

# Palestine Maritime League.

## Reception in Honour of Rabbi Israel Abrahams.

There was a large attendance at the Zionist Hall on Monday night when a Reception was held by the Palestine Maritime League in honour of the President of the League, Prof. Israel Abrahams, Chief Rabbi of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation.

**Mr. J. Gitlin** was in the chair and extended a cordial welcome to Rabbi Abrahams. He was sure that the Rabbi had been impressed at Congress and in Palestine by the importance of maritime activities in our national life. He also welcomed Mr. and Mrs. M. N. Marks, who had returned on Sunday from a visit to Palestine. Mr. Marks was one of the founders of the Cape Town branch of the League and was a pillar of strength to it.

**Mr. M. N. Marks** expressed thanks for the words of welcome. He had had many meetings in Palestine with members of the League, which played an important part in the life of the Yishuv. There was a spirit of readiness to further maritime work in Eretz Israel. Maritime activity was intertwined with every phase of the development of the country and he left with the conviction that they were working for a worth-while cause. The Yishuv was staunch in its determination to carry on till final victory was achieved.

**Mr. Colin Traub** extended greetings on behalf of the Youth Committee of the League to Rabbi Abrahams and Mr. Marks. To the youth maritime activity opened up wide horizons. He was sure we would be as successful on the land as on the sea. The message of the P.M.L., whose potentialities were immense, was being brought home to the youth, who were going forth not only as chalutzim of the land but of the sea as well.

**Rabbi Abrahams** expressed sincere thanks for the warm welcome. Referring to his visit to H.M.S. Vanguard earlier in the afternoon, he said that he left the ship with the feeling that we needed to recreate Jewish maritime power, to propagate the idea of Jewish seafaring activity and to transmute the idea into ships and men.

The League had honoured him by making him Hon. President. When he went to the Congress he felt he went as the League's ambassador. He came to Basle knowing he was the sole South African representative of the P.M.L. with a sense of responsibility and not inconsiderable enthusiasm. He met various leading personalities of P.M.L. and was particularly impressed with the General Secretary, Mr. Rivlin, and the Chairman, Mr. Tolkowsky. Contact with the leaders had made him realise that we must remember the realities and be prepared to hasten slowly. He had been told of some of the difficulties of the League. The whole movement was only ten years old. Branches had been established and had to close down during the war. There was a need for re-establishing old branches and establishing new ones. This would require an initial outlay, and instead of receiving revenue, the League would have to help the new branches.

As regards the work in Eretz Israel, said Rabbi Abrahams, he had learnt that the Palestine coastline was most unsuitable for the establishment of harbours—everything would have to be built artificially. There was a crying need for anchorages, but these cost a tremendous sum; each one could, however, be established piecemeal. He felt that the leaders were men who, while they sensed the full weight of the tasks to be accomplished, yet were men of enthusiasm and inflexible will to reach their objective.

The highlight of the activities at Congress as regards P.M.L. was the trip along the Rhine during Chanukah.

It was good to be on the vessel and see the Jewish flag on the masthead. At the end of the trip, when he kindled the Chanukah lights, he was tempted to kindle an additional light—it seemed as if an additional light was shining in his Jewish spirit.

A number of resolutions covering the whole field of maritime activity was passed at Congress, which voted a quarter of a million pounds for maritime activity.

In Eretz Israel, said Rabbi Abrahams, he had made it his business to see everything connected with P.M.L. His first visit was to Tel Aviv port, where Mr. Herzl Zuckerman acted as his guide. The port was small, but great in the heart and soul of the people. When it was explained to him that every inch represented Jewish achievement, he began to have a greater respect for what he saw. He was told of the difficulties encountered and of the obstruction on the part of the Government, and began to understand that all he saw was a miracle. Gradually the spirit of the place penetrated everyone.

In Haifa he visited the Nautical School attached to the Technical Institute; and was present at the ceremony of breaking the flag, which was part Jewish, part British. He inspected the cadets and saw the workshops, where the standard of the work was very high. At present there was no accommodation for students, but it was hoped to build a hostel in connection with the Nautical School.

In the Fisheries Research Station he was impressed by the research done in connection with fishing activities. Just as agriculture was being developed, so was fishing.

He went on a trip to Haifa on a Jewish ship. He saw some of the ships, veritable floating slums, which had brought immigrants to Palestine. Opposite these were the British naval vessels, and he felt what was painted in lurid letters across the bridge of the latest boat to reach Palestine: "Nelson, behold the work of your heirs!" He left Haifa a little depressed and came to Sdath Yam, where he and other South African visitors were given a royal welcome. The seas were not always kind, but unkindest of all was the British Navy, which had raided this fishing settlement again and again. A cordon had been put round it and a destroyer posted opposite it, because it was suspected of bringing in immigrants. The Marine Training School at Sdath Yam was near ancient Caesarea, the Roman stronghold. The ruins of Caesarea and the burgeoning village of Sdath Yam were symbolic. Caesarea would never rise again but Jerusalem and Sdath Yam would grow and flourish.

The shipping company "Zim," which was partly British and partly Jewish, had acquired its first vessel, "Kedma," of 3,000 tons. He felt it would achieve much good and hoped South Africans would make their contribution to it. Everything connected with P.M.L. and other maritime activities was on a small scale. Fifty years ago agricultural development was at a similar stage. Just as chalutzim on the land were necessary, so are Jewish seafaring chalutzim to-day.

He (Rabbi Abrahams) believed in the Jewish maritime future. He believed the time would come when Jewish ships flying the Jewish flag would be seen in all the harbours of the world on missions of peace and goodwill. He believed this because he believed in the Jewish people, the descendants of the Prophets.

During the evening Miss Sarah Rabinowitz rendered pianoforte soli; Miss Ray Kantor, songs; Mrs. Tuch, violin soli; and Cantor Katzin, songs, which were greatly appreciated.

## Large Crowd at Muizenberg Function.

### ACTING JUSTICE HERBSTEIN ADDRESSES VISITORS' RECEPTION.

The Muizenberg Pavilion was again filled to capacity on the occasion of a Visitors' Reception arranged by the Western Province Zionist Council on Thursday, 20th February. Dr. A. Birnbaum presided, and on behalf of the Council extended a cordial welcome to all present. He referred to the difficult times through which we were passing but added that there was no room for pessimism if everyone would continue to do his duty.

In the first half of the programme Mrs. Stella Saacks rendered a piano solo and Cantor L. Goldwasser sang several songs. Both artists were received with acclamation.

In the course of his address Justice Herbststein gave an interesting picture of conditions in the towns and country areas of Eretz Israel. What had impressed him most was the way in which children of the Youth Aliyah had made an oasis in the desert from the salt and crusted earth and he had

been deeply impressed by the way in which the community of Eretz Israel had taken them in and turned them into constructive human beings. When viewing the bleakness of the Negev and the difficulties of the new settlers there, he was told to come back in ten years time and see how that area could be transformed into a paradise. Judging by the miracles that he had noticed elsewhere he could well believe this.

The speaker then gave some interesting facts about agricultural specialisation which he had noticed at Mikveh Israel and the industrial research at the Daniel Sieff Institute and explained the joys of life on a settlement as he had experienced it at Givat Brenner.

Replying to a question, Judge Herbststein said that the Yishuv by and large condemned unreservedly and without equivocation the terrorists and their acts. They had brought about a state of affairs which had certainly not improved our relationship with Britain and the Arabs. They might be brave young men but they were certainly misguided, and there should be no sneaking sympathy or praise for them. Eretz Israel, however, was not made up of terrorists; terrorism played a comparatively small part in everyday life.

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