave of national support, enabled a gang of political criminals to get hold of the state" (p.14). This undefined force called "personal interests" conveniently obscures the role of big business in underwriting the creation of a wave of fascist sentiment and support of Hitler in Germany.

The remainder of the book is replete with historical mistakes, untenable generalizations and questionable conclusions. The following selection should suffice to give the reader a flavor of the scope of errors contained in Hoffmann's volume.

Hoffmann asserts that the German Communist Party (KPD) resistance groups were "...inactive against Hitler until the invasion of the U.S.S.R.," i.e. 1941, (p.54). This puerile falsehood is exposed by the historical record which indicates that tens of thousands of KPD members and other opponents of Nazism were placed in concentration camps as soon as Hitler assumed power and many continued active resistance inside concentration camps and outside the camps throughout the period of Nazi rule, as documented by Peter Altmann, et al. and noted by Allan Merson in his study **Communist Resistance in Nazi Germany** (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1986, see especially pp. 217-232).

Hoffmann argues that women and blue collar workers

were the "least active" opponents of "anti-Jewish measures." Hoffmann's generalization attempts to cover up the fact that the largest anti-Nazi resistance organizations were mainly staffed by working-class persons, and some women played prominent roles in that resistance as well. Hoffmann is largely silent regarding women and the resistance; he mentions Sophie Scholl but not other prominent women resistance figures, who certainly deserve our attention in a study of German resistance. See the works of Eva Gottschaldt, **Antifaschismus und Widerstand** (Heilbrunn, 1985) and Gunther Weisenborn, **Der lautlose Aufstand** (Frankfurt am Main 1974) for a good overview of the German resistance movement. The following works also provide detailed information on the German resistance that has been left out of the Hoffmann book: **Die KPD im Kampf gegen Faschismus und Krieg 1933-1945** (Berlin 1985); Gertrud Meyer, **Frauen gegen Hitler** (Frankfurt am Main, 1974); Klaus Mammach, **Die KPD und die deutsche antifaschistische Widerstandsbewegung 1933-1945** (Frankfurt am Main, 1974).

Hoffmann's book leaves out the stories of the many different components of the German resistance (left SPD, church resistance, KPD, trade unionists). Moreover, his anti-left bias leads him to obscure or distort the key role played by left-wing Jews and non-Jews in that struggle. For example, the heroic but tragic role played by the Anton Saefkow-Jacob Bästlein Group is entirely missing in Hoffman's account. This group was the largest underground resistance group operating inside Germany during World War II and for Hoffman to ignore this group is truly a major blunder.

Hoffmann's book shows that the cold war is still continuing among western historians, particularly when it comes to the role of the Left in the resistance movements of World War II. Progressive Jews and non-Jews have a duty to speak out against this cold-war scholarship. We owe this to the resistance fighters who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

*Ronald C. Kent is a trade unionist and labor educator in Madison, Wisconsin.*

### *Jewish Affairs*

expresses its deepest sympathy to Editorial Committee member Louis Kalb on the death of his wife, Mary, a lifelong activist in the struggle for progress, peace and socialism.

## GDR Parliament Commemorates

November 9-10, 1938 Pogrom

Concluding five months of official commemorative activities in the German Democratic Republic, a special session of the People's Chamber paid homage to the victims of the 1938 pogrom and "the millions of victims of Nazi dictatorship, among them six million Jews."

The session was attended by Erich Honecker, the head of the government and the ruling Socialist Unity Party, and other top political and organizational leaders. It was also attended by over 100 Jewish leaders from the GDR and abroad. The latter included representatives of the Association of Jewish Communities of the GDR, the World Jewish Congress and Jewish organizations from Austria, Czechoslovakia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.S., the USSR and West Berlin.

Major addresses were delivered by Siegmund Rotstein, president of the Association of Jewish Communities of the GDR, and Horst Sindermann, president of the GDR People's Chamber.

Mr. Sindermann's speech, a description and excerpts of which follow, can be compared to that of his opposite number in the legislature of the Federal Republic of Germany, which resulted in the latter's resignation. The text is reprinted from the GDR's *Foreign Affairs Bulletin* of November 21, 1988.

At the beginning of his commemorative speech...Horst Sindermann described in moving terms the savageries committed by SS men and storm troopers going on the rampage during the night of 9 November to 10 November 50 years ago. [He continued:]

"The bloody pogrom perpetrated in a single night of 1938 meant that all the thoughts and teachings of German humanists were dragged through the mud: the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who had called for human dignity as the paramount objective of all human endeavour, and the ethic of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the German patriot and freedom fighter, who believed in the equality of all those with a human countenance. What a comedown from the Germany of the humanists to the Germany of the Nazis!

Flouting all the precepts of German humanism about the dignity of man and the upholding of humanity, the Nazis spread a theory of racial segregation, dividing humankind into a *Herrenvolk* or master race, the Aryans, who were meant to rule the world, and a subhuman race, the non-Aryans, destined to become slaves. Within the context of this pseudo-scientific racial theory, anti-Semitism provided the chief argument for the physical annihilation of the Jews. The pogrom in November 1938 was evidence of plans to sacrifice all spiritual values to an evil creed, to trample on all the noble and beautiful products of the human mind so that the scum of the earth could rule over Germany. After the pogrom, when Hitler was told about the outrage, he said that the inner voice of the people was

beginning to cry out for violence. The terrifying yell, *Juda verrecke*. (Death to the Jews), was a kind of dress rehearsal for the Nazis as they set out to exterminate six million Jews and slaughter the nations of Europe.

Anti-Semitism, the lynchpin of the fascist racial ideology, meant despising and downgrading people who had to be killed in their millions in order to gain world domination for German imperialism.

The leaders of the German working class had realized that anti-Semitism was, by its very nature, a method of asserting the interests of the ruling class and were therefore always to be found unwaveringly on the side of the Jews.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany, forced to operate clandestinely, therefore immediately spoke out in November 1938, as the voice of the German proletariat, against the shameful anti-Jewish pogroms. A statement by the KPD Central Committee on the Nazi pogroms reads in part: 'Upholding the proud traditions of the German labour movement and the true spirit of the greatest German poets and thinkers, the Communist Party of Germany denounces the fascist anti-Jewish pogroms which have besmirched the honor of Germany, bringing deep shame upon it in the eyes of all mankind.' The document called on the German working class, indeed all people, to fight against the pogroms and to display solidarity with their martyred Jewish fellow citizens, describing the struggle against the pogroms as an inseparable component of the German struggle to achieve freedom and peace and overthrow the Nazi dictatorship. Here, today addressing the highest legislative body of our socialist German state, we have a duty to recall what the founders of our state said about the anti-Jewish pogroms."

Horst Sindermann referred to the writings of Wilhelm Pieck and Walter Ulbricht in 1938 expressing the solidarity displayed by Communists with the Jewish population, to Otto Grotewohl, Otto Nuschke and Wilhelm Kulz, who bravely defied the fascists' anti-Semitism, to Lothar Bolz, who joined the battle against Hitler's Germany while in exile in the Soviet Union and always played a courageous part in the front ranks of those who defended human dignity.

"Those were the founders of our political parties and of our antifascist and democratic state. Those were the first members of our People's Chamber. So this here is a worthy representative body of our people, one that keeps sacred the lofty ideas that governed the proclamation of our state. This spirit prevailed during the meeting held between our Head of State, Mr. Erich Honecker, and the President of the World Jewish Congress, Mr. Edgar Miles Bronfman, who attested to the fact that the GDR has been sincere and has lived up to its responsibilities in coming to terms with history. The Chairman of the GDR Council of State had cordial and very constructive talks with the Chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Dr. Heinz Galinski, and with Mr. Siegmund Rotstein, who deserves our highest regard for his dedicated work as President of the Association of Jewish Communities in the GDR.

We stand in the tradition of the anti-fascist struggle as we did in the past, and so it will be in the future, too. Anyone who looked our country's youngest citizens in the eye during the meeting which the Free German Youth held in the former Ravensbrück concentration camp some days ago to honour the victims of the pogrom, anyone who is aware of their selfless devotion in looking after Jewish cemeteries, anyone who has witnessed their attentive and respectful dealings with veterans

and antifascists senses and knows that our youth will uphold the legacy of antifascism for ever.

Albert Einstein, the most celebrated scientist of our century, whom the Nazis regarded as a Jewish barbarian, once made a wonderful statement. Pleading the Jewish cause, he said: 'As long as we remain devoted servants of truth, justice and freedom, we will not only survive as one of the oldest civilized peoples in existence, but also continue, through our productive work, to create values that contribute to the betterment of mankind...'

In commemorating the pogrom we must honour the memory of all those Jews who helped to fashion world civilization and made immortal contributions to the common treasure-house of humanity. There are thousands of Jews who carved their names into German history, bequeathing a priceless heritage to our people which will remain in our hearts and minds forever.

For us the name and work of Karl Marx represents an unshakable foundation for our struggle for the common weal, for peace among nations and for human happiness. By the time the pogrom took place twenty Germans had been awarded the Nobel Prize, twelve of them from Jewish backgrounds. The list of world-renowned scientists, doctors, writers, actors, theatre directors, musicians, and painters is too long to mention all of them. We will single out just a few who were particularly close to us: Hanns Eisler, the composer of our national anthem; Anna Seghers, the revered president of our writers' union; Arnold Zweig, Lion Feuchtwanger and Lin Jaldai; our comrades Lea Grundig, Peter Edel and Leo Haas. All of them enriched our lives with their works, giving us so much that we hold dear...

On this day of remembrance, as we pay tribute to the victims of the pogrom and express our abhorrence of the Nazis' savagery, it is appropriate to point out that Jews and Communists were bracketed together in Nazi propaganda. As early as 1922 Wilhelm Pieck told the Prussian diet that the Communists regarded the rejection of anti-Semitism as an inseparable component of their struggle to defend the social and democratic interests of the people. Marxism holds that history is a succession of class struggle whereas the Nazis falsely depicted it as a series of racial struggles. As the teachings of scientific socialism were an obstacle to propagating the sinister "myth of the blood", it became necessary for them to combine their hatred of the Jews with a crusade against scientific socialism.

The Reichstag Fire in February 1933, allegedly instigated by the Communists, tallied with this primitive propaganda as did the arrest of tens of thousands of Communists, Social Democrats and bourgeois humanists.

The killers who ran amok during the pogrom and in the camps were absolutely necessary for the wholesale slaughter of the Soviet people. In those days only the Communists exposed anti-Semitism as being partly anti-communist in nature. Needless to say, it would be wrong to single out only the Communists as antifascists. In the struggle against Nazi barbarity they joined hands with the Social Democrats. Many Christians, Roman Catholics and Protestants, bravely defied fascism and came down on the side of the tormented Jews out of a sense of brotherly love. We have the highest regard for men such as the Reverend Martin Niemöller, Provost Bernhard Lichtenberg and the Reverend Paul Schneider. Among those who offered resistance to the barbaric regime were many Jews,

especially many young Jewish Communists. Talking to them, we must point out that they were fellow fighters who endured twofold oppression—as Communists and as Jews.

We shall never forget the valiant stand of the group led by Herbert Baum who set fire to an anti-Soviet exhibition in Berlin because the web of lies that enveloped Germany had become unbearable.

Comrade Erich Honecker was put on trial before the so-called People's Court together with Bruno Baum, Herbert Baum's brother. The hanging judges of that notorious tribunal sentenced him and the "non-Aryans" Bruno Baum and Sarah Fedorova to long terms of imprisonment for being Communists who had defied fascism and, throughout the nightmarish years of Nazi rule, had shone like a beacon, illuminating the steep and stony road leading to new frontiers.

Nor shall we ever forget the courage which our Jewish friends and comrades displayed in standing up to the terrorism of the Nazi henchmen...

Exulting over our liberation from Nazi rule, we vowed, with the horrors of fascism still fresh in our minds, to leave no stone unturned until the roots of war had been extirpated and until racism and contempt for other human beings had given way to neighbourly love... Weapons of mass destruction must disappear from the face of the earth. A current imperative is to make the world's armies incapable of attack so that no country can invade another. The evil spirit of confrontation will have to be supplanted by peaceful cooperation among peoples and states for the benefit of all.

Anyone honestly wishing to pursue this challenging goal must help to remove all flashpoints of tension. One of them is the Middle East conflict which can only be resolved if both the people of Israel and the Palestinian people are accorded the right to independent statehood as provided for in the relevant United Nations resolution.

On this day of remembrance devoted to the victims of the pogrom in 1938 we are speaking out for a world in which all nations can live at peace with one another while recalling the demands contained in the precepts of Judaism: "Remember" and "Never forget."

### Contributions (continued from p.16)

Israel Maged .....	30.00
W. Richard Meyers .....	17.50
Lawrence & Mildred McGurty .....	7.50
Victoria Olds .....	2.50
Regina Gori, Sadye & Peter Panken .....	25.00
Henri & Florence Percikow .....	20.00
Vincent & Madeleine Provinzano .....	9.50
Leo Schneider .....	100.00
Clarence H. Sharp .....	20.00
Charlotte Sinovoi .....	7.50
Beatrice Stadler .....	5.00
Esther Surovell .....	7.50
Marcel A. Ullman .....	17.50
David Weiner .....	12.50
David & Simon Zeldin .....	10.00
Michael Ziebel .....	25.00

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אין ליכטיקן אָנדענק פון

מישאַ ראָזמאַן

געשטאַרבען דעם

28-טן פעברואַר, 1974

פּרוי, פּערל

קינדער אייניקלעך און אוראייניקלעך

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# אידישע נייעס איבער דער וועלט

ראש העיר, שלמה להט, האָט פיל מיטגעהאַלפן צו דער גרינדונג פון דער טעאַטער. גלייכצייטיק האָט ער אויך מיטגעטײלט וועגן דער ווירקזאַמער שטיצע פון וועלט-ראַט פון אידיש פון אידישער קולטור, דורך איר פאַרזיצער, יצחק קאַרן ביי די צוגרייטונגען. ש. עצמון האָט געגעבן, אַז דער וועלט-ראַט פאַר אידיש זאָל אויף אויך ווייטער מיטהעלפן אין קאַנסאַלירן דעם אידישן טעאַטער.

יצחק קאַרן, דער פאַרזיצער פון וועלט-ראַט פאַר אידיש און אידישער קולטור האָט באַזונדערס אונטערגעשטראַכן, אַז מיט דער אָנשטייאונג פון אידישן טעאַטער איז פאַרווירקלעכט געוואָרן אַז גרויסער טרײַם פון וועלט-ראַט. ער האָט אויך פאַרגעשאַפן, אַז ביים וועלט-ראַט זאָל זײַן אַ ספּעציעלע קאַמיסיע פאַר אידיש טעאַטער און סײַזאַל געגרינדעט ווערן אַ סטודיע פון יונגע כוחות, וואָס זאָל לערנען די טעאַטער־קונסט, כדי צו זײַן דער רעזערוו פאַרן טעאַטער.

## 5-טע סעסיע פון וועלט-ראַט פאַר אידיש אין לאַנדאָן

די פינפטע סעסיע פון וועלט-ראַט פאַר אידיש און אידישער קולטור איז אָפּגעהאַלטן געוואָרן אין לאַנדאָן אין די טעג פון 5-טן ביזן 12-טן יולי, 1988. זי איז פאַרגעקומען אין זאָל "בית הלל". ביי דער סעסיע איז אונטערגעצויגן געוואָרן אַ סך־הכל פון זײַנע 12 יאָר עקזיסטענץ און סײַזענע אָנגעמערקט געוואָרן ריכטליניעס פאַר דער טעטיקייט אין דער צוקונפט. סײַזאָ אויך פאַרגעקומען די ערשטע פאַרטיילונג פון ליטעראַרישע פּרייזן פון דער פונדאַציע א.ג. פון ד"ר הירש און דבורה ראָזענפעלד. דאָס ביורג פון וועלט-ראַט פאַר אידיש האָט צוגעגרייט אַ קורצע בראַשור וועגן די פאַרשידענע טעטיקייטן פון וועלט-ראַט א.א. 12 יאָר וועלט-ראַט פאַר אידיש און אידישער קולטור". אין דער בראַשור גײַען אויך אַרײַן באַריכטן וועגן די טעטיקייטן פון די פאַרשידענע אידיש־קאַמיטעטן אויף דער וועלט, אין די לעצטע צוויי יאָר.

## ליטעראַרישער פּרייז ביים וועלט-ראַט פאַר אידיש

יצחק קאַרן האָט געבראַכט צו דער עקזעקוטיוו די ידיעה, אַז דער באַקאַנטער נרבו און אידיש לביהאַבער הירש ראָזענפעלד האָט באַשלאָסן צו גרינדן אַ ליטעראַרישן פּרייז ביים וועלט ראַט אויף זײַן נאָמען, כדי צו שטיצן אידישע שרייבער און קינסטלער. עס וועט אריסגעוויילט ווערן אַ ספּעציעלע זשורי־קאַמיסיע — וועלכע וועט אויסאַרבעטן די פּרינציפן און פאַרשאַפן אַן די קאַנדידאַטן פאַר דעם פּרייז.

## אידישע באַפעלקערונג געוואַקסן אויף דער וועלט

אין ירושלים איז פאַרגעקומען אַן אינטערנאַציאָנאַלע קאָנפערענץ — די ערשטע פון דעם מיין — אַ געווינדעמטע דער פאַרזיצערונג פונעם פאַרזעץ פונעם לעבן פון דער אידיש קולטור אין קינפּטיקן אַרהערערט. סײַהאַבן זײַך באַטייליקט 200 ספּעציאַליסטן פון 20 לענדער. דינעאָראַפּן פון דעם העברעאישן אוניווערסיטעט פון ירושלים האָבן אָנגעוויזן, אַז די אידישע באַפעלקערונג איז געוואַקסן פון 11 מיליאָן (נאָך דער שוואה), אויף 12.8 מיליאָן אין 1985.

## 2 אַרבעטן וועגן אידישער שפּראַך דערשינען אין סאָויעטן־פאַרבאַנד

דער "בראַכדזשאַנער שטערן" האָט געמאַלן וועגן צוויי וויכטיקע אַרבעטן אויפן געביט פון אידישער לינגוויסטיק. דער פאַרלאַג "נאַקאָ" איז צוגעטראַטן אַרויסצוגעבן אַ נייע וויסנשאַפטלעכע ביכער־סעריע. "האַנט־געשריבענער כּוּך אין דער קולטור פון די מוזח־פעלקער". און דעם ערשטן באַנד, וועלכער איז שוין אַרויס, איז איינגעשלאָסן אַן אַרבעט פון באַוואוסטן לענינגראַדער העברעאישט און דאָקטאָר פון פּילאַלאָגיע, וויקטאָר לעבניעווער. א.ג. "יער אידישער מיטלעלעכער האַנט־געשריבענער כּוּך". די אַרבעט האַלט 30 זײטן און אין איר ווערן באַטראַכט אידישע ליטעראַטור־ווערק אויף 12 שפּראַכן מיט אידישע אותיות.

דער מאַסקאווער אינסטיטוט פאַר מוזח־קענטענישן האָט נישט לאָנג צוריק פאַרענטלעכט אַ זאַמל־בוך "די אָנשטייאונג און פונקציאָנירונג פון די קאַנטאַקט־שפּראַכן". דאָרט געפינט זײַך אַן אַרטיקל פון אַלעקסאַנדער אייכענוואַל; "אידיש און געמישטע שפּראַכן — צום שטעלן די פּראָבלעם". די פאַרשערין אַנאַליזירט אין איר אַרבעט פאַרשיידענע דערשיינונגען פון ליטעראַרישן אידישן לשון און פון די אידישע גערעדטע דיאַלאָגן.

## אידישער טעאַטער אין ישראָל

די דערפערענונג פון פערמאַנענטן אידישע קונסט־טעאַטער אין ישראָל און זײַן ערשטע אויפפירונג "שווער צו זײַן אַ איר" פון שלום־עליכם, האָט געהאַט אַ גרויסן אָפּקלאַנג אין לאַנד.

שמואל עצמון, דער דירעקטאָר פונעם נײַגעשאַפענעם אידיש־טעאַטער האָט איבערגעגעבן וועגן די פאַרשידענע עטאַפּן, וואָס האָבן געבראַכט צו דער עטאַבלירונג פון דעם טעאַטער. ער האָט אונטערגעשטראַכן, אַז דער תּל־אָביבער

# ווידישע ענינים

## אידיש קולטור-לעבן אין סאָוועטן-פּאַראַנאָד

דעם. ביי דער ערשטער באַגעגעניש פון די קורסאנטן איז געווען דער שרייבער זיאל שרייבמאָן.

אויך אין טייראספאל האָבן זיך דערעפנט קורסן פון אידיש, דאָ וועט אונטערזיכטן דער באַוואוסטער מחבר פון "אַלעף בית" און פון בוך פאַר דערלערנען אידיש, שמעון סאַנדלער.

### פאַר די וועלכע לערנען אידיש

דאָס מיניסטערום פון פּאָלקס-בילדונג פון ר.ס.פ.ר. און דער מלוכהשער קאָמיטעט פאַר פּראָגן פון פּאַרלאָגן, פּאַליגראַפיע און ביכער-האַנדל האָבן געמיינזאַם באַטראַכט די פּראָגן וועגן אַרױסגעבן מעטאָדישע און לערן-מאַטעריאַלן אין דער אידישער שפּראַך און באַשטימט די ערשטע פּראָקטישע מיטלען (פון "ביראָבידזשאַנער שטערן", 14.9.88).

### קאָנקורס פון אַ דענקמאַל

#### פאַר שלום-עליכמען

דער אויספירקאָמיטעט פון ביראָבידזשאַנער סאָוועט פון פּאָלקס-דעפּוטאַטן האָט באַשלאָסן וועגן דורכפירן אַ קאָנקורס אויפן פּראָיעקט פון דענקמאַל שלום-עליכמען. "דער ציל פון קאָנקורס" — זאָגט זיך אין באַשלוס, אַנטפּעלקט די בעסטע פּראָיעקטיר-קריסטלערישע לייזונגען פון דענקמאַל פאַרן קלאַסיקער פון דער אידישער ליטעראַטור שלום עליכמען."

צום סוף גיט זיך צו, אַז בירגער קענען צושיקן ביישטייערונגען אויפן קאָנטאַ-חשבון אין באַנק, נומ. 50813 אויפן חשבון פון "דענקמאַל" שלום-עליכמען."

### אידישע קולטור-ענטוואַסטן

#### אין ליטע

ביים קולטור-פּאַנאָד פון דער ליטווישער ר.ס.פ.ר. איז טעטיק אַ גרופּע ענטוואַסטן פון דער אידישער קולטור, אין וועלכן ס'האָבן זיך איינגעשלאָסן 25 פּערזאָנן. פּאַרזיצער פון דער גרופּע איז עמאַנועל זינגער פון קאַוונע, דער איניציאַטאָר פון דער אויסשטעלונג פון דער אידישער קונסט.

### אוקראינע געדענקט

#### און גיט אַפּ כבוד

אין קיעוו, אויפן הויז, אין וועלכן ס'האָט געלעבט שלום עליכם איז צוגעפעסטיקט געוואָרן אַן אַנדענק טאָול מיטן בילד פון גרויסן אידישן שרייבער, דערביי איז פּאַרנעקמען אַ צערעמאָניע מיטן אַנטיל פון אוקראינישע און אידישע שרייבער, די באַוואוסטע שרייבער דימיטראַ פּאַויליטשקאַ און הערשל פּאַליאַנקער האָבן איבערגעשיקט די טענגע און אַנטהילט דעם מעמאָריאַל-טאָול.

אין דער צערעמאָניע האָבן אַנטיל-גענומען אַ גאַנצע ריי אידישע און אוקראינישע שרייבער און צווישן אַנדערע א. יושטשענקאָ, י. כוכבינדער, א. קאַצענעלסאָן, ק. גריגאָרעו, נ. כאַלעמסקי, אין אַרטיסטישן טייל האָבן אַנטיל גענומען שוישפילער פון דעם נישט לאַנג געגרינדעטן אַנסאַמבל "ניגונים" און "שלום". דער אויטאָר פון דער סקופּלטור איז וואַלערי מעדעוודעו און דער אַרכיטעקט אברהם מילעצקי, די אינפּאַראַמאָציע גיט איבער א. ירושאוּסקי אין "ביראָבידזשאַנער שטערן" פון 24.9.88.

### געשיכטעס פאַר קינדער

#### פון שלום-עליכם

אין פּאַרלאָג "דעטסקאַיאַ ליטעראַטוראַ" איז דערשינען שלום-עליכם בוך "געשיכטעס פאַר קינדער" אין 100 טויזנט עקזעמפּלאַרן, דער קינסטלער יו. גערשקאוויטש האָט אילוסטרירט דעם בוך, דער צונויפּשטעלער פון בוך איז ר. רובין.

### קורסן פון אידיש

#### אין מאָלדאַוויע

ש. רובין גיט איבער אין "ביראָבידזשאַנער שטערן" (18.9.88) פון קיינעווען, זאָ: "פאַר אויסלערנען אלעמען ווער ס'פּאַרלאָנגט לערנען אידיש זיינען צון ערשטן מאָל אַרגאַניזירט געוואָרן אומזיסטע קורסן און אַז איבער 100 פּערזאָנן, עלטערע און יונגע האָבן זיך גלייך געוואָנדן וועגן