

Reports from the Conference.

Delegates at Fortnightly Conversazione.

The Conversazione at the Zionist Hall on Thursday, June 1st, was very well attended. The hall was filled to capacity.

The speakers of the evening were the Cape Town delegates to the Fourteenth South African Zionist Conference at Kimberley. These, in the order of speaking, were Dr. S. E. Kark, Adv. J. Herbstein, Dr. C. Resnekov (Dorshei Zion Association), Rabbi I. M. Gervis (Cape Town Mizrachi Association), Mr. J. Gitlin (Cape Town Hebrew Congregation), Mr. Ch. Achron (Cape Town Zionist Socialists).

Mr. J. M. Weinreich, who represented the Cape Jewish Orphanage at the Conference, was in the chair and in his opening remarks commented on the excellent delegation sent from Cape Town.

Dr. Kark, in giving his impressions, remarked that a certain warmth was lacking at the Conference due, he thought, to the procedure, the rules and regulations which had to be followed. One man might want to reply to some remark he objected to made by another speaker, but he could not just jump up and do so, he had to wait his turn.

This Conference, said Dr. Kark, was rich in colour, in emotional and in practical value, and he proceeded to illustrate the emotional effect of the German-Jewish question dealing with which Dr. J. L. Landau gave a most dignified and solemn address which though restrained was soul stirring and definitely the most outstanding event of the Conference. That this deep concern for German Jewry would be wasted unless turned to some practical value was the feeling of the Dorshei Zion Association. The relief work therefore should be planned with foresight and with this in view the Dorshei Zion delegates brought forward to the Federation that a fund be raised to help our German brethren, and secondly, that the fund be used entirely for German Jews who are willing to help in the building of the National Home in Palestine. The second important constructive work of the Conference was the decision to buy land in Haifa Bay, which is the coming port in Eretz Israel, and the scheme for the relief of German Jewry and this one of buying land in Haifa should be combined if possible, but the relief fund will be launched first as it is the most pressing.

Adv. J. Herbstein said that he did not intend speaking about the Senior Conference, but the Youth. Their Conference had created a very good impression. In the past the Young Israel Movement in this country was one which had no real aim and object. They were to a very large extent "playing at societies," but within the past year or two a tremendous change had come over the Youth of this country. Their aim was now much more definite and they were linking up in their work with Eretz Israel. This has culminated in the Chalutz movement, which, through the generosity of Mr. Senior, of Johannesburg, who has provided the farm whereon to train the Chalutzim, has now become a practical and workable fact. South African boys and girls who want to go to Palestine can be trained on this farm. At the Conference this announcement was received with accla-

mation. Within a short time both money and all the necessary implements were promised by various people. Mr. Herbstein said he was perfectly sure the scheme would be a success.

He next dealt with the Habonim movement which had been started in this country by Mr. and Mrs. N. Lourie. It was designed for young children who were not catered for by any of the societies. It aimed at training the young boys and girls in all things Jewish and making them realise their responsibility as Jews and Jewesses. At the Conference the Young Israel and the Habonim had joined forces and in future will work in the closest possible co-operation. A Habonim movement was being started in Cape Town by Mr. and Mrs. Lourie, who were here for that purpose.

Mr. Herbstein remarked on the great change in Zionist thought in this country. The seniors have now come to realise that their best material lies in the Youth.

Dr. C. Resnekov, in commenting on the decision to buy land in Haifa Bay, said that it did not matter what part of Palestine we bought the land so long as it was in Eretz Israel. Dr. Resnekov dealt with the resolution passed by the Conference that the Federation take a more definite part in furthering interest in Jewish education. The speaker said he was never more impressed with the need for a strong Jewish Board of Education as when he saw the latest returns of the census now being taken in all the schools throughout the Cape of children who are or have taken Hebrew. He then proceeded to quote some of the replies to questionnaires that they had received. They made very sorry reading. Hebrew education was absolutely essential. Unless a good foundation was laid when they were children they will be useless in any society later on. It was these statistics just quoted which were responsible for the change of attitude which official Zionism has now taken on educational matters. The Board of Education wanted the Federation to have an Educational Week every year, everybody to be asked to contribute 2s. 6d. and the proceeds to go to the Jewish Board of Education. It would bring home to every Jew the state of Jewish education in this country, and it would also bring in a good deal of money. Unfortunately the Federation did not see their way clear to agreeing to do this but they promised to assist the Board in every possible way, if they proclaimed such a week. It was now up to the general public to do all they could in this connection.

Rabbi I. M. Gervis said that he could not agree with the other speakers. Mr. Herbstein made a fuss of the union of the Habonim and Young Israel movements; Dr. Resnekov was pleased because the Conference had agreed to his Education Week, but what would happen to those country places where the minister is not there for half the year. Each party was but a stream in the Jewish whole. They all wanted to settle the Jewish problem. So each representative came with his resolutions and wanted them accepted, but though they represented all shades and differences in Jewish thought there was only one motive

at the Conference at Kimberley behind them all and that was coalition, not merely in party matters, but coalition in the up-building of Palestine. The enthusiasm and feeling ran so high at the Conference that though it meant three years' hard work, it was decided to buy 15,000 dunams of land in Eretz Israel, and when this resolution was passed it was as if the hall was electrified. The resolution was received with hearty acclamation. There exists in South Africa a Youth question. Mr. Herbstein sees the Chalutz movement as a solution, but it is only a link in the chain. The problem of Youth must find its answer in Zionism. We must also see that the Education Week be real and true, and we hope, and this was the wish of the Conference, that when the Board of Education is strong financially it will reach the heights it desires.

Mr. J. Gitlin remarked on the fact that he thought the delegates should have reported on the actual resolutions passed at the Conference, and had he known that they would not do so, he would have been prepared to report. He said that the Conference had made a very great impression on him. This Conference was the most representative one he had attended. All the delegates came inspired with the Jewish ideal. The Conference was carried on in most excellent fashion.

Mr. Gitlin dealt with the question of Kfar Yeladim from its inception, its support by the South African women, and its closing down and now the proposal to open it as a secondary school again under the aegis of the South African women.

He said that the Dorshei Zion delegates and those of the Federation had many private sittings at which every aspect of Zionism was discussed and many decisions arrived at, thereby saving much work from the Conference. He also dealt with various resolutions in detail, also the election of the Executive. He hoped in conclusion that those present would ask questions.

Mr. Ch. Achron said that he was giving his report at a meeting of his society next week. He said that he was not as impressed as his colleagues were with the Conference. It was a question of spiritual matters. From a business and practical point of view everything was in good order, whatever the Executive wished was done, but this was not sufficient for the delegate who was not in direct contact with the business side of Zionist work. Apart from the questions of Kfar Yeladim, the £60,000 voted for Palestine and the questions regarding German Jewry, all the resolutions of a political nature were pushed into the background and left for the end and then had to be rushed or left as there was not sufficient time. That, he thought, was the reason for the coldness that was felt. He felt that at the Conference all the differences of opinion should be expressed on the different questions. From this point of view the Conference was very conservative. Too much time is taken up with practical matters, all problems of general Zionist interest should be dealt with at the Conference, but everything was arranged by the Federation beforehand.

When the discussion was opened, Mr. B. L. Rubik suggested that as the hour was late the discussion should be left for another gathering at the earliest date possible. It was decided to hold the discussion at the next Conversazione which takes place on Tuesday, June 13th.

Mr. Rabinowitz rendered a piano solo and Mr. Kovarsky a song. The news was read by Mrs. Kottler.