

Health and Work Among East European Jews

We have received the following for publication from the South African Reconstruction Campaign now proceeding.

ANY Jew interested in the fate of his Eastern European fellows cannot but realise the profound significance of the movement towards economic regeneration which is afoot there at the present moment. The facts are simple and obvious: the Jew is surely and rapidly losing his position as trader and middleman. If he is to survive he must find work in other economic spheres. If it becomes impossible for him to be a buyer and seller he must become a farmer, craftsman, or a factory worker. This is putting in a nutshell the contention of the Ort organisation.

Closely bound up with the efforts for economic revival is the task with which the organisation Oze concerns itself, namely, safeguarding the health of the Jewish people. One might conceivably argue (1) that the problem of health is not of primary or urgent importance, (2) that even without the Oze the Jews have always taken care of their infirm and treated their sick.

The facts themselves are the best reply to such arguments. Even before the present severe crisis the ill-health and physical debility were positively undermining the life of our people. One well remembers the tragedies in Jewish homes when an immigrant was refused admittance into the country of his destination because of some physical defect or another. During the war and the post-war periods the deterioration of Jewish health grew apace to an alarming extent. To take one example, skin diseases of all sorts were so rampant among Jewish children in Eastern Europe that tens of thousands of them were incapacitated as a result. It is estimated that even now 75 per cent. of Jewish children in Poland suffer from anaemia with its sequel of greatly lowered resistance to disease. The proportion of Jewish children in Lithuania afflicted with rickets is twice the proportion in Western countries.

The fact is, of course, that the question of the physical welfare of our people is one of paramount importance. If a people is to survive it must be physically fit. The body's powers of endurance are the very foundation of the national structure. The question is not only one of curing, but much more of preserving the health of the masses.

It is here that there appears the radical difference between the Oze and the institutions for the sick, of the older type—a difference both in outlook and methods: Oze aims not only at giving succour to those stricken with disease but at preventing disease and maintaining and strengthening health. The standard Oze has set itself is the one in vogue in the most modern institutions in the Western world. It equips its centres with the most up-to-date instruments and installations, always keeping the prophylactic goal in view.

To give a few instances: between 1923 and 1926 Oze concentrated its energies on the special disease of the scalp known as Favus. Its efforts were attended with so much success that now the incidence of this particular disease has been greatly reduced everywhere and, according to the latest reports, has disappeared completely in many places. During recent years one of the greatest achievements of Oze has been the establishment of an institution known as "Children's Summer Colonies." During the summer school vacations thousands of Jewish children are taken from their unhygienic, poverty-stricken homes and sent for recuperation to the forest or country-side. There they spend some five weeks in the fresh air and sunlight bathing, playing and resting, they are well fed and looked after; their health is watched and any ailment gets prompt attention and treatment.

In 1931, 12,000 children were accommodated in these summer colonies. Owing to lack of funds the number for 1932 fell to 8,500. In the neighbourhood of Kovno on the banks of the Vilya River facing the beautiful forest covered-mountains, there stands a stately double-storied building known as the Oze Central Colony. This was built upon a grant made by the family Finkelstein of Kovno.

Recently, in an effort to aid in some way their stricken German fellows the workers of the Lithuanian Oze entertained a group of Jewish children from Königsberg who, after the recent events were very much in need of recuperation. Needless to add that the children enjoyed their brief holiday immensely. They seemed to have increased their powers of endurance when returning home. These are only two instances of the great work done by Oze which has altogether 416 medical institutions of various kinds, looks after 50,000 school children, takes care of the Jewish mother, and fosters hygiene in the Jewish home.

If a transition to occupations demanded by modern industrial life is going to save the ruined Jewish economy of Eastern Europe, a healthy body is essential to the success of this great re-orientation.

L.M.

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ADDITIONAL 1,050 CERTIFICATES FOR
GERMAN JEWS.

Berlin, October 22nd.

1,050 certificates have been to-day received by the Palestine Office here from the Jewish Agency Executive in Palestine for German Jews who wish to proceed to Palestine.

Since the 1st of July the Palestine Office in Berlin has not been accepting any further applications for certificates in view of the fact that the number available was completely exhausted, and the Office was overwhelmed with thousands of applications from prospective settlers in Palestine.

Jewish Singer Praised in Berlin

JEWISH FILM STAR HAVING BIG SUCCESS

Berlin, October 18th.

ROSA RAISA, the famous Jewish singer, who is now appearing in Berlin with the visiting Italian Opera Company, is the musical sensation of the day here. The press, including the Nazi "Voelkischer Beobachter" and the "Angriff" are full of enthusiastic praise of her singing. They do not disclose, however, that she is a Jewess, making it appear as if she were Italian.

(Rosa Raisa was born in Bialystock, in Poland, in 1893, and studied music at the Naples Conservatory, and made her debut in 1913 at the famous Scala Opera House in Milan. She has also sung at Covent Garden, and in America, where she has lived for some years, appearing at the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago).

Sylvia Sydney, the New York Jewish film star, is also having a tremendous success in Berlin now. No less than six films in which she stars are being shown in the principal Berlin cinemas, and are having an enthusiastic reception.

The Position of Ex-Soldiers in Germany

Berlin, October 15th.

THE "Schild," the official organ of the Federation of Jewish Front Soldiers in Germany, reproduces an announcement which has been issued by the National Socialist War Wounded Welfare Organisation, which reads:

Those war wounded who have hitherto enjoyed any privileges on the ground of their membership in the general war wounded organisations (such as reduced prices for food or coal) must in future submit their claims accompanied by details of their previous membership in any of these Federations, inclusive of membership in the Reichsbund of Jewish Front Soldiers, to the National Socialist Welfare headquarters Office in Berlin, or its branches in their respective localities.

CUTHBERT'S FOR LADIES PHOENIX HOSE from 5/6