

The South African Jewish Chronicle.

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Another Turn of the Screw.

Another turn has been given to the screw that has already been thrust deep into Jewry by the announcement that those Jews who were on board the "President Warfield" are being sent back to France, where they embarked, and that in future all those who seek their homeland without the magic certificate in their pockets will be returned to whence they came. To herd them on Cyprus is to leave them still with hope and this they must not be allowed! For, cruel as it was that Jews, who had suffered and lost all, should be turned away when within sight of the goal of their longing, yet on Cyprus at least they felt close to Eretz Israel and that within a measurable time they might hope to enter. Now even this is being taken away and they are left only with despair.

It is difficult to credit the British Government with the callousness it has displayed, yet the evidence is overwhelming and the voice of no Englishman is raised in protest. Pharaoh had the excuse that he wanted the Jews as slaves, but in this new exodus the British Government has not even this justification for barring the way.

Moreover, this blow has been struck at a time when the U.N.O. Commission is still in the Middle East busy gathering evidence. Why, then, the sudden urgency of halting that which has gone on for months? This latest action can only serve to increase the tension in Palestine and lead to still more active resistance against the Administration. However restrained the Yishuv attempts to be, it can be goaded beyond endurance. Is this the intention of the latest move? If it is not, it is moving towards this result. Or is the intention to offer an affront to the U.N.O. Commission by showing Britain's independence of it?

The British Government cannot carry out this new policy without partners and it has chosen France to assist her, France which since the revolution has been the home of the ideals of liberty and nobility of man. This country whose soil has been a refuge for all the oppressed who have sought sanctuary from her, is now asked to receive those who, seeking their own home, are brought back by compulsion. It is not quite certain yet that she will acquiesce and we hope that she will have the strength not to be coerced into becoming a partner in this shameful business.

The Deputies Congress.

On the occasion of the 16th Biennial Congress of the Board of Deputies, due to meet in Johannesburg over the coming long week-end, the Executive Council has issued a most creditable report and we would take this opportunity of congratulating them upon a fine record of service. After reviewing the world scene, the report sets forth some of the numerous instances in which it identified itself with Zionist aspirations, and we are happy to note that the continued harmonious relationship prevailing between the Board and the Zionist Federation had such practical manifestations.

The Board ably represented the community in matters affecting the status of European Jews, refugee relief and representations to the Peace Conferences. On the South African scene it has attended to a situation of growing complexity regarding immigration, anti-Semitism, and many similar problems. Generally, its programme of activity has been motivated by a desire to serve Jewish interests in a most constructive manner and its widened scope has revealed careful thought, systematic planning and energetic leadership. Notable amongst the Board's cultural achievements was the highly successful lecture tour by the world-renowned Professor Baron, and we welcome this tour especially because we feel that it is along such lines that much of the Board's efforts will have to be directed in future.

South African Jewry has an exceptionally fine record in regard to overseas relief. Technically, this work is the responsibility of a special body, the S.A. Jewish War Appeal, but it is well known that the Board has all along taken the initiative in this vital sphere and to it must go the credit for the valiant part that South African Jewry has been enabled to play in bringing a measure of help and rehabilitation to our downcast brethren.

If we are perturbed about any aspect of the Board's many-sided endeavours it is in regard to public relations work, and in this connection we would like to offer a word of constructive advice. The report admits that here its record has not been entirely satisfactory and it suggests various causes, one of which is a lack of qualified personnel and an insufficient budget. In our opinion the root cause goes much deeper and is to be found in the ideological approach to the problem of anti-Semitism. Jew hatred has been defined as "a disease of the Gentile." If this is true then there is very little that Jews can do directly to remedy the ill. American Jewry, as ample reports will bear out, has begun to question the efficacy of its own public relations activity—and this is certainly not due to lack of funds or staff. Experience at earlier stages in other countries, too, has also tended to prove that one cannot reason with an anti-Semite nor argue anti-Semitism away. It would, therefore, be unwise to spend time and money on a purpose which may well turn out to be impossible of realisation. In our view anti-Jewish prejudice should give rise to a twin programme. The first element should be the restoration of Jewry to a basis of normal nationalism which in the long run would prevent the Jew from being singled out for irrational hatred. The other remedy lies in a positive educational programme for the Jewish people so that they themselves can resist the virus of anti-Semitism and through knowledge and understanding avoid giving credence to the accusations of the Jew-baiter. The adoption of this right approach would result in a public relations programme which would ensure that the community's resources were being used productively. On the other hand, any other programme would not only prove futile but would also succeed in diverting valuable energies away from constructive channels into barren pursuits. We earnestly commend this point to delegates' attention and wish them fruitful deliberations.

From my Desk

... By ...

HASOFER



Bravo!

I wonder whether last Thursday's action off Rafa will be linked up with the traditions of the British Navy after the fashion of Trafalgar and the River Plate. It was a resounding victory for a small force consisting only of one cruiser and six destroyers. After all they had to deal with 4,500 "desperadoes" who deserved to be spurned because they had survived the worst that the Nazis could perpetrate upon them in ten years or more.

The British Government seeks to claim world sympathy by describing these immigrants as "illegal." It has deliberately forgotten that the law which checked Palestine immigration (a 1939 regulation) was itself declared illegal by the highest authority in the world at that time. And I wonder how legal it is for boats to be interfered with fourteen miles outside territorial waters?

Official Tears.

I liked the story that Dr. Granovsky told Zionist workers on Sunday morning about the Palestine Government and the water pipeline to the Negev. The J.N.F. began working on this line leading water from the vicinity of Beersheba so as to enable large scale settlement in the southern desert. The Palestine authorities then proposed a draft ordinance, the effect of which would be to stop this work. The matter was taken on appeal to the Colonial Office in London, who gave the following reasons for this great piece of legislation. (The sentiments in brackets are those of Dr. Granovsky).

(1) The pipeline would change the character of the Negev. (Quite right, but apparently London prefers the desert to remain a desert.)

(2) Arabs in the Beersheba district would be deprived of water. (Nonsense; it was proposed to tap only 1½ million of the 30 million cubic metres of water known to be there.)

(3) The cost of the water would be prohibitive. (British regulations have forced up the price of land, too, but the price is our concern—not their business.)

(4) The pipes being used were brought to the country for irrigation of vegetable lands in the north and not to bring water to the south. (!!!)

Two days before the United Nations Commission landed in Palestine, the Government withdrew this great humanitarian restriction. Danger of its reimposition, however, still exists.

Medicine Indeed.

Dr. Granovsky also recalled a conversation between the late Ussishkin and Sir John Hope Simpson in 1930. (The latter will be remembered for his prophecy that there wasn't room in Palestine "to swing a cat." Since then over 400,000 Jews have comfortably entered the country.)

Sir John had suggested to Ussishkin that Jews were paying very high prices for land—prices which could not be justified economically. In replying Ussishkin asked him whether, when any of his children fell sick and required medicine, he first ran to a chemist and asked what was the price of the medicine or whether he ordered it irrespective of price.

While Sir John was pondering over this very deep philosophical query,

Ussishkin went on: "Land is the medicine of our people. It is needed to heal our sickness. We do not count the cost."

Forecasting the News.

I see that a Johannesburg paper has been congratulating itself, in its correspondence and its news columns, on its enterprise in flying its weekly edition to the S.A. Zionist Conference in record time.

I remember that at the Bloemfontein Conference in 1939, a Johannesburg weekly was selling copies to delegates as they entered the hall before the Opening Session. The paper not only had the full text of the presidential address and messages (this had obviously been supplied in advance) but it also reported the loud applause with which these were greeted. An hour or two after they had purchased the paper, delegates obligingly applauded and so helped to fulfil the amazing prophecies of the paper.

Music Lovers' Treat.

Make a note in your diary that on Saturday night, August 9th, you must attend a concert at the City Hall. The star of the evening will be the well-known opera singer Madame Mabella Ott-Penetto, who has been received so enthusiastically by Cape Town audiences. A unique feature of the very interesting programme which she is to present will be an original rendering of "Eli, Eli," with full orchestral accompaniment by the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra. Another notable feature of the programme will be a song "In Memoriam"—to the sacred memory of those who have fallen as victims of Nazi atrocities. The entire programme should be greatly appreciated by all music lovers and to add to the attraction, the proceeds are going to the Keren Kayemeth. Do not delay your booking lest it be too late.

Simple Grandeur.

In a letter from a Capetonian at present in Jerusalem, I read an interesting description of a graduation ceremony which took place at the Hebrew University on Monday, 7th July. "The University for the first time conferred honorary degrees—and the persons to receive them were Weizmann and Magnes. It was, as you can imagine, an historic occasion, and it was treated as such. It had the formality which is customary on such occasions, but also great beauty—everything was done with taste and feeling. I can't tell you how moving it was. Weizmann came dressed in the cap and gown which the Doctorate he received in Manchester years ago entitled him to—the only other occasion he wore it was when the University was opened in 1925. There is still something majestic about his appearance. And the ceremony itself, one felt, could have stood comparison with similar ceremonies at any University in the world. Well, one really felt proud, and touched."

Good Fare.

In the general Conference excitement I am afraid not sufficient praise (Continued on Page 501.)

Dance Festival at Dalia.

By DOROTHY KAHN BAR-ADON.

Note: Dalia is one of the settlements in the Isaac Ochberg Tract, the area of land redeemed through the generous bequest of the late Mr. Isaac Ochberg of Cape Town.

The festival at Dalia during a recent week-end—a courageous undertaking with a road-curfew in force—brought together some 25,000 people in a natural mountain amphitheatre. Apparently Dalia knows the pulse of the people. At 4.30 a.m. the next morning, when the buses were preparing to leave, young people and fellahen from the neighbouring village of Richania were still dancing the Negev hora on the platform.

How the endless procession of buses, lorries and other vehicles got up to Dalia, how all the vast audience was seated on the mountain side, was a paragon of orderliness. It went off without a hitch, drawing compliments even from those who could compare it with Army-Navy games in America or Derby Days in England.

For a week in advance a "Dalia Dance" madness seemed to infect Tel Aviv as well as the other towns and villages. Nobody remembered anything quite like it. From noon on Friday the little village in the Ephraim mountains became a Mecca, vehicles streaming up the mountain road in an orderly unbroken ribbon.

A camp, including showers, a buffet, and parking ground for the visitors had been arranged, while the 500 dancers had their separate group of tents, where they had been camping from the previous day.

The prologue in the early evening, presented by the Dalia Group itself, was something to be set aside in memory. On one stony slope the sea of faces; and on the opposite hill "And there will be light" was depicted in dance and pageant by human torches, dedicated to the Jews of the Diaspora. On this hill the "Ner Tamid" (Eternal Light) flared through the night.

Then, until daylight, dance followed dance, with only two intermissions. We saw the youth of Palestine dancing—youth from cities, towns and villages, and the orchestras of Nesher, Emek Hefer and others, and choirs. All of the festivals as well as the day-to-day life of the countryside were set to rhythm in this spectacle, in which 500 dancers, representing 20 selected troupes, participated.

In addition, there were the Druze neighbours from "Carmel Dalia" and the fellahen from Richania. The latter appeared twice, once as a small group, and a second time when all of the male population of the village surrounded the platform and their chosen dancers mounted. Their "debka" was brought to such a pitch that the entire audience clapped hands to the

rhythm of their waving handkerchiefs.

To comment on outstanding numbers in this all-night feast is difficult. But when trying to sort out high spots, one remembers the fishermen's dance of Sdot Yam: the Tel Aviv Hapoel's "Sherula" (taken from Eastern European Jewry), and the "Battle Dance," the only all-male number of the evening and a poem in rhythm conceived by Sara Levy of Ramat Hakovesh; the beautiful first-fruits pageant of Kfar Menahem, including a dance of shepherds with staffs; the "Land of Milk and Honey" by Gan Shmuel; the sheep-shearing festival by Nahalal; the great harvest by Afkim; the Omer of Ein Harod arranged by Rivka Sturman; and the now well-known Omer of Ramat Yochanan, with dances by Lea Bergstein and music by Mata-tiahu Weiner.

It must be remembered that this was far more than just a night's entertainment. In the field of dancing there is a definite search for national expression. The question is primarily, "Exactly how did Miriam dance with her timbrels in Biblical days?" and on the basis of that, to build the modern dance with roots in the past and branches developing into the future.

"While there is a tradition for literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, music and other forms of art, there are no signposts left regarding the ancient Hebrew dance," said Avraham Levinson, Director of the Cultural Centre of the Histadruth, which sponsored this event.

Three years ago, the first dance festival was held in Dalia. At that time the major portion of the programme was devoted to dances of foreign inspiration, and we saw everything from the Cossack to the Scottish reel.

The programme this year was completely Palestinian. In the words of the organiser, Gert Kaufman, who has been devoting herself for some years to this revival of the Hebrew dances, "this festival summed up three years of experimenting in dance, music and costume."

Miss Kaufman points out that the previous festival was called the "gate to the future." This year, we entered the gate, although in her considered opinion, "We are still at the beginning of the road. We were able to present only those dances which grew on our own soil and from the work and holidays of our settlements. It is too early to say that we have found the style, but there is a beginning. The future generation will dance—dance without questions or problems or searching. To-day we are building the foundation of the Hebrew dance."

"Palestine Post."

American Corporation to Build Thousands of Housing Units in Palestine.

New York.

Plans are under way to organise an American company to build thousands of housing units in Palestine, where the shortage is extremely acute, as a result of conferences between Mr. Aaron Wright, President of the Jewish National Fund and the United Palestine Appeal for Great Britain and Ireland, and American Jewish leaders headed by Judge Morris Rothenberg, President of the American J.N.F.

Mr. Wright, before his return to England, declared that the housing situation is more desperate in Palestine than it is in America. He estimated that 100,000 rooms are needed immediately. The American corporation will co-operate with the Keren Housing and Mortgage Corporation of Palestine, which is already in the field.

Commenting on the reception to his proposals here, Mr. Wright declared: "I am gratified with the response I have already received. Those with whom I have consulted have indicated a genuine interest in the problem. I am confident that a group of important American Jews will be organised in a semi-public way to serve the needs of Palestine in regard to housing."

The United Jewish Appeal and the Jewish National Fund are "vital instruments in that direction," he stated. "We must supplement this income with private investments and it is for that purpose that I have come here to seek aid and advice in the hope that something really tangible will be achieved in the matter of housing which I regard as an emergency," he added.

FROM MY DESK.

(Continued from Page 488.)

has been showered upon the Combined Zionist Societies for their magnificent Oneg Shabbat presented on the Friday evening of Conference. It was a splendid affair down to the last detail—from the fine meal to the beautiful decorations and the wonderful festive atmosphere that prevailed. I did not believe it possible that more than 500 people could be served dinner in the Major Hall, without any discomfort to speak of. In the varied stage programme the items that suited the general mood best were the humorous items. Mr. G. Laden brought the house down with his ironical references to all political parties and the monologue staged by Mr. J. Blesovsky also caused delight to the large number who were able to follow the Hebrew. In all, the occasion helped to make a memorable Conference even more memorable.

A Factual Account.

The prospective bridegroom looked daggers at the "shadchan." "I have always been afraid of men of your calibre," he said, "and now I find that my fear is justified . . ."

"Why are you so agitated?" interrupted the shadchan. "Has anything happened since I saw you last?"

"Plenty has happened," continued the young man. "You assured me that the girl's father is dead, and now I find that he is serving a sentence in jail."

"Well," said the shadchan triumphantly, "I ask you: do you call that living?"

Jerusalem.

After a conference of Congressional leaders with President Truman, Senator Vandenberg, President of the Senate, said that Congressional action regarding D.P.'s was "all but impossible" before Congress adjourns a fortnight hence.

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