

Jewish World Congress

AFTER having been the subject of controversy for many months, the World Jewish Congress meets this week-end at Geneva. The heat and bitterness of the argumentation which has on this issue divided the Jewish communities of so many countries have unfortunately, contributed little towards a conclusion which might be said to command even a majority support. The result is, that at the Congress at Geneva, many of the most responsible representative Jewish bodies will not be present. In America itself, these include the American Jewish Committee, headed by Dr. Cyrus Adler, which has been in the forefront of the opposition ever since the idea was mooted four years ago, the Jewish Labour Committee, the Bnai Brith, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, and many other groups. In Europe, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the French Alliance Israelite Universelle, and equally noted organisations in other countries have decided against participation. Our own Jewish Board of Deputies has likewise turned down the invitation. On the other hand, in America itself (where Dr. Stephen Wise and the American Jewish Congress have been the main sponsors of the Congress) the conference which was convened in June to elect America's delegates claimed to represent some 2,000,000 American Jews, and in many countries where the official Jewish bodies have refused to join the Congress, separate *ad hoc*

organisations have secured the representation at the Congress of those elements of Jewry who have not accepted the "official" attitude. The Congress remains therefore, despite four years of preparation and propaganda, a thoroughly unrepresentative body so far as wide and responsible circles of the Jewish people are concerned. Little good would be served in considering the arguments pro and con which were advanced. A large variety of reasons have dictated the opposing attitudes of the various bodies. People have been divided on personal grounds, on temperamental grounds, through divergency of political outlook, or considerations of practical expediency. The decision for or against has usually been an intensely difficult one, because, even those who have opposed the Congress would probably agree that in principle it would be desirable — in the words of an advocate—"to substitute among Jews conscious planning for aimless drift"; "to proclaim the unity of Israel in safeguarding the rights and interests of Jews outside Palestine"; "to summon Jews to think together about their own questions," and to lay Jewish claims and grievances "at the door of the tribunal of the world conscience." The rub has been in the means whereby it is hoped to achieve these desirable objectives. Misgivings and doubts have arisen because there has been a greater facility in proclaiming grandiloquent objectives, than in suggesting practical and feasible means whereby these may be realised.

The future alone may give the answer to the many doubts which

have been expressed, and to the many questions which have been asked. And one says advisedly "may," because the intricate labyrinth of political affairs has very rarely that direct progression from problem to solution which distinguishes the exact sciences.

It is readily understandable why South African Jewry as a whole has not been able to make up its mind on this issue. Apart from the difficulties inherent in the problem itself, its distance from the centre of things and the consequent necessity of having to depend on information at second hand have caused it, for the most part, to display little interest in the debate; or, where it has taken an interest, to suspend judgment. Our Board of Deputies have not made public the reason for their decision. We may assume that the factors already mentioned have had their influence. Besides, we can well understand that, rather than commit South African Jewry to the endorsement of a policy over which it would have a negligible, if any, say, and which might react adversely to our local interests, the Board decided that discretion was here the better part of valour, and is therefore not participating.

Since, however the Congress is, despite the warnings and the doubts, a *fait accompli*, we can only sincerely hope that the pessimists will in the event be proved wrong; that, negatively, the Congress will do no harm, but will on the contrary and positive side, bring beneficial results in its train.

South Africa Not To Participate

INFORMATION has reached the *Zionist Record* that the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies has decided not to participate in the forthcoming Jewish World Congress.

ACTIONS COMMITTEE TO MEET ON AUGUST 25

Zurich, July 21st.

THE next session of the Zionist Actions Committee will open in Zurich on August 25, it was learned here to-day.

The session will take place under the chairmanship of Mr. M. M. Ussishkin, and will be devoted chiefly to the present developments in Palestine.

NEW RESTRICTIONS AFTER OLYMPIADE

Berlin, July 20th.

FURTHER restrictions against the Jewish press in Germany, in addition to the ban on the news-stand sale of Jewish newspapers are contemplated by the Nazi Government, it was learned here today.

It is understood that among the anti-Jewish regulations which are now being prepared by the Nazi authorities for promulgation after the Olympic Games is an ordinance excluding the Jewish press in Germany from membership in the Reich Press Chamber and placing the German-Jewish newspapers under the direct supervision of Hans Hinkel, the Nazi Commissar for Cultural Affairs, thus tightening the "ghetto restrictions" also in the field of the printed word.

RUSSIAN-JEWISH COMPOSER HONOURED

Moscow, July 21st.

THE title "Deserving Leader of Art" has been bestowed here by the Soviet Government upon the Jewish composer Isaac Dunayevsky.

M. Dunayevsky is the composer of "The March of the Flyers," which is sung all over Soviet Russia and is played at official functions of the Soviet Air Force.

LITHUANIA AND WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

Kovno, July 20th.

SIX delegates will represent Lithuania at the World Jewish Congress, which opens at Geneva on August 8. They were elected yesterday at a joint conference of Jewish economic organisations, communities and political parties.

The Jewish People's Party, dissatisfied with the procedure of the elections, walked out of the conference in protest.

The Lithuanian delegation will consist of three Zionist Socialists, one Mizrachi, one General Zionist and one non-partisan member.

FRENCH CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Paris, July 20th.

A NATIONAL conference of French-Jewish organisations, which yesterday elected thirty-five delegates to the World Jewish Congress, adopted a series of resolutions, condemning the pogroms in Poland which take place "with the consent of the Government," and Hitlerist terror, and protesting against the continued disorders in Palestine.

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