

CURRENT COMMUNAL COMMENT

By "Hamabit"

New Minister

THE appointment of a new Minister to the Kimberley Synagogue interested me. The new incumbent, Mr. Wolfe Yesorsky, is a Bachelor of Arts and a graduate of the famous Jews College of London. He is only thirty years of age, and has apparently not yet occupied the pulpit of any synagogue; this, therefore, is his first post. He has, however, been associated with many aspects of social welfare work and has been the Minister-in-Charge of a number of boys' clubs in the East End of London. He has, no doubt, from time to time also occupied the pulpits of London synagogues and preached sermons.

Generally, the new Minister of the Kimberley Hebrew Congregation appears to be the type of cultured young man we need to enhance the prestige of the Jewish Ministry in this country. He will, incidentally, come to serve one of the oldest congregations in this land and will preach what is probably the most beautiful little synagogue in the British Empire. The edifice was erected at a time of great prosperity, when Kimberley was a hub of pioneer diamond mining activity. Money was plentiful, and some of the leading Jewish folk of the growing mining town, who originally came from England, engaged an English architect to design a really handsome synagogue.

Davidson

PROFESSOR Israel Davidson, whose death is reported from New York, was probably one of the greatest Jewish scholars in America. Born in Janowa, Lithuania, in 1870, Davidson displayed great promise as a Yeshivah student in Kovno. At a youthful age he settled in America, studied at the Columbia University. On his graduation, Dr. Davidson engaged in research work, and since then written many important studies. He specialised in Mediaeval Hebrew literature, and has written several books on the subject. In many years past, Professor Davidson was active in the Jewish Theological Seminary, popularly known as Schechter's Seminary. He belonged to the Conservative Synagogue in America, and his name was highly revered by all sections of American Jewry.

In 1926, Dr. Davidson was specially elected by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to deliver a course of lectures which aroused considerable interest in academic circles in Pales-

An Old Firm

AS a young boy, I always had a liking for the "thin English" matzot which was baked with wood fuel. This delightful product was manufactured by a famous old established concern, Levy Bros., of Middlesex Street, London. The firm began operations in 1710 and continued to work even after the introduction, some sixty years ago, of machinery for the baking of matzot. The firm was the last of the bakers of this type of thin matzot.

I remember that Levy Bros. received the honour of acceptance of their matzot by members of the Royal Family and consignments were sent regularly to many parts of the world. During the Great War the firm supplied matzot to the Jewish soldiers at the front.

Supplies used to come to this country and were ordered by English-Jewish families who had come to reside in South Africa. During last Passover no English thin matzot could be secured here, and now I learn that the famous concern of Levy Bros. has just been closed. The demand for the matzot baked with wood fuel had apparently diminished in the last decade or so to such an extent as to cause it to become an unmarketable commodity.

A Synagogue is Rebuilt

THE news that the community of Kruschow, in Moravia, is rebuilding the synagogue, which the Nazis recently destroyed, will come as a surprise to many. One may well appreciate the feelings of our co-religionists, and their confidence in a brighter future. The appeal for funds which this community issued says: "Let the enemies burn our synagogues. So long as there is any strength left in us, we shall rebuild them." According to the report, the sum necessary for the restoration of the synagogue was collected within two hours and building activities are already in process.

Up to the middle of June, twenty-three synagogues had been burned by the Nazis in Czecho-Slovakia, and one hundred and forty Sefer Torahs were reduced to ashes. Smaller communities in Czecho-Slovakia have transported their scrolls to Prague, where there is a greater feeling of security. Yet, despite all this, Kruschow insists on rebuilding its House of God. Here one is truly faced with an act of heroism and courage before which the blustering speeches of tyrants fade into insignificance.

Bloch's Concerto

I WAS interested to learn that a recording of the Bloch Violin Concerto has now been issued by the Columbia Gramophone Company. This publication is regarded as a great event in musical circles and Desmond Shawe-Taylor describes it as "the most valuable piece of pioneer work performed by the gramophone since Decca published the Walton Symphony."

The Concerto is produced on four records and the soloist is Szigeti, whose recent visit to this country is so well remembered. He is accompanied by the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra which is conducted by Charles Munch. Szigeti, by the way, performed this Concerto at its premiere in Cleveland. At the beginning of this year he played it with Sir Thomas Beecham at the Queen's Hall, and musical critics were full of praise for Bloch's composition.

The composition is described as "music of conflict" and it reaches great heights of genius. Bloch himself has warned the musical public against seeking in the Concerto evidence of any specifically Jewish inspiration such as is to be found in most of his compositions. Nevertheless, musical critics assert that they are well able to discern the Oriental note and the pathos of a distant past.

I hope that the Concerto will before long be performed by some of our orchestras, or that at least the recording will be broadcast from the wireless stations of this country.

Silence

A WELL-KNOWN German comedian used, until recently, to present an act which always sent his audiences into gales of laughter. He walked on to the stage with a muzzle over his mouth, sat down on a chair, and remained silent. One minute, two minutes, three minutes passed. Still he did not utter a sound. The audience began to titter. Finally he got up and walked off the stage, still silent.

Whereupon the Master of Ceremonies appeared in front of the footlights and announced:

"Ladies and gentlemen, now that the political part of our programme is over, we come to the entertainment!"

Both men are now languishing in a concentration camp.



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