

Record Symposium

# Should Tisha B'Av Be Abolished?

## Views Of Chief Rabbi Abrahams And Rabbi Freedman

THEIR comments on the future of Tisha B'Av, arising out of the editorial in the "Zionist Record" of August 13, has been published this week.

Chief Rabbi Israel Abrahams (Cape Town) writes:

...the abolition of Tisha B'Av was set already in the words of the Prophet Zechariah... years after the work on the reconstruction of the Second Temple... (Zech. Ch. VII, 5)... In Talmudic times, when the Temple was destroyed, the Ha-Nasi sought to change the character of Tisha B'Av: to one version he wished it to be a day of mourning completely; according to another view his intention was to abolish a Nidheh. But the Rabbis found no support for his

majority of Jews will not cease to mourn for Zion till 'the city of David' becomes again the Metropolis of Israel.

Halachically, too, there are difficulties. It would be easier to set aside the Fast of 3rd Tishri, 10th Tebeth and 17th Tammuz (R.H. 18B). The abolition of Tisha B'Av, which commemorates the dual destruction of the Temple, involves the principle that no enactment of an earlier Beth Din can be annulled except by one superior in learning and numbers (Tos. s.v. Uvikkesh on Meg. 5B). "This halachic rule represents a crucial problem that will challenge the ingenuity and courage of our highest Rabbinical authorities in regard to many other ecclesiastical matters. At the moment, however, it may be generally agreed that the question of abrogating the observance of Tisha B'Av is primarily still an academic issue.

"Not so, however, the fixing of a Day of Memorial for the victims of Nazidom. To fail to appoint such a day would be a grave historic blunder. The actual day, whether it should be on 9th Av or any other day, is not of real moment. The matter could be settled by consultation among the recognised Bate Din of world Jewry. But the lead in this case (as in all religious problems of the future affecting the entire Jewish people) must come from Medinat Israel, which is the spiritual centre of K'lal Yisrael," concludes Rabbi Abrahams.

Rabbi A. H. Freedman (Durban) writes:

"I find myself almost entirely in agreement with the views expressed in your leader on Tisha B'Av.

"This National Day of Mourning has, for the first time, since the destruction of the Second Temple failed to cast its usual gloom over the House of Israel. Recent events in Israel have, thank God, robbed Tisha B'Av of its sting.

"Somehow, when one reads in the press that the Israeli Prime Minister has addressed himself to the United States Government through Israel's Accredited Representative in Washington—that the Military Governor of Jerusalem has informed Count Bernadotte that he cannot accept some of his recommendations because they violate the sovereign rights of the State of Israel one does not find the reading of the Book of Lamentations nearly as distressing as in the past.

"And yet, I feel that the time has not yet arrived to expunge Tisha B'Av from the Calendar. That we

must continue to observe Tisha B'Av, but not so much as a Day of Mourning, but rather as a reminder and a challenge that we must hasten the process of redemption and help bring nearer the day when the Jewish people shall dwell in peace and security in our ancient Homeland.

I do not believe however that Tisha B'Av should be re-interpreted and observed as a Day of Mourning for the overwhelming tragedy of our times. The dead of our generation must be remembered, but we must not confuse the issue. The destruction of a people is indeed as tragic as the destruction of a land, and so a Memorial Day must be appointed, so that for generations to come the world, as well as the Jewish people, will remember the inhumanities and barbarisms perpetrated in the twentieth century.

"That Day of Mourning should be observed by Jews and non-Jews as a warning and as a reminder that unless man learns to uphold the dignity of man, that unless man learns to respect the sanctity of human life we shall again bring humanity to the brink of ruin and destruction and turn the clock back a thousand years."

### Jewish Musical Institute

Complete musical programmes for concerts to be held within the next few months for Magen David Adom, the city branch of the Johannesburg Women's Zionist League and the Jewish Guild, are being arranged by the Jewish Musical Institute.

A ballet school has been opened and is being conducted by Hanna Seinik.

A Jewish theatre has been founded, with Mr. Galvin in charge.

There is also a youth symphony orchestra, a choir, a balalaika orchestra and a piano-accordion section.

All those interested are asked to contact the secretary, Jewish Musical Institute, Ginsberg Hall, Gordon Terrace.

## Welfare Council Reports Good Progress

### REHABILITATION INSTEAD OF CHARITY

GOOD progress was recorded at the first annual general meeting of the Witwatersrand Jewish Welfare Council, held at the Coronation Hall last week. Delegates from several leading Jewish institutions resolved to give full co-operation to the Council in the future. The need for a co-ordinating body to centralise the assistance given to Jewish Youth in regard to education was expressed by Mrs. I. B. Jacobson.

DR. I. J. BALKIN, who presented his annual report, said that the Council had now outgrown its infancy. The fear that it would stifle the initiative of individual societies had proved unfounded.

"One of the first tasks undertaken was the establishment of a confidential register of cases dealt with by Jewish organisations, in an attempt to eliminate overlapping which had formerly occurred."

Dr. Balkin said that the number of cases dealt with by the Case Committee was 177. "Of these 95 were referred to us by affiliated bodies, and 82 applied personally. A high percentage were promoted to seek assistance because of ill-health."

CHIEF RABBI DR. L. I. RABINOWITZ said that the Welfare Council had come to stay because it fills a need in the community in co-ordinating social activities of the Jewish community.

MR. A. W. KATZEN, the vice-chairman, spoke on the need for financial grants for the upkeep of the Council.

MR. H. J. KIRSCH, chairman of the Case Committee and vice-chairman of the Council, said that his committee had carried out many investigations. He stressed that the primary task of the Welfare Council

was rehabilitation and not charity.

"I wish to express my thanks to Balfour Park for employing several of our people," he said.

DR. ROSS, of the Tara Hospital, spoke on the great work undertaken by the Jewish Welfare Council. He related the many problems faced by his institution.

MRS. I. B. JACOBSON, secretary of the Council, reported on her findings in connection with the assistance extended to Jewish youth to study trades and professions.

The following took part in the discussion: Messrs. J. Goldblatt, M. Cohen, A. L. Meyer, L. H. Cohen, R. R. Hahn, M. Segal, I. J. Hersch, L. Melamed and Dr. Sichel.

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### Lecture Tour

(Continued from page 15)

Chess Club, and Mr. M. ... the secretary.

...man of the Eastern Province of the S.A. Jewish ... Deputies is Mr. B. Smulian. ... is the secretary and ... is the treasurer.

...resident of the Central ... of the Board of Deputies ... Eastern Province is Mr. A. ... an ex-Mayor of the city. ... of the most active members ... Council, and is the or- ... of the cheap housing scheme ... and native popula- ... Elizabeth.

### Members of Shechita Board

(Continued from page 24)

... gave the assur- ... there was no shortage of ... in Johannesburg.

... of the shochtim present com- ... that they were often sub- ... indignities and insults by ... employees in the course ... at the abattoirs. He ... by the chairman that ... would be investigated ... to the notice of the ...

... who took part in the de- ... Messrs. J. Rich, W. Aron, ... Feitelberg, M. Joffe, ... Hofmann and Fine-

... was paid to Messrs. M. ... Rosenfeld and Michael ... services to the Board. ... office-bearers were

... Mr. M. Kagan; vice- ... Mr. N. Rosenfeld; hon. ... Mr. M. Barsel; hon. ... Mr. J. Goldblatt; council, ... Kirson, I. Frankel, M. ... Aron and Dr. Hamburger.

### Addresses I.U.A.

(Continued from page 11)

... lack the means to live ... said Mr. Gering.

... to workers for an all- ... Mr. Gering concluded that ... aim of the present ... peace in Israel, with the ... all-neighbouring coun- ... the rest of the world and ... to regain some of the ... of the nation of Israel.

### Political Scene

(Continued from page 7)

"To-day the average Jew cannot understand his own destiny, but surely God has yet a purpose and a mission for the Jews in this world. Many people think prophecy is being fulfilled in these days. Of this, I will not write, but does it not seem as though, with the return of more and more Jews to Palestine, some great purpose will be worked out and through the Jewish people? Jerusalem has become a burden on the nations. The spotlight of the world is focused on Palestine, and what is happening in that small part of the universe is reverberating throughout the world. Are we approaching the goal of history? What is the significance of the present hour?"

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