

FAREWELL OF ZEIRE ZION TO DR. OLSVANGER

The Zeire Zion gave their farewell evening to Dr. Olsvanger on Wednesday, October 22nd, at their hall marked through out by a spirit of enthusiasm, the audience joining during the evening in singing Zionist and national songs. In his speech, Dr. Olsvanger outlined the Jewish national movement as a part of the philosophy of mankind and as an individual philosophy of life.

Mr. J. Bahr, who presided and made a few introductory remarks in Hebrew, called upon Mr. Ben Zion Shayne.

"We have always looked upon Dr. Olsvanger," said Mr. Shayne, "as our teacher, and our attitude towards him has been that of an older friend. What I have to say of Dr. Olsvanger's art as an orator is entirely free of compliment. His speeches have made a profound and lasting impression. I remember his words at the last Zionist Conference. I have often been complimented as an orator, but do you know what it is that makes one an orator? It is the knowledge of the wonderful past of the Jewish people and its equally wonderful future."

Dr. Olsvanger has succeeded in melting some of the ice which surrounds the hearts of the Jewish youth in this naturally hot, but spiritually cold, country. We feel now that we have to say good-bye to him that we remain spiritually lonely. When he reaches those places where Jewish life pulsates, he should remember that we are also bound to these Jews—that we here are spiritually starved."

Dr. Olsvanger was presented with a golden fountain pen by Mr. Bahr on behalf of the Zeire Zion.

In reply, Dr. Olsvanger, who was cordially received, said:—

"I would be happy indeed if my activities in South Africa had the effect that Chaver Shein portrayed. I wish it were really so. In the townlets which I have visited, where for the first time for twenty years a Jewish voice has informed them what is happening in world Jewry, I do not think that the effect can be measured. The results will only be seen later. As for the Jewish youth in the outlying districts, I am afraid the outlook is black. They are dying, but their death takes a long time. Once in twenty years someone comes to them and rouses them. I was perhaps fortunate in being able to show them for one hour a different from that of meales, wool and sheep. Rather than meet with such apathy, I would have been happy had they been virulent anti-Zionists. But they are not interested—they do not understand."

"The second matter which has impressed me deeply is the beautiful gift you have presented to me. I will present a secret. I knew you were going to give me a book. I even knew what it was going to be—(laughter)—that it is now quite impossible for me to utter that customary phrase, 'I have been pleasantly surprised.'"

After intimating that he would be writing a book of impressions of South Africa, Dr. Olsvanger said:—

"I came to South Africa from a free land—Switzerland. There I found myself in a double *Goluth*—the *Goluth* of being in a neutral country during the war and the of being amongst 1,500 poor refugee students. These students were of two classes—serious and flighty. The serious students when they were merry showed that there was a joy which springs from the heart; the flighty students delighted in debauchery, played cards, and led the life of degenerates."

"There amongst the beautiful snow-capped mountains of Switzerland there were those of us who felt moved by the wonders of nature. It was war time and we felt all the being keenly the tragedy of being in this double *Goluth*—our domains surrounded by the beauties of nature, while outside our world a fearful struggle was going on between the old world and the new. The old world would fall and a new world would rise in its place. We admired not only the beauties of nature, but also the social life which this small people of three million souls had built up. We compared our situation with ours. We understood that we had but to imitate, not to create."

"And so we tried to think of our place in the world; we tried to build up a *welt anschauung*. As I trace back my thoughts to those moments I see a picture of the whole world, and when I look at you I feel that you are in a thick fog, that there are a thousand and one things which obscure your sight. There is one thing for which you must strive and that is constantly to think of your place in the world and gradually to evolve a philosophy of life. There are young people who, when they begin to think, place a label upon themselves—Zionist, Yiddishist, and so on. I have no labels. I have not made an oath that I will observe every letter of the Zionist programme made at Basle. I try to fit it into my *welt anschauung* and find that it fits very well."

"We must have, in a sense, a *chassidist* outlook on life, we must teach ourselves to regard things from a height, as it were. You single individual, you must seek to understand not only yourself, but all that goes on around you. You must suffer with those that suffer, feel the joy of those that rejoice. You must embrace in your consciousness as much of the world as possible—every dower, every blade of grass, every bird, every fish, every star. Absorb the life that you see and feel around you."

"Zionism is a movement to solve the Jewish problem and concerns only a small people. It is not a *welt anschauung*. Therefore you must develop this *chassidist* outlook, which embraces the whole world, and thus you shall see Zionism in its true perspective. You must strive to find your place in the world. Your individual life is of so little account that unless you do this you are merely an animal. You must feel that between you and the universe there is a wonderful harmony."

"Each child that is born into the world inherits certain qualities from its parents. It is because of this inheritance that the consciousness of the child is nationally coloured. Our *begabung* is national—we inherit it from our parents. My mother sang me a cradle song, and its melody echoes through my life."

"In Switzerland we sang Russian national music and with gusto. We were young and we wanted to sing, but our souls were not satisfied. This music was created for us; it was not so much a part of us as those who created it. We could thus not build within us a reflection of the universe. But because we saw that the object of each individual was to be in harmony with the universe we came to Zionism."

"There was one man in modern times—a genius—Herzl. What you read in the press, that Herzl turned to anti-Zionism because of the Dreyfus case or because of anti-Semitism, is a profanation. Herzl felt that in the German atmosphere he was strange, and he wanted to create a nation in the midst of which he could live and not feel out of place. Herzl saw that others felt as he felt and thus the Zionist movement came into being. Zionism is a part of our *welt anschauung*. Viewed from such an angle, all the pettiness of party politics and the pain of temporary difficulties vanishes. When a complete Jewish national life is built up in Palestine, we will forget all the party squabbles. When I am asked the question, Will the Zionist movement create such a life in Palestine, in spite of obstacles? I do not understand it. There are no difficulties, there are no obstacles. We desire such a life and we shall create it."

Great enthusiasm prevailed when Dr. Olsvanger finished his beautiful oration.

See Palestine with Your Own Eyes

—by joining the South African Excursion to the Holy Land now being organized by S.A. Zionist Federation.

The party is scheduled to leave from Delagoa Bay by the S.S. USAMBARA on February 22nd, 1925, and to arrive at Port Said on March 27th. Palestine will be reached on March 29th.

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See the Jewish Colonies and the practical achievements of our Pioneers.

The Party will be specially conducted

Adequate arrangements will be made for the supply of KOSHER food during the voyage.

EARLY APPLICATION ESSENTIAL

To The Secretary and Organizer, PALESTINE EXCURSION, P.O. Box 18, JOHANNESBURG.