

Zionist Conversazione.

RABBI ISRAEL ABRAHAMS ON "CAUSES AND CURES."

The Zionist Hall was overcrowded last Tuesday evening when Rabbi Israel Abrahams gave a very enlightening and comprehensive analysis of "Anti-Semitism—its Causes and Cure," at the fortnightly Conversazione.

Dr. C. Resnekov, who presided, said that Rabbi Abrahams was now a member of the Dorshei Zion and one who was taking a great part in the regular work of the Association. The Rabbi's capacity for the improvement of Jewish life in South Africa, would no doubt prove of invaluable service to the community.

Rabbi Abrahams tried to find why the Jewish people had at all times been hated and persecuted. Anti-Semitism had taken different forms; but was a universal disease and had to be examined as a world problem. As no one could deny that the Jewish people had helped with the Greeks and the Romans to lay the foundations of Western civilisation, one could assume that there should be no Jew hatred. There were some who maintained with G. K. Chesterton that there was "no smoke without a fire," and Jews were deserving of ill-treatment, others had accepted the fact that "Anti-Semitism could not be helped." It was almost automatic.

Until recent times it had been taken for granted that a Jew was an adherent of Judaism and most persecutions and persecutors had come from adherents of another faith. There had been a persistent and exaggerated form of hatred of one religion for another religion. Certain facts seemed to support that view. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain had taken place during the golden age of Jewish contributions to philosophy and science. When Columbus had gone forth to discover America, the expedition had been largely financed by Jews, the astronomical tables had been prepared by Jews and Jewish sailors had been on board. Yet, in the end the Jews were thrust out of the land on the grounds of religion. In Russia too, the clergy had stirred up hatred against the Jew. At one time Anti-Semitism could be explained on the grounds of religious bigotry and intolerance.

Modern Anti-Semitism was not due to religious differences. The finest protagonists of justice to the Jew came from the Christian Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury's words were a model of words of righteousness and condemnation of wrong. Anti-Semitism was in itself anti-religious.

Nazi Germany to-day, declared the Rabbi, was largely pagan and there the Jew was vilified for anti-Christian reasons. Many Jews in Germany had not been afraid of conversion, yet they were turned back to the Ghetto. The question of belief fell away in modern times.

Ignorance was a contributory factor. The Gentile world entertained colossal ignorance on what Jewish life really was. They had no ideas of the basis of a Jewish community and still had false notions about the power and wealth of the Jewish people. They had no idea that the Jews were not so well organised only agreed to differ on all questions. This ignorance played a terrible

part in misunderstanding the Jew. It was a theory that was exploited by unscrupulous politicians. In the universities, where there was no natural ignorance, there was an assumed and libellous misconception of what constituted Jewish life.

In Germany "scientific" explanations had been given for bolstering up inhumanity. Hegel's ideas about the homogeneity of a nation suited their purpose. They attempted to prove their superiority on grounds that could not be accepted by test of reason. But their speculations regarding the Aryans was false, yet they based their Anti-Semitism upon this philosophy.

Some people applied the social test to Anti-Semitism and claimed that it was due in measure to the separatism of the Jew. This too was an argument that could not bear examination. Pious Jews had always been respected more than their non-observing brothers. Genuine anti-Semites never complained why Jews did not assimilate, but did all they could to keep them from doing so.

The number of Jewish volunteers in the British Empire for active service during the Great War was greater than that of any other denomination. This was a test of their patriotism and proved that where Jews were given a square deal, they were willing and ready to sacrifice their lives for their countries. Anti-Semitism was explained by some on the grounds of patriotism and yet Jews were indeed full patriots.

It was true that not every Jew was a paragon of virtue and Jews from time to time committed wrongs and were condemned for it. But individuals of all races were found amongst the delinquents of the world. Some Jews might be loud or ostentatious. Certain types of Gentiles too, could behave objectionably. This offered no explanation for the expulsion of Einstein from the German universities.

Most of the suffering of the Jew to-day, said Rabbi Abrahams, was due to sheer political propaganda. The Jew who had no army and could not hit back provided excellent material for attack. A fallen people had to regain its confidence and an attack upon the Jews was but a preparation to meet the bigger enemy. This was not a cause for Anti-Semitism, but an explanation of it. Politicians knew well how to make a scapegoat of the Jew.

In Russia there was no Anti-Semitism because it was not permitted by the State. If a law were passed in South Africa that the vilification of a community be forbidden, then Anti-Semitism would soon die away. To-day there was not one reason that could explain Anti-Semitism, and the Jews themselves could not furnish an immediate cure. They could, however, provide certain palliatives by spreading knowledge and clarifying the atmosphere. Jews should be a 100 per cent. pure of hand, pure of heart, and pure of tongue. In time of a plague one had to live as healthily as possible.

(Continued in Third Column).

Bishop on Jewish Contribution to South Africa.

After dealing with racialism and nationalism, the Bishop of Pretoria, the Right Rev. Wilfred Parker, said that it seemed that a poisonous anti-Semitism was spreading from some parts of Europe to South Africa, where the Jews represented a minority of 5 per cent. of the European population.

It was said that much of this feeling was due to the envy of the material prosperity of the Jews as a whole and the vulgar idea which had to be combatted was that if one section of the community prospered the rest would suffer.

He was not in a position to judge of the allegation that the standard of commercial morality among Jews was low, but certainly the commercial morality among Christians was sometimes far from what it should be. He had heard Christians, who were employed by Jews, speak most highly of their employers. There was no doubt that the Jewish race had its own contribution to make to the well-being of South Africa.

Cape Province Maccabi Physical Culture and Wrestling Association.

Classes, both for physical culture and wrestling are now held every Monday and Thursday night at the club, at the Long Street Baths, Long Street, Cape Town. The physical culture section is under the strict supervision of Mr. D. Yosvoin, I.P.L.I., and the wrestling under well known local wrestlers.

Mr. I. Lewis, the present Maccabi and ex-Western Province Amateur Bantam Weight Champion, won his fight against R. Wilson of the Radiant Health Club, and will go on tour to the Transvaal with the Western Province Amateur Wrestling team, to take part in the Empire Games Trials, and the match against the Transvaal for the Richardson and Luyt Shield. Mr. A. Epstein will also accompany the team.

It is intended to hold shortly, Western Province Jewish Amateur Wrestling Championships, and all those interested can obtain full particulars from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. A. Epstein, c/o Star El. Co., Salt River.

(Continued from Second Column).

The Jewish people had to have a homeland, said the Rabbi, in conclusion. Once the Jews had a Home, then their dignity would rise in every country and ease the situation wonderfully. Palestine provided a power for Jewry. Real peace would come, however, when the world would be filled with the knowledge of God and a feeling of brotherhood for all mankind.

Amongst those who participated in the discussion were Mr. Mirvish, Dr. Rabinowitz and Mr. M. Ben-Ari.

Mrs. Goot rendered a number of piano-forte solos and Cantor Golub (of Wynberg) gave a few Yiddish songs which were much appreciated.