

SUMMARY

With this, the tenth issue of "Yalkut Moreshet" — a unique periodical on our literary scene — we have completed five years of publication. Our journal has come to be accepted as a serious forum of an established pattern, with a keenly interested, regular readership. In our view the attainment of a tenth issue is a milestone on our path. We shall continue in the future to strive to keep up regular publication and constantly to improve our periodical.

Sources and testimonies

Our tenth issue opens with a chapter from the memoirs of Alexander Pieczorski (Sasza) on the uprising in the Sobibor death camp. This was one of the major uprisings of the entire holocaust era. It was not a spontaneous riot by the prisoners but a carefully planned rebellion implemented according to a pre-conceived programme. Jews from many countries joined forces in the uprising which was a kind of secret pact contracted in death-camp conditions in the shadow of the gas cells of Sobibor. The author, Alexander Pieczorski, was a Russia Jewish officer in the Red Army. He was taken prisoner by the Germans and sent to Sobibor on account of his Jewishness. Here it was he who took the initiative in organizing the uprising and the escape from the camp.

His plan was put through in close cooperation with veteran Jewish inmates of the camp. Pieczorski tells his own personal story in this literary account which, despite its literary flavour, is of considerable value as a document throwing new light on the period and describing the background to the riot and the way it was carried through.

Arieh Lupi (Rico) — "To Brothers in Arms"

Rico, a member of Kibbutz Sarid, was paratrooper and envoy to the Jews of Rumania in World War II. He was one of a group of selected young men and women whose assignment it was to land behind the enemy lines and form contacts with prisoners-of-war from the English-speaking countries. Preparations for their action were made in co-ordination with British Intelligence, but the young people themselves regarded it as their principal task to make contacts with the Jewish communities and to establish ways of bringing assistance to these ill-fated communities.

Rico and his fellow-paratrooper land in Rumania, are caught by the Rumanians and imprisoned. They manage to hide their true identity and

from contacts with the prisoners-of-war. Upon their release, they immediately begin taking action among the Jews. Later on, as an envoy on behalf of the Palestinian Jewish community to Rumanian Jews, Rico became one of the organizers of the illegal immigration movement to Palestine, whose gates were officially kept locked to the survivors of the holocaust.

Rahel Aharonowicz — the author, a former prisoner in the Krakow ghetto who survived detention in a series of concentration camps, describes the psychological metamorphoses which took place in individuals as they suffered the catastrophes and the upheavals wrought in their lives by the Nazi occupation. She is a qualified psychologist who applies the keen insight of her professional perception to her analyses.

The short chapter which we publish is an extract from a larger work. Rahel Aharonowicz sets out to prove that the changes which took place in the reactions and traits of individuals were of an extreme kind, giving rise to unexpected manifestations in the behaviour of people in a state of tremendous tension faced with the unbearable ordeals of the period.

Michael Tagliacozzo — The Nazi persecution of the Jews of Rome.

Michael Tagliacozzo's essay opens the series of articles on the central theme of this issue — The history of the Jews of Rome in the short period following Germaiy's seizure of power in Italy (September — October 1943). Tagliacozzo briefly sums up the actions of the S.S. Sturmaband-führer Herbert Keppler and of the officials of Eichmann's division in the city of Rome.

Next, we publish the "Report on the Persecution of Jews of Rome in the early days of the German Occupation" written by Prof. Uogo Foa, then chairman of the Jewish community of Rome. He sums up the principal measures taken by the German authorities against the Jews of Rome:

- a. A ransom of 50 kg. of gold per capita was imposed (September 26—28 1943);
- b. The German's sacked the offices of the community, searched them and seized all the registry books, most of the archives and other papers, as well as a sum of 2,021,540 lira (29.9.1943).
- c. Harassments of a minor nature, during the lull between the raid of the community offices and the sacking of the two libraries (between September 30 and October 12, 1943).

- d. Pillage of the community library (which contained one of the richest selections in Europe of works on Judaica) and of the rabbinical college library (13.10.1943 and the following days).
- e. Seizure and deporting of large numbers of Jews, irrespective of age, sex or state of health — on October 16, 1943.

Rosina Surano — From the Diary of Persecutions

These are the regular daily entries in the diary of a clerk employed at the Jewish community office in Rome — describing developments in the community and among the Jews in the Italian capital. Due to the personal angle of the writer, we see the events described previously in the official report from a personal, individual slant.

STUDIES

This section opens with Dr. Daniel Carpi's essay on "**The beginning and development of anti-semitism in Italy**". Dr. Carpi in his study reviews the various stages in the development of the hatred of the Jews which penetrated the fascist state. The author points out that anti-semitism in Italy emanated from the alleged identification between the Jews and the liberal movement of Europe. The alleged pact between Jewish "internationalism" and liberal circles, or the freemasons, was presented as the "original sin" of all the revolutionary trends of Europe.

Despite apprehensions, during the first fifteen years of Mussolini's rule in Italy there were few manifestations of active anti-semitism, and during this period no fundamental changes occurred in the situation of Italian Jewry. However, when Italy changed the course of its policies in 1936—1937 (the Eritrean war, declaration of the empire, the tension in Anglo-Italian relations, attempts to win the support of the Arabs and the rapprochement with Nazi Germany) a change took place in the attitude towards the Jews in general and to the Jews of Italy in particular.

Racial theories began to penetrate Italy, a "race campaign" was launched, and racial laws were enacted:

This legislation (of November 17, 1938, No. 1728) in addition to clauses stipulating the deportation of foreign Jews and banning all Italian Jews from learning or teaching at state schools, also contained:

- a. A strict ban on marriages between Jews and Aryans.
- b. A juridical definition of who was deemed to be a Jew (such as the offspring of parents of the Jewish race — even if he professes to a religion other than Jewish; the son of one Jewish and one foreign parent; the offspring of parents of

Italian citizenship one of whom in of the Jewish race and professes to the Jewish religion).

- c. The obligation to declare one's belonging to the Jewish race and to see to it that due entries were made in one's personal documents as well as in the records of Public Registrar etc.
- d. Severe restrictions on civil rights were imposed, such as: Jews were banned from military service; they were forbidden to act as legal guardians for non-Jewish minors; were not permitted to maintain ownership of companies, farms or buildings whose value exceeded a given amount, or to employ Aryan servants, hold any public or government office or any post subject to state control or supported by the state, such as management posts in banks and insurance institutions.

This law also stipulated that Jews who had in the past been awarded some special recognition by the state (such as war medals) or who were war invalids or volunteers, or who had been members of the Fascist party from 1919—1922, and in the second half of 1924, could apply to the Ministry of the Interior for "special privilege" status. This meant that they would be permitted to hold on to immobile properties and to employ Aryan servants, but were still subject to all the other restrictions imposed on the Jews.

A further series of laws was enacted which carried anti-Jewish legislation a stage further, in effect banning the Jews from practising the liberal professions (June 29, 1939 — No. 1054) and imposing increasingly severe restrictions on them concerning the ownership of property and partnerships in commercial and industrial companies (February 9, 1939, No. 126). Then, upon instructions from the Party secretariat or, in some cases upon the private initiative of a local official, the Jews banned from owning radie sets, from spending their time at holidays centres, from publishing newspapers etc.

Dr. Carpi goes on to describe the actual effects of this anti-Jewish policy: the situation of foreign Jews; the restrictions upon and ousting of the Jews from public life; the camps set up in Italy during the war, forced labour etc.

The last chapter refers briefly to the situation of the Jews after the Germans had siezed control in Italy. The writer cooncludes: "Some 7,750 Jews out of a total Jewish population of 35,000 who were in Italy during the German occupation, were missing at the end of the war. Of these, 7,496 had been banished and the rest murdered or had fallen in battle".

Dr. Yehuda Bauer — Jewish Palestine during World War II.

Dr. Yehuda Bauer of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in his essay describes the pattern of relations between Jewish population of Palestine and Britain during World war II.

Both sides were facing a severe dilemma. The British ostensibly wished to utilize the fresh and vigorous force of the Yishuv (Jewish community) of Palestine against the Axis, but powerful political elements in Britain foiled the Jews entering into military alliance. They feared that, if Britain were to accept the Jews as a more or less independent element among the Allied armed forces, this would provoke anti-British feeling among the Arabs on the one hand and oblige her to enter into far-reaching political commitments towards the Jewish people on the other.

The Jews too were in a difficult situation. British policy as expressed in the White Paper, and particularly the cruel restrictions on immigration, forced the Yishuv to oppose the British while at the same time, in the global struggle, they were obviously on the side of the Allies (i.e. including the British) for it was only by fighting on this side that the Jews of Palestine could help their brethren suffering oppression by the Nazis and threatened with utter annihilation by the German regime.

Dr. Bauer describes developments among various planes: the formation of military units among the Jews of Palestine, the scale of the volunteer movement, the way in which the Unit was formed under the Palestinian banner, and the actions taken to provide aid to the Jews still in Europe. He describes both the plans drawn up and the actual implementation.

Dr. Daniel Carpi — The Jews of Spaletto and Sarayevo

(new documents: 1941-42)

Dr. Carpi publishes two important documents revealing enlightening aspects of the Italian occupation of Croatia. These two documents, published unabridged in Hebrew translation, are two separate reports written by leaders of the Jewish communities of Spalette and Mostar at the beginning of 1942. They reveal that in December 1941 or January 1942, a visit was paid to Mostar by the commander of the Italian "Alpine Hunters" division, some of whose units were stationed as a garrison in the town. On the occasion of this visit, the general convened a meeting with representatives of the various ethnic and national communities — Croations, Serbs, Muslim and Jews, in order to try and dissolve the mutual animosity that prevailed, and which was an obstacle to the maintenance of security in the region.

At the time, besides the local Jewish community of Mostar, there were hundreds of Jewish refugees in the town. They had come mainly from Sarajevo, having fled to the zone of Italian occupation in apprehension of persecution by the Croatian collaborationist forces. Whether deliberately or otherwise, the general asked the Jews what had prompted them to abandon their homes and choose the tough and bitter path of homeless wanderers. The refugees gave their exhaustive reply to this question in a detailed memorandum describing what had been the fate of the Jews in their home town, Sarajevo, since the establishment of the "independent state of Croatia" dwelling in particular on the fate of those who had fallen into the hands of the local militia and been jailed in Croatian prisons and concentration camps.

The main purpose of the authors of this memorandum was to persuade the Italian authorities not to force them to return to their former homes and to continue, as in the past, to take a liberal line of policy towards them and to other refugees who might yet succeed in fleeing from the zones of German occupation. With this end in view, the Jews sent copies of the memorandum to various institutions and Jewish and non-Jewish personalities who might be in a position to help them in some way in their struggle for survival and for the lives of their dear ones.

Through the Italian consulate in Sarajevo, this document eventually made its way to the office of Italy's Foreign Minister, Count G. Ciano. After some time, a group of senior Foreign Ministry officials in charge of Croatian affairs, referred to it in the negotiations begun in the summer of 1942 at various diplomatic levels, to substantiate their opposition to the extradition of these refugees.

Yisrael Gutman — Czerniakov, the man and the Diary.

Following publication of "The Czerniakov Diary", an important document containing the diary entries of the head of the Judenrat in the Warsaw Ghetto, Yisrael Gutman in this paper compares what we know of Czerniakov from the impressions of those who have written about him, with those one may gather from Czerniakov's own entries in his daily record.

Many of the impressions he made upon the people who knew him at that time are confirmed by his own diary, while many others are refuted. The writer sets out to analyse the traits and actions of the man, through a careful study of the available sources. He contends that neither a totally apologetic nor a totally critical attitude towards

Czerniakov would be tenable. From an objective assesment emerges the interesting figure of a man who came from a certain environment remote from the Jewish masses, and whose actions were influenced by the conditions created and imposed upon him by the occupation. In his sincere, subjective approach and with his honest good intentions, he attempted in vain to break through the impenetrable wall of pre-determined, unshakeable Nazi decrees and their policy whose ultimate goal was complete annihilation.

In an Appendix, Gutman presents a selection of extracts from various works referrnig to the engineer Adam Czerniakov as an individual, and to his actions as head of the Judenrat. The writer has selected entries from diaries and memoirs of people who lived in the Warsaw ghetto, were Czerniakov's associates or expressed the feelings of the ghetto about him.

in the **Discussion Section**, Aharon Weiss comments on Haika Grosman's article on "The 52 th Anniversary of the Byalistrock Ghetto Uprising" which appeared in No. 9 of **Yalkut Moreshet**.

Haika Grosman replies to Mr. Weiss' remarks, stressing her own approach to the problem of the Judenrat.

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P E R I O D I C A L

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