

JACK TELL'S NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE

OF NEVADA

Phone 870-1255

Published Every Friday in Las Vegas, Nevada
 Price per copy 15¢ - Per Year \$6 - 2 Years \$10

P.O. Box 549, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89101

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2nd Class Mail, Las Vegas, Nev.

Member American Jewish Press Association
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A Great Newspaper

Current observance of the seventieth anniversary of the Forward, Yiddish daily, brings back to mind an interesting era in Jewish life on the American scene and the transformation which Jewish life both here and abroad has undergone in the seven decades since the founding of the newspaper.

When the Forward was born in 1897, the world was standing at the threshold of a new century, one that held out glorious vistas for the future. True enough, black clouds of reaction were still rampant, but there was also the faith that the blackness would dissipate before the radiance of the new freedom that was expected to be ushered in by the new century. The Jewish position in most countries was precarious, but in the sigh of the liberals and the radicals of the time that situation was to melt under the rays of beneficent enlightenment. The labor movement that was gaining momentum in Eastern Europe was looking forward to the era of economic, cultural and political emancipation that the new century was to bring, and the Jewish workers looked forward to the day of brotherhood when differences among men would be obliterated, when the linking of the workers would break the chain of hostility that kept men and peoples sundered from each other. Oddly enough, it was this dream that held the root of wide Jewish labor hostility to Jewish nationalism.

As a labor paper, the Forward was to mirror that outlook for many years, only later to become a powerful instrument in reversing that trend in the Jewish labor movement. The first dent in the anti-Zionist armor of the Jewish trade unionists was made by Max Pine, one of the founders of the Forward and secretary of the United Hebrew Trades. This was in the early twenties, when he was a leading figure in labor campaigns for Palestine. However, the resistance was not fully broken until 1926, when Abraham Cahan, famed colorful editor of the Forward, made his first journalistic trip to Palestine. The result of that experience was a series of glowing reports on the idealism that was moving the early settlers and of the potentials of the land that now is Israel. Such was the power and prestige of Abe Cahan that the effect of his pronouncements was to reverse the anti-nationalistic coloration of the Jewish labor movement.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the Forward has been the intense Americansim of its general and Jewish outlook - a facet that was common to the Yiddish press at all times - an outlook which contributed tremendously to the Americanization of hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants and their linking with American soil.

The story of the Yiddish press in America and its impact on the intellectual, artistic and literary fermentation in the Yiddish - speaking enclaves has not yet been fully told. If no tongue other than English in the United States has been able to achieve such remarkably high literary creativity as Yiddish, it was because there was no comparable foreign-language press as that created by the early Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe.

We salute the Forward on the occasion of its seventieth birthday, fervently praying that seventy years hence there still will be penning of its praise by journalistic Jewish hands.

over the world.

"Palestine sits in sack cloth and ashes," wrote Mark Twain when he visited it at the beginning of this century. "Over it," he noted then, "broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies." But if Mark Twain were to visit Israel today, on the nineteenth year of its establishment, he would find the fields not withered at all. The fields of Israel now export food to many parts of the world and the cows in Israel give as much milk as in the ancient days when the country was a land of milk and honey.

Israel since its founding has been beset by many difficulties, most of them resulting from the irrational bitterness of its Arab neighbors who are blind to the verity that survival is in peace not in war. Despite all that, Israel in the nineteen years of its existence has developed an economy strong enough to withstand the strains that are concomitant to growth, has built a very substantial merchant marine and has achieved complex of scientific accomplishments that would do honor to older and richer countries. Moreover, even in the midst of economic dislocation and relentless pressure by its Arab neighbors, Israel has neither neglected nor diminished its preoccupation with educational, cultural and artistic values.

But what of the future? Today there is no great volume of refugees rushing across its doors clamoring for admission. The seas are tranquil. But who is the prognosticator who can foresee every storm? "Home," said the late American poet Frost, "is the land where they have to take you." Israel is such a place for the Jew.

One of Israel's greatest tasks now, it was recently pointed out by Dr. Joseph Schwartz of the Israel Bond Organization, is the rounding out of its land resources by the development of the Negev.

Israel's tasks are many and they will be attained with the help of the millions of prayerful Jewish hands throughout the world.

TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth
 Constitutes A Majority"

BY JACK TELL



A "Good Jew"

by Dr. Samuel Silver

What's a Good Jew?

People often debate the question, "What's a Good Jew?" But in Spring Valley, New York, Rabbi Louis Frishman and his sisterhood are quizzing the temple membership for their views.

A questionnaire was sent out listing the criteria of Jewishness and the list is intriguing.

There are 12 possible criteria one is asked to select. To be regarded as a good Jew, which of the following do you deem essential, desirable, or of little importance?

1. Contribute to Jewish charities
2. Support Israel
3. Support humanitarian causes
4. Belong to a synagogue
5. Attend weekly services
6. Lead an ethical and moral life
7. Attend services on High Holydays
8. Know the fundamentals of Judaism
9. Gain respect of Christian neighbors
10. Promote civic betterment
11. Observe the dietary laws
12. Work for civil rights
13. Marry within the Jewish faith
14. Believe in God

The temple planned an audience-participation program to discuss the list. I wish I could have been there. I'm going to write Rabbi Frishman and ask him how it went. If you'd like to, too, the address is 415 Viola Road, Spring Valley, New York.

TO BE CERTAIN THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING, THE OBSERVATIONS EXPRESSED BY JACK TELL ARE HIS AND HIS ALONE, AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS THE OPINIONS OF TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM OR THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

What's a Good Jew?

Now there's a question that should stimulate a lot of interest, especially among those who are affiliated with temple or associated organizational work.

In its broadest aspect, Judaism is a belief in God. Therefore, it stems from within, and how much of a man's devotion to Faith remains in his heart and soul, only he knows.

Judaism is also a religion of laws, specifically the Torah and therefore there are traditions to be followed. In this sense certain forces are evident, which may be seen, heard or felt, and sometimes smelled and tasted. Here we have actions which may be judged by others, and also proof by the person himself, to determine if he is a "Good Jew." But who is to say?

There are all degrees of putting our traditions into practice, and no matter what standards an individual sets up for himself, he is firmly convinced he is a "Good Jew." For instance, some parents feel they are in the chosen category if they send a youngster to Hebrew School. Perhaps so.

Because each, to himself, is a "Good Jew" (and who are others to determine our devoutness?) We will attempt, instead, to evaluate the relationship of the 14 criteria above, in order to their importance.

14. Believe in God. This, to us, in the No. 1 requisite of being a Jew. Here we have the inner reaction that guides us spiritually. All of the others would be meaningless without it.

8. Know the fundamentals of Judaism. We interpret this category to mean the basic principles behind our religion, i.e. the Ten Commandments, and knowing them is not enough. It is their practice that counts.

6. Lead an ethical and moral life. This is a redundancy of the previous item, but it cannot be emphasized enough. What good is being a "Good Jew" if you are a bad person?

5. Attend weekly services. We list this category high in importance because there is no satisfaction to equal the gratification of mental relief from the daily routine.

4. Belong to a synagogue. This is the next step, if you can afford it. Especially if you attend regularly, but even if you don't a place of worship is a responsibility we owe to our religion.

3. Support humanitarian causes. This detail precedes those that follow because all humanity is more important than any segment or requirements of an area.

1. Contribute to Jewish charities and
 2. Support Israel, are next in order because if we don't, who will? We Jews have always been our brother's keeper and there is no brother closer than those of our own religion.

(Continued on Page 5)

Editorial

Israel at 19

by Nathan Ziprin

"What had God wrought?" were the words which first clicked over the wires when the telegraph was invented. What sentence could also more aptly portray the miracle and the joy of that day in 1948 when Israel was born? This, incidentally, was almost a century after the invention of the telegraph. We have of course no recollection of the impact of the phrase announcing the first clicking of the invention. Yet this is certain the news over the wires of the re-establishment of the Jewish States was to many of us of this generation a greater miracle than that wrought by the telegraph invention.

The world on the day Israel was born rubbed its eyes in disbelief, as if awakening from a dream. No longer was the land of the Bible simply an archaeological entity or a theological abstraction and Jerusalem had taken her rightful place among the living capital cities of the world.

What has happened in the years since is perhaps as much a miracle. To sustain her independence, Israel, unlike the United States, needed more than a declaration of independence. She had the land but she had not the people. Most of her people were still to be brought in.

And what about the land? Israel was described then by cynical wits as a land of unlimited impossibilities. Much of the land was without water and her other natural resources were minimal.

But these wits, and the experts who often agreed with them, overlooked one natural resource Israel was gaining -- the people who were its settlers and dwellers.

Oil is important and gold and silver enrich a land, but people, if they are the right kind, can be a great natural resource.

Ben Gurion seemingly understood this. In 1951, when it was first proposed that Israel issue bonds to make possible the economic development of the land, the bankers and the financiers who were consulted said no. Such a bond issue, they counseled, would be doomed, arguing that a newly emerging country could not hope to market its bonds. Despite this advice, Ben Gurion gave the signal to go ahead. "I don't know anything about banking and finance," and his answer, "but I think I know my people."

He proved to be right. When the Israel Bond campaign ends this year the total sale of Israel bonds since the inception of the campaign in 1951 will reach if not exceed the billion dollar mark.

The bond dollars helped lay roads, build harbors, lay out cities, develop new industries. They also made possible the miles of pipes which brought water to parts which had not had a drink in the 2,000 years since Rome destroyed the Jewish nation and scattered her people

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