

The ZIONIST RECORD

The Organ of South African Jewry

"Zionism aims to establish a publicly-assured, legally-secured Home for the Jewish people in Palestine."
—Basle Programme.

VOL. XXIX. No. 790.

JOHANNESBURG.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1937.

A WORD TO OUR LEGISLATORS

BY the time these lines appear in print, Parliament will have met, concentrating in Capetown the political controversies which have been so vigorously engaged in of late. As Jewish citizens of the Union, we normally follow the debates with more or less interest and relish according to the degree of our individual political-mindedness or partisanship. On this occasion, however, we must all approach the coming session with a special interest and possibly with a tinge of anxiety. Immigration has been in the headlines for months, and the Government has given recognition to this fact—according to the press—by according pride of place to its Immigration Bill.

Since the country's immigration policy should serve national and not sectional interests and can have a determining influence upon the nation's future, all considerations of good sense and public welfare demanded that this should be a non-Party measure. So far, however, is this from actually being the case, owing to the tactics of Dr. Malan and the Nationalists, that it has been turned into a battle-ground of Party warfare with all its manoeuvrings and inconsistencies. Worse still, thanks again to the Malanites, it is being used for the purpose of exploiting latent racial prejudices and of deliberately exciting ill-will against Jews. Such an atmosphere is not the most favourable to sane and statesmanlike legislation; and the duty of the Government (as well as of the Opposition Parties) is, therefore, all the greater to avoid pitfalls which may be regretted in more sober mood and may reflect little honour upon the country.

It is perhaps late in the day for Jews to protest that they have no special interest in the proposed legislation. Normally, and in principle, that would be so: legislation on immigrants should not, any more than legislation on a host of other national matters, have any particular interest for, or applicability to, Jews. If it is otherwise in the present case, that is not of Jewish seeking. It should have been proved to the satisfaction of all who have an open mind, that in this matter no other factors have been at play but the usual forces leading persons to migrate from country to country: and in particular, that the Jewish community have not fostered or "organised" this immigration. If nevertheless Jews are being compelled to take direct interest in the coming debates, it is because Dr. Malan and his followers have forced that upon them by using this issue as a starting point for a general anti-Semitic agitation which, despite its amouflages, deceives nobody as to its true intent.

All this imposes additional responsibilities upon our legislators, and particularly upon the Government. "Stealing your opponents' thunder" may be good party politics, but not good statesmanship. Recent reports as to the probable provisions of the bill, and the Minister's latest statement, cannot but cause uneasiness. Talk about making "assimilability" the test of eligibility for admission and yielding in other respects to Dr. Malan, may possibly win the Government a temporary advantage, but only at the price of being untrue to the principles of the United Party (interpreted recently by Mr. Hofmeyr) and of revealing a glaring weakness.

The deciding factors must be not Party advantage but national interest. Despite the notorious short memory prevalent in party politics, our legislators should recall the repeated demands which have been made during this last year for a policy which encourages immigration. Let them not forget South Africa's great need for new immigrants to fill its vast empty spaces, to develop its resources, and to safeguard its white civilisation. Our conditions are entirely different from those prevalent in the older countries of Europe, which are burdened with chronic problems of over-population and unemployment. Restrictive legislation against foreigners which may, therefore, be necessary and justified in those countries by their bitter economic struggle, have no place in the prosperous conditions of South Africa. It is true

that the country cannot be expected to keep the door open to all who may wish to come here; but it must be wary of an ungenerous policy which has no justification beyond bad precedent.

No less should the country be on its guard against the traps which are being laid to ensnare it into accepting principles of racial discrimination. Dr. Malan's formula for cloaking anti-Semitic designs in pseudo-scientific and legalistic language have taken nobody in; but we must beware that his objects should not be achieved in other ways. South Africa must not bring to herself disadvantage and—worse—dishonour by the adoption of racial discriminations. Sweeping and invalid generalisations about recent immigrants will not help to formulate a sensible and useful policy. Any fair judgment will, we believe, establish what General Smuts has asserted: that as a whole the recent immigration, especially that from Germany, has been an asset to South Africa. The guiding factors of policy should be the country's needs and the individual merits and desirability of intending immigrants.

We do not wish to mince our words. Owing to Dr. Malan's flirtations (or is it already a closer bond?) with anti-Semitism, this immigration business has quite irrelevantly become a battle-ground for the two divergent tendencies which are becoming more and more crystallised in South Africa: the one seeking to preserve the earlier traditions of liberalism and democracy and to broaden out into a policy of fair-dealing and progressiveness; the other, moving to narrowness and exclusiveness, and easily tempted to follow the vogue of illiberalism. The Government (as well as those of the Opposition members who have not been committed to a downright racial policy) have now an opportunity of striking a blow for the broader and the wider outlook, and so to align South Africa with those countries which are keeping aloft the banner of freedom, democracy and liberalism.

(Written by David Dainow, Progress Buildings, Johannesburg.)

AN ARTISTIC TRIUMPH

CABLED news of the brilliant success of the inaugural concerts of the newly-formed Palestine Symphony Orchestra has aroused a feeling of pride amongst Jews throughout the world. A pride that our people in Palestine have been able, in spite of many difficulties, to organise so fine a musical combination, and that so distinguished a conductor as Arturo Toscanini was attracted to celebrate his seventieth birthday by conducting the newly-formed orchestra.

The performances in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv aroused extraordinary enthusiasm and a spirit of *yomtov* prevailed throughout the Yishuv. The fact that the High Commissioner was present at the opening recital with Dr. Weizmann and almost every leading personality in the country, gave an unique significance to this Jewish contribution to cultural and artistic development in the life of Palestine.

A great tribute is due to Bronislaw Huberman, the gifted violinist, who quietly and determinedly has brought about the miracle of a fine modern orchestral combination in the National Homeland. We can only hope that the day is not too far distant when the fame of the orchestra will compel it to visit important musical centres in other parts of the world and in this way demonstrate Jewish Palestine's specific contribution to a great art.

CHIEF CONTENTS

NEWS:

	Page
Latest Cables	7
Latest Airmail News	6
S.A. Immigration Bills	8
Royal Commission	9
Eretz Israel News	12-13
Overseas News in Brief	18

ARTICLES:

	Page
If Democracy Fails in Spain	11
A Mighty Woman with a Torch	15
Jews in the Fine Arts	16
Current Communal Comments	17
Short Story	19
The Library	20
From the Jewish Press	23