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Dora Sowden Writes **FROM A WINDOW IN EU**

Musicians, A New Play A
Some Anti-Semites

SO many South African friends are writing to me anxiously about the growth of anti-Semitism in Britain that I think I ought to give you my own personal experience during my stay here. I am glad to say it does not seem to follow the usual lines.

Let me tell you at once that I do not go often to the East End and I have never been to the notorious Ridley Street, where all the "incidents" seem to be concentrated. But I do keep my eyes and ears open.

Since "Jews are News" to-day, there is much to be seen and heard. Miss Rebecca West ran a series of articles on Mondays in the "Evening News" on anti-Semitism. She appealed passionately against it and Fascism. She created no stir—hardly a quiver. But the fact remains that she wrote in one of the most widely read evening papers. The air is full of views, features, reports and comments on Arabs, Jews, here, there and everywhere. Of those I have heard there is this to be said: they are all as objective as the situation allows—a credit to British journalism.

Man in the Street

Apart from this "publicity" aspect of the Jewish theme, there is little to show how the man-in-the-street is reacting to Jews—I mean the man outside Ridley Street. There are occasional indications. I have heard a drunkard in a bus shout that the Jews should all be shot. No one took the slightest notice of him. A Welsh girl told me that too many Jews were running factories in the once "depressed" areas. A woman in Leeds confided that "only the Jews got black market goods." And I have heard the Jewish preference for Bournemouth (and its consequent prosperity) called "The Palestine Invasion." I found, however, on further questioning that these remarks were just irresponsible accusations of which the persons concerned were obviously ashamed when asked for proof or substantiation.

Harry Pollitt

What did give me a chill was something of quite another sort. I heard Harry Pollitt, the Communist, talk in Hyde Park one Sunday afternoon. When he attacked Capitalists, Big Business, Vested Interests, America, there was immense applause among his supporters. Several times he attacked Fascism and there was tremendous cheering. But several times also he attacked anti-Semitism and every time there was a profound hush. Not one voice was lifted to support that. This gave me a more sickening feeling than any amount of hostility might have

done. It spelt indifference to my mind.

A few minutes later, however, I observed something that quite restored my spirits. At the same time and in the same park there were many orators—all well supplied with listeners. Among them was a member of the Jewish Legion, a member of the Jewish Ex-Servicemen's League and a free-lance speaker telling the British what he thought of them. The audiences in each case were mixed. They were all attentive. The questions asked were relevant. In fact, the standard of oratory was high and drew obvious admiration from the crowds. But there was more to it than that. There was not a single policeman nearby these platforms, in spite of the East End incidents. And there was not a single "incident." In fact, all the police were gathered round the Communist stands. And even there, there was nothing to report.

Cheered Up

It cannot be a very dangerous anti-Semitic situation where Jewish speakers, attacking Fascism, anti-Semites and racial injustice find ready listeners and require no protection or need no self-defence. I left Hyde Park quite cheered up.

And here are more things to cheer you. On one of those nights when the newspapers carried shrieking headlines about the "Exodus" ship, a singer at the Albert Hall chose an aria from Handel's "Judas Maccabaeus" as his share of the programme. This particular song—"Arm, Arm, Ye Brave"—calls upon the Jews to face their enemies and promises them victory. It was followed by the "Plague Choruses" and "Israel in Egypt." Both items were received with acclamation.

A few nights later William Walton conducted his own composition, "Balshazzar's Feast," and the critics commended his genuine Hebraic inspiration. Walton is not a Jew, but I am sure that he must have studied "Chazonuth" in some way to make this work so authentic and thrilling. About that time, too, Harriet Cohen was given an ovation in the Albert Hall. Her name and her sympathies are well known. Yet the audience which packed the hall was by no means Jewish. Jews were not even in the majority.

Among those present were Vivien Leigh, the actress, and her husband, Sir Laurence Olivier. No one besides myself seemed to recognise them (else I am sure they would have been mobbed). Olivier must have counted on his straw-coloured hair (dyed, I suppose, for the part of "Hamlet") to keep him incognito. Vivian Leigh could not have been less conspicuously dressed. They sat in a box with

Angela Baddely and I enjoy Harriet Cohen immensely.

Since then and all present season there constant stream of on London platform that international name of Menuhin and I command enthusiasm and probably raise a race in the minds mirrors (other than are still hosts of names are almost a are yet given a sylvan even a warm harir Kyle Greenbaum, Sfir, Maurice Raskin, Louis Kentner, not those like Myra Hess who obviously never Semitism in their even recall a very discussion recently tian belief was be One of the speakers he was) said he co Christian dogma but theless get "religious things of beauty. He example of the bespired him Myra Hess Bach's "Jesu Joy of ing." Myra Hess is

Not a Ho

All this should be cation that Britain bed of growing which some people be. In fact, the still as tolerant as the underdog and a mire spirit as ever haps I can quote on from music—I have lot of it lately. To Arnheim, the I.B. gramme chose Michael Tippett's "Child of Our I formed in Holan broadcast Tippett introductory talk e of the sources of He said he got his plight of those af could not go bkk were not allowe else and thus h no-man's-land. T quite simply, sm British broadcast.

"Dark Su

And if you wan of British interest, in the play "Dark was recently per Lyric Theatre in London, and got a author is apparant Wynward Browne the treatment of t actor in the play i Jewish. The ph blinded officer wh of sightlessness. A refugee Jewess—u aged, but so full

Sholem Aleichem

THE Decca Company is planning an album of Sholem Aleichem stories to be recorded shortly. The narrator is Howard de Silva. Some of the untranslatable expressions will remain in Yiddish, but the major part of the stories will be in English.

Discrimination

By E. M. R.

Civic-defence has been lax.
The Rabbi's a Jew,
The congregants, too.
What! No Goyim?
Not even a few?
Goodwill must not relax!
This is restriction!
Discrimination!
Are we then fools
To record in the log
That the synagogue
Is partial to Jews?
OY!
Such news!

that the young man almost loves her. Before recovering his sight he offers her marriage. She promises because she knows that this will save his life and increase his chances of recovery. When, however, he does get his sight back, she renounces him in favour of his pretty ex-fiancee.

In itself this plot would be very ordinary, but there are original touches and some fearless portrayal of character and situation. There is the genteel spinster who finds everything that she does not like "Jewish." Through her the reactions of unthinking gossips repeating anti-Semitic cliches are given. There is no shirking. Black Market, Palestine, Religion, everything commonly current about Jews tumbles out of this old chatterer. And the author gives no verbal refutation. The refutation comes from the characters and their actions. This is good drama and it has telling effect.

I am told that another play (this time about immigrants from a Roumanian village to Cyprus) by a non-Jew was recently staged with success at the Windsor Theatre. If it comes to London I shall write about it another time. Unfortunately I was in Derbyshire at the time of its performance in Windsor. But these shows do suggest that the British attitude towards the Jews is not merely an official one. That there should have been an audience for a week in the Royal Borough of Windsor for a play on an entirely Jewish theme is significant enough. And that non-Jewish playwrights should be choosing Jewish themes and presenting them fairly and getting them performed is more significant still.

From my own experience, therefore, I should say that anti-Semitism is not serious here in spite of Fascist nuisances and cases of hooliganism. I have covered a good part of the British Isles and in my lecture tours have had the opportunity of meeting people of all kinds and of many opinions. I can almost say that, to my knowledge, I have not yet met an anti-Semite here.



Producer Presents Barmitzvah Film

MR. L. LEWIS, Cape Town film producer, presented a varied and interesting programme of some of his documentary pictures in Cape Town recently, including a Barmitzvah film entitled "The Other Half."

Produced primarily as an adult educational feature, the film portrays the preparation of a lad for his Barmitzvah as well as the actual synagogue ceremony, which was taken in the Great Synagogue.

It deals with the boy's first Hebrew lessons at a tender age right up to the period when he receives his instruction concerning "Tallith" and "Tephillin." The exceptionally well worded and edited titling makes this film a useful and enlightened vehicle of educational propaganda for the dispelling of many misconceptions which must doubtless exist in the minds of Gentiles concerning the significance and ceremonial of the Barmitzvah.

The film was shown to the committee of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation at an "At Home" and to members of the Synagogue Centre.

At the conclusion of the film, Chief Rabbi Abrahams gave a short talk on the significance of Barmitzvah.

Orthodox Rabbi Arrives in Cape Town Reunion With Mother After 26 Years

THE other day I met a most interesting visitor to South Africa in the person of Rabbi Leib Rabinowitz, of New York. He has come on a visit to his mother, Mrs. E. Rabinowitz, of Worcester, whom he has not seen for 26 years since his departure for America from Russia.

The arrival of Rabbi Rabinowitz, who is extremely orthodox, in Cape Town presented some difficulty to his family, since his boat docked on the Sabbath. However, arrangements were made for him to spend the Sabbath at the home of his niece, Mrs. Harriet Levin, in Green Point, and together with her husband Mr. S. M. Levin, the Rabbi walked to their residence from the docks. There the reunion took place with his mother, who had come in from Worcester for the reunion, but because of the Sabbath had been unable to meet her son when the ship docked.

During the voyage Rabbi Rabinowitz drank only water and weak tea without milk, and ate only matzo, biscuits, cheese and sardines, which he had purchased in New York before sailing. Since the boat (the South African "Victory") had left New York on the Sabbath, too, the Rabbi had gone aboard on Friday and there ushered in the Sabbath in the traditional way.

Rabbi Rabinowitz has a large

family in this country. His brother, Mr. Michael Rabinowitz, lives in Worcester, as does a sister, Mrs. Brenner. Another sister, Mrs. L. Hodes, lives in Mowbray, Cape Town. They are all well known in Zionist and Jewish communal life.

After a month in South Africa, Rabbi Rabinowitz will return to the yeshiva with which he is attached in New York. A widower, the Rabbi has a married daughter and a son who is studying at a yeshiva in New York.

Clergy and Communism

A BITTER controversy has flared up in New York recently as a result of a series of articles published in the "New York World Telegram." The writer is Rabbi Benjamin Schultz, of Temple Emmanuel. Some idea of the contents of the articles can be gained from their headlines: "Red Fronts Find Dupes in Protestant Pulpits" and "Red Crocodile Tears Ensnare Some Rabbis." The articles were syndicated in 18 Scripps-Howard papers. In the course of his sensational writing Rabbi Schultz gave names of Christian as well as Jewish clergymen and said: "Rabbi Stephen Wise has consistently encouraged the Communist and pro-Soviet movements . . . by addressing and joining Communist Fronts."

Informed of these charges, Rabbi Stephen Wise told the United

Press: "I brand him (Schultz) as a professional and probably profiteering Communist baiter, as unworthy to be even a member, not to say a Rabbi, of a Jewish congregation. His column on Rabbis and the Communist line is not only mendacious but utterly and inexcusably vicious. He knows that his articles contain a minimum of truth and a maximum of untruthful propaganda on behalf of his Red-baiting employers."

In the meantime, leaders of the Reform Rabbinate took up the matter and the question whether it was ethical for Rabbi Schultz to enter into this controversy was being discussed. There was even talk of his expulsion from the ministry.

Berlinski Conducts his Own Compositions

MR. JACOB BERLINSKI, the newly-appointed choirmaster of the Great Synagogue, Cape Town, appeared for the second time as guest conductor with the Cape Town Orchestra at the Thursday night symphony concert.

Included in the varied programme presented by Mr. Berlinski was his own composition, a symphonic poem entitled "Chanaan." Based on a Biblical theme, it created deep interest and scored a decided success. Mr. Berlinski, as composer, was recalled several times to acknowledge the tremendous applause.

Romance of
By
a Name N. Pearlroth

BITENSKY

This request name was sent in by M. Bitensky, Lower Houghton, Johannesburg.

THIS is a family name of geographical origin.

It is derived from the name of the town of Byten, near Slonim, in Eastern Poland. The town, with a population of 1,288, of whom 70 per cent. was Jewish, is now a part of Soviet Russia.

There is an interesting story in connection with the genesis of the name.

Byten was long the private property of a Lithuanian family named Tryzna. The last of the Tryznas died debt-ridden, his creditors attached the property, and the town was in litigation for over a hundred years.

In 1779 a grand old man entered the case. His name was Chaim Gershon, his age 110 years and he volunteered as a witness in the lawsuit, which had been pending for over a century.

The witness testified that as a boy of 10 he had been present at an agreement concluded 100 years previously. The agreement, he testified, was to the effect that the creditors of the last Tryzna were to hold the town of Byten for a century. At the expiration of the century Byten was to revert to the Tryzna heirs.

The facts the old man testified to had occurred 100 years before, but the testimony was so lucid and his memory so keen that the great-grandmother of the last Tyrza won her case and the rich estate was restored to her by the Superior Tribunal in Grodno.

As a result of his sensational court appearance Chaim Gershon became known far and wide as Bytenski (the Polish ending "ski" means "man of"). He survived for another four years, dying in 1783.

In 1804 his descendants made the family name official.