

Letters to the editor

A Polish Yoke

Dear Sir:

Some months ago The Voice ran a piece of mine about the founder and chief of the Red Orchestra—the most effective anti-Nazi spy ring of World War II—“The Plight of Leyb Trepper: The World’s Greatest Yiddish Spy” (Voice, September 21). It went something like this:

The Big Chief (as Trepper was called) warns Stalin about Hitler’s planned attack on the Soviet Union. Uncle Joe poo-hoos the whole notion. Hitler attacks anyway. Trepper’s data shortens the war by months and costs Germany 200,000 soldiers.

When the Nazis try to sink the Allied war effort by spreading false reports of separate peace talks between the U. S. and Germany, Trepper blows the whistle on that one too.

So when Trepper finally gets back to the USSR, he is rewarded for all his achievements by being chucked into Lubianka Prison for 10 years.

The dictator dies. Trepper is freed by the Superior Court of the USSR as “a victim of Stalinism,”

gets a pension, and has his rank of general restored. All he’s lost is 10 years.

But Trepper fought the Nazis as a Jew. And when the Soviets turn down his request for a Yiddish press, a restoration of Yiddish culture, he leaves for Poland where he is elected head of the Polish Jewish community and founds Yiddish Book Publishers, thriving in this, his second career.

In 1968 Poland asks a small favor. They have a new anti-Semitic campaign underway and would like the ex-spy chief to lend a hand. All he must do is (a) laud these miserable goings-on and (b) denounce Israel as Hitler’s successor. Trepper resigns all his posts in protest, and demands the right to emigrate to Israel. The Polish emirs refuse. Trepper becomes an official un-person. Only his wife and three sons are allowed to depart.

Alone and desperately ill these days, in need of an immediate operation, the 69-year-old Trepper fears that a visit to a Polish hospital would be his last.

At the time this story first appeared, not much could be done. More can be done now.

New York activist attorney Gustin L. Reichbach is organizing a U. S. Trepper Committee which plans to publicize this very rotten business through the press, radio, and tv, picket the Polish Embassy, and, in general, make things hot for the Polish pharaohs. The Polish pharaohs hate it when things get hot, when the world’s a witness to their misdeeds; it often makes them think twice. Reichbach may be reached at 317 West 93rd Street, New York, New York 10025. All are, of course, welcome.

Okay, Voice readers, Trepper anti-Nazi buffs, and all you who care about a square deal for people, it’s your move.

—Isidore Haiblum
Manhattan