

Two Rabbis

I WAS a member of the large audience, which assembled at the Langham Hotel on Sunday evening last, to listen to the young reform rabbi deliver his first address in this country. There was soon no doubt of the talent of Rabbi Dr. Moses Cyrus Weiler. Besides being extremely cultured in Jewish lore, he is a lucid speaker and is a personality on the platform.

The large audience present was no indication that Liberal Judaism has "caught on" in Johannesburg. The majority of folk came along, no doubt, out of pure curiosity. This same curiosity will express itself again a few weeks hence when Rabbi Kosofsky of Poland, will arrive and deliver his first public address, under the auspices of the ultra-orthodox section of the Jewish community.

In any case, the arrival of spiritual leaders representing reform and extreme orthodoxy in Judaism, is likely to make things hum congregationally on the Rand for some months to come.

A Predecessor

THE fact that the World Union of Progressive Judaism considered it worth while to send a Hebrew Union College graduate to this country, must be taken as an indication of the growing importance of the community here. At the same time very few people are aware of the fact that a reform movement was established here some thirty-five years ago.

Some time in 1898 a "Rand Modern Hebrew Congregation" was established in Johannesburg. It lasted only a few months and very little is known of the way it conducted its services or who were the organisers. Records in connection with those activities seem to have disappeared and there are only one or two old stagers in local Jewry, who have some dim recollection of the short-lived synagogue.

Contending with the Lord

ON a recent Sunday evening I found myself among an enraptured crowd of fifteen hundred men and women in the auditorium of a local theatre. They were clamouring for the re-appearance of Cantor Berele Chagy, who was entertaining them from the platform with a series of delightfully interpreted folk-songs. Chagy, who is undoubtedly one of the sweetest singers in Israel to-day, gave life, beauty and poignancy to many well-known folk-songs.

I rather liked the rendition of a Chasidic prayer. It is one in which there is much contention with God and I noticed that Chagy gave to it a modern touch. I give here a free translation of this remarkable and poignant song-prayer:

"Good morning, Master of the Universe.

I, Levi-Yitzhok of Berditschef, have come to hold

Judgment with You concerning Your people, Israel.

What have You—against Israel?

Current Communal Comments

By
'Hamabit'

Why have You imposed Yourself upon Your people, Israel?

Everywhere You say, 'Command the Children of Israel.'

Everywhere—'Speak to the Children of Israel!'

The Russians—what do they say?
That Stalin is their leader; is Master.
The Germans—what do they say?
That their Hitler is ruler.

But I, Levi-Yitzhok of Berditschef, say:

'Magnified and sanctified be Thy Great Name.'

This contentiousness with God and these prayers are not blasphemous, but rather reveal the warm conception of God possessed by Jews, who feel so near to Him that like any good friend, they can give to Him a "calling down."

Yet Christian theologians believe that the Jewish conception is that of a distant and fearful God.

Our Own Teachers

A FEW weeks ago there appeared an interesting announcement that Miss Minna Solomon of Pietersburg, Northern Transvaal, had passed the Jews' College Teachers' Examination (Junior Grade). A pupil of the Rev. J. I. Levine, Miss Solomon possesses the proud distinction of being the first South African to qualify for the the Teachers' Certificate of Jews' College, London.

I do not know whether our educational authorities contemplate taking advantage of this unique event. But they must no doubt realise that Jewish education in this country cannot reach its full height until the tuition given to the children is imparted by teachers, who are able not only to speak English fluently and correctly, but also understand the psychology of their pupils; in other words, by teachers who have been brought up in South Africa.

I would, therefore, strongly advise our local Board of Education to concentrate upon the important work of producing a goodly number of our own teachers in South Africa. No time should be lost in obtaining the services of Miss Solomon for one of our local Hebrew schools, and encouragement should be given to the idea of South African-born young men and women qualifying for the profession of Hebrew teachers.

Shocking!

I HEAR that only one Jew has been allowed to remain on the Berlin legitimate stage. He is Alexander Granach and is playing Mephisto in "Faust." It is explained that

Granach is not being bothered, because the Nazis like to look at a Jew in the role of the devil.

All very pleasant! I hear, too, that some of the earnest research men in Germany have begun to believe that Brahms, the great musical genius, was really of Jewish stock and that the name was originally Abrahams.

It is really terrible! How the poor Germans are suffering!

Recently at the London Economic Conference, the German delegates found themselves somewhat disconcerted. Their delicate and refined feelings were really hurt. It's all such a shame! For the gentle hundred-percent. Ayrans were confronted with the shocking reality that the head of the Belgian Delegation was Paul Huymans—a Jew, and the head of the Italian Delegation was none other than Guido Jung—also a Jew. Awful!

A Boxing Symbol

THE recent epic struggle between Max Baer and Max Schmeling in America had a certain significance above that of being merely a boxing encounter of note. Before the fight the Jewishness of Baer was emphasised against the Germanism of Schmeling. In the minds of the Jewish and German youth interested in sport, the fistic encounter assumed the proportions of a struggle between Hitlerism and Judaism. This feeling became intensified because Schmeling had stated in an interview that he had not noticed any anti-Semitic activities on the part of the Hitlerites.

It would be, of course, ridiculous, to attach too much importance to the knock out scored by Max Baer, whose father is Jewish. On the other hand, in view of the boastfulness in the German press that "our Schmeling will do a quick job with that arrogant Jew who aspires to supremacy," Baer's victory is really welcomed as a damper on that unbearable impudence exhibited by the Brown Shirt representatives, in every sphere of human activity.

Physical prowess has never been a forte of the Jewish people. The Baer-Schmeling contest, however, became somehow transformed into a battle between Baer, the Jew, and Schmeling, the Hitlerite. An audience of sixty thousand showed in no uncertain manner, that it was enthusiastic about the best man winning—and Baer received an enormous ovation.

Antique.

A COLLECTOR of antique articles came into a little Jewish village in Lithuania recently. He was eager to ascertain whether there were any antique articles of value in the locality.

A Jew approached him and said:

"I have a wonderful little old watch manufactured at the time of the *Rambam*."

"But," cried the collector, "at the time the *Rambam* lived and wrote there were no watches in the world."

"Ah!" was the reply; "that is why the watch is so extraordinarily antique."