

What Our Readers Think—

"TEL-AVIV SABBATH"

A Reply to Harry Levin

From Mrs. J. MIZRACHY
(Port Elizabeth).

To the Editor of the "Zionist Record"

Sir,—With reference to the recent letter of Mr. Harry Levin on the above, allow me to express my opinion through the columns of your valuable paper. Your correspondent writes: "It is deplorable that the clamour-raisers should have launched the struggle against the alleged plague precisely at this troubled time." Does not Mr. Levin realise that now is the time, if it is not a bit late already? Do not we all desire and strive that Eretz Israel should be built on the basis of our holy Torah, and that our children, the future fathers and mothers of Eretz Israel, should be imbued with that spirit—the spirit of religion and tradition? It is in this period of transition, when our country is the meeting place for people from all parts of the world, people of very different views, people who have for many years been subjected to influences altogether foreign to our country, it is at this difficult time that we are particularly in need of those who are guided by their deep inner convictions and are trying to uphold the sanctities of our nation. After all these years of persecution, how is it that we have survived, and what is it that has kept us together in spite of everything, if not our traditions and our holy Torah? Who knows whether even now we are not suffering and paying heavily for the decline in our traditional values?

Mr. Levin in a very sarcastic way writes: "The forces of clericalism continue to thunder, and at a mass meeting made a fierce onslaught on the Sabbath wreckers, and one cowers at the prospect of their violence should a Jewish State soon come into being."

Your correspondent seems to be very much disturbed and afraid of our Rabbis and Sabbath observers, but at the same time, it is surprising that he does not seem to mind at all the Sabbath wreckers. The Sabbath wreckers in Eretz Israel are not only the cafe proprietors but also the general public which visits the cafes. Mr. Levin's excuse that the cafe seems to serve as a sort of a club where one can meet one's friends, may be true, but we have enough clubs in Tel-Aviv, where one need not pay for tea or buy cigarettes, and yet meet one's friends.

The habit of sitting on Friday night in cafes is quite foreign to Eretz Israel and the public of Eretz Israel, and the fact that this was done in Germany is not sufficient reason for its being done in Eretz Israel as well. There are already a number of people in the Holy Land who take great pride in the fact that they never eat matzohs on Passover and demand bread when they are in a cafe (this is not to say that they get it), or they boast of the fact that on Yom Kippur they make a feast and invite all those who are hungry to come and eat.

To my mind, if these people are allowed more freedom, they will be-

come more dangerous than our "thundering" Rabbis. Your correspondent then will not be able to refer to the Sabbath of Tel-Aviv as the "Princess Sabbath," the day of rest, the basis of the Yishuv's life. No, with religion one cannot compromise. If the cafes are open, why should not the cinemas be open as well, why should not the buses run and why should shops remain closed? No, the cafes of Tel-Aviv must be closed on Sabbath and that is not being unreasonable as your correspondent seems to think.

I would suggest, if I may, that the Mizrahi Organisation of South Africa should write to the Chief Rabbi of Tel-Aviv and congratulate him and others who support his attitude for the good work they are doing, and assure them that the South African Jews are with them. This would no doubt encourage them and give them new energy to go on with the battle which they must win.

Yours, etc.,
(Mrs.) J. Mizrachy.

The Jewish Guild Again

From "EX-GUILDITE" (Johannesburg).

To the Editor of the "Zionist Record"

Sir,—Would you grant me the hospitality of your columns to ventilate a matter of rather wide public interest? Once again the Jewish Guild have appointed a new committee, and the annual clap-trap was indulged in regarding the unsuitability, for them, of their fine Memorial building. The President of the Guild said that the membership of the Guild is falling off, and almost in the same breath averred that bigger premises are necessary.

"Bright" ideas such as these convince me that there has been something lacking in the management of the Guild affairs in recent years. There is an old saying that bad workmen complain of their tools, and I think this must apply to some of the recent Guild Executives. I sincerely trust that the incoming committee will not complain of their "tools," but will get down to something of wider appeal, and make the Jewish Guild once more the popular institution that it was in years gone by.

It seems to me that the whole and sole effort for the members is entertainment of the bioscope and music-hall type. Whilst this type of entertainment appeals to many, I venture to say that there are at least as many more who would prefer something of a more intellectual standard.

Public lectures and debates, as far as the Guild is concerned, seem to be things of the past, and I am convinced that if these are revived, they will attract a bigger membership, and at the same time place the Jewish Guild on a higher plane.

Where is the idealism and culture that made the Guild?

Sabbath Breaking in Tel-Aviv—Criticising the Jewish Guild—Writing to Daily Newspapers

A suggestion I would like to make, is that reciprocal arrangements be made with clubs of a similar nature in other towns. This is not a new idea. Arrangements such as this exist between many non-Jewish clubs. Yet another suggestion is, that they should try to arrange an interchange of visits with local non-Jewish clubs. This was done during the Guild's better days. It helped to promote a better spirit and understanding between Jews and non-Jews, and at the same time gave us an opportunity of discussing matters which again, at the present time, are exercising the mind of every thinking Jew.

I make the foregoing suggestions in all good faith, and am sure that if they are carried out, the Guild will benefit considerably in membership, and regain some of its former prestige.

Yours, etc.,
"Ex-Guildite."

Writing to the Press

From MR. J. L. PERLSON
(Johannesburg)

To the Editor of the "Zionist Record"

Sir,—For a number of years I lived in England and although there are a large number of Jews in that country, I noticed that Jewish events are rarely found in the ordinary general press there.

I consider that this is as it should be, for the Jewish people of Great Britain has its own press in the form of the famous "Jewish Chronicle" (now 97 years old) and a few other smaller journals. All Jewish problems are discussed in the Jewish press and not in general newspapers.

It is for this reason that I am so amazed—since I came to this country recently—at the enormous amount of space given to specifically Jewish news in daily South African newspapers. Recently there has been a spate of "letters to the editor" from Jews on Jewish matters.

There is almost an over-dose of specifically Jewish newspapers in this country. Surely the columns of these are sufficient to cope with reports of Jewish activities and the expression of Jewish opinion. If our people feel the urge of writing "letters to the editor" on a subject of particular interest to their own people, I appeal to them to use the columns of one or the other seven weekly Jewish newspapers now existing in this country—besides quite a number of monthly journals.

Yours, etc.,
J. L. Perlson.

Was Maurice Ravel a Jew?

From "MUSICIAN" (Johannesburg)

To the Editor of the "Zionist Record"

Sir,—I notice in a recent issue of your journal an article by Mr. E. Bernstein on the work of Maurice

Ravel, the well-known composer died recently in Paris. Mr. Bernstein speaks of Ravel as a "great Jewish artist," and asserts that "his work was deeply influenced by his Jewishness."

May I ask, Sir, on what grounds does Mr. Bernstein conclude that Ravel was a Jew? Personally, I, a member having read some years ago an article by David Ewen, the Jewish art critic, in which he gave details of an interview with Maurice Ravel, latter told him that whilst he was extremely proud of his Jewish connections, he was "sorry to say that he was not a drop of Jewish blood."

Jewish achievement in the field of music is so vast that we ought to take credit for contributions which belong to the French people.

Yours, etc.,

"Musician"

[Dr. Robak in his "Jewishness and Modern Thought," writes that he was a Jew, but that he was not taken seriously by the Jewish public. The name of the book is listed in Jacob de Hass' "Encyclopaedia of Jewish Knowledge." Quite a number of our papers which reached us recently, including the "Forwaerts," of New York, describe Ravel as a Jew. If Mr. Bernstein was mistaken in his impression that Ravel was a Jew, he has sinned in good company. The impression that Ravel was a Jew must be due to the fact that he was the author of several compositions which are truly Jewish in spirit—Ed., "Zionist Record"]

Mrs. Chanah Krikler

From G. BARNETT (Johannesburg)

To the Editor of the "Zionist Record"

Sir,—Recently I spent a few days in Muizenberg and came across an extraordinary personality—a lady of eighty—who looks like a typical Mother in Israel. I am sure that Mrs. Chanah Krikler, at the age of eighty, still spends several hours a day sewing and knitting for the purpose of selling the products of her aged hands, for the benefit of the Jewish poor of Poland.

It was Mrs. Krikler who organized the Sewing Circle in Muizenberg and influenced a number of good women to knit and sew, so that a considerable number of articles are made and sold from time to time, the proceeds being sent to Poland, where money is gratefully received.

I am an old worker in Johannesburg and am still connected with various philanthropic endeavours, but I am amply set by Mrs. Krikler's example which should not be passed over without some comment. To be so energetic and keen at the age of eighty, and to live mainly for the purpose of helping the poor of her people, is a wonderful instance of determination and courage. I hope that the Jewish men of Muizenberg will rally round this fine, graceful, elderly woman and assist her in the noble task which she has undertaken.

Yours, etc.,

G. Barnett

CUTHBERT'S FOR GIRLS SCHOOL SHOES