

**Freedom.**

AT this time of the year when Jews the world over are celebrating the Festival of Freedom and whilst petty-minded leaders of all nations are striving their utmost to make the life of the aliens—especially the Jewish aliens—a hell on earth, there comes with peculiar aptness a quotation of the Bible.

“There shall be one law for the home-born and for the stranger in our midst,” says Exodus 12-49. And if ever an indication that the Jews have given the world the ideal of a brotherhood of man was needed, it can be found in that ordinance of Passover.

While we Jews sit at Seder imbued with the spirit of freedom, which is common in the ritual, let us not forget that one of the basic principles of freedom is being stealthily undermined. Even in America—the country of the free—an alien registration is proceeding with a Czarist psychology. In all countries throughout the world the stranger is being brow-beaten and persecuted and in this country the position of the unnaturalised is becoming more precarious daily.

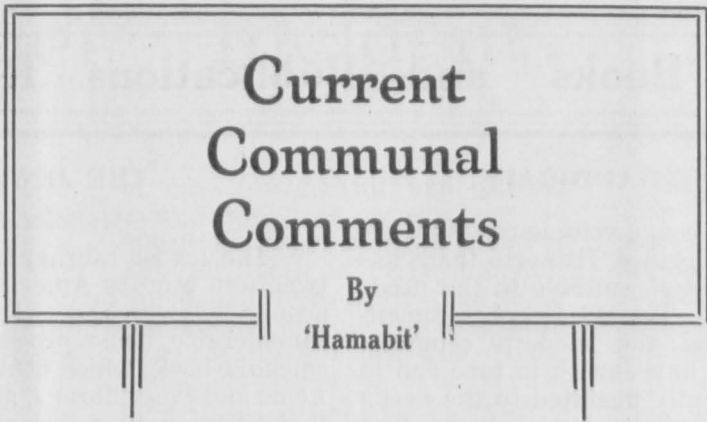
In celebrating our deliverance from the slavery of Egypt at this time of the year, we Jews cannot but deplore the gradual elimination of the spirit of freedom from the political philosophy of the so-called civilised nations of the world.

**Our Ministers.**

Nearly three years ago there was established a Jewish Ministers' Association and quite a successful conference was held in Johannesburg. There was a generous representation of ministers from various centres throughout the country—although it must be admitted the majority of them came from the Transvaal. A movement was, however, set on foot to establish a union of effort on the part of our spiritual leaders. The whole project looked promising and the delegates left the conference apparently full of enthusiasm and with a sincere desire to establish the Ministers' Association upon a sound basis.

Alack and alas! the ministers, shochtim and chazonim among the returned delegates became esconced in the comfort (or discomfort) of their own positions. Gradually they have lost all interest in the ambitious ideas enunciated at the Conference. I have heard that only a few of the ministers have been gracious enough to send in their membership dues to the secretarial office in Johannesburg.

As a result of this lack of interest, the whole project has gone to seed. This is



a veritable pity, indeed, for there can be no doubt that tremendous benefit could accrue from a well organised Ministers' Association in this country. The development of spiritual Judaism in South Africa is hampered by the lack of such an organisation.

I will refuse to believe that failure in this connection, is due to conflict and jealousy among the ministers themselves. For if that is the position, then the situation is quite hopeless. But surely our spiritual leaders are made of finer material than is indicated by such an accusation!

**“After the Ball.”**

The other night I was present at a dance organised by some of our young people. I could not help admiring the grace of the young dancers and I had to pay tribute to the brightness of modern Jazz music. I longed, however, for the old days, when dances were of a different calibre. They were then more jovial and social affairs. The fine set dances indulged in enabled strangers to meet, and before the evening was ended everyone was acquainted with the other.

In the midst of my reverie, the orchestra suddenly struck up a tune I had known in my childhood. It was “After the Ball”—a charming waltz which attained international fame in the nineties. The playing of this old tune was like a cool wind against the hot atmosphere of modern jazz. And this interested me the more on account of the death, which occurred a few weeks ago, at the age of sixty-five, of Charles K. Harris, the composer of ‘After the Ball,’ and other popular tunes of years ago. Another famous contribution of Harris to popular music was ‘O, Break the News to Mother’—in which a young soldier dying in the arms of a grey-haired general, asks him to inform his mother that he is dying, only to learn unexpectedly that the general is none other than his own father.

How many of the millions of people who have danced in the last few decades to the haunting tune of “After the Ball” had any idea that the composer was a Jew?

**Shylock.**

I hear that the latest choice of the Jewish Book Club in America is Ludwig Lewisohn's new volume, entitled “The Last Days of Shylock.”

In this book, Mr. Lewisohn, has very cleverly taken up the story of the “Merchant of Venice” where Shakespeare left off, presenting Shylock as no bloodless inquisitor, but a man embittered by injustice, rebellious

against ancient wrongs. When Shylock returned to the ghetto after the trial in the great palace after Portia's fair words and subtle reasoning had snatched from him the sweets of revenge, he faced the task of carrying on a broken life.

Mr. Lewisohn tells of Shylock taking up his labour for Israel, and through the great historical chronicle which the author weaves into his life, we see Shylock finding certain peace at last, although the endless struggle continues. There is the note of prophecy in the book, the tragic echo of ancient injustices, the triumph of faith that is reviled, but which rises again and again.

As a moving contribution to the literature of Jewish struggles and Jewish ideals, as well as a unique addition to the background of Shakespeare's immortal play, “The Last Days of Shylock” is a book which should stir the minds of Jewish readers.

**A Problem.**

A busy housewife in a South African Jewish home was inundated with work in connection with preparations for Pesach. In the midst of it all, she discovered that she would require another chicken to be killed and thereupon called out to the native boy to get a chicken from the yard and take it to the *shochet* for the purpose of killing.

A half-an-hour later the boy came into the kitchen and the good lady discovered that he had not yet carried out her command.

“Why do you not go to have the chicken killed?” she remonstrated.

The native scratched his head and appeared in doubt.

Finally he ejaculated: “Shall I kill a *bass* or a *missus*?”

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