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The *Zionist Record* is sent post free to any address in the Union and other parts of Africa, for 10/- per annum, 5/- for 6 months.

All Subscriptions are payable in advance.

Telegrams: "Kadimah," Johannesburg. Telephone: Central 722.
Communications should be addressed to the *Zionist Record*, P.O. Box 150, Johannesburg.

OUR UNIVERSITY.

THE NEW TEMPLE ON MOUNT SCOPUS.

Our readers were no doubt intrigued by an extract, published in our last issue, from an article which recently appeared in the *Osservatore Romano*, the official organ of the Vatican. The extract referred to the prospects of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and to the spirit which animated its foundation. According to this Catholic organ, that spirit is a militant and aggressive one. It talks of the "great intellectual battle" which the Zionist revival is preparing; of the "monopoly of higher culture in Palestine" at which the University aims; of the "campaign for a spiritual revenge" upon which its Faculties are about to embark.

Two remarkable facts emerge from our contemporary's analysis of the situation: firstly, its full recognition of the earnestness of the movement for the University; secondly, its total misconception of the ideals which underlie it. We were told, in the early days of the Great War, that Germany sought to impose its "Kultur" by the strong hand upon nations which had their own spiritual possessions, and which therefore resented this attempt at cultural domination by an alien race; and one would imagine, from the language of the *Osservatore Romano's* contributor, that he anticipates a similar attempt at intellectual tyranny on the part of Palestinian Jewry, to be enforced, of course, not by engines of destruction, but by spiritual weapons of even greater potency than guns and poison gas. It is perhaps not unnatural that the official organ of a creed which has distinguished itself for nearly two thousand years by successful efforts to master and control the souls and the imaginations of its followers, should look for similar motives in others, especially where their activities appear to conflict with that creed's interests; for, be it remembered, the article to which we refer dealt with the position of Catholic education in Palestine. But to one who knows anything of the aims of the Hebrew University, such apprehensions can only appear grotesque.

The cultural programme of Zionism is made up of two correlated parts: the re-establishment of a Jewish system of education and of national life in Palestine, and the spread of the Hebrew language, of a knowledge of Jewish history and literature, and generally of the Jewish national consciousness, in the lands of the Dispersion. Of this programme the University, as the coping stone of the educational equipment of Palestine, is the highest and noblest embodiment. In that institution will be sounded the whole gamut of Jewish culture—to use that much-abused term in its widest sense as signifying the total product of the Jewish spirit.

"Zionists," remember that no Jewish function is complete unless a collection is made for the National Fund.

FAMILY
ANNOUNCEMENTS

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TELEPHONE: CENTRAL 722.

FIANCILLES.

ABRAMS—PRICE.—The engagement is announced between Sadie, only daughter of Mrs. and the late Mr. P. Abrams, and Percy (Pinkie), youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Price, both of Johannesburg.

NAYMAN—FURMAN.—The engagement is announced between Julia, third daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nayman, of Manchester, also sister of Mr. and Mrs. Chatkin, of Boksburg North, to Mr. Solly Furman, third son of Mrs. Furman and the late Mr. Furman, also of Boksburg North.

THAL—WEINRONK.—The engagement is announced of Miss Ethel Thal, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. D. Thal, of Cradock, to Mr. Simon Weinronk, of Port Elizabeth. Port Elizabeth papers please copy.

FORTHCOMING MARRIAGE.

RESNICK—LEVY.—The marriage of Rae, youngest daughter of Mrs. and the late Rabbi Shapsel Resnick, to Max, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Levy, will be solemnised at the Berea Synagogue (Tudhope Avenue), on Sunday, January 4th, at 4.30 p.m. No reception.

MARRIAGE.

POLICANSKY—HERBSTEN.—Married at the Great Synagogue, Capetown, on Wednesday, December 17th, 1924, by the Rev. A. P. Bender, assisted by the Rev. N. Kirshner, Betty, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Policansky, of "Tandem," Marnion Road, Orangezicht, Capetown, to Joseph, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. M. Herbstene, of "Hazeldene," Hof Street, Capetown.

What is the *raison d'être* of a Hebrew University in Jerusalem? Firstly, it is the sense that the ideals of the Bible, which the Jewish race has struggled to preserve through all vicissitudes, still hold good; that Jews can create for themselves a renaissance of their own; that they have a specifically Jewish contribution to make to the thought, the art, and the culture of the world, and that nothing less than a Hebrew University, broad-based upon a pulsating Jewish life in Palestine, can enable this contribution to be made. Only in Palestine is there the necessary freedom to be specifically Jewish, for no dominant alien culture exists there to claim authority. Only Palestine can be the centre to which the heart of every conscious Jew will turn, and from which, as from nowhere else, he awaits and is prepared to accept Jewish guidance and Jewish instruction. Over twenty years ago, when the idea of the University was first mooted at the Fifth Zionist Congress, a band of young Jewish students devoted themselves to popularising the idea, and, among other things, produced a pamphlet called "Eine Jüdische Hochschule." The authors took as their motto the famous words, "Give me Jabneh and her wise men," which Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai spoke to Titus in the crisis of the fate of the Jewish nation. Like Jochanan, they expressed faith that the seat of Jewish learning and the Jewish wise men would preserve and develop the Jewish spirit and the Jewish people even when political power and machinery had collapsed.

Secondly, the Hebrew University is a necessity to Jewry because it will be a repository of the Hebrew language. A language is not a mere tool: it is, besides, the highway along which the soul of a people marches in the fulfilment of its destiny; and to reach its goal the soul of the Jewish people requires its own highway—Hebrew. Hebrew will liberate the unexhausted treasures of the Jewish soul, and set them in circulation; and, through and in Hebrew, the Torah will once more go forth from Zion as in the past. Without Hebrew, a Jewish University in Jerusalem would but repeat the old Jewish tragedy of civil war within the soul, and destroy that unity of heart and brain and speech which breeds prophets, artists, the breakers of new paths in science or in letters. If the accusation is true that the Jewish people, which in its early unity flooded the world with light, has since its dispersion given the world less than its fair share of great minds, does this not point to the ruin wrought by the divorce between the Jewish people and the Jewish speech?

And thirdly, the University is indispensable as a light to the Exile. Jews the world over will flock there, come into intimate contact with Jewish teachers and Jewish students working freely in a Jewish atmosphere for the full expression of the Jewish spirit; and return, having drunk of the new-old well of living waters, to spread among all the scattered legions of Jewry their deepened Jewish faith and their widened Jewish understanding. We are breaking into fragments, and the fragments are being powdered into dust by the grinding of alien ideas and alien faiths. Only the influence of Palestinian Jewish culture can act as a cement to the disintegrating body of Jewry

in dispersion. Many years ago, Ahad Ha'am dreamed this dream. To-day the dream is becoming a working reality: the foundation of a Jewish culture in Palestine is being laid before our eyes. And when, in the land of the Prophets, we have planted a people speaking their language and inspired by their ideals in their daily life, the Zionist ideal and the Jewish Renaissance will be on the road to joint fulfilment—Palestine will be a light to Israel, and Israel will be a light to the nations. A.

THE BENONI EXAMPLE.

Interesting reflections are aroused by the account given to this journal by Mr. N. Kirschner, of Benoni, and published in its last issue, describing the amalgamation which, under his leadership, has just been effected of the various Jewish communal bodies of that growing town. That the achievement marks a forward step is beyond question. Unification is an unqualified blessing. It prevents overlapping, saves time, thought and energy, and is, financially, a boon.

Mr. Kirschner and his colleagues must be possessed, not merely of far-sightedness, but of determination: for one can well imagine the difficulties which had to be surmounted. Honorary office is something which, to our frail human nature, too often appeals as an end in itself, instead of as a means to serve the community; and a re-organisation which has so considerably reduced the number of communal offices must have been acquiesced in with reluctance not only by the existing incumbents of the offices which have been abolished, but by others who aspired to similar distinction. It is testimony to their public spirit that they have subordinated their personal desires to the common good.

The example of Benoni is well worthy of emulation elsewhere. We make bold to say that what Benoni has done is practical politics in every Jewish community in South Africa which is not appreciably larger than that of Benoni—in other words, by every community outside Johannesburg and Capetown. How far such amalgamation is practicable in those two centres is another story. There the elements of the Jewish population and the Jewish institutions are not only much more numerous, but more heterogeneous; and we doubt whether communal education is far enough advanced to admit of a unification of bodies whose points of view are often as far asunder as the poles. In discussing the City-state, that remarkable political phenomenon of ancient Greece, Aristotle rightly held that such a constitution was only possible if the number of citizens was moderate, the maximum for which he stipulated being 100,000. This limitation was, of course, inherent in the very character of the ancient Greeks. Similarly, it would seem difficult, if not impossible, to create a united machinery for the management of the affairs of a Jewish community of ten thousand souls or more. The largest unit within which a really lively communal sense appears to prevail is that which may be compendiously termed the Chevra—a body whose extreme limit it is not easy to lay down, but which certainly would not run to several thousands of persons. The Jewish case is, however, different from the Greek in that, whereas

(Continued on page 3.)

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