



Current Communal Comments

By "Hamabit"

A Patriot.

I NOTE that a local contemporary has been commenting on the experiences of certain folk who were associated with the opening-up of the road from the eastern goldfields to Lourenco Marques and back during the early part of the 1870's. Reference has been made to the activities of one A. H. Nellmapius, who was a true pioneer of the region concerned.

It may be of interest to record that Nellmapius, who was of Hungarian-Jewish descent, came to the Transvaal about 1870. He soon made his mark in local affairs. It was he who successfully introduced sometime in 1875 the establishment of the "Lourenco Marques and the South African Republic Transport Services." It is also claimed that it was he who found at Pilgrim's Rest a nugget weighing 132 ounces. As a result of his reported discovery, the diggings at Pilgrim's Rest came into being. At the latter place, too, he was Vice-Consul for Portugal.

When he died at Pretoria, in July, 1892, a vast concourse was present at his funeral, which was also attended by members of the First and Second Volksraads. According to a contemporary newspaper report, President Kruger, in the course of his oration at the grave-side, is reported to have declared: "There lies the best patriot of the Transvaal."

Elias

HIS association with the Jewish community throughout his life has been so slight that very few people are aware of the fact that the new Baron created by King George V. in the recent coronation honours is a co-religionist.

I refer to Julius Elias, one time newsboy and now publisher of the *Daily Herald* and head of the famous firm of Odham's, who publish a whole series of newspapers whose circulation reach many millions daily.

When Elias took over the *Daily Herald*—the Labourite daily—it was on its last legs. It was his fine organisation power and ability which effected so great a change in the career of this paper, which now has a circulation of two million daily.

The new Baron is a man who is very rarely seen in public, but he wields great power on account of the large number of influential papers his company owns. He takes practically no part in communal affairs, but is privately known to be a man keenly conscious of his Jewish heritage. He is a man of great charm and is beloved by thousands of employees in his various great enterprises.

A Belgian Monash

I HEAR that the Belgian Government has erected on the Sqaire Marie Louise in Brussels a monument to the memory of General Bernheim. Bernheim's name was often in the news during the Great War, when Belgium put up such a courageous

fight in defence of its independence. He led many important battles, and in London he was spoken of as the "Monash of Belgium." A son of Jewish immigrant parents in Alsace, he became one of the chief military councillors of the late King Albert of Belgium.

In this connection, I recall the fierce controversy which raged in Belgium at the time of his death in 1931. The Catholic press was against the Government having arranged a national funeral to a Jewish general. At that time apparently there were no such war clouds on the horizon as there are to-day, and military achievements were not made a fuss of. Now, however, things seem to be different, and on the occasion of the erection of the monument recently, the whole press sang a chorus of praise to the distinguished defender of Belgian liberty.

Adolf Max, that brave Mayor of Brussels, paid a tribute to Bernheim in which he said: "The Bernheim monument comes in the right time, when for the sake of the moral health of our country it is necessary to remember the achievements of this great man. From all sides people are trying to obscure the minds of our youth with foul racial theories. This monument will be the best answer to such propaganda."

A Giver.

SOME remarkable revelations have been made regarding the private life of Henry van der Bergh, who died a few months ago at Nice. In the public life of London, Van der Bergh was known as a quiet and unostentatious philanthropist. His benefactions included the donation of a collection of Peruvian and Persian pottery to the British Museum, of which he was an honorary life member. In the field of charity he had been treasurer of Princess Beatrice Hospital, honorary manager of the Jews' Free School and was responsible for the endowment of many and various scholarships.

Lately, however, some interesting facts have been disclosed regarding Van der Bergh's *silent* charity. It appears that on Sundays the aged magnate, head of the margarine industry in England, would not be "at home" to his friends. On that day he would dress in simple clothes and roam about the streets of White-chapel, where he visited the aged and the poor and gave them comfort and help. He would shun professional

schnorrers and was on the look-out for respectable people who were down in life. He would take an interest in their affairs and help them to re-establish themselves in business. Before Pesach he would appear outside the bigger Talmud Torahs and give Pesach presents to the *cheder*-boys. With equal generosity, he treated the Christian children before Christmas. The former spoke of him as Elijah the Prophet, whilst the latter he was known as a veritable Santa Claus.

It is only now, after his death, that many of those who were helped by him discovered who their anonymous benefactor had been.

Wagner.

WAS Richard Wagner, the great German composer, of Jewish descent? This question has now again come up for discussion in musical circles in Europe. Two biographies have appeared recently and both maintain that Wagner, the idol of Hitler, the man who is described as the best representative of Aryan music, had a Jewish father.

In England, Ernst Newman, the well-known musical critic, published a biography of Wagner, in which he says that Wagner was a half-Jew. Another biography, described as most authoritative and based on letters and documents which appeared recently in Prague, makes the same assertion. The whole question revolves round the fact that it was not definitely known who was Wagner's father. His step-father, Heinrich Ludwig Geier, was not a Jew.

Even during Wagner's life time, Frederich Nietzsche and Countess Witgenstein wrote openly of Wagner's "mixed blood." To the Jews the subject is of little importance, but if Wagner really had a touch of Jewish blood, it is bound to make the Nazis most uncomfortable, for it was he who laid the foundation of the so-called scientific anti-Semitism and his compositions are performed at all official German functions.

Stale

IN a small village a Jew went about muttering to himself and waving his right hand about in a derogatory sort of manner.

A friend asked him what he was doing.

"When I get depressed," he answered, "I tell myself jokes."

"But why do you wave your hand about?"

"Well, I tell myself I have often heard them before."

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