

Culture and Labour.

Final Lecture by Dr. A. Syngalowski.

Dr. A. Syngalowski, Vice-President of the Ort-Oze World Union, delivered his final lecture in South Africa before a very large audience at the Zionist Hall on Wednesday night.

Dr. H. Kramer was in the chair and said it had been a great privilege and opportunity to meet and listen to Dr. Syngalowski, who was a great scholar and a great Jew. We owed him a double debt of gratitude—for his self-sacrificing efforts on behalf of the distressed Jews in Eastern Europe and for the manner in which he had instilled in South African Jewry a pride in their race.

Dr. Syngalowski, taking as his subject "Culture and Labour," said that the "leit-motif" of all his lectures had been "labour," and that was his farewell message to South Africa. Labour must become the foundation of the physical existence of Jewry. Our whole activity should not be concentrated on combating anti-Semitism but on improving the economic conditions in the lands in which we live. Our political aims should be to eliminate all inequality between Jew and non-Jew.

Labour, said Dr. Syngalowski could be regarded both from the material and spiritual standpoint. The Ghetto had crippled not only the Jewish body but the spirit as well. Jews must be taught not only to work and thus rehabilitate themselves; they must be taught the dignity and high purpose of labour. Culture and labour were indissolubly bound together, and there could be no proper culture where labour was unknown. The whole of world-culture was a resultant of labour. Labour was not a material concept as culture was not a spiritual concept. Labour was the source of all cultural life; it bound individuals together into one social whole. The first product of man's culture was group life; men had to come together for common protection and this was the first triumph over nature.

Labour, continued Dr. Syngalowski is a psychological concept. Not all man's activity is labour, but only that which has a definite object in view—to change the form of something. Man became a partner with Nature through labour; the understanding and application of Nature led to science which is the holiest work of man on earth.

Behind all technique, said Dr. Syngalowski, is man's mind; on all sides we are surrounded by embodied ideas; the union of spirit and matter results in culture. The old-fashioned Jews in the little villages thought that theirs could be a life of the spirit without any attention to the material aspect; this one-sided view led to many ills from which the Jews are suffering to-day and accounts for the poverty of Jewish literature. Only through the union of "Torah" and "Avodah" can the economic lot of the Jews be improved.

Labour is the strongest driving power in man. It is a deeply rooted instinct as is seen in young children—an instinct which all educationists to-day are making the basis of their theory and practice.

Work is the highest mission of man on earth. It is difficult, said Dr. Syngalowski, to regard work as a blessing to-day, when it is everywhere looked upon as an evil. But work is the purest and noblest instinct in man and is the source of the highest ideals. Man's destiny is to make dead matter live, and this can be done only through work. The tragedy is that this highest ideal of labour has been prostituted for monetary gain; but it must and will find its highest form once again.

Dr. Kramer announced that it had been decided to form an Ort-Oze branch in Cape Town, and appealed for helpers.

Dr. S. E. Kark proposed a vote of thanks to Dr. Syngalowski which was carried with acclamation.

Molly Picon's Yiddish Concert.

AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS.

Molly Picon's Yiddish Concert at the City Hall last Friday night was an outstanding success and a brilliant climax to her season in Cape Town. For over two hours she kept the huge audience entertained by her wonderful power of characterisation; she revealed an amazing knowledge and understanding of Jewish life and recreated many familiar types.

Appropriately enough she began with the item "Yiddish is a Shprach" to show how alive and expressive a language Yiddish is. She rose to great heights in "The Wandering Melody" in which she showed how the old Chassidic melody "Ai, Ai, Ai" changes its form with different lands and generations, yet remains thematically the same. Two items which made a very deep impression were those in which she portrayed the characters depicted in "Mendele's," "Der Kleine Menshele" and "Die Shtetel." In subtle fashion she brought before the eyes of her audience types and characters which are fast disappearing from Jewish life to-day.

As Yankele, the little Jewish boy, Molly Picon showed her understanding of child psychology and a fine sense of humour, as she did in her sketch "The woman with her millions—her seven children."

Finally Miss Picon gave in English, for the benefit of those of the audience who did not understand Yiddish, her famous series "Four periods in the life of a woman," which was received with great enthusiasm. As an encore, she gave the "New York Symphony," which has left an indelible impression on all who have heard it.

Mr. Jacob Kalich added to the pleasure of the evening by several appearances during which he kept the audience vastly entertained with his wit and humour.

Mr. Abe Ellstein who has set Miss Picon's songs to music, accompanied her at the piano and also played several solo items.

Youth Conversazione.

ADDRESS BY Adv. H. M. BLOCH.

There was large gathering on Sunday night in the Zionist Hall where a Youth Conversazione arranged by the Cape Town Herzlia, took place. **Adv. H. M. Bloch** was the guest speaker of the evening and during the course of his address on "Jewish Problems in South Africa", he delivered a brilliant survey of the future of Jewry in this country.

The lecturer gave a detailed analysis of the anti-Semitism in this country. The beginning of the Nazi regime in Germany was followed soon after by the first organisation in South Africa to foster anti-Semitism viz. the Greyshirts. This movement spread rapidly to other parts of the country and was given much publicity through publications, propaganda meetings etc. and was doing harm.

A serious turn for the worse occurred at the close of the last session, when a certain political party adopted the beginnings of an anti-Semitic policy, which later crystallised into a forthright attack on the Jews of South Africa. The position became acute until in the minds of many people only suitable legislative action by the Government was regarded as a means of stopping a most unhealthy state of affairs not only in the interests of the Jews but also in the interests of the rest of South Africa.

At present a Goodwill movement in Canada, America, France and Austria in which leading non-Jews have come out openly to deprecate and combat anti-Semitism is meeting with some success and the speaker thought that similar action by liberally minded South Africans would be very welcome.

There was, however, one force which could exert a big influence in the right direction and that was the Dutch Reformed Church, if it would continue to preach a policy of liberalism. Propaganda, too, from Jewish sources, pinning down the lies of

the anti-Semites and enlightening the general public might help the situation, as well as the holding of public meetings, but at present, it was difficult to gauge the precise effect this would have.

The future of Jewry depends, to a large extent on the **Youth**, who must continually replenish the Senior Zionist movement. But anti-Semitism is having a detrimental effect on its character. It is imperative that Zionist work be greatly intensified, and the Youth must be linked up with Judaism and Zionism to combat this harmful influence. Every Jew must be taught to have a spiritual life to cling to in order to save his individuality.

In the discussion that followed, many suggestions were forthcoming from the audience on ways and means to suitably check the anti-Semitic movement, both through organised and individual efforts. Adv. Bloch replied to the points and queries raised.

Mr. S. L. Schach expressed the appreciation of those present and proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker and artists.