

A Letter from Eretz Israel.

(From Our Own Correspondent).

Jerusalem, 13th March, 1935.

Festivity in Palestine.

The season of spring and festivity has arrived in Palestine and with it thousands of tourists from all over the globe. The hotels already are crowded and accommodation must be reserved weeks ahead. Everywhere the newcomers are to be met—in the restaurants, in the buses, in the banks, in the streets and in the taxis, and seldom can one fail to recognise them for what they are—tourists. They assume an air different from that of the residents here, there is an indefinable something about them that immediately marks them out. One is not sure whether it is the smartness of their clothes, or the lost, surprised look on some of the faces, or the crude criticism—favourable and unfavourable—that one hears behind one at the theatre or in a bus or at the next table in the cafe. Whatever it is one knows that they are tourists.

Last week the first batch of tourists travelling under the auspices of the S.A. Zionist Federation arrived at Haifa. Many of them have come to Tel-Aviv, many to Jerusalem, and some have stayed in Haifa, but they all together with the large number of South African tourists who have arrived here on their own and the South African residents in the country, attended a reception given in their honour by the Jewish Agency, Keren Kayemeth and Keren Hayesod in the Keren Hayesod Reception Hall in Jerusalem. During the last few days the homes of South Africans here have been filled with visitors and there have been many happy reunions and "shaloms" and greetings from home. For South Africans here it has indeed been "Yomtov."

Many arrangements are being made for the tourists to see the country to every advantage. And during their stay here there will be much to see beyond what every tourist should and generally does see. Purim promises to exceed all previous efforts at jolly-making. Politically things are happy at the moment (last year Purim was a period of intense strain politically) nothing serious has occurred of late to cast a gloom over the Yishub—on the contrary, recent events like the Jewish Agency loan and the Huleh Concession have tended rather to heighten the spirit of well-being and satisfaction—and the "prosperity" of Palestine, albeit with evil concomitants, continues. There is much eager preparation for Purim. Brightly coloured advertisements—often in very modern and futuristic designs—are to be seen placarded on the walls and hung in shop windows. There will be a gala procession as usual, and fancy-dress balls and special theatre performances. And there will be a day's holiday for Jews throughout Palestine and a good proportion of the Yishub will find its way into Tel-Aviv which will concentrate within itself the essence of the Purim Carnival.

And only a week or two later the second Maccabiah will take place in the Levant Fair grounds, and already the seats for spectators are being erected and tickets being bought up at a feverish rate. At regular hours of the day one may see the candidates practising near the Yahn. The sprinters and the vaulters and the cyclists and disc throwers are all in training and going through a period of intense activity.

And then, for a section of the tourists, an event of some importance is taking place in March—the Wizo Conference. The Wizo offices in Tel-Aviv are in the throes of preparation. Meetings and conferences are held daily for there is an incredible amount of work to be done and often even accommodation must be found for delegates, particularly those from Eastern Europe who come with little more than an eager enthusiasm to participate in the work being done. South Africa will be well represented at the Conference, and, it is hoped, play a useful role in the proceedings.

Dr. Weizmann in Critical Vein.

Dr. Weizmann, who returned to Palestine after a brief visit to Europe, has not relaxed his criticism against present tendencies in the Yishub. At the opening of the First Conference of the Kidmah Group of General Zionists he decried the "excess of economic freedom" which existed in Palestine—a feature which, he said, was to be found nowhere else in the world. This freedom was leading to abuses which were evil for the Jewish people and for the future of the Yishub.

"We should take a leaf from other countries," he said, "where there is a partial or complete regulation of their economic structure by the Governments, whether it be democratic or dictatorial."

Everywhere the economic foundations were laid and the basis of their economy planned by the Governments. Here all they had was the power of the National Funds and the influence of organised constructive labour. "It will be the duty of the

next Zionist Congress to bring about a change of life here from the "translation of the Galuth which it is to-day, and to create instead something original and establish a firm basis whereon to build the National Home," said Dr. Weizmann.

A Symphony Orchestra for Tel-Aviv.

Tel-Aviv is now the proud possessor of a very fine Symphony Orchestra—the first Jewish Permanent Symphony Orchestra in Palestine. It is, it is true, not the first effort that has been made in this direction, but it is the first that has really met with success and that is likely to be what its name states it will be—permanent.

The success is due to the active interest taken in it by a newcomer to the country—Michael Taube, a German Jew who arrived about a year ago. Taube has done marvels with a group of good but undistinguished players and the concerts at which he conducts are packed to the doors. Tickets are sold out days ahead and when, at the beginning of this season, tickets were being advertised for a series of ten concerts, the remarkable number of 600 was bought within the course of a few days.

It is as interesting to watch Taube conduct his orchestra as to listen to it perform—perhaps even more so, for the play of expression on his face, in his hands, his fingers and the movement of his body, and his capacity for extracting from each player the very best that he has to give is truly amazing. Music lovers in Tel-Aviv have indeed much for which to be grateful to him.

Rents Restrictions.

Agitation for a Rents Restriction Ordinance in Jerusalem is growing, now that Moharram is approaching so soon and the public meeting—largely attended—was held this week under the auspices of the Jerusalem Merchants' Association, the Jerusalem Workers' Council, the Artisans' Union, the Barbers' Union, and retail associations, and the grievances of all given vehement utterance.

A statement issued by the joint associations points out that no local or partial solution will succeed in curbing the freedom

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To Every Jew and Jewess

SHEKEL DAY 5695.

Sunday, 31st March—26th Adar 2.

SHEKEL DAY has been fixed for Sunday, March 31st—26th Adar. Year by year, on an appointed day at or near the season of Purim, South African Jewry is called upon to take the Shekel.

THE Shekel is the token and symbol of the Jew's adherence to his nation. The taking of the Shekel is the annually repeated act whereby he declares himself an adherent of the Jewish national ideal and a member of the Jewish national movement. It is at once an act of enrolment and a declaration of allegiance.

TO a dispersed nation that has as yet no unified citizenship, registration through the Shekel represents the most effective visible bond, and at the same time demonstrates our national

solidarity and our part in the success of our striving in Eretz Israel.

THE number of Shekel payers each year is the only concrete evidence we can offer to the world of the strength of the national will which lies behind the Zionist movement and therefore of the validity of the claim it makes to speak on behalf of the Jewish nation.

THE Nineteenth Zionist Congress will be held this year. Its decisions will be of the utmost moment for the future of the national home and of the Zionist cause. Only Shekel payers have the right to send delegates to this Congress. Only, therefore, if vast numbers take the Shekel will the Congress be truly representative of the great masses of world Jewry.

**UPON EVERY ZIONIST WORKER WE URGE: "SELL THE SHEKEL"
TO EVERY JEW AND JEWESS WE APPEAL: "BUY THE SHEKEL"**

For the S.A. ZIONIST FEDERATION,
N. KIRSCHNER, *Chairman of the Executive Council.*
J. ALEXANDER, *Secretary.*

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with which owners of shops, dwellings or office premises are handling the rents situation. Rigorous application of the law is the only remedy, it is urged.

Agreement has been reached to send a deputation to wait upon the members of the committee of enquiry set up, at the request of the District Commissioners by the Municipality, to urge that this committee should not go beyond inquiring and reporting on the position. If cases of extortionate increases are established, the committee has no power to suggest that landlords offer concessions.

A deputation will also be chosen to wait upon the Vaad Leumi and to urge agreement among the Jewish members of the Jerusalem Municipality, in order to secure their concerted vote on a rents restriction measure.

Meanwhile Jewish doctors in Jerusalem have also entered the fray, and in a circular just issued, the Jewish Medical Association suggests that doctors seeking new premises should not negotiate with landlords where other doctors are in tenancy except with the latter's consent. If accommodation is available in the same house, the assent of the physician resident therein should be obtained first.

Arbitration in disputes is offered by the committee of the Association.

The Achad Ha'am of Czecho-Slovakia.

Celebrations have been taking place in Palestine in connection with the eighty-fifth birthday of President Masaryk, of Czecho-Slovakia, the great Jewish friend and sympathiser. In honour of the occasion the President has been elected an honorary citizen of Tel-Aviv.

A meeting was held under the auspices of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem and was attended by a large audience. Dr. Shmarya Levin, in the course of an exceedingly fine address, referred to President Masaryk as the "Achad Ha'am" of his people and likened him to the Balfour of Britain and the Smuts of South Africa.

In Tel-Aviv also a mass meeting was held. Mr. Rokach, the Acting Mayor, stated that President Masaryk had been granted the freedom of the city out of appreciation of his sympathy for the strivings of the Jewish nation all over the world and towards Zionism and the first Jewish city, Tel-Aviv. The only other non-Jews to be elected Freemen of Tel-Aviv are Marshal Viscount Allenby and the late Earl of Balfour.

Tozereth Ha'aretz.

A delightful story—a true one incidentally—is told in connection with the strenuous efforts made here to promote the buying of *tozereth ha'aretz* (locally produced goods).

A new cinema was opened in Tel-Aviv about a fortnight ago. Just prior to its completion it was learnt that all the seats had been imported from Europe and an agitation was immediately set on foot by the Furniture Manufacturers' Association. The owner of the cinema was vigorously tackled and after much argument agreed to have the matter settled by arbitration. The Vaad Leumi was referred to and a board of arbitrators set up by it. The cinema proprietor was compelled by the terms of its decision to contribute 10 per cent of the cost of the seats to the Keren Hayesod.

THE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

