

## A National Orchestra

NOTICE that the idea of having a National Orchestra for South Africa is being strongly advocated by Mr. Lyell Taylor, the well-known conductor. The proposal, which is an excellent one, will be particularly welcomed by Jews, who are such keen lovers of music. It is well-known that both the Capetown and Durban orchestras have many Jewish patrons, and a National Orchestra is likely to receive generous support.

I often wonder why it is that a rich city like Johannesburg has no municipal orchestra. The lack is keenly felt by a large number of its Jewish citizens. The City Council is generous enough in its support of swimming baths, zoological gardens and sports grounds. It seems, however, to be moved by no inspiration when it comes to music and the establishment of a municipal orchestra.

Our city fathers, who are ready to meet losses for the upkeep of lions and tigers, should not cavil at the projected loss upon an orchestra which would brighten the tone of life in Johannesburg and prove of great educational value.

In view of the lack of a local musical combination of this nature, the idea of a National Orchestra makes a special appeal. Johannesburg would then at least be visited—if for a few weeks only during the year—by a National Orchestra which could render some of the great classical compositions for the benefit of thousands of appreciative music lovers.

## Zlotnik.

THERE are many here who will have heard with interest that the fine orator, lecturer, bibliophile and scholar, Rabbi J. L. Zlotnik, of Canada, has finally accepted a post as spiritual leader of a congregation. He had not occupied a post of this nature for many years, having devoted himself to his work as cultural lecturer, propagandist and educationalist.

Zlotnik, who was in South Africa on a National Fund campaign some years ago, made a deep impression here. He has a striking and unusual personality. Apart from his fine Rabbinic learning and scholarship, he is interested in every form of human activity.

It is probably known to only a few that Rabbi Zlotnik was eager to come to this country to occupy the pulpit as permanent minister of an important Hebrew congregation in South Africa. Unfortunately, negotiations fell through. Had this not been the case, we would have had this brilliant teacher to adorn the Jewish ministry in South Africa. Not only would he have been beloved by members of his congregation, but he would have wielded a tremendous influence for good upon the Jewish youth.

Zlotnik has now gone out to the Pacific Coast. Whilst wishing him *Mazal u'Brachah*, I somehow feel it is a great pity that he has so far been prevented from

# Current Communal Comments

By  
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realising an ardent wish to make his permanent home in South Africa.

## Uprooted.

HOW many people have thought of the fate of the small Jewish community of Saltzbach in Germany? It will be recollected that this place has now become "Judenrein" and its synagogue has been converted into a museum.

The record of the extinguished community dates back to the year 1666 when the Duke Christian of Saltzbach invited the Jews to immigrate into his dominion. This act was followed by the immigration of 100 Jewish families who started to develop trades and crafts of Saltzbach and who met with conspicuous success. Before long the Jewish community numbered 300 families.

Fame was achieved among Jewish enterprise at Saltzbach by the old Jewish printing works which turned out Hebraic and German-Jewish ("yiddish") books in the course of centuries. The epic "The Knight of the Road" by the minstrel von Greffenberg re-written in the German-Jewish idiom was among the Saltzbach books which enjoyed the greatest popularity in the contemporary Jewish world.

The Saltzbach synagogue, a mixture of "Biedermeier" and Empire styles, belonged to the most beautiful of old German synagogues. In its later history Jewish Saltzbach had hard times when the little country came under Bavarian domination.

The Jewish community deteriorated both in wealth and numbers, but there were still about 170 families left. In consequence of the terror of the last 18 months the entire Jewish community has left the place.

I think it is tragic to realise that a Jewish community with a record of three hundred years of honourable existence has thus been uprooted and obliterated from the map of Germany.

## Manchukuo.

I AM rather doubtful whether our people are likely to avail themselves of a very bland offer made by a Japanese diplomat inviting Jews to settle in Manchukuo. It is not so much that Jews may find it difficult to become citizens of a land under the sovereignty of Emperor Pu-Yi that makes me sceptical of the plan. Jews have fitted into so many environments that they are likely also to fit into the Japanese way of things. It is rather because of the peculiar position of the principality of Manchukuo, which is after all an ephemeral creation of an Empire, that I have qualms concerning Jewish orientation therein.

In their present anti-Russian attitude, the Japanese are rather keen to set up in their new territory a State to rival Biro-Bidjan. They are also relying on Jewish initiative to build up a tremendous country and bring it to a more modern status. Manchukuo is a buffer State between China and Japan, and it would be eminently desirable to settle Jews therein, whom the Japs feel could be relied upon to defend their interests.

German Jews are being beckoned to the land of the Rising Sun. I do not think many will feel inclined to commit, after the Teutonic suicide, a Japanese *hari-kari*.

## Beards.

I HEAR that beards are to be *taboo* in Roumania. A recent Government order has out-lawed facial adornment, except in special cases, for which official permits must be obtained. Beards have already been prohibited in the French, Italian and Russian armies. Roumania, however, is the first to prohibit it in civic life. I am afraid the prohibition is likely to encourage the growing of beards as a matter of defiance.

I would not be surprised if false beards will become the rage amongst the youths in Roumania too immature to grow their own. As for the Jewish position, it will be a heart-rending business to see some of our folk being "officially" parted from their beards, to which they have become attached throughout their lives and to the possession of which a religious sentiment has developed.

I would not be surprised if shortly there will be arriving here a few *meshullochim* to raise funds to assuage the feelings of elderly Jews who have suffered by enforced separation from their beards.

## A Diamond

AN itinerant beggar arrived at a small Lithuanian village on a late Friday afternoon. He soon learned that practically every householder had already taken a poor man for the *Sabbath*. The *noggid* was the only one to whom an *aurach* had not yet been assigned, but he was an inveterate miser.

The beggar was treated in a most generous manner, "What would you offer me for a diamond as large as an egg?"

The *noggid* was deeply interested and said: "Stay with us over the *Sabbath*, rest a little and then we will talk business."

The beggar was treated in a most generous manner throughout the *Sabbath* period, but when this had finally passed, the rich man said to the guest:

"Now let us see the diamond."

"I have no diamond," replied the pauper as he rose to go, "I just wanted to know what you would offer me for a diamond of such size if I had one."