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Biblical Cantillation His Life's Work

"YOU are a Zionist but you don't yet know it," Bialik told the young musical student whom he met in Berlin. And in that respect, as in so many others, the great writer was proved correct. For to-day that young man has been a Palestinian for 22 years and is honoured not only in Palestine, but all over the world, for his great research into Biblical music.

His name is Salomo Rosowsky, Professor Salomo Rosowsky, and he is the cousin of a cousin of mine, Mrs. Jeanette Davidoff (nee Rosofsky), who has been touring Canada for the Hadassah J.N.F. campaign. I met Professor Rosowsky and his wife (a scientist doing research work at Columbia) at the home of two ardent American Zionists, Dr. Rosoff and his wife, who are also cousins of his.

Professor Rosowsky has been in the United States for a year now, having completed the first part of his research into Biblical cantillations, a work of 17 years, which he is waiting to see through the press. The book, which is called "The Cantillations of the Pentateuch," is being published by the Columbia University Press and the American Academy for Jewish Research. It deals with the Ashkenazic cantillations of the Bible. When he returns to Palestine the professor will continue with his work on the Sephardic cantillations and those of the Oriental Jews.

During his stay in the United States he has given a number of lectures on various musical subjects, and is at present giving three courses at the New School for Social Research, an institution noted for its breadth of vision and academic brilliance allied with practical application. When these courses are over he will lecture for a term at the College of Jewish Studies in Chicago.

The list of Professor Rosowsky's achievements is breathtaking. He originated the Analytical Theory of Biblical Cantillations, he founded the Jewish Conservatory of Music in Riga, he is a member of the faculty of the Palestine Conservatory of Music, and has been a guest lecturer at London and Cambridge Universities, the Ecole Rabbinique in Paris, Columbia University, the New School for Social Research, the Jewish Institute of Religion and at Dropsie College. He helped found the Society of Jewish Folk Music in what was then St. Petersburg, was formerly musical director of the Jewish Art Theatre in Moscow, was music critic of the Russian paper, "The Day," and a collaborator at the Musicalni Sovremennik. His compositions include scores for Calderon's "Crown of David," Levic's "Dream of the Golem," Sholem Aleichem's "The Treasure," Sholem Asch's "Amnon and Tamar," Singer's "The Sinner," Gutzkoff's "Uriel Acosta," and the Ohel Theatre's productions of "The Chassidim" and "Trauerode."

He is the president of the Federation of Musicians' Associations of Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv, and in recognition of his musical achievements he was awarded a special honorary degree by the Municipality of Tel Aviv in 1946. In accordance with a resolution passed by the Department of Education, his "trop" system has been included in all the seminaries and schools of Palestine.

Telling me in my lay ignorance something of his work and his

methods, Professor Rosowsky said he uses the various types of Biblical cantillation at present in existence, he examines Bible readers and has had erected in Jerusalem an acoustical laboratory, the work of engineers who make recordings of the various types of cantillations.

There are 27 different Biblical "trots" or special signs, he told me, and they have four functions: to give the natural accent of the word, to help us understand the meaning of the Biblical word and its parts (syntactical), to help us understand the rhythmical structure of Biblical verse (rhythmical) and the musical function, in which he specialises. The "trots" form a musical system, and he was the first person to establish scientifically the melodic and rhythmic values of the "tropical science" and to clarify the laws according to which the "tropical" motives linked and formed the recitative of the Biblical text.

Looking just as one expects a musician to look, with long grey hair and flashing brown eyes, Professor Rosowsky has all the volubility of the native-born Russian, and all the Slavic intellectual's gift for languages. He conducted our interview partly in German, partly in English, and during the rest of the evening his conversation with the Rosoffs alternated between Yiddish, Russian and occasionally English. They talked mainly about musicians and how badly society has treated them in the past, and gave their opinions of the concerts, both secular and religious, that they had most recently attended.

The professor's musical gifts do not spring from the blue. His father, he told me with great pride, was Baruch Leib Rosowsky, the

Roman a Name

DEMBO (This name was sent in by D. Dembo, 1 Park Royal, Wolmarans Street, Johannesburg): This name is traceable to that of a little town near Breslau in Silesia. The name means "Oak". Dr. Isaac Dembo, Russian physician and Privy Councillor to the Czar was a member of the same family.

FARBER (This name was sent in by N. Farber, 509 Edmund Street, Arcadia, Pretoria): This is occupational and means "Dyer". The dyeing trade was widespread among the Jews of Eastern Europe.

GWINT (This name was sent in by Mrs. Gwint, 8th Avenue, Mayfair): This is a Polish word derived from the German "Gewinde", meaning "the spiral thread of a screw". As a name it is occupational and indicates the trade of "turner".

PODLASHUK (This name was sent in by P. Podlashuk,

from **NEAR and FAR**
BY BEN DOR

Hebrew Marriage Document was Valid

AN interesting case occurred recently in Cape Town, when a marriage document in Hebrew was recognised by the appropriate authorities.

A young lady from Eretz Israel was to be married, and the magistrate who was to perform the civil marriage which preceded the synagogue service, required of her that she produce documentary proof of her marital state. The only document she had available was one issued in Hebrew by the Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem, and containing the official rubber stamp of the Beth Din there and an endorsement in English that the contents of the document had been filed with the Palestinian Administration.

The magistrate forthwith accepted the document. An official form written in Hebrew, and issued in Eretz Israel, now, therefore, reposes at Caledon Square (the venue of the magistrate's court), in Cape Town.

This incident calls to mind a not dissimilar one which took place when Dr. Abraham Granovsky, Director of the Jewish National Fund, visited this country last year. While he was in Cape Town, he received an urgent invitation to attend the Actions Committee Meeting at Zurich. For this purpose he needed a Swiss visa, and when the Consulate was approached, the officials asked for some proof in writing, showing the nature of his business. The only document Dr. Granovsky had was a stencilled circular on the letterhead of the World Zionist Organisation. The entire document was in Hebrew. The consul accepted an assurance from a local Zionist official regarding the contents of the circular and the visa was granted.

To Advise Dutch Reformed Church

Dr. Louis F. Freed, the well-known South African psychologist, and chairman of the Johannesburg Branch of the Social Services Association of South Africa, recently addressed, by special invitation, the Commission on Sex Education of the Dutch Reformed Church in Johannesburg. On the same occasion Dr. Freed gave a second address to the Ministers of the Church on "The Principles of Sociological Theology in Relation to the Problems of Personal and Social Disorganisation". Dr. Freed was subsequently invited to act as an adviser to the Church in this connection.

Success of "Eternal Light" Series

The Board of Deputies received from the United States of America, towards the end of last year, a number of records of the "Eternal Light" series, consisting of recordings of programmes broadcast by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and dealing with different aspects of Jewish life and culture. Made up of radio dramatizations of incidents in Jewish life and Jewish ideals, they have won enormous popularity in the United States of America. Since its inauguration in America, the "Eternal Light" series has received six national awards for excellence as a religious programme. Formal recognition has come from such organisations as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Women's National Radio Committee, and for two successive years it has been designated "as the best religious programme on the air", by the Ohio State University Institute for Education by Radio.

There has been a remarkable response by cultural societies to the offer of the Board to loan out these records. At times, it has been difficult to cope with the enthusiastic demand and cultural societies on the Reef and in Johannesburg, have had some 30 odd recitals. Youth groups have shown such interest that it has been decided to order more records from overseas to cope with the demand.

At some of these recitals, Mrs. A. Levy gave a short introductory address explaining the background of these records and their significance.

"Gentleman's Agreement" awarded "Oscar"

"Gentleman's Agreement," the 20th Century-Fox production of Laura Z. Hobson's best-selling novel, has won the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences "Oscar" for the best picture of the year out of a total of 450 pictures eligible for the award. Before the choice was made, the New York Critics Circle had already given it a similar ranking, and the film has now received 39 honours in all.

Darryl F. Zanuck, the producer, is to receive the Thomas Jefferson award for the advancement of Democracy in the field of arts by the Council Against Intolerance In America, as the result of a poll covering 1,000 organisations concerned with promoting democratic ideals, and 500 newspaper editors.

The scenario was written by the famous playwright, Moss Hart, and everyone who has seen the

film agrees that it is remarkable, not only for the excellence of its acting and production, but for the brilliant shearing away by the scenario-writer of every irrelevancy contained in the book, so that the audience is left with a moving, striving tale that, while propaganda, is even more effective than the book as living characters present their viewpoints to us. It yet remains a tale that does not intrude its propagandistic theme on to our consciousness in an obvious manner.

He Produces "Hits"



MR. J. SACHS

A STORY of England's gain and South Africa's loss in the cultural sphere lies behind the story of Mr. Joseph Sachs of London, formerly of Johannesburg, who is holidaying in South Africa and Rhodesia, visiting his relations in Johannesburg and his brother, Mr. J. Sachs, of Bulawayo, and renewing old acquaintances.

For Mr. Sachs sold the Palladium Theatre in Johannesburg, which he built in 1910, to Mr. I. W. Schlesinger in 1913, and South African theatres thereupon became picture-houses rather than places of living culture, while English theatres enjoyed many masterly productions.

Mr. Sachs first became interested in matters theatrical when he joined Phyllis' Circus as odd-job boy at the age of nine. In 1900 he started his own company in Cape Town, bringing out artistes from overseas and putting on concerts, and he then performed the unique Boer War service of travelling from one beleaguered part of the country to another with an English concert company which he took off a boat en route from Australia to England. They ended their tour in Johannesburg on the day peace was declared.

Mr. Sachs stayed on in Johannesburg, bringing English companies out continually, and once a Yiddish company. He was connected with Leonard Rayne and Frank Willows, who ran all the musical comedies, and in 1910 he started building his own theatre which was completed in 1912 and which he sold a year later.

Then he went to England to fetch out more concert companies in opposition to Mr. Schlesinger, and in 1916 he booked Harry Lauder, who was then at the height of his fame, for a South African tour. But the Great War prevented their coming, and he persuaded Lauder to play in a most successful revue in London.

Mr. Sachs remained in London, producing various types of plays, mainly musicals, most successfully, and to-day he has the reputation of being London's West End producer of the longest standing. Among his greatest successes were "Irene" with Edith Day, "Lilac Domino" with Clara Bottivet, "Sybil" with Josie Collins, "The Dutch Girl" with Maggie Tate, and "Tiger Rose" with Godfrey Tearle. Since he joined up with Jack Hilton in 1943 they have revived "Irene," put on the American success, "Anna Lucasta," and at present are showing "The Crazy Gang."

When Mr. Sachs leaves South Africa he will go to New York, which he visits twice a year to buy plays and arrange for players to come to England.

Many Jewish causes and charities have been helped by Mr. Sachs, who has never refused to lend a theatre or put on performances gratis.

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