

From the Desk of Rabbi Gold



UNITED SYNAGOGUE

(Continued from last week)

Dr. Prinz said that after the extermination of the six million, the Jews are now entering into a completely new and unique era. He traced the course of the Jewish "emancipation," the eras when citizenship and freedom were granted, and then taken away. Now a new chapter has begun, he said. "For the first time in history the Jews wherever they live, enjoy freedom. This includes the Soviet Union, although freedom there is defined in

purely Soviet terms. It is an era without pogroms."

The problem today is not how Jews can survive with democracy, but how they can survive DESPITE democracy, he declared. Jewish existence is no longer threatened -- physically. But it is wrong to believe that Jewish existence is guaranteed. It is foolish to say that there will always be a Jewry. The inner life of Judaism all over the world points to a process of disintegration which is greater and more vigorous than at any time in Jewish history."

Dr. Prinz is the spiritual leader of Temple B'nai Abraham of Newark, president of the American Jewish Congress and chairman of the Congress of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, composed of the leaders of 21 national religious and secular organizations. He was one of the ten founding chairmen of the March on Washington in 1963 and his address on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial then has since been quoted widely: "Bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problems. The most urgent, the most shameful and most tragic problem is silence," he de-

clared recalling the silence of the world when the Jews of Europe were massacred.

Uprisings of the "have-nots" against the "haves", as in the Watts section of Los Angeles, have occurred in the great cities throughout history -- in Rome, in Athens and elsewhere, but never in Jerusalem, Professor Louis Finkelstein, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, declared here.

Prof. Finkelstein, speaking at the banquet closing the five-day biennial convention of the United Synagogue of America said that the reason for this was that "the Prophets in their time and the Pharisees in their time were leaders of the "have nots" and gave the "haves" something more important than they had had -- "a sense of dignity deriving from their devotion to study and good deeds."

Prof. Finkelstein, who has written several scholarly works on the Pharisees, said that they and the Prophets "have a message for our time".

"Aside from everything else that has to be done to ameliorate the conditions of the poor, what is necessary is to create a system of values where a person can pursue creative goals which will give him dignity in his own eyes."

"Mere material improvement of a person's condition is not enough. What we need is a change in the spiritual outlook by the whole nation."

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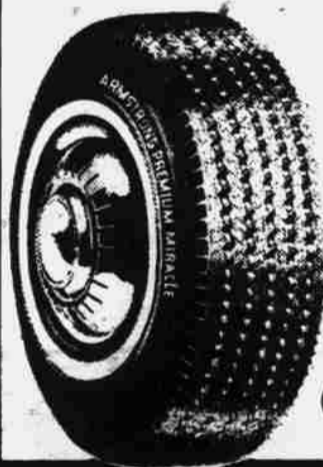
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