

"RDM" 13/5/75

Bram cremated in simple style

By MARSHALL LEE

BRAM FISCHER was cremated at 5 o'clock yesterday evening and his ashes will be returned to custody.

About 80 people — family, friends, former Bar and political colleagues and the local prisons chief — attended the simple ceremony in Bloemfontein.

They included Fischer's daughters Ruth and Ilse; his son-in-law Dr Tim Wilson; his three brothers; Mrs Helen Joseph; Mr A. I. Maisels, who defended Fischer in the treason trial; the Rev Douglas Thompson, one of the treason trial accused; and others, Black and White.

Completely non religious, the ceremony consisted of a statement about the man

and his career, eulogies written by Mr Andre Brink, the Afrikaans academic and writer and Mr Hugh Lewin who was with Fischer in prison.

All around people were echoing the qualities of the man. Earlier the commander of prison services in Bloemfontein, Colonel P. Scheffer said he had come to pay his last respects to a man whom he had seen in his last days.

Mr Gerald Scheepers the undertaker, said he had been instructed to hand over the ashes only to the prison authorities.

He arrived at the crematorium with the coffin at 4 pm yesterday. There was no funeral procession and only a handful of people when he got there.

Mr Scheepers asked me to help him with the coffin and four of us lifted

it from the hearse. "It's not heavy," he said.

In fact, it was remarkably light for the amount of history it carried inside.

● The Soviet Communist Party organ Pravda yesterday published a front page tribute to Fischer.

On legal advice the Rand Daily Mail is not publishing extracts from the eulogy, nor several tributes paid in messages and statements at the cremation service in Bloemfontein, since it could be construed as promoting the ideals of communism and thereby violating the Suppression of Communism Act.

In London some 500 demonstrators stood in front of the South African Embassy in silent protest at the death of Fischer "in captivity."

● See Page 3