

Abrahams

I BELIEVE the community in Capetown is to be highly congratulated upon the reverend gentleman who has accepted a "call" to the Ministry of the Gardens Synagogue. The new incumbent has been the spiritual head of the Great Synagogue in Manchester — the most important centre in Great Britain outside of London. It is only four years ago that Rabbi Abrahams was inducted at Manchester and he has built up for himself a great reputation.

When I came into contact with communal leaders during my recent London visit, I was told that the going of Rabbi Abrahams from Great Britain was in the nature of a great loss for English Jewry. There appears to be a paucity of really capable ministers occupying pulpits of synagogues in Great Britain.

I felt also a tinge of chagrin that just when this young minister had reached the stage in his career when he was becoming a great power for good in communal leadership, he should be whisked away thousands of miles to another community which had never "invested" anything in his previous career as student and minister.

I know for a fact that Rabbi Abrahams considered long and earnestly the "call" which was made to him from a far-away community. It was after much serious thought that he decided his duty demanded his leaving his home and work in England in order to keep the spirit of Judaism vibrant in a far more distant part of the world.

The coming of Israel Abrahams to South Africa brings here a cultured personality and experienced leader. His arrival is an important event in our communal history.

The "Army"

RECENTLY a uniformed lass handed me from the Salvation Army a publication issued by the organisation in New York. From a perusal of this, I learned that fifty-seven centres of the "Army" in New York were instructed recently to distribute Passover food amongst the Jewish poor. The food consisted of matzoh, matzoh meal, farfel, eggs and even charosses and bitter herbs. Furthermore, it stated, that the food would be strictly kosher, as it was being ordered from the most reliable Jewish manufacturers.

I confess to having been astonished at this bit of news. This is the first time I heard of a Christian charity organisation catering for such specifically Jewish needs as Passover relief. It has been an immemorial Jewish tradition to maintain a special fund entitled *Moos Chitim*, with the object of providing Passover food for the needy. It would be interesting to learn whether many people availed themselves of this generous offer from the Salvation Army.

Current Communal Comments

By "Hamabit"

I cannot believe that the Jewish community of New York with its multifarious charity activities has not provided sufficient funds for its poor during the Pesach season. In all likelihood, the action of the Salvation Army was more in the nature of a gesture than a result of a pressing need. Jews all over the world are often called upon to contribute towards the funds of the Salvation Army, which they willingly do. I know of a man in Johannesburg who often recalls the times when as a down-and-out, he was given shelter in a Salvation Army home. Since then he had always contributed regularly to an organisation which does so much good to people in distress.

A Jubilee

FIFTY years ago there embarked upon its career of service to a Jewish community a small newspaper in the city of Philadelphia in America. Recently the *Jewish Exponent* celebrated the occasion of its jubilee by the publication of a golden anniversary number. During this period the Jewish population of Philadelphia has grown from less than twenty thousand to approximately 240,000.

I had the pleasure recently of looking at the editorial in the first issue published half a century ago. In this the publishers declare that the journal would be "an exponent of Jewish interests, in all their varied activities, of Jewish life, with all its virtues and imperfections, still throbbing strongly and vigorously; in this is found the true, broad field of usefulness that we shall labour most strenuously to fill."

The journal has always faithfully interpreted the varied activities of Jewish life in America and abroad. There is no doubt that the *Exponent* is to-day one of the finest of Jewish newspapers. It has distinct qualities of refinement, sincerity and possesses a high literary standard.

I feel sure that the congratulations of the readers of the *Zionist Record*, which in itself is no youngster, being nearly twenty-nine years old, will go out to its elder contemporary upon the occasion of this unique celebration.

"Germans"

ONE of the pleasant aspects of a visit to Palestine these days is the manner in which German-speaking Jews are acclimatising themselves to

the country. Whilst there are a number of Vienna cafes in Tel-Aviv and Haifa and a certain amount of German is heard on the streets, it is a fact that German Jews are beginning slowly to speak Hebrew.

It is true that this is often forced upon the parents by the children who, going to school and mixing with the other youngsters, soon become acclimatised and begin speaking a fluent Hebrew, in which they take a great pride, and they refuse to speak to their parents in any other language. The latter hearing the ancient tongue on the lips of their children, begin to feel a love for the language, and gradually learn to speak it.

It must be remembered, too, that many of the Germans in Palestine have only a working knowledge of English, and in their eagerness to speak that language, make quite a number of amusing errors. One doctor from Berlin announced that he was a specialist in "women and other diseases." A lady from Frankfurt published that she was a "diplomatic midwife." A tailor from Munich informed his customers on a poster that "ladies would be given fits upstairs." And in a well-equipped office a German business man had a prominent notice to the effect that "no spiting" would be permitted.

A Composition

I WAS interested to learn that Ernest Bloch's composition *Avodas Hakodesh* (Sacred Service), was recently performed in a Paris synagogue. This composition is certainly the most ambitious Jewish musical work written in modern times. Its scope can be understood from the fact that at the Paris performance, a mixed choir and a symphony orchestra constituting together two hundred executants, participated in the performance.

Writing of the performance in France, a critic stated that the impression it created "was obviously profound, the audience hardly stirring for several seconds after the last notes have long ebbed away."

I wonder if a choral society in South Africa could arrange a reading of this remarkable piece of music?

A Strange Instrument

AS the reverend had been with the congregation for twenty years and had carried out his duties conscientiously during all that period, a meeting of members was held to decide in what manner to honour the shochet, secretary, collector, chazan, mohel and melamed—all the positions of which were held by the reverend.

After some discussion, the chairman said:

"I suggest we give our minister a honorarium."

This was received in silence.

After a few moments a member rose and queried: "But what's the use, he cannot play it!"

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