

ASSIMILATION and the JEWISH PEOPLE

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Published by the:

MORNING FREIHEIT
35 East 12th Street
New York 3, N. Y.
Tel: - AL 4-9480

October, 1964

03186

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SOCIAL STUDIES & RESEARCH

The following pamphlet consists of three articles by Paul Novick, editor-in-chief of the Morning Freiheit, published in the Morning Freiheit on May 17, May 31 and June 14, 1964.

The Morning Freiheit is a progressive Jewish daily, appearing every day in the week in Yiddish and on week-ends in an enlarged edition containing a special section in English (2 pages).

The Morning Freiheit has been in existence for close to 43 years, having been established in April, 1922. Throughout these years it has championed the cause of the Jewish people, the laboring masses and American democracy generally, fighting against anti-Semitism, for Jewish culture, for better union conditions. During the last few years it has been conducting a campaign against the Nazi-collaborators admitted to this country under the MacCaran-Walter Act and is now engaged in an energetic campaign against the ultras and the entire Goldwater cabal.

The Morning Freiheit has particularly distinguished itself throughout the years in bringing on its pages, not only up-to-date news from all corners of the earth, but also the best of Yiddish literature and culture in general.

The Morning Freiheit has its own correspondents in Israel, the Soviet Union, Poland, France, England, Rumania, Canada, Cuba and a number of other countries. It also has its own special correspondents in every major city in the United States.

The Morning Freiheit can be obtained on the news stands in all the major cities with a compact Jewish population and can also be subscribed to by mail. The rate is \$20.00 per year - or \$6.00 for the week-end edition.

Readers of this pamphlet can obtain a subscription for the week-end edition for \$3.00 the first year.

THE MORNING FREIHEIT
35 East 12th Street
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The May issue of the magazine USSR, published by the Soviet Embassy in Washington, contains quite a few Jewish names.

On a two-page spread Edward Rosental writes about Ideals and Reality. In the tid-bits, Around the Country, the scientist Yakov B. Zeldovich comes forward with a new theory about the universe. The childrens corner opens up with a feature article by Felix Shapiro. Boris Lempert discusses foreign language study. Professor Iosif Braginsky, an orientalist-philologist, Honored Worker of Science, deals with a Jewish question, that of assimilation. The economist Genrikh Emdin writes on economic experimentation.

The participation of so large a proportion of Jews in one issue of the USSR is no surprise to people who know, or want to know the facts which proponents of the slanderous "theory" of Soviet "anti-semitism" are trying to hide. And that is — that the proportion of Jews occupying honorable positions in the fields of science and art is quite high.

But this is just an aside. It is the article by Professor Braginsky which drew our particular attention.

His article is captioned: ASSIMILATION? YES, BUT WHY? Whether the "Why" is sufficiently explained we shall see.

It seems to us Prof. Braginsky skins the first stage of the subject and that is: ASSIMILATION — HOW? It is true, he speaks of "non-forcible assimilation of the Jews or any other nationality." But that is all he has to say on this subject — a half a dozen words or so. This is quite insufficient on a question which is of great concern to the Jewish or any other nationality.

What does "non-forcible assimilation" mean? Lenin answers this question by stating: "Inseparably connected with the principle of complete equality is the guaranteeing of the rights of a national minority... The incorporation in the Constitution of a fundamental law which shall declare null and void all privileges whatsoever enjoyed by one nation and all infringements whatsoever of the rights of a national minority" (V. I. Lenin: Critical Remarks On the National Question, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow 1951, p. 49).

Polemizing with the leaders of the Jewish social-democratic Bund who advocated national cultural autonomy, Lenin quotes statistics of the number of pupils in the schools of St. Petersburg in czarist days (in 1911), with 396 Jewish children of a total enrollment of 48,076, and he asks: "Is it possible to draw up a 'positive' national program that will cover this diversity of relationship and conditions?"

In answering this question, Lenin speaks of "a fundamental law that rendered null and void every measure that infringed the rights of a minority"... "Every citizen would be able to demand the rescinding of orders that would, for example, prohibit the hiring at state expense, of teachers of the Jewish language. Jewish history, and so forth, or the provision of state-owned premises for lectures for Jewish, Armenian or Rumanian children, or even for one Georgian child. At all events, it is by no means impossible to satisfy all the reasonable and just wishes of the national minorities on the basis of equality, and nobody will say that the advocacy of equality is harmful" (Ibid, p.p. 51-52).

This equality, as is well known, was introduced by Lenin after

the October Revolution. When Lenin's approach was still in force in the 1930's, in the Ukraine alone there were 765 Jewish schools with over 90,000 pupils, 3 teachers' seminaries, 16 technical schools, numerous Yiddish libraries and reading rooms, 3 Jewish state theatres, 10 Yiddish newspapers and periodicals and one Jewish scientific institute. A similar flourishing of Jewish culture took place in Byelorussia. In Moscow, there was the famous Jewish State theatre headed by Solomon Mikhoels, the Yiddish club "Kommunist," a Jewish school in the suburb of Malakhovka, the Yiddish daily Emes and the publishing house under that name and many other Jewish cultural institutions. In Moscow, Minsk, Kiev, Birobidjan there existed Yiddish pedagogical institutes, university chairs, scientific establishments.

Just these few facts — and there are a great many more — will suffice to illustrate how the Leninist program of equality was put into practice. Then, towards the end of the 1930's there developed the Stalin Cult and a suppression of Jewish culture began. Most Jewish schools were closed down, as were the Emes and other Yiddish publications. Yiddish book publishing still continued, and it is worth mentioning that while in 1913, under czarism, only 73 Yiddish titles were published, they numbered 339 (titles) in 1939.

After the war the Emes publishing house resumed activity, publishing 14 titles in 1945, 19 in 1946, 52 in 1947 and 60 titles in the first ten month of 1948 (in November all Jewish cultural institutions were clamped down).

The Moscow Jewish State Theatre too, was revived after the war and a Yiddish weekly, Einikeit, was published by the Jewish

Anti-Facist Committee which had developed many activities in the field of Jewish culture and general Jewish affairs. All this was cut down when the cult brought down its heavy hand on the peoples of the USSR generally on the Jewish people in particular.

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Since the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party Jewish culture was rehabilitated to a certain degree. There is the bi-monthly Soviet Heimland with a circulation larger than the circulation of any of the Yiddish magazines even in the 1930's. There are a number of dramatic groups touring the country. Attendance at Jewish concerts reached the enormous figure of 300,000 in 1963. All this is very important and in accordance with a Leninist approach to the national question.

However, there is no Yiddish publishing house and no Yiddish books whatsoever were published in 1962 and 1963 (and thus far in 1964). There are no Jewish schools and facilities "for hiring at state expense, of special teachers of the Jewish language, Jewish history and so forth, or the provision of "state owned-premises for lectures" for Jewish children as required by Lenin.

Prof. Braginsky states that "only" some 20 per cent of the people of Jewish nationality (in the USSR) "declared Yiddish as their native tongue". Considering the line of forced assimilation practiced by the Stalin cult for over 20 years prior to the 1959 census; considering the fact that that part of the Jewish population which was not evacuated by the Soviet authorities during the war, or could not be evacuated (or did not want to leave their old homesteads) and which was exterminated by the Nazis was overwhelmingly of the older generation (the younger

people were quite young while many hundreds of them were in — considering the facts one is amazed at the percentage!

But what is a registered Yiddish tongue to do with teaching his children? Jewish schools, courses, with no whatsoever? Lenin's question should be asked and he showed in 1917, how national into practice. No Leninist approach is to be able to speak non-forcible assimilation to quote Prof. B.

In our next article how Prof. Braginsky's language assimilation approach is being used by Prof. Braginsky to Yiddish. That was a deeply nationalistic to a certain Jewish communist which is not Yiddish's overwhelming proves the point assimilation does not assimilation!

This is something like Prof. Braginsky's member, I think there was a Jewish Russian in the Soviet Jews who Yiddish are now Jewish books translated, although it is sians, Ukrainians and other nationalities relation from the

Since we mention Jewish communist one must say, in until the American and municipal provide the means for Yiddish cour

people were quicker to evacuate while many hundreds of thousand of them were in the Red Army — considering these and other facts one is amazed at such a large percentage!

But what is a parent who registered Yiddish as his native tongue to do when he wants to teach his child Yiddish, with no Jewish schools or supplementary courses, with no Yiddish textbooks whatsoever? Lenin stated how this question should be answered — and he showed the world, after 1917, how national equality is put into practice. Not until this Leninist approach is restored will one be able to speak of “voluntary, non-forcible assimilation of Jews”, to quote Prof. Braginsky.

In our next article we shall see how Prof. Braginsky confuses language assimilation with national assimilation. Einstein, mentioned by Prof. Braginsky, did not know Yiddish. That is true. But he was a deeply national Jew, even nationalist to a certain degree! The Jewish community in the USA, which is not Yiddish-speaking in its overwhelming majority, glaringly proves the point that language assimilation does not mean national assimilation!

This is something a Leninist like Prof. Braginsky should remember, I think. Because of that, there was a Jewish magazine in Russian in the 1930's, *Tribuna*. Soviet Jews who do not know Yiddish are now avid readers of Jewish books translated into Russian, although it is true that Russians, Ukrainians and members of other nationalities read the translation from the Yiddish.

Since we mentioned here the Jewish community in the USA one must say, in passing, that not until the American Federal, state and municipal governments will provide the means and facilities for Yiddish courses in the public

and other schools, the means and facilities for the development of culture in Yiddish generally — that is, for those Jews who want it; not until the rights of all national groups are provided for, there will continue to be practiced forceful anglo-saxon assimilation — a violation of the rights of the national minorities, a violation of a truly democratic approach.

One cannot begin to talk about “voluntary” assimilation while closing one's eyes to forced assimilation.

Before we are sure there is no forced assimilation we cannot accept at face value the statement that there is a mass voluntary assimilation, as follows from the article by Prof. Braginsky. There is great merit in the statement in the May issue of the progressive magazine *The Minority of One*: “In our view there is no bigoted discrimination against Jews in the Soviet Union, but there is a policy of forced assimilation.” In an article in the Canadian progressive Yiddish *Wochenblatt*, written by the editor, J. Gershman, and in the May issue of the Canadian progressive monthly *Outlook*, the same idea is projected, the idea that there is forced assimilation in the Soviet Union. To be more exact, considering the publication of *Sovyetish Heimland*, the dramatic groups, the widespread Jewish concerts which are growing in quantity and quality, we would say that in spite of these important achievements to which one should not close his eyes, the line of forced assimilation which began with the Stalin cult has in the main, remained intact.

In its condemnation of the Kichko booklet “Judaism Without Embellishment” the Ideological Commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU drew attention to the “Leninist policy on the religious and national questions”. It is to be hoped that the process

of the total liquidation of the Stalin cult in relation to Jewish culture will now gain new momentum.

What should be one's attitude toward truly voluntary assimilation? What about Lenin's approach on this subject? And who should assimilate whom? And is it progressive when national cultures disappear, as they are bound to disappear after there will be no more works in the original language to be translated? (For, how long can Jewish writers, for instance, continue to create in Yiddish when books in Yiddish are not published, when there are no newspapers, no schools?)

FOR many years Lenin conducted a struggle against the nationalist slogan of national cultural autonomy advanced by the Jewish social democratic organization, the Bund. As against this harmful slogan he put forth the program “to satisfy all the reasonable and just wishes of the national minorities on the basis of equality,” as quoted by me in the *Morning Freiheit* of May 17.

This program, outlined by Lenin in the autumn of 1913, deals with the subject of assimilation. We shall dwell on this subject later on. For the present, in stressing the harmfulness of forced assimilation — something which Prof. I. Braginsky glosses over in his article in the *May USSR* — let us record the struggle of Lenin against leftism and dogmatism in the approach to the national question.

In his essay “On the Right of Nations to Self Determination,” written in the spring of 1914, Lenin refers to the struggle led by Karl Marx in the First International both against the nationalism of Mazzini and the nihilism of the “Proudhon clique.” In a letter to Frederick Engels, written June 20,

1866, Marx relates how, during a discussion at the Council of the International, the representative of “Young France came forward with the thesis that nationality and nation are obsolete prejudices.”

The British delegates chuckled, Marx writes, when he drew attention that the French delegates who would abolish nations were using a language — French — which nine-tenths of the delegates did not understand. He also intimated, Marx writes, that under cover of the theory of abolishing nationalities the French delegates expect the others “to be swallowed by the exemplary French nation.”

During his polemics with Rosa Luxemburg on the national question, while recognizing many of her contributions to the revolutionary movement, Lenin also exposed the harmful role of Kautsky on this question. In his “Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder,” where he dealt with both leftists and vulgar reformists, Lenin stated:

“As long as national and state differences exist among peoples and countries — and these differences will continue to exist for a very long time, even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world scale — the unity of international tactics of the Communist working class movement of all countries demands, not the elimination of variety, not the abolition of national differences (that is a foolish dream at the present moment), but such an application of the fundamental principles of Communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) as will correctly modify these principles in certain particulars, will properly apply them to national and national state differences.” V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, International Publishers, New York, (vol. 10, p. 135).

THIS struggle, both against bourgeois nationalism and leftist dogmatism, was conducted by Stalin during the period when he adhered to the Leninist line and was fighting for this line. Thus, in a speech he delivered at Moscow University on May 18, 1925 he stated:

"How are we to render the development of national culture, the development of schools and courses in the native languages, and the training of Communist cadres from among local people, compatible with the building of socialism, with the building of a proletarian culture?"

"Is this not an irreconcilable contradiction? Of course not! We are building a proletarian culture. That is absolutely true. But it is also true that proletarian culture, which is socialist in content, assumes different forms and methods of expression among the various peoples that have been drawn into the work of socialist construction, depending on differences of language, customs, and so forth. Proletarian in content and national in form — such is the universal human culture towards which socialism is marching.

"Proletarian culture does not cancel national culture, but lends it content. National culture, on the other hand, does not cancel proletarian culture, but lends it form." (J. Stalin: *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, International Publishers, New York, pp. 209-210).

In this same speech Stalin exposed "certain persons (Kautsky, for instance) who talk of the creation of a single universal language in the period of socialism and the dying away of all languages."

In his report to the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of

the Soviet Union (June 27, 1930), Stalin took issue with the "deviationists" who are using a "mask of internationalism," protecting themselves with the name of Lenin in order to hide "the most subtle and therefore the most dangerous form of Great-Russian nationalism." At this point he used part of the above quotation from "Left Wing Communism" in the following manner:

"Lenin never said that national differences must disappear and national languages become fused into one common language within the boundaries of a single state, before the victory of socialism on a world scale. Lenin, on the contrary, said something diametrically opposite, namely, that national and state differences among peoples and countries... will continue to exist for a very long time, even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world scale." (Ibid p. 257).

DUE to this truly Leninist approach on the national question, Jewish culture, alongside the cultures of all nationalities, flourished in the Soviet Union, gaining enormous prestige for the land of socialism among all peoples abroad, including the Jewish people. Progressive Jews, fighters for socialism, pointed with pride to the Soviet Union as the land which truly solved the national question. Jewish culture — progressive culture, of course, in the spirit of the Yiddish classicists, — can be built only under socialism, they maintained with full justification.

In our first article we quoted some figures on the development of Jewish culture in the USSR. On leafing through the book, "Jews in the USSR" (Yiddish, published by Mezhnigva and Emes, Moscow 1935) we were filled with the pride of the achievements of those days

as well as some painful nostalgia... We find that in 1933, only four Yiddish publishing houses in the USSR (there were more) published 391 books with a circulation of 2,609,700 copies. Of these there were 75 textbooks for Soviet Jewish schools, circulation—1,185,000 copies. (p. 169).

During the school year of 1933-1934, there were 143,815 pupils in the Jewish schools in the Ukraine, Byelorussia and other parts of the country, including Birobidjan. There were 25 pedagogical and other Jewish technical Jewish sections at various universities, university chairs. There were 17 Jewish State theatres, many choruses, etc. Four large Yiddish dailies were in existence. (Moscow, Minsk, Kiev, Birobidjan) as well as a large number of other publications.

Professor Braginsky is at variance with the facts when in his utter simplification of the national problem — to put it mildly — he makes it appear that as a result of the October Revolution, Yiddish began to disappear. He states "The natural course of cultural development of the Jewish population of the Soviet Union, a development which had already begun before the Revolution and was accelerated after 1917, lead to assimilation." Compare at least the number of books published by the four Yiddish publishing houses: in 1933 with the publication of only 93 titles in 1913. And, of course, there were no Jewish State theatres and other institutions in 1913. After the October Revolution, there began an amazing upward development of Jewish culture.

Only after the Cult set in, during the trials of 1936, followed by the "frightful year" of 1937, when the line of forceful assimilation began, as pointed out in our first article, did Jewish cultural institu-

tions receive their first blow.

Jewish schools and other institutions were abolished, newspapers closed down (the Birobidjan *Shtern* began appearing 3 times a week in 2 pages and is still appearing so). Book publishing still continued, with 339 titles appearing in 1939. Jewish state theatres, too, still continued to exist, although reduced to 10 by 1939; there were also two theatrical schools (L. Singer: "The Renewed People," Emes Publishing, Moscow 1941, p. 109). After the war there was some revival, as indicated in my first article, developing in an upward line until the end of 1948 when everything was brutally crushed. (The Moscow Jewish Theatre was closed in the summer of 1949).

BUT here some well-meaning people will say:

"Very well, you may be correct. But no matter how it happened, things have changed! You cannot turn the clock back!"

Without dwelling on the "morality" of such argument, which accepts the results of a criminal policy, one can say: Yes, things have changed. And if by that one means that there are fewer Jews using the Yiddish language, then, there are still close to half a million Jews in the USSR who registered Yiddish as their mother tongue in the census of 1959. Let them enjoy the same rights accorded to similar groups of other nationalities, including nationalities that are not concentrated in one territory!

One could dwell at some length on this point, quoting facts and figures, making analogies. But... things have truly changed in quite a different way! Some changes were brought about by fascism, others by the Second World War; when six million Jews were murdered — because they were Jews, murdered without any distinction!

Even before the war, during the rise of Nazism, Georgi Dimitroff raised a cry against national nihilism. He pointed out how Lenin, while fighting resolutely against bourgeois nationalism wrote, in 1914, his essay "On the National Pride of the Great Russians." Reminding us how, during the historic trial at Leipzig he defended the Bulgarian people, Dimitroff stated:

"Proletarian internationalism must, so to speak, 'acclimatize itself' in each country in order to sink deep roots in its native land" (G. Dimitroff: "The United Front," pp. 79-80).

During the rise of Nazism national consciousness among the Jewish people was heightened. Then came Auschwitz... Treblinka... Maidanek... Babi Yar... Ponar, and many, many other death factories, places of the most horrible slaughter... Among the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis, there were one million Jewish children, slaughtered in a most unbelievably barbaric manner, buried alive, burned alive... Does it not occur to Prof. Braginsky that this has really brought about profound changes among the Jewish people; that if one is to continue with the line of forced assimilation, of insensitivity to the deeply felt sentiments of the Jewish people, he will only bring about the very thing he is supposedly fighting — bourgeois nationalism?

This insensitivity to the suffering of the Jewish people during the war has brought about such products as the shameful booklet, "Judaism Without Embellishment". This insensitivity led to attacks on that pride of Soviet literature, Evgeni Evtushenko, for his poem "Babi Yar," a poem published in the organ of the Union of Soviet Writers, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* — all honor to this Writers' Union and its organ!

Professor Braginsky may not be so sensitive on this subject — and that is his right. He may not be observing the anniversary of the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto, observed by countless numbers of Jews (and non-Jews, too) throughout the world — and that is his right, too. But he is certainly not expressing the sentiments of the Jewish masses. Anyone accepting him as representing the Jewish masses would be making a serious mistake.

THE May issue of *Look* magazine carried an article sensationally captioned: "The Vanishing Jew," by Thomas B. Morgan. From the standpoint of business this seemed to have been a good contribution: that issue of *Look* was gobbled up by the reading public, mainly by Jews. As a serious analysis, however, it was utterly worthless.

Mr. Morgan based his premise on some figures showing an increase in Jewish-Gentile intermarriages. Since American Jews do not go in for large families and therefore, according to Mr. Morgan, do not "reproduce" themselves, the day will come when the American Jew will "vanish."

While admitting intermarriage presents a problem, Jewish leaders nevertheless had little difficulty in blasting Mr. Morgan superficial analysis.

Mr. Morgan's type of "prediction" is nothing new. In 1908, the writer and dramatist Israel Zangwill promulgated the well-known theory of the "Melting Pot", predicting—56 years ago—the disappearance of all nationalities and national groups in the USA. He was followed by Karl Kautsky who in his book "Are The Jews A Race," written in 1914, predicted the disappearance of the Jewish nationality everywhere, basing himself on immigration figures of Jews into the USA. Here, in the

USA, he stated (50 years ago!) "the process of the dissolution of the native Jewry is proceeding at full speed" (p. 154). He maintained (p. 241) that when Jewish immigration into the USA will end and the second and third Jewish generation will no longer understand Yiddish, will not live in compact Jewish neighborhoods and religion will become a matter of indifference to them, "the last barrier to their assimilation will be removed" (K. Kautsky: *Are The Jews A Race*, International Publishers, New York 1926).

CONSIDERING present day realities this sounds ludicrous. Around 80 per cent of the Jewish community of over five and a half million in the USA are American-born—second, third and even fourth generation Jews. But this community was never so highly organized around Jewish activities. B'nai B'rith with about 450,000 members, Hadassah with over 300,000, or the Zionist movement generally, or non-Zionist Jewish organizations, are not any less Jewish because they conduct their affairs in English and that the overwhelming majority of their membership is English-speaking. If anything, they are more nationalistic than some of the Yiddish-speaking elements who are alert to national Jewish interests but are opposed to nationalism.

Again, language integration does not mean national assimilation! Many people, however, have made and are still making the mistake of confusing the two distinctly different developments. I am afraid professor Iosif Braginsky, in his article in the May issue of the magazine *USSR* (published by the Soviet Embassy in Washington) is making the same mistake.

Does it follow that there is no assimilation at all? Of course

there is. There are forces in Jewish society, as well as in the Gentile society, that bring about, for different reasons, trends of assimilation, depending on many factors, but the nationality as a whole continues to exist and develop.

Some maintain that Jews have kept and are keeping together due to persecution, anti-semitism. Undoubtedly this is a powerful factor. Anti-semitism, anti-semitic trends and discrimination, anti-Jewish persecution tend to unite the Jewish people. Persecution of Jews in any country, particularly a major one, affects Jews everywhere. The Dreyfuss case in France in the 80's had an effect on Jews throughout the world. And so with the persecution and pogroms in czarist Russia, in Eastern Europe generally, not to mention the extermination of a third of the Jewish people by the Hitlerite beasts during the second world war. All these developments fostered nationalistic movements (Zionism came into being during the Dreyfuss uproar), but among proletarian-internationalist Jewish elements, too, national consciousness was heightened due to these causes.

Generations of persecutions, of pogroms, of ritual blood libels, have made Jews everywhere sensitive to persecution or "just" anti-semitism anywhere. Again, the experience of the Jewish people during the second world war, with its Auschwitz and Babi Yars must be borne in mind.

Any one surprised at the "exaggerated" shock and resentment over the despicable, anti-semitic booklet "Judaism Without Embellishment" must have forgotten all about the Hitlerite "final solution".

* * *

THERE is no doubt, then, that here we have a powerful factor binding Jews together, keep-

ing Jews on alert. But one must not overlook other factors contributing to national consciousness and adhesiveness. There is the history of the Jewish people, Jewish culture (in Yiddish, Hebrew and other languages), tradition, customs or "just" national pride and other factors. So are family ties among Jews of various countries. Religion has played a powerful role in the past and is still a factor among many Jews.

With all this, certain elements among the Jewish people, even if relatively insignificant, may assimilate (and if these are progressive elements they are making it easier for nationalistic elements to hold sway over considerable Jewish masses). But it is not only idle to talk of the "vanishing" of the Jewish people, or of the disappearance because of the effect of the "melting pot," or because of the diminished use of Yiddish—it is also harmful. The theories of Zangwill and Kautsky resulted in petty bourgeois, anarchistic, or leftist-dogmatic notions regarding the Jewish question and the national question generally. I am afraid the approach of Professor Braginsky suffers from this confusion.

Prof. Braginsky, to support his approach, may refer to Lenin who in his polemics with the leaders of the Jewish social democratic Bund chided them over their "fear" of assimilation. But Lenin was dealing with a trend, not a policy. There is a big difference here! When assimilation becomes a line, a policy, one is apt to use a "little bit" of force in order to promote this policy, as was happening during the Cult days in the USSR. But Lenin was quite stern on this subject; he kept warning against forced assimilation. As regards policy he put forth in the same essay, in his polemics with

the Bund leaders, the program of equality, as quoted in my first article (*Morning Freiheit*, May 17). In the very same essay he declared in no uncertain terms:

"Whoever does not recognize and does not champion equality of nations and languages, does not fight against all national oppression or inequality, is not a Marxist, is not even a democrat" (V.I. Lenin: *Critical Remarks On The National Question*, Moscow 1951, p. 24).

Nothing could be clearer than that! And this is—policy.

In that same essay, written in 1913, while speaking favorably of the trends of assimilation, Lenin also referred favorably to the attitude of Kautsky, quoting—as Kautsky did—figures of Jewish and other immigration into the USA. However, during the first world war, in his polemics with Rosa Luxemburg on the national question, and particularly in his book, *Left Wing Communism*, Lenin was mainly fighting against left-dogmatism on this question, as we have seen (*Morning Freiheit*, May 31), hardly mentioning the subject of assimilation. What is most important, the policy of full equality which resulted in the flowering of the culture of the nationalities, including the Jewish nationality, was introduced by him and prosecuted after the October Revolution with utmost severity, without weakening his struggle against bourgeois nationalism, against local nationalism as well as Great Russian chauvinism.

IN this connection it will be important to recall "*Lenin's Letters On The National Question*," written towards the end of 1922 and published for the first time after the 20th Congress of the CPSU in the theoretical organ of the party, *Kommunist* (1956, No.

9). In these letters Lenin severely criticised the approach of Stalin and others on the subject of relations between the various Soviet Republics and among and towards the nationalities in the Caucasus. Lenin stated:

"Internationalism on the part of the oppressing or the so-called GREAT nation (although great only in its violence, great only in the sense of brutality) must consist not only in observing the formal equality of nations, but also in such inequality as will make up on the part of the oppressing nation, the big nation, for the inequality which in fact arises in life. Whoever does not understand this does not really understand the proletarian attitude to the national question.

"...It is necessary to lay down the strictest rules regarding the use of national languages in republics of different nationalities belonging to our union, and to enforce this rule with special thoroughness. There is no doubt that on the pretext of the unity of railway services, the pretext of fiscal unity and so on, we will have under the present apparatus a mass of evil practices of a Russian-chauvinist character." (The *Letters* appeared in English translation in the English section of the *Morning Freiheit*, on Dec. 30, 1956 and January 6 and 20, 1957).

In 1956, after the Cult of Stalin was exposed, quite a good deal was written on how Lenin's tenets on the national question were violated during the Cult period. The magazine *Voprosi Istorii* (*Problems of History*), in the issue of March of that year devoted its editorial and leading article to this question and to Lenin's fight against Stalin in the Caucasian

situation. The editorial pointed out how Lenin fought against "great-power chauvinism and local nationalism"; how in his struggle against the Russian reactionaries and bourgeois parties he fought against anti-semitism, pointing out that "anti-semitism is deeply hated by the proletariat."

THOSE who are holding tight—for whatever reasons—to the remarks made by Lenin in 1913, forgetting about his writings between 1916 and 1922, forgetting about his policy—the policy of the strictest equality—forgetting how this policy was introduced and vigorously prosecuted after 1917, are not, obviously, adhering to the tenets of Lenin.

Lenin kept admonishing—it seems to us—that realities must be evaluated in a truly Marxist, creative way. Whereas Kautsky and others stuck to their "theories" in spite of realities (the worse off for the facts, as Lenin would say), Lenin took full cognizance of developments. Any one with a truly Leninist approach to the Jewish question cannot be oblivious to the effects of the Hitlerite "final solution" on the Jewish people. There is no question, of course, that one cannot and must not overlook the results of the 1959 census in the USSR which showed a registration of close to a half a million for Yiddish. Here one must remember the admonition of Lenin: full equality with other nationalities!

Facts are stubborn things. The facts of life in relation to the problems of the Jewish people, as well as with regards to Jewish culture, whether in Yiddish, or Hebrew, or English, or Russian or any other language, are in total conflict with the premise upon which Prof. Iosif Braginsky has built his theory of assimilation.