

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"AFTER GERMANY IS LIBERATED"

From Mr. L. L. MEYERHOF
(Johannesburg)

Sir.—The surprising tendency of the article, "After Germany is Liberated," in your issue of the 9th inst., should not remain uncontradicted. At a time when Jewish organisations all over the world—with the Zionist Organisation appropriately leading them—make plans for the rescue of the remaining Jews from Central Europe after the war is over, the writer advocates that Jews should then return to Germany. He goes further by maintaining that they will be wanted and needed in the country.

I do not know whether or how far Libby Benedict knows the German people, but I am afraid that he has become a victim of that gullibility which he asserts to be a Jewish characteristic. In any case he must have forgotten that the German youth, for the last ten years, have been brought up in the true Nazi spirit of anti-Semitism. And what that means needs no explanation, bearing in mind German thoroughness. This spirit of anti-Semitism has not only been literally instilled into them with their mothers' milk, but, from the moment they go to school or even before that, it is hammered into them in such a way that it will last for generations.

What reception could the returning Jews expect from these youngsters in a defeated and bitterly disappointed Germany? Were not the Jews made the scapegoats for the loss of the last war? How much more will young Germans put the blame on "international Jewry" when disillusion comes this time? Even if there may have been a number of "noble instances of self-sacrifice of Germans" on behalf of Jews during the Hitler period, they must have come from people who were old enough to judge from their own experience the "truth" of the Jewish bogey.

But there is still another aspect of the picture, which seems to me to have been entirely overlooked by the writer. Will there be any Jews wanting to return to Germany? Most of us have learned to love our new homes, have built up new existences in countries in which the population received us with unexpected hospitality. We have grown accustomed to living in truly free countries, where—under normal peace conditions—the meaning of the word "verboten" is unknown. Many of us are helping in the life-and-death struggle against Hitler and for the preservation of this liberty, which has become so dear to us.

What could induce us—particularly the younger ones—to go to Germany, even if we were wanted there? Are we supposed to put our knowledge at her disposal for rebuilding, and thus repay the most frightful experiences of our lives?

No, the writer misjudges the formerly German Jews as much as the "Aryans." Leave them with what will remain of their country after the war will be over, and may they this time have learned their lesson. But leave each and everyone of us to do our duty to those who deserve our collaboration, and who have sacrificed so much, to make this world a place worth living in again.

Yours, etc.,

L. L. Meyerhof.

"ABOLISH THE MIXED CHOIR AT YEOVILLE SYNAGOGUE"

From Mr. ISRAEL KATZ
(Johannesburg).

Sir,—As a resident of Yeoville, I wish to raise my voice in protest against the United Hebrew Congregation for their insistence on maintaining a mixed choir at the Yeoville Synagogue.

Most of the worshippers of the latter synagogues are personally known to the writer, as strictly observant orthodox Jews, who are *Shomrei Shabbos*, but are compelled to attend a partly reformed synagogue owing to the fact that a few ladies sing in the choir.

There is absolutely no justification on the part of the committee for forcing orthodox people to break a fundamental principle of the Jewish Law by having to listen to a mixed choir, while being unable to walk long distances to other districts to attend Orthodox synagogues.

Even if the majority of members of the Yeoville Synagogue desire to have a mixed choir during the High Festivals, they cannot decide to have such a choir all the year round, whilst they do not come to synagogue.

It is the ardent wish of all those who attend synagogue regularly—irrespective of whether they are members or not—as many like myself cannot become members whilst the mixed choir is in existence—that the mixed choir be immediately abolished and that this be substituted by a men's choir—which even from the musical point of view would be far preferable.

We cannot fight Reform by meeting it half way—and it is high time that the few individuals who are responsible for the mixed choir should realise the position.

I trust that this rightful demand of the Jewish residents of Yeoville district will not fall on deaf ears, and that those temporarily in authority will give us an opportunity to put our case before them, when I feel sure the longfelt wrong will be remedied.

Yours, etc.,

Israel Katz.

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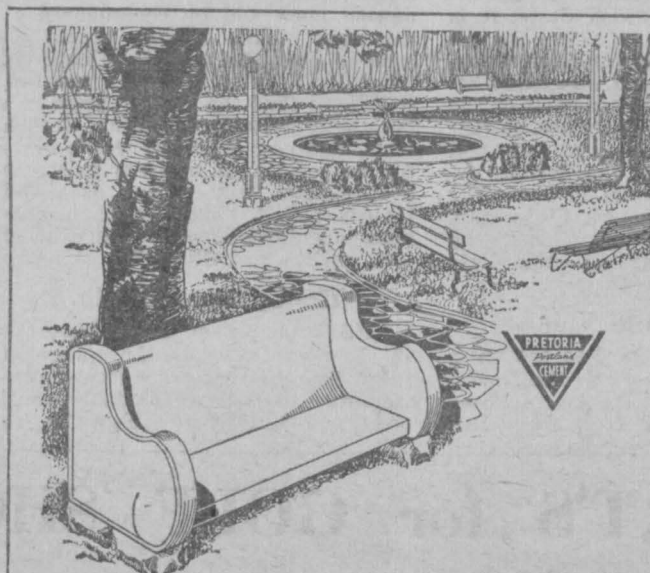
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