

June 27, 1930.

THE ZIONIST RECORD.

IN DURBAN

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.

All communications for this page to
"Avon," P.O. Box 942, Durban.

A UNITED TALMUD TORAH.

After years of protracted discussion, postponements and disagreements on the subject of a united Talmud Torah for the Jewish population of Durban, finality has been reached as the result of a mass meeting held on Sunday morning, June 22nd, when a resolution, to the effect that "the Durban United Talmud Torah be, and is hereby, formed" was passed, after considerable and lively discussion, with only one dissident. So at last the dream of many sincere communal workers who have battled hard and long in both congregations with this object in view, has been realised; by a public and constitutional meeting a new institution has been created, with the aims and objects of which no Jew would dare to quarrel. The community may congratulate itself on its latest achievement, but it remains to be seen what support the new Talmud Torah will receive from the people most concerned—the parents with children eligible for instruction in Hebrew subjects and, above all, who may receive a sound training in "Yiddishkeit," an awkward word, perhaps, yet most expressive of the many principles and ethics involved. The meeting marked the beginning of a new experiment in solving some of the problems of our growing community. The children who will receive the benefits of a training in Judaism in the new Talmud Torah will be the generation of another Durban. It is as well we have in our midst gentlemen who are able to visualise a changed to-morrow, who, perhaps, have realised that this Durban of ours, now the foremost seaport of the Union, may, twenty years hence, be the greatest city in the country. It is a city of industrial possibilities which must eventually involve an enormously increased population, and consequently seriously increase the problems confronting the Jewish section of that population. Assimilation was one of the dangers mentioned by a speaker at the meeting; others obviously foresaw a degenerate form of Judaism so rife in most large cities all over the world, and therefore pleaded most earnestly for the establishment of an institution where the precepts of our ancient faith may be taught, a fortress from which Judaism could never be dislodged.

Despite the unanimity which carried the resolution the meeting was by no means without its dissentients, and a number of arguments took place on matters fully and, perhaps laboriously, thrashed out at more than one previous meeting. Five or six gentlemen were decidedly pessimistic and predicted an early collapse of the whole scheme, but the majority were obviously confident of the future. Rabbi E. M. Levy and Rev. G. Rubin, as ministers of the two congregations, spoke feelingly and enthusiastically in favour and were most ably supported by Mr. E. Magid, Mr. S. Bloom (who occupied the chair), Mr. C. Lyons, Mr. Marcuson, and others. Mr. Lionel Hart, fighting a lone hand in favour of the retention of the present dual system of Congregational Talmud Torahs, crossed swords with Rabbi Levy, but received some encouragement, though from different angles, from others who foresaw difficulties that would bring immediate disaster.

A second resolution, that the draft constitution as read out by Mr. H. L. Magid (who had drawn it up in conjunction with Mr. E. S. Henochsberg) be approved of, was unanimously adopted. The meeting then proceeded to elect its officers, which resulted as follows: Hon. Treasurer, Mr. H. L. Magid; Hon. Secretary, Dr. N. Smith; Committee: Messrs. E. S. Henochsberg, Gevisser, Lapinski, Lachman and Brewer; these, together with two delegates each from every Jewish Society in Durban, will form the first committee of the United Talmud Torah, a committee sufficiently representative, we think, to justify every confidence in the future of Hebrew education in Durban.

YOUNG ISRAEL SOCIETY.

To progress from a discussion on a Talmud Torah to the affairs of the Durban Young Israel Society seems but the most natural step to take as the recruits for the Y.I.S. should be most obviously the pupils, or ex-pupils, of the former. I am informed that the good work of the Young Israel Society continues to increase, nearly all the meetings of the past few weeks recording an average attendance of sixty to seventy members.

One of the most outstanding functions was the address delivered by Dr. Mossinsohn to a gratifyingly large attendance, including, among a number of adults, Rabbi Levy, Mr. H. Hillman, Mr. M. Freed, Mr. H. Brown, Mr. C. Lyons and Mr. I. Geshen. Miss Muriel Freed, the newly-elected President of the Y.I.S., most ably occupied the chair.

The following function was a chat on "Radium" by Dr. N. Smith, and a chat by Dr. Kaplan on "Dietetics."

On May 17th, the Entertainment Section provided a most enjoyable Sports Evening. No less than ninety members witnessed an excellent presentation of a mock trial, for which Mr. C. Friedman was mostly responsible.

On May 31st the President and Committee were "At Home" to a hundred members of the Society at the S.A.P. Club, at

which a most enjoyable and entertaining evening was spent. The first June function was a General Knowledge Evening organised by Mr. J. Cohen. By this time the Society began to feel the first draught of the season, meaning that as a result of the other attractions so frequent at this time of the year, the attendance dropped away to about forty. The President appeals to members to remember Saturday night is still Society night. The Tennis Section organised a tournament on May 29th, which was won by Miss Sybil Jacobson and Mr. Julius Gurwitz, who received silver cups presented by Mr. J. Leigh. The great event next month is the Young Israel Camp at Warners Beach. The Society will be busy then arranging functions and opportunities for meeting other Young Israelites from all over South Africa.

THE CIRCLE'S SECOND PLAY.

Of all the many Societies which have flourished in this town from time to time, whose aim in life has been to appear before the footlights in the presentation of dramas and comedies, the Dramatic Section of the Circle is certainly the most favoured of the Gods. For they have before them the prospect of the most wonderful opportunities for experimenting in stagecraft that have ever been given to a group of enthusiastic amateurs, when the new Jewish Institute eventually opens its doors to its public. The highest possible tribute that could be paid to the work of the Playreading and Dramatic Section for building up during the past four or five years amongst Durban Jewry, an appreciation of the good things in the theatre, has been the recognition in our own Hall shall be the most important asset in the building. We know now that before long the Institute will have a theatre as complete in equipment as any professional theatre in the country. This alone should stimulate the Dramatic Section to greater efforts. A fine stage and a fine theatre demands fine acting. The Section should now consider a policy of training some of its members by means of professional experts. The standard of play we have been used to, however satisfying at the time of production, leaves a lot to be desired. We have the material; all we need is a craftsman to mould it into a work of art.

In the production of "The Cat's Cradle," a three-act comedy containing much subtle humour and some rather risqué moments, the Dramatic Section has shown decided improvement. With one or two exceptions none of the cast had had previous experience in dramatic work before, and on the whole the company acquitted itself admirably. Obviously the producer, Miss Mimi Smo, had drilled her cast mercilessly and the team work—always the acid test in an amateur performance—was entirely satisfying. No awkward pauses occurred at any time and the service of the prompter was fairly even, the outstanding work being that of Miss Rose Ware in a difficult and well-thought-out character study. Other "character" roles were pleasingly portrayed by Miss May Rubens as "Miss Matcham," and Mr. L. Fobb as "Brigham" (a longshoreman). It was a pity Mr. Fobb entirely missed a golden opportunity for a W. W. Jacobs' make-up. Mr. A. Goldberg played "Michael Hastings," Miss Muriel Freed "Irene," Miss Elsie Cohen "Angela Fane," and Mr. Chas. Adley "John Hastings."

Special mention must be made of the Circle Orchestra, entirely coached and led by Mr. Maurice Cohen. This innovation was received with rapturous applause, but the orchestra certainly captured the right spirit and demonstrated at the same time that we have in our midst a first-class band of musicians whose services should be (and they most certainly shall be) called upon on other occasions.

SOCIAL BREVITIES.

Miss Ruby Gevisser is to be heartily congratulated on the distinction she achieved by appearing with the Durban Orchestra at the Thursday night symphony concert a week ago. Miss Gevisser, who is probably one of the youngest artists to have appeared on that distinguished platform, essayed the difficult Liszt Phantasia without music, and was given a most cordial reception. The Press reports highly of this young pianist's talents, and declares "... with the finer points of virtuoso playing acquired, will make a most attractive soloist."

Mr. Lazlo Schwartz, the eminent Hungarian-Jewish violinist who has arrived in Durban with Miss Dawn Assheton, brilliant singer of international folk songs, is to appear with the Durban Orchestra shortly. Mr. Schwartz, who has composed a number of Jewish folk songs, may present an entirely Jewish programme at some future date.

Congratulations are extended to Mr. Matt Ware, second son of Mr. and Mrs. I. Ware, Macdonald Road, on his engagement to Miss Annie Suritz, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. Suritz, Capetown.