

CURRENT COMMUNAL COMMENT

By "Hamabit"

A Statue

I NOTICE that the Pretoria City Council recently debated the question of the removal of the Kruger statue from Station-Square to Church Square in the centre of the town. No decision was taken, but the matter is due to come up again in January.

In this connection, it should be remembered that this particular memorial to President Kruger was presented to the citizens of the Capital by the late Senator Samuel Marks in grateful recognition of the work done on behalf of his people by the late "Oom Paul." The Jewish industrialist's gesture was deeply appreciated by many of President Kruger's fellow-burghers at the time the statue was erected, which occurred shortly before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Among those who helped in the erection of the monument was Anton van Wouw, the famous South African sculptor.

Sorrow and Comfort

THE OCTOBER issues of the German-Jewish newspapers contain much material in connection with the celebration of the high Festivals. Published before the recent wave of vandalism these issues show as yet no signs of the panic which must have seized German Jewry to-day. Yet the contents of the news columns of one number of a *Juedische Rundschau* or *Israelitisches Familienblatt* provide ample food for thought.

In one section of the paper the reader finds reports from small communities in the provinces. The headings are: "Farewell Sermon by the Communal Rabbi" or "Farewell to our President." Most pathetic of all is a little news-item from a place called Mulheim in the Ruhr district. The headline speaks of a "Farewell to the Synagogue." At the Neilah service the community was asked by the Hebrew teacher (the Rabbi having evidently left already) to bid farewell to the Synagogue which would be closed down after the Festivals owing to the greatly diminished number of members.

Nevertheless, there are signs of comfort too. On other pages one finds reports from the distant lands of German Jewish dispersion. In Montevideo, in Santiago, in Lima and in Haifa, German-Jewish congregations held their own services during the last Festivals. Exiled Rabbis delivered sermons and Cantors from Germany conducted services.

German-Jewish newspapers are naturally not in a position to comment on the news, but the contrast is evident to anyone familiar with Jewish history. Synagogues are burned and Synagogues are built and between the two lies the eternity of Israel.

A Bible Chapter

SOME TIME ago I had occasion to comment on the success of the "Daily Page Movement" — a movement to encourage the study by Jews throughout the world of a set daily page in the Talmud. The success of this venture has now brought forth a new suggestion which if adopted will prove even more popular. It emanates from Mr. D. M. Lipman, a Hebrew writer who resides in Lithuania.

Mr. Lipman suggests that a "Daily Bible Chapter Movement" should be inaugurated amongst the Jewish youth. He calculates that by reading daily one chapter, and on Sabbath Eve two chapters of the Bible, it should be possible to go through the whole Book of Books within a period of two years. Under the slogan "Back to the Bible" members would be notified through the press and other channels of the text set for the day and Jews throughout the world would be reading the same text daily. A movement of this nature would be of great educational value for the Jewish youth and would serve as a unifying factor.

I heartily endorse this scheme and feel that it has enormous possibilities. The text of the Bible is always fresh and interesting and our youth leaders would certainly be glad to precede their study circle meetings with a reading of the Daily Chapter. Where possible the text would be read in the original and young people could thus have an opportunity of brushing up their Hebrew knowledge. The Board of Education is, I think, the most suitable institution to take up a suggestion of this nature.

Bizet

I UNDERSTAND that a number of opera companies in Europe and America have recently given special performances of "Carmen" in connection with the hundredth birthday of George Bizet, the composer. "Carmen" may not be a particularly good opera, but it is certainly a most popular one both on the concert platform and in the opera house.

It has often been suggested that George Bizet was a Jew. Dr. Kohut regards Bizet as such and bases his conclusion on the fact that he was a son-in-law of Jacques Halevy, composer of "La Juive" and of a number of Synagogue tunes. Bizet also completed the opera "Noah" which his father-in-law had left unfinished.

On the other hand, the fact that "Carmen" is produced in Nazi Germany nowadays must be regarded as ample proof that its author is not a Jew. The Nazi racial experts must have made careful inquiries into Bizet's antecedents before they permitted his opera to be performed.

Muzzled

IN THE dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, Poland gained a big slice of territory and the "victory without bloodshed" was naturally made the occasion for great national rejoicing. During the celebrations — and this, too, seems natural in Poland — the opportunity was taken to beat up scores of Jews, to smash windows, and to tell the Jewish newspapers not to breathe a word about the occurrences. All that the newspapers were permitted to do — and this seems a most gracious concession in these days of Hitler — was to congratulate the government on the return to its rule of quarter of a million Polish nationals without the use of the sword. Seeing that a Polish sword may be used against enemies without as well as against Jews within, the Jews of Poland had every reason to be grate-

And here are two instances of the Jewish muzzled press: On the days following the riots one paper carried a notice: "In reply to the various enquiries from the provinces as regards the happenings in Warsaw, we regret to state that for various reasons we are unable to publish any information on the subject." One smart Jewish columnist managed, however, to break through the muzzle. He published a little sketch entitled "Mottel Chlop beats his Wife." On every occasion, said the writer, Mottel beats his wife. When he does not earn enough, when he starves, he puts all the blame on her and gives her a thrashing. When his horse dies, he blames his wife and gives her a beating. When he is ill, he gives her a beating. One day he won a big prize in the lottery. He came home and gave his wife a beating. Why? To show how great, how important he is . . .

Poland, who has won a piece of Silesia, not because of her own strength, but by sheer chance, must needs demonstrate her great strength through the medium of a helpless Jewish minority.

Generals

TWO STORM troopers were travelling in a railway carriage in Germany when an old Jew stepped in. He did not blink an eyelid at their provocation and when one of the troopers declared it was the Jews who had lost his country in the War, the old Jew nodded in assent.

"It was because of the Jewish generals," he murmured.

"But we had no Jewish generals," expostulated the Brown Shirts.

"Yes," consented the elderly Jew, "but there were quite a number on the side of the Allies."

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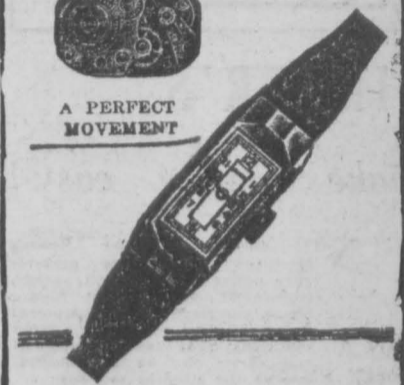
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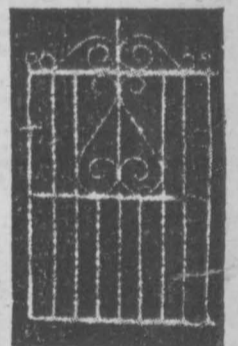
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