

## A Review of the Zionist Congress.

Lecture by Mr. Peretz Cornfeld.

The seventy-fourth meeting of the Palestine Club was held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. B. Bloch, 170 Francis Street, Observatory, on Saturday evening. Mr. I. J. Hersch, the chairman of the Club, presided, and Mrs. A. I. Miller, the hon. secretary of the Club, read the minutes of the previous meeting.

Mr. Peretz Cornfeld gave an address on the Seventeenth Zionist Congress. He said that not having yet received here a full report of the Congress, he was not in a position to give a review of the Congress as a whole. He would, however, confine himself to certain reflections on some of the more salient points of the Congress.

The first was the question of leadership. For the first time since the war Dr. Weizmann was not at the head of the movement. Secondly, there was the personnel of the new Executive. Only six were elected and only two of those were members of the outgoing Executive, namely, Mr. Sokolow and Professor Brodetsky. Thirdly, there was the attitude of the Mandatory Power. Fourthly, was the attitude of the Congress towards the Arab question; and fifthly, the debate on the ultimate aims of Zionism.

The sixth point was the question of practical work and the attention given to private initiative; and finally, there was the question of the Jewish people itself.

With regard to the first, Dr. Weizmann not only ceased to be a leader, but also ceased to be regarded as an individual. Thus they had the designation of "Weizmannism" as a policy and party, and it was around this "Weizmannism," not around Weizmann the individual, that the discussion raged. It was a discussion of the policy, the methods and the outlook typified by Weizmann. That was certainly the greatest tribute the Jewish people could pay to Dr. Weizmann.

This brought him to the second point, which was that the new Executive was a Weizmannist Executive. As the only way out of the *impasse* in which the Congress found itself, it had to resort to constitute a Weizmannist Executive without Weizmann himself. With regard to the third point, the attitude towards the British Government loomed so large at the Congress that it looked as though the business of the Congress was nothing else but to discuss the British Government. It was strange that the leaders of the movement should exclude all other considerations in order to sit in judgment on the British Government—a procedure which, after all, could only be futile.

It was the same with the discussion on the Arab question. It appeared strange that this should be so when the only conclusion that could be come to was that the whole Arab movement was 80 per cent. bluff and 20 per cent. only based on a national movement and national aspiration. The whole Arab movement was devoid of any real foundation.

There was a very acrimonious debate on the question of the ultimate aims of Zionism. This arose out of an interview Dr. Weizmann had given the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. It led to the appointment of a commission to draft a resolution for Congress on the ultimate aims of Zionism. For two days they sat and wrangled.

He (the speaker) was not so much concerned with the resolution itself, but with the extraordinary fact that thirty-four years after the first Congress, after the recognition of Zionism by the whole world, the establishment of its legal status, the issue of the Balfour Declaration, the leaders of Zionism itself should still have a doubt in their minds as to what *they* wanted and to what *they* aspired. That to his mind struck him as one of the most tragic aspects of the Congress.

The discussion over the practical work of Zionism took up a small portion of Congress and received correspondingly little attention. It was obvious from the debate that the various experts' reports were given very little attention, the major portion of the time being devoted to the politics of Zionism. Mr. M. Ussischkin mentioned the much-discussed plan of England and America settling a thousand Jewish families in Palestine on the special tract of land purchased by South African Jewry.

With regard to the seventh point, an eloquent and telling figure was that during the last year the number of shekolim sold throughout the world was 605,000 among a world population of sixteen to seventeen million Jews. This seventeen million Jews had a capacity of at least five million shekolim that should have been sold, but only about 10 per cent. of that number was purchased; so that they had to face the lamentable fact that they had only 605,000 members of the Zionist movement throughout the world. Even assuming that these 605,000 were all active Zionists, it was still extremely disappointing.

It was really to be wondered whether the Zionist movement with all its wonderful achievements could survive for a long time if they made up their minds that it was to be confined to such a small number of people.

It was, therefore, with a sense of disappointment that they saw this vital aspect of the Zionist movement given so very little attention at the Zionist Congress. The fact that Congress could only devote one hour to this vital aspect greatly disheartened one. These figures showed that they had still a very long way to go before their Zionist leaders could truthfully come to the world's powers and say that they were really speaking on behalf of all the Jewish people.

He expressed his deep disappointment at what this Congress had achieved. He was disappointed with the new Executive that had been elected. It could not inspire faith in the minds of the Jewish masses. We must frankly admit that acquiescence in the present state of affairs means that we are on the verge of bankruptcy from every aspect, external and internal. Still it was only necessary for the Jewish people to bring into play the great forces they were capable of whereby they could still re-shape their destiny and emerge victorious.

In the discussion that ensued, Mr. M. D. Hersch, Mr. M. Sand, Mr. L. Cohen, Mrs. A. I. Miller, Miss Cohen and the Chairman participated.

Mr. Cornfeld, in replying to the discussion, dwelt mainly on the necessity of facing facts, as this was the only sure remedy for our evils. Only in this way can we test our real strength.

Mr. Percy Cowen moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer, and Mr. M. Sand a similar compliment to the host and hostess.

### NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCE OF JEWISH CULTURE.

A *tisha-b'av* evening was arranged by the "Hatchiya" on Tuesday, 28th July, at the Hebrew High School. Mr. I. Goss, who presided over a gathering of about 100 people, explained the aims and ideals of the association.

Mr. Morris Sewitz gave an excellent review of the period preceding the destruction. Miss Rae Resnekowitz gave an able rendering of Jehuda Halevy's "Ode to Zion," which was much appreciated by the audience. Mr. Ch. J. Lurie then delivered a lecture on "Destruction and Redemption." He stressed the importance of tapping Jewish culture at its original sources—through the medium of the Hebrew language and literature in their original—and not in dry translation.

The last part of the evening's programme was devoted to two violin solos, beautifully played by Miss C. Cohen, who was accompanied by Miss Mary Wayburne.

### TO JEWISH FILM FANS.

A remarkable "talkie" is to be shown at the Palladium on Monday evening. It is an E. A. Dupont production, entitled "Two Worlds," and is of special interest to Jewish film fans. It depicts the story of the tragedy of a poor Jewish girl who saves an American officer during the Russo-Polish war. There is a fine portrayal of the girl's father and the production abides in poignant scenes of Jewish life. "Two Worlds" has been described as a drama which is like Thomas Hardy expressed in terms of Zangwill. The incidents move with the inexorable march of destiny. It is a "talkie" not to be missed.