

In Pretoria

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

THE ZIONIST GUILD.

The annual general meeting of the Pretoria Zionist Guild is due to take place shortly, and it cannot come a moment too soon. If Zionism is to remain a live force in Pretoria—and there are many members of the community who are determined that it shall continue to be so—then it is necessary that no time should be wasted in mobilizing the Zionist elements in the city to think and act communally. Recently, there has been a deplorable lack of this concentrated and co-ordinated effort, and the result has been that the Zionist organisation in Pretoria has been inactive to the point of stagnation. In emphasising this fact—and it is in the interests of Zionism that faults should not be glossed over—it is also necessary to point out that the blame does not attach altogether to the official organisation. A committee can do a great deal, but unless it has behind it the constant stimulus of an enthusiastic public opinion, and unless it feels that it is supplying a definite demand, it is bound to lose heart and to slacken in its efforts. That has been the unfortunate experience of Pretoria, and the fact is recorded because it is confidently believed by the writer that there is sufficient Zionist sentiment in the Capital to ensure that the experience should not be repeated once the facts are clearly understood. If this belief is unjustified, then the task of maintaining Zionism as an organised force in this city, would become a hopeless one. But it seems impossible to conceive that Pretoria, with its relatively large Jewish community, should be unable to do what many smaller communities are doing satisfactorily, and we can, therefore, only conclude that the present phase is a temporary one.

In this connection it should not be overlooked that lately Zionism in Pretoria has sustained some heavy blows in the shape of the death of several devoted leaders of the local organisation, and in various other directions; but surely the movement is vital enough and inspiring enough, even in Pretoria, to be able to survive shocks such as these, however severe. The forthcoming general meeting will provide the test of this, and all who have the cause at heart are looking forward to that event as affording an opportunity of clearing the air and resuming the constructive labours which have recently been in abeyance.

A MOCK ELECTION.

The Jewish Guild held a successful function on the 20th December, in the shape of a mock election for Parliamentary honours. The banqueting room of the Memorial Hall was crowded, and the hilarity was unrestrained and continuous throughout the evening. Five parties contested the seat, and election posters and manifestos were greatly in evidence. Mr. M. Strauss, as the Jewish supporter of the Farmers' Party, Mr. G. Osrin, as the Indian merchant who was all for compromise and settlement, and Mr. L. Saks, as the Cockney Socialist, were most amusing and effective; and the other candidates and election agents also sustained their parts adequately. The following candidates were eventually declared elected:—Mr. A. Cooper, Farmers' Party (election agent, Mr. M. Strauss); Mr. G. Osrin, Settlers' Party (election agent, Mr. L. Hotz). Mr. C. Isaacson made an admirable chairman. The audience aided and abetted the different speakers by maintaining a running fire of comment, heckling and questions.

The Jewish Guild has every reason to congratulate itself on the success of this function, which has helped to add to its popularity. The Guild is in recess until the second week of January, owing to the current holidays. Its activities will be resumed on the 10th of that month, when a dance will be given in the Memorial Hall. Subsequent events on the programme include a lecture on Palestine by Major Lorch, who served in that country during the war. The lecture, which is due to take place on the 18th January, will, it is hoped, be illustrated by a number of lantern slides.

It may be mentioned that the question of forming a sports section and a musical and dramatic section of the Guild is under consideration.

A CHANUKAH CONCERT.

The Town Hall was filled to capacity on Sunday night, the 21st December, when the third annual sacred Chanukah concert was held in aid of the Talmud Torah funds under the auspices of the Talmud Torah Committee of the Pretoria Hebrew congregation. His Worship the Mayor and Mrs. G. H. Brink were present, and the audience comprised a very representative gathering of members of the Jewish community, young and old. The function was a success both from the financial and social point of view, and reflected the greatest credit on the Talmud Torah teachers (who arranged the bulk of the programme), the youthful entertainers who participated and the ladies and gentlemen who kindly supplemented their efforts, and last but not least, the energetic honorary secretary, Mr. L. Resnik, who ably supervised the general arrangements.

The main part of the entertainment consisted of a number of items for which the Talmud Torah pupils were responsible. The *pièce de résistance* was a Hebrew playlet entitled "The Maccabees," by I. L. Katzenellenson, which was adapted for the stage and produced by the Talmud Torah teachers. No less than fifteen children participated in the production, and the action went with a swing throughout. The whole performance testified not only to the careful and painstaking instruction given by the teachers but also to the ability of the performers. Master A. Schwartz and Miss Sylvia Rudolph were suitably dignified as the old priest and his wife, Misses H. Ziman, A. Kahn, M. Waisbrod and M. Segal took minor parts quite effectively, while the five sons of the old couple (Masters Ginsberg, Resnik, Levitt, Friedlander and Rudolph) were war-like and gallant, and the four shepherds (Masters Fasser, Isaacman, Elk and Sachs) both rustic and tuneful. The furniture for the various scenes was kindly lent by Messrs. Schwartz, Ltd.

Besides the playlet, the first part of the programme consisted mainly of several Hebrew and Yiddish melodies. Miss J. Pecker and the Rev. A. Zwick gave a beautiful rendering of "Haneros Halolu," in the course of which Rev. Zwick lighted the ceremonial candles commemorating the historic exploits of the Maccabees. As an encore Miss Pecker and Rev. Zwick gave the Misere scene from "Il Trovatore." Misses Annie Kahn and F. Sklare recited a little Hebrew poem, and the Talmud Torah pupils, under the direction of the Rev. Zwick, acquitted themselves well in some Hebrew and Yiddish songs, which were highly appreciated. Miss E. Cohen evoked much applause by singing a couple of "Folkslieder," which were both quaint and melodious.

Rabbi W. Hirsch, B.A., then gave a brief but eloquent address on Talmud Torah as a spiritual force in the development and life of the Jewish nation. He pointed out that its value as such lay in the fact that, in the past at any rate, the teaching and learning of the Law had played a very real part in the everyday life of the Jews. Modern conditions had brought about some changes in that respect, but there was no reason to abandon hope so long as the religious school, the Talmud Torah, remained a living institution. The security of a people rested largely in the hands of its teachers, and this was notably the case with the Jewish people. He congratulated the Talmud Torah committee and all those responsible on the success of the function that evening.

After a brief interval Miss B. Sachs gave an acceptable rendering of two violin items, and Miss A. Jaffe sang "Eli, Eli," and an encore item, with considerable power and expression.

Songs by Mr. Lewis Wolff, who was in excellent voice, and by Miss J. Pecker, who sang with her customary charm and sweetness, concluded a pleasant and well-balanced concert programme. Special thanks are due to these artists for their kind assistance, as well as to Madam Leah Williams, Mr. Felix Ginsberg and Master Bruno Raikin, who ably accompanied the various items in the programme, and to Mr. Ben Cohen, who assisted generally in making the evening a success.

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