

Balfour Declaration Silver Jubilee.

Reception in Zionist Hall.

There was a very large gathering in the Zionist Hall on Monday night when a reception was held under the auspices of the Combined Zionist Societies in celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Balfour Declaration.

Mr. J. M. Weinreich presided and inspiring addresses were delivered by Dr. Alexander Goldstein and Adv. J. Herbstein, K.C.

Mr. Weinreich welcomed those present and particularly visitors from other parts of the country. Twenty-five years ago the Balfour Declaration had been hailed as the Magna Charta of the Jewish People. It was issued at a serious time and was acclaimed as a great historic document by leading personalities. To Jews it meant that for the first time an attempt was being made to solve the Jewish problem in a political manner. In spite of all that had happened the Yishuv had stood the test. The Balfour Declaration was the foundation on which the Jewish People were able to build brick by brick. A great deal had been achieved and it was the duty of Jews everywhere to assist those who were in the forefront of the upbuilding of the National Home.

Mr. J. Herbstein said he felt it was an honour to speak on behalf of W.P. Jewry on this important and auspicious occasion. The Balfour Declaration had changed the course of history. It was fitting to mention with reverence and gratitude the names of those who had helped to bring about the Declaration—great Jews such as Sokolow and Ussishkin and non-Jews such as Sir Mark Sykes and Lord Milner. We rejoiced that we still had with us one who had played a leading part in the issue of the Declaration, that great statesman General Smuts, who had never ceased to plead the cause of the Jewish People in the councils of the nations.

Twenty-five years ago when the Declaration was issued, Great Britain was engaged on a life and death struggle. It had been issued not only to serve imperial interests, but as an act of justice, an "attempt to right a great wrong," as Lord Balfour had said. With the passing of the years, however, the original meaning had become obscured. It was laid down that the British Government should use their best endeavours to facilitate the establishment of a National Home in Palestine. Looking back it could be said with confidence that the Jews or at least Zionists had done their share in the partnership which had been created. As far as the British Government was concerned it was regrettable that for political reasons emphasis had come to be laid on the latter part of the Declaration rather than on the former. It was right and proper that the world should be reminded of the solemn promise made 25 years ago to the Jewish People. Recently a spirit of appeasement had been adopted; hence the issue of the White Paper which was contrary to the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. The time would come when the future of Palestine would again come up for discussion. The Jewish

People only demanded that the Balfour Declaration should be honoured in the letter and the spirit. There was never a greater need for Eretz Israel than to-day when Jewry was so sorely stricken. But the right of the Jews to Palestine depended not only on Jewish need; Palestine belonged to the Jews by right, and should be restored to them.

To-day, said Mr. Herbstein, the Jews stood in a much stronger position with regard to Palestine than 25 years ago. All they had accomplished was an unanswerable argument in their favour. Tremendous progress had been made in every sphere in the development of the country. Looking back on the last 25 years, there was no cause for dismay, but much for congratulation. The Yishuv was going from strength to strength and nothing could stop its progress. What the Jews were doing was the surest guarantee that if they willed it they would obtain full rights in Eretz Israel. Forgetting all difficulties and obstacles Jews must continue their labours with renewed zeal and with the determination that when they met to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Balfour Declaration Jewry would be living a free and independent life on their own soil.

Mr. Herbstein moved the following resolution which was carried unanimously:—

"On this the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, this mass meeting of Cape Town Jewry reaffirms that Palestine is the only country which can permanently answer the need of the Jewish people and with inflexible resolve pledges itself anew to continue its efforts until the righteous purpose of the Balfour Declaration be fulfilled.

"This meeting records its gratitude to the nations and statesmen of the world who in the critical days of 1917 acknowledged the right of the Jewish people to their historic homeland and undertook to facilitate their return to it. This meeting, however, expresses its disappointment that the British Government as the Mandatory Power has, contrary to the promises made by it, placed heavy obstacles in the path of the Jewish upbuilding of Palestine.

"This meeting proudly records its reverent admiration of the Yishuv's growth notwithstanding these obstacles. During the last twenty-five years, Jewish devotion and energy have created in Palestine a dynamic Jewish community on the basis of justice and equality for all and has further created the conditions whereby millions of uprooted Jews of the Diaspora can be absorbed into the economic life of the country with advantage and benefit to the total population, Arab and Jew alike.

"This meeting sends a message of hope and encouragement to the Jewish masses, languishing beneath the Nazi yoke, who look to Palestine for the rebuilding of their

shattered lives, and we pray that their deliverance and the deliverance of the other persecuted millions may not be long delayed.

"At this moment when all are engaged in the common struggle of humanity against Nazism, this meeting records with pride the vital contribution which Jewish Palestine has made to the Allied war effort and calls upon the Allied Governments to hasten the establishment of a Jewish army and the full utilisation of Jewish man-power and resources.

"This meeting proclaims its confidence that victory for the Allied Nations will be achieved and expresses the confident hope that in planning for a new and better world the Allied Powers will implement the promises contained in the Balfour Declaration and the Atlantic Charter, and will accord to the Jewish people the right and facility to create Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth."

Dr. A. Goldstein said that the Balfour Declaration had changed the fate of the Jewish people. It had been a quarter of a century of great achievements and great disappointments. When the Declaration was issued many Jews as well as Gentiles had adopted a sceptical attitude about the possibilities of Palestine and the ability of the Jews to colonise it. To-day these doubts are no more. The Jewish people had shown in Palestine what they could do in spite of all difficulties. In 1917 there were almost no Jewish agricultural labourers. To-day the Jewish settlements were the backbone of the country and non-Jews came to Palestine to learn how to solve their agricultural problems. Industrial development had been phenomenal in spite of the lack of oil, coal and raw materials. Palestine was to-day the greatest industrial centre in the whole of the Middle East.

Within a short space of time a Hebrew-speaking Palestine had been created, and this was such an obvious fact that it was hardly noticed. There was tremendous progress in every sphere and what had been achieved was a modern miracle.

The last quarter of a century, however, said Dr. Goldstein, had also been a period of great disappointment. The whole position to-day in the Middle East would have been different if there were two or three million Jews there now instead of 600,000. The great mistake was that the importance of a Jewish Palestine from strategic and other viewpoints was not realised. In spite of all, however, Palestine was to-day considered as the centre of the Jewish people by the whole world. What was happening in Palestine was the first chapter in a volume which was still to be completed. To-day Palestine was the only hope for the Jews of Europe suffering so cruelly under the Nazi yoke; the thought of Eretz Israel and the hope of going there some day sustained them in their despair.

The Jewish people, said Dr. Goldstein, will achieve their national aim if they will be united and determined. There was still

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