

JEWISH AFFAIRS

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CONTENTS

Editorials

- The Question of Quotas 2
- Hyman Lumer, Soviet Exit Fees: A New
Excuse for Slander 3
- Donna Ristorucci, Racism in Canarsie 8
- Phil Honor, The Morning Freiheit's
Bourgeois Nationalism: II 15
- On the Plight of Ida Kaminska 18

Communications

- Tess and Meyer Gelfman,
We Saw Socialism at Work 19
- A Reader,
Is There a Jewish Community? 21
- The Editors,
On the Jewish Community: A Reply 22

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EDITORIALSTHE QUESTION OF QUOTAS

In the course of the election campaign the issue of quotas in hiring came sharply to the fore. An editorial in the New Republic of October 21 describes it graphically:

Judging by the outcry, one might guess that quotas in hiring had become as rampant and destructive as racial discrimination itself. In the last month, quota-setting has won a place alongside war, crime and inflation as one of the scourges from which both of our presidential candidates have promised to deliver us. Never a man to dodge a delicate subject when votes can be won, the President in his Labor Day statement... produced a stunning repudiation of such an "artificial yardstick as has ever been used to deny opportunity to anyone... The basic idea of quotas," he said, "is anti-ability wherever it is applied."

Such declarations were a response to the pressures exerted by leading Jewish organizations, particularly the American Jewish Committee, which wrote to both Nixon and McGovern urging them to condemn the use of quotas. These organizations have been highly vocal on this subject, declaring themselves in favor of hiring based on the sacred principles of "merit," "non-discrimination" and "equality." Naomi Levine, writing in the Congress Bi-Weekly, organ of the American Jewish Congress, asks: "Are the concepts of equality and non-discrimination outmoded? Is reverse discrimination the only way to correct past discrimination?" ("Quotas and Affirmative Action: Where We Stand," November 10, 1972.)

Despite this outcry, however, there is no quota system in existence in hiring by the federal government, or in institutions or projects financed with federal funds--not even on paper. What does exist is a vaguely defined program called "affirmative action." It requires employers to commit themselves to a hiring schedule that will "eventually" result in balanced employment. They are permitted to set their own goals and are then required to show nothing more than a "good faith effort" to attain them. Such a program the American Jewish Congress and other organizations find acceptable.

But as might be expected, the effects of "affirmative action" have been negligible. The highly touted "Philadelphia plan" is all but dead. Efforts at enforcement are hardly worth talking about. Moreover, with Nixon's reelection we may anticipate a move to abolish even those weak gestures that exist. In this connection it is worth noting that his opposition to quotas was one of the reasons given by those Jewish leaders who endorsed Nixon.

The position of the leading Jewish organizations on the question of quotas is hypocritical and racist. Thus, Naomi Levine states that "no responsible person, certainly in the Jewish community, questions the goal

of increasing the opportunities for minority groups. The issue in question is whether even the pursuit of such a socially desirable goal warrants the use of means that may violate basic principles fundamental to the American system." But this is mere lip service.

Simply to preach "merit" and "non-discrimination" in hiring is to avoid the issue. Almost everyone, if asked, will agree that people should be employed solely on the basis of merit, but everyone also knows that Black and other oppressed minorities are not employed on the basis of merit but are systematically discriminated against and excluded from many types of jobs. Moreover, the effects of such discrimination and exclusion cannot be wiped out without compensatory hiring, that is, without a policy of hiring Blacks and others in such numbers as will accomplish this--not "eventually" but in the very near future.

Such numbers must be specified; if one does not like the term "quotas" he can give them another name. But compensatory hiring must be instituted and enforced. This is inescapable; anything less can produce only token improvement at best. Such devices as "affirmative action" are designed to get around this necessity, not to implement it. Hence it is not surprising that so little effort is made to enforce them.

The real position of these Jewish organizations was demonstrated when New York's Mayor Lindsay called for an ethnic census of city employees to be used for the purpose of remedying the near-absence of Black and Puerto Rican employees in many job categories, particularly the higher-paying ones. Every leading Jewish organization aggressively opposed it, maintaining that the aim was to take jobs away from Jews. Instead of calling for united action for expansion of employment--for a program of jobs for all--they have taken a stand which directly pits Jew against Black, to the delight of the class forces of reaction which perpetuate racial discrimination--and anti-Semitism as well.

One's position on the question of quotas cannot be based on abstract principle. A quota system used to impose discrimination must be condemned and fought. But such a position is wrong when it is a matter of abolishing discrimination. It is necessary to conduct an active struggle for preferential hiring of Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Indians and Asians. To do less is to help perpetuate discrimination.

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SOVIET EXIT FEES: A NEW EXCUSE FOR SLANDER

By Hyman Lumer

In mid-1972 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree requiring Soviet citizens who take up permanent residence abroad to reimburse the state for the cost of whatever higher education they have re-

ceived. In the case of those holding higher academic degrees this amounts to a considerable sum of money.

This action, as might be expected, has stirred the anti-Soviet crusaders to a new pitch of frenzy and has given rise to a fresh wave of demonstrations, newspaper ads, resolutions, Congressional lobbies and similar activities. As usual, the Soviet government is charged with the basest of motives, and is accused of no less a crime than "selling Jewish bodies." ("Jews for Sale" is the headline of an ad published by the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry.)

The Soviet Union, it is alleged, suffers from an acute shortage of educated personnel and cannot afford the loss of the heavy financial investment it has made in its educated Jews. Hence the government seeks to blackmail those who wish to leave. In addition, it is claimed, the Soviet Union suffers from a serious shortage of food. It is compelled to import large quantities of wheat, for which it must pay in hard currencies. Hence the government imposes a demand for ransom money which it hopes to get Jews in the United States and elsewhere to raise, thus acquiring needed dollars and other hard currencies.

The imposition of such a tax, it is declared, is a gross violation of the basic rights of educated Soviet Jews. The pro-Zionist stalwart James A. Michener writes:

It is the duty of any society to educate its young and then to let them apply that education wherever it will prove most productive. Education is not a boon which society confers upon a few, holding them up to prescribed standards of repayment later on. It is a vote of confidence in the future, an expression of faith that these young will make their contribution in unforeseen ways. The Soviet assessment of taxes for a high school education is a total perversion. (New York Times, September 16, 1972.)

"Besides," says a two-page ad published by the Academic Committee on Soviet Jewry, "they have more than compensated the state for their education by years of productive labor. And, in emigrating, they leave the USSR enormous sums of equity--pensions, bonds, savings, apartments, and personal property." (New York Times, October 31, 1972.)

Such is the nature of the reaction to the new tax in anti-Soviet circles. Coming at a time of increasing detente between the United States and the Soviet Union, at a time of growing prospects of large-scale trade between them, it has led to a disgraceful campaign by leading Jewish organizations and spokesmen to halt the process, to bar trade concessions and credits to the USSR until the tax is repealed. The notorious hawk, Senator Henry M. Jackson, has introduced amendments to this effect in pending legislation. Senator George McGovern has joined the pack, pledging to vote against trade concessions. Businessmen have been called on to boycott Soviet

goods. In short, the exit fees have been made the grounds for an attack against improvement of U. S. -Soviet relations.

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Like its predecessors, this new wave in the anti-Soviet crusade is based on gross misrepresentation and slander. It reflects a concern not with the well-being of the Soviet people, and of Soviet Jews as a part of the Soviet people, but only with the obsessive Zionist drive to bring Soviet Jews to Israel. The fraudulence of its appeals to morality and human rights is made clear by even a cursory examination of the facts of the situation.

To begin with, the law applies not only to Jews but to all Soviet citizens. It is not, as the anti-Soviet propagandists would have us believe, a discriminatory measure.

Moreover, such a law is not in violation of the stand of the United Nations, which has recognized the right of states to restrict emigration on certain specific grounds, including those involved here. In addition, Resolution 1,243 of UNESCO proposes measures to be taken by member states to restrict the drain of their trained specialists by other states. This resolution was prompted by the well-known "brain drain," whose chief perpetrator is U.S. imperialism.

The "brain drain" serves the U.S. ruling class as a means of securing scientific, engineering, medical and other professional personnel at the expense of other countries. Such personnel is systematically recruited abroad, and especially in the developing countries. Indeed, in this age of the scientific and technological revolution, when the demand for trained specialists is growing by leaps and bounds, this has become an important form of imperialist robbery of these countries. With regard to Latin America, Z. Romanova writes:

...In the past five years alone, the U.S. has succeeded in recruiting over 19,000 Latin Americans with higher education to work in the United States, which means, at the roughest estimate, a loss to Latin America of almost \$400,000,000. And this leaves out of account the potential benefits which these specialists could have brought their own countries.

In the USA the cost of training one scientist is estimated at \$40,000. The U.S. makes tremendous gains, financially, out of the immigration of scientific and technological experts...

Nor is a country like Israel immune from such inroads. Today there are about 100,000 Israelis living in the United States (most of them Israeli-born), of whom 8,000 have academic degrees. Many are students who will return to Israel on completion of their studies, but there are also a considerable number, with degrees, who are living in the United States permanently. Since 1956 some 25,000 Israelis have become U.S. citizens. (Douglas L. Greener, Israel Magazine, May 1971.)

Such parasitism on the part of U.S. monopoly capital obviously does great damage to the countries involved. If any of their governments were to require those who choose to emigrate permanently to repay the costs of their higher education, they would be guilty of nothing more than seeking to stem this plunder, in keeping with the UNESCO resolution. Any condemnation on moral grounds would properly be directed not against them but against the plunderers.

In this connection it is worth noting that the Israeli government itself, prior to the 1967 war, was giving serious consideration to levying an emigration tax on professionals leaving Israel. Today, however, the Zionist ruling circles are exerting themselves to induce Soviet professionals to migrate to Israel. Premier Golda Meir made the meaning of this plain in a recent speech in the Knesset. Referring to those who had already come to Israel, she said: "Imagine what it would have cost us if we had to educate all these people!"

As a matter of fact it is not uncommon in capitalist states to require repayment of debts, including debts to the state for educational purposes, as a condition of permanent departure. Israel, for example, has required immigrants wishing to return to their countries of origin to repay all funds advanced to them through the Israeli immigration agency Sokhnut before permitting them to leave. Thus Juda Lazaretni, a resident of Kishinev who had migrated to Israel and later returned, states: "The Sokhnut agents ... have special account books with the personal number of every immigrant. In them they take down all the sums of money spent on the accommodation of the newcomers. And until he has paid back everything down to the last penny, no immigrant will be allowed to leave Israel." (The Deceived Testify, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1972, pp. 45-46.) One is led to ask: how many Soviet Jews are living in Israel today only because they are unable to repay these sums? And why are there no outcries of moral indignation about this situation?

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The contention that the Soviet Union is demanding repayment of the costs of higher education because it needs foreign exchange or because it is desperately short of scientists is simply nonsense. The sums involved are insignificant in relation to the totality of Soviet foreign financial transactions. Furthermore, the Soviet Union today has one-fourth of all the world's scientists, and the number is rapidly growing. It will not be appreciably impoverished by the comparative handful who wish to leave.

Nor can it be maintained that this is simply a form of persecution of Jews who want only to go to Israel where they can "live as Jews." While this may be what motivates some individuals, in the main it is not the basic reason.

Consider, by way of illustration, the case of Dr. Benjamin J. Levich, whom the New York Times describes as an internationally known electrochemist and a member of the Soviet Academy of Science, and who has lectured in the United States and England on more than one occasion. He is, says the Times, "obviously a successful member of the Soviet establishment." (August 13, 1972.) But Dr. Levich has applied for an exit visa to Israel. Why? Can it be said that he is a victim of anti-Semitic discrimination? Hardly. Does he feel that he has been deprived of access to Yiddish culture or the practice of Judaism? There are no indications that these have been matters of concern to him. Why, then, does such a person want to go?

I think that Norman Massey, in a letter to the Canadian progressive Yiddish weekly Vochenblatt (September 20, 1972) puts his finger on the answer. Speaking of Soviet scientists and intellectuals, he says:

This great army of scientists and learned people, together with the whole people and its institutions, led by the Communist Party, is building a communist society. In this most epoch-making and breathtaking process, one encounters a small number of Soviet citizens of a different caliber, among them a number of writers, scientists and other intellectuals who, for reasons we cannot go into here, do not see the historic process the people of their own country are carrying out and think only of themselves. Living in a land where the class struggle has been abolished, they fail to grasp the bitter reality of the class struggle in the capitalist world. For them there exist only "industrial societies" in general. They do not distinguish between capitalism and socialism. These elements, a small number, want to live where it is more pleasant (so they think), and they run to the "free world" to become "rich without even trying"...

This is the issue. Instead of going with the Soviet people in building a society of well-being for everyone, they want to satisfy themselves alone. Thus they abandon their people and their country and the idea of socialism. We have to do here with a parasitic element which does not want to fit into the new society. It exists among all nationalities. These are no idealists but the refuse of Soviet society!

The question is: should the Soviet people--the workers, the collective farmers, the intellectuals--raise and educate them, make people of them, so that they may leave the country and desert those who have nurtured them--and with no penalty whatever? The answer is clearly: no!

This is the nub of the question. In the Soviet Union all higher education is free and in addition the students generally receive a stipend. Such education is not looked upon, as in capitalist countries, as something

which an individual purchases and is then free to peddle to the highest bidder. Nor is it viewed as an advance which the recipient repays by performing so many years of productive work, after which he is free to go. On the contrary, it is viewed as something provided to the individual as part of the process of building the new society for the benefit of all. The individual in turn, as part of this great collective, is expected to use his education for the benefit of the society. He is not considered as free to leave the country at will and deprive it of his training.

Moreover, in the case of the socialist countries the imperialist powers and their allies seek not merely to secure free scientific and professional talent, but to undermine their economic development by stripping them of trained personnel. Small wonder, then, that the Soviet people as a whole do not take kindly to those who, seeking personal advantage, assist these enemies of socialism.

Nowhere in the world do Jews figure so prominently in scientific and professional life as in the Soviet Union; nowhere do they enjoy such opportunities and prestige. The allegation that Jewish Soviet scientists and intellectuals are driven to leave by anti-Semitic persecution is a barefaced lie. It is not the action of the Soviet government which is reprehensible--on the contrary, it serves the best interests of the entire Soviet people. It is rather the despicable campaign of the Zionist anti-Soviet elements and their supporters which must be condemned and repudiated if the true interests of all Jewish people are to be served.

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RACISM IN CANARSIE

By Donna Ristorucci

The recent events in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, New York, where thousands of white parents created near-riots, staged sit-ins and closed down every elementary and junior high school because 32 Black and Puerto Rican children from Brownsville were assigned to John Wilson Junior High School 211, are not isolated from what's happening in the country today.

During the same period a vicious white mob brutally attacked two Black youth, killing one and seriously injuring the other, cheered on by other whites, in New York's South Village. In Ozone Park, Queens, white racists violently attacked a school bus filled with Black children. In New York City and Newark, N. J., large numbers of whites demonstrated against the construction of low- and moderate-income housing, which would have provided homes for poor Black families, in overwhelmingly white areas.

This month President Nixon demanded the resignation of Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, chairman of the Civil Rights Commission. The latest dramatic incident--the first since Nixon's re-election--was the brutal murder of two Black students at Southern University in Baton Rouge, La.

The display of racism in Canarsie belongs in this context of a mounting campaign of racism in the United States, emanating from the White House. What happened in Canarsie was not just a sudden, spontaneous explosion but was, in a sense, a logical outcome of policies pursued by the Nixon Administration, the state and city governments, banks and real estate interests, the United Federation of Teachers and others.

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As a result of mass struggles for quality, integrated education in New York, as in other northern cities, the Board of Education took steps to integrate the schools through various programs.

Over 10 years ago children from Brownsville's predominantly Black Tilden Housing Project began to be bused to Meyer Levin Junior High School 285 in East Flatbush which, with Canarsie, makes up school district 18, as part of the Board of Education's plan to integrate East Flatbush schools and to alleviate overcrowding in Brownsville's schools. Other Brownsville children were bused to other East Flatbush schools.

Some Black families began to move into East Flatbush, since their children went to school there. Many whites, made afraid that their property values would go down and fearful that their neighborhoods would be transformed into slums, fled to the suburbs, while, once again, real estate interests and banks profited and the city government did nothing.

The policies of the Board of Education, rather than creating integrated schools with quality education, led to resegregated schools, overcrowding and deterioration, especially when combined with federal policies of cutbacks in funds for education.

These are real problems that have to be recognized and dealt with. However, the District 18 School Board, established about two years ago as a result of community control struggles waged primarily in the Black and Puerto Rican communities, reacted to these problems in a racist, unprincipled manner. Instead of attempting to unite parents from East Flatbush, Canarsie and Brownsville to fight to end the Vietnam war and use the funds for education and other social needs, to halt racist block-busting tactics of real estate interests and banks, to demand more schools and education reform, this local board voted to refuse to admit

graduating 6th grade students from the Tilden Houses to JHS 285 in East Flatbush. The Board did not want to "tip" the racial balance, it said.

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The 32 Black and Puerto Rican Tilden children, who became the center of the Canarsie dispute, were not assigned to any school; they had no place to go.

The central board, finally reacting, ordered the local board to assign the children to a school. The nine-member board, in a 5-4 vote (the majority cast by the five Canarsie members), responded by assigning them to a nearly all-Black junior high school in East Flatbush, in violation of the Board of Education's integration statutes.

At this time Schools Chancellor Harvey Scribner temporarily suspended the local board and assigned the 32 Tilden students to John Wilson JHS 211, with a 30 per cent Black enrollment, in Canarsie which is 95 per cent white, mostly Italians and Jews.

This is when the racist mass demonstrations of whites broke out. Scribner, bending to these racist protests, including a 3-day sit-in by whites at 211, reassigned the Tilden children to nearby Isaac Vandersee JHS 68, which has only a 3 per cent Black enrollment. White parent leaders from 68 agreed to accept the children, reversing their earlier opposition, because 32 children would barely affect the racial composition.

The Tilden parents, by this time furious about the insults their children had been subjected to while being shunted from one school to another and fearful for their children's safety at 68, refused to send their children there.

The central board overrode Scribner and assigned the children back to 211. All of this was done without consultation with the Tilden parents.

On the same day that State Education Commissioner Ewald Nyquist upheld the central board's decision--his first show of interest in the situation--some 2-3,000 whites rallied at a Canarsie theater, where they pledged to continue their demonstrations and boycott every Canarsie elementary and junior high school until the local board was given the right to transfer the 32 Tilden children out of 211.

The white boycott of the three junior high schools or six elementary schools in Canarsie was virtually complete. Those few parents who defied pressures from their neighbors and sent their children to school were subjected to threats, intimidation and harassment.

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The leaders of the white parent protestors insisted that decentralization was the issue, and became highly indignant if it was even suggested that racism might be involved. But, as was pointed out by a supporter of the Tilden children, decentralization and community control were never meant to be used to exclude Black children. It is important to distinguish between what community control means to the Black and Brown communities and the potentially racist nature of community control in a white community.

None of the Canarsie parents had participated in the community control struggles of two years ago, and in fact many of them opposed community control until the current situation. Racism was and is clearly at the root of the Canarsie conflict; the facts belie the claims of the Canarsie protesters. From the crowds of whites behind the police barricades at demonstrations outside 211 were heard racist epithets such as "You're not people. You're animals," "Go back to Africa," "Go back where you belong, n----," and others.

Some of the parents, differing slightly with those in leadership of the protests, said that they were against the 32 children going to 211 because of overcrowding. Overcrowding is, of course, a legitimate complaint. But when these parents were asked if it wouldn't be better for them to unite with the Tilden parents and others around the city to fight for more funds for education from the federal, state and local governments, they replied "no."

A major fear, of course, and perhaps the major fear, was that the value of their homes would go down. These racist fears were played upon and aggravated by politicians in the Conservative and Democratic Parties and local religious leaders, as well as by real estate and bank interests.

The Conservative Party club was key in inflaming racism, actually taking part in and leading the demonstrations, the sit-in at 211 and the school boycott. This was the first year that the Conservative Party participated actively in the community as a political group.

The Conservative Party is an important influence in the Italian American Civil Rights League in Canarsie, and many of the organization's members, wearing "Nixon for President" buttons alongside their IACRL patches, were among the white Canarsie protesters. During the last couple of days of the protests, when the crowds had dwindled greatly, they appeared to make up the majority of the demonstrators.

Democratic City Councilman Monroe Cohen, who supposedly represents Brownsville as well as Canarsie, became one of the main agitators, and was responsible for a court injunction, invalidated the same day it was issued, against Scribner in an attempt to prevent the 32 Tilden children

from entering 211. Assemblyman Stanley Fink, who was running for re-election, worked closely with Cohen. The Democratic club organized the Concerned Citizens of Canarsie and initiated the mass rally in support of the local board.

In addition to this, a number of Canarsie residents reported that they had received notices from real estate agents requesting if they were interested in selling their homes, and implying that they should sell now before the values go down. In this way Democrats, Conservatives and real estate interests all took advantage of people's racist fears for their own political and economic purposes by turning white against Black.

Canarsie religious leaders and institutions also inflamed the conflict. Canarsie rabbis and priests offered their synagogues and churches as "freedom schools" to the boycotting white students.

Rabbi Alfred Cohen of Young Israel of Canarsie and Rev. Gennaro M. Simonetti of Our Lady of Miracles Roman Catholic Church spoke at the mass rally, assuring the white Canarsie parents that they were morally right and urging them to continue their protests. Irving Schwartz, chairman of the Jewish Community Council of Canarsie, declared at the same rally, "We have built the swamps of Canarsie into a beautiful community, and no one is going to take it from us."

Throughout almost the entire crisis, Mayor John Lindsay refused to take a position, primarily because he feared weakening his chances for re-election or as candidate for New York State governor.

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There were some white Canarsie residents who did not agree with the protests. A group of these met one Sunday, and after much discussion decided to send telegrams to Commissioner Nyquist, the Board of Education and Chancellor Scribner urging them to support the Brownsville parents and not to give in to racist pressures.

Two of the men gave TV interviews in which they spoke out against what was going on (one later requested that the interview not be used). They were harassed and jeered at by their neighbors during the interviews and subsequently received threats.

One factor they mentioned which they felt prevented some Jewish people from speaking out was the anti-Semitism in the community, and the risk of being subjected to open ostracism and discrimination. Their fear for their homes and jobs prevents their relating this situation to that in pre-Nazi Germany, where such attitudes prevailed and eventually permitted the Nazis to gain control.

One rabbi, Rabbi Kushner, took the position that the Tilden children should be admitted and pointed out that if the children had been white there wouldn't be such objections. But at the same time he asserted that both sides are partially right. Observers noted that religious leaders are hired and fired by their congregations, and Rabbi Kushner's synagogue had already gotten rid of several rabbis for statements they made. Thus, when the rabbi at this synagogue supported Rev. Milton Galamison during the 1964 school boycotts for integration, he lost his job.

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A more vocal, active opposition from Canarsie residents would have helped the fight greatly. But even more serious is the fact that very little support for the Tilden parents and children came from organizations or individuals outside Canarsie. Such support would have helped create an atmosphere which would have enabled more of the residents to come out more vocally and actively.

PTA leaders and parents from all over the city could have marched into Canarsie to show their support for the Tilden children, sent telegrams and petitions to officials, and above all, attempted to talk to white Canarsie parents early in the school year, before the situation reached such a crisis that emotions crystallized their positions. Religious leaders and institutions could have contacted religious leaders and institutions in Canarsie to urge them to influence their congregations away from racist positions. Liberal politicians and office holders could have taken action to prevent the Conservative and Democratic parties from using the situation for their own selfish political ambitions. And so on.

Some religious leaders, mostly Catholic and Methodist, Black and white, and some PTA leaders came to 211 in a show of solidarity with the Tilden parents and children. Statements by Nyquist and particularly by Kenneth Clark, the only Black member of the State Board of Regents, strongly condemned the racism exhibited in Canarsie and criticized the central Board of Education for permitting such a situation to develop.

The Young Workers Liberation League was the first group to respond to the crisis, distributing a leaflet addressed to white Canarsie residents which pointed out that racism was hurting them as well as Black people. One of the League's leaders worked closely with the Tilden parents.

The Teachers Action Committee (TAC) circulated a resolution in the UFT demanding that the union support the Tilden parents and denounce attempts to institute "quotas" on Black students in 211, and TAC members went to a meeting in Brownsville to offer their support.

Communist Party leaders and activists in mass movements spoke out and urged support for the Tilden children.

The NAACP also came out against the demonstrations and the boycott and in support of the Tilden children. In addition, preliminary steps were taken to establish a Coalition Against Racism and For Quality Education, consisting of Black and white trade unionists, teachers, parents and community activists.

In the final stages of the boycott the American Jewish Committee released an appeal from 13 New York City civic, religious and educational groups calling for an end to the boycott.

As important as these statements and displays of support were, however, they were inadequate and belated. Little effort was made actually to talk to Canarsie parents or to mobilize significant concrete expressions of support, particularly among whites, around the city.

Albert Shanker, president of the UFT, opportunistically gave his support for the admission of the Tilden children to 211. He was not interested in fighting racism, which he agreed with Canarsie parents was not the issue, but in destroying decentralization and community control. He saw it as a power play between the central board and the local board.

In addition, more than a dozen civic and ethnic leaders, including representatives of some leading Jewish organizations, met on November 2 with Eleanor Holmes Norton, chairman of the city's Commission of Human Rights, and formed a loose coalition aimed at reducing racial polarization and averting confrontations like the Canarsie school dispute. However, this coalition did not act on the immediate Canarsie crisis, and nothing has been heard about the group since the initial meeting.

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Although the boycott and demonstrations were halted--temporarily--the situation can explode again at any time. The District 18 board was instructed to draw up new zones which would create more of a racial distribution among Flatbush and Canarsie schools. But what is probably happening during talks between the local board, the central board, and parents is that deals are being made to prevent "tipping" the racial balance.

Clearly, the elements that created the Canarsie crisis exist in cities and neighborhoods across the nation, and if racism in all its concrete manifestations is not fought at every turn there will be more Canarsies.

Progressive organizations should make the fight against Nixon's racist policies and the racist practices of every level of government, corporations, institutions, etc. a top priority.

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THE MORNING FREIHEIT'S BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM: II

By Phil Honor

(The following is the concluding portion of an excerpt from the Yiddish pamphlet How Long Can the Truth Be Hidden? The first part appeared in our June-July 1972 issue.)

Morning Freiheit Incitements against Arabs

Let us quote one more passage from P. Novick's book Palestine, the Arabs and Zionism:

Can there be any doubt that the objective of the movement in Egypt, Palestine, Syria--is to destroy British imperialism? This cannot be questioned. Therefore this movement must get the support of the working class, of all anti-imperialist elements, even if it is not led by workers.

The struggle in Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq... is a link in the chain of revolutions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries... In order to perceive the full scope of this, it is necessary to view the movements for national liberation in light of Marxism-Leninism, in light of the class struggle. (p. 126.)

In his report to the 1971 national MF convention, P. Novick follows a nationalistic approach to the Arab question that he himself so vigorously denounced in his past writings. He says: "Their (the Arab) unity against Israel--if one can call it unity--was of a pan-Arab chauvinist character and not anti-imperialist." This gross misrepresentation of the situation in the Middle East can only lead the MF readers to believe that the united struggle of the Arab nations to regain the territory occupied by Israel in the 1967 war is based upon "pan-Arab chauvinism." The editor of the Morning Freiheit distorts the truth, concealing that this is a just fight against a state which aims to enlarge its boundaries at the expense of its Arab neighbors. Novick comes out again and again with alarming statements that "Communists are being persecuted by Arab governments." He hints repeatedly that "serious errors are committed in 'certain circles'" on the Arab question, without being able to substantiate these accusations. Swayed by bourgeois nationalism the MF spokesman overlooks the fact that although the Arab national liberation movements proceed unevenly, have to contend with many difficulties and must, at times, overcome interruptions, they are progressive movements which must be supported by all anti-imperialist forces.

Of course we cannot ignore the extremist elements in the Arab ranks. We denounce the terrorist acts of these elements who are still beset by an illusion of destroying the State of Israel. We must also recognize that

this movement was brought into being, to a large degree, out of resentment against the six-day war, the occupation of Arab territories, the oppression of the Palestinian Arabs, and the merciless treatment of Arab refugees. Most of all we must bear in mind that these growing and maturing liberation movements have become an important factor in the Arab world, strengthening the anti-imperialist struggle and leading to cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, while the "democratic" rulers of Israel are becoming more and more enmeshed in the web of American imperialism.

Lenin pointed out:

To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc. --to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution...

Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is. (Collected Works, Vol. 22, pp. 355-356.)

It should be noted that this quotation was included in a pamphlet entitled Palestine, written by Paul Novick in 1936 and issued by the Jewish Bureau, Central Committee, CPUSA. In that pamphlet he denounced the Zionist persecution of the Palestinian people, stating: "The Zionists... are using all means to justify the criminal attitude towards the Palestinian population." In another passage we read:

Of course this movement still has faults... Must the movement be condemned together with its misleaders? Real revolutionists must, of course, take part in such a movement, weaken the influence of the misleaders, remove them, place themselves in the leadership of the movement in order to keep it within the orbit of struggle against the real enemy--imperialism--and all its servants.

It hardly needs to be said that Paul Novick, who is now so much concerned with "Pan-Arab chauvinism," could gain a great deal of enlightenment from his writings of 35-40 years ago.

"Maintaining a Base amongst Jewish Workers"

The spokesmen of the MF are attempting to justify their opportunism under the pretense that they must not separate themselves from the Jewish masses. They contend that they have to "sustain and preserve the progressive Jewish base." In a comment, "An Answer to a Reader"

(MF, February 24, 1971) the editors tell us: "Zionists and Zionist sympathizers constitute a majority of the Jewish people in the United States. To shrug them off, in a single gesture, would leave us a small minority that would be doomed to live in isolation. This is how Marxist-Leninists have to work among the American people."

Under the pretext of "not wanting to isolate themselves from the people," the spokesmen of the MF have turned from Marxism-Leninism to opportunism. The aggressive six-day war became a "war of self-defense," the UN Revolution on the Middle East is misrepresented, the Arab National Liberation Movement is maligned as "Pan-Arab chauvinism," the Soviet Union and other socialist countries are attacked and calumniated (Novick talks about "errors and even crimes in the socialist world." In an MF editorial, January 1, 1971, the Leningrad trial of hijackers of a Soviet airplane was lumped together with the ignominious trial of Basque freedom fighters in fascist Spain.) The MF leaders are doing all this "in order not to isolate themselves from the masses," as they say, and this opportunism is being offered to the readers as "Marxism-Leninism."

On various occasions Lenin conducted a sharp struggle against this kind of opportunism. He correctly pointed out that "our Party leads the masses to socialism, it does not follow every twist in the mood, or degradation of the mood, of the masses. All social democratic parties were faced, at one time or another, with a situation when the masses became apathetic or were swayed by some fallacy or vogue (chauvinism, anti-Semitism, anarchism, Boulangism, etc.). Consistent revolutionary social democrats never give in to a temporary turn in the mood of the masses." (Quoted by Igor Cohen, "The Leninist Theory on the National Question and Present-Day Capitalism," Sovetish Heimland, No. 9, 1970.).

This is how steadfast progressive leaders have to deal with this question. They must bear in mind that the way to strengthen the progressive movement is by educating the masses, imbuing them with a principled resolute position, and not to drive them still further in the direction of revisionism and bourgeois nationalism. Those who give in to chauvinist trends, betray the principles and boast about "strengthening the base," fail to see that they are losing the progressive image. They talk about "respect for the people." But they themselves are losing their respect for the masses, taking the people for granted.

However it must be made absolutely clear that this criticism is intended to be constructive and helpful. The aim is to lead the MF back to the Marxist-Leninist foundation that it was anchored to in previous years; to place this newspaper again under the ideological compass that it followed under the guidance of the unforgettable Moishe Olgin. It should also be noted that the MF takes a correct position on the war in Vietnam, the struggle against George Meany and other reactionary misleaders of labor, and on a number of other questions. We reiterate: our aim is

not to harm or eliminate the Morning Freiheit but to strengthen its base, to prevail upon the MF leaders to correct their ideological error and place the paper again in the forefront of the militant struggle of the progressive Jewish movement, which it has, to our great regret, abandoned in the last few years. We fully concur with the editors of Sovetish Heimland who have expressed their hope "that the spokesmen for the Morning Freiheit will find the necessary strength to overcome their present difficulties and bring back this newspaper to the position of a fighting organ for the progressive community in the United States."

* * *

ON THE PLIGHT OF IDA KAMINSKA

(We reprint here some excerpts from an article by Lee Rosenthal which appeared on August 17 in the Clinton-Chelsea News in New York City. Entitled "Show Business Is No Business," it deals with the troubles of Ida Kaminska since she came to the United States from Poland. Also reprinted is a letter to the newspaper by Louis J. Bravey, appearing in its issue of August 31.)

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"How can they allow me to wait so long, until I will not be able to play? They must find something for me," Ida Kaminska asks, demands, sadly, bitterly, not expecting an answer, but with some hope. There's always hope.

She is surprised, almost shocked that she has perhaps reached the end of her line, before she is ready, here in America where she expected so much.

Ms. Kaminska, who lives at 124 West 79th Street, is best known in this country for her portrayal of the shopkeeper in "The Shop on Main Street," a Czechoslovakian film which met with great success here in 1965.

Shortly after that, in 1967, she came to this country from Poland, where she and her parents before her were famous in the Yiddish theatre. She has no complaints about the state-controlled theatre in Poland.

"Every year they give millions for theatre," she said. "Naturally they have the right to know what you will play. In 22 years I never was disturbed..."

Ms. Kaminska came here expecting and hoping to establish her own Yiddish theatre. "My greatest passion has always been to have (it), and I have had it my whole life in Poland," she said.

Here the people who have money and would otherwise be interested are now giving money to Israel, she finds. They feel it is much more urgent. But, if they are concerned about Israel, why are they not concerned about keeping the Jewish theatre alive in this country, she wonders. She finds it frustrating and mystifying.

The Friends of Ida Kaminska Theatre tried to raise money here in New York, and she managed to produce a brief series of plays which appeared here recently. "They were absolutely sure that there would be many people to help. It wasn't so. The people who are interested don't have money, and the people who have money aren't interested..."

"A good theatre cannot exist without the government," she concluded, meaning that theatre should not exist simply because some people expect to make a profit or because some people have given money for it...

* * *

COMMUNICATIONS

WE SAW SOCIALISM AT WORK

By Tess and Meyer Gelfman

After living in the U. S. A. for 44 years, my wife and I took a 2-month trip and visited many republics in the Soviet Union, which is my native land. Our aim was to see socialism at work. I also hoped to find some of my relatives who might have survived.

I would like to share my impressions with the readers of this magazine. Since space is limited, I will touch only on some of the most outstanding impressions and experiences.

This journey was full of adventure and excitement. We visited many cities: Moscow, Leningrad and Volgograd in the Russian Federated Republic, Kiev in the Ukrainian Republic, Minsk in the Byelorussian Republic. We also stayed for seven days in Sochi in the Caucasus. In the Republic of Uzbekistan we visited Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara. We also made a side trip to Warsaw in Poland.

To describe all we saw and experienced would take a book. Suffice it to say that each republic and each city we visited filled us with awe, respect and admiration. It is fantastic, to say the least, that in only 27 years following the war, which resulted in so much destruction and in the loss of 20 million people, that such progress in rebuilding could take place. Only profound education and devotion of a people to their country and their system of government could make this possible.

The city of Minsk, especially, afforded us a real opportunity for close contact with Soviet people, many of them Jews. I found a relative who survived and some friends from my youth. Most of them prior to the revolution lived in poverty and degradation without any opportunity or hope for an education or a prospect for a better life. Now, most of my old friends are educated and practicing various professions in the service of their country. They are happy and contented. We were invited by several Jewish families to their homes. They dined and wine us.

I wish I could go into detail about the talks we had with them. From these and other contacts in various places, I can certainly attest to the fact that there is a new human being in the Soviet Union. The warmth and concern for the visitor as well as for one another is evident everywhere, in the streets, in the hotels, and in the institutions we visited. Everyone you speak to has only one desire and they express it eloquently in the words: "Mir y Drushba" (Peace and Friendship).

It may appear to some that I am painting too rosy a picture and perhaps that I am biased. Let me assure you that these were our honest and truthful impressions. Yes, there are some shortcomings; these are being corrected. Given time they will all be eliminated because that is the goal of the Soviet people and their government. It is true that money earnings are modest, especially in the professional category; however, when you add up all the benefits the Soviet people receive, one can readily see that the total earnings rise to the level of a well-paid worker in the U. S. A. The benefits include free medical service; free education; low rentals, minimal cost for utilities, telephone and transportation; etc. If we include all this, there is no doubt in my mind that they are much better off than we.

A lot of people are concerned about the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union. They want to know what is all this hue and cry about discrimination and anti-Semitism? Let me tell you that these are fabrications and propaganda spread by the Kahanes, the Zionists and the like. We did not have to visit synagogues to meet Jews, which most tourists do. We met Jews, old and young, in the streets, in restaurants and hotels, as well as in their homes. When we asked questions about these allegations, these were their answers: "When you get back to your country, tell them to leave us alone, they are only creating trouble for us. We are happy here. We have every opportunity for everything on a par with any other Soviet citizen."

Yes, we met some Jews who are discontented. These include people who would like to have a free hand to speculate or to engage in other illegal acts. Those are the Jews that are not trusted. They are being watched and as a result of their activities they are sometimes being passed over for promotion on the job. That is their gripe and it is of their own doing.

We visited Warsaw which, prior to the Hitler holocaust, was teeming with Jews. Now it is a city with few Jews. There are about four thousand Jews in Warsaw, but they are hardly visible in such a big metropolis. We met Jews who are connected with the Jewish Center and the Jewish theater. There is a Jewish Historical Museum in Warsaw. We met with the editor of the Jewish weekly, Folks-Shtime. All of these institutions are supported by the government. We were given to understand the reasons for the small Jewish population and the reason why some Jews left Poland in recent years.

We returned to Leningrad to board the Soviet boat, the Pushkin, which was to bring us home. For 13 glorious days aboard this ship we had an opportunity to be in a very close contact with many Soviet citizens. Our first impressions were confirmed that the Soviet people are a new breed worth emulating.

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IS THERE A JEWISH COMMUNITY?

By A Reader

Please comment on a dispute between myself and some friends over the meaning of "Jewish community" and whether we have one in our country.

I maintain that we do not have a Jewish community in the full sense of what a community represents. To me a community must represent a common interest, common goals and common aspirations affecting the entire group. To my mind, we cannot say this about the Jewish community in our country. It is a class community, made up of tens of thousands of poor Jews on welfare, working-class Jews slaving to make ends meet like any other workers and, on the other side, a wealthy middle-class community and a rich community of industrialists and other capitalists. Are their communal interests the same? Only the uninformed or the Zionists will argue that they are and talk of a Jewish community. As a working-class Jew I find no common identity with the man for whom I work and who exploits me from day to day and enjoys life on the profits he makes from those who work for him.

Who can forget the struggles of the garment workers who shed blood to organize the workers in that industry? A very large part of the employers were Jews. Was there a common identity between those who had their heads smashed by underworld scum, hired by employers, and those who did the hiring?

The interests of the Jewish workers are the same as those of any other workers in the country. They face discrimination and anti-Semitism just as the Black and Puerto Rican peoples face oppression and discrimina-

tion. There is a greater identity among them than there is between the Jewish worker and the Jewish capitalist.

The Black people, the Puerto Ricans, the Chicanos--these have communities. They each have a common denominator. There are no capitalists among them, or if there are any they are too insignificant to affect the existence of a community.

It is therefore of greater importance to the Jewish workers and lower middle class groups to identify themselves with these peoples in the struggle against racism than to be identified with the Jewish capitalists. This will assure that the struggle against anti-Semitism will become part of the over-all struggle against racism and not just a narrow struggle of Jewish groups.

* * *

ON THE JEWISH COMMUNITY: A REPLY

by the Editors

We believe it is correct to speak of a Jewish community in the United States, in the same sense as we speak of, say, a Polish, Italian or Hungarian community, as well as of a Black, Chicano or Puerto Rican community. It is essential, however, to understand clearly where the community of interests in such groups lies, and where it ends.

A nation is a community. It consists of a body of people sharing a common territory, language, culture and economic life. It is a community which emerges historically with the development of capitalism; therefore it is a community based on capitalist relations of production, on the exploitation of wage labor. It is a class-divided community. But at the same time it possesses the above national attributes, common to all its members.

In relation to these it is proper to speak of national interests and national unity. Thus, in World War II we called for national unity for the defeat of Hitlerism--a unity embracing all classes. As our readers may recall, it was the working class which fought hardest for that unity, and in whose ranks the truest patriots were to be found, while in the ranks of monopoly capital there were not a few who were prepared to sell out our country's interests to Hitler.

True, a national minority, living within the territory of another nation, does not have all the attributes of a nation. It lacks a territory and economic life of its own. Its members do, however, share a common language and a common cultural heritage and, in some cases a common religion. They are imbued with a national consciousness and a national pride. And they are subjected in one degree or another to national discrimination or oppression, an inevitable outgrowth of the exploitative character of capitalism.

The Jewish people in the United States clearly constitute a national minority possessing all the above features and forming a distinct community whose existence is manifested in a number of ways. There are more than 200 Jewish organizations of significant size, ranging from Right-wing Zionist organizations at one end to such progressive organizations as the Jewish Fraternal Clubs and the Emma Lazarus Federation at the other. To be sure, the use of Yiddish is declining, but there exists an extensive Anglo-Yiddish culture, marked by a large number of newspapers, a considerable body of literary works, production of plays and musicals on Jewish themes, etc. In addition, the Jewish people are subjected to anti-Semitism against which they are compelled to wage a constant struggle--a struggle involving all classes.

Thus, while it is true that the basic class interests of Jewish workers and Jewish capitalists are diametrically opposed, there also exists certain common interests among the Jewish people as a national group, particularly in the fight against anti-Semitism. But in this fight it is necessary to strive for the leadership and ideology of the working class--the ideology of proletarian internationalism--and against the influences of bourgeois nationalism and Zionism.

What must be rejected, therefore, is not the existence of a Jewish community but rather the classless concept of it characteristic of Jewish nationalism, which views the Jewish people as an undifferentiated, homogeneous mass. What must be rejected is the Zionist thesis that the interests of Jewish workers and capitalists are identical, that their common enemy is the non-Jew, of whatever class. What must also be rejected is the tendency in certain progressive Jewish circles to speak of the Jewish community "as a whole." For example, in a recent speech Paul Novick raises the question: "Shall the Jewish community as a whole continue to occupy a forward position in American political, social and cultural life, or will there be a turn towards reaction?" (Jewish Currents, September 1972.)

This idea that the Jewish people as a body are more progressive than other groups is a nationalist myth. It is true that Jewish workers have played an exceptional role in the class struggle and the fight for socialism; it is no less true that the Jewish monopolists and financiers have in the main played a reactionary role. Novick completely ignores the reactionary role of Zionism in the Jewish community--failure to fight against the Indochina aggression, support of the Zionist policies of aggression in Israel, support of Nixon in the presidential elections, the shocking growth of racism, etc. Hence he abandons the struggle to mobilize the masses of Jewish working people against Zionism, against racism and anti-Semitism, for unity with the Black and other oppressed peoples, for a genuine policy of peace in both Indochina and the Middle East.

But this is precisely the task of Communists and progressives within the Jewish community--within its organizations and institutions as well as among Jews as individuals.

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