

Letters to the Editor

The Institute of Race Relations

From Rabbi W. HIRSCH, B.A. (Pretoria).

To the Editor of the "Zionist Record."

Sir,—It was reported in the last issue of the *Zionist Record* that Mr. M. Alexander spoke of the anti-Semitic propaganda in the Union at a meeting in Capetown of the Council of the Institute of Race Relations, and appealed for the sympathy of the Institute. Professor du Plessis actually justified the propaganda, but in the end a committee was appointed to go into the matter.

About four months ago, at a meeting of the Pretoria committee of the Institute of Race Relations, I drew attention to the anti-Jewish agitation in the country. The subject was subsequently brought up before the Central Council of the Institute at Johannesburg and the Council proposed to hold at the Senate room of the Witwatersrand University a joint meeting of representative Jews and non-Jews to consider what steps should be taken to counter the propaganda. I then informed the Board of Deputies of the Council's proposition, and urged its acceptance. The Board, however, for reasons best known to itself, declined the offer, somewhat discourteously.

Now, if Mr. M. Alexander, who is the twin pillar of the Board of Deputies, thought it wise to approach the Institute of Race Relations for assistance, where was the wisdom of his Johannesburg colleagues, when they refused the help that was offered? Surely it would have been more dignified, and undoubtedly more beneficial, if the matter were taken up on the initiative of the Institute than the manner in which the question was handled at Capetown. It seems that the Board is acting with more than one mind.

Yours, etc.,

W. Hirsch.

Cantors as "Artists"

From "ADHERENT TO JUDAISM."

To the Editor of the "Zionist Record."

Sir,—An unpleasant incident occurred in Paarl on Sunday, the 14th ult. Having arrived at the synagogue, a "famous Cantor" found that his advance agent had not been successful in securing an attendance big enough for his liking, with a consequent deficiency in the estimated budget for a "performance" no less solemn than the evening service. The Cantor executed a round-about turn and without explanation left his prospective audience in the lurch. Some of those present had motored over from Worcester, Wellington and elsewhere to hear him.

It would appear that the "profession of Chazonuth" is being converted into a money-making concern for self-gain. It is indeed a deplorable state of affairs when conditions such as these prevail in our community. It is high time that our "famous Cantors" were made to realise that their profession is not to be put to mercenary gains for their own benefit in the capacity of artists. Congregations should impress upon their Cantors that they are employed as synagogue officials and they must live up to their profession as such.

Jewry here and throughout the world has enough to contend with without having matters such as these to put up with. It is, moreover, only to be expected that the Cantor should serve as a source of strength for our respected religion and not as a retarding force.

I recall an incident which occurred in London recently when a "reputed Cantor," having exhibited his merits on the concert stage, applied for a situation in a synagogue in the vicinity. His application was for this very reason not even considered. Capetown has seen fit to prevent this ostentatious scandal, and the United Synagogue of London has gone so far as to delete the words "Oberkantor" and "Cantor" altogether and to replace them by the title "Reverend."

I sincerely trust that, in the interests of all, our communal authorities will see fit to employ the necessary measures for the prevention of such occurrences in the future.

Yours, etc.,

"Adherent to Judaism."

(Concluded from next column.)

Some minds may believe that "the beast of prey is the highest form of free life," but I am satisfied that the majority of the citizens of South Africa do not subscribe to such a philosophy of barbarism.

Dr. J. L. Landau's Departure

MESSAGE TO SOUTH AFRICAN ZIONISTS

Chief Rabbi, Dr. J. L. Landau and Mrs. Landau are due to sail to-day from Capetown on the s.s. *Warwick Castle* on an extended visit to Europe and Palestine. Prior to his departure, Dr. Landau sent the following message to the Editor of the "Zionist Record":—

Sir,—On the eve of my departure for Eretz Yisrael I feel I must, with your kind permission, address a few earnest words to my fellow-Zionists in this country, to appeal to them strongly and emphatically to rally round our esteemed chairman, Mr. N. Kirschner, and his colleagues, to give them all the moral and financial assistance they have a right to claim during the next campaign on behalf of the Keren Hayesod. The revered president of the World Zionist Organisation, Nahum Sokolow, is again honouring the South African Jewish community with a visit, not sparing himself at his advanced age, and sacrificing most valuable time, in order to lend us the support of his matchless eloquence and respect-commanding personality.

We must not fail him. Otherwise we shall be failing in our most sacred duty towards our National Home, and towards all those Chaluzim, who have made immense sacrifices for those achievements of which we are all justly proud. We may not forget or neglect our supreme ideal. Indeed, we cannot forget Jerusalem at a time when the iron finger of the Nazis is knocking at our doors.

"Im Lo Achshav Imatai!" All eyes of the Galuth are turned towards South African Jewry, eyes dimmed with tears, but also glowing with imperishable hope.

Yours, etc.,

J. L. Landau.

Anti-Jewish Propaganda

Mr. R. I. C. Scott-Hayward, J.P., has sent to the Editor of the "Zionist Record" a copy of a letter which he wrote recently to the "Cape Times." In the course of this letter, Mr. Scott-Hayward says:—

I regret to find that in spite of warnings from the Minister of Justice, the Churches and the Press, anti-Jewish propaganda is increasing to an alarming degree. In my opinion, nothing is more calculated to retard the country's progress at a time when we are entitled to expect something better. Any sensible person must realise that a hateful spirit of discrimination based on race or religion can lead a people nowhere but to disaster, and in South Africa there exist no such conditions as in Europe may at least explain, if not justify, the "isms" and shirt fashions of peoples driven to despair and blinded by race hatred. There is no reason for this loathsome movement other than a cheap notoriety for its leaders, an attempt to copy Europe, and a desire to ride to political power on a wave of Jew-baiting.

Government, Churches and Press, it must be admitted, represent the views of all sections, including Jewish, and for that reason I believe the time has come for a number of responsible non-Jewish citizens to come together and denounce anti-Semitism of any kind and call upon the Government to introduce such legislation as will prevent a continuance of it. With such an object in view I would be willing to co-operate with those who would care to get into touch with me. The propaganda must be checked and stopped, otherwise a counter-organisation must develop and thrive with results that should be obvious to most people.

A duty devolves upon us to guide the youth of the country to acquire the correct point of view, which surely should be the object of all of mature thinking. I have faith in our youth and refuse to believe that after many years of school and university association the young people can be dragged by a self-appointed leader into Jewish and Gentile camps hating each other because of an accident of birth.

The challenge of the anti-Semites is the challenge to democracy and as such it must be met. I have no particular reason for taking up the cudgels on behalf of my Jewish fellow-citizens other than the duty of every decent-minded South African to take his stand against the persecution of a section of the community. Since I feel that duty, I proceed to it.

(Concluded in previous column.)