

Is There a Need for a Mizrachi Organisation in South Africa?

From MR. L. SHAPIRO (Johannesburg).

To the Editor of the Zionist Record.

Sir,—I shall be obliged if you will kindly allow me the hospitality of your paper to ask Rabbi Berlin a few questions.

Why are practically all the famous rabbis and deans of the great Yeshivot not within the Mizrachi? The leading rabbis in Lithuania and Poland are not with the Mizrachi. If it is true that the Mizrachi has a specific conception of Judaism and has its own Jewish philosophy, how it is that there exists such a gulf in the ranks of the religious leaders?

The other question is whether there is any moral justification for a Mizrachi branch in South Africa? In Lithuania there are the semi-religious who cannot work for the upbuilding of Palestine, unless there is an extra label that admixtures a dose of sanctity. Here however, where the piety of all is somewhat equal, why this segregation? Would it not be better that all our Zionists should work harmoniously for the great national object, without creating different labels?

The only justification for the introduction of the label here is that the strictly religious Jews of South Africa should, from their lofty abodes, exercise influence upon Jewry in Palestine that it should be more religious.

To me it all sounds rather farcical. The little Jewishness we possess here is only a reflection of the living fountain in Palestine. Is it not high time that Zionists should understand that it is not for the Galuth of South Africa to inspire Judaism in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem?

Yours, etc.,

L. Shapiro.

In view of Rabbi Berlin's departure for Eretz Israel towards the end of last week, the opportunity was taken of showing him Mr. Shapiro's letter before he left. We are, therefore, now able to publish Rabbi Berlin's reply to our correspondent's communication.—Ed.

Rabbi Berlin's Reply

To the Editor of the Zionist Record.

Sir,—In reply to the letter of Mr. L. Shapiro, I wish to say:

(1) It is not true that the leading rabbis in Lithuania and Poland are not in the Mizrachi. Chief Rabbi Shapiro of Kovno, Rabbi Friedman of Tavrig, at present in Palestine, Rabbi Broth of Tomashov, the late Rabbi Fine, of Bialystock, are among the many who are devoted and active members of the Mizrachi. Of course many Rabbis are not interested in practical Zionism and therefore they are not taking part either in the Mizrachi or in their parties.

(2) The old conception of semi-religious Jews doesn't correspond with the truth. There is no such thing as semi-religious, as one cannot speak of semi-honesty or semi-cleverness. A man can be honest or dishonest, clever or a fool, in the same way he can be religious or not religious. The main aim of the Mizrachi is a positive one to try with all ways and means to build up the new life in Eretz Israel in the religious spirit. This has to do with the educational system, with building of synagogues and other ritual undertakings, with having Rabbis and Shochetim, etc., in the colonies, etc., etc. Because the Mizrachi desires to continue keeping the religious tradition alive at least in Eretz

(Concluded in next column).

Zionism in Orange Grove

Activity of Branch of Johannesburg Women's Zionist League.

GEAT strides have been made during this year by this newly-formed branch. It will be recalled that at the beginning of the year the group barely numbered forty members, but to-day the ranks have developed to a membership of a hundred and twenty.

An evening devoted to serious discussion took place recently at the residence of Mrs. H. Woolf. The attendance was remarkably good and Advocate Phillips, the guest lecturer, gave a graphic survey of the rise of modern Zionism from the days of Achad Haam. Discussion was particularly brisk especially among the gentlemen, who had for the first time, accompanied their wives to a function of the branch. The speaker and the hostess were heartily thanked.

On the 17th ult., a successful sewing meeting took place at the home of Mrs. Cripps. A great deal of work had been done by the ladies in this direction and a parcel is about to be despatched to Palestine. During the morning Mr. Infeld gave an illuminating talk on the foundations of Zionism. He also dealt comprehensively with the present political situation. His enlightening address was greatly appreciated.

In regard to the social sphere a pleasant gathering was recently held at the residence of Mrs. Jaspan and was well attended.

The following functions have been arranged for July. A sewing and cultural morning will take place on the 15th inst., at the residence of Mrs. Woolf, 23, Durham Street, Randburg. A social afternoon will be held at the residence of Mrs. Androse, 11 Osborne Road, Orange Grove, on the 25th inst., while a cultural evening is being planned for Tuesday, the 27th inst., at the residence of Mrs. Arenson, 73, 9th Avenue, Orange Grove.

Israel they are helping the religious Chalutzim, the Poalei Mizrachi, to organise groups of Youth, boys and girls who shall live according to the tradition, etc. Such an influence has to be brought up by every Jew if he is in his heart religious and it does not depend on his living in Lithuania or in South Africa.

Yours, etc.,
M. BERLIN.

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MAURICE SAMUEL TOUR

Further Lectures in Transvaal Centres

AFTER completing a highly successful stay in Cape Town and the Peninsula where he delivered a brilliant series of lectures, Mr. Samuel has now left on his return to Johannesburg. He has already visited and addressed meetings at Worcester, George and Oudtshoorn en route, and is due to deliver lectures at Kroonstad, Senekal and Bethlehem on the 10th, 11th and 12th inst. respectively.

Visits to Transvaal Centres

Pretoria

On Wednesday the 14th July, Mr. Samuel will leave for Pretoria where he is to address an "At Home" arranged under the auspices of the Pretoria Women's Zionist League. The subject selected for the lecture is "Jewish Writers of To-day."

Bethal

On Sunday, July 18th, Mr. Samuel will be motored out to Bethal where he is due to deliver a lecture to the Jewish community of Bethal and neighbouring districts. A large attendance is anticipated.

Rustenburg

On his return from Bethal Mr. Samuel will leave for Rustenburg where he will lecture on Tuesday evening the 20th July, on "Jewry and the World Popular Front," under the auspices of the local Zionist Society.

Nigel

The following evening, Wednesday, July 21, Mr. Samuel will visit and address a combined Senior and Junior Mass Meeting at Nigel.

Johannesburg

A highly successful function was arranged by Mr. and Mrs. H. Fine of Junction Avenue, Parktown, at their residence in aid of the Jewish National Fund. The amount of £54 6s. 3d. was realised.

VISIT OF RABBI MEIR BERLIN TO BETHAL AND KINROSS

RABBI MEIR BERLIN, accompanied by Mr. J. Janower and Rabbi Schwartz, visited the Highveld on Sunday, June 27. Their first stop was at Kinross where they were entertained to tea at the residence of Mr. J. J. Dorfan and had an opportunity of meeting a few local people. Thereafter the delegation proceeded to Bethal, accompanied by members of the Kinross Jewish Community.

In Bethal they were met by Mr. A. Stein, who presided at a meeting which took place in the afternoon, in the unavoidable absence of Dr. J. Wulfsohn. The meeting was well attended by members of the Bethal Jewish Community and also by Jewish farmers from the neighbourhood. At the outset, Mr. A. Stein extended a welcome to the visitors and called upon Mr. J. Janower to address the gathering.

Mr. Janower delivered a short interesting address in the course of which he dealt with the important part which Jewish farmers had played as pioneers of the Highveld which they had developed to such a great extent.

At one time their contribution to local agriculture was held up as an example to their neighbours, although to-day their enemies did not hesitate to use the word "undesirables." In this respect the Jew had everywhere the same experience. There was, however, a difference as far as Eretz Israel was concerned. There, whatever the Jew created always received the fullest recognition.

Rabbi Schwartz dealt with the redemption of the soil of Eretz Israel for the Jewish people and appealed for the utmost support of the National Fund.

Rabbi Meir Berlin then delivered a most eloquent and inspiring address, tracing Jewish sufferings throughout history and emphasising the role of the Jewish National Home in the solution of the Jewish problem.

There was a fine response to the appeal for the J.N.F.

In addition to Bethal, the Kinross Jewish community has responded most generously. Special thanks are due to Mr. J. J. Dorfan, who assisted Rabbi Schwartz in the personal interviews which took place in Kinross and to Mr. A. Stein for his assistance with the work in Bethal.

Arrangements are being made now for Rabbi Zalman Schwartz to interview the Jewish residents of Devon and Leslie. He will once again be assisted by Mr. J. J. Dorfan.

SALISBURY'S NEW CANTOR

The appointment of Cantor M. Kamionsky to the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation recently took place. Mr. Kamionsky, who was formerly the cantor of Kimberley, rendered his first service in Salisbury during the Coronation celebrations. His lyrical tenor made a deep impression on the large assembly.

At the Sabbath service following a special induction service was held when the cantor sang beautiful liturgy in a traditional manner. His sweet melodious music was appreciated by the large number of worshippers present.

Rev. M. Konviser delivered an excellent induction address during which he extended to the new chazan a sincere welcome on behalf of the community.