

PROTEST AGAINST REARMING GROWS

Fear of nazi rearmament among the Jewish masses is beginning to find voice despite the silence imposed by the Jewish leadership in the U.S.

By Louis Harap

THE war crisis over Formosa is serious enough but the people would be ill-advised to allow it to blunt awareness of the parallel danger of a threatened West German rearmament. The peace of the world hinges on the ability of the people to affect State Department policy on both questions. Thus, while the Far Eastern crisis is the immediate peril, crucial decisions concerning West German rearmament will also be made in the coming few months. We dare not allow our concern over the former to divert us from acting also on the latter.

And action on West German rearmament is sorely needed. While there is an ominous silence in Jewish organized life on the rearmament issue, the fears of the American people and particularly the masses of Jews are beginning to find expression. One significant sign is the brief but laden comment of *New York Post* publisher Dorothy Schiff. "In this country," she wrote on January 30, "few voices have been raised against reviving the Wehrmacht. No protest meetings have been held at Madison Square Garden although the nazis are rising again in Germany." Miss Schiff has good reason to be worried at an apparent lack of awareness—or is it a lack of backbone?—on the part of leading spokesmen at the revival of the peril which in the thirties evoked widespread protest in the country at large and among the Jews in particular. One would suppose that, with the experience of Hitlerism behind us and the horror of hydrogen war before us, there would be a universal outcry against rearmament of a re-nazified West Germany.

The deep-seated fear among the Jewish masses is beginning to break through. After the Paris agreements were signed last October, the American Jewish Congress, following the lead of the World Jewish Congress, expressed its "misgivings" (*Congress Weekly*, November 8, 1954) but has not come out flatly in opposition to rearmament. More frequently now does one see editorial expressions of apprehension in the English-Jewish press. The *Intermountain Jewish News* (Denver, Colo.), for instance, concludes an editorial on January 6, thus: "To Jewry, who cannot erase the horrible memory of Hitler, German rearmament makes us shudder. We can only pray that [French ex-Premier] Mendes-France's victory [on ratification of the Paris agreements] is not a phyrnic victory." Why we should not express our fears in protest as well as prayer, the paper does not suggest. But the New Jersey

Department of the Jewish War Veterans has passed over to protest. Early in the year its commander, Edward Nappen, issued a statement for his state organization warning of the threat of "creation of a Fourth Reich at least as powerful as Hitler's empire. . . . Behind the German anxiety to contribute military divisions to the European army lurks the specter of yet another German bid for control of the continent."

Why Are They Silent?

Welcome as are these sporadic expressions of alarm and protest, the fact is that most of the leaders of Jewish organized life are silent as the grave on the question. It is true that, following the shocking outburst of virulent nazi anti-Semitism in West Germany last November, several Jewish leaders like Rabbi Norman Salit, president of the Synagogue Council of America, called for a "halt" in the plans for West German rearmament and Dr. Emanuel Neumann, chairman of the executive committee of the Zionist Council of America, warned that such demonstrations "threaten to disqualify the Bonn government as an ally of this country consecrated to the cause of democracy and human freedom." But nothing further has been heard from most Jewish organizations.

Why this blanket of silence on an issue which so vitally affects the whole future and survival of the Jewish people, let alone the American people as a whole? The basic reason is the adherence of most of the Jewish leadership to State Department foreign policy. The keystone of this policy in the West is the rearming of West Germany as a spearhead of a military alliance against the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that the re-nazified rulers of West Germany have made no secret either of their aggressive military intentions or of their anti-Semitism (see "The Fact-Sheet on West German Rearmament," in our January issue), the Jewish leaders have sat on the lid with respect to the problem.

When West German rearmament was formally introduced about four years ago, the State Department was confronted with the problem of neutralizing the antagonism of democratically-minded people and especially the masses of Jews toward rearming the same nazi elements that had only a short time ago plunged the world into war and perpetrated a ghastly genocide. The State De-

partment came up with the scheme of buying off the opposition of the Jewish masses by a deal with the leadership. With the State Department in the background, West German Chancellor Adenauer offered to pay "reparations" to the Jewish people. A "Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany" was set up composed of the leaders of major Jewish organizations in the non-socialist world. The effective leadership of the conference, however, lay with a handful of United States Jewish leaders, led by Dr. Nahum Goldmann as State Department agent extraordinary and battering ram of the whole deal. There was widespread opposition to the plan from the Jewish masses all over the world. They regarded the deal as a shameful bartering of Jewish honor for money. After months of negotiations, a pact was signed on September 10, 1952 by Adenauer and Dr. Goldmann providing that West Germany would pay the Israel government \$712,000,000 in goods over a period of 12 years and \$107,000,000 over the same period to Jewish organizations and projects outside of Israel. In March 1953 the deal was ratified by both the Israel and West German governments.

The disgrace of the whole deal is now compounded with the allocation of funds in the United States to organizations and individuals who are not victims of nazism. The affair has the look of a racket. Here are some of the allocations in the United States last year: \$310,000 to the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO); \$175,000 to the Jewish Labor Committee, and \$140,000 to 52 Jewish writers in the United States.

Behind the Adenauer Deal

Shortly after the deal was broached, this writer pointed out (JEWISH LIFE, December 1951, p. 3) that "the reality behind the conference was the attempt to strangle opposition to the rearmament of West Germany." The utter silence of the greatest part of the Jewish leadership in this country from that day to this on the danger of West German rearmament and their successful suppression of all discussion of the issue in Jewish organized life, confirms this analysis up to the hilt. At the Third Plenary Assembly of the World Jewish Congress in August 1953, Dr. Goldmann and the United States leaders actually succeeded in heading off action for which European Jewish leaders pressed on the dangers to the Jewish people of renazification and rearmament. Commenting on the Assembly, *Zionistische Bletter* (August 1953), organ of the General Zionist Federation of France, exclaimed in shocked indignation that at the meetings Dr. Goldmann was so anxious to suppress the whole question that he opposed even the mention of the six million Jewish dead. "It was not at all a question of accusing the German people," said the paper, "it was only a question of mentioning the martyrs, of mentioning them!"

The question of West German rearmament has not even been on the agenda of most Jewish organizations—at least, publicly. But there are signs of an awakening among the

E. European Jews Against Rearmament

THE remnants of the Jews in Eastern Europe, who felt the full force of Hitler's fury, have in recent weeks strongly expressed their opposition to the rearmament of a renazified West Germany and the threat to peace and the entire Jewish people that it bears.

From Moscow came the appeal of Rabbi S. M. Schliefer, head of the city's Jewish religious community. It was originally published in *Izvestia* (January 6) together with those of Christian and Moslem leaders. "The Jewish people, together with other peoples, suffered enormous losses during the Second World War. German fascism, seeking to exterminate our people, murdered millions of defenseless persons of Jewish nationality. . . . Jewish believers! Remember and do not forget the fascist crimes! Fight for peace in conformity with the words of the Bible: 'Seek peace and strive for it' (Psalms 34, 15)."

A message by the Polish Jewish leaders Ber Mark, Ida Kaminska and Abraham Bankier in mid-December, said: "We protest the revival of German militarism, which again threatens the peace and independence of Europe and the existence of the Jewish people. Polish Jews, together with the entire Polish nation, will continue the struggle for collective security and against the arming of the nazi genocides."

The Rabbinical Council and the Council of Religious Jewish Communities in Czechoslovakia also in January sent an appeal to co-believers in France, Britain, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark and Norway not "to forget our six million dead brothers and sisters, victims of nazism. Do not allow new weapons, spattered with the blood of our parents and children, to be given into the hands of the German fascists!"

Jewish people of our country, as we indicated earlier. Thus, in the January issue of the *Bulletin* (in Yiddish), organ of the Free Jewish Club, an independent liberal group that includes some labor leaders, a page one editorial protesting silence of Jewish organized life on rearmament, comments that "One could have known that the acceptance of [reparations] money from [West] Germany would bring tragic results. But that it would come to the shame that Jews would remain silent in the face of giving all kinds of arms to the nazis—this the devil himself could not have foreseen." The *Bulletin* charges the Zionists and Israel with the whole responsibility for this state of affairs. Although Zionist leaders do bear a large share of the responsibility, it is the cold war leadership, both Zionist and non-Zionist, of Jewish organized life in this country under the thumb of the State Department that is basically responsible. For leaders of both persuasions negotiated and pushed through the deal, exploiting Israel's need for money and goods.

European Jews Protest

The survivors of Hitlerism themselves are crying out in shocked horror at the attempt of Jewish leadership to silence Jewish opposition with what they call "blood money" for their murdered relatives and their own sufferings. In

Canada, four survivors of Belsen, Auschwitz and Buchenwald appealed to the Canadian Jewish Congress in December 1954: "Can we keep silent today when many nazis are free again and are just waiting to put their hands on a gun again? No! Our silence would be a betrayal. . . .We appeal to you to use every ounce of your strength to prevent the rearmament of Germany. We must stop them from rearming Germany now—before it is too late."

In France the death camp survivors are even more vigorous in their demands. The 10th annual meeting in December 1954 in Paris of former concentration camp inmates and families of the martyred protested the return of the hangmen of Auschwitz and Maidanek. They resolved to mobilize the surviving victims of Hitlerism to fight against West German rearmament and the use of the Adenauer-Goldman "Maidanek-money" to help whitewash the crimes of nazism. In a recent issue of the *Bulletin of the Union* of former Jewish deportees of France, the organization's general secretary, H. Bulovko, passionately condemned the "scandal" of the affair of the "Maidanek-money." He scored the fact that United States Jewish leaders have taken it upon themselves in the name of the victims of nazism but without consulting them to accept "reparations" money. This money, he pointed out, is being used to stifle opposition in the Jewish community to German rearmament. The whole deal, he said, is a "Judenrat swindle." Bulovko gives voice to the sentiments of Jewish death camp survivors all over the world. In Israel these survivors of Hitlerism together with masses of Jews have repeatedly demonstrated in the past few months against

rearmament of a renazified West Germany. Over 400,000 Israelis, crossing all party lines, have signed a petition against German rearmament.

The imposition of silence on the American Jewish community has been so effective that Dr. Albert Einstein was moved to express his stand against West German rearmament by greeting opposition by Jews in Europe, not in this country. Andre Blumel, French Zionist leader who is head of the French Actions Committee Against German Rearmament, recently revealed in Paris that he was fortified by a personal message he received from Dr. Einstein on the work of his committee. In this letter Dr. Einstein supported the unity manifested in the Conference of European Jews Against German Rearmament held in Paris on December 12, 1954.

Meanwhile Jews in Europe continue to protest against German rearmament. On January 16 a delegation of the Board of Deputies of British Jews headed by its president, Dr. A. Cohen, called on British Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs R. H. Turton to warn against the increasing signs of renazification and to reaffirm their opposition to the prospective rearming of West Germany. And the French Section of the World Jewish Congress about the same time restated their opposition. It is only in this country that the Jewish organizations, which are under the domination of those responsible for the Adenauer deal, have not yet given organized expression to the fears of the Jewish people to the rearming of those who murdered one-third of our people.

Opposition Is Growing

A Warning from WJ Congress

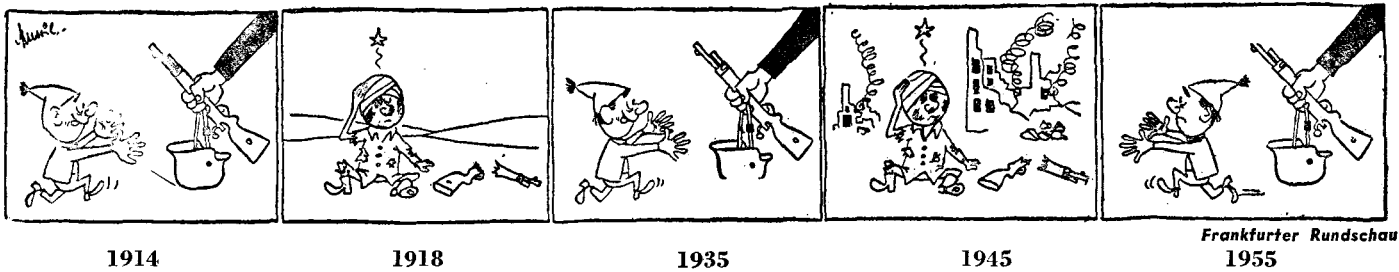
A dire warning of the danger in the rearmament of Germany was issued by the World Jewish Congress Executive on January 30 at the conclusion of a three day meeting on the issue. Following is the text of the resolution:

"The World Jewish Congress Executive, in plenary session assembled, recalling the resolutions and declarations of the World Jewish Congress adopted as early as 1944 and reiterated in 1948, 1951 and 1953, in opposition to the rearmament of Germany, both East and West, takes the occasion of its meeting at a time when the rearmament of Germany appears imminent to call attention to the dangers which this policy may generate and to the urgent necessity of seeking every possible safeguard against them.

"In the light of the terrible catastrophe suffered by the Jewish people and by the world at the hands of the nazi regime in Germany, in which militarism played so sinister a role, there is widespread concern over the threat of a renascent militarism in Germany. It is, therefore, our solemn duty to call the attention of the governments in both parts of Germany and of the great powers which are behind them, to the need for unremitting vigilance in preventing every attempt, overt or covert, to reinstate a militarism which may go hand in hand with the resurgence of Nazism, the fostering of anti-Semitism and the thwarting of the processes of democracy."

The Jews of Canada are aroused over the issue. Eminent Jews have protested and publicly dissociated themselves from the vote in favor of West German rearmament cast in the Canadian Parliament by two Jewish M.P.'s, Leon Crestohl and David Croll. The *Jewish Standard*, of Toronto, has taken an editorial stand against West German rearmament. "There will be those," said the magazine on January 15, "who say that the arming of Germany will go on despite our protests. . . . But our protests will at least draw the attention of those determined to put arms into the hands of the Germans to the terrible dangers involved."

There is in some quarters an unjustifiable sense of the futility of protest. The intensely anti-Soviet labor Zionist organ, *Jewish Frontier* (January), concludes a gloomy editorial with the statement that "It may be too late to protest the decision to rearm Germany but it is hard to escape the conclusion that a great blunder and a still greater wrong are being committed." But the *Jewish Frontier* and the other Jewish papers that recognize the need for protest but view this as hopeless, are giving up too easily. For West German rearmament is still far from assured. The fall of Mendes-France's government on February 5 has thrown French ratification of the Paris agreements in doubt once again.



1914

1918

1935

1945

Frankfurter Rundschau
1955

The extremely militant campaign against rearmament being conducted by the West German labor movement and Social Democratic Party has Adenauer and advocates of a new Wehrmacht worried. More than 800,000 West German coal and steel workers held a one day strike on January 22 in protest against threatened rearmament. The labor movement is carrying on an intense campaign to hold up ratification at least until the Soviet offers of negotiation for reunification are tried. Social Democratic leader Erich Ollenhauer said on January 25: "We will use all democratically permissible means to block ratification of the Paris treaties until the last possibilities have been exhausted for opening serious negotiations with the Soviet government on restoration of German unity. Never in its ten years of post-war history has the German people been faced with such a fateful issue."

In view of this powerful West German opposition, in addition to that of the French and British peoples, there is no justification for assuming that the issue has been decided. The all-too justified fears of the Jewish people at the prospect of a resuscitated Nazi Wehrmacht can be mobilized to add considerable strength to the already strong opposition and thus contribute toward the defeat of the war-threatening Paris agreements.

Rearmament Is No "Lesser Evil"

There is a widely held view that rearmament is a "lesser evil." Here is typical expression of this view: "I, for one, am deeply troubled by the prospect of a rearmed Germany and yet I am prepared to acquiesce in it as made necessary by Russian aggression" (Herman A. Gray, *Jewish Newsletter*, February 7). We can only briefly discuss this erroneous viewpoint. In the first place, the "threat of Soviet aggression" is a cold war propaganda myth which is not really believed to any extent anywhere in the world except in the United States. People recognize that the Soviet government does not want war any more than their own governments want it—all of them have had as much of war as they will take and do not relish the prospect of hydrogen bomb annihilation. The Soviet Union, moreover, has shown persistently that it wishes to negotiate all questions and to avoid war. In relation to Germany, it has made concessions, especially in recent months, on the issue of free German elections in order to reunify that country and thus avoid the threat of a new Korea-type war. More than this, the Soviet demand for a *neutralized*, democratic and unified Germany is a guar-

antee against war since the heart of the war danger is in an aggressive, remilitarized Germany.

But even if one does not accept this line of reasoning, one needs to face the cold fact that the most rabid expansionists in West Germany are bound to realize—as indeed Hitler did—especially after the debacle of the attempt to conquer the Soviet Union, that absorption of Western Europe is a much easier and more likely of success than an attack on the Soviet Union. What West German rearmament may very well mean is that the United States and West Europe will help build a new military machine which will promptly turn against the Western powers. As the Brooklyn *Jewish Examiner* expressed it (December 31, 1954), "When Germans march to war, they inevitably march west rather than east—at least in the beginning." West German rearmament thus is an invitation to suicide on the part of participants in the Paris pacts.

What To Do

The fears of the Jewish people and of the peoples of the world have a real basis. It is therefore time that the Jewish people and their organizations heed the call of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, who is crying for peace like a prophet in the wilderness. In his year-end sermon in The Temple in Cleveland, Rabbi Silver once again affirmed that "Only a democratic, disarmed, neutralized and united Germany, as envisaged in the Potsdam agreement, will keep peace." Since the leadership of Jewish organized life has largely suppressed discussion of this vital issue, it is high time that the members of Jewish organizations have a say in the deciding policy on this all-important issue. The masses of Jews must have the opportunity to discuss the crucial question of West German rearmament and participate in decisions regarding it. The demand for discussion of the issue needs to be made throughout Jewish organized life.

The Jewish masses have the right to make their voice heard on this issue when the Senate considers ratification of the Paris agreements. To this end, both individuals and organizations can demand that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hold open hearings on the Paris agreements and that as many representatives of the people as possible be permitted to present their viewpoint at the hearings. The interests of the Jewish people as well as the American people as a whole dictate that the greatest number of such representatives speak for their organizations at these hearings.