

Letters to the Editor

"Zionism Versus Evacuation or Assimilation"

From Mr. J. SCHRAGENHEIM
(Johannesburg).

Sir.—Some time ago you printed an article by Professor S. Brodetsky, entitled "Zionism Versus Evacuation or Assimilation." Although there was much in the article with which every Zionist could agree, there were a number of points which deserve some serious criticism.

Almost throughout the article Professor Brodetsky persisted in giving the assimilationist a certain definite status in the Jewish communities. He appeared to consider that the objections of assimilationists to Zionism were more or less justified. In doing this he was guilty of a very dangerous fallacy.

As has been pointed out before, the Jew, even in democratic countries, has no actual defence against anti-Semitism. It is true that the evil can be combated to a certain extent by propaganda, but as soon as discrimination between citizens on racial or religious grounds becomes part of the programme of a political party or is, as in a large part of the world to-day, legalised by the Government, nothing can be done to oppose it. The existence of a Jewish state, however, with its consular representatives in every country and its participation in some international authoritative body, such as the League of Nations, would make any such development a virtual impossibility. Jews would not be persecuted to the tune of feeble excuses on the part of democratic Governments that "one state cannot interfere in the internal affairs of another," as has been happening during the past eight years. Thus a Jewish state would come as a boon and blessing, not only to persecuted European Jewry, but also to those who profess hostility towards the project, namely, the assimilationists.

Besides, why acknowledge the existence of assimilationists at all? Surely those who have given up their religion and who do not believe in a distinct Jewish race should have no more say in Jewish communal affairs? Professor Brodetsky ought to have recognised the fact that the assimilationist who makes Jewish affairs a concern of his own and who combats Zionism actively is nothing but a despicable saboteur.

To make full civic rights for Jews part of our direct peace-aims is, in my opinion, a definite mistake. For, if English and American politicians are taught to look upon civic rights and liberties for minorities, not as the very fundamentals of democratic rule, but as a particular favour which they are conferring upon the Jews, these rights and liberties will be gravely endangered. Besides, such peace-aims would come into conflict with the aims of Zionism. We would be told that we "cannot have our cake and eat it."

Professor Brodetsky expresses his opposition to a Zionist policy of "evacuation." He appears to forget that "evacuation" presents the only hope of a free and happy life for some five million Jews in Central and Eastern Europe. The Jewish communities in Germany, Poland, the Bal-

kans and now also in the Low Countries and France have been completely uprooted. Their members are out of employment and their property has been confiscated. Tens of thousands are engaged in forced labour for the Germans or have been herded into the Lublin "reserve." All are destitute and starving. Their re-absorption into the economic structures of the different states is almost impossible and those in Germany and Poland would face death rather than remain in their present surroundings. For them some sort of evacuation, in keeping, of course, with the economic absorptivity of Palestine, is a necessity and does not "signify capitulation to the forces of darkness."

One cannot but acquire the impression that his surroundings have blinded Professor Brodetsky somewhat to a number of important facts. His article contains nothing of that new spirit that is gradually gaining ground among the Jewish people and the partial conversion to which by some extremely reactionary elements, was recently reflected in your "Readers' Opinions."

Yours, etc.,

J. Schragenheim.

Wagner's Ancestry

From Dr. H. O. SIMON
(Johannesburg).

Sir.—In a recent issue you quote Mr. Ernest Newman, the eminent musical critic, in support of the theory that Richard Wagner was the son of a Jewish father. There is, however, no such evidence, and Mr. Newman has left no doubt that he does not share the opinion that Wagner was a Jew by descent.

What Mr. Newman states, and what to-day can be regarded as common cause, is that Wagner was not the son of the man whose name he bore, but of an actor, Ludwig Geyer. No evidence, however, has as yet been produced to the effect that Geyer was a Jew. As far back as 1913, Otto Bournot made full investigations into Geyer's ancestry without finding any trace of Jewish blood.

This is the conclusion Mr. Newman reaches:

(a) There is the best of grounds for believing Wagner to have been the son of Geyer.

(b) There is not the smallest ground, at present, for holding that this proves him to have been a Jew. Those who choose so to regard him must give us some better reason for the faith that is in them than the mere inclination to believe what they would so much like to believe.

Yours, etc.,

H. O. Simon.

Parents and Jewish Education

From Mr. A. BLUMSOHN
(Roodepoort).

Sir.—Permit me to say something about our Hebrew education.

There is definitely apathy on the part of the parents in regard to Hebrew education. The child receives instruction in Hebrew from three to four hours weekly, and he cannot be expected to learn very much in so short a time. It should, therefore, be the duty of the parents to revise the lessons with the child once a week, and even if the child has no home work, to find out what the child has learnt during the week.

The parents must see that the child says his daily prayer, perhaps not so much from the religious point of view, but because it gives the child the opportunity of becoming accustomed to the reading of Hebrew, and also because he finds in the prayer words of which he knows the translation. It also accustoms him to the routine of prayer, as most of our youth do not know where to start, where to find the place, what to daven on Mondays, Thursdays etc., and "Miloch Shelo Lishma ba Lishma." I also consider it of great importance for the child to attend Minyan daily, wherever possible, but certainly on Saturdays and Fridays, when the child can follow the Reader at prayers, and the reading of the Torah. He will become accustomed to it, and will know more than his Maftir. He will also know all the Haftoras. Only with parental encouragement in the general tuition of Hebrew, and with the altering of the home atmosphere into a Jewish one, can we hope that our children will be Yodei Seifer.

Yours, etc.,

A. Blumsohn.

Cradock

The annual general meeting of the Cradock Zionist Society took place on Sunday evening, 30th March, at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. M. Kahn. The election of officers resulted as follows: Chairman, Mr. D. Thal (re-elected); vice-chairman, Mrs. B. Kahn; secretary, Miss Maisie Thal; treasurer, Mrs. I. Gordon. Committee: Mesdames Adler, Bergman, S. Kahn, J. Kahn, S. Levenstein, F. Levenstein, H. Thal, and Messrs. Bricker, Gordon, B. Kahn, H. Thal, and Rev. Musikanth (ex-officio).

It isn't the bird with plumage gay
That sings the sweetest song.
It isn't the loudest councillor
That gives us Right for Wrong.
It isn't the colour of shining gold
That makes the metal pure;
But the finest thing for a cough or cold
Is Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.

Remember!

The Great Fete & Amusement Park

ALL DAY AND NIGHT

at the CORONATION HALL Cor. Claim & Plein Sts.,

on WEDNESDAY, 30th APRIL, 1941

STALLS - GAMES - DANCING

TEAS - LUNCHEON - SUPPERS

10a.m. till the small hours!!

Support the United S.A. Jewish War Appeal!!

Enjoy Yourself — and Spend for Victory!!!!

MOSMARK MATZOS

South Africa's Best