

## Students' Jewish Association.

LECTURE BY DR. J. L. LANDAU.

Dr. J. L. Landau, Chief Rabbi, is hon. president of the Witwatersrand University Students' Jewish Association, and on Thursday evening at the Jewish Guild he delivered his annual presidential address, taking as his subject "Modern Jewish Authors." Mr. L. Kuper presided.

The lecturer said that there was a Rabbinical saying that man lived by force and died by force. He was born against his will and died without being asked for his consent. The rabbis omitted to add another point, over which one had no control. They might have added that one wrote against one's own inclinations. It was a well-known fact that most eminent people in history struggled against opposition, slander, abuse, persecution, yet persevered, and that referred especially to leaders of human thought.

Referring to Hebrew writers, the lecturer said as he did not wish to give fragmentary remarks about many, he would concentrate on one personality only, viz., Peretz Smolenskin. The Jewish life in those days was most humiliating. The children and grandchildren of great Jewish rabbis embraced Christianity. Letters had to sell his name to the British and Foreign Bible Society in order to keep his soul and body together. That was the position when Smolenskin decided to publish his monthly journal *Hashacher* in 1897. As soon as the magazine was published he became famous. He created and educated writers. Pilgrimages were made to him. He himself wrote five great novels. In his "Hatoë Bedarchai Hachaim"—the erring wanderer through the path of life—he embodies all his own experiences.

But in spite of all his books he was starving. He could not sell them, and his agents robbed him. He married in 1875, but had to send his wife and children to his father-in-law, as he was unable to support them.

In Hebrew literature, Peretz Smolenskin was the creator of the modern Jewish national idea and of the Jewish national movement. True, before him there was published Moses Hess's "Rome and Jerusalem." But Smolenskin said he had never seen it. Smolenskin wrote with a force and flow of language such as no other could equal. No one, however, listened to him. But then there occurred the pogroms (in 1881), after which when he visited Russia he was carried shoulder-high by the young Jewish students. But the germ of death was already making itself manifest. He wrote with his heart's blood, for the doctor said that every word that he wrote hastened the hour of his death. In spite of that, he persisted in writing. His last novel was the story of the Jewish students who turned Nationalists.

He gave the name of "Kadimah" to the first Jewish National Students' Society in Vienna. He wrote the last pages of his novel, "Hayerusha," when he was dying, and ten years after his marriage he passed away. When he died, his monthly journal died with him, after fifteen years of a struggling existence. After his death, the greatest Jews began to sing his praises, and to collect money for his widow and children. But they continued to struggle, in spite of that. He died at the age of 43, like Herzl.

In conclusion, Dr. Landau expressed the hope that the time would come when Jewish students in South Africa would be able to read Smolenskin and appreciate his writings.

After the lecturer had answered questions put to him by members of the audience, votes of thanks were passed to Dr. Landau and the chairman.

## JEWISH RETURNED SOLDIERS.

### Big Gathering at Smoking Concert.

A smoking concert organised by the South African Jewish ex-service men held at the Jewish Guild on the 13th inst., attracted a big gathering of old soldiers. In addition to a good vaudeville programme a splendid supper was provided. Many a yarn was "swapped" and many old friends were delighted to meet again.

Among the contributors to the programme were Leo Laden and his symphonators, a jazz band of quality and novelty; Miss Benie Alexander and Alec Watt, in duets; Miss Peggy Fay, a dainty soubrette; Maurice Tatz and company in a funny sketch, "A Hunting We Will Go"; Barry Ono, in old-time numbers (by permission of African Theatres); Messrs. Vidofsky and Horwitz, in humorous items; and Ben Barnett, the popular tenor.

Prior to the entertainment the president, Mr. G. S. Kope, referred to the splendid assistance the league had been able to afford needy ex-service men. And at the conclusion, Colonel Thackeray, C.M.G., D.S.O., congratulated the Jewish returned soldiers on the work they were doing. Among those present were Major Smitheman, of the Transvaal Scottish, Major Hunt, B.E.S.L., Major Bell, Moths, and representatives of the T.O.H and kindred associations.

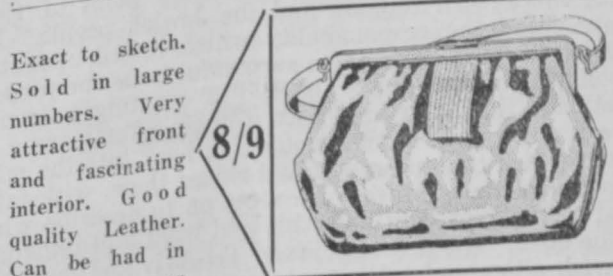
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