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## In Cape Town

REPORTS OF JEWISH ACTIVITIES  
IN THE MOTHER CITY

From Our Own Correspondent.

All Communications relating to these pages should be addressed to "HASOFER," P.O. Box 3084, CAPE TOWN.

### THE CONVERSAZIONE.

Few features of communal life have surprised us more of late than the almost phenomenal success which has attended the Zionist conversaziones held with unflinching regularity every other Tuesday evening in the Zionist Hall. The conversaziones were inaugurated by the combined Dorshei and Bnoth Zion Associations in July last year—just about a year ago—and the aim of its originators was to provide an opportunity for members of both bodies to meet in an informal atmosphere, where social intercourse could be fostered and where Jewish topics of the day could be discussed. The first few of these functions were something in the nature of an experiment—no one was quite certain what would be the outcome of them. But the result was unprecedented success. The number of those who attend has grown steadily, and of late it has been difficult to comfortably accommodate all in the minor Zionist Hall. The conversaziones have definitely "taken on."

We mentioned above that we were surprised at the success met with by the conversaziones, and if we were to state a reason for this, it would be that we did not at the beginning believe that the venture had any element of permanence in it. And, frankly, we are still inclined to believe that had this fortnightly function not been called a "conversazione," it would have been doomed to failure. Had it been advertised instead as "a meeting when a lecture by Mr. So-and-So will take place," or as "a discussion on —," etc., it would have held out no appeal whatsoever. It is the word "conversazione," with its suggestion of informal discussion, French patter and a cheering cup of tea withal, which proves so irresistible.

As in many schemes which have met with success, the original aim and idea of the authors of the conversaziones have not been carried into effect entirely. It was purposed at first that the gathering which attended these functions should not be too large—should consist of about 30 to 35 in number at the most—in order to preserve the atmosphere of informality and to render the discussion more of an open "conversation" among friends than as a performance in an arena surrounded by a silent and willing-to-be-entertained audience. The regular frequenters have to-day so increased in number—although, it is true, the atmosphere is still more or less informal—that we find only a limited few participating in the discussions which take place. Incidentally, we may add that they are generally the same few.

Another feature of the conversazione which is not entirely satisfactory is the fact that so little use is made of the news service. The news is read every fortnight, is listened to or not, as the case may be, and is then dismissed to make way for other items on the programme. Very often the "other items" are far from being as interesting as discussion on the news items might prove, and in many cases serve far less purpose. Discussions on abstract problems which are apparently indissoluble and are certainly so within the short period of one evening, have, after all, little value in comparison to discussions on concrete matters which are taking place at the moment. Not that a concrete problem could be solved at a conversazione, but a discussion of it would at least give those present a better knowledge of and interest in what is actually happening in the Jewish world than a mere recital of the facts. News is never so well brought home to those it concerns as when it is debated, and it is primarily for this reason that we recommend to the host and hostess of the next conversazione that they have a discussion initiated on the basis of Jewish Telegraphic Agency bulletins. The discussion need not necessarily be political if it is undesirable as such. There are other aspects of Jewish news—even Zionist news—which could equally well be given careful consideration.

Our criticism of the conversazione does not, however, imply that we consider this function as of no consequence. By no means. The conversazione is to-day performing a most useful service, and if we are surprised at the success with which it has met we are no less pleased. We certainly trust that it has a long life ahead of it, and we have no doubt that it will continue from strength to strength, in spite of any adverse criticism we may offer.

### THE LAST CONVERSAZIONE.

There was a good attendance at the last conversazione at the Zionist Hall on Tuesday evening, when Mr. and Mrs. H. Glaser acted as host and hostess.

The main feature of the evening was a lecture by Dr. J. Sachs, M.A., Ph.D., who spoke on "Assimilation."

Dr. Sachs quoted the opinion of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, the notorious anti-Semite, who had once said that he did not object to a Jew becoming Lord Chief Justice of England, Viceroy of India, or even Archbishop of Canterbury, provided he became any of those under his colours as a Jew and not whilst masquerading as a Gentile. He (Dr. Sachs) was also inclined to agree with this point of view. Jews could achieve far more by acting as Jews.

The difference between Jew and Gentile did not lie merely in an inability on the part of both to eat, drink or pray with each other, but in the general outlook of both upon the world. This difference was becoming gradually weaker and weaker, until the only hope of maintaining a distinct Judaism to-day lay in the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home.

A lively discussion followed the lecture, in which Messrs. S. Futeran, M. Ben-Arie, Mrs. C. Cohen, Messrs. B. Mirvish, H. Snitcher, Blumenthal, O. Basson, P. M. Clouts and Mrs. S. Gordon participated, and after which Dr. Sachs replied to his critics.

During the course of the evening, Miss Jessie Zuckerman obliged with a number of piano solos, which were very appreciatively received. News of the Jewish world was read as usual, special attention being paid to the reports of the concluding sessions of the Seventeenth Zionist Congress.

The evening was brought to a close with the singing of the Hatikvah.

### DORSHEI ZION CONCERT.

There was a fair attendance at the Zionist Hall last Sunday night, when a concert was held under the auspices of the Dorshei Zion Association. A good programme had been arranged, and was much appreciated by the gathering.

Those who contributed to the programme were the Capetown Maccabean Guild Sextette, who gave a number of pleasing orchestral items, Miss Belle Pinn, who sang, the pupils of the Miriam and Elvira Kirsch School of Dancing, Miss R. Cohen, who sang, Mr. B. Garfinkel, who sang, and Mr. M. Losman, who recited. During the evening a sketch entitled "The Australian Florin," composed by Mr. M. Natas, was staged, the production being in the hands of Mr. P. Dibowitz.

The members of the Maccabean Guild Sextette consist of Mr. A. Lorie (leader), Mr. E. Narunsky (second violin), Mr. A. Maag (viola), Mrs. P. Herstein (cello), Mr. I. Lewis (clarinet), Mr. P. Lewis (piano).

### GENERAL.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Padowich have returned to South Africa after an eight months' trip to Europe, Palestine and the Near East. They attended the opening sessions of the Seventeenth Zionist Congress in Basle.

Miss Muriel Alexander, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Morris Alexander, left on Wednesday last for New York, to continue her studies at the Columbia University.

The engagement is announced of Sonia, daughter of Mrs. and the late Mr. Ch. Effman, of Mowbray, to Isaac, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. Hoberman, of Capetown.

Congratulations are being extended to Mr. and Mrs. L. Rechtman on the birth of a son.

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