

JEWS FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES

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and work in the country. Generally speaking, this youngest generation of immigrants has now found a sound economic footing. Naturalisation is to commence in 1948. Denmark grants naturalisation to foreigners only after 15 years' residence in the country.

Chief Rabbi Dr. Marcus Melchior

The status of the Danish Chief Rabbi is that of a recognised ecclesiastical dignitary, comparable to, say, a bishop of the State Church. The appointment of the Chief Rabbi has to be confirmed by the King, as his functions include the right to legalise marriages.

Dr. Marcus Melchior, whose family has been resident in Denmark since 1722, succeeded Chief Rabbi Dr. Friediger in April, 1947. Two of his ancestors were also Chief Rabbis in Copenhagen. Melchior's name is today widely known in Denmark. An excellent speaker, he is often called upon by the press and the radio where questions of Jewish interest are concerned. Living in Sweden, during the exile period, he acted as Rabbi for the Jews of Denmark, a mission which frequently took him far up north. Dr. Melchior, an ardent Zionist, enjoys the support of the Jewish youth in Denmark. The duties of the Chief Rabbi include also the supervision of religious instruction in the Jewish school, whose director as well as most of the staff, are non-Jews.

Jewish Press

The rightly illustrated "Jodisk Familieblad" has come into being, representing pro-Zionist interests. Torben L. Meyer, chief editor, also belongs to the editorial staff of the big Copenhagen publishing house Berlingske Tidende.

The considerable library of the Jewish community was saved by being hidden in the cellar of the State Library during the occupation. In charge is Librarian Josef Fischer. Born in Hungary, he is the only Jew collaborating on the Danish biographical dictionary. His wide historical interests are reflected in several works on Jewish history. Aged 76, Fischer is a survivor of Terezin.

A treasure trove of Jewish knowledge is the Jewish section of the Royal Library in Copenhagen. It was founded at the beginning of the 17th century (that is even before Jews were admitted to the country), by Royal purchases at auctions, and now numbers over 30,000 books in all languages. The Library contains valuable originals, including the Answers of Maimonides and his son, written in the 13th century on cotton paper. Other rarities are a Mishna from the year 1492 and an Italian ritual work dating from 1948. The purchase of the library of Chief Rabbi David Simonson added 25,000 Jewish books to the collection out of a total of 40,000. A further 1,200 were bought from the widow of Dr. Friediger.

Dr. Rafael Edelman, who came to Denmark from Latvia in 1909, at the age of 7, has been in charge of the library since 1933 and continued to work for it even during the period of exile in Sweden. After the destruction of the libraries in Warsaw and Budapest, the Jewish library in Copenhagen is today the biggest in Europe. At Edelman's suggestion the Government agreed to put it at the disposal of European Jewry as an independent research centre, to be further maintained by the Danish State. The library received the active support of the Jerusalem University.

The University of Copenhagen envisages in the near future, the foundation of a Chair for Judaica which will probably be offered to Dr. Edelman.

In the musical field, mention must be made of the excellent male synagogue choir and of the choral society "Hasomir," founded 35 years ago.

Organisations and Zionist Activities

Since the war, Zionist activities have been intensified. All organisations are affiliated to the newly-founded Zionist Federation. The chairman is Benjamin Slor, a native Palestinian.

Before the war, there were hardly any campaigns apart from box collections, which brought in about Kr. 10,000-12,000 per year. Now this sum has risen to Kr. 20,000-22,000. An extraordinary appeal raised an additional Kr. 65,000. Proportionately the Jews of Denmark sacrifice more than those of America.

1,400 young Jews went through the Danish Hachsharah. When the Joint had to discontinue its support, the community raised Kr. 1,000,000 for them.

In January, 1946, Mrs. Melchior, wife of the Chief Rabbi, founded the Wizo group, which now numbers 300 members. It works in close co-operation with Wizo in London. Mrs. Kissman's recent visit was an encouragement and contributed to the efficiency of the organisation.

The Jewish Youth Group of Copenhagen has 600 members and is affiliated to the Scandinavian Jewish Youth Association. Its statutes endorse all positive Jewish aims, and above all the upbuilding of Palestine.

Since the positive Jewish elements returned with the Danish Brigade, however, a new, purely Zionist Hanchalah was elected. (Chairman, Arno Melchior.) Nearly all Zionist demonstrations are to-day being organised by the Youth Group whose numerous activities are an effective antidote to the process of assimilation.

Zionism meets with a great deal of sympathy amongst non-Jewish Danes. Bende Henriksen, the gentle editor of "Berlingske Tidende," wrote a widely read book called "Palestine—Land of the Jews." Whilst Jewish Danes rejected terrorism it strangely enough found much understanding in Christian circles, including even the clergy.

Stauning, the great leader of Danish Social Democrats, had declared his support for the Jewish National Home in a much-quoted letter, and the present Labour Government under Hedtoft, a philo-Semite, who used to be Stauning's secretary, adheres strictly to that line. This also explains Denmark's participation in the Five-Power Commission on Palestine. It met with some criticism but responsible politicians like Hedtoft and Christinas Moller, the former Foreign Secretary, expressed their agreement with it in a personal talk which I had with them. (It was the latter who once categorically rejected Denmark's participation in the Olympic Games while racial legislation against Jews existed in Germany.)

After the war, the Jewish community in Copenhagen became a corresponding member of the World Jewish Congress. At present there are still difficulties in the way of active membership, but all organisations are pressing for the final step which now seems only a question of time.

PNINA SALZMAN'S SUNDAY NIGHT CONCERT

Chopin's Sonata in B Flat Minor was the most outstanding item in a well-balanced programme of a piano recital given by Pnina Salzman on Sunday evening at the Plaza Theatre.

She played it with competence and assurance confirming the impression that her Paris training had given her a delightful approach to Chopin in which she excels.

The Sonata came as a relief after the somewhat austere "Carnival" by Schumann. Liszt's "Mephisto Waltz" was performed with vigour, displaying personality and temperament.

MR. AND MRS. HOWSCHA BRITS



(The names of Mr. and Mrs. Howscha, who celebrated their Silver Wedding recently, were inscribed in the Golden Book.)

DR. J. SHATZKY TO GIVE THREE LECTURES

Under the auspices of the South African Committee for the Jewish Scientific Institute and the Jewish Encyclopaedia, Dr. J. Shatzky, Research Director of Department of History of YVO, will deliver the following three lectures: Sunday, June 20, "Jewish Characters in World's Literature" (in Yiddish); Thursday, June 24, "Psychology of Jewish Humour" (in Yiddish); Wednesday, June 30, "A Millennium of Jewish Life in Eastern Europe" (in English).

The lectures will take place in the Coronation Hall, (cor. Plein and Claim Streets) and will begin at 8.15 p.m.

"THE TAMING OF THE SHREW"

"The Taming of the Shrew" is yet another creditable achievement of the Reps following upon their triumph in "The Witch." The success of a Shakespearean play depends on the producer more so than any modern production, and Miss Gwen Frangwen Davies is to be congratulated on a very praiseworthy effort. It was evident that much thought and hard work went into the rehearsing and preparation of the play. Philip Birkinshaw took his part admirably well and so did Maurice Horwitz and Theo Sacks. Helen Faul was slightly restrained in the part of Kate.

On the whole, "The Taming of the Shrew" proved once again that the Reps are capable of handling serious plays.

OPHIR RECEPTION TO PROMINENT VISITORS

The Jewish Arts Association Ophir, will hold a reception at the Carlton Hotel on Saturday, June 13, at 8 p.m., to four prominent overseas visitors. They are: Dr. J. Shatzky, well-known Jewish scientist; Mr. Goldberg, prominent journalist; Mrs. Esther Salaman and her husband, Mr. Paul Hamburger, two distinguished London musicians. All interested are welcome to attend.

Belgravia and East Kensington Branch of J.W.Z.L.

The above organisation is holding a concert in aid of the WIZO Emergency Campaign at the Selborne Hall on Monday, June 28. Cantor Kusevitsky, of the Parkview-Great side Congregation, will include dramatic arias and Jewish folk melodies among his songs.

Jayne Sussman and Jean Gluckman, both well known vocalists on the operatic stage and concert platform, will render classic songs and operatic arias, while Nat Brogan will contribute the lighter side of the programme with character impersonations.

Three monologues by Nathan Alterman will be recited by Jennie Targowsky with special incidental music by Jerry Idelson. The instrumental section, consisting of Arno Sacks and Betty Pack, violin and cello respectively, will be accompanied by J. Idelson at the piano.

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