



Fleet Street, London,
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Roumanian Ruthlessness.

According to reports which have reached the Joint Foreign Committee of the Anglo-Jewish Association, the anti-Semitic agitation has reached a degree of violence for which it is difficult to find a parallel in recent years. The Committee realise that this may in a large measure be due to the popular excitement caused by the elections, and they feel that it would be unwise on their part to take any public action until the general election is over. The prospects of a decision which may bring about a more wholesome situation are not by any means hopeless, as is shown by the results in the municipal elections. In these circumstances the Committee have resolved to confine themselves to watching the developments of events with the utmost vigilance, and to make due preparation for dealing effectively with whatever contingency may arise when the new Parliament is constituted. Apart from the general situation, the Committee considered the attacks of the Roumanian anti-Semites on the Bible and the Jewish religion, and it was resolved to take steps in Roumania itself, which, it is hoped, will put an end to this scandal. The Committee did not fail also to take note of the incompatibility of certain new Roumanian laws with the provisions of the Minorities Treaty. The necessary action will in due course be taken at Geneva.

Little Better in Russia.

It would appear from a communication from an authoritative source laid before the Committee that the administrative suppression of all Jewish religious teaching in Russia is being continued with the utmost severity. At the present moment no other education is open to the rising generation of Jews in Russia than that afforded by the atheistical and communist schools of the Government. It is admitted that this is a breach of the Soviet law, which permits private religious instruction in all religious communities, and, indeed, no obstacles have been placed in the way of Christians and Mahommedans who wish to avail themselves of the law. Unfortunately, this is not the case with the Jews. If this discrimination continues, the result must be disastrous for the rising generation of Russian Jews and for Judaism in Russia. The Committee provisionally approved certain measures for bringing this serious grievance to the notice of the Soviet Government, but the whole question will be further considered at a special meeting to be held when further information which has been asked for has been received.

Jewish Contributions to Music.

It is interesting to note that in the course of an address delivered recently on this subject, Miss Gertrude Azulay, after stating that the subject matter of her lecture was Jewish composers and not Jewish divine music, said that she wanted to examine whether the Jew had an individuality which was peculiar to him alone. Their show composers, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Rubinstein, Halevy, Goldmark, had written in the manner of their

respective countries, but there was certainly a Jewish element, a flavour of "Chazonuth" discernible in some of the operas of Meyerbeer, and there were "spots" in Mendelssohn's music that reminded them of the Synagogue. Mendelssohn's best music was due to Jewish inspiration. "Elijah" would be considered a great work as long as appreciation of oratorio existed, and his one concerto for the violin—a gem, a work of pure delight—was written for his friend the Jewish violinist, Ferdinand David. Halevy had great power and the gift of creation. He wrote much, including a trio for three voices set to Hebrew words. But the present generation was only acquainted with his opera "The Jewess"—his finest work. Meyerbeer was important as the connecting link—the bridge from the old classic school of music to the art of Wagner and his disciples. Rubinstein was perhaps the greatest pianist that ever lived. As a composer, Rubinstein was a true Slav in his musical outlook, the personal element, and the passion so intensely revealed being in direct contrast to the more aloof and spiritual communing with nature that they found in Mendelssohn. Karl Goldmark was still a great figure in the world of music. His "Queen of Sheba" was the one fine opera, considered by experts to be really Jewish in colouring and atmosphere. Among composers of songs, Sir Frederick Cowen was noted for exquisite taste and great charm. Wienaski, Bomberg and Offenbach were all famous in their respected spheres of activity.

Sunday Dancing.

In view of the fact that in South Africa a Jewish wedding would hardly be considered complete without dancing it is worth while noting that recently the Liverpool Licensing Bench refused sanction for a city cafe to be utilised on Sunday for the purposes of a Jewish wedding because it was anticipated that dancing would be a feature of the proceedings incident to the wedding ceremony. It was explained to the Bench that even in the best Jewish circles dancing was regarded as almost an integral part of a marriage ceremony, and a Jewish encyclopaedia was produced, in which it was set forth that "dancing in honour of the bride is deemed a matter of piety."

Aspects of Assimilation.

The question of assimilation is one that interests you in South Africa as much if not more than in any other Jewish community since the conditions of complete freedom which exist for our co-religionists in your country tend to make them easy victims. Recently a lecture on this subject was delivered by Mr. Paul Goodman who, in the course of his remarks, said that the Jews were essentially a "Protestant" people, and from the time that Abraham was told to leave his country and his kindred, the spirit of protest against the dominant non-Jewish surroundings, appears as the "Leitmotiv" which runs throughout Jewish history. And yet there were many ideas and observances, views and actions, which Jews of all times had derived from non-Jewish sources. The Jews assimilated speech, habits, doctrines, and practices to such an extent that, in many instances, those factors had come to be regarded as innately Jewish. Indeed, it may be said that if the Jews had lacked the spirit of assimilation, they would not have been able to survive their remarkable vicissitudes. In modern times, the term "Assimilation" had come to denote a "terminus technicus." The Jewish tendency to assimilation had, since the days of Moses Mendelssohn, been proclaimed with such persistence that many Jews have not only come to regard it not merely as a sad necessity but as a joyous opportunity.

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