

Identicom Experts Check 'Year of the Big Threat'

By SALLY KALSON, *Chronicle Staff Writer*

In an unstable world, can there be any stability for world Jewry? More important, can there be any security? At home, Americans are faced with a government in turmoil, runaway prices, and shortages of everything.

Abroad, we witness old fascist governments dusted off and returned to the mantlepiece, coups and counter-coups. Fuel-parched countries fall all over each other at the oil wells, and Israel and Syria still battle it out on the Golan Heights.

Embargo, no embargo. Detente, no detente. Dizzied by Orwellian double-speak and feeling powerless in a new wave of kidnapping and terrorism, most of us find ourselves, if not overwhelmed, at least whelmed.

The question it all boiled down to on Sunday night at Identicom 4 was an age old one: What does it mean for the Jews?

"Perspectives on Jewish Security" called in two experts, Richard Maass, past chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, and Norman Podhoretz, editor of "Commentary" magazine, to interpret events of the last 15 months into an indicator of Jewish certitude.

Maass stated that "The last year has seen the gravest threat to Jews around the world since nazi Germany," as a result of the afore-

mentioned instability, plus a "propaganda campaign directed specifically against Jews".

Despite the magnitude of these threats, Maass noted that most of them have gone unrealized. In his rundown of the state of Jewry in Western Europe and Latin America, he was reassuring if not overly optimistic.

"Jews in Western Europe faced the same anxieties we did regarding the energy crisis. They acted almost unanimously in opposition to their governments." Maass listed the French, German and English Jewish communities as "vocal and vociferous" in their denouncements of oil-sniffing government tactics.

These communities, all growing, are on solid ground in other respects as well, but Maass would not term them "strong".

The French Jews live under a government historically hostile to Israel, and German Jews are "still dealing with the vestiges of nazism." Neither has much voice in the government, but both are increasing in numbers, largely because of immigration.

The British Jewish community is reported by Maass to be the strongest of the three. The newly though only partially re-enthroned Labor party, known for its antagonism toward Israel, is sur-

(Please See Page 23.)

Year of the Big Threat

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 2.)

prisingly more favorable toward her now than was the Conservative party which has just fallen. There are more Jews in Parliament now, he said, than ever before.

The trouble spot, Maass confided, is Italy. "There is an increasing tide of pre-WWII fascism", he said, "and there have been a number of anti-semitic acts in the small towns, including desecration of cemeteries. But there is no panic yet."

Moving on to Jewish security in Latin America, Maass made the following appraisals:

Argentina (550,000): "The Peronist government has been a catastrophe. The country is in chaos. Police on the right are killing police on the left, and the Jewish community is laying low in the middle.

"The number of young Jews in Argentinian universities who have maintained Jewish affiliation is small, while the number of those in the radical left is very high.

"The Minister of Finance is a Jew. Although the Arabs say they won't deal with the country until he is out, he's still in."

Chile (20,000): "The majority of the Jewish community was against Allende. Five thousand Jews crossed the border to Argentina upon his election.

"He appointed 17 prominent young Jews to government office, and his wife belonged to Hadassah, although not Jewish herself. When Allende fell, there was surprisingly no reaction against the Jews.

Mexico (40-50,000): "The Jewish community came to Mexico in the '30s, trying to get into the U.S., but they did so well, they decided to stay. They are an extremely wealthy community, but they stay completely out of Mexican life.

"Mexico City is the printing center for anti-semitic material. From there, it pours into South America. This is mainly because Jews separate themselves from the rest of the society."

Brazil (125,000): "The Jewish community here is in great shape. The country is riding the crest of an economic boom, and the Jews are riding along with it. Although there is a military government, the new president has promised to hold free elections."

When Maass got to the Soviet Union, he was less reassuring. He feels Secretary of State Kissinger is treading on dangerous ground when he links peace in the Mid-East with the plight of Soviet Jews.

Calling the linkage inaccurate, he said, "More Jews were allowed to leave the Soviet Union for Israel in October (during the war) than ever before."

The fate of the Jackson-Mills-Vanik legislation is up to Congress now, he emphasized, and the Jewish community should stay out of the negotiations over the bill's wording. "We should support the bill as is," he concluded. "Soviet Jews are begging us not to abandon them."

Podhoretz, Pulitzer scholar, addressed the audience of 450 with a "non-paranoid, non-hysterical" account of the Jewish scene in this country.

Podhoretz traced the demise of what he called the "Golden Age" of American Jewry into "a brassier age." Calling the last 20 years "civically and materially prosperous" for Jews as a result of a post-World War II anti-semitism "taboo" he noted that anti-semitism is once again gaining approval.

Until recently, he said, the taboo was so effective that groups which would normally have thrived on anti-semitism actually "bent over backwards to be friendly."

Although the Jews were only "subsidiary beneficiaries" of the quota system's abolition and subsequent spread of the merit system, which he said was meant to benefit Blacks more than Jews, they were aided nonetheless. Jews became prosperous and influential in every area, and then came, "an explosion of Jewish creative energy, especially in literature."

But since 1967, Podhoretz has been detecting the slow but certain demise of this Golden Age. "To the enemies of Jews, the Six-Day War gave anti-semitism the more respectable guise of "anti-Zionism". (He warned against the danger of equating the two, although they "can be hard to distinguish in practice.")

"Old fashioned, familiar anti-semitism came crawling out of the woodwork, and a new, unashamed anti-semitic spirit prevailed in the wake of the Israeli victory"; a victory which left many Jews, including Podhoretz, nervous at its enormity.

With the "running out on the moral statute of limitations on Holocaust guilt", Americans no longer had to feel protective or sympathetic. Jews were now leading members of the Establishment, and many viewed them as "the quintessential embodiment of middle-class values", in "defiance of the facts."

The classic cultural anti-semitism thus returned, he continued. Jews were once again charged with "seizing power, corrupting the language and subtly poisoning the wells of the host country."


What are the effects now? Not as bad as expected, Podhoretz contended. Jews are still winning political seats, and the rash of anti-semitic diatribe expected to accompany the energy crisis never occurred.

Podhoretz suggested that anti-semitism is still not widely felt by most Americans. But he went on to cite what he considers the most serious threat to American Jewry in his lifetime; the growth of support for the quota system's return.

"This growth is not guided by anti-semitism, but it will effect Jews anyway", he said. "The major purpose is not to hurt Jews, but to help Blacks and other minorities, so it is not looked upon with disfavor."

Jews have become disproportionately represented in many fields, he continued, so the attitude is "It won't hurt to knock them down a peg or two".

"We are told this is a necessary consequence of the only policy that can establish racial justice. I most loathe the demand on me that social justice can only be achieved by discriminating against my children," he concluded.



CO
DO
Lic
All To
One I

Maple Festival Tour
Sunday Dinner Tour, Ligon
All-American Country Show
Waterford Park
Kenley Players, Saturday M
Sea World
Thanksgiving Dinner, Ligo

TWO

Azalea Festival
Springtime in Delaware . . .
Tour of Washington Embas
Tulip Festival, Holland, Mi
Colonial Williamsburg . . .
Tulip Time in Ottawa
Canadian Rockies Tour . . .
Walt Disney World Tour . . .
New York City by Air
Mackinac Island and Saul