

The South African Jewish Chronicle.

ESTABLISHED 1902.

Head Office:

85, PLEIN STREET, CAPE TOWN.

FRIDAY, 29th AUGUST, 1947.

A Jubilee.

All the world over this week Jewry is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the First Zionist Congress convened by Herzl at Basle in 1897. This does not seem a time for Jewry to celebrate, not only because of the catastrophe that befell us during the Hitler era, but even more so because of the tragedies that face us in this period of peace. Notwithstanding, that optimism that has marked the Jewish character throughout the ages urges us to rejoice, in the midst of our mourning, in the jubilee of a great event in our history.

To understand that historic occasion, a picture of the background of the period is necessary. In Western Europe, where Jews enjoyed political and economic equality, it was expected that the Jews should become completely assimilated and identified with the peoples among whom they lived, but while there was a strong movement by many Jews towards complete integration with the populations of their countries of adoption, the pace of it was not as fast as their fellow citizens apparently wished. As a consequence there arose "scientific" anti-Semitism based on imaginary racial characteristics which made the Jews inferior to their neighbours, and those Jews who genuinely and whole-heartedly desired to merge their identity were spurned by the very people they wished to imitate.

One important reason for the slowness of the process of assimilation was the continual immigration from Eastern countries, where Jews still lived the life of the Ghetto and brought with them all the traditions of Judaism. This stream from the East constantly prevented the wells of Jewry in the West from drying up. But a more cogent reason was the hold Judaism had over the Jewish people. There were great numbers of Jews who had neither wish nor desire to lose their heritage, while many of those who wished to assimilate were deterred, unconsciously perhaps, from doing so by their training and memories.

Add to the ever-growing anti-Semitism in the West the pogroms in the East and the picture of Jewry in Europe is complete. And it was at this critical period that Herzl appeared on the stage of Jewish history with his rallying cry "Wir sind ein Volk." This was the core of his ideology. We are one people, whose fate is linked together by the past, present and future, and not only spiritually but physically we should be close to one another. We need a State where Jews could live a normal national life.

This idea, though not new (Hess and Pinsker before Herzl had propounded it) electrified the Jewish masses because of the times and because it was said by a man who not only had himself tasted all the fruits that assimilation could give, but who had voluntarily rejected them to return to his people.

The first Congress, therefore, which was attended by representatives of Jewry from all corners of the world, was the "Shofar of the Messiah," the prelude to the resuscitation of our people. Since those days at Basle Congress has become the unchallenged forum from which Jewry speaks to the world and to itself.

Herzl himself suffered many disappointments in the few years he was destined to live after Congress and the whole movement has from time to time suffered misfortune and setbacks, but the foundations laid at that first Congress were strong enough for those who followed to build higher and higher the edifice the first delegates promised the Jewish people.

It was the first Congress that paved the way for the Yishuv, the pride of the Jewish people, and it is from the Yishuv from whom we to-day draw the faith and courage that will eventually bring to complete fruition the proclamation of the Congress of 1897, "Wir sind ein Volk."

Fugitives and Wanderers.

The rumour current some weeks ago and emphatically denied that the British Government intended sending the refugees of the "Exodus 1947" to Germany, has been confirmed by the facts. While these lines are being written our brethren, who had thought they were on the way to salvation, are being transported to that country responsible for the tragedy to the world but in much greater measure for the destruction of the very kith and kin of the refugees themselves.

We have experienced many things we did not expect from the British, but we never permitted ourselves to believe that the Labour Government would take this decision. But reality is cruel and the world is witnessing the spectacle of Hitler's victims being forced into Hitler's country by those very people who ostensibly fought not so much against Hitler as against Hitlerism.

It is being said, and the British press has been very eager to propagate it, that the refugees are the tools of political propaganda, and if not for this opportunism would have disembarked in France.

We grant that our political aim is to build a people so that in the future we may avoid a repetition of our tragedy, but it is a shameful suggestion that it is *We* who are gambling with the lives of the wretched refugees. Apparently the British mind, nurtured in that security which Britain has known for centuries, is incapable of understanding, let alone sharing the feelings of those who have felt the penalty of homelessness, have suffered all the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" and have made up their minds to fight for their lives; if necessary with their lives.

It is a civilised world indeed in which the curse laid upon Cain, the first murderer—Thou shall be a fugitive and a wanderer—has been transferred to the victims of murderers!

(Continued from Fourth Column.)

to Jewish affairs and particularly to Zionism.

Sephardic Ritual.

Mr. Weinreich witnessed a Sephardic marriage in the Shul. Apparently there the customary chupah is not utilised and instead the young couple stand with their backs against the entrance to the Ark. When the marriage vow is taken a Talis is placed over the heads of the bride and bridegroom. It was a very picturesque ceremony, he said, one performed with

beauty and dignity. I asked Mr. Weinreich about the language problem. He said that Mrs. Granovsky spoke a perfect French and as the residents all understood French, there was no difficulty. He himself spoke in English—which the majority were able to follow. Ninety-five per cent. of the residents came from the island of Rhodes and their home languages were Spanish and "Spanjolith" (a Sephardic form of Yiddish). In addition they spoke Italian and many of them were perfectly at home in

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From my Desk

... By ...

HASOFER



Musical Acquisition.

Not being fluent in French, German or Polish (he is perfectly at home in these languages) I found Hebrew the best medium of conversation with Mr. Jacob Berlinsky, the newly-appointed conductor of the Great Synagogue choir. Mr. Berlinsky will be guest conductor to the Cape Town Orchestra on Sunday evening, September 7th. He is to conduct a symphonic suite never before played in South Africa. The respective movements are "Rosh Hashona," "Yom Kippur" and "Simchas Torah." The soloist at the concert will be Miss Freda Sagov (now Mrs. Roy Sacks) of Sea Point. Mr. Berlinsky is a comparatively young man, and was born in Poland in 1913. As a youth he was secretary of the Zionist Youth Organisation and was an active worker for the J.N.F. After leaving school he studied music at the National Conservatoire at Paris and received its laureate diploma in 1939. He enlisted in the French army at the beginning of the war and wears the blue-black badge sported by those French soldiers who ignored the French surrender and carried on fighting on the Allied side. He has held the position of choirmaster to the United Synagogue of Paris, and his arrival is a definite acquisition to the local community.

Choir With a Tradition.

Talking of the Great Synagogue choir, I am reminded of the festivities which marked the opening of the Zionist Hall in Hope Street, some 20 years ago. On that occasion the Gardens choir officiated, led by Mr. Boris Rome and one of their most popular renderings was that of "Halleluya," by Lewendowski. I now learn that the same choir is to sing the Halleluya again at the Zionist Hall on Monday night as part of the programme to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the World Zionist Organisation. This time it will be conducted by Mr. Jossie Marin, who in 1927 was its leading alto. At the same function Mr. Ralph Koorland, the celebrated violinist, who is not heard often at the Zionist Hall, will render special Jewish and Hebrew melodies. All in all I think the organisers of Monday's reception have arranged a most attractive programme and I am sure Cape Town Jewry will attend in full force.

No Rejoicing.

It is a pity, for more than one reason of course, that this great Jubilee comes at a time when the Jewish people are certainly not in the mood for rejoicing. Normally this should have been an occasion for world-wide demonstrations paying tribute to the prophetic vision of Herzl and to the faithfulness of his followers these last 50 years. It would have afforded an excellent opportunity of letting the world realise that present-day Zionist demands are not a capricious whim of the moment nor an ill-timed fad, but the culmination of an historic ideal coupled with unrelenting labour under the most forbidding conditions. Our feelings of solidarity with our brethren being repatriated to Germany and with the hundreds of thousands of others still detained in enforced idleness and despair in Europe a feeling to which practical utterance was given by yesterday's day of prayer and supplication—has toned down considerably the nature of the celebrations. Nevertheless, it would have been wrong in my opinion to have passed over this outstanding event in Jewish history in silence, and I am glad to observe, therefore, that our children will be marking the day in appropriate fashion and that the parents, too, will have an opportunity of attending a function and recording their satisfaction at having reached this significant milestone.

Silly Rumour.

Cape Town has been seething with rumours to the effect that a leading City store has sacked all its Jewish employees, apparently because of events in Palestine. Mr. Max Melamet, Secretary of the Board of Deputies, and others have made extensive enquiries and I am authorised to state that there is not the slightest truth in this story. This is confirmed by the employees concerned: Will rumour-mongers please note.

How Can You?

The reference above to enlightening Gentile opinion is borne out by a letter which I received this week. In it an active Zionist worker writes: "Is there any way in which we can really get facts across to the non-Jewish public? I am beginning to despair. Sitting in the bus the other day I was an unintentional eavesdropper and could not help overhearing a conversation between two English business-men sitting behind me. They were talking about Palestine affairs and were of the opinion that the Government had blundered in not dealing more ruthlessly with terrorism in its early stages. Furthermore, they felt that the British army should withdraw and leave the Jews to the mercy of the Arabs. This was not so bad because, after all, even spokesmen in the British House of Commons do not understand the relationship between Jew and Arab in Palestine. But then the one gentleman added that after all Jewish interest in Palestine was only a recent thing and, in fact, all that we were after was the Middle East oil. While I was wondering whether to put him right, we reached the terminus and I lost the opportunity. How does one tackle this problem? We are barred entry into the daily papers where our case is twisted. They won't come to our meetings or even the meetings of sympathetic non-Jews. They certainly won't read with any conviction literature that we may send them. The only method that seems to convince people is a visit to Palestine, but except in the case of soldiers on leave in war-time this remedy can never be applied. Is there no way by which we can counteract this terrible, criminal ignorance?" My correspondent has touched a problem with which Jewish leaders are constantly grappling. I would welcome comments.

Congo Jewry.

Mr. Johnny Weinreich is one of the travelling salesmen of Zionism. There is scarcely a part of the Southern African continent which he has not visited for one Campaign or another. He has just returned from his latest mission, this time to Elisabethville, in the Belgian Congo, where he accompanied Mrs. Granovsky for the J.N.F. Campaign. I learn some interesting facts from Mr. Weinreich about Elisabethville's Jewish community. They number no less than 600 souls—probably more than even the community of Paarl. Hebrew education is very well organised there. There is only one teacher—Rabbi Levy—who devotes 26 hours a week to the task of teaching his 125 pupils. When the delegates arrived for a meeting in the Shul, said Mr. Weinreich, they were met by a guard of honour provided by Habonim who made a very smart turn-out. A carpet had been laid from the pavement to the Shul door. As they entered the choir sang "Bruchim Habayim" and then modern Palestine songs. The Shul itself was a magnificent building and he was greatly impressed by the community's devotion

(Continued in First Column.)

Important Cultural Mission.

MR. H. KOSSOWSKY-SHACHOR'S VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA.

Mr. H. Kossowsky-Shachor, of Tel Aviv, has come out to South Africa on an important cultural mission. He is here on behalf of the Palestine Committee for the publication of the popular edition of the dictionary of Eliezer Ben Yehuda, in order to obtain subscribers for that dictionary.

It will consist of 16 volumes and will cost £25 per set. Five volumes have already been issued and these will be sent to subscribers immediately. The remaining volumes will reach subscribers at the rate of one volume every two months.

In response to letters received from Mr. David Ben Gurion, Mr. David Remez, Chairman of the Vaad Leumi, and Prof. N. H. Torcziner, President of the Vaad Halashon and Chairman of the Institute for the Faculty of Judaica at the Hebrew University, the S.A. Zionist Federation heartily recommends Mr. Kossowsky-Shachor's mission and hopes that everyone who has the revival of the Hebrew language and literature at heart will acquire a set.

The members of the Palestine Committee for the publication of the popular edition of the dictionary include such personalities as Mr. J. Ben Zvi, President of the Vaad Leumi, Mr. David Remez, Chairman of the Vaad Leumi, Mr. Isaac Gruenbaum, Dr. M. Soloveichik, Jacob Fichman and Prof. J. Klausner.

Prof. N. H. Torcziner is the editor of the vast amount of material left by the late Eliezer Ben Yehuda.

In a pamphlet addressed "To Our Friends in South Africa" the Committee state:—

"The revival of the Hebrew language is a unique achievement of the Jewish national movement, an achievement unparalleled among other peoples. Indeed it was a task befitting an academy of science which would have undertaken to arrange for the compilation of a complete Hebrew dictionary in which to gather together the precious pearls from the dusty manuscripts and thousand-year-old books, to sift the original material from the additions of later writers, and to explain the meaning of the words and phrases in the past as compared with their modern usage. . . ."

" . . . The undertaking will prove a many-sided blessing. Its supporters will derive satisfaction not only at the completion of this monumental work for the Hebrew language, but also from the fact that it will now be within the reach of every loyal Jew. Some will enjoy the sayings of our sages in this treasury of language, while others will cherish it in their homes for the use of their children and their relatives. It is a tree bearing the pride of ancient and modern Palestine, and of its fruit those will also eat who are not able at present to turn to it. . . ."

A Cultural Evening was held by the Worcester Women's Zionist League (Wizo) at the residence of Mrs. R. Bloch on Tuesday, 19th August. After the Monthly News Review had been read by Mrs. A. Brauer, a piano duet was rendered by Mrs. R. Bloch and Mrs. L. Lange. An interesting article on Palestine compiled by Mrs. A. Levy, a South African who had lived in Palestine for 27 years, was read by Mrs. Friedman, and thereafter a Quiz was held. Two teams were chosen from amongst the members present, and an animated contest ensued.

Memorial to the Late Rabbi Mirvish.

MAYOR CONVENES MEETING.

On Wednesday afternoon a large and representative gathering of communal leaders and workers met in the Library of the City Hall to discuss a suitable memorial to the memory of the late Rabbi M. Ch. Mirvish. The meeting, which had been convened by the Mayor, agreed in principle that the memory of the late Rabbi Mirvish could best be revered by the establishment of some tangible cultural or educational scheme which would bear his name. It is understood that a committee has been elected to achieve this object and that the Mayor, Councillor A. Bloomberg, M.P., is the President and Mr. Max Rabie, President of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, will be the Chairman. Further details will be published next week.

Day of Prayer in the Union.

In accordance with the request of the Chief Rabbinate in Palestine and Britain, Thursday, 28th August, was declared a Day of Prayer and Supplication by the Beth Din, Cape Town. A special service was held at the Great Synagogue at 5.15 p.m. The preacher was Rabbi Dr. A. T. Shrock, in the absence of Rabbi I. Abrahams.

The Johannesburg Jewish ecclesiastical authorities associated themselves with the British Chief Rabbinate in proclaiming Thursday as a day of fast from dawn to dusk, in sympathy with Jews denied entrance to Palestine.

FROM MY DESK.

(Continued from Page 572.)

Hebrew. In all, his visit to the Belgian Congo was a great inspiration.

An Abundance.

In a little village of old Russia, the Rav decided to resign. The community felt ashamed. Was the Rav to desert his flock? What would the world say?

So a public meeting was called and two balebatim were chosen to interview the spiritual leader. Naturally, they were the two wealthiest men in the village. The Rav received the delegation most cordially. He said: "If there were five balebatim like you in the village, I would remain."

"You do us great honour," replied the delegation. "In our community there can surely be found five like us." "Ah," murmured the Rav, "unfortunately, there are a hundred of you!"

The S.A. Jewish Ex-Servicemen's League, Cape Town Branch,

are holding their

CABARET BALL

at the

MAJOR ZIONIST HALL,
Hope St., Cape Town,

on

SATURDAY, 30th AUGUST,

Dancing 8-12.

AL Roberts and His Orchestra.
Conductor Al Roberts.

Refreshments will be served.

TICKETS: 10/6d. DOUBLE.

IN AND AROUND THE PENINSULA.

(Continued from Page 581.)

Europe had affected people in various ways, bringing some back to the fold of religion, turning others right away.

Although the law of the land was essentially British, a great deal of autonomy was given to the Yishuv in the administration of justice, and there was a tendency to return to old values. Jewish judges presided over civil courts and on occasions even over circuit courts. Jewish marriage and divorce was left entirely to the Beth Din.

The output of literature could compete with that of countries of ever so much larger populations. Last year alone over 1,000 new books were published, books on every scientific subject as well as fiction. There were newspapers of every shade of opinion, as well as translations into Hebrew of all important non-Jewish literature.

Among a population of about 700,000 there were five theatres producing the best dramatic works. The people showed full appreciation of these, as well as of music in which the country was rich.

All this within the framework of the Hebrew language which had developed within the last 30 to 50 years to a rich living language. Although all languages were spoken in Palestine, the language of the Yishuv was essentially Hebrew, particularly among the youth. There was a tendency to make the language easier by simplifying the grammatical rules.

The Jew of Palestine maintained his self-respect and if many of the young people were over self-confident there was a tendency to check this if the Jews could live a normal life. Hospitality towards immigrants was shown in the kibbutzim rather than in the towns, which were already overcrowded and could not stretch their accommodation any further. Nevertheless, homes had been found for 30,000 ex-servicemen in spite of Government obstacles.

The Yishuv on the whole wants to be of service and is making endless sacrifices, even of life itself, and in spite of the crisis confronting the country, the light definitely prevails over the shadows. Jewish cultural values were being re-created.

The Brit Ivrit Olamith was the instrument for spreading Hebrew literature and culture all over the world, and therefore deserves full support.

A number of questions were asked to which the lecturer ably replied.

In proposing a vote of thanks Dr. A. Birnbaum expressed his appreciation to Dr. Rabinowitz for a most inspiring lecture.

Youth Aliyah, Wynberg.

The following are the results of the competitions held recently: Evening Dress won by Miss Calles, c/o Bennett and Baker, Wynberg; Coat won by Dr. Lizerbrum, Main Road, Mowbray.

Muizenberg Talmudical Society.

It is regretted that in the report of the Siyum on Ein Yaacov the name of Mr. H. Benjamin was inadvertently omitted from among those who spoke.

CAPE MIZRACHI ORGANISATION.

THE STUDY OF TANACH.

will be conducted by
MR. M. L. ARONSON
at the

ROELAND STREET
SYNAGOGUE HALL,
Roeland Street, Cape Town

on
SUNDAY, 31st AUGUST,
at 8.15 p.m.

RABBI DR. E. W. KIRZNER
will preside.
ALL WELCOME.

ק"ק תקות ישראל

CAPE TOWN HEBREW CONGREGATION.

HIGH FESTIVAL SERVICES

There being no further accommodation available in the Great Synagogue, an

OVERFLOW SERVICE

has been arranged to be held in the

OLD SYNAGOGUE.

The Preacher will be
PROF. I. ABRAHAMS,
Chief Rabbi to the Congregation.

Seating Cards may be obtained from the Secretary's Office, 84 Hatfield Street.

פֿעדֿעראַציע פֿון

לאַנדסמאַנשאַפֿטן (קײַם)

FEDERATION OF LANDSMAN-SHAFTEN (CAPE).

LECTURE

by MR. B. L. RUBIK on
"Der Gayer" by M. Boraisha,
one of the most outstanding books in modern Jewish (Hebrew and Yiddish) Literature, on

TUESDAY, 16th SEPTEMBER,

at 8 p.m. at the

ZIONIST HALL,

Hope Street, Cape Town.

All welcome.

WYNBERG HEBREW CONGREGATION.

The Executive will be in attendance for the

ALLOCATION OF SEATS

for the forthcoming High Festivals at the Synagogue Office on the following days:—

SUNDAY, 31st AUGUST,
and 7th and 14th SEPTEMBER,
between the hours of 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

CHAZEN L. ALTER (Jnr.), of Johannesburg, will officiate at the Services.

RONDEBOSCH HEBREW CONGREGATION.

Services for the forthcoming

HIGH FESTIVALS

will be held in the

RONDEBOSCH PARISH HALL
(Camp Ground Road, Rondebosch)
as follows:

ROSH HASHONA: Commencing at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday, 14th September, 1947.

YOM KIPPUR: Commencing at 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 23rd September, 1947.

CANTOR: MR. J. GLICK.

For reservation of seats and further enquiries apply to:

L. LINCOW (PTY.) LTD., Main Rd., Rondebosch.

MANHATTAN MANUFACTURERS (PTY.) LTD., 55, Loop St., Cape Town. SECRETARY, Phone 6-8917.

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