

CURRENT COMMUNAL

By "Hamabit"

COMMENT

The Ministry

IT IS pleasant to realise that a successor to the late Rev. M. I. Cohen has been found in this country, and I congratulate the Rev. Dr. I. H. Levine, of Sea Point, upon receiving a call from the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation.

At the same time, the Sea Point community is faced with the problem of finding a successor to its young minister.

The present war situation makes it difficult to arrange for our spiritual leaders to come from overseas and there is undoubtedly a dearth in South Africa of young men who have prepared themselves for the ministry. The projected scheme for the establishment of a Jewish seat of learning in South Africa is all the more important to-day, therefore, but it will take considerable time before such an activity can even be launched.

The whole question of the Jewish Ministry is important. There is an undoubted need for smaller communities to be subsidised in order to enable them to engage the right type of spiritual leader. Such men would have to have a knowledge of the two official languages of this country and would not only serve Jewish congregations, but would also be a link between Jews and Afrikaners.

I have always considered this matter should receive the earnest attention of our congregational leaders, who, in conjunction with the Board of Deputies, might create the necessary machinery to improve generally the status of the Jewish Ministry in this country and attract some of our younger men to this difficult but noble vocation.

A Silver Jubilee

ONE of New York's leading Jewish dailies—*Der Tog*—is now celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, and the special number produced on this occasion has just reached me.

Unlike most Jewish papers, *Der Tog* did not grow from small beginnings. In 1914, a group of Jewish leaders in New York formed a corporation with a capital of 100,000 dollars to publish this paper. The venture was headed by Hermann Bernstein, one of America's most famous war journalists and a member of the staff of the *New York Times*. Associated with him was Dr. J. L. Magnes, the present head of the Hebrew University, and a group of the Jewish intelligentsia in New York, who aimed at providing a modern Jewish daily that would approach as nearly as possible the re-

sponsible organs of public opinion in English, and would steer clear of party politics, with which Yiddish newspapers were at that time occupied. The *Forwaerts* was then mainly a labour organ, whilst the *Morning Journal* catered for orthodox Jewry.

Der Tog managed to enlist the services of some of the most outstanding Jewish writers. Sholem Aleichem, Hirschbein, Zhitlovsky and Dr. Koralnik were regular contributors. Its news columns and magazine pages were modelled on the English press. It was also probably the first Jewish newspaper to publish a regular cartoon.

The present publisher is Mr. David Shapiro, who some years ago created a storm in Jewish circles by offering a large sum of money for the establishment of a Yiddish chair at the Hebrew University. The offer was not accepted.

Kusewitzky

THE rumour that Moshe Kusewitzky, Warsaw's leading Cantor, had been killed in the bombing of Warsaw has, I am glad to hear, proved false. The latest report states that Kusewitzky has managed to find refuge in Bucharest, Roumania.

Some time ago it was announced in Johannesburg that Kusewitzky was to officiate and give concerts in the Union. Lovers of Chazanuth were eagerly looking forward to his arrival. Unfortunately, the tour did not materialise. Had he come here for the High Festivals he would have been saved the terrible agony of the war in Poland.

Kusewitzky is to-day regarded as the leading Chazan. A member of a gifted family of singers—two of his brothers are chazanim in England and his uncle, Mr. Ephraim Shlepek, is officiating in a leading Montreal Synagogue—Kusewitzky began his career as choir-boy. As a child he also showed great promise in painting and sculpture and attended the Royal Academy of Art in Rostov. His first important post was Vilna and later he was called to the Great Tlomatski Synagogue of Warsaw.

Some two years ago he visited the United States and appeared in the Carnegie Hall. New York Jews, who have heard some of the greatest Chazanim, gave him a most enthusiastic welcome. The sternest critics were full of praise. It was then stated that a synagogue on the East Side had offered him 10,000 dollars for officiating on the three days of Yomim Noroim. But being under contract with the Warsaw community he could not accept the offer.

Journalist Heroes

IT will take a long time before anything like the full story of Jewish heroism in Poland is told. In the meantime incidents and episodes trickle through from various channels. Of special interest is the heroism of the Jewish journalists. Moses, the correspondent of the "Jewish Telegraphic Agency," would not leave Warsaw until the very end. When the city was being bombarded, he broadcast an appeal to the United States which, it will be remembered, was reproduced by Reuter. All other journalists clung to their posts till the last minute, and many refused to leave the country when facilities for evacuation were offered to them.

To-day hundreds of Jewish journalists are stranded in various parts of Eastern Europe, and their plight is a most tragic one. The Palestine and American Writers' Union has issued an appeal on their behalf, and hopes to send them material aid. The position of Zionist journalists who were stranded in the Soviet-occupied territories is no less tragic than under the Nazis. They can hope for little mercy from the Bolsheviks. In the small states which have come under Russian influence the position of the Jewish journalists also seems not very safe, and the case of M. Orzech is typical.

Orzech fled from Nazi Warsaw to the safety of Vilna. As soon as he reached Lithuania he began cabling to the *Forwaerts*, of New York, detailed reports of the German terror. He also described the Soviet looting of the invaded territories.

Pressure was then brought upon the Lithuanian Government by the Soviet and Orzech was arrested and threatened with deportation to Warsaw. For days there were excited cables in the *Forwaerts* until the State Department of the U.S.A. took up the matter. Orzech is now free, but he must send no more cables, and has to leave the country as soon as he can obtain a visa to a neutral haven.

Plausible

A BEGGAR presents himself at the door of a Jewish home.

"As a result of the war," he tells the housewife, "I am reduced to selling *tzitzis*."

"May I see your *tzitzis*?"

"As a result of the war, I am unable to get any."

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