

A Surprise

I SAW an interesting fellow the other day in Tel Aviv—none other than Mr. Sherlock Holmes. The world thought he had passed away long ago, but on the stage of the Matatei—the well-known Hebrew satirical theatre—the famous detective struts across the scene in the course of his most important assignment. His task is to discover (for a foreign Power), who is the hidden and sinister organiser of what is known as “illegal immigration.”

In the course of his inquiry, Sherlock Holmes secretly visits the sittings of various well-known national institutions. There are funny scenes at closed meetings of the W.I.Z.O. and the Aliya Chadasha. His visit to a Synagogue meeting to find the culprit is screamingly funny. Around me folk are wiping away the tears of laughter running down their cheeks.

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The Culprit

But let us follow Sherlock, who is full of determination to make a rapid success of his mission. He has never failed in his previous existence and he is not likely to fail now. His great art of clever detection is as keen and as sharp as ever. Finally, Sherlock completes his inquiry and makes his report to the foreign Power concerned. He reports that the organiser of the illegal immigration is none other than Moshe Rabeinu (Moses).

The Matatei producer, Isaac Nujick, has written one of the cleverest comedies ever seen on the Hebrew stage in “Sherlock Holmes in Tel Aviv,” and this excellent company of players scored an unique success. Whilst the audience had smiled at “others,” a considerable portion of the evening was spent in laughing at “ourselves”—a thing rather difficult these days for a Jewish audience to do outside of the homeland.

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Curfew Music

An amazing example of normality in a time of tension was the concert I attended a few evenings ago in Jerusalem of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra. The spacious Edison Hall was crowded with a highly intelligent audience of music lovers. They came to greet Charles Munch, the world-renowned conductor, whose baton has so electric an effect on the gifted group of seventy-five players which now make up the enlarged orchestra.

The evening was one of Bach and Cesar Franck, but we heard, too, for the first time, the brand-new Honegger Symphony No. 3 of 1945-1946, dedicated by the gifted composer to Munch himself, who had a few days previously conducted it in Paris. The orchestra rose to a great occasion and gave a satisfying performance of surely one of the most difficult and complicated of musical compositions ever written. Not to play Honegger perfectly is to play him disastrously.

It was pleasant to note the genuine appreciation, not only of the deeply impressed audience, but of Charles Munch. To have conducted so fine a

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By David Dainow

combination of musicians and to have secured so complete a response to his baton to the minutest detail, was an experience he is likely to cherish for many a day.

The thrill of life as lived here these intense days was further enhanced by the two performances of the orchestra given in the afternoons during the period of heavy curfew in Jerusalem. The large hall was on both occasions packed. The performances were splendid, and when over, I saw the players rushing out with their instruments to the special bus waiting to rush them off to Tel Aviv before the road-curfew descended on the whole area.

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Pampas

Some little while ago on a visit to the Menorah Club in Jerusalem, I observed an air of happy excitement in the large central hall. I stopped at the entrance and looked in. A few hundred women were engaged in sipping tea and partaking of pastry. All eyes were drawn to the long main table, where many well-dressed women were seated. Something about them indicated they were from overseas.

A series of addresses began. Some in English, some in Hebrew, but the main speeches were delivered in Yiddish. Of peculiar interest were the W.I.Z.O. workers from Latin-American countries. It was a revelation to hear of Zionist work being carried out in desolate places of the pampas countries. Jewish communities had sprung up in the most unlikely places during the last few years. Their material position was good, but spiritually they were sinking and so the message of Eretz Israel came to them as a breath of reviving air.

These women leaders of a new *galuth*, in their Zionist enthusiasm, made local workers realise the new responsibility facing them. Shortly a group of women will leave the homeland on a great trek to bring the message of Eretz Israel to large sections of our people whom fate has deposited over a tremendous expanse of red desert.

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“Going Up!”

Exquisitely-cut frocks were shown by attractive mannequins in a bright setting at the Eden Hotel in Jerusa-

lem, when I—a mere male—popped in the other afternoon to attend the first social function held this season in the ancient city. It was hard to believe that the members of this neatly clothed audience of W.I.Z.O. workers and their friends had just gone through a heavy period of curfew.

The occasion was a Fashion Show. There were dresses of lovely turquoise, black and cocoa silk and red wool. Material of 100 per cent. Palestine origin had been used for hostess gowns featuring attractive Yemenite embroidery. There were dresses for the young girl, the child, the babe, and the elderly woman. My masculine admiration was aroused by some of the new specimens of shoe-craft, and I took a liking to the rather sweet sandals for little girls. I determined to visit the W.I.Z.O. shop next day and buy a pair for a little Delilah of three years, who has lately conquered my soul.

The range of hats ran from peasant kerchiefs to delightfully trimmed straws. There were some neat creations—all designed and made here—really no necessity to go to Paris! And what a beautiful selection of handbags, made of plastic leather, suede, and real leather, in pouched and envelope types . . .

The hub of Hebrew conversation about me—the spontaneity—the alertness—the feeling of being alive—it all made one realise that no crisis can “down” the normal, healthy life proceeding in this grand old Jewish city.

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Bublik

“There are only a hundred thousand Jews in the United States of America.”

He sat in a comfortable arm-chair in the lounge of the old Amdursky Hotel in Jerusalem, speaking to a group of friends. For over fifty years Gedalia Bublik has been one of the leading lights of Yiddish journalism in America. He is now its “grand old man.” From time to time he slips away from the rush and excitement of the American scene to his beloved Eretz Israel.

“This is my tenth visit,” he told us, and his fine old face lit up with a wonderful smile.

“You see,” he went on to explain in the classic Hebrew he acquired as a youth, “the danger over there is not anti-Semitism, but Americanism. It

eats our people up like a fire and devastates the very springs of our spiritual foundation. Of the five million Jews in the U.S.A. only about a hundred thousand are Jew-conscious, being still under the influence of the upbringing they received in the cultural centres of Eastern Europe.”

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Waste

Bublik went on: “But everything is against even this small Jewish remnant. For fifty years, I helped to build a Jewish life in America, but you cannot erect a concrete building on the sea. It sinks before your eyes.”

Although nearly four score years of age, Bublik said he hoped to make another visit or two to Eretz Israel before he finally slipped over the precipice.

“Here a natural process is occurring,” he said in happy mood, “for we are all Jews, no matter how bitterly we differ with each other. Your young people have no racial complexities and they grow up naturally, full-blooded Jews. Even if a Jew is an “apicorous,” he is a Jew and my brother. The great privilege you have is in being away from things *goyish*. Do you realise how much good Jewish time is being wasted by five million Jews in America?”

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Rumour

In spite of the present intense atmosphere here, an innate sense of humour expresses itself. The latest example is the circulation of a rumour that ten thousand Palestinian Jews have applied for British citizenship. When one asks, “But why?” the answer is:

“So that they can send their wives to England.”

This anecdote reached my ears through a very happily married woman in Jerusalem.

1,000 DISPLACED JEWS RETURN TO POLAND

WARSAW, April 14.—More than 1,000 Polish Jews who fled this country last year have returned to explore the possibilities of permanent resettlement, it was learned here. Hundreds of them had passed through the Czech-Polish border town of Zbrzydowice during the past few days en route from D.P. camps in the U.S. zone of Germany.

Most of the returnees hope to settle in Silesia. Their families are remaining in camps until they can ascertain whether it will be possible for them to establish permanent residence and secure employment in Poland. Their arrival represents the first reversal in the trend towards Jewish emigration from Poland.

Meanwhile, Jewish groups are expecting the arrival shortly of the first transports of the 15,000 Polish Jews who are to be repatriated from the Soviet Union under an agreement negotiated last month between the Polish and Soviet Governments. A new group of repatriates recently arrived from Russia, but no Jews were among them.

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