

JEWISH AFFAIRS

50¢

November — December 1979

**Break the Mideast
Deadlock**

by Nahum Goldman
Founding President of the World
Jewish Congress

**Poland Honors
Jewish Activists**

by Sol Flapan

**Fifteen Years After
— Part III**

by Aron Vergelis

We Were Saved

by Dr. Harry Epstein

**Fascism In The
Mirror of Acuality**

by Hans Lebrecht

Struggle For Peace in 1980 Continues

The unprecedented campaign of the government and the mass media to utilize the events in Iran to expand U.S. imperialist intervention in the Middle East has obscured important developments in that region and their effects upon the United States.

The arrest of the Mayor of Nablus by Israeli military authorities for, of all things, expressing support for the P.L.O. and the Palestinian national movement was met by a wave of unity among Palestinian public officials and people of the West Bank. The threat of the West Bank mayors to resign collectively and its perceived effect upon the fraudulent Camp David "autonomy" schemes no doubt resulted in U.S. pressure upon Israel to release the Mayor.

But while the Israeli government makes one concession to international public opinion, it brutally violates it in another area.

Settlements, "accomplished facts", in spite of some attempts to mask them, are being expanded in the West Bank either in the name of the government or private settler groups. As a journalist from the newspaper "Maariv" reported in an interview with a settler in the Ariel settlement in "Samaria", "I believe in the bulldozer more than I believe in Begin". Begin himself calls this settlement "the glory of Israel".

These callous and cynical policies of the Israeli government have encountered widespread opposition from amongst the Israeli people themselves. A recent demonstration called by the "Peace Now" movement brought together almost 100,000 Israelis to demand an end to the settlements policy and for a way to negotiate with the P.L.O. to end the conflict. Peace Now forces, including members of the Knesset, have organized public conferences in both the U.S. and Canada, in cities such as Washington,

The recent meeting in Moscow between Chairman Arafat and Foreign Minister Gromyko, in which Arafat affirmed that the "P.L.O. will utilize all means to reinforce friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries, for it considers this is one of the important

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SEASON'S
GREETINGS!

**Eighth Annual
Jewish Affairs
Dinner**

To all our Readers and Friends;

You are cordially invited to attend the Eighth Annual *Jewish Affairs* Dinner, which will be held at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York on Sunday, January 27, 1980.

Our Dinner takes place at a time when the forces of peace, national-liberation and socialism are exerting a dominant and positive effect on the development of humankind. These forces are countering U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Monopoly capital has resorted to using virulent strains of racism and anti-Semitism to divide our peoples as they struggle against inflation and unemployment. Zionist and bourgeois led Jewish organizations are handmaidens to the monopoly policy of divide and rule; they have worked against affirmative action at home and have furthered U.S. imperialism's goals abroad.

Jewish Affairs has become an indispensable tool in the Jewish community. It advocates: support for Black Liberation and affirmative action programs; support for legislation that would outlaw racist and anti-Semitic organizations; deportation of all Nazi war criminals; support for peace and friendship with the Soviet Union; and support for Israel's existence and self-determination of the Palestinian people as represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Our journal is not endowed with unlimited funds; nor do we have personnel and fancy equipment, but it is the devoted support of its readers, and friends who, by their participation at our dinners and by their contributions, provide us with the funds that enable us to publish our magazine.

It is this support which we are once again asking you to demonstrate on behalf of our Eighth Annual Dinner and its Appeal. Your presence and contribution would enable us to continue our positive work.

All greetings and contributions will be acknowledged in future issues of *Jewish Affairs*.

We ask you to send in all reservations and greetings promptly. We are confident that with your help this affair will be an effective political demonstration that will serve the best interests of our people.

Comradely yours,
Herbert Aptheker, *Editor*
Alex Kolkin, *Chairman*.

Break the Mideast Deadlock

by Nahum Goldman
Founding President of the World Jewish Congress

THE PERMANENT CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Since the proclamation of the State of Israel thirty-one years ago, the Middle East has been in permanent crisis, more or less violent, with one war following another.

It is no exaggeration to say, however, that no crisis in the past was as menacing as the present one. My Israeli friends present at this conference know more about the details of the situation from the Israeli point-of-view than I; suffice it to point to the inflation beyond 100%, the growing abyss between a small rich minority which is getting richer and the vast majority getting poorer, the growing polarization of the inner political scene and, internationally, the total isolation of Israel, supported only by the U.S.A., primarily for internal political reasons especially in view of the approaching presidential election.

On the other hand, and this is the paradox of the situation, there was never, in my view—and I follow political developments in Israel since its creation and long before—any moment offering such chances for a real total peace.

I have this optimistic hope not only, nor even chiefly, because of the Camp David agreement which, despite its significance, will end in failure if it remains isolated, but because I begin to believe that the Arabs are undergoing a change of mind.

From all I know both by personal contracts and through greater experts than I, the majority of the Arab states seem to have realized that there is no chance for them in any foreseeable future to destroy Israel and, instead of wasting any more of their enormous resources, economical, financial and psychological, on a hopeless attempt to liquidate Israel, they would be ready, under certain conditions, to accept Israel and to establish normal relations.

This is valid also for the greater part of the Palestinians and the PLO. There are many clear indications that the PLO would be ready to recog-

nize Israel and to live together with it in some yet to be determined form.

If, however, no solution is found by a policy of flexibility and moderation on both sides—pushing the extremists in the Israeli as well as in the Arab camp into the background—the chance for peace may be lost for a long time.

The tragedy of such a development, from a Jewish point of view, consists in the fact that time works more and more against Israel and in favor of the Arabs; in case of another conflict, more violent, brutal and devastating than previous ones, one must not overlook that the world could imagine the Middle East without Israel, but not without the Arabs.

The details of a settlement can only be worked out by negotiations, bargaining and political maneuvering. I shall limit myself here to commenting on three main factors, whose attitude will determine the outcome of such negotiations: 1) Israel; 2) the Arabs, especially the Palestinians; 3) the U.S.A. and American Jewry.

ISRAEL'S GREATEST DANGER, EROSION OF MORAL STRENGTH

In my speeches and essays I have always maintained that the decisive front of a people, which determines its destiny, is not the external but the internal one.

The gravest danger to Israel's survival today is neither the Arabs nor the PLO, nor the hostile states all around the world, but the erosion of its moral strength and the disappearance of a minimal national consensus in all important spheres.

From day to day, however, Israel is losing its moral qualification and is becoming only a small aggressive state, over-estimating its potentialities, not paying attention to its image nor to the opinion of the non-Jewish world, thus losing the respect and the admiration of the larger part of world public opinion which in turn has its effect also on the solidarity of the Jewish Diaspora for Israel.

Israel today is trying to have the best of two worlds: it wants to be a state like all other states, with an army, power, political maneuvers, expan-

(An abridgement of his special message to the New Outlook magazine Conference held in Washington, D.C. October 27-30.)

sion etc., but nevertheless to continue to live in the psychology of the Jews in the Diaspora.

What Israel does today is just the opposite. The government of Begin and the majority which it still commands gets more rigid, more aggressive and more unable to reach a settlement as far as borders, new colonies, occupation of territories is concerned. When it comes to ideals, Zionism, Socialism, new forms of social life, there are few idealists left. One of the paradoxes of Israel today is that the only real idealists are the religious and nationalistic extremists of Gush Emunim, but it should be said in this context that some of the great tragedies in history were caused not by criminals but by fanatics who followed wrong ideals.

As a matter of fact, the claim by certain religious zealots that they have to conquer the Greater Israel because it was promised them by God is really a "hillul hashem," a profanation: nowhere in the Bible were the Jews commanded to conquer Eretz Israel by war or bombs. From this point of view the anti-Zionist Orthodox Jews—the Naturei Karta or the followers of the Satmarer Rebbe—are right when they declare that, from their point-of-view, the State of Israel is not the one brought about by the Messiah, according to divine promise. Without going so far, some of the important religious leaders of world Jewry and Israel have stated that, according to Jewish tradition, the safeguarding of human lives is more important than territory of the holy land.

Developments in the Arab world tend in the opposite direction. Although a minority of the PLO is just a fanatic as the "hawks" in Israel, the majority are more flexible today than ten-twenty years ago, and the courageous and visionary gesture of Sadat was a first indication of this new state of mind. The Camp David agreement, though not yet officially accepted by the other Arab states, may hopefully be followed by other similar agreements.

THE KEY TO SOLUTION OF TRAGIC DEADLOCK

The key to the solution of this tragic deadlock lies in the U.S.A. Israel has reached a point of exclusive reliance on American support, which is in itself a contradiction to the original Zionist ideal of achieving independence for the Jewish people.

Israel is more dependent today on the U.S.A. than were the Jews on the rulers under whom they lived centuries of Diaspora life.

Financially, economically or militarily, Israel could not survive even for a short while without American support. Not only the budgetary burden which this represents is being viewed negatively in the States, but also the political isolation in which the U.S.A. find themselves, because the Arab countries, the Third World and practically all the European states oppose the American policies with regard to the Middle East.

Under these circumstances, Israel's belief that "what is good for Israel is good for America" is naive and absurd.

I am firmly convinced that peace could have been achieved long ago if the U.S.A. had taken a stronger and more determined position both vis-a-vis the Arabs and Israel. Naturally the other powers of the world will have to play a role too, and neither the Communist bloc nor chiefly the U.S.S.R. can be completely eliminated from the peace process.

In the shaping of American policies, an important element is American Jewry. I may be allowed to be personal on this point. I made my first Zionist speech at the age of fourteen, which means that I have seventy years of Zionist activity behind me.

I lived more than twenty years in America, helped establish the American Jewish Conference, the first united representative body of American Jewry during the Second World War (together with Weizmann, Wise, Silver, Lipsky and Monsky), and took the initiative to create the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in 1956, of which I was president for the first eight years. During several decades I was president of the World Jewish Congress and for twelve years of the World Zionist Organization.

All this gives me credentials to state certain things which some among the American Jewish leadership may resent. Having retired from active political work and holding no ambition in any sphere of Jewish public life, I can afford to be as frank as I think I should be, without worrying about criticism.

AMERICAN JEWRY'S STRENGTH, WEAKNESSES

American Jewry is a unique phenomenon, with magnificent qualities and great weaknesses. While its forefathers were poor, miserable and persecuted in Europe, it reached a position of considerable wealth and political influence within two or three generations, and, in the last decades, great cultural achievements.

This experience inevitably went to the head of American Jewry. Lord Action's famous saying that "power corrupts" applies to peoples more than to individuals, and the greatest danger looms for a people which, after centuries of persecution and lack of power, came to a position of strength, wealth and power within one short generation.

I have often said that the problem of world Jewry in our times is how to behave in good times; how to do it in bad times we learned in two thousand years of tragedy and suffering.

Another element which explains the psychological attitude of American Jewry is the impact of the Holocaust and the feeling of responsibility and guilt for having insufficiently reacted to the fate of European Jewry under Hitler.

American Jews were warned against the impending tragedy, but refused to take Hitler seriously; for instance, when the World Jewish Congress proclaimed the boycott against Nazi Germany, the Jewish establishment in the U.S.A., with few exceptions, refused to cooperate.

During the entire period, American Jews reacted only in a minimal way and the realization of this failing is one of the bases for their present total solidarity with Israel, in the fear that the Arabs may cause another Holocaust.

The unlimited support for whatever Israel does has become a policy of blind solidarity since the coming of power of the Likud, despite the fact that many American Jew do not approve of Israel's present policies and realize—consciously or unconsciously—that it represents a danger to Israel's survival.

DANGER OF BLIND SUPPORT FOR BEGIN'S POLICIES

It may appear paradoxical if I state that this blind support of the Begin government may be more menacing for Israel than any danger of Arab attack.

American Jewry is more generous than any other group in American life and is doing great things, financially and socially, in favor of Israel. But by missing its political influence, by exaggerating the aggressivity of the Jewish lobby in Washington, by giving the Begin regime the impression that the Jews are strong enough to force the American administration and Congress to follow every Israeli desire, they lead Israel on a ruinous path which, if continued, may lead to dire consequences.

I have never believed in the principle "right or

wrong my country." Just as the best American citizens fought their administration over the war in Vietnam, and other progressive groups in different countries never hesitated to oppose policies which they regard as wrong, American Jewry and Jews all over the world have not only the right but the moral duty to advise Israel and to warn it, instead of pledging automatic support for any action, however wrong or even immoral it may seem.

If the U.S.A. has, on many occasions—such as with regard to Gunnar Jarring's mission or the Rogers plan—refrained from making use of the possibilities to bring about a full settlement in the Middle East, it was to a very large degree because of electoral considerations, of fear of the pro-Israel lobby and of the Jewish vote.

The operation of lobbies is a normal element of every democracy, and I personally helped establish the pro-Israel lobby when I lived in the U.S.A. twenty years ago. But the Jews have always been a people of superlatives, inclined to think in extremes.

The support of America under the pressure of American Jewry has been precious for Israel, but it is now slowly becoming something of a negative factor. Not only does it distort the expectations and political calculations of Israel, but the time may not be far off when American public opinion will be sick and tired of the demands of Israel and the aggressivity of American Jewry.

To give one example, Israel's request for financial support from the U.S.A. this year equals the total amounts given to all other countries by the United States.

It is obvious that the Congress will not accept such a provocative demand. In this connection one should also remember the defeat suffered by the Israeli lobby in the question of arms deliveries to Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

A word should be said about the problem of oil and its repercussion on the general issue of the Middle East. Israelis, Jews and non-Jewish friends of Israel have decried as immoral and unacceptable the fact that the Arab oil producing countries link both the quantities supplied and the prices to America's unlimited support of Israel. I consider this condemnation as unrealistic and hypocritical.

Politics in general, and especially in this brutal and complex twentieth century, is based on interests. Moral considerations did not prevent the war in Vietnam, nor did they hinder Nixon from bring-

Poland Honors Jewish Activists

by Sol Flapan

A number of Jewish activists here have been decorated with high government awards for their outstanding professional/vocational work and public commitment. The honors, decreed by the Council of State (a collective presidency), were conferred within the framework of festivities marking the 35th anniversary of the Polish People's Republic.

Actually, July 22nd is the National Holiday. But this year's being a round figure "jubilee" event the celebrations are yearlong.

The eight Jewish recipients of various orders and medals have been honored precisely for Jewish related work. Scores of other Jews around the country were decorated together with Polish

workers and neighbors for patriotic services at their places of work and/or residence.

The distinctions for the eight, said the Jewish weekly *Folks Shtime*, were for their "sacred efforts at continuing the traditions of Polish Jewry...which were revaged by the nazi-German holocaust."

In truth, the medals reflect socialist Poland's gratitude and acknowledgement for all the toil inherent in rekindling Jewish public and cultural life since the nation's liberation three and a half decades ago. The deliverers, of course, were the freedom-bearing Soviet Army and a reborn Polish People's Army. This new army had been organized in 1943 by Polish Communists and other patriots whom fate had scattered across the length and breadth of the vast Soviet Union. Then, armed, trained, clothed and fed by their Soviet comrades-in-arms, it fought side by side with the Red Army right into Berlin. Indeed, the first victory flags to fly over the captured nazi den were the USSR's red banner with the gold hammer and sickle topped by the five-pointed star and the white-and-red of Poland.

Cataloguing the reasons for the medals the *Folk*

ing about the fall of Allende in Chile or from destroying the happy people of Cambodia. Moral considerations did not deter Israel for years from delivering arms to the Somoza regime and to other reactionary governments in the world.

One cannot blame Israel, because its first duty is to take care of its defense needs, and the situation in the Middle East would make it foolish to act only out of moral considerations. But on the other hand it is hypocritical to become indignant when politicians in America or Arab leaders try to use the powerful oil argument in the search for a solution to the conflict.

FOR THE FIRST TIME PEACE IS POSSIBLE

Despite all this, I want to end on an optimistic note, not in order to comfort my listeners and readers, nor to conclude "bachi tov," with the best, but because I believe in it. For the first time in the thirty-one years of Israel's existence, I am hopeful that there may be peace in the near future, and I base this hope, as I said at the outset, on developments in the U.S.A., the Arab world, and in Israel and world Jewry.

Not only American but the entire world has had

enough of the Middle East conflict, which has been continuing for thirty years. The only fact which may yet delay a quick solution is the holding of presidential elections in the United States next year, which may post-pone the attempt to achieve an all-embracing settlement until after 1980. But the situation in the Middle East may not allow the President to wait, and I am still hopeful that a decision will be taken soon.

As to the Arabs, there is a growing flexibility, indicated by Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and the subsequent negotiations, as well as by the resolutions of the Baghdad conference of the more extreme Arab states, ready, under certain conditions, to recognize the existence of Israel and live in peace with it.

With regard to Israel seems to realize that the alternative which Menem Begin offered proved its bankruptcy faster than expected and that a completely different political line has to be followed in order to achieve peace. This is of utmost importance for world Jewry as well which, in a certain way, is menaced by the continuation of the Middle East conflict.

Shtime's frontpage editorial cited "organizing a Jewish-national life, disseminating Jewish culture and art, studying the history and eternalizing the memory of the Jewish people." Also for "spreading the truth worldwide about the life and creativity of Poland's tiny but dynamic Jewish community."

Folks Shtime, a 12-page Yiddish-Polish journal, is the organ of the Social and Cultural Society of Jews in Poland popularly known simply as the "Farband" in Yiddish or by its Polish acronym "TESKAZET".

Common in the biographies of most of the Jewish medal receivers is that they are alive today thanks to the protection and solicitude of the Soviet Union or the work of the wartime anti-nazi resistance movement in Poland. Verily, their lives are a sterling confirmation that the forces of socialism rescued the Jewish people from complete extermination. Furthermore, it was (and still is) socialism that offered that martyred community fertile ground for an all-round cultural renaissance.

"Farband" president Edward Rajber fled with his family to the hospitable Soviet Union when the nazi brown plague overran Poland in September 1939.

After holding down a number of jobs there, fellow refugees in a small town deep in the heart of the country elected him in 1943 head of the local chapter of the Union of Polish Patriots (UPP) in the USSR. In time he was promoted to the rank of instructor in that organization's supreme executive committee.

Rajber returned home one year after the war (1946) taking up employment in a textile mill. Then he became an elected official in the Worker's Party (the forerunner of the present-day United Worker's Party) the country's Marxist-Leninist party and leading political force. Rajber is today a full time activist and leader in the organized Jewish community. At 69 he has been awarded the prestigious Order of the Banner of Labor which he proudly adds to an already impressive collection of medals and awards bestowed on him over the years by People's Poland.

Jewish State Theater director/actor Szymon Surmiej, born in Luck, the Ukraine, was also rescued from the advancing genocide—sowing fascist hordes. When the nazis perfidiously attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, 18-year-old drama student Szymon was evacuated to far off Alma Ata, capital of the Soviet Asian republic of Kazakhstan where he completed his studies in a local theater and commenced his stage career.

He too returned to Poland in 1946 settling down in the southwestern city of Wroclaw where he performed in the Polish theater. When given the helm occasionally he staged Soviet plays and the world classics. At one time he shuttled between Wroclaw's Contemporary Theater and the Jewish stage shifting over to full time Jewish work in 1970 when he took over as manager/director/actor of the Jewish State Theater her in Warsaw.

Szurmiej's lapel also sports a number of medals.

Then there is Hentyk Robak, 58, a leading offices of the Wroclaw TESKAZET.

Together with thousands of fellow Jews young Henryk fled to the Soviet Union when the Hitlerites occupied Warsaw in September 1939 returning five years later as a liberator and avenger after having enlisted in the UPP's newly formed Tadeusz Kosciuszko Division. Fighting in the ranks of what developed into the First and Second Armies, he did battle with the nazis right up to Victory Day.

After demobilization he became a government and party functionary, simultaneously doing yeoman's work and voluntary work in the Jewish community. His latest decoration joins a row of well earned combat medals.

Adam Bielicki, 64, is a librarian at the Jewish Historical Institute (JHI). A far cry from being a warrior. In 1943 he was drafted into the Red Army after having worked in the Gorki Steel Mill following his escape from nazi-occupied Poland.

The following year he was transferred to the reborn Polish armed forces participating in the liberation of his homeland. Later, arms still in hand, he stood guard over the early consolidation of a free, democratic and grass-roots ruled Poland.

Since rejoining civilian life in 1954 he has held jobs in heavy industry (engineering, electrical) and has been an activist in the ex-combatants' organization. Likewise in the Polish United Worker's Party (PUWP).

As a linguist with a highly polished knowledge of Hebrew he has worked in various governmental departments which deal with the study and conservation of antiquities. He has been with the JHI for the past three years.

His colleague, Jan Rochwerger, is a staff member of the JHI's quarterly "Bulletin". As a youth in his twenties Rochwerger escaped with thousands of others into the protective arms of the Red Army and then made his way east to Stalingrad. He enlisted in 1943 in the nucleus of the Polish People's

Army with whom he fought for the liberation of Prague.

In that May 5-9 battle in 1945 Soviet and Polish formations hastened to the assistance of the inhabitants of the Czechoslovak capital who had taken to arms to liberate their city and to rescue it from deliberate destruction by the retreating, defeated nazi army of occupation.

Rochwerger remained in the army after the war. He attended the General Staff Academy graduating as a full colonel. He joined the JHI just a decade ago. And his is a medal-bedecked chest.

Sixty-year-old Moisiej Jakubowicz was another freedom fighter. But with a slight difference. He was already in uniform when the nazis launched their aggression against Poland. He fought throughout the heroic and tragic "September Campaign" of 1939. He took part in the Battle of Warsaw.

Soldier Jakubowicz escaped to the Soviet Union after the fall of Poland making his way to the USSR's Far East where he was treated for wounds received in defending the Polish capital.

With the activation of the Tadeusz Kosciuszko Division Jakubowicz joined its ranks to renew the fight with the despoilers of his country. This time, however, not alone and betrayed by his western allies but together with a tried and true friend—the Soviet people and its workers—peasant army.

In New Poland Jakubowicz has worked in textile, in the cooperative movement and later in the Polish United Workers Party. For many years now he's been a leading activist in the Jewish community of Dzierzanow in the Silesian industrial heartland down south.

The last two on this list experienced the gehenna (terror) of nazi occupation here. Aron Gros, secretary of the "Farband's" Walbrzych's chapter also in the south was rounded up for slave labor but he managed to escape to the woods where he remained under cover until liberation.

And Moses Finkelstein, president of the religious community, was twice caught and twice escaped from nazi clutches. First he was captured as a Red Armyman he escaped shortly thereafter with some of his frontline buddies. Then, after 25 months in a concentration camp following his recapture, Finkelstein was being led away with a contingent of death-row Jews for a mass execution when he and a group made a desperate but successful break for it. They found shelter nearby and

remained hidden for nine months until that area was freed July 30, 1944.

Both Gros and Finkelstein are now in their seventies. Gros is a party and "Farband" activist while Finkelstein is a long standing leader of the Jewish congregation.

Among the many Poles of Jewish origin decorated in this "Jubilee" year of people's rule for public oriented work is Piotr Shitzer, a party labor activist from prewar capitalist times.

As a Young Communist Leaguer, a Communist Party educational worker, he was repeatedly arrested and otherwise persecuted and harassed by the semi-fascistic authorities. In the thirties Shitzer spent four years in a military prison following a court-martial after having been called up for service. The charge was professing "communist convictions". Sounds familiar.

With the coming of the nazis Shitzer sought refuge in the Soviet Union where he became a miner in the Donbas Coal Region. Young Piotr then joined the Red Army. And for his enlistment date he chose May 1st, the day of international labor solidarity. In time he requested to be transferred to the Polish armed forces with whom he wound up the war liberating Prague.

Upon returning home he learned that his entire family had been wiped out in the notorious Auschwitz concentration camp which the occupiers had set up in southern Poland. That "death factory" snuffed out the lives of some four million men, women and children from all over Europe.

So class- and batterfield-wise Shitzer remained in uniform for a while longer and did battle with bands of marauding Ukrainian fascists, remnants of the nazi murder machine.

As a civilian in newborn Poland Shitzer has been an elected official in the PUWP, and has administrative/managerial posts in the building industry, in mining and in the diplomatic corps.

As is to be expected the Officer's Cross of the Order of the Reborn Poland received this year joins Shitzer's other high state awards of previous years and occasions.

All of which is but a sampling of the public esteem accorded Polish Jews for their efforts in behalf of socialist construction here—be it in Jewish related work or in other general public/social activities. It is the ongoing realization of the principle that all citizens of People's Poland are equal and equally loved children of the same mother land.

Fifteen Years After — Part III

by Aron Vergelis

14. *Incognito Among the "Russian Jews"*

Why not, in a foreign land, meet one's own people?

I went to Brighton Beach, a district in New York with a beach on the Atlantic Coast. That is where the "Russian Jews" are accumulating. My route runs through various city ghettos, but I am so deeply wrapped up in my thoughts that I fail to notice this. One never knows what the changing times are going to bring next. Fifteen years ago, Brighton Beach existed as it does now, but at that time it never entered my head to go there. If there were "Russian Jews" in New York, they were to be looked for among the old emigrant generations, that is, among those who fled from tsarist Russia and from Hitler's Germany, escaping from the Kishinev pogrom, from "Crystal Night", and so on...

What has happened now? Why has the dismal fate of the emigrant succeeded in attracting people today? The world war has long been over, the Jews have rebuilt a peaceful life for themselves along with other peoples. Life is already back to normal. Joy and care, success and disappointment alternate in the normal course of things. As for disappointments, in Moscow, Vilnius, Kishinev, Tashkent, Sverdlovsk, or Leningrad, they are as ordinary as could be: they are the ones that invariably happen to people and, of course, they cannot and should not be made an excuse for "packing one's things". Only two causes can drive a Soviet citizen to such an insane course: vicious persecution *from outside* or a sort of clouding of the mind—morbid illusions and irresponsible considerations which inevitably lead to personal catastrophe.

I think that when the madness has passed, the Jews, supported by other people, will bring the instigators to book. I can already see it now,

because my own restless life has brought me into contact many times with these unfortunate emigrants in their new places of residence in Europe, and now America. I can foresee a "little Nurnberg trial", with zionism sitting in the dock—not only for its barbaric treatment of the Palestinians, but for its criminal incitement of the Jews to emigration—the cynical hoodwinking of many thousands of people and thereby the creation of a horrible society of outcasts torn from the world of socialism in which they once lived and had their own homes, whereas they are now dependent on those who are burdened enough as it is with their own problems. Who could fail to be disappointed when those people, whom no one ever deprived of a normal life, have become lodgers in strange houses or have turned into vagrants? Some of them have even gone morally down the drain—denigrating the country that brought them up, going and working for dealers in human souls, involving themselves in alien ideologies.

Brighton Beach looks like a suburb with its own railway station. A closer look reveals, however, that the platform extends into the sea and might be described as a wide boardwalk between the end houses of the city and the sea shore. Green benches with the paint flaking off are occupied by people, for the most part elderly, wearing autumn coats and either caps pulled down over their ears or winter hats. The young ones walk up and down, chatting. All here are busy talking, whether seated or promenading up and down, as can be seen from the way they wave their hands and tug one another's buttons off.

The sea is sullen, the people are autumnal, the air is cold, and it is uncomfortable on the boardwalk.

The emigrants are "taking in the air"—a useful occupation; but if we might philosophise a little, those sitting on the sea shore could be called con-

temporary "people of the air". Although their appearance tells me all I need to know, I cannot understand with my heart who they are and where this meeting of ours is taking place. They seem to be wearing Soviet clothes, but the landscape round them is not in the least like the beach at Riga or the seaside park in Odessa, or any other sea coast in our own country...

But this is the pavement at Brighton Beach. Several New York comrades have undertaken to show me "Russian gold-diggers", as one of them put it. I don't agree.

"If you want to understand the nature of the present-day emigration," I tell them, "you must first of all find out who these people are, which republics of the USSR they come from, and just who in each family was the first to talk about leaving the country and induced them to expect that a change of domicile would work some kind of miracle. Was it the mother and father who cherished an irresponsible dream? The grandfather? The children?"

In Vilnius, Lvov, Kishinev, Chernovtsy, that is, in the western regions of the country, I knew many elderly Jews who belonged to the "capitalist generation", and for whole decades—I am not exaggerating—they cherished in their hearts the dream of a "shifskarte"—a ticket for the steamer. Many, at the age of eighteen to twenty, were on the verge of leaving for Palestine but in fact sat on their trunks all their lives because something always prevented them: at first in old Lithuania, in Poland of the Pans, in Romania of the Boyars, there wasn't enough money for the ticket, and, moreover, bitter experience showed that a neighbour would try his luck and end up with the same capitalism that he had left behind him. Then the war began, and those who had survived left neither for America nor for Palestine but for the depth of Russia to save their lives. After the war, it took a long time before the dream of foreign strands came back to haunt them. For the war-torn country, there were to be long years of another war, the "cold war", when the migration of citizens was particularly difficult. Only after Helsinki, in the atmosphere of nascent detente, when life in general had been stabilized and joys and disappointments had begun to alternate in the usual, commonplace way—only in the 70s could emigration raise its head, and this inevitably effected other layers of the Jewish population

too, apart from the "esterners". Zionist propaganda found its takers, many of them among the "Georgian Jews" on religious grounds; among those whose heads and hearts had been clouded by minor offences; among people who were simply unstable and irresponsible; among "parents whose children are leaving" and among "children whose parents are leaving"; and among all kinds of relatives, brides, bridegrooms, unrecognised artists, misunderstood writers...

Seriously, one must express sympathy not for the country which was left by such people, but the countries in which they are settling and to which they are taking their morbid problems, their deteriorating characters, their disillusionment, and their memories of the life they left behind them—everything that goes under the name of nostalgia. Soviet society has definitely lost nothing. As for sympathy towards the hapless Brighton Beach "holidaymakers", surely they were warned in advance about what to expect in a foreign land.

So here I am, looking at the New York suburb of Brighton Beach. The planks of the boardwalk along the Atlantic seashore squeak like ungreased cartwheels. I look at the faces of estranged people, huddled in groups, surging to and fro. Distraction, remorse, humiliation and helplessness are written on those faces. I hear old worlds which, however, have taken on a different shade of meaning here, and so unexpectedly that I seem to be hearing them for the first time: "lodger", "doss house", "naturalised", "subject", "incomer",...

Isolated phrases:

"He won't take me..."

"You have to get stuck in..."

"I would crawl back home on my hands and knees..."

An elegantly dressed man with dry, sunken cheeks is sitting on a bench surrounded by young people (he must be about seventy, and an artistic-looking butterfly tie can be seen under the coat). He declaims:

In Istanbul, the unwary Turk

Treads on a map, and scarce imagines

It's one of old St. Petersburg:

To every inch, three hundred sazhen.

There is a little house on the boardwalk. I've seen something like it among the lumberjacks on the big rivers. And the very domestic word "Moscow" is written in Russian on the sign at the entrance, and also on the windows facing out to sea. The windows

are doing duty for shop display windows, and they are filled with nested dolls, or "matryoshkas", plates of smoked fish, and "Mishka" and "Belochka" chocolates. The restaurant belongs to some "old Russian Jews". The new arrivals don't frequent the place. I open the door: there is no one at the little tables inside.

The voice of the elegant, elderly ma again comes to my ears when I step off the boardwalk to go for a stroll with my friends down Brighton Beach Avenue.

My lodging's like that city map:

To very inch, three hundred sazhen.

Brighton Beach Avenue is a long, narrow street consisting of nothing but little shops, grocery stalls and cheap snack bars. The street has a "roof": up above, the whole length and breadth of the avenue where there should be a blue sky, there are concrete girders and slabs over which runs a municipal railway, known by the typical Jewish name of "The Elevator". As Sholem Aleichem put it: "The sort of *leiter* (ladder) that's called an *elevator*..." A ladder can, of course, be stood up against a wall or laid down, and this one "lies". Its rungs, or sleepers, just about touch the heads of the people in the Avenue.

Yes, Brighton Beach Avenue is crowded with people. I've come here to have a look at them. People, people! What evil power threw you into this whirlpool at the other end of the world? You there, for instance! You think I don't know that only a matter of weeks ago you were going into the trade union committee, or the factory committee, or the Party committee, and were saying in a firm voice that, thank goodness, we had Soviet power and, if things weren't done in what you considered a rational way, then you'd "take it as high as the Central Committee". How come you only took it as far as Brighton Beach? And just take a look at yourself in the mirror. It's a disgrace! Stovepipe trousers, a hat the colour of baby's diarrhoea, and you sneak about under the "elevator", all steamed up with chasing after a private property. Nothing but a contemporary Menachem-Mendel. Oh, laddie from Uman! Did you sneer at St. Sophia's? But your father lies on the high bank of the Dnieper; he took Kiev back from the Germans. And you've sunk so low that you don't want Uman, and you've no time for Kiev, but you've made it to Brighton Beach Avenue Fool! In New Yrok, the best you can hope to do is scrape together a few extra dollars to

get yourself a pair of check pants which wouldn't suit you at all in Uman. Oh, you fool!

I don't get talking to anyone here. I'm incognito, so let it stay that way. I just look and listen. If I didn't know that all this was actually happening, I would think myself at the shooting of a film about the New Economic Policy. In front of the camera are some amusing little people "in costume", with some professional troublemakers among them; they took like stevedores, but they're only hoodlums really, terrorising ordinary people and fleecing the unwary. There are tarts in the crowd too, and some hungry youths. There are crowds of sightseers in the middle of the street. There is casual trading at the cross-roads. People are jostling about, some on business, some with nothing to do. Foul language. People here in general talk in a kind of special Russian Jewish jargon of their own. Listen you! Only weeks ago you were still going to the trade union committee, the factory committee, the Party committee; you wore a clean shirt, you shaved, you cleaned your nails, you used nice words such as "excuse me", "please", "man is a proud word". Why have you let yourself go down the drain so quickly?

There is a restaurant on the Avenue. A sign in Russian reads: "Odessa". Next to it is a notice in Yiddish: "Kosher Dumplings". There is a snack-bar inside the "Odessa", near the entrance. "Half a pound of Russian sausage, please"... "With pleasure, lady...Matilda Samoilovna, bring a whole sausage—best quality... We don't weigh them here." "What's the use of complaining? Last Friday I bought half a pound of sausage here too, and when I got home it was fifty grammes short. I hope he loses fifty months of his life!"

There is *cul-de-sac* just off the Avenue: it's choked with refuse and all kinds of packing cases. I can hear someone singing in Yiddish. It's not an organ-grinder or a blind fiddler. A middle-aged woman is leaning up against a small structure which is part of one of the shops on the Avenue. Two men are standing by her, and I can tell at once that one of them is already a naturalised American. The other is a newcomer. My companions have not noticed this trio and have gone on ahead, deep in conversation. The woman is singing in a low voice, quietly, for herself alone, and when I stop near her, she shows annoyance. I write the words of her song down in my notebook.

Here is a literal translation:

I wander round the streets,
All on my little own,
No one to talk to
Except myself.
Oi, fate has brought me
To a foreign land.
The punishment of God
Has descended upon me.

To tease me, she breaks off in the middle of this song and sings a few lines from another one:

You've come here to a foreign land,
You knock on other people's doors.
There's no one here will shake your hand,
There's no one here will keep you warm...

And she looks at me, as if wanting to say: "That's for you, you dumbbell, for stopping when you weren't asked in front of someone who was singing to herself." I try not to lose sight of my comrades, who are now ahead of me, and I very much want to talk to the singer and the two men. She takes absolutely no notice of me at all. She softly whispers the words of her song and wipes her eyes with the thin kerchief tied round her neck. One of the men, the naturalised American, is kind enough to force out a few words.

"You're in a bad way, you've really landed in the soup..."

"If you're from Sokhnut* and want to persuade them to go to back to Israel, then kindly go away."

He nods at the woman:

"She's bitter, about Israel, because when they invited her to go there, she ended up right here..."

Seeing that I'm about to go, he takes out of his pocket a little book, dog-eared and yellow with age, tears off the page at which it is open and pushes it into my pocket:

"I haven't got any money, take this. It'll come in handy..."

As I hasten to catch up my comrades, I look at the page from the old book, which was published about fifty years ago by well-known bourgeois Jewish writer Josef Opatoshu, who was then living in American and visited the Soviet Union. It is a collection of travel notes. Opatoshu arrives by train at some small American town to read a lecture about Soviet Russia. Before beginning the lecture, he chats to some of the local Jews. Here is the part

* Sokhnut, or the Jewish Agency concerned with the affairs of emigrants bound for Israel.

of the conversation which had been underlines in red pencil on my page of the book:

"Tell me, Comrade Opatoshu, did you go to Odess?"

"I did."

"And how is Odessa looking? It is a beautiful as it was before?"

"Odessa is beautiful."

"You hear that, Lyubochka? They say Odessa is still beautiful! You see, that's where we were born! We worked there until 1922. I was commissar in a printing house, then I got the idea of coming here to cart vegetables...Oh, Comrade Opatoshu! Odessa, Odessa... How can we get back there again? And is Pushkin Street beautiful?"

"Very beautiful."

"Your hear, Lyubochka? But if someone says something bad about the Soviet Union, then I hope his tongue withers up..."

This scene was not written by Soviet communist Aron Vergelis, but by American bourgeois writer Josef Opatoshu.

Our Sincere Sympathy to Morris Carroll at the loss of his wife Fannie

Editorial Committee
Jewish Affairs

In Memory of Our Beloved
BROTHER BILL
Died December 13, 1979

Saul and Anne Bittman

We Were Saved

by Dr. Harry Epstein

Bulgaria, although a small country with a population of 8½ million people, is noted for some of the FIRSTS in contemporary history.

It was the first to put up a struggle against fascism. Unfortunately this FIRST, for a number of reasons, was unsuccessful. But another first—the struggle to prevent the deportation of Bulgarian Jews to extermination camps—was highly successful, and that, at a time when all of Nazi-occupied Europe was a huge concentration camp under total Nazi domination. As a result, while at the outbreak of the second World War there were about 50,000 Jews in Bulgaria, at the end of the war there were still about 50,000 Jews in Bulgaria. Many Bulgarian Jews lost their lives when Bulgaria entered the war against Nazi Germany, but not a single Bulgarian Jew was delivered to the crematoriums.

How did all this take place? The credit for this victory over Nazi genocide goes to the Bulgarian people: the working class, the intellectuals, the peasants, the church, and above all to the Bulgarian Communist Party which initiated and organized the struggle against the deportations.

The advent of Hitler to power initiated the most vile campaign of anti-Semitism within Germany, which later spread to every country invaded by the Nazis. It was a useful instrument employed by them to rally fascists throughout Europe. Thus, in 1936 Bulgarian tobacco manufacturers and exporters organized and financed a fascist cell in Bulgaria under the name of "Ratnik", which served as a nucleus for Nazi activities after the outbreak of World War II. Only a short time after the war broke out in 1939, King Boris III of Bulgaria sent a legal expert to Germany to study their racial laws and methods of mass extermination. In 1940 King Boris met with Hitler and in 1941 he signed the treaty with him admitting German troops into Bulgaria. Fascism then became the official doctrine in Bulgaria and an intensive campaign of anti-Semitism was unleashed throughout the country.

This article is based on findings and documents in a book titled "WE WERE SAVED" by Haim Oliver, published by Sofia Press in Bulgaria in 1978.

In the National Assembly a bill was introduced under the title "Protection of the Nation Act", a somewhat modified copy of the Nuremberg Laws. The bill was sponsored by the King, by German agents in Bulgaria and by lumpen fascist elements. False statements were spread throughout Bulgaria that "the annual income of Jews in Bulgaria was 26 times greater than the income of Bulgarians". It was an invitation to rob the Jews of their possessions without the threat of legal action. A storm of protest called by the Communist Party and other progressive and liberal forces from all over the country flooded the office of the Prime Minister. But the bill was passed over the protests and became the law of the land.

The next step was to put the bill into action. The "final solution" of the Jewish problems was to be carried out according to plans formulated by Hitler and entrusted to Eichmann. However, Bulgarian officials remembering the storm of protest from most sections of the population decided to carry out the plan of deportation in extreme secrecy. 11,300 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia were rounded up during the night and sent East to crematoria thru Sofia. Only the officials involved knew about this treacherous act. These Jews were not considered as part of the Jewish population of Bulgaria. The Communists learned about it a short time after the deportation took place. But, the Nazis demanded that the first shipment should consist of 20,000 Jews, and inasmuch as 11,300 were already shipped, they demanded another 8700 Jews from Bulgaria to be deported on March 9, 1943. This, it was later learned from documents, was in keeping with an agreement signed by Alexander Belev, legal advisor to the Minister of the Interior. A list of names was prepared consisting of Jews who were believed to be Communist, who were known to have made disparaging remarks about Hitler and those Jews who had bank accounts of 50,000 leva. They and their families were allowed to take along no more than 40 kilograms of luggage and 10 kilograms of food. These Jews were to be removed no later than 1 hour after advance notice

and in complete secrecy. They were to be collected from a number of towns and brought to Sofia to be delivered to designated death camps. The first consignment was to come from a town near Sofia, Kyustendal. The Jews of Kyustendal were completely unaware of what awaited them. But the Communist Party learned about the diabolical plans of the fascists. They spread the news throughout the town and a storm of indignation swept Kyustendal. The Party with the help of the Young Workers League mobilized its forces to organize resistance against the removal of the Jews from their homes. The office of the Mayor was besieged by protestors. Hundreds of telegrams were sent to the government in Sofia. Money and aid were offered to Jews who were willing to escape to nearby towns. A group of four prominent residents of Kyustendal went to Sofia to get the Prime Minister to cancel the order of deportation. The same actions took place in a number of other towns including Varna, where a group was organized to protect the Jews. Later it was learned that the Swiss and Spanish ambassadors and the Catholic Bishop of Skopje also intervened with the Government and the King on behalf of the Jews. Sensing that there was a powerful, well organized resistance to the operation, the Minister of the Interior issued an order cancelling the deportation and releasing all the Jews that were to be shipped out.

The Germans were in a rage. They were not ready to give up their "final solution" to the Jewish problem. On March 31, 1945 King Boris III was called to see Hitler. He was given strict orders to carry out the agreement reached earlier. A message from Berlin read: "The 51,000 Jews in the old territories of Bulgaria represent a great danger to the rear of the German defense forces in the Southeast." Hence, immediate steps should be taken for the nationwide destruction of these Jews. 25,000 were to come from Sofia, and 23,000 from the provinces. But in order to divert any suspicion about the purpose of the command, the Sofia Jews were to be sent first to nearby provinces and from there to assigned crematoriums. This was to start on May 22nd. On that day the Jews of Sofia received notices to be ready to leave the city in 3 days. This news was immediately conveyed to the Communist Party. On the first of the 3 days, on May 22nd, Sofia was

flooded with appeals to the Jews to resist the order and not to leave their homes. They were assured that help was being organized from many quarters. Sofia was seething with activity. The Secretary of the 3rd District of the Communist Party, where 20,000 of the Sofia Jews lived, called a meeting to organize a well planned resistance. Prominent Bulgarians, the United Evangelical Churches and the Metropolitan Stefan sent telegrams and letters to King Boris and to the Minister of the Interior who was in charge of the execution of Hitler's plans. But there was no indication that this time the government was ready to yield. The police, secret agents and fascist hoodlums filled the streets. Rich peasants from outlying villages came to Sofia to buy Jewish possessions for a song. Little Jewish children stood in front of their homes asking passerby to buy some of their poor belongings. In fact, some Jewish families already started out on the way to the railroad station.

It was then that the Communist Party decided to go over to direct mass action. By May 24th the last of the 3 days given for the Jews to depart, the Communist Party succeeded in getting thousands of people into the streets. They were joined by 10,000 Sofia Jews. It was one of the largest and greatest anti-fascist demonstrations in the world. The organization of this demonstration was entrusted to and carried out by Comrade Toder Zhivkov, now President of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. The demonstration of the thousands of people marched to a synagogue. From there they were to proceed to the King's Palace. However, before reaching the palace and while in the center of the City, the police attacked in force with machine guns and automatic rifles. Many were wounded and over 300 were arrested. Later in the day the police made a tour of the city, arresting every Jew they found. However, the King, frightened by the magnitude of the protesting masses, fled from his palace in Sofia and the final order for the deportation was not issued. This time the Jews of Sofia left for the provinces but not within the 3 days designated by Hitler and King Boris. They returned on September 9, 1944 to welcome the partisans among whom there were many Jews and the victorious Soviet Army.

Fascism In The Mirror of Actuality — Part II

by Hans Lebrecht

FOREVER WITH IMPERIALISM

His disciple, Menahem Begin and his heir, in the capacity of leader of the extreme rightist current in Zionism—likes to present himself and his movement as heroes of the movement for the liberation of the Land of Israel from British colonialism. (Begin, just like other Zionist leaders, conceals from the public the consistent struggle waged by the Arab and Jewish Communists against the British rule in this country for more than 20 years, when thousands of them filled the prisons, were tortured and deported from the country). The historical truth is that the ETZEL “*ligun*”, under Begin’s leadership, (on the eve of the UNO decision to turn out the British and establish independent statehood for the Jews in Palestine and for the Palestinian Arab people) stood for supplanting the British rule in Palestine by a rule that was to be dependent on U.S. imperialism. It is a fact that the very same Menahem Begin at this very moment sells out—and even more enthusiastically than his predecessors—our state to the global interests of U.S. imperialism and even exerts every effort to enter with it into a military pact, with all the perilous repercussions involved by this.

Indeed, there is nothing new in this position of Begin. As long ago as 1930, his accomplice in the leadership of Betar, Abba Ahimeir, wrote that *“In every conflict between west and east we will always side with the west, for the west symbolizes...a higher human society than the east...”* (A. Ahimeir, *“Revolutionary Zionism”*, p. 39, Tel-Aviv, 1966, Hebrew).

And Begin’s master and teacher, Jabotinsky, when courting British imperialism, said in his speech to the British Parliament in 1937: *“We, revisionist,...have proposed to the British Empire a good Jewish active partner, to stand on guard over the most important imperial lines of communication...and we do not want the English to shed their blood for our defence”*.

Let us replace the words “British Empire” and *“the English”* with the words “USA” and *“the*

Americans”, whom Begin requests *“not to shed even one drop of blood for our defence”*—then you have precisely Begin’s latest declarations in the White House and the US Congress. From this we must learn that this attitude of Begin is not just a tactical move, by means of which he attempts to succeed in the perpetuation of the Israeli occupation in the *“Complete Land of Israel”* and to eliminate the rights of the Palestinian Arab people, but a fundamental character trait of the extreme-rightist current in Zionism.

This basic attitude explains the blind hatred of Begin and his accomplices towards the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and with what he considers to be the *“fateful concurrence of interests”* with the opponents of detente and with regimes of the Chile type, on the other hand.

Fascism rises and grows on the ground of *the most imperialist elements of finance capital”*, as Dimitrov said, and there is no doubt that these central pillars are in our epoch embedded in the rule of the finance capital of the USA, the centre and bulwark of the *“free world”* of Begin and his likes. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that in our country, in the shadow of the Zionist ideological education at large—and now, that the extreme rightist current in Zionism and finance capital have risen to direct rule—a fertile soil has been created for the sprouting of fascist groups and organizations.

Various fascist organizations exist now in this country. However, this phenomenon is also quite characteristic of other countries, where neo-fascist organizations are being set up and have been strengthening: *“Neo-fascism is fascism adapting itself to the conditions of the present stage in the general crisis of capitalism, to the balance of forces in the capitalist world and the balance of forces in the international arena”* (*“Present day Fascism and its Acute Danger”*—Problems of Peace and Socialism, 4/1973, p. 644, German edition). Also when frictions exist between the *“Herut loyalists”*, led by MK (Member of Knesset) Geula Cohen and their

overt or covert leader, Menahem Begin. One cannot ignore the fact that all of them belong to the same spiritual current, to the same family, to the same basic policy.

COLONIALIST OPPRESSION BEGETS FASCISM

It is only natural that the prolonged occupation of Arab territories and the ruthless suppression of any expression of opposition to occupation, the colonialist rule and the precipitated continuation of the *conquest of lands*, the creation of faits accomplis, the demographic alterations and the annexation, are intensifying the resistance of the indigenous Palestinian population to the occupation. This resistance is not only just, but it is legitimate from the aspect of international law. While the previous government in Israel still pretended to be prepared for a *territorial compromise (of course, at the expense of the Palestinian people)*, the present government has openly stated: There will not be any frontiers within the *Land of Israel* west of the Jordan River. Begin's *autonomy* plan explicitly speaks of an *"independent administrative rule for the inhabitants"*, but under no circumstances any *"territorial independent rule"*.

The Israeli government responds to the growing resistance to occupation by intensified means of terror. It openly encourages fascist terrorist groups and organisation of the *"Gush-Emunim"* type, which already now use firearms to terrorize Palestinians. They are not brought to court for this. In every case, their provocative acts, even murder like at Halhoul, or attempted murder as recently happened at Bir-Zeit, the Palestinian *"natives"* are incriminated.

The colonialist terror in the occupied territories, the escalation of oppression, attempt to strangle the just struggle of the Palestinian people against the occupation, also bear within themselves grave dangers for democratic freedoms in Israel itself, and accelerate the process of fascisation of social and political life in the State. The soldiers, policemen, frontier guards, and the members of the fascist terrorist groups are learning methods of oppression by practice on the flesh and blood of the Palestinian Arab people are learning to depreciate human lives, human dignity. Who can guarantee that these methods will not find their way into public life in Israel, when the government will encounter an intensified opposition to the continuation of its rule?

"In the class interest of the big bourgeoisie, fascism is required to oppress by means of the most atrocious terror, first and foremost, the working class and its revolutionary party, and all the other democratic forces and their organizations in the state; to eliminate stage by stage the institutions of bourgeois democracy (such as parliament), or to empty them of any content, and to establish in their place a 'popular' mass basis in support of monopoly capital, by means of extreme nationalist as well as social demagogy"—this, *inter alia*, is stated under the heading *"Fascism"*, in the *"Concise Political Dictionary"* Kleines Politisches Wörterbuch, "Dietz" publishing House, Berlin, GDR, 1973.

What does this tell us, if in the Israeli context, *"our own"* bourgeoisie should, heaven forbid, succeed in setting up a fascist regime in our country?

* A brutal offensive against the standard of living the toiling masses, their social and democratic achievements, an offensive which indeed is already on its way, will intensify. And if the working class will respond with a growing and organized class struggle, freedom of trade-union struggle and freedom to strike will be restricted, and even prohibited by the force of law and the police. (The police are already getting trained in methods for this purpose). Workers' parties, first and foremost, the Communist Party and other *"left"* parties, will be outlawed and fascism considers every workers' party as being *"leftist"*, the trade unions will be turned into state—controlled unions;

* The discrimination against the Arab population, the robbery of their lands and the crushing of any expression of resistance to all of this, will be intensified; oppression will not remain the *"privilege"* of the Arab minority in Israel, but will extend to the democratic forces among the Jewish majority;

* Freedom of expression and freedom of the press will be still much more restricted. Censorship will increasingly invade political issues. Anyone not consenting to censor himself while expressing, writing or publishing any essential criticism of the authorities, will be removed from the communication media, and even imprisoned. Government control over the press and mass media will be complete (the recent developments in the television and broadcasting networks must already arouse concern);

* Fascism will seize the whole super-structure, culture, the arts, scientific work and education; any-

one not conforming to the official line will find himself either ousted or even imprisoned;

* Under the pretext of *"the need for a strong arm"* against criminality and against the deioration of public morality, the fascist regime will set up the domination of its own *"morality"*: freedom of organized robbery by big capital, freedom of speculation at the stock-exchange, freedom to fascist terrorist groups, on the one hand, and jails and *"preventive detentions"* and even concentration camps and death sentences for those who will stand up against fascist *"morality"* of the authorities, on the other hand.

* The militarization of the economy, society and education will be still more intensified; the army and police will be *"purged"* of officers and commanders who are not to the liking of the regime. All this with respect to internal affairs, and with respect to foreign affairs:

* Aggression against the neighboring Arab people will be intensified, in particular against the Palestinian people; the oppression in the occupied territories will be intensified and the Palestinian population will be exiled by way of creating such a situation which will compel the inhabitants to leave their homeland, unless they are ready to be turned into *"hewers of wood and drawers of water"*. There will be a still closer attachment to the imperialist and neo-colonialist system against the national liberation movements and against the Soviet Union.

Do not let us belittle the issue. This is a list of options that are open for a future fascist regime in the State of Israel, the foundations for its realization have already been laid and do exist. I *"scenario"* of fascism in Israel, but in general outline it certainly comes close to it. Hence, fascism does not hit *"only Communists and Arabs"*, but the popular masses, workers, intellectuals, *"the man in the street"*, small businessmen, etc. Therefore the main task in the struggle for preventing the establishment of a fascist regime in our country is bound to be the exertion of great efforts, in order to point out those dangers and to convince—in spite of the limitations already set upon the utilisation of the mass media by forces of peace and democracy—the widest circles among the people, especially the working people and the intellectuals, that the struggle against the fascist peril lies in the Israeli national interest at large.

Notwithstanding what has been said above about

the reality of the strengthening of the elements of fascism, a reasonable prospect exists for the success of this struggle.

FOR UNITY OF ANTI-FASCIST FORCES

The extreme rightist current, today in power in our state, is an inseparable part of Zionism in general. It is based upon the Zionist ideology and its extremism is expressed by a considerable aggravation of Zionist practice, as compared with more moderate currents. This is being done to such an extent as to arouse indignation also among persons and circles holding Zionist views.

Dimitrov taught that the struggle against the fascist peril demands of us to *"develop an extensive ideological struggle based on clear, popular arguments and a correct well-thoughtout approach to the peculiarities on the national psychology of the popular masses"*. (From his speech at the 7th Congress of the Comintern). The ideological education of the Jewish masses in Israel throughout decades, equating—thereby indeed falsifying the truth—the Israeli nationality with Zionism must be considered to have turned into a *"specific national psychology."*

However, we must not identify the misled masses, among them honest persons, and Zionist circles with those who mislead them. It would be a grave mistake if we in our ideological struggle against fascism would not take into consideration this specific national psychology among the Israeli people. Only be a correct and well-considered attitude can we contribute an important share to the vital struggle against fascism.

The 18th Congress (December 1976) of the Communist Party of Israel stated: "under the conditions of Israel, the decisive division in today's concrete political struggle is not between Zionists and Communists. The decisive division is between the working people and the capitalists, between the forces of peace and the forces of war and annexation, between the democratic forces and the forces leading to fascism. There are Zionists who take up a correct position towards some concrete political or social issue. Hence there exist the feasibility and necessity of striving for unity of action, irrespective of ideological views, for the establishment of a peace front, a democratic front, a united workers' front." ("The 18th Congress", published by the Communist Party of Israel, p. 117, Hebrew ed.).

Let us also learn from history: In the self-criticism of his party, read by the leader of the Commun-

ist Party of Germany, *Wilhelm Pieck*, in the framework of the Report of the Executive Committee of the Comintern to the 7th Congress (1935), we read: "A not lessor error than the incorrect assessment of the danger of fascism was the fact that fascism was seen even there where it did not exist..." Pieck explained this error by the fact that there were Communist leaders and Party members who during the decade before the ascent to power considered governments that were as yet social-democratic or bourgeois — democratic governments in the Weimer Republic of the 1920's "a rule of fascist dictatorship and thereby weakened the struggle against the real danger of Nazi fascism". This error was indeed corrected by the Party, but was too late for preventing Hitler's ascent to power ("The 7th Congress of the Comintern", Dietz Publishing House, Berlin, P. 34, German ed.).

Our party stated in its 18th Congress: "under the concrete conditions which developed in Israel, the democratic front against the forces of the extreme right — against the danger of fascism — can be very wide. There exist political circles which do not support our realistic peace plan, and which so far entertain perilously delusive plans of territorial annexations, of preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state and the like, (some of these are topical today, too, when we have the illusion of "peace and annexationist "autonomy" as formulated by the Begin government! -H.L.), but who are ready to rise, and who are rising in the struggle against the fascist onslaught of 'Gush-Emunim' and their partners, against colonialist settlement and the threats directed at democracy."

"Hence, the democratic front is not a front of only leftist forces, but can, and must include the widest forces, whose interest is to prevent a fascist dictatorship from coming to power".

"We Communists show that it is the government's

policy, which prevents peace and security and is liable to bring about a new war, as it establishes colonial settlements in the occupied territories. Its policy assists the strengthening and raving of the fascist and extreme hawkish circles". ("The 18th Congress", p. 116, Hebrew ed.).

Despite what has been said in the last sentence, we must not commit the error of seeing the danger of a fascist regime in Israel as something unavoidable. We must appraise the intensifying opposition to this danger, the growing awareness of the danger among various circles, as well as the widening struggle for preserving the democratic achievements and for equality of rights. First and foremost, considerable importance is to be attached to the intensification of the class struggle and the unity of the working class against the attack of the big capital and its government, against the policy of discrimination and against land seizure from the Arab population, and for true peace — "Peace, not occupied territories". All these help the widest struggle against the peril of fascism.

We must also pose the question: If the struggle against the Likud rule intensifies and expands, will a fascist dictatorship — "the worst terrorist oppression" be set up in order to suppress this process? This, of course, is precisely the danger. However, it is absolutely possible to prevent it.

As will be recalled, after the 18th Congress of the CP of Israel, and towards the elections to the Knesset and the Histadrut institutions in the spring of 1977, the "Democratic Front for Peace and Equality" was established. We must strive, by exerting all efforts, in order to expand this Front or establish a militant alliance between the Front and other progressive forces, which are aware of the danger.

This is to be done with the aim of establishing an anti-fascist front, before it is too late.

Editorials Continued on page 2

and decisive factors in reaching a solution to the Palestine question, and for the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East", indicates the response of the Arab people of Palestine to the Camp David maneuvers.

No less of great significance is the increasing recognition and support to the P.L.O. and Palestinian national rights of many Black leaders and organizations in the United States. More on this will be said at the forthcoming 8th Annual Jewish

Affairs Dinner, whose theme will be "Black — Jewish Unity for Affirmative Action and for the Just National Rights of the Israeli and Palestinian People".

The struggles of the people for peace and justice will break through in spite of the huge campaign of public deception now taking place in the United States. The participation of the Jewish community of the U.S. behind these objectives will hasten their achievement.

This must be our goal for 1980.

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ארץ ווערנענערליים וועגן נייע יידישע קולטור-פלענער

• אויסקער די נארמאל-דערשטיגענדיקע יודישע ביסער אין פארלאג, סאָ- וועקסי פּיאַמטעל, וואָס זי יעדן זומער, „פּאָטעטיש היימלאַנד“ זענען לינגע ווערן אַ פּאָפּולער בוך. • אין 1981 וועט אָפּגעמערקט ווערן דער 20טער יוביליי פּאָן „פּאָטעטיש היימלאַנד“. • די מעלוכע באַזאָרגט פּלע יודישע קולטור-באַדערעסנישן. • אין ביראָבירזשאַנער שולן האָט מען אָנגעהויבן לערנען יודיש.

מור. מיר האָלטן, אז די 20 יאר „סאַווע- טיש היימלאַנד“ פּעלן מיט זיך פּאַר אַ נייעם עטאַס אין דער פּאָטעטישער ליטעראַ- טור. אין יאר 1981 וועלן מיר אַפּמערקן דעם 20-יאָר יוביליי.

מען דאַרף נאָר צורעכנען די אויבער- קע ביכער וואָס ווערן אַרויסגעגעבן אין באַפּאָווע און אַנדערע שטעט. דורך אַזוינע ביכער יודישע שרייבער מיט אַן יודיש און פּויליש אַלבערזשענע און רוסיש אַזאָרניש, אַזאָרניש און אַדערע שפּראַכן. לעצטנס האָט בן מיר אַנגעהויבן פּובליקירן צעמלען, רע- זימעס פּאָן גינדערשינענע ביכער. יעדעס יאר ווערן פּאַרמערס די צאל אַרויסגעגעבע- נע ביכער. מען דאַרף אויך פּאַרשייטן, אַז אַונגערע ביכער שטעלן מיט זיך פּאַר עמע- סע ליטעראַרישע שאַפּונגען. דאַס הייסט טאַטע יודישע ליטעראַטור. דאַס זיינען גיטש קיין ביכער פּאָן צופּע- זיקע מענטשן. נישט זיינען יודישע שאַפּונ- גען, פּאַעטעס, פּובליציסטישע זאַמלונגען. דער אויסקער פּאָן נייע אַיצגעשטאַמענע אַרבע- טן פּאָן היינטיגע שרייבער, פּאָן העכער 100 שרייבער, וועלעך גרופּירן זיך אַרום „סאַווע- טיש היימלאַנד“.

„סאַוועטיש היימלאַנד“ גייט זיך אַרויס צוגעבן אַ קלינע ביליאַטע פּאָן ביכער מיט פּאַרשיידענע טעמעס פּאָן דער אַזוי- גערופּענער קאַפּיטע- (גראַש-)ביליאַטע, וואָס פּעלעט אַפּאַל אַרויסגיין כאַ יודן, אין דער סאַוועטישער צייט פּעלעט אַרויסגיין אַזאָ ביליאַטעס אין פּאַרלאַג פּאָן דער ציי- טונג „עמעס“. אַיצט גיט אַרויס אַזאָ ביב- ליאָטעק דער שוואַפּל „אַנאַליקס“ אין ר.ס. יעדן ביליאַטע אַ ביכעלע. אַזאָ ביליאַטעס, וועט אַרוינגעמען פּאָן אַונגען פּאָן סאַוועטישע יודישע שרייבער, און אַנהייבן אַרויסצוגיין פּאָן יאַנאַר 1980.

יעדער ליינער פּאָן „סאַוועטיש היימ- לאַנד“ וועט באַקומען יעדן ביליאַטע דעם ליטעראַל צוזאַמען מיטן ביבליאָ פּאָן דער גראַפיק-ביליאַטע, וואָס וועט אַרוינגעמען דערציילונגען, לידער, קעפּאָמלען פּאָן אַ ריף פּאָן אַפּאַנאַלונגען וועבן יודישע קול- טור-ווערן, וואָס מיר רופן און „סאַוועטישע היימלאַנד“ — אַונדערע סיימפּיליזאָנען, אַדער טאַטעס וועגן סאַלעדי.

„סאַוועטיש היימלאַנד“ היינט אַלץ וואָס סאַוועטישע יודישע שרייבער שאַפּן. די ביי- כער, וועלעכע גייען אַרויס אין פּאַרלאַג, סאָ- וועקסי פּיאַמטעל, זיינען גיטש האַווען די, וועלעכע זיינען דערדיקט אין אַונדער זטור. נאָל מיר וועלן אויספּליקן די אינטערע- סאַנטסטע אויסקער דעם וועלן מיר קענען זענען אַ נאַמעלע פּאָן דעם 1981 יאַר, אַדער 1980 יאַר.

די ווייטערדיקע ביכער וועלן גענומען ווערן טיי פּאָן דער פּרעזירוקער צייט, מיט און דער אַיצטיקער. דאַס וועט שוין זיין אין אַ באַפּאָווע, אַראָניזירט אַזאָ ביבלי- און אַ געזונט. וועט זיין אַ צוזאַם אַזאָ שווע- גענער, דער שוואַפּל וועט זיין פּרייז גיטש נאָדער, אַזוי אַרום וועט דאַס זיין אַ צוזאַם פּאַר די ליינער. דער ליינער וועט זיך טענען שאַפּן אַזאָ אייגענע ביליאַטעס, מיר וועלן אַונגעהויבן פּאָן דערשטע כאַדער- וועלן און קומענדיקע יאַר. עס איז אויך דאַ אַ פּאַרשייאַט אַזאָ מיר זאָל אַנהייבן נאָך דעם יאַר, די צעצעט כאַדאַש, אַזאָ אַ פּאַרבע, מיט אַ פּאַר ביכעלע. אויב מיר וועלן דאַס באַזייגן, וועלן מיר דאַס זיכער פּאַן אויב גיטש, וועלן מיר דאַס אַנהייבן אין 1980.

מיר וועלן דאַס אַנרום. בייאַלע צו סאָ- וועקסי פּיאַמטעל, צו יעדן זומער וועט נאָך אַ בייבלי, אַזוי און אין מעשער פּאָן יאַר וועלן מיר אַרבעטן 12 ביכער פּאָן די אויספּאַטע סאַוועטישע יודישע שרייבער. מיר וועלן אויך טענען אַרבעטן פּאָן סאַווע- טישע קריטיקער, טאַמענאַרן פּאָן דער ליטעראַטור פּאָן אַונטערשטע יודישער ליטעראַט- 21

מיר האבן פאַרשיידענע פלענער אף דער צוקונפט. געוויינלעך, בארימטע מיר זיך נישט פרייע פון פאַרויס. ס'איז אַזאָ סאַווע טישער סגיל. בא אונדו, איידער מען האט אַרויסגעלאָזן דעם באַמאָנט, האבן מיר נישט געשריבן ווען מיט אַ קוועסט אָפּן קענע פלי. מיר האבן געשריבן בעייט מען האט אים שוין אַרויסגעלאָזן. מיט דעם וויל איר נישט זאָגן, אז מיר וועלן אַרויסלאָזן אַ צאל לי- טעראַרישע „פּאָטעטישעס“. מיר וועלן אַכער באַרונדערען די צאל ביכער, וואָס מיר גרוי- פּאָן צו יעדעס יאַר פאַר דעם פּאַרלאַג, סאָ- וועקסי פּיאַמטעל, אַפּאַס איר וועלן דאַס מאַכן. פּאָן די מענטשן, וואָס וועלן דאַס מאַכן, ווילן באַ אונדו און נישט דעיאַלוקער. מיר מען זאָל אַרויסגעבן מיט פּעלערן, לעבן שטאַרק איבער, ווען מיר דערוענען אַ מעלער אין „סאַוועטיש היימלאַנד“, און צום באַדויערן זיינען פאַרען פּעלערן.

מיר זיינען פאַראַינגעפּרעטע דעם זאָל זיין אַ פאַרעוועגן לויט די פּאַרדיקטע פּאָן דער יודישער קולטור בייבלי און פּאָן דער סאָ- וועטישער יודישער ליטעראַטור. פּאָן דער סגור יודישער קלאַסיק בייבלי אַזאָ דאַס די קומענדיקע יודישע שרייבער, דערבייך גרייטן פּאָן אַלץ מונדאַמענטאַל איר גלויב, אַז מיט דעם אונטערשיידן זיך „סאַוועטיש היימלאַנד“ פּאָן דער יודישער קולטור און דער וועלט.

אין אידישן לעבן

די נאציאנאלע קאמיטע פון דער קאמוניסטישער פארטיי פון די פאר אייניקטע שטאטן פארצייכנט מיט טיפסטן טרויער דעם טויט פון חבר מ. אַלין דעם 22טן נאוועמבער, 1939. חבר אַלין איז געווען די אויס נעצייכטסטע און באליבטסטע פינור אין דער אידישער סביבה, און א פינדיקער מיטגליד פון דער קאמוניסטישער פארטיי, וועמענס איינפלוס האָט גענירטיגט א סך ווייטער פון די נרענצען פון אמעריקע.

אַלס רעדאקטאָר פון דער „מאָנגן־פרייהייט“ זינט איר נרידונג, איז ער מערסטנס געווען פאַראַנטוואָרטלעך פאַר איר וואַסנדיקן איינפלוס און פאַר איר הויכער ליטעראַרישער קוואַליטעט, וואָס האָט אָפּגעשפּילט זיין אייגענע הויכע קולטור און ועלטענעם קינסטלערישן טאלאַנט, וואָס האָט צוגעצויגן א סך אָנגעזעענע מיטאַרבּעטער. אַלס אַן אויסערנעוויינ' לעכער אָרטאָדאָקס אין חבר אַלין'ס געווען אַ טריבון פאַר די ברייטסטע אידישע מאַסן, אַזוי גוט ווי פאַר דער פאַרטיי, וועמענ'ס מאַנדיראַט ער איז געווען אין עטלעכע וואָלן אין ניו יאָרק.

נאָך אַ טראַגיקהייט פון קנאַפע צוויי יאָר — אין וועלכע חבר אַלין האָט פון טראַגיק'דיגעם פאַרגעזעצט זיין ליטעראַרישע אַרבעט פאַר דער „מאָנגן־פרייהייט“, „דעילי וואַרקער“ און אַלס ספּעציעלער קאָרעספּאָנ' דענט פון דער מאַסקווער „פּראָדוראַ“, האָט אויסגעזען, אַז ער פּילט זיך שוין אַזוי פּיל בעסער, אַז ער האָט אין דעם 13טן נאוועמבער, אין מעריסאָן סקווער נאָרדן, אַרויסגעטראָפּן מיט זיין ערשטער עפּנסלעכער רעדע זינט ער איז קראַנק געוואָרן. יעדער איינער, וואָס איז אָנגעזען געווען ביי דעם מיטינג, וועט קיינמאַל ניט פאַרגעסן די אַוואַזיע, וואָס חבר אַלין האָט געקראָגן ביי דער געלעגנהייט. אַזוי איז אויסגעדיקט געוואָרן די נעפע ליבע צו אים אין די הערצער פון די אַרבעטער, אַ דאַנק זיין מסירת' טשעדיקער איבערגעבנהייט צו זייערע אינטערעסן. די 22 טויזנט אַרבעטער אין זאַל האָבן ניט געהאַט שוין אַנגונג, אַז זיי געזענענען זיך צום לעצטן מאַל מיט איינעם פון זייערע בעסטע פאַרשטייער אין נאָמען פון די הונדערטער טער מויונטער, מיליאָנען, וועלכע וועלן טרויערן אויסן פאַרלוסט, וואָס סיר אַלע האָבן געלייגן מיט זיין טויט.

חבר אַלין וואָלט ניט פאַרלאָנגט שוין בעסערע געלעגנהייט פאַר די לעצטע טעג פון זיין לעבן, ווי די אַקטיווע באַטייליקונג אין דער זאַך פון אַרבעטער־קראַפּ, פון סאָציאַליזם, פון דער קאמוניסטישער פארטיי, וואָס ער האָט אָנגעפירט ביו זיינע לעצטע שטונדן און אין וועלכע ער האָט געפונען די שורסטע פאַרווירקלעכונג פון זיינע לעבנס־אינספּיראַציעס. חבר מ. אַלין האָט איינגעריצט זיין נאָמען אין די העצער פון די מאַסן, וועלכע ער האָט גערינגט.

די נאציאנאלע קאמיטע פון דער קאמוניסטישער פארטיי טרויערעם צו זאמען מיט די מאסן אין זייער טיפן צער, און רומט אַלע, וואָס האָבן גע' פילט אַלינס אינספּירירנדיקן איינפלוס, צו שליסן זייערע רייען מיט דעם ועלביקן ענטוואַזום, וואָס ער האָט שטענדיג אַרויסגעוויזן, פאַר אַ זיג אין די שטאַכטן, וואָס הויבן זיך איצט אָן.

וויליאַם ז. פּאַסטער, טשערמאַן
אויבן באַוואַדער, נענער־אַלעמעקערשאַר.

נאַציאָנאַלע קאָמיטע, קאָמוניסטישע פאַרטיי
פון די פאַראייניקטע שטאַטן

