

CURRENT COMMUNAL COMMENT

By "Hamabit"

"Goodwill"

I HEAR there is a very good response on the part of clergy of most denominations to Goodwill Day which is to be held on February 15. The day is to be devoted to the cementing of goodwill between all races and faiths in South Africa. As this will be only its second observance, it is striking that Goodwill Day should have already become an institution in this country. The response shows how eagerly most men and women of goodwill welcome an opportunity of consolidating the forces of goodwill in this country.

There is unfortunately one church which, so I learn, has not yet agreed to co-operate, and that is the Dutch Reformed Church. This is a pity, but it must be recognised that the Dutch Reformed Church is now acting on the principle of no direct co-operation with other denominations. We can only hope that this decision will be revoked soon because the great majority of the adherents of the Dutch Reformed Church favour co-operation with other religious bodies.

I understand that the Jewish community will hold Goodwill Services in most instances on Friday evening, the 13th February. There is, of course, every reason why we should support and associate ourselves with a movement of this character.

The stability of the Jewish position here depends upon a sound and healthy attitude to problems of race and religion among the various groups of the community, and only when harmonious relations and understanding really exist between the different sections of our population can they give of their best to the common weal.

I am pleased to learn that in several of our synagogues members of the Christian community are being invited to attend the Goodwill Services, and I believe that in one or two cases there is also going to be an interchange of pulpits.

In America the goodwill movement has made very rapid strides and has led to a fine spirit of co-operation between Jews and Christians.

Kusevitsky

LOVERS of *chazanuth* were distressed to hear, some time ago, a rumour that the famous Cantor Moses Kusevitsky had become a victim of German aggression in Poland and had lost his life. It is now learned that his mother in England (where she resides with her three other cantor sons, Simcha, David and Jacob) has received a cable informing her that Moses and his family

are well, and that they are now at Shklov in the Urals. Kusevitsky was the *chazan* at the Tlomatske Synagogue, Warsaw, a position which was held for many years by the famous Cantor Sirota.

It may be recalled that some years ago an attempt was made by a group of Jews in this country to "import" Cantor Kusevitsky to South Africa, for the purpose of conducting a few synagogue services and appearing at a number of public concerts. Negotiations were almost completed, when Kusevitsky received the important appointment at the Tlomatske Synagogue, which prevented him from coming here.

Kusevitsky is acclaimed as one of the world's greatest *chazanim*. He is a member of a unique family, for, as I remarked above, his three brothers are all cantors. One of them—Simcha Kusevitsky—holds the position of *chazan* at the Great Synagogue in London. This is the synagogue which was recently bombed out by a "blitz."

In Hawaii

WHEN the Japanese struck without warning at the American defence base in the Pacific, there were many Jewish officers and men serving in both the army and navy units stationed in Hawaii. The highest ranking Jewish officer there is Rear Admiral Claude C. Bloch, former commander of the United States fleet, and now chief of the 14th Naval District, the top ranking administrative office in Hawaii.

Serving on the US/S Iowa in the Spanish American War, Admiral Bloch participated in the battle of Santiago, and was decorated for assisting in the rescue of Spaniards from burning ships. When the United States entered the last world war, Bloch was placed in command of the naval transport at Plattsburg, conveying troops and supplies through the war zone and returning troops to the United States following the armistice. In 1923 he was given the rank of Rear Admiral, and in 1927 he was put in command of the battleship US/S California. Eventually he was named commander of the battle force and from 1938 to 1940 he was commander in chief of the United States Fleet.

I hear that the spiritual needs of Jewish men on duty in Hawaii was long ago provided for. Stationed at Pearl Harbour is the lone Jewish naval chaplain, Lieutenant Herbert Straus. Serving the men in the army is Chaplain Harry Richmond, who holds the rank of captain. Chaplain

Richmond is now under fire for the second time. He left his civilian congregation during the last war to enlist in the army as a private. The Jewish Welfare Board, hearing of the case, sought out the young rabbi, discovered that he was on the point of being sent overseas and hastily prevailed upon him to accept a chaplaincy post in the army. He accepted the commission and went abroad as a chaplain, serving the men in his own regiment.

Since the last war, the Jewish Welfare Board has maintained a centre and a worker in Hawaii to serve the permanent military and naval establishment there. The representative is Israel Weinstein, who has filled the post for the past twelve years. Three months ago, Mr. Weinstein made one of his periodic visits to the mainland. He came across the Continent to New York, stepping off at various cities along the way. In each city he visited he called together little meetings of parents who had boys serving in Hawaii. To each he brought a personal message from the boy in question, adding reassuring details concerning him which the boy would not be likely to write himself. In turn he took back messages from their parents.

It is evident that many a Jewish home in America is now plunged into mourning as a result of the recent Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbour.

Monotony

FOR many years past the general public of New York City has listened to Edwin Goldman conducting the famous orchestra in Central Park Mall.

Recently much interest was caused in musical circles by the announcement that this well known conductor was about to direct his 1,339th consecutive concert. When dining in a restaurant one night he was approached by an inquisitive young man who asked: "You're Dr. Goldman, aren't you?" "Yes," the conductor admitted.

"I have just read," continued the young man with duly respectful tone, "that you're going to conduct your 1,339th concert. Is that correct?"

"Yes," said Dr. Goldman.

"Monotonous, isn't it?" came the rejoinder.

Obvious

A VERY lame *schnorrer* meets a blind *schnorrer*.

"How goes it?" asked the latter. "As you see," was the reply.

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