



CURRENT COMMUNAL COMMENT

By "Hamabit"

Bentwich

AN interesting personality is Mr. Norman Bentwich, who is due to arrive shortly in this country to help inaugurate (with Sir Wyndham Deedes) the South African campaign for Austrian and Polish relief.

Bentwich is the scion of a famous Anglo-Jewish family. It will be recalled that his father, Mr. Herbert Bentwich, who was also a lawyer of standing, was a member of the first Zionist group ever to be organised in England. On one occasion he represented South African Jewry at a Zionist Congress.

His son Norman, who is, by the way, a voluminous writer on Jewish and other subjects, has long been an active participant in almost every phase of Zionist and Jewish activity. Ever since he graduated at the Cambridge University, at which he had a brilliant scholastic career, Mr. Bentwich has contributed much to leading journals about the fortunes of Jews in the contemporary world.

In that respect the "Zionist Record" can claim him as being one of its earliest contributors, for in one of the pre-War issues, I found his name being featured as the author of an essay on some aspect of Zionist thought, which he had specially contributed at the time.

In Rhodes

I LEARN that as a result of the present anti-Semitic policy of the Italian Government, the famous Jewish cemetery on Rhodes Island is being destroyed. This news will come as a particular shock to my Sephardic co-religionists in Rhodesia, most of whom hail from this island.

The cemetery is of great historic value. Many of its tombstones date back to four and five hundred years ago. They bear glorious testimony to the great past of the Jews of Rhodes Island, where a Jewish community existed in the times of the Hasmoneans. The community is also mentioned in records of the first few centuries of the present era. In the year 1170, Rabbi Benjamin of Toledo, the famous traveller, found four hundred Jewish families and three rabbis in Rhodes.

In modern times Rhodes was known as a seat of Jewish learning amongst Sephardic Jews. When in 1913 the Italians occupied Rhodes, there were 3,300 Jews on the Island. In the last few years the figure has risen to 4,500.

Until the recent change of attitude by the Italians, the Rhodes Jews were treated very well. Sabbath observance was incorporated in the island's laws, and the Hebrew schools and the rabbinical college were supported by the Government.

Salem

THE ITALIAN press has passed over in silence the resignation of Henrico Salem, Prefect of Trieste.

Salem, who is a Sephardic Jew, was considered the most popular mayor Trieste had ever had. His resignation came as a shock to the Fascists themselves. From his very childhood, he had been an intimate friend of Benito Mussolini. He is the possessor of the Commandant of the Great Cross, the highest Italian decoration that can be awarded. Together with Mussolini he took part in the famous march on Rome.

Some eight years ago, Henrico Salem was appointed Prefect of Trieste. This office is, in the Fascist system, somewhat similar to that of a Governor. Salem threw himself into the work of developing and beautifying the City of Trieste. So successful was he in his work, that some five months ago Mussolini appointed him for a further period of office, which was to expire in 1942.

It is rumoured in Italy that high official circles, including Mussolini himself, tried to press Salem not to take the step of resignation. But he feels he can not continue his work at a time when many of his co-religionists are being persecuted in Italy

An Orchestra

THERE is a movement afoot to have the Palestine Symphony Orchestra visit the United States to take part in the World's Fair.

The promoters of the World's Fair might well be proud of such a participant. Only three years old, the Palestine Symphony Orchestra has made an enviable reputation for itself in the world of music. Some of the greatest conductors in the world have considered it an honour to lead the orchestra. Symphonies have been performed under the direction of Toscanini, Sargent, Dobrowen, Szenkar, Horenstein and others of great talent.

When I heard the orchestra in Palestine last year, I felt I was in the presence of one of the finest musical combinations in existence. The expense involved in transferring so large an orchestra from Palestine to America will be enormous, but that such an arrangement would arouse considerable interest, goes without saying.

In my opinion, the promoters of the World's Fair in New York will not regret making the necessary investment for this purpose.

Budko

IT SEEMS strange to think that Joseph Budko, the Palestine artist whom one was always inclined to regard as a "young" painter, has reached the age of fifty. His jubilee is now being celebrated in Palestine, and the newspapers are publishing laudatory articles about him and his art.

Budko was brought up in Wilno, where as a youngster he learned to be a coppersmith. Gradually he began to take an interest in metal-designing and established contact with Hermann Struck. The latter took an interest in the young man and brought him to Berlin, where he studied and developed into a fine artist. His illustrations of the *Haggadah* are probably the finest of their kind. In his work Budko strove to combine the traditional Jewish style of drawing (which, by the way, is not often to be found) with the more modern schools of painting. The result is magnificent. His illustrations of the *Haggadah*, which give a modern version of the mediaeval drawings in ancient texts of the Passover book, are a fine achievement indeed. Budko has also illustrated Bialik's work with many excellent woodcuts. He drew also the title-page of the Hebrew weekly *Haolam*. In most of his book-illustrations, Budko has devoted himself to the art of Hebrew lettering which had been a neglected art for many years past.

At present he resides in Palestine, where he is in charge of the New Bezalel School of Art.

No Stinginess

A BEGGAR went to wealthy Reb Chaim of his village and stated that the physician had informed him it was essential that he take a "cure" at a health resort. He wanted assistance, therefore, to go to Carlsbad.

"But why is it essential that you go to so expensive a place?"

"My dear Reb Chaim," replied the beggar, "when it comes to my health, nothing is too expensive."

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