

Hitler May Exploit Oberammergau Passion Play in Anti-Semitic Drive

What will happen in the little Bavarian town of Oberammergau, famous for its "Passion Play," now that Herr Adolf Hitler is ruler of Germany, has been vividly described by G. E. R. Geyde, correspondent for the London Daily Telegraph, in a recent dispatch to that newspaper. Chancellor Hitler in recent announcements lent his support to the Passion Players and hinted that not only would he support them financially, but wanted them to go on a tour of Germany for the first time in their history, so that the whole country could be inflamed against the Jews.

Geyde described his recent visit to Oberammergau as follows:

"Criminal outcasts from the most desperate of peoples once came together in the desert under the leadership of the law-giver Moses, and formed the Jewish people." So I had read in the Nazi organ, "Der Sturmer."

There came to memory a tiny, world-famous village, hidden in the Bavarian Alps, where I had once seen walking shamelessly in the streets the most perfect examples of the "criminal outcasts from the most desperate of peoples" that the modern world can show, with their long hair, high foreheads; and aquiline or slightly hooked noses.

By tens of thousands people have flocked to this tiny Alpine village with its painted-house fronts, to see them. Oberammergau lies not three hours' journey from Munich.

Only three weeks before my own visit I had heard Julius Streicher, the Nazi high-priest of anti-Semitism, announce that "the murder of Golgotha, which had gone unpunished for two thousand years," would now be visited upon "the Christ-murderers." How, I wondered, would all this have affected the village which lives by its depiction of the "Christ-murderers" of Golgotha?

Not at all, was the first impres-

sion frowning upon this representation of Jews by the Oberammergau peasants, or by the German public being reluctant to witness it, or by the players themselves being reluctant to play the Semitic parts of the disciples, of Mary, Joseph, Mary Magdalene—and of Christ Himself? Among the interesting things I learnt was that it will depend upon the Nazis' choice who is to play Christ, Mary, the disciples and all other Jewish roles.

"We don't believe," a municipal officer said, "that the new movement will at all harm us. Why should anti-Semitic principles induce any hostility to our Play?"

"Is there any Jewish blood in the villagers, so many of whom are the living images of what we imagine the Jews of Biblical times to have been?" I asked.

"As far as we know," came the reply, "no real Jew has ever lived here. We are just Bavarian mountain peasants."

Herr Stuckl, guardian of the Passion Play Theatre and depicter of the "Public Prosecutor" of the Jews, the Priest Nathaniel, said: "We shall none of us feel the least reluctance to play our Jewish roles. Our Judas is as fine a Christian man in real life as we have in our village. No, no; I am a good German, and I endorse something like what is happening now in Germany was inevitable. The Nazis will be inclined to help forward this 300-year-old tradition of our village."

It was the man who at the last performance depicted, and surely in the next will again depict Christ, Herr Alois Lang, who revealed the actual effect of the Nazi revolution on the Passion Play.

"This summer," he said, "we are to play a two-and-a-half hours' religious drama of great force, which shows how the Passion Play arose. We should have already started rehearsals, but politics have inter-

