

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Humour in Palestine

Sir,—I was sorry to note in your issue of October 27, that my old friend, Mr. L. Eisner, is so deeply offended at what he described as an extremely tactless joke, which appeared at the end of my "Jerusalem Diary" contribution in your issue of October 13.

Mr. Eisner feels that I had implied that members of the Aliyah Chadashah are only too eager to return from Palestine to Germany after the war. I would like to point out to Mr. Eisner that he exaggerates the importance of what was only an anecdote. When I told some of my German-Jewish friends here about Mr. Eisner's indignation, they smiled a little and felt rather sorry for him.

I did not publish the story to hurt anybody's feelings, and I can assure Mr. Eisner that no one in Palestine is hurt by it—especially not any member of the Aliyah Chadashah.

We are all going through a grim period and it is rather refreshing to be able to hear some witticism and not be offended by it, if it happens to hurt one's political angle. I must say that the Yishuv is full of rich and subtle humour of a healthy kind.

Does Mr. Eisner know that the "Matateh" (People's Satirical Theatre) has made its success on its lampooning of Zionist leaders? The people lampooned come to the performances and join in the general laughter.

Does Mr. Eisner know of the cartoons which are published in the Hebrew newspapers? The most cruel caricatures appear of leading men and women. Instead of being offended, the people caricatured usually try to get the original of the drawings to keep as happy mementoes.

I heard a story the other day which I know will infuriate Mr. Eisner, but I feel that you, Mr. Editor, might have courage and be good enough to print it:—

Two Jews who had arrived in Palestine from Lithuania a few months before the outbreak of war, met in Tel Aviv recently. They greeted each other and in reply to the query of one of them as to the other's welfare, he received the reply: "Tov Ba'Arez." The other asked what exactly he meant, and he said in a very emphatic Yiddish: "Es iz gut in d'rehrd."

Now, this particular story is going the rounds here and everybody is enjoying it, but I am afraid Mr. Eisner would stamp his feet in rage at the alleged insult to the homeland. Nobody, of course, feels that way here. It is just an anecdote.

Life is hard. There are enemies within, there are enemies without. But we have our ideal and we are fighting and we are going to win. Don't blame us if we laugh a little through it all.

Yours, etc.,

DAVID DAINOW

P.O. Box 1151,
Jerusalem.

Dr. Magnes' Letter to the "Nation"

Sir,—It was recently reported in your journal that Dr. J. L. Magnes, President of the Hebrew University, had sent a letter to the "Nation," an American publication, advocating the establishment of a Bi-national State in Palestine on the basis of "numerical political parity between Jews and Arabs." The country, he suggests, should be included in a Federation of Syria, the Lebanon and Transjordan. He states that Palestine can only absorb about another 500,000 Jewish immigrants, whereas our leaders have stated that the country can absorb another five million immigrants.

As the Doctor is the head of an institution supported by Zionist funds, I think the time has arrived to

request the leaders of the S.A. Zionist Federation to use their good offices to see that the Doctor is removed from his post.

I had occasion to speak to several Zionist leaders who have come out to this country. One of them made a statement in public that the Agency and the Zionist Organisation would be only too pleased to get rid of Dr. Magnes. If that is the case, why is he kept on? The Institution is supported by us and by having him, it does a lot of harm to our national institution. Although Dr. Magnes states that he does not speak on behalf of the University, he nevertheless expresses his views as well as those of "individuals of public standing in Eretz Israel."

The letter is published from an authority who is considered to be a "leader" of Jewry. It is a real "charpe" to have such a man as President. All the doors are closed to our destitute and suffering and homeless brethren, and "Chasidei Houmois" are appealing on our behalf to open the doors of our homeland and grant us a Jewish State. But according to Dr. Magnes, we will have a ghetto of about one million Jews, and there will be strife and civil war is a Jewish State is established in Eretz Israel.

It should be mentioned that 2,000 years ago Transjordan and Syria were included in the State of Palestine.

We must request our leaders in this country to convene mass meetings to protest against the attitude taken up by Dr. Magnes, and have him removed from the post without any further delay.

Yours, etc.,

CH. HOPPENSTEIN.

"Tel Aviv," Benoni.

Public Library is Insufficient

Sir,—I was interested to read the comments of "Book Worm" in regard to the Jewish Sections of the Public Library. Whilst I would like to see more efficient handling of these Sections on the part of the Library authorities I feel that the Public Library as it is presently constituted can never render satisfactory library service to the local Jewish community which to-day comprises half the total Jewish population of South Africa.

The Public Library has numerous obligations to fulfil to the various sections of Johannesburg's population, and thus a Jewish Library service can only form a very small portion of its work—at best a few sections in the present Library.

As a newcomer to this city I was amazed at the fact that in spite of its large Jewish population there is no communal Jewish Library in Johannesburg. This is indeed a sad reflection on the cultural life of South Africa. In Europe the smallest communities were possessed of a fine collection of books accessible to every member of the community. In Palestine the poorest settlements are not without a literary collection. Yet Johannesburg in spite of an abundance of wealthy Jewish communal institutions cannot boast of even a small collection to which the local Jewish community can have easy access. I am aware of the collection at the Board of Education, but this is a specialised collection for a specific purpose and does not fulfil the normal functions of a communal Library.

The fault obviously lies with the Board of Deputies whose responsibility it should be to cater for the cultural needs of our community. Here I wish clearly to draw distinction between the Board of Education, which caters for the educational needs of children and adult educational work which in this country is almost completely unknown.

The establishment of a free Judaica Library in Johannesburg is a vital

necessity to which the Board should give immediate attention. There is no doubt that it will prove a very valuable contribution to the Jewish cultural life of the city.

Yours, etc.,

"ISH SEFER."

Celebrations at Soldiers' Tabernacle

Sir,—May I, a soldier in the ranks, draw the attention of your readers to an omission, doubtless inadvertent, in the last issue of your esteemed journal, in the report of the Chaplains Reunion at Roberts Heights.

No mention whatsoever was made of the gentleman who inaugurated the idea and supervised the construction of a Succah, first at Premier Mine and then at Roberts Heights, and who, as representing the Jewish Communities, invited all the Christian Chaplains and soldiers to the celebration held in the Tabernacle. I refer to Lieutenant-Colonel, the Rev. L. Levinson, ex-Principal Jewish Chaplain, whose splendid work during his term of office—some three years—will never be forgotten. But for his imagination, forethought and broad outlook there could have been no such reunion.

"Palman qui mercuit ferat."

Yours, etc.,

CORPORAL.

Johannesburg.

NEW REPS. PRODUCTION

"Music at Night"

J. B. PRIESTLEY'S interesting dramatic experiment, "Music at Night," is to be the first production of the Johannesburg Repertory Players for 1945. It goes on at the Standard on February 14.

Each of the three acts of "Music at Night" bears the title of a movement in a conventional musical work; in other words, "Music at Night" is not in three acts, but in three "movements." The play portrays the innermost thoughts of a group of people sitting and listening to a piece of music—a situation in which most people's thoughts are apt to stray towards unrelated things. Each character's stream of consciousness is represented in the form of dramatic action, and each is revealed in a most telling light.

Priestley's special genius for analysing the minds of the middle-class, the pretentious fake, the restless seeker after happiness, is to be found in every line of "Music at Night."

Production is by Dolfanna Brown, a newcomer to the ranks of Rep producers, but whose work is well-known in Bloemfontein and elsewhere. She is the first of a series of new producers whom the Reps intend introducing to Johannesburg this year.

MORE JWA RELIEF REACHES SWITZERLAND

Collaboration with Non-Jewish Bodies

REMITTANCES from the JWA to suffering Jewry in Europe are safely reaching their destination, according to a cable received by the JWA from its representative in Switzerland, Mr. Saly Mayer.

Mr. Mayer acknowledges the arrival of a further large sum of money, and adds—"Your generous grant being used in your name for the upkeep of children in homes. Besides yourself the American J.D.C., Swiss Red Cross and Non-Sectarian Children's Help are sharing cost."

Mr. Mayer states that among the refugees reaching Switzerland are large numbers of Hungarians. These people evaded the German armies, but who were unable to reach safety behind the Russian lines. This influx is likely to continue and to bring with it extra calls for relief.

Pretoria Function for JWA

Dr. Minnie, of Pretoria, organised a function at her home on December 31, at which a substantial sum was raised for the JWA.

Harrismith

At the annual general meeting of the local branch of the S.A. Jewish Orphanage, the following office-bearers were elected: Mrs. W. Chodos, chairman; Mrs. O. Rosenberg, secretary; Mrs. B. Brash, treasurer; committee, Mesdames Woolfson, B. Green, G. Davidson, E. Steinberg, H. Cohen, L. Green and Miss B. Caplan

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STRICKEN DOWN IN
PRIME OF LIFEBUS DRIVER FORCED
TO GIVE UP WORK
AT 38

Physical fitness and alertness are demanded of a bus driver. It is therefore of interest to read how Mr. George Walgers, of Queen's Road, Five Rock, Sydney, conquered the



pain of lumbago and sciatica, which gripped him so intensely that he was obliged to stop work at the age of 38 years.

Mr. Walgers' words state: "After the first packet of R.U.R. I began to get relief, and could at last stand up straight, and sleep returned to me. I then took a course, and can honestly say I have not one pain left. I am back at work again, and can even dig in the garden. I now take R.U.R. twice a week, and am feeling my old self again."

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