THE STORY OF "NIGHT OF STARS"

By SAMUEL BLITZ
Executive Director, "Night of Stars"

On a September evening in 1934, 45,000 persons were seated in the amphitheatre of the Yankee Stadium. Before them on the field was a huge stage flooded with the rich colors of theatrical spotlights. Out of the darkness below stepped a slight figure with a leonine shock of steel gray hair. Facing an orchestra of 600 men, he raised his right arm and with a nod of his head he gave the signal for the beginning of the overture. Leopold Stokowski had never conducted such an orchestra, neither had New York ever before witnessed such a performance. In that first gesture Mr. Stokowski inaugurated the first "Night of Stars," a presentation which was to become New York's most spectacular entertainment.

When the newspapers appeared the following morning, they spoke of a glamorous array of talent taken from the top shelf of the amusement world, which could not be assembled by any one theatrical impresario, but could be gathered on one stage only through the great humanitarian urge to serve a cause of major importance — the program of Palestine reconstruction and refugee relief and rehabilitation.

Today, as "Night of Stars" gives its tenth annual performance, those who were present at its birth may be pardoned the slightest touch of nostalgia if they indulge in reminiscences which may not be regarded as entirely inappropriate on an occasion such as this.

"Night of Stars" was not a revolutionary enterprise in the theatre, but it did introduce elements which established its claim to special importance and which gave rise to a type of production that has captured and fired the imagination of New York. The success of "Night of Stars" influenced the Army and Navy, the Red Cross and other organizations to undertake similar shows and more recently Hollywood has recognized the value of this type of entertainment and a crop of "star" pictures has blossomed forth on the screens of the nation's movie houses.

Like many other significant enterprises, "Night of Stars" had a rather modest beginning. In the year following the advent of Hitlerism in Germany, the leaders of New York Jewry were engaged in a determined effort to raise funds to alleviate the plight of the Jews in Germany and to help as many as possible find a home in Palestine. In that year the writer urged that the campaign of the United Jewish Appeal be (Continued on page 60)
FOOD
-Lifeline of War Production

The U. S. Department of Agriculture estimates that it takes the food from 42,000 acres to feed the workers who build a 35,000 ton battleship.

It takes the food from 155 acres to build a bomber.

It takes 43 acres to build a medium tank.

These figures illustrate the immensity of the job of feeding a nation at war. Tremendous quantities of food must be produced. They must be kept flowing steadily through the channels of distribution to the mealtabs of American workers.

The efficiency with which this food is distributed greatly determines how well American workers can eat.

Greater efficiency in food distribution means less loss of perishables, and therefore a larger quantity of actual food available at the store. It means that foods reach consumers with a higher nutritional content. It means that prices are lower than would otherwise be possible. It means that transportation facilities and manpower are released for other vital war jobs.

That is why the men and women of A & P are proud to be doing the nation’s most efficient job of food distribution.

A & P FOOD STORES
papers gave generous space to "Night of Stars." I should like here to thank especially Mr. Lee Wood, of the New York World-Telegram, who has demonstrated a keen interest and a most helpful understanding every year, as well as Robert H. Johnson of the Mirror. We also received splendid cooperation from the Sun, the Post, the Journal-American, the Times, the Herald-Tribune, the Eagle, the Home News, the Inquirer, the News, PM and all of the other general papers, the Yiddish press, the English-Jewish press and the radio stations. Without their freely-offered help, "Night of Stars" would not have been as forcefully presented to the people of New York. The city's transit systems have greatly helped to publicize the event and their assistance has been invaluable.

Naturally, our deepest appreciation is due to the countless stars of stage, screen and radio who generously gave of their talent without remuneration. They are the ones who made the "Night of Stars." The list is very long, but each and every star has done a great service to the causes represented by "Night of Stars." Many of them have returned year after year, travelling great distances at great expense, to do their part for Palestine and for refugees all over the world.

Thanks are due, too, to Local 802 of the Musicians Union, whose cooperation has been most helpful; to the Stagehands Union, which donated the services of its members so that the show might go on; to Don Albert, who has served as musical director since the inception of "Night of Stars" and to Captain Sidney H. Pierson, who served as Stage Manager and who is now with the U.S. forces in North Africa.

Far from least has been the splendid and selfless cooperation of industry leaders. After the success of the first "Night of Stars," its continuation as an annual event was assured by the organization of the Night of Stars Corporation. Serving with Nathan Straus, president of the corporation, are: Sylvan Gentshal and Rudolf Sonneborn, Co-Chairmen; Dr. G. A. Lowenstein, Executive Chairman and Abraham L. Liebowitz, Treasurer.

It was the third annual "Night of Stars" that firmly established the spectacle as a public institution. The late Mr. Harold Jacoby, then chairman of "Night of Stars," enlisted the active cooperation of Grover A.

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Marvin H. Schenck, former Producing Committee head.

Whalen, who has since served as honorary chairman of the event. He consulted such eminent authorities on public affairs as Edward L. Bernays and Herbert Bayard Swope with the result that the Yearbook of the United Palestine Appeal, which you are now reading, published on the occasion of "Night of Stars," has become an important educational medium for Palestine as well as a means for raising additional funds for the campaign.

In 1938 Louis K. Sidney was called to the coast and was succeeded as chairman of the producing committee by Marvin H. Schenck, who has served brilliantly until this year, when Robert M. Weissman, managing director of the Paramount Theatre, assumed the chairmanship.

Year after year the efforts of those upon whose cooperation the success of "Night of Stars" depends have been so devoted and efficient that a loyal audience, vying for the privilege of buying tickets, has been built up. To them, too, we owe a debt of gratitude. I find some satisfaction in the fact that they have never been disappointed.

The leading factors in the promotion of "Night of Stars" have been the members of the Trades Council which for a number of years was headed by Michael Schaap, president of Bloomingdale's, and which is now directed by Leonard Ginsberg, president of Hearn's. Of great importance in this phase of "Night of Stars" has been the Women's Division which has been under the leadership of Mrs. Roger W. Straus, Mrs. Ferdinand Sonneborn, Mrs. Joseph Strock and now headed by Mrs. Leo Spitz.

There is always an unsung group of workers behind the scenes of any great undertaking.

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Dewar's "White Label"
and "Victoria Vat"
THE MEDAL SCOTCH OF THE WORLD

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Don Albert Capt. Pierrmont

"Night of Stars" has its full measure of them. The administrative office of "Night of Stars" has had the benefit of the loyal services of Alex Rothenberg, controller; Samuel Goldstein, director of the Trades Council; Meyer F. Steinglass, editor of the Year Book; Mrs. Estelle Liebers, director of the Women's Division; David Lipsky, publicity director from 1939-1942 (now in the Service); and Miss Molly Feldman who serves as secretary to the Producing Committee.

The idea for "Night of Stars" literally proved to be a million dollar idea. During the ten years of its unprecedented one-night stands "Night of Stars" has raised approximately that sum for the programs of Palestine settlement and reconstruction and for aid to refugees and relief abroad.

I like to think that "Night of Stars" is a symbol of the heart of democracy for so much of the truly human elements have gone into its preparation. As the lovable George M. Cohan said in his imitable style:

"We must believe, we must relieve
The ones who bear the scars,
So fight the fight, tonight's the night,
The mighty Night of Stars!"

Jewish women in the "Pats" (Palestine Auxiliary Territorial Service) at a training center.

The U. P. A. Program
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Palestine, ranging from the recruitment of Jewish soldiers, which is completely under the jurisdiction of the Jewish Agency, to the support of religious affairs.

For the year 5703, from January through August, the Jewish Agency spent $1,162,702 for the vital program of agricultural settlement, which includes the founding of new settlements, expansion of food production, irrigation projects, livestock, agricultural research, seeds, buildings, etc.

For internal security, a particularly important aspect of Palestine's affairs under existing conditions, the sum of $1,155,704 was spent. Included in this sum is provision for recruitment, assistance to the armed forces and their

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