

# Letters to the Editor

The "Zionist Record" invites correspondence on subjects of interest to the Jewish people in this country, but disclaims responsibility for or endorsement of the views expressed by the writers.

## "Whither Does This Lead?"

From Miss Bracha Ben Jacob (Johannesburg).

To the Editor of the "Zionist Record."

Sir,—In last week's issue of the *Zionist Record* there appeared a letter from "Ben Elkanah," in answer to the editorial "Whither Does This Lead." In it he remarks that Dr. Arlosoroff was "universally respected."

Mr. Jabotinsky, too, in a manifesto issued after the murder of Arlosoroff says, *inter alia*, "I take my hat off to the memory of this honest, quiet, hard-working Jewish Patriot." These elegies are most unexpected, when we remember that for the last two years—ever since Arlosoroff was made head of Political Affairs in Jerusalem—the Revisionists unremittingly spread insidious rumours against his character.

On the very day of his death, an article appeared in the official organ of Beth-Trumpeldor of Tel Aviv, in which he was accused of "betraying the honour of his people for a handful of silver." The article went on to say that "The Jewish People would know how to avenge such a base betrayal" (June 16th, *Chazit Ha'am*). —

The week previous another article had appeared in the same paper. Arlosoroff was here blamed for his efforts to transfer Jewish children "from the bane of Hitlerism in Germany to that of Socialism in Eretz Israel."

Every conceivable opportunity was seized to incite the masses against the leaders of the Histadruth in general, and Arlosoroff in particular. Jabotinsky's second-in-command, Dr. von Vizel, made use of these words at a public meeting: "The scoundrel, Dr. Arlosoroff, should be condemned to death by a military tribunal." What miracle has metamorphosed this "scoundrel" into "honest Jewish patriot" and "universally respected?"

The Revisionist leaders in Palestine, who but yesterday said "He (Arlosoroff) is party to the machinations of the Colonial Office," to-day loudly lament his untimely death, and appeared at his funeral with a banner inscribed thus: "His blood sanctifies us." What does all this betoken? Hypocrisy, brazenness, or an effort to create an "alibi" for the party?

I am at a loss to understand why the *Zionist Record* thought it necessary to counsel the leaders of the Histadruth, together with those of other parties, to "Halt."

Does the Histadruth merit such admonition? As the *Zionist Record* is surely aware, the Histadruth—as soon as suspicion fell on Stavski—whilst still in the first frenzy of its grief and anger at the dastardly outrage committed, issued an appeal to all its branches and representatives the world over to exercise restraint, and to refrain from comments and from forming hasty conclusions, whilst the matter was still under investigation. These appeals averted acts which would have done irreparable harm to our cause.

But though open discussion was forbidden, it was impossible to suppress private opinion.

As soon as news of the murder became public property, and even before Stavski the Revisionist was arrested, people from all parts of the world, many inimical to the Labour movement, voiced the suspicion that one of our own people was responsible for the dastardly outrage. Many of those who mourned the death of Arlosoroff as a personal as well as a national tragedy, felt that this suspicion, if proved true, would be an even greater calamity. The Histadruth did all in its power to discourage the insistent rumours that were being circulated.

The very fact that such world-wide suspicion was aroused so spontaneously against the Revisionists, shows to which party the warning to "Halt" should have been directed.—Yours, etc.,

Bracha Ben Jacob.

[The bitterness shown in this letter evinces clearly how necessary was the appeal of the "Zionist Record" to the party leaders to cry "Halt." The Zionist public is not interested in the accusation and counter-accusation of the parties in regard to the past, leading to the internecine strife of the present. It wishes an end to all this and desires that a sincere attempt should be made for a unified Zionist Organisation, composed of all parties to deal with the urgent problems with which the movement is now faced.]

**CUTHBERT'S FOR BOYS' SCHOOL SHOES**

## Local Cantors and Rosenblatt

From "An Admirer of Chasonuth."  
To the Editor of the "Zionist Record."

Sir,—Your correspondent "M.G." whose letter you published in your issue of August 4th, may have been right in criticising local *Chazonim* for not properly commemorating the passing of Cantor Jossele Rosenblatt. At the same time he shows considerable unfairness against one *chazan*, who did go out of his way to show respect to a great singer in Israel.

I would, therefore, like to record that Cantor Berele Chagy, who was a personal and intimate friend of Rosenblatt, was deeply moved at the news of the latter's death. He expressed his sorrow in two fine articles which appeared in the local Yiddish press. In these he referred with warm feeling to Rosenblatt and it is extremely unfair on the part of "M.G." to say that the writer merely extolled himself in these articles.

I feel sure that if there was co-operation among the other cantors in Johannesburg that Cantor Berele Chagy would have been pleased to have taken a prominent part in a memorial service.

Yours, etc.,

"An Admirer of Chasonuth."

## In Old Johannesburg

From Mr. B. Faerber (Willowdene.)

To the Editor of the "Zionist Record."

Sir,—On a recent evening at the symposium held at the Jewish Guild reference was made during the discussion to the time before the Anglo-Boer War, when the schoolroom of the old Park Synagogue housed the then newly organised and short-lived Jewish Guild.

I should like to ask those who can still recall the long past whether functions of other societies also took place in that school-room? It may have been about 1898, I was present at a lecture given in the school on Shylock, if I remember correctly, by an elderly and lame Jewish teacher, Abrams. The usual discussion followed which is imminent after lectures of this nature as to whether Shakespeare has, or has not, done harm to the Jewish people in portraying "Shylock" to the world as a heartless Jew and devoid of human feeling. I remember when I left the meeting I felt sore at heart and wished Shakespeare had not written "The Merchant of Venice." There was then a small gathering—a woman or two were also present among the audience.

A bigger attendance of Jewish pioneers attracted a lecture given on "Native Wars" in the Assembly Hall of Balmoral Chambers, Commissioner Street, shortly before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer conflict. I am not able, on account of the length of time, to mention with certainty the name of the lecturer, but I am strongly inclined to think that it was the much-esteemed and notable Africander veteran, Abram Fisher. He was fairly tall, with a greyish beard and of a charming personality.

I remember when the lecturer mentioned the names of the native chiefs such as Sekukuni and others, who caused so much trouble and bloodshed to the Voortrekkers. I felt as if the audience was reminded by the lecturer of Haman of evil fame. This lecture was very interesting and highly appreciated by the intellectual Jewish audience, the more so, for the initiation taken by this veteran gentleman to come to speak to them on interesting events in the history of the republican Voortrekkers. Had not the Boer War intervened, more lectures by this veteran Voortrekker would have followed.

Perhaps some other readers of the *Zionist Record* will be able to recollect in detail these Jewish assemblies of early pioneer days in Johannesburg.

Yours, etc.,

Benzion Faerber.

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