

CURRENT COMMUNAL COMMENT

By "Hamabit"

A Lover of Zion

A NOTABLE anniversary which should be recalled at present, is that of the death of the famous lover of Zionism, Laurence Oliphant, who passed away in London on December 23rd, 1888, at the age of 59.

Incidentally, few of my readers are aware of the fact that Oliphant was born at Capetown in 1829. His father, Sir Anthony Oliphant, was for a while Attorney-General at the Cape, and his mother was a member of a well-known South African family—the Cloetes.

Laurence Oliphant's name will always be remembered by the Jewish people for his initiation of a practical scheme for the settlement of Jews in Eretz Israel. Among other things, he was a noted traveller, journalist, diplomatist and member of Parliament. All told, he was a remarkable personality.

As far back as 1879 he went to Palestine in order to investigate the prospects of Jewish colonisation there. He approached the Turkish Government in regard to this particular scheme, but he did not succeed in arousing their interest. But he never lost his faith in the dream of an autonomous Jewish state in Palestine. Shortly after the outbreak of the Russian pogroms of the 1880's he again took up the Palestine project. He was a powerful factor in enlisting Jewish and non-Jewish aid in settling Jews in the Holy Land. In addition to writing two worthwhile books on this subject, he also did his best to arouse the attention both of Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield in his plan to help Jews to establish themselves. Among his intimate Jewish friends were Rabbi Samuel Mohilewer and Perez Smolenskin, the Hebrew author.

Thus, it is well that Jews here should always pay a warm tribute to his memory. Together with George Eliot, the novelist, and other famous figures of his generation, Laurence Oliphant did much to prepare the ground for the anticipated revival of Jewry on its ancient soil.

The Better Germany

THAT THE true spirit of the better Germany has not altogether been destroyed is shown by the great success of books published by refugee writers abroad.

There are ten German publishing houses in Holland, Switzerland, France, Belgium and Czecho-Slovakia and since 1933 they have been publishing the works of Germany's exiled writers. Amongst the writers whose works have had to be published outside the Reich are famous men like Feuchtwanger, Thomas Mann, Arnold Zweig and Remarque. Since Austria provided the biggest market for refu-

gee writers it was feared that with the Anschluss German publishing abroad would come to a standstill.

Events have shown, however, that, far from decreasing, the demand for German books published abroad is steadily growing. The publishing houses report that they have received orders from 32 countries, and that 241 of their books have been translated into many foreign languages.

It appears that the world's reading public which is constantly fed on Nazi propaganda literature is very keen on getting a true insight into the real Germany — hence, the big demand for books written by exiled writers. It is also said that despite the strict censorship the German public itself continues to read the prohibited books. The millions who were reared on Zweig, Remarque and Feuchtwanger could not so easily be weaned. I am told that in Berlin there is in existence a Literary Circle consisting of German aristocrats who make a practice of going down, now and again to Holland, in order to enjoy a bout of reading the real German books.

Menuhin

FROM THE position of East Side's pet-boy and wonder-child Yehudi Menuhin is fast becoming a veritable *enfant terrible*. The controversy which has not yet died down, regarding his aristocratic marriage, is now being followed up with a new hue and cry about his attitude to AGMA — short for "American Guild of Musical Artists".

AGMA is a trade-union in the best sense of the word. Lawrence Tibet, the baritone-singer, is its president and Yascha Heifetz, the vice-president. Yet Menuhin refuses to recognise the Guild, and for some time past there has been a pitched battle in the American press between him and Heifetz on the question of AGMA. Yehudi's mouthpiece is his father, Moshe Menuhin, who defends his son with most ingenious arguments. The virtuoso is in his eyes an omnipotent being who dare not be dictated to by a professional organisation. He believes in, and is a staunch supporter of trade regulations for the small fry — when his own house was built he insisted on Union labour — but not for the stars in heaven. The only sound argument which Menuhin has had to offer against the AGMA was that it has taken steps to restrict the importation of famous artists from Europe. Outside of this, his arguments seem to be based on sheer snobbery.

A Union, the father said to a correspondent of the *Forwaerts*, is good enough for Heifetz who plays for the movies, but not for Menuhin who would not do a thing like that, who

is not interested in the financial side of his work, who plays for the sake of art . . .

As for the sympathy of the masses there is no doubt which side it favours. With the backing of a rich father-in-law the masses can, however, easily be ignored. Anyway, they should be pleased to know that any issue of the Menuhin marriages will be brought up in the Jewish fold. On this matter they have Moshe Menuhin's assurance.

A Museum

THE PALESTINE press reports that architects have already been invited to submit plans for the new museum which is to be built next to the Hebrew University. Thus the dream of the late Mr. Kootcher, that remarkable Zionist from South West Africa, who bequeathed his fortune for this purpose, is now being realised. The full and detailed plan of the institution was submitted to, and was approved of by, the District Court of Jerusalem. A sum of £8,000 will be spent on the building and £2,000 on equipment and furniture. The interest on the residue of the bequest will go towards the maintenance and upkeep of the institution.

The museum will be conducted by Dr. Sukenik, a prominent Jewish scholar and archaeologist. In connection with his new appointment Dr. Sukenik made a special trip to Europe last year and visited a number of European countries for the purpose of collecting exhibits for the Museum. He visited Jewish museums in Warsaw, Vilna, Prague, Berlin and Breslau and has also interviewed a number of European Governments in connection with his work.

Where original exhibits are unobtainable the Museum intends to obtain copies in print or plaster and every effort will be made to restore and collect valuable articles of Jewish historical interest from all over the world. The Museum will also engage in extensive archaeological work. The building, which will be facing the holy city, is situated next door to the National Library and will no doubt serve to enhance further the magnificent group of buildings comprising the Hebrew University.

Something Else

THE FOLLOWING story is current in German refugee circles in Switzerland:

An elderly man, evidently a "non-Aryan" stood in a leading Zurich travel-bureau and examined the huge globe which adorned the table. He kept on turning the globe and looked closely at every country. After a while he sighed and turned to the clerk across the counter:

"Haven't you got anything else?" he asked.

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