

Ethel Hayman Describes Cultural Developments in the Yishuv

(In An Interview With the "Zionist Record")

ETHEL HAYMAN, who has just spent three and a half months in Palestine, spoke with ardour of the remarkable constructive and cultural development of the country. In spite of inflation and other war difficulties, music, art, theatre, opera and literature are an integral part of the daily life of the Jew.

Even in far-flung kibbutzim, wringing an existence out of the desert in the Negev, or from a stony height in the North, well-used books and periodicals are to be found; and if by chance there is a lack of local talent to provide a lecture or music on a rest-day, fine programmes of the Palestine Radio fill the gap. In the big towns and the older villages and settlements, there is no lack of cultural activity, for nearly all groups possess enough musical talent to form small orchestras, quartettes, or trios, and in those rare places where there is no reading room stocked with books and papers, a travelling library supplies their need.

The Palestine Orchestra sets the tone for the high musical standard of the Yishuv, and while its headquarters are in Tel Aviv, it gives regular concerts all over the country—perambulations which present problems of transport, halls accommodation, etc., to the management and keep the performers busy with the calendar, fitting in the private lessons and solo-performances which most of them give to eke out their very humble living.

A Little Demonstration

On the anniversary of their 1,000th concert, which took place in winter, the performers staged a little demonstration. They came on to platform attired in soft shirts, pullovers or sports coats. This was to draw attention to the fact that, salaries being low and cost of laundering very high, they could not afford many clean boiled shirts. In the summer this expense is avoided as it is considered *de rigueur* for them to appear in collarless white shirts because of the dreadful heat. The blondest member of the orchestra is the only non-Jew, a flautist from Holland.

Pnina Saltzman

There was an even more than usually crowded house when Pnina Saltzman made her first appearance on her return from her South African tour. She received a magnificent ovation, and masses of flowers were handed to her by an usher in an open-necked blue shirt and dark trousers, the garb of many of the audience.

At a delicious supper, prepared entirely by Mrs. Kestenburg in her flat in Tel Aviv, Mrs. Hayman learnt that

her host, Professor Kestenburg, who is to-day head of the Palestine Orchestra, had been the Minister of Culture in pre-Hitler Germany. Professor and Mrs. Kestenburg are most loveable people and the centre of musical life in Tel Aviv. Mr. Levertoff, the able Administrator of the Palestine Orchestra, and his wife, both excellent musicians themselves, were also there,



and Mr. Levertoff remarked how delighted he was to be co-operating with Professor Kestenburg in this creative effort in Palestine.

Possibility of Habimah's Coming to South Africa

The Habimah, the Ohel, the opera, and the Mattatch, all play to crowded houses. Soldiers on leave often go to the Habimah Theatre, though many more of them attend the concerts, for music is a universal language.

Mrs. Hayman was taken by Dr. Kriege, the energetic Chair of the Friends of the Habimah in Palestine, to have supper with some of the Habimah players at Mr. and Mrs. Meskin's flat, after a performance of "Tevye the Dairyman," by Sholom Aleichem. Rovina, with ever changing expressions on her sensitive face, essayed to talk English with the guest, who, to her shame, knew little Hebrew.

"Meskin, a leading member of the Habimah company, is a giant of a fellow with a fine, resonant voice," Mrs. Hayman said. "He claimed that he could speak English only after he had had a few drinks, but he managed, nevertheless, to discuss quite coherently the possibility of the Habimah coming to South Africa."

Mrs. Hayman also met Bertenoff, who took the part of Tevye, and who attained fame as the "Meshulach" in "The Dybuk."

A group of Ohel actors, headed by Halevi, their Director, showed Mrs. Hayman round their club house and communal kitchen, situated right on the sea-shore in the worker's quarters of Tel Aviv. One of the prominent actresses in this group is an aunt of Pnina Saltzman.

From Yehuda Yaari and Yitzhak Schenberg (whose story, "The Deserted Camp," appeared in the "Zionist Record" New Year Annual), Mrs. Hayman learnt that a real Hebrew literature with its roots in the life of Eretz Yisrael, is springing up. Both these men are among the leading young writers in Palestine, Yaari, noted for his deep understanding of human problems, and Schenberg for his exquisite literary Hebrew. They accompanied Mrs. Hayman on several of her tours into the country.

Art

"At the Habimah's unfinished Theatre at the top of Rothschild Avenue in Tel Aviv, I saw a great many paintings by Palestinian artists," said Mrs. Hayman. "A very interesting development is taking place in the endeavour to combine the French, and continental teaching with the atmosphere, light and feeling of Eretz Israel. Much of the work is dynamic and forceful and many of the painters are not satisfied to remain static but have the urge to experiment, which is the sign of a vital art. Among these artists are Sigard, Levanon, Yankel, Gutman, who had an exhibition in this country some years ago, and others whose names I cannot pronounce."

Mr. Perlson, head of the Kupat Cholim and Deputy-Mayor of Tel Aviv, took Mrs. Hayman to the Beilinson Hospital a few miles outside Tel Aviv, and showed her round this excellently run institution. The resident doctors have no private practice, and thus are able to devote all their time to the hospital.

They also have time to read of the latest developments of medicine in the hospital library. Calls in the middle of the night do not dismay this medical staff, as being on the spot they do not have to turn out in all weathers.

Just before the recent elections, Mrs. Hayman attended a notable

labour meeting in Tel Aviv, which was a rally of the Mapai. She sat the platform between Golda Meir and Bebe Idelson, the former famous labour leader, and the latter one of the heads of the Moetz Hapoalet. There were some thousands present in the hall at the opening and great cheering greeted a vast number of newcomers, representatives of 15,000 new Mapai members who arrived at about 9 o'clock in Haifa. Ben Gurion had to ask a gathering to crush together to make room for them. Berl Katznelson was present—one of the last meetings attended by him.

Mrs. Hayman had discussions with several members of the Aliyah Hashasha. "Most of them are German," she said, "but great British patriots nevertheless. Their platform seems to consist largely of criticism of the existing regime, some of which well-founded, some merely bitter. Constructive programme they have none. But there is no doubt that the party can perform a very useful function in Eretz Israel—if only in a healthy opposition."

"So much has happened in Palestine since my last visit in 1938," said Mrs. Hayman. "Vast constructive and creative work has been done in spite of the tension of riots and war years. We can be proud to take courage from the high endeavours of our people."

JEWISH WAR APPEAL CAMPAIGN

Progress in New Campaign

Following up its recent Transvaal Conference, the JWA has now extended its "Actions Committee" to include close on 200 members. A special Planning Committee has also been set up to work out the details of the campaign. Its chairman is Mr. J. Hersov, with Mr. E. I. Rogoff as vice-chairman. Other members of the Planning Committee are Messrs. L. Feit, M. Greenstein, J. Kanarek, I. Saffer and M. J. Spitz.

Good reports continue to arrive from the Cape Committee, which is now well advanced in the preparations for its new drive.

Brilliant Success of JWA Concert

The dancing display by pupils of Miss Tamara Ressler and variety concert organised by the Highlands North branch of the JWA Women's Section, held at the H.O.D. Hall on Wednesday, October 11, was an outstanding financial and social success. Concert items were contributed by Miss Miriam Lopert, Miss Ray Lieker, Mrs. Sheila Nathankuper, the Rosamonde Trio, Mrs. Gertrude Hirschmann and Mr. Billie Boegt. Mr. Jimmy Fernhold was the pianist and Mr. Mike Abel acted as compere.

During the evening a diamond ring presented by Mr. J. Kadinsky was sold by American auction, and Mrs. R. Katz, chairman of the Highlands North Branch, gave a brief outline of the work of the JWA.

Forthcoming Functions

An outstanding success was attained at a jumble sale held jointly by the Houghton and City branches of the JWA at the home of Mrs. S. Rosen, West Street, Houghton, on October 5. The two committees were under the chairmanship of Mrs. L. Moshal and Mrs. M. Moss.

A social afternoon, organised by the Saxowold Branch of the JWA Women's Section, will take place on Monday, October 30, in the Ball Room of the Commodore Hotel, Catherine Avenue, Berea, at 2 p.m. The total proceeds will go to the JWA. All persons wishing to make reservations are asked to telephone Mrs. Jack Brownstein, 41-2417.

A large attendance is expected at the joint meeting of the Berea and Yeoville Branches of the JWA Women's Section on Tuesday, October 31. A social afternoon is to take place at the Sive Hall, Hunter Street, Yeoville, in honour of Mrs. Helen Kehr.

Doornfontein Synagogue "Schnoders" for JWA

"Schnodering" for the JWA has now introduced at the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol, Doornfontein, and the authorities of the synagogue are gratified at the exceedingly generous offerings made there during the recent Festivals.

Rabbi M. Kossowsky and Mr. Philip M. Kohn, president of the congregation, took the initiative in applying this famous traditional Jewish method of raising funds for the special needs of to-day.

FAREWELL TO MR. AND MRS. E. UDWIN

MR. E. UDWIN, Organiser-Secretary of the Rhodesian Zionist Council for the past seven months and Mrs. Udwin, were the guests of honour at a farewell evening in Bulawayo on September 29. The couple took the form of an Oneg Shabbat.

Tributes to the services rendered Rhodesian Zionism by Mr. Udwin were paid by Mr. Samuel Rabinovitch, Rev. Dr. I. H. Levine and Dr. D. Kahn. A presentation was made by Mr. Udwin on behalf of the Combined Zionist Societies of Bulawayo.

Mr. Udwin thanked the speakers and that he was glad to state that though he was leaving the Rhodesian Zionist Council on a full-time basis, for he was being transferred to the Federation's headquarters Johannesburg. He then delivered an interesting lecture which made a deep impression on the large gathering present.

Mrs. Kahn and Miss Bernice Kaplan recited poems by well-known Hebrew writers. Mrs. Diana Hurwitz sang Hebrew songs.

The Lads "up North" Want Jewish Newspaper

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