

JOHANNESBURG MASS MEETING MOURNS MARTYRED JEWRY

*Nation's Pledge: "It Shall not Happen
Again"*

The South African Jewish community, in common with world Jewry, observed last Friday (Assara B'Teveth) as a day of mourning for the six million Jews of Europe exterminated by the Nazis. Services were held in all synagogues, and in Johannesburg a mass meeting was held at the Coronation Hall last Thursday evening. The hall was packed to capacity, with an overflow in the minor halls where the speeches delivered by Chief Rabbi Dr. L. I. Rabinowitz, Bernard Gering and Mr. M. Szur were relayed by loud speakers. Miss Niusia Gold, the noted Yiddish actress now pur of the Union, rendered with tragic magnificence poems by Katznelson and Sholem Asch. Dr. H. Sonnabend, vice-chairman of the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies, presided, and Cantor S. Backon intoned the Haskarah.

"It is right that we gather to recall that which befell our people and draw the lesson of those days," said Dr. Sonnabend in opening the meeting. "The 'Board' of Deputies has called this meeting so that we can express, through the distinguished leaders on the platform, our feelings."

Speaking in Yiddish, Mr. M. Szur, recalled the brutalities perpetrated by the Nazis on the Jewish population of Europe. It was a silent march of death that re-echoed with pain throughout the world. It was death that, although at first not realised, was soon brought to the attention of the world. No one had believed

did, many hundreds of thousands more would have died.

"When the world heard the cries of pain from European Jewry and did nothing to save them, it was the Yishuv which sent parachutists into Europe to lead and help Jewry defend itself. It was the Yishuv which stretched out a hand to them, and gave them courage and hope."

Now the State of Israel had been reborn. Already it has accepted thousands of survivors of the great massacre in Europe.

"Let us, each year, as we come to commemorate those who died, pledge that it shall not happen again — that Israel shall not

The historical people, said Chief Rabbi Rabinowitz, was one where the shadow had been greater than the light. But the tragedies of the past fell into insignificance in comparison with the one Jewry commemorated on the present day of mourning. It was not only a physical destruction, but the death of a great heritage and culture.

From this greatest tragedy had nevertheless come the greatest glory — the birth of the State of Israel. We had learnt how to meet and overcome our tragedy. The survivors had shown us the way. They held on to life, they crossed the heavy seas in small boats, and defied those who occupied the Homeland.

"Now, for six months; Israel has been a member of the United Nations. In no single instance has she failed to vote in accordance with the social teachings of the Prophets. Israel expresses our views on the question of humanity. We shall never be led to the slaughter again. The Jewish State, and, with a new determination, those of us in the Golah, will guarantee a new lease of life for the Jewish people, and the new age will be the greatest memorial to the tragedy we have had to face."

soon brought to the attention of the world. No one had believed that it could happen, until the details began to filter through.

"We must remember what befell our people. We must remember the great heroes who arose from the ashes and blazed a great chapter of Jewish history. Amidst the falling walls of the ghettos, our heroes clung to their people and their culture."

Stressing that more than five years had passed since the end of hostilities, Mr. Szur said that many Nazi criminals responsible for the death of thousands of the Jewish people were to-day walking in freedom in Western Germany. Others had been given high administrative posts, instead of being tried for their crimes.

Fascism was still alive, and as long as it lived, the future of Jewry in Israel and elsewhere, was in danger. The history of the Jewish people was bound up with the progressive forces and with democracy. As long as other people were enslaved, there was no future for any free people. Jewry must not isolate itself, but form part of a bastion against fascism.

A NATIONAL YAHRZEIT

Mr. B. Gering, Chairman of the S.A. Zionist Federation, said that the present day of mourning was a personal "Yahrzeit" for many members of the community. They had lost families and relatives in the destruction of European Jewry. In addition to the individual loss there was the great national tragedy felt by Jewry as a whole.

"In our long history of wandering, we have tried to teach the world our great humanitarian principles. But we have found other forces at play. The slaughter of Jewry began with the Kishenev pogroms, and the Ukrainian massacres, that were the rehearsals for the bigger things to come. As before, the world stood silent and watched. Then Hitler came and the world again received ten years' notice of what was to befall. But the world stood silent, for after all it was only Jews. We tried to avert the



The spirit of martyred European Jewry is movingly symbolised in this striking study, "Kria," by Herman Wald, the South African Jewish sculptor. A letter in our "Open Forum" last week urged that "Kria" should be acquired as a memorial by the Jewish community.