

# CURRENT COMMUNAL COMMENT

By "Hamabit"

## Choirs

I AM pleased to hear that a fine male choir is now being established at the Beth Hamedrash Hagodel, to assist Rev. S. Pincasovitch, the new cantor. Rev. Pincasovitch has a deep knowledge of synagogue music and considerable ability in its interpretation. In addition, he himself has earned no small reputation as a composer of synagogue music, and gramophone records of his work are to be found in almost every Jewish home. Our people greatly love *negunim* and the synagogue liturgy is full of lovely melodies and tunes. The choir at the Beth Hamedrash Hagodel, under the guidance of the new cantor, will do much, I am confident, to bring to synagogue worshippers some of the treasures of Jewish liturgic music.

There is, of course, an excellent choir at the Wolmarans Street Synagogue, which assists in the services conducted by Cantor I. Alter, and Cantor S. Backon has the support of a choir at the Yeoville Synagogue. The latter has a choir of mixed voices, and the introduction of women into it some years ago has been a never-ending source of controversy.

I feel sure that the arrival of Cantor S. Pincasovitch will generally give a fillip to Jewish music here. A recital of Jewish music by the combined local synagogue choirs would be most welcome and would attract a large and interested audience.

## George Leven

AN extensive period of modern Jewish history is recalled by the report from France that George Leven, President of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, died in Vichy recently at the age of 73.

George Leven was the famous son of a famous father. The father, Narcisse Leven, who died in Paris in 1915, was General Secretary to the Ministry of Justice under Cremieux, and was an opponent of Napoleon III. For seven years he was also vice-president of the Municipal Council of Paris. To readers of Jewish history he is well known as one of the founders of the Alliance Israelite, and successively its Secretary and Vice-President.

George Leven followed in the footsteps of his father and was in charge of this great institution for the past fifty years. He travelled widely throughout the Near East, and looked after the various educational institutions in some of the most backward parts of Asia and Africa. He visited Palestine in 1932 and showed his de-

votion to Eretz Israel by consolidating the local colonies of the P.I.C.A.

He was also active as a writer and historian. His two volumes covering the history and activities of the Alliance between 1860 and 1910 are among the most important contributions to modern Jewish history, and throw a particularly interesting light on the story of the Jews in the East and in Northern Africa.

## Liquidated

MANY South African Zionists who visited Europe during pre-war days must certainly have called at the Meinekestrasse offices in Berlin—the headquarters of the Zionist movement in Germany. They will, therefore, hear with deep feeling that this busy centre of Zionist activity has been liquidated by the Berlin authorities.

This bureau not only had a sentimental place in the affection of the supporters of the movement. It was also the seat of very considerable influence on Zionism in Germany and beyond.

"Reflector," writing on the subject in the "Palestine Post," says of the bureau that "it came to stand for a specific regime of liberal thought coupled with loyal discipline and unparalleled organisation."

I remember visiting Meinekestrasse some ten years ago and coming into personal contact with various members of the staff. Its offices, by the way, were also the home of the "Juedische Rundschau," the famous publication which became the mentor of German Jewry after Hitler's rise to power. The bureau was housed in a handsome, large building, and possessed a fine library as well as two reception rooms for cholutzim on their way to Palestine, and its reputation as a centre of Zionist activity had spread to every country in the world.

## Bullitt's Visit

I WAS interested to learn that during his recent visit to Palestine, Mr. William Bullitt made a special point of calling on Capt. Alex Aaronsohn, D.S.O., and Rifka Aaronsohn, the brother and sister of the late Aaron Aaronsohn, with whom Mr. Bullitt had enjoyed a very close friendship. Mr. Bullitt, who was the former United States Ambassador to the Soviet and to France, is now President Roosevelt's special representative in the Near East, and on his way to Jerusalem by car he broke his journey to spend an hour with

the Aaronsohns at their home in Zichron Jacob.

Aaron Aaronsohn, it will be remembered, was the well-known Palestinian agriculturist and botanist, who discovered wild wheat in North Palestine and founded and directed the first Palestinian Agricultural Experimental Station at Athlit. He was also a leading member of the British Secret Service, and was killed in a fall from an aeroplane off Boulogne when returning from London.

Mr. Bullitt, I understand, met the late Aaron Aaronsohn in the United States during the last war, and subsequently at the Versailles Peace Conference. On Aaronsohn's death in 1919, Mr. Bullitt wrote a moving letter of condolence to his brother, in which he said of Aaron: "He seemed a sort of giant of an early day—like Prometheus." When he was interviewed on his arrival in Jerusalem, Mr. Bullitt referred to his visit to the Aaronsohns, saying how much he had enjoyed the hour he had spent with them.

## Of the Solomons

THE American sergeant was having a hard time with a young Jewish recruit who was brought before him at a military Reception Centre.

"Your name?"

"Solomon Solomon."

"This is a serious business. You are expected to give your Christian name and your surname."

"Solomon Solomon."

The Sergeant boiled up: "And maybe you have a middle name, too?" he asked with all the sarcasm he could muster.

"Sure. My name is Solomon Solomon Solomon."

A birth certificate proved that he was not talking in jest. Solomon Solomon Solomon, of the Brooklyn Solomons, is 21 years of age and is a dental mechanic by profession. He readily enlisted for active service, and is perfectly willing to do his duty to America by fighting Japan and Hitler.

## A Nuisance

A JEWISH father was annoyed with his son for spending his time working for the "Revolution."

"Come into my business," he said in an effort to wean him away from his radical activities, "and when the revolution comes, at least you'll have some solid financial footing."

The youth looked doubtful. "But if the revolution doesn't come, I'll be stuck with a store on my hands!"

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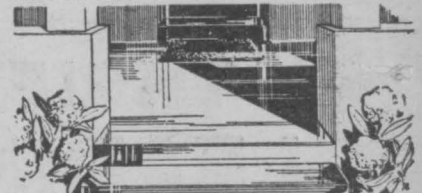
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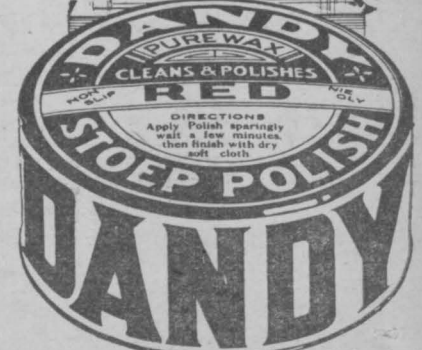
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