

LABOUR PARTY AND ISRAEL

Broken Pledges During Mandatory Era

To the Editor of THE JEWISH CHRONICLE

Sir.—Perhaps Mr. Landman is, as Mr. Schaffer suggests (in your last week's issue), capable of futile polemics, and perhaps he is a source of amusement. And perhaps he is not. But would it not be wiser, and more decent, for critics of his writings to concentrate on the pros and cons of his arguments, and refrain from public sneers and jeers on and of a man who, after all, has given a lifetime of service and time to the Jewish people and the Zionist movement? Surely Mr. Landman deserves better than this speculation how much this sort of public (and private) denigration, together with pettiness and spite, has turned people away from Zionist politics.

As regards the nature of Mr. Landman's expressed views on the Labour Party and Israel, it certainly is not un-understandable that thinking people who remember the disgraceful manner in which Labour broke every one of its pledges on Palestine during the years leading up to the termination of the Mandate should feel bitter and cynical upon relying on any expression of such a pledge that the Labour Party might make. And what I can only call the latest perjured statement of Earl Attlee on Israel is enough to drive people if not to drink—then at least to print! For my part, I thought that Mr. Landman was far too generous in his estimation of Earl Attlee's motives. (It is interesting to remember when giving appreciation to Earl Attlee's mistake remark that in 1943 he proposed a motion at a Labour Party conference that the Palestine Arabs should be encouraged to move out as the Jews moved in, and that Transjordan should be made part of a future Jewish State.)

Mr. Schaffer is certainly right in stressing the necessity of keeping all sections of British public opinion and political thought informed on developments in Israel, and it certainly is to the best advantage of Israel that an atmosphere of sympathy should be built up wherever possible. But let us well remember that all governments when put to the test will act according to their practical needs and not according to sentimental pronouncements. And Mr. Landman by reminding us of past Labour defections helps to bring home to us this hard lesson.

22 Cranley Road, R. GERSHLICK, Westcliff-on-Sea.

Harsh Comments

Sir.—I believe that Mr. Schaffer (who wrote last week) has been unduly harsh on his colleague, Mr. Landman, for his comments on the anti-Israeli outburst of Lord Attlee and Mr. Gaiskell. Periodically, leading members of the Labour and Conservative Parties criticise Israel. It is, therefore, a natural reaction for members of the Jewish community to voice their protest.

The British press cherishes a jealously guarded freedom—a freedom which is shared by correspondents

who besiege editors with strong opinions and literary masterpieces. There can be no doubt that Mr. Schaffer, in his capacity of Public Relations Officer for the Zionist Federation, capably performs an important and difficult task. But surely he goes beyond his jurisdiction when he expresses a desire to censor the letters of his executive members.

17 Hill House, Springfield, E.5.

Jewish M.P.s

Sir.—May I dot an "i" and cross a "t" in Mr. Landman's letter in your issue of August 22.

It would be catastrophic to count on the British Labour Party, if and when it attains power, implementing the pious expressions of good will towards Israel which is uttered by many of its members while in opposition. The last Mr. Bevin was a member of that Party when it was in power and his name is linked with the collective responsibility of it as a whole; we all, alas! know what that policy was.

But members in both parties carry little weight in the making of policy and it is sad to see so much of the all too few £s and \$s which should be spent in developing Israel devoted to sponsoring the journeys of M.P.s to and from that country. It is as futile to pin our faith on their official support as it is to pin it on the effective support of the Jewish M.P.s. These were elected to support their constituents, not their fellow Jews, and why should they risk their whip? Indeed, if they do give effective support to Israel in the House of Commons let us be thankful but do not let us count on it.

CYRIL HENNINGSON, 4 Campden Hill Square, W.8.

Sir.—If the last paragraph of Mr. Samuel Landman's letter (in your issue of August 22) be true—and who may challenge it?—the observation of Earl Attlee need not worry us overmuch.

True the Earl is no longer Leader of the Labour Party, but he is of that party which subscribes so wholeheartedly to the principle—"Policy is the best honesty." Nor ought we to be dismayed at his foolish remark, the Leader of the Opposition which added nothing to his stature as a statesman. The Labour Party once shone with idealists and there may be some left—enough indeed to redeem the city.

HENRY SNOWMAN, 21/22 Dunraven Street, W.1.

Sir.—Mr. Goldberg's correction in his letter of last week is incomplete. Mr. Greenwood's Brain Trust speech, made in reply to a question from me, also included the somewhat surprising statement that the reason the DAILY HERALD and the NEW STATESMAN made no reference to the Tenth Anniversary was only that they did not consider it of interest from the journalistic point of view.

Even more surprising, however, is the hectoring attempt of Mr. Schaffer to accuse Mr. Landman of myself have reason to know that there are many Gentile Englishmen of all parties who are sufficiently aware of this country's true interests in the Middle East to support Israel and I see no point in dwelling on the past. But it is surely an insult to the intelligence and the patriotism of these real friends of Israel to suggest that they might change their attitude—which I think is the correct interpretation of Mr. Schaffer's "incalculable harm"—merely because an individual Jew lets himself go on the basis of once bitten twice shy. In any case, Mr. Schaffer really ought to remember that politicians when in a position to act invariably do so on free thoughts.

LAWRENCE WOLFE, 76 Omslow Gardens, London, S.W.7.

MISS MILLIE GARCIA, the singer, entertained the Friendly Fellowship Club at a recent concert at the home of Mrs. B. Labor (Dorcy Avenue, N.W.1).

APPEAL FOR CLOTHING

Refugees at the Shelter

To the Editor of THE JEWISH CHRONICLE

Sir.—May we appeal once again through your columns on behalf of our protégés who are in need of clothing.

The magnificent response to our appeal early in 1957 was, of course, almost exhausted by distribution among the Hungarian and Egyptian refugees who were being cared for at the Shelter. The present residents of the Shelter come mainly from India, where economic conditions are forcing a famine, but fairly constant migration. Most of these people come rather scantily clad, and quite unprepared for the comparative rigours of an English autumn and winter.

The urgent need is for new clothing, of warm clothing in very good condition, for men, women, and children; but we do most respectfully ask that these cause embarrassment, both because of lack of space and shortage of staff.

Gifts, which will be individually acknowledged, should be sent to the Secretary at the Shelter, 63 Mansell Street, London, E.1.

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About Books

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH A New Imprint

The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text: A New Translation. With the aid of previous versions and with constant consultation of Jewish authorities. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, London: Cambridge University Press, 1951. 6s. 6d.

Reviewed by HUGH HARRIS This English version of the Hebrew Bible has rightly become a modern classic and is now everywhere recognized by English-speaking Jews as the standard version in the synagogue. In its preface to the original edition the translators expressed their objective as follows: "It aims to combine the spirit of Jewish tradition with the results of biblical scholarship in a new edition, which gives a fresh and accurate translation of the Scriptures in a modern idiom, but which will welcome a translation that presents itself from the Jewish traditional viewpoint."

This splendid objective was completely achieved; and during the past forty years this renowned work has constantly been reprinted in a host of hundreds of thousands of copies. British Jewry is now greatly indebted to the enterprise of the Cambridge University Press, which has produced a reprinting of this work that will make it far more readily obtainable in this country and at a much more reasonable price than hitherto. This is a real service not only to the Jewish community but to the followers of all faiths; and it is in keeping with the traditions of the Cambridge University Press, which is famed for its productions in the field of Biblical literature.

On the title-page, however, appears an erroneous ascription: "The Jewish Publication Society of America." Moreover, on the verso appear the words: "Second Impression, August, 1917" (apparently through the reprinting by photolithography using that very early impression). This is unfortunate, as some forty impressions have since appeared. As well as the ordinary edition, the Jewish Publication Society produced in 1955 a new edition, which differed not only in format and type but also contained a number of internal changes, such as the respelling of some archaic words and the correction of a number of misprints, although no other changes were made in the text of the translation.

ASPECTS OF ITALIAN JEWRY Over Twenty Centuries

Scritti in Memoria di Sally Mayer (1875-1953). Jerusalem: published for the Sally Mayer Foundation, Institute of Jewish Studies, Milan. Reviewed by LEON ROTH

The late Sally Mayer was an industrialist of great wealth who came to Italy from Germany as a boy and became an Italian citizen after the First World War. Between the wars he built up a fortune, and after the end of the second devoted his remarkable energy and abilities to the rehabilitation of Italian Jewry. He seems to have re-created Jewish life in his home city, Milan. He reorganized it from top to bottom, refounding its school and reconstituting its charitable institutions; but not (we are assured) "low above"! The service he gave us personal, and so much more to me for his loving care. He would join the schoolchildren in their excursions as readily as he would guide his numerous committees and conduct a campaign for some public Jewish cause. For the general community day and night, and enjoyed it. When he was killed in a motor accident in 1953 he was universally mourned as friend and helper as well as benefactor.

TRANSFERENCE TO ISRAEL

The volume issued in his memory contains a collection of studies on various aspects of Italian Jewry, two-thirds of which are in Italian and one-third in Hebrew, the Hebrew portion including contributions from the President of the State of Israel, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, and a former Prime Minister of the State of Israel. The studies cover points of regional, domestic, religious, and social history, the history of art and music (chanting), demography, literature, and education; while the most recent history is represented by an article on modern Italian Jewish writers, on the other by a memoir of Enzo Sereni and a description of the past taken by Italian Jewry in helping the refugees of the present post-war period. For the general student of the Jewish people perhaps the most significant material is the account of the transference to Israel of the Italian rite in the synagogue, which is illustrated by photographs of the rite in its original form, but which may well attract scholarly reflections on the breaking-up of the present "congregational" structure of world Jewry.

Since the volume deals with the transference of the Italian rite to Israel, it is interesting to note that the author, who is a well-known scholar of the Casanovi and Zimbardo and other strange wonders of the past. The volume is published by the Jewish Publication Society of America, London: Cambridge University Press, 1958. 12s. 6d.

WOMEN PIONEERS

Daughters from Afar: Profiles of Israeli Women. By GERALDINE STERN. Abelard-Schuman, 16s. Reviewed by MIRIAM WARBURG

It is always difficult to write about such "outsize" personalities as the ones with whom this book deals. Most writers are too easily inclined to idealise those about whom they write and thus to de-humanise them and to ignore those features and incidents which make them real living people. In addition there is, naturally, always the consideration that one must not write anything which may embarrass or offend the person whom one admires. Geraldine Stern has succumbed to these pitfalls, too. Not in all her stories (I almost wrote "articles")—because this book is the work of a true journalist, but in some of them she succeeds in bringing her heroine to life—in others they remain mere statues.

Who are these women about whom she writes? They are the women pioneers of Israel, who have helped to build Israel under tremendous sacrifices with a stamina, courage, and almost incredible endurance which must arouse deepest admiration. Some of them—like Golda Meir and the actress Rivka—are well known outside Israel; others have made their name only inside the country. But just those with the world-wide fame—and this refers especially to Golda Meir—are Geraldine Stern's least human creations. Geraldine Stern has liked to read more incidents like the rather macabre joke which Geraldine Stern relates about her: When Golda arrived in New York after the declaration of the State, her sister Clara hurried to meet her at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. She was kept waiting for some time, and when she was asked to come up, she was startled to find a woman wearing flowing Arab dress, her face blacked up. When she said: "Hello! Clara," she recognised her sister, who had put on the same disguise she had chosen for her meeting with Abdullah. Stories like that may have revealed much more about the heroines of Israel, the enumeration of the many achievements of hers, most of which we know anyhow.

Touching Stories But how can Geraldine Stern penetrate to the real thing if she tries to do so by writing her heroine for a cup of tea in a café, or to go to see her in her flat or place of work and talk a few hours with her? She "interviews" her women but she does not live their lives with them. That, in spite of this, she succeeds in writing some fascinating, touching, and often harrowing stories, is obviously due to her outstanding ability to induce people to tell her about their lives and their problems. She has selected these people most skillfully from all walks of life and from immigrants from all over the world. There is never a repetition; each chapter tells a new and interesting story.

BIBLE AND TALMUD

Vision Press are the U.K. distributors for several books published in New York by Twayne Publishers and Bookman Associates: A Treasury of Bible Stories, by Hyman E. Goldin (40s.); Treasury of Holidays (40s.); The Talmud, by David Goldby (25s.); The Talmud, by Isaac Untermyer (25s.). The Genesis and the Pentateuch, by Immanuel Jakobowitz (36s.).

PAPERBACKS

Three valuable books, finely reprinted in paper-cover editions and published in America by Meridian Books and in the Jewish Publication Society, are now available for readers in this country through the Mayflower Publishing Co., For the Sale of Heaven, by Martin Witt (12s.); Students, Scholars, and Scribes, by Isaac Avivi, compiled by Isaac Husik (16s.).

BOOK BRIEFS

תורת ישראל (Essays in honour of Abraham Rezanani's 70th birthday), Jubilee Commemorative, 123 Rebov Nachalat Binjamin, Tel Aviv, 1957, comprises 12 essays and tributes to a Zionist leader, who, before he settled in Eretz Yisrael, was active in Salonika. Some of the essays were published in the Jewish Chronicle's correspondence.

תורת ישראל (Essays in honour of Rabbi Yehuda Kadai (Rufin Meir, Jerusalem), is the first part of a text-book of Modern Hebrew for non-Jews, with advanced study units. It is a most advanced, up-to-date and partly novel method of teaching Hebrew in Israel.

The U.K. distributor of 1958 reprint by Moshe Gordon, reviewed in our issue of August 15, 1958, is now available in paperback from the distinguished House of Israel Lectures.

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