

JEWISH AFFAIRS

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CONTENTS

Editorial Comment

- Protest the Brutal Treatment of Angela Davis! 1
Hyman Lumer, The Truth About the Lies at Brussels 2
Joseph Lévy, The Morning Freiheit's "Balanced" Approach 6

From DER VEG

- Soviet Jewish Migrants to Israel Await Return 10
Alliance With Fascists 11
Protest the Persecution of Na'm El-Ashhab! 13
Hyman Lumer, A Reply to Slander 15

Communications

- Ivrey Awnochev, On the Actions of Dr. Wexler 15
Morris Davis, The Role of B'nai B'rith 17
James Sager, Against Anti-Sovietism 19
Lee Carr, Jewish Currents, Which Side Are you On? 20

- Events and Views 22

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From Warsaw Sol Flapan reports (January 2, 1971): "Chewel Buzgan, actor-director of the Jewish State Theater, was honored recently for his 50 years of service to Jewish culture, and in a letter of thanks, published in the Folks-Shtimme he wrote:

"Where else would a Ministry of Culture and the executive board of the capital city sponsor the anniversary of a Jewish actor who performs in Yiddish for Jewish and non-Jewish audiences?..."

"We exist, we work, we bring joy to our dear theatergoers, we are entirely supported by our government, we have no fear of tomorrow and we have nothing to be envious of as regards our actor colleagues anywhere else in the world."

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We have just received Volume V, dated 1970, of the Annual published by the Social, Cultural and Educational Association of the Jews in the People's Republic of Bulgaria. It contains a collection of articles on the history of the Jews in Bulgaria. Among them are the following: Dona Crispin, "Protest Demonstration of the Jews of Sofia on May 24, 1943"; Willi Mayer, "Bulgarian Writers in Defense of Jews During World War Two (1940-1944)"; Isak Moscona, "Material and Spiritual Life of the Bulgarian Jews." The volume also contains material on the struggles of the Communist Party of Bulgaria on behalf of the Jews during the war years. Together, the five volumes which have appeared present a wealth of information on the history and status of the Bulgarian Jews, a subject which is little known in this country.

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EDITORIAL COMMENTPROTEST THE BRUTAL TREATMENT OF ANGELA DAVIS!

While the fight to win her freedom mounts in scope and intensity, Angela Davis continues to be confined in San Rafael Prison under inhuman conditions which not only deprive her of the rights and privileges generally accorded to prisoners but seriously threaten her health and even her life.

She is kept in solitary confinement, completely isolated from all the other prisoners. She is confined to one of two cramped windowless cells, that in which she sleeps and that in which she does her reading and writing. She is permitted outdoor exercise only rarely, and then only by herself. She is denied proper medical and dental care, on the excuse that the cost of security in moving her from place to place is prohibitive. She is subjected to rough and abusive physical treatment by the guards. Efforts are made to cut off visitors on the slightest pretext. Her jailers lose no opportunity to display the utmost bestiality toward her. They are determined to break her even before she is brought to trial.

The outrageous persecution of this courageous Black woman must evoke the widest indignation and protest. Letters of protest should be sent to Deputy Sheriff Gassett and Captain McTeague at San Rafael Prison, Marin County, California. They must be made to feel the wrath of the American people.

But much more is required. Angela Davis should not be in prison at all. The denial of bail is part of the special persecution visited on her. Having already been tried in the news media, she is now muzzled and prevented from defending herself properly by being kept in jail. To protect her health and to enable her to prepare her defense, among other reasons, she should be immediately granted bail. A flood of letters and wires should also descend on Governor Ronald Reagan, demanding bail for Angela Davis now.

Meanwhile the need for funds continues, particularly to cover legal defense costs, which are expected to run into huge sums. To facilitate the raising of these funds an Angela Davis Legal Defense Fund has been established.

The following-named American citizens constitute the Trustee Board of the Fund:

Chairman, Ossie Davis
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 Co-Chairman Black Liberation Commission, C.P.U.S.A.

There is in addition a considerable body of sponsors representing various walks of life.

Contributions should be sent to the Angela Davis Legal Defense Fund at 112 West 120th Street, New York, N.Y. 10027. Such contributions will be used solely for legal defense purposes. Contributions may also be made to the Angela Davis Defense Committee in your city.

We call on all our readers to join to the full in this vital struggle for the freedom of Angela Davis and all other political prisoners.

. . .

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LIES AT BRUSSELS

By Hyman Lumer

(The following is part of an article appearing in the World Magazine of March 20, 1971. Other parts will be dealt with in later issues.)

On February 23-25 an international conference took place in Brussels. Ostensibly it was called to defend the rights of the Jewish people and to combat anti-Semitism. Did it protest the re-nazification of West Germany and the rise of the neo-Nazi National-Democratic Party? Did it cry out against the manifestations of anti-Semitism in the United States or in Franco Spain? Not at all. The sole purpose of this gathering was the "liberation" of Soviet Jews.

The conference was sponsored by an array of organizations including the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and its counterparts in other countries, and the Israeli Representative Council of Soviet Jewry. The B'nai B'rith International Council, the World Zionist Organization and the World Jewish Congress also took part. Some 750 representatives of these organizations attended, 200 of them from the United States. It was a prestigious gathering, indeed, graced by the presence of such prominent U.S. figures as Arthur Goldberg, Otto Preminger, Paddy Chayefsky and Hans J. Morgenthau.

The conference issued a ringing declaration of "solidarity with our Jewish brothers in the Soviet Union" and stated that it was "totally identified with their heroic struggle for the safeguarding of their national identity and for their natural and inalienable right to return to their historic homeland, the land of Israel." And it denounced "the policy pursued by the government of the Soviet Union of suppressing the historic Jewish cultural and religious heritage."

Recent Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union were put on display to tell harrowing stories of their supposed cultural and religious deprivation. Typical was one Grisha Feigin, who had served time as a counterfeiter and as a confidence man and who invented a fictitious record of "war heroism."

The conference also attracted the notorious Rabbi Meir Kahane, mentor of the Jewish Defense League, who was refused admittance and was subsequently expelled from the country. But this, according to the New York Times of February 25, "threw the conference into an uproar, embarrassed its organizers and sharpened a split between a majority favoring peaceful pressure on the Soviet government and those who think that violence is necessary." Prominent among Kahane's defenders was the even more notorious Menahem Begin, head of Israel's extreme Right-wing Gahal party.

Such was the disgraceful performance in Brussels - an action vehemently protested by the Soviet government and by leading Soviet Jewish citizens. It climaxes a long-standing campaign against alleged persecution of Soviet Jews - a campaign which has become the chief preoccupation of the Zionist establishment here and in other parts of the capitalist world.

The sources of this unholy crusade, now involving virtually all major Jewish organizations and the government of Israel, lie in the circles of Right-wing reaction and in the State Department, which has given it the fullest support and encouragement. Its purpose is not the welfare of Soviet Jews but the defamation and undermining of the Soviet Union. And it is based on a fraud - on a Big Lie endlessly repeated and elaborated with the aim of winning popular acceptance. Its tactics range from the subtlest distortions to the crudest fabrications.

The Soviet government, it is charged, pursues a deliberate policy of anti-Semitism - of discrimination against Jews in all aspects of life, of denial of their right to live as Jews, of persecuting and imprisoning those who seek to do so. Congress Bi-Weekly, organ of the American Jewish Congress, speaks of "the Soviet inquisition of Jews," and refers to the Soviet Jews as "a captive people." (January 22, 1971.) Some of the accusers go as far as to liken the Soviet Jews' situation to that in Nazi Germany, and they speak of genocide.

But this is so glaringly false that even anti-Soviet spokesmen are impelled to repudiate it. C. L. Sulzberger, in a New York Times column datelined Moscow (July 1, 1970), states that "the regime itself is not committed to internal anti-Semitism" and that "real anti-Semitism is concentrated among relatively few bigots." New York Times correspondent, Bernard Gwertzman, writes (December 27, 1970): "There is certainly no wave of officially-inspired anti-

Semitism sweeping the Soviet Union" (though there are, he says, individual instances of anti-Semitism). Nahum Goldmann, head of the World Jewish Congress, has repeatedly noted that Soviet Jews enjoy equal civil and human rights with all other Soviet citizens and has warned against distortions on this point. Other observations of a like character can readily be cited.

* * * * *

It is also alleged that Soviet Jews are severely restricted in their ability to practice their religion, that there are few synagogues and even these are being progressively shut down, that no seminary exists, that prayer books and other religious articles are unobtainable, as are kosher foods. Of all these things, it is charged, Soviet Jews are deliberately deprived by the Soviet government. Lewis Feuer, for example, goes so far as to state: "They have no kosher food; if somebody secretly sells a kosher chicken, there is a prison-term." ("Soviet Marranos," Judaism, Winter 1964, reprinted in Jewish Digest, July 1970.)

But these allegations are no less false than the others. The fact is that Soviet Jews who wish to do so are perfectly free to practice their religion. Any group of 20 or more may establish a synagogue, and any group of 10 or more may form a minyan, conducting religious services in members' homes or other places. There are today nearly 100 synagogues and 300 minyans in the Soviet Union.

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin, Chief Rabbi of Moscow, in an address delivered during his visit to this country in 1968, reported:

"The doors of our Moscow Great Synagogue, from the time of the Revolution to the present day, have been open to all worshippers and for all visitors . . . and prayers are conducted there throughout the day, the Talmud is studied there, and the Mishnah, the Shulchan Aruch, and the Chumosh. There is available a slaughterhouse for poultry, a ritual bath, and those who perform circumcisions. The Community Council provides Jews with matzoh, not only for Moscow Jews but also for Jews of other places."

Two Georgian correspondents of Soviet Weekly report (March 21, 1970) that in the city of Kutaisi, where there are three synagogues, "there are kosher slaughter-houses, and both the Great and Small synagogues have their own bakeries for matzoh. There are eight butchers selling kosher meat, a Jewish bath-house and a Jewish cemetery."

A religious calendar is published every year by the Moscow Central Synagogue, and in 1968 a new prayer book edited by Rabbi Levin was issued in 10,000 copies. It should be noted that in the Soviet Union there is complete separation of church and state and that religious institutions must provide for themselves. But they

are in no way prohibited from doing so, and this applies to Jews as well as Christians or Mohammedans.

It is not true that there is no Jewish seminary. Rabbi Levin reports that in 1956 a Yeshiva was opened in Moscow with the consent of the government, but he adds that "the youth have completely removed themselves from Judaism so that students for the Yeshiva are very difficult to find."

Indeed, the proportion of religious believers among Soviet Jews is very small. It ranges from 3-6% in the Russian Federation and the Ukraine to 7-12% in Georgia, the Northern Caucasus and Bukhara. And they are mostly old people. The fact is that, like other religions, Judaism is dying out in the Soviet Union. It is only those who identify Jewish life with Judaism who find in this fact a monstrous plot of the Soviet government to destroy Jewish identity.

Least of all do Soviet Jews see it in this light. Says Aaron Vergelis, editor of Sovietish Heimland:

"We live in a country where more than half a century ago the old order was abolished. We have a different way of life. It corresponds to our convictions. We believe that the Jewish people must go forward on the road of the twentieth century.

"They maintain that Jews will be able to preserve their identity only if they attend synagogue regularly, remain captive to tradition, and return to the usages of past centuries. They say that if we follow new paths, we are no longer Jews. We, on the contrary, are convinced that we are Jews only when we live in a new way and are part of new times." (World Magazine, April 18, 1970.)

* * * * *

The overwhelming majority of Soviet Jews consider the Soviet Union as their motherland and have no desire whatever to leave it. They are proud to be Soviet citizens, and in reply to the anti-Soviet slanders many of them have emphatically said so. And with good reason. The transformation from the ghettos and pogroms of Tsarist days to the full equality which Jews enjoy today has been little short of miraculous. The discrimination in employment and housing one finds in this country are absent there. There are no "Jewish neighborhoods," not even the "gilded ghettos" of U.S. suburbia about which so much has been written.

It is here that the fight against anti-Semitism must be waged. The anti-Soviet crusade only creates a diversion from this struggle; it helps not the Jewish people but their enemies. Hence such spectacles as the Brussels conference must be unequivocally condemned.

THE MORNING FREIHEIT'S "BALANCED" APPROACH

By Joseph Levy

Paul Novick, editor of the Morning Freiheit, published on January 3, 1971 an article on the Leningrad trial, which opens with the following statement: "The Morning Freiheit has taken in the Leningrad case--as it has in all other important matters-- a balanced view, seeing the complete picture." (Emphasis his.)

In the light of this assertion, it is well to recall a New Year's editorial which appeared in his paper on January 1. We read there:

The last days of the past year brought significant gains for justice and humanism. The death sentences imposed on two Jews in the Leningrad trial were removed. The Basque fighters in Spain will not be killed. These are two different matters. These two extremely important events, which deserve a broader analysis, can only be recorded here. We are doing this with a feeling of relief, hoping that justice will be done everywhere.

By linking the Leningrad case to the Burgos trial the editorial maligns the Soviet Union, seeking to establish a common denominator between the Socialist USSR and fascist Spain. The vague sentence, "These are two different matters," has been presumably added in order not to alienate discriminating readers who have not lost faith in socialism and their friendship for the USSR, but then it is hoped that "justice will be done everywhere"--in the Soviet Union and in the Spanish fascist dictatorship.

This is truly an insidious distortion of the facts. In Burgos there were tried before a military court 15 Basque freedom fighters, who have devoted their lives to the liberation of their homeland from Franco's fascist tyranny and to the struggle for freedom and socialism. The Basques have for decades offered the stiffest resistance to the Spanish dictator, which has caused the enraged Franco to conduct a genocidal campaign against this national minority. He has declared the Basque Province a "treasonable territory" and aims to destroy their national identity and culture. The use of the Basque language is illegal in Spain.

The severe sentences imposed on the 15 freedom fighters, six of whom were condemned to death, led to wide mass actions, campus upheavals and a wave of strikes in Spain and to mass protests all over the world. News commentators in the U.S. pointed out that this trial caused the sharpest crisis in the history of the Franco regime. It was the upheaval at home and an aroused public opinion abroad that compelled the Spanish dictator to commute the death verdict.

In Leningrad there were put on trial eleven conspirators who planned to hijack an airplane and flee to a country whose rulers declare that the Soviet Union is their worst enemy. In drawing a comparison between the Basque freedom fighters and the group that tried to hijack a Soviet plane, the editor of the Morning Freiheit surely did not present to his readers an "objective, complete picture."

Some aspects of the Leningrad case have remained untold in the Morning Freiheit. The New York Times correspondent, Henry Giniger, has disclosed in a report from Paris (February 5, 1971) that two of the eleven defendants in the Leningrad trial, Mark Dymshits and Edward Kuznetzov, had been in direct contact with Israel. Giniger related that according to information received by the New York Times, Dymshits admitted in court that he had consulted Israel on the plan to hijack the Soviet airplane and to fly it to Israel. Kuznetzov and a witness, Gilya Butman, corroborated his testimony. Dymshits, who is a pilot, said that he was instructed not to implement the hijacking plan until Israel had been consulted by the "Leningrad Center" (presumably a Jewish group in Leningrad that has direct contact with Israel.)

According to Giniger's report, Dymshits stated in his testimony that they were advised by the Israelis to give up the hijacking plan. However, it is interesting to note that some Right-wing members of the Knesset stated in a parliamentary debate that the Soviet Jews have the right to hijack airplanes. These statements were never refuted by government ministers. The silence of the high Israeli government officials is particularly reprehensible considering the fact that Israel and the Soviet Union were among the 72 countries who had signed, a few weeks before, an international pact condemning hijacking as a menace to international aviation and providing severe punishment for the culprits.

Though the Morning Freiheit did not publish the Giniger report, it did print on January 1 a statement by Golda Meir in which she said that a "universal humanitarian awakening" helped to bring about a commutation of Dymshits' and Kuznetzov's sentences. Mrs. Meir should be reminded that the "universal humanitarian awakening" of which she spoke does not extend to the policies of Israel that include the torture of Arab prisoners who are being held without trial, the demolition of Arab houses and other mistreatment of the Arab population in the occupied territories.

On December 29 the Morning Freiheit published a special dispatch from its Israeli correspondent, I. Lipsky, which was prominently displayed in a box on the front page. It was headed "All Communist Parties Get Urgent Appeal from Israel." The text was as follows:

Tel-Aviv December 28, 1970-- The Israeli Communist Party, led by Mikunis, Sneh and Esther Vilenska, has sent off cablegrams to all Communist Parties, asking them in the name of socialism, friendship for the Soviet Union, justice and humanism, to appeal to the Supreme Soviet for the annulment of the death sentences imposed on the two defendants in the Leningrad case and the verdict received by the other defendants.

One of the biggest public demonstrations ever seen in our city took place yesterday, December 27. The slogan of the demonstration was to save the lives of the two sentenced to death and to abolish the verdicts passed on the eleven Jews in the Leningrad trial.

A few days later (January 5, 1971) the Morning Freiheit printed a correction to this news item, noting that appeals were made not to all the Communist Parties of the world, but only to the Communist Parties of Italy, France, England, Spain, China, Sweden, Holland, and Canada. However, the editors did not consider it necessary to correct another false statement in Lipsky's dispatch, namely, that the 11 defendants in the Leningrad case were not all Jews. Two of them were non-Jews. This is a crucial point, which should not have been ignored by a responsible publication, because the ultra-reactionary Jewish Defense League and other Soviet haters spread the big lie that only Jews were tried in Leningrad in order to make it appear as an anti-Semitic act.

This dispatch contains another gross misrepresentation. We are told that there exists in Israel a Communist Party led by Sneh, Mikunis and Vilenska. The truth is that this is a renegade group which has been rejected by the Communist parties the world over. This chauvinistic clique conducts a virulent anti-Soviet campaign. It gives its tacit support to Mrs. Meir's aggressive policies by abstaining from voting when these policies are challenged in the Knesset. (This group has one representative in the Knesset: M. Sneh)

Mikunis and his friends have supported the aggressive 1967 War as a "war of self-defense." On the question of peace negotiations the Sneh-Mikunis group claims to support the UN Resolution of November 22, 1967, but it distorts the real meaning of this document in such a way as to allow Israel to hold on to the occupied territories, or a great part of them, as well as to disregard the rights of the Palestinian Arabs.

The Sneh-Mikunis followers, as other revisionist renegade groups, are using the slogan, "Humanistic Communism" to undermine the vigilance in Socialist countries against counterrevolutionary subversion (CIA agents have used this misleading slogan in their counterrevolutionary activities in Czechoslovakia.)

In the anti-Soviet hysteria that raged during the Leningrad trial, the organ of the Mikunis-Sneh clique, Kol Ha'am, reached a high pitch of irresponsible journalism. On the first page of this publication there appeared a cartoon depicting a Soviet gallows (on a Stalin background) with a star of David in its noose. The Israeli newspaper Yediot Ahronot reported on December 12 that the Soviet flag which was burned in front of the Finnish Embassy in Tel-Aviv came from the Club Ahava, which is sponsored by Sneh-Mikunis group. Spokesmen for the group tried to deny their affiliation with the club, but they couldn't hide the fact that their party meetings are held in the club headquarters on Brenner Street. Yet this infamous cartoon and the flag-burning incident were not mentioned in the Morning Freiheit.

The real Communist Party of Israel is never mentioned in the Morning Freiheit. This party, led by Meir Vilner and Tawfiq Toubi, is recognized by the world Communist movement as the only Communist Party of Israel. It has three deputies in the Knesset. Its influence among the Jewish and Arab masses of Israel is growing. It is in the forefront of the economic struggle of the Israeli workers and has been influential in the creation of a broad peace movement in Israel.

The Morning Freiheit has embarked on a course of catering to elements who are influenced by Zionist propaganda and have turned away from the class struggle. At the same time it does not want to alienate those readers who believe in socialism and are staunch friends of the Soviet Union. Such a course leads to irreconcilable contradictions and confusions.

Thus, in an editorial of December 27, 1971 we read: "Recently the Soviet Union had the experience of having one of its planes hijacked in which a young hostess lost her life. Its rigorous attitude to hijacking is therefore understandable." Then comes the following: "However, in the Leningrad case, not only were there no casualties, but there was no actual hijacking--merely a plan that did not come off..." The demagoguery of these two statements is obvious. We are told that the Soviet Union's "rigorous attitude toward hijacking is understandable," but the full extent of the treasonable crime committed by the defendants is concealed.

The editorial states: "Simple justice demands that consideration be given to the request by such responsible Jewish leaders as Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, President of the American Jewish Congress, and others to annul the death sentences and for the moderation of the verdicts generally." But it fails to mention that Rabbi Lelyveld and the AJC are eager participants in the Zionist attacks on the USSR.

The editorial declares: "For many years the Morning Freiheit has rejected the charge that a kind of official 'Soviet anti-Semitism' exists in the USSR. We still do." But this is followed by the comment: "It would not surprise us if questions are now being

raised as to whether the atmosphere created (in the Soviet Union) by the anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic hysteria of the Ivanovs, Yevseyevs and others did not contribute to the severity of the sentences."

The ambiguity is obvious. First we are told that the existence of official "Soviet anti-Semitism" is rejected. But then it is insinuated that such an "atmosphere of anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic hysteria" has been created in the Soviet Union as to render it impossible for the defendants in the Leningrad case to get a fair trial. The editorial concludes with a call for "socialist humanism" in the Leningrad case. The implication is that it is lacking, a false idea frequently employed by the C.I.A. and counterrevolutionary forces to subvert duped, vacillating, revisionist elements in the socialist countries. Such is the "balanced" approach of the Morning Freiheit, which always ends in an anti-Soviet stand.

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From DER VEG

(The following items are translated from the progressive Yiddish weekly, Der Veg, published in Tel Aviv. For the information of our Yiddish-speaking readers, air mail subscriptions to it are available at the rate of \$12.00 a year. Write to: Der Veg, 61 Maze Street, Tel Aviv, Israel.)

SOVIET JEWISH MIGRANTS TO ISRAEL AWAIT RETURN TO USSR

(January 13, 1971)

Twenty-five Soviet Jewish families, who emigrated in the past year to Israel, are now in Vienna awaiting permission to return to their Soviet homeland. They were compelled to leave Israel illegally, having no other way to get out of the country.

A journalist of the Austrian newspaper, Volkstimme, interviewed these emigrants (January 1, 1971). He was told that the Soviet authorities are now considering their re-entry appeals and are making the necessary preparations for their repatriation, such as finding housing and jobs for them.

Some of the interviews divulged that even now the local Zionist organizations in Vienna are exerting a great deal of pressure on them, attempting to prevent their return to the Soviet Union.

One of the most repugnant things to the emigrants was that they were constantly subjected to questioning by Israeli authorities about Soviet military matters and military installations in the Soviet Union. No less annoying were the demands that they should cut themselves off from everything and everybody in the

Soviet Union. Those who refused to acquiesce to these requests, or to become informers, suffered economic discrimination. There were some who consented under pressure to join the anti-Soviet propaganda campaign which rages in Israel. They now regret their hasty decisions.

The interviewer was told that those Jewish immigrants from the USSR who want to return to their Soviet homeland have been disenchanted by the callous attitude of the ruling circles of Israel to the economic and social problems of the population and to their indifference to human needs. Spokesmen for the group asserted that there are at present hundreds of newcomers to Israel who would be happy to go back to the Soviet Union if they could get an opportunity to do so.

Some of the group pointed out that the Golda Meir government, which accuses the Soviet Union of refusing to allow Jews to leave the USSR, takes stringent measures to detain many people who have become disillusioned with life in Israel. This is especially true with respect to Soviet Jews. In corroboration of this statement, spokesmen of the emigrant group pointed to the fact that they had to leave Israel illegally.

The editors of the Volkstimme added the following remarks:

For us, in Austria, this story is of particular interest. It shows the falsity of the allegations that Jews are not permitted to leave the Soviet Union and are, at times, even compelled to hijack airplanes and endanger the lives of passengers and crew in order to leave the country. Evidently it is possible to leave the Soviet Union in a lawful manner. The Jews who are now waiting here for permits to return to the USSR are proof of this.

Of course, it's true that those Jews who want to depart from the Soviet Union encounter difficulties. This is especially the case since the 1967 war, but the fact that some of them want to return shows that the Soviet government has to be particularly careful in this respect. It also must be considered that some of the Soviet Jewish immigrants may serve the Israeli government as cannon fodder in future conflicts.

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ALLIANCE WITH FASCISTS

(January 6, 1971)

The Israeli progressive Yiddish newspaper, Der Veg, comments on an interview that the Premier of Israel, Golda Meir, had with a reporter of the reactionary French newspaper L'Aurore. This

newspaper reflects the views of the French fascist elements and is known as an extremely anti-Semitic publication. Since the 1967 War L'Aurore has supported the aggressive policies of the Israeli government.

Der Veg points out that Mrs. Meir's intemperate attacks on the Soviet Union were doubtless very desirable copy for L'Aurore. Her remarks included such irresponsible statements as: "The USSR wants to annihilate the Jews" and "The Soviet Government wants to destroy Israel."

The interview shows in which direction the present leaders of Israel are going in order to gain support for their aggressive policies of holding on to the occupied Arab territories and sabotaging the Gunnar Jarring talks.

The editors of Der Veg have stressed that Israel could very well do without such "friends" as L'Aurore. The same goes for the notorious former Nazi Franz Joseph Straus, who after Hitler's downfall became a minister in the Adenauer government. He is now a leader of the growing fascist forces in West Germany.

Straus was interviewed (12/23/70) by a journalist of the widely circulated Israeli newspaper, Yediot Ahronot. This former Nazi, whose bloodthirsty "comrades in arms" sent hundreds of thousands of Jews to the gas chambers, pretends now to be a "friend" of the Israelis, many of whom barely saved themselves from the Nazi genocidal holocaust. He let loose a barrage of abuse against the Soviet Union and the present Brandt government in West Germany.

Straus said, among other things: "Brandt's Eastern policies serve the interests of the Soviet Union." and "The Soviet government wants to spread its influence in the Middle East." This former Nazi had the gall to say: "Israel is our friend. This she must know and appreciate. She must realize that the real threat to her does not come from West Germany or the N.D.P. but from the Soviet Union." (The N.D.P. is the West German neo-Nazi Party.) Straus advised the Israeli leaders "to strongly resist Brandt's Eastern policies." He hinted that the Golda Meir government ought not to participate in the Jarring talks. He also brought the "glad tidings" that he intends to visit Israel later this year.

(We fully agree with the opinion expressed by the editors of Der Veg that Israel would be better off without the "friendship" of this neo-Nazi whose insidious "advice" must be revolting to every conscionable person.)

PROTEST THE PERSECUTION OF NA'IM EL-ASHHAB!

We have received the following letter from the Communist Party of Israel:

January 11, 1971

Dear Friends,

It is over two years that Na'im El-Ashhab, leading personality of the Communist Party of Jordan, was arrested by the Israeli occupation authority in East Jerusalem and detained administratively without indicting him of any crime or offence, without trial.

About a year ago, an attempt was made on the life of comrade El-Ashhab, in prison. Since then, N. El-Ashhab was jailed in the Shatta prison, near Beisan, in solitary confinement, on the pretext of "safeguarding him" from attacks by hooligans and incited prisoners. Notwithstanding his deteriorating health and disregarding the public protests and repeated demands to release Na'im El-Ashhab, the Israeli authorities continue to hold him imprisoned in his separate cell deprived from light and air.

Lately Na'im El-Ashhab's health has further deteriorated and particularly his sight now is in danger. The doctor who examined his eyes asserted that his eye-sight is being weakened and endangered by the continued solitary imprisonment and deprivation from sunlight and fresh-air.

The Communist Parliamentary faction in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) submitted an urgent interpellation to the Defense Minister, Moshe Dayan, drawing his attention to the situation of Na'im El-Ashhab and demanded his immediate release.

There are thousands of victims of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories - imprisoned, tortured, exiled, oppressed in many other ways and deprived of elementary human rights. But the particularly deteriorating situation of Na'im El-Ashhab urges us to bring his case to the notice and knowledge of democratic organisations calling for solidarity action as deemed fit, raising the demand from the Israeli Government and its representatives to immediate release of the Communist leader Na'im El-Ashhab and save him from the danger of losing his sight.

We shall appreciate receiving information on any action taken.

Fraternally yours,

COMMUNIST PARTY OF ISRAEL
CENTRAL COMMITTEE

MEIR VILNER
GENERAL SECRETARY

To this appeal the officers of the Communist Party of Illinois have responded with the following letter to Israeli Premier Golda Meir:

January 22, 1971

Premier Golda Meier
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Premier Golda Meier:

In behalf of the Communist Party of Chicago and the State of Illinois, and the many thousands of our friends and supporters, we raise our voices in the demand for the immediate release of Na'im El-Ashhab, outstanding peace and freedom fighter and leading personality of the Communist Party of Jordan.

Over two years ago he was arrested by the Israeli occupation authorities in East Jerusalem, and has been held in prison without indictment and without trial.

While in prison, an attempt was made on the life of Na'im El-Ashhab. His health is in a state of deterioration. His eyesight has been seriously impaired, with the possibility of even more serious consequences.

We in the United States who are involved in a major struggle against our government's war policies, against the horrible crimes being committed against the Indo-Chinese peoples and our own American boys, against growing fascist reaction and anti-Semitism here, cannot remain indifferent or silent to persecution of peace and freedom fighters in other parts of the world, including Israel.

We who face the onslaught of the Nixon repression drive here in the United States, at a time when so many peace, civil-rights and freedom fighters have been imprisoned, when our own dear and beloved comrade, Angela Davis, has been imprisoned and faces possible death--cannot remain silent to similar developments in Israel.

Together with many others throughout the world, we demand the immediate release from imprisonment of Na'im El-Ashhab. We demand that he be given all necessary medical aid in order to help restore his health and save his eyesight. We also demand the immediate freedom of all Arab and Jewish political peace and freedom fighters who are being persecuted, hounded and imprisoned by your government.

Sincerely yours,

Claude Lightfoot, Chairman, Communist Party of Ill.
Jack Kling, Secretary
Linda Applehans, Organizational Secretary

A REPLY TO SLANDER

By Hyman Lumer

The Mikunis-Sneh group, in its Information Bulletin of November 1970, has done me the honor of attacking my description in the Daily World of what it refers to as the "Israeli Left." In an article entitled "Hyman Lumer's Strange Map of the Israeli Left," it undertakes to prove my ignorance of the situation by the simple device of falsifying what I said.

Thus, the article states: "He classifies the 'Ha'Olam Hazeh' as Left (despite declarations that they are not Left at all." However, I did not refer to them as "Left" but as part of the Israeli peace movement--which they most certainly are.

The article also states: "The 'Matzpen' group shows, in Lumer's opinion, 'a correct approach' on most issues." What I said was that this was a small ultra-Left grouping which "opposes the cease-fire but has taken a correct stand on some other issues." And so it has. Among other things, in the last Knesset elections it supported the Communist Party candidates.

The article states that I referred to their group as being to the Right of Mapam and at the same time as being the "Left wing of the Alignment" which includes Mapam. Of course, this would be absurd--if I had said it. What I did write was that the Israeli journalist Amos Kenan had characterized this group as "the Left wing of the Labor Party," that is, of Golda Meir's party, which does stand to the Right of Mapam.

I could go on, but the above is enough to demonstrate the scurrilous character of the attack. This kind of slander only serves to demonstrate how low this group has sunk. If they continue on their present course, they will soon be more aptly designated as the Right wing of the Labor Party.

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COMMUNICATIONSON THE ACTIONS OF DR. WEXLER

On December 26, 1970 a newscaster announced that a Dr. William A. Wexler, president of B'nai B'rith, was going to file an amicus curiae--a "friend of the court" brief--with the Leningrad Tribunal before which eleven defendants were found guilty of serious crimes against the Soviet people.

Earlier, the National Observer of May 18, 1970 presented an article, "Zionist Role in the U.S. Raises New Concern," by Lawrence Mosher. It had to do with a court action initiated in Washington, D.C. by a certain Saul E. Joftes, a former official of B'nai B'rith, against B'nai B'rith and its officers. Joftes contends, to quote Mosher:

That the Zionists have used B'nai B'rith, a charitable, religious, tax-exempt American-membership organization, to pursue international political activities contrary to the B'nai B'rith constitution and in violation of Federal foreign-agent registration and tax laws.

"Case documents filed with the Federal District Court in Washington," writes Mosher, "reveal a number of extraordinary relationships between B'nai B'rith, the Zionist establishment, and Israel."

Mr. Joftes, who was summarily fired after 22 years as secretary general of the B'nai B'rith International Council, tells, according to Mosher, of the employment

... by B'nai B'rith of a Riverdale, N.Y., matron who was actually financed and controlled by the Israeli consulate in New York City. Mrs. Avis Shulman, the wife of a prominent rabbi who has since died, was given the job of setting up "saturation briefings" for American Jews visiting the Soviet Union. Her main duty was to channel information back to the Israeli government on who went to the Soviet Union and what Russians visited the United States.

Let the readers of these lines decide who needed, and for what purposes, the names of Jews visiting the Soviet Union and of Russians visiting the U.S. Perhaps Dr. Wexler, who occupies the B'nai B'rith chair at the UN, can answer why, as Mosher reports, "the Israelis insisted that Mrs. Shulman 'report only to them' and 'they wanted but very few people to know the inner workings of the operation.'"

The epitomy of "chutzpah" was reached when Dr. Wexler announced his proposed amicus curiae brief in the Leningrad case. One must come into court with "clean hands," or doesn't he know about such things? He also signed the call for a "March for Justice and Freedom" on December 20, 1970, which stated: "We call for an outpouring of condemnation and revulsion against such atrocities in the name of justice, a cry of such magnitude and intensity that the rulers of the Soviet Union will not be able to disregard it."

Dr. Wexler, when did you last raise your voice for American victims of persecution? Where were you when the victims of Mississippi, Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner were lynched? Where were you when Communist leaders were framed and jailed under the Smith Act? Have you heard about Angela Davis? The whole world has, but I am still straining my ears waiting to hear your voice appealing for her. Have you heard of the recent imprisonment of Cesar Chavez for fighting for the lettuce pickers and their families? Do you know of the oppressed millions of Black people, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and Indians throughout our country? Of the sufferings of the many poor and aged Jews? Of the millions of unemployed?

So, Dr. Wexler, if you have a plan to write briefs for the victims of the "Western way of life"--start writing.

Ivrey Awnochey

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THE ROLE OF B'NAI B'RITH

(The following letter appeared in the bulletin of Sunrise Lodge 2056 of B'Nai B'rith. We reprint it in somewhat abridged form as a document of interest to our readers.)

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF SUNRISE LODGE:

As a charter member and a vice president of Sunrise Lodge 2056 I hereby tender my resignation as an officer of the Lodge. I do so reluctantly, but I find myself unable to agree to certain activities of our parent body, subscribed to by the membership without criticism.

I find myself in agreement with Mr. Joftes, Secretary General of B'nai B'rith International Council for 8 years, who charged in 1967 "that Israel representatives have tried to use the B'nai B'rith as a cover for their own (Israel) foreign policy activities." He charged that B'nai B'rith has acted as an "unregistered agent of Israel," and that Israel has directed the campaign against the Soviet Union. He quotes a letter from Rabbi Kaufman who was appointed Executive Vice President of B'nai B'rith as follows: "The Israelis are adamant that we must continue the conference (on Soviet Jewry - M.D.), make it a permanent body and they will help us raise funds. In this they are now giving direction and will brook no interference."

Mr. Joftes was fired from his job and the events leading to it were a B'nai B'rith secret. I, too, feel that B'nai B'rith is acting as a political party and has absorbed some of the wealthy Zionists who help make policy for world Zionist organizations and for B'nai B'rith.

I find abhorrent the political campaign against the Soviet Union when history shows that it did more to save the Jewish people during the holocaust than any nation in the world. It is an undeniable fact that it was Gromyko, representing the USSR in the United Nations, who called for the right of the Jewish people to have a sanctuary in a state of their own in Israel. In the Israeli war of independence against the Grand Mufti in 1948 it was the arms of the so-called "Iron Curtain" countries and the moral and practical support of the socialist world that helped guarantee victory for the Israelis, while it was the United States that placed an arms embargo against Israel.

Israel changed its policy in 1950 when that arch reactionary John Foster Dulles visited Israel with Morgenthau and made a deal with Ben Gurion's government. Israel announced itself as the bastion of Western civilization (meaning the U.S.). Since Israel veered away from neutrality her foreign policy is such as to alienate her from all her former friends. She has lost diplomatic ground but gained territorial ground at the expense of the Arab nations. It is this observation that was made by Nahum Goldmann, long-time world Zionist leader, who intimated that the government of Israel as it is constituted now will not fight for peace. . . .

B'nai B'rith, in reacting to the political line of the Israeli government, places our organization in a puppet role with the most Right-wing Zionists pulling the strings. . . .

Israel was accused many years ago of being a pawn of U.S. imperialists. The B'nai B'rith laughed at this and called it an astonishing declaration. Today Israel's government openly admits that Israel is fighting for the best interests of the U.S. to contain socialism in the Mid-East as well as in Israel, to try to get rid of Nasser for a pro-West ruler, and to try to help to assure U.S. control of the Suez Canal.

The ADL Bulletin carried a long article advising the United States to take an active part to protect her interests in the Mid-East (oil). This is an open invitation for the U.S. to do another Cambodia in the Mid-East, thus inviting confrontation between the world giants, the United States and the Soviet Union. A conflict between these two powers will wipe out the population in vast areas of the Mid-East and the Israeli people will be the first to suffer.

My heart is in anguish as I write this. I know that most of us look to the image that has been projected by B'nai B'rith through the Anti Defamation League. We need mass demonstrations to wipe out racism in this country of ours. We need demonstrations to protest and expose the financial giveaway to the ultra-Rightists who today have an "in" with our government. We need demonstrations to alert the people to the danger of repression of a new McCarthy period. Above all we need peace demonstrations to stop the war in Vietnam and to direct our State Department to implement the UN Security Council Resolution of 1967 for peace in the Mid-East and guarantee safe and secure borders to Israel as well as the Arabs. The war in Vietnam as well as the Mid-East has opened up a Pandora's box feeding the international forces of reaction, racism and fascism at home and abroad.

Shalom,

Morris Davis

AGAINST ANTI-SOVIETISM

(The following letter is self-explanatory. A copy was sent to us by the writer with permission to publish it.)

Mr. Norman S. Davis, President
Jewish Social Service Federation
of San Antonio
307 Aztec Building
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Sir:

I wish to venture my opinion in regard to your recent circular letter, dated December 11, 1970, and other enclosed material pertaining to alleged persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union and your exhortation to write protests.

In good conscience I cannot join you in this. In the first place, I have often inquired of friends, including a relative of mine, who in the past and recently have visited the Soviet Union, as to their findings on the status and conditions of Jews there. Invariably they have replied that they found their Jewish friends and kin doing quite well. They found that Jewish people enjoy working and living conditions on a par with those of all other Soviet citizens, of varied racial and national backgrounds. It seems that Soviet Jews have achieved integration into general Soviet life the same as American Jews are integrated into our "American way of life."

It is evident that your anti-Soviet efforts and those other flag-burning demonstrations we read about have mainly for their objective to stir up emotions and to hide the Mid-East reality from the eyes of the public, particularly the Jewish-American public. The objective is to shield from view the aggressive war policies of the Zionist and theocratic leadership, who at present are at the helm in Israel and are steadily steering that new country on a course of disaster.

I would counter your invitation with one to urge support of peace efforts in the Middle East as initiated by the United Nations in its Resolution of November 22, 1967. I believe it is only by the implementation of this Resolution that we can hope for a peace settlement that will be just to all parties involved--a peace that will insure security to Israel within her recognized borders and redress of the just grievances of the Palestinian-Arab people.

No doubt, the reactionary Zionist war hawks and jingoes are in a rage because the Soviet Union moves to frustrate the intrigues and designs of imperialist elements against the emergence of progressive regimes of national liberation throughout the Middle East. I read that there is a growing resistance on the part of outstanding Israelis, and particularly the youth, to the policies of war

and aggression pursued by the present Tel Aviv leadership. We can look forward to the not distant day when the progressive and popular force of Israel will prevail and steer it onto a path of secular, popular democracy, which will enable both Jew and Arab to exist on terms of equality and brotherhood.

Yours sincerely,
James Sager

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JEWISH CURRENTS, WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

For some time now the editors of Jewish Currents have been taking that periodical down the path of bourgeois nationalism and opportunism. Their line is one of apologists and defenders of the Meir-Dayan policies, and this passion for support to the Zionist-Israeli leadership has led them into one anti-Soviet position after another.

This tone and line of the magazine was clearly expressed during the height of the anti-Soviet frenzy whipped up by various Jewish organizations around the Leningrad trial.

In an extraordinary change of format the editors printed on the front cover of the January 1971 issue a telegram to Anatoly F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador, signed by a number of leaders of progressive Jewish organizations and institutions. The telegram "expressed shock at the severity of the sentence against the 11 defendants in the Leningrad trial for 'attempted hijacking,' especially the death sentence for Dymshits and Kuznetsov." It further said that "the extremity of the verdict shocked many supporters of peace, coexistence and socialism" and it urged the Soviet Government "to annul the death sentences and remit the sentences against all other defendants."

This action can be viewed as nothing more than a complete capitulation to the anti-Soviet hysteria. We do not question the right of the signers to ask for the annulment of the death sentences. Many groups, including the Daily World, spoke out for commutation. What we do question is the line of the telegram, its apparent acceptance of the bourgeois press falsehoods about the Leningrad trial; its complete silence on the anti-Soviet, anti-Socialist attacks, and its generally hostile tone.

It is not correct to say that supporters of peace and socialism were shocked by the verdict. Many hoped for a lesser sentence but they didn't question the Soviet Union's right to deal as firmly as necessary with what is considered an extremely serious crime. If one accepts that the Leningrad trial was merely for the "persecution of Soviet Jews" and for denial of their "right to emigrate" to Israel, then one will be shocked, but if one recognizes hijacking as a serious crime, if one accepts the Soviet Union's right to fight intrigues against it, then one will not be shocked.

The signers of the telegram speak of "attempted hijacking." Does their putting these words in quotation marks mean they question whether there was an actual conspiracy to hijack? Even the capitalist and Zionist press do not now try to deny this. Or do the signers mean that since it was only an attempt it is not as serious as if it actually did take place? Whichever their intent, the fact that the Soviet authorities prevented this intrigue from succeeding does not make the crime any less heinous than if it did take place and if Soviet citizens had been killed.

Apparently the editors of Jewish Currents measure the Soviet Union by a different standard than they do the capitalist countries. We recall no such moral indignation when the Israeli government fought hijacking even to the extent of an armed guard killing two Arab hijackers. We recall no questioning of the United States' right to fight hijacking by installing armed guards on its airplanes. But when the Soviet Union, in conformity with an international convention that calls for the severest measures to punish hijacking, attempts to do this, it is called "Soviet anti-Semitism."

Again, what do the signers mean when they say "remit the sentences against all other defendants?" Do they mean that there should have been no punishment?

An answer to this and other questions was given in an editorial in the February issue of Jewish Currents, entitled "Soviet Jews and the Right to Emigrate." The editorial asserts that the "right to emigrate is no longer only an internal matter and is by universal agreement a matter for universal concern." It bases this on the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN General Assembly in 1948 and the Soviet Union's acceptance of that declaration. It then talks of the "outcry against the Leningrad trial in the planned hijacking case involving 11 Soviet citizens, nine of them Jews." It goes on to say that 5 of those on trial had been trying for years to emigrate to Israel and had appealed to 23 Communist Parties and the editorial ends up by saying that "then, in desperation, five of the signatories turned to the hijacking plan. Therefore the law was broken because there had been a prior denial of a human right."

There is not a word about the fact that the Soviet Union cannot be a party to the imperialist-Zionist campaign to tear the 3 million Soviet Jews away from their country and use them to settle the annexed Arab territories. There is not a word about the fact that the Socialist Soviet Union, which at tremendous expense to the Soviet people has trained millions of its citizens in professional and technical skills, is not going to see its skilled labor and professional population pirated away. There is not a word about the fact that the Soviet Union has nevertheless allowed many thousands of Jews to emigrate to Israel. There is not a word from the editors that this emigration policy is one that applies to all Soviet peoples, not only Jews.

There can be no doubt that the editors of Jewish Currents have moved significantly in the direction of the bourgeois American Jewish organizations.

Lee Carr

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EVENTS AND VIEWS

The following letter appeared in the Miami Herald on January 27, 1971:

An ancient adage avers: "Whatever occurs in the Christian community is mirrored in the Jewish."

Some self-styled leaders whom one would expect to speak responsibly and cautiously have not hesitated to speak of "pogrom atmosphere" in the Soviet Union, with whom our country is seeking rapprochement; of juxtaposing the savagery of sadistic czarism with U.S.S.R.

Having been in Russia a number of times and having taught Russian, thus dispensing with Intourist guide, I cannot but bow in sorrow at the violence of the "ultists," the Semitic Agneurosis.

Certainly the non-Aryan fuhrer of the so-called Jewish (?) Defense League is no more representative of the Hebrew faith and conscience than Charles Manson is of Christian ethics and morality.

Dr. J. Marshall Taxay
Co-Founder, Southeast Association,
Central Conference of American Rabbis

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The progressive Israeli newspaper Der Veg reports the following statement to a correspondent of Israel Radio by Henry Shapiro, long-time UPI correspondent in Moscow, on January 4, 1971: "The Leningrad trial was not designed to evoke an anti-Semitic campaign in the USSR. On the contrary, the Soviet government sought to avoid wide publicity for the trial in order to prevent such consequences." He said further: "If the Soviet government had wished to launch an anti-Semitic campaign, the trial could have served as a basis for a powerful campaign.... They could, in an open trial, have portrayed the Jews as a criminal group which wants to leave the country and commits a serious crime of hijacking an airplane."

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