

Jewish Currents

A PROGRESSIVE MONTHLY

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Editor

Feb. 2, 1981

Prof. Francois Gremy,
President, M.R.A.P.
120 Rue St. Denis
75002 Paris.

Dear Prof. Gremy:

For years we have been receiving your publication, *Droit et Liberte*, and have of course learned much from it. Recently, just after the anti-Semitic attack on the synagogue in Rue Copernic, our attention was called to the fact that your organization had changed its name from Movement Against Racism, Anti-Semitism and Peace to the Movement Against Racism and For the Friendship of Peoples.

It is difficult for us militant progressive American Jews to understand why you found it necessary to eliminate the struggle against anti-Semitism from the name of your important progressive organization with a splendid history of struggle against anti-Semitism and other forms of racism. The idea that racism includes anti-Semitism may be accurate semantically but not politically. Many people who fight against all kinds of racism also either tolerate or even encourage anti-Semitism. In the 20th century, anti-Semitism has become, as you certainly well know, such an important instrument of international reaction that it needs to be combatted specifically in all countries.

We have read your statement in the November-December 1980 issue of *Droit et Liberte* and of course respect the intentions that led to the change of your name but we cannot agree that the change was politically wise. Certainly the Rue Copernic incident, which was only the climax of the widespread anti-Semitic movement, leads one to question the judgment for changing the name.

May we in the spirit of international solidarity in the struggle against racism, anti-Semitism and for the friendship of peoples urge you to consider changing back to your former name. To admit an error so soon after it is made is honorable and can help improve the quality of your progressive work.

Sincerely yours,

Morris U. Schappes
Morris U. Schappes
Editor

MUS:p

*after Copernic
found ourselves able to gather*

Thank you for your attention to us. Please, if you do not do it already, send your publications.

Your very sincerely,

PARIS, le 26 février 1981

FRANÇOIS GRON
President, MAF

Mr Morris U. SCHAPPES
Editor
JEWISH CURRENTS
22 East 17th street
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10003

Dear Mr Schappes,

I thank you very much for your letter dated February 2d, which I read very carefully.

The change of our name is now several years old. It had been decided by our national congress with a very strong majority, including the jews of our Movement.

We wanted to emphasize the positive aspects of our struggle. The term "Peace" having paradoxically an old connotation of "cold war". We wanted also to keep our acronym, which was really beautifully known and respected, due to our action for years.

Even if the word "antisemitism" disappeared from our name, be sure that we never dropped our action against antisemitism. Have we a better proof than our action after Copernic, when we found ourselves able to gather nearly 300.000 persons in the streets of Paris? We protest and/or go in court after every aggression against jewish persons, monuments, shops...

In fact, the main racist problems in France concern the immigrant workers and their families. The laws of our present government make their condition very miserable specially by contraining them to an unprotected life from the legal point of view. The police, the administration, the employers are given uncontrolled rights upon them. This is also, of course, one of our main concern.

So our theory as well as our practice from that, we must - and indeed do - make no discrimination between different aspects of racism. And there is not the tiniest beginning of proof that our action has changed after we changed our name.

So we think there is neither theoretical no practical reason for coming back to our former name.

.../..

Thank you for your attention to us. Please, if you do not do it already, send your publications.

Your very sincerely.

François GREMY
President, MRAP