

# Current Communal Comments

By "Hamabit"

...ers  
...S interested to read  
...e other day an inter-  
...hich a local newspaper  
...with the well-known  
... African architect, Mr.  
...l Moerdyk, who re-  
...returned from abroad.  
...y be noted in passing  
...this gentleman is  
...esigner of the Voor-  
...er Monument, the foun-  
...ss of which are now be-  
...uilt on a koppie over-  
...gg Pretoria. One of the  
...urposes of his visit  
...as was to study monuments in  
...e and Egypt.

The course of his talk with a  
...entative of one of our local con-  
...raries, Mr. Moerdyk told him of  
...ous incident which befell him  
...his wife in one of the oldest  
...ogues in Prague.

...were talking together in Afri-  
... said Mr. Moerdyk, "when an  
...w came up to us and asked in  
... whether we were Boers. That  
...e first time on our trip that  
...ly had recognised our language.  
... we were. The old man then  
...ss that he knew all about our  
... and the great man we had  
...eed, Paul Kruger.

...sequently we found out that  
...Kruger—or as they call him  
...Oom Paul—was regarded as a  
...national figure in Czecho-  
...ia. He is considered to be a  
...leader who defended his people  
...tt domination by a great race.  
...lovakia is similarly in danger  
...mination by Germany, and the  
...revere Kruger. He is perhaps  
...ater figure there than he is  
...n his own country."

...ainly, this is not the only in-  
... of a Jew overseas paying a  
...e tribute to the late President's  
...and fame. Lately, I read an-  
...esimilar eulogy of Oom Paul  
...the pen of one of the greatest  
...glo-Jewish writers. I refer to  
...tte Israel Zangwill, who once  
...a visit to Kruger at Merton-  
...ing could be more pathetic or  
...sublime," declared Zangwill,  
...the figure of the old warrior  
... before his Bible in unbroken

## Chazanuth College

...POPOS my recent note on the  
...estion of how a cantor becomes a  
... , a reader tells me that for  
...time past there has been a  
...ent in America to establish a  
... college for *chazanim*.

...correspondent, who is evidently  
...nformed in the affairs of the  
... with profession, also furnished  
...th some interesting details re-  
...g the work of various *chazanim*  
...ssations. He says that whilst it  
...bably true that there are some  
...im who do not understand  
...they sing, it must also be men-  
... that in recent years great ef-  
... have been made to raise the  
...ard of the profession. For some  
...past two magazines have been  
...ring — one in Warsaw and the

other in New York — devoted en-  
...tirely to the profession and art of  
...chazanuth.

In addition there is in New York  
...a special organisation of cantors en-  
...titled "The Board of American Jew-  
...ish Ministers." As recently as last  
...December this body held a most suc-  
...cessful conference in New York, at  
...which a number of important ad-  
...dresses were delivered. One of the  
...main speakers was Cantor Jassinow-  
...ski, who stressed the fact that the  
...modern *chazan* ought to be given a  
...wide scope in communal activity, and  
...should not be confined merely to the  
...conducting of services. It was at this  
...conference that a special commission  
...was charged with the task of estab-  
...lishing a *chazanim* Seminary.

## A Forgotten Man

ONE day, I hope, somebody will  
...write the story of the "forgotten  
...men in modern Jewish life." The  
...chief place in this gallery would be  
...occupied by the leaders of pre-war  
...Russian Jewry. A large number of  
...the Jewish intelligentsia in Russia, it  
...is true, fled the country after the  
...Revolution, but there must have been  
...many rabbis, communal leaders,  
...writers and Zionists who stayed on.  
...What has happened to these people?

The fate of Leon Rabinovitz, who  
...died recently, is perhaps typical.  
...Rabinovitz was for many years editor  
...of the *Hamelitz*, the leading Hebrew  
...daily in pre-war Russia. Through the  
...medium of his paper he brought to  
...light a wealth of Hebrew talent. He  
...was the type of Russian Jew who  
...combined Talmudic erudition with  
...modern education, he himself having  
...attended the Universities of Paris  
...and Berlin in his youth.

Under the Soviet regime he re-  
...mained in Leningrad, where he lived  
...in obscurity. The Jewish public out-  
...side of Russia had forgotten about  
...his existence. His children took up  
...Government posts and became es-  
...tranged from him.

He died on the eve of Sabbath, and  
...in accordance with Jewish tradition  
...the Chevra Kadisha of Leningrad  
...postponed the funeral for Sunday.  
...But his children were afraid of the  
...large assembly of mourners — old  
...leaders, Zionists and Hebraists —  
...which a Sunday funeral might bring  
...together. They were ashamed of their  
...illustrious father, and arranged a  
...hasty and secret funeral on the Sab-  
...bath Day. The news of his death  
...trickled through somewhat late to the  
...outside world. Truly a forgotten man!

## In Shanghai

THERE are a number of  
...European Jews in the  
...Sino-Japanese war zone, and  
...their position is an unenvi-  
...able one. Whilst almost  
...every European is able to  
...seek protection from his  
...Consul, the German and the  
...Russian Jews have no one to  
...defend them. A few years  
...ago a number of German re-  
...fugees, chiefly medical prac-  
...titioners, succeeded in es-  
...tablishing themselves in  
...the International Settlement.  
...The other day I was shown  
...a letter written by one of these doc-  
...tors from Shanghai to a friend in  
...Johannesburg.

He says that it took him about two  
...years before he was able to eke out  
...a living. At the beginning of last  
...year there was a wave of prosperity  
...in Shanghai, and the position of the  
...German refugee doctors had im-  
...proved. Some of them were already  
...doing quite well. Since the outbreak  
...of the war, however, 80 per cent. of  
...all foreign women and children have  
...been transferred to Hong Kong and  
...Manila. As a result the doctors have  
...lost their practices and are virtually  
...starving.

The position of the Russian-Jewish  
...emigrees is also pitiful. These people  
...left Russia at the outbreak of the  
...Revolution, and the Soviet Consul-  
...ates will therefore not protect them.  
...When the foreign nationals were  
...moved to Hong Kong, the Russian  
...emigrees were unable to obtain visas.



## Recognition

SOME little while ago, two  
...Jews, who had not been  
...long in South Africa, were  
...standing on the corner of a  
...street in Capetown, killing the  
...King's English.

A friend of theirs, who has  
...been in the country for many  
...years, and who knows English  
...perfectly, happened to be pass-  
...ing. On seeing them, he stopped  
...and said to them:

"Why must you talk English  
...for people to recognise you are  
...Jews? Better talk in Hebrew  
...so that everybody will know you  
...are *goyim*."

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