



Haganah men sniping on an Arab stronghold from where Jewish quarters are continually attacked.

"You Are The Man!"

PALESTINIAN ACTORS' SUCCESS IN LONDON

By R. da Costa

THE story of how Abraham Sklarz came, saw and conquered London sounds as if it were taken straight out of a Hollywood "dream factory". It has almost all the ingredients of the cliché film script—the poor boy from the provinces coming to the Metropolis, unknown, but full of confidence that, eventually, he will become a star. He never loses hope and is rewarded, for suddenly—

But I am going to tell it from the beginning.

Abraham Sklarz has made himself a name in Palestine, particularly by his one-man shows of Shakespeare's "Othello". He decided to try his luck in London and I met him some time after he had arrived here. Sklarz' highest goal was, then, to find an agent and to get a hall in the West End, where he wanted to do his "Othello", first in Hebrew and, at another date, in English. He asked me whether I could advise him there, and also whether I could help him to arrange a press conference. I promised to do my best and sent him with a recommendation to the Associate Drama Director of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

A few days later the wondrous tale was already making its rounds. Sklarz went to see Mr. L. at the Arts Council, who recommended him to a certain agent. Sklarz went to see the agent.

When he entered the office, the agent stared, jumped up and cried: "You are the man! Wait a second!" He took the telephone: "Embassy Theatre? Hallo, I've got the man! What? Yes, L. says he's got experience. Yes, I'll ask him to take a taxi."

Sklarz, already somewhat dizzy, took a taxi to the Embassy Theatre at Swiss Cottage. There the director and producer met him, looked once and shouted in unison, "You are the man!" Sklarz was handed a manuscript, was told to study his part and to appear next morning at the rehearsal. And, by the way, that he would be paid 40 pounds a week, plus percentage. Now completely dizzy, he went and signed a contract with his new agent.

All this was due to a two-fold stroke of luck. In "Point Valaine" by Noel Coward, a play just being rehearsed at the Embassy, the famous Frederick Valck had agreed to take one of the leading parts, but was suddenly offered a role in a film. A long and unsuccessful search for an actor began. What was required was a sort of White Nigger, an actor with an extremely forceful, almost savage, and very earthbound appearance. This type is rare and, therefore, always busy, in spite of the present depression in London's theatreland. Sklarz, who personifies the type perfectly, entered the agent's office just at the right moment.

"Point Valaine" was unanimously rejected by the critics, the production and the acting were partly acclaimed, but Sklarz—who now calls himself Ben Astar, to commemorate his late mother—received strong and general praise. The usually reticent London critics went out of their way to find positive adjectives, and this in spite of his being announced in The Star as "Mr. Ben Astar, the Anglo-Palestinian actor".

The praise, from what I saw at the general rehearsal, was amply justified. Sklarz-Ben Astar plays the music-addicted, animal-like Russian head-waiter, who is in love with the middle-aged proprietress of a hotel on an island off the Brazilian coast, with power and superior technique. The Embassy has been sold out for weeks in advance, and he has already been offered the main part in a forthcoming production of "Emperor Jones". He has "arrived", but is, nevertheless, still dreaming of doing his one-man show of "Othello", in Hebrew as well as in English.

Death of Richard Tauber

RICHARD TAUBER, the world famous tenor, who died in London last Thursday at the age of 55, was born in Linz, Austria, in 1892. During his life time he appeared as guest artist in most of the leading opera houses in Europe and was decorated by the King of Sweden with the Cross of the Wasa Order, First Class. He visited South Africa in 1939.

He studied singing with Carl Beines and in 1913 made his debut at the State Theatre in Chemnitz, of which his father was the director. A contract with the Dresden Opera followed this successful appearance and Tauber remained in Dresden for ten years, scoring many successes. In 1915 he became the first tenor of the Berlin Opera, where he achieved world fame for his interpretations of German, Italian and French operas.

Together with his success in opera came triumphs in the field of the operetta, in which he was incomparable. Franz Lehár wrote for Tauber many of his successful operettas, including, "Paganini", "Frederika" and the "Land of Smiles". Tauber appeared in the "Land of Smiles" more than 700 times.

In 1933 he was banished from Nazi Germany and settled in Austria. Following the annexation of Austria by Germany, Tauber went to England, where he applied for citizenship. In England he appeared in several films, and in 1936 he married the British actress, Diana Napier.

York State; William O'Dwyer, Mayor of New York City; Sumner Welles, former Under-Secretary of State; Senator Robert Wagner; Congressman Emanuel Celler; Phillip Murray, President of the CIO; James G. Patton, President of the Farmers' Union; Freda Kirchway, Editor of "The Nation"; Eddie Cantor; Edward G. Robinson; Louis Lurie and Ben Swig, of San Francisco; Col. John Gottlieb, of Chicago; Bartley C. Crum, member of the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry and author of "Behind the Silken Curtain".

Besides its fortnightly bulletin, the committee has reprinted the Haganah memorandum to the United Nations. It has placed articles in various Jewish publications and has sent a few releases to the Anglo-Jewish press. Its steadily increasing influence is shown by the number of calls it has received recently from reputable non-Jewish newspapers with requests for information.

"World Wide", for instance, requested information on the subject of American arms shipments to the Arabs.

"Life" Magazine had a short note on the Exodus as the result of advances made by the committee.

PM, the liberal afternoon paper, had a four-page article entitled "The Story of Haganah", by Louise Levitas, all the information for which was supplied by the committee. This article had

illustrations picturing the defense and aliyah work of Haganah on the first two pages, one of the rescue by Haganah of 200 internees at Athlit on the third page, and a reproduction of a recent issue of "Hahoma", Haganah's secret newspaper, discussing the Irgun murder of a Haganah member in Austria on September 27, on the last page, apart from the very full write-up.

The committee also held press conferences in New York when the Exodus boys came back, and in particular with Ted Kollek, a Haganah leader, who acted as liaison between Haganah and the British Intelligence during the war. Kollek, it will be recalled, visited South Africa some years ago. In this country on a special mission, he was invited by the committee to bring before the American public an authoritative interpretation of Haganah's new role, its activities and its needs, particularly for heavy equipment, including planes and armoured cars.

The quiet, authentic work of the committee in the six months of its existence has thus proved more and more successful, and in the new campaign of public meetings, which began with the meeting addressed by Mr. Shertok last night, it will be able to bring home the truth more often and more clearly to the befuddled Jewish public of America in these times of urgency and vital necessity to maintain the national discipline and put an end to dissident activities.

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