

New Hebrew School in Johannesburg

Opening of Talmud Torah in Berea

THE Berea Hebrew Congregation has erected on ground adjoining its synagogue in Tudhope Avenue a building comprising a Hebrew School, consisting of three large and airy classrooms, a "succah" and kitchen and other offices required for the holding of synagogal functions of all kinds. The building cost £1,600.

The laying of the foundation stone and the official opening both took place on Sunday afternoon. Close upon 500 people were present, including representatives of every section of the local Jewish community.

Chief Cantor S. Steinberg, assisted by his choir under the direction of Mr. Steinberg, Junr., intoned the appropriate psalms and hymns, including the "Hatechiyah" written by the late Mr. M. D. Hersch and the music by Cantor Steinberg.

Mr. I. J. Hersch, the President of the Congregation, welcomed those present who came to participate in their joy. He pointed out that the school had been in existence for some years, but was housed in the synagogue itself, which was unsatisfactory. The synagogue had been built 15 years ago, since when it had gone from strength to strength, and he hoped the same would apply to the Hebrew School now that it had been built.

Mr. B. Friedman presented two silver trowels, suitably inscribed to Dr. A. J. Kuny, the treasurer of the Building Committee, with one of which he laid the foundation stone on his own behalf, and with the other in memory of the late Mr. M. D. Hersch, who was to have had the honour had not death intervened prior to the function.

Dr. Kuny thanked the Committee for the honour accorded him. He concluded with an appeal for funds to complete the cost of the building, one-half of which had been obtained, the donations including fifty guineas from Mr. W. Hillman and a like sum from Mr. M. Haskel.

Mrs. M. D. Hersch gave a very interesting and learned address in memory of her late husband, who throughout his life had been devoted to the cause of Hebrew education. She expressed the hope that the pupils of the school would grow up good Jews and Jewesses and a credit to the community.

The chairman then presented a golden key, suitably inscribed, to Mr. A. Behrmann, the chairman of the Building Committee, and in doing so referred to the intimate association of the Behrmann family with the Berea Synagogue, of which Mr. Behrmann's late father had laid the foundation stone and his late brother had performed the official opening ceremony.

Mr. A. Behrmann, after declaring the building officially opened, described how they had gone on with the building of the school, in spite of the depression of last year, and now they had reaped the reward of their courage.

All present then entered the building and sat themselves at the tables, which were laden with refreshment.

Dr. Landau's Address.

CHIEF Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau said that he had a sacred duty to fulfil—to refer to those people no longer here to see the fulfilment of the work they had cherished for years—the late Mr. Harris Behrmann, Mr. L. H. Behrmann, and Mr. M. D. Hersch, to whose memory he paid an eloquent tribute. Graetz said

the Jews were a nation of extremes, just like the Land of Israel was a country of extremes in climate—and extremes met in Jewish history, too. For their little ones they provided schools; their old studied in the Boti Midrashim. But where were their young men and women, their middle-aged? They looked for them in their synagogues, but looked in vain.

But their community was only 40 years old, and forty years in the history of a community was not very long, and Rome was not built in a day. Dr. Landau added they were grateful to such men like Mr. Hersch and Mr. Behrmann, who gave their time to the work of the community.

Was it not a crying sin that there were men in the community trying to break and destroy, instead of trying to build, because of nonsense and *rishus*?

Dr. Landau went on to say that the time had arrived when the community should have their eyes opened to the true facts. Here they had a United Talmud Torah with a total of 700 children, whereas it should be 2,000, which they would have had if it were not for such *rishus*.

After referring to the sufferings of their people in Germany, Dr. Landau asked whether it was not time that parents opened their eyes and prepared their children to be able to face the future that lay before them. In conclusion, the Chief Rabbi expressed the fervent hope that they would live to see the dawn of a better day.

Other Speakers.

RABBI ISAAC KOSSOWSKI, of the Federation of Synagogues, gave an address, in which he dealt with the significance of

the Succoth Festival, and referred to the tragic position of the Jewish people in Germany. He said that a succah was a temporary abode, like all the lands in the Galuth. In this sense South Africa was a beautiful succah, but still a succah. In conclusion, the rabbi congratulated the committee on the success of their work.

Mr. S. Saharin, a past president of the congregation, traced the early history of the Berea Congregation, and mentioned that there were about 50 children attending the school.

Mr. Norman Lourie, the leader of the Habonim movement, introduced the Berea troop of the Habonoth, who sang a number of Hebrew songs.

Mr. J. Feitelberg, immediate past president of the congregation, said that that day was one of the happiest in the history of the congregation.

Mr. Harry Lourie, president of the S.A. Board of Jewish Education, offered his congratulations to the Berea Congregation, and paid an eloquent tribute to their work, which he could not praise too highly. The congregation was the first to affiliate with the Board of Education.

Mr. D. Mierowsky, Director of Education for the Board, wished that parents could realise the great difference between private teaching and that obtainable in the schools of the United Talmud Torahs. He expressed the hope that with the completion of their building a new era would dawn for the Berea School.

Rabbi Soloweitzik also delivered an address.

The chairman thanked the speakers above-mentioned and the members of the Building Committee, Rev. Steinberg and his choir, the hon. secretaries (Mr. Ralph Behrmann and Miss Malk), the stewards, the architect and builder, and Mr. Percy Cowen, who, he said, was an old and stalwart friend of the Berea Congregation, as representing the Press, for their participation in the function.

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