

on the Bookshelf

"The Seven Thunders"



SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN

"I WRITE in Nuremberg . . ." Thus begins one of the last pages of Sarah Gertrude Millin's War Diaries. It is the only chapter which gives an "eye-witness account." She saw the engineers of the "World Black-out" (the title of her first book) being tried before a world court of justice. Here is the happy ending with the villain of the piece getting his deserts. Yet the novelist is not at all tempted to introduce a note of triumph. The first seeds of post-war dissension begin to show themselves in 1944 and 1945 and the entries in the diary are recorded with a feeling of frustration: "And what is it to us if they (the Nazi Chiefs) die, these rats whose rats we were . . . Nothing. As good as nothing. We cannot be repaid for what they have done. We cannot be revenged."

About the Jews she says: "One thing Hitler has achieved: he said that he would exterminate the Jews of Europe, and he has done it."

But it is not only the Jews who are the victims: "He said if Germany went under, so would Europe. Not only is he destroying us, but we are destroying one another."

Roosevelt is dead; Churchill's coalition is drawing to a close; America becomes the greatest creditor nation; There is trouble in France; in Holland; in Poland and in Greece. Wisely the diarist shakes her head, about the futility of human endeavour.

The "Seven Thunders" is the sixth and last volume. "Fire out of Heaven" was the fifth and I happened to glance through it immediately after I had put away the evening newspaper containing a chapter of Churchill's Memoirs. To the arch-politician the story of the day was a complete achievement, a consummation of a plan which, irrespective of other issues, is self-sufficient: He may "triumph" over the sinking of a section of the German fleet, or the destruction of a German army in the desert. But to the woman-diarist nothing is conclusive: even some of the greatest victories are recorded with a touch of irony.

It has been said that despite the big part played by women in the fighting of the last war, they did not manage to produce a single war-leader. One dare not generalise and it may be purely accidental that I happened to draw a contrast between the memoirs of Churchill and the humble diary of the woman-novelist. One feels that it is perhaps to the good that women do not become embroiled in the immediate conduct of war, and are in a position to comment with a certain detachment. A mother's sigh over the loss of her boy on the battle-field provides more scope for reflection than a treatise of the most glamorous general. Because there is so much simplicity in Mrs. Millin's comment, one is inevitably reminded of "The Mother's Sigh."

Both "Fire Out of Heaven" and the "Seven Thunders" have many moving references to Jews and to Palestine. There is thoughtful bitterness in the third chapter of "Fire Out of Heaven" and some concise comment on the reason for the growth of "Terrorism." The Jewish tragedy at the end of the war does not escape the eye of the diarist.

For a vivid recollection of the last war, one will always in future

turn to Mrs. Millin's Diaries. Even to-day, so shortly after the event, one realises on reading these Diaries, how quickly we forget. No wonder the world has so soon forgotten the price paid by the Jews for the last war.

C.G.

"FIRE OUT OF HEAVEN," by Sarah Gertrude Millin. Faber & Faber, Ltd.

"THE SEVEN THUNDERS," by Sarah Gertrude Millin. Faber & Faber, Ltd.

MAGEN DAVID ADOM CONCERT

"A Yiddish Owend," arranged by the Magen David Adom will be held on July 4, 1948, at 8.45 p.m., at the Coronation Hall. An interesting programme has been arranged and the artists include H. Zabludowsky, Bruno Raikin, Louis Sacks, Max Adler, and Louis Alter and his Balaika Orchestra. In addition to the musical items, there will be dramatic sketches by I. Zygielbaum and B. Karlin, and a mock quiz, written and produced by Gershon Fine. No booking.

First Concert by Greek Soprano

Andigoni Salta, the noted Greek soprano, will give her first recital on Wednesday, July 7, in the City Hall, Johannesburg. She will be accompanied by Bruno Raikin.

The programme will consist of songs by Schubert, Handel, Gluck, Brahms and arias from a number of operas.

Madame Salta's tour is under the direction of the Solly Aronowsky Concert Bureau.

Fine Effort by Teen-agers

Five young girls, Rhona Goldman, Myra Kurland, Esther Smith, Shirley Shapiro and Heather Wayburne, acting without any outside assistance, organised a concert last week at the Sive Hall, and handed over the proceeds to the Bellevue Branch of the Women's Zionist League for submission to the United Israeli Appeal.

The concert was of an extremely high standard, and the artists included some promising youngsters who were making their debut on the stage.

Statehood Has Crowned The Nation With Dignity

Descriptive Article In "New Statesman"

LONDON, Wednesday.—In a descriptive article in the "New Statesman" headed "Jews at War," Jack Winocour says that the Jewish "weltschmerz" has been shed in Palestine and that only in Jerusalem lingers the introspective Jew.

"This is a tiny war in a tiny country, but it has made a nation out of 700,000 Jews, whose vitality is enormous. The nation existed before the state but statehood has crowned the nation with dignity.

the city's will falter. The population is embittered against Britain. It cannot understand why and how a Labour Government has let them down so badly.

"Although some of the more cynical foreign correspondents are inclined to laugh at rubber stamps and new uniformed police, these are an essential compensation for the indignities heaped upon Jews by other states.

"I tried to tell them what damage the Irgun and Stern Group have done to their store of goodwill in this country. But they have much to say that I could not answer.

Paying tribute to the late Col. Michael Marcus, the Commander of Jerusalem, Winocour quotes him as saying: "This is not an army. This is a nation in arms."

"They deeply resent 'British Propaganda' to the United States complaining that this identifies Zionism with Communism, although a more petty bourgeois society than Israel it is difficult to imagine."

Concluding, the writer states that it may not be too late.

Speaking of Jerusalem, Mr. Winocour says: "The civilian morale there did not bend in spite of weeks of hunger, thirst and hellishly effective bombardment by the British trained and British officered gunners, and in spite of false cease-fires when singing groups of children were torn to shreds by sudden shellfire.

"It is surely in the interests of Great Britain and in the interests of Socialism too that the standard of life in the Middle East should be raised. The Jews could transform the whole power structure of the Near East. It is better to have them as friends than as embittered, ejected suitors."

"Yet never once in its ordeal did



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