

Out With the Dybbuks

By ARTHUR CANTOR

Self-abasement in Jewish writers is nothing new. Nor is violent attack on the Jewish community by its own members. The annals of the Old Testament bristle with indignation over the backsliders of Israel--Jeremiah with his visions of sword and pestilence, Ezekiel who girded himself with sackcloth. The Psalms are as filled with self-reproach as with celebrations.

What is new in this era of the speed with which modern communications have scattered the dybbuks of the Jewish psyche.

The Jewish mother -- once a sentimental and cherished symbol -- has become the Medusa. The Jewish ethic, the visionary love of God and one's fellows by which Jews lived and died for a millenium, is now dismissed by alienated Jewish writers. If "Portnoy's Complaint" had been written by a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, he would have been labeled an anti-Semite by both Jews and Christians. But since this onanistic walgurgisnacht is by a Jewish writer using the "new freedom" in attitude and language, it has been welcomed by some Sanhedrin of American-Jewish Criticism with the fatalistic objectivity of concentration camp Trustees watching their fellow inmates marching off to the gas-chambers.

For several years, I have been visiting Jewish communities in America, lecturing at synagogues and community centres. Facilities differ dramatically; some town

have Taj Mahals for assembly, other centers are shabby and antiquated. All breathe dedication and humanity.... the basic attributes of Jewishness.

There are many heartening aspects of Jewish community life. In the midst of self-doubt and quandary, American Jews have much to appreciate about themselves. Everywhere I went, I was struck by the vitality of Jewish participation in American cultural life. American Jews are fierce supporters of symphony orchestras, museums, libraries, ballet companies and, of course, the stage. Cultural programs in community centers and temples seek involvement with contemporary problems. Jewish commitment to political and social progress is a vital truism in American Life.

And within the Jewish community, there are many good and thoughtful people--warm, gentle and concerned-- doing their best to achieve stability and decency for themselves and their children in a bewildering world.

In the avalanche of self-hatred that is sweeping modern American Jewry, it is important to remember that we can also regard ourselves with respect and affection. We can be proud of our origins, our achievements, our fathers and -- yer, even of our mothers.

New Year Greetings, 5730

By DR. EMANUEL NEUMANN

CHAIRMAN, JEWISH AGENCY-AMERICAN SECTION

Though Israel, as we enter the New Year, 5730, is sorely beset by border terrorism and diplomatic problems of distressing magnitude, we look to the future with great hope and confidence for the year just past has been one of high achievement.

Recent events have forged a new unity that has given added strength to a maturing country now in its twenty-second year. The successful Conference on Human Resources, following on the heels of the earlier Economic Conferences, is indicative of the loyal support by the Jews of the Diaspora to the upbuilding of Israel.

As Israel heroically shapes up to the threats of continued Arab intransigence, planned terrorism and the deep concern for the safety of thousands of Jewish hostages in Arab countries, the American Jewish community is aware of the necessity for its full support. Whatever the cost, we are determined to stand by her through every challenge, whether it be economic or political. We once again assert that peace in the Middle East is dependent upon a meeting and agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbors and not upon any solution that might be imposed upon it from without.

As the Shofar sounds again, we rededicate ourselves
ISRAELITE ADS PAY

to the Biblical injunction that we 'bring together our scattered ones from among the nations and gather our dispersed from the uttermost corners of the earth.

Calendar of Commitments

By LOUIS STERN

PRES. NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD

The shock waves of violence and restiveness are keenly felt in America and many parts of the world. These distressing reverberations are a major concern at Rosh Hashanah, as the American Jewish community rededicates itself to building a viable Jewish life founded on significant Jewish identification and Jewish peoplehood.

Streets of our cities, campuses of our universities and members of our communities bear the scars of the dissidence and stress of our times. These disturbing events bring sharply into focus the urgent need for principled, orderly and determined combat against the root causes of social unrest.

As Jews and Americans, we must not fall victim to those who have eyes but are blind to discrimination, have ears but are deaf to calls for social justice, have hearts but no feelings for the oppressed.

The Jewish New Year 5730 comes to us with a calendar of commitments for those pledged to constructive individual and communal action on the vital issues that have such a direct bearing on our lives.

In extending my warmest Rosh Hashanah greetings and those of the National Jewish Welfare Board it is my ardent wish that the New Year will be the harbinger of a just and speedy end to the conflicts in Vietnam and the Middle East, a period of rewarding experiences for all people, and a year of greater social health and contentment.

Happy New Year



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