

A Letter from Eretz Israel.

(From Our Own Correspondent).

Jerusalem, 30th January, 1936.

The American Economic Committee.

Towards the close of 1935, I understand, a South African Economic Committee for Palestine was formed at the instigation of the American Economic Committee, with which body it has affiliated. I am ignorant of the lines on which this new organisation will conduct its activities, but if it follows in the path of its parent body, or can in any way further its work, it will be performing no mean service for Palestine.

The American Economic Committee, whose headquarters are in Tel-Aviv, is an institution essentially concerned with facts. It has been created and is served by people who are wholeheartedly Zionists but who are not carried away by high-sounding talk and the usual arts of propaganda. Their service to the Yishub is of a fundamentally practical nature.

The Committee was set up for the purpose of facilitating settlement and investment by middle-class immigrants to Palestine and the establishment by them of new industrial and agricultural enterprises. Aware of the difficulties which beset the newcomer who is ignorant of local conditions and of the enterprises in which he may most satisfactorily invest his capital, the Committee sets out to give him advice and information. It has made careful investigations in every field of enterprise in the country, it has collected a stack of data and statistics which has caused it to be recognised as the Central Bureau for Economic Information in the country by a number of the principal institutions here, and it gives the prospective settler the benefit of its information with an honesty and directness more valuable than any soul-stirring appeal for Palestine. At the same time it is concerned not only for the immigrant but for the welfare and progress of the Yishub as well. It attempts not to direct new capital into field already overcrowded. It explores every possibility of new enterprise, increased employment and thus enlarged immigration. It has given advice to thousands of prospective settlers with capital, and it can be truly said that of those who do eventually settle in the country, the majority pass through its hands.

The report of the Committee for 1935, which has just come to hand, reveals that during the year it dealt with 2,355 enquiries, which is approximately the same number as in 1934. The enquiries were received from prospective settlers who visited the Central Bureau of the Committee in person, by others who sent personal representatives to enquire on their behalf, or by mail. The majority of them, as during the last year, were received from Germany, though a decrease of 33 per cent. in the number of German enquirers is noted since 1934.

The following table shows the dominant interest of the enquirers:—

	1933.	1934.	1935.
	p.c.	p.c.	p.c.
Industry	75	59	50
Agriculture	6	6	8
Commerce	4	11	15
Investment	11	15	15
Miscellaneous and service (hotels, clinics, laundries, etc.) enterprises	4	9	12

The diminishing interest in industry and increasing interest in other occupations is attributed by the Bureau to difficulties experienced and fears entertained by prospective investors concerning unbridled dumping; inadequate customs tariff protection for infant undertakings with reasonable economic bases; lack of complete customs tariff exemption on *all* industrial machinery and equipment; lack of suitable leasable factory space; lack of longer term industrial credits; and, particularly, the lack of adequate supply of labour.

The owners of practically all the factories and workshops established in Palestine during 1935 made use of the Bureau's services, and it was able to indicate and often to prevent uneconomic duplication and the establishment of unwarranted enterprises. During the year the Bureau revised and enlarged its extensive files ranging over all the most important branches of Palestine's industry, agriculture and commerce. The co-operation of an experienced agriculturalist was secured for the purpose of an intensive study of the economic side of dairy farming, poultry-raising and vegetable growing on privately owned holdings. Some two hundred farms were visited in the course of this study and individual reports made on the history, organisation, income and expenditure of each one. It is hoped to complete the investigation early in 1936, when the results will be made available to new middle-class settlers interested in mixed farming.

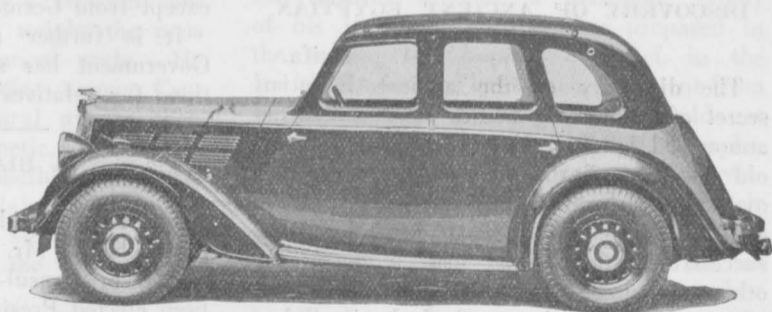
A Music Festival for Palestine?

Bronislaw Huberman's schemes for a Palestine Symphony Orchestra, about which I wrote several weeks back, are beginning to take very definite shape. I hear that he has succeeded in raising already £20,000 both here and abroad and that he has made fair headway with the more technical arrangements.

His plans are for an orchestra of fifty-five members. He has already selected about thirty-five first-rate musicians in Palestine, and it is understood that the High Commissioner is granting immigration certificates for others from outside the country. Arrangements are being made for two well-known Jewish conductors to come to Palestine to take charge of the orchestra, whilst a number of world-famous conductors, among them Bruno Walter, have promised to act as guest conductors.

The home of the orchestra will be in Palestine, although it will from time to time travel through Europe. Huberman hopes to create in Palestine a regular musical festival on a large scale, of a similar nature to the Salzburg festivals, which will bring thousands of music-lovers from all over the world. He plans to launch this undertaking next season.

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