Providence Passover Journal

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THE BUILDER OF A NATION!

SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 28

The ANNUAL CELEBRATION of the THIRD SEDER

AND THE BEGINNING OF THE

Campaign for the Jewish Workers in Palestine
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Our Best Wishes for a Successful Season
The labor movement of the Jewish Workers of Palestine is the youngest of the world's labor movements. As it is known today it began its work as late as 1920. In this short period of time it has built a complete structure of organized labor and of cooperative institutions. The achievements are so astonishing as to be a tribute to the devotion and spirit of the ranks and leaders of the Jews who have settled in Palestine and are making their contribution to its up-building.

The circumstances of the country and of the Jewish immigrants have forced the movement to be considerably more than an ordinary trade union, as we know in agriculture as it is in industry. It has been forced to teach its members the common trades of industry. It has set out to become at once a training school and a political and business institution.

In its relations with the employers of Palestine, the labor movement has already encountered the common problems of organized labor elsewhere. It has undertaken the task of settling Jewish labor in the Zionist colonies and it has found employment for thousands of Jewish workmen in the old colonies of the country. Under its initiative there has grown up an elaborate system of collective bargaining with the private industry of Palestine, which has weathered the storms of a severe depression of several years duration.

Adjustment of the difficult problem of establishing friendly and workable relations between the Jewish and Arab workmen has from the beginning been undertaken by the labor movement. Some results of this are already visible in the rising standards of living of Arab workmen, in the slow spread of organization among them and in the gradual awakening of a spirit of fraternity and mutual understanding.

The importance of political power and representation has not been overlooked by the movement. It has made its political contacts inside and outside of the country. In many places in Palestine it has already won important political recognition and has come in foreign countries to be accepted as the representative of the substantial workers' interest in the methods and results of the development of Palestine.

Toward the building of a cooperative economic society in Palestine, the movement has made direct and, I hope, lasting contribution. It has carried cooperative ideas and organization into agriculture and industry. It has set up its own financial institutions and cooperative marketing agencies and in the process has instilled in the mind of the Palestinian workers the ingredients of cooperative policy and spirit.

Its cultural activities surpass those of most other movements. From the theatre to political education, the movement has organized instrumentalities of thought. Its experiments in these fields have already yielded original contributions that have won recognition and applause from the outside.

So vast an undertaking in so short a span has naturally not been undertaken without mistakes and serious consequences. The hopeful sign for the future is that the movement has developed a growing number of men and women with intelligence, insight and experience. As their number and influence grows, the errors will become less frequent and less disastrous.

The Histadruth, the organized movement of Palestinian Jewish Labor, deserves the sympathetic attention and support of organized labor elsewhere. Its institutions, now resting on a sounder foundation, should not be allowed to languish for lack of understanding and resources. The labor movement of this country can make lasting contributions to the up-building of Palestine not only through financial participation in labor's enterprises but by creating direct contacts with the management and plans of these enterprises.
THE ORDER WITH AN IDEAL
By M. L. BROWN

The Jewish fraternal bodies at one time embraced ninety per cent. of American Jewry. In the years of immigration the fraternal orders prospered. The Jews were strangers in the country, and were in need of self-help, of friendly encouragement. Their instinct for self-preservation taught them to organize into fraternal bodies.

Recently the future of the Jewish fraternities has been questioned, many symptoms pointing to their decline. In the graveyard lie a good many Jewish fraternal orders once prominent and numerically strong: Sons of Judah, Sons of Jacob, Sons of Benjamin, Kesher Shel Barzel, Aharas Israel—every one of them had its day and has completely gone out of existence, causing distress and tears to many a Jewish widow and orphan.

With the exception of B’nai Brith, the foremost and oldest Jewish order of international fame, all others are providing or undertaking to provide their members with life insurance benefits, thus becoming cooperative public service organizations, but due to the unsound assessment system of benefits, lack of a constructive program and an ideal to inspire the members, to arouse them to enthusiasm and devotion, most of the orders are on the decline, losing ground. The situation is becoming particularly dangerous now because Jewish immigration is practically at a standstill and thousands of members are joining the general fraternal orders. Grave problems are facing most of the conservative Jewish fraternal associations, which failed to see the writing on the wall, the need of a complete change of their insurance system.

While at the conventions of most of the Jewish fraternal orders one may listen to oratorical fireworks of their leaders and see a display of campaign ammunition by candidates running for high office, one need not be deceived.

This condition should be of concern to American Jewry. The various orders have a membership of about five hundred thousand and their insurance obligations run into more than one hundred millions of dollars, affecting a large number of Jewish families.

The future of the Jewish fraternal orders is easy to foretell. They are going, they must go, unless a radical change in their benefit system and a revaluation of their social values and functions takes place.

The Jew is no more an immigrant, not so vitally in need of mutual aid and cooperation as before. He must be given an ideal, a real constructive program of Jewish and humanitarian importance, otherwise the orders are doomed morally as they are financially.

It is gratifying to note that the Jewish labor fraternities present a healthier picture. Their insurance system is sound, their insurance rates adequate and based on recognized tables of mortality, and their activities are of interest to their constituents.

The Jewish National Workers’ Alliance will celebrate its fifteen years of existence as an order with an ideal. Under the banner of progressive nationalism and social justice it is making great strides, gaining in influence, creating new values, making friends everywhere. Progressive elements, radical Jewish men and women, who are hungry for cooperative activities, for a proper mental background for Jewish cultural work, find in the branches, and ladies’ clubs of the Alliance a worthy cause to work for, to be inspired by.

The Alliance is a Jewish fraternal order with an elaborate program for social and educational activities, recruiting its members from the ranks of Jewish labor and progressive Jewry. It aims at constructive Jewish life. It has given liberal support to labor in Palestine, establishing sanatoriums, helping in the drives for funds, and it has latterly aided in forming the Hassneb Insurance and Mortgage Company of Palestine.

The Alliance was instrumental in the birth of the Jewish Peoples’ Schools (Volks Schulen) where thousands of children are taught Yiddish and Hebrew, literature and history and where the environment is distinctively Jewish, helping in the preservation of the “Jewishness” of the home.

And it has made it possible for the Jewish Teachers’ Seminary to be organized and developed into a very promising institution of Jewish learning. It has been constantly devoting its attention to the spreading of the Jewish culture and to fostering the social, economic and educational advancement of the Jewish masses of America.

The Alliance is not content with purely materialistic aims, with providing its members with attractive features of cooperative insurance, scientifically prepared and actuarily solved, but has by its various activities induced other Jewish fraternities to become of greater usefulness to American Jewry.

Lofty idealism, creative cooperative work, a sound economic foundation have brought forth a promising vigorous Jewish workers’ fraternity, proud of its achievements and ever ready to serve in the ranks of progressive Jewish labor and constructive forces of American Jewry.
THE PROVIDENCE PASSOVER JOURNAL

THE FUN OF BEING A JEW

By SELIG GREENBERG

Every morning, as I pick up my daily paper and glance through the news of the world's events, I once again render thanks unto the Lord for having been born a Jew.

Not that I am one of those who keep on talking of how proud they are of being Jews. First of all, you can hardly be proud of something with which you had nothing to do at the outset. And then, in spite of the stuff preached by our rabbis and the other professional blah-blah gentlemen, I am beginning to doubt, looking at our American home product, whether there is anything to be particularly proud about.

But I am glad I am a Jew for the simple reason that I am getting a lot of fun out of it, because to use more direct language, I am getting a hell of a kick out of a good many things thanks to the fact that I was born in the folds of Israel. Of course, you mustn't mistake my usage of the word "kick," which has lately become synonymous almost exclusively with the effects of necking parties and bootleg gin.

What I am talking about here is intellectual fun, a much subtler and scarcely less exciting sport, the fun an intelligent man gets out of watching so many of his fellow men make such damned fools out of themselves and such an awful mess of things in general.

Because I am a Jew I have a particular vantage point, a choice seat in the orchestra as it were, out of which I can watch the daily circus which is called American democracy and which can justly be extended to include every corner of this blessed universe of ours. And what I behold is a world hopelessly entangled in a maze of prejudices and taboos and either unable or afraid to think for itself, a world led for the most part by demagogues and ignoramuses and satisfied with reading the trash which is being turned out daily by thousands of presses and listening to the tawdry music broadcast every night by scores of radio stations, a world lulling itself to sleep with flowery oratory, patriotic rubbish and cheap sentimentalism.

Being a Jew, an anomaly and a man without a country, as the Zionists have been telling me since ever so long, I am free from the scourge of superpatriotism and consider the whole world my country. Not that I am underestimating the paramount value of nationalism in the entity of the world's cultural life, but I believe that the sanctification of the whole paraphernalia of nationalism and its heroes is the fruit of ignorance and prejudice and a clever, though perhaps in most cases unconscious, attempt to turn away the attention of the masses from the injustices of the present economic system and the mediocrity of their political masters. That's why I have a lot of fun watching the naivete with which the millions of people throughout the world take it for granted that everything pertaining to their country is the acme of perfection and worth dying for, while regarding the same things, when displayed on the part of another nation, as pernicious and contrary to the laws of God and humanity. The only thing that interferes with my fun is the awful seriousness of this folly for which we have paid the staggering price of 12,000,000 young lives only a decade ago and for which we are still paying with the tremendous burden of armaments, in spite of all the pious talk about peace.

Being a Jew and a radical as well, I still hold that radicalism is as much in need of de-bunking as Americanism and am constantly amused by the tendency of radicals of all hues to blame the capitalists for everything that goes wrong, anywhere and at any time. Another thing that makes me laugh is the talk about proletarian culture, art and education. There is no and there can be no such thing as proletarian or bourgeois art and education. There is only good art and bad art, good education and bad education, nothing else. To drag in party controversies into art and education is to betray an ignorance of the real meaning of both these things. Truth and beauty are neither capitalist nor proletarian; they are eternal and universal, and, in the long end, they are all that really matters.

And, last but not least, being a Jew. I have the daily pleasure of contemplating my Gentile friends labor under the inborn conviction that Jews are duffers and inferior creatures, a conviction against which their intellect sometimes rebels but of which they can no more get rid than the average American can get rid of the idea that the Constitution is God-given and should not be tampered with, even when there's a chance to improve it. Since it is a part of my business to meet Christians of all walks of life, I am coming across this attitude practically every day and am getting quite a bit of amusement out of it. The fact that I am a Jew, I invariably find, injects a certain element of strain, however delicate it may be, whenever I appear on the scene. Not that I am intimating that I am getting a worse deal because of my Jewishness. On the contrary, on most occasions I am treated much gentler than another person would be, exactly because of this attitude of strain. But the further the conversation progresses, especially if the subject we talk about happens to deal with racial and religious questions, the more guarded it becomes. And then, out of sheer malice I suppose, I spring on my victim the "surprise" that I am a Jew. Not that he didn't know it as soon as he saw me, but it's just a little psychological experiment that I can't help indulging in. The minute I say that, there comes invariably the answer, just as sure as the instinctive reaction to a pin prick: "Why, my best friend is a Jew!" And there follows a long and obviously forced dissertation on the Jewish friend and the multitude of his good qualities. Among those on whom I have tried this little trick and who have responded true to form are a college president and scores of professors, physicians, lawyers, politicians, government officials and social workers. I had never believed before that there were so many good Jews alive.

Then, of course, there is plenty to keep me amused in Jewish life in America. Where, indeed, is there a funnier assortment of snobs and ignoramuses and more blah-blah talk and cheap sentimentality, more gross materialism and less appreciation of things of the spirit? Though now and then I do come across some things in Jewish life which almost fill me with hope that the love of truth and justice by which our people had lived for so many centuries is not entirely dead yet and may some day still take on a new lease of life and flower again into
The student, and even the casual observer, of Jewish life in America cannot fail to record, though regretfully, that the Jews in the New World, while they have made great gains materially, have suffered irretrievable losses spiritually. We can hardly speak of ourselves here as religious devotees, or idealists. We are not superior to those among whom we live, we are following and imitating our Gentile neighbors rather than setting an example of a more spiritual life.

Jewish pupils may be among the brightest, and the gold medal winners, in the public schools. Jewish students may be among the most diligent in the colleges, and Jews may be found among the most distinguished and most reputable in all fields of human endeavor. But the Jews in America are not the torch bearers of a new spiritual revival. They are no longer a people with a "mission," though some of our brethren, the Reform Jews, still boast of it in their temples—temples of Jews who have long ago abandoned pure Judaism, having very little of it in their homes and daily life, leaving it entirely to their Rabbis and other professional religionists.

Neither the reformed nor the orthodox Jew, nor even the non-religionist Jew who deserted the old gods for new ones, substituting modern education, science, art, and philosophy for the Scriptures and the Talmud, has retained his former ideals.

The orthodox Jew, who for generations defied the world, has grown too weak to hold unto the Laws of Moses. He who would have sacrificed his comfort and even his very life not to turn aside from the tenets of his forefathers, will now desecrate the Sabbath and will passively look on as his children grow up practically without a Jewish education.

"America!" he will sigh, waving his hand despondently, and this will be the excuse for his own weakness, for his betrayal of the God in Whom he still believes but Whom he would not worship in accordance with his own religious conviction.

"America!"—as if that single word could explain the great change that has come over him, probably as bewildering to himself as to others.

America is to him the land of materialism, where one must exert all his powers, physical and mental, to make a living. Old ideals and beliefs do not count and must be abandoned or simply overlooked. One must not have any scruples and surely one cannot afford to lead the life of an idealist and religious devotee unless he is prepared to starve, to sacrifice the material comforts of himself and family—something he would not think of. This is likewise true of the modern Jewish theorist and so-called idealist that has drifted into the various movements of our age.

He, too, finds himself in this country with his wings clipped, unable any more to soar in the heavens and to lead the life of a visionary—an angel dropped to this sinful planet, dazed by the pursuit of material happiness, and driven to despondency by the lack of appreciation for the higher values of a spiritual life.
This modern Jew finds himself in the midst of a current that carries him farther from the shore and place of safety. He would not turn up-stream for fear of getting lost—dashed against the rocks or dead of exhaustion and exposure. He finds it much easier, and more practical, to drift along. He soon realizes that he is in the midst of a struggling mass of humanity; forgets the point he is carried from and puts all his efforts in matching his skill against the others who, like himself, fight for a place of safety in the stream of life.

To this modernite "America!" is also the only justification for his spiritual fall, for this weakness and his abandonment of the ideals he had cherished in his former days, the principles that he had upheld so zealously.

"America!"—that's his explanation of why he must be here different from what he had been on the other side: comfort to principles and ideals and why he must do like the rest, though at heart he knows that he is wrong, is not true to himself, is not leading a perfect and wholesome life.

As to the Reformed Jew, the so-called Yahudi, he is the very personification of plutocracy, the worshipper of Mammon. He has already attained that for which the others, still struggling for their place in the sun, are aiming.

His Judaism is nothing but an empty shell, no matter how beautifully worked and richly bejeweled. It requires very little of him—charity and attending once in a while services in the Synagogue where all the worshipping is done by the well-paid and perfectly groomed Rabbi.

He enjoys the services when the Rabbi preaches well and the Rabbi preaches well when he speaks of the things that he approves of.

Charity is probably the only activity in which he engages, but it is to him nothing more than mechanical, nothing but "scientific," nothing but theory, figures, system, correct accounting (and who knows if it is really correct?).

To the old-fashioned and economically less favored Jew, charity was something that touched his heart and soul. He helped the needy personally, practically, with his own hands. He gave until it hurt. "Zedakah" was the very soul of Judaism.

To the Yahudi charity is only a matter of bookkeeping. He knows in advance how much to give and to what institutions to give. It is all figured out. If there is a Federation of Charities he is the happier for it, for it saves him the trouble of figuring. It saves him time, and time is very valuable to him. Let those who get paid for it do the figuring; let the professional charity people worry about all the detail. A signature to his check book and his soul is saved: he has done his duty to his poor and suffering brethren who should bless the gods for the great opportunities America has given to all the peoples of the world, thereby preserving the Yahudi for the salvation of the less fortunate Jews here and abroad.

The Yahudi, too, will explain his mental state and attitude toward Judaism and Jews by "America!"

To him, America is a country of great and equal opportunity to all. There is, therefore, no Jewish problem, nothing to worry about or to fight for. To him, Jews are not a nation or a race, but a religious sect, and we know how little his religion occupies his mind. He may realize, probably through his own experience, that we are somewhat different from our neighbors: that we are, here and there, dislikable and socially ostracized, but he possesses the most powerful thing in the world—money, something that all others, Jew and Gentiles alike, are seeking, and he is well satisfied, knowing that all will be well with him and even with his less fortunate brethren. In case of distress, whenever the Yahudi may feel unpleasant on account of the "ghetto Jews," he will come forth with his money and again everything will be well.

Thus we have reached the stage when Jews of all classes meet at a certain point and find themselves occupied with the petty problems of daily life, paying little attention to higher things.

Yet, some kind of a spiritual revival seems to be on foot among the Jews of America. An urge for something loitering, something new—or perhaps old—is evident. The prodigal son is on his way back. He may not have arrived as yet at the threshold of his father's, but he is on the way.

Surprising as it might seem, this new spirit is more marked in those of the second or third generation than in those of the first, the original immigrants.

The children of the Reformed are often turning to orthodox or conservative Judaism in search for something more spiritual, and the children of the non-religionist Jews are becoming ardent nationalists—even religious Jews.

The sons and daughters of those who have desecrated the Sabbath, having made the Gentile Sunday for the day of rest, are becoming observers of the Seventh Day and do so at great sacrifices.

I have met among the young Israelites sons and daughters, natives of this country, who may have seen very little to inspire them in their homes, but who are in spirit real orthodox Jews, though in appearance thorough Americans.

These young American Jews are influencing their parents, almost compelling them to turn back to Judaism. It is a well-known fact that many a Jewish father and mother have turned back to religion or to Jewish nationalism solely because of their children.

Their children suddenly began to demand some definite form of Jewishness. They grew spiritually hungry. And the parents were awakened to their duties and began to follow, or rather to lead, their children.

In many a case the parents, who had drifted far from Jewish life and tradition, lacking the courage to turn back, were only too glad to find the "excuse" in their children.

"My boy insisted upon going to a Sunday school" is often the explanation of a radical father, who thought that he would raise his children as free-
"My children would not let me stay home on Rosh Hashana and other Jewish holidays; they had to be taken to a synagogue." is the explanation of another who might have felt the urge himself long before but would not otherwise have permitted himself to return to those from whom he had drifted away.

The younger Jewish generation is gradually finding itself occupied with Jewish and religious problems. The young folks have come in contact with their Gentile neighbors and have found that religion is still a great factor in their lives, at any rate their relation with the church is definite. The young American Jews remembered their own gods and turned to them.

The young Jewish Americans have found it much easier to solve their economic problems. Their parents had prepared the ground for them. By hard work they built an economic structure from which their children could begin their life with much more ease, more leisure, and greater opportunities to see the higher things in life.

The problems of food, shelter and the other requirements of a material existence having been more or less solved, they found their lives dull and uninteresting, and they awakened to an urge for something spiritual.

Not all, to be sure, have gone the same length. Not all have looked for the same things in Judaism. For one it was the revival of old orthodoxy in a new form—an orthodoxy minus the beard, minus the skull cap and minus the clothes that marked the orthodox Jew in the ghetto. These young American orthodox Jews may not be so strict in other religious customs and laws, but they are orthodoxy almost as their fathers and grandfathers were, cherishing a Jewish life in accordance with the Laws of Moses.

For another, Judaism is rather national than religious. He finds in Judaism a new culture, a new ideal, even a new mission. He studies Jewish history, acquaints himself with Jewish problems, with Jewish life in other countries, and becomes interested in Zionism and other phases of the nationalist Jewish movement.

The awakening may be coming about imperceptibly. One may be groping in the dark, searching for something that did not as yet take shape or form. One may not even know of those who are ready to guide him and enlighten him. One may even drift unconsciously into the camp of some liberal Gentile cult. join the "Cnitarians or the Christian as yet crystallized. has not taken as yet definite form. is to choose.

But sooner or later, by his own reasoning or with the aid of others, he sees the light. He sees the sun rising, and a new world in all its glory and fascination reveals itself to him and he knows the path he is to choose.

One may say that Jewish life in America has not as yet crystallized, has not taken as yet definite form. But surely there is the urge for something definite, a real spiritual revival that may bring definite forms, specific American forms of Judaism.

The Pioneers are a women's organization participating in the upbuilding of the Jewish Homeland by cooperating with the organized women workers of Palestine, also partaking in all undertakings of Zionism.

This organization has actively aided the establishment and upkeep of four existing agricultural girls' schools. During the economic crisis of 1927, the organized women workers with the financial aid of the Pioneer Women's Organization, established eleven new girls' co-operatives. In America the Pioneer Women's Organization is affiliated with the Poale Zion Party and carries the message of the Zionist ideal to the working women.

The finances of our first year's existence was five thousand dollars, the second fifteen thousand, the third twenty-five thousand, the fourth thirty-five thousand, and the year of 1929 shows our quota to be forty thousand dollars.

In 1926 when we organized in Providence we were but a handful of members who succeeded in raising four hundred dollars that year. The second year we were a body of about forty members who raised seven hundred and fifty dollars. This year, 1929, our membership has increased to sixty-five who are all sincere and will surely see to it that the quota of one thousand dollars will be filled.

It is certainly due to the activity of our members that we can boast of our financial and moral success.

MRS. MORRIS BEEBER, President.
HADASSAH

Hadassah, the women's Zionist Organization, has a two-fold purpose—to promote Jewish institutions and enterprises in Palestine and to foster Zionist Ideals in America. Hadassah is a national organization with international relationship. The first chapter was organized seventeen years ago. Nationally, there are two hundred and eighty-five chapters in all sections of the country, with a membership of thirty-eight thousand. The Providence Chapter was organized six years ago. It has approximately four hundred members to date.

During this past year we sent fifteen hundred articles of clothing and hospital supplies to the Palestine Supply Department. Of this amount twelve hundred garments were cut by our sewing chairman and made by our eight sewing groups.

The Providence Chapter voted three hundred dollars for land to National Fund several months ago in honor and appreciation of three of our active members, who have distinguished themselves in our community, not only for their work for Palestine, but for everything that is Jewish.

We have also started a Hospital Building Fund which has now reached one thousand dollars since December first in connection with a campaign now being conducted throughout the country. We hope to raise enough money to build a chain of hospitals that will constitute and create a medical department in connection with the Hebrew University where the deserving young men will have an opportunity to study medicine. As you know, this privilege is denied to the Jew in most universities of Europe. We hope to create the medical center of the Orient thereby introducing sanitation, health and healing in the surrounding countries, as well as in Palestine.

Our people who have honored and helped to build up civilization are now trying to establish a home for themselves and every Jew should be proud and happy to do his share.

In what finer way could Jewish womanhood serve her God and her people than that which thirty-eight thousand women in the United States, members of Hadassah, are now doing?

"The healing of the daughter of my people" is our motto and Hadassah has made good the promise embodied in its motto.

MRS. MORRIS SHEER, President.

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