

POINTS OF VIEW

By C. Gershtater

An Aspect Of the Negev

THE exciting report about the establishment of the settlements in the Negev reminded me of Bialik's interpretation of the famous Talmudical saying "Ein mazel l'Israel" (Israel has no mazel). He said that other nations in history attain their goal through sheer luck, by a turn of political events, by reshuffling of strategic borders, by reorientation in the international set-up. Jews, however, have to get everything through sweat and toil. Palestine will be acquired, he urged, only by energetic practical deeds, and not through "mazel."

One might have expected a shower of blessings from all parts of the world for an achievement which holds out prospects to devastated areas in other parts of the world. Time and again there is talk of bringing life to the Karoo and to the Egyptian desert. The Negev might provide a useful object lesson. Yet the "Operation Negev" had to be carried out stealthily, in the dead of night lest there be interference. When the newspapers announced that the police were helpful and that the military were not going to interfere, everybody rubbed their eyes in wonder: as if the men and women who put up twelve settlements in the desert were out to plant atomic bombs.

Oil:

The Magic Word

SINCE the Negev is mere desert, why was it excluded from the "Jewish area," both in the Peel partition plan and in the Morrison Plan? The answer given lately is that it was to be a British military base. There is yet another version. It refers to that magic word "oil."

I am told that an American seismographic research team working on behalf of Petroleum Development (Palestine), Ltd., a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Corporation, has just completed a six-weeks' oil survey in the Gaza district.

It is expected that drilling will commence next spring. Buildings have already been erected beside Gaza station to house the administrative offices and stores.

Interest in oil in the Negev began before the war, and it is now reliably reported that over half a million dollars will be expended on the first drill. A second boring may be made.

The presence of water wells will greatly facilitate all aspects of drilling, and the location near the sea would be most advantageous to the development of any projected oil field.

Why There Can Be No Revenge

IN connection with the comment in the "Zionist Record" on the Nuremberg verdict a reader has written to complain that we dismiss the matter of revenge far too lightly.

"Is not revenge a very human and very natural instinct? Must we, because of the enormity of our losses, disregard any attempt at revenge, no matter how small?" he argues.

I was about to reply to this letter, when I noticed a German stamped envelope on the table. It came from Munich and contained a recent issue of "Nizoz," a Hebrew paper published by displaced persons. It is curious that great prominence is given in this publication (it appears on German soil!) to a letter dealing with the very same subject. Here are some extracts:

"Your words have awakened in me many thoughts. For example, your remarks about hatred and feelings of

New Name For Jerusalem

HEBREW newspapers contain drawings and impressions of the new "panorama" of Jerusalem, provided by the barbed wire entanglements which now surround many famous landmarks, the fixed bayonets, dugouts, etc.. The wags suggested that the city should be given a new name.. It should be called "Bevingrad."

revenge. I ask myself: is it not a misleading feeling? Believe me, hatred for the nations generally or for Germans in particular will not harm them at all. A trifle of love for ourselves—not merely for an orphaned child, or for an 'afflicted' Jew—but love for ourselves as a people, deprived of independent life—a mere trifle of such love, could be a blessing to us. If we go on speaking about revenge, we shall merely develop in our hearts the instinct of hatred. This might not be very hard, because the blood cries out from the earth and thus we shall quickly find an outlet for our feelings. Anything which is not based on deep morality is not only unjustified, but also useless. Of what use will it be if we create things which are not based on ethics? They will be uprooted when evil disappears from the world.

"There is another thing that worries me. How can we develop feelings of hatred which cannot be translated

into practice? We are unable to hang German civilians, bury them alive and slay their children. Since it can never be translated into deeds, our hatred will bury itself in our bones and will eat into our system until it reaches the heart, and when the heart is devoured by hatred, the man is incurable.

"One might compare it to a man in a temper, who is unable to hit his rival. He bangs the table and injures his hand. At the sight of his own blood his hatred becomes even stronger. . . . Our children do not today require an awakening of hatred. They have enough of it. They do not require partisan politics which leads to hatred. They need a little love. They have to feel that hatred and bloodshed is not everything and that there is somebody who needs them: we need them."

The Optimist:

"Puste Zachen"

PALESTINIANS managed to retain their sense of humour even under the most trying conditions. Here is one example which can only be appreciated by those who understand the Yiddish idiom.

When Crossman spoke in the House of Commons some time ago, he said that the Jewish "Intelligence Service" was the best in the world and that a commanding officer had told him that all his orders fall into the hands of Jews within 24 hours after they had been issued. Now comes the comment of a Tel Avivian wit. He said:

It happened in the days of Czar Nicholas the First. One day his councillors came and complained to him that all the anti-Semitic decrees issued by the Czar become known to the Jews before they, the councillors, had a chance of seeing them.

The Czar was astounded.

"Unbelievable," he exclaimed. "I must try it out for myself. I shall send a sealed, but empty envelope to one of my Governors in an outlying Jewish village and see what the Jews say about it."

The Czar immediately sent out a messenger on horseback (in those days there was neither telegraph nor railway) to carry the empty envelope. The horseman reached the outskirts of the town while the local Jews took their Saturday afternoon walk. The moment they saw him there was some panic. "The Czar's messenger must be bringing a new evil decree," they complained.

But the optimist of the village would not be beaten. He said: "Weis ich vos! PUSTE ZACHEN."

Hymn Sung

After Kol Nidrei

FROM Tel Aviv comes the report that by order of the Chief Rabbinate, the Congregation of the Great Synagogue sang the Ghetto hymn, "Ani Maamin," after Kol Nidrei. This hymn was sung by bearded Jews on the way to the gas chambers.

The chassidic tune has now achieved the widest popularity and is known to young and old in Europe and in Palestine. The words are part of the Thirteen Principles of Faith, and read as follows: "I believe with complete faith in the coming of the Redeemer, and even though he tarries, nevertheless, I believe."

The other day Cantor Mandel sang the hymn at a gathering of the Histadruth Ivrit. Perhaps because of its tragic association the tune is awe-inspiring.

Ward 7

DR. SAM KLEINOT
Ex-Serviceman — Socialist-Zionist



DR. SAM KLEINOT was elected to the City Council of Johannesburg in 1944 after being demobilised. He had served with the S.A.M.C. and reached the rank of Major. During the past year he served as Chairman of the Public Health and Welfare Committee, on the General Purposes, Non-European Affairs and Housing Committees.

He has identified himself actively with Jewish communal activity, particularly with the Zionist Movement. He is Vice-Chairman of the Yeoville Branch of the Zionist-Socialist Party.

Ward 7 includes Yeoville, Berea, Bellevue, Observatory, Mountain View, Cyrildene.

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