FOCUS ON RESISTANCE
JEWISH VETS OF THE LINCOLN BRIGADE
HOLOCAUST RESISTANCE BIBLIOGRAPHY
WARSAW GETTO REVOLT
STORIES, LETTERS, MORE

40th ANNIVERSARY WARSAW GETTO REVOLT
### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passover Kaddish</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by Steve Fankuchen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Veterans of the Spanish Civil War</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by John Gerassi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters To The Editor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Israeli Tragedy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Shirley Ranz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Invisible Passage</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Irena Narell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honk, Wonk, and Jowl</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Florence Lewis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holocaust Resistance Bibliography</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by James Bennett</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### COVER:
Monument to the heroes and heroines of the Warsaw Ghetto by Nathan Rappaport. Background: map of Ghetto, April 1943.

### CREDITS:
Graphic on page 2 by AIN SOF PRODUCTIONS. Thanks to the artist and AGADA for permission to reprint. *The Invisible Passage © 1961 Irena Narell*.

### CORRECTIONS:
Apologies to SHMATE readers and authors for the following mistakes in Issue #4. On page 2 the Lesbian Herstory Archives was referred to as the Lesbian History Archives. In the Table of Contents Daniel Marlin was referred to as Jacob Marlin. The “unusual looking... basketball game” referred to on page eight certainly was unusual in that it was played on a diamond complete with bats and nine players on a side!

### SUBSCRIPTIONS
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Welcome to SHMATE #5. On April 19 we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It is therefore appropriate that this issue of SHMATE focus on Jewish resistance. In a real sense the international struggle against the Nazis, the first battle of World War II, was fought in Spain in 1936. The United States, as usual more concerned with stopping socialism, communism, and the Soviet Union, than nazism and fascism, effectively supported Franco through a thin veneer of neutrality. Thus, Hitler knew the score even before Munich.

And what of those Americans, those premature anti-fascists, who went to fight in Spain? Even after the U.S. went to war with Germany, these people (a very large percentage of whom were Jews) were harassed by the American government. And, once the war was over, they were actively persecuted.

I am pleased to be able to present in this issue of SHMATE, excerpts from John Gerassi's forthcoming oral history of the American and Canadian veterans of the Brigades. Other chapters of the struggle by Jews against fascist oppression have become known in recent years. It is time that the Internationals received their due recognition. It is time that the struggles of which they were a part, both within Spain and after they returned, were put in their proper perspective.

There are undoubtedly those who consider the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln and Mackenzie-Papineau Brigades as anachronisms, as relics of a no longer relevant period of history. However, a close examination of the American socio-political context from which they arose, as well as their experiences after they returned from Spain will, when analyzed in terms of current realities, present much from which we can learn.

The past several months have seen a marked expansion of Reagan administration initiatives toward repression at home and reaction abroad: censorship, government infiltration and provocation, incorporating religious morality in public law, a retreat from the most minimal commitment toward equality for women and minorities, the rape of the environment, the destruction of medical, nutritional, and educational programs, the "Viet Namization" of Central America, the effort to develop a clear first strike "advantage" over the Soviet Union.

The signs are there again. Not merely the signs of individual — or even systemic corruption such as Reagan's "unpaid" chairman of the Legal Services Corporation getting $25,000 from the consumer/poverty agency he was appointed to destroy. No, it's not just the signs of dishonesty and manipulation. It is the sign of something which would control our access to knowledge, our thinking, our minds, something which does not want us to have the tools with which to struggle for a better life.

Hortensia Allende is denied a visa to the U.S. so that she cannot remind our people that our government and major corporations overthrew the popularly elected progressive government in Chile and installed a murderously repressive dictatorship. Maybe if people don't know, they will be unable to draw the parallel between Chile and Republican Spain. Klaus Barbie is taken back to France and the American government pushes ahead with plans to destroy the Freedom of Information Act so that our people, in addition to being kept in the dark about present and future activities, will not know of its intimate collaboration with the Nazis, collaboration which goes back to Republican Spain and continues today. The Reagan Administration's Justice Department establishes guidelines so that the F.B.I. can legally infiltrate groups accused of committing no criminal acts, groups which the government determines "advocate" or are "prone" to various things. Maybe our people will forget the Hollywood Ten, the House Un-American Activities Committee, the Rosenbergs, the 18,000 F.B.I. agents in the Communist Party, the F.B.I. spying harassment, and violence directed at civil rights, anti-war, feminist, and leftist groups. Maybe with the destruction of the Freedom of Information Act we will not learn how environmental and gay organizations have been added to the list of "enemies". Maybe we will focus all our energy on the F.B.I. and forget about those even more immune to public scrutiny, the C.I.A., the National Security Agency, the Customs Department, the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Division, and Military Intelligence, outfits which can make the F.B.I. look penny-ante.

And what will be the response of the Jewish People? Will the traditionally organized Jewish community continue to support any reactionary in government as long as he or she gives a blank check
to the Begin Administration? Will it continue to oppose affirmative action thinking that such will prevent discrimination against Jews? Will it continue to fear to speak out on issues not perceived as Jewish issues? Will it more and more play it safe so as not to offend the non-Jewish power structure?

And what of the half of our people unaffiliated with traditional organizations? Will they continue to pretend that being Jewish is not a relevant political reality, that being Jewish is a case of contemporary bagels and old country nostalgia?

Will we recognize that without our spiritual and ethical identities, without our soul, the Jewish People will be reduced merely to a nation state, a set of rituals, or perhaps just an historical memory?

This being the 40th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, it is appropriate to look to that chapter of our history for a bit of guidance. From the writings of ghetto archivist Emmanuel Ringelblum, writing about Mordechai Anielewicz, the commander of the Jewish Fighters Organization. “But our Mordechai committed here a second serious error which boomeranged on the history of the Warsaw and Polish Jews. Mordechai and his young companions... had taken too much into consideration the opinions of the older generation, of the ‘wise’, the ‘deliberating’, who weighed and measured and who had up their sleeves a host of clever arguments against the struggle... They knew too little about the history of freedom struggles or they would have known that in these stormy times one had to give less consideration to resolutions of committees and administrations and depend more on oneself, on one’s own healthy instincts.”

STEVE FANKUCHEN

**PAS SOVER KADDI SH**

On Pesach the Hagadah commands us to consider the tribulations of our people in ancient Egypt and their subsequent exodus not as abstract history but as if we were there ourselves. We are directed to understand, to feel that it was not merely the salvation of an abstraction called “Our People”, but rather each of us personally who was saved.

Most of us are symbolically, if not literally, orphans of the Holocaust. Not only were our relatives murdered but the culture from which many of us descended was destroyed. For most of the Six Million, there are no survivors. It is we who must be their offspring, both in spirit and deed.

It was the first night of Pesach, April 19, 1943, that the Nazis chose for the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto, and it was on that first night Pesach that the Jews began their historic uprising. It is therefore appropriate that we look to the Hagadah, the record of one of the other great tragedies of our people, for guidance on how to approach the Holocaust. By remembering that the purpose of the Nazis was to rid the world of Jews, it becomes impossible not realize that we are all survivors, and that the Holocaust was not an historical abstraction, but, rather, an event in our own lives, an event which our children should remember in the same vein. If the Nazis had had their way, we would have no children.

It is precisely in this way which our ancestors approached our people’s escape from Egypt. From the Hagadah: “In every generation each individual is bound to regard him and herself as if they had personally gone forth from Egypt, as it is said, ‘And thou shalt relate to thy child what the Eternal did for me when I went forth from Egypt.’ Thus it was not our ancestors alone whom the Most Holy then redeemed but us also did God redeem with them as it is said, and God brought us forth from thence...”

The words of the Hagadah are as true for the Holocaust as they were thousands of years ago... We are all survivors. The Holocaust never must be allowed to be something which merely happened to others — we must remember the Holocaust as if we were there, we and our descendants.

STEVE FANKUCHEN
LETTERS

— THE VIEW FROM OUT THERE —

The response to SHMATE's letters page has been very encouraging. However, many folks I talked with never put their thoughts down on paper. This is a loss for all of us, not only readers but also the authors who are keenly interested in feedback. Many of the most interesting and useful responses to issue #4 were oral. Please, folks, let's not let SHMATE become a spectator sport.

In the last issue of SHMATE we printed a letter (signed Very Anonymous) asking for thoughts concerning the situation of adoptees who are, by law and convention, usually prevented from meeting their "birth families. The following two letters are in response to that request.

I was also adopted and therefore cut off from my Jewish family — all of it in my case, as I was adopted by "Christian-Atheists". A couple of years ago I found my birth mother, sister, brother, uncle, aunt, and cousin. I believe I could be of help and support to you. Please call me.

Elizabeth Greene
Bay Area, Ca.

I, too am adopted and did not find that out until my mid-twenties. Even at that age, my shock was resounding. I can't tell you what you ought to do; I did not pursue my past. I am sure there are some things I could learn about myself if I met my natural father and half-sisters. Possibly there would be some ties that I would form. But, the pain I would cause the man who adopted me and raised me is where my sense of self comes from.

What pisses me off is that by Jewish law I am a bastard and so will my children's children be forever.

Mamzer
New York, N.Y.

I enjoyed the intensity and freedom of interchange, especially in letters which addressed the very attitudes and contradictions which I'd reacted to in the previous issue.

However, I was dismayed to find you repeating yourself in a maddening way ... You have much that is worthwhile. Please try harder to keep up with spelling—enough small, silly errors add up and begin to compromise the impact of any material, even as provoking as SHMATE's.

Daniel Marlin
Berkeley, Ca.

Please extend my subscription for a year. Congratulations and thanks for vastly improved proofreading and typesetting. Florence Lewis is an exceptional writer. Her piece in SHMATE #4 is remarkable, thought-provoking, unique. Regards from Norfolk, where they think that Jew is a verb.

Bob Schwartz
Norfolk, Va.

I appreciated that piece on the Brooklyn Dodgers quite a lot. Two nights ago I finished reading a good second-rate book entitled New York City Baseball: The Last Golden Age, by Harvey Frommer. You might like it. [Not to mention The Boys Of Summer, by Roger Kahn —ed.]

Stephen Levy
New York, N.Y.

I am enjoying SHMATE #4, especially the poetry by Irena Klepfisz. I loved the format in which it was printed. She is quite popular in New York. She had a reading in Atran House recently.

Mindy Rinkewich
New York, N.Y.

I was surprised at the content of Sagan's review of Irena Klepfisz's book, Keeper of Accounts. Not only did it exhibit a tremendous lack of insight but was inappropriate in parts and offensive as a result.

The shallowness of Sagan's perception is especially apparent in two areas. She uses the word "bore" as in, "Klepfisz can also bore the reader..." This is a frequently used catch all word often masking something else, something uncomfortable to deal with usually. Klepfisz's work often elicits uncomfortable feelings and issues that are important to recognize and name. To be bored by what is difficult for us is a contradiction in terms. I am additionally offended by Sagan's few sentences regarding poetry or short prose poetry not giving the writer a large enough scope. I'm not quite sure what was intended here but it sounds as though we might be in store for a lecture on poetic form and whether or not it is an adequate vehicle for expressing deep concern and experience.

Finally, it would be a real disservice to SHMATE's readers if Sagan's review discouraged even one person from reading Klepfisz's works. Klepfisz is a wonderful writer and she has made room for all of us.

Linda Gutterman
Brooklyn, N.Y.

First, I saw Robb Pope's ad (naturally, I read from the back, and am pleased to see that A Woman's Place Bookstore has advertised again). The ad brought to mind a Dutch Gay-Jewish magazine, SJALHOMO, which was languishing on my shelf (Robb's ad seeks info on gay and lesbian European Jews, 1920-1939). So I telephoned him on up and we talked at some length and with great delight of our various and mutual interests. Robb, we could go together to Jewish Homes for elders and I'll shup their ears with Yiddish fiddle and you'll draw them out their talk of these difficult stories.

I read the Florence Lewis Story, "The Great Betrayal" with enormous pleasure and respect. I loved the density of good things—details, language, structures, and the very comfortable and sure human voice in this true telling (the sly fox writes, "So where am I?")

continued next page
LETTERS: continued

Florence, I want you to tell me more about “berimperter”. I want a whole story about yentes. Do you really think that yentes should assume a low profile?

That SCREW graphic was too graphic. It hurt to look at it. My kishkes received that image with a wince. On the other hand, lots of people are feeling screwed this season, and talk has been full of words and gestures. Too many idle hands flying around. Too many empty pockets. Too many potatoes this season. Kugels.

Barbara Stack Berkeley, CA.

I received issues 1-4, all at once, of SHMATE, for which I thank you. Beset with two successive days of rain in Sunny Florida I read (most) of these first issues and came away pleased and enthusiastic on the one hand and confused on the other. The source of confusion?

In your opening statement of policy (!?) in issue No. 1, you write: “the purpose in producing the magazine is to serve as a reflection of and catalyst for the development of alternative currents within the Jewish community.” What manner of “alternative” currents? Alternative to which currents?

There is a second source of confusion. Commencing with issue No. 2 the front page bears the subtitle “A Journal of Progressive Jewish Thought.” No clue is to be found in your all too brief statement of policy as to what you mean by “progressive.” How does (will) SHMATE differ from existing Jewish periodicals?

Al Prago
Flushing, N.Y.

My only feedback on SHMATE outside of the fact that I am glad it exists, is that I think it needs to be a little more hard hitting, a little more in depth. I've only seen two issues but it seems you avoid the most difficult and controversial issues facing Jews today, namely the Middle East and anti-Semitism in the U.S. and the world. I think there may be a tendency amongst some of us to not understand the depth of thought on these issues within the whole Jewish community. An example: RUAH sponsored a forum on anti-Semitism last fall. We invited a speaker from the Jewish Educational Council and from Jewish Family and Childrens Service to participate with us. We were concerned that our presentation would be seen as too radical. (We concentrated on the development historically of political anti-Semitism and Nazism and the rise of such as ideology and grouplets today). We need not have been concerned. The forum, which was held at a local synagogue, was very well attended. The audience in the discussion that followed (such discussion is something we try to promote at all of our events) condemned those who spoke of anti-Semitism as the established groups generally do (prayer in schools, Christmas programs, don't give the nazis publicity and they'll go away, rely on the state, etc.) and latched onto our presentation which in many ways was tamer than what THEY were saying. Another example: I spoke during a discussion on the Middle East at a local synagogue last Yom Kippur and essentially offered a two state position. I was not hooted down; in fact the response was very warm and open. I was surprised. What I'm saying is that I think the community is open to fresh ideas (at least a strain of the community larger than just “us”). I don't think you need fear controversy. One need only look to Israel itself.

Anyway keep up the good work... and good luck.

Randy Gould
Kansas City, MO.

"Marcher Is Killed In Israeli Protest"
New York Times, 2/11/83

by SHIRLEY RANZ

I met Emil 15 years ago. He came to Kibbutz Revivim as part of his army service in a branch known as the Nachal. I had come to the kibbutz 6 months earlier, straight out of high school in New York, but determined to make kibbutz and Israel my future home. I spent the next year and a half there and Emil and I became friends. I did not make very many friends among the Israelis, but among the few I did, the memory of Emil lingered on while others faded. Whenever I reminisced with the woman who had been my roommate there, his name never failed to come up.

In 1969 I left Israel and did not keep in touch with Emil, so I can only describe him as he was at 18. Extremely handsome, warm, full of laughter, and an intense curiosity about everything. In this last quality especially, there was something different about Emil, something which set him apart from the others in his army group. When he completed his military service he alone chose to return to kibbutz and to become a member.

As I picked up The New York Times to read the article covering the grenade attack on the Peace Now demonstrators, I approached it with the usual attitude of remoteness one must take when reading about tragedies in far away places, even in Israel. I read about the terrible insults hurled at the demonstrators by Begin-Sharon supporters — “Hitler should have finished you off!”, “You should have been in Sabra and Shatilla and died there instead”. Such were the horrible things one group of Jews could say to another. I read that most of these Jews were Sephardim, and that the polarization between Ashkenazi and Sephardim was threatening Israel's democracy. The pro-Sharon group does not believe in the right of every Israeli to dissent and express opposition to the government. And one of these fascist Jews, for what else can I call them, threw a grenade into the crowd of protesters and killed 33-year-old Emil Grunzweig.

Of all the ways for a young idealistic Jew to die, a Jew who had emigrated to Israel, fought in its wars, born the hardship of kibbutz life, and worked for peace — for him to die by the hand of another Jew is too awful to contemplate. Would the pain and grief have been less if Emil had died in one of Israel's wars? Perhaps not, but then the mourning would have been for him alone and not also for the future of Israeli democracy.
HONK, WONK, AND JOWL

by FLORENCE LEWIS

Chrst, I'm glad he doesn't know everything. Because if he does, then you can ship me to the glue factory. I mean Tom Wolfe. His analysis of Honk and Wonk makes wide my grin of approbation, but he should have talked to me or Alfred Kazin, who was a real brother in sorrow, not Marshall D. Berger because what does Berger know about sorrow? I mean Berger came to New York from Buffalo already equipped with Standard Mid-western Speech. Maybe he couldn't honk, but he could teach in the public schools of New York. But those like Kazin and me, who had the mark of the immigrant branded on our uvulas and were otherwise afflicted with sloppy shushes, overstress, and overbite — I even talked Honk and Wonk makes wide my grin of approbation, but with my hands — were out of luck.

I mean it wasn't funny. In order to teach in the public school of New York City, one had to pass a written exam, write the exam in essay form, not pencil marks, and myself, I wrote for three hours, passionately. But the next hurdle I couldn't take, and that failure automatically excluded me from the third, where, as a novice, I would be thrown into an airtight classroom with a pointer, a piece of chalk, a waste-paper basket and ten rows of kids. "Go ahead, teach. Pass the basket, first. And open the windows." And that I could have done. I weighed a hundred pounds, ten of them in my larynx. Boy, could I yell. But it was how I yelled that mattered, don't you see? Did I yell, "Sit dawn," or "sitt dowin", or worse, "sidowin". No, before I could pass the basket, open the windows and start yelling, I had to demonstrate my standard American speech: Mid-western-flat; North-western-tight; Buffalo, Syracuse or Rochester-gentee; Indiana-cracker, Texas-mush. Even the mush which produced "cain't" for "can't" or "two-faced" for "too-fast" was better than "chawklet" and "dawg." So I had not only the truck-driver but the immigrant in my larynx — call it Bronx, Brooklyn, or Bensonhurst — and it was Goodbye Columbus. Talk about Pygmalion. I sat on the curb and waited for hours after my speech exams were over: "What's to become of me, what's to become of me?" But my tale is somewhat different from Liza's.

You see, they had instructed me all my life in this game of speaking Standard English. My own teachers were sterling examples of contortionists who could tie their mouths in knots in order to utter "Haw nauw brawn cauw" the better to tell us to sit "dawn", not "dowin". Careful Draculas, they would cover their fangs to get the "ar" out of "oranges". But I considered it unnatural for such nice people to give themselves airs, even though I understood what they had to do in order to pass the speech exam. But having passed it? I mean, why did they have to keep it up? Was I to suppose these interesting young men and women spoke this affected stuff at home? I didn't know some of them kept it up in their sleep.

And I had speech classes too...not just classes, but labs and clinics, except that our teachers were teachers, not therapists. We had no hardships other than being slightly deaf to new sounds and therefore our tongues were stubborn; and for such deficiencies there were exercises... baaing and braying and squeezing and bleating. Nothing wrong with our personalities either or our clothes, just deviated septums... therefore nasality or cleft palates, therefore a bitruncated "s". Even when the disorder was something akin to a matzhes-herring-whine, no one gave us counsel. They gave us the phonetic alphabet. Everyone had to read and transcribe the phonetic alphabet. It was a graduation requirement. Illiteracy was not permitted. Poverty was a spur. In the speech class everyone brought a hand mirror to examine uvulas and wiggle them and pull out tongues and waggle them. Thus we would practice bilabial fricatives and prefrontal rolls. And everyone came to class. And gargled. And rolled tongue over alveolar ridges to sneak up on an "l". God, it was boring, but there was no escape. For nobody thought it was racist to wipe away the sound of a mother-tongue. It was the passport to the teacher's platform. Without it, where could you go? Fifth Avenue wouldn't have you, not even Best and Co. Except me. I couldn't do it. Passive resistance. I failed the speech exam. So I sat on the curb and cried.

I'm sorry the New York establishment is still fussy. 'Twas never the sound but the disposition they feared. WASP sensibility was always fragile. Behind the speech exam hovered the "what church do you go to" test. It's still disposition and playing the game. No one wants a Mark Lane around, no matter his color. Abrasive, these qualities give a gentler sort ulcers because gentler sorts can't fight back, and Germaine Greer could hand out cardiac seizures by the hundreds. One has to be protected from such as they — Bah! Bah! Bah!
The following article is excerpted from the author's 800 page oral history of the North American veterans of the Spanish Civil War. This, in turn, was edited from over 18,000 pages of interviews which are available to the public, along with related material, at the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives at Brandeis University. Gerassi's project will be published in 1984 by M. I. T.

In choosing the material for SHMATE, I have tried to do what cannot be done: namely, maintain the integrity and coherence of the author's work while utilizing 5% of his material. Therefore, criticisms concerning continuity and appropriateness should be laid at my door and not the author's.

The Spanish Civil War was the first battle of World War II. The tragedy of that episode is not merely the havoc wreaked on Spain, the missed opportunity to prevent the Holocaust, or the continued failure to give recognition to the Lincoln Brigade veterans, but also, the failure after forty-five years to recognize that the United States was, for all practical purposes, on the wrong side. Hopefully Gerassi's work will help to provide people with a better understanding of why that is the case.

History," wrote Arthur Schlesinger Jr. "is still mostly written from the top down, not from the bottom up." Indeed, policies are inevitably analyzed through the motives, knowledge, and background of the policy-makers. Events are related according to the statements spit out by those who help shape them. Actions are evaluated according to the will and goals of the decision-makers who generate them. Rarely are policies, events, or actions in a historical period described through the testimony of the ordinary people who work, suffer, and die in that period. Hence, an oral history which lets those directly affected by the policies, events, and actions in a particular period of history talk at length is a much better guide to what really happened to such people than antiseptic surveys, statistical polls, or scholarly generalizations.

And yet, for the voices at the "bottom" to make sense, a stage must be delineated. So, although I have tried to write a history of a group of people at the bottom by deliberately letting each speak at length, I find that I must first try to place their lives in the context of what was happening around them.

On July 18, 1936, when the Spanish Civil War started, most of the American and Canadian men and women who would volunteer to fight with the Republic were in their twenties.

Most North American veterans of the Spanish Civil War lived their formative years just before, during, or immediately after the first world war. What's more they probably sought their first job just after the crash of 1929 and became of family-raising age during the worst period of the Great Depression. A history-from-below by such people then will certainly have to reveal much information about that depression, how it molded the lives and thoughts of those who ended up volunteering to fight fascism.

Robert Rosenstone, who based his findings on data furnished by 291 volunteers, found that over 60 percent of the Americans came from working class backgrounds. He estimated that of the 3000 volunteers, 600 were sailors, 400 came from "steel, auto, mining, timber, garment and trucking industries." The rest were from low and middle levels of the middle class, including, he said, no less than 500 students.

My own statistics vary slightly. I have concluded that between 3200 and 3500 Americans and between 1200 and 1500 Canadians went to Spain between 1936 and 1939.

According to my figures, no less than 46% [of the North American volunteers] were Jewish.

Of these, 55 percent had working class parents, 35 percent came from middle class sectors, mostly the petit bourgeoisie, and 10 percent were from the upper middle class. Exactly nine individuals belonged to ruling class families or to their high civil servant allies.

Whatever statistics chosen, at least this conclusion is inescapable: a history of the volunteers is bound to give a good indication on how the poor, the unemployed, the industrial worker, and the salaried employee lived during the early years of this century and how they survived the depression.

But the statistics can prove more. According to my figures, no less than 46 percent were Jewish. Albert Prago, who has studied the question closely, says that figure is too high. His own count brings it down to 30 percent, still amazingly high and much higher than the overall percentage in the International Brigades, which was 16 percent. Writes Prago, a Jew and an ALB veteran himself: "They went to Spain as internationalists, as humanists, as anti-fascists, as communists — while they may not have denied their Jewish heritage, they did not go to Spain identifying as Jews. This is particularly true for the American Jews."
And yet it was no accident that so many of the volunteers were Jewish. Among them were the top American officer, Lt. Col John Gates (alias Sol Regenstreif); Major Milton Wolff, the last ALB commander; Saul Wellman, the last political commissar of the Mackenzie-Papineau; Capt. Leonard Lamb; commissars Dave Doran and George Watt; battalion commander David Reiss; company commanders Aaron Lopoff, Paul Block, Larry Lustgarten, Sidney Levine, Julius Deutsch, Irving Weissman, Yale Stuart, Manny Lancer, Lawrence Cane, Jack Cooper, Harold Smith, Harry Schonberg, David Smith. Of the 124 members of the American Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy, 59 were Jews — 19 surgeons, 4 dentists, 6 technicians, 28 nurses, and 2 drivers. No less than 66 Jewish activists volunteered from the Brownsville section of Brooklyn; only 25 returned. Of the 13 teachers, alumni, and students from City College who volunteered, eleven were Jews; their leader, instructor Alfred “Chick” Chakin, wounded and repatriated in 1937, returned to Spain the next year to fight again - and die.

Thus, while most of the volunteers who were Jewish may well have been non-religious and assimilationists and did not go to Spain, as ALB veteran Alvah Bessie has said, “out of my Jewish 'nature' or 'personality' or 'unconscious' [but] to fight fascism, and specifically Naz-fascism,” it is probable that being Jewish helped create that desire to fight Nazi-fascism. After all, even the most anti-religious and assimilated Jew is made to feel Jewish by the anti-Semitism. As Jean-Paul Sartre once said, the Jew is he who is defined as a Jew by his society. And if a society sponsors pogroms, all Jews will inevitably hate such attackers, even the Jews who only hear or read about the attacks from relative and distant safety. Repression may cause fear, even cowardice, but it also creates consciousness.

The America and Canada which molded the future volunteer was the America and Canada of the bottom, of miners and lumberjacks, sailors and machinists, of demonstrations for the right to organize for a better life and of marches to protest police brutality and the murder of comrades. It was the America of Pinkerton men and Klansmen, massacres and frame-ups.

In Ludlow, Colorado, in 1914, for example, no less than 66 miners, their wives and children were systematically executed by National Guardsmen while they crouched helplessly in their tents. The New York Times cheered because the miners were “savage-minded,” while it, approved American warships bombarding Vera Cruz, in Mexico, killing one hundred, because Mexico had arrested some American sailors and refused to apologize with a 21-gun salute.

In Arizona in 1917, some 1200 supposed Wobblies (351 turned out to be AFLers) were sealed into a cattle train, shipped under guard to New Mexico, kept without food or water for 36 hours, then severely beaten before being locked up in a federal stockade for three months without charges. Elsewhere, scores were murdered, jailed up to 22 months without trials, castrated, framed, gassed, executed by firing squad (Joe Hill), beaten to death, and hanged, all because the IWW recognized the reality of America, namely that, as the preamble to the IWW constitution flatly stated, “the working class and the employing class have nothing in common.”

During the first world war, repression of organizing workers and farmers was downright vicious. Mostly, the excuse was that they opposed the war. “Neither working nor farmers,” complained the National Civic Federation, an organization of conservative businessmen and high politicians (and, as its first vice-president, the indubitable Samuel Gompers), took “any part or interest in the efforts of the security or defense leagues or other movements for national preparedness.” Added the conservative Akron Beacon-Journal: The U.S. had “never embarked upon a more unpopular war.” To quash such opposition, the ruling elites and government passed a series of sedition laws which were then used against labor organizers. Under the Espionage Act of 1917, for example, no less than 900 people were jailed simply for criticizing the war, including presidential candidate Eugene Debs, who has stated that “the master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles.”

The Supreme Court unanimously upheld the constitutionality of the Espionage Act on the ground that criticism during emergencies can “create a clear and present danger.” That now-famous justification for repression was written by the Court’s leading liberal, Oliver Wendell Holmes, who, seen from the lower working-class depths rather than from the traditional historian’s lofty station, was nothing but a staunch defender of the “master class.”

The Espionage Act, supposed to apply only during wartime, was then constantly used after the advent of the Korean War because legally the U.S. has been in a “state of emergency” ever since. Indeed, the Kennedy Administration even tried to have it apply to “critical articles...on Diem and his government” in Vietnam. During the McCarthy era, many dissenting or uncooperative labor organizers were jailed on this Espionage Act. But in 1918, after so many were arrested, beaten, and jailed for so little the attorney general could rightfully boast: “It is safe to say that never in its history has this country been so thoroughly policed.”

Few from America’s middle sectors, none from its “master class,” as Debs had put it, ever felt the impact of that police state described by 1918’s top cop. Yet it got manyfold worse after his successor, A. Mitchell Palmer, took over in 1919 (and appointed as his assistant a 24-year-old foreign-hating, racist lawyer named J. Edgar Hoover, who described all radicals as “a gang of cutthroat aliens who have come to this country to overthrow the government by force”)

Encouraged by Palmer and Hoover, mounted police in Chicago, Detroit, Boston, Seattle and New York charged into any large unionist meeting. In Cleveland, army tanks assaulted 20,000 people peacefully gathered to hear dissenting politicians. By early fall 1919, every major newspaper in America demanded severe police action against “the agitators.”
VETERANS: continued

Encouraged by the press, Palmer, who had presidential aspirations, decided to unleash his infamous raids. Choosing November 7, 1919 (in commemoration of the Bolshevik revolution) and January 2, 1920 as the moments to strike, Palmer tried to destroy working class organizing. Thousands were jailed without warrants. Hundreds were deported, including 199 non-political Russians and 39 bakers who had met to plan a cooperative bakery. One U.S. citizen was arrested because, said the Newark police, "he looked like a radical." Another because he asked "what's happening?" Twelve wives and children were arrested because they tried to join their "deportable" husbands; the press reacted with the headline "Reds Storm Ferry Gates to Free Pals." The husbands were deported; the wives and children were not. The American press had never been happier. The New York Times demanded more, more. The Washington Post warned legalists that "there is no time to waste on hairsplitting over infringement of liberty." The Brooklyn Eagle complained that "too many persons in this country are enjoying the right of free speech." In New York State, the Lusk Committee got the Legislature to pass laws barring elected socialists from serving, and the Supreme Court upheld these and the sedition and "Red Flag" laws enacted by 32 states. Under these laws, probably some 10,000 radicals were jailed.

The real reason for the repression, the legal lynchings, and the massive violations of all semblances of democratic fairplay at the base of society was, of course, that the base was becoming more and more agitated because it was worse and worse off. The 1913 dollar, for example, had become the 1920 dollar was wrought even more steel-firm two years later when the Great Crash smashed their already meager hopes for a just better working conditions, but they were often lynched. From 1936 to 1966, no less than 325,000 textile workers throughout the South was fought by armed deputies and strike-breakers, who killed seven and wounded 20. When the strike spread to New England, state troopers toting machine guns arrested thousands, beat hundreds, and murdered another six. Naturally, only strikers were brought to trial. Nor were farmers better off. In 1935, of the 6,800,000 farmers, 2,800,000 were tenants earning an average of $312 a year. And the New Deal did little to curtail racism. On the contrary, not only were black tenant farmers harassed and beaten whenever they individually or collectively demanded better working conditions, but they were often lynched. From 1936 to 1966, no less than 2800 blacks were put to death illegally while no murderer was ever prosecuted.

In March 1935, Harlem exploded. Crammed with 350,000 people, 233 per acre compared to 133 for the rest of Manhattan, rampant with rats, tuberculosis and "slave markets"—hiring points for maids for white households—Harlem had long been seething with discontent. Later that year, a strike of 6,800,000 textile workers - hiring points for maids for white households—Harlem had long been seething with discontent. When it finally blew, 1500 blacks swept through the streets attacking white merchant property, but not people. Seven hundred, cops, however, did not make such distinctions; two blacks were killed, hundreds severely beaten.

As late as Memorial Day 1937, shortly before the last ALB Memorable Day 1937, shortly before the last ALB volunteer left American shores, ten strikers were killed by police at a Republic Steel plant near Chicago. It was very easy to conclude that unbridled capitalism led inevitably to fascism.

continued next page
Indeed, most ALB and MacPap volunteers felt that if they could stop German Nazis, Italian Fascists and Spanish Falangists in Spain, eventually the tide would turn against all the other fascisms, the Austrian, the Romanian, the Portuguese, the South African, the Japanese, and, yes, some day, the American as well.

After all, even the anti-labor New York Times had admitted that Henry Ford was "an industrial fascist—the Mussolini of Detroit." Most socially-minded Americans at the base were genuinely frightened that America was in fact well on its way to fascism.

When the Civil War in Spain did begin in July 1936, many folk, if not already members of the CPUSA, signed up in order to fight. For it was the Communist International, the Comintern (hence the CPUSA in America and the CPC in Canada), which organized the journey to Spain. Between 40 and 60,000 from 53 countries went. Many more would have gone had travel funds and facilities been available. In America in August 1936 alone, some 300,000 applied to the Spanish Embassy in Washington for combat visas. Similar spontaneous reactions occurred in Canada.

Since the U.S. and Canada were officially neutral, the Spanish embassies could not legally recruit. Hence that job was left to the CPUSA and CPC whose funds were extremely limited. Only persistent bureaucrats managed to get to Spain. And, CP functionaries "often discouraged party members from volunteering and argued it was more important to stay at home to work for the Communist Party programs."

The U.S. was neutral only on paper. In fact, while all U.S. and Canadian government agencies, and after a while those of other countries except Russia and Mexico, stopped shipments of foods, arms, ammunition, drugs, and fuel to the established, freely-elected Republican government, no such agency tried to stop aid to the fascists. Rockefeller's Standard Oil (Exxon today), the Vacuum Oil Co., and Texaco provided Franco with all the oil he needed — on credit. Charles Foltz, the AP correspondent in Madrid in 1945, reported that Franco told him: "Without American petrol, American trucks and American credits, we would never have won the war." Herbert Feis, economic adviser to the U.S. Embassy during World War II, wrote that the U.S. supplied Franco with 1,866,000 metric tons of oil and 12,800 trucks from 1936 to 1939 — on credit. All the bombs dropped on Spaniards, Internationals, and of course Americans and Canadians during the Civil War were manufactured in America, mostly by Dupont.

Those who had survived came home proud of their part in the defense of the Republic — and very sad at its defeat. They all hoped to fight fascism again, and as soon as their bodies healed from the numerous wounds suffered in Spain, they desperately tried to get into combat in World War II. But the American and Canadian governments now considered the Spanish vets unreliable, potentially dangerous, subversive, even traitorous, because they had been, as they were actually dubbed, "premature anti-fascists." How most of the vets were kept away from the fronts of the second world war, despite their vast experience and dedication, is documented herein — and shows rather conclusively to what extent officials in both the U.S. and Canada had hoped to fight Russia, not the Axis.

That realization is what kept most of the vets from publicly voicing their disillusionment with their own parties and with the Comintern. And it kept them loyal to their parties. When, in 1945, President Truman launched the loyalty boards and unleashed the Cold War, the vets became firm activists once again. For, contrary to the views of America's traditional historians, and because of their own experiences with their governments, the A.L.B. and MacPap veterans understood that the Cold War was not directed at Russia — and never had been. It was aimed at the non-conformists and dissenters at home, especially in the labor movement.

The veterans understood that the Cold War was not directed at Russia... [but] at the non-conformists and dissenters at home, especially in the labor movement.

Truman, and Eisenhower after him, were not so much interested in wiping out the Russian elite or even its industrial potential. With that, America could come to terms. What they hoped rather to accomplish was to smash all U.S. independent unions, so that some day America would be able to accept without rebellions or even massive protests double-digit unemployment, decertification of recalcitrant unions, rigid racial imbalances, widening gaps between rich and poor, and the proletarianization of the middle class.

But, as the veterans' accounts herein so clearly reveals, this Cold War against America by America (and Canada, which has always followed suit), this destruction of its working class, of its independent intellectuals, of those functionaries and officials who tried to hold on to some principles and integrity, could not have succeeded without the help of Soviet Russia. No Subversive Activities Control Board, no HUAC, no Smith or Taft-Hartley or McCarran acts could crush the spirit of America's genuine anti-fascists. What was also needed was Stalin's Comintern agents, his crimes and executions, and Khrushchev's put down of workers in Berlin, Warsaw, Prague and Budapest while denouncing the very Stalinist code under which he acted. That and not the repressions at home made the vets abandon the Communist Party.

The American contingent, for all its gripes, disillusionments, and bitter inner feuds, remained amazingly close and cohesive. During the McCarthy period, 60 percent of those accused of being communists or fellow travellers in Hollywood immediately cooperated with the government. In the labor world, 40 percent fingered unionists turned against their comrades. But of the 23000 U.S. and Canadian survivors of the Spanish Civil War, all of whom were accused of disloyalty and over 2000 of whom were harassed by the FBI, exactly eleven cooperated with the witch-hunters.
Most of the veterans of the Spanish Civil War remain undaunted. At 65 or 70 or even 80, they still march against U.S. wars and U.S. invasions, they still organize against nuclear outrages and industrial wastes, they still denounce the greed and corruption of America's and Canada's ruling class and their allies in government. And, of course, they still see their greatest triumph to have been when they fought and risked their lives on strange, foreign soil in solidarity with workers and peasants with whom most could not even communicate.

But they are rapidly becoming extinct.

That will be a great loss. For they, more than all the American and Canadian super-patriots described by the historians-from-above, truly represented the best of America's and Canada's soul.

Born in Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York, in 1915, of Russian-Lithuanian parents, Abe Osheroff had very little contact at first with socialist or radical ideas. But his father, a confirmed trade union activist did take an active part in demonstrations against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. "I was 12 years old when I attended my first political demonstration. I remember it very clearly. It was on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti. I found it difficult to understand why we should be fighting against Italian kids like crazy all the time in my neighborhood. The Italian neighborhood began on the other side of the street and we were always at each other's throats. But since they were poor, too, eventually I learned that they were not the real enemy.

"It was then, I was 15 or 16, that I began to learn who was. I was pretty heavily engaged in some street struggles, which were no longer abstract. I belonged, with a whole bunch of people from the neighborhood, to a thing called 'The Brownsville Athletic and Cultural Club.' We lifted weights and listened to classical music, but we also had squads whose jobs was to put people back in their houses when they were evicted, by force if necessary. We would do that with such repetition that landlords often grew weary and just stopped putting people out, because it cost them $7 or $8 to put them on the sidewalk and we would hustle the stuff right back. I got busted at 16 for that kind of activity. I spent a couple of days in jail that first time, but I remember it very well because the police beat the shit out of me. And of course, after I got arrested a few more times I was branded a communist so loudly and so often that I decided I'd better find out what being a communist was. So, by the time I was 17, I joined the YCL, the Young Communist League, because it was committed primarily, at that time, as far as I knew, to always fighting evictions of poor people."

Milt Felsen's family came from Romania and Russia. His father had settled down on a little farm near Kingston, N.Y., in 1907, where Milt was born in 1912. Because his father couldn't quite make a living off the farm, Milt was raised by his mother while his father went down to Bedford Stuyvesant to get a job. From there he was only able to go to his family on weekends.

In the mid-twenties, a man living in a nearby house fascinated Milt Felsen. This man was Joe Friedman, the editor of The New Masses. Milt spent hours quietly listening to the conversations that took place there. "My father was not political, although he was anti-religious and felt that religion caused most of the suffering and bloodshed in the history of the world. He was an avid reader of Ralph Ingersoll, but by and large, that was all. He worked for the Singer Sewing Machine company, for about 28 years. In 1931 they dumped him unceremoniously without a word's notice, and somehow he managed to think it was his fault. He blamed himself because he had worshipped the company. The fact that there were millions who were unemployed by then did not seem to mean anything to him. He never got another job; he deteriorated, feeling himself a victim, and ended up on the dung hill of unemployment.

"My mother raised us two boys and my sister, but we all helped by working on the farms or in hotels while we went to school. I started working when I was ten years old and kept right on going until the depression and my graduating from high school in 1930 meant that I could leave. That's when I started bumming around the world in search of a decent job, or after a rumor of such a job."

AFTER Al Prago graduated from college in 1934, the only job he was able to get was jerking sodas in Liggett's Drug Store. Then in 1935 he got a job with a WPA project as a teacher.

"I discovered my way of life. I was a teacher. I loved it. I taught social sciences and it was going pretty good. I was active in my union, and gradually I became active in the Communist Party. I did a lot of reading and although I was certainly very naive to think that the revolution was possible in the United States, I'd certainly thought it ought to take place, and I remember being very impressed by William Foster writing a book about Soviet America. I think I myself marched in various demonstrations with a slogan, 'For Soviet America.' Aside from the stupidity of it, it certainly
shows what a superficial elementary understanding I had of America's political and economic scene. But, that's now, in hindsight, we can say that. At that time, I was certainly very committed.

"My family was not happy at all. They knew that I was in the party. They tolerated it because, well, I was their son and after all I lived alone. I lived in a small furnished room on the upper west side of Manhattan. My mother died back in 1925 and shortly before I went to Spain, my father died. After that, family was simply two sisters and my brother, and I had very little contact with them.

"Anyway, I didn't tell my family, only good friends, that I wanted to go to Spain, that I thought I should go.

"I certainly did not think it was wrong to go. I had read a great deal about Hitler and Mussolini and I agreed with the party's analysis that fascism had to be stopped in Spain, and that if it were stopped in Spain it might prevent a second world war. I also knew about the anti-Semitism of Hitler in Germany. But I did not go as a Jew fighting back. I was not conscious of being a Jew at the time, and I behaved more as a political animal than as an anti-anti-Semite. After all, we Jews who were members of the party were assimilators. That was the party position. There was a big Jewish movement within the Communist Party: there was a Yiddish section, the Freiheit movement, the Jewish fraternal order, Communist cells in the synagogues, etc. It was not discouraged to be conscientiously and consciously Jewish. On the contrary. But on the other hand, my whole generation was encouraged, and this was the official policy of the party, to assimilate. The Communist Party made the point that we were exploited because we were poor and powerless, as a class. Remember Mike Gold's Jews Without Money, one of the greatest novel-histories ever written? The solution to the exploitation of Jews is a revolution, in that book, not the union of all Jews and certainly not the creation of a Jewish homeland.

"Part of me still believes that: the solution is not the creation of another nation, Israel, which then behaves like any other nation. The solution is to destroy anti-Semitism, and the way of destroying anti-Semitism is by destroying the kind of inequality and arrogance and oppression and repression that exists in the world based on the exploitation of man by man. But the assimilationist emphasis of the party was also wrong, because it would have been the same, if you think about it, as telling blacks that they are not black, not to behave as blacks. After all, we Jews may have been atheists, but we were Jews and were being identified as Jews by the rest of the world whether we went to schule or not. So, as far as Spain is concerned, it was not because of my hatred of the anti-Semitism of the fascists that I went to Spain, but because of my hatred of fascists, ideologically speaking.

By 1935, George Watt was working full time for the National Student League. He had been admitted to Cooper Union School of Engineering and had to work at the same time in his father's small shop. He couldn't keep up. So he quit school and just worked in the student organization, which, though dominated by communists, was open to various organizations including the YMCA and the Methodists.

"What had radicalized me the most had been the way labor was being treated in America during the depression. I was drawn closer to communists by their militant action and by some of the violent struggles taking place in the labor movement. Harlan, Kentucky, was a great influence on me. We had student delegations there and we were sending truckloads of food in support of the Kentucky strikers in 1931. And I remember that the argument made by party leaders against socialists was that 'Look at what's happening in Harlan. All the miners are asking for is a few pennies and they are being slaughtered. They are being shot down. How can you expect to change the whole system without violence?'

"When the Spanish Civil War broke out, we all became fascinated and watched the events there very carefully. When we got the first news that there were international brigades in the defense of Madrid, in November I think, most of us felt that we wished we had been part of that defense. I was then asked by an organizer of the YCL to organize a brigade of students. Well it was very easy. I just let it be known that I was organizing and I had 25 students processed very, very quickly. As for me, I felt if I was recruiting other young people, I had no right to stay behind. So I kept pressing the New York leadership of the Young Communist League to let me go. They kept turning me down. But I kept arguing, and finally they gave me the okay. I left on July 24th. Joseph Lash went with me. He was the socialist leader whom I had worked with in the National Student League and then in the American Student Union, but his party called him back before he actually got to the front.

A Prago came back from Spain with gnawing, ambivalent feelings about his role in Spain, as well as about the party that had sent him there. Not that he looks back now and regrets having fought in Spain. That he does not, "absolutely not." But in 1939 he had great misgivings about the leadership of both the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Communist Party. Yet he did nothing about either one. "I guess what bothered me most was the lack of democracy within the people's army. I mean, don't get me wrong, by and large it was highly egalitarian. It was certainly far, far superior in that respect to any professional army, certainly to the army of the United States. But my expectations were higher. I expected to see a totally egalitarian army, and I was disturbed by the lack of democracy in some cases of promotion, where top commissars would appoint their deputies or commanders would appoint their field representatives and so on, rather than leaving it up to the men to choose their own commissars and their own commanders. I was also upset by the arrogance of some of the commissars.

"And the role of the Communist Party upset me also. The party structure, which was based on the Bolshevik model of democratic centralism, which may have been fine for the Russians, I don't know, was not good for us. It was centralist and not democratic. And yet I didn't question the structure
VETERANS: continued

in Spain and I didn’t question the structure in the U.S. party either. I remained in it until 1956. There was a moment, at the signing of the Russo-German pact, when I was shocked. But when I examined it carefully, I might add, blindly but I thought carefully and reasonably, I decided that it was Stalin’s way of gaining time because the so-called democracies were trying to push Hitler into attacking the Soviet Union. And that was true. But two points have to be made. I kind of made them then, but I passed them off. One was that, after all, Stalin did not gain a nickel’s worth of time during the period of the pact, and secondly, that even though the pact may have been a correct tactic for Stalin, why did that mean that communist parties all over the world had to support Stalin one hundred percent. I mean the communists were being executed wherever the Nazis were in power and yet, in respect of the Russo-German pact, the parties in those same countries were stopped from opposing Hitler.

“Things these bothered me but I didn’t quit the party. I remember being upset by the fact that during the Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia, of the fourteen charged with Trotskyism, cosmopolitanism and traitorism, or whatever, eleven were Jews; eleven out of fourteen (not the same) were veterans of the Spanish Civil War, and eleven again, though not exactly the same, were executed. These things bothered me. I guess I began to wonder just what sent me to Spain. I know at the time that I went because I was anti-fascist and social-minded and not because I was Jewish, not because Jews were being exterminated by Hitler and that this was a way of standing up for my Jewishness. But was that the real reason? And if so, how come 30% of Americans who fought in Spain were Jewish?

“When I think about it, I think the reason so many Jews fought in Spain is because Jews had not only been exploited and repressed all over the world, but also had traveled, they were much more cosmopolitan and international. The blacks who went to Spain, I think, also went out of anti-fascism in general and not because fascism was racist. But blacks, more repressed, had travelled less, were less cosmopolitan, less international, which explains why, though one out of nine Americans is black, only one out of forty-five of Abraham Lincoln volunteers was black. The blacks went out of anti-Nazism and anti-fascism, even though they too could have been wooed by the fact that the Republican army represented the first case of an egalitarian army, the first incident of a totally and fully integrated army.

“The statistics are incredible. Of the whole International Brigades, it is now estimated that 16 percent were Jews. This is a fantastic percentage, and as I say, although most of us thought then that we went out of pure anti-fascism and anti-repressiveness and because of our social conscience, obviously these figures were so high because we must have been conscious of being Jews. The fact that we did not uphold that identity, proclaim it so to speak, began to bother me when I got back.

When W.W. II broke out, Abe Osheroff volunteered for the infantry. “The lieutenant thought I was mad. He asked me why. I said ‘Be-
tears in his eyes, 'Don't ask me, I can't talk, I can't say.' So I went to my Central Committee and asked them to find out for me. Instead, they brought me up on charges, accused me of being anti-Soviet. I didn't learn until a couple of years later that my two Yiddish writer friends had been executed.

"I asked the editor of the Freiheit... who was going to Moscow to investigate [what had become of two Soviet Yiddish writers I had met in New York]. When he came back he kept saying, with tears in his eyes, 'Don't ask me. I can't talk. I can't say.'"

"Actually, the Khrushchev report I could have dealt with. I saw it as part of that self-correcting notion that I had. But the Hungarian invasion, there was no excuse for that and I just couldn't fit it in. I suddenly realized that if I had been a Hungarian communist, I would have been fighting the red army. There were those who said that it was the Hungarian fascists who were out in the streets. Was all of Hungary fascist? Judging from Russian newsreels, there was an awful lot of Hungarian workers rioting against the red army; were they all fascists? Sure some were. Sure the CIA was in there trying to provoke a counter-revolution. But you could see that the rebellion was a mass phenomenon, and if it were true that the mass had become fascist, then the blame had to be born by the communist apparatus.

We had a big convention in 1956-57, in which the struggle came out into the open. On one side was Foster who wanted to maintain the traditional way—Soviet Russia as the center of world communism. Opposed to that was what had become known as the Johnny Gates group. In between were those who supported a sort of compromise offered by Eugene Dennis. These were old leaders. They had all gone to jail under the Smith Act. I identified with the Gates group which said that we needed a Communist Party that advocated democratic socialism. But there weren't many democrats in the group and it eventually dispersed.

"I left the national convention and the Communist Party, but not before I explained why.

"I left New York and went to California. Went to work as a carpenter and didn't do much politically. I felt like a displaced person until the 1960s, when I became involved in the civil rights movement, first locally by raising funds in support of the kids who were working in the south, then by going down myself. I spent the year of 1964 in Holmes County, Mississippi, building a community center and helping with voter registration. It was a solid black-belt town. The nearest white was seven miles away. And it was a marvelous experience for me.

"When I returned to Venice, California, I got very heavily involved in Los Angeles politics. Venice had become the scene of a real estate development where tens of millions of dollars were going in to try to turn it into a rich man's resort, taking out all the poor white folk that lived there. I helped fight that scam. In 1970, quite by chance and for emotional reasons only, I returned to Spain. I went through the areas of the Spanish Civil War where I had been. I even asked a fisherman to row me out to where I had been torpedoed and swam back to shore from there. It was a weird experience. I walked and crawled through the places I'd been, visited every battle site. When I came to Belchite, I had what you might almost call a religious experience. I stood there and I could hear the fighting, I could see the fighting, I was just overwhelmed. I then decided to make a film about my experiences.

"Dreams and Nightmares was finished and released in 1974. It has been successful beyond my wildest dreams. It has been shown all over the world, in universities everywhere in this country and in France, Japan, and even the Soviet Union."

Irvng Goff, who went into the O.S.S. with Milt Felsen, didn't know him very well in Spain. "In fact, I really got to know him after the Spanish Civil War when he and his wife Roberta, Jerry Cook, another vet from the Spanish Civil War and his wife Anne, and my wife Sophie and I all shared an apartment in New York before the second World War. I was unemployed, looking for a job. Then the World's Fair took place and there was a giant Soviet pavilion, where there had been bomb threats, so a lot of the Spanish vets were hired as security. Milt Wolff was there and Billy Aalto. I don't think I knew him, but anyway, it paid a very good salary, in fact exorbitant compared to the salaries of the day. But that didn't last long, six months about, then I went on a speaking tour for the Brigade.

"The next thing I know is that Milt Wolff was called in by General Donovan who wanted to set up a sort of intelligence operation to help British intelligence. It was called something like British Special Operation. Billy Aalto ended up there and Mike Jimenez, a Spaniard born in America who had fought in Spain, and Felsen was called in, and Lossowski, and we were all supposed to go to Alexandria, Egypt, when Pearl Harbor got bombed. So instead of collaborating with the British, Donovan set up his own operation which was, of course, O.S.S., the Office of Strategic Services.

"Originally we were supposed to be I&E, Information and Education, which was based on a book researched at Yale University, which documented that if you know what you're fighting for, you make a better soldier. We were supposed to be set up as instructors for that, in other words as propagandists. Well, what it amounted to really was commissarship—I mean the United States Army was going to use this I&E, different names of course, to set up commissars to teach soldiers what they were fighting for in the second world war. This was based on this Yale report which showed that in Spain, 97 percent of the soldiers fought as bravely as they did because they knew what they were fighting for and they were constantly reminded of this by their political commissar.

"But soon we became a sort of underground operation,
based on the fear that Franco was going to allow the Ger­
mans to seize Gibraltar. That’s what we were meant to try to
stop — by going into Spain and setting up an underground.
But the American ambassador raised such a stink that it
never took place. I was supposed to actually go in as a chauf­
feur for him, so that I could be flexible and move around
everywhere, make contact with the Spanish underground,
which was part of the Spanish Communist Party, many of
whose leaders I had known.

“Well, the ambassador would have nothing of it, so that
part of the operation never took place, and instead we were
used first for the African landing, then for the invasion of
Sicily. Of course, we knew that we were expendable. Milt Fel­
sen, I remember, used to remind me of that all the time, and
we fought down the line with our eyes open. And it was this
kind of expendability that got Felsen captured and all of us
almost killed. But, at the same time, I must say, Donovan
liked us; he was good to us. For one thing, he made us all sec­
ond lieutenants, giving us field promotions. And I liked what
we were doing. I went behind the lines five different times, in
Africa and Italy, and did some really crucial stuff, though of­
course we have never gotten promoted, except by Donovan.
Those guys, who were part of our outfit but never went be­
hind the lines, got to be made captains.

...the order was that no... left-winger... could become an officer.

“Of course, we were always suspect. There was always
some guy checking up on us. I know the guy that was writing
on me. Every day he had to write a report on me. And not
only on me, but on Lossowski and Jimenez, all the guys who
had fought in Spain. They used to keep tabs on those they
thought were fascists as well, I must say, since there were a
couple of Ku Klux Klanners there. For a long time the order
was that no communist or fellow-traveler, no left-winger in
general, could become an officer. But Donovan personally
lifted that order. I had an excellent relationship with him all
along. And after the Africa bit, when we were sent into Italy,
I went in with Donovan at Salerno.

Anyway, I set up a relationship with the Communist
Party in Naples. This helped us a great deal to
set up general operations behind the lines and
facilitated our seizure of Naples. It was through the Com­
munist Party that I learned that the union and party struc­
ture that ran the railroads under Mussolini had never been
infiltrated and was solid anti-fascist. We used that network
to our military advantage.

“Of course, most of the relationships usually got strained
because the American mentality was that it didn’t matter
how many Italian lives were lost, if one American life could
be saved. One officer actually told me that. I had him re­
moved, even though he was a colonel and I was a second lieu­
tenant, because with officers like that, the anti-fascist
Italians up north would not cooperate with us. After all,
there were 300,000 guerrillas fighting in northern Italy. And
they were perfectly willing to work for us if we played fair.
Anyway, Lossowski and I were put in command of this oper­
ation, and we went up north and we gave some training and
maintained a liaison that was very good. I actually took 44 of
our people across at various times to work in back of the
lines and make contact with the guerrillas. All but one got
back safely and that one, who was captured and tortured,
ever talked.

“Donovan, of course, knew I was dealing with commu­
nists. He asked me about it one day and I simply said, ‘Look.
The Italian communists are interested in winning the war,
we’re interested in winning the war. Isn’t that enough for
collaboration?’ He said, ‘Absolutely. Keep right on going.’
And so successful were the partisans in their relationship
with us that I could get all sorts of advantages and requests.
For example, I knew that Milt Wolff was being wasted and
so I asked that he be transferred to us and, all of a sudden, six
months later — actually I had forgotten all about it— there
he walks in, and says, ‘How the hell did I get here?’ Of course
he was very pleased. And I was very pleased to have him
there.

Anyway we were very successful in relating to
the partisans, who, after all, liber­
at ed all of
northern Italy and made life extremely easy
for us in our sweep up north, proving that Donovan’s tactic
of working with the partisans and with the communist party
in Italy ultimately did pay off very concre­
tely in saving an
awful lot of American lives. When the European theater was
coming to a close, I decided that it would be good to go into
China to do the same thing there. I wrote up a mission, where
we would be parachuted into northern China to set up
intelligence, sabotage and operations behind the Japanese
lines. It was accepted by Donovan.

“But then we got into trouble. There was some fascist big­
oted racist senator from Mississippi, I think it was Bilbo,
who started complaining that communists had become offi­
cers. So while we were literally on the way to China, going
across the United States for take-off points in San Fran­
cisco, the whole operation came to a standstill. The press had
picked up on the fact that I was an officer, that Milt Wolff
was an officer, that Lossowski was an officer, and so on. I
still thought that the operation was going to go, but then
Donovan called me back to Washington and in a very
friendly manner told me, ‘Irv, I’ve got a requisition for twenty
million dollars in Congress to carry the O.S.S. opera­
tion, and it’s being jeopardized right now because of these
asshole senators who think that you’re not patriotic. Of
course they never did a thing to defend this country in their
continued next page
lives. Nevertheless, they've got some fantastic influence in Congress. You guys did a fantastic job. I can testify to your patriotism, but I need my appropriation, and in order to get it, I'm afraid I have to let go of the known communists in my operation."

"And that was it. Things had already been changing everywhere. In Italy, for example, known Nazis, who had even tortured and executed American and British soldiers, were being released. The British were literally letting the Nazi SS people out of jail. I told Togliatti, who was head of the Communist Party in Rome at the time and with whom I had been in fairly close contact, that this was going to happen, and so from then on the partisans rounded up these Italian and German Nazis, and executed them. That's also why they decided to execute Mussolini and not risk turning him over to the allies as had been requested, because most probably, the allies, the Americans and British, would have freed Mussolini. I think that the partisans were correct in their estimation, because by then already the allies were thinking of using Nazis to stop communism. The prime American concern, by then, had become the communists rather than the Nazis.

"In Italy...known Nazi [torturers] were being released...The prime American concern had become the Communists rather than the Nazis."

In all of this fortified my communist zeal and after the war I became a full time worker for the Communist Party. Meanwhile, the party in the United States was in trouble. It had been officially dissolved by Earl Browder who had reorganized the Communist Party, and I got sent to organize New Orleans in 1947. That was kind of rough. I was there for about a year. There was no party down there, so it had to be totally reconstituted.

"It's funny, you know, I went through two wars and never got wounded, but in the south I got wounded badly many times. I got kicked around, I got beaten up, I got roughed up real bad. At one point, I was grabbed by some right wing goons and given such a sound going over that I couldn't walk for weeks. And there were all sorts of inner battles, as well. One of our organizers got shot in his car. One of the problems, of course, was that we had elected blacks for local leadership. That made us cross the racist contingent within the unions, and their goons would then beat up our organizers.

"I left the south late in 1950 and was told to be prepared to go underground. Indeed, when the Smith Act arrests started, I went underground. The party had decided that fascism was coming to America and that the communist leadership was going to be jailed—and in fact, before the Smith Act trials stopped, more than 120 communist cadre were in jail. They wanted to outlaw the party because they had a perspective of world conquest with the atomic bomb. They wanted to use the atomic bomb—'they,' meaning the American superstructure—as blackmail to dominate the world, to achieve certain military objectives and to eliminate opposition. And of course, they wanted to eliminate opposition in the rear, understandably enough. The party decided to fight with two central committees, one underground and one overground, which was arrested.

"But this was a mistake, because it created a conflict within the party. The overwhelming majority of the party was out in the open, trying with difficulty to understand whose orders to follow. I think, to a certain extent, that we were duped. I took tremendous precautions: I changed apartments every three months for about four years; I had met my wife under very guarded conditions maybe once every six months; I lived constantly under assumed names. But now it turns out that the FBI had eighteen thousand agents within the party, watching us, very possibly knowing at all times exactly where I was, where we all were, doing exactly what they wanted, namely keeping us underground so as to render the party ineffective.

"The party decided to surface, to abandon the underground, in 1955. By 1956, we were all out in the open again. The hysteria had somewhat died down, the Korean War was over.

We came out of the underground but I never really recuperated from it. My wife, for example, was so disgusted by the kind of existence that I had to lead that she left both me and the party. And, of course, added to that was the consequence of the Twentieth Congress. It affected me, too. I did a lot of thinking and I decided I would judge the de-Stalinization speech by Khrushchev as a class question, according to principles of class. Sure, there had been tremendous errors by the Soviet Union. The foreign policy of the Soviet Union was consistent with some of these internal errors. But, in the

"While Stalin did, in many ways, objectively help capitalism by discrediting the policies of the Soviet Union, nevertheless, there was no class-confrontational system other than socialism, and without it imperialism would go unchallenged...everywhere."
Milt Felsen, a University of Iowa student who had gone to Spain, returned to the University in 1939. "I had been a senior before I left and so I had only one semester to finish. Everybody on campus knew who I was so it was easy for me to start and build up some kind of progressive group, and I had a lot of fun. But when I graduated, I was blacklisted as far as teaching was concerned. I didn't have a chance of getting a job in the area. So I came to New York and started driving a truck. And I drove that truck until I went into the second world war."

"Meanwhile the Communist Party, of which I was still a member, thought that people who fought in Spain would make good guards for their leaders. So they assigned a couple of us to guard Browder and other top men. Browder had weird ideas, but Foster was the dullest man in the world. And that's who I was supposed to protect. But I learned a lot. I did not let the Russo-German pact affect me too much, since, as far as I was concerned then, Russia could do no wrong. Also I had become very suspicious of the policy of the United States, France, and England.

"After Pearl Harbor, something did happen to shake me up a bit about the party for the first time. There was a party plenum, a huge meeting, which was discussing everything, and everybody was there. I remember that people thought that I was a big shot because I went around and whispered something to all the leaders and they whispered something back to me. What they were whispering was 'ham on rye,' or 'bagel and lox' because I was only taking the orders for sandwiches. So, I went downstairs to get the sandwiches and got a glimpse of the papers which had come out with extras: Pearl Harbor had been bombed! I grabbed the papers and rushed back into the plenum. I was absolutely convinced that everything had changed, that this was going to radically alter all CP plans and programs."

"Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was making a speech, so I had to wait for an opportunity to go up on the stage. That wasn't easy. Some of those speeches could last five or six hours when the leaders were warmed up. But there was a slight break and I rushed up and showed the papers to the people on stage. Nothing changed. Everything continued exactly as it had been planned. The speeches had been prepared and nothing was going to change them. I could understand, in a way, that someone who had worked for six months or so to prepare some report was reluctant to suddenly change the whole trend of his or her reasoning in the middle of his or her point. But still, it was an incredible shock for me to see that no one called the meeting off, that no one said 'Let's get back two weeks from today, let's consider the new situation.' No. They had this meeting in gear; they were going to keep it running."

But shortly after that, I was called to Washington by O.S.S. I was told that a new outfit was going to be created. And then I met Irving Goff and a little bit later Vince Lossowski and, of course, the chief of our unit, that crazy man, Donald Downs. As discussion about our new unit continued, as our functions were defined, as more vets and communists were recruited, I real-ized that we would end up in the very, very thick of it because we were considered expendables. In fact, if we did die during our duty, all the better. That's why they chose so many reds in O.S.S.

"Our training base was called Shangri-La. Today it is known as Camp David. My unit included Billy Aalto, as well as Irving Goff and others. Billy and Goff had been guerrilla fighters in Spain. They had done a fantastic job. They had faced death many times. They had been caught behind the lines and had to swim the Mediterranean to escape. They were unbelievable soldiers. Hemingway had based Robert Jordan in For Whom the Bell Tolls on Goff. One day, Goff came to me and he said 'We've got a problem. Billy Aalto's cruising around picking up sailors in downtown Washington.' So we got together with Vince Lossowski, who was also there, and discussed it and decided that we had to turn Aalto in. To our everlasting shame! We felt that he might jeopardize the unit."

"Donovan did not handle it badly. He told Billy that he was a terrific guy, that everybody thought extremely well of him that he could choose any non-combat outfit he wanted, and made him an instructor to a group of recruits. It was there, in fact, during instruction, one day, that one of the recruits froze with a pin pulled out of a hand grenade; he just couldn't get rid of it. Aalto grabbed the hand grenade out of his hand but it exploded before he could get rid of it, and it blew his hand off. He was decorated for this and was discharged from the army. He later committed suicide."

"Neither Irv nor I, nor Vince, nor any of the other people there, ever discussed this anymore. We felt at the time that we had no alternative, that we would jeopardize the whole unit if we did not reveal this information to our superiors. But it was a terrible thing to do and we've all regretted it ever since."

Our training was just ridiculous. Although in a way, perhaps, it was effective. At one point for example, Downs told Irv, Vince and me to put on German officer uniforms, complete in every detail, swastikas and everything, and go marching through downtown Washington. The rest of the outfit was following behind ready to explain things if we got into trouble. Not only didn't we get into trouble— we got saluted. Every soldier, every officer saluted us. Even the policemen in the streets saluted us. It was getting so bad that we decided to start making believe that we really were Germans by putting on a thick German accent. That didn't change anything. So we started asking 'Where's the defense plant? Where's the telephone company?' People not only saluted but gave us correct answers."

"[In O.S.S. training] we put on German officers' uniforms and marched through downtown Washington... We started asking, 'Where's the defense plant? Where's the telephone company?' People not only saluted, but gave us correct answers!"
“Next thing we had to do in our training was parachute jump. Well, the way they figured it, we were certainly not going to jump in the daytime, so we better jump at night. Of course, we weren’t going to jump from very high either, so we better jump from very low. And of course, we weren’t going to jump into an open field, so we better jump into some bushes. That’s what they made us do — without any training whatsoever, we jumped from 2000 feet into some wooded area, accompanied by a doctor because they figured that we would get hurt. Well, the doctor broke his leg, Jimenez sprained his ankle, and the rest of us got knocked out.

“As to learning how to be an intelligence agent, nobody had any ideas. So they decided to show us some spy movies to get some hints. That’s what we did: looked at scores of Hollywood movies from which we were supposed to learn how to behave as an agent behind the lines. We also almost got killed various times trying to ride this huge German motorcycle because they said that if we ever got caught behind the lines we might have to drive such vehicles to escape.

“He later became a general mainly because he looked like a general. A football player from Seattle, he was six foot two, blond, handsome and looked like Gary Cooper. What else do you do with a guy like that except make him a general?”

“Well, eventually we got to Oran. Our job was to go and free some 300 or so Spanish Republicans who had escaped to Africa rather than stay behind under Franco and whom the French had interned in camps and put to work building the trans-Sahara railroad. The conditions they were living in were certainly like concentration camps. Our job was to free them, which was relatively easy, and then group them into underground units and submarine them into Spain so that, if Franco decided to let the Germans go through his country to attack our flank after we made the African landing, these people would be ready to sabotage the way. But one of the guys that was brought into Spain on the submarine with these Spanish Republicans was a British officer who was a double agent. Tipped off, Franco raised such a fantastic stink to Roosevelt that Donovan stopped us from operating in Spain.

“But before we were to leave for Italy, we were asked to carry out a ridiculous operation for a colonel by the name of Sage who wanted to get some experience behind enemy lines, and he gave us orders to blow up something. Sage was a nice guy. He later became a general, because, mainly, he looked like a general. A football player from Seattle, he was six foot two, blond, handsome, looked like Gary Cooper. What else do you do with a guy like that except make him a general? But he was pleasant enough, except that he absolutely insisted that Vince and Irv and I organize a sortie behind the lines. There was also this British soldier along, part of Sage’s outfit, and when this guy saw a German standing on top of a Jeep, he just couldn’t resist; he had never shot at the enemy, and so he did, there and then, and he hit him. Well, we happened at that point to be in the very midst of the 16th Panzer Division, one of Rommel’s finest. And of course they immediately started circling in, and bullets started wheezing every which way, and I got hit.

“The bullet grazed my eye and went out the back of my ear. But the ear has an incredible supply of blood and can bleed like a son-of-a-bitch. The bullet spun me around and I fell down. Goff crawled over to me and said ‘Don’t worry, I’ll take care of you,’ and bandaged up the ear very effectively. Then we started running but at that point I became like honey to a patch of bees. Bullets were flying all over me, all around me, until I realized too late that what the Germans were zeroing in on were my white bandages. That was the only thing that they could see in the dark. I got hit again, badly. I couldn’t move anymore.

“I was taken with 800 British soldiers to a prison hospital in Bologna, where I was held for about six months, and then put in a ward with New Zealanders and Australians who were very rough. The prison was a religious school that had been converted and we had 25 nuns, acting as nurses, taking care of us. Everybody was very badly wounded, but everybody was always in a fantastic mood. What happened was that the nuns had asked how to say good morning in English, and the soldiers had explained that you say ‘Fuck you.’ They introduced themselves as Ace, King, Queen, and so on, so every morning, the nuns would come in and say ‘Fuck you ace, king, queen. Fuck you, Jack.’ Everybody would then burst out laughing, and be in a good mood for the rest of the day.

“Shortly thereafter, the Italian front collapsed and the Italians surrendered. We were trying to pull ourselves together in order to get the hell out of this prison camp, which was now abandoned by the Italians guarding us, when we heard an announcement saying there are crazy people out there taking shots. The announcement said, ‘If you are prisoners, stay put; we will come and get you. We know where every prisoner is, don’t move, we’re coming, if you leave the hospital, if you leave your prison, you’re going to get slaughtered out there because you become fair game for all the marauders.’ Well, we were going to ignore the announcement, but the British general in charge said, ‘No,’ and he gave the order to some of his men who had picked up the arms abandoned by the Italians to stop us, physically if necessary. So we didn’t leave and the next day, the Germans showed up — it had been a phony broadcast and we were all German prisoners of war. The general, eventually, committed suicide.

“There were a lot of things about being a prisoner that I had thought about and that I think have not been dealt with, either in fiction or in the movies or even in biographical books. You know it always appears as if somebody is digging a fucking hole trying to escape. That’s not at all the way prisoners spend time. They did very little digging — there was no point. You’re in the middle of Germany, so even if you do escape, where do you go? continued next page
When I got back to the States, I had long talks with Donovan and suggested he set up some kind of class for the units that were going to be parachuted behind the lines in China and Japan. But while the discussions with Donovan were easy, they were also somewhat troubling. I understand that he considered us expendable. He wanted to win the war, and he was ready to use anybody for that purpose. He was a Wall Street lawyer, with the reputation of being a fighter. But at the same time he had certain admiration for his guys. He felt that we had done something that we believed in, and we had done it well. That's why he wanted veterans of the Spanish Civil War. Also, he knew that we had a lot more military experience than anybody else. We had recently fought Italians and Germans, we knew their equipment, we knew their tactics, and of course we had been in the War. But while the discussions with Donovan were easy, the same time he had certain admiration for his guys. He felt that we had done something that we believed in, and we had done it well. That's why he wanted veterans of the Spanish Civil War. Also, he knew that we had a lot more military experience than anybody else. We had recently fought Italians and Germans, we knew their equipment, we knew their tactics, and of course we had been in the War.

"Still, we knew that he was perfectly willing to sacrifice us, so that we were always looking—I was, anyway—behind our shoulder somewhere. And because of our background, we didn't get the kind of credit that we should have. There's no question that Irving Goff and Vince Lossowski should not only have gotten the kind of commendations that they got, but they should have come out generals, considering what they did. Had it been anybody else, they would have. The political consideration was always there. I remember being present during a discussion in Washington where, besides Donovan, there were also some other generals including Beetle Smith. They were discussing the ammunition and supplies that they were going to drop to the French underground and were worried about it. They said they shouldn't drop too much, because although they wanted the French underground to help significantly, at the same time, they didn't want them to take over because they were all left-wingers. In Yugoslavia, too, they helped both sides, Tito and his partisans, and Mihailovic and his Chetniks who ended up being fascists.

"[In China] the communist forces were doing most of the fighting while [the] nationalists were simply accumulating the arms to attack the reds later."

"The same was true in China, of course. There the communist forces were doing most of the fighting, while Chang Kai Shek's nationalists were simply accumulating the arms to attack the reds later. I was aware of all that. I was aware that I was going to be in a touchy situation in China, which is where I was being sent. But I never got there. The atomic bomb was exploded and the war ended and I got discharged.

"I went to work for the CIO. I was chief of publicity for the CIO Council, and it was in that capacity that I had a chance to see Donovan again. There was a Senate committee in Albany which was discussing the question of bonuses. Its counsel was General Donovan. Everybody wanted to speak, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, organizations like that which never dared bring up political questions. They knew that the committee was being run by Feinberg, the same Feinberg of the infamous 'Feinberg law' that passed terribly repressive legislation against teachers, outlawing their right to strike. This real ultra-rightist son of a bitch would, of course, give the floor to representatives of right wing organizations. Suddenly, Donovan saw me and Irving. He waved at us, motioned us to come up and asked us what we were speaking for I said, 'CIO,' and Irv, 'the Communist Party.' So he puts us on the list and told Feinberg that there were a couple of his boys who wanted to speak. Sure enough, I get called to speak next.

"Well, I made a fairly restrained speech. Nevertheless, the committee's eyebrows got raised. But the next speaker was Irving and he went all the way. With an impassioned voice, he started out by saying 'I represent the New York State Communist Party veterans, and then launched into an incredibly emotional, and I might say terrific, speech in which he described the world situation, slavery in the South, the history of imperialism, everything, while Feinberg and the audience were absolutely stunned. But no one dared to interrupt; after all, it was Donovan, counsel to the committee and Wall Street lawyer, who had introduced us as 'his boys.' Well, that was Donovan. He had a sense of mischief and he got a big kick out of all that.

"My wife had already been subpoenaed by Nixon's committee—she had been an organizer of the union at Macy's.... She had never joined the party."

"But except for little incidents like that, I didn't enjoy working for C.I.O. public relations. I did my job well, but it was always for somebody else, and for somebody that I didn't quite identify with. So I went over to the electrical workers, to U.E., where I ended up staying as an organizer for a number of years. I handled the Westinghouse plant, the anaconda Wire and Cable, the San Antonio Hearing Aid, Otis Elevator, a whole bunch of places. I was good at my job and I really liked what I was doing. But then all left-wing unions started getting raided, and it was decided that UE should merge with IUE in order to avoid being ostracized completely. I did not have to be purged. I had never rejoined the Communist Party after coming back from Spain. Nevertheless, it was thought that I should just take a back seat, as an IUE organizer.

"But I was subpoenaed all the same. My wife had already been subpoenaed by Nixon's committee — she had been an organizer of the union at Macy's, had been fired and reinstated when the union had finally won, and she was subpoenaed even though she had never joined the party. And now I was subpoenaed in, I don't know, 1956, something like that. I decided that it was just as well that I left the IUE and, even though I had nothing to hide, I decided that I would not answer their questions; or, rather, I said I would answer no question prior to February 2, 1955. They jumped on that and said, 'Ah — that's the date you left the party, right?' I said 'No. It's my birthday.' Which kind of broke up the meeting.
“As much as I have always been a workaholic, I think I’ve always ultimately done what I’ve wanted to do. I mean, there were moments when I had to compromise, perhaps, but by and large, whatever were the ulterior motives of people that I associated with, I never felt that I was used. People used to accuse me of having been an agent of the Comintern because it was the Comintern that organized the International in Spain. Well, maybe, but so what? I wasn’t. I was doing what I believed in. I was fighting one of the worst kinds of despotism and reactionary regimes that has ever existed. After that, I tried to fight those same kinds of reactionary despots in the labor movement. I was not a member of the Communist Party, nor anywhere close to it by then. I was part of the losing team in Spain, I was part of the losing team in the labor movement, but I know that I was on the winning side in terms of humanity.”

George Watt, who had been a commissar in Spain, was also almost thrown out of the party prematurely, but survived that crisis and stayed on until much later. “It was the Nazi-Soviet pact that created the disorientation. We had a certain sudden shift of gears that was so fast that I didn’t quite adapt quickly enough.

“After Pearl Harbor the party was more patriotic than anyone else. Some of the guys volunteered immediately. I couldn’t volunteer because I had a wife and a child, but six months later they waived exemptions and I went in. I was assigned to the Army Air Corps, went to mechanic school, then volunteered to fly and became a flight engineer and an aerial machine gunner.

“In the spring of 1943, the army decided to isolate all the people that they labeled ‘premature anti-fascists.’ I was then a member of a flight crew that was getting ready to go overseas. We were in our final bit of training, on B-17s, but I was pulled out at the very last minute and assigned as a carpenter in an airplane factory. I asked Earl Browder, head of the party, to go directly to Eleanor Roosevelt, which he did, and I got orders to go overseas.

“I was quickly retrained with a new crew and went to England to join a bombardier group that flew missions over Germany, France, and Belgium. We were supposed to do twenty-five missions, then go home. I completed six. On my seventh, which was over the Ruhr valley, November 5, 1943, my luck ran out. We called the Ruhr valley happy valley because it was like riding a blanket of anti-aircraft. On that day I had jokingly said that nothing could happen because it was my 30th birthday.

“Which it was. But we got some pretty heavy ackack just the same. And a hit: our belly machine gun was put out of commission. Then the left number one engine was hit and caught fire. The pilot managed to go into a dive to snuff out the fire, which was an oil fire and not gasoline, and continued to navigate the course. But we couldn’t keep up to the formation. We just didn’t have the power. Some of our fighters protected us across Germany, but once we were in Belgium they left us.

“We were flying at 33,000 feet, so the pilot asked for an oxygen check. The tail gunner did not respond. Since I was in the waist gun position and that had also been knocked out, the pilot asked me to check on the tail gunner. I crawled back there and found that he had almost passed out. His oxygen mask was not on. He had been knocked away from his post by some explosion but he was not wounded. I gave him some of my oxygen and he came to, then I pushed him back to where he could reach his own mask, and I took over his gun position.

“I was sent to Officers Candidate school where I did very well. But... instead of getting my commission, I was charged with being a subversive and got discharged.”

“No sooner did I get settled in than a German fighter came up behind us, straight at me. As he came he had me in his sights, I had him in my sights. We both opened up fire simultaneously, but my gun jammed. And as he flew past, he must have hit the front instrument panel, wounding the pilot, because we started going into a nosedive. I looked back for my chest parachute, but I couldn’t find it. When the plane had taken a nosedive all the chutes had slid forward. Luckily, since we had been at very high altitude, when we hit 20,000 feet, the pressure eased. Unlike other planes, B-17s have very wide wings and are therefore slower, with a tendency to take up air speed which would force the plane to level off momentarily before taking its next dive.

“When ours did level off, I felt a tremendous amount of energy unleashed in me and I was able to move quickly. I saw my chest pack, crawled to it, snapped it on, and rushed to the waist door, which I tried to open. But it wouldn’t give. So, as the plane started diving again, I hit it with my shoulder, with all the strength I had, and the next thing I knew I was out. I found myself spinning over and over, going down.

“Suddenly everything was very quiet. The noise of the plane had disappeared. My ears were deaf from the pressure of coming down. I still did not open the chute. I allowed myself to fall for as long as I thought was safe so that enemy fighters could not machinegun me in the air, as was their habit. Finally I went to pull the cord, but there wasn’t any. In the moment of excitement and stress, my earliest indoctrination had come back; I had been trained on chutes that had the D-ring on the left side. I panicked for what seemed to me a hell of a long time before I finally realized that the string was on the other side. I pulled it and out came the little chute which slowly opened up and then pulled out the big chute. Suddenly I was yanked up and floating quietly, serenely towards the land.

“When I landed, I walked over to a man and asked him for directions. But he just grinned; he didn’t understand French, he was Flemish. A whole bunch of people started rushing towards me, but nobody seemed to know which way I should go. Except one man who looked as if he knew. I followed his lead. After awhile everybody else dropped out, and there was... continued next page
The connection between the ideology of the Right — what it says it stands for, and its program (what it really wants to do) — is rarely made as explicit as it is in Senate Bill 1630. S. 1630, also known as the Criminal Code Reform Act, is the great-grandson of the Nixon administration's infamous S. 1.

Some of S. 1630's provisions include the following:

- **Obscenity.** Gets anyone who "disseminates obscene material to any person" whether by selling it or just giving it away. Casts into the stone the test "material that... would be found by an average person, applying contemporary community standards, to appeal to prurient interests. Also includes the test "appeals to the prurient interests of a sexually deviant class of person"; that class is not defined.

- **Engaging in a Riot, Obstructing Government Function by Physical Interference, Obstructing a Proceeding by Disorderly Conduct.** In the latter offense, "disorderly conduct" includes "noise that is unreasonable," and "violent or tumultuous behavior."

- **Draft Provisions.** Draft evaders get three years and $250,000 fine, draft counsellors get six years and a $250,000 fine.

- **Anti-Nuke Activities.** Any property damage at a facility "involved in the production, storage, or distribution of electricity, fuel or another form or source of energy" can get you five years.

- **Freedom of the Press, Government Whistle-Blowers.** New protection for "National Defense" and "Classified Information." Reporters protecting their sources may be found to "Hinder Law Enforcement." Creates an offense of "revealing private information submitted for a government purpose."

- **Attempt, Conspiracy, Solicitation.** Broad and frightening. Talking about, planning or encouraging someone to attend a demonstration that obstructs government functions, for example, can get you the same punishment as actually committing the act.

- **Preventive Detention.** Gives judge broad new discretion to deny bail and to jail persons accused of a crime prior to their trial. So much for innocent until proven guilty.

- **Pot.** Possession of marijuana: 1 year and $25,000 fine. Sale of marijuana: a felony, three years and a $25,000 fine.

*by Scott Brookie*
Excerpted from Gay Community News
July 10, 1982
WARSAW Ghetto Revolt

THE INVISIBLE PASSAGE

by IRENA NARELL

The author was a Columbia University undergraduate when she wrote this story in 1944. It was the first work of fiction on the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt. News of the revolt had barely trickled to the United States. The disbelieving Jewish establishment found the truth so distasteful that the destruction of the ghetto and even the mass murder of Jews in Hitler’s death camps were hardly publicized in the American Jewish community. Consequently there were no takers for this story among Jewish publications at the time. It took nearly fifteen years before it received the Agnon Prize. It was published in a story collection in 1961.

This land is free but I cannot sleep. The thunder and lightning that have passed through my life have left behind a devastated abyss. In the midst of a great city, the clanking noise of cars, trolleys, and voices of people, I hear another sound and I cannot sleep. The hollow sound of boots is with me all night through, again and again I hear them — the symbol of enslavement, the symphony of death. With a stifled cry I rise from my bed and call for Michael to comfort and protect me.

Then I remember that Michael is dead.
Michael is dead, my people are dead, and I do not deserve to live.

“If you come out of this alive, my love,” he said, “take a message to the world, paint it on every neon sign in each country on this earth, avenge our death!”

The people here have been kind to me. I can live in spite of my name, I can walk in the street without a yellow armband, and I do not have to die in a ghetto. But, Michael, I cannot sleep. They come for me every night, Chaim and Anna, and little Janek, and Doctor Czerniakow and so many others, their faces livid and cold, and once more I’m in the Warsaw ghetto, behind that closed wall...

And then, Michael, I hear the sound of boots as on that day in April 1943...

* * * *

For two years we have been living in hell. We have forgotten the meaning of the word “freedom” for the walls here are high and the gates are locked. We are jammed into overcrowded houses, compelled to live on starvation diets, deprived of medical aid and of the most elementary hygienic conveniences. We have no fuel in the extreme cold of winter, and we suffer thirst in the hot summer. We have no gas nor electricity. We are hungry, ragged and unwashed, we have been plunged into an abyss of disease. Five hundred of us die each day. The dead are buried in mass graves. Corpses lie in the streets, covered by rags and paper. All food reserves are gone. We have even eaten the horses, and the carts carrying the dead to the cemetery are drawn by men.

You see we are not people. We are Jews.

Often I think that no one on this earth could survive in this horror and yet we manage to live and even to hope. I have watched so many die that I feel the burden of my twenty years a hundred times that number, lying heavily on my shoulders, for I have lived more than one lifetime of sorrow and despair.

My people are dying all around me, quietly, passively, and yet — my people desire so to live. I see that hope and terrible want in their eyes and I turn away. Then I look for Michael, for I know that we must die, and he knows it, too. I take his hand and watch the fire in his dark eyes and once more regain the hope that we shall die fighting on our feet, though with our backs to the ghetto wall, because Michael believes in it too.

When father was shot, many of us believed we could still be saved. When mother died of typhus, some of us still believed it. But when my little brother Janek died because he did not have enough to eat, I knew we would not survive.

Old Chaim and Anna had known me since I was born. Chaim used to bounce me on his knee and tell me terrifying stories of the powers of the “beyond” and the “unknown”. Since we had all found ourselves living a terrible tale, his sad eyes rested on me often. Chaim had known about father before we did. He had watched my mother die and almost could not take it, for she had always been his best friend’s favorite child. Chaim carried Janek to the grave and afterwards he said:

“My child, when I see you lying there on that iron bed in the kitchen, I wonder how long we shall be able to keep you with us.”

Anna shook her head and said:

“Do not talk this way, Chaim. How could God let so beautiful a girl die so young? he has left her to us to take care of and we should be thankful that we can have her with us in this hour of trial.”

But it is I who am thankful for their love and their faithful company. We are living in a three-story, hunchback old house on Mila Street. It is a dreadful old house with a narrow, filthy street outside. We hardly ever see the sun.

But I can live in this house of horrors and walk the dark, wet stairway to the top floor each day, because Michael lives in it too. He came to stay with us quietly one day, after both of his parents were shot.

Michael is my tower of strength and it is because of him that I can live. He is tall, and dark and full of indescribable, burning energy. I said there was fire in his eyes. There is more than that. Behind that fire burns a faith so profound that it envelopes and carries away all those around him; there is nobility of soul behind that fire and there is a warm and saddened heart.

Sometimes when I look at Michael I remember the yesterday that now seems so far off. The walks we took in the park continued next page
where King Stanislaus had built his exquisite palace, the squirrels we fed, the swans on the lake, the voices of other students around us, the sky that was blue, our future that, despite anti-Semitic rumbling in our land, still seemed bright and promising. I see Michael waiting for me on the grass in front of Chopin's monument smiling, with a load of books under his arm. Hand in hand, we walk into the sunlit street.

I remember so many things when I look at Michael. He smiles rarely now and has no need to carry a load of books. Life has given him a diploma of maturity far more complicated than any college could have done.

Had not his professors predicted that he would make a great engineer? To prove it now he must build an invisible passage through which all of us can escape to freedom or immortality. Michael will build us that passage. I know he will.

* * *

They have left us alone for awhile but I know they'll be back. Each night I listen for the sound of their boots, the sharp noise of bullets, the horrible cry of the tortured. They come through the gate which is open to them but locked to us. They round up whole blocks, shoot the sick and unemployable, take the still comparatively strong to slave labor in German war industry. We Jews must make weapons to kill those who might come to save us. We Jews have no earthly right to feel or to suffer like men.

We have not forgotten the months that have passed. There were 400,000 of us a year ago, there are 40,000 of us now. How could we forget?

In spite of hunger and persecution our life in the ghetto had been well organized. Behind the locked walls we had regained our spiritual and political equilibrium. A city council was set up. The connection with the Polish underground movement was established. And the Germans organized the Jewish police.

Henryk was a member of the Jewish police force. There were almost a thousand of them. They were of us, some felt as we did, and yet they were to keep us subdued. At the point of a German gun they walked through the narrow, grim streets of the ghetto and saw that we obeyed orders.

Many of them were shot for they helped smuggle in extra food and illegal literature from the Polish underground through one of the gates. Some became creatures of the Germans. But still we received the news. When once a week long peasant carts bringing starvation rations into the ghetto began to roll over the pavements, we knew that at least one of the peasants was bringing in something much different than bread.

Henryk was a dear old friend but we never talked about the old days. He was a few years my senior, blond, tall and brilliant. His pleasant round face had once held many smiles. But now he had looked in the eyes of disease often and had to turn away, for even he could not save the thousands of our children without medical supplies. Henryk, you see, was going to be a famous doctor, but Henryk became a policeman in the Jewish ghetto instead.

"I often wish I had the courage to die," he would say to me. "Yet I don't want to, not just yet. Life is too precious a thing to throw away. And I so want to see this nightmare through.”

When he came to see us some nights, tired after a day of witnessing tragedy he would talk to us about his dream for the future.

"There will be a great hospital some day on Mila Street. Children will not have to die on the sidewalks. We will give them the best of care and save them before it is too late."

Yes, we agreed, there will be a hospital... Henryk is a dreamer, I thought, Henryk does not know the truth.

And there was Dr. Czerniakow, chairman of the City Council and an old friend of father's whom I frequently visited.

“You have found yourself in the midst of the greatest of crimes, my child,” he would say. “We are being slowly, ruthlessly annihilated. I'm an old man, you are so young, it is a shame for you to be here. And Michael so promising, so brave, the world should belong to you both, and to many others like you, my child. But we have the misfortune of being Polish Jews... We are the doomed and the unwanted. Try to live through this child, try to see another world in which we can live and die like human beings.”

“But Dr. Czerniakow, I do not believe in such a world any longer.”

“You must, my child, you must. That is our only hope and salvation.”

“Dr. Czerniakow, why should we wait for the world to change and let others perish all around us? If we must die, why can't we fight for our privilege to die with dignity?”

“Are you so young. An uprising is a noble thing. But an uprising will mean that countless lives which might be spared, will have to be laid down on the altar of sacrifice. And remember, collective responsibility is the enemy's answer to our weak attempts to resist.”

“Then we must be patient and wait? For what? The Allies? The world that will hear our cry?”

“Yes, my child, we must wait.”

With tears in my eyes I ran to Michael for I knew that his answer would always be: “Fight!”

The elders did not understand. Just as in the Holy City surrounded by the Roman legions under the leadership of Titus, the young and the old struggled in an eternal conflict. The old ones said: “Survival at any price, even at the cost of maximum compromise with the demands of the persecutor” —the young ones had replied: “We must fight!”

“Michael, we young have so much more to lose, yet we desire to fight. Why do they stop us with empty words of hope and collective responsibility?”

Michael took me by the shoulders and said:

“Do not waste your tears, my love. I promise you we shall fight. Our Jewish flag will rise high above the ghetto walls. I promise you that.”

But we had no arms and we were physically exhausted. The hangman did not rest. At the end of July 1942 the gestapo demanded from the Jewish Council that it supply for deportation to the East from 6,000 to 10,000 persons daily. Those subject to deportation were to be delivered by the Jewish police of the ghetto no later than 4 p.m. each day.
Himmler had issued an order to liquidate the ghetto. Posters appeared on the wall. They announced that the 6,000 men and women were to be taken daily from the ghetto for "resettlement" purposes in the Eastern regions.

Few believed the "resettlement" tale. We had already heard of the lime sprinkled, tightly packed railroad cars that had taken so many of us to the camp of Treblinka. Treblinka contained gas chambers, steam pipes, and the sand pits where Jews were forced to dig their own mass graves before they died.

To Dr. Czerniakow fell the honor of making the initial list of men and women to be "resettled".

We waited and held our breaths. We did not have to wait very long. In the breaking of the dawn the news spread rapidly from house to house. Pale shadows wandered in the streets of the ghetto, bringing hand to hand information.

Dr. Czerniakow had poisoned himself.

Michael's friend, Daniel, managed to come despite the curfew to tell us the news.

"I believe Dr. Czerniakow's suicide was meant to alarm the world about the Nazi aim of our liquidation," he said.

But to us who knew him so well, the doctor's suicide had meant something more. It meant the tragic collapse of his belief in the effectiveness of the method which aimed to avert a clash with the enemy, to execute his orders, and try to survive at any price. Dr. Czerniakow saw that there was no price that would leave even the smallest chance to live for the Jews of the ghetto, and so he chose to die.

"I think Dr. Czerniakow's duty was to call the population to active resistance against the invader, instead of this hopeless gesture," Daniel's voice sounded hollow and bitter.

"He's done his best, Daniel, in the light of his convictions. The call to arms, that is our duty!" Michael replied.

Many reported voluntarily at the deportation center on Stawki Street. I stood in front of our house and watched them go by though tears blinded my eyes. They left in thousands, carrying their little bags of clothing with them, their faces expressionless, empty — like a herd of cattle slowly and patiently going to their death. Little children tagged at their mothers' skirts and bearded old men walked among them with quiet dignity. There was fear in some of their eyes, despair in some, and hope even in others.

They were going to embrace freedom outside the ghetto wall, eternal freedom, I guess.

Henryk and others like himself were responsible for their arrival on Stawki Street. That first night Henryk came in to see us. His young face was ashen gray and deeply lined.

"They pack them in hundreds where there's room for tens, they seal the cars, and send them to their destination. Our people are slowly dying a horrible death in those cars! Is there no hope left.

I had never seen Henryk cry before. But he sat down on our crooked kitchen stool, buried his head in his hands and wept like a child. We let him battle with his grief alone, Michael and I.

That night Michael spoke at a secret meeting in one of the large cellars, and called openly for organized action.

"Jews, citizens, brothers in slavery! All of us here realize that 'resettlement' is a myth, a brutal and clever lie thrown brazenly into our faces by the Nazis. We can choose to believe it and die a patient death of martyrs or we can face the truth presented by the testimony of the members of our police force and several persons who have escaped from the trains. The time for action is now. We must put a stop to this mass murder by refusing to die like cattle. The question is set before you clearly. Are you prepared to face it?"

The elders just shook their heads. Old Rabbi Samuel said: "And are you prepared to take the responsibility for the slaughter of thousands, my young man? No, if we are to survive we must let some of us die without a fight."

We did not dare to take the responsibility just then. But the next evening news came to us that over one hundred and fifty persons escaped from the deportation center through Dzika Street into the open city of Warsaw. A German poster warning against such acts in the future blamed a Jewish policeman for the act.

Henryk did not return that night. He never came back at all.

During these first days of deportations, Michael, Daniel and many other young people like ourselves, printed leaflets which called at least for passive resistance. But my people were so caught in fear on one hand and false, feverish hopes on the other, that no one would listen. They seemed deprived of will power and incapable of action. The Gestapo carried on its bestial task.

We Jews did not possess arms. Deportations continued.

Old Chaim and wrinkled Anna left quietly one morning. "Good-bye, my little one. It is better that we should go," old Chaim said. "If it will spare you or others like you, it is better. I pray that you should live."

I could not hide the tears and I kissed his hand. I thought in those weeks of horror that I had almost forgotten to cry. "God bless you," Anna said and her lips trembled.

I held on tightly to Michael's hand for he was all I had left, and I knew that I would lose him too, sooner or later, and I asked Almighty God why he had punished so gravely a people so devoted to His faith.

There were 400,000 of us, there are 40,000 of us now. The streets of the ghetto are still with a silence of fear, mourning and death. The hangman rests but he will return again. Only this time we shall not go patiently to our death!

* * *

The change has come slowly. With a gladdened heart I have watched it come. Almost all the elders are gone and the workers and former students have created the Jewish Armed Resistance Organization. Michael has become one of its leaders. We have been able to establish closer contact with the underground Polish military organization. At first they refused us arms. But then...

At the beginning of January 1943, a lonely peasant cart came in through one of the gates. Friedrich M., an S.A. guard had turned the other way, at any rate, he did not seem to notice. We had long before then discovered that Friedrich had a price. We paid and he closed his eyes.
The cart rolled slowly to our house on Mila Street, where it stopped and the aged peasant who had been sitting in it, jumped off with surprising swiftness and ease. He began to take potatoes out of the wagon, while our main door opened slowly and cautiously. A few moments later the peasant had disappeared.

In the badly lit cellar Michael and Stefan N. of the Polish underground were holding a whispered conversation. The old peasant turned out to be a young man of about thirty. I sat at the entrance to the cellar watching for any unwelcome passersby and tried to hear fragments of conversation. Michael's whisper was sharp and clear. The other man seemed firm but his evasions were tinged with guilt.

"Slavery knows no degrees," Michael was saying. "We are all brothers in face of a common enemy. Friends, let us have arms! You have seen thousands of us die, and you know what future awaits us. Let the invader pay life for life, death for death! We must have arms!"

"It is a difficult thing for us to decide, Michael. We have heard your name mentioned by every man who has left the ghetto alive. Your legend grows and your people believe in you, I grant that. But do not expect too much from us. This is no time for us to strike."

"This is the only and the last time for us. It is our final reckoning. We do not ask you to fight with us or for us. We only ask that you help us regain our honor. We expect only the minimum—your sympathy and your arms. I have found a way to make bombs and hand-grenades and we have been preparing them secretly in the ghetto. But we need much more than that. How can you refuse us?"

I saw Stefan N. of the Polish underground bow his head. We knew the pressures upon him. We also knew that he represented the Polish Socialist Party and we had counted on their support. He now looked at Michael's fiery eyes, his dark hair falling wildly over his forehead and stretched out his hand.

"You shall have arms, Michael of the ghetto. More than that I cannot promise. From the Polish underground to the fighters in the ghetto, take this message. You shall have arms."

A gate in the northwestern outskirts of the ghetto where once a week starvation rations were brought in, in the form of bread made with rotten flour mixed with plaster and rotting potatoes, became the lifeline which made our armed resistance possible. Concealed under the load of bread and potatoes were shotguns, revolvers and hand-grenades. There were Jewish hands to unload precious food but there were also Jewish hands ready to receive the weapons for the battle to come.

We might have been shadows, staggering along the streets, we might have been weak, exhausted, hungry and sick but we dreamed of an armed encounter with the enemy. The fire of hatred and revenge burned deep within our hearts. And somehow, we knew now that the hangman had been afraid of our wrath. He had tried to tell us the reports of gas chambers were not true. He had slaughtered us when our morale was broken, secretly, separately, in cowardice.

We, the Jews, were strong for we were not afraid to die. Not anymore. But we had determined that we should sell our lives dearly.

We prepared for revolt feverishly and with deadly efficiency.

They came for us on the night of April 19th, 1943, the first night of Passover. First — the sound of boots. Armed German detachments surrounded the ghetto, then marched in to complete its liquidation. Many came in cars mounted with machine guns and in tanks.

I watched them from our hiding place. They were sure of themselves as always, and seemed almost bored with their task. They had come to bring the final end to the meek, fear-stricken population of the Warsaw ghetto. But they had miscalculated, for we were neither meek nor afraid any longer.

I looked at Michael's wrinkled brow for he was deep in thought, and he noticed my searching glance. His hand immediately went to the gun at his belt.

"We are ready, my love. Do not be afraid."

The streets were empty as the Germans soon found out. The ghetto stood silent as the grave.

But suddenly the roofs and seemingly unoccupied houses burst out with the vengeance of thousands. Our guns began to play.

At last we had opened fire on the enemy.

Instantly stunned, the Germans began to flee in confusion. Our sudden blow threw their forces into something resembling panic. They were gone as quickly as they had come.

We had tried to meet them on the field of battle and they had fled. Some of them were lying there, dead on the pavement of the Warsaw ghetto, as mortal as the thousands of us who fell in gas chambers at Oswiecim and Treblinka, or on those very streets.

We were strong with the strength of despair, courageous with the courage of the doomed. Our last battle had finally begun.

More dynamite and bombs were smuggled in. And the German tanks returned. They took severe punishment in those first days for the flame of our wrath burned high. Hundreds of them were killed and more wounded. Several times they had to retreat behind the ghetto wall.

Men, women and children were fighting in this, our common battle with the intensity of unloosed slaves. We crawled toward German tanks with hand grenades, aimed our rifles straight at the despised Nazi uniforms, killed with amazing and prompt accuracy, killed the save the remnants of humanity within our very selves.

The response of the persecutor to his early defeats came soon enough. Incendiary bombs were dropped on us from air, the Germans attacked with flame throwers and heavy artillery.

Cannons were posed in the streets around the ghetto — heavy machine guns were placed on the neighboring houses. Death rained everywhere.
Michael was in the very heat of the fight, just as he had been the guiding hand of our preparations for it. He seemed to alight from every corner, every street and house, to bring a word of courage to the fighters and death to the invaders.

We did not try to spare each other. We had remained alive through a series of accidents. We had remained in love.

The Germans dared enter the ghetto itself only by daylight. During the nights they retreated guarding the approaches to the ghettos and shooting constantly.

On April 23rd, they took the central and outer parts of the ghetto. The main battle then continued in the north. But we had managed to maintain strong guerrilla activity even in the conquered parts. The burning in the main ghetto kept spreading. The fires were becoming intolerable, and the end seemed to draw closer for all of us.

On the fifth day of battle the Jewish Fighters' Organization issued an appeal to the non-Jewish population of Warsaw, but there was no answer to our call.

On the sixth day of the battle, when I had just returned from a corner of Niska Street after having brought its defenders more ammunition, I came across Michael and Daniel engaged in a feverish discussion in the cellar.

"The munitions depot on Okopowa Street must be destroyed. No two ways about it, Daniel."

"Michael, let me go. You have no right to trifle with your life, not just yet. The fighters need you more than they need me."

"I fail to see your logic, Daniel. I know the territory better than you, and my hand is more accustomed to the handling of explosives. We can't afford to miss this time. You are to leave with a detachment heading in the opposite direction. This is an order."

I did not want him to see my face for I knew that this was the end. But I wanted so much to take one long last look at him that I came out of the shadows of the cellar.

"You're back," he said. And then he motioned to Daniel who was staring at the floor and said:

"It's time."

Daniel looked at us both.

"I wish you two had a chance," he blurted out. And then he left.

Michael inspected the gun at his belt. Then he picked up a small bundle of explosives from the gray stone floor.

"I must go," he said.

I did not answer him — I just stood there looking at his dark figure, and I did not want him to leave. There was a deep furrow around his mouth that I had not noticed in the fever of the last few days. He smiled at me just then and his face lit up with a flicker of old hope. Or so I must have imagined, for we both knew that there was no longer anything to be hoped for.

"It has been a good life because of you," he said impulsively. "I love you more than mere words can express."

No, I refused to take the cruel verdict! I could not bear to touch him for I might have never let him go. I turned toward the wall and embraced it with aching arms. He must have felt as I did for he just walked past me up the stairs; I heard the door close slowly and I began sobbing wildly into the wall.

He died that same day.

I do not know how he died and Daniel said only:

"He died heroically."

I could not ask how he died. I know that Daniel has told me the truth. In the dark days of my life afterwards I often repeated to myself:

"He died a hero..."

A trite cliche? Perhaps. Yet it was the only thread that could bind me to reality, reconcile me to life.

For days following Michael's death I fought on in a blind fury and existed only because of my terrible thirst for vengeance. Days changed into weeks and still we lived and died and we fought on. At the close of the fourth week regular operations gave way to guerrilla warfare. The Jewish-German war, they called it in Poland.

At the end of the fifth week Red Cross ambulances were still evacuating German dead or wounded from the ghetto. When almost every house had been burned, and we had retreated underground to cellars and other passages, we issued our last appeal to the allied nations. The last house in the ghetto had fallen but the world did not hear our cry.

I do not know how I left the ghetto. Daniel would not tell me then. I had been unconscious and now Daniel is dead. I suspect that he carried me through the underground passages, then through city sewers to freedom, at a terrible risk and hardship.

I awakened in a peasant hut a few days later with heavy wounds and a slight brain concussion. The peasant woman later delivered me to the Polish underground. Daniel was with me when I first awoke and he said:

"I promised Michael to save you if I could..." and then he turned and left me. In the arms of a great fever I understood even then that he was going back to finish the fight.

The Polish underground sent me here to England as soon as I had recovered, for I was a queer specimen, one of the last remnants of a dead people.

Seven weeks after the battle of the ghetto had begun, guerrilla fighting still went on among the ruins. The head of the S.S. and of the police in the Warsaw district, Von Sammern, was dismissed. Governor Fisher of Warsaw was also removed.

On a cold February day in London, in the year 1944, the commander-in-chief of the Polish army bestowed posthumously the silver cross Virtuti Militari, the highest military honor known in Poland, on engineer Michael S. of the city of Warsaw.

It was a mere gesture on the part of a government that had done nothing to help the fighters of the ghetto while there was still time. However, one must learn to be grateful even for gestures.

As the general read the citation I thought:

"Yes, Michael, you have been a truly great engineer. For you have built us that invisible passage for which I had hoped many months ago — the passage to immortality. Thousands of Jews have crossed the stormy waters into the
unknown through your passage. They will rest in peace for they died like men. The passage you built extends far beyond the unknown, into the pages of the history of the future. You have given us a glorious place in that future, among the soldiers of freedom, in the family of the United Nations, among those who died for a better world.

You might ask me how I can live without Michael. I do not know if there is a life after death, but I'll tell you how I live. Michael has restored my national pride. I know now that this I must do for Michael and for all those who lie buried forever beneath the vast rubble that was once the home of Warsaw's Jews.

New York, April 1944

BIBLIOGRAPHY: continued


Another collection of official Gestapo papers compiled by the Centre of Contemporary Jewish Documentation, a highly favorable account of how Italian authorities tried to hinder Nazi and Vichy efforts to deport Jews. “Jews must not forget what those nine months of Italian humanitarianism — even under military law — meant for them.” Chapters: “The Jews Under the Italian Occupation,” “Note on the S.D. Organization,” “Documents,” “The Attitude of the Italians to the Persecuted Jews in Croatia,” “The Attitude of the Italians to the Jews in Occupied Greece.”


The author’s testimony of the role of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in saving Ukrainian Jews from Nazi persecution.

Ten Boom, Corrie, and John Sherrill. The Hiding Place.


A Dutch family that concealed Jews but were caught and sent to concentration camps.

HONK, WONK AND JOWEL: continued

But the New York City Schools were always progressive. They gave all of us immigrants a break. They didn’t check, except covertly, our church, our culture, just our vowels, our diphthongs and our consonants, and if we could but get those sounds out into the open and spit on them, why we could teach and spend our summers in the mid-west listening to Standard American Speech for two months at a time or go to Paris and speak French, which, oddly enough, we spoke elegantly because we were not ashamed to learn a new language well, only English.

Today, there are certainly no speech requirements for teachers, and no written exams, and some teachers I know can’t spell, let alone write. And that’s O.K.

What’s O.K.?

You know — Justice!

Between the blind prejudice of one generation and the open season of the next comes progress, only it’s a strange beast.

SHMATE

After a year of publication, SHMATE has established its validity. It is now imperative that the magazine be placed on a more secure, more diversified footing, both financially and editorially. This can only come about with your help. Subscriptions must quadruple this coming year. To do this each of you must subscribe, give a gift sub, and/or sell a sub to someone else. Individual or group commemorative ads would be an appropriate form of support. If you know of bookstores that will carry SHMATE, please put them (or us) in touch. Commercial advertising is also needed. And, don’t forget plain old fashioned donations. Maybe all readers should keep a SHMATE pushke in their homes and send in the proceeds every six months.

Letters are the lifeblood of a magazine such as SHMATE. Your feedback is essential if SHMATE is to improve. For authors, your letters provide invaluable commentary and support. But, most important, your letters provide a forum for genuine participation of a relatively large number of people in the substantive discussions held in these pages. So don’t let SHMATE become a spectator sport!

To answer a small backlog of technical questions: SHMATE’s typesetting is done with great good cheer by Lewis Publishing. The first three issues were printed by Waller Press. Issues #4 and #5 were printed by Alonzo Publishing. With the exception of Solitary Acts in issue #4 (which was done by Janine Baer), all layout has been done by myself. I am also responsible for the covers of issues #4 and #5.

At this point I should know better than to ever say in one issue of SHMATE what will be in the next issue. But, we are a people of tradition, so once again the ritual of prophecy seizes me. SHMATE #6 will focus on progressive Jewish humor.
In SHMATE #4 we began the author's annotated bibliography of resistance to the Holocaust. Included in that issue were sections on General Histories, National Histories, Individual Biographies, Autobiographies, Special Topics, Partisans, Concentration Camps, Ghettos, and the Warsaw Ghetto. In this issue we conclude with Bennett's excerpts from his original seventy-three page unpublished bibliography. We urge SHMATE readers to submit annotated additions which we will publish in the future.

**THE REPRESSION**


Little attention to Jewish resistance, the author believing resistance not in the Jewish tradition.

Kubovy, Aryeh Leon. "How Did We Sit Solitary..." *Yad Vashem Bull.*, 15 (1964) 2-4.

The Author explores the reasons for the inability of Western Jewish leaders to hinder the Nazi extermination program during the war.


Commissioned by the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation, the book offers massive documentation of the murder of 100,000 Jews. One small section on resistance.


Very little recognition of Jewish resistance. Divided into two parts, I. "The Search for the Final Solution" (general history and organization) and II. "The Final Solution Country by Country." See Hilberg, Poliakov.


Not a study of the "Final Solution" but an examination of the period preceding Auschwitz when the machinery which produced the "Final Solution" was established. Argues that the "Final Solution" was not the product of a grand design. See Hilberg, Levin, Dawidowicz.

**HISTORIOGRAPHY**


The archives, museum, and library in the Kibbutz Lohamei Haghettaot near Haifa.

Poliakov, Leon. "Le Centre De Documentation Juive Contemporains"


"Recounts the origin, growth, and resources of the Center of Grenoble. It includes the material on the history of genocide practices by the Germans in all European countries during World War II."

**IMAGINATIVE LITERATURE, MUSIC, FILM, ART**


Clandestine art protesting the Nazi regime.

Buczowski, Leopold. *Black Torrent*.


The wartime life of Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian partisans in the eastern part of Poland.

*The Diary of Anne Frank*. 1959. Film.

Diary for Anne (German Democratic Republic). Film. Specifically about Anne Frank but includes general fate of European Jews.

*The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*. 1970 Film.

The life of a wealthy Italian Jewish family from 1938 until destroyed by the Nazis. Directed by Vittorio de Sica.


continued next page

27
BIBLIOGRAPHY: continued

A novel about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

The *Hiding Place*. 1975 Film.
Based on *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom.

*Holocaust*. 1978. Film.
A nine-hour NBC-TV production of the life of a German Jewish family from 1933 to 1945. Novelized by Gerald Green and published by Bantam (nine printings and almost 2,000,000 copies in a few weeks).

Knopp, Josephine Z. *The Trial of Judaism in Contemporary Jewish Writing*.
Chapters on Nelly Sachs, Andre Schwarz-Bart, and Elie Wiesel, writers about the Holocaust.

New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ., 1975.
Analyzes the imaginative works of writers on the Holocaust - Elie Wiesel, Jerzy Kosinski, Jakov Lind, Heinrich Boll, and others.

311 pp.
Eva Korngold, a young Jewish woman, escapes from occupied Poland under an assumed identity, is caught and sent to Auschwitz, but escapes from the Auschwitz death march.

Five volumes of the Czech writer's stories about children and young people.

"A Memorial to the Holocaust of Six Million Jews—Hizkor: Remember," an Oratorio.

*Comparative Literature Studies*, 11 (June 1947), 123-50.
Auschwitz as a symbol has developed from the total involvement of anonymous poets writing while in the camps to the extraordinarily varied responses ranging from Nelly Sachs to Yevtushenko to Gwendolyn Brooks to Sylvia Plath to Andreas Reimann.

Neshamit, Sarah. *The Children of Mapu Street*.
About the extermination and resistance of young Lithuanian Jews.

Playing for Time. 1980 Film
From Fania Fenelon's autobiography of survival at Auschwitz as a member of a prisoners' orchestra. Dramatized by Arthur Miller.

Sachs, Nelly. *O the Chimneys: Selected Poems, including the Verse Play, Eli*.

Schwarz-Bart, Andre. *The Last of the Just*.
Received the Prix Goncourt for its story of Jewish suffering from the twelfth century to Auschwitz.

*Spiritual Resistance: Art From Concentration Camps, 1940-1945;* Union Of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981

Suhl, Yuri. *Uncle Misha's Partisans*.

The author's course in "The Literature of the Holocaust" is described.

539 pp.
A novel about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943 (Mila 18 was the command post of the Jewish resistance fighters).

**JOURNALS**

*Dappim: Studies of the Holocaust and the Jewish Resistance*.
Ghetto Fighters' House (Beit Lohamei Hagetaot). D. N. Oshrat 25220 Israel.

*Jewish Currents*. New York, monthly
Material on the resistance, especially in their April issues.

[Comprehensive newspaper covering the Holocaust, with an emphasis on new materials, survivors, and the legacy of the Holocaust.—ed.]

*SHMATE: A Journal Of Progressive Jewish Thought*. Berkeley, Bi-Monthly [A broad journal with a major focus on Jewish resistance to the Holocaust.—ed.]

*Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance*.
Yad Vashem is the Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem.

*Yalkut Moeshet* ("A Compilation of Heritage"). A semi-annual publication (in Hebrew) established by the Kibbutz Artzi, Hashomer Hatzair, which also sponsors an archive and produces books on the Resistance. Address: Moeshet, 9 Hameasvim St., P.O.B. 40009, Tel Aviv, Israel.

continued next page
BIBLIOGRAPHY: continued

Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute. In addition to occasional articles on German Jews, the Yearbook contains an annual bibliography of "Post-War Publications on German Jewry" which includes a section on Jewish resistance.

ASSISTANCE TO THE JEWS

Abrahamsen, Samuel. "The Rescue of Denmark's Jews." American-Scandinavian Review, 60(1972), 157-164. By August 1943, Danish resistance and sabotage led Germany to proceed with plans to deport Denmark's 7,700 Jews. The Danish resistance to this ultimatum was heroic. About 7,200 Jews were transported to Sweden in October 1943.

Berenstein, Tatiana, and Adam Rutkowski. "Comment la Population Polonaise Aidait et Secourait Jes Juifs Pendant l'Occupation Nazie" [How Polish Population Helped and Saved the Jews During the Nazi Occupation]. Acta Poloniae Historica, 8 (1963), 55-78. In spite of the particular difficulties for Poles, Polish help for the Jews was considerable.


Csorba, Helena. "Dzieci Uratowane od Zaglady" [Children Saved from Extermination]. Biuletyn Zydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego, No. 35 (1960), 100-105. How a group of Jewish Polish children were brought to Hungary by the Polish underground and Jewish resistance and saved from extermination.


Morse, Arthur D. While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy. New York: Random House, 1968. 420 pp. The author attempts to answer three fundamental questions: "What did the rest of the world and, in particular the United States and Great Britain, know about Nazi plans for the annihilation of the Jews?" "What was their reaction to this knowledge?" "Could anything have been done to prevent the murder of six million men, women, and children?" As the book's title indicates, the author indicts the U.S. for inaction. See Feingold.

continued page 26
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