

## An Interchange ?

SOME time ago I suggested to local congregations the idea of a temporary interchange of preachers and cantors. My words, however, did not have any effect.

I have been interested, therefore, to observe that the United Synagogue of London is favouring the interchange of Readers in its constituent synagogues. Some of the *chazonim* in the synagogues of the great Metropolis are now conducting the services in others than their own, and ministers are preaching to their flocks in other places of worship. This temporary interchange is found to be of advantage in increasing interest in public worship.

I strongly recommend the idea for South Africa. It would be attractive to have the cantor of the Gardens Synagogue in Capetown to conduct the Friday evening and Sabbath morning services in the Wolmarans Street Synagogue in Johannesburg, whilst the local cantor conducted similar services in Capetown. It would also be interesting if—let us say—the rabbi of the Pretoria Synagogue were occasionally to preach in a Johannesburg *shul* and local preachers were to go from time to time to Pretoria.

Such interchanges can only have the effect of drawing congregations together. It is an old criticism that in this country, synagogue members are solely interested in their own particular congregational problems, without showing the slightest interest in the development of other similar synagogue groups and communities in various parts of the country.

## Rothschild

THE first *Yahrzeit* of the late Baron Edmond de Rothschild was observed in Paris on the 22nd day of Cheshvan—the Jewish date of his death. The memory of the old Baron is very dear indeed to Jewry in the French capital, upon whom his deeds brought lustre.

An interesting feature of the first *Yahrzeit* was a speech made by Baron Maurice de Rothschild at the memorial meeting in Paris. The Baron is the only son and heir to the title. After the death of his father, speculation was rife as to whether he would follow in his father's footsteps and take an interest in Jewish affairs. He is a member of the French Senate and is prominent in public life in France, but during the life-time of his father he took no part in Jewish activities. At the memorial meeting, Baron Maurice delivered an address which was a pleasant surprise to his audience, and a great shock to the assimilated Jewish aristocracy of Paris, who believe themselves to be "Frenchmen of the Jewish persuasion."

"My late father," declared Baron Maurice de Rothschild, "did not go to Palestine with the purpose of doing charity work. He foresaw the dark days which were to come upon Jewry. He aimed to help in the building of the National Home, to create a haven of refuge for the persecuted Jews in the land of their ancestors. It was not a matter of philanthropy, but the following of a great ideal. In my childhood he used to speak to me about Palestine, saying: 'Not my millions will build Palestine, but the great Jewish will . . .' My father always hated Jews

# Current Communal Comments

By  
"Hamabit"

who were ashamed of their origin — he could not stand them."

With many others, I welcome this expression of faith in the Jewish national will-to-live, on the part of the scion of a noble family.

## A "Turk"

THE many admirers of Yehudi Menuhin in South Africa will be interested to learn that this young virtuoso has now decided to retire from the concert platform for a period of two years, in order to devote his time to study and to further accomplishment.

Menuhin is one of the most highly paid music performers of our time and nothing short of heroism was required for him to resist the temptation of further contracts. I am sure his decision will be applauded by all lovers of music, for many a young prodigy has had his head turned by too early successes.

By the way, I notice that the "Koelnische Volkszeitung" — a Nazi newspaper—published recently a long eulogy of the art of Menuhin. The article was full of praise for Menuhin's work, but there was just one "inaccuracy" in the first passage. It reads as follows: "the Turkish violinist, Yehudi Menuhin . . ."

What a fine illustration of the degradation of the German press!

## Hebrew for Adults

A FRIEND of mine, who travelled on a boat to Palestine together with German refugees, has described to me the manner in which German Jews have taken to the study of Hebrew. With characteristic thoroughness of their native land, they make every effort to acquire the language in a short time. On the ship everyone of them spent hours with a Hebrew book. In Palestine, my friend learnt that the German immigrants make the best pupils in the adult classes. Whilst pupils from other countries are often satisfied with a smattering of Hebrew, the German pupil keeps to his class until he finally masters the language.

The popularity of Hebrew in present-day Germany is also evident from the success of the weekly Hebrew lessons, published in the "Juedische Rundschau." It is not usual for a newspaper to teach languages through its columns and when the new feature was inaugurated I wondered whether it would be a success.

It appears, however, that these lessons are studied regularly by thousands of readers. The writer of this feature receives each week scores of papers to mark. Occasionally he publishes letters written by readers in Hebrew—as a result of his tuition.

One such letter was from a "student" who is seventy years of age. He wrote to say that he had been a professor in a provincial German University, that he was now retired and did not hope to be able to go to Palestine, but he studied the language as a real "Baal Teshuva." In his childhood days he had learned a little Hebrew in *Cheder* but he had not handled a Hebrew book for sixty years!

I hear that the first two series of lessons published in the "Rundschau" have now appeared in book form and over ten thousand copies of the book have already been sold out!

## Oppenheimer

I NOTE that a most cordial reception has been given in New York to an interesting newcomer in the person of Professor Franz Oppenheimer. The occasion was a dinner-meeting which was attended by five hundred leaders in academic and Zionist circles, headed by Professor Albert Einstein, Max Reinhardt, Professor Felix Frankfurter and other distinguished folk.

Only the older Zionist stalwarts will recollect Franz Oppenheimer as one of the most notable founders of modern Zionism. It was he who at the request of Dr. Theodor Herzl went to Palestine to establish the first co-operative colony in Merchavia. He has achieved widespread recognition in his work of founding four successful agricultural settlements in Germany.

It is now Dr. Oppenheimer's intention to familiarise himself with American efforts in rural reconstruction. He is also bringing out an English translation of his book on "Land Reform." Dr. Oppenheimer's services have always been at the disposal of the Zionist movement. A son of his is now professor at the Hebrew University at Jerusalem.

## Howlers

I RECENTLY came across a few particularly "screaming" howlers made by school-children studying the Scriptures. Here are some of them:

"Joseph was so straight that Pharaoh made a ruler of him."

"The Pentateuch was a man who married five times."

"Who came after King Solomon? The Queen of Sheba."

"The Ten Commandments were given to Moses, but he passed them on quickly, because the stone was very heavy."

"The Decalogue is the ten longest books in the Bible."

"Moses gave the people the Commandments when they wanted food. He was a good leader who went up into the mountain to be away from them."

"The Ten Commandments have lasted to this day but then they were written on great slabs of stone."