

LETTER FROM PALESTINE

HARRY LEVIN
discusses

A NEW EPIC — ANOTHER TRIUMPH — THE
TOURIST SEASON — IRREPRESSIBLE TEL-AVIV

Hanuta.

NEW name and a new epic has been won for the his- of the Yishuv of these "That name is Hanuta. It designation of an area of m the extreme north of the y, on the Lebanese fron- a number of miles inland the sea. High up above the nding hillsides it looks out the whole of Upper Galilee, ssing the Valley of the and the mountains of cali on the east, the Leban- wns of Tyre and Sidon on orth-west, and the Carmel zaifa on the south. Its sur- ings are wild and rugged, ith a fierce beauty. No eads thither, the nearest the recently completed gic road from Ras-en- ra, the Palestine-Lebanon er post, to the Huleh.

ee, two days ago, a new n settlement was estab- . Because the belief pre- in authoritative quarters the British Government propose to partition Pales- such a manner that some 000 dunams of the western of Upper Galilee, stretch- and from the Mediterran- will be cut off from the area, the National Fund een straining every effort uire the maximum area of and in this region before government's final decision een. Hitherto, there has out one Jewish settlement s whole 1,200,000 dunam the private settlement of iyya, north of Acre. "What have you to protest if we ee this exclusively Arab rom the proposed scope of wewish State?" the British nment may well demand the final division comes to posed. So the aim of the t leaders is to repair the t to the utmost of our ty while there is still time.

uta is the first of these accomplis that will face w Technical Commission it arrives at its decisions. will follow soon, but the r of new settlements and pidity of their establish- must depend upon the res- s of the National Fund to w areas and of the Keren od to settle them. Land,

for the present, is purchasable here in large stretches.

The "Conquest" and the First Victims.

THE peaceable "conquest" of Hanuta is a tale that might have been lifted from the history of the European penetration of the Middle West of America or from the history of the Great Trek. At 4 o'clock on Monday morning a long line of motor lorries and cars, headed by an armed police car, set out from Nahariya, the nearest Jewish point of settlement, towards the northern mountains. Before it was yet dawn, the procession arrived at the Ras-en-Nakura-Huleh road. Thence began the trek up into the mountains. There were 400 men and women, picked from settlements all over the country, 80 of them armed, and 100 of them skilled quarrymen and road builders.

While one section selected the site of the temporary encampment, built the dining-hut, erected the watch-tower topped by a powerful searchlight, and pitched the lines of tents, the others set about constructing the by-road from the Ras-en-Nakura-Huleh road to the permanent site of the new Jewish village, over half-a-mile up the hillsides. Before the permanent village can be constructed, that is, with stockades, huts and other appurtenances, the road must be ready along which to transport the necessary materials. Three days have been allotted for its construction, and the road-builders are working as they have never worked before.

By mid-day of the first day, the encampment was ready. From behind great boulders in the distance, Arab terrorists watched the proceedings. Occasionally the sun would catch and reflect the lens or metal of their binoculars, assuring the settlers, had they not already suspected it, that they were being watched. For this region, because of its remoteness and inaccessibility to troops, has been one of the principal passages for the traffic in terrorists and arms from Syria to Palestine since the disturbances began.

When the first day's work was done and the few unarmed settlers lay down to rest, the 80 armed men took up their posts, waiting for the attack that they believed would come. And it did. At midnight, when the moon was covered by clouds, about 80 rifles spat fire at the little encampment from four sides. The lines of tents were an easy target for the assailants who themselves, however, hid behind boulders. The 80 defending rifles replied. For nearly two hours the attack continued. The defenders had nothing to aim at except the bursts of fire from their assailants' rifles. But so cool and exact was their judgment that the terrorists at no time dared emerge from behind their cover to draw nearer the camp. Suddenly the Arabs' fire ceased. They had withdrawn.

Examining their ranks, the defenders found that one of their number, Judah Brenner, had been killed, and another wounded. Next morning a search revealed the body of a terrorist behind a boulder and tracks of blood elsewhere pointing to further casualties that had been removed in the retreat.

Among the very few visitors who had been allowed to remain overnight was a journalist who had served as an officer in a crack German regiment during the War. "Never have I seen finer discipline and coolness," he said to me after the battle, "nor a more expert defence." Among the defenders, incidentally, was a Johannesburg lad, Weinberg, who had dogged Abraham Harzfeld's steps for days until permitted to join the group.

As I write another attack may be in progress at Hanuta. We know that the fastnesses about Hanuta, particularly the two kilometre strip of "no man's land" between the actual frontiers of Palestine and Lebanon, are infested with terrorists resting after their recent battles with troops in the hills about Safed. There may be more casualties among the heroic band of pioneers. But the Jewish outpost at Hanuta will remain—to-morrow the feeder road will be completed, and the permanent village, suitably constructed for defence, will crown the site within 24 hours thereafter.

Tourists.

THE tourist season, although nothing but a shadow of its counterpart in normal years, has begun. The voice of the tourist as heard in the land is not now so completely American as it has sounded in past years. Instead of the cyclonic world tours which gave the 600 or so victims two nights and a day for "doing" Palestine, a more constant feature is the leisurely pil-

grimage whose objective is to see as much of the country as is considered safe and to spy out possibilities for settlement for its participants or their friends abroad, now, or at some later date. The financial blessings of such groups is more widely bestowed than those of the lighting tours whose benefits are confined to two or three hotels and tourist agencies. Of course, there have been cruises, too, three or four of them, each well sprinkled with famous people.

Prominent among the "pilgrimages" is the first South African group, to be augmented in a few days by the second. Its members are not travelling as an organised group, many having relatives or friends who are piloting them through the land. As usual, they are given a hearty welcome wherever they go, and no door, however much its opening may be incommoded by the average tourist, is barred to them.

Purim.

ALL the visitors flocked to Tel-Aviv, of course, on Purim. But it was not the old Purim. It could not be. With the tragedy of Austrian Jewry contracting the heart, the political and economic depression and the insecurity here ceaselessly before us, Purim jollities could neither be carefree nor wholehearted. But in spite of all Tel-Aviv is irrepressible. There were still scores of balls and dances and special theatre performances, while the synagogue services were filled to overflowing. But there were few of the traditional groups of gaily masked children thronging the streets, and the streets themselves lacked the decorations that in former years invested them with the spirit of carnival. And, of course, carnival itself was not even mentioned.

Besides the visitors from abroad, thousands of local visitors from Jerusalem, Haifa and the large settlements flocked to Tel-Aviv for Purim week-end, which extended from Thursday to Saturday night. Apart from everything else, the weather at Tel-Aviv at this time of the year is delightful, the Symphony Orchestra, under a distinguished visiting conductor, Issay Dobrowen, known to us from last year, performed twice in quick succession (instead of once in three weeks, as is their usual practice), and the Ohel Theatre presented the more outstanding plays of its repertoire. (Habimah Theatre is still touring abroad). Finally, still a great drawing card for visitors—Tel-Aviv port could be visited and the new constructions on its wharves proudly inspected and admired.