

**Ben Dor**

**EPIC OF JEWISH HEROISM**

This week's Menorah Supplement to the "Zionist Record" includes features which will be of interest to all readers of our journal.

In particular, we draw attention to the article by Ziviah Lubetkin, heroine of the Warsaw Ghetto describing the last days of Warsaw Jewry. This is probably the first comprehensive account published in English and written by an eye witness. The article appears on page 33.

**Meeting of Pen-Friends**

A CAPE TOWN correspondent has written to me of an interesting meeting between two pen-friends which took place recently.

Twenty-five years ago Mrs. Wolf Heller, of Worcester, started a correspondence with Miss Rosa Marks, of Glasgow, and they have been pen-friends throughout that period.

Recently Miss Marks arrived in this country on the "Dominion Monarch" and made a train journey to Worcester to meet Mrs. Heller. This first meeting, to which they had both looked forward for some time, took place on Worcester station. Miss Marks, who is an accomplished musician, will spend a short holiday with Mr. and Mrs. Heller, and then she plans to settle in South Africa.

Mr. and Mrs. Wolf Heller are amongst the best-known of Worcester's communal and Zionist workers. Mrs. Heller is the chairman of the Union of Jewish Women branch and a prominent member of the Ladies' Zionist Society. Mr. Heller is a past chairman of the congregation and is associated with every facet of Jewish life in Worcester.

**The Chueyta**

AT a meeting in Cape Town recently Mr. Lionel Isaacs, a retired bookseller and writer, gave some interesting details about the Jews of Majorca.

Mr. Isaacs said that the Jews of Majorca had been massacred in 1391; those who remained had been forced to convert to Catholicism in 1435. These converted Jews, who could be compared to the Marranos of Spain, were called Chueyta. Up to that time Majorca had been the centre of medieval trade, in which its Jews had taken a prominent part.

Despite their conversion, said Mr. Isaacs, the Chueyta are still looked upon with scorn and disdain by the rest of the Catholic population, and inter-marriage does not take place. "Jews will always remain Jews, and the sentiments of Jews never vary," he stated.

Mr. Isaacs' address was delivered at the Forum of the Cape Town Great Synagogue. In the course of his vote of thanks Rabbi Abrahams mentioned that Mr. Isaacs had just compiled a list of all the authors of Jewish works from the post-Biblical period until the end of the 18th century. Mr. Isaacs is also the author of a book on the "Jews of Majorca."

**A LITTLE "MAZEL"**

THERE is a new little tune now being heard around town—I don't guarantee it will become a hit and I don't know whether it is even being sung west of the Jersey ferry, but it is getting quite an airing around Broadway—which begins as follows:

"You've gotta have a little Mazel,

Mazel means luck. . . ."

You notice the Hebrew word—and I've been wondering whether the idea isn't Jewish, too. Of course, all people believe in luck, and yet it seems to me this idea of "mazel" is a little more embedded in the Jewish spirit. Jews say "Ob Got vill, shisst a bessem," which translated literally means: "If God chooses, you can shoot with a broomstick." That's the idea of luck in its quintessence.

Of course, all races and groups of every kind are pretty heavily coated with the idea of luck. The Irish sweepstakes prove that. There is no Jewish sweepstake. So in this case it would appear that the Irish go in for luck more than the Jews.

Shakespeare in "Julius Ceasar" says: "It is not in our stars, but in our selves that we are underlings." That's a denial of the idea of luck, yet in "Hamlet" the same Shakespeare says: "There's a divinity which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will"—and it seems to me this involves the idea of luck.

Woodward, in his biography of Washington, makes the statement that there are always a number of people who are qualified for every important post and luck is the factor which determines who shall get the post and who shall be relegated to obscurity. A little luck for one of the other contenders, and someone else might have been "the father of his country."

Napoleon believed strongly in luck and in his own luck, his star, yet, of course, it might be argued that Napoleon made his own luck.

Every Tom, Dick and Harry seems to believe more or less the

By **David Schwartz**

same thing. Americans all speak of getting "the breaks." If you get the breaks, if Dame Fortune slips you a helping hand at an opportune time, we believe it's a "cinch" to realise our ambitions.

So the idea of "luck" is a pretty general idea, yet, as I say, I think it appears to have crept into the Jewish consciousness a little stronger than into others. I think the reason for this is the fact that Jews just had to have luck. They had to have it to survive. Many times their actual survival as a group depended on some favourable turn of affairs. Maybe the old ruler would die and another, better disposed toward Jews, would replace him.

There is a Jewish story about a governor of a certain territory who was celebrating the anniversary of his administration. This governor was hated by the Jews for his treatment of them. Yet the Jews sent the governor a letter wishing him better luck. The letter was signed by a Jew whom even the anti-Semitic governor respected for his great honesty.

The governor sent for this Jew and said to him: "You see, all Jews are hypocrites, and even you, the most honest of them, are a hypocrite. I know that all of you Jews hate me and would like nothing better than that I should leave."

"Exactly," replied the Jew. "That's what we meant when we wrote wishing you better luck. We hoped that with better luck you would be appointed governor of a larger province than this, so we would be rid of you here."

One of the Jewish holidays, "Purim," virtually means "luck." Literally, it means "lots." Lots were cast to determine the day on which the Jews should be exterminated, but the Jews "got a break" when Esther won the beauty contest and became queen.

"Der Redel git a dreh," the Jew says. "The wheel spins." That's a great law of the universe for the Jews. Therefore, Jews have not despaired. Maybe the next turn of the wheel would be in their favour.

So Jews believe in luck. Yet, paradoxically, I think it may be said that Jews also believe in luck less than any other peoples. I think there is a strong sense of causation in us. Judaism teaches that we are saved by ourselves, not by any intermediary—and that's the very opposite of the idea of luck.

It seems to me the Baal Shem Tov most correctly put the Jewish position when he said that forty-nine doors were opened to Moses, but the fiftieth Moses had to open through faith. Moralising from this, the Baal Shem advised that we must try to solve everything first through study and thought and when these methods are exhausted, resort to faith.

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**Sigi Weissenberg Wins In Philadelphia**

SIGI WEISSENBERG, 18-year-old Jerusalem pianist, who visited South Africa last year, came out first in a concert competition held by the Philadelphia Orchestra, according to a cable received in Jerusalem last week.

There were 67 competitors for the "prize"—the privilege of appearing with the Philadelphia Orchestra next season.

In the end there were three musicians left for the finals, and "Sigi" came out on top.

**Name**

**S. E. Dreispult-ansvaal.**

curious occupational Jews were forbidden and caskmakers prior le caskmakers were guilds or industrial th a very exclusive The guild watched their prerogatives permit any out- age in this trade. long a standard of ine, beer and salt. ad to take a Chris- his barrels were not or immature wood, capacity was full o Jew could take a which circumstance bar him from the er, exceptions were e when extraordin- Jewish craftsman The ancestor from ve this name must an exception. family names de- occupation as cask- nder, "Bonder" or e Jewish family ," however, has with caskmaking. m-an ancestor who itn.