

CURRENT COMMUNAL COMMENT

By "Hamabit"

The Landau Library

BOOK lovers throughout the country will be deeply interested to hear that the late Chief Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau has bequeathed his very fine library to the Witwatersrand University.

I was always a great admirer of this wonderful collection of books, which were gathered together throughout a lifetime by a connoisseur and bibliophile. Thousands of rare and valuable volumes of Judaica and Hebraica are to be found in the collection and I often observed the loving care and pride with which Dr. Landau handled these when he showed them to interested visitors.

I feel sure that the "Landau Library" at the Witwatersrand University will prove a centre for Jewish study and research in the days to come, as no other South African institution of learning yet possesses such an outstanding and unique collection of works of Jewish interest as the University now will.

A Wing Commander

A CANADIAN friend writes to me about the recent promotion to the rank of Wing Commander in the Dominion fighting air forces of a young Jewish airman, Maurice Lipton by name.

As a lad in Springhill, Nova Scotia, where he was born, young Lipton used to send model planes soaring over the quiet streets of his native town. Air-minded since his childhood days, the lad went from model 'plane building to Dalhousie University where he established a brilliant record in engineering in preparation for post-graduate work in aeronautics.

When war broke out, Lipton immediately enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force, bringing his enthusiasm for aeroplanes to practical use in his country's service. To-day he is leading a squadron of night flyers over the British Isles. This young Jewish airman was one of the first pilots to fly a Hudson Bomber over the Atlantic to Britain.

Mrs. Lipton, the lad's mother, is a well-known communal worker in Halifax and his father, Nathan Lipton, went to sea as a boy on ships which took him to the four corners of the globe.

When attending the University, Maurice Lipton was President of the Engineering Society and captain of the baseball and football squads. He also took a keen interest in the Halifax Young Judeans. My correspon-

dent tells me that the Jewish youth of Canada are very proud of their Wing Commander comrade.

A Singer in Israel

AT VARIOUS Jewish functions in Johannesburg during the last three decades, the poems of the late Chief Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau were often sung. Most of these had been set to music by Asher Perlzweig.

I hear that this interesting composer and *chazan* recently passed away in London. He was, by the way, the father of the Rev. M. L. Perlzweig, the Rabbi of the Liberal Synagogue, who some years ago visited South Africa on a Zionist mission. The composer himself was the son of the Rev. Raphael Perlzweig, of Czernowitz and Brody.

A graduate of the Cantorenschule of Vienna, the late Asher Perlzweig studied music at the Vienna Conservatoire and under Prout at the Guildhall School of Music. He first attracted attention in England by his beautiful solo singing at the Great Synagogue in London in 1899. Later he was appointed First Reader of the Finsbury Synagogue, a position he held for twenty-eight years until 1931, when he retired to devote himself to research in the history of Jewish music.

The late Dr. Landau was very proud of the musical settings which Perlzweig had composed for his poems. One of the more famous of these was the setting for his "Song of Zion." Perlzweig also published a manual of Neginot, and in collaboration with the Rev. W. Stoloff, was the author of a volume entitled, "Songs and Prayers of Israel."

Soviet Hero

HERO of the day in the Soviet press is Samuel Liberman, a feeble-looking Jewish watchmaker with sad eyes, narrow shoulders and a small chest. He had already been wounded three times in the present war, but as soon as he recovered from his third wound, he insisted that he be sent back to the front. He had his way, and his first exploit was to capture, with the help of another Russian soldier, an important Nazi officer and his escort of two men.

It happened this way. Liberman and a comrade-in-arms were sent on a reconnaissance mission. As they lay concealed along the road close to the German line, a military car appeared. They fired. The car stopped, and three Germans, an officer and two men, jumped out. The fourth occupant of the car was killed.

Simulating different voices, the Jewish watchmaker shouted to the Nazis to surrender. The trick worked. The Nazis thought that they were surrounded by many Russian soldiers and raised their hands. Liberman and his companion then began to remove the prisoners' weapons.

The Nazi officer, however, soon realised that he had been tricked, and that there were only two Russians. Leaping aside, he drew his revolver and fired at Liberman's head, wounding him severely. But although blood was pouring from his head and mouth, Liberman managed to help his comrade to tie the hands of the three Germans and lead them to the Russian lines.

At present Liberman is in hospital for the fourth time, recovering from his head wound, and eagerly waiting for the day when he will again go to the fighting lines.

Disappointment

I HEARD an interesting "Sammy Marks" story the other evening. It appears that when the late Senator (who was a close friend of President Kruger), was at the height of his wealth and popularity, he was approached by a struggling co-religionist for the loan of £50.

After some hesitation, Marks granted the favour. Punctually at the stated time the £50 was returned. A few weeks later the same co-religionist approached the Senator to lend him £100. Again after some hesitation he lent this sum, and again it was punctually repaid.

Marks, always suspicious of struggling co-religionists who asked him for loans, was somewhat puzzled at these two punctual repayments. He was not surprised, however, when a few weeks later the same co-religionist approached him for the loan of £200. This request Senator Marks promptly refused.

"But, why?" asked the borrower. "Because," replied Marks, "You have already disappointed me twice."

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