

# PROF. RABINOWITZ APPOINTED CHIEF RABBI OF UNITED HEBREW CONGREGATION

## Rev. Yesorsky to be New Minister

THE appointment of Rabbi Professor L. Rabinowitz as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation, the engagement of a new Minister, the Rev. Wolfe Yesorsky, of Kimberley, and the replacement of the mixed choir at the Yeoville Synagogue by a Men's and Boy's Choir, were important decisions taken at a largely attended special general meeting of the Congregation held at the Hebrew High School last Sunday morning. The meeting was conducted in a spirit of unanimity and harmony which was highly commended by the chairman, Mr. B. I. Joffe.

Proposing the adoption of the resolution concerning Rabbi Rabinowitz's appointment, Mr. Joffe mentioned that it was unanimously recommended by the Council. He spoke of the outstanding academic qualifications and qualities of Rabbi Rabinowitz, and said that he had far exceeded their expectations. The work he had accomplished and the increased attendances at the services conducted by him, were testimony of his great oratorical gifts and leadership. He was not only fully qualified to be the Chief Rabbi of the important synagogues embracing the United Hebrew Congregation, but it was felt that in time to come he would be the chief spiritual leader of South African Jewry. The congregation could indeed feel proud to have him as their Chief Rabbi. It was an honour due to him.

Mr. H. Herber, Vice-President, seconding the resolution, fully endorsed the sentiments expressed, and particularly emphasised the influence the Rabbi would exercise on the younger generation.

Messrs. S. Raphaely and I. Friedlander, two old members of the Park Synagogue, wholeheartedly supported the resolution, which was carried unanimously and with acclamation.

### New Ministers

Dealing with the appointment of two Ministers Mr. Joffe said that for the past two years Rabbi Lapin had occupied the position of Additional Minister to the Congregation. He had proved himself an excellent organiser, as witness the successful Sabbath services for children and Hebrew classes for the youth, which he had inaugurated. It was felt that he should now be appointed as Minister.

### Organiser for Oxford Synagogue

Referring to the appointment of Rev. Yesorsky, the speaker mentioned that he was a young man whose outstanding qualities, and in particular his experience as a U.D.F. Chaplain during the war, would make him a most suitable incumbent for the post. The two Ministers would not be allocated to any particular synagogue of the congregation, but it was felt that the Rev. Yesorsky would be of great assistance in organising the new Oxford Congregation.

Adv. S. M. Kuper, who seconded, pointed out that the Chief Rabbi and the leaders of the Congregation would decide in what area the services of

the two Ministers would be employed at any time. The Oxford Synagogue was already in existence and within a few weeks' time the Congregation would provide accommodation for about 500 in the building which has been reconstructed as a synagogue. With some spiritual direction the Congregation should forge ahead rapidly.

In reply to a question the Chairman stated that Rabbi Lapin would continue to officiate at the Yeoville Synagogue until such time as a Minister is appointed for that synagogue, after which he may be appointed as assistant to Chief Rabbi Rabinowitz at the Park Synagogue.

Adv. I. A. Maisels, in supporting the resolution, emphasised that it could be assumed that the services of the Chief Rabbi would be extended to a much wider sphere. It would therefore become necessary for the Congregation to engage more ministers in the future.

Mr. H. Teeger said that the members of the Yeoville Synagogue felt that they should also have the benefit of the Chief Rabbi's services.

Replying, the Chairman stated that it was the intention of the Chief Rabbi to render his services to all the three synagogues under the auspices of the Congregation. Rabbi Rabinowitz had twice preached at the Yeoville Synagogue, but refused to attend further services in view of the existence of the mixed choir.

When put to the vote the motion was unanimously adopted.

### The "Great Synagogue"

A motion that the name of the "Park Synagogue" be altered to the "Great Synagogue" and be recognised as the principal synagogue of the Congregation was unanimously carried without discussion.

### Increased Membership Fees

A resolution that the present membership tariff of the Congregation be raised by 25 per cent. to the nearest £, in order to meet the much increased and constantly rising expenditure of the Congregation, was carried with a few dissentients.

\*Adv. A. I. Maisels, in seconding, stressed the need for building up a reserve fund for the Congregation so that it could also assist poorer congregations whom he felt the United Hebrew Congregation should incorporate.



CHIEF RABBI RABINOWITZ

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### Reservation of Seats

Mr. H. Teeger suggested that to overcome the disappointment felt by certain members who found their seats occupied at the recent special public services, their seats should be reserved on such occasions until a certain time.

The Chairman replied that this had been found impracticable in the past, but that the Council would consider the reservation of a few blocks of seats in the same way as was done for soldiers.

### Abolition of Mixed Choir

The meeting unanimously agreed that the mixed choir at the Yeoville Synagogue be replaced by a men's and boy's choir as soon as practicable.

The Chairman pointed out that the Beth Din had ruled against the mixed choir because it was contrary to Jewish Law for women to take part in the services of the Synagogue. The same opinion was expressed by the late Dr. Landau, by Dr. Shrock in his last ministerial report, and now by Chief Rabbi Rabinowitz. "If we claim to be an orthodox Congregation then we should respect the opinion of our spiritual leaders," declared Mr. Joffe.

Mr. S. Sapire said that the mixed choir had caused a great deal of heart-burning in the past, and he felt that the right thing would be to accept the first decision given by their new Chief Rabbi.

Dr. P. Yutar, in urging the adoption of the resolution, complimented the Chairman on the able and dignified manner in which he had conducted the meeting, and also the members on the fine spirit they had displayed.

A number of amendments to the Constitution were also adopted.

The Chairman referred to the death of Mr. H. Shapiro, an old and highly respected official of the Yeoville Synagogue, and a vote of condolence was passed in the usual manner.

## WOMEN'S WORK IN PALESTINE

### Mr. Abrahamson Addresses J.W.Z.I.

MR. A. ABRAHAMSON, Acting-Secretary of the S.A. Zionist Federation, spoke on "Women's Work in Palestine," when he addressed a luncheon under the auspices of the Johannesburg Women's Zionist League on Tuesday last. Mrs. J. Davidoff presided.

Mr. Abrahamson gave a brief review of the work of Hadassah, the League of Working Mothers and Wizo. He referred especially to the Mothercraft Training Centre in Tel Aviv. This centre took in all premature or abnormal children and nursed them back to complete health and normality, thus saving hundreds of Jewish citizens. The institution was, however, the only one of its kind, and as a result it was usually overcrowded.

The speaker dealt also with the Handwork Classes for Boys and Girls that had been established in the Yishuv. A striking feature of these Classes is that every graduate must give a year of national service after the completion of his course—working on a settlement, is the form of national service usually chosen.

The refugees who arrived in Palestine, said the speaker, will require care, attention, love and friendship—and this work falls partly upon the shoulders of Jewish Women's Organizations.

In Palestine there were 300 families, in which the breadwinner relied on his parents in the field of arts and crafts. Wizo supplies these craftsmen with the raw material and also helps them to sell their products. In Wizo workshops one found exquisite gift-articles. Mr. Abrahamson suggested that a shop of these articles should be opened in South Africa.

"In Palestine there are a host of political parties—between 50 and 60. Yet, though Jews may squabble and argue as much as they like, one thing is sure: when things of vital importance are concerned—the Jewish right and honour and his right to live in his country as a free man—the Jews of Palestine will rise as a man," concluded Mr. Abrahamson.

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