

FROM THE JEWISH PRESS

Items and Comments of Particular Interest

Interview With Feuchtwanger

LION FEUCHTWANGER, the famous writer, who recently reached America after a miraculous escape from France, gave an interview to a reporter of the *Forwaerts* (New York).

"What has happened in France ever since the outbreak of the War," said Mr. Feuchtwanger, "was simply another Dreyfus case. The Laval and Flandin clique, right from the beginning, was engaged not upon war against France's deadliest enemy, but upon a war of incitement, against Leon Blum and all the Jews. The French military clique which some forty odd years ago instigated the notorious Dreyfus case, were liberals compared with the Laval set. Whilst it may be true that there was a momentary feeling of relief when the Armistice was signed, it very soon changed into overwhelming bitterness against the present ruler of France and into a desire to see Britain win the war."

Mr. Feuchtwanger then expressed the hope that American Jewry would do everything in its power to help the Allies.

Yeshivah Students in Internment Camps

A CANADIAN correspondent of the *Tog* (New York) states that amongst the many enemy aliens who were transferred from England to Canada are some two thousand Jewish refugees from Germany.

A number of these internees are waiting for visas for America. There is a group of 250 Chaltzim who came to England on the way to Palestine. Another group consists of fifty Yeshivah-bachurim, students of the famous Yeshivah of Frankfurt.

This is perhaps the most interesting body of internees in Canada. They are kept in a separate camp, almost segregated from the other internees. They have a Sefer Torah and volumes of the Talmud and they continue their Yeshivah behind barbed wire. They are provided with kosher food, and as they are unable to have any contact with the outside world they can devote themselves to their studies with even greater zeal than before.

With the relaxation of the restrictions against Aliens in England, it is expected that before long at least fourteen hundred of these internees will be released, and Jewish Relief organisations are already concerned over the problem of providing means for their sustenance. The correspondent also states that refugees in Canada itself were not interned and that a large number of German refugees in Canada have recently had themselves converted to the Catholic faith.

Refugees . . . Refugees

THE American Jewish press publishes a full statement, which was issued by the executive of the World Jewish Congress, on the number of recent refugees in France and Portugal.

The invasion of Poland has driven into Palestine, Rumania, Lithuania and Hungary some 30,000 Jewish refugees. In Portugal and in Southern France there are to-day between one hundred and a thousand refugees. They include those who escaped from Nazi-occupied France, from Belgium and Holland; the refugees from Germany who happened to be in internment camps in France; demobilised Jewish soldiers of the French, Polish and the Czech army. The small Jewish community of unoccupied France was altogether unprepared to render aid to the big army of refugees, who, therefore, have to depend on world Jewish organisations. It must be stated that both the Vichy Government and the Government of Portugal have shown a humanitarian attitude towards the refugees. The Catholic Church of Portugal has published an official welcome to the exiles.

The largest number of refugees are in Southern France. These include thirty-five thousand Jews who were driven from Alsace Lorraine, twenty thousand German and Austrian Jews, twenty thousand Jewish soldiers of the Polish and Czech armies, six thousand Belgian, Dutch and Luxemburg Jews, and a number of demobilised Jewish soldiers of the French Army. They are at present stranded in Toulouse, Marseilles, Limage, Vichy and Lyons. Some four thousand refugees are in Portugal and are stranded in Lisbon and Porto.

Democracy in Jewish Life

SOME outspoken comment on Jewish communal institutions is given by Prof. Mordecai M. Kaplan in the "Reconstructionist" magazine. He says:

"To fortify Democracy through loyalty means to incorporate it into our Jewish communal life. We must practise Democracy in every group to which we owe loyalty. But at this point Jewish communal life is referred to particularly. We have condoned shtadlanuth within and without; that is, we have permitted our leadership to go by default to the rich and the influential. Jewish institutions have never achieved democracy because the masses of Jews have been neither ready nor willing to assume their democratic responsibility. In our relationship with the non-Jewish world the same evil has prevailed. Our representatives have not been elected by us, but have acquired status through their wealth and power. We have permitted taxation without representation; we have supported Jewish enterprises without insisting upon our right to determine communal policies democratically. Our duty henceforth must be to put democracy within our own communal life."

Commenting on this statement, the *Tog* (New York) says editorially that

"Just because the times are so perilous, requiring the utmost tact and caution, no individual or group of individuals can be entrusted to act on behalf of Jewish interests according to their own individual judgments . . . There must be more control and not less, more representative Jewish leadership, more democracy. The Jewish masses have a right to know where they are being led, and to have a decisive voice in the determining direction that is to be followed."

The Chazanim Season

THE period of the High Festivals is regarded in America as the season for chazanim. In reviewing this year's season both the *Forwaerts* and the *Tog* of New York dwell on the deplorable position of Chazanuth at the present day.

Gone are the days, says the "Forwaerts," when Yossele Rosenblatt obtained 15,000 dollars for officiating on the three days of the High Festivals. In those days, during the post-war prosperity, Synagogues were "bathing in money," and there was strong competition for the offices of the leading chazanim. At that time seven great chazanim were active in America. They were Kwartin, Fuks, Rautmann, Hershmann, Rosenblatt, Neumann and Winogradow.

Three of these have since died. Hershmann has retired completely from the singing profession. Have any new chazanim appeared in their place? As far as can be seen all the young wonder children who were at one time attracted by the high salaries have not turned out to be great chazanim. Most of them have realised that there is no great future in the profession. To-day there are virtually no great chazanim in America.

Cantor Joshua Weisser, President of the Cantor's Association, reviews the position in the *Tog*. He states that only twenty per cent. of the cantors have permanent positions. The rest remain satisfied with a job for the High Festivals only. Amongst the unemployed are many fine musicians and well-trained men. There are also a number of refugee chazanim who are looking for work in the United States.

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