

# AFTERMATH OF A GENOCIDE—WHERE DOES THE BLAME LIE?

## Jewish Resistance—Or Cooperation?

by Dr. Abraham Duker

So much has been written and so much more could be written about Hannah Arendt's book that I shall touch on only a few points. Dr. Arendt has the reputation of being one of the most brilliant women writers and scholars. To this I heartily subscribe, on the basis of my personal contact with her. However, Dr. Arendt is also what I call an *Ipcha Mistavranik*, a common phenomenon among intellectuals. In her case, her search for contradictions is expressed in going to town on a point, sometimes a minor one, that leads itself to some obtuse and sensational and therefore presumably brilliant interpretation; in the eyes of the half initiates.

A good example of this is her treatment of Jewish leadership particularly the *Judenrat*, the Councils, established by the Nazis to carry out their orders in the Jewish community. Dr. Arendt claims that the Jews should not have lent themselves to any organized self-rule under the Nazis or any negotiations which she terms collaboration with them.

"Wherever Jews lived, there were recognized Jewish leaders, and this leadership, almost without exception, cooperated in one way or another, for one reason or another, with the Nazis. The whole truth was that if the Jewish people had really been unorganized and leaderless, there would have been chaos and plenty of misery but the total number of victims would hardly have been between four and a half and six million people."

Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil by Hannah Arendt, New York, Viking, 1963, p. 111.

Generalizations are easy. For example, the outstanding Marxist historian of the catastrophe, Arthur Eisenbach, in his first edition of his *Hillierowska Polityka Eksterminacji Zydow (The Hitlerian Policy of Extermination of Jews in the Years 1939-1945 as One of the Phenomena of German Imperialism)* (Warsaw, 1953), classified the *Judenrat* as an instrument of Nazi strategy "to force the enemy to destroy itself with its own hands." He continues: "Eventually, all demoralized, opportunistic elements in the local bourgeoisie came to cooperate with the Hitlerians. Similarly, among the Jewish population the Hitlerian authorities captured many *Sancja (Pilsudskiite)* leaders bourgeois elements, right-wing Zionists, clericals, whom they exploited as instruments in carrying out their criminal plans. Out of these fears were recruited agents, informers, and servants of all types." Eisenbach further describes the demoralization of the *Judenrat*, leaning very much on the characterization of the Warsaw council in its last stage by the martyred historian, Emanuel Ringelblum, his own brother-in-law.

To show how difficult it is to arrive at a historical verdict on the *Judenrat*, I shall cite now from H. Smolar's *Fun Minsker Ghetto (From the Minsk Ghetto)* (Moscow, 1946), a reminder of the relatively good old days when the publication of Yiddish books was still permitted in the USSR. Minsk, White Russia's capital since 1918, had no bourgeoisie, no Zionist movement, no clerical parties, not even an organized Jewish community outside the few synagogues. The Minsk Jews were not prepared for Nazi brutality, because Stalin, Hitler's faithful ally, did not permit the press to reveal the facts about Hitlerite anti-Semitism. Smolar, a leading Communist, describes the establishment of the *Judenrat* in Minsk:

"A group was held long in the street near the *Kommandatur*. . . . A Hitlerite officer came out and ordered a person who could speak German to step forward. Nobody moves. The officer issues his command a second time, in a more threatening tone. 'Let someone step forward who understands German.' Many understand, but nobody moves. 'I understand a little,' quietly says Elie Mushkin, and takes a few steps forward. When Mushkin returned from the *Kommandatur*, he looked even more gray and his shoulders were bent and sagging."  
(Continued on page 2)

## The persecutor . . .



Adolph Eichmann hearing his death sentence appeal rejected by the Israeli Supreme Court.

A period of unbelieving silence pervaded the Knesset chamber on the morning of May 23, 1960 as Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion announced the capture of Adolph Eichmann. Eleven months later, Eichmann was brought to trial on a fifteen count indictment. His crimes were listed under three categories: crimes against the Jewish people, crimes against humanity, and membership in hostile organizations. The "great expediter" of death as Attorney General Hausner called him, pleaded not guilty, denied he was a mass murderer, and stated he merely carried out orders.

On December 11, 1961 he was found guilty of all fifteen counts; four days later he was sentenced to hang. Eichmann died on the gallows on May 31, 1962.

Covering the trial were more than five hundred correspondents including Hannah Arendt representing *The New Yorker* magazine. She propounded two theses: Eichmann was a smallminded bureaucrat who functioned as a cog in the vast, impersonal machine of German totalitarianism and destruction. This made it impossible for him to know or feel he was doing wrong. The second thesis is that the Jews themselves abetted their own destruction by cooperating with the Nazis.

## . . . The prosecutor



Attorney General Gideon Hausner

EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM: A Report on the Banality of Evil. By Hannah Arendt. The Viking Press, New York. 275 pp. \$5.50.

## Personal Culpability In An Evil Society

by Mr. Leo Taubes

One of the most disturbing things about Hannah Arendt's book — and it contains much that is disturbing — is its subtlety. It is difficult enough to comprehend the vileness, the suffering, the atrocity, but the mind naturally rebels against the combination of the words *banality* and *evil*. How can wickedness be insignificant? How can enormity be trivial? In a moral world where every act has a spiritual value, where every deed has repercussions in infinity, where every impulse, good or bad, can affect eternity, sure it is absurd to describe evil as mere banality.

And yet Dr. Arendt is right. [The banality she discusses is not a depreciation of evil but a disparagement of the evil-doers; the proportions of the evil were monstrous, the extent of the misery indescribable, but the perpetrators were mean, their status contemptible, their actions shabby. And it is a symptom of the great disease of our time that such distinctions can actually be made.

They can be made because thinking and acting are no longer related, because the boundary between good and evil has been erased, because man is rejecting the moral world and, in Erich Fromm's terms, is escaping from freedom and disburdening himself of responsibility. He has embraced determinisms of various sorts and repudiated guilt as anachronistic, with the result that actions which once required a conscious moral struggle have degenerated into dull routine into banality. Not only evil becomes banal, but all human endeavor, and humanity itself.

Ironically enough, this is occurring at a time when thoroughgoing determinism has been questioned on scientific grounds. The implications of quantum mechanics, of Niels Bohr's theories of complementarity, of Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy point to the operation in nature of what in the moral sphere is called free will.

The complexity of modern society, the vastness of its operations, the bewildering pace and intricacy of technological change have turned theoretical determinism into the practical helplessness in the face of existence which is moral slavery. The evil that man commits is often not the result of personal moral decision but of drifting with social currents. The more atrocious the evil, the less personal involvement there is, and man is enslaving himself by relinquishing control over his actions.

This loss of control is perhaps most obvious and most appalling in the realm that presents the greatest danger to humanity — nuclear power. Humanity is faced with the possibility of destroying itself, and no one accepts, or even considers, the responsibility for this ultimate evil. Scientists exculpate themselves by claiming that they have no control over the application of their research. Einstein, after all, did not want to create an atom bomb when he developed his theories or made his recommendations to Roosevelt to encourage the study of nuclear fission. The taxpayer has no choice, industry must uphold the economy, the military must defend freedom, the government represents the will of the people. The whole question is resolved by saying that no one is guilty — the final banality.

It is not surprising that the most common defense at war crimes trials was the lack of free choice; superior orders and the law had to be obeyed. The only basis for the rejection of this defense was to cut through the tangle of deterministic philosophy and psychology; to  
(Continued on page 2)

"The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were — and still are — terribly and terrifyingly normal. . . . this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implied that this new type of criminal commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong." Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil by Hannah Arendt, New York, Viking, 1963, p. 253.



## On The Sidelines

## Red's Blues



by Ted Brodie

After weeks of practice and preparation the moment of truth has arrived. This past Monday night "Red" Saracheck's Mighty Mites opened their rigorous season against Paterson State in a fast-paced encounter which may well set the pattern of the team's future performances.

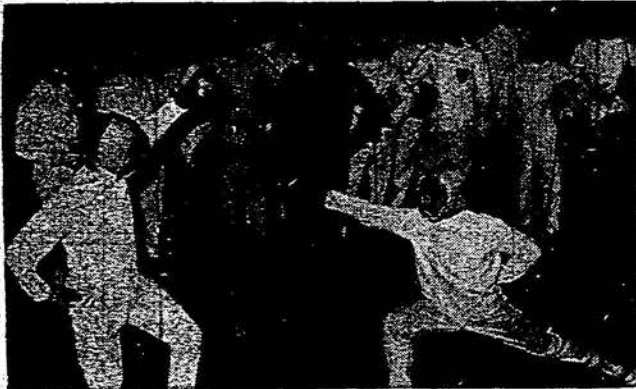
This first game is of major importance, and a quick glance into last year's records will explain the situation. At that time, in pre-season scrimmages, the Mites exhibited unusual strength and promise. In one particular scrimmage they went against St. Francis—a team which went on to play in the National Invitational Tournament as one of the country's top teams. As the play ended, everyone was shocked and pleasantly surprised when Saracheck's five whalloped them, and immediately predictions for a terrific record were announced. When the first game of that season was played, however, these great expectations were shattered. Coming out against a weak Kings Point, Yeshiva unexpectedly lost, and, as history shows, this game was typical of the entire '62-'63 effort.

Now of course there are, other than the outcome of the first encounter, more substantial factors which come to bear on a season prognosis, and each year these factors vary according to the needs and problems of the moment.

This year especially, pre-season practice has been terribly disrupted by the non-existence of a permanent home court. (This won't be a plea for a new gym, so don't get piqued.) In years passed a court has been rented for team use, but this season, the Mites have been practicing in four gyms—FIT, Power Memorial, Barnard High School, and the YMHA on Nagle Ave. The difficulties such wanderings have caused, and will continue to cause if not rectified, are enormous. Being forced to practice several times a week in several places will unquestionably sap team spirit, strength, and stamina, saying nothing of the time that will be wasted. It is hoped, however, that before long one court will be used by the team as is normally the case.

With the season under way, and all things being equal, the schedule will become an important factor in team performance. This year eleven of the nineteen scheduled games will be played at home (Power). This is significant because, in the normal course of events—excluding a team that is "hot"—a home team is spotted between five and ten points over its opponent before the game begins. Given a large and enthusiastic student crowd and evenly matched teams, the host should win.

With this in mind, let's look again at the record books. Last year our record was 6-13, with eight games lost by five points or



Coach Tauber observing fencers' form.

less. Many of these close losses were away games and each was, naturally, a heartbreaker. This season, with a majority of the games scheduled for home stands, we should see an improved season record.

## TED'S TOPICS:

Tonight, Wittenberg's wrestlers travel to Hunter College to try to duplicate last year's victory. Despite some weak spots left by graduating lettermen, look to Jeff Berg and Barry Berger, in the 177 lb. and heavyweight slots, to give the grapplers this first match.

Also on tonight's agenda is a fencing match between Yeshiva and Jersey City. This is a home stand—7:30 P.M. in the gym.

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ACROSS FROM YESHIVA

## Mighty Mites Play Second Tonight; Hope To Dribble Away Drew's Fight

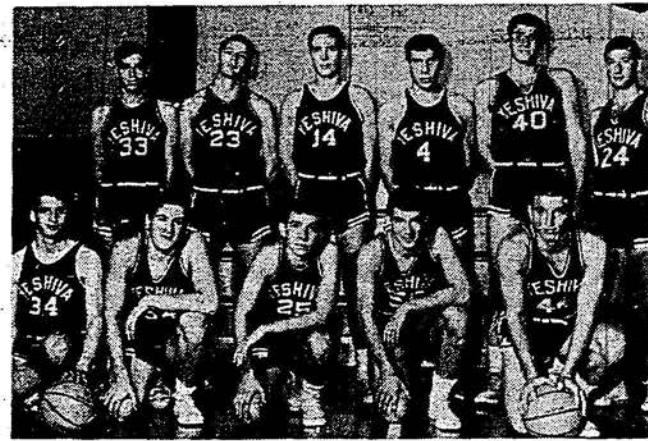
by Neil Koslowe

Tonight YU faces Drew, and judging from the opening victory, 73-61 over Paterson State, Drew does not look as formidable as feared.

The Mites won Monday's opener with a final team effort.

though team and YU hasn't been too successful against them in the past. Together with the playing date, which won't favor our players for sure, it looks like SCRANTON.

PRATT. We played Pratt



Yeshiva College Varsity Basketball Team.

Steve Gralla's scoring touch (20 points) led our boys, and he stifled a late Paterson rally by sinking two crucial foul shots. Also starring were Ken Jacobson, 15 points, and Shelly Rokach, 12 points.

## Predictions

With the season first starting, a few predictions are in order. There are eighteen games left, including tonight's match with Drew, eight League contests, and four teams new to the Mighty Mites. The games could go this way:

**DREW.** This New Jersey squad is one of the new additions to our schedule. They face some of the same teams we do, and our past record has compared favorably with theirs. Though a large school, Drew is noted more for fencing than basketball. **YESHIVA.**

**MARIST.** Another new addition is this team from Poughkeepsie, New York. Our only common foe last year was Brooklyn Poly. We defeated Poly by 20 points, and Marist rolled up 103 points against them. Marist has seven lettermen returning to this year's five, and is led by John Oudletter, a 6'6" sophomore. **MARIST.**

**LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY.** In a word, LIU is loaded. They're headed for things bigger than the Tri-State League. Albie Grant will pave the way for a big season for the Blackbirds. **LIU.**

**C. W. POST.** We dropped a close contest to Post last year because they maintained a steady attack. Post has just that combination of height and shooting to beat us again. This game, nevertheless, would be a good spot for an upset. **C. W. POST.**

**NEW HAVEN.** The third new school we face is more our size. New Haven isn't reputed to have that good a squad and a quick opening by the Mites could scare them. **YESHIVA.**

**SCRANTON.** We journey to Scranton January 2 this year. Scranton always comes up with a

basket-for-basket last year, but ran into foul difficulty in the waning minutes. This year, there will be no such difficulty. **YESHIVA.**

**KINGS.** The final new team for us is this squad from Pennsylvania. We played them a few years ago, and our history with them is a sad one. Kings always comes up with big and strong boys, and we'll be lacking under the boards. **KINGS.**

**FARLEIGH DICKINSON.** Last season Farleigh had the top team in the League. Their squad, depleted by graduation is still formidable. Here is another chance for a YU upset, but probably **FARLEIGH DICKINSON.**

**KINGS POINT.** Last season opened with an ominous note as we dropped a sloppy game to the Marines. This year we face them in the middle part of our schedule, and we won't let them slip again. **YESHIVA.**

**HARTWICK.** Another heartbreaker last year was the 41-40 loss to Hartwick. Basically, they don't have the caliber of basketball player we have, and we should whip them. Nevertheless, Hartwick is always trouble. **YESHIVA.**

**ADELPHI.** Another one of last year's top teams, Adelphi, pulled away from us only in the closing minutes of last year's game. We surprised them then, and we might do it again. But Adelphi's recruited talent may prove to be too much. **ADELPHI.**

**BRIDGEPORT.** This year, the schedule has given us the Connecticut lads at home. Last year's long trip was an important feature in an uninspired team. This year Bridgeport is about even with us in talent, and our spirit should win. **YESHIVA.**

**CITY.** A traditional rival, City lost its co-captain this season with an injury. We always play an inspired game against our brethren from Convent Ave., and we should pull a mild upset this year. **YESHIVA.**

**HUNTER.** Never powerful, Hunter will fall again. **YESHIVA.**

**RIDER.** We dropped a close contest to Rider last year, and again it was a matter of the last minute breakdown of our endurance. This year the boys are conditioned and set to gain in a second upset. **YESHIVA.**

**FAIRFIELD.** We have to travel way up to Connecticut to face the powerful Fairfield five this season. The trip, in addition to the excellent players of Fairfield, seem to point to our defeat. **FAIRFIELD.**

**BROOKLYN.** Our squad, after a highly gratifying season, will send off seniors Art Aaron, Ken Jacobson, and Bob Podhurst by mauling Yeshiva's Brooklyn extension. **YESHIVA.**

## Volley Forge Battles Bring Out The Best Of YC Battlers

On Tuesday, Nov. 19, the first intramural volleyball game of the season was played between the sophs and the seniors. After a rugged battle co-captains Gil Epstein and Sandy Gitel led the upperclassmen on to a 21-19 victory.

In the beginning of the game the seniors were able to build a 12-5 lead, aided by the power of Ellis Sultanik and Joe Zitter. But soph co-captains, Stan Schneider and Peter Hans, changed their strategy in mid-game and soon senior supremacy became suspect. Surging forward, the sophs set up a power drive and made a bid for victory. Howie Salob and Joe Wikler played extremely well in this last effort.

## Smicha Forfeit

Scheduled also that evening was a basketball game between the juniors and smicha, but the latter had no one to represent them, and the game was forfeited to the juniors. The "winners," including Larry Martin, Moshe Brand, Jay

Garsman, Mitch Wohlberg, and Warren Goldman, now have a 2-0 record, having trounced the frosh in an earlier contest.

On Nov. 26, the sophs again played volleyball, this time going against the juniors. Having profited by their previous encounter, the second-year men overpowered their opponents and took the contest 22-20. Piloting their team to victory were co-captains Peter Hans and Stan Schneider, who have a keen insight into the game's strategy.

**Sophs' Tops**  
Junior captains Max Wolpinky and Neil Olshan, aided by the spirit and experience of Stan Raskas and Al Felsenfeld, took an early lead. The sophs, closing their ranks with the defensive prowess of E. Fenig, stamped out their foe's drive and won by two points.

"This season's interest in intramural sports is excellent," stated intramural coordinator Harold "Chico" Wasserman.



# A Mandate For Murder

by Steven Prystowsky

**THE DEED**, by Gerold Frank. Simon and Schuster, New York, 317 pp. \$4.95.

The realization of the State of Israel—a 2,000 year-old dream—was not achieved solely by victory in 1948. This was only the last step. The dream started with the *aliyahs* from Eastern Europe in the late 1800's and early 1900's. It reached fruition with men like Herzl, Jabotinsky, Ben-Gurion, and Weizmann, with the *chalutzim* who toiled the stubborn soil and with the new generation of Macabees born in Palestine.

And there were others. There were the terrorists: the small groups who used murder, arson, kidnapping, and robbery as a means to an end. Their end was freedom—freedom from foreign rule.

*The Deed* by Gerold Frank is the story of the assassination of Lord Moyne, the senior British official in the Middle East, by two members of the Stern Group—a terrorist organization. It is more, however, than a story of an assassination. It is the story of an era filled with adventure, tragedy, and fulfillment. *The Deed* is three chronicles: It is a vivid story of the assassins, of the struggles of the Stern Group, the *Haganah*, the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, and of the trapped European Jews who didn't reach Palestine.

The deed was simple: Two boys—one seventeen, the other twenty-two, killed Lord Moyne as his car stopped in front of his residence on a hot November 6, 1944 in Cairo. The boys killed coldly and calmly—showing no remorse, no contrition.

Lord Moyne's death had been planned months before. His movements had been watched and analyzed for weeks. He was marked for death because he was the symbol of foreign rule. He was England's highest official in the Middle East and was responsible for all policy. His death was to change the course of history and quicken the exit of Britain from Palestine.

The author traces the lives of the two boys—Eliahu Bet Zouri and Eliahu Hakim. He explains who they were and what motivated them to kill. The two Eliahus did not know each other. They first met in Cairo. Both were born in Palestine, one was wealthy, the other poor. Although young, their memories were old. They remembered the Arabs looting, shooting and attacking Jewish settlements. They remembered the White Paper of 1939 and witnessed refugees trying to reach the shores of Palestine only to be sent back to certain death. Seeing British policemen coming from England become policemen in their country angered them. The boys never forgot. And they never forgave. These memories became their *raison d'être*.

The assassins were immediately caught. Mr. Frank describes poignantly the trial and their refusal to plead temporary insanity brought on by the Jewish suffering in Europe and by the closing of the gates of Palestine. Their lawyers pleaded with them; they refused. Their

*As the people of the book, the Jews were taught "Thou shalt not kill." But reality dictated to the Jewish population in Palestine "Thou shalt kill under certain conditions the enemies of thy country." This conflict was to rage furiously as the deaths mounted and the survivors lessened during the Nazi holocaust. The British were their enemy. They were responsible for the deaths of thousands of Jews fleeing Nazism by refusing them asylum in Palestine. The British had to leave if Palestine was to become a haven for all Jews. The question was how? The Deed was one answer to this problem.*

defense would not be a plea for themselves but for their beliefs. Ben Zouri explains: "If we plead insanity, we claim that our act was an emotional accident. It was nothing of the kind. We committed a political act for reasons . . . I am very happy to sacrifice my life if it must be that way. I am convinced that our nation will benefit by our deed."

The defense councils argued that the boys "sought only freedom." They claimed that there was a difference between a man who murders for self-interest and one who murders because of conviction. The chief defense council defended their actions: "The Jews tried everything, but nobody heard them. Some came to the conclusion that a savage act was necessary, so as to appeal to the world to save their people."

All to no avail. On March 23 the two Eliahus were hanged. As Hakem put on the traditional execution suit, he said: "This is the finest suit I have ever worn. I wear it with pride."

THE two Eliahus died as they lived—with honor, with courage. "I saw two young lions die today," commented the Egyptian Director of Prisons. The Egyptian hangman told a physician: "This is the first execution in twenty years in which I had the impression that I am a criminal for what I do."

Gerold Frank wrote a complete book. He interviewed nearly everyone connected with the deed—relatives, friends, accomplices, and witnesses—and revisited every scene. The vivid descriptions in the book put the reader at the assassination, at the courtroom, at the hanging.

The author, however, only tells the story; he draws no conclusions. He sets forth with great skill the facts to the reader and to history for judgment. Mr. Frank is sympathetic towards the assassins, understands their position and admires their bravery. He writes of the ruthlessness of the British. But he does not answer these moral and historical questions raised in the book: Is fighting for freedom and independence justified by a higher law? Is

### Excerpts from Mr. Frank's Reply

To the Editor of The New York Times:

As the author of "The Deed," I was astonished to read your May 4 editorial attacking the book as one that "glorifies" assassination. This is simply and demonstrably not true. Nowhere does "The Deed" glorify assassination. What it seeks to do is to explain what could lead two youths of otherwise exemplary character to such an act and to place it in the framework of the anguish of the time.

#### Terrorist Group

Rather than glorify assassination, the book carefully documents the horror felt at the deed by all the leaders of Palestine, beginning with Dr. Chaim Weizmann's bitter lament that the shock of Lord Moyne's death was "far more severe and numbing to me than that of my own son."

"The Deed" exalts murder? This is an unforgivable distortion. Do I need your anonymous editorial writer to quote "Thou shalt not kill" to me? He will find it on Page 10, and again on Page 63, and again on Page 264 and again—but it does not matter.

It was because of this injunction, because I wanted to be certain that this story in all its drama and heartbreak could be told and not misunderstood, that 18 years had to pass before I attempted to write it.

#### Statement Made

Nowhere in the book do I state or imply that such a deed was necessary. What is stated is that such a deed took place, and how it came about.

I can only add my surprise that a paper I admire so much could condemn a book before reviewing it so that its readers, unless they have read reviews elsewhere, know nothing of its true contents.

Gerold Frank

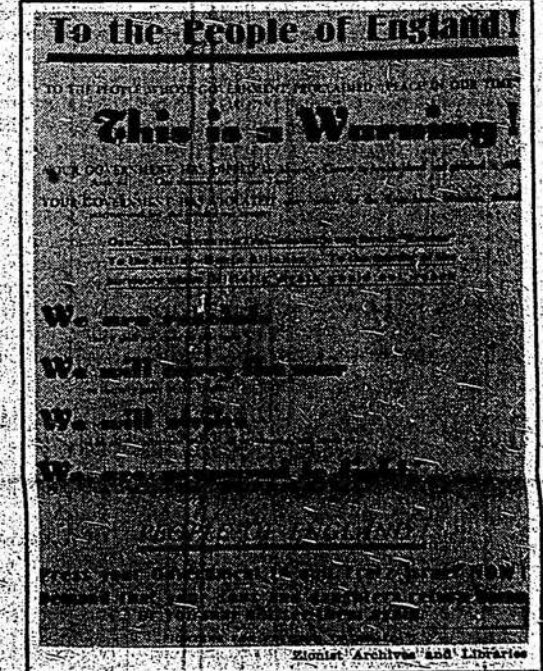
New York, May 6, 1963.

terrorism and murder the means? What effect did the deed have? Were these methods responsible for obtaining a Jewish State or indirectly useful in forcing the Jewish community in Palestine to become more militant?

The Jews are not a violent people and they have suffered greatly for this. Yet there is a limit to one's passivity, even for Jews. Terrorism was the result not the cause of British policy. If we trace some of the major documents in Anglo-Jewish relations we can understand the reasons for the violence.

The British in 1917 issued the Balfour declaration which viewed with favor "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" and promised "to facilitate the achievement of this objective." In 1919 the Paris Peace Conference recognized "the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine" and the "grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country."

THE first minor retreat was the Churchill White Paper (1922) which affirmed that the Jews were in Palestine "as of right and not sufferance." But the aim of the national home was "not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole, but the further development to the existing community."



The second came with the White Paper of 1930. It stressed Britain's obligations—the protection of the rights of non-Jewish communities and the establishment of a Jewish National Home. Nevertheless it restricted the opportunities for building the Home by limiting available land for new immigrants.

The harshest move was the White Paper of 1939. It barred the further purchase of land by Jews in 95 percent of Palestine without the approval of the Arabs. It also barred further Jewish immigration into Palestine, unless approved by the Arabs, after a five year interim in which 75,000 people would be permitted.

David Ben-Gurion, commenting on the 1939 White Paper in his book *Israel: Years of Challenge* wrote: "All hope vanished that Britain might abide by its commitments. It was clear to any realist that unless we succeeded in establishing a Jewish State by our own initiative, we could remain an oppressed minority in an Arab country." The question was how and by what methods.

The *Haganah*, the military organ of the Jewish Agency, followed a policy of *havalagah*—restraint. They prescribed purely defensive tactics and condemned any attempt at retaliation. The *Irgun Zvai Leumi* (National Military Organization) and the *Fighters for Freedom* (Stern Group or *Lehi*), both very small, rejected the philosophy of *havalagah*. The *Irgun* damaged British civil institutions, post offices, police stations and the like. They warned the British before hand so that all personnel could be evacuated and no lives lost. The Stern Group was the most violent. They knew that the British would not give up Palestine unless they were forced to. And to them terror was the only effective weapon against any occupying power equipped with guns, tanks, and large armies.

The terrorists were the few against the many, the  
(Continued on page 7)

### Editorial from The New York Times

Gerold Frank's book "The Deed" glorifies the assassination of a high British official in Cairo on Nov. 2, 1944, by two young members of the Stern Gang. They "gave their lives for an ideal," the author tells us, the ideal being Zionism.

The young Jewish assassins who in cold blood murdered Lord Moyne as a symbol were not doing anything original. Modern history gives many examples of assassinations in a political cause. Behind every such murder is a philosophy: the end justifies the means. Those who would glorify the killing of an innocent man like Lord Moyne in a cause they feel just, are forgetting that every cause employing violence has used this argument, and with equal sincerity. The Nihilists used it, and so did the Communists, the French O.A.S. and the Algerian rebels who fought them, for instance. And is Gerold Frank forgetting the Nazis?

Fortunately for Israel, her path to freedom had better exponents than the Stern Gang. No doubt these terrorists provided a contributing factor to the many that induced Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin to abandon the British mandate over Palestine. There was no need to kill Lord Moyne; but suppose for the sake of argument and "realism" it be granted that the Zionists could have only won freedom as quickly as they did by committing such acts of terror. Would it not be more appropriate to sorrow that such deeds seemed necessary rather than to glorify them?

The answer lies in a man's or a generation's or a people's conscience. Those who exalt such killings seem to have lost the sense of what justice and idealism truly signify, and to have even forgotten the meaning of the Fifth Commandment.



## Judenraten

(Continued from page 1)

"The next day an order was posted in all the streets and alleys of the future ghetto to the effect that *Der Jude* (in White Russian *Zhyd*) Elie Mushkin is appointed as the commissar and Chairman of the *Judenrat* and that all his orders must immediately be carried out." (p. 11)

What do we learn from this experience? Certainly, Mushkin was no Nazi collaborator. He took a chance with his own life in order to bring an end to the unknown threat posed to his fellow Jews in the lineup.

This goes for many if not most members of the *Judenraten*.

OFTEN, in Poland, the *Judenrat*, began as the continuity of the democratically elected Jewish Community Council. Some authority had to deal with the Nazis, and East European Jews, accustomed as they were to self-government in a number of areas naturally continued their councils. The ghettos had to be fed.

It was much better to recruit forced labor in an orderly manner than to permit the Nazis to kidnap people indiscriminately in the streets. Dealing with the Nazis was not pleasant, and many Jewish *Judenrat* leaders were the first to be killed.

I am not asking for complete objectivity in the evaluation of the Hitler holocaust. Objectivity in such a case is impossible and inhuman. However, a historian is responsible for thorough research and an evaluation of comparative situations.



Yivo Institute for Jewish Research  
Jews arrested by Nazis. The Nazi caption read: "The Bandits Resisted By Force."

This is where Dr. Arendt flunks her test. Her brilliance achieved at the cost of ignoring facts in favor of easy generalizations is to judge by public reaction, a source of delight to the escapist Jewish intellectual reader, who can further justify his own escapism by maligning the victims of Nazism and thus weakening his identification with them and the Jewish people.

Zosa Szajkowski, in his study on "The Organization of the UGIF in Nazi-Occupied France," *Jewish Social Studies* (Vol. IX, 1947), brings out both the positive and negative values of the *Judenrat*.

Surely, Dr. Arendt should have been acquainted with this Szajkowski study, as she is a member of the editorial council of the quarterly, *Jewish Social Studies*. It is not listed in her skimpy bibliography. I marked in my copy of the reprint of the study either "pro" or "anti" on the margin next to his description of each community council. There are plenty of "anti" marks. But some "pro's" are worthwhile citing.

In Zolkiew, for example, a Jewish committee, formed solely on Jewish initiative, was organized for the purpose of calling upon Jews to volunteer for work since

otherwise they would be subject to vindictive acts on the part of the Germans. Later the Germans called the members of the committee and commanded them to organize a *Judenrat*. The historian of this ghetto has no charges to prefer against this council, which with the aid of bribes did everything possible in order to ameliorate the condition of the Jews.

These arguments are not intended to give a clean bill of health to all *Judenraten* at all times. Judgment will have to be passed, but not after a summer's or year's research, not without the perusal of the massive testimonies and secondary literature in many languages, not without attempts to clear many of the contradictions of witnesses. The whole truth will never be found out, but one has to be careful also about the sparks of the truth.

A similar problem is raised by the view of the role of the *Kapos*, the Jewish foremen or trustees in concentration camps. There is general agreement that they were a very nasty lot. However, Leon W. Wells, in his *The Janowska Road*, a harrowing story of a survivor from one of the nastiest jobs, (New York, Macmillan, 1963), states: "In my experience, the leaders I had known had been, for the most part, superior men of high moral quality."

He describes one of them, Kamps, an engineer, as follows: "He really never laid a hand on anyone—if he had to admonish a fellow prisoner, it was always for that individual's own good and safety. He was finally shot by the Germans . . ."

And then there was Axer . . . rich and prominent . . . never hurt anyone . . . everyone felt he had a friend in him."

To a question why he returned to camp following his successful escape, he answered that his conscience bothered him when he was free — he felt guilty for trying to save his own life when we in the concentration camp were clearly doomed. One day in 1942, Axer yelled at Wilhaus (his Nazi superior) for shooting so many people. Wilhaus took out his revolver and shot him dead on the spot."

Clearly, it is not so easy to pass judgment, even on the *Kapos*.

It is regrettable that a very important little work, published before Dr. Arendt's bill of no particulars, has not received its due share of recognition: The booklet is, *As Sheep to the Slaughter? The Myth of Cowardice*, by K. Sabetai.

It presents succinctly and touchingly the other side of the story and is a clear answer to the extremist and one-sided accusations of Raoul Hillberg, Bruno Bettelheim, Hannah Arendt, the scores of others who will follow them and the thousands of intellectuals who will swear by them, for this is the lot of the "emancipated" *goyish* Jew, whether he lives in the Diaspora or in the State of Israel.

## Free Will

(Continued from page 1)

assert the primacy of free will; to insist that self-enslavement is culpable, that the denial of freedom does not bring absolution from guilt, that the avoidance of moral responsibility is a greater sin than immorality, and finally that despite the difficulties of disentangling personal volition from the net of impersonal social forces, it is still possible to differentiate between individual and collective guilt and to judge both.

Dr. Arendt has been bitterly attacked for showing sympathy to Eichmann and trying to deny his guilt by minimizing his activities and spreading the blame over a larger area. She has done neither. Her "sympathy" was sarcasm, which only the most obtuse reader could fail to recognize, and her "minimizing" of Eichmann's activities left her completely convinced that he deserved death. What she did accomplish was to focus the issue; her concern was with the banality of evil, the horrible banality incomprehensible to the mind that knows great evil only as a positive, powerful, and sometimes majestic force. She condemns Eichmann unequivocally, but also the world that produced him, a world so devoid of grandeur, of nobility, of meaning, that its greatest crime bears the marks of pettiness and triviality.

THE most strenuous attacks on Dr. Arendt resulted from her attempt to show that the cooperation of Jews was an important factor in the effectiveness of the extermination program. The idea is not a pleasant one, but certainly Dr. Arendt's overtones of indignation or condemnation are offensive and reprehensible. Who can dare, without having suffered himself, to condemn anything anyone did in a time of terror? We have no right to judge, and perhaps we have no right to probe, but since the issue has been raised it must be met. Is the theory really so inconceivable? Eichmann and others acknowledged the importance of the various Jewish Councils; Dr. Kastner was accused by an Israeli court of having sold his soul to the devil; when Pinchas Freudiger, a member of the Jewish Council in Budapest, was on the stand, he was stunned by the outpouring of hatred from the spectators' gallery; and the insensitive, even brutal question that Mr. Hausner asked each witness, "Why did you not resist?" was clearly meant to imply that the victims had to some extent cooperated in their own destruction.

The problem of Jewish responsibility, however, involves another more basic question. It is not in man's power, according to the rabbinic statement, to understand why the wicked flourish and the righteous suffer. But is it possible for six million righteous people to be killed? Does it not become imperative, in order to maintain one's moral sanity, to believe that the Jews have been guilty of sins and have been punished? Germany is guilty. The nations that permitted her rise and denied asylum to Jews are guilty. The world is guilty. Are the Jews not also guilty? Not an individual here and there, but the entire Jewish nation as a historical and moral entity. The Jews have not stood apart from the spiritual decline of the Western world; they have declined with it. The basic principle of the philosophy of Jewish history has been that moral laws govern the world and that G-d punishes his people for their sins. This is the message and the warning of the prophets; it is the basic theme of the Bible. With variations it has been applied to all the major events of history. If the world has a purpose and history has a meaning, the suffering of the Jews must have a purpose and a meaning.

Dr. Arendt raises a number of problems in connection with the trial itself: questions of legality, of procedure, of strategy. But the most important question is a mor-



Alfred Bernheim  
Miss Hannah Arendt

al one. What was the purpose of the trial? It was obviously not a matter of determining the innocence or guilt of Adolf Eichmann; the principle that the accused is innocent until proven guilty could not apply here, even as a legal fiction. Eichmann was known to be guilty — perhaps not on every count of the indictment, but any one count was sufficient for the death penalty. The only excuse for his kidnapping could be his undoubted guilt, and Ben-Gurion explained in his letter to the President of Argentina that the extraordinary procedure was warranted by the fact that Eichmann was "directly responsible for the . . . murder of every single Jew on whom the Nazis could lay their hands."

The real reason for the trial came out in a series of newspaper articles by Ben-Gurion and his supporters: the trial was to inform the world and the new generation of Israelis that six million Jews had been killed by the Germans, that the establishment of the State had changed the status and character of the Jews, etc. The trial, in other words, was to serve no great principles of justice but was to be a propaganda affair. Other nations had their war crimes trials; Israel was a nation like all other nations and would have a trial like all other trials. Perhaps some of the voices that were raised against the holding of a trial in Israel would have been silent if the publicity preparations had not been quite so blatant.

FOR weeks and months the horrors were poured out, the wounds and sores were reopened and exposed to an increasingly indifferent public, the dead ashes were once more stirred and sifted — with total disregard for normal court procedure. For what purpose. Was a momentary place in the limelight worth it? Was the moral stature of Israel, the moral stature of the Jews, enhanced? Not at all. At best a fleeting and morbid curiosity was aroused; the sale of pocket books with atrocity pictures flourished briefly. At worst the trial awoke embarrassment and shame, shame for the meekness of the victims, embarrassment because they were not like the tall, bronzed *Sabras* who can gain respect so easily.

Research fellowships have been granted, lectures have been given, books have been published in a desperate effort to counteract the notion that Jews were sheep and to establish that they were really heroic fighters. Every act of revolt has been greedily snatched up and picked clean, and every minute indication of resistance. But the six million are dead. And we must feel only anguish and pity. We have no right

(Continued on page 7)

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Mr. Leo Taubes lived in Holland during the war. He is an instructor of English and is presently doing research for a doctoral thesis on Milton.





Hayman, but he broadens its terms. Conformity and non-conformity; mechanism and freedom; aggressiveness and humility; moral indifference and love — his conflicted heroes veer between these opposites of attitude and behavior. The titles of his novels — *The Dangling Man*, *The Victim*, *The Adventures of Augie March* (a variation upon *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*) — indicate the suspended or non-committed state of his main characters. Bellow's landscape is the shadowy one of the unsettled: rainy city streets, rooming houses, inexpensive hotel rooms, elevated trains.

In what respect is Bellow a Jewish novelist? If he is such, it is not simply because all his central figures, except in *Henderson the Rain King*, are Jewish. For Bellow generally does not see his heroes as units in a group; in his novels there are no distinctively Jewish problems, nor even distinctly Jewish milieus. Following the example of Joyce with Leopold Bloom and of Proust with Swann, Bellow makes his heroes represent universal modern predicaments rather than singularly Jewish ones. If Bellow is a Jewish novelist, it is because he sees his Jews as most symbolic of the situation of modern man, because they bear the burden of ambiguity in Western culture.

*Dangling Man* (1944) is a first novel in diary form, in which philosophical reflection, narration, and notes on the not-so-trivial trivia of every day are artfully intermingled. Joseph, who has left his job because he expects to be drafted, is forced, because of draftboard technicalities, to wait for his induction some months longer than anticipated. He finds himself in an anomalous position, living in a vacuum, an idle man in war-busy world, low man on the totem pole. Whereas, at an earlier time, he had believed in planning, had once even been a communist, the chief of planners, he now leads an unplanned life.

Joseph evolves into a combination of Thoreau and Dostoevsky's *Man from the Underground*. On the other hand, he is able, from the vantage point of the unattached, to recognize the shams, the avidities, and herd-like conformities that deprive men of their own true selves. But, on the other Joseph cannot, even in his isolation, discover what his own best self is. He envies those busier than himself, rails aggressively against real or imagined

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insults. The humiliation his status inflicts upon him does not bring him humility. He finally enlists in the Army with a sense of relief:

"I had not done well . . . To be pushed upon oneself entirely put the very facts of simple existence in doubt. Perhaps the war could teach me, the violence, what I had been unable to learn during those months in the room. Perhaps I could sound creation through other means. Perhaps. But things were now out of my hands. The next move was the world's."

*The Victim* (1947) is Bellow's novel of anti-Semitism. He is even more interested, however, in the effects of fear, anxiety, and suspicion upon his Jewish hero, Leventhal — debilitating emotions common among members of minority groups. Bellow brings his Jew, Leventhal, and his anti-Semite Albee, together in a subtle interplay of relationship. Leventhal finally exorcises some of his apprehensive self-consciousness.

*The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), which carries its story through the Second World War, marks a turning point in Bellow's career. His first two novels are bound in a tight, constricted form. Here the author's energies are released and he creates a long, picaresque novel, full of colorful events and characters, often comic, sometimes fantastic or grotesque.

HE follows the peregrinations of Augie March, a modern Huck Finn, through many parts of the United States and Mexico. Augie is the second of three illegitimate sons borne by a simple, almost simple-minded, mother to a traveling stranger. The oldest son, Simon, is shrewd, aggressive, determined to succeed, but not without warmth and kindness; George, the youngest, is mentally retarded, innocent, loving, and loyal. Augie, as intelligent as Simon, falls between the two in personality. He is a wonderful literary character, happily conceived and intuitively developed.

Simon, like Gatsby, finding that he must abandon the Horatio Alger creed of his boyhood in order to succeed, learns to employ more devious means. He marries for money into the Magnus family, and then bulldozes his way to independent wealth, so that he might be more than a rich man's son-in-law. In the novel he ends up fat, brutal, important and with a young mistress. But since Simon always retains a core of sensitivity, his "success" is wounding and makes him bleed in numerous different channels.

Augie, on the other hand, handsome and personable, constantly falls in with the

ambitious, the aggressive, and the wealthy, but resists their grasp. But somehow he cannot avoid their company. Occasionally he dreams of settling down in a small town with some waitress or shopgirl he is in love with or of forming a small community, with the companionship of his blind old mother and retarded brother, and gaining his livelihood by teaching a company of boys.

But these notions are never realized; for if Augie does not succumb to avidity, he is also incapable of renunciation. He has no code to live by, and so is vulnerable to accidental and impermanent desire. His own marriage proves no more successful than Simon's, though more blithe and short-lived. At the close of the novel, Augie is still buoyant, still engaged in somewhat shady deals, still vulnerable to experience, and possessed of the comic point of view that Bellow has tried to maintain throughout:

"That's the *animal ridens* in me, the laughing creature, forever rising up . . . Or is it the laugh at nature — including eternity — that it thinks it can win over us and the power of hope? . . . Look at me, going everywhere! . . . I may well be a flop at this line of endeavor. Columbus too thought he was a flop, probably, when they sent him back in chains. Which didn't prove there was no America."

The brilliant novella, *Seize the Day* (1956), the best sustained writing Bellow has ever done, concerns itself with an older



Farrar Straus & Co.  
Mr. Bernard Malamud

and more tragic Augie March, Tommy Wilhelm, who, at the end of the rainbow, finds life bitter. The last scene sees Tommy, who has wandered into a funeral service, weeping over his own and man's fate. Written with great compassion, *Seize the Day* nevertheless proffers no affirmative answers to the riddles of life. One can write in Bellow's defense that in all his work he does not admit of easy solutions.

If Bellow's style is multi-leveled and baroque, Malamud's, at his best, is simple and profound. Like Bellow, he can resort effectively to fantasy. Although there are long pedestrian lapses in each of his books (an indication that his imagination cannot sustain itself for long), he has bold, original conceptions and courage in confronting moral issues. He shows best, perhaps, in the short story. Of all the writers examined here, he gives most evidence of the Jewish religious spirit. (Is this a sign of the fifties and sixties?)

I find in Malamud's work three religious themes. First, he stresses the idea of redemption, that men can be raised from the slough of sin and despondency and can regain their better selves. Conversely, as in the memorable story "The Magic Barrel," man can fall into a state of degradation. Malamud is aware of the demonic forces threatening us from within.

Second, one finds throughout his work the pattern of Jacob and Rachel, of a man

working in bondage in order to earn love.

Third, one constantly comes across Malamud's version of the good Jew, a poor storekeeper — grocer, tailor, or shoemaker — whose work is itself a daily moral discipline. The storekeeper's persistence, despite his poverty, is a form of renunciation. He assumes the Jewish commitment as he sees it: to suffer and to do good. He sometimes helps the sinner to redeem himself.

One recalls the elder Hayman in Fuch's *Summer in Williamsburg*, whom Malamud would have elevated. (It should not be forgotten, however, that the elder Hayman's example does lead Harry to leave Papravel eventually.) Malamud invests his storekeepers with the humility and simplicity that Bellow's heroes cannot discover. They accept the poverty that David Levinsky rejects. As literary figures, they are what is most difficult for the writer of fiction to create: good men but believably human.

ALL these themes are found in Malamud's best novel, *The Assistant* (1957). Frankie Alpine, an Italian, with his colleague in crime, Ward Minogue, who represents the demonic within man generally and the evil in Alpine specifically, hold up while wearing masks a poor grocer, Morris Bober. Frankie's guilt drives him to assist the old, sick grocer at various odd tasks. Gradually he becomes Bober's practically unpaid assistant. After his guilt has worn away, he remains on the job out of respect for Bober and love for Bober's daughter, Helen.

But his reformation is incomplete, and he inflicts injury upon the two he loves most. After the death of both Minogue and Bober, Alpine takes over the grocery store and sustains the Bober family. He becomes a replica of Bober. Eventually he is converted into a Jew. Throughout, Malamud displays his usual sympathy and knowledge of poor Jewish people and, to my mind, does well with Alpine.

In his fine collection of stories, *The Magic Barrel* (1958), the theme of redemption appears in "The Mourners" and "A Summer's Reading." The Jacob and Rachel patterns appears in "The First Seven Years" and "Angel Levine." Variations of the three can be found in nearly all the remaining. I have not yet read his second collection, *Idiot's First*, published this year.

*A New Life* (1961), Malamud's most recent novel, is disappointing, though, as one might expect, it has much in it that is good. The result of the author's career as a teacher of English at Oregon State College, it is a novel of academic life, and as such it presents a truthful and disillusioned picture of a college faculty, if an unexciting one. Another Jewish theme reveals itself. S. (for Seymour) Levin, complete with new beard and degree, embarks on a teaching career hoping to begin a new life. He learns that he cannot shed the past nor his identity as a Jew. The same idea is found in "The Lady of the Lake" in Malamud's first collection.

On the whole, Malamud's is the most credible affirmation of Jewish values I know of in modern American fiction, more convincing because in his work these values are put to the test more vigorously. They are more hard-won. His storekeepers suffer for their faith. "It is hard to be a Jew!"

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## In Four Steps:

## American Jewish Fiction

by Dr. Seymour Laisoff

*The Rise of David Levinsky* remains the classic prototype in its picture of the European Jew transformed into an American. The novel is remarkable for its sanity, balance, and realism. Written when the author was near sixty, it attests to Cahan's vast observation and knowledge of his subject. For many decades he was the editor of the *Daily Forward*. In Europe he had been a student of the Russian novel, especially in its realistic modes; and in America, with the encouragement of William Dean Howells, the dean of the modern realistic tradition in fiction, he had written stories and an earlier novel about Jews. His literary career was climaxed by his last novel.

*The Rise of David Levinsky* is a sociological novel, tracing the influx of Jewish immigrants in the eighties and nineties.

It is an industrial novel, describing the growth of the cloak-and-suit industry in New York and the supplanting of German Jews by Polish and Russian Jews in the positions of power in that industry. It presents graphic vignettes of Jewish life after the turn of the century: the stores, pushcarts, and tenements of the East Side; the Yiddish Theatres and the cafés where the intelligentsia congregated; the expansion into Harlem where many aspiring to the middle class moved and into Seventh Avenue with its factory lofts; the Harlem cafeterias serving as an exchange for frantic dealers in real-estate booms; the Catskill resorts, then as now the marriage mart.

EVERYWHERE, in the American sections of the book, is the note of a burgeoning mercantilism, an explosion of pent-up commercial energies. Piteable are the failures, like Tevkin and Margolis, caught up in the business maelstrom but without Levinsky's aptitude or luck.

More specifically, Cahan traces the expansion of spirit of a representative Jew who makes a transition from one culture to another. David Levinsky grows rich in America, but even he at times perceives in himself a coarsening of character. Reared in a Russian town (Antomir) in almost incredible poverty, he loses his father in infancy;

but he absorbs the values of Jewish family life from his mother.

This heroic woman works slavishly so that her nimble-witted only son might become a *yeshiva bocher*. He displays a talent for the study of Talmud. After his mother's death — she is fatally beaten while lashing out at anti-Semites who had insulted her son and torn his uniform — his enthusiasm for his studies wanes, and when the opportunity arises he seizes it to emigrate to America.

In New York he strays from orthodox practices. Although he is at first determined to pursue an intellectual life (the City College is the "secular temple" he hopes to attend), he embarks upon a commercial career, impelled initially by the need to survive and later by the presence of business opportunities he will not let pass. He achieves his fortune through hard work, opportunism, and an occasional lack of scruples. He grows to hate labor unions, to regard the poor as inferior beings; he is paternalistic to his employees and is fond of hiring immigrants from Antomir, for as the years pass he grows increasingly nostalgic for the days and places of his youth.

Levinsky's shift from Talmud scholar to successful business man is not a sudden reversal. Cahan carefully prepares the reader. Even in his youth Levinsky, combatting his poverty and semi-orphaned state, is capable of opportunism. His ardor for the Talmud is marred by envy and the spirit of emulation. Furthermore, the spirit of secularism was already at work among Russian Jews in the eighties and nineties, tearing at the fabric of the traditions Levinsky had known. Even before his emigration, Levinsky's attitudes are changing.

In America, though eventually richer than most of his fellows, he is not different in kind. An interesting parallel to Levinsky is Tevkin, in Russia a sensitive Hebrew poet and in America a frumpy real-estate broker. Cahan links Levinsky to the rest of the Jewish community in New York. At certain times, if pushed a bit farther in the appropriate direction, he might have become an intellectual, a doc-

tor, or a Marxist, and he retains in his acquaintance examples of these three and more.

Despite his financial success Levinsky remains a lonely bachelor. The shifting conflicts in values he experiences at different stages of his life make him reject the women who wish to marry him and to be rejected by others he wishes to marry. The tensions of his inner life render his relations with women chaotic. As he grows older, Levinsky often wonders whether his rise was worthwhile, though at other times he has all the complacency of the *allrightnik*.

Curiously, Cahan shares Levinsky's ambiguity of feeling. Though he sees Levinsky, in his anti-unionism and occasional unscrupulousness, as a vague economic menace and though he recognizes the deprivations of Levinsky's emotional life, he derives some satisfaction from the fact that a Russian Jewish immigrant has attained such status in America. Cahan views Levinsky with a mixture of scorn, pity, and pride.

WHEREAS Cahan described a period of economic expansion, Fuchs wrote novels set in the depths of the depression. Brooklyn's Williamsburg is the densely-explored milieu of his first two novels; Brighton Beach, of his third. Fuchs writes, in the introduction to the 1961 reprinting of the three, that his family moved to Williamsburg when he was five. He remembers sleeping on the tin covers of two wash-tubs his first night there.

In his twenties, while teaching in P.S. 225 in Brighton Beach, he wrote his three books, recalling life in Brooklyn as he had observed it. They evinced a striking talent. Fuchs revealed a precise knowledge of setting, a knife-edged irony, and a presence of disaster brought on by the different pulls within his society. Discouraged by the failure of his books to sell and by a lack of critical notice, Fuchs turned to Hollywood and has devoted himself largely to movie scripts since. Only recently have his novels gained critical attention.

I shall discuss the first, *Summer in Williamsburg* (1934), his most representative work though not his best. The latter is *Homage to Blenholt* (1936), a novel of unusual comedy and pathos. *Summer in Williamsburg* presents a distressed and panoramic view of city life, reminding the reader of *Studs Lonigan*. Though it lacks the tragic force of Farrell's novel of Chicago, it is a vivid and frightening picture of Jewish life at a certain time and place.

The tenements, newly built but already decrepit, the poolrooms, the stables, the sometimes amusing, sometimes shocking shenanigans of children and adolescents, the street gangs, the movies — the magic carpet to escape and romance, pictures of marital infidelity and of an impoverished family life — all contribute to the busy and oppressive squalor Fuchs reconstructs. Near the end of the novel the author makes a prayer to God, which he feels will prove ineffectual, that He redeem Williamsburg.

Fuchs sets forth the vices and dilemmas of his characters with a remorseless clarity yet with an understanding that borders on sympathy; often, however, this measure of sympathy does not sufficiently compensate for his attack. As a result, the novel sometimes possesses an acidulousness, a curdling quality, which is its greatest defect.

Underlying all else is the theme of economic entrapment. Unlike similar novelists of the period, Fuchs does not call for a Marxist solution. His main characters have inherited the dream of Fitzgerald's Gatsby, the dream of the twenties, of wealth and power, of the fulfillment of the promises America seems to offer. Max Balkan, the central figure of *Homage to Blenholt*, idolizes Blenholt, a successful local politic-

ian, the seeming incarnation in modern times of Tamurlane; later, of course, Max is disillusioned.

So far as *Summer in Williamsburg* has a hero, it is Philip Hayman, a twenty-year-old City College student on summer vacation. He is at a crossroads, with no clear path to follow. He begrudgingly admires the tenacity of the Talmudists of the neighborhood and of those who preside at religious ceremonies, but — without intensive religious training himself — he sees no relevance in them to his own problems.

His father, a decent man who likes to reminisce about Jewish life in Europe, has worked doggedly at an ill-paying job, sustaining his family at one level above poverty. The elder Hayman's natural ebullience has been squashed by years of routine and especially by the dissatisfaction of his sons. Philip sometimes thinks of his father as a *schlimiel*, at other times thinks of him with a painful respect. He anticipates (and even encourages) the eventual split with his girl friend, whose wealthy parents disapprove of their love. What road leads to wealth and success? It is the way of Gatsby, or usurping power.

The one economic activity traced at length in the book is the life-and-death struggle between two bus companies operating between Williamsburg and the Catskills. The older Hayman's son, Harry, has thrown in his lot with their uncle, Pappravel, a gangster of sorts who provides the muscle for one of the companies. Eventual-



Mr. Saul Bellow

Viking Press

ly Pappravel contrives to break both owners and bend the companies to his will. A more depraved Levinsky, he expresses his complacency after his triumph as follows: "... where in the world could a Jew make such a man of himself as right here in America?" Philip resists Harry's overtures to take him into the "business" but he is still left with what seems to him a difficult set of alternatives: a grinding obscurity, in which the traditional decencies might find place, or a relentless drive to surmount these circumstances.

The complexities of Saul Bellow's art cannot be dealt with adequately in this short paper. I can merely point to one or two directions his novels take. An inquiring, philosophic mind, furnished with formidable intellectual equipment, and a restless creative vitality coupled with technical virtuosity make Bellow a great novelist. Raised in Chicago and a product of the University of Chicago, he nevertheless rises above the tradition of naturalism associated with that city and university. Assimilating Farrell and Fitzgerald, he also reflects the influences of Kafka, Babel, and Jewish fiction from Sholem Aleichem to Agnon and I. B. Singer. He ventures beyond the social concerns of the thirties to meditate upon the metaphysical questions of the nature and destiny of man.

In a sense, Bellow carries over the dilemma Fuchs poses and embodies in Philip

When I accepted the invitation to contribute to THE COMMENTATOR an essay on the Jew in Modern Fiction, I was faced with the problem of selection: which authors to discuss? I decided to concentrate on those who are Jewish and write about Jews. If traced historically, these writers would reveal, I thought, a continuing comment upon Jewish life in America. But I had not completely resolved my problem. Jewish novels (if I may so label them), always copious in number, keep coming off the press in an everflowing stream. It seemed practical, therefore, to confine myself to several significant figures, past and present. They are: Abraham Cahan, who, in the *Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), writes of the transition of East European Jews from Europe to America and of life on the East Side before the First World War; Daniel Fuchs, whose three novels, *Summer in Williamsburg*, *Homage to Blenholt* and *Low Company*, written in the thirties, constitute a record of that decade; Saul Bellow, the most important writer to emerge after the Second World War and perhaps the finest of all Jewish American writers; and Bernard Malamud, whose career at present seems to be ascending. Of course, this choice is subjective.

The fact that so many Jewish novels continue to be written is in itself an interesting phenomenon. Jews have written a large part of better recent American fiction; in addition to those I have named who are still active, one can cite particularly Herbert Gold, Harvey Swados and

Edward Wallant. The number of such novels far exceeds the proportion one would expect. How to explain this creative upsurge? A valid explanation would be that, just as Southern writers like Faulkner, Warren, and McCullers have the Southern tradition, a remembered past, to play off against the American present and so are assured the substance of conflict in their fiction and a subject matter, so Jewish writers have a distinctly Jewish tradition — no matter that it is retained sometimes only peripherally — and a remembered European past to play off against the American present. The fiction of Southerners, as a group, is the most distinguished in America today; the fiction of American Jews makes a respectable showing. Both observe segments of American life in which the possibilities of internal conflict exist. Jewish fiction is a continued dialogue between the European and the American experience, between memories of the Ghetto and the dream of emancipation, between a religious and moral code and the hope of winning financial success (too often the bitch goddess) in a competitive society. Following "Columbus," Jews sought a "new life" (two stereotypes of Jewish fiction); but in their quest for freedom and a rise from poverty, they saw cherished values threatened. Contemporary Jewish writers, though educated in America and trained in Anglo-American fictional techniques, are as troubled by this dilemma as was Cahan's generation. I shall trace here the course of this dialogue in the authors I have selected.



# The Fire Next Time

by James Baldwin

Dial Press, New York,  
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Reviewed by  
Aryeh Botwinick

In his essay on Norman Mailer in *No-body Knows My Name*, James Baldwin describes himself as "a very tight, tense, lean, abnormally ambitious, abnormally intelligent, hungry, black cat." His essay in *The New Yorker* magazine which forms the bulk of *The Fire Next Time* shows us that, if anything, Baldwin was too modest in assessing his own abilities and ambitions. In *The Fire Next Time* Baldwin's aim is to preach a sermon to the whole American people that will make them terrifyingly aware of the tragic plight of the Negro in American culture. Baldwin's sermon has as its basic presupposition a decidedly Calvinistic view of man which reminds us of the sermons preached by the Puritan divines in Colonial New England.



James Baldwin

Yet, Baldwin's sermon is a sermon delivered without any belief in a theistic G-d. In fact, in strict Reinhold Niebuhr fashion, Baldwin expatiates at length on the abuses inherent in the very nature of religion itself. Very often religion serves not as judgment pronounced from the ultimate vantage point of G-d, but as a facade for the more base desires and aspirations of men. The contrast between the poor Harlem flock and the rich Harlem preachers is vividly described by Baldwin as an example of the exploitative purposes to which religion can be put.

Baldwin begins his essay with an explanation of how he came to embrace the Church at the crucial adolescent age of fourteen. He shows us how the "nightmare world of Harlem's gangsters, pimps and whores" made him excruciatingly aware of his own depravity and wickedness, and how the Church appeared as the only means of escaping the evil characters on the Avenue as well as assuaging his own sense of guilt. In the Church affirming the glory of G-d, he could be more sure of his own worth as a man.

The Church, however, proved an unsatisfactory palliative for him; partly because he was aware of the hypocrisy which is so shamelessly clothed, and partly because as a young writer growing aware of his many talents, he realized that it was more important for him to ask the right probing questions than to prematurely identify himself with any absolutist answers.

A solution to the problem of the improvement of relations between whites and Negroes is lacking. In a sense Baldwin is defeated by his own uncompromising honesty. Somewhere in the middle of his essay,

Baldwin makes the revealing comment that he is torn in his response to the situation of Negroes in North America between the poles of power and love. Baldwin so mercilessly and so skillfully dissects the power realities affecting the relationship between Negroes and whites in this country, that his espousal of love at the end of the essay appears almost as an afterthought, a kind of chaser to help down the bitter pill of truth. Having forsaken the traditional faith of his father and echoing Nietzsche in the statement that G-d is dead, Baldwin is unable to find an adequate substitute for the religion he has shed with such bravura.

I wish to make myself clear on this point. I am not criticizing Baldwin's values with reference to the personal life he has led, but rather in terms of the effect these values have in his work and specifically with the effect they have in shaping his attitude toward the situation of the Negro in this country. Baldwin's ultimate reliance on love, as the source from which the regeneration of American society and the full integration of the Negro in that society will come, leaves us with the feeling that the solution is too weak to avert the cataclysm which the sins of Americans, for close to four centuries, make almost inevitable. If there is a dialectical relationship between the poles of power and love in the thought of James Baldwin, the odds are stacked too heavily; I feel, on the side of power.

The quality of no-holds-barred exploration, provides Baldwin's work with its great virtue as well as with its central defect. Its great virtue, of course, is that it can help shock the whites of this country out of the complacency and inertia which characterize their dealings with Negroes. The central defect of this unflinching, almost hysterical approach of Baldwin's is that it leaves the door wide open for extremist movements like the Black Muslims which recently have gained many followers among Negroes.

Baldwin in his essay makes very clear his lack of sympathy for the methods and goals of the Black Muslims or the Nation of Islam movement; as he correctly calls it. Yet, if the situation between white and Negro in this country is as desperate as Baldwin depicts it, then why not follow the Honorable Elijah Muhammed. Indeed, Baldwin himself is unable to answer this question satisfactorily. The phenomenon of Black Muslimism is so rationally explained that Baldwin himself appears almost to be taken in by his own verbal magic.

Baldwin, however, cannot finally accept the tenets of Black Muslimism. His failure to adequately supply us with the reasons for this rejection is the measure of his failure to come fully to terms with the problems facing the Negro in this country. The approach of the novelist who paints in broad, dramatic strokes cannot do full justice to the actual situation of the Negro in this country. One must view the problems facing the Negro not only from the point of an ultimate perspective as Baldwin does, but also from the point of view of securing permission to eat at a particular lunch counter in a Southern city and other such nagging, dreary daily problems.

The traditional American approach to problems of social justice—indeed the traditional American approach to philosophical as well as to political problems—is to ignore the grand contours of a problem, and to concentrate instead on the gnawing details that cry out for solution day by day. This approach seems particularly distressing to Baldwin in the area of Negro rights since this problem has been festering for so many centuries. Yet, it is only this cumulative approach, I feel, that can in the end achieve for the Negro the genuine equality Baldwin so ardently desires. It is Roy Wilkins, head of the

NAACP who to me exemplifies this approach best. Leaders like him (and, alas, they are not many) will help the Negro achieve the goals he has set for himself in American life.

LOVE is an unsatisfactory solution to the problems created by the monopoly of power in the hands of whites in this country because in reality, love functions on a less exalted level and power on a less sinister one than Baldwin understands them. If under "love" we include the element of sympathetic attention that problems of social justice are able to arouse in the American people, then the great popularity of Baldwin's book is one of the best proofs possible that the American attitude toward the Negro is less intransigent than Baldwin suggests. (Americans, I think, are the only people in the world willing to pay \$3.50 for a book that scolds them until their insides ache.)

The manifestation of power relations in regard to the Negro in this country are amenable to those economic pressures which, Mr. Baldwin's love, notwith-

## Fighters for Freedom

(Continued from page 3)

stand weak against the mighty. Determined to fight and win, they demanded a blind faith of their members. The terrorists were true believers generating fanaticism, enthusiasm, hope, and hatred. They believed there were things more precious than life and more horrible than death.

The British policies were responsible for the violence. The Germans killed Jews while the British refused them asylum in the only country that would accept them. By turning away refugee ships the British government showed (as others, including the United States) it was not interested in saving Jewish lives.

Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen of the British Colonial Office wrote in his book *Middle East Diary 1917-1956*: "The Palestine Administration and the policy of H.M.G. must shoulder the responsibility for the murder of Lord Moyne." He further states that the British Government has "broken every promise that they ever made to the Jews and have backed the Arabs against the Jews."

## The Trial

(Continued from page 2)

to feel shame; it is a desecration of the dead to feel shame. Mr. Hausner had no right to ask his indecent "Why did you not resist?" to underline the superiority of modern Israel to old Poland. To benefit from the misery of others and to capitalize on the dead is immoral.

Of course, the concept of legal trial is hallowed in Western civilization. Nevertheless, in connection with the Eichmann case, one is reminded of a splendid and noble Biblical verse which many think the height of barbarism. Samuel stands before the captive king of the Amalekites. There is no trial, only a sentence and execution: "As thy sword has made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord." That is justice—done before the Lord by a man of character. Perhaps if the three judges had bypassed normal legal processes and confronted Eichmann with his death sentence something noble would have been achieved.

Eichmann, it is true, was no Agag. He did not personally kill anyone and seems to have had a horror of blood; he was not, in fact, the melodramatic monster that Mr. Hausner's histrionics produced. Dr. Arendt's interpretation of his personality is much closer to the truth. Eichmann was simply a nonentity, not overly intelligent, devoid of imagination, muddled in his ideas, petty in his desires, capable only of the mediocre—a perfect tool, and not unusual for his role.

Dostoevsky, that profound psychologist

standing, help make American life go round. The effective coordination of Negro policies of purchasing has opened up more stores to Negroes in the South than all Mr. Baldwin's strictures about love could possibly accomplish. Where Negroes have been guaranteed the right to vote, their voting practices have brought pressure to bear on local governments to yield to Negro demands.

I need not go into all the various ways (such as the very structure of presidential politics, for instance) by which the American system of government makes provisions for its own improvement in the light of moral ideals and the aspirations of particular minority groups. (Very often the latter are the bearers of the former.) The point I think is clear, that love and power in the reality of American society function in a different combination from the one envisaged by Mr. Baldwin. Gains are constantly being made, the grand design can be revealed to us only in retrospect. In the meantime, it is the minutiae, the inglorious tasks of daily living that make the future possible and the present meaningful.

Mr. Frank in the beginning of *The Deed* stated the following in a note to the reader: "There is no doubt that the deed was one of the great irritations, the great harassments which so annoyed and confused and bedeviled the British" that they left Palestine. To Mr. Frank there is no doubt, but the reader is in doubt because he neither mentions this again nor proves the statements validity. Yet it was true.

On the day of the British withdrawal from Palestine, the British Colonial and Foreign Office published a Termination of the Mandate explaining the withdrawal: "Eighty-four thousand troops had proved insufficient to maintain law and order in the face of a campaign of terrorism waged by highly organized Jewish forces equipped with all the weapons of the modern infantryman. Since the war 338 British subjects have been killed in Palestine, while the military forces there had cost the British taxpayer one hundred million sterling. The declared intentions of Jewish extremists showed that the loss of further British lives was inevitable."

who knew the depths of personality that other men did not dare to dream about, and who had a clear understanding of the totalitarian mind, has left a picture of the Eichmann type. A very minor character in *The Possessed*, Ensign Erkel, belongs to the clique of nihilists who murder one of the book's main characters. Erkel is a hero-worshiper who will blindly obey the leader, even if he is ordered to commit a random murder; but he sends his invalid mother half his pay.

"Erkel was a little fool who only lacked the higher form of reason, the ruling power of the intellect—but of the lesser, the subordinate reasoning faculties he had plenty—even to the point of cunning. A craving for active service was characteristic of this shallow, unreflecting nature, which always yearned to submit itself to another man's will—of course always for the good of the 'common' or the 'great' cause. Not that that made any difference, for little fanatics like Erkel can never imagine service to a cause except by identifying it with the person who in their mind is the expression of it. The sensitive, affectionate, and kind-hearted Erkel was perhaps the most callous of Shtov's would-be murderers, and though he had no spite against him, he would have been present at his murder without the quiver of an eyelid."

He remained unrepentant at his trial, and Dostoevsky pities him because Erkel was a fanatic, deluded by an impostor. Here Erkel and Eichmann part company, but the general relationship is clear. The portrait is a portrait of banality.



# History Of A Presidential Campaign

by Shep Metzer

**MAKING OF THE PRESIDENT, 1960, by Theodore White.** 400 pp. New York, Atheneum Publishers, 1962.

**EDITORS NOTE:** Many Americans and many "citizens of the world" will now want to read or reread an account of Kennedy as a thinker and Kennedy as a man. But a complete portrait of John F. Kennedy, the courageous, youthful, and enthusiastic leader can be clearly viewed in Theodore H. White's *Making of the President—1960*.

An American presidential election is a unique transaction of power. It is a process re-enacted every four years in which the varied subtleties and complexities of American life are carefully calculated and ultimately exposed. Next fall, each and every part, faction, lobby, and section will play a part in this political decision.

No one can estimate what effect the death of President Kennedy will have. But the foundation of the issues and the background of the candidates for the coming year's election is more readily understood by studying the exciting campaign of 1960.

The possibility of political realignment which may become a reality in 1964 is rooted in the re-emergence of American conservatism and the growing importance of civil rights, factors which were important in the past election.

Candidates, personalities, campaign techniques, issues and memories of the Kennedy-Nixon contest will help determine the outcome of the presidential election of 1964. Thus, Theodore H. White's narrative history of American politics, *The Making of the President—1960*, is an effective guide for understanding the shaping of American politics.

White skillfully unfolds the story of 1960 with suspense, a feat difficult to accomplish, when the outcome is known. He begins with the tense atmosphere in Kennedy headquarters on election night as the clinching votes begin to come in. Flashbacks to the start of the campaign, one year before, are then interjected to begin the panorama.

**T**HE Wisconsin primary, in which the "Progressive" state did not welcome Kennedy and the pathetic collapse of Hubert Humphrey's hopes in the West Virginia primary are treated with accuracy and understanding. White explores the strategy of Adlai Stevenson who sought to keep out of pre-convention politics by saying that he was not a candidate. Lyndon Johnson's attempt to expand his senatorial-sectional image and Stuart Symington's plan to emerge as a compromise candidate appealing to the Democratic minority groups are also discussed in noteworthy reporting form.

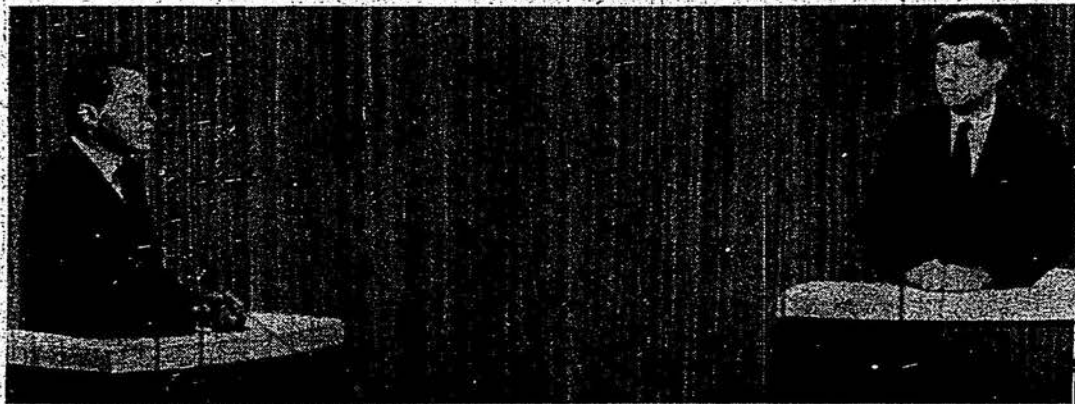
In describing the streamlined Kennedy political machine, White analyzes the political personalities of all its key members.

These were veterans of political strategy who had been with Kennedy in his fourteen years of politics. The proper division of function and the quality of each in his own field would contribute heavily to the success of the campaign. The effectiveness of John Kennedy as a campaign manager is shown by his amazing knowledge of the key issues, leaders, and factions in every state and his ability in organizing and co-ordinating the activities of his advisors from the first primary until election eve.

White describes the nature of the Republican party and the ideals of its leaders. "Within the Republican party are combined the loftiest of American idealism and a stream of the coarsest American greed." By studying the liberal and conservative roots of the party, White is able to present an accurate explanation of the position of the Nixon, Rockefeller, and conservative factions on various issues.

He shows the Republican leaders courteous to Rockefeller's proings but wholly committed to the candidacy of Richard Nixon. White's insights into Nixon's personal background reveal the source of the campaign image which Nixon would project. By contrasting the picture of Nixon with Rockefeller's personality, White reveals the reasons for Nixon's failure to communicate with the electorate.

World history does not stop for American politics every four years. The U-2 incident preceded only by days the opening of the May summit conference and caused its prompt collapse. Rioting in Turkey led to the fall of the government and student uprisings in Korea overthrew the regime of Sygman Rhee. Relations with Cuba deteriorated to the point where Castro expropriated American property in Cuba.



One of the scenes from the 1960 Presidential Campaign. The candidates, Richard Nixon (left) and John F. Kennedy, face each other in their historic TV debates. ABC-TV Network

Eisenhower's trip to Japan was cancelled by riots, the disarmament negotiations with Russia broke down and the Congo situation became savage and chaotic. American statecraft responsibility and Presidential command underwent a severe humiliation. In the light of these events, the nominating conventions convened to choose their candidates and write the platforms.

**A**S the Democratic Nominating Convention drew closer, each candidate planned his strategy and sought the support of the party's sectional leaders. The convention revealed the effectiveness of the Kennedy Organization—a new generation of political tacticians.

White describes the attempt of a sudden "grass roots" attempt of thousands of Stevensonians to upset the carefully planned strategies in Wilkie style. The fateful choice of Lyndon Johnson as the Vice Presidential candidate confuses White but the effect of John Kennedy's acceptance speech on Richard Nixon is analyzed very well. Kennedy's obvious exhaustion and high-pitched speech on T.V. made Nixon believe that "he could take this man in a television debate."

There was no confusion about who was to be the Republican candidate. Yet, Rockefeller led a wing of the party which Nixon would have to deal with. The major issues considered by the convention were those Rockefeller felt to be important. The differences between the views of the Republican administration and Nelson Rockefeller were ironed out by Nixon and the New York Governor in secret session.

While the convention delegates and Nixon's staff were virtually ignored, the Republican platform, which had already been written was revised to include the Fourteen Point Compact of Fifth Avenue.

The platform committee and Nixon's own forces felt an acute sense of betrayal. At this point of confusion, Nixon asserted his leadership in rallying the party behind himself and Lodge and the new Republican platform. The moving Nixon acceptance speech marked the beginning of the dramatic presidential campaign.

Before beginning his description of the Kennedy-Nixon battle, White analyzes the underlying factors in an election. The prejudices and political inheritance of various segments of the population are weighed, the population shifts and the impact of foreign and domestic issues are studied and the methods which political parties use to attract as many religious and ethnic groups as possible are explained in detail. Finally, the religious issue of Kennedy's Catholicism is treated with political and social objectivity.

At first John F. Kennedy cannot get started. He is trapped in a special session of Congress which contributed nothing to the advance of the New Frontier. To make up for lost time, Kennedy tries to "swallow the whole country in a gulp" and is unable to communicate with the crowds.

Gradually the Democratic candidate's youthful enthusiasm begins to stress a sharp single theme—the need for dynamic America. For White, Kennedy is most effective in tackling the religious issue which he does with courage and conviction.

In contrast with Kennedy's poor opening, Vice President Nixon began his campaign with a spirit of confidence and optimism. He pledged that he would visit all fifty states and that his campaign would use all possible media of communication building up to a peak before election day. White describes how Nixon's knee injury

and subsequent hospitalization threw him off stride. In trying to fulfill his fifty-state pledge he would overschedule himself and thereby exhaust the candidate, his staff, and the press.

White compares Kennedy's skillful and precise preparation for the first television debate with Nixon's failure to consult with his television advisors who did all they could to erase the Herblock image. Nixon addressed himself to Kennedy in the debates, trying to refute each point as it came up. Kennedy wisely appealed to the audience and concentrated on his central theme.

**K**ENNEDY projected a calm mature image while Nixon looked tired and tense. In the next three debates Nixon was able to recover but Kennedy had erased the Republican portrait of his immaturity and had gained in popularity and appeal. The debates did not present a complete discussion of the issues but they did present America with an effective picture of the candidates at their best and worst.

Nixon seemed almost pathetic in his attempt to reach and identify with the people. While Kennedy could communicate through a high level of eloquence Nixon struggled to put warmth in his speeches aimed at the "plain folks."

Nixon's self-pity and his unconscious admiration for Kennedy entered his discourses. While Nixon began to tire and even loose his temper John Kennedy always seemed youthful, fresh, and enthusiastic. The belated use of President Eisenhower in Nixon's campaign and the desperate nation-wide telethon could not bridge the gap created by Nixon's introspective personality and the disaffection of his staff.

In the final weeks of the campaign John Kennedy showed the qualities of sound, decisive, and mature leadership. When Martin Luther King was arrested and imprisoned in Georgia, Kennedy consulted with his staff about what should be done. His phone call to Mrs. King and Robert Kennedy's call to the Georgian judge who had set the sentence, secured the release of Dr. King and had a profound effect on Negro voters. Kennedy's intervention was a human action which produced human reactions. Nixon ignored the entire incident.

John Kennedy's humor, his youthful yet dignified outlook and his sense of purpose gained him the support of the politicians, the press and the people.

White strives to describe the process of the election but he cannot explain its outcome. The complexities of campaigning can be analyzed by a great reporter like Theodore White but a result which gives one candidate the Presidency by one tenth of one percent of the total popular vote will never be completely understood.

White is a Kennedy supporter but he explains why this is so. His reporting technique is an objective one but he cannot disguise his true feelings. The picture he presents of the candidates and of the campaign is a realistic and vivid one. His analyses is detailed yet precise, and his style is eloquent yet clear.

The mandate for Kennedy was a narrow one—only 112,000 popular votes. But Kennedy had won a sense of confidence in a future that did not look bright. He brought reason to a prosperous America not faced with disaster but with a crisis which seemed obscure. John F. Kennedy's inaugural address, "passed the torch to a new generation of Americans" and instilled the spirit of patriotism in all Americans through his momentous expression—"ask not what your country can do for you—ask instead what you can do for your country."



# Walls Are Crumbling

by John M. Oesterreicher

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The Devin-Adair Company  
New York, 1952. 393 pp.

Reviewed by  
Dr. Michael Wyschogrod

This book by Father John M. Oesterreicher, who is Research Professor of Sacred Theology at Manhattanville College, is a study in inter-religious polemic. It pits Judaism against Christianity and concludes that the former is succumbing to the latter. Judaism, the Jericho that "stands astride the road to the Promised Land of Christ" is crumbling. The seven trumpets that bring about this crumbling are seven Jewish philosophers whom "the Gospel has conquered." Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, Adolf Reinach, Max Scheler, Paul Landsberg, Max Picard and Edith Stein. By devoting an essay to the thought and life of each of these thinkers, Father Oesterreicher comes to the conclusion that the movement toward Christianity exemplified in the lives of these figures indicates a weakening of that obstinance which in the words of Jacques Maritain's foreword, is "the central tragedy of his man history," the Jewish rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. The lesson the reader is to draw from these considerations is made clear when Father Oesterreicher, himself a convert to Catholicism advises in the preface: "Put not from you what you have found; regard it not as mere matter of present controversy; set not out resolved to refute it, and looking about for the best way of doing so, seduce not yourself with the imagination that it comes of disappointment, or disgust, or restlessness, or wounded feelings or undue sensibility or other weakness. Wrap not yourself round in the associations of years past nor determine that to be truth which you wish to be so, nor make an idol of cherished anticipations. Time is short; eternity is long.

If not for such explicit statements, however, it would be difficult to guess that this book is intended for the Jewish reader. At least not for the Jew who is a Jew in any religious sense of that word. None of the thinkers discussed as far as can be gathered from Father Oesterreicher's book, encountered Christianity after a deliberate rejection of Jewish religion. More than that, nowhere does it appear that Judaism was ever a living claim in their lives. The only possible exceptions to this are Henri Bergson and Edith Stein; Bergson, because in discussing the prophets of Israel he says of them that "It is their voice we hear when a great injustice has been done and condoned." Nevertheless, he refuses to include the prophets among the true mystics, the bearers of a genuinely open morality, because their God is all too national, all too stern a judge. And Edith Stein's first real meeting with Judaism occurs when, after her conversion to Catholicism in 1922, she accompanies her heartbroken mother to the Synagogue. "The sermon was beautiful, Edith, was it not?" asks her mother. "Yes indeed, mother," she answers. "So one can be devout as a Jew?" "Certainly—if one has never met anything else." To which her mother responds with the age-old question the Jew asks of the Christian: "I don't want to say anything against him, he may have been a very good man, but why did he make himself G-d?"

These, then, are the only two points at which the encounter with Christianity which Father Oesterreicher describes is that of the Jew who is at least somewhat conscious of the Jewish God-encounter and not of the Jew who moves to Christianity because his is a spiritual wasteland. The question of Edith Stein's mother remains unanswered — Father Oesterreicher does not even seem to realize the deep chord he has struck in the Jewish soul by asking it. And the case of Henri Bergson, too, is not fully cleared up. In his last will and testament, dated February 8, 1937, Bergson declares that his reflections have led him closer and closer to Catholicism, which he felt to be the complete fulfillment of Judaism. He adds: "I should have become a convert, had I not seen in preparation for years . . . the formidable wave of anti-Semitism which is to sweep over the world. I want to remain among those who tomorrow will be persecuted." To Father Oesterreicher this shows a " . . . defect in his philosophy" which lacked a clear concept of the nature of obligation. "But is it not at least equally possible that instead of a defect, this choice represented for Bergson a discovery, even if vague at first, that the workings of the historical order, as reflected in the destiny of *Knesset Israel* (The Community of Israel), somehow point to a profounder obligation of the Jew toward his Judaism? The fact that it is the voice of the Jewish prophets that resounds for Bergson when a great injustice is done and condoned might indicate an approach to the understanding of Israel's commitment to its historic situation as a people who protest against injustice is its divine mission. Where the Christian G-d encounter expresses itself most adequately, perhaps, is in its rejection of a patently corrupt natural order. The Jewish G-d-consciousness, on the other hand comes to the fore in a meeting and a defeating of those powers of evil that stand in the way of the fulfillment of the divine historical plan. Bergson hears the Jewish prophets and chooses to remain a Jew when the Tide of Amalek threatens to sweep over the earth because it is precisely the struggle against Amalek that constitutes one of the basic admissions of Jewish election.

AND yet, though here and there a glimmer of understanding for Judaism emerges, the fact remains that not only Bergson, but Edith Stein—who embraced Catholicism in 1922, took the veil in 1934, and was gassed in Auschwitz in 1942 as a Jew—saw in Christianity the true way to love of G-d. And, in different ways, the same is true of all the figures in this book. That at least in some cases this was the result of a genuine yearning for the religious that had been thwarted by a decaying culture is clear. It is equally clear that the tradition of Christian mysticism, the personalities of a St. Francis and a St. Teresa of Avila, contain the kind of authenticity that defeats all argument and debate. Indeed, it has never been the purpose of historic Judaism to enter into such fruitless and self-defeating debate. Judaism, perhaps more than any other religion, has realized that the ways to G-d are many and that to insist upon imposing Judaism on the non-Jew is intrinsically wrong. The almost heart-rending tragedy comes in when a Jew, searching for G-d, remains ignorant of the Jewish vistas to G-d. When Bergson discusses true mysticism and the way of life that is the ecstasy of the love of G-d and His creatures, one is almost driven to distraction by the realization that he undoubtedly did not know of a Simeon b. Yohai, a R. Isaac Luria and a Baal Shem and the many other works and lives that are the inner core of traditional

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Judaism. One is almost driven to distraction on imagining what an Edith Stein, Ph.D., graduate of the University of Freiburg, student of Edmund Husserl, would have heard and seen at the table of the Rabbi of Gur, or Chortkov, or Belz, or in the eyes of any one of hundreds of thousands of poor, downtrodden and godly Jews of that focus of Jewish life that was Eastern Europe. The writings of a Martin Buber bear testimony to the power that contact with authentic Judaism has over minds nurtured in the best of European culture and aflame with the thirst for G-d. There is no closer analogy to any of the

*Among the more sophisticated Christian missionaries an attempt is being made to destroy Jewish commitments by discussing and analyzing issues which divide certain Jews, and drawing the "inevitable" conclusions. However, instead of examining the classic texts of Judaism, they often study the writings of Jews who have exhibited Christian influences in their writing, accepting these Jews as authorities on questions of authentic Judaism. Little concern is shown for the halacha and its qualification for a messiah — the main issue which separates our two faiths.*

seven philosophers of Father Oesterreicher's book than the case of Franz Rosenzweig who, at a crucial juncture in his life, was at the point of conversion to Christianity but felt that such a conversion must come not from an indifference to Judaism but from a devout practice of it. The result that this deeply honest view had for Rosenzweig's subsequent discovery of Judaism has been discussed only recently in current Jewish periodicals.

It is difficult to see how Edith Stein, for instance, could have escaped the impact that the writings of Buber and Rosenzweig made on the German academic world. And Bergson, too, with his developed interest in mysticism, should have at least been acquainted with the French version of the Zohar which appeared in 1906. The reasons for the presence of such extensive blindspots in the education of people who, in most other respects, were erudite almost beyond respectability, is a fascinating topic for speculation. On one level, it is difficult to resist seeing subconscious forces at work steering them away from areas that represented possibilities too difficult to face. As usual, such a psychological explanation does not, somehow, exhaust the problem. There must have been factors in the intellectual currents of the day that accounted for such psychological forces, even if these are admitted to have been present. Furthermore, it is not difficult to attribute the almost cultivated ignorance of authentic Jewish sources displayed by thinkers like Bergson and Stein to the education they received. Raised in the spirit of the Enlightenment and its aftermath, they were the products of an educational system that devoted itself above all to a classical humanistic viewpoint and not to the Hebraic influence on the personality of the West. The strictly Jewish educational institutions, on the other hand, had not yet succeeded in transmitting their heritage in a context of general learning, thereby making communicable their message to a broader, less specialized audience. And yet, movements like that of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, initiated by Leopold Zunz in 1823, had been on the scene long enough to make the thought of Judaism accessible in some measure even to people untrained in the difficult Talmudic discipline. That thinkers like Bergson, Husserl and Edith Stein nevertheless knew

as little about Judaism, or even its Western spokesmen, as they did, is a very curious fact in the history of thought.

The possible value of Father Oesterreicher's study is to be sought not in the light it sheds on the relation between Christianity and the Jew whose Judaism is something significant, but in the portrait it draws of the intellectual climate of the continent during the first half of this century. Husserl's phenomenological method made possible by an exploration of areas of human experience that were held suspect by the more traditional neo-Kantians of the Marburg school. The rejection of epistemology as the central problem in philosophical analysis opened the way for Husserl's *Wissenschaft*, which was a sort of intuition of the essences of things. The application in the religious field of this method consisted of permitting the suspension of the problem concerning the reality of the objects in religious discourse and a concentration on the nature and relationships of these objects. Such a method is conducive to the evocation of religious experience since it fosters an intimacy with the materials of religious thought. The religious orientation of Husserl and that of his chief expositor, Reinach, who was prematurely killed in Flanders in 1917, can generally be traced back to this methodological innovation. Max Scheler, on the other hand, was led to the Church by his disappointment with the ethical emptiness of the day. Father Oesterreicher attributes his subsequent change of position to the refusal of the Church, in 1921, to declare his existing marriage null and void and not to a sincere philosophic change of orientation. It is curious, however, that in 1924 there was published in Germany a study by P. H. Lennerz, S. J., who maintains that Scheler's teaching is basically irreconcilable with that of the Church. Father Oesterreicher does not seem to be aware of the existence of this study.

THE outspoken remaining fact is that Father Oesterreicher has not established the thesis that is implicit in the title of this book. If Judaism is crumbling it is not because of the Christian orientation of these seven thinkers who never were figures in Judaism. The heaviness of heart that remains for the Jewish reader results from the great sense of loss of potentially good material for the sanctuaries of Israel. One is appalled to believe that such a simple explanation as ignorance of the language and materials of their faith could account for the abandonment of the faith in which they could have lived and labored fruitfully. The potentialities of souls like Edith Stein and Simone Weil are specifically those of Jewish religiosity. They harbored the forces that exploded into the poetry of the Zohar, Lurianic mysticism and Chassidism. The social protest of a Bergson and the earlier Simone Weil is rooted in that practical, political mysticism which is the unique achievement of the Jewish prophets. Martin Buber expresses this when, in speaking of Bergson's relation to Judaism, he writes (*Judaism*, April, '52). The "concept of man's vocation as a co-worker with G-d is emphasized by Bergson as the goal of that mysticism which he glorifies and which he does not find in Judaism; it is, however, a fundamentally Jewish concept." Not to know these facts means for these people not to know what they themselves fundamentally were. It meant not to recognize the elemental forces that were stirring within themselves and that demanded expression. The tragedy implicit in this situation is that of ignorance. And it is the reading of such a book as that of Father Oesterreicher that explains to a large extent the almost inborn fear the Jew has of ignorance. When the Rabbis of the Talmud taught that the study of the Torah is equal in value to everything in it, they almost foresaw the havoc that ignorance has brought to the Jew.



# "Render Unto Caesar . . ."

by Mr. Marvin Schick

**RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS: THE GREAT CONTROVERSY**, by Paul Blanshard. Boston, Beacon Press, 266 pp. \$4.95.

There is no more contentious domestic issue confronting the nation, than the many-faceted conflict between the advocates of a high wall of separation between Church and State and those who believe that government should play a substantial role in support and encouragement of religious institutions and practices.

This dispute differs very significantly in form from most of the important domestic questions of the past generation. In the United States issues are generally resolved and controversy abates because ultimately the opposing sides move toward center positions and a middle-ground consensus is formed. But in the battle over Church-state relationships the conflicting groups are taking more extreme positions than they did several years ago and there is little suggestion of compromise. This unusual (by American standards) situation is in part an almost inevitable consequence of the semantics of the issue. Separationists who speak of a constitutional wall of separation between church and state and religious leaders cloaking their goals with denunciations of the secularization of America elevate (or is it really "degrade?") their pronouncements to the level of ideology; and how can ideologies be compromised?

But the unbending positions are also a reflection of the fact that, at about the same time, both sides have been able to win some very big victories. One side gets the Supreme Court to outlaw prayers and is encouraged and becomes bolder; the opposition is able to get congress and other legislative bodies to steadily increase indirect financial aid to religious institutions and it is encouraged and becomes bolder.

Paul Blanshard's book is the latest—at least in book form — polemic against the Catholic Church. The organized Catholic Church is the villain of the piece and almost from the first page to last there are Catholic bogey men and straw men to contend with. So one-sided is this book that except for pinpointing the major areas of dispute it is of little value to those who desire a balanced view of the controversy. I wonder who the publishers thought they were fooling when they wrote on the inside jacket: "Those on each side of the controversy will benefit from this carefully documented book . . ."

## Supreme Court

Only a year and a half have passed since the Supreme Court in *Engel v. Vitale* struck down a non-denominational prayer devised by a unanimous Board of Regents of New York State. The tremendous storm of criticism unloosed by the decision seems so unreal today; it is difficult to explain, except in terms of the need to say something in public about the decision, the outrage expressed by many of the nation's outstanding political and religious leaders. After the debate quieted down it became

quite apparent that the Supreme Court had not "deconsecrated the nation," to recall the words of James A. Pike, Episcopal Bishop of California. In fact, it is now recognized that the decision is almost irrelevant to religion in the United States because the outlawed prayer was almost irrelevant to religion. Children do not become religious by proclaiming: "Almighty G-d, we acknowledge our dependency upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessing upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country."

All this is now understood. The unreasonableness, from a religious standpoint, of the furor over the ruling was recognized by the religious leaders when a year after the prayer decision, the Supreme Court outlawed Bible reading in public schools. Criticism was muted and seemed to be more out of duty than out of conviction. Indeed, in an almost perverse manner, it is now believed by many that the Supreme Court rulings are a vindication of the position of the Catholic Church in that they reinforce the Church's contention (to Catholics) that public schools are hostile to religion and that parents who want their children to have a religious education must send them to parochial schools.

With the possible exception of the Lubavitcher Rebbe there was no Jewish criticism of either decision. Two of the five parents in the prayer case were Jewish and the Synagogue Council of America, the *Parve* organization representing all "branches" of Judaism, and the National Community Relations Advisory Council, representing many of the leading national Jewish organizations, filed *Amicus Curiae* (friend of the court) briefs before the Supreme Court against the prayer. In the eyes of many the fight to outlaw the prayer was "Jewish" and throughout the years of litigation and after there were overtones of anti-Semitism. The whole thing came to a head when the liberal Jesuit publication, *America*, published an editorial, "To Our Jewish Friends" which warned that Jews were inviting anti-Semitism when they became identified with the banning of religious practices in public schools. The editorial was tactless and unfair and eventually the editors retreated.

## Financial Aid

On this issue Blanshard writes: "Here is joined a Catholic versus American battle, with organized world Catholicism committed to a program and a philosophy of ecclesiastical education, supported out of public treasuries, while the law and tradition of the United States favor public support for public schools only." Blanshard would have us believe that the Church is in battle against the approximately 150,000,000 Americans who are not Catholic. But we must not forget that in a number of states, including some in which Catholics amount to only about ten percent or less of the population, laws have been passed allotting money for transportation of parochial school children and the purchase of non-religious textbooks for use in parochial schools and the support of lunch programs

in religious schools. It is simply untrue to state that all this has been done because of a quasi-subversive "Popish Plot." And when it comes to various forms of aid to higher education, where Blanshard admits, "a wide breach has already been made in the wall between religion and government," the role of the Catholic Church has been relatively small. Much of the initiative for aid to colleges, even those that are sectarian, has come from purely educational or governmental sources. An example is the scholar incentive program of New York State.

As a rule federal and state courts have reconciled the use of tax money to support programs run by religious schools with the first amendment and state constitutional provisions by resorting to the "child-benefit" theory. The funds, courts have reasoned, are used for the safety and welfare of school children and not to aid religion. Of course children benefit; still it is hard to deny that the major impact of grants to support transportation, textbooks, lunches, and construction is to allow religious institutions to attract more students and to use money that otherwise would be allocated for these programs for religious purposes. It follows then that the federal and state governments are already deeply committed to the support of parochial schools and in the field of education there is virtually no wall—high or low—separating church and state.

Whether the federal government will begin to give money directly to parochial schools for libraries, laboratories, and other purely secular programs cannot be clearly foretold. As I said at the outset, the opposing sides are able to take comfort from recent victories. The Catholic Church has been widely attacked for its opposition to any federal aid to public schools until parochial schools are included in the program. Catholic pressure has prevented Congress from giving the desperately needed financial assistance to public schools and the church has been labeled as obstructionist and anti-democratic.

Much of this anti-Catholic criticism is interesting, especially since it comes from individuals and groups that have long been identified as liberal. The tactics of the Catholic Church may be blocking passage of a much needed piece of legislation, but they certainly are compatible with democratic government.

In our pluralist society important policy decisions are made after the interested groups have taken their positions and tried to influence public officials.

In fact, it is the opponents of aid to parochial schools, at least as much as the Catholics, who have prevented a decision on the issue. In the United States issues of public concern are normally decided by the political organs of government or by the courts. But the separationists are afraid of both the political and the legal outcome. They know that Congress and state legislatures, when the time to vote comes, very often include funds for religious institutions. At the same time they do not want the question left for judicial decision because they have doubts whether the federal courts will even agree to accept jurisdiction of a suit attacking the constitutionality of congressional appropriations. And, should the courts reach the substantive questions there remains the possibility that they will use the "child-benefit" theory to sustain the aid to parochial schools.

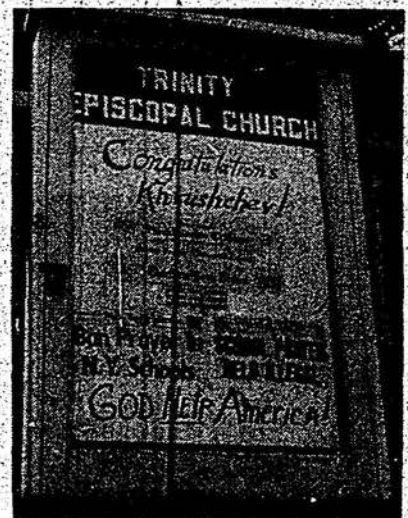
## Jewish Leadership

Blanshard paints a picture of an almost solid Jewish front against aid to parochial schools and the Catholic Church. He writes, "The only Jewish dissidents in this solid Jewish bloc were a few Orthodox rabbis committed to Jewish religious day schools and eager to receive public money for those schools. It is doubtful whether they represent more than ten percent of the American Jewish community." And, "those few

Protestant and Jewish leaders who go along with Catholic demands on the public treasury, or make parallel demands for themselves, are so unrepresentative that they can be disregarded." Later, he writes, "A tiny handful of Orthodox Jewish rabbis wanted public money for their own Jewish day schools, but they were clearly unrepresentative." Blanshard's bias leads him to ignore the testimony of Orthodox leaders before congressional committees in favor of such aid.

Moreover, in the last year or so a number of Orthodox Jewish organizations have taken a new look at the entire issue and either now support federal aid to parochial schools or no longer oppose it. An example is the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, one of the largest synagogue organizations in the country.

All this is very encouraging apart from the merits of aid to religious education. The issue of leadership of American Jewry, and particularly Orthodox Jewry, is involved in every area of Jewish contact with the government and with the non-Jewish world.



Hal Boon  
A sample of the reaction raised by the Supreme Court ban against school prayer.

The time has come for Orthodox Jews and the responsible representatives of all Jews to stop following blindly the leadership of the secular organizations that have "Jewish" in their title but which have little or nothing Jewish in their programs. The AJCs are small and non-representative groups of rich and alienated Jews. They have no right to speak for the masses of American Jewry; their ability to do so has been based on the silence and immaturity and lack of dignity and courage of the representative organizations.

Aid to religious education by the federal government may be wrong and unconstitutional, but why identify with groups that are not merely opposed to the government helping parochial schools but to the very existence of religious schools per se?

Even from a practical standpoint reliance on the secularists have been harmful. The recent victory over Sabbath law was due to the work of Orthodox individuals and groups. In fact, high state officials stated frankly that they would not support revision if the fight were led by secular organizations.

Have American Jews learned from the Blue Law struggles? Is it too much to expect that the organizations will have the courage to repudiate the secularists? For one, an optimistic. For in the raging battle over federal aid to parochial schools, we have strong evidence that the religious community has finally attained maturity.

Mr. Marvin Schick is visiting lecturer of Political Science. He was ordained at Rabbi Jacob Joseph. Mr. Schick received his M.A. at New York University and is writing his doctoral thesis on the U. S. Court of Appeals.

Paul Blanshard has been called "the dean of American controversy." He received this title, after writing his book *American Freedom and Catholic Power*. Although *Religion in the Schools* is his eleventh book, he is most famous for his *American Freedom and Catholic Power*. The book is exceptionally critical of the Catholic hierarchy, but not of the faith itself. He wrote in his personal program: "It is a book not about the Catholic faith, but about the cultural, political, and economic policies of the rulers of the Catholic Church." As to why he chose the Catholic Church as his topic of discussion, Mr.

Blanshard answers: "It is a matter of the use and abuse of power by an organization that is not only a church but a state within a state, and a foreign-controlled society within a society." The book was rejected by ten leading publishers. When it was finally published the *New York Times* refused to carry advertisements for it on the ground that it was an attack on the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy. The advertising ban was later rescinded, but many state book stores and department stores refused to sell the book. It was also banned in many libraries. Today, *American Free-*

*dom and Catholic Power* has gone into twenty-six printings for a total of 240,000 copies. Mr. Blanshard has had a varied career as a lawyer, author, journalist, and public official. Under Mayor LaGuardia he was head of New York City's Department of Investigations. He served two years as an associate editor of *The Nation* and, during World War II he was a State Department Official in Washington and the Caribbean. Other works include: *International Communism*; *The American Communist Party*; and *Communism, Democracy and Catholicism*.