

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Re the recent visit of a soccer and table tennis team organised by Sydney Hakoah, the Executive of J.A.S.A. took strong exception to the report of one of the Sydney Jewish papers designating it Melbourne-Sydney Sports Carnival and inferring that this was an interstate meeting.

The Jewish Amateur Sports Association is the N.S.W. member of the Australian Judaeon Sport Council, whose members include A.J.A.X. (Melbourne), Maccabean Youth Club (Perth), and Judaeon Sports Club (Brisbane), who are affiliated with the World Maccabi. The A.J.S.C. is the only body responsible for Jewish interstate sports carnivals in Australia, and the J.A.S.A., being the N.S.W. member, feels that in fairness to their constituent clubs in Sydney, the report was misleading and has created the wrong impression.

It is the J.A.S.A.'s duty and first consideration to foster sport amongst the Jewish clubs, and whilst we do not object to teams visiting from other states, which can only further the aims of Jewish sport, we do, however, feel strongly about any attempt to usurp the function of the J.A.S.A., and label these visits Interstate Sports Carnivals.

As other sporting bodies affiliated with the J.A.S.A. have shown resentment to the report, we feel that our explanation in your paper at your earliest opportunity would clarify the matter.

Yours faithfully,

C. GREENSTEIN,

Hon. Sec., J.A.S.A.

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I heard that Dr. Adenauer, Chancellor of the West German Republic, asked the Jews to help rebuild Germany. He would do everything possible to make good the damage they had suffered at the hands of the Nazis.

In my opinion, no Jew who was so fortunate as to be admitted to U.S.A. or Australia, at least, would like to go back to Germany, though I do not doubt the sincerity of Dr. Adenauer's inten-

the sincerity of Dr. Adenauer's intentions. The Nazi sympathisers are still very strong, and no sane Jew should undergo that adventure. There are, however, still some people who feel as "German citizens of Jewish faith."

Compare, on the other hand, Pastor Niemoller's suggestion to bring German farmers out to Australia. Even with very careful screening, many a Nazi may slip through, thus increasing the number of anti-Semites in this country.

But Jews in the Diaspora are now better off than in former times. Even if our State of Israel cannot harbour all Jews, it gives us a strong prestige and a feeling of strength.

Yours faithfully,

C. LEVIN.

Dear Sir,

As I find that some people in the Sydney Jewish community seem to be under a misapprehension as to the role of Pastor Niemoller and the true character of his mission in Australia, I would like to draw your attention to some facts about the man who—under the cloak of religion—is a traveller for German nationalism. Whilst the Pastor opposed the Nazis on religious issues, he never clearly came out against them.

In fact, it appears from available evidence, that Pastor Niemoller was attracted to the Nazi Party soon after its foundation. According to a booklet published in 1938, under the title "Martin Niemoller und sein Bekenntnis," by the Swiss Evangelical Relief for the Confessing Church in Germany, Niemoller,

1924, onwards, voted for the Hitler Party since, in the words of the booklet, its programme "for a national revival was fundamentally his own, with its vehement denial of all that was meant by individualism, parliamentarianism, pacifism, Marxism, Judaism."

In line with these views, Pastor Niemoller made no protest against the pogroms perpetrated by the Nazis in Berlin during the Jewish High Holidays of 1930 and 1931. Even in 1933, he made no protest against anti-Semitism in

no protest against anti-Semitism in Germany, he was merely opposed to the introduction of the Aryan paragraph into the Protestant Church, demanding that the Church make no distinction between members of Teutonic and those of Semitic origin. As late as March, 1933, he voted for Hitler, and in 1947 the Pastor apologised for his action by claiming that the Fuehrer had deceived him, as he, Niemoller, had failed to pay attention to the "bad aspects of Nazism."

When he did realise, after 1933, that his attitude had produced unexpected results, in that it hit not only the Jews, but everything tainted with the "Jewish Spirit"—notably, the Christian religion—Pastor Niemoller began to protest, though by no means strongly, as he himself recognised in 1946: "I ask myself over and over again, what would have happened if 14,000 Evangelical Ministers of the Evangelical communities all over Germany had defended the truth with their very lives in the years 1933 or 1934, when it must surely have been possible to do so."

In 1937, as a result of a number of sermons he delivered, Pastor Niemoller was arrested and placed in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Yet, in spite of this, and the persecution Pastor Niemoller suffered as a prisoner in the concentration camp, in September, 1939, he offered to serve in the German Navy (in which he had already served as a U-boat Commander during World War I.). His request was turned down. His explanation for his action underlines his nationalistic attitude, which is by no means reconcilable with his alleged anti-Nazism. He said that "he realised that as a German and a Christian he could not wish for Hitler's defeat as this would have meant the end of Germany."

After the war, in January 1947, Niemoller, speaking on the question of anti-Semitism in Germany, declared that it had come to an end and would not return. "... pity for Jews and a feeling of that what has been done to the Jews had been avenged not by the Allies, but

God, is the outstanding psychic reaction in the German nation." This statement

in the German nation." This statement was interpreted by democrats in the United States as an attempt to secure a favourable consideration of a new German State.

He was denounced by Rabbi Stephen Wise, in a letter for the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, which organised Niemoller's visit to the United States. The late Dr. Wise wrote: "I am bound to declare that Niemoller has not so borne himself throughout the unspeakable 'Hitler years as to merit the respect or confidence of the Christian peoples of America. When Hitler launched the movement destined to be the most disastrous in human history, the Rev. Niemoller became his enthusiastic supporter." Some of his recent statements strongly confirm the impression that Pastor Niemoller, in the words of the American Army Chaplain, Samuel Tettelbaum, "is the kind that is capable of placing the mark of respectability upon Nazism and Fascism."

According to a report from the World Jewish Congress on April 1, 1949, much indignation has been evoked in Germany by the outrageous testimony before a Munich court, given by Pastor Niemoller during the trial of three S.S. criminals, whom he described as "German Idealists." These criminals were the commandants of the gas chambers in Oswiecim, but Pastor Niemoller described their function as "duty executed conscientiously like good German soldiers." Owing to Niemoller's defence these murderers were acquitted by the Court.

Since his visit to Australia, the 'courageous man who defied Hitler,' did not have a single word of condemnation against the Nazis for committing the greatest crime in history—the wiping out of millions of our people. There can be no feeling of sympathy towards a man who is carrying the flag of German chauvinism and asks for forgiveness for those whose hands are stained with the blood of our dearest.

Yours faithfully,

MARK COHEN.