

A Letter from Eretz Israel.

(From Our Own Correspondent).

Jerusalem, 1st April, 1936.

Jerusalem Calling.

The whole population of this country became radio fans on Monday, March 30th, when the Palestine Broadcasting Service was inaugurated. Those who had radio sets of their own hurried home from work to be ready for the High Commissioner's opening speech, and those who had not crowded outside the radio shops to "assist" at this latest innovation. With the words, "This is Jerusalem calling" translated into the other two official languages, Hebrew took its definite place on the ether.

Reception locally was, of course, excellent. After the announcements we were introduced to Arabic music played on such unfamiliar instruments as the kanoun, oud, santur and nay, followed by the singing in Hebrew of Psalm 13 by Vittorio Weinberg, then by the thrilling voice of Rovina reciting Bialik's poem "Megillath Haesh"—the Scroll of Fire—and chanting part of the Song of Songs. Yemenite songs sung by Bracha Zephira with Nahum Nardi at the piano, and a speech by Dr. Abraham Katznelson, member of the Programme Advisory Committee—who addressed himself to "my brethren in Zion, Jewish listeners wherever you may be, Shalom Ubracha"—completed the purely Hebrew part of the programme, though Jews in the persons of the Chamber Music Orchestra and the Jerusalem Hauser Quartet supplied European music.

Although this was the first official occasion, broadcasting is not entirely new to Palestine. In December, 1933, two programmes were transmitted from a temporary station at Tel-Aviv operating on a wave of 977 kilocycles. In March, 1933, Tel-Aviv transmitted gramophone recordings of parts of "Madam Butterfly" and Rimsky-Korsako's "Thousand and One Nights," and in May, 1935, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In April of the same year Dr. Magnes addressed America on the tenth anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Hebrew University, and more recently the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone of the Hadassah University Hospital on Mount Scopus was broadcast to America. For the non-Jewish world the chimes of the Church of Nativity at Bethlehem have been broadcast on the last three Christmas Days to London and thence relayed to all parts of the British Empire.

The programme on the second day of Palestine's broadcasting (only the Hebrew part will interest us here now) included an Historical Calendar, a reading of Bialik's famous poem "There was a man, and Lo! he is no more," a description of Bialik's poetry by the well-known poet Zalman Schneur, a commemorative programme in honour of Joel Engel, one of the pioneers of modern Hebrew music, who wrote the music for the "Dybbuk."

To-night we are having an Economic Report on 1935 by Dr. Ruppin and a talk for children on the history of musical instruments, besides the usual news, reading and calendar in Hebrew. Other items this week will be Hebrew lessons by Dr. Izhak Epstein, Hebrew songs by Palestinian composers, an address on the Gift of Sabbath by Dr. Yehudah Kaufman, a description of the 1935-36 season's rain by Dr. D. Ashbel, meteorologist of the University, Jewish popular songs, including Milner's "In Cheder" and Engel's "Kaddish," and a sports talk by Izhak Halutz.

In view of the immense interest which these and similar items would excite among the many Jews in every country who can now speak Hebrew and among the tens of thousands who would listen to Hebrew music, it is a pity—though perhaps at present inevitable—that the station has been built for reception in Palestine only.

Moharrem and the Movers.

Moharrem means moving day. Really it doesn't; it is the name of the first month of the Moslem year, and leases date from 1st Moharrem of one year to 1st Moharrem of the next, and few people seem to want to stay in their apartments for more than one year. On expiry of their lease they look for some other place. For convenience, or out of ignorance, the name of the months has come to be applied to its first day, so on "Moharrem" everybody moves.

Then the "sabal"—the bearer of burdens—comes into his own. He is the prime mover; without him nothing goes. During the rest of the year he is to be found squatting at certain street corners which have become his by right of custom, awaiting summons to carry to your home any odd package or the case of oranges sent to you by your orange-growing friend or relative. He wears the black trousers with enormously wide bottom narrowing down till it fits tightly at the calves and held up by a wide sash of many folds wound three or four times round the waist,

which was one part of the Macedonian national costume and has come to be worn by the natives of all the provinces of the old Turkish Empire. His shirt, jacket and shoes are of whatever kind that offers; no socks, or socks with more holes than substance. His head-dress seems to have a kind of "yarmelke" as substratum, wound thickly round with material which was once coloured. On his back several layers of sacking, and in his hand, or round his waist when not at work, loops of stout rope.

Thus equipped the sabal—who is usually a Kurdish Jew—can carry almost anything. However heavy or high the boxes on his back there is always something else he can add on top, and once steadily balanced on his feet he can go for any distance. I have seen one carry a piano through the town, and when I first came to Palestine one carried a box of books weighing half a ton along a slippery road all the way from Jaffa port to Tel-Aviv. With the weight resting on the sacking and held in position by the rope passing round the sabal's forehead, it seems to be a matter of skilled balance rather than strength.

Until very recently the sabal was ultra conservative in his methods. He refused the aid of one of civilisation's greatest inventions, the wheel. He would rather carry any weight any distance than use a hand-cart. Now Western Jewry is changing him. The lorry is forcing its help on him, and he is learning much from some of the young German immigrants who have organised themselves into groups of furniture removers proper. Nor is he the strict individualist that he was. In Jerusalem the principal sabbalim have created a co-operative, directed by Mosheh, the famous "King of the Sabalim." They have a tariff from which they will not be bargained, a tariff which slides chronologically, rising as Moharrem approaches, then falling away as everybody becomes settled in their new homes.

This general moving at Moharrem forms an interesting chapter in the social history of the new urban Palestine. With the scarcity of accommodation the newcomer must take whatever apartment he can at first, meanwhile looking round for something better. On his part, the landlord will not rent out his house beyond the coming Moharrem since, with present tendencies, the chances are that he will get a higher rental. Both parties, lessor and lessee, expect to improve their position, and both appear to calculate correctly. In 1925 I took a three-roomed flat at Tel-Aviv. Apartments were so scarce that I was content to go into it even before the doors and windows were in, and there was no lighting or water—in a Tel-Aviv summer. We would wake up in the morning and find workmen in the room. We lived like that for six weeks—and paid the landlord ten pounds a month for the open-air accommodation. Domestic architecture in those days was poor. The front door led straight into the living rooms. There was no corridor; to get to the dining-room you had to go through the bedroom. There were no cupboards or other storage space. Trunks and even fuel had to be kept under beds or on top of the wardrobes, and it was always a special puzzle where to keep the "Pessachdike kehlim." Bathroom and lavatory were together. If you lived on the second floor the water supply would fail every Friday, for then the whole town took its erev-Shabbas bath and the united demand was too much for the two wells which supplied Tel-Aviv in those days.

Naturally we moved at the next Moharrem, and then again, and again as flats became better built, and the whole population moved with us in similar search. And we became hardened to seeing the furniture damaged. One can imagine that the sabal would be none too careful about how he dumped a sideboard or a bookcase off his back on to the floor. We learnt not to look. Better the furniture break than your heart. And it was no use arguing with the sabal. Always the adventure would begin with the sabal declaring: "Ani achra-i!—I am responsible! And always it would end: "Ani ahra-i?"—Am I responsible? And invariably he would pour salt on your wounds by asking more money for the job than had been agreed upon. And invariably, poor innocent, you paid.

The Law of Moses and Economic Development.

Those people, lacking in vision, who fear that Palestine is too small and too poor in natural resources to support all the Jews who want to come are forgetful of the country's greatest wealth—the brain power of the very people for whom there seems to be no room. There is no limit to the *internal expansion* which they can cause to Palestine through proper exploitation of its apparently meagre assets. Much of the future growth of the Yishuv will be due to the remarkable work now being done at the Daniel Sieff Research Institute at Rehovoth, of which Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the scientist who is political leader in his spare moments, is the head.

Take whey, for example, the left-over when milk is skimmed. In other countries it is used for fattening pigs. Our Mosaic law

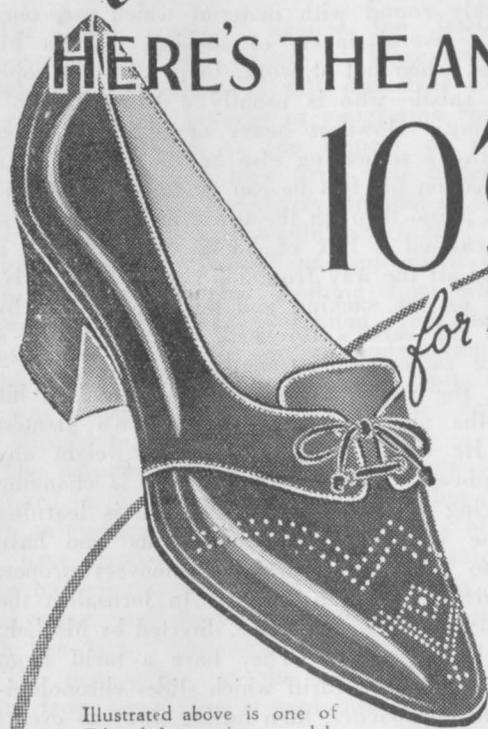
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Shoe economy

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A LETTER FROM ERETZ ISRAEL.

(Continued from Previous Page).

prevents us from doing this. The whey goes waste, and by so much our economic position is weakened. The research workers at the Institute are not satisfied. They discover that the sugar in the whey when fermented with certain grains makes an excellent and cheap feed for chickens. It is expected in this way to reduce the cost of feeding poultry by half. So the trefa chazir is converted into kosher chicken; another possibility is added to mixed farming, which can be carried on on smaller areas than grain growing or citrus planting; the capacity of Palestine to absorb new immigrants is correspondingly increased.

The Institute is doing much other fascinating work. The disposal of the growing orange crop is becoming a problem, especially in connection with the second-grade and the large-sized fruit which the English market will not take. It has been found difficult to preserve orange juice by the usual methods of heating. A way has been found at Rehovoth by the very opposite process. By freezing out the water not only are the health-giving properties of the fruit preserved in a way impossible by the heating process, but the juice is reduced to a syrup which is easy to transport and which is practically indistinguishable from the fresh juice when water is added. The orange, grapefruit and pomegranate can be thus treated. The same process extracts pectin from the peel, and pectin is one of the most useful products of modern industrial chemistry. It reduces the cost of making good quality jams, it is used in making milk and cheese products, in medicines and in the textile industry. It is interesting, too, to learn that it is just those oranges, the large fruit from young trees and the thick-skinned fruit which fall from the trees before ripening, and which therefore are of no use for export, that give the best yield of pectin.

In other directions, too, Palestine's very limitations are being turned into assets. The Jewish standard of living and therefore Jewish wages are high, which means that it pays to produce only such products as command high prices. Palestine must turn out specialties. Tobacco grows here, but not of such quality as can compete in the world markets, although both soil (in certain northern districts) and climate are suitable. The Institute is experimenting with certain varieties of tobacco, with some to have a smaller nicotine content than usual, for the smoker, with others to have a higher nicotine content than usual, for its extraction and use in the making of insecticides, which in turn will give greater economic value to all our plant growing.



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