

The Young Judeans.

To celebrate the third anniversary of the foundation of the Young Judean Society, an "At Home" was held at the Zionist Hall on Saturday night last, when the Executive and members of the organisation entertained prominent members of the community and leaders of Cape Town's many communal institutions. The capacious hall was thronged when the proceedings were opened by Mr. Herzl Zuckerman, the Chairman. His opening remarks, delivered in a clear and resounding voice, were frequently punctuated by enthusiastic applause; particularly when, in welcoming the gathering, he emphasised their pleasure in having among them their hon. patron, the Rev. A. P. Bender, and Mr. Morris Alexander. He was glad, he said, to see so many seniors present, and thought it but right that they should, at least once a year, come along to see what the juniors were doing. This observation was heartily endorsed by the younger section of the gathering. "Some day," he declared, "We will have to take the place of the older generation, whose duty it is to see that we who are growing up are prepared to carry on the great work of the National Movement."

The Young Judean Society, he continued, was the most active Society in Cape Town, a Society that catered for both the cultural and physical needs of their young men and women. One hopes that his appeal to the older generation to encourage the movement will bear fruit. It clearly merits much more than passing interest.

Jewish children in South Africa had not, he said, been brought up with the same advantages and facilities for Jewish education as had those of the older generation; those who had emigrated from Russia, and they should be taught and encouraged in not only the great Zionist ideal, but also in their Judaism.

He drew a comparison between the numbers of young men and women who attended the recent Herzl Yahrzeit celebration and the three hundred and fifty members of the Young Judeans. There were over eight hundred present on that occasion, he declared, and he felt that those who had not joined their movement should be encouraged to do so. It was the duty of parents to see that their children became members. He was followed by the Rev. A. P. Bender, whose rising was the signal for a spontaneous ovation.

"I am not," Mr. Bender opened, "a stranger to the Young Judeans." This remark was agreed with in an unmistakable manner. He had had the great pleasure, he proceeded, of seeing them in large and increasing numbers at the afternoon services on the second Sabbath in the month, and he saw in that a sign that the movement was based on religion. "No movement can succeed unless it is based on religion—the religion of the Jewish people," asserted Mr. Bender amid applause.

It was a pleasure to him to see the Young Judeans in the Mother Synagogue and to notice the manner in which they took part in the service—with earnestness and reverence.

One thing he regretted, however, and that was to observe how rarely they were accompanied by their parents. They could at least come on Saturday afternoons and thus show their interest not only in the Young Judean movement, but in the Jewish community generally and the Mother Synagogue. They would then see how their children attended and enjoyed the services.

Mr. Bender expressed the hope that, as a result of the meeting that evening, the older people would take the juniors as an example and appropriately quoted the words of the prophet Isaiah: ". . . And the day will come when a child shall lead them." Above all, he hoped they would realise the great significance of the Young Judean Movement. It was really a religious movement. It aimed at bringing into active play all the best qualities of the heart, the mind, and the soul in the Jewish youth. If they appreciated that he was sure their undivided support would be given and that they would encourage their boys and girls to join.

As the Chairman had pointed out, continued Mr. Bender, the paramount object of the Society was to assist the great Zionist Cause in which they were so heartily interested. That could only be maintained by first of all imbuing the children with the knowledge that without Judaism there could be no Zionism: no Zionism without Judaism. This was universally recognised. Judaism was coupled with Zionism and vice versa.

Not only were the Young Judeans serving the great Zionist ideal, but they were advancing, in the heartiest and fullest degree, the best and holiest ideals of Judaism, of which they were the future custodians. Zionism would then become what it should always be—a real Jewish movement—a universal movement.

There was nothing in Zionism that was at variance with the convictions of the most reform or orthodox Jew—nothing that should prevent either from fostering the Zionist ideal.

Mr. Bender then referred to the establishment of the Jewish Agency at Zurich, and said they would no longer hear of a Zionist and a Jew as being different factors in the progress and well-being of Jewry in this or any other country. The Jewish Agency represented world Jewry. It was a movement which should enlist the support of every Jew throughout the world.

Cheers greeted Mr. Bender's handsome tribute to Mr. Kalman Hoffman and Mr. Julius Simenhoff, who were mainly responsible for the organisation of the Young Judeans and for its maintenance in the high state of efficiency it enjoyed.

"They are joint guardians and trustees of the Young Israel movement," concluded the speaker. "They have our thanks for their past services, and I can assure them of our undivided confidence in the future. I congratulate the Society upon reaching its third birthday. The Young Judeans stand as a signal to the community, who should rally around the movement in increasing numbers."

Mr. Alexander's reception was a most cordial one, and he expressed the pleasure it gave him to be present at the celebration of the third anniversary "of this powerful organisation." After all, he said, the whole future of their race depended upon their youth. The motto of the Society had been taken from one of the questions put by Hillel. In modern times it had become fashionable to send out questionnaires in every walk of life. That custom was started ages ago by Hillel, who asked three pertinent questions. They were: "If I am not for myself who is for me?"; "If I am not for myself alone who am I?"; and "If not now, when?"

The first question came back forcibly to them. They had just received very regrettable news from Jerusalem. They find that the incident of the Wailing Wall, which should have been settled with firmness by the Government long ago, was still unsettled and had caused conflict between Arab and Jew. There was no necessity for conflict, but if there was one consolation in the whole unfortunate incident it was that the Jews stood up to protect their inalienable rights. These undoubted rights had to be protected. They would now look to the Government to settle the question once and for all. With firmness on the part of the Government a solution could be found, but this solution could only rest upon a recognition of and respect for one another's religious beliefs. If the question was settled in that spirit there would be no loss of dignity on the part of Arab or Jew. The latter would then be entrenched in their rightful position at the Wailing Wall, which they could not, dared not, and would not give up, no matter what violence was used to intimidate them.

In conclusion, Mr. Alexander endorsed Mr. Bender's remarks regarding the establishment of the Jewish Agency, and wound up his excellent speech with congratulations to the Young Judeans on the success they had achieved in the three years the Society had been in existence.

The Chairman, on behalf of the members, then conveyed to Mr. Hoffman and Mr. Simenhoff their whole-hearted appreciation of their efforts and arduous work on behalf of the Society. He announced that in recognition of their service the Society had decided to inscribe their names in the South African Young Israel Book of Service. He then asked Mr. Bender to hand the two presentations to the gentlemen named, and the recipients were accorded musical honours.

Mr. Hoffman, in replying, dealt with the difficulties with which he and his colleague had been faced, but he was sure that the Society was so well established now that it could sweep its difficulties aside. Mr. Simenhoff thanked the Society for the honour that had been conferred upon Mr. Hoffman and him-

self. Their work was but beginning. He took the opportunity of expressing his thanks to Mr. Herzl Zuckerman and Mr. M. Kapelus for the sterling good work and assistance that they had given Mr. Hoffman and himself.

Advocate H. M. Bloch, on behalf of the Dorshei Zion Association, and Miss M. Gitlin, on behalf of the Judean Central Council, conveyed the congratulations of their Associations to the Young Judeans.

The rest of the evening was spent in a social manner, the following contributing musical items: Misses M. Zlotnick, Ruth Cohen, R. Stone, R. Wolpert, J. Pika and F. Lockitch, Mr. Z. Berk, and the Young Judean Choir. The last item on the programme was a short sketch entitled "The Realisation," written by Mr. H. Zuckerman. A most enjoyable and highly successful evening concluded with the singing of the Hatikvah and National Anthem.

During the evening refreshments were served.

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