

Zionist Conversazione.

Dr. C. RESNEKOV ON THE THREE ALIYAHS.

A special Yomtov Conversazione took place at the Zionist Hall on Tuesday night.

Advocate G. Gordon was in the chair.

Dr. C. Resnekov gave a very interesting and masterly lecture on "A Comparative Study of the Three Aliyahs." The longing for isolation and separation, he said, has been the deciding factor in our chequered history. In their self-imposed state of isolation in the Land of Goshen, our ancestors developed a conception of life which was totally alien to that of the native Egyptians. In order to be sure that the Hebrews would not join with his enemies and attack him from the rear, Pharaoh enslaved them. This must have been very galling, for the democratic principle which the Israelites had brought with them from the desert was still rooted in their being and the urge for freedom became all the greater with each repressive law passed against them.

When a favourable opportunity presented itself, our ancestors took their departure. But the tribes which left Egypt were not as a body ready to do justice to the cause; they were not sufficiently cohesive and had to go through a period of trial and trouble before the ideal of a Promised Land could permeate through all the strata of the Tribes.

Sages explain the Revolt of Korach and his men as a protest against the Shekel being used firstly for the purpose of census and secondly for the money so obtained being allocated for the use of the House of Worship.

The sudden release from bondage and slavery coupled with a free life in the desert soon invigorated the erstwhile slaves, but the spirit of slavery had worked itself into the marrow of the Israelites and at the first sign of adversity they hankered after the flesh-pots of Egypt. For forty years they wandered in the wilderness and their reward was indeed great for they emerged unified and with one purpose: to settle in the land of Canaan. At first the Aliyah proceeded on the correct and approved lines with enthusiasm and spirit and with Joshua in command began a chapter of military exploits which had far-reaching repercussions throughout the ages. The first Aliyah had the effect of consolidating the nation not so much by conquest of territory but rather by the forced moral laws. The democratic principle of the Covenant and the implied sanctification of the whole people of Israel, became the basis of our religious philosophy.

The Second Aliyah.

The return from the Babylonian captivity with the encouragement of Cyrus was undertaken by a band of enthusiasts who can be compared to our first Chalutzim. The majority remained in Babylon yet steadfastly proclaimed their attachment to the Jewish People. They sought salvation by instituting the custom of Prayer, Synagogues and schools. Every home was declared to be a miniature Temple and the father of every household presided as chief priest. The innate desire of the nation to preserve itself found ample expression in their willingness to obey the laws: To forge a link between the Galuth

(Continued in Second Column).

Major Noah: American Jewish Pioneer.

JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY ISSUE.

"MAJOR NOAH" by Dr. Isaac Goldberg, has just been published by the American Jewish Publication Society of America. It deals with the life of the well-known American Jewish Pioneer, Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785—1851) and is the first book-length biography of an American Jew that has been published by the Society.

The author, who is widely known for his books upon literature, drama, music and biography and for his numerous translations from many languages, has made a very close study of his subject and has had access to a great deal of new material including letters in Noah's own hand. The result is that we are given a very interesting and colourful portrait of Major Noah who was in many respects the representative Jew of the early United States and one who is regarded as America's first Zionist.

Noah was born in Philadelphia and reared in the home of his patriotic grandfather, Jonas Phillips. He was a picturesque personality and if somewhat eccentric and bombastic at times, had many fine qualities which won for him the respect and confidence of Gentiles no less than Jews. His greatest fault perhaps, was that he was too theatrical and melodramatic.

His versatility was amazing. He served his country as diplomat in Africa; he edited a number of the leading newspapers of his day; he wrote a number of popular plays; he was an orator in politics and in the synagogue; he was Sheriff of New York City in 1822; and he occupied the Surveyorship of the Port in the same city.

Noah was one of the first American Jews to take part in political life, and he was also among the first Jews in public life to feel the lash of anti-Semitism. Throughout his life he remained a staunch and ardent Jew and in writings and addresses tried to defend his brethren from prejudice at home and abroad. Envisaging the United States as a haven for the oppressed, he regarded it also as a temporary home for the wandering Jew on his long mystical journey from the Past to the

and the returning exiles, the festivals were raised to the status of religious and national events.

A radical change came over the life of the nation; the democratic principle was made again to assert itself and the people regained their freedom from the spiritual slavery. In matters of education the people developed a universal system for rich and poor, young and old.

The second Aliyah showed that a nation can at the same time be great and small—great where its spirit is concerned and small in the circumscribed circle of the land.

The Third Aliyah.

It is difficult, said the lecturer, to decide when the third Aliyah commenced. There has always been a desire to return to Palestine. After centuries of spiritual longing, the first Chalutzim arrived in 1882 and established themselves amongst the swamps and wastes of Palestine. That was the symbol that the body had come to join the spirit and weld itself into something concrete. Though the first Aliyah was

Future in the land of Zion. For Jew as for Gentile, he was a firm believer in vocational training as a foil to the purely literary life. He was for the attainment of some mechanic art "and for the avoidance of those crooked paths of traffic miscalled commerce."

Noah's most grandiose exploit and the one for which his name is best-known today among Jews, was the attempt to found on Grand Island, outside Buffalo, a City of Refuge for the Jews, name Ararat. The author gives a very interesting and illuminating account of the founding of this "city" and reveals how this was nothing more than a supreme example of Noah's love for melodrama and histrionic display. This was "Noah's greatest play," says the author, "planned on a veritably cosmic scale, given in a single performance, with an entire city as its stage." The scheme was a complete fiasco and in spite of the flourish and noise of the foundation ceremony and of Noah's "Jewish Declaration of Independence", "Noah's ark, grounded upon a barren Ararat, was left high, dry and empty." The author reveals that Noah was not altogether disinterested and high-minded in this scheme (for he was concerned also with the commercial possibilities of Ararat), and that from this exploit at any rate he does not deserve the reputation of having been the "first real Zionist."

That Noah, however, realised that it was Palestine alone that can and must become the home of the Jewish People once again is clear from a speech delivered in the Tabernacle on October 28th, 1844. This has become famous in the history of American Zionism as the "Discourse on the Restoration of the Jews," and contains an appeal to the free people of the United States to assist in the restoration of the Jews to Palestine.

The book contains reprints of many of the letters of Noah from manuscripts and his many-sided career is described in lively detail. It is a valuable addition to any library.

violently opposed by sections of the Jews such as the assimilationists and the leaders of the Reform Movement, yet nothing could stem the tide. In Hibbath Zion as an ideal the youth found the real outlet for their energies. They formed themselves into little bands so that the words of Isaiah should come true: "A remnant shall return."

The fact that in about twenty years there was an influx of 300,000 people into Palestine indicated very strongly that in spite of the tragic material position of Jewry, the spirit of the nation rejected all attempts at colonisation anywhere but in Eretz Israel. An unprecedented amount of work had been accomplished, said the lecturer, and it was felt that the third Aliyah would ultimately be able to develop a greater ideal—the peace of the world and the peaceful development of nations, each on its own soil and with its own culture.

Mr Mirvish, Dr. Rabinowitz and Mrs. Ch. Cohen took part in the discussion to which Dr. Resnekov replied.

Miss A. Berndt and Miss P. Slusznay contributed to the musical programme.