WITH AN H ON MY DOG TAG

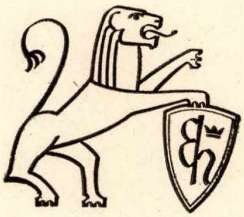




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With an H on My Dog Tag

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Behrman House, Inc., New York, 1947

Illustrated by Laszlo Matulay

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With an H on My Dog Tag



TO MY FATHER, DAVID KERTZER
HIS MEMORY REMAINS AN INSPIRATION

Acknowledgments

I WISH TO express my appreciation to the many friends who made this story possible, and especially to my assistants overseas—Joseph Geisler, Henry Wimfheimer, Sidney Wener, Joseph Goldman, and Saul Loeb—whose devotion to the Chaplains' Corps was a constant inspiration to me and to the men I served.

My heartfelt thanks too to my dear wife, Julia Kertzer, whose aid in collecting the material in this book and whose kind but incisive criticism contributed greatly to my work; and to Rabbis Bernard Segal and Philip Bernstein, whose wise counsel helped me through many a difficult time.

But above all, my gratitude to the GIs who never came back, the men of all faiths whom it was my privilege to know. Their memory will remain forever fresh in my heart.

M.N.K.

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CHAPTER ONE



Anzio Anxiety

WE LEFT New York at 2:30 in the afternoon, flying by army transport. In four hours we were over Bermuda, small and green against the flaming background of the evening sun. We flew on. This world we dwelt in was not only broad, I thought; it was infinitely deep. I had a sense of personal insignificance. I watched the stars appear. They seemed no closer, even though we were three miles nearer to them than were the people back at Bermuda. The surface of the sea was covered with clouds, as though the night had slipped a soft blanket over it. At times, when there were breaks in the clouds, there seemed to be tufts of cotton, fluffy and light, between us and the dark water. I felt no sense of motion of any kind. It was as though we were coasting upon tracks that were smooth and perfectly flat. Even when changing altitude, the automatic pilot tipped the wings so slightly that only the instruments noted the difference. I watched the stars ahead on the eastern horizon. Over there some place was Anzio,

my destination. I recalled the prayer: "Behold, I am sending before thee an angel to guard thee on the way and bring thee to the place I have prepared."

I watched throughout the night. I thought of Gautama the Enlightened, brooding in the great loneliness of the Himalayas, and of Amos, meditating in the silence of a Judean sycamore grove. They had no better place than I to apprehend the terror and mystery of eternity. I breathed slowly into my oxygen mask. What colossal conceit, I thought, prompts man to feel worthy of the attention of Divine Providence. Then, perhaps thinking of the men I was to serve on bloody fields, feeling the powerful vibrations of the plane's great motors, I was not so sure of man's unworthiness. I put out of my mind for a while his torture chambers, his Rotterdams and Coventrys, remembering the courage and creative genius he had put into the very plane in which I was flying. Here, certainly, was achievement—basic laws of gravitation defied, Neptune vanquished, the inertia of weight ignored. An apple dropped from Pisa's tower had but one inexorable path to follow, and here was I, held aloft by great pounding engines of man's devising, sufficient in precision and power to flout the mighty magnetism of the earth. I felt proud of the human family. Shortly thereafter, I went to sleep.

In twenty hours' flying time out of New York, Morocco came into sight. We had slept a few hours aboard the plane and had had breakfast in the Azores. There was no reason for weariness. But it felt good to get into the shower room at Casablanca. We changed to the Cairo plane and after a four-hour flight over the Atlas Mountains, we landed in Algiers; then on to Tunis, crossing the North African battlefields where youngsters from my home state of Iowa had come so perilously close to disaster in

their first encounter with the enemy. I looked down upon the wide areas of empty space, dotted only occasionally with clusters of habitation. I saw the wideness of this earth, mocking at Hitler's fatuous cry of *lebensraum.* There was enough room for billions of men and women. Then why did we keep pushing our fists into other people's faces? Some of us, emulating the saintly Berditchever rabbi, uttered complaints before the Heavenly throne. We asked, in our folly, of Him whose tender mercies are over all His works: "Why does a righteous God permit this war?"

A book could be compiled about the flying rabbi and his thousand *kehillahs* (congregations) during this recent war. Some services were for a sparse handful of men: for six or seven Jewish boys on an airstrip in a Pacific atoll, or in the heart of Africa, in Scotland, in the Himalayas or the Caribbean Isles. There were Alvin Fine and Morris Gordon serving in the numberless villages of China; Harold Gordon, with his flying *Torah,* visiting all the stopping places on the North Atlantic; "Shepsel" Baum, in his plane marked *Kosher* on every airfield in the continent that is Brazil. These are but a few of the men whose flying time probably exceeds that of a large number of commercial pilots in the United States. Computing the total distance flown by only four chaplains, Baum, Fine, Gordon, and Manny Honig of the Mediterranean Theatre, we would find that collectively they journeyed the distance to the moon and back.

In North Africa and Italy I heard the tragic story of Louis Werfel, the young chaplain from Alabama, who died against the side of a mountain in full view of ten thousand men. It was near Oran, in Algeria, beside a large replacement depot which was the first overseas home for tens of thousands who went on

to Italy and France. Canostel, as it was called, was a landmark known all over the Mediterranean. Those who were there on *Chanukah* (Feast of Lights), 1943, tell of the sickening crash, and of their horror when they learned that their lovable young chaplain had met his death in the crack-up. Only a compelling sense of duty brought him to this untimely end. A storm was raging and all planes were grounded, but a group of soldiers were waiting for a *Chanukah* service in Algiers. At that time, the soldiers saw few Jewish chaplains in Africa. Werfel decided he could not disappoint them. He was deeply loved, loved as only a rabbi in arms can be.

It has been a tortuous road from Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, to Hiroshima, Japan. There are many who wonder whether to bless the day when man first sprouted wings, or to curse it as a day of disaster. But for the chaplains who were granted the opportunity to fulfil Jeremiah's prophecy to carry the word of the Lord unto distant isles, the airplane will remain a precious thing, to become some day a true blessing for all mankind.

The last lap of my journey to Anzio was made aboard an LST. Alerted at midnight, we stepped into the yawning mouth of the vessel near Naples, about a mile from the volcanic field where Dante was inspired to write the "Inferno." The overnight trip through German waters was far from pleasant. I looked at the dark, misty enemy shore. The Nazis were there and I imagined that guns were lined up ten feet apart, all aimed in our direction, with orders from Field Marshal Kesselring to "Get that replacement!"

After a few days on the beach at Anzio, I began to use mathematics. The beachhead, like a slice of pie seven miles in radius, contained about forty square miles, or almost eighty-two

million square yards (in my foxhole I had time for such calculations). I normally occupied about two square yards, and when the enemy began dropping "anti-personnel," I could curl up into two-thirds of a square yard. That meant that one bomb had only one chance in forty-one million of getting me, a consoling thought if I concentrated hard enough on it. But when I peered out into the night and saw a dropped flare lighting up our area like the stage of Radio City Music Hall, I had the feeling that this was target practice and I was the bull's eye.

In a week or two, I had completed my baptism of fire. First, I woke up every morning to find that I was still listed on Morning Report as alive and intact. Next, I learned that most of a battlefield was made up of empty space, with isolated pockets of activity. Then I discovered that we who were back in the regimental area were not even considered in the battle zone. The rifleman, the machinegunner—*they* were fighting. To them, company headquarters was rear-echelon, battalion headquarters was practically a picnic-area, and the regimental command post was somewhere this side of Chicago. I began to feel like a slacker. I might as well have been back at the Red Cross Snack Bar in Algiers.

A few weeks later, when I embarked on the LST from Naples for a second time (returning from the rest center at Caserta), I leaned calmly against the railing, watching the Nazi-occupied town of Terracina on the coast. Near me stood a replacement. I watched his face as it revealed the emotional convulsions of a man convinced that Kesselring had a whole regiment committed to wiping us off the surface of the sea. For the first time I felt like a veteran.

Our headquarters, which combined office and sleeping quar-

ters, were fifty feet underground in a labyrinth of wine cellars over half a mile in length. Life became stabilized in our cavernous home. Chaplain Brown, the Catholic padre, set up a beautiful altar at one end of our section where services might be held without danger of interruption. A few feet away was my "apartment," a vault normally used for a large wine-vat. Our offices boasted electric lights, but for our personal quarters candlelight sufficed. Officers and enlisted men of all ranks lived together, each in his own section. Except for the dampness and the rats our life was fairly comfortable.

A typical evening in the chaplains' quarters would find "Brownie" engaged in his newly acquired hobby of painting, the Protestant chaplain writing poetry, a sergeant-assistant studying Greek, our chief clerk occupied in musical arrangements for the Sunday service, and Colonel "Mike" Connors and me playing casino or writing to our families. Deep in the earth, most of us were touched by the muses. I found myself writing poetry to my daughter, Ruth, or composing never-to-be-published sonnets. Often, at ten o'clock, we would hear the rumble of anti-aircraft fire. Some of us would dash upstairs to see the tracer fireworks, while others would turn on the radio to follow the battle of wits between our radar and the Junker pilots.

We slept soundly, learning to ignore the air raids unless we were called to duty (which happened frequently). One night I was awakened well after midnight by a sergeant from the message center, summoning me to an emergency call at the evacuation hospital. My trip along the shore road to the evacuation hospital that night marked my first brush with death. A jeep traveling in the dark about 150 yards ahead of me went off the road and touched off a triple Teller mine. There was a

deafening blast. A shower of dust and rubbish—all that remained of car and driver—descended on me!

The talk at Anzio dealt almost exclusively with one topic—narrow escapes. I contributed the following tale to the general lore: I was returning from a service with the First Armored Division when my jeep's accelerator jammed. The spring had fallen into the sandy road. I started a futile search for the precious gadget. The evening barrage began and shells plowed up the sand along the beach. I made for the nearest foxhole. Near the road, a softball game had been in progress. The players sprinted for cover. But one soldier, of the 16th Engineers, literally left on third-base, refused to evacute his hard-earned position. He kept shouting for the others to come back and go on with the game. I presume he was convinced he had nothing to worry about so long as he was "safe-on-base!"

The surface normality of life on the beachhead sometimes astounded me: sheep grazing, and farmers carrying on their chores while shells whined overhead; horse races and basketball games conducted within range of German batteries; outdoor movies and amateur-night shows taking place in full view of the enemy.

Anzio was the center of the world's attention, for little of military significance was taking place on the other fronts at that time. Writers like Ernie Pyle and photographers like the famous Sammie were there. Sammie was the cause of some embarrassment to one of our chaplains. A devout southern Baptist, the chaplain officiated at a baptismal service on the beach. Sammie took a picture of the event for the press of the world. At the end of the ceremony, Sammie begged for a second shot, this time from out in the water, so that the beach would serve as a background. The good-natured chaplain

agreed, provided the soldier who was being dipped acceded. No sooner was this second picture taken, than Sammie begged for yet another picture, with both shore and sea in the background. Thereafter, the good chaplain's fellow officers missed no opportunity to ask: "What sort of a Baptist are you, dipping a soldier once for God and twice for Sammie Goldstein!"

I shared my underground home with another minister. He was twenty-six years old, the youngest chaplain on the beachhead, and the most popular man in his regiment. Henley was a lanky Texan, soft-spoken, generous in thought and action. Waking at six in the morning, we could hear the regular fire of our 155's as they opened their early morning barrage. In the shelter of our home, its sound was hardly more than a rhythmic beat, as though our ears were listening to the heart of mother earth. We clambered out into the morning light, washed out of the same helmet, used everything but each other's toothbrush, and joined the chow-line together. When we returned from visits to our men, we kicked a football around. I could punt like a college professor, emeritus, but Henley could compete with his fellow Texan, Sammie Baugh, in making the pigskin sail. Some wag suggested that my incompetence was normal: a rabbi had no natural affinity with a pig-skin. Henley and I exchanged reading notes, and with fitting forbearance studied each other's baby pictures. Lying on our bunks in the darkness of night, we confided our feelings, our aching homesickness, our plans for the future. We knew the deep peace of brotherhood as he, a southern Baptist preacher, and I, a conservative rabbi, fell asleep beneath the common roof of the dark protective earth.

The uniform which we donned at the reception center ef-

fected a radical change in our appearance. But it would be folly to expect that we had shed the raiments of our mind, casting off a life pattern replete with prejudices and subjective tastes. If we abhorred spinach at home, we were not likely to lose our dislike only because the army put it on our mess gear. We would eat spinach if our mess sergeant glared at us, but few of us would acquire a fondness for it. Learning its taste had not broadened our horizon on the subject. But understanding is something far more fundamental: living with a man, sharing his thoughts and hopes and dreams, caused prejudices to evaporate.

The deepest pitfall in group relations is our "dislike of the unlike," our passion for uniformity, our separation of society into the "in-group," of which we are a part, and the "out-group," against whom we erect a protective wall of prejudice. As our sympathies widen, as we become truly civilized, the "in-group" is expanded to include all of mankind, and we identify our welfare, our security, and our realm of interest with men of all faiths and color.

In military life we had an ideal human laboratory, the largest of its kind in history, where twelve million men shared a common destiny and were bound together in a social community whose fate and future depended upon each member of the group. We grudgingly gave up our individuality, and submerged our lives in the group-life.

If we would take advantage of it, the Protestant and Catholic and Jewish chaplain could say to his soldier-congregation: "All my life I preached the doctrine of brotherly love. All my life I taught tolerance. But until today, I was speaking in the abstract, because most of us chose our society and selected our companions. We had no opportunity to appreciate the prophetic

teaching: 'Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us all?' Look about us, in our barracks, in our company day rooms, and we will learn the true meaning of human fellowship in our lives together, in living and fighting and dying together."

In the army, the rabbi changed the tone and the content of his sermons. Even those who constantly had dwelt on the negative theme of discrimination were now constrained to discuss the more positive aspects of Judaism. As I look over a collection of Jewish chaplains' sermons, I am struck by the few talks devoted to the distasteful but ever-popular subject: anti-Semitism. Pride in our spiritual heritage and its challenge to our army lives were the dominant motifs in our messages. Too much had already been said to the troops about dislike of the Jew, and they welcomed the clean air of creative, constructive Jewish thinking.

Every Jewish soldier knew that prejudices did exist in the army, that racial and religious discrimination could not be eradicated by military fiat. Promotions, recognition of merit, perhaps even decorations for bravery were a little harder to obtain because he belonged to a minority group. He may have attempted to get into an army section where his legal talents were useful, or a general hospital where his medical experience would be utilized, only to find the way blocked by a bigoted superior officer.

But there was this important difference: *The United States Army officially and unequivocally stood against any form of prejudice, racial or religious.* Any proven act of religious intolerance was dealt with severely. The bigot might have his private views, but they dare not be expressed or overtly translated into an act of discrimination. I have seen men from the

southern states lean over backward to avoid the charge of race discrimination. I have seen men lose their rank because of an anti-Semitic remark.

In the monthly report demanded by the Chief of Chaplains in Washington, the army required each Protestant chaplain to report what he personally had done to meet the needs of Catholic and Jewish men in his command. The Catholic and Jewish chaplains were equally responsible for other faiths.

Whatever the inadequacies of its educational program, the army made an honest effort to promote tolerance and mutual respect in its training films, lectures, and literature. I once heard a narrow-minded chaplain remark: "The army pays too much attention to its minority groups!" That unintentional compliment was the greatest tribute I ever heard paid to the United States Army.

For every Jewish boy who was not promoted, a hundred were made sergeants and captains and colonels. For every decoration lost through prejudice, a hundred others were awarded (the latest available figure is over fifty thousand decorations to Jewish servicemen). America, for all its Gerald Smiths, its Rankins and Bilbos, entrusted Jews with the military command of general hospitals, infantry regiments, armored divisions, and mighty destroyers. We are far removed from a utopian state of good will in human relations, but our army, despite its inequities, succeeded in bringing a little closer the day when a man's biography will be written, not on the back of his birth certificate, but in the book of his own achievements.

Over eight thousand chaplains, men who occupied pulpits and teaching posts in every state, have returned to civilian life enriched by a new experience. A few will have been untouched

by what they saw and heard, for like any collection of human beings, the Chaplain Corps was not lacking in intellectual pygmies, psychopathic personalities, and men whose poor digestive tone made them incurable misanthropes. But in the main, army life had a tremendous effect on most chaplains. A southern Methodist preacher, who had never seen a Jew out on the Texas range, who had first heard of Catholics when his mother spoke of the bogeyman, shared a tent or a foxhole with a rabbi and a priest. A rabbi leaving his orthodox synagogue in Flatbush, whose life had been confined within the four walls of Brooklyn Jewry, visited the bedsides of Catholic and Protestant boys. A Benedictine priest, fresh from the cloistered life of a parochial boys' school, shared a room with a Jewish medical officer and became his constant companion. These were experiences that leave permanent marks on our thinking, and what is more important, on our preaching. It is easy to denounce another faith if one does not have a precious friend who adheres to it.

One such friend of mine, the most colorful personality I met in the army, was a Catholic priest, Chaplain Patrick B. Fay. He was my senior chaplain in southern France. We knew him only as Pat. Even his enlisted men called him by his first name, a most unmilitary procedure. But Pat was as unmilitary in his manner as he was adept in the ways of the army. He had the build of a football player who had gone off diet twenty years before. Pat's philosophy was simple: in the army, as in every other human situation, a kind word and a friendly smile of greeting could vanquish the most adamant colonel or granite-hearted sergeant. His technique was perfect, and I have never seen Pat fail to get what he wanted. Chaplain Fay had only one obsession, an unshakable belief that Brooklyn, his home town,

was the capital of civilization. He had lived all his life in that polyglot community, and he believed that all men were just about alike. When a soldier came into my office, a cablegram in his hand bearing the unhappy news of his father's death, we would start gathering a *Minyan* (a congregation of ten men) for a brief memorial service. Pat was always on hand, begging to be accepted into the congregation of Israel for this *Mitzvah* (good deed). Ecclesiastical considerations were shunted aside when a man was in trouble. Pat never missed a Passover *Seder* service, and on several occasions preached the sermon when there was no Jewish chaplain available. He did not hesitate to join the Protestants in the same spirit. A Protestant chaplain once showed me two rosaries which he owned, one of them blessed by the Vatican, the other a gift from Pat Fay. The second rosary, he told me, was the one he would cherish forever.

Not only did we who were Jewish come to respect and love our comrades of other faiths, but they, in turn, saw in some of us qualities which commanded their esteem. One of the few public funerals on the Anzio beachhead was held for a Jew, Technical Sergeant Bernard Feinstein. Gatherings were forbidden at the Nettuno cemetery because shells landed at intervals in the graveyard, and more than one Graves' Registration boy was a casualty. But when a shell fragment hit Bernie his colonel asked if an exception could be made for his last rites. Bernie was almost worshipped by the men whom he had led for over two years, and they insisted on attending his interment. With his death, Bernie had helped purchase our liberty; in his life, Bernie had helped to give meaning to that liberty.

On another occasion, during the burial in France of a New

York East Side boy, I witnessed the grief of a whole battalion at a buddy's passing. Al Roth was a medical sergeant, in charge of a dispensary. His captain told me what a blow they had all suffered in Al's death. Al had been father and brother to the men. They had come to him not only with their aches and pains, but with their heartaches and troubles, too. The twenty men who stood around his flag-draped coffin were *avelim*, mourners in the full sense of the word. On that occasion, I added the prayer which calls upon the Almighty to heal the broken-hearted and bind up their wounds.

Whenever I am tempted to say that a country gets the kind of government it deserves, and that men mold society more than it molds men, I remind myself of the many Italian-Americans whom I met in the armed forces; men who but for the accident of a ship schedule in 1890 or 1910 might have been wearing black shirts instead of U. S. khaki. These sons of Italian immigrants were generous hearted, liking their fellow-man instinctively, possessed of an appealing sense of humor, and having a natural affinity for the aesthetic in life—certainly important characteristics in the making of democratic man. If American piedpipers of fascism had to depend on the Frankie Pavones and the Dick di Gregorios I have met, they would die of malnutrition.

Because of Italy's political follies, we tend to underestimate her contributions to our way of life. Family devotion, one of the pillars of Judaism, is remarkably strong in the Italian household. Years ago, I watched a young man of Italian descent enter a train at Chicago. He was followed by some sixteen relatives, who kissed him in a tearful farewell and showered him with cumbersome baskets of food and gifts. As the train began to move, they left him lingeringly, as though their sepa-

ration was to be eternal. I surmised that he was travelling either to the East Coast, or perhaps was returning to Italy for a visit. Forty-five minutes later the train stopped at Gary, Indiana. The young man gathered his baskets and gifts together and hurried off, having reached his destination. America will lose a precious element in its social chemistry if it allows folk feeling of this kind to be drained away.

My work at Anzio centered on three areas of the beachhead: the pine woods, the hospitals, and the cemetery. The rest area was a euphemistic phrase for a pine forest where men of the Third and Forty-fifth Divisions retired for intensive training. Although, through the voice of Axis Sally, the Nazis announced on the radio that they knew we were there (they practically referred to us by name and serial number), for some reason few bombs or shells interrupted our activities. It was here that I held a Passover *Seder* service in April of 1944. We were in a big tent in the pine woods near the Mussolini Canal at Anzio. Our artillery was shelling the enemy, only a thousand yards away. Because of the protection afforded by the thick pine forests, the Nazis did not know we had gathered five hundred men and one nurse in the area. It was not a bright Passover. We had two candles, and I could not see most of the men seated on the sand before me. Our feast was meager, a piece of *Matzah* for each man, a drop of wine (flown by the Air Transport Command from Algiers) and some fruit salad. There was nothing else. We even omitted the bitter herbs. The *moror*, we said, was provided by the situation. Our spirits were light, though, and we remarked that it would be wise to eat our *Matzah* as quietly as possible, for the sound of many men crunching might well be heard by the enemy.

My assistant, Pfc. Joe Feigenbaum of Detroit, ran about among the men to make sure that everyone had at least a taste of *Matzah.* Joe would appear before me out of the dark and whisper exultantly: "What a crowd! What a wonderful *seder!*" He was thrilled that a Jewish chaplain had been flown all the way from the States to officiate on an occasion such as this. Until my arrival, he had served as substitute Jewish chaplain for the Third Division. Joe had three loves: his widowed mother in Detroit, his Judaism, and the 7th Regiment of the Third Division. When he wasn't talking about his mother, or his pride in being Jewish, he talked of the greatness of the 7th Regiment: "I've been with them since they were activated," he would say. "Been through every campaign. They're the greatest outfit in the U. S. Army." For the eight days of Passover, he worried about my Passover diet, and somehow obtained eggs in which to fry *Matzah* for me. I wrote his mother telling her she should be very proud of her son. Later, Joe gave up his life on Highway 6 on the road to Rome. The righteous ones, says our tradition, are greater in their death than in their life. Joe was a simple boy but he knew why he was fighting, and he knew why he was called upon to die.

The hospital center, with eight hospital installations clustered together, was not a place of refuge on Anzio. A shell landed on the operating-room table one evening, killing a number of men and several nurses. It was, nevertheless, the safest place we had. I held most of my large services there. On Mothers' Day, over 250 men joined me there in a beachhead tribute to their mothers across the sea.

The Evacuation Hospital saw pain and anguish in such measure that there was no time for protracted sorrow, and the absence of grieving relatives helped to ease the situation. But

there were exceptions, for occasionally a relative was at hand. I was summoned one afternoon to the side of a young lieutenant as he lay on the operating table. There were ten other tables in the large tent, and above them bright lights glared twenty-four hours a day, as one surgical team after another handled hundreds of cases from midnight to midnight. The lieutenant was in a cheerful mood, despite a severe arm injury. He asked me to tell his brother on another sector of the beachhead what had happened. The surgeon motioned me to one side and whispered that there was grave danger that the youth would lose his arm.

I dashed to the other end of the beachhead by jeep and located the wounded man's brother. He was a captain, redheaded, well over six feet in height. He was the typical hard-boiled company commander.

"Your brother has been hurt," I told him. "Will you come along in my car?"

"Very bad?" he asked, changing color.

"Just his arm," I said.

"He's been on the damned line too long," the captain shouted suddenly. "I knew he couldn't last in the Third Division." He got into the jeep beside me and we sped back toward the hospital.

"His left arm?" he asked.

"His right," I said.

"He still has it?"

"It looks pretty bad."

We were nearing the Operating Room tent when he said, "He was getting married next month to a nurse here in Italy."

I went into the tent alone. The operation was over. I looked at the lieutenant and saw that his right arm was gone.

The captain watched my face as I came out, then sat down on the sand and covered his face with his hands, weeping.

A few nights later a nurse called for my services. A Jewish soldier was dying, and as his rabbi I was summoned for prayer. The long ride down the blacked-out beach to the hospital was



itself a chilling experience. If my driver lost the narrow road for a second we were in danger of being blasted off the beach by a land mine. We were not even permitted "cat's eyes," a thin slit of light on the blackened headlights. This night we met a British convoy. The British drivers, long used to total blackouts, came down the road, in peculiarly British fashion on the left, at a speed which made us freeze in our seats.

Entering the hospital ward, I was brought to a soldier who was being held down by two nurses and a ward-boy. I glanced at the chart: wounded in action, severe brain concussion, condition critical. Later, when the boy became calmer, his nurse, a petite young girl who must have weighed less than a hundred pounds, told me about him. He was partly paralyzed, had lost his speech and could use only his left arm. If he would relax, there was a chance for recovery. But he seemed to wish desperately to communicate something and because he could not, he was violently disturbed. Standing at his bedside, I read the Psalms: "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants. . . ."

The remainder of the night was a restless one for me. Returning to my bunk, I pondered schemes to penetrate the wall which separated this boy from the world. In the morning, an obvious stratagem occurred to me: I printed the letters of the alphabet in my notebook, and the patient, a sergeant from a small town in Michigan, spelled out two words. He did this slowly, losing consciousness several times between letters. The words were: "NO HOME." I gathered from this message that he did not want his family to know the extent of his wounds. I showed him I understood. He smiled for the first time and lapsed into coma. Two months later, I met the sergeant in a Naples general hospital. He had recovered all of his faculties, except for a temporary speech defect.

The third center of my activities was the cemetery near Nettuno. Planned originally for a hundred graves, it grew tragically, as the months passed by, into the largest in the Mediterranean Theatre. Every day it was my duty to read graveside services for a youngster who had joined in our prayers perhaps only the week before. I repeated the *Kaddish* and the *El Moleh* more than a hundred times.

A flapping tent wall separated the cemetery from the area in which bodies were prepared for burial. The sign "Off Limits" warned the visiting soldier to stay away from this latter area. Hardened though he might be to the sight of men with ears and nose and eyes blown away, he could not be expected to withstand the shock of seeing the Graves' Registration boys sorting out parts of bodies and identifying remnants.

I stood before an open grave, a few yards from the "Off Limits" area. In anticipation of heavy fighting, fifty graves on my left were already dug—graves soon to be occupied by men still among the living. The wind shifted and the sickly-sweet smell of death whipped into my face. A terrible nausea came over me. I continued to recite the *El Moleh.* After I left the cemetery, the odor still clung to my clothing.

Hardest to take was the sight of trucks coming in from the battlefield bearing their cargo of death. Coming by the gate, they passed fields of poppies, whose hue was the color of fresh blood.

On Decoration Day, in the presence of General Mark Clark, I read the Twenty-third Psalm in memorial tribute to our dead. In every section of the vast cemetery there was a sprinkling of Stars of David. Where General Clark stood, there were six. But back home, one of America's most popular magazines published a picture of this same cemetery in which not a single

Star was in evidence. I learned later that the shot *was* taken at our cemetery, but in the Nazi section. The photographer had sent in several shots, he informed me, and the one showing the Nazi sector was the one published.



Foxhole Faith

IT WOULD BE misleading to give the impression that a large majority of our men overseas attended religious services. But it is not an exaggeration to report that they came in very large numbers, and that they attended faithfully.

Most discussions of "foxhole religion" center upon the soldier's relation to God. Little attention is paid to his moral code, which certainly underwent a severe trial in his European tour of duty. The hazards of war were not all at the battlefront. Our men were granted a kind of dispensation from the fourth, sixth, and eighth Commandments, and often they let the seventh slip into the "list of exceptions." They attended chapel regularly, but their moral standards were far from puritanical. Paradoxically, it often seemed that the soldier who was most considerate of his comrade-in-arms was at the same time least inhibited in his drinking and carousing. G. I. Joe tended to be careless in his morals, yet more pious in mood and general be-

havior than he had been as a civilian. He was blasphemous in speech, but more generous and tolerant than his civilian brothers.

Religion at Anzio was not inspired solely by the foxhole. Men who were not in grave danger flocked to services. They made up a serious congregation, if not a solemn one. There was, for example, an intensity in community singing and an eagerness to participate in the service which contrasted sharply with the timid congregational responses at home. Every chaplain whom I have met was impressed by the warmth and enthusiasm of the men attending services overseas. There were few embellishments at these services, few external trappings to stimulate worship. At Anzio's "city hall," where I conducted many Sabbath morning services, we used a miniature scroll of the *Torah* given to me by Lieutenant Colonel Farsht, a medical officer. It was not ritually acceptable by any stretch of the imagination. It was actually only a souvenir, but our use of it was none the less sincere.

We would usually summon seven men to the reading of this miniature *Torah,* usually four British and three Americans, and even offered old-fashioned *Misheberachs* (personal blessings), which delighted both the participant and the congregation. By a strange nostalgic quirk, the same youngster who objected to such ceremonies back home on Pitkin Avenue or Douglas Boulevard beamed with joy at the recitation of the traditional blessing. On special occasions, when the birth of a daughter was announced, we called the father to the *Torah* and chanted with dignified ceremony the blessing for his wife and baby in Manchester or in Minneapolis.

The British boys came to *shul* in a stream of trucks directly from the front lines. They carried their rifles with them and

dropped them on the floor when the cantor summoned them to the blessings of the *Torah.* Few indeed among them, Londoner or Highlander, who did not know the words by memory. The Americans would glow with pride when one of our own men could rise to the occasion and chant in flawless fashion the words: *Bor'chu es Adonoy 'Hamvoroch* (Bless ye the Lord).

There was, at these services as at all overseas worship, an atmosphere of informality, with the distance between rabbi and congregation reduced to the vanishing point. The sermons were not abstract, but were related to the men's own experiences. The congregants would laugh heartily at a joke (especially one at their own expense), listen intently, offer criticisms frequently, discuss the sermon in their bull sessions, and quote them back to me later.

A rabbi serving under fire can keep his dignity, but not his distance. The cartoonist, George Baker, has introduced and popularized the army "sad sack," a twentieth-century version of the ghetto *schlemiel.* The "sad sack" was an integral part of our lives. He was in the barracks, in the foxholes, and even in one's mirror. He was the butt of all jokes, the "innocent bystander" who got hurt in all accidents. "Sad sack" was woven into the fabric of our vocabulary. When a chaplain declared, "Israel has often been the sad sack of human history," his audience understood at once. At some time or other we all wore the dunce-cap of the "sad sack." I recall a service with the 180th Infantry, after evening chow on a sand dune at Anzio. I stood on a knoll, facing my congregation, which was seated on the sand below me. Over their heads I could see, as we read the *Maariv* service, the ducks (amphibious trucks) skimming speedily over the water, bearing precious cargo from the Lib-

erty ships, anchored off shore, to the wharves of the beachhead. As we began the strains of *Ein Kelohenu,* someone in the congregation cried "Duck! Duck!" Looking at the amphibious ducks in the background, the thought came to me that the men were distracted by the boats and were disrupting the singing of the hymn. When the cry went up for the third time (by then I was singing *Ein Kelohenu* solo), Captain Shainhouse grabbed my arm and I ducked. Bullets had been whizzing past my ears, but preoccupied as I was with my singing, I had not noticed their warning whistle. At that moment, I was a perfect candidate for Sergeant Baker's caricature. The men smiled at my embarrassment, and we were a little closer after that.

Overseas, we conducted neither an orthodox nor a reform service, although the three hundred Jewish chaplains came from all branches of Judaism. The ritual probably would be called conservative, and it seemed to satisfy the soldier-congregation. Occasionally, an orthodox youngster would complain bitterly about the watering-down of the service. A few times, as I was delivering my sermon, perhaps reaching the dramatic point, a pious young worshipper would rise in the midst of the congregation and perform the *Amidah* (silent devotion), with genuflections and bowing of the head. This would distract every eye away from me. In my early army days, I would rebel against this breach of decorum, but I mellowed after a time, glancing tolerantly towards the pious protestant as I continued my sermon.

A student of Jewish rites and ceremony would be surprised at what was emphasized and what was of necessity discarded in our ritual overseas. I have had some congregations in which you could dispense with *Bor'chu* and the *Sh'ma* with hardly a

word of protest, but if the hymn *Ein Kelohenu* was omitted a wailing lament would rise from the ranks of the faithful, as though the very heart of Judaism had been rent asunder. In one congregation, a medical unit which I served regularly in Italy, I could delete (if time pressed) age-old prayers without arousing protest, but if I dared overlook page 320 of the Jewish Welfare Board Prayer Book, containing the Prayer for Home, the murmurs and glances of reproach would be more than I could withstand. I still see before me the look of serenity on the face of an American boy as he repeated by heart, like a pious Jew reciting the *Ashre,* "Far from home and those I love, I find my thoughts turning to them with affectionate longing."

In an armored division which I served, a young Jewish sergeant filled in as substitute Jewish chaplain in my absence, conducting regular Sabbath services for the men (he had thousands of counterparts all over the world, enlisted men and officers, who conducted as many services as did the Jewish chaplains). A private came to this sergeant for counsel, explaining that every night when the shelling grew heavy, he would tremble in his foxhole, the darkness of the night aggravating his fears. The private wished to know what he could do to calm himself. The sergeant handed him a Prayer Book, saying: "When the shells start coming in fast and close, turn to page 15, and keep repeating '*Sh'ma Yisroel, sh'ma Yisroel! . . .*'" which was original if not very orthodox counsel. Two days later the soldier returned. "Sergeant," he declared, "your advice didn't do me any good. Last night the shells fell mighty close and I kept saying the *Sh'ma Yisroel* over and over again. Finally one shell landed right in our hole, between my buddy and me. And I'm still shaking."

"How come you weren't killed?" the sergeant asked.

"The shell was a dud and didn't go off," the private said.

His spiritual mentor turned on him wrathfully. "A German 88 lands right in your lap," he shouted, "and you complain that the *Sh'ma Yisroel* didn't do you any good!"

Arthur (Rough-house) Shainhouse, a medical officer, was another part-time, unofficial Jewish chaplain at Anzio. He was a Silver Star recipient, and was admired by his men as being indifferent to danger and the discomforts of heavy shellfire. His roommate told me it was impossible to move Shainhouse from his bunk at night when the "heavy stuff" came close. He would not leave so long as the shells kept falling in the other rooms of the house. Arthur was typical of the hard-boiled battalion surgeon who refused to listen to a tale of woe at "sick call" unless there was a clean and unmistakable case of cancer or traumatic amputation. His nickname was probably given to him for good reason, but actually he was deeply concerned over the welfare of his men, even to the point of taking up the chaplain's duties, in so far as he was qualified to fulfill them, when no regular chaplain was at hand. His aid station was a miniature J.W.B. Club, and when I visited the Forty-fifth Division, it was my second home.

Because a chaplain was an officer and had to live with officers, his free time was spent with them. On many a Neapolitan evening a group of us would collect and talk away the night, arguing, usually, the merits of religion in a science-dominated world. I have to admit I was often on the defensive. Following the day Wendell Willkie died, I came sadly to the breakfast table and announced: "Last night I dreamed it was not Willkie who died, but a certain southern congressman."

Rough-house gave me a sharp look. "There you go," he said, "criticizing God in your subconscious!"

The future historians of the Jewish religion, tracing the growth of custom and ceremony from Ur of the Chaldees, through biblical injunction, Talmudic interpretation, Gaonic emendation and rabbinic clarification, may have to turn their attention to the impromptu beachhead service or the hasty moment of worship along a line of march, to reach the origin of certain discernible trends which may affect the entire development of Judaism. A half-million men and women in the American army and navy were not able to practice the dietary laws of their parents during this war. They had no alternative but to compromise on Sabbath observances, and were required generally to make drastic adjustments in religious practices over a period of years.

It is true that a good proportion of them would never have conformed to the traditional customs, but of the thousands who would normally have adhered to the Law many have developed habits which will carry over into their civilian lives. It is possible that orthodoxy suffered a fatal blow when the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor.

Our congregations overseas were composed largely of men who came from orthodox backgrounds, with conservative Jews far behind, and the reform youngsters almost out of the running. Possibly men who were forced to ignore dietary restrictions and to toil on the Sabbath may again take up the thread of traditionalism in civilian life, but my own guess is that they will not, and that orthodoxy is confronted today with its greatest crisis.

World War II presented Jewish law with undreamed-of

challenges and complications, creating situations never envisioned by the codifiers and the architects of its jurisprudence. When does the evening service begin in the land of the midnight sun, in the Aleutians, on a summer's eve? What is the hour of *Sh'ma* on an arctic winter morning when the sun refuses to rise above the horizon? What happens when a Sabbath disappears as your ship passes the International Date Line and Friday afternoon melts into Saturday night?

But to offset the depredations made into Jewish tradition, there is the story of a positive, constructive pattern of Jewish living which grew up during this war. Thousands of young men and women who had never seen the inside of a synagogue attended services faithfully. Large segments of our youth who would have been lost to Judaism found the way back while they were oceans away from family and temple. If a chaplain canvassed his congregation of one hundred men on the minor festival of *Purim,* he would learn that less than a score would have attended the synagogue at home during the Feast of Esther. Whatever the motives of the men, whether they sought companionship or felt closer to home when they heard the tale of Mordecai and Haman, they came in great numbers. The other minor festival, *Chanukah,* loomed equally large on their calendar; they sent cards home to their loved ones, ate potato pancakes after service and sang "Rock of Ages."

European Jews who attended our services marvelled at these things, at the attendance, at the responsiveness of the congregation, at the informality of the rabbi, at the atmosphere of spiritual eagerness. I have heard these European Jews speak with envy of our services, and I feel certain that some day they will emulate some of our wartime practices. I shall never forget the dropped jaws of a group of French Jews who witnessed

an army *Seder* which I conducted later in liberated Marseille. A thousand worshippers came that day to the Grand Synagogue; privates and colonels, WACs and nurses, and a whole caravan of air corps men led by a Christian chaplain. A special force of M.P.s directed traffic around the synagogue, and trucks, jeeps, and staff cars were lined up for blocks. A dozen high army officials had cooperated in the arrangements.

My French friends could not believe until they saw for themselves that all this was actually a service for Jews; and when they learned the origin of the eggs used on the *Seder* table at the banquet, they began to think that their senses had left them. Eggs were always nearly impossible to obtain overseas, but on this occasion the army delivered several hundred to us in perfect ritual condition. They had been salvaged the day before from a blazing cargo ship sinking in the harbor. The fire had heated the waters of the Mediterranean sufficiently to boil the eggs—and according to custom, they had truly been dipped in salt water.

The intense interest in festivals and holidays alone, among Jewish men overseas, may well alter religious custom in the American synagogue for years to come. Enthusiasm for such observance may carry even the most minor holidays into positions of prominence on the Jewish calendar. At the same time, there is likely to be strong G.I. influence in the ritual and manner of observance, originating both in military custom, and in the soldiers' exposure to the ritual of the North African, European and British Jews. The returning warrior will surely be impatient of provincialism. He has learned that there are few norms for orthodoxy, that customs which his congregation deem inflexible and unalterable are foreign to other Jews who

likewise call themselves orthodox. In wishing to adopt some of the ceremonies which impressed him overseas, he may, for example, seek to introduce the custom of decorating the Temple in white, and having both cantor and rabbi dressed in white robes, on the Sabbath of Consolation following the Fast of *Ab.* Moved by the beauty of the Sephardic ritual, the reverence for the *Torah,* the formal recognition of the rabbi as he enters the synagogue, the veteran may influence his congregation to adopt similar customs. Above all, he will certainly demand greater congregational participation in the service than is customary today. Like the famed Jewish travelers, Eldad the Danite and Benjamin of Tudela, the serviceman has become acquainted with exotic forms of Judaism that will create in him a tolerance for variety and a willingness to seek new modes of religious expression.

CHAPTER THREE



Here's My Problem, Chaplain!

A CHAPLAIN'S FLAG outside a tent or hut meant the same the world over during the war; it was an invitation to come in, get acquainted, get something off your chest, and talk about any subject on the face of this earth (or of the world to come).

Usually, I would drop some such remark as this at my Anzio services: "Come to my office, and let me know some of your problems. If you haven't any, maybe you can help me solve some of mine."

The number of men whom I met via this invitation probably ran into the tens of thousands. Through small talk with them, through "heart to heart" conversations, through scanning thousands of letters shown to me by soldiers, I gained an insight into man and his problems that were hidden from me in civilian life. I have had men in my office who wept without restraint, psychopathic men who threatened to kill me, and a

young man who knelt before me and kissed my fingers in a most embarrassing exhibition of gratitude.

The chaplain served as father, brother, lawyer, psychiatrist and social worker. But mostly, he was simply an audience to men who found relief in talking about things that distressed them. "Come into my office and hear yourself think out loud" was a meaningful invitation. The chaplain was the emotional safety valve in the military establishment.

The range of problems brought to me by the men ran the gamut of human experience. I listened to the ridiculous and the tragic, to the sordid and the eloquently beautiful in human affairs. The young men who came into my office assumed I could offer expert medical advice, untangle complex legal puzzles, don the role of banker for substantial sums of money, persuade a faltering wife to learn the meaning of true love. When I look back upon the variety of problems which I was called upon to solve, I am amazed at the sublime faith which some G.I.s had in the Chaplains Corps, assuming us to be invested with encyclopedic omniscience and semi-divine omnipotence.

What the soldier wanted most of all was friendship, the honest unaffected word of confidence in his ability to face the strange world of war. I learned to avoid criticism and sermonizing. Whatever a man's faults, I did not preach to him about his sinfulness. It was more effective to make him understand that it was *my* problem, not his alone, once he had shared it with me. Above all, he learned that he was one of millions who shared the same weaknesses, was confronted with the same moral wrestling, and that in the long run he alone could find the road out. His counselor might light up the signposts and point out the danger spots, but the traveler had to

make his own way. I have spent an hour with a man, reading a series of seven daily letters from his wife, which began with warm affection on Sunday and ended with frigid indifference on Saturday. We read and re-read them, pondered over them and finally the soldier himself answered the question which he had put before me.

What refreshing confidence our congregants had in our financial sagacity and in our honesty in the handling of funds! Occasionally, a chaplain overseas would suggest the need for money to help the afflicted among the civilian population of the area. The men gave without question, eager to help if they could, trusting the chaplain's judgment of the need. Some chaplains raised and disbursed thousands of dollars.

We rarely brought up embarrassing questions about the origin of the contributions. One soldier in a station hospital handed me forty dollars as he was leaving my services. The following week, I supplied three hundred children from Buchenwald concentration camp (Chaplain Bob Marcus' children) with food and candy for their trip to Palestine. Probably an investigation might have cast a suspicious light on that forty dollars: winnings from the poker table, or perhaps the Saturday night dice game. But we rationalized our acceptance of tainted funds: the cause was too urgent.

Once a youngster came to me with a confession. He blurted out that for the first time in his eighteen years, he had gambled. In the process of learning the game, he had won $220. "What did you do with all that money?" I asked him. He replied, blushing, "Well, I sent two hundred dollars to my brother to keep for me, and a ten dollar gift to my mother."

Grinning sheepishly, he added, "All my life I have wanted a

real good pair of *tefillin* (phylacteries) so I sent the last ten dollars for the *tefillin.*"

One afternoon, I was standing in line in the hot sun waiting for a coke.

"You're just the man I'm looking for," someone said behind me.

I turned and faced a corporal. He had a bright open face, now beclouded by some problem.

"My name is Jack," he told me. "I've been saving this question until I saw one of you chaplains. Can you give me two or three good reasons to prove there is a God?"

The question was obviously asked in earnest. As we inched our way forward on the line we explored the matter, seeking out the answers to his question.

I remarked that he reminded me of the story about the great Rabbi Hillel, who was asked to present the essence of the *Torah* while standing on one foot.

The setting for our discussion was rather bizarre. Kicking our feet in the sands, we drew nearer to the "coke bar," a euphemistic name for two boxes with a board running between them. Every G.I. held a canteen cup in his hand, into which he poured the contents of two Coca Cola bottles after paying four francs. The dispensers refused to serve in any other fashion. Reaching the bar, I discovered I had forgotten my cup. Jack offered his own cup, and we took turns drinking the tepid liquid. At that temperature, we drank the coke for sentimental reasons only, or perhaps to drink something which did not have the taste of disinfectant. Neither Jack nor I hesitated in using a common drinking cup. After a year overseas, we had become indifferent to germs. Rather, we had a sort of communistic impulse to share whatever bugs we possessed.

By the time we had finished a second coke Jack and I were deeply enmeshed in the matter of God's manifest existence. I sweated and drank and talked. He nodded, drained the cup, then smiled at me. "Thank you," he said. "You have been helpful." And he walked away.

It was not easy for me to overcome the barriers set up by the army to separate officers from enlisted men. Many chaplains would have preferred to hold no rank whatever, for our insignia often stood in the way of genuine rapport with our soldier-congregation. The men sometimes accused us of being "rank-conscious," of "bucking for promotion," and often they were right.

But even the most enterprising and sincere chaplain found himself barred from all but a relatively few men's private lives and affairs. In the beginning, I often visited the enlisted men's meeting places and recreation centers. My presence, I discovered, nearly always was embarrassing and uncomfortable. First and foremost, I was an officer, and there was very little I could do about it. At least three-quarters of the army did not know the significance of a Jewish chaplain's insignia. I was simply an officer of some sort. I knew of a general who thought a Jewish chaplain came from the army inspector's office. On one occasion, a Regular Army colonel asked me what branch I represented. When I put my finger on the tablets, and answered, "This is the insignia of the Jewish chaplain," he whistled in amazement, "Well, I'll be a son of a ——."

Occasionally, I have been escorted out of an enlisted men's area by a stalwart member of the provost marshal's office. Aboard an army transport, I ventured onto the enlisted men's deck. Politely but firmly, the M.P. told me that even chaplains should not intrude upon the privacy of the troops.

Only in the battle areas were the bars let down. Here I could walk freely into the dugouts and tents, and the men in turn felt free to come into my own tent or foxhole—but only so long as the military situation was extreme.

The chaplain was faced with many dilemmas. If he devoted his time only to his men, as he was urged to do at Chaplain School, he forfeited the confidence of his fellow officers, and the chaplain who was not on intimate terms with the officers could not be effective in solving his soldiers' problems; for most of the G.I. troubles could be solved only by officer cooperation and assistance. On the other hand, if the chaplain identified himself with officers the charge of "bucking" was leveled at him. The chaplain had to walk a mental and spiritual tightrope in the vain attempt to be "all things to all people."

Ideally, the chaplain should have displayed a total disregard of promotions. But theory and practice are often strangers. He learned by unhappy experience that his influence grew with his rank, that he was able to accomplish more for his men when he outranked the officers from whom he sought assistance.

Another dilemma constantly confronting the chaplain related to army discipline. The army measured a chaplain's success in terms of the degree to which he expedited army discipline; but the men judged him on his ability to unbend that discipline. Later, in France, I was able to obtain emergency leaves to the United States for about a hundred men at various times. From the military viewpoint, those leaves were harmful. Wars cannot be won by men who are at home, no matter what relative is dying there.

I have been asked if chaplains considered themselves as the guardians of men's morals. If we saw ourselves in that role, what an unhappy lot was ours. Advocating that the soldiers'

language be laundered, that drunkenness be discouraged, that an army-operated brothel be abolished was an invitation to unpopularity and transfer. The Commanding Officer's ideal chaplain was one who "didn't get in his hair." A resolute man of God who pursued his convictions to the bitter end discovered that he had the blessing but not the support of the Chaplains Office in Washington. Many a chaplain was crucified for his tenacity, finding that his efficiency rating, and, in turn, his usefulness, was determined in the end by his Commanding Officer.

Army justice, as reflected in the court-martial system, has been the subject of vigorous and well-justified criticism. The chaplain—ostensibly the humanizer of military life—had no voice in the procedure of court-martial. Regulations and custom dictated that he be a bystander. In our training, in fact, we were cautioned to avoid entanglements with the machinery of army justice. Chaplains, it seemed, were forbidden to serve on the courts lest human kindness be introduced into the system. The tempering of justice with mercy is not an officially-supported concept in army jurisprudence.

Even the testimony of chaplains was discounted at a court-martial. We were *expected* to support the defendant. If we protested, we were informed that no man is committed to court-martial unless a thorough investigation has been made. There was, accordingly, a presumption of guilt in the very existence of a trial.

Once sentenced to prison, the defendant could *then* utilize the services of a chaplain for religious guidance and comfort. But woe unto the padre who took up the cause of his prison congregants. If he raised his voice against cruelty or unfairness, he was unceremoniously transferred to a more innocuous post.

A medical officer in North Africa, who protested against the treatment of prisoners on medical grounds alone, was forced to leave. The blemish on his record occasioned by this transfer continued to plague him for the remainder of his army career.

I was able to effect a measure of moderation at one camp only because I was a visiting chaplain from higher headquarters. The most depressing service I ever held was at a detention training camp. Attendance was 100 per cent, not because of the attractiveness of the service, but because it offered the men a chance to get out of the baking sun for one hour a week. The prisoners' lips were swollen to twice their normal size from heat exposure. I protested against this Devil's Island technique and was rewarded upon my return the following Sunday to find a marked improvement.

What a relief it was to the men to be treated as human beings, to be told what was going on in the world! A week after the atomic bomb was dropped, I informed a prison congregation of the event. This news, perhaps the greatest to be recorded in their lifetime, had been kept from them. My talks with the men never dwelt upon their prison status, as did my colleague's on the other side of a thin partition. I once overheard a fellow-chaplain preach in this vein:

"St. Paul was once a prisoner, even as you here . . . Paul was once a sinner, even as you. . . ."

That was almost as bad as the preacher in a mental hospital who spoke on the theme: "Why Are We Here?" and provided the answer "We're here because we're not all there."

A smile, a real handshake, and a word of encouragement (reinforced by my belief that I had broken more army regulations than the boy standing before me)—and I had made a friend for life.

We rarely hear of chaplains being called upon to testify in official investigations, even though we were the moral radars of the army, ofttimes better informed about actual conditions among the men than our commanders.

We knew of flagrant miscarriages of justice, of officers going scot-free after committing heinous crimes, and of enlisted men suffering excessively harsh penalties. In one organization, an order was issued quarantining all units who were found to have a certain percentage of venereal disease. I protested that it was unfair to punish the innocent with the guilty, especially since the restriction did not apply to officers. One case was particularly absurd. The medical officer told me that he had quarantined a small unit because one individual had contracted a disease. That individual was the only officer in the unit. His men were quarantined for *his* dereliction, yet he was free to go and come as he pleased!

During the winter of 1944–45, when men at the front lacked warm clothing for want of transportation facilities, a colonel in charge of a truck regiment told me that he was forced to take *sixteen* two and one-half ton trucks out of service for several days so that a base section general could have them to move his personal belongings.

When I met a group of men for the first time, I entertained no extravagant illusions that they were thrilled and excited about my visit. Their mood was usually one of curiosity. "Is he one of us or does he have his eye on the promotion calendar," was what they were thinking. Once in a while the men would receive me resentfully, wishing I would stay away from their battalion and not remind the others that they were Jewish.

For the most part, however, the soldier was willing to meet

the chaplain halfway, opening up his heart when he felt that the rabbi's response would be sincere.

The easiest method of breaking the ice was to find common ground. "You come from Newark?" I would ask. "From the Weequahic Park District? I used to commute to Newark when I was a student. Which bus do you take, Number 48 or 10?"

A grin would break out, and the Newark native, who for years had cursed bus 48 for its unreasonable schedule, its rude operator, and its creaking gait, suddenly remembered the vehicle as a symbol of all that was good and beautiful in life.

I made a friend of another boy because I happened to know the rabbi in his home town, remarking that the rabbi had been a terrible basketball player when we were in college together. The youth could not envision the solemn black-robed Klapenkop throwing a basketball. I profited greatly by this soldier's discovery that rabbis are born in the image of man!

A chaplain's reward for his hard work was the devotion of the young men whom he befriended. Every chaplain has a file of fan letters from men whose course of life was changed by a single conversation. Many of these men had never talked to a minister or rabbi before. The American rabbinate has little for which to congratulate itself on this score, especially in the larger cities. I have yet to meet a young man from a big city who had ever been vitally affected by his rabbi. On occasion, he expressed admiration or esteem, but never affection, for the spiritual leader of his congregation. In civilian life, it never occurred to him to bring his problems to the rabbi, even if they concerned matters of faith or Jewish information. The Christian boy was no more enthusiastic about his minister.

Despite obstacles of discipline and custom we did break

down some of the barriers of distance and apathy which separate young people in civilian life from the church and synagogue. A part of youthful America discovered for the first time that its ministers were human beings who spoke their language and shared their thoughts. The young refuse to be bored. Life is too exciting, too picturesque and dynamic. If the speaker in the pulpit cannot compete with the drama and color of everyday life, he is not likely to capture interest. Dullness is the most grievous sin, one which young people are unwilling to forgive. The pulpiteer may retort that our youth has become flighty, irresponsible, or superficial, but unless the church and synagogue wish to secede from our young people, they will have to accept them as they are, and work with the human material at hand.

The chaplain is a product of war and of war needs. The young man confronted with the crucial problems of dangerous living is offered the counsel and guidance of a mature and wise friend. If the chaplain, like the ancient prophet, is a product of crisis, his function is not ended with the laying down of arms. The youth of our country has been thrust into a complex world of tensions and conflicts, tugging and pulling him in a hundred directions. He has need of friendly guidance as much as the soldier at war. Our grandfathers lived in a valley of decision, where effect followed cause in an obvious fashion. The grandson lives in a world of multiple choice. He has two thousand two hundred occupations to select from instead of twelve. His grandfather had only two choices in the political arena. The grandson has a score or more. In the area of religion, he has a handful within the framework of his own creed, with an infinite variety of others competing for his loyalty. The young American has hundreds of cities and towns to choose for his

home, scores of social organizations among which he may discriminate, dozens of radio programs at his disposal, and hundreds of books to read or reject. Half of his life is consumed in the routine of making choices. The late Justice Brandeis was reputed to own only one tie at a time. As soon as the tie was worn out, it was supplanted by another single tie. In that way he saved a minute a day in dispensing with the necessity of making a decision every morning. Mr. Brandeis was trying to escape the tyranny of multiple choice.

The minister who served an older generation of Americans did not need much equipment in his role of counselor and spiritual leader. A working command of the Talmud, fundamental teaching of prayer book and general tradition, and he was quite prepared to fulfill the duties of his calling. His spiritual heir, the minister of today, must not only be a religious scholar—he must be a literary critic, a psychologist, social scientist, and political thinker; he must be a business administrator and a public relations expert; he must be an orator and a teacher, and if he is a cantor in addition, so much the better. I sometimes feel that only one gifted with boundless conceit could possibly feel adequate to the role of minister in the twentieth century.

In an excellent study of war neuroses, two flight surgeons who served in North Africa, Lieutenant Colonel Roy Grinker and Captain John Spiegel, analyzed the factors which contributed to emotional and psychic breakdown among servicemen. They showed that a generation trained to respect human life and property could not be called upon to suppress a lifetime of such training without serious nervous disturbances. Two factors which protected the soldier against neurosis were, first, identification with the group and, second, a drive toward

a fixed goal. The successful commander was able to instill in his men an *esprit de corps* so intense and an aim so clear that fear and anxiety were overcome. But many of our commanders were not successful in this respect. A well-justified criticism of the American army (and the chaplains share in the indictment) was that our men did not know exactly what they were fighting for. The goal was not fixed for them. The basic facts were explained in a haphazard fashion, and that was about all. Possibly, the generals in higher command prized morale and knew the value of "indoctrination," but the average company commander did not have the political vision or human insight to invest his men with a fighting purpose. We may not have believed Nazi propaganda, but we did not trust our own. "What are we doing in Europe?" the men would ask. "Our fight is with the yellow men." Their hatred of the enemy was grounded in racialism. Until the Nazis resorted to unfair tactics against a unit, such as firing under the protection of a surrender flag, there was little heat in the animus against the enemy.

I must admit here that on the whole the Chaplains Corps did little to stimulate understanding of what we were fighting for or against. Harping on the theme of loving our enemies, our Washington office lauded the efforts of chaplains who preached the doctrine of universal love. To my mind, there is nothing so frankly immoral as killing without hate. I cannot follow the moral gymnastics in the argument that we despised not our enemies, but only what they represented, as though a man and his principles could be divorced. If the average G.I. did not know why he was thrust five thousand miles from home to risk his life, we chaplains as a corps did little to offer him enlightenment.

In our role as liaison officer between the men and the army command, we were often of help to the G.I. in trouble, but by the very nature of our organization we failed in the bigger task, our work in the direction of morale building being incidental and, at best, piecemeal. The chaplain had to decide early in his career whether his function was to support his commanding officer and justify all his actions, or to offer constructive if uninvited suggestions concerning ways to improve the physical, mental, and spiritual lot of the common soldier, for his and the army's common strength and welfare. The chaplain who cried "amen" to all of his C.O.'s orders found that life was serene, promotions readily obtainable, his status assured. The chaplain who was the fiery crusader type learned to his sorrow that the army had no place for prophets, even for the prophet who could quote army regulations to support his behavior. The third type of chaplain followed the middle road: he would not compromise with his conscience and become a rubber stamp for the army, but on the other hand he made haste slowly, and learned to get things done without calling on the trumpets of jubilee to herald his accomplishments. The Regular Army chaplain was invariably in the first category; he had learned by experience that success in the army meant a complete submergence of his crusading impulses. Fortunately, there were hundreds of ministers, priests, and rabbis who came into the service without any military strings, men who took the army seriously when it declared that "the primary function of the chaplain is to serve his men."

The Chaplains Corps' greatest achievement, I believe, was in making the soldier believe that the army did care about him as an individual. We were a symbol to him, a guarantee that

the army, recognizing its fallibility in dealing with large masses of men, was sufficiently concerned for his welfare to set aside seven thousand trouble-shooters in the Chaplains Corps to short-circuit red tape, to right wrongs, to deal with injustices. We talked and we talked with G.I. Joe. We made him laugh when his heart was heavy. We passed his bed of pain with a pleasantry. We gave him a sense of his own importance. Together with the Medical Corps, we were the soul of the army.

Despite our eight million men, despite incompetence in some high places, our soldiers were not always treated as impersonal units. I have listened to doctors and nurses talk about their patients as though they were discussing their own children. I have heard them lament the wall of silence separating them from patients following evacuation to the Zone of the Interior (USA). I have seen a whole ward full of men fall in love with their nurse. I have watched the gleam of affection come into the eyes of a man strapped to his bed as his doctor approached and I have seen a doctor weep when a paralyzed patient moved his finger for the first time. The Nazis believed a wounded American to be more valuable than a dead one because the wounded man required ten men and women to serve him.

Once I received a cable from the United States, asking me to inform a young soldier of his father's sudden death. The rabbi who sent the message neglected to mention the boy's outfit, and it was no easy task to locate one man out of two hundred thousand. I called on a colonel for advice. He promptly radioed on behalf of our Commanding General to Allied Forces Headquarters. Within an hour we received word of the soldier's location. Even then I spent half the day before I reached the beachhead and the isolated anti-aircraft battery to which

he belonged. An individual *did* count in our army. All this trouble over one man was inconceivable outside of the American forces, as our Allied friends often admitted with envious admiration.

My darkest hour overseas stands out in my memory now as though it were yesterday morning. I was attached to the 37th General Hospital, a Brooklyn unit, which I served in Naples for an entire summer. One July morning I was sitting up in bed under orders from my physician (and roommate) Major Arthur Weinberg, nursing an infected foot. Seated at the foot of my bed was an old friend from the Third Division, "Smitty" —otherwise known as Father Smith, Senior Chaplain of his division. Smitty came from a circus family in Texas, and was as informal and down-to-earth as his nickname. He was one of the few chaplains of his outfit who managed to emerge from the entire series of campaigns without a Purple Heart. I heard later that by a peculiar twist of irony, after V-E Day, Smitty was hurt at Nuremberg during the symbolic destruction of Hitlerism. I recall witnessing the newsreel scene depicting the dynamiting of the gigantic swastika in the infamous Nazi stadium. According to one report, a piece of that swastika was hurtled against Smitty, and he was ZI'd (sent home to the United States—the Zone of the Interior).

That morning in Naples Smitty was sprawled near my feet talking over old times, when a cablegram was handed to me. We were in the midst of telling a funny story and I tore the seal casually. Suddenly all went dark: my beloved father, of blessed memory, had passed away suddenly, and I was five thousand miles away from my grieving mother! How often I had been called upon to comfort boys with cables in their hands. Now it was I who sought solace. Smitty's friendly and

firm clasp of my shoulder as he read the message, was a simple gesture, but it softened the blow and initiated the process of healing.

In the evening—it was Friday—I found new consolation in conducting Sabbath service for the men in the hospital center. Earl Stone, who was visiting in town from Sicily, joined with me in leading the prayers. Earl was my idea of a perfect combat chaplain. Serving in a battalion with the rugged First Infantry in North Africa, he was an honest-to-goodness "mud" chaplain, probably the first rabbi to live in the front lines in this war. The men of his division worshipped him. When they asked you: "Do you know Chaplain Stone?" their eyes kindled with pride in their rabbi who could "take it."

How fortunate I was to have chaplains to serve as "my chapplains" both in America and overseas. The men would facetiously ask us: "Whom does a chaplain take his troubles to?" I answered that there were rabbis who illumined my own army experience—Harry Nelson at Dix, Eddie Sandrow when I left for Europe, Ben Zion Bokser when I landed at Miles Standish, Teitelbaum and Tavel in the Mediterranean, and Haselkorn in France. Never in civilian life was there fellowship such as we shared.



Breakthrough

ON THE 22ND OF MAY, I went to sleep with a heavy heart. Dawn would see the thousands of men whom I had been serving on Anzio sweep out of their foxholes towards Cisterna, towards Highway 6, onto the bitter road to Rome. I went out into the "pines" for a final service before the Big Push. One had little to say to the men. We talked of home, of recent mail, of unfulfilled dreams. Our prayers, at least those closest to our hearts, were unspoken. I gave the soldiers prayer books, with the inscription, *"L'chayim v'livrochoh"* (for life and blessing), books that some men held in their hands when they were brought in later. That night I lay awake in my sleeping-bag, wondering in an agony of soul if the price of liberation was not too high. Somewhere in the army mailbags were letters I had written to mothers and wives, telling them cheerfully about Harold and Sam and Lou, letters that would arrive after War Department telegrams of another sort.

The festival of *Shevuoth* (Pentecost) arrived while the battle was in progress, and those of us behind the lines gathered at Anzio "city hall" to commemorate the Giving of the Law and its Commandments. Three thousand three hundred anniversaries, and mankind had come no closer to Sinai's heights! As the battle went on, our headquarters awaited couriers from the lines of fire. News came in from each unit: "133rd advanced 200 yards," "the 7th Infantry reached the railroad track," "Cisterna has fallen." I, too, received messages, but of a somewhat different character. The first, from the Thirty-fourth Division, was marked "urgent" and came from a corporal whose dugout had received a direct hit. By some freak, he was blown out unharmed. His request read: "Please *Bensh Gomel* (a prayer one offers upon escaping danger). I haven't got the time." Another emergency missive was written in Hebrew, reading: "Just lost my *tefillin* in battle. Please send another set by same courier."

When the beachhead was joined and the enemy was on the run, we moved out of our wine cellar. Now that we were leaving it, we decided it had been almost comfortable. We had felt safe nesting down there, even though a direct hit from the Anzio Express would have buried us alive. But it was a diversion for us to arrange our new quarters above ground. Overseas, we learned the art of contriving a home out of almost nothing, going to elaborate lengths to improvise gadgets and furnishings. Our move to the earth's surface was premature. That night, at about two, my window shutters slammed open with a violent jar. The Anzio Express was letting us have the remainder of its ammunition before folding up. As the explosions gained in intensity, and each succeeding hit seemed to be getting closer, a retreat back to the wine cellar seemed to

be in order. I listened for signs of movement from the other room where a colonel, a lieutenant colonel, and a major slept. A lowly lieutenant, I could not lead the retreat. How would it look if the junior officer showed the white feather? In the other room, apparently, a similar debate was taking place: "How would it look if we let the junior officers outlast us?" A mighty, jarring concussion made the decision for me. Shoes in my right hand, bed-roll in my left, I tiptoed into the hall. In the dim moonlight, I silently joined the parade. The colonel was already halfway down the stairs. Behind him was the lieutenant colonel. I followed the major. No one uttered a word.

June came over Anzio, and the gates of Rome were forced open. The tired soldiers were greeted along Highways 6 and 7 with rudely constructed signs bearing the news: "D-Day today! Allies land in Normandy!" The men jumped off the tanks and trucks and bunched together on the road, cheering. Berlin did not seem far away.

Eighteen weeks had passed between Anzio's D-Day and the great moment when our tanks and "six-by-sixes" snaked their way through the arches of Rome. One hundred and twenty-seven days of hemorrhage, but now it was over and the word "Liberation" resounded through the first unfettered capital of Festung Europa. Here was the gate to the imperial home of the Caesars. We had the keys in our possession, but what a fearful price we had paid for them. Thousands of our brothers lay beneath the fields of Nettuno, just beyond the Alban hills. I had repeated the *Kaddish* too often to share in the exhilaration of that hour.

Months later, in an Alsatian town not far from the German border, I saw a sign reading "C.P. 179," the regimental head-

quarters of a unit which I served at Anzio. I was traveling by jeep on my way to the front. I pulled to the side of the road and jumped down, entering the first door I saw. I stepped into Colonel Murphy's bedroom. He was sitting on the edge of his bed, in front of his wife's picture. I had interrupted him in the midst of writing a letter home. He clasped my hand and pulled me into the room. We sat together on his bed, laughing and talking.

The colonel called his chaplain and asked that the Jewish men, all old friends from Anzio, be rounded up for me. In a brief service, without altar or *tallis,* we chanted together the everyday prayers of the *Minchah.* We were all thinking of Anzio, remembering the men whom we had left behind on the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea, but we said not a word about it. As a matter of fact, we said very little. We stood and prayed quietly, and I felt that God's *Shechinah,* God's presence, hovered over us. His ample blessing shone upon us.



Rome Reborn

OUR TROOPS ENTERED Rome by jeep and truck, by tank and half-track. A few came by command and staff cars. I came by mistake. With Chaplain Aaron Paperman, of Fifth Army headquarters, I met a civilian at Anzio who had made the trip from the Eternal City on Highway 7, and he assured us that the road to Rome was open. Apparently our limited mastery of Italian prevented us from distinguishing between the decline and the fall of Rome. We found ourselves in the capital in time to witness its official capture on Sunday afternoon, June 4th.

We formed part of an unannounced military parade, our jeep sandwiched between a tank and a truck. A million Romans greeted us, not as conquerors, but as liberators. Whatever the mood after the first few days, it was evident then that the people of Rome were pleased with our arrival. There must have been a half million children on the boulevards. They clambered into our trucks and swarmed over our jeeps. They hurled

garlands of flowers at us and were determined to touch our hands, our uniforms, our tires, gear shift, every movable and immovable part of the caravan. Once or twice I made the mistake of stretching out my hand to offer "caramelli"; my hand was almost torn from my arm before I retrieved it. Woe unto the importunate soldier who paused to ask directions. He was attacked—like a full-back who has just received a punt—by a crowd of gesticulating men, women, and children, who argued and jostled, reviling one another, each determined to translate the soldier's question for the crowd. We soon found out that asking for directions was an invitation to riot.

We passed under the ancient triumphal arches and reached the famous Colosseum. As we neared the old gladiators' stadium we saw a white-helmeted American M.P. already directing traffic, handling the maze of vehicles streaming in six directions through a seemingly impenetrable mass of humanity. (Nothing gives an American a superiority complex so quickly as watching one of his M.P.'s directing heavy traffic in Europe. His smooth and somewhat contemptuous calm contrasts strikingly with the excitable behavior of his continental counterpart.) The M.P. motioned us to halt, and Paperman slid the jeep to a stop in the shadow of the Colosseum. The dusty-faced M.P. called out: "Well, Chaplain, we made it, like you said we would in *shul*!" By *shul* he meant Anzio "city hall," where I had ventured the foolhardy prophecy that on the following sabbath we might be joining Roman Jewry in a common prayer of thanksgiving.

That afternoon in Rome, the true meaning of the phrase "fog of war" came to me. In the southern half of the city, a victory parade was in progress, but north of the Victor Emmanuel Monument the rattle of machine-guns filled the air. Crowds

gathered around a shop on one of the main boulevards, shouting hoarsely, bent upon anti-fascist vengeance. Several young men hurled hand grenades through the shop window. Their efforts were rewarded, for a few fascists came hurtling out of the door and windows.

In our haste, Aaron and I had brought no rations, but a generous tank crew threw two cans of cheese and packages of biscuits into our jeep. We turned into a quiet side street, ate the rations, then walked into the lobby of a large hotel. In typical cosmopolitan fashion, business was progressing as usual. A few civilians were leaving through the back door, apparently Nazi diplomats who were late in departing. As the desk-clerk completed straightening out their accounts, he turned to us. "Would you like rooms?" he asked, lethargically.

I remarked that it must seem fantastic to him to have Allied guests hard on the heels of the Nazis. The manager, speaking as perfect English as he probably spoke German, replied: "In the hotel business, one must be prepared for all eventualities. Last night we had Nazi diplomats and an American naval officer at the same time." He motioned toward a gray-colored jeep standing in front of the entrance. Its owner, according to the story, made a habit of entering a city the day before it fell, leaving his jeep, which bore the markings, "United States Navy," parked among the German vehicles. In the fog of war, no one paid any attention to the jeep, nor to the ensign's uniform.

We were probably the first tourists since 1939 to ask, "*Dove la synagoge, per favore?*" Our search led to the unharmed edifice which adorns the *Via Tebere* (Tiber). Occupying a city block on the river drive, the Temple was an imposing structure situated in the very heart of Rome. *Tempio Israelitico* stood

near the old Ghetto, but across the river from the ancient Jewish settlement of Transtebere. This majestic structure was the synagogue of the Chief Rabbi of Rome. Neighboring it was, oddly enough, a Catholic Mission to the Jews. A figure of the Nazarene beckoned to Roman Israel to forswear its waywardness and return to the fold. Beneath the figure, a verse from Isaiah, engraved in Hebrew and Italian, challenged the faithful as they entered to worship. In my first conversation with Rabbi Zolli, I remarked on the indelicacy of a mission house at the very doorstep of Italy's greatest synagogue. He replied that his congregation was not offended.

The following Friday, on the ninth day of June, the first large synagogue in liberated Europe opened its doors. Four thousand men, women, and children streamed into the high-domed house of worship. Vast though the Temple is, every inch of space was occupied. This was indeed a significant day in the two thousand year history of Roman Jewry. Here was the remnant of a proud people offering a mighty *Shehechiyonu,* a blessing for life, such as I have never heard, uttered in an atmosphere of painful relief and ineffable joy.

On the pulpit sat Chief Rabbi Zolli, his associates, Rabbi Panzieri, Chaplain Urbach of the Palestine Forces, and myself. Before I was introduced, an American soldier made his way to my seat and whispered a request. He had left Rome ten years before, as a boy of twenty, and now, in the ranks of the liberators, he sought vainly for his parents. "I am sure that if they have not been sent to Germany, they are somewhere in this congregation," he said. "Please, chaplain, make an announcement for me." I hesitated, explaining that the Chief Rabbi was in charge of the services.

"When I am introduced, stand beside me," I told him. Pos-

sibly, like Joseph in Egypt, his brothers would not recognize him, but surely his mother would know him, even in the uniform of distant America. And there he stood when a cry of recognition came from the throng. There before the Ark of the *Torah,* was enacted the tearful scene of reunion, a mother brought back from the land of the dead by an army of liberation which included her own son.

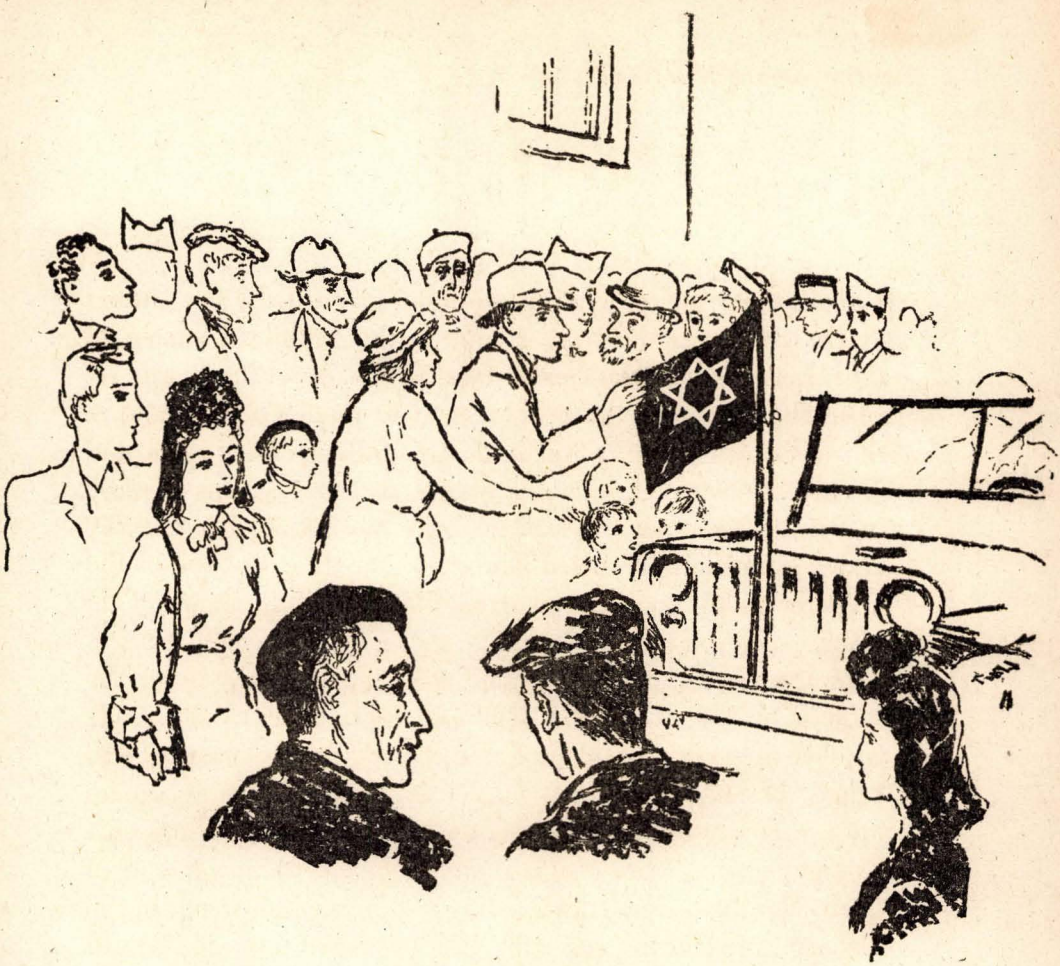
In my brief address, I told the people of Rome that we knew what burdens they had borne. But for us, too, the road to this synagogue had been a bitter one. Hundreds of our closest friends lay buried in Nettuno, thirty miles from this House of God. They, more than any of us in *Tempio Israelitico,* had opened these portals of prayer.

After the service, I submitted to the painful ordeal which fell to the lot of many chaplains. Our insignia, the Star of David resting upon the Ten Commandments, was the symbol of liberation to the Jews of Rome, as it was all through Europe and North Africa. Every chaplain had the uncomfortable role of a messiah, being the living symbol of liberation to a people whose hearts overflowed with gratitude. They crushed one another attempting to get close to me, to touch my clothes, press their fingers to my insignia, and place their lips against it. Several elderly ladies kissed my cheek; many young ladies kissed my hands. I cringed with embarrassment, watching the expression on the faces of the amused G.I.s. *"Multe grazie, signor rabbino, multe grazie,"* the people cried. Commanding generals are invariably inaccessible, but I was an incarnation of the armed forces which had brought light to their darkened world. "Look, Sarah, our *Mogen David,"* a girl shouted. "Come here, Papa, the Ten Commandments." Throughout the war, in French, Italian, Yiddish and Arabic, these were the words

our chaplains heard. The little symbol given us by the United States Army was the sign of hope to the battered remnant of the House of Israel. "Somewhere in the world, we are respected," was what the insignia said to them. "Somewhere in the world, our Ten Commandments, dashed down again and again, still live." The uneasy wearer of this precious symbol, in this occasion myself, had to bear the brunt of a friendly attack born out of frenzied adulation. Nearly every one of the four thousand congregants came to clasp my hand or to embrace me.

In the streets, a Jewish chaplain's jeep, bearing either the symbol of his work or a Hebrew inscription, would invite another messianic scene. I once came out of the synagogue in Lyons, France, to find a crowd of fifty Jews gathered around my car, inspecting the insignia, fondling it and pondering over its significance. Here was a double symbol, of power and of spirit. Here was a redeemer riding not on a white steed, but in a chariot of steel from Detroit, U.S.A. (In all texts on "adjusting the soldier to civilian life" I have seen no discussion of the problem: how to help a chaplain step down from his messianic role in Europe to serve again the Men's Club and the Sisterhood in his modest congregation.)

Italian Jewry, numbering less than fifty thousand before the war, had for centuries been outside the mainstream of Jewish life. Its religious forms seemed almost alien to us, being modelled after the Catholic ritual. A member of the Roman congregation told me that when he visited the United States, he was astonished at our synagogues. They were more like churches in appearance. My reaction to the magnificent Temple in Rome was, like his, one of sharp surprise. We had both come upon the truth that religious forms tend toward uniformity



within a country. Catholic soldiers and officers who were brought up in America also were astounded at the pattern of Italian Catholicism. Many devout Catholics spoke unhappily about the home of the mother church. In *The World, the Flesh and Father Smith,* Bruce Marshall tells of a disappointed Catholic returning from Rome who was told by the Monsignor: "It is always best not to visit the Kitchen of the Good Lord."

The faith of Italians, regardless of creed, is clothed in a mass of superstitions, some of them harking back to pagan days. *Form* is all important; rite is the dominant theme among Catholics and Jews alike.

As I walked in front of St. Peter's, I met an elderly lady whom I had seen at the synagogue. She was peddling cruci-

fixes and the other articles that are sold in profusion to visiting tourists. She recognized me as Signor the Rabbi of America, curtsied, and spoke with deference about my exalted station in the House of Israel. She touched my insignia and brought her fingers to her lips. In the same mood of reverence, she held up a crucifix: "Buy a crucifix for Signora?" Perhaps her action was mechanical; possibly she thought an American Rabbi's wife would have some use for it.

Mark Twain's description of Italy as a "museum of magnificence and misery" might have been written in 1944. Every soldier who traveled from Salerno to Genoa will vouch for its accuracy. When I visited the home of the first *Shamos* (beadle) of *Tempio Israelitico,* I found that he, his wife, and a family of seven children occupied two small rooms. Furthermore, they had offered their hospitality to two Yugoslavian refugee children. From the vantage point of comfortable America, I can understand now that such terms as "housing shortage" are only relative.

The day following Chief Rabbi Zolli's return from hiding, I visited his apartment, accompanied by my assistant, Joseph Goldman, of New York City. Goldman took notes of the interview, and every detail of our conversation was checked by Zolli himself before we left.

Climbing to a fifth story apartment, only two blocks from the Grand Synagogue, we were greeted with the sign: *Professor I. Zolli.* At the time, we pondered the fact that the title, Chief Rabbi, was missing. Furthermore the brass sign did not appear to be of recent cast. There were six locks on the door and our knock started an elaborate process. First, an eye could be seen peering at us through a small hole in another door in

the hallway. Then the series of locks were released, one by one. We noticed several bullet holes in the door which, according to Zolli, were the work of the Gestapo on the night he fled into hiding. The multi-bolted door was a distasteful symbol to me wherever I saw it in Europe, a symbol of an insecurity bred of suspicion and distrust.

A little girl, not more than three years old, ran away from us and tried to hide in a corner as soon as we entered the Zolli apartment. We offered her candy and spoke to her. She burst into tears. Zolli explained that her father, the young man who had opened the door for us, had been found at the rabbi's home when the Gestapo arrived. When he refused to divulge Zolli's hiding place, the youth was beaten. As the little girl ran to help her father, the Nazi officer kicked her. It was not until our third visit to Zolli's home and a quantity of "caramelli" had been given to her through the rabbi, that she overcame her fear of our uniforms. She still would not speak to us, but would come near enough to accept the candy directly.

Zolli spoke to me in Yiddish. He spoke it easily with a mixture of German and Galician dialect. He also addressed us in Hebrew and English. Referring to the young man in our presence, he said, "He is a fine man, even though he's a *goy*." This was an odd and surprising manifestation of Ghetto provincialism in a Jew who had left his native Brody more than forty years before.

For two hours, Zolli traced the story of his flight, as he did a month later for the Associated Press. In the version which we heard and recorded, the aid he received from the Vatican seemed trivial compared to the assistance rendered him by the underground, which he referred to as communist. Zolli described how he learned to set type for the clandestine news-

paper, how he watched them prepare hand grenades and other ammunition. His vivid and detailed description bore out the truth of his claim that he had spent many months with them. I asked how long he had remained at the Vatican, and though his answer was not clear, he implied that it was not more than thirty-six hours. The tale of his entrance into the Vatican was fantastic. In order to avoid detection, he posed as a plumber's assistant. By entering with the Vatican engineer, ostensibly to repair a critical plumbing item for the Pope, he penetrated the Nazi cordon which surrounded the area. Zolli spoke admiringly of the Pope. The Vatican was terrified of the Nazis, according to the rabbi, and feared a violation of its neutrality. Zolli's presence there added greatly to this fear. Zolli spoke glowingly of the great hoard of wealth he claimed to have seen at the Vatican when he was given a substantial quantity of gold to help pay the Nazi ransom demands made upon the Jewish community. (Later, it seemed doubtful to me that the Pope would have taken his friend into the Papal treasury.)

Zolli was bitter about his quarrel with the president of the Jewish Community, Ugo Foa, whom he accused of strong fascist connections. Foa had been appointed to the office by the Mussolini government, and was definitely a *persona grata* in fascist circles. Foa did not deny his dealings with the government (though he made certain we were aware that at one time he had delivered an anti-fascist speech). A few years before, the rabbi sought permission to travel to Palestine to examine some Semitic manuscripts. Il Duce granted his request, sending him a gift of several thousand *lire* at the same time.

Signor Foa had long been Zolli's enemy, and when the Nazis occupied Rome the quarrel came to a boiling point. Foa insisted that Temple services be continued, and that the rabbi

remain at his post. He had been reassured by his fascist friends in the highest Roman circles that the deportation policy would not be applied to the Jews in the capital. Zolli opposed Foa for two reasons: first, the Italians were no longer masters of their country's destiny and Jews would be arrested if they approached the synagogue. (He illustrated this point with a story of an old lady who refused to go into hiding because this would interfere with her social service work: she was sent to Germany.) The second point, as Zolli put it, was, "What good would I be to my people as a corpse?" The Nazis had taken the rabbis of Venice, of Milan, of Florence. Zolli believed that to remain would be tantamount to throwing away his life.

At our liberation service, when Zolli rose to introduce me, Rabbi Panzieri, the man appointed by Foa as spiritual leader, broke into Zolli's remarks, and the two rabbis spoke simultaneously. The confused situation was not noticed, even by the American or Vatican reporters. Zolli turned to me, embarrassed and crestfallen. "Now my own people have added to my torment," he remarked.

During our talk at his quarters, Zolli urged me to communicate with the late Chief Rabbi Hertz in London, urging him to use his good offices to reestablish peace in the Roman community. He gave me a copy of his *History of the Jews,* writing in Hebrew: "To my dearly beloved colleague, in esteem and affection, Israel Zolli, 20th day of Sivan, 5704."

After leaving Rabbi Zolli that day, I went to the Temple. A crowd of Jews had gathered before the gates. I saw Chaplain Urbach of the Palestine Forces in the company of Ugo Foa. Taken aback at the warm friendship which seemed to have developed between the two, I asked Urbach whether he had seen Zolli, cautioning him not to take sides in the quarrel until

more light had been shed on the controversy. Urbach resented my suggestion and a few hot words passed between us. Urbach's continued fraternization with Foa placed the weight of Allied prestige on the side of the president and against Rabbi Zolli.

Unfortunately, Palestine has not yet developed a modern rabbinate. During this war, it was forced to draw upon mediocrities, men without ability and completely alien to the spirit of Palestine's fine young soldiers. Urbach, in fact, did not have the confidence of his own men. He represented an Old World Judaism against which they rebelled. It would be a grave mistake to identify Urbach with the spirit of the Palestine Brigade.

Soon after the service of liberation, my military duties took me to another part of Italy. In this interval, the very capable Chaplain Jacob Hochman was brought in to serve the Rome area. On my next visit to Rome, on the day set aside for elections of new Jewish officers, I learned from Hochman that the Military Government, on the advice of Colonel Poletti, had postponed elections when it became evident that Signor Foa, the fascist, would be reelected by a resounding majority. Apparently the taint of fascism was not sufficient reason to condemn a man in liberated Italy—even the Jews, who had suffered most under its tyranny, were willing to overlook Foa's political affiliations.

Much has been written about Zolli's conversion to Catholicism which took place in February 1945. The Catholic church throughout the world hailed the entrance of an important figure of Israel into the mother church. It welcomed Zolli as a shepherd who might lead some of his flock to the baptismal fount. The Jews reacted in several ways. Some believed that Italian Jewry, devoid of leadership and floundering in con-

fusion, again had been betrayed. Others said, let us ignore the incident; Zolli is not worth discussing. Still others, such as Dr. Yahuda and Dr. Newman, traced the historic and psychological reasons for Zolli's apostasy, at the same time pouring out a torrent of vituperation upon him.

We must, it seems to me, place the event in its proper perspective. It is, first of all, a common fallacy to associate the greatness of a city's name with the caliber of its chief rabbi. My observations have led me to believe that in France, Italy, and North Africa, the rabbinate was invariably mediocre. Incumbents of great pulpits often were very inferior men. If transplanted to the United States, they could not hold a pulpit even in a small town. Their scholarship was not outstanding, their speaking ability uniformly poor, and their personal contact with people uninspiring and lacking in warmth. The very word "Chief" is meaningless: in most cities the sole rabbi used this high-sounding title. And when we realize that the congregation which the Chief Rabbi of Rome served is no bigger in size than the congregation of Des Moines, Iowa, the historic significance of Zolli's action dwindles to its proper proportions.

Zolli, in my opinion, should never have been the rabbi for the congregation, but in conservative Europe it is not easy to take the drastic measures necessary for a rabbi's expulsion. Zolli had neither the temperament of a spiritual leader, nor the traditional beliefs of an orthodox rabbi. His biblical studies had led him to a denial of Mosaic authorship of the Bible; and as he told me, his eastern European training made him rebel against the superstitious encrustations overlying Italian Judaism, which he thought were borrowed from local Catholicism. He mentioned one strange custom which he had denounced from the pulpit as superstitious: on the *Yahrzeit* (death anni-

versary of a parent) his congregants would go to the graveside and slaughter a chicken over the tombstone. According to Zolli, his open opposition to such a practice had made him unpopular with the more orthodox members of *Tempio Israelitico.*

Only in Italian Jewry would it be possible for a rabbi to change his name to Ignazio as a tribute to a Catholic saint, as Zolli did a number of years ago. Months before Zolli's conversion, Cecil Roth wrote me that it was a tragedy for the Rome pulpit to have such a nonentity as rabbi.

With all his shortcomings, I believe that Zolli might never have left the fold had he been offered the hand of friendship. The measures taken by our Allied representatives, even of those who attempted to restore his position, were not based upon a knowledge of Zolli's personality, or of the conflicts tormenting his soul. His fall from grace and dismissal from office, which led him to his act of apostasy, can now be understood. Post-mortems have limited value, but they may shed light upon the causes.

Zolli's dramatic act kindled the wrath of world Jewry, but in the heat of that wrath historic objectivity melted away and the most elementary facts became obscured. Since our judgments were subjective, they tended to alter our memories. My first image of Zolli, which I put in writing after our first meeting, was of a kindly old gentleman. Today, the picture in my mind stresses characteristics which I then beheld but to which I paid scant attention—a sickly, slightly irrational old man, who looked over eighty, with a hard mouth, and lips betraying coldness and obstinacy.

Later, while visiting the Tel Aviv home of the late Rabbi Amiel, I was introduced to a distinguished old gentleman. He had heard that I was flying back to Europe, and asked if I

could arrange for our pilot to stop in Italy. He was Rabbi David Prato, Chief Rabbi Designate of Rome. Had the rabbi and his wife obtained their Palestine exit visas on time, they would have hitchhiked to Rome in our plane and arrived before the High Holydays. Prato's warm personality contrasted sharply with the cold, distracted temperament of his hapless predecessor. Prato was the quintessence of kindliness and charm.

The torrent of criticism that poured down upon Zolli contained the charge that he had refused to accept martyrdom when the Germans entered Rome. We would do well to heed the rabbinic injunction bidding us, "judge not a man until thou standest in his place." Hitler succeeded only too well in his task of extermination, and though answering the Gestapo's summons with the words, "Here am I; take me away with my people," has an appeal to the dramatist and poet, they are not much good to a post-war generation of European Jewry desperately in need of leadership.

Watching the Nazi juggernaut crush first the Rabbi of Venice, then of Milan, and then of Florence, a rabbi might well decide he would accomplish very little by joining his flock in the death-march. I cannot believe that *Kiddush Hashem* calls upon any man to commit hari-kiri: it challenges a Jew to fight, not to die like a witless lamb in the house of slaughter.* Our justifiable resentment against a turncoat blinds us to the stubborn fact that martyrdom is too expensive a practice for a decimated people. The loss of Europe's spiritual leadership is a tragedy of the first magnitude. Those who remained after the death chambers had ceased their work were usually the nimble witted, not the intellectual leaders of European Jewry. A critic

* Bialik, *City of Slaughter.*

in a comfortable apartment in New York or Chicago who condemns a man for refusing to be martyred should canvass his own conscience.

Courage is two-dimensional, and difficult to evaluate. For instance, from Pearl Harbor on, it took great moral stamina to resist the appeal of a uniform, to swim against the popular tide of direct participation in the winning of the war. Men who took the view that their contribution to humanity would be broader if they stayed at their undramatic teaching or preaching, or at work in their laboratories, were as courageous, in a way, as the Silver Star recipients who served overseas. Zolli cannot be denounced as a moral weakling for his decision to remain alive. The New World was founded by men who chose flight in preference to martyrdom.

In our indignation, we are wont to condemn the apostate as taking the easy way out. Apostasy is never an easy way. For one brought up in a religious tradition, it is a path strewn with psychological thorns. The hysteria which greeted the Zolli conversion was a negative one, consisting of denunciation and cries of reproach. We have too long indulged in smug condemnation of those who deny their faith. The antidote to heresy is not witch-hunting, but a strengthening of our faith by making it spiritually and emotionally attractive. Critics of the backslider are often men whose sermons are vacuous and whose teachings are uninspired. And yet they cry havoc when an Israelite forsakes the fold. We would do better to ask: are we presenting the faith of Israel in a way that will move the hearts of men, lay hold of their imagination, corral their idealism? Are there any Akibas among us who would inspire Bar Kochbas to take up the banner of our heritage? Are we building up a reservoir of Jewish leadership in our own country that will provide us

with a vital living Judaism? Hundreds of small communities in America are entering a phase not unlike Italian Jewry. Their pulpits are without rabbis, their Hebrew schools without teachers. The *K'lei Kodesh*, those who enabled the Jewish community to observe dietary laws, circumcision, and other aspects of tradition, are even fewer in number. Without replacements and reinforcements, Jewish life in America will inevitably imitate the tragic pattern of the European community.



Lest We Forget

THE INFANTRYMAN in Italy saw little of the total war picture: only the tremendous wall of Nazi steel and fire which faced his company and his battalion. A hill conquered meant but one thing; he was now at the bottom of another hill twice as tall. But in those gloomy rain-soaked mornings on the Italian front, a gleam of hope came from an unexpected direction. The *Stars and Stripes* brought us the news of victory in Russia. Our task seemed less colossal, less futile, when we knew that the enemy, ensconced so firmly on the hills in front of us, was beginning to feel a warning breath on the back of his neck, a breath that might some day become a tornado. Odessa fell: crack Nazi divisions moved eastward; the quality of Nazi captives began to show signs of deterioration on the Italian front, with more Austrians and Poles among them, fewer grenadiers and SS material. The boys in the Third and the Forty-fifth, the seamen on the LSTs off Naples and Anzio, breathed an audible

"Thank God for Russia. Without her the war would last forever."

Yet there were disturbing voices: "What of Russian might? Would their armies stop in Berlin or march right on to Paris?" was the refrain when the Red tanks were rolling. "Have they made a secret agreement with Hitler?" the same ones clamored during weeks of stalemate, as at Warsaw. These voices were not from the rank and file; they came from the regular Army Command. I remember that at Chaplain School, while studying the standard army course on morale, how shocked we students were at the customary grouping of Japanese, German and Russian methods. In nearly every one of the sixteen classes, vigorous protests were voiced by the new chaplains. By way of reply, our instructor would say: "Perhaps the principle is the same in all totalitarian states."

The most virulent anti-Russian speech I heard was at Naples in 1944. A Fifth Army General, lecturing to us at an officers' meeting, expounded on the foibles of Russia and the lofty motives of the Germans. He contrasted Russian and German medical standards, lauding those of our enemy. "We don't trust the quality of Russian hospitals," he declared, "because they only showed our observers their very best installations" (a rather common practice everywhere in the presence of inspectors). We had recently heard the eyewitness report of an AAF bombardier, fresh from a B-17 trip to Poltava, describing the beautiful field hospitals which he had seen there without benefit of escort. This same bombardier also compared the neatness of the destroyed Russian city to the ugliness of Naples, whose idle populace had not yet removed the war debris from the streets. Yet our general insisted upon the Goebbels-made picture of the "dirty Russian." He then became elo-

quent about the Nazis' respect for our hospital Red Cross markers. "Adolf Hitler has given personal orders to the Luftwaffe to respect all Red Cross emblems," he said. My roommate, a major in the Medical Corps, later asked the general: "How do you explain the recent bombing of a well-lit British hospital ship off Naples harbor?" The general's answer, even as I write it, seems fantastic. Said the general: *"The bomb may have been dropped by a Russian pilot in a Nazi plane!"*

The army exhibited splendid movies of our Allies. The pictures portraying Russia were inspiring, both in content and artistic merit. But the undercurrent of suspicion vitiated much of their effectiveness. There was, at that time, an ideal opportunity to draw Russia and America closer together; a sense of good will and comradeship engendered by common sacrifice was very strong in both camps. Was it accidental or intentional that we missed the chance to be friends with Russia?

For their part, the Russians seemed more than eager for our continued friendship, severely punishing any of their own group whose behavior might make for ill will. My own contact with the Russians was very limited. On a dusty road near Leluc, on Highway 7 in southern France, I stopped my car one afternoon to watch a Russian company proceeding along the side of the road. The rhythm of their stride was as smooth as a clock-beat. Their perfect timing came from their singing, a gay marching song in four-part harmony that would have done credit to the Don Cossack Chorus. I was deeply impressed.

Our religious services in Italy attracted some Russian officers and enlisted men. With few exceptions they were older men. They spoke Yiddish fluently. At a Passover *Seder* dinner much later in the war's progress, two Russian captains were at our head table, seated between a British major and two French

guests. When I introduced the latter to the men, the applause was warm and sincere. But when I presented the two Russian officers, there was a spontaneous roar of appreciation. What prompted the outburst? Probably admiration for their achievements on the field of battle since June 1941, coupled with a tacit welcome to these sons of Israel who were returning to the household of Israel after a generation-long absence. Deeply moved, our Russian guests arose to address us in a language which we shared, Yiddish. The first to speak addressed us as, *"Kamaraden,"* and proceeded cautiously into a plea for the United Nations cause. But as he warmed up to his audience, sensing the friendship in the sea of faces in front of him, his voice took on a passionate fervor. He ended with a mighty and resounding *"Chaverim Kol Yisroel!"* (All Israel are brothers!)

These men may or may not have been typical of Russian Jewry. Last summer, as we were arranging for a shipload of immigrants to set sail for Palestine, a Russian lieutenant approached the Jewish authorities to seek passage with the refugees. It was explained to him that it would be highly indiscreet of us to fight his case with the Russian authorities, and advised him to return to his native land. The officer said he was intensely worried about the Jews in post-war Russia. Nazi propaganda, carried on incessantly for four years within his country, might not be so quickly forgotten. Would not the rise of Jew-baiting Greek orthodoxy bring back the *pogromtchiks,* he wanted to know.

We who served on the Western Front in 1944 were little concerned with Russian politics. We were interested in elementary mathematics, the simple arithmetic of numbers and time. Every Russian surge forward meant one less major drive for us: fewer crosses, fewer Shields of David, fewer eyes lost,

fewer limbs mangled. Each major Russian objective achieved meant that Brooklyn and Dallas and Seattle were months nearer to our dugouts. Simple, eloquent mathematics, and we were ready to translate it into terms of brotherhood and international understanding if given the chance.

We have been endowed by nature with the blessing of memory-blocking (psychologists call it repression), which enables us to forget most of our battlefield nightmares. Unfortunately though, we forget too those fearful nights when we prayed for Russia in her tragic hour of sacrifice, when we blessed the Kremlin for its military sagacity, when we thanked the Almighty for the Russian *katoosa*-wielder and tankman. We forget the days when we gasped in admiration at the epic of Leningrad and Sevastopol and Stalingrad. We forget because, since returning to the United States, our minds have been filled with an ugly hymn of hate chanted by newspaper men, commentators, and even pulpiteers.

The cry, "Remember!" is usually a prelude to violence and revenge. But there is another kind of remembrance which can save us from these very things: "Remember Russia, whose blood helped to purchase our freedom. Remember Britain, whose youth paid a more fearful price than ours to gain our common liberty. Remember the small and the great whose fears and hopes blended with ours, so that we fought with one heart and one soul."

The hysterical red-baiting politicians in our midst constantly dwell upon the theme of communist propaganda. They are oblivious to the basic truth that the printed word is but a mild form of propaganda. Russia's spiritual conquest of Europe, if it comes, will be born not of propaganda but of political and military achievement. A shipload of pamphlets is worth less

than one Stalingrad. Three hundred German divisions vanquished is a powerful argument. The little nations of Europe now living in a political vacuum will not be won to a particular way of life by words.

When I entered Rome on June 4, 1944, a few hours before the city officially fell, I saw several motorcycle patrols speeding through the streets, obviously looking for combat. I was not certain whether they were friend or foe. Later I was told that they were liberated Russian prisoners who were taking matters in their own hands. According to the Romans, they succeeded in liquidating 2,000 fascists. The Italians understood the work of this Red patrol. They had more difficulty understanding the subtle logic behind our Allied Military Government's policy, which not only permitted fascists to remain free, but allowed them to become the intimates, politically and socially, of the Allied forces. The *populo Romano* looked with wonder at American and British officers joining the fascist aristocracy at cocktail parties, driving in limousines with beautifully attired Italian ladies, visiting the homes of prosperous men who had not acquired their affluence in the underground anti-fascist movement. When the full story of this war is known, we shall dwell longingly, no doubt, upon the golden opportunities we lost in this war. We could have filled the vacuum of Europe with the basic American ideals of liberty and democracy, had we believed in them hard enough ourselves.



Dijon Days

THE STORY of an army officer's career can be traced in his "201 file," a collection of the orders he has received, copies of which he is required to keep. "Officer concerned WP by rl or ma for d'y 157th Inf," was not a code message to mystify the enemy. It stated in army fashion that the officer should proceed for duty with a regiment of the Forty-fifth Division. If that unit happened to be on a beachhead or an LST, the one line order meant the difference between sitting in an office or storming a beachhead. Reading my own "201 file," I see that I served thirty-nine different army units: battalions, armies, evacuation hospitals and base sections (main supply headquarters).

A two line order shifted me from the Mediterranean to the European Theatre of Operations, a command translated into a non-stop flight from Naples, Italy, to Dijon in central France in less than five hours. My diary for the day describes the

balmy weather in Italy during the morning hours, and what happened to me in snow-covered Dijon during the evening.

For over four months Dijon was to be my home and the center of my activities in an area about the size of New Jersey. In that space of time, many of us who were "permanent" residents became as Dijonnais as the *Moutard de Dijon,* the mustard for which the city is famous.

The capital of Burgundy would make an ideal "Middletown" study of the typical French community. Approximately the size of Peoria, it is distant enough from Paris to have an *esprit* peculiar to itself, yet sufficiently close to the capital to catch something of its tone. Dijon is essentially bourgeois, the perfect middle class town, seat of the ancient Dukes of Burgundy, the center of the world's best wines and champagnes. The three great wars which have ravaged France since 1870 somehow bypassed the rich province of Côte d'Or. Even the Nazis failed to make a stand there against the American Seventh Army and General Tassigny's forces. Dijon bears none of the scars which seared the other countrysides of France. Many Americans recall their Dijon days during the First World War pleasantly, and to many natives the outstanding impression of that era of American occupation was of a gay military carnival.

Change in Dijon is so infinitely slow, that homes are more important as historic monuments than as comfortable dwelling-places. Even the real-estate brokers, who by trade and temperament are usually in the vanguard of civic development, spoke only of the famous *Maisons de Dijon,* fourteenth-century houses whose architectural reputation attracted tourists from the Pyrenees to Brittany. I suggested to a friend in the real-

estate business that he build an area of modern homes where low-income residents of Dijon could live comfortably. He was startled by the idea. "We pride ourselves on our history, and we like our old homes," he told me.

The school books which I saw in Dijon often contained on the flyleaf the names of child, mother, and grandmother, an unheard-of thing in America where textbooks are sometimes outmoded in a semester. Habits of thought in Burgundy certainly did not change overnight.

Conservative Dijon knew few extremes. Its affluence was not a whit ostentatious, and its extreme poverty was neatly disguised. All change was shocking to the Burgundians, and time was reckoned in centuries. I recall a description given by a Dijonnais of the organist in the synagogue, an elderly Christian lady. As a young girl of eighteen, she began to accompany the chants of the cantor. Now past sixty-eight, she still was at the organist's chair, having had a brief vacation during the Nazi occupation. The Jews of Dijon were proud of the fact that she now knew the Hebraic melodies by heart: "She doesn't even need a book." That was quite understandable, it seemed to me, and hardly a sign of precocity as the local Israelites believed it to be.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this French "Middletown" was that it looked exactly like a Hollywood reproduction of a typical town in France. The Jewish community, according to the encyclopedias, "has been settled there from time immemorial." A thousand years ago, there were two special quarters for Jews, and a street called *Rue des Juifs*. When we captured Dijon, the street sign *Rue de la Synagogue* still stood, unmolested during four years of Nazi rule. We learned that the Germans were not consistent in practice, even though they

were thorough in the principle of making France *juden-rein.* In nearby cities, monuments erected to Jews were smashed, but a prominent square in Dijon named Emmanuel Adler, in memory of a Jewish public figure, had not been disfigured. This inconsistency appeared in many Nazi actions. The Dijon synagogue was used by the Germans as a quartermaster warehouse for clothing. In some cities, they converted the synagogue into stables for their horses, as in the case of the magnificent temple in Tunis. The synagogues in Lyons and Nice were undamaged, but in Marseille they had hurled a bomb into the back of the temple. Evidently, even the Nazis had gradations in their degradation.

September of 1944 was the month of emancipation for the Jews of Dijon. The High Holydays found the beautiful synagogue unharmed externally, but denuded of its benches, its metal decorations and furnishings. The scrolls of the *Torah,* left with Christian friends of the caretaker, were saved from the Nazis, who in some neighboring cities indulged in the pointless sport of firing bullets into the sacred scriptures. Behind the synagogue was an old cemetery, containing the graves of a rabbi and his wife who had served Dijon in Napoleonic days. In front of the synagogue was a modern underground air-raid shelter built for protection against Allied bombers.

On *Yom Kippur* Eve of that year, with the Nazi withdrawal but a few days past, Dijon Jewry held its first free religious service. There were no prayer books, no lights, no publicity. The rabbi was in exile, and even the *Shamos* (beadle) was not yet in evidence. I was given a typewritten report of *Kol Nidrei* Eve in Dijon by an M.P. who witnessed the event. Though couched in the language of a police report, it is a rather unusual document. It follows verbatim:

241ST MILITARY POLICE COMPANY
APO 667 U. S. ARMY

SUBJECT: *Yom Kippur* in Dijon
TO: Chaplain, CAS Hq., APO 667, U. S. Army

1. Preparation for a *Yom Kippur* service was started at about 1500 hours 26 September 1944 when I was relieved from guard. With the help of an unknown sergeant of the U. S. Air Corps I started to look for the synagogue. Within about fifteen minutes we found the synagogue and I went in for information. The synagogue was in very poor condition with only about six benches, no *Torahs,* no prayer books, and small piles of filth and straw which the Germans left behind. In the small areaway between the synagogue proper and a small chapel I saw a few French workmen, who were cleaning up the filth and hauling it away.

I asked one of them if he knew of any service scheduled for that evening, but he remarked that he was not Jewish and didn't know. He referred me to Mr. Franc on Rue Piron. Just then we ran into a French soldier who was also looking for services, so he joined us in the jeep and we went searching for Mr. Franc. His store was closed, and we asked for another Jewish name.

Here the report described the laborious hunt which ended in the discovery of the Levy family.

Mrs. Levy told us that our search was almost futile as most of the Jewish population had not returned from their places of hiding. Now having six people we decided that we might be able to hold a service. The French soldier said he would conduct the service, which would be held at 1755 hours (5:55 p.m.).

As I had an hour of duty to perform, and was not relieved until 1830 hours, I arrived a little late and was surprised to find the small chapel fairly well crowded by Maquis (about fifteen) and about seven or eight civilians, the Sergeant and myself. The service was conducted by a member of the Maquis, and then we planned for the morning *Yom Kippur* service.

This was held in the synagogue proper, and was restricted to reading from the prayer book and the memorial (*Yiskor*) service as we had no *Torah.*

2. Enclosed negatives are proof of my statements, the indoor photo taken just before we finished the service, and the outdoor shot after five had left the group.

3. The addresses of some of the people who attended are: (four civilians) Address of the Maquis unit: (men who freed the city) 7eme Co. 3 B½ Brigade 4c, Groupe Mobile Sud Ouest, Bureau Militaire de Toulouse.

4. I promised all these people copies of the photos taken, but was unable to do so.

(Signed) HAROLD J. SERVETNICK
241st M. P. Co. APO 667

During the long winter months following my arrival in Dijon, my assistant, Joseph Geisler, and I gathered information which would enable us to reconstruct the story of Dijon Jewry from 1940 to 1944. The story can be summed up in one word: flight. The aged and the feeble, the poor and the lame, all joined in the precipitous retreat to havens of refuge. The German breakthrough at Sedan meant that each Jewish family had to decide the life-or-death question: "Which were the safest areas of asylum, the large cities where scrutiny was more intense but the individual less conspicuous, or the out-of-the-way villages? Was it better to live alone, or to hide with a hospitable Christian family? One thing was certain: to remain in Dijon as Jews was to perish. The Nazi dragnet caught up those who were too poor to travel, those who staked their ability to survive on bribing the Nazis, and those who were loath to leave their property and financial support. The German emigres and a few from Eastern Europe, who had no firm roots in the

community, were the first victims. An old couple in their middle seventies, detained in the local prison for deportation, did not survive more than a few days. The youngest to be taken was five years old, the eldest seventy-six.

A wealthy cattle dealer and his family of five, old citizens of Burgundy, were confident of their ability to buy their way out. All five were shipped to Germany—and death. Their very wealth had proved their undoing.

A few men, like Rabbi Zyper, a young scholar who was a spiritual leader of the community, were able to flee, but were later apprehended and sent to an unknown destination in Germany.

No Jew who professed his identity could escape. But tens of thousands succeeded in obtaining false identification papers (some youngsters I knew had three or four names). In one city, the papers had all the signs of authenticity because they were printed by the Chief of Police who, though acceptable to the Nazis, was actually the head of the local French underground.

Most of Dijon Jewry found security in those areas of France controlled by the Italians. Here the treatment varied from kindly tolerance to a weakness for bribery. Grenoble, Chambery and other cities near the Italian border became a mecca for Jews in flight. Some of the poorer families found their way to the zone near the Spanish frontier, as close to the perimeter of the Nazi dragnet as they could reach.

The mountain regions of France were popular for another reason; the French underground, operating from these hills, shielded and protected the older Jews and enlisted the active support of the younger men and women. One wealthy Dijon family fled to the hills: the father became a Maquis officer, the

two sons enlisted in the Free French underground forces. They served with distinction and returned unharmed after the liberation.

French Jews were often organized into FFI units, and after D-Day they succeeded in liberating many French villages unaided by Allied forces. At "Resistance" meetings held after the Nazis were driven out, I heard the young Jews discuss their victories and battles with Maccabean pride.

Before the capitulation, 70 per cent of Dijon's Jews were in commerce, 15 per cent in the professions, 1 per cent in skilled labor, the remainder inactive. The changed economic picture before and after the invasion is shown in the following table of statistics which we compiled:

	1939	1944
Retail merchants	47	12
Wholesale merchants	6	6
Manufacturers	1	1
Cattle dealers	6	5
Salesmen and peddlers	6	1
Lawyers and accountants	4	1
Real-estate brokers	4	2
Doctors and dentists	4	1
College professors	3	3
Photographers	1	0
Tailors	1	0
Rabbi, cantor, sexton	3	2
Retired or unemployed	14	60*

*(including deportees)

The Marrano-like existence led by Dijon Jews during the German occupation often led to unhappy family situations. A young daughter of an eastern European family lived with her parents on a farm owned by a Catholic family. The girl fell in

love with the farmer's son. Despite the secret disapproval of the parents, the eighteen-year-old girl entered into an unfortunate marriage. The girl's parents could not reveal the reasons for their opposition, and thus betray their Jewish identity. Later, the young couple separated, the girl left with a young baby.

A few days after my arrival in Dijon, I was asked by a middle-aged couple to officiate at a remarriage ceremony. They had been divorced in order to elude the Nazis. The wife, who was "Aryan," undertook formal divorce proceedings in 1941 in order to help her husband. The couple had a son who deserted Judaism entirely during the Nazi occupation. Indeed, for four years, Jewish homogeneity almost ceased to exist in Dijon.

But the genius of a European Jewish *Kehillah* (community) is that it can remain suspended in midair and still continue to exist. Even the Nazis were unable to reach certain aspects of the permanent Jewish structure. Because the synagogue of Dijon was still linked with the state government, despite the separation of church and state, the synagogue funds remained in the city treasury. When I examined the books, there were several thousand dollars on hand, divided into three funds—synagogue, charity and education—moneys kept in trust for the Jewish community under the very noses of the Nazis. Somehow the Germans had not figured out either a legal or illegal basis for seizing the funds. During the four years, the families of the rabbi, of the cantor and the *Shamos* continued to receive support. Small as it was, the *Association culturelle Israelite de Dijon,* with its 361 souls, was stable to its very core.

Liberation Day was the signal for the Jewish community to return to Dijon. Wounds were licked and losses were assessed.

Over eighty of their number had been deported to Germany; they were mourned as dead. Much of the worldly possessions of the survivors was gone, plundered by the Nazis or by unscrupulous Frenchmen who took advantage of their compatriots' predicament. Least to suffer were the richer families. They were able to leave with less hardship when danger threatened, and they were the first to return after the storm. Many were able to salvage most of their belongings by leaving them with "Aryan" household-help.

Genuine consideration was given by the Dijon community to the returning Jews. In Burgundy, at least, the French authorities were more than helpful. They sought to restore property wherever possible, searching the homes of collaborators for stolen goods, retrieving furniture and family heirlooms. A repatriated Jew, finding his home or store occupied by Allied forces, readily obtained legal possession. The state appointed an advocate, M. Heymann, to expedite the return of property to its rightful ownership. In my visits to his office, I was impressed by the immensity and complexity of his task, which covered a wide area, from Dijon to the towns impinging upon the Swiss border. Justice for European Jewry was not an impossibility when the government had the will to carry it out.

The local Chamber of Commerce, as a token of its friendship, held an official welcome for its secretary, M. Maurice Levy. As a *beau geste,* he was elected to the office of vice-president, an event which in Dijon took place only three or four times in a century.

Christian-Jewish relations in this provincial capital were not disturbed by Nazi propaganda, provided the Jews were of established French-Jewish families. There were few social barriers and no evidence of economic discrimination. But the non-

French Jews reported a totally different situation. They spoke with bitterness against their French neighbors and angrily condemned the local Jewish community for its superciliousness.

The Dijon Jewish congregation was far from an orthodox one, even though it maintained the traditional forms externally. Few families adhered to the dietary laws, and not more than thirty persons patronized the kosher butcher shop. Of these, most were Alsatians or German Jews.

The *Shamos* (beadle) who served as liaison officer between us and the community, was typical of his species. He knew the intimate details of the family life of every congregant; he was jack-of-all-trades in the synagogue and entered, with or without invitation, into every aspect of community life. He also served as a clearing-house for all rumors, and could tell us when a hospital unit was moving out of town long before our colonels were informed. Monsieur Grossman was no paragon of piety; even though he served as cantor, he did not hesitate to light a cigarette upon emerging from the synagogue, or to conduct a small stand in the market-place, on the Sabbath. According to the local Jews, this was not typical of France: their community was unique in its tolerance.

In 1927, a *Mikveh* (ritual bath-house) was built in Dijon. This was accomplished by the zealous efforts of the rabbis, who campaigned throughout France for the funds and returned with sufficient means to build a modern, attractive structure, to which tradition-minded Jews pointed with civic pride—but never used. Except for a rare case of conversion to Judaism, the *Mikveh* stood deserted.

Educationally, the synagogue left much to be desired. Few of the men and women under thirty could read Hebrew, the only language used in the service. Endowment funds afforded

the local Hebrew school a sound financial basis, but the school reached no more than a tiny segment of Burgundy Jewry.

The only active organization was the Ladies' Aid Society, which carried on an ambitious program of relief work. At one time, in the days following Hitler's rise to power, two hundred Jewish families were adopted by the community, placed on farms throughout the province and supported.

With the arrival of refugees from the east, the first Zionist activity was inaugurated. Until the 1930's only a glimmer of Zionist interest had been discernible in Dijon. A modest sum of money was forwarded each year to Paris, for Palestine work. This, despite the fact that the city's leading Jewish philanthropist had made his contribution with the express understanding that none of it would be used for such "alien" purposes. The Zionists were ordered to meet only in the synagogue; Jewish activities outside the religious orbit were not tolerated. Native-born Dijonnais Jews were quick to quench the fires of Zionism among the emigres. "We are first and foremost Frenchmen, and Jews in religion only," they said. The blue-and-white National Fund collection boxes were distributed to thirty homes, but in only one was the family bold enough to keep it in evidence.

Dijon was luckless in its rabbis. With the exception of Rabbi Salzer, who had served them in the late twenties before going to Marseille, their spiritual leadership had been mediocre. French Jewry was not capable of producing leadership from within. The only rabbinical school, in Paris, did not graduate enough men to meet the need. Dijon's most spectacular rabbi was an Algerian gentleman who won for the Jewish community a most unwelcome notoriety. He had an uncontrollable temper, which he displayed on the streets in loud arguments with his

wife. Ancient Dijon, which boasted great academies of learning and shrines of Jewish life dating from the days of Charlemagne, was now treated to the spectacle of a rabbi pursuing his *rebbetzin* down the *Rue de la République* armed with a broom. The situation grew intolerable, of course, and the Algerian rabbi was forced to leave his pulpit (and, I understand, the active ministry). The comedy of the fiery rabbi has its tragic overtones; French Jewry was spiritually ill long before the Nazi plague infested Western Europe.

I discussed the Jewish problem with a leading officer in the congregation, who was the most active member in communal charities. He offered me his philosophy of Judaism: "I want my children to marry out of the faith. They must rid themselves once and for all of the burden of Judaism." The last chapter in the two-thousand-year history of Israel in Dijon was about to be written.

During my stay in Dijon I covered the highways to the north, east and southeast, visiting troops in Chatillon (who were preparing to take over the military government of Bavaria when Germany fell), the military installations at Langres, Vittel, Mirecourt and other cities behind the lines. Like all of Europe, this sector bristled with landmarks of history, some as old as Joan of Arc, others as recent as the barbed wire barriers at the Vittel Concentration Camp. I stopped to visit the house where Pasteur was born. A few miles further on, I conducted services in a Caserne where Sub-Lieutenant Napoleon Bonaparte had carved his initials on the barracks wall.

One day I journeyed to a cemetery in the heart of France to help lay a young soldier of nineteen to rest. He had died of wounds during the night. My only companion was Lieutenant

Paul Bachrach. He stood at my side in the cold, lashing rain, ankle-deep in mud. I read the brief words of the service, thinking of this youngster, thousands of miles away from home on the edge of a lonely French forest—with only two unhappy strangers who had never seen his face bidding him farewell as he merged with the wet earth. I turned my face into the rain so that my tears would not be noticed by the grave-diggers who stood waiting beside the flag-draped coffin.



Much of the chaplain's work is of necessity spent in the valley of sorrow, but there were happy times for me in Dijon, especially when I sat beside our temperamental stove after a long day, talking with three of my closest friends—Paul Bachrach, Bob Humphreys, a Warrant Officer from Niagara Falls, and Captain Cooper, who came from a small town in Mississippi. We all agreed we would rather spend five years in Dijon than one in some forsaken jungle outpost of the Pacific theatre.

In several Dijon households we were accepted with great friendliness, and at more than one home I felt as though I were

almost a member of the family. I "adopted" a little girl of seven, Collette, and we became fast friends. Late every afternoon, whenever I was in town, she came to show me her daily lessons and confide some of her problems. I learned her language rapidly by speaking without inhibition, because Collette was tolerant of my pronunciation and shared my limitations of grammar. Collette was a model of good manners and courtesy. She stood up when I arose from my office-chair, lisping (because of a missing front tooth), "*Merthi monthieur, bon thoir monthieur,*" with all the grace of a lady-in-waiting. We ate cheese and cookies out of the packages my wife sent me. Collette was a consummate artist in accepting gifts of chocolate. At the end of each visit, when I gave her the candy, the like of which she could not recall seeing in her brief lifetime, she would appear to be completely taken by surprise. She would murmur, "I never dreamed that you would give me such nice things." That ritual was repeated regularly, and each time the scene was enacted with the freshness of the first. What a queer combination we were: an American rabbi from Iowa and a little French girl from a devout Catholic household. Although we did not discuss matters of creed, we often spoke about America. Her family was somewhat disturbed when she announced in the spirit of Moabite Ruth, that wherever I should go, she would follow. When Collette came in with her report card, showing a straight A average, proudly exhibiting a school decoration that was more colorful than our Congressional Medal of Honor, I felt that very little indeed separated this foreign child from my own daughter far across the sea. Collette's medal, won for being the outstanding student in her class, made me very proud.

Another bright memory of Dijon is of our big *Chanukah*

festival. The first candle was kindled in the presence of four hundred servicemen and women who had gathered from all over Burgundy. One truck-load of soldiers and nurses came from far-off Besançon, near the Swiss border. They had stood for hours in the back of an open truck, braving the cold December wind whipping across the highway. Our celebration had two phases; our own party, and an entertainment for the children of Dijon. In the afternoon, we presented a show for the sixty Jewish children who had somehow escaped the hands of the Nazis. We offered a French Punch and Judy show, a Mickey Mouse film, and finally candies and chocolates in such profusion that both youngsters and parents gasped with delight. Our WACs distributed three parcels to each child. One family was represented by ten children. The youngsters of five and six, or below, had never seen a chocolate bar but knew how to dispose of one. I announced that sixty of the packages had been prepared by a group of Christian soldiers from the American Army who had volunteered to give up their own rations, and had, moreover, spent an evening preparing the packages. At this announcement, the expression on the children's faces was one of wonder and awe. After four years of flight, hiding from an enemy they could not understand, living in a shadow terrifying to their childish imaginations, it was incomprehensible to them that anyone in the world should sacrifice these precious candies for them. I doubt if anyone who joined in the Dijon celebration of *Chanukah* will ever enjoy a more beautiful commemoration of the Maccabean festival.

For our own party, the army had lent us a brand-new stove, and we had somehow managed to collect two sacks of potatoes and the other items necessary for the preparation of genuine *latkes*. A committee of soldiers and WACs began grating pota-

toes at noon. They scraped steadily until evening. Our master chef was Herbie, whose family operated a large *kosher* restaurant in Brooklyn. He promised us *latkes* that would remind us of mother's; he did not disappoint us. Within an hour and a half, two thousand pancakes had disappeared into four hundred mouths. An ambulance from a local hospital stood by, not to await victims of indigestion, but to rush a platter of the holiday delicacy to the wounded men of Jewish faith at the 36th General.

Christmas in Dijon was spent at a local chateau, the home of a Marquis. My friends, Cooper and Humphreys, had met him when their detachment came up from southern France during the Nazi retreat. Entering the chateau to obtain permission to camp for the night on his spacious grounds, the men had been urged by the Marquis and his family to stay as their house guests. The twenty-three of them were the first American soldiers he had seen, and the Marquis assured them it would be an honor to act as their host. The chateau, with its sixty-five lavishly appointed rooms, was quite adequate for the emergency. The men, who had been sleeping in the mud fields of the Rhone Valley for days, reveled in its fine, clean beds.

That Christmas morning, as I entered the chateau, it was like walking down a road into the past. With me were ten officers and men. Upon our arrival, we were escorted through the establishment, each room of which was dedicated to some phase of polite living as understood in an earlier day. In one of them, while looking at an eighteenth-century painting, I remarked to Humphreys: "It's probably a masterpiece, but what a face that woman had!"

"Quiet," he whispered, "it's probably an ancestor."

Our hostess, the Marquise, overheard us and informed us with a smile that the lady under discussion was her husband's great-great-grandmother, sister of Louis XIV.

Our host was a quiet man in his late fifties, friendly and unassuming. If we had met him on the street, we would have guessed him to be a bank-teller or the editor of a local newspaper. Our hostess, on the other hand, looked the part. Stately in appearance, genial and self-assured, she was perfectly at ease, making each of us in turn feel that our presence was especially welcome to her. She even made the driver of my jeep, an easily abashed farm boy from Kentucky, feel that he had honored her by his visit.

The Marquise told us of her woes in marrying off her daughters and of her regret at not having presented her husband with a son to carry on the family name. The three daughters, all attractive and musically gifted, entertained us after dinner. They spoke English flawlessly, except for a slight Irish brogue. We were startled by the accent until we met the dominating personality of the house, Mademoiselle Clancy, the girls' mentor, who had brought up the children, tutored them and managed the parents as well. Mlle. Clancy was an unforgettable person, silver-haired, aristocratic in bearing, vigorous and with a fondness for practical jokes. At one point, she danced for us, amazing us by an expert performance of a fast and intricate jitterbug routine.

When the Nazis arrived, the Marquis and his family, including Mlle. Clancy, had been lined up against a wall in the village to be shot. French underground forces entered the village and rescued them. The Marquis showed me a bullet hole in one of his prized paintings, made by a Gestapo agent at the time of their arrest. Despite this evidence of the family's recent, and

near-tragic, participation in the brutal present, there was about them and their chateau an air of unreality, as though in this ancient sanctuary a Rip Van Winkle family had survived who had not even heard of Robespierre and Danton, had not felt the shiver of a crashing Bastille. And yet they were of the twentieth century. The Marquis showed us family moving-pictures, as any sixteen-millimeter fan in Kenosha, Wisconsin, would do. The family knew, too, that cries of social democracy were in the air, that their world of grace and leisure and special privilege was no more. As I sat at the dinner table, the Marquise pointed to one of her daughters and told of her accomplishments. "She won the second prize in the National Music Academy for her singing," she said. "She is talented enough as a pianist to be on the concert stage, she composes well, and is an expert dress designer. She speaks four languages perfectly, has an intelligent understanding of politics, much personality, and beauty that is rare. Tell me, Chaplain, how can I find a husband for such a one?"

The Marquise understood that hers was the last generation of medieval aristocracy, that after her would come a still greater deluge of popular democratic sentiment, sweeping away forever the chateau and all it stood for. I wonder how the Ramsay Macdonalds and the Clement Attlees react to their chateau visits in England and Scotland. Do they sigh with regret at the passing of such a graceful, if narrow, world? Were I in charge of the Labor government, I would urge a boycott of the princely castles, for only a strong-willed man can resist their fascination, their appeal to the fairy-book child in every one of us.

In Dijon, also, I learned the meaning of the words: "will of the people." The morning of February 18 was an ordinary

weekday morning for us, but not for the citizens of Burgundy. The spirit of 1789 filled the air. One could almost sense the ghost of Madame Defarge, and hear the tumbrils rolling. A former chief of police, a man of twenty-eight who had served under the Gestapo, had been placed on trial for collaboration (being held responsible for deporting one hundred and fifty Dijonnais to Germany). The trial concluded on a fantastic note: the judge postponed proceedings until after the defeat of Germany, on the grounds that the Nazis would take revenge on Dijon citizens still interned by the enemy. When the news of this decision was made public, a fever of anger broke out. The people knew that the Nazis were not affected in their barbarism by any actions taken in France. They suspected, and with good reason, that the judge had been bribed. The morning papers cried out for justice. We passed the office of one paper and read this call to arms: "Arise, citizens of Dijon! Let us demand justice! Death to the traitor!" This was incitation to riot, according to American standards, but the newspapers were not suppressed. By noon, a crowd of twenty-five thousand had gathered before the mayor's office. The venerable mayor, a professor at the university, addressed the crowd. "Patience!" he cried. "Give the wheels of justice a chance to roll!" By then, half of the citizenry of Dijon had been brought together. A march on the Departmental Prison was begun. The leaders entered the unlocked gates and, with the aid of sympathetic guards, seized the ex-police chief, led him out to the boulevard, and hanged him to a tree.

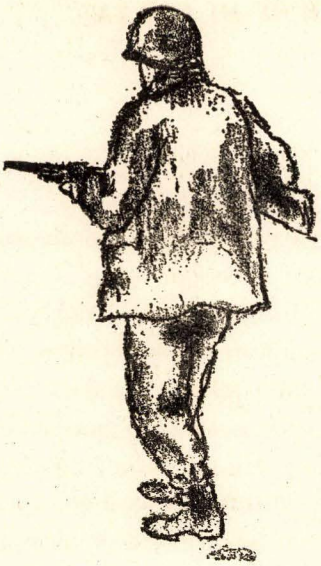
The city had been declared "off-limits" to our troops, as the army feared we would take sides in the struggle. Our sentiments, though we knew only a few details of the case, were with the crowd. G.I. camera fans poured into the boulevard.

One American had his camera splashed with blood when the prisoner was stabbed.

By late afternoon, all was quiet in Dijon. My janitor came in to pour coal into our stove. He was a portly man of sixty, the typical French peasant, a dark blue tam on his head, his face wrinkled in a permanent smile. He seemed weary. "It was a good day's work we did, a good day's work," he said.

On the morning after the storm, the mayor addressed soft words of reproach to the lawless townspeople: "It would have been wiser to have waited. *Quel dommage!* What a pity!" We Americans were divided in our opinions. Lawlessness is a two-edged sword, yet the lynching had accomplished its purpose. No French court in the sector was bold enough to whitewash a guilty collaborator after that.

CHAPTER EIGHT



I Saw the Liberation

THE SECOND LARGEST CITY in France, Marseille, was liberated by its own forces on August 28, 1944. The American Third Division was in the hills surrounding the Rhone Delta, but for reasons of prestige, the doughboys were ordered to stay clear of the city until the French could purchase it with their own blood. The order to halt was not mystifying to the initiated among the infantrymen. Often a battle is conducted with one eye on the history books, or the Paramount newsreel camera. A battalion of foot soldiers might enter a city, only to be ordered out again to make way for another unit. Perhaps a tank battalion, which had been promised the prize, would then take over formally, accompanied by the proper publicity, cameras, reporters, and historians.

When our troops poured into the port city, devastated by both American bombers and Nazi demolition experts, the residents were overwhelmed by the number of vehicles. They

stood in front of houses and shops, mouths agape in unmasked awe at the procession of power that seemed to stretch from one end of the world to the other. This could not be the work of the puny American civilization which Goebbels had belittled with such rasping eloquence.

That mechanical miracle of World War II, the amphibious duck, which came straight out of the water and down the *Canebiere* without a moment's pause, was certainly the vehicle of supermen. Exactly two thousand years before, Julius Caesar had landed at the same *Vieux Port* and had come down the same road, but he had no such Martian weapons to aid him in dividing Gaul into three parts.

It was interesting to watch the expression on the face of an American boy at the wheel of a giant duck as it turned from the *Canebiere* into the Rue de Rome. He wore a look of exhilaration, he, the symbol incarnate of America's might. He was a powerful arm stretched across five thousand miles of sea, saying to these people: "Here, feel my muscle!" "Oh's" and "ah's" of amazement burst from the crowd as the ammunition-laden ducks were maneuvered with swashbuckling ease through the crowded downtown streets.

Marseille was my second home overseas. I spent more time in the ancient port city than in any other area in Europe. Despite its ugliness, its lack of glamor and color, I developed an affection for it that made me overlook its shortcomings, as one forgets the homeliness of a friend. For good or ill, it was the temporary home for perhaps a million Americans who passed through its uninspiring gates.

Soon after the city fell, I was assigned a billet at the Hotel Californie, in the heart of Marseille, opposite the black-market place. The Californie was not a luxurious hotel, but its discom-

forts were largely mental. The hotel was infamous for having been the local Gestapo headquarters, and when we entered our rooms, a few days after the departure of the enemy, we could almost feel the poison in the air. A few scraps of German stationery near my bed added to the unpleasant impression. The Californie regularly made the headlines in the local newspapers. Every day or so, a member of the staff (civilians who had wandered freely in and out of our rooms), would be tried in court and shot for collaboration with the Nazis. The French wasted little time, and their simple, direct methods of dealing justice gradually depleted the hotel's personnel. What made me most uncomfortable was the presence of the French night clerk. He looked the very image of Adolf Hitler! The same eyes, the same cheeks, the identical haircut. Seemingly unaware of the striking resemblance, he would look at me gloomily as I mounted the stairs to my room. Lying on my bed, I often speculated: "Perhaps it *is* Hitler, dressed in perfect disguise—as himself!"

The Jewish community of Marseille, with which I was destined to work intimately, is one of the oldest in Europe. This part of France was once an illustrious center of Jewish learning. Great academies graced the medieval cities; world-famous scholars sent forth the word of the *Torah* from Arles and Narbonne and Avignon. Because the latter city was an old papal seat, the Israelites in this area were known as "the Pope's Jews." The President of the Resistance Organization in *Bouche de Rhone* (Marseille District) was M. Cremieux, scion of the most distinguished Jewish family of nineteenth-century France, whose ancestors were among these ancient residents.

The city contained four separate strata of Israelites. Of first importance, in their own estimation especially, were the old

Provençal families. They considered themselves true Frenchmen of *le Midi*—Southerners! The second category were Algerian Jews who had left North Africa in the nineteenth century to escape discriminatory laws which had been promulgated against them. The largest group, though not identified with the Consistory, was from Turkey. They were unorganized and their economic level was considerably lower than the first two groups. Several Americans took brides from these oriental Jewish homes. The fourth group, the refugees from Germany, Austria, and Poland, formed a substantial element in a city long hospitable to the emigre. It included poor Warsaw Jews as well as a family related to the Rothschilds. The Grand Synagogue offered a chapel for the use of the Ashkenazic Jews who conducted independent services.

Although the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* gives the Jewish population of Marseille as five thousand, the local estimates ran over fifteen thousand. The former figure is based on membership in the community. Rabbi Salzer acknowledged that thousands of unaffiliated Jews, whose roots in Marseille go back only a decade or two, were not counted in the census. Americans who have no *Kehillah* tradition found this rigidity between in-group and out-group difficult to comprehend. In a certain French city, the congregation called a special community meeting for the purpose of increasing its official membership. I remarked to the secretary that only members were to be present for the interesting program: "Wouldn't it be a good idea to invite non-members, in order to attract them to your organization?" He scratched his head pensively. It was too radical an innovation.

"We can't send out letters to people who aren't on the official mailing list," he told me, "and we can't place them on our lists

until they become members." In all probability, the secretary is still resting comfortably between the horns of that dilemma.

After the liberation, there were about five thousand Jewish survivors in Marseille. Communal life was expressed in ten varied organizations. The only synagogue was the Temple Consistorial, presided over by a Chief Rabbi and a Consistory, whose authority was derived from the Chief Consistory in Paris.

We found the synagogue intact, except for bomb damage to the entrance caused, according to the natives, by French fascists whose signs, "*A bas les Juifs,*" were still in evidence. The scrolls of the *Torah* had been hidden in the local cemetery, and were brought back when we opened the temple on the High Holydays. During *Rosh Hashanah* I was the only rabbi officiating in the Grand Synagogue. We had searched in vain for the Chief Rabbi. Everywhere, we received the same reply: "Our Rabbi is missing. Only God knows if he is still alive." Before the Ark of the *Torah,* his congregation offered up prayers for his safety and well-being. Their petition, "Remember us unto life, O Lord who delightest in life," had a poignant significance for this shepherdless flock.

On the Friday following the New Year, we prepared to welcome the Sabbath of Penitence, *Shabbos Shuvah.* Soldiers who were present that evening witnessed an unforgettable event. Just as the service was to begin, the Chief Rabbi walked in—young, handsome, dressed in cavalry boots and the uniform of the F.F.I., the word "padre" on his chest, and beside it the insignia of the Mosaic tablets. For the past year he had been serving secretly as Jewish chaplain with the French underground forces.

The congregation was breathless. The usually articulate

French Jews were for once too choked with emotion to find words to express themselves. Then came the tears, some of happiness, some of grief. I listened as Rabbi Israel Salzer spoke first to one congregant, then another. My diary for the day contains this brief sampling of what was said:

Rabbi: "God bless you, Monsieur L. Who of the family are still here?"

Congregant: "Sarah is gone. Emil and his family deported. Only mother and I are left.'

Rabbi: "And you, Reb Jacob?"

Congregant: "I am all alone. Where is my family, Rabbi?"

Rabbi: "Only the Almighty knows, May He be merciful."

Congregant: "We thank God for your safety. Where is your family?"

Rabbi: "*Todoh Lo-El.* Thanks be to God, they are safe in the hills."

Congregant: "Will you come out into the woods with me on Sunday? The Nazis buried my boy where they shot him. No one recited the *El Moleh.*"

It was the hour of *Minchah.* While the congregation lowered their voices, the rabbi sang softly, "*Somech Adonoy Lechol Hanoflim.* The Lord upholdeth all who fall, and raiseth up all that are bowed down," and a moment later: 'The Lord is near unto all who call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth." Now the tears streamed down his sun-baked face. "*Shomer Adonoy.* The Lord preserveth all that call upon Him."

Later in the day, Rabbi Salzer came to our services. I introduced him to our American troops. He told us soberly that half of the spiritual leaders of French Jewry had been dispatched to the lands of doom—Germany and Poland. His own Cantor, a young man of thirty, was among the missing. "But we are not dismayed," he said. "You young Americans are here to fill their empty places. This is your house of worship,

as much as it is ours. For both of us, this night is the Sabbath of Return."

I led our men in prayer, and we thanked the Almighty for sparing our loved ones at home the fate which had befallen those about us. We implored Him to strengthen the stricken ones in our midst. The congregation rose for the benediction, and Rabbi Salzer impulsively beckoned for the privilege of blessing our troops: *"Yevorechecho L'Eternal vous bénisse. Vous préserve.* May God bless you for coming to our home, for sharing in our homecoming."

Our battle-hardened men, who had lived through Salerno and Anzio, who had driven over the hills of Tuscany, who had come ashore at the Riviera to help push the Nazis back across their own borders, seemed repaid at that moment for all of their travail and sacrifices.

There were ten active Jewish organizations in Marseille, most of them dealing with relief and rehabilitation. The largest was the Federation, which cared for two thousand persons—the widows and orphans, the ill and the needy. The OSE, a well-established French Jewish children's aid society, had free medical clinics, a summer camp and other services. The ORT, an organization devoted to training underprivileged children in trades and handicrafts, operated a small but active school which taught electricity to the boys and sewing to the girls. I visited their school, and was greeted by the students, who knew I had come with provisions to supplement their meager lunch. Perhaps the most important feature of the establishment was the free meal given at noontime for these unhappy orphans. When the war ended, I was able to obtain some scrap electric wire and small gadgets for use in their instruction.

The men in charge of the program were modest, and did not advertise their excellent achievements.

My first organizational contact in Marseille was with the *Union des Juifs pour la résistance et l'Entre-Aide.* I received from this organization the following invitation on behalf of our troops:

> For the Feast of the Jewish New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*) the Fight and Help Jewish Union friendly convies all Jewish officers, under-officers and soldiers to a party.

The Resistance Jews greeted the two hundred Americans who accepted the invitation with pastries and champagne. In the light of later experiences, I realize that they gave up to us food and drink assiduously husbanded for the *jour de gloire.*

The official Jewish community, the Consistory, eyed the Resistance Union with disfavor, criticizing us for linking ourselves with the "communists" (though the wealthy manufacturer, Cremieux, could hardly be called a Red). The cleavage between the two groups continued to widen during the year after liberation. The Resistance Jews contended that they had been the only ones to operate during the Occupation, the sole group to fight Hitler under the Jewish banner. Although their institution continued its relief work after France was freed, they received no support from the American Joint Distribution Committee, and all efforts to unite them with the JDC-supported Federation were abortive. The Consistory objected to the political coloring of the Union's teachings, but during my frequent visits I saw no evidence of communist influence. Each of the Jewish festivals was observed in traditional fashion, with a tinge of Zionism. On *Purim,* we were

hosts at a party for one hundred and fifty children at their center. The program which these orphaned youngsters presented might easily have been given in a temple Sunday school back home.

The Grand Synagogue of Marseille was erected eighty years ago, a splendid house of worship with a beautiful altar and a fine organ. The pulpit stands to the side, toward the center of the synagogue, about twenty feet above the main floor. It is reached by a winding staircase. The rabbi explained that it was modeled after Catholic architecture. Indeed, there were many forms of imitation in the worship. The Chief Rabbi, for example, wore the vestments of a priest during services.

Rabbi Salzer was the officially recognized representative of the Jewish community. He appeared at all state and patriotic functions, and shared, civically, the status of the Catholic Archbishop. The Jewish residents prized this formal recognition of equality. The French placed much stress upon patriotic days—Armistice Day, July 14 and other dates of importance in their national history. On all such occasions, there was an elaborate display in the Jewish community, appropriate decorations appearing at the temple entrance, and within the sanctuary itself. *Ost-juden,* Jews of eastern Europe, could not therefore fully identify themselves with the community; they were forever *éstrangers*; they were not French. Their presence, too, disturbed the native sons, to whom the taint of "alien," associated with as thoroughly a French institution as the *Consistoire,* was objectionable.

The rabbi's relation with the local archbishop was more than a formal one. They were personal friends, and the rabbi had easy access to the archdiocesan office. Once when I mentioned a problem involving a monastery which allegedly had

refused to return refugee children to their parents, the rabbi assured me that a word with the archbishop would solve the matter.

I learned overseas that the rabbi of a community, in nearly every part of the world, has the respect of both Christians and Moslems. Even the anti-Semite seems to draw the line at rabbis, the most Jewish of the Jews.

From the day of Rabbi Salzer's dramatic entrance into the temple, we became fast friends. He was born in Paris of Polish parentage, and was graduated from the rabbinical school in that city. His wife, the daughter of Rabbi Amiel of Tel Aviv, enhanced his rabbinical position by her grace and intelligence. Their two daughters, Miryam and Danielle, completed a very attractive family. We worked together closely during my stay in southern France. When he returned from exile, I went with him to the empty apartment that had been his pre-war home. We saw the results of shell fragments from the Nazis' 88's which had been concealed on the grounds of the *Notre Dame de la Garde*. The shells had been hurled from under the protective wing of the great church (an old Nazi trick), and one of them had wrecked his dining room.

On another occasion, when I dropped in to see the rabbi, I found the *rebbetzin* home alone. All the signs indicated that she would present her husband with another child momentarily. Since ambulances were nonexistent in Marseille, I had to make a quick decision. Though we were forbidden to take civilians into army vehicles, I hesitated only a moment. Ushering Mme. Salzer into our jeep, we made a speedy trip to the hospital, reaching it with only a narrow margin of safety. My French driver, Pierre, pleased with his share in the adventure,

glanced at our lady in distress and whispered to me, *"C'est un garçon."* Mme. Salzer gave birth to a son that afternoon.

When I visited the hospital the next day, I saw the extent to which the Nazis had gone in their destruction of normal French life. There were no bandages, no thermometers, no adhesive tape, no alcohol or glycerine—none of the minimum essentials for maintaining a medical establishment.

The Salzers loved to be hosts to the three American chaplains, especially when we came together. Father Fay, John Olschewske, and I spent many a pleasant evening at their home. Both Pat and John numbered the rabbis of Oran and Algiers among their overseas friends, and they had a good knowledge of both Jewish custom and the French language. The Salzers, after their four years of exile and distress, saw in the three of us—priest, minister, and rabbi—a foreshadowing of the messianic age of fellowship.

Rabbi Salzer and I often conducted joint services, and on one fine Sunday afternoon we officiated at the wedding of a French girl and an American soldier. Accustomed as I was to encountering class distinctions in Europe, with first, second, and third class divisions occurring not only on trains but throughout the social structure, I nevertheless was not prepared to find watertight compartments of *première, deuxième* and *troisième* classes in the French-Jewish wedding ceremony. There was, in fact, even a fourth, or "out-caste," service. When the rabbi and I walked through the vestibule of the temple on this particular day he glanced at the *chupah* (wedding canopy) and announced perfunctorily:

"Troisième classe."

"How can you tell," I asked.

"Look at the *chupah.*"

What caught my attention was the colorful display of French and American flags draped about the canopy, but the key to the matter lay in the canopy's maroon color, designating a third class ceremony. Blue was the motif of a second class one and white satin advertised an elaborate four thousand franc wedding of the very first order. This last category also included an array of flowers and potted palms, a luxurious rug and a full choir. But the third class bride was entitled to only one soloist and two potted palms (at a cost of twenty dollars). The hapless pauper class, whose seven stages are whimsically delineated in Maurice Samuel's *The World of Sholom Aleichem,* are offered a fourth category, known as *gratuit.* They were not only exempt from fees, but were given a community dowry. However, they were allowed neither rug, flowers nor soloist, and were married in the rabbi's study.

I was told about two Parisian weddings which followed one upon the other in the same synagogue. The first was a satin canopy affair, accompanied by the usual arrangement of palms, with many bright lights overhead. For the next wedding, a third class ceremony, the lights were all but extinguished, as though the ninth Egyptian plague had swept down upon the impoverished couple, and the bride and groom were requested to wait in the vestibule while Temple officials rolled up the rug and whisked up the potted palms—lest the lower caste couple avail themselves of these unpaid-for luxuries. The rabbi in charge vigorously defended the custom, contending that the scale of prices meant no added income for the Temple, as the higher fees were absorbed in the floral and choral costs. In any case, he explained, the same arrangement was firmly established in all Christian churches.

At the Marseille wedding, the bride did not occupy a central

role in the ceremony. After she entered, the groom and his entourage followed. The principles were then seated and covered with prayer-shawls. As the ritual unfolded, I appreciated the wisdom of taking seats. The service lasted ninety minutes! Both rabbis sat during part of the ceremony and during the frequent musical interludes. Most surprising to me was the collection for the needy (*quète*) taken up in the middle of the service, with proper organ background music. The enterprising collectors even penetrated the privacy of the *chupah* and exacted a gift from all save the bride and groom.

Generally, the French ritual followed the same pattern as our own, with two variations. The rabbi came in last because it befitted his dignity to do so. All the guests and the bridal group rose when he entered and remained standing until he motioned them "at ease." The other departure from our custom, perhaps a local affair, was that the *shamos* broke the glass at the end of the service. It was not the groom's prerogative.

In all French marriages, the double-ring ceremony is used; never the single ring. As the final words were spoken, the American groom kissed his bride and held the embrace for a moment. My colleague flushed with annoyance at the prolonged osculation, remarking to me: "This is not a cinema." I have not yet learned whether the French permit kissing at the close of the ceremony.

The long piers of Marseille stretched for miles along the bay, in the waters of which half-sunken ships lay at bizarre angles, most of them scuttled by the Nazis before their retreat in August. Into these piers, which our troops had hastily repaired, came millions of tons of materiel, food and manpower for the Seventh Army attack. In the days following victory in Europe,

a steady stream flowed out again, on its way to Okinawa, Manila, and ultimately Tokyo Bay.

I shall never forget the piers of Marseille. It was at Pier A that the Swedish liner, *Gripsholm,* brought the first "exchange prisoners" to us—Americans whose wounds were permanently disabling and whom the Nazis were therefore willing to release in exchange for men of their own. The brightly-painted *Gripsholm* docked in the morning. I watched the men leave the ship, a long slow line of them, some on crutches, some on stretchers. I saw the strange facial immobility of the permanently maimed. A few of them smiled at the Red Cross girls.

The commanding general announced that Purple Hearts would be distributed. Three hundred men received them. Aiding the general, I pinned thirty Purple Hearts on as many chests, and as I grasped the hand of each soldier I asked him where he lived. I wondered then if America would give these young men from Pasadena, from Rhode Island, from Ohio more than a medal in exchange for their health and their youth.

At Pier G, another kind of cargo came ashore. A ship from Poland docked with eight hundred former prisoners of the concentration camps, rescued by the advancing Russian army. Among them were the first French Jews to be liberated in the East. As we stood on the dock, Rabbi Salzer and I ventured the guess that since most of the deportees had been Jewish, fully half the repatriates would be of our faith. We were wrong. Counting them at the *Centre d'accueil,* we found only nine: seven men and two women. They bore the Nazi brand on their left forearm. The two women, young matrons from Paris, had been sterilized by their jailers.

At Pier F, I went aboard an army transport ship destined

for the Pacific isles. The men were not happy. They had been separated from their families for months, some for years. They were not pleased at the prospect of a forty-five-day voyage into another war. This continent of Europe, upon which they had poured out their "gripes," now seemed like a cherished land. If ever I saw mass misery, it was there on Pier F. The only bright spot were the Red Cross girls, handing out doughnuts and coffee as the men alighted from the transport trucks and threw down their barracks-bags. Inching their way up the gangplank, weighted down with full equipment, the soldiers looked grimly in front of them. Then the loudspeaker came on and a sultry voice sang out across the windswept pier, "We'll meet again . . . don't know where . . . don't know when. . . ."

The Red Cross girls forced themselves to smile for hours on end, calling out over and over, "S'long fellows, we'll be seeing you. . . ." Only after the ship lifted anchor and headed for the open sea did the girls allow the tears to come.

On a Sunday afternoon in July, one of the last ships for Palestine was about to depart from Pier G. Some eight hundred and fifty pilgrims were on their way from the land of bondage to a sanctuary of hope and peace. (I learned later that the ship carried two unwelcome stowaways, Gestapo agents who were attempting to escape the wrath of our Crimes Commission. They were seized at Haifa.) The refugees had learned to know us, and when a small group of American officers and soldiers came to the dock-side, they besieged us with questions: "Where is the *kosher* dining room? How can I get a cabin for my children? May I be placed in the same cabin as my sick father?"

My assistant, Saul Loeb, of Louisville, Kentucky, stood at the gangplank distributing gifts to each passenger as he

boarded the vessel. The process of checking each refugee was painfully slow, and the confusion became indescribable. Finally, an American staff sergeant, Si Caller, took matters into his own hands. Seizing the passenger list, he climbed atop a lofty pile of baggage, and called out the names in several languages.

The youngest traveler was three days old. Less than a week before, his mother had been notified that she could not board the ship, because no pregnant women beyond the six-month period were permitted to sail. She met the objection promptly by giving birth to a healthy baby boy. I said goodbye to them in the ship's library. The baby, blissfully asleep, was going to have his whole life transformed by this journey. He would not grow up in wretched Europe. The mother was very happy, especially at having outwitted the authorities.

The oldest member of the *Aliyah* was a rabbi from Bialystok, Poland, a disciple of the renowned Rabbi Haim Soloveitchik. He wept freely as he beckoned me to convey a greeting of gratitude to the American Jewish community. "Only you in America have understood us," he said. "You have seen our needs and understood our sufferings."

The rabbi had just undergone a serious operation, and I suggested to Captain Larry Weiss that he examine him. The aged man (he was over eighty) smiled his appreciation for the medical advice Larry offered as my roommate, Garry Bernstein, calmly assured him, in fluent Yiddish that was sheer inspiration, that he was sure to recover. Moving away from his bed, I turned for a look of farewell. The old scholar seemed at the moment like a patriarchal saint, to be gathered up at last in the land of his forefathers. He motioned me back to his bed. "Before you go, Rabbi, give me your blessing," he said.

Here I was, a beardless young rabbi from profane America, called upon to offer blessings over the hoary head of a saintly *Rav* of the ancient world! Never had I felt so humble.

The most unusual passenger to board the ship was a nineteen-year-old *yeshivah bochur* (rabbinical student) who had come from Slovakia. He wore forelocks and was dressed in an old-fashioned frock coat. Two years in a concentration camp had not altered his orthodox habits an iota. Even during Buchenwald days, he refused to eat non-*kosher* food, nor would he accept the Hershey bar we gave him. Carefully avoiding the cameras pointed in his direction, he clung to a small scroll of the *Torah* and tried to hide himself. A girl passed near him and he lowered his gaze, lest his eyes look upon a woman. A French newsman asked him:

"Are you a Zionist?"

"No, I am a Jew."

"If you are so orthodox in your beliefs, why do you not wait for the Messiah to redeem Zion?"

"I shall await the coming of the Messiah," he said in a low monotone, "*in* the land of Israel."

The ship's whistle blew a warning signal. To the eight hundred and fifty souls who had emerged from the valley of the shadow of death, this was the sweetest note they had ever heard. A song rose from hundreds of throats: *"Od lo ovdah tikvoteinu* . . . Our hope is not yet lost . . . to return to the land of our fathers. . . ."

CHAPTER NINE



French Windows to America

BEFORE WE LANDED in southern France, our bombers struck heavily in a daylight attack against the city of Marseille. Their targets were German: Nazi equipment, Nazi soldiers, Nazi-controlled transportation. But the bombs cascaded down upon apartment houses as well, and the newspaper, *Marseillaises,* printed the somber arithmetic of death: "five thousand and five hundred Frenchmen killed and thousands wounded by allied bombs." Whether the figures were exaggerated is not important; the people of France believed them to be true. I knew a fine couple who lost their only child, an eighteen-year-old daughter, on that horrible night. Grief had left an indelible mark on both of them, but they told me, as we spoke of their loss on the anniversary of the great American raid, that their girl was a victim of the Nazis, not of the Americans. The father had been active in the underground movement, and there was a ring of sincerity in his comment that their daughter had

given up her life as a sacrifice for French liberty. But this man was exceptional. Many Frenchmen looked upon the American war effort in quite another light.

A nation with absolutely no liking for international aggression has had to blot out a larger area of human habitation than has any other people in civilized history. That nation is America. Through historic necessity, we killed hundreds of thousands and made many millions homeless. We must remember this in dealing with our neighbor-nations, and in our efforts to build the United Nations organization. A nation of peace-lovers, we are looked upon by the rest of the world as a symbol of power, often as a symbol of destructive power. I have looked upon the ruins of Pompeii—the devastation wrought by nature—but it cannot be compared to the destruction created by our bombers and heavy guns in many parts of the world.

Little imagination was shown in our public relations program in France. In shop windows, we displayed pictorial evidence of our military prowess and our superior industrial accomplishments—proof only that we could beat the Nazis at their own game. Why were we diffident about presenting our achievements in the school, music hall, and research laboratory? Ignorant of our non-military and non-industrial creativity, the French could easily be led to the belief that America had imperialistic intentions. They could not grasp the notion that we entered the war against fascism without thought of political or military aggrandizement. I have yet to find a Frenchman who accepted our Atlantic Charter pledge at face value.

Sometimes I found myself wondering if one hundred and forty million Americans had been deluding themselves. We admitted that our primary motive was self-defense and not an

altruistic desire to rescue the world, but we sincerely believed that our government had no territorial ambitions. Ask any Frenchman and he will tell you with no show of emotion that *the United States expects to seize Morocco.* Among others, a French captain repeated this story to me, offering conclusive evidence in the form of a letter from a fellow officer stationed in Morocco. He had seen, in July 1945, fifteen thousand American families landing at Morocco as the advance guard in the peaceful settlement of that country. The captain was an educated man, well-informed in economic and political matters. I asked him what chance we had to educate his countrymen when even enlightened men such as he firmly believed this nonsense. "Why," I said, "if we offered our penitentiary inmates the alternative of moving to the desolation of Morocco or of remaining in their cells they would choose the comfort of the latter." He was unconvinced, and mystified by my annoyance. "After all, Americans are no different than Britishers or Frenchmen," he remarked. "We send people to colonize and so will you. We would not fight for nothing and you will not do so either."

Even in my own work I could not help becoming irritated by the repeated evidence that in European eyes we had little to recommend us but wealth and power. Chaplains of Allied nations made heavy demands upon our religious supplies, usually remarking, "You Americans have everything." It was true that no other army permitted its men such a plethora of religious equipment, literature, and provisions for special feasts, but I suspect our brothers-in-arms attributed this not to a true concern for the spiritual welfare of our men, but merely to an overabundance of worldly goods.

The French phrase, *société des nations,* used to describe

the old Geneva league, is the cue to the real meaning of the United Nations. It must be a *society,* a social community of common traditions, before it can be a political entity. The process of political amalgamation which will produce the United Nations will not be a matter of alchemy: fifty units of Chinese, fifteen units of Russian, five of American, one each of British, French, etc., mix well, stir vigorously, repeat the phrase, "One World," and presto—the twentieth-century man is born. One World will grow only out of the successful congeries of individual cultural mergers of two nations: British-American, French-Russian, Russian-American, British-Chinese, Italian-French, and so on. Concretely, let us consider one step in the spiritual merger of mankind—Franco-American relations. Here the atmosphere for cultural union is favorable, with no threat of combustibility. America and France are not competing for control of land areas, and there is relatively little overlapping in their market potentialities. The elements in common are abundant. With only minor differences, we share a belief in democracy and liberty; a dream of human equality; confidence in the role of education; love of the fine arts, a rich family tradition, a respect for religion. One single difference stands out, far from insurmountable: the barrier of language. Here, then, is an ideal situation for an exploratory experiment: experiment number one in the international-relations laboratory.

What windows did the Frenchman have to the world of America through which he could perceive kinship with his own people? There were almost none. The A.E.S., the American Expeditionary Station, which gave the radio listeners eighteen solid hours of so-called entertainment daily, made me cringe with embarrassment. "Popular" music at its loudest

and brassiest crashed the air waves week in and week out. The program directors apparently decided that a lonely soldier was averse to "sweet music" and depressed by the classical variety. If only for the sake of public relations, we should have scheduled at least one hour out of the eighteen for a symphonic program. Instead, the only relief from "jive" was a three-hour interlude of hillbilly music which had us comin' 'round the mountain all the afternoon.

Another distorting window through which the Frenchmen peered at us was the Hollywood movie. I have noticed, both in peace and in war, that our movie industry invariably unburdens its third and fourth-rate pictures onto its foreign customers. We often hear that Hollywood's foreign trade yields a large share of its profits. I have never studied the financial reports, but I have seen the results. Our French friends, judging American life by our 4-F scenarios, see us as a nation of wife-traders, cocktail imbibers, Indian-chasers, jitterbugs and leering racketeers. Many a Frenchman has asked me in all seriousness if we had any home life in the United States, being truly surprised when I described the typical American family. It is difficult to persuade the world that the American way of life offers a blueprint for all mankind, when our movies show her cities dominated by gangsters and her broad prairies overrun with Indians and cattle-rustlers.

The truly formidable barrier to Franco-American understanding is the plain unadulterated ignorance each nation has about the other. The meager knowledge our men had of French civilization was more than matched by the stupendous mass of misinformation accumulated by the Frenchman. And that ignorance is nurtured from early childhood on. My optimism concerning the success of the United Nations is always

tempered by the knowledge that there are many countries such as France, that teach their children that practically all great cultural values were born in their own land. In my talks with French students majoring in philosophy, I was told dogmatically that most of the original philosophic systems were French in origin. They were dismayed when I suggested that, with all due respect, France had only a fair share of the immortals, and no more. The French youngster who went to the opera heard Verdi and Wagner and Rimsky-Korsakoff in one language—his own. Many a budding musician must have been certain that his nation alone produced the world's great performers and musical masterpieces. In our public relations, we did little to disabuse him.

When Jascha Heifetz played before soldier-audiences in Europe, he felt called upon to explain that he was offering us some "musical spinach." Even if we did not enjoy it, the stuff was still good for us. A Frenchman would shudder at such an apology. The critical review of the Heifetz concert printed in the *Stars and Stripes* read: "I came to the concert with grave misgivings. It was a pleasant surprise to hear Mr. Heifetz in a thrilling performance."

We did not feel complimented to be assured by a new European acquaintance that it was refreshing to meet a cultured man from the United States. Our hosts thought us a nation of boors. They never heard us discuss symphonic performances, painting, poetry, or political philosophy. They believed, and with some justice, I am afraid, that many Americans looked with disdain upon a people who could spend their time on such nonessentials as painting and sculpture.

Observers returning from France have pointed out that the French saw us at our worst. Tired, homesick men, living on

the edge of physical annihilation, are not the best ambassadors of good will. But intelligent handling of the problem could have prevented the disastrous chasm that finally developed between us. Many military men did not see the value of good relations, of pleasing the French in any way. Despite instructions from the High Command, they persisted in the attitude that "These Frogs should thank God we kicked the Nazis out and gave their country back to them. We weren't sent here to entertain them." One found it hard to explain that we were fighting for victory and One World at the same time.

Had I been in charge of army public relations, I would have recommended that the American soldier and officer improve his dress when visiting a large city. The American soldier is the least self-conscious person imaginable, or perhaps the most self-assured. He was rarely aware of the impact his mere presence made upon the European. Without realizing it, he was standing before footlights. Yet he walked down the streets of Marseille, or Algiers, or Rome, as though he were an anonymous tourist blending in with the crowd. He occasionally wore fatigues when he went to town and nearly always had on a sloppy jacket. Even in Paris, the visiting officer did not wear the fine blouse he reserved for his Officers' Club affairs. As long as he conformed to certain minimum standards, the army was satisfied. (I am not referring here to the small number of combat men, coming into the cities on leave, whose wardrobes made few allowances for dress. The M.P.s made their lives miserable enough without criticism from me.) Our Russian allies, whose traditions were founded upon the supremacy of the humble proletariat, dressed self-consciously well, recognizing the importance of "face." We Americans were either buoyed up by our feeling of superiority or else blind

to the importance of establishing prestige by attending to such small matters.

But where we failed abysmally in creating sympathy and kinship was in the handling of public information about our casualties. The European had no idea of the extent of our sacrifices. Dry statistics are never persuasive—especially when relegated to the back page of a minuscular French war-size newspaper. "For reasons of military security" we hid our wounds from the gaze of our Allies. I believe that the amount of information kept from Nazi intelligence did not compensate for the distorted view presented to our friends in Europe. We placed our cemeteries in inconspicuous byways, and our hospitals were carefully screened from civilian attention. There should have been conducted tours to our cemeteries, the French seeing for themselves that their own soil was marked, for miles and miles, by the white symbols of our dead. I once brought some French friends to a ward in a local general hospital called the "Arena." Here, over three hundred American boys lay on beds of misery. One long row of them were amputation cases; another row was of serious pelvic injuries. My friends were appalled by the sight, but moved at last to an understanding that we Americans were not in France to buy Chanel No. 5 and flirt with their young ladies. One of the guests was a woman who had served as a French Red Cross worker with the American men in 1918. Had we organized a program through which French women could have served wounded American boys in this war, we might have kept the barriers of sharp distrust from rising between us in 1945.

For their part, the French, with perhaps better reason than our own, were likewise remiss in showing us a France we could love and support in building our One World. Tolerance

and understanding is much like penicillin; its effect in the body lasts but a few hours. During the early summer of 1944, Americans in France understood the tragic plight of the people and made allowances for what they saw. But soon there were areas of tension and conflict, and open violence was not uncommon. Today, Americans are unwelcome guests in France, and soldiers returned from western Europe are bearers of ill will towards their Gallic hosts. Two nations whose cultural interests run parallel to each other are divided in a world which cannot afford divisiveness.

In our relations with the French, it was invariably the unimportant differences in cultural patterns which caused the trouble—rivulets of misunderstanding flowing into torrential rivers of distrust and suspicion. On the one hand, there was the difference of tempo: the American tends to be swift in action, deliberate in speech; the Frenchman is volatile in speech, leisurely in action. In the book *Importance of Living*, Lin Yutang takes us to task for three cardinal sins: efficiency, punctuality, success. The French have an enthusiasm for pleasure, a passion for long and frequent vacations, an abhorrence of streamlined living. The American soldier was especially impatient of French business methods. After years of Nazi depredations, there was no need for shops to be open more than thirty hours a week, but the American soldier did not understand this. Then there was the matter of "forms" and rubber-stamping to which the French are almost psychopathically addicted. If you do not have at least three official imprints on a document, it will be viewed with grave suspicion.

The French looked with amazement upon our simple army methods of securing gasoline: we merely drove our jeep to *any* fuel point, and without a word of conversation our tank was

filled. Woe betide the American who ran out of gas driving through a nonmilitary part of France. A friend of mine told me of the following incident which, in its retelling in the barracks, probably cancelled out all the good in at least one major speech devoted to furthering French-American friendship. This friend found his gas tank empty at an odd hour, at about two o'clock on a Monday afternoon. All French shops were closed in the afternoon until 3:30 o'clock, and on Mondays they were shut all day anyway. After much inquiry, my friend learned that the city clerk would sign the necessary papers for emergency gasoline rations if the official could be awakened from his siesta. After some difficulty, the clerk was aroused, and obligingly affixed his signature to the proper gas permit. My friend rushed back to the gas station, only to be informed that the mayor's signature also was required. By this time, the sun was sinking behind the Pyrennees. My friend decided to postpone further action until the following morning, when the mayor would again be in his office. But the mayor did not arrive until 11 A.M. Then at last, he signed the necessary papers—with impressive pomp and flourish. A day overdue at his destination, my friend hurried back to the filling station in feverish haste. The station was closed, and would not reopen until four o'clock in the afternoon. That evening, the traveler finally got away. He proceeded dolefully towards Lyons—his tank full of gasoline paid for at one dollar a gallon. But it was good gas, coming originally from America in a lend-lease shipment via Navy tanker.

Our Allies knew us to be rich, and they became accustomed to our unstinting generosity. Overseas, we had no illusion that the role of wealthy uncle would enable us to "win friends and influence people." By some quirk of human nature, the best friends are won by having people do something for *us*. Charity

is the greatest barrier to friendship. Even when the donor uses infinite tact in giving without condescension, the recipient's pride stands in the way of understanding.

But all this conflict (or most of it) was born of war—of a great country's national torment. If the real facts of our respective nations and peoples were freely and honestly exchanged, France and America could once again become friends. But such an exchange of truth is almost impossible to bring about. The window of our State Department, for example, through which we officially observe the world and into which our neighbors look at us, is hopelessly dusty and distorted. In fact, I learned in the army that the State Department is not equipped with windows at all, but with mirrors to reflect its own prejudices. If our government wishes to get the Arab reaction, say, to a situation in the Near East, our State Department's listening-post dutifully reports not what it observes but what it wants to observe. Army intelligence men learned this bitter truth during the war. In those critical days of North African diplomacy, when we favored Giraud against De Gaulle, they reported a reception given the Free French leader at Casablanca. In fervor and enthusiasm the affair resembled the welcoming of a Messiah. The army's eyewitness account of what happened was dispatched into the wastebasket. The State Department official assigned to the same event sent a cable to Washington reporting the population to be lukewarm to De Gaulle; and our government was given further proof that its support of the popular Giraud against the unpopular De Gaulle was fully warranted!

As I journeyed along a country road in the valley of the Saône, a group of schoolchildren, hardly out of rompers, were walking along the roadside. They carried schoolbooks under

their arms. The scene might have been painted on a Watteau canvas; serene, peaceful, a little throat-catching. The youngsters, who were born about the time of the Munich pact, strolled along oblivious to the wrecked tanks in the ditch beside them. They were exactly like a group of children who might be walking along Highway 24 in Ohio. But there was a vital difference; they were European children. I knew as I looked at them that the peace of Europe, the peace of my little daughter's world, depended on what went on in those young minds, what they thought of us and other nations, and what my daughter thought of them.

We had better wash those windows quickly.



The Unfettered

FROM A MILITARY VIEWPOINT, the war against fascism was a single undertaking, but from the aspect of the soldier's experiences, there were two wars. In actual combat, perhaps, the soldier underwent the same emotions, whether the stage was set in a New Guinea jungle or on the beaches of Normandy. A thin white cross or a Shield of David planted on Iwo Jima looked no different than the crosses and shields which rose from the sands of Tunisia and Morocco.

There was this important difference: for the soldier and sailor in the Pacific, the sign at the end of the road read VICTORY. For us in Europe, the marker proclaimed LIBERATION! The war against Japan was fought in a socio-political vacuum. But for thousands of other fighting Americans of immigrant stock their journey across the Atlantic was akin to that of the patriarch Abraham, who was bidden to go forth to his land and to his birthplace. Staff Sergeant Kurt and Corporal Hans of the Army

of the United States were completing a ten-year cycle of their lives, which found them back on the same *strasse* in Mannheim, perhaps occupying the same Salzburg apartment from which they had fled. For many more thousands, it was a pilgrimage to "the land of their forefathers," who had left these shores a generation ago. Pfc. Tony Cafaro of New Jersey would proudly introduce his Neapolitan uncles and their bambinos to the men in his ordnance company.

Of the Jewish soldier, too, we may say that the impact of what he experienced will certainly affect his thinking and his attitudes as a Jew during the next decade.

The Jewish soldier with even a mild interest in his origins invariably sought out his own people in the communities of Europe. Almost unaware that the U.S. insignia on his uniform was a symbol of liberation to the remaining remnant of European Jewry, he would explore the ghettos, acquaint himself with their merchants, discover the synagogues and sometimes, when in an especially nostalgic mood, make a futile search for a good Jewish delicatessen (a nearly hopeless task because only Marseille boasted so succulent a retreat). Within but a few days after the fall of a city, it was an easy matter to gather from the soldiers themselves the general state of the Jewish community, its approximate size, the condition of its synagogue and the fate of its rabbi. We had none of the missionary zeal of the Palestinian soldiers in Italy who would start a Hebrew school and a youth club within forty-eight hours after the town was taken, but our men nevertheless established friendly contact with their coreligionists the moment fighting subsided. Many a community was reborn only through the enthusiasm and activity of these soldiers.

I am of the opinion that the low crime rate among the

Jewish troops, and the extremely rare incidence of venereal disease, can be partially attributed to their "Jewish" curiosity, which led them to seek out the average European middle-class family to capture, if they could, the atmosphere of their own homes. Some married European girls, and a few of our men stationed in France flew back to North Africa to claim their brides. Intermarriages were uncommon overseas, occurring most frequently within hospital units, and between members of the same organization.

The Jewish chaplain in Europe had an easier task than his colleague in the Pacific. In New Caledonia and Okinawa, his congregants were thousands of miles from the mainstream of Jewish life: there was little to stimulate an interest in their heritage. Alone, the Jewish chaplain was challenged to create an atmosphere that would be meaningful to the soldier, often calling upon his own resources in building an Altar and supplying other religious paraphernalia. In Europe, even the combat chaplain would, on occasion, take his men into an abandoned synagogue, (as did Chaplain Herbert Eskin in Alsace) and feel the thrill of restoring a House of God. There was compensation for the Pacific chaplain. He lived closer to his men. He knew them more intimately, and possibly had a better understanding of their spiritual problems.

The barrier of language which separated the G.I. from the European was not so formidable for the Jewish soldier. Yiddish frequently became the bridge to understanding. Our most enthusiastic welcome, in Rome, Metz, and Brussels, came from the uprooted Jews of Poland and other East European countries. Though they did not recognize us at first—a uniform erases outward cultural and group differences—when a Jewish soldier suddenly uttered a Yiddish phrase, the European Jew

would turn, startled, and beam with delight. Many of our men, and our nurses too, would vie with the natives in a free-flowing Yiddish such as these people had not heard since leaving Vilna and Lemberg. One WAC in our congregation invariably attracted a crowd after services by the very sound of her authentic, undiluted Galician accent.

Knowledge of the language was, also, the only link some of our men had with their homes and relatives. Many foreign-born parents could not read or write English, and corresponding with them in Yiddish sometimes had curious results. A letter written in a foreign language had to be censored. Twice, a soldier at Anzio wrote to his mother in Yiddish describing his battery commander in uncomplimentary terms. A few weeks later, one of the letters was returned, together with a note written in Yiddish: "I agree with you that your CO is probably the kind of *momzer* you describe, but it is wiser to leave such letters unwritten." The message was signed, "*Dein freind, Eliezer ben Shmuel* (your friend, Eliezer, son of Samuel), Base Censor."

In one sector of New Guinea, where no Jewish chaplain served, there happened to be a rather enterprising youngster who was disturbed by the number of men cut off from their parents in America because they could not write Yiddish. With some of the ingenuity which prompted a G.I. at Anzio to fashion a radio out of razor-blades, the lad set up a school in the heart of New Guinea. Since the tropic heat made all activity an effort, he inaugurated a streamlined language course, posting a sign bearing the words: "Yiddish in a Jiffy."

My colleague in Marseille, Chaplain Abraham Haselkorn, told us of the electrifying effect an ordinary Yiddish newspaper had upon a crowd of refugees assembled in Mannheim, Ger-

many, for a Herzl-Bialik memorial meeting. (In every Jewish community, memorial meetings are held in the early summer to honor the founder of political Zionism and the immortal poet laureate of Hebrew letters.) Haselkorn reported that the refugee-congregation pounced upon the Yiddish paper, the first they had seen since Warsaw fell, with the frenzy of parched travelers coming upon an oasis in the desert.

The evident coolness of French and Belgian Jews towards their American coreligionists can be explained partially by the difficulties of language. They were also far from Jewish tradition and, therefore, did not share the East European love of hospitality. The West European Jew feared too close association with us would invite the charge of "alien" and cast suspicion on his national loyalty.

Liberation did not come wholly from without. Hands were lifted everywhere against the Nazi taskmaster. Our landings on the rocky coast of southern France were made possible by bands of Frenchmen who warned our paratroopers against death traps, whose signals told us where guns were located, and whose ancient jalopies which had gathered straw in barns for years, miraculously blocked the Nazi military highways. Along the shore road to Cannes stand the simple graves of many of these native heroes who gave their lives to liberate their homeland.

There were a few of the enslaved who died in the uniform of the Allies. One of them was Gabriel Wortmann of Czestochowa, Poland. When we landed in France, this nineteen-year-old boy joined one of our combat teams, a hard-hitting American armored patrol which later spearheaded the drive toward Germany. On my desk is a picture taken on D-Day plus 4. Gabriel stands proudly with a group of G.I.s, thrilled, as he

wrote that day, with his role of guide and interpreter to Eisenhower's soldiers. With the picture, he sent me a shoulder patch which the men of his combat team had given him. He was almost an American!

Then the earth swallowed up Gabriel Wortmann, and his parents' pride in his achievements turned to deep anxiety. I sat with them at the dinner-table, partaking of the Sabbath meal while they breathed prayers for his safety. They showed me a letter from the French army, a short-tempered note disclaiming responsibility for his welfare, since he had joined the Americans. Neither parent criticized their son's action in joining the dangerous American combat team, unarmed and untrained in the use of weapons as he was. Liberation meant much to them, and the father described to me the hour of their own deliverance.

"We were in a village in Haute-Savoie," he related, "when word came to us that the Americans had reached a town only ten kilometers away. Ours would be the next village to be liberated! I called to my wife: 'Malkah, get out the potatoes and bake a *kugel* (hot pudding) in honor of the Americans.' She took the last two eggs, and a little flour, and by the time you boys came down the road we had the *kugel* ready. I made a small American flag (it has always been a mystery to me how Europeans were able to make flags of all nations so quickly). I hung the flag across my chest and we walked down the road, Malkah and I, she holding the hot *kugel* in front of her."

As the old man spoke, I watched an American soldier seated with us at the dinner-table. His face told me what he was thinking. It was for this that he had left his home and had undergone the ordeal of war—so that Malkah might bake a *kugel* with a light heart and a free soul. He knew that we were



more than liberators; we were symbols of a better, happier life.

It was D-Day plus 365 when our search for Gabriel finally yielded success. A note from an American colonel, a kindly but tragic note, told the family: "Your son offered up his life in a village near Valence, fighting side by side with my men. His was truly a hero's death."

Kugel was not the only gift Malkah presented to the liberators.

A very literal case of liberation came to my attention one afternoon when two soldiers walked into my office to seek advice about correspondence with Americans and Palestinians who had relatives in concentration camps. Pvt. Morris Milner, one of the soldiers, started to tell me about his problem, but his friend interrupted, declaring that Morris was not telling me the whole story. Morris, his friend related, was a member of a signal battalion near the front line of Patton's attack on Germany. His outfit of seven hundred men came across an abandoned freight train, which they smashed open in the hope of finding food to supplement their depleted rations. Instead of rations, however, they discovered the train bore an imprisoned cargo of two thousand five hundred dying Jews. Milner was one of three Jews in his battalion, but he prevailed upon the whole outfit to pitch into the job of salvaging these miserable people. The mess sergeant, an Italian boy from Brooklyn, baked bread from flour that the men "liberated" from a German mill. They picked up enough clothing and food to meet the most elemental needs of the naked, hungry unfortunates. The battalion doctors did all in their power to nurse them back to life. Still ten persons died daily, although this was a remarkably good average considering their condition when rescued.

As the Jews recovered, they sought Milner's aid in sending word to the outside world of their whereabouts. Since that day, he had been writing hundreds of letters to all parts of the world, and has received hundreds in return, letters containing immigration visas, money, and other valuables. He had done

nothing else since VE-Day but work tirelessly to help these people. "It became his main interest in life," the friend said, "and ever since we left Germany, he's been worrying about them."

I turned to Milner, who was blushing. "What did you do in civilian life?" I asked.

"I was in the junk game," he answered, smiling in embarrassment.

Pvt. Morris Milner of the Army of the United States had traveled a long, long way.

Often soldiers expressed a desire to adopt an orphan, some child they had run across whose parents had disappeared into Germany. "I'd like to bring one of them home and surprise the wife," the soldiers would say to me. Sometimes I felt an impulse to smuggle a child into my own homeward-bound baggage. A winsome girl of nine came up to me at the end of one particular Sabbath service at which I had announced that a list of twenty-five thousand names of survivors of Dachau had been sent to my office by Chaplain Abraham Klausner. Struggling through the adults, she reached my side. She just looked up at me, and I had to encourage her to speak. "Can I come to your office tomorrow?" she pleaded. "I want to find my daddy and mother." To me, her small sad voice carried centuries of anguish. I would have taken her back to America, if I could.

The stumbling blocks against adoption in France were formidable. The question, "Is this child really an orphan?" was nearly always unanswerable. Possibly we shall never know how many children are really orphans, and how many are the offspring of persons still alive—but so broken by torture and hunger that they may never manage a reunion with their children.

The French government frowned upon American requests for orphans for adoption. France is not only impoverished economically, but her birth rate has fallen to a new low. By 1960, her population will be less than that of New York and Illinois combined. Every French child is part of the country's human resources, and France will not part with her orphans without a struggle. By strewing the road to adoption with endless red tape, she discouraged all but the most determined of us from filing adoption papers.

Possibly a plan to rescue the children of Europe by mass adoption is the only practical way to salvage that continent's parentless children. I hope that many American families will at least try to obey the rabbinic dictum: "He who rescues one soul is as though he had sustained the entire world."

With all our glaring blemishes, our Jim-Crow cars, our *Juden-rein* colleges and country clubs, our blatant civic corruption, America is still the star of hope to people living in the darkness of Europe. The spiritual isolationists among us, especially in the halls of Congress, are seemingly blind to the fact that America has been nominated, whether with her consent or without it, to be the torchbearer of democracy. Even in the splendid isolation of the nineteenth century, the figure of Abraham Lincoln, bearing a message for his own people, spoke also to the outcast and disinherited of the earth. How deliberately blind we are not to recognize that the man who served as our President for over a decade, Franklin Roosevelt, was and still is, the symbol of freedom throughout the world. I wish that our congressmen and publicists could have been in Europe the day he died. On every street and in every village outside of Germany, they would have seen men and women

weeping. I spoke to Jews who cried as though the last terrible blow had finally been struck. All hope had vanished. The only shepherd they could trust had passed away. We Americans, in our own grief, were forced to comfort these European mourners, who felt a closer kinship with the man than did many of us. We, our children, or our children's children, will someday learn that Franklin Roosevelt stood on a higher pedestal in history than either Washington or Lincoln, placed there not by his countrymen, whose judgment was swayed by the winds of political controversy, but by all humanity.

CHAPTER ELEVEN



When Jew Meets Nazi

I DOUBT IF IN our lifetime the average Jew will think of Germany as anything but a scourge of God and an abomination. One of the few certainties of the war was the unanimous support of Israel for the Allied cause. Radio's voice to the world, the British Broadcasting Company, sent its message in scores of languages, in Hindustani and Bengali, in Spanish, Arabic, and Swahili, to persuade the peoples of the world to come in on our side. The BBC found it unnecessary to broadcast in Hebrew and Yiddish. The Jews of the world needed no convincing. Almost six hundred thousand American Jews were in uniform, the largest group in Israel's history to join arms for a single purpose.

A total of one and one-quarter million Jews fought on the side of the Allies. They did not have to be enlightened on "why we fight." They saw in this war an elemental struggle for survival, a battle against physical annihilation. For others, a Nazi

victory might mean enslavement; for the Jew, total extermination. The simple alternative of "we must win or we are dead ducks," rendered all propaganda superfluous.

But thousands of American Jewish soldiers shared another passionate motive. Together with millions of Greeks, French, Norwegians and Russians, they sought revenge for loved ones whom the enemy had already destroyed. I watched a soldier being brought into a field hospital, weeping on his stretcher bed. He glanced down at his wounded leg and asked me how long his recovery would take.

"I'm not a medical man," I said, "but I'm sure that you'll be out of action for at least two or three weeks."

He went into another fit of angry weeping at these words. "I must get back to my outfit," he said. "I haven't finished my job!" He served with a Special Service Force of American and Canadian commandos. A refugee, he had left his family in Berlin. I am certain he followed the custom of many commandos, went AWOL from the hospital, and returned to his outfit without waiting for a hospital release.

What does a rabbi do when he encounters his first Nazi? Does he pour forth his wrath, tempted to visit the suffering of his people on the wretch who wears the despised uniform of an accursed government? Like many a peaceful Jew living in the shelter of an American home, I imagined that I would probably rise to smite down even a helpless prisoner in my frenzy of indignation. My first face-to-face meeting with the Nazi took place at a hospital clearing station of the Third Divison at Anzio. Wounded men were lying on cots on the ground, waiting to be registered. The mud of battle was still fresh on their bodies and uniforms. I distributed cigarettes to

the men, pausing to say a word as I lit the match. A wounded soldier, too grimy to be recognized as a prisoner at a glance, accepted the light, and said, *Danke schön.*

The medical officer who stood nearby looked at the Nazi, then at my rabbinical insignia. He smiled and whispered, "Tell him who you are and let's see what he says." I leaned down again and asked the soldier a few questions. He was forty, father of two children, a resident of Bavaria. My German was not fluent, but he understood me.

"Do you see this insignia?" I asked. "It means that I am a rabbi, a Jewish minister who takes care of Jewish soldiers."

He looked up at me and remarked, "I'm a Catholic. We both worship the same God. To the devil with Hitler."

The story has no moral for me. I report it as it happened, not as an indication that a wave of penitence was sweeping over the German people. Certainly there were many millions who abhorred Hitlerism. The tragedy was that a few million were but a small minority in a land of Maidenek, Lublin, Lidice and Auschwitz.

In Rome I spoke to a merchant during a shopping tour. He had lost a youngster, a boy of seven. The child had been seized by two S.S. troopers, imprisoned by guards, placed on a train by other German soldiers, carried through Brenner Pass by still others, taken to a concentration camp in a truck driven by another German, and dispatched to the gas chambers by additional Germans—all probably reared in good God-fearing homes. Hitler and Himmler never saw that Roman boy. But hundreds of Germans did. The argument that they simply obeyed orders does not change the brutal fact that they were active partners in a human chain which sent a helpless child to death.

The most dramatic story I heard about a Nazi and a Jew concerns a family who had little reason to whitewash the Germans. The elder son had been executed by the Gestapo for posing as a German in southern France. The younger son, an artist employed by a lithographing concern, fled into the hills. He communicated with his parents through the secretary of this firm. The Gestapo intercepted the correspondence, but continued writing to him, forging the secretary's name. One day he received a phone call. A woman's voice urged him to return home, saying his mother was ill. Upon his arrival at the station, he was apprehended and sent to a detention camp, preparatory to the fatal trip to Germany. David was an excellent artist, especially in pen and pencil sketches. Prison officers, learning of his talent, set him to work in the officers' quarters. (In our PW camps, German artists were often commissioned to do similar work.) One evening, as he finished his labors, a young officer said to him: "Keep the pen (a steel one for cutting engravings) and the eraser. *Some day they may come in handy.*" The officer then dismissed him.

The following day, twelve prisoners, including the young artist, were placed in a closed truck which started for the railway station and the death journey into Germany. Using his pen as a knife, the youth cut an opening in the back of the truck, slipped his hand through the opening, turned the handle. The twelve prisoners rolled out onto the highway and escaped into the night. Two were recaptured later. A farmer's wife hid the young artist, fed him, and lent him enough francs to buy a train ticket to Paris. As the train neared Lyons, the boy, horrified, saw two Nazi inspectors boarding the forward coach. His identification papers were marked with the telltale 'J'—the stamp used for all European Jews. Quickly he made

use of the other tool, the eraser. His papers passed the hasty inspection and David reached Paris safely. A few months ago, I was present at his homecoming.

There is no mystery in this episode. Of course there are "good Germans," and there will be more good ones. Were it not for the miserable failure of their churches, the fanatical voice of Hitler might have fallen on deaf ears.

Contradictions abound in the Nazi world. The only Jewish currency since the days of the Maccabees was printed in Hitler's Germany—bank notes with a fine engraving of Moses holding the Ten Commandments! The bills were used in the PX's (sic) of Germany's concentration camps. What macabre efficiency these Germans displayed!

The most frequent question asked of a Jewish chaplain in the battle zone was: "How will the Nazis treat me if I am captured?" Should the soldier throw away his dog tags before going out on a night patrol? Should he deny his religion point-blank if taken prisoner? The problem was further complicated by the army custom of sending refugees on night-raiding patrols because of their fluency in German.

These were life-and-death questions that could not be answered lightly. The army offered us no information on the Nazi treatment of American Jews. We had to rely on private observations and suppositions. Army policy insisted that the dog tags be worn at all times (we could tell when a drive was imminent by the dog-tag inspection preceding it), but I have known company commanders who ordered their Jewish men to dispose of their identification markers before going into combat.

We finally learned that *as a general rule, the German army did not discriminate between Jews and Christians among their*

American prisoners. Yet one hesitated to state dogmatically that a Jewish soldier would be safe in their hands. The average German would not harm the soldier, but if the guards or prison officials were S.S. troops he might fare badly. It is, of course, a matter of record now that the Geneva Convention articles were violated in the cold-blooded murder of hundreds of prisoners in Italy and Belgium. Two cases involving Jews came to my attention. A G-2 sergeant, whose reliability was unquestionable, volunteered the information that he had seen an official Nazi report showing that two Jewish medical officers had been executed because of their faith. The execution had also been witnessed by an American infantry sergeant who later escaped.

I encountered one flagrant instance of savagery in a German hospital which we captured when we entered Rome. An American soldier found there had to have both legs amputated above the knee to save his life. He told me that before his capture he had stepped on a mine, losing several toes. The Germans placed him in the hospital and treated the wound. Then one of the attendants learned that he was Jewish, and he was immediately removed from the ward. The wound was neglected, gangrene developed, and when our troops came upon him, the doctors found it necessary to amputate. This soldier was one of the gamest men I have ever met. He appeared indifferent to his own suffering, but was concerned only about his mother.

"Shall I write and tell her now?" he wanted to know, "or will the shock be easier when she sees what good spirits I'm in when I get home?" Sammy lived in Brooklyn on Coney Island Avenue. I finally decided to write his mother myself. I received a reply from his sister. It read:

"My mother and I want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your very warm and encouraging letter which you wrote on behalf of Sammy. It is so gratifying to know that he is in good spirits and is hanging on to his wonderful courage. Mom and I and everyone here back home love Sammy very much. It makes us happy to learn that he has won your praise and admiration too." Too bad that Noel Coward never met Sammy.

Although the human race produced warped souls who could watch a boy's legs rot without lifting a helping hand, it also produced Sammy and his folks.

I have spoken with many Jewish men returning from prison camps in Germany. Their stories are fairly consistent: no acts of discrimination against individual soldiers, except of a trivial kind. The Nazis respected our uniforms and, Germans that they were, even the flimsiest of American documents. *Many lives were saved in Poland when Jews displayed papers issued by our government, offering them sanctuary in America.* Had the United States and other countries of the New World only heeded the pleas of the World Jewish Congress and permitted free immigration, thousands upon thousands of lives might have been saved.

At the prison camp near Kustrin (later liberated by the Russians during their drive on Berlin), a young American corporal entered the Interrogation Office. The Nazi captain asked the routine questions: Name? Rank? Serial number? Then he asked, "What is your religion?"

The answer came straight from the shoulder: "I am a Jew!"

The interrogator looked up at the corporal. Then he turned back to his notes. "You have a lot of nerve, young man, a lot of nerve," he said, waving him out.

During the corporal's internment at the prison camp, he saw no evidence that his interrogator had passed word of his Jewishness down the line.

Flying through heavy flak at Wiener Neustadt or through the hail of steel at Schweinfurt, the Jewish crewmen on our B-24's often thought about their chances of survival if they were compelled to bail out over Germany. One such flyer, whom I met after he had been freed from Stalag 1 in Barth, Germany, told me that as his nylon umbrella eased him to earth, he determined not to risk being taken wearing his dog-tags. He hid them in a hayloft a few moments before his capture. Stalag 1, the largest encampment for air-corps prisoners, had three hundred Jewish internees when Lieutenant Jacobson arrived there. The commandant, a colonel who had lived for a time in San Francisco, was on friendly terms with the prisoners, including the Jewish ones. When the tide began to turn against Germany, and the guards openly declared the war lost, the colonel gave autographed pictures to the Americans, inscribing the words: "See you in the USA." Then one day the S.S. men swooped down upon Stalag 1 and removed the commandant. Rumor had it that he was executed. At all events, Himmler's office was now in charge. In January 1945, an order came from the reorganized command: Isolate all Jews in one barracks. The three hundred Jewish airmen wondered what was coming next. Stories spread that Hitler had ordered *all* prisoners to be shot. Then the grapevine reported that Allied bombers had dropped leaflets over the area warning that ruthless punishment would be meted out to any German found guilty of executing prisoners. No subordinate, the leaflet said, would be allowed to seek refuge in a plea that the order had come from above. The three hundred Jewish men wondered whether the

leaflet would save their lives. They were never to know, for our troops swarmed all over Stalag 1 and freed them. Lieutenant Jacobson, after a year in prison, started his homeward trek, making only one detour: he returned to the hayloft and picked up his old identification discs.

During those last few months when the Nazi machine was crumbling swiftly, I watched a group of youthful Nazi prisoners standing before a war map. The forward sweeps of the Russian, British, and United States armies were marked in red. The Nazis stared unbelievingly at the little arrows aimed at the heart of the only world they knew: Hitler's world. I approached them, and the Germans clicked their heels to attention, turning in a smart salute. I despised everything their uniform represented, and I thought of the words of the prophet: "Oh God, pour forth Thy wrath upon this nation that hath rejected Thee." But looking into the faces of these bewildered youngsters, I could not maintain that mood. Were I a Russian father who had lost his children and his home, were I a Greek patriot who had watched a brother die an agonizing death, I might not have lost my bitter fury. But I was neither. It is futile for an American and a Czech, or for a Canadian and a Norwegian, to discuss the problem of Germany. Using the same phrases, they nevertheless talk in separate realms of understanding.

Germany turns the clock back. So wrote H. R. Knickerbocker during the early days when a misguided world looked upon Hitler as a respectable statesman. The tragedy in turning a clock back is that we cannot make up for it by moving the hands forward. Time lost is lost forever. Like an individual, a generation cannot live its life over again. Twelve years of Nazi teachings represent an entire school lifetime of a gen-

eration; and the diplomas have been inscribed in indelible ink!

When Tassigny's French Army overran Strasbourg, they captured several German hospitals. Many Nazi nurses were among the prisoners. An American hospital, filled with thousands of patients at the time, was calling for additional nursing help. Because no American nurses were available, fifty Nazi nurses were assigned to duty in the German-prisoner wards. Two weeks later, when I visited the hospitals, the nurses were gone, returned to the PW cages. They had sabotaged the hospital equipment, dropped thermometers, ruined expensive and irreplaceable X-ray machines. They had been doing their bit for their Fuehrer. Germany had reached such depths of moral depravity that these young women, consecrated to assuage man's suffering, were willing to destroy instruments used in the cure of their own wounded. Surely the Nazi doctors who could put children to death in the course of their laboratory experiments bore the same festering mark.

Allied educators who have gone into Germany to remold its philosophy of life have a long job ahead of them.



Remnant of a People

WHO ARE THE JEWS of Europe today? What enabled them to survive—chance, ingenuity, bribery, or a Nazi process of selection?

There are six categories of survivors:

First: Children under ten, men under forty. These latter survived because they were used in the labor pool for the Nazi war machine.

Second: Jews who were hidden in farmhouses in the country, and in private homes in the city (rare). For three years, hundreds of these terror-stricken people never emerged into the light of day.

Third: Jews hidden in monasteries, usually children.

Fourth: Those who carried false identification cards. This was by far the largest group. Blessed was the man who could speak several languages without accent. I knew a French sergeant who passed as a Canadian at the Spanish border, because of his

mastery of English, and as a Spaniard in France, after a year of study in an Andalusian jail.

Fifth: Jews active in the underground. They lived in the hills, and were rarely confronted by the Nazis, except in a battle of equals. (I once asked a British civilian, working at our public relations office as an artist, to draw me some signs for Passover. He enthusiastically undertook the task, telling me: "When I was in hiding from the Nazis, before the Allied landings, I was fed and kept alive by Jewish FFI fighters").

Sixth: A handful of Jewish quislings, men who had sold their souls for money, and who worked for the Gestapo on a commission basis (they tell of a certain Jacques in Brussels who turned in fifteen thousand Jewish names).

Today, there are approximately 1,400,000 Jewish survivors in Europe. What goes on in their minds, particularly in the minds of the young people, the next generation of Old World Jewry?

The Jewish youth of Europe is bitter, numb, frightened, lacking in faith in itself, and with little faith in others.

I saw hatred in one child's eyes that was terrifying. I was leaving a refugee camp one afternoon when a boy of about ten waved a hitchhiker's thumb.

"Want a ride to town?" I asked.

"If you please," he said, "but I'm not going all the way. Please drop me at the camp for Nazi prisoners. *Ich vil sich oprechenen far tate-mame* (I want to settle accounts for my daddy and mother)!" I let him off at the gate as he requested, too taken aback by the steel-cold hatred in his voice and the look in his eyes to argue with him.

In a French city, I knew a Polish Jew who was employed by our army as a foreman over Nazi prisoners working in a ware-

house. He had been treated brutally in a concentration camp, and his family had been clubbed to death. "This job," he told me ecstatically, "is wonderful! What pleasure I get in my work! I should pay the U. S. Army for letting me work! I frighten the so-and-so's with my orders and my threats, and I pour out on them what is in my heart!"

I told him that the army would not permit him to violate the Geneva Convention concerning treatment of prisoners, and that he would be dismissed. My warning, of course, did no good. He could not control his hatred. He came to me with the expected news, deeply downcast. "I've been fired," he said.

"Thy cup of suffering is bitter enough . . . and revenge is not sweet for thee!"

Only a modern Nahum, with striking metaphor, could help us visualize the desolation of Europe today, Every returning soldier will have his own image of the dark continent, but I suspect that for most the image will be shaped primarily around the figures of wretched, unhappy children. When I think of Europe today, I see two scenes in my mind's eye. One is on the historic *Via Roma* of Naples: A group of children, ages six to eight, are competing vociferously with one another, soliciting "trade" for their fifteen-year-old sisters. Their obscene comments, shouted in broken English, are meaningless to them, repeated by rote. The second scene is in Marseille, but it could be in any European city. There are a boy and a girl, both dressed exactly alike in torn sacking, standing near an American motor pool. The girl is a little filthier than the boy. The adjective, dirty, does not apply to them. Theirs are not the smears children get from playing in the mud. There is a permanence about the grime on their bodies. Their gray-black legs are so

uniformly dark, that you are reasonably certain soap would not clean them. With these children is a woman begging. The tears on her face seem to be frozen there, giving her a fixed expression of weeping about the eyes. "There is no assuaging of thy hurt, thy wound is too grievous."

The Jews of this mortally sick continent have been convulsed with suffering far beyond the normal limits of human endurance. Often I have said that the problem of suffering Jewry is only a small segment of the European tragedy: there were, I said, Poles and Dutch, Greeks and Czechs likewise brutally crushed by the tyrant's heel. Eighteen months of life in Europe have made me regret that ill-considered judgment. Quantitatively and qualitatively the uprooted, despised, tortured Jews of Europe have suffered as no people, save perhaps the Russians. Here too the parallel is inexact. The Russians did not lose a hundred and fifty million of their people, but that would have been the number to equal the proportion of Jews forever lost.

I have heard it said that there are Jews who wish to return to Germany. I have met such Jews; they sought hysterically for the privilege of going back to hunt through the refuse of Buchenwald and Belsen, hoping that by some act of God their children were there with the breath of life still in them. I have seen a child of five, who could not walk (but who could speak German and Hebrew for some inexplicable reason). He had been lying hidden for *one year* inside a sack of clothing which his mother kept beside her in a concentration camp. The S.S. guards did not discover the hiding place and when all youngsters below twelve were taken away, this child alone was saved.

It is one thing to read statistics in a report, but it is another

matter to hear a branded concentration-camp inmate tell of daily events: all people over forty dispatched to the gas chambers, as well as all who had gold teeth and all who were too ill to work. The mind revolts at the details, but we dare not push them away.

There is another class—the numb! Any visitor to a refugee camp will testify to the strange indifference of certain children to what had happened to them and their parents. I saw one group of boys and girls playing a game based on what they saw at Auschwitz and Dachau. "Aunt Sonia was thrown into the furnace on Wednesday," a little boy said. His companion answered, "Grandma was burned on a Friday." These children had fashioned their own appalling armor.

Then there are the deeply frightened. A hysterical young man came into my office in Dijon, and blurted out: "Rabbi, give me one reason why I should not kill myself. Here is a letter from the Belgian government telling me I cannot enter because I'm an alien. My wife in Antwerp is a native. She is there with her family. I cannot go back to Poland, my birthplace. Here is a letter saying there are no more certificates for Palestine. The French authorities say there is no room for me here. I cannot go. I cannot stay. I am an architect, but I live on charity. Why shouldn't I kill myself?"

What could I say to him—hollow generalities?

An organized group in America has massed all its energies to convince their Christian neighbors to look upon the Jews as members of a religious body and nothing more. I wish these people who talk glibly about Judaism as a religion, who shudder at the mention of Israel as a people, could be called upon to answer that distraught young man.

Standing near me on the dock, when the first refugees were

brought from Poland by ship, was a social-service worker, the wife of a Viennese engineer. I spoke of the tragedy of two young women who had been sterilized by the Nazis. Mme. F— did not share my distress. "My husband and I," she said, "have also decided not to have children. *It is a crime for Jewish parents to bring children into Europe today.*" She spoke for a frightened generation, one without faith, and literally without a future.

Then there are the psychotically suspicious and distrustful. They are great in number. I was driving one day to Nice with a French sergeant, a Parisian Jew. After his release from the army, he served as a volunteer assistant to me. He was doubly embittered because, upon his return to France after four years in the army, he discovered that his wife had been unfaithful. She had begged him to forgive her for the sake of their daughter. He was telling me the story when we passed through the town of Frejus. I stopped my car and picked up a hitchhiker, a French master-sergeant. We then began the slow ascent through the foothills of the Alps. My assistant went into a long monologue, speaking rapidly in English, which our new passenger obviously could not understand.

"This fellow is evidently not Jewish," my assistant said. "He looks as if he comes from Normandy or Brittany. He doesn't know we're Jewish. He'd be surprised. Probably sympathetic to the Fascists, maybe a follower of Laval. Yes, you can tell he's an anti-Semite. It's written all over his face." By the time we reached the outskirts of Cannes, my sergeant had worked himself into a lather of animosity. When we reached the airport, our hitchhiker leaped from the car, saluted me smartly, and smiling pleasantly, said, "*Merci, mille fois, M. mon capitaine.*" My sergeant glared at him. Turning to me, he com-

plained, "Can't understand how you'd take a man like that into your car!"

A few days later in my office, when I asked this same sergeant to write return addresses on some envelopes for Rabbi Salzer, he omitted the word "Rabbi." I learned, then, that another French secretary who was also Jewish was likewise deleting the title. I asked them both to explain. "The letters would never reach their destination," the sergeant declared. But my own experience proved how exaggerated this obsession was.

The examples I have cited are not offered as extreme manifestations of the disease which has infected the young Jews of Europe. They are typical, and represent a state of mind reflected throughout the continent. Those who advocate the *Stay in Europe* program for the 1,400,000 survivors of Hitlerism are correct in their contention that the Jewish problem will finally resolve itself. True, it will be resolved, but by self-extermination; this will take such forms as conversion to other faiths, intermarriage, mass flight from Judaism. Assimilation of some variety or other will sweep the Jew away. Even British Jewry, as Cecil Roth has shown us, has been suffering a steadily intensified decline in numbers.

Deprived of leadership, robbed of its rabbis, teachers, editors, and philosophers, European Jewry is following Hitler's blueprint for its physical and spiritual dissolution. Hitler did more than poison the European mind against the Jew (a virus of hate that can some day be eliminated). He succeeded in persuading the Jew that he was worthy of hate. Worse than the brand on his arm, the Nazi deprived the Jew of his will to live as a Jew.

As far as I know, there are few post-war plans that call for a

cultural mission to European Jewry. We have sent religious articles and delegations of rabbis to survey the situation and assay their needs. But what the Jews of Europe need most is leadership. We are not a missionary folk, even among our own people, but if ever we could use missions, the time is now. Our history abounds with tales of scholars and teachers who were pathfinders in new lands: the glorious chapters of the Spanish Golden Age were made possible by pioneering teachers. Our rabbinical schools could make a worthwhile contribution to the revitalization of Europe. This will not be accomplished, however, by case workers or social-service experts, no matter how lofty and sincere their motives. (One group of such workers was made up of thoroughgoing assimilationists.) The Protestant mission movement has inaugurated a billion-dollar campaign, and has already attracted young men and women whose imaginations have been kindled by the dream of improving man's lot in the world's depressed areas. Is Israel so poor, so bankrupt in moral resources, that we cannot find men who will think of their people as *a people with a future*?

We should have a cultural mission fund of a half-million dollars to train men and women for service in the European Jewish community. In no other way will we truly defeat Hitler. For every great academy of learning destroyed, at least one consecrated rabbi must take its place; for every hundred scholars consigned to the Auschwitz furnace, at least one teacher must be sent to don the mantle. It is futile comfort to announce that the Jews have outlived Adolf Hitler. But his will indeed be the last word if Judaism does not long outlast him.

The most pathetic story of this war is the gruesome epic of Polish Jewry. The country which graced our civilization with Frederic Chopin and Marie Curie has not yet swerved from its

centuries-old habit of maltreating the Jews. Recently I asked the editor of a great American newspaper why his liberal columns had contained only passing mention of the brutal pogroms *now* in progress in Poland. He replied that hearsay evidence is not sufficient. America must wait until we accumulate substantiated evidence before passing judgment. The words had a familiar ring; I remembered that as late as 1938 many of us here in America could not quite believe in the existence of concentration camps.

In Europe, I was surprised to meet soldiers of the Palestinian Army who had never been in the Holy Land. They were Jews who had found conditions in the Polish Army so intolerable that at the risk of being court-martialed, they had insisted on being transferred to the banner of Zion. Here they knew they would be treated with the dignity of men and soldiers. Never would they be looked down upon as second-rate citizens, as Poland has always done with her Jews. Their plight became so serious that it was finally aired in the House of Commons where it was revealed that during a certain voyage across the Mediterranean, the commanding officer of the transport had ordered all Jewish soldiers to give up their life belts for the use of Christian men. And this was the Poland for which they had been called upon to die!

In the late summer of 1945, I spoke with a group of boys who had hitched from Cracow and Lodz, crossing the entire length of the continent. One of the boys originally came from a Polish town in which there had been two thousand Jewish inhabitants before the war. Seven survived the Nazis, but these seven were murdered in a pogrom *after* the Nazi surrender. The remnants of Poland's eighty thousand Jews were, and still are, desperately trying to escape the death-trap of their native land. Fleeing the

terror, they avoid Allied officials, UNRRA, all authorities and agencies. For they are certain to be asked, when applying for assistance, "What is your nationality?"

"I am Jewish."

"There is no such nationality."

"I come from Poland."

"Then you are Polish," and the cycle of misery and death begins again.

As a college professor, I often conducted seminars on the status of the Jew. As students and teacher sat, comfortably sipping tea and tasting dainty cookies, we bandied about the words, "race, religion, cultural group, nation," sublimely ignorant of the fact that national status was a life-and-death matter to millions of Jews.

Months before we occupied Germany, an American Military Government officer showed me the directive instructing them in the handling of Jews in Germany. The lieutenant was worried, remarking that, "If Jews are to be treated as Germans, as it says they must be, they will fare worse than the Nazis, who at least will have some status and resources as native Germans." At that time, however, we were certain that the Jewish relief organizations at home would know of these plans and have them revoked.

I am one of the disciples of Dr. Weizmann—who admonished us to examine the faults in ourselves before turning upon others. The army was not to blame. It had been informed by powerful Jewish voices that the Jews are not a people, only a religious group. The army, therefore, treated the Jew as a national of his birthplace. If the Jewish agencies for rescue and rehabilitation base their program on an unreal and false philosophy of Jewish life, we can hardly expect our government to

do otherwise. Thus, were we not unwitting partners in the devastation of European Jewry?

My earliest emotional associations with the word, Europe, were of tears and bandages, soup kitchens and motherless babies. I recall a Day of Atonement Service twenty-five years ago, when Rabbi Barnett Brickner of the local reform temple came into our orthodox synagogue to make a dramatic plea for European relief. Mature men and women wept unashamedly as the rabbi described the tragedy of Eastern Europe. As far back as I remember, Europe was always the receiver, never the giver.

An American over forty has an altogether different picture of European civilization than the young man who grew up after the First World War. The older generation still recalls Europe as the donor: the source of scientific and medical knowledge, the inspiration for our schools of learning and our social reforms. To this older group, Europe was both our financial and cultural banker.

The younger generation, on the other hand, has the impression that "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even until the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and festering sores. . . ."

In our work to further international understanding, we should take into account the fact that the entire new generation has little or no respect for the Old World. Since my return to the United States, I have urged educators to include in veterans' education an interpretation of what the soldiers' eyes beheld in Europe, but what their minds could not comprehend. If we are to create any mutual respect between the new world and the

old, our potentially isolationist veterans must be given new insight into Europe's true worth.

Between the two world wars, American Jews spent over one hundred million dollars on European relief. The main organization which raised and disbursed that vast sum, the Joint Distribution Committee, is the largest permanent organization of its kind in the world. Only such governmental agencies as UNRRA have carried on a program as ambitious. Wherever I traveled in Europe there were signs of its generous help. Unquestionably, JDC has firmly established itself in the minds of European Jewry as the symbol of America's conscience.

To date, I have seen no objective evaluation made of this, the world's largest private relief organization. The danger in such a study, presumably, is that a few prospective donors, whose beneficence is half-hearted, will find in it excuses for paring down their contributions. Obviously, there is an inevitable element of waste in the expenditures of vast sums of money. I have seen scholarship funds used for gay entertainment, and church mission collections used on horse races, but it is only the mean in spirit, seeking a rationalization for miserliness, who use such exceptions as an excuse to evade responsibilities. If I saw an occasional instance where Joint Distribution Committee funds were used unwisely, it did not alter the fundamental fact that the JDC is the *sole* organized effort to answer the needs of a stricken people. If its program is inadequate (which it certainly is) then our support must be multiplied; if its philosophy is inadequate for our times, its personnel must be changed and improved. Urgent Jewish problems make complete reconversion of our relief machinery impossible; we will have to patch up the equipment we possess.

When we entered a liberated city, the first question directed

to us by the stricken community was: "Where is Joint?" European Jews were convinced that the forces of the American JDC would be marching a few hundred yards behind the infantry. Though their sanguine visions were a tribute to Joint's reputation, they made the chaplain's role difficult. "You will have to wait some time before they can come to Rome," I would have to say. "The Joint is in Naples now, but it may take weeks for them to get here." Ragged and hungry people could not understand the delay. Why were the JDC representatives not permitted to drive up the open highway to their city? Help only four hours distant, yet weeks away in time? We pleaded frantically with JDC to come to Rome, but its hands were tied. It had no permission from the military to do so. We were told that the Army Civil Affairs Office, upon the advice of a prominent American relief agency, prevented the Joint's prompt entry into Rome. A similar policy had been adopted after our first landing in Italy. Representatives waited months in Algiers for permission to land at Naples. Few people at home knew that the JDC fought its way into Europe, making slow arduous beachhead landings in army offices, securing footholds only after strenuous struggle.

During the first crucial months of liberation, the debate went on continuously: "Shall we permit Joint to enter Italy with all its funds—but without food and clothing? Will we not be creating inflation? Why give Jews preferential treatment, since every person with a ration card is entitled to the same amount of bread?"

We were informed that the Red Cross opposed the operation of JDC, even though it was not equipped to assume relief responsibilities itself. "If this were true," we asked ourselves, "why had not the Joint directors thrashed out the problem at

home—or were they hesitant about raising issues? Were not the agencies in Washington, including the civil affairs branch of the Army, aware that the Jewish problem was unique, that we were dealing with an *uprooted* people, many of whom, to avoid the Gestapo, had only false papers and no ration cards? Had it not been made clear to them that there were a hundred problems peculiar to the decimated Jewish community?" Were the authorities so lacking in imagination that they did not comprehend these problems?

At all events, these difficulties were secondary to the major task of breaking through the Cassino death-valley, and unloosing the Nazi grip on our necks at Anzio. These broad matters of relief policy could not be settled in a fighting army, but only in New York and Washington at the highest command level.

It was the Palestinian troops in Italy who were the first-aid men to the Jewish community. They brought food and clothing immediately, winning the affection of their coreligionists in Naples and Leghorn, and converting them to Zionism overnight. The beauty of their salvage work lay in its simplicity, its directness, and above all, in the bare fact that it was done *at once.*

When the creaking American relief machinery finally got under way, its work was splendid, but we had lost the first few precious weeks. I shall never forget the despair in the eyes of starving men and women during the early days when liberation meant only more frustration and disappointment.

The JDC had no direct relations with the Jewish chaplains in combat areas, despite the fact that we were the first ones on the scene. No one in the New York office had the vision or imagination to realize that the first contacts with liberated

European Jewry would be made by the chaplains. Never have I received any correspondence from the Joint office, and I doubt if many other chaplains were in communication with them. After the acute stage had been passed, we did establish belated contact with them, through *our own* initiative. Chaplains alerted for European duty should have been briefed by the Joint officials, to guide them when they entered certain territories. At the same time, chaplains might have served as the eyes and ears for relief organizations. Partially, the fault lay with the chaplains, who were tied closely to army regulations.

The Jewish chaplains of the American army were correct in maintaining that their only function was to serve their troops. But the logic of events proved them wrong. It was only when they grasped the immensity of the task, and the inability of any organization to cope with it, that they began to devote a larger share of the day's work to European Jewry, especially after Germany fell. Even before victory in Europe, many chaplains began to engage in relief work among the helpless Jews. It was done without the army's blessing, and many of these men gave up opportunities for promotion thereby. If army officials take pride now in their chaplains' work, they forget that the job was accomplished in an upstream struggle.

The most conspicuous failure of JDC and *all* relief organizations was that food and clothing were not provided. Dollar bills are indigestible, and they cannot clothe the naked. In Marseille, the average family on relief received twenty dollars a month, a fair sum considering the thousands in need and the limited budget. But a pair of shoes cost fifty dollars on the black market (the only place they could be obtained). A family had less than the equivalent of one shoe a month to provide for

all of its needs. A relief program based on cash was doomed to failure.

Of course, the armed services constantly demanded top priority for all shipping, and with full justification. The army told relief agencies there was no room for supplies, but we who served in Europe *knew that there was.* It is public knowledge that at one period nearly a third of all the shipping entering Naples harbor for our Italian campaign never reached American hands. Our battles were won despite the huge drainage on our tools of war.

Surely those stupendous blunders were unnecessary. We had a G-2 staff which successfully combatted enemy action behind our lines; we had an FBI which prevented acts of sabotage in the Allied countries, maintaining an almost perfect record. We could have stopped the billion-dollar leak, even if heads had to fall among important Italians and Allied officers. Precious American food ended its sea voyage on the tables of well-to-do fascists via the black market. The oppressors, not the oppressed, were fed.

The American military became so adept at withholding surplus food that even after V-E Day, relief agencies found it difficult to tap resources, and UNRRA supplies proceeded at a snail's pace. The tragic events in *our* concentration camps were the logical climax of a policy placing cash relief above food and clothing. We were totally unprepared to administer relief to even the survivors of Buchenwald and Belsen. I saw a hundred dreary figures on a truck leaving Germany. They were on their way to Palestine, dressed partly in prison stripes, partly in Nazi uniforms. They were on their way to the promised land clothed in the costume of their tormentors.

No anti-Jewish sentiment was interwoven into the army atti-

tude. Relief policy was part of a larger American philosophy. Our ambitions in Europe were these: to destroy the Nazi war machine and to go home. Our other Allies, including the British, thought in terms of winning friends and striking roots in Europe. We longed only to finish the job and sail back to New York harbor. Our army had neither the time nor the will to go deeply into European problems, and the decisions they did make were, for a time, based on incomplete and hastily-gathered data. Our military leadership operated on the principle that the war was being fought in a socio-political vacuum.

The Allied Military Government, except for the British who have a special axe to grind in the Near East, would probably be willing to accept the judgment of American Jewry on the solution of the post-war Jewish problem. Unhappily, no individual or group can speak with total authority. The American Jewish Conference, nearest approach to the voice of Israel in this country, has attempted to speak out, but it has been consistently sabotaged by a minority of influential Jews.

The Allied governments can say with the Talmud: "Two voices that speak together cannot be heard." The masses of Jewry, its labor element in the large cities, its small businessmen and professional leaders, its rabbis and teachers, speak of Israel as a *people*, not as a religious community. They know that common destiny binds together Jews in all countries, and they feel a kinship with world Jewry. They are loyal to America, have given their sons and daughters out of all proportion to their numbers in the war against tyranny, but they are unwilling to foreswear the cultural basis of their tradition. Nor are they inarticulate. The Yiddish press stands firmly with them, and nine out of ten rabbis preach on their behalf.

The other voice, while coming from fewer throats, is equally insistent. A group of eminently successful businessmen, whose concern for their fellow Jews is expressed in generous contributions to all charitable causes, who devote time and effort in the raising of funds, are uneasy about the implications of their own activities. By identifying themselves too closely with their co-religionists in other lands, they are concerned lest they expose themselves to the charge of dual allegiance. I can understand the motives of a department store owner in rejecting the Zionist program. He has too much at stake to jeopardize his security. And he can rationalize his attitude on the highest moral level: "So long as I and my colleagues have economic and political security, we shall always be in a position to aid our unfortunate brethren across the sea." Their heritage has become not an eternal birthright, but a perpetual burden.

More baffling to understand are the rabbinical apostles of this view. Where in Jewish tradition have they found support for their rejection of Israel as a people? Are they not priests to a golden calf in the wilderness of their people's misery and affliction?

The time is ripe for a frank analysis and an honest appraisal of the relief program in Europe, and I look forward to the day it will be made. The Joint Distribution Committee has been the sacred cow of our philanthropy. Its requirements are ever-present, its campaign program ever more urgent. The conscientious critic, moved to compassion for his sorely-tried people, hesitates to scrutinize too closely the *only* relief organization dedicated to alleviate their suffering.

I am certain that most American Jews share the belief that the JDC is an *operating agency* for relief abroad. Dr. Eli Ginzberg pointed out in his *Report to American Jews* a few sig-

nificant facts. The economist revealed that "the Joint Distribution today, as at the time of its organization, *is primarily a fund-disbursing rather than an operating agency* (my own italics), largely dependent on its own field staff and on foreign representatives." Many chaplains in Europe learned for the first time that JDC supplied only *funds* to local organizations, supervising the distribution of these funds in a general way, but not operating the institutions, and not always able to determine policy. If, for example, the Roman relief office discriminated against Polish and Lithuanian Jews in favor of natives whose demands were less urgent, Joint officials could do little to remedy the injustice. Still we found it more expeditious to use this modus operandi, though our principles could not be enforced. Because of staff limitations, JDC was ill-equipped to disburse its own funds. The average soldier, familiar with the Red Cross patch on the field worker's uniform, and later the UNRRA insignia, was unaware of the role JDC played in Europe because it operated only in the background.

Another popular misconception has been to divorce the JDC program from the Palestine effort. Though financial reports indicate that from 1926 until 1942, Joint "turned over $1,800,000 to further the economic development of the Holy Land," my own estimate is that in recent years much larger funds have been expended in that direction, to expedite legal (and possibly, unwittingly illegal) immigration to Palestine. Jewish forum groups and budget committees in our country have wasted valuable months of controversy on the question of JDC versus United Palestine Appeal, ignoring the crystal-clear fact that since 1933 the difference between the two organizations is only this: *JDC has been preparing Jews for Palestine, and UPA*

has been preparing Palestine for the Jews. It is high time that we ceased this profitless controversy.

Out of deference to the anti-Zionists, the Palestine aspect of JDC has been minimized and obscured. Though they comprise but a small group, the opinions of the opposition are treated with respect. Dr. Ginzberg's statistics show that 2 per cent of the contributors to the United Jewish Appeal give almost three-fifths of the total amount raised. Approximately a quarter of the funds are collected from one-thousandth of the donors.

This then is the reason for the two-voiced cacophony. If representation by population is the determining factor in selecting the true voice of American Israel, the 98 per cent who contribute 44 per cent of the funds will be heard in Senate chambers and in the halls of the United Nations. If representation by contribution is the rule, the 2.1 per cent of American Jewry who give the majority of the funds will call the turns.

Booker T. Washington, in a plea for unity among the Negroes of America, once pointed to the Jews as having an ideal organic pattern which his brothers would do well to follow. He shared a common belief in an oft-exploded myth. The chaos and confusion in the Jewish community has offered the after-dinner speaker ideal material for a successful quip, but it has cast a somber shadow over every phase of our life: over the synagogue, the Jewish educational institutions, and the federated charities. But until a *kehillah* type of organization is introduced, it seems that unfortunately we shall continue to follow the line of least resistance and be guided in our policies by the voices of the few.

Historic forces, more powerful than the pressure of public opinion in America, will decide whether the remnant of Israel in Europe will survive as organized communities. They can

eat now, if we feed them. They can speak now, if we listen. But their feet are still bound: they have no place to go.

The alternatives which present themselves are tragically simple: they must emigrate or ultimately perish as a people.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN



Destination Palestine

"BEFORE I RETURN home from Europe, I'd give anything to see Palestine," was the prayer of every Jewish chaplain, as well as most Christian chaplains. In our foxholes and tents, we dreamed of the day when we would visit the birthplace of our faiths. My own longing to return to the country I had not visited since the days of the 1936 riots was realized only a week before the end of my overseas duty.

A bomber group had been given permission for an educational tour. On this trip, there were thirty Jewish officers and men, and two Catholic chaplains, Fay and Gallagher. We boarded a B-17 in Marseille at sunrise, fastened our parachute harnesses, and took off for Palestine with Murray Kaplan and Sidney Becker, our two pilots, at the controls. We had lunch in Athens, Greece (a K-ration meal), and dinner in Tel Aviv, Palestine (herring and blintzes in an Allenby Road restaurant). That evening we walked through the brightly-lit boulevards

of the all-Jewish city. It seemed like a dream. Within eight hours we had flown over the great centers of ancient civilization, Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem.

During the flight, we had passed over the Isle of Elba and had pondered for a moment over Napoleon's fate. At that very time, an Allied crimes commission was being organized for the Nuremberg trials which would reject once more the immoral view that warmakers are beyond the law. Perhaps there would be no more Elbas. We looked down upon St. Peter's, the Vatican, the Anzio beachhead. We flew on over the endless mountains of Italy, and we thought of our infantrymen who had fought so bitterly in those jagged peaks.

From the air, the isles of Greece seemed lonely and remote from one another. Looking down, I understood the formation of city-states, and why it was that the ancient Athenians and Spartans could go through five hundred pages of history without getting together.

Our lunch-stop at the Athens airport was brief. On the field, a maintenance man came up to Kaplan: "Shall I fill her up?" he asked. Lieutenant Kaplan, walking on toward field headquarters, turned his head and shouted: "3400 gallons, please!"

The airport sign read: "Eleusis: altitude 36 feet." This, then, was the home of the mysteries, the retreat for jittery Athenians seeking refuge from their hectic city life. Now Eleusis was a bustling air center; pilgrims coming from Algiers, Cairo, and Pisa landed on her broad airstrip.

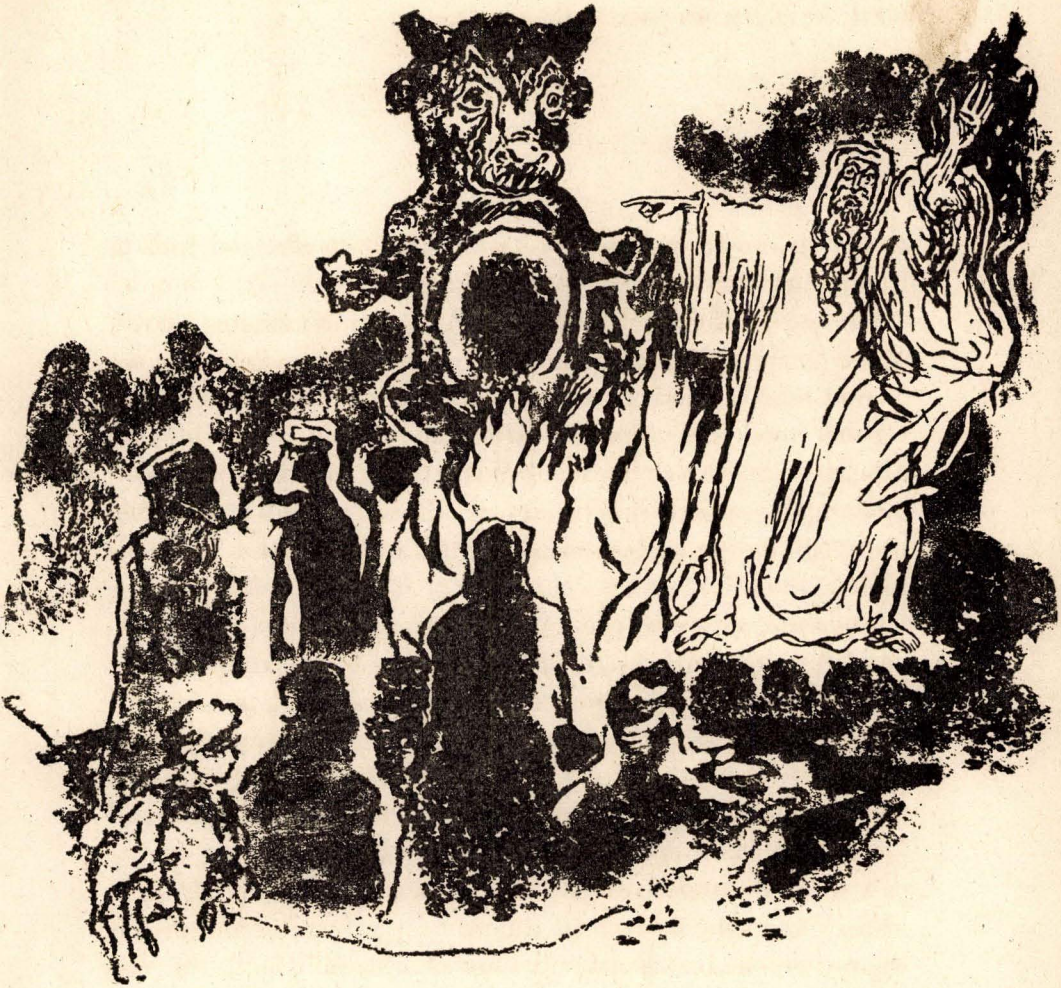
We took off gently into the hot breeze, turned towards Salamis, where the ancient Greek navy won its own Midway battle, and headed in the direction of Rhodes, Cyprus, and Palestine. Our Bible spoke of a pilgrimage to Palestine as an

ascent to the Holy Land. We were about to *descend* into it, from an altitude of eight thousand feet.

Our navigator (and later, my Tel Aviv roommate), Irwin Morse, suggested that I might try to direct the course as we neared land. I chose to aim our nose for Haifa, where Mount Carmel stood. The automatic pilot was unerring. Swooping over Mount Carmel, I reminisced: there the prophet Elijah stood inveighing against the priests of Baal. I could almost see the Tishbite in his goatskin mantle, mocking the impotent idol.

Then we were over the magnificent city of Haifa; it had expanded prodigiously since I last saw it in 1936. To our left, the vista might have been a copy of a suburban area of Chicago. Below, I saw a cluster of great oil tanks terminating the long pipeline from the Mesopotamian fields. Here certainly was one important clue to the understanding of modern Palestine and her difficulties.

A moment later we were over the valley of Jezreel, rich in history and equally rich in promise for a fertile Palestine. If there was milk and honey anywhere in this hilly land, this was the place to find it. Below us, a flower blossomed forth: it was the colony of Nahalal, perfectly symmetrical in form, green with abundant crops. Moments later, the village of Nazareth appeared, sacred in the hearts of a half-billion people. On the other side of the hill was the plain of Megiddo, the ancient battlefield of Armageddon. How near was Nazareth to Armageddon—only a single hill divided the symbol of war from the shrine of peace. From our plane we beheld them both at the same moment; the bleak desolation of Arab lands on the one side, and the bright cultivation of redeemed lands on the other.



The sun was setting. We began to lose altitude and Kaplan and Becker brought the plane into the Lydda airport, near which had once stood the home of Samson and his tempestuous Delilah. We were met, not by an official welcoming party, but by an officer of the field. "Do you want the motors checked?" he asked. "No, thanks," Kaplan replied. "We'll look at them when we get back to France. Just check the gas and oil." We had traveled two thousand miles, leaving a starved, impoverished Europe in the morning, arriving at a land of abundance in the evening. For our first breakfast in Palestine, we had two

fresh eggs each. We had not tasted eggs for over a year. In France, the natives were permitted only one stale egg a month, and at a cost of one dollar. In Tel Aviv, our breakfast was included in the dollar-and-a-half charge for a clean, bright room overlooking the Mediterranean.

Much has been written about the city of Tel Aviv. There is little I can add other than to say that we, too, were amazed. Here on the ancient sand dunes of Jaffa stands the city of the future, modern in aspect, sun-drenched in atmosphere.

We visited the famous colony *Givat Brenner*, and I learned the meaning of cooperative living. The colony had expanded phenomenally since I had last visited it. At the neighboring Sieff Institute, we inspected the chemical and bacteriological laboratories at Rehobot. Our hostess, the amiable Dr. Anna Weizmann, sister of Dr. Weizmann and director of chemical research, indulgently allowed the chemists in our group the run of the place. Few universities in the United States can boast such modern equipment.

Dr. Weizmann told us of Palestine's great contribution to the war effort. "In this room, we developed the drugs used for the treatment of malaria among the British troops," she said. She spoke as a scientist, not as a propagandist. Later, walking between a row of palm trees toward our car, we stopped and looked back upon the beautiful grounds, which reminded me somewhat of the campus at Cornell. One of the men said, "I never dreamed Palestine was like this." The young people in our group, typical of American Jewish youth, were beginning to get a glimpse of the epic of modern Palestine. They were surprised by nearly everything they saw, and one of them admitted to me that he had always assumed that Palestine was primarily a place of orphanages and Hebrew homes for the

aged. They had never been told the story of the Land of Promise. Jewish education in Kansas City and Detroit, in the Bronx and Scranton, had left its task undone.

But I too was impressed, both by the rapid industrialization and the tiny country's growing self-sufficiency, and by the Palestinian's sublimely optimistic confidence that despite British opposition, theirs would soon be the *Jewish National Homeland.* I had left Palestine in 1936 amidst bloody Arab riots, but the Arab problem did not disturb them now. They were absolutely certain that if the two Semitic peoples were left alone, there would be peace between them. Israel has no quarrel with Ishmael; the sons of the desert can live amicably with modern Jews. That there are grave problems involved, no Palestinian will deny, but with no more pessimism about the permanence of the problem than Americans have about their labor difficulties. Difficult and complex, they can yet be resolved.

The spirit of modern Palestine is extremely contagious: after forty-eight hours in the land, you wonder why you ever had misgivings. If the British try to prevent the natural development of Palestine, ways will be found to circumvent them. A frontier people can permit themselves few luxuries, but above all, they cannot afford the luxury of doubt and misgiving.

I remembered the bronze-faced Palestinian soldiers I had met back in Naples, men whose faces still reflected the blaze of the sun on the long drive from El Alamein to Tripoli. Few uniformed men long for the rifleman's role, as our Ernie Pyles and Bill Mauldins have informed us. But these truck drivers and supply sergeants had yearned to see the Nazi at close range, close enough for a strangle hold. They were not youngsters in quest of adventure, nor super-patriots who sought glory—they

were determined, angry men, praying for the opportunity to strike a personal blow against the Nazi. Most of them had relatives in Poland and Germany, mothers and brothers upon whom Hitler had pronounced the death sentence.

Whether angry men make the best infantry material is an arguable point. But General Patton would have been glad, I am sure, to capitalize upon their fiery spirit. The British government decided not to. Until strong pressure was brought to bear during the last years of the war, when the Palestine Brigade was finally activated, the young men from the *kibbutzim* and the cities of modern Zion were shunted into non-combat regiments.

For Britain, political expedience took precedence. The British government had no desire to train Jewish men in the use of arms, but the Palestinians in the pre-Brigade days took matters into their own hands. During their free hours, or at times when their fellow-soldiers were resting, they trained themselves in the use of weapons, without Britain's blessing.

I visited the Palestine troops frequently, as did many Americans. As we walked through their bivouac area, listening to their Hebrew chatter, their lusty singing, and the ease with which they broke into a *hora* (folk dance), we envied them their spirit. One evening I watched them present a skit for their own amusement. The skit revealed the trials and tribulations of the Water Company. The stalwart *Sabras* (cactus-plants, the Palestinian term for natives) had left their homes in a blaze of glory. Weeping mothers waved proudly at their sons marching off to vanquish the enemy. Now the brave Maccabeans had been given the heroic task of piping water to the troops. They were the United Nations Water Carriers! In the ghetto social scale, the *vasser-trager* was one degree lower than the scav-

enger. After two years in the army, they had worked themselves up to the bottom of the ladder! The audience, made up of water carriers, shrieked with delight at the presentation of their own "sad sack" plight. As it has had to do so often, Israel laughed—and kept its self-respect.

Another episode in the skit had been based on an unfortunate if humorous happening of the week before. The actors told how King George VI, ruler of the mighty British Empire, was scheduled to drive down a dusty road at 8 A.M. on a visit to the Eighth Army front. The company had been ordered to send out the water trucks to sprinkle the road so that the dust would not engulf His Majesty. With genuine zeal, the water carriers began their sprinkling before dawn, an hour earlier than scheduled. Two hours later, His Majesty drove down the road in the hot Italian morning sun all but concealed in a gritty cloud of dust.

I have heard the Hebrew language spoken as a living tongue, in the lisped accents of babies, in the physics laboratory, and in the town-hall meeting, but my visits to the encampments of the Palestinian forces gave me my first opportunity to hear the tongue of Isaiah spoken in a military milieu, used by battalion headquarters, by WAC sergeants, by officers "pulling their rank." One afternoon, I watched some men working beneath their trucks, shouting garage argot, which even in English usually mystifies me. But here was a greasy-faced mechanic calling out in the *loshen kodesh* (language of the Bible) for a # 3 wrench. One strange thing about modern Hebrew is that when tempers flare and the situation calls for a flow of profanity (seemingly a frequent military necessity) the Palestinian lapses into Yiddish, Russian, German or some of his newly-acquired American expletives, apparently unable to find appropriate

Hebrew phrases. But I harbor no illusions about the respectability of the language. As it continues to be a living medium of expression, so it will acquire phrases that compare with the explosive and picturesque word-pictures which fell readily from the tongue of the Ghetto shrew.

Though the aura of sanctity associated with the language has been dispelled by usage, Hebrew remains, somehow, more than a language to the Palestinian zealots. One can almost call it a fetish—a thing loved and treasured for its own sake. Hebrew has become a symbol of Israel's vitality. A living tongue is proof of a living people. An Italian is pleased when a stranger stumbles through an Italian phrase, and a Frenchman winces when a foreigner limps through an imperfect sentence in his native language, but a Palestinian literally beams when he hears an American struggle with a simple Hebrew expression. When I delivered an address in Hebrew for several hundred Palestinian soldiers and WACs, they overwhelmed me with expressions of appreciation, indulgently ignoring my faux pas. My talk dealt with France and, to the delight of my audience, I contrived a word for underground fighters—*tachtonim*—the Hebrew word for *underwear.*

The Palestine ATS, counterpart of our WACs, was an integral part of their military organization. Their work covered not only office and signal branches, but heavy labor as well. The girls' physiques were usually equal to the task. They were a sturdy, robust type, the pin-up variety being practically nonexistent. Years of farming had toughened their muscles, and few of them could be called beautiful in the conventional sense. The battalion commander affectionately referred to them as his shock troops, but when we teased him about their lack of glamour, he had an answer ready for us. "There is an old adage in

our tradition which says that it is our old men who are beautiful."

Our personal relations with the Palestinians were not always smooth. Whenever the subject of American Zionism was broached, the air became thick with charges and countercharges. The WACs were forthright in their opinion that America could boast of few real Zionists. We were contributors to the upbuilding of the land, we were well-wishers of the movement, perhaps we were profound students of Zionism, but unless we aspired *personally* to become pioneers and participate actively in creating a Jewish national homeland, we were not Zionists. At best, we were fellow travelers, but let us not dare claim the title, Zionist! One WAC sergeant was especially biting and outspoken on the subject. She was the daughter of Kurt Blumenfeld, a leader in world Zionism. She could not see how the redemption of land could be realized by Zionists who wanted *others* to settle in the land. She ruled us out of the movement by definition.

Our Palestine friends spoke apprehensively about the refugee material which was entering the movement. Palestine as a refuge was incidental to *Eretz Yisroel*, the living expression of the Jewish spirit. They felt that, like America, Palestine could begin its modern history as a sanctuary for the oppressed, but that soon it must become much more than that—a great creative nation of free people.

Few military histories of the Italian campaign will depict the strange advance of the troops wearing the Star of David into the hearts and minds of Italian Jewish youth. The Palestinian soldiers used the most elementary techniques—the persuasive soup-kitchen so dear to the heart of the missionary. They denied themselves meals in order that the hungry natives might

be fed. In a world where idealism is at such a premium, we were astonished to meet youngsters beseeching their fellow men to share their food, their homes, their country! In our civilized twentieth century, this was unheard of.

We who had been led to believe that modern Palestine was anti-religious learned that the country was perhaps one of the world's few spiritual frontiers. In Naples, the Palestinians established a community center, assigned one of their members to full-time duty as director, offered free food daily as well as Hebrew education to the children. A block away from the building where the southern invasion of Europe was being planned, the Neapolitan Jewish families gathered for the cultural programs of the Palestinians, in a hall decorated with flags, paintings of Tel Aviv, photographs of the Hebrew University, and of the colonies. Parents listened to their youngsters singing songs whose words were meaningless to them: *Am Yisroel Chay* (The People of Israel Liveth). American soldiers would hear the words of *Hinei Mah Tov* (How goodly it is for brothers to dwell together) sung to the tune of *John Brown's Body.*

If any sign of vitality appears in the Italian Jewish community in the future, the soldiers wearing the Star of David can take full credit. No relief group equalled them in the scope of their program and in the extent to which they restored a measure of self-respect to Italian Jewry.

On Tuesday evenings, the Palestine Soldiers' Club held its weekly forum. Chaplain Teitelbaum took an active part in their program, and whenever I was in Naples I joined him in the discussions. So far as I know, this group provided the only regular meeting of minds among young Jews of all nations. We did not attach any historic significance to the forum. So many acts of ours, performed without fanfare or publicity, were replete

with unusual meaning, but to the boy from Buffalo or Manchester or Johannesburg it was as matter-of-fact an event as a visit to his local YMHA. Here we met South African chaplains (gifted rabbis who reflected a vigorous Jewish community), Canadians, New Zealanders, and Australians. A Scottish Jew, born and reared in the city of Glasgow, lent much color to the discussions. The kilted sergeant's sense of humor was as broad as the Clyde, and as homely as a *Shabbos Kugel.* He was an ideal combination of Sholom Aleichem and Sir Harry Lauder.

One evening, our speaker was an Italian who related his experiences in a local internment camp. He told us that the Italians had been mild in their treatment, displaying none of the savagery of their Axis partners. A Palestinian who had lived most of his life in Odessa then rose to speak. He talked extemporaneously, in a beautiful free-flowing Hebrew, occasionally interspersed with Yiddish sentences. He made a passionate plea for justice. (An American nurse sitting near me began to weep as he spoke.) His transitions from Hebrew to Yiddish were curious. In a demand for elementary justice from Britain, he presented us with an imaginary speech delivered by himself in the House of Commons. Turning to Messrs. Churchill and Attlee, he addressed them suddenly in Yiddish: "*Hert nor raboisai*" (listen here, gentlemen), as though the British statesmen would be more likely to understand and incline a willing ear to words spoken in *mame loshen* (mother tongue).

My soldier-pilgrims with me in Palestine began to speak, for the first time, of "our people." A few of the more impulsive souls wanted to remain for a while *with* our B-17, in case any difficulties arose. With Germany and Japan vanquished, per-

haps the Flying Fortress could be put to further use in the struggle for liberty. Our bomb bay, however, was now sorely inadequate, being full of watermelons which we were taking back to France.

The men were not interested in the distant past, nor in old monuments (though they stood reverently at the Wailing Wall, and lit candles with pious ones). But the great Hebrew University, the rising new colonies, the industries of Tel Aviv—these were what inspired the air-corps boys.

American authorities operating the army rest center rebelled at our visiting the colonies. The major commanding the center happened to be an American Indian. He frowned upon my plan to conduct an inspection tour for our group. His odd excuse was that, "Officially America is neutral in the Arab-Jewish dispute. We can't afford to take sides."

Why the army looked upon the average American as incapable of making mature judgments of his own, why the army thought it necessary to protect our minds from absorbing bad ideas, was a mystery to me. I even received a telephone call urging me to stay clear of the colonies. According to British intelligence, Arab-Jewish trouble was brewing and there was talk of placing the settlements "off-limits." Here indeed was clear-cut evidence of Britain's divide-and-rule policy in Palestine.

On Friday morning, we were back at Lydda airport, crowding into our plane with souvenirs packed into our baggage and memories tucked into our heads. Kaplan and Becker banked the plane for a last look at the city of Tel Aviv. As we flew above the long sandy beach, the residents waved up at us. The B-17 tipped its wings in farewell, and in a moment we were out of Palestine, crossing the wilderness of Sinai on the way to Egypt.

We turned inland, and there in the distance we looked down upon the lofty sanctuary of Moses, Mount Sinai, birthplace of our moral civilization. *Within 40 minutes we had traversed the wilderness where the Israelites wandered for forty years!* Modern wings had enabled twentieth-century man to fly high, but we had not yet scaled the spiritual heights of Sinai.



Operation Zion

As I stood on a makeshift pulpit before a congregation of soldiers and civilians one Friday evening in France, I felt a man's eyes riveted on my face. The eyes were set against a thin, drawn face, the face of a man who had known suffering. His lips mechanically mouthed the words of the *Maariv* service as his eyes remained fixed upon me.

All the following week I was haunted by the memory of the man with the piercing eyes who had disappeared so completely after the benediction. I waited eagerly for the next Sabbath service, knowing somehow that the stranger would seek me there again. And I was not disappointed. I did not have to look for him after the service. He moved casually toward me through the crowds streaming out of the synagogue. For a moment, I thought I was seeing the Hebrew teacher of my childhood: both were men of about forty-five, simply and neatly dressed. Even the faces might have been the same. But

not the eyes. Except for them, my stranger might have been a typical *luftmensch*; one of those intellectual Jews without moorings, bound up to a dream and hardly aware of the real, the practical world.

A sense of destiny hung over our meeting, and it was strange and mysterious. The words he spoke were simple: "May I see you alone?" Quite suddenly I was uneasy. I did not want to be alone with him but I knew I had no choice. His face was passive and his words quiet but they held a compulsion in them. So I murmured yes and suggested that we meet at my office at headquarters. There I knew we could speak privately.

But I was not to have my way. "Let us meet at the Cafe Montmartre Monday afternoon," he replied. And then his face relaxed and he said softly, "I want you to meet a different kind of Jew—one who will not beg for cigarettes for himself or bonbons for his children . . . one who wants no favors from you . . . one who asks for nothing . . . but a Jew who has something precious to give to you . . ."

Monday afternoon arrived. All during the long weekend I had not thought it would. My doubts and anxieties did not leave me when I saw the Montmartre—secluded, old, with the air of a thousand years of conspiracy in every corner. There was no one else around, and even the waiter appeared only at rare intervals.

My strange friend arrived and we sat down. I waited. "*Shema noh,*" he began. "Let us get down to business. I have come from Haifa. . . ."

I had heard enough. I knew. And in a way I had been expecting it. This was the mighty Palestine Underground, and the man who sat facing me, whom I shall refer to as Operator

Zayin, was one of its keenest minds. The shock ran through me and I felt exultant.

Stranger no more, Operator Zayin's tone had changed. Was this what I had called human driftwood? Here was a swivel-chair executive of crisp words and dynamic manner. Here was my key to the door of the romance and intrigue of the Underground to Palestine, a man with a price on his head, a man less than thirty years old who looked like forty-five. Twice he had been imprisoned, and twice he had slipped through the grasp of the Palestine police. A thousand unanswered questions raced through my mind. How had he gotten to France? How did he live without identification papers, ration cards? Luftmensch indeed!

He was perfect for the role. A Hollywood casting director seeking a quiet, unobtrusive, anonymous-looking character to melt imperceptibly into a crowd would have chosen Operator Zayin. Except for his eyes, now bright and alert, Operator Zayin had the kind of face one forgets the moment it is out of sight.

A few chaplains were fortunate enough to share in the drama of the Underground to Palestine. They were Scarlet Pimpernels; they were like those American clergymen who helped speed Negro slaves on the underground railroad to freedom. These chaplains formed part of the lifeline to liberty for thousands of young European Jews. Their work was illegal, but they were not frightened. They neither sought the approval of their own command, nor concerned themselves about running counter to the will of their British allies. For them the sight of young pioneers, strong, idealistic, ready to swim a thousand miles to set their feet on the shores of Palestine, was sufficient.

The stories here must necessarily be vague. The work of the Underground is not yet done, and its traffic is still in human lives. Someday the full story of one of the most glorious chapters in Israel's history will be told.

With the war's end in Europe, several Jewish chaplains met secretly with Underground leaders, learned their needs, lived with them, and served as soldiers in the final act of liberation. Suddenly army post offices found themselves flooded with parcels. At one APO fully half the available space overflowed with packages that streamed in from all parts of the United States in response to the pleas for help.

Often there was access to surplus food and clothing. Even in the days of the North African campaign, the Chaplains Section received large amounts of food destined for destruction or waste: canned food without labels and therefore useless to army mess officers; food branded "unfit for human consumption" (although most GIs will not believe it, the Quartermaster did set high standards!); tropical Hershey bars glutting the post exchanges because the soldiers were so weary of them. As supply officer of my section, I was once called upon to distribute a quarter of a million Hershey bars to institutions of all faiths, and distribute them I did—to Catholic orphanages, Unitarian clinics, OSE centers. This was the kind of surplus food that so often found its way to the vessels which lifted anchor for Palestine.

The army was quite aware of all this, and looked the other way. The purpose was humanitarian; nothing went to the black market; and so no questions were asked. One day a chaplain, driving a weapons carrier loaded with precious food and clothing down a road in northern Italy, was hailed by two hitchhikers. As he waved them toward his truck, he noticed

that the three silver stars of a lieutenant general gleamed from the shoulders of one of them.

"Our car broke down, captain. Would you mind giving us a lift to the airport?" asked the general.

Glancing back uneasily at his highly questionable cargo, the chaplain nodded glumly and then nervously waited for the holocaust, as the general also turned to examine the contents of the vehicle. "We're taking these supplies to a camp for refugees," the chaplain blurted out.

Suddenly the general smiled and the tension snapped. "You chaplains are on the ball. You're doing great work for those people." Driver and passengers beamed and the truck rolled on.

Hundreds of American soldiers pitched in and spent their evenings in refugee camps, sharing in their songs and dances, listening to plans for departure. A beautiful spirit of camaraderie developed; some chaplains and their assistants were even permitted to enter the secret radio stations which broadcast the latest shipping news in code to Palestine.

There was one critical moment when the whole line of communications was threatened. An important radio part was missing. The Underground appealed to the Americans for help. Days passed without success. A ship was approaching the waters of the eastern Mediterranean and there was no way to send the word that would mean safety for the hundreds of homeless aboard.

An American corporal, attached to a medical station, knew of the crisis. But he had no access to the signal corps supplies. One night a lieutenant came to his clinic for treatment. He had contracted a venereal disease and begged for off-the-record treatment. The corporal was sorry but the answer was no—until he looked twice at the lieutenant's insignia—the

crossed flags of the signal corps! A slow grin lit his face. "I'll break army regulations if you will, lieutenant," said the happy corporal. "You get me a radio part from your supply room and you'll have your treatment."

But the lieutenant balked. He wanted no part of a conspiracy. But the corporal was equally adamant. No part, no penicillin!

That night the underground radio was back in operation.

Chaplains and their assistants discovered the world of European intrigue in their strange adventure. Nations ostensibly friendly to Great Britain were not only willing to cooperate with the underground—they were delighted at the chance to outwit the colonial authorities. By adding to Britain's discomfiture, they enhanced their own prestige!

Scotch is rarely mentioned in the annals of international diplomacy, but it is a medium of exchange that is universally understood. Chaplains learned to have deep respect for its persuasive powers. Many a ship to Palestine was launched by a bottle from the Highlands.

European governments were asked to cooperate with Britain in preventing the exodus from Europe. Publicly they announced their sympathy with their harrassed ally; privately they aided the Jews to escape.

Once a chaplain was asked to send a doctor to see a South American consul. The worthy gentlemen was too ill even to sit up; certainly he was in no condition to sign 2000 visas (at 80 cents per visa!). A medical officer was dispatched promptly; the consul sat up; and the certificates that meant life to two thousand Jews were duly signed.

British Intelligence, one of the best in Europe, knew all about these shenanigans. They sent out military police; the

water's edge was guarded—but somehow the seas divided and the Israelites marched on.

American chaplains knew the risks they were taking. The Articles of War—Bible and Constitution of the U. S. Army—contain enough rules to send even the average officer to Leavenworth for 99 years. But cooperation with the underground continued. Word came to a chaplain's office that two high-ranking Haganah leaders had been caught—dressed in the uniform of British naval officers—and were imprisoned by the British in a village near the Mediterranean. A message came through from Palestine: the long arm of the Haganah would reach out and free them. But the competent British would then set up a dragnet from which it would be virtually impossible to escape. The plans had to be careful and daring.

The hour was set; the place was set. A chaplain started on a leisurely drive along the highway, while two men lay hiding in a ditch at the road's edge. At exactly 5:03 A.M., the car stopped and two men scrambled inside. Within a few days, the leaders of the Haganah were on the high seas, returning to their posts in Palestine.

British Intelligence has its hands full tracking down the members of the Haganah. Men moving about in the varied uniforms of the British Empire, men springing up out of nowhere in Bedouin garb, cannot be detected readily. When the colonial administration sent an additional hundred thousand troops to police Palestine, it succeeded not in stamping out Jewish resistance but only in complicating its task and making the British ludicrous in the eyes of their Arab friends. The Arab world must have looked with unrestrained glee at the absurd spectacle of a division of troops, complete with tanks and field artillery, attacking fifteen thousand strong against

a colony of three hundred men, women, and children. No wonder the rumor was rife among the Arabs that the Jewish colonists had secretly obtained two atomic bombs to be held in reserve for dire emergencies!

I have often wondered about Operator Zayin. Is he still alive? Is he still one of the strong links in the chain of hope to Palestine? Sometimes a wind of fancy strikes me, and I imagine that the thin, soft-spoken young man who sat with me in the Cafe Montmartre had, in his inimitable way, managed to add an atomic bomb to his vast baggage.

One thing will always remain with me: the sentence the stranger uttered at our first meeting:

"I want you to meet a different kind of Jew . . . one who asks for nothing . . . but a Jew who has something precious to give to you. . . ."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN



Comfort Out of Zion

A RECENT SURVEY conducted by an impartial observer revealed that 80 per cent of American Jews are favorably disposed towards a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. A similar poll of returning Jewish veterans from Europe would increase that percentage sharply. During the Italian campaign, I held a service almost under the nose of a 155-howitzer that was being primed for the "big push" on the following morning. I asked the men to introduce a subject for discussion after our prayers, and the topic turned at once to Palestine. Men who would soon face death (several of this group were buried within a week) were determined to learn if their struggle would somehow help their people find peace. Even a casual observer in Europe could not but be impressed by the universal appeal of Palestine to the dispossessed Jews of that continent. Only in far-off America could men speculate idly on the hopes and dreams of these homeless people.

What little constructive Jewish life was discernible in France stemmed from Zionist roots. In Marseille, the religious schools were not functioning in 1945, but the Zionist youth groups had already begun classes in Hebrew and Bible. The largest youth program, built around the Scout movement, was Palestine-centered. A few cultural activities for the entire community, initiated by the Marseillais, were dedicated to memorials of Theodor Herzl and the poet, Bialik. On Saturday afternoons, more than sixty young Zionists gathered at an *Oneg Shabbat*, a musical-cultural observance which the world has borrowed from Tel Aviv.

If a group of anti-Zionists were to visit a refugee camp, they would be converted in a day. At one camp, housing more than a thousand displaced persons, I visited with a group who were about to embark for Palestine. We had seen them when they arrived, crowded on army trucks from Buchenwald and Belsen. Terrible suffering still showed in their faces. They caught a glimpse of my insignia and shouted: "Do you know Chaplain Marcus? Do you know Chaplain Schecter?" A group of French Young Judeans swept over the camp, singing songs of Zion, and dancing the Tel-Avivia. The refugee children drew back diffidently, but were finally coaxed into the dancing circles. Soon we saw the youngsters, with branded arms and the deathpallor of Buchenwald on their faces, begin to smile, repeating, "*Naaleh l'artzeinu berinoh.*" (Let us go forth to the land in joy). Their elders stood and watched, many weeping. A father who had lived through Belsen turned to me and said, "Praise be to God. Those are my children singing." Had it not been for one tiny spot on this inhospitable earth, there would have been no singing here.

I tried to imagine what a speaker sent by the American

Council for Judaism would have said in addressing these refugees. Far from his Houston and Philadelphia audiences, what would he have preached to this throng? Return to Germany and Poland? Remain in allied camps? Surely what was true in Texas was equally valid in France!

Homer described the wanderer Ulysses within sight of Ithaca, reveling in anticipation as he neared the journey's end. His sailors, discovering a bag of wind, fell victim to their curiosity and opened the bag—and all were blown far out to sea again. A few years ago, when I passed through the narrow channel near Ithaca, I understood the tragedy portrayed by Homer. Here was the homeland almost at fingertip, but the wanderers had been condemned to roam again all because of a small bag of wind.

The day before I left the United States for duty overseas, the cause of Zion appeared bright: there was a wave of Congressional support and strong sincere voices spoke firmly. But on that day a prominent rabbi appeared before a Congressional committee and warned against supporting the Zionist cause. That segment of American Jewry whose affluence is more eloquent than the cries of the Jewish masses, would not tolerate a Hebrew commonwealth. A little bag of wind had once more altered our course.

Many American Christians are sincerely interested in modern Palestine. They want the truth, and are willing to listen to any authentic voice. Since my return from the Holy Land, I have been invited by many groups to present the facts behind the present difficulties. Would to God I had all the facts at my disposal! The much-promised land of Palestine is riddled with anomalies, but after my recent pilgrimage, I am sure of one thing: Ishmael and Israel have no *basic* quarrel. There is

no Arab-Jewish battle for Palestine, as our headlines scream. During the most recent events, no *Palestinian* Arab raised a hand against a Jew, no Jew against an Arab.

Our failure as Zionists to get the truth across to America is evident in this: that the only *kings* supported by liberal America are the sons of the Arabian desert. In Spain, in Greece and Yugoslavia, progressive leaders have spoken out against rule by royalty. Yet the same liberal forces have been known to hail the feudal slave-holding kings of the Near East as torch-bearers of Arabian democracy.

Where on the face of the globe, when in human history, has medieval royalty been the symbol of democracy? In those democratic lands where royalty continues, kingship perforce keeps above or out of the democratic eddies of political life. But the Arabian kings or chieftains appeared at San Francisco, and we were so intrigued by their costumes that we raised no questions about whom they represented.

Take a closer look into this paradox. The richest oil area in the world, twice as rich as our own tremendous resources, is now to be found in the Near East. Will this golden treasure enrich the lives of millions of Arabs who own that earth? Certainly not; for the Arab people do not own that wealth. The mighty rulers, whose dominion is as ruthless as any dictator's, have bargained that wealth away. Yet we call on these chieftains to speak on behalf of the Arab people. Liberals in America who endorse the Near East overlords as symbols of the Four Freedoms are offering despotism one more chance to survive.

I would venture to guess that if atomic energy supplants oil as a source of power, we are likely to discover a sudden cooling-off of interest in the politics of Palestine.

Between my two visits to Tel Aviv, an industrial revolution

had taken place. The air-corps men on our expedition were surprised to find chocolate bars in abundant quantities on the store counters, this at a time when the rich cities of America were denuded of such luxuries. *Lieber* milk chocolates instead of British products flooded the markets of Palestine and of the entire Near East. Other products, made in Palestine, were beginning to make inroads into the British trade monopoly. We began to appreciate another significant factor in British disapproval of a Jewish Palestine: the threat of economic competition. The factories of Manchester and Newcastle faced new trials in the post-war world. Australia was becoming industrialized, Canada less dependent upon the mother country; South America, an important customer, was beginning to manufacture its own goods. The tight little island of Britain cannot long endure without vast markets. We were told, but had no time to verify the fact, that an American trade group, seeking permission to visit Palestine in search of markets, were denied visas.

Now the pattern of British opposition became more intelligible. The gibberish of appeasing the Arabs was patently illogical. An empire which did not hesitate to arrest a man worshipped by three hundred million Hindus would hardly balk at the opposition of a few million Arabs; particularly when the Arab people have tacitly approved of Zionism by flocking to Palestine in tens of thousands. "Where it is good for me, there is my home," a wise Roman once opined. Men do not stream towards lands of oppression, and the phenomenal growth of Palestine's Arab population is due not only to the improved hygiene (introduced by Jews) but also its economic advantages.

Soldiers who had served in Morocco and Algeria made the

interesting observation that Arabs in the Holy Land, despite their backwardness, had better homes, better clothing, and seemed better fed than the North Africans. We saw an Algerian Arab near Oran following an American convoy along the highway, watching for discarded scraps of food. He wore trousers made out of a flour sack, into which two holes had been cut. On the seat of his pants were the two printed words, Minneapolis, Minn. The enterprising native found some C-ration biscuits, emptied the contents of a tube of toothpaste onto the biscuits, and ate the sandwich with unabashed relish.

The Arab world offers a difficult challenge to the Palestinian people. The process of education will be a slow and arduous one. Buried under centuries of feudalism, the Arabs are strangers to all ideas of political democracy. When Field Marshal Rommel stood at El Alamein, they appeared to greet Hitler's arrival at Haifa Harbor, working in their stalls on Allenby Road in Tel Aviv making swastikas for the Teuton conquerors. To teach people who have been submerged in ignorance for centuries is a gigantic task. But it has been done before. The Moslem world produced a great culture which leavened out our own civilization. Its science, poetry, and philosophy formed an important foundation-stone for European culture; its broad tolerance encouraged a golden era of Jewish spiritual productivity before the Dark Ages.

We might well ask: "If Zionism serves the best interests of the Arab people, why have no voices been raised in Ishmael to proclaim that truth?" I believe that the advocates of peace and cooperation among the Moslems have been silenced. During the 1936 disturbances, several were assassinated. Those allowed to speak today teach that the Jewish pioneers are the tools of British imperialism.

Paradoxically, the Hindu advocates of self-rule are fervent anti-Zionists. Followers of Gandhi and Nehru decry the Jewish attempt at self-emancipation, locking arms with Arab feudalism. We are indeed a divided world.

Arabs and Jews are still a world apart, and a common meeting ground must be found if peace is to return to the Holy Land. A nation which has endured the yoke of feudalism for centuries, and a people who have suffered the pangs of homelessness for millennia, can and must stand together. If they do not, a mightier force which is surely fashioning this earth of ours into one world will have to build anew upon the ashes of their discord.

When the Temple stood in ancient Jerusalem, it was incumbent on all the faithful throughout the Diaspora to undertake an annual pilgrimage to the Holy City. The modern Zionist would do well to follow that custom, perhaps in a modified form, with a triennial visit to Palestine. Our spiritual batteries have a tendency to run down, and must be recharged by a flow of fresh energy. The contagion of optimism which one encounters in Palestine is remarkable. No one debates the question "Will we succeed?" but asks only "When will we be victorious?"

The American public was convinced of final victory over the Axis. Even after Pearl Harbor, Bataan, and Singapore, we did not entertain the possibility that an enemy atomic bomb might overwhelm us. That is the identical frame of mind one encounters in Palestine. They are utterly certain of the justice of their cause and the inevitability of its realization. The pilgrim leaves Palestine wondering why he had ever dared to doubt that dream.

Here in America we must corral public opinion by frank, en-

lightened discussion of the imperialistic interests enmeshed in the Palestine situation. Britain's presence there is our doing, as well as that of other nations. The mandate given her after Versailles had our blessing, and she is therefore accountable to us.

If Great Britain contends that her withdrawal would lead to civil war, let the experiment be tried. So far, history has not been given the opportunity to learn whether such withdrawals are disastrous. Both Jews and Arabs would be willing to be the first guinea pigs.

Secondly, we must establish the principle without evasion that the Jews, *as a people,* are as entitled to the guarantee of self-determination (within the framework of the United Nations), as are the peoples of Luxembourg or Guatemala.

Finally, American Jews must redeem and continue to redeem more land by supporting the Jewish National Fund and the *Keren Kayemeth.* The child who places a coin in the blue-and-white box is saying: "Let the winds of controversy blow, let Arab and Jew grapple with their differences, Britain and Zionist contend in bitter strife: I will not falter in my work, for out of my labors a desert will bring forth fruit, and out of my sacrifices the green earth will give birth anew!"

About the Author



MORRIS N. KERTZER,

distinguished young rabbi, lecturer and educator, was born in 1910 in the "bush country" of northern Ontario, where his father had pioneered. A log cabin in Cochrane on what was then "the last mile of steel" was his first home.

A graduate of the University of Toronto, the author was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary and did graduate work at Columbia, Illinois, and Michigan. After several years with the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, he became an Associate Professor at the School of Religion of the University of Iowa, where he was one of the most popular lecturers on the campus.

Rabbi Kertzer traveled extensively in Europe, Asia, and Africa both before and during the war. He was in Palestine at the time of the Arab riots in 1936 and again at the close of the war.

Morris Kertzer was the only Jewish chaplain to serve on the Anzio beachhead and the first to enter Rome. After the invasion of Europe, he covered all of southern and central France. His "meritorious achievement" brought him the Bronze Star Medal.

Since September 1946, Rabbi Kertzer has been associated with Rabbi Milton Steinberg at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City.