

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Statement by Dr. Rabinowitz

Sir,—In view of my impending departure for Europe prior to attending the Zionist Congress, and the possibility of misunderstanding arising out of the recent resolution passed by the S.A. Jewish Ministers' Association recommending me as Chief Rabbi of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, I should like to give my personal view of that resolution.

I made it clear to the conference after the vote was taken that I did not regard it as more than a gratifying expression of the confidence reposed in me by my colleagues, and as an indication to the lay community of the feelings of ministers with regard to the need for religious organisation of the community. I do not regard it as in any way altering my status.

May I point out also that the alternative proposal adopted by the Union for a Rabbinical Council with a rotating chairman who shall hold office for two years was my proposal, submitted in writing to the governing body of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, and that it was on the basis of that letter that the proposal was adopted.

Yours, etc.,

L. RABINOWITZ.

Johannesburg.

Four Questions

Sir,—Permit me to express my feelings about the recent conference of the Jewish Ministers' Association.

At the opening night of the conference Rabbi Dr. Rabinowitz said that he could not accept the four resolutions which were submitted by the Lema-an Hashabbat Organisation, because according to their constitution only members of the Ministers' Association can bring forward resolutions to this conference, but not organisations.

Here I want to ask some questions:

(1) Since when must a Sabbath Observers' Organisation have a passport to submit resolutions at a Jewish Ministers' Conference at a time when any individual reverend or shamas is entitled to do so?

(2) Does the chairman, who is now the Chief Rabbi as well as president of the Ministers' Association, think that we, by our demands, were impertinent, impudent, audacious and "Chutzpeddik"? Because I know how that during the whole conference the question of sabbath or Chillul Shabbath was not dealt with at all. Apparently the whole religious problem in this country was the appointment of a Chief Rabbi for the Jewish Ministers' Association.

(3) Assuming that we were unconstitutional in our demands, surely the election of a Chief Rabbi was unconstitutional, a fact which was brilliantly exposed at the conference by Rabbi M. Kossowsky. Therefore it seems that with regard to our resolutions Rabbi Rabinowitz saw fit and proper not to place them on the agenda, a decision which is all red tape, but when it comes to a question of being elected Chief Rabbi then the Association's constitution is disregarded.

(4) I want to know whether 24 rabbonim, reverends and shamossim can elect a Chief Rabbi for the whole

South Africa at a time when I know that in Berea and Yeoville alone there are more than 24 rabbonim, reverends and shamossim.

Yours, etc.,

R. LURIE,

Vice-Chairman, Lema-an Hashabbat Organisation.

Designation of Chaplains

Sir,—I would be grateful if you would kindly publish the following announcement in your paper.

With reference to the designation to be used by former Chaplains who served with the U.D.F., the Adjutant-General has ruled that a Minister who has been placed on the Reserve of Officers is a Chaplain to the Forces. He is, therefore, authorised to use the letters C.F. after his name. To designate himself Honorary Chaplain to the Forces (H.C.F.) would be both inapplicable and incongruous as far as the U.D.F. is concerned. The designation H.C.F. refers to former Chaplains in the British Army and then only when they are gazetted as such in recognition of distinguished services.

It must, however, be pointed out that a Chaplain is not automatically placed on the Reserve of Officers upon his relinquishing that position. Only those who have applied for posting to the Reserve of Officers and have had that application granted may use the letters C.F. after their names.

It is also necessary to point out that Chaplains may not refer to themselves or allow themselves to be referred to by their military rank, since it is clearly laid down that "a Chaplain is to be known and addressed by his ecclesiastical title and not by his relative military rank."

Yours, etc.,

I. H. LEVINE,

Principal Jewish Chaplain.

P.O. Box 92,

Voortrekkerhoogte.

Statement by Hashachar

Sir,—In your last issue, you published a letter signed by "Not-A-Rabbi," criticising the Jewish Ministers' Association in electing Dr. L. Rabinowitz as Chief Rabbi.

Without going into details, we wish to state the following facts: Many delegates were forced, owing to congregational duties, to leave the Conference before the voting took place, but before leaving, handed over in writing to the Joint Secretaries, their full support to the Resolution. These votes, however, were not included in the ballot. Thus, there was an overwhelming majority and not thirty out of the fifty-five as stated by "Not-A-Rabbi."

This resolution is, in fact, a recommendation to the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations that Dr. L. Rabinowitz be appointed Chief Rabbi. Surely the right of Ministers to make a recommendation on this vital matter, affecting them, cannot be denied.

There is no clause in the constitution stating that a Chief Rabbi cannot be appointed by the Ministers' Association, neither is there a clause that an Hon. Life President should be appointed, yet no one would deem the latter unconstitutional.

The progress of an organisation would be paralysed if it would refrain from activities not mentioned in the constitution, which are conducive to the welfare of the Organisation.

Owing to the fact that the conference sub-committee had failed to

report its decision that Dr. L. Rabinowitz should absent himself during this session, and as the objection to his presence was lodged at an advanced stage of the discussion, the conference felt that he should be present till the end.

We trust that after ascertaining the true facts, "Not-A-Rabbi" will realise that his criticism is completely unfounded and he will regain his breath.

It was generally agreed by all present that the conference was of a high standard.

Yours, etc.,

A. GOLDBERG, Secretary,
Jewish Ministers' Association.

63 Sauer's Buildings,
Johannesburg.

Gratifying Interest in M.D.A.

Sir,—I recently returned from Eretz Israel and am very pleased to note the increasing interest taken by the South African public in the work of Magen David Adom.

This institution, which started as a voluntary organisation, is playing an increasingly important part in the national upbuilding. It caters for the sick, cares for our refugees, not only on arrival, but also in Europe, provides blood transfusion services and a number of other vital services.

I wish the organisers and all their assistants the best of luck in this important work.

Yours, etc.,

W. RUBIN.

7 Washington Court,
40 Yeo Street, Yeoville.

Recognised as Chief Rabbi

Sir,—It is an established principle with me to ignore the remarks of a correspondent who, for lack of courage, hides his identity behind a nom-de-plume. However, as I was responsible for introducing the Resolution which resulted in Rabbi Dr. Rabinowitz being accepted by the Ministers' Conference as the Spiritual Chief, I am obliged to depart from that principle.

It is a misstatement of fact that only 30 out of 55 delegates voted in favour of the resolution. The actual fact is that the resolution came before conference at its last session when a number of delegates had already left.

As a member of the Conference Committee, I emphatically deny that any decision was taken by the committee that Dr. Rabinowitz was not to be present during the discussion of the resolution. It was left entirely to his wisdom and discretion whether to vacate the hall or not. Personally, I thought it courageous of him to stay and face whatever criticism may be levelled against the resolution. To say that his "presence exerted pressure on the delegates," is most fantastic. Dr. Rabinowitz is far too democratic to have taken exception to any remarks that might be made, not against him personally, but the prin-

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ciple embodied in the resolution.

A perusal of the resolution will make it clear to "Not-A-Rabbi" that conference did NOT APPOINT him Chief Rabbi, only RECOGNISED him as such by virtue of his "outstanding abilities as a great Spiritual Leader." Hence, I fail to see his reference "that there was no provision for such an office in the Constitution." The Constitution does not define the nature of Resolutions to be submitted to Conference. Hence any resolution which aims at strengthening Jewish religious life and the improvement of the status of the ministry comes within the scope of the Ministers' Conference. A Chief Rabbinate will serve that dual purpose.

Yours, etc.,

(Rev.) J. I. LEVINE.

Beth-El House,
Pietersburg.

SOLOMON'S FAREWELL CONCERT

The large, appreciative audience at the Solomon farewell Concert on Sunday night was more than merely reluctant to hear him for the last time and recalled the pianist over and over again.

Solomon seemed to be in a dream-world and played with the utmost delicacy and sensitivity, nevertheless he lost none of the resonance and clarity in his interpretation of Schuman's Etudes Symphoniques Op. 13.

In Bach's beautiful Prelude and Fugue in C Minor from "The Well Tempered Clavier" Book 2 he interpreted the composer's artistry with perfect emotion.

His Mozart was gracious and joyous, but as always he excelled in Chopin which took up the whole of the second half of the programme. In Sonata in B. Minor Op. 58 Solomon brought forth all the suffering and forlorn hopes of the composer's life. It was a beautiful rendering.

We hope the promised return visit of this great artist will materialise, and in the very near future.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Hon. Secretaries of

Youth Aliyah Branch Committees

as well as the general public are hereby notified that the

YOUTH ALIYAH OFFICE

is situated at

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All material is now obtainable at the above office.