

"Unknown Jews in Unknown Lands."

Dr. W. J. Fischel's Fascinating Lecture.

There was a large audience at the lecture on "Unknown Jews in Unknown Lands" given by Dr. W. J. Fischel, of the Hebrew University, at the Zionist Hall on Tuesday night. Dr. Fischel dealt chiefly with remote Jewish communities in the Orient and his fascinating account of their mode and conditions of life was listened to with the closest attention.

Dr. L. Mirvish was in the chair and introduced Dr. Fischel as a famous scholar and orientalist who was combining his visit to South Africa with an appeal for the Hebrew University. The functions of a university, said Dr. Mirvish, were: (1) To train for the professions; (2) to be a centre of research; (3) the propagation of truth. The Hebrew University was now fulfilling all these functions. In addition it was helping towards co-operation between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Men of learning like Dr. Fischel by disseminating knowledge and removing ignorance were helping to bring about a *modus vivendi* between the two races. Dr. Fischel's mission for the Hebrew University was a most important one and it was hoped that his appeal would meet with a very generous response.

Dr. Fischel said that he had made several journeys to the East on behalf of the Hebrew University and had visited countries in the heart of Asia which were the cradle of Jewish history. He was tempted to describe these journeys from the archaeological aspect, but would concentrate rather on the Jews living there to-day than on the past. It was a great surprise to him to find from the Jordan to the Oxus hundreds of thousands of Jews differing from the Jews of the West. The division of Jews into Ashkenazi and Sephardi was incomplete; the Jews of the East spoke Oriental languages and lived in lands where Islam was the state religion. The attitude of Islam to the Jews was the same as their attitude to all non-believers, who were regarded as ritually unclean. Western culture and civilisation were, however, entering even the remotest parts of Asia and this attitude was being modified in countries like Persia where reforms had been introduced by the new Shah.

Muslin Marranos.

One of his most overwhelming impressions, said Dr. Fischel, was that of a city in Persia where there was a community of Jews who were outwardly Muslims but practised the Jewish religion in secret. They lived a dual life and observed all Muslim rites and ceremonies while at the same time they kept the Jewish traditions and festivals.

"These pseudo-Jews," said Dr. Fischel, "are an Islamic version of Marranos. It is little known that the tragedy of Marranos which we associate only with the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had later repeated itself in Asia."

The lecturer gave a fascinating account of this secret community, of their dual mode of existence, and of the methods em-

ployed by them to prevent detection and to safeguard their continuity as Jews. Particularly interesting was his account of how they avoided intermarriage; there could be no better proof of their dual life than the fact that each family possessed two *Ketubas* (marriage certificates), one Muslim and the other Jewish. Examples of the *Ketubas* were shown to the audience by Dr. Fischel.

Love of Zion.

In order to understand Jewish history, said Dr. Fischel, it was important that more be known about these Jewish communities of Asia. Their forced conversion to the Muslim religion changed the whole position of Jews in the Orient. A new wave of immigration started in the heart of Asia and new settlements of Jews were established in Afghanistan, Bokhara, India, etc. The stream of refugees even reached to the West, and London and Jerusalem have colonies of Marrano Jews. About 500 Marranos from Asia live in Jerusalem to-day, having arrived there on the pretext of going to Mecca; they established a colony there and threw off the mask of Mohammedanism. Amongst the Oriental Jews, love of Zion is as strong as among those of the West, and there was a movement parallel to that of Chibbat Zion. Indeed love of Zion was no invention of the 19th century but inherent in the souls of Marrano Jews for whom Eretz Israel is the only salvation. To-day there was a steady stream of Oriental Jews to Palestine; from Yemen, Kurdistan, Persia, Iraq they were pouring into the country, many along the same route by which their forefathers had been led into captivity. They wished to become once again part of a united people in the old-new homeland.

Dr. Fischel concluded with an appeal for support of the Hebrew University, the fortress of the Jewish People which safeguards their past and their future. The Jewish genius had contributed greatly to the cause of humanity. The golden chain of Jewish culture must not be broken. The torch of Jewish learning which had brightened our darkness throughout the centuries dare not be dimmed now. It was not only a duty but a privilege to make the University a spiritual fortress against which no Hitler or other Haman could prevail.

Dr. Mirvish thanked Dr. Fischel for his brilliant lecture and said we could be proud that the Hebrew University had scholars of such eminence. If we realised what great work was being done at the University we would do our utmost to make it possible for this to continue for the sake not only of the Jews but of humanity as a whole.

Cape Town Hebrew Congregation.

IMPRESSIVE CHANUKAH SERVICE.

An impressive Chanukah Service was held at the Gardens Synagogue on Sunday afternoon and was attended by members of the Active Citizen Force, detachments of ex-service men, Boy Scouts, V.A.D's, Red Cross Nurses and the Women's Air Guard. Among the large assembly present were the Mayor of Cape Town, Mr. W. Brinton, and Mrs. Brinton.

The service, which was choral, opened with "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob." After the prayer for the Royal Family, Rabbi Abrahams delivered an address on the significance of Chanukah, and its message for the present day. The lights of Chanukah, he said, were the only lights that could illumine the gloom of a world suffering from a physical as well as a spiritual black out. A comparison of events to-day and those of the time of the Maccabees might help us to solve the problems confronting the world to-day. The Maccabees fought in a war which was being waged for the first time because of a spiritual challenge. Had Israel lost the whole aspect of history would have been different. The conflict was between the spiritual and ethical as against paganism in all its cruelty and barbarity.

The struggle to-day was similar. The issue at stake was a spiritual one—whether the Godless might would rule the world or not. The Chanukah lights gave a message of hope—the only result could be a victory of God over idolatry.

The lights also made the appeal to man to fight and help to win the victory. If one had the spirit of the Maccabees one must go forth and do one's duty, which was clear and plain. There was an attempt to blot out the Jews from the world; it was a life and death struggle and he was sure that the modern descendants of the Maccabees would not be found wanting in the Maccabean spirit.

Loyalty.

It was an old established tradition among the Jewish race that they should be loyal to the country in which they lived. During the last Great War the number of Jews who volunteered for service was taken on a pro rata basis, the highest of all sections in the British Empire. This proud record would be maintained in the greater struggle to-day. It could not be over-emphasised that the victory we were celebrating was not a martial victory. If we want a true Maccabean victory, it must be a spiritual one—a return to the temple of God. If we are to have a true peace we cannot achieve it entirely on the battlefield but by moral rearmament, spiritual rebirth. If the spirit of true religion spread through the world, then there would be peace and the victory of the spirit would be final.

After the Last Post and Reveille had been sounded by buglers of the Dukes the service closed with the singing of Hatikvah and God Save the King.

The members of the different units then lined up outside the Synagogue and proceeded to the Rose and Woolf Harris Hall of the United Hebrew Schools where a re-

Worcester Hebrew School.

A Grand Chanukah Concert took place at the Worcester Hebrew School on Wednesday, 6th December, in which the pupils of the school participated.

A children's musical play in two acts named "Mishpat Shlomo" was staged by the pupils of the school.

The play which included a great number of musical items, historically designed costumes and other scenic effects, deeply impressed everybody present.

Especially noteworthy is the fluency with which the children expressed themselves in Hebrew and the high standard of performance.

The beautifully constructed decorations by Mr. R. Shwartzter and the able musical accompaniment by Miss B. Stein greatly helped towards the success of the performance.

The play "Mishpat Shlomo" was adapted for the stage by the Principal of the School, Mr. L. Goodman, from the famous story of J. L. Peretz by the same name.

The annual prize distribution was combined with this function.

Before the prizes were distributed by Mrs. J. Friedman the Chairman of the Hebrew School, Mr. J. Rabinowitz, congratulated the Principal of the School, Mr. L. Goodman, and Rev. Stein on the outstanding success of the school which, according to the report of the examiners, can be placed amongst the best in the country.

Invalids' Home in Tel-Aviv.

VISIT OF Mr. J. WOOLF.

Mr. J. Woolf, of Tel-Aviv, has arrived in this country in the interests of the Invalid's Home in Tel-Aviv. This institution was founded in 1936 and has been of great service to the Yishuv during the riots, having cared for many people injured during attacks. The Home has the official support of the Tel-Aviv Kehilla.

Mr. Woolf hopes to secure support for the institution from the Jewish public of South Africa.

CAPE TOWN HEBREW CONGREGATION.

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ception was held. Mr. A. M. Jackson presided.

Rabbi I. Abrahams welcomed the members of the forces present.

The Mayor, Mr. Brinton, said he had been very much impressed by the Service in the Synagogue, and expressed his pleasure at being present.

Major Dan Patterson on behalf of the Moths and ex-service men, and Com. O'Brien on behalf of the Jew and Christian Shell Hole, expressed their appreciation of the Service and the reception and spoke of the bonds between Jews and Gentiles.

Col. Smedley-Williams also spoke.

Capt. Whitesman thanked the speakers and all who had helped towards the success of the function.

"Chronicle" Seaside Camp in Full Swing.

Happy Days in the Open.

Funds Still Urgently Needed.

The Zionist Hall was the scene of much excitement and activity on Sunday morning when over a hundred children and 30 assistants left for the "Chronicle" Seaside Camp at the Strand. Long before the appointed time most of the campers had arrived at the hall, carrying their belongings and the medical certificate without which no child was permitted to join the camp.

Perfect order and discipline prevailed and the party left by charabanc, arriving at the Strand Park in time for lunch.

The camp is now in full swing under the able direction of Mr. Claude Reitstein. The children are well and are enjoying themselves to their hearts' content. They are indulging in all the pleasures of outdoor life—sun and sea bathing, games, competitions, etc.—and are deriving the greatest benefit from their much-needed holiday.

The following doctors examined the children free of charge: Dr. P. Dickman, Dr. I. M. Hurwitz, Dr. Rebecca Katz, Dr. C. Kaufman, Dr. J. Mibashan, Dr. M. E. Pimstone, Dr. C. Resnekov, Dr. S. Sieff, Dr. C. Shapiro, Dr. I. Waynick.

Funds are still urgently needed and those who have not yet done so are urged to send in their contributions without delay.

This Week's List.

	£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged ...	234	6	3
Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Brodie ..	3	3	0
Grand Order of Israel ...	2	2	0
I. Schaechter (Bulawayo) ...	2	2	0

Mrs. H. Sacks (in memory of late husband Herman Sacks)	1	1	0
Woodstock and Salt River Jewish Ladies' Society...	1	1	0
Jacksons Ltd ...	1	1	0
Mr. and Mrs. J. Segal and family	10	6	
M. Joffe ...	10	6	
Master E. Shifrin ...	10	6	
Phyllis Davidowitz ...	10	6	
Blacher Bros. ...	10	6	
Maurice, Leslie, Billie & Doreen Stoch (Kalabaskraal)...	10	6	
J. L. Maister ...	10	6	
Master B. Turok ...	10	0	
Master H. Karro ...	10	0	
Mrs. L. Kottler...	10	0	
Mrs. S. Phillips ...	10	0	
Harris Gorfinkel ...	7	6	
Morris Sacks ...	5	0	

Collected per Miss S. Lipshitz (Durbanville):

Solly Swerling 5/-, D. Schus 5/-, H. Scher 3/-, H. Emdin 2/6, Mrs. Ch. Berman 2/6, H. Scher (Jnr.) 2/6, B. Lipschitz 2/6, Mrs. M. Scher 2/6, Mrs. A. Scher 2/6, Mrs. M. Caplan 2/6, Mrs. P. Scher 2/6 ...	1	13	0
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Contributions, which are not limited in any way, should be sent to the Secretary, "S.A. Jewish Chronicle" Seaside Fund, P.O. Box 2000, or 85, Plein Street, Cape Town.



The children leaving on Sunday for the "Chronicle" Seaside Camp at the Strand.

(PHOTO BY HAUBMANN.)