

Death of Maurice Moscovitch.

FAMOUS JEWISH ACTOR.

One of the outstanding figures of the Jewish stage passed away with the death, which took place recently in Hollywood, of Maurice Moscovitch, at the age of sixty-eight. He had been in Hollywood for four years, during which time he had established a fine reputation by his dignified characterisations. By his death the part of an elderly music teacher in an R.K.O. film was left unfinished.

Maurice Moscovitch was born in Odessa in 1871. As a boy of ten he hung about the stage door of the National Theatre, then assisted property men and actors, learnt wig making, and received his first role at the age of fourteen. His choice of vocation shocked his orthodox parents. He went to New York in 1890, playing at first in Jacob Adler's Company.

It was in the years preceding the last war that Mr. Moscovitch won the acclaim of London's Jewish theatre-goers by his appearance at the Pavilion Theatre, White-chapel. Besides producing the classics of Jewish authors, he staged plays by Tolstoi, Turgeniev, Andreev and Strindberg. He was soon, however, to achieve fame far wider than in the Yiddish theatre. In 1919 at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, he essayed his first English-speaking role as Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice." Coming to London in the same play he scored an outstanding hit at the Court Theatre. He won an ovation the following year when he appeared as Jean Paurel in "The Great Lover" at the Shaftesbury Theatre. Moscovitch was, in those days, the talk of London. After a season as actor-manager at the Apollo Theatre, he made tours to South Africa and Australia playing in a varied repertoire that included Shakespeare, Shaw and Edgar Wallace. He returned to New York in 1930 to appear in an ambitious production of "Josef Suss," a dramatisation of Feuchtwanger's novel "Jew Suss."

Maurice Moscovitch's film work in recent years included roles in "Winterset," "Suez," "Love Affair," "Lancer Spy" and "In Name Only." One of his three sons, who has also had a successful film career, is Noel Madison. Another son is a well-known violinist, Anton Maaskof.

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BIRTH.

MUNITZ.—To Mr. and Mrs. M. Munitz, of Woodstock, on 8th inst., at the Trafalgar Nursing Home, a son.

"I KNEW THOSE SPIES."

Fascinating Revelations by Felix Gross.

There was a time when the Great War of 1914-1918 seemed part of our present-day lives, part of the era in which we live. The outbreak of the present war, however, seems to have rung down the curtain on the last war, and the confused period that followed it. It has all disappeared into the limbo of bygone things. Matters and events of the 1914-1918 cataclysm have lost their interest for the average reader save in so far as they bear upon the present struggle for world supremacy.

To-day everything is different—military methods, strategy and ideologies. One of the new phenomena that has appeared is that of the "Fifth Column." This sinister weapon exploited by Hitler has been the subject of the weirdest stories. It is said to be something entirely new. Yet is it? Is it not in fact merely a development of that complicated system of espionage brought to such an advanced stage in the last war?

Though this is not the direct purpose of Dr. Felix Gross's book, "I Knew Those Spies," which has just been published by Hurst & Blackett, and Unie Volkspers Beperk (at 12/6), this illuminating and fascinating work has a definite practical value. It opens the doors to the very interior of the secret services of Germany in the last war and shows what in many ways were the forerunners of the modern "Fifth Column." Written by one who has not gleaned his information from others, but from what he himself saw and heard in his capacity as Intelligence Officer in the counter-espionage department of the German General Staff, it is a first-hand revelation of the network made up by the spies of Europe.

But apart from the practical interest it thus involves, spy stories are always most absorbing, and Dr. Gross has the happy knack of serving up facts to his readers in a most arresting and assimilable form. He relates the inside stories of the famous spies of the last war, allowing his imagination sufficient rope to present a continuous series of events in each story, without at the same time permitting fact to be sacrificed for fancy.

Some of the characters and events he depicts are not well known to the public. Others again assumed almost world-wide fame. There is, for instance, a full description of the world-famous Trebitsch Lincoln, the son of a Hungarian tradesman, who through sheer stubbornness in his convictions left home, and began life as a dock labourer in Quebec, whence later he went to England to become a parson, and then a member of the House of Commons. This picturesque character passed through various other phases, becoming in turn a drawing-room conversationalist, a brilliant financier, a spy on behalf of Germany, an official in the Soviet, a Putschist, a Hungarian Monarchist agent, a Buddhist, and a Japanese agent. It was the life of a brilliant mind that miscarried, and however much the reader might already have read of the strange, almost incomprehens-

ible versatility of Mr. (ex-Reverend) Trebitsch Lincoln, Dr. Gross gives a new and personal angle to the character, and his description never lags.

Then there is a brilliant painting of that amazing figure Annemarie Lesser, the German-Jewish girl who, cultured as she was in music and the arts, and brought up in the luxury of a comfortable home, nevertheless forsook the life of ease for the exciting and dangerous one of a spy. She appears as a young girl, as a peasant, as a nun, as anything. And, as the author points out, was of incalculable value to the German General Staff. Her story is more absorbing than any thriller, and Dr. Gross has made the most of his intimate contacts with her and all she was employed to do.

It is not to be wondered at that a girl of such indomitable courage and strength of will should in certain ways be abnormal. She took to drugs, and ended her adventurous life dying a consumptive in the mountains of Switzerland while still in her twenties. To the end she studied the advance of the microbes in her own lungs with the cold objectivity of a general planning a campaign. The fearless way this girl—a non-Aryan—consecrated herself to the cause of her fatherland is a complete answer to all the allegations of lack of patriotism levelled by Hitler against the Jews of Germany.

Then there was Mata Hari, the subject of the Garbo film of that name, whose dancing thrilled Europe. She paid the supreme penalty of the spy who is found out, and faced her death heroically.

Several other characters stud the pages of the book, but it is not only in the pictures of the personalities that its success lies. Incidentally the author has given his reader an insight into all the tricks of the spy trade, the various uses of invisible inks, the methods by which the most complicated codes were deciphered and the manner by which various messages were conveyed from one country to another.

It is strange to read that messages were even carried in eggs, on the lens of an eye-glass and in other unheard of ways.

Then, too, there is the historical background. Particularly interesting are the chapters dealing with the chaos that surrounded Germany's inglorious end in the war. The conflict between the disgruntled army and the Government, and the hoisting in many parts of Germany of the red flag are vividly depicted, and these pages of history live again for the reader.

Dr. Gross has written a most absorbing book revealing as it does, the treachery perpetrated in the name of spying. It is not only a book to be read for enjoyment; it contains too its warning message to-day. It is also a useful aid to anyone with pretensions to the modern work of intelligence for defence purposes.

The author has just completed a manuscript of approximately 195,000 words called "Hitler's Girls, Guns and Gangsters," and if it is anything like the present book it should likewise prove a most enjoyable and informative work.

G.G.