

Entertainment.

CULTURAL and youth organisations in Johannesburg always make Chanukah the occasion for arranging some special function. This year's celebration, which is to take place early next month will, I have no doubt, produce the usual crop of Chanukah entertainments. There will be Chanukah balls and Chanukah concerts. As for the former they hardly suit the festival, whilst the concerts arranged by individual societies are, I must confess, a little dull.

I have often advocated an improved standard of entertainment organised by our clubs and societies. Johannesburg has a host of hidden talent which, if pooled, would produce some excellent entertainment. The trouble is that such talent is not co-ordinated. Every society works on its own and as a result we never see any ambitious enterprise in the way of combined communal entertainment.

In England and America successful efforts have been made in recent years in the direction of large-scale Chanukah celebrations. A number of societies join hands, choose the biggest hall in the town and undertake an ambitious programme for a Chanukah or Simcha celebration. At such functions one sees—for instance—a musical programme by all the combined synagogue choirs; duets, trios and even quartets of the leading chazonim in town; an ambitious play requiring mass scenes or a historical pageant.

I think that if our societies in Johannesburg were occasionally to combine for the purpose of celebrating a great Jewish occasion, the effort would meet with unqualified appreciation and success.

A Poet

I AM glad to note the memory of a young poet—young at the time he was killed—was honoured on Monday afternoon when Mr. Amshewitz, the well-known artist, lectured to an audience of ladies in Johannesburg, on "Isaac Rosenberg—the Poet."

This lyric singer in words who is now coming into his own, was a product of the slums of London. He was essentially a poet and his soldiering was a poor sort of affair which could only end in tragedy, for Rosenberg was intrepid and continually placed himself in the zone of danger. The bullet that robbed English literature of a young poet, also robbed Israel of a brilliant son.

I remember meeting the young sad-eyed, sallow-faced poet some years ago in Capetown, when he was on a visit to a married sister there. He found himself in strange surroundings in this country and began to deliver a series of lectures on art. Somehow these did not "catch on" and little notice generally was taken of so odd a being.

What a pity there was hardly an individual in the Mother City who was able to realise then that a great poetic spirit was residing there for a short while.

Karlebachs

DR. EPHRAIM KARLEBACH, whose death took place in Jerusalem recently, was one of the finest type of *Rabiner* which

Current Communal Comments

By
"Hamabit"

German Jewry has produced. The Karlebach family is well-known to every German Jew. The head of the family was Dr. Shlomo Karlebach, a prolific author and a great scholar. It was his ambition that his sons and grandsons should receive a liberal modern education, together with an intensive knowledge of orthodox Judaism, and then become rabbis and teachers of German Jewry.

He saw his ambitions fulfilled to a large extent. Sons and grandsons of his took their doctorate with distinction in leading German Universities and then went to the *Yeshivoth* of Slobodka and Jerusalem for special study of the Talmud. Within the last fifty years, a number of Karlebachs—all doctors, all Talmudists and several of them well-to-do and independent of their salaries—occupied rabbinical positions in Leipzig, Berlin, Memel, Koeln, Milheim and Halberstadt.

Dr. Ephraim Karlebach was active in Leipzig until about a year ago when he left for Palestine. Leipzig was a stronghold of assimilation and Dr. Karlebach often had to fight his own community. Against their will, he established a High School for boys and a Lyceum for girls, where Jewish subjects were taught side by side with secular ones. When he could not get from his community the money necessary for the building, which had cost £10,000, he turned to his relations by marriage, the famous Persitz family of Moscow, who were great patrons of Hebrew culture. He was a strictly orthodox Rabbi and belonged to the Agudath Yisroel.

One of his sons, Dr. Azriel Karlebach, was a leading journalist in Germany. Several years ago he was shot at and wounded by a Communist for having published articles against the Soviets. Since the advent of Hitler, he fled to Warsaw where he took to Yiddish journalism. The language he acquired during his stay as a young man in a Kovno Yeshivah.

Royalty

THE famous Chassidic court of Belz had a few exciting days lately. A rumour was spread in "court circles" that no less a personage than the King of England who was at that time on a visit to Vienna, would pay an informal visit to the Belzer Rebbe.

Later on it turned out that the report was unfounded and that, instead of the King, the court would be visited by Prince Peter of Greece, who is a cousin of His Majesty. The visit took place during *Yomtov* when Belz was full of visiting chassidim from all over the world. The Prince had read a number of books in English and French in which chassidic life was described and he decided to see for himself a great chassidic centre. Accompanied by a

professor of the Lemberg University, he was present at the Rebbe's table and watched with interest all the ceremonies. He was also given the traditional and revered "Rebbe's Brocha."

The Royal visitor, I understand, was particularly impressed with the personality of the "Minister for External Affairs" in the Belz court. This gentleman, who is a *gabbai* amongst the chassidim, has had a most romantic career. He was born and brought up in an assimilated Hungarian family. He had a military training and during the War was an officer in the Budapest Hussar Regiment. By the end of the War he happened to be in Galicia and was attracted by the chassidic life. He joined the Belz Court, studied Hebrew, grew a long beard and earlocks, and became a devout chassid. As he speaks and writes several European languages, he is always made use of when a distinguished foreign visitor appears in the court.

On this occasion a number of important diplomatic affairs were discussed between the Rebbe and the Prince through the medium of the "Minister of External Affairs."

Musical

THE present visit to this country of Leopold Premyslav, the well-known violinist, draws attention to the all-important role played by our people in the realm of music interpretation.

A friend of mine in New York writes me that a fine galaxy of Jewish artists are being featured at the present successful musical season at the great metropolis. Among these are, Myra Hess, Vladimir Horowitz, Rudolf Serkin, Samuel Dushkin, Jascha Heifetz, Mishel Piastro, Joseph Szigeti, Joseph Schuster and Emanuel List.

In the realm of composing, it is interesting to note that Lezare Saminsky is prolifically at work. Three important world orchestras are playing selections of his new compositions during the present winter season in Europe and America. His fine work, "Three Shadows," which was played by the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra last February is scheduled for performance in Brussels and Zurich, and his popular song, "Hebrew Lullaby," will be sung by Helen Jepson, the great Metropolitan opera star, in forty American cities during her transcontinental tour.

"Mistrust"

AN elderly Jew became tired of suffering and want. He wrote a letter addressed to the "Almighty in Heaven," and dropped it in a South African pillar-box.

The local post office officials, amused at the address, opened the letter and were touched by the contents which made an appeal for a "fiver." They collected amongst themselves the sum of £2 10., which they sent to the writer of the letter.

They were surprised a couple of days later to find another letter addressed to the "Almighty." On reading it, they found that the writer expressed his appreciation for the money sent, but added the following postscript: "Next time you give me a 'fiver,' don't send it through the post office, because the *ganovim* there have taken half for themselves."