

Current Communal Comments

By "HAMABIT."

Conversaciones.

Our Zionist friends in Capetown are to be congratulated upon instituting an innovation in the way of functions. In order to eliminate the present feeling of depression existing in some quarters on account of the recent happenings in Palestine, it was felt desirable that people should get together more often in a Zionist atmosphere. By opening the heart one to the other, a feeling of renewed confidence is likely to be aroused and an appreciation engendered at the wonderful accomplishments realised in Palestine.

An attempt in a similar direction began on Sunday evening last by the Johannesburg Zionist Association, and unhappily proved a failure. The affair was to have taken place at the H.O.D. Hall. At 8.30 p.m. the large total of three people had turned up—one of whom was the chairman of the evening. After waiting some time, the three stalwarts left reluctantly. Soon after that a few late arrivals appeared on the scene—about five of them—and these, too, gradually dispersed.

I trust that the failure on Sunday will not cause the abandonment of the idea of holding such functions in Johannesburg. The meeting referred to had evidently been badly organised, and the notices convening the meeting not only arrived late, but were worded in so heavy, lengthy and dull a manner as to frighten off rather than attract visitors.

The idea of "getting together" during these times of depression and inculcating in the diaspora something of the courageous spirit of the *Yishuv* in Palestine, is an excellent one indeed.

The Depression.

It would be an interesting study in economics to find out exactly—and give a report on—the influence of the present economic depression on the purchasing power by members of the community of synagogue seats for the forthcoming holidays. From observation so far, it does not seem as though the prevailing depression is having any adverse influence at all on the hiring of seats in the synagogues, whilst as for the public halls where *Minyanim* are being arranged for the *Yomim Norayim* it is too early to draw any conclusions in this respect.

Seats in the synagogues are being taken up just as much as ever, speaking generally, and should the result show no lessening in the financial harvest of the synagogues, it will be an incontrovertible proof that the attachment of the Jew to his synagogue in this country is so strong that even "bad business" and decreased earnings cannot weaken it. I hear that the first evening's takings in a big Johannesburg synagogue amounted to five hundred pounds.

Meshulachim.

A group of people who are being specially harmed by the recently-passed Quota Bill is undoubtedly the *Meshulachim*, and we shall be seeing fewer of these gentry in the near future. In spite of this—shall I say—a comforting prospect, it is to be observed that the *Meshulachim* are still a source of worry to some of our communities.

Recently in Pietermaritzburg, where a most generous group of our people reside, a Communal Fund has been established for the main purpose of receiving donations to be forwarded to any institution which the donor desires to nominate. A warning is, therefore, issued to *Meshulachim*—who are advised not to include Pietermaritzburg in their itinerary.

My own opinion is that a mere warning will not keep such gentlemen away from visiting the Natal capital. It is, after all, an interesting and historic place, and the *Meshulachim* would hardly wish to rob themselves of the pleasures of a visit. Once a specimen of these kindly disposed gentry kisses the *mezzuzah* of a Jewish home in Pietermaritzburg and steps in without ringing the bell, it would be very hard for the *Balebos* or the *Baleboste* to refuse a cup of tea with some *eingemaachs* and a donation.

The heart is indeed a very weak portion of the anatomy of the Jew.

Broadcasting.

For some time past lectures have been given over the Broadcasting Station in Johannesburg on various Jewish subjects. I understand that these are now to be stopped. In a way this is a pity. The facilities offered by broadcasting should undoubtedly be taken advantage of by the Jewish community, which has a generous proportion of owners of wireless sets.

The difficulty has been that no responsible Jewish organisation appeared desirous of undertaking the work of securing the necessary lecturers and organising the activity. As a matter of fact, there is no body in Johannesburg that can properly undertake this work. It hardly comes under the jurisdiction of the Jewish Guild, the S.A. Zionist Federation or the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies.

I think, therefore, it would be advisable to form a special Jewish Broadcasting Committee, which would undertake to organise a panel of lecturers. The limited financial resources of the Broadcasting Station does not, unfortunately, enable the offer of fees to the lecturers. This should not, however, prove a hindrance in securing lecturers, provided it was pointed out that the delivering of these Jewish addresses over the broadcasting station was a cultural contribution of importance. The fact that these lectures can also be heard in various parts of the country should be made widely known. With proper organisation a lecture—say by Dr. Landau—could be heard in thousands of Jewish homes throughout South Africa.

Mr. "Solly" Turtle dove.

It will be learned with interest by many of his friends in South Africa, that Mr. Solomon Turtle dove was married in London on Thursday, August 28th, to Miss Betty Levy, sister of Rabbi E. M. Levy, of Durban. The young couple will reside permanently in Palestine.

Solly Turtle dove is one of the most brilliant of the younger men in the South African Jewish community, and from early youth associated himself with Zionist activity. He was one of the founders of the Maccabeans in Capetown and under his presidency the organisation flourished exceedingly both in activity and membership. Turtle dove's idealism always expressed itself in the hope that he would be able to go to Palestine. He never wished to do so merely as a tourist and was the happiest young man in South Africa when circumstances enabled him to leave for Eretz Israel. Arrived in that country, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the spirit of the *Yishuv* and is to-day a hundred per cent. Palestinian.

It was in Eretz Israel that he met Miss Levy—a young lady imbued with a desire to make Palestine her future home. Thus it was that these two young "chalutzim" from tremendous distances, were both filled with an urge to contribute to the building of the national homeland. In the realisation of that ideal their lives have now become intertwined—lives which I feel sure will be devoted to the service of our people.

The "Hatikvah."

I hear that at a recent conference of Reform Rabbis in America, it was decided to include the "Hatikvah" in the revised issue of the Hymn book of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. There can be no doubt that this action is a partial repudiation of the ideology of the Reform Rabbis in the nineteenth century. The hymn "Hatikvah" restores to the liturgical literature of the Reform synagogues the hope in the Jews' return to Palestine, which was repudiated for the first time by the Sanhedrin convened by Napoleon in 1807, and avowed in 1885 in an official statement by the Reform Rabbis in America.

The fact that the recognised Jewish national anthem of to-day has been accepted as a hymn by Reform Judaism to be sung in the Temples, is a remarkable development indeed, for the "Hatikvah" unquestionably suggests that we are in exile and that our longing for a return to Palestine is cherished as an imperishable hope. That implication cannot be ironed out of the text of the Hymn by the Reform Rabbis, who voted to include it in its original form by Naphtali Herz Imber.

Is this recognition of the "Hatikvah" a sign that the spirit of the Jewish national ideal is entering the armed fortresses of Zionist apathy amongst supporters of Reform Judaism?

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