

READERS' VIEWS

Viscount Cecil and Partition

The Editor, "Zionist Record."
 Sir,—In your issue of January 7, your "Special Correspondent," under the heading "Settling the Future of Palestine," cites a number of pronouncements by leading personalities in favour of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Your correspondent reports, with apparent satisfaction, that among the protagonists of the Jewish State is Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. He, of course, has always been well-known to every Zionist, as a lifelong friend of Jewish national aspirations. It is since he has recently become an ardent supporter of the partitioning of Palestine, the form which his advocacy takes to-day is a great disappointment, rather than the triumph which is the impression your "Special Correspondent" obviously wished to create.

Dr. Weizmann's notorious association with the views of Lord Cecil (whose book he recently wrote a commendatory foreword) does nothing to dispel the alarm which must be felt.

In the same issue of your paper, there appears the following passage, lifted from the leading article: "The Palestine which is to be the Jewish Commonwealth is the unmarked Palestine within whose borders its children are to return." There is not a contradiction between the aim of Zionism as envisaged by the official organ of the South African Zionist Federation, and that which the President of the World Zionist Organisation is speaking of.

Yours, etc.,
 (Mrs.) S. M. Freedman.

The Chmelnitzky Award

The Editor, "Zionist Record"
 Sir,—The name of Bogdan Chmelnitzky is associated, in the Jewish mind, with some of the worst crimes in our history, and the award is regarded by some Jews as an insult to Jewry.

Let me say, before going any further, that I am a Jew myself and I share the feelings of those of my compatriots on Bogdan Chmelnitzky. I can still remember my mother used to sing about Bogdan Chmelnitzky and Gontel's sack and the fear (even to-day) of a song with its words and tune which calls forth. But up till now we have been talking about feelings; let us turn to the intellect. Let us place ourselves in the position of the Ukrainians (or Soviet authorities) which for our purpose is the case) and try to find their reason for establishing the Chmelnitzky award and what meaning they attach to it.

Bogdan Chmelnitzky in Ukrainian history was the leader of a revolt against the Polish landowners. The landowners used the Jews as instruments of oppression. Jews owned (on lease) the land, collected taxes, and, most surprising of all, held, in many instances, the keys of churches, which

were not opened to the Ukrainians, unless the latter had paid their taxes. The Jews, as so often before in our history, were caught between hammer and anvil. If they wanted to exist they had to do what the Polish barons wanted them to do. It is understandable, therefore, that Jews were often identified with oppression.

Here then are two pictures. To us Jews, Bogdan Chmelnitzky means pogroms, that and nothing else. To the present-day Ukrainians he means a fighter against oppression, a fighter for freedom. It is obvious then that the order of Bogdan Chmelnitzky is given to a particularly brave fighter for freedom. And I seriously feel that we should regard it as such and not as an insult, which it definitely is not meant to be.

Yours, etc.,
 Gerald Chait.

Johannesburg.

Meetings on Fridays

The Editor, "Zionist Record."

Sir,—In your last issue a correspondent deplores the fact that the lecture series "The Jewish Woman in her Home," arranged by the Johannesburg Women's Zionist League, will take place on Friday mornings.

I assure her and others who might find it inconvenient to attend them, that the day was carefully considered and decided on after due consideration of possible disadvantages involved.

Although all women interested are invited to attend these talks, they were originally planned for the instruction and guidance of members of the League, who were therefore consulted as to the most suitable day. At a Central Committee meeting at which representatives of the Branches were present, 24 out of 25 agreed that Friday mornings suited them best. Discussion revealed that most League members have several mornings and afternoons of the first four days of the week reserved for fixed meetings in connection with Zionist, communal, or war work.

While realising that it might be difficult for women engaged in domestic duties on Friday mornings to leave home, it was felt that since "The Jewish Woman in her Home" talks were to be held on only 21 Fridays during the year, some adjustments in her Sabbath preparations could be made by the housewife anxious to attend.

Yours, etc.,
 Sarah Leftwich,
 Chairman, Cultural and Propaganda-Sub-Committee, J.W.Z.L.

Pinna Saltzman's Concert

The Editor, "Zionist Record."

Sir,—I have received a circular concerning Pinna Saltzman's concert, which concludes with the words: "Jewry can be proud of this distinguished artiste." The circular is signed by a Jew, Mr. Alex Cherniavsky. One wonders why one of the concerts is scheduled for a Friday night?

I am not of the Orthodox section of the community. As a medical man, I cannot observe the Sabbath. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that it is wrong to arrange such a concert for a Friday night, particularly since with the curfew regulations one night is as good as another. It will certainly prevent large numbers of the Jewish Community from hearing the artiste "of whom they are supposed to be proud."

While playing on the sentimentality of the Jewish Community, it would be just as well, from a business point of view, to consider the religious susceptibilities of our people, even if there is no sentiment in business.

Yours, etc.,
 N.F.

Johannesburg.

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POINTS FROM LETTERS

THE REFORM MOVEMENT

THE interest of the "Reform" controversy—from my point of view—is the protest letter from the Mizrahi and the reply to it by the Board of Deputies.

Mr. Rich for the Board deploras the action of the Mizrahi in sending their letter of protest to the press. Why? If the Board had acted bona fide why worry about the letter? Secondly, the fact—as he states—that Rabbi Weiler was chosen to speak as a member of the Executive Council is an admission to the Mizrahi contention that he is not entitled and cannot speak on behalf of a Jewish community on an occasion such as this, and the fact that Mr. Rich must look for justification and seek refuge under the cover of the "warm reception accorded to the speaker" is—to my mind—an admission of guilt.

He knows as well as the Mizrahi knows, what the man in the street does not know, that (a) the Dietary and Sabbath Laws are abolished by the Reform, (b) Kol Nidre prayer abolished, (c) Ritual and Rabbinical observances abolished, (d) inter-marriage not forbidden.

In Breslau in 1846 at the Third Reform conference it was approved to abolish the second day in every holiday, and a discussion took place for the changing of the Sabbath to Sunday. All this in addition to what Mr. Chigier says about them in your more or less orthodox—arouse our resentment towards Reform, because, the ordinary average Jew if he does profane the Sabbath Law or for that matter any Jewish Law, he at least is conscious of the fact that he did a wrong, he did it under prohibition but the Reformed Jew wants to remove all prohibitions; this is a very important difference.—S. GOLDBERG (Durban).

THE advice tendered by Mr. S. Aber to me in the last issue of your esteemed paper, as to the best way of studying Reform Judaism is not quite on the right side of fairness.

Surely Mr. Aber would not care to familiarise himself with the tenets of Judaism out of Hitler's "Mein Kampf," with the ideals of Communism through Alfred Rosenberg's "anti-Bolshevist" tracts, with the principles of Zionism out of the anti-Zionist fulminations of Rabbi I. Breuer of the Orthodox Agudah, or the Arab Nationalists.

Wishing to become acquainted with

the ideas of Reform Judaism I have perused the expositions of the great teachers of Progressive Judaism, the great luminaries of Jewish Scholarship like Rabbis Leo Baeck, M. Joseph, K. Kohler, C. Montefiore, D. Phillipson, H. G. Enelow, and others.

It is also high time that the name of the late Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau be left out of the controversy. He could hardly be expected to be a champion of Reform Judaism in South Africa.—J. M. ABELMAN.

THE basic principle of Reform Jewry is that the Jews are merely a religious community. They are not a people. All those Jewish traditions which served both as a national as well as religious bond were swept away. An anaemic form of Theism was retained. Your correspondents cite individual cases of Reform ministers who have participated in Zionist activities. Surely it is self-evident that these men are acting not in accordance with Reform ideology. They are active in Zionism, not because of any inspiration from their Reform teachings, but in spite of it. The ideology of Reform has not changed. Zionism has not been included in the credo of the Reform movement. Until the Reformers, as a body, declare that Zionism is an integral part of their philosophy, then, and only then, have they the right to participate in the leadership of Jewry, for then they will have identified themselves with the Jewish people as a whole.—J. GREEN (Chaplain).

MR. L. PRINTEMPS' assertion that there was not a single Reform Synagogue in Poland does not tally with facts. Warsaw had a Progressive Synagogue (Synagoga Postempowa, dedicated in 1878), there were Reform Temples with mixed choir, organ, and sermon in Polish (Templum Postempowy) dedicated in 1846 in Lemberg and Cracow. The Progressive Synagogues in Poland were places of worship for modern, enlightened Jews, in intentional distinction from the current orthodoxy of the country. They were Reform Synagogues in spirit, outlook and—by Polish standard—in ritual. The Rabbi of the Warsaw Progressive Synagogue was the late Prof. M. Shorr (a leading Zionist), of the Cracow Synagogue, the late Dr. O. Thon (a leading Zionist), of the Lemberg Temple, Dr. Jecheskel Lewin. A Reform Synagogue with choir and organ existed also in Odessa, dedicated in 1840. Poland was undoubtedly the stronghold of orthodoxy, but it is quite incorrect to affirm that the entire Jewish Population were orthodox or pro-orthodox Jews. Suffice it to quote the figures for the city elections held in 1931 in Lodz, the citadel of Polish Orthodoxy. On that occasion the orthodox lists received 16,000 votes, the Zionist 13,500, the Bund 14,000, the Poale Zion 7,100. These figures speak for themselves.—B. I. BLANKFIELD.

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